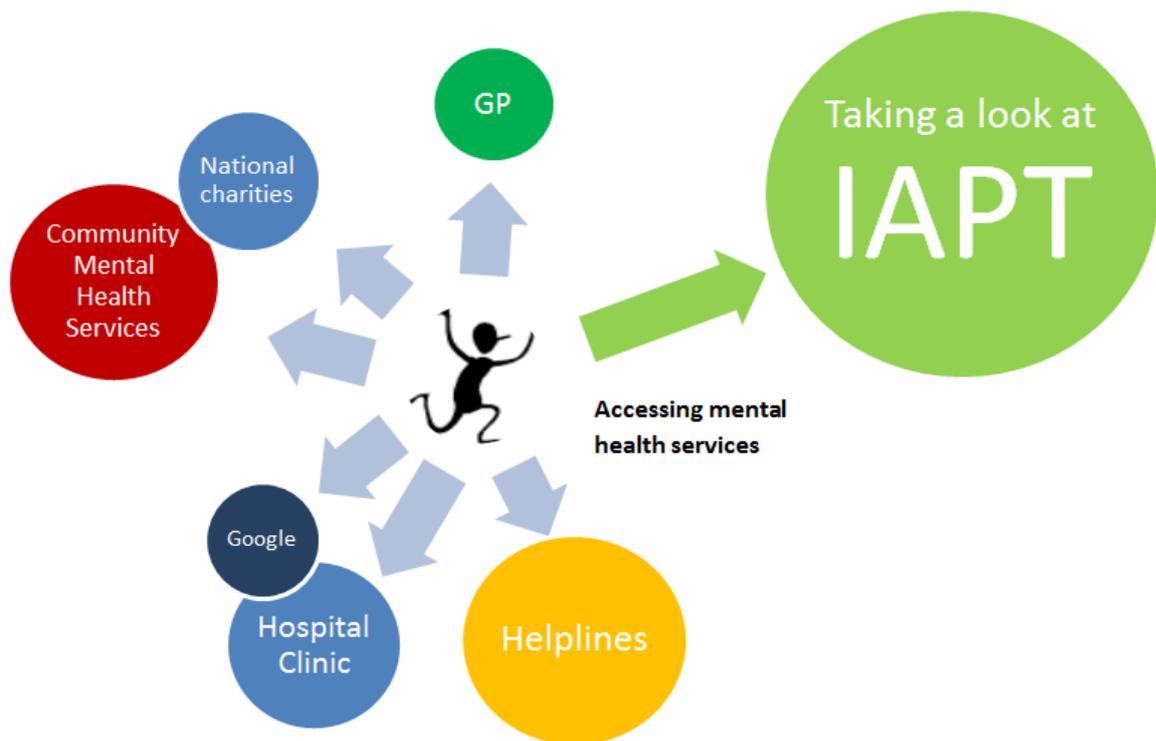


Improving Access to Psychological Therapies

Guidance for faith and community groups



The aims of this resource

This document aims to improve faith communities' understanding of the professional treatments available to treat mental health problems, particularly depression and anxiety disorders, through the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services provided by the NHS. It also provides some tips on how faith groups can support access to these treatments.

This document is not intended to create clinical expertise. It is presented as a basic guide to with links to further information and resources to help you understand and respond to mental health needs in your community, particularly through the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme.

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Mental health in the UK

- Mental health problems can affect people of any age, race, religion, or income
National Alliance of Mental Illness
- One in four people will experience a mental health problem at some point in their lives
The Office for National Statistics Psychiatric Morbidity report, 2001
- Around one in ten children experience mental health problems
The Office for National Statistics Mental health in children and young people in Great Britain, 2005
- Mixed anxiety & depression is the most common mental disorder in Britain
The Office for National Statistics Psychiatric Morbidity report, 2001
- Depression affects around one in 12 of the whole population.
The Office for National Statistics Psychiatric Morbidity report, 2001
- Mental illnesses are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing
'Can We Talk?'
- Mental illnesses are treatable

..However, many individuals do not seek treatment and common mental health disorders continue to go unrecognised.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Faith and mental health

Mental Health problems are very common, and affect how people think and feel about themselves and others, how they interpret events, how they learn, how they cope with life events and how they develop and sustain relationships. They range from feeling 'a bit down' to common disorders such as anxiety and depression, and in some cases, to more serious long-term conditions.

There are many barriers that can prevent people from asking for advice or accessing helpful services, including stigma, discrimination, fear of being isolated or of being misunderstood. There might also be issues like language difficulties, or a lack of understanding of the different treatments and options that are available.

Faith and community groups can have a significant impact on how mental health issues are viewed and treated within the community.

Faith groups are sources of support, strong social networks, and often long held trust relationships between leaders and their community. There are many ways that faith communities can provide care and support to those in their congregations who are

suffering from depression or anxiety, and spirituality, religion and meditation can be critical to recovery from mental health issues.

