

REVIEW

Mental aspects of impactful methods in cognitive treatment

Aspectos mentales de los métodos impactantes en el tratamiento cognitivo

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: in modern psychotherapeutic practice, there has been growing interest in integrating suggestive methods into cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). This trend was driven by the need to enhance the effectiveness of interventions with clients of different profiles, particularly in the transition to digital therapy formats where suggestion acquired new forms of implementation.

Method: the study was based on qualitative and content analysis of contemporary scientific sources addressing empirical and clinical aspects of suggestion in CBT.

Results: the analysis identified the main forms of suggestive influence and highlighted the key psychological mechanisms of their action. The effectiveness of suggestive techniques was established in the treatment of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic states, and eating disorders. A summarizing table of psychological mechanisms and an author's scheme reflecting the stages of suggestion in the CBT process were constructed. It was shown that suggestion could be successfully integrated into both traditional and digital formats of therapeutic interaction, particularly through affirmations, metaphors, visualizations, and resource messages.

Conclusions: suggestive techniques were found to enrich CBT interventions by enhancing motivation and emotional engagement. The results provided practical opportunities for adapting therapeutic programs, including online applications, with suggestive elements. The proposed generalizations may serve as a basis for developing personalized CBT models that are responsive to the client's emotional state and level of motivation.

Keywords: Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy; Suggestion; Psychological Mechanisms; Affirmations; Suggestion; Therapeutic Effectiveness.

RESUMEN

Introducción: en la práctica psicoterapéutica moderna se observó un creciente interés por la integración de métodos sugestivos en la terapia cognitivo-conductual (TCC). Esta tendencia estuvo impulsada por la necesidad de aumentar la eficacia de las intervenciones con clientes de diferentes perfiles, especialmente en el contexto de la transición hacia formatos digitales de terapia, donde la sugestión adquirió nuevas formas de aplicación.

Método: el estudio se basó en un análisis cualitativo y de contenido de fuentes científicas contemporáneas que abordaban los aspectos empíricos y clínicos del uso de la sugestión en la TCC.

Resultados: el análisis permitió identificar las principales formas de influencia sugestiva y destacar los mecanismos psicológicos clave de su acción. Se estableció la eficacia de las técnicas sugestivas en el tratamiento de la ansiedad, la depresión, los estados postraumáticos y los trastornos alimentarios. Se construyó una tabla de síntesis de los mecanismos psicológicos y un esquema del autor que reflejaba las etapas de la sugestión en el proceso de TCC. Se demostró que la sugestión podía integrarse con éxito tanto en formatos tradicionales como digitales de interacción terapéutica, en particular mediante afirmaciones, metáforas, visualizaciones y mensajes de refuerzo.

Conclusiones: se constató que las técnicas sugestivas enriquecían las intervenciones de la TCC al aumentar la motivación y la implicación emocional. Los resultados ofrecieron posibilidades prácticas para la adaptación de programas terapéuticos, incluidas aplicaciones en línea, con elementos sugestivos. Las generalizaciones propuestas pueden servir de base para el desarrollo de modelos personalizados de TCC sensibles al estado emocional y al nivel de motivación del cliente.

Palabras clave: Terapia Cognitivo-Conductual; Sugestión; Mecanismos Psicológicos; Afirmaciones; Eficacia Terapéutica.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, characterized by an increased level of psycho-emotional stress, social instability, and information overload, effective psychotherapeutic support is of particular importance. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has proven to be one of the most effective models in dealing with anxiety, depression, psychosomatic and stress disorders. At the same time, the effectiveness of CBT directly depends on the flexibility of its application in the actual therapeutic process and adaptation to the individual characteristics of the client. In this context, more and more attention is being paid to methods based on suggestion, which are traditionally associated with hypnosis or non-directive therapy, but are increasingly being integrated into the structure of CBT.

The analysis of the current scientific literature shows that there are two conditionally opposite approaches to the assessment of suggestion in CBT. Some researchers^(1,2) insist on the exclusively rational nature of cognitive restructuring, rejecting the use of emotional and associative influences as incompatible with scientific principles. At the same time, other authors^(3,4,5) demonstrate convincing evidence that the use of suggestive elements - metaphors, affirmations, visualizations, positive framing - can enhance the therapeutic effect, especially among patients with high levels of anxiety, lack of motivation, or emotional instability.

Despite the growing number of studies, there are still a number of open questions related to the precise definition of the psychological mechanisms of suggestion in CBT, its effectiveness in different formats (individual, group, online), and the search for optimal ways to integrate suggestive techniques into standard protocols. The available literature rarely contains systematic generalizations or practical suggestions on how to implement suggestion in CBT in an ethically sound and methodologically accurate manner.

