

Type of Therapy: An explain of common Therapeutic Modalities

For many, the word “therapy” simply means talking to a professional. While this traditional mode continues to be quite helpful for some, many different types and styles of therapy and therapeutic treatment have since emerged prompting much conversation around what really works, understanding the array of treatments (“What the heck is tapping?”), and much perplexity in regard to which treatment is best for each individual.

This resource guide is here to offer readers a brief and easily understood synopsis of current mental/brain health therapies in hopes of both educating as well as making the process of seeking and finding help a little less daunting.

Each treatment highlighted has been clinically shown to be therapeutically beneficial depending on the patient and the issue at hand. Also, a number of treatments overlap in certain ways. It may take sampling more than one before finding the best choice.

Of course, finding the right treatment, and more importantly the right practitioner is a very individualized process. The right therapy or therapist for one is not always the best choice for another. While each therapy listed here has its merits, no therapy will be at its best without first and foremost a positive connection between client and clinician. Technique has value, but the person using the technique is even more valuable. The Center for Support and Wellness can help you to finding the right therapist and right modality for you. Please call us at 203-270-4612 and we can walk you through the process.

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BRAIN BASED THERAPIES

EMDR - Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy



WHAT: EMDR is based on the theory that painful memories remain unprocessed in our memory systems due to a high level of disturbance experienced at the time of the event. EMDR theorizes that eye movements enhance the success of treatment through neurological changes and that these changes assist the client in healing and recovering from negative memories.

HOW - The client is usually asked to reflect on a stored memory while focusing on an external stimulus (often a finger or small stick, sometimes taps or even tones) delivered by the therapist. During this time of dual attention new associations can emerge in the form of insight, other memories or new emotions.

WHY - EMDR therapy usually focuses on past events, current triggers and future needs often in relation to post traumatic stress.

Emotional Freedom Technique/Tapping



WHAT - EFT works by tapping (done by the patient) on acupuncture meridians in order to release blockage of painful memories or feelings. The treatment sprang from the idea that negative emotions are caused by a disruption in the body's energy system. When blockages are released the problem feeling is thereby also released and moved through the body.

HOW - The process starts with a beginning statement of the problem along with a complete acceptance of both the problem and one's self. For example, a person may say something like "Even though I have this (fear) about (the time I almost drowned) I completely accept myself. The statement is said three times while tapping on the karate chop point (side of the hand.) While continuing to articulate the fear or problem, the client begins to tap on other points - around the face, chest, top of head - until the fear or negative feeling begins to decrease.

WHY - Many find EFT to be an effective way of clearing out feelings and releasing limiting beliefs thus making room for new more positive beliefs and feelings to emerge. Learning EFT also empowers someone to take charge of handling their own emotions as they can tap on a feeling any time they wish without needing a clinician present.

Brainspotting



WHAT - Brainspotting is designed to help people access, process and overcome trauma, negative emotions and pain including psychologically induced pain. Evidence demonstrates that trauma is stored in the brain and thus alters the way in which the brain works by interfering with emotion, memory and physical health. By working on the limbic system, Brainspotting attempts to access both the physical and emotional aspects of negative emotions.

HOW - During Brainspotting, a therapist will help the client position their eyes in a way that enables them to target the source of the negative emotions. A “brainspot” is an eye position that tends to activate a traumatic memory or painful emotion. A trained therapist can effectively locate where this spot is as it differs from person to person. Brainspotting allows therapists to access emotions on a deeper level and to target the physical effects of trauma.

WHY - Brainspotting has been used with promising results in trauma therapy and the treatment of PTSD. It can help people recovering from injuries and health problems with issues such as motivation and attention. As many everyday psychological issues such as anger and difficulty concentrating can be caused by trauma, Brainspotting can be effective with those whose concerns are trauma related. It can also be an effective treatment for those who may be reluctant to seek traditional therapy (EMS, police, first responders) as the focus is on the “brain” rather than the person’s “feelings.”

Neuro and bio feedback



WHAT - Neuro and bio feedback entail supplying the brain with feedback of its own activity in real time methods in order to create self-regulation. The process serves to improve overall functioning of the brain. The goal of biofeedback is to take the information gathered from the body's physical responses to stimuli or events, and use it to better understand and eventually transform physical and emotional reactions.

