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Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a type of psychotherapeutic treatment that helps people learn how to identify and change the destructive or disturbing thought patterns that have a negative influence on their behavior and emotions. Cognitive behavioral therapy combines cognitive therapy with behavior therapy by identifying maladaptive patterns of thinking, emotions, responses, or behaviors and replacing them with more desirable or helpful patterns. Cognitive behavioral therapy focuses on changing the automatic negative thoughts that can contribute to and worsen our emotional difficulties, depression, and anxiety. These spontaneous negative thoughts can also have a detrimental influence. Through CBT, thought patterns are identified, and more objective, realistic thoughts. This view has been mostly reviewed by Steven M. Zimbardo, who has been a pioneer in the development of techniques and approaches that address our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. These can change from structures to psychotherapies to self-help practices. Some of the specific types of therapeutic approaches that involve cognitive behavioral therapy include: Cognitive therapy; Centers on identifying and changing inaccurate or distorted thought patterns, emotional responses, and behaviors. Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT): Addresses destructive or disturbing thoughts and behaviors while incorporating treatment strategies such as emotional regulation and mindfulness. Multimodal therapy: Suggests that psychological issues must be treated by addressing seven different but interconnected modalities: behavior, affect, sensation, imagery, cognition, interpersonal factors, and drug/biological considerations. Rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT): Involves identifying irrational beliefs, actively challenging these beliefs, and finally learning to recognize and change these thought patterns. While each type of cognitive behavioral therapy takes a different approach, all work to address the underlying thought patterns that contribute to psychological distress. CBT is about more than identifying thought patterns. It uses a wide range of strategies to help people overcome these patterns. Here are just a few examples of techniques used in cognitive behavioral therapy. It is important to learn what thoughts, feelings, and situations are contributing to maladaptive, unhelpful, or harmful behaviors. This process can be difficult, however, especially for people who struggle with introspection. But taking the time to identify these thoughts can lead to self-discovery and provide insights that are essential to the treatment process. In cognitive behavioral therapy, people are often taught new skills that can be used in real-world situations. For example, someone with substance use disorder might practice new coping skills and relaxation ways to avoid alcohol in social situations that could potentially trigger a relapse. Goal setting can be an important step in recovery from mental illness, helping you to make changes to improve your health and life. During cognitive behavioral therapy, a therapist can help you build and strengthen your goal-setting skills. This might involve teaching you how to identify your goal or how to distinguish between short- and long-term goals. It may also include helping you set SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based), with a focus on the process as much as the end outcome. Learning problem-solving skills through cognitive behavioral therapy can help you learn how to identify and solve problems that may arise from life stressors, both big and small. It can also help reduce the negative impact of psychological and physical illness. Problem-solving in CBT often involves five steps: Identify the problemGenerate a list of potential solutionsEvaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each potential solutionChoose a solution to implementImplement the solutionAlso known as diary work, self-monitoring is an important cognitive behavioral therapy technique. It involves tracking behaviors, symptoms, or experiences over time and sharing them with your therapist. Self-monitoring can provide your therapist with the information they need to give you the best treatment. For example, for people with eating disorders, self-monitoring may involve keeping track of eating habits, as well as any thoughts or feelings that went along with consuming a meal or snack. Cognitive behavioral therapy can be used as a short-term treatment to help individuals learn to cope on present thoughts and beliefs. CBT is used to treat a wide range of conditions, including: In addition to mental health conditions, cognitive behavioral therapy has also been found to help people cope with: We've tried, tested, and written unbiased reviews of the best online therapy programs including Talkspace, BetterHelp, and ReGain. Find out which option is the best for you. The underlying concept behind CBT is that thoughts and feelings play a fundamental role in behavior. For example, a person who spends a lot of time thinking about plane crashes, runway accidents, and other air disasters may avoid air travel as a result. The goal of cognitive behavioral therapy is to teach people that what they think they cannot control, they can. They can take control of every aspect of their world around them, they can interpret the things in their environment, they can take control of the following key benefits: It helps you develop healthier thought patterns by becoming aware of the negative automatic unrealistic thoughts that dampen your feelings and moods. It is an effective