

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING TECHNIQUE: WHY DOES IT WORK?

A. Calero, M. Montaña & M.X. Froján

Mail to: ana.calero@uam.es



ABSTRACT

Restructuring technique is widely used by clinicians and outcome studies inform its efficacy and efficiency; however, there is little published processes research and this has hindered definitive explanations about its success.

We studied restructuring technique trying to clarify the processes that explain therapeutic change during therapy. We analyzed 18 fragments of restructuring technique selected among different video-recorded clinical sessions. Six behavioural therapists participated in the study, all of them working in private clinical centres in Madrid (Spain).

To observe and code session recordings, we used the software The Observer XT and a validated category system, elaborated by the authors, with 8 categories that classify therapist's verbal behaviour based on the basic behavioural operations.

Results indicate a wide regularity in the application of restructuring technique, which is a preliminary step to study change processes.

INTRODUCTION

• **Traditional explanations of restructuring technique:** there is a change of cognitive schemas and errors (Beck) or in irrational beliefs (Ellis) but...

WHAT DOES REALLY WORK WHEN THIS TECHNIQUE IS APPLIED?

• **There is not enough published processes research** in the area. A new research agenda on this topic was initiated by our group (Froján, Calero & Montaña, 2006); new results are presented in this work.

• **Our study is based on previous contributions:**

✓ Hamilton (1988), Rosenfarb (1992), Follete, Naugle & Callaghan (1996): therapeutic change consists of shaping new behaviours through therapeutic relationship.

✓ Poppen (1989): restructuring technique consists of changing erroneous client's rules.

✓ Skinner (1957), Staats (1967): verbal pavlovian and instrumental conditioning

PROCEDURE

✓ We contacted the clinical centre to obtain its collaboration. Therapists and clients gave their informed consent for the recordings.

✓ A semi-hidden camera was used to record clinical sessions. Restructuring fragments recordings were selected and transformed from a VHS to a MPEG format.

✓ One psychologist observed, coded and registered the 18 fragments.

✓ Unique case study methodology, figures and descriptive statistics

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SAMPLE

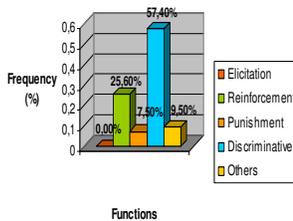
✓ 18 recordings of fragments of cognitive-restructuring technique from 8 different cases

✓ 6 behavioural therapists from private clinical centres in Madrid (Spain) participated in the study

✓ Total fragments duration: 300 min.

✓ Mean of fragments duration: 20 m.14 s.

MEAN FREQUENCY OF EVENT FUNCTIONS



INSTRUMENTS AND VARIABLES

• **Variable: therapists' verbal behaviour**, comprised of 7 levels based on the basic behavioural operations. Registering was made using an **observational code** elaborated by the authors. Here are the definitions of therapist's verbal behaviour functions:

• **Reinforcement:** verbalizations that show agreement with, acceptance of and/or admiration for the behaviour shown by the client.

• **Punishment:** verbalizations that indicate disagreement with, disapproval of and/or rejection of the behaviour shown by the client.

• **Discriminative:** verbalizations that occasion a client's behaviour (verbal or non verbal) followed by reinforcement or punishment.

• **Information:** verbalization by the therapist that transmits his or her theoretical and/or clinical knowledge to the client.

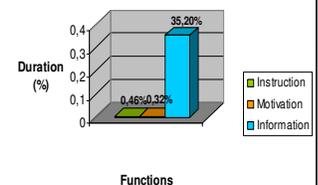
• **Motivation:** verbalization by the therapist that highlights the benefits derived from a given behaviour shown by the client or the costs of maintaining a dysfunctional behaviour.

• **Instruction:** guidelines offered by the therapist with the aim of promoting a certain behaviour in the client outside the clinical context.

• **Elicitation:** verbalization by the therapist that elicits an observable emotional response or a verbalization referring to its appearance in a covered up way by the client.

• **Software The Observer XT**

MEAN DURATION OF STATE FUNCTIONS

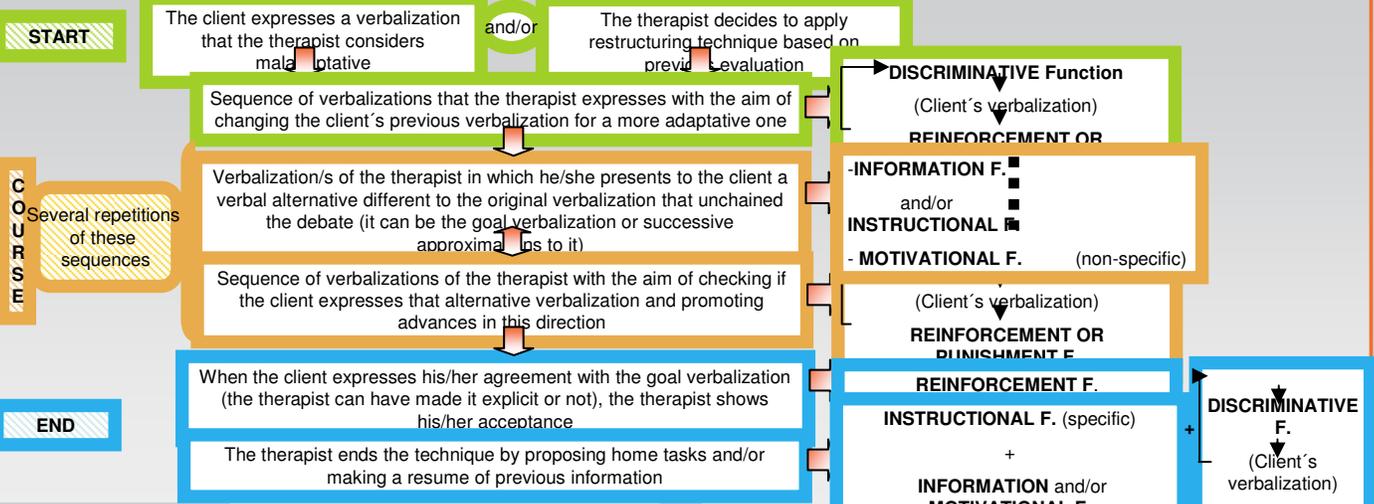


RESULTS

PHASES

TOPOGRAPHY

FUNCTIONAL SEQUENCES



CONCLUSIONS

-This **new methodology** has been demonstrated to be **useful** to analyze cognitive restructuring technique

-Is there a **shaping process** of client's new verbalizations during debate? **Gradual changes** do happen but we must be careful if we use technical vocabulary

- In a long time period this type of research would **benefit Clinical Psychology**: a more systematic and effective application of restructuring technique is possible

- **Future improvements:** sub-categories for information and motivational functions; category system for client's

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