

## The foundation of all Cognitive behavioural techniques are;

- Uncovering Automatic Thoughts
- Changing Patterns of Limited Thinking
- Changing Hot Thoughts

CBT is based on 5 key areas (or elements), which we know strongly, influence each other and give rise to patterns of thought, behaviour and emotions. In all cases of psychological distress there will be patterns of thought, feelings and behaviour that maintain and exacerbate difficulties and distress. Sometimes clients will recognise some of these patterns, but more commonly they are not fully aware of the ones that maintain their difficulties.

The 5 interacting elements in CBT are:

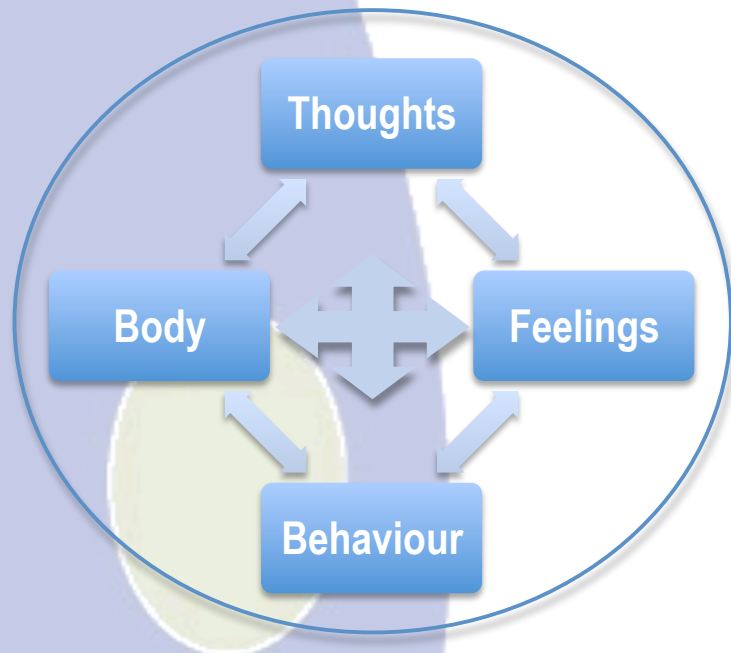
THOUGHTS = Our thoughts and beliefs

BEHAVIOUR = What we do or don't do

BODY = Our physical reactions

FEELINGS = Our mood

ENVIRONMENT = Our circumstances and relationships (represented by the circle)



Many of our thoughts are actually “Automatic thoughts” In response to a variety of triggers. These thoughts occur without us having to think about them. They just pop up and can be in the form of verbal thoughts or images.

Often we are not aware we are having automatic thoughts or we are not aware that we are having an emotional response to our thoughts.

Automatic thoughts are an integral part of all our thinking processes and many will reflect underlying beliefs that we have about ourselves and about the world in general.

Thoughts are closely linked to our mood and feelings and this state is closely linked to our thoughts.

If we feel anxious we will experience anxious thoughts and if we are having anxious thoughts we will feel anxious. If we feel depressed we will have a series of depressed negative automatic thoughts and because we are feeling low we feel even more depressed and so on.

Our physical responses and our behaviour also change in response to our thoughts and mood and these

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in turn influence our thoughts and mood.

It is this interaction between the different elements that establish both the short term and long-term patterns (or loops) that maintain psychological distress. In CBT these are often referred to as “vicious circles”.

The object of CBT is to identify and change these patterns in order to secure immediate benefit and to understand how these patterns emerged in order to maintain improvement in the long term.

CBT intervenes at the level of thinking by **helping people to identify and then change ‘faulty’ automatic thoughts and the associated core beliefs that are contributing to distress.**

**This is accomplished through**

- ☑ **Information giving (client learns new ways of looking at environment, feelings, behaviour)**
- ☑ **The developing of an awareness of the unhelpful thoughts and beliefs**
- ☑ **Behavioural tasks assigned that help the client discover their personal patterns**
- ☑ **Experimental tasks where the client tries out new behaviours, beliefs etc.**