**COGNITIVE-AFFECTIVE-BEHAVIORAL THERAPY**

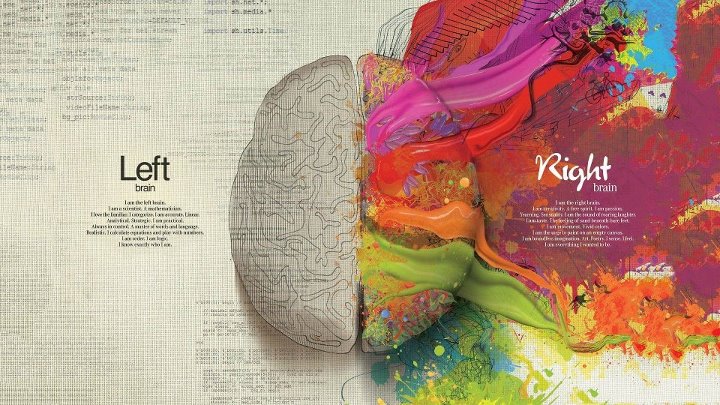
**A (CABT) APPROACH TO THERAPY**

**CABT is also an Approach to Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

CABT is based on three concepts:

1. What you think determines what you feel.
2. Being aware of what you feel gives you choices from which to choose.
3. Your brain has two functioning operating systems:

a) the left brain, which thinks logically and systematically, and   
b) the right brain, which thinks in pictures and flashbacks.

This concept is not new; in 700 BC, Psalms 23:7 says, ***“As a man thinks it in his heart, so is he.”*** Then, in 35 A.D., a Roman slave wrote, *“Men are disturbed not by things but by the view they take of them.”* Epictetus. Then David Burns, in his book FEELING GOOD, wrote, *“You feel the way you do right now because of the thoughts you are thinking at this moment.”*

Now, here comes the surprise. Everyone thinks! “But, you say, that is no surprise, everyone knows they think.” Look at your own thoughts that keep you awake at night. If you are the one who chooses to think these thoughts, then what is the purpose of choosing to stay awake all night?

The idea that you think and can think about anything you choose to think or not think. It has been known and practiced for thousands of years.

***“You have the power over your mind—not outside events!***   
***Realize this, and you will find strength.”***   
*~ Marcus Aurelius, 121 A.D. Roman Emperor*

For example, Melissa feels overwhelmed. Her feelings are caused by what she thinks, which is what makes her feel overwhelmed.

Steve feels anxious and uptight. Steve does not know it, but his anxiety is the result of what he is thinking.

**Your Head Contains two Brains.**

Your Head contains two brains or two types of operating systems. For convenience, we say one side generates your IQ, and the other generates your EQ. Your IQ + EQ = Emotional Intelligence.

Your brain processes information in two very different ways! One side is logical,  
rational, and deductive. This is the cognitive (left side) of your brain and is measured by IQ tests.

The other side (right side) processes information emotionally. Its source of information is memory pictures. For example, you visit a beautiful ocean with fluffy white clouds. And you listen to the sound of waves breaking on the shore, and your body relaxes. Whenever you “see” that memory, your body relaxes like you were still at the ocean. Seeing a memory from the past is sometimes called a “flashback.”

On the other hand, if you are involved in a traumatic incident in which  
someone dies, you experience anxiety and fear. Whenever you bring that  
memory up (flashback), you will experience the same feelings as if it were happening right now. Both examples are of Emotional Intelligence (EI).

Emotional Intelligence — the skill of knowing what you feel and then choosing to feel something different by "seeing” a different picture. This ability is critical to your work and life success. You can increase your EQ by learning and practicing Awareness.

You were born able to recognize when you are experiencing an emotion. When you were born, you would readily tell others when you were angry, happy, or sad, and you could express these feelings at will. As you grew older, you likely learned how to disregard your emotions, hide them as often as possible, and rationalize why you feel the way you do to deal with the situation in “socially acceptable ways.”

No matter what people tell you about the evils of emotions, such as: “You should not feel that way,” “Nice girls do not get angry,” “Pretty is as pretty does,” and “Anger is a sin.”, the truth is that your emotions are not good or bad, right or wrong. They just are.

***“There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.”***

*~ Shakespeare, in “Hamlet”*

What you choose to do with your feelings (and your behaviors) can get you into trouble. No one has been put in prison for being angry. However, how you express your anger can certainly bring the police to your door.

If you don’t recognize your feelings, you cannot fully understand what motivates your actions. This lack of awareness limits your ability to choose how you want to feel and act, negatively impacting your relationships, job performance, and overall happiness. Your upbringing likely stunted the development of your emotional intelligence.

