

Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT-A)

IPT-A is a treatment for young people with depression, which looks at your relationships with the people around you. It is important to pay attention to our relationships because how we feel often has a lot to do with how we are getting on with other people. Sometimes feeling down is a response to what is going on in our relationships and at other times our relationships become more difficult when we are low and have lost interest in the people close to us. IPT-A helps you to make sense of the difficulties you are experiencing and to understand how your relationships with other people contributed to how you feel. By helping you to sort out the main problems that trip you up with other people we expect your mood and interest to improve too.

IPT-A is especially helpful with the kinds of things young people often find difficult when they are depressed:

- Not getting on with an important person in your life
- Changes in your life that affect your routines and the people around you
- When someone important in your life dies
- Difficulty in starting or keeping relationships going

How long will it last?

IPT-A is usually offered over 12-16 sessions. Your parents or carers will also be invited to 3 additional sessions, which you might also want to join.

Getting started

All therapists should be able to help you feel respected and comfortable. Many young people find it difficult to talk about their problems with someone they do not know, and it is important that your therapist can make you feel that they are to be trusted, and can help you manage if you talk about things which upset you or about which you feel embarrassed. Talking openly about yourself for the first time to a new person can feel difficult and you may be worried about what your therapist thinks about you. Your therapist will be interested in how you are getting on as a team and will help you to make sense of any worries you may have about starting therapy.

Getting a picture of what you need ("Assessment")

Your therapist will need to get as good a picture as they can of what you are finding difficult in your life. They will ask some questions, but they should also make it clear that you only need to give as much information as you feel comfortable with. Many people find that as therapy gets going they are able to talk more openly, in the early stages you shouldn't find yourself under pressure to say more than you want.

Before you get started your therapist should explain how IPT works and how it could help you. That does not mean that you need to be 100% convinced, it's more that the idea of IPT and its focus on your current relationships needs to make some sense to you if you are going to get the best out of it.

In the first sessions of IPT, the therapist will ask you both about your symptoms and also about the people in your life. This is because they are interested in understanding how difficulties in your relationships may have contributed to your depression. Your therapist

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will help you think about what is going well and what isn't going so well in your relationships to help you to decide which relationships it would be most useful to focus on during the therapy.

How will you know that the therapy is working?

Each week your therapist will ask you to complete a questionnaire and will talk to you about your responses. These will give you both a better idea of the sorts of problems you have as well as how difficult these are for you. By completing the questionnaire each week, it will help you and your therapist see what progress you are making. This is very useful because not everyone makes progress at the same rate. If questionnaires show that therapy isn't helping as much as you hoped it gives you and your therapist a chance to think about why this might be and how you can work together to improve the way therapy helps you and your problems.

What you can expect of your therapist

You can expect your therapist to be active: they will ask you questions, especially about your symptoms, what is happening in your relationships week-by-week, and how you feel. The therapist will help you to track the links between your symptoms and what is happening in your relationships. They will also encourage you to sign up your own personal 'recovery team' to help you overcome your current difficulties. This might mean they will help you to develop new relationships that can provide the support you need. The therapist will also support you in making positive changes in your life. This might involve helping you to understand how you are feeling and find ways to tell other people about it so that they can help you or to get back into routines that you used to enjoy but that have been more difficult to keep up with when you have been feeling low.

Ending therapy

Many young people find that ending the therapy is difficult. Ending the therapy can feel like a big loss and you might have lots of different feelings about it. Your therapist will know and understand this and they will help you to talk about and manage your feelings. They should help you to anticipate problems that you might face in the future and think with you about how you and your recovery team would manage if things became difficult again. This will include reminding you of what you have learnt and achieved during therapy. You can find more information about IPT at www.iptuk.net and www.minded.org.uk

How to give feedback

We really want to hear from the parents, children and young people who use our services. If you have any comments or suggestions about your experience of coming to the Centre we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch by emailing feedback@anafreud.org

Out of hours or emergency contacts

The Centre does not offer any out-of-hours or emergency services for children, young people and families. If you require urgent assistance please contact your GP or visit your local A&E department.

Other languages and formats

If you would like this leaflet in a different language or format please ask at reception or contact us at:

Email: Info@anafreud.org

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