In this respect, the rationale of the research lies in presenting a conceptual and empirical synthesis of how suggestive methods work in the cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) as processes that contribute to increasing the therapeutic effectiveness and emotional involvement in both conventional and digital types. The article is designed to synthesize theoretical knowledge and research results with the goal of determining a cohesive meaning of the psychological processes underlining suggestion and their theoretical implementation into contemporary models of CBT.

This study aims to fill the gap between the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of suggestion and its practical application in cognitive behavioral therapy by offering a structured vision of its role in changing cognitions, emotions, and behavioral patterns.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Modern scientific thought demonstrates an increasing interest in the integration of suggestive techniques into cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which is reflected in a number of empirical and theoretical works. There are two conceptual positions which control the academic debate on whether suggestion should be incorporated into cognitive behavioral therapy. According to the rationalist perspective, CBT has to be strictly cognitive, based on logical restructuring and denying emotional or associative methods as unscientific. The integrative view, in its turn, contends that suggestive components, such as metaphor, affirmation, re-framing and imagining, can be viewed as the mechanisms that can help achieve cognitive and emotional changes, which in turn bolster the healing process. This discussion brings out a more theoretic distinction between rational correction and affective involvement of psychotherapy, which puts suggestion in between cognition and emotion.

Rational Suggestive Debate of CBT

The discussions on the scholarly front pertaining to the inclusion of suggestion in cognitive behavioral therapy are dominated by two conceptual positions. The rationalist perspective demands that CBT should be more of a scientific approach in which there should be the restructuring of the mind in a logical way with the exclusion of emotional or associative approaches as unscientific. The integrative perspective, however, states that suggestive components, such as metaphors, affirmations, reframing and visualization can be used as processes that can cause cognitive and emotion change, enhancing the therapeutic process. This discussion opens up a more theoretical chasm between rational remedy and affective participation in psychotherapy, becoming a mediator of the intellectual and emotive.

Experimental Support of Suggestive Techniques by Disorder

There is growing empirical evidence that suggests that suggestion is clinically relevant in different disorders. Affirmations and guided imagery help to encourage motivation and support self-efficacy in anxiety and depression. Suggestive dialogue has proved to be effective in trauma-related processes as well as in eating disorders because the emotional resonance enhances the speed of restructuring maladaptive beliefs. Conversely, the effects of chronic pain disorders are still not stable, which suggests that somatic symptoms can restrict the responsiveness to suggestive influence. These results, combined, positively indicate that suggestion enhances CBT results in cases when emotional activation is a part of the disorder.

Recommendation in the Digital and Telehealth CBT Formats

The possibilities of suggestion in therapy have been broadened by technological transformation. The supportive presence of the therapist in online and app-based CBT is simulated by preprogrammed affirmations, resource messages, and interactive visualizations. Subtle nonverbal suggestion through intonation, gaze, visual framing, and similar means can be used in telemental health sessions, strengthening therapeutic alliance. The digital contexts therefore widen the scope of suggestive, and it is possible to implement interventions that are scalable and tailored to the individual in CBT.

Moderators of Suggestive Influence Cultural and Individual

Effectiveness of suggestion is relative to cultures and profiles of individuals. The patterns of cultural communication, belief systems, and suggestibility levels also affect the clients in accepting suggestive interventions. Narrative and visual formats will be more useful to younger clients, whereas the method of cognitive reframing and verbal affirmation is more effective with adults. These moderators demonstrate the importance of the contextual sensitivity of the adaptations of suggestive CBT to various groups of people.

Identified Research Gap

The literature is still very fragmented as some of the studies are purely theoretical, others are narrowly empirical, and not many studies have tried to combine both dimensions. No synthesis has yet been fully developed on the interaction between suggestive mechanisms and cognitive restructuring and motivation in CBT. The gap is addressed by the current review, which provides a systematic summary of the linkage between psychological processes of suggestion and their applications in both traditional and online CBT frameworks.

A number of studies have shown that suggestion - in the form of affirmations, metaphors, and resource messages - can significantly increase the effectiveness of CBT, especially in the treatment of anxiety disorders, depression, and psychosomatic conditions.^(3,4,5,6) This is also confirmed by the analysis of digital formats of therapy, where suggestion is realized through visualization, programmed messages, or video communication.^(7,8,9,10) Other authors emphasize the cultural and contextual aspects of CBT adaptation, noting that suggestion is particularly effective in regions with a developed tradition of communicative suggestion.^(1,11) In this context, the importance of personalizing therapeutic interventions that take into account the individual psycho-emotional characteristics of the client is growing.^(12,13,14,15) Researchers also emphasize the importance of suggestion as a tool for building trust in the therapist, increasing client motivation, and stimulating internal resources.^(8,9,16,17)

