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Hybrid Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy

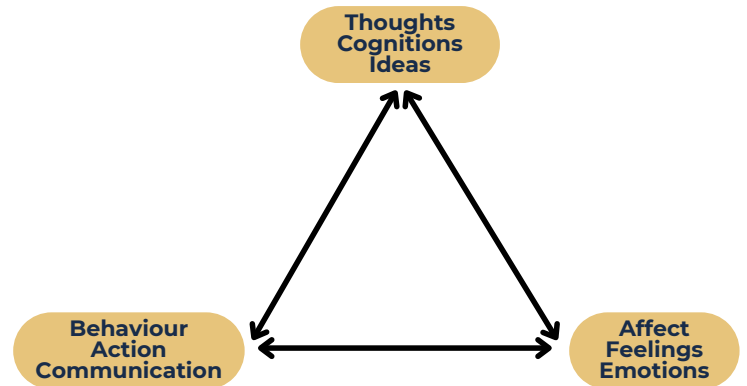
Cognitive-behavioural therapy (a form of psychotherapy or talk therapy) can be quite effective for improving our mental health, thought processes, and, indirectly, our physical and spiritual wellness. It has proven helpful for lowering stress, decreasing anxiety (heightened fear), overcoming addictive habits, weight loss and disordered eating, overcoming depression, and many other challenges we face in life.

“Mainstream” CBT has two main components. The **cognitive** component focuses on helping people examine and change negative thinking patterns, or what I like to call “Stink’n Think’n”. Through a process of positive reframing, we can gradually shift negative thought patterns into positive thought patterns. The underlying premise of the theory is that our **thoughts (cognitions) lead to feelings, which lead to action.** (See diagram)

Many of us have come to believe that if we want to change, we simply need to change how we behave. CBT, however, suggests that **we can have more permanent success by simply understanding and altering the thoughts that drive our negative behaviour.** For example, this can put an end to the repetitive cycles of “fad” or “on and off” behaviour that is so common, troubling, and even harmful. CBT may sound more simplistic than it is to actually put into practice; yet, it often requires only a few months of applying this approach in order to see positive changes

Discussing your thought patterns with a trained and experienced CBT therapist/coach may seem a bit strange. Just think of it as a “tune-up”. We regularly maintain things that are valuable or important to us, so why not treat yourself the same way?

Identifying positive thought shifts or reframes will alter the negative patterns of thought, feeling, and behaviour. Then we are able to consistently insert



these new thoughts, which require courage, hard work, and patience. This process can be positively referred to as **“mind management”** or a **“cognitive workout”**. This is because, as our thoughts are shifted from negative into positive, our emotions also become more positive, or “pumped up”. This positive emotional strength helps us minimize negative behaviours and build up more positive and satisfying behaviours.

The **behavioural** component of CBT seeks to change our actions and reactions. As our thoughts are shifted to become more positive, they have a positive influence on how we behave. Effective behavioural techniques include:

- emotional management strategies
- communication changes
- increasing self-awareness
- relaxation exercises
- parenting and relationship training
- family reforming
- reorganization strategies

These can help us to manage stress, improve our thought processing, psychological, social, mental, physical health, and even **lift our spirit!**

Traditional CBT is very useful, but what about our connection to others? The meaning we give to existence? In addition to our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, we are influenced by our connection to others



and to the world around us. **The meaning that we give to life and our experiences shape how we view both ourselves and the world.** This sense of soul or spirit influences our values and beliefs and has a huge impact on our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

Most of the time, we can choose our thoughts or interpretations about ourselves and others. We can also select our perception about events or situations. Many times, however, we are just “too busy” to really sit down and track our thoughts in order to assess how they make us feel. At other times, significant life events occur in such a way that make managing our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour extremely difficult. We can all benefit from support and assistance during challenging times in order to limit the regrowth of negativity.

What You Can Do Today

- Think of the behaviour that you would like to change.
- Take some time in the next few days to discover or uncover some of the negative thoughts that are connected to the negative emotions about that behaviour (e.g. anxiety, frustration, feeling tired, guilty, ashamed, etc.)
- Ask yourself how many times you think these negative thoughts. Hourly? Daily? Weekly? It adds up!

Consider This...

Imagine that your mind is a computer hard drive. Who initially stores information onto your hard drive? Yes, parents....and who else?

We tend to think that all of the thoughts in our mind are our own. However, society, the media, and the influences around us actually imprints on our mind, or hard drive.

We have both positive and negative stored in our minds. With some effective questions and conversation, we can uncover the negative thoughts and experiences that are fuelling what troubles us.

In keeping with the hard drive analogy, we can create more positive icons on our desktop and archive the negative ones. **We can become more effective managers of the wealth of information that is stored in our minds.** We can reorganize and upgrade our minds with a “mental health workout” that is proven to be effective. The results are well worth the effort.

Many find the help of a therapist or counsellor to be extremely helpful when implementing CBT techniques. **Ask to speak with one of our counsellors today!**