

HOW TO CHOOSE A THERAPIST?



Once you have decided on the kind (or kinds) of therapist that could be right for you, the next step is to pick the person that suits you best.

Contents

- [Which person should you choose?](#)
- [Interviewing your therapist](#)
- [Which kind of therapist?](#)
- [What are the different types of therapy?](#)
- [Therapy Modes](#)
- [Theoretical Orientation](#)
- [Definitions of mental health practitioners](#)
- [Definitions of mental health services](#)

Which person should you choose?

There are four things that you should consider when selecting a therapist from a mental health profession: 1. Credentials, 2. Experience, 3. The relationship, 4. Orientation.

Credentials aren't everything, but they are important. They let you know that the psychotherapist you are working with has at least met certain minimum standards. However, proper credentials don't automatically mean that someone is a great therapist, and even the best paperwork doesn't make up for experience, personality or talent.

Experience makes a tremendous difference, particularly in areas like OCD, addiction, eating disorders, schizophrenia, postnatal depression, sexual abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder. Therapists experienced with your difficulties have seen people facing these struggles many times. They have a clear sense of what to expect, when to worry (or not), what works and what to avoid, and they aren't likely to get caught up in the next treatment fad. This is priceless. Newer therapists do however bring energy and enthusiasm that goes a long way. They tend to be more hopeful and work harder to please. There is no need to avoid these therapists provided they regularly consult with more experienced colleagues. You are meeting with a trained professional (rather than a good friend) because of your interest in making use of their expertise. It's okay to ask them questions about their background and interest in the areas that bring you.

With credentials and experience being equal, the next factor to consider is the relationship. Research confirms that the largest predictor of a positive outcome in psychotherapy is the quality of the relationship between the therapist and patient.

A therapist should feel like a potential partner on your journey towards growth; someone that you can connect with. This is vital: how often do you take the things that someone says seriously when you don't value your relationship with that person? Also, how likely are you to show your most authentic and vulnerable self to someone you don't particularly like or trust? They should also impart confidence that you are safe with them, that your experience, feelings, and actions can be understood and accepted, and that the sessions won't be about the therapist.

No one can predict how you will respond to the work, but they should impart some sense of hope, even if it's just the hope that things will become clearer in time. You certainly should not walk away feeling looked down on, told off, judged, mocked or criticised. Well, not unless this is how you always feel, in which case you should leave with some sense that even these are feelings that can be discussed together, accepted and worked with.

The last area you may want to consider is the therapist's theoretical orientation. This refers to the school of thinking that informs how they make sense of the matters you bring, how they approach these, what to aim for and, as a consequence, the duration of the therapy. For example, someone working from a biomedical orientation (medical doctor) is more likely to prescribe medication, while a psychoanalyst might encourage in-depth analysis, and a CBT therapist would target specific symptoms. This is over-simplified, but the principle is sound.

Although some schools market themselves more effectively than others, there is no scientific consensus that one is unequivocally better than the rest. They do have different focuses and aims, and some are more appropriate in certain contexts. In an ideal world, you would be assessed by an experienced professional who is well-versed in a range of

approaches and has access to psychotherapists from each orientation to refer you to. In practice, there are few psychotherapists who are able to assess other orientations without bias.

Orientations aren't easily summarised in a manner that does them justice, and you certainly don't need to know about your therapist's orientation to enjoy its benefits. They are raised as a factor because some people do resonate more with one approach than another.

[Back to top](#)

Interviewing your therapist

You can find therapists by talking to people you know, asking your doctor and exploring therapist profiles and websites online. As you do this, gather their contact details and start to plan the kinds of questions you might want to ask them. It is sometimes possible to get some sense of a therapist by speaking with them on the phone, but meeting face to face, sometimes more than once, is preferable.

It is best to take as much charge of your therapy as possible. Try to make the calls yourself and to keep the relationship with your therapist between the two of you. If you are sure that you can't set up an appointment without help, then ask a loved one to make the first call for you, but do take things from there.

Be aware that the way some therapists comes across during initial meetings can differ from how they are once they shift into psychotherapy mode. You will only get an accurate sense of how they work after spending some time with them, so initial interview meetings have more to do with personality match.

Questions to ask over the phone, via email or in person, to help you prepare for your initial meeting:

Questions to ask yourself after your initial meeting:

Now that you are well-informed, it's time to choose one or a few therapists to set up a meeting with. It's okay to interview more than one therapist. You can be open about treating the encounter as a mutual assessment and whether you plan to see others. Experienced therapists know that they aren't the best fit for everyone and understand that it is important to find someone you feel is right for you. The choice is yours.

- Are they a licensed psychotherapist? A licence implies they meet minimum standards, follow an ethics code and are subject to accountability.
- Do they have experience with your kinds of concerns?
- Have they helped others effectively with those concerns?

- Do they provide the kind of therapy you are looking for?
- Are they taking on new clients?
- How long would you need to wait for an appointment?
- How much do they charge, and do they offer a sliding scale?
- Can you claim to be reimbursed by your insurance?
- How do they expect to be paid?
- Are they willing to accommodate your financial circumstances to help make therapy sustainable?
- Do they keep liability insurance? This ensures you are compensated if something goes wrong.
- What is their professional licence or registration category?
- What level of training do they have?
- How long have they been working?
- Are they experienced in the mode you require? E.g. individual therapy, family therapy, group therapy, long-term, short-term, etc.
- Do they follow a preferred frame or model?
- What will their approach with you be?
- How often will you meet, how long is a session, what is the expected length of therapy and why?
- What are the boundaries? E.g., can you call between sessions?
- Did they match your preferences? E.g., gender, age, ethnicity or background?
- Did you feel comfortable with this person? Yes, the meeting might have involved discussing uncomfortable things, but did you like the person and were they on your side?
- Were they able to listen authentically and thoughtfully?
- Did they seem to be interested, attentive, caring? Did they understand and accept you?
- Did they seem competent and trustworthy?
- Did they have appropriate boundaries, e.g. no flirting or telling you their problems?
- Could you be honest and authentic with this person?

[Back to top](#)

Which kind of therapist?

Deciding to work with a professional on personal matters is a positive step worthy of a round of applause and a great big cheer; well done for coming this far. The next steps you face are to choose the right kind of therapist to see, and then to decide on which person to choose. Taking an active role in this process by investing time to learn the ropes can be empowering and therapeutic.

However, if you aren't up to the effort this involves, it is entirely acceptable to ask your regular family doctor or clinic to refer you to someone that they trust. This is preferable to asking friends for recommendations because starting to see someone who is or has seen someone close to you can get complicated. For example, the person you know may decide to start seeing your therapist again, possibly about something that involves you.

This article introduces six kinds of mental health professional. There are many others, and if you are interested, you can find a list of their definitions here. These are the six most established.

The difference between a coach and a mental health professional

Licensed mental health professionals have received advanced postgraduate training in how to recognise different forms of psychological distress and to intervene using scientifically validated methods. They are required by law to uphold ethical standards (which they can be held accountable for breaking) and to remain abreast of advances in knowledge. The requirements of their licensing are usually rigorous and carefully monitored. This sets them apart from coaches and lay or volunteer counsellors, who are often unregulated and might not meet similar minimum standards.

