MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES OF THE COUNSELING PROCESS FROM MULTIPLLE

PERSPECTIVES

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Meaningful Experiences of the Counseling Process from Multiple Perspectives

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Abstract

The counseling process and relationship are inherently interconnected, and each person involved, or observing, has a unique perspective on what is significant. Thus, it is important for researchers to examine this process holistically for a more complete understanding of the counseling process and relationship. The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of counselors-in-training (CITs) and clients in the counseling process with respect to what was meaningful, and the strength of the therapeutic relationship using a mixed methods approach. The following four research questions were a guide for this study: (a) What do CITs and clients experience as most meaningful in counseling? (b) What are the similarities and differences of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling? (c) How does the strength of the therapeutic relationship correspond to the depth of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling? (d) What are the similarities and differences of an observer's perspective and the experiences of the CIT and client of what is meaningful in counseling? These questions were explored through qualitative phenomenological interviews to capture the experiences of CITs and clients in a given counseling session, a quantitative instrument to measure the therapeutic relationship, and participant observation to gain an observer's perspective of the counseling session. Data analysis of the interviews revealed several themes of meaningful experiences for clients, CITs, and observer, with many similarities and some differences. Themes for clients were as follows: Counseling Relationship, Goals, Insight, Immediacy, Emotion, and Reflections on Counseling. Themes for CITs were: Counseling Relationship, Goals, Insight, Immediacy, Emotion, Nonverbals, Transference and Counter

Transference, and CIT Negotiating the Counseling Process and their Role. Finally, observer themes were: Depth of Congruence, Goals, Insight, Immediacy, Nonverbals and Intuition, and Rescuing. There seems to be a slight connection between the strength of the therapeutic relationship and depth of meaningful experiences. More often than not, the stronger the therapeutic relationship, the greater depth of meaningful experiences of participants, however, these results are inconclusive. Findings from this research have implications for CITs, counselors, and counselor educators and supervisors.

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Preface

The two manuscripts in Chapters 4 and 5 are co-authored with Gerard Lawson and Penny L.

Burge.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The counseling relationship and process are complex and dynamic. "The counseling process comprises client, counselor and relationship factors. Therefore, it is problematic for practitioners when researchers identify and examine these components as separate and unrelated entities" (Paulson, Everall, & Stuart, 2001, p.60). Counseling is a relationship between at least two people, and therefore the nature of that relationship will have an impact on the counseling process (Bennun, Hahlweg, Schindler, & Langlotz, 1986). While in the same relationship and the same process, clients and counselors each have their own unique perspective on their experiences. Consequently, it is vital to elicit different sources' experiences and to consider each essential, combining to create a more complete picture of what is happening in the process (Elliott & James, 1989). Observer accounts offer a compelling perspective on the process as well. Elliott and James assert that observers can identify subtleties, unconscious occurrences, and experiences that clients may be less willing to report, and that counselors are unaware of.

The field of counseling can benefit from researchers holistically approaching the exploration of the relationship and process of counseling. Bordin (1979) conceptualized the therapeutic relationship in a way that considers the interaction between the therapist and client, as well as the interrelatedness of the relationship with the process. Counseling has been shown to work regardless of theoretical orientation (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1996), treatment modality, or presenting issue of the client, and much of the success in counseling can be attributed to the strength of the therapeutic relationship (Carpenter, Escudero, & Rivett, 2008; Horvath, 2000; Horvath & Symonds, 1991). Given the clear significance of the therapeutic relationship and its impact on counseling process and success, researchers should continue to discover more in this

area (Hill & Knox, 2009; Nelson & Neufeldt, 1996; Paulson et al., 2001; Ward, Linville, & Rosen, 2007), including eliciting participant experiences (Blow et al., 2009; Elliott & James, 1989; Llewelyn, 1988; Moon, Dillon, & Sprenkle, 1990; Sells, Smith, & Moon, 1996).

If counselors can recognize discrepancies between their own and their clients' experiences of the process, then they may become more aware and be able to use this information to build stronger alliances (Elliott & Shapiro, 1992). Further, if counselors can evaluate what they are doing based on participant perceptions and experiences, they can become more effective counselors and provide more effective counseling, using participant experiences as a guide for therapy (Elliott & James, 1989; Singer, 2005).

Problem Statement

Researchers have shown that counseling is effective (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1996), yet there is still relatively little research on the process of counseling (Paulson et al., 2001; Ward et al., 2007). Multiple perspectives of the process are needed to gain a more complete depiction (Elliott & James, 1989; Moon et al., 1990; Sells et al., 1996). Further, comparisons between counselor and client perspectives are valuable in evaluating therapeutic process, and few studies address this (Sells et al., 1996). Specifically, Elliott and Shapiro (1992) call for comparison between multiple perspectives of significant events in session, and Bennum et al. (1986) call for an examination of in-session subjective experience combined with an examination of the therapeutic relationship. Thus far, researchers who have examined session impact on a client have mostly asked what is helpful and the way it was helpful (Elliott & James, 1989), or what was hindering (Henkelman, 2004 as cited in Henkelman & Paulson, 2006). In the current study, I have examined what is meaningful to clients and counselors-in-training (CITs), while avoiding

the value judgment of the terms helpful and hindering, eliciting more candid responses from participants.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the experience of counselors-in-training (CITs) and clients in the counseling process with respect to the strength of the therapeutic relationship using a mixed methods approach. This was accomplished through qualitative phenomenological interviews to capture the experiences of CITs and clients in a given counseling session, a quantitative instrument to measure the therapeutic relationship, and participant observation to gain an observer's perspective of the counseling session. The ultimate goal of this study was to contribute to the understanding of counselors, counselor educators, and supervisors of the counseling process with respect to strength of therapeutic relationship. Results shed light on whether the strength of the working alliance corresponds to the depth of meaningful occurrences in session.

The proposed study addresses four research questions: (a) What do CITs and clients experience as most meaningful in counseling? (b) What are the similarities and differences of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling? (c) How does the strength of the therapeutic relationship correspond to the depth of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling? (d) What are the similarities and differences of an observer's perspective and the experiences of the CIT and client of what is meaningful in counseling?

Methodology

A mixed methods design was used to describe the experience of CITs and clients in the counseling process with respect to the strength of their rating of the therapeutic relationship. The four research questions were answered through analysis of phenomenological in-depth

interviews (Seidman, 2006), participant observation (Jorgensen, 1989), and the scoring of the

Working Alliance Inventory (WAI; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). Participants in this study were

CITs and clients from the Counselor Education clinic at the Virginia Tech Roanoke Center. The

CITs were completing their practicum experience in the clinic, and in the third semester of their

first year of the Master's Counselor Education program at Virginia Tech (VT). The practicum

entails 100 hours of clinical experience in a clinical mental health setting and a school setting

simultaneously with intensive supervision, and is the first time students worked with actual

clients. Practicum students have completed two semesters of graduate coursework in counseling

prior to this point in their training. The clients were students from Virginia Western Community

College (VWCC), who were enrolled in a Human Services Associate's Degree program. In

order to experience the counseling process, and to fulfill course requirements, these students had

the option to voluntarily take part in at least three counseling sessions at the VT Counselor

Education clinic. I served as the observer of the counseling sessions. I am familiar with the

Practicum experience, as I have served as a clinical supervisor for this process for the past two

years. I did not know any of the CITs or clients personally, with one exception, though I had

been introduced to the CITs as a group on two occasions.

Identifying Terminology

Three terms used in this study warrant explanation here, meaningful, depth, and

therapeutic relationship. In addition to these clarifications, it is important to note that many

terms will be used interchangeably, including counseling relationship and therapeutic

relationship, counseling and therapy, counseling process and therapeutic process, and counselor

and therapist.

Meaningful: Meaningful experiences in a counseling session are defined specifically for this study as experiences that are important, significant, or moving to the participant as has been described by Mahrer and Boulet (1999). Meaningful experiences may be cognitive, emotional, relational, or behavioral in nature and were defined by participants and by the observer. An example of a meaningful experience in a counseling session may be when a counselor shares his or her authentic reaction of a client with them.

Depth: Depth of meaningful experiences in a counseling session was determined by the researcher following these criteria given by Lyddon (1990) in describing common change factors in counseling: the amount of hope clients apparently glean from the experience, the amount of emotion displayed coupled with cognitive learning, and the amount of apparent new learning experienced.

Therapeutic Relationship: "…the totality of the interpersonal field between the therapist and client and include in this term the concepts of the real relationship, the working or therapeutic alliance, and transference and countertransference" (Hill & Knox, 2009, p.14).

Delimitations

It is important to describe the bounds of this study. Participants include practicum students in a Counselor Education master's program who are near the beginning of their counselor training and clients who were enrolled in a community college helping skills course at the time of data collection. Therefore, the focus is on beginning counselors, and other CITs and their supervisors will likely receive the most direct benefit from this study.

Limitations

There are limitations to this study that need to be identified. The most significant limitation is the use of a convenient sample of participants from the Counselor Education clinic

at Virginia Tech. With this convenient sample of new CITs and clients who were fulfilling a course requirement, transferability to experienced counselors, the variety of clients they serve, and in general, the larger field of counseling is limited. My role as a doctoral student in the Counselor Education program at VT, while the researcher and the observer in this study, was explored through reflexivity and with my community of practice throughout the life of this study. Further, a single session is not representative of the entire course of counseling in the way of either process or the relationship. Therefore, the findings are not necessarily applicable to the process with respect to the therapeutic relationship over the course of counseling for a client-CIT pair; rather it captures a segment of time within the relationship. Finally, much of the data collected in this study is self-report of subjective experience. Therefore, even though great effort was made to establish trust and a safe environment for the interviews, it is possible that participants withheld information, or relayed experiences in a socially desirable light.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce and provide an outline for the study. The clear importance of the therapeutic relationship in counseling success, the inevitable connection between the therapeutic relationship and counseling process, and the importance in considering participant experiences in evaluating process, are key cornerstones in this study. Chapter two includes a review of the relevant literature, and Chapter three details the methodology employed in the study. Chapter four is comprised of the first manuscript, *Meaningful Experiences in the Counseling Process,* and Chapter five contains the second manuscript, *Multiple Perspectives of the Counseling Process: Implications for Supervision*, both of which hold the results of this study. Chapter six includes findings that were beyond the scope of the two manuscripts, and Chapter seven holds the conclusions of the study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Scope of Review

      This chapter provides a review of the literature relevant to this study. There are two main sections to this chapter, therapeutic relationship and participant perceptions of counseling. Within the discussion of the therapeutic relationship, theory and applicable research is reviewed, followed by recommendations from the researchers pertaining to practice, training, and further research. The discussion of participant perceptions of counseling consists of the following: importance in considering those perceptions, existing studies of client perceptions, existing studies of client and counselor perceptions, existing studies of client, counselor, and observer perceptions, and recommendations from the researchers for practice, training, and further research. The chapter will conclude with a brief synopsis and direction for the present study.

Therapeutic Relationship

      Researchers have shown that counseling works regardless of theoretical orientation (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1996). There is relatively little difference in treatment outcomes or success rates among the different treatment models and theoretical approaches (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). Instead, a great deal of success in treatment can be attributed to common factors across treatment approaches, one of which is the therapeutic relationship. Common factors in counseling research refer to the factors that affect outcome that are common across all modes of counseling approaches and theories, and that are examined in the research of the counseling process (Ward et al., 2007). Common factors consist of extratherapeutic events, of which 40% of change in therapy is attributed, therapeutic relationship, of which 30% of change can be attributed, hope and expectancy (15% of change), and therapeutic technique (15% of change).

Extratherapeutic factors include age, gender, and race of the client, family dynamics, environment, and client motivation for change, among other things. The therapeutic relationship consists of the bonds, goals, and tasks of the working alliance. Hope and expectancy encompasses the level of expectation from the client that counseling will be helpful. Finally, therapeutic technique refers to the model the counselor is working from, including theory and interventions (Blow et al., 2009; Ward et al., 2007). Of these common factors, the therapeutic relationship is the largest contributor to outcome that can be attended to in counseling.

In fact, it is the strength of the therapeutic relationship, even early on in the process, that predicts success, regardless of the treatment modality of the counselor or the clinical issue of the client (Carpenter et al., 2008; Horvath, 2000; Horvath & Symonds, 1991). Therefore, the therapeutic relationship is the key factor in the success of treatment (Hill & Knox, 2009; Marziali, 1984). Specifically, poor alliances lead to poor outcomes, including premature termination, and good alliances lead to good therapeutic process and outcome. For this reason, counselors' priority is to establish a collaborative, strong therapeutic bond with their clients (Audet & Everall, 2010). Hill and Knox (2009) assert that since research has shown much of therapeutic outcome is reliant on the therapeutic relationship, counselors should be more deliberate about forming and maintaining, as well as researching, the relationship. However, since the significance of the therapeutic relationship has now been widely accepted (Audet & Everall, 2010), recent research in this area is limited.

A good counseling relationship consists of an empathic counselor, an emotional bond between the client and counselor, the enlistment of the client in productive working alliance, and mutual agreement on the direction of counseling (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1996). The therapeutic relationship, like any other relationship, is dynamic. Clients and counselors influence and impact

each other in session. Therefore, the alliance is about the ways in which each affects each other, and about the establishment and maintenance of a relationship (Bordin, 1979; Halstead, Brooks, Goldberg, & Fish, 1990). Further, the therapeutic relationship, involving contributions from both parties, is a partnership in working towards the goals in therapy (Bachelor, 1991; Bordin, 1979).

The creation of a solid therapeutic alliance allows the counselor to take risks with clients, and provides an environment where mistakes and missed opportunities can be used to therapeutic advantage (Blow et al., 2009). Rhodes, Hill, Thompson, and Elliott (1994) conducted a qualitative study of here-and-now experiences in the therapeutic relationship. The study specifically looked at instances where clients felt misunderstood by their counselors. In cases where the clients were able to share their concern with the counselor, and when the counselor was responsive either with an apology or understanding and explanation, the client felt validated and the therapeutic relationship was enhanced. However, in cases where the client either did not feel safe to bring up their discomfort, or in the few cases where the client did bring up the concern, but was not met with understanding by the counselor, the therapeutic relationship was terminated by the client following the incident. It is evident that when miscommunication and discomfort can be openly discussed and a mutual repair process can take place, the result is a strengthened therapeutic bond, increased self awareness, and relational learning.

Developing a good working alliance early in treatment is crucial to a successful outcome. However, the process of the relationship is not linear. Instead, there are stressors and fractures along the way that need to be tended to (Horvath, 2000). Though, if a collaborative alliance has been formed early, these stressors can be dealt with in a way that reinforces the relationship and

is of therapeutic benefit. Mutual respect, trust and personal commitment of both parties are necessary ingredients for this to happen.

Theory

Bordin (1979) developed the concept of the therapeutic working alliance and argued that the strength of the working alliance is responsible for much of the change experienced by clients in counseling. The working alliance, as Bordin describes it, is a goodness of fit issue, which partially is attributed to personal characteristics of the therapist and client. He defined the working alliance as consisting of three domains: goal, task, and bond. More thoroughly the three domains are, the agreement between therapist and client on goals of treatment, the assignment of tasks (i.e. a therapeutic contract), and the development of a bond.

The compatibility of the client and counselor specific to the three domains of the working alliance is critical. Clients are typically motivated to enter into therapy by goals, or stressors in their lives they wish to alleviate, not by the quest for self-reflection. The task domain includes the focus and direction therapy will take, what approach the therapist works from, and what will be expected of the client and therapist. Bordin (1979) states the importance of the therapist linking the tasks of therapy to the client's struggles in an effort to move towards the established goals of treatment. Therapists and clients must both be in agreement on and invested in the tasks and goals for a strong working alliance (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). The execution of these two domains is dependent on the final domain, the bond, or relationship between therapist and client. The type of bond developed will depend on the approach of the therapist, as well as on the individuals in the room (Bordin, 1979). As a result, the weight of each domain in any given relationship will be different depending on this distinctive design, and will differ throughout the stages of the counseling process as well (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989).

Although Bordin's (1979) theory of the working alliance emerged from his psychoanalytic orientation, he argues that all therapeutic situations have working alliances at their core, and it is the strength of these relationships that is at least largely, if not wholly, responsible for the effectiveness. Bordin's conceptualization of the working alliance was the first to take into account the interaction between, and the interdependence of, the therapist and client, rather than seeing the relationship as something the therapist offers to the client. This unique perspective is what set Bordin's theory apart from the others (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). Another key difference in Bordin's idea of the working alliance is the interrelatedness of the relationship and counseling strategies and interventions. In other words, rather than seeing the relationship as a counseling strategy, the relationship is instead the medium through which everything else happens. Although other theorists have conceptualized the therapeutic relationship, Bordin's conceptualization is the chosen theory for this study for the reasons stated, as well as for its wide acceptance in counseling research (Blow et al., 2009; Halstead et al., 1990; Horvath, 2000; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989; Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Patton & Kivlighan, 1997).

Applicable Research

With the clear importance of the therapeutic relationship in the counseling process, many researchers have sought to understand more about the therapeutic relationship and its connection to process and treatment outcomes. Since this body of research is vast, only studies with specific relevance to the current study are reviewed here.

Halstead et al. (1990) explored how the working alliance is perceived by both clients and counselors, and whether that has a significant influence on their satisfaction with the alliance. The Working Alliance Inventory (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) was utilized in this study, and

additional items were added by the researchers to measure satisfaction with and importance of the alliance. Halstead et al. (1990) compared the perceptions of counselors and clients. Results indicated significant differences between counselors and clients on several dimensions of the alliance, including goal strength, task strength, bond importance, and task satisfaction. Specifically, clients rated all of these dimensions as more important than counselors did. Results showed no significant differences between counselors and clients on bond strength, goal importance, task importance, bond satisfaction, and goal satisfaction. Overall, clients and counselors had similar perceptions of the working alliance, but not on every aspect of the relationship. The strength of the working alliance was a significant predictor of satisfaction in the working alliance for both clients and counselors.

Bachelor (1991) conducted a study to compare and improve three working alliance measures, the Penn Helping Alliance Method, the Therapeutic Alliance Rating System, and the Vanderbilt Psychotherapy Scale, through client and therapist perceptions. Perceptions on alliance variables were collected at three points in the counseling process. Several additional measures were used to gauge improvement by pre and posttherapy difference scores of clients, therapists, and supervisors. Significantly high correlations among total scores of the three working alliance measures indicated they are measuring a similar construct. Results showed significant differences between client and therapist perceptions on several working alliance variables. Interestingly, when perceived by the client, the strongest determinants of improvement were positive therapist contributions, whereas when perceived by the therapist, the strongest determinants of improvement were positive client contributions. In general, clients perceived more positive alliance behaviors, both in themselves and in their therapists, than the therapists in the study perceived. Bachelor also found the therapeutic relationship to be a major

factor in positive outcome of therapy, and that the client's perception of the relationship was a better predictor of treatment outcome than the therapist's perception.

Marziali (1984) gathered client, counselor, and observer views of the therapeutic relationship using measures of alliance developed for this study following several counseling sessions. The researchers utilized psychiatric social workers as observers in this study. Results showed that counselors and clients rated each other both positively and negatively within a therapy session. In addition, clients, counselors, and observers were similar in their ratings of the therapeutic relationship. Finally, client and counselor ratings of his or her own and the other's positive contributions to the therapeutic relationship were predictors of change.

Horvath and Symonds (1991) conducted a meta-analysis to address questions about the strength of the relationship between the working alliance and outcome, and whether this relationship is influenced by who perceives it (i.e. client, counselor, or observer reports). The authors concluded in their review that there is a considerable link between the working alliance and outcome. Additionally, the authors found that the working alliance is equally as important across modes of therapy. Interestingly, a conclusive answer as to whether the source of the report had bearing on the relationship between working alliance and outcome was not found in this meta-analysis.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice from the Literature

Many suggestions have been made by researchers to attend to, enhance, and continue to learn about the therapeutic relationship. Recommendations address counseling, supervision and training, and research needs.

Implications for counselors from the research on the therapeutic relationship include the importance of tending to the relationship and in recognizing the possible differences in their own

and their clients' perceptions of the same relationship (Bachelor, 1991; Nelson & Neufeldt, 1996). On the front end, researchers suggest attention to the fit between clients and counselors, including possibly matching on demographics, attitudes and beliefs, and interpersonal style (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1996). Once counseling has begun, it is suggested that counselors use interventions to elicit the client's experience of the relationship and process (Bachelor, 1991). Counselors could work with clients on developing intrapersonal and interpersonal skills that would help build a positive working alliance, enhancing the therapeutic process (Halstead et al., 1990). Hill and Knox (2009) recommend directly talking about the alliance with clients. This communication can lead to healing in the therapeutic relationship, and hopefully transference of this healing and learning to other relationships in the clients' lives.

For counselors to be able to do these things effectively, supervision and training must focus on the therapeutic relationship as well. Counselors need be trained in how to establish and maintain strong therapeutic relationships that are sufficient to support change (Carpenter et al., 2008; Hill & Knox, 2009). Specifically, this training should entail how to create a safe environment, show empathy, respond to client concerns, and engage in immediacy and appropriate self-disclosure. Critical to this effort is self awareness of the counselor, which also should be emphasized in training. The supervisory relationship is an ideal forum to model these traits and skills, where trainees can take the learning from the supervisory relationship and transfer it to the therapeutic relationship (Hill & Knox, 2009).

Carpenter et al. (2008) took initiative in this realm by creating a training tool for the therapeutic relationship. The authors conducted a pilot study training Marriage and Family Therapy students in the therapeutic alliance, specifically in conceptual, observational, and executive skills. Students in the intervention group, trained in therapeutic alliance, showed

statistically significant improvement in knowledge of the therapeutic alliance. The control group showed no significant change. This provides evidence that training students in the intricacies of the therapeutic alliance in an intentional way is a productive endeavor.

Finally, given the empirical significance of the therapeutic relationship, continuing to discover in this area is important (Hill & Knox, 2009). Research needs to continue to ascertain more about the counseling strategies and maintenance and improvement of the therapeutic relationship (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1996). In this, both client and counselor perspectives are important to consider (Bachelor, 1991).

Participant Perceptions in Counseling

Although we know empirically that counseling is helpful (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1996), we still do not know a great deal about therapeutic process, or about what is happening in counseling that is contributing to positive outcomes (Paulson et al., 2001; Ward et al., 2007). Once therapy begins, it is difficult to separate what are client variables, counselor variables, and what is happening between them. All of these factors are interrelated and systemic at that point, making the dynamic therapeutic process difficult to study (Henkelman & Paulson, 2006). We can work to better understand therapeutic process as practitioners and researchers if we hear from clients about their experiences in counseling (Blow et al., 2009; Elliott & James, 1989). We can then evaluate what we are doing based on their experiences, leading to more effective counseling and counselors (Elliott & James, 1989; Singer, 2005). In addition, eliciting multiple perspectives of the therapeutic process creates a more complete picture (Elliott & James, 1989). Each participant has their own view of the relationship and the process, and all are important in attempting to understand what is happening of substance (Paulson et al., 2001). Rather than one

objective reality, there are multiple realities; presenting a need to hear from multiple perspectives (Sells et al., 1996).

Historically, much has been written about therapeutic process from the lens of the counselor, and only recently have researchers turned to focus on client experiences (Bowman & Marshall, 2000; Henkelman & Paulson, 2006; Paulson et al., 2001). Only clients can speak accurately to their experience, so this is a productive shift (Elliott & James, 1989). Likewise, only counselors can speak to their experience, and they are part of the equation as well. In addition, observers of the process can add a valuable perspective; often picking up on subtleties and unconscious occurrences, as well as uncomfortable experiences that clients may be less willing to report (Elliott & James, 1989). Therefore, capturing multiple perspectives of client, counselor, and observer, will enrich our understanding, as each is compelling and contributes something unique to our understanding (Elliott & James, 1989; Sells et al., 1996). Further, comparisons between counselor and client perspectives are valuable in evaluating therapeutic process, and few studies address this (Sells et al., 1996).

Client Perceptions

Historically largely ignored in the research of the counseling process, many researchers have recently answered the call to look at client perceptions of counseling (Bowman & Marshall, 2000; Henkelman & Paulson, 2006; Paulson et al., 2001; Thomas, 2006). This perspective assists researchers in understanding more fully the therapeutic process and what is happening of value for the client. For example, Ward et al. (2007) conducted a mixed methods study of client perceptions of therapy using a common factors lens. The mixed methods approach provided conflicting results within the study. Quantitative findings indicated that only the common factor of hope and expectancy contributed significantly to clients' perceptions of change and

helpfulness in therapy. The qualitative results however, show that clients value the therapeutic

relationship as the most helpful aspect of therapy.

Singer (2005) interviewed clients, and in addition, asked clients to write their own case

notes after each session in an effort to understand their perspective on the counseling process.

Findings indicated the therapeutic relationship to be the most important variable to clients in

counseling. Specifically, clients valued feeling honored, understood, and accepted by their

therapist. In addition, clients wanted their therapist to be fully present and engaged, and non-

judgmental. Clients wanted to feel safe and have a sense of trust with their therapist. It was also

evident in the findings that body language of the therapist was important to clients. Clients

indicated they wanted therapists to offer new options and viewpoints to them. Often clients had

their own theories of problem origination and ideas of changes that at times the therapist did

access and utilize. Results also confirm that clients have differing needs, for instance, some

clients prefer to receive advice and directives from therapists, while others wanted a

collaborative relationship. Most clients reported wanting suggestions versus directives. In

instances where client expectations and therapist style did not match, the client rarely brought

this up with the therapist. Therefore, unless therapists can elicit client expectations and

perceptions in counseling, they are unlikely to ever be aware of discrepancies, as clients are not

likely to initiate this discussion. Regarding the research procedure, clients enjoyed writing the

case notes, indicating it led to a better understanding of themselves and gave them an opportunity

to reflect on the process.

Paulson et al. (2001) explored clients' experiences of what is hindering and unhelpful in

counseling. They conducted in-depth interviews with adult clients and asked the questions:

What was unhelpful or hindering about counseling and what would have made counseling more

helpful? Paulson et al. enlisted other participants, who were also clients of the same clinic, to

sort and rate the statements derived from the interviews. The researchers assert this approach

rids the process of researcher subjectivity and bias. Three core themes were evident that clients

found hindering in counseling: (a) counselor variables, which included negative counselor

behaviors, insufficient direction, and lack of responsiveness; (b) external barriers, including

perceptions of power differential, cultural, age, and religious differences and structural barriers,

including scheduling, frequency, and regularly meeting needs of clinicians but not necessarily of

clients; and (c) client factors, including lack of readiness, low motivation, and not knowing what

they wanted in counseling. Findings also indicated that connection with the therapist is central to

therapeutic process. Specifically, a lack of connection had a negative impact on what occurred,

while connection allowed clients to engage in the process. Consequently, connection, or the

therapeutic relationship, is the medium through which the therapeutic process takes place.

Without a positive, strong connection, counseling will be ineffective or unhelpful.

      Bowman and Marshall (2000) looked at helpful and unhelpful aspects of couples' therapy

through the clients' lens. Participants indicated being given choices and ideas that fit for them

was helpful, as was developing new ways to conceptualize the couple relationship. Also,

working with a therapist whom the clients trust, who is validating, supportive, non-judgmental,

demonstrates genuine caring, uses therapist transparency, and creates a safe environment is

helpful. On the other hand, clients found the following unhelpful: unequal treatment of partners,

therapist talking when the clients want to talk, not enough time in sessions, and not enough

intentional transference of learning between sessions and life outside therapy. These invaluable

client perceptions were not known to the counselors in this study, yet if explored, could have

contributed greatly to the improvement of the process.

Client and Counselor Perceptions

Many researchers have seen value in assessing both client and counselor perceptions for a more complete view of what is happening in the counseling process. Understanding of therapeutic process must include the experience of all participants in that process (Llewelyn, 1988). Some studies have also compared client and counselor perceptions of the process, leading to conflicting results among studies (Hill, Helms, Spiegel, & Tichenor, 1988; Llewelyn, 1988). There is a stronger agreement among counselor and client perceptions of counseling in successful versus unsuccessful counseling (Hill et al., 1988), and more differences when counseling outcome is poor (Llewelyn, 1988).

Counseling psychologists examined client and counselor perceptions of what each experienced as most important in counseling (Martin & Stelmaczonek, 1988). Martin and Stelmaczonek found that clients and counselors identified the same occurrences as most important in counseling sessions. For clients, those most important were the expression of insight, which is defined as expressing or demonstrating a significant degree of insight or understanding; the provision of personal material, or providing personally revealing and significant material about self or interpersonal relationships; the expression of new ways of being or behaving, either in the session or through reports of extratherapy events; and the description and exploration of feelings, defined as describing and exploring the nature and meaning of feelings that are immediate and ongoing. Occurrences are listed in order of importance for clients. For counselors, the same events were important, but the final two were reversed in rank. Surprisingly, Martin and Stelmaczonek found that the therapeutic relationship was not identified by either counselors or clients in their study as an important factor in counseling sessions.

Thomas (2006) conducted research in the Marriage and Family Therapy field to explore the common factors in therapy, through counselor and client perceptions. Thomas found that clients and therapists perceived different factors contributed most to change in therapy, and were in agreement only in that 60% of the change in session is attributable to the client. Specifically, therapists rated the therapeutic relationship as most important to change (35%), followed by client's hope and expectancy (27%), client extra-therapeutic factors (22%), and models and techniques (16%). Clients, on the other hand, attributed the most change to client's hope and expectancy (30%), followed closely by therapeutic relationship (29%), models and techniques (28%), and finally client extra-therapeutic factors (13%). Here again, understanding differences in client and counselor perceptions can help therapists to bridge gaps in communication and address what is important to clients in session.

