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Subject: cardiovascular diseases / cancer / autism / other

Couple-responsible therapy process: positive proximal outcomes.

Therapist-couple struggle vs. cooperation is linked to clinical outcome. This research conceptualizes and investigates treatment process as it relates to the occurrence of struggle versus cooperation. Models of couple-responsible and therapist-responsible process in couple therapy were developed. Couple-responsible process consists of enactments, accommodation, and inductive process. Therapist-responsible process consists of primary therapist-couple interaction, therapist interpretation, and direct instruction. In counterbalanced order, 25 couples were exposed to couple-responsible and therapist-responsible episodes during one therapy session. Couples reviewed videotapes of the episodes and completed measures of responsibility, struggle, and cooperation. Perceived responsibility was higher and struggle was lower during couple-responsible episodes. No difference in cooperation was found. Presence or absence of a contrast condition, where couples reported on one therapist process after already experiencing its opposite, led to main effects for responsibility and struggle, and mediated effects of struggle and cooperation. Generally, speaking, responsibility was even higher during couple-responsible episodes and even lower during therapist-responsible episodes when contrast was present. Similarly, struggle was even lower during couple-responsible episodes and even higher during therapist-responsible episodes when contrast was present. For both couple-responsible and therapist-responsible episodes, cooperation was negatively affected by a shift from the prior, opposite therapist process. Significant proportions of the variance in responsibility, struggle, and cooperation, however, were not accounted for by therapist process alone.