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to Understanding Clinical Change

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Towards a Shared Understanding - Using Personal Construct Psychology to Differentiate In-session Constructs in Arts Psychotherapies

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Abstract

This study aims to answer the question, ‘How do arts psychotherapists describe their practice in sessions with clients who have severe mental illness?’ The authors explore the use of personal construct psychology (PCP) methods to gather and build consensus about how arts psychotherapists describe in-session therapeutic constructs in adult mental health services, working with patients diagnosed with severe mental illnesses.

We used PCP techniques to interview seven arts psychotherapists (art, music, drama and dance movement psychotherapists) about in-session constructs relating to clinically significant events. PCP assumes that the interviewee holds personal perspectives and makes decisions based on their system of personal constructs.

The results showed that there were overarching categories for the in-session constructs elicited from arts psychotherapists during interviews. These constructs were subjected to an intensive categorising process that produced a final set of 14 bipolar constructs describing 28 alternative therapeutic constructs. The in-session constructs cover a wide range of interventions from empathic attunement to narrative reconstruction.

KeyWords: Arts Therapies; ; ; ; , Personal Construct Psychology, Consensus, Interventions, Constructs, Repertory Grids

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