Some researchers have undertaken the task of developing measures to better understand perceptions of in-session behavior. Bennun et al. (1986) developed a scale to assess therapist's perception of client behavior, and client's perception of therapist behavior in session. The authors found an association between how the therapist and client perceived behavior and treatment outcome. Examined therapist behavior included positive regard, competency, and direct guidance, while client behavior consisted of positive regard, self-disclosure, and cooperation. This positive correlation between aspects of the relationship and treatment outcome, indicate the importance of the therapist's interpersonal style in treatment. The authors suggest attention to this in training new therapists. Hill et al. (1988) developed a measure to determine client reactions to therapist interventions, and found that therapist intentions were met with related client reactions more in successful than unsuccessful cases. These authors suggest therapists become more aware of client reactions in treatment.

Lietaer and Neirinck (1986) conducted a study of client and counselor perceptions of client-centered/experiential therapy. Results showed clients perceive the therapeutic relationship as more helpful than counselors do. Specifically, clients found a safe therapeutic relationship with an empathic, accepting, and involved therapist helpful. With some degree of difference in emphasis, clients and therapists agree that self-exploration and experiential insight were the most significant features in their therapy sessions.

Llewelyn (1988) asked 40 therapist-client pairs to record post-session views on helpful and unhelpful events that took place during that session. At termination the pairs were asked to describe their views on helpful and unhelpful events in retrospect, and to report an outcome for treatment. Clients in this study most often reported events consisting of reassurance or relief, and problem solving as helpful. Therapists in the study most often reported the events where clients gained cognitive and affective insight as helpful. Unhelpful events for clients were those related to disappointment and for counselors those related to misdirection. When treatment outcome was reported as poor, there were more differences found in client and therapist perceptions. However, even when the treatment outcome was good, there were still differences in client and therapist perceptions. More problem solution and reassurance events were reported, which is what clients found most helpful, when treatment outcome was good. Llewelyn postulated that insight gain by clients, which is what therapists found most helpful, could have led to greater problem solution. The discrepancy in perceptions found in these results is described as positive by the author, serving possibly as a catalyst for creating movement in therapy.

Lietaer (1992) conducted a study eliciting both clients and therapists to write their perceptions of what was helpful and hindering in sessions. The researcher sought to identify

helpful and hindering experiences in session, as well as to compare perceptions between clients and counselors. Clients, two times more than therapists, found the relational climate helpful, whereas therapists twice as often as clients identified self-exploration as helpful. Therapists emphasized the acknowledgment of feelings and painful aspects of self as more helpful than clients. Interestingly, many therapists and clients left the question of what was hindering in session blank, and more than twice as many clients than therapists left this question blank. This may indicate clients experienced sessions as less negative than therapists, but may also mean that clients are reluctant to criticize therapists, as has been reported by Elliott and James (1989) and Thompson and Hill (1991). Of those who did answer this question, both clients and therapists tended to attribute the hindering happenings in session to their own doing. However, both clients and therapists attributed the helpful events as originating from the clients. Therapists identified hindering events in session as lack of empathy, avoidance of the here-and-now of the relationship, lack of congruence, and a "flight to rationality" in both themselves and clients. Both clients and counselors agreed that useless self-exploration and resistance were hindering. Clients reported either too much or too little happening in a session as hindering. Even in very highly rated (i.e. good) sessions, many hindering events were mentioned by clients and therapists, for instance, painful advice or suggestions.

Sells et al. (1996) explored effective moments during the course of therapy through ethnographic interviews. The authors accomplished this by utilizing two options. One option was that four therapists interviewed their own clients after a session, and then wrote field notes about the interview. The second option had the same four therapists and a different set of clients interviewed by the researcher. Findings of effective moments in counseling from the clients' perspective included two themes: specific therapist interventions (i.e., homework, providing

focus or specific goals, receiving support or backup); and specific things that happened because of counseling process (i.e., more perspectives about a problem, a safe place to talk about feelings and problems). Findings of effective moments from the therapists' perspective resulted in one theme: specific therapist techniques that were beneficial to the client (i.e., contracting, finding solutions or exceptions to the problem, reframing, unbalancing). During a therapist group interview, all therapists expressed surprise that clients did not identify techniques as important in the counseling process. Instead, goal setting, rapport, and therapist empathic qualities were identified by clients as important. Therapists reported these results were eye opening. As for ineffective moments in counseling, clients identified the following: when the therapist seems to have their own agenda, not understanding or addressing the problem, unclear goals and direction, and no continuity of sessions. Therapists also identified unclear goals and direction as ineffective. Findings of this ethnographic study indicate that therapists are unaware of what is not working in session, as evidenced by the sole response of unclear goals and direction. Even in a follow up group interview, therapists as a group were unable to identify anything else as not working.

Regarding the therapeutic relationship, Sells et al. (1996) concluded that overall, results revealed that clients emphasize the therapeutic alliance more, while therapist emphasized formal techniques. This discrepancy is further evidence for the need of multiple perspectives when looking at therapeutic process. Clients reported feeling trust and rapport with their therapist when the therapist was casual and down-to-earth, instead of formal or professional.

Participants in the Sells et al. (1996) study reported benefits of participating in this ethnographic research. Therapists used the results of client interviews to inform future sessions together. Clients and therapists agreed that the ethnographic research process made for a more

collaborative counseling process, giving empowerment and voice to clients to comment on the therapist and the process. Therapists reported that the ethnographic research process would be very helpful for beginning counselors to learn from client feedback on how to improve the counseling process. Client experiences can be then be used as a teaching tool in training new counselors. It would be helpful for new counselors to evaluate what they did in session, and have clients do the same, and then compare the two perspectives. In addition, therapists described becoming more collaborative with clients in their practice in general as a result of participation in the study.

Thompson and Hill (1991) conducted a study seeking to find to what extent therapists accurately perceive client reactions. The researchers further looked to determine if negative client reactions were more difficult to detect by therapists, given that clients often hide their negative reactions from therapists. Sixteen therapists each saw two clients for single sessions. Afterwards clients rated helpfulness of and gave reactions to each therapist intervention. Therapists did the same, only they gave their perceptions of client reactions, instead of their own reactions. Results showed that 50% of the time the actual and perceived client reactions matched. Negative client reactions were in fact more difficult for therapists to accurately perceive. When therapists accurately perceived client negative reactions, they were less helpful in their following interventions. The authors speculate this may be a result of anxiety of the therapist, realizing that the client had a negative reaction, or possibly a result of the client feeling threatened by the therapist perceiving their negative reaction. Therapists were rated as more helpful following interventions they accurately perceived when the clients' reactions were positive.

Client, Counselor, and Observer Perceptions

Fewer studies have considered the perceptions of an observer in addition to the client and counselor viewpoints. Discrepancies have been found in comparing client, counselor, and observer perspectives (Elliott & Shapiro, 1992). Thus, to create a more whole picture of the therapeutic process, all three perspectives must be included (Llewelyn, 1988). Each of the two studies described below were explorations of a single client system from multiple perspectives.

Blow et al. (2009) studied one couple's experience in couple's counseling to examine key therapeutic moments of in-session events from counselor and client perspectives, and included an observing team's perspective as well. To guide their study, they used a common factors lens. Rather than compare the multiple perspectives, they took advantage of them all in creating a whole picture of change for this particular couple in treatment. All perspectives, the clients, therapist, and observation team, were in agreement that change did occur for the couple during treatment. The clients and therapist showed strong levels of agreement on the aspects of the therapeutic alliance. Client perceptions of factors leading to change in therapy spoke much more to the person of therapist and her style, than to specific things that she did. Given the strong therapeutic alliance, therapist behaviors that were seen as therapeutic mistakes by the observation team did not detract from the work in therapy. Similarly, "missed opportunities" as labeled by the observation team, were seen differently after the course of treatment was complete. The direction the therapist and clients took in each moment gave the process a direction that could not have been anticipated, and worked well for the couple. Overall, the authors concluded that the combination of many, oftentimes unrelated events, contributed to change for this particular couple. However, much change seemed to take place in the dynamic relationship between the therapist and the clients.

Elliott and Shapiro (1992) explored significant events within a given therapy session from client, counselor, and observer accounts. Significant event was defined as an event within a therapy session that leads to a meaningful degree of help or change for the client. The authors saw this kind of event as key to change in the therapeutic process. Results showed many similarities and differences among the perspectives. Most often the different perspectives were in general agreement, but described the same event in different language or provided complementary but not discounting information. In other words, perspectives from the three sources were generally consistent or complementary. The observer's language was found to be more professional and general, the client's language was more specific and vivid in regard to his situation, and the therapist's language was professional and based in theory. There were only a few instances where moderate discrepancies surfaced, and clear discrepancies were not present. The authors saw these discrepancies as opportunities for further understanding of the event, and ultimately the therapeutic process. An example of this is an instance in which the therapist saw the client as avoiding an issue, while the client and observer saw the client as working through the issue. The therapist's view of the client avoiding led the therapist to respond in such a way to push the client to become more involved, which contributed to the event becoming significantly helpful in the session. In other words, whether the client was avoiding or not, the discrepancy in perceptions between the therapist and the client, proved to be positive in their process. Therefore, it is not necessary, nor realistic, for clients and therapists to have the same perceptions in counseling, however, if therapists can become aware of what is meaningful to clients in session, they can maximize on those opportunities to create more meaningful experiences.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice from the Literature

There is much to be gained and implemented from the findings on participant perceptions of the counseling process, and still more research to be done. Recommendations from the literature for practice, supervision and training, and future research are presented here.

Since the purpose for exploring the process is to inform practice, there are many recommendations for future counseling based on the research. Findings confirm the importance of the therapeutic relationship in the treatment process; therefore counselors should regularly tend to the relationship (Henkelman, 2004 as cited in Henkleman & Paulson, 2006; Paulson et al., 2001; Singer, 2005; Ward et al., 2007). In tending to and strengthening the therapeutic alliance, Henkelman (2004) suggests practitioners be responsive to and repair hindering experiences that occur in the process (as cited in Henkelman & Paulson, 2006). Counselors should also ask clients about their experiences in counseling, and encourage clients to reflect on the process in counseling (Elliott & James, 1989; Henkelman, 2004 as cited in Henkelman & Paulson, 2006). Singer emphasizes the importance in valuing client experiences and using them as a guide for therapy. Further, counselors should take care that what they are offering in therapy is consistent with the client's expectations. Doing this will help foster better counselors, and will enhance therapy for clients. Given the empirical support of the significance of clear goals in counseling; Sells et al. (1996) suggest establishing clear goals with clients and reviewing these goals and progress throughout the counseling process.

There are also many suggestions for training and supervising counselors based on the research of participant perceptions. Again, given the clear significance of the therapeutic relationship, training should focus on the relational skills (Bowman & Marshall, 2000) and the process of self exploration of beginning counselors (Lietaer, 1992). It is crucial that beginning

counselors also realize that so much of what clients experience in counseling goes unsaid; therefore counselors should not make assumptions about what clients are experiencing (Elliott & James, 1989). Singer (2005) suggests that client written case notes, which can offer the client's view of what the counselor is doing, can be a powerful tool in supervision. Paulson et al. (2001) and Bowman and Marshall (2000) both stress the importance in training counselors of addressing issues of diversity, and to be aware of their own biases so as to not inadvertently impose them on clients. Finally, Lietaer (1992) parallels the importance of the therapeutic alliance to the importance of the quality of the supervisory relationship. He asserts that only when supervisees feel secure in the supervisory relationship, will they explore the personal and interpersonal aspects of their work. Therefore, he argues for less focus on the client, and more focus on what is happening with the supervisee.

Researchers agree there is more to be done in this area. More research on the counseling process, including client perceptions (Bowman & Marshall, 2000; Elliott & James, 1989) and multiple perceptions (Moon et al., 1990; Sells et al., 1996) is needed. Research that is qualitative, exploratory, and discovery-oriented is ideal (Elliott & James, 1989; Elliott & Shapiro, 1992). Specifically, there is a call for research looking into discrepancies in client, counselor, and observer accounts of significant events (Elliott & Shapiro, 1992). Finally, Bennun et al. (1986) reminds us that therapy is a relationship; therefore the nature of that relationship will have a huge impact on process. Thus, research is needed to combine a look at the therapeutic relationship with in-session behavior and subjective experience.

Synopsis and Direction

This review of the literature illustrates that although we know empirically that counseling is effective (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1996), we need to know more about how the process of

counseling works (Paulson et al., 2001; Ward et al., 2007), and we need to consider multiple

perspectives of the process (Elliott & James, 1989; Moon et al., 1990; Sells et al., 1996). The

current study addresses these needs, as well as the call from Elliott and Shapiro (1992) to

compare multiple perspectives of significant events in session, and from Bennun et al. (1986) to

combine a look at both the therapeutic relationship and in-session subjective experience. With

Bordin's (1979) theory of the working alliance as the impetus, given his conceptualization of the

inevitable interconnectedness of the alliance with therapeutic process, the current study adds to

this important body of literature.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of counselors-in-training (CITs) and clients in the counseling process with respect to the strength of the therapeutic relationship using a mixed methods approach. The lived experiences of CITs and clients in a counseling session were explored using a qualitative phenomenological design, while the therapeutic relationship was measured with a quantitative instrument. Further, an observer's perspective of the counseling session was incorporated using participant observation. The goal of this study was to contribute to the understanding counselors, counselor educators, and supervisors have of the counseling process with respect to strength of therapeutic relationship. Specifically, the results inform counselors, counselor educators and supervisors about whether the strength of the working alliance is related to the depth of meaningful occurrences in session for the study participants.

In this study, I address four research questions: (a) What do CITs and clients experience as most meaningful in counseling? (b) What are the similarities and differences of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling? (c) How does the strength of the therapeutic relationship correspond to the depth of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling? (d) What are the similarities and differences of an observer's perspective and the experiences of the CIT and client of what is meaningful in counseling? This chapter includes the research design and rationale for the chosen methodology, a discussion of ethical considerations, a description of participants and the recruitment procedures, and a description of the data collection and analysis that were used in addressing the research questions.

Research Design and Rationale

This study was designed to describe the experiences of clients and CITs in the counseling process with respect to the strength of the therapeutic relationship. The use of both quantitative and qualitative measures allowed for integration of data and enrichment of results in ways that using either a qualitative or quantitative design exclusively would not deliver (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005). In other words, qualitative and quantitative methods can be complimentary to each other. For instance, the researcher can expand on the questions they are asking by using different methods to address different parts of the question, for greater depth and breadth of inquiry. A concurrent triangulation design was used in this study. With this design, the qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed at the same time, with priority given to the qualitative data. The qualitative and quantitative data analyses were conducted separately, and were integrated during data interpretation. The experiences of clients and CITs in the counseling process, along with observer reports, were measured qualitatively, while the therapeutic relationship was measured quantitatively.

Qualitative research is an ideal avenue for looking at participant experiences in counseling. There are considerable similarities between qualitative research and counseling, including identifying themes and patterns and attempting to understand the participant's or client's experience (Singer, 2005). The single session unit was employed for the purposes of exploring participant experiences in counseling, which allows the researcher to look at within-session events and session impact (Elliott & James, 1989). A single session unit also allows for participants to reflect on their most recent session, leading to more accurate results and better understanding of experiences than if participants were reflecting on the entire course of counseling (Mehr, Ladany, & Caskie, 2010). Further, I used significance sampling, which is the

examination of units that have special meaning to the client and counselor, or therapeutic impact. Elliott and James (1989) assert this is the preferred mode of sampling in the development of models of therapeutic change process. The majority of the research studies on session impact ask participants about what was helpful and the way in which it was helpful. The present study however, is unique in that value judgments such as helpful or unhelpful were not placed on participant experiences. Instead, the approach I took in examining what is meaningful in session, can be described well by Mahrer and Boulet (1999), "The emphasis is on whatever touches you as something impressive happening here rather than relying on your theory, your knowledge, and your being on the lookout for particular kinds of traditional significant in-session changes" (p.1484).

A mixed methods approach used in this study began with phenomenological, in-depth interviews conducted with participants to inquire about what is most meaningful in a counseling session. Participant observation was also used, with the researcher as observer noting meaningful experiences in session. In addition, each participant completed the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) to measure the strength of their therapeutic alliance. Each component of the mixed methods approach will be described in detail.

Ethical Considerations

Approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Tech was secured for all participant solicitation and selection procedures, for the instrument and interview questions, and for the procedures which comprised the research process, before any participant selection began. An informed consent process was implemented with all participants prior to their involvement, including the purpose and description of the study and assurance to the participant of ethical conduct on the part of the researcher as suggested by Rossman and Rallis (2003). The following

was covered in the informed consent: purpose of the study, what participation involved, a clear

statement that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw at any time,

confidentiality of data, and the potential risks and benefits of participation as described by

Seidman (2006). Potential risks of this study were minimal, and were limited to possible

discomfort in being observed during a counseling session, in answering questions about the

working alliance, and in recounting what was meaningful in their counseling session.

Participants were given explicit permission to refrain from answering any questions they wish.

Since reflection can be a powerful learning tool, participants may have benefited from new or

reinforced insight through the interview process and in completing the measure of working

alliance. In addition, participants were given a five dollar gift card to a coffee shop as a token of

appreciation for participating in the study. See Appendix A for the informed consent.

Care was taken to ensure the confidentiality of participants and collected materials. All

participants chose or were given pseudonyms that were associated with their interview and

fieldnotes from observation. I developed a key to link participant actual names with

pseudonyms, to be kept separate from the study data. Audio tapes and transcripts of interviews,

brief notes and fieldnotes of the observations, and completed quantitative measures have been

kept in a locked file cabinet in my office or in encrypted files on my computer and have only

been reviewed by myself and my advisors. In addition, all research data will be destroyed at the

conclusion of any presentations related to this study and publication of any articles resulting

from the study.

Participants

Participants in this study were CITs and clients from the Counselor Education clinic at

the Virginia Tech Roanoke Center. The CITs were completing their practicum through the

clinic, and were in their first year of the Master's Counselor Education program at Virginia Tech (VT). The clients were students from Virginia Western Community College (VWCC) who were voluntarily taking part in at least three counseling sessions at the VT Counselor Education clinic to fulfill the requirements of a class assignment. Participants ranged in age (though all were over 18 years old), gender, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic background. All CITs and all clients from the clinic were invited to participate in this study. All CITs who volunteered, who also had clients who volunteered to participate, were selected for the study. Fourteen CITs were in the participant pool. The goal was to recruit 14 CIT-client dyads, with an effort to have each CIT participate only once. The informed consent, after approval by Virginia Tech's IRB, was taken to recruit participation when orienting the VWCC students to the counseling services offered by the VT Counselor Education clinic. See Appendix B for the recruitment script for clients. The informed consent was also presented to VT's first year master's counselor education cohort at their practicum class meeting to recruit participation. See Appendix C for the recruitment script for CITs.

   I am currently a third year doctoral student in the Counselor Education program at Virginia Tech, and therefore need to make clear my relationship with the CIT participant pool in the study. I had met these students on two occasions prior to the time of the study, at their interview for the master's program, and again at their first class meeting last summer. These were both group encounters, and I do not know the students on a personal level, with one exception. One of the potential CIT participants was a peer of mine in a research course during Fall 2009, and we were on a group research team together for the course in which we ultimately were co-authors.

Data Collection

All data was collected during and following the second counseling session. Live observation of the counseling session took place by me in another room in the clinic through televisions linked to camera equipment. Following the session, I conducted interviews and administered the WAI (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). I conducted interviews and administered the WAI with client participants first, being respectful of their time, and then with CIT participants, who were spending much of their day at the clinic. A demographic questionnaire was also completed by participants during their interview time. The demographics gathered included name, gender, age, ethnicity, email address, whether the participant is a client or a CIT, and the name of that participant's CIT or client for the session just completed. A pseudonym was chosen by each participant and recorded on this demographic questionnaire. See Appendix D for the demographic questionnaire.

Interviews

Prior to starting the interview, I reminded participants of the purpose of the study by reading them the first paragraph in the Informed Consent. The interviews were phenomenological in nature, to examine the lived experience of participants and the meaning they made of that experience in a particular counseling session as suggested by Seidman (2006). Interview data was used in answering all four research questions.

Clients and CITs were interviewed separately following their second session, clients first, and then CITs. I conducted all interviews and they took place in an available classroom or office space at the VT Roanoke Center. Interviews had a standardized framework, which allowed for structure and for follow-up exploration when desired, and created a conversation around the interview topic as recommended by Patton (2002). Interview questions targeted what

participants believed was most meaningful in that particular counseling session. See Appendix E for the Client Protocol and Appendix F for the CIT Protocol. The broader purpose of the interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of client and counselor experiences of what is meaningful in counseling. Interview questions were created following the advice from Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002), "Keeping in mind that research questions provide the scaffolding for the investigation and the cornerstone for the analysis of the data, researchers should form interview questions on the basis of what truly needs to be known (p.31)."

Observation

Participant observation was implemented as a source of data collection in this study as well, and is known to be useful in capturing participants' lived experiences and in studying processes (Jorgensen, 1989). This method of data collection was used in answering the fourth research question: What are the similarities and differences of an observer's perspective and the experiences of the CIT and client of what is meaningful in counseling? I observed the second counseling session of each client-CIT pair participating in the study. Observation took place in a different room in the same clinic via televisions linked to cameras in the counseling rooms. I took brief notes, which included abbreviated key words or phrases, of significant happenings, both verbal and nonverbal, during observation of the sessions as described by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995). Later that day or the next I used these brief notes to aid in writing a fieldnote for each session observed. The observation, brief notes, and subsequent fieldnotes were focused on meaningful events in the counseling session related to the purpose of this study. I have seven years post-master's experience in the counseling field and therefore was positioned to observe the counseling process from that informed and experienced lens, which the beginning CITs in the study were lacking.

Instrument

The Working Alliance Inventory (WAI; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) was used to measure the strength of the working alliance and to answer the second research question: How does the strength of the therapeutic relationship correspond to the depth of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling? Horvath and Greenberg (1989) described the WAI as a means to measure Bordin's (1979) conceptualization of the alliance, consisting of three subscales, bond, goal, and task. The development of the WAI addressed the need to measure Bordin's concept, assisting in predicting outcomes in counseling and providing an opportunity for further investigation into the counseling process. Thirty-six self report items rated on a seven point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Never) to 7 (Always), with variations of those two extremes in between, make up each of the two versions (client and counselor) of the WAI. Within the 36 items, there are 12 items to represent each of the three subscales of the alliance. Composite scores range from 36 to 252, and subscale scores range from 12 to 84. The instrument takes approximately five minutes to complete. Sample questions of the client version of the WAI are as follows: _____ and I understand each other; I disagree with _____ about what I should get out of therapy; I am clear as to what _____ wants me to do in these sessions. The WAI has a reported reliability coefficient of .93 for the client version, and .87 for the counselor version. Validity studies of the WAI have shown it to be a valid instrument in measuring the working alliance (Halstead et al., 1990; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). The client version of the WAI is presented in Appendix G, and the therapist version in Appendix H.

Data Analysis

"Confronted with a mountain of impressions, documents, transcribed interviews, and field notes, the qualitative researcher faces the difficult task of making sense of what has been

learned" (Anfara et al., 2002, p. 31). I had a great deal of qualitative data to analyze, as well as a quantitative piece to integrate into a full picture in addressing the purpose of this study. Analysis of these pieces and their integration are described below. Reflexivity is crucial in this study, particularly in the process of interviews and observation and the analysis of both. Therefore, I state clearly my position with respect to this study and I describe methods I used to practice reflexivity.

Interviews

Each interview was audio recorded, with a back up audio recorder on hand, and later transcribed. A constant comparative method described by Anfara et al. (2002) was used to analyze the data. This method consists of three iterations of analysis, the first two of which I employed in this study, forgoing the final iteration of theory and hypothesis creation which was beyond the scope of this study. The first iteration involves assigning open codes, in the way of emergent words or phrases, from reading the data broadly and noticing regularities and what stands out among participant interviews. This requires examining what is in the data and labeling it. It is ultimately a way of summarizing countless pages of interview transcripts. A second iteration serves the purpose of comparison within and between codes in order to combine codes into categories and identify themes. Data is moved from concrete to abstract form in theme development. Themes give meaning to the data. This system of analysis provides a way to make sense of large amounts of data by breaking it into manageable pieces, and then identifying patterns and themes. I completed the iterations for the client and CIT interviews separately, resulting in themes for clients and themes for CITs. The resulting themes were used in addressing the four research questions.

As stated above, I am a third year doctoral student in the Counselor Education program at Virginia Tech, and as such reflexivity is crucial in this study. I have been a practicing counselor for several years, and am a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. In interviewing the participants, especially the client participants, I was aware of the differences between an interviewing relationship and a therapeutic relationship. Seidman (2006) describes the similarities in the two relationships and clarifies the difference in goals, that the interviewer is there to learn, rather than to treat the interviewee. I have also been a clinical supervisor of counseling students in the master's program for the past two years, and was mindful of my role as a researcher when interviewing CIT participants about the session they just completed and was careful not to fall into the supervisor role. I turned to my advisors for peer debriefing to practice reflexivity and ensure my role as researcher, and relied on my committee as a community of practice for the same purpose. Member checks were also employed by conferring with participants regarding emerging findings, allowing them the opportunity to rescind, clarify, or elaborate (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). During analysis of the interviews, after the first iteration is complete, I emailed each participant with a copy of their interview transcript, including my comments in Word of assigned codes and asked them to email or call me with any questions, suggestions, or concerns. See Appendix I for the script I used for member checks.

Observation

After all fieldnotes of the observations were written, I read them together as one document. I analyzed fieldnotes through qualitative analytic coding described by Emerson et al. (1995), beginning with open coding, where I read fieldnotes line by line to identify any ideas, themes, or issues without limitation. Throughout the entire analytic process, I wrote memos as needed when insights arose that deserved further thought and attention. In the process of coding

and memoing, I identified themes. Initial themes were integrated and narrowed down with

similar themes, new broader themes emerged, and subthemes were created when themes were

related, but had distinct differences that prohibited integration. Focused coding followed theme

development, and consisted of going back through fieldnotes line by line allowing for

elaboration of themes, further development of subthemes, and integration of interesting material

that was initially overlooked. This process of theme development was separate from the theme

development in the interview analysis. In analysis of observations, I did not separate between

client and CIT themes. Instead, I identified themes of meaningful experiences as a whole in

counseling sessions. Ultimately, there are themes from the client interviews, CIT interviews, and

observations.

Here again, my role in the Counselor Education program, and my previous professional

experience required a central focus on reflexivity in data analysis. My role as a clinical

supervisor in this program was significant in the observation and analysis. I was physically in

the same position as an observer of these counseling sessions, as I had been as a live supervisor

of counseling sessions in the clinic. My goal however was different and was focused on

observing what was happening that was meaningful in the session from my lens of experience in

the counseling field, rather than on evaluation of the CIT. I have not had any supervisory or

instructor relationships with the CIT participant pool, which helped curtail the inclination

towards supervision. As with the interview analysis, I looked to my advisors for peer debriefing,

and as a community of practice to perform reflexivity throughout this process.

Instrument

Analysis for the WAI (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) was conducted by summing the

Likert scale ratings for each item to determine a composite score reflecting the strength of the

working alliance. The sum scores for each subscale, bond, goal, and task were also calculated. Within the three subscales, five of the 12 items on the task scale are reverse scored, three of the 12 items on the bond scale are reverse scored, and 6 of the 12 items on the goal scale are reverse scored. Composite scores range from 36 to 252, and subscale scores range from 12 to 84. Higher scores indicate a more positive working alliance and lower scores a more negative working alliance. Each participant composite score and subscale scores of the WAI were matched with the corresponding interview. From the participant pool, I examined client and CIT data separately to determine if higher ratings of the WAI, as compared to other client or CIT participants, corresponded to greater depth in meaningful experiences reported by participants in their interviews. Likewise, I determined if lower ratings of the WAI corresponded to less depth in reported meaningful experiences.

Integration of Analyses

In order to answer the four research questions in this study, integration of the different data points was necessary. The first two research questions, asking what CITs and clients experience as most meaningful in counseling, and what are the similarities and differences of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling, were answered solely by the interview data. For the first research question, CIT and client interview results were presented separately, however, for the second research question I looked for similarities and differences in CIT and client interview data both as a whole, and within each client-CIT pair. In the third research question I asked how the strength of the therapeutic relationship corresponds to the depth of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling. This was answered by matching each WAI (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) outcome with the corresponding interview. I determined whether higher ratings on the WAI, in comparison to other client and CIT

participants, corresponded to greater depth in meaningful experiences reported by participants in their interviews. Likewise, I determined if lower ratings of the WAI corresponded to less depth in reported meaningful experiences. In this analysis, I examined client and CIT data separately. The final research question in which I ask what are the similarities and differences of an observer's perspective and the experiences of the CIT and client of what is meaningful in session, was determined by examining together themes identified from participant observation, themes identified by clients, and themes identified by CITs, and finding similarities and differences among the themes from the three perspectives. In addition, I matched observer fieldnotes from each session observed with the corresponding client-CIT pair of interviews to find similarities and differences in the data from each counseling session from the three perspectives.

Several methods suggested by Anfara et al. (2002) were utilized to establish credibility and demonstrate rigor in this study. Triangulation was used through the interview data, fieldnotes from observation, and the WAI (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) outcomes. Obtaining data from three different methods provided an opportunity to describe the counseling process in a more complete way. As stated above, member checks allowed each participant to review their interview transcript and make comments or ask questions of the researcher if they wished. None of the participants had questions or comments for the researcher. Peer debriefing and a community of practice were utilized to ensure the ongoing practice of reflexivity by serving as forums for discussion of reflexivity issues. In qualitative research, the researcher is the tool and therefore all data passes through the researcher's personal lens. As such, continual examination of how I as the researcher was positioned in this study was necessary. Practicing reflexivity did not take away my perspective, but instead allowed for critical self reflection of ways I

contributed to the research process and gave the readers a sense of the lens through which I have collected, analyzed, and delivered the data and results. Finally, I kept an audit trail detailing the steps in the research process. The audit trail is specific enough that a reader could retrace my steps if they choose to.

