



*Optimal Treatment  
for Anxiety  
& Mental Health*

Applying the Unified Protocol for the  
Treatment of Emotional Disorders in  
Children and Adults: An Overview for  
Practice

2 December 2022

Ryan R. Landoll, Ph.D., ABPP, Maj, USAFR



THE ROSS CENTER IS APPROVED BY THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION TO SPONSOR CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS. THE ROSS CENTER MAINTAINS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS PROGRAM AND ITS CONTENT.

The Ross Center for Anxiety and Related Disorders LLC is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Psychology as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed psychologists #PSY-0105. Ross Management Services, LLC is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #SW-0701

#### DISCLOSURES

NEITHER RYAN LANDOLL, PHD NOR MARY SALCEDO, MD HAVE ANY FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMERCIAL INTERESTS TO DISCLOSE.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THERE ARE MANY INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE WORKED BEHIND THE SCENES TO HELP PUT THIS TRAINING TOGETHER. A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE: DR. GRETA HIRSCH, DR. ABIGAIL ROMIROWSKY, DR. BETH SALCEDO, DR. AVY STOCK, DR. SHARON THOMAS, DR. CHRISTINA TRIPODI MITCHELL AND BARBRA WALDFOGEL FOR THEIR COLLABORATION TO REVIEW TRAININGS AND TO ENSURE A HIGH LEVEL OF QUALITY OF EACH TRAINING WE PROVIDE. EACH TRAINING REQUIRES A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF PLANNING AND PREPARATION. MUCH APPRECIATION AND THANKS IS EXTENDED TO OUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM FOR ALL THE HARD WORK AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL THEY PUT INTO MAKING SURE EACH TRAINING RUNS SMOOTHLY.

## COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVITY



The Ross Center is an equal opportunity organization, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, disability, color, size, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, or socioeconomic background. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all patients and members of our staff. For any questions, or to report any concerns, please contact us at [info@rosscenter.com](mailto:info@rosscenter.com).

# Disclaimer

The views expressed in this presentation are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Department of the Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government

## OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to...

1. Describe the key principles of the Unified Protocol for the Treatment of Emotional Disorders.
2. Summarize the key research findings supporting the use of the Unified Protocol in clinical practice.
3. Use exercises from the UP in their own clinical practice.

# Overview

- The Unified Protocol and Transdiagnostic Approaches

Experiential Practice:

- Emotion Awareness and Mindfulness
- Opposite Action in Therapeutic Settings

# The Unified Protocol for the Transdiagnostic Treatment of Emotional Disorders

- The Unified Protocol for the Transdiagnostic Treatment of Emotional Disorders (UP) is an evidenced-based Cognitive-Behavioral Intervention
- The UP has been widely studied, adapted, and implemented in a wide range of settings
- *Full disclosure: I have been trained in the UP-C (Children and Adolescent), Group UP (group-based intervention in military settings) and am currently conducting a study on an adaptation of military families in pediatric primary care, but am not a certified UP trainer*

# Rationale

- Many other interventions are **disorder** specific
  - *How many “clean” anxiety or depression cases do you work with?*
- Transdiagnostic approaches focuses on **underlying processes**
  - *Neuroticism, tripartite mode of anxiety and depression*
- **Rigorous** evaluation, training, and dissemination
  - *2020 Systematic Review: 77 studies!*



# Eight Modules

1. Goal setting and motivation for treatment
2. Adaptive nature of emotions
3. Mindful emotion awareness
4. Cognitive flexibility
5. Action tendencies with strong emotions
6. Interceptive exposure
7. Emotion exposure
8. Relapse prevention

# In Children & Adolescents: CLUES

Consider how I feel

Look at my thoughts

Use detective thinking

Experience my fears and feelings

Stay healthy and happy

# Key Ingredients

- Emotion awareness and language
  - *Role and function of emotion, three component model, avoidance*
- Mindful emotion awareness
  - *Focus on experiential*
- Cognitive flexibility
  - *Automatic thoughts, thinking traps, challenging negative thoughts*
- Opposite action
  - *Focus on experiential*

# Results

- Efficacious for
  - Anxiety, Depression, Mixed states, Bipolar, Substance Use, Eating Disorders, Borderline personality, Non-suicidal self-injury, sleep, subclinical symptoms, health and chronic pain, sexual minority stress...
- Strongest effects tend to be seen in anxiety-related symptoms even amongst comorbid conditions
- Inpatient response is more limited, but broad support for cross-cultural adaptations

# Relationship with other EBTs...

- Many overlapping similarities with other EBTs
- Focus on transdiagnostic as opposed to symptom/disorder specific
- Complementary with many new wave CBTs
- Heavy focus on experiential learning and behavior change

