

Definition of Terms

Various words, phrases, and technical terms are explained below in plain language with reference to how they are used in this practical guide.

Word or Phrase	Meaning
Active listening	A communication technique, in which the listener re-states or paraphrases in their own words what the speaker has said, to confirm what they have heard and moreover, to confirm mutual understanding.
Adjustment	The process of adapting or becoming used to a new situation.
Anxiety	The anticipation of a perceived or real future threat; associated with fear, vigilance, and avoidance behavior.
Anxiety disorder (also known as clinical anxiety)	A diagnosable mental condition characterized by frequent, intense, and excessive anxiety symptoms, typically occurring for a minimum of six months; interfering with a person's ability to function, and causing significant distress.
Avoidance behaviors/ strategies	Pervasive pattern of withdrawing from fear or anxiety provoking situations.
Binge eating	Eating a very large amount of food within a relatively short period of time (e.g., within two hours), and feeling a sense of loss of control while eating (e.g., feeling unable to stop oneself from eating).
Body dissatisfaction	Negative perception of weight and shape of one's physical self and negative feelings resulting from it.
Body image	How a person thinks and feels about the way they look, including how they think others perceive them.
Body language	A form of non-verbal communication where thoughts, intentions, or feelings are expressed by physical signs, such as facial expressions, body posture, gestures, eye movement, and the use of space.
Brief solution-focused therapy	Goal-directed form of therapy with focus on solutions rather than on the symptoms or issues that brought the person to therapy.
Clinical interview	A structured conversation during which a clinician gathers valuable information (behavioral observations, idiosyncratic features of the person, the nature and history of the problem, experience of symptoms) from the person, to inform an accurate diagnosis.
Closed, directive communication style	A form of communication where one person is actively communicating and seeks little feedback or input from the other person, rarely inviting expression of emotion or detail. Questions typically invite single word (yes/no) answers.
Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)/Enhanced CBT	A form of psychotherapy that aims to identify and change unhelpful thinking and behavior; used to treat various emotional and behavioral problems or mental disorders. Enhanced CBT is a modified version of CBT, used to treat eating disorders.

Word or Phrase	Meaning
Cognitive impairment	When a person has trouble remembering, learning new things, concentrating, or making decisions that affect their everyday life.
Collaborative care (also known as multidisciplinary approach)	Multiple health providers (from various professions and settings) providing comprehensive healthcare services by working with people, their families, care providers, and communities. Practice includes both clinical and non-clinical health-related work, such as diagnosis, treatment, surveillance, health communications, management, and support services.
Compensatory behavior	Deliberate act undertaken in an effort to “undo” another behavior (e.g., self-induced vomiting to counteract calories consumed) or to counteract a negative experience (e.g., taking too little insulin to avoid hypoglycemia).
Decisional balancing	A technique that enables an individual to work through ambivalent thoughts to make an informed decision (origins in motivational interviewing).
Depression (also known as depressive disorder or major depression)	A diagnosable mental condition characterized by a persistent (minimum two weeks) state of low mood and lack of interest and pleasure in regular activities, in addition to other symptoms, such as significant changes in weight and sleep, lack of energy, difficulty concentrating, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, or suicidal ideation.
Depressive symptoms	A range of symptoms shared with diagnosable major depression (e.g., significant changes in weight and sleep, lack of energy, difficulty concentrating, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, or suicidal ideation), but of insufficient severity or frequency to meet the full diagnostic criteria.
Desensitization	Diminished emotional responsiveness to a negative stimulus after repeated exposure to it; a behavioral technique commonly used to treat phobias and anxiety disorders.
Diabetes burnout	A state of physical or emotional exhaustion caused by severe and long-lasting diabetes distress.
Diabetes distress	The emotional burden arising from living with and managing diabetes, including problems related to the relentlessness of diabetes self-care, worries about the future, feelings of guilt, anxiety or frustration, and interpersonal problems (e.g., with health professionals or significant others).
Diabetes-specific fears	The emotional response to real or perceived threats specific to diabetes, often associated with the “fight or flight” response (e.g., fear of hypoglycemia, hyperglycemia, diabetes-related complications, and injections/needles).
Diabetic ketoacidosis	A potentially life-threatening medical condition arising from a lack of insulin (intentional or unintentional insulin omission). Without insulin, the body cannot use glucose for energy, and the body breaks down fat (producing ketones) as an alternate energy source. If ketones build up, they are toxic to the body (acidosis). Diabetic ketoacidosis can also be present at diagnosis of type 1 diabetes (and occasionally type 2 diabetes) or occur during illness or infection if there is a lack of insulin in the body.
Disordered eating/ behaviors	A wide range of unhealthy eating behaviors (e.g., restrictive dieting, compulsive eating, skipping meals), and associated emotional disturbances (e.g., feelings of shame, guilt, lack of control). Many of these symptoms are shared with diagnosable eating disorders but they are of insufficient severity or frequency to meet the full diagnostic criteria.
Eating disorder	Diagnosable mental condition characterized by preoccupation with food, body weight, and shape, resulting in disturbed eating behaviors with or without disordered weight control behaviors (e.g., food restriction, excessive exercise, vomiting, medication misuse).
Emotional eating	A form of disordered eating, in response to negative emotional states, such as anxiety, distress, and boredom; and where a person eats to temporarily suppress or ease unpleasant feelings.

