



Top 10 Strategies for Effective CBT Sessions

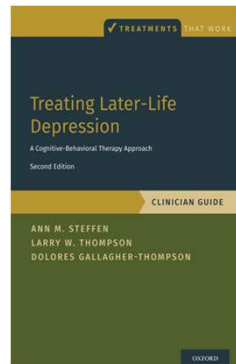
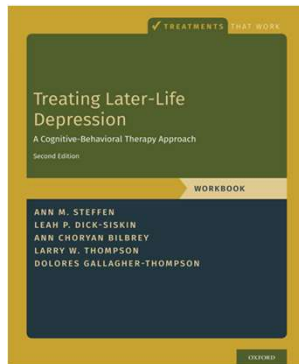
Ann M. Steffen, PhD, ABPP



1



Conflict of Interest



2

Today's Handouts

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THERAPY

Who Provides Psychotherapy?
Most people, at one time or another, seek some help. For many, talking with a therapist helps them understand why they're having their life. Sometimes people seek therapy at the advice of a physician or health agency. Sometimes it's something that comes in a particular crisis that causes a person to decide to go to therapy. And many times people enter therapy to gain insight and to support about themselves and to achieve personal growth. Psychotherapy is for anyone who is unhappy with the way they feel or live, and wants to change.

What is Psychotherapy?
In general terms, psychotherapy is a relationship in which one person assists the professional and another for the purpose of bringing about changes in how he or she thinks, feels, acts, and behaves. The task of the psychotherapist, therefore, is to help individuals make the changes they wish to make. Sometimes the person entering therapy knows change is needed but doesn't know what changes to make or how to go about making them. A psychotherapist helps the person figure this out.

How do psychotherapists go about helping a client? It depends upon the therapist's training and theoretical orientation. This orientation will affect the therapist's skills and focus, as well as the methods and techniques used in psychotherapy. Most therapeutic orientations fall under three general categories: Behavior Therapy, Psychoanalytic/Personodynamic Therapy, and Humanistic Therapy.

Behavioral Therapies
Behaviorally oriented therapies practice a particular kind of therapy known as behavior therapy. Behavior therapy involves the application of findings from behavioral science research to help individuals change in the way they would like to change. Behavior therapy places a strong emphasis on the principles of learning and on how these learning principles can be used in a person's life. There is also an emphasis in behavior therapy on developing up on how effective the therapy is for the individual and on evaluating the client's progress. Most behaviorally oriented therapists believe that the current environment is more important in affecting the person's present behavior. The procedures used by behavior therapists are generally intended to improve the individual's well-being by expanding the person's skills and abilities. Most all behavior therapy programs emphasize and the practice of new behaviors as part of their therapy.

Another type of behavior therapy is cognitive behavior therapy or cognitive therapy. Cognitive therapists believe that many problems stem from irrational and dysfunctional thoughts, ideas, and beliefs, and that these thoughts may affect a person's behavior and emotions. The goal of cognitive behavioral therapy is to modify a client's way of thinking so that a change in behavior and

What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?
Behavior Therapy and Cognitive Behavior Therapy are types of therapies that are based on research findings. These approaches are aimed at achieving specific change in goals.

Changes or goals might include:
• A way of seeing the meaning and value of one's life
• A way of feeling, but learning to communicate with their own emotions
• A way of thinking, that changing beliefs about food and health issues
• A way of relating, that recognizing healthy sources of being a person and how to get and being a meaningful life
• Behavior Therapy and cognitive behavior Therapy usually focus more on the current or future problems and how they affect the person's present life and work rather than the person's past life and work. Behavior Therapy and cognitive behavior Therapy are usually used with children, students, and for those who have a way of thinking that they are not used with some of their work, and giving people more control over their lives, and a sense of purpose of behavior and goals.

