

FORMATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM IN PSYCHOTHERAPY: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

PROGRAMA DE FORMACIÓN Y ENTRENAMIENTO EN PSICOTERAPIA: FUNDAMENTOS TEÓRICOS E IMPLEMENTACIÓN

Pablo Rafael Santangelo

Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, Facultad de Psicología. Argentina

Fundación Aiglé, Argentina

CAPsi, Centro de Asistencia Psicológica

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5551-2923>

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Extended Summary:

The formation and Training Program in Psychotherapy composes one of the trainings available in the Faculty of Psychology belonging to the National University of Mar del Plata (UNMdP), Argentina. This program instructs and trains novels psychotherapists, initiating them into patient care and offering them clinical supervision and postgraduate courses. Both therapist's training and client care are provided free of charge. A systematic follow-up of psychotherapists and patients is carried out throughout the entire process. This process is articulated with a research project called "Psychotherapy and Clinical Supervision: skills, therapeutic competencies and treatment outcomes" of the UNMdP, which is in charge of doing all evaluations of clients and psychotherapists.



The four most widely used methods to improve the effectiveness of the therapist are supervision, continuing education, dissemination of evidence-based treatments, and feedback systems for the results. Core competencies in psychotherapy include professionalism, reflective practice, validated knowledge, interpersonal skills, cultural diversity, ethical behavior, and interdisciplinary skills.

The program encompasses different modules: a) Continuous theoretical training through different courses; b) work with clinical material such as case vignettes, session audios, and written case studies. These summarize a complete course of therapy with reflections on the psychotherapeutic process; c) Formulation of cases, where professionals learn to articulate validated knowledge with the uniqueness of each client; d) Appropriate response capacity, favoring professionals who can make an optimal adjustment to the characteristics and condition of the patient; e) Deliberated practice, which involves observing the psychotherapist's performance, obtaining expert feedback, setting small incremental learning objectives beyond the graduate's capacity, repetitive testing of specific competencies, and continuous evaluation; f) Humbleness, key to the training process, which implies honesty, an accurate self-assessment and an orientation centered on the people in treatment / supervision situations; g) Multicultural competence, favoring in psychotherapists the ability to get actively involved and work effectively with a diversity of clients; h) Psychotherapy, graduates practice psychotherapy in different neighborhoods of Mar del Plata, Argentina; i) Supervision, which is essential for psychotherapist care, therapeutic competences development and clients wellbeing protection.

Psychotherapy: Graduates who are part of the program provide psychotherapeutic care in different neighborhoods of Mar del Plata, Argentina. In the training program, the psychotherapy offered consists of two parts: an admissions process and the psychotherapeutic process.

Admission process: psychotherapists carefully evaluate potential client and the resources available to help them. In these initial evaluations, psychotherapists appraise motivation to change, possibilities of the psychotherapeutic process to achieve changes and improve quality of life, expectations from psychotherapy, psychological resources, psychopathological and diagnostic characteristics, preferences, and culture. In addition, psychotherapist assesses symptoms and personality through questionnaires such as OQ-45.2, ORS and PID 5. Admission process end with an agreement on the objectives to be achieved and the resources to be used, as well as the estimated duration of the therapeutic process.

Psychotherapeutic process: Once the initial evaluation is finished, the treatment itself begins. In the third and eighth treatment interviews, we evaluated whether there have been changes since the beginning of the process regarding the symptoms (OQ-45.2; ORS) and therapeutic alliance (WAI-SR-A; SRS V .3.0). At the end of the treatment, we administer all the instruments again. These instruments add objective information about the client's progress to the daily clinical evaluations made to adjust interventions. All the therapists record the entire psychotherapeutic

process of each patient in an admission file and a follow-up file.

Supervision: Since clinical supervision is the instructional strategy that characterizes the preparation of mental health professionals the most, the program has a weekly supervision space of an hour and a half. It is done in small groups. These groups change every two years, that is, all supervisors rotate through all supervisors and they also share the supervisory experience with different colleagues. There are several models of supervision, including those based on the theory of psychotherapy, development, process models, combined models, transtheoretical, or problems, and common factors. The good exercise of supervision goes through all of these models. Supervision adapted to the characteristics of the psychotherapist and the client is carried out based on supervisor / supervised feedback, and client/ psychotherapist feedback.

Follow-up of Psychotherapists: Throughout the training, the therapists have monitored with different evaluations: a) Process evaluations on a day-to-day basis. Verbal information is requested about how they are feeling, what things they need and what should be changed so that everything works better; b) Content evaluation, each of the courses they take has its corresponding evaluation; and c) Administration of scales, which evaluate self-perception of therapeutic skills (CASES), supervisory relationship (S-SQR) and personal style of the therapist (EPT). The psychotherapists are continuously monitored.

Conclusion: The Formation and Training Program in Psychotherapy (Psychological Faculty, UNMDP), follows the guidelines of evidence-based psychotherapy. The psychotherapy that is provided is adapted to the characteristics and needs of the clients. It considers that continuous theoretical training, therapeutic competences development and supervision are essential to improve the results of psychotherapy. It is not enough to read up-to-date information to be an effective therapist. Instead, is also essential training that involves role-play, work with vignettes, listening to sessions, formulating cases, and presenting them, deliberate practice, and primarily clinical supervision. At the same time, any device that attempts to train therapists must include processes for evaluating professionals. This evaluation implies course exams, cases athenaeums, objective assessment of therapeutic competencies, and therapeutic skills. Finally, the most important evaluation is the one provided by clients from the outcomes of psychotherapy thrown by the questionnaires and comments on how they feel.