

EFFICACY OF PSYCHODYNAMIC THERAPY

Home > [Education & Training](#) > [Suggested Reading](#) > Efficacy of Psychodynamic Therapy

Does psychoanalysis or psychodynamic therapy actually work?

There is a common misconception around the world that there is no real evidence that psychoanalysis or psychodynamic psychotherapy actually works. However, this notion is incorrect.


In fact, in the past decade or more, an ever-growing body of evidence has shown that psychodynamic therapy (PDT) and psychoanalysis reduce symptoms as effectively as other treatments, and in some cases the evidence even suggests that the benefits of PDT are more durable than other treatments.


This list points you to work that highlights the research on whether — and, in some cases, how — psychoanalysis and psychodynamic are effective. See below for most of the reviews and meta-analyses on PDT and psychoanalysis that have been published to date.

Note: the links provided in this list go to the "version of record," and may require subscriptions in many cases. Due to copyright rules, we are unable to provide the PDFs of most of these papers. If you would like to recommend additional readings, have PDFs that are authorized for public sharing, or wish to make any suggestions for revisions, please email Dr. Ross Balchin (education@npsa-association.org).

Journal articles and book chapters

Reviews


Abbass, A.A., Nowoweiski, S.J., Bernier, D., Tarzwell, R., & Beutel, M.E. (2014). Review of psychodynamic psychotherapy neuroimaging studies. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 83, 142–147. <http://doi.org/10.1159/000358841> 


Abbass, A.A., Kisely, S.R., Town, J.M., Leichsenring, F., Driessen, E., De Maat, S., Gerber, A., Dekker, J., Rabung, S., Rusalovska, S., & Crowe, E. (2014). Short-term psychodynamic psychotherapies for common mental disorders. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.*, 7, CD004687. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD004687.pub4/full> 


Barber, J.P., Muran, J.C., McCarthy, K.S., & Keefe, R.J. (2013). Research on Psychodynamic Therapies. In M. J. Lambert (Ed.), *Bergin and Garfield's Handbook of*


Psychotherapy and Behavior Change (6th ed.) (pp. 443-494). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

http://www.amazon.com/Bergin-Garfields-Handbook-Psychotherapy-Behavior/dp/1118038207/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1451574998&sr=1-1&keywords=Bergin+and+Garfield%27s+Handbook+of+Psychotherapy+and+Behavior+Change


Høglend, P. (2014). Exploration of the patient-therapist relationship in psychotherapy. *Am J Psychiatry*, 171, 1056–1066. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2014.14010121> 


Leichsenring, F., Luyten, P., Hilsenroth, M.J., Abbass, A., Barber, J.P., Keefe, J.R., Leweke, F., Rabung, S., & Steinert, C. (2015). Psychodynamic therapy meets evidence-based medicine: a systematic review using updated criteria. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 2, 648–660. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(15\)00155-8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(15)00155-8) 

Leichsenring, F., Leweke, F., Klein, S., & Steinert, C. (2015). The empirical status of psychodynamic psychotherapy – An update: Bambi's alive and kicking. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 84, 129–148. <http://doi.org/10.1159/000376584> 

Luyten, P., & Fonagy, P. (2015). The neurobiology of mentalizing. *Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment*, 6, 366-379. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/per0000117> 


Luyten, P., & Blatt, S.J. (2012). Psychodynamic treatment of depression. *The Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 35, 111–129. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.psc.2012.01.001> 

Midgley, N., & Kennedy, E. (2011). Psychodynamic psychotherapy for children and adolescents: a critical review of the evidence base. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 37, 232–260. <http://doi.org/10.1080/0075417X.2011.614738> 

Palmer, R., Nascimento, L., & Fonagy, P. (2013). The state of the evidence base for psychodynamic psychotherapy for children and adolescents. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 22, 149–214. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2012.12.001> 


Shedler, J. (2010). The efficacy of psychodynamic psychotherapy. *American Psychologist*, 65, 98–109. <http://doi.org/10.1037/a0018378> 

Meta-analyses


Abbass, A.A., Rabung, S., Leichsenring, F., Refseth, J.S., & Midgley, N. (2013). Psychodynamic psychotherapy for children and adolescents: A meta-analysis of short-term psychodynamic models. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 52, 863–875. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2013.05.014> 

Abbass, A., Kisely, S., & Kroenke, K. (2009). Short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy for

somatic disorders: systematic review and meta-analysis of clinical trials. *Psychother Psychosom*, 78, 265–274. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1159%2F000228247>

Abbass, A., Town, J., & Driessen, E. (2011). The efficacy of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy for depressive disorders with comorbid personality disorder. *Psychiatry*, 74, 58–71. <http://doi.org/10.1521/psyc.2011.74.1.58> 

de Maat, S., de Jonghe, F., de Kraker, R., Leichsenring, F., Abbass, A., Luyten, P., & Dekker, J. (2013). The current state of the empirical evidence for psychoanalysis: a meta-analytic approach. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, 21, 107–137. To view this article please click [here](#) or [here](#)


Driessen, E., Hegelmaier, L.M., Abbass, A.A., Barber, J.P., Dekker, J.J., Van, H.L., Jansma, E.P., & Cuijpers, P. (2015). The efficacy of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy for depression: A meta-analysis update. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 42, 1–15. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2015.07.004> 

Leichsenring, F., Abbass, A., Luyten, P., Hilsenroth, M., & Rabung, S. (2013). The emerging evidence for long-term psychodynamic therapy. *Psychodynamic Psychiatry*, 41, 361–84. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1521%2Fpdps.2013.41.3.361>

Leichsenring, F., & Rabung, S. (2011). Long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy in complex mental disorders: update of a meta-analysis. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 199, 15-22. <http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/199/1/15>

Leichsenring, F., & Rabung, S. (2008). Effectiveness of long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy: A meta-analysis. *JAMA*, 300, 1551-65. <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1028649>

Leichsenring, F., Rabung, S., & Leibing, E. (2004). The efficacy of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy in specific psychiatric disorders: A meta-analysis. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 61, 1208-1216. <http://archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=482102>

Town, J.M., Diener, M.J., Abbass, A., Leichsenring, F., Driessen, E., & Rabung, S. (2012). A meta-analysis of psychodynamic psychotherapy outcomes: Evaluating the effects of research-specific procedures. *Psychotherapy*, 49, 276-290. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0029564> 

EDUCATIONAL
RESOURCES