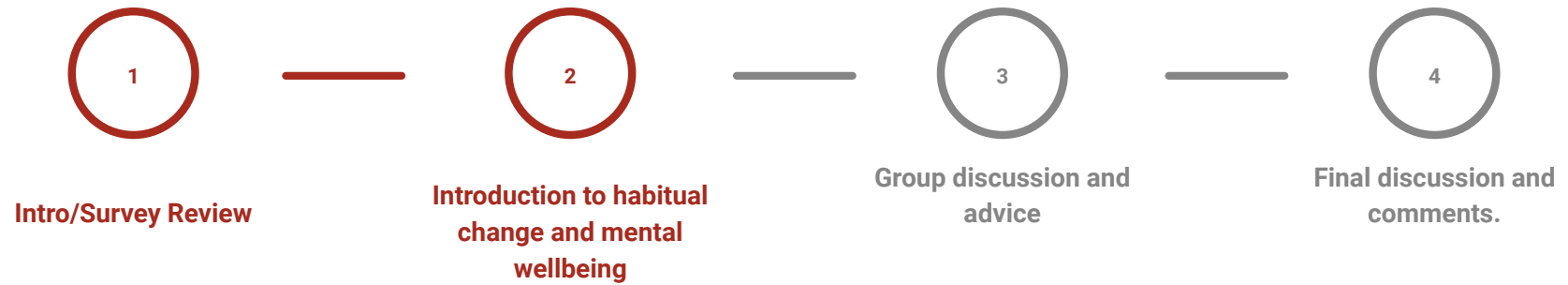


Physical and Mental Health

Lindsay and Liam

Session Structure



Importance of Health

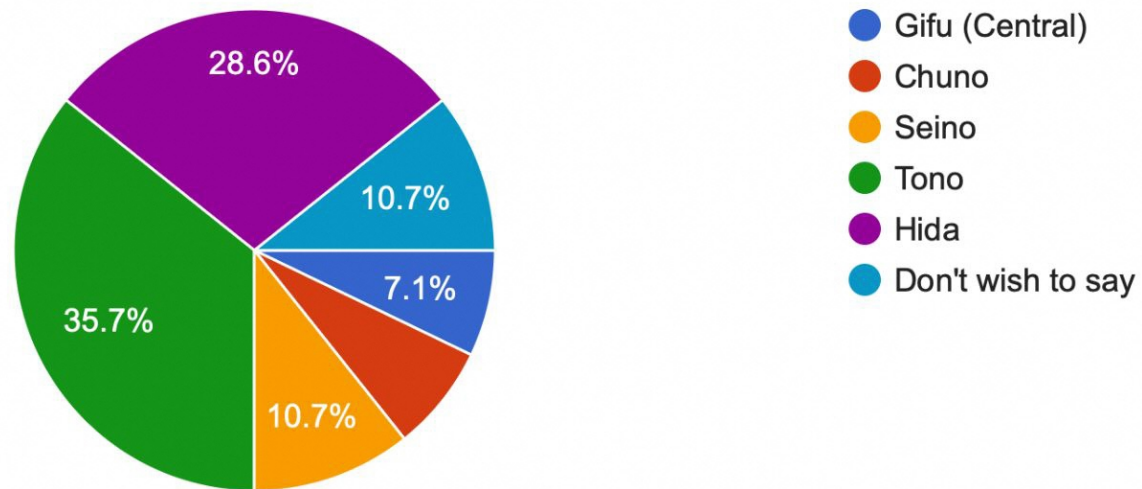
- Developing habits that support our mental and physical health sustains lifelong well-being and happiness
- Living abroad is a wonderful experience, but presents us with new challenges and stressors that may disrupt healthy habits
 - Changes to established routines, lack of a close support system, culture shock, maintaining an appropriate work-life balance, etc.
- It's important to reevaluate our lifestyles regularly so that we can integrate positive changes



Review Survey Results

Which part of Gifu do you currently work in?

