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CBT Therapy, a Proven Anxiety Therapy and Depression Treatment, and End to Anxiety Problems by [Dr. David Purves](#)

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Psychological problems such as Stress, anxiety, and depression can be just as devastating as physical problems like injury or bacterial or viral infections. Medical research has shown repeatedly the crucial link between thoughts, emotions and physical health and recovery. Cultures all over the world have known about this link for years. In fact, the tendency of Western medicine to look at patients as clusters of symptoms instead of whole human beings is a rather recent development in the history of healing. Many scholars are puzzled by the steep rise in depression and anxiety problems in relatively prosperous, developed countries. One might imagine that there would be more of a need for depression treatment in the poorer countries of the world, but that does not seem to be the case. People in poor countries may certainly become stressed or saddened as a response to tangible suffering or misfortune, but the state of being stressed, anxious, or depressed without any direct, specific cause seems to be a problem primarily of the wealthier, more highly developed nations. Various theorists view the causes of these problems differently, but one element seems to be fairly consistent: depression and anxiety are generally caused by what we might call dysfunctional over-analysis. The conscious thoughts of a person directly affect the way that the brain reacts, changing the brain chemistry and the neurological pathways that send signals through the brain and outward through the body. Repeated dysfunctional thoughts tend to reinforce themselves by strengthening these pathways through repetition, which effectively conditions the patient to think dysfunctionally, and to experience neurochemically induced discomfort, distress, fatigue, malaise, lower immune system function and slower healing.

For decades now, Western medicine has largely treated anxiety and depression with medication, a practice that has certainly attracted some skepticism. The primary criticism of medicating depressed and anxious people (aside from the potential side-effects) is that this approach does not really address the root causes of these conditions. Fortunately, there is at least one type of therapy that does go to the root causes of the problems: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, also called CBT Therapy. Many sources indicate that CBT is the safest, most effective therapy available. This approach focuses on an examination of the patient's thought patterns in an effort to locate and modify thought patterns that are dysfunctional or harmful. Many people have developed negative ways of thinking, through a variety of experiences and sources. While it is not realistic to ignore problems, it can be just as unrealistic (and much more harmful) to dwell on problems, to focus on defeat and failure, or to expect unpleasant things to happen. When people do these things, the brain reacts to these conscious negative thoughts with chemical changes that reinforce the negative reactions: low energy, low libido, nervousness, lack of focus, and many other unpleasant symptoms. CBT Therapy finds the root of the problem, the specific recurring thoughts that are causing the brain to react negatively, and to replace those thoughts with thoughts that are more accurate, productive, forward-thinking, and healthy. It sounds pretty simple. Most brilliant ideas are. If this treatment can spread widely enough to be accessible to everyone who needs it, the world will be a much happier and healthier place.

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[Dr. David Purves](#) - About Author:

The author is a former university professor who taught psychology and psychotherapy. He is an

innovator in the field of computer based cognitive therapy and writes articles about CBT Therapy and its role as a [anxiety therapy](#) and a [depression treatment](#) to eliminate depression and a [anxiety problems](#).

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