

Understanding the Lived Experiences of Children and Young People Using Client Preference Tools in Mental Health Therapy: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract : Children's and young people's (CYP's) perspectives on using client preference tools are central to understanding youth mental health therapy engagement. This systematic literature review attempts to understand the meanings of CYP using preference tools that may allow greater connection with the therapeutic process. Following a systematic search using PRISMA guidelines, seven studies were identified that reported qualitative feedback on preferred treatment options or activities within therapy. The data were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Three group experiential themes were found: 'Tailor my support', 'My autonomy leads to greater engagement' and 'Preferences facilitate my authentic self'. CYP is broadly divided into those who thrive in decision-making and those who require more support. Being offered a choice in therapy delivery provides easier access and means more freedom for CYP. Preferences in therapy appeared to enable greater self-knowledge and a deeper connection to the therapeutic process. The therapist is integral in using preference tools in therapy. Youth feedback is currently limited, yet essential and ethical in order to understand critical factors of CYP engagement and for future research.

Keywords : child and adolescent, client preferences, mental health therapy, qualitative

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