



# **Recovery from Depression – The role of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**

Depression affects over 50 million people across the country, and it is a growing issue among our population as well. Especially during the pandemic, the incidence of depression and other mental health disorders has increased exponentially. So, a little bit more about the disorder. Depression is a serious mental health disorder that has a significant negative effect on how you feel, how you think, how you perceive the world around you, and how you behave as well. It causes deep feelings of sadness that are different from grief and causes a person to lose interest in their daily activities. The result? Myriad physical and emotional health problems in a person's professional/ academic or personal life.

Recovery from depression is possible, but the key for recovery to be smooth and proper is to ensure early recognition of symptoms. Post identification of symptoms, it is crucial to seek help from a mental health professional. Help can also be sought from a multidisciplinary team that includes a psychologist, psychiatrist, family therapist, and more. Treatment can include medication, psychotherapy, family therapy, occupational therapy, and rehabilitation. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, however, is seen to be very effective in treating depression.



# What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a type of psychotherapy that helps in treating multiple mental health disorders. Through this treatment process, individuals learn how to identify and change disturbing thought patterns that have a complete negative influence on a person's emotions and behavior. CBT focuses on transforming the negative thoughts that influence and worsen emotional difficulties, depression, and even anxiety. Usually, the spontaneous occurrence of negative thoughts leads to a complete breakdown in the functioning of a person. Further, through CBT, these thoughts and notions are identified, and the therapist helps a person challenge these thoughts and replace them with more rational thoughts.

## Types of CBT

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy comprises multiple techniques and approaches that address a person's thought patterns, emotions, and patterns of behavior. The different types of CBT include structured psychotherapy, self-help materials, and more. The different types of CBT can be listed as follows:

- **Cognitive Therapy:** This type of CBT centers on identifying and changing thinking patterns and emotional responses. This therapy transforms them from inaccurate in nature to healthier thought patterns, emotional responses, and behavioral patterns.

- **Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT):** Through this therapeutic approach, the therapist helps a person address thoughts and behaviors. Post this, the therapist helps the individual inculcate emotional regulation and the act of mindfulness. Mindfulness refers to being aware of one's surroundings without judgment, to understand one's situation better.
- **Multimodal Therapy:** This form of CBT addresses seven distinct but connected modalities within a person that include behavior, affect, sensation, imagery, cognition, interpersonal factors, and biological considerations.
- **Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT):** This form of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy helps a person identify irrational beliefs. The therapist then helps the person challenge these beliefs, and eventually learns to recognize and change these negative and irrational thought patterns.





## How does CBT help in treating depression?

CBT sessions allow you to identify current life events that may be causing or contributing to your mental health issues, such as anxiety or depression. You and your therapist can use CBT to discover thought patterns or erroneous beliefs that are no longer benefitting you. This is not the same as psychoanalysis. Working backward through your life history to find an unconscious cause of the difficulties you're having is the goal of this sort of therapy.

As part of CBT, you may be requested to keep a diary. The journal is a location where you may keep track of important events in your life as well as your reactions to them. Your therapist can assist you in categorizing your emotions and mental patterns into self-defeating thought patterns (also known as cognitive distortions) and healthy thought patterns.

## These may include the following:

01 Thinking in absolute, black-and-white terms is known as **all-or-nothing** thinking.

02 Rejecting favorable experiences by claiming they "don't count" for some reason.

03 Having regular scolding thoughts that exaggerate or diminish the significance of an event.

04 Overgeneralization: drawing excessively broad generalizations from a particular event.

05 Personalization: making a greater deal about a specific event or moment. Taking things personally or believing that acts are meant to target you.

06 Mental filter: selecting a single unpleasant aspect and focusing solely on it, resulting in a dimming of reality's perception.





**If you suffer from depression, your therapist may employ CBT approaches to assist you in identifying problematic thought patterns and determining how they may be affecting:**

**01** Your feelings and perceptions of yourself.

**02** Your general attitude toward life,

**03** You could also be given "homework" to practice replacing negative ideas with more positive ones in real-time.

# Techniques of CBT that help with Depression

- 1. Cognitive Restructuring:** You learn about potential cognitive distortions and harmful thinking patterns that may be promoting depressive emotions or suicidal thoughts by questioning your thought patterns, tone, and self-talk. Cognitive restructuring assists in the formation of better patterns, the reduction of cognitive mistakes, and the practice of rationalizing distortions.
- 2. Scheduling your activities:** Rewarding oneself for arranging low-level tasks that promote positive esteem and self-care is referred to as activity scheduling. You learn to motivate yourself to perform required duties even when you are feeling down by arranging these activities and rewards. It also boosts your odds of completing these duties once your official therapy sessions have ended.






**3. Thought Journaling:** You establish a place to process and discover any possible triggers, as well as how your ideas affected your actions, by journaling about your feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. This can help you become more self-aware and develop coping methods to utilize in the future.

