

Editorial

Introduction to the Special Issue «Innovative Counselling and Psychotherapy Research Methods»: Defining the Future of Counselling and Psychotherapy Research

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In the call for papers for this special issue, we sought submissions that would introduce innovative methods with the potential to shape counselling and psychotherapy research into the future. We believe we accomplished this goal and that this issue introduces a range of valuable examples of current innovations in counselling and psychotherapy research methods. Through the review process, we encouraged authors to offer practical guidelines on how to innovatively assess and analyze change and other relevant aspects of therapy. We also guided authors to not only provide the field with an update on cutting-edge methodology, but to also describe these methods in a practice-friendly way. As such, the Special Issue aims at becoming a building block for future practice-friendly research in counselling and psychotherapy.

Among the contributing authors to this Special Issue are early career researchers and clinicians from an international background: these individuals are defining the future of counselling and psychotherapy practice and research. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are included. From a qualitative research viewpoint, Levitt, Morill, and Collins (2020) introduce the concept of methodological integrity as applicable to qualitative research on counselling and psychotherapy. This concept is becoming established as a standard for qualitative research, particularly in the North American context, so this paper is an opportunity to introduce the concept to UK and international readers. The authors illustrate the usefulness of the concept by giving an example from their own research. Hissa and Timulak (2020) introduce the concept of

theoretically-informed qualitative psychotherapy research. They offer this approach in juxtaposition to atheoretically led qualitative inquires that attempt to bracket researchers pre-conceptions. Again, they illustrate their thinking with an example of research they themselves conducted.

From a quantitative research viewpoint, Falkenström, Solomonov and Rubel (2020) introduce time-lagged panel analysis as a potentially fruitful way for studying mechanisms of change in psychotherapy. Using this methodology in a study of the therapeutic alliance, they particularly recommend disentangling between-person from within-person effects. Batista, Silva, Magalhaes, Ferreira, Fernandez-Navarro and Goncalves (2020) discuss the innovative moments method. Based on an idiographic and transtheoretical conception, the authors propose to study in detail the process of emergence of innovative moments in-session. They demonstrate the coding phases of the instrument, procedures for training and assessing inter-rater agreement, and apply the method to a clinical case. Aafjes-van Doorn and Müller-Frommeyer (2020) explain the matching of language style in counselling and psychotherapy research by discussing a detailed method of analyzing 5-minute segments of reciprocal language style matching. In the example case they provide, the reciprocal language style matching is related to alliance ruptures.

Penix, Swift and Trusty (2020) focus on the assessment of client perspectives and propose a method which uses moment-by-moment client ratings of different variables (such as affect or the therapeutic alliance). Anderson, Finkelstein and Horvath (2020) present the facilitative interpersonal skills method to assess effects of responsiveness. The authors describe the paradigm, give examples of typical responses and show effects explaining outcome in psychotherapy. Howe, Bosley and Fisher (2020) introduce idiographic network analysis as a viable method to predict within-subject changes in key variables over the course of

psychotherapy and counselling. This approach is illustrated by a study showing potential changes in discrete mood states, and the emergence of patterns across individuals. Lane (2020) discusses state-related fluctuations of levels of emotional awareness in daily life and in psychotherapy using, in particular, ecological momentary assessment. Momentary transitions in emotional awareness may involve the forming of specific feelings based on bodily sensations, awareness of conflictual emotions, etc. Grandjean, Beuchat, Gyger, de Roten, Despland, Draganski and Kramer (2020) propose a methodological integration of neuroimaging assessment with process-based assessment of interpersonal processes in counselling and psychotherapy, using the core conflictual relationship theme method. The authors outline how clinically relevant individualized stimuli may be used in an fMRI environment in a controlled and valid fashion and provide two contrasting case examples.

We hope that the collection of highly accessible, and cutting-edge contributions described in this Special Issue will stimulate new approaches in the assessment of psychotherapy practice.

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