

Psychological Therapies Explained

At Atrium, our therapists are trained in a whole range of therapeutic approaches and won't necessarily have to be limited to just one – sessions will be tailored to the needs of the individual. Some of the more frequently used types of therapies have a brief description below:

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

There are different types of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, however, the founding principle is that our thoughts, feelings and behaviours are linked and impact upon each other. The thoughts that we have are related to the beliefs and assumptions that we hold about ourselves, others and the world around us. The therapy involves assisting clients to explore these areas and potentially develop new beliefs, assumptions and coping strategies that may be more helpful to them in living a more fulfilling and value-driven life. It usually involves the introduction of new ways of approaching thinking and behaving that helps to reduce the levels of distress that they experience. The therapy involves the therapist and client working together on this by practising techniques and interventions during sessions and the client completing tasks between sessions.

Additionally other CBT approaches available through Atrium include:

Mindfulness & Acceptance Based Cognitive Behavioural Therapies

These approaches build on the ideas of CBT, but incorporate the concepts of Mindfulness to assist individuals in experiencing problems in ways that cause them less distress. They focus upon values-based living instead of the management of thinking and feeling.

Mindfulness is about being present in the moment without judgement. Its aim is to bring greater awareness to clients' actual experiences, instead of living constantly in their thoughts.

Person-Centred Counselling

Person-Centred counselling is a non-directive therapy which is client led. This means that the therapist will work with clients on whatever they bring to the session. The therapy works towards increasing their self awareness so that they can find possible solutions and ways of understanding and accepting their problems and making choices about the way they want to deal with the difficult situations they may be experiencing.

Integrative therapy

Integrative therapy is a model that draws on a number of approaches to human functioning in order to help individuals understand their current position. It involves understanding the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of individuals combined with their biology, and social context. The aim of integrative therapy is to assist clients to experience a feeling of wholeness by enabling them to develop understanding of their current problems and finding alternative ways of living and functioning in their world that would enable them to feel fulfilled.

Psychodynamic Therapy

Psychodynamic Therapy is the general name for therapeutic approaches that try to get clients to bring unconscious feelings to the surface, so that they can both experience and understand them. It uses the basic assumption that everybody has an unconscious mind (also referred to as subconscious) and that feelings held in the unconscious mind are often too painful to be faced. Consequently people develop defences to protect themselves from them – denial is one such defence. Understanding these defences helps clients to manage them and deal with the problems that cause the defences to show up. The goals of psychodynamic therapy are to increase self-awareness and gain an understanding of the influence of the past on current behaviours and relationships.

Relationship Counselling

Relationship counselling focuses upon relationships. It can help with problems in current, past or future relationships with partners, family members, employees or employers and others. This can be done with or without the other people involved being present. It aims to enable people to recognise patterns of relating and behaving around those relationships and to accept or change where appropriate those patterns by addressing feelings, values, expectations, communication styles, problem solving and unresolved issues to enhance relationship experiences.

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy

Solution-focused brief therapy as the name suggests is future focused, goal-directed and concentrates on solutions, rather than on the problems that bring clients into therapy. It is focused on building solutions rather than problem-solving. The foundation of this approach is the basic assumption that problems are not constant ie there are times when the problem is not there. The approach works by focusing upon the individual's own resources and building on those successful ones when the client is not experiencing the problems. By bringing small successes into the client's awareness and repeating these, they can improve the individual's experience which in turn improves self confidence. When clients become more hopeful, they become more interested in creating a better life.

Systemic Therapies

This is a generic term for therapies that view problems occurring within a social context. As human beings, we are always in relationships with others and this means that we need to view problems as occurring within a system of relationships, families, groups, workplaces and many others. With its roots in family therapy and family systems therapy, it approaches problems practically. It does not seek to determine cause, diagnosis or blame. Instead it addresses patterns of relating and provides creative nudges to enable the system to change by altering those patterns of relating.

Transactional Analysis (TA)

TA is an integrative therapy drawing on ideas from other therapies including psychodynamic, cognitive and humanistic. It combines a theory of communication, personality and child development to help clients to understand their behaviours in relating to others and how others behave towards them. All individuals are believed to have an ego as part of their personality and ego can take three forms: Parent – Child – Adult. Due to

different childhood experiences, individuals can get stuck in certain states which affect the ways in which they interact with others. TA seeks to identify and understand these states and the circumstances in which they occur so that the individual can begin to behave in ways which are more helpful and bring about few interrelational difficulties.

In summary

The above are just some of the more commonly known therapies that are used by therapists; the most important factor to take into consideration is finding the right therapist for you. However good a therapist is, it is the relationship between you and the therapist that determines whether you trust the therapist enough, and s/he comes to understand you enough, to help you explore and find solutions for your problem.