

Competency-based teaching concept for psychotherapeutic social skills in child and adolescent psychotherapy training

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Introduction

Psychotherapeutic social skills are essential for psychotherapy outcomes, making their training key in higher education. However, corresponding teaching concepts are lacking and the systematic, behavior-based assessment and training of social skills are scarce. With a new competency-based teaching concept we aim to systematically assess and train psychotherapeutic social skills in real-world simulations and to compare self-rated and behavior-based assessments.

Methods

1st year Master of Psychology students at University of Münster enrolled in the clinical program (N = 54) took part in three standardized 12-minute real-world simulations of outpatient psychotherapeutic treatment for children and adolescents. Simulations required students to engage with trained simulation persons (SP). Each simulation focused on one psychotherapeutic professional skill (e.g., diagnostics) and one social skill (agency skill, communion skill, interpersonal resilience; see Breil et al., 2024). Behavior-based assessments were achieved by rating students' social skill performance on a standardized scale with skill-specific, empirically derived behavioral anchors by trained, external raters. Directly after each simulation, students self-rated their social skills performance on a visual analogue scale (range 1 to 6).

Results

All participants completed all three simulations, there was no pre-terminal ending of any simulation by either students or SP. Students attributed learning success primarily to the real-world simulations. In real-world simulations, students' mean self-rated social skills performance concerning the agency skill and the skill interpersonal resilience differed significantly from external ratings.

Discussion

First results suggest good feasibility of the teaching concept and relevance for individual learning success in social skills. Differences in self- and externally rated behavior-based assessment of social skills performance highlights the need for future research to understand the role of different assessment methods for individual skill development in competency-based teaching for prospective psychotherapists.

Is the first author also the speaker?

Yes

If first author is not the speaker, please indicate speaker's name here:

Please indicate up to five keywords regarding the content of your contribution

competency-based teaching, psychotherapeutic social skills, behavior-based assessment, real-world simulations, feedback

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