



Accurate Clinic

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www.AccurateClinic.com

Cognitive Behavioral Training (CBT) and Chronic Pain Management

How our Thoughts, Feelings, and Actions affect Pain

When the pain signal is experienced and processed in the brain certain thoughts, memories and emotions may be activated. So, when a person experiences pain s/he will have some emotional responses to it and will experience certain thoughts and/or images during or immediately following the pain. Similarly, thoughts and emotions that have activated in the brain may also affect the pain signal. In other words, our thoughts, memories, and emotions can influence the experience of pain physiologically.

Our negative, unrealistic thoughts about pain and other life events can have a significant and negative impact on how we perceive pain sensations, how we feel emotionally, and what we do when we are in pain. When we think negatively, we are more likely to feel emotionally distressed, which can result in 1) muscle tension, making the pain worse, and 2) a hyper-aroused state in our nervous system, activating more pain messages in our bodies, leading to more pain. When we think negatively, we are also more likely to engage in self-defeating behaviors (e.g., inactivity, social isolation, over reliance on medications), which can also affect our pain. Often times, the thoughts and images we have about our pain and life events in the moment are related to underlying beliefs. Most people who have chronic pain have beliefs about their pain (i.e., “the pain has taken over my life”), themselves (“my pain makes me a weak person”), and their bodies (“my body is broken”), their relationships with others (“my doctors don’t care about my pain”, “no one understands what I am going through”) and about their future (“I am doomed to be pain-ridden forever”).

CBT and Chronic Pain Management

CBT addresses the importance of realistic, healthy beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in reducing emotional and physical suffering associated with pain. CBT is geared toward identifying any emotional, cognitive, behavioral, physiological, and/or environmental (e.g. family, social, cultural, and societal) difficulties that might be influencing the experience of pain. Although it is rare for clients to become pain free, cognitive therapy teaches people how to reduce their pain, how to be less affected by their pain, and enhance their functioning in various life roles.

CBT sessions focus on helping clients learn to cope with their pain and their lives by learning: 1) to think more realistically about their pain and other life events, 2) to relax more effectively than before (by using deep breathing techniques and relaxation exercises), 3) to manage their activities given their pain, 4) to communicate in an assertive manner with others including their physicians, family members, and friends about their pain, and 5) to solve problems related to pain and other life stresses. The course of cognitive behavioral therapy typically starts with a focus on pain management and then moves to other concerns or issues. The primary target for changes is client’s negative, unrealistic thoughts, images, and beliefs about their pain, the consequences of having pain, and other life stresses. Cognitive behavioral therapist also help client’s identify behaviors that exacerbate pain and stress and teach clients new coping strategies as well as adaptive, health behaviors.

Information taken from www.academyofct.org



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Please make an appointment with our psychotherapist for training in cognitive behavior therapy.

Online **free** self-help CBT courses:

- Standard computer web page: <http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/cbtstep1.htm>
- Mobile phone web page: <http://www.get.gg/mobile/step1.php>
- CBT course *download*: <http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/SelfHelpCourse.pdf>
- Guided Relaxation, Meditation **free** downloads: <http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/gallery1.htm>

Main website for additional **free** Self-Help courses: <http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/>

Neuroplasticity: www.Neuroplastix.com

Books

“Your Brain on Pain” by Michael Moskowitz MD - a great book on adapting to and reducing pain