Remember that each country (or state) defines its professional categories and their educational requirements differently. Feel free to research the requirements in your region (and abroad) and to ask professionals if they hold valid licences that verify whether they have met these. Not all professional titles are regulated everywhere. If you choose to see someone who claims an unregulated title, ask them about their training and compare their answer to the requirements in other regions.

[Back to top](#)

Definitions of Mental Health Practitioners

General Medical Practitioner (GP)

A general medical practitioner (GP) has completed comprehensive medical training that focused on providing a thorough understanding of the body, the ability to diagnose disease, and the effective use of medical interventions. General practitioners have been introduced to a broad range of medical fields (e.g. gynaecology, psychiatry, etc.). Their knowledge of mental health varies depending on their interests and post-qualification training; however,

they are a good first port of call. General practitioners can provide physical examinations, conduct basic mental health assessments, offer primary counselling, prescribe psychiatric medication and refer to other specialists where necessary.

Psychiatrist

A psychiatrist has all the medical training of a general medical practitioner plus several years of dedicated training in the diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric conditions, e.g. depression, anxiety, bipolar, schizophrenia, etc. Working within the medical model, psychiatrists classify experience and behaviour into symptom categories which inform their diagnosis and prescribed medical treatment. Psychiatrists are qualified to offer counselling, and some provide talk therapies. However, their exposure, experience and attitudes towards psychotherapy vary. Many limit their role to diagnosis and medication management, and will refer their patients on for psychotherapy. Psychiatry regularly forms a useful adjunct to psychotherapy, and it is indispensable in instances where a person can't be reached through dialogue, or is unable to engage in self-reflection. Examples include being detached from reality, manic, catatonic, severely agitated, depressed, actively suicidal, delusional or profoundly anxious.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychiatrist>

Psychologist

Psychologists differ from medical doctors as a psychologist's training focuses on the study of human behaviour and development, not the diagnosis and treatment of physical diseases. During training, a psychologist will cover a broad range of areas including psychological testing and assessment, research methods, human development, psychopathology, counselling skills and a variety of methods of intervention. As a discipline, psychology is divided into several subspecialties; examples include clinical, educational/school, and counselling. Clinical psychologists are experts in understanding, diagnosing and treating mental illness using psychological interventions. Educational/school psychologists are well equipped to assess children (and parents), and to work with their emotional and educational difficulties. Counselling psychologists are experts in working with developmental stages and the challenges of daily living, e.g. professional development, family conflict, divorce, retrenchment, ageing, retirement, etc. Psychologists don't prescribe medication and intervene using a variety of talk therapies, e.g. cognitive behavioural (CBT), interpersonal or psychodynamic therapy.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychologist>

Psychoanalyst

Psychoanalysts dedicate themselves to working deeply, have completed an intensive training lasting several years and including personal analysis, closely supervised clinical work and extensive theoretical study. This experience provides psychoanalysts with a rich, personal understanding of the mind and its dynamics, and equips them to work with both the conscious and unconscious aspects of being human. Psychoanalysts are trained to work intensively (several times weekly) and over the long term. They are less interested in establishing which psychiatric category best describes someone's behaviour, and instead collaborate with a person to achieve an intricate, tailored, nuanced and experientially derived understanding of what drives their behaviour, outlook and experience. This approach has grown out of the recognition that the same reaction (or symptom) in two people can have very different underlying causes, meanings and dynamics. Bringing these into consciousness through an intensive psychoanalytic relationship can bring about relief and permanent personal and relational growth.

Psychotherapist

The title psychotherapist is used to two ways. It can either be applied as an umbrella term referring to any professional that treats mental health conditions, or to professionals who dedicate themselves solely to the practice of psychotherapy (as opposed to counselling, psychological testing, research, diagnosis, case management, psychoeducation, etc.). The latter type of psychotherapist may have completed many years of advanced training in psychotherapy and might be a member of an association that confirms they meet a minimum standard. The kind of therapeutic approach they use will differ depending on the training they have undertaken, e.g. cognitive behavioural (CBT), existential or psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Because of the variation in how this title is applied, it is important to ask about training, professional memberships and approach.

Clinical Social Worker

Clinical social workers have much in common with clinical psychologists, in that they both study human behaviour and diagnose and provide therapy to specific populations. Unlike psychologists, who emphasise the individual, clinical social workers engage more with whole families, communities and social systems. Clinical social workers are more likely than psychologists to work with the state and so are often also a great resource to help people with limited means gain access to services like child protection, healthcare, housing and employment.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_work

Registered/Licensed Counsellor

Not to be confused with counselling psychologists (who have studied for longer), counsellors are trained to provide guidance and support on personal and mental health

matters. They differ from therapists in that their function is more preventative than curative. They aren't necessarily qualified to diagnose or treat mental health conditions (see the scope of practice details that apply in your area) but they are a valuable resource and offer high-quality education, guidance and short-term supportive work during difficult times.

[Back to top](#)

What are the different types of therapy?

Type of therapy can refer to three things; the mode used to deliver the therapy (e.g. individual, family, couples, or group therapy), the specific techniques applied, and the philosophy that the therapy is based on. The latter is called 'theoretical orientation' and examples include psychodynamic, cognitive behaviour, humanistic and eclectic. This article introduces some of the more established modes of therapy and theoretical orientations. The number of techniques now available is so vast that they can't be meaningfully covered in this article. Click here if you would like to know more about them https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_psychotherapies".

It is not at all necessary to understand the ins and outs of each of the different modes of therapy or the various techniques and orientations. It is included here purely for interest and because some people feel more secure and able to steer the process in accordance with their outlook and preferences if they have more information available to them. However, a competent, licenced therapist should be able to carry out a proper assessment and point you in the direction that is best for you. This is the approach that most take, and there is nothing wrong with following it. The most important thing is to find someone with experience (or who is supervised by someone with experience) in the area you seek help with, and who you think you might be able to trust in time.

[Back to top](#)

Therapy Modes

Many therapists are introduced to a range of techniques during their training. Some continue to work flexibly between them, while others commit to and develop their expertise in one over the course of their careers. The most commonly encountered modes of therapy are discussed below. Remember that the structure, form and techniques you encounter during the sessions differ from therapist to therapist and are guided by their orientation, goals, experience and the age of the patient/s worked with.

Individual Therapy

This is the form of therapy that most have in mind when we think of the word 'therapy'. It involves a therapist in one chair and a patient/client in the other, either face to face or with

one (hopefully the patient) lying on the couch. Sometimes this setup forms the whole therapy, and sometimes it's used in combination with other modes, e.g. group or couples therapy.

Couples Therapy

Usually attended by romantic partners, but some therapists also see people experiencing difficulties in friendships, work relationships or even between neighbours. Couples tend to seek couples therapy during a relationship breakdown or crisis. This might be because of infidelity, built up resentment, poor communication, financial difficulties, or ongoing parenting conflicts. Therapy can either help resolve the underlying issues or help the couple to separate while continuing to meet their responsibilities, e.g. parenting or work demands. Some couples attend couples therapy to improve their already functioning relationship and achieve greater intimacy and depth. Couples therapy can also be a useful place for an engaged couple to begin to anticipate and prepare for difficulties, e.g. differences in values, religion or culture.