At the same time, there is some disagreement in the literature about the feasibility of combining suggestion with the rational logic of CBT. Some authors advocate maintaining a purely cognitive vector of therapy, rejecting emotional and associative influences as incompatible with scientific principles.^(1,2,18,19) However, an analysis of integrated approaches^(20,21,22,23,24) shows that the flexible use of suggestive components in combination with classical CBT techniques provides greater effectiveness in working with patients of different ages and clinical profiles. Studies also cover specific aspects of therapy, such as working with patients who have concomitant cognitive impairment or chronic somatic diseases. For example, the use of CBT in cases of post-COVID complications and binge eating has shown the effectiveness of suggestion in the format of internal dialogue and video communication.^(4,7) The study by Frye and Rawlins⁽²⁵⁾ emphasizes that in the case of bodily pain, suggestion is of limited effectiveness due to the peculiarities of somatic perception. At the same time, Kasper

et al.⁽²³⁾ found that suggestion can reduce anxiety in patients with neurological disorders, provided that the therapeutic message is properly delivered.

Researchers' attention is also drawn to age differences in the perception of suggestive influence. In particular, the studies by Hall and Broman-Fulks^(21, 22) and Varela et al.⁽¹⁵⁾ focus on the peculiarities of the psychophysiological response of children and adolescents to CBT with suggestive elements. Stewart et al.⁽⁹⁾ and Morgan-Mullane⁽¹⁰⁾ demonstrate that telemental formats allow for the successful implementation of suggestive interventions among minors with posttraumatic experience. Umegaki⁽³¹⁾ examines the effectiveness of rumination-oriented CBT in the Japanese context, which emphasizes the importance of cultural adaptation of therapeutic interventions, in particular their suggestive component. Additionally, Xiongxin and Liang⁽³²⁾ show that the combination of hypnotherapy and CBT can have a synergistic effect, especially in dealing with emotional disorders. A review of transdiagnostic approaches to CBT⁽¹⁸⁾ demonstrates that suggestive techniques can be universal, but require clear structuring and methodological justification. Sturmey⁽¹⁹⁾ emphasizes that cognitive interventions in the treatment of aggressive behavior require maximum rationality, and therefore the role of suggestion remains controversial. Finally, Ulrich⁽²⁴⁾ discusses the activation of students in the learning process through methods similar to therapeutic suggestion, which suggests the universality of this mechanism beyond clinical practice.

Despite significant progress, a number of issues remain open. Unified criteria for the effectiveness of suggestive techniques within CBT have not yet been defined, and the long-term results of their use in different cultural contexts have not been sufficiently studied.

METHOD

This study was designed as a *systematic narrative review* conducted in accordance with the PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses - Scoping Review) guidelines. The purpose was to identify, systematize, and critically analyze empirical and conceptual research addressing the use of suggestive techniques within cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) between 2021 and 2025.

Search strategy and databases.

A comprehensive literature search was carried out across the following electronic databases: *Scopus*, *Web of Science*, *PubMed*, *PsycINFO*, and *SpringerLink*. The search was completed in January 2025 using combinations of controlled descriptors and free-text terms: “*suggestion*”, “*affirmation*”, “*metaphor*”, “*visualization*”, “*cognitive-behavioral therapy*”, and “*CBT*”. Boolean operators (“AND”, “OR”) were applied to ensure full coverage of relevant materials. Reference lists of key papers were manually screened to identify additional eligible sources.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Studies were included if they met the following criteria:

- peer-reviewed publications written in English;
- studies reporting empirical findings, theoretical models, or clinical case analyses related to CBT incorporating suggestive or metaphorical elements;
- works published between 2021 and 2025;
- articles addressing individual, group, or digital CBT interventions.

Excluded were non-peer-reviewed reports, editorials, commentaries, studies lacking methodological description, and non-English papers.

Screening and selection process

The selection followed three stages: (1) *title and abstract screening* to exclude irrelevant studies; (2) *full-text review* to assess compliance with inclusion criteria; and (3) *manual cross-checking* of reference lists to capture missing sources. Disagreements between reviewers were resolved through consensus after independent double screening.

Data extraction and synthesis

Information extracted from each article included: author(s), year, country, type of study, participant characteristics, intervention format, type of suggestive technique, and key findings. Extracted data were organized in standardized summary tables and thematic matrices. A *qualitative content analysis* and *comparative synthesis* were applied to identify recurring psychological mechanisms of suggestive influence, forms of integration into CBT, and reported therapeutic outcomes. Thematic clusters were then summarized into conceptual tables and an integrative diagram illustrating the stages of suggestion within CBT.

