

Couple Therapy for Depression

What does Couple Therapy for depression involve?

Everyone's therapy will be a bit different but typically the couple therapist aims to help you and your partner open up the issues that seem to be troubling you both. Together, you will decide on new ways to relate to each other, gaining a greater understanding along the way of your own and your partner's feelings. Talking openly with your partner about problems for the first time can feel difficult and you may be worried about what your couple therapist thinks about you. Your couple therapist will usually try to get a good picture of what you and your partner are finding difficult in your relationship and how this is affecting you both. You may both be offered a session on your own at the beginning of therapy as some things can be hard to talk about with your partner at first. Although your couple therapist will need to gather some basic information about you and your life, most of the time they will let you take the lead.

Sometimes your couple therapist may suggest ways for your partner and you to improve your communication and this may occasionally involve some "homework". Mostly, however, they will be interested in helping the two of you have a conversation so that you can find your own ways to understand and resolve the problems you are having.

Length and frequency of therapy

There may be some variation in the number of sessions of therapy you are offered according to the way your local service is run. However, it is worth bearing in mind that if you are having some relationship problems and you are depressed, it is recommended that you have up to 20 sessions of couple therapy over a period of six months.

In most NHS services it is likely that you will be seen once a week for about 50-60 minutes. In some cases sessions may be offered on a less frequent basis, for example fortnightly rather than weekly. There should be a clear agreement between you and your couple therapist on these arrangements.

To find out more and to get more information about this specific therapy and what you can expect from your therapist, visit:

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology/CORE/competence_frameworks.htm and read the guide for service users or you may wish to visit the Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships website www.tccr.org.uk

Couple Therapy is an approach that can help both people in a relationship with the emotional difficulties that sometimes flow from problems between partners, especially when one or both people are depressed. There are many different types of couple therapy but what is described here is a particular type of couple therapy that has been developed to help people who are suffering from depression.

People might benefit from couple therapy for many reasons. It may be that the relationship has broken down or that there is anxiety that it might. Sustaining a fulfilling and stable relationship is never easy. Pressures from work, money, children, family tensions and ill health can all contribute to creating problems and these problems can lead to depression and other difficulties for one or both partners. Sometimes couples can't talk to each other and meeting with a couple therapist can open the way to better communication which seems to be a key part of improving relationships.

How does it work?

Research has shown that couple therapy helps people with depression when they are in relationships that are experiencing difficulties. Improving your relationship through working together on the things that create unhappiness helps both you and your partner move on from stuck and often hostile patterns of interaction.

This in turn, can lead to a happier and more fulfilling relationship. Having a happier and more fulfilling relationship often relieves depression which in turn improves your relationship. This positive cycle tends to improve mood and emotional well being.