

What is Talking Therapy?

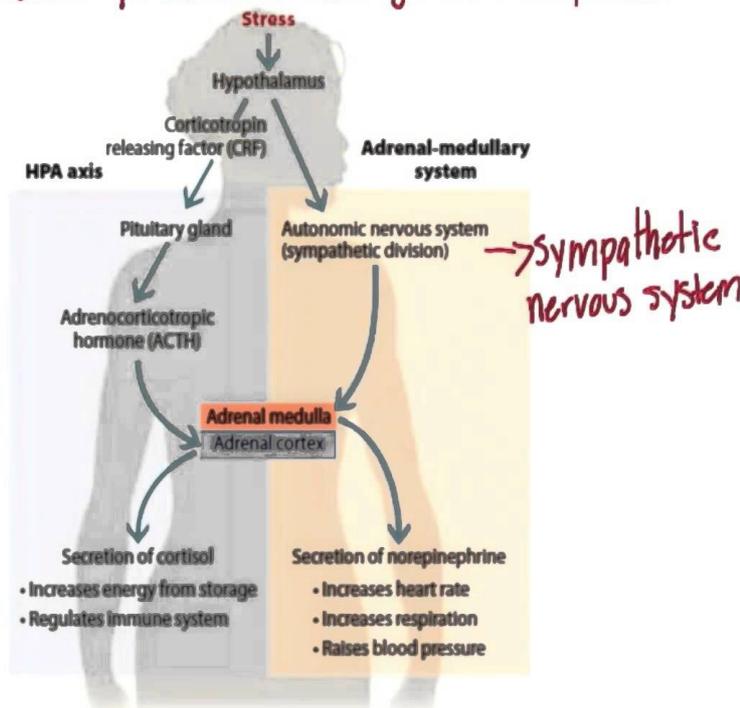


In recent years neuroscience studies have discovered a lot of new information about the human brain: how it develops, how it operates, and how it changes.

Neuroplasticity explains that the brain is not a rigid organ, but that it is flexible and changes throughout life, both in structure and function. These changes happen through experience. Humans change their brains when they react to their environment. This new learning is helping mental health practitioners review how they work with clients, and is creating exciting new possibilities for people suffering from mental health issues.

The brain and nervous system are made up of millions of neurons and can connect in many combinations. The structure of the brain at any time is a result of a person's life history – a lifetime of learning and experiences. Life experiences – positive and negative – create a complex and integrated neural network that sometimes results in psychological inflexibility, and debilitating conditions such as depression and anxiety.

Two Pathways activated during stress response



Anxiety for example, can be described as a inflexible neural network characterized by reactivity e.g. hyper vigilance, and resistance to experience e.g. avoidance behavior.

Talking Therapy – also known as Psychotherapy – can be an effective method for developing, reshaping, and strengthening new neural connections that allow for psychological flexibility. This flexibility can result in a person achieving a healthier state of wellbeing, by developing new – and positive – ways of thinking, feeling and behaving.

In his second edition of *The Neuroscience of Psychotherapy*, Louis Cozolino, PhD, suggests that psychotherapy can positively effect neural growth and connection through reshaping – or co-constructing – new client narratives and stories.

A professionally trained therapist can help a client reconstruct their stories and life experiences, for example, exploring their story and experiences from different perspectives, helping them identify personal strengths and qualities, encouraging them to challenge negative and limiting thoughts, and helping a client find purpose, hope and self belief.

Talk therapy is not just “talking about your problems”; it involves helping a client work toward solutions, toward a healthier state – a place of wellbeing. Some forms of Talking Therapy are insight-focused – they aim to increase a client's awareness of their unconscious motivations and historical understanding of current patterns – and neural pathways. Other forms of therapy are active, and provide research-based techniques and practices e.g. CBT, to help a client reshape their negative thinking, emotional experiences and behaviour. Some may involve homework, such as client-monitoring of their emotional triggers and responses, or experimenting with new skills, insights, or reframed cognitions developed during sessions.

The skill of the therapist includes assessing which therapeutic model best suits each client, and also having the necessary level of training and experience to work competently, safely and ethically, alongside a medical model of care provided by medical professionals – doctors, clinical psychologists, nurses – for example, who may also be supporting the client.

Confluence Cook Islands currently provides Talking Therapy, counselling services and training, to various local organisations, including: CITC, BSP, Punanga Tuaturu (PTI) – and works with Cook Islanders and clients from overseas, individual adults, couples and youth.

To help ensure our clients receive the necessary level of professional care, Talking Therapy practitioners employed by Confluence Cook Islands are required to meet a minimum standard of training and qualification, e.g. NZ diploma level, with an accredited NZ training organization. Additionally, professional registration with an independent body, such as NZAC or NZAP, is required to help ensure annual assessment of competency and regular professional supervision.

Further information about our work is available online www.confluence.co.ck

Phone or text +682 72400 to book an appointment - or a free initial meeting