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## CLIENT TRAINING PRIOR TO COUNSELLING

Although considerable attention has been directed toward the Counsellor with regard to increasing behaviors which have positive effects on the outcome of a therapeutic relationship, little investigation has been undertaken in applying these principles to the *client* before the initiation of counselling. Just as it is important for the beginning counsellor to adopt certain roles and attitudes toward the therapy process, it would seem vital for the client to develop certain attitudes and learn specific behaviors if he is to effectively engage in the process. Indeed, many writers see the therapist's ability to evoke expression of feeling in the client as a vital aspect of the therapy process (Brammer and Shostrom, 1963; Berenson and Carkhuff, 1967; Carkhuff and Berenson, 1967; Truax, 1966). Thus, if clients can learn to accurately express their feelings prior to counselling, the process of counselling may be more effective.

Truax et. al. (1965, 1966) found that clients who engaged in vicarious therapy pretraining, listening to an audio recording of a client illustrating how to explore feelings, showed moderately greater gains from counselling than clients who were not exposed to VTP.

Using a similar approach, Myrick (1969) exposed clients to audio and video models of a client emitting self-reference statements during a counselling interview. Myrick found that the clients exposed to taped models promoted significantly more self-reference statements than clients who were not exposed to the taped models in the first interview. He also found that the counsellor variable exerted a significant influence on the extent of self-reference.

Recent work on the desirability of training clients prior to counselling is also reflected in the work of Kagan and Schauble (1969) who utilized Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR) to facilitate the emergence of client effect in counselling. In addition, Pierce and Drasgow (1969) have reported significant improvement in interpersonal functioning among psychiatric patients who were trained in interpersonally facilitative behavior.

The present study examined the efficacy of training clients in the expression of feeling prior to counselling compared to clients who engaged in a regular initial interview, and clients who received no pretraining.

## METHOD

### *Subjects*

Ten (10) female and eight (8) male undergraduate college students recruited from a course in Education served as subjects in this study. Counsellors (two (2) male and one (1) female) employed in the present study were employed in the University Counselling Centre and ranged in experience from 3 to 8 years.

### *Procedure*

Each counsellor saw subjects under each of the three (3) experimental conditions employed: (1) client pretraining, (2) initial counselling interview, and (3) control condition.

Subjects were randomly assigned to treatments by sex. Because of the unequal number of males and females and a few scheduling problems, counsellors were not able to see an equal number of males and females under each condition. One counsellor saw seven (7) subjects, the second counsellor saw six (6) subjects, and the third saw five (5) subjects. All counsellors saw subjects under each of the three (3) experimental conditions.

In each of the experimental conditions, the subjects received the following instructions:

"During your sessions with the counsellor we would like you to behave as though you were a student who has come to the Counselling Centre for help in resolving something of concern to you. Although you may talk about anything you wish, you will probably find it helpful to talk about something that is meaningful to you. That is, the situation may appear more real if you talk about something of concern which you might have experienced in the past, are experiencing now, or anticipate in the future."

Each of the three (3) experimental conditions included a 45 minute session; the main difference between the conditions was the time spent in actual counselling experiences.

### *Pretraining Condition*

Six (6) Ss interacted with a counsellor for an initial 5 minute counselling session which was videotaped. Following the first 5 minute interaction, Ss were exposed to the client pretraining procedure which is similar to the microcounselling paradigm described by Ivey, et al. (1968). In this condition the S was first presented with a handbook describing how clients can evidence therapeutic movement through the experience of feeling. Following this initial introduction, the S viewed a videotaped model of a client demonstrating high and low levels of accurate expression of feelings. The S then discussed the material presented in the handbook and modeling tape with a supervisor. The supervisor and the S then reviewed the S's first 5 minute videotaped counselling session and discussed the S's behavior in counselling with regard to his ability to accurately express his feelings. In this interaction, the supervisor made every attempt to actively reinforce any behaviors on the part of the S which approximated the accurate expression of feeling. After the trained experience, the S was asked to interact with the same counsellor for a second 5 minute counselling session. The S was

urged to express his feelings as accurately as possible during this session. This second 5 minute interaction was videotaped.

### *Initial Counselling Sessions*

Seven (7) Ss interacted with a counsellor according to the above mentioned instructions for a 45 minute initial counselling session. This experimental condition was selected since it allows a comparison between clients who receive a pretraining experience prior to counselling and those who engage in an initial counselling session without pretraining. This condition was included in as much as a client may implicitly learn to express feelings merely as a function of experiencing the first counselling session without any pretraining. The second five minutes and the next to the last five minutes segments of the initial counselling session were selected as the segments to be videotaped since equipment was not available to videotape the entire session for all subjects. These segments were arbitrarily chosen since the investigator felt that the timing of the segments would permit clients to express greater feelings than the first or last five minute segments of the counselling session, and thus be the best comparative segments in contrast to the five minute sessions of the pretraining and control groups.

