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Subject: cardiovascular diseases / cancer / autism / other

Is psychotherapy more effective when therapists disclose information about themselves?

Theorists have long debated the wisdom of therapists disclosing personal information during psychotherapy. Some observers have argued that such therapist self-disclosure impedes treatment, whereas others have suggested that it enhances the effectiveness of therapy. To test these competing positions, therapists at a university counseling center were instructed to increase the number of self-disclosures they made during treatment of one client and refrain from making self-disclosures during treatment of another client. Analyses revealed that clients receiving psychotherapy under conditions of heightened therapist disclosure not only reported lower levels of symptom distress but also liked their therapist more. Such findings suggest that self-disclosure by the therapist may improve both the quality of the therapeutic relationship and the outcome of treatment.