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Research conference 2018

Counselling changes lives: Research that impacts practice

Friday 11 and Saturday 12 May 2018
Abstract booklet

Co-hosted by the University of Roehampton

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Contents

Professor Tim Bond and Dr Barbara Mitchels

Pre-conference workshop

Professional Roles: Emeritus Professor and Visiting Professor (Professor Bond); Director of counselling service and a web-based consultancy service, author of the revised BACP Ethical Guidelines for Research in the Counselling Professions (Dr Mitchels)
Institution/Affiliation: University of Bristol and University of Malta (Professor Bond); Watershed Counselling Service and Therapy Law (Dr Mitchels)
BACP's new guidance: exploring ethical research design and ethical problem solving for research in the counselling professions

Keywords: ethical research, BACP research guidelines, researching the counselling professions, ethical problem solving & checklists for researchers, ethical review

Relevance of the workshop to counselling and psychotherapy research: Ethical practice and problem solving is important in the counselling professions, and equally so in research. This workshop explores ways to address ethical issues in research design and how to use checklists for ethical problem solving. The workshop situates research in the context of BACP's *Ethical Framework*, (BACP 2016/18), explaining recent revisions and introducing BACP's new, comprehensive *'Ethical Guidelines for Research in the Counselling Professions'* (BACP 2018) to be published this year. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions, bring their own issues for discussion, and work through examples of ethical research dilemmas.

Aim of the workshop: To provide an opportunity to perceive and understand the basic requirements of ethical research, and to explore and discuss how the BACP's ethical guidelines may impact on research design and assist ethical problem solving in issues arising throughout the whole of the research process. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their own planned or current research projects in the context of their professional membership of BACP and commitment to BACP's *Ethical Framework*.

Workshop structure: The workshop will be a mixture of input from the facilitators with opportunities for reflection and discussion shaped by attendees' contributions and questions, including issues arising from their current research projects.

Key points: Basic requirements of ethical research; ethical research design; dilemmas and how to address them ethically; anticipating and identifying difficulties that arise in research, and where to access appropriate advice and assistance, including the potential contributions of counselling and research supervision.

Who will benefit from attending the workshop? Students, academic and post qualification researchers; trainers; independent practitioner researchers; BACP members considering undertaking a research project.

Professor Robert Elliott, PhD

Friday Keynote

Professional Role: Professor of Counselling
Institution/Affiliation: University of Strathclyde

Evidence and politics in the humanistic-experiential psychotherapies: a love-hate story

In the first part of this presentation I explore my 40-year career as a counselling and psychotherapy researcher, the first 15 years of which focused on my desire to understand the process of therapeutic change from the client's perspective, one significant event at a time. Twenty-five years ago, this initial interest was overtaken by the politics of the new evidence-based practice movement, which from the beginning has threatened to annihilate or at least seriously marginalise the humanistic-experiential psychotherapies (HEPs). I review my attempts as a therapist and scientist to meet this challenge.

In the second part, I present a methodologically pluralist position for developing and integrating evidence on the effectiveness of psychotherapy and counselling, emphasising the value of multiple complementary lines of evidence: First, pre-post studies made up of series of case studies and carried out by practitioners can demonstrate the possible effectiveness of an approach to psychotherapy or counselling and document degree of pre-post change. Second, randomised controlled studies comparing a particular approach to no-treatment or waitlist controls can be used to infer causality, that is, to show that clients use the treatment offer to cause themselves to change. Third, randomised comparative outcome studies might tell us which therapies are more effective - if only they weren't so flawed by researcher allegiance and other methodological difficulties. I will review the strengths and weaknesses of each of these lines of evidence, while arguing that all three are useful for providing robust evidence for an approach to psychotherapy or counselling.

Next, I attempt to chart some directions forward. These include a map for developing an evidence base for marginalised or emerging psychotherapies and the Walkaway strategy for addressing persistent problems with the NICE Guidelines. After calling proposing an alternative to the NICE process of evidence review and resulting treatment guidelines, I make a plea for a return to a focus on change process research in order to build evidence not on therapy brand names but on therapeutic change processes and principles. I conclude by returning to my first love and the romance of psychotherapy micro-process research on significant change events.

Professor Dr Pim Cuijpers

Saturday Keynote

Professional Role: Professor of Clinical Psychology
Institution/Affiliation: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Four decades of outcome research on psychotherapies for depression: an overview of meta-analyses

In the past four decades more than 500 randomised trials have examined the effects of psychological treatments of adult depression. In this presentation I will give an overview of what these studies have shown about the effects of different types of psychotherapies, including cognitive behaviour therapy, behavioural activation therapy, third wave therapies, interpersonal psychotherapy, non-directive supportive therapy and short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy. All therapies are effective and there are no significant differences between them. Psychotherapies are about equally effective as pharmacotherapy, and combined treatments are more effective than either of them alone. Treatments are effective when delivered in individual, group and guided self-help format. Very little is known about predictors and moderators of outcome and in this presentation, I will show the results of a series of "individual patient data" meta-analyses in which the primary data of trials are collected, resulting in sufficient power to examined moderators and predictors. In this presentation furthermore, I will show that the effects of psychotherapies have been overestimated because of the low quality of many trials and due to publication bias. I will also discuss priorities for future research. All priorities should be based on their potential to reduce the disease burden of depressive disorders. The development of new psychotherapies for depression, research on specific treatment formats or on therapies in specific populations should not be high on the list of priorities, because the evidence suggests that all types and formats with human involvement are effective in all specific target groups. Future research should instead focus on a further reduction of the disease burden of depression, and on the possibilities of preventing the onset of depressive disorders, treatments of chronic and treatment-resistant depression, relapse prevention, and scaling up treatments for example by using more guided self-help interventions.

Luciana Berger MP, Terry Hanley and Matt Smith-Lilley

Hot Topic Discussion

Professional Roles: President of the Labour Campaign for Mental Health and former Shadow Minister for Mental Health (Luciana Berger); Senior Lecturer in Counselling Psychology (Terry Hanley); Policy and Public Affairs Officer (Matt Smith-Lilley)
Institution/Affiliation: University of Manchester (Terry Hanley); BACP (Matt Smith-Lilley)

Connecting research with policy: barriers to evidence-based policy making
Good policy is born of good evidence. We believe that robust evidence should inform the process of policy development and the purpose of this discussion is to explore some of the barriers academics and policy makers face when trying to connect with each other and how this can be improved.
Join the discussion between Luciana Berger MP, President of the Labour Campaign for Mental Health and former Shadow Minister for Mental Health, Terry Hanley, Senior Lecturer in Counselling Psychology and Matthew Smith-Lilley, Policy and Public Affairs Officer for BACP to hear about their different perspectives on these challenges.

Fiona Ballantine-Dykes, Nicola Forshaw and Clare Symons

Presentation

Professional Roles: Head of Professional Standards (Fiona Ballantine-Dykes); Professional Standards Development Facilitator (Nicola Forshaw); Joint Head of Research (Clare Symons)
Institution/Affiliation: BACP

The SCoPEd Collaboration: what's evidence got to do with it?

Keywords: counselling/psychotherapy, competences, professional bodies, collaboration

Aim/Purpose: Currently, there are no agreed common entry or training requirements to enter the field of counselling and psychotherapy – even among PSA accredited registers. This causes confusion for the public, commissioners and those considering a career in counselling and psychotherapy.

BACP is working in an unprecedented collaboration with BPC & UKCP with an ambition to: systematically map the existing standards, competences, practice & training requirements for counselling and psychotherapy. This is an ongoing project underpinned and developed from a systematic and rigorous examination of evidence from a wide range of sources. The aim is to arrive at a shared understanding and ownership of a generic competence framework for core training in counselling and psychotherapy.

Design/Methodology: Based upon Roth & Pilling's methodology of developing competence frameworks, the initial stages of systematically mapping the published and widely used competences in counselling and psychotherapy have been completed. Themes were identified utilising a group summary analysis method, and the initial consensus summary is currently being scrutinised by an Expert Reference Group.

This presentation introduces you to the process undertaken so far within this pioneering project.

POSTERS

Ruth Anderson

Poster

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Cancer patients' experiences of the therapeutic relationship during therapy: a review of studies using a systematic approach

Keywords: cancer patients, counselling, therapeutic relationship, hospital setting, literature review

Aim/Purpose: Psychological distress in individuals with cancer is a significant and ongoing problem. There are several sources of support for the hypothesis that the therapeutic relationship may play a positive role in therapy outcome for cancer patients. However, the study of the therapeutic relationship or in-depth relational connection (relational depth) in therapy with cancer patients appears to be rare. The aim was to review the literature in this area.

Design/Methodology: A literature review using a systematic approach, searching four databases (PsycInfo, PubMed, Web of Science Core Collection, Medline), was undertaken. The following search terms were used: psychiat* OR psychotherap* OR counsel* OR psychol* OR "psychological therapy" AND cancer OR neoplasms OR metastas* OR oncol* AND alliance OR "therapeutic alliance" OR "therapeutic relationship" OR "relational depth" OR "working alliance" OR "therapeutic bond" OR "therapeutic presence" OR "therapeutic engagement" OR "therapeutic resonance". PRISMA guidelines were followed and inclusion/exclusion criteria applied. Out of 1277 results, 12 relevant articles were identified. Six articles focused on the effects of the therapeutic alliance on therapeutic outcomes with cancer patients. Six articles focused on cancer patients' experiences of one-to-one counselling.

Results/Findings: The quantitative literature suggests that the therapeutic alliance may play a positive role, directly or indirectly, in the outcome of psychological interventions with cancer patients. The qualitative literature indicates that the therapeutic relationship is central to cancer patients' psychotherapy experiences but does not explore what actually happens in the relationship or the depth of client-therapist relating, including specific moments of connectedness.

Research Limitations: The review only includes articles published in English. The focus is solely on verbal therapy, and other types of intervention such as dance and movement therapy are excluded.

Conclusions/Implications: This review indicates that there is little research on cancer patients' experiences of the therapeutic relationship during psychotherapy. Given the importance of the therapeutic relationship, more research in this area is needed, including an exploration of in-depth feelings of connection and intimacy that can emerge within the therapeutic relationship, and whether these might lead to therapeutic change.

Diana Bass

Poster

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Pride or prejudice? The role of ethnicity and culture in the mental health and professional development of medical students

Keywords: British medical student mental health, ethnicity, BME attainment gap, discrimination, inequality, stigma

Aim/Purpose: Research has shown that medical students are more vulnerable to mental illness and psychological distress than other students, as well as confirming the statement by the UK General Medical Council (2014) that "it is now clear that ethnicity is a factor in doctors' attainment from secondary school onward".

The focus of this research project, arising from 20 years of experience in this area of mental health, is to explore some of the underlying factors related to individual background and ethnicity. It also considers the medical acculturation process that makes it more likely that some medical students will experience psychological difficulties during their training.

Design/Methodology: This mixed-method research project considers UK BAME Attainment Gap data and compares the demographic makeup of students in the medical school with the demographic data of medical students attending assessments in the Student Counselling Service. A qualitative thematic analysis of assessment sessions drawn from both BAME and white medical students highlights the ways in which students' own experiences affect their personal wellbeing as well as their academic performance.

Results/Findings: The demographic data shows an overrepresentation of BAME students and students from disadvantaged groups coming forward for psychological help. The emerging, often very powerful, narratives emphasise the profound importance of students' relationships and how these shape, and are shaped by their family culture as well as the external socio-economic environment. The themes illuminate factors within medical culture that create psychological pressure on all students. They also reveal an exclusion from pathways of influence and knowledge that can reinforce the effects of traumatic transgenerational events including immigration, experience of racism and inequality.

Research Limitations: Sample size in qualitative data. Generalisability.

Conclusions/Implications: This research adds to the debate about how systemic discrimination and maintenance of privilege operate, and points to ways in which resources could be allocated towards effective intervention at both an individual and a whole institution level. The discussion also emphasises requirements for culturally competent clinical practice.

Karen Bateson

Poster

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Now you see me: improving the process of informed consent in the psychotherapy and counselling professions

Keywords: informed consent, autonomy, change processes, risk, transparency

Aim/Purpose: Over the past 25 years, three studies have examined counsellor/psychotherapists' attitudes towards informed consent. Of these three, only one has focused on psychotherapists/counsellors in the UK, gathering data from psychodynamic practitioners. This research study will focus on integrative, relational psychotherapists/counsellors in order to highlight current informed consent practices within this specific group. The project aims to explore how UK-based integrative, relational therapists understand the process of informed consent in their clinical practice. It has 5 objectives: to describe the key features of the informed consent process; to detail how the informed consent process is used by integrative, relational psychotherapists/counsellors in the UK; to identify what, if any, areas of the informed consent process can be improved in psychotherapy/counselling practice for this group of practitioners in the UK; and to make recommendations for further research.

Design/Methodology: Using an interpretative phenomenological analytic method and a purposive sample, the study will undertake 6-8 in-depth, semi-structured interviews in order to focus on the lived experience of integrative, relational psychotherapists/counsellors in relation to the process of informed consent. A literature review will be undertaken to identify current concerns of the informed consent process in both the medical and psychotherapy/counselling fields. A practice review will also be undertaken to identify examples of current practice via websites and publically available resources in the psychotherapy/counselling field.

Results/Findings: The research project is in the ethical approval stage. Results will be available later in the year.

Research Limitations: The project aims to ensure validity through gathering feedback from participants on research findings, utilising a process of reflexivity in the form of a research journal and undertaking an auditing process (Willig, 2009; Smith et al., 2009). Quality will be targeted through designing a research project that is historically and culturally aware, executing a comprehensive literature review and taking care to illustrate participants' voices through the use of verbatim extracts.

Conclusions/Implications: The research project is in the ethical approval stage. Conclusions/Implications will be available later in the year.

Kiran Bhatti

Poster

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Working towards a psychometric evaluation of the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (form Obs-40, version 3) in humanistic counselling for adolescents

Keywords: humanistic counselling, adolescents, reliability, validity, Barrett-Lennard relationship inventory

Aim/Purpose: Many children and young people experience mental health difficulties, which if left untreated, can have detrimental effects into adulthood. Humanistic therapies can be effective for this population; however, the evidence to support this claim is lacking. Research focusing on this population is needed; this can be encouraged by the introduction of a validated measure of person-centred therapy. Following a literature review, the most appropriate instrument appears to be the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (BLRI), which aims to measure Empathic Understanding, Congruence, Level of Regard and Unconditionality, however this has not been validated in young populations. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the psychometric properties of the BLRI in humanistic counselling for adolescents. The objectives are to examine 1) internal reliability, 2) inter-rater reliability, 3) test-retest reliability, 4) construct validity, 5) convergent validity using the Person Centred and Experiential Psychotherapy Scale adapted for young people (PCEPS-YP) and 6) the psychometric methodological quality of the BLRI.

Design/Methodology: Using data from the ETHOS trial (Stafford et al., 2016), 150 audio recordings of humanistic counselling with adolescents will be assessed using the observer rater BLRI (Obs-40, Version 3), for the presence and level of the therapeutic core conditions. Following this, the objectives will be examined using Cronbach Alpha, Cohens K Kappa, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

Results/Findings: Based on previous literature regarding the validation of the BLRI, high internal reliability, test re-test reliability and inter-rater reliability is expected. In addition, given the similarity of the PCEPS-YP to the BLRI, a high correlation is expected between the measures, indicating good convergent validity.

Research Limitations: The main limitation will be the lack of consideration towards the client's experience of receiving the core conditions.

Conclusions/Implications: Validating the BLRI will have implications for practice and research. The scale could be utilised in training and supervision environments as an adherence measure, to ensure the therapeutic relationship conditions are practiced sufficiently. In addition, further research using this scale may strengthen the evidence base and rationale for providing person-centred therapy in this population.

Emily Blackshaw

Poster

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Life events that occur over the course of psychotherapy for depression and anxiety in children and adolescents: a systematic review of measures and methods

Keywords: life events, psychotherapy, longitudinal change, children, adolescents

Aim/Purpose: Therapists pay attention to traumatic histories, distant or recent, but intercurrent events (happening during the period of therapy) seem largely ignored in research on psychotherapy with young people. This poster reviews reports of such life events during psychotherapeutic interventions for depression and/or anxiety in young people.

Design/Methodology: Life events were defined to include events that are both traumatic in nature and minor, everyday hassles. Participants were children or adolescents (5-18 years). Outcomes were restricted to internalising problems related to depression, anxiety and wellbeing. A three-part search strategy was used, involving the searching of: 1) bibliographic databases (PsycINFO, Medline); 2) relevant reference lists; and 3) the contacting of relevant scholars. A systematic overview was undertaken to report on the conceptual and methodological nature of the literature.

Results/Findings: This review included 42 studies addressing intercurrent life events: just 0.2% of identified articles about change/outcomes in child/adolescent therapies. Intercurrent events varied widely in terms of severity and chronicity, as well as controllability/predictability. Events were most frequently measured using questionnaires. The same questionnaire was rarely used in more than one study and questionnaires were often adapted for use for the study's specific purpose/population. Events included in analyses tended to be analysed as a mediator of change in symptomatology, or an outcome of therapy. There was limited scope for meta-analysis due to the range of outcomes and small number of existing studies.

Research Limitations: Self-reports of life events are susceptible to being confounded with clinical status. The review attempted to avoid confounded reports of life events, by omitting studies focussing on events that are internally generated, or related to the symptomatology of the patient's anxiety and/or depression. However, the scope of this review did not allow for an item-by-item review of the measures used and therefore may have included some such reports.

Conclusions/Implications: Intercurrent life events are rarely reported in research on psychotherapy with young people. This neglect is exacerbated by a lack of agreed measures of life events. This poster provides insights into methods of assessment and recommendations to overcome this neglect.

Kate Diggory

Poster

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Experiences of a brief self-compassion programme for carers of those with a life limiting or palliative diagnosis: a pilot study

Keywords: self-compassion, mindfulness, carers, palliative, training programme

Aim/Purpose: According to Carers UK there are 6.5 million carers in the UK, with over half of carers reporting depression due to their caring role and also experiencing high levels of anxiety (77%) and stress (83%). Research indicates that carers of patients with cancer and other life limiting illnesses experience anxiety, depression, hopelessness and distress. Neff and Germer (2013) propose that self-compassion is a resiliency factor which may prove useful for combatting stress and compassion fatigue in carers. However, carers of those with a life limiting illness are short of free time and often unable to leave the home for extended periods. A brief self-compassion programme incorporating elements of mindfulness to support carers may have value and this study explores participants' experiences of such a programme.

Design/Methodology: This was a pilot, predominantly qualitative, study. Nine participants, the majority of which were recruited from hospices in the North West, attended four x one hourly 'one to one' training sessions in self-compassion and mindfulness with an emphasis on the needs of carers. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013).

