

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Psychologists at Rush offer many types of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), the gold standard of psychotherapy for depression, anxiety and other disorders.

Home Services & Treatments Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is the most widely used form of psychotherapy (talk therapy). It's also the best-studied. Research has shown that it's an effective treatment for depression, anxiety, PTSD and many other mental and behavioral disorders. In some cases, it can also help relieve physical disorders, such as chronic pain.

How Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Works

During cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), your therapist will help you solve specific problems. CBT is based on the idea that your behavior, thoughts and feelings are closely connected. So your therapist may suggest ways to change your feelings or behavior by changing your thought patterns, or vice versa.

For example, if you feel depressed, you may be less motivated to exercise or see friends. But avoiding exercise and social activities can make depression worse. During CBT, your therapist could help find strategies to prevent or break this cycle.

You'll typically meet with your therapist once a week for about 50 minutes. Most people start feeling better and are able to stop going to therapy within a few months. But this can vary depending on your needs and goals.

Types of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Over the years, psychologists and researchers have developed a variety of CBT techniques to deal with specific problems. Your therapist at Rush may use one or more of the following.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Traditional CBT often focuses on changing thoughts that lead to unwanted feelings or behaviors. Acceptance and commitment therapy focuses, instead, on changing your relationship to unwanted thoughts or feelings. By accepting them and moving through them, you can become free from their grip.

Cognitive Processing Therapy

Cognitive processing therapy is designed to help people process trauma. It focuses on helping you see traumas in a different way so that they don't negatively affect your life. It's particularly helpful in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Dialectical Behavior Therapy

The word "dialectical" refers to opposing ideas that coexist or even depend on each other. In dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), those ideas are change and acceptance. DBT includes strategies for both accepting and changing unwanted thoughts and feelings. It also includes strategies for helping people manage relationships and conflict with other people.

Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing can help you deal with conflicting feelings, insecurity or lack of motivation. Its goal is to help you find the motivation to make changes you want to make. Motivational interviewing typically takes only one or two sessions. It can be used on its own or combined with other forms of CBT.

Problem-Solving Therapy

True to its name, problem-solving therapy focuses on improving your problem-solving skills. It can help you identify and overcome stressors — from everyday challenges to adjusting to a new illness or disability.

Prolonged Exposure Therapy

Prolonged exposure therapy is designed to help people face and move on from past traumatic events. It's based on the idea that avoiding thoughts or conversations about past trauma reinforces fear. It's particularly helpful in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Who Would Benefit from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)?

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can help with a wide range of mental health conditions and other problems, including the following:

- Bereavement
- Binge eating
- Chronic pain
- Depression
- Difficulty coping with chronic illness
- Difficulty coping with everyday life
- Eating disorders
- Generalized anxiety disorder
- Insomnia
- Lack of motivation to do things you want or need to do
- Obesity
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Panic attacks (panic disorder)
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Stress
- Stress eating

Rush Excellence in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

- Video and phone therapy options:** Research has shown that cognitive behavioral therapy done over video is just as effective as in-person CBT. Therapists at Rush will be happy to work with you over the phone, via video or in person.
- Special techniques designed to help you:** There are several different types cognitive behavioral therapy, each of them designed to help with specific conditions or symptoms. Psychologists at Rush have special training in all of the major CBT techniques. Whatever symptoms you're dealing with, they'll be able to tailor therapy to your needs.
- A team approach:** At Rush, therapists (psychologists) work closely with psychiatrists (who can prescribe medications). If your therapist thinks you may benefit from medication, they'll refer to you to a trusted psychiatrist.
- However much support you need:** Some people do well with only a few sessions of therapy. Some people need several months of weekly sessions. We're happy to work with you for however many — or however few — sessions you need. And if you hit a rough patch after therapy is over, you can come in for "booster" sessions. These are sessions (typically one to three of them) that help you get back on track.



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