Comparing The Color of Fear and Evolution of a Group: A Pilot Study

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Abstract
This article compared two films: (a) *The color of fear* and (b) *Evolution of a group* using the Multicultural Awareness Knowledge and Skills Survey and the Counselor Skills and Personal Development Rating Form. The results indicated significant differences in multicultural counseling skills evidenced by the leader of *The color of fear* when compared with those skills of the leaders of *Evolution of a group* \((t(6) = 3.43, p < .001)\).

Keywords: Multicultural; Pilot Study; Testing.

Comparando El Color de Miedo y Evolución de un Grupo: Un Estudio Modelo

Compendio
Este artículo compara dos películas: (a) *The color of fear* (El color del miedo) y (b) *Evolution of a group* (Evolución de un grupo) usando el Multicultural Awareness Knowledge and Skills Survey y el Counselor Skills and Personal Development Rating Form. Los resultados indican diferencias significativas en las destrezas multiculturalas en el líder del grupo en *The color of fear* cuando se comparan con las destrezas de los líderes de *Evolution of a group* \((t(6) = 3.43, p < .001)\).

Palabras Clave: Multicultural; Pilot Study; Testing.

There has been some discussion of culture-specific group interventions in the most recent group counseling literature (e.g., Brinson & Fisher, 1999; Chen & Han, 2001; Colman & Merta, 1999; Torres-Rivera, Garrett, & Crutchfield, 2004). In many of these writings, the focus is on recommendations to majority-culture therapists regarding how to best serve group clients of a particular culture. As such, it is necessary to discuss the importance of working with culturally homogeneous groups in order to better understand culturally-responsive services offered through multicultural interventions.

Furthermore, the diverse demographics of the Americas requires that group leaders be trained to be culturally competent before they can be considered to be effective with all populations (Mendoza, Fernández, & Páez, 2005; Smith Castro, 2005; Traverzo-Yépez, 2005). Despite the clear need for training in cultural competence, group counseling as a field has neglected the cultural components of group dynamics, concentrating primarily in Euro-American models of group counseling (see Guth & McDonnell, 2004; Riva & Korinek, 2004). Recognizing this need in the United States the Association for Specialists in Group Work, a division of the American Counseling Association developed the *Principles for Diversity Competence Group Workers* (ASGW, 1999). Essentially, the *Principles for Diversity-Competent Group Workers* is a document that makes an attempt to provide guidelines to effectively work with diverse population in group setting and it is based on the Awareness-Knowledge-Skills model of Pedersen (2000).

While the *Principles for Diversity-Competent Group Workers* (ASGW, 1999) provides some guidelines for working with diversity, these standards can at times be confusing and some people might find it overwhelming, given that the principles are not really providing much more than just guidelines and not much structure nor examples on how the a group leader can become culturally competence in leading multicultural counseling groups. Correspondingly little can be found in the literature of group work with regards to operationalization of these principles. Therefore, this study is an effort to add to the research literature about group work by suggesting methods of operationalizing cultural competencies in group settings. When considering the use of culturally-based interventions in groups, it is likely to note two seemingly divergent applications. The first...
application is the use of interventions that are culturally-responsive with members of culturally homogeneous groups. Many authors have discussed the importance of working effectively with racially or ethnically homogeneous groups to specifically address issues and concerns of people from those specific populations (i.e., Chen & Han, 2001). The second application is the integration of indigenous practices into psychoeducational and counseling groups that may not be racially/ethnically homogeneous or focused on cultural issues. This approach consists of a synthesis of contemporary group counseling techniques and traditional wisdom. Thus, in order to assess the second application of the integration of indigenous practices into psychoeducational and counseling groups that may not be racially/ethnically homogeneous or focused on cultural impacts that social processes have on group members. These social processes include “the interdependence of people in groups... a group’s capacity to promote social interaction, create patterned interrelationships among its members, bind members together to form a single unit, and accomplish its goals...” (Forsyth, 1999, p. 11). As group members shape
their own microcosm, the dynamics that occur between the group environment and the group member form a social microcosm that evokes the core issues of all members. The spontaneity of interactions determines how fast the social microcosm will develop and how authentic the social microcosm will become.

