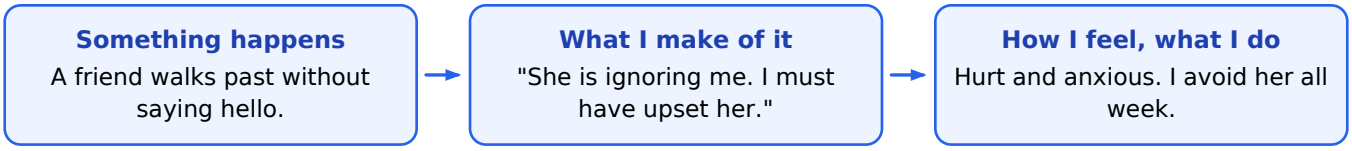
What is CBT?

A short guide to cognitive behavioural therapy and how we will use it.

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a practical, structured kind of talking therapy. It looks at how the way you think about things, and the way you respond to them, affect how you feel. It is one of the most researched therapies and is recommended for many common difficulties, including anxiety, low mood, panic, OCD and trauma.

The basic idea

How we feel often depends less on the situation itself than on what we make of it and what we do next. Two people can get the same text message and feel completely different, depending on how they read it.



A different reading ("She looked miles away, she probably did not see me") leads to a different feeling and a different response. CBT helps you notice these readings, check them out, and try new responses.

What CBT involves

- **Working together.** You know your own life, and I know how these difficulties tend to work, so we work it out between us.
- **A focus on now.** We may look at where things came from, but most of the work is on what keeps the problem going today.
- **Clear goals.** We agree what you want to be different and keep checking how it is going.
- **Trying things out.** Change happens between sessions as much as in them. We will agree small things to practise or test.
- **Learning skills.** The aim is that you learn to do this for yourself and need me less over time.

What it asks of you

1. You do not need to have things worked out before you come.
2. Say what is going through your mind as openly as you can, even if it seems silly or embarrassing.
3. Try the between-session practice and tell me honestly how it went. If something did not work, that is useful to know.

> **Note**
> CBT is not positive thinking, and nobody will tell you that your feelings are wrong. The aim is to see things accurately, including yourself.

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