The Historical Development and Related Research Exploration of Focus Brief Group Therapy

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Abstract: *Group psychotherapy has a long history as an effective method of psychological counseling and treatment. With the continuous development of group psychotherapy research and the needs of people's social reality, short-range group therapy, a shorter, more affordable and more efficient form of treatment, has become popular in recent years. On the basis of short-range group therapy, Professor Martyn Whittingham, an American psychologist, introduced the Inventory of Interpersonal Problems (IIP32), and develops a new model of short-range group therapy based on Interpersonal focus orientation: Focus Brief Group Therapy (FBGT). It can be used in eight or fewer group sessions to specifically alleviate the interpersonal problems that plague group members. This paper will introduce the historical development and related research from group psychotherapy to short-range group psychotherapy and short range focus group therapy. In particular, it introduces the theoretical basis of short-range focus group therapy, the identification, classification and measurement of interpersonal problems, and related research. It is expected to provide reference for the research and development of short-range focus group therapy.*

Keywords: *Group psychotherapy, Focus brief group therapy, Historical development, the inventory of interpersonal problems*

1. Introduction

As an important technique of psychotherapy, group therapy has been paid much attention in the field of psychology. Especially the focus brief group therapy in group therapy is more and more popular. As a new psychotherapy method introduced into China, its concept and form have great inspiration for our group therapy, and we increasingly need a quantifiable way to measure the effectiveness of our treatment in group psychotherapy. Focus brief group therapy introduces the Inventory of Interpersonal Problems (IIP32), which is able to find out the most urgent Problems of team members, so the solution of team members' psychological Problems is more targeted. This paper explores and summarizes the meaning and characteristics of group therapy and short-range group therapy, and introduces in detail the focus brief group therapy, its application and related research and development process initiated by American psychologist Martin Whittingham.

2. Historical Development of Focus Brief Group Therapy

2.1 Group Psychotherapy

Group psychotherapy, usually conducted by one or two therapists, who lead a group of roughly 8 to 15 members with the same or different problems. Typically, treatment occurs in the form of group and the groups meet for an hour or two each week. The number of treatments depends on the specific problems and circumstances of the patients. During the whole process, group members might discuss issues of common concern, observe and analyze their own and other's psychological and behavioral reactions, emotional experiences and interpersonal relationships, in order to strengthen their own behavior. As a form of psychological consultation and counseling, group psychotherapy has been widely used in the field of psychological consultation and treatment. Group psychotherapy is based on the professional theory of psychology, concentrating the power of the group and driving the members of the group to grow up together. It plays its role in a specific curative effect element, the individual to

interact with others in group communication, through the feedback of others to evaluate themselves, insight and change their mode of communication and interaction, get a new behavior, promote emotional expression and communication among members, and integrate the impact by internalizing close to the way of life (Yanfen Zeng, 2016). The most influential is the group model of psychodynamic therapy based on humanism and existentialism proposed by IRVIND.YALOM, a famous American existentialist psychologist. It builds a simulated society, with groups at its core, through human interaction within the group, which, under the guidance of group dynamics, completely plays the role of the here and now, raising the self-perception of the group members. Promote the rapid growth of the individual, to help members to deepen their understanding and comprehensive understanding of their relationship with others. Develop and maintain quality relationships by internalizing the communication skills through practice (Yuhuan Yang, 2015). Irvind Y. Yalom believes that all psychological problems can be traced back to the individual's maladjusted interpersonal relationship in real life. Group therapy is the best way to solve the psychological symptoms caused by interpersonal disorder (Hong Zhao, 2014). He proposed that the influence of a group promotes and induces new behaviors in its members, to form and change their personalities in interpersonal relationships. In a healthy group, good behavior patterns can be established through feedback and insight.

2.2 Short-Range Group Therapy

With the continuous development of society, people have a new demand for group therapy(Yueqing Qian,2017). A shorter, cheaper and more effective form of treatment, short-course group therapy, has gained popularity in recent years. A survey conducted among 73 million people found that people were more interested in shorter, homogenous group treatments (IRVIND.YALOM, 2005).It can relieve the symptoms of visitors in a relatively short period of time and promote them to develop in a positive direction (Mingming Liang, 2017). It usually takes about eight sessions, sometimes less. With the continuous development of short-range group counseling and therapy, more than 20 short-range group therapy methods have been applied, such as short-range family therapy, short-range cognitive and behavioral therapy, and focused solution short-range therapy. All the short treatment groups have some similarities where the demand for efficiency is high, clear goals in advance, and the determination of goals will focus on the visitor's current problems where an agreement should be signed before treatment; focusing on the inclusion goals throughout the treatment process; cautious about timing from the beginning to the end; the members of the group have similar problems or characteristics; groups pay less attention to the inner activities of members, and usually focus on the interpersonal problems of members. In order to ensure the effectiveness of group therapy, short-course group therapy pays much attention to the preparation and screening of members. In short-range group therapy, the therapist should focus throughout the activity to guide members to clarify goals and focus on the goal, control the progress of the group, facilitate a lively atmosphere when the group is relatively silent and the most important thing is to ensure the effectiveness of the group. As members learn new experiences, should actively encourage them to apply them in real life. Continue to internalize and practice, facilitate the transfer of the learning application.