Word or Phrase	Meaning
Emotional health	A state of positive affect or well-being; the ability to understand, express, and respond to feelings in an appropriate way (without being overwhelmed by them).
Empathy	The ability to understand and share the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another person.
Empowerment	Realization of one's own abilities and potential; the philosophy and practice of sharing information, skills, and opportunities to enable another person to discover and develop the capacity to be responsible for their own health, and for this to contribute to their engagement, competence, and satisfaction. In diabetes, it is defined as a person-centered, collaborative approach tailored to match the realities of diabetes care (i.e., that the person with diabetes is responsible for their own outcomes and lives with the consequences of their decisions).
Exposure-based therapy	A specific type of cognitive behavioral therapy designed to help people confront their fears, by exposing them to the feared objects, activities, or situations in a safe environment. It helps the person to break the pattern of avoidance and fear, and overcome their feelings; often used in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder and phobias.
External eating	Eating in response to food-related cues, such as the sight, smell, or taste of food.
Fear management	A method used to reduce negative emotions and the physiological arousal that fear causes, to change unhelpful beliefs, reduce unnecessary fear, and to promote positive coping mechanisms.
Fear of hypoglycemia	Extreme worry or anxiety about low blood glucose and its consequences; this specific fear is evoked by the risk and/or occurrence of hypoglycemia but is not necessarily related to the frequency or severity of current hypoglycemia.
Generalized anxiety disorder	A diagnosable mental condition characterized by persistent, excessive, or disproportionate worry about a number of events or activities, that is difficult to control and long lasting (minimum six months), and accompanied by symptoms such as restlessness, fatigue, sleep disturbance, irritability, muscle tension, and difficulties concentrating.
Health literacy	The ability to obtain, understand, and apply health-related information and to navigate the health system to enable appropriate health decisions.
Insulin stacking	Injecting insulin too soon after a previous dose, resulting in too much active insulin in the body ("insulin on board") and the risk of low blood glucose.
Interpersonal therapy (IPT)	A form of psychotherapy concerned with the "interpersonal context"—the relational factors that predispose, precipitate, and perpetuate distress; the aim is to help the person improve their relationships or change their expectations about them.
Impaired awareness of hypoglycemia	Diminished ability to perceive the onset of hypoglycemia, due to reduction in symptom intensity or change in symptom profile or both; an acquired complication associated with longer duration of insulin therapy.
Maladaptive coping strategies	Attempts to cope with a stressor that are either ineffective or provide only temporary relief, while the stressor maintains its strength. For example, "comfort eating" or drinking alcohol to "forget" a problem (but the situation continues to be stressful as it has not been resolved).
Mental health	A state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being, in which the person is able to realize their own potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and make a contribution to the community.

Word or Phrase	Meaning
Minor depression (also known as mild, subthreshold, or sub-clinical depression)	Characterized by the presence of depressive symptoms that are of insufficient severity or frequency to meet the full diagnostic criteria for diagnosis of major depression.
Monitoring	Observing and checking progress over a period of time, maintaining regular surveillance (e.g., of emotional/mental health and well-being); typically using open-ended questions and/or validated questionnaires.
Motivational interviewing	A goal-oriented, counselling style for eliciting behavior change by helping people to explore and resolve ambivalence to change.
Neuroglycopenia (neuroglycopenic symptoms)	A shortage of glucose in the brain, usually due to hypoglycemia (low blood glucose). Neuroglycopenic symptoms include confusion; difficulty concentrating; weakness, tiredness or dizziness; blurred vision; and inappropriate behavior (sometimes mistaken for inebriation).
Neuroticism	A personality trait characterized by anxiety, fear, moodiness, worry, envy, frustration, jealousy, and loneliness.
Normalization/normalize	A process by which the health professional helps the person to view their experience as common, “natural,” or “human.”
Open, empathic communication style	A form of interaction where all parties actively share and are able to express their ideas. Questions typically encourage full, descriptive responses because the person asking is genuinely interested in understanding the other person’s experience or perspective.
Panic attack	Sudden surge of intense fear, either due to an external or internal trigger, that involves various anxiety symptoms, such as increased heart rate, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness, sweating, and shaking.
Panic disorder	A clinically diagnosed mental condition characterized by recurrent, unpredictable, and severe panic attacks.
Paraphrase	To express the meaning of what someone has written or spoken, using your own words, to achieve greater clarity.
Peer support	A system of giving and receiving help from a person (or people) with similar experience (e.g., living with diabetes). It can involve sharing knowledge and experiences of daily self-management, social and emotional support, and linkages to clinical care and community resources. Peer support can take many forms, including phone calls, text messaging, group meetings, home visits, and online forums.
Perfectionism	A personality trait characterized by striving for flawlessness and refusal to accept any standard short of excellence, accompanied by overly critical self-evaluations and concerns regarding others’ evaluations.
Person-centered approach/ care	A non-directive approach that places the person at the heart of decisions relating to and affecting their life; considering the person as an individual, respecting their rights, priorities, and preferences, believing in their potential and ability to make choices that are right for them, regardless of the health professional’s own values, beliefs, and ideas.
Post-traumatic stress disorder	A diagnosable mental condition characterized by persistent psychological stress occurring as a result of injury or severe trauma, typically involving disturbance of sleep and continual or frequent vivid recall of the experience, interfering with the person’s ability to continue with their everyday life, activities, or relationships.
Problem solving training	A method used to increase a person’s adaptive skills as a means of resolving and/or coping more effectively with stressful situations or problems.

