CHATELAINE

What you need to know about 3 different types of therapy

What kind of therapy is right for you? Here, a field guide to three of the more common types.

By Katie Underwood
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So you've decided to see a therapist. First of all, welcome to the first day of the rest of your well-adjusted life! Seco you've got some choices to make. Not all therapeutic techniques are created equal — maybe you'd like to spend a t venting, or maybe you'd like some take-home exercises. Whatever your particular psychological needs, here's wha need to know about three common types of therapies, before booking that first appointment.

Illustration, Sam Island.

Couples therapy

It's prophylactic: "There can be a helpful preventative aspect to couples therapy, even early on, even when you are great distress," says Dr. Richard Harrison, a therapist the Vancouver Couple & Family Institute. But lots of people a

great distress," says Dr. Richard Harrison, a therapist the Vancouver Couple & Family Institute. But lots of people benefit from maintenance or, to use a car metaphor, a tune-up."
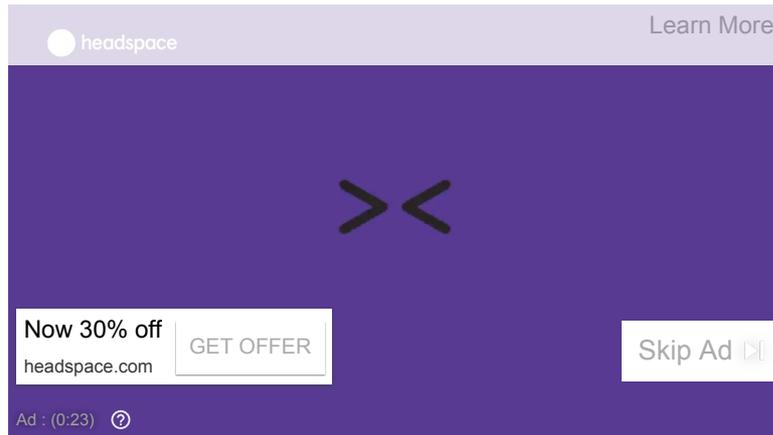
Actually, you're both to blame: "Couples can get caught in negative interactional patterns they create together. An person makes in stressful times in their relationship shape their partner's context. It's about getting that conflict t decrease, helping patients tune in to what's going on — how they feel, deep down, in moments of disconnection – build up a more engaged, caring response."

You can go it alone: "Ideally, we want to start with both people [in session] together, but you can expect to come ir own as well. Sometimes, that makes it easier for a therapist to get fuller sense of how people are coping."

Illustration, Sam Island.

Psychodynamic therapy

Everything goes back to your childhood: "The most basic things we learn in our lives happen early on and can carry adult lives," says Dr. Vera Bekes, a psychologist at Blake Psychology in Montreal. "Usually the reasons for our curr behaviour are not conscious — there are elements of our psyche that are in conflict with each other. The psychody approach tries to figure out the past behind the present."

Freud started it: Many of the doc's techniques, such as free association and dream analysis, are still used today. "O he wasn't right about everything — some theories are culturally biased, and only true within his time period and c but his most important contribution was the [emphasis on the] unconscious. Most therapeutic approaches acknow that there is something out of our awareness [causing us pain]."

There is no couch: "Unless you really want to feel comfortable."

Illustration, Sam Island.

Cognitive-behavioural therapy

It's complicated: "Initially developed for treating depression, CBT is a form of talk therapy that looks at the relatio between thoughts, emotions and behaviours in creating low mood." says Dr. Eilenna Denisoff, director at CBT Asse

Toronto. "It's about recognizing unhealthy patterns, like black-and-white thinking, and helping people change th strategies for everyday life,"

It involves homework: "This includes tracking your moods and behavioural components — so instead of staying h your head under the covers, you're purposely going outside, exercising, socializing, anything you know naturally improve your [outlook]."

It's short-term: "About 10 or 12 sessions on average. We want patients to be independent going forward."

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