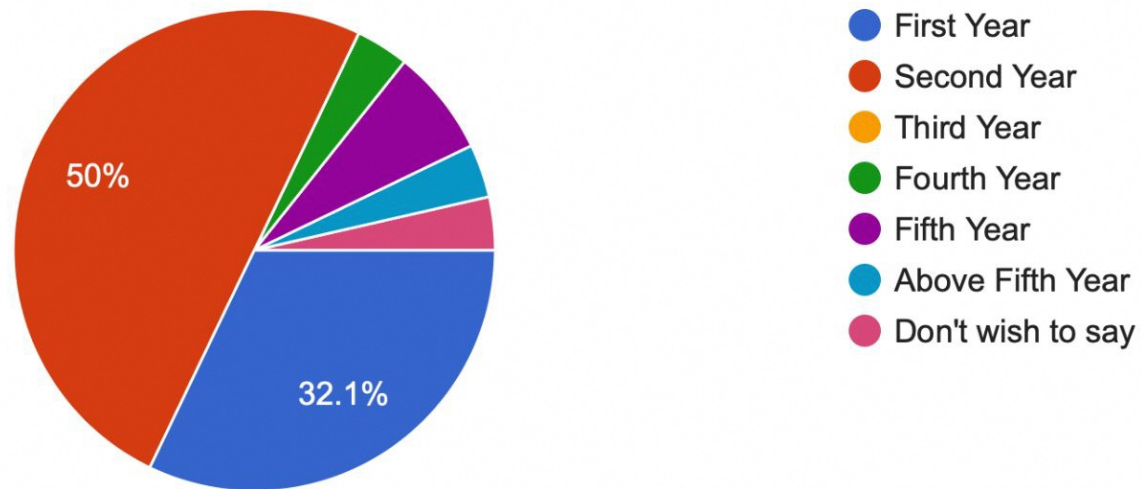
28 responses



Review Survey Results

What generation of JET ALT are you currently?

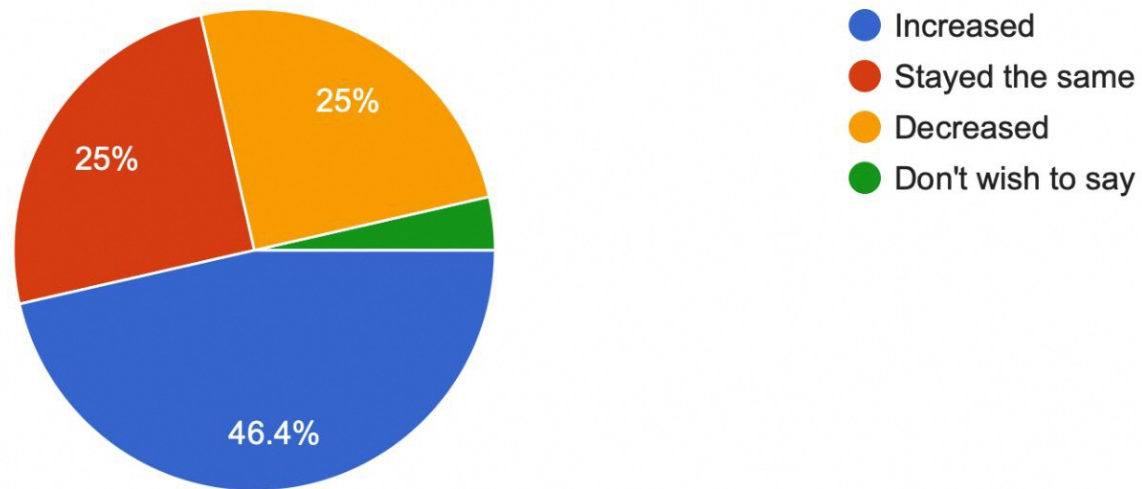
28 responses



Review Survey Results

Since coming to Japan, my rate of physical exercise has:

