

INTRODUCTION

Narrative measures in psychotherapy research: Introducing the special section

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The aim of this special section is to present a review of recent advances in the assessment of changes in client narratives. An emerging trend in the psychotherapy research field suggests that narrative-based meaning reconstruction is an important foundation for the articulation of a new, more adaptive view of self (Angus & Kagan, 2013) in psychotherapy. Additionally, a range of research-informed treatment models, including psychodynamic (Luborsky, 1998), humanistic (Angus, Watson, Elliott, Schneider, & Timulak, 2015) and systemic therapy approaches (Dallos & Vetere, 2009), emphasize that client change in psychotherapy is facilitated through personal story disclosure, emotional engagement and reflection for new meaning construction and self-narrative reorganization. In fact, recent research from Angus et al. (in press) and Gonçalves et al. (this issue), using different methods and clinical samples, have independently established that successful psychotherapy involves client self-narrative transformation processes evidenced in late phase therapy sessions.

Accordingly, a central aim of this section is to present new developments in the measurement of client narrative reconstruction and transformation processes, in the context of different therapy approaches (e.g., emotion-focused, psychodynamic, narrative, motivational interviewing/cognitive behavioral psychotherapy) and client samples (individual adult, couples, adolescents/young adults), for enhanced understanding of the central role that client narrative expression plays in the facilitation of key change processes and effective treatment interventions.

More specifically, the manuscripts comprising this special section highlight a range of narrative-informed coding methods, including Narrative-emotion Process Markers (Angus et al., this issue), Innovative Moments (Gonçalves et al., this issue), and CCRT/RAP interviews (Wiseman & Tishby, this issue), that demonstrate how these measures can be reliably applied to therapy DVDs and transcripts, for the development of an enhanced understanding of how client narrative change contributes to improved treatment outcomes. Additionally, Habermas and Döll-Hentschker (in press), analyze five formal dimensions of client storytelling (e.g., chronological order of events, evaluations, interpretations), that are evidenced in dysfunctional narratives and are expected to change over the course of treatment. Finally, Gildersleeve, Singer, Skerrett, and Wein (this issue) describe the development and application of a narrative approach to the assessment of couples' "we-stories" in the context of a couples counseling treatment intervention.

It is important to highlight that the narrative measures/methodologies selected for inclusion in the Special Section not only evolved in the context of research-informed treatment approaches, but are also supported by research findings published in mainstream psychotherapy research and practice journals. Additionally, as suggested by the authors who contributed to this special section, it may be the case that our clients' internalized self-narratives, and the meanings they convey, have as much impact on guiding future actions and behavior, as dispositional traits. Accordingly, we aim to promote the

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development of narrative-informed research in psychotherapy, using robust measures, to further understand how client storytelling contributes to self-narrative change, and productive treatment outcomes, in a diverse range of treatment approaches and clinical samples.

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