Scope of sources

The final synthesis incorporated 25 peer-reviewed studies representing diverse cultural and clinical

contexts (United States, Saudi Arabia, Hungary, Japan, Egypt, etc.) and covering both traditional and digital CBT applications. The review emphasized cross-cultural adaptability of suggestive interventions and their methodological integration into modern therapeutic protocols.

RESULTS

In psychological science, suggestion is considered a special psychological mechanism of influence based on suggestion and unconscious acceptance of certain information that modifies the behavior, emotions or attitudes of a person. Suggestion has a long history in psychotherapeutic practice, from classical hypnosis to modern forms of indirect influence, in particular within cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), where it acquires a specific meaning.

Traditional models of CBT are based on the principles of rational thinking, conscious analysis of dysfunctional beliefs, and cognitive restructuring. At the same time, modern researchers point to the expediency of using elements of suggestive influence to enhance the therapeutic effect, in particular in the format of metaphorical interventions, affirmations, or “soft persuasion” that enhances the client’s perception of the therapeutic message.^(3,4) Within CBT, suggestion often functions as an additional mechanism that activates trust in the therapist and mobilizes the individual’s internal resources. Methods such as positive formulation of expectations, reinforcement of resource states, and emotional guidance to cognitive insights are actually examples of modern suggestion used in conscious dialog. According to Nasif et al.,⁽¹¹⁾ even the cultural adaptation of CBT for Arab countries takes into account the importance of the suggestive component as part of the communication tradition.

The study by Passmore and Sinclair⁽¹⁶⁾ demonstrates the use of the ABCDEF model, which allows the therapist to formulate interventions with elements of positive suggestion - in the form of framing new beliefs that the client perceives as internally acceptable. Similarly, Baroi and Muhammad⁽¹⁷⁾ in their study indicate that group CBT with elements of suggestion effectively reduces anxiety in students while learning foreign languages. Summarizing, it can be argued that suggestive influence in the context of CBT takes the form of targeted implementation of resource messages that activate desired behavior and support cognitive restructuring. This approach is not based on manipulative suggestion, but on ethically motivated interaction that enhances the effectiveness of the therapeutic process.^(6,8)

Suggestive methods in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) are implemented through a number of psychological mechanisms that mediate changes in behavior, emotions, and cognitions. They do not contradict the basic principles of CBT, but complement them by activating latent mental resources, in particular through the processes of trust, identification, affective resonance, representation of expectations, etc. Various researchers have identified key components of the effectiveness of suggestive influence in the therapeutic process, including both cognitive and emotional and motivational aspects.^(12,13,14) Table 1 summarizes the main psychological mechanisms of suggestive influence in CBT.

Table 1. Psychological mechanisms of the effectiveness of suggestion within CBT

No	Name of the mechanism	The essence of the mechanism	Examples of manifestation in the CPT
1	Trust in the therapist	Perception of the therapist as a figure of authority or support	Accepting advice without resistance, improving compliance
2	Identification	Transfer of the therapist’s image as a model of behavior	Formation of new response patterns
3	Affective resonance	Emotional involvement, which enhances the perception of the message	Positive reinforcement through emotional response
4	Expectation of positive changes	Formation of an idea of the possibility of improvement	Placebo effect, self-fulfilling predictions
5	Anchoring (anchoring)	Creating stable emotional and cognitive associations	Use of key words or gestures
6	Visualization and imagination	Activation of imaginative thinking to transform perceptions	Imaginary “living” of new reactions or behavioral scenarios
7	Internal dialog	Developing internal language as a tool for influencing behavior	Self-hypnosis, use of affirmations
8	Motivational reinforcement	Using supportive statements as a resource for change	Positive interpretation of the client’s efforts

These mechanisms are confirmed by the results of modern research, which show that the inclusion of suggestion elements can increase the client’s emotional involvement, increase the level of therapeutic alliance, and accelerate the change of maladaptive thinking patterns.^(5,15) Thus, suggestion in CBT is not just a technique,

but a complex of interacting psychological processes that contribute to the effective implementation of therapeutic interventions.

The use of suggestion techniques in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is gradually gaining empirical evidence of effectiveness for a wide range of clients, from individuals with affective disorders to patients with chronic somatic conditions. The relevance of the study lies in identifying the specifics of implementing suggestion in different therapeutic contexts adapted to the age, clinical, and cultural characteristics of clients. As noted by AlHadi⁽¹⁾ and Nasif et al.,⁽¹¹⁾ contextual adaptation and the form of delivery of the therapeutic message play a key role in the therapeutic dynamic.