Types of Group

The Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW), a division of the American Counseling Association, who specializes in group therapy, identifies four different types of groups. These types of groups are: task group, psychoeducational group, group counseling, and group psychotherapy. According to the classification of groups by ASGW, each type of group has a different and unique goal. The goal for task group is to promote efficient and effective accomplishment of goals. The goal for the psychoeducational group is to promote personal and interpersonal growth and development and the prevention of future difficulties among people who may be at risk for the development of personal or interpersonal problems or who seek enhancement of personal qualities and abilities. The goal for group counseling is to address personal and interpersonal problems of living and promote personal and interpersonal growth and development, among people who may be experiencing transitory maladjustment and who are at risk for the development of personal or interpersonal problems, or who are seeking enhancement for personal qualities and abilities. The goal of the psychotherapy group is to address personal and interpersonal problems of living, remediate perceptual and cognitive distortions or repetitive patterns of dysfunctional behavior, and promote personal and interpersonal growth and development; among people who may be experiencing severe and/or chronic maladjustment.

The two films illustrated two different types of group with overlapping dynamics that are present all types of groups. The Evolution of Group presented a typical counseling group modality or therapy group, while the Color of Fear presented an encounter group that unfolds under the psychoeducational group modality. The group dynamics and the group leader role in both groups overlap even when the goal of each group is different.

Group Development and Stages

Related to the definitions and goals of the different types of groups is the issue of group development and stages. A number of authors have developed and proposed numerous conceptualizations and definitions of three to five group stages or phases through which groups progress in their development (Corey & Corey, 2006; Day, 2007) and while no empirical confirmation or outcome studies have validated the existence and progression of such sequential, developmental stages, it is important to mention that the various developmental group stages do possess common sense value, and do have face validity, based upon the clinical experience of group workers. There also remains the task of furthering the credibility and development of group stages and phases in various group type formats and structures, such as multicultural counseling group work.

Gladding (1998) simply described the structure of a group as the way in which the leader directs group member interaction, which exists on a continuum. At one end of the continuum, the leader assumes a passive stance and encourages members to give direction to the group. This type of group structure is often referred to as a process group. Conversely, in highly structured groups, the leader often focuses on specific themes or topics, and communication among group members is frequently directed through the leader and other times through direct member-to-member interactions. The Color of Fear (Mun Wah, 1994) provides a good example of an encounter structure group, consisting of developmental phases (or stages) that may be applied to a multicultural counseling group work.

Hypotheses

The research hypotheses for this study are:

Hypothesis 1: The results of the MAKSS will indicate that the group leader in The color of fear (Mun Wah, 1994) demonstrates more multicultural competency than do the leaders in Evolution of a group (Corey, Corey, & Haynes, 2000).

Hypothesis 2: The results of the Counselor Skill and Personal Development Rating Form (Torres-Rivera, Wilbur, Madden, Snaith, Phan, & Roberts-Wilbur, 2002) will indicate that the group leader in The color of fear (Mun Wah, 1994) demonstrates more counseling skills than do the leaders of Evolution of a group (Corey, Corey, & Haynes, 2000).

Method

Participants

The participants were 16 doctoral students in an APA-accredited counseling psychology program who completed at least their first year practicum and were part of the advanced group counseling course. There were 15 females and one male, with a mean age of 28 (range = 23-33). Of the sample, two were African American, one was Asian (Korean) and 13 were Caucasian. One of the participants was bilingual (Korean and English). The participants considered themselves part of the middle class of the socio-economic status in the United States of America. The participants also have completed the multicultural counseling course that the university required as part of the degree plan of study.

Instruments

The Multicultural Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills Survey (MAKSS) (D’Andrea et al., 1990) was used in the
study to measure multicultural counseling competencies of group leaders. It was modified so as to measure observed behaviors rather than self-report information. The MAKSS is a survey that consists of sixty items on a 4-point Likert-type scale. Three subscales of awareness, knowledge, and skills are equally divided among the sixty items assessing rater agreement about the observed levels of awareness of multicultural issues, understanding of multicultural counseling terms and topics, and multicultural counseling skills. The ranking of these choices include a range of 1 (strongly disagree or very limited), 2 (disagree or limited), 3 (agree or moderate), 4 (agree or good) or 5 (strongly agree or very good).