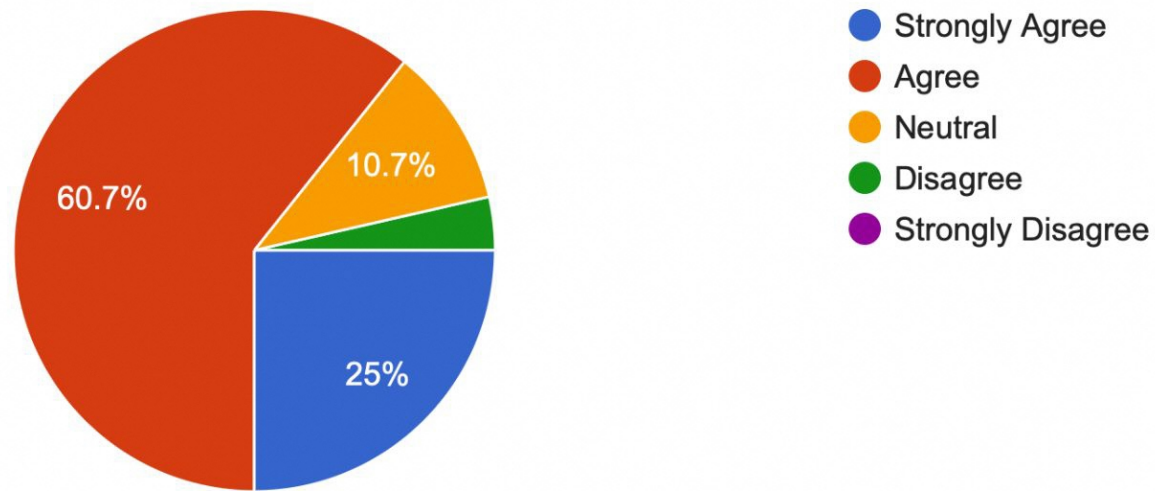
28 responses



Review Survey Results

If I wish to, I know what steps to take to better my physical health.

28 responses



Physical Challenges

- “It’s hard to keep cooking healthy meals. It’s also hard to motivate myself to exercise”
- “No gym in my town”
- “Poor posture - the chairs at work are uncomfortable!”
- “Often feel tired before, during, and after work”
- “I struggle to lose weight”
- “Finding the motivation to exercise during the colder months.”
- “Lack of cycling paths makes it difficult to safely cycle on roads. Footpaths are poorly maintained and full of weeds so I can’t cycle on the footpath.”

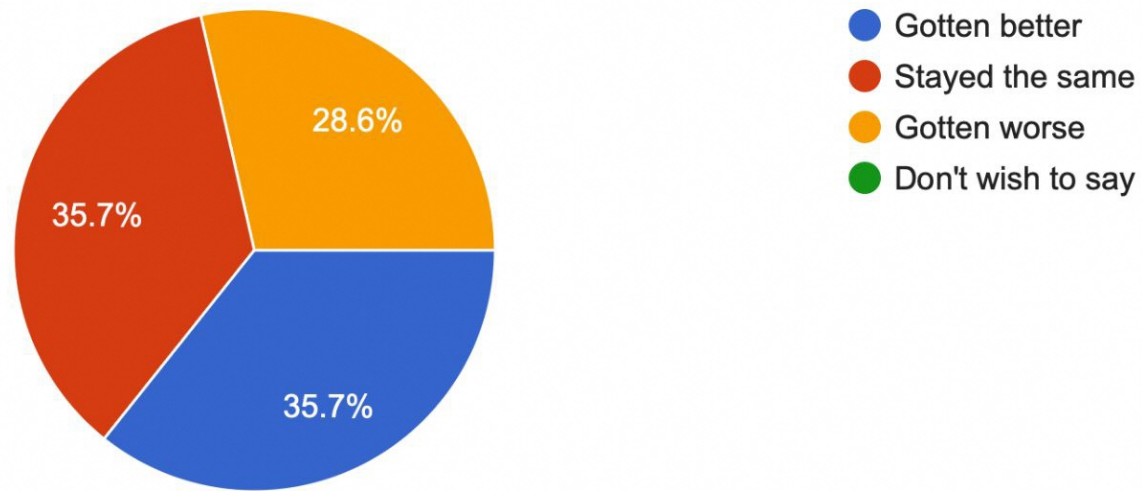
Physical Challenges

- Established routines gone
- Don't know how to go about signing up for activities
- Don't know people in the area for team sports
- Everything is too small
- Supermarkets are in Japanese
- Common ingredients from my home country don't exist here
- Tiny kitchens
- “JaPAn mUsT bE a gReAt cOuNtry to sTaY hEaLThy iN”

Review Survey Results

Since coming to Japan, my general mood/mental health has:

