

Evaluation of Transactional Analysis Psychotherapy Groups In Primary Care Within an IAPT Site

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Introduction

Groups have been used in psychotherapy for decades and encompass a wide variety of structures and approaches. They have been used to raise awareness, develop skills and deal with psychological distress. Because of their versatility and cost effectiveness they are an important resource in increasing access to psychological therapies. So far, most of the treatments within IAPT services consist of individual, mostly CBT therapy, and structured groups targeted on single issues, such as sleep, relaxation etc. Psychotherapy groups are not widely available.

To address this, Metanoia Institute has teamed up with an existing IAPT site in London to provide Transactional Analysis groups and evaluate their effectiveness in this context. The project is ongoing. The evaluation reported in this paper relates to group outcomes between September 2010 and February 2012.

Literature

There are a number of research studies into the uses of group psychotherapy and counselling in both health and educational settings. Group treatments are rooted in the rich tradition of therapeutic theory and practice and used in a variety of settings for prevention, personal development and education, counselling and psychotherapy. They span psychoanalytic, cognitive-behavioural and humanistic theoretical orientations.

Current research evidence shows that group psychotherapy is effective with different client groups: clients suffering from anxiety and depression, (Chen, Lu, Chang, Chu, & Chou, 2006; Dodding, Nasel, Murphy, & Howell, 2008), HIV infected clients (Himmelhoch, Medoff, & Oyeniy, 2007), adults who have experienced childhood sexual abuse (Lau & Kristensen, 2007), girls (age 9-15) who attend school for children with complex needs (Flitton, Buckroyd, & Vassiliou, 2006) and others.

However, this body of research doesn't fully represent a range of theoretical approaches currently used in group therapy. Transactional Analysis focused on group therapy from its inception, and maintains group work in training and certification of psychotherapists. Some evaluative studies of Transactional Analysis groupwork are available within psychiatric settings (Thunnissen, Duivenvoorden, & Trijsburg, 2002) and therapeutic communities working with addiction (Ohlsson, 2002). The structure and flexibility of Transactional Analysis, and its emphasis on client empowerment, make it an important resource for working with the diverse patient populations within primary care. The particular IAPT service in London, which is the subject of this study, caters for clients who experience high levels of deprivation and operates within a multicultural environment of South London.

Research Aims

This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Transactional Analysis psychotherapy group treatment within the existing primary care service, which provides a range of psychological treatments and evaluation as one of the IAPT sites (CSIP, 2008,).

The project is a naturalistic study, which means clients and therapists are not specially chosen for research, which takes place within the ordinary practice setting, rather than a laboratory. Therapists are senior TA students at Metanoia Institute, which specialises in the relational approach to Transactional Analysis. The evaluation is quantitative and representative of the methodology used within IAPT.

Groups are time limited (16 sessions) and facilitated by Transactional Analysis psychotherapists, students at Metanoia Institute, who are on placement within PTiPC. Each group takes 2 hours and is conducted weekly.

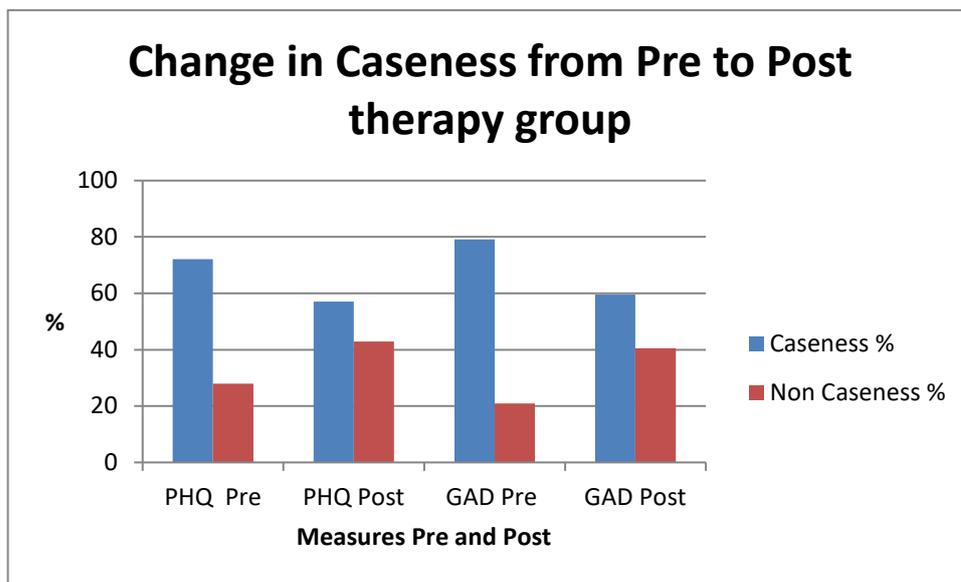
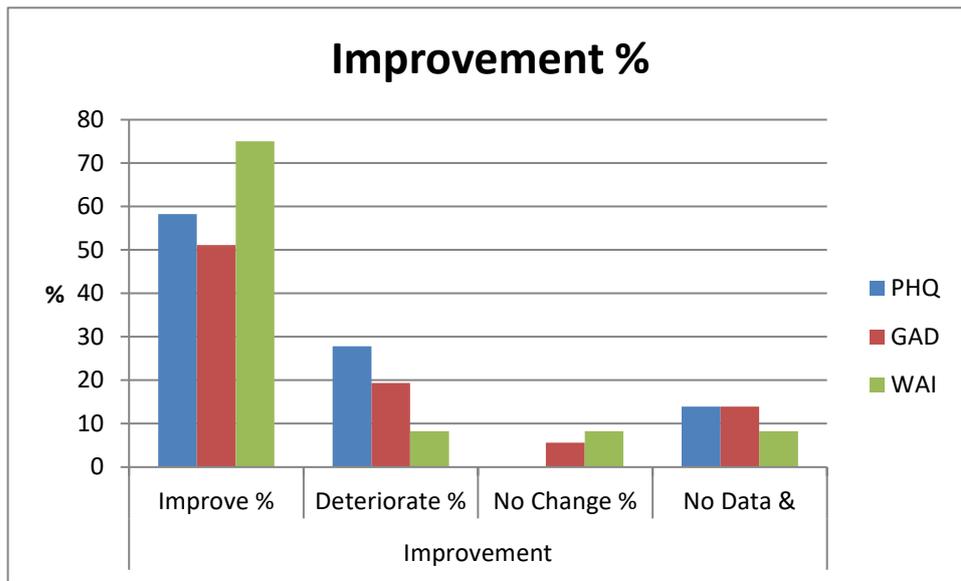
To conduct evaluation therapists are using standardised questionnaires, PHQ-9 (K. Kroenke, Spitzer, Williams, Monahan, & Lowe, 2007) and GAD-7 (K. Kroenke, Spitzer, & Williams, 2001) at every session. These questionnaires are commonly used within each IAPT service.

