

The Big 'I', Little 'I' Technique: A Case Study of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Intervention on Self-Acceptance among Young Drug Addicts

Huzili Hussin¹, Alyaa Insyirah Huzili^{2*}, Nurul Mazidah Sainani² and Saralah Devi Mariamdarani Chethiyar³

¹*School of Human Development and Technocommunication, Universiti Malaysia Perlis.*

²*School of Applied Psychology, Social Work and Policy (SAPSP), College of Arts and Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia.*

³*School of Applied Psychology, Social Work and Policy (SAPSP), College of Arts and Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Kedah.*

ABSTRACT

This case study aimed to explore the feelings of the residents in one of the care and cure rehabilitation centre in North Malaysia. The outcome from this study will help them increase the ownership of their own feelings and decision. This study leads to further findings their thoughts living as young drug addicts. An intervention session was conducted for about three hours involving eight participants and two facilitators. The intervention session was conducted using artwork as a medium for exploration and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy as the intervention technique. These two elements helped explore the clients' emotions and thoughts deeply through verbal and non-verbal communication. Apart from that, the interventions used helped the clients on decision-making and achieve self-acceptance.

Keywords: Case Study, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Intervention, Self-Acceptance, Young People, Drug.

1. CLIENT'S BACKGROUND

The clients in this case study consists of eight males from one of the rehabilitation centre in North Malaysia for young drug addicts. The selected clients are Muslim and Malay with age between 16 to 21 years old. Six of them were raised in the Northern state itself, one from the East Coast and one from South Malaysia. They possessed different educational background, in which three of them managed to complete high school with Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) certification, while the others completed their studies either at the age of 12 years old or 15 years old. Despite having educational background, they possessed poor spelling skills. The rehabilitation centre comprise of two different types of residents which are the ones who were voluntarily sent and the other ones were sent under court mandates. The clients in this case study have stayed in the centre for about six months on average, except for one client who will be finishing his treatment in two weeks. Overall, most of the clients that attend the intervention session were from court mandates. They were detained in the centre because they have been caught during raids or as repetitive offenders.

Most of the clients started using drugs from the age of 12 to 18 years old. One of the clients is from a big family and he is the youngest in his family. Whereas, other clients identified themselves as originating from middle income and lower income families and reside together with their family. However, they rarely stayed at home and spent most of their time outside; working or hanging out with friends. Despite coming from different background, they all shared

* Corresponding Author: alyaahuzili@gmail.com

a similar experience as all of their family members are very supportive and give positive feedback for them to move on with their careers and lives. One of the client claimed that he tried to escape from the centre once but had been caught not long after. Due to that reckless decision, he was being re-detained and placed in a detention room for quite some time. They spent their time in the centre to receive treatment that is more holistic, encompassing medical, social and spiritual support conducted with the standardized module, attend the counselling session and do some work to enhance their skills.

The clients' appearances such as their clothing were quite shabby but were still neat and clean. Some of them were very talkative and responsive, while some were a bit quiet and shy, but not passive. However, their attitude towards the facilitators was very welcoming and they followed the instructions well despite their shyness and quiet character. Overall, they gave excellence response throughout the session.

2. SESSIONS GOALS

The clients join the therapy for support in helping them to move forward and carry on with normal lives according to social norms. The goal of the intervention session is to help them to explore and aware of their own feelings. In addition, the session was conducted to encourage them to open up about their family and their thoughts on that. At the end of the session, the intervention was expected to help clients to achieve self-acceptance.

3. THEORETICAL APPROACH

The artwork session used in this case study was only an element taken from art therapy with the intention of helping clients to freely express their thoughts and emotions because some of them might have a problem to express it verbally, along with poor writing skills. According to Koiv and Kaudne (2015), art therapy offers children, adolescents, adults, and elder people therapy primarily through non-verbal means using art forms such as music, art, drama, and dance/movement in the context of psychotherapy, counselling, rehabilitation, or treatment. in Koiv and Kudne (2015) stated that clients are more likely to interpret something visually rather than verbally (Dhurai and Saralah, 2018; Harriet Wadeson, 2010; Malchiodi, 2009).

