

Common Types of Therapy - Weekly Tip

If you've ever searched for a therapist for yourself, a loved one, or a patient, you might have noticed that there are **many different [types of psychotherapy](#)**. A few of the common approaches are described below. Many therapists use techniques from multiple approaches, which is called integrative or eclectic therapy.

Personal preference is a key factor in choosing a therapist and type of therapy. Studies have found that the [effectiveness](#) of different therapy approaches is often similar. The **most [consistent predictor](#) of psychotherapy outcomes is the quality of the relationship between therapist and patient**. So, it is important to find a therapist you connect with and to be open with your therapist about your experience in sessions.

Common Therapy Approaches

[Cognitive Behavioral Therapy](#) (CBT) focuses on **changing thoughts and behaviors** that contribute to distress. It is typically short-term (weeks or months, not years) with the goal of preparing patients for self-management. Often there is homework to reinforce concepts and skills between sessions. CBT is effective for treating a wide variety of conditions including anxiety, depression, substance use, insomnia, and PTSD.

[Acceptance and Commitment Therapy](#) (ACT) emphasizes accepting thoughts, emotions, and sensations and **letting go of the struggle to control or change** them. Patients are encouraged to focus instead on living in line with their values and being in the present moment. ACT is effective for treating a variety of conditions including chronic pain, depression, anxiety, caregiver stress, OCD, and psychotic symptoms.

[Interpersonal Therapy](#) focuses on helping patients improve their **interpersonal relationships and social functioning**. The therapist helps patients identify and address interpersonal difficulties such as isolation, conflicts, life transitions, and unresolved grief. Interpersonal therapy is typically short-term and effective for treating depression and eating disorders.

[Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic Therapy](#) explores connections between thought patterns, emotions, behaviors, relationships, unconscious drives, repressed feelings, and **childhood or other past experiences**. This type of therapy is typically long-term, often lasting years, although brief versions have been developed for depression.

[Humanistic/Person-Centered Therapy](#) focuses on personal growth, living a fulfilling life, and **being one's true self**. The patient is seen as the expert in examining their worldview and choices. The therapist supports the patient by being empathetic and non-judgmental and offering unconditional positive regard.