

An introduction to Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT)

Hi, my name is Liz Robinson and I'm an IPT therapist working at CNTW within the Centre for Specialist Psychological Therapies and I'd like to introduce my colleague. Hello my name is Katherine Edmunds, I'm also one of the IPT therapists as part of our team. We want to do this video to give you a bit of an introduction into the type of treatment we offer. Right so to start with then what is IPT?

So IPT stands for interpersonal psychotherapy and it's a talking therapy treatment for depression basically. The interpersonal bit is about the idea we live in a social world and interpersonal world and things that happen in life can really impact onto us. So, if somebody has a bereavement or a loss, or there are struggles in relationships, that can really impact how we feel and that can trigger or maintain depression.

So, in terms of who is it for, it is aimed at, as Katherine outlined, primarily people with depression. So that might be adults, or young people, or older people who suffer from depression. And what I would say is that IPT has been around a long time so it is also being available and modified for post-traumatic stress disorder or bipolar disorder including other things.

So, what about what it will involve Katherine? So IPT is a weekly treatment. You would see the same therapist every week and you would have an appointment for about 50 minutes. We offer around 16 sessions and the treatment is split up into three parts, so we've got a beginning, a middle and an end. Quite simply the beginning is where we try and make sense of your depression and understand a little bit about the context, where it came from and to really help you understand it. And part of that is understanding what might have fuelled it in terms of has there been a loss, has there been a bereavement, or has there been a struggle with a particular relationship or several relationships.

And once we understand that together, and that's something we'd figure out between us. I'm not going to tell you, Liz isn't going to tell you. It's about us figuring it out together. We're the experts in depression but you're the expert in you, so we would then use that information to try and target your depression. Once we understand what the problem is we'd then really focus on helping you with some strategies and some ways of being able to manage your depression differently. And a key part of that is also helping you to do some recovery work, to kickstart your recovery to get you feeling better.

Hopefully by the time we get to the end phase you're feeling a lot better and so we'd think about what is it that's helped from this treatment, what's been useful, but also going forward what would be really good for you to keep doing to be able to manage your depression, as you're the expert in it now and hopefully you wouldn't need to come back and see us because you know how to manage it.

A key part of IPT that we love is that whilst doing all of that we help you to do that with a support team, so you wouldn't just be getting support from us as your clinicians, you would be getting, hopefully, support from the people around you, and we would work with you to figure out what the best way of doing that was for you.

So Liz if people want to find out more information about IPT where could they get that? Well, the good news is you are on the CNTW website to have accessed this video so that's a great start. If you have a look at the rest of the material with regard to IPT it's a little bit more written information about IPT, and there's also reference to the IPT UK website and you could look on NICE guidelines if you wanted any of the scientific evidence too. Good luck. And if you want any more information about IPT please just speak to your clinician