### *Control Condition*

Seven (7) Ss interacted with a counsellor according to the above mentioned instructions for a five minute counselling session, which was videotaped. Following this session, the S was instructed to read, relax, or study for 35 minutes. The S then interacted with the same counsellor for another five minute segment with the same instructions. This design was employed to provide a comparison between subjects who experienced a pretraining session and a control group who did not experience a pretraining session, and between subjects who experienced initial counselling sessions and subjects who experienced no pretraining.

### *Instrumentation and Raters*

Three (3) judges (graduate students in counselling who were not otherwise associated with the study) were trained using a modification of a scale developed by Carkhuff (1967). This scale delineates and explains by example five levels of expression of feelings. The scale was adapted for use in rating clients rather than counsellors for this study. The scale represents a 5-point, constant response, Likert type scale with verbal anchoring statements. Interrater reliability for the three (3) judges was tested on the ratings of both pre-and-post-interview ratings and yielded values of .52 and .68, respectively. These five minute counselling segments were presented in random order for the purpose of rating; judges did not know which of these segments were pre- or post-

Analysis of Covariance was used to test the hypothesis of this study. The criterion measure was the post-treatment rating of accurate expression of feeling. Preliminary analysis of pre-treatment differences between experimental condition revealed that although Ss had been randomly assigned to conditions, differences between pre-treatment means approached significance. Therefore, pre-treatment ratings of the expression of feelings were used as the covariate in data analysis. Unadjusted pre- and post-treatment mean ratings and adjusted post-treatment ratings have been presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
Unadjusted and Adjusted Pre- and Post-treatment Means of the Pretraining, Initial Interview, and Control Groups

<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	Unadjusted Pre	Unadjusted Post	Adjusted Post
Pretraining	6	3.11	4.17	4.26
Initial Interviews	5	3.60	3.87	3.54
Control	7	3.05	3.05	3.20

Results of the analysis of covariance using a one-tailed test appear in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
Analysis of Covariance of Post-treatment Differences between Pretraining, Initial Interviews and Control Groups with Pre-treatment Ratings Controlled

<i>Source</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Total Residuals	16		
Within Residuals	14	.23	
Difference	2	1.80	7.83**

\*\*  $p = < .001$  (one-tailed test)

Inspection of Table 2 reveals that significant differences were obtained between Pretraining, Initial Interview and Control groups on post-treatment ratings of accurate expression of feeling ( $p = .001$ ).

Duncan's New Multiple Range Test for Unequal cell frequencies using a corrected error mean square term (Kramer, 1956; Winer, 1962) was applied to all possible pairs of means scores of Pretraining, Initial Interview and Control groups. The results of this analysis have been summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3  
Duncan's New Multiple Range Test on All Pairs of Ordered Means

	<i>Groups</i>		
	<i>Pretraining</i>	<i>Initial Interview</i>	<i>Control</i>
Ordered Means	3.20	3.54	4.26
Corrected MS error	3.97		
P =		2	3
student Range at:	.05	1.517	1.589
	.001	2.928	3.308
R'p at:	.05	.602	.631
	.001	1.162	1.206
	<i>Corrected Mean Difference</i>		
Pretraining vs Control (3)			2.69**
Pretraining vs Initial Interview (2)			1.68**
Interview vs Control (2)			.82*

\*  $p = < .05$  (one-tailed test)

\*\*  $p = < .001$  (one-tailed test)

Significant differences resulted between all possible pairs of treatments in this study. The Pretraining group was significantly more effective than either the Initial Interview or Control group, and the Initial Interview condition proved more effective in eliciting expression of feeling on the part of the client than was the case with the Control condition.

Differential performance of male and female Ss was tested by means of the Mann-Whitney U Test. Pre- to Post-treatment change scores were used and yielded a  $U = 44$ , which was not significant. Male and female Ss did not respond differentially in this study.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that a pretraining experience can effectively be extended to training clients in specific, therapeutically related behaviors that facilitate the counselling process. Basically, Ss who were instructed in a pretraining model to express feelings did so more accurately than either the group that saw a counsellor in an initial interview or the control group. The pretraining design illustrates a technique which might be employed to teach clients to discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate (or at least defined) behaviors in the counselling interview. Kagan and Schauble (1969) have emphasized the role of IPR in helping clients differentiate between various types of emotional stimuli. The pretraining technique relies heavily upon the identification and reinforcement of responses in the client's behavioral repertoire which are defined as appropriate to the counselling interview. In those cases where a behavioral deficit exists, the paradigm provides the vehicle through which discrimination training can take place.

