**Interpersonal Therapy – your first 4 sessions:**

The ‘assessment phase’ of IPT usually last for 4 sessions. During this time, we gather information to help us to decide how to focus your therapy. We will focus on either:

1/ A significant bereavement in your life,

2/ A major change or disruption in your life which has impacted on your relationships with other people,

3/ A distressing conflict in your life, or

4/ A long term pattern which is evident in many of your relationships with others (‘sensitivity’)

It is very common to feel that more than one of these options has relevance to your story: if this is the case we choose the one that feels like the best fit, but bear the other(s) in mind as we proceed.

At the start of therapy, I will ask you to make a small change to your day to day life to help it to feel easier whilst you are receiving therapy. This might involve STOPPING doing something which is difficult, or STARTING doing something which you are likely to enjoy, ideally with other people. You will decide what want to change, and I will check in with you each week to find out how you get on.

**There are a number of key tasks that we will work on together during the assessment phase of IPT:**

I will ask you detailed questions about the symptoms of depression you are experiencing, and how long they have been there.

We will construct a ‘timeline’ of events together, to help us understand how events in your life may have contributed to depression.

We will also make a map of the relationships in your life, and talk about what these relationships are like for you.

Having gathered this information, we will decide together (usually at session 4) how you want to focus your therapy. At this stage, I will write down what we have discovered, and also our plan. I will also invite you to set goals for your therapy.

Grief, transition, conflict, and ‘sensitivity’ all involve working in slightly different ways in IPT, and I will explain more about the differences during our meetings.