

## Therapy Does Not Have to Last Forever: An Introduction to Brief Therapy

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**Myth:** You will have to go to therapy for months or years in order to overcome problems

**Myth:** The best therapies take the longest to work

**Myth:** You always have to deal with your past and childhood first before you can learn to cope with current issues

**Myth:** An effective therapist will expect you to lie on a couch and talk, uninterrupted, while they take notes

When I ask people what they expect will happen in psychotherapy, many of them have the same ideas that I had before I knew any differently- you lie down on a couch and talk about your feelings, childhood and problems while a trained clinician sits nearby and takes notes. At some point the therapist might ask a question or two, or add an “hmm” or “I see” from time-to-time. When your session is over, you schedule another one for the following week, go home, and continue this same routine week after week for up to several years. Somehow, through this process of venting, one eventually overcomes their neuroses.

It's not that the people I ask about their ideas of therapy are wrong. In fact, there are a surprising number of mental health professionals that still rely on the cliché “lie-on-the-couch” method of therapy, despite its failure to be proven helpful in scientific studies. What many people do not know is that there are other therapies that have been shown through numerous research studies to be helpful and effective, and they do not require that individuals engage in therapy sessions every week for years on end. In fact, some problems can be solved between 1 and 6 sessions of counseling using models of therapy that are “evidence-based”, or simply put, scientifically proven to work.

A recent article published by the NY Times asserts that treatments such as Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy and family-based therapies like Brief Solution-Focused therapy, have been proven to be effective in treating a wide range of problems (Brown, 2013). It is also pointed out in the article that a 2009 study found that very few psychiatric patients actually receive evidence-based treatments.

Fortunately, it is possible to find treatment that works and to learn to cope with and quickly resolve problems. The licensed professionals at the treatment clinic at Freedom From Fear are all trained in short-term, solution focused therapies that are evidence-based. In addition to being a pioneer in using Cognitive-Behavioral therapy with anxious or depressed Staten Island, New Jersey and Brooklyn residents, the mental health staff at Freedom From Fear has remained up-to-date on other helpful therapy models that

focus on short-term treatment. One such therapy is Solution-Focused Therapy, which is a future-oriented, goal-directed approach that focuses on solutions, rather than the problems that brought one to treatment (Institute for Solution-Focused Therapy).

Below is a list of **some** of the problems that can be resolved using solution-focused therapy:

Panic attacks

A phobia

Mild Depression

A relationship problem

Conflict with a family member or members

Difficulty making an important decision

Budgeting/Financial difficulties

Wanting assistance in making a lifestyle change such as losing weight, quitting smoking, eating healthier, changing careers or going back to school

If you or someone you know is interested in resolving a problem through treatment without making a commitment to months or years of counseling, Solution-Focused Therapy may be the best choice. Feel free to contact the treatment clinic at Freedom From Fear to learn more or to sign up

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