



Talking Therapies

CBT, Anxiety and Depression

Core Workbook

What Is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)?

Brief History

CBT was initially developed in America during the 1950s by Professor Aaron Beck. Although there were various available forms of psychological treatment these were mainly aimed at focusing on our early lives related to the past. Beck wanted to explore changing how we feel in the present time. He identified that when we feel down we are more likely to see things in an unhelpful way; we become more self-critical and tend to misinterpret many things negatively. Beck also identified that during periods when we are feeling particularly low and unsettled we change what we do and how we relate to others; some of the changes we adopt often backfire and worsen how we feel. Based on this framework CBT was developed as a **self-help** form of psychotherapy: to empower individuals to make practical changes in their thoughts and actions in order to improve how they feel.

Why use CBT?

CBT can help you to change the way that you think ('cognitive') and what you do ('behaviour'). These changes can help you to feel better. Unlike some of the other talking treatments it focuses on the 'here and now' problems and difficulties you may be experiencing by providing a helpful set of tools to make positive change possible. CBT has proven to be one of the most effective ways of improving our wellbeing as a self-help approach and has been endorsed by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE; www.nice.org.uk) as a recommended treatment option.

It is a useful way of addressing:

- How we think about ourselves, the world and other people
- The effects of what we do on our thoughts and feelings

When does CBT help?

CBT has been shown to help with many types of problems which include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Panic
- Phobias (including agoraphobia and social phobia)
- Stress
- OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder)
- Insomnia

Research has also found that CBT strategies have proven helpful if you have difficulties with stress, low self-esteem or physical health problems such as fatigue and lack of energy.