

Josh, this is from the Control Therapy Training Module, 117-121

CONTROL MODE REHEARSAL: An intervention created by putting building blocks together to match the client's goal, profile, and concern

The above control enhancing skills in mind and body, composed of several different building blocks, can be utilized to develop skills and interventions directed toward either the yielding/accepting mode of control, or the assertive/change mode of control.

One way to put them together in an integrative model is through the use of the Control Mode Rehearsal, matching the client's control profile, preferences, goal, and clinical concern. This technique builds upon and is an extension of the work we have already done with the Control Mode Dialogue (CMD). The CMD was an opportunity to clarify goals and modes.

The CMR is an opportunity to practice, through a combination of different building blocks—e.g., visualization, kinesthetic, and/or self-instruction--modeling the new skills the client wishes to develop in order to reach her/her goal. You will note that the building blocks for CMR are adjusted accordingly to tailor it depending upon whether the client's goal is to gain a sense of control through the yielding, accepting mode of control, or the assertive/change mode of control.

CMR has two main steps:

1) The first step is to have the client try to re-create, and experience the problem scenario, noting with some precision any mental and physical cues, e.g., body sensations, thoughts, feelings. This re-creation can be done through visualization of the situation and persons involved, if the client is comfortable with visualization. CMR can also be done descriptively, i.e., having the client verbally describe who is present, where the client is, what the client is feeling.

2) The second step involves self-modeling, seeing oneself effectively handling the situation by using the physical and mental cues from step one as a "signal" to engage in the desired behavior, thoughts, and/or feelings the client would like to implement in reality. The client can either visualize this process, if s/he is good at imagery, or actually practice acting (feeling, thinking) exactly as s/he would like to when dealing with the real situation, including feeling the body calm and relaxed, making cognitions that are supportive and helpful, and saying and doing whatever supports the goal of enhancing either the yielding, accepting mode of control, or the assertive/change mode of control. .

You can explain to the client that Control Mode Rehearsal operates on the same principles sports psychologists use when helping athletes use self-hypnosis/ self-instructions and guided imagery to effectively execute a play sequence, golf swing, or other highly controlled yet relaxed precision movement. It is helpful to point out to clients that the more clearly they can approximate creating the problem situation and then practice in the safe space your office (and later at home as homework) a desired solution or solutions, the more likely they will be able to successfully reach their goal(s).

We will now go through a brief exercise involving the CMR for each mode. Please note how the different building blocks are utilized and integrated. This is an over inclusive model in terms of utilizing building blocks; not all of the each building block necessarily would be needed for the intervention for each client, but all are provided here to create a familiarity with how each might be used.

Guidelines for practicing CMR.

Creating a personalized script. What follows is a general format, but the therapist and client should work together to create a more specific script, because research suggests that it is more effective to create a personalized guided scenario tailored to the client's concerns, style, and values, than to use a preset one. When working with clients, you may want to have a detailed discussion of their problem scenario and desired behavior before doing a Control Mode Rehearsal, so they can generate material that resonates most powerfully for them. In other words, you can co-write a customized protocol using the client's own keywords and affirmations.

Perhaps we can practice this here in the lecture, if you are willing. Please recall a situation of "minor" concern that you are willing to briefly explore as a way to experience the CMR.

Brief preparatory breathing. Let me invite you to ask you to engage in a brief breathing exercise. Allow yourself to take a couple of deep breaths, exhale, and as you are willing, let your eyes gently shut.

The scenario as it is. Use visualization (for those who are comfortable with imagery; otherwise, use whatever senses are most helpful for you—somatic, cognitive)-- to create the situation that is of concern, as it is. Notice in your mind's eye a situation that is causing you some concern. Try to see the situation in as much detail as possible. Where are you? Who is present? What time of day is it? Describe the scene as precisely as you can (sights, sounds, sensations, tensions).

Notice where and how you are ***breathing***. Is it somewhat shallow? In your chest?

Bring your attention to how you are ***feeling*** in this situation. Are you noticing any stress in your body? If so, please note as clearly as you can where you are feeling this anxiety. Butterflies in the stomach? Tension in the neck? Sweaty palms? Are there other emotions? Fear? Anger? Again, notice where you are feeling these emotions in your body.

Note as precisely as you can what you are ***saying*** to yourself, what thoughts you are having.