Summary

Chapter three is a description of the methodology that was used to respond to the purpose of this study. A mixed methods design was used to describe the experience of CITs and clients in the counseling process with respect to the strength of the therapeutic relationship. The four research questions related to this purpose have been stated in this chapter and were answered through data collection and analysis of phenomenological in-depth interviews (Seidman, 2006), participant observation (Jorgensen, 1989), and the administration of the WAI (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). Appendix J provides a visual representation of the data analysis.

Chapter 4

Article 1

Meaningful Experiences in the Counseling Process

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Abstract

Researchers examined the experiences of a counseling session from the perspective of counselors-in-training (CITs) and clients. Post-session interviews were conducted to elicit participants' experiences, and the analysis revealed both similarities and differences. CIT themes were: Counseling Relationship, Goals, Insights, Immediacy, Nonverbals, Transference and Counter Transference, Emotion, and Negotiating the Counseling Process and their Role. Client themes included: Counseling Relationship, Goals, Insight, Immediacy, Emotion, and Reflections on Counseling. Implications for counselor educators and supervisors are described.

Meaningful Experiences in the Counseling Process

Researchers have demonstrated empirically that counseling is effective (Nelson &

Neufeldt, 1996), yet we still know relatively little about the counseling process (Paulson, Everall,

& Stuart, 2001; Ward, Linville, & Rosen, 2007). The counseling process consists of at least a

counselor and a client, each with their own unique perspective on the counseling relationship and

what is happening of significance (Elliott & James, 1989), thus it is important to elicit and

consider each perspective to gain a whole picture of the counseling process (Blow et al., 2009;

Elliott & James, 1989; Llewelyn, 1988; Moon, Dillon, & Sprenkle, 1990; Sells, Smith, & Moon,

1996). Comparisons between counselor and client perspectives allows for evaluating the

counseling process, yet few researchers have taken this on (Sells et al., 1996). Elliott and

Sharpiro (1992) and Bennum, Hahlweg, Schindler, and Langlotz (1986) call for an examination

of in-session subjective experience, and Elliott and Shapiro further call for a comparison of

significant in-session events among multiple perspectives. Recognizing discrepancies in

counselors' and clients' experiences of the counseling process may allow counselors to build

stronger alliances (Elliott & Shapiro, 1992) and to provide counseling that is more effective

using participant experiences as a guide (Elliott & James, 1989; Singer, 2005).

Counseling is a dynamic process to investigate, consisting of interrelated and systemic

factors of client variables, counselor variables, and what is happening between them (Hekelman

& Paulson, 2006). If we hear directly from clients about their experiences in counseling, we can

better understand the process (Blow et al., 2009; Elliott & James, 1989) and better prepare

counselors to be effective (Elliott & James, 1989; Singer, 2005). Since each participant has his

or her own view of the counseling relationship and process, each perspective is important in

understanding what is happening of substance (Paulson et al., 2001). There are multiple realities

based on experience, rather than one objective reality, and thus a need to hear from multiple perspectives (Sells et al., 1996). In the current study we examine what is meaningful to participants in counseling, and what is similar or different in those perceptions for counselors-in-training and clients.

Empirical Research on Client and Counselor Perceptions in Counseling

Historically, researchers examined the counseling process from the lens of the counselor (Bowman & Marshall, 2000; Henkelman & Paulson, 2006; Paulson et al., 2001), however recently, many researchers have studied client perceptions of counseling (Bowman & Marshall, 2000; Henkelman & Paulson, 2006; Paulson et al., 2001; Thomas, 2006). Ward et al. (2007) conducted a mixed methods study assessing client perceptions of counseling with a common factors lens. This study yielded conflicting results. Quantitative findings indicated that the hope and expectancy common factor contributed significantly to clients' perceptions of change and helpfulness in therapy, while qualitative results indicated that clients consider the counseling relationship the most helpful contributor in counseling.

Singer (2005) took a comprehensive approach by asking clients to write their own case notes after each session in addition to interviewing them to gain their perspective on counseling. Singer found the relationship to be the most important variable to clients in counseling. Clients specifically valued feeling honored, understood, and accepted by their counselor. Clients indicated wanting their counselors to be fully present, engaged, and non-judgmental. They also wanted new options and viewpoints from their counselors, with most clients wanting suggestions versus directives. While some clients preferred advice and directives from counselors, others wanted a collaborative relationship. Singer also found that clients rarely addressed, with counselors, when their expectations were incongruent with the counselor's style. This finding

adds validity to the argument that unless counselors elicit client expectations and perceptions in counseling, they are unlikely to be aware of discrepancies, as clients are unlikely to initiate this discussion.

Paulson et al. (2001) explored hindering and unhelpful experiences in counseling from the clients' lens by conducting in-depth interviews and found three core themes. First, clients found certain counselor variables unhelpful or hindering, including negative counselor behaviors, insufficient direction, and lack of responsiveness. Further, some external barriers, including perceptions of power differential, cultural, age, and religious differences, and structural barriers, including scheduling, frequency, and regularly meeting needs of clinicians but not necessarily of clients were unhelpful to clients. Finally, clients experienced a number of client factors hindering, including lack of readiness, low motivation, and not knowing what they wanted in counseling. The findings also indicated the therapeutic relationship is fundamental to the counseling process. Specifically, a lack of connection had a negative impact on the process, and connection led to clients being engaged in the process. Therefore, connection, or the therapeutic relationship, is the means through which the process takes place, and without a connection, counseling will likely be ineffective or unhelpful.

Bowman and Marshall (2000) explored both helpful and unhelpful aspects of couples' counseling through the clients' lens, and found that clients identified the following things as helpful: being given choices and ideas that fit for them, developing new ways to conceptualize the couple relationship, working with a therapist whom the clients trust, who is validating, supportive, non-judgmental, demonstrating genuine caring, uses therapist transparency, and creates a safe environment. Clients indicated the following as unhelpful in counseling: unequal treatment of partners, therapist talking when the clients want to talk, insufficient time in sessions,

and not enough intentional transference of learning between sessions and life outside therapy. Counselors in this study were unaware of these valuable client perceptions, which could have contributed greatly to the improvement of the process if elicited.

Many researchers have explored the counseling process more holistically by eliciting client and counselor perceptions (Llewelyn, 1988) and by comparing these perceptions (Hill, Helms, Spiegel, & Tichenor, 1988; Llewelyn, 1988). Researchers have found stronger agreement among counselor and client perceptions in successful versus unsuccessful counseling (Hill et al., 1988), and more differences among perceptions when counseling outcome is poor (Llewelyn, 1988).

Martin and Stelmaczonek (1988) examined client and counselor perceptions of what each experienced as most important in counseling and found that clients and counselors identified the same occurrences as most important, and were only slightly different in their ranking of these occurrences. The most important occurrences for both clients and counselors were the expression of insight, providing personally revealing and significant material about self or interpersonal relationships, the expression of new ways of being or behaving either in session or outside of session, and the description and exploration of feelings. These occurrences are listed in order of importance for clients; the order differs for counselors in that the final two occurrences are reversed in rank.

Thomas (2006) explored client and counselor perceptions of family therapy through a common factors lens. Both clients and counselors agreed that 60% of the change in session can be attributed to the client, but disagreed on the other factors contributing to change. Counselors thought that 35% of change is attributable to the therapeutic relationship, 27% to client's hope and expectancy, 22% to client extra-therapeutic factors, and 16% to models and techniques.

Clients, however, attributed 30% of change to client's hope and expectancy, 29% to the therapeutic relationship, 28% to models and techniques, and 13% to client extra-therapeutic factors.

Lietaer and Neirinck (1986) conducted a study of client and counselor perceptions of client-centered/experiential therapy, finding that clients perceive the therapeutic relationship as more helpful than counselors do. Clients specifically report a safe therapeutic relationship with an empathic, accepting, and involved counselor as helpful in counseling. Clients and counselors agree that self-exploration and experiential insight were the most important aspects in their counseling sessions, with some degree of difference in emphasis.

In Llewelyn's (1988) study of helpful and unhelpful events in counseling sessions, clients most often reported reassurance or relief, and problem solving as helpful, and events related to disappointment as unhelpful. Counselors, on the other hand, most often reported events where clients gained cognitive and affective insight as helpful, and events related to misdirection as unhelpful. Further, the results indicated that when treatment outcome was reported as poor, there were more differences in client and counselor perceptions. Even when the treatment outcome was positive however, there were still differences in perceptions between clients and counselors.

Lietaer (1992), in studying helpful and hindering occurrences in session, found that clients, twice as often as counselors, identified the counseling relationship as helpful, while counselors, twice as often as clients identified self-exploration as helpful. Many participants, twice as many clients than counselors, chose not to answer the question of what is hindering in session. This finding may indicate that clients experience fewer hindering occurrences in session than counselors, or it may support the idea that clients are hesitant to criticize counselors, which has been reported by Elliott and James (1989) and Thompson and Hill (1991). Participants who

answered this question tended to attribute hindering events in session to their own doing, whereas both clients and counselors attributed helpful events as originating from the clients. Counselors identified lack of empathy, avoidance of the here-and-now of the relationship, lack of congruence, and a "flight to rationality" in both themselves and clients as hindering events in session. Clients identified either too much or too little happening in session as hindering. Clients and counselors agreed that useless self-exploration and resistance were hindering in session.

Sells et al. (1996) interviewed clients and therapists on effective moments over the course of counseling. Effective moments from the clients' perspective included two themes: specific therapist interventions and specific things that happened because of counseling process. The first theme, therapist interventions, includes homework, providing focus or specific goals, and receiving support or backup. The second theme includes more perspectives about a problem and a safe place to talk about feelings and problems. Effective moments from the therapists' perspective resulted in one theme, specific therapist techniques that were beneficial to the client. Included in this theme are techniques such as contracting, finding solutions or exceptions to the problem, reframing, and unbalancing. In a group interview, all therapists expressed surprise that clients did not identify therapist techniques as important in counseling. Clients instead identified goal setting, rapport, and therapist empathic qualities as important. Clients identified the following as ineffective in counseling: when therapists have their own agenda, when therapists do not understand or address the problem, unclear goals and direction, and lack of continuity of sessions. Therapists identified unclear goals and direction as ineffective as well. Overall, Sells et al. (1996) found that clients emphasize the counseling alliance more, while counselors emphasize techniques.

This review of literature illustrates that we still need to know more about the counseling process (Paulson et al., 2001; Ward et al., 2007). In addition, we need to elicit participant perspectives of the process (Elliott & James, 1989; Moon et al., 1990; Sells et al., 1996), and compare perspectives of significant in-session events (Elliott & Shapiro, 1992). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of counselors-in-training (CITs) and clients in the counseling process and answer the following two research questions: (a) What do CITs and clients experience as most meaningful in counseling? (b) What are the similarities and differences of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling? The results of this study will inform counselors, counselor educators and supervisors about what is meaningful to participants in counseling and where clients and CITs are congruent and incongruent in their perceptions.

Methods

The research questions were answered through analysis of phenomenological in-depth interviews (Seidman, 2006). Qualitative research is ideal for examining participant experiences in counseling, given the considerable similarities between qualitative research and counseling, such as identifying themes and patterns and attempting to understand the participant's or client's experience (Singer, 2005). The single session unit, in the form of one counseling session, was used in this study, which allows for examining within-session events and session impact (Elliott & James, 1989), and for participants to reflect on their most recent session, leading to more accurate results and better understanding of experiences than if participants were reflecting on an entire course of counseling (Mehr, Ladany, & Caskie, 2010). In addition, significance sampling is used, which involves the examination of units that have significant meaning to the client and counselor, or therapeutic impact (Elliott & James, 1989). Rather than looking at session impact

from what is helpful or hindering, this study approaches session impact with what is meaningful in session, as illustrated by Mahrer and Boulet (1999), "The emphasis is on whatever touches you as something impressive happening here rather than relying on your theory, your knowledge, and your being on the lookout for particular kinds of traditional significant in-session changes" (p.1484). For the purposes of this study, *meaningful* experiences in a counseling session are specific to each participant, and are defined as experiences that are important, significant, or moving to the participant. Meaningful experiences may be cognitive, emotional, relational, or behavioral in nature.

Participants

Participants in this study consist of CITs and clients from a counselor education training clinic at a satellite center for a large mid-Atlantic public university. The CITs were Master's students in a counselor education program at this university, and were completing their practicum experience in the clinic at the time of the study. This was the CITs third semester of the program and their first experience working with actual clients. The clients in the study were students enrolled in a Human Services Associates Degree program at a local community college. Human subjects research approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the institution where the study was conducted, followed by participant solicitation and the informed consent process. The sample consisted of 12 CIT-client dyads, totaling 24 participants, including 12 CITs and 12 clients. The CITs ranged in age from 22 to 29, with an average age of 23, and 10 White females, one Hispanic female, and one White male. The clients ranged in age from 18 to 40, with an average age of 25, and eight White females, and four White males. Participants were given a five dollar gift card to a coffee shop as a token of appreciation for participating in the study.

Data Collection

Data was collected following each dyad's second counseling session. The first author

(CS) conducted interviews with each client immediately following the session and then with

CITs. Interviews were conducted in private rooms that were in the same building and on the

same floor, but separate from the clinic. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed. A

demographic questionnaire was completed by each participant and included name, gender, age,

ethnicity, email address (for member checks), and a pseudonym chosen by the participant.

Following the recommendation from Patton (2002), interviews had a standardized framework,

which allowed for structure and for follow-up exploration when desired, creating a conversation

around the interview topic. Interview questions targeted what participants believed was most

meaningful in that particular counseling session.

Data Analysis

A constant comparative method described by Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) was

used in analyzing the data. This method consists of a first iteration of assigning open codes, in

the form of emergent words or phrases, from reading the data broadly and noticing regularities

and what stands out among participant interviews, and a second iteration of comparison within

and between codes in order to combine codes into categories and identify themes. The third

iteration, which typically includes theory and hypothesis creation, was beyond the scope of this

study. This system of analysis provides a way to make sense of large amounts of data by first

organizing it into manageable parts, and then identifying patterns and themes. Iterations for

client and CIT interviews were completed separately, which resulted in themes for clients and

themes for CITs.

Credibility and Rigor

As suggested by Anfara et al. (2002), several methods were used in this study to establish credibility and demonstrate rigor. Member checks were implemented through email and allowed each participant to review their interview transcript and make comments or ask questions of the researcher. To ensure the ongoing practice of reflexivity, peer debriefing and a community of practice served as forums for discussion for issues that arose throughout the data collection and analysis processes. Finally, the researcher detailed the steps of the research process in an audit trail.

Since, in qualitative research, the researcher is the tool, how the first author (CS) was positioned in this study was a point of continual examination, and is stated here to give the reader an idea of the lens through which this data was gathered and filtered. CS is a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education program at the same university as the Master's students in the study. She has been practicing in the counseling profession for eight years post-masters, and is licensed as a Marriage and Family Therapist. CS was keenly aware when interviewing the client participants of the differences between an interviewing relationship and a therapeutic relationship. Following Seidman's (2006) distinction between the two relationships in their goals, the first author was present with the participant to learn, rather than to treat. In addition to CS's clinical practice experience, she has served as a clinical supervisor of counseling students in the master's program where the CIT participants were drawn, for the past three years. Thus, she was cognizant of the differences between an interviewing relationship and a supervisory one, and resisted the urge to supervise the CITs when interviewing them following their counseling sessions. CS purposefully had no teaching or supervisory contact with this cohort of master's students prior to the study, and had only met them as a group on two occasions. She relied

heavily on colleagues in her community of practice for reflexivity work given her position in the study.

<div align="center">**Results**</div>

Findings from this study resulted in themes for CITs and themes for clients. Eight themes emerged for CITs, with many subthemes: Counseling Relationship; Insights; Immediacy; Nonverbals; Transference and Counter Transference; Emotion; Goals; and CIT Negotiating the Counseling Process and their Role. Six themes emerged from the client participant interviews: Goals; Counseling Relationship, with many subthemes; Insight; Immediacy; Emotion; and Reflections on Counseling. The CIT themes are presented first, followed by the client themes.

CIT Themes

Counseling Relationship

The interview protocol contained a broad question regarding the counseling relationship, prompting the CIT to describe the relationship they have with their client. Therefore, discussion of the relationship was inevitable, however the way participants spoke about the relationship resulted in the various subthemes. The theme of the Counseling Relationship consists of five subthemes describing meaningfulness in the relationship according to CITs including Depth of Connection, Trust, Depth of Understanding, Boundaries, and Collaboration.

Depth of Connection represents CITs descriptions of how connected they and their clients are. Some experienced feeling very connected, while others portrayed their relationship as improving and building, and still others reflected on not feeling very close with their clients, not having developed much of a relationship yet, or not having really connected. Sarah describes not feeling connected to her client, "It's definitely not like, well, I don't feel very connected to him. He feels very guarded, and I feel like I'm pushing him in doing a lot of the work. So. It's a hard

relationship." When answering a question about what her client might say was most meaningful

in the session, Sarah also had this to say about their connection, "I feel like there's this wall

between me and him so, yeah, so I honestly don't know what part like would stand out for him."

Although these quotes vividly illustrate a lack of connection in this particular counseling

relationship, many CITs reported feeling very close and connected to their clients. Michelle

describes her feelings of connection to her client, in spite of the many differences between them:

> I mean I feel connected with her. I feel like I can, …it's weird because …I'm similar to
>
> her in a lot of ways and, you know, gender and sex, but also different in age and
>
> …responsibilities and where we're at in our lives, but I seem like I can understand her ....
>
> Many CITs also described the counseling relationship as meaningful in terms of the

quality of Trust. The sharing and honesty exhibited by clients was directly related to the trust

present in the relationships according to CITs. Some of the sharing included the client admitting

that they were sharing information with the CIT that they had never shared with others, sharing

information that seemed deep to CITs, and showing emotion. Other examples were of clients

sharing that either the CIT or something in the session made them feel uncomfortable. Kerry

describes here how the client's behavior translated to evidence of trust:

> Being our second session, and I think a way that kind of signified it, was that she was
>
> able to become emotional and let some things out, and I think that kind of let me know
>
> that she had somewhat of a trust built up with me.

Other CITs reported clients being guarded in session, not wanting to discuss certain topics, or

that they were working on building greater trust. Annie shares here how the trust was building,

but not quite at the level she hoped for yet in her relationship with her client:

So, it seemed like at times she was trying to share those with me but she wasn't quite

sure, ready to do it. So, that seemed pretty important for me to kind of recognize and

realize that she did seem like she was trying and that maybe it was difficult.

Trust was a subtheme of the Counseling Relationship that was present in many of the CIT

interviews and one that they seemed to place great importance on.

Another prominent subtheme for CITs is Depth of Understanding. CITs spoke to being

on the same page as their clients, experiencing moments of clarity with their clients, CITs

showing understanding through validation and reflection, the CIT obtaining a grasp of the

client's experience, or a lack of these characteristics. Sam describes her experience here of a

moment of clarity and understanding between she and her client:

… he described it as the noise in his head was quieted and it was just very meaningful, a

metaphor that he used, and it was a very meaningful moment for both of us because it

was like this connection like he really hit the nail on the head of what he was trying to

explain about how he can't interact with people. And I feel like he accepted that I

understood that….

Regarding this same moment, Sam says, "The way I felt was that we were both just, like all the

muddy waters were cleared. It was like this perfect moment of communication."

A few counselors spoke about the relationship in terms of boundaries. They described

feeling that the client understood the boundaries of the relationship, the boundaries were clear, or

that the two of them were trying to figure out the boundaries. Annie described the

meaningfulness of the clear boundaries in this way:

[My client] mentioned that she had talked with a classmate afterwards and they had been

discussing their relationship with their counselor and [the classmate] had said that they

weren't really getting a lot out of it because she felt like the counselor was friendly and it felt like a friend relationship. So that felt meaningful to me because it felt like she understood our boundaries and she could kind of respect what my role was and what her role was and she was, while it could be awkward and she was still somewhat in process that she understood those boundaries and that was meaningful I think.

The fact that this relationship resembles no other relationship that many of the participants have experienced, though they have studied it, is significant as they negotiate what that looks like. It is not a friendship, yet is very intimate in its own way.

Several CITs portrayed their counseling relationship as a collaborative one. CITs described the relationship as equal, collaborative, and balanced. Further, in these relationships, mutual respect, mutual investment, and working collaboratively together are pillars. Reflecting on her relationship, one CIT, Susie, had this to say, "I would think that our relationship is equal. I don't see me in a powerful position. I try to keep it on a level playing field where I don't offer advice or make anything a power differential session." It is evident that Susie, and other CITs, valued that they were able to create a non-hierarchical environment for the counseling relationship.

Insights

Meaningful experiences for CITs also included Insights. This theme is made up of three subthemes: Client Insight; CIT Insight; and Questions, Reflections, or Discussion that led to Insight.

CITs described clients gaining insights or having 'ah-ha moments' in session as meaningful and often spoke about this in a way that portrayed feeling honored to be a part of these moments with clients. Kerry was particularly struck by a client's insight:

… and she brought up the relationship with her father, which has been strained for some

time and she actually tied some things together where she was able to correlate the

insecurities with her father towards her problems with loneliness. So I think that was a

big key thing for her…. … it was awesome for me to see that and her, in the room like it

was like being part of it, and I don't think I did it, like I don't think I waved a wand and

like she was able to realize this, which was more, it was more beneficial for her to be able

to come to the realization.

Many more CITs described instances similar to Kerry's experience.

Other CITs described their own insights in session as meaningful. Some CITs gathered

information from clients and then drew parallels or shed light on areas that clients were

previously unaware. Grace experienced sharing her own insight with her client as powerful in

session:

I had insight and I don't know how I worded it now but it kind of made her cry and I

realized that what I said made her cry …. I felt like it kind of meant that I hit what she

really meant and what she was feeling and that really stood out to me.

Several CITs expressed clients gaining insight following CITs asking pertinent,

sometimes difficult, questions, making reflections, or discussing deep or uncomfortable topics.

Annie asked her client a difficult question about how her relationships with men affect her

relationship with her son, and describes here that occurrence and the client's reaction:

At the beginning when we were talking a lot about some of the things that came up in the

first session, we were talking about the resentment that she felt towards men, and I asked

her how that relationship impacts her relationship with her son and she really paused and

she was like, 'I don't know if I'm going to come back after three sessions'. [CIT laughter]

So I wonder if maybe that could have resonated because it was something she hadn't

thought of before. … it was kind of like, 'oh, I've never thought about it before'.

CITs felt proud of prompting or being part of insights for clients, and perceived insight as

meaningful in session.

Immediacy

Immediacy emerged as a strong theme in CIT interviews. CITs' experience of

Immediacy in session fall into three subthemes: CIT Initiated or Desire to Initiate; Client

Initiated; and CIT Disclosure of Their Experience of Client.

CIT Initiated or Desire to Initiate, includes happenings in session where CITs initiated

immediacy with their clients, and moments where they wish they had taken the opportunity to be

immediate with clients. Experiences of Immediacy in this subtheme include processing the here-

and-now of the counseling relationship, of the counseling process, and include broaching gender

differences. CIT Annie describes initiating a conversation with her client about the counseling

relationship and how that may have been significant for this particular client:

I just kind of opened it up by saying, you know, 'how are you feeling in this room? How

is our relationship? Are you feeling comfortable in our relationship? Are there things

that I could do to make that relationship more comfortable for you?' And I think that was

pretty, I think that because she puts up that intimidation sometimes as a front that that's

probably one of the first times someone has ever said that to her and kind of put the ball

in her court and tried to mutually, you know, invest in a relationship.

There were also instances of immediacy that were Client Initiated. Susan was pleased that her

client brought up her discomfort with Susan's positioning:

I was sitting up close, I'm kind of working on my where it feels comfortable for me to sit. I scooted up more to the tip of my chair and was leaning towards her and that made her feel really uncomfortable and she felt that she could address me about it, which really I kind of was, I shouldn't say flattered by it but I appreciated that she felt that comfortable that she could say, 'wow, you're making me feel really uncomfortable by being that close'.

When clients initiated immediate moments, CITs felt this indicated clients' trust and comfort level in the counseling relationship.

Still other CITs found it meaningful when they were able to talk with their clients about how they were experiencing them in session. Exhibiting CIT Disclosure of Their Experience of Client, Sue describes both her urge and hesitance with this:

…there was a point at the end when I was able to validate her …but she worries that people don't value her opinions so I stepped a little outside of my comfort zone and disclosed like 'I really am valuing what you're saying in here'. …I have a fear of self-disclosing and it's just because I don't have a lot of practice with it so it's always like am I doing this for the right reasons? Will it be meaningful to her? But in that moment it felt like I needed to tell her …'in this relationship [I] really value what you're saying'. So it was uncomfortable because there's always that second guessing, is this appropriate? How should I phrase it?

Nonverbals

Many CITs were in tune to the Nonverbals exhibited in the room. This theme is presented in four subthemes: Presence, or how present they and their clients were in the room; Silence; Body Language; and Other Intuitive Observations by CIT.

Presence, or how present CITs and their clients were in the moment with each other, was something some CITs were very in touch with. Alex describes her process with this and her client's response well:

>…when I stopped thinking, what am I supposed to be doing, and just was more myself, it seemed like I was able to do what I was supposed to be doing and then also being myself. …So, yeah, and I wonder like did he notice I wasn't being myself? Because when I was, he was definitely more engaged as well so.… Like we started joking and it just seemed like things were actually clicking instead of me doing, 'uh-huh, uh-huh' and like up here [in my head] trying to figure out what was going on.

Alex describes what other CITs also experienced, a difference in the counseling process when they and their clients were present and engaged.

Another subtheme, Silence, includes silences that felt productive and those that felt awkward. Taylor's experience was that the silence felt awkward, and was not sure how to interpret the awkward silences:

>I feel like it was really awkward. It was really awkward and uncomfortable for me and I know it was uncomfortable for him. I don't know, well, he did say it was, so I think it's uncomfortable for both of us and there's a lot of like awkward silence and small talk. I felt really awkward and I worried that I didn't do anything good or that, I don't know, I'm not sure it was helpful at all for him but I hope it is.

Even with the silence that Taylor describes as awkward, in the same session Taylor experienced the client's Body Language, specifically eye contact, which indicated that the client was more comfortable towards the end of the session:

Well, this is kind of silly, but he started, like at the beginning of the session I felt he

didn't look at me at all and towards the end of the session he wasn't like maintaining eye

contact with me but he looked at me a few times and it made me feel like maybe he was

more comfortable with me or something, so.

In addition, there were many Nonverbal observations by CITs that were more intuitive in

nature, and fall into the subtheme, Other Intuitive Observations by CIT. Sam, when speaking to

feeling counseling is effective with this client:

I don't have any solid evidence. I don't have anything measurable, but it seems like he is

already more comfortable and it seems like he's been thinking comfortably about some of

the things we've talked about….

Nonverbals, specifically how present and engaged CITs and their clients were, silent moments,

body language, and other intuitive observations made by CITs were important in CITs'

experiences of what was meaningful.

Emotion

CITs experienced emotion in session, or the lack of emotion in session, as important in

the process. For avoiding or lack of emotion, CITs reflected on their own actions that led the

client away from experiencing their emotions deeper in session, their unsuccessful attempts to

explore clients' feelings, and clients keeping the content at a surface level, rather than emotional.

Alex experienced her client's avoidance of processing emotion:

I think the same thing that's important is that there are things that he's not talking about,

mainly his feelings, and then when I did ask him I think directly, like 'how does smoking

make you feel' or 'tell me about the anxiety or something', he went to how does it

physically make me feel, which brings up even more to me that whole, 'you're not
experiencing emotions very much'.

Many CITs also reflected on the emotional climate in the room and found it important that they elicited emotions from clients, and that their clients', and sometimes even they themselves, experienced emotions in session. Kerry was struck by a client's release of emotion in session:

I would absolutely have to say I believe that it was her, the release. It was like when she became emotional it was like she was, it was her finally getting a chance to release these things and guessing I think that she kind of had to hold these feelings in for quite some time so being okay with letting them out and I imagine that was probably a great feeling.

It was clear from the interviews that CITs found emotion, or the lack of emotion as critical in counseling.

Goals

Some CITs experienced Goals as a meaningful theme in counseling. Setting goals, making a plan, and assigning homework were important to these CITs. Sue picked up on her client's desire to be challenged and used this opportunity to challenge the client with a homework assignment that was directly related to the client's goal of speaking up in class more often:

So there was an opportunity at the end for me to, she said 'I want to be challenged, I want my teacher to call on me' and I said, 'well, I would like to challenge you to step a little outside of your comfort zone and speak up just one time in class and, you know, if you have time jot down how it felt before and during, after, your thoughts about it' and then, you know, we kind of concluded that next week we would focus on what that experience was like.

Setting goals is one of the more concrete meaningful happenings in session that appealed to some CITs.

Transference and Counter Transference

CITs dealt with some transference and counter-transference in session as well that stood out to them. Kerry describes the meaningfulness of this in session:

There was some transference there with her issues with her father are really similar to issues I have with mine, so it was something that I was kind of battling myself and so, yeah, it was emotional for both of us.

CITs experienced clients reminding them of people in their own lives, sometimes of parts of themselves, and other times noticed that they were representing someone else for the client.

CIT Negotiating the Counseling Process and their Role

CITs often reflected on their own performance in session, clearly attempting to negotiate the counseling process and their role in it. CITs described how they felt the sessions had gone; how well they felt they performed, and things they wished they would have done differently. They reflected on their own learning process of when to give more time to certain things, when to elicit more from clients, when to step in, what to do when clients want them to have answers, how to be more present, how to manage their own feelings in session, among other things. Kerry describes the journey of growing as a counselor through this session:

I think today's session was really important for not only the client, but for me. Like I was telling my supervisor going in that there was a different feeling with this client and I think today I learned that all clients have different feelings, and that I think I finally came to the realization that they're all unique and all different and to try to fit so many into the

same circle if you will, but it's just impossible. So, I think it was good for me and it was,

as much as progress as the client made, I probably made more as a counselor.

