

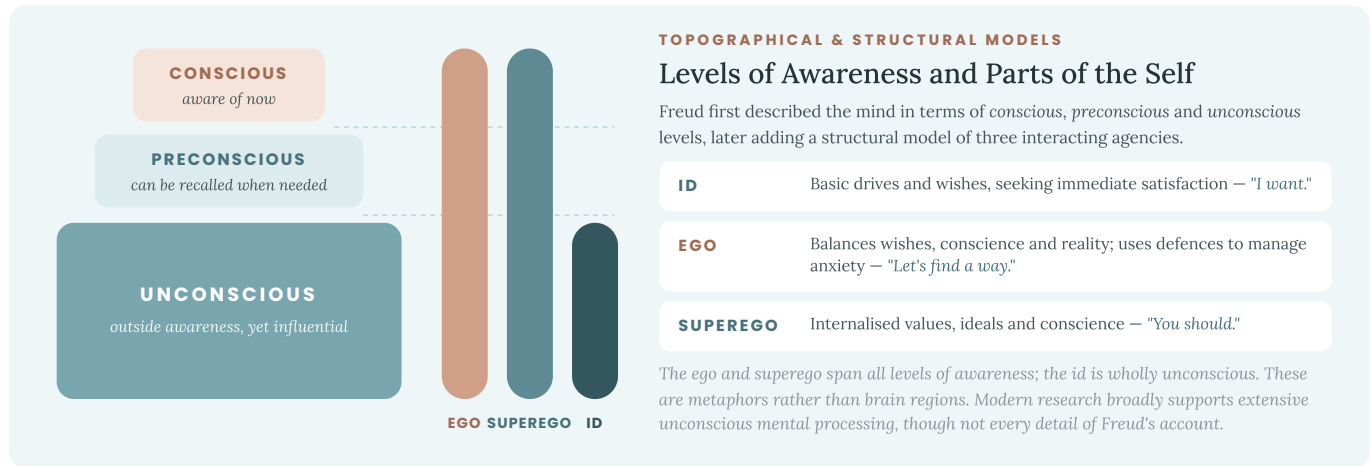
Psychoanalytic Concepts

KEY IDEAS FROM FREUD TO CONTEMPORARY PSYCHODYNAMIC THINKING

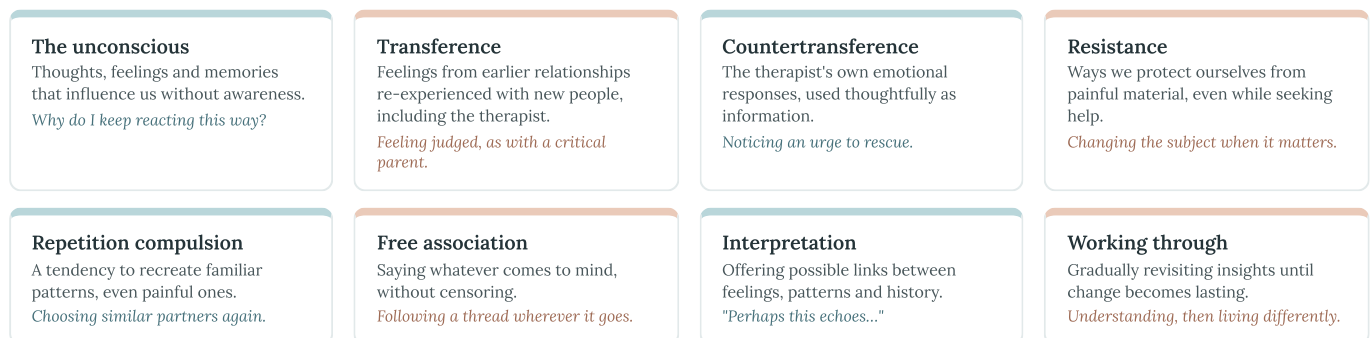
A two-page overview of the foundational and modern concepts of psychoanalytic and psychodynamic psychology

Psychoanalysis began with Sigmund Freud in the 1890s and has grown into a broad family of psychodynamic approaches. At its heart: much of mental life happens outside awareness, and early relationships shape patterns we can come to understand and change.

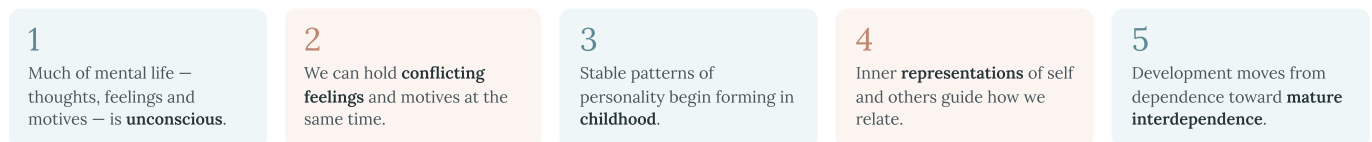
Models of the Mind Freud's two classic maps



Core Clinical Concepts Ideas central to psychodynamic therapy today



Five Core Assumptions What contemporary psychodynamic thinking holds (Westen, 1998)



Freud's Psychosexual Stages Historically influential — now viewed critically



This stage theory has little empirical support in its original form. Contemporary psychodynamic thinking focuses more on relationships, attachment and emotional development.