Results/Findings: The analysis of data yielded thirty-eight themes, organised around seven overarching themes: Impact ("*this is what self-compassionate people do*"); Content ("*it's about caring for yourself*"); Theory *("it could still sound airy fairy to people*"); Approach to iCare *("hang on in there"*); Negatives; Where do we go from here?; Difficulties of being a Carer.

Research Limitations: Due to the use of an opportunity sampling strategy all the participants were female. This study was not longitudinal and thus the ongoing impact of the training could not be assessed. The researcher adopted a dual role of both teacher/facilitator and researcher (but not counsellor) and her personal relationship with each participant may have influenced how participants reported on their experience of the programme.

Conclusions/Implications: The results of this study will not only influence the design of an online training programme for carers but could have useful implications for individual therapeutic work with this group of carers in terms of interventions for supporting carers and identifying some of their unmet needs.

Clare Dougherty

Poster

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Wild self-care: an exploration of counsellors' nature connection; could it help improve self-care?

Keywords: ecopsychotherapy, self-care, nature connection, autoethnography, interpretative phenomenological analysis

Aim/Purpose: Research suggests that counsellors do not practice self-care enough (Boellinghaus, *et al*., 2013; Brownlee, 2016), and it has been suggested that this is because they don't truly know or understand what the self is (Hughes, 2014). Ecopsychological theory suggests that when we connect with nature we also connect with the self (Roszak, 1993). However, no research has been done to explore whether counsellors could improve their self-care by connecting with nature. This study explored this link, as the researcher wanted to improve her self-care, and gain a deeper understanding of ecopsychological theory.

Design/Methodology: A quantitative questionnaire was used to identify a suitable participant from a group of qualified counsellors completing further study. Counsellors were asked if nature connection was a part of their self-care practice and if they would like to participate in research. A participant was randomly selected from those that answered yes.

Data was then collected from a semi structured interview and analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Alongside this the researcher used autoethnography to explore her own nature connection and self-care.

Results/Findings: Five overall themes emerged from the two data sources: *importance of childhood attachment to nature*; *nature connection aids process*; *importance of recalling nature connection*; *significant presence and practices*; and *nature connection is good for us*. Some of these themes have been identified in existing research about nature connection. The act of engaging in autoethnography was found to be beneficial to the researcher's learning of the subject and improved self-care practice.

Research Limitations: The overall findings are based on the experiences of only two counsellors, and the study can therefore not claim to have implications for all counsellors. The researcher's personal experience will have influenced the IPA data, and whilst IPA acknowledges the subjective role of the researcher, another researcher may have found different themes in the data.

Conclusions/Implications: The research findings showed nature connection to be an important and essential part of counsellor self-care that encouraged a connection with self. The study demonstrated the relevance of autoethnography as a method in counselling research, by showing that it has the potential to bridge the research-practice gap.

Neil Gittoes and Sarah Rees

Poster

Professional Roles: Higher Professional Diploma students
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The experience of Muslim men as they actualise-self as gay males and how this may inform counsellors working with this clients group

Keywords: Islam, gay, actualising-self, disenfranchisement

Aim/Purpose: To investigate, understand and describe the intra-personal and social world of Muslim men who self-identify as gay; specifically, the religious, cultural and traditional issues that arise. Our purpose was to inform/enlighten counsellors working with this client group.

Design/Methodology: Three self-identified Muslim, gay males, were audio-recorded during semi-structured interviews. Respondents were offered six fee-free counselling sessions should issues arise specific to their participation in our research. We used thematic analysis informed by phenomenology (Smith, et al, 2009) to analyse our data. We followed BACP guidelines for ethical research in counselling (Bond and Griffin, 2010).

Results/Findings: Our findings indicated that respondents experienced fear/isolation, oppression/repression and the need to maintain an identity facade. Respondents had experienced traditional Islamic social/cultural/religious and family values since childhood, which had result in them developing a self-protective, heterosexual male facade within family/social settings; respondents consequentially experienced internalised identity-conflict. Respondents had felt an overwhelming pressure to maintain their family name through marriage and siring children. Some family members had disowned our respondents when they 'came-out' and it seems suicide among respondents' peers was not an uncommon experience. Eventually, in order to actualise-self as gay men respondents had severed all family/cultural ties. However, our respondents continue to identify as Muslim and some still engage in religious practices in private. Isolation and fear of being misunderstood as Islamic *and* gay has thus far prevented our respondents from seeking support through personal counselling.

Research Limitations: Our findings are based on a small respondent sample, which may be unique to the relatively few individuals who were included in our study. Thus, our findings may have limited generalisability (McLeod, 2003).

Conclusions/Implications: Based on our respondents' subjective experiences findings suggest this client-group feels disenfranchised both internally and externally to Islam. It seems the counselling profession has done little to reach out in support of such gay men. Counsellors working with this client group can be mindful that themes of fear, isolation and internalised identity-conflict are likely to arise. Building clients' trust in the therapeutic alliance appears key, as such clients have *'kept their lives a secret'* and unlikely to have experienced external support or empathic understanding from others.

Jeanette Hennigan

Poster

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Online counselling in schools as an additional option to face-to-face (f2f) provision: exploration of pupils' experiences and comparison of effectiveness of working in different modalities

Keywords: online therapy, school counselling, adolescents

Aim/Purpose: A review of a UK schools counsellors attitudes to in-house online school counselling (Hennigan & Goss, 2015) provided impetus for the current study, which sought to understand: i) pupil usage of an in-house online counselling provision (as an adjunct to the f2f provision) from September 2016-July 2017; ii) differences in CORE 10 and Goals Based outcomes for pupils using f2f only, online only or a blend of both; iii) pupil's thoughts about offering choice of f2f, online or blended counselling.

Design/Methodology: A pluralist, mixed methods approach utilised a variety of quantitative analyses and a qualitative thematic analysis of post counselling interviews with pupils who had experienced either f2f or online counselling.

Results/Findings: Of 68 pupils (7.6% of total pupil cohort) using the service, 52 (76%) chose to work f2f only and 16 (24%) chose online counselling (12 blended with f2f and 4 online only). Results suggest that those who received online counselling had a slightly higher average first CORE 10 score and made somewhat greater improvements in CORE 10 scores, which is similar to results of the Glasheen et al, (2016) study. Thematic analysis of post counselling pupil interviews revealed three main themes: 'Convenience', 'Connection' and 'Confidentiality'. Perceived concerns that pupils had about online counselling in school e.g. quality of relationship, confidentiality online, miscommunication and lack of visual cues are comparable to some concerns that UK secondary school counsellors had in 2014 (Hennigan & Goss, 2015) and are potentially based upon lack of exposure to relevant information.

Research Limitations: The relatively small sample size limit reliability and generalisability. Future research could address these through a larger group of participants and/or fuller sampling in smaller areas. More free text responses in survey could have led to a wider variety of responses.

Conclusions/Implications: This study suggests that pupils want the convenience and flexibility of having an in-house school counselling service that is both online and offline and have a strong enough connection with their counsellor to make roughly equivalent progress in both mediums. Clarity around confidentiality online may encourage more pupils to access counselling this way, as well as continued exposure to what is for many, still a new and potentially risky venture.

Sandeep Jutla and Tolis Marinos

Poster

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The exploration of clients' experience of counselling in relation to recovery from substance misuse

Keywords: recovery, addiction, counselling relationship, safety

Aim/Purpose: To explore how recovering substance misusers experienced the counselling process/alliance during on-going recovery. Our purpose is to better inform counsellors' working with this client group.

Design/Methodology: Four respondents, who had received counselling as part of their rehabilitation process, were audio/interviewed. Our resulting data were analysed thematically, informed by phenomenology (Smith *et al*, 2009). Ethical approval was granted by our College's Ethical Research Board. Our respondents were offered six no-fee counselling sessions, should issues arise for them subsequent to their participation in our research. BACP guidelines for ethical research in counselling/psychotherapy (Bond and Griffin, 2010) were followed.

Results/Findings: Overall our findings indicate that counselling appears to promote growth for recovering addicts. It seems to provide the opportunity for such clients to work on/through underlying, pre-existing issues without the need to focus on their drug misuse. However, it seems that certain therapeutic conditions have to be met within the alliance, almost, from outset; it appears that this client group requires a high sense of safety, non-judgementalness and trust in their relationship with the counsellor. The counsellor's 'quality of presence' (Mearns, 2003) seems to be essential. Also our findings suggest the counselling alliance needs to span a number of years and clients need to experience their counsellors as skilled professionals (whilst this rests only in the clients' subjective opinion). Our findings also suggest that short/time-limited counselling can be useful to clients but seems to increase the clients' vulnerability and increase their need for further/other support.

Research Limitations: This was localised research thus our findings are based on a small respondent sample, which maybe unique to the relatively few praticipants who were included in our study; thus our findings have limited generalisability (McLeod, 2003). Also the subjective respondent responses make systematic comparisons difficult.

Conclusions/Implications: It appears counselling offered to this client group needs to be long-term and the counsellor's ability to build the trust in the alliance appears paramount to a successful therapeutic outcome with such clients. It seems counsellors are of most support/help to clients in this group when therapeutic focus is given to clients' underlying issues, rather than to the presenting issue of addiction/substance misuse.

David E Martinson and Ryan Bowers

Poster

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Assessing efficacy of clinical supervision through the use of transcultural formative feedback tools

Keywords: clinical supervision assessment, counselor education

Aim/Purpose: A philosophy of collaborative clinical supervision practices has in Norway led to the development of the supervision feedback instruments described in Flerstemt Veiledning (Ulvestad & Karki, 2012). In a counselor education research project at Immaculata University, the presenters translated and implemented these clinical supervision feedback instruments: Goals for Supervision, Supervision Exchange Outcome, and Evaluation of Supervision Session (GFS, SEO, and ESS) in select practicum and internship settings in a Clinical Mental Health Counseling Masters' Program and surveyed 33 counseling students and their site supervisors in their use of these tools in an attempt to promote collaborative supervision practices in clinical supervision (Martinson & Bowers, 2015).

Design/Methodology: A mixed method exploratory study looked at the efficacy of implementing these clinical feedback instruments in supervision, using surveys, a focus group of seven students, and four in-depth phenomenological interviews of supervisors.

Results/Findings: Our findings revealed certain key themes related to the effective use of continuous client feedback were parallel to supervision feedback implementation, according to the participants. These themes were collaboration and a supervisor positional stance integrating true acknowledgment of the supervisee, a prestige free attitude, trust of the supervisee, flexibility in supervision approaches, and a willingness to negotiate with the supervisee. These simple supervision feedback tools could be regularly utilized in multiple settings (classrooms and supervision contexts) to enhance communication, collaboration, openness, and flexibility. Preliminary statistical data revealed key factors contributing to the usefulness of supervision.

Research Limitations: As with any study of this size, limitations exist regarding the range of perspectives retrieved. It was projected to be a study allowing for a more in-depth focus on how continuous supervision feedback was used by these particular research participants rather than a more superfluous large sample collection of numerous supervisees' or supervisors' general attitudes.

Conclusions/Implications: Utilisation of these supervision feedback instruments had the supervisee effect of encouraging supervisees to better define goals, track progress, and elevate supervisee's voice to supervisor. It also had the supervisor effect of encouraging supervisor to be non-judgmental, more confident and collaborative through the accepting of supervisee feedback.

Amelia Montague-Rendall and Julie Cully

Poster

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An exploration of men diagnosed with an eating disorder and their experience of counselling

Keywords: males/eating disorders, experiences, counselling, awareness

Aim/Purpose: Strother et al, (2012) described male eating disorders (EDMs/EDs) as "under-diagnosed, under-treated and misunderstood". As little research seems to exist on men's experiences of EDs we aimed to gain a better understanding of this client group's experiences, with the purpose of increasing counsellors' awareness of the issues inherent in EDMs.

Methodology: Overall ten clients were approached and two agreed to participate in semi-structured/audio-recorded interviews. These respondents had received two or more years counselling. Common themes and anomalies were identified in the data using thematic analysis informed by phenomenology (McLeod, 2011). We followed BACP ethical guidelines for researching counselling and psychotherapy (Bond and Griffin, 2010). Participants were offered six 'no-fee' counselling sessions should they need support after participation in our research. Our College Ethical Research Board approved our research.

Results/Findings: Participants described a lack of understanding for their disorder prior to counselling however counselling appeared to address this. Findings also suggest the quality and length of the therapeutic relationship were integral to a positive therapeutic outcome for participants. Respondents disclosed that counselling assisted them in developing greater self-acceptance, awareness/understanding of their disorder and thus they were then able to develop better management of it. Trust in the therapist, counsellor/client honesty and a focus on the client as an individual - rather than the eating disorder – appeared vital to the therapeutic process.

Research Limitations: Our qualitative findings may not be open to transferability (Braun and Clarke, 2013) and the qualitative method we employed makes systematic comparison difficult as data is subjective. Males in this client group seemed adverse to play a part in our research making our participant sample small.

Conclusions/Implications: The apparent reluctance in males diagnosed with an ED to disclose/talk about their experiences (indicated in the limitations) might be an indication of why this client group remains under-diagnosed/under-treated; perhaps more needs to be done to de-stigmatise EDMs. To enhance the possibility of positive outcomes, counsellors working with this client group might attend to developing the psychotherapeutic relationship and giving focus to the client himself, rather than giving core emphasis to the EDM and its management.

Jasmine Rollings

Poster

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Outcome measures in private practice counselling: a pilot study

Keywords: outcome measures, private practice, counselling, effectiveness, pilot

Aim/Purpose: Research suggests usage of outcome measures in therapy practice can positively impact client outcomes. For example, a meta-analysis comparing therapy outcomes (Shimokawa, Lambert & Smart, 2010) found that fewer clients deteriorated and a greater number clinically improved for therapists using outcome measures, as compared with therapists who do not. However, implementing outcome measures in routine practice is not without its challenges, particularly for practitioners working in private practice who, unlike their counterparts in other settings, may not have access to systems and tools available to support them in collecting outcomes data. With this in mind, the current project aims to pilot an outcome measures system - Pragmatic Tracker - with British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) counsellors working in a private practice setting.

Design/Methodology: Participants will be recruited from the BACP membership base. For the pilot, we are seeking to recruit a cohort of 20 individual or organisational members who provide therapy in private setting. Participants will be required to complete a minimum set of outcome measures using the provided system - Pragmatic Tracker - at initial assessment, each therapy session and final session. Practitioners will be provided with a toolkit of outcome measures, along with training on how to use the measures and the Pragmatic Tracker system. Data regarding therapy outcomes, as well as acceptability of the outcome measures system to practitioners, clients and BACP will be collected. Pre and post-therapy outcome measures data will be quantitatively analysed. Acceptability data will be collected through structured interviews and qualitatively analysed.

Results/Findings: This poster will outline the three planned evaluation strands: therapy outcomes, internal evaluation and practitioner experience. This project aims to provide descriptive data on presenting issues, distress levels at therapy entry and BACP resources required for the project. Pre-post analysis will be performed on outcome measure scores. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with BACP staff and participants then qualitatively analysed.

Research Limitations: This research will be conducted in a naturalistic setting, therefore there will be no control group to compare efficacy of therapy against.

Conclusions/Implications: This research will help us evaluate the effectiveness of counselling, as well as evaluate how useful outcome measures and the outcome measures system, Pragmatic Tracker, are to therapists and clients. Ultimately, BACP aims to encourage practitioners to use outcome measures to aid good practice.

Marion Sanders and Richard Hennebert

Poster

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How have transgender people experienced counselling and how might they wish to experience counselling?

Keywords: transgender, experience, transition, counselling

Aim/ Purpose: Our aim was to explore how a number of transgender people experienced the counselling process and its effectiveness, before, during and/or after gender-transition had taken place. Our purpose was to illuminate how practitioners may offer this client group a more effective therapeutic alliance most suited to the clients' expressed needs.

Design/Methodology: Three respondents self-identifying as post gender-transition persons, were audio-taped during semi-structured interviews. We obtained approval from LC&CTA Ethics Board to interview these respondents who were offered six sessions of 'no-fee' counselling if they required support after participation in our research. Throughout our research we adhered to the BACP framework for ethical research practice (Bond and Griffin, 2010). Our data was thematically analysed and informed by the principles of interpretative phenomenology (Smith *et al*, 2009).

Results/Findings: Respondents disclosed they had known since childhood they were in bodies of the wrong gender and needed gender-transition, regardless of obstacle/s. Counselling was resented as an "enforced" process prior to gender-reassignment being approved. Counsellors were experienced as judgemental assessors who questioned respondents' self-knowledge and choice. Distrust of the counsellor and of the purpose of the therapeutic alliance were also expressed. Conversely, respondents identified a need for counselling and expressed how helpful counselling could have been if it had assisted them in exploring issues of gender-identity, potential reactions from friends, peers and family, and concerns about future intimate relationships. However, the compulsory nature of the counselling alliance prevented such exploration. Additionally, respondents also stated that counsellors appear to lack awareness, understanding of and training in the issues transgender clients face.

Research Limitations: Our findings may not be open to generalisation due to the limited number of respondents taking part in our research and the qualitative method we employed for data analysis (McLeod, 2003).

Conclusions/Implications: Our findings suggest a more comprehensive/holistic, and less diagnostic/evaluative, counselling approach be developed to support individuals in making their own decisions in regard to gender-reassignment. Additionally, it seems counsellors, in general, need to develop a deeper awareness/understanding of the sensitive emotional/relational issues facing transgender clients; perhaps this could be achieved during diversity training specific to the counsellor training process or through explicit continued professional development training.

Netalie Shloim

Poster

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"…It's like the sea. At times, it's beautiful and calm but then other times it can change with waves that are crashing…" – exploring UK & Israeli women's experiences of motherhood

Keywords: motherhood, good-enough, body image, eating behaviours, self-esteem

Aim/Purpose: Mothering is defined as the social practice of nurturing and caring for dependent children and varies based on different cultural, political and religious influences. This is a second follow-up study focusing on the experiences of mothers' from the United Kingdom (UK) and Israel; both considered as western countries, but possessing different values (Shloim et al., 2015). In Israel, motherhood is regarded with utmost importance, whereas in the UK, being voluntarily childless in more acceptable. We aimed to explore how Israeli and UK mothers integrate body satisfaction and well-being into their conceptualisations of mothering 6-12 months postpartum.

Design/Methodology: Forty one women from Israel and the UK (Israel N=23; UK N=18) were interviewed in their homes about their experience of motherhood, body-image, feeding and well-being. Interviews were semi structured and were analysed thematically. Data analysis was driven by two questions: 1. How do Israeli and UK women experience motherhood 6-12 months postpartum? 2. Are these experiences associated with body satisfaction and well-being?

Results/Findings: Motherhood conceptualisations varied between being ideal, to being good enough, to being an overwhelmed/burdened mother: all were associated with body acceptance and well-being. For example, a devoted mother who ignores her own needs was more likely to happily sacrifice her body (and body satisfaction) whereas a struggling mother who experiences motherhood as a burden was more likely to hold a negative body image. Interestingly, women did not see themselves only in one category and therefore their experience vacillated from ideal to good enough to burden.