There is also an important role for professional care and medication in the treatment of mental health problems. There are lots of places that people can go to receive support for mental health problems, but evidence shows that in some communities, faith leaders are the first point of contact. Supporting access to professional treatments is one way that faith communities can care for those with mental health issues.

Professional Treatments

The two most common forms of treatment for common mental health problems are **talking treatments** and **medication**.

- Talking treatments provide a regular time and space to talk about troubles and difficult feelings with a trained professional, aiming to help people to understand and change feelings and behaviour.
- Prescription medications aim to ease the most distressing symptoms to allow people to function at work, look after children or take part in their normal activities.

One way to seek advice and receive **talking treatments** is through the government funded programme to increase access to psychological therapies (IAPT), which is described in this booklet.

Talking Treatments can help people

- Improved coping skills
- Increased self confidence
- Lifting of mood
- Overcoming fears, panic or shyness
- Practical strategies for dealing with problems
- Being able to move forward

What is IAPT?

IAPT stands for **‘Improving Access to Psychological Therapies’**. It is a national initiative providing *free* mental health services, which aims to make it easier and quicker for people that have difficulties with anxiety and depression to get the help they need. Some people use IAPT for practical problem solving or help dealing with stress, others for treatment for mental health problems or someone to talk to.

1. Patients can be referred by their GP, another health professional or social worker, or can **self-refer** by visiting the website below.

2. Once referred, the patient is called and booked in for a structured 30 minute telephone conversation to assess their needs. Alternatively, some services may offer a face-to-face assessment.

3. Once the assessment has been completed clients are offered the most appropriate support for their needs.

To find out where local IAPT services are located, and who is providing them, go to the IAPT website:

www.iapt.nhs.uk/services

Common mental health problems treated by IAPT

IAPT services treat the following conditions:

- Depression
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Social Phobias
- Panic Disorders
- Agoraphobia
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders

What therapies are available through IAPT?

IAPT offers different types of support which are approved by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) or have a substantial evidence base, such as:

- One-to-one Therapy
- Guided Self-Help
- Computerised On Line Therapy
- Behavioural Activation
- Graded Physical Exercise
- Psycho-educational Groups
- Counselling

The type and length of a therapy depends on the severity of the condition and a person's individual needs. Different kinds of therapy work well for different people.

There is more information about some of these therapies in the *glossary* section in the back of this booklet.

The role of the faith community

How can faith and community groups help to..

...combat stigma and ignorance around mental health?

...guide people towards the right advice and services?

■ Speaking honestly and openly about mental health

Often the fact that it's difficult to talk about mental health problems can be one of the hardest parts of having a mental illness. It can lead to the loss of friendships, feeling isolated, not seeking help and slower recovery.

When people believe mental health problems are shameful and should be hidden this prevents GPs, health professionals, or others in a position to help or provide information from doing so.

Talking about the cultural and social themes around mental health, depression and anxiety in a faith community can help others to access the help they need.

■ Take notice

Social isolation can prevent people from accessing psychological therapy services. Individuals who have recently arrived in the UK may have little or no understanding of the availability of services provided in this country and may become isolated from many statutory services, including the wider health services.

■ Ask questions

People will want support in different ways, for example, those who struggle with English may need help in describing their problems in a way that accurately communicates the seriousness of those problems; others may want support in approaching mental health services.

■ Helping to shape local services

You can help to shape local services so that they reflect and respond to the needs by:

- Providing information: Some cultures hold different beliefs about the causes and treatments for mental health issues. If you feel that your local IAPT services are not aware of issues faced in your community you could provide them with information that helps to engage those they are not reaching;

- Providing commissioners and IAPT service providers with useful feedback to help IAPT services improve the way they encourage engagement.

- *Improving awareness of psychological therapies*
It can be daunting to engage with services that you do not fully understand. Raising awareness of what psychological therapies are, and what is involved in receiving them, is key in overcoming this barrier.

- *Signposting individuals to IAPT services*
Find out where local IAPT services are, and who is providing them. Consider signposting this through leaflets or phone numbers in your place of worship.

You can do this through the IAPT website:

www.iapt.nhs.uk/services

Glossary

Explaining the therapies

Once a person has had initial contact with local IAPT services a 'Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner' (PWP) or 'High Intensity Therapist' will talk with them about any life difficulties they may be experiencing with the aim of thinking about resources or treatments that might be helpful.

IAPT offers therapies that have been approved by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), an independent body established to identify the most effective ways to treat ill health and promote wellbeing.

Certain psychological treatments are recommended, based on many years of clinical research, which have demonstrated that "talking therapies" can be as helpful as medication to treat anxiety and depression. The recommended treatments are referred to as "evidence-based treatments" because of the research that has proved their effectiveness.

