TREATMENT FACT SHEET

INTERPERSONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY (IPT) FOR DEPRESSION

TREATMENT WORKS FOR VETS

WHAT IS IPT?

Interpersonal Psychotherapy (or "IPT") is a proven, short-term "talk therapy" for depression. IPT focuses on improving or expanding relationships in your life. Many years of research have shown that challenges, conflict, or changes in relationships can contribute to or worsen depression. Research has also shown that having positive relationships can greatly improve mood and emotional health. IPT focuses on improving challenging relationship issues, expanding positive relationships in your life, or both.

WHAT WILL I DO IN IPT?

First, you will work as a team with an IPT therapist to set goals for changes in your life, especially in your relationships, that will guide treatment. During treatment, you and your therapist will decide on one or two problem areas that you would like to work on in therapy. The general problem areas in IPT include:

- Resolving grief associated with the loss of a loved one.
- Dealing with changes in relationships related to changing life events.
- Resolving conflicts in relationships.
- Expanding positive relationships and relationship skills.

In treatment, you and your therapist will use effective strategies to help you address your problem areas and achieve your treatment goals. Examples of some treatment strategies are:

- Developing appropriate expectations for relationships.
- Learning effective problem solving skills for relationships.
- Examining communication patterns in your relationships.
- Learning effective ways to talk about and express emotions related to relationships.
- Learning effective ways to expand positive relationships in your life.

HOW LONG DOES IPT TAKE?

Treatment usually lasts between 12 and 16 sessions. However, each person is different, and you and your therapist will work together to decide how many visits are right for you.

HOW OFTEN WOULD I MEET WITH MY IPT THERAPIST?

IPT sessions are usually provided weekly or every other week.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF IPT?

You may feel some discomfort when talking about different issues that you are currently facing in your life. IPT is "present-focused," meaning that you will not spend much time focusing on your past.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS IPT?

Decades of research have shown IPT to be effective in treating depression, including with Veterans. On average, IPT reduces symptoms of depression by almost half. And it is highly recommended by experts. Because IPT helps to improve relationship issues related to depression and learn effective skills to strengthen relationships, the benefits usually last well after treatment ends.