Family Therapy

Family therapy helps whole families resolve conflict and improve their interaction and communication. At least two members of the family attend, but more is beneficial since family therapists aim to work with the dynamics affecting the family system in general.

Group Therapy

Group therapy usually refers to one of four things: support groups, skills groups, teaching groups or psychotherapy groups. As the name suggests, support groups aim to provide a supportive space for people to meet others facing similar problems. These can be either peer- or professionally-led. Skills and teaching groups are a little like classes and provide psychoeducation or coping skills for focused issues (e.g. dealing with a panic attack). Psychotherapy groups are sometimes called process groups. These groups use the process of the group in therapeutic ways (e.g. an opportunity to discover how other people see you and experience life). Each of these kinds of groups can be constituted in different ways, e.g. long term or short term, similar ages or a range of ages, similar difficulties or a range of challenges etc.

Group therapy is an efficient and effective mode of intervention both by itself and in conjunction with other methods. Running a psychotherapy group is an advanced skill, and it is important to seek therapists who have received additional training in this regard.

[Back to top](#)

Theoretical Orientation

A therapist's orientation (orientation for short) refers to the underlying philosophy and theory that guides how they understand people and approach their challenges. You could think of this as a compass that orientates the therapist to where they are and where they are headed. How they understand your issues, their idea of health, and the route they follow all depend on their theoretical orientation. For example, a medical orientation encourages the practitioner to identify symptoms (e.g. depressed mood) that diagnose an underlying disease (e.g. depression) which can be medically treated (e.g. antidepressants); whereas a psychodynamic approach might aim to understand the psychological dynamics at play (e.g. let's see if we can understand your unhappiness). Most training programs will focus on one orientation but introduce trainees to a range of them. To properly master an orientation takes decades, and few therapists manage to learn master more than one.

Therapists are usually happy to answer questions about their orientation (especially at the beginning), and so you can feel free to do so. Apart from helping to inform you, exploring your interest can form a fruitful part of the therapeutic process.

No one orientation is better than the rest, and there is often considerable overlap between them despite the different language they use to describe similar things. This does not mean that they are all the same or that they are all equally appropriate in all instances, since each has its emphasis and goals. For example, short-term, symptom-focused approaches help you quickly address specific things while longer-term, more intensive approaches aim for lasting, broader change. Also, you will find that each therapist is unique, and it is not unusual to see two therapists with the same orientation work in remarkably different ways.

The therapies that have grown from the more established orientations are described below. There are many more than those listed here, but these are the most widely practised. The therapies rather than the actual orientations are defined because this site aims to meet the needs of therapy seekers rather than therapists. There is no intention to exclude any orientations, and if you notice that an important one is missing and would like to submit an explanatory paragraph that is in line with the others, we would happily consider including it.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) offers a practical and measurable approach to therapy. It holds the premise that what we believe, the way we think and the behaviours we have learned perpetuate (if not cause) the emotional difficulties we experience (e.g. you might feel depressed because you believe you are bad). Thus, changing the way you think and act can change the way you feel. CBT helps by providing a combination of education, structured interventions and directions that target specific symptoms. You might be taught how to identify the negative automatic thoughts that undermine your mood, and be asked to do homework, e.g. keep a thought diary. In the case of phobias, a person might be called upon to face their fears in a systematic and graded way while being taught relaxation techniques.

This approach is concrete, hands-on, and appeals to one's common sense. You don't need to have undergone decades of study to understand its core principles. It is easily written into manuals, and its definable and measurable goals provide useful direction in what can be a rather fuzzy world. These features also make it easy to research, and many studies have confirmed that CBT effectively and efficiently reduces specific symptoms in a range of conditions.

In the last few decades, CBT has begun to incorporate mindfulness and acceptance into its paradigm. Some practitioners see this as an evolution, shifting CBT's emphasis from reducing and managing dysfunctional thinking styles, towards embracing the value of acceptance and moving forward or letting go. Some of those advocating this shift critique the traditional cognitive focus on changing dysfunctional thinking as potentially counterproductive. These practitioners incorporate aspects of eastern thought that aim to embrace contradiction and acceptance as a way of life. Mindfulness and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy are two examples.

CBT is a good first port of call, especially in defined instances of phobia, OCD, depression, social anxiety and panic. It is less useful when aims are less circumscribed, e.g. wanting to develop maturity and depth, or seeking insight into interpersonal or self-defeating patterns, etc.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_behavioral_therapy

Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is a sophisticated body of theory and practice that has evolved in different directions over more than a century. The theory is dense, complicated and intimidating but, once you grasp its core concepts, it's also quite simple and straightforward. Some of its grounding ideas include the recognition that we don't always know or understand our motives, that we try to avoid painful feelings, that our wishes frequently conflict and that we can confuse parts of our fantasies with reality. Added to this is the understanding that many of our actions, language and dreams communicate more than we realise. This might sound a bit odd, but it's no more esoteric than when we interpret our partner forgetting our birthday.

Psychoanalysis proper is carried out several times per week over several years. Free association (saying all that comes to mind without censorship) forms the cornerstone of this technique. The analyst and patient are encouraged to listen to the patient's associations with care and curiosity. Both parties then gradually develop a profound understanding of the patient, how they came to be who they are, and how they play a role in the difficulties that they face. This can lead to greater levels of emotional maturity and deep personal change.

The long-term and unstructured nature of this practice has historically made it difficult to research. Fortunately, the number of high-quality research trials supporting psychotherapies based on the principles of psychoanalysis is mounting.

Conducting a psychoanalysis is an advanced skill. Training as a psychoanalyst involves undergoing a full personal analysis (usually four times weekly for years), performing closely supervised work with patients, and completing a demanding theoretical program. It is impractical to incorporate more than a basic introduction when training psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, etc. For this reason, treat much of what you read about psychoanalysis online with caution.

Psychoanalysis is a good choice, particularly if you have tried other routes, are struggling with long-lasting difficulties, are naturally drawn to this way of thinking, or are a psychotherapist wanting to deepen your work with your patients.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychoanalysis>

Psychodynamic Psychotherapy

Professionals from various backgrounds often hold a psychodynamic orientation, including many psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, occupational therapists and even nurses. Psychodynamic psychotherapy (sometimes called insight-oriented therapy) applies the same theories as psychoanalysis but in a distilled, less intensive and more pragmatic way.

Therapists working from this perspective tend to talk more than psychoanalysts, but also guide their patient towards recognising their defences, conflicts and interpersonal patterns, and how their past experiences influence the present.

The relationship with the therapist in the 'here and now' is frequently used as a valuable source of information and taken as a site where the patient's (and therapist's) patterns play out live. Witnessing yourself repeating the same patterns in therapy that brought you to therapy, or noticing how you start to see your therapist in the same way that you tend to see other important people, is a compelling way to discover your contribution to things.

