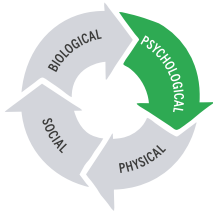


Brief CBT-based interventions



The main focus of this treatment is on psychological factors.



Remember, more thumbs up just means that more people have done research that shows that this approach does work.

What is it?

Newer short forms of CBT have also been developed that focus on more specific problems associated with unusual distressing experiences, such as worry and anxiety, low mood, sleep, reasoning, self-confidence, paranoia and voice-hearing.

They are all CBT-based talking therapies, where you meet individually with a therapist but they are much shorter than traditional CBT for unusual distressing experiences, generally involving about 4–8 meetings focused on one problem.

What does it aim to do?

These interventions all aim to improve how you feel and what you do day-to-day, by focusing on your thinking and behaviour, just like the CBT interventions described above.

They are different to general CBT for unusual distressing experiences, because they focus on one specific problem, (e.g. worry, anxiety, mood, sleep, reasoning, self-confidence and thinking patterns) that can make unusual, distressing experiences worse.

By improving this one specific problem, they reduce the distress and impact of your experiences on your life. For example, you may worry a lot about things that might happen in the future or struggle to go out, or to do new things because of anxiety. CBT might help you to understand why you worry or feel anxious, and help you to break out of worry cycles, and gradually work through the things that make you anxious by practicing facing these things, bit-by-bit.

You may feel down and lacking in energy and enthusiasm, sleep too much or too little. CBT can help you to gradually build up the things that you used to do and even add new things, so that you gradually regain your energy and your sense of pleasure, enjoyment and success.

A detailed focus on sleep in CBT can help you to understand why your sleep is poor and can suggest good sleeping habits to help you to sleep better. Paranoia and other experiences can get worse when your thinking spirals out of control, so that you see danger everywhere. CBT can help you to understand and get control over your thinking.

All of these things, if they're a problem for you, can make experiences worse, so dealing with them can make life better. After all, we all know how much harder everything is, if you've not had enough sleep, or feel sad or anxious all the time.



“ I thought it was excellent. My self-confidence has got better and I think more positively. Before, everything seemed like a really big problem and I worried a lot. I do still worry, but I tell myself I can't do anything about it so I write it down instead. I'm feeling really good at the moment. ”

Beth, 22

“ I found the therapy challenging and difficult, but it was eye-opening. I didn't realise how much I worried and where the worry was coming from. I now try to take time out just doing things that I actually enjoy. I still find it hard around people but I feel I can still build on the skills. ”

Felix, 19

What's the evidence base?

There are now several trials and a growing evidence that these short interventions work when delivered by well-trained and expert therapists.

Most of them have at least one good randomised controlled trial so far, but early results from these new studies do suggest that focusing on individual difficulties with CBT can work really well on their own.

They have not yet been reviewed by NICE.

How can I get this treatment?

These Brief Interventions are starting to become available in the NHS, as more therapists are getting the training.

A standard CBT therapist should be able to offer sessions to help with these issues.

Ask your doctor or care coordinator for more information about seeing a CBT therapist, or refer to the website cbtregisteruk.com to find a private therapist.

✓ Main pro

These are short interventions with a limited time commitment. Sometimes they include interactive computer exercises and early evidence is promising.

✗ Main con

The interventions are quite set and they focus help on a specific problem area only.

“ We know that sleeping badly, worrying a lot, and feeling low in confidence can be exhausting. Getting anxious, stopping activities, and becoming isolated can all too easily follow. We've found that it can be really valuable to spend time sorting out – one by one – these problems. After one goal is achieved, we move on to the next. ”

Professor Daniel Freeman