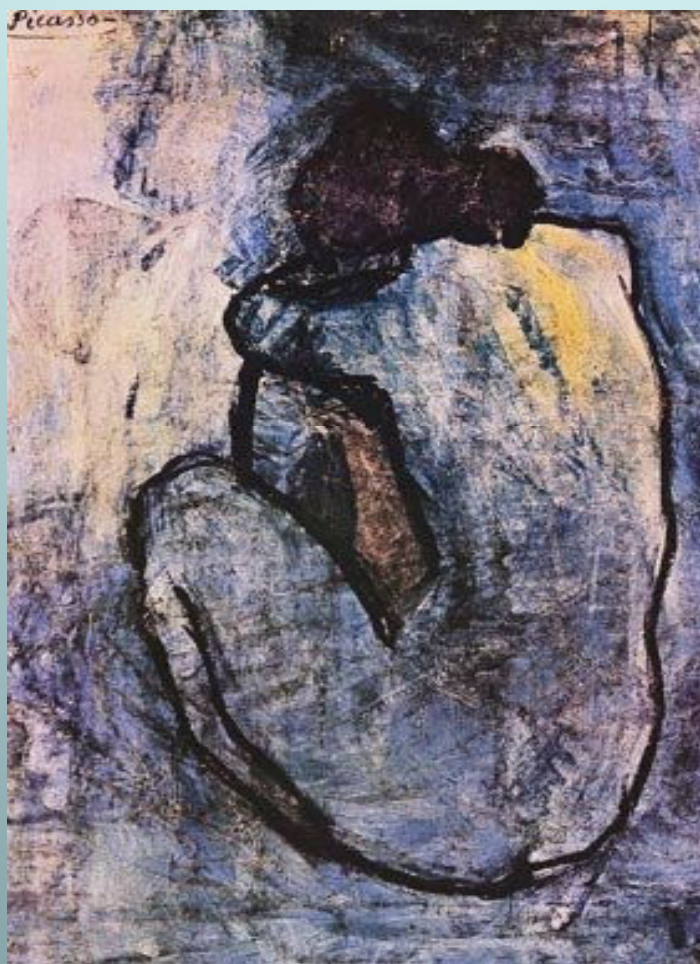


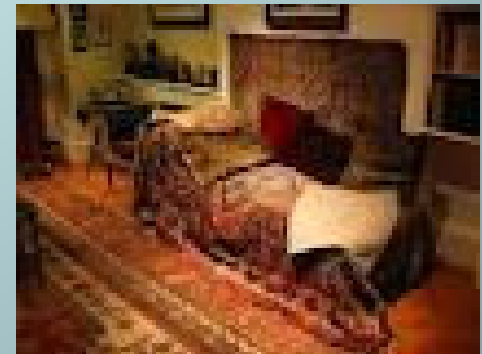
IPT, DBT, CBT: Psychotherapy for Depression is more than alphabet soup



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Science vs History

- Psychotherapy “discovered” before diagnosis
- More like aspirin than insulin
- Still important, even for brain diseases

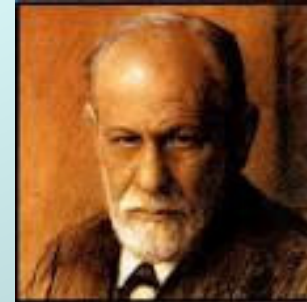


Mood disorders are meaningful

- Sources of meaning: memory/associations, relationships, religion or moral philosophy
- Our brains structure meaning according to mood.
- Mood disorders: alienation, disability, failure to meet expectations, feeling cast out by God, loss of purpose and sense of justice

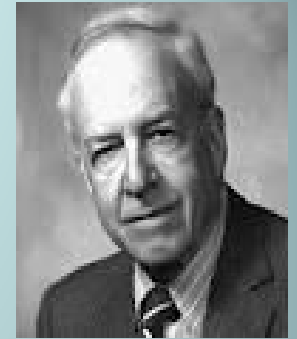


Meaning evolves over time and in context



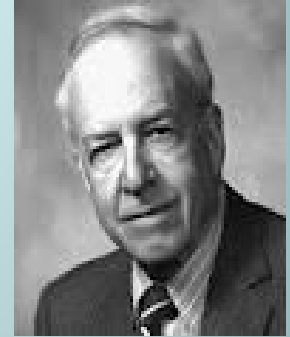
- Pre 18th century: religion source of most meaning
- 19th-early 20th century: secularization, psychoanalytic search for meaning in universals (linking myths to sex and survival)
- Mid 20th century revolt: rejection of the unconscious and mythical, expanded understanding of motivation

Psychotherapy and meaning



- Psychotherapies “work” by instilling, developing, encouraging, restoring meaning
 - May or may not relieve specific symptoms
 - Restore hope, morale, and sense of efficacy
 - May change the brain

Comparing competing therapies



- Equal outcomes
- Search for universal elements
 - Therapeutic alliance (acceptance, positive regard, commitment, therapist socially legitimate)
 - Any theory offering practices of hope and empowerment
 - How much, how long, with whom less important



Proofs

- All cultures practice some form of psychotherapy
- All psychotherapies relieve some aspects of suffering
- Experienced therapists are more alike than different
- Altering **any** particular variable (including time, individual or group) or technique rarely changes outcome

Is this science?