Psychodynamic psychotherapy is particularly useful with interpersonal difficulties and in working on how you relate to yourself and your emotions. A successful, long-term psychodynamic therapy should produce internal changes that continue to develop long after the therapy ends. This approach is a good first port of call for a broad range of difficulties especially if you are open to a longer-term process.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychodynamic_psychotherapy

Narrative Therapy

The narrative method of therapy works with the way a person tells the story of their lives. People are thought to hold a narrative of their lives that foregrounds certain details at the expense of others, i.e. it's one version of a life story that potentially keeps you stuck by leaving out details that might change things significantly. A narrative therapist might help their patient to find alternative ways to see their lives that are less saturated with difficulties and impossibilities, and more open to potential and success.

Narrative therapists view problems as separate from people. As such, they work with clients to help them separate themselves from their problems and to develop tools and resources to address the problems that they are experiencing. A narrative therapist considers the client to be the ultimate expert on their life and views the role of therapist to be more of a curious, investigative reporter assisting the client to make discoveries through different types of interviewing questions.

Humanistic Existentialism

A wide range of therapies is underpinned by a humanistic or existential orientation. These approaches foreground human experience rather than dynamics, symptoms or diagnostic categories. The difficulties people present are taken as an expression of their inability to live in an authentic, meaningful and self-guided way. Therapy guides the person towards growth by promoting self-understanding, self-awareness, and acceptance of personal responsibility and free will. Although humanistic and existential approaches are often grouped, they emphasise different things.

Humanistic approaches view people as inherently good and innately capable of directing their lives and relationships in ways that are healthy and meaningful to self and other. People fail to do this only because they hold conscious assumptions that inhibit them from acting as their true self. Therapy overcomes these blocks to living in an actualised way by promoting growth rather than cure.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanistic_psychology

Existentialism also holds that the individual is a conscious, free, self-directed actor, but it emphasises the need to find philosophical meaning in our lives. From this perspective, the problems we face stem from the challenge to live a meaningful life given the context of essential loneliness, isolation, despair and the inevitability of death. Living authentically and creatively offers a means to overcome this and accept that we are each responsible for finding meaning in our lives, no matter what circumstances we face.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Existential_therapy

[Back to top](#)

Definitions of Types of Therapist

There are many types of therapists – each with different educational requirements and focuses. This list introduces the most common types and offers a brief description of each to help you better understand the options that may be available to you.

Details, including education and registration requirements, are those typical for each profession, but every country or region has different regulations governing who can and can't lay claim to each title.

[TherapyRoute.com](https://www.therapyroute.com) believes that all mental health service providers should hold a valid registration with a board that governs standards of practice and ethics. Become familiar with the requirements that apply in your area and aim to see professionals that comply with these. If no such regulations exist, you can use those of other regions to help you to evaluate whether a professional is qualified to claim the title that they do.

Art Therapist

Art therapists have training in both mental health and art and typically hold a master's degree. These therapists help their clients by using forms of expressive therapy that include creative processes of making or practising art.

Child Psychotherapist

Child psychotherapists have typically completed a master's or doctoral level training that legally qualifies them to work psychotherapeutically with children and adolescents. Many countries allow general psychotherapists and psychologists to work with children in the absence of specialist child training.

Christian Counsellor

A Christian counsellor provides pastoral counselling that combines the use of psychological counselling techniques and Christian principles.

These individuals may be registered or lay counsellors. The area is not always regulated but professional bodies that require members to prescribe to minimum training levels and offer ongoing support and professional development do exist in many regions.

Clinical Pastoral Therapist

Clinical pastoral therapists are qualified clinical therapists (master's or doctorate) who combine the use of psychological counselling techniques and religious principles.

Couples Counsellor

Couples counsellors are registered counsellors who offer support to couples or people in a relationship who may be considering separation or experiencing relationship problems.

Couples Psychotherapist

A couples' psychotherapist is a qualified and registered psychotherapist who has undergone further specialist training in couple work.

Dietician

A dietician is a qualified expert in the improvement and maintenance of human nutrition and diet. They typically hold at least a bachelor's degree in dietetics. A dietician advises people on what to eat to lead a healthy lifestyle. Their interventions may form a component of treatment for some mental health issues and can reduce nutrition-related side effects of psychiatric medications.

General Practitioner

A general practitioner or GP is a medical doctor who does not specialise in any specific illness or disease. They assess and treat all common medical conditions and refer patients to hospitals and other practitioners for urgent and specialist treatment. A GP will often be the first port of call for people who have a mental illness. They may conduct a general check-up to ascertain if there are physical causes for the clients' symptoms and, depending on the problem, will refer clients to mental health professionals such as psychiatrists or psychologists.

Family Therapist

A family therapist makes use of psychotherapy techniques to assist families to improve communication and resolve conflicts. They have training in psychotherapy and family systems and hold a master's or doctorate.

Group Analyst

Group analysts are specialists in providing group analytic psychotherapy. They often hold qualifications in other health-related disciplines, e.g. psychology, occupational therapy or psychiatry. They have completed specialist training in the theory and practice of group analysis and have undergone personal group analysis to gain first-hand experience of the process.

Group Psychotherapist

A group psychotherapist is a qualified psychotherapist or psychologist who has undertaken additional specialist training in group work. Unlike group analysts who typically work from an analytic perspective, group psychotherapists draw from a range of theoretical orientations.

Homoeopath (Mental Health)

A homoeopath is a practitioner of general well-being (mind, body and soul) and often uses natural remedies in the form of highly diluted substances to treat illness or disorders. Training requirements vary widely, and consumers should familiarise themselves with the rules governing training and registration in their region.

Hypnotherapist

Hypnotherapists include a broad range of professionals and non-professionals using hypnosis as a method of intervention. The regulations in this industry vary widely. Consumers should familiarise themselves with the rules governing this practice in their region. If no such laws exist, it may be prudent to select practitioners who also hold other professional qualifications and registrations.

Jewish Counsellor

A Jewish counsellor provides counselling that combines the use of psychological techniques and Jewish values.

These individuals may be registered or lay counsellors. The area is not always regulated, but professional bodies that require members to prescribe to minimum training levels and offer ongoing support and professional development do exist in many regions.

Jungian Analyst

A Jungian analyst is a qualified psychotherapist who has completed intensive training in Jungian analysis. These practitioners aim to bring unconscious elements of the patient's psyche into an adjusted relationship with conscious awareness. Carl Jung developed the school of analytical psychology in the early 1900s.

Life Coach

A life coach will help their clients with motivation, setting and achieving goals, prioritising, managing careers and improving on relationships. Coaching is a largely unregulated industry, and training standards vary widely (from attending a morning workshop to qualifying after years of dedicated study). Consumers should familiarise themselves with the regulations governing this practice in their region.

Music Therapist

Music therapists have training in both mental health and music and typically hold a master's degree. Their approach involves the therapeutic application of music and may include listening to, moving to and creating music.

Muslim Counsellor

A Muslim counsellor provides counselling that combines the use of psychological techniques and Muslim values.

These individuals may be registered or lay counsellors. The area is not always regulated, but professional bodies that require members to prescribe to minimum training levels and offer ongoing support and professional development do exist in many regions.

