

Interpersonal therapy in acute depression

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Interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) is one of the few psychological methods whose efficacy has been demonstrated for affective disorders. The approach was originally designed specifically for the outpatient treatment of acute unipolar depressive episodes. Since the method has proven to be successful, it has been modified in many ways e.g. for the inpatient setting and treatments for numerous mental disorders.

IPT conceptualizes depression as a multifactorial psychiatric disorder that develops in an interpersonal context. The therapeutic work therefore focusses on the current circumstances of the person's life, which are related to depressive episode (e.g. partnership conflict, change of roles in the context of maternity or caring for a relative). The therapeutic work takes place in the here and now. The patient is helped to deal with interpersonal problems, to develop appropriate social skills to cope with its difficulties and to reduce depressive symptoms. The theoretical basis of the IPT is the interpersonal theory of Sullivan and Bowlby's attachment theory. Specific interpersonal techniques (e.g. communication analysis) as well as techniques of other therapy schools (e.g. actualization of emotions, clarification and roleplaying) are applied.

The aim of the workshop is to give an introduction to the IPT, in particular working with the four different foci *conflicts, change of roles, pathologic grief* and *interpersonal deficits* as well as the work with IPT in the individual and inpatient setting.