

**Person-centred approach:** This provides you with the experience of another person offering authentic interaction, unconditional positive regard and empathy given the situation or challenges you face. This experience may be unavailable to some extent in your current family life, professional life or social life. In this space, we can achieve greater understanding of your self and your experience. Conversation can get 'deep'. This might be from exploring your sense of *self*, your current situation and life events and how you function in relationships, to talking about your real insecurities, weaknesses or emotional and/or practical needs, or any risks or opportunities you face. This is not easy, but supported conversation in this way can increase your self-expression or change aspects of yourself or your life if that is possible and what you want. Otherwise, we can decide instead to work towards accepting aspects of yourself and your life that can not change. *\*Based on the work of America psychologist Carl Rogers*

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**Solution focused approach:** This involves focusing on the present and the future as opposed to focusing on the past. This may introduce to you a *new* way of thinking and/or behaving, understanding 'mindsets' and what factors, experiences or people in your life that *make* you think and/or behave in a certain way. Three things are key in this approach. 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. The process involves identifying or rating where you *are* today and how you would like to be. This includes exploring your readiness to change, identifying the resources available to you and visualising a positive future-self. Therapeutically, this can lead to longstanding, positive change for you. 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*

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**Positive psychology:** This involves developing yourself by identifying your signature strengths and using them more effectively and/or building upon them. This approach is different to what tends to be prevalent in families and community services when an individual is struggling to cope or to adapt, or if other problems arise. Mental health services tend to focus on weaknesses or what is *wrong* with someone and/or the process of categorising or labelling or their difficulties as *disordered* in whatever way leading to a *diagnosis*. This *medicalisation* of our difficulties is now taken for granted in four family life, education and work. Central to this approach is exploring your environment or the 'systems' in which you live, learn and work. Then pin pointing what *works* in enabling you to thrive not just survive. Thriving involves 'flow' or being 'in a zone of proximal development' to achieve whatever you are working towards (if anything). First steps are to identify your values, what you really want, what personal resources you have, skills and talents and the people who can/might support you. Therapeutically, this approach extends to building blocks of wellbeing. These involve you feeling good (with positive emotions), being absorbed in action (engaged in activities), being authentically connected to others (in good relationships), finding a purposeful existence (making life meaningful) and a sense of accomplishment (achieving something along the way). Reviewing these building blocks is important. It ensures that you take enough time and space to recover from what may be an understandable response to chronic stress (anxiety and/or depression) and to improve your resilience when faced with unavoidable stressors or challenges. This positions you better to live the life you want

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on your terms. \*Based on the work of American psychologist Martin Seligman and Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.

*Adapted to include the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky*

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**Cognitive behavioural approach:** This involves identifying how your beliefs, thoughts and attitudes affect your feelings and behaviour. 'Cognition' refers to what you think and/or feel, and 'behaviour' refers to the things you do as a result. Negative thinking can be noted, challenged for their *truth* and unlearned through self-awareness, visualisation and practice. Therapeutically, this can support you to change how you think, see your self, others and how you *see* future challenges or problems. This is useful if you tend to over-think negatively, ruminate about worries or to be stuck in a pattern of intrusive or negative thoughts. Any of these can lead to emotional or cognitive exhaustion, procrastination, indecision or a tendency to make 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

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**Attachment-informed approach:** This involves exploring how you *learn* to become your present self. Our genes (nature) and experiences (nurture) are the 'conditions of possibility' that *make* us. Critical in this, are the experiences of your parents and grandparents (epigenetics) and their behaviour towards you - or that of whoever raised you from infancy and childhood. So, this process involves understanding your past. Specifically, that how you think or how you behave is *learned* within key relationships and experiences. This means that your thinking and behaviour are *strategic*. In other words, how you think and behave have been developed over time and *organised* to be *self-protective*. These strategies reflect the meaning we made of our past experiences and our efforts to cope with anything 'bad'. This includes being neglected, coercively controlled, threatened, abused or any other harmful experiences. In this way, understanding *why* you might think and act in the way that you do, enables you to bring about change in how you think and what you do *next*. Therapeutically, this is not easy 'work' on the self. However, this new understanding can bring about significantly positive change in yourself and your 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

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**Mindfulness:** This involves techniques to help us to increase self-awareness in a situation or in challenges we face or in life generally. This helps us 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 of us 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 of us who tend to over-respond to our 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. Therapeutically, 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

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