

Job title: Cognitive behavioural therapist (CBT).

General Overview

A cognitive behavioural therapist meets with patients who require psychiatric help and they learn to identify, question, and change the thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs related to the patients psychiatric issues (Rector, 2010). They do this by monitoring and recording the patients thoughts during situations that tend to upset them. The CBT typically treats a patient intensively over short-term (six to 20 sessions) as opposed to other types of therapy like psychoanalysis which often last years (2010). It is the job of the CBT to teach the patient the skills they need to know to change their thinking in order for them to continue “treating” themselves long after the therapy is done. A CBT does this by creating exercises for patients to participate in during sessions, which are designed to train the patient to think in a more normative way regarding things that usually upset them, like showing spiders to arachnophobics and teaching them cope: The CBT often also assigns the patient homework similar to the exercisers in order for them to practice and learn on their own time (2010).

Job duties and responsibilities

Typically a CBT has many patients at a given time, but works with them each in individual sessions scheduled at different times (some exceptions are couples therapy, marriage counseling etc.). Although group therapy is a potential option, it is not common because CBT involves the use of techniques, exercises, and strategies that often involve specific thinking patterns that are subjective to each individual (Rector, 2010). Most often, the work done by a CBT is independent from colleagues: They devise individual treatment plans according to the specific needs of each patient and these plans are made based on therapist patient consultations (2010). During a typical consultation, or therapy session, the CBT actively listens to the patient to understand their specific needs, and teaches them short and long term treatment implementation plans (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2013). As mentioned earlier, some of the core duties for a CBT is to create exercises for patients, create similar homework, and to teach the necessary skills required to treat themselves after the intensive (six to 20 week) therapy has concluded (2010). Also, it is common for CBT to sometimes record the audio of their sessions in order to reanalyze and assess the best methods to treat the patient (Certificate in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, 2013). CBT follow up with clients by having the client book follow up sessions until both they and the therapist are confident that the therapy was effective in treating their psychiatric needs (personal correspondence). Other more experienced CBT, who have moved beyond the realm of therapy, do other things such as write reports and conduct experiments based on explaining or evaluating the effectiveness of CBT.

Typical work day

CBT typically work full time. As a CBT there are a few different environments that they could potentially work in. Some common settings for CBT to work in are universities, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, clinical psychology firms, or home offices (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). The setting that they work in is subjective to both their own and their patient's needs. Furthermore, any given CBT may find themselves working in more than one of the aforementioned settings. The setting you work in will also be largely determined by the methods and techniques that you use. For instance, many CBT can successfully practice CBT in a quiet office setting whereby the therapist administers typical psychotherapy techniques while

incorporating their CBT skills. These practitioners would likely have a heavy background in clinical psychology. Conversely, there will also be many other CBT that might require certain equipment like biofeedback machines in order to treat their patients (Slutsker, Konichezky, & Gotthelf, 2010). In this case, these practitioners would have to work in a setting that has this equipment available. These individuals would likely have a more heavy background in clinical neuroscience or cognitive neuroscience. Given that many CBT come from different fields it is very much interdisciplinary. Not all CBT work directly with clients, some of them focus more on things such as education and research.

Educational requirements and other qualifications

To become a certified CBT one must earn a certificate from a recognized institution. A couple examples of potential institutions that offer certificates in CBT are Beck Institute for CBT and the University of Toronto Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (Certificate in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, 2013; Customized CBT Training, 2013). In order to be eligible for this certificate you must already have an understanding of, and experience with, counseling (CBT Admission Requirements, 2013). So generally speaking, someone who wants to become a CBT has already completed a bachelor's degree. A bachelor degree in psychology is particularly useful as it will prepare you best for the further psychological education and training that you will have to receive to become a CBT. Furthermore, once you've earned a bachelor degree, to become a CBT it is expected that you have knowledge and experience in counseling, and most often you should also have completed either an MSc or a PhD in a counseling/medical related degree (CBT Admission Requirements, 2013). Some example occupations that might seek to enhance their skills by acquiring a certificate in CBT are clinical psychologists, social workers, nurses, physicians, or occupational therapists. However, in exceptional cases, it is possible for individuals with significant counseling experience or non-university based education to be eligible to earn a certificate in CBT (CBT Admission Requirements, 2013).

