**What is cognitive behavioral therapy?**

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a treatment approach that helps you recognize negative or unhelpful thought and behavior patterns.

CBT aims to help you identify and explore the ways your emotions and thoughts can affect your actions. Once you notice these patterns, you can begin learning how to change your behaviors and develop new coping strategies.

We can sometimes feel like we get ‘stuck’ in a loop with negative thoughts, emotions and behaviours. CBT provides tools to help us to break the cycle by recognizing and changing our thoughts. It is not about having positive thoughts all the time; it is about having true and helpful thoughts to help us feel and act our best!

**Things to keep in mind**

CBT can be helpful. But if you decide to try it, there are a few things to keep in mind.

**It’s not a cure**

Therapy can help improve concerns you’re experiencing, but it will not necessarily eliminate them. Mental health issues and emotional distress could persist, even after therapy ends.

The goal of CBT is to help you develop the skills to deal with difficulties on your own in the moment when they come up. Some people view the approach as training to provide their own therapy.

**Results take time**

CBT can last for weeks or months, usually with one session each week. In your first few sessions, you and your therapist will likely talk about how long therapy might last.

That being said, it’ll take some time before you see results. If you don’t feel better after a few sessions, you might worry therapy isn’t working, but give it time. Keep doing your homework and practicing your skills between sessions.

Undoing deep-set patterns is major work, so go easy on yourself.

**It can be challenging**

Therapy can challenge you emotionally. It often helps you get better over time, but the process can be difficult. You’ll need to talk about things that might be painful or distressing. Don’t worry if you cry during a session — it can be a typical experience during therapy.

**It’s just one of many options**

While CBT can be helpful for many people, it does not work for everyone. If you don’t see any results after a few sessions, do not feel discouraged. Check in with your therapist.

A good therapist can help you recognize when one approach is not working. They can usually recommend other approaches that might help more.

Also consult about trying medicines with therapy.

These are some of the most popular techniques used in CBT:

* **SMART goals.** SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-limited.
* **Guided discovery and questioning.** By questioning the assumptions you have about yourself or your current situation, your therapist can help you learn to challenge these thoughts and consider different viewpoints.
* **Journaling.** You might be asked to jot down negative beliefs that come up during the week and the positive ones you can replace them with.
* **Self-talk.** Your therapist may ask what you tell yourself about a certain situation or experience and challenge you to replace negative or critical self-talk with compassionate, constructive self-talk.
* **Cognitive restructuring.** This involves looking at any cognitive distortions affecting your thoughts — such as black-and-white thinking, jumping to conclusions, or [catastrophizing](https://www.healthline.com/health/anxiety/catastrophizing) — and beginning to unravel them.
* **Thought recording.** In this [techniqueTrusted Source](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/labs/pmc/articles/PMC3155448/" \t "_blank), you’ll record thoughts and feelings experienced during a specific situation, then come up with unbiased evidence supporting your negative belief and evidence against it. You’ll use this evidence to develop a more realistic thought.
* **Positive activities.** Scheduling a rewarding activity each day can help increase overall positivity and improve your mood. Some examples might be buying yourself fresh flowers or fruit, watching your favorite movie, or taking a picnic lunch to the park.
* **Situation exposure.** This involves listing situations or things that cause distress, in order of the level of distress they cause, and slowly exposing yourself to these things until they lead to fewer negative feelings. [Systematic desensitization](https://www.healthline.com/health/systematic-desensitization) is a similar technique where you’ll learn relaxation techniques to help you cope with your feelings in a difficult situation.

Homework is another important part of CBT, regardless of the techniques you use. Just as school assignments helped you practice and develop the skills you learned in class, therapy assignments can help you become more familiar with the skills you’re developing.

Reference: https://www.healthline.com/health/cognitive-behavioral-therapy#uses





