

How I Work With Patients

I like to think of myself as an Integral provider. Another way to say that is I view patients from bio-psycho-social-spiritual lenses.

On the biological side, I'm a trained neuropsychologist, meaning that I am aware of how the brain impacts our thoughts and behavior, and I am comfortable helping people with brain injuries, chronic pain, and other chronic health conditions. I've also done training in Functional Medicine approaches to mental health treatment (CMHIMP/Certified Mental Health Integrative Medicine Provider). In order to manage one's medical conditions or have optimal physical health, I'll suggest nutritional supplements, herbs, dietary changes, movement patterns, adopting a regular contemplative practice, as well as ways to improve sleep. However, I always encourage patients to check with a medical provider before putting a new substance in their body, as I cannot predict how medications and herbs/supplements may interact within a complex body. All of these recommendations help support a physiology in which mental wellness is likely to arise. We can also help stabilize this ideal physiological state through low-frequency neurofeedback (using the Othmer Method) or HEG neurofeedback for migraines.

On the psycho-social side (which is the heart of the psychotherapy work), I offer two primary styles of treatment- Third Wave Behaviorism and Internal Family Systems (IFS). When I say Third Wave Behaviorism, I refer to various modern behavioral treatments like Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Functional Analytic Psychotherapy, Compassion Focused Therapy, and Functional Analytic Psychotherapy.

Although aspects of these treatments (Behaviorism and IFS) can go well together, each session will tend to focus on one over the other, depending on whether you are doing more internally focused work to help strengthen acceptance, compassion, and perspective taking with troubling parts of your mind or whether you are looking more towards effective engagement with the people and passions around you (regardless of what your body and mind is doing at that moment).

I occasionally will work with couples, offering Gottman Couples Therapy. However, I have limited training in this model (Level 1), and therefore I may suggest a couples therapy specialist if I do not feel my level of expertise will be effective. You are also welcome to bring family members or spouses on occasion to individual sessions (as often as monthly), as this is sometimes helpful towards helping our goals in individual work.

On the spiritual side, I've been a contemplative practitioner for over 20 years, and have extensively studied and practiced yoga, tai chi, Thai Forest Buddhism, Pragmatic Dharma, and Tibetan Buddhist Essence Traditions. I believe that spirituality is a fundamental human need which is also known as self-transcendence. The work I do is a core value to me, and my professional practice is part of my spiritual service in helping change the relationships people have with an unkind mind. To this end, I am able to offer psychedelic-assisted care using ketamine (in consultation with Dr. Meidad Goldman) and hopefully MDMA (when the laws change and when I complete the MAPS therapist training by the end of 2021). These treatments act as an adjunct or accelerant to psychotherapy to help repair attachment wounds, improve chronic pain and other medical conditions, as well as induce mystical experiences to help progress practitioners further on the Path of Awakening. I also can

draw from modern positive psychology research as well as peak performance literature to aid patients in accessing beneficial mental states.

You do not have to be a Buddhist or a yogi to work with me, as I respect the variety of practices and traditions that are available in our world heritage. However, if we work together long enough, I will encourage you repeatedly to adopt a regular contemplative practice, as I believe it is one of the best things one can do for sustainable happiness. One way to understand the relation between psychotherapy and self-transcendence is that psychotherapy helps to create a foundation of adequate physical health, emotional stability, and perspective taking that becomes the foundation for self-transcendence (and that attempts to prematurely transcend an unstable self could become dangerous or pathologically destabilizing).

This type of work can be intense and requires a type of fierce commitment towards healing that I will help facilitate and bear witness to. If you are looking for a more casual relationship that is closer to a friendship, such as someone to go to unload stress from the week or to have supportive counseling- this may not be a good fit and I suggest that you work with another therapist. There is no shame in needing extra support from another human; I am simply not able to offer that as an ongoing service.

This deep path does take time which I'm more than happy to spend with you, but at some point our psychotherapy relationship will end. Part of the purpose of psychotherapy is to make the therapist obsolete. A typical course of treatment looks like weekly sessions for 4-8 sessions, before trimming to bi-weekly for an additional 8-12 sessions, and then eventually tapering to one to three additional monthly check-ins. However, each case is different in terms of treatment goals, intensity and duration of symptoms, availability, etc. I am often booked to capacity, meaning that it is difficult for me to see someone twice a week. However, I schedule myself so that I can become more available in the later afternoon if a crisis were to develop.

It is rare for me to offer ongoing maintenance care for patients I have treated, although it is common for old patients to get back in contact if they need a few booster sessions after a successful treatment.

I take to heart one of the observations from the Abhidhamma (Buddhist Psychology)- The techniques one uses to eradicate negative mental states are not reducible to the techniques that enhance positive mental states. My hope is that our work would create a firm foundation for a practitioner to eventually transcend and include their sense of a separate self. However, this latter work of cultivating positive mind states eventually stops being appropriate for the practice of clinical psychology. If we arrive at this point in the treatment, I may suggest contemplative teachers whom I believe would be a good fit for you.

An ideal client of mine would be motivated, intelligent, willing to be tender with themselves and others, and be interested in contemplative practice. I'm very comfortable helping patients who might be struggling with some shame, chronic illnesses or pain, difficult experiences from the past, or want to be more loving in their relationships.

I hope this message sparks interest and joy within you, and that you might consider reaching out to collaborate with me.