

Complete Cognitive-Behavioral (CB) therapy is generally provided by mental health professionals, but nurses can incorporate a CB approach in counseling and educating patients and informal caregivers. The hallmarks of a cognitive behavioral approach, and ways to incorporate it into interactions are shown below. Individuals with clinically significant anxiety or depression should be referred for appropriate specialized care. Major components of a CB approach are:

- Altering current thoughts and beliefs (termed cognitive “restructuring”) by helping the person change how they think about something. Instead of viewing a situation or concern as negative or hopeless, they try to think of alternative ways to view the problem that may be hopeful. The goal is to decrease unhelpful or negative thoughts by actively trying to use thoughts that are more helpful and positive.
 - Start by assessing the person’s concern and ask them to describe their thoughts about it. (E.g., what does that mean to you, what does that make you think, how does that make you feel?)
 - Help the patient or caregiver to identify other ways to view the problem and alternative meanings that they may not have thought about previously.
 - Reinforce thoughts that are helpful and discuss how to change unhelpful ideas. Correct any misconceptions.
- Behavioral change and development:
 - Ask the person “what do you do” when faced with problems or issues that comes concern them.
 - Help the individual identify alternative behaviors that are more helpful and affirming. Ask about strategies they have used in other stressful situations - these might be helpful.
 - Help the patient and caregiver to follow the steps of problem-solving:
 - Identify the problem or concern.
 - Work with the patient and caregiver to develop a concrete plan to address it, including strategies identified to change how they think about it.
 - Incorporate specific helpful actions/behaviors in the plan.
 - Follow up with them to see if they implemented the plan/activities.
 - Determine how the plan is working and help them to make revisions as needed.

For more information on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy view our video Oncology Nurse Cognitive Behavioral Interventions at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=de3HxXWPZHY&feature=youtube&list=PLgND6mUAYF4FSkBuRNUK3LLETajzXWmOd>. To learn more about CBT for insomnia visit the PEP page for Sleep-Wake Disturbances at <https://www.ons.org/pep/sleep-wake-disturbances>