



## **THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES DEFINED**

### **Bottom Up Approach**

The bottom-up approach begins with information acquired from the body's sensations. The bottom-up approach accepts that feelings or even body sensations happen first. The body's automatic responses or feelings happen, feelings that one is unsafe. The life-saving stress response that has people looking and acting dysregulated is noticed. Trauma-informed therapy creates healing relationships in which it is safe to begin to look at the reasons why a person feels unsafe (and unable to control thoughts and feelings when triggered), without being overwhelmed. The healing relationships include the therapist-client relationship, and the client's own relationship with himself or herself.

One of the modalities for bottom-up therapy incorporate dual awareness —thinking and feeling —that is necessary for healing. In order to heal, feeling safe and learning how to have regulated responses in both the body and the brain need to develop. Bottom-up therapy integrates the whole brain: left, right, top and bottom. Integration is key to healthy regulation.

### **Coaching**

Life coaching is an increasingly popular profession that has no specific licensing or academic requirements. Though psychologists also often consider themselves life coaches, these therapists don't focus on treating mental illness. Instead, they help individuals realize their goals in work and in life.

### **Cognitive Behavioral (CBT)**

Cognitive-behavioral therapy stresses the role of thinking in how we feel and what we do. It is based on the belief that thoughts, rather than people or events, cause our negative feelings. The therapist assists the client in identifying, testing the reality of, and correcting dysfunctional beliefs underlying his or her thinking. The therapist then helps the client modify those thoughts and the behaviors that flow from them. CBT is a structured collaboration between therapist and client and often calls for homework assignments. CBT has been clinically proven to help clients in a relatively short amount of time with a wide range of disorders, including depression and anxiety.

## **Eclectic**

Many practitioners take an eclectic approach to therapy, drawing upon various aspects of cognitive-behavioral and psychodynamic methods to create their own custom-made approach. Such therapists often work with their clients to create a treatment plan that encompasses different techniques to best address the client's particular problems and to appeal to their sensibility.

## **Existential**

Existential psychotherapy is based on the philosophical belief that human beings are alone in the world, and that this aloneness can only be overcome by creating one's own meaning and exercising one's freedom to choose. The existential therapist encourages clients to face life's anxieties head on and to start making their own decisions. The therapist will emphasize that, along with having the freedom to carve out meaning, comes the need to take full responsibility for the consequences of one's decisions. Therapy sessions focus on the client's present and future rather than their past.

## **Humanistic**

The humanistic method takes a positive view of human nature and emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual. Therapists in this tradition, who are interested in exploring the nature of creativity, love, and self-actualization, help clients realize their potential through change and self-directed growth. Humanistic therapy is also an umbrella term for gestalt, client-centered therapy, and existential therapy.

## **Interpersonal**

IPT is a short-term psychotherapy in which therapist and client identify the issues and problems of interpersonal relationships. They also explore the client's life history to help recognize problem areas and then work toward ways to rectify them.

## **Mind-Body**

Mind-body therapies are a group of healing techniques that enhance the mind's interactions with bodily function, to induce relaxation and to improve overall health and well-being. Guided imagery, low intensity movement, meditation, yoga, music/sound.

## **Mindfulness-Based (MBCT)**

For clients with chronic pain, hypertension, heart disease, cancer, and other health issues such as anxiety and depression, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, or MBCT, is a two-part therapy that aims to reduce stress, manage pain, and embrace the freedom to respond to situations by choice. MCBT blends two disciplines--cognitive therapy and mindfulness. Mindfulness helps by reflecting on moments and thoughts without passing judgment. MBCT clients pay close attention to their feelings to reach an objective mindset, thus viewing and combating life's unpleasant occurrences.

## **Motivational Interviewing**

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a method of therapy that works to engage the motivation of clients to change their behavior. Clients are encouraged to explore and confront their ambivalence. Therapists attempt to influence their clients to consider making changes, rather than non-direct exploration of themselves. Motivational Interviewing is frequently used in cases of problem drinking or mild addictions.

## **Narrative**

Narrative Therapy uses the client's storytelling to indicate the way they construct meaning in their lives, rather than focusing on how they communicate their problem behaviors. Narrative Therapy embraces the idea that stories actually shape our behaviors and our lives and that we become the stories we tell about ourselves. There are helpful narratives we can choose to embrace as well as unhelpful ones. Although it may sound obvious, the power of storytelling is to elevate the client--who is the authority of their narrative--rather than the therapist, as expert.

## **Person-Centered**

Person-centered therapy uses a non-authoritative approach that allows clients to take more of a lead in discussions so that, in the process, they will discover their own solutions. The therapist acts as a compassionate facilitator, listening without judgment and acknowledging the client's experience without moving the conversation in another direction. The therapist is there to encourage and support the client and to guide the therapeutic process without interrupting or interfering with the client's process of self-discovery.

## **Positive Psychology**

Unlike traditional psychology that focuses more on the causes and symptoms of mental illnesses and emotional disturbances, positive psychology emphasizes traits, thinking patterns, behaviors, and experiences that are forward-thinking and can help improve the quality of a person's day-to-day life. These may include optimism, spirituality, hopefulness, happiness,

creativity, perseverance, justice, and the practice of free will. It is an exploration of one's strengths, rather than one's weaknesses. The goal of positive psychology is not to replace those traditional forms of therapy that center on negative experiences, but instead to expand and give more balance to the therapeutic process.

### **Solution Focused Brief (SFBT)**

Solution-focused therapy, sometimes called "brief therapy," focuses on what clients would like to achieve through therapy rather than on their troubles or mental health issues. The therapist will help the client envision a desirable future, and then map out the small and large changes necessary for the client to undergo to realize their vision. The therapist will seize on any successes the client experiences, to encourage them to build on their strengths rather than dwell on their problems or limitations.

### **Strength-Based**

Strength-based therapy is a type of positive psychotherapy and counseling that focuses more on your internal strengths and resourcefulness, and less on weaknesses, failures, and shortcomings. This focus sets up a positive mindset that helps you build on your best qualities, find your strengths, improve resilience and change worldview to one that is more positive. A positive attitude, in turn, can help your expectations of yourself and others become more reasonable.

### **Supportive Therapy**

The idea behind supportive therapy is to give people an outlet where they can express themselves and their frustrations, sorrows, joys, and hopes. Some people just need to have someone on their side to get through certain life problems. Having a dedicated therapist who is willing to listen and be there is often enough to make a big difference in a person's life. That is why therapists who are practicing supportive therapy often think carefully before deciding to interject with some advice of their own. Supportive therapy is also about helping clients to manage their symptoms.

### **Transpersonal**

Transpersonal therapy emphasizes the transcendent or spiritual aspects of a client's development. A transpersonal therapist may help the client cultivate a greater sense of connectedness with others, with nature, and with a higher spirit.

### **Trauma Conscious/Focused**

Trauma conscious therapy, also called “trauma informed therapy,” is about creating safe, non-judgmental spaces for healing a single or series of traumatic events. It is helpful to learn to calm your mind and regulate your physical responses and, thus, your emotions. You are able to learn to recognize and tolerate physical sensations and thereby regain a feeling of safety inside your body as your metabolize and process any trauma experiences.