

PDPT- Personality Disorder Psychodynamic Psychotherapy

Overview – What are personality disorders?

Personality disorders involve longstanding patterns in how individuals think, feel, and relate to others, often causing distress and disruption in relationships, identity, and emotional regulation. These patterns typically develop from an interplay of temperament, early relationships, and life experiences.

Rather than focusing on symptom management, this service offers evidence-based **psychodynamic psychotherapy** designed to address the deeper psychological structures that maintain distress. The goal is lasting change—building a more stable sense of self, healthier relationships, and improved emotional regulation.

Area of Focus

- Identity disturbance, chronic emptiness, and difficulties in self-concept
- Repeated patterns of unstable relationships, interpersonal conflict, or fear of abandonment
- Emotional dysregulation, mood instability, or impulsive behaviours
- High-functioning individuals experiencing chronic internal distress or relational difficulties
- Individuals with prior treatment failures or misdiagnoses seeking deeper understanding and change
- Clients with co-occurring neurodivergent traits or developmental trauma requiring nuanced formulation

Age Group

Adolescents (16+) and adults

What to Expect

Treatment begins with a collaborative assessment phase, including structured interviews, narrative exploration, and psychometric tools where indicated. Therapy typically involves one to two sessions per week, with flexibility based on individual need and clinical indications.

The therapeutic relationship serves as the primary space for change, where problematic patterns can be safely explored and reworked. Over time, clients develop increased insight, emotional resilience, and healthier relational patterns, leading to long-term improvements in wellbeing and life satisfaction.

Session Format

1. **Initial Consultation (50 minutes):** Explore goals, expectations, and therapy fit
2. **Assessment Phase (2–3 × 50 minutes):** Structured clinical interviews and personality assessment
3. **Collateral Information (optional 50-minute session):** Interviews with significant others or professionals if appropriate
4. **Feedback and Formulation Session (50 minutes):** Shared understanding of difficulties and treatment focus
5. **Ongoing Psychodynamic Therapy:** Weekly or twice-weekly 50-minute sessions
6. **Review Points:** Periodic reviews to assess progress and refine goals

Our Approach

Our work is grounded in **core psychodynamic principles**, which emphasise understanding unconscious processes, early relational patterns, and internal conflicts. We draw extensively from **Nancy McWilliams’ dimensional model**, which recognises that personality traits exist along a continuum, and that defensive styles, relational dynamics, and internal conflicts are central to understanding a person’s struggles.

Our primary treatment model is **Transference-Focused Psychotherapy (TFP)**, a highly structured and empirically supported approach. TFP focuses on observing and working through

how internal representations of self and others play out within the therapeutic relationship. Through this active, here-and-now process, clients are supported to recognise and integrate split-off or conflicting parts of themselves, leading to more stable identity and improved relational functioning.

We also integrate concepts from **Self Psychology**, with particular attention to empathic attunement and the repair of relational ruptures. This focus helps foster a more cohesive sense of self, especially for individuals who have experienced chronic invalidation or neglect.

In therapy:

- The **therapist** offers a structured, attuned presence, helping the client explore unconscious dynamics, tolerate difficult emotions, and understand repetitive relational patterns.
- The **client** engages in active reflection, developing curiosity about their internal world, while using the therapeutic relationship as a safe space for emotional growth and integration.

This treatment aims to achieve **structural personality change**, supporting greater emotional stability, a more coherent sense of self, and the capacity for secure, satisfying relationships.



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