Since seeing clients is new to CITs, negotiating the counseling process and their role is at the

forefront for them. They receive live supervision that includes a briefing before the session, a

mid-session supervision break, and a debriefing with their supervisor immediately following the

session as well that accentuates this development.

Client Themes

Counseling Relationship

As was the case in the CIT interviews, clients were asked in the interview protocol about

the counseling relationship, making a discussion of the relationship inevitable. The way clients

experienced the relationship and what they found meaningful in the relationship is how the

subthemes for Counseling Relationship emerged. Clients reflected a great deal on the

relationship and many subthemes emerged including: Descriptions; CIT Contributing

Characteristics and Behaviors; Depth of Understanding; Trust; and Someone to Talk to and

Focus on Self.

Clients portrayed a wide range of Descriptions of their counseling relationships. Some

described having trouble even calling it a relationship since it was new, some described the

relationship as different or odd, or had difficulty describing the relationship. Others portrayed

the relationship as respectful, comfortable, or easy. Heather illustrates here the uniqueness of the

counseling relationship:

> …really that it's so odd to have a one-sided relationship almost. I come in and I say all
>
> this about myself and don't know anything about her at all, you know, it's just so odd. It's
>
> strange to me still.

Other clients were focused on CIT Contributing Characteristics and Behaviors in how they experienced the counseling relationship. Frank illustrates how he experiences his CIT well here:

My counselor is very open individual. She doesn't seem to be guarded. She didn't seem to be judgmental at all. She always greets with a smile, welcomes me into the office, that's very important. There is, even today, there is still a stigma to seeing a therapist, there's still a lot of anxiety around going to see a therapist. So when she greets me and invites me into her office with a smile and a truly inviting nature about it, that makes the session go a lot better because it takes a lot of that load off of me right from the get go. You don't feel like she's going to sit and judge you the whole time and she's very good with eye contact. She doesn't bore a hole in your head. [laughter]

Clients expressed many other behaviors and characteristics such as the gender of the CIT, their body language, listening skills, social skills, empathy exhibited, and genuineness that were meaningful to them.

Depth of Understanding was important to clients in how they experienced their relationships with their CITs. Often clients were able to determine whether and how much their CITs seemed to understand them by CITs normalizing clients' experiences, by their paraphrases and reflections, and asking for clarifications. Clients could tell whether or not they and their CIT were on the same page, and when their CIT wanted to understand them. Carol's reflection of the meaningfulness of her CIT being able to understand her story is a good illustration:

Just that I guess I feel like I've never been able to explain it to where somebody understood how I was feeling, but she understood exactly what I was trying to say and how I was feeling and things like that and I guess I've never really had that before so that

kind of stood out that she even though sometimes I felt like I was just babbling, you

know, but she understood. She could bring it in and be like, you know, 'this is what I'm

hearing' and I go 'you know what, yeah'. So I mean, that kind of stood out to me that

she just really could understand even if I felt like I was all over the place she, I like that

she just kind bring it all in and then I could go, 'yeah, you know, yeah'. So.

Trust was another important element to the counseling relationship for clients. Many

clients felt they were revealing, or would be revealing, intimate parts of their lives in session,

making trust critical. The depth of sharing was related to the amount of trust clients felt with

their CITs. Wanda explains how the trust she feels with her CIT will be crucial in the future

work they will do:

I trust her. I feel like I'm going to be able to tell her, you know, there's other things that I

haven't told her yet that we're going to probably discuss, and I feel like I'll be able to tell

her that and it'll be, you know, I don't feel like she'll judge me on it. I feel like she'll

listen just from knowing her two sessions. Wow.

Wanda's "wow" demonstrates her awe of the trust she feels. On the other hand, Heather is not as

sure about the trust in her counseling relationship, "I don't distrust her. I don't know if I trust her,

but I don't distrust her." Trust can take some time to develop and some clients felt two sessions

was not a sufficient amount of time, while others felt trust immediately with their CIT.

Some clients emphasized that having Someone to Talk to and Focus on Self was

important in the counseling relationship. This was unique for these clients and they valued being

able to vent and open up to someone that is not in their everyday lives. Ava portrays this well:

…it's nice to have a person to sit there and listen to you and to help you through the

issues that you have because you just don't want to sit down and talk to your friends or

someone tell them 'oh, I'm alone and I'm unhappy with this and this' because a lot of people don't, it's just a comfort thing. You don't want people to know what your insecurities are in life, your weakness I guess. So it's nice to have someone that I can talk to and to help me.

The Counseling Relationship was significant for clients and they paid great attention to what CITs did and did not do, as well as what was between them that contributed to the relationship.

Goals

Many clients experienced goals as very significant in counseling. Clients appreciated having a direction for their sessions and something to work towards, and in some cases, experienced frustration when they did not have this focus or a plan of action. Frank speaks to his need for a plan here:

…what seemed most important to me was actually sitting with my counselor and coming up with the homework that I'll be doing this week. It's a completely different feeling. It actually felt like rolling up the sleeves and, you know, getting your heads together and coming up with a plan of action and that's still, you know, a part of I guess it's the old marine in me. You can sit down and do a situation report and start planning that mission the better off you are and that was very important to me to actually sit down and get moving.

It was clear that clients were focused on goals and wanted to use session time to productively work towards their goals.

Insight

An even stronger theme for clients than Goals, was Insight. Clients experienced new insight as meaningful in session through their CITs asking questions, reflecting, reframing, and drawing parallels that made them think of things in new ways and come to new realizations. Johnny demonstrates here how a question his CIT asked led to an insight:

The reason why it's a good question is I don't think there's a really good answer for it. It also really just makes you feel like well, it doesn't really make sense that I think, to allow myself to think that way.

Carol illustrates the impact of insight for her in session:

I'm still just trying to, I don't know. I think I'm, I mean I'll think about it, you know, probably for the rest of the day. I've got to just come to terms with everything that happened, you know, in my head or whatever and, yeah, I think it probably is going to make a really big difference so. …Because I mean I wasn't expecting anything out of this, but I'm getting like life-changing stuff out of it, so it's pretty crazy.

Clients, like Carol, consistently spoke about insight as requiring further thought and reflection, and as expecting it would sink in more over time, and would impact their lives.

Immediacy

A few clients experienced Immediacy as meaningful in session. This included processing the here-and-now of the counseling relationship and the counseling process, broaching gender, and CITs sharing their experience of the client with them. Carol thought it was important that her CIT invited her to openly talk about her comfort level in their relationship:

I think what I felt like was important, is that she kind of stressed the point that she wants me to feel comfortable. Like, if she makes me uncomfortable or says something that I

don't feel comfortable talking about, that just to let her know, you know. I thought that

was important that, you know, she didn't want me to feel uncomfortable and she wanted

most to feel like I could talk to her and that it was okay. I thought that was important to

make me, I think it was important for her to let me know that. That if she was doing

something that made me uncomfortable, just to be able to tell her.

Another client, Heather, had this to say about an immediate moment where her CIT asked how she felt in the room, "It was strange, but it was meaningful. I remembered it."

Emotion

Some clients focused on Emotions exhibited in session as important. Clients felt a variety of emotions in session including, nervous, anxious, relaxed, exposed, and vulnerable. Ava, when responding about what her CIT may say was most meaningful in their session, reflected on her vulnerability with him:

I'm hoping opening up the way I did to him. It's not very often that I can sit down and

talk about issues with a parent, your mom and dad, to open up. To be able to cry in front

of him and all of that I kind of hope that makes him realize that 'this is important to her,

that she is talking to me about it' where I don't really have anybody else I talk to like that.

Reflections on Counseling

Clients had much to say about the counseling process in general, coming together in a theme of Reflections on Counseling. Some clients had expectations about counseling that were either met or not met. Other clients described how they felt about this session and about counseling in general. Still others described the process as odd or different. Wanda, in reflecting on her experience had this to say:

….That this shouldn't be a one-time thing; that I, you know, I should probably do it again, you know, in about a year or two, you know. …It really makes you question yourself and things like that. So that's important. I think it's important to realize, you know, what you do and how you affect people around you and I feel like, you know, boy, couldn't everybody just use that, you know?

Discussion

The results of this qualitative study are significant to furthering our understanding of the counseling process with views from both the client and counselor perspectives. Eliciting both client and counselor perspectives have been shown to help broaden our knowledge of the counseling process (Blow et al., 2009; Elliott & James, 1989). Many themes emerged from both participants' lenses, and reveal some overlap, as well as some differences among CIT and client themes. Llewelyn's (1988) work shows that some differences in participant perceptions are to be expected, even when counseling has a positive outcome.

Both CITs and clients experienced the Counseling Relationship as meaningful, which is also supported in the literature (Lietaer, 1992; Lietaer & Neirinck, 1986; Thomas, 2006), and there were similarities in the aspects of the relationship they each found meaningful. Trust and Depth of Understanding were subthemes for both clients and CITs. Singer (2005), when qualitatively examining clients' perspectives in counseling, also found that clients valued feeling understood by their counselor.

While both CITs and clients experience the counseling relationship as meaningful, with some similarities, there are also some differences in the aspects of the relationship they emphasized. Subthemes for CITs include Boundaries, Depth of Connection, and Collaboration. On the other hand, different subthemes that emerged for clients include Descriptions, CIT

Contributing Characteristics and Behaviors, and Someone to Talk to and Focus on Self. In examining these differences in subthemes among CITs and clients, it makes sense that they would emphasize different aspects of the relationship. For example, it is reasonable that CITs would be aware of and experience boundaries as important in the Counseling Relationship, while clients may not be in tune with this characteristic. In the training of CITs boundaries are emphasized, and CITs, who are new to practicing, need to be especially vigilant in establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries. Likewise, it makes sense that clients would emphasize CIT Contributing Characteristics and Behaviors in the relationship, while CITs would be not as focused on what they themselves are bringing to the relationship to make clients feel comfortable. One of the CIT Contributing Characteristics and Behaviors valued by clients in this study, being non-judgmental, is also supported in the literature by findings of Singer (2005) and Bowman and Marshall (2000). Another CIT characteristic found in this study, genuineness, was also evident in Bowman and Marshall's findings. Further, having Someone to Talk to and Focus on Self is something that although very important for clients, would not be a factor CITs would be cognizant of necessarily, as this is not their experience of the relationship as CITs.

Both CITs and clients experience Goals, Insight, Emotion, and Immediacy as meaningful in counseling. These themes are supported in the literature. For example, Martin and Stelmaczonek (1988) found insight and the description or exploration of emotion among the most important occurrences in counseling for both clients and counselors. Llewelyn (1988) found insight to be most helpful from the counselors' perspective, while problem solving or action related to goals, as most helpful from the clients' perspective. Sells et al. (1996) also found goals to be among the most effective moments for clients in session, but not for counselors. Rhodes, Hill, Thompson, and Elliott (1994) found that when clients and counselors

are able to openly discuss the here-and-now of the counseling relationship, in other words, practice immediacy, the therapeutic bond is strengthened.

Goals, although a theme for both clients and CITs, showed up much more for clients than for CITs. As noted above, this is consistent with the findings of Llewelyn (1988) and Sells et al. (1996). Clients often thought of setting and reaching goals as the focal point of counseling, and therefore found it meaningful when the focus was on this.

While Insight and Immediacy are also themes for both CITs and clients, a difference lays in how detailed the breakdown of these experiences were described from each perspective. CITs reflected on Insight in terms of whether the insight was their own, what they did to elicit insight, and what was client insight, whereas clients only reflected on their own insight. For the common theme of Immediacy, similarly, CITs were more aware of whether this originated from themselves or their clients, when they wanted to initiate immediate moments, and when they shared their experience of clients with them. Clients did not experience this level of detail in moments of immediacy. Further, Immediacy was a stronger theme for CITs than for clients, showing up much more in their interviews.

Another common theme, Emotion, was broken down from CITs into experience of emotion in session and avoiding or lack of emotion, while clients only described emotion that was present. It is reasonable that CITs would be looking for deflecting and avoiding emotion from clients, while clients would likely not think of their own absence of emotion.

Nonverbals is a theme for CITs and not for clients. CITs are more focused on nonverbal happenings, as they are trained to attend to this, whereas clients may be experiencing these nonverbals without much awareness of them. Similarly, Transference and Counter-transference

are aspects of counseling that CITs have learned about and are hopefully considering, while clients may not even be aware of these concepts.

The CIT theme of CIT Negotiating the Counseling and their Role, and the client theme of Reflections on Counseling, although different, seem to be somewhat parallel for the different perspectives. CITs are attempting to figure out the counseling process with respect to their own role and performance in it. Meanwhile clients are less likely to reflect on their own performance and role, but more on the process of counseling in general.

Implications

The findings of this study indicate that CITs and clients experience much of the same things as meaningful in session, such as the counseling relationship, goals, insights, immediacy, and emotion. The findings also indicate where CITs and clients differ in their perspectives, such as in meaningful aspects of the counseling relationship, and the level of importance placed on goals and immediacy (for example goals are more meaningful to clients, and immediacy is more important to CITs). These similarities and differences have implications for our practice and for clinical supervision.

It is encouraging to see how much overlap there is in what CITs and clients find meaningful in a counseling session. This is hopefully evidence that CITs are meeting clients' expectations and needs much of the time. However, the differences are important to be cognizant of, so that CITs and their supervisors may tend more to the areas that are meaningful to clients. For example, goals are clearly important for many clients, and if goals are not as meaningful to CITs, they may be missing an opportunity to be productive with their clients. Further, CITs and supervisors would do well to tend to the aspects of the counseling relationship that clients found meaningful, but were not present for CITs, such as the characteristics and

behaviors of CITs that contribute to creating a positive counseling relationship. Most importantly, the findings indicate a need for CITs to elicit client experiences of the process and to check that against their own experience of the process to see where they match up and where they differ. Supervisors can help CITs see the value in doing this, possibly by even modeling this conversation in supervision between themselves and CITs. Along these lines, the findings indicate a need for live and video supervision to be sure we are not only hearing the CITs account of the session, and missing an important piece of the picture.

There are limitations to this study that are important to identify. The population sample of CITs and clients who are fulfilling a course requirement create some limitations. There is limited transferability to experienced counselors, the variety of clients they serve, and to the larger field of counseling. In addition, the first author's role as a doctoral student in the same program the study was conducted is a limitation as well, and was managed through reflexivity work and with a community of practice. Further, the single session used for data collection in this study is not representative of the entire course of counseling. In particular, collecting data on the second session when the counseling relationship is still new is a limitation. Finally, the data in this study is self report of participants' subjective experience, and it is possible that participants have withheld information, or have relayed experiences in a socially desirable light.

Future researchers looking at comparisons of meaningful events in session within client-CIT pairs would give us more information about the counseling process and where clients and CITs are similar and different in their perspectives. Further, having the perspective of an observer, who is an experienced counselor or supervisor, of meaningful happenings in session would add a unique view of the process, and help to more holistically understand the counseling

process. Observers can pick up on subtleties, unconscious occurrences, and experiences that clients may be less willing to report and that counselors are unaware of (Elliott & James, 1989).

Conclusion

Ultimately, some differences in perceptions are present, but largely clients and CITs find the same things meaningful in counseling. Though they differ some in what they emphasize about the meaningful experiences and how much they emphasize certain happenings.

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Chapter 5

Article 2

Multiple Perspectives of the Counseling Process: Implications for Supervision

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Abstract

Researchers examined multiple perspectives of meaningful in-session events through observation of counseling sessions, and interviews with participants. The observer identified the following themes as meaningful in the sessions observed: Immediacy, Nonverbals and Intuition, Rescuing, Depth of Congruence, Insights, and Goal Setting. Anchoring the results with the perspective of the observer, and highlighting similarities and differences among the three perspectives, the authors discuss implications for counselor training and clinical supervision.

Multiple Perspectives of the Counseling Process: Implications for Supervision

Research on the counseling process is in its infancy (Paulson, Everall, & Stuart, 2001; Ward, Linville, & Rosen, 2007), and in order to gain a full understanding of the process, multiple perspectives are needed (Elliott & James, 1989; Moon, Dillon, & Sprenkle, 1990; Sells, Smith, & Moon, 1996). Examination of in-session subjective experience (Bennun, Hahlweg, Schindler, & Langlotz, 1986; Elliott & Shapiro, 1992) and comparisons between multiple perspectives of those experiences will further our comprehension (Elliott & Shapiro, 1992). The client and counselor have their own perspective on the process, each of which is important to elicit in order to gain a whole picture of the counseling process (Blow et al., 2009; Elliott & James, 1989; Llewelyn, 1988; Moon et al., 1990; Sells, et al., 1996). Further, the perspective of an observer offers a compelling extension of our understanding (Elliott & James, 1989). Observers can identify subtleties and unconscious occurrences, as well as shed light on experiences that clients may be less willing to report and that counselors may be unaware of. Consequently, capturing multiple perspectives of the process, including client, counselor, and observer, will enrich our understanding, as each is compelling and contributes something unique to the picture (Elliott & James, 1989; Sells et al., 1996). In the current study we examine an observer's perspective of what is meaningful in counseling, and how clients and counselors-in-training (CITs) experienced those same occurrences. Implications for counselor educators and supervisors are detailed.

Research on client, counselor, and observer

Historically, much of what we know about the counseling process has come from the perspective of the counselor (Bowman & Marshall, 2000; Henkelman & Paulson, 2006; Paulson et al., 2001), however, recently many researchers have more holistically explored the counseling process by eliciting both client and counselor perceptions (Llewelyn, 1988) and by comparing

these perceptions (Hill, Helms, Spiegel, & Tichenor, 1988; Llewelyn, 1988). Yet, few researchers have explored the process through the client, counselor, and observer perspectives (Elliott & Shapiro, 1992).

Llewelyn (1988) conducted a study of helpful and unhelpful events in counseling from 40 client-counselor pairs. Clients found reassurance or relief, and problem solving as helpful, while counselors most often reported times when clients gained cognitive and affective insight as helpful. As for unhelpful events, clients reported events related to disappointment, and counselors reported events related to misdirection. When treatment outcome was poor, there were more differences found in client and counselor perceptions, however even when the treatment outcome was good, there were still differences. Llewelyn described the discrepancy in perceptions as positive, possibly serving as a catalyst for creating movement in therapy.

Lietaer (1992) also studied helpful and hindering occurrences in session. Clients identified the counseling relationship as helpful twice as often as counselors, and counselors identified self-exploration as helpful twice as often as clients. As for hindering occurrences, counselors experienced lack of empathy, avoidance of the here-and-now of the relationship, lack of congruence, and a "flight to rationality" in both themselves and their clients as hindering. Clients experienced too much or too little happening in session as hindering. Clients and counselors both found useless self-exploration and resistance hindering. Participants tended to attribute hindering events to their own doing, yet attributed helpful events to the clients. Interestingly, many participants chose not to comment on what is hindering in session, and this question was left blank on the post-session questionnaire twice as often by clients than counselors. This may mean that clients experience less hindering occurrences in session than

counsolors, or it could mean that clients are reluctant to criticize their counselors, as has been

reported by Elliott and James (1989) and Thompson and Hill (1991).

In exploring the common factors in family therapy, Thomas (2006) elicited client and

counselor perceptions. Thomas found that clients and counselors agreed that clients are

responsible for 60% of change in counseling, yet disagreed on the importance of other factors

contributing to change. Counselors attributed change to the therapeutic relationship (35%),

client's hope and expectancy (27%), client extra-therapeutic factors (22%), and models and

techniques (16%). On the other hand, clients attributed change to client's hope and expectancy

(30%), the therapeutic relationship (29%), models and techniques (28%), and client extra-

therapeutic factors (13%). The therapeutic relationship and client hope and expectancy factors

secure the top two spots for both clients and counselors.

Lietaer and Neirinck (1986), when examining client and counselor perceptions of client-

centered/experiential therapy, found that clients value the therapeutic relationship more than

counselors do. Specifically, clients found helpful a therapeutic relationship that is safe, with a

counselor that is empathic, accepting, and involved. The researchers also discovered that clients

and counselors, with some degree of difference in emphasis, experienced self-exploration and

experiential insight as most important aspects in their counseling sessions.

Martin and Stelmaczonek (1988) examined the experiences of clients and counselors of

what they found most important in counseling. They discovered clients and counselors identified

the same occurrences as most important, and differed only slightly in the ranking of those

occurrences. Themes, in the order of importance for clients, were: the expression of insight,

providing personally revealing and significant material about self or interpersonal relationships,

the expression of new ways of being or behaving either in session or outside of session, and the

description and exploration of feelings. The final two themes are reversed in rank for counselors.

Sells et al. (1996) ethnographically explored clients' and therapists' perceptions of effective moments over the course of treatment through interviews. Two themes emerged from the clients' perspective of effective moments, which were: specific therapist interventions, including homework, providing focus or specific goals, and receiving support or backup; and specific things that happened because of the counseling process, which includes more perspectives about a problem and a safe place to talk about feelings and problems. For therapists, only one theme emerged: specific therapist techniques that were beneficial to the client, including techniques such as contracting, finding solutions or exceptions to the problem, reframing, and unbalancing. Therapists, in a group interview, expressed surprise that clients did not find therapist techniques effective in counseling. Rather, clients experienced goal setting, rapport, and therapist empathic qualities as effective. Clients and therapists agreed that unclear goals and direction are ineffective in counseling. Clients also identified the following as ineffective: when therapists have their own agenda, when therapists do not understand or address the problem, and lack of continuity of sessions. Sells et al. concluded that clients place more value on the counseling alliance, and therapists on techniques.

While these studies have been focused on the perceptions of clients and counselors, there have been fewer studies which have included an observer's perspective of the counseling process. Discrepancies have been found when comparing client, counselor, and observer perspectives (Elliott & Shapiro, 1992), thus including all three perspectives creates a more complete picture of the process (Llewelyn, 1988). Two studies in particular explored a single client system from multiple perspectives.

Blow et al. (2009) examined experiences of key therapeutic moments of in-session events from the perspectives of counselor, client (in this study a couple), and an observation team, using a common factors lens. All perspectives were in agreement that change occurred for the couple in treatment. The clients attributed factors leading to change much more to the person-of-therapist and her style, than to specific things that she did. Therapeutic mistakes, as labeled by the observation team, did not detract from the work in counseling, given the strong counseling alliance. Similarly, what the observation team saw as missed opportunities, later were seen as movement in a direction that could not have been anticipated, and that worked well for the couple. Blow et al. concluded that the combination of many, oftentimes unrelated events contributed to change for this couple, and that much of the change seemed to take place in the dynamic counseling relationship.

Elliott and Shapiro (1992) elicited client, counselor, and observer accounts of significant in-session events. Most often the three perspectives were in general agreement, but described the same event in different language, or provided complimentary, but not discounting information about the event. In describing significant events, the observer's language was more professional and general, the client's language was more specific and vivid, and the counselor's language was professional and theory-based. In a few cases, moderate discrepancies in perspectives were evident, but clear discrepancies did not arise. The authors saw the discrepancies as opportunities for further understanding of the events, and ultimately of the counseling process. For example, the client and observer perceived the client as working through an issue, while the counselor perceived the client as avoiding the issue. The counselor responded to the client's perceived avoidance by pushing the client to become more involved, which then contributed to the event becoming significantly helpful. Hence, whether the client was avoiding the issue or not, the

discrepancy in perspectives became productive in their process. As such, the need is not for clients and counselors to have the same perceptions in counseling, nor is this realistic. Rather, counselors need to become aware of what is meaningful to clients in session, so they may maximize on those opportunities to create more meaningful experiences.

More research on the counseling process is needed, including eliciting multiple perspectives (Moon et al., 1990; Sells et al., 1996), and using qualitative, exploratory, and discovery-oriented research (Elliott & James, 1989; Elliott & Shapiro, 1992). Specifically, there is a call for research examining discrepancies among client, counselor, and observer accounts of significant in-session events (Elliott & Shapiro, 1992). Thus, in the current study, we address the following research question: What are the similarities and differences of an observer's perspective and the experiences of the counselor-in-training (CIT) and client of what is meaningful in counseling?

Methods

The research question was answered through analysis of fieldnotes from participant observation (Jorgensen, 1989) and of transcripts of phenomenological in-depth interviews (Seidman, 2006). These findings are part of a larger study that explored meaningful experiences from three perspectives of clients, CITs, and an observer. Themes from the client and CIT interviews are reported in a separate manuscript (Sackett, Lawson, & Burge, 2011, Manuscript in preparation). Therefore, this manuscript is focused on themes from the observer's perspective, and client and CIT experiences (both similar and different) that correspond to the observer's experience of meaningful happenings in the session are reported here in order to answer the research question.

There are many similarities between qualitative research and counseling, such as identifying themes and patterns, and attempting to understand the participant's or client's experience, and these similarities make qualitative methods ideal for examining participant experiences in counseling (Singer, 2005). A single session unit and significance sampling were used in this study. The single session unit allows for an examination of in-session events and session impact (Elliott & James, 1989), and for participants to reflect on their most recent session, leading to more accurate results and better understanding of experiences than if participants were reflecting on an entire course of treatment (Mehr, Ladany, & Caskie, 2010). Significance sampling is the examination of events that have significant meaning to the participant, or therapeutic impact (Elliott & James, 1989). This study was designed to approach therapeutic impact with what is meaningful in session, and is illustrated well by Mahrer and Boulet's (1999) statement, "The emphasis is on whatever touches you as something impressive happening here rather than relying on your theory, your knowledge, and your being on the lookout for particular kinds of traditional significant in-session changes" (p.1484). For the purposes of this study, *meaningful* experiences are defined as experiences that are important, significant, or moving to the participant as described by Mahrer and Boulet, and may be cognitive, emotion, relational, or behavioral in nature. This was defined in each case by the observer and by the participant.

Participants

Participants in this study include clients and CITs from a counselor education training clinic at a satellite center for a large mid-Atlantic public university. CITs were enrolled in a master's counselor education program at this university. CITs were completing their practicum experience in the clinic at the time of the study, were in their third semester of graduate studies,

and working with actual clients for the first time. Clients in the study were enrolled in a local community college at the time of the study. After human subjects approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at the institution where the study was conducted, the first author (CS) solicited participants and completed the informed consent process with those participants. The resulting sample consisted of 24 participants, specifically 12 CITs and 12 clients, totaling 12 CIT-client dyads. Ages for CITs ranged from 22 to 29, with an average age of 23. Further, CITs consisted of 10 White females, one Hispanic female, and one White male. Client ages ranged from 18 to 40, with an average age of 25. Among client participants were eight White females and four White males. Each participant chose or were assigned a pseudonym, which are used in the results section. CS gave a five dollar gift card to a coffee shop to each participant as a token of appreciation for participating in the study.

Data Collection

The first author's (CS) perspective as the observer was captured through participant observation. Participant observation, as described by Jorgensen (1989), is known to be useful in capturing participants' lived experiences and in studying processes. CS observed the second counseling session of each client-CIT pair from a different room in the clinic via televisions linked to cameras in the counseling rooms. CS took brief notes of significant happenings, both verbal and nonverbal, during the observations of the sessions as described by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995). CS then used these brief notes to aid in writing a fieldnote for each observation.

CS also conducted interviews with Clients and CITs following their second counseling session; clients were interviewed first, being respectful of their time, and then CITs, who spent much of their day in the clinic. CS conducted interviews in private rooms on the same floor in

the same building, but separate from the clinic. Interviews had a standardized framework, which

allowed for structure and for follow-up exploration, following the recommendation of Patton

(2002). This framework created a conversation around the interview topic. Interview questions

were focused on what participants found most meaningful in that particular counseling session.

Data Analysis

CS analyzed the fieldnotes from the participant observation through qualitative analytic

coding described by Emerson et al. (1995). This process began with open coding, writing

memos as needed when insights arose that deserved further attention, identifying themes,

integrating and narrowing those themes with similar themes, and the creation of subthemes when

themes are related, but have distinct differences. Focused coding followed the theme

development and consisted of re-reading the fieldnotes, allowing for elaboration of themes,

further development of subthemes, and integration of interesting material that may have initially

been overlooked. Theme development for the observation did not involve separate themes for

clients and CITs, instead CS identified themes of meaningful experiences in the counseling

sessions overall.

For the purpose of this study, only portions of CIT and client interviews that correspond

to meaningful experiences as seen by the observer were used. Those examples showed both

similarities and differences among the perspectives. As stated previously, results for what CITs

and clients found meaningful in session are reported in another manuscript (Sackett, Lawson, &

Burge, 2011, Manuscript in preparation).

Credibility and Rigor

Several methods were used in this study to establish credibility and demonstrate rigor as

recommended by Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002). Triangulation was used through the

interview data of clients and CITs and fieldnotes from observations. Obtaining data from these different methods and data points provided an opportunity to describe the counseling process in a more complete way. Member checks allowed each participant to review their interview transcript and respond to the researcher with any comments or clarifications they had. CS detailed the steps of the research process in an audit trail. Peer debriefing and a community of practice served as forums for discussion of issues that arose throughout the process of data collection and analysis.

In qualitative research, all data passes through the researcher's lens. Therefore, the position of the first author (CS) in this study was a point of continual examination, and is described here to give the reader an idea of researcher's lens through which the data was collected and filtered. CS is a doctoral candidate in the same Counselor Education program as the Master's student participants in this study. CS has eight years of post-master's experience in the counseling profession, and is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. CS was acutely aware of the differences between interviewing and counseling when interviewing client participants. As Seidman (2006) distinguished, the researcher is present with the client participant to learn from them, rather than to treat them. In addition to CS's counseling experience, she has practiced for the past three years as a clinical supervisor of CITs in this Counselor Education program. CS was purposeful in not having teaching or supervisory relationships with this particular cohort of CITs, and had only met them as a group on two occasions prior to the study. Nevertheless, when observing sessions, and when interviewing CIT participants, CS was cognizant of the differences between interviewing and supervision, and continually resisted the urge to supervise the CITs during their interviews, or to critique during

the observations. CS heavily utilized her community of practice for reflexivity work, given her position in this study.

