

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a type of therapy that focuses on helping patient's change their thoughts and behaviors related to the problems they are having. The therapist helps the patient become more aware of negative or distorted ways of thinking that may be contributing to negative feelings or behaviors. Once those negative thoughts are identified the therapist teaches the patient how to look at situations, himself/herself or others in a more positive and realistic manner.

CBT also teaches patients more positive ways to cope with everyday stressors, communicate with others better, be more self-aware and how to solve problems more effectively. CBT with children and adolescents also includes educating the family on how they can help change behaviors through structuring and modifying the child's environment. Sessions can be conducted weekly, bi-weekly or monthly and a typical course of treatment contains 8 to 16 sessions depending on the problem.

What type of problems can be treated with CBT?

Some of the most common childhood problems that can be treated using CBT are: depression, anxiety disorders (separation anxiety, phobia, OCD, etc.), anger problems, impulsivity, tics, ADHD, Autism and parent-child conflict problems. CBT can be used alone or in conjunction with medication to help improve such problems.

Who benefits from CBT?

Most studies have concluded that children must be at least 7 to 8 years old to benefit from CBT. The child must have the cognitive maturity to understand such concepts as self-talk and self-instruction. The child must, to a certain degree, be willing and open to learning new skills to deal with some of their problems. They must also be willing to practice some of the techniques at home with parental encouragement. Since CBT is insight-oriented in nature children and adults with impaired intellectual functioning and/or those presenting with limited or extreme resistance to change may be better suited for a different type of intervention or therapy.

