

## Transcript of “Making sense of CBT: A guide to what CBT is and how you can decide whether it’s best for you” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9c Bv FBE-c>

If you’re living with a mental health problem, it can be hard to know which way to turn or what to do to feel better.

You might go to your GP [general practitioner, meaning your doctor] and one of the first things they might offer is CBT, which stands for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

It combines Cognitive Therapy – examining the things you think – and Behavioral Therapy – examining the things you do.

The word therapy might make you think of laying on a couch talking to a man with spectacles and a beard about your childhood while he analyzes your dreams. But CBT is actually a very practical type of talking therapy which focuses on goals and focuses mostly on the present day and things that are affecting you in your life now.

The theory behind CBT is that the way we think about situations can affect the way we feel and behave. It does this by dealing with how your thoughts affect your feelings and behaviors and teaches you coping skills for dealing with different problems.

For example, you might make a simple mistake like burning the dinner. This might make you think bad things and it might make you feel worthless and inadequate which could lead you to do things like withdrawing, snapping at your family, or trying to avoid things which you think might go wrong.

Or perhaps you’ve been invited out for drinks with some friends and you start thinking negative things. This might make you feel anxious and scared, which might make you do something like saying no to the invite, avoiding your friends completely, or using drink and drugs to cope with the situation.

Over time, whether it’s years, weeks, or months, this cycle of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, may have happened so many times, it’s become like a habit. You start avoiding situations more and more or automatically blame yourself if something goes wrong and the more you do these things, the worse it can get.

A CBT therapist will help you break this cycle and figure out what sorts of negative feelings, thoughts, and behaviors might be contributing to the problems you are experiencing. They will help you deal with your negative thinking and help you change your behavior, both of which will lead to an improvement in your mood.

CBT can be helpful for people with nearly every diagnosis you can think of and can be delivered through one-on-one sessions, in groups, self-help books, online, or through a CD-rom.

That doesn’t mean that CBT works for everyone, though. Some people struggle with it because they find it just too hard to talk about their feelings. CBT is usually quite a short-term treatment, and so you may find that your problems are too complex to deal with in the time.

It can also be quite hard work. Your therapist will probably give you homework, and you have to really practice the skills they teach you to see a difference in how you’re feeling.

If you don’t think CBT is the right treatment for you, you should be able to talk to your GP [doctor] about what alternatives there are. The Mind website also has lots of information about the different treatments that are available for a wide range of mental health problems.