



Nurturing Therapeutic Connections Among Trainee Counselors: Exploring the Influence of Mindfulness

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Abstract

Research indicates that the therapeutic alliance is a significant factor in maintaining optimal treatment and therapeutic outcomes, even though the specific traits associated with this are still being studied. This research aims to analyze the effects of using mindfulness techniques in counselors-in-training and how they influence the therapeutic alliance. Our comprehensive literature review on preceding research about mindfulness and the therapeutic alliance investigate the impacts that mindfulness can have on real relationship, working alliance, and countertransference. In ancient eastern culture, specifically within Buddhism, Mindfulness was a common activity that was practiced. Despite its ancient origins, the use of mindfulness in clinical practices in the western world is very new. Research shows that further study of mindfulness and its modalities is appropriate in order to better understand the therapist-client relationship as well as other influences. The literature indicates that the traits that come about as an effect of mindfulness techniques such as and emotional intelligence can have a positive impact on the development and cultivation of the therapeutic alliance.



Introduction

- The connection between therapists and clients is crucial for therapy success.
- Enhancing counselor training is essential for improving therapy outcomes. Incorporating mindfulness techniques can enhance counselor training.
- Research shows a significant correlation between therapist-client relationships and positive treatment outcomes.
- The relationship involves an emotional bond, collaborative goal-setting, and task accomplishment.
- Skills associated with favorable outcomes align with mindfulness principles: awareness, nonjudgment, self-regulation, empathy, and patience.
- An extensive literature review aims to identify knowledge gaps and areas for further research.
- Objectives include establishing a theoretical framework, defining mindfulness operationally, and identifying areas for exploration.

Methods

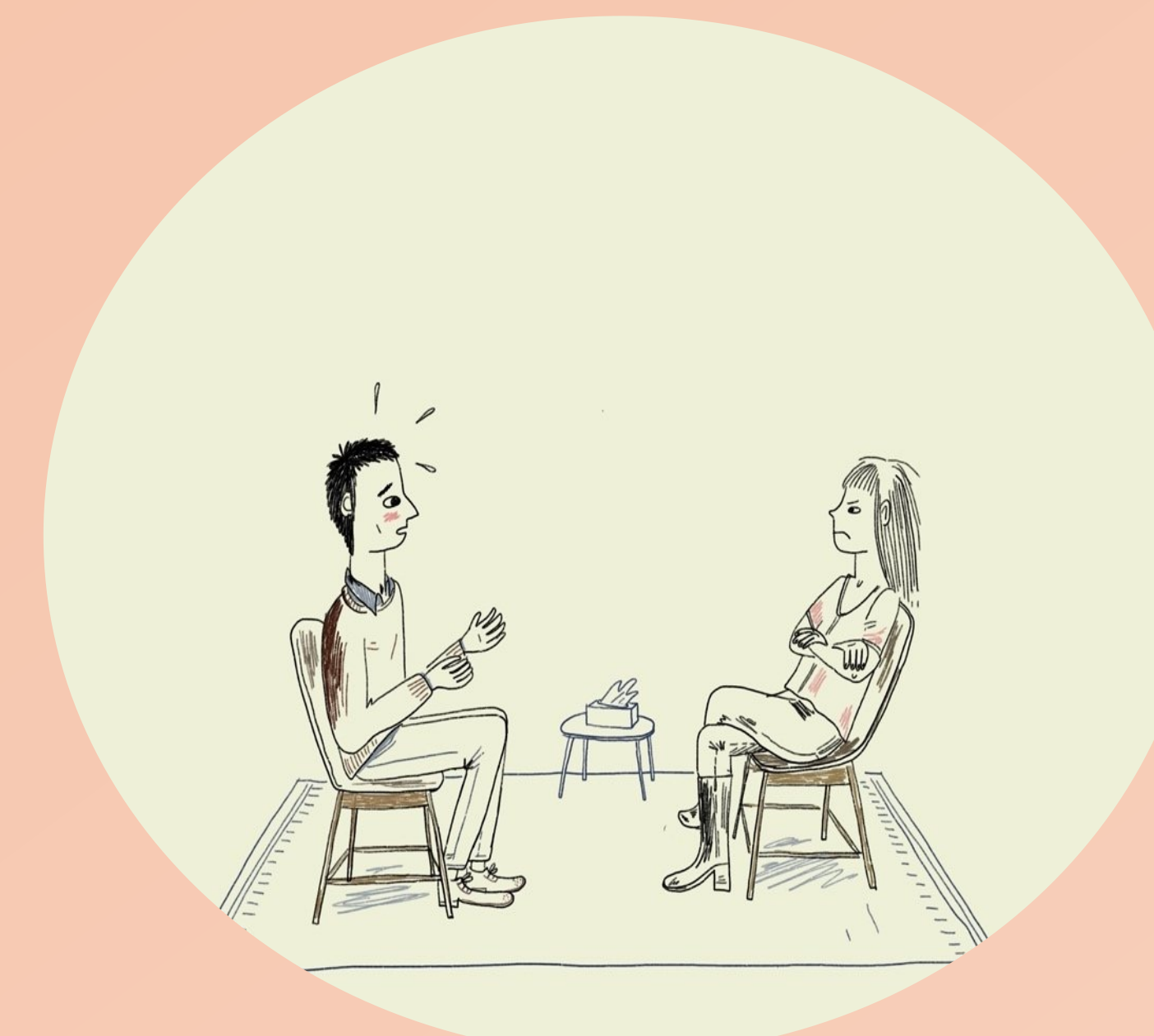
- Keywords Used: mindfulness, therapeutic alliance, psychology, working alliance, adolescent, teenager, mental illness and rapport.
- Literature search confined from the year 1990 to 2021.
- Created a preliminary excel spreadsheet of articles relevant to the study, including abstracts of each; divided among each team member.
- Created a secondary excel spreadsheet to examine relevant information from each article, including the research question/purpose, sample size, type of sample, research design, models/theories, findings, and limitations.
- Use annotations from articles and organize them into an outline analyzing definitions/constructs, theoretical framework, prior research, gaps in literature, conventional strategies for cultivating therapeutic alliance, and impacts of mindfulness in various populations.
- Created a combined collaborative outline of relevant information and summarized the findings.
- Relevant studies were highlighted in green and further summarized.
- Compiled literature review into organized "Manuscript" called "Examining Therapeutic Relationship and Mindfulness Among Counselors-In-Training with sections called "Bullets"
- Created an excel sheet of potential, accredited colleges/universities (CACREP) to reach out to in order to conduct future studies
- Qualtrics survey will be sent to masters/doctoral-level counselor trainees
- Questions will be taken from
 - The Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, The Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II, The Real Relationship Inventory-Therapist Form, Working Alliance Inventory-Short For, Therapy Session Checklist-Transference Items, Countertransference Management Scale

Results

- The initial literature review highlights significant themes in therapeutic alliance and mindfulness.
- Themes are drawn from prominent literature sources or contribute to fundamental comprehension of therapeutic alliance and mindfulness principles.
- The compilation aims to illustrate elements closely associated with mindfulness that positively impact the therapeutic alliance or relationship.

Discussions

- The therapeutic alliance is critical for favorable therapeutic and treatment results.
- Characteristics driving these advantages are still under scrutiny.
- The study aims to investigate the effects of incorporating mindfulness techniques into counselor training and their influence on the therapeutic alliance.
- Existing research suggests the need for further exploration of mindfulness techniques, especially within the therapist-client dynamic.
- Numerous potential avenues for extending this research exist and will continue to be subject to ongoing examination.



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