

Psychotherapy or personal counseling with a psychotherapist, is an intentional [interpersonal relationship](#) used by trained psychotherapists to aid a [client](#) or [patient](#) in problems of living.

It aims to increase the individual's sense of their own [well-being](#). Psychotherapists employ a range of techniques based on experiential relationship building, [dialogue](#), [communication](#) and [behavior](#) change and that are designed to improve the [mental health](#) of a client or patient, or to improve group relationships (such as in a [family](#)).

Psychotherapy may also be performed by practitioners with a number of different qualifications, including pastoral counseling, [psychiatry](#), [clinical psychology](#), [counseling psychology](#), [mental health counseling](#), [clinical social work](#), [marriage and family therapy](#), [rehabilitation counseling](#), [music therapy](#), [occupational therapy](#), [psychiatric nursing](#), [psychoanalysis](#) and others.

Indeed, psychotherapy can increasingly be considered as a profession in its own right, and in [Europe](#) the [European Association for Psychotherapy](#) is promoting this view and has set professional training standards to this effect. However, some European countries have passed laws about psychotherapy that restrict its practice to the professions of [psychology](#) and [psychiatry](#); Austria has a law that recognizes multi-disciplinary approaches; other European countries have not yet regulated psychotherapy. In the [United Kingdom](#), psychotherapy is voluntarily regulated by the [United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy](#).

Psychoanalysis (or **Freudian psychology**) is a body of ideas developed by [Austrian](#) physician [Sigmund Freud](#) and continued by others. It is primarily devoted to the study of human psychological functioning and behavior, although it can also be applied to societies. Psychoanalysis has three applications:

1. a method of investigation of the mind and the way one thinks;
2. a systematized set of theories about human behavior;
3. a method of treatment of [psychological](#) or [emotional](#) illness.^[1]

Under the broad umbrella of what is psychoanalysis, there are at least 22 theoretical orientations regarding the underlying theory of understanding of human mentation and human development. The various approaches in treatment called "psychoanalytic" vary as much as the theories do. The term also refers to a method of studying [child development](#).

Freudian psychoanalysis refers to a specific type of treatment in which the "analysand" (analytic patient) verbalizes thoughts, including [free associations](#), [fantasies](#), and [dreams](#), from which the analyst formulates the [unconscious](#) conflicts causing the patient's symptoms and character problems, and interprets them for the patient to create insight for resolution of the problems.

The specifics of the analyst's interventions typically include confronting and clarifying the patient's pathological [defenses](#), wishes and [guilt](#). Through the analysis of conflicts, including those contributing to [resistance](#) and those involving [transference](#) onto the analyst of distorted reactions, psychoanalytic treatment can clarify how patients unconsciously are their own worst enemies: how unconscious, symbolic reactions that have been stimulated by experience are causing symptoms.