### **H1: Which Therapy Is Right for You – CBT, DBT or ACT?**

**Primary keywords:** CBT, DBT, ACT therapy, psychotherapy types India, mental health therapy

### **H2: Introduction: Choosing the Right Therapy for Your Mental Health Needs**

H3: Why therapy isn’t one-size-fits-all
H3: Brief overview of CBT, DBT, and ACT
H3: When to seek professional support to decide what fits you best

**H2: What Is CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy)?**

H3: How it works and what it treats (e.g., anxiety, depression, OCD)
H3: Tools used in CBT (thought tracking, cognitive restructuring)
H3: Best suited for: people struggling with negative thought patterns

**H2: What Is DBT (Dialectical Behaviour Therapy)?**

H3: How it differs from CBT (focus on emotional regulation and acceptance)
H3: Origin in treating borderline personality disorder, now used for anxiety, trauma, self-harm
H3: Best suited for: people with intense emotions or impulse control issues

### **H2: What Is ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy)?**

H3: Focus on values, mindfulness, and accepting difficult thoughts
H3: Treats anxiety, depression, chronic stress, trauma
H3: Best suited for: people who want to build resilience and purpose

### **H2: Comparing CBT, DBT and ACT**

H3: Key differences and overlaps
H3: Which one may work best based on symptoms and personality
H3: Why therapy often involves integrating multiple approaches

**H2: How VIMHANS Helps You Choose the Right Therapy**

H3: Expert psychological assessments and consultations
H3: Customised therapy plans based on your mental health goals
H3: Access to trained specialists in CBT, DBT, and ACT

**H2: Empowering You to Take the First Step**

H3: Choosing therapy is a personal journey and we’re here to guide you
H3: The right support can make all the difference

Which Therapy Is Right for You – CBT, DBT, or ACT?

Navigating Your Mental Health Journey

### Introduction: Your Therapy, Your Choice

Mental health isn’t one-size-fits-all—just as a fever and a fracture needs different treatments, anxiety, depression, and trauma require tailored therapeutic approaches. At VIMHANS Delhi, we understand that choosing between Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) can feel overwhelming. This guide simplifies these options, helping you take the first step toward healing. While stigma around mental health persists in Indian society—where seeking help is sometimes mislabeled as "weakness"—remember that prioritizing your well-being is an act of courage. Delhi/NCR residents have unique resources like VIMHANS, ensuring expert care is within reach.

### What Is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)? Rewiring Your Thoughts

**How it works:** CBT helps you identify unhelpful thought patterns that may be deepening your struggles. By examining how your thoughts, emotions, and actions interact, you'll see difficult situations with new clarity and respond in healthier ways. Imagine your mind is a garden. Negative thoughts (e.g. “I’ll fail this exam”) are weeds. CBT helps you identify these weeds, replace them with healthy plants (e.g. “I can prepare well”), and tend your garden regularly. It targets to solve current problems by changing unhelpful thought patterns that worsen anxiety, depression, or other challenges to mental health.

**What to expect:**

* Session structure:
	+ A typical cognitive therapy schedule consists of about 15 visits over a three-month period.
* Tools used:
	+ Cognitive techniques such as recognising and correcting negative automatic thoughts,
	+ Teaching reattribution techniques - recognizing that multiple factors contribute to an event, not just personal responsibility,
	+ Decentering - recognizing that thoughts and feelings are not facts, but rather subjective experiences that can be observed and processed without being immediately acted upon.
	+ Identifying and testing maladaptive assumptions,
	+ Behavioural techniques such as activity scheduling, homework assignments, graded task assignment, behavioural rehearsal, role playing, and diversion techniques.

**Best for:** Those struggling with negative thought patterns seen in anxiety disorders, depression, phobias, or obsessive thoughts. People who prefer practical, goal-oriented strategies gel well with CBT.

### What Is Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)? Mastering Emotional Storms

**How it differs:** While CBT focuses on challenging unhelpful thought patterns, DBT teaches you to accept intense emotions while learning to control reactions through mindfulness, distress tolerance and acceptance, and interpersonal skills. Think of emotions as weather: You can’t stop a monsoon, but DBT gives you an umbrella (coping skills) to walk through it without drowning. Originally designed for Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), it now helps those with self-harm urges, chronic suicidal thoughts, eating disorders, or trauma.

**What to expect:**

* Session structure:
	+ DBT sessions typically last 50-90 minutes. However, the duration may vary depending on the program and individual needs.
* Core skills:
	+ Mindfulness: Staying present during distress, just observing your thoughts and feelings without judgement.
	+ Distress tolerance: Learning healthy ways to cope with intense emotions and urges without resorting to self-harm or other destructive behaviors. (e.g., using ice on wrists to “shock” the nervous system).
	+ Emotion regulation: Developing skills to manage difficult emotions like anger, sadness, and fear in a healthy way.
	+ Interpersonal effectiveness: Building stronger, more fulfilling relationships by learning assertive communication and conflict resolution skills.

