

CBT for Depression

How cognitive behavioral therapy can help you feel less stuck.



1. What CBT Is

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an evidence-based approach that helps you notice how your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are connected.

It teaches practical tools to challenge unhelpful patterns and create healthier, more balanced ways of thinking and acting.



2. Why CBT Helps Depression

Depression can shape how you think, feel, and act—often keeping you stuck in cycles that are hard to break.

CBT can help you identify negative thought patterns, increase balanced thinking, build coping skills, and support small behavior changes that improve your mood over time.



3. Common Thought Traps



All-or-nothing thinking:

Seeing things in extremes—good or bad, success or failure.



Catastrophizing:

Expecting the worst possible outcome and feeling overwhelmed.



Discounting the positive:

Dismissing good things or focusing only on what went wrong.



Labeling:

Putting a negative label on yourself or others.



Mind reading:

Assuming you know what others are thinking.



“Should” statements:

Holding rigid rules about how you or others should be.



4. What CBT May Help You Practice

- **Challenging automatic thoughts:**
Notice unhelpful thoughts and gently question whether they're accurate or helpful.
- **Testing whether a thought is fully true:**
Look for evidence for and against your thought and consider other possible explanations.
- **Problem-solving:**
Break problems into smaller steps and explore options that can help.
- **Self-compassion:**
Speak to yourself with kindness, understanding, and patience.
- **Activity scheduling:**
Plan small, meaningful activities that support mood and motivation.
- **Taking one small helpful action:**
Choose one doable step today—progress builds hope.



A thought pattern
I notice most:



One situation
that triggers it:



One small action
I can try this week:
