

What Is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy For Alcohol Addiction Treatment

by Evolve Indy | Jun 1, 2022 | Alcohol Treatment, Blog | 0 comments



According to statistics, alcohol is the 3rd leading cause of death in the US. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) estimates that as of 2019 about 14.5 million people aged 12 and above had an alcohol use disorder (AUD).

These figures bring clarity to how serious alcohol addiction is in the country. In response, several rehab facilities and alcohol addiction treatment programs have come up aimed at helping those struggling with addiction get their lives back under control.

One popular psychotherapy approach we use here at [Evolve Indy](#) to treat addiction is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).

What Is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a form of talk therapy or mental health counseling. This form of counseling focuses on helping those with addiction, including alcohol addiction, to find a connection between their thoughts, feelings, and actions and what impact these have on their recovery.

The main premise of CBT is that your thoughts and feelings can lead to addiction. This means that what you think about and what you feel are directly correlated to how you behave. For instance, if you struggle with addiction and feel fearful, anxious, or angry or you perhaps think that you're inadequate in some situation you find yourself in, you are more likely to take alcohol to numb or self-medicate those feelings and thoughts away.

When you start working with a cognitive-behavioral therapist, they'll help you identify the negative thought patterns or feelings you normally have that lead to addiction. Once identified, the next step is to replace them with more positive, healthier thoughts and feelings that eventually lead to changed behavior, in this case, a break from your reliance on alcohol.

The main goals of CBT include:

- Identifying and changing negative thought patterns and feelings.
- Discourage and change unhelpful behavior patterns.
- Teach coping strategies that can be used in daily life when faced with different triggering scenarios.

Unlike other addiction treatment methods, CBT is considered a short-term therapeutic approach because results can be realized in as little as 12 -16 sessions. Additionally, CBT is adaptable and versatile enough to be used in both inpatient and [outpatient treatment settings](#) as well as in either individual or group counseling.

Techniques Used in CBT

There are different techniques that cognitive-behavioral therapists use to help those with alcohol addiction. These are aimed at identifying negative thinking patterns and reshaping them to effect behavior change.

The techniques include:

1. Cognitive restructuring

Cognitive restructuring is aimed at helping you gain better control over your thoughts. When using this technique, the therapist will ask you questions about different scenarios that you may encounter in your normal day-to-day life and how you react to them. This will help them to identify problematic thought patterns and make you aware of them. From there the next step is to reform and replace them with more positive and productive ones.

2. Exposure therapy

This is an excellent way of helping you learn to face things and situations that you are afraid of or may find challenging in life. Using this technique, the therapist slowly exposes you to things that provoke fear and anxiety and then guides you on how to cope. For instance, they can ask you to remember a painful memory and the more you focus on it, the less the pain becomes. Exposure therapy helps you become more confident and feel more in control of your life.

3. Role-playing

Role-playing helps you visualize and act out different behaviors in different situations. Most often these are scenarios that induce anxiety or stress and have led you to drink in the past. Playing out these scenarios while practicing different behaviors under the guidance of a therapist helps you learn to control your fear, solve problems and practice social and communication skills. That way, should you face the same situations in the real world, you'll know what productive actions to take, instead of reaching for a drink.

4. Journaling

Writing is a great way for you to get in touch with your thoughts. Your therapist may ask you to keep a journal of all the negative thoughts you have between therapy sessions and then you can work on changing them together. Additionally, they may ask you to also keep track of the positive thoughts you've had or the situations where you've chosen constructive behavior over drinking since your last session. This way, you can chart your progress through recovery by seeing how your thoughts and behaviors change for the better over time.

5. Relaxation and breathing techniques

The inability to deal with stress and other negative emotions is one of the main reasons driving people to drink. Learning relaxation and breathing techniques in CBT allows you to gain control over these emotions. These techniques lead you to relax and reduce tension in your body, making it unlikely for you to reach for a drink to escape these negative feelings.

For instance, if you find yourself in a stressful situation, you can take time out to practice your deep breathing and muscle-relaxing techniques to help you calm down. This may involve using a specific breathing pattern or focusing on tensing and relaxing different muscle groups. Deep breathing, like meditation, helps you focus on the present moment, lowering your stress levels and increasing control over your thoughts and feelings.

Get Help at Evolve Indy

If you're struggling with alcohol addiction, there's a way out. CBT can help you learn how to manage cravings and adopt healthier coping strategies. At Evolve Indy, we incorporate CBT into our various addiction treatment programs including [partial hospitalization](#) and [intensive outpatient programs](#). We provide individualized treatment based on your unique treatment goals. This greatly improves recovery outcomes. We emphasize aftercare treatment and will equip you with the skills you need to avoid relapse and rebuild a life free of alcohol addiction. Get in touch with us today and we'll help you to live a healthy and sober life.

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