

Cognitive Re-Programming



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What is CBT and REBT?

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)** is a widely used form of psychological treatment that focuses on changing unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviors. It's effective for a variety of issues, including depression, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, eating disorders, and severe mental illness.
- CBT works by helping individuals recognize and challenge distorted thoughts, understand the behavior and motivations of others, and develop problem-solving skills. It often involves practical strategies like facing fears, role-playing, and relaxation techniques.
- **Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT)** is a type of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) developed by psychologist Albert Ellis in the 1950s. It's an action-oriented approach that helps people identify and change irrational beliefs, which can lead to emotional and behavioral issues.



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The ABC Model

REBT operates on the principle that our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are interconnected. It uses the ABC model to explain this connection between thoughts

- A: Activating event (something happens in your environment)
- B: Belief (your interpretation of the event)
- C: Consequence (your emotional response to the belief)



We Will Feel Whatever We Think and Believe

The relationship between specific thoughts and emotions is a fundamental concept in both Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT). The idea is that our thoughts—whether we are aware of them or not—directly influence our emotions, which in turn can affect our behaviors



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Why Do We Feel It First?



- **Neurological efficiency** refers to the brain's ability to streamline processes for quicker and more automatic responses. Over time, repeated thought patterns and behaviors become almost automatic, similar to muscle memory. This efficiency is crucial for everyday functioning, allowing us to perform routine tasks without conscious effort. However, it can also lead to automatic negative thoughts that contribute to emotional distress without our conscious awareness

- **Subconscious processing** refers to the brain's ability to handle a vast amount of information without our conscious awareness. Our brain is constantly absorbing and processing data from our environment, even when we're not actively focusing on it. This means that many of our thoughts and reactions are formed and acted upon before we become consciously aware of them

- **Emotional salience** refers to the ability of a stimulus or event to capture our attention and evoke an emotional response. It's why certain experiences stand out in our memories while others fade. This concept is crucial for survival, as our brains prioritize information that might affect our well-being. The amygdala plays a key role in detecting emotionally significant stimuli and triggering responses. Neurotransmitters like dopamine and norepinephrine also influence which stimuli we find emotionally significant. Factors such as personal experiences, cultural background, and individual emotional sensitivity shape what we find emotionally salient. Understanding emotional salience can help us better navigate our emotions and improve decision-making



Why Do We Feel It First?



- **The evolutionary perspective** in psychology seeks to understand human behavior by examining how it has been shaped by natural selection and adaptation over time. This approach suggests that many of our cognitive, emotional, and behavioral traits have evolved because they enhance our chances of survival and reproduction.
- **For example**, traits like fear of predators, partner selection preferences, and even social behaviors like empathy can be understood through this lens. These traits likely developed because they offered some advantage to our ancestors in terms of survival and passing on their genes.

- **Cognitive Biases and Heuristics:** Our brains use shortcuts, or heuristics, to speed up decision-making. While these can be helpful, they can also lead to cognitive biases—automatic patterns of thinking that are not always rational or accurate. These biases can shape our perceptions and reactions without our explicit awareness



The Beginning of Understanding One's Self



- "Emotions arise first, and then we consciously initiate the process of self-regulation."
- "Self-awareness acts as the catalyst, enabling us to understand, embrace, and effectively manage our emotions."
- Practicing this regularly helps us stay in a constant state of self-reflection and introspection.
- "Being in this state enables us to make decisions aligned with our core values rather than emotional reactions. Additionally, as our self-awareness grows, we develop empathy and better understand others' feelings through our mastery of CBT."



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Examples

- **Thought:** "My partner doesn't find me attractive anymore."
- **Emotion:** Loneliness, frustration.
- **Explanation:** The perception of a lack of deep communication can lead to feelings of loneliness and frustration about the state of the relationship.
- **Thought:** "It's always my fault when things go wrong."
- **Emotion:** Guilt, resentment.
- **Explanation:** This kind of self-blaming thought can cause feelings of guilt and resentment, especially if it feels like responsibility is not equally shared.
- **Thought:** "I can't do anything right in their eyes."
- **Emotion:** Discouragement, anger.
- **Explanation:** Feeling constantly criticized or undervalued can lead to feelings of discouragement and anger, impacting self-esteem and the view of the relationship.



