

# Introducing the New Model of Healthy Thinking Based on Human Soul Faculties: Application in Psychotherapy Approaches in Clinical Psychology

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## Abstract

**Aims:** Regarding the importance of health as well as the discussion of thinking in psychology and philosophy, so far, no model has been presented in the field of the relationship between “thinking and health” with this model. Therefore, the present study aimed to introduce the new model of healthy thinking based on human soul faculties. **Materials and Methods:** Using the narrative review method, 63 sources were selected among the 240-evidence, including books, articles, national, and international reports and theses from PubMed, Google Scholar, Elsevier, and Web of sciences, then entered the analysis stage. Indicators of sensory and intellectual thinking were extracted from these sources. Then, the indicators were coded and analyzed according to the Content Analysis method. **Results:** The results of this research are used in psychotherapy in clinical psychology because researches have shown that thinking and especially healthy thinking has a very effective role in mental health and a healthy lifestyle. Several concepts are available in this model: The nature of thinking, levels of thinking, sources of error in thinking such as cognitive distortions, cognitive bias, and perceptual errors. **Conclusion:** The models of thinking that have been proposed in the world so far have many shortcomings, including none of them has the power to clarification thinking and none of the theories and models have the relationship between thinking and health been clearly explained, while the proposed thinking model of the present study does not have such shortcomings.

**Keywords:** Clinical psychology, health, intellectual, model, psychotherapy, sensory, soul faculties, thinking

## INTRODUCTION

Today, the field of health is not limited to physical and mental health but is related to all the aspects of life.<sup>[1]</sup> According to the research in theories of psychotherapy, what is considered in most approaches is the issue of thinking.<sup>[2]</sup> In the cognitive-behavioural approach, it was found that thinking is the source of beliefs and determine the emotion and behavior of each person.<sup>[3]</sup> In the cognitive psychology approach, the cognitive

processes of thought and information processing in the mind are considered, such as attention, perception, memory, language, problem-solving, creativity, and reasoning.<sup>[4,5]</sup> Furthermore, in mind theory, healthy thinking underlies mental states such as beliefs, intentions, desires, pretence, and knowledge of oneself and others.<sup>[6]</sup> However, considering that the issue of thinking is

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very important in health approaches in the field of the nature of thinking, no model has been developed so far in which healthy thinking was distinguished from unhealthy thinking. It is important to note that psychological theories and approaches focus on human behavior and psychological processes and focus less on the “existence” of the man himself and the “soul.”<sup>[7]</sup> The question is how is man a creature? What Soul Faculties it has? And what is the role of each Soul Faculties in human action? Although psychological theories are based on the findings and empirical, they are based on philosophical assumptions. His formation of structure, theoretical framework, pathology, and content of treatment have always been based on philosophical assumptions.<sup>[8]</sup> That’s why the relationship between philosophy and the psyche can be considered a fundamental relationship.<sup>[9]</sup> The subject of the Faculties of the soul in psychology is related to the subject of the psyche in psychology.<sup>[10]</sup> When there is a balance between the forces of the soul in human, the person behaves healthily and when there are extremism and wastage between the forces, it means that the human soul is dominated by one of the forces and the person’s behavior is out of health and he suffers damage.<sup>[11]</sup> Therefore, discussing the faculties of the soul is important in human behavior, but it has so far received less attention in psychology. The present study aimed to introduce a model of healthy thinking for the first time based on the faculties of the soul and bring up the factors of health and harm in thinking.

### The importance of thinking and health

In 2019, during a study entitled healthy thinking and healthy living, the academic community to conduct a research on “thinking” and focus the topics of their articles on thinking and their relationship to health.<sup>[12]</sup> Regarding health psychology and positive psychology, it is said that that health, and especially mental health, depends on how people think. If it is healthy, the feeling and action of the person are also healthy.<sup>[13-15]</sup> Such people feel good about themselves and others, and they are responsible in their work environment and relationships because when we are mentally healthy, we expect the best things in life and we are ready to deal with any incident. As the characteristics of mental health are learnt, a balanced and happy spirit can be achieved.<sup>[16]</sup> Mental health is essential for human happiness. Achieving mental health is by no means accidental, but this goal is achieved by spending time and effort in the right direction. In addition, positive and pleasant thoughts are key to mental health.<sup>[17]</sup> However, what is the exact meaning of health? According to the World Health Organization, health is the complete physical, mental and social well-being, and the absence of disease or disability. In such definition, the three main dimensions of health, including physical, mental and social, are well emphasized.<sup>[18]</sup> Health is a multidimensional concept. Hence, that the person may be healthy from one point of view and another point of view in the condition of the disease.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, qualitative content analysis method has been used. The search strategy included four databases (PubMed,

Web of Science, Scopus, and Scholar Google) including books, articles, national and international reports, and theses. An initial set of 240 abstracts were reviewed, that 177 sources were omitted due to the duplication of concepts. Hence, 63 sources remained and indicators of sensory and intellectual thinking were extracted from these sources. Then, the indicators were coded and analyzed according to the content analysis method. The process of data analysis in this process was performed based on the approach of Hsieh and Shannon, 2015 and inductive method<sup>[19]</sup>. The steps are noted in Figure 1:

1. Open codes: In this step, the concepts within the interviews and the documents were classified based on their relationship to similar topics. The purpose of this step is summarizing and identify categories<sup>[20]</sup>
2. Axial coding: In this step, the purpose of axial coding is to create a relationship between the components produced (in the open coding stage)<sup>[21]</sup> that the components of thinking indicators were categorized
3. Selective coding: At this point, the main components are combined, the main category selection processes were systematically interrelated. Selective coding based on the results of open coding and axial coding is the main stage of theorizing.<sup>[22]</sup> At this stage was designed a thinking model based on the levels of thinking indicators.