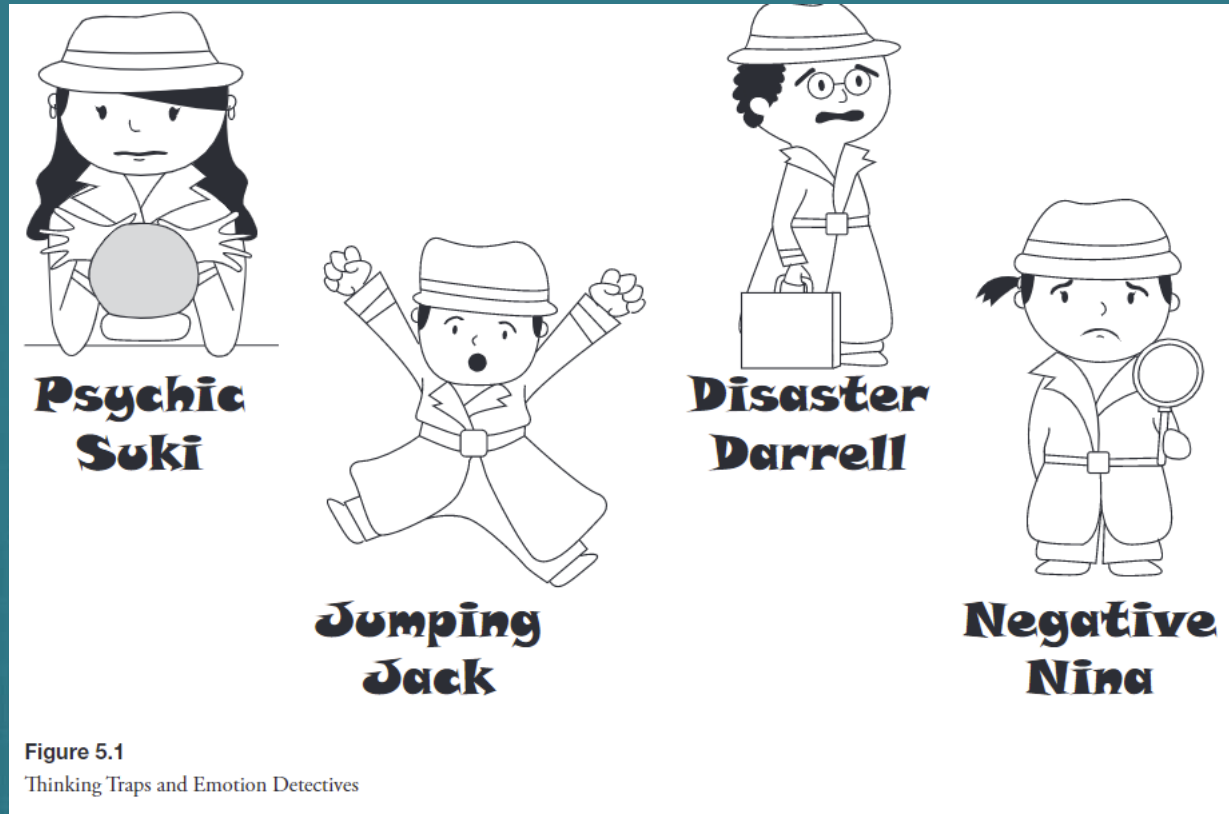
# BREAK

# Mood Induction

# The Worry Line



# Thinking Trap Characters

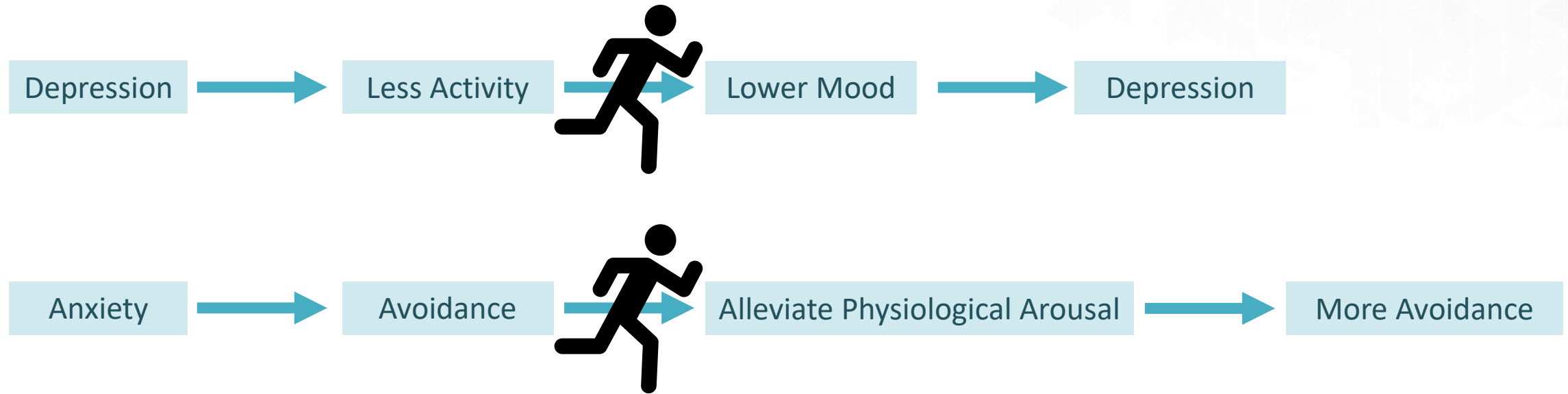


# Open Case Discussion

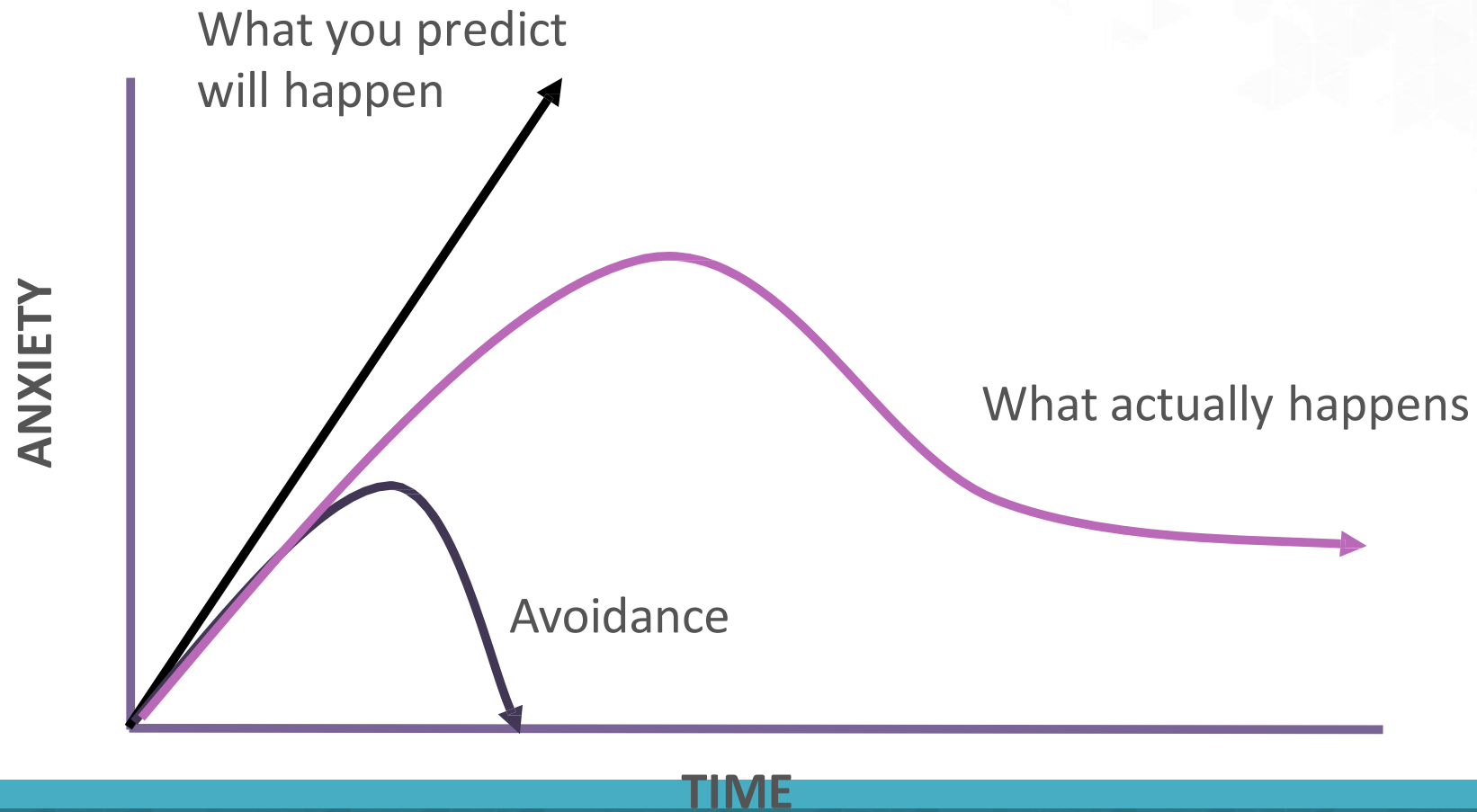
- How would you use some of these exercises with your own patients?
- How have you used similar approaches? What worked well? What were challenges?

# BREAK

# Opposite Action



# Riding the wave...



# Brainstorm

- What interoceptive exposures have you used?
- What experiential exposures have you used?