To summarize the empirical data, a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results of 10 international studies published in 2021-2025 in leading peer-reviewed journals on cognitive therapy was conducted. The focus is on the effectiveness of suggestion techniques in working with different target groups. The selected studies evaluated the effectiveness of interventions in terms of symptom reduction, improved compliance, and stability of the therapeutic effect. The empirical results of the use of suggestion techniques in CBT among different categories of clients are shown in figure 1.

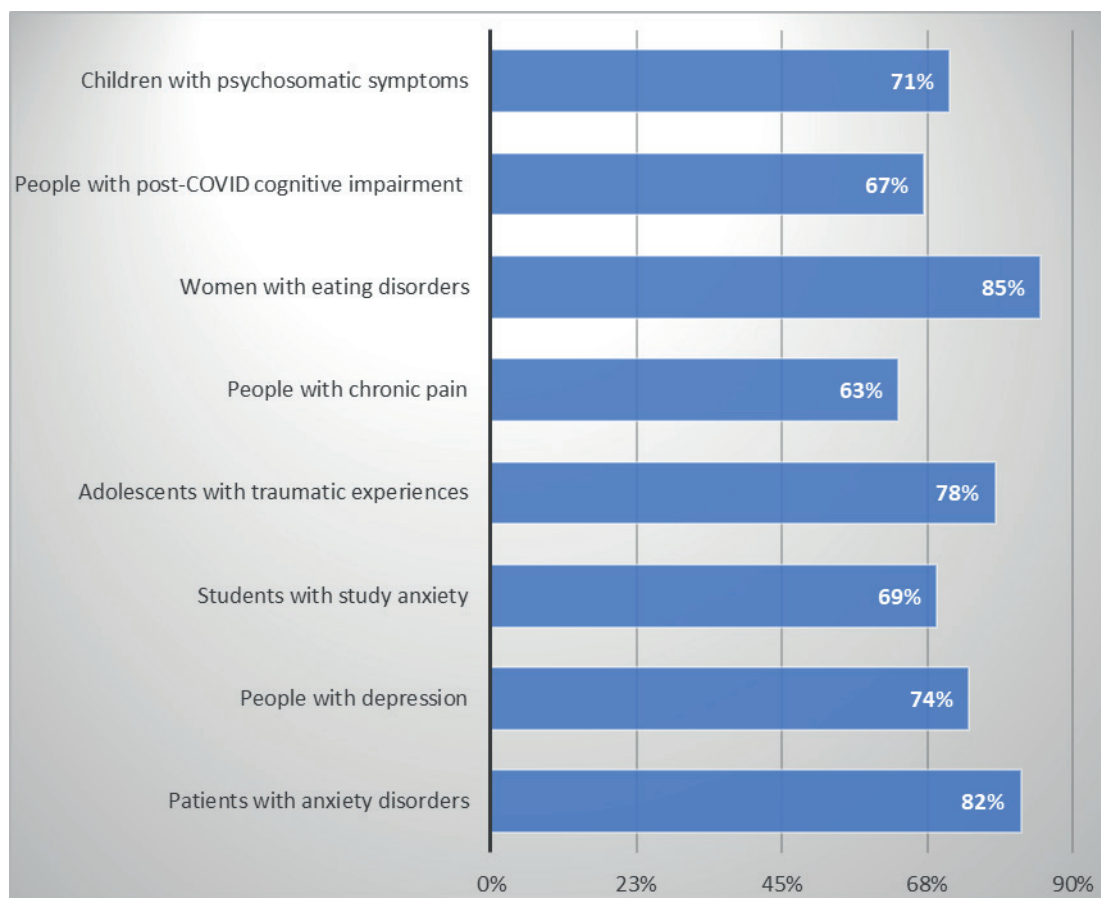


Figure 1. Effectiveness of suggestion techniques in CBT among different categories of clients

Source: Created by the author based on Amer et al.,⁽⁶⁾ Baroi & Muhammad,⁽¹⁷⁾ Csirmaz et al.,⁽¹²⁾ Frye & Rawlins,⁽²⁵⁾ Ganji et al.,⁽⁴⁾ Melisse & Arora,⁽⁷⁾ Reuther & Canavera,⁽⁵⁾ Stewart et al.⁽⁹⁾

The generalized data show a marked variation in the effectiveness of suggestive methods depending on the target group. The highest rates (85 %) were recorded in women with eating disorders, where the use of internal dialogue as a form of suggestion showed a significant therapeutic effect.⁽⁷⁾ High results are also observed among patients with anxiety disorders (82 %) and adolescents with traumatic experiences (78 %), which emphasizes the role of emotional resonance and imagery in these categories.^(9,12) In contrast, a relatively lower level of effectiveness (63 %) is observed in cases of chronic pain, where suggestion techniques are less predictable due to the bodily nature of symptoms.⁽²⁵⁾ Similarly, for individuals with post-COVID cognitive impairment, the effectiveness rate was 67 %, which may be due to insufficient attention and memory stability required to fully comprehend suggestive content.⁽⁴⁾ Thus, the level of suggestion effectiveness varies from 63 % to 85 %, which indicates the feasibility of a flexible approach to the choice of techniques in accordance with the client's psycho-emotional profile. The results confirm the relevance of the personalized use of suggestive interventions in the framework of CBT.