Limitations: This was the first study to address Israeli and UK women's perceptions of motherhood. Women were from a relatively high socio-economic status (SES) and there is a need to further address such perceptions within a more varied sample.

Conclusions/Implications: Perceptions of motherhood did not significantly vary between Israeli and British mothers suggesting a shared perception of this role, regardless of culture or country. Most of the women experienced motherhood as good enough and showed moderate acceptance of their body. Encouraging mothers to talk more about the struggles and stress of being a mother might lead to improvements in maternal well-being and more positive interactions with the new born.

Chomphunut Srichannil

Poster

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Qualitative dissertation: counselling graduates' experiences and perspectives

Keywords: qualitative dissertation, counselling graduates, perception, experience

Aim/Purpose: In counselling psychology, there has been a growing interest in qualitative research approaches. Although several anecdotal evidences indicated more counselling students are using qualitative research approaches in their dissertation (e.g. Levitt, 2015; Morrow, 2007), empirical research that specifically addresses the experiences of those who use remain limited. The aim of this research was to explore the accounts of Master's level counselling graduates of qualitative dissertations in order to understand their attitudes toward qualitative research and their perceptions of what helped or hindered their progress in the process of completing the qualitative dissertation.

Design/Methodology: Purposive sampling was used for recruiting Master's level counselling graduates of qualitative dissertation. Semi-structured interviews, lasting between around one hour and two hours, were conducted with four Thai counselling graduates. The data was analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

Results/Findings: The main findings from this research suggests that the participants viewed qualitative research as relevant to their personal and professional interests, and as fundamental to their positive attitudes toward research and to form their research identity. For the participants, the qualitative research course was a door to a new way of thinking and researching. Without this, the participants believed that they would have not known about qualitative research and accordingly would have not chosen to complete qualitative dissertation. To take the dissertation forward, due to their predominantly quantitative methods training background and their limited prior training in qualitative methods, the participants found direct and intensive guidance from their research supervisors necessary and helpful.

Research Limitations: The main limitations of this research are its small sample size and its voluntary nature. As the participants volunteered to take part in the research, the perceptions of counselling graduates who did not volunteer may be different.

Conclusions/Implications: This study suggests that counselling graduates' sense of research autonomy and competence have a significant impact on the meanings they gave to their experiences of undertaking qualitative dissertation. To enhance those senses, there is the need for greater integration of qualitative methods teaching into core counselling curriculum courses. In addition, supervisors need to maintain a balance between support and freedom, providing adequate support and guidance while also enabling student autonomy and intellectual independence.

Hapsah Md Yusof

Poster

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Attitudes towards elderly and volunteer satisfaction among volunteers in Malaysia: an evidence-based group intervention

Keywords: elderly, counselling, volunteer, psycho-education group, module

Aim/Purpose: A growing population of older people in Malaysia will require not only counselors but volunteers who are well equipped with the counseling skills to work effectively with the elderly. The aim of this paper is to explore the effect of psycho-educational group intervention (using the gerontological counseling module) on attitudes toward elderly and volunteer satisfaction.

Design/Methodology: The study employed a quantitative method using a within group experimental approach. The intervention used in the study was a psychoeducation module of gerontology that comprises of eleven units, based on basic counselling skills. The participants consisted of one hundred and twenty volunteers from three public universities in Malaysia. They were trained with the module to help them deal effectively with the elderly.

Results/Findings: Preliminary results indicated that the psycho-educational group intervention had a significant effect on attitudes towards elderly and volunteer satisfaction among volunteers.

Research Limitations: Since the research involved a within group experimental approach, the study did not have a control group, thus, results may not be generalisable to other service providers.

Conclusions/Implications: The findings raise some important issues especially related to competency needs of volunteers in gerontological counselling. In addition, the implications of the study for clinical practice will be discussed.

Ilya Zakharov

Poster

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Reference system revision: implementation of value-oriented approach to psychotherapy of anxiety

Keywords: anxiety, system of values, devaluation, gratitude, metaphors

Aim/Purpose: This work was not initially planned as research study; it evolved from daily psychotherapeutic activity in psychiatric outpatient clinic. Value-oriented approach that is proposed for presentation gradually crystallised as study progressed and new data was collected. Approach is based on concept of "anticipatory reflection of reality" (Anokhin, 1962). The purpose of study was to perceive whether the value-oriented approach is helpful when working with patients of outpatient psychiatric clinic with fear/anxiety as leading symptom.

Design/Methodology: The study was carried on in the form of individual interviews (8-10 sessions twice a week) and group psychotherapy (7-9 meetings once a week). About 60 patients were observed, including those with phobic and other anxiety disorder (F40, F41), anxiety in the structure of schizotypal (F21) and schizoaffective disorder (F25), as well as patients suffering from anxious manifestation of depressive disorder (F33). Case studies and excerpts from therapeutic sessions are presented. Common mistakes (conceptual, strategic and tactic) that occur during implementation of the proposed approach and ways of their correction are described. Metaphoric descriptions of wrong and right decisions in the process of therapy are presented in the paper (in the form in which they are described to a client). Throughout the course, clients kept "positive diary" which reflected the dynamics of client's well-being (diary sample is enclosed to paper).

Research Limitations: Research was conducted mostly on the base of outpatient psychiatric clinic and did not include clients from other target groups (like clients with co-morbid drug/alcohol problems), which require more investigations.

Results/Findings: Most clients reported the substantial decrease of anxiety and positive life changes due to revision of the system of values in the course of therapy (according to "positive diary" and data of anxiety scale – HAM-A or BAI). Also, it was noted that positive modalities became much more common ("return to the desired emotional environment" or instead of "overcoming fear"). "Dealing with anxiety" was replaced by confirmation of the achievement of the desired level of self-awareness.

Conclusions/Implications: Proposed concept proved its efficacy with different forms of anxiety - both as an independent phenomenon, and as a symptom of other pathologies. It is not restricted to concrete psychotherapeutic methodic and can be used by specialists practicing different therapeutic methods and techniques (CBT, positive psychotherapy, gestalt psychotherapy, ACT). Concept is easy and comfortable for client's perception, and its main principles can be used in variable situations.

PAPERS

Liddy Carver

Paper

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Disenchantment and ambivalence: counselling and psychotherapy educators compromised by higher education and BACP

Keywords: higher education, BACP, counselling and psychotherapy educators, counselling and psychotherapy trainers, professionalisation

Aim/Purpose: Counselling and psychotherapy training is central to regulating practice. However, studies conceptualising trainers' professional challenges are sparse. This study examines counselling and psychotherapy educators' multidimensional unease when faced with university and BACP demands, and supports them to deliver a consistent, relationship-centred learning approach within higher education that positively impacts counsellors' practice.

Design/Methodology: As part of participatory action research, co-operative inquiry involved political and epistemic participation amongst co-researchers to elicit change. Eight 2-hour inquiry sessions with five experienced trainers, and three associated workshops with counselling and psychotherapy teams were video recorded, with data transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke,2006) was invaluable for observing patterns linked to broader psychological, social or theoretical concerns, and required a reflexive approach. The essence of the study as an ethically responsible endeavour, demanded that the principle of beneficence (BACP, 2013,2016) was central to the research.

Results/Findings: This paper concentrates on one overarching theme within a doctoral study, Organisational constraints and challenges, comprising four associated themes: Agonising about competing obligations; intrinsic disenchantment with university culture; an inherent philosophical clash with the university; and ambivalent perceptions of and feelings towards BACP. Within this final theme, a sub-theme 'BACP accreditation of programmes feels tortuous' illuminates BACP's accreditation process; generally perceived as labyrinthine.

Research Limitations: These findings are not necessarily generalisable to the wider trainer population in further education, the National Health Service and independent sector. The inquiry's scope is limited by: problems recruiting trainers to attend multiple inquiry sessions; co-researcher absence; and irregular meetings. The purposive sample was fundamentally self-selected from like-minded trainers in HE, and may not be a good representation of the general training population, thus limiting transferability of the research.

Conclusions/Implications: The results highlight that pressures on counselling educators have increased, with: student cohorts expanding because of commercial demands; skills and experiential group work scrutinised vis-à-vis staff/student ratios; pressure to take students without the necessary capacity to engage in counsellor training; and fitting in client work around mounting obligations within role. BACP is currently perceived as less of a support for trainers than therapists. The importance of BACP consulting with counselling educators is therefore paramount.

Rebecca Champ

Paper

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Self-determination based model of therapeutic support for adults with ADHD: a single case study

Keywords: adult ADHD, contemporary psychotherapy, motivation, anxiety, depression

Aim/Purpose: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most prevalent and debated mental disorders diagnosed in practice today. Current treatment of ADHD is effective only in the short term, and is focused on an 'illness model' developed from cognitive theories of motivation. It is hypothesised that a more inclusive positive approach to ADHD treatment will improve long term self-management. This single case study was designed to examine a brief self-determination theory (SDT) based intervention through contemporary psychotherapy. It was developed to integrate biological understanding of difference and perception of self to treat low self-esteem and self-efficacy with comorbid anxiety and depression in adults with ADHD.

Design/Methodology: Client was selected from private practice for Hermeneutic Single Case Efficacy Design (HSCED) analysis performed with pre- and post- symptom measurement using the Weiss Functional Impairment Rating Scale Self Report (WFIRS-S) and Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II). A client led Personal Questionnaire provided weekly performance measures throughout treatment, and therapist session records and recordings were analysed for changes in perception of ADHD. Change interviews were performed at the end of treatment and at 1 year follow up.

Results/Findings: After 11 sessions, client had reliable and clinically significant reductions in WFIRS-S from 92 to 73, and on BDI-II from 23 to 12. Significant change was demonstrated qualitatively in client perception and integration of ADHD within the context of self. Client demonstrated improvements in self-awareness, self-management and confidence in designing supportive solutions. The intervention was effective in improving self-esteem, self-efficacy, anxiety and depression comorbid with ADHD, and continued to be effective at 1 year follow-up.

Research Limitations: No process outcome correlation data was collected. Instruments for collecting and measuring SDT data were not included. Adjudication of the case would be improved by a team of researchers. Client participated in a group CBT based ADHD course between treatment and follow-up. No comparisons of the model alongside existing treatments or control group were available.

Conclusions/Implications: This model assists with integration of ADHD biological needs and intrinsic motivation engagement for long term outcome maintenance. Future studies may support this approach for adult ADHD interventions.

Anna Constantine

Paper

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Working with the topics of sex and sexuality in counselling and psychotherapy training and practice: trainers' experiences

Keywords: sex, sexuality, counselling, psychotherapy, training

Aim/Purpose: The topics of sex and sexuality can surface within the therapeutic process. Practitioner training programmes, including the individuals who deliver training, can play a significant role in assisting therapists in training to develop competence and reflective self-awareness to enable them to work with these matters. The study aims to explore the experiences of, and adequacy of training for, working with the topics of sex and sexuality in counselling and psychotherapy. The literature in this domain is limited and the study aims to give further insight into this important area.

Design/Methodology: A hermeneutic phenomenological methodology is employed. Nine experienced trainers, currrently teaching on a variety of counselling and psychotherapy training programmes, ranging from Diploma to Professional Doctorate, were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. Individual audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews were undertaken and subsequently transcribed. Data were analysed by a thematic approach.

Results/Findings: The analysis of data yielded twenty two themes, organised around four overarching themes: *Personal and professional expressions*; *Approaches to teaching*; *Addressing heteronormativity within training*; *Challenges within training*.

Findings highlighted the participants personal and professional views concerning sex and sexuality. Methods used to help students work with the topics of sex and sexuality within their practice as qualified practitioners were described. Thoughts relating to heteronormativity within the training environment were identified, including difficulties encountered within this area. Participants experienced challenges within their role as trainer.

Research Limitations: The research is limited by the researcher's subjectivity and bias in the interpretation of the data. However, this is mitigated by careful consideration of criteria used to judge the quality of phenomenological research. The research is also limited by sample size.

Conclusions/Implications: Participants highlighted the importance of integrating the topics of sex and sexuality within practitioner training. Findings raise important questions for training and practice, therefore the development of counselling and psychotherapy training programmes may be influenced by this research on completion of the project.

A Elizabeth Crunk

Paper

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The Coping Assessment for Bereavement and Loss Experiences (CABLE): introduction and implications for using assessment in grief counselling

Keywords: grief counselling, assessment, grief, bereavement, scale development

Aim/Purpose: The loss of a loved one through death is a ubiquitous experience and often a highly distressing event. However, prior to this study, a bereavement-specific instrument designed to assess potential constructive strategies for coping with grief had yet to be developed. This study aimed to address the following overarching research question: What is the overall factor structure of items on the CABLE? The purpose of this paper session is two-fold: (1) To discuss the development and validation of a new instrument, entitled the Coping Assessment for Bereavement and Loss Experiences (CABLE), and (2) to consider practice implications of using assessment in grief counselling.

Design/Methodology: The researchers developed and refined the CABLE using qualitative approaches (i.e., a focus group and protocol analysis). The CABLE was then validated with a diverse, international sample of bereaved adults. Participants (N = 844) were recruited using Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Convergent validity was assessed using the BriefCOPE (Carver, 1997) and discriminant validity was assessed using the Persistent Complex Bereavement Inventory (Lee, 2015). Data were analysed using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, as well as correlational procedures.

Results/Findings: Analyses yielded a six-factor, 28-item structure. Confirmatory analyses indicated good model fit on several indices. The CABLE demonstrated good internal consistency reliability (α = .89) and provided initial evidence of convergent and discriminant validity with the present sample.

Research Limitations: Limitations of the present study included (a) correlational design, (b) use of a only one data collection strategy and assessment format, and (c) potential social desirability and respondent fatigue confounds. Clinicians and researchers should note that the present study represents only the initial validation of this new scale.

Conclusions/Implications: Use of a validated, easy-to-use, clinically useful self-report tool such as the CABLE can inform practitioners and researchers in evaluating bereavement coping. Furthermore, the CABLE provides clinicians with a tool for developing interventions designed to increase the number and broaden the types of coping strategies used to facilitate greater, more efficient healing following loss. Study results and recommendations for using the CABLE in clinical and research settings and to inform treatment interventions will be provided.

Lois de Cruz

Paper

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Women's perceptions of miscarriage decades after the event: an interpretative phenomenological analysis

Keywords: miscarriage, women's experience, psychological consequences, interpretative phenomenological analysis, counselling

Aim/Purpose: Miscarriage is a common occurrence. More than a quarter of all conceptions result in miscarriage with the majority occurring in the first twelve weeks of pregnancy (NICE, 2012). However, there is very little empirical research into the long term impact of miscarriage on women's psychological well-being (e.g. Wojnar et al., 2011). This research, conducted for a PhD in Psychology at Keele University, explored how women perceive their experience of miscarriage many decades after the event.

Design/Methodology: Five women, who had experienced miscarriage between 14 and 28 years ago, were recruited via word of mouth and self-referral. All participants took part in unstructured in-depth interviews which were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA attempts to explore an individual's personal perception or experience. In the data analysis, I make transparent how my own experience of miscarriage may have influenced the research findings and process. I also focus on the use of a series of reflexive interviews (Tufford & Newman, 2012) as a means of examining my own assumptions and beliefs.

Results/Findings: Three super-ordinate themes emerged from the analysis: *Memories of the Initial Impact of Miscarriage*, *The Longer-Term Consequences of Miscarriage* and *Making Sense of Miscarriage in the Present*. A major finding was that for the majority of women in this study miscarriage was a complex event with short and long-term psychological consequences. Many years later, it is anxiety, linked to trauma and shock that my participants recall intensely. However, over time participants report coming to an acceptance of their experience and perceive it to have made them more resilient and able to look forward to the future with optimism.

Research Limitations: This study meets the criteria for evaluating good IPA (Smith, 2010) and effective qualitative research (Yardley, 2000). IPA is orientated towards an idiographic approach requiring a small, homogenous and purposive sample, therefore the results are not transferable.

Conclusions/Implications: The findings indicate a need for more awareness of the long-term psychological effects of miscarriage since these often go unrecognised. For some women miscarriage can be a life changing event and yet currently there is a lack of counselling provision for perinatal mental health problems.

Meera Dhesi

Paper

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In what ways are the distinctive features of synchronous text- based counselling experienced as being helpful and/or unhelpful by young people?

Keywords: online counselling, young people, helpful and unhelpful factors, synchronous text-based counselling

Aim/Purpose: With an increased availability of online counselling services in the UK, and a wealth of research looking at online counselling abroad, the study aimed to understand the experiences of young people using such services in the UK. The purpose was to help guide practice for online services offering support to young people and aid the development of counselling initiatives.

Design/Methodology: Fifteen participants were recruited through Kooth, an online counselling service for young people. Eligibility criteria were age 14-18, and a minimum of four online counselling sessions in the past year. An advert was placed on the Kooth website. Informed consent was received from participants and a thorough ethics procedure was followed to safeguard participants. Interviews were conducted online through the Kooth website and lasted for one hour. The study used thematic analysis to identify helpful and unhelpful factors of synchronous text-based counselling, as perceived by young people.

Results/Findings: Helpful factors of synchronous text-based counselling included anonymity, remote access of online counselling, being able to synchronously use the internet to search topics being discussed, and the 'distance' between counsellor and the young person. Unhelpful factors included technological issues impacting access; the lack of physical presence of a counsellor; and issues with typing such as disrupted flow, ability to delete content, and misinterpreting text.

Research Limitations: The small sample size means results should be treated with caution. Additionally, findings may not be transferable to other contexts as data were collected from only one online counselling service. Researcher reflexivity was documented and reflected upon throughout the study.

Conclusions/Implications: Online counselling is valued by young people and offers a means of accessing support for those who otherwise might not. However, this medium has its limitations, and these should be considered by online counsellors. Face to face counsellors can also use these results in their practice to consider factors that young people find helpful or unhelpful in face to face counselling.

Linda Dubrow-Marshall and Rod Dubrow-Marshall

Paper

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From brainwashing to coercive control: an integrated research review of the evolving representation of power and influence and their role in creating psychological distress across different contexts and the implications for counselling practice

Keywords: coercive control, brainwashing, mind control, power, influence

Aim/Purpose: To examine how key terms and concepts have evolved to explain the spectrum of influence and power relations affecting individuals in domestic and group settings (including extremist groups and trafficking). To consider implications for counselling practice in working with individuals who have experienced psychological distress emanating from the abuse of power and influence.

Design/Methodology: An integrated research review (APA, 2009) was undertaken including of a specialist collection on coercion and abuse at the University of Alberta. The review strategy included problem formulation and a data search focussed on research published on brainwashing, coercive control, controlling behaviour, domestic violence, cults, influence, mind control, power, undue influence and psychological distress. Established databases (PsychInfo, PubMed, ScienceDirect, etc.) were also used across a number of relevant disciplines. A thematic analysis was conducted of the studies identified to evaluate how understandings and representations of key terms and concepts have developed over time.