HOW TO GET HELP: If you are looking for help for yourself or someone else, you may be directed to call someone who offers them a local consultation or someone who has a list of therapists. You may or may not find a competent therapist in this manner. It is best to check on the credentials of a therapist. The best way to do this is to contact the American Psychological Association, or to contact the Behavior and Cognitive Therapy or the American Psychological Association. Of course, they should be able to help you find a therapist who has experience or special health facilities or who is trained in the treatment of your problem.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND ETHNIC FACTORS IN BEHAVIOR AND COGNITIVE THERAPY: The American Psychological Association (APA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) are committed to the advancement of a socially responsible and culturally sensitive approach to the understanding, assessment, and treatment of mental illness. This includes the recognition of the unique and often complex and often overlapping experiences and applications of behavioral, cognitive, and other approaches to the treatment of mental illness and substance use and abuse.


TipSheet: Within-Session Strategies

1. Begin session with warm greeting: "It is good to see you/ hear your voice" (instead of "How are you doing?")
2. Discuss client's values and strengths early and throughout treatment.
3. Set agenda with client for use of phrases ("What 1 or 2 topics are most important to work on today?")
4. Write agenda on whiteboard/ screenshare so it is visible throughout session.
5. Collaborate during first two sessions on acceptable way for you to interrupt. Consistently use that signal.
6. Facilitate consistent use of a session preparation sheet ahead of each session.
7. End a summary after each point has been covered in session. Facilitate consistent use of a written summary of key points at end of each session.
8. Say client's name, then pause, to direct attention ahead of important points.
9. Use written materials every session to facilitate deeper processing of content and improved memory via dual coding.
10. Refer to and prepare for therapy termination process, including planned booster sessions throughout treatment.

Oxford University Press: *Treatments That Work*
Later Life Depression, Clinician Guide (2nd ed)

3


Learning Objectives



Describe foundational assumptions of all CBTs



Identify common within-session barriers



Discuss within-session strategies that enhance therapy outcomes

4

What is Cognitive Behavior Therapy?

Behavior Therapy and Cognitive Behavior Therapy are types of treatment that are based firmly on research findings.

These approaches aid people in achieving specific changes or goals.

Association of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies
ABCT.org

5

What is Cognitive Behavior Therapy?

ABCT.org

Changes or goals might involve:

- A way of acting:** like smoking less or being more outgoing
- A way of feeling:** like helping a person to be less scared, less depressed, or less anxious
- A way of thinking:** like learning to problem-solve or get rid of self-defeating thoughts
- A way of dealing with physical or medical problems:** like lessening back pain or helping a person stick to a doctor's suggestions

6

“Think” Rules of CBT

Kanfer & Schefft (1988)

Think Behavior – Define problems and goals as specific behaviors instead of general or abstract concepts;

Think Solution – Consider what to try before the next session to make the situation better;

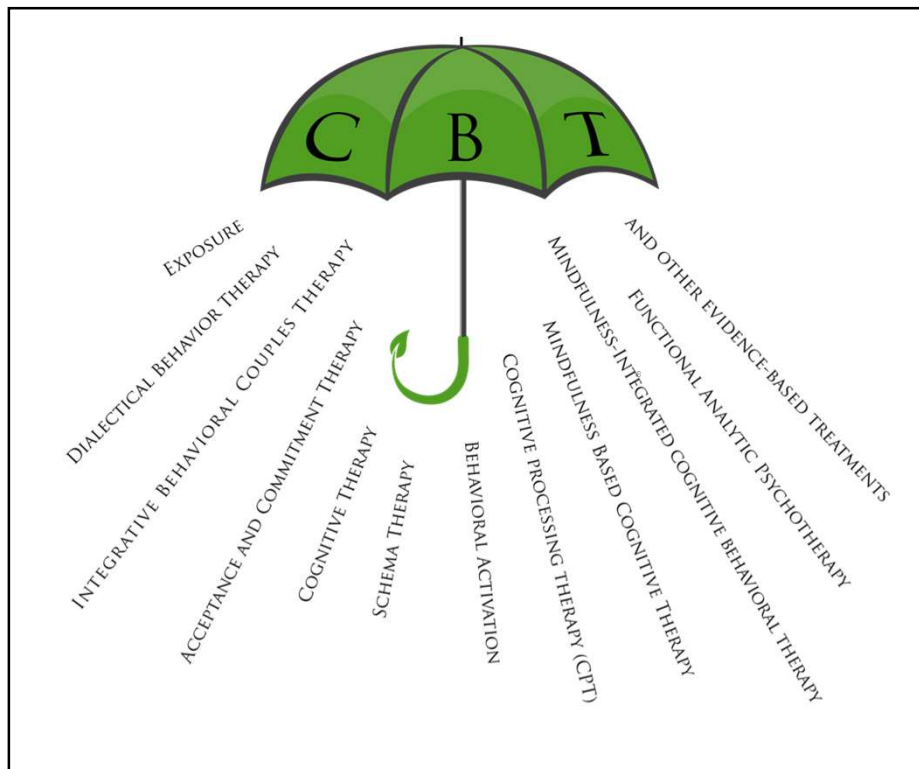
Think Positive – Identify personal strengths and the positive aspects of any event or change effort, while validating concerns and difficulties;

