



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

## How long does therapy last?

Each session lasts for 50 minutes. You will meet your therapist at the same time and in the same place on a weekly basis.

The number of therapy session's people receive varies. If the difficulties you have been struggling with are long standing, then you may attend sessions over many months.

## Further information

UK Council for Psychotherapy:  
[www.psychotherapy.org.uk](http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk)  
Tel: 020 7014 9955

British Association of Psychotherapists:  
[www.bap-psychotherapy.org/content.jsp](http://www.bap-psychotherapy.org/content.jsp)  
Tel: 020 8452 9823

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy: [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)  
Tel: 01455 883300

## Contact us

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

For information on Trust services visit [www.awp.nhs.uk](http://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).

Tel: 01225 362900  
Free phone: 0800 073 1778  
Email: [awp.pals@nhs.net](mailto:awp.pals@nhs.net)

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Avon and Wiltshire  
Mental Health Partnership  
NHS Trust

# Psychodynamic Psychotherapy

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 psychodynamic psychotherapy?

Psychodynamic psychotherapy tries to understand the reasons behind symptoms, emotional distress and relationship difficulties. It can help you understand how past experiences, current ways of thinking and relating and anxieties about the future are causing difficulties in your present life.

Psychodynamic psychotherapy is based on the assumptions that part of our mind operates outside of our conscious awareness and that early experiences in life are important in later development. These experiences lay down patterns of relating to others, of dealing with feelings and life's challenges.

## What does it involve?

During the therapy sessions, you will be encouraged to talk as freely as you can and to explore your feelings, experiences, memories, dreams, anxieties, fantasies and wishes.

Your therapist will listen carefully to what you say and how you say it and will at times feedback her/his understanding to you.

S/he is likely to pay particular attention to the relationship that grows between the two of you, as this can help you learn something about your past and present relationships.

Psychodynamic psychotherapy does not involve medication. However, if you are being prescribed tablets, it will be best to discuss this with your therapist to make sure that medication does not interfere with your thinking processes.

## Who can benefit?

Psychotherapy can be an effective treatment for a range of problems. Perhaps you are feeling:

- unable to cope or to resolve conflicts
- burdened by resentment, disappointment or despair
- that family problems are too much to bear
- that it is very difficult to deal with stress or recover from stressful situations
- lonely, empty, depressed or that you have to deal with extreme mood change
- anxious, "panicky" or unable to concentrate
- curious or anxious about your sexuality

- concerned about drinking or eating problems
- that you have difficulties in making or keeping relationships, or that you repeatedly become involved in unsatisfying or destructive relationships
- that you have to harm yourself to feel better
- that life is not worth living or that there is little hope for change
- that you struggle with physical problems which are not easily explained or don't fit into a diagnosis.

People who benefit most are usually those who want to understand themselves better and who have the motivation to commit to the process, even when it involves facing emotional pain.

If you are relying on alcohol or other substances to help you to deal with your mood difficulties or with general life, then you will need to think about minimising or stopping your alcohol/substance use completely to benefit from the therapy.