

## **Methods of Psychotherapy**

### **Psychodynamic Therapy**

Psychodynamic therapy is a form of talk therapy designed to help an individual find relief from mental or emotional stress. The goals of psychodynamic therapy are to increase a client's self-awareness by understanding the influence of the past on one's present behavior. In its brief form, a psychodynamic approach helps the client examine unresolved conflicts and symptoms that arise from past dysfunctional relationships. By exploring unconscious motives, needs, and defenses, one can understand the roots of emotional distress. Psychodynamic therapists help clients find patterns in their emotions, thoughts, and beliefs in order to gain insight into their current self. These patterns are often found to begin in childhood as psychodynamic theory holds that early life experiences are extremely influential in psychological development and functioning as an adult. Through psychodynamic therapy, self-reflection and self-examination are promoted. Though traditionally, psychodynamic therapy involved lying on a couch with your back to the therapist completing a process called free association, most modern psychotherapists utilize a combination of exploring childhood issues and developing ways to move past insight into action for change.

### **Family Systems Therapy**

Family systems therapy is based on Murray Bowen's family systems theory, which holds that individuals are inseparable from their network of relationships. Furthermore, it is a branch of psychotherapy that works with families and couples to nurture change and development. Family systems therapy emphasizes family relationships as an important factor in psychological health. This therapy views change in terms of the systems of interaction between family members. Problems can be resolved in the context of the family unit, where many issues are likely to begin. This therapy encourages family members to work together to better understand the group dynamic as well as how their individual actions affect one another and the family unit as a whole. Family systems therapy believes that what happens to one member of a family happens to everyone *in* the family. This therapy allows the opportunity to express personal thoughts and feelings while exploring ways to support and help one another, relieving strain on the family. The goal of this therapy is to restore family relationships and rebuild a healthy family system.

### **Humanistic Therapy**

Humanistic therapy is a positive approach to psychotherapy that focuses on a person's individual nature. Humanistic therapy looks at the whole person, both from the therapist's view as well as from the perspective of the individual observing their own behavior. This approach allows the individual to explore how they feel in the here and now, rather than focusing on past events, while encouraging self-awareness and mindfulness. This helps the client change their state of mind. The emphasis of this therapy is on the individual's positive traits and behaviors, encouraging them to use their own abilities and personal instincts to find growth, healing,

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wisdom, as well as fulfillment within themselves. Humanistic therapy can be used to treat depression, anxiety, addiction, and relationship issues.

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