Group Treatment for OCD: Preliminary Evaluation of Treatment Effectiveness and Client Perceptions of Change

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INTRODUCTION

Growing data on effectiveness of ACT for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).

Sense of shame and isolation common in those with OCD can make group treatment particularly helpful.

Purpose

- Examine effectiveness of ACT-based outpatient group treatment for those with OCD symptoms.
- Understand process of change from clients’ perspective - can inform therapy process.

METHODS

Treatment

Psychoeducational material:

- Values
- Acceptance
- Willingness
- Traps of language
- Defusion
- Committed action

Participation and interaction encouraged.

Participants

- $N = 7$, age range 20-65
- No exclusions based on prior treatment.
- Pre, post, and follow-up data - Obsessive Compulsive Inventory (OCI).
- Client feedback - Helpful Aspects of Treatment (HAT)
- Thematic analysis conducted by authors independently; collaboratively agreed on themes.

RESULTS

Themes from Client Feedback - HAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Exemplars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance/ Safety</td>
<td>• Feeling acceptance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Being able to speak about my experiences… without judgment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of Community/Felling</td>
<td>• It allowed me to feel that truly others understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understood/ Helping Others</td>
<td>• Feeling part of a community. It felt fantastic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I feel like I was helping others and not just myself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Realizations/ Insights</td>
<td>• It made me more aware of my issues with avoidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Concept of quicksand helped put the thoughts/compulsions into a more understandable way of thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Relationship to Thoughts/ Feelings</td>
<td>• The difference between evaluation and description and focussing on description.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The quicksand metaphor helped me recognize and recall the necessity of allowing myself to feel anxious.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>• Relief now that I shared, and people related weight has lifted.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Helped me feel more willing to put the practices into effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Toward Values/ Future Direction</td>
<td>• Realizing what is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Helped me to move in the right direction to achieve my goals and meet my values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average and Individual OCI Scores

DISCUSSION

- ACT-based group treatment promising for OCD, with individual treatment or as primary treatment.
- Group cohesion and support is likely an important mechanism of change needing further investigation.
- Future research should compare ACT-based individual vs. group treatment.
- Limitations: small sample, lack of random assignment and control group.