Naturopath (Mental Health)

A naturopath uses an array of natural remedies and treatments to heal disease and disorders. They employ healing practices such as homoeopathy, acupuncture and herbal medicine, and focus on supporting the body's natural ability to heal itself, placing an emphasis on diet, nutrition, stress management and exercise. Training and regulations vary widely, and consumers should familiarise themselves with the regulations governing this industry in their region.

Neurologist

A neurologist is a qualified medical doctor who has developed specialist expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the nervous system, which includes the central and peripheral nervous system and more specifically the spinal cord and the brain.

Neuropsychologist

A neuropsychologist is a qualified, licensed psychologist with specialist expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders relating to the interaction between brain, behaviour and cognition.

Nurse (Mental Health)

A psychiatric nurse or mental health nurse is a registered and qualified nurse who specialises in the care of patients experiencing mental illness or psychological distress. Psychiatric nursing includes different professional levels. A licensed psychiatric nurse may, for example, dispense medication, but works under the supervision of other practitioners (e.g. psychiatrists or registered nurses). They can qualify after a year of training, while a psychiatric nurse practitioner might hold a master's or doctoral degree and may be qualified to practice independently, to diagnose and treat individuals and families and prescribe medication. Consumers should familiarise themselves with the regulations governing this practice in their region.

Occupational Therapist

An occupational therapist makes use of assessment and treatment techniques for aiding recovery or developing or maintaining the daily living skills of people with a physical, mental or cognitive disorder. An occupational therapist typically holds at least a bachelor's degree.

Play Therapist

A play therapist uses an array of play and creative arts methods to engage children, foster development and help relieve behavioural and psychological conditions. Play therapists are usually registered counsellors who have opted to focus on working with children.

Psychiatrist

A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who has undertaken specialist training in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. Psychiatrists (unlike most psychologists) are qualified to prescribe medication and tend to view psychiatric disorders in medical terms.

Psychoanalyst

Psychoanalysts have undergone intensive and accredited training (specifically in psychoanalysis). This entitles them to register as a psychoanalyst with a recognised regulatory authority. Psychoanalysts emphasise the role of unconscious dynamics in mental life and are qualified to conduct psychoanalysis (3-5 times per week for several years).

Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist

A psychoanalytic psychotherapist is a psychotherapist who has undergone specialist training to apply psychoanalytic principles in their work. Psychoanalytic work is often defined as work that emphasises unconscious conflict, resistance and transference. Psychoanalytic psychotherapy is less intensive than psychoanalysis (e.g. 1-2 times per week).

Psychologist

Psychologists hold a master's or doctorate and register with a recognised licensing board. In most regions, psychologists train and register within specific categories, such as clinical, counselling or educational psychology.

Psychologist (Clinical)

A clinical psychologist has specialised schooling in the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders and mental illness. They hold a master's degree or doctorate and register with a recognised licensing board. Most clinical psychologists do not prescribe medication, but instead use psychotherapeutic techniques, such as cognitive behavioural and psychodynamic therapy.

Psychologist (Counselling)

A counselling psychologist is a professional psychologist who helps people negotiate personal and interpersonal challenges across all developmental life stages. Counselling psychologists emphasise emotional, social, vocational, educational, health-related, developmental and organisational well-being. Counselling psychologists hold a master's or doctorate and register with a recognised licensing board.

Psychologist (Educational)

An educational psychologist has specialised in child-related matters, e.g. helping children or adolescents with educational or learning struggles. They may also work with social, behavioural, parental or emotional problems, or learning difficulties. Educational psychologists hold a master's or doctorate and register with a recognised licensing board.

Psychometrist

Psychometrists are concerned with the administration, interpretation and scoring of psychological and neuropsychological tests. Depending on their level of training and experience, psychometrists may work under the supervision of a psychologist or clinical neuropsychologist.

Psychometrist (Independent Practice)

A psychometrist in independent practice is permitted to use certain psychological tests independently of a supervisor. These include selecting, administering, scoring and reporting on psychological tests. They typically hold a bachelor's degree in psychology. Psychometrists are not qualified to diagnose or treat mental disorders or illnesses.

Psychotherapist

Broadly speaking, a psychotherapist is a practitioner (e.g. a psychiatrist, psychologist, psychiatric social worker or nurse) who uses techniques of psychotherapy to treat psychological difficulties, disorders and illnesses. The term can also apply to a professional who has specialised in psychodynamic or psychoanalytic techniques by undertaking several years of intensive training.

Registered Counsellor (General)

A registered counsellor is a therapist who offers short-term, compassionate counselling, psycho-education and psychological assessment. These interventions are intended to be primary, and registered counsellors are expected to identify and refer complex cases to more qualified professionals. Registered counsellors typically hold a bachelor's degree in psychology.

Registered Counsellor (Trauma)

A registered trauma counsellor is a registered counsellor who has opted to focus their studies and practice on providing short-term emotional support and psycho-education after a traumatic life event or sequence of events.

Researcher

A researcher is a professional qualified in the systematic investigation, study and reporting of phenomena, e.g. human interaction and behaviour.

Sex Therapist

A sex therapist is typically a psychotherapist who has completed specialised training in the practical application of techniques of psychotherapy that aim to address anxieties about sexual function, feelings and intimacy.

Social Worker (Mental Health)

A psychiatric social worker offers mental health services to vulnerable populations of society and individuals with special needs. They may be able to perform psychotherapy and diagnose mental illness. These social workers have opted to specialise and usually hold a master or doctorate. They are sometimes called clinical social workers.

Therapist/Counsellor Practising Under Supervision

A therapist or counsellor working under supervision makes use of the services and support of an external counsellor or psychotherapist as a consultant. Although qualified practitioners consult more experienced colleagues as part of their professional development, this title applies to those who have not yet met the requirements to graduate from their training.

Mental health providers offer a wide range of services. You may be in search of a specific service. A couple seeking to adopt a child will, for example, look for a therapist providing adoption services. However, for many, a range of approaches or services can address their psychological concerns and needs. A depressed individual may, for example, find that psychiatry, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy or group therapy can all be effective options.

Definitions of Mental Health Services

The breakdown below introduces some of the services or types of therapies available. Deciding which type of service is the most appropriate for you may feel daunting. If you are unsure if a particular provider can assist you, then discuss this with them. Treatment choices

should be guided by an appropriate assessment process. All providers are ethically bound to honestly disclose what they can offer and will often guide you or refer you to other professionals when they believe they are not the most appropriate choice.

Adoption

Includes services relevant to taking custody of a non-biological child, as if it were one's own. This might include placement, screening, follow-up or preparatory counselling and psychotherapy.

Advocacy

This refers to a range of possible legal services and may include psychotherapists or other professionals assuming an advocacy role in a court of law; e.g. a psychotherapist may testify on a child's behalf on matters related to well-being. Advocacy may also refer to services related to the promotion of public awareness and human rights issues surrounding mental health.

Art Therapy

A form of psychotherapy that makes use of free self-expression through painting, drawing or sculpting. The creative process and the resulting artwork are used to express and explore feelings and address emotional issues.

