

# Cognitive Behavior Therapy Terms

**A-B-C model:** The theory that people's problems do not stem from activating events but, rather, from their beliefs about such events. Thus, the best route to changing negative emotions is the changing of one's beliefs about situations.

**Automatic thoughts:** Personal ideas that result from a particular stimulus and that lead to emotional responses.

**Cognitive errors:** In cognitive therapy, the client's misconceptions and faulty assumptions. (Examples include arbitrary inference, selective abstraction, overgeneralization, magnification, polarized thinking, and personalization.)

**Cognitive restructuring:** A process of actively altering maladaptive thought patterns and replacing them with constructive thoughts and beliefs.

**Cognitive structure:** The organizing aspect of thinking, which monitors and directs the choice of thoughts; implies an "executive processor," one that determines when to continue, interrupt, or change thinking patterns.

**Cognitive therapy:** An approach and set of procedures that attempts to change feelings and behavior by modifying faulty thinking and believing.

**Collaborative empiricism:** A strategy of viewing the client as a scientist who is able to make objective interpretations.

**Constructivism:** A recent development in cognitive therapy that emphasizes the subjective framework and interpretations of the client, rather than looking to the objective bases of faulty beliefs.

**Coping-skills program:** A behavioral procedure for helping clients deal effectively with stressful situations by learning to modify their thinking patterns.

**Distortion of reality:** Erroneous thinking that disrupts one's life; can be contradicted by the client's objective appraisal of the situation.

**Internal dialogue:** The sentences that people tell themselves and the debate that often goes on "inside their head" a form of self-talk, or inner speech.

**Irrational belief:** An unreasonable conviction that leads to emotional and behavioral problems.

**Musturbation:** A term coined by Ellis to refer to behavior that is absolutist and rigid. We tell ourselves that we *must*, *should* or *ought* to do or be something.

**Rationality:** The quality of thinking, feeling, and acting in ways that will help us attain our goals. Irrationality consists of thinking, feeling, and acting in ways that are self-defeating and that thwart our goals.

**Rational-emotive imagery:** A form of intense mental practice for learning new emotional and physical habits clients imagine themselves thinking, feeling, and behaving in exactly the way they would like to in everyday situations.

**Self-instructional therapy:** An approach to therapy based on the assumption that what people say to themselves directly influences the things they do. Training consists of learning new self-talk.

aimed at coping with problems.

***Shame-attacking exercises:*** An REBT strategy of encouraging people to do things despite a fear of feeling foolish or embarrassed. The aim of the exercise is to teach people that they can function effectively even if they might be perceived as doing foolish acts.

***Stress-inoculation training:*** A form of cognitive behavior modification developed by Donald Meichenbaum that involves an educational, rehearsal, and application phase. Clients learn the role of thinking in creating stress, are given coping skills for dealing with stressful situations, and practice techniques aimed at changing behavior.

***Therapeutic collaboration:*** A process whereby the therapist actively strives to engage the client's active participation in all phases of therapy.

---

**[Return to Cognitive-Behavior Therapy Home Page](#)**