

HOW TO DEVELOP COUPLE THERAPY FOR DEPRESSION:

Co-research interviews with couples
and therapists

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Bergen, 28.8.2008



My Context

- Clinical psychologist and family therapist in an outpatient clinic for adults in the Department of Psychiatry, Kuopio University Hospital, Finland
- Work with depressed people and their spouses
- E.Jones and E.Asen: Systemic Couple Therapy and Depression
- Social constructionist ideas and reflective, narrative and dialogical ways of working
- Interest in research and developing everyday work environments



Dialogical and Narrative Processes in Couple Therapy for Depression

- The centres:
 - Department of Psychology, University of Jyväskylä (Emeritus Professor Jukka Aaltonen, Professor Jaakko Seikkula)
 - Department of Psychiatry, Kuopio University Hospital
 - Helsinki University Hospital, regional psychiatric outpatient clinics in Espoo
 - Hospital Districts of Länsi-Pohja in Tornio and Kemi in Western Lapland



Aims of the study


- The first aim is to develop couple therapy for depression with special interest in dialogical and narrative processes in therapy.
- The second main aim is to analyse the effectiveness couple therapy for depression as a real world study.
- The good and poor outcome of different therapy processes will be compared and thus information about precise change processes will be reached.



THE WINDS: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST IDEAS

- Co-constructing knowledge about therapy; what was useful, what was not useful?
- Clients as experts of what they find useful
- Local knowledge of particular processes; most useful for the participants
- Reflective positions for both clients and therapists; possibility to be an insider and an outsider
- Space for inner and outer dialogues

THE WAWES: CO-RESEARCH INTERVIEW

- Developed by Tom Andersen and teams in Norway and Sweden
 - Best linked to participatory action research or collaborative research
 - A follow-up-interview after 3 (or 6-24) months of termination of the therapy
 - The therapists and the clients talk together with an outsider about the therapeutic process they have had together in a reflective way.
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- Everyone is present in the same room for the whole time; the outsider talks first with the therapists and the clients listen, then (s)he talks with the clients and the therapists listen and finally they talk together
- Shifts between being part of talking and being listening to others' talking
- Important to explain how the interview proceeds
- Creating a safe atmosphere



PARTICIPANTS

- 25 interviews
- Patients:
 - 44 clients, 24 identified as depressed (15 men, 9 women) and 20 spouses (9 men and 11 women)
 - In six interviews only one spouse participated (three were separated, one was sick, two couldn't leave their work). Four were identified as depressed, two were spouses.
 - In one couple both spouses had a diagnosis of depression



