

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)** is a therapy based on cognitions, assumptions, beliefs, evaluations and behaviors, with the aim of influencing negative emotions that relate to inaccurate and maladaptive appraisal of events. Significant events and associated feelings, thoughts, assumptions and behaviors lead to certain beliefs that might be unhelpful and unrealistic and CBT helps in discovering new ways of behaving and reacting.

The objectives of CBT typically are to identify irrational or maladaptive thoughts, assumptions and beliefs that are related to debilitating negative emotions and to identify how they are dysfunctional, inaccurate, or simply not helpful. This is done in an effort to replace them with more realistic and self-helping ways.

An example from cognitive therapy may illustrate the process: Having made a mistake at work, a person believes, "I'm useless and can't do anything right at work." Believing this, in turn, tends to worsen his mood. The problem may be worsened further if the individual reacts by avoiding activities and then behaviorally confirming his negative belief to himself. As a result, a successful experience becomes unlikely, which reinforces the original thought of being "useless." In therapy, the latter example could be identified as a self-fulfilling prophecy or "problem cycle," and the efforts of the therapist and client would be directed at working together to change it. This is done by addressing the way the client thinks and behaves in response to similar situations and by developing more flexible ways to think and respond, including reducing the avoidance of activities. If, as a result, the client escapes the negative thought patterns and destructive behaviors, the feelings of depression may, over time, be relieved. The client may then become more active, succeed more often, and further reduce his negative feelings.

Cognitive Behavior therapy or CBT is based on discovering not **WHY** we think a certain way but **HOW** we think a certain way. It is based on the concept that it is our thinking that causes us problems **NOT** what happens to us.

If we can remove the **IT** from the situation we can better manage our responses to external stimuli.

In order to understand our behavior, we need to understand how our brain works. We have a left and right side of our brain. The left side is responsible for our words, sentence construction. It deals with logic. The right side of our brain is the picture side and the emotional aspect of our brain.

When we think something, the words from our left brain get matched up with the corresponding picture in our right brain and a resultant behavior occurs. It is our thinking that starts the process and we then act out the pictures that our thinking has created in our right brain.

In chronic negative behavior, there is a predominant negative thought that overrides everything else.

CBT helps people identify the distortions that their thinking has caused and provides alternatives to this chronic negative way of thinking and behaving.

CBT helps people overcome phobias such as a fear of flying, fear of heights, fear of enclosed spaces etc., as well as anxiety, depressive moods and helps people be more comfortable in social settings.

Gary has a certification in cognitive behavior therapy and would be happy to discuss your individual requirements.