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INTEGRAL SELF THERAPY: A NOVEL TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC METHOD

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This paper summarizes the results of Integral Self Therapy in the treatment of a group of 30 patients with mild anxiety and depression, and explains the steps involved in this novel psychotherapeutic method.

Integral Self Therapy (IST) is best defined as a transpersonal, nondual, psychotherapeutic method.

It is a form of transpersonal psychotherapy since practitioners of IST incorporate a spiritual understanding of the nature of the self into the therapeutic practice. IST has its theoretical foundations in the eastern paradigm of self-concept.

"Non-Dual" refers to the eastern concept of the lack of an inherent difference between the observer and observed - a personal identity is considered to be a part of a larger whole. While this has traditionally been seen as a metaphysical concept, it has powerful therapeutic implications.

For example, a person with depression and anxiety might feel a great deal of relief if they are able to experience what Maslow called "peak experiences".

Integral Self Therapy uses meditation, and gentle confrontation to create transcendent experiences.

These experiences are then placed into context by the therapist, comparing these experiences with the patient's own sense of depression and anxiety.

In this manner, patients are moved towards a more expansive self-concept. This has a significant therapeutic benefit, with a concomitant decrease in symptoms of depression and anxiety, with results seen in 6 to 8 sessions.