
LET'S TALK ABOUT... THERAPY AND MEDICATION

THIS SESSION:

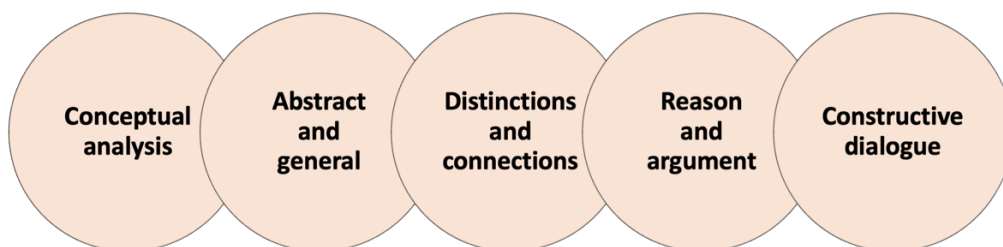
Discussion: Understanding Psychotherapy and Medication

Discussion: The Value of Psychotherapy and Medication

Break (10 Minutes)

Discussion: Scepticism about Psychotherapy

THE PHILOSOPHY TOOLKIT



DISCUSSION: UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOTHERAPY AND MEDICATION

DISCUSSION POINT: What are some of the similarities and differences between psychotherapy and medication?

DISCUSSION POINT: Should we understand the categories of psychotherapy and medication more in terms of their similarities (a unifying approach), or by their differences (a contrastive approach)?

DISCUSSION: THE VALUE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY AND MEDICATION

THOUGHT EXPERIMENT: Suppose hypothetically that we achieve an IDEAL SITUATION in the world of mental health medicine: there are PERFECT DRUGS for any mental health condition. For instance, there is medication for depression that completely alleviates depression, and has no ill-effects at all (no side-effects, no addiction or dependence), just one pill, and depression is simply cleared away. If we reached this ideal situation, should we do away with psychotherapy? Would the value of medication eclipse the value of psychotherapy, or would there still be some value to psychotherapy?

DISCUSSION: SCEPTICISM ABOUT PSYCHOTHERAPY

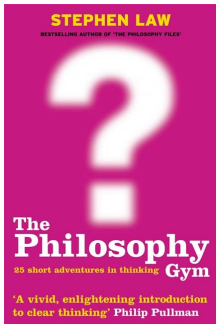
- Some are sceptical about psychotherapy: we can distinguish two forms of scepticism:
 - Scepticism about the **effectiveness** of psychotherapy
 - Scepticism about **the very idea of psychotherapy**
- The latter is expressed by Thomas Szasz in his book *The Myth of Psychotherapy*

SZSAZ'S SCEPTICISM: In this book I shall argue that treatment means, and should only mean, a physicochemical intervention in the structure and function of the body aimed at combating or curing disease. The term *psychotherapy*, insofar as it is used to refer to two or more people speaking and listening to each other, is therefore a misnomer, and a misleading category. Because it may help people, psychotherapy may be thought and said to resemble regular medical treatment; but it is not such treatment. There is, properly speaking, no such thing as psychotherapy. Like mental illness, psychotherapy is a metaphor and a myth (p. x).

- What are your thoughts on scepticism about psychotherapy?

RESOURCES

Our project has a new website: <https://pmhnottingham.wixsite.com/home> - here you can access the materials from the sessions, and post-session summaries and videos that aim to capture **your** philosophical ideas and relate them to other ideas in philosophy!



The **Philosophy Gym** by Stephen Law is a great book introducing philosophy

An accessible resource to learn about philosophy is the **philosophy bites** podcast: <https://philosophybites.com/>

Thomas Szasz was a psychiatrist but did philosophy of psychotherapy in his book **The Myth of Psychotherapy**

MAILING LIST (OPTIONAL)

Do you want to be part of the Philosophy of Mental Health @ Middle Street electronic mailing list? If so, email Craig.French@nottingham.ac.uk to join (with "Mailing List" in the subject header), or scan this QR code to join:

If you join the mailing list, we will only contact you to advertise events related to Philosophy of Mental Health @ Middle Street, and to distribute materials from these events.



FEEDBACK (OPTIONAL)

We value your views. With your feedback we can (1) improve the ways we discuss the ideas in the philosophy of mental health here at Middle Street Resource Centre, and in society, and (2) use your ideas to inform out thinking for future research and events on the philosophy of mental health. If you would like to provide feedback, please complete the feedback form overleaf.

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