



In the client's experience, is the Person-centred approach effective in helping them process their diagnosed/self-diagnosed anxiety disorders/issues?

Aim/Purpose:

Our aim was to explore if the Person-Centred Approach (PCA) was experienced as effective in helping clients process their anxiety. Our purpose was to inform practitioners as to what works psychotherapeutically for this client group.

Design/Methodology:

We interviewed four respondents who self-identified as suffering from anxiety and had received person-centred counselling. These respondents were audio recorded during semi-structured interviews. The data was then analysed thematically using phenomenological principals.

Results/Findings:

- The two strongest themes that we identified were the client's issues with personal relationships and the physiological effect of their anxiety.
- A sub-theme that developed was traumatic childhood experiences and not processing them.
- Respondents cited the counsellors' understanding, honesty, acceptance and provision of a space, in which to talk and explore, alleviated the impact of their anxiety.
- Conversely when these were not experienced, the respondent was dubious about the overall effectiveness of psychotherapy.

Conclusions:

An open and trusting relationship with their counsellor emerged as central to a successful psychotherapeutic alliance.

We suggest that the extension of the 3 Core Conditions (central to the PCA) are integral to the successful outcome of therapy for clients presenting with anxiety.

We also suggest that if difficult relationships tend to increase anxiety, then the PCA, with its focus on the therapeutic relationship is a well-suited modality for working with such clients.

Limitations:

These findings may only be applicable to the respondents in question and might not reflect the larger population. We suggest that further studies are done with a larger and a more diverse spectrum of society.

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