Think Small Steps – Break larger goals into smaller pieces to increase likelihood of success and reward efforts;

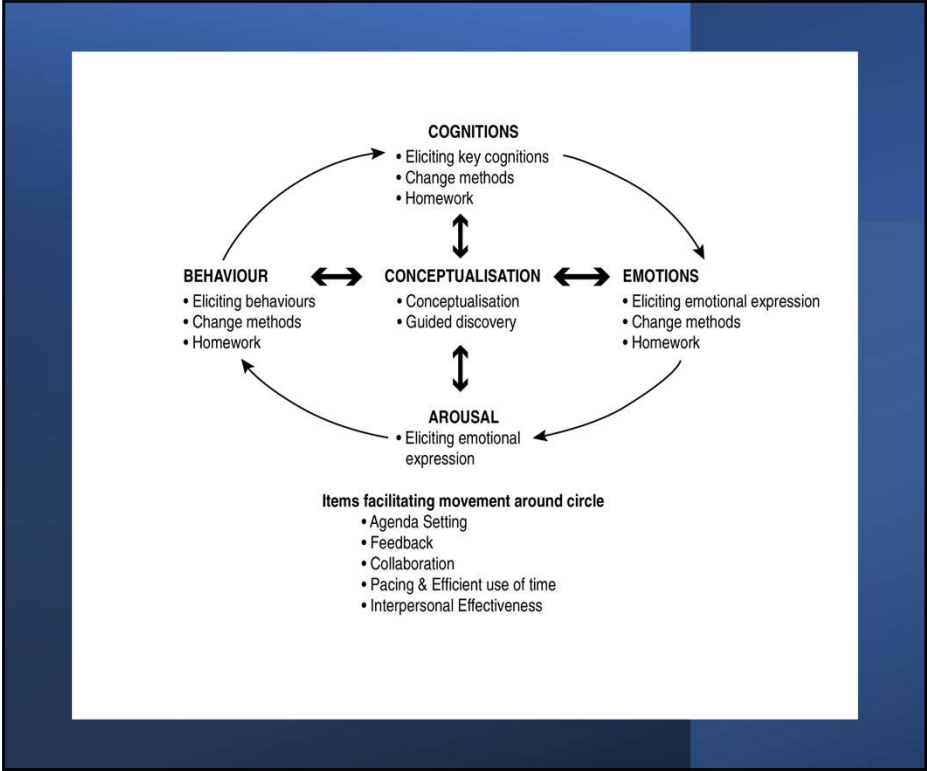
Think Flexible – Spend time in session preparing for the unexpected and develop back-up plans;

Think Future – Keep therapy focused on future events rather than the past and facilitate planning and rehearsal.

