



Oxford Health  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Oxfordshire Psychological Therapies

## Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT)

# Contents

What is Cognitive Analytic Therapy?.....	3
Why might I need CAT? .....	4
What can I expect when I'm in therapy?.....	4
Practical Information.....	5
Patient Feedback.....	6
How can I contact Psychological Therapies?.....	7
Accessibility.....	8
Get in touch.....	8
Feedback.....	8

# What is Cognitive Analytic Therapy?

Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT) takes the perspective that as children we take on board, sometimes unconsciously, the values of those around us and their views on how to deal with conflicts and challenges.

If our childhood years have included painful experiences, or we have not felt supported in dealing with difficulties, we find ways of coping with the feelings in order to get by and 'survive'.

These attempts at coping can become 'fixed' or unhelpful and they can end up keeping our problems in place, rather than solving them.

An example of this is what CAT describes as a 'Placation Trap': we start out feeling bad about ourselves, so we try to please others and fit in with them, in the hope that this will make them like us.

However, we then end up feeling taken for granted and resentful, which confirms our low opinion of ourselves and keeps us miserable. And so, it goes round.

CAT works by trying to help to work out what our unhelpful patterns are, and which of them are causing problems now.

## Why might I need CAT?

CAT is particularly helpful where problems are complex and deep-rooted, involving abrupt or unmanageable mood swings and disrupted relationships.

CAT can be helpful for people who present with more than one problem, or who may feel differently about themselves and other people at different times.

CAT acknowledges that changing can be hard, as at times it will feel like we are asked to give up parts of ourselves, or at least the very ways of going about things that have seemed to keep things safe. Open and shared work with your therapist, following a clear structure, make it easier for people to stay with the therapy through challenging patches and to start breaking long-standing patterns.

## What can I expect when I'm in therapy?

What you can expect in CAT therapy is to be actively involved with your therapist in trying to identify your patterns of behaviour and considering different ways of going about things.

It will involve noticing patterns between sessions and gradually setting yourself manageable tasks to change them. We also pay attention to how the difficulties may be activated between

you and your therapist, so that you can together seek solutions or ways out of the patterns.

CAT aims to help you understand yourself, and your relationships. Particular symptoms and difficulties will always be considered within this overall understanding.

Both you and your therapist will be actively involved, devising written descriptions and understandings of your problems, or using diagrams to understand how your current ways of thinking, acting, and relating to others may inadvertently maintain them.

These descriptions can offer you a new way to think about and feel in charge of the patterns that underlie your difficulties. Very often, as the wider picture is worked on, symptoms will fade away, but, if necessary, some specific, focused work can take place to look at these.

## **Practical Information**

CAT is always offered within a time limit. The standard format for CAT is sixteen weekly individual sessions, usually lasting fifty minutes, with the same therapist and at the same time throughout. The more active and involved you are in and between sessions, the more likely you are to benefit from your therapy.

About three months after the end of therapy you will meet your therapist for a review of how things have gone for you. This is an important part of the consolidation process.

CAT may also be offered in a group, which is typically sixteen weekly sessions lasting up to two hours.

## **Patient Feedback**

"I would advise anyone thinking of doing CAT to go for it, it's actually very very rewarding".

"It's been the best therapy I have ever had".

# How can I contact Psychological Therapies?

## Email

Oxon.psychologicaltherapies@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

## Telephone

01865 902 005.

## Address

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

Adult Mental Health Team

Psychological Therapies

May Davidson Building,

Warneford Hospital, Warneford Lane,

Headington, Oxford OX3 7JX

# Accessibility

Patient information leaflets are available on our website:  
[www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/leaflets)

# Get in touch

Address           Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust  
                      Trust Headquarters  
                      Littlemore Mental Health Centre  
                      Sandford Road, Oxford OX4 4XN

Phone             01865 901 000

Email             [enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

Website          [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

# Feedback

Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) provides advice and support to patients, families, and carers, helping to resolve any problems, concerns, or complaints you may have.

Phone             0800 328 7971

Email             [PALS@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

Become a member of our foundation trust: [www.ohftnhs.uk/membership](http://www.ohftnhs.uk/membership)

Support Oxford Health Charity, making a difference to patients, their families and staff who care for them: [www.oxfordhealth.charity](http://www.oxfordhealth.charity)