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INTEGRATIVE AND LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

# Holistic Psychotherapy

## What is holistic psychotherapy?

Holistic psychotherapy uses traditional methods of psychotherapy along with nontraditional approaches to accomplish the deepest level of healing possible. In holistic psychotherapy, the mind, body and spirit are viewed as one unit, working in harmony and seeking integration and balance. However, stressful life events can bring about disharmony and disconnection, creating symptoms of emotional and even physical discomfort.

At Cleveland Clinic, holistic psychotherapy is delivered by licensed independent clinical social workers or licensed professional clinical counselors with training in therapeutic approaches focused on the mind-body connection.

## What are the nontraditional therapies involved in holistic psychotherapy?

Nontraditional therapies tap into various levels of mind-body-spirit healing. They have a strong spiritual component that complements elements of transpersonal psychology, energy medicine and other traditions of healing.

- **Eye movement desensitization reprocessing therapy (EMDR)** is a modality that involves a form of bilateral stimulation (e.g., eyes moving back and forth) that is performed while the patient processes a traumatic memory. The goal of EMDR is to heal from distressing experiences that are still affecting the patient in the present day.

- **Mindfulness-based cognitive behavioral therapy** combines mindfulness strategies and cognitive approaches to help individuals better understand the interplay between our thoughts, feelings and behaviors.
- **Guided imagery** is widely used to change a patient's overall health by actively creating images of well-being. The technique can be used to help reduce the effects of certain medical and emotional conditions.

### What is traditional talk psychotherapy?

Talk psychotherapy is used for patients who are not ready for nontraditional treatments. This method includes psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive and other well-known approaches used in modern mental healthcare.

### How does the clinician decide which type of therapy to use?

During the first session, which lasts from 45 to 60 minutes, the patient and healthcare provider will establish goals for treatment. Subsequent sessions are usually 45 to 50 minutes long. During each session, the clinician will focus on addressing the patient's specific needs, allowing for greater flexibility between different therapeutic approaches as treatment progresses.

### What conditions can be treated by holistic psychotherapy?

Our holistic psychotherapists specialize in the treatment of physical illness and disease, emotional issues, difficult family dynamics, stage-of-life issues, work-related problems, sexual abuse, trauma, addiction (substances, food and unwanted behaviors), depression, stress and anxiety. Holistic psychotherapy does not take the place of traditional medicine; it simply works in concert with other treatment methods



to help the healing process. Holistic psychotherapy, which primarily looks at specific areas of the body from an emotional, spiritual and energetic perspective, is designed to help heal trauma and restore balance.

### Who can benefit from holistic psychotherapy?

Each patient responds differently to holistic psychotherapy. We recommend that patients approach each session with an open mind to receive the full benefits of the process. Even patients who are under the care of a psychiatrist or are currently taking psychotropic medications can benefit from holistic psychotherapy. However, patients who present with active psychotic processes or pose a danger to themselves or others will be referred to an appropriate facility until they are more able to benefit from this process. Holistic psychotherapy at Cleveland Clinic provides short-term support that can help patients learn therapeutic coping skills that can be incorporated into their lives. If more long-term therapy is needed, referral options will be discussed.

To schedule an appointment for holistic psychotherapy or other forms of integrative medicine, please call [216.448.4325](tel:216.448.4325). Virtual and in-person appointments are available.

For more information on Center for Integrative Medicine services, please visit [clevelandclinic.org/WellnessHP](https://clevelandclinic.org/WellnessHP).

