

## **What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?**

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or CBT is a term for a number of therapeutic interventions that are based on scientific evidence and share the following features:

- CBT approaches are based on the idea that thoughts (cognitions) are closely connected to feelings and behaviors. Because emotions, thoughts, and behaviors are all linked, therapeutic approaches allow therapists to intervene at different points in the cycle.
- CBT is a collaborative approach. A good working relationship between the client and therapist is imperative, but is not the focus of treatment. We work together to establish goals, make progress, and determine when treatment is complete.
- CBT is intended to be time-limited and is usually briefer than traditional psychotherapy approaches. Therapy often lasts between 6 and 20 sessions. While every person is different, therapy should not be an endless process.
- CBT is structured. Each session has an agenda and therapeutic decisions are driven by data collected between sessions.
- CBT involves homework. To make the best progress and learn great skills, it is important to practice. Progress is maximized because therapy continues outside of the session via homework.

### **The “Cognitive” part of therapy helps people:**

- Understand the difference between thoughts and feelings.
- Build awareness of how thoughts influence feelings, sometimes in ways that are not helpful.
- Learn about automatic thoughts and assumptions, and how they impact emotions.
- Carefully evaluate the accuracy of automatic thoughts.
- Develop the skills to notice, interrupt, and correct these inaccurate thoughts independently.

### **The “Behavioral” part of therapy helps change patterns of behavior by:**

- Setting up the environment to promote success.
- Using effective reinforcement techniques to increase desired behaviors.
- Using effective disciplinary approaches to decrease inappropriate or problem behaviors.
- Building and generalizing new skills across different settings.