

Common TYPES of THERAPIES

Why use therapy?

Mental health professionals use a variety of approaches to give people tools to deal with troublesome patterns of behavior and to help them manage symptoms of mental illness. The best therapist will work with you to design a treatment plan that will be most effective for you. This sometimes involves a single method, or it may involve elements of several different methods.

Behavioral Therapy

As the name implies, this approach focuses on behavior-changing through rewards, reinforcements, and desensitization. Desensitization, or exposure therapy, is a process of confronting something that arouses anxiety, discomfort, or fear and overcoming the unwanted responses. Behavioral therapy often involves the cooperation of others, especially family and close friends, to reinforce a desired behavior.

Family Therapy

This approach to therapy involves discussions and problem-solving sessions facilitated by a therapist with an entire family group or with individuals. Such therapy can help family members improve their understanding of, and the way they respond to, one another. This type of therapy can resolve patterns of behavior that might lead to more severe mental illness. Family therapy can help educate the individuals about the nature of mental disorders and teach them skills to cope better with the effects of having a family member with a mental illness—such as how to deal with feelings of anger or guilt.

Interpersonal Psychotherapy

Through one-on-one conversations, this approach focuses on the patient's current life and relationships within the family, social, and work environments. The goal is to identify and resolve problems with insight, as well as build on strengths.

Cognitive Therapy

This method aims to identify and correct distorted thinking patterns that can lead to feelings and behaviors that may be troublesome, self-defeating, or even self-destructive. The goal is to replace such thinking with a more balanced view that, in turn, leads to more fulfilling and productive behavior.

Cognitive-Behavioral Combined Therapy

A combination of cognitive and behavioral therapies, this approach helps people change negative thought patterns, beliefs, and behaviors so they can manage symptoms and enjoy more productive, less stressful lives.

Psychoanalysis

This approach focuses on past conflicts as the underpinnings to current emotional and behavioral problems. In this long-term and intensive therapy, an individual meets with a psychoanalyst three to five times a week, using "free association" to explore unconscious motivations and earlier, unproductive patterns of resolving issues.

Play Therapy

Geared toward young children, this technique uses a variety of activities, such as painting, puppets, and dioramas, to establish communication with the therapist and resolves problems. Play allows the child to express emotions and problems that would be too difficult to discuss with another person.