

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Skills Group: Participant Information

Are you struggling with...

- Sadness or depression
- Worry, nervousness or anxiety illness, pain, or health problems
- Addictions or problems with spending, overeating, or other out of control behaviors
- Anger
- Insomnia
- Guilt or shame
- Grief and loss
- Family or work conflict
- Relationship stress
- Transitions
- Eating disorders
- Attention or distractibility problems

Our MSP-covered physician-led CBT skills program could help.

What is CBT Skills Group?

As human beings, stress and pain are inevitable in life. But sometimes the way we respond to this distress makes matters worse. We don't have a choice about which curve balls life will throw at us, but we do have a choice about how we respond.

In the CBT Skills program, we take a look at how the mind works, bringing mindful awareness to our patterns of feeling, thinking and behaving. In doing so, we become more aware of our choices. We also practice skills that help us cope with intense emotions, cultivate more helpful thinking, and make choices that move us in the direction of what is truly important to us.

The course material draws on concepts from neuroscience, mindfulness, and cognitive behavioral therapy to teach skills that may help you build a sense of empowerment and begin to cultivate a relationship with yourself that is kind and insightful.

Who is the course for?

Ask your doctor if the course is right for you.

You may be eligible if you struggle with anxiety, depression, chronic medical conditions, chronic pain, substance misuse, insomnia, ADHD, hormonal problems, postpartum-related issues, or are dealing with a major life stressor.

Who is this course not the best fit for?

We do have some criteria that outline who may not be ready for group at this time.

This group requires the ability to tolerate being in a group setting, the motivation to practice skills at home, and the ability to attend to group teachings and home practice.

Often, when we are experiencing severe episodes of depression, mania, psychosis, or any difficulty with cognitive impairment (such as dementia or serious head injuries), it is too difficult to participate in a group like this. Similarly, if you struggle with immense difficulties regulating your emotions or being triggered by others (e.g. flashbacks, anger outburst, dissociation, or suicidal thinking), it may be important to work in a 1:1 setting on these symptoms or join a group that specifically targets these symptoms (e.g. groups offered at the sexual assault center or dialectical behavioral therapy).

Similarly, significant difficulties with substance use (to the extent that it would interfere with your ability to participate in the group and home practice) may better be served at your local alcohol and substance use center to target these behaviors.

What is the course like?

Each series consists of 8 weeks of 90-minute sessions, facilitated by a specially trained family physician, psychiatrist, or both. There is also 10-60 minutes of home practice each week.

The group medical visits are like an interactive classroom with up to 16 participants. The program involves skills training, not psychotherapy, so personal sharing is very limited, but each participant shares a brief report on their learning each week. Most people say this learning from other participants is the most powerful part of the course.

Groups sound terrifying, especially for people with anxiety!

For those reluctant to participate in a group, we have had extensive feedback from past participant telling us that although they initially felt anxious joining a group, they found it to be extremely beneficial to be in such a supportive environment and to learn that they were not alone in in their struggles.

To learn more about others' experiences, you can read an article on our group interviewing past participants at:

- https://issuu.com/divisionsbc/docs/vdfp_scope_magazine_volume_1_issue

What do past participants say about the group?

"This course has been invaluable. I wish I could have learned these things earlier in life." - Participant

"Through the CBT skills program I have learned simple approaches I can use to maintain more objectivity in situations where I could become anxious or overly emotional. I have more ways to remain calm and feel more control over my moods/emotions." - Participant

"I feel more capable of managing and reducing my anxiety by using the concepts (and workbook) taught in class. The group facilitator was compassionate and being with a group helped me feel less isolated and alone." - Participant

"It brought sunshine to the darkness. An oasis of companionship and sharing. Awakening and aha moments of triggers." - Participant

"I feel empowered that I direct my life, I have the power to control and change my thoughts, behaviors, and feelings, and I'm worth it to do so." - Participant

"Realization that I am not alone - everyone is going through something." - Participant

What is the cost?

The cost of the workbook is \$35, and we ask you to pay-as-you-can. The sessions themselves are covered by MSP (and thus no direct costs to you).

When and Where are the courses?

The courses are run on various days and evenings in several locations within the region. Once you are referred, you will get an email outlining all the upcoming choices.

How can I sign up?

First, decide if you have the time and energy to commit to attending all of the 8 weekly sessions. Each week also involves 10-60 minutes of practice at home.

Then, discuss a referral from your primary care practitioner. He or she will have you complete a screening questionnaire to determine if the group is suitable for you.

If you are eligible, we will be in touch with you about the best series that works with your schedule.

Who can I contact for further information?

Check out our **website** www.divisionsbc.ca/vancouver/CBTskillsgroup , email us at vancouver@divisionsbc.ca or **call** 604-569-2010.