

Fiona Smorag

BSc (Hons) Mental Health Nurse/Nurse Therapist-Interpersonal Psychotherapy

Since qualifying in 2012 I have worked within inpatient mental health services (adults aged 18+) and more recently the perinatal community mental health team at WDHB. During that time I have been introducing Interpersonal Psychotherapy to my clients and have found it works really well as a way to treat depression, anxiety and can be adapted for many other mental health conditions. I am also familiar with ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) and have experience providing CBT Skills as a treatment.

Interpersonal psychotherapy or IPT provides a short term, attachment based psychotherapy that explores your interpersonal relationships and is based on the idea that your mood may also be linked to your relationships. Asking for help when you are distressed can be really hard, and IPT helps to navigate and improve relationships and social networks, see the link between mood and relationships and encourages a sense of autonomy; asking for help from others when needed.

IPT is an evidence based treatment for depression and other mental health issues such as anxiety and eating disorders, it continues to grow as an intervention and can be modified and has evolved over time. IPT can be used as a standalone treatment, or alongside medication.

The categories that are explored within IPT are introduced during the initial phase, and a formulation will be agreed together to determine which category is a best fit in terms of what needs to be addressed. These categories include:

1. Grief – Loss of a loved one
2. Role Disputes – Arguments, communication difficulties, strained relationships with one or more people in your life
3. Role Transition – The experience in moving from one role to another, such as moving house, having a baby, changing jobs etc
4. Interpersonal sensitivities – This relates to feelings of isolation, limited social supports and difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships

The treatment consists of 3 phases:

The first phase

Exploration of your interpersonal world, focusing on the here and now. Although past events may require some examination, most of the work is about who is important to you right now.

The second phase

Closer examination of your relationships, changes you would like to make within them. During this time you will be trying different ways of communicating and see how some of your symptoms may be linked to the relationships you have

The third phase

Looking towards concluding therapy and reviewing your progress. At this time we may suggest having maintenance sessions in 3-6 months' time. The treatment is time limited, usually lasting between 6-16 sessions that are scheduled weekly for the best outcomes.

Sessions are usually 50 minutes long and \$110 per session.