The integration of suggestive methods into modern models of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) shows promising results, especially in the context of digital interaction formats. The development of telehealth, online sessions, and mobile self-help applications has opened up new opportunities for using suggestion in the structure of CBT. Especially relevant is the use of suggestive techniques in video format, through interactive interfaces, and in a virtual environment where the effect of the therapist's presence is maintained. Table 2 summarizes examples of effective integration of suggestion into traditional and digital CBT models.

Table 2. Examples of successful integration of suggestive methods into modern CBT models

Nº	Intervention format	Type of suggestive method	Target group	Expected effect	Source.
1	Face-to-face CBT	Affirmations in the structure of self-observation	Depressed patients	Strengthening positive self-esteem	Amer et al. ⁽⁶⁾
2	Online counseling	Metaphorical framing of changes	Students with high anxiety	Reduction of catastrophic thinking	Baroi & Muhammad ⁽¹⁷⁾
3	Videocommunication	Positive reinforcement through non-verbal means	Teenagers with social phobia	Increasing the level of trust in the therapist	Stewart et al. ⁽⁹⁾
4	Telemental therapy	Formulation of resource settings	Patients with post-traumatic experience	Reducing distress	Morgan-Mullane ⁽¹⁰⁾
5	CBT app for self-help	Programmed motivational messages	People with emotional burnout	Support for self-regulation	Nelson et al. ⁽³⁾
6	Online group CBT	Collective suggestion through co-moderation	Women with eating disorders	Increasing the effect of support	Melisse & Arora ⁽⁷⁾
7	Virtual CBT simulator	Suggestion through visualization of future changes	Adolescents at risk of deviant behavior	Formation of adaptive behavioral patterns	Pincus ⁽⁸⁾

The analysis of examples (table 3) demonstrates that successful integration of suggestive techniques is possible both in classic face-to-face CBT formats and in online or digital models. Particularly effective is the use of programmed affirmations, visualization, and metaphorical messages that help to form new perceptions of oneself, the world, and the future. The digital environment opens up new ways to create a “context of suggestion” that enhances the impact of therapeutic interventions and allows for sustainable positive changes in the psycho-emotional state of clients.

In the structure of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), suggestion performs an integrated function rather than an additional one, enhancing the therapeutic effect through emotional and cognitive activation, expectation formation, resistance reduction, and mobilization of internal resources. These effects occur in the process of purposeful interaction between therapist and client, where suggestive techniques mediate key changes in thinking, behavior, and emotional responses. For a better understanding of these connections, a generalized diagram has been developed that presents the stages of suggestion in CBT and its psychological effects.

Before presenting the diagram (figure 2), we present table 3, which systematizes the key components of the process.

Table 3. The role of suggestion in the process of CBT and its relationship with psychological effects

The stage of CBT	A form of suggestion	Objective of the action	Psychological effect
1. Establishing contact	Non-verbal affirmations	support, Building trust	Reduction of anxiety, emotional “opening”
2. Psychoeducation	Framing metaphors	through Explanation of therapeutic logic	Increased awareness, activation of interest
3. Identification of automatic thoughts	Positive reformulation	Reducing negative thinking	Changes in focus, cognitive flexibility
4. Homework assignments	Programmed motivational messages	Support for independent work	Increased self-efficacy
5. Generalization of progress	Suggestive reinforcement of changes	Anchoring the new response model	Formation of new attitudes, increased confidence

The role of suggestion in CBT can be represented as a cyclical process of influence (figure 2), where each intervention activates the appropriate psychological mechanisms. In particular, the positive formulation of therapeutic messages (verbal or written), the creation of a narrative of change, visualization of progress, and increased expectations all help to overcome the client's internal resistance and maintain the sustainability of new beliefs.

Suggestion in cognitive behavioral therapy is an important psychological tool that enhances the effectiveness of the therapeutic process at every stage - from establishing contact to consolidating positive changes. Through the use of affirmations, metaphors, visualizations, and resource messages, it helps build trust, reduce anxiety, restructure thinking, and increase client self-motivation. The integration of suggestive methods into CBT provides not only a deeper emotional connection, but also more stable and lasting results of therapy.