Emotional Quotient — EQ also increases your understanding of others: what motivates them, how they work, how to work cooperatively with them, and how to inspire them to reach their potential. The University of Maryland, Robert H. Smith School of Business. explains the value of using Emotional Intelligence at work. See the list below for how a low EQ will affect you:

**Are you lacking or forgetting to access your Emotional Intelligence?**

\_\_ You quickly blame other people for your problems or errors.

\_\_ You don’t take feedback well, get defensive or shut down when comments are offered, and hurt your feelings.

\_\_ You get impatient and frustrated when you think others don’t understand or appreciate what you are saying.

\_\_ You don’t forgive people easily; sometimes, you choose never to forgive.

\_\_ You are quick to judge people for who they are, what they wear, what they say, and/or what they do based on what you think is correct and best.

\_\_ You are very selective about whom you will spend time with and share your thoughts with because other people do not have your beliefs or values.

\_\_ You give your opinions early in a conversation and hold on to them no matter what anyone says because you see things in black and white with very little gray.

\_\_ You constantly declare that you don’t care if people like you. This is based on your fear of rejection. “I reject other people before they can reject me.”

\_\_ You think emotions are overrated, and it doesn’t matter what other people feel.

\_\_ You quickly challenge new ideas that might impact your work, family, and relationships.

Robert H. Smith, University of Maryland

**The behaviors that demonstrate you are emotionally intelligent include**:

√ You are resilience and flexibility.

√ You are listening and accepting, because you see acceptance not as approval but accepting the person where they are until they can be someplace else.

√ You are forgiving, by no longer judging the other person’s behavior. There would be nothing to forgive unless you first judged the person.

√ You take personal responsibility.

√ You seek other points of view. You are comfortable with your beliefs and are not threatened by other’s beliefs.

√ You understand, accept, and can explain your emotional reactions because you understand the thoughts that are creating your feelings.

√ Staying calm under pressure because you believe you can handle whatever happens.

√ You use emotions appropriately to both inspire and make others feel comfortable.

√ You admit and learn from mistakes. You believe that mistakes are just steppingstones and that nothing is a mistake if you learn from it.

√ You take feedback easily by understanding that positive or negative feedback is not about you. It is about the other person’s thoughts, values, and beliefs.

√ Your body language matches your words.

Your behavior matches your words.

**Event --> Meaning --> Feeling --> Behaviour**  
Following is a powerful exercise you can do to increase your emotional intelligence.

First, look at the chart below. Notice that your behavior is based on your feelings, which are based on your cognitive thoughts and emotional pictures. Something is said or happens to you or around you (EVENT) à you put a MEANING(s) to the event à FEELING(s) result, from which consciously or unconsciously you choose à your BEHAVIORS.

Text

Description automatically generated

Depending on which of the three areas you are most aware such as “I am aware that I am feeling angry.” Go backward now to the meanings and figure out what you are thinking that is creating the feelings of anger. . . . “She just used and took advantage of me.” Now that I know what I am thinking, what else could I think? “She must feel very powerless and need to put me down.”

What flashback triggered you? (One, something similar happened in your past.) What are you experiencing right now? What would you like to get from the situation, such as respect, appreciation, or control? How could you respond to someone feeling powerless so that you get a different response?

All therapeutic approaches use one or a combination of Cognitive, Behavioral, and Feeling (Affective) approaches. Any one of these approaches works to help the therapist to help the client achieve the changes they are looking for. However, unless there is a permanent change in the client’s feelings, their behavior will not permanently change.

Diagram

Description automatically generated with low confidence

If you go to a CABT therapist, they will consider the two crucial points.

First, on what side of the brain do your issues stem? Cognitive or Affective, or a combination of the three. (Is the client having flashbacks that are triggering the problems? Or are the client’s issues stemming from faulty or contradictory belief systems?)

Second, for therapists, I suggest you list all the intervention techniques you use with your clients and separate them into Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral categories. Now, depending on where you see your client’s issues stemming from, you will have an intervention for that issue. Use the following as a place to get started.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PRESENTING PROBLEM** | **Approach: Cognitive, Affective, Behavioral** | **INTERVENTION TECHNIQUE** |
| Child --- divorcing parents | Cognitive | Mutual Storytelling & play therapy |
| Anger issues | Cognitive & Affective | CBT and role-playing |
| Anxiety issues | Cognitive, Affective, Behavioral | **Enter your interventions** |
| Obsessive-compulsive disorder | Cognitive & behavioral | **Enter your interventions** |
| Guilt | Cognitive | **Enter your interventions** |

For more therapeutic interventions and information,

**You can contact Doc Downing, MSW, Ph.D. at**:

**Email: DocDowning103@gmail.com**