# Examples

## Box 4.1 Sensational Exposure Options

- Shake head from side to side (does not need to be done quickly) for 30 seconds
- Place head between knees for 30 seconds, then lift head (to an upright position) quickly
- Run in place for 1 minute
- Hold breath for 30 seconds
- Tense the muscles throughout the body for 1 minute or hold a pushup position for as long as possible
- Spin in a chair (relatively quickly) for 1 minute
- Hyperventilate for 45 seconds (see exercise described in the text)
- Breathe through a thin straw (e.g., a coffee stirrer or cocktail straw) for 1 to 2 minutes while holding nostrils closed
- Stare at a bright light for 1 minute and then read a short paragraph immediately after
- Stare at a single point on one's hand for 3 minutes

Ehrenreich-May, J., Kennedy, S. M., Sherman, J. A., Bilek, E. L., Buzzella, B. A., Bennett, S. M., & Barlow, D. H. (2018). *Unified Protocols for Transdiagnostic Treatment of Emotional Disorders in Children and Adolescents: Therapist Guide*, Oxford University Press.

# Open Case Discussion

- How would you use some of these exercises with your own patients?
- How have you used similar approaches? What worked well? What were challenges?



# Summary

- The Unified Protocols are well-study, flexible, and adaptive approaches to a wide range of emotional disorders
- Key ingredients focus on increasing emotional awareness and knowledge, and increasing emotional experiences by decreasing avoidance
- Additional training can be found at: <http://www.unifiedprotocol.com/>
  - One and three day workshops
  - Consultation and supervision
  - Online training
  - Clinician guides and workbooks (Treatments that Work series)

# Questions?

# References

- Allen, L. B., & Choate, M. L. (2004). Toward a unified treatment for emotional disorder. *Behavior Therapy, 35*(2), 205-230.
- Allen, L. B., McHugh, R. K., & Barlow, D. H. (2008). Emotional disorders: a unified protocol.
- Barlow, D. H., Farchione, T. J., Bullis, J. R., Gallagher, M. W., Murray-Latin, H., Sauer-Zavala, S., ... & Cassiello-Robbins, C. (2017). The unified protocol for transdiagnostic treatment of emotional disorders compared with diagnosis-specific protocols for anxiety disorders: A randomized clinical trial. *JAMA psychiatry, 74*(9), 875-884.
- Bentley, K. H., Boettcher, H., Bullis, J. R., Carl, J. R., Conklin, L. R., Sauer-Zavala, S., ... & Barlow, D. H. (2018). Development of a single-session, transdiagnostic preventive intervention for young adults at risk for emotional disorders. *Behavior modification, 42*(5), 781-805.
- Bullis, J. R., Boettcher, H., Sauer-Zavala, S., Farchione, T. J., & Barlow, D. H. (2019). What is an emotional disorder? A transdiagnostic mechanistic definition with implications for assessment, treatment, and prevention. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 26*(2), e12278.
- Cassiello-Robbins, C., Southward, M. W., Tirpak, J. W., & Sauer-Zavala, S. (2020). A systematic review of Unified Protocol applications with adult populations: Facilitating widespread dissemination via adaptability. *Clinical Psychology Review, 78*, 101852.
- De Paul, N. F., & Caver, K. A. (2021). A pilot study of a brief group adaptation of the Unified Protocol in integrated primary care. *Psychological Services, 18*(3), 416.
- Hood, C. O., Southward, M. W., Bugher, C., & Sauer-Zavala, S. (2021). A preliminary evaluation of the unified protocol among trauma-exposed adults with and without PTSD. *International journal of environmental research and public health, 18*(21), 11729.
- Sauer-Zavala, S., Cassiello-Robbins, C., Ametaj, A. A., Wilner, J. G., & Pagan, D. (2019). Transdiagnostic treatment personalization: The feasibility of ordering unified protocol modules according to patient strengths and weaknesses. *Behavior modification, 43*(4), 518-543.
- Sauer-Zavala, S., Tirpak, J. W., Eustis, E. H., Woods, B. K., & Russell, K. (2021). Unified protocol for the transdiagnostic prevention of emotional disorders: Evaluation of a brief, online course for college freshmen. *Behavior Therapy, 52*(1), 64-76.
- Sharifi, M., Mami, S., Mohammadzadeh, J., Ahmadi, V., & Kakabaraei, K. (2020). Evaluation of the effectiveness of unified protocol for the transdiagnostic treatment and emotion regulation intervention in patients with generalized anxiety disorder in a military hospital. *EBNESINA, 22*(3), 73-77.
- Varkovitzky, R. L., Sherrill, A. M., & Reger, G. M. (2018). Effectiveness of the unified protocol for transdiagnostic treatment of emotional disorders among veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder: A pilot study. *Behavior Modification, 42*(2), 210-230.