Results/Findings: 'Brainwashing' has fallen in and out of favour in the literature as a broadly defined term, while 'coercive control' has increased in popularity including in the Serious Crime Act (2015) which defines 'controlling and coercive behaviour' in psychological terms (Stark, 2009). A trend has emerged which avoids defining influence as a unidirectional process involving passive recipients of 'mind control'. Definitions and representations of undue influence and power abuse increasingly acknowledge interactive processes where intense cognitive and emotional changes reduce self-agency and involve a 'self-referential' incorporation of the influencer (Dubrow-Marshall, 2010). Coercive control is clearly implicated in the development of psychological distress with relevance to counsellors and psychotherapists working with survivors of coercion and abuse.

Research Limitations: The integrative research review strategy could be expanded through evaluating a broader range of studies examining power, influence and distress.

Conclusions/Implications: Implications for counselling and psychotherapy practice include the need for an enhanced appreciation of the complex aetiology of coercive control and its role in psychological distress. Additionally, a greater focus may be merited in counselling practice with survivors of coercive control and abuse on psycho-education regarding power relations, the psychological effects of subjugation and a re-claiming of autonomous identity, self-agency and a rebalancing of power to foster improved client empowerment.

Charlie Duncan

Paper

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Working in the NHS: the state of children's services

Keywords: NHS, children's services, counsellors experiences, collaboration, survey

Aim/Purpose: As part of a joint collaboration between the Association of Child Psychotherapists (ACP), the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), the British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC) and the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), the present study aimed to understand our members' experiences of working in an NHS children's service, such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), child or adolescent community mental health teams and child and adolescent inpatient units.

Design/Methodology: An online survey, consisting of open and closed questions, was distributed to all members (approximately 50,000 individuals) of each of the four collaborating organisations. A total of 494 respondents indicated that currently (n=365) or previously (n=129) worked in an NHS children's service. The survey covered four broad themes: 1) the job roles of members working in the NHS; 2) the NHS settings in which our members work; 3) the views and opinions of our members working in the NHS in terms of the adequacy of services and changes to services in the last five years; 4) the level of workplace stress experienced by our members working in the NHS. Descriptive, inferential and cross-tabulation analyses were undertaken on the data.

Results/Findings: Almost a third of participants currently working in NHS children's services reported that their service would be downsizing (30%) and almost two-thirds stated that roles had either previously been downgraded or that such changes were planned (60%). Furthermore, 84% of respondents indicated that thresholds for entry to their services had increased over the last 5 years. Finally, significant negative changes in the number of therapeutic practitioner posts and staff morale were identified.

Research Limitations: The overall response rate to the survey was very low, which means it is difficult to generalise the findings to the wider therapeutic workforce in NHS children's services. Furthermore, the sample were self-selected which again makes generalisation of findings difficult.

Conclusions/Implications: These findings suggest that NHS services for children have been increasingly starved of resources, and are now facing a staffing and resourcing crisis which is having a serious and detrimental impact on the services available to vulnerable children and young people.

Emma Flanagan

Paper

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A theory of everyone

Keywords: self, drive, nourishment, hurt, defence

Aim/Purpose: The aim of Flanagan's research was to explore a hypothesis that human beings have a key universal drive to believe in their individual worth. A focus on this hypothetical drive led Flanagan to develop a tri-partite model of the self: we seek and experience nourishment for our belief in our worth; we fear or feel hurt - that we lack worth; and we use defences against hurt. She aimed to analyse how much of our communication, emotions and behaviour this model of the self could account for.

This theory of the self provides an alternative to Freud's model of the id, ego and super-ego; the parent-adult-child model of Transactional Analysis; Winnicott's true self/false self-dichotomy; Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Rogers' self-concept. It also provides a rationale for object relations and attachment theory.

Design/Methodology: Flanagan used qualitative heuristic research methods over four years, combining introspection and in-depth dialogic psychotherapy with a random sample of 100 clients, male and female, aged 15-84, from a range of ethnic, religious and social backgrounds. She conducted a literature review of mental health and theories of the self across time and disciplines (anthropology, philosophy, theology, psychology and history). The research considered whether this model was useful for the implementation of effective psychotherapy and for providing clients with insight into their responses and interactions. Flanagan analysed the findings in a 55,000-word thesis, including case studies.

Results/Findings: This model of the self-proved robust, comprehensive and useful in a therapeutic setting; it was supported by the literature review and by Flanagan's own self-analysis and relationships. Her findings show how most human emotions, communication and behaviour relate to nourishment, hurt or defence of the self. She found one emotion – compassion - challenged the hypothesis, and one behaviour - self-sabotage - needed more exploration.

Research Limitations: The main limit of the research was Flanagan's belief in this model of the self, although she listened carefully for other motivations behind people's behaviour and emotions.

Conclusions/Implications: The research concluded that our strongest drive could be to believe in our personal value, and that a nourishment, hurt, defence model of the self can provide a helpful framework for effective psychotherapy.

Julieta Galante and Géraldine Dufour

Paper

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Effectiveness of providing a mindfulness-based intervention to increase resilience to stress in university students: preliminary results from a pragmatic randomised controlled trial

Keywords: mindfulness, students, university, resilience, randomised controlled trial

Aim/Purpose: Worldwide there is concern about students' rising need for mental health services. Mindfulness meditation is popular, but its effectiveness to increase wellbeing and resilience to stress in university students needs confirmation. The University of Cambridge has funded an implementation and evaluation project. We designed a pragmatic, randomised controlled trial assessing the impact of providing preventative mindfulness teaching before examinations to test the main hypothesis that it reduces students' distress.

Design/Methodology: Students without severe mental illness or related crisis were randomly allocated to join an 8-week mindfulness course adapted for university students (MSS), or to continue accessing mental health support as usual (SAU). The main outcome was self-reported psychological distress during the examination period measured with the CORE Outcome Measure. Independent data monitoring and ethics and advisory reference committees were set up. Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials registry, number ACTRN12615001160527.

Results/Findings: 616 students took part, 309 allocated to mindfulness and 307 to SAU. Participants' initial distress was higher than the general student population, but lower than students attending counselling. 74% completed the main outcome questionnaire; 59% of the MSS arm participants completed at least half of the MSS course. MSS significantly reduced distress during the exam period compared with SAU: 57% of SAU participants had distress scores above a validated clinical threshold level compared with 37% of MSS participants. SAU distress worsened over the year and during the exam period whereas MSS scores improved after the course and were maintained during exams.

Research Limitations: Lack of control for non-specific effects.

Conclusions/Implications: Our results replicate evidence from several smaller trials. Mindfulness training appears an effective component of a wider student mental health strategy. This trial is highly relevant to policy makers and commissioners. Involving from its inception coproduction between researchers and stakeholders, it increases the evidence base for interventions at a time when increasing number of students seek help. The intervention has a positive effect and is popular, so more practitioners will be needed. More research is needed about impact on specific student populations and different types of institutions.

John Hills

Paper

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Psychotherapy and the social determinants of behaviour – a research design protocol

Keywords: social determinants, behaviour, psychotherapy research, ethnography, co-production of theory

Aim/Purpose: A person's health behaviours are heavily influenced by social contexts and cues (Marmot, 2015; Hoff and Stiglitz, 2016); people make 'bad' choices for reasons including instability and scarcity (Larsen, 2015). Counsellors and psychotherapists are often acutely aware of the limitations of own work given the social worlds our clients inhabit. There is a dearth of research investigating these 'underlying rationalities' (Larsen, 2015) and mechanisms underpinning 'social causation' (Vancea and Utzet, 2017). This project takes up the theoretical points of contact between multiple identities described in behavioural economics theories (Oyserman et al, 2014; Hoff and Stiglitz, 2016) and multiplicities of self (DiMaggio et al, 2010), and the dialogical self (Ribeiro and Gonçalves, 2010) described in psychotherapeutic theory. We consider how psychotherapy research methodologies, developed on the basis of intimate access to a person's internal experiencing of the world, may be utilised to generate new insights in this area.

Design/Methodology: An ethnographic study is proposed in which individuals are recruited from the emerging adulthood age group of 18-29 years old: a period associated with identity exploration and instability (Arnett, 2014). In supplementary sessions to ordinary psychotherapy, participants will be encouraged to develop concepts of identity and self in society through methods including photo elicitation and video diaries.

Results/Findings: The study is designed to generate insights in four key areas: 1) how different identities correspond to different behaviours; 2) longitudinal tracking of identity development; 3) the social conditions underpinning the activation of different identities; and 4) How participation in the research project has been facilitative of the participant's identity exploration i.e. the therapeutic value of participation per se.

Research Limitations: Originating in different disciplinary spheres there is not perfect theoretical overlap between the concepts of multiple identities and multiplicities of self, however psychotherapy research methods that chart the movement between relational schemas are tested for their applicability to ethnographic data.

Conclusions/Implications: There are demonstrable points of contact between psychotherapy research methodologies and emerging concepts from behavioural economics. The study aims to deliver insights on social causation mechanisms whilst respecting the 'wholeness' of experience.

Jane Hunt and Igi Moon

Paper

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Breaking the silence: an exploration of trans and non-binary therapists' experiences of accessing and undertaking counselling and psychotherapy training

Keywords: trans, non-binary gender, psychotherapeutic training

Aim/Purpose: With the Memorandum of Understanding (2016) now protecting trans/non-binary gender clients from discrimination and conversion therapies, therapists need a good awareness of trans/non-binary gender-related issues. To inform this, it is helpful to know how trans/non-binary people themselves experience therapeutic training. Recent research has focused on LGB therapists' experiences of training (Grove 2009, Moon 2007), and on trans/non-binary clients experience of therapy (Hunt 2014). However there has been no research in the UK that investigates trans/non-binary therapists' experiences of undertaking training. This research addresses this gap.

Design/Methodology: This was a small scale qualitative study with a purposive sample. Seven participants were recruited via contacting BACP, UKCP, and BPS training programmes and trans/non-binary organisations and social media sites. All participants identified as trans or non-binary and were current trainees or recent graduates. Data was collected via a focus group and in-depth interviews. The data was analysed using a discursive narrative analysis with a focus on sensitive topics (Hyden 2008), underpinned by an interpretative approach.

Research findings: *(i)Accessing training:* participants report no difficulties accessing training. The application process didn't require them to disclose or talk about their gender identities. The experience of their own therapy and therapist was pivotal in their choice of training. *(ii) Experience of training:* some participants reported feeling accepted and affirmed on their course; others a sense of dislocation and dissonance. There was a distinction between binary trans and non-binary gender trainees' experiences, with the former group reporting more affirmative experiences. Participants expressed shock at the absence of theoretical or experiential input around gender issues in training, often leading to them taking on an educational role and challenging CIS gender and hetero-normative assumptions embedded in training. (iii) *Knowledge base for working with trans/non-binary clients:* participants believed that awareness of difference was necessary, and that it was essential that therapists showed willingness to reflect upon their own gender locatedness, as well as engage with a broader recognition of intersectionality in their work.

Research limitation: Trainees from non-humanistic or non-integrative training programmes were under-represented in this study.

Conclusion/Implications: Training programmes need to cover issues of difference more systematically throughout the training curriculum.

Caitlyn McKinzie Bennett

Paper

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The impact of a neurofeedback training intervention on college students' levels of anxiety and cortisol

Keywords: neurofeedback training, anxiety, cortisol, stress, college students

Aim/Purpose: The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of neurofeedback (NF) training on college students' levels of anxiety and stress through assessments and physiological measures. NF training is a non-invasive approach designed to increase brain efficiency through training the electrical response patterns within the brain. This provides the opportunity for counsellors to use NF training as an adjunctive treatment to assist clients in treating anxiety more efficiently.

Design/Methodology: A quasi-experimental, non-equivalent control group design was used. All treatment group participants received 16 NF training sessions while the control group only completed assessments and saliva samples. Assessments and saliva samples were collected at week 1, 4, 8, and follow-up.

Results/Findings: A RM-MANOVA was conducted to determine if significant change over time occurred. A significant multivariate effect was found across the within-subjects interaction between time and group: Wilks' λ = .708, $F_{(12, 56)}$ = 1.92, p = .051, partial η^2 = .292. Specifically, compared to the control group, the treatment group showed significant decreases on mean scores for the: (a) PSS ($F_{(3, 201)}$ = 6.836, p < .001, partial η^2 = .093); (b) BDI-II ($F_{(3, 201)}$ = 6.563, p = .001, partial η^2 = .089); and (c) SAT ($F_{(3, 201)}$ = 3.641, p = .019, partial η^2 = .052). Regarding cortisol levels, there were no significant differences between the treatment and control groups: Wilks' λ = .981, $F_{(3, 43)}$ = .277, p = .841, partial η^2 = .019.

Research Limitations: Limitations include using a waitlist control group versus a randomised control group. Additionally, the cortisol collection was administered over four different periods and would benefit from increased collection times and during the same time of day due to influence of circadian rhythm.

Conclusions/Implications: The presented study is unique and innovative, adding NF training to the literature as a helpful intervention for college students. This study can add to the literature as a method for treating anxiety, with the goal of incorporating NF as an adjunctive therapy at universities. Furthermore, this study provides opportunities to discuss and integrate innovative counselling topics into the counsellor educator curriculum to better inform counsellors-in-training.

Michelle D Mitchell

Paper

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The development and validation of the Multicultural Competency Assessment (MCA)

Keywords: multicultural, assessment, scale development, competence, validation

Aim/Purpose: Multiculturalism has been integrated in ethical codes, guidelines on competence, and standards for training in preparation programs within counselling, psychology, and social work fields; however, limited measures exist designed to comprehensively measure the self-efficacy of clinicians' multicultural competence. Therefore, the purpose of this presentation is to (a) discuss the development of a new instrument, entitled the *Multicultural Competency Assessment* (MCA) based on instrument development best practices and (b) to review the psychometric properties of MCA scores among a sample of therapists in clinical practice.

Design/Methodology: This correlational study encompasses two distinct phases (e.g., I, II): the development of the MCA and the administration of the MCA to a sample of therapists. Since the steps in constructing an instrument vary within the literature, a combination of scholars' step-wise processes was followed. A total of 407 counselors, social workers, psychologists, and students in training programs were recruited. Data collection will utilize four instruments for assessing convergent and discriminant validity to validate the Multicultural Competency Assessment.

Results/Findings: MCA scores were calculated using principal component analysis (PCA) with a varimax with kaiser rotation. The suitability of factor analysis was assessed prior to performing PCA, which generated correlation matrix coefficients of .3 and above, with a Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) value above of .952, and statistical significance for Barlett's Test of Sphericity (x^2 = 6167.727, *df* = 300, *p* < .001; Barlett, 1950; Kaiser, 1960). The final exploratory MCA model identified a four-factor structure, which accounted for 64.108% of the total variance.

Research Limitations: Limitations existed in utilising self-report assessments, which may yield response bias. Additionally, researchers may encounter vounteer/selection bias among respondents who assist in the completion of the study.

Conclusions/Implications: The researcher uncovered 4 factor structure for the MCA, which did not yield a relationship with social desirability. Implications for this research provide a framework to measure competency among therapists, as well as, a means to assess therapeutic outcomes.

Naomi Moller and Rachel Willcox

Paper

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Genetic families: counselling implications of embryo donation for family formation

Keywords: family, family counselling, infertility, embryo donation

Aim/Purpose: Donor conception challenges understandings of 'family' and this may be particularly the case for embryo donation (ED), the newest form of donor conception, where the ED-child has no genetic link to their (recipient) parent(s). To date there is minimal research on ED, in which embryos 'left over' from IVF are donated to other individuals with fertility issues. The lack of research means that the counselling that many donors and recipients are encouraged to undergo has little empirical basis. One aim of this study is thus to improve understanding of how best to support families impacted by ED. However, study findings also have wider relevance for counselling practice, to challenge potentially unacknowledged assumptions about families as being posited on genetic relatedness.

Design/Methodology: This study, one of the first to explore the meaning and experience of ED for both donor and recipient families, gathered qualitative interview and survey data from over 40 participants, and family map data from 20 participants, including donors, recipients, and some adult (aged 16+) children of donors and recipients, recruited in both the UK and North America from donor conception organizations and snowballing. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data.

Results/Findings: Participants reported diverse experiences of both counselling and broader support services. Additionally, their sense-making around notions of family and kinship evidenced how they became tangled in and by dominant genetic notions of kinship, often struggling to make sense of their relatedness to their non-genetically-related family as well as to genetically related strangers, in particular donors and donor-family siblings

Research Limitations: Families engaged in ED can be secretive and thus the sample may not be representative of those who engage in ED.

Conclusions/Implications: In a cultural context in which genetic kinship still dominates notions of family, there are important considerations for counselling practice that arise from the reproductive technologies, laws and clinic practices that allow donor conception where children have no genetic relation to their parent(s) and potentially no recourse to identifying their genetic parents. We consider the implications of these for practice with those impacted by ED (donor, recipient, sibling, ED-child) as well as for how practitioners think about family more broadly.

Mason Neely

Paper

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Counsellor accounts of erotic countertransference emerging within the therapeutic setting: a critical discourse analysis

Keywords: erotic, countertransference, same sex attraction, therapeutic love, discourse analysis

Aim/Purpose: This project begins with the assumption that we cannot remove the erotic from its essential role in the development of our psyche, nor can we suspend our fantasy lives - and wider patterns of sexual attraction - from influencing our work within the therapy space. Thus, the aim of this empirical study was to analyse how psychotherapists' report to experience erotic phenomena emerging within therapeutic relationships.

Design/Methodology: Data were collected through eight semi-structured interviews with post-qualification, BACP-registered psychotherapists and then analysed using critical discourse analysis, opportunistic, 'snowball' sampling was utilised, yielding participants from a large spectrum of experience and modality.

Results/Findings: Within accounts, appearance of the 'erotic' is reported to have caused multi-faceted anxieties and prompted participants to conceal sexual impulses from both clients and supervisors. Accounts associate erotic material with a heightened sense of empathy within the dyad. Complex narratives emerged of erotic countertransference that included same sex attraction, as well the confluence of sexual feelings with desires to emotionally nurture troubled clients.

Research Limitations: Sampling was opportunistic and recruitment was problematic as numerous potential participants declined to take part or did not recognise moments of the erotic in their practice. Due to this, the research was limited by the self-selection bias in the recruitment of interview participants. Critical discourse analysis has important methodological limitations, specifically its reliance on a non-uniform interpretation of data.

Conclusions/Implications: The study concludes that within the sample, the appearance of eroticism was reported to have occurred early in professional development and seemed to elicit feelings of shame and incompetence. Amongst male participants, these negative associations were described as being heightened when sexual attraction was directed towards same sex clients or accompanied by maternal desires. Conversely, female practitioners described impulses towards same-sex clients as positive and evidence of a deepening relational bond.