Results

Several themes emerged from this study of participant observation of the counseling sessions. The six themes include: Immediacy (with several subthemes), Nonverbals and Intuition, Rescuing, Depth of Congruence, Insights, and Goal Setting. The participant observation themes are presented here. With each theme and subtheme, an example from the observer fieldnotes is given, followed first by an account of how the CIT experienced the event, and then by an account of how the client experienced the event. In other words, for each theme of what an observer found meaningful in the counseling session, the event will be presented from three perspectives, the observer, CIT, and client.

Immediacy

Meaningful experiences from the observer perspective included many accounts and facets of Immediacy. Immediacy as a theme includes three subthemes: Processing the Counseling Process and Relationship, Here-and-Now Moments, and CIT Sharing their Experience of Client with Client and the Reverse.

Many CIT-client pairs engaged in conversations about the counseling relationship and about the counseling process in attempt to define it, better understand it, and gain insight into how the other participant was experiencing it. In other words, many dyads engaged in processing the process and the relationship. The observer's report of Annie and Heather's conversation of their relationship illustrates the subtheme well:

The counselor asked the client, "how about our relationship?" The client talked about the relationship feeling awkward, she was not sure what to do, and felt that the relationship

was one-sided. The counselor asked if the client understood the process of counseling, and the client began describing a textbook kind of talking about counseling. The counselor responded, "I don't want you to feel like I'm pulling out schemas" and the client responded, "I know you are!" [laughter]. [this was interesting]. [Then the counselor seems to get it, the client's hesitation and concern.] The counselor validated the client's observation that it is a different kind of relationship. The client spoke about a fear that she would see the counselor out in town somewhere and the counselor would be thinking "she is crazy" about the client. The counselor offered, "Is there anything I can do to make it more comfortable?" The client answered "no" and commented that she thinks it (the relationship) will get better over time.

The CIT in this dyad, Annie, perceived her client, Heather, as being new to the counseling experience and as trying to figure out what it looks like. Without prompting, Annie reflected that this conversation about the relationship with Heather was meaningful in their session. She spoke in her interview of initiating the discussion about the relationship with Heather and about how Heather felt in the room. Annie also spoke of how she asked Heather if she could do anything to make the relationship more comfortable. Regarding Heather's concern that Annie may see her out and think "she is crazy", Annie had this to say:

> I think that she was very honest, which I really appreciated and she did disclose, you know, that some parts of it were uncomfortable and she didn't really know, because of the trust issues, about her relationship, and she mentioned feeling like she wondered if she saw me out in public, would I be thinking she was crazy, or would I say that to someone? And she mentioned that like the people in this program [CITs] thinking the people from [the community college] were crazy or things like that. So, I really appreciated that raw

honesty because I thought that took, you know, some courage to be able to say that

openly and not know how it would be accepted.

The client, Heather, experienced this conversation about the relationship as meaningful as well,

and had this to say:

Well, I think her concern, too, with our relationship and just with, she knows the issues

with trust so she questioned our relationship. …And it didn't seem like that would be

something that she would care about because that seemed something that I would think

about and that I would care about and that I would probably maybe stress about like, but

she seemed to care about that relationship, too.

The observer, Annie, and Heather all experienced this Immediacy moment of processing the

process and the relationship as meaningful, and experienced it in similar ways, emphasizing

different parts given their position.

There were also many here-and-now moments in the counseling sessions that were

meaningful to the observer. Susan and Carol's session contained a very meaningful here-and-

now event that was initiated by the client, Carol. The observer experienced the event this way:

The client confronted the counselor saying, "you're not as relaxed" and that she had

"aggressive energy" [I am really surprised the client is bringing this up in such a direct

way!]. The client said that the counselor looked as though she wanted to "get out of the

room" or "shake the shit out of me" [wow, this client is being very expressive and direct].

The client [reflecting on the weirdness of this whole thing] said, "that was weird" [so the

client was being very immediate and authentic, and the counselor was not at all, and

instead just strangely smiled and nodded!]. [I'm wondering if this is a power struggle for

control?] …Following the break [mid-session supervision], the counselor returned and

addressed the awkwardness the client brought up earlier in the session, but attributed it to

how the counselor was sitting forward in the chair [I thought this was a gross over-

simplification of the situation]. The client responded with "did they tell you to say that?"

[again, I am very surprised with this client's directness!]. [The counselor is exhibiting

that inappropriate smile again]. [Is this a power struggle??]. [They are absolutely

processing the relationship].

Susan, the CIT, spoke about this event as meaningful in her interview, although she described the

occurrence as the result of her body language. Specifically, the CIT perceived that she was

sitting close to her client, Carol, and that Carol verbally expressed this was making her feel

uncomfortable. Susan appreciated Carol's honesty and directness about this. From the client's

perspective, Carol found it meaningful that Susan wanted her to feel comfortable in the

relationship, and that if Susan makes Carol uncomfortable, to tell let her know. Interestingly,

Carol did not mention her initiation of the here-and-now event with Susan in her interview.

Although aspects of this occurrence were found meaningful by the CIT and client as well, the

observer's experience of this event, and strong reaction, are unique.

Finally, there were a few Immediacy events that involved the CIT sharing their

experience of the client with the client, and the reverse. The observer found the following event

from Sue and Bridget's session meaningful. Sue is working on her fear of speaking up in class:

The client gave an example of an awkward moment in a role play in class and how she

turned it into something funny. After hearing this example, the counselor reflected, "you

have put yourself out there"- [this was nice, exception seeking]. The counselor shared

her experience of the client with her saying, "I would like to provide my feedback" and

went on to say that the client provides many [important, significant, etc. things] in session

and that she wonders if others in the client's life are missing out on her [I loved this!!!].

[There seemed to be a real shift to the positive here.]

The CIT, Sue, found this event meaningful in the session as well. She perceived that she told her client, Bridget, that she really values what she says in session. Sue was hesitant about whether or not this disclosure was appropriate, as she is still learning about boundaries in counseling. Sue was also unsure of how this disclosure would be received by Bridget. Ultimately though, Sue found this to be a positive and meaningful experience in the session. The client also found this occurrence meaningful, as Bridget states here:

Well, something that was different that was really important and really meaningful to me was just the way that she shared herself with me much more than the first session. And so I feel like we're both kind of growing ... …She also told me that the things I tell her, even though I think they might not be useful, that she really thinks that she can grow from my opinion and that she really likes to hear what I have to say, so.

Here again, the observer, CIT, and client all found this Immediacy occurrence meaningful, and in this case, were compatible in their accounts of the event from their varied perspectives.

Nonverbals and Intuition

The observer found many moments meaningful that were nonverbal events or exchanges in session, or intuitive to the observer. This includes silence and space in the counseling room, shifts of energy in the room, and other nonverbal or intuitive occurrences noticed by the observer. During Alex and Frank's session, the observer experienced the following:

[I'm wondering if the counselor is uncomfortable in this session. The client seems dominant and as if he is educating the counselor].

The CIT, Alex, perceived the dynamic between she and her client, Frank, as Frank wanting Alex to be directive with him, and reflected on it as:

> I feel like he's kind of looking for someone to tell him what to do sometimes. His issue is smoking and I feel sometimes like he wants me to be able to give him just like a clear-cut way on how to stop.

On the other hand, Alex also experienced the dynamic in the session as Frank fulfilling the counselor's role, "…a lot of times I'll go to like say something just to reflect something back and he's there already. I'm like, oh, you steal my job." This comment from Alex is in line with the observation that Frank was dominant in the session. In addition, Alex found a conversation meaningful where Frank asked Alex to hold him accountable:

> He said that he wants me to be, not confrontational, but be open and be willing to call him out when he's stepping out, which I feel pretty comfortable with, so I think it went well. When we had that conversation, I felt like, I felt good about that conversation.

It seems as though Alex sees Frank as both wanting her to be the expert, and as jumping into the expert role himself. In his interview, Frank evaluated Alex quite a bit, telling the interviewer how well Alex did and how fine her skills are, concluding, "I was very impressed with my counselor today". Frank confirms in some ways the observer's intuition here with his evaluation of Alex.

Rescuing

The theme Rescuing includes instances where the observer noticed either the client or CIT shifting the discussion away from something intimate or uncomfortable. Some examples included the CIT interrupting a silence, rather than allowing the client to experience what they needed in that silence, or the CIT rescuing the client from an uncomfortable thought. In this

example from Susie and Wanda's session, the observer noticed the CIT, Susie, shifting the

conversation away from a topic that seemed clearly important and intimate, and likely

uncomfortable, for Wanda, the client:

> The client said she worked on her anxiety in previous counseling and that she was
>
> "always a nervous person, even when [she] was little". She spoke about eating when
>
> anxious, rather than hungry, and picking at her lips. The counselor left this conversation
>
> [rather abruptly] and shifted to talking about the client's present relationships.

Susie, the CIT, did not mention that particular occurrence, but did have this to say about the

session:

> Today went well. I felt like she [the client] did a lot of work. I felt like also on my part
>
> that I didn't do a lot of validating. So, at times I was so focused on picking up those key
>
> words or other things that she was talking about, that I would kind of forget to be in that
>
> moment with her and validate painful feelings and stuff like that.

It may be that the example from the observer's perspective was one of the times Susie forgot to

be in the moment with her client and validate her feelings. However, this missed opportunity, or

shifting away from something intimate, led to the conversation about present relationships,

which ultimately led to a major insight for Wanda that she is judging others in her relationships.

Wanda did not mention this occurrence either, though she did have this to say about her goals for

counseling:

> I'm an anxious eater, so maybe just kind of working with that, definitely working with
>
> that a little bit, you know, maybe techniques to kind of talk myself out of eating
>
> something when I don't need it. [Client laughter]

It is possible that Wanda came to the conclusion that she should find techniques to manage her anxious eating, rather than explore the related emotions and impact, as a result of Susie's reaction to the topic. With Rescuing, the observer's experience of the meaningfulness of this particular shift away from something intimate is unique among the perspectives.

Depth of Congruence

Depth of Congruence includes when CITs and clients were on the same page, when CITs understood their clients' experiences, as well as when they did not understand their clients' experiences, and questions CITs asked to further their understanding of their clients' experiences. This theme also comprises CITs' efforts to validate and reframe their clients' experiences. Finally, the theme includes instances when clients express that their CITs understood their experiences. This example of Penelope and Cindy illustrates the observer's perspective of the CIT not understanding her client's pain, missing the expression of pain, and her own part in that pain:

> The client began the session saying that she felt like "shit" after last week's session, that she spent the week feeling very negative and "bad" about herself. The counselor responded with nodding and smiling [this seemed REALLY inappropriate and disrespectful to me]. [Heartbreaking]. The client talked about this quite a bit and continuously brought it up throughout the session, without the counselor addressing it.

The CIT in this dyad, Penelope, experienced this event differently and felt she had addressed the client's pain. Penelope also spoke to the difficulty she experienced in hearing her client's discomfort, which may have contributed to her in-session behavior that the observer had a negative reaction to. Penelope's experience of this event is as follows:

>She [the client] initially came in and she said that after last week's session, she felt like crap. So, that was a little hard to hear, but I tried to talk with her about why she felt so bad about the last session, and just kind of figured out some ways, you know, to make it a better process for her, and like what she really wants to get out of it and, you know, what I could do to make her feel more comfortable; that kind of thing. …It was difficult. It was hard to hear that, you know, I think on some level it was hard not to kind of blame myself for how the first session went, so it was hard, but I was glad that she did at least feel comfortable being honest with me and I think that it will be more productive in the next couple of sessions since we kind of, you know, already have a history and it's already gotten complicated so I think we're at a more comfortable place now so I feel okay about it I guess.

Penelope perceived her client's honesty as evidence that they can have a more productive counseling relationship in the future. Interestingly, Cindy, the client, experienced the CIT's reaction to her pain as positive, unlike the observer's perception:

>Yeah, today was good. I think what helped is that as soon as we, before we even started I let her know how I felt last week, and she was great about it. She didn't take offense to it, which I didn't think that she would. …But she didn't take offense to it. She, you know, she thanked me for telling her…

The observer, CIT and client all experienced this occurrence as meaningful, yet each had their own distinctive view of what happened. While the observer saw the CIT as missing on joining with the client on her experience, or as a lack of congruence, neither the CIT nor client experienced it in this way.

Insights

Insights were present in many sessions as a meaningful occurrence from the perspective of the observer. Included in this theme are new realizations, ah-ha moments, questions that led to insights, and experiences that led to the insights. The observer found this event of Wanda coming to a new realization in Susie and Wanda's session meaningful:

> The client talked about feeling judged by her partner's mother. The client said something about not being pretty or coming from a "high class" background. The client came around to saying that her partner's mother's behavior might not be about her (the client). The counselor affirmed this. …The counselor asked if the client feels judged in any other relationships besides her relationship with partner's mom [great question!]. There was a long pause and the client finally said that she feels judged by her cousin. She spoke about this for awhile, which included some religious stuff. …The client said at one point, "maybe I'm judging her" [huge light bulb moment!!!]

Susie, the CIT, found this event meaningful as well:

> The first moment when she said … something similar to this, …'Maybe it wasn't them being judgmental, it's me that is being judgmental towards others' and so I felt like that was a big moment for her. …I would say that [was] the biggest thing because that's the main thing I remember so I feel like that's meaningful to me. …she realized that she's judgmental and critical of others. I think that's important for her to realize because I think that makes her shut relationships down, so I feel like that's important to realize that you're doing that in relationships, to make those relationships better.

The client, Wanda, had this to say when answering a question about what she has learned about herself through counseling:

…it's so funny you would ask that, because today I kind of realized that maybe I judge

people a little bit too, like I think they have maybe an ulterior motive sometimes, or that

they're being mean or judgmental, and when it's really just them being themselves. I

guess possibly floating with that idea.

All three perspectives, the observer, CIT, and client, found this event as meaningful in session,

and experienced the event in very similar ways.

Goal Setting

The final theme, of meaningful happenings from the observer's perspective, Goal Setting,

encompasses formulating and setting goals and plans of action for clients. Goal setting seemed

to carry energy for clients in these sessions. The following example of goal setting in Kerry and

Ava's session, although important to the client, felt like avoidance of painful issues to the

observer:

They ended the session ….and with suggestions about how to busy herself [the client] so

that she is not lonely, such as focusing on her school work. The client stated that she

wants to be an ER nurse, start a family, and then "everything will be ok". [This feels like

avoidance and/or denial to me, and feels sad].

Kerry, the CIT in this dyad, did not experience the goal setting as meaningful and did not

mention the event in his interview. The client, Ava, did find this goal setting meaningful:

…and then the schooling I feel is a huge goal that I need to focus on and to keep in mind

and I know schooling will overcome everything if I just focus on that.

Although the observer and client both found this event meaningful, it was for different reasons.

The client gleaned hope from the goal setting, while the observer felt it was a temporary solution

for a deeper issue.

Discussion

The results of this study contribute to our understanding of the counseling process by providing an examination of meaningful happenings in counseling from three different perspectives, client, CIT, and observer. This study answers the call for an exploration of discrepancies among client, counselor, and observer accounts of significant in-session events (Elliott & Shapiro, 1992), creating a more complete comprehension of the process (Llewelyn, 1988).

The results were relayed with the observer's perspective first, followed by the CIT and client. It was natural to begin the sequence with the observer perspective since the themes were from the participant observation. Further, the observer inevitably had a more professional and broad view on meaningful events than either the CIT or client in the session, as was found by Elliott and Shapiro (1992). In some cases the examples given for each theme, the observer, client, and CIT were similar in their experiences of the events, as is the case for Immediacy and its related subthemes. It must be stressed here that clients and CITs were interviewed regarding what they each experienced as meaningful in session, and were not specifically asked about events that the observer found meaningful. That being said, all three perspectives were in agreement that the example event was meaningful for Processing the Counseling Process and the Relationship. The observer and CIT, Annie, experienced the meaningful event similarly, and viewed it as being much about the client, Heather's, honesty and direct communication. Heather, however, found the event meaningful because Annie showed concern for the counseling relationship. Hill and Knox (2009) suggest that when clients and counselors process their relationship, the relationship will be enhanced, and clients will transfer this relational learning to their other relationships. In the subtheme CIT Sharing their Experience of the Client with the

Client and the Reverse, all three perspectives found the example event meaningful, and saw it similarly. This finding has support in the literature from the client perspective, as Bowman and Marshall (2000) found that therapist transparency is helpful to clients in counseling. Therefore, clients may benefit when CITs are transparent about how they experience their clients.

In the example of the Here-and-Now subtheme of Immediacy, the observer and CIT found the event meaningful, but experienced it differently. Susan, the CIT, thought the client, Carol's, discomfort was solely about Susan's body language, whereas the observer thought the Carol's discomfort was about much more than body language. Further, the observer felt Carol was being very immediate, honest, and direct, while the observer experience the CIT as none of those things. Carol found it meaningful that Susan wanted her to feel comfortable. The observer's perspective of this event is markedly different from Carol's view that Susan cared about her comfort level, and is similar to Blow et al.'s (2009) finding that a mistake as seen by the observer did not hinder the process when the therapeutic relationship was solid. Further, the results are in line with the finding of Rhodes, Hill, Thompson, and Elliott (1994) that when clients experienced discomfort in counseling, were able to share their concern with their counselors, and the counselor responded with understanding, the counseling relationship was enhanced.

The observer and client found the example given for the Goal Setting theme as meaningful, though for different reasons, and the CIT did not reflect on the occurrence as meaningful at all. The observer perceived the goal setting as lofty, and as avoidance of dealing with the client's pain, Ava's present situation, while Ava found the goal setting meaningful because it was positive focus for her. Goal setting as an important aspect in counseling is also supported in the literature. Llewelyn (1988) found that clients consider problem solving most

helpful, while Sells et al. (1996) demonstrated that both clients and counselors find a focus on goals effective in counseling.

Two themes of meaningful occurrences in session, Depth of Congruence and Insights, showed that all three perspectives were in agreement that the given examples were meaningful. However, in the case of Depth of Congruence, the three perspectives experienced the event differently. Specifically, the client, Cindy, and CIT, Penelope, perspectives were similar, and the observer's perspective was markedly different. It is possible that the observer was picking up on Penelope's insecurities and feelings of guilt in this scenario. Again, this finding is much like that of Blow et al. (2009), where the observation team's perspective of a therapeutic mistake did not detract from the process, given the relationship in the room. Also, Cindy's concern was met with understanding by Penelope, which strengthened the relationship, as has been shown by Rhodes et al. (1994). Not surprisingly, the literature shows us that the relationship is important to clients (Lietaer, 1992; Lietaer & Neirinck, 1986; Sells et al., 1996; Singer, 2005; Ward et al., 2007), and to both clients and counselors (Thomas, 2006). Further, Singer established specifically that clients value feeling understood by their counselors, and Paulson et al. (2001) found that connection between clients and their counselors allows clients to engage in the process. The observer, CIT, and client were all in alignment in the example given for the theme of Insights. Insight, oftentimes referred to as ah-ha moments or light bulb moments, generally means new learning experienced through counseling about any number of aspects of clients' lives. Several studies have also found insight important from the counselor perspective (Llewelyn, 1988), and from both client and counselor perspectives (Lietaer & Neirinck, 1986; Martin & Stelmaczonek, 1988).

Nonverbals and Intuition as meaningful events were unique to the observer when considering the examples given to illustrate the themes. In the case of Nonverbals and Intuition, the observer picked up on the dynamic of the client, Frank, dominating the session. Frank wanted Alex, the CIT, to be more directive, and therefore possibly took on that role so that it would be filled. Singer (2005) found that some clients desire directives from their therapists. Singer also demonstrated that clients place importance on their therapists' body language, another aspect of Nonverbals and Intuition from the observer's perspective.

In the example given for Rescuing the observer's view of Susie's (the CIT) abrupt shift away from an intimate topic was unique among the perspectives. However, Susie verbalized she wished she would have been in the moment and validated Wanda's feelings more in session, and was possibly speaking to hastily leaving the topic of Wanda's anxious eating. Although Wanda did not mention the shift away from her anxious eating in her interview, she did discuss her goal to limit eating when anxious. The rescuing in this example actually led, albeit abruptly, to a conversation about Wanda's present relationships, which ultimately led to a major insight for her. This finding is in support of the discovery of Elliott and Shapiro (1992) that a discrepancy in perspectives can lead to a significantly helpful event and of Blow et al. (2009) that a missed opportunity can lead to a direction that is unanticipated by the observer, yet worked well for the client. Rescuing is found in the group counseling literature as a way group members attempt to help when another member presents as helpless by soothing them, which in turn deprives that group member the opportunity to work through their pain (Jacobs, Masson, & Harvill, 2009). The observer, CS, was trained in a Marriage and Family Therapy master's program where teaching trainees to resist tendencies to rescue others from pain was an integral part of the training. Rescuing was seen as a distraction from the work that needs to be done. Thus, as a

result of her training and clinical experience, CS was not only cognizant of rescuing in the counseling sessions, but also found it meaningful to the process.

Overall, the results of this study show that much of the time the three perspectives were in general agreement, as was in the case in Elliott and Shapiro's (1992) study. In addition, examining the three perspectives together, and especially when there were discrepancies, allowed for a fuller understanding of meaningful events in counseling sessions.

Implications

The findings of this study shed new light on the counseling process for counselor educators and supervisors. When examining meaningful in-session events, the results show that the perspectives of observer, client, and CIT are in alignment on meaningful events much of the time as with Immediacy, Depth of Congruence, and Insights. Many times, although the observer, CIT, and client may have all viewed the same event as meaningful, they had different experiences of the event, as was the case with two themes, Immediacy and Depth of Congruence. It is important to reiterate here that meaningful experiences were elicited in interviews without participants knowing what the observer, or their respective CIT or client, found meaningful, and without being led by the interviewer towards specific events. The findings also point to meaningful happenings that may be unique to an observer, or supervisor, such as those related to Nonverbals and Intuition, that are often out of the awareness of the CIT and client in the relationship, and Rescuing, that are beyond the developmental level of the CIT, and not an aspect clients would be in tune with. Recall that the results, beyond the observer themes, are based on selected events for the purposes of examination of multiple perspectives of the same event, and are therefore not necessarily indicative of the other meaningful events that fall under each theme.

These findings have implications for clinical supervision in counselor education training programs.

Supervisors should encourage CITs to elicit client experiences throughout the counseling process, as has been recommended by many researchers (Bachelor, 1991; Elliott & James, 1989; Henkelman, 2004 as cited in Henkelman & Paulson, 2006; Singer, 2005), including directly talking about the alliance as suggested by Hill and Knox (2009), and much in the way that Immediacy was present in many sessions in this study, and was found meaningful by all three perspectives. In moments of Immediacy, supervisors can view this intimate interaction from a meta-level, and offer valuable feedback to the supervisee. However, the supervisor is not in the room for these moments of Immediacy, and therefore may experience the feeling differently than the CIT and client. Even in these instances though, the supervisor can engage in productive conversations with CITs about the differences in perspectives, facilitating awareness and growth for the supervisee. In addition, modeling conversations about the process and relationship can ideally be done within context of the supervisory relationship, which has also been suggested by Hill and Knox. Clearly, the counseling relationship is important, and the supervisor is not in that relationship. Therefore, what the supervisor may see as a therapeutic mistake may in fact be experienced differently in the room because of the relationship. Consequently, the importance of the counseling relationship must be continually stressed to supervisees, and the supervisory relationship should be treated with as much care.

Supervisors can challenge CITs by informing them of moments when they rescue clients. Rescuing is an aspect of counseling that must be seen by the supervisor, live or via video, as CITs will likely not be aware of this, and therefore will not report it. Similarly, supervisors can offer CITs another perspective of what may be happening in the room, and between themselves

and their client, that the CIT is unable to see, such as nonverbals and intuitive observations. Finally, supervision live and through viewing video recording can reinforce how powerful these meaningful experiences are in session. For instance, in the case of Sue and Bridget, the observer noticed a clear, positive shift in the session following the CIT's disclosure of how she experienced her client, and although the CIT experienced this event as meaningful also, she may not have noticed an overall positive shift in the session, or have attributed the shift to her disclosure.

Supervisors can incorporate these findings in their supervision in many ways. First, it is important for supervisors to remember that although they bring expertise to the table, they can still only see out of their own lens, and therefore should be aware of and own their predispositions. Live supervision and viewing video recording are important in adding the supervisor's perspective to supplement the CIT's account of the session. Interpersonal process recall (Kagan, 1980) can be used to enhance supervisee self awareness (Getz, 1999) by pausing at vital moments while viewing and checking in with the supervisee about their feelings and thoughts from that moment in the tape. The supervisors' perspective can be added to this process as well. The reflective model of supervision (Stinchfield, Hill, & Kleist, 2007) can also be effective in supervisee self awareness and growth through the supervisor and peer supervisee, after observing the presenting supervisee's work, discussing feedback for the supervisee with each other while the presenting supervisee only listens and reflects internally.

There are limitations to this study that are important to mention. Examples for each theme were chosen to illustrate a meaningful event as seen by the observer, from the three perspectives of the observer, client, and CIT. As such, the similarities and differences in the three perspectives on the chosen events cannot be generalized to the other meaningful events

within those same themes. Also, transferability is limited, as the study was conducted in one

particular clinic, associated with a counselor education program that has its own training and

style preferences that may not be representative of other counselor education programs and their

supervisors. Finally, data was collected at one point in time, and with one counseling cohort,

rather than longitudinally across cohorts or across their training.

Future research on an observer's perspective of the counseling process, and how that is

similar and different from participant perspectives, will further our understanding of the process,

as well as provide greater awareness for supervisors. It would be helpful to examine this further

into the life of the counseling relationship. It would also be useful to replicate this study across a

variety of settings and populations, and with several observers. Finally, using a quantitative or

mixed methods research methodology to examine multiple perspectives of the process would

likely provide new, helpful information for supervisors.

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Chapter 6

Other Findings

Introduction

The results presented in this chapter are beyond the scope of the two prepared

manuscripts and will be explored and discussed more thoroughly in future manuscripts. First,

results related to the therapeutic relationship and participant perceptions of counseling are

presented. The research question these results refer to is: How does the strength of the

therapeutic relationship correspond to the depth of what CITs and clients experience as

meaningful in counseling? Initial analysis of this data indicate there may be some connection

between the strength of the therapeutic relationship and the depth of meaningful experiences in

counseling, however further analysis is needed to have a more thorough understanding of this.

Second, although the research question, what are the similarities and differences of an observer's

perspective and the experiences of the CIT and client of what is meaningful in session, was

answered in the second manuscript, themes from the three perspectives are presented holistically

here and the similarities and differences among the themes are identified. There are many

similarities, and a few differences among the three perspectives that are discussed.

The Therapeutic Relationship and Participant Perceptions of Counseling

The following research question was beyond the scope of the two manuscripts presented

in Chapters Four and Five and will be more thoroughly discussed in a future manuscript: How

does the strength of the therapeutic relationship correspond to the depth of what CITs and clients

experience as meaningful in counseling? This question was answered by matching each

participant's Working Alliance Inventory (WAI; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) composite and

subscale scores with the corresponding interview. First, I determined whether each Client or CIT

composite score fell into Group 1 (high scores), 2, 3, or 4 (low scores) by grouping scores into

quartiles. I calculated quartiles separately for Clients and CITs by using the median to divide

each data set into two halves, then using the median of each half to divide the data further,

resulting in the four groups. I examined the WAI scores and the interview material to determine

whether higher ratings on the WAI, in comparison to other client and CIT participants,

corresponded to greater depth in meaningful experiences, and whether lower ratings of the WAI

corresponded to less depth in reported meaningful experiences. Recall that the WAI has

subscales of Bond, Goals, and Tasks. The bond refers to the connection between the counselor

and client, the goals refers to the agreement between the counselor and client on the goals of

treatment and the tasks refers to the focus and direction the counseling will take. The most

meaningful experiences for each participant were determined by the number of times a theme

was present in the participant's interview. In other words, the theme that showed up the most for

each participant is what is discussed in this section as most meaningful. Depth was determined

following the criteria presented by Lyddon (1990) in describing common change factors in

counseling: the amount of hope clients apparently glean from the experience, the amount of

emotion displayed coupled with cognitive learning, and the amount of apparent new learning

experienced. Finally, as part of the participant observation and on the recommendation of my

committee, I assigned a YAVIS (Young, Attractive, Verbal, Intelligent, and Successful; Smith &

Dejoie-Smith, 1984) score for each participant to determine if YAVIS scores seemed to be

related to how participants viewed their relationships with their counseling partner. I created a

scale of one to ten for each of the components of YAVIS. I calculated the mean of the ratings on

the five components, resulting in a YAVIS score for each participant. Higher scores equaled a

higher level of these attributes.

For the purpose of this section, I have chosen five dyads that stood out in their WAI scores to discuss here. Susan (CIT) and Carol (client) both scored in Group 1 (the highest), on the WAI, and their subscale scores were ranked in the same order: bond, tasks, and goals. Both Susan and Carol experienced Insight as most meaningful in their session. Specifically, they were struck by Carol's insight into the difference between how she and her parents had dealt with her grandmother's death. Carol realized in session that her parents cared for her grandmother at the end of her life, and therefore watched her deteriorate and mourned the impending loss gradually, whereas Carol was not present to see this process. Prior to this insight in session, Carol had been harboring a great deal of anger towards her parents for not grieving in a way that she recognized as deep as her grief. Carol had this to say about the impact of her insight:

> I still am kind of trying to I guess wrap my mind around it but that's pretty, you know, I told her I was like, you know, I've been to therapy, you know, I guess the longest I've ever been was like for a little bit over a year and never have made as much progress with this issue as me and [Susan] have [in two sessions].... I think it probably is going to make a really big difference … I mean it's just life-changing stuff.

 Although Susan found the insight meaningful, she did not describe the impact with as much passion, which makes sense as it was not her own insight. She said, "[Carol] kind of had an ah-ha moment for herself so that made me feel really good." This experience seems to have great depth given the criteria used, with new learning and hope gleaned for Carol, and this dyad had high scores on the WAI. Susan and Carol both agreed this was the most meaningful happening in the session, and also both thought the other would recognize it was the most meaningful. In addition, Susan and Carol happened to have received the same YAVIS score of 8.