7



8



9

Strategy #10

Orient to CBT Expectations

10

Strategy #10

Orient to CBT Expectations

What to Expect from Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)

Therapist/Clinician Role

You can expect that your therapist/clinician:

- is an expert on the latest techniques in CBT, as well as experienced in working with middle-aged and older adults.
- will work very hard to understand your problems.
- will help you learn the skills you need to reach your goals.
- will maintain continuity from session to session and make every effort to reschedule appointments if one is missed or cancelled.

Patient Role

As a patient, you are expected

- to be open with your therapist about your concerns and any difficulties you are having with the material.
- to arrive on time for sessions and call in advance if you need to cancel or reschedule.
- to practice skills between sessions and let your therapist know when you have trouble completing home practice.
- to consider how a close family member or friend may help support your developing skills to manage your depression.

The Collaborative Relationship

Both you and your therapist will:

- work together to understand the problems that led to therapy.
- define goals and track progress on specific goals.
- plan ("set the agenda") for how session time will be used.
- support your working together as a team, by sharing feedback with each other at the end of each session.
- discuss how therapy is and isn't helping with specific goals through the end of therapy.

Steffen et al., 2021
@ Oxford Press

11

Strategy #9

Set Clear Therapy Goals

(and remind clients of these goals at beginning of each session)

12

Strategy #9

Set Clear Therapy Goals

(Bern Inventory – list of 64 possible therapy goals to select from)

Client: _____ Date: _____
 Therapist: _____

Bern Inventory of Treatment Goals (US - 1/0)
Goals Checklist

Setting goals is an important part of psychotherapy. That's why we'd like to learn about your personal goals for therapy.
 To help you formulate your therapy goals, we're providing the list below. The list is divided into five sections. In the left column, we've listed broad content areas. In the right column, we've listed specific therapy goals.

- Carefully read through the list and mark each goal you'd like to pursue in therapy.
- If you have a specific personal goal that you can't find in the list, please describe it in your own words on the lines provided.
- At the end of the list, please describe how each goal fits in with your specific life situation, and indicate the importance of each goal.

Thank you for providing this important information.

Coping with Specific Problems and Symptoms

With the help of therapy, I'd like to ...

Depressive experiences	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 ... learn how to cope with my negative thoughts, ruminations, or sense of guilt.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 ... find a way out of my negative mood, sadness, or sense of inner emptiness.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 ... learn how to cope with my moodiness or mood fluctuations.
Self-injury	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 ... gain more drive and energy.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 ... learn how to stop physically hurting or injuring myself.
Fears or anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 ... overcome my suicidal thoughts or regain the desire to live.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 ... learn how to overcome a specific fear or how to cope with it.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 ... learn how to master anxiety or panic attacks.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 ... learn how to be among people without acting insecurely (e.g., blushing, stuttering).
Obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 ... learn how to do things again that I've been avoiding because of my fear.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 11 ... learn how to control recurring thoughts or impulses that have been bothering me.
<input type="checkbox"/> 12 ... learn how to limit repetitive, time-consuming, or senseless behaviors.	

Can you think of other goals for therapy that didn't fit with any of the categories?

... please continue on the next page.

- 7 -

Self-related Goals

With the help of therapy, I'd like to ...

Attitude towards myself	<input type="checkbox"/> 54 ... gain self-confidence or become more self-assured.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 55 ... learn to accept myself the way I am.
Desires and Wishes	<input type="checkbox"/> 48 ... clarify my needs and desires and learn how to express them more effectively.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 57 ... figure out what my limits are and how to act accordingly.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 58 ... learn how to pursue my goals and plans more effectively.
Performance, Control, and Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> 59 ... learn how to make decisions more independently.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 60 ... learn how to finish projects I've started.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 61 ... learn how to adjust overly high expectations I have in myself or others.
Dealing with Feelings	<input type="checkbox"/> 62 ... learn how to delegate responsibility and control.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 63 ... allow myself to experience feelings and express them more effectively.
	<input type="checkbox"/> 64 ... learn how to deal with strong negative feelings (e.g., anger, rage).

13

Strategy #9

Set Clear Therapy Goals

(and then prioritize!)

After you've completed the checklist, please write your goals on this page. If you've marked more than five goals, please indicate here your five most important goals (it's also okay to have fewer than five goals).

