

At some stages of therapy, you might actually feel worse for a while, and get discouraged. It is important to try to keep going during these times. These uncomfortable feelings are often a good indication that you're working on difficult problems. If this happens for you, let me know your concerns. If you can stick with it, things are likely to improve over time.

This therapy also helps you to explore your general patterns of relating to people. You may notice at times that the way you relate to me as your therapist is similar to how you relate to other people in your life. For example, if you have difficulty trusting people, you may have difficulty trusting me. If this happens for you, it's really helpful to tell me how you are feeling – I won't be offended or upset. Then we can talk about it, which often leads to new understanding and to positive changes for you.

What do I need to do as a client?

It is important to get into a pattern of attending therapy regularly and to let me know if you cannot attend. You may need to pay for any sessions that you miss – we will discuss this at the start of your therapy. There will be times when you don't feel like coming or when you think that you don't have anything worthwhile or significant to talk about. It is important to come at these times anyway as often the very thing that is getting in the way of coming is an important thing to talk about in therapy.

What should I do if I feel I want to quit therapy?

Therapy can be very hard work and it's natural to feel like quitting when it's hard.

If you find that you wish to leave therapy earlier than the time we have agreed, this is your decision and your right. However, I would encourage you to discuss your reasons for leaving with me first, in case we can overcome some obstacles together. If you have already decided to leave, I would ask you to come back for one last session so that you have an opportunity to share any unresolved concerns, and we have a chance to say goodbye.

About me



I am a trainee psychotherapist with the Australia and New Zealand Association of Psychotherapy. I see clients for psychotherapy in Rangiora and Christchurch. I have had an equine therapy and coaching practice, working with children and adults, in Loburn, North Canterbury since 2015. You can find out more about how I work on my website: www.potent.co.nz

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

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The Conversational Model of Psychotherapy

Client information sheet



Ingrid Gunby

Psychotherapy
Equine Therapy
Coaching

What is the Conversational Model of Psychotherapy?

The Conversational Model was initially developed by Robert Hobson and Russell Meares in the UK and Australia in the 1960s, and has continued to evolve since then. It brings together psychodynamic theories about how our early experiences shape our later behaviour, developmental theories on early childhood attachment, and recent research on memory and the impact of trauma. It was initially developed specifically to help people with borderline personality disorder, who were not helped by other forms of psychotherapy.

Borderline and other “personality disorders” are now increasingly viewed as symptoms of complex trauma. The Conversational Model of psychotherapy is now being used to support people who have experienced complex trauma and who are living with PTSD, personality disorders, depression, anxiety, suicidal impulses, a pattern of deliberate self-harm, and/or physical symptoms that can't be explained by medical conditions.

Does it work?

Research studies have described very successful outcomes for the majority of a group of 30 patients with borderline personality disorder after one year of twice a week therapy. The patients in this study were followed up after five years and the researchers found that they had maintained the progress they had made in therapy (Stevenson & Meares, 1992 & 1999). There is also research evidence for its effectiveness for depression, suicidality and self-harm, and Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

What actually happens in therapy?

I listen carefully to how you feel and pay particular attention to very small emotional changes as you are talking. I then reflect back to you what I have heard and check with you to see if this fits with your experience.

This is your space, where the priority is on me listening deeply to you, so you can be yourself and feel heard in a way that may be different from what you have experienced before.

I won't analyse you or use jargon. I won't try to fix you or tell you what is best for you. And there is no time frame that you have to follow – we will go at your pace. You won't be asked or expected to talk about anything you don't want to.

We will work together to build a picture of your thoughts and feelings, and how life is for you. Over time, you will understand yourself better, be clearer about what you really need, become more resilient, and make positive changes in your life, including your relationships with other people.

Our relationship, as client and therapist, is a very important part of the therapy. I aim to be supportive, trustworthy, reliable and predictable. A crucial part of my role is to create a space where it is safe for you to express yourself. I will accept and value what you say, and will ensure confidentiality.

I will encourage you to talk about anything that comes to your mind. You may find yourself 'editing out' things that seem trivial or unimportant. You may also worry that something is too inappropriate to say. In life we often 'edit' what we're really thinking

because we can get ourselves into trouble with others if we say everything we think! But often what we think is trivial or inappropriate can be the key to what is really bothering us.

Often people try to think their way through issues, and they might also expect themselves to have it all sorted out in their heads before saying it out aloud. This therapy is more about feeling and noticing instead of needing to be logical, so I will encourage you to express things even if they don't make sense to you yet.

What difficulties might come up?

Sometimes you might feel that nothing has changed or worry that you are not making changes fast enough. It is important to remember that making major change in your life takes time and effort, because it is a complex process.

Usually changes occur on the inside first and it can be difficult to see these changes happening when you live with yourself all the time. I will help you to notice changes, no matter how small they seem.

Sometimes the people closest to you, who may have encouraged you to get help, change their mind and decide that therapy is not helping you. This may be a sign that you are changing and that these changes are puzzling or troublesome to someone close to you.

Sometimes the people around you will be convinced that you are getting worse, often just at the time when you feel you are starting to improve.