

What is Behavioral Medicine?

Behavioral Medicine addresses the relationship between our thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and physical well-being, and the impact these elements have on illness, health and healing.

Our thoughts have tremendous capacity to affect our physical state of well-being and the healing process. Similarly, how we respond emotionally to events that take place in our lives can lead to states of chronic stress and tension that, in turn, can affect our physical health. Repeated strong stress reactions have been shown to contribute to medical problems, and can impede the healing process.

Behavioral Medicine integrates behavioral and psychosocial theories with biomedical science and applies these theories to help patients develop effective ways to reduce stress and tension, and to create healthier ways of being. The behavioral medicine approach assumes that promoting mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being promotes physical well-being, optimal health, and wellness.

Behavioral Medicine therapies offered at the institute include:

- [Biofeedback](#)
- [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy](#)
- [Relaxation Techniques](#)

What Conditions Can Be Treated with Behavioral Medicine?

Common reasons for Behavioral Medicine treatment include:

- Asthma
- Chronic medical conditions
- Chronic pain
- Counterproductive behaviors
- Disruptive emotional reactions
- Epilepsy
- Headaches
- High blood pressure
- Hot flashes
- Insomnia
- Irregular heartbeats
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Mood disorders
- Nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy
- Panic attacks
- Phobias
- Raynaud's disease
- Stress/anxiety/depression

When Should I Avoid Behavioral Medicine?

Some types of behavioral medicine should be avoided if you have:

- Depression
- Psychosis
- Other major mental health complications

Behavioral Medicine Therapies

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) asserts that our thoughts influence our feelings and behaviors. CBT helps patients adjust how they think in order to create healthier behaviors and emotional responses. CBT is very systematic and goal-oriented within an established time-frame. Sessions are focused on helping patients unlearn their unwanted thoughts and reactions, and learn new ways of being.

The CBT approach relies heavily on assignments to help patients track and adjust thoughts and behaviors. Practices and therapies may include, but are not limited to: keeping a diary of significant events and associated feelings, thoughts, and behaviors; questioning and testing cognitions, assumptions, evaluations, and beliefs that might be unhelpful and unrealistic; gradually facing activities which may have been avoided; and trying out new ways of behaving and reacting. Relaxation, mindfulness, and distraction techniques are commonly utilized.

Biofeedback

Biofeedback is a type of mind/body medicine based on the premise that people have the ability to use their minds to influence many of the automatic and involuntary functions of their bodies. Biofeedback specialists use special monitoring equipment to help patients understand the rhythms and patterns of their involuntary responses so that they can use mind-over-matter techniques to control certain body function and their responses.

Relaxation Techniques

There are many relaxation techniques that can be easily learned to help patients cope with stressful situations, chronic pain, or anxiety. Relaxation is an important way to help decrease the impact of daily stressors on the mind and body, and allow the whole person to experience improved health. Relaxation techniques can be used to slow your heart rate, lower blood pressure, reduce the need for oxygen, increase the flow of blood to muscles and organs, and reduce muscle tension. Health benefits of relaxation include fewer physical symptoms such as headaches and back pain, more controlled temperament, increased energy, improved concentration, greater ability to cope with stressful situations, improved problem solving capabilities, and more energy to undertake daily activities.

Many types of relaxation techniques target physical and psychological relaxation. These include muscle relaxation, visualization, yoga, Tai chi, music, exercise, meditation, hypnosis, massage, and deep breathing.

How Can I Find Out More?

To find out more about Behavioral Medicine options offered at the Raby Institute for Integrative Medicine or to [schedule an appointment](#) with one of our licensed practitioners contact the Raby Institute at 312-276-1212 or info@rabyinstitute.com