



Cognitive behaviour therapy:

What does cognitive behaviour therapy do?

Cognitive behaviour therapy aims to help people solve their difficulties by changing their thought patterns and behaviour.

There is ample evidence that CBT can help people with problems such as depression, anxiety and panic disorders, and post-traumatic stress.

What happens when you come for CBT?

During the initial stages of therapy, we are likely to focus on clarifying the problems you face and making attempts to identify what triggers and maintains your difficulties from day to day. We will also try to think about what we can do to make things better in your everyday life. During this phase of therapy, we usually do not spend huge amounts of time thinking about possible causes that may lie in the distant past (ie., your childhood). If it is relevant, we might decide to explore the past at a later stage.

Although the goal of therapy is to help you overcome your symptoms and improve your quality of life right from the start, you should also know that psychotherapy involves a substantial commitment from you in terms of your time and effort. Results are sometimes seen quickly, but it can take a long while – sometimes many months – before substantial changes in symptoms happen. Therefore, starting therapy does involve a commitment from your side.

Assessment and formulation

Committing to therapy also means that you should feel that you are able to work with your therapist over a period of time. To help you make up your mind, we may offer you an initial assessment. This will help you to decide whether you feel that you can work with your therapist and will provide us with the information we need to be able to devise a treatment plan for you that has a good chance of helping you to feel better and overcome your difficulties.

An initial assessment involves a small number of initial sessions where, apart from talking about some of the difficulties you face, you may be asked to complete some questionnaires or some psychological tests. Following your assessment, the therapist will provide you with an explanation of the psychological view of your problems and how the therapy might be of help to you. We may also compile a written report that is shared with you and sent to your psychiatrist or doctor. At that point we can decide whether or not to continue with therapy and we can agree on some initial goals.

How a referral works

All referrals for this service has to come through a registered medical practitioner (eg., your GP or psychiatrist). Once we have received a referral for you, we will contact you with all the relevant information. This service is currently recognised by three of the major medical insurers, namely, AXA PPP, BUPA, and Norwich Union. Depending on your policy, they may cover all or part of your fees.

Who to contact with enquiries

If you are interested in pursuing a referral, please contact Dr Natus Oelofsen, Chartered Clinical Psychologist at our office address.