## RESULTS

Based on the study and analyzing the existing models of thinking as well as the indicators of sensory and intellectual thinking, a new model in thinking was found.

### New model of thinking

Due to the importance of health as well as the discussion of thinking in psychology<sup>[23]</sup> and philosophy<sup>[24]</sup> and the views of many scientists in this field, so far, no model has been presented in the field of the relationship between “thinking and health” and this model is introduced for the first time. The new model of thinking that is presented in the present study does not have the gaps and shortcomings of existing models of thinking in the world and it is designed simply and comprehensively. There are several concepts in this model:

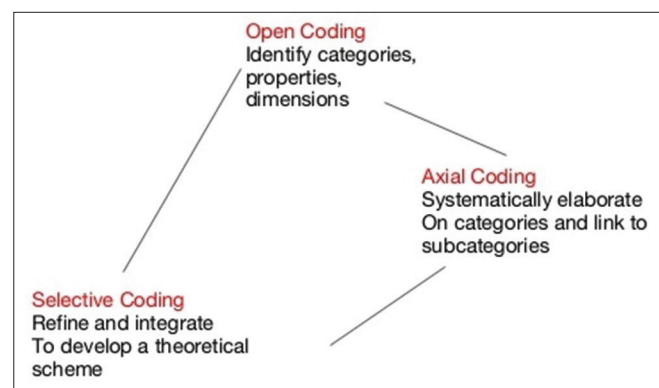


Figure 1: Coding in qualitative research (21)

### *The nature of thinking*

Explains the concept, nature, and essence of thinking.

### *Levels of thinking*

Determines how many levels of thinking exist and what levels of existence each of these levels is associated with.

### *Sources of error in thinking*

Thought is always subject to cognitive distortions and cognitive bias and perceptual errors that all of these are the sources of error and deviation in thinking.

### *Healthy thinking*

Healthy thinking means looking at the entire situation – the positive, the negative, and the neutral parts – and then coming to a conclusion. In other words, healthy thinking means looking at life and the world in a balanced way, not through rose-colored glasses.<sup>[25-27]</sup>

In fact, thinking can be harmful and healthy. When the mind is free from cognitive distortions, cognitive bias, and perceptual errors, then it is healthy and otherwise harmful. Accordingly, it is said that thought has levels that have different attitudes and behaviors according to the level of thinking of the person, and his action is derived from his attitude, which also determines the type of attitude, the level of thinking.

The thought is always subject to error and deviation. The higher the levels of thinking, the few sources of error and the healthier the mind. Thus, in the last level of thinking called “Wisdom” or “Intellectual Thinking,” the sources of error are eliminated and the person achieves healthy thinking.

In the faculties of the soul, we have the perceptual powers from which thinking originates. Sensory thinking has many sources of error and intellectual thinking has more health.

- The spectrum of mental health is directly related to levels of thinking. The higher the levels of thinking, the better the health of the mind, therefore, the sources of error are less in intellectual thinking
- There is a range of sources of error and thought damage inversely related to levels of thinking. The higher the levels of thinking, the less damage is done to the mind, so there are more sources of error in sensory thinking. In fact, the farther away from mistakes and injuries in one’s lifestyle, the closer one gets to health, to the extent that, one has a healthy lifestyle and healthy thinking at the level of one’s intellectual thinking
- Healthy thinking and a healthy lifestyle are directly related. The higher a person’s level of thinking, the healthier his lifestyle and have a healthy lifestyle
- Sources of error and damage are always around the person and are interrelated
- A person’s nurtured and development is related to their health-oriented lifestyle and level of intellectual thinking.

### **Models of thinking, critiques**

In the field of “thinking,” there are few models in the world. There are many weaknesses in these models.

In this research, we introduce the best models of thinking in the world and point out the gaps in these models.

First, the critical thinking model: Critical or Critical Thinking (Critical Thinking) means thinking right in an attempt to gain reliable awareness in the world. This method involves the mental processes of data recognition, analysis, and evaluation.<sup>[23]</sup> In other words, the art of thinking is about thinking while we want to make our idea better, clearer, more accurate, or more defensible.<sup>[28]</sup> A critical thinker can ask the right questions and gather relevant information. Then categorize them creatively and reason logically; and in the end he comes to a reliable conclusion about the problem.<sup>[29]</sup> Philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle also saw critical thinking as the ability to question, test, and think about ideas and values.<sup>[30]</sup>

### *Critique*

As it turns out, in this model, it does not deal with the process of thinking and how to reason logically and presents only the ideal as “rational criticism.” But it does not explain at what level of logic operates and what the essence of thinking itself is.