The ramifications of this study are many. If we can teach therapeutically related skills to clients prior to the counselling process, we may be able to enhance communication between counsellor and client. If increased communication between counsellor and client is an important aspect of counselling, such a goal would perhaps be reached more efficiently through client pretraining.

One of the tasks in implementing a client pretraining program based upon microcounselling techniques lies in identifying what behavioral skills are appropriate for different types of therapy. For example, a client who is engaged in counselling with a behaviorally oriented counsellor might be expected to exhibit an entirely different set of behaviors than he would if he were in therapy with an analytically oriented counsellor. What would seem necessary would be the development of taxonomies of client behaviors that would be considered necessary and sufficient for each therapy. From these taxonomies, those client behaviors that were common to all therapies would be used as a nucleus for pretraining all clients. Individual programs could then be developed for the remaining therapeutically specific behaviors. The end result might be generalized client behaviors which would cut across philosophical and theoretical lines, as well as a set of client behaviors which would be theoretically specific.

Once the above mentioned taxonomies have been identified, both the generalized and theoretically specific client behaviors might be programmed via microcounselling techniques and taught to clients routinely before the counselling process begins. Indeed, such instruction may prove to be a part

of the counselling process, as Kagan and Schauble (1969) have pointed out with respect to IPR.

The results of this study also lend support to the "vicarious therapy pre-training" work of Truax (1965) and Truax et al (1966), the self-reference modeling work reported by Myrick (1969) and the application of IPR techniques to client trained described by Kagan and Schauble (1969). The microcounselling technique employed in this study differs from the work of Truax and Myrick in that the microcounselling paradigm relies upon the reinforcing properties of the model *as well as* the reinforcement of specific behaviors by a "supervisor" or "teacher." Although this procedure is more costly of time than a straight forward modeling procedure, there is some evidence to suggest that the most effective training in behavioral skills results from maximum feedback conditions similar to the procedure employed in this study (MacDonald, Allen and Orme, 1966). The question of whether the microcounselling paradigm adapted for client pre-training is superior to other techniques described above is yet open to test.

Some limitations to this study should be considered. Since an analogue situation in which subjects were asked to simulate client behavior was used, this study should be replicated on actual clients to establish the validity of the approach. Higgins and Ivey (1970) have successfully employed the microcounselling paradigm in a quasi-therapeutic setting and report that the technique is highly valuable in training dyadic interaction participants the skill of direct mutual communication.

Further, some attempt must be made to determine if the established effects of this procedure generalize to extra-counselling situations. Further tests of the microcounselling paradigm in client pre-training may well establish a new alternative approach to counselling. For many clients, training in behavioral skills demanded by the environment may be the necessary and sufficient condition for increased adjustment. For other clients, pre-training may well serve as a valuable adjunct to the counselling process. Further investigation of other behavioral skills and the implementation of training programs based on these skills in the counselling situation would appear to offer fruitful grounds for future exploration.

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## L'ENTRAÎNEMENT DU CLIENT A L'EXPRESSION DES SENTIMENTS ANTERIEUREMENT AU COUNSELLING<sup>1</sup>

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On a utilisé une technique de préparation afin d'entraîner les clients à exprimer leurs sentiments avec précision avant que ne commence le counselling. Dix-huit sujets furent assignés au hasard à l'un ou l'autre des trois groupes suivants:

- 1) Entraînement à l'expression des sentiments,
- 2) Entrevue initiale de counselling,
- 3) Groupe contrôle.

Deux échantillons de cinq minutes des réactions des sujets avec chaque conseiller furent enregistrés au vidéotape pour fins de comparaisons. Les évaluations des juges portant sur l'expression exacte des sentiments ont révélé des différences significatives entre tous les groupes ( $p < .001$ ).

Les sujets qui avaient reçus un entraînement préalable étaient capables de s'exprimer d'une façon plus précise que ceux qui avaient reçus une entrevue initiale de counselling ou qui appartenaient au groupe contrôle. On discuta de ces résultats pour la recherche et la pratique du counselling.

<sup>1</sup> M. A. Julius Guttman est maintenant affecté au College of Education, McGill University.

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