HOW - A typical session begins with an assessment followed by an EEG reading that should offer insight into the condition that brought the client to treatment. Sometimes, if needed, a full EEG is done which shows the clinician how much activity is present in various areas of the brain. Sensors then placed on different spots on the clients head then measure the activity. Feedback is received through a variety of mediums including video, audio, imagery and motion. Information relating to the activity level of the brain at each specific moment is made available through these outlets.

WHY - Neurofeedback allows a client to manipulate their brainwaves and is beneficial for those suffering with issues that directly affect brain activity.

Neurofeedback training for the brain is similar to physical training for the body. It is a non-invasive technique that prompts the brain to draw from its existing resources in order to overcome the present condition.

Neurofeedback has been shown to improve conditions of mood including anxiety, depression, ADHD, sleep disorders and other cognitive impairments than can result due to injury. It has also been known to alleviate stress, nausea and pain and has been used in clients with cancer and other chronic illnesses.

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)



WHAT - Transcranial magnetic stimulation is a procedure that uses magnetic fields to stimulate nerve cells in the brain in order to improve symptoms of depression. TMS may be tried when other treatments for depression have been unsuccessful. Magnetic pulses stimulate nerve cells in the region of the brain involved in mood control. TMS does not require surgery or implantation of electrodes. It does not cause seizures or require sedation with anesthesia.

The stimulation affects how this part of the brain is working which in turn can ease depression and improve mood.

HOW - A large electromagnetic coil is placed against the scalp near the forehead. The coil creates electric currents that stimulate nerve cells in the region of the brain involved in mood control and depression. TMS is done on an outpatient basis in a doctor's office. It requires a series of sessions to be effective; usually 40 minute sessions carried out daily, five times a week for four to six weeks.

WHY - While depression is usually treatable, sometimes standard treatments are not effective. TMS can be used when treatments such as medication and talk therapy have been unproductive.

MNRI (Masgutova Neuro-Sensory-Motor Reflex Integration)

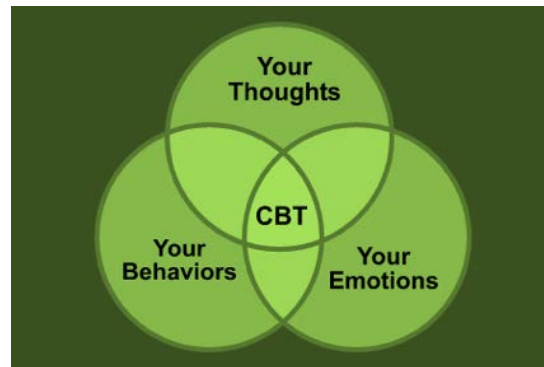


WHAT -MNRI (Masgutova Neuro-sensory-motor Reflex Integration), also known as the Masgutova Method, addresses primary reflex patterns. When we experience trauma, our primary reflexes come into play in order to protect and serve us. PTS/PTSD coincides with these primary reflex patterns remaining in an active state, and hence individuals may experience various symptoms (be it: anxiety, irritability, difficulty sleeping, difficulty focusing, sensitivity to sounds, decreased immune system, etc.)

HOW - - MNRI is a non-verbal, body based therapy that uses movement and stretching to address trauma impacted reflex memory. Following an initial assessment, the state of each reflex pattern is characterized as functional, dysfunctional, or pathological. Once specific reflex challenges are identified a basic MNRI treatment program is created. Often clients are provided with a simple home program and instruction on how to apply basic MNRI techniques between visits.

WHY - MNRI targets the emotional center of the brain without talk therapy in a gentle and noninvasive way in order to achieve proper realignment of the sensory-motor reflexes.

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY - CBT



WHAT- Cognitive Behavioral therapy stems from the belief that it is a person's perception of events - rather than the events themselves - that determines how they will feel and act. It is a short-term, problem-focused form of treatment that helps a person see the relationship between beliefs, thoughts, feelings and the behaviors and actions that result. CBT rests on the theory that behavior and emotions are directly influenced by adjustments in thought patterns.

HOW-Through cognitive therapy a client is helped to unlearn negative reactions and to learn new, positive emotional and behavioral responses to challenging situations. Big problems are often broken down into small manageable parts, and through setting goals the therapist can help the client adjust the way they think, feel and reacts in challenging situations.

