Abstract

Goals of this project:
- Explore the efficacy of teletherapy more generally
- Identify factors relevant to the transition from in-person to remote work
- Summarize therapeutic outcomes for psychodynamic and psychoanalytic remote therapy
- Identify key factors for each

Findings:
- Remote psychodynamic / psychoanalytic therapy fail to produce the same outcomes as in-person work
- Therapeutic relationship, technological factors, and lack of intimacy play significant role in this
- More training for remote therapy might be possible solution

Introduction

What is Psychoanalytic Therapy?
- Form of therapy pioneered by Sigmund Freud in 1896
- Structure of personality broken into three parts: Id (strive to satisfy desires; pleasure principle), Ego (strategic thinking; reality principle), and Superego (internalized norms; the conscience)
- Notion of “the unconscious” is important; explained human action by pointing to past traumas, often from childhood
- Worked through childhood traumas and defense mechanisms using combination of strategies, notably free association and dream analysis
- Analyst views the mind of the analysand as a “realm to be explored”, analysand plays passive role in process

What is Psychodynamic Therapy?
- Like psychoanalysis, holds the belief that traumas lead people to develop negative relationship patterns
- By discussing “relationship episodes” (stories and dreams), patient and therapist collaboratively work through client’s childhood traumas and resistances

What is Teletherapy?
- Counseling provided remotely (phone or internet)
- During COVID-19, teletherapy has exploded in popularity, as in-person work is enormously complicated by social distancing guidelines
- This research focused on internet-based approaches (e.g. video calls allowing face-to-face communication from a distance)

Methods

- Studies and articles collected through PsycINFO database
- Focus on recent research (2018-present)

Common Factors Relevant to Transition:

Therapeutic Relationship:
- Universal theme in research, frequently mentioned as important factor in therapeutic process
- 64% of therapists (n=122) felt that relationship w/ client during remote work was “as strong as in the earlier in-person sessions.”

Technological Factors
- Stable internet connection is essential; lag makes meaningful communication difficult
- Decent microphone and webcam have positive impact on strength of therapeutic relationship

Efficacy of Teletherapy

| Research | Participants | Survey distributed to participating analysts | Asked a host of questions: General demographic information, including prior experience with teletherapy and perceptions of remote work | Questions about transition included: How did you prepare yourself/your patient for the transition to online therapy? What are challenges right now using online therapy? | Demographic information: 52% of therapists had done online therapy prior to COVID-19. 5.5% had received training in online therapy | Questions about transition: 32% of therapists felt less competent and 25% felt less confident doing remote work. After doing remote work, percentage of therapists who saw remote work as “as effective” rose from 74% to 85% of therapists felt less confident doing remote work. After doing remote work, percentage of therapists who saw remote work as “as effective” rose from 74% to 85%.

Discussion on Remote Psychodynamic Therapy:

Research shows that remote psychodynamic therapy is possible, but difficult
- Format may prompt new insight (e.g. stress related to change; difficulty adapting; etc.)
- Important to form therapeutic relationship before transitioning to online format

Discussion on Remote Psychoanalysis:

Research shows that remote psychoanalysis is possible, but difficult
- Format may prompt new insight (e.g. stress related to change; difficulty adapting; etc.)
- Important to form therapeutic relationship before transitioning to online format

Discussion on Remote Psychoanalytic Teletherapy:

Research shows that remote psychoanalytic therapy is possible, but difficult
- Format may prompt new insight (e.g. stress related to change; difficulty adapting; etc.)
- Important to form therapeutic relationship before transitioning to online format

References

Academic Sources:

doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/00207578.2020.1732287


References for Pictures:


https://www.psychedeliccorp.com/teletherapy-remote-care-for-60-clients/