

Basic analytic/dynamic techniques

Knowledge of the basic principles and rationale for analytic/dynamic therapy

Knowledge of developmental theory

An ability to draw on knowledge of the developmental factors that shape an individual's experience of themselves and others (i.e. the importance of early relationships/attachments).
An ability to draw on knowledge of the different types of personality organisations (i.e. neurotic, borderline, psychotic)
An ability to draw on knowledge of the operation of defences throughout development
An ability to draw on knowledge of developmental psychopathology

Knowledge of an analytic/ dynamic model of the mind

An ability to draw on knowledge that we have a conscious as well as a dynamically unconscious mental life
An ability to draw on knowledge of the different structures of the mind (ego, id, superego) and their contribution to personality development
An ability to draw on knowledge of an unconscious inner world of object-relations that:
mediates the way people experience themselves and others
informs how people act in the external world.
An ability to draw on knowledge of, and respect for, the importance of the client's imaginative life (e.g. unconscious fantasies, dreams, metaphors) as a vehicle for understanding their unconscious experience of themselves and others.

Knowledge of the core principles of an analytic/dynamic therapeutic approach

An ability to draw on knowledge of the affective and interpersonal focus of the therapy.
An ability to draw on knowledge of the rationale for closely tracking the therapeutic process (i.e. attending closely to micro-processes in the therapeutic relationship so as gain a detailed understanding of the client's internal world of relationships and conflicts).
An ability to draw on knowledge of the rationale for adopting a primarily receptive (i.e. non directive) stance in relation to the client's communications so as to facilitate the elaboration of unconscious meaning.
An ability to draw on knowledge of the importance of maintaining an open mind throughout therapy (avoiding premature closure and tolerating 'not knowing', so as to avoid imposing assumptions about the client's difficulties or the direction of treatment)
An ability to draw on knowledge that the alleviation of symptoms is not normally regarded as the primary target of the therapy, but is considered to be the outcome of an understanding of their unconscious meaning

Ability to undertake an assessment of likely suitability of analytic/dynamic therapy

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that pre-therapy client characteristics are not significantly predictive of outcome:	
	an ability to draw on knowledge of factors that may be pertinent to the ways in which an analytic/dynamic approach is applied/needs to be adapted to meet the client's needs:
	the client's response to an exploratory approach (e.g. their response to a relative lack of therapist direction, indicators of an interest in reflection)
	the client's interest in reflecting on how their relationships with others work
	the client's interest in working with interpersonal and affective themes
	the client's curiosity about their role in their difficulties
	the risk to the client of connecting with painful feelings and/or memories, which could be difficult for them to manage (e.g. increasing risk to themselves) balanced against the benefits of exploring issues in therapy
	the external resources that could support the client during the therapy
	the therapist's experience with the client in the session
An ability to draw on practice-based knowledge of the contra-indications for brief and more intensive analytic/dynamic therapy (e.g. risk of exacerbation of problems)	
An ability to draw on knowledge of other psychological therapies as the basis for considering more suitable alternatives for the client	

Application

Frame for the assessment

An ability to approach the assessment with an analytic attitude so as to observe the client's interaction with the therapist and evaluate what adaptations may be necessary to support the client's capacity to work within an analytic frame:	
	an ability to balance the need to gather information about the client and their difficulties against the requirement to assess how they manage without therapist imposed direction in the session
An ability to realistically consider, with the client, their capacity to work within an analytic frame in the context of an assessment of potential risk (e.g. increase in self-harming behaviour)	

Listening: content and process

An ability to listen both to the content of the client's narrative while taking into account the way in which they present themselves (e.g. non-verbal communications)	
An ability for the therapist to identify the emotional impact the client's presentation: has on them	
	an ability to appraise the potential significance of the therapist's response to understanding the client's interpersonal patterns

Intervention

An ability to engage the client's interest in this therapeutic approach by making interpretations that connect the client's presenting difficulties/symptoms to their past and current relationships and behaviour
An ability to evaluate the client's readiness and motivation at this point in time to engage with the affective and interpersonal focus of the therapy through relevant questions and interpretations (e.g. a "trial interpretation")
An ability to formulate the dominant transference theme(s) that emerge in the assessment so as to gauge how the client responds to a transference focus
An ability to help the client reflect on their experience of the assessment by articulating their conscious and unconscious experience of it

Ability to identify and take account of external resources available to the client and to the therapist when planning interventions

An ability to inform the therapeutic plan and consider the need for additional resources by exploring the client's external resources (e.g. sources of support, stability of housing, etc)
An ability to appraise the appropriateness of the setting in which the therapy will be offered relative to the client's needs (e.g. for additional support from other professionals)

