

Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy

-Frequently Asked Questions-

1. What is Psychotherapy?

Psychotherapy is a discipline of study and practice that aims at healing psychological problems. Some patients opt only for Psychotherapy for healing, some patients rely only on Psychiatric treatment for healing whereas for some patients both Psychiatric treatment and Psychotherapy are needed together.

2. Are there different types of Psychotherapies?

There are many schools of thought with regard to the structure and function of the psyche (mind) and hence there are many types of Psychotherapies. Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Intensive Short term dynamic Psychotherapy, Rational Emotive therapy and logotherapy are major forms (schools) of psychotherapy in practice at present.

3. What is Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy?

Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy is a system of Psychotherapy which is based upon 'Psychoanalysis' which is one of the leading schools in Psychology. Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy itself is divided into many 'types' and the most common are Freudian Psychotherapy, Jungian Psychotherapy, Winnicottian Psychotherapy, Lacanian Psychotherapy and the Kleinian Psychotherapy. Every Therapist practices predominantly any one school of Psychotherapy with influences and eclectic borrowings from the other schools.

4. Why should I go for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy?

For many psychological problems, the causes lie deep in the unconscious mind, mostly related to intensely emotional events, many of which would have happened in early childhood. Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy is the only Psychotherapy that deals and heals such deep seated and long forgotten causes of Psychological Problems. For example a person may have a compulsion to wash hands and he may be washing his hands 15 times in a day. The roots of this problem may lie in his unconscious mind and relate to some events which happened when he was 3 to 5 years of age. Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy is the only therapy that goes to the roots of such problems. Also studies have shown that problems healed with Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy have very less chances of relapse compared to other forms of therapy since it heals the problem at its roots.

5. What are the purposes for which someone would choose Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy?

Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy is chosen for broadly two reasons. One is to heal one's psychological problems and second is to know oneself better so one can improve one's quality of life. It is not necessary that only patients seek this form of therapy. Many healthy individuals motivated by the Socratic desire to know oneself also choose this form of psychotherapy. In problem specific terms patients struggling with a range of psychological problems like Anxiety,

Depression, Bi-Polar Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and others seek Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy.

6. What is the duration of a session in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy?

Generally it is 45-50 minutes per session. Not more than one session per day is preferred.

7. How many sessions a week do I have to take if I opt for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy?

Generally 3-5 sessions per is the norm. In case of financial limitations lesser number of sessions per week is also tried.

8. How long does a Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy treatment last?

It depends upon the depth, duration, intensity and nature of the problem. Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy is essentially a long term therapy (although in shorter duration forms also at times it is customized under special circumstances) and in general the minimum duration can start from 3 months and go on till the patient is healed or rehabilitated. On an average 2.5 years is the most common duration of the therapy. In case of deep seated neurosis or psychosis the treatment can go on for upto or even longer than 5 years.

9. What is the rate per session for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy?

The rate per session varies by the skill of the therapist and the capacity of the patient to pay. Generally most Therapists follow a sliding scale where they charge more to the well off patient and less to the low income patient. The general rate per session ranges from Rs 250 per session to Rs 5500 per session.

10. Do I have to pay if I decide to cancel a session?

The session cancellation policy depends on the practice of the Therapist. Generally a 48 hour in advance cancellation policy is practiced which means if a patient wishes to cancel the session he can intimate 48 hours in advance and if doesn't then even if the session is not held, he has to pay for it. Some therapists also follow a one week cancellation policy that is any cancellation from the side of the patient has to be done one week in advance else the patient has to pay for the session. The Therapist has the privilege however to cancel any session owing to an emergency and for such sessions no payments are to be made.

11. How is the Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy conducted?

The first session is to take a Case History enter into a general discussion where the no. of sessions, days and timing are decided. The patient then comes to the session on scheduled time and lays down relaxed on a couch. The patient is free to express himself on any issue he feels like and naturally this leads to his problems. The Therapist helps the patient to proceed to explore himself and gives him 'interpretations' that helps the patient to discover the unconscious workings of his mind and it leads to a transformational emotional insight. It is through interpretations that emotional insight is attained and it helps in self transformation and healing.

12. Can I call the Therapist after or before the session? Can I request to meet the Therapist after or before the session?

The Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy conventions demand that the patient should not call the Therapist before or after the session unless there is an emergency.

13. Can I ask the Therapist about his personal information or personal opinion?

No because it is your therapy and not that of the Therapist. The focus has to be on you not the Therapist.

14. What happens if I happen to see the Therapist at a social function or a shopping mall or a theatre or a book shop?

Convention says that you should not meet the Therapist anywhere except in the Therapy room under the framework of the therapy setting. If at any social occasion you both happen to cross each other, you are not supposed to interact with each other.

15. Will confidentiality be maintained about what I disclose to the Therapist during the session?

Yes the Therapist has to maintain absolute confidentiality of the information about the patient both during and after the therapy is over or terminated

16. Under what circumstances will the Therapist break the code of Confidentiality and disclose information that I have shared with him during the session?

The law prescribes that if the patient is likely to indulge in any action that can lead to either harm to the self or to harm to others in society then the Therapist or the Psychiatrist is law bound to break the confidentiality convention and report it to parents or police or the hospital. Except for such critical situations, confidentiality is maintained in an absolute sense for all times.

17. Does the Therapist discuss my case with any other Therapist or a Supervisor?

The practice of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy conventionally states that every Therapist should have a 'Supervisor' that is a senior Therapist who is neutral to both the Patient and the Therapist. The patient never knows about the Supervisor however the Therapist is expected to meet the Supervisor at regular intervals to discuss the case in order to get a third party expert opinion in order to help the patient better. The Therapist doesn't discuss the case with any other Therapist.

18. Can the Therapist use my case for research or publication purposes?

Yes but only if you grant permission and even in such cases the name and identity is kept confidential. If you don't grant permission the Therapist can't use your case or any part of it for any research or publication purpose not even after changing your name and identity.

19. Can a person be under both Psychiatric treatment and Psychotherapy?

Yes many patients need both Psychiatric treatment and Psychotherapy going on to help them recover faster.

20. If a person is treated by both the Psychiatrist and the Psychotherapist and there is a conflict of opinion between the two whom should the patient listen to?

Generally the Psychiatrist and the Psychotherapist discuss and resolve such issues if any arise, however if yet the conflict prevails then the opinion of the Psychiatrist has to prevail.

21. Can I call the Psychotherapist during an emergency?

Yes you can. Ordinarily the patient is not supposed to call or meet the Therapist except during session timings, however in case of an emergency the patient can call the Therapist. Usually the call is first taken by the Office incharge who inquires about the issue and talks about it to the Therapist and if the Therapist feels it is indeed an emergency only then talking outside of session timings is permitted.

22. If I have undergone other forms of Psychotherapy before, Can I then undergo Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy?

Yes. Having undergone a particular form of therapy is no bar to seeking healing with Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy

23. Are Psychotherapists certified in India?

No at present there is no government body that certifies Psychotherapists however most Psychoanalytic Psychotherapists in India are trained/affiliated to reputed Psychoanalytic Institutions or to the Indian Psychoanalytic society or the International Psychoanalytic society.

24. Is Psychotherapy covered by Insurance?

No in India as of yet Psychotherapy is not covered by Insurance

25. Is there a professional code of conduct for Therapists?

Yes there is a professional code of conduct for Therapists which lays down professional and ethical guidelines. The professional code is based on the code in vogue in the United States proposed by the American Psychological Association.