short-term treatment option as improvements can often be seen in five to 20 sessions. It is effective for a wide variety of maladaptive behaviors. It is often more affordable than some other types of therapy. It is effective whether therapy occurs online or face-to-face. It can be used for those who don't require psychotropic medication. One of the greatest benefits of cognitive behavioral therapy is that it helps clients develop coping skills that can be useful both now and in the future. CBT emerged during the 1960s and originated in the work of psychiatrist Aaron Beck, who noted that certain types of thinking contributed to emotional problems. Beck labeled these "automatic negative thoughts" and developed the process of cognitive therapy. Where earlier behavior therapies had focused almost exclusively on associations, reinforcements, and punishments to modify behavior, the cognitive approach addresses how thoughts and feelings affect behaviors. Today, cognitive behavioral therapy is one of the most well-studied forms of treatment. It has been shown to be effective in the treatment of a range of mental conditions, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, insomnia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance use disorder. Research indicates that cognitive behavioral therapy is the leading evidence-based treatment for eating disorders. CBT has been proven helpful in those with insomnia, as well as those who have a medical condition that interferes with sleep, including those with pain or mood disorders such as depression. Cognitive behavioral therapy has been scientifically proven to be effective in treating symptoms of depression and anxiety in children and adolescents. A 2018 meta-analysis of 41 studies found that CBT helped improve symptoms in people with anxiety and anxiety-related disorders, including obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. Cognitive behavioral therapy has a high level of empirical support for the treatment of substance use disorders, and people with these disorders can develop coping mechanisms for daily stressors. CBT is one of the most researched types of therapy, in part, because treatment is focused on very specific goals. As a result, outcomes can be measured relatively easily. Vervolg Myriam's Cost of Therapy Survey, which sought to learn more about how Americans deal with the financial burdens associated with therapy, found that Americans overwhelmingly feel the benefits of therapy: 80% say therapy is a good investment 91% are satisfied with the quality of therapy they receive 84% are satisfied with their progress toward mental health goals There are several challenges that people may face when engaging in cognitive behavioral therapy. Here are a few to consider. Initially, some patients suggest that while they recognize that certain thoughts are not rational or healthy, simply becoming aware of these thoughts does not make it easy to alter them. Cognitive behavioral therapy doesn't focus on underlying, unconscious resistance to change as much as other approaches, such as psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Instead, it tends to be more structured, so it may not be suitable for people who may find structure difficult or who want to more freely explore their past and their emotions. For cognitive behavioral therapy to be effective, you must be ready and willing to spend time and effort analyzing your thoughts and feelings. This self-analysis can be difficult, but it is a great way to learn more about how your internal states impact your outward behavior. In most cases, CBT is a gradual process that helps you take incremental steps toward behavior change. For example, someone with social anxiety might start by simply imagining anxiety-provoking social situations. Next, they may practice conversations with friends, family, and acquaintances. By progressively working toward a larger goal, the process seems less daunting and the goals easier to achieve. There is no magic therapy bullet - all therapy, including CBT, requires a commitment to the process. 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If you're new to cognitive behavioral therapy, you may have uncertainties or fears of what to expect. In many ways, the first session begins much like your first appointment with any new healthcare provider. During the first session, you'll likely spend some time filling out paperwork such as HIPAA forms (privacy forms), insurance information, medical history, current medications, and a therapist-patient service agreement. If you're participating in online therapy, you'll likely fill out these forms online. Also be prepared to answer questions about what brought you to therapy, your symptoms, and your history—including your childhood, education, career, relationships (family, romantic, friends), and current living situation. Once the therapist has a better idea of who you are, the challenges you face, and your goals for cognitive behavioral therapy, they can help you increase your awareness of the thoughts and beliefs you have that are unhelpful or unrealistic. Next, strategies are implemented to help you develop healthier thoughts and behavior patterns. During later sessions, you will discuss how your strategies are working and change the ones that aren't. Your therapist may also suggest cognitive behavioral therapy techniques you can do on yourself at home. Cognitive behavioral therapy is a gradual process that helps you take incremental steps toward behavior change. For example, someone with social anxiety might start by simply imagining anxiety-provoking social situations. Next, they may practice conversations with friends, family, and acquaintances. By progressively working toward a larger goal, the process seems less daunting and the goals easier to achieve. There is no magic therapy bullet - all therapy, including CBT, requires a commitment to the process. Behavioral Therapists to locate a licensed professional in your area. 