Assessment (Children)

Assessments are used in educational and psychological settings by psychologists and psychometrists to accomplish a range of objectives, and to direct therapy.

Assessment (Custody)

The investigation into all aspects of a child's life (parental functioning, home, family environment and background), used to help determine child custody and access during opposed divorce proceedings.

Assessment (Developmental)

The investigation into a child's intellectual, emotional and developmental competencies and resources. Used to inform the caregiving and learning environments that would likely help a child achieve his or her developmental potential.

Assessment (Disability)

The investigation into the accurate evaluation of the impact of disability status on all aspects of the patient's life, including financial remuneration, personal and workplace productivity, and access for existing and future healthcare needs.

Assessment (Forensic)

The investigation into the mental and psychological state of a defendant, witness or offender in order to inform the court, for use as evidence.

Assessment (General)

The systematic investigation of a person's behavioural, emotional or intellectual functioning.

Assessment (Intellectual)

The investigation into the general intellectual functioning and cognitive abilities of an individual.

Assessment (Medico-Legal)

Assessments that are done independently from the plaintiff or defendant in a court case that has an impact on matters relating to public liability and workers' compensation in common law.

Assessment (Neuropsychological)

A performance-based method to assess cognitive functioning and to diagnose brain damage, disease and severe mental illness.

Assessment (Organisational)

The systematic process for obtaining valid information about the performance of an organisation and the factors that affect performance.

Assessment (Personality)

The measurement of human character traits and their portrayal in quantitative terms.

Assessment (Psycho-Educational)

The investigation into the developmental, family, school, social/emotional, personality/temperament and health histories of an individual. This includes the administering and interpreting of norm-referenced and projective tests.

Assessment (Scholastic)

The investigation into an individual's aptness and the potential for school or university admittance. Tests might include fundamental reading skills, mathematical, rational and writing capabilities assessed over a period.

Awareness

Services which promote the awareness of mental health issues in society and organisations.

Care Centre

A facility that provides rehabilitative, recuperative and ongoing skilled treatment to patients or residents in need of support with the activities of daily living.

Child and Adolescent Services

Mental health care services provided for children, usually up to school-leaving age.

Child Protection Services

Usually, a government-based service that provides protection for children at risk of, or who are experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or emotional or physical neglect.

Child Support Service

The service that ensures a parent makes ongoing payments for the financial benefit of a child; also known as child maintenance.

Clinical Supervision

The supervision of a clinical practitioner by another practitioner that is meant to be beneficial to the professional growth and confidence of both the supervisor and the supervisee. This practice is intended to develop clinical skills and leads to improved outcomes for clients.

Coaching (Business)

The process of systematic, structured conversation and guidance with a client, individual or team, to increase efficiency, productivity and the setting and attainment of goals.

Coaching (Life)

The process of systematic, structured conversation and guidance with a client, advising them in making decisions, setting and reaching goals, or dealing with challenges.

Community Support Programme

A community-based initiative offering community-focused interventions that aim to support the community and develop its ability to function. Examples of services might include coordinating existing services or encouraging community member involvement.

Conflict Management

The practice of limiting the negative characteristics of conflict, while increasing the positive aspects, to improve learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in organisational settings.

Consultation

A meeting with an expert or professional, such as a medical doctor, psychologist or psychiatrist to seek advice or diagnosis.

Counselling (Career)

An expert-guided process to help a person maximise their skills, set goals and make a career, educational or general life decision.

Counselling (Crisis)

The emergency psychological interventions aimed at assisting individuals in a crisis or trauma situation to restore balance to their biopsychosocial functioning, and to minimise the potential for psychological trauma.

Counselling (Divorce)

Care aimed at divorced couples to assist them in disengaging from their former relationship and malevolent behaviour toward each other or their children.

Counselling (Family)

Care aimed at families and family members to improve communication and resolve conflicts.

Counselling (General)

The provision of assistance and guidance by a professional to help address a person's personal, social, life-stage, or psychological problems and difficulties.

Counselling (Marriage)

The provision of assistance and guidance by a professional to help recognise and resolve patterns of behaviour and different types of conflicts, and improve relationships.

Counselling (Parent)

The provision of assistance and guidance by a professional aimed at helping parents with any difficulties that they may be experiencing in their role as parents.

Counselling (Religious/Spiritual)

The provision of psychological assistance, advice and guidance by a professional, following the guiding principles of a religion or spirituality.

Counselling (Stroke)

Counselling and guidance by a professional aimed at stroke survivors and their families. The focus usually lies on providing psychoeducation and rehabilitation, and aims to return the client to the most independent state possible.

Counselling (Trauma)

Includes a range of techniques aimed at addressing the impact and effects of experiencing traumatic life events.

Court Services

The provision of assistance and guidance by a professional for all parties involved in a court matter. This includes mental well-being, legal and financial services.

Custody

Services relating to the protective and financial care or guardianship of someone or something, usually relating to custodianship of children following a divorce, neglect or parental loss situation.

Day Centre

Daytime care for people with special needs (physical or emotional) who cannot be fully independent. May also include day centres providing services to individuals and groups struggling with emotional difficulties.

Disability (Medico-Legal)

Services relating to the inability to perform normally on any aspect of functioning, including functioning at work.

Drama Therapy

The use of drama or theatre as psychotherapeutic tools to help clients process emotions and identify and resolve psychological difficulties.

Dream Analysis

The analysis of dreams to investigate and diagnose a patient's mental state and unconscious mind.

Drug and Alcohol Counselling (Abuse, Addiction and Recovery)

Counselling and guidance aimed at patients who are abusing, addicted to or recovering from drug or alcohol addiction. The focus usually lies in overcoming the cycle of addiction.

Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)

Procedure conducted under general anaesthesia, in which a small electric current is passed through the brain, intentionally triggering a brief seizure to reverse symptoms of certain mental illnesses.

Emotional Intelligence

Services relating to the development of one's ability to be aware of, control and express one's emotions, and to manage interpersonal relationships thoughtfully and empathetically.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

An employee benefits programme offered by the employer and intended to help employees deal with personal problems that might negatively impact job performance, health and well-being. Usually refers to the provision of a limited number of counselling sessions.

Employee Wellness Programme

A coordinated and inclusive set of health promotion and protection training applied at the work site. It includes programmes, policies, benefits, environmental supports and links to the surrounding community, and is designed to encourage the health and safety of all employees.

Epidemiology

The branch of medical science dealing with the incidence, distribution and control of disease in a population, but can also refer to the sum of the factors controlling the presence or absence of a disease or pathogen.

Ethics

Services related to working with ethical dilemmas and the promotion of ethical practices. Ethics refers to the moral principles governing a person's or group's behaviour.

Gambling Compulsion Counselling

Counselling and guidance aimed at patients who suffer from an uncontrollable urge to gamble. Counselling is usually directed at assisting patients to gain an understanding of their addiction and to learn to manage their urge to gamble in new, sustainable ways.

Grief Counselling

Counselling and guidance for patients who have lost a loved one or experienced major life changes, triggering feelings of grief. Counselling aims to provide support and help the patient adjust to their new life.

Home(s)

Services related to the provision of housing.

