
Therapeutic Approaches used in Consultation

Person-centred approach: This provides the experience of another person in your life (or your child's life) offering authentic and genuine interaction and unconditional positive regard and empathy for given the situation or challenges faced. This experience may be unavailable to you (or your child) to some extent in your current family life and/or professional life or your child's education or school life. In this space, you (and/or your child) can achieve greater understanding yourself and your experiences. This includes your circumstances, self-concept, how you (or they) and others function in interaction or in relationships, explore your (or their) experience, memories, insecurities, emotional and/or practical needs, risks or opportunities, increase your (or their) self-expression and/or bring about some other change in your (or their life) or acceptance

**Based on the work of America psychologist Carl Rogers*

Solution focused approach: This involves focusing on the present and the future as opposed to focusing on the past. It introduces new thinking and behaviour for some in understanding 'mindsets' and what factors, experiences or people in our lives make us think and/or behave in a certain way. Self-awareness and commitment to practising a *positive* or *growth* mindset in the face of hardship, and taking responsibility for our thinking, feelings and behaviour are key in this approach. The process involves identifying or rating where you (or your child) are at present and how you (or they) would like to be. Exploring readiness, resources available and visualising a future-self leads to longstanding, positive change. This approach prioritises solution-finding, planning next steps, trying them out in small, achievable steps and reviewing outcomes in the process of self-development

**Based on the work of Austrian psychotherapist Steve de Shazer and Korean America psychotherapist Insoo Kim Berg*

Positive psychology: This involves developing the self by identifying you (or your child's) signature strengths and using them more effectively and/or building upon them. This way of seeing is different to what tends to be prevalent in families and wider communities when someone struggles, or problems arise – a focus on identifying what is *wrong* with you (or your child) and/or labelling you (or them) as different or with a 'disorder' or a 'mental illness'. Central to this approach is exploring our environments or the 'systems' in which we live, learn and work. Then, identifying what *works* in enabling you (or your child) to thrive, not just survive. Thriving involves 'flow' and being 'in the zone of proximal development' to achieve our aspirations. This involves identifying values, future desires or passions, personal resources and key people, skills and talents and the next steps required to broaden or develop these. Building blocks of wellbeing in this model include feeling good (positive emotions), being absorbed in action (engagement), being authentically connected to others (good relationships), finding a purposeful existence (meaning) and a sense of accomplishment (achievement). Reviewing these building blocks ensures that others better understand you (or your child). This increases inclusion, minimises stress providing opportunity to recover from responses to chronic stress (anxiety and/or depression) and improves resilience when faced with unavoidable stressors or challenges

**Based on the work of America psychologist Martin Seligman and Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Adapted to include the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky*

Cognitive behavioural approach: This involves identifying how your (or your child's) beliefs, thoughts and attitudes affect your (or their) feelings and behaviour. 'Cognition' refers to what you (or your child) think and/or feels and 'behaviour' refers to the things you (or they) do as a result. Negative thinking can be noted, challenged and unlearned through self-awareness, visualisation and practice. This can lead you (or your child) to change how you (or they) think, see yourself, others and future challenges or problems. This is useful for those that experience 'inner chatter', rumination, fixed, intrusive or negative thoughts or 'paralysis by analysis' where over-thinking or worrying leads to emotional or cognitive exhaustion, procrastination, indecision or making poor or easy choices

**Based on the work of American psychiatrist Aaron Beck, South African psychologist Arnold Lazarus, Canadian-American psychologist Albert Bandura and others*

Attachment-informed approach: This involves exploring how you (or your child) learns to become your current selves. Our genes (nature) and experiences (nurture) are the 'conditions of possibility' that *make* us. Critical in this are the life stories of our parents and grandparents (epigenetics) and their behaviour towards us (or whomever) raised us from infancy and childhood. This process involves understanding our past and that how we think or and what we do is *learned* in key relationships and experiences. Our subsequent thinking and our behaviour are therefore both *strategic*, or in other words *organised* and *self-protective* and *function* in our onward relationships in adolescence and adulthood. These strategies reflect the meaning we made of our past experiences and our efforts to cope with anything 'bad' including being neglected, coercively controlled, threatened, abused or any other harmful experiences. In this way, understanding *why* we (or others we know) might think and act the way we (or they) do, enables us to bring about change in how we think and what we do *next*. This is not easy 'work' on the self. However, this new understanding can bring about significantly positive change in ourselves and our current and future relationships

**Based on the work of British psychiatrist John Bowlby, American-Canadian psychologist Mary Ainsworth, American psychopathologist Patricia Crittenden, Italian psychiatrist Andre Landini and others. Adapted to include ideas from French philosopher Michel Foucault*

Mindfulness: This involves techniques to help you (or your child) to increase self-awareness in the situation or challenges faced or in life generally. This helps you (or them) to identify and process thoughts, feelings and body sensations. Then to increase self-control or better self-regulate, or simply to accept and tolerate negative experiences knowing that they will pass. Mindfulness is useful for those who distance themselves from others or from themselves and tend to avoid or minimise feelings or problems, or do not *know* how they feel. In contrast, it is useful for those who tend to over-respond to their emotions without thinking leading to impulsive behaviour. This present-moment awareness is achieved through stillness and controlled breathing, then evoking the senses available: sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, temperature, space, movement. This 'grounds' us to see and accept our current self and our reality and then to cope with whatever challenges we face. Practice over time is effective in increasing self-acceptance, engagement in life, connection with others and resilience when faced with inevitable challenges and recovery from stress

**Based on the work of American biologist Jon Kabat-Zinn*
