



CPD Online take-home notes

Introduction to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

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Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a short-term, problem-focused psychosocial intervention. Generic CBT skills provide a readily accessible model for patient assessment and management and can usefully inform general clinical skills in everyday practice.

This module will help you understand the role of CBT in general adult psychiatry, enabling for you to start to help patients and/or their carers to look at their difficulties from a cognitive behavioural perspective. It will help you to answer the following questions:

- What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)?
- How can I use CBT in my everyday practice?
- What is the role of thoughts and behaviours in CBT?
- What interventions are used during a course of CBT therapy?
- When should I refer someone for CBT?
- What happens when during a course of CBT?

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a form of psychotherapy which is increasingly being used in clinical settings.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- understand the role of CBT in psychiatry
- explain to a patient what CBT is
- summarise a patient's difficulties from a cognitive behavioural perspective
- use basic CBT techniques
- know when to refer someone for CBT.

The CBT model emphasises the reciprocal links between mood state (e.g. anxiety or depression) and altered thinking and behaviours.

The five-areas model is a tool that is used in CBT practice to explore the links between:

- thoughts
- behaviours
- emotions, and
- physical symptoms.

Extreme thoughts may lead individuals to reduce or stop doing activities that previously gave them a sense of pleasure or achievement, or to start doing things that actually worsen how they feel.

This establishes a reciprocal relationship between extreme thinking and reduced/avoided activities or unhelpful behaviours.

Because mood and thoughts are linked, investigating the thoughts that are present at a time when the patient feels worse is a helpful way of identifying extreme and unhelpful thoughts.

Behaviours that can result in these situations can be divided into ‘helpful’ and ‘unhelpful’ behaviours. They can have a role in maintaining the cycle.

Common tools that are used within CBT to tackle patients’ difficulties include:

- thought investigations
- behavioural experiments
- activity logs

Worked examples of these techniques are contained within the module.

What does individual CBT entail? What you and your patients need to know:

- The patient will usually meet with a therapist for between 5 and 20, weekly, or fortnightly, sessions. Each session will last between 30 and 60 minutes.
- In the first 2–4 sessions, the therapist will check that the patient can use this sort of treatment and check that the patient feels comfortable with it.
- Although CBT concentrates on the here and now, the therapist will also ask questions about your patient’s past experiences and background. Especially to understand how past experiences may still be affecting the patient now.
- The patient will be asked to identify goals for the therapy. The patient will decide what you want to deal with in the short, medium and long term.
- At the beginning of each session the therapist and the patient will establish an agreed “agenda” of what will be discussed during the session.
- The therapy sessions will focus on developing a CBT formulation of the patient’s difficulties and will target key unhelpful thoughts and behaviours for intervention.
- Between sessions the patient will try to put into practice some of the things learnt during the therapy sessions and this is done by agreeing with the therapist on a homework task.

Useful resources

Useful resources to share with your patient:

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy links:

Beating the Blues

This is a computerised cognitive behavioural therapy (CCBT) programme for depression and anxiety. It is only available through a health care professional and is currently used in over 300 sites within National Health Service Primary Care Trusts, Community Mental Health Trusts and specialist CBT services.

www.ultrasis.com/products/product.jsp?product_id=1

British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies

For general nationwide information about CBT, news, conferences, training and finding accredited therapists.

www.babcp.com/

Fear Fighter

A computerised cognitive behavioural therapy programme. Free access can only be prescribed by your doctor in England and Wales.

www.fearfighter.com/

Psychnet-uk

For further information and links on Cognitive Behavioural therapy.

www.psychnet-uk.com/psychotherapy/psychotherapy_cognitive_behavioural_therapy.htmhttp://www.psychnet-uk.com/psychotherapy/psychotherapy_cognitive_behavioural_therapy.htm

Free online CBT resources:

Book prescription schemes

These schemes are active around the UK, and CBT self-help books recommended are freely available at local libraries – it would be useful to look at the booklist to identify a book which may be useful to your patients needs.

<http://www.fiveareas.com/bookprescriptionschemes/><http://www.fiveareas.com/bookprescriptionschemes/>

Living Life to the Full

Free online life skills course for people feeling distressed and their carers. Helps you understand why you feel as you do and make changes in your thinking, activities, sleep and relationships. Contains a free DVD resource for people who cannot use computers.

<http://www.livinglifetothefull.com/>

Mood Gym

Information, quizzes, games and skills training to help prevent depression.

moodgym.anu.edu.au

Further reading

Useful books for those interested in deepening their knowledge of CBT include:

Beck J. (1995) *Cognitive therapy: Basics and beyond*. New York: Guildford Press.

Wilson R., Branch R. (2006) *Cognitive behavioural therapy for dummies*. London: John Wiley.

Whitfield G., Davidson A. (2007) *Cognitive Behavioural Therapy explained*. Oxford: Radcliffe Medical Press.