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The Experiences of Forensic Males in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (Forensic Version): A Qualitative Exploratory Study

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Background

- Originally developed in 1993 by Marsha Linehan, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) has been widely used with a number of different client groups including forensic male clients (McCann & Ball, 2000; McCann, Ball & Ivanoff, 2000).
- Much of the research to date on the efficacy and outcomes of DBT has been

Objectives

- To qualitatively explore the experiences of forensic male clients who have completed all four modules of a DBT programme (forensic version) including both individual and group treatment (at least 9-12 months).
- This study is an exploratory study aimed at developing understanding of the implementation of DBT by interviewing clients directly to source their views and experiences.
- quantitative in nature, however there is growing support for the need for qualitative research focussing on client experiences (Elliott, 1995; Hodgetts, Wright & Gough, 2007).
- Two known studies qualitatively explore the experiences of clients in DBT (Araminta, 2000; Hodgetts, Wright & Gough, 2007) and identify the importance of the therapeutic relationship, the individual therapy and the structure and guidelines of DBT.
- Studies focussing on the application of DBT with forensic populations is however limited with the quantitative research of McCann and colleagues being most prevalent (McCann & Ball, 2000; McCann, Ball & Ivanoff, 2000).
- Subsequently relatively little is known about the experiences of clients within DBT using a qualitative framework, least so the experience of forensic clients.

Methods

- Participants were recruited from within the FIPTS Community DBT programme (forensic version).
- Clients were male with a diagnosis of both BPD and ASPD. Clients were assessed as being a high risk of harm having a history of violent offending.
- 6 clients took part in the study which involved a semi-structured interview aimed at capturing their expectations and experiences of both group and individual DBT.

Results		
Motivation	Feeling Supported	
Motivation to engage in DBT is driven by a want for change, personal development, need to change behaviour and a dedication to prove self.	Clients described feeling supported by the DBT programme including by the group and the therapists. For some this was a unique experience with them typically having limited support outside of DBT.	

Professionalism

Clients spoke about the professionalism of the DBT programme including the therapists skills and methods, the dedicated location and the materials used. This then influenced clients trust of the therapists and treatment.

Group Processes

Shared Learning

There was a strong sense of shared learning between group members and therapists, drawing on opinions, knowledge, experience and advice. This contributed to enjoyment and feeling comfortable to disclose information and ask questions.

Achievement

Clients were proud to report that they had made changes to their lifestyle, behaviour and personal development. There was some disbelief that this was possible with many clients taking pride in themselves because of this change.

Belonging

The clients saw themselves as belonging to the DBT group, with like minded, similar people. This normalised their experiences and contributed to feeling part of something. A strong level of bonding and rapport was evident.

Reinforcement

Rather than represent anything new, the clients saw DBT as a reinforcement of other courses/skills that they have learnt and an accumulation of treatment

Reflection

Reflection is used as a process of learning and to develop within DBT. This assists clients in applying the knowledge and skills learnt to themselves.

Knowledge

This represents the cognitive outcome of DBT in that clients have developed insight about themselves and been able to learn about their behaviour and the changes that need to be made.

Skill Application

This represents the behavioural application of skills to everyday situations. Often this was reported as application of generic skills rather than DBT specific, however an increase in confidence was evident.

Conclusions

• The emerging themes have been classified into two main categories focussing

References

Treatment

Outcomes

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- on the process of group DBT and treatment outcomes.
- DBT was generally highly regarded and positively spoken about., with the outcomes of achievement, belonging and support being most prevalent and stemming from the group component.
- Interestingly focus was on the impact of DBT on interpersonal and internal processes, with less emphasis on the content of DBT. Linked with this, DBT was seen as a reinforcement of previous treatment.
- Clients focussed on a number of processes which supported their engagement and benefit of DBT, with links between the processes utilised within DBT by clients and the outcomes.
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