

What treatment is right for me?

Sometimes people come to The London Centre with a clear idea of what therapy they would like. Sometimes people are not sure at all. We are happy to discuss what type of therapy you might benefit from in your assessment appointment, but here is a bit more information about some of the treatments available.

Clinical Psychology

Our clinical psychologists largely offer integrative CBT. This means that they use cognitive behavioural therapy (see more below) as the starting point for treatment, but that they may draw on other relevant therapies during the course of treatment. This allows us to ensure we are offering an evidence-based treatment, but that we are tailoring it to meet each individual's requirements. Sessions typically last 50 minutes and occur weekly.

Counselling Psychology

Our counselling psychologists offer a more integrated approach. Whilst they are able to draw on their knowledge of different theoretical models, there is a greater focus on giving the client space to explore their own story, in a safe and supportive space. Sessions may be more exploratory and less structured, using a mixture of techniques and the relationship between the client and the psychologist to engender change. Again, sessions typically last 50 minutes and occur weekly.

Trainee Counselling Psychologists

We also offer low cost sessions with our Trainee Counselling Psychologists. These are all psychology graduates who have been accepted on a Counselling Psychology Doctorate Course. As part of this they receive three years of training, and work on placements offering therapy.

The trainee counselling psychologists offer the same form of treatment as our qualified psychologists, although they are still training. They have all received additional training in working with eating disorders, and are supervised on a weekly basis by a qualified member of staff. Trainees come to us towards the end of their clinical training, therefore we see this as an opportunity to receive a very high quality treatment from someone with a lot of training but fewer years' experience, at a more affordable cost.

Dietetics

Our specialist dietitians use a wide range of tools to assess and identify potential nutritional imbalances and understand how these may contribute to an individual's symptoms and health concerns. This approach allows them to support and guide you towards a healthy diet plan that will help you to maintain physical, emotional and psychological health.

A dietetic session could be a one off, or a series of consultations (usually fortnightly or monthly). The aim of these consultations is to help you create a structured, healthy and

balanced meal plan that will enable you to reduce bingeing, maintain, gain or lose weight as appropriate and keep your energy levels constant so that dips in mood, energy levels and urges to overeat are reduced.

Dietetic sessions are usually, but not always, offered in addition to psychological therapy at The London Centre.

Occupational Therapy

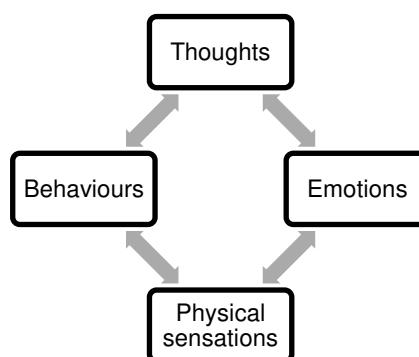
Occupational therapy is designed to enable people to live their lives to the full, by providing practical advice and techniques. In particular, an OT could work with you to improve the structure and routine in your daily life, to increase your independence with eating outside the home, or preparing for a social occasion. This may include practical sessions in the community, and can help you to build your confidence in these challenging areas. It may be possible to arrange sessions in your home, practising the whole process of creating a meal plan, visiting the supermarket, and cooking and eating a balanced meal. OT sessions can also assist you with securing paid or voluntary work, or returning to work after some time off. This can include assistance with job searches, applications and interview techniques.

OT can be offered when clients feel they have had a lot of therapy already and would be interested in a different approach or following or alongside therapy to tackle specific feared or challenging situations.

Different types of Therapy

CBT

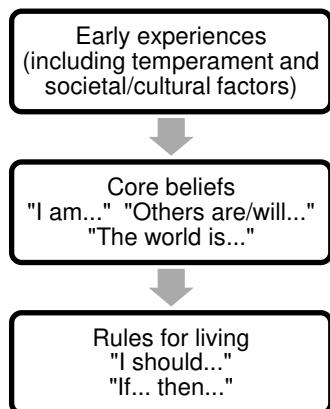
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is based on the premise that the way that we think, the way in which we act, and the way in which we feel, all impact on each other.



If we have a negative thought such as "I can't do it", we are more likely to feel sad or anxious or hopeless. If we have a strong emotion such as feeling anxious, we are more likely to experience anxious thoughts or to avoid the things that are making us anxious. And if we act in an unhelpful way, for example, isolating ourselves, we are more likely to experience negative thoughts or emotions.

