**What is Psychodynamic Psychotherapy?**

Psychodynamic therapy, also known as insight-oriented therapy, focuses on unconscious processes as they are manifested in a person’s present behavior. The goals of psychodynamic therapy are a client’s self-awareness and understanding of the influence of the past on present behavior. In its brief form, a psychodynamic approach enables the client to examine unresolved conflicts and symptoms that arise from past dysfunctional relationships and manifest themselves in the need and desire to abuse substances.

Several different approaches to brief psychodynamic psychotherapy have evolved from psychoanalytic theory and have been clinically applied to a wide range of psychological disorders. There is a body of research that generally supports the efficacy of these approaches.

Psychodynamic therapy is the oldest of the modern therapies. (Freud’s psychoanalysis is a specific form and subset of psychodymanic therapy.) As such, it is based in a highly developed and multifaceted theory of human development and interaction. This chapter demonstrates how rich it is for adaptation and further evolution by contemporary therapists for specific purposes. The material presented in this chapter provides a quick glance at the usefulness and the complex nature of this type of therapy.

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