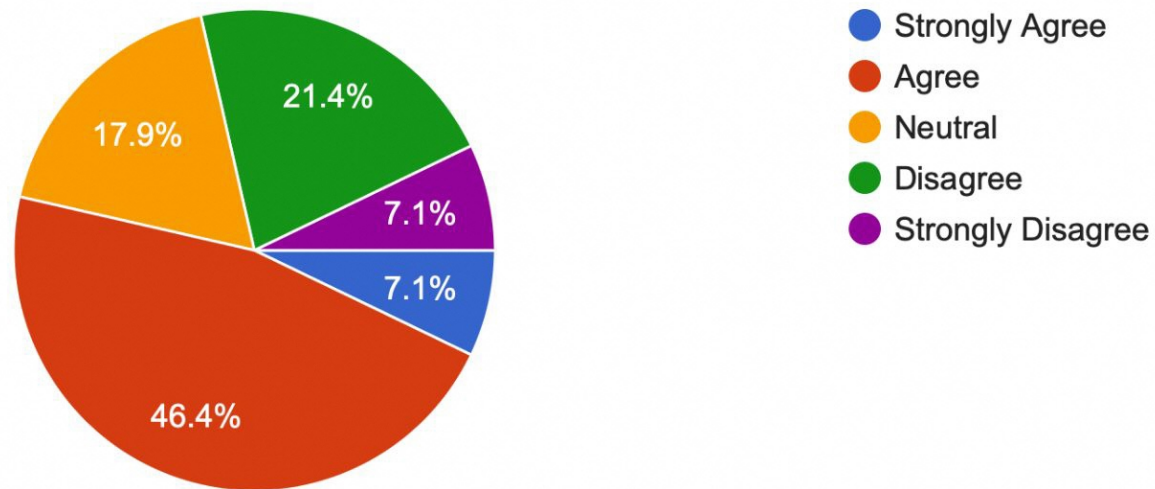
28 responses



Review Survey Results

I feel confident that I can get the mental support I need should I wish to seek it.

28 responses



Mental Challenges

- “I feel that I am overly reliant on other ALTs to fulfil my social needs”
- “Not being able to maintain a clean apartment”
- “Not having my friends and family around has made me feel isolated at times which affects my mental health”
- “Feeling like an outsider because of the language and being a visible foreigner”
- “Insomnia, feeling unfulfilled and boredom because of not having much to do at work”

Mental Challenges

- Lack of a familiar and long-standing support system
- Adaptation, balancing our own cultural expectations with Japan's
- Culture shock
- Finding meaning in work
- Recurrence of older challenges



What resources do we have as Gifu JETs?

The Gifu JETs Website:

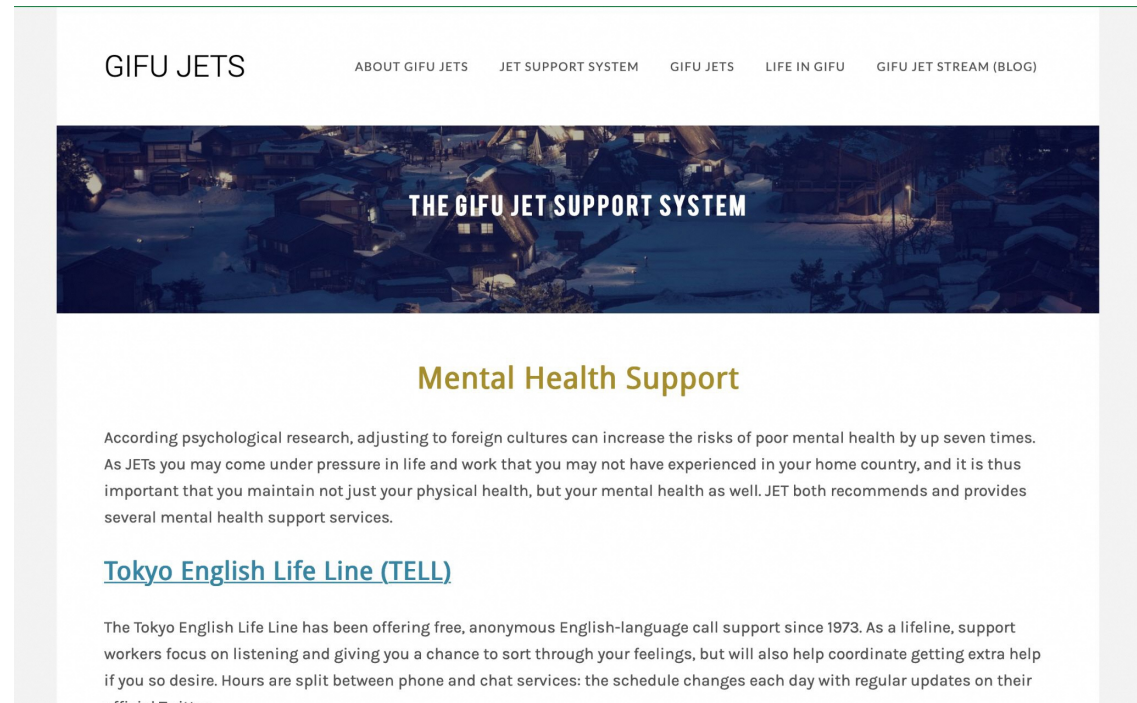
- This website contains a multitude of mental health resources available to JETs

