

Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT) FAQs

What is CFT?

Compassion focused therapy (CFT), developed by Professor Paul Gilbert OBE, is a psychological therapy approach that was originally developed to help people with high shame and self-criticism.

CFT centres on the three systems of emotion regulation that has evolved in humans over time; the threat (protection) system, the drive (resource seeking) system and the soothing system.

Does it work for anxiety?

Yes, CFT has been shown to be more effective for people who have high levels of shame and self-criticism that drives their anxiety than other more traditional forms of talking therapy. By addressing those patterns of shame and self-criticism, and developing your own self-compassion, CFT can be very helpful in the management of anxiety

How does it work?

By emphasising the link between our thought patterns and the three emotion regulation systems, whilst also drawing on compassionate mind training and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques, your therapist will help you manage each system more effectively and in doing so, help you respond more appropriately to situations or challenges you might be facing.

CFT can be delivered either as a stand-alone treatment/talking therapy approach in its own right, or can be blended with another form of talking therapy that your Anxiety UK Approved Therapist is trained & qualified to deliver e.g. clinical hypnotherapy, CBT or counselling.

How effective is CFT?

There is growing evidence that developing feelings of compassion for both yourself and others can have a positive impact on our body, brain and mind. Learning to 'be kinder to ourselves' can have a positive impact on both our mental and physical health, and can help us to deal with life's ups and downs.

How many sessions will I need/how long does it take?

The number of sessions of therapy that you have will depend on your particular problem and its complexity. However as a guide, if you are having CFT as a stand-alone intervention or blended with clinical hypnotherapy, you can expect to have between 4-6 weekly sessions.

If instead, CFT is being provided as a blended approach alongside either CBT or counselling, you can expect to have between 6-15 sessions.