

## **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Depression.**

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We all experience depression at some stage throughout life; this is generally as a result of a stressful life event. In the majority of cases we work through these difficult times naturally. However, depression as a mood disorder results in intense and prolonged disturbance in personal, social and work performance. Rates of depression are steadily increasing. According to the World Health Organisation it will become the world's most pervasive serious illness by the year 2020.

Given the scale of depression it is worth considering what is available to help those suffering with it. CBT challenges the thinking and behaviour patterns which may be maintaining the problem. Often, when someone is depressed, they tend to do what their mood dictates. While this is perfectly understandable it results in a worsening of symptoms. CBT helps depressed people learn how to override their depressed mood and to do the opposite of what their depression makes them feel like doing.

In depression, negative thoughts about ourselves are often based on beliefs - formed as a result of our early experiences - that we're helpless and worthless. Negative thoughts about the world are also a common feature.

CBT aims to help people to become aware of the connection between their thinking patterns and their emotional response and to begin to challenge those distorted thinking patterns which are causing such distress. Techniques include exploring, testing and replacing old meaning with new, generating arguments against unhelpful beliefs, scheduling and monitoring activities and preparing for the future.

Therapist and client work closely together over an agreed number of sessions. The client, aware that the tools and techniques they learn are for lifelong use, is prepared for the inevitable setbacks they will experience in life when therapy is ended

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