

Psychodynamic-Interpersonal (PI) Therapy

This section describes the knowledge and skills required to carry out Psychodynamic-Interpersonal Therapy.

It is not a 'stand-alone' description of technique, and should be read as part of the psychoanalytic/ psychodynamic competence framework.

Effective delivery of this approach depends on the integration of this competence list with the knowledge and skills set out in the other domains of the psychoanalytic/ psychodynamic competence framework

Sources:

Guthrie et al. (unpublished) *Psychodynamic Interpersonal Therapy: An Evidence Base*

Hobson, R. (1985) *Forms of Feeling*. London: Tavistock Publications

Shapiro, D. & Firth, J. (unpublished) *Exploratory Therapy Manual for the Sheffield Psychotherapy Project*

Meares, R. (2005) *The Metaphor of Play: origin and breakdown of personal being* (3rd Ed.), London: Routledge

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge of the psychodynamic, humanistic and interpersonal principles underpinning the PI model:
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knowledge of the "tripartite self" ("me, myself and I") reflecting different aspects of personal identity

An ability to draw on knowledge that PI therapy focuses on understanding and changing the client's characteristic patterns of feeling and behaving in relationships

An ability to draw on knowledge that PI therapy:
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sees the client's presenting problems and symptoms as originating in interpersonal patterns established in early relationships, and that these patterns inform current relationships and contribute to specific vulnerabilities (e.g. to the experience of loss)
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aims to foster the development of a collaborative, "personal conversation" between therapist and client

assumes that the client's problems are expressed, or enacted in the client's "here-and-now" experience in the session and hence:
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focuses primarily on the client's immediate experience in the session

uses the evolving relationship with the therapist as the vehicle for exploring and resolving the client's difficulties (i.e. helping the client to discover more helpful ways of relating)
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Application

Therapeutic stance

An ability to maintain a warm, involved, empathic manner
An ability to provide support and encouragement through:
acknowledging the client's progress
communicating hopefulness about progress
An ability to work collaboratively with the client to develop "shared meaning" by:
using direct and collaborative language (e.g. 'I' and 'We') that facilitates the development of an active, mutual dialogue with the client
sharing the therapist's understanding tentatively
being responsive to the client's experience of the therapy

Assessment and engagement

An ability to be attuned to, and respond to, the emerging quality of the interaction between therapist and client, including feelings generated within the therapist in response to the client
An ability to assess the client's characteristic patterns of feeling and behaving in relationships
An ability to appraise the nature of the client's difficulties through the way they present and relate in the session (both verbally and non-verbally)
An ability to reformulate the client's presenting problems in an interpersonal context and to communicate this understanding to the client
An ability to orient the client to the therapy by explaining the rationale for PI therapy
An ability to jointly agree the therapeutic focus with the client

Interventions

Ability to focus on the client's here-and-now experience in the session

An ability to help the client to stay with, and explore, what they are <i>currently</i> feeling:
an ability to identify and respond to verbal and non-verbal cues from the client to facilitate the client's exploration and understanding of the client's feelings:
an ability to identify and appraise the significance of the therapist's countertransference
an ability to be explicit about the cues that the therapist is using to understand the client's experience (e.g. the client's tone of voice/posture)
An ability to carefully track and the client's emotional state during the session, and to communicate an understanding of this in order to help the client to:
recognise and accept their feelings
differentiate feelings from actions
An ability to build on the client's idiosyncratic use of language (especially their use of metaphors), to:
support the exploration of the client's immediate experience
deepen the level of emotional exchange between therapist and client

Ability to use the therapeutic relationship to explore and address the client's interpersonal difficulties

An ability to identify and respond to recurring interpersonal patterns as they are enacted in the session:	
	an ability to help the client reflect on their perceptions of the therapist
	an ability to make appropriate use of self-disclosure by the therapist to develop a shared understanding of what is happening between therapist and client
An ability to maintain an ongoing, mutual dialogue with the client to help them explore, within the therapeutic relationship, alternative ways of approaching their interpersonal difficulties	

Ability to work collaboratively with the client to generate hypotheses about their difficulties

An ability to use statements (as opposed to questions) to promote an ongoing "conversation" about the client's experience (i.e. the primary goal is not to provide 'explanations', but to encourage further exploration of the client's current experience)	
An ability to share the therapist's understanding of the client's experience through exploratory statements that are couched tentatively (i.e. as hypotheses open to correction/further amplification):	
An ability to promote the exploration and organisation of the client's affective and interpersonal experiences by generating a "hierarchy" of hypotheses	
	an ability to introduce hypotheses in a progressive manner (in which "explanatory hypotheses build on "understanding" and "linking" hypotheses):
	"understanding hypotheses", which aim to communicate empathy for the client's experience and the therapist's perspective on the client's experience
	"linking hypotheses", which aim to establish connections between affective and interpersonal experiences within the therapy and those occurring in other contexts
	"explanatory hypotheses", which aim to draw attention to repetitive interpersonal patterns and introduce a tentative account of the underlying reasons for these patterns

Ability to monitor and respond to the client's experience of the therapy

An ability to decrease the likelihood that clients will become "overaroused" or overwhelmed (e.g. by becoming very anxious in response to the therapist's interventions) by:	
	monitoring the frequency and intensity of challenging interpretations
	negotiating a shared account of the client's experience of the session
	supporting the client's adult self at the end of the session (e.g. through the therapist's tone of voice)
An ability to ensure that the client has sufficient time to assimilate and respond to any interpretation (i.e. by not introducing new, unexplored themes in the last few minutes of a session)	

Working with endings

An ability to prepare the client for ending by explicitly referring to the time limited nature of the therapy at the outset and throughout the therapy, as appropriate (e.g. in connection to a discussion about loss)
An ability to help the client express feelings about termination, including any disappointment with the limitations of the therapy and of the therapist
An ability to help the client make connections between their feelings about ending and other losses/separations
An ability to help the client review what they have learnt and gained during the therapy
An ability to formulate and construct a “good-bye letter” that accurately conveys the main interpersonal themes that have been worked on, as well as the ways of managing these problems, in a way that is positive, warm and personal