

*Salt and Light Papers provide important information and analysis to help Christians and Churches to engage with 21<sup>st</sup> century social issues*

JA6

---

## THE LONG QUEUE TO MODIFY NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

---

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), sometimes referred to as Talking Therapy, is being promoted as the best 'evidenced-based' cure for depression, phobias, schizophrenia, ME, obsessive compulsive disorder and obesity. The Royal College of Psychiatrists views CBT as 'the most effective psychological treatment for moderate and severe depression – as effective as anti-depressants for many types of depression.'

The assumption behind CBT is that psychological problems are caused by flawed or irrational ways of thinking about self, the world and other people. CBT seeks to evaluate realistically, using a rigid, structured approach – analysing, for instance, why a person feels a certain way. The goal is to modify negative thoughts, thus improving both mood and behaviour. It is claimed that in fewer than 16 meetings with a therapist, at least half of those with depression or clinical anxiety can be cured completely.

The Department of Health says that approximately 60,000 practitioners are trained in CBT in the UK, 48,553 of them psychiatric nurses. However, demand is such that GP referral can take up to 18 months.

To meet this need, the Mental Health Foundation has set up a dedicated website where it is possible to receive CBT assistance on-line. For many this approach is just as helpful as a face-to-face consultation with a therapist. [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/depression-relief/](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/depression-relief/)

There is also a site, produced by psychologist Chris Williams, which has been set up with Christians specifically in mind. Its address is [www.feelinglikethis.com](http://www.feelinglikethis.com) There is also some helpful information and guidance about CBT on the Christian Medical Fellowship website.

Gerald Tanner

*The above was published in The Bulletin [March 2007]*

**Salt and Light Papers** is a series of occasional papers on contemporary issues of social concern. It is published online by the Affinity Social Issues Team. Its purpose is to help Christians to think through questions of relevance to our place in the world around us. The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily endorsed by the Affinity Social Issues Team.