

What is cognitive behavioral therapy ?

Cognitive behavioral therapy, often referred to as CBT, is a type of psychotherapy that focuses on making connections between thoughts, behaviors, and feelings. CBT helps people identify and change dysfunctional patterns.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a form of psychological treatment that has been demonstrated to be effective for a range of trauma-related and mental health issues including depression, anxiety disorders, alcohol and drug use problems, marital problems, eating disorders, and severe mental illness. Numerous research studies suggest that CBT leads to significant improvement in functioning and quality of life. In many studies, CBT has been demonstrated to be as effective as, or more effective than, other forms of psychological therapy or psychiatric medications.

It is important to emphasize that advances in CBT have been made on the basis of both research and clinical practice. Indeed, CBT is an approach for which there is ample scientific evidence that the methods that have been developed actually produce change. In this manner, CBT differs from many other forms of psychological treatment.

CBT is based on several core principles, including:

- Psychological problems are based, in part, on faulty or unhelpful ways of thinking.
- Psychological problems are based, in part, on learned patterns of unhelpful behavior.
- People suffering from psychological problems can learn better ways of coping with them, thereby relieving their symptoms and becoming more effective in their lives.

CBT treatment usually involves efforts to change thinking patterns. These strategies might include:

- Learning to recognize one's distortions in thinking that are creating problems, and then to reevaluate them in light of reality.
- Gaining a better understanding of the behavior and motivation of others.
- Using problem-solving skills to cope with difficult situations.
- Learning to develop a greater sense of confidence in one's own abilities.

CBT treatment also usually involves efforts to change behavioral patterns. These strategies might include:

- ➔ Facing one's fears instead of avoiding them.
- ➔ Using role playing to prepare for potentially problematic interactions with others.
- ➔ Learning to calm one's mind and relax one's body.

Not all CBT will use all of these strategies. Rather, the psychologist and patient/client work together, in a collaborative fashion, to develop an understanding of the problem and to develop a treatment strategy.

CBT places an emphasis on helping individuals learn to be their own therapists. Through exercises in the session as well as "homework" exercises outside of sessions, patients/clients are helped to develop coping skills, whereby they can learn to change their own thinking, problematic emotions, and behavior.

CBT therapists emphasize what is going on in the person's current life, rather than what has led up to their difficulties. A certain amount of information about one's history is needed, but the focus is primarily on moving forward in time to develop more effective ways of coping with life.

How CBT Works

Teens often develop distorted core beliefs about themselves. CBT helps confront and modify those distortions. A psychotherapist using CBT would help a teen identify those unhealthy thought patterns that contribute to mental health problems. A therapist may ask a series of questions and ask the person to keep a thought record to help identify dysfunctional thoughts.

Benefits of CBT

CBT helps teens learn how to interpret their environment differently. Compared to other therapeutic approaches CBT is generally short-term. Sometimes, only a handful of sessions are needed.

The approach is also very problem-focused which means it deals with issues in the present. Treatment providers aren't likely to rehash a teen's childhood or look for hidden meaning in their behavior. Instead, sessions focus on helping the teen with problems going on now

This type of therapy can provide benefits such as:

- Change negative thought patterns
- Identify positive responses to stress
- Improve communication with others

- Improve self-esteem
- Interrupt thoughts that lead to addictive or other self-destructive behaviors
- Reduce fears and phobias

What to Expect

During CBT, your teen will work on identifying negative thoughts, which can be a challenging process. Their therapist will work with them to develop new ways of thinking and learn new coping skills.

Your teen may be assigned "homework" to do outside of their therapy sessions, which may involve practicing many of the skills they are working on during therapy. CBT tends to be highly structured, which can be helpful for teens who want to be able to clearly understand goals and expectations.

Family Therapy

Family therapy is an approach that helps teens by addressing the interpersonal and family issues that affect their mental well-being. For teens who are dealing with problems with the home environment or family conflicts, this type of therapy can help both the child and the family as a whole.

Basic Principles

Family therapy works by improving emotional awareness and understanding their role in the family. By working with their therapist and with the rest of the family, individuals are able to

learn more effective ways of communicating with one another. It can also help parents and caregivers learn strategies such as listening to and validating their teen's emotions.

How It Works

Family therapists utilize a number of techniques in order to help teens and their families. Their approach may include behavioral strategies such as role-playing and modeling effective communication, psychodynamic strategies such as talking about experiences in order to gain insight, and structural strategies to address how family routines and dynamics play a role in how each member of the family functions.

Benefits of Family Therapy

This type of therapy can help teens and families in a variety of ways. Some of these benefits include:

- Improving communication
- Reducing conflict
- Improving the home environment
- Creating empathy
- Building family cohesion
- Developing healthy boundaries

This approach can be helpful in addressing behavioral issues and coping with life changes such as moving, divorce, or the death of a loved one.

What to Expect

Family therapy can be short-term or last longer depending on the situation a teen or family is facing. Some sessions may focus only on your teen, but in most cases, it will involve all of the members of the family.

During your sessions, you will talk about the issues you are facing and explore other factors that may also contribute to issues including peer influences, stress, trauma, or underlying mental health conditions.