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What Is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy For Drug Addiction Treatment

By Louisville Addiction Treatment Center

You might have heard about Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or CBT for short, as one of the methods that specialists can use to help you recover from substance addiction.

It is important to understand from the start that cognitive behavioral therapy is not the same as psychoanalysis or person-centered therapy. We will explain in detail what these stand for and why they shouldn't be confused with CBT.

CBT is a popular approach that focuses on the interconnection of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The core of cognitive behavioral therapy relies on the influence that thoughts, feelings, or behaviors have on each other. If you have been asking about drug addiction treatments and your counselor mentioned the CBT method, what they mean is to help you regain control over your life by recognizing how your feelings impact your thoughts and behaviors, and the other way around.

So what does CBT mean, and how does it work for substance addiction recovery?

What CBT is NOT

As mentioned, cognitive behavioral therapy is not psychoanalysis or humanistic therapy (person-centered therapy).

Psychoanalysis is a Freud-inspired approach that focuses on the subconscious triggers for your behaviors. In person-centered therapy, the therapist plays a passive role, mostly helping you resolve issues independently.

What CBT IS

Cognitive behavioral therapy is a talk therapy engaging both the client and the therapist to explore how your feelings, thoughts, and behaviors are entwined.

At Impact Outpatient Program, our counselors use CBT to help you uncover thinking patterns that have a negative impact on your emotions and behaviors.

CBT is designed to equip you to recognize harmful patterns and make positive changes. For instance, if you have unpleasant feelings, you can actively modify them by changing your behavioral response or thoughts.

What is the purpose of cognitive behavioral therapy for addiction?

CBT is designed to enhance your awareness of the tight connection between your thoughts, actions, and the consequences of each.

Typically, CBT uses a system called ABC:

- A: the Activating event
- B: your Beliefs about the event
- C: the Consequences of your behaviors

The purpose of CBT is to give you the tools to recognize incorrect beliefs (or thoughts), so you are in a position to transform them and change your behavior.

Incorrect beliefs are often influenced by flawed perceptions, also called cognitive distortions. They act like a dark lens that affects your perception of the world, such as an all-or-nothing attitude, negative mental filter, or overgeneralization.

How CBT can be part of your addiction treatment

Our team at Impact Outpatient Program is committed to creating individualized plans for our clients. Therefore, one person may receive CBT as part of their intensive outpatient program during in-person appointments on-site, while someone else who's already further along the recovery path may choose CBT via telehealth appointments instead.

Additionally, CBT is likely to be one element of a more complex and involved treatment plan. We are dedicated to providing multiple pathways to recovery, using a variety of evidence-based programs and traditional approaches. For example, a person could receive cognitive behavioral therapy along with medication-assisted therapy.

Using CBT can help the person recognize negative patterns and change their behavioral response to an event. However, addiction is chemically induced, which means that the physical craving is likely to linger for a little while despite CBT. That is where combining treatments, such as medication-assisted therapy, can help reduce the urge to consume hard substances.

How can you combat negative patterns with CBT?

CBT helps you take the first step toward addiction recovery, as it enables you to identify thoughts and feelings that lead to addictive behaviors.

People also use cognitive behavioral therapy to replace their negative coping mechanisms and thoughts with positive and healthy beliefs.

Additionally, CBT can also be part of long-term recovery plans as the coping skills you discover can be applied to future potential triggers such as:

- Relapses
- Cravings
- High stress
- Emotional trauma
- Etc.

CBT has a great success track record based on studies observing its effectiveness in dealing with addiction, anxiety, and depression. It is important to note that while CBT provides self-awareness and healthy coping responses, it doesn't replace psychological support for individuals who have developed addictive behaviors following a traumatic experience. But it can be used in partnership with trauma resolution to help address addiction problems.
Are you wondering how cognitive behavioral therapy could help with your addiction issues? Do not hesitate to get in touch and fill out the admission form to find out if we are a match for you. Our counselors will be delighted to help you and organize a first appointment to find out more about your needs.

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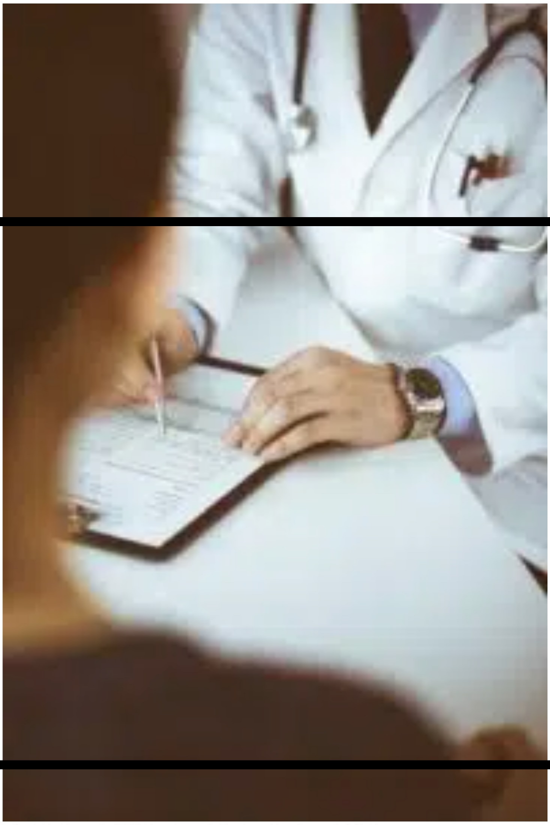

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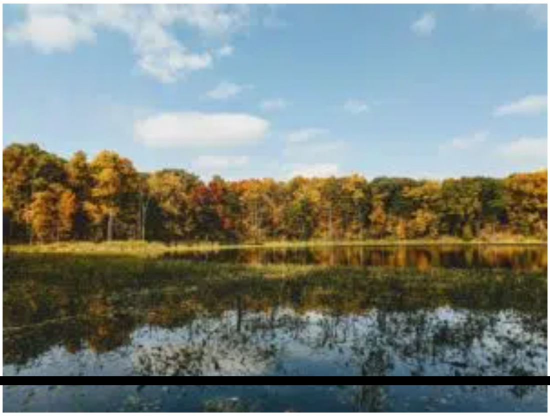

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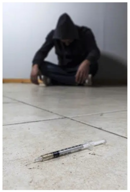

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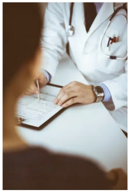

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