Psychotherapy – basics, overview

Basic definitions

- **broader concept:**
  - treatment of psychological or physical symptoms by psychological methods
- **more narrow concept:**
  - therapeutic interaction between an educated (trained) psychotherapist and a client (patient)

Broder use of psychotherapy

- every physician / psychologist / health professional should work - to some extent “psychotherapeutically” in contact with patients
  - empathic approach
    - empathic listening
    - building a relationship (therapeutic rapport) from the first contact with the patient

  everyday supportive psychotherapy
Systematic psychotherapy

- **psychotherapist**
  - education/training in psychotherapy
  - willingness to listen
  - the ability to empathic involvement to the patient feelings
  - ability to distance from the patient’s problem
  - accepting the patient without prejudices
  - receiving confidential information and confidentiality

- **problem identification**
  - diagnosis or clear identification of the problem, choice of method or methods

- **definition of relationship**
  - honorary (insurance company, private payment)
  - the duration of the psychotherapeutic session
    - usually 50 min.
  - total length of psychotherapy

Conditions on the patient side

- interest in solving the problem
  - e.g., court-ordered psychological counseling is not a "real" psychotherapy, but it can develop into it
- ability to understand
  - if not - e.g., for organic disorders
    - it is psychosocial intervention or rehabilitation, not true psychotherapy

Psychotherapy as the medical model?

- It is a question of whether psychotherapy exceeds the medical model
  - probably yes

- the psychotherapist probably does not say he has nothing to treat because he cannot identify the symptoms that would give him reason to treat (diagnosis)
  - or the problem would be identified that patient thinks s/he has the problem
  - the medical approach based on the diagnosis is different
General mechanisms

• therapeutic relationship (rapport)
  • it is reported to account for up to 70% of the essence of psychotherapy effectiveness regardless of the method used

• abreaction
  • a stormy emotional reaction usually associated with the re-experience of past traumatic situations
  • e.g. re-use of memories of rape that have been suppressed before

• catharsis
  • alleviating associated with understanding, cognitive processing is present
  • suddenly understanding the negative relationship between parents and realizing the feeling of guilt for not taking enough care about them (height, "aha" effect)
  • a gradual understanding of the context that relates to the current problem
  • e.g. I'm afraid of responsibility because I've never been able to deny my father's claims and so I have the idea that I'm repeatedly failing

• emotional distancing
  • creating an emotional distance from the problem (deactivation)
  • e.g. maybe I'll be blushing again at the party, but most people do not even notice it and even though they notice it, the other qualities I have are more important

• corrective (emotional) experience

Problematic areas of psychotherapy

• time-consuming and financially demanding process
• how to control and evaluate processes of psychotherapy
  • there is a lot of knowledge from controlled studies at EBM level (mainly CBT)
    • e.g. research shows the potential of CBT
  • problem of non-specific, natural change
    • quotation from internet, therapist:
      • one client who has completed 6 years of classical psychotherapy while showing no improvement during the last year, she revealed severe traumas from her childhood and relieved herself of many problems, many of the symptoms disappeared

• ethical code
  • induction of negative memories
    • 1992 - False Memory Syndrome Foundation founded by parents who had been accused of abusing their children sexually as it was suggested to the "victims" during psychotherapy
  • emotional/erotic relationships
    • "addiction" to psychotherapy
**Psychotherapy - arrangement**

- **individual psychotherapy**
  - **pros**
    - individual relationship, intimacy, the patient is not "sharing" the important person who is a psychotherapist in the artificial situation
  - **cons**
    - lack of feedback from a larger circle of people, lack of possibility to share similar experience (problems, symptoms) with others
- **group psychotherapy**
  - dynamics of relationships between patients
  - group dynamics are sometimes stormy and must be mastered
  - "fight" for therapists, attention
  - usually two therapists - male and female role as a model of communication outside the group, or communication during childhood
- **therapeutic community, pair therapy, family therapy**

**Psychotherapeutic “schools”**

- about 500 with good or worse defined concepts and methods
  - theory (or individual conviction) → methods → training → supervision
- some schools with a world-view or spiritual context but with a problematic definition
  - "All disorders are a spiritual crisis"
  - newer trends like "coaching"
    - personal or professional counseling is very difficult to delineate out from psychotherapy on the basis of the goals offered
- supportive groups based on religion
  - "Gurus", lifestyle ...

