



What is Mentalization Based Therapy?

Mentalization Based Therapy (MBT) focuses on developing a person's ability to recognise what is going on in their own mind and what might be going on in other people's minds. We call this 'Mentalizing'. Mentalizing is sometimes described as "thinking and feeling about thinking and feeling" and/or "understanding ourselves from the outside and others from the inside"

Why is Mentalizing important?

Mentalizing can be very important in enabling us to regulate our emotions and impulses, and in developing fulfilling meaningful relationships.

Who is Mentalization Based Therapy for?

MBT was originally developed to help people with borderline personality disorder. However, MBT can help people who have difficulty in understanding their emotional responses to situations, and who struggle to understand and manage their moods. It can also help those who have difficulty in understanding others and/or have long standing difficulties in developing and sustaining fulfilling relationships.

What does it involve?

Within MBT there is an assumption that mentalizing is a learned skill, which can be developed through therapy. MBT can occur in a group, either exploratory or psycho-educational, in an individual therapy setting, or a combination of these components.

If you choose to engage in mentalization based therapy I will initially spend time with you getting to know the kind of situations which have, tended to provoke strong emotional reactions in you, or which have led to shifts in your mood. I will also work with you to develop a shared understanding (formulation) of your key difficulties, this will include looking at how these difficulties affect and are affected by your relationships. This formulation is designed to help you focus your therapy but is meant to be flexible and is open to reworking throughout your therapy. The way that you experience the therapeutic relationship and/or other people can be explored and discussed in therapy is often a useful vehicle in developing your mentalizing skills.

Further information

If you are interested in receiving MBT please get in touch with me.

Books describing Mentalization Based Therapy have been compiled by Anthony Bateman and Peter Fonagy and/or Jon Allen. There is also a role play on YouTube in which Anthony Bateman demonstrates mentalizing.

For information about the current evidence for MBT see: National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) Guidelines for Borderline Personality Disorder:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG78>