

and transformations which are occurring within social sciences, society and applied disciplines such as counselling and therapy. It should prove of special value to researchers and supervisors of research who are working to revise, deconstruct, and reconstruct research methods and purposes to meet the needs and relevance claims of the postmodern era.

References

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Talley, Joseph. (1992). *The Predictors of Successful Very Brief Psychotherapy: A Study of Differences by Gender, Age, and Treatment Variables*. Charles Thomas Publishers.

Reviewed by: Ronald Warner.

A classic is a classic even if it takes a year or two to discover it. Talley's study is a must for counsellors and may be a classic. The interest in briefer and more cost-effective models of psychotherapy is increasingly attractive for many agencies and clinics—including university counselling centres—facing the challenge of providing quality service in an era of increasing demands and diminishing resources. Joseph Talley's book is an important contribution to the brief therapy outcome literature because it is the most scientifically rigorous study, that this writer has examined, of the effectiveness of treatment at the lower end (number of sessions) of the brief therapy continuum range.

Talley's contribution to the psychotherapeutic outcome literature is that he provides rigorous empirical evidence (beyond client satisfaction) of the effectiveness of treatment lasting from one to seven sessions. The research design included control groups, and psychometric indicators of therapeutic change, as well as a sophisticated measure of client satisfaction. This study, undertaken at Duke University Counselling and Psychological Services Centre, involved 95 clients (who received a mean of 2.4 sessions) and 12 therapists with a predominantly psychodynamic treatment style. The research design employed a random control group as well as two comparison groups, and utilized four psychometric instruments; the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale, the Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale, the Visual Analogue Depression and Anxiety Scales, and the Beck Depression Inventory. Also incorporated into this design was a 16-item Client Satisfaction Index.

The pre-treatment administration of these depression and anxiety symptom oriented scales indicated significantly higher scores for the clinical group than for the control and comparison groups. And at post-treatment there was no significant difference between groups on any of these meas-

ures. Similarly the pre-post treatment scores for the clinical group indicated significant reductions in depression and anxiety symptoms. Also as measured by these scales, no effects of very brief therapy were found for client age and gender, therapist gender and experience (including therapist gender \times experience interaction). Nor did the findings show a positive linear relationship between number of sessions attended and symptom reduction.

Two chapters are devoted to providing very detailed and thorough discussion of the results and evaluation of these psychometric instruments including literature reviews, gender and sample group effects, screening and pre/post-treatment measures. Anyone considering using these instruments would be well advised to examine these chapters carefully for the wealth of information provided.

The second outcome measure employed in assessing the effectiveness of the very brief therapy was the Client Satisfaction Index. The 16 items of this index (i.e., components of counselling such as increased understanding, feeling comfortable with the counsellor, counsellor appearing authentic/real, etc.) were highly correlated with overall satisfaction for all gender/age groups with the exception of one (i.e., "The counsellor encouraged me to discuss my feelings that I might have about him/her during the sessions" p. 130).

Talley reports that the most unexpected finding was that the single item that best predicted satisfaction with treatment was, "the counsellor encouraged me to believe that I could improve my situation," and this item accounted for 68% of the variance! As Talley points out, this finding was unexpected because it is "not a salient part of insight oriented psychodynamic theories of brief psychotherapy" (p. 65). This item is much more a part of cognitive-behavioural models.

The major criticism of Talley, in this reviewer's opinion, is that the author did not first subject this study to journal peer review before book publication. Nevertheless, this well-written rigorous study makes an important contribution to the knowledge base of psychotherapy outcomes; "—even a limited amount of psychotherapy can be helpful to a good many people" (p. vii, from the Foreword of the book by the distinguished professor of psychology, Hans Strupp). This reviewer highly recommends Talley's book to practitioners and researchers who have an interest in brief or very brief therapy.
