

COMMON TREATMENTS FOR OVERCOMING PHOBIAS

There are a number of different therapeutic approaches that your psychologist may use to treat phobias. The treatment will depend on the type of phobia, how long the problem has been there, and whether there are other mental health conditions present.

CBT THERAPY

1 IDENTIFYING THOUGHTS

- Identifying any negative or fearful thoughts you might have, and learning why having these particular thoughts are irrational - separating out distortions and misconceptions from fact.

2 RATIONAL ALTERNATIVES

- Replacing those unhelpful thoughts with rational alternatives that are based more in reality, and that are more conducive to nurturing confidence and empowerment.

3 MODIFYING BEHAVIOURS

- Changing behaviour patterns, and other rituals or habitual actions that are carried out because of fearful thoughts. A large part of CBT will be focused on gradual practical exposure to your particular fear. This is incredibly important, and your psychologist will be able to support you to incrementally face the fear in an experiential way.

OTHER OPTIONS

4 USING MINDFULNESS

- Mindfulness is often practiced alongside CBT, and teaches people to become more aware of their thoughts and feelings, and to focus on why the two are so connected to one another. Once you are aware of your feelings, and how they are precipitated by a thought pattern or memory, you are going to have a lot more control over them. Essentially, you will be able to think far more clearly and start to realise that many of your phobic thoughts and ideas are irrational.

5 TAKING MEDICATION

- Only in the most extreme cases will a psychologist also recommend medication to help a client deal with their anxiety or phobias while working with CBT and graded exposure. It is unlikely that even a severe case will need to be on medication indefinitely though, if they do go down the CBT route. Once the behavioural treatments begin to have a positive impact, they will likely be able to reduce the medication under supervision until they can stop completely.