2.3 Focus Brief Group Therapy

Focus Brief Group Therapy (FBGT) is also a type of short-range group therapy where it is based on interpersonal focus. It is a new short-range integrated YALOM interpersonal relationship group model proposed by Professor Martyn Whittingham when he was working in the counseling center of Wright State University combined with the research of YALOM group. Based on the short-course group therapy, the Inventory of Interpersonal Problems (IIP32) is introduced. The goal is to reduce the interpersonal problems that plague group members in eight or fewer group sessions (Abel, 2016). Before and after treatment, IIP-32 was used to measure the degree of interpersonal distress of group members and provide relatively accurate data, so that we can accurately understand the status of team members in order to ensure effective treatment. Martin Whittingham argues that our style of interpersonal interaction is acquired early in life and replicated later on. We should treat our children with love and attention at the right time and in the right way, but the style that we have developed doesn't translate well to the way we interact with our children, it can lead to periodic maladaptation between parents and children and form this fixed pattern. This can lead to major emotional discomfort, which can be at the cost of happiness sometimes.

Focus Brief Group Therapy suggests that through interpersonal process, groups can change the rigid

interpersonal style that we have developed (Martyn Whittingham, 2016). It incorporates the Interpersonal Problems Scale, which divides interpersonal patterns into eight dimensions; egocentric, over-accommodating, controlling, unconfident, over-friendly (intrusive), socially repressive, self-sacrificing, and indifferent. When an individual is exposed to a group, an individual's interpersonal communication pattern will manifest itself in the group through group feedback, individuals can gain insight into their own interpersonal patterns and interpersonal experience, facilitate changes to existing interpersonal schemas. Gaining self-insight and experience to constantly find their own problems through group members is the key mechanism for change. The group is the starting point, everyone has to have a goal before joining the group. The group has a clear time frame and realistic hopes that its members can quickly form a cohesive, solid working union. Focusing on short-range focus group therapy, it's not suggesting a change in personality, it's about increasing the range of choices in individual behavior. The results sought are in respect of what the visitor considers to be the cause of their misfortune, it may slightly enhance their interpersonal flexibility. Focus Brief Group Therapy is relatively easy and effective for a wide range of people. Thus, many countries use it in hospitals, schools, and even in businesses and social services.

3. The Theoretical Basis and Interpersonal Problem Identification of Short-Range Focus Group Therapy

Focus Brief Group Therapy incorporates multiple theories, the goal is to maximize the likelihood of change in the group (Ying-ying Wang, 2014). In the process of screening interviews, team members should have an insight into their own problems in order to determine their goals for inclusion. When forming a group, the leader should lead the group members to form a strong working alliance by leading the group into the here and now to stimulate their reactions, the therapeutic factors of the group can be fully mobilized. Before each group begin the process, the leader should initiate each member of the group to make a personal report and share their feelings among the group members as to promote the group members to improve their self-efficacy. As you can see, there are a lot of ways that members can change and work together to promote the development of the group. Group communication is a miniature of social interpersonal communication, here, Yalom and Molynleszcz's group interpersonal relationship therapy model activation of the here and now is taken as the foundation and core of the group throughout different group members fully present themselves in the group, show them how they interact in real life, and then you can find out their problems.

In the assessment and identification of group member's interpersonal problems, Focus Brief Group Therapy introduced the Interpersonal Problems Scale (IIP-32) developed by Leonard Horowitz, Lynn Alden, Jerry Wiggins, and Aaron Pincus, where it can be tested to show where the group members interpersonal problems occur. Each IIP-32 report includes eight dimensions and their corresponding scores. It is an important tool for short-range focus group therapy. Focus Brief Group Therapy uses the Interpersonal Model Loop Theory to focus on the inclusion goals of the group members, anticipate the various underlying dynamics that exist in the group. In group therapy, feedback from other members of the group also plays a crucial role. They use their own behaviors to make the parties realize that they are not necessarily to be rejected, and they can be recognized, so as to dispel the fear of the parties, propel them to change towards a good interpersonal communication style.

4. Focus Brief Group Therapy Administered to Measure the Interpersonal Problems of Group Members

In order to evaluate the interpersonal problems of the group members, The Focus Brief Group model introduced the Interpersonal Problems Inventory, IIP-32, also known as the Interpersonal Problems Checklist. It was compiled by psychologists Leonard Horowitz, Lynn Alden, Jerry Wiggins, and Aaron Pincus, and it has good reliability and validity. The reliability, coefficient and validity of the IIP-32 user manual report scale were 0.93 and 0.78. As a self-reporting tool, it can identify a person's most salient relationship problems. Even when a clinical interview begins with a person describing uncomfortable feelings and painful thoughts, a number of interpersonal problems emerge.