**Best for:** Individuals with overwhelming emotions, impulsive behaviour, or unstable relationships.

### What Is Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)? Finding Your Compass

**How it works:** ACT is an action-oriented approach to psychotherapy that stems from traditional behavior therapy. Clients learn to stop avoiding, denying, and struggling with their inner emotions and, instead, accept that these deeper feelings are appropriate responses to certain situations that should not prevent them from moving forward in their lives. With this understanding, clients begin to accept their hardships and commit to making necessary changes in their behavior, regardless of what is going on in their lives and how they feel about it. Picture yourself carrying a heavy backpack (painful thoughts). ACT teaches you to unpack it, accept its weight, and still hike toward your goals (e.g., family, career). It uses mindfulness and self-compassion to treat anxiety, depression, substance use, chronic stress and pain, or trauma.

**What to expect:**

* Session structure: Weekly 50-minute sessions for 8–16 weeks.
* Tools used:
	+ Acceptance: Rather than avoiding, denying, or altering them, acceptance involves acknowledging and embracing the full range of our thoughts and emotions.
	+ Cognitive defusion: Distancing yourself from and changing the way you react to distressing thoughts and feelings. This involves, seeing thoughts as passing clouds, observing it without judgment, singing the thought, and labeling the automatic response that you have.
	+ Committed Action: Taking concrete steps to incorporate changes that will align with our values and lead to positive change. This may involve goal setting, exposure to difficult thoughts or experiences, and skill development.

**Best for:** Those seeking purpose despite chronic pain, stress, or low self-worth.

### CBT vs DBT vs ACT: Which Fits You?

**Core Philosophies:**

| **Therapy** | **Primary Goal** | **View of Distress** | **Key Metaphor** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CBT | Restructure Thinking | "Distorted thoughts create suffering." | Repairing a misaligned lens – Adjust how you see the world. |
| DBT | Balance Acceptance and Change | "Inability to manage intense emotions causes chaos." | Building a lifeboat – Stay afloat in emotional storms. |
| ACT | Live Fully Despite Pain | "Struggling against pain worsens it." | Carrying luggage lightly – Keep walking towards your destination. |

**Key Differences:**

* Relationship with Thoughts/Emotions:
	+ CBT: Challenges Thoughts (“Is this worry realistic?”)
	+ DBT: Accepts emotions while changing reactions (“My anger is valid but I won’t yell”)
	+ ACT: Observes thoughts without fighting them (“I notice that I’m having self-critical thoughts”)
* Focus Area:
	+ CBT: Behavior (avoidance patterns) + Cognition (self-critical thoughts).
	+ DBT: Emotions (regulation) + Relationships (interpersonal effectiveness).
	+ ACT: Values (meaningful action) + Present-moment awareness (mindfulness).
* Tools and Techniques:
	+ CBT: Homework sheets, Socratic questioning.
	+ DBT: Crisis survival skills (TIPP: Temperature, Intense exercise, Paced breathing).
	+ ACT: Metaphors ("Thoughts are like cars on a highway - they come and go"), values compass exercises.

**Where they overlap:**

* Mindfulness: All three use it.
	+ CBT: For detaching from thoughts.
	+ DBT: For tolerating distress.
	+ ACT: For connecting to the present.
* Behavioural Activation: CBT (scheduling pleasurable activities) and ACT (committed action towards intrinsic values and goals).
* Cognitive Awareness: CBT (identifying distortions) and ACT (cognitive defusion).

**Matching Therapy to Symptoms & Personality:**

| **Your Profile** | **Likely Best Fit** | **Why?** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| "I overthink everything." | CBT | Targets rumination & catastrophic thinking directly. |
| "My emotions control me." | DBT | Builds concrete skills for emotional tsunamis & impulsive urges. |
| "I feel stuck/lost." | ACT | Focuses on purpose & action even when motivation is low. |
| "I need quick tools." | CBT or ACT | Both offer practical strategies within weeks (vs. DBT’s longer skills training). |
| "I self-harm or have suicidal thoughts." | DBT | Only therapy with specific protocols for life-threatening behaviors. |

### How VIMHANS Guides Your Therapy Choice in Delhi/NCR

Our specialists use structured assessments to map your symptoms, goals, and lifestyle:

1. Expert evaluation: We utilize clinical interviews and standardized tools to identify your needs.
2. Personalized plans: Tailored CBT/DBT/ACT combinations aligned with your priorities.
3. Specialist access: We have a panel of highly trained and qualified psychologists and psychiatrists trained across all three modalities.

### Take the First Step Today

Choosing therapy is deeply personal—like finding shoes that fit only your feet. At VIMHANS, we walk alongside you. Early intervention prevents years of struggle; a single session can illuminate paths hidden by pain. Reach out: Your mental health journey begins with one brave conversation.

*"You don’t have to see the whole staircase. Just take the first step."* — Martin Luther King Jr.

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