

Psychosocial therapies for psychoses and bipolar disorders

FAMILY THERAPY

The term »family therapy« covers a wide variety of therapies (e.g. psychoanalysis, newer system theory and behaviour therapy). The treatment methods are correspondingly varied. However, what they do have in common is that a person suffering from a psychological illness is not treated alone but rather in the presence of, or in a group of as many people as possible known to the patient. Systemic family therapy is most often used.

Systemic family therapy is a psychological method that, although primarily oriented to dialogue and behaviour, also uses creative expressive techniques. The therapy is particularly suitable for acute cases of psychological confusion and problems for individual persons as well. »Family therapy« must be distinguished from so-called accompanying family discussions, which serve only to deal with technical issues, information about a patient or comforting of the patient's family members.

Aims of systemic family therapy: :

- *The fundamental aim* is to reinforce the autonomy and self-worth of each individual person or every family member - as well as to strengthen the cohesion with one another, to improve communication and exchange, and to modify damaging relationship patterns .
- *In the area of psychotherapy:* curing of psychological and psychosomatic problems and disorders of all natures
- *In the area of advice:* resolution of problems and conflicts across generations, problems with retirement, decisions, separation and other issues
- *Target groups:* Systemic family therapy works with the entire system as well as partial systems and individual persons. Accordingly, family therapy is geared towards families, couples, groups, organizations and other social systems but also to individuals.

Treatment in terms of family therapy can be performed in an in-patient or an out-patient environment, and does not exclude other forms of treatment such as medication or individual therapies in other therapeutic directions. As a general systemic therapy it is not limited to the family - indeed, employees of institutions such as schools for example can participate in sessions, at the request of those involved. Similarly, systemic family therapy or systemic treatments are not only useful in problems with children and adolescents but also with adults and couples. It is not necessary for an entire family to be involved in therapy, as many problems with children, including those relevant to psychiatry, could be present in single-parent families in particular. In Germany there are now numerous institutes dealing with family therapy and systemic therapy, as well as branches of medical and psychological family therapists.

Text: Adapted from Hans Kowerk and Karsten Groth

Source: Fritz-Michael Sadre Chirazi-Stark, Fritz Bremer, Ingeborg Esterer: Wege aus dem Wahnsinn. Therapien, Begleitung, Selbsthilfe bei psychotischen Erkrankungen. Aktualisierte und erweiterte Neuausgabe, Psychiatrie - Verlag, Bonn 2002..