Examples

- **Thought:** "They're probably happier when I'm not around."
- **Emotion:** Rejection, sadness.
- **Explanation:** This thought reflects a sense of perceived rejection and can lead to deep sadness and feelings of inadequacy
- **Thought:** "If I bring up my concerns, it will just start a fight."
- **Emotion:** Anxiety, helplessness.
- **Explanation:** The anticipation of conflict can cause anxiety and feelings of helplessness, especially if communication has been historically problematic.
- **Thought:** "Things used to be so much better between us."
- **Emotion:** Nostalgia, despair.
- **Explanation:** Idealizing the past can lead to feelings of nostalgia, coupled with despair about the current state of the relationship.
- **Thought:** "Maybe we're just not right for each other."
- **Emotion:** Doubt, fear.
- **Explanation:** Questioning the fundamental compatibility in the relationship can lead to feelings of doubt and fear about the future.

Challenge – Reframe – Replace Negative Thoughts.



Disputing, reframing, and replacing thoughts are crucial techniques in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT). These methods aid in transforming unhelpful or negative thoughts into more positive, realistic, and constructive ones.



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Re-Wiring the Brain

- **Original Thought:** "My partner doesn't find me attractive anymore."
 - **Dispute:** "Is there concrete evidence that my partner doesn't find me attractive, or am I assuming based on the current tension? "
 - **Reframe:** "My perception of attractiveness may be influenced by our current relationship struggles, not necessarily by how my partner actually sees me."
 - **Replace:** "Our relationship is going through a rough patch, but that doesn't define our entire connection or attraction to each other."
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- Original Thought: "We never have meaningful conversations anymore."
 - Dispute: "Have there been opportunities for meaningful conversations that I might not have noticed or taken?"
 - Reframe: "We haven't had many meaningful conversations recently, but that doesn't mean we can't have them in the future."
 - Replace: "I can initiate a meaningful conversation and express my desire to communicate more deeply with my partner."



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Re-Wiring the Brain

- **Original Thought:** "It's always my fault when things go wrong."
 - **Dispute:** "Are there times when the fault was shared or when it was due to external factors?"
 - **Reframe:** "Sometimes I might be responsible, but it's unrealistic to think I'm always at fault. Relationship issues are often shared."
 - **Replace:** "Both of us contribute to the relationship dynamics, and it's important to view issues as shared challenges rather than assigning blame."
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- **Original Thought:** "I can't do anything right in their eyes."
 - **Dispute:** "Can I recall instances where my partner appreciated or complimented something I did?"
 - **Reframe:** "It feels like I can't do anything right, but this might be an exaggeration of the current tension between us."
 - **Replace:** "I have strengths and weaknesses like everyone, and my worth isn't solely determined by my partner's approval."



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Re-Wiring the Brain

- **Original Thought:** "They're probably happier when I'm not around."
 - **Dispute:** "Is there evidence to support this thought, or is it my interpretation based on how I'm feeling?"
 - **Reframe:** "This thought is based on my current insecurities. My partner's happiness is complex and not solely dependent on my presence."
 - **Replace:** "My presence has a positive impact in many ways, even though we have our challenges."
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- **Original Thought:** "If I bring up my concerns, it will just start a fight."
 - **Dispute:** "Have there been times when we've discussed concerns calmly and constructively?"
 - **Reframe:** "While discussing issues can lead to disagreements, it doesn't always result in a fight. Communication is key to resolution."
 - **Replace:** "I can approach the conversation calmly and constructively, expressing my concerns in a non-confrontational way."



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Re-Wiring the Brain

- **Original Thought:** "Things used to be so much better between us."
 - **Dispute:** "Is it possible that I'm overlooking positive aspects of our relationship as it is now?"
 - **Reframe:** "While it's true things were better, romanticizing the past doesn't help us address the present. We can work towards improving our current relationship."
 - **Replace:** "We have had great times in the past, and we can create more positive experiences by working on our relationship now."
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- **Original Thought:** "Maybe we're just not right for each other."
 - **Dispute:** "Are there aspects of our relationship that show we are compatible and have worked well together?"
 - **Reframe:** "It's natural to question compatibility during tough times, but this doesn't necessarily mean we're not right for each other."
 - **Replace:** "Every relationship has ups and downs. It's worth exploring how we can improve our compatibility and understanding of each other."



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