


Therapy Approaches at a Glance

Approach	Focus	Helpful For	Common Techniques	Evidence Base
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)	Changing thoughts and behaviors	Anxiety, depression, trauma, stress	Thought records, behavior tracking	✅ Strong empirical support
Behavioral Therapy	Modifying learned behaviors	Phobias, ADHD, habits, behavior issues	Exposure, reinforcement strategies	✅ Strong empirical support
Behavioral Activation	Re-engaging in meaningful activity	Depression, low motivation	Activity scheduling	✅ Strong empirical support
Cognitive Therapy	Challenging negative thinking patterns	Depression, anxiety, self-esteem	Cognitive restructuring	✅ Strong empirical support
Interpersonal Therapy (IPT)	Improving relationships and social roles	Depression, grief, role transitions	Interpersonal mapping, role-playing	✅ Strong empirical support
Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT)	Understanding and processing emotions	Relationship issues, trauma, depression	Empty chair, emotion coaching	✅ Well-supported in research
Motivational Interviewing (MI)	Enhancing readiness for change	Substance use, ambivalence, health behavior change	Decisional balance, open-ended questions	✅ Strong empirical support
Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)	Focusing on solutions and future goals	Short-term issues, motivation, decision-making	Miracle question, scaling questions	✅ Growing support

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Narrative Therapy	Exploring personal stories and meanings	Trauma, identity, self-esteem	Externalizing problems, rewriting life narratives	⚖️ Emerging evidence
Trauma-Informed Care	Safety, choice, and trust in therapy	PTSD, complex trauma, sensitive past experiences	Grounding, pacing, collaborative work	✅ Supported framework
Culturally Responsive Therapy	Honoring cultural identity and lived experience	BIPOC clients, systemic stress, identity work	Identity exploration, adapting therapy to values	✅ Best-practice approach
Positive Psychology	Building on strengths and well-being	Boosting mood, self-growth, life satisfaction	Gratitude practice, strengths work	✅ Evidence-based tools
Strengths-Based Therapy	Leveraging existing abilities and resilience	Personal growth, recovery, confidence building	Strengths assessment, goal planning	✅ Widely used and supported
Adlerian Therapy	Exploring early experiences and belonging	Self-esteem, relationships, life purpose	Lifestyle assessment, goal setting	⚖️ Developing evidence
Existential Therapy	Meaning, values, freedom, and life purpose	Life transitions, anxiety, identity crises	Meaning exploration, open dialogue	⚖️ Philosophical focus
Gestalt Therapy	Present-moment awareness and self-integration	Emotional blocks, self-awareness, personal growth	Here-and-now exercises, role play	⚖️ Moderate support

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Humanistic / Rogerian Therapy	Empathy, self-acceptance, and personal growth	Self-worth, emotional healing, identity	Reflective listening, non-directive conversation	 Strong relationship focus

✓ What “Evidence-Based” Means

Approaches with strong research backing have been studied in clinical trials and shown to be effective for specific issues. That doesn’t mean other methods don’t work—it just means they may focus more on personal insight, relationships, or meaning-making than measurable outcomes.