Hypnosis

The induction of a state of consciousness in which the client is highly responsive to suggestion or direction that assists the modification of behaviour and processing of unresolved emotions.

Information/Resource Service

A service provider whose function is to supply persons with the necessary information and psychoeducation to enable them to make informed decisions, get adequate healthcare and be knowledgeable about their wellbeing issues.

Inpatient Services

A hospital or institution offering patients overnight emotional and/or physical care.

Jungian Analysis

A method of psychotherapy that draws on the theories developed by C. G. Jung. Emphasis is on the individual psyche, the collective unconscious and the unconscious, the persona, the archetype, the ego, the complex, the shadow, the anima and animus, the self and individuation.

Mediation

Coordinated intervention in a dispute to assist in resolution and arbitration of two or more parties, by providing an objective perspective to all parties.

Mental Health Nursing

Psychiatric or mental health care provided by a registered nurse, aimed at people of all ages with mental illness or distress.

Music Therapy

A type of psychotherapy that uses music and the playing of musical instruments to further the social, cognitive, emotional and physical development of the individual.

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

Also known as workplace health and safety (WHS), this is an area concerned with the safety, health and welfare of people engaged in work or employment.

Occupational Therapy

A form of therapy for those recovering from a physical or psychological illness that encourages rehabilitation through the performance of activities required in daily life.

Online Counselling/Phone Therapy

The provision of professional mental health therapy services over a telephone or mobile phone, or via email, real-time chat or video conferencing.

Outpatient Services

Medical or psychological healthcare performed in a centre without an overnight stay.

Paediatrics

The branch of medicine dealing with children and their diseases.

Pain Management

Medical and psychological interventions intended to prevent, diagnose and treat pain.

Philosophy

The academic discipline of studying the nature of knowledge, reality and existence.

Play Therapy

A type of assisted therapy in which children are encouraged to act out their fantasies and express their feelings through play.

Prevention

Interventions designed to reduce or avoid difficulties in the realm of physical and mental well-being.

Psychiatry (Adolescent)

A field of psychiatry that offers specialised diagnosis, treatment and care for adolescents, and the families of adolescents, who have emotional, thought or behavioural disorders.

Psychiatry (Adult)

A field of psychiatry that offers specialised diagnosis, treatment and care for adults, and the families of adults, with disorders of thinking, feeling, perception and behaviour.

Psychiatry (Biological)

A field of psychiatry that offers specialised diagnosis, treatment and care for individuals, and is based on the premise that mental disorders result from biological dysfunction.

Psychiatry (Child)

A field of psychiatry that offers specialised diagnosis, treatment and care for children who have emotional, thought or behavioural disorders.

Psychiatry (Community)

A field of psychiatry that concentrates on the detection, prevention, early treatment and rehabilitation of patients with emotional disorders and social deviance in the community, rather than focusing on individual problems.

Psychiatry (Consultation Liaison)

A branch of psychiatry that specialises in mediating between the boundaries created between general medicine and psychiatry in a hospital or medical setting.

Psychiatry (Forensic)

A branch of psychiatry that specialises in mediating between questions raised by the legal system and the psychiatric background of a patient.

Psychiatry (General)

A branch of psychiatry that specialises in diagnosis, treatment and care using both psychotherapy and medication.

Psychiatry (Neuropsychiatry)

A branch of psychiatry studying the link between mental or emotional disturbance and disordered brain function.

Psychiatry (Transcultural)

Also known as cross-cultural psychiatry, this is a branch of psychiatry studying the cultural context of mental disorders and the challenges of addressing diversity in psychiatric services.

Psychoanalysis

A form of psychotherapy that achieves its aims through a profound investigation of the interaction between conscious and unconscious elements of the mind. Techniques include the use of the couch, free association, analysis of resistance and dream interpretation.

Psychoeducation

Education offered to individuals and groups on topics relating to the promotion of mental health and living with, treating or preventing psychological distress and mental illness.

Psychological Evaluation

The assessment and testing, using a combination of techniques, of people's behaviour, personality and capabilities to inform decisions (e.g. treatment) or draw conclusions and add to research.

Psychology (Clinical)

The application of psychological knowledge and use of psychological techniques in the assessment and treatment of psychological distress, mental illness and disability.

Psychology (Community)

The application of psychology in studying environmental interactions and the ways society affects individual and community functioning, social issues, social institutions and other settings that influence individuals, groups and organisations. Includes the promotion of community mental health and integration through community-level interventions.

Psychology (Corporate)

The application of psychological principles in organisations and the workplace; also known as industrial and organisational psychology. May include organisational assessments and diagnosis as well as the development of wellness programmes and interventions aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness.

Psychology (Counselling)

The application of psychological knowledge and techniques in assisting patients to negotiate personal and interpersonal challenges across all developmental life stages.

Psychology (Educational)

The application of psychological knowledge and techniques in assisting children and adolescents with a range of problems, from education and learning struggles to social and emotional difficulties.

Psychology (Forensic)

The application of psychology to legal settings, e.g. assessing offenders with the intention of presenting evidence in court.

Psychology (Geriatric)

The application of psychology to the study, prevention and treatment of mental disorders in elderly people.

Psychology (Medico-Legal)

Psychological medico-legal services include those involved at the intersection between medicine and the law. An example might include independently conducted assessments of psychological functioning that form part of a court case seeking compensation for loss of potential future earnings.

Psychology (Neuropsychology)

Techniques and methods in psychology that study the relationship between behaviour, emotion and cognition, and its correlation to brain function. These include services such as conducting neuropsychological assessments and making recommendations based on the findings.

Psychology (Sport)

An interdisciplinary psychological service that draws on knowledge from many related fields including biomechanics, physiology, kinesiology and psychology. It involves the study of how psychological factors affect performance and how participation in sport and exercise affect psychological and physical factors.

Psychology (Testing)

The administration of psychological tests and assessments carried out in an objective and standardised manner while studying a sample of behaviour. May include a broad range of subjects from psychological symptoms to intellect and personality functioning.

Psychometric Testing (Industrial)

Also known as industrial and organisational psychometric testing, it is the systematic assessment of an individual's behaviour in the workplace and the application of these findings. This can, for example, be used to try and predetermine an individual's fit with a job role.

Psychotherapy (Adolescent)

The application of psychotherapeutic principles, techniques and methods to help adolescents experiencing difficulties with their emotions or behaviour. This may include techniques like playing, drawing, building, pretending and talking as a means of sharing feelings and resolving problems.

Psychotherapy (Analytic)

The branch of psychotherapy which draws on the Jungian approach to prevention, diagnosis and treatment of psychological distress and mental illness. Emphasis is on the individual psyche and the personal quest for wholeness, the collective unconscious and the

unconscious, the persona, the archetype, the ego, the complex, the shadow, the anima and animus, the self, and individuation.

Psychotherapy (Child)

The application of psychotherapeutic principles and methods to help children experiencing difficulties with their emotions or behaviour. This may include techniques like playing, drawing, building and pretending as a means of sharing feelings and resolving problems.

