

Other problems commonly treated by C.B.T.

**SPECIFIC PHOBIAS**

**SOCIAL PHOBIA**

**OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER**

**IMPULSE CONTROL DISORDERS**

**DEPRESSION**

**PANIC DISORDER**

**BI-POLAR DISORDER**

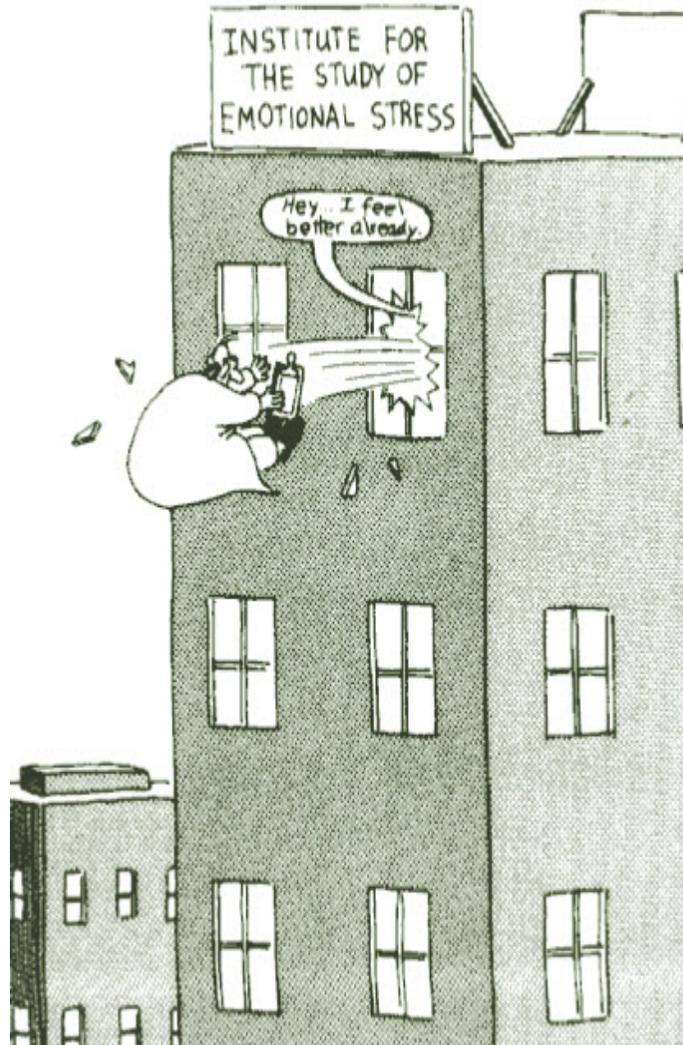
**GENERALISED ANXIETY DISORDER**

**POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

**SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION**

**MARITAL & RELATIONSHIP THERAPY**

**PANIC ATTACKS**



## Health Anxiety

*"Cognitive Behavioural Therapy can empower an individual to manage and transform their feelings -and thus their life"*

Professor Lord Richard Layard  
*"Mental Health—Britain's Biggest Social Problem?"*

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# COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

## Health Anxiety

Health Anxiety is characterised by the belief that one has, or fears developing, a serious disease based on the misinterpretations of one's bodily symptoms.

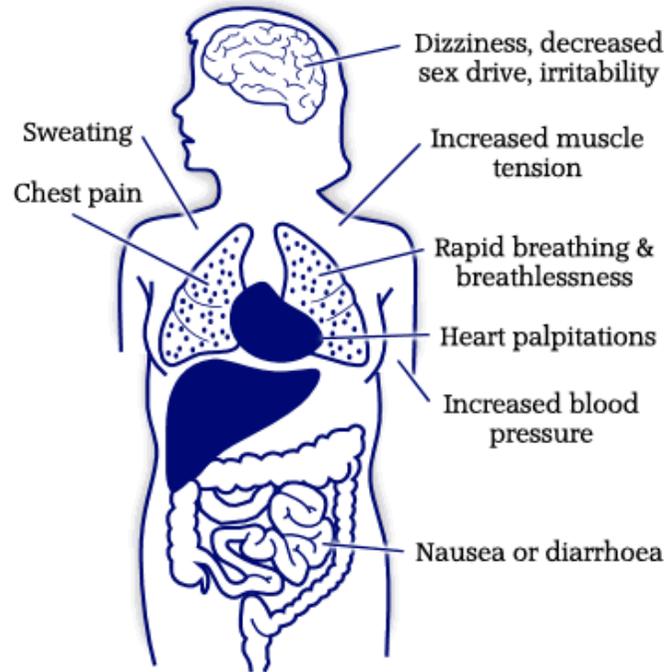
The beliefs regarding the state of health are not borne out by a corresponding medical diagnosis which supports these fears. These beliefs are not "delusional" in nature as one can accept that the extent of the (feared) illness may be being exaggerated.

From a cognitive behavioural perspective, Health Anxiety is similar in concept to that of Panic Disorder, the major difference being the immediacy of the threat to one's health e.g. if one judges that the heart attack is happening now then one is more likely to panic than to worry about it happening at some point in the future.

Typically the health anxious person will focus on symptoms which one believe confirms beliefs about the state of one's health, e.g. a cough, a blemish or lump may be a sign of cancer or headaches may be a sign of impending stroke.

Reassurance seeking is extensive and may amount in certain extremes to "Doctor Shopping", other behaviours include self-examination, selective attention and the repeated checking of the body for signs of malaise. These behaviours often result in tenderness or over-awareness of benign symptoms which may be

## Physical Effects of Anxiety Disorders



considered as further evidence of a serious physical illness. Additional avoidances and safety behaviours further complicate noticeable symptoms and contribute to maintaining the symptoms of anxiety.

## Formulation

The Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapist will collaborate with the patient and assess all maintaining factors; including thoughts, behaviours, emotions and physical symptoms associated with the problem and develop a working formulation which will be utilised to guide the course of therapy.

## Treatment

A number of techniques will be employed to test predictions and beliefs which may include behavioural strategies such as exposure and/or cognitive interventions aimed at identifying unhelpful thoughts and beliefs, possible thinking errors and misinterpretations. These may then be challenged through a combination of verbal reattribution, Socratic questioning and behavioural experiments.

Final Stages of the therapeutic interventions are aimed at relapse prevention.

A Professional and Confidential service, provided by a fully Qualified and Experienced Psychotherapist.

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