**Basic concepts – directions in psychotherapy**

- **psychoanalysis**
  - S. Freud
  - deep psychotherapy
  - dynamic directions
- **directions derived from behaviorism**
  - learning, training techniques
  - cognitive - behavioral therapy (KBT, CBT)
- **humanistic psychotherapy**
  - client-oriented,
  - empathic
- **other directions**
  - transpersonal (broadening of consciousness)
  - meditation
Psychoanalysis – basic concepts

• psychoanalysis ≠ psychotherapy!

• three layers of the structure of the psyche
  – Id – unconscious drives
    • the basic energy for psychological processes
    • the principle of pleasure - libido (and later Thanatos)
  – Ego - Conscious experience
    • the principle of reality
  – Superego - ethical standards
    • the principle of perfection

1856 - 1939

Psychoanalysis – basic concepts

• stages of psychosexual development
  – oral
  – anal
  – phallic
  – latency and genital phase
    • failure to fulfill these stages, or fixation on them may mean life-long disturbed behavior

• Oedipal Complex and Elektra Complex
  – castration complex

Source of symptoms

solution in a socially acceptable way = sublimation

suppression to unconsciousness = conflict, energy converted to symptom
Psychoanalysis in process

- the development of transference neurosis

- transference
  - the patient conveys conflicts, hates, wishes, expectations at the therapist

- countertransference
  - reverse - transmission from therapist to the patients

Psychoanalysis – methods

- to detect suppressed conflicts in unconscious
- create an insight
- solution of transference neurosis

- the way to the unconsciousness (revealing latent contents)
  - (for Freud originally hypnosis)
  - free associations
    - in seemingly nonsensical associations, suppressed conflicts are identified
  - analysis of dreams
    - it is not the interpretation of dreams as a snare, but the analysis of feelings, forgetfulness, reshaping of memories or interpretations, emotional reaction, symbolic meaning
    - sword, rifle, pen – fallus
    - cave, bag, darkness – vagina, uterus

Depth psychotherapy

- non-orthodox psychoanalysis, but psychoanalytically oriented
- dynamic

- Carl Gustav Jung
  - collective unconscious, archetypal symbols valid for all mankind
  - father, mother
  - (personality typology - extrovert, introvert)

- Alfred Adler
  - individual psychology
  - self-actualization as the main urge vs. feeling of inferiority
  - inclusion of social factors
  - conflict between self-concept and acceptance
**Dynamic psychotherapy**
- accepts unconsciousness, but rejection of the dominant role of instincts
- interpersonal psychotherapy
  - relationships in the family
  - interpersonal relationships
  - early experiences
- several representatives, probably Erich Fromm most known
  - popular books
  - *Art to love; Fear of freedom*

**Interpersonal psychotherapy**
- Gerard Klerman
  - affective disorders, particularly depression
  - more structured method, use of evaluation (scales), evaluated in clinical studies
    - deals with sadness, loss
    - interpersonal conflicts and solutions
    - changes in role of life
    - deficiencies in social skills

**Transactional analysis**
*Eric Berne*

complementary transaction (communication):
- I am OK
- You are OK

[Diagram showing parent, adult, and child transactions]
Do you know about my phone?
You will forget your head sometime!!!

Transactional analysis  Eric Berne

Behavioralism

- I.P. Pavlov
- B.F. Skinner
  - operant conditioning
    - neutral
    - reinforcement
    - punishment
  - learning theory
  - training

Training methods

autogenous training (Schultz's)
  - takes based on the theory of physical state and emotions - tension reduction
  - feeling weight
  - feeling warm
  - a peaceful pulse
  - peaceful respiration
  - heat in the abdomen (plexus solaris)
  - cold on forehead (bright head)

Jacobsen's progressive relaxation
  - works with muscle tension and subsequent release
**Reinforcement - punishment**

- child psychiatry
  - reward for dry night in enuresis treatment, school phobia
- pedagogy
  - stamp of bee ... for good behavior, work
- therapeutic communities in addictions treatment
  - scoring
  - token system
  - weekend release, change of regime
- penitentiary (prison) system
- (without negative connotation) dog training