However, the artwork only acts as a medium to help the facilitators gain an overview and rough information about the clients. In order to explore and help the clients to achieve well-being, the intervention used in this case study focused on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). CBT was used in order to help the clients to be aware of their thoughts and emotions, as well as to promote self-acceptance. According to Cully and Teten (2008), CBT combines cognitive and behaviour (Chambless and Ollendick, 2001; Cully and Teten, 2008). CBT is based on the premise of changing thoughts and behaviours that are contributing to the distressing emotions. CBT is also a set of skills that enable an individual to be aware of thoughts and emotions (identify how situations, thoughts and behaviour influence emotions), and improve feelings by changing dysfunctional thoughts and behaviour. The process of CBT skill acquisition is collaborative. Skill acquisition and homework assignments are the skills that distinguished CBT apart from "talk therapies" (Cully and Teten, 2008). Figure 1 shows the theoretical framework of the CBT.

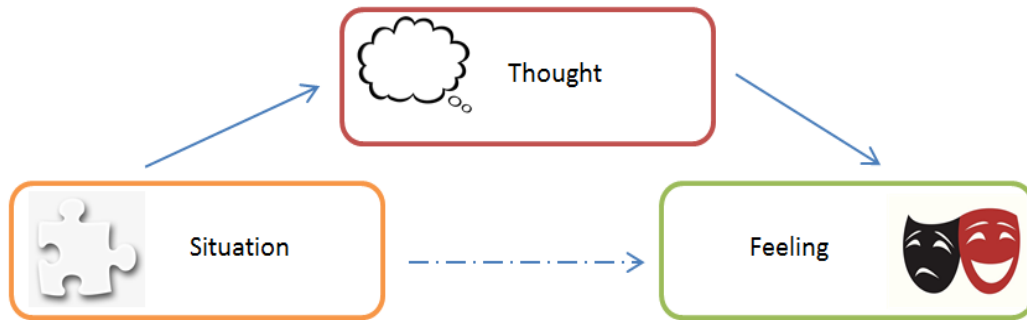


Figure 1. CBT theoretical framework.

There are various techniques used in order to apply CBT. And one of the technique is through Big 'I' and Little 'i' worksheet which had been used during the intervention session in this case study. The Big 'I' and Little 'i' act as a medium to help the clients accomplish self-acceptance. According to Lazarus (2006), Albert Ellis has inspired him to develop a strategy for mitigating global self-rating in clients with overgeneralized self-appraisals who suffer from self-blaming and self-damning propensities. This clients that place their 'ego' on the line develop over-generalizing which results in anxiety, depression, and guilt. Hence, "I am useless!" statement is a self-statement that implies zero value in all areas of their life (Lazarus, 2006). Therefore, Lazarus (2006) develops the Big 'I' and Little 'i' technique in order to help the client overcome their over-generalization so that they would be able to fully accept themselves. Figure 2 shows the Big 'I' and Little 'i'.

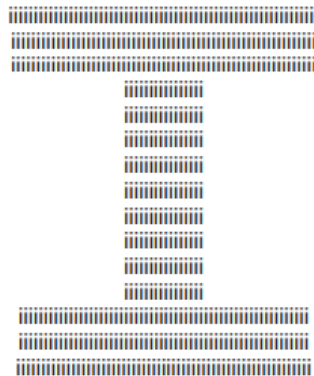


Figure 2. The big 'I', little 'i'.

Branch & Willson (2010) stated that self-acceptance is one of the alternatives to enhance someone's self-esteem. For example, if someone does not have a firm belief that the values are built-in themselves, then they will have difficulties in measuring their self-worth. Instead, they insist on labelling themselves negatively. Albert Ellis, the founder of REBT in Branch & Willson (2010) mentioned that all human beings have extrinsic and intrinsic values. Humans, however, regularly confuse these two and often measure themselves as good or bad based on the judgements of others. It is important for people to see themselves as a person who is liked, admired, and respected by other people independently.

Self-acceptance is not the same as self-esteem (Seltzer, 2008). Though it is related, self-esteem refers to how worthwhile and valuable we are. Self-acceptance, on the other hand, is accepting ourselves holistically. For example, we recognize our limitations and weaknesses together with our strengths and capabilities but in a positive way, we do not let them interfere with how we accept ourselves.

In order for someone to fully embrace themselves, they have to let go of labelling. For instance, lying to a friend once does not make you a liar forever. Reviewing this example helps people to evaluate themselves based on their characteristics, thoughts or actions rather than over-generalization (Branch & Willson, 2010). For a therapist to help the clients to evaluate and acknowledge their uniqueness, the Big 'I' and Little 'i' technique plays an important role. Whenever the clients refer the 'I' as themselves, they should consider that the 'I' is not totally from them but it is just a part of them. Because in the end, the goal is to have as many positive little 'i' as possible and accept the nature of their own self-improvement.