WHY -CBT can be very effective for those with clearly defined behavioral and emotional concerns as well as those with specific problems that affect their quality of life. CBT trained therapists often utilize a problem solving and goal oriented approach which can effectively treat a number of issues including depression, anxiety, PTSD, obsessions, phobias, substance abuse, insomnia, anger management and more.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS THERAPIES

Trauma Informed Art Therapy



WHAT - Art therapy uses a person's creativity to help develop their physical and emotional health. Self-expression can frequently awaken someone's inborn problem solving capacities. It combines traditional techniques found in psychotherapy with the creativity of producing visual art. Trauma informed art therapy takes into consideration how the mind and body respond to traumatic events, recognizing that symptoms are coping strategies rather than pathology. It aims to help individuals thrive through skill building, support networks and resilience building.

HOW - Art therapists are trained professionals who have a master's degree in art therapy. In order to practice, therapists must understand psychotherapy and counseling. Artistic theories combined with clinical techniques are used to enhance the healing effect the creative process has on the client. The therapist is aware of the body's reactions to stressful events and/or memories and can thus incorporate sensory based artistic activities. The therapist is mindful of reinforcing a sense of safety by making and maintaining a positive attachment and individualized care plan with each client.

WHY - People of all ages can benefit from Trauma informed Art therapy; particularly those experiencing such issues as, anxiety; depression; addiction and trauma. This therapy approach is helpful for those who may prefer focusing on another task while discussing complex issues or who are challenged with expressing these issues verbally.

Music Therapy



WHAT - Music therapy integrates the elements of music with therapy to help provide a healing of mind, body, emotion and spirit. A trained music therapist uses the nonverbal language of music to initiate contact with the client and to help foster a relationship that helps the client gain self-awareness, personal development and self-expression.

HOW - After assessing the client's needs, a qualified music therapist can provide treatment including creating, singing, moving to, and/or listening to music. Through musical involvement in the therapeutic context, clients' abilities are strengthened and transferred to other areas of their lives. Music therapy also provides avenues for communication that can be helpful to those who find it difficult to express themselves in words.

WHY -Research in music therapy supports its effectiveness in many areas such as: overall physical rehabilitation and facilitating movement. Music Therapy often enhances or increases motivation to become engaged in treatment. Because Music Therapy involves a more holistic and creative level, it often elicits response from those that may not otherwise respond to traditional therapy.

ADDITIONAL THERAPIES

Equine and Animal Assisted Therapy



WHAT - Equine and animal assisted therapy involves the use of horses and other animals to help people gain self-awareness and emotional healing.

The benefits of the natural bond between animal and human being are fostered in an effort to facilitate emotional recovery. Animals can elicit a number of nurturing emotions and therapists find that many people respond positively to the idea of caring for another being.

HOW - Animal assisted therapy involves much more than simply spending time with an animal. Usually there are specific therapeutic goals, strategies and outcome measures. Therapeutic experiences can include walking, brushing, petting and caring for an animal. Equine therapy for example does not typically involve riding a horse. Rather, the therapist as part of their relationship with the client, incorporates care of and/or exercises with the animal.

WHY - The psychological and physiological benefits of equine and animal assisted therapy have been well documented. The improvements in health can include: decreased stress, reduction of anger, improved social interactions, decrease in heart rate and blood pressure and improved sense of trust and empowerment. Young children in particular can see significant improvements in interpersonal relationships with equine therapy. A child unable to experience physical and emotional comfort with others may find they are able to freely form that bond with a horse or other animal.

Play Therapy



WHAT - Play therapy works to transform current life issues by accessing past, present and unconscious experiences through play. During play therapy, the therapist and child (though adults can also benefit) form a relationship in which the child is encouraged to explore life situations in a manner and pace of their choosing, utilizing play materials. Play is the primary tool used. Language is secondary.

HOW - A caring environment is created to allow the child to play with as few limits as possible (other than for physical and emotional safety.) Sessions may be with an individual or with groups of children. A variety of play techniques are used according to the child's wishes and the skills of the therapist.

WHY - Through play, rather than conversation, the child is given strategies to cope with difficulties with which they may be powerless to change. It can also provide the therapist with valuable insight into what the child is experiencing as many children can or will better express their needs and feelings through imagination and play.