On the other end of the relationship spectrum, Penelope (CIT) and Cindy (client) both scored in Group 4 (the lowest) for the WAI, and ranked the subscales in the same order: bond, tasks, and goals. Despite their low working alliance ratings, they experienced the same event as most meaningful in the session, which was described thematically as Immediacy. The immediacy in the session was centered on Cindy initiating a discussion about the counseling process, specifically her painful emotions resulting from their last session, with Penelope. Cindy describes how she felt a need to process how counseling was going with her CIT, or she may end up feeling resentful:

> I think it was good that I opened for my own self that I let her know, you know, how I felt so I wasn't bottling that up, you know, because if I bottled that up then I may have resented her or something, you know, and I think it was good for her as well because then she knows where I'm coming from. …I was just being honest with her and she did not take offense to it, which I really appreciated.

Penelope had mixed feelings about the immediacy, as she describes here:

> I feel strange. It was difficult. It was hard to hear that, you know, I think on some level it was hard not to kind of blame myself for how the first session went so it was hard, but I was glad that she did at least feel comfortable being honest with me and I think that it will be more productive in the next couple of sessions since we kind of, you know, already have a history and it's already gotten complicated so I think we're at a more comfortable place now so I feel okay about it I guess.

In addition, for Cindy, the immediacy of Penelope drawing attention to Cindy's use of humor as a defense mechanism in the session was meaningful. This immediacy event led to the realization

for Cindy that others notice her defense mechanism. Cindy describes her feelings from the immediacy here:

> It feels weird because humor is kind of my defense mechanism and now it's like I feel like everybody knows. [laughter] Everybody knows, but I'm glad it was pointed out to me but I feel like, you know, I don't want anyone to know because it's kind of like my protective gear, you know.

There seems to be some depth to this meaningful experience for Cindy in the new learning experienced, and in the amount of hope gleaned from the experience by both Penelope and Cindy, yet this dyad's WAI scores were low. Cindy thought that Penelope would find her initiation of immediacy about the previous session most meaningful, which she did, and Penelope thought Cindy would experience being heard in her pain most meaningful, which was part of what Cindy found most meaningful. This dyad's YAVIS scores were similar, in that Penelope was rated 7.8, and Cindy was rated 8.4.

Taylor (CIT) and John McCrane (client) also both scored in the lowest group, Group 4, on the WAI. They both ranked bond, tasks, and goals in that order. This dyad differed in what they found most meaningful however. Taylor found Emotion, Immediacy, and Nonverbals most meaningful. Specifically, Taylor referred to broaching gender differences with John and initiating a conversation with John about the awkwardness in the room between them. Taylor also found it meaningful that after the conversation about how awkward things were in the room, there was a shift and John began making eye contact with her, which she hadn't noticed prior to the immediacy. She also spoke in her interview about how awkward the session felt and about John's discomfort in openly sharing about his drug use. Taylor describes here the importance of her client's eye contact:

He started kind of like once he started talking about the drugs and stuff, which was right

after that [the immediacy], that's when he started looking at me I think. That's

meaningful I think.

John experienced Goals as most meaningful, specifically learning ways to improve his life,

manage money, and strategies to abstaining from substance use. John apparently deemed this

important based on the amount of time spent on the subject, "Most meaningful? Basically the

same thing [staying clean from drugs]. We talked for a good 15 minutes about that so that was

the most important thing." These meaningful experiences do not have much depth to them for

either client or CIT. There was no new learning, emotion, or hope gleaned by this experience.

Thus, this dyad has lack of depth along with low WAI scores. Taylor and John each thought that

their partner would find the same things meaningful that they found, and they were both

incorrect. Taylor thought John would say that discussing the awkward feeling in the room was

most meaningful, and John imagined Taylor would say the discussion of how John can abstain

from substances was most meaningful. Taylor and John's YAVIS scores are far from each other,

with Taylor at 8, and John at 4.4.

Kerry (CIT) and Ava (client) were another dyad who's WAI scores were in the highest

group, Group 1. They were similar in their subscale rankings, but Kerry had the same scores for

goals and tasks, and Ava had a slightly higher score for tasks than for goals. Both Kerry and

Ava ranked the bond subscale highest. They were different in what they found most meaningful.

Kerry found Ava's expression of Emotion in session most meaningful. He had this to say about

the emotion being related to the work Ava is doing:

> …it was a really emotional session and like there was times where it was like she was, it
>
> was like a struggle for her. I don't think therapy is easy and I think good therapy is hard
>
> and I think she realized that today.

Ava found the Relationship, specifically characteristics and behaviors of Kerry, most

meaningful. Ava found it meaningful that she is able to talk to a male, Kerry, about her strained

relationship with her father, and that Kerry normalized her feelings. Ava describes here how she

was comforted by Kerry's words:

> Hearing his comments …or thoughts like reassuring me that how I feel isn't just me being
>
> crazy ... It's just nice to know hearing him say, you know, 'I could definitely see how
>
> you feel the way you do, you know, it's understandable that you feel that way'. It's nice
>
> to know that I'm not crazy I guess feeling that way.

The meaningful experience for Kerry had depth in light of the emotion displayed by Ava

accompanied by Kerry's view that she is making progress. Ava's meaningful experience also

had depth in the hope gleaned from Kerry's characteristics and feedback. This depth in

meaningful experiences is complemented by high WAI scores for this dyad. Kerry believed Ava

would say her expression of emotion in the session was most meaningful. Ava hoped Kerry

found it most meaningful that she opened up and cried with him. The two have similar YAVIS

scores, Kerry at 9, and Ava at 8.6. Although this dyad experienced different events as

meaningful, both had depth, and both scored high on the WAI.

Sue (CIT) and Bridget (client) were the farthest off from each other in their WAI scores,

with Sue's score in the second to lowest group, Group 3, and Bridget's score in the highest,

Group 1. They ranked the subscales in the same order: bond, tasks, and goals. In spite of their

difference on the alliance rating, they both identified Goals as most meaningful in the session. In

particular, Sue and Bridget both found the focus on social skills and, more specifically, the homework assignment Sue gave Bridget to speak up once in class in the coming week most meaningful. Bridget described the experience this way, which indicates the hope she has for personal growth:

> Today was the first session that we actually made a goal so I was really glad to, because when I think about counseling I always think about goals. It was nice to get past just the talking and actually leave here with a plan to improve myself so.

Sue also has hope for Bridget as well, as is indicated by her here:

> …sharing and speaking up in class and the challenge [to speak up in class] at the end …I feel like it gives us a good jumping point. She's going to try it hopefully and we can work on it and we can process it and if it goes great, great, we'll keep doing it. If it doesn't, what went wrong, what felt bad, what can we do differently?

The meaningful experience for both Sue and Bridget had some depth to it in the amount of hope attached to the goal setting. Recall that Sue's WAI score fell in the second to lowest group, while Bridget's score fell in the highest group. Sue imagined Bridget would find the specific challenge to speak up more in class most meaningful. Bridget, however, thought Sue would find it meaningful that she plans to continue counseling with her. This dyad's YAVIS scores are relatively close with Sue at 9.2 and Bridget at 8.4.

Half of the dyads (6) identified the same theme as most meaningful in session. In three of the dyads that identified the same theme as most meaningful, both client and CIT scored in one of the two lower groups, Groups 3 and 4, on the WAI, and in a fourth dyad, the CIT scored in the Group 3, while the client scored in Group 1. The other two dyads, of the six who found the same theme most meaningful, scored in Groups 1 and 2.

Seven dyads' WAI scores fell into the same group. Four dyads were one group away from each other in their WAI scores. One dyad was off from each other by two groups in their WAI scores (Sue and Bridget). Interestingly, all 24 participant subscale ratings were ranked in the order of bond, tasks, and goals, with the one exception of Kerry, who's ranking of tasks and goals was the same, and still bond had the highest ranking. This finding indicates the relationship, or bond between the client and counselor, is indeed the most important aspect of counseling.

As for the YAVIS scores, all clients who had a WAI score in Group 1, and who's CIT also had a WAI score in Group 1, had a YAVIS score of eight or higher. No such connection was found between CIT WAI scores and CIT YAVIS scores, although YAVIS scores for CITs did not range widely, at 7.8 to 10. Client YAVIS scores however ranged from 4 to 8.6. It is possible that higher YAVIS clients are more confident and competent in forming and maintaining relationships because of their YAVIS attributes, and therefore have higher ratings on the WAI, by both themselves and their CITs. It is also possible that CITs react differently to their high YAVIS clients, and may rate their relationships higher with those clients.

Table 1 gives a depiction of the breakdown for each dyad with their WAI composite scores, followed by the subscale scores in parentheses in the order of bond, goal, and tasks. The table also shows the most prominent meaningful theme for each participant, as well as their YAVIS score. The WAI score calculations and quartiles are shown at the bottom of the table for CITs and clients.

As for the answer to the research question, how does the strength of the therapeutic relationship correspond to the depth of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling, the results are inconclusive. Initially, it appears as though higher WAI scores may

correspond to greater depth in meaningful experiences, and lower WAI scores may correspond to less depth in meaningful experiences. Of the five dyads examined above, two dyads had high scores on the WAI and their meaningful experiences had depth, and one dyad scored low on the WAI, and lacked depth in their meaningful experiences. A fourth dyad also scored low on the WAI, and had some depth to their meaningful experiences. The final dyad had one partner scoring high, and one low on the WAI, and both had some depth to their meaningful experiences. Analysis of the related results from the other seven dyads will provide valuable information to more adequately answer this research question. If there is in fact a connection between the strength of the therapeutic relationship and the depth of meaningful experiences in counseling, the results would add to the body of literature indicating the interrelatedness of the relationship and the process, and the relationship as the medium through which everything else takes place.

Table 1

WAI, Most Meaningful Theme, and YAVIS Data by Dyad

Dyad (CIT/Client)	CIT	Client
Grace/Jenny	83 (50,16,17) Emotion	118 (57,27,34) Relationship- CIT contributing characteristics and behaviors
	YAVIS 9.4	YAVIS 8
Sarah/Mike	49 (33,1,15) Relationship- CIT disclosure of their experience of client	85 (42,16,27) Relationship- Depth of understanding
	YAVIS 9.2	YAVIS 4

Dyad (CIT/Client)	CIT	Client
Penelope/Cindy	45 (32,1,12) Client initiated Immediacy YAVIS 7.8	66 (34,12,20) Client initiated Immediacy YAVIS 8.4
Alex/Frank	97 (46,25,26) Emotion YAVIS 9.6	84 (30,23,31) Goals YAVIS 5.8
Susie/Wanda	51 (40,0,11) Insight- Client YAVIS 8.4	65 (38,6,21) Insight YAVIS 6.8
Michelle/Denise	110 (50,26,34) Relationship- Trust YAVIS 9	110 (47,26,37) Insight YAVIS 8.2
Taylor/John McCrane	22 (31,-11,2) Emotion, Immediacy- CIT initiated or desire to initiate; Nonverbals YAVIS 8	81 (41,15,25) Goals YAVIS 4.4
Susan/Carol	104 (43,26,35) Insight- Client YAVIS 8	133 (59,32,42) Insight YAVIS 8
Annie/Heather	53 (34,7,12) Relationship- Trust YAVIS 9.8	90 (40,19,31) Insight YAVIS 5
Sue/Bridget	80 (43,15,22) Goals YAVIS 9.2	138 (58,36,44) Goals YAVIS 8.4
Kerry/Ava	103 (49,27,27) Emotion YAVIS 9	129 (51,36,42) Relationship- CIT contributing characteristics and behaviors YAVIS 8.6

Quartile Calculations	CIT	Client
Average	74	100.17
Max	110	138
Min	22	65
Median	81.5	96.5
Q1	50	82.5
Q2	81.5	96.5
Q3	100	123.5

Similarities and Differences among Three Perspectives of Meaningful Experiences

The research question, what are the similarities and differences of an observer's perspective and the experiences of the CIT and client of what is meaningful in session, was partly determined by examining together themes identified from participant observation, themes identified by clients, and themes identified by CITs, and finding similarities and differences among the themes from the three perspectives. This particular piece of the analysis was beyond the scope of the two prepared manuscripts, and I discuss it here.

There were several similarities and differences among the three perspectives. Themes of Immediacy, Goals, and Insights emerged for all three perspectives. Nonverbals was a theme for both CITs and the observer. Emotion was a theme for both CITs and clients. CITs and clients both experienced the Counseling Relationship as a theme, and the observer a related theme of Depth of Congruence. Rescuing was a unique theme for the observer. The client theme of Reflections on Counseling and the CIT theme of CIT Negotiating the Counseling Process and their Role appear to parallel each other. CITs were the only group with Transference and Counter transference as a theme.

The similarities and differences found in the themes among the three perspectives are predictable. Immediacy, goals, and insights are core aspects of the counseling process and thus it is understandable that all three perspectives would find these meaningful. Counselors are trained to attend to their clients' nonverbal behavior, and therefore it makes sense that the CITs, as well as the observer found nonverbal happenings meaningful. Emotion was a theme for CITs and clients, but not for the observer, which is likely because the observer was not in the room and in touch with the feeling as much as the CITs and clients. The Counseling Relationship and Depth of Congruence are closely related. The CITs and clients are both in the relationship, which is likely why they would talk directly about it, while the observer is on the outside, and instead perceived times and ways when clients and CITs were in sync and on the same page as each other. Rescuing was only a theme for the observer. Clients would not likely be cognizant of times when they are being rescued from uncomfortable or intimate things, and CITs may not yet be at the stage developmentally where they would notice this behavior in themselves. Yet the observer, having been trained in a Marriage and Family Therapy master's program that emphasized attention to rescuing behavior, was mindful of this in her observations. Clients, many of them in counseling for the first time, reflected on the counseling process, while CITs, who were new at providing counseling, reflected on how they negotiated the counseling process and their roles in it, resulting in these two parallel themes. CITs were also in tune with transference and counter transference, and are trained to be aware of these issues in counseling, resulting in this final theme for CITs.

There are many similarities, as well as some differences in the three perspectives of what is meaningful in counseling. It is important to have all three perspectives as each has a unique view based on their position in the process, and their own personal lens, and for the CIT and

observer, professional lens as well, and will be in tune with different aspects of the process as a result.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of counselors-in-training (CITs) and clients in the counseling process, with respect to the strength of the therapeutic relationship, using a mixed methods approach. The following four research questions served to guide this study: (a) What do CITs and clients experience as most meaningful in counseling? (b) What are the similarities and differences of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling? (c) How does the strength of the therapeutic relationship correspond to the depth of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling? (d) What are the similarities and differences of an observer's perspective and the experiences of the CIT and client of what is meaningful in counseling?

In the beginning chapters I laid out the rationale for the study, thoroughly explored the existing literature related to this topic, and detailed the steps I took to accomplish the purpose of this study. In particular, I made the case to holistically examine the counseling process by eliciting experiences from different sources, including the client, counselor, and observer, and to examine the counseling process with the counseling relationship, as the two are inherently interconnected. To accomplish this, I conducted qualitative phenomenological interviews to capture the experiences of CITs and clients in a given counseling session. In addition, I administered the WAI to CITs and clients to measure the therapeutic relationship. Finally, I employed participant observation to gain an observer's perspective of the counseling session.

I prepared two manuscripts to present the findings of this research. The first article, titled *Meaningful Experiences of the Counseling Process*, was written primarily for an audience of practicing counselors, CITs, and their supervisors. In this article, I identified the themes that

emerged for CITs and clients of meaningful experiences in counseling, and identified the

similarities and differences in the themes between the two perspectives. I discussed the results

and outlined implications for counselors and supervisors. The second manuscript, titled *Multiple*

Perspectives of the Counseling Process: Implications for Supervision, was primarily written for

counselor educators and supervisors. In this manuscript I identified the themes that emerged

from the observer's perspective of meaningful experiences in counseling. For each theme from

the participant observation, I gave an example from the observer's fieldnote, and matched the

experiences of the client and CIT of that same event from their interview transcripts, highlighting

similarities and differences in perspectives. I thoroughly discussed the implications of the results

for supervision in this manuscript.

There were findings from this study that were beyond the scope of the two articles

mentioned above. These findings were presented in Chapter Six. Included in this chapter are the

results related to the research question: How does the strength of the therapeutic relationship

correspond to the depth of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling? It is

clear that despite initial indication that higher WAI scores may correspond to greater depth in

meaningful experiences, and lower WAI scores may correspond to less depth in meaningful

experiences, the results are inconclusive and further analysis is required to adequately answer the

research question. Finally, this chapter includes a discussion of the similarities and differences

among the three perspectives of client, CIT, and observer of meaningful experiences in

counseling, and related implications.

Along with the knowledge gained from this study, there are limitations that are important

to state. The use of a convenient population sample from the Counselor Education clinic at

Virginia Tech limits the transferability of results to experienced counselors and the variety of

clients they serve. In addition, there are likely stylistic characteristics specific to the training at this particular program that make transferability to other counselor education training clinics limited as well. I, as the sole observer, and given my position as a doctoral student in this program, am a limitation as well. Observation was restricted to my lens, and while the use of reflexivity and a community of practice helped, data collection and analysis was filtered by my own personal and professional biases. Further, the use of a single session unit is not representative of an entire course of counseling in the way of process or the counseling relationship. Finally, the data collected and analyzed in this study was largely subjective experience, and may have been depicted in a socially desirable light.

Future research on meaningful events in counseling from multiple perspectives would further our understanding of the process. An examination of meaningful experiences in more mature counseling relationships would be helpful, as would replication of this study among different settings and populations, and with an observation team. Lastly, as stated above, further analysis of the data related to WAI scores and the depth of meaningful experiences is needed, as the results were inconclusive.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Experiences of the Counseling Process with Respect to the Strength of the Therapeutic Relationship

Investigator: Corrine R. Sackett

Advisors: Dr. Gerard Lawson and Dr. Penny Burge

I. Purpose of this Research/Project
The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences of counselors-in-training and clients in the counseling process with respect to the strength of the therapeutic relationship. The goal of this study is to contribute to the understanding counselors, counselor educators, and supervisors have of the counseling process with respect to strength of therapeutic relationship. Specifically, the results will inform counselors, counselor educators and supervisors about whether the strength of the working alliance is related to the depth of meaningful occurrences in session for the study participants.

Participants in this study will be counselors-in-training and clients from the Counselor Education clinic at the Virginia Tech Roanoke Center. The counselors-in-training will be completing their practicum through the clinic, and will be in their first year of the Master's Counselor Education program at Virginia Tech (VT). The clients will be students from Virginia Western Community College (VWCC) who will be voluntarily taking part in at least three counseling sessions at the VT Counselor Education clinic to fulfill the requirements of a class assignment. Participants will likely range in age (though all are over 18 years old), gender, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic background. The goal is to recruit 14 counselor-in-training-client dyads, with an effort to have each counselor-in-training participate only once.

II. Procedures
You will be asked to stay after the second counseling session for approximately one hour. Following the session, you will be asked to complete the Working Alliance Inventory (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) that will measure the strength of the therapeutic relationship between you and your counselor-in-training. This will take approximately five minutes to complete. Following this, you will be asked to complete a brief demographic questionnaire, including name, gender, age, ethnicity, email address. Then the researcher will conduct an interview with you that will take approximately 45-50 minutes. The interview will be focused on what you found meaningful in that particular counseling session. This will all take place in an office or classroom at the Virginia Tech Roanoke Center. In addition, the

researcher will be observing your second counseling session live from another room in the clinic through televisions linked to camera equipment. The researcher will take notes on meaningful events in the session.

III. Risks
Potential risks of this study are minimal, and are limited to possible discomfort in being observed during a counseling session, in answering questions about the therapeutic relationship, and in recounting what was meaningful in a counseling session. You will have permission to refrain from answering any questions you wish.

IV. Benefits
Reflection can be a powerful learning tool, and you may benefit from new or reinforced insight through the interview process and in completing the measure of working alliance. However, no promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate in this study.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality
Care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of participants and collected materials. All participants will be given pseudonyms that will be associated with their interview and fieldnotes from observation. I will develop a key to link participant actual names with pseudonyms, to be kept separate from the study data. Interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. Interviews will be transcribed by an outside source, but will have only the pseudonym, not actual names, identified in this process. All audio tapes and transcripts of interviews, brief notes and fieldnotes of the observations, and completed quantitative measures will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my office and will only be reviewed by myself and my advisors. In addition, all research data will be destroyed at the conclusion of any presentations related to this study and publication of any articles resulting from the study. It is possible that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

Confidentiality may be broken if there is knowledge or suspicion of child abuse or neglect or if the subject is believed to be a threat to herself/himself or others. In these cases, the researcher is required to notify appropriate authorities.

VI. Compensation
Participants will be given a five dollar gift card to a coffee shop for your participation in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw
Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Participants are also free not to answer any questions that they choose without penalty. There may be circumstances under which the researcher may determine that a participant should not continue in the study

VIII. Subject's Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities: Be observed by the researcher during the second counseling session, complete the Working Alliance Inventory (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) and participate in an interview with the researcher following this session.

IX. Subject's Permission

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this study. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

_____Date_____

Subject signature

Should you have any pertinent questions about this research or its conduct, and research subjects' rights, you may contact:

Corrine R. Sackett   corrine@vt.edu   (828) 773-6260

Faculty Advisor E-mail/Telephone:

Dr. Gerard Lawson   glawson@vt.edu   (540) 231-9703

Dr. Penny Burge   burge@vt.edu   (540) 231-9730

Department Head E-mail/Telephone:

Dr. Elizabeth Creamer   creamere@vt.edu   (540) 231-8441

Chair, IRB E-mail/Telephone:

Dr. David M. Moore   moored@vt.edu   540.231.4991

(Note: Subjects must be given a complete copy (or duplicate original) of the signed

Informed Consent Form)

Appendix B

Recruitment Script for Clients

Hello, my name is Corrine Sackett and I am a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education

program at Virginia Tech. I am conducting a study to explore the experiences of counselors-in-

training and clients in the counseling process with respect to the strength of the therapeutic

relationship. My goal with this study is to contribute to the understanding we have of the

counseling process with respect to strength of therapeutic relationship. Specifically, I am

interested in discovering what is meaningful to participants in a counseling session.

If you are interested in participating in this study, I would like to observe your second counseling

session in the clinic, if your counselor has also volunteered for the study, then afterwards ask you

to complete a measure with questions about your relationship with your counselor that would

take about five minutes, then interview you with questions related to what was meaningful to you

in that counseling session, which will take about 45-50 minutes. Your information will be kept

confidential. You will be given a five dollar gift card to a coffee shop as incentive if you

participate.

I am leaving a copy of the informed consent with each of you with my contact information on it.

Please review this and call or email me as soon as possible, or you may let me know now, if you

would like to participate. Thank you for your time!

Appendix C

Recruitment Script for Counselors-in-Training

Hello, my name is Corrine Sackett and I am a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education program at Virginia Tech. I am conducting a study to explore the experiences of counselors-in-training and clients in the counseling process with respect to the strength of the therapeutic relationship. My goal with this study is to contribute to the understanding we have of the counseling process with respect to strength of therapeutic relationship. Specifically, I am interested in discovering what is meaningful to participants in a counseling session.

If you are interested in participating in this study, I would like to observe your second counseling session in the clinic with a client who has also volunteered for the study, then afterwards ask you to complete a measure with questions about your relationship with your client that would take about five minutes, then interview you with questions related to what was meaningful to you in that counseling session, which will take about 45-50 minutes. Your information will be kept confidential. You will be given a five dollar gift card to a coffee shop as incentive if you participate.

I am leaving a copy of the informed consent with each of you with my contact information on it. Please review this and call or email me as soon as possible, or you may let me know now, if you would like to participate. Thank you for your time!

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire

Name:

Gender:

Age:

Ethnicity:

Email address:

(Please note that the above information will not be linked to your interview)

Please check one: _____Client   _____Counselor

Please list the name of your counselor or client:

Please choose a Pseudonym:

Appendix E

Client Interview Protocol

1. What brought you to counseling?

2. What were you hoping to get out of counseling?

3. What are your goals for counseling?

4. Has counseling met your expectations? In what ways?

5. What have you learned through counseling about yourself?

6. Can you describe the relationship you have with your counselor?

Now I'd like you to think specifically about today's session….
7. Was today's session similar to session one? How so?

8. Can you tell me about today's session?

9. How do you feel about today's session?

When you think about today's session, I want you to think about what was meaningful to you…
10. What stood out for you in today's session? Which of those things stood out the most for

you?

11. What things seemed most important to you? What of those seemed most important?

12. What things felt most meaningful to you in today's session? Which of those things felt

the most meaningful?

13. What do you imagine your counselor might say was most meaningful in today's session?

14. Is there anything that you wish would have come up in today's session that didn't?

15. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about today's session?

Appendix F

Counselor-in-Training Interview Protocol

1. Can you describe the relationship you have with your client?

2. Do you feel counseling has been effective with this client? In what ways?

3. Are you planning to continue past three sessions?

Now I'd like you to think specifically about today's session….
4. Was today's session similar to session one? How so?

5. Can you tell me about today's session?

6. How do you feel about today's session?

When you think about today's session, I want you to think about what was meaningful to you…
7. What stood out for you in today's session? Which of those things stood out the most for

    you?

8. What things seemed most important to you? What of those seemed most important?

9. What things felt most meaningful to you in today's session? Which of those things felt

    the most meaningful?

10. What do you imagine your client might say was most meaningful in today's session?

11. Is there anything that you wish would have come up in today's session that didn't?

12. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about today's session?

13. What is your theoretical orientation?

Appendix G

Working Alliance Inventory- Client Version

Used with permission of Adam Horvath, 2011

Working Alliance Inventory

Form C

Instructions

On the following pages there are sentences that describe some of the different ways a person

might think or feel about his or her therapist (counsellor). As you read the sentences mentally

insert the name of your therapist (counsellor) in place of _____in the text.

Below each statement inside there is a seven point scale:

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

If the statement describes the way you always feel (or think) circle the number 7; if it never

applies to you circle the number 1.

Use the numbers in between to describe the variations between these extremes.

This questionnaire is CONFIDENTIAL; neither your therapist nor the agency will see your

answers.

Work fast, your first impressions are the ones we would like to see.

(PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO RESPOND TO EVERYITEM.)

Thank you for your cooperation.

© A. O. Horvath, 1981, 1984.

1. I feel uncomfortable with _____.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally   Sometimes   Often   Very Often   Always

2. _____ and I agree about the things I will need to do in therapy to help improve

my situation.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally   Sometimes   Often   Very Often   Always

3. I am worried about the outcome of these sessions.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally   Sometimes   Often   Very Often   Always

4. What I am doing in therapy gives me new ways of looking at my problem.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally   Sometimes   Often   Very Often   Always

5. _____ and I understand each other.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally   Sometimes   Often   Very Often   Always

6. _____ perceives accurately what my goals are.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

7. I find what I am doing in therapy confusing.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

8. I believe _____ likes me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

9. I wish _____ and I could clarify the purpose of our sessions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

10. I disagree with _____ about what I ought to get out of therapy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

11. I believe the time _____ and I are spending together is not spent efficiently.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

WAI(C) p. 2

12. _____ does not understand what I am trying to accomplish in therapy.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

13. I am clear on what my responsibilities are in therapy.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

14. The goals of these sessions are important for me.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

15. I find what _____ and I are doing in therapy is unrelated to my concerns.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

16. I feel that the things I do in therapy will help me to accomplish the changes that I want.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

17. I believe _____ is genuinely concerned for my welfare.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

18. I am clear as to what _____ wants me to do in these sessions.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

19. _____ and I respect each other.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

20. I feel that _____ is not totally honest about his/her feelings toward me.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

21. I am confident in _____ 's ability to help me.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

22. _____ and I are working towards mutually agreed upon goals.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

WAI(C) p. 3

23. I feel that _____ appreciates me.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

24. We agree on what is important for me to work on.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

25. As a result of these sessions I am clearer as to how I might be able to change.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

26. _____ and I trust one another.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

27. _____ and I have different ideas on what my problems are.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

28. My relationship with _____ is very important to me.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always

29. I have the feeling that if I say or do the wrong things, _____ will stop working with me.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always

30. _____ and I collaborate on setting goals for my therapy.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always

31. I am frustrated by the things I am doing in therapy.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always

32. We have established a good understanding of the kind of changes that would be good for me.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always

33. The things that _____ is asking me to do don't make sense.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always

WAI(C) p. 4

34. I don't know what to expect as the result of my therapy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

35. I believe the way we are working with my problem is correct.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

36. I feel _____ cares about me even when I do things that he/she does not approve of.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

WAI(C) p. 5

Appendix H

Working Alliance Inventory- Therapist Version

Used with permission of Adam Horvath, 2011

Working Alliance Inventory

Form T

Instructions

On the following pages there are sentences that describe some of the different ways a person might think or feel about his or her client. As you read the sentences mentally insert the name of your client in place of _____in the text.

Below each statement inside there is a seven point scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

If the statement describes the way you always feel (or think) circle the number 7; if it never applies to you circle the number 1. Use the numbers in between to describe the variations between these extremes.

This questionnaire is CONFIDENTIAL ; neither your therapist nor the agency will see your answers.

Work fast, your first impressions are the ones we would like to see.

(PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO RESPOND TO EVERY ITEM.)

Thank you for your cooperation.

1. I feel uncomfortable with _____.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

2. _____ and I agree about the steps to be taken to improve his/her situation.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

3. I have some concerns about the outcome of these sessions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

4. My client and I both feel confident about the usefullness of our current activity in therapy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

5. I feel I really understand _____.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

6. _____ and I have a common perception of her/his goals..

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

7. _____ finds what we are doing in therapy confusing.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

8. I believe _____ likes me.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

9. I sense a need to clarify the purpose of our session(s) for _____.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

10. I have some disagreements with _____ about the goals of these sessions.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

11.

