

Mental and Emotional Health

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Nowadays probably every person came across the term *Psychotherapy*. It seems, however, not to be so clear what psychotherapy actually means. Besides that, it seems to be not so clear, what a Psychotherapist does and how s/he can assist someone, who finds himself temporarily in distress. When we speak about psychotherapy, we refer to a form of therapeutic interaction or intervention which usually addresses emotional issues.

Accredited psychotherapists are highly trained people, who have undergone strictly regulated schooling in one or more of the officially recognized forms of psychotherapy. This training takes up to four years and even more. During their training course psychotherapists have to undergo their own personal therapeutic journey. Following accreditation, a psychotherapist is asked to take part in supervision groups, personal development groups and to attend seminars and workshops to further his knowledge and education. The therapist's on-going personal and professional journey will equip him for his *métier* with the right amount of empathy and experience to choose from the best instruments available the most appropriate one to work with the individual patient's issues.

Persons can avail themselves of the support of a psychotherapist as individual patients, groups, couples, or families. The session's focus will address the person's or the group's environment, since human beings do not live isolated from one another. Fundamentally we all are historically - somewhat coarsely expressed - gregarious animals.

The journey of discovering the roots of the difficulties experienced throughout a momentary phase of life might bring into awareness issues with every day contacts like the partner, members of the patient's close family, work, school, or any other social group.

Confidentiality in psychotherapeutic sessions is of critical importance and stipulated in the regulatory statutes of the psychotherapeutic organization's code of ethics. A psychotherapist who does not respect those statutes is in danger of losing his credibility, and also his right to practice in his profession. A trained professional would unlikely want to risk that.

When it comes to the topics that can be dealt with in psychotherapy there is hardly anything that cannot be addressed. Psychotherapists however, might have specialized themselves in a particular field. In such a case, a patient can be referred to a colleague with the respective specialized background.

Psychotherapy can improve the response to prescribed medication and help the patient to recover quicker. Vice-versa the psychotherapist might decide that it would be of advantage for the patient to see a medical practitioner to evaluate the possibility of introducing medication. The psychotherapist and the medical practitioner can thus decide together on the management of the patient by monitoring the improvement of the patient's emotional rebalancing.

Psychotherapy aims to help patients to cope better with their lives and the challenges, learn about conflict management and self-growth, and to reach their full potential. Within the therapeutic setting, the psychotherapist creates an environment that is

potentially healing for the patient. Mental and emotional health and fitness are efficient allies when it comes to seriously tackling all sorts of crisis. Therefore, the psychotherapist's aspiration will be that of strengthening both, be it as prevention for future hardships, or as cure for a momentary deadlock in a difficult life-situation.

During each session the psychotherapist strives to increase awareness, insight and understanding. To reach this goal the therapist will use different techniques. Amongst others the therapist will aim to support the patient to recognize his behaviour or thinking patterns that once might have been useful but now sabotages the patient's well-being. Through broader awareness the patient can ultimately expand his capacity for self-observation, become more aware to undesired behaviour, develop insight and empathy.

Be it with medication or without, through the interventions given by the psychotherapist, the patient will with time be able to change his thoughts and feelings and as a result change his patterns and his behaviour. Through this changed behaviour the patient will increase his sense of well-being.

Coming to the end of this therapeutic journey, the patient will be able to cope better with discomfort and distress, and his perception of reality will be balanced, so that he can clearly see the variety of his choices - and choose freely. §

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