- Minimal objective confirmation (sleep studies, some PET and fMRI data)
- Systematic collection and analysis of outcome data
- Limited experimental data (no animal models)

“Placebo control” studies: comparisons of valid therapies?



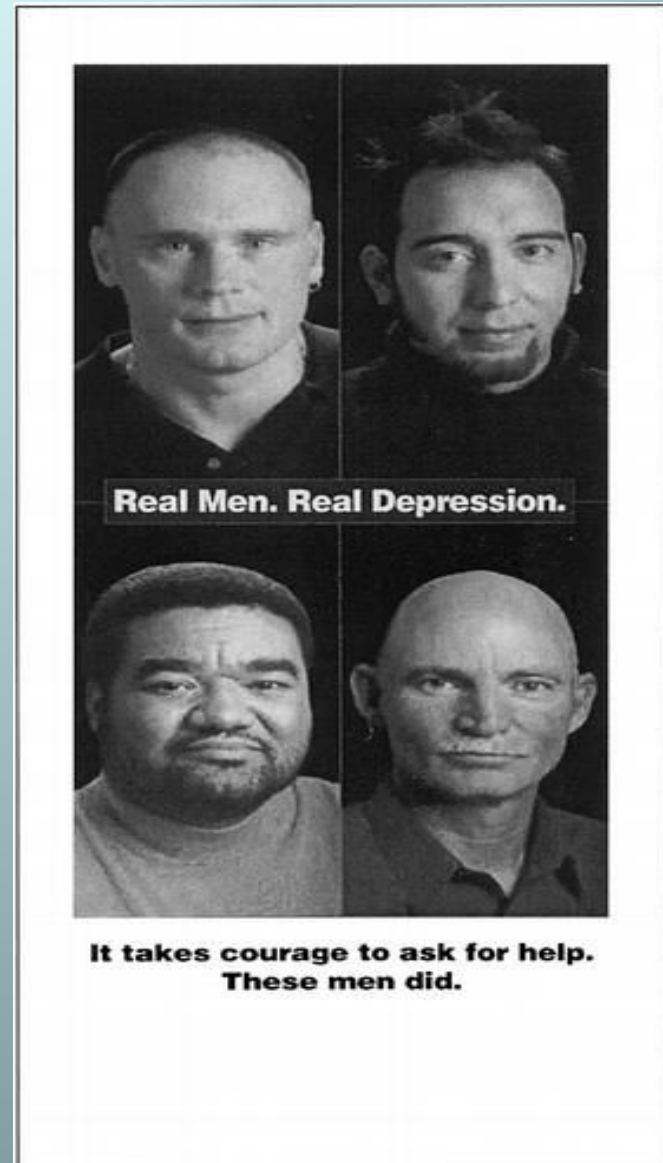
What does that mean for you?

- Many forms of therapy, and many psychotherapists, may be helpful
- Failure of one method does not mean no method will work
- Outcome may not be primarily reduction of specific symptoms.

When to seek psychotherapy

- Anhedonia predicts lower responsiveness
- Later episodes of depression less meaningful, focus of therapy: management of chronic illness
 - Regaining control by charting and recognizing warning signs
 - Finding meaning beyond the illness itself
 - Realistic hope

One size does not fit all



Current practices: Mild to moderate depression

- Psychodynamic: past experience and irrational or unconscious elements; heals by repeatedly reworking in the present
- CBT: accessible patterns of thought, with recognized distortions; linked to prescribed changes in behavior
- IPT: specifies activities to mourn or change relational patterns (modified to include “social rhythm therapy” for bipolar disorders)
- DBT: Acknowledges past roots of distress, accepts legitimacy of coping but also prescribes exercises (mindfulness, mentalization)

Isolation of active elements

- IPT: improvement in relationships
- CBT: exposure (for anxiety), behavioral activation (for depression)
- DBT: borrows effective elements of many therapies

Unifying elements

- Relationship built on empathy and mentalization by therapist
- Trained healer, linked to enterprise of science
- Enhance coherence
- Compatible with meds and scientific understanding
- Require repetition and practice

Walk the dog and don't let him eat
your homework!



Differences

- Exploration of causes, past experience
- Degree of directiveness vs receptivity
- Nature of practice (“homework”)

Beyond differences

- Therapists are more alike than different
- Chemistry matters
- Medications often (but not always) necessary
 - Influence motivation, available memory, capacity to regulate affects, energy, concentration, even patterns of cognition
 - Facilitate change, require reinforcement by behavior

Conclusions

- Psychotherapy capitalizes on human capacities for growth and learning (neural plasticity)
- Encourages hope, mastery
- Shapes meaning
- Still vital for both disease and illness management