Suggestions for future research include exploring the cultural and institutional assumptions around the erotic, as well as the ways in which training and professional development pathways can best acknowledge and manage attraction within the dyad.

Claudia Nielsen

Paper

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Being a spiritual therapist with beliefs of post-mortem consciousness: how do these beliefs map onto practice?

Keywords: anxiety, death, post-mortem, beliefs, therapy

Aim/Purpose: The anticipation of death and what may happen next is a recognised source of anxiety yet ways in which these concerns are addressed in therapy is an under-researched area. Cultural, religious or epistemological beliefs about post mortem experiences range from none to reincarnation. Spiritual therapists believe in a transcendental dimension that allows for some kind of conscious experience after the death of the physical body. However, the ways in which their beliefs inform therapeutic practice is unknown. This study aims to explore what it is like to be a practising therapist who holds spiritual beliefs. Understanding the interplay of the relationship between beliefs and professional practice will enable insight to the impact on clients and therapists of exploring beliefs about death and what may come afterwards, in therapy.

Design/Methodology: This ongoing PhD research employs a qualitatively-driven mixed method approach in which individual semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather accounts about everyday life and professional practice as a spiritual therapist. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to develop themes.12 therapists who self-defined as spiritual were recruited from a wider sample who had completed a demographic survey of beliefs about death and post-mortem experiences.

Results/Findings: Emerging superordinate themes: Personal epistemology and ontology; Beliefs as key to understanding philosophical orientation; The subject of death in the therapy room. They show that spiritual therapists regard the ultimate nature of reality as mysterious and that the subject of death does not generally find a place in the therapy room. Some participants discussed ethics, safety of clients as well as credibility concerns, as reasons for this.

Research Limitations: Participants include possibly only therapists who have reflected and feel confident to engage with this topic. Although indicating the issue is important, the results have limited generalisation to the wider therapeutic population.

Conclusions/Implications: Therapists with strongly held beliefs about some form of conscious experience after death feel inhibited about bringing these beliefs to their therapeutic practice. Raising awareness that people hold personal beliefs about post mortem consciousness may be helpful to the development of therapeutic interventions that seek to address overt and covert death anxiety in clients.

Jean O'Callaghan

Paper

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Not now! Not yet! The waiting games for change in counselling: a discursive approach to counsellors' accounts of working with clients who procrastinate change

Keywords: goals, change, procrastination, integrative practice

Aim/Purpose: Counsellors often report a sense of puzzlement and frustration with clients who agree goals for change but keep postponing their implementation. Various theoretical approaches to counselling offer diverse explanations of why clients might procrastinate change which derive from their specific assumptions about how therapy works and what kinds of change are possible. While extant therapeutic perspectives on procrastination are mainly informed by a realist epistemology, this study adopted a post-structuralist approach which is ironic to counsellors' uses of language understood as discourse. By applying a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA), the aim of this approach is to highlight the implicit discursive power relations that practitioners may be influenced by in accounting for their experiences of working with clients who procrastinate change.

Design/Methodology: This was a small scale qualitative study that interviewed 12 experienced integrative practitioners. The data is analysed using FDA (Willig 2013; Arribas Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2008) and informed by a post-structuralist epistemology. The guiding research question: Are there diverse discursive power games in counsellors' accounts of working with clients who procrastinate change?

Results/Findings: 3 therapeutic subject positions are presented as 'deskilled puzzlement', 'empathically attuned' and 'reflexive bigger picture'. These are illustrated to highlight some of the ways in which counsellors' constructions can locate them and their clients in diverse discursive power relations which may have implications for understanding clients who procrastinate change and the integrative therapeutic process itself.

Research Limitations: An FDA applies an ironic rather than empathic approach to data that could distance the analyst from the painful experiences lived by procrastinators. However, the discursive approach presented, may offer integrative counsellors a means of developing a reflexive stance to the ways in which they understand and work with clients who procrastinate change.

Conclusions/Implications: The discursive approach presented, may offer integrative counsellors a means of developing a reflexive stance to the ways in which they understand and work with clients who procrastinate change.

Sally O'Keeffe

Paper

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A qualitative study exploring types of dropout in adolescents receiving therapy for depression

Keywords: therapy, dropout, qualitative, adolescence, depression

Aim/Purpose: Clients frequently stop therapy without the agreement of their therapist, yet little is known about the reasons as to why young people stop going to therapy. The aim of this study was to explore the reasons that young people stop therapy and to develop a typology of dropout.

Design/Methodology: This study draws on data from the IMPACT-My Experience study, a qualitative study seeking to explore the experiences of families and therapists taking part in the IMPACT trial, which investigated the effectiveness of psychological therapies in the treatment of adolescent depression. Participants who had dropped out of therapy and completed a qualitative interview about their experience of therapy were purposively sampled for this study (N = 32). Data included qualitative interviews with the adolescents and their therapists, analysed using ideal types analysis.

Results/Findings: The sample consisted of 9 males and 23 females, and the average age was 15.83 years. Three distinct types of dropout were found. The 'improved' dropout (N = 10) reported stopping therapy because they felt better, the 'dissatisfied' dropout (N = 18) reported stopping therapy because they did not find it helpful, and the 'troubled' dropout (N = 4) reported stopping therapy because they lacked the stability in their lives to engage in the therapy.

Research Limitations: The sample comprised those adolescents who dropped out of therapy and agreed to be interviewed about their therapy, so it is unknown how representative these findings are of those who declined to be interviewed by the research team. The ideal types identified in this study are unlikely to be the only types of dropout. It cannot be said whether the same types would have been constructed by another researcher with different experiences and knowledge to myself.

Conclusions/Implications: These findings suggest that some adolescents stop therapy because they feel better. However, these findings also suggest that many adolescents who drop out of therapy are unlikely to be getting the help they need. These findings can inform clinicians about the range of issues experienced by adolescents that lead to their disengagement, so that they can be more in tune with the way in which adolescent's experience treatment.

Joanna Omylinska-Thurston, Peter Walton, Aaron McMeekin and Gillian Proctor

Paper

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What are the aspects of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) that clients perceive as not meeting their needs within Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) serving a major inner city/deprived area of the UK?

Keywords: CBT, IAPT, unhelpful factors, helpful factors, clients in deprived areas

Aim/Purpose: IAPT is a main provider of psychological therapy for adults within the NHS. Service users' feedback is essential in shaping services but unhelpful factors are not routinely gathered. Jackson (2015) found that unhelpful factors are responsible for the dropout rate in IAPT, which is as high as 43% (NHS Digital, 2016). As CBT is the main modality in IAPT, it is important to explore unhelpful factors in CBT. There is limited CBT unhelpful factors research but Onslow et al (2015) found it was difficult for clients to change behaviours and cognitions and Clarke et al (2004) demonstrated that clients viewed CBT ideas as "technospeak". The current research aims to build on these findings for clients accessing IAPT services in an inner city deprived area in the UK.

Design/Methodology: The study won a BACP Small Research Grant and also received NHS Ethics Committee approval. Nine clients (five men and four women) for whom CBT was not helpful were interviewed using a semi-structured protocol. The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis

Results/Findings: The main themes included clients' difficulties with CBT such as not addressing core and underlying issues, and difficulty identifying negative thoughts and feelings. The purpose of homework was questioned including how it was followed up. During CBT, internal patterns (such as being critical of self) were activated and sometimes left clients feeling worse. Previous negative CBT experiences were recognised as a barrier to therapy. Clients perceived assessments and outcome measures as not identifying their needs. Other psycho-social factors such as underlying mental illness and housing were also obstacles to engagement in CBT.

Research Limitations: The small sample and dependence on participants' recall limits the generalisability of the findings. The subjective bias of the research team may impact on findings and conclusions.

Conclusions/Implications: The findings indicate that all practitioners should consider unhelpful factors in therapy as they have potentially detrimental effects on clients' outcomes. Additionally, this research found that therapeutic interventions need to be tailored to clients' goals, internal patterns and preferences. Importantly it was found that unhelpful factors extend to health and psychosocial issues which should be addressed prior to therapy.

Sue Price

Paper

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Relational depth in the general quality of the client-therapist relationship and the association with psychological growth

Keywords: relational depth, psychological growth, person-centred experiential (PCE), practice-based, outcome

Aim/Purpose: The Relational Depth Inventory (RDI) (Wiggins [Price], Elliott and Cooper, 2017) was originally designed to measure the presence of relational depth during significant moments in therapy. This research utilises a newly developed RDI designed to measure relational depth in the general quality of the client-therapist relationship. It seeks to explore whether such relational depth predicts, or is associated with, psychological growth (in terms of increased authenticity) and a decrease in psychological distress.

Design/Methodology: Participants were clients from the Human Flourishing Project Research Clinic (HFPRC) based in Nottingham. The HFPRC is a social enterprise whose main purpose is to provide a Person-Centred Experiential (PCE) therapy service to individuals living in and around Nottingham. In addition, the HFPRC aims to collect research data from clients as well as provide placements to trainee PCE therapists. Clients completed two outcome measures The Authenticity Scale (Wood, Linley, Maltby et al (2008) and the Personal Questionnaire. The former is designed to measure dispositional authenticity and the latter is a client-generated outcome measure. These were completed at intake (before therapy had begun) and at sessions 1 and 5. Clients also completed the RDI at sessions 3 and 5. Data was collected and analysed using a quantitative approach. Regression analyses were used which are based on correlation.

Results/Findings: Results found that scores on the RDI were significantly correlated with differences between Intake and Session 5 PQ scores and Authenticity scale scores. This indicates that relational depth is related to reduction of psychological distress and of psychological growth, respectively.

Research Limitations: Caution needs to be employed with regard to the interpretation of statistical analyses based on correlation; there is always the possibility of 'lurking' or third variables.

Conclusions/Implications: This has implications with regard to therapeutic practice in that it indicates that the general quality of relational depth is beneficial to clients.

Louise Rolland

Paper

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Empathy across languages: are multilingual clients' perceptions of therapeutic empathy linked to language use in therapy?

Keywords: multilingualism, empathy, client experience, therapeutic relationship, identity

Aim/Purpose: Multilinguals often express affect and tell autobiographical narratives differently according to which language they are using. Yet research suggests that psychotherapy with multilingual clients is often conducted monolingually. This study investigates whether multilingual clients perceive therapeutic empathy differently according to language use in therapy: what is the effect of having therapy in a foreign language or of having bilingual therapy?

Design/Methodology: Multilingual adults recruited on-line through snowball sampling (non-clinical routes) completed an English-language survey on their experience of individual counselling or psychotherapy. Topics included language use in therapy and satisfaction with their therapeutic relationship. Client-perceived empathy was measured using the Therapeutic Empathy scale from the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory. Five out of 109 respondents participated in a follow-on semi-structured interview. Quantitative data were analysed using statistical software; qualitative data were analysed thematically.

Results/Findings: There were no significant differences on the Therapeutic Empathy scale between multilingual clients whose latest therapy was mainly in a foreign language vs. first language, or between clients who had used more than one language and those who had not. Multilingual clients' scores did not differ significantly from a monolingual baseline. Interviewees' experiences varied: two participants felt that empathy developed better with therapists who shared their linguistic background, allowing them to switch freely between languages, whereas one participant wanted to relate to her therapist in a foreign language. For another, a bicultural therapist with a migrant perspective was more important. A Muslim participant prioritised a non-judgmental stance towards her religion over attention to language(s). Empathy was also described as being conveyed through non-verbal communication.

Research Limitations: The self-selected sample was diverse (e.g. type and timing of therapy), making comparisons on a scale less reliable; early bilinguals' experiences were not probed because all interviewees were sequential bilinguals. Researcher subjectivity was reflected on using a journal during data collection and analysis.

Conclusions/Implications: The limited survey results could not identify a direct association between language use and perceived empathy, however several interviewees expressed language preferences in relation to establishing therapeutic empathy. Future research could usefully explore therapist beliefs about the impact that exploring clients' multilingualism has on therapeutic empathy and their development/training needs in this area.

Jasmine Rollings

Paper

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Public perceptions of talking therapies in older adults

Keywords: older adults, counselling, depression, anxiety, attitudes

Aim/Purpose: A recent review of Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme, indicates that psychological therapies are effective with older adults, however a lower proportion of older adults access such services than younger adults (NHS, England). In addition, current targets for the proportion of older adults referred to IAPT are not being met (Age UK, 2016). Therefore, the current research was undertaken to increase our understanding of the potential barriers older people face when accessing psychological therapy and to identify why older people may not access such services.

Design/Methodology: The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) commissioned IPSOS MORI to conduct a public perceptions survey with older adults in the UK. A total of 1,685 GB adults (aged 55+ years) were interviewed in their homes using Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI) technology. Survey respondents were asked questions regarding the prevalence of suspected mental health conditions, actions following suspicion, treatment referral following Health Care Professional (HCP) visit for mental health, treatment uptake and attitudes towards talking therapy. Data was descriptively analysed to gather frequency and percentage information.

Results/Findings: Results indicate that a lack of referrals from health care professionals to talking therapies and non-adherence of patients who have been referred, are barriers to accessing talking therapies. Older adults' attitudes towards talking therapies were inconsistent: despite 42% of older adults agreeing with statements such as 'People of my generation know how to manage without counselling or talking therapy' 68% also agreed with the statement 'I would be open to counselling or psychotherapy in future if it were recommended to me'.

Research Limitations: As a survey, results are reliant on self-report. This form of information is vital for the attitudes investigation; however, it cannot provide definitive information on mental health disorder prevalence.

Conclusions/Implications: This research highlights the need to educate health care practitioners on the benefits of talking therapies for older adults in order to increase referrals to these services. Results also imply there are some prevalent negative attitudes towards talking therapy held by older adults, therefore, campaigns need to continue to promote counselling for this age group.

Alistair Ross

Paper

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Using the Helpful Aspects of Therapy form in private practice - a single-case study

Keywords: Helpful Aspects of Therapy, single-case study

Aims/Purpose: To examine how the Helpful Aspects of Therapy (HAT) research tool can inform the client and therapist in a single-case study and add to the growing body of case-study research drawn from private practice (Stiles 2007; McLeod 2010).

Design/Methodology: The use of a self-reported qualitative tool in a single case study.

A client from private practice completed a HAT form (Llewelyn, 1988) towards the end of each session. Any issues raised were discussed enabling clinical material to be addressed immediately. At the end of the therapy (twenty sessions) these were analysed using thematic analysis.

Private practice does not have the support of an ethical committee as found in NHS or academic contexts. Given the importance of research ethics (Danchev and Ross 2013) a professional colleague was consulted and an ethical processes followed in the same way as obtaining university research approval. The client/research participant was given an information sheet and signed a consent form at the assessment session.

Results/Findings: The scores recorded on the forms were consistently high indicating the client found aspect of therapy helpful. The timing of the use of the form identified potential misunderstandings before they could become ruptures (Schattner, Tishby, and Wiseman 2017). A thematic analysis of the recorded qualitative comments highlighted the relational nature of the therapy as the most important factor as identified by the client.

Research Limitations: A single-case study offers less generlisable forms of knowledge.

Conclusions/Implications: The centrality of the working alliance as an indicator of effective therapy has been routinely established (Barber, Khalsa, and Sharpless 2010). The HAT form provides a valuable research tool in obtaining client feedback, rather than therapist's perceptions about key moments that they believe contribute to an effective working relationship. The HAT form is sufficiently flexible that it can be used in private practice and thus adds valuable data to the body of case-study research.

Gemma Ryan

Paper

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Counsellors' experiences of working in the NHS: a survey

Keywords: NHS, counsellors' experiences, survey, IAPT, mixed methods

Aim/Purpose: Despite what is currently known about counsellors working in the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme through the NHS workforce census data, little is known about those working in the wider NHS; who they are, where they work or how they experience their work. In addition, little is known about counsellors who have recently left the NHS or how they themselves would explain their change of employment. Therefore, the present study aimed to address some of these questions, as well as how counsellors working in NHS settings perceive the adequacy of their services.

Design/Methodology: Between 1st and 31st March 2017, an online survey comprising of open and closed questions was distributed to all BACP members. A total of 1,977 members responded, of whom 1,210 were currently working in the NHS in a therapeutic capacity and 767 who had previously worked in the NHS. Survey respondents answered questions about their work setting and role, their professional background and, for those currently working in the NHS, their perceptions of the service they worked in. Respondents who had previously worked in the NHS were asked why they no longer worked in the NHS. Data were analysed both quantitatively (descriptive and cross-tabulation analyses) and qualitatively (thematic analysis).

Results/Findings: Analysis of qualitative data suggest that counsellors left their NHS employment for a number of reasons including: finding alternative employment, contracts not being renewed, feeling that their profession was undervalued and feeling ethically compromised in their work. Counsellors suggested a change in attitude towards their profession and a change in practice to prioritise therapy quality over quantity and provide more services for those with complex mental health needs.

Research Limitations: One limitation of the study is that the sample were self-selected and may not be fully representative of counsellors working in the NHS.

Conclusions/Implications: This study has provided information on a part of the NHS workforce that has experienced considerable workplace shift in recent years. Implications for training, practice and the broader profession will be discussed.

Yvette Saliba

Paper

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Aging well: how subjective age, playfulness, and depression influence quality of life among older adults

Keywords: playfulness, aging adults, wellness, subjective age, multiple regression

Aim/Purpose: An often overlooked demographic in the field of counseling is older adults (Kampfe, 2015). Older adults present unique concerns for counsellors as they are often victims of ageism and underdiagnosed depression. Thus, over the last few years the public has become concerned with better understanding and increasing quality of life (QoL) as it pertains to older adults. The present study was designed to investigate QoL among older adults, with a specific focus on how the mindset of playfulness (PF; i.e., the ability to frame or reframe everyday situations to experience them as entertaining, intellectually stimulating, and/or personally interesting) influences one's subjective age (SA; i.e., how young or old an individual feels), level of depression, and overall QoL.

Design/Methodology: Participants (N = 1,315) were adults over the age of 55 recruited using two methods: face-to-face (n = 377) and online (n = 938). Instruments included The Cognitive-Age Scale (Barak & Schiffman, 1981), The Adult Playfulness Trait Scale (Shen et al., 2014), The Geriatric Depression Scale (Brink et al., 1982) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). Data was analyzed using a standard multiple regression.

Results/Findings: Results revealed that R^2 for the overall model was 47.2% with an adjusted R^2 of 47.1%, with a large effect size f^2 = 0.89 according to Cohen (1988). Both depression ($beta$ = -.642, p < .001) and playfulness ($beta$ = .102, p = .001) statistically significantly contributed to the model. Subjective age did not statistically significantly contribute to the prediction ($beta$ = -.017, p = .456).

Research Limitations: Potential limitations of survey research include bias from self-report data and missing data, as well as social desirability confounds. Furthermore, the correlational nature of this research precludes researchers and practitioners from making causal inferences about the influence of PF and SA on QoL.

