

Cognitive Behavior Therapy

What is it?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an evidence-based therapeutic technique which is based on the idea that our thoughts cause our feelings and behaviors rather than external things like people, situations, and events. The benefit of this fact is that we can develop an understanding of our thoughts, and with this knowledge be able to change the way we may think or respond to a situation. The goal of CBT is to provide people with skills that will help them to unlearn their unwanted reactions and learn a new way of reacting.

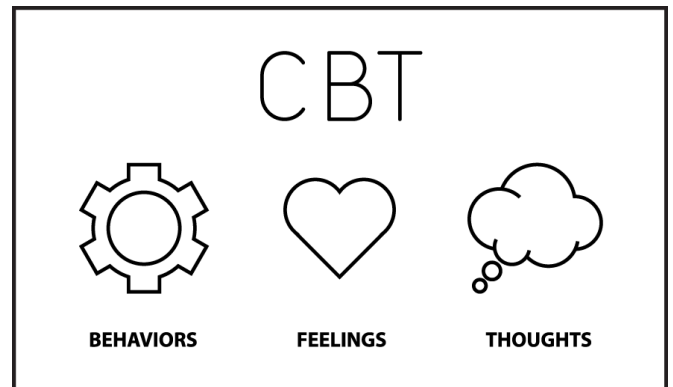
CBT is highly instructive in nature and makes use of homework assignments. By helping you become aware of negative thoughts that may be inaccurate, CBT allows you to view challenging situations and decisions with more clarity and provide you skills to manage a response in a more effective way.

CBT is not an open-ended, never-ending process. It is time limited and briefer than other forms of therapy. The ending of the formal therapy is a decision made by the person served and the therapist.

Who it is designed for

CBT can help anyone to learn how to better manage stressful life situations. It can be used in individual therapy, group settings, and in helping yourself. Mental health conditions that may improve with cognitive behavioral therapy include:

- Sleep disorders
- Sexual disorders



- Depression
- Bipolar disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Phobias
- Eating disorders
- Substance abuse disorders
- Personality disorders
- Schizophrenia
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How it works

Although there are different ways to apply CBT, it typically includes these steps:

- Identify troubling situations or conditions in your life.
- Become aware of your thoughts, emotions and beliefs about these situations or conditions.
- Review troublesome thoughts to see if they are valid and identify their impact and value in the situation or conditions of life.
- Find ways to address negative thoughts.

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The particular therapeutic techniques vary according to the particular kind of problem issues but commonly may include:

- Keeping a diary of significant events and associated feelings, thoughts and behaviors;
 - Reviewing and discussing didactic (teaching) materials;
 - Questioning and testing thoughts, assumptions, and beliefs that might be unhelpful and unrealistic;
 - Gradually facing activities which may have been avoided; and
 - Trying out new ways of interacting and reacting to different situations and conditions.
- Identify ways to manage emotions, such as anger
 - Resolve relationship conflicts and learn better ways to communicate
 - Cope with grief, such as after the loss of a loved one
 - Overcome emotional trauma related to abuse or violence
 - Cope with a medical illness, such as chronic fatigue syndrome or cancer
 - Manage chronic physical symptoms, such as pain, insomnia or fatigue

Relaxation, mindfulness and distraction techniques are also commonly included in CBT.

In some cases, CBT is most effective when it is combined with other treatments, such as the use of psychotropic medications

Why it is done

The educational emphasis of CBT leads to long-term results. When people understand how and why they are doing well, they know what to do to continue doing well.

Results/Benefits

CBT may not cure your condition or make an unpleasant situation go away, but it can give you the power to cope with your situation in a healthy way and to feel better about yourself and your life. CBT may help you:

- Manage symptoms of mental illness, either by itself or with other treatments such as medications
- Prevent a relapse of mental illness symptoms
- Treat a mental illness when medications aren't a good option, such as during pregnancy
- Learn techniques for coping with stressful life situations, such as problems at work