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

Ability to engage the client in analytic/dynamic therapy

Ability to develop a therapeutic alliance

An ability to respond to the client's presenting problems in a concerned, non-judgemental manner through:	
	allowing the client's narrative about their difficulties to emerge without imposing a structure
	asking clarifying questions so as to understand the client's perspective without making assumptions
	communicating empathic understanding in response to the client's conscious and unconscious communications
	respecting the client's need for defences
An ability to foster the development of a working relationship of trust and rapport through:	
	containing the client's level of anxiety by engaging with the client's conscious and unconscious anxieties about the therapy and the therapist
	tolerating the client's distress and other feelings in order to remain emotionally attuned to them
	adjusting technique with those clients who are unproductively disturbed by a more passive stance in the early stages of therapy
	communicating the boundaries and frame of the therapy clearly
	providing some brief guidance on the differential expectations of both therapist and client (e.g. to say what comes to mind) so as to orient the client to the particular style of therapy
	assessing which clients may require a strengthening of the supportive aspects of the therapeutic relationship in an explicit manner so as to engage them

Ability to help the client understand the rationale for analytic/dynamic therapy

An ability to provide the client with sufficient direct information about the therapy (including its risks and benefits) so as to make consent meaningful	
An ability to use the assessment session(s) to give the client an experience of an analytic/ dynamic approach and the challenges this might present for them, for example through:	
	showing interest in, and commenting on, the client's unconscious communications, especially about the relationship with the therapist
	conveying an understanding of how the client's presenting symptoms/problems may be connected with unconscious feelings and conflicts
An ability to encourage the client to reflect on their reactions to the proposed therapy and its focus (i.e. primarily on feelings and relationships)	

Ability to identify and agree therapeutic aims

An ability to share a tentative account of how the therapist understands the client's problems early on in the therapy so as to provide the client with an opportunity to ask questions, clarify and agree therapeutic aims
An ability to engage the client in articulating the aims for the therapy through:
enquiring explicitly about what the client hopes to achieve
communicating understanding that in addition to the stated aims there might be less conscious aims
communicating understanding of the client's resources and vulnerabilities in relation to the stated aims
helping the client to reflect on their expectations of therapy so as to introduce some realism about what might and might not be achievable

Ability to maintain an analytic/dynamic focus

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that ‘maintaining an analytic focus’ describes two distinct activities:

maintaining the primary focus on the exploration of the client’s unconscious experience (i.e. maintaining an analytic attitude)

remaining focused on a particular theme to the relative exclusion of others for the duration of the therapy (which typically applies to brief therapeutic approaches)

Application

Ability to approach all aspects of the work with an analytic attitude

An ability to stay focussed on:

exploring the client’s unconscious, “internal world” of relationships

identifying and responding to the transference and countertransference

An ability to prioritise the focus of the interventions on the here-and-now therapeutic interaction:

an ability to identify when such a focus is not appropriate so as to attend to other material that carries a strong affective charge

Ability to “track” a specific dynamic theme/conflict

An ability to relate the content of interventions to the interpersonal and affective themes and unconscious conflicts that the formulation identifies as the focus of the therapy

An ability to help the client explore themes relevant to the agreed focus through the use of techniques such as clarification, confrontation and interpretation

An ability to work on the agreed focus by exploring the vicissitudes of the therapeutic relationship:

an ability to help the client identify relevant interpersonal and affective patterns through exploration of interpersonal narratives and (where relevant) their elaboration in the transference

An ability to help the client identify and explore the meaning of diversions away from the agreed focus (e.g. because it is too painful to address)

Ability to work with unconscious communication

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that a client's manifest communications may contain a latent meaning

An ability to draw on knowledge that the latent content of any communication may at times only become manifest indirectly through the emotional impact the communication has on the therapist

Knowledge of the principle that unconscious communication is more likely to emerge in the absence of therapist-imposed structure, and that remaining silent can facilitate this

Application

Ability to facilitate unconscious communication

An ability to allow the emergence of spontaneous communication of feelings, thoughts, fantasies, daydreams or dreams so as to gain access to the client's imaginative world by:

allowing the client to talk without imposing any formal structure or direction in the sessions (e.g. by using questions infrequently)

communicating understanding to the client of the internal obstacles to free association

An ability to tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity when trying to understand the client's communications so as to not foreclose exploration through:

helping the client explore their feelings about not being understood or helped (e.g. when the therapist does not provide practical advice)

understanding and managing the therapist's own feelings of anxiety about 'not knowing' (e.g. about being perceived to be incompetent)

