



Cognitive *focus*

Centre for Cognitive Therapy

— ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS AND PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR A SECURE FUTURE.

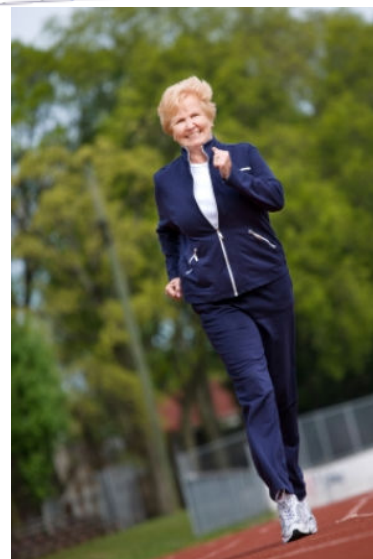
The Centre for Cognitive Therapy is dedicated to helping clients secure sustainable psychological well being. The current issue focuses on managing mood through menopause.

Helping Women with Mood and Menopause

Mood swings in menopause are caused by three factors: physiological, behavioural and cognitive. Physiologically, the main culprits are hormonal imbalances and fluctuations in estrogen, progesterone and androgens, and fatigue due to insomnia and due to the hormonal fluctuations. Behaviourally, there is a tendency for women to become socially withdrawn, and less active. Cognitively, menopausal women tend to think in four upsetting ways:(1) they attribute the mood swings to their current situation (eg: their marriage) or to others (eg: their demanding boss); (2)

they engage in self-blame, telling themselves that they are useless, ugly, and/or stupid; (3) they engage in low frustration tolerance, telling themselves they can't stand the way they're feeling; and (4) they ruminate on negative situations, relationships or ideas.

There are two effective remedies available for the physiological factors: exercise and hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Many women cannot take HRT for medical reasons, but the good news is that recent research has demonstrated that exercise is at least as effective as HRT for the psychological



symptoms of menopause, and for many of the physical symptoms. Recently many exercise clubs have begun to offer exercise programs aimed specifically at menopausal women and addressing their specific exercise needs.

Behaviourally, it is important that women remain or become as active socially and physically as possible through menopause. This is especially true for women for whom menopause coincides with retirement from their jobs, or in the case of mothers with the empty nest syndrome. It is critical that a sense of



LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE OF MENOPAUSE

Women can look forward to mood stabilizing completely, one year after menopause. Mood stabilization occurs once hormonal balance becomes steady, without monthly cycles. This can be a freeing time for women, when childcare and work responsibilities are no longer escalating. Being able to make more time for relationships, exercise and hobbies, greatly enhances personal growth and quality of life. Capitalizing on the new freedom can make this an extremely enriching stage in the life cycle.



Getting the most from our research analysis

Research has found that remaining positive helps mood through menopause.

meaning in life through engagement in social, work or volunteer activities is maintained.

Cognitive change can be more difficult to achieve. Self-defeating thinking in menopause must be challenged by the beliefs that (1) the mood swings are not caused by external events or people, but by menopausal changes (2) it is not the fault of the menopausal individual (3) it can be tolerated, and (4) it is possible with practice to shift one's focus to more positive thinking. While many women are able to change their cognitive focus on their own, cognitive therapy can be invaluable

in assisting women in achieving this goal.

Menopause can be an exciting and extremely meaningful time of life. Usually women are going through life transitions of children leaving home, and/or cutting back on work hours. This allows more freedom and time to pursue hobbies or volunteer activities there has been no time for earlier. In addition it allows more time to reconnect with your spouse, or for single women, to establish new social relationships. The ability to look at this period of life in terms of the endless opportunities for new growth can transform the transition into a positive and exciting period in the life cycle.

Get an hour of exercise daily.

**Remember your mood is governed by your thoughts.
Stay engaged in social, work and volunteer activities.**

SMARTER THERAPY:

Tips to help survive menopause



1. Exercise. Get regular daily exercise for 30-60 minutes. Start easy, progress gently and get to at least moderate intensity.
2. Keep active. Make an effort to stay socially active with friends and family.
3. Focus on thought patterns. Learn to change your thinking to positive, non-blaming, tolerant beliefs.



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Cognitive Therapy

1309 Carling Ave
Ottawa, ON K1Z 7L3
613-729-0801
www.ocbt.ca