

Healthshare Q&A

Q1. What is the difference between a Psychotherapist and a Psychologist?

Fundamentally the difference is in the learning or areas of study. A student studying psychology can choose to become a psychotherapist and go on to see clients. A student who sets out to study psychotherapy will be trained specifically to conduct face to face or group therapy very early in their training. Very few graduates of psychology will go on and see clients – the field of psychology is so vast and diverse. The psychologists who do choose to see clients will typically utilise cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) as their primary modality. Psychotherapist's may specialise in a certain modality or use an eclectic modality mix depending upon a client's needs. Each client comes with distinct issues and needs and may not necessarily respond to the statistically derived principles from conducted scientific research studies.

I also sense that there is a convergence of; 'the science of the mind and behaviour' – (psychology) and the neuroscience studies of the 'process of human change and self-awareness' - (psychotherapy). These are exciting times for both skills.

On a personal note I have observed that a psychologist will consider how to modify behaviour and monitor the progress - whereas a psychotherapist will allow the self exploration to discover why behaviour is present and develop a toolkit of coping skills around this self-awareness.

Q2. What advice would you give to someone who's considering which Psychotherapist to see?

This question can be asked of every Psychotherapist as well as clients who are seeking to see a therapist for the first time. Most therapists attend therapy for their own personal reasons or for supervision which is a compulsory requirement to maintain their professional membership.

Firstly, ask for proof of membership to a professional organisation. 2. Enquire how long they have been in practice and if they have experience in dealing with the problem.

The initial session will determine how comfortable you feel about returning. Just on the second point, I would not get too hung up on how long a therapist has been practising – it is generally thought that the longer the better but I have witnessed newbie's who are better therapist's than long-timers. Chemistry is your best guide along with a professional setting where a code of ethics is displayed along with formal qualifications.

Q3. How do I overcome obsession during/after a relationship?

I am usually a very laid-back and care free, happy person. This holds true at the beginning of my relationships as well which is why they usually begin with a great start. However the longer I stay in them I begin to obsess over every little thing. I become jealous, I worry, etc. Then if a relationship ends I continue to obsess about their whereabouts and quite frankly I feel psycho! This has led to a lot of impulsive behaviour which I regret immediately after. Why can't I feel and act normal/sane?

Without knowing any more than what is spelt out above, my first instinct is around the trust issues you seem to have after a certain period of time in a relationship. Obsessing over details, jealousy and

worry seems to infer 'I don't trust you'. My therapeutic approach may be to lean towards an Adlerian approach to investigate at what stage of life these emotions started to kick in.

What is also apparent is there is a good level of self-awareness going on here. So a reflective therapy rather than a solution-focused approach may be the starting point to identify the triggers and traits that cause the changes in behaviour. Certainly it is possible that CBT (maybe aversion therapy) could be utilised but I would more than likely be tapping into the self-awareness strengths to employ a narrative approach for the follow through therapy.

Why can't I feel and act normal/sane? - Being able to express yourself the way that you do – would suggest that your sanity is not in question – and I am yet to discover who or what 'normal' is. Obsessive behaviour is 'curable' once you become acquainted with your inner-self.

Q4. How do I move on from a relationship when I have so much anger and too many unanswered questions?

Separated last year, but still hold a lot of anger in the separation. Even though it was I that left, I didn't feel loved for some time. But why, I did everything for her, and forgot about me. Yet I think of her every day, remembering things good and bad. Just can't seem to move on.

Anger is a powerful emotion and can develop into inappropriate behaviour if it is not checked. So how do we check it? Let's normalise anger for a sec, it is OK to be angry – it is how we display anger that can get us into trouble. You should allow anger to be part of 'moving on' – say to yourself; 'I feel anger towards her for not loving me after I tried so hard' – then add – 'but I have made a decision to move on'. You need to ask yourself – 'when will I be happy' - also it should be asked - 'who am I living my life for'.

Visualisation technique is a powerful therapeutic intervention tool which may allow a client to visualise a 'preferred future' - along with focusing on a toolkit of coping tools to cater for the unwanted anger issues.

You have suffered a loss and it requires all the 5 stages of grief & loss to be endured until reaching acceptance.