The Evolution of Psychotherapy: An Oxymoron

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International Center for Clinical Excellence
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

About Us
The International Center for Clinical Excellence (ICCE) is a worldwide community of practitioners, healthcare managers, educators and researchers dedicated to promoting excellence in behavioral healthcare services. Our online community facilitates the sharing of best practices and innovative ideas that are specifically designed to improve behavioral healthcare practice and allow practitioners and managers to achieve their personal best as helping professionals.

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The Evolution of Psychotherapy:

**Evolution:**
/ˌevəˈlooʃən/
Noun
The gradual development of something, esp. from a simple to a more complex form.

**Progress:**
/ˈprægrəs,ˈpræɡˌres,ˈprōˌgres/
Noun
Forward or onward movement toward a destination.
The Evolution of Psychotherapy:

So, what’s happened?

• Since the 1960’s:
  
  • Number of treatment approaches grown from 60 to 400+;
  
  • 10,000+ “how to” books published on psychotherapy;
  
  • 145 manualized treatments for 51 of the 297 possible diagnostic groups in DSM.


The Evolution of Psychotherapy: Progress?

- In most studies of treatment conducted over the last 40 years, the average treated person is better off than 80% of the untreated sample.
- The outcome of behavioral health services equals and, in most cases, exceeds medical treatments.
- On average, mental health professionals achieve outcomes on par with success rates obtained in randomized clinical trials (with and without co-morbidity).


The Evolution of Psychotherapy: Progress?

• The effectiveness of the “average” helper plateaus very early.
• Little or no difference in outcome between professionals, students and para-professionals.

The Evolution of Psychotherapy: Progress?

- Practitioners incomes in serious decline;
- Factoring in inflation, therapists earning one-third of what they did 10-15 years ago.
- Increasingly, direct services provided by minimally-trained, support personnel.

The Evolution of Psychotherapy: Progress?

• Use of psychotherapy declined by 35%.
• Use of pharmaceuticals increased by 75%.


The Evolution of Psychotherapy: Progress?

**Extinction**

*ikˈstiNG(k)SHən/

Noun

The state or process of a species, family, or larger group being or becoming extinct.

**Synonyms:** dying out, disappearance, vanishing.

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The Evolution of Psychotherapy: My Practice is Thriving!

Lack of Funding/Parity

Societal Changes

The Field is “Good Enough”

Emphasis on the “Quick Fix”

Big Pharma Dollars

Insurance Companies

More Complex Problems

The Research is WRONG: The Field IS More Effective
The Evolution of Psychotherapy:

- Theories
- Diagnosis
- Methods and Models


The Evolution of Psychotherapists:
The Evolution of Psychotherapists:

• Some therapists achieve consistently better results than others;
• Differences between therapists consistently accounts for 5-9% of variability in treatment outcome;
• Differences persist when therapist competence is held constant and treatments are manualized;
• Difference is unrelated to age, gender, caseload, theoretical orientation, social skills, professional degree, years of experience, and time spent conducting therapy.

The Evolution of Psychotherapists:

Richard Bandler & John Grinder

Sol Garfield

Michael Lambert

David F. Ricks

Lester Luborsky

Don Meichenbaum

David Orlinsky & Michael Ronnestad


The Evolution of Psychotherapists:

- Studied experts in chess, music, art, science, medicine, mathematics, history, computer programming.

The Evolution of Expertise: How Top Therapists Improve?

The Streetlight Effect

2013 ANAHEIM DECEMBER 11-15
The Evolution of Psychotherapy:  
How can Therapists Improve?

METHOD

BEFORE

T

Diagnosis

C

Therapy

AFTER
The Evolution of Expertise:
How Top Therapists Improve?

De·lib·er·ate

diˈlibərit/

Adjective
Done consciously and intentionally

Prac·tice
ˈpraktəs/

Noun
To carry out a particular activity regularly

Hours per week spent alone seriously engaging in activities related to improving therapy skills

The Evolution of Expertise:
How Top Therapists Improve?


Deliberate Practice

BASICS

MISTAKES

Deliberate Practice

Zone of “Proximal Development”:
• Reliable performance inconsistent
• Identification of errors, misperceptions
• Setting small process and outcome objectives
• Involves planning, rehearsal, reflection

Too Difficult

Too Easy

Realm of “Reliable” Performance:
• Processes executed quickly, automatically
• Involves recognition, retrieval, execution

Edge of Ability

Too Difficult

Ambit of Admiration:
• Abilities of others appear flawless, magical, dramatic
• Effort and attention focused on easily recognized, but non-causal factors and/or processes (superstition)
• Risk of failure and injury high
The Evolution of Psychotherapy: Natural Selection

“The process whereby organisms better adapted to their environment tend to survive.”

Top Performing Clinicians:

- Deliver more reliably effective treatment;
- Achieve 50% better outcomes;
- Suffer 50% fewer dropouts;
- Provide more value per dollar spent.