The RPA/PA team

- Please reach out for support with work/life issues, or just for some social connection!

IMHPJ

- *(Outside the JET Program)*
- Contains a directory to help find a licensed therapist in Japan



The screenshot shows the Gifu JETs website. The navigation bar includes 'GIFU JETs', 'ABOUT GIFU JETs', 'JET SUPPORT SYSTEM', 'GIFU JETs', 'LIFE IN GIFU', and 'GIFU JET STREAM (BLOG)'. The main content area features a header image of a snowy village at night with the text 'THE GIFU JET SUPPORT SYSTEM'. Below this is a section titled 'Mental Health Support' in green. The text reads: 'According to psychological research, adjusting to foreign cultures can increase the risks of poor mental health by up seven times. As JETs you may come under pressure in life and work that you may not have experienced in your home country, and it is thus important that you maintain not just your physical health, but your mental health as well. JET both recommends and provides several mental health support services.' Below this is a section titled 'Tokyo English Life Line (TELL)' in blue. The text reads: 'The Tokyo English Life Line has been offering free, anonymous English-language call support since 1973. As a lifeline, support workers focus on listening and giving you a chance to sort through your feelings, but will also help coordinate getting extra help if you so desire. Hours are split between phone and chat services: the schedule changes each day with regular updates on their official Twitter'.

Habitual Change

Forming Positive Habits: James Clear's Model

Make it obvious

Redesign your environment to make your desired habits easy to see.

Piggyback off of already-established habits.

Make it attractive

Pair your habits with other, more enjoyable habits.

Surround yourself in environments that praise those habits. Avoid environments that shun them.

Make it easy

Do **not** make your desired habit into hard work; make it as easy as can be.

Become a master of simply turning up.

"A habit needs to be established before it can be expanded upon"

Make it satisfying

Find a marriage between delayed and instant gratification.

Reward yourself guilt-free.

Scenario: *“I want to go for a run after work.”*

Make it obvious

You get home.

You have an already established habit; changing into comfy clothes.

Instead, you hang up outdoor clothes in the morning and get changed into them.

Make it attractive

You listen to an audiobook on the run.

You put on the rice cooker before you go. You'd only be waiting around anyway.

Make it easy

At the start, you run for two minutes and walk for three.

By the time you get back, You've barely had time to think about the effort it took. You don't see it as a task whatsoever.

Make it satisfying

Once you get back, you enjoy a nice shower and relax.

You enjoy your evening as you usually would; a film, video games, etcetera.

