



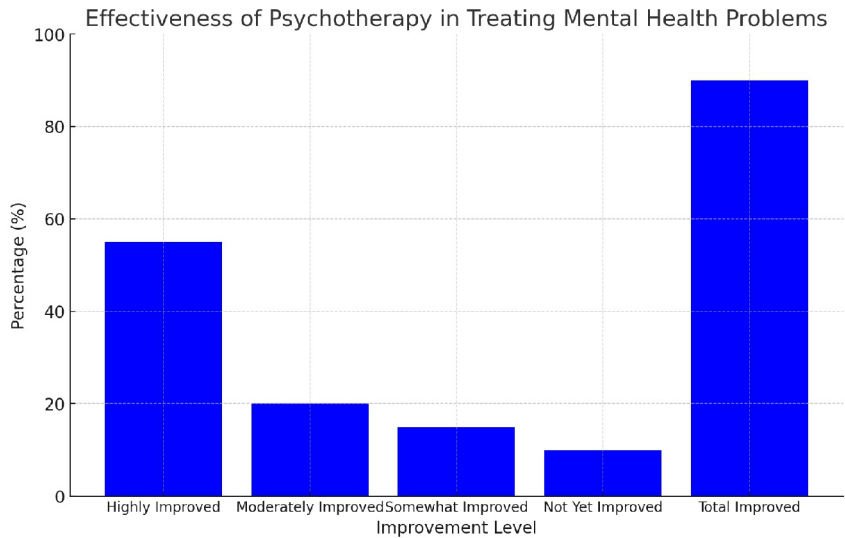
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## Psychotherapy Helps Develop Psychological Skills for Effective Living© Don Rosenberg 2024

Psychotherapists help clients develop many domains of psychological skills.

- social skills
- cognitive skills
- behavioral skills
- interpersonal skills
- emotional intelligence skills
- executive functioning skills
- communication skills

Psychotherapy works. It is a powerful tool for helping to develop a wide range of skills that enhance functioning. Each type of skill addresses different elements of a healthy psychological life. Here's a detailed look at how psychotherapy can aid in the development of these skills.



## Social Skills

Psychotherapy can help clients improve their social skills for interacting with other people. Social skills are crucial for interacting effectively with others in everyday situations.

- Reading social cues and non-verbal communication.
- Engaging in appropriate conversation, including starting, maintaining, and ending discussions, while listening carefully to others.
- Developing assertive behavior without being aggressive.
- Navigating social situations and following norms.
- Relationship-building, fostering better personal and professional relationships.



## Cognitive Skills

Cognitive skills relate to how a person thinks, learns, and remembers. Psychotherapists often use techniques like cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) to enhance cognitive skills.

- Making good decisions.
- Mastering problem-solving strategies.
- Improving memory and the ability to process information.
- Encouraging taking different perspectives to solving challenges and understanding others.
- Using critical thinking.
- Reducing cognitive distortions (illogical thinking and inaccurate conclusions) and irrational thoughts, so one is more logical and rational in thinking.

## Behavioral Skills

Behavioral skills focus on modifying harmful or unproductive behaviors.

- Developing healthy habits and important routines.
- Implementing behavioral changes that promote better mental and physical health – set behavioral goals and execute behaviors towards reaching them.
- Using techniques like behavior modification and reinforcement to encourage desired behaviors.
- Managing impulsivity and staying focused.



Therapy can help at the office or by telehealth.

## Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills are central to how a person relates to and communicates with others.

- Enhancing empathy and understanding of others' feelings and perspectives.

- Improving communication skills, including active listening to others, summarizing what they are saying, and expressing oneself clearly and respectfully.
- Being responsible for how one's communications are understood.
- Managing and resolving conflicts in healthier ways.
- Building and maintaining healthy boundaries.
- Showing empathy and compassion for others.

### **Emotional Intelligence Skills**

Emotional intelligence is key to *recognizing, understanding, and managing one's own emotions and empathizing with others.*

- Identifying and labeling emotions accurately.
- Regulating emotions and adapting to changing emotional circumstances without drama or loss of control of emotions.
- Understanding the impact of emotions on others.
- Utilizing emotional information to guide thinking and behavior effectively.

### **Executive Functioning Skills**

Executive functioning involves higher-order processes that enable goal-directed behavior, such as:

- Organizing, planning, and prioritizing tasks.
- Managing time efficiently.
- Maintaining attention and focus.
- Exercising cognitive flexibility to adapt strategies when needed.
- Monitoring and self-regulating behavior.

### **Communication Skills**

Communication skills are essential for effective interactions and understandings between individuals. These skills lead to improved personal and professional relationships. Here's a detailed look at the components of communication skills that psychotherapy can help to develop.

## Verbal Communication

This involves the words we choose, and how we say them.

- Explaining thoughts clearly and concisely.
- Using assertive communication to express needs and opinions without being aggressive.
- Adapting language and tone to suit different situations and audiences.
- Practicing active listening to fully understand the speaker's message.

## Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal cues often communicate more than words. Psychotherapy can help clients:

- Understanding and using body language effectively, such as eye contact, gestures, and posture.
- Recognizing and interpreting the non-verbal signals of others to better understand emotions and reactions.
- Managing facial expressions to align with the intended message.
- Using appropriate physical space (proxemics) to enhance communication comfort levels.

## Listening Skills

Good communication is as much about listening as it is about speaking. Therapy can enhance listening skills.

- Developing *active listening* techniques, which involve fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and then remembering what is being said.
- Showing feedback that conveys understanding and empathy.
- Encouraging the practice of empathy to better connect with the speaker's emotions and point of view.
- Helping to avoid interrupting and to maintain focus on the speaker without preparing a response while listening.

## Emotional Regulation in Communication

Managing emotions is crucial in effective communication.

- Recognizing emotional triggers that affect communication.
- Learning strategies to calm oneself before and during conversations.
- Expressing emotions in a manner that is clear and appropriate to the situation.
- Using emotional intelligence to enhance interactions and relationships.

## Persuasion and Influence

Effective communication can also involve elements of influence and persuasion, especially in professional settings.

- Using persuasion techniques respectfully and ethically.
- Improving the ability to present arguments and information in a convincing manner.
- Enhancing skills in negotiation and compromise.



## Psychotherapy and Personal Skills

Psychotherapy can help clients improve these skills through structured interventions, practice, and positive feedback. This can be particularly beneficial for individuals with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), executive function problems, or with specific challenges, such as the need for interpersonal skills and cognitive flexibility in those with Autism.

Overall, psychotherapy not only addresses specific mental health symptoms and overall well-being. In

addition, a good therapist also aims to enhance the overall functional abilities of clients by fostering a broad set of life skills. This holistic approach ensures that clients can navigate life's challenges more effectively and achieve a higher quality of life.

So, psychotherapy helps to work on

**1. Ameliorating symptoms**

**2. Reducing impairments, that is, the way symptoms affect how we live our lives**

**3. Improving life skills for a better *quality of life***

**Call with your questions or to make an appointment.**

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**Or use the Contact Us link on our website.**

