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.

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### 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.

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### RESULTS

**Themes from Client Feedback - HAT**

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

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### 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.