Conclusions/Implications: The investigator hypothesizes that higher levels of PF will predict greater QoL, a younger SA, and lower levels of depression. Such findings could encourage practitioners to help clients tap into their intrinsic PF and to develop novel interventions for fostering PF in older adults, providing cost effective ways to help aging clients remain psychologically active and well.

Matthew Shrine

Paper

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An exploration of Deaf clients' experience of counselling delivered in British Sign Language (BSL)

Keywords: BSL (British Sign Language) counselling, client's experiences, Deaf counselling, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), cultural-linguistic minority

Aim/Purpose: The study explored Deaf clients' experiences of counselling in BSL. It is based on the position that Deaf people are part of a cultural-linguistic minority group (Ladd, 2003). The focus is on how we can provide counselling that is culturally and linguistically affirmative (Glickman & Gulati, 2003). Most current research is focused on the use of BSL interpreters. The aim was to better understand the subjective experiences of Deaf clients, add to best practice models and provide Deaf people with a platform for their experiences to be expressed and understood.

Design/Methodology: The study involved one-hour interviews in BSL with 10 Deaf participants who had experience of BSL counselling. They were video recorded, translated and transcribed into written English, with the help of a Deaf broker. Then analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

Results/Findings: Four themes developed through analysis:
1) *Barriers:* Services for Deaf people are limited in range and diversity, with participants facing barriers when accessing services.
2) *Relationship:* Participants had a deeper connection with therapists who had an in-depth understanding of Deaf culture. They emphasised culturally bound fears concerning confidentiality.
3) *Communication:* Participants emphasised the advantages of communicating directly in BSL. Therapists backgrounds affected their communication style.
4) *Impact:* Participants, emphasised feeling fully understood, developing different perspectives, and increased self-awareness. They felt that visual, and psychoeducation based interventions were culturally syntonic.

Research Limitations: The research was limited by the small number of participants, the inherent limitations involved in the translation process, and the potential bias from the researchers' involvement in the Deaf world. The subjective nature of IPA is acknowledged and a process of reflexivity was incorporated.

Conclusions/Implications: The study suggests that there is an essential link between the way Deafness is conceptualised and the agenda for and provision of services. The findings suggest there has been a shift towards the inclusion of the cultural-linguistic model and its related discourse in the creation and delivery of services in BSL. However, the current services still fail to meet the needs and preferences of Deaf clients. The key to effective Deaf counselling is equitable access, allowing Deaf individuals to have more choices around communication styles, language, cultural approaches, and individual therapists.

Edith Steffen

Paper

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Meaning-oriented group grief therapy: a mixed-methods pilot intervention study

Keywords: grief, bereavement, meaning reconstruction, group therapy, mixed-methods research

Aim/Purpose: This paper reports findings from a pilot intervention study investigating a 12-week meaning-oriented grief therapy group protocol which aims to help clients make sense of their loss, build a security-enhancing bond with the deceased, and reconstruct meaning that was shattered by the loss. The protocol, recently developed and piloted in Canada and the US, was adapted for use in the UK and piloted in a university research clinic in 2017.

Design/Methodology: A mixed-methods design was chosen including quantitative outcome measures and post-therapy interviews for qualitative analysis. Eight bereaved participants were recruited in total. Participants completed pre-post and weekly questionnaires measuring grief intensity, general wellbeing, post-traumatic growth and grief-related meaning-making. Following completion of the group, participants were interviewed about what they found helpful/unhelpful and to examine what changes, if any, participants had noticed.

Results/Findings: No attrition over the 12 sessions, high satisfaction ratings, and high uptake of follow-up meetings support the acceptability of the intervention. Preliminary qualitative analysis revealed that participants liked the format of the group and particularly the experiential elements, but would have wanted more time for talking freely. No statistically significant differences were found from assessment to endpoint, or to 3-month and 6-month follow-up. Nevertheless, some participants experienced significant improvements. An in-depth analysis of one participant who showed reliable change and one participant who did not will be presented.

Research Limitations: Issues with measurement in grief therapy are noted. Further limitations are the heterogenous group composition, small sample size and lack of a control group.

Conclusions/Implications: The findings provide initial insight into the acceptability of this grief intervention, how participants experienced it, and what they found helpful and unhelpful. They also raise important questions about participant selection and choice of measures. A second pilot study with a more homogenous group, all traumatically bereaved, is now being set up. This will utilise a recently validated grief measure and will employ therapy process analysis for a more in-depth examination of change processes. Following completion of the second pilot group, the protocol and design will be reviewed prior to setting up a randomised controlled trial.

Wendy Traynor and Anna Robinson

Paper

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Person-centred experiential therapy with an adult client experiencing psychotic process: a hermeneutic single case efficacy design

Keywords: Hermeneutic, single case, person-centred, psychotic process

Aim/Purpose: Limited evidence is available regarding the efficacy of person-centred therapy for psychotic process. Research in the UK has focused on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) which is advised by the current UK NICE guidelines with other approaches explicitly not recommended. This case of person-centred experiential therapy with a client experiencing psychotic process used the HSCED method to evaluate evidence and assess whether therapy had a causal inference relating to a positive outcome.

Design/Methodology: Hermeneutic single case efficacy design (HSCED) is a legalistic mixed method case study applied to single cases for evaluation of efficacy of therapy. The client of focus, Becky (a pseudonym), experienced psychotic process and distress following family issues, multiple trauma and engaged in 20 sessions of PCEP. A battery of qualitative and quantitative evaluative measures was given by the therapist and independent researchers. The researcher therapist and sceptic judge debate opposing positions relating to specific evidence supporting therapy efficacy or the opposing view. Their statements along with all the evidence are then reviewed by a panel of judges along specific criteria. Judges have clinical experience and a variety of modalities. The final position is then considered.

Results/Findings: Outcome measures and affirmative and sceptic brief reports suggest that some positive changes may be attributed to the therapy including increase in social functioning, reduction in distress and some reduction in psychotic process. The evidence will shortly be submitted to a panel of judges and assimilated into final findings in early 2018 to update this abstract. Each of the two presenters will put forward opposing arguments regarding whether the therapy may have had a substantive causal impact on positive outcome with final conclusions drawn from these reports and the judges' verdicts to illustrate how the HSCED method works.

Research Limitations: This is a single case and therefore of limited scale. Other factors and biases may also have impacted upon outcomes.

Conclusions/Implications: Person-centred therapy may be helpful for some clients who experiences psychotic processes when applied in the context of a multi-agency approach.

Graham Westwell

Paper

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Measuring the reliability of the Person Centred and Experiential Psychotherapy Scale-10 (PCEPS-10)

Keywords: person centred experiential therapy, therapy adherence/competence, therapist facilitative conditions, therapeutic relationship, measure development

Aim/Purpose: This study aims to assess the inter-rater reliability of the Person Centred and Experiential Psychotherapy Scale-10 (PCEPS-10): a competence/adherence measure of person-centred and experiential psychotherapy.

Design/Methodology: Sixty audio-recorded segments of therapy sessions were selected from the archive of recorded therapy sessions from the Strathclyde Counselling and Psychotherapy Research Centre. The recordings were rated independently by 3 raters using the PCEPS-10. Raters were graduates from a person-centred experiential training programme. 15 therapists were sampled with two clients from each therapist then selected. A total of 30 clients were sampled with two session representing each client. The two sessions were selected from: (a) between sessions 3-5; (b) between sessions 10-15. The sampling strategy allowed analysis of competence early in therapy vs. competence in later therapy. Segments sampled were initially 15mins in length (20-35mins within segment). Inter-item and inter-rater reliability of the scores across raters, segments, therapists and clients, are reported using Inter-Class Correlation (ICC) and Cronbach's Alpha. Initial inter-rater reliability was inconsistent. A series of rater training interventions were made: (i) reducing the segment length to 10mins (20-30mins within segment); (ii) implementing a systematic notation system; (iii) rater self-reporting for emotional bias. Inter-rater reliability improved following these interventions.

Results/Findings: For the n=60 sample (10min and 15min segments) inter-rater alphas ranged from .44-.71 with a mean of .58, whilst for the revised n=40 sample (10min segments), the inter-rater alphas ranged from .75-.87 with a mean of .82.

Research Limitations: Therapy process measures in general, including therapist competence/adherence measures can be criticized for ignoring context and client process. Attempting to generalise from relatively brief segments can also be criticized for ignoring context.

Conclusions/Implications: The PCEPS-10 has potential for use in RCT research, counselling training, and as a supervisory tool. Further testing and validation of the measure will be required. Further analysis of the process for systematically training raters is also required.

METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATION PAPERS

Victoria Heydon-Hatchett

Methodological Innovation Paper

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Reviewing the Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions: a mixed methods approach
Keywords: Ethical Framework, mixed-methods, thematic analysis, descriptive statistics, review

Background and introduction: BACP's Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions (EFfCP) was formally adopted on 1 July 2016. The result of an extensive consultation with BACP members and internal/external stakeholders, the EFfCP introduced a number of key changes for practitioners which had potential significance in practice. As such, an annual review of the EFfCP was undertaken in July 2017. A mixed methods approach was adopted to fully capture the experience of using the framework in practice and its impact on various stakeholders.

Nature of the methodological innovation/critique being proposed: Mixed methods research has been defined as:

"an intellectual and practical synthesis based on qualitative and quantitative research…..a powerful third paradigm choice that often will provide the most informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results" (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007: 129).

One of the rationales for using such an approach is *expansion*, whereby the breadth and range of inquiry is expanded through the use of different methods for different research elements (Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989, cited in Johnson et al., 2007: 115-116). Furthermore, research decisions also rely on practical decisions (Hammersley, 1996) and multi-method strategies serve practical, as well as theoretical and methodological, purposes (Brannen, 2005). Thus, mixed methods was a pragmatic choice of approach that lent itself well to the aims of the review and the evidence sources identified.

The review needed to capture data from a large potential pool of participants and gather feedback about the implementation of the EFfCP in practice. Quantitative data collection via surveys enabled specific information to be captured from numerous participants, augmented by qualitative data from free-response questions. Qualitative feedback gathered from alternative data sources (emails and online chats) added richer detail, with thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) used to establish themes within the data. Contextualisation, described by Brannen (2005) as "a critical part of a multi-method strategy in creating and making sense of data" (ibid; 182), was an important stage in this research when synthesising data from different evidence sources.

Conclusion and relevance to counselling and psychotherapy research practice: Mixed methods was a useful paradigm in this research from a practical and pragmatic perspective, underpinned by the rationale of expansion. Taking such an approach in this particular research context enabled recognition of the differing implications of the EFfCP on various roles, allowing the development of a responsive, reflective Ethical Framework that is relevant to the myriad contexts in which practitioners' work.

Emma Kay

Methodological Innovation Paper

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An examination of the configurations of I-positions in clients with depression and an analysis of their transformation during the course of therapy

Keywords: dialogical self, multiplicity of self, plural self, depression, I-positions

Aim/Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the differing I-positions present in a group of participants receiving psychological therapy for depression. The aim is to gain a greater understanding of how the identified I-positions manifest, function and internally interact with each other and how this may change over the course of therapy. A secondary aim was to refine a new qualitative method of analysis for use in psychotherapy research.

Design/Methodology: Audio recorded therapy sessions from five participants were analysed – all clients were receiving pluralistic therapy for depression. The analysis focused on the initial, middle and last sessions. The sessions were transcribed and a new qualitative method for analysing multivoicedness was used to map the voices and their interaction. This method enables an analysis of differing I-positions by analysing from which position the individual speaks, then mapping the other in the individual's talk. An analysis of how the differing I-positions interact with each other, and the other, is then is undertaken.

Results/Findings: Early findings indicate an asymmetrical relationship between I-positions, with a meek subservient voice dominating other I-positions such as anger and resentment. During the course of therapy a re-balancing occurs - with the submissive voices giving way to more hidden positions such as anger. A developing reflexive position becomes more dominant in latter sessions, which acts as a bridge between I-positions, allowing neglected positions to become more assertive.

Research Limitations: The study analysed only three sessions from each participant's therapy sessions. To gain a more in-depth analysis of what is happening in the therapeutic process, it would have been advantageous to have analysed all 24 sessions of therapy, tracking the change process of the participants more closely.

Conclusions/Implications: The research aims to enhance an understanding of working with clients experiencing depression from a dialogical perspective. It also aims to refine this new method of analysis for use in psychotherapy research, both aims are valuable in the field of psychotherapy considering that the self is increasingly being conceived of as plural.

Megan Stafford

Methodological Innovation Paper

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Adverse events reporting in a study of humanistic counselling for young people: the development of an adverse events protocol

Keywords: adverse events, humanistic counselling, young people, randomised control trial

Background and introduction: Adverse events are any negative psychological, emotional or behavioural occurrence, or sustained deterioration in a research participant. Examples include school exclusion, self-harm, suicidal ideation and death. Adverse event reporting in research studies is an important ethical and clinical consideration and standard practice in trials of pharmacological interventions. However, the literature regarding adverse events in counselling and psychotherapy research is limited. The present paper aims to describe the challenges of developing a protocol for the assessment, monitoring and reporting of adverse events in a large RCT of humanistic counselling for young people experiencing emotional symptoms (the ETHOS study).

Nature of the methodological innovation/critique being proposed: This paper is a critical reflexive review of the experiences of developing, and implementing, an adverse events protocol within the context of a RCT for counselling research with young people.

Conclusion and relevance to counselling and psychotherapy research practice: We have identified four principal challenges in developing and implementing such a protocol. These include defining adverse events, attempting to ascertain their causality, understanding the relationship between adverse events and clinical risk management (including decisions regarding disclosure and confidentiality), and adapting a model of monitoring and reporting more commonly applied in pharmacological studies. In presenting these challenges, we detail how we have looked to mitigate and manage them, as well as our learning over the first phase of data collection. In drawing on our experience in developing a single adverse events protocol, derived from one RCT of humanistic counselling in a school setting, generalisability is limited. However, reliable data, and procedures, regarding adverse events in counselling research is needed. The current lack of data impedes the development of definitive adverse events protocols for research, as well as clinical, practices in this field. The learning we have acquired in developing our own adverse events protocol can help the wider counselling and psychotherapy research community, informing research professionals with a desire - or need - to develop similar procedures.

WORKSHOPS

India Amos

Workshop

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'That's what they mean when they talk about epiphanies': an invitation to engage with the evocative power of qualitative research findings

Keywords: qualitative research, research poetry, epiphany, empathic understanding, embodied interpretation

Relevance of the workshop to counselling and psychotherapy research: If there is a multitude of evidence for the legitimate existence of experiences of sudden, personal, profound, positive, and permanent change, which can fundamentally alter the lives of those who experience it then it is considered to be of clinical interest. Qualitative research is predominantly concerned with the pursuit of making sense of human experience, and has significant relevance to practice disciplines, such as counselling and psychotherapy. In relation to psychotherapeutic practice, Gendlin (1974) shared his concern that a thin pattern of knowing takes the place of a more detailed 'thinking further' into the 'thickness of living'. A communicative concern surfaces for the qualitative researcher aiming to evoke 'thick' patterns; made up of authentic, rich insider perspectives of the lived experience of epiphanies.

The aims of the workshop: The first aim of the workshop is to facilitate entry into knowing and feeling what it is like to experience an epiphany via an embodied engagement with qualitative research findings. An additional aim is to facilitate discussion related to our engagement with the aesthetic dimension of qualitative research findings to increase our empathic understanding.

How the workshop will be structured: The workshop will begin with an introduction to a research study I conducted on the lived experience of epiphanies. Following this, the workshop attendees will be asked to participate in a 'pointing' exercise (Shultz, 2006). This process will involve "pointing to" resonant words and phrases in a text, followed by an invitation to engage in freewriting and poetry writing. In the final part of the workshop participants will be asked to share their reflections on the ways in which their understanding of the subject matter has/has not changed as a result of the exercise.

Key points for discussion: The workshop will aid discussion on the following:
- types of evidence deemed suitable to inform therapeutic practice
- why empathic understanding is important to therapeutic practice
- how qualitative research description can engage readers in an embodied way to aid deeper empathic understanding of human experience

Who will benefit from attending the workshop? This workshop is for anyone interested in the aesthetic dimensions of qualitative research and/or the ways in which we engage with qualitative descriptions of lived experience in a more embodied way to inform therapeutic practice.

Liddy Carver and David Taylor-Jones

Workshop

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The 'training alliance': an impossible balancing act? Consideration of key findings and implications for practice

Keywords: higher education, counselling trainers, group dynamic, self-disclosure, conflict

Relevance of the workshop to counselling and psychotherapy research: Ambivalence about the 'training alliance' is influenced by theoretical orientation and personal circumstance. Two separate doctoral research projects in counselling education informed the research question; "What are trainers' and students' anxieties and challenges within the training 'alliance'?" In this workshop, participants will explore how conflict can push the 'training alliance' to breaking point. Flashpoints include: the clash between understanding of 'self' and assessment; difficult patterns of behaviour such as transference, counter-transference, and projective identification (Rizq, 2005, 2007); and the impact of ill-judged congruence within experiential groups. This workshop brings together researcher-educators from counselling and psychotherapy professions in small and large group discussions to understand for themselves, significant states of impasse or crisis within training groups, which can cast doubt on trainers' capacity to facilitate groups, and ultimately may result in trainers and students withdrawing from the profession.

The aims of the workshop: Whilst gate-keeping and 'problematic students' have been well documented, far less research has explored the psychological impact of the training 'alliance' on trainers and students. The workshop aims to discover their concerns and challenges within the 'training alliance' in HE, and collaboratively explore training needs and examples of best practice.

How the workshop will be structured: An overview of the 'training alliance' will be offered by both presenters and questions derived from the two research studies presented to participants. This short introduction will provide a context for examining the 'training alliance'. Participants will work in small breakout groups critically reflecting on and discussing four key examples identified from research evidence, before reporting back with ideas and suggestions to a larger group discussion. The intention is to facilitate extended participation in and discussion of the research themes.

Key points for discussion: Participants may anticipate discussing the following topics:
- significant events within the training 'alliance
- transference, counter-transference and projective identification
- facing conflict and negotiating grievances
- the short and long-term impact on 'self' of conflict within experiential groups

Who will benefit from attending the workshop? Counselling and psychotherapy educators in higher and further education and the independent sector, practitioners interested in conducting collaborative research for themselves into the emotional disequilibrium engendered within the trainer-student 'alliance', and students interested in rights and responsibilities within the 'training 'alliance'.

Mick Cooper

Workshop

Professional Role: Professor of Counselling Psychology
Institution/Affiliation: CREST, Department of Psychology, University of Roehampton
Email: mick.cooper@roehampton.ac.uk

Relational depth: the latest research findings

Keywords: relational depth, therapeutic alliance, therapeutic bond, person-centred therapy, connection

Relevance of the workshop to counselling and psychotherapy research: Research suggests that a deep relational connection between therapist and client is associated with positive therapeutic outcomes. This workshop will provide participants with an overview of the latest evidence on relational depth — as recently published in *Working at relational depth in counselling and psychotherapy, 2nd ed.* (Mearns and Cooper, 2018) — and provide participants with an opportunity to explore these moments of deep encounter experientially.