4. INTERVENTION PROCEDURE

No.	Process	Details	Duration
Ice Breaking Session (Big Group)			
1.	Brief introduction	The main facilitator briefly introduced all the facilitators.	10 Minutes
2.	Forming a group of 8	The clients are divided into randomly assigned groups using polls prepared by the facilitators.	10 Minutes
3.	Refreshments	The dance was conducted by the facilitators. - To warm up themselves and build early rapport.	10 Minutes
Art Work Session (Small Group)			
1.	Self-introduction	Facilitators and clients introducing each other.	5 Minutes
2.	Distributing the informed consent and the personal information form.	Facilitators explained the responsibilities and clients' right as well as limitations of confidentiality to the clients.	10 Minutes
3.	Rapport building	Played simple games. - To build early rapport. - To make them feel comfortable in the newly formed group.	5 Minutes
4.	My dream house	Instructions were given to the clients: - Facilitators prepared folded paper shaped like a house prior to the session. - Facilitators distributed the folded paper and crayons to clients. - Clients were asked to draw on the paper using crayons. The image drawn by the clients <i>represents the house that clients want to live in the future.</i> (Refer Exhibit I)	20 Minutes
5.	My house	Instructions were given to the clients: - Facilitators prepared folded paper shaped like a house prior to the session. - Facilitators distributed the folded paper and crayons to clients. - Clients were asked to draw on the paper using crayons. The image drawn by the clients <i>represent the house that clients lived.</i> (Refer Exhibit I)	20 Minutes
Intervention Session (Small Group)			
1.	Simple games	Facilitators teach a break clap game - To ensure clients focus to the session	5 Minutes
2.	Ice breaking	Clients were asked to talk about themselves regarding their background, family, and drug usage. - To ensure they are comfortable with each other as well as with the	25 Minutes

facilitators			
3.	Clients' interpretation	Clients were asked to tell what they have drawn on the houses. Facilitators asked questions to explore more on their emotions and thoughts on their families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To know more information about their relationship with the family and - What kind of family they are living with - Their plan to achieve their dream house 	45 Minutes
4.	Theoretical approach (Big 'I', Little 'i')	Instructions were given to the clients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clients were given a piece of colour paper. - They were instructed to draw a big capital 'I' on the paper with a blue pen. - Then, they were asked to draw little 'i' in the big capital 'I' that represents their negative values with a red pen. - They have to count how many red little 'i' they have drawn and written outside of the big capital 'I'. - Next, they were asked to fill all the space in the big capital 'I' with little 'i' using a blue pen. - They have to count how many blue little 'i' and write them outside of the big capital 'I'. (Refer Exhibit I) 	30 Minutes
5.	Refreshment	Clients were given a puzzle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They were instructed to arrange the puzzle from a square into a triangle. 	5 Minutes
6.	Closing	Reflection throughout the session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clients shared their reflection about the session and facilitators and vice-versa. - Closing and farewell session. 	10 Minutes

5. INTERVENTION

The intervention session was purposely carried out to explore the emotions and thoughts acquired from their sharing about family. The facilitators prepared the materials needed beforehand. It was to ensure the time used for intervention was maximised. The artwork acted as a medium for the clients to better express their feelings and to help the facilitators to get an early overview of the clients themselves. The sharing artwork session helped facilitators to gain more information about the clients. The session was conducted according to the intervention procedure. The clients were free to draw anything related to the instructions given.

Client A, Yo (pseudonym) in his artwork (My House), drew an orange-red-blue coloured house with a sofa, television, and percussion band inside. According to the client, his family loved to play music. They had their own band and sometimes they performed outside. The client added that it had been a long time since he came home because he lives alone. Hence, the only thing he remembered was the sofa and television as he always spend his time there when he is at home. He move out of the house and starts working to support his life at the age of 14. Next, for the artwork (Dream House), he drew a brown coloured house, where plants and smileys are outside of the house while a sofa and a television are inside the house,. He shared that the dream house was actually his current house. He planned to start his new life in that house, and the reason he drew only television and a sofa was because he wanted to fill the house with other furniture as his life gets better. He also said that it was hard for him to return to his old life with his family

because his parents were divorced. He wanted to change his life and work diligently after he finished his treatment.

