

# CBT | therapy worth talking about

## What is CBT?

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or CBT, is a family of talking therapies, all based on the idea that thoughts, feelings, what we do, and how our bodies feel, are all connected. If we change one of these we can alter all the others.

When we're low or upset, we often fall into patterns of thinking and responding which can worsen how we feel. CBT works to help us notice and change problematic thinking styles or behaviour patterns so we can feel better.

CBT is a collaborative therapy - it's not something that is done to someone, it's a way of working together with a CBT therapist on mutually agreed goals.

## What can CBT help with?

CBT works for lots of different people and problems, and is widely recommended by national treatment guidelines across the UK, EU and North America.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) provides independent, evidence-based guidance for the NHS on the most effective, proven treatments. CBT is recommended in NICE guidelines for many different problems, including:

- anxiety disorders (including panic attacks)
- depression
- obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
- post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- psychosis and schizophrenia
- bipolar disorder
- eating disorders
- tinnitus
- insomnia

There is also good evidence that CBT is helpful in helping people cope with the symptoms of many other conditions, including:

- chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS)
- irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- fibromyalgia
- chronic pain

CBT approaches can be used with children as well as adults and older adults.

A course of CBT can be completed alone or at the same time as taking medication prescribed by a GP or other doctor. This will depend on the difficulty CBT is helping with and on personal choice.

## How CBT is delivered

CBT can be offered in individual sessions with a therapist or as part of a group. The number of CBT sessions needed depends on the difficulty. Often it is between five and 20 weekly sessions - usually lasting about an hour.

CBT is mainly concerned with how we think and act now, although sometimes our current difficulties are related to things which have happened in our past, and so these might also be part of what we talk about.

Goals for therapy are set together with the therapist after talking things through to properly understand the problem. Most sessions begin with agenda setting - agreeing together what that session will concentrate on. A therapist will not tell someone coming for therapy what to do or what to talk about.

CBT works best when it involves working on things in between sessions as well as during them. Tasks will be planned together.

At the therapy comes to an end we will think together about to continue using CBT techniques in daily life after treatment.

CBT is available in a wide range of different settings, including schools, GP surgeries, specialist clinics and hospitals. It is sometimes provided online. This may be combined with flexible telephone, video or face-to-face appointments to check progress and help overcome any obstacles. This has made CBT more accessible to busy people and reduced delays in getting help.

## Self-help CBT




There are plenty of CBT-based self-help books available, as well as free websites about CBT techniques. However, evidence does show that using them works better with support from a therapist, especially for low mood.

## Finding a therapist

CBT is widely available on the NHS. It's usually best to first discuss difficulties with your GP. Some NHS services also let you refer yourself and private therapists are also available. Before starting CBT, we recommend that you check that your therapist is accredited with us.

To find details of our BABCP accredited CBT therapists visit [www.cbtregisteruk.com](http://www.cbtregisteruk.com).

### Contact BABCP

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