

3f. Sleep - Improving sleep hygiene

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT): A type of psychotherapy that combines cognitive and behavioural therapies to treat mental health problems, mental disorders and sleep disorders.

- The core assumption of CBT is that the way people feel and behave is largely a product of the way they think.
- CBT provides a structured program focussed on how a person's current thoughts, feelings and behaviours are affecting them.

CBT for insomnia:

- Many people with insomnia develop sleep-related thoughts and behaviours that maintain or worsen their sleep problems.
- Their inappropriate thoughts and behaviours can lead to excessive worry or anxiety about not sleeping.
- CBT aims to identify these negative thoughts and inappropriate behaviours and change them to more balanced and realistic ones.

CBT cognitive component:

- The cognitive part of CBT assists the individual to recognise and change the inappropriate or dysfunctional attitudes, beliefs and other thoughts about their sleep.
- Alternative interpretations are offered to allow the individual to think about their sleep problems in another way.
 - Example of alternative interpretation:
 - Fact: 'I'm not feeling very sleepy right now.'
 - Thoughts: 'I'm not sleepy now, but I usually get some sleep during the night. I will eventually feel sleepy. I always make it through the next day without any disaster' or 'It doesn't matter whether or not I fall asleep.'

Rest is still good for me — it does not have to be sleep. I can function well with little sleep. I will relax and not worry about it. I will fall asleep when my body is ready.'

- Consequence: Less anxiety, less aroused/more relaxed, positive thinking and therefore increased likelihood of sleep.

CBT behavioural component:

- The behavioural component of CBT helps the individual develop *good sleep habits* and avoid behaviours that prevent them from sleeping well.