Yoga Therapy



WHAT - Yoga therapy uses yoga, meditation and guided imagery to improve health. Yoga therapy can cover a broad range of elements from both physical therapy and psychotherapy.

HOW - Once a treatment plan is established, a number of components may be included. These include, physical yoga based postures such as “downward facing dog” or “legs up the wall”; breathing techniques and some home based work.

WHY - Yoga therapy has been used as a treatment for depression and anxiety. It has also been shown to be effective in the treatment of PTSD. Yoga therapists have also begun to develop treatment modalities to suit children with autism.

Reiki



WHAT - Reiki is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that is also known to help promote healing. It is administered by “laying on hands” and is based on the idea that the therapist can channel energy into the patient by means of touch, to activate the natural healing processes of the patient's body and restore physical and emotional well-being. While spiritual in nature, Reiki is not a religion.

HOW - During a Reiki session, the therapist will place their hands lightly on different part of the body. Some may follow a predetermined sequence of placements while others will freely move their hands in no particular order to areas in which they feel energy is most needed. Some practitioners do not actually touch the client. Rather they will hover their lifted hands a few inches above the body.

WHY - Reiki is a simple, natural and safe practice. It can work in conjunction with other medical or therapeutic techniques possibly to relieve physical side effects and promote recovery.

Aromatherapy



WHAT - Aromatherapy uses plant materials and aromatic plant oils, including essential oils, and other aromatic compounds for the purpose of altering one's mood, cognitive, psychological or physical wellbeing.

HOW - The inhaled aroma from these "essential" oils is widely believed to stimulate brain function. They can inhaled either through diffusers or from individual bottles. Essential oils can also be absorbed through the skin, where they travel through the bloodstream and can promote whole-body healing.

WHY - Aromatherapy is used for a variety of applications, including pain relief, mood enhancement, stress relief and increased cognitive function.

Acupuncture



WHAT - Acupuncture is a complementary medical practice that entails stimulating certain points on the body, most often with a needle penetrating the skin, to alleviate pain or to help treat various health conditions.

HOW - An acupuncturist will look for the places (called points) on the body to access the chi that is blocked or not flowing right. Each of the points relates to certain health problems or body functions. He or she will then locate landmarks on the body—using certain muscles or bones, for example—to find the points in which to place the needles. After locating the points, he or she will quickly tap very thin needles into the skin. Some may be placed deeper than others, depending on what the provider believes is needed to restore the flow of chi.

WHY - Recent [scientific studies](#) have shown acupuncture to be effective for stress relief and promising results have additionally emerged in adult post-operative and chemotherapy nausea and vomiting and in post-operative dental pain. Other common uses for acupuncture include addiction, stroke rehabilitation, headache, menstrual cramps, fibromyalgia, carpal tunnel syndrome, and asthma. Acupuncture is often useful as an adjunct treatment or an acceptable alternative or be included in a comprehensive management program.

Somatic Therapy



WHAT - Somatic or Body Oriented Psychotherapy makes no distinction between body and mind and encourages the “communication” of experience between the mind and the body. Somatic therapy recognizes that every intricacy of human experience is connected and that each element of body, mind, and spirit co-exist, complement, and contrast each other and combine to create a complete, whole person. The theory behind somatic therapy is that trauma symptoms are the effects of instability of the ANS (autonomic nervous system). Past traumas disrupt the ANS. In recent years neuroscience has emerged with evidence that supports somatic psychology, showing how the mind influences the body and how the body influences the mind.

HOW - The main goal of somatic therapy is recognition and release of physical tension that may remain in the body in the aftermath of a traumatic event. The therapy sessions typically involve the patient tracking his or her experience of sensations throughout the body. Depending on the form of somatic psychology used, sessions may include awareness of bodily sensations, dance, breathing techniques, voice work, physical exercise, movement and healing touch.

WHY - Somatic therapy offers a variety of benefits. It reframes and transforms current or past negative experiences, instills a greater sense of self, promoting confidence, resilience and hope. It reduces discomfort, strain and stress while developing a heightened ability to concentrate. When

somatic therapy sessions are completed, the patient often reports feeling less stressed and more engaged with life.

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