

# **The Influence of Doctoral Trainees' Emotions on the Process of Time- limited Dynamic Psychotherapy**

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# Introduction

- We are using the “totalistic” definition of countertransference (CT), which includes all the therapists reactions toward clients (Kiesler, 1982, Levenson, 1995).
- Clients who exhibit hostility tend to elicit negative CT reactions (i.e., counter hostility, distancing, and avoidance) from therapists (Strupp, 1980 a-d).
- Negative CT emotions can lead to negative CT behaviors (i.e., unfavorable clinical judgments, avoidance, withdrawal) (Fauth & Hayes, in press).

# Purpose

- Therapist's awareness and use of their own CT reactions are central to TLDP (Binder & Strupp, 1984)
- No empirical research has examined the therapeutic impact of therapists' emotional CT reactions (i.e. positive & negative) on the process of TLDP
- We wanted to assess the influence of therapist-trainees' CT emotions on the process of psychotherapy during the pilot phase of a training program in TLDP

# Hypotheses

- Therapists' CT emotions will predict clients' SIS ratings and emotional reactions
  - Therapists' Negative Stress scores will be:
    - Directly related to client Negative Stress and Hindering impacts
    - Inversely related to client Task Impacts, Relationship Impacts, Challenge scores
  - Therapists' Challenge scores will be:
    - Directly related to client Task Impacts, Relationship Impacts, Challenge scores
    - Inversely related to client Negative Stress, Hindering Impacts

# Hypothesis 2

Sessions in which therapists' negative CT emotions are extreme ( $> one\ SD\ above\ the\ mean\ for\ the\ sample$ ) will be less therapeutic than sessions in which therapists' negative CT emotions are not extreme

# Methods

- **Participants**

**14 dyads** (117 sessions)

*Therapist Trainees*

11 Female, 2 Male

100 % European American/White

*Clients*

10 Female, 4 Male

100% European American/White

# Measures

*Therapist/ Client Appraisal Questionnaire* (TAQ/ CAQ; Fauth et al., 1999)

- Assessed therapists' and clients' positive & negative emotions
- Scales: Challenge (positive emotions), Negative Stress (negative emotions)

*Session Impact Scale* (SIS; Elliott & Wexler, 1994)

- Assessed clients' perception of session impacts
- Scales: Relationship Impacts, Task Impacts, and Hindering Impacts

# RESULTS

## Hypothesis 1: Beyond the effect of dyad...

- Trainee's negative CT emotions and positive CT emotions predicted:
  - 21% of client Relationship Impact ratings (direct relationship with positive CT emotions, inverse with negative CT emotions)
  - 17% of client Task Impact ratings (direct relationship with positive CT emotions, inverse with negative CT emotions)
  - 9% of client Hindering Impact ratings (direct relationship with negative CT emotions)
  - 17% of client negative emotions (inverse relationship with positive CT emotions)
  - 36 % of client Challenge scores (direct with positive CT emotions, inverse with negative CT emotions)

# Hypothesis 2

## MANCOVA

### **Independent Variables** (therapist negative stress):

- LOW: (  $< 1$  *SD* below *Mean*)
- MEDIUM: ( within 1 *SD* of Mean)
- HIGH: (  $>1$  *SD* above *Mean*)
- Covariate: dyad
- **Dependent Variables:**
  - Client Session Impacts
  - Client's negative and positive emotions

# Hypothesis 2

## Findings

**The effects of therapists' extreme negative CT emotions on Sessions Impacts was significant ( $F=3.08, p=.007$ )**

- **Task Impacts:** Significant differences ( $p=.005$ ) were found between extreme LOW ( $1 < SD$  above *Mean*) and MEDIUM (w/in 1 SD ) negative reactions.
- **Relationship Impacts:** Significant differences ( $p=.005$ ) were found between extreme LOW ( $<1 SD$  above the *Mean*) and extreme HIGH ( $>1 SD$  above the *Mean*) negative reactions.

# Hypothesis 2 (cont.)

## Findings

**The effects of therapists' extreme negative CT emotions on client's positive & negative emotions was significant ( $F=8.6$  ,  $p < .001$ ).**

•**Client's Challenge:** Significant differences were found between extreme LOW ( $1 < SD$  above *Mean*) and extreme HIGH (w/in 1 SD ) negative CT emotions

•**Client's Negative Stress:** Significant differences were found between extreme LOW ( $< 1 SD$  above the *Mean*) and extreme HIGH (  $> 1 SD$  above the *Mean*) negative CT emotions

# Limitations and Clinical

## Limitations: Implications

- Small restricted sample
- Use of graduate trainees

## Implications:

- Enhance awareness about the ways in which their CT emotions could impact on the therapy process
- Help practitioners monitor their CT emotions using the TAQ
- Focus supervision on trainees' emotional reactions

# Descriptive Results

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>CAQ</b>			
Neg. Stress	101	10.6	7.3
Challenge	102	17.8	10.3
<b>TAQ</b>			
Neg. Stress	92	7.2	4.5
Challenge	92	16.4	7.1
<b>SIS</b>			
Task	115	16.6	6.0
Relationship	115	18.5	5.5
Hindering	115	7.3	2.2

# Analysis: MANCOVA

## Descriptive Statistics

### Effect of Therapists' Extreme Negative CT Emotions

Scale	Level	Mean	SD
<b>Task Impacts</b>	Low	20.0	5.7
	Med	15.0	5.7
	High	15.0	6.4
<b>Relationship Impacts</b>	Low	22.0	5.0
	Med	17.0	5.2
	High	15.3	6.0
<b>Hindering Impacts</b>	Low	6.3	.58
	Med	8.0	3.0
	High	8.0	2.3
<b>Negative Stress</b>	Low	7.7	3.6
	Med	11.3	7.3
	High	15.3	10.4
<b>Challenge</b>	Low	27.0	6.0
	Med	15.1	9.0
	High	10.6	8.4

a, b= extreme high, extreme low sig.  
differences