When you envision the problem situation, you should try to make it as realistic as possible. This is important because it will help you recognize (in a safe environment) what feeling anxious, even slightly "out of control," is like for you. This is important so that, in the future, you can detect these feelings and thoughts early, and use them as a cue to break the negative sequence and transition to the next phase, below.

The scenario as you would like it to be: The use of multiple building blocks.

This step involves the transition to imagining how you want yourself and the situation to be. Note how this CMR technique can include and integrate many of the building blocks, all in the service of self-modeling whichever positive mode of control you wish to emphasize: either the accepting/yielding mode of control or the assertive/change mode of control. Imagery and

visualization; emotional reprogramming/ self-regulation; self-instructions (cognitions) to alter negative thought patterns and feelings, and kinesthetic (body and movement) are possible building blocks for creating a control enhancing intervention you might choose to utilize.

Diaphragmatic breathing. Now, take a few slow, diaphragmatic breaths. Allow your breath to settle into its natural rhythm and let yourself practice the diaphragmatic breathing we have discussed.

Mindfulness. If you continue to feel anxiety or tension, allow these feelings to arise. Then, just notice them mindfully, while continuing your diaphragmatic breathing. You may also wish to direct your breath gently toward the areas of discomfort, as in the body scan allowing a calm, gentle relaxation to flow through you.

The second two interventions involve cognitive and emotional self-regulation to cultivate either the accepting/yielding mode or assertive/change mode:

cognitive self-regulation involves self instructions and affirmations;

emotional self-regulation may involve cultivating emotions reflective of either mode: for the accepting mode, emotions such as serenity, gratitude, unconditional, non-judgmental love, and forgiveness might be cultivated; for the assertive/change mode, emotions such as courage,, fearlessness (managing fear), determination, competence may be cultivated. Of course, the most important thing is to talk with clients about what emotions they feel might be most helpful in working toward achieving their goal.

It would also be important to discuss with clients , if appropriate, their views of the nature of the universe, and how that might context and even be a part of the Control Mode Rehearsal, as we have discussed previously under that particular building block.

We then put the four interventions together into the ***Control Mode Rehearsal.***

Visualizing positive self-modeling. As you continue this mindful noticing and slow, gentle breathing, switch the scene in your mind so that you now see yourself thinking, feeling, and if appropriate, acting exactly as you would like to in the situation. If someone else is present in your CMR, see yourself saying or doing exactly what you want to do, if anything, toward that person. When you switch to the desired scenario, try to be as specific and detailed as possible. This helps you visualize what success would mean to you in concrete terms, thereby modeling it for yourself.

Remember to keep your breath as an anchor, inhaling effortlessly, exhaling gently and calmly.

Positive thoughts. Remember to create positive thoughts as part of your CMR ideal scenario. Are you telling yourself that you are proud for the courage you are showing in attempting to act in accordance with your self-chosen goals? Are you admiring your willingness to become more (e.g., accepting in this area? or your courage to engage in positive assertive change). You may use positive self-statements listed above as affirmations, including “This is a brave step I am taking,” “I am doing the best that I can,” “I am feeling loving and accepting of myself just as I am, and proud of myself for how I am acting and behaving and feeling.” Create affirmations tailored to your situation that are most helpful to you.

Positive emotions. Also try to cultivate and feel the positive emotions that you want to have in the CMR situation, using a combination of thoughts and images that are most helpful for you.

Up to this point, the instructions I've given you can be used for either positive mode of control. I'd now like to offer some specific cultivation of positive emotions tailored to each mode of control. Let me begin with

THE YIELDING, ACCEPTING MODE OF CONTROL.

Emotional self-regulation. What emotions do you associate with the yielding, accepting mode of control? Four are explored here, as examples, but are not meant to be inclusive.

Serenity. The first is "serenity," as in the "serenity to accept" and "letting go" of stress, negative thoughts, negative emotions. You may wish to feel this serenity through *diaphragmatic breathing*, which involves learning to accept and trust your body's natural wisdom and gentle, relaxed breath; through *mindfulness meditation*, which teaches attentional focusing and the ability to accept all thoughts and feelings, without rushing toward them, or running away from them, a compassionate gentle observing of thoughts with non judgmental equanimity. If your problematic scenario in CMR involves dealing with stress, tension, too many responsibilities, perhaps you may think about, see, and actually feel yourself "dropping the bundle" of cares. Imagine yourself being in a place that brings you quiet relaxation (e.g, the ocean, watching a sunset, a favorite place in nature).

