

SPOTLIGHT: Computer-Based Training for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT4CBT)



Background

Computer-Based Training for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT4CBT) is an evidence-based online program that teaches cognitive behavioral skills to help people reduce substance use. Development of the program began in 1999, after Dr. Kathleen Carroll realized that (1) there were not enough providers to address all the patients in need of CBT; (2) there was room for improvement in the quality of delivery of CBT; and (3) delivery was too expensive for broad scaling to all of those in need. The program has been available for general use since 2015.

How It Works

CBT4CBT is for anyone who is misusing drugs or alcohol and is currently enrolled in a clinical program or working with a licensed clinician. CBT4CBT is an adjunct to continued monitoring and/or treatment. Interested clinicians and treatment providers can connect with CBT4CBT through the CBT4CBT website. Once connected, clinicians receive a secure username and password for each patient.

CBT4CBT guides patients through seven modules, each lasting around 30-45 minutes. These modules use a variety of engaging techniques such as films, quizzes, and games to teach skills such as how to recognize triggers for substance use, how to cope with cravings, and how to navigate negative thoughts and situations. Additionally, CBT4CBT focuses on decision-making skills, problem-solving, and other cognitive and behavioral self-control strategies. After completing each module, patients receive instructions for practicing the skills on their own. A typical assignment might have the participant think through each small decision made over a day, to build awareness of their decision-making processes.

There are five versions of CBT4CBT, targeting:

1. Individuals with any substance use disorder,
2. Spanish speaking individuals with substance use disorder,

“CBT4CBT can extend the clinician’s reach and improve outcomes by replacing or supplementing clinician-delivered therapy. CBT4CBT is a user-friendly, engaging, broadly accessible, cost-effective means of providing access to empirically validated cognitive behavioral therapy.”

- Dr. Kathleen Carroll, Founder of CBT4CBT

3. Individuals whose primary diagnosis is alcohol use disorder,
4. Spanish speaking individuals whose primary diagnosis is alcohol use disorder, and
5. Individuals receiving office-based buprenorphine.

How It Is Innovative

By reducing the time that clinicians need to spend with an individual patient, CBT4CBT enables treatment programs to accommodate larger caseloads and increase access to treatment.

Behavioral health counseling is recommended for office-based buprenorphine treatment. However, many prescribers of buprenorphine are not trained in behavioral health therapy and are unable to provide this type of support. CBT4CBT provides a solution to prescribers, allowing them to recommend CBT4CBT to their patients in need of behavioral health support.

Demonstrating Success

CBT4CBT is used all over the United States and Canada, reaching thousands of patients. The program is cost effective and is successful when used as part of a professionally administered substance use disorder treatment program. Two randomized clinical trials conducted at Yale University found that people who use CBT4CBT in addition to their regular treatment for drug and alcohol use reduce their substance use more

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than people in standard treatment alone.¹²³ The program is durable, with reductions in drug use found even six months after CBT4CBT treatment ended. These results have been replicated in the culturally adapted version of CBT4CBT.⁴ Recently, two trials showed that the CBT4CBT programs, used with only minimal clinical monitoring (10 minute-check ins with clinicians) was more effective than standard outpatient care, again with improved efficacy during a 6-month follow-up.^{5 6}

A randomized controlled pilot study of the CBT4CBT program for individuals receiving office-based buprenorphine found a significant difference in opioid and other substance use between the population that received CBT4CBT and buprenorphine versus the population that only received buprenorphine.

The Future of CBT4CBT

While CBT4CBT is available from the CBT4CBT, LLC, it is also available through CHES Health, which has integrated CBT4CBT with its A-CHES Platform for addiction management and its Connections App for patient treatment and long-term recovery support.

Resources and References

CBT4CBT Website: <http://www.cbt4cbt.com>

CHES Health Website: www.ches.health

1 Carroll, K.M., Ball, S.A., Martino, S. Nich, C., Gordon, M.A., Portnoy, G.A. & Rounsaville, B.J. (2008). Computer-assisted delivery of cognitive behavioral therapy for addiction: A randomized trial of CBT4CBT. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 165:7, 881-889.

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3 Carroll, K.M., Kiluk, B.D., Nich, C., Gordon, M.A., Portnoy, G.A., Martino, D.R., & Ball, S.A. (2014). Computer-Assisted Delivery of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy: Efficacy and durability of CBT4CBT among cocaine-dependent individuals maintained on methadone. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 171, 436-444.

4 Paris, M., Silva, M., Jamarillo, Y., Añez-Nava, L., Kiluk, B.D., Gordon, M.A., Nich, C., Frankforter, T.F., & Carroll, K.M. (2018). Randomized clinical trial of a culturally adapted computer based cognitive behavioral therapy for Spanish speakers with substance use disorders: Primary outcomes. *American Journal of Public Health*. 108(11), 1535-1542.

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