

Basic IPT competences

Knowledge of basic principles, rationale and strategies of IPT

Knowledge of the principles and rationale of and for IPT

An ability to draw on knowledge that IPT is a time-limited, focused psychotherapy aimed at reducing symptoms and improving social adjustment and interpersonal functioning

An ability to draw on knowledge that the client's social and interpersonal context are

Ability to maintain a focus on the interpersonal context of the symptoms

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that IPT distinguishes itself from other psychotherapies at the level of its clearly specified and interpersonally focused strategies

Ability to implement IPT in a manner consonant with its supportive and active therapeutic stance

Ability to engage the client in IPT

Application

Ability to develop a therapeutic alliance

An ability to communicate with the client in a direct manner that acknowledges the client's experience

An ability to respond to the client's presenting problems in a curious, non-judgmental manner by:

asking clarifying questions so as to understand the client's perspective without making assumptions

communicating empathic understanding in response to the client's narrative

An ability to identify opportunities for both empathizing with the client's predicament(s) and for noting their strengths through affirming and encouraging statements

An ability to 'normalise' the client's experiences and/or emotional responses, particularly in relation to knowledge about the presenting problem (e.g. 'many people who are depressed feel like withdrawing from others')

Ability to help the client to understand the rationale for IPT

An ability to provide the client with information about the nature of their presenting problem, and of the proposed therapy and its focus

An ability to link the rationale to the client's idiosyncratic experiences and symptom profile

An ability to work with the client to agree a contract that clearly specifies the duration of the therapy, its focus and the expectations of the therapist and client

An ability to encourage the client to discuss their reactions to the proposed therapy and focus

Ability to reframe the client's presenting problems as an illness

Ability to identify an interpersonal problem area that will provide the focus for the middle phase of the therapy

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that a core strategy in the initial phase of IPT is a detailed and systematic review of the client's interpersonal context (i.e. the 'interpersonal inventory'):

Ability to agree a primary focal area that is emotionally resonant for the client and is linked to the onset and/or maintenance of the symptoms

An ability to make use of the interpersonal inventory to identify which interpersonal difficulties are linked with the current symptoms:
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an ability to help the client to feel understood by summarising the salient interpersonal events (and their response(s) to these events) linked to the onset/maintenance of symptoms
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an ability to explicitly connect the proposed focal area(s) to the onset/maintenance of symptoms
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An ability to tentatively share with the client a formulation and focal area that links the diagnosis to the client's current life circumstances and interpersonal context
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An ability to actively engage the client in responding to the proposed formulation and focus:

where the client disagrees with the proposed focus of the work, an ability to openly discuss misunderstandings or different perceptions of the problem, and to work with the client in order to agree how to proceed
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where there are several potential foci, an ability to engage the client in identifying the most pressing concern that has the greatest impact on their interpersonal functioning and symptoms

an ability to recognise when the proposed focus or IPT is not viable
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Ability to identify and set goals

An ability to work with the client to identify and agree realistic therapeutic goals, in the light of:
--

the severity and/or chronicity of their presenting problems

their interpersonal resources

the time-limited nature of the therapy
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Ability to maintain a systematic focus on an IPT interpersonal problem area(s) linked with the onset of symptoms

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that each of the four focal areas (role transitions, role disputes, grief and interpersonal sensitivity/deficits) specifies the strategies required to help the client to resolve the identified interpersonal problems

An ability to draw on knowledge that while IPT usually priorities one primary focal area, it is possible to

Focal area specific competences

An ability to help resolve interpersonal difficulties and relieve symptoms by implementing strategies appropriate to the focal area:

Role Transitions

An ability to help the client to relate their symptoms to a recent life change that has necessitated a role transition
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An ability to help the client to explore the feelings and meanings associated with the role that had to be relinquished, so as facilitate a realistic appraisal of what has been lost:
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an ability to help the client to identify which aspect(s) of the transition they find most problematic (e.g. letting go of the old role or adapting to the new role)
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an ability to help the client mourn the loss of the old role and to relinquish it

An ability to help the client to explore the feelings and meanings about the new role

Interpersonal Deficits/Sensitivities

An ability to help the client to relate their symptoms to problems of social isolation or unfulfilling/impoverished relationships

An ability to identify and specify a particular interpersonal deficit/sensitivity that will provide the focus for therapy

An ability to help the client reconstruct past relationships as the basis for exploring repetitive or parallel problems in these relationships
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An ability to help the client to consider their own expectations
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Ability to identify and explore difficulties in communication

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that throughout all the focal areas the therapist aims to help the client to identify and explore communication patterns so as to help them to communicate more effectively:
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an ability to draw on knowledge that the technique of 'communication analysis' may be used to this end to help the client to focus in detail on a specific interaction
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Application

Ability to identify and clarify negative and/or ineffective communication

An ability to sensitively draw the client's attention to overt and covert disputes/communication problem(s) as they arise in their relationships:

an ability to focus on the way the client communicates with others so as to help them to become aware of:

how they feel in the relationship

the implicit expectations they hold about their relationship with another person
--

how they may undermine the likelihood of gaining support
--

An ability to assess when t

Ability to facilitate the expression and acceptance of a range of emotions

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that throughout the three phases of IPT a core strategy is the exploration of the client's emotional state

Application

Ability to help the client to express, understand and manage their emotions

An ability to carefully track the client's emotional state during the session, and to communicate an understanding of this:

an ability to identify and respond to verbal and non-verbal cues from the client in order to help the client explore and understand their emotions

Ability to encourage interpersonal change in-between sessions

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that IPT is a change-

Ability to engage the client in preparing for ending

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that IPT is a time-limited therapy that explicitly conceptualises the ending of therapy, and separation from the therapist as a role transition, and hence focuses on:
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exploring the client's experience of ending

helping the client to plan for the future post-therapy
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Application

An ability to prepare the client for ending by explicitly referring to the time limited nature of the therapy at the outset and throughout the therapy
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An ability to facilitate the expression of feelings about ending the therapy by:
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acknowledging ending as a time of potential grieving
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normalizing feelings of apprehension or sadness

responding non-