Ability to listen to unconscious communication

An ability to pay attention to the client's imaginative life and to use its manifestations (e.g. conscious and unconscious fantasies, dreams, metaphors) to further the understanding of the client, and hence as the basis for a more focused interpretation

An ability to note, and reflect upon, the latent meaning conveyed through non-verbal communications (e.g. tone of voice, body posture etc)

An ability to allow the therapist's own subjective associations and ideas to form in response to the client's communications

Ability to respond to unconscious communication

An ability to prioritise process over content when responding to the client's communications
An ability to consider the potential latent content in the client's communications by:
being curious about what anxieties may lie behind the client's questions, even if ostensibly 'sensible', and drawing the client's attention to these
identifying and helping the client to reflect on unverballed feelings
An ability to consider the possible meaning of the therapist's own emotional reactions to the client as a basis for an intervention
An ability to help the client elaborate on their idiosyncratic use of language/imagery/dreams, with the aim of facilitating the experience and expression of their feelings and states of mind.

Ability to tolerate and make judicious use of silence

An ability to tolerate and allow silence so as to permit the emergence of the client's uninterrupted flow of associations and communications
An ability to resist interpersonal pressure to break silences (e.g. by asking questions)
An ability to manage the anxiety evoked in the therapist by silences
An ability to communicate to the client an understanding of the anxiety silence can generate, rather than responding directly by filling the silence
An ability to monitor the client's level of anxiety in response to silence, and limit silences if the client's anxiety risks undermining engagement with the therapy by:
interpreting the anxiety
increasing the therapist's level of activity when appropriate
An ability to engage the client in exploring the unconscious meaning of silences as they occur in a session:
exploring the client's use of silence in the session
exploring the client's response to the therapist's use of silence

Ability to help the client become aware of unexpressed or unconscious feelings

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that the client may be troubled by feelings and experiences other than those which they consciously report
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Application

Ability to facilitate the expression of unexpressed or unconscious feelings by:

communicating to the client that their feelings can be tolerated and thought about by the therapist (i.e. through the therapist's understanding, empathic stance)

responding to non-verbal cues by the client and linking these to unexpressed or unconscious feelings
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Ability to engage the client in exploring unexpressed or unconscious feelings

An ability to help the client put into words what they feel, or fear feeling, by:

enquiring into the subjective meaning of the client's use of particular words, dreams, fantasies or non-verbal behaviours

encouraging the client to stay with a current feeling as it emerges in the session and to articulate what they are experiencing

An ability to help the client explore internal and interpersonal obstacles to the awareness, and expression, of particular feelings (especially in the context of the relationship with the therapist).

Ability to help the client explore the unconscious dynamics influencing their relationships

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that the origins of the client's difficulties will normally lie in their early relational experiences

An ability to draw on knowledge that both internal and external forces shape the mind and therefore inform our perception of ourselves in relationships with others

An ability to draw on knowledge that unconscious projective and introjective processes underpin the client's subjective experience of their relationships

Application

Ability to formulate the client's internal world of relationships (as the basis for helping them to understand their subjective experiences of relationships)

An ability to listen out for recurring interpersonal and affective patterns in the client's past and current relationships:

an ability to identify recurring configurations of 'self' and 'other' representations

an ability to identify areas of omission from the client's descriptions of their relationships (e.g. a pervasive absence of conflict)

An ability to make use of the experience and observation of the client's ways of relating within the session to inform the understanding of the client's internal world of relationships
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Ability to help the client explore their feelings when in a relationship

An ability to help the client identify and understand recurring affective patterns in their relationships, particularly by exploring how these play out in the relationship with the therapist
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Ability to help the client explore the defences mobilised in relationships

An ability to help the client identify areas of difficulty in their relationships

An ability to help the client understand the unconscious strategies they use to manage areas of difficulty in their relationships

An ability to help the client reflect on behaviours and feelings which perpetuate or exacerbate interpersonal difficulties
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Ability to identify and respond to difficulties in the therapeutic relationship

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that a degree of resistance to the painful nature of exploratory therapy is normal, and to be expected in everyone
An ability to draw on knowledge that difficulties in the therapeutic relationship may reflect the operation of the client's defences
An ability to draw on knowledge of the reasons for "negative therapeutic reactions" and "flight into health"
An ability to draw on knowledge that enactments are inevitable and require the therapist to work to regain a reflective stance

Application

Ability to engage the client in understanding the meaning of difficulties between themselves and the therapist

An ability to identify therapeutic ruptures or impasses:					
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An ability to facilitate the client's involvement in making sense of the interpersonal behaviours that express opposition to the therapist through:					
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An ability to recognise the importance of working with the negative transference:					
an ability to make use of ruptures or impasses in the therapy as opportunities for expanding the understanding of the client's subjective experience and of their difficulties					