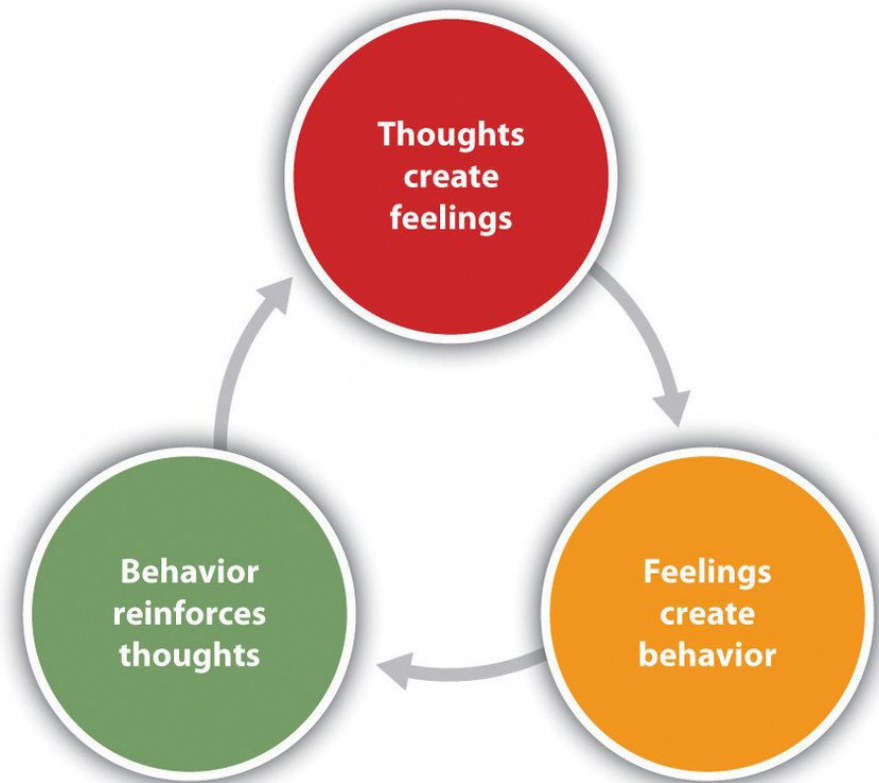
You enjoy the fact that it can't be undone.

CBT Introduction

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Based on 3 principles:

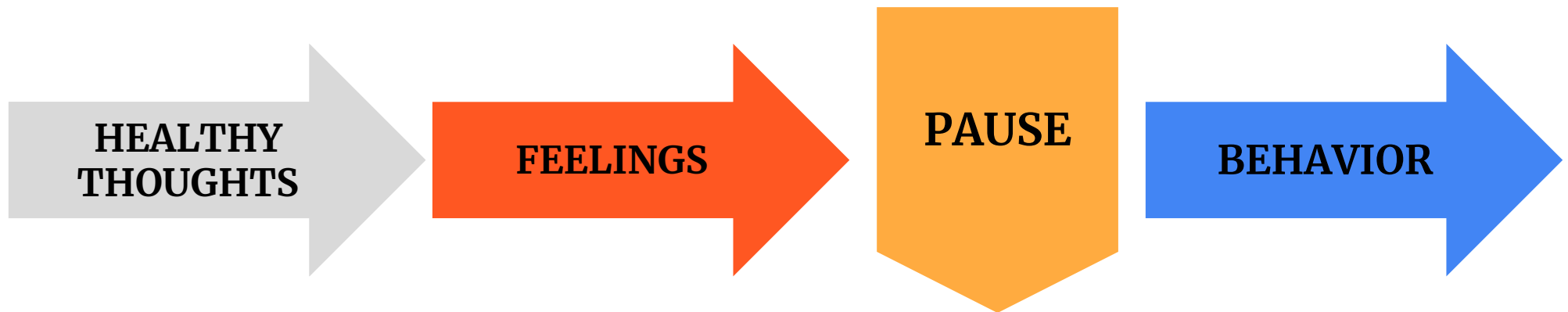
1. Psychological problems are based, in part, on faulty or unhelpful ways of thinking.
2. Psychological problems are based, in part, on learned patterns of unhelpful behavior.
3. People suffering from psychological problems can learn better ways of coping with them, thereby relieving their symptoms and becoming more effective in their lives.



How do we apply CBT?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a therapeutic intervention, and to reap the greatest reward for treating psychological problems we recommend working with a therapist.

