

MCQs

Select the single best option for each question stem

1 Supportive psychotherapy:

- a is a well-defined way of working
- b has not been researched
- c has clear training guidelines
- d is widely practised
- e has a single theoretical orientation.

2 Supportive psychotherapy:

- a always requires weekly supervision
- b always requires weekly contact with the patient
- c can be done only as a short-term therapy
- d can be practised by therapists of various theoretical backgrounds

e can be offered only in specialised psychotherapy settings.

3 Supportive psychotherapy aims to:

- a uncover deeply unconscious conflict
- b push the patient to overcome all obstacles
- c create a dependence on psychiatric services
- d break down defence mechanisms
- e build on the patients existing strengths.

4 Supportive psychotherapy is unsuitable for patients:

- a who would clearly benefit from another form of psychotherapy
- b with severe and chronic mental disorder
- c experiencing an acute crisis

d with from depression

e with borderline personality disorder.

5 The techniques of supportive psychotherapy:

- a require the therapist to be a 'blank screen'
- b require no attention to the transference
- c cannot include the prescription of medication
- d aim to increase anxiety in the patient
- e are common to many other therapies.

IN OTHER WORDS

'A crisis in my mental history', from *Autobiography* by John Stuart Mill

Selected by Femi Oyeboode

John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) was a philosopher, political theorist and liberal thinker. He was also a Member of Parliament. This extract is from *Autobiography*, Chapter V: A crisis in my mental history. One stage onward (first published in 1873).

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It was in the autumn of 1826. I was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to; unsusceptible to enjoyment or pleasurable excitement; one of those moods when what is pleasure at other times, becomes insipid or indifferent; the state, I should think, in which converts to Methodism usually are, when smitten by their first "conviction of sin." In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: "Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you?" And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, "No!" At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for.

At first I hoped that the cloud would pass away of itself; but it did not. A night's sleep, the sovereign remedy for the smaller vexations of life, had no effect on it. I awoke to a renewed consciousness

of the woeful fact. I carried it with me into all companies, into all occupations. Hardly anything had power to cause me even a few minutes' oblivion of it. For some months the cloud seemed to grow thicker and thicker. The lines in Coleridge's "Dejection" — I was not then acquainted with them — exactly describe my case:

"A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear,
A drowsy, stifled, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet or relief
In word, or sigh, or tear."

In vain I sought relief from my favourite books; those memorials of past nobleness and greatness from which I had always hitherto drawn strength and animation. I read them now without feeling, or with the accustomed feeling *minus* all its charm; and I became persuaded, that my love of mankind, and of excellence for its own sake, had worn itself out. I sought no comfort by speaking to others of what I felt. If I had loved anyone sufficiently to make confiding my griefs a necessity, I should not have been in the condition I was. I felt, too, that mine was not an interesting, or in any way respectable distress. There was nothing in it to attract sympathy.