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Psychotherapies: A Personal Construct Psychology Approach

to Understanding Clinical Change

Authors: Dominik Havsteen-Franklin, Nikolina Jovanovic,

Nick Reed, Megan Charles, Christella Lucas

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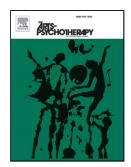
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Towards a Shared Understanding - Using Personal Construct Psychology to

Differentiate In-session Constructs in Arts Psychotherapies

Dr Dominik Havsteen-Franklin Consultant in Arts Psychotherapies, CNWL, UK

Nick Reed- Personal Construct Psychologist, UK

Dr Nikolina Jovanovic, MD, PhD, Queen Mary University of London, UK

Megan Charles, Art Psychotherapist, UK

Christella Lucas, Art Psychotherapist, UK

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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