

## Cognitive behavioral therapy

### Summary

As providers and managed care organizations (MCOs), we are in a position to keep our fingers on the pulse of members by monitoring their physical and emotional status. The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic recession have negatively affected many people's mental health and created new barriers for people already suffering from mental illness. We want to emphasize the effectiveness of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) as an intervention to improve the mental health of our members.

### Why is this necessary?

CBT is a covered service, and there are many behavioral health providers in the Amerigroup Washington, Inc. network who are certified to deliver CBT. Amerigroup encourages and supports you in making patient referrals to CBT if you determine that your patients may benefit from this effective treatment.

The American Medical Association (AMA) created two new CPT<sup>®</sup> billing codes for cognitive intervention, 97129 and 97130, effective for billing CBT services provided on and after January 1, 2020.

### What is cognitive behavioral therapy?

- CBT is a form of talk therapy a member receives with the help of a licensed therapist. CBT focuses on changing thoughts and behavior patterns.
- The National Alliance on Mental Illness describes CBT: “CBT focuses on exploring relationships among a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. During CBT, a therapist will actively work with a person to uncover unhealthy patterns of thought and how they may be causing self-destructive behaviors and beliefs. By addressing these patterns, the person and therapist can work together to develop constructive ways of thinking that will produce healthier behaviors and beliefs.”
- CBT is one of the most evidence-based psychological interventions for the treatment of several psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety disorders, somatoform disorder, and substance use disorder.
- CBT is based on the following core principles:
  - Psychological problems are based, in part, on faulty or unhelpful ways of thinking.
  - Psychological problems are based, in part, on learned patterns of unhelpful behavior.
  - People suffering from psychological problems can learn better ways of coping with them, thereby relieving their symptoms and becoming more effective in their lives.

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## Benefits of CBT:

- It allows the patient to engage in healthier thinking patterns by becoming aware of the negative and often unrealistic thoughts that dampen your feelings and moods.
- It has been found effective for a wide variety of maladaptive behaviors.
- It is often more affordable than some other types of therapy.
- It has been found to be effective both online as well as face to face.
- It can be used for those who do not require **psychotropic medication**.

## How does CBT work?

CBT is a shorter-term approach that usually takes as little as six sessions or up to 20 sessions, with each session lasting 30 to 60 minutes. CBT can be carried out with a therapist in one-to-one sessions, virtually, or in groups. Throughout each session, the therapist helps the patient to identify situations in their life that may be contributing to or causing depression. CBT aims to transform distorted ways of thinking and behaving that stand in the way of positive outcomes.

## What if I need assistance?

If you have questions about this communication or need assistance with any other item, visit the *Contact Us* section at the bottom of our provider website (<https://provider.amerigroup.com/WA>) for up-to-date contact information and self-service tools. You may also call Provider Services at **800-454-3730**.



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