**4. ABC Analysis:** This skill, like journaling, is primarily focused on breaking down depression-related habits such as snapping at others. The ABC model is made up of the following components:

- The "Activating" event occurs when the device is turned on.
- Your "Opinions" about the event.
- The event's "consequences," include your thoughts and conduct in the aftermath.

You can investigate the "consequential" actions and hunt for common reasons for your depression triggers by examining your triggers and consequences.



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- A small, glowing yellow mushroom with a thin stem grows on a mossy surface. The background is dark and blurry, with some green foliage visible on the right side. The lighting is soft and focused on the mushroom, giving it a magical appearance.
- 5. Fact-checking:** This strategy enables you to examine your ideas and see that, while you may be locked in a depressed or damaging thinking pattern, these views are not facts but rather feelings (e.g., "I am a failure"). Fact-checking can also assist you to figure out which actions you engage in because of your feelings or beliefs rather than the facts.
- 6. Mindful Meditation:** You will learn to minimize your concentration on negative thoughts and boost your ability to stay in the present by practicing meditation for depression. Meditation may help you understand and accept your negative thinking patterns, as well as detach from them rather than allowing them to control you.

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# Difficulties in Learning: Identify the early signs and types of SLD



Learning disabilities are mental health disorders/ neurological conditions that affect a person's ability to grasp new information and learn skills necessary for daily living. These disorders occur due to genetic or neurobiological factors that can alter brain function in a way that affects one or multiple cognitive abilities that are necessary for learning.

These cognitive issues might make it difficult to master fundamental abilities like reading, writing, and math. They can also obstruct higher-order skills including organization, time management, abstract thinking, long and short-term memory, and concentration. Learning difficulties can have an influence on an individual's life outside the classroom, affecting connections with family, friends, and coworkers.

The signs and symptoms of learning impairments are most typically recognized during the school years since issues with reading, writing, and/or math are obvious problems during that period. Some people, however, do not undergo an evaluation until they are in post-secondary school or are working adults. Others with learning impairments may never have an evaluation and go through life without understanding why they struggle in school, at work, or in interactions with family and friends.



Learning disabilities are not to be confused with learning difficulties caused by visual, hearing, or motor impairments; intellectual disability; emotional disturbance; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantages.

People with learning impairments, on average, have normal or above-average intellect. There appears to be a disconnect between an individual's potential and their actual accomplishments. This is why learning difficulties are known as "hidden disabilities": the individual appears to be fully "normal" and intellectual, but may be unable to display the skill level anticipated of someone of comparable age.

A learning disability is a lifetime issue that cannot be healed or rectified. People with learning impairments, on the other hand, can succeed in school, work, relationships, and the community with the right assistance and intervention.





# Signs and Symptoms of Learning Disabilities

Learning disorders manifest differently in each child and vary in severity as well. Some children might struggle with reading or spelling, but another child could be proficient at reading but might not be able to make head and tail of mathematics. Some others may have difficulty comprehending speech. While all of these may seem like symptoms of different kinds of issues, they all fall under the umbrella term of learning disorders.

Learning difficulties aren't always simple to spot. Because of the large range of symptoms and profiles, there is no one symptom or profile that can be used to prove the existence of a problem. At various ages, though, certain warning signals are more prevalent than others. You'll be able to detect a learning issue early and take action to aid your child if you know what they are.

Some frequent red flags for learning difficulties are listed in the checklists below. Remember that even children who do not have learning problems may face some of these challenges at different times. When your child's ability to learn specific abilities is consistently unequal, it's time to be concerned.





# Symptoms of SLDs in Preschool Years

- **Delays in language acquisition:** Your preschooler should be able to speak in phrases or short sentences by the age of 2 ½.
- **Speech difficulties.** By the age of three, your kid should be able to communicate well enough for adults to comprehend the majority of what they say.
- **Colors, shapes, letters, and numbers are difficult to remember.**
- **Rhyming** words is a challenge.
- **Coordination is a problem.** Your youngster should be able to button clothes, handle scissors, and jump by the age of five. A circle, square, or triangle should be able to be copied.
- **Attention spans are short:** Your youngster should be able to sit down and listen to a short narrative between the ages of 3 and 5. Your youngster should be able to pay attention as they get older.



## Symptoms of SLD in ages between 5–9

- 01 It's difficult to make the connection between letters and sounds.
- 02 Incapable of combining sounds to form words.
- 03 When reading, fundamental words become mixed together.
- 04 Learning new talents takes time.
- 05 Frequently misspells words and creates grammatical blunders.
- 06 Basic arithmetic ideas are difficult to grasp.
- 07 Having trouble keeping track of time and memorizing sequences.

