

What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy?

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is an evidence-based therapy which focuses mostly on the way people think about things (including their attitudes and beliefs) and the way they behave. CBT is based on the understanding that thinking negatively is a habit, and, like any other bad habit, it can be modified. It helps people identify where their thoughts and actions are negative, and then to replace these "bad habits" with more helpful thoughts and responses.

CBT utilizes both cognitive therapy and behaviour therapy. Cognitive therapy aims to identify and evaluate the unhelpful thoughts (or cognitions) that lead to negative feelings (e.g. depression, anxiety) and behaviours (e.g. avoiding friends). The treatment focuses on questioning thoughts and restructuring these with positive ways to think about difficult situations. Behaviour therapy is goal-oriented and aims to help people change unhealthy or unhelpful behaviours that cause them to suffer or lower their quality and enjoyment of life. For example, people who are depressed often enjoy fewer pleasurable activities and so your psychologist would work with you to identify pleasurable activities and develop a plan to increase your participation in them.

Finally, CBT not only helps you to understand, manage and challenge thought and behaviour patterns, but can also provide you with a range of useful and practical strategies to enhance your productivity, well-being and your ability to cope with various situations in everyday life.