

Psychodynamic psychotherapy

In psychotherapy the interaction between a psychotherapist and patient aims to change less adaptive ways of thinking and behaving to a more adaptive way. The therapist helps the patient look at the problems in the past (counselling looks at here and now). Patient works with the therapist and identifies, manages and can ultimately overcome emotional and mental problems.

Patients are either referred by their CMHT or can refer themselves. Patients have an initial assessment to determine if psychotherapy would be beneficial for them and also to decide on the type of psychotherapy, which will best meet their needs.

Indications

1. Emotional and interpersonal problems
2. Low self esteem
3. Problems in forming close relationships

Patient characteristics

1. Motivated to change
2. Able to express feelings
3. Able to tolerate a range of emotions
4. In the past have had at least one significant relationship
5. Be able to reflect and form a therapeutic relationship
6. Be able to deal with the emotions evoked and continue the working relationship with the therapist

Contraindications

1. Severe mood disorder
2. Psychotic illness
3. Substance abuse
4. Repeated self harm or actively suicidal

Types of Psychotherapy

1. Individual psychotherapy
 - Short term: lasts for around 9 months and is useful for patients with identified problems.
 - Long term: lasts longer than 9 months (open ended). Offered to people with severe personality difficulties and when problems are difficult to identify.
2. Group psychotherapy
 - Useful for people with relationship problems. Not offered to people with severe social anxiety.
3. Therapeutic communities
 - Used to help people who have been referred for long term psychotherapy for severe and disabling problems but struggle to contain their feelings.

Frame work

Contract about the length of the therapy is made with the patients. It requires commitment from both patient and therapist. Sessions are on a weekly basis and last for 45-50 minutes. Therapist has regular supervision.

Transference and countertransference

Transference is said to occur when the patient reacts to the therapist as though he or she were a person in patient's past. The therapist must be aware of this phenomenon and can use it to help the patient. Countertransference refers to the feelings evoked in the therapist by the patient.