

Empirical studies of trainee skills and knowledge attainment, therapeutic alliance and psychotherapy outcome

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Aim: This paper presents findings from empirical studies of development of knowledge and skills attainment and working alliance in trainee psychotherapists, and the relationship between those variables and psychotherapy outcome. **Methods:** Two sets of data are used for the analyses, both contain data collected at several different time points from trainee psychotherapists, their supervisors, and the trainees' clients. Data were collected using the Working Alliance Inventory, the Psychotherapists Common Core Questionnaire, and the Evaluation of Knowledge Attainment and Relations in Group Supervision Scale. Clients completed standard self rating scales before and after treatment (the Outcome Questionnaire -45, Symptom Checklist, and Inventory of Interpersonal Problems). **Results:** Mixed models analysis will be used to examine the relation between therapist factors and treatment outcome. **Discussion:** Findings and implications are discussed.

"Becoming who you are": The experience of mindfulness in therapists and trainees in UK and Greece and its relevance for counselling training

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Mindfulness-based interventions have attracted a lot of scientific interest. Yet, little is known about how mindfulness is actually experienced by therapists and its meaning for those who practice it (Bruce et al 2010). In this paper findings from a doctoral research project involving two interlinked studies are briefly presented. The first is an IPA study on the experience of 5 seasoned therapists in the UK who have incorporated mindfulness practice in their personal and/or professional life. The second study involves a mindful inquiry into two focus groups of counselling trainees in Greece who have attended a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). The benefits of mindfulness practice as they emerged from the results of both studies are presented. Particular attention is given to the experience of both therapists and trainees that mindfulness can facilitate a greater integration of the personal and professional selves, which is theorized to be vital for sound clinical practice (Mace 2008); this echoes J.Kabat-Zinn's (2011) invitation "to have there be no separation between one's practice and one's life" (p.295). With this in mind, suggestions are made regarding how mindfulness could be incorporated in counselling training in order to facilitate a more holistic approach to cultivating a professional identity and potential benefits as well as difficulties and risk factors are discussed.

A secure base: Implications of psychotherapist's attachment experiences

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Nowadays special attention has been devoted to the application of attachment theory to the therapeutic relationship and the role the therapist plays in the psychotherapeutic process. Nevertheless little effort has been put in operationalizing the role of the therapist as a secure base figure. Bowlby (1977, 1988) has stressed the implication of the psychotherapist's own history of receiving care in attachment relationships and his emotional availability to provide secure base conditions for the client to work on and revise the internal working models. The main goal of this study is to explore the associations between psychotherapists' past attachment experiences and their representations as secure base figures for their clients. In addition the mediating role of current attachment experiences in this association will be tested. Self-reports were administered to a sample of 384 psychotherapists from different theoretical backgrounds and levels of experience. Measures included the Father and Mother Attachment Questionnaire (Matos & Costa, 2001), the Romantic Attachment Questionnaire (Matos & Costa, 2001) and the Secure Base Questionnaire (Carvalho, Ávila, Matos, 2009). Structural Equations Modelling supports the hypothesis for mediation, from parental attachment dimensions, namely the inhibition of exploration and individuality to the secure base dimensions through ambivalence and dependence in romantic relationships. Results stress the importance of considering the attachment history and current attachment experiences in adulthood as an enthusiastic path to understand psychotherapists' ability to act as responsive and available figures to their clients.