Relational & Defensive Processes How we take in, push out and replay experience



How Psychoanalytic Thinking Evolved Key figures and the concepts they introduced

● Sigmund Freud 1856–1939	DRIVE THEORY The unconscious, dreams as a route into it, the id-ego-superego model, transference and the "talking cure".
● Anna Freud 1895–1982	EGO PSYCHOLOGY Systematised defence mechanisms and pioneered psychoanalytic work with children.
● Melanie Klein 1882–1960	OBJECT RELATIONS Inner worlds of relationships; <i>splitting</i> , <i>projective identification</i> , and the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions.
● Donald Winnicott 1896–1971	OBJECT RELATIONS <i>Good-enough</i> care, the <i>holding environment</i> , the True and False Self, and play.
● John Bowlby 1907–1990	ATTACHMENT THEORY Trained in psychoanalysis; emphasised real early bonds and security – later a major field in its own right.
● Heinz Kohut 1913–1981	SELF PSYCHOLOGY Empathy and "selfobject" needs – mirroring, idealising and twinship – for a cohesive sense of self.
● Otto Kernberg B. 1928	PERSONALITY ORGANISATION Levels of personality organisation; Transference-Focused Psychotherapy for personality difficulties.
● Stephen Mitchell 1946–2000	RELATIONAL PSYCHOANALYSIS The mind as shaped in relationships; therapy as a mutual, two-person process.
● Peter Fonagy & Anthony Bateman CONTEMPORARY	MENTALIZATION The capacity to understand behaviour in terms of mental states; Mentalization-Based Treatment (MBT).

What Makes Therapy Psychodynamic? Seven distinctive features identified in process research

1 Focus on emotion and its expression	2 Exploring avoidance of difficult feelings	3 Identifying recurring themes and patterns	4 Discussing past experience	5 Focus on relationships	6 Using the therapy relationship	7 Exploring wishes, dreams and fantasies
--	--	--	---------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------------	---

The Evidence & a Balanced View What research suggests today

RESEARCH FINDINGS

An Evidence-Informed Tradition

- **Comparable effects:** reviews suggest psychodynamic therapy has effect sizes similar to other evidence-based therapies
- **Lasting benefits:** gains may be maintained, and sometimes grow, after therapy ends
- **Specific models:** MBT and TFP have trial support for personality difficulties

HOLDING IT CRITICALLY

Limits and Debates

- Some classic ideas are hard to test, and the psychosexual stages lack support
- The evidence base is smaller than for CBT for some conditions
- Modern practice differs greatly from early psychoanalysis – shorter, more relational

Further Key Terms A short glossary

Containment

Bion: a caregiver or therapist taking in and making bearable overwhelming feelings.

Internal working model

Bowlby: inner expectations of self and others formed through early attachment.

The therapeutic frame

Consistent boundaries – time, place, role – that create safety for exploration.

Mentalizing

Understanding ourselves and others in terms of thoughts, feelings and intentions.

What we cannot yet put into words, we often live out in our relationships.

Reflection For personal reflection or to explore in therapy

01

WHICH RELATIONSHIP PATTERNS DO I NOTICE REPEATING?

02

WHAT FEELINGS DO I TEND TO AVOID OR PUSH AWAY?

03

HOW MIGHT MY EARLY EXPERIENCES ECHO IN THE PRESENT?

SOURCES

Freud, S. (1923/1961). The ego and the id. In *Standard Edition*, Vol. 19. Hogarth Press.
 Freud, A. (1936/1966). *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*. International Universities Press.
 Klein, M. (1946). Notes on some schizoid mechanisms. *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, 27, 99–110.
 Bion, W. R. (1962). *Learning from Experience*. Heinemann.

Winnicott, D. W. (1965). *The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment*. Hogarth Press.
 Kohut, H. (1977). *The Restoration of the Self*. International Universities Press.
 Westen, D. (1998). The scientific legacy of Sigmund Freud. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124(3), 333–371.

Blagys, M. D., & Hilsenroth, M. J. (2000). Distinctive features of short-term psychodynamic-interpersonal psychotherapy. *Clin. Psychol. Sci. Pract.*, 7(2), 167–188.
 Shedler, J. (2010). The efficacy of psychodynamic psychotherapy. *American Psychologist*, 65(2), 98–109.
 Bateman, A., & Fonagy, P. (2016). *Mentalization-Based Treatment for Personality Disorders*. Oxford University Press.