IIP - 32 contains of 32 questions in total and it is divided into two parts; "Here are some things you have a hard time doing with other people" and "Here's what you do too much". The response options range from "not at all" to very "much". It is often use to screen people with interpersonal problems and to identify changes in interpersonal patterns. It provides a standard T-score to assess an individual's overall relationship difficulty, as the the interpersonal model of each person is divided into eight

dimensions: egocentric, over-accommodating, controlling, unconfident, overly friendly (intrusive), social inhibition, self-sacrifice, and indifference. Scores in each of the eight dimensions indicate the level of difficulty in the corresponding area of interpersonal functions. These scores can be used to compare and individual or a group members in different settings before and after clinical treatment. Scores can also be used to determine whether a person is miserable enough to deal with interpersonal problems. In addition to the overall score, there are "individual-based" T-scores that allow clinicians to evaluate individuals scores relative to each other on different dimensions, identifying specific areas where individuals find the most distressing interpersonal problems. Individual-based analysis is particularly useful for individual treatment planning. The test environment should include appropriate lighting and appropriate working space, the environment should also provide privacy, and should be free from auditory and visual interference.

Table 1 Meaning of High Scores in the Self-Reported Eight Dimensions of IIP-32 Interpersonal Problems Scale

The Dimension	Meaning of a High Score (defined as a T score of 70 or higher)
1.Controlling	People with high scores described themselves as too controlling or manipulative. Sometimes losing control is threatening to the person because it causes him or her to lose dignity, worth, or self-esteem. In extreme cases, the person's identity is threatened, and every time someone else seems to be giving him or her orders, guidance, or instructions, the person's sense of self is hit and unable to consider the other person's point of view.
2.Egocentric	High scores in this dimension reflect distrust and suspicion of others. He is apt to express anger, complain, insult, or belittle others. Showing little support or concern for others and showing no concern for their needs or happiness.
3.Indifference	High scores indicate low feelings for others and a lack of connection with others. People who score high don't feel close to or like other people, and have difficulty making and maintaining long-term commitments to others. He is indifferent even when there are clear social obligations and responsibilities.
4.Socially inhibited	High scores indicate anxiety, shyness, or embarrassment when interacting with other people. It is difficult to initiate social interactions, express feelings to others, or join groups or socialize. It has social inhibition and hypersensitivity to negative evaluations.
5.Un-confident	High scores indicate a severe lack of confidence and self-esteem. People who score high in self-doubt tend to avoid socially challenging situations in particular. It is also hard for them to assert themselves in the face of opposition.
6.Over-accommodating	People who score high on this dimension show excessive friendliness and submissiveness. In order to please others and win their approval, they are reluctant to say "no" to others, and do not like to express anger, lest it arouse hostility or retaliation from others.
7.Self-sacrifice	High scores indicate too much affinity. Such people have an easy time forming emotional bonds with others and are always available to help and care for those in need. However, high achievers also reported being too keen on service, and being too giving, too generous, too caring, too trusting and too forgiving.
8.Too friendly or intrusive	People with high scores have a strong need to feel connected to others, they have trouble being alone, talk too much to others, may reveal inappropriately personal things to please others, and take undue responsibility for solving other people's problems. In a word, their lack of bottom line and boundaries for others causes difficulties in interpersonal communication.

5. Related Research on Focus Brief Group Therapy

Focus Brief Group Therapy has a relatively short history of development. According to relevant materials and literatures in China and other countries, technical training of Focus Brief Group Therapy is relatively large, but applied research is relatively few. Yanfeng Jia of Beijing Normal University conducted a study on the effect of Focus Brief Group Therapy on the parent-child relationship of students in a middle school in Zhuhai City for eight weeks, and proved that the Focus Brief Group Therapy has a great impact on the improvement of parent-child relationship (Yanfeng Jia, 2018). Overall, there has been relatively little research on short-range focus group therapy in China and abroad, it is hoped that short-range focus group therapy can be developed in the future and fully applied to the psychological counseling and therapy of various groups.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, we can see that short-course group therapy, which is a popular form of group therapy, is gradually emerging and developing. Focus brief group therapy as a method of short range group therapy, although it is relatively new, but we can clearly see its advantages in solving interpersonal problems. It has detailed classification and clear goals and quantifiable measures and data. A growing number of new studies and practices have demonstrated its effectiveness in various fields such as psychology, education and rehabilitation. With the further development of the research, focus brief group therapy will serve more fields and help more people improve their mental health as a unique psychotherapy method.

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