

Reflections on a Time-limited Dynamic Psychotherapy Training Project: New Directions for Brief Psychotherapy Training

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Abstract: I will briefly review the research literature on psychotherapy training, with emphasis on training in time-limited dynamic psychotherapy (TLDP). This literature suggests that our typical paradigm for psychotherapy training, which emphasizes didactic learning of and adherence to theory and technique, does not work. I will also review process and outcome data from a three-year pilot TLDP training project, which reinforces the notion that the traditional training paradigm has significant limitations. Specifically, results from the project indicated that therapist effectiveness increased only within the training context itself. These results, however, did not generalize beyond the training context; in fact, therapist effectiveness actually decreased outside of that context. Process research indicated that therapists' emotional and cognitive reactions, some of which seemed to emanate from the training process itself, were powerful predictors of client process and session outcome. I will discuss the implications of these results in light of the training and supervision literature. Based on this experience, as well as the scholarship of Binder (2004), Safran and Muran (2000), and others, I will propose a new paradigm for psychotherapy training that focuses on a few "big ideas," the therapist (rather than the client), a few key metacognitive skills, active practice, and feedback. In conclusion, I will describe how I am implementing this training paradigm in two different contexts: a community mental health center (with experienced clinicians) and a departmental clinic (with doctoral trainees).