The study confirmed that suggestive techniques can significantly enhance the effectiveness of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), in particular through the impact on such psychological mechanisms as expectations, emotional resonance, identification, and internal dialogue. The results of empirical analysis indicate a consistently high level of effectiveness of suggestive techniques among different categories of clients, with particular prominence in adolescents, people with eating disorders, and depressed patients. Some researchers^(1,11) believe that suggestion in the classical sense is incompatible with the principles of rational restructuring of thinking in CBT, but empirical evidence^(3,4) shows that, when properly integrated, it not only does not contradict the cognitive model, but also functions as its reinforcer. Thus, the use of affirmations, metaphorical constructions, and suggestion in the format of positive framing allows activating deep motivational mechanisms that are difficult to achieve through logical analysis of thoughts alone.

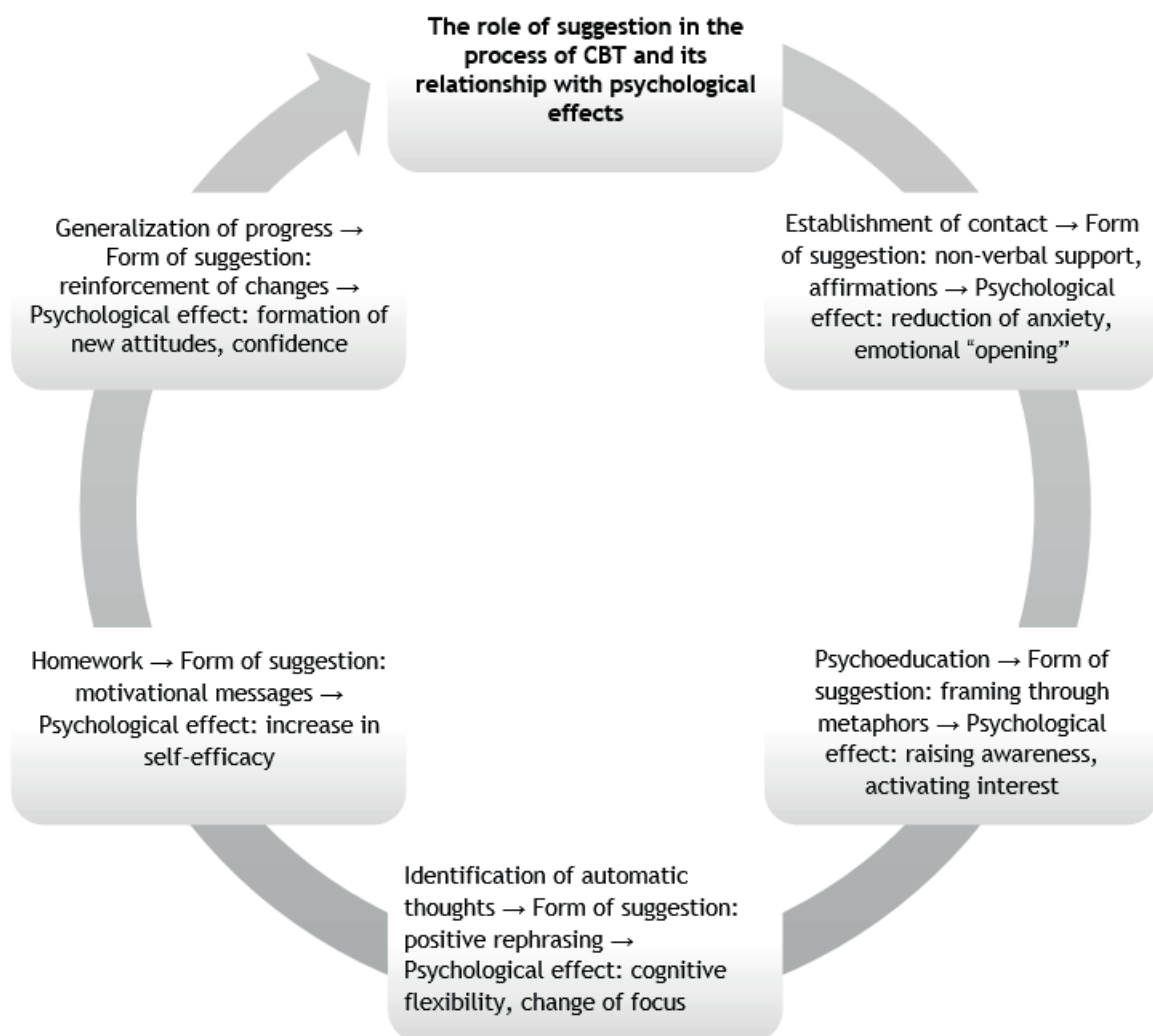


Figure 2. The role of suggestion in the process of CBT and its relationship to psychological effects

