

NEARI NEWS:

TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

An Essential Tool for Professionals Working with those who Sexually Abuse or... A Great New Way to Stay Current with Cutting Edge Sexual Abuse Research.



Volume 5, Issue 8

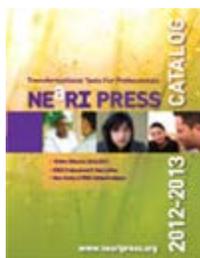
August 2012

Dear Colleague,

This month's issue explores the impact of the qualities of a therapist on the outcomes of treatment. Although this question has been studied in a variety of fields, this article is one of the first to identify the impact with traditional sex offender treatment. Read the NEARI Press summary to learn which four qualities emerge as most significant to effective treatment.

As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at info@nearipress.org or call us at 413-540-0712 x14.

Sincerely,
Joan Tabachnick and Steven Bengis



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FEATURED NEARI RESOURCES

Impact of Therapist Qualities on Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy

by Steven Bengis, David S. Prescott, and Joan Tabachnick

Question

Do the qualities a therapist brings to a treatment group impact the outcome of cognitive-behavioral therapy?

The Research

In Marshall's 2005 article, he describes a process whereby he aggregated a listing of 28 therapist qualities and then trained raters to identify these qualities in observed therapist-to-client interactions. These raters then observed the presence/absence of those attributes in taped sessions supplied by the HM Prison Service in England of cognitive-behavioral therapy approaches with adult sex offenders.

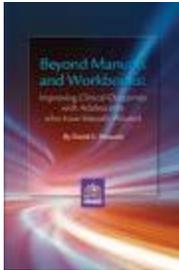
The researchers concluded that there was a statistically significant difference in positive outcomes where therapists exhibited certain qualities and these therapist features exerted a positive influence over-and-above whatever influence the procedures specified in the treatment manual. Among the influential therapist behaviors identified in this study, the most important appear to be:

- Warmth,
- Empathy,
- Rewardingness (verbal encouragement to clients for small steps toward whatever goal was being sought) and
- Directiveness (the importance of being firm and challenging to encourage a client's responsibility for their behavior)

Researchers noted that these four characteristics accounted for between 32% and 61% of the specific indices of change in treatment outcomes. They also noted that other characteristics identified in the general literature such as **supportiveness, genuineness, respectfulness, and confidence**, go hand-in-hand with these four features.

Implications for Professionals

In some circles, these four characteristics (warmth, empathy, rewardingness, and directiveness) have become known by the acronym WERD. This can be a helpful way to remember them. Some professionals have noted that these characteristics share some similarities with the six "core conditions" originally described by Carl Rogers (e.g., empathy and genuineness). Following this original work, one can see how these characteristics could produce direct benefits such as a stronger therapeutic alliance as well as



[Beyond Manuals and Workbooks: Improving Clinical Outcomes with Adolescents who have Sexually Abused](#)

by David S. Prescott

This booklet focuses on the essential elements that every clinician can integrate into their current treatment to make it more effective.

While many treatment programs organize themselves around specific curricula, this booklet makes recommendations for specific skills for improving outcomes and therapeutic alliances, early identification of at-risk cases, motivational goal setting, and considerations for successfully moving clients into a healthier environment. Based upon the current research, this booklet outlines the core values and concrete steps towards developing a truly evidence-based practice

ISBN: 978-1-929657-61-2

Catalog Number: 9706

Cost: \$3.75 + S&H

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FIVE-DAY TRAINING

Best Practices for Addressing Sexual Harm by Youth

by Joann Schladale

The NEARI Press Training Center brings back a Five-Day training by Joann Schladale to be held on October 7-12 in Albany, NY.

indirect benefits such as reductions in adverse termination from treatment. The client may find it easier to stay in treatment and benefit from it when he or she sees a therapist as empathic. Ultimately, evidence-based treatment curricula can only be as effective as the therapeutic alliance in which they occur.

If therapist qualities influence outcomes with adult offenders in highly structured manualized programs within a prison environment, we would hypothesize that these qualities have an even greater impact on treatment outcomes with children and adolescents. If we are seeking self-regulation, individual responsibility, accountability and altered behaviors, then **who we are** (bringing our qualities as a therapist) is as important as **what we do** (the techniques we employ). If we are striving for effective outcomes, the therapist qualities that the general literature indicates support successful treatment outcomes are critical to our work with children and adolescents who have sexually abused.

Implications for the Field

As the field strives to coalesce around evidence-based best practices and consistency of procedures and techniques, we must not lose sight of the human factors that influence change. It is imperative that while we train clinicians to identify appropriate risk factors, provide appropriate treatment interventions, address diagnostically different clients and build safety plans and community-based safety nets, a therapy approach that also provides support, encouragement, humor, rewards, and directiveness must have an equal place at the training "table". What might be difficult for others outside of our field is the importance of these qualities with clients who have caused harm in others. Therefore, discussing these qualities within the context of taking responsibility for behaviors to create better outcomes is critical to greater acceptance of these principles.

Citation

- Marshall, W. L. (2005). Therapist style in sexual offender treatment: Influence on indices of change. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research & Treatment*, 17(2), 109-116.

Abstract

This paper describes the results of our review of the broad process literature as well as summarizing two studies examining the influence of the therapist in generating changes in treatment targets among sexual offenders. We conclude that displays of empathy and warmth by the therapist as well as the provision of rewards for progress and some degree of directiveness, maximize the benefits derived from the procedures employed in treating sexual offenders.

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Please email us at info@nearipress.org or call us at 413.540.0712, x14 to let us know if you have a question or a topic you would like us to cover.

Best Practices for Addressing Sexual Harm by Youth will provide participants with an overview of best practices with in-depth training covering the key research, skills to accurately assess and manage risk, consideration of a developmental approach for intervention and treatment across a full continuum of care that involves the youth, his or her family, and any available social supports.

Cost is \$1,100 due by October 1.

To register for this important program, contact Diane Langelier, NEARI Training Coordinator, at 413.540.0712 x14 or email Diane at info@nearipress.org.

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