

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

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Provider Fact Sheet

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Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT is a type of psychotherapy which teaches strategies for altering unwanted thinking, emotional, or behavioral patterns. Compared to other types of talk therapy, CBT places more emphasis on the present moment and learning how to move forward and cope with life's difficulties instead of dwelling on the past. CBT usually consists of a combination of in-person talk- therapy and at-home exercises to enhance what is learned during treatment sessions¹. Some strategies that may be taught include:

- Learning to recognize faulty or unhelpful thought patterns and how to confront them.
- Relaxation techniques for calming the body.
- Thought stopping or meditation techniques to quiet the mind.
- Working to face one's fears instead of avoiding them.
- Learning to recognize when a learned behavior is unhelpful in one's life.
- Using problem solving skills to cope with difficult situations.

Persistent Postural Perceptual Dizziness (3PD) and CBT

The best treatment outcomes for the treatment of 3PD have been shown to be a combination of vestibular rehabilitation (PT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and medication, if appropriate. One study showed a significant improvement in subjective report of dizziness-related handicap, anxiety, and depression for individuals with motion sensitivity receiving a combination of vestibular rehab techniques and CBT compared to those who only received vestibular rehab. The study concluded that Phobic Postural Vertigo (an alternate term for 3PD) is "a multidimensional problem involving vestibular, postural, proprioceptive, cognitive and emotional factors." As such, a multidimensional approach to treatment may be needed²

The relationship between the inner ear, anxiety, and dizziness

We know that dizziness can cause anxiety – It can be really scary to experience! There is a physiologic reason for this as well.

The inner ear— the part of the body that detects motion and head position in relation to gravity – has nerve connections to many other parts of the body, including the brain, eyes, blood vessels, and abdominal organs. The reason for this is that the inner ear plays a role in regulating the sympathetic nervous system, more commonly referred to as our “fight or flight” response. This is why dizziness may cause feelings of nausea, increased heart rate, or faster breathing. Our brain interprets dizziness as danger and triggers these responses to help protect us.

Studies have shown that this relationship also works in reverse. Anxiety can trigger a sympathetic response which can then make us feel dizzy. Scientists believe that the areas in the brain that cause anxiety interact with the systems that cause dizziness and can influence each other. For this reason, it can be beneficial to treat anxiety and dizziness simultaneously³.

If insurance will not cover CBT, online psychotherapy may be an affordable option. Moreover, it is convenient since it can be conducted from home via secure text and voice messages, with the added bonus of having a record of sessions to go back to and review. The following websites are good places to start.

Search for a therapist that specializes in CBT.

www.betterhelp.com www.talkspace.com



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