

The influence of doctoral trainees' negative emotions on the process of Time-limited Dynamic Psychotherapy

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Abstract: We investigated the process of therapy as conducted by therapist-trainees during the pilot phase of a training program in Time-limited Dynamic Psychotherapy (TLDP). We examined the association between trainees' emotional reactions, especially their most extreme reactions, on clients' emotional reactions, and perceptions of session impact. We analyzed data from several post-session self-report measures from approximately 70 TLDP sessions (representing approximately 12 dyads). Therapists' and client's positive and negative emotions were measured with the Therapists Appraisal Questionnaire (TAQ) and Client Appraisal Questionnaire (CAQ) and Session impact was measured with the Session Impact Scale (SIS), which contains three scales: Task Impacts, Relationship Impacts, and Hindering Impacts.

We tested two primary hypotheses. First, we expected that trainees' negative emotions would be directly related to clients' negative emotions and Hindering Impact, but inversely related to clients' Task Impacts and Relationship Impacts. This hypothesis was tested using Regression Analysis. Preliminary findings confirmed that as trainees' experienced more negative reactions, clients reported less progress on their goals in therapy (Task Impacts) and experienced the therapeutic relationship (Relationship Impact) as less positive. Trainees' Negative Stress scores however, did not directly predict client's perception of Hindering Impact as predicted.

Second, we expected that sessions in which therapists report extreme negative emotions (greater than one standard deviation above the mean for the sample) would be less therapeutic (i.e., increased client negative emotions, lower client Task and Relationship Impacts, higher Hindering Impacts) than sessions in which therapists experience non-extreme negative emotions. This hypothesis was tested using MANCOVA. Preliminary findings indicated significant effects of therapists extreme negative stress reactions on Session Impact ($F=2.3, p=.03$); Task Impacts ($F=4.6, p=.014$), Relationship Impacts ($F=7.2, p=.002$). There was no significant effect of extreme negative stress reactions found on client's negative stress or Hindering Impact.

Novice Therapists' Use of Self: Training Issues and Implications