

The analyst helps by fostering the bond with their patients and helping them to become aware of the meanings behind their thoughts. This process can help to refine, correct, reject and modify disturbing thoughts, feelings, and fantasies.

The experience with the analyst is emotional as well as intellectual. For example, some patients may have difficulty trusting their analyst. Discussing this may help them explore their problems with trust in their relationships and everyday lives.

Finding a professional psychoanalyst

Although new credentialing requirements will bring tighter regulation of the profession, the specialist title 'psychoanalyst' is not currently regulated by Australian law; thus, anyone can theoretically present themselves as psychoanalysts even if they have no experience or training. It is therefore essential to find a psychoanalyst through an appropriate professional society.

Graduate psychoanalysts trained under the auspices of the Australian Psychoanalytical Society which is a component organisation of the International Psychoanalytical Association, have undertaken extensive clinical education. Candidates accepted for training must meet high ethical, psychological and professional standards.

How can you decide if psychoanalysis might be the right choice for you?

The best way to explore the possible usefulness of psychoanalysis is to have a consultation with a psychoanalyst.

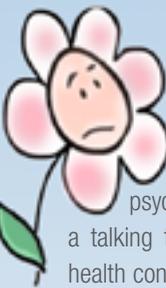
A free psychoanalytical consultation service is available through the Roy Winn Clinic for patients wishing to explore whether psychoanalytic treatment is right for them.

For further information, go to www.thewinnclinic.net

Alternatively, you may wish to discuss the idea with your doctor, who can also assist you with this decision.

How can
Psychoanalysis
help





Information for General Practitioners and their patients about contemporary psychoanalysis

Contemporary psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy is a form of psychological treatment, that is, a talking therapy that can assist people with a range of mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, unresolved grief, and relationship difficulties that have not responded to other forms of treatment, such as medication or cognitive behaviour therapy.

Qualified psychoanalysts come from a range of health professions, and include psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and social workers who have undergone additional, extensive post-graduate training in psychoanalysis that meets international accreditation standards.

Research, particularly research on infant development and research that assesses the outcome of psychoanalytic treatment, supports the current practice of psychoanalysis, which focuses on the connection between our psychological difficulties in adulthood and our unresolved or unsatisfactory experiences in early life. These early difficulties and the emotions attached to these experiences are often not at a conscious level of awareness. They can be re-triggered by current experiences (such as loss of a loved one, job loss or relationship breakdown) in adult life that result in intense distress and confusion that we have difficulty explaining to ourselves and others.

These painful feelings, if unprocessed, can remain in the unconscious mind and continue to influence our current mood and behaviour. They contribute to problems with self-esteem, personality, relationships, and work. Because we are unaware of these processes, common problem-solving techniques – such as seeking the advice of friends and family, reading self-help books, or attending self-improvement classes – often fail to provide relief.

Psychoanalysis helps to bring these experiences and our feelings about them to light through an intensive therapeutic relationship. This relationship offers us the opportunity to re-experience and re-think these past influences on our current lives in new and constructive ways. This process clears the way to our achievement of our true potential in all aspects of our lives.

What evidence tells me that psychoanalysis is effective?

Not all treatments in medicine are effective for everyone who tries them. For example, some people respond well to chemotherapy for cancer and go into remission, while others do not respond well and do not achieve remission. To maximize the possibility of benefit of any given treatment, patients and treatments must be matched as closely as possible. This is also true of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is comparable in its effectiveness to a range of commonly used medical treatments (e.g., the 5-year survival for colon cancer varies between 6% and 74%; for breast cancer, between 22% and 100%). Recently, large studies of the effectiveness of psychoanalysis concluded that if patients are well-chosen, between 60%-90% show significant positive gain and achieve clinically significant change on some or all of the outcomes listed below.

What outcomes can I realistically expect from psychoanalysis?

The outcomes following psychoanalysis or long-term psychoanalytic psychotherapy are not expressed only in terms of specified symptom remission (e.g., less anxious, less depressed, less phobic). This treatment is also concerned with fostering psychological resources that include increases in the capacity to:

- have more fulfilling relationships
- make more effective use of one's talents and abilities
- maintain a realistically based sense of self-esteem
- tolerate a wider range of affect (emotions and feelings)
- understand self and others in more nuanced and sophisticated ways
- face life's challenges with greater freedom and flexibility

The patient–therapist relationship

Psychoanalysis is a longer-term high frequency treatment, which involves being in a close and intense relationship with the analyst. The attachment that the patient develops to the analyst in the course of treatment creates a safe environment in which to reveal personal information.