



Socratic Questioning Basic Training

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What Socratic Questioning Is

- “Socratic questioning is derived from Socrates and the Socratic method of learning wherein the core value is the patient coming to know something for themselves” (Wachen, Dondanville & Resick, 2017, p. 389).

The Importance of Psychotherapy

- Psychotherapy is the gold standard of treatment for mental health concerns.
- Socratic questioning is an integral component to effective counseling and psychotherapy.

R.W. Paul's 6 Types of Socratic Questions

- **Seeking Clarification**
- **Analysis of Assumptions**
- **Critical Review of Evidence and Reasoning**
- **Analysis of Perspectives and Viewpoints**
- **Analysis of Consequences and Implications**
- **Analysis of Questions**

(Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014; University of Michigan, n.d.).

Seeking Clarification Questions

Automatic thinking often limits perspective and seeking clarification leads to a richer set of cognitive choices (Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014a).

- “Why do you say that?” (University of Michigan, n.d., on-line)
- “Can you give me an example?” (Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014a, p. 8)
- “How does this related to our discussion?” (University of Michigan, n.d., on-line)
- “Could you explain further?” (Bowman, n.d., on-line).
- “What is the problem you are trying to solve?” (Bowman, n.d., on-line).

Analysis of Assumptions

It is important to question the assumptions that provide foundation to belief patterns. Analytic scrutiny is helpful in diluting problematic assumptions (Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014).

- “How did you come to this conclusion?” (Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014a, p. 9).
- “What would happen if...?” (Bowman, n.d., on-line).
- “How can you verify or disprove that assumption?” (University of Michigan, n.d., on-line).
- “If this happened to a friend/sibling, would you have the same thought about them? (Resick, Monson, Chard, 2014a, p. 9).

Critical Review of Evidence and Reasoning

Reviewing the evidence that provides foundation to problematic assumptions, beliefs and arguments can provide means to attenuate such (Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014a).

- “How do you know this?” (Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014a, p. 9).
- “What evidence is there that supports...?” (Bowman, n.d., on-line).
- “What would be an example?” (University of Michigan, n.d., on-line).
- “Would these reasons stand up in a reputable newspaper? (Resick, Monson, Chard, 2014a, p. 9).

Analysis of Perspectives and Viewpoints

It is helpful to purposefully consider alternative perspectives and viewpoints relevant to the problematic pattern of thinking present (Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014a).

- “What alternative ways of looking at this are there?” (Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014a, p. 10).
- “What makes your viewpoint better?” (Bowman, n.d., on-line).
- “How are... and... similar?” (University of Michigan, n.d., on-line).
- “What are the strengths and weaknesses of...?” (Resick, Monson, Chard, 2014a, p. 10).

Analysis of Consequences and Implications

It is helpful to analyse the consequences of problematic thinking patterns, so that people can understand how problematic thinking may be generating unpleasant circumstance (Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014a).

- “What can we assume will happen?” (Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014a, p. 10).
- “What does our experience tell us will happen?” (Bowman, n.d., on-line).
- “What are you implying?” (University of Michigan, n.d., on-line).
- “What are the consequences of that assumption?” (Resick, Monson, Chard, 2014a, p. 10).

Analysis of Questions

Questioning questions can provide a great deal of information helpful to determining problematic thinking patterns that have led the person to ask the question itself (Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014a).

- “What would my answer either way mean to you?” (Resick, Monson & Chard, 2014a, p. 11).
- “What is the point of the question?” (Bowman, n.d., on-line).
- “How does... apply to everyday life?” (University of Michigan, n.d., on-line).
- “Are you concerned that I don’t understand? Please tell me what you think I am missing” (Resick, Monson, Chard, 2014a, p. 10).

The Socratic Questioning Worksheet by Schuldt (2017).

- “Thoughts are like a running dialogue in your brain. They come and go fast, in fact, that we rarely have the time to question them. Because our thoughts determine how we feel, and how we act, it’s important to challenge and thoughts that cause us harm.
- **Spend a moment thinking about each of the following questions, and record thorough responses. Elaborate, and explain “why” or “why note” in your responses” (Schuldt, 2017, on-line).**
- *The Therapist Aid website by Schuldt (2017), notes: “Therapist Aid is dedicated to helping mental health professionals improve their craft by providing free evidence-based education and therapy tools,” as noted on <http://www.therapistaid.com/about>*
- *Schuldt’s Socratic Questioning worksheet can be downloaded for free from: <http://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/socratic-questioning>*

How to Begin the Socratic Questioning Worksheet by Schuldt (2017).

- First, note the thought that you would like to question. The thought can only be successfully analyzed if it is an interpretation or criticism.
- Please note your *example* thought:
- Examples can be:
 - “I never do anything right”
 - “Everyone thinks I am useless”
 - “It is completely my fault”
 - “I am a complete failure”
 - “I am doomed”
 - “The world is completely bad place”

The Questions Provided by the Socratic Questioning Worksheet by Schuldt (2017) (Part 1 of 4).

- “What is the evidence for this thought? Against it?” (Schuldt, 2017, on-line).
 - Please note your answer:
- “Am I basing this thought on facts, or on feelings? (Schuldt, 2017, on-line).
 - Please note your answer:
- “Is this thought black and white, when reality is more complicated? (Schuldt, 2017, on-line).
 - Please note your answer:

The Questions Provided by the Socratic Questioning Worksheet by Schuldt (2017) (Part 2 of 4).

- “Could I be misinterpreting the evidence? Am I making any assumptions?” (Schuldt, 2017, on-line).
 - Please note your answer:
- “Might other people have different interpretations of this same situation? What are they?” (Schuldt, 2017, on-line).
 - Please note your answer:
- “Am I looking at all the evidence, or just what supports my thought?” (Schuldt, 2017, on-line).
 - Please note your answer:

The Questions Provided by the Socratic Questioning Worksheet by Schuldt (2017) (Part 3 of 4).

- “Could my thought be an exaggeration of what’s true?” (Schuldt, 2017, on-line).
 - Please note your answer:
- “Am I having this thought out of habit, or do the facts support it?” (Schuldt, 2017, on-line).
 - Please note your answer:
- “Did someone pass this thought/belief to me? If so, are they a reliable source?” (Schuldt, 2017, on-line).
 - Please note your answer:

The Questions Provided by the Socratic Questioning Worksheet by Schuldt (2017) (Part 4 of 4).

- “Is my thought a *likely* scenario, or is it the *worst* case scenario?” (Schuldt, 2017, on-line).
 - Please note your answer:
- After answer all the Socratic questions, re-consider your original problematic thought in companion with the information have discovered in this worksheet.
- What is your new thought?
 - Please note your answer:

Affirming Thoughts

“We set the expectation that therapy benefit is dependent on the amount of effort patients invest through practice assignment compliance and practice with new skills” (Chard, Resick, Monson & Kattar, 2014b, p. 231).

“Practice yourself, for heaven’s sake in little things, and then proceed to greater” Epictetus (50 – 135).

“An arrow has one motion and the mind another. Even when pausing, even when weighing conclusions, the mind is moving forward, toward its goal” (Aurelius, 167, Book VIII, verse 60, translated by Gregory Hays).

References

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