

# CBT For Fear of Flying

## Finding a therapist

CBT is available on the NHS. If you feel that CBT may be helpful, then you should first discuss it with your GP. Private therapists are also available. Before starting CBT, it is recommended that you check that your therapist is accredited by BABCP. To find details of BABCP accredited CBT therapists visit [www.cbtregisteruk.com](http://www.cbtregisteruk.com)

## About BABCP

BABCP stands for the British Association for Behavioural & Cognitive Psychotherapies. It has been the lead organisation for CBT in the UK and Ireland since 1972. BABCP members work in the NHS, social care, education and universities.

BABCP also provides accreditation to those who practise CBT in the NHS and privately. It is widely recognised by health and social care employers, training institutions and health insurance companies. BABCP believes that accreditation is important in protecting the public and raising the quality of CBT.

## What is CBT?

CBT, or Cognitive Behavioural 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 fear of flying?

Fear of flying is a common problem, affecting around ten per cent of the population. The impact of this fear varies from feeling apprehensive before and during every flight to the avoidance of all flights. As a result, fear of flying can significantly affect family, social and professional life.

Fear of flying can be limited to travel by aeroplane. It can also be part of a wider difficulty such as Panic Disorder, Claustrophobia or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

People with this fear can be afraid of different aspects of flying, such as:

- Crashing
- Dying
- Vertigo

- Confinement
- Suffocation
- Turbulence
- Being far from home
- Experiencing a heart attack

There is no single cause for fear of flying, but a previous frightening experience may be at its core. Sometimes people with a fear of flying cannot remember this and it's not always necessary for treatment.

## CBT works

There is a great deal of research evidence to show that CBT works effectively in treating the fear of flying. 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 the fear of flying.

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 fear of flying

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 of the aims of CBT in treating a fear of flying are:

- Exploring your thoughts and beliefs about the perceived risks of flying, including physical responses such as fainting or having a heart attack
- Challenging these thoughts and beliefs with accurate information
- Learning relaxation and breathing techniques to reduce the physical symptoms of anxiety and panic attacks
- Examining unhelpful thoughts or beliefs which lead to feelings of worry, fear or panic

## How CBT is delivered

CBT is available in a wide range of settings, as well as hospitals or clinics. It can be offered in individual sessions with a therapist or as part of a group. It is sometimes provided in the form of written or computer-based packages. This may be combined with flexible telephone or face-to-face appointments to check progress and help overcome any barriers to putting into practice what you have learned. Different ways of delivering CBT have made it more accessible to people with busy lives, and has also reduced delays in getting help.

### **Contact BABCP**

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