

psychotherapy for depression



Depression can be treated with medical treatments such as antidepressant medication or electroconvulsive therapy, and psychotherapy. Please see your medical doctor or psychiatrist for more information about medical treatments as this will not be discussed in this handout.

We're now going to talk briefly about two psychological therapies that have been proven to be effective most of the time. You might have come across words such as "best practice" "evidence-based practice," "evidence-based treatment" or "evidence-supported therapy." These words refer to a particular type of treatment or therapy that has been evaluated and has proven to be effective. For the treatment of depression, the evidence-supported therapies include cognitive therapy and behaviour therapy.

Cognitive Therapy

The aim of cognitive therapy is to help individuals realise that they can influence their mood by identifying and changing their thoughts and beliefs. When people are depressed, they often think very negative thoughts about themselves, their lives, and their future. This further worsens their mood. Cognitive therapy focuses on discovering and challenging unhelpful assumptions and beliefs, and developing helpful and balanced thoughts. Cognitive therapy is also structured, time-limited, and focused on the 'here-and-now.' This form of treatment for depression has been proven to be effective when individuals are able to acquire the skills that are being taught in therapy.



Behaviour Therapy

Depressed people tend to feel lethargic and unmotivated. They often stay at home and avoid going out and interacting with people. As such, they may miss out on opportunities that help lift their mood. Behaviour therapy aims to identify and change aspects of behaviour that may perpetuate or worsen the depression. Some behavioural strategies include: goal setting, activity scheduling, social skills training, and structured problem solving.



In Summary

These two therapies have been shown to be effective most of the time. Often, a combination of these therapies are offered for people who experience depression. This information package focuses on providing information on the cognitive and behavioural aspects of depression, which includes suggested strategies for how you could better manage your mood.