

Body-oriented psychotherapy (BOP)

Body-oriented psychotherapy (BOP) originated in clinical psychology from the work of Wilhelm Reich, Sigmund Freud and Alexander Lowen. Within the BOP approach, all functions of the body and psyche are explored in connection, and BOP practices emphasize reciprocal relationships between the body and the mind. They involve breathing exercises, relaxation techniques, meditation, “bridge methods” and others.

People with Cystic Fibrosis can benefit from BOP, as their congenital chronic disease may adversely affect the formation of body-mind structure. Body-oriented techniques can be used in psychotherapy to help them acknowledge their own emotions and behaviors, and the downstream effects of their physical sensations and condition, improving quality of life.

Patients become aware of the interconnectedness between emotions and body sensations and identify how body function and perception can be affected by emotions. Importantly, they learn to identify whether a particular body sensation results from a pathological state caused by the disease, or is a manifestation of patient’s emotional state such as anxiety, stress, or panic.

Another goal of BOP is to help patients learn to rely on their bodies, including organs that are affected by the disease. Such practices can be especially important in periods before and after lung transplantation.

BOP can also be beneficial for parents and caregivers, who can apply bodily practices to cope with their own anxiety and panic, which they often face when their loved ones experience Cystic Fibrosis exacerbations.