I believe the time _____ and I are spending together is not spent efficiently.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

WAI(T) p. 2

12. I have doubts about what we are trying to accomplish in therapy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

13. I am clear and explicit about what _____'s responsibilities are in therapy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

14. The current goals of these sessions are important for _____.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

15. I find what _____ and I are doing in therapy is unrelated to her/his current concerns.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

16. I feel confident that the things we do in therapy will help _____ to accomplish the changes that he/she desires.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

17. I am genuinely concerned for _____'s welfare.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

18. I am clear as to what I expect _____ to do in these sessions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

19. _____ and I respect each other.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

20. I feel that I am not totally honest about my feelings toward _____.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

21. I am confident in my ability to help _____.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

22.

We are working towards mutually agreed upon goals.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

WAI(T) p. 3

23. I appreciate _____ as a person.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

24. We agree on what is important for _____ to work on.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

25. As a result of these sessions _____ is clearer as to how she/he might be able to change.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

26. _____ and I have built a mutual trust.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always

27. _____ and I have different ideas on what his/her real problems are.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

28. Our relationship is important to _____.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

29. _____ has some fears that if she/he says or does the wrong things, I will stop

working with him/her.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

30. _____ and I have collaborated in setting goals for these session(s).

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

31. _____ is frustrated by what I am asking her/him to do in therapy.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

32. We have established a good understanding between us of the kind of changes that would be

good for _____.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

33. The things that we are doing in therapy don't make much sense to _____.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

WAI(T) p. 4

34. _____ doesn't know what to expect as the result of therapy.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

35. _____ believes the way we are working with her/his problem is correct.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

36. I respect _____ even when he/she does things that I do not approve of.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Never Rarely Occasionally Sometimes   Often Very Often   Always

WAI(T) p. 5

Appendix I

Member Check Script

Dear (Participant's Name),

Attached to this email is the transcript from your initial interview. Please read through this transcript and my comments. You may email or call me with any questions, suggestions, or concerns you have about the transcript or my accompanying notes. My email address is corrine@vt.edu and my cell phone number is (828) 773-6260.

Thank you again for your participation in this study. Your contribution to this research on the counseling process with respect to the therapeutic relationship is incredibly beneficial.

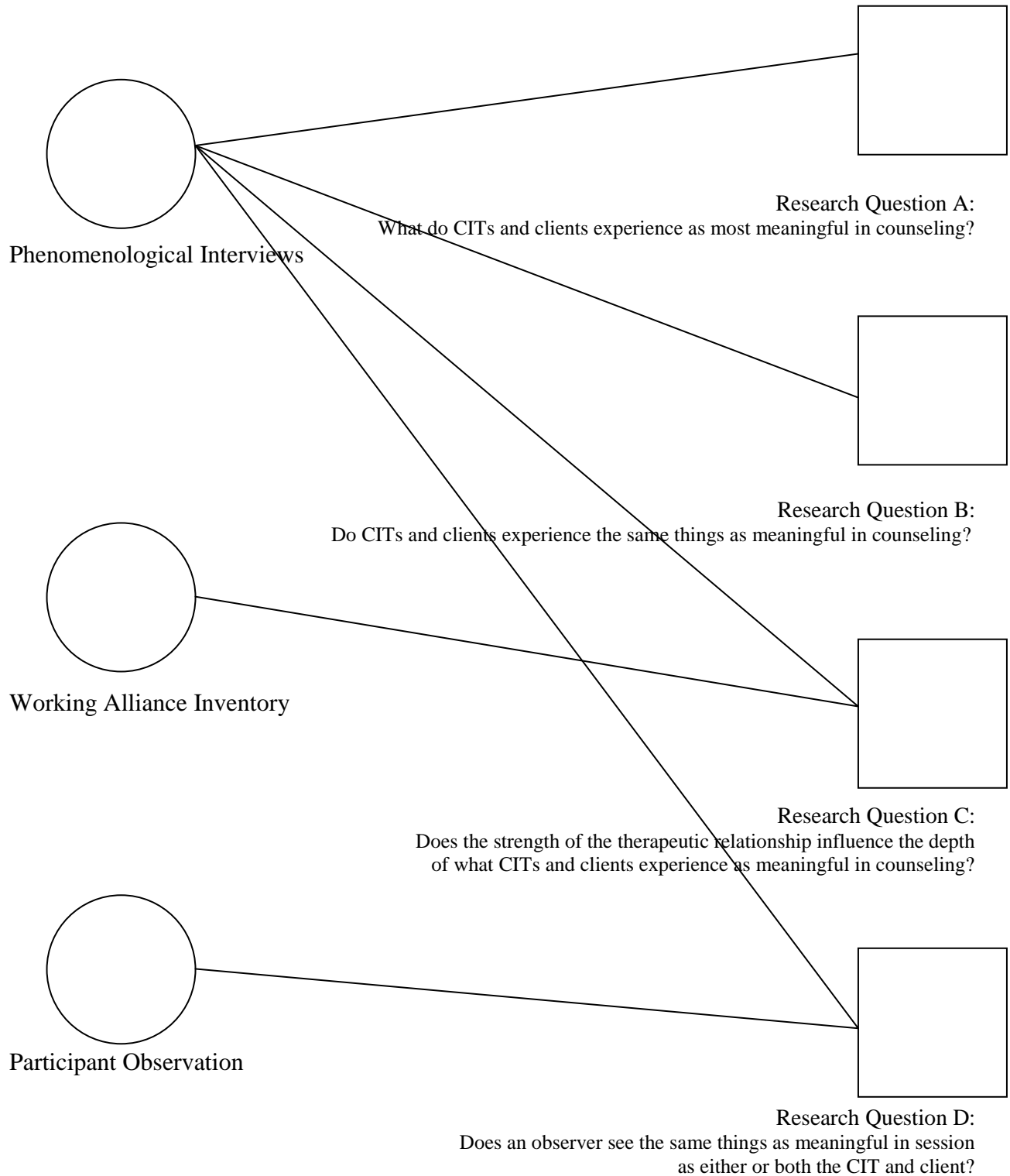Sincerely,

Corrine Sackett, MA, LMFT (NC)

Doctoral Candidate

Counselor Education

Virginia Tech

Appendix J

Data Analysis Visual Representation

Phenomenological Interviews

Working Alliance Inventory

Participant Observation

Research Question A:
What do CITs and clients experience as most meaningful in counseling?

Research Question B:
Do CITs and clients experience the same things as meaningful in counseling?

Research Question C:
Does the strength of the therapeutic relationship influence the depth
of what CITs and clients experience as meaningful in counseling?

Research Question D:
Does an observer see the same things as meaningful in session
as either or both the CIT and client?

Appendix K

IRB Approval Letter

VirginiaTech

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 19, 2011

TO: Gerard F. Lawson, Corrine Sackett

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires October 26, 2013)

PROTOCOL TITLE: Experiences of the Counseling Process with Respect to the Strength of the Therapeutic Relationship

IRB NUMBER: 10-1031

Effective January 10, 2011, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, at a convened meeting, approved the new protocol for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm (please review before the commencement of your research).

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:
Approved as: **Full Board Review**
Protocol Approval Date: **1/10/2011**
Protocol Expiration Date: **1/9/2012**
Continuing Review Due Date*: **12/19/2011**
*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:
Per federally regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals / work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this

requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Appendix L

Demographic Survey Results

Pseudonym	CIT or Client	Age
Susan	CIT	29
Kerry	CIT	26
Sue	CIT	22
Annie	CIT	22
Taylor	CIT	23
Michelle	CIT	23
Susie	CIT	23
Penelope	CIT	22
Sam	CIT	23
Sarah	CIT	22
Grace	CIT	22
Alex	CIT	24
Denise	Client	35
Cindy	Client	29
Heather	Client	28
Ava	Client	21
Autumn	Client	18
Carol	Client	23
Wanda	Client	21
Jenny	Client	19
Johnny Stevens	Client	21
John McCrane	Client	20
Mike	Client	26
Frank	Client	40

Appendix M

Client Data Analysis Chart

Theme	Subtheme	Category	Code
Counseling Relationship	Descriptions	Positive	Comforting relationship with csl. Has been to therapy multiple times, and for over a year before, and has never made as much progress with loss of g-ma and anger with parents than she has in 2 sessions with this csl. (SO COOL) Initially thought she and csl would each get what they need from the assignment, "but now it became so much more than that." Not sure why the relationship works so well, but it works. Don't really have a relationship yet b/c it's new. Mutual respect. The relationship is "easy", the clt talks and the counselor processes it. It is a good relationship, very real, genuine, comfortable. "It doesn't feel like she's just going through the book kind of thing." Pretty good relationship with csl, seem to be on the same page. Friendly, comfortable relationship with csl who is close in age and is a woman. Csl really cares about clt's life, it feels like a friendship.
		Developing or unsure	Can't call it a relationship b/c it's new. Need more than 2 sessions to say if there's a relationship. Not sure how to explain the relationship. Relationship is different than what clt is used to. It's not a relationship yet to clt. Because of clt's trust issues, and because it is one-sided, it's hard for clt to see this as a relationship. Not sure what it is. "odd" and "strange" to have a one-sided relationship all about the clt. Is a client/counselor relationship- "I mean there's nothing more to it than that." Early in the relationship and process. and the relationship is developing.
	CIT Contributing Characteristics and Behaviors	Gender	Nice to have this with a csl of a different gender. "nice that I can open up to a guy the way I do with him." Nice to have a guy to talk to and "cry in front of". Having comfort with this male csl is especially significant b/c of relationship with father. Talking about relationship with dad with another male (csl) Friendly, comfortable relationship with csl who is close in age and is a woman. Most meaningful was having a woman's perspective.
		Other csl characteristics,	Csl not judgmental, clt would be angry if she were. Csl is non-judgemental. Csl is very nice Feels csl is very nice and understands her, and thinks it "could be a very good therapeutic relationship" Really likes csl and feels comfortable with her. Csl is very open, non-judgmental. Csl is non-judgmental. Csl has clt's best interest in mind.

			Csl really cares about clt's life, it feels like a friendship. Csl "just didn't automatically act like she knew more than me. Csl is genuine. Stigma and anxiety associated with seeing a csl, so csl greeting clt, smiling, inviting helps a lot.
		Csl actions	Csl tries his best to listen and help clt. never said anything to confuse clt or bring her down. Csl is a good listener. Impressed with csl today. Csl has gotten to know her rather than just labeling her and prescribing meds, like professionals have in the past. Csl is good at asking questions, showing empathy and that she is listening, "she's got good skills" Csl is very good at listening. Csl's listening skills, and ability to "guide and redirect if necessary" was most important. Csl is a good listener Feels csl is good, "pretty cool" Csl has very good eye contact, and facial expressions and body language show she is genuine and interested in clt. Csl gives advice that's non-biased. Unbiased opinions.
	Depth of Understanding	Understanding and On the same page	Csl normalizing clt's feelings. "It's nice to know that I'm not crazy I guess feeling that way." Csl's perceptions, reflections, and suggestions show that "she always gets it". Csl understood how clt was feeling, and easy for clt to tell her things. In sync and on the same page. Csl could fill in when clt didn't know how to express something. Has never felt like she could explain (about g-ma) in a way that someone could understand, and stood out today that csl understood, even though clt felt she was "babbling" and brought it together. Most meaningful was that csl and clt are on the same page, which is new for clt around this issue with g-ma. Clt felt that csl understood her. Feels csl is very nice and understands her Today they clicked, feels like they could have a therapeutic relationship, whereas last week she didn't feel they could. Working collaboratively now and on the same page, and weren't last session. Seeing csl get what clt wanted- breaking the entire habit of addiction. Understanding and being on the same page. Csl's paraphrase is what let clt know she understood. "I think the key to take away from everything I've said today is the importance of being in the moment with your client cannot be stressed enough." Csl understands her. Pretty good relationship with csl, seem to be on the same page. Csl and clt are on the same page, very important to clt.
		Not on the same page	No idea what csl would say is most meaningful, maybe the similar thing as clt? Anxiety- clt thinks he gave csl impression that he smokes b/c of anxiety, but actually he actually is anxious when not smoking.

		Working to be on the same page	Listens and wants to understand what's important to clt, unlike previous professionals. Csl tried to understand what clt is looking for in the future and "dug deeper" into what he means when he says future. (??) Csl might think that they "dug deeper" into meaning behind the word future as most meaningful. This is the same thing he thinks is most meaningful. (??) Csl will say "it sounds like" rather than assuming or directing. Csl "just didn't automatically act like she knew more than me. She just wanted to understand me"
	Trust	Evidence of trust (sharing, open)	Hopes csl realizes how significant it is that she is talking to him about issues, being emotional, and she isn't able to do this with anyone else. Isn't able to talk to anyone else about the stuff she talks to csl about. Sharing his unpleasant history with csl, when has only discussed with wife was big. Clt is opening up and is able to trust csl. Thinks csl would say clt sharing and being open about how he feels in social situations was most meaningful. Csl said this was important and "she seemed real excited". It was also important to clt that he shared and was open about how he feels in social situations. Feels she is "going pretty deep with csl" and is honest b/c she doesn't feel judged by csl, which is important. Important that she can go to a csl and unload "deep" things. Clt is not the type of person to share immediately, but in this case csl asked about her g-ma and "it was just kind of like emotional vomit everywhere." Clt had time to think about it, nad csl had time to process after 1st session, and "we came back the second time and it was just like I guess kind of like I had known her forever."
		Uncertain about trust	"It was incredibly powerful for me to actually realize, hey, my knee jerk was that by sharing this with my counselor it was almost like I was betraying my wife." Once he got past the idea that he's never shared this with anyone besides wife, he was fine. Not sure if trusts csl, but doesn't distrust her (some uncertainty here) It's a big deal for clt to trust csl.
		Reflections on trust	(Is sensitive to feeling judged) and feels she can tell this csl "something really gross just to gross her out and I bet she wouldn't even make a face" – which is very important to clt. Needs to feel she can be honest with her csl or else they wouldn't be productive. Clt trusts counselor Pretty good relationship, trust and connect with csl more quickly than thought she would be able to.
	Someone to Talk to and Focus on Self	Someone to talk to	To have an outside person to talk to that can help because it's hard to tell people your insecurities. Has learned that talking can be really helpful. Having someone to talk to Feels better getting stuff out. Clt feels more comfortable, sees the benefit of counseling, is "able to open up which is new" to her.

		Focus on self	It's helpful to talk and have her counselor listen. Talking to csl is really helpful, and be productive after talking to csl once/week. Important that she can go to a csl and unload "deep" things. feels good to vent. and focus on self Clt opening up about what is important and what she needs to work on. New experience talking to someone new about "all these aspects in my life"
Insight		Insight into self	Has learned through counseling that her relationship with her parents is connected to her insecurity of being alone. Feeling alone in life is a result of strained relationship with dad. Thinking about the relationship between clt and dad in a new way. Learned that she is not as quiet and invisible as she thought she was. Clt had an epiphany in session about why she and her parents had different views and coped differently with g-ma's death. The difference was that clt was away at college and didn't see g-ma go downhill like parents did. Huge realization today about parents' and her dealing with g-ma loss. Clt is still trying to "wrap my mind around it"- epiphany "I'm still just trying to wrap my head around everything that happened today." Putting things together from last session, between sessions, and this session, ended up being a "big epiphany"… "I don't even know what to think" (clt still processing this in interview). This epiphany feels "life changing" to clt. Feels great about today's session, lots to think about, "life-changing stuff" "I did not realize how negative I really was", always see self as a "sunny, positive person" Has learned through counseling that it is hard for her to open up, but she needs to. Has also realized she takes responsibility on that isn't hers, which is stressful. Wants to learn how to not do this. about her "role in the home and it was interesting. It's interesting." (this was as if she's processing this in the moment with me). Clt said "I feel good. I feel good." about today's session, and it seems very much like it is all still sinking as she's saying this. Has learned through counseling how fortunate he is to have a great support network. Csl would say clt's realizing his support network. Internalizing the learning from school through counseling sessions. Had a big realization today that she maybe judges people too. "Yeah, well, it affects every, you know, it makes you evaluate every relationship that you have. That's a big deal." Know self better. Csl may think either clt's realization that she is judgmental of others were most meaningful.
		Csl leading clt to insight	Csl pointed out that clt it is clear clt is growing b/c she used to want to blend in, and now she wants to speak up- this was helpful for clt to see.

Csl has helped clt bring up thoughts and feelings she didn't realize she had.

Csl helped clt realize how she has been coping already with loss in ways.

Csl helped her realize things clt knew but had never really thought about, so a different look, "and I'm going to toss that around in my head."

Csl pointed out that clt uses humor a lot to distract from things, which clt didn't realize others noticed she does.

Humor is defense mechanism, so it feels weird that everybody knows, and she doesn't want people to know.

Doesn't necessarily mean others notice, but wonders who else notices her humor defense.

Csl brought up things clt didn't want to hear or confront. Clt sees this as good.

Good that csl brought up something that was hard, because it was different than the way clt had seen it.

Issues with men and trust, and csl asked how this is related to relationship with son.

Hopes her son won't be "that type of man"

Hadn't thought before about how her past relationships with men affect how she feels towards her son.

Was defensive at first, but thinks it was a good question and needs to think about it.

These were "parallel issues" and csl "made them cross".

Clt had never thought of the issue of her relationships with men affecting her relationship with her son, and it is ok to think about.

Feels like she over analyzes things, but hadn't made this connection.

Csl reframed what clt called "avoiding" as "coping"

Today's session brought things to clt's attention that she will "probably over analyze" and try and work on.

Main insight was the link between clt's relationships with men and her son.

Another big insight was the csl's reframe of avoidance to coping.

Csl looks at things differently than clt, which is good.

The link between her trust issue with men and her relationship with her son- "shocked" her and she will give it more thought.

Clt hopes the link is that she is raising her son to be responsible and follow through on his word, which is what she wants from others.

Csl asked about a link between the grief and loss of her grandmother and her relationship with her son, and the responsibilities she puts on her kids.

Clt is unsure about the relevance of all of the csl's questions.

Clt feels like it's too much to talk about at times.

The things covered in session are overwhelming at first, and it takes clt some time to process them later on.

Csl helped clt see that maybe she could meet her wants and her needs.

Csl reflected clt's wants and needs for her, and that she could have both.

This shifted clt's focus away from her "thinking I had an anger problem"

and the questions from the csl made him realize what a problem drugs are.

questions were more direct and took more difficult to answer b/c

			they were things clt hadn't thought about before. Today's session left clt with a lot to think about, which is a good thing. Stood out when csl asked clt why and where a particular issue came from for him, and he didn't know the answer- this changed the whole session for clt. Clt was more relaxed at the beginning of session, but csl's questions led clt's thoughts to become more concentrated, and the session got more serious. Clt went from "maybe I wasn't in the moment so much" to "serious" with csl's questions. Meaningful that csl was able to take info from session 1 and get to the "root". Also meaningful was csl's good question about where clt's self criticism comes from- "The reason why it's a good question is I don't think there's a really good answer for it. It also just makes you feel like well, it doesn't really make sense that I think, to allow myself to think that way." There is no answer for why he is self critical- which is why it is a meaningful question. uses questions to get clt to think about what she's saying Csl asking questions to get clt to think is better than csl telling clt what she thinks b/c if clt realizes something, she will feel badly about it and change it, if csl had said it, then clt would think csl would be being judgmental. Midway through session clt started to see through csl's questioning, inconsistencies in what she was saying, and realizing she is judging others. "So that's a big, I think that's huge for me, you know, because I guess I've been kind of pointing fingers at other people and it might just be me." Thinks session went really well b/c csl was able to help clt realize something just by asking questions. Meaningful that clt understands she can be judging others, which affects her personally and professionally, so she wants to deal with it, "becoming a better me ultimately" Having a csl hold all of clt's info and then help her realize some things. Clt hopes she will be able to do this in the future (hear others' stories and help them come to realizations).
Goals		Hopes	Was hoping to not feel lonely and unhappy all the time, and rather build on what makes her happy. Wants to feel stress free and learn coping skills for loneliness. Talked about how to fix relationship with dad, but feels it is unfixable. Thinks immersing self in her career goal will help her feel less lonely. Career goal is what makes her happy. Thinks focusing on school "will overcome everything". Talked about what clt wants to get out of sessions.
		Concrete goal setting	Set a goal to this week in a discussion class, speak up when she has something to say, and they can analyze how she felt in next session. Liked having one subject to focus on in session- social skills. Stood out was the goal, "It was nice to get past just the talking and actually leave here with a plan to improve myself so." Most meaningful was focusing the entire session on one subject and csl never acted bored, or like they should change direction, just let

			clt go, and gave her input and recommendations. Really satisfied with focus on one subject and the goal setting. Able to set goals. Collaboratively set goals. Focused on identifying triggers for smoking, and strategies attempting to stop. Feels good about today's session, is ready for the next week, has a plan and homework. Came up with homework together, rather than csl telling her what to do. Homework is to write down when smoke, what was doing immediately before, triggers. Most important was sitting with csl and "rolling up the sleeves and, you know, getting your heads together and coming up with a plan of action" Main agenda was to come up with a plan of action- did this and talked about other things that tied into plan. Talking about drugs and how he can quit. Talking about drugs-staying clean and passing drug tests is important. Talking about solutions to drug problem, Guesses csl would say the same thing was meaningful- discussion about drugs- b/c they kept expanding on this.
		Coping skills	The breathing exercise as homework is important for clt b/c it is a directive, which is what clt wanted. Talking about coping skills was also meaningful. Continued to be in a bad mood since last week. Talked about ways out of this. Coping skills for the loneliness- getting a cat, focus on school.
Immediacy		CIT initiated	Important that csl stressed that she wants clt to feel comfortable and wants clt to say if she is uncomfortable in session. Csl showed concern for their counseling relationship, given the trust issues. Clt was surprised the csl cared about the relationship and this was meaningful. It was "strange, but it was meaningful" that the csl asked how clt felt in the room. Stood out that csl broached gender with clt and he thinks it is good that he would be getting and did get a woman's perspective on relationships. Really important and meaningful "was the way that she shared herself with me much more than the first session."- both with disclosing she felt similar in school, and when she told clt she values her opinion. Felt good when csl shared that she values and grows from clt's opinions.
		Client initiated	Today was good, at least partly b/c clt shared how she felt last week, and csl "was great about it" and "didn't take offense to it". Csl didn't take offense and thanked clt for her honesty. Is glad she was honest with csl about her feelings from the 1st session so csl knows where she's coming from and clt won't resent csl. Would have resented csl and not gotten what she wanted out of counseling if she didn't confront this.

			Confronting discomfort made things better.
			Didn't feel good this week. Felt better this week. Csl understood that it wasn't about her.
			Feels "a lot lighter" after telling csl how she felt from last session, including having anxiety coming in today.
			Told csl that if she weren't doing this for class, she wouldn't have come back, which csl did not get defensive about, and clt appreciated.
			Wasn't trying to hurt csl, just trying to be honest.
			Maybe csl thinks clt being honest with her about last session was most meaningful- based on her facial expression and csl thanking clt for telling her.
			Clt feels if she hadn't set the boundary on talking about the past, they would have gone back there and it wouldn't have gone where she wanted it to go.
			Doesn't blame csl for her negative feelings from last session.
			Put her foot down b/c she has been in a "funk" since last week and doesn't want to feel that way.
			Clt needs to tell csl how she feels if she wants to get something out of counseling. "She just knows what I tell her."
			Csl won't know unless clt tells her that she doesn't want to go to the past.
Emotion		In session	Feels nervous coming into session, but then relief and feels better after talking to csl.
			Hopes csl realizes how significant it is that she is talking to him about issues, being emotional, and she isn't able to do this with anyone else.
			Came into session nervous and stayed nervous.
			Nervous in session because "exposed" and "vulnerable"
			Clt feels crazy?
			Has now come down from feeling anxious, feels relief, and can go on with her day.
			Feels more relaxed now, feels good.
		Discussing	Talked about her guilt that her husband is in a job he doesn't like, and some possible reasons for that.
			Knows that being a stay-at-home mom is a lot of work, but she doesn't contribute financially, and has realized in today's session that she feels guilty about that.
			Focused on identifying triggers for smoking, feelings associated,
			Anxiety- clt thinks he gave csl impression that he smokes b/c of anxiety, but actually he actually is anxious when not smoking.
			Also csl might say that clt was able to deal with anxiety and stress in a positive way.
			Resentment over being a single parent.
			Guilt when she needs time to herself.
			Resentment when she doesn't get the time to herself.
			"catch 22"
			Csl asked about specific examples of what makes clt upset or angry.
Reflections on Counseling		Positive reflections	Feels a lot better coming out of session.
			Csl may say most meaningful was that clt said counseling has been really helpful and that she wants to continue past 3 sessions.
			Feels today's session was productive.
			Went well, was productive, and will come back next week.
			Is glad she came back to counseling this week.
			Session today was productive.

			Clt feels more comfortable, sees the benefit of counseling, is "able to open up which is new" to her. Counseling serves to bring up things, as a de-stressor, and a coping mechanism. Clt thinks next session will be even better. Feels "pretty good" about today's session, got him to think that he can move on and be open to trying new things. Present focus feels productive to clt. Today's session "really helpful" Clt feels she should go back to counseling again in the future, feels that all counselors, everybody should go to counseling to question self and how you affect others. Csl facilitating clt's growth. Enjoyed session, feels good to vent.
		Different and new experience	Counseling is "weird" "out-of-body experience" to know others are watching as she is "spilling everything" New experience talking to someone new about "all these aspects in my life" "it got pretty deep." Awkward moments of silence are weird for clt.
		Critique	Thought csl would be more directive in teaching skills. Would like csl to be more teaching. Want to touch on the past to let the person know where she's coming from, but depressing to stay on the past. Clt thinks awkward silences are about csl trying to figure out where to go next.

Appendix N

CIT Data Analysis Chart

Theme	Subtheme	Category	Code
Counseling Relationship	Descriptions	Positive	Comforting relationship with csl. Has been to therapy multiple times, and for over a year before, and has never made as much progress with loss of g-ma and anger with parents than she has in 2 sessions with this csl. (SO COOL) Initially thought she and csl would each get what they need from the assignment, "but now it became so much more than that." Not sure why the relationship works so well, but it works. Don't really have a relationship yet b/c it's new. Mutual respect. The relationship is "easy", the clt talks and the counselor processes it. It is a good relationship, very real, genuine, comfortable. "It doesn't feel like she's just going through the book kind of thing." Pretty good relationship with csl, seem to be on the same page. Friendly, comfortable relationship with csl who is close in age and is a woman. Csl really cares about clt's life, it feels like a friendship.
		Developing or unsure	Can't call it a relationship b/c it's new. Need more than 2 sessions to say if there's a relationship. Not sure how to explain the relationship. Relationship is different than what clt is used to. It's not a relationship yet to clt. Because of clt's trust issues, and because it is one-sided, it's hard for clt to see this as a relationship. Not sure what it is. "odd" and "strange" to have a one-sided relationship all about the clt. Is a client/counselor relationship- "I mean there's nothing more to it than that." Early in the relationship and process. and the relationship is developing.
	CIT Contributing Characteristics and Behaviors	Gender	Nice to have this with a csl of a different gender. "nice that I can open up to a guy the way I do with him." Nice to have a guy to talk to and "cry in front of". Having comfort with this male csl is especially significant b/c of relationship with father. Talking about relationship with dad with another male (csl) Friendly, comfortable relationship with csl who is close in age and is a woman. Most meaningful was having a woman's perspective.
		Other csl characteristics	Csl not judgmental, clt would be angry if she were. Csl is non-judgemental. Csl is very nice Feels csl is very nice and understands her, and thinks it "could be a very good therapeutic relationship" Really likes csl and feels comfortable with her. Csl is very open, non-judgmental. Csl is non-judgmental. Csl has clt's best interest in mind.

			Csl really cares about clt's life, it feels like a friendship. Csl "just didn't automatically act like she knew more than me. Csl is genuine. Stigma and anxiety associated with seeing a csl, so csl greeting clt, smiling, inviting helps a lot.
		Csl actions	Csl tries his best to listen and help clt. never said anything to confuse clt or bring her down. Csl is a good listener. Impressed with csl today. Csl has gotten to know her rather than just labeling her and prescribing meds, like professionals have in the past. Csl is good at asking questions, showing empathy and that she is listening, "she's got good skills" Csl is very good at listening. Csl's listening skills, and ability to "guide and redirect if necessary" was most important. Csl is a good listener Feels csl is good, "pretty cool" Csl has very good eye contact, and facial expressions and body language show she is genuine and interested in clt. Csl gives advice that's non-biased. Unbiased opinions.
	Depth of Understanding	Understanding and on the same page	Csl normalizing clt's feelings. "It's nice to know that I'm not crazy I guess feeling that way." Csl's perceptions, reflections, and suggestions show that "she always gets it". Csl understood how clt was feeling, and easy for clt to tell her things. In sync and on the same page. Csl could fill in when clt didn't know how to express something. Has never felt like she could explain (about g-ma) in a way that someone could understand, and stood out today that csl understood, even though clt felt she was "babbling" and brought it together. Most meaningful was that csl and clt are on the same page, which is new for clt around this issue with g-ma. Clt felt that csl understood her. Feels csl is very nice and understands her Today they clicked, feels like they could have a therapeutic relationship, whereas last week she didn't feel they could. Working collaboratively now and on the same page, and weren't last session. Seeing csl get what clt wanted- breaking the entire habit of addiction. Understanding and being on the same page. Csl's paraphrase is what let clt know she understood. "I think the key to take away from everything I've said today is the importance of being in the moment with your client cannot be stressed enough." Csl understands her. Pretty good relationship with csl, seem to be on the same page. Csl and clt are on the same page, very important to clt.
		Not on the same page	No idea what csl would say is most meaningful, maybe the similar thing as clt? Anxiety- clt thinks he gave csl impression that he smokes b/c of anxiety, but actually he actually is anxious when not smoking.

