

A Brief Trauma Treatment Program for Survivors of Trauma: A Single-Case Design

Authors : Duane Booysen, Ashraf Kagee

Abstract : There is a high prevalence of violent crime and trauma exposure in South African society. Considering the prevalence of continuous violent crimes and traumatization in South Africa, the public mental health sector is required to combat the burgeoning effect of traumatic stress in South Africa. Trauma counselors, especially, provide important mental health services at primary health care to persons affected by traumatic events. Therefore, the evaluation and implementation of evidence-based trauma therapies is essential at a primary health care level in treating traumatic stress. A single-case design was used to evaluate the treatment effect of a Brief Trauma Treatment Programme treating persons who present with symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder at a primary care trauma centre in Cape Town, South Africa. The sample consisted of six adult participants who presented with symptoms of posttraumatic stress and were assessed at baseline, during treatment, post-intervention and at 3-month follow. All participants received six sessions of trauma therapy. Assessment measures included the posttraumatic stress disorder symptom scale interviews for Diagnostic and Statistical Manual fifth edition (DSM5), the posttraumatic disorder checklist for DSM5, Beck Depression Inventory and Beck Anxiety Inventory. Results demonstrate that participants had noticeable reduced symptoms for traumatic stress, anxiety and depression despite living in contexts of violent crime and trauma. In conclusion, the article critically reflects on the need to evaluate and implement evidence-based treatments for the South African context, and how evidence-based treatments are used in developing socio-economic and cultural diverse contexts with continuous levels of violence and traumatization.

Keywords : psychological interventions, public mental health, traumatic stress, single-case design

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