

MIXED-METHOD RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROCESS OF BIOENERGETIC THERAPY IN FOSTERING EMBODIMENT AND “GROUNDED TRANSFORMATIVE NARRATIVES”



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1.INTRODUCTION

Given the lack of research on the effectiveness of Bioenergetic Analysis in the field of Psychotherapy Research, the aim of this research project is to analyze the process of change fostered by Bioenergetic Analysis in the hypothesis that the process of Bioenergetic Analysis, in combining a bodily, analytic and relational understanding of the person by a dynamic and energetic epistemology, may foster the connection between bodily processes and symbolic verbal processes within a narrative elaboration of the client's experience that arises from a deep understanding and grounding in her/his own embodied experience and history of character structures.

2.HYPOTHESIS

We hypothesize that the process of Bioenergetic Analysis, in combining a bodily, analytic and relational understanding of the person by a dynamic and energetic epistemology, may foster this connection between sub-symbolic bodily processes and symbolic verbal processes. That is, the symbolic and narrative elaboration of the client's experience arise from a deep understanding and grounding in her/his own embodied experience and history of character structures. This narrative is therefore an embodied, grounded, narrative, that corresponds with the “shape” of the somatosensory, affective and cognitive history of the client; therefore an effective Bioenergetic Therapy may foster effective changes in the dysfunctional and disconnected narratives of the client, as far as in her/his energetic processes and structures (Lowen, 1958).

3.METHOD AND TOOLS

Within a mixed-method research design, two 20-session Bioenergetic Therapies will be evaluated by an in-depth analysis of the impact of the bodily techniques on the psychological processes of the client, from the perspective of two different constructs and their measures for the analysis of the mechanisms of change in psychotherapy:

- 1) The software for the analysis of Referential Process (Bucci, 1997; Bucci and Maaskit, 2007)
- 2) the Innovative Moments Coding System (Gonçalves, 2011)
- 3) the analysis of a physiological measure(Skin conductance).

To reach a complete understanding of the therapeutic process, outcome measures of the overall symptomatology(SCL-90) and the emotion regulation(TAS-20 and ERQ) will be evaluated as well.

4.RESULTS

We expect results to shed light on the specificity of the processes of change fostered by BA. Process research by the means of the Innovative Moments coding system and the software for the analysis of RA should help us to detect the characteristic of the psychological processes elicited. Outcome measures should help us to read these results in terms of effective improvements and achievements reached by BA. We expect these improvements go in the direction of showing high quality Innovative moments detected by the IMCS, and in narratives coded as Reflective by the software for the analysis of Referential Process. Moreover, we expect also the outcome measure to show an improvement in the overall symptomatology and in the emotion regulation measures.

- Results will be discussed in proper scientific papers with reference to two overarching scopes:
1. disseminating the principles and mechanisms of BA in the wider community of psychotherapy researchers
 2. reflecting, within the BA scientific community, on the effectiveness of the treatment.

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