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helps you to change how you think and act. It can treat many different mental health problems. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a recommended treatment for many mental health problems, such as:depression, including postnatal depressionanxiety, including social anxiety, phobias and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)eating disorders, including anorexia and bulimiabipolar disorderpersonality disordersCBT can also help with other conditions including:sleep problems, such as insomniaproblems with alcohol and drugslong-term painirritable bowel syndrome (IBS)chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) You can get cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for free on the NHS for many mental health problems – you do not need to have a diagnosed mental health condition.There are many ways to get CBT. Waiting times vary depending on where you live.Refer yourself to NHS talking therapiesFor many mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression, you can refer yourself to NHS talking therapies without speaking to a GP.You must be aged 18 or over (or 16 or over in some areas) to self-refer to NHS talking therapies. Speak to a GPFor some conditions, including eating disorders, bipolar disorder, personality disorders or psychosis, you'll need a GP to refer you for treatment.Other ways to get CBTYou may choose to pay for CBT privately, rather than having it on the NHS. You can find an accredited CBT therapist near you on the UK CBT register.You may also be able to get CBT for free through your employer, university or local charities. Getting CBT on the NHS is different if you're under 18 (or under 16 in some areas).Find out more about getting mental health support for children and young people Once you've been referred for cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), you'll have an assessment with a therapist to decide what the best treatment is for you. This may be done in person, online or on the phone.The therapist will ask about your symptoms and what you hope to get from treatment.They'll then recommend a type of therapy, which may be CBT or another type of therapy, depending on what you need it for. They'll usually also tell you how long you may need to wait until you get treatment. There are many different types of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). The type you have will depend on why you're having it and your symptoms.You can have CBT in different ways including:guided self-help – going through a workbook or an online course with the help of a therapist1-to-1 sessions with a therapistas part of a group – with a therapist and other people who are dealing with a similar issueCBT can be done in person, online, or on the phone.You'll usually have between 5 and 15 sessions of CBT, depending on what you're having it for.What CBT sessions involveIn CBT, the main aim is making changes to solve your problems.In a typical CBT session, you'll talk about situations you find difficult, and discuss how they make you think, feel and act.You'll work with your therapist to work out different ways of approaching these situations. This could include:questioning unhelpful thoughts and beliefs, and considering other ways of looking at thingsnoticing your emotions and physical feelings without reacting to themchanging what you do, for example, doing activities you've been avoidingYour therapist will help you find approaches that work for you and the problems you're having.You'll usually be asked to practise what you've learned between sessions – it's important to do this for CBT to work. You may also be asked to record your progress in a worksheet or diary.After you have CBTAfter your course of CBT has finished, it's important to keep using the skills you've learned. Your therapist will usually help you plan how you'll do this.If your symptoms do not improve after your first course of CBT, you may be given more sessions.Speak to a GP if you're still having problems after your CBT has finished. They might suggest having more CBT or a different type of treatment. Page last reviewed: 28 March 2025 Next review due: 28 March 2028 TF-CBT is een behandeling voor kinderen en jongeren van acht tot achttien jaar. De behandeling is zowel in Nederland als in het buitenland goed onderzocht. Uit al deze onderzoeken blijkt dat het een zeer effectieve behandeling is voor getraumatiseerde kinderen en jongeren. TF-CBT is een passende behandeling als een kind of jongere één of meerdere ingrijpende (traumatische) gebeurtenis(sen) heeft meegemaakt en hier last van heeft. Veel kinderen en jongeren maken wel eens iets ingrijpends of naars mee. Als je kind een verlies meemaakt door overlijden, een ongeluk heeft gehad, gepest wordt of een vervelende medische behandeling moest ondergaan, dan is het begrijpelijk dat hij/zij tijd nodig heeft om dit te verwerken. Als dit langer duurt dan we zouden willen of de verwerking loopt vast, dan kan een kind of jongere hierbij worden geholpen met een TF-CBT behandeling. Als er na een maand nog steeds sprake is van ernstige klachten, dan weten we uit onderzoek dat nog maar weinig kinderen zonder behandeling van hun klachten afkomen. Dit betekent overigens niet dat je altijd een maand moet wachten als je kind ernstige klachten heeft! Hieronder kun je ook folders over TF-CBT downloaden:

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