

What Is Jungian Counseling?



What is Jungian therapy? Jungian therapy is a form of psychotherapy based on the ideas and methods of the Swiss psychiatrist C. G. Jung (1875-1961). It is a depth psychotherapy, in that it works with the unconscious and our relation to the unconscious. In analytical psychology (also called Jungian psychology) the unconscious is viewed not only as a place where unwanted thoughts, feelings and memories are repressed and stored (therefore later causing emotional difficulties), but also as a potential source of creativity, spirituality, healing and wisdom. The goal of Jungian therapy is to facilitate individuation,

the becoming of the unique person one is meant to be. Psychological symptoms are viewed as a sign of something blocked or gone awry in this process.

Who can benefit from Jungian therapy?

Jungian therapy can help people struggling with a range of emotional problems, including depression and anxiety; it is especially suited to assisting anyone seeking personal growth. Analytical psychotherapy adapts to the needs and goals of the person. Therapy can be supportive to help through a challenging time, can be short-term to focus on a specific problem, or can be longer term to help with conflicts, to get rid of symptoms, to effect lasting change, and to find purpose, creativity and new possibilities. Because analytical psychology is a theory of adult development, Jungian therapy is especially appropriate for people who are in mid-life passage (also called mid-life crisis).

How does Jungian counseling work?

The therapist and patient work to increase the patient's awareness, in order to integrate rejected aspects of the patient and move toward wholeness. This is achieved by finding a proper relation between consciousness (ego) and unconscious. In analytical psychology many psychological difficulties are viewed as originating from complexes, which are like knots of mainly unconscious strong feelings and beliefs. The therapist and client use information coming from the unconscious, such as dream images, fantasies, moods and other symbolic material. The energy of a complex is defused the more we recognize and understand it and so we are less likely to be overtaken by the complex.

What will I experience during a Jungian therapy session?

In a typical session you (the patient) talk and I (the therapist) listen. I make comments. Together we help you better understand your feelings and become more aware of your actions. We explore what goes on inside and outside you and how it affects you. This exploration proceeds as you talk about your daily life, interactions, thoughts, feelings, body experiences, wishes, memories, and dreams, and also about what may be going on in the relationship between the two of us. We pay attention to symbols as they arise, to creative processes (such as art) and to dreams. We learn the language of the unconscious as you experience it.

How do I find a Jungian therapist?

You can find a Jungian analyst (someone who has been formally trained and certified in analytical psychology, and has undergone their own personal analysis [therapy]) through the various Jung centers that are affiliated with the International Association for Analytical Psychology (www.iaap.org). Locally, the Jung Institute of San Francisco (www.sfjung.org) maintains a list of analysts and candidates on their website and has a referral line that can refer you to therapists with grounding in Jungian theory and practice. In addition there are many therapists who call themselves Jungian with varying degrees of training and experience. At the very least any therapist one seeks to consult with should be licensed to practice psychotherapy.

For more information:

- *Boundaries of the Soul: The Practice of Jung's Psychology*. June Singer. Anchor Books, 1994 (revised edition)
- *The Jungian Experience. Analysis and Individuation*. James Hall MD. Inner City Books, 1986
- *Jung's Map of the Soul. An Introduction*. Murray Stein. Open Court, 1998
- *The Middle Passage (Studies in Jungian Psychology by Jungian Analysts)*. James Hollis. Inner City Books, 1993
- The C G Jung Page: www.cgjungpage.org