		Working to be on the same page	Listens and wants to understand what's important to clt, unlike previous professionals. Csl tried to understand what clt is looking for in the future and "dug deeper" into what he means when he says future. (??) Csl might think that they "dug deeper" into meaning behind the word future as most meaningful. This is the same thing he thinks is most meaningful. (??) Csl will say "it sounds like" rather than assuming or directing. Csl "just didn't automatically act like she knew more than me. She just wanted to understand me"
	Trust	Evidence of trust (sharing, open)	Hopes csl realizes how significant it is that she is talking to him about issues, being emotional, and she isn't able to do this with anyone else. Isn't able to talk to anyone else about the stuff she talks to csl about. Sharing his unpleasant history with csl, when has only discussed with wife was big. Clt is opening up and is able to trust csl. Thinks csl would say clt sharing and being open about how he feels in social situations was most meaningful. Csl said this was important and "she seemed real excited". It was also important to clt that he shared and was open about how he feels in social situations. Feels she is "going pretty deep with csl" and is honest b/c she doesn't feel judged by csl, which is important. Important that she can go to a csl and unload "deep" things. Clt is not the type of person to share immediately, but in this case csl asked about her g-ma and "it was just kind of like emotional vomit everywhere." Clt had time to think about it, nad csl had time to process after 1st session, and "we came back the second time and it was just like I guess kind of like I had known her forever."
		Uncertain about trust	"It was incredibly powerful for me to actually realize, hey, my knee jerk was that by sharing this with my counselor it was almost like I was betraying my wife." Once he got past the idea that he's never shared this with anyone besides wife, he was fine. Not sure if trusts csl, but doesn't distrust her (some uncertainty here) It's a big deal for clt to trust csl.
		Reflections on trust	(Is sensitive to feeling judged) and feels she can tell this csl "something really gross just to gross her out and I bet she wouldn't even make a face" – which is very important to clt. Needs to feel she can be honest with her csl or else they wouldn't be productive. Clt trusts counselor Pretty good relationship, trust and connect with csl more quickly than thought she would be able to.
	Someone to Talk to and Focus on Self	Someone to talk to	To have an outside person to talk to that can help because it's hard to tell people your insecurities. Has learned that talking can be really helpful. Having someone to talk to Feels better getting stuff out. Clt feels more comfortable, sees the benefit of counseling, is "able to open up which is new" to her.

			It's helpful to talk and have her counselor listen. Talking to csl is really helpful, and be productive after talking to csl once/week. Important that she can go to a csl and unload "deep" things. feels good to vent.
		Focus on self	and focus on self Clt opening up about what is important and what she needs to work on. New experience talking to someone new about "all these aspects in my life"
Insight		Insight into self	Has learned through counseling that her relationship with her parents is connected to her insecurity of being alone. Feeling alone in life is a result of strained relationship with dad. Thinking about the relationship between clt and dad in a new way. Learned that she is not as quiet and invisible as she thought she was. Clt had an epiphany in session about why she and her parents had different views and coped differently with g-ma's death. The difference was that clt was away at college and didn't see g-ma go downhill like parents did. Huge realization today about parents' and her dealing with g-ma loss. Clt is still trying to "wrap my mind around it"- epiphany "I'm still just trying to wrap my head around everything that happened today." Putting things together from last session, between sessions, and this session, ended up being a "big epiphany"… "I don't even know what to think" (clt still processing this in interview). This epiphany feels "life changing" to clt. Feels great about today's session, lots to think about, "life-changing stuff" "I did not realize how negative I really was", always see self as a "sunny, positive person" Has learned through counseling that it is hard for her to open up, but she needs to. Has also realized she takes responsibility on that isn't hers, which is stressful. Wants to learn how to not do this. about her "role in the home and it was interesting. It's interesting." (this was as if she's processing this in the moment with me). Clt said "I feel good. I feel good." about today's session, and it seems very much like it is all still sinking as she's saying this. Has learned through counseling how fortunate he is to have a great support network. Csl would say clt's realizing his support network. Internalizing the learning from school through counseling sessions. Had a big realization today that she maybe judges people too. "Yeah, well, it affects every, you know, it makes you evaluate every relationship that you have. That's a big deal." Know self better. Csl may think either clt's realization that she is judgmental of others were most meaningful.
		Csl leading clt to insight	Csl pointed out that clt it is clear clt is growing b/c she used to want to blend in, and now she wants to speak up- this was helpful for clt to see.

				Csl has helped clt bring up thoughts and feelings she didn't realize she had.
				Csl helped clt realize how she has been coping already with loss in ways.
				Csl helped her realize things clt knew but had never really thought about, so a different look, "and I'm going to toss that around in my head."
				Csl pointed out that clt uses humor a lot to distract from things, which clt didn't realize others noticed she does.
				Humor is defense mechanism, so it feels weird that everybody knows, and she doesn't want people to know.
				Doesn't necessarily mean others notice, but wonders who else notices her humor defense.
				Csl brought up things clt didn't want to hear or confront. Clt sees this as good.
				Good that csl brought up something that was hard, because it was different than the way clt had seen it.
				Issues with men and trust, and csl asked how this is related to relationship with son.
				Hopes her son won't be "that type of man"
				Hadn't thought before about how her past relationships with men affect how she feels towards her son.
				Was defensive at first, but thinks it was a good question and needs to think about it.
				These were "parallel issues" and csl "made them cross".
				Clt had never thought of the issue of her relationships with men affecting her relationship with her son, and it is ok to think about.
				Feels like she over analyzes things, but hadn't made this connection.
				Csl reframed what clt called "avoiding" as "coping"
				Today's session brought things to clt's attention that she will "probably over analyze" and try and work on.
				Main insight was the link between clt's relationships with men and her son.
				Another big insight was the csl's reframe of avoidance to coping.
				Csl looks at things differently than clt, which is good.
				The link between her trust issue with men and her relationship with her son- "shocked" her and she will give it more thought.
				Clt hopes the link is that she is raising her son to be responsible and follow through on his word, which is what she wants from others.
				Csl asked about a link between the grief and loss of her grandmother and her relationship with her son, and the responsibilities she puts on her kids.
				Clt is unsure about the relevance of all of the csl's questions.
				Clt feels like it's too much to talk about at times.
				The things covered in session are overwhelming at first, and it takes clt some time to process them later on.
				Csl helped clt see that maybe she could meet her wants and her needs.
				Csl reflected clt's wants and needs for her, and that she could have both.
				This shifted clt's focus away from her "thinking I had an anger problem"
				and the questions from the csl made him realize what a problem drugs are.
				questions were more direct and took more difficult to answer b/c

			they were things clt hadn't thought about before.
			Today's session left clt with a lot to think about, which is a good thing.
			Stood out when csl asked clt why and where a particular issue came from for him, and he didn't know the answer- this changed the whole session for clt.
			Clt was more relaxed at the beginning of session, but csl's questions led clt's thoughts to become more concentrated, and the session got more serious. Clt went from "maybe I wasn't in the moment so much" to "serious" with csl's questions.
			Meaningful that csl was able to take info from session 1 and get to the "root".
			Also meaningful was csl's good question about where clt's self criticism comes from- "The reason why it's a good question is I don't think there's a really good answer for it. It also just makes you feel like well, it doesn't really make sense that I think, to allow myself to think that way."
			There is no answer for why he is self critical- which is why it is a meaningful question.
			uses questions to get clt to think about what she's saying
			Csl asking questions to get clt to think is better than csl telling clt what she thinks b/c if clt realizes something, she will feel badly about it and change it, if csl had said it, then clt would think csl would be being judgmental.
			Midway through session clt started to see through csl's questioning, inconsistencies in what she was saying, and realizing she is judging others. "So that's a big, I think that's huge for me, you know, because I guess I've been kind of pointing fingers at other people and it might just be me."
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			Having a csl hold all of clt's info and then help her realize some things.
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Goals		Hopes	Was hoping to not feel lonely and unhappy all the time, and rather build on what makes her happy.
			Wants to feel stress free and learn coping skills for loneliness.
			Talked about how to fix relationship with dad, but feels it is unfixable.
			Thinks immersing self in her career goal will help her feel less lonely.
			Career goal is what makes her happy.
			Thinks focusing on school "will overcome everything".
			Talked about what clt wants to get out of sessions.
		Concrete goal setting	Set a goal to this week in a discussion class, speak up when she has something to say, and they can analyze how she felt in next session.
			Liked having one subject to focus on in session- social skills.
			Stood out was the goal, "It was nice to get past just the talking and actually leave here with a plan to improve myself so."
			Most meaningful was focusing the entire session on one subject and csl never acted bored, or like they should change direction, just let

			clt go, and gave her input and recommendations.
			Really satisfied with focus on one subject and the goal setting.
			Able to set goals.
			Collaboratively set goals.
			Focused on identifying triggers for smoking, and strategies attempting to stop.
			Feels good about today's session, is ready for the next week, has a plan and homework.
			Came up with homework together, rather than csl telling her what to do.
			Homework is to write down when smoke, what was doing immediately before, triggers.
			Most important was sitting with csl and "rolling up the sleeves and, you know, getting your heads together and coming up with a plan of action"
			Main agenda was to come up with a plan of action- did this and talked about other things that tied into plan.
			Talking about drugs and how he can quit.
			Talking about drugs-staying clean and passing drug tests is important.
			Talking about solutions to drug problem,
			Guesses csl would say the same thing was meaningful- discussion about drugs- b/c they kept expanding on this.
		Coping skills	The breathing exercise as homework is important for clt b/c it is a directive, which is what clt wanted.
			Talking about coping skills was also meaningful.
			Continued to be in a bad mood since last week. Talked about ways out of this.
			Coping skills for the loneliness- getting a cat, focus on school.
Immediacy		CIT initiated	Important that csl stressed that she wants clt to feel comfortable and wants clt to say if she is uncomfortable in session.
			Csl showed concern for their counseling relationship, given the trust issues.
			Clt was surprised the csl cared about the relationship and this was meaningful.
			It was "strange, but it was meaningful" that the csl asked how clt felt in the room.
			Stood out that csl broached gender with clt and he thinks it is good that he would be getting and did get a woman's perspective on relationships.
			Really important and meaningful "was the way that she shared herself with me much more than the first session."- both with disclosing she felt similar in school, and when she told clt she values her opinion.
			Felt good when csl shared that she values and grows from clt's opinions.
		Client initiated	Today was good, at least partly b/c clt shared how she felt last week, and csl "was great about it" and "didn't take offense to it".
			Csl didn't take offense and thanked clt for her honesty.
			Is glad she was honest with csl about her feelings from the 1st session so csl knows where she's coming from and clt won't resent csl.
			Would have resented csl and not gotten what she wanted out of counseling if she didn't confront this.

			Confronting discomfort made things better. Didn't feel good this week. Felt better this week. Csl understood that it wasn't about her. Feels "a lot lighter" after telling csl how she felt from last session, including having anxiety coming in today. Told csl that if she weren't doing this for class, she wouldn't have come back, which csl did not get defensive about, and clt appreciated. Wasn't trying to hurt csl, just trying to be honest. Maybe csl thinks clt being honest with her about last session was most meaningful- based on her facial expression and csl thanking clt for telling her. Clt feels if she hadn't set the boundary on talking about the past, they would have gone back there and it wouldn't have gone where she wanted it to go. Doesn't blame csl for her negative feelings from last session. Put her foot down b/c she has been in a "funk" since last week and doesn't want to feel that way. Clt needs to tell csl how she feels if she wants to get something out of counseling. "She just knows what I tell her." Csl won't know unless clt tells her that she doesn't want to go to the past.
Emotion		In session	Feels nervous coming into session, but then relief and feels better after talking to csl. Hopes csl realizes how significant it is that she is talking to him about issues, being emotional, and she isn't able to do this with anyone else. Came into session nervous and stayed nervous. Nervous in session because "exposed" and "vulnerable" Clt feels crazy? Has now come down from feeling anxious, feels relief, and can go on with her day. Feels more relaxed now, feels good.
		Discussing	Talked about her guilt that her husband is in a job he doesn't like, and some possible reasons for that. Knows that being a stay-at-home mom is a lot of work, but she doesn't contribute financially, and has realized in today's session that she feels guilty about that. Focused on identifying triggers for smoking, feelings associated, Anxiety- clt thinks he gave csl impression that he smokes b/c of anxiety, but actually he actually is anxious when not smoking. Also csl might say that clt was able to deal with anxiety and stress in a positive way. Resentment over being a single parent. Guilt when she needs time to herself. Resentment when she doesn't get the time to herself. "catch 22" Csl asked about specific examples of what makes clt upset or angry.
Reflections on Counseling		Positive reflections	Feels a lot better coming out of session. Csl may say most meaningful was that clt said counseling has been really helpful and that she wants to continue past 3 sessions. Feels today's session was productive. Went well, was productive, and will come back next week. Is glad she came back to counseling this week. Session today was productive.

			Clt feels more comfortable, sees the benefit of counseling, is "able to open up which is new" to her. Counseling serves to bring up things, as a de-stressor, and a coping mechanism. Clt thinks next session will be even better. Feels "pretty good" about today's session, got him to think that he can move on and be open to trying new things. Present focus feels productive to clt. Today's session "really helpful" Clt feels she should go back to counseling again in the future, feels that all counselors, everybody should go to counseling to question self and how you affect others. Csl facilitating clt's growth. Enjoyed session, feels good to vent.
		Different and new experience	Counseling is "weird" "out-of-body experience" to know others are watching as she is "spilling everything" New experience talking to someone new about "all these aspects in my life" "it got pretty deep." Awkward moments of silence are weird for clt.
		Critique	Thought csl would be more directive in teaching skills. Would like csl to be more teaching. Want to touch on the past to let the person know where she's coming from, but depressing to stay on the past. Clt thinks awkward silences are about csl trying to figure out where to go next.

Appendix O

Observer Data Analysis Chart

Theme	Subtheme	Categories	Codes
Immediacy	Processing the process and the relationship	Processing the process, figuring it out	Asking the client to provide direction for the counseling Counselor expressed desire for sessions to be beneficial for clt Client expressing feeling responsible for session content Clt verbalized uncertainty in understanding of the counseling process Csl responded by asking clt if she understood the process of counseling The clt responded by talking textbook about counseling Csl responded, "I don't want you to feel like I'm pulling out schemas" Clt responded emphatically "I know you are!"
		Processing the relationship	Clt says the counseling relationship unique- all about the client Client saying there is nothing special about them- (sad and touching) The counselor then asked about the counseling relationship Clt said the relationship was awkward, one-sided, and wasn't sure what to do Csl validated csl observation and feelings by saying that it is a different kind of relationship Clt expressed fear of seeing csl in public, and of csl thinking she "is crazy" Csl asked "is there anything I can do to make it more comfortable?" Clt answered no, and said it should get better over time Clt said later that she wasn't blaming csl, and csl responded she didn't take it that way and was glad clt was honest with her Csl (finally) asked clt "what are ways I can support you?" Csl and clt agreed on the level of trust in the counseling relationship as evidenced by the depth of sharing in the last session. Clt asked for accountability from csl and quickly explained why his wife wouldn't be appropriate for this role because she is emotionally involved and csl is not- this was odd, almost apologetic. Funny moment between clt and csl about clt wanting accountability from the csl, but not with a "baseball bat" the csl quickly responded "I'll put that away then" Csl responded (weirdly I thought) that she is there to "listen" and "help". Clt then said that this counseling relationship was "different" because she told csl things that she had not told anyone else. The csl said she felt "honored". This was nice.
Immediacy	Here-and-now moments	Csl initiated, broaching	Broaching. Csl broached gender with clt

			The csl said "I can see that that's affecting you" (here-and-now!) and sat with the silence that followed. The clt began crying… very moving. Counselor statement of "awkward" in room. Counselor being immediate. Csl asked about clt's here-and-now feelings Counselor asked another here-and-now question, "how do you feel in our relationship now" Clt answered about the physical room and how she felt in it. Csl asked about here-and-now feelings of the clt. Csl comfortable self disclosure that breathing exercise (done in session) helped her because she was nervous- awesome! Csl asked how the counseling relationship is going for the clt! Here-and-now. This seemed especially strong since there seemed to be something tense or something in the room the whole session. This was very strong even if prompted by the supervisor at the break. The csl brought up to clt that she noticed the clt laughs after saying something painful, which seemed weird since I didn't notice that, but did notice the csl doing it.
		Clt initiated	Clt- Weird talking about intimate things while being watched and recorded. Clt said "I feel kinda crazy around you" – maybe clt does feel judged by csl?? The clt told the csl "you put me on the spot!" after the csl asked clt about her weekend. Csl responded "did I make you feel uncomfortable?" Clt said no, and csl said to let her know if she ever does make her feel uncomfortable. Clt must not have gotten what she wanted from counselor because clt said "you look like you don't understand". Very interesting- the clt confronted csl saying "you're not as relaxed" and said that she had "aggressive energy", and looked as though she wanted to "get out of the room" or "shake the shit out of me". The clt then said "that was weird"- which it was!! The csl responded minimally and most just smiled and nodded! The clt was being immediate and authentic and the csl was not! After break, csl brought up the conversation from earlier, but attributed what clt was saying specifically to csl sitting forward in her chair- which seemed like a gross oversimplification. Clt responded, "did they tell you to say that?" The csl minimally responded and smiled again. Again, I wonder if this is a power struggle?
Immediacy	CIT sharing their experience of client and the reverse	Csl shares experience of clt with clt	Csl shared her experience of clt with clt saying she offers much of value in session and wonders if others in clt's life are missing out on this… loved this! Csl shared her view of clt's progress since last session Clt spoke about being "awkward" socially and "not congruent with the norm", and csl reframed this to "unique" and "you're an intellectual definitely"- very nice.
		The reverse	At end of session, the clt surprisingly said, "you've made a big ass difference in my life" to csl!
Nonverbals		Silence and	Awkward silence and client not knowing what to talk about

and Intuition		space, including awkward silences	Silence Csl changing pace, slowing down, giving clt space Csl allowed for silence and space. Long silence, the clt looked deep in thought. More silence and deep thinking on clt's part.
		Energy shifts	Clear shift of energy in the room from high to low.
		Other things I noticed, misc.	Clt happily and proudly reported being a new grandfather!- touching. I notice a dynamic that the clt is dominant in session and I wonder if the csl is uncomfortable. Csl seem inactive It seems to me as though this clt may have big issues with women in general. Clt stated "everything will be ok" if she can focus on school work, become an ER nurse and start a family- this feels sad to me, like avoidance. Clt is eating during session
Rescuing		Clt rescuing themselves or the situation	Clt abruptly changes topic to csl after feeling exposed Clt abruptly shifted to talking about scheduling sessions on a different day The clt abruptly moved on as if she hadn't gotten what she wanted or needed from csl, saying "Anyway…"
		Csl shift from self	Csl deflected attempt for conversation to shift to her
		Csl left intimate sharing	Csl abruptly left clt's intimate sharing Clt described her loneliness in a very thick and sad way, such as her home as a "dark little hole", and that growing up as an only child and her parents "wanted nothing to do with me" and that living alone since age 18 "sucks". This all felt powerful to me, yet csl left it and changed topics. Did he not know what to do? Was he uncomfortable with the depth?
		Csl rescued clt	Csl rescued the clt by saying it is clear she means well
		Csl rescued silence	Long silence, the clt looked deep in thought. Csl rescued the silence. More silence and deep thinking on clt's part. Again csl rescued the silence.
Depth of Congruence		Csl not getting it,	Csl and clt not on the same page on what was an issue from last session- awkward moment. Clt spoke about being "awkward" socially and "not congruent with the norm", and csl reframed this to "unique" and "you're an intellectual definitely"- very nice. Maybe doesn't understand though and not validating his experience? Csl is high YAVIS. Clt described painful social interactions- felt sad. Csl doesn't seem to get it, yet she is very respectful and kind to clt Csl emphatically said "I know what you mean, I really do"- she seemed sincere, but I didn't believe her, b/c how could she know? I wondered if the clt believed her? Clt repeatedly brought up a V-day where he tried, and the woman broke up with him soon after- very painful. Clt repeatedly said that she felt like "shit" after last session

			and "bad" about herself. Csl responded with nodding and smiling and not much else- really inappropriate and heartbreaking! Clt said her husband tells her she has "an incredible amount of strength"- this felt very touching to me and the csl did/said nothing. Csl laughed several times when clt said something painful- seemed really inappropriate to me. Csl seemed somewhat judgmental to me about the clt and her husband's life/work choices Csl asked clt how she feels with her level of contribution in the home, including not contributing financially, and how she feels about being a stay-at-home mom- I thought this was the csl fishing for feelings of guilt, and like it was making the clt feel shame The csl misunderstood that clt smokes due to anxiety, and clt was able to correct csl that not smoking causes anxiety.- seemed important that he could correct her
		Csl getting it	Csl uses clt language Csl is more with clt after break, clarifying statements, leaning in. Clt said using eased social tensions b/c it blocked the noise. Csl responded with "Blocked off all of the noise- such a powerful statement"… this was a great moment, very genuine. The csl pointed out that clt has put herself out there Clt described feeling resentful for not having time to self as a single mom, and feeling guilty to take this time Clt said lost her own identity after having kids Csl reflected clt's conflict for her Clt responded she is "still a human" Clt spoke about being "awkward" socially and "not congruent with the norm", and csl reframed this to "unique" and "you're an intellectual definitely"- very nice. Maybe doesn't understand though and not validating his experience? Csl is high YAVIS. Clt talked about her fear of leaving home and leaving grandmother, and about the life she is missing out on in college. The csl made an insightful comment that clt may be afraid to leave home because something bad may happen. The clt also reflected the impact of the clt's grandfather's death on clt, and clt began to cry. Clt admitted her worst fear was always losing her grandparents. Discussed struggle of "wants" and "needs" and csl reflected that clt was not able to imagine having both- great!
		Csl asking questions that get it	Csl asking what the phrase, "in the moment" meant to clt, although she was familiar with it, and clt describing Csl asked clt for success stories of speaking up in class The csl smiled and said to clt "is that where the protective role comes in?" while nodding- this was the most movement and emotion displayed by csl thus far in the session.
		Csl validating and reframing	Counselor affirmed Csl- validated this concern over being watched while sharing

			intimate info
			Csl validated this personal growth and asserted that this is not universal
			Csl reframed this as possibly coping instead of avoiding
			Clt said she would rather think of it as coping
			Csl joined with and validated clt on her stress
			Clt connected her loneliness to her strained relationship with her father and expressed a desire to reconcile with dad in hopes of helping her "security issues"- very self aware. Csl did a nice job reflecting and validating around this.
		Clt describing experience that csl gets or doesn't get	Clt said she finally felt understood by csl, as if she had felt frustrated for awhile until reaching understanding
			Clt further talks of feeling judged by others and tells the csl, "I'm not just making this stuff up"- does clt feel judged by csl?
			In response to the csl asking clt's idea of a meaningful relationship, clt said "someone to be happy to see at the end of the day" and "somebody to fill the future with"- this was touching.
			Clt repeatedly said that she felt like "shit" after last session and "bad" about herself. Csl responded with nodding and smiling and not much else- really inappropriate and heartbreaking!
			Clt said her husband tells her she has "an incredible amount of strength"- this felt very touching to me and the csl did/said nothing.
Insights		Clt reaction to insights	Clt said session helped and made him think about things!
			Clt pushed back by saying "I don't think I can have more than 3 sessions with you"
			The clt took some time in answering question and said her feelings of men may make her harder on her son
		Clt's experiences that lead to insight	Clt talked herself through to the reality that partner's mother's behavior is likely not about her
			Hilarious moment about clt self talk and clt's hope that she won't start answering herself!
			Clt's pet peeve of people, especially men, don't follow up with what they say
			Clt wondered out loud if Facebook was avoidance, and said this was a new insight
			Clt connected her loneliness to her strained relationship with her father and expressed a desire to reconcile with dad in hopes of helping her "security issues"- very self aware.
		Csl questions that lead to insight	Csl asked question relating clt feeling judged by partner's mother to clt feeling judged in other relationships- great question!
			Csl asked clt something about her intimate relationships with men that made clt say she never thought of that before
			Csl ask a question linking clt's feelings of men with her relationship with her son
		Clt light bulb moments	The clt had a light bulb moment with "maybe I'm judging her" rather than that person judging her as she had viewed it!
			Clt's new realization about her parents' grief over the loss of

			grandmother verses her grief, saying "I never even thought of that until just right now." The csl asked, "how does that feel"- appropriate.
Goal Setting		Formulating goals based on experience	Clt named social skills as a goal she wanted to focus on, saying "I can't be shy forever" Clt spoke about her ongoing personal growth process Clt took control of session direction saying she wanted to talk about present and goal setting, rather than past, which is what left her feeling badly after last session. Clt stated "everything will be ok" if she can focus on school work, become an ER nurse and start a family Clt's hesitance to speak up in class for fear of being wrong Clt feeling inferior in class, in wisdom and experience, and questioning the value of what she has to say Clt realizes if she shares personal experience, she can't be wrong Clt, as a result of not putting herself out there, has had no "complete failures or successes" Clt said no one is challenging her, and she wants someone to Clt fear of being judged by others
		Csl assigning homework	Csl, bringing up clt's stated wish to be challenged and says "I would like to provide that challenge"- Great! Csl gave assignment to clt to speak up one time in class in next week, and then write down what she was feeling before and after sharing- Great!
		Collaborative create plan	Ended session with a plan of action that was agreed upon- this had energy.

Appendix P

Audit Trail

6/9/11- met with Penny to discuss dissertation idea and ask her to be my co-chair
6/20/10- Ebscohost search (usual databases) Client perceptions (SU) or Counselor perceptions (SU) and counseling (SU)
7/29/11- meeting with Gerard
8/5/10- Ch. 2 draft to Gerard
9/1/11- meeting with Gerard
9/8/11- meeting with Gerard
9/13/11- Ch. 3 draft to Gerard
9/15/11- meeting with Gerard
9/22/11- meeting with Gerard
10/4/11- Ch. 1 draft to Gerard
10/6/11- meeting with Gerard
10/13/11- meeting with Gerard
11/3/11- meeting with Gerard
11/12/11- Prospectus to committee
11/17/11- meeting with Gerard
12/1/10- meeting with Gerard
12/3/10- Prospectus defense
12/6/10- IRB submitted
12/10- made changes to Prospectus document suggested by committee
1/14/11- IRB communicated that approval is contingent on changes. Changes submitted.
1/17/11- Spoke with VWCC about potential to talk about their experiences in counseling
1/18/11- Spoke with VT Practicum class about potential to talk about their experiences in counseling
1/19/11- meeting with Gerard
1/19/11- IRB approval
1/20/11- Sent out email to Annemarie at VWCC and to Gerard at VT with recruitment script and attached informed consent asking them to forward it to their students. Gerard confirmed that he would get the info to students same evening.
1/21/11- Annemarie confirmed that she forwarded info to her students.
1/25/11- At clinic, informed consent out to new clients
1/26/11- At clinic, informed consent out to new clients
1/26/11- meeting with Gerard
1/27/11- At clinic, informed consent out to new clients
2/1/11- Collected data on one session and interview with counselor, but client was unable to stay for interview (later decided to throw out this data). Informed consent out to new clients.
2/2/11- At clinic, informed consent out to new clients
2/3/11- Collected data on one dyad. Informed consent out to new clients.
2/8/11- Collected data on two dyads. Informed consent out to new clients. Continued to collect data for a total of 4 weeks.
2/2/11- meeting with Gerard
2/9/11- meeting with Gerard

2/16/11- meeting with Gerard
2/23/11- meeting with Gerard
3/2/11- Began coding Fieldnotes.
3/2/11- meeting with Gerard
3/7/11- Coded more of Fieldnotes. Entered WAI scores into Excel sheet
3/10/11- continued coding Fieldnotes.
3/11/11- continued coding Fieldnotes.
3/11/11- Scored WAI
3/14/11-4/25/11- Finished analyzing fieldnotes and analyzed interview data
3/16/11- meeting with Gerard
3/30/11- meeting with Gerard
3/31/11- sent Penny data on one dyad for her review
4/6/11- meeting with Gerard
4/13/11- meeting with Gerard
4/20/11- meeting with Gerard
4/25/11- met with Gerard about data and discussed plan for two manuscripts
4/26/11- sent themes and plan for articles to Penny and Gerard for review
4/26/11- started writing manuscript 1
4/27/11- meeting with Gerard
5/4/11- meeting with Gerard
5/12/11- meeting with Gerard
5/16/11- manuscript 1 draft sent to Gerard
5/16/11- Began writing manuscript 2
5/24/11 meeting with Gerard
6/7/11- meeting with Gerard
6/13/11- met with Jon to discuss Rescuing in ASU MFT training
6/13/11- manuscript 2 draft sent to Gerard
6/18/11- Received manuscript 1 from Gerard with his edits and comments
6/18/11- Made changes to manuscript 1 per Gerard's feedback and sent to Penny and Gerard
6/25/11- Received manuscript 2 from Gerard with his edits and comments
6/27/11- Finished edits to manuscript 2 per Gerard's feedback and sent to Penny and Gerard
6/28/11- Received manuscript 2 from Penny with her comments
6/28/11- meeting with Gerard
7/1/11- Other Findings section sent to Gerard
7/3/11- Received Other Findings section from Gerard with his edits and comments
7/6/11- Finished edits to Other Findings section, finished writing abstracts and conclusions, compiled everything into one document and emailed Gerard and Penny with the dissertation document
7/8/11- Mailed Penny a paper copy of dissertation document
7/11/11- After correcting margins and Table of Contents, emailed Gerard and Penny with the updated version of the dissertation document
7/12/11- Left Penny a paper copy of latest version of dissertation in the box outside her office door
7/12/11- Met with Gerard to discuss his feedback on latest version, and to discuss the defense presentation
7/13/11- Made edits from Gerard's feedback

7/18/11- Met with Penny and received her notes and feedback on the dissertation
7/21/11- Dissertation document sent out to committee!