- Start by putting the numbers of your most important goals into the boxes below (one number per box).
- Then, describe in your own words how each goal fits into your personal life situation. Try to be as concrete and specific as possible.

Goal Number:

Goal Number:

Goal Number:

Goal Number:

Goal Number:

14

Strategy #8

**Start Behavioral,
Not Cognitive**



The image contains three distinct visual elements. At the top right is an orange silhouette of a person walking, representing behavior. At the bottom left is a yellow diamond-shaped sign with the word 'CAUTION' in black capital letters. At the bottom right is a graphic of a white outline of a human head in profile, facing left. Inside the head is a brain with the word 'idea' written on it. Surrounding the brain are several colorful lightbulbs (red, yellow, green, blue, purple) with glowing filaments, symbolizing cognitive processes or ideas.

15

Strategy #7

Identify Specific CBT Change Strategies

The main body of this slide is a large, empty white rectangular area, intended for identifying specific CBT change strategies.

16

Strategy #7

Identify Specific CBT Change Strategies

- ✓ Self-Regulation
- ✓ Behavioral Activation
- ✓ Social Skills
- ✓ Emotion Regulation
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Principles of Positive Psychology
- ✓ Acceptance
- ✓ Clinical Functional Analysis
- ✓ Skills Training
- ✓ Exposure
- ✓ Cognitive Reappraisal
- ✓ Problem Solving

Focus on **no more than 2** at any point in CBT!

17

Strategy #6

Think of Therapy Skills as Habits

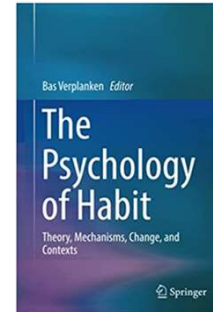
18

Strategy #6

Think of Therapy Skills as Habits

CBT is focused on systematically helping patients build healthier habits

- Habit formation and change requires repetition, overlearning, development of backup plans during high stress
- CBT uses the science of habit architecture to help us do this



19

Strategy #6

Think of Therapy Skills as Habits

Provide education about what emotions are (and are not). This helps us move away from myth that simply talking about upsetting events is enough to produce change



20

Strategy #5

Stay Specific, Not Abstract

21

Strategy #5

Stay Specific, Not Abstract

Abstract discussions create
problems in targeting
specific change

Work with specifics/details
(certain day & time & place)



22

Strategy #4

Teach Problem-Solving Skills

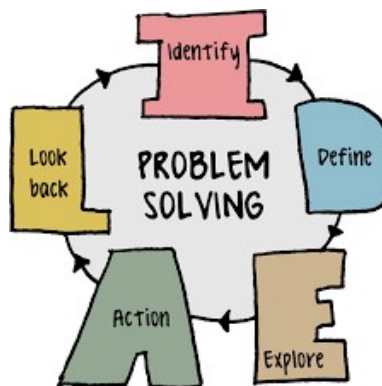
When therapy sessions become filled each time with problems of the week, focus on problem solving skills

23

Strategy #4

Teach Problem-Solving Skills

When therapy sessions become filled each time with problems of the week, focus on problem solving skills



24

Strategy #3

Start Session with Warm Greeting

25

Strategy #3

Start Each Session with Warm Greeting

Instead of:
“How has your week been? What would you like to talk about today?”



Say:
“It is good to see you! Let’s start by reviewing how you are doing & then making a short list of topics for our time together today”

26

Strategy #2

Use Written Session Preparation & Session Summaries

27

Strategy #2a

Use Written Session Preparation

Date of my next session:

Name of person helping me:

My instructions: Either the day before or morning of my next session, I should spend no more than 10 minutes to write down a few words or phrases.

1. What did we talk about/work on in our most recent session?
2. Did I have a specific home practice assignment? Something I was supposed to read, write or do? What was that?
3. Did I have any problems with that? Learn anything new? Did anyone help me with this?
4. What do I want my therapist to know about the past week? Any major changes in my condition or life?
5. What would I like to be sure to talk about in this upcoming session?

