

FACT SHEET: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

CBT is a model that was developed in the 1960's by Dr Aaron by Beck and has been evolving since then. CBT is a common treatment for depression and anxiety and has a strong research base.

The model encourages a person to look at the way they are thinking, identify unrealistic thinking patterns/styles and develop a more realistic way of appraising situations and events.

This is important because the way a person thinks influences their emotional state and as a consequence how they react to a situation. Thoughts and emotions are also linked to how our bodies react physiologically to a stressful event or to anxiety.

CBT also involves helping a person identify beliefs such as "I must be loved and approved of by everyone" or the "world should be fair" or "I must be competent in every respect" and learn to challenge these ideas.

Some Examples of Unrealistic / Faulty Thinking Styles

- Black and White thinking "If I'm not the best at this I'm worthless"
- Catastrophising - "If I disagree the friendship will be over"
- Emotional Reasoning - "I just know this is going to fail"
- Jumping to Conclusions - "they must think I'm a boring person"
- Labelling - "I'm such an idiot for not remembering her birthday"
- Magnifying - "they are much smarter than me - I only got a good mark by chance"
- Personalisation - "I'm to blame for someone else's mistake"
- Should's eg "I should never make a mistake"
- Overgeneralising - "it's typical that this happened to me"
- Filtering - "we had a good dinner but the service was very slow"

Goals and techniques used in CBT

- Developing psychological flexibility involves being able to adapt to circumstances in life and accept that some things are out of your control.
- Working on developing beliefs and thoughts that are not self defeating or irrational
- Questioning your thoughts and looking for evidence by asking questions such as:
 - Past Experience - how much has this situation happened before
 - General Rules - Is this something that generally happens
 - Alternative explanations - What other explanations are there
 - Role Reversal - How would you feel if this was the other way around

- Using thought monitoring forms and other written material is a common technique - you may be asked to monitor your thoughts, feelings, beliefs and to write down more helpful alternative thoughts. There may be a mood diary, worry log or other form of journaling that assist with the treatment.

References and Further reading:

Centre for Clinical Interventions: <https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Overview>

Edelman, Sarah (2002) - Change Your Thinking: Harper Collins Australia.

Beck Institute : <https://beckinstitute.org/about-beck/our-history/history-of-cognitive-therapy/>

Rapee, R (2004) Overcoming Shyness and Social Phobia: A step by Step guide. Lanham, MD Rowman and Littlefield.