The next model is Hurson’s Productive Thinking Model. This model is a structured approach to solving problems or creating creative ideas.<sup>[31]</sup>

Being “creative” in problem-solving allows one to understand issues related to problems and it helps to find the best solution.

This model helps the individual to be more creative in problem-solving.<sup>[32]</sup>

### *Critique*

This model also seeks only a kind of divergent thinking and “creativity,” not the very nature of thinking. It also does not discuss how the problem-solving process is carried out by thinking and not consider what level of thinking does the process of creativity and problem-solving operate?

The next models are mental models which help the person to do a task “simply” The technique of these models is to perform the desired task first in the mind and then in reality. In this case, because the work has been done once in the mind, it will be easier again.<sup>[33]</sup> This kind of thinking is more common in movie directors. In psychology, the term “mental models” is sometimes used to refer to mental representations or mental simulations in general.<sup>[34]</sup>

### *Critique*

In this view, mental models can be constructed using the imagination, but there is no reference to the imaginary level of thinking. Moreover, it has not been studied what is the nature of imagination and what are the sources of error of thinking and imagination. Furthermore, the explanation of thinking in these models is very vague and lacks a regular structure and framework.

## **DISCUSSION**

In the present study, after introducing the sensory and

intellectual thinking, a new model of thinking based on the levels of intellectual thinking was introduced that the result of present study is consistent with researchers,<sup>[35,37]</sup> which requires researchers to design models for healthy thinking and healthy living. The results also showed that people with intellectual thinking have healthier lifestyles and mental health that are consistent with other studies.<sup>[38-40]</sup> In the field of “thinking”, there are few models in the world. There are many weaknesses in these models. For example, the critical thinking model: that is, thinking right in an attempt to gain reliable awareness in the world. This method involves the mental processes of data recognition, analysis and evaluation.<sup>[28]</sup> In other words, the art of thinking is about thinking. While we want to make our idea better, clearer, more accurate, or more defensible.<sup>[35]</sup> A critical thinker can ask the right questions and gather relevant information. Then categorize them creatively and reason logically; And in the end he comes to a reliable conclusion about the problem.<sup>[41]</sup> Philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle also saw critical thinking as the ability to question, test, and think about ideas and values.<sup>[42]</sup> Critique: As it turns out, in this model, it does not deal with the process of thinking and how to reason logically and presents only the ideal as “rational criticism.” But it does not explain at what level of logic operates and what the essence of thinking itself is. The next model is Hurson’s Productive Thinking Model. This model is a structured approach to solving problems or creating creative ideas.<sup>[43]</sup> Being “creative” in problem-solving allows one to understand issues related to problems and it helps to find the best solution. This model helps the individual to be more creative in problem-solving.<sup>[44,45]</sup> Critique: This model also seeks only a kind of divergent thinking and “creativity”, not the very nature of thinking. It also does not discuss how the problem-solving process is carried out by thinking, and not consider what level of thinking does the process of creativity and problem-solving operate.<sup>[46]</sup> But the proposed model in present study, will not have the gaps and weaknesses of previous models of thinking such as (weakness in explaining the nature of thinking, not explaining the levels of thinking, the relationship between thinking and human health the relationship between thinking and behavior and human performance). also, research has shown that thinking and especially healthy thinking has a very effective role in mental health.<sup>[47-50]</sup> In fact, people do not want to suffer from physical and mental illnesses and experience a low quality of life but the problem is with their dysfunctional thinking and lifestyle. Many people are not able to give up an unhealthy lifestyle because they have sensory thinking and cannot take into account all aspects of the phenomena. Therefore, the sources of mental error are abundant in them,<sup>[51,53]</sup> Because this unhealthy way of thinking and living has developed over the years, it is difficult to put it aside. As a person’s level of thinking gradually increases from sensory to intellectual thinking, so does their healthy lifestyle. And because of this, these people have a healthy lifestyle because when a person has intellectual thinking, his mental health also increases.<sup>[54]</sup> Besides, what has been suggested in research related to the level of intellectual

thinking is creativity,<sup>[55]</sup> emotional intelligence,<sup>[56]</sup> organized learning,<sup>[57]</sup> business success,<sup>[58]</sup> emotion management<sup>[59-61]</sup> and happiness.<sup>[62,63]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The models of thinking that have been proposed in the world so far have many shortcomings, including: None of them has the power to clarification thinking, and none of the theories and models have the relationship between thinking and health been clearly explained, while philosophers consider the level of the intellectual of thinking to depend on the healthy behavior of the individual, but the proposed thinking model of the present study does not have such shortcomings. Furthermore, in other psychological models, only the application of thinking has been addressed, but in the present model of thinking, the nature of thinking and its levels are also discussed. Furthermore, the sources of thinking error and mental health factors are mentioned in this model, so that the results of this study can be used in psychotherapy approaches in clinical psychology.

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## Ethical approval

Principles of research ethics have been observed in the article.

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## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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