In addition to that, Relational Transactional Analysis focuses on the therapeutic relationship as central to psychotherapy. To address this the clients were asked to complete a standardised working alliance inventory or WAI, (Bordin, 1979) after each group session.

Outcomes

Eight groups have been completed until February 2012 and 2 still are ongoing. 48 clients have been seen to date, 12 were still attending current groups. The evaluation was completed for 36 patients, who were representative of the service in terms of age, ethnicity and employment status. Table below shows improvement rates and caseness. Caseness is a measure used in IAPT services and represents the severity of the symptoms as measured by the questionnaires (GAD-7 and PHQ-9). Unlike these clinical questionnaires, Working Alliance Inventory (WAI) is a contextual measure, which shows the flow of the therapeutic relationship

	Improvement				Caseness		
	Improve %	Deteriorate %	No Change %	No Data &	Caseness %	Non Caseness %	Difference Caseness Pre and post %
PHQ	58.3	27.8		13.9	PHQ Pre 72.1	27.9	
					PHQ Post 57.1	42.9	15
GAD	51.1	19.4	5.6	13.9	GAD Pre 79.1	20.9	
WAI	75	8.3	8.3	8.3	GAD Post 59.5	40.5	19.6



Conclusions

These outcomes show that Transactional Analysis psychotherapy groups result in changes in the levels of depression and anxiety, as well as changes to the levels of caseness, which is a more clinically significant measure of improvement. The percentage change is comparative to the current rates of improvement using CBT (Glover, Webb, Evison, & Northoff, 2010). IAPT services aim for a 50% improvement in depression and anxiety, but improvement rates vary in practice and are frequently below this level, as shown in the latest report. The improvement rates for our TA groups are above that expected level, and also show a high level of the working

alliance. However, this picture is limited by its scale. It is a useful snapshot which shows the potential for TA psychotherapy groups within IAPT. For a fuller and more reliable research a bigger sample is needed as well as the more in depth evaluation of the work which takes place within the groups. Large scale quantitative evaluation and in depth case studies would help to build a fuller research evidence base for TA psychotherapy within the NHS

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Contemporary psychotherapy transactional analysis in contemporary psychotherapy. Edited by Richard G. Erskine First published in 2016 by Karnac Books Ltd 118 Finchley Road London NW3 5HT. Copyright 2016 to Richard G. Erskine for the edited collection, and to the individual authors for their contributions. Transactional Analysis Psychotherapy: Three Methods Describing a Transactional Analysis Group Therapy. Department of Psychology, Lund University. Total number of authors: 1. Three different parts of Transactional Analysis have been investigated with support of three different approaches. These are: Diagnosis/ Client assessment with TAA's Script Analysis as a reliability study (Study I), Identification of different components in TAA's psychotherapy method with Discourse Analysis (Study II) and Study III investigating the therapeutic alliance with a psychodynamic approach, the CCRT method (Luborsky, 1990, 1998) and the Plan "Diagnosis method according to Weiss and Sampson (1986). In integrative transactional analysis, the conceptual constructs, theories, and sub theories are organized into a theory of motivation, a theory of personality, and a theory of methods. The theory of motivation examines human functioning and the need for stimuli, structure, and relationship. The theory of personality describes internal and external contact, interruptions to contact, life script, and ego function. Integrative psychotherapy has integrated Berne's concepts of the hungers within a contact-and-relationship framework. Attention is given to the biological imperatives of stimulus, structure, and relationship hungers as a theory of motivation. The contributions of transactional analysis to integrative psychotherapy. Transactional Analysis Journal, 29, 198-214. The Ultimate Transactional Analysis Course for Mental Health Professionals. Transactional Analysis offers a complete framework for human psychology that's premised on a Parent - Adult - Child model of 'Ego States' - one of it's general goals is to foster an 'Integrating Adult' ego state that can solve-problems, think rationality, and engage fully with the here and now processes of living and interacting. By improving the ways in which people communicate we can help them to live more functional lives, engage in more healthy relationships, and relate more harmoniously with wider society.