There are different types of therapies to address different levels of need, so the type of therapy and duration of sessions will depend on a person's individual needs.

Visit the FaithAction '**Friendly Places**' pages to see videos and resources for guidance on how talk about mental health in your community, and for Top Tips on how to promote a Mental Health Friendly Faith Setting:

www.faithaction.net/friendlyplaces

Some therapies, known as low intensity interventions are provided for people with ‘mild to moderate’ levels of depression and anxiety – these include:

Guided Self-Help.

Guided self-help is a way of supporting people with mild feelings of depression or anxiety. This uses self-help materials (in the form of booklets/worksheets) and encourages you to work through the materials and set goals on a weekly basis as agreed by yourself and your Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner.

Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (cCBT).

This is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy provided by an interactive computer programme. The programme can be accessed in your own home or on a PC in your local library. cCBT is offered by our Online Support Practitioners who you will have regular appointments with you to follow your progress towards recovery.

Other low-intensity interventions include;

Psycho-educational groups: a specific type of group therapy that focuses on educating clients about their disorders and ways of coping

Graded physical exercise: physical activity that starts very slowly and gradually increases over time

Behavioural activation: focuses on activity scheduling to encourage patients to approach activities that they are avoiding

There are a variety of therapies that IAPT offers for those with moderate to severe depression or anxiety. The main type of therapy IAPT supports is called Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

CBT has been found to be very effective in helping people that feel low or anxious. It aims to help you look at different aspects of your problem and understand how your thoughts, feelings and behaviour are linked.

CBT is different than traditional counselling since the sessions tend to be focused on one or two target problems. The aim is for you to learn new skills to help you cope with difficulties. You might be asked to try your new skills outside the sessions so that you can practice and grow in confidence.

Length and frequency: Individual CBT can be from 16 – 20 sessions over 3-4 months

Other talking therapies include...

Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT)

The main focus of IPT is on relationship problems and on helping the person to identify how they are feeling and behaving in their relationships. When a person is able to deal with a relationship problem more effectively, their psychological symptoms often improve. IPT typically focuses on the following relationship difficulties:

- Conflict with another person
- Life changes that affect how you feel about yourself and others:
- Grief and loss:
- Difficulty in starting or keeping relationships going

Length and frequency: the number of sessions will depend on the problems you have and the setting you are being seen in. IPT is often offered over 16 sessions, but sometimes it is offered over fewer sessions

To find out more you can visit
www.interpersonalpsychotherapy.org.uk

Brief Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy (DIT)

DIT is a form of brief psychodynamic psychotherapy developed for treating depression. It is particularly helpful for people with emotional and relationship problems, especially if these are linked to previous relationship difficulties.

DIT is based on the idea that when something is very painful we can find ourselves trying to ignore it. Most of the time we know when we're doing this but sometimes we can bury something so successfully that we lose sight of it completely.

DIT aims to help people by focussing on certain key aspects of someone's current relationship patterns. If these can start the change, a person is more able to sustain intimacy and closeness with others and their depression lifts.

Length and frequency: The number of sessions will be decided with a therapist – usually it is around 16 sessions.

Couple Therapy for Depression

Couple Therapy is an approach that can help both people in a relationship with the emotional difficulties that sometimes flow from problems between partners, especially when one or both people are depressed.

Research has shown that couple therapy helps people with depression when they are in relationships that are experiencing difficulties. Improving your relationship through working together on the things that create unhappiness, helps both you and your partner move on from stuck and often hostile patterns of interaction.

Everyone's therapy will be a bit different but typically the couple therapist aims to help you and your partner open up the issues that seem to be troubling you both.. Together, you will decide on new ways to relate to each other, gaining a greater understanding along the way of your own and your partner's feelings.

Length and frequency: There may be some variation in the number of sessions you are offered depending on your local services; on average there will be 6 face-to-face sessions.

Counselling for Depression

Counselling tends to see depression as primarily an emotional problem. Being overly critical of ourselves, feeling we are worthless and being left with unresolved feelings from difficult relationships can make us feel low and depressed.

Counselling aims to help people get in touch with the feelings underlying their depression, to express these, make sense of them and develop new ways of looking at themselves and the world around them. This is achieved by counsellors focusing on how you feel and understanding your situation from your point of view. The Counsellor is not there to tell you what to do but to help you to explore what you wish to talk about in a thoughtful and understanding manner.

Length and frequency: There may be some variation in the number of sessions of counselling you are offered according to the way your local service is run. Typically, people with mild to moderate depression might receive about 6–10 sessions over 8–12 weeks, people with moderate to severe depression may receive up to 20 sessions.



FaithAction is a national network of faith-based and community organisations and a Strategic Partner to the Department of Health. FaithAction works to provide support, advice and training for its members, as well as partnering with local and central governments to highlight the contributions made by these organisations to their communities.

For more information visit

www.faithaction.net

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