Steffen et al., 2021
@ Oxford Press

28

Strategy #2b

Use Written Session Summaries

Date of session:

Name of person helping me:

1. Today we focused on:
2. I'd especially like to remember:
3. Before my next appointment, I am going to specifically work on:
4. Is there anyone in my life who could support me as I work on this?
What do I want to ask them?
5. My next appointment is on _____ at _____ am/pm

Steffen et al., 2021
@ Oxford Press

29

Strategy #1

Measurement-Based Care

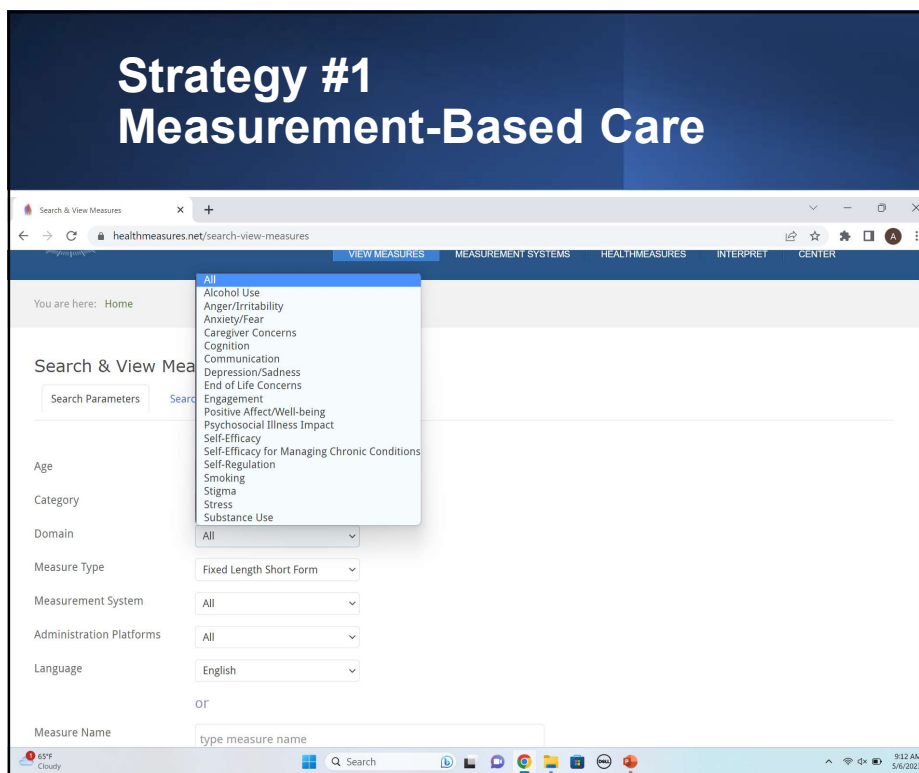
Bases clinical care on client data collected throughout treatment -
also called Routine Outcome Monitoring

Patient Reported Outcome Measures are most common

30



31



32

Strategy #1 Measurement-Based Care

PSYCHLOPS PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTCOME PROFILES

<http://www.psychlops.org.uk/>

33

Strategy #1 Measurement-Based Care

A questionnaire about you and how you are feeling – now that you are starting therapy



Question 1

a. Choose the problem that troubles you most. (Please write it in the box below.)

b. How much has it affected you over the last week? (Please tick one box below.)

Not at all affected 0 1 2 3 4 5 Severely affected

c. How long ago were you first concerned about this problem? (Please tick one box below.)

Under one month Between one and three months Over three months but under one year One to five years Over five years

Question 2

a. Choose another problem that troubles you. (Please write it in the box below.)

b. How much has it affected you over the last week? (Please tick one box below.)

Not at all affected 0 1 2 3 4 5 Severely affected

c. How long ago were you first concerned about this problem? (Please tick one box below.)

