

CPT for PTSD

What is Cognitive Processing Therapy?

Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) is an evidencebased, weekly treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that helps people recognize how trauma has changed their view about themselves, others, and the world. Most people who complete CPT show a noticeable improvement in PTSD symptoms.

Does CPT work with multiple traumas?

Yes. CPT is very effective for individuals who have experienced multiple traumas. In the beginning of treatment you will focus on the traumatic experience that troubles you the most. Then, the focus can shift to other traumas as needed.

Examples of traumatic events include:

- Sexual assault
- Domestic violence
- Traumatic grief
- Trauma that occurred in childhood
- Vicarious trauma



CPT has four main parts:

- 1 Education about PTSD and CPT
- 2 Processing the impact of the trauma
- 3 Learning to challenge thoughts about the trauma
- 4 Addressing trauma-related themes

What Are the Goals of CPT?

Reflect

- Improve your understanding of PTSD
- Examine the impact of the trauma on thoughts and feelings
- Decrease avoidance and emotional numbing

Redefine

- Learn skills to evaluate thinking
- Consider alternative viewpoints of the trauma, oneself and the world

Recover

- Reduce your level of distress related to your memories of the trauma
- Reduce feelings of anxiety, anger, guilt and shame
- Improve day-to-day living

What will I be doing in CPT?

The 12 modules typically take 10–14 weekly sessions to complete, but this varies from person to person.



During the sessions you will:

- Be asked to write about the impact of your traumatic experience(s)
- Choose whether you want to write the story of your traumatic event(s)
- Learn to identify and challenge unhelpful thoughts through structured therapy sessions and take-home practice assignments

For whom does CPT work the best?

CPT works for a wide range of individuals. Ultimately, those who are motivated and put a lot of work into CPT will get the most out of the therapy.

Will I be able to handle CPT?

Many who have this initial concern successfully complete this treatment and enjoy significant improvements. While it may be scary to focus on the thoughts and feelings related to your trauma, it is important to remember it is a memory and it is not happening now. You're encouraged to discuss any concerns with your therapist.



How are CPT sessions structured?

You will get the most out of CPT by attending sessions weekly on a consistent basis. CPT is effective in both individual and group settings and the treatment works well both in-person and over telehealth.

Individual CPT involves sessions with just you and the therapist. Group CPT involves going through the treatment with other individuals who have experienced traumatic events. Details of each individual's trauma are not discussed in group. Group will focus on the ways in which your thinking has been impacted by the trauma. Group provides an opportunity to receive support from peers while going through treatment.

Citation: Department of Veterans Affairs Cognitive Processing Therapy brochure 2015

https://cptforptsd.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/992-057_VA_CPT_brochure_REV02_2015.pdf



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