

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What can I do to get ready for CBT-D?

A: One of the first tasks in therapy is to set a few reasonable goals that will help you feel better. It would be helpful to think about what difficulties you would like to see improve. For example, consider which areas of your life, such as your personal relationships, work-related activities, social activities, or physical health, that you would like to improve.

Q: Can I receive CBT-D and take medication for depression?

A: Yes. Both CBT and medications have been shown to effectively treat depression and there is no reason that you cannot use both treatments at the same time. However, talk to your therapist about specific medications you are taking to address this further.

Q: How will I know if CBT-D has been helpful?

A: You will likely notice that your mood has improved by feeling less depressed, hopeless, and/or irritable. You and your provider may also track how much your depression has declined by using an outcome measure, such as the Patient Health Questionnaire.

Who We Are

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' Center for Deployment Psychology (CDP) trains military and civilian behavioral health professionals to provide high quality, culturally-sensitive, evidence-based behavioral health services to Service members, Veterans and their families.



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Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Depression

This brochure was adapted (with permission) from a Department of Veterans Affairs brochure on CBT-D.

What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Depression?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Depression (CBT-D) is one of the therapies recommended by the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense for the treatment of depression. CBT-D is based on years of research and has been shown to be very effective with nearly all types of people and age groups. Over 75% of people treated with CBT-D show improvement. This treatment is at least as effective as medications, although both CBT-D and medications can be helpful in the treatment of depression for some people. CBT-D typically requires 12 to 16 sessions to lead to significant improvement. Sessions last about 50 to 60 minutes when delivered individually and 90 minutes when delivered in a group.

If you decide to participate in CBT-D, you will be asked to:

- Attend sessions regularly
- Work with your therapist to set therapy goals
- Address the most important issues during each session
- Practice new CBT skills outside of session
- Provide feedback to your therapist about your progress and how the therapy is helpful to you



CBT-D is a short-term psychotherapy for treating symptoms of depression, which may include:

- Feeling sad, depressed or hopeless
- Experiencing loss of interest or pleasure in activities
- Feeling worthless or having extreme guilt
- Being irritable or agitated
- Having difficulty making decisions or concentrating
- Experiencing loss of energy or feeling fatigue
- Having an increase or decrease in appetite or sleep

What are the Goals of CBT-D?

The overall goal of CBT-D is to improve the symptoms of depression by helping you develop more balanced and helpful thoughts about yourself, others, and the future, and by helping you spend more time engaging in pleasurable and/or productive activities. CBT-D can help you achieve personal goals and solve problems by learning and practicing new skills.

What Will I Be Doing in CBT-D?

Throughout the course of CBT-D treatment you will:

- Work with your therapist to establish specific treatment goals
- Learn new ways of thinking about situations
- Learn ways to cope with problems that come up in the future, even after therapy has ended
- Use the information learned during the therapy sessions and apply it to your everyday life to help you feel better

These new skills will help relieve your depression and help you move forward in your life.