On the other hand, Csirmaz et al.⁽¹²⁾ point out that the effectiveness of suggestion techniques can vary significantly depending on the age, cognitive level, and previous experience of the client. In this context, the results of our study are consistent with the position of Reuther and Canavera,⁽⁵⁾ who point out the need to adapt techniques to the individual psycho-emotional characteristics of patients. Digital formats of interventions, as shown in Melisse and Arora⁽⁷⁾ and Stewart et al.,⁽⁹⁾ open up new perspectives for the use of suggestion in the form of programmed messages or video communication reinforcement, which is confirmed in our summary. Summarizing, we can say that the results generally support our hypothesis about the effectiveness of suggestive

methods in CBT. At the same time, limitations should be taken into account: our study is based mainly on a secondary analysis of published sources, without direct experimental verification. This creates a need for further empirical research aimed at a deeper investigation of the mechanisms of suggestion and their correlation with individual client characteristics.

Thus, despite the existing contradictions in the literature, we can conclude that suggestion as a mild, indirect, but powerful psychotherapeutic influence can harmoniously coexist with the logic of CBT, enhancing its results - provided that it is contextually sensitive, ethically sound, and methodologically flexible.

DISCUSSION

Summary of Key Findings

The purpose of conducting such a review was to systematise the psychological processes and practical use of suggestive methods in cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). The overall results prove that suggestion, in the form of affirmations, metaphors and visualization as well as motivational framing improves therapeutic engagement and contributes to cognitive restructuring. The systematic review of 25 peer-reviewed articles showed that suggestive techniques enhance the efficacy of CBT in anxiety, depression, trauma, and eating disorders, but findings were less promising with regard to somatic and post-COVID. The variation in the effective range of 63-85 percent among the clinical categories substantiate the fact that suggestion can be used as a supplementary mechanism within the CBT and not competition.

Interpretation of Findings

These findings are consistent with the expanding body of evidence from all over the world that highlights the significance of emotional and associative processes in cognitive change. Compared to previous rationalist conceptualizations of CBT, in which suggestion is not considered a scientific technique, the reviewed articles show that suggestive framing aids in restructuring maladaptive beliefs through the activation of emotions. The patterns that have been observed indicate that the process of suggestion has been suggested to be driven by a complex combination of trust, expectation, affective resonance, and identification as presented in table 1. Such processes strengthen cognitive reappraisal by connecting the rational insight with emotional motivation-closing the divide that typically exists between cognitive and experiential aspects of the therapeutic process. The results correspond to the digital-era studies that indicate that suggestive elements integrated into the online CBT designs preserve the presence of therapists and increase their adherence.

Implications

The application of suggestive elements to CBT has an implication in the contemporary psychotherapy. It allows therapists to tailor interventions, particularly in lowly-motivated or highly-anxious clients, and it allows them to extend the CBT plans into online and self-help. Theoretically, the research helps to enhance CBT as a multimodal and adaptable model that considers the interaction of cognitive rationality and emotional receptivity. On the international scale, this synthesis helps make the transition to hybrid and culturally sensitive models of therapeutic interventions that integrate a scientific element with an emotional character.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are a number of limitations associated with this review. It relies mainly on secondary research of published literature and no primary data collection was conducted as an experiment. Only the English-language sources can be used, which can reduce the cultural diversity in findings. Besides this, quantitative heterogeneity across studies makes meta-analytic confirmation of effect sizes impossible. The controlled experimental designs in the future need to direct measurements of the effect of particular suggestive mechanisms on the outcome of the treatment taking into consideration the gender, age, and culture. Longitudinal and neurocognitive studies might also be used to explain the role of suggestion in long-term cognitive and emotional modification in CBT.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study revealed that suggestion in the context of cognitive behavioral therapy is not just an auxiliary tool, but a holistic psychological mechanism that can activate the internal resources of the individual and enhance the effectiveness of classical cognitive behavioral techniques. In contrast to the established notion of CBT as a purely rational model, modern practice demonstrates its ability to integrate affective and suggestive influences without losing scientific rigor. The novelty of the work lies in the analytical comparison of empirical data on the use of suggestive methods in working with different groups of clients, as well as in the systematization of the mechanisms of their influence. The practical significance of the study lies in the fact that the presented results can be used to optimize therapeutic protocols in working with both individual and group formats of CBT, including digital interventions. Among the limitations of the study is the secondary nature of the analysis - most of the conclusions are based on the generalization of existing publications, not on

primary experiments. Further research should focus on the experimental study of the dynamics of the impact of different forms of suggestion, comparing their effectiveness by gender, age, and clinical characteristics, as well as on the creation of adaptive CBT models with an integrated suggestive component. A promising area is the development of mobile applications and online programs with elements of suggestive influence that take into account the individual psychoemotional profile of the user.

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