

Dynamic interpersonal therapy

Dynamic interpersonal therapy (DIT) is a form of brief psychodynamic psychotherapy developed for treating depression. It is particularly helpful for people with emotional and relationship problems, especially if these are linked to previous relationship difficulties. We have known for some time that difficult experiences in the past can continue to affect the way people feel and behave in the present and that this can cause problems in relationships which in turn can be linked to depression.

How does it work? Psychodynamic therapy is based on the idea that when something is very painful we can find ourselves trying to ignore it. Most of the time we know when we're doing this but sometimes we can do this so well that we lose sight of it completely. DIT aims to help people by focussing on certain things in someone's current relationship patterns. If we can help them change these they feel more able to sustain intimacy and closeness with others and their depression lifts.

In practice, DIT tries to help someone talk more freely about themselves. It might become clear, for example, that whenever someone tries to get to know them, they fear the worst and push them away to make sure no-one gets close enough to hurt or disappoint them again. This would be one kind of self-defeating pattern.

If a person's difficulties go back to earlier in life they may not notice for themselves the impact this can have on how they are behaving or responding to others because it becomes second nature – 'the way things are'. By drawing attention to some key aspects the DIT therapist tries to help them make sense of how they are in their present relationships more clearly. They can then change how they respond and move on, feeling more confident in how to relate to others.

What does DIT involve? Your therapist will need to get some basic information about you and current and past relationships. Sometimes your therapist may stay quiet, waiting for you to speak. This is because a DIT therapist wants to hear what is on your mind. This may feel a bit uncomfortable but your therapist will try to help talk about this so you can both explore things freely again.

Each session your therapist will typically help you identify and focus on a pattern that may keep happening in your relationships. DIT uses what happens in the relationship between you and your therapist to help think about the problems in your life. So, a person who worries about getting hurt or rejected might start to worry that the therapist will reject them too, perhaps becoming convinced the therapist isn't really interested in them. This pattern is then explored and new ways of thinking are tested out.

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Are there any forms to complete? A contract and confidentiality agreement is signed in the first session. There is also a form to complete before each session, this is a set of questions to see how you're getting on and see whether there's any risk of harm to yourself. At the end of your sessions there is a feedback questionnaire.

How long and how often would you see a therapist? Your therapist will talk with you about the fixed number of sessions you can expect to have. This will typically be sixteen sessions. The therapy usually takes place once a week and each session is 50 minutes. Your therapist will discuss with you any planned breaks and what happens if you cancel sessions.

To find out more, and to get more information about this specific therapy and what you can expect from your therapist visit [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/research/cehp/research-groups/core/pdfs/Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy/DIT service user information.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/research/cehp/research-groups/core/pdfs/Dynamic%20Interpersonal%20Therapy/DIT_service_user_information.pdf) which is a guide for service users.

For more information about dynamic interpersonal therapy or for an informal chat about whether this type of therapy might be useful for you, please contact the counselling team, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, on enquiries@mnessexmind.org or 01206 764500.

We're Mid and North Essex Mind, the mental health charity. We're here to make sure anyone with a mental health problem has somewhere to turn to for advice and support. We are a local, independent charity connected to the national charity Mind. We have to raise our own money to run our services.

If you want to raise some money or donate to support the work we do in the local area, make sure you are clear on any fundraising or cheques that the money is for Mid and North Essex Mind. This means we can use this money locally. We cannot take donations to 'Mind'.
Thank you