technique, they are encouraged to examine which behaviours are helpful and which are not. This may involve conducting behaviour experiments to test the effectiveness and helpfulness of the behaviour, and can be done by testing hypotheses in real-life situations to see whether an alternative behaviour may be more helpful. It can also involve simpler techniques, such as behavioural activation, which involves clients identifying activities they may have stopped doing, or have been avoiding since becoming unwell, and reintroducing these.

CBT techniques
Cognitive behavioural therapists want clients to learn more about the way their mind works. CBT is not only about making specific and identified changes to thoughts and behaviours but also about making clients their own therapists. This will enable them to apply the learning developed in and between sessions to life in general.

Therapists use a number of measures to identify, test and reinforce this learning. Clients can use some of these after therapy ends. Measures include:

- Becks Depression Inventory (Beck et al, 1988; 1961);
- Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (Kroenke et al, 2001);
- Generalised Anxiety Disorder Assessment 7 (Spitzer et al, 2006).

5 key points

1 At least one in four people will suffer a mental health problem

2 Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) has been used in acute mental health care for many years and there are many CBT practitioners in both acute and community mental health teams

3 CBT addresses the interaction of thoughts, emotions, physical sensations and behaviours, helping clients find solutions to problems and develop problem-solving skills

4 CBT uses two psychological techniques: cognitive processing helps clients to recognise negative thoughts; and behavioural strategies help them identify helpful and unhelpful behaviour

5 CBT can be practised by many professions, including nurses who have attended a registered CBT course and have done a minimum amount of practice supervised by a registered CBT therapist

FIG 1. THE HOT CROSS BUN MODEL

Source: Padesky and Greenberger (1995)

and function as a readily accessible explanation for the client. It must be clear so the client can understand it and avoid jargon.

How does CBT work?
CBT uses two psychological techniques: cognitive processing; and behavioural strategies.

Cognitive processing
The aim of cognitive processing is to examine clients’ thoughts and help them to learn the skill of recognising negative thoughts, often referred to as negative automatic thoughts (NATs).

They will then be able re-evaluate these thoughts using an objective framework. This can involve using techniques to gather evidence for the validity of the thoughts, such as evidence for and against, surveys, or asking a trusted other.

Having done this, a client is then in a better position to evaluate the thought objectively and either create a more helpful thought, or be able to recognise the thought as unhelpful.

Socratic questioning, or guided discovery, is crucial to this as we want clients to be able to recognise unhelpful thoughts and take the appropriate action, rather than telling them how they should be thinking.

Behavioural strategies
This technique focuses on clients’ behaviour. Using a Socratic or guided discovery technique, they are encouraged to examine which behaviours are helpful and which are not.

This may involve conducting behavioural experiments to test the effectiveness and helpfulness of the behaviour, and can be done by testing hypotheses in real-life situations to see whether an alternative behaviour may be more helpful. It can also involve simpler techniques, such as behavioural activation, which involves clients identifying activities they may have stopped doing, or have been avoiding since becoming unwell, and reintroducing these.

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