

Can CBT help older people with anxiety disorders?

Clinical Question	How effective is cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for reducing anxiety and related disorders in older adults?
Bottom Line	<p>The evidence presented in this systematic review showed that CBT can result in a can result in a large to moderate reduction in worry and depression.</p> <p>The results from this review suggest that the treatment of older adults with anxiety disorders can follow the clinical guidance available for younger adults, whilst acknowledging circumstances and issues more common amongst older adults, such as hearing or vision problems and other physical comorbidities.</p>
Caveat	The majority of the evidence presented in this review was rated as low as the majority of studies were small and had issues with attrition some of which was related to treatment preference, or dissatisfaction with treatment
Context	Anxiety and related disorders, including panic disorder, agoraphobia, generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, specific phobia, OCD, and PTSD, are the most common mental disorders globally, with lifetime prevalence rates ranging from 17% in the EU to 29% in the USA. In older adults, prevalence ranges from 6 to 12%. These disorders in older adults are often undiagnosed and untreated due to ageism and a focus on physical health issues. Anxiety if left untreated is commonly associated with depression and physical health problems such as increased risk of coronary heart disease and mortality.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Hendriks G-J, Janssen N, Robertson L, van Balkom AJ, van Zelst WH, Wolfe S, Oude Voshaar RC, Uphoff E. Cognitive behavioural therapy and third-wave approaches for anxiety and related disorders in older people. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2024, Issue 7. Art. No.: CD007674. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD007674.pub3. This review contains 21 trials which included 1,234 people.

Pearls No. 751, July 2024, written by Assoc Professor Vanessa MB Jordan.

Systematic review link:

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD007674.pub3/full>