Gratitude: Acceptance and appreciation of what is. A second emotional state that you may wish to cultivate as part of the accepting mode of control is gratitude, appreciation and acceptance for what you have. If that is an emotional state that you feel would be helpful in your CMR to create feelings of acceptance, you might ask yourself what is there right now in your life that you are thankful for, what are "blessings" that you have right now. The emotion of gratitude helps address feelings of frustration, helplessness, annoyance, envy, and other emotions about what you don't have or feel is lacking in your life. Rachel Remen talks about those people "who are given more blessings than they receive." Gratitude can be achieved through the conscious focus of attention on the positive aspects of your life, and by utilizing cognitions and affirmations such as the first one noted in the affirmations above:

Rather than focusing on what is lacking or missing in my life, I will recognize and be grateful for the blessings that I have. You may also choose for a moment to focus on your breathing, and notice how grateful we are when we think of this amazing feat which occurs even we do nothing. We can feel gratitude to our body, our lungs; and to the earth, which provides oxygen! You may imagine yourself feeling grateful for breath which keeps us alive.

(A note on gratefulness and upward and downward comparison: Sometimes affirmations of positive yielding and acceptance can involve downward comparison, as in the aphorism, "I felt sorry for myself because I had no shoes until I met someone who had no feet." Downward comparison can be helpful to develop gratefulness. Rather than always looking for what we're lacking, or what others have that we don't, a useful strategy for cultivating gratefulness and acceptance for what we do have is to see, relatively speaking, how many blessings we have in comparison to those who are less fortunate. For example, in the first affirmation listed, a person could add: ... gratefulness for the blessings I have, *especially when I recognize the extent of poverty, homelessness, and suffering that others in the world are experiencing*. However, downward comparison can also be misused, as when a person tries to accept and feel better about their situation by putting others down through racism, sexism, ageism, etc. This is clearly not what is meant.)

Non-judgmental, unconditional love and loving-kindness. A third emotional state that may be part of the yielding, accepting mode of control is loving-kindness. This emotional quality can help address the desire to change, judge, or criticize. Loving-kindness can include the use of attentional focusing in a kind, loving way on a specific body part, on yourself as a whole, or on a beloved. It involves the feeling tone of caring and compassion. If there is a specific aspect of yourself that concerns you—a limitation, something about your body—in your CMR, send as much caring and love as you are able to that aspect of your self, greeting it with kindness. If your goal involves more holistic self-acceptance, you may wish to practice a CMR in which you cultivate images and make “self-statements” of self-acceptance and self-love for who you are, just as you are, without trying to accomplish, change, or actively control anything. Feel a deep caring about yourself, a willingness to nurture yourself, and to accept yourself at the most fundamental level, unconditionally, not dependent on what you perform, do, or accomplish.

Forgiveness. Forgiveness is a form of acceptance that involves changing your attitude and feelings toward what happened in the past that is not changeable, to be more accepting of it. If your goal involves letting go of past hurts you feel were caused by another (or yourself), you may wish to offer forgiveness for pain that person (or you yourself) has caused you, whether intentionally or unintentionally, by thoughts, words, or deeds. You may visualize this process in your CMR, feeling yourself letting go of unproductive anger and dwelling in the past about events that cannot be changed, and see and feel in your mind’s eye as you allow yourself to come to a greater inner peace and healing acceptance in the here and now. If you have made mistakes or caused suffering to yourself or another in the past, it is helpful to practice self-forgiveness in your CMR “for any hurts I’ve caused, intentionally or unintentionally, by my thoughts, words, or deeds.”

As you continue your slow, gentle breathing, allow all the thoughts and feelings that contribute to peaceful acceptance and letting go to flow through and in you. If your goal involves accepting some problematic aspect of another person, you might want to see yourself in the CMR guided visualization being serene, grateful, loving, and forgiving accepting and non-reactive when the person acts in the way that concerns you. If your goal involves letting go of past hurts you feel were caused by another, and you wish to offer forgiveness, you might want to use CMR as a way to visualize the practice of offering forgiveness to another for pain that person has caused you, whether intentionally or unintentionally, by their thoughts, words, or deeds. As you visualize this process, feel yourself letting go of unproductive anger and dwelling in the past about events that cannot be changed, and see and feel in your mind’s eye as you allow yourself to come to a greater inner peace and healing acceptance in the here and now. All the while you can continue to allow the slow gentle natural rhythm of diaphragmatic breathing and the gentle, kind, compassionate noticing of mindfulness.