Ability to reflect on the therapist's contribution to difficulties in the therapeutic relationship

An ability to engage in self-reflection to clarify the therapist's possible contribution to a difficulty in the therapy and to understand its meaning

An ability to consider the respective contributions of the therapist and the client to the client's perception of the therapist

An ability to distinguish between instances when resistance to therapy is a manifestation of the client's difficulties and instances when the client is responding to an accurate perception of differences of opinion between themselves and the therapist

Where the therapist identifies their contribution to a therapeutic impasse, an ability to consider the most helpful way of using this awareness to resolve the impasse (e.g. by openly acknowledging an error)

An ability to identify the need for supervision/further personal therapy in order to protect the client's therapy

Ability to establish and manage the therapeutic frame and boundaries

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that the therapist's boundaries and those of the therapeutic frame will have an idiosyncratic meaning for the client and that this will inform how the client experiences the frame and any changes to it.
An ability to draw on knowledge that the physical setting of the therapy room is invested with an affective charge that is linked to the relationship with the therapist
Knowledge that planned and unplanned interruptions in the treatment may impact on the client and that this requires acknowledgement and understanding when it occurs:
knowledge of the dynamics of separation, loss and mourning as the basis for understanding the client's subjective experience of breaks during the treatment

Application

Ability to establish and maintain a consistent therapeutic frame

An ability to establish clear parameters within which the treatment will take place (setting; frequency and length of sessions; use of the couch where applicable; limits of confidentiality; expectations of the client [e.g. that they will say what comes to mind/bring dreams etc]; arrangements/cover over breaks)
An ability to maintain consistency in relation to the agreed parameters and therapeutic stance so as to create a stable and secure setting for the client through:
maintaining the therapist's analytic attitude
being alert to the meaning to the client of any changes to the agreed setting, whether planned or unplanned
helping the client to explore their experience of any changes
attending to and interpreting the therapist's understanding of the client's experience of separations/discontinuities in the treatment frame
An ability to be receptive to the client's conscious and unconscious experience of the setting and its boundaries and to help the client to articulate this experience so as to:
ensure that the client's agreement to the therapy and its boundaries is rooted in an exploration of their conscious and unconscious feelings and fantasies about the therapy
identify early transference patterns that will form the basis for eventual interpretations

Ability to manage deviations from the established therapeutic frame

An ability to evaluate the meaning of the client's requests for modifications to the parameters of the therapy as the basis for responding to such requests
An ability to help the client explore unverballed feelings and unconscious conflicts to counter the pressure to act out and so protect the viability of the therapy
An ability to maintain (or regain) a reflective stance when managing forms of acting out in relation to the setting (by the client, therapist or both)
An ability to set clear limits where necessary (e.g. if the client's behaviour undermines the viability of the treatment)

Ability to manage interruptions in the treatment

An ability to prepare the client for planned interruptions (e.g. holiday breaks) in the treatment by helping them explore their conscious and unconscious responses to breaks

An ability to assess risk during breaks in the treatment and to make arrangements for additional support when required

Ability to work with the client's internal and external reality

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that analytic/dynamic approaches privilege the exploration of the client's internal, unconscious world of experience, but that this is not at the expense of the exploration of, and sensitivity to, the client's external reality and value systems
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Application

Ability to balance working with the client's internal and external reality

An ability to attend and respond to the conscious as well as the unconscious meaning of the client's preoccupations:
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an ability to respond sensitively to the client's current preoccupations and distress

an ability to evaluate when it is most productive to focus primarily on the client's external or internal reality

An ability to help the client to make connections between their current, real-life preoccupations and their unconscious internal world of subjective experience

An ability to respond openly and respectfully to the client's conscious and unconscious experience of race, culture, religion, age, gender and sexual orientation:
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an ability to explore for the client the meaning of their cultural, ethnic, socio-economic and religious background as well as their gender and sexuality

an ability to explore the relationship, if any, between the client's external context and values and their difficulties

Ability to work with differences between the therapist and client

An ability to be curious about the meaning and impact of differences in race, culture, age, socio-economic status, religion, gender and sexuality between therapist and client
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An ability to respond openly and sensitively to the client's experience of difference in the therapeutic relationship

An ability to explore with the client the unconscious use that may be made of actual differences between therapist and client

An ability to be aware of, and reflect on, the significance of the therapist's countertransference in relation to difference(s)

An ability to critically self-reflect on assumptions, biases and prejudices that may be operating consciously and unconsciously in the therapist with respect to difference(s)
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