Looking at the way in which our thoughts, emotions and behaviours interact can help us understand why we get stuck in difficult patterns. However, it can also help us work out how to recover – as we can look at ways in which we can challenge our negative thoughts or change our behaviours to help us feel better. Furthermore, as we start to make these changes, helpful thoughts and behaviours will have a positive impact on each other, forming a more positive cycle.

In addition to thinking about what is happening in the here and now, CBT can help us understand what underlies any difficulties that we are having. CBT looks at the experiences we have had in our lives (including our personalities and the society/culture we have grown up in) and how these have led to us developing core beliefs about ourselves, others, the world and our emotions. These core beliefs often underpin the negative thoughts that we might experience. For example, someone with a core belief "I'm not good enough" may find that they often experience self-critical thoughts. They may try and avoid the distress caused by these thoughts by developing the rule "there's no point in trying" or they may try to compensate for their perceived inadequacies by developing the rule "I must always give 100%". These core beliefs and life rules will typically feed into the negative thoughts in the here and now, triggering the vicious cycle above.



In CBT sessions, you will spend some time developing an understanding of your eating disorder or body image issues, and then learning CBT techniques to help you address this. This might include thought challenging, finding other ways of managing difficult emotions, regular eating, behavioural experiments, problem solving – or numerous other CBT techniques.

CBT has repeatedly been shown to be effective in treating eating disorders, and has a strong evidence base. It also allows eating disorders to be tackled in a timely manner – with people often requiring approximately 16-20 sessions of CBT for Bulimia Nervosa or 40 sessions of CBT for Anorexia Nervosa (although length of treatment does vary from person to person).

We typically recommend that people attend weekly CBT sessions – around 50-60 minutes long. There will also be tasks for you to try in between sessions.

Other Therapeutic Approaches

Whilst CBT is very effective, we do sometimes find that people benefit from slightly different approaches. Given that, our therapists are also able to draw on other therapeutic approaches, dependent on what the client needs. These may include:

Schema Therapy

A schema is an extremely stable, enduring negative pattern that develops during childhood or adolescence and is reinforced throughout our lives. They consist of beliefs, feelings and memories about ourselves, others and the environment, which we accept without question. We then develop coping styles in response to these schemas (either "giving in" to the schema, "overcompensating" for the schema, or trying to "avoid" the schema) and these responses tend to become unhelpful in our adult lives, often reinforcing our difficulties.

Schema therapy is an integrative therapy, designed to address the deeper level unhelpful schema which people may have developed as a way of coping with unmet need in their childhood. Schema therapy draws on a number of techniques to help address this, including experiential, interpersonal, cognitive and behavioural techniques, aimed at providing an antidote to client's unmet needs from childhood within the boundaries of a therapeutic relationship.

Dialectical Behavioural Therapy

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy is based on CBT, but has been developed to help people who experience intense emotions. 'Dialectics' means trying to balance opposite positions and look at how they go together. For example, in DBT, you will work with your therapist to find a good balance between acceptance and change; learning to manage difficult emotions by letting yourself experience, recognise and accept them. As you learn to accept and regulate your emotions, you also become more able to change any unhelpful behaviours. To help you achieve this, DBT therapists use both acceptance and change techniques - finding a balance between accepting yourself as you are, and making positive changes in your life. In particular, DBT can help you develop certain skills including Mindfulness, Distress Tolerance, Emotion Regulation and Interpersonal Effectiveness.

Compassion Focussed Therapy

Compassion focused therapy is based on the concept that, whilst most of us are able to show compassion to others, many of us struggle to feel or show compassion to ourselves. We often operate a double standard, judging ourselves much more harshly than others in a similar position. CFT combines CBT techniques with neuroscience, evolutionary and social psychology and concepts from Buddhism, and is particularly helpful where people experience a lot of shame and self-criticism.

CFT uses compassionate mind training, teaching the skills and attributes of compassion, to help the individual feel safe and secure. It helps people see where their critical thoughts have come from, whether they are justified, and how to reduce this self-criticism. In addition to working with thoughts in the here and now, it works with the part of the brain where emotional memories are stored, linking back to the origins of these feelings of self-criticism.

CFT uses techniques such as mindfulness, meditation, and imagery, as well as more typical CBT techniques.

Family Therapy

Family therapy can also be a very useful form of therapy, particularly for young people who are still living at home with their families. Please see our information sheet on Family Therapy for more details about this.

There is more information about all of these therapeutic approaches on our website:
www.thelondoncentre.co.uk.