



# Psychological Theories

Pragmatic and Contemporary Schools of Thought

# The Birth of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- Arose out of behaviorism; did not think behaviorism was complete enough
- Began to add cognitions (thinking)
- Based on logic and reason
- Evidence-based treatments – manuals for treating many kinds of disorders: depression, anxiety
- Relatively short forms of treatment



# Cognitive Theorists

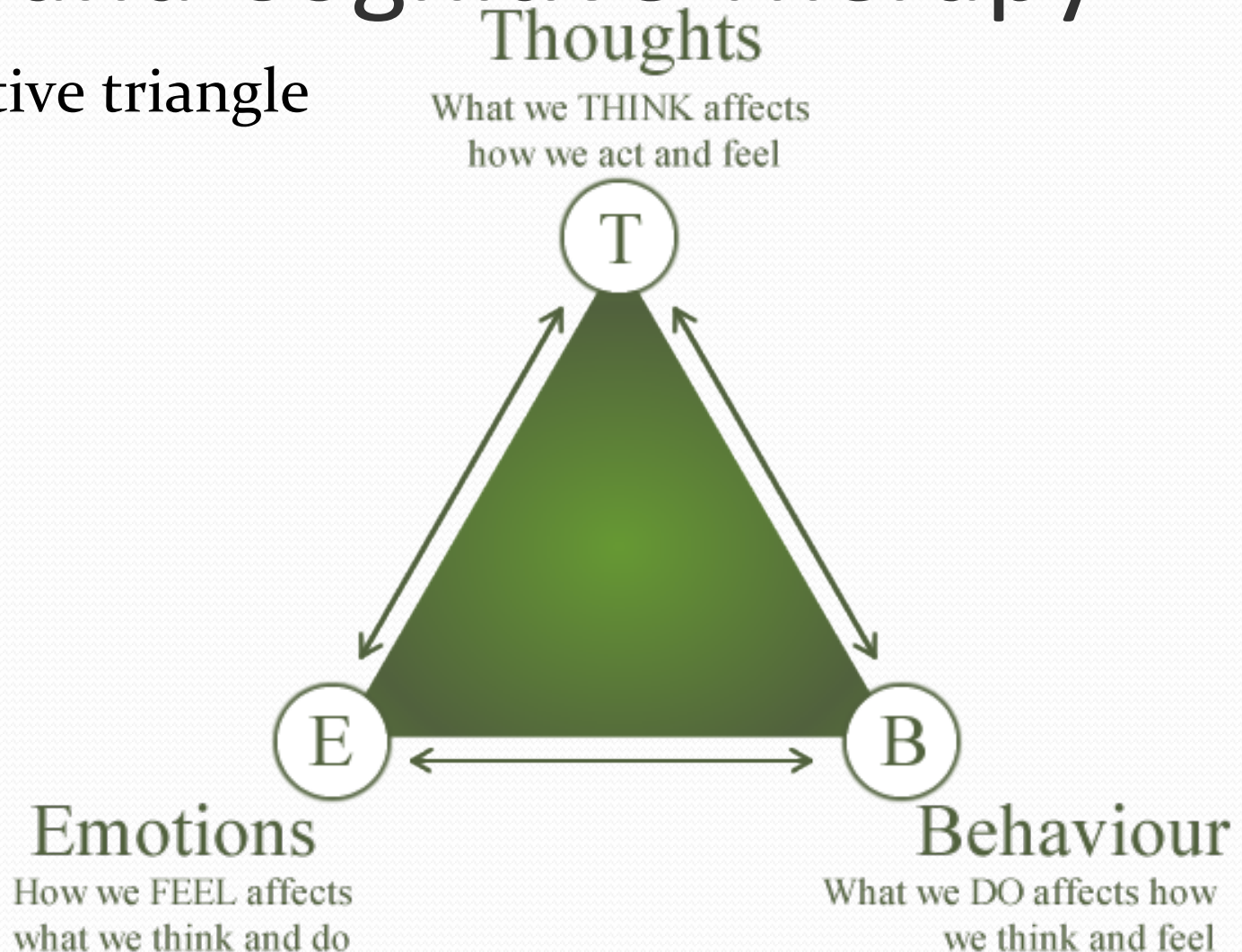
- Aaron Beck – was a psychoanalyst, but was a keen observer of his clients  
= creator of Cognitive Therapy
- Albert Ellis – began as a psychoanalyst (studied Jung), became disillusioned and founded Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy

# Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- Human Nature:
  - Cognitions (thoughts) are the root of people's emotions and behaviors
  - People act on their core beliefs
  - People have the power to change their cognitions
- Health =
  - A person is healthy who can recognize and understand his or her cognitions and cognitive distortions
  - Problems come from faulty core beliefs and cognitive distortions which lead to maladaptive behaviors and emotions

# Beck and Cognitive Therapy

- Cognitive triangle



# Cognitive Therapy

- **Automatic thoughts** = situation specific thoughts
  - People are always aware of these
    - This first assignment is too hard
- **Intermediate beliefs** = assumptions from core beliefs
  - Where we get rules about the world
    - If I don't do well in this course, I'm dumb
- **Core beliefs** = deepest, fundamental beliefs about self, others, world
  - Overgeneralizations; rigid and difficult to change
    - I have to be perfect or I'm a failure

# Cognitive Therapy

- **Cognitive distortions** = exaggerated or irrational thoughts
  - All or nothing thinking
    - Black and white thinking, with no middle ground of shades of gray
      - Teachers either like me or hate me; assault weapon ban = the government is coming for my guns
  - Overgeneralization
    - A conclusion based on one example or experience
      - Failure; racism
  - Shoulds
    - Thinking that a situation or person should behave a certain way
      - When the person doesn't we get angry with him or her
      - When we don't behave as we "should" we feel guilt

# The ABCs of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy

- People create their own reality through their perception
  - If perceptions are negative, even positive events have no impact
- Activating event
  - Whatever event happened in client's life
    - Death of parent
- Belief
  - How the client's thoughts react to the situation
    - Farewell or I never really said I'm sorry after our last fight
- Consequence (emotional or behavioral)
  - What the client feels about the event because of his or her beliefs
    - Sadness or Sadness and guilt



# What Cognitive Therapy Looks Like

- Client and therapist sitting across each other, talking, much like Humanistic idea of therapy
- Manualized
  - There are books out with steps to follow for good therapy
  - Scientifically tested
- Homework
  - Teach the client how to become his or her own therapist

# References

- Archer, J. Jr., McCarthy, C. J. (2007). Cognitive Approaches. *Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy: Contemporary Applications*. 266-309.