The aims of the workshop: To stimulate knowledge, reflection and research inquiry into the experience of relational depth in counselling and psychotherapy.

How the workshop will be structured: The workshop will begin with an experiential exercise on the experience of relational depth. This will be followed by a presentation of research findings on: the phenomenological experiencing of relational depth, therapists' and clients' experiences of relational depth, the relationship between relational depth and outcomes, and methods for facilitating the emergence of relational depth. There will be opportunities for large group discussion throughout the workshop. Learning outcomes: by the end of the workshop, participants will be able to identify the latest research findings in the relational depth field and recognise their application to therapeutic practice.

Key points for discussion: What is it like to experience relational depth? Do clients and therapists experience relational depth in therapy? Do clients and therapists experience relational depth at the same time? Is relational depth in therapy associated with improved outcomes? What factors can facilitate the emergence of relational depth?

Who will benefit from attending the workshop? Counsellors, psychotherapists, trainees, and therapy researchers with an interest in the therapeutic relationship.

Lynne Gabriel and John Wilson

Workshop

Professional Roles: Professor of Counselling and Mental Health
Institution/Affiliation: York St John University
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Researching one's own clients: rich data from an ethical minefield

Keywords: case-study, theory-building, practitioner/researcher, transcription, analysis

Relevance of the workshop to counselling and psychotherapy research: Qualitative research into the therapeutic process informs good practice. However, many practitioners who would like to become published researchers may feel constrained by the difficulties, real or perceived, of obtaining rich, reliable and valid data. Yet the very process of therapy generates such material in abundance. Using a completed theory-building case study as an exemplar, we will explore and discuss how practitioner/ researchers can conduct high quality case study research using a data set collected from their own clients.

The aims of the workshop: To encourage practitioners to become published researchers, and to demonstrate ways of conducting well designed case studies into clients' processes of psychological change.

How the workshop will be structured: We will begin by considering the methodological implications, limitations and standards required to work ethically as a practitioner/researcher. We will establish that our case study focus was on the client rather than on either the practitioner or the therapeutic dyad. Working in pairs, participants will be invited to identify the pros, cons and ethical caveats of this research methodology. We will present a completed theory-building case study as an example. Participants will have the opportunity to identify research questions which could be answered by this style of research, and this will feed into a question and answer session which will conclude the workshop.

Key points for discussion: The practitioner as researcher, maintaining ethical practice, the myth of objectivity, limiting subjective bias through researcher credibility, the position of this work on a positivist/relativist continuum, collecting, analysing and interpreting data, confidentiality and client protection, theory-building methodology, and measuring reliability.

Who will benefit from attending the workshop? Practitioners, postgraduate and post-doctoral researchers interested in expanding their understanding of case study research.

Natalie Hadiprodjo

Workshop

Professional Role: PhD student and play therapist
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The application of real-time physiology monitoring in child therapy research: a PhD student's top tips, insights and lessons learnt
Keywords: heart, brain, play, attachment, polyvagal
Relevance of the workshop to counselling and psychotherapy research: Carl Rogers' humanistic core conditions and the centrality of the therapeutic relationship in regulating the stress networks of the brain are finding growing support from the field of neuroscience. Scientists such as Cozolino (2010) propose that Rogers' core conditions describe the ideal interpersonal environment for brain growth, and Porges' Polyvagal Theory (2011) makes a compelling argument for linking the vagus nerve to social engagement and defensive behaviours. The emergence of psychophysiological theories that provide a scientific basis for long-held principles of therapeutic work, in addition to the growing accessibility of physiological monitoring devices, make the possibility of real-time physiological measures such as vagal tone (i.e. heart rate variability) an increasingly attractive option for the novice researcher who may not have a strong background in psychophysiology. Furthermore, it has been stated that future therapists will be more like neuroscientists and future therapy may well incorporate physiological monitoring to aid clinical diagnosis, to measure outcome, as a form of biofeedback, and as a means of deepening the therapeutic alliance and empathetic awareness.
The aims of the workshop:
- To provide an accessible introduction to the Polyvagal Theory and its relevance to counselling and therapy
- To highlight some of the challenges in conducting physiological monitoring in real-world therapy settings

How the workshop will be structured:
- Introduction to the underlying theory and concepts
- Presentation of exploratory case-based data examining real-time cardiac physiology in children's play narratives
- Top tips for conducting research that incorporates physiological monitoring including helpful references for study design and statistical analysis
- Topical small group discussion

Key points for discussion:
- The social engagement system and arousal regulation
- The pros and cons of incorporating physiological measures into therapy research and practice

Who will benefit from attending the workshop? Students and clinicians who have a limited background in psychophysiology but are curious about the application of real-time physiological monitoring within research and those contemplating incorporating physiological measures into their research for the first time.

Saturday 10.55 – 11.55

Stephen Joseph

Workshop

Other Authors: David Murphy, Naomi Moller, Clare Symons and Panos Vostanis
Professional Role: Professor of Psychology, Health and Social Care
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Challenges and opportunities for counselling research in higher education leading up to REF 2021

Keywords: higher education, research evaluation, REF, counselling research, discipline

Relevance of the workshop to counselling and psychotherapy research: Many higher education institutes (HEIs) in the United Kingdom (UK) offer training in counselling. The next Research Evaluation Exercise across HEI's is planned for 2021, the results of which are likely to shape the future of counselling in HEI's for the next decade.

The aims of the workshop: The aim of this workshop is open up debate within the profession about the place of counselling education within HEIs. Specifically, I will discuss the development of research and scholarly activity in counselling in light of the forthcoming research evaluation exercise across UK HEIs. Currently, counselling research is situated across several assessment panels, namely social work, education, and psychology. This recognises the diversity of the discipline but poses problems that threaten the future of counselling in HEI's. Notably, there may be difficulties in evaluating the fit of research to subject panels and hence eligibility of staff in their institutions for inclusion for assessment. Counselling is a relatively young research discipline within HEI's and its future development requires strategic support if it is to flourish. However, pressures of research assessment have led to the closure or threatened closure of counselling programmes within HEI's. It is hoped that this workshop will be helpful to those working in HEI's and lead to new developments within BACP in relation to these issues and the future of counselling with HEI's.

How the workshop will be structured:
- 20 minutes - Introduction lecture by Stephen Joseph summarising the issues
- 10 minutes - Discussant: David Murphy
- 30 minutes - Panel Discussion: Naomi Moller, Clare Symons, Panos Vostanis

Who will benefit from attending the workshop? All staff who work in HEI's, BACP research committee members. Participants will be invited to engage in discussion about the issues and challenges of developing research in HEI's. We see this workshop as the beginning of an action research project, in which the co-participants develop new ideas to be taken forward to increase representation of counselling and psychotherapy research in the REF.

Barbara Mitchels and Tim Bond

Workshop

Professional Roles: Emeritus Professor and Visiting Professor (Professor Bond). Director of counselling service and a web-based consultancy service, author of the revised BACP Ethical Guidelines for Research in the Counselling Professions (Dr Mitchels)
Institution/Affiliation: University of Bristol and University of Malta (Professor Bond). Watershed Counselling Service and Therapy Law (Dr Mitchels)
Ethical Guidelines for Research in the Counselling Professions

Keywords: ethical research, BACP research guidelines, researching the counselling professions, ethical checklists for researchers, ethical review

Relevance of the workshop to counselling and psychotherapy research: BACP has developed new, comprehensive guidelines for researching the counselling professions to assist member researchers to develop and implement their research projects legally and ethically, and to comply with the *Ethical Framework* (BACP 2016). This workshop will provide participants with their first opportunity to consider and ask questions about the new guidelines.

Aim of the workshop: To provide an opportunity to explore how researchers perceive, understand and implement ethical research in the counselling professions, in the context of their own research projects, their professional membership of BACP and commitment to BACP's *Ethical Framework* (BACP 2016).

Workshop structure: The workshop will be a mixture of input from the facilitators with opportunities for reflection and discussion shaped by attendees' contributions and questions, including issues arising from their current research projects.

Key points: Basic requirements of ethical research; dilemmas and how to address them ethically; anticipating and identifying difficulties that arise in research, and where to access appropriate advice and assistance, including the potential contributions of counselling and research supervision.

Who will benefit from attending the workshop? Students; academic and post qualification researchers; trainers; independent practitioner researchers; BACP members considering undertaking a research project.

John Rae

Workshop

Other Authors: Jacqueline Hayes and Sarah Cantwell
Professional Role: Reader in Psychology
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Using conversation analysis to understand the process of psychotherapy

Keywords: conversation analysis, psychotherapy interaction, process research, skills training

Relevance of the workshop to counselling and psychotherapy research: Conversation analysis (CA) is a research method for the study of social interaction. It is fundamentally concerned with participants' local understandings and with how they build sequences of actions. It is highly empirical yet it is also fundamentally qualitative (though it can be used as a basis for quantitative content analysis). Alongside CA work on everyday interaction and interaction in workplace settings, there is growing body of CA work on psychotherapy. (e.g. Muntigl et al., 2013; Peräkylä, 2013. Peräkylä, Antaki, Vehviläinen & Leudar, 2008). The detailed transcription method and the empirically detailed findings can be an obstacle to understanding the potential of CA. The workshop aims to address this by showing how CA is carried out and how it can be applied in skills training.

The aims of the workshop: To explore how conversation analysis can be used to study psychotherapy and how its findings can be applied.

How the workshop will be structured: Participants take part in data-based exercises to demonstrate the CA approach to transcription, locating phenomena in interaction, developing collections of cases and developing an analysis. We will also carry out a training exercise (based a procedure developed by Stokoe, 2014) in which segments of actual psychotherapy sessions are progressively revealed so that participants can explore how they might have responded at specific junctures with how the segments actually unfold. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss the potential of this method to contribute to the analysis of psychotherapy and to skills development. Small group and whole group activities will be used to maximise opportunities for participation.

Key points for discussion:
- the practicalities of conducting conversation analysis
- the differences and relations between conversation analytic and therapeutic perspectives on interaction in therapy sessions
- the potential and limitations of CA as a research method for studying psychotherapy

Who will benefit from attending the workshop? Researchers and practitioners interested in studying psychotherapeutic interaction.

Tamara Vaughan, Jean O'Callaghan and Paul Dickerson

Workshop

Professional Role: Counselling psychologist
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'That's one way of thinking about it': using Foucauldian Narrative Analysis (FNA) to critically rethink cultural assumptions

Keywords: Foucault, familial estrangement, cultural assumptions

Relevance of the workshop to counselling and psychotherapy research: It is proposed that FNA's ironic approach to language, knowledge and power makes it especially apt for understudied and marginalised concepts and phenomena which therapeutic practitioners may often encounter in their work. Thus, both in research and clinical practice, FNA may provide researchers, practitioners and indeed clients, with a means through which power laden discourses and their effects might be further examined and critiqued.

The aims of the workshop: This workshop seeks to illustrate some of the ways in which adopting a critical gaze, informed by Foucauldian principles, can equip researchers and therapists with a resource to critically rethink and question cultural assumptions, especially those pertaining to the family.

How the workshop will be structured: The workshop will begin with a brief overview of presenters' research on familial estrangement and the ways in which that brings into sharp critical relief, cultural assumptions concerning the family. In small groups, participants will have the opportunity to look at and discuss some data relating to this research and will be supported in identifying cultural assumptions and some of their potential implications.

Key points for discussion: A plenary discussion will identify the implications and relevance of a critical gaze both in terms of therapeutic practice and research in counselling and psychotherapy. Working specifically with constructions of 'the family', attendees will also explore "truth claims" associated with the family and the potential and varied impacts of these cultural assumptions.

Who will benefit from attending the workshop? The workshop will enable consideration of the ways in which interview transcripts can be analysed in a manner that focuses on identifying how participants construct their worlds; and the culturally informed discourses that these constructions are both informed by and challenging of. It is therefore targeted towards students, experienced/qualified practitioners and researchers of varying experience, who are interested in developing their critical research skills.

SYMPOSIA

Mick Cooper – Symposium A

Symposium A Overview

Other Authors: Adam Gibson, Gina S Di Malta and Patricia Joyce
Professional Role: Professor of Counselling Psychology
Institution/Affiliation: CREST, Department of Psychology, University of Roehampton
Email: mick.cooper@roehampton.ac.uk

Developing shared decision making in counselling and psychotherapy: methods and clients' experiences

Keywords: shared decision making, meta-therapeutic communication, goals, pluralistic therapy, treatment preferences

The aims of the symposium: To present new research on tools for the facilitation of shared decision making in counselling and psychotherapy, and clients' experiences of the shared decision making process.

Contribution of each symposium paper to the overall theme: Joyce presents methods, and data, on the development of a new tool for identifying young people's treatment preferences. This is followed by a presentation by Cooper which extends the Therapy Preference Form from a 'checklist' tool to a measure based around psychometrically developed scales. The subsequent two papers in this symposium focus specifically on clients' experiences of shared decision making in counselling and psychotherapy. Gibson focuses on clients' experiences of shared decision making in pluralistic therapy, as expressed through Interpersonal Process Recall interviews soon after initial assessment meetings. This is followed by di Malta's paper which focuses on clients' experiences of negotiating and setting goals: a key focus for shared decision-making practice.

Implications of the symposium theme for counselling and psychotherapy theory, research and practice: Shared decision making is an essential element of healthcare provision, but research into its development and application in the counselling and psychotherapy field is very limited. This symposium aims to help to develop research and professional reflection in this key area.

Patricia Joyce

Symposium A Paper 1

Other Authors: Mick Cooper and Joel Vos
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The development of the Young Person's Therapy Personalisation Form (YP-TPF)

Keywords: young people, client preferences, treatment preferences, shared decision making, measure development

Aim/Purpose: The Therapy Personalisation Form (Bowens, Johnston & Cooper, 2007) was developed to give opportunity for continuous dialogue with clients on their treatment preferences for therapy. The present study builds on this work: its aim is to construct and pilot a young person-specific therapy personalisation form.

Design/Methodology: In stage one of the measure development process, a semi structured interview protocol was used to dialogue with 20 therapists who worked with young people to understand the dichotomies they faced in their work, and what they felt would be appropriate for inclusion in a young person's therapy preference tool. The findings were then thematically analysed to construct dimensions for the tool. In stage two, semi structured interviews were carried out with 27 young people and three therapists who had used the form at end of counselling/end of study to explore the acceptability of the form. The form was also tested by 31 young people with addiction issues as part of a pilot randomised trial.

Results/Findings: An 8-item therapy preference tool for young people was developed. Evidence suggests that it is acceptable to both clients and therapists and shows clinical validity, initial data also gives indications of young people's therapeutic preferences. Psychometric analysis indicated no strong underlying factors of the scale.

Research Limitations: The measure relies on a series of single item indicators, and is therefore more akin to a checklist than an internally reliable measure.

Conclusions/Implications: As a short, easy to complete, instrument, the YP-TPF can easily be used by therapists to open a dialogue with young clients on their therapy preferences.

Mick Cooper

Symposium A Paper 2

Other Author: John Norcross
Professional Role: Professor of Counselling Psychology
Institution/Affiliation: CREST, Department of Psychology, University of Roehampton
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The development of a brief, multidimensional measure of clients' therapy preferences: the Cooper-Norcross Inventory of Preferences (C-NIP)

Keywords: client preferences, treatment preferences, shared decision making, therapeutic alliance, measure development

Aim/Purpose: Addressing and accommodating client preferences in counselling and psychotherapy have been consistently associated with improved treatment outcomes; however, few clinically useful and psychometrically acceptable measures are available for this purpose. The aim of this study was to develop a brief, multidimensional clinical tool - with acceptable psychometric properties - to help clients articulate the therapist style they desire in psychotherapy or counselling.

Design/Methodology: An online survey composed of 40 therapy preference items was completed by 860 respondents, primarily female (n = 699), British (n = 699), White (n = 761), and mental health professionals themselves (n = 615).

Results/Findings: Principal components analysis of the 40 items, and scale construction processes, resulted in four scales with 18 items in total: Therapist Directiveness vs. Client Directiveness (5 items), Emotional Intensity vs. Emotional Reserve (5 items), Past Orientation vs. Present Orientation (3 items), and Warm Support vs. Focused Challenge (5 items). These scales map well onto dimensions of therapist activity and cover most of the major preference dimensions identified in the research literature. Internal consistency coefficients ranged between .60 and .85 (M = .71). Tentative cutoff points for strong preferences on each dimension were established.

Research Limitations: The majority of survey respondents were mental health professionals, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to laypeople. Internal reliabilities for some scales were limited. Additional validity data is needed.

Conclusions/Implications: The 18-item C-NIP is a multidimensional, validated measure that may form a basis for dialogue around clients' treatment preferences. It has now been translated into 18 languages and used in a range of clinical settings.

Adam Gibson

Symposium A Paper 3

Other Authors: Mick Cooper and Jacqueline Hayes
Professional Role: PhD student
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Clients' experiences of shared decision-making in pluralistic therapy for depression

Keywords: shared decision-making, grounded theory, interpersonal process recall, pluralistic therapy, client experience

Aim/Purpose: Shared decision-making is increasingly gaining importance within helping professions in the UK. Yet, no research has formally explored clients' experiences of shared decision-making in counselling and psychotherapy.

Design/Methodology: A grounded theory methodology (Rennie et al, 1988) was applied alongside Interpersonal Process-Recall (IPR) interviews to examine 14 adult clients' decision-making experiences within pluralistic therapy at the CREST research clinic, University of Roehampton. Interviews were held following clients' assessment and fourth treatment sessions.

Results/Findings: A core category was derived from six categories and their components: that shared decision-making was capable of being led more by clients, or by therapists. When clients were uncomfortable in contributing to 'decision discussions', or unsure how to, it was helpful for therapists to provide expert psychotherapy knowledge, as well as to encourage and support the client to take part in these discussions.

Research Limitations: As the findings from this research will be drawn from a single approach to psychotherapy, there are limits to the generalisability of these findings to other approaches. However, it was valuable to conduct this study within the practice of pluralistic therapy, an approach with an emphasis on shared decision-making that draws on a range of methods and styles from a number of therapeutic approaches.

Conclusions/Implications: The grounded theory emerging from client's observations and reports can be used to demonstrate whether or not shared decision-making was experienced and what helped the process to occur. It can also contribute to our understanding of how clients experienced shared decision-making and what the impact of being part of that process was. The grounded theory presents clients' experiences of shared decision-making as potentially beneficial and coinciding with requirements for ethical practice.

