

Ability to derive an analytic/dynamic formulation

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that a psychodynamic formulation takes into account the respective contribution of:

relevant developmental deficits (including early traumata)

unconscious conflicts, including unconscious anxieties and the defences associated with their management (and which may “oppose” change and pose challenges to the therapy)

recurring interpersonal patterns and expectations of others

areas of resilience

An ability to draw on knowledge that the formulation will be informed by the therapist’s observations about the quality of:

the client’s presentation of their narrative

the client’s relationship with the therapist in the session

An ability to draw on knowledge that formulation is not a “once-and-for-all” process, but requires regular revision in light of client feedback and the therapist’s evolving understanding of the client over time

Application

Ability to derive an analytic/dynamic formulation

An ability to be curious about the client’s subjective experience

An ability to identify recurring interpersonal themes through:

relevant questions and observations

reflection on the transference-countertransference themes that emerge in the session

An ability to develop hypotheses about:

the unconscious meaning of the client’s presenting symptoms

the significance of the therapist’s emotional response(s) to the client

An ability to bring together information directly provided by the client, as well as the experiential information derived from the here-and-now of the therapeutic interaction, to arrive at a provisional formulation of the client’s difficulties

Ability to elaborate and agree the formulation with the client

An ability to work collaboratively with the client to promote a sense of agency and participation in arriving at a formulation that is meaningful to them:

an ability to communicate in a clear manner the therapist’s understanding of the client’s experience and difficulties

an ability to engage the client in responding to the therapist’s formulation and elaborating it or revising it

An ability to ascertain the formulation’s relevance and/or any threats it poses to the client’s equilibrium from their response to it.

An ability to revise the formulation (and hence the focus of the therapy) in light of new evidence and/or the client’s response to the therapy