- That being said, we **can** apply these techniques as part of a self-care regimen for our mental health, particularly in regards to coping with challenges
- Identify the gap between **feelings** and **behavior** in order to break the cycle

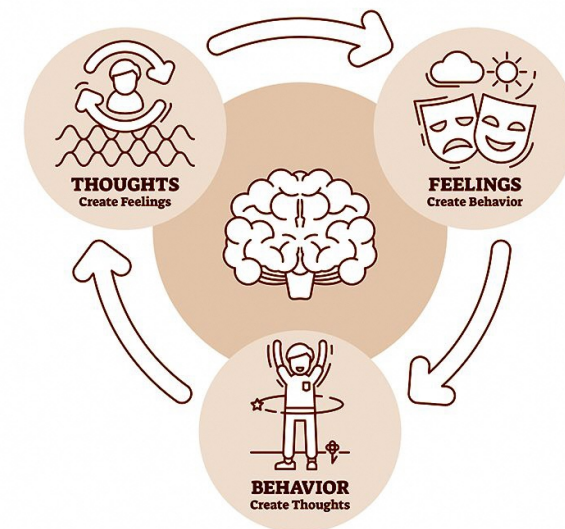


Essential CBT Techniques

As mentioned, CBT is a therapeutic technique and is typically used for treatment of mental health issues, including but not limited to depression, anxiety, PTSD, OCD, and eating disorders.

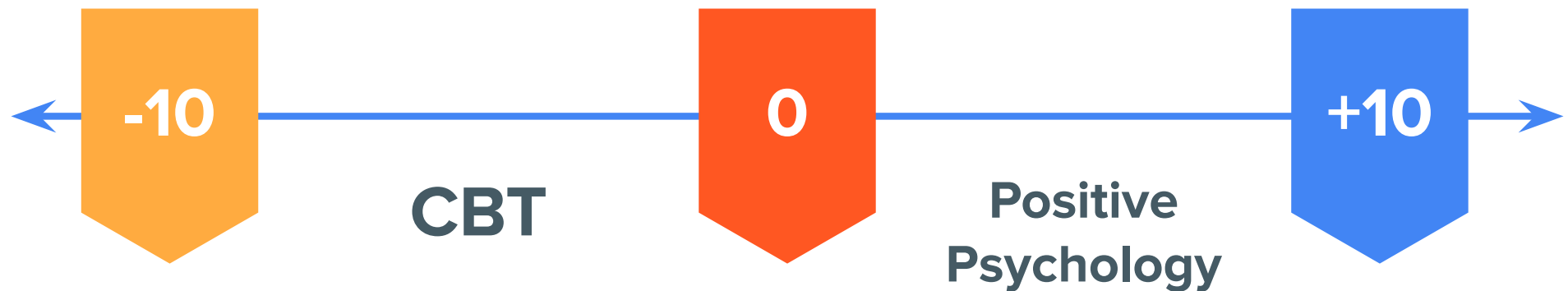
That being said, the following four techniques can make CBT accessible and usable regardless of your mental health status.

1. Journaling
2. Cognitive restructuring
3. Progressive muscle relaxation
4. ABC functional analysis



Other Well-Being Practices

Outside of CBT, there are a wealth of activities that can help you flourish both mentally and physically. Positive psychology is a field which produces researched strategies that have statistically significant results for lasting happiness increases.



Case Studies

Case Studies

- In a survey, JET participants anonymously shared some of the struggles they experience during their time in Japan.
- We will share some of these responses on the screen, and in groups, discuss potential solutions or advice.

Please be mindful and kind - the person who shared these struggles could be one of your group members.

**“I struggle to
keep my
apartment
clean.”**

- How can we break cleaning the apartment into smaller, easier to accomplish tasks?
 - What would you recommend to someone who’s struggling to find motivation to clean?
 - How can we reframe this task so it feels less overwhelming?
 - Is it possible to make cleaning something to look forward to?
-

**“Motivation to
get out and do
things and
clean.”**

- How might someone redefine success in order to maintain motivation?
 - What does it mean to feel motivated? Are there multiple definitions of this experience?
 - How might our hobbies and passions teach us what motivates us? How can we learn to broadly apply those lessons to less intrinsically motivating tasks?
-

“I feel disconnected from the greater community, and rely on ALTs for most of my social needs.”

- How do you define your community? Are you part of one community or many?
 - In what ways can someone become more involved in their community?
 - How can we reframe feelings of reliance as something positive (*i.e. being supported*)?
-

**“I struggle to
make friends.”**

- What helps you deepen your social connections?
 - Where do you make friends and meet new people?
 - How can we reframe feelings of loneliness to initiate better coping (*i.e. through the context of self-reliance*)?
 - How might this new framework open us up to new social relationships?
-

“Not having my friends and family around has made me feel isolated at times which affects my mental health.”

