

abstract

The effective therapist communication for building therapeutic relationship in early psychotherapy processes: From the client's perspective

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The qualities of therapeutic relationship in early psychotherapy processes are related to the therapeutic effects and prevent from client's dropout. Especially, the therapeutic relationship from client's perspective is important. However, few studies have specifically found therapist's communication which is important to clients. This study was aimed to clarify the effective therapist communication for building therapeutic relationship from client's perspective

First study was aimed to clarify the harmful therapist's communication from the client's psychological process of the decision of dropout their therapy. Six participants who had dropped out of therapy interviewed. The data was analyzed by ground theory approach. Four categories of client's psychological process from before receiving the psychotherapy to dropout were obtained. The lacks of therapist's emotional responsiveness was related to client's dropout.

Second study was aimed to clarify the effective therapist's communication from the client's psychological process of the decision of keep receiving their therapy. Eleven participants who had terminated psychotherapy interviewed. The data was analyzed by ground theory approach. Five categories of client's psychological process from before receiving the psychotherapy to the decision of keep receiving their psychotherapy were obtained. Therapist's actively affirmation was related to client's decision of keep receiving their psychotherapy

As those results of studies were compared, the hypothesis that therapist's affirmation was effective for building therapeutic relationship in early psychotherapy processes was obtained. Third study was aimed to examine how therapist's affirmation responses influence clients' views of therapeutic relationship in the first session by using the short video of stimulated psychotherapy. Participants were sixteen individuals with a major depressive disorder and sixteen controls without any mental disorders. Participants evaluated therapists who mainly used affirmation or reflection after watching each session. The result indicated that when therapists used affirmation, participants were evaluated as significantly more attractive and trustworthy than when they only used reflection responses. However, there was no difference of expertness between affirmation and reflection. As results of qualitative analysis, the depression group tended to highly evaluated the affirmation that therapist affirmed client's past efforts rather than their characteristics.

In conclusion, therapist's affirmation was effective in early psychotherapy processes, thus in building the basic relationship. Therapist's affirmation was highly evaluated their humanity and accelerated clients' positive emotion. Future studies need to control the variance of characteristics and nonverbal communications.