

Treating anxiety and stress disorders with therapy

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Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)

CBT, the leading form of psychotherapy for anxiety, aims to correct ingrained patterns of negative thoughts and behaviors. As the name suggests, the treatment has two parts. Cognitive therapy helps people change patterns of thinking that prevent them from overcoming their fears. Behavioral therapy works to change their reactions in situations that trigger anxiety. People with social anxiety disorder, for example, may assume that others will inevitably regard what they say as stupid. This is negative thinking. As a result, these people may avoid being with or talking to others. This is an example of negative behavior. The goal of CBT is to break this chain of thoughts and reactions.

Exposure therapy

Exposure and response prevention, a type of exposure therapy used to treat anxiety, gradually and increasingly exposes you to the object of your anxiety until the fear subsides. Under the guidance of a therapist, you first imagine and then confront your fears.