

The Psychological Skills Service (PSS)

Schema Therapy (Group Intervention)



Information for service users, friends, family, carers, and GPs.

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Is this intervention for me?

You may find Schema Therapy helpful if you:

- Find that your emotional reactions in relationships are often bigger than you would expect and are linked to your early experiences
- Find that you hold strong beliefs about yourself and others e.g. that there is something bad about you., that others will hurt you or leave you, that you have to sacrifice your needs
- Find yourself repeating similar patterns in relationships that mean your needs are not met, e.g. giving up your own needs to please others
- Set such high standards for yourself you keep burning out trying to meet them
- Notice a really critical voice or demanding set of rules that you put on yourself
- Detach or go numb a lot of the time to cope with difficult situations.
- You have started to recognise and link these to how people responded to you in childhood



What's it all about?

The purpose of group schema therapy is to help you identify, build awareness of, and manage your schemas and the coping modes, develop a healthy adult self that is self aware and compassionate in order to get your needs met in a healthy way.

In schema therapy most of the strategies are designed so you can experience emotional change, and uses imagery and chairs to help you to understand parts of yourself.

Schema Therapy helps to:

- Identify unhelpful coping strategies and understand how they have helped us survive but also get in the way e.g. going numb, being overly perfectionist, setting really high standards.
- Understand what triggers feelings of vulnerability and understand how we can develop our own “healthy adult” to provide this part of us with what it needs.
- Recognise that some of the ways we react now are like emotional flashbacks to situations in the past when our needs were not met
- Learn to understand the origin of the critical, demanding and punishing thoughts that we have about ourselves and learn to banish the critical and negotiate and soften those that are unrealistic.
- Understand episodes of rage or anger, and understand that they can be ways to try and get our needs met or protect ourselves and how we can manage them so these needs can get met

Structure and Content

The Schema Therapy group takes place over roughly a six month period (around 24 weeks). The structure will be adjusted to meet the needs of the group, therefore, the following information is only a guide and may change. The programme is based on an evidence based workbook "Brief schema therapy workbook: experiential strategies for group and individual psychotherapy".

Before the group begins you will be invited to an individual session to discuss the program, the schema model, set some schema specific goals and answer any questions you have. Before this session, you will be sent two questionnaires that help us to understand your core schemas and schema modes. Further individual sessions will be scheduled within the programme to review progress and focus on individual experiences and your own formulation. The frequency and timings will be explained in the first session.

The group programme involves 3 phases.

- **Phase 1-** Focusing on experience focused exploration of emotions, schemas and modes. A key focus of these sessions is to ensure that a safe space is created. There is a focus on strengthening the nurturing parts of yourself and your core needs that are not being met.
- **Phase 2-** Connecting with painful emotions, imagery and situations in the past. Using some evidence based imagery and active exercises, problematic events are brought into focus.
- **Phase 3-** How coping modes (coping strategies) impact on your relationships and how you can get your emotional needs met.
- **Phase 4-** Reviewing and integrating what you have learned, on your current and desired relationships. We will look at moving forward how do you continue to move towards doing things you value and be able to be more aware of your reactions and make conscious decisions about your behaviour in relation to yourself, others and the world around you. We will review your goals for therapy.

There will be a follow up session arranged to review progress in therapy and discuss how you can best maintain this

How can I access this intervention?

To access our interventions you must be referred to us. To do this, please visit your GP who can then make a referral via the Primary Care Mental Health Team (PCMH). If you are currently open to a Mental Health Service, please discuss this with them and they may be able to make a direct referral to PSS. If your referral is suitable, you will be contacted by email to ask you to call in and let us know you are still interested. Then you will be sent an appointment by email to offer you an assessment session with one of our clinicians to explore which intervention may be best for you. If schema therapy seems the most appropriate for your goals this will be discussed with you



Contact Details



Tel: 01733 746811

17 Bridge Street, Peterborough, PE1 1HJ.

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Cambridge, CB4 1PX.

Newtown Centre, Nursery Road,
Huntingdon, PE29 3RJ

Agenoria House, Churchill Road, Wisbech,
PE13 3AB

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I can't attend a session?

Before you start you will be given information about how to let us know if you can't attend sessions. We provide an email and telephone number to call. For group sessions we cannot repeat the group if you miss it but we can send materials.

Where will appointments take place?

All group and individual sessions currently take place on Microsoft Teams. Individual sessions may be offered face-to-face if necessary. These will take place at Peterborough Town Hall or Chesterton Medical Centre, depending upon your location.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

For information about CPFT services or to raise an issue, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on Freephone 0800 376 0775, or e-mail: palsandcomplaints@cpft.nhs.uk

Out-of-hours service for CPFT mental health service users

Please call **NHS 111** for health advice and support.

If you require this information in another format such as braille, large print or another language, please let us know.

Your paragraph text



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CPFT supports the **HeadtoToe Charity** – visit www.HeadToToeCharity.org for details on how you can help

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