

Short-Term Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (STPP)

Information sheet for young people

Short-term psychoanalytic psychotherapy (STPP) is offered to young people who are depressed and have been troubled by quite serious worries and unhappiness for some time.

What is said in the sessions is kept confidential between you and your therapist. The only exception to this arises if the therapist thinks you are at risk (from yourself or someone else) or are a risk to someone else. In such a situation there will be a discussion between you about who else might need to know to help in keeping things safe.

How long will it last?

You will be offered 28 sessions with your therapist, each one lasting 50 minutes.

Sessions take place each week at a regular time. There are breaks for holiday periods in the summer, at Christmas and at Easter time, so, depending on the starting date, there are likely to be two of these holiday periods in the course of the therapy, which will last overall between 8 and 9 months. The day and time of the session is negotiated between the therapist and yourself and is arranged as far as possible to take account of the demands of your school, college and/or work and family circumstances.

How we help

There is an opportunity at the start for you to decide whether you feel this sort of help is what you want. In psychoanalytic therapy, there is no set agenda. Instead, you are encouraged to talk about what is on your mind. This can often be difficult for people who are depressed and the therapist will try to help you to find a way to express yourself. Sometimes drawing or other ways of getting things across can be helpful, but it is important to know that psychotherapists are experienced in helping young people to convey their problems in whatever way is right for them. Sharing upsetting memories, thoughts and feelings can be a relief in itself, but the therapist will also aim to help you understand yourself better, and be able to think about difficult aspects of your experiences rather than be overwhelmed by your feelings.

Alongside your sessions, your parent(s) or carer(s) will be offered some sessions (up to 7) with another therapist. These are to help them to understand your behaviour and feelings and to think about their difficulties in helping you. If you are 16 or over, you can decide whether or not you want your parents to be involved.

A link to school or college may sometimes be helpful and will be arranged if appropriate with your permission.

The relationship with the therapist can become an important part of your life during therapy. It evokes all sorts of feelings, but because there is a regular pattern of sessions, there is a trustworthy space in which you can think about how you feel about yourself and the therapy. You can also explore how you manage relationships with others including friends, family and boy or girl friends, and discuss how you are dealing with the process of becoming gradually more independent and more responsible for yourself.

Ending therapy

At the end of the therapy, the possibility for a review meeting a few months later is usually offered. One of the features of STPP is that changes in how things are seen may continue to evolve after the therapy has ended. This is because the therapy can help people become more aware themselves of their strengths and vulnerabilities, and better at managing the ups and downs which are always part of adolescence.

As the therapy comes to an end, there is also a chance to think about how to deal with saying goodbye.

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 ask at reception or email feedback@annafreud.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@annafreud.org
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Our Patron: Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cambridge

Kings Cross site: Anna Freud Centre, 4-8 Rodney Street, London N1 9JH

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