Psychotherapy (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy)

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a form of psychotherapy that was initially designed to treat depression. Considerable evidence supports the efficacy of CBT, and techniques exist to treat a growing range of psychological disorders. CBT aims to solve current problems by helping the patient learn to apply tested techniques and change unhelpful thinking and behaviour.

Psychotherapy (Dynamic)

Usually refers to variations of psychoanalysis or the application of psychoanalytic principles in less intensive therapies, e.g. once a week face-to-face therapy vs five times weekly, lying on the couch therapy. The primary focus of these therapies remains on revealing the unconscious content of a patient's psyche.

Psychotherapy (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing)

Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a well-researched form of psychotherapy developed by Francine Shapiro that can effectively, and sometimes rapidly, relieve the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Psychotherapy (Family)

A type of psychological counselling drawing on the theories of psychotherapy (focusing on behaviour and the unconscious) that helps family members improve communication issues and resolve conflicts.

Psychotherapy (General)

The treatment of broad-ranging psychological distress and mental disorders through the application of psychological theories for treatment, prevention and cure. Most of these techniques take place through talking rather than medical means.

Psychotherapy (Group)

Psychotherapy carried out with three or more people. Psychotherapy groups can consist of individuals who share something in common (e.g. a diagnosis or difficulty) or who are working towards a common goal (e.g. psychological development and growth).

Psychotherapy (Individual)

A type of psychological counselling in which the therapist and patient work face-to-face to explore and find relief from problematic feelings, beliefs or behaviours, and work through difficult memories.

Psychotherapy (Jungian)

A method of psychotherapy that uses the theory developed by C. G. Jung as the basis for interpreting and working through psychological difficulties. See: Psychotherapy (Analytic).

Psychotherapy (Psychoanalytic)

Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy is a talking therapy that functions by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements of the mind and bringing repressed fears and conflicts into consciousness through techniques such as free association and interpretation.

Psychotherapy (Psychodynamic)

A term sometimes used interchangeably with Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, but which may also refer to a broad range of therapies that are influenced by psychoanalytic theory and practice.

Referral Service

A service focusing on assessing a client or patient's needs before directing them to an appropriate service or professional.

Rehabilitation (Cognitive)

Programmes that aim to help brain-injured or cognitively impaired individuals to restore normal functioning, or to compensate for cognitive deficits.

Rehabilitation (Psychosocial)

Programmes that aim to restore community integration and the well-being of a person diagnosed with mental health or emotional disorders.

Research

Services related to the systematic investigation of subjects, to reliably establish facts and reach valid new conclusions.

Residential Treatment or Hospitalisation

Programmes that provide long-term (in-patient) supervision and treatment for individuals whose disordered behaviours have become abnormally destructive, habitual or addictive and who are not currently able to live an independent life out of care.

Risk Management

The forecasting and assessment of risks relating to physical and mental well-being, as well as the identification of procedures to avoid or reduce their impact.

Rural Medicine

May refer to the provision of medical services in rural conditions or the interdisciplinary study and use of rural methods of treatment for mental and physical well-being; including midwifery, sociology, nursing, economics and telemedicine or telehealth.

School Service (Child and Adolescent)

Services offered by the schooling system that attempt to assist in the treatment and care of children and adolescents (up to school-leaving age) with general healthcare issues or emotional, thought or behavioural disorders.

Sexual Health

Specialist services related to the relationship between sexuality and physical, mental and social well-being, e.g. men's clinics and sex therapists.

Social Activities

Organised group activities intended to facilitate social functioning and improve the quality of the lives of the population group attending, e.g. adolescents, the elderly, physically challenged or mentally ill.

Social Work (General)

Care carried out by a trained professional with the aim of alleviating the conditions of less-privileged and at-risk individuals and those in need of help or welfare.

Social Work (Geriatric)

Social services that deal specifically with alleviating the conditions of less-privileged and at-risk elderly individuals in need of help or welfare.

Social Work (Medico-Legal)

Social services that deal specifically with alleviating the conditions of less-privileged and at-risk individuals, and those in need of help or welfare involved with legal matters.

Social Work (Psychiatric)

Social services provided to less-privileged and at-risk mentally ill persons and those in need of aid or welfare; also known as clinical social work.

Stress Management

Includes techniques and psychotherapies aimed at acquiring skills to be able to control a person's level of stress, especially chronic stress, typically to improve everyday functioning.

Supervision

The act of offering consultation to a psychotherapy provider with the intention of enabling that provider to deliver a higher level of service, e.g. a psychotherapist might present a case

to another psychotherapist to enrich the quality of their work by benefiting from the other's expertise.

Support Groups

The provision of group settings in which people who share common experiences, disorders or concerns may provide each other with comfort, understanding, encouragement and advice.

Therapy

Techniques of treatment (psychological, psychiatric or drug therapies) intended to relieve or heal a psychological and/or psychiatric disorder, disease or symptom.

Therapy (Adolescents)

A broad term for a range of specialised therapies aimed at preventing, treating and diagnosing mental illness or disorders, or problematic functioning, in adolescents.

Therapy (Child)

A broad term for a range of specialised therapies aimed at preventing, treating and diagnosing mental illness or disorders, or problem behaviours, in children.

Therapy (Family)

A broad term for a range of specialised therapies aimed at preventing, treating and diagnosing mental illness or disorders, or problematic family functioning, by improving communication and resolving conflicts.

Therapy (Imago Relationship)

A form of insight-orientated marriage therapy that places emphasis on the relationship and its historical context (including each partner's early life and parental influences) rather than focusing on problem-solving specific situations.

Therapy (Individual)

A broad term for a range of specialised talking therapies aimed at preventing, treating and diagnosing mental illness or disorders, or problematic functioning, on a one-on-one and usually face-to-face basis.

Therapy (Personal Growth)

The aided process of analysing a person's life, their outlook, emotional world, relationships, unfulfilled desires and dreams, and giving considered thought to how they might improve themselves through increased awareness and specific changes.

Therapy (Relationship)

The counselling of two or more parties in a relationship with the aim to improve the way they manage and reconcile troublesome differences and negotiate stressful patterns in the relationship.

Therapy (Relaxation)

The facilitated application of techniques used to promote stress reduction, the eradication of tension throughout the body and the attainment of a peaceful state of mind.

Therapy (Schema)

A form of psychotherapy developed by Dr J. E. Young for use in the treatment of personality disorders. Schema therapy translates concepts taken from object relations theory into cognitive terms. The therapy is structured, directed and systematic.

Therapy (Sex)

The aided process of psychotherapy or counselling for psychosexual difficulties.

Training

Teaching persons or groups a skill or type of behaviour.

Training (Assertiveness)

Teaching individuals, or groups of people, how to act in a brave, self-confident manner.

Training (Communication Skills)

The aided process of teaching a person, or group, the necessary skills for healthy, effective communication.

Training (Life Skills)

The assisted process of teaching a person or group the necessary skills for dealing with the demands and challenges of everyday life in a healthy, effective manner.

Wellness

Interventions that are intended to promote a physical and emotional state or condition of good, well-functioning health.

Youth Development

Services that focus on developing children's and adolescents' capacities in positive ways, especially in the context of the family, peer groups, the school and the neighbourhood or community.

[Back to top](#)