

Information Handout

Professional Version | US English

What Is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)?



Description

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a popular, evidence-based, form of psychological therapy. It is an effective form of treatment for a wide variety of psychological conditions. One of the basic messages of CBT is that “what you think and do affects the way you feel”. *What Is CBT?* is a one-page information handout which gives an explanation of the basic principles of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and explores how our (well-intentioned) behaviors often result in unintended consequences. Importantly, it emphasizes that CBT is a collaborative form of therapy which requires active participation in order to prove helpful.

Instructions

This is a Psychology Tools information handout.

Suggested uses include:

- Client handout – a psychoeducation resource.
- Discussion point – to provoke a discussion and explore your client’s beliefs.
- Therapist learning tool – to improve your familiarity with a psychological construct.
- Supervision tool – to develop formulations and knowledge.
- Teaching resource – a learning tool during training.

References

Beck, A.T., Rush, A.J., Shaw, B.F., & Emery, G. (1979). *Cognitive therapy of depression*. New York: Guilford.

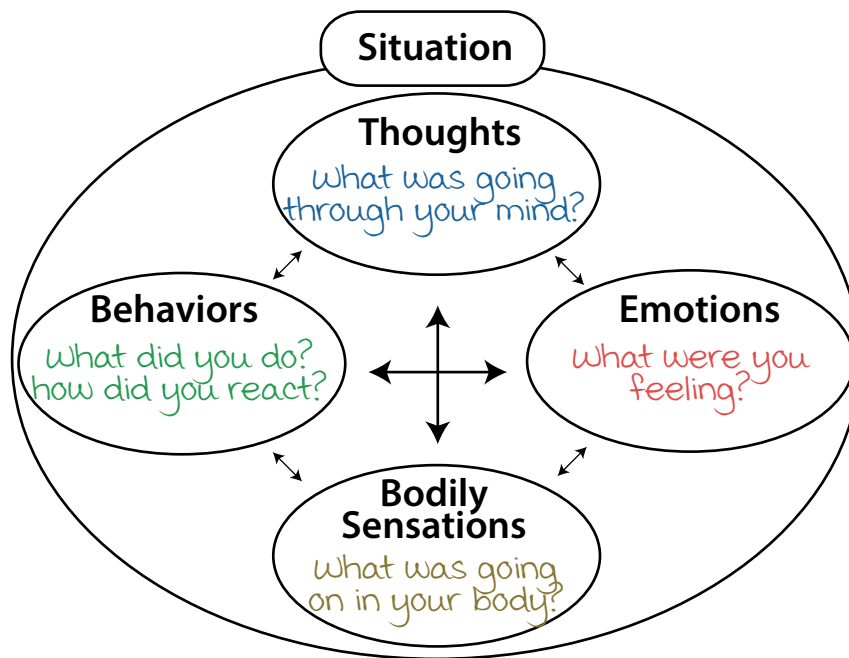
Beck, J. S. (2011). *Cognitive behavior therapy: basics and beyond*. New York: Guilford.

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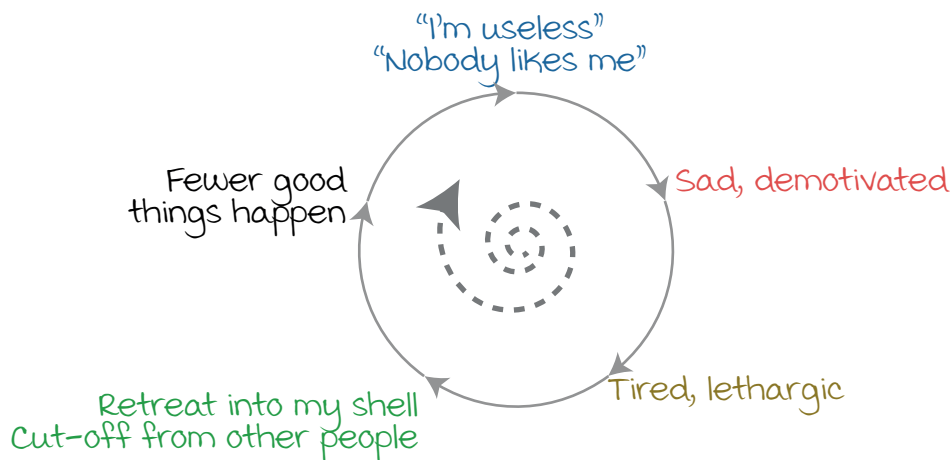
The key idea behind cognitive behavioral therapy is that:



CBT is 'present focused'. That means it works with thoughts and feelings in the here-and-now. A cognitive behavioral therapist will try to understand a situation by looking at separate parts:



Sometimes, through no fault of their own, people get 'stuck' in vicious cycles: the things they do to solve a problem can inadvertently keep it going.



CBT is about finding out what is keeping us 'stuck' and making changes in our thinking and actions in order to improve the way we feel. It is a collaborative therapy and needs your active participation in order to be helpful. There is a lot of evidence to show it is an effective treatment.

Psychology Tools develops and publishes evidence-based psychotherapy resources. We support mental health professionals to deliver effective therapy, whatever their theoretical orientation or level of experience.

Our digital library encompasses information handouts, worksheets, workbooks, exercises, guides, and audio skills-development resources.

Our tools are flexible enough to be used both in-session and between-session, and during all stages of assessment, formulation, and intervention. Written by highly qualified clinicians and academics, materials are available in digital and printable formats across a wide range of languages.



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