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How will I know when it is time to stop seeing the therapist?

Your progress will be monitored closely throughout treatment.

Towards the end of the meetings that you have agreed, your therapist will review of your progress and discuss with you whether you are ready to stop therapy or whether you need further help.

For further information

Gestalt Psychotherapy Training Institute
www.gpti.org.uk

Contact us

For more information, please ask to speak to the psychological therapies manager in your area.

For information on Trust services visit www.awp.nhs.uk

PALS

To make a comment, raise a concern or make a complaint, please contact the Trust's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

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Lead: Psychological Therapies Service Manager
Leaflet Code: AWPAug 2010-146
Last review March 2016
Next review due: March 2020



Avon and Wiltshire Mental
Health Partnership
NHS Trust

Gestalt Therapy

This is one of a series of information leaflets on psychological therapies for service users. The therapy is described, what it involves, and the kinds of problem it may be helpful for.

What is Gestalt Therapy?

Gestalt therapy is a type of psychotherapy or 'talking therapy'. Gestalt therapists believe that human beings are essentially healthy and will naturally fulfil their needs, grow and develop.

However, people sometimes go through experiences that interfere with this process and create problems in functioning. These problems result in blocks which can interfere with growth and development.

Gestalt therapy aims to help people become aware of and understand these blocks and to carry on with the process of healthy development.

Who is Gestalt Therapy for?

Gestalt therapy is used to treat a wide variety of problems such as:

- anxiety disorders,
- depression
- difficulties relating to other people.

It works best with people who recognise they are having problems and want to work on these difficulties.

What will happen once I have been referred for Gestalt Therapy?

Once you have been referred, you will be sent an appointment letter for an assessment.

This usually involves two or three meetings with a therapist. During the assessment, the therapist will ask you a lot of questions and will try to build up a picture of your problems and how they have developed.

They may also ask to see you with a partner or other family member, depending on the nature of your difficulties.

After the assessment, the therapist will discuss your difficulties with you. They will also discuss whether Gestalt therapy is a suitable treatment for you and whether you want to start therapy.

What does Gestalt Therapy involve?

It usually involves a series of meetings (called sessions) with a therapist. Most often these will be between you and the therapist, but may involve a partner or family member.

During the session

You will be asked to bring a problem or issue that you wish to work on. This will be the theme for the session.

You may come with something specific in mind or this may be an issue that arises while you are there.

At first, the therapist will ask you to talk about your chosen issue. They will explore it with you and try to see why you are finding it a problem.

They will then suggest a simple exercise or 'experiment' to help you understand more about it and where you are getting blocked. For example, if the issue involves a difficulty in relating to someone else, the experiment might be to role play a recent situation that caused you problems.

During an experiment like this, the therapist might make observations and give you feedback to help you understand more about your difficulty and to work on it.

After such an exercise, there will usually be some time to reflect on the experiment and see what you have learned from it before the session ends.

How long does treatment take?

Gestalt therapy is not a 'quick fix'. Treatment takes time and can range from a few months to one or two years of weekly or fortnightly meetings.

At first, you will usually agree to meet with the therapist for a set number of sessions or set period of time.