



Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Skills Course: Formulation, Thought Records and Behavioural Activation



Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Skills Course: Formulation, Thought Records and Behavioural Activation

Introduction:

Cognitive behavioural therapy skills, covering case formulation, thought records and behavioural activation, form the subject of this 5-day foundation course for counsellors, nurses, social workers, school counsellors and wellbeing practitioners, who complete a CBT case formulation and session plan for a client case. Services often rely on helpers who listen well but lack a structured, evidence-informed method and a clear sense of where their scope of practice ends. Nominees already support clients in a helping role, and teaching is by rehearsed role-play with feedback; the course does not license anyone to practise psychotherapy. CoreConcept Training Center delivers this CBT skills course.

Course Objectives:

- Explain the cognitive model and the links between situations, automatic thoughts, emotions, body reactions and behaviour to clients
- Draw up a collaborative cognitive case formulation from an assessment interview using a five-part and longitudinal format
- Apply Socratic questioning, thought records and cognitive restructuring to identify and test unhelpful automatic thoughts
- Plan behavioural activation, graded exposure hierarchies and structured problem solving for low mood and anxiety presentations
- Structure sessions with agenda setting, homework review and routine outcome measures within a low-intensity or guided self-help model
- Recognise the limits of foundation-level practice, use supervision and refer clients with risk or complex needs to qualified professionals

Target Audience:

- Counsellors and psychologists in training responsible for one-to-one sessions with clients presenting low mood or anxiety
 - Nurses responsible for psychological support of patients in community, primary care or inpatient settings
 - Social workers responsible for casework with individuals and families facing distress
 - School counsellors responsible for brief supportive work with pupils and referral to specialist services
 - Wellbeing practitioners responsible for guided self-help and low-intensity psychological support
-

Course Outline:

Day 1: The Cognitive Model, Scope of Practice and the Therapeutic Alliance

- Cognitive Model Linking Situation, Thought, Emotion and Behaviour
- Five-Part Model Including Physical Sensations and Environment
- Evidence Base and Common Presentations Suited to CBT
- Scope of Practice Map for Foundation-Level Helpers
- Therapeutic Alliance, Collaborative Empiricism and Guided Discovery

Day 2: Assessment, Case Formulation and Socratic Questioning

- CBT Assessment Interview Structure and Problem List
- Longitudinal Formulation With Core Beliefs and Conditional Assumptions
- Maintenance Cycle Diagram for Low Mood and Anxiety
- Socratic Questioning Sequence for Guided Discovery Conversations
- SMART Therapy Goals Agreed From the Formulation

Day 3: Automatic Thoughts, Thought Records and Cognitive Restructuring

- Automatic Thought Identification Using Emotion Shifts and Imagery
- Cognitive Distortions Checklist With Catastrophising and Mind Reading
- Seven-Column Thought Record With Evidence For and Against
- Balanced Alternative Thought Rating and Belief Change Tracking
- Behavioural Experiment Planning Sheet to Test Predictions

Day 4: Behavioural Methods, Exposure, Relapse Prevention and Referral

- Behavioural Activation Activity Monitoring and Scheduling Charts
- Graded Exposure Hierarchy and Safety Behaviour Reduction for Anxiety
- Structured Problem Solving Steps With Option Appraisal
- Relapse Prevention Blueprint With Early Warning Signs
- Risk Indicators, Supervision Escalation and Referral Pathway Decisions

Day 5: Role-Play Practice and the CBT Formulation and Session Plan

- Low-Intensity CBT and Guided Self-Help Session Role-Play
 - Session Structure Rehearsal With Agenda, Bridge and Homework
 - Routine Outcome Measures Review and Progress Discussion Practice
 - Ethics, Confidentiality and Consent Dilemmas in Case Discussion
 - CBT Case Formulation and Session Plan Completion and Feedback
-

Skills You Will Gain:

- Cognitive Case Formulation
- Socratic Dialogue
- Thought Record Facilitation
- Cognitive Restructuring
- Behavioural Activation Planning
- Graded Exposure Design
- CBT Session Structuring
- Risk Recognition and Referral

Why Attend This Course:

- Produce a CBT case formulation and session plan that a clinical supervisor or team lead can review before the next client contact
- Decide whether a client fits a low-intensity CBT approach or needs referral to a qualified therapist or specialist service
- Reduce drift into unstructured sessions, missed homework and unrecognised risk that slow client progress
- Share thought records, activity schedules and exposure hierarchies with colleagues who support the same client group

Conclusion:

Back at work, the participant brings the CBT case formulation and session plan to supervision, where the supervisor or team lead uses it to agree whether the client continues in low-intensity support or is referred onward. Colleagues can adopt the shared thought record, activity schedule and exposure hierarchy templates. After the first sessions delivered under the plan, the participant and supervisor should review outcome measure scores, homework completion and any risk indicators, and revise the formulation and referral thresholds accordingly.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should participants know before a cognitive behavioural therapy skills course?

Participants should already work with clients in a helping role such as counselling, nursing, social work or wellbeing support. No previous CBT training is needed. An anonymised case from their own caseload helps during the role-play and formulation work.

How does this cognitive behavioural therapy skills course differ from stress management or coaching courses?

This course teaches structured CBT methods for client work: formulation, thought records, behavioural activation and exposure. Stress management courses build personal coping, and coaching courses focus on goal achievement with well clients rather than psychological difficulties.

Does a cognitive behavioural therapy skills course qualify someone to practise as a CBT therapist?

No. This is a foundation-level course that equips helpers to use CBT-informed skills within their existing role and scope of practice. Practising as a therapist requires further accredited training, supervised clinical hours and professional registration.

What do participants take back from the cognitive behavioural therapy skills course?

Participants take back a CBT case formulation and session plan for a real or anonymised case, plus thought record, activity scheduling, exposure hierarchy and relapse prevention templates ready for supervised use.
