What are the experiences of one-to-one therapy with clinical psychologists? Views from people with Learning Disabilities.
Outline

Background of the study
  Aims
  Method
  Results
  Clinical implications
People with LD are more likely to receive mental health diagnoses (Doody et al., 1998) and self-harm (Emerson et al., 2001) compared to the general population.


Therapeutic approaches are often adapted by clinical psychologists to meet the needs of this population (Sams, Collins, & Reynolds, 2006), but there are few studies that explore how clients perceive the adaptations.
Aims

- How do clients perceive the role of clinical psychologists?
- What do clients consider important in therapy?
- What approaches from clinical psychologists have clients particularly valued?
- What else would clients like clinical psychologists to consider during the course of therapy?
Method

- Three participants recruited from Adult Community LD Teams (NHS): Michaelangelo, Celine & Sam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychologist</th>
<th>Participants identified</th>
<th>Reply slip returned</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Declined = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No answer = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Participated = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist 6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist 7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Semi-structured interviews
- Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
Results

Four themes emerged:

1. The psychologist was an outsider and extended voice who helped me talk about my feelings

2. Psychologists' person-centred approach facilitated the therapeutic relationship

3. Seeing the psychologist helped me gain confidence

4. Psychologists being placed in multiple and conflicting roles
Theme 1: The psychologist was an outsider and extended voice who helped me talk about my feelings

Michaelangelo: “It was another voice...outside the peers I knew...it was nice to know that it wasn't a family or a friend...for me it was a really good thing...it was like I came to life in these sessions.”

Celine: “[talking] is a lot easier”

Celine: “Because my husband he needs he know what's going on.”

Sam: “so happy... talk about it” (pointed towards his keyworker)
Theme 2: Psychologists' person-centred approach facilitated the therapeutic relationship

- **Person-centred approach**
  - Celine: “[the psychologist was] brilliant... [he/she] makes me laugh, [he/she] was very nice to me”

- **Qualities of psychologists**
  - Michaelangelo: “Some don't speak clearly, and they don't...try to understand that disability, but I appreciate psychologists [that] have spoken at a level that I can understand”
  - Celine: “because I did all my drawings with [previous psychologist], but [most recent psychologist] doesn't do that with me though... [they were] just asking questions, on [their] notepad”

- **It was difficult to challenge psychologists**
  - Celine: “because [they] had told me erm, we do those weekly diaries thing and I didn't fill those yet so...I just, I can't get my head to it though”
Theme 3: Seeing the psychologist helped me gain confidence

- **Change happened very quickly**
  - Celine: “I am feeling better yes... it was the work together”
  - Sam: “[they did] good job... help me... [feel a] bit happy”

- **Confidence developed through psychological therapy**
  - Michaelangelo: “I told [the psychologist] my goal, and we were trying to work on that... [and now] I'm proud of myself for being able to go out and do my own thing”
  - Celine: “speak with confidence, like what we're doing now with you”

- **Participants had confidence to manage difficulties post-therapy**
  - Michaelangelo: “within the last weeks it’s been difficult but I’ve been thinking through things that’s been more positive and thinking what’s helped me”
Theme 4: Psychologists being placed in multiple and conflicting roles

Michaelangelo: “some people don't understand what psychologists do”

Theme two: psychologists being friendly, attentive and kind

Celine: “it's good to have a friend to talk to”

Goodbyes
Michaelangelo: “to be honest that was really really horrible...I kept it all in until I got home”

Sam: “sad... keep in... don't show people”

Celine: “I think it's alright...because I've got [their] number, I can ring [them]”
Clinical implications

- CPs to provide space to explore adaptations made & any difficulties in completing tasks.
  - Extra sessions: consolidate learning, a space of encouragement, support (Kroese et al., 2005).
  - Recording therapy sessions (Macaskill, 1996).
  - Sending therapeutic letters can have a similar function (Freed et al., 2010).

- CPs can focus sessions on confidence building as a core central activity.
  - Encouraging clients to try new activities.
  - CPs can model assertive behaviour which would increase clients’ confidence (Goleniowska, 2014).

- CPs to prepare clients for the end of therapy.
  - Marking the ending: acknowledge the relationship, a review of the therapy, leave clients feeling proud of their progress (Chapman & Rosenthal, 2016).
  - Ground rules, which are often used in group therapy for people with LD (Hollomotz, 2009), can be adopted in individual therapy which may mitigate role confusion.
Thank you for listening!
References