

CPJA statement on its members' psychotherapeutic approach

All members of the Council for Psychoanalysis and Jungian Analysis believe that unconscious processes shape our behaviour and our lives. Broadly speaking this means that we don't know as much about ourselves as we think we do. The unconscious is, as the word suggests, 'un'-conscious but manifests in dreams, symptoms and patterns of behaviour. Often we know these patterns are damaging to our selves and others, but we feel powerless to change them. More positively, the unconscious is also a source of creativity and imagination. While psychotherapy attempts a greater understanding, its entire contents can never be known.

This kind of psychotherapy is the classic 'talking therapy', though these days the use of the couch is not as universal as it once was. The psychotherapist provides a containing framework within which exploration of personal issues can take place. The relationship between the psychotherapist and the patient/client is at the heart of such work. Early patterns of relationship are often mirrored in this relationship, providing a framework for the work.

This form of psychotherapy can be quite demanding in that it does not involve the patient/client being given advice or told what to do. Indeed, the whole idea is to enable the person to gain more control of their own life and to live in their own individual way.

Members of the CPJA work with people with a very wide range of concerns, such as depression, anxiety, sexual and relationship problems, conflicts at work or in education, and loss of a sense of meaning and purpose in life. However, it is not necessary to have a specific problem but simply desire to undertake a journey of discovery.

The therapy, which may be in an individual or group setting, usually takes some time. In part, this is because defences that have been built up within the personality over time, as protections against emotional pain, have become problems in themselves. They need to be understood and let go of gradually. This way the patient /client may achieve a greater awareness of long-standing conflicts and deep-rooted problems and so feel more free in their lives and their relationships.

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