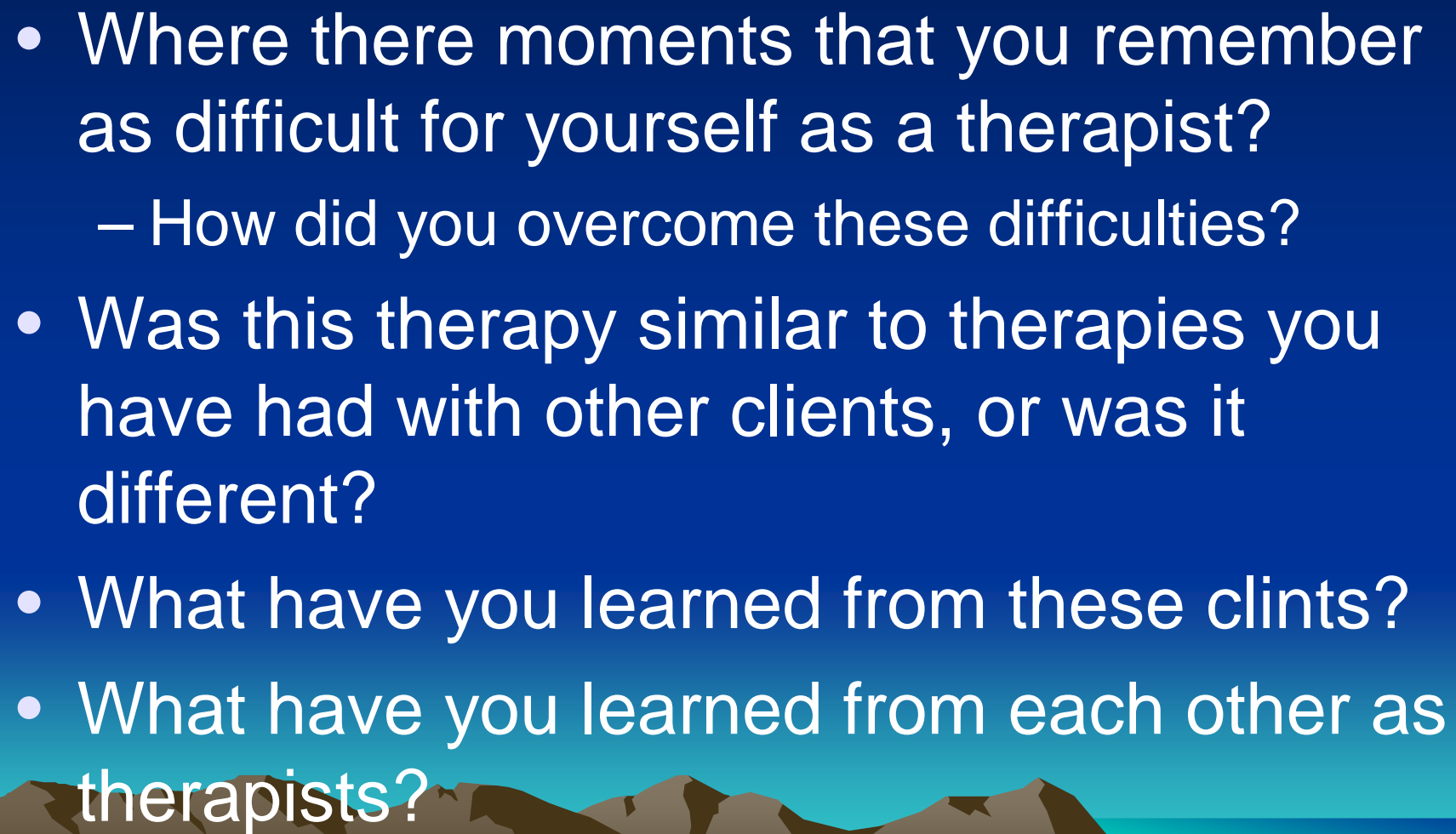
PARTICIPANTS

- Therapists:
 - 28 different therapists
 - in this project therapists had worked as a team of two
In two interviews only one of the therapists participated (one therapist had moved to another team),
 - Different therapist attended the interview 1-5 times
- All and all 72 different persons talking about their experiences about couple therapy for depression



QUESTIONS FOR THERAPISTS

- What did you have in mind when you asked these clients to come today?
- What of your contributions to the therapy-meetings do you think the clients appreciated the most?
- Might there be something they would have liked to talk about but what was never discussed?
- Where there times when you yourself had thoughts in your mind that you never disclosed, but in hindsight think that might have been useful to talk about?
- If it had been possible to talk about that, how might you have done it with them?

- Where there moments that you remember as difficult for yourself as a therapist?
 - How did you overcome these difficulties?
 - Was this therapy similar to therapies you have had with other clients, or was it different?
 - What have you learned from these clients?
 - What have you learned from each other as therapists?
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QUESTIONS FOR CLIENTS

- Would you like to comment on what you heard during the conversation between the therapists and myself?
- They talked about this and this, what are your comments on that?
- In addition to what the therapists talked, is there something you would like to talk about?
- Is there something particular you remember from the therapeutic meetings?

- Where there times you wanted to talk about something you never got to talk about?
- Where there times you tried to say something they didn't hear?
- What was most helpful for you?
- How was it helpful?



WHY TALK FIRST WITH THE THERAPISTS?

- Therapists have invited the clients to the interview to learn from their experience
- By talking first the therapists give a permission for the clients to talk, also about difficult things
- Clients don't usually hear their therapists talk like this
- While listening to therapists talk clients have a possibility to think and remember things connected to the therapy

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What do the therapists ask and what do they learn in co-research interviews?
- What are the helping and the hindering factors in couple therapy for depression?
- How does the co-research interview work as a mean to study and to develop clinical work?



CO-RESEARCH PRACTICE, CLIENTS

- Therapists thoughts sounded familiar, similar to own experience
- Felt good to talk like this
- It was interesting to hear the therapists talk
- Good to have an outsider to interview us all
- Good to listen to others in peace
- I wanted to comment already during the interview



CO-RESEARCH PRACTICES, THERAPISTS

- Valuable to hear feedback from clients
- Good to see the positive change in clients
- Felt good
- The conversation felt natural, open, equal and respecting
- The structure of the interview was good
- It felt good to be able to listen to others talk



- Strengthened belief to own work
- Gave thoughts about collaboration between the therapists
- Possibility to learn
- Good way to end the therapy
- This should be done more often



- Not that easy
 - It was not too easy, I haven't got used to explaining my work like this.
 - Felt quite hard, but became meaningful after I heard what XX just said.
- Problems with the interview
 - Is it possible to give negative feedback?
 - If the therapists don't know each other well, situation is demanding
 - The clients situation didn't sound good, what can I do?
 - I felt I was being polite, wasn't able to say too much.

INTERVIEWER'S EXPERIENCES

- High intensity of the meetings
- Both demanding and rewarding for participants
- Collaborative experience
- Especially interesting in situations, when there have been problems in the therapeutic work
- All the questions will not be answered, it is important that they are raised



- Only some things will be said, others remain unspoken
- The more openly therapists were able to talk, the more free the clients seemed to be to talk, also about difficult issues
- Therapists need to be prepared, ready to talk about their ideas and experiences in front of their clients, not an easy task!
- A possibility for the therapists to learn

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED SOFAR?

- In co-research interviews local understanding of particular therapeutic processes is co-constructed, with the help of the outsider.
- Clients seemed to be able to evaluate the therapeutic process in the presence of their therapists.
- It is necessary to have a trained and experienced therapist as interviewer; co-research interviews are intense and demanding.
- It is useful to collaboratively evaluate therapeutic work with our clients.

- Many clients were satisfied with couple therapy for depression.
- It is important to pay attention to:
 - collaborative planning of the goals for the therapy,
 - with whom it is best to work (individual vs. couple)
 - flexibility, need-adapted approach
- Combining the couple therapeutic view with treatment of depression: necessary and demanding!



IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE

- Wächter, A. (Ed.) (2006) Samforskning – att lära av klienten. Falun, Mareld
- Andersen, T. (1997) Researching Client-Therapist relationships: A Collaborative Study for Informing Therapy. Journal of Systemic Therapies, Vol. 16, no. 2.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION!

