



**PSYCHODYNAMIC  
INTERPERSONAL THERAPY (PIT)  
SKILLS WITHIN PWP PRACTICE**

**CASE STUDY**

**Emma Salah**

# OBJECTIVES

- Brief introduction to PIT competencies introduced on training days
- To present a specific case study of my experience utilising PIT skills with my client 'Amanda'
- Integrating PIT skills into routine PWP assessment and treatment
- Summary of how PIT has enhanced and broadened my PWP practice



# PIT LEVEL 1 COMPETENCIES

- Using statements rather than questions
- Using a negotiating style
- Picking up cues (verbal, vocal, non-verbal)
- Staying with feelings
- Understanding hypotheses – offered tentatively



# BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON MY CLIENT AMANDA

- Amanda, my client is a 36 year old female, married with 2 young children aged 1 and 3.
- Amanda was referred to me by her GP with depression, she had poor motivation and spent most of the day ruminating.
- Amanda was able to work part-time but had stopped socialising with friends and doing other activities she enjoyed.
- Amanda's depression had been ongoing for the last 12 months and was linked by her GP to the birth of her second child.



# PROGRESS WITH AMANDA PRIOR TO PIT-PWP COURSE



# 1. USING STATEMENTS RATHER THAN QUESTIONS

- Questions sometimes push clients into thinking mode (e.g. 4Ws) and clients can struggle to find an answer. However statements made tentatively facilitate expressions of feeling. E.g. 'that sounds difficult'. Creating an atmosphere of reflection, where feelings emerge rather than a list of facts.
- Using the 4Ws can elicit details, however using PIT skills offers an alternative strategy to explore symptoms and deepen the relationship rather than ask a lot of questions. You will often obtain a similar amount of information in a shorter space of time.



## 2. USING A NEGOTIATING STYLE

- Relaxed and conversational manner in order to develop a good rapport
- Deepens the alliance and enhances collaboration
- Tentative approach to questioning, using curiosity and a willingness to recognize the possibility of being wrong
- Phrases such as 'I wonder' 'this may not be quite right' invite client to correct and refine details



### 3. PICKING UP CUES (LISTENING AND NOTICING)

- Important that the PWP is vigilant and attentive to what the client is experiencing – tune in – notice ‘cues’ that help emphasise how the client is feeling, this can make the client feel understood
- Cues can be ‘**verbal**’ and if picked up indicate feelings
- ‘**vocal cues**’ picking up tonal inflection
- ‘**non-verbal**’ facial expression, eye contact, body language
- ‘**cues in therapist**’ the therapist can sometimes act as a resonating board and pick up the same feelings as the client in session





## 4. FOCUSING ON FEELINGS

- Instead of talking about feelings in an abstract way, as if they belong in the past, an attempt is made to recreate them in the immediacy of the therapeutic environment. The client experiences the feeling and is able to share it with the therapist
- Using the past tense leaves feelings in the past and inaccessible but by focusing on the present the client is able to re-experience feelings and gather deeper information. E.g. 'can we stay with that feeling' 'this feeling is still with you now'.



## 5. UNDERSTANDING HYPOTHESES

- Aim of a hypothesis is to engage the client in dialogue, a conversation about feelings
- Express in tentative manner so can be accepted, rejected or modified by client
- Ways of promoting exploration and understanding of clients mood and feelings. Guess or suggestion relating to clients mood, based on evidence or indication given e.g. cues
- Communicate a desire to understand, not necessarily get it right. ‘ I wonder if’ ‘sort of’ ‘a bit’ make statements less harsh and more conversational



# SUMMARY

- By using the 5 PIT-PWP competencies I was able to explore barriers to BA and cognitive restructuring, deepen our alliance and understanding of Amanda's depression
- Amanda was able to move forward implementing PWP interventions and her PHQ-9 and GAD-7 score reduced out of caseness by the end of treatment.
- At the heart of the PIT-PWP approach is the ability to really listen and tune into what the client is 'saying' and a genuine desire on the part of the PWP to get to know the client as a person, rather than to know a lot of facts about him/her



# INSTANCES WHEN PIT SKILLS HAVE BEEN USEFUL

- When a client is very emotional PIT skills help elicit and explore emotional distress
- When a client is not responding well to questions PIT skills are useful because sometimes it's difficult to pin down the problem
- When I feel stuck and treatment doesn't seem to be working PIT skills are useful in exploring barrier to progress
- PIT skills have helped me form a strong therapeutic relationship with clients through a strong sense of understanding
- Manage difficulties that arise in therapy



## SUMMARY OF HOW PIT HAS ENHANCED AND BROADENED MY PWP PRACTICE

- I have found using the PIT competencies provide the client with a strong sense of being understood, ultimately this leads to greater self disclosure and a stronger working alliance, facilitating information gathering and treatment
- PIT-PWP competencies incorporate specific interpersonal skills that help the rapid development of problem statements, facilitate interventions and help manage difficulties that arise in therapy. They are also a powerful way of deepening the collaborative work with a client.