Word or Phrase	Meaning
Psycho-educational intervention	An approach combining both education and psychological principles or activities (e.g., counselling or motivational interviewing); typically offered to people for whom the problem to be resolved is more than the absence of knowledge or skills but is more deep-rooted in attitudes and beliefs.
Psychological barriers to insulin use (also known as psychological insulin resistance or negative appraisals of insulin)	The negative thoughts or feelings that people with diabetes may have about starting, using, or intensifying insulin.
Quality of life	Subjective satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with aspects of life (e.g., family, friendships, work, hobbies, holidays, finances) considered by the individual to be important to them.
Resilience	An individual's ability/capacity to adapt to or recover quickly from stress or adversity.
Restrained eating	Restriction of food intake, or avoiding certain foods, food categories, or ingredients; similar to being on a diet, for the purpose of weight loss or maintenance.
Screening	Systematic assessment to detect risks or problems (e.g., using validated questionnaires to identify specific emotional or mental health problems).
Self-efficacy	A person's belief or confidence in their ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task, to exert control over their own motivation, behavior, and social environment. Low self-efficacy refers to a person lacking such confidence or self-belief.
Self-esteem	A person's subjective emotional evaluation of their own worth.
Self-harm	Deliberate injury to oneself, typically as a manifestation of mental health problems but without suicidal intent; maladaptive behavior used to cope with difficult or painful feelings.
Sick role	The culturally accepted behavior pattern or role that a person is permitted to exhibit during illness or disability; the social role of being ill or having a chronic condition; adoption of the "sick role" changes the behavioral expectations of others towards the person, they are exempted from usual social responsibilities and not held responsible for their condition.
Social anxiety disorder	A diagnosable mental condition characterized by intense, excessive fear of being scrutinized by other people, resulting in avoidance of social situations.
Specific phobia disorder	A diagnosable mental condition characterized by intense irrational fear of specific everyday objects or situations (e.g., phobia of spiders, injections, blood).
State anxiety	The experience of unpleasant feelings in response to a perceived threat or specific, negative situations, demands, or events; when the threat is removed, the person no longer experiences anxiety; differs from "trait anxiety."
Stigma	A mark of disgrace that sets a person apart from others; a strong feeling of disapproval towards a thing, a person, or a group based upon a shared negative characteristic (often a stereotype), which may or may not lead to negative actions, unfair treatment, and discrimination.
Stress management	A wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies used to manage a person's level of stress, especially chronic stress, for the purpose of improving everyday functioning.
Suicidal ideation/ thoughts	Thoughts about killing oneself, ranging from fleeting thoughts, to preoccupation and extensive thoughts, to detailed planning and incomplete attempts at suicide.

Word or Phrase	Meaning
Trait anxiety	A relatively enduring disposition or stable tendency to feel stress, worry, and discomfort; people with high trait anxiety experience more intense degrees of state anxiety than those without trait anxiety; a personality characteristic not a temporary feeling; differs from “state anxiety.”
Traumatic hypoglycemic event	An episode of hypoglycemia (low blood glucose) that is typically complicated by loss of consciousness or hospitalization, injury to oneself or others, or happening while asleep, often leaving the person with residual fear of hypoglycemia or feelings of embarrassment or vulnerability.
Tweetchat	A live Twitter event, usually moderated and focused around a general topic (e.g., for the purposes of providing and receiving support). A hashtag (#) is used and a set time is established so that the moderator/host and participants are available to engage in the online conversation.
Validated questionnaire	A questionnaire that has undergone rigorous design and psychometric testing to ensure it effectively measures the topic under investigation (e.g., depression) within the population under investigation (e.g., people with diabetes). Psychometric tests typically include “reliability” (the ability of the instrument to produce consistent results), “validity” (the ability to produce true results), “sensitivity” (the likelihood of correctly classifying a person with the condition), and “responsiveness,” (the ability of the instrument to detect change, e.g., following treatment). “Unvalidated” questionnaires may be subject to measurement error and any conclusions drawn may be flawed. Validated questionnaires should not be modified without permission from the developer, as this may also introduce errors.
Validation (of feelings)	“Normalization”; recognizing/acknowledging someone’s feelings as important or appropriate; a technique that helps the person to feel that you care about and understand them.
Well-being (emotional or psychological well-being)	The state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy; a general term for a person’s mental condition; a high level of well-being means in some sense the individual experience is positive, while low well-being is associated with negative happenings.