

Symposium title: Decoding the mysticism about psychotherapy practice

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Abstract

Psychotherapy is surrounded by a lot of mysticism. It is supposed to be an extremely intricate and complex process practiced by very brainy, intelligent professionals. There have been various web forums and groups despising anyone practicing psychotherapy without a particular degree. A question then arises – is psychotherapy practice all about a degree or a skill? The well accepted definition of psychotherapy emphasizes that it is to be done by a professional skilled in psychological means, NOT by a psychological degree. The focus of the symposium is, thus, to shed light on the way psychotherapy is perceived and practiced. The presentations cover different aspects - it speaks about the aura of mysticism, the probable reasons for it, and its impact on the field based on formal and informal data collected over the years; the understanding about psychotherapy among clinical and non-clinical population through an open ended survey questionnaire; the practice of psychotherapy in private setting based on subjective experience and objective data from practice; and, not to leave out the focus on practitioners, the issue of compassion fatigue among psychotherapists based on findings from semi structured interviews done with active clinicians in the field. The idea of the presentations is not to overdo the numbers and figures about psychotherapy but to present it as a skilled profession like any other profession requiring skills.

Speakers

- 1. Psychotherapy: Mysticism vs fact** – Naveen Grover Department of Clinical Psychology IHBAS Delhi 95. ID 472
- 2. Understanding of psychotherapy among clinical and non-clinical population** – Ved Prakash Maurya, Department of Clinical Psychology, SGT University Gurgaon. ID 473
- 3. Psychotherapy in private practice** – Amrita Pain, Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, University of Delhi and Clinical Psychologist. ID 474
- 4. Compassion fatigue in psychotherapy** – Anusuya Dutta, Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, University of Delhi and Clinical Psychologist ID 475

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Psychotherapy: Mysticism vs fact

Naveen Grover Department of Clinical Psychology IHBAS Delhi 95

Psychotherapy is a challenging field. It requires learning skills under supervision like many other professional fields. However, it has been observed in the informal discussions on the psychology web forums and in the formal feedbacks that it has been linked not with skills but with degree. Not having possession of a particular degree is considered a taboo in the practicing community. There is also a kind of aura of mysticism built around it by its practitioners, knowingly or unknowingly. Somehow the practitioners also, at least in the aura issue, behave like general population. The focus of the presentation is on bringing these thorny issues to the fore and highlight facts about psychotherapy practice.

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Understanding of psychotherapy among clinical and non-clinical population

Ved Prakash Maurya Department of Clinical Psychology SGT University Gurgaon.

Perception about psychotherapy is vague in general population. Based on the principle of perceptual learning, it can be assumed that there could be differences in the perception about psychotherapy between clinical population and non-clinical population. Given the fact that clinical population comes in contact with mental health professionals, it would be interesting to see how it impacts their understanding about psychotherapy. The present paper focuses on the findings from a cross-sectional open ended survey. The participants formed two groups. One group comprised of person undergoing psychotherapy and the other group comprised of persons who did not have any contact with mental health professionals. The insights based on the thematic analysis will be shared in the presentation.

Psychotherapy in private practice

Amrita Pain, Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, University of Delhi and Clinical Psychologist

Psychotherapy practice in private setting is a different experience altogether. The very first change is the economy part of it i.e. charges for the services. The second change is about the independence with which a professional needs to function, no more of continuous supervision available in an academic setting. The primary concern of the client could stem from the ability to 'pay' the price for certain services, such as longer duration of sessions, decreased waiting time, infrastructure and the like, that the private practitioner is magically able to provide. There are many other facets to the private setting in terms of length of therapy, frequency of therapy sessions, symptom presentation, role of social relationships, administrative issues and so on. The focus of the presentation is to reflect upon the need to keep psychotherapy mystic (?), varied clients reaction to need for psychotherapy and other insights from the clinical work.

Compassion fatigue in psychotherapy

Anusuya Datta Research Scholar Dept of Psychology University of Delhi and Clinical Psychologist

Providing psychological services can be rewarding and yet enormously challenging for helping professionals. Burnout on the part of professionals is inevitable. Compassion fatigue is a type of burnout that is experienced in relation to the helping profession. It can occur as a result of continuous narration of client's distress which in turn can trigger therapists own life distress. Compassion fatigue describes profound and permanent changes in how therapists think, feel, and behave in relation to others and themselves as a result of their exposure to and empathic bonding with their clients' difficult material. The aim of the research was to study compassion fatigue in mental health professionals in relation to burnout and compassion satisfaction. The sample consisted of clinical psychology professionals active in providing psychotherapy services. Semi-structured interview schedule was administered in face-to-face interviews. The data was recorded and transcribed. The findings based on the thematic analysis will be shared in the presentation.