Related skills, interests, qualities

Given the therapeutic aspects of CBT people wishing to pursue this career path from an undergraduate degree should be suited for counseling. To be suited for counseling implies many things. In a prescribed sense, you should be a personable person, you should have the academic ability to earn at least an MSc in an appropriate counseling related field, you should be an excellent active listener, you should have the wherewithal to deal with potentially traumatized or severely mentally ill patients, and you should be dedicated to helping and treating people. A number of other relevant skills and abilities include social perceptiveness, critical thinking, judgment and decision making, persuasion, problem sensitivity, and both inductive and deductive reasoning (summary report, 2013).

Also, in depth knowledge of cognitive behavioural therapy is of course pertinent to being a CBT. Cognitive behavioural therapy is a type of psychotherapy in which negative patterns of thought about the self and the world are analyzed in order to alter unwanted, emotions, behavioural patterns, and mood disorders (Google definition, 2013). CBT is a combination of behavioural therapy and cognitive therapy: Where behavioural therapy seeks to alter an individual's unwanted behaviours, and cognitive therapy seeks to modify peoples cognitions by altering their beliefs or thinking processes. Hence, it follows that CBT is a therapy that treats peoples unwanted behaviours using techniques that isolate behavioural issues to particular cognitive instances. For

instance, someone with a severe phobia of spiders will typically have adverse behavioural reactions to spiders and this type of person might seek CBT to change their belief or thinking about spiders which in turn changes their behavioural response to spiders. Other examples of patients that might seek CBT are people with anxiety, personality disorders, substance abuse, sleep disorders, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, marital problems, chronic pain (Miller, 2013).

Relevance of Psychology undergraduate degree

The most prominent uses of psychology in CBT are the use of psychotherapy as well as the more general counseling skills for dealing with patients. General knowledge of psychology will contribute to one's overall practice, but these skills are considered to be cumulatively included in being a certified psychotherapist. An undergraduate psychology degree will provide an ideal basis which to build upon for those wishing to pursue cognitive behavioural therapy. Some specific courses that could be earned during an undergraduate psychology degree that would be useful as a CBT are introduction to psychology, research methods in psychology, statistics in psychology, cognitive psychology, personality psychology, motivation and emotion, thinking and rationality, sensation and perception, social psychology, introduction to mental health and disease, drugs and behaviour, addictions, and introduction to logic (Carleton University, 2013). In these courses students will acquire lots of domain specific knowledge pertaining to different aspects of human psychology that will assist them in their job in many different ways. Introduction courses as well as the initial research methods and statistics courses will be particularly useful in providing an understanding of how to test and assess subjects experimentally. More simply, they also teach one how to understand and evaluate psychological papers, including the understanding of different statistical tests, data represented graphically or in tables, and psychological methods. Courses that pertain specifically to human cognition, personality, thinking, rationality, logic, social interactions and sensations/perceptions will be particularly useful for better understanding the human psyche, including its limitations, capabilities, and malleability. Lastly, courses involving mental health disease, drugs/behaviour, addictions, and motivation/emotions will help to prepare a CBT to understand a variety of patient's psychiatric needs and how to deal with them appropriately.

Salary potential

As is the case with most careers, CBT annual average salary depends on location, experience, and education (Lee, 2013). The following available statistics are American and do not directly reflect CBT, but rather mental health counselors on a whole. The reported salaries show a median of \$38,150 annually for 2010 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). The most comparable Canadian statistic from statistics Canada shows the average annual income of persons residing in a health occupation (which includes all therapists) in Ontario as of October 2013 being \$44,113.68 (Statistics Canada, 2013).

Job outlook

According to Orfanos (2013) "the career outlook for CBT with a master's degree is expected to grow faster than average... which projects the growth in CBT to grow by 37 percent through 2020" (p. 1).

To apply

To apply for a CBT certificate in Canada please visit the following link.

http://conted.oise.utoronto.ca/Certificate_in_Cognitive_Behaviour_Therapy/index.html

To know more

If you would like to know more about CBT please visit the following link which contains an information guide regarding CBT.

http://knowledgex.camh.net/amhspecialists/resources_families/Documents/cbt_guide_en.pdf

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