

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)

ABOUT COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a research proven therapeutic program which combines the techniques of two psychological treatment modalities: cognitive therapy and behavioral therapy. The combination of these two theories has shown, when implemented in an effective way, to benefit a great deal of people suffering from a wide range of emotional and behavioral problems.

HOW IS CBT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER THERAPIES

CBT is probably different from the other therapy experiences you have encountered in the past and in most self-help literature. Hallmarks of this therapy are the learning of methods to restructure irrational or distorted thought and belief systems, homework and ongoing assignments to desensitize and demonstrate skills and concepts, and shorter term therapy experiences designed to give tools to the patient that are then practiced and demonstrated on your own.

WHERE TO BEGIN

It is clear after years of practice that there is not one clear "right" place to begin your therapy experience. Begin where you are. What is most troubling or most upsetting to you right now? That is generally a place to begin. The first step to therapy is a willingness to change and work towards a goal. This therapy is not done by the therapist to the patient, it is done as a carefully orchestrated complementary relationship designed to support, instruct, and assist the patient in a growth process.

UNDERSTANDING IS NOT THE PATH TO CHANGE

Contrary to common thought, CBT is not about understanding. I tell patients regularly that understanding will do nothing to relieve you of your current affliction and suffering. Most people feel more comfortable beginning this work by trying to find out what occasioned the response pattern, thought, or behavioral cycle. But even if we were to come to the conclusion, right now, of how this all began, who was to blame, how it stays in process in your life, etc. you would still

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be suffering exactly the same as you were when you began reading this page. Understanding of itself cannot produce change. In fact, it does not matter why something started, moreover, it matters why you got up this morning and repeated the self-defeating, hurtful, or distorted process all over again (just like yesterday), If we figure out the purpose today of why you do something, discover that it no longer is what you want and you make a decision to change, then we can work at replacing the thought or belief system, the behavioral pattern, or the self-defeating process and practice a more productive way – then you will see a real change. But this process is a process and it takes time. Frustration is often a part of change and we have to accept it. But once we implement this method of personal change you will begin to see things differently and will begin to make changes in small ways leading to bigger and more pivotal changes resulting in improved mood and new more affirming behaviors.