



This booklet can be made available in other languages or formats such as large print, audio or Easy read. Contact 01225 362900

Understanding MBT

A lot has been written about MBT.

If you would like to know more, we recommend the book below which covers the theory and research behind MBT, and what it involves.

'Mentalization Based Treatment for Borderline Personality Disorder: A Practical Guide' by Anthony Bateman and Peter Fonagy (2006) Oxford: Oxford University Press

Contact us

Please talk to your care coordinator for further information.

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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Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership
NHS Trust

Mentalization Based Treatment (MBT)

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

You matter, we care

What is mentalizing?

Mentalizing is the ability to make sense of our own actions and feelings and those of others.

This ability is important in enabling us to regulate our emotions and impulses and in developing fulfilling, meaningful relationships.

Mentalization based treatment is a psychotherapy to improve this ability.

Who is MBT for?

Mentalizing is a normal everyday skill we all use. This skill is less well developed or easily lost for those who meet criteria for a diagnosis of borderline personality disorder. MBT is used to help treat people who meet these criteria.

What problems can MBT help with?

MBT has been developed to help people who have had long term problems with overwhelming and intense emotional distress, which has led them to

- engage in impulsive often self-destructive behaviour
- feel mistrustful of others
- feel that people are mainly motivated by bad intent.

Purpose of MBT

The objective of MBT psychotherapy is to provide a safe, structured environment to help:

- enhance your understanding about thoughts and feelings about yourself and others
- you learn how these thoughts and feelings affect your responses and actions.

Enhancing your ability to mentalize can:

- help you understand your emotional responses to situations and rapidly changing, unexplained mood changes.
- help if you have difficulty reading other people's responses to you, by focusing on understanding other's feelings and reactions as well as your own.

What does MBT involve?

MBT takes place in groups and individual psychotherapy sessions.

After assessment sessions, service users are usually offered:

- psychoeducational sessions
- followed by 18 months of both group and individual weekly psychotherapy.

During the psychotherapy, service users will be invited to look at difficulties in their current life and relationships

This will involve exploring the kind of situations which have provoked strong emotional reactions and changes in mood.