Table 8.9
Common Challenges for Core Beliefs

Challenge	Possible Considerations
Difficulty identifying negative core beliefs	--Similar to negative automatic thoughts, clients who express thoughts with high emotional intensity are more apt to state their negative core beliefs. --Listen for clients to state the negative core belief – it can sometimes be stated when sharing a negative automatic thought. --Hypothesize in advance possible negative core beliefs. This will help you choose the most appropriate approach for identification. --Look for patterns in negative automatic thoughts, including content (i.e., helplessness, worthlessness or unloveability) and style (i.e., specific categories of cognitive distortions). Reviewing Negative Automatic Thought Records can help with this process. --Simply ask clients if they can think of any core beliefs. --Consider almost always using the techniques Downward Arrow Technique and Core Belief Flowchart – Part A. --Sometimes, using formal core belief assessments can identity the specific negative core belief or stimulate related thinking patterns. --Ask clients to record any negative core beliefs that come to mind, including its category/lens and associated negative automatic thoughts and cognitive distortions. (Core Beliefs Tracker can assist with this technique.) --Use your CBT case formulation to review prominent thinking and behavioral patterns that tend to elicit the most distress.
Difficulty selecting appropriate Socratic techniques to modify a negative core belief	--The more you know about the specific core belief (e.g., category and lens) and its related contextual contributing and maintaining factors, the more likely you will choose an appropriate Socratic technique. --Similar to negative automatic thoughts, always start off with examining the evidence to determine if the negative core belief is invalid. Keep in mind that clients' core beliefs have at least some validity in the past and may have some validity in the present. --Play out the scenario of modification with a specific technique in your mind and assess possible outcomes. --If one technique does not work, simply try another. --More than one technique is almost always necessary in order modify negative core beliefs.

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Difficulty identifying and developing a new core belief	--Remember to start with a new core belief that is not the extreme opposite (i.e., too positive) of the old negative core belief. A "slightly" positive new core belief will be more realistic when applied real-life situations and interactions. Negative Core Belief Continuum Worksheet can be especially helpful with this process. --Return to previously used modification techniques to compare the new core belief with the old negative core belief. For example, examining the evidence and advantages/disadvantages techniques have a third column for comparison, and Core Belief Flowchart – Part B allows for examining thoughts, emotions, and behaviors with the new core belief. --Have clients practice applying their new core belief in their day-to-day life between sessions. Behavioral Experiment Worksheet provides a structured format to test the new core belief and compare its believability with the old negative core belief. --Reinforce clients' progress while also reminding them that it takes time and practice to develop new core beliefs in place of old core beliefs that may have been present for many years. --Emphasize that clients focus on their improved emotions and decreased level of distress associated with their new core belief.