Client B, Mi (pseudonym) on the other hand drew an unfinished green coloured house for his own house. It was because he liked colouring but unfortunately, he did not have enough time to finish his drawing. He chose white crayon to draw four people in the house, a back door and a television. He insisted to choose white crayon because he likes white. He shared how he rarely stayed at home because he preferred to hang out with friends. The four people in the drawing represents his siblings as he miss his younger siblings dearly. In addition, he drew a bright yellow-blue-pink house for his dream house. Inside the house, he drew a red car, a person with spiked-hair, a television, a cupboard and two people at the dining table. He said that he planned to grow his hair after he finished his treatment. He dreamed for a red Honda car and he would like to ask his parents to stay with him in his new dream house. Mi said his family was very supportive as they always visited him in the centre and pray for him to recover and start a new life.

Client C, Cho (pseudonym), drew a yellow-pink coloured house and inside his house, he drew his family: his father, mother and his six siblings including him inside the house. It was because eight of them lived in the same house. He stated that he is the youngest in the family and the other four siblings did not live together. He said that his family was very supportive towards him and always encouraged him to change. He realised that there was room for him to change but the problem was his lack of determination to do so. For his dream house, he drew a purple house with a door and windows, while inside the house, he drew a motorcycle, a stereo system, bicycle, two people sitting at the dining table, a car, a fishing line, a television, a pool, a safe, cash, a sofa, two people, a cat and a washing machine. He said that he wanted to keep a lot of cash inside the safe. He dreamed of a stereo system in his house because he really liked EDM music. Since he is the youngest, he wanted his parents to live together with him. He drew a fishing line because he wanted to lead a new life and enjoy his hobby.

Client D, Joe (pseudonym), drew a blue-grey coloured house and a few persons inside the house representing his parents and three siblings. He also drew a fridge and a television. He said that he was living with his parents and his siblings. The blue colour that he coloured on the house is the actual colour of his current house. He also stated that he is rarely home because he was outside hanging out with his friends and selling drugs. He said that whenever he came home, his parents were always mad at him but he still persisted and did not really care. For his dream house, he drew a green-coloured house with pink roof and windows. Inside the house, he drew a television, a sofa, a new shirt, a fridge and his parents. The reason he drew only windows was because he wanted an air-conditioned house. He also wanted to buy an inexpensive car for his use on a daily basis, alongside a few Levi's shirts when he's out of the rehab centre. He also wanted his parents to live with him one day. He also revealed that he did not have a specific plan when he finished his mandatory time.

Client E, Apit (pseudonym), drew a white house with a door and windows surrounded by trees. Inside the house, he drew his living room, a set of sofa, a television, a fridge, a stove, a cupboard and a few persons. He said that he wanted to live with all of his family members. He stated that previously, his relationship with his brother was not really good, but his brother now accepted him for who he is. The dream house he drew was a really interesting house, where it had a red roof, blue paint, windows and a door as well as a garden. The inside of the house was drawn exactly the same as his previous drawing, but he added a swimming pool and a car as his dream. He wanted to fill his house with his own furniture since he wanted to own a furniture factory as he really loved to do carpenter's work.

Client F, Epul (pseudonym), drew red windows, plants, motorcycle, car and a tree outside his house. On the inside of the house, he drew his family members consisting of his parents and his siblings, as well as a television, a fridge, a cupboard, a sofa and a washing machine. He drew a

washing machine because he liked to do the laundry. Since all of his family members lived in one house, the necessities for them were sufficient. He said that he was usually out of the house but he always came home to have meals and to sleep. Meanwhile, his dream house was coloured in yellow and its roof red with sunlight and birds on it. Inside the house, he drew a red coloured car, a fridge, a washing machine, a television, a cupboard and a sofa as well as his parents and his wife and child. He said that he wanted his parents to live with him later. He also said that he wanted to live a new life with his own family. He added that although what he drew was quite impossible to achieve at this time being, he was convinced that one day he will make it achievable. He also stated that he wanted to start his own business.

Client G, Awie (pseudonym), drew only a tree and a car. Inside his house, he drew a few persons, a cupboard, a fridge, a television and a back door. He stated that he's rarely at home so he did not quite remember how his house actually looked like even though he stayed with his family. Meanwhile, his dream house was painted blue with windows and a door as well as the sky on top of it. Inside the house, he drew a car, a television, a cupboard and a fridge. His dream house was exactly like his family house. This is due to the fact that he really regretted not spending more time with his family. Therefore, he planned to treasure his time with them after he completed the treatment.