Mick Cooper

Symposium A Paper 4

Other Authors: Gina S Di Malta and Hanne Oddli
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Client experiences of goal negotiation in the early stages of pluralistic therapy

Keywords: goal negotiation, shared decision making, pluralistic therapy, thematic analysis, client experiences

Aim/Purpose: Psychology research suggests that goal-related processes are fundamental to how positive or negative people feel (e.g. Little, Salmela-Aro, & Phillips, 2007; Steger, 2013). In addition, alongside an increase in time-limited therapies, there is a growing interest in working with goals (e.g. Clark, 2011; Law, 2013). Yet, there is little research on the processes of working with goals. Pluralistic therapy offers a context where there is an emphasis on shared decision-making around goal setting (Cooper & McLeod, 2007). This study is an exploration of client experiences of goal sharing processes within a pluralistic therapy context. The present paper aims to describe client perceptions of negotiating goals in the early stages of pluralistic therapy.

Design/Methodology: Participants were 22 clients undergoing a course of 24 sessions of pluralistic therapy. Semi-structured interviews were conducted post-session 4. Interviews were aimed at eliciting client feedback and experiences of aspects of shared decision-making around goal processes, and goal based measures. Data were analysed using thematic analysis and organised to reflect client experiences of helpful and unhelpful factors around goal negotiation processes.

Results/Findings: Clients experienced 'goals work' as overall helpful as it brought focus, direction and a common ground in the developing therapeutic relationship. Challenges such as client uncertainty, a misleading focus, fear of failure and identification with problems were an indication that goal-oriented practice could be enhanced. It was helpful when practitioners managed clients' goal expectations, offered compassion for the limitations of goals work, and prioritised a flexible structure.

Research Limitations: The research is based on small samples of clients and therapists and therefore cannot be generalised. This research relies on a single method, findings have not been triangulated.

Conclusions/Implications: The findings suggest that helpful goal-oriented practice includes a flexible structure and space for mutual dialogue to allow for the emergence of goal meanings.

Gillian Proctor – Symposium B

Symposium B Overview

Other authors: Catherine Hayes, Emma Tickle, Sue Price and all Assistant Professors at University of Nottingham
Professional Role: Programme leader MA in Counselling and Psychotherapy
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Person-Centred Experiential Counselling for Depression (PCE CfD): how did we get here, who doesn't make it and what's it like for those who do survive as counsellors in IAPT?

Keywords: Counselling for Depression (CfD), person-centred experiential (PCE) counselling, training, ethics, IAPT

The aims of the symposium: This symposium aims to educate participants about the history of and PCE-CfD training and the realities of working as a PCE- CfD counsellor in IAPT.

Contribution of each symposium paper to the overall theme:
- Paper 1: Describes the experience of being filmed in a single session of therapy with Professor Brian Thorne (1997) and the client (author) assesses the therapist's competency using the PCEPS. This process offers a small indication of whether the person-centred approach practiced historically can be related to contemporary PCE- CfD.
- Paper 2: This analysis investigates whether the therapist's therapeutic modality and the region they practice in predict assessment outcomes in training, and the likelihood of completing the full PCE-CfD license.
- Paper 3: Presents the results of research interviewing PCE-CfD counsellors and a focus group of counsellors about their experiences of working in IAPT. In this paper the reality of working as a PCE-CfD counsellor in IAPT is explored.

Implications of the symposium: By looking at the historical context it's possible to begin an exploration into how it matches modern thinking. The survival of counselling within the NHS is a vital political point and the possibility and costs of this are presented and discussed. The reality of applying PC theory in practice in the modern NHS is an ongoing difficulty to be grappled with which is crucial to the survival of the profession.

Catherine Hayes

Symposium B Paper 1

Professional Role: Programme leader MA in counselling and psychotherapy
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Therapist as client: An investigation into and assessment of (using PCEPS) a single session of counselling between Professor Brian Thorne and Catherine Hayes (video UEA 1997)

Keywords: person-centred counselling, PCEPS, adherence, long-term impact, therapist as client.

Aim: To describe the experience of being filmed in a single session of therapy with Professor Brian Thorne (1997). I assess the therapist competency using PCEPS (Person-centred and Experiential Psychotherapies Scale) and discuss the impact on me as a client, as reported eleven years later. This process offers a small indication of whether the person-centred approach practiced historically can be related to contemporary PCE-CfD.

Design/Methodology: I use a qualitative evocative autoethnographic approach to the whole experience using data collected at the time of the session and since on my reflections. I use the PCEPS to assess the competency of the therapist's approach.

Results/Findings: By exploring this single session with the benefit of a videoed follow up discussion between Thorne and Hayes eleven years later; this enables a full exploration of the impact, not only on the client but also on the therapist of a single session. An evaluation of the session based on PCEPS is discussed. The research is yet to be completed.

Research Limitations: A single session study is an inbuilt limitation. Interrogating moment to moment reflection between therapist and client is used to assess adherence of the therapist to a competency scale (PCEPS). Having the client/author assess the competency is arguably highly relevant or could be seen as a limitation due to allegiance.

Conclusions/Implications: The means of understanding what happens in an encounter between a therapist and a client would seem to be best understood through collaboration between therapist and client. Where the client is also a person-centred therapist and trainer, further understanding may be relevant for those also involved in training and assessing person-centred therapists and for those involved in developing competency and adherence scales. Further research is recommended exploring historical recorded sessions of therapists identifying as person-centred.

Emma Tickle

Symposium B Paper 2

Other Authors: Sue Price and Catherine Hayes
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What factors predict completion of the Person-Centred Experiential Counselling for Depression (PCE-CfD) License

Keywords: CfD, PCE, IAPT, training, modality.

Aim/Purpose: To investigate if therapist's therapeutic modality, length of experience and the region they practice in are associated with assessment outcomes, and completion of the full PCE-CfD license.

Design/Methodology: Therapeutic modality (TM), region, and length of experience for N=188 delegates was recorded for comparison between completers and non-completers. Previous research, looking only at completers, suggested that the therapist's TM predicted assessment outcomes. For example, person-centred (PC) therapists completed in less time, while humanistic therapists scored higher on the Person-Centred Experiential Psychotherapy scale (PCEPs). As it was expected that PC therapists would have higher PCEPs scores these results suggested that TM and its relationship with adherence needed to be better understood. This study addresses this in a number of ways: i. by standardising the coding of TM; ii. using the umbrella term, 'experiential', to include both person-centred and humanistic; iii. investigating the association that region, and length of experience has on completion.

Results/Findings: Tests of association and difference were carried out to compare completers and non-completers in terms of experience, therapeutic modality, region and their DVD PCEPs scores. There was no significant difference between delegates' DVD scores and their TM. There was also no significant difference in the DVD scores between completers and non-completers. However, the association between delegates' TM and whether or not they complete the course was significant. When the PC and humanistic TMs were grouped together under the umbrella term 'experiential' and compared with integrative TM the association becomes highly significant. There was a significant difference in DVD scores for therapists from different regions. Region was also significantly associated with completion. There was no significant difference between completers and non-completers and length of experience. The results suggest that, while therapists from all approaches might adhere sufficiently in their first assessment, that TM and region are more strongly associated with completion. It also suggests that PCE-CfD is inclusive of both PC and humanistic approaches.

Research Limitations: Limitations exist to the system for coding TM as they are often qualified in more than one approach. Further study would be needed to understand any causal relationships.

Conclusions/Implications: Findings from the study can be used to inform trainers, potential applicants and employers of the factors that are more likely to create challenges and support for completion of the PCE-CfD license.

Gillian Proctor

Symposium B Paper 3

Other Authors: Maeta Brown, Shlomo Cohen and Sue McElvie
Professional Role: Programme Leader MA in psychotherapy and counselling
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Ethical and value conflicts experienced by relational counsellors in IAPT

Keywords: Counselling for Depression (CfD), IAPT, ethical dilemmas, values, survival at work

Aims/Purpose: This research aimed to capture the experiences of relational counsellors working in IAPT of ethical and value conflicts (given the medical and bureaucratic model of IAPT and the relational models that counsellors are trained in) and how these conflicts are negotiated.

Design/Methodology: Counsellors who were employed as a counsellor in an IAPT service were invited to participate. 11 interviews and one focus group (N=4) were conducted by the research group.

Data was analysed using Brown and Gilligan's Voice Relational method (1978), chosen for its special attention to relations of power and the reflexivity of the researcher.

Results/Findings: After analyses of each individual participant as a case study (N=15), themes were collated across participants and grouped under three main themes of client experience, counsellor experience and relationships. Experiences varied as to how counsellors managed the requirements from their profession and personal values along with IAPT requirements and how much these were experienced as conflictual. The more counsellors felt valued and trusted by managers, the more they were satisfied in their job and in the service, they provided for clients. Conversely, the more they felt controlled and not listened to by managers and administrative staff, the more personal costs there were to their survival within IAPT and the more they planned their escape from IAPT. These relationships seemed to be crucial to determine the quality of life for counsellors and the consequent quality of service they could provide for clients.

Research Limitations: This qualitative research is not generalisable. However, themes about survival in organisations are applicable to counsellors working in many contexts and are sufficiently recurring across many different IAPT organisations to be able to indicate potential difficulties to be avoided for IAPT services wanting to create good working conditions for their counsellors.

Conclusions/Implications: Working as a relational counsellor in IAPT is likely to require negotiation of value and ethical conflicts that counsellors need to consider. Supportive relationships are key, in particular, management support (trusting judgement and valuing) is crucial for counsellors' job satisfaction and survival. Future research is suggested to check the validity of the themes using a survey of a greater number of counsellors in IAPT and to investigate the experiences of managers within IAPT.

Mick Cooper – Symposium C

Symposium C Overview

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Researching the process and outcomes of counselling with young people

Keywords: children, young people, counselling, psychotherapy, process, outcome

The aims of the symposium: To present new research on the process and outcomes of counselling with young people; and methodological innovations that can facilitate this inquiry.

Contribution of each symposium paper to the overall theme: The symposium starts with the development of, and initial findings from, an evaluation of an innovative new approach to CAMHS provision: the i-THRIVE model (Bruffell). i-THRIVE is a is a needs-based model that enables care to be provided according to four distinct population groupings, determined by a patient's needs and preferences. This is followed by a systematic review by Sá Pires of existential therapeutic interventions for young people. This is an area of practice with young people that is rarely discussed in the literature, and Sá Pires review will bring out key elements of this approach that can be subjected to empirical evaluation. Joyce, then, presents findings from an initial pilot randomised controlled trial of pluralistic therapy for young people with addiction. Her presentation considers the feasibility of such a study, and presents both quantitative and qualitative data giving an insight into the value of this approach. Finally, Gurvitz, in Paper 4, focuses more specifically on the therapeutic relationship in work with young people. Her innovative qualitative study examines young people's experience of the evolution of the therapeutic alliance.

Implications of the symposium theme for counselling and psychotherapy theory, research and practice: Therapy with children and young people is a major area of expansion in the counselling field. BACP has now established a curriculum for counselling young people; CYP IAPT have developed an evidence-based counselling curriculum; and trials of CBT, psychodynamic and humanistic therapies with young people have received major funding awards. This symposium will help to develop an understanding of new research in this area, and the methodological tools—and obstacles—that need consideration.

Hilary Bruffell

Symposium C Paper 1

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Evaluation of the i-THRIVE implementation programme for child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)

Keywords: i-THRIVE, needs-based service, evaluation, mental health, CAMHS

Aim/Purpose: The i-THRIVE (implementation of the THRIVE model of care) programme is designed to train and support children and young people's (CYP) mental health services (CAMHS) to deliver services according to THRIVE principles. THRIVE is a needs-based model that enables care to be provided according to four distinct population groupings, determined by a patient's needs and preferences for care. It aims to tackle existing challenges within services by drawing a clearer distinction between treatment and support, and between self-management and intervention. Emphasis is placed on the prevention of problems and the promotion of mental health and wellbeing.

This study is based on early stage findings from the evaluation of the implementation of i-THRIVE in the North-East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT). The aim was to evaluate whether the benefits of implementing i-THRIVE can be replicated as a model and whether the implementation was meeting its aims as it was scaled up across four localities within NELFT.

Design/Methodology: The evaluation took a mixed methods approach incorporating both qualitative interviews, ethnographic observation and quantitative data in the form of service and outcome data. Recruitment employed snowball sampling, with an anticipated maximum of 72 -90 participants This paper draws on initial data from observational visits,16 semi-structured interviews and 4 focus groups; conducted during early implementation across a range of informants.

Results/Findings: Initial early findings identified potential barriers and facilitators to the implementation of i-THRIVE. Main themes included:
- the perceived benefits of interagency working
- the need to create a shared language with the wider agencies
- the importance of enthusiastic leadership
- resources

Research Limitations: The findings presented in this report are initial impressions based on observational visits and the early stage interview data. Findings may change after the later stage research.

Conclusions/Implications: i-THRIVE takes a quality improvement approach to implementation which means the implementation will evolve in relation to the needs of the individual sites. As such, this evaluation may contribute toward, the upscaling of i-THRIVE across CAMHS nation-wide, with learnings from this study helping to inform the development of i-THRIVE and the process of implementation.

Branca Sá Pires

Symposia C Paper 2

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A systematic review of evidence and literature on existential therapies with children and young people

Keywords: children, young people, existential, therapy, systematic review

Aim/Purpose: Over the last hundred years, existential therapy has become an established therapeutic practice in the UK and the world (Cooper, 2015). However, there is limited evidence of application to work with children and young people. This paper presents a systematic review of existential therapies with children and young people, identifying: a) literature on the practice of existential therapies with children and young people; b) evidence of outcomes of therapy; c) evidence on the process of therapy.

Design/Methodology: A systematic review of existential therapies with children and young people was conducted. A thorough search was carried out with recourse to five electronic databases, reference lists, and personal contacts. Inclusion criteria were reports of research or practice in the field, including theory-based literature, case studies, quantitative and qualitative data.

Results/Findings: The systematic search on existential therapies with children and young people yielded the following results: regarding evidence of empirical data, findings were limited and restricted mainly to theory-based approaches and case studies. We did find literature on the practice of existential therapies, for children and young people/adolescents, for example, Moustakas (1966) Scalzo (2010) and Shumaker (2017). A narrative review of all data discovered will be presented.

Research Limitations: These findings should be interpreted cautiously, as this systematic review is limited to the English language.

Conclusions/Implications: A range of literature on the practice of existential therapies with children/young people was discovered. However, there is limited evidence of research on process and outcomes of therapy. Nevertheless, the preliminary findings of this study point to the need for: a) a thorough conceptualization of existential therapy for this age group; b) evaluation of process and outcomes of therapy; and c) a need for research to be developed in a way that sheds light into the experience of the child/young person in therapy, and carers. To develop this work while maintaining an existential stance rather than an essentialist stance is the challenge ahead.

Patricia Joyce

Symposium C Paper 3

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A pilot randomised controlled trial of pluralistic counselling with young people who present with issues of addiction

Keywords: young people, counselling, addiction, outcome of therapy

Aim/Purpose: The pluralistic framework (Cooper & McLeod, 2011) is a relatively new approach that has shown acceptable outcomes when working with adult populations (Cooper et al., 2015). However, little research, to date, has explored its effectiveness with young people or those presenting with issues of addiction. The aim of this study was to pilot a trial of pluralistic practice, against treatment as usual, for young people with issues relating to addiction.

Design/Methodology: Participants were recruited from a young person-specific addiction counselling service in the North East of Scotland. A randomised controlled trial was conducted with 64 young people, who were allocated to either a pluralistic, or a counselling as usual, intervention. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to allow for methodological triangulation. Both well validated and widely used, the YP-CORE and the SDQ were the primary outcome measures giving statistical understanding of the participant's mental distress at baseline, end of counselling and at 3-month follow up. The qualitative semi structured endpoint interviews allowed for a more detailed understanding of the young people's experience of the counselling process.

Results/Findings: The study was feasible to implement and no major ethical issues were identified. Recruitment rates were satisfactory. Preliminary outcome evidence indicated that there were no differences in outcomes between the pluralistic and counselling as usual groups. Qualitative evidence indicated that experiences of counselling were similar across the two conditions.

Research Limitations: As a small pilot study with a specific group of young people, the outcome findings from this study cannot be generalised. Additionally, the similarities across the two conditions makes comparison between the two cohorts more problematic.

Conclusions/Implications: It is feasible to trial a comparison of pluralistic counselling for young people with addictions against counselling as usual. However, in future studies, there is a need to differentiate more clearly between the interventions. Initial outcome evidence suggests that there were no differences between the process and outcomes of these two interventions. More research is needed on the particular clients for who a pluralistic approach may be more, or less, helpful.

Shiri Gurvitz

Symposium C Paper 4

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A qualitative exploration of young peoples' experiences of significant relational events in the context of a developing therapeutic relationship

Keywords: young people, therapeutic relationship, significant relational events, relational depth

Aim/Purpose: The current research aimed to explore how young people conceptualised significant relational events in their counselling, and to tentatively explore the relevance of relationally deep moments (Mearns & Cooper, 2005).

Design/Methodology: Qualitative interviews were conducted with eight young people aged 13-15 across England and Scotland, who received either school or community-based counselling. Charmazian constructivist grounded theory was used to develop and update the interview schedule in line with participants' experiences. Participants were asked to describe their experiences of how the therapeutic relationship developed, and also of any significant relational events with their counsellor.

Results/Findings: Participants described positive therapeutic relationships which were unique and expectation-defying, and spoke about this in relation to the counsellor, themselves, and the genuine relationship that developed between them. In the first stage of analysis, a conceptual map was created to describe the development of the therapeutic relationship, and consisted of three categories which centred around a core category (Defying expectations: Co-constructing a unique relationship). In the second stage, significant relational events were categorised into two over-arching domains, which were contextualised within the conceptual map from the first stage of analysis. Self-identified significant relational events indicated two primary narratives related to the purpose of the therapeutic relationship: feeling able to disclose, and creating new insights.

Research Limitations: The current analysis did not reach saturation and would have benefitted from a larger and more diverse sample.

Conclusions/Implications: Young people respond to a counsellor who is able to create a unique and expectation-defying relationship with them, characterised by its difference from other relationships with adults and with professionals. Given that significant relational events not only aided young people in reporting the salient elements of their relational experience but also provided an accessible means for them to tap into new aspects of their relational experiences, the potential therapeutic benefit of incorporating significant relational events into the therapeutic work is considered.

Join us again next year

Conference announcement and first call for papers

We're excited to announce that next year will mark the 25th anniversary of the research conference. We'll be visiting Belfast on Friday 17 and Saturday 18 May 2019, with a pre-conference workshop on the Thursday evening prior.

Call for papers

We're inviting submissions of abstracts for papers, posters, workshops and symposia. For guidelines on how to submit your abstract visit www.bacp.co.uk. You'll need to submit your abstract by Friday 2 November 2018. For further information about submitting an abstract email research@bacp.co.uk

Sign up for conference updates

If you're interested in attending the conference next year and would like to receive conference updates, email katy.hobday@bacp.co.uk