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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 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.

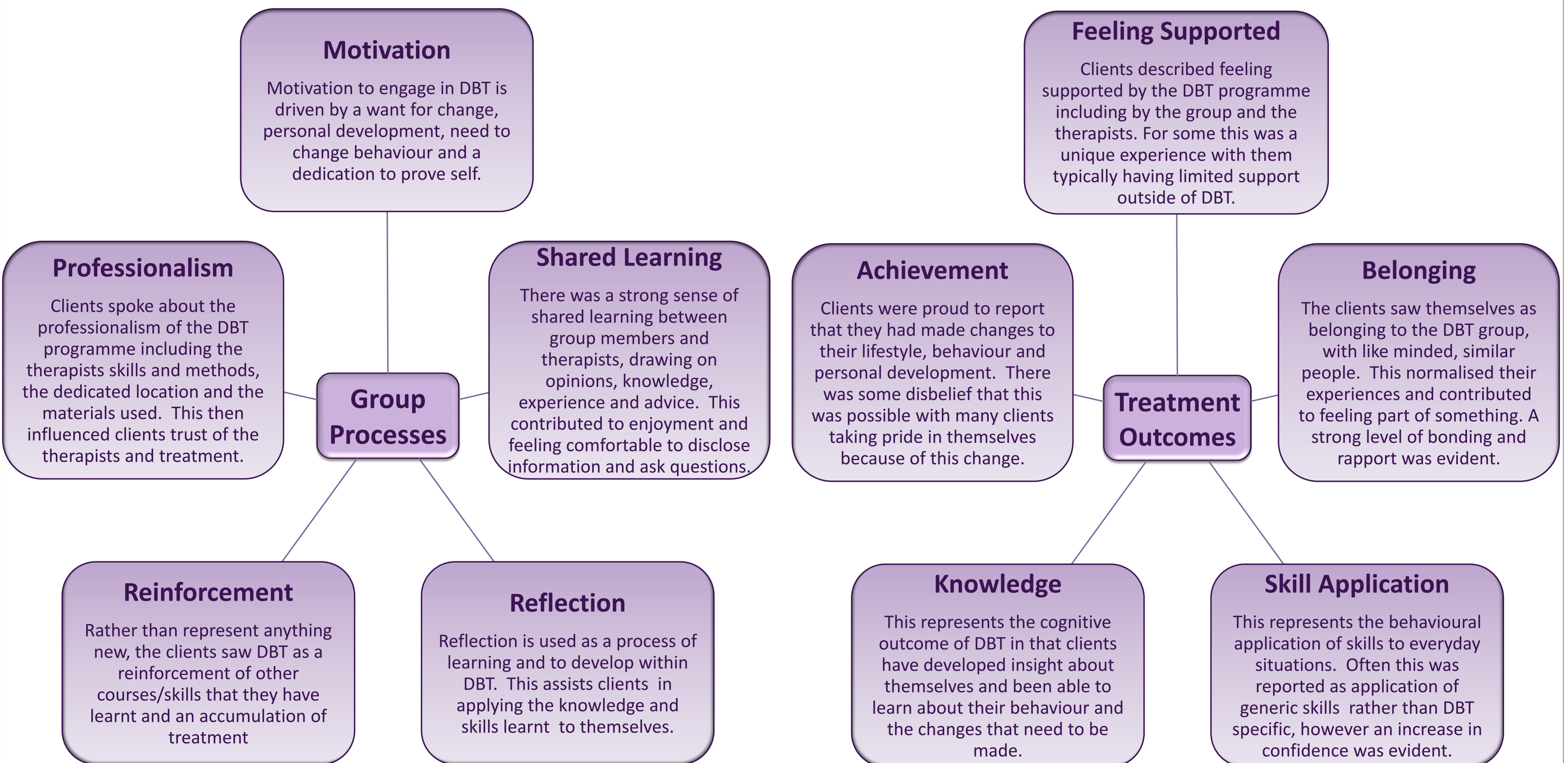
Objectives

- 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.

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



Conclusions

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