## Symptoms of SLD through teenage years

- 01 Reading comprehension or math abilities are difficult to master.
- 02 Open-ended test questions and word problems pose a challenge.
- 03 Reading and writing are disliked by the child, and they avoid reading aloud.
- 04 Handwriting is sloppy.
- 05 Ineffective organizational skills (bedroom, homework, and desk are messy and disorganized).
- 06 Following classroom conversations and expressing opinions aloud are both difficult.
- 07 In a single document, the child spells the same term differently.

## How do you identify these symptoms?

It's critical to pay attention to toddlers' and preschoolers' natural developmental milestones. An early diagnosis of developmental abnormalities might be a symptom of a learning disability, and issues that are caught early are simpler to fix.

Although a developmental lag may not be recognized as a symptom of a learning problem, until your kid is older, you may act early if you see it when your child is small. You know your child better than anyone else, so getting an examination doesn't hurt if you suspect a problem. You can also request a developmental milestones chart from your physician.



# Types of Specific Learning Disabilities

## Issues with reading, writing, and mathematics

### **Dyslexia - Problems with reading**

In reading, there are two categories of learning difficulties. When it comes to basic reading challenges, it's tough to comprehend the link between sounds, letters, and words. When people have trouble understanding what words, phrases, and paragraphs mean, they have reading comprehension issues.

Reading difficulties can manifest themselves in a variety of ways, including:

- Recognition of letters and words.
- Understanding the meaning of words and concepts
- Reading speed and fluency are important factors to consider.
- Vocabulary skills in general.



### **Dyscalculia - Problems with mathematical calculations**

The severity of arithmetic learning impairments varies tremendously depending on the child's other strengths and shortcomings. A language learning handicap, a visual issue, or a problem with sequencing, memory, or organization will all influence a child's ability to perform math in different ways.

A kid with a math-based learning problem may struggle with number memory and organization, as well as number "facts" (such as  $4+4=8$  or  $56=30$ ). Children with arithmetic learning disabilities may struggle with counting concepts (such as numbering by twos or calculating by fives) or telling time.

## Dysgraphia - Issues with writing

The physical act of writing or the cerebral activity of interpreting information can both be affected by learning impairments in writing. Physical trouble making words and letters is referred to as a basic writing problem. The term "expressive writing handicap" refers to the inability to arrange thoughts on paper.

The act of writing is central to the symptoms of a written language learning problem. They include issues such as:

- The writing is not neat and consistent.
- Copying letters and words with precision.
- Consistency in spelling.
- Writing coherence and arrangement.



# Other types of Learning Disorders

Learning disabilities affect more than just reading, writing, and math. Other forms of learning impairments include challenges with motor skills (movement and coordination), comprehension of spoken language, sound discrimination, and visual information interpretation.





## **Dyspraxia - Issues with Motor Skills**

Whether it's fine motor abilities (cutting, writing) or gross motor skills (walking, running), motor difficulties refer to issues with movement and coordination (running, jumping). Motor impairment is also referred to as an "output" activity, implying that it has something to do with the brain's information output. The brain must be able to communicate with the relevant limbs in order to accomplish an activity such as running, jumping, writing, or cutting.

Problems with physical abilities that involve hand-eye coordination, such as holding a pencil or buttoning a blouse, are signs that your kid may have a motor coordination deficit.

## **Dysphasia - issues learning languages**

The capacity to understand or generate spoken language is affected by these learning impairments. Language is also an output activity since it takes the brain to organize thoughts and summon the appropriate words to vocally explain or express something.

Problems with verbal language abilities, such as the capacity to repeat a tale, speech fluency, and the ability to grasp the meaning of words, directions, and the like, are all signs of a language-based learning disability.

## Auditory and Visual Processing Problems

The primary way of conveying information to the brain is through the eyes and hearing, a process known as "input." Learning can be hampered if one or both of the eyes or ears aren't functioning properly.

**Auditory processing problem** - The capacity to hear well is referred to as "auditory processing skills" or "receptive language" by professionals. The capacity to hear things correctly has a big influence on reading, writing, and spelling. It's tough to sound out words and comprehend basic reading and writing ideas if you can't discern minor distinctions in sound.

**Visual Processing Problems:** Missing tiny distinctions in shapes, inverting letters or numerals, skipping words, skipping lines, misperceiving depth or distance, or experiencing difficulty with eye-hand coordination are all symptoms of visual processing impairment. "Visual processing" is a term used by professionals to describe the activity of the eyes. Motor abilities, reading comprehension, and numeracy can all be affected by visual perception.

It's not always simple to know what to do and where to look for support when it comes to learning impairments. Of course, enlisting the help of experts who can locate and diagnose the issue is critical. You should also engage with your child's school to create modifications and obtain specialized academic assistance. But don't forget about your own part. Take the lead in researching your alternatives, learning about new therapies and services, and managing your kid's education since you know your child better than anyone else.

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