

**Keywords:** mentalizing, reflective functioning, social cognition, attachment, borderline personality disorder, trauma.

**Summary Points** (8 maximum)

- Mentalizing (or reflective functioning) refers to the highly developed, evolutionary pre-wired, human capacity to understand the self and others in terms of intentional mental states, such as feelings, desires, wishes, attitudes, and goals.
- Mentalizing impairments are transdiagnostic and transtheoretical vulnerability factors for psychopathology: temporary or chronic impairments in mentalizing are implicated in a wide range of psychological problems and disorders.
- Recent formulations have shifted from an emphasis on the role of dyadic attachment in the development of mentalizing in earlier formulations to a broader, socio-communicative approach that emphasizes the role of family, peers, and broader sociocultural factors in the development of mentalizing and the capacity for epistemic trust, the evolutionary prewired capacity to trust others as sources of social information.
- A growing body of research supports the effectiveness of mentalization-based treatments (MBT), that is, treatments that focus on the recovery of the capacity for mentalizing and epistemic trust.
- Although the evidence base for MBT is growing, there is a need for large-scale trials to further investigate the effectiveness of MBT, its purported mechanisms of change, and its potential to be implemented in routine clinical care.
- Similarly, there is a need for more research on the assessment of the various dimensions of mentalizing, which will also enable research concerning the neurobiological basis of mentalizing and associated psychological processes.

**10 annotated references (15 words maximum)**

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