

Psychotherapy and YOUTH

A RESOURCE FOR YOUTH, BY YOUTH

"Psychotherapy" involves talking with a qualified therapist. Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Brief Psychosocial Intervention (BPI) are two types of psychotherapy for depression.

Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy

What is CBT?

CBT involves 8 to 16 weekly sessions to help challenge thoughts and actions that contribute to depression. Clinicians often recommend CBT for depression since it has the most research to support its benefits.

What does a typical CBT therapy session look like?

Sessions start with a check-in where you talk about how your mood has been and recent events in your life. Next, the previous week's home practice is discussed. This is followed by a discussion of new skills and strategies to practise over the next week.

For Group CBT: Each session lasts 90 minutes and is offered in a group of up to 12 people. Sessions start with an icebreaker to help participants get to know each other.

For individual CBT: Sessions last 50 minutes and are one-on-one with a therapist.

Which is a better fit for me?

Check the three most important values for you.



Group CBT

Being with a therapist and group where I can **meet, support and learn** from other youth who share similar concerns.

Learning **many skills** that can be used in different situations.

Starting therapy **sooner**.



Individual CBT

Meeting with a therapist **one-on-one** to help me feel more comfortable sharing my experience.

Getting support to work on the **specific mental health concerns and skills** that apply to me.

Flexibility when scheduling my sessions.

Brief Psychosocial Intervention

What is BPI?

BPI aims to reduce stressors in your life that contribute to depression and increase activities in your life that make you happier. The therapist also helps you explore ways to get support from others.

If CBT is not a fit for you, then BPI is another option that can be just as effective. With BPI, you focus less on challenging negative thoughts the way you do with CBT.

What does a typical BPI therapy session look like?

With BPI, you discuss:

- how to **understand your depression** given your experiences
- **ways to increase meaningful activities** in your life
- how to **problems-solve** through stressful situations in your life
- ways you can increase your sense of **connection in relationships**
- **ways to work directly with your supports** (e.g., family and school)—and sometimes even bring family members into the session—to discuss how to create an environment where your depression can get better.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What should I know before starting therapy?

- Therapy involves attending **regular sessions plus applying the newly learned skills in your daily life.** This means dedicating time each week to practise new skills. Although this can take time away from other things in your life, many youth find the time investment worth it.
- Therapy involves **exploring situations or experiences that can bring up strong emotions.** This can feel uncomfortable at first. If therapy is overwhelming, please let your clinician(s) know; they can help guide you through the next steps.
- **Your relationship with your therapist is important.** If you don't feel comfortable with your therapist, you are encouraged to bring this up in session. You can also ask your supports (e.g., parent, teacher or other members of your care team) to help express how you want to address your concerns with your therapist, such as writing down what you want to say and role-playing.

How will I know if therapy is working for me?

You may start to notice you are:

- recognizing your emotions more easily
- working through difficult situations effectively
- problem-solving in times of stress
- identifying more useful thoughts in your daily life.

Remember, it can take months to notice shifts. If you don't notice any improvement after eight weeks of therapy, or if your symptoms get worse, talk to your care team about your treatment options.