

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) is an umbrella term used to refer to a large number of different modalities which are designed to assist individuals with making long term behavioral changes. This therapy postulates that 'if you can change the way you think, it will change the way you behave.'

CBT focuses on modifying dysfunctional emotions, behaviors, and thoughts by interrogating and uprooting negative or irrational beliefs. Considered a "solutions-oriented" form of talk therapy, CBT rests on the idea that thoughts and perceptions influence behavior. Feeling distressed, in some cases, may distort one's perception of reality. CBT aims to identify harmful thoughts, assess whether they are an accurate depiction of reality, and, if they are not, employ strategies to challenge and overcome them.

CBT was founded by psychiatrist Aaron Beck in the 1960s, following his disillusionment with Freudian psychoanalysis, and a desire to explore more empirical forms of therapy. CBT also has roots in Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT), the brainchild of psychologist Albert Ellis.

CBT is appropriate for people of all ages, including children, adolescents, and adults. Evidence has mounted that CBT can address numerous conditions, such as major depressive disorder, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, and many others. CBT is a preferred modality of therapy among practitioners and insurance companies alike as it can be effective in a brief period, generally 5 to 20 sessions, though there is no set timeframe; and, CBT involves completing homework assignments. Research indicates that CBT can be delivered effectively online, in addition to face-to-face therapy sessions. (Psychology Today "Cognitive Behavioral Therapy" 2020)