

The link between anxiety and stuttering is perhaps best established by the fact that many people who stutter only do so around certain people and in certain situations. Therefore, we can assume that certain situations and people generate anxiety and stuttering in some individuals. The goal of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) is to understand and work with the underlying negative appraisals that create anxiety in these situations.

CBT therapists call these negative appraisals 'causal thoughts', and they are responsible for anger, anxiety, sadness and many other problems we experience in our daily lives. Learning to identify these can help people enormously with improving their quality of life.

CBT changes the lives of thousands of people every day around the world. It is an evidence-based approach within the field of psychology, and many people choose this treatment form over other forms of treatments such as medication. Many people prefer CBT because there are no side effects and the treatment gives people tools they can use in their ongoing lives.

The psychological associations in most countries are currently working towards increasing access to CBT for the general public to deal with their anxiety and depression. For example, in Australia and the UK, the governments have put together schemes for increased access to CBT. The reasons for these recent changes are hundreds of studies supporting CBT as an effective treatment modality. Also, because of the acceptance and prevalence of CBT treatment, the stigma often attached to psychological services is being removed.

In 2008, there was only been one randomized controlled trial of the efficacy of CBT treatment on anxiety related to stuttering. In comparison, in the same year nearly one thousand studies have been conducted on CBT treatments related to other anxiety problems. This fact sheds light on the need for research into treatment efficacy for anxiety in stuttering. The only CBT trial on anxiety in stuttering was conducted in Australia by Ross Menzies and his colleagues at the Australian Stuttering Research Centre (ASRC) at the University of Sydney. Based on their treatment protocol, a computerized internet treatment has been created. The online treatment has all the ingredients of CBT, and people can access it at their convenience. If anyone is interested in participating in the study, please contact the ASRC on 9351 9061 or email me on f.helgadottir@usyd.edu.au

