



A Simple Guide to Cognitive Therapy

Cognitive Therapy is a powerful tool that helps us understand how our thoughts shape our feelings and actions.

Imagine your mind as a giant puzzle. When we're young, we start putting the pieces together, forming beliefs about ourselves and the world around us.

These beliefs become like blueprints, guiding how we see things. They can be really strong, like "I'm not good enough," or how we think others see us, like "If I feel angry, I must be a bad person."

When something reminds us of these beliefs, they kick into gear. They influence how we think and feel about what's happening. Sometimes, our thoughts seem wonky to others because they're based on these strong beliefs we've had for a long time.

And here's where it gets interesting: When we're feeling stressed or worried, these beliefs can make us think in funny ways—like always expecting the worst to happen, even when it's unlikely—or thinking in extremes like everything is great or terrible. Sound familiar?

Let's take a closer look at some of these thinking patterns:

1. **Catastrophising:** This is when we always expect the worst possible outcome. It's like imagining a small problem turning into a huge disaster.
2. **Overgeneralisation and Jumping to Conclusions:** Have you ever found yourself making a big deal out of something based on just a tiny bit of evidence? That's overgeneralising. And jumping to conclusions is when we assume we know what will happen without knowing for sure.
3. **Dichotomous or Black-and-White Thinking:** Sometimes, we see things in extremes, like everything is perfect or a total disaster. It's like there's no middle ground.



4. **Thinking Feelings are Facts:** Ever felt sad or angry and thought that meant something terrible must be happening? That's when we mistake our feelings for facts.
5. **Minimising or Maximising:** This is when we downplay our abilities to handle things and blow our problems out of proportion. It's like making a mountain out of a molehill.
6. **Arbitrary Inference:** Making decisions without enough evidence can lead us down the wrong path. It's like assuming something without really knowing the whole story.
7. **Selective Abstraction:** Have you ever focused only on the bad parts of a situation and ignored all the good stuff? That's selective abstraction.
8. **Mind Reading:** Sometimes, we think we know what others think about us, even when we don't have any real evidence. It's like having a crystal ball, always showing us the worst-case scenario.
9. **Personalising:** When we take everything personally, even when it's not about us at all, that's personalising. It's like thinking the whole world revolves around us.

By understanding how these thinking patterns work, we can challenge them and see things in a different light. It's like shining a flashlight into the dark corners of our minds and finding a way out.

With Cognitive Therapy, we can learn to untangle the knots in our minds and find a path to feeling better.