

CBT For Depression

What is CBT?

CBT, or Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, is a talking therapy that has been proved to help treat a wide range of emotional and physical health conditions in adults, young people and children. CBT looks at how we think about a situation and how this affects the way we act. In turn, our actions can affect how we think and feel. The therapist and client work together in changing the client's behaviours, or their thinking patterns, or both of these.

What is depression?

Depression is the most common mental health difficulty. Around half the population will experience symptoms of depression severe enough to affect their quality of life at some point in their life.

There is no single cause of depression. Depression does appear to run in some families. Others are vulnerable because of the environment they live in, or because they had bad experiences in the past. Depression can also occur as a reaction to a major negative event in life, such as a relationship breakup, redundancy or the loss of a loved one.

Here are some of the common symptoms which are associated with depression:

- Mood changes, such as feeling sad, anxious or more irritable than usual
- Thinking changes, such as difficulties in concentrating, making decisions, remembering things or thinking life is not worth living
- Physical changes, such as being unable to sleep properly, reduced appetite, a loss of sex drive, an increase in aches and pains, or excessive tiredness
- Behaviour changes, such as finding work and social activities difficult or impossible, or avoiding other people

CBT works

There is a great deal of research evidence to show that CBT works effectively in treating depression. This research has been carefully reviewed by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

NICE provides independent, evidence-based guidance for the NHS on the most effective ways to treat disease and ill health. CBT is recommended by NICE for the treatment of depression.

CBT can be used if you are on medication which has been prescribed by your GP. You can also use CBT on its own. This will depend on the difficulty you want help with.

How CBT is used to treat depression

You and your therapist will discuss your specific difficulties and set goals for you to achieve. CBT is not a quick fix. It involves hard work during and between sessions. Your therapist will not tell you what to do. Instead they will help you decide what difficulties you want to work on in order to help you improve your situation. Your therapist will be able to advise you on how to continue using

CBT techniques in your daily life after your treatment ends.

Some examples of how CBT is used to treat depression are:

- People who are depressed stop activities which used to give them pleasure or a sense of achievement. CBT aims to restart these gradually as a way of improving mood
- People who are depressed often avoid meeting with friends or other social situations, CBT will aim to get back to previous levels of social activities
- People who are depressed experience low mood because of negative thoughts they may have. These are usually not something they are aware of, causing them to have reduced mood and motivation. CBT can help people who are depressed to identify and challenge these thoughts and to develop more balanced thinking.