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## **Application of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in management of anxiety during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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In this unprecedented time of global uncertainty, it is completely normal for people to be experiencing a wide range of emotions. The Coronavirus pandemic is and will continue to make an impact on mental health at an individual, group and societal level. One of the most common responses to COVID-19 has been fear and anxiety. Fear is an evolutionary bodily response to threat and in principle, is an adaptive emotion. But in excessive amounts, fear and anxiety might do more harm than good and lead to significant distress and impairment in daily functioning. As mental health professionals, we will play a pivotal role in helping people understand and manage their emotions in this difficult time.

In this presentation, the author will discuss how the COVID-19 Pandemic may contribute to a global rise in prevalence of Anxiety Disorders, such as Panic Disorder, Health Anxiety Disorder or Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, and how Cognitive Behaviour Therapy could be implemented to address these disorders.

Cognitive Behaviour therapy (CBT) is a form of psychological treatment that has been demonstrated to be effective for a range of mental health problems including depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, adjustment disorders, alcohol and drug problems and severe mental illness. The goal of CBT is to change patterns of thinking or behaviour that cause emotional distress and help individuals develop more helpful coping strategies to relieve their distress and improve their functioning. Numerous research studies have shown CBT to be as effective, or superior to other forms of psychological therapy or anti-depressant medication.

### **Biography**

Joanna Szponarska is a Cognitive Behaviour Therapist working for the British National Health Service and has a private practice in partnership with PsychoMedic.pl clinic in

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Warsaw, Poland. She holds a MSc in Clinical Psychology from the University of Manchester and recently completed an accredited course in CBT at the University of Birmingham. She works predominantly with adolescents and adults with depression and anxiety disorders, delivering therapy both face to face and online, in Polish and English language.

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