

Achieving fidelity with adults with complex intellectual disabilities

Background

Use of the fidelity measure (Parham et al 2011) is essential for high quality ASI treatment; however, there is a lack of research regarding achievement of fidelity for adults with complex disabilities.

Clinical experience has found achieving fidelity with this population challenging. Barriers include time to build a rapport, communication difficulties, and challenges encouraging people who spend large portions of time following a structured routine/schedule to have fun and make active choices.

Aim: A retrospective review of clinical practice explored the relationship between apparent achievement of fidelity in individual ASI sessions and goal achievement.

References

Kiresuk, TJ, Smith, A, Cardillo, JE. (1994) Goal attainment scaling: Applications, theory and measurement. Hillsdale: Erlbaum.

Parham, LD, Roley, SS, May-Benson, TA, Koomar, J, Brett-Green, B, Burke, JP, Cohen, ES, Mallioux, Z, Miller, LJ, Schaaf, RC. (2011) Development of a fidelity measure for research on the effectiveness of Ayres Sensory Integration Intervention. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 65(2) 133-142.

Method

A service-evaluation methodology reviewed data from 8 adults who received weekly ASI therapy for a minimum of 10 weeks.

Observers (OTs and OT students) scored fidelity for 1 session per participant. Due to staff availability, scorers did not have formal ASI training but received training about scoring fidelity from an ASI therapist. The therapist self-scored fidelity following each session.

Note - This is not compliant with the fidelity measure, as raters were not SI trained, however it made best use of available resources.

Despite lack of formal SI training, scoring by non-SI trained raters demonstrated a high level of consistency with therapist self-scoring.

Achievement of fidelity and achievement of goals set using the Goal Attainment Scale were compared. (Kiresuk, Smith and Cardillo 1994).

Findings

Fidelity compared to goal achievement. A direct correlation was found between achievement of fidelity and achievement of goals.

Conclusion

This small-scale exploratory service evaluation of treatment by one therapist found that perceived achievement of fidelity resulted in increased achievement of goals. Whilst too small to be statistically significant, this finding suggests further exploration of the relationship between achievement of fidelity and achievement of goals would be beneficial. Plans are in place at Seashell Trust for larger service evaluation incorporating independent evaluation of fidelity by trained ASI therapists.



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