**Aversive therapy**

- negative stimulus during undesirable behaviors
  - use of disulfiram in alcohol dependence
  - in the past, the administration of apomorphine (vomiting) associated with smell or use of alcohol

**Systematic desensitization**

- exposure of stress stimuli (in imagination) in the state of relaxation
- the list of "fears, is created
  - alone on the bus ...
  - ..... alone in a locked elevator ...
- flooding (real exposure)
  - Exposing the patient to an experience that causes difficulties
  - e.g. phobia from infection
    - putting the hands in the waste bin
Cognitive – behavioral therapy (CBT)

- Hans J. Eysenck
- Albert Ellis
- Aaron Timothy Beck

- Methodologically refined
- Well evaluated
- Currently the leading method in research

- Cognition (thoughts) added to the behavioral concept

Part of it is:
- Educating the patient
- Relaxation techniques
- Training of social skills
- Prevention of relapse (early warnings)
- Writing and evaluating positive and negative experiences
- Assigning tasks and checking them

Irrational thoughts or cognitive distortions

- I didn’t fulfill the task
  - I’m useless, they all despise me
- If all people do not show gratitude to me
  - I’m failing as a doctor, I’m not good at doing the job
- XY annoyed me
  - I deserve people to hurt me, I am worthless, they have the right for do it

Similar cognitive distortions may be associated with a mental disorder, e.g., depression, anxiety disorders

ABC principle of KBT

A activating event

- During the travel by bus, my heart started to beat strongly
- I had to get up and take a taxi, I was late to work

B belief

- I have an heart attack!

C consequence

- I had to get up and take a taxi, I was late to work
"Humanistic" client-oriented or person-centered psychotherapy
Carl Rogers - Rogerian psychotherapy

- everybody has a natural goodness inside
- we should help, enable the patient (client) to self-optimize by facilitating his/her inner abilities

- the principle of empathy
  - hm ..., hm ... psychotherapy
  - non-directional, does not advise
  - mirroring (how it would work on me)
  - retelling, reformulation of patient's content

other directions

Hypnosis

- changed state of consciousness
- suggestive method
- hypnotic rapport - receiving instructions without rational control

- therapeutic and diagnostic functions
  - unblocking barriers to express problems
  - abreaction
  - insight to the problem with the help of a therapist

- posthypnotic commands
**Gestalt therapy**
Fritz Perls

- gestalt - shape, whole, integrity
- the principle "here and now"
  - do not think of the past, grip the presence
- awareness of feelings, relationships
  - role play - e.g. sit on your father’s stool and express it like he would do
- if you get angry, so do show it at maximum
- accept yourself and care for yourself, but also take responsibility
  - “I” principle similar to assertiveness

**Existential Therapy (logotherapy)**
Viktor Frankl

- he survived concentration camps
- logos - meaning, purpose of life
- challenges of how to be a decent human being
  - existential anxiety
  - self-transcendence, transference
  - paradoxical intention

**EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing - Desenzitizácia a spracovanie pomocou očných pohybov)**

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKrflH43srg8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKrflH43srg8)
Transpersonal psychotherapy

Research Report
The efficacy of psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy in treating depressive and anxiety disorders: a meta-analysis of direct comparisons

Paul C. Graham, M.D., M.S.,* Mary M. Phelan, M.D.,† Susan L. Kratz, M.D.,* Edward Anderson, M.B., B.S.,* Amanda T. Harris, M.D.,* Cameron F. Ressler, M.D.*

Although psychotherapy and antidepressant medication are both effective in the treatment of depressive and anxiety disorders, it is not known whether they are equally effective in terms of their clinical benefits. This meta-analysis identified 21 studies comparing psychotherapy and antidepressant medication and conducted a direct comparison of the efficacy of these two treatments. The results indicated that psychotherapy and antidepressant medication were equally effective in the treatment of depression and anxiety disorders. However, the results also suggested that psychotherapy was more effective in the treatment of anxiety disorders than antidepressant medication. The findings of this meta-analysis suggest that psychotherapy and antidepressant medication are both effective in the treatment of depressive and anxiety disorders, and that the choice of treatment should be based on the specific clinical needs of the patient.