Client H, Man (pseudonym), drew his house with only a blue coloured roof and a white door. On the inside of the house, he drew stars at the top, a plant, a cupboard and a television. After he finished his school, he worked as a barber and even set up his own barbershop. He also stated that he mostly stayed at his shop and was seldom at home. He always came home late at night. He also regretted that he did not remember much about his family. The dream house he drew has purple coloured paint with grey roof and a door. Meanwhile, on the inside, he drew clouds, a tree, a sun, birds, money and a limousine. He planned to continue working on his barber shop and was determined not to get involved in drugs anymore. He really regretted his decision on drugs and wanted to start a better life to gain money to buy his own dream car.

All of the clients had a very supportive family and realized that their decision to be involved in drug abuse is actually because of themselves. They showed that they wanted to create a new life after the treatment as they really had goals and plans afterwards. Most of them were influenced by their friends as they spent most of their time outside their homes. They expressed their regrets and hoped for encouragement to change. The good thing about them was that they were not afraid of becoming the talk of the town as a former drug addict. They wanted to focus on their own dreams and make them achievable. Upon the realization of wanting to change, they understood that the thing holding them back was their own self. Thus, the technique used during the intervention was to give them a better understanding of themselves and self-acceptance.

The technique used was "Big 'I', Little 'i'". This technique was a very simple one used in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. As their spelling skills were lacking, this technique was understandable and easier for them. They managed to complete their task excellently but was really curious about the meaning behind all of these 'I's. The facilitators asked the clients what are their thoughts on the 'I' and the possible meaning of the letter. They took part in the process to come out with their ideas actively and did not expect that the Big I actually represented their own self.

All the little 'i's represented the values in their lives, either bad or good. The number of red Little 'i's they wrote down are way lesser than the blue Little 'i's. The blue one portrayed all the positive values about themselves. It included all the simple good deeds from smiling to friend, and saying thank you and sorry. The facilitators explained to the clients that they should not be focusing on their Red Little 'i's instead of the Blue Little 'i's. They should believe that they are no different from other people and realize they too had done good things in their lives. If the clients

were more appreciative of their lives, they would not be easily influenced by other people. This simple and less time-consuming technique was powerful for the clients to really ponder on their decision-making and self-acceptance. The clients also wanted to try this technique in the future to sort and rationalize their thoughts better.

At the end of the session, the clients were glad and expressed their gratitude towards the facilitators for this meaningful session. They were ready to accept themselves and were confident to change according to their plan. They felt appreciated with the facilitator's warm treatment as well as the various activities conducted.

6. IMPLICATION IN PROFESSION

The artwork used during the intervention session will help counsellors to explore more about client's background indirectly as the client will express their unconscious thought and emotion on their issue through the artwork. This technique will promote client's willingness to share about them through non-verbal communication. Therefore, through this artwork which is quite an unsung technique used in exploring the clients. The competency in the counselling profession would be more developed and increased especially in the rehabilitation perspective where most of the clients are reluctant and hostile towards other people.

CBT approach that has been used broadly nowadays is really helpful to counselling professionals in dealing the clients with cognitive and behavioural issues. Nonetheless, the "Big 'I', Little 'I' technique should help counsellors in explaining and convincing the clients about accepting the positive values within themselves and try to disregard their guilt. In addition, this technique provide an alternative method for counselling professionals in considering the client's welfare who have the disability or lacking in basic skills such as writing and spelling. This case study may point to various directions for future research. For example, it will give an opportunity to construct the quantitative studies based on current research. This will increase the competency of various techniques used as intervention in counselling profession.

7. CONCLUSION

The counselling session is very important as a medium to help people on their wellbeing, as well as their own self-improvement. Everyone has a potential to develop themselves in a positive way. To sum up, combining the two elements; artwork and CBT intervention can be helpful to explore the emotions and thoughts of young addicts of drug about themselves. Besides exploring insights, the technique used has easily helped them evaluate themselves and boost their self-esteem. Hopefully, they are able to embrace and achieve self-acceptance completely. Furthermore, the counsellors are encouraged to explore more on the young drug addicts to fully capitalize their strengths. Frequent exposure may be helpful to eliminate the prejudice which can ease their path to a better life.

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