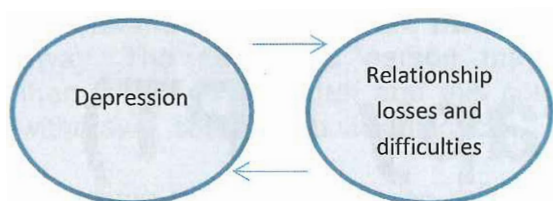


PATIENT INFORMATION FOR IPT

WHAT IS IPT?

IPT is a time limited and structured psychotherapy, typically delivered over 16, weekly sessions. It looks at the ways in which current difficulties in relationships contribute to psychological stress, and the ways in which psychological problems affect relationships.



Therapy comes in many forms, each having a particular focus and emphasis. IPT focuses primarily on relationship problems. When a person is able to deal with a relationship problem more effectively, his or her psychological symptoms often improve. IPT aims to help people recognise the problems they face with other people and to make changes in their relationships. Many scientific studies have demonstrated the benefit of this approach.

WHAT IS TALKED ABOUT IN IPT?

Your therapist will spend a few sessions talking with you about your depression and current relationships as a way of understanding how they are connected. Your therapist will help you to keep the discussion focused upon these kinds of problems. The relationship issues described by most people usually fall into one of the following areas:

- **Interpersonal disputes:** disagreements or arguments with others, and unmet expectations.
- **Role transitions:** circumstances in which your life changes, such as retiring or having a baby.
- **Grief and loss:** an emotional reaction to a major loss through bereavement.
- **Interpersonal sensitivity:** difficulty starting or keeping relationships going.

WHAT ABOUT MEDICATION?

It is quite common to use IPT alongside medications such as antidepressants, and for some people this may have advantages over receiving either treatment alone. If medication is being prescribed for you, please be sure to inform your therapist about the medications and any changes to them.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT TO HAPPEN OVER THE COURSE OF TREATMENT?

In the first sessions of IPT, you and your therapist will spend time talking about the important relationships in your life and their connection to your depression. Your therapist will work with you to complete an Interpersonal Inventory, which is a review of your key relationships, looking at their strengths and problems. This will help you both to identify those relationships which it would be most useful to focus on during therapy. At the end of the initial sessions you and your therapist will agree a contract, outlining the focus of the work for the remainder of the sessions.

During the middle sessions of treatment, you and your therapist will discuss your agreed main area of interpersonal difficulties and work on making positive changes. Familiar tasks during these sessions will include monitoring current relationship triggers for depression, working on improving communication, and discussing your emotional reactions to your relationship problems.

When concluding therapy, you and your therapist will discuss feelings about therapy ending and the progress you have made during the treatment. You should also spend some time planning ahead for any other problems you anticipate coming in the future and how to use the new skills and supports you have developed.