

Psychotherapy: How It Works and How It Can Help

Psychotherapy is a set of skills intended to improve mental health — emotional or behavioral issues. Talk therapy is not just talking about your problems; it is working toward solutions. Therapy involves partnership, communication, goals, collaboration, trust, understanding and action. Successful therapy can help a person change thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, actions and moods for the better.

Therapy can help...

- Overcome fears or insecurities.
- Make sense of past traumatic experiences.
- Establish a stable, dependable routine.
- Identify triggers that may worsen your symptoms.
- Improve relationships with family and friends.
- Separate your true personality from the mood swings caused by illness.
- Develop a plan for managing stress and crises.
- End destructive habits (drinking, using drugs or alcohol, overspending, risky sex).
- Address symptoms like changes in eating or sleeping habits, anger, anxiety, irritability or other emotions.
- Overcome barriers that prevent permanent, healthy changes.



Some ways to find a therapist include:

- Ask your doctor, a family member or friend for a recommendation.

<http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/>

Common Therapies for Depression or Bipolar Disorder

Interpersonal therapy (IPT) was originally developed to treat depression and has been adapted for bipolar and other disorders. It addresses a person’s symptoms, social relationships and roles. IPT focuses on what is happening “here and now” and attempts to help a person change, rather than just understand his or her actions and reactions. The patient and therapist examine current and past relationships. IPT does not focus on unconscious or subconscious motivations, wishes or dreams. It looks at choices, actions and how a person socially interacts with others.

The therapist helps the patient review his or her symptoms and relate these symptoms to one of four things: unresolved grief over a loss, interpersonal role disputes (conflicts with others), role transitions (changes in life status such as moving or changing jobs) or interpersonal deficits (isolation or lack of social skills). The therapist and patient then work through specific situations to relieve symptoms and stress.

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) combines cognitive and behavioral therapies. The cognitive aspect of CBT helps a person recognize the automatic thoughts or core beliefs that contribute to negative emotions. The person realizes some of these thoughts and beliefs don’t make sense and begins to change them. Types of automatic thoughts may include focusing on one negative detail and applying the negative quality to everything, perceiving things as “all good” or “all bad.”

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is a treatment model effective with both personality and mood disorders. It is based on the belief that most disorders have biological and social origins. The therapy has two parts: skills group and individual therapy. Skills of controlling emotions, mindfulness, interpersonal communication and stress management are taught in a group(s) once a week.

Self-Defeating Thought	Reality-Based Response
No one likes me.	People like me.
I am worthless.	I am a valuable person.
I’m a loser.	I assume the very best from myself.
I can’t do anything right.	I do many things right.