The Gestalt Therapy Fidelity Scale
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Overview
• A 20 point scale of observable therapist behaviors
• A binary adherence scale, or check list: are the behaviors present or absent?
• To be used on a 25 minute (or more) video of live clinical work, to establish treatment fidelity
• A holistic scale describing behaviors, not a series of techniques
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Methodology
• Literature Review
  • Used to generate items for consideration in the Delphi Study
  • 8 key concepts identified and described, together with 37 therapist behaviors that operationalised those concepts
  • Study 1: Delphi Study (September 2015 - January 2016)
  • Study 2: Pilot Study (July 2016)
  • Study 3: Validation Study (January - September 2017)

Study 1: Delphi Study

Aims:
• Identifies observable therapist behaviors that:
  • Are fundamental to Gestalt clinical practice
  • Make Gestalt Gestalt
  • Are fundamental to Gestalt clinical practice

Key Gestalt concepts

Study 2: Pilot Study

Aims: to assess the face validity and clarity of items, and to assess the amount of training needed to use the GTFS

Method:
• Six experienced Gestalt therapists and trainers in Melbourne watched and rated videos of clinical work by:
  • Bob Ross
  • Gordon Wheeler
  • Michael Clemmens
  • Jeff Young (Gestalt Therapy)
• Participants used draft GTFS:
  • 24 therapist behaviours (organised around 7 concepts)
  • For each behaviour, options of “Yes” (behaviour observed), “No” (behaviour not observed) or “Not Applicable”

Results:
• The Gestalt therapists rated much higher than the non-Gestalt therapist
• Showed that the GTFS had the potential to distinguish between clinical work by Gestalt trained therapists and work by therapists trained in other modalities

Mean GTFS ratings (on N):

Study 3: Validation Study

Aims: to assess the criterion validity and reliability of the GTFS as a measure to determine whether or not a therapist is delivering GT

Method:
• Conducted in small groups (with no discussion)
• Participants complete the rater training
  • Watch and rate the two practice videos (Clemmens and Young)
• Watch and rate four 25 minute videos of trainee therapists:
  • Two trained in Gestalt, two trained in other modalities
  • Videos created using real therapists and “actors”
  • Hypothesis: therapists training in Gestalt will rate higher on the GTFS than therapists training in other modalities

Results:
• RM ANOVA revealed a significant difference in ratings across sessions, F(2.71, 474.16) = 1177.578, p < .001, ηp²=.87.
• Session type accounted for 87% of the variance in GTFS ratings.
• GT sessions were rated significantly higher than the non-GT sessions, with large effect sizes (between 81% and 96%) accounted for in contrasts between those sessions

Conclusions:
• The GTFS is an important tool for GT to step up engagement with EBP in psychotherapy
• Strong evidence for face validity, content validity, criterion validity and reliability of the GTFS
• Can also be used as a tool for supervision and clinical practice

The GTFS

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<th>Interpretation</th>
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Other outcomes:
• Identifying what training was needed for raters to use the GTFS
• Identifying a preliminary competence test for raters: could they (like the participants in the pilot study) distinguish between a Gestalt therapist (Clemmens) and a non-Gestalt therapist (Young)?
• Refinement of the GTFS:
  • Elimination of four repetitive or redundant items
  • Minor rewording for clarity of some of the remaining 20 items
  • Removal of the “Not Applicable”, and introduction of a new item that allowed raters to indicate the presence of significant unusual factors that “justified the therapist not engaging in the behaviors described in this scale”

Mean GTFS ratings (on N):

Field sensitive practice

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The therapist demonstrates a willingness to be uncertain and to work with creative indifference

Working in the here and now

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The therapist explores the client’s awareness of their presenting issue rather than trying to change it

Working with embodied awareness

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The therapist encourages the client to widen their choices rather than establishing a program for change

Working with emerging authenticity

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The therapist invites the client to identify sensations, feelings, emotions, thoughts or images that emerge as a consequence of attending to somatic experiences

Working with emerging authenticity

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The therapist invites the client to engage with their body through experiment

Experimental attitude

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The therapist uses material that emerges in the therapeutic encounter as the basis for introducing experiments to develop the client’s awareness

The therapist explores the ground (or context) from which the client’s presenting figure emerges

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The therapist supports the client to identify how their perception of their environment and prior relationships and needs organises current experience

Presence of unusual factors

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