



# Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

## Information for Young People

### What is cognitive behavioural therapy?

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a type of psychological treatment, also commonly known as a 'talking therapy'. It can help you understand how your problems began and what keeps them going. It works by helping you understand the links between:

- What you think (your thoughts, beliefs and assumptions)
- What you feel (your emotions)
- What you do (your behaviour)

Our thoughts and emotions often cause us problems. Sometimes our thoughts are unhelpful and they are not accurate. This pattern of thinking can lead to many problems. Cognitive behavioural therapy breaks these unhelpful patterns and helps you to feel more in control of your life.

### What will CBT do for me?

Cognitive behavioural therapy is not about thinking more positively! It helps improve the way you feel, think and what you do. It gives you skills for coping with your life. The goal of CBT is to help you learn a more balanced way of thinking, and to change any unhelpful patterns of thinking and behaving. This is important because sometimes, when you talk about things that are difficult, you may feel worse to begin with. Cognitive behavioural therapy teaches you skills:

- To overcome problematic thoughts, emotions and behaviour
- To find ways of overcoming negative thinking, challenging any inaccurate thoughts or beliefs

### If I agree to take part in CBT, what will I have to do?

Initially you may be seen by a therapist to make sure you can do the therapy (also called an 'assessment'). This usually means trying to understand your difficulties and agreeing what you wish to change in the present time. If you are offered CBT, you will be expected to meet with your therapist regularly (usually starting with once a week). The session can last up to an hour. To help your therapist to understand your difficulties, you will be asked to complete some questionnaires or worksheets. These may be repeated throughout your treatment. Your therapist will monitor how you are getting on.

The therapist will help you understand your problems and teach you ways of dealing with them. You will be expected to practise them outside of your therapy (e.g. at school/college or at home). This means that tasks or homework will be set at the end of the meeting. You may be given worksheets to help remind you of what you need to do.

Six to ten sessions can be enough to help, however you may be offered more sessions if you have more severe difficulties. It may seem like hard work at times, but by attending sessions and learning new ways of coping, you will be equipping yourself with valuable life skills.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists. (2013). Mental Health and Growing Up: Factsheets for Parents, Teachers and Young People (4th ed.). Cambridge: Royal College of Psychiatrists.

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