

Cognitive behavioral therapy enhances brain circuits to relieve depression

Cognitive behavioral therapy, one of the most common treatments for depression, can teach skills for coping with everyday troubles, reinforce healthy behaviors and counter negative thoughts. But can altering thoughts and behaviors lead to lasting changes in the brain?

New research led by Stanford Medicine has found that it can - if a therapy is matched with the right patients. In a study of adults with both depression and obesity - a difficult-to-treat combination - cognitive behavioral therapy that focused on problem solving reduced depression in a third of patients. These patients also showed adaptative changes in their brain circuitry.