Calculation of the MAKSS consists of total subscale scores by each individual (awareness subscale in items 1 to 20; knowledge subscale in items 21 to 40; skill subscale in items 41 to 60) and then the sum is divided by 20 to produce three subscale scores. Seven items that were negatively worded were scored in reverse. The alpha reliability coefficient from previous studies for each subscale of awareness, knowledge, and skills respectively were .75, .32, and .92 (Díaz-Lázaro & Cohen, 2001). For the present study, reliability has been reported as .76, .79, .90. Full scale reliability was .90 and for the present study. While the use of this scale for this study is not what it was intended to do and it creates a limitation for the use of the scales, the authors of this manuscript found evidence to support that the scale have been used to assess training programs, providing support for the use of scale in a evaluative function beyond self-reporting events. (see D'Andrea & Daniels, 1991; D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1999; Daniels, D'Andrea, & Kim, 1999). Additionally the authors of this study received confirmation that the MAKSS could be used as an external assessment tool with limitations without losing validity (M. D'Andrea personal communication, 26, February 2006).

Nonetheless, it is important to mention that Constantine, Gloria and Ladany (2002) warned us against using the MAKSS, the Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI) (Sowowksy, Taffe, Gutkin, & Wise, 1994), and the following results were obtained the first week: Total scores on the CSPD-RF reflect the overall performance of counselors-in-training in observed counseling situations. Internal consistency of all 20 items of the CSPD-RF was .91 (Cronbach's alpha coefficient, Cronbach, 1951). The split-half reliability coefficient was .83 and .84. This reliability is consistent with a previous study using the CSPD-RF in which Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .95 (Phan, 2001). For the present study Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .93.

Data analysis

To determine whether the group leaders of each film presented significantly different multicultural competency skills and counseling skills, the mean scores of each group were compared using a t test for dependent samples. All of the instruments were analyzed by total score and not by subscales. For example, when looking at the MAKSS the researchers did not tabulate sub-scores for awareness, knowledge, or skills, but rather used the total score of the MAKSS as whole.

Results

The following results were obtained the first week:

Hypothesis 1: The results of the MAKSS will indicate that the group leader in The color of fear (Mun Wah, 1994) demonstrates more multicultural competency than do the leaders in Evolution of a group (Corey, Corey, & Haynes, 2000).

A dependent sample t test was performed to test this hypothesis. The t test confirmed that the group leader in...
The color of fear demonstrated more cultural competency (Mean=3.84; SD=.34) than did the leaders of Evolution of a group. Hypothesis one was rejected the second week.

Hypothesis 2: The results of the Counselor Skill and Personal Development Rating Form (Torres-Rivera, Wilbur, Maddux, Smaby, Phan, & Roberts-Wilbur, 2002) will indicate that the group leader in The color of fear (Mun Wah, 1994) demonstrates more counseling skills than do the leaders of Evolution of a group (Corey, Corey, & Haynes, 2000).

A dependent sample t test was performed to test this hypothesis. The t test indicated no significant difference between the counseling skills of the group leader in The color of fear and those of the leaders of Evolution of a group (Mean=3.45; SD=.55). Hypothesis three was rejected the second week.

The following results were obtained the second week:

Hypothesis 1: The results of the MAKSS will indicate that the group leader in The color of fear (Mun Wah, 1994) demonstrates more multicultural competency than do the leaders in Evolution of a group (Corey, Corey, & Haynes, 2000).

Similar to the procedures performed during the first week, a dependent sample t test was performed to test this hypothesis. The t test indicated that the group leader in The color of fear demonstrated more cultural competencies (Mean=3.43; p<.001) than did the leaders of Evolution of a group. Hypothesis one was accepted the second week.

Hypothesis 2: The results of the Counselor Skill and Personal Development Rating Form (Torres-Rivera, Wilbur, Maddux, Smaby, Phan, & Roberts-Wilbur, 2002) will indicate that the group leader in The color of fear (Mun Wah, 1994) demonstrates more counseling skills than do the leaders of Evolution of a group (Corey, Corey, & Haynes, 2000).

An independent sample t test was performed to test this hypothesis. The t test indicated more counseling skills in the group facilitator of The color of fear (Mean=3.90; SD=.51) than the group leader of the Evolution of a group (Mean=3.45; SD=.55). Hypothesis three was accepted the second week.

Future Research

A follow-up study to this pilot would include a larger and more diverse sample of student raters. Similarly of interest, a study that compares ratings of students with those of experts in the field of multiculturalism and group work would have important implications. Furthermore, a study in which language issues are part of group dynamics could also serve as a follow-up for this study.

References


