

Psychology and Addiction in Substance Misuse

The role of psychological therapies in working
with drug and alcohol misusing clients

By Anne Maclachlan MA (Hons) Psych,
D Clin Psych

Different psychological interventions

- Relapse prevention
- Motivational interviewing
- Working with
 - Bereavement
 - PTSD / Post Traumatic Stress
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Childhood neglect and/or sexual and physical abuse

Gary Sutton (RELEASE) quoted in 'Rooms for Improvement'

Guardian 2006

“...the people I have worked with who are opiate-dependent are depressives or are suffering from some sort of post-traumatic stress”

Other psychological interventions

- Community reinforcement (CBT approach developed for alcohol dependence)
- Contingency management (voucher based therapy)
- Counselling/supportive-expressive psychotherapy
- Family therapy
- Social behaviour network therapy
- 12 step approaches

Motivational Interviewing

- Level of client resistance during counselling predicted absence of change in drinking (Miller, Benefield and Tonigan 1993)
- Verbal commitment to drug use during MI predicted continued drug use

Positive Change as natural process

- Positive change often occurs without formal treatment.
- The stages and processes by which people change seem to be the same with or without treatment
- Therefore treatment is facilitating a natural process

Therapist factors related to good outcomes

- Be empathic and authoritative
- Be willing to participate in supervision
- Take a non-blaming stance
- Use motivational dialogue
- Be a good listener
- Be in good psychological health
- Develop a helping alliance

» Shamil Wanagaratne NTA 2005

Clinical Supervision

a professional relationship between the practitioner engaged in professional practice and a clinical, specialist or practice supervisor (NTA July 2004)

“ a formal process of professional support and learning which enables individual practitioners to develop knowledge and competence, assume responsibility for their own practice and enhance consumer protection and safety of care in complex clinical situations”(Dept of Health 1993)

Dilemmas/Questions

- How to contract a piece of psychological work when people are coming for methadone maintenance, harm reduction etc
- Questioning treatment modalities/ efficacy/ ethical soundness
- A place to process feelings of sadness, powerlessness and anger
- Trouble with other workers/management

Dilemmas (cont'd)

- Trouble with balancing casework and paperwork demands
- Multi roles, e.g. working with client but also needing to go to TAC meetings, write reports for child protection etc
- Trouble with casework demands versus pressure to take on more clients
- Working with people who are not choosing to change and are slowly killing themselves through their substance misuse

Supervision

- “a naturally good patient can make a poor student look competent and a difficult...case can make a good student seem to have major difficulties”
 - » Dewald in Watkins 1997
- “supervision as process of reciprocal influence or ‘co-consultation’”
 - » Rigazio-Digilio et al 1997

supervision

- The relation of gender to power and involvement in supervision (nelson and holloway 1990)
- Male and female supervisors made significantly more low-power encouraging messages to male trainees than female trainees

supervision

- ‘in essence clinical supervision is both a structure and a process through which the principles of reflective practice may be facilitated’ Cottrell 2000
- NTA 2004
 - “ it should be an ongoing commitment and should extend throughout an individual’s career....it is increasingly recognised as good practice”

Interpersonal Process Recall

- Term first coined by Norman Kagan
- Supervision strategy developed to empower counselors to understand and act upon perspectives they might not otherwise notice
- Awareness raising and practice expression of covert thoughts and feelings without negative consequences

Key points

- In IPR, the supervisor functions as a consultant, taking on the role of inquirer during the session
- Because the supervisee is considered to be the highest authority about the experiences in the counseling session, the inquirer does not attempt to teach the counselor or ask leading questions but rather adopts a learning-by-discovery philosophy and functions in an assertive and even confrontative but nonjudgemental capacity (Kagan 1980)