- What qualities make someone feel like part of your support system?
 - Does support require reciprocity? Can helping others play a part in building a personal support system?
 - How can you nurture and prioritize long-distance relationships with friends or family? How can you mirror that energy in local relationships?
-

**“Feeling
unfulfilled and
bored because
of not having
much to do at
work.”**

- In what ways might you change your approach to work to create/initiate more fulfilling experiences?
- How might you use your free time at work to pursue personal interests and goals?
- In what ways can you instigate fulfilling experiences outside the workplace?
- Is it possible to make boring work more interesting, or at the very least tolerable? How?

Meaning in Work SDC Files:

https://gifujets.weebly.com/uploads/2/5/1/9/25199933/finding_meaning_in_work.pdf

What themes do we notice?

1. Motivation
2. Community
3. Meaning/Fulfillment

Well-Being Interventions

Approaches to Improved Mental Health

Motivation:

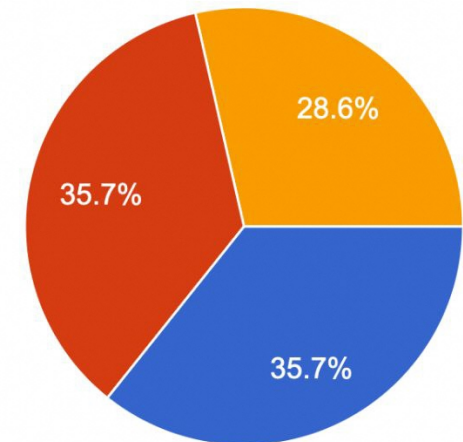
1. Committed Goal Pursuit
 - a. Intrinsic, Authentic, Approach, Harmonious, Flexible, Activity

Social Connections / Community:

1. Make Friends
 - a. Make time, Communicate, Offer Support, Hug
2. Enhance Relationships
 - a. Make time, Express admiration, appreciation, and affection, Capitalize on good fortune, Manage conflict, Share an inner life

Meaning / Fulfillment:

1. PERMA
 - a. Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement



- Gotten better
- Stayed the same
- Gotten worse
- Don't wish to say

Physical Health Boosting Activities

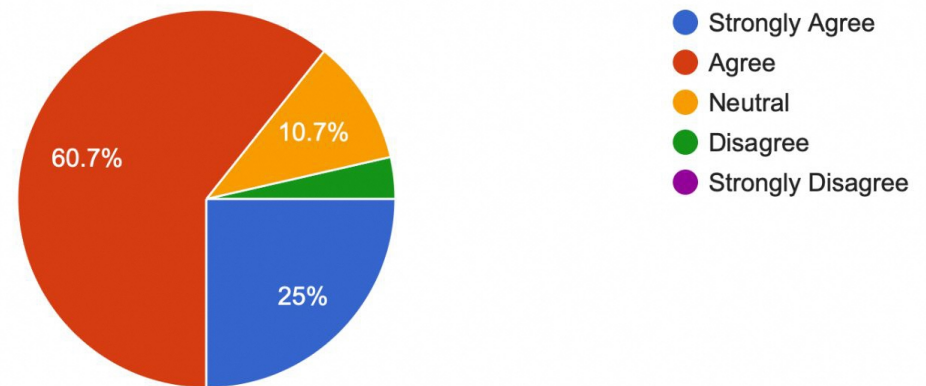
People generally feel confident that they know what steps to take to better their physical health. Activities like:

- Yoga, walking, running, sports, etc.

The key here is **motivation**.

Find activities that are **engaging**, **enjoyable**, and allow you to experience **flow**.

Set SMART goals - it's easier to track (and celebrate!) your progress and achievements.



Final Comments

Final Comments

- All of the worksheets for this session will be made available on the Gifu JETs website.
- If you'd like to continue the conversation about mental and physical health strategies or challenges, please feel free to contact Lindsay or Liam.
- If you are struggling with your mental health, please reach out to your RPA for resources, or check out the Gifu JETs website for counseling options.
- For urgent situations, TELL Japan offers a Mental Health Lifeline, which can be reached at **03-5774-0992**. More information can be found at <https://telljp.com/lifeline/>
- **For emergency situations please call 119 for the ambulance or 110 for police.**