Discussion. As you are willing, let’s take a few second of breathing and then gently open your eyes and return to the room. When you do this with a client, it can be helpful to take some time to discuss the differences between the two scenarios in CMR. What were the thoughts and feelings in the scenario “as it is” compared to those in the scenario “as you wanted it to be.” Notice how the second set of thoughts and emotions might serve as an antidote to the first. Further, once we become aware of the first set of thoughts and feelings—the ones that seem problematic and challenging -- they can be a cue to “change the scene” to the “scenario” as you desire it, a cue triggering a new sequence: beginning to breathe diaphragmatically, notice

mindfully, and replace the problematic thoughts and feelings with the positive statements and emotions of acceptance that you desire.

ASSERTIVE CHANGE MODE:

When the Control Mode Rehearsal is directed toward the assertive change mode it involves a way to self model (visually and/or through actual role-playing) trying on new behaviors. Through guided imagery and self-instructions, the clients can image (and practice) seeing themselves building competence and confidence in the ability to engage in “assertive change” that fits their goal (e.g., slow eating, speaking up calmly and confidently to their mother in law, exercising).

Many of the mind-body exercises discussed earlier can be utilized with the client in working toward assertive/change: e.g., diaphragmatic breathing to promote relaxation, role-playing to try on new behaviors, guided imagery to relax or build feelings of competence, and self-instructions to alter negative thought patterns and feelings). These building blocks are both preparations for change AND forms of change in and of themselves—skills to help the client reach his or her goal. The therapist can work with clients in CMR to help them see themselves acting exactly as they would like, including visualizing and feeling the body calm and relaxed, making cognitions that are supportive and helpful, and saying and doing whatever supports their identified goal. When creating the personalized script, it can be helpful to include positive affirmations we have discussed above about the client’s desire, right, responsibility, and belief in one’s own efficacy to accomplish what the client wishes to change.

We have already explored potential “ready” positions physically in terms of what the client feels would be best for him/her in an assertive/change scenario. Let’s look briefly at some considerations of the assertive/change project— mentally and emotionally.

Mental/emotional attitude. What is the mental/emotional readiness this client feels would be best before embarking on an assertive action? Would the client want to be focused, attentive, determined, relaxed and minimizing unnecessary tension/mental contraction, while projecting a certain confidence--the psychological representation of the ready position discussed earlier.

What are cognitive statements, self-talk, and instructions that would be helpful for the client? The process discussed in the section on negative thoughts can apply here. If the client notices a negative thought, that can serve as a cue to replace it with a positive one. For example, here is a series of self-critical thoughts: “I am undisciplined, lazy, noncommittal, a procrastinator. I’ve always been a failure” (Quadrant 4, negative yielding). Positive replacements can include: “Careful of all-or-none thinking. I’m becoming increasingly disciplined. I am practicing small changes.” “I can do this”, “I’m ready”; “I’m going to follow through.” “I am proud of myself and the courage I’m showing by being willing to make this change.”

Visualization. The next step is to have the client see him/herself acting exactly as s/he would want. . This might involve taking a brisk walk; or eating slowly and calmly. If the goal involves another person, this step involves the client seeing herself or himself saying exactly what s/he would want to say to them, with the confidence, clarity, calmness, and forceful self-assurance that ideally the client would want to have.

Ideal response from “other”; adaption to non-ideal responses. Initially, in the Control Mode Rehearsal when a client is going to be assertive with another person, it is helpful to focus on a) the client’s behavior, thoughts, feelings; and b) having the other person acting exactly as

the client would want in response to the initial request or actions. The therapist can remind the client that this is all happening in their mind, so why not imagine the event as they'd want it to be initially?

However, since assertive/change sometimes involves another person, it is important to imagine different possible outcomes, some of which are less than ideal. For example, sometimes an individual may "rehearse" speaking assertively to her husband. Next, she could imagine different scenarios of how her husband might react, ranging from hostile and defensive to "less than pleasant" (perhaps more realistic but less desirable outcomes). The therapist and client can role play a) how she would ideally like to respond to these reactions: i.e., staying calm in body and mind, choosing the best possible option staying on target in terms of her goal.

From "in vitro to in vivo": Clearly, the goal is to be able to engage in the behaviors in an actual situation. The therapist and client should work together to practice CMR a sufficient number of times so that the client feels increasingly comfortable and confident in the "self-modeling" rehearsals helps optimize the chances for success in the actual situation.