

ABOUT THE HVCCT

The HVCCT is one of the leading psychotherapy practices in the Hudson Valley region and adheres to the philosophy that the client's well-being is the top priority. Our therapists treat their clients with respect and warmth while also utilizing state-of-the-art methods. Our therapists accept the responsibility of providing quality care and aim to help their clients to address their problems with an effective, hopeful, and engaging approach.

Therapists at the HVCCT work with children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families. Some of their areas of specialization include the following:

- Depression and Mood Disorders
- Anxiety (Panic, OCD, Social Anxiety, Phobias, Worry)
- PTSD / Trauma / Abuse Issues
- Family Therapy and Marital / Relationship Issues
- Insomnia / Sleep Difficulties
- Academic / Learning Difficulties
- Child & Adult Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- Anger Management
- Impulse Control Difficulties (e.g., Hair Pulling)
- Grieving and Loss

PARENT TRAINING

For parents with a child in therapy, parent training is offered to help reinforce the strategies their child is learning.

TESTING SERVICES

Areas of assessment include intelligence, academic / learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, personality and emotional issues, and pre-surgical evaluations for gastric bypass/bariatric surgery candidates.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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10/07

A New Approach to Treating

Panic Attacks

**for Adults, Children,
and Adolescents**

Do You Experience:

Heart palpitations?

Difficulty breathing?

Sweating?

Dizziness, faintness, or unsteadiness?

Chest pain or discomfort?

Fear of dying or losing control?

Regain Control!

 **HUDSON VALLEY CENTER
FOR COGNITIVE THERAPY**

Mood & Anxiety Disorders • Substance Abuse • Sexual / Relationship Issues

Sue is a 35-year-old teacher. One day while driving home from a stressful day at work, her heart started pounding and she began to have trouble breathing. Thoughts began racing through her mind such as, "I can't catch my breath! I am having a heart attack!" She started to feel dizzy and wondered if she might faint. She started to see images of herself running out of her car screaming. When the panic passed, and she drove to the emergency room. After several tests, the physician concluded that she was in perfect health. Sue left the hospital wondering what could have caused her frightening symptoms.

This story is quite familiar to people who suffer from panic attacks. It is estimated that 3% of the population suffers from Panic Disorder, suggesting that panic affects millions of people. The good news is that in the past decade there has been a considerable amount of research conducted about Panic Disorder, leading to new developments in its treatment.

WHAT IS A PANIC ATTACK?

Panic attacks can be best characterized as a sudden burst of intense fear accompanied by uncomfortable physical sensations. The first attack may occur unexpectedly and may not necessarily have been triggered by an anxiety-provoking situation. Over time, however, the attacks become associated with various situations that can in themselves provoke the attacks.

The following are typical symptoms of a panic attack:

- Difficulty breathing
- Sweating
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Dizziness, faintness, or unsteadiness
- Trembling or shaking
- Tingling or numbness
- Nausea or stomach upset
- Heart palpitations
- Choking or smothering sensations
- Hot flashes or cold chills
- Feelings of unreality or detachment
- Fear of dying, going crazy, or losing control

WHAT IS AGORAPHOBIA?

Many individuals with Panic Disorder also develop Agoraphobia. Agoraphobia refers to the fear of going into certain situations because it may trigger a panic attack. These situations are often avoided or endured with intense fear. Examples include riding elevators, driving, going on buses or trains, traveling, going to shopping malls, and being home alone.

In addition to panic attacks and agoraphobia, individuals with Panic Disorder often suffer from chronic anxiety and depression. The chronic anxiety is often related to the feeling that the attacks can happen at anytime, so individuals are constantly on edge, anticipating their next attack. Individuals may also suffer from depression, which is often related to the feeling that life is not going to get back to normal.

COGNITIVE THERAPY

Studies throughout the world have shown Cognitive Therapy to be an effective treatment for Panic Disorder. The word "cognitive" simply refers to how one thinks and feels at a particular moment. A central idea in Cognitive Therapy is that perception of an event or experience powerfully affects emotional, behavioral, and physiological responses. Clients are taught to identify thought patterns that keep them locked into dysfunctional moods. These negative thought processes are usually "learned" during childhood. Since thought patterns become habitual and ingrained, they are experienced as automatic and go unnoticed. Nevertheless, they have a profound effect on the way one is feeling and behaving.

With direction and support, clients can learn to identify and challenge their typical ways of interpreting events and viewing themselves and the world around them. It is important to realize that Cognitive Therapy is not "positive thinking." Instead, the point of Cognitive Therapy is to view life's problems in a realistic perspective. This method has helped thousands reduce emotional distress and develop more effective coping skills that can be used in everyday life.

ADVANTAGES OF COGNITIVE THERAPY

Proven Effective: Hundreds of research studies demonstrate that Cognitive Therapy is an effective treatment for panic. In fact, Cognitive Therapy is often more effective than other forms of psychotherapy, and is equivalent to medication.

Short Term: Cognitive Therapy aims to achieve results as quickly as possible. Most clients experience positive changes in approximately 12-25 sessions. The course of treatment tends to be considerably shorter than for traditional approaches to psychotherapy, as it is structured, problem-focused, and goal-oriented.

Cost-Effective: The active and focused psychotherapeutic approach makes the cost of treatment less expensive than other forms of therapy. Focus on skill building and client independence minimizes length of treatment and reduces the risk of relapse.

Lasting Results: Cognitive Therapy emphasizes many practical strategies that can be used when therapy ends to cope with life more effectively. Most clients with Panic Disorder are successful in controlling or preventing the attacks after completing Cognitive Therapy.

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE OF TREATMENT

Cognitive Therapy uses various cognitive and behavioral techniques to treat anxiety and panic. Education about panic and why the physical symptoms occur is an essential component of therapy. Cognitive Restructuring is intended to change the thought patterns that trigger anxiety. Relaxation Training and Breathing Exercises are used to provide clients with strategies to control their physical symptoms of anxiety. During Exposure clients follow a gradual, systematic plan to learn to use anxiety management strategies as they re-enter phobic situations.

FREE PHONE CONSULTATION

Dr. Christine Ziegler, Director of the HVCCT, is happy to discuss your specific concerns and explain how Cognitive Therapy may benefit you. Please call (845) 353-3399 x 12 to learn more about our services or to schedule an initial appointment with one of our therapists.