

Page 2 of 15 Note that 'A' alone does not cause 'C' – 'A' triggers off 'B', and 'B' then causes 'C'. It contains illogical ways of evaluating oneself, others, and the world: demandingness, awfulising, discomfort-intolerance and people-rating; When talking with clients, we often refer to beliefs as 'self-defeating' rather than 'irrational', to emphasise that the main reason for replacing a belief is because it negatively affects their lives.

Two Types of Disturbance REBT suggests that human beings defeat or 'disturb' themselves in two main ways: (1) by holding irrational beliefs about their 'self' (ego disturbance) or (2) by holding irrational beliefs about their emotional or physical comfort (discomfort disturbance). For a person to go beyond feeling better to actually get better – that is, to achieve fundamental and lasting change – involves modifying the underlying core beliefs that create difficulties for them in a range of situations.

Discomfort disturbance comes in two slightly different but related flavours:

- o **Low frustration-tolerance (LFT)** results from demands that frustration not happen, followed by catastrophising when it does. It blocks a person from achieving their goals, creates extreme emotions that persist and which distress and immobilise, and leads to behaviours that harm oneself, others, and one's life in general. They are habitual or automatic, often consisting of underlying 'rules' about how the world and life should be. With practice, though, people can learn to uncover such subconscious 'core' beliefs. At a superficial level you can feel better by altering your body chemistry (e.g. via exercise, dietary change or medication); by changing the situation (e.g. by avoiding contact with the other person); or by changing your inferences about the situation (for example, you make yourself feel less anxious by convincing yourself that the disapproval isn't going to happen). This proves 'I am no good' and so on. These beliefs create 'ego anxiety' – emotional tension resulting from the perception that one's 'self' or personal worth is threatened – and lead to other problems such as avoidance of situations where failure, disapproval, etc.
- o **Low discomfort-tolerance (LDT)** arises from demands that one not experience emotional or physical discomfort, with catastrophising when discomfort does occur. To achieve such change, REBT uses a range of cognitive, emotive and behavioural strategies (more about these later).