



(R)evolution Psychotherapy

Liberation Focused Psychotherapy: A Simple Guide

Liberation Focused Psychotherapy (LFP) is a therapeutic approach that connects personal healing with social justice. It recognizes that many struggles people face—such as anxiety, depression, or trauma—are not only individual experiences but also shaped by larger systems of oppression, including racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism, classism, and colonization (Comas-Díaz, 2020). LFP helps clients explore how these forces impact their lives while also supporting them to reclaim dignity, agency, and hope.

The word liberation means freedom. In therapy, liberation is about freeing ourselves from the weight of oppression, shame, and internalized negative messages. LFP emphasizes that healing is not just about coping with symptoms—it's about understanding the bigger picture and finding ways to resist harmful systems while nurturing personal and collective well-being (Martín-Baró, 1994).

This approach values the wisdom of communities, cultural traditions, and lived experiences. It encourages clients to see themselves not as “broken,” but as resilient individuals navigating unjust circumstances.

Liberation Focused Psychotherapy is guided by several key ideas:

- Context Matters 🌍 : Emotional pain is understood within social, historical, and political contexts. For example, experiences of discrimination or poverty are seen as part of the healing conversation.
- Healing and Justice 🤝 : Therapy is not only about personal growth but also about fostering empowerment and collective change.
- Cultural Integrity 🌱 : LFP integrates cultural practices, Indigenous wisdom, and community-based traditions into therapy, honoring diverse ways of healing (Comas-Díaz & Torres Rivera, 2020).
- Critical Awareness 🔍 : Clients are supported to recognize how systemic forces shape their struggles, which can reduce self-blame and open pathways to resilience.
- Action and Agency 💪 : Therapy encourages small acts of resistance and self-affirmation, helping clients reclaim their voice and power.

LFP is deeply collaborative. The therapist does not act as an “expert” who diagnoses and fixes, but as a partner who walks alongside you. Your lived experience, culture, and values are central to the process. This person-centered stance means therapy is tailored to your unique identity and goals, rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all model.

Clients often find LFP validating because it acknowledges both personal pain and the broader injustices that contribute to it. This dual focus can reduce isolation and foster a sense of belonging.

Liberation Focused Psychotherapy can be especially supportive for individuals and communities who have experienced marginalization. By connecting personal healing with collective empowerment, LFP helps clients:

- Reframe struggles as responses to systemic harm rather than personal failure.
- Strengthen cultural identity and community ties.
- Develop resilience through self-compassion and collective action.
- Imagine futures rooted in justice, dignity, and hope.

References

Comas-Díaz, L. (2020). Liberation psychotherapy. In L. Comas-Díaz & E. Torres Rivera (Eds.), *Liberation psychology: Theory, method, practice, and social justice* (pp. 169–185). American Psychological Association.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0000198-010>

Comas-Díaz, L., & Torres Rivera, E. (2020). *Liberation psychology: Theory, method, practice, and social justice*. American Psychological Association.

Martín-Baró, I. (1994). *Writings for a liberation psychology*. Harvard University Press.