Under one month Between one and three months Over three months but under one year One to five years Over five years

Question 3

a. Choose one thing that is hard to do because of your problem (or problems). (Please write it in the box below.)

b. How hard has it been to do this thing over the last week? (Please tick one box below.)

Not at all hard 0 1 2 3 4 5 Very hard

Question 4

How have you felt in yourself this last week? (Please tick one box below.)

Very good 0 1 2 3 4 5 Very bad



This questionnaire is called the Psychological Outcome Profile questionnaire (POP) (2005). The Psychop, Version 5. See www.psychlops.org. All rights reserved © 2012, School of Population Health and Environmental Sciences, King's College London.

34

Strategy #1 Measurement-Based Care

A questionnaire about you and how you are feeling – now that you are starting therapy



Question 1

a Choose the problem that troubles you most. (Please write it in the box below.)

b How much has it affected you over the last week? (Please tick one box below.)

Not at all affected 0 1 2 3 4 5 Severely affected

c How long ago were you first concerned about this problem? (Please tick one box below.)

Under one month Between one and three months Over three months but under one year One to five years Over five years

35

Strategy #1 Measurement-Based Care

A questionnaire about you and how you are feeling – now that you are having therapy



Question 1

a This is the problem you said troubled you the most when we first asked. (Therapist, please write it in the box below.)

b How much has it affected you over the last week? (Please tick one box below.)

Not at all affected 0 1 2 3 4 5 Severely affected

Question 2

a This is the other problem you said troubled you when we first asked. (Therapist, please write it in the box below.)

b How much has it affected you over the last week? (Please tick one box below.)

Not at all affected 0 1 2 3 4 5 Severely affected

Question 3

a This is the thing you said was hard to do when we first asked. (Therapist, please write it in the box below.)

b How hard has it been to do this thing over the last week? (Please tick one box below.)

Not at all hard 0 1 2 3 4 5 Very hard

Question 4

How have you felt in yourself this last week? (Please tick one box below.)

Very good 0 1 2 3 4 5 Very bad

Question 5

a Now that you are having therapy, you may have found that other problems have become important. If so, please write the one that troubles you most in the box below. At least 2 days. (If no other problems have become important, please leave blank.)

b How much have these other problems affected you over the last week? (Please tick one box below, or none based if no other problems have become important.)

Not at all affected 0 1 2 3 4 5 Severely affected



This questionnaire is valid for Psychological Outcomes Profiles and the Utah Psychological Outcomes Profile. Copyright © 2011, University of Utah. All rights reserved. For more information, please contact the Utah Psychological Outcomes Profile Development Team.

Client ID:

36

Fact Sheets abct.org

Fact Sheets of ABCT - ABCT - Association

abct.org/fact-sheets/

Forum/List Serve Donate Contact Us Join My Membership


ABCT ASSOCIATION for BEHAVIORAL and COGNITIVE THERAPIES

Home About ABCT Get Help For Professionals For Students Convention and CE eLearning

Find a CBT Therapist Search through our directory of local clinicians. Zip Code Distance Search

Fact Sheets of ABCT


FACT SHEETS

 ABCT is pleased to offer the growing archive of "Fact Sheets" listed below.

Fact Sheets provide an introduction to the disorder, its symptoms, and likely treatment approaches (with a particular emphasis on cognitive and behavioral strategies).

If you are interested in learning more about how a therapist might work with you or a family member to solve problems and improve the quality of life, please consult our fact sheet, [What to Expect From Therapy and Guidelines for Choosing a Therapist](#).

[About Fact Sheet Writers](#)



Adolescent and Young Adults With Cancer

The effects of a cancer diagnosis and treatment may be especially upsetting for people diagnosed as adolescents and young adults.

Select a Category

General Information

Populations

- Adolescents (13-17)
- Adults (18-64)
- Adults (65+)
- Black / Indigenous / People of Color
- Children (Under 12)
- Families
- LGBTQ+
- Military and Veterans

65°F Cloudy 8:44 AM 5/18/2023

37

Q & A Discussion



38