

Pre-training

Fundamental to this training program is the development of a set of baseline measures from which to compare trainee change. The primary outcome measure is the Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE) (5). The COSE is a 37-item self-report measure that asks trainees to rate their therapeutic self-efficacy with respect to five dimensions. Sample items include “I am certain that my interpretation and confrontation responses will be concise and to the point,” “I feel confident that I will appear confident and earn the respect of my patient,” and “My assessment of patient problems may not be as accurate as I would like them to be.” Information about the trainee’s background and experience with psychotherapy is also gathered. The primary task that trainees accomplish in the Pre-training phase is to see two psychotherapy patients for at least three sessions. Trainees are asked to tape their third sessions. In addition, trainees and patients complete several forms which provide data that serve as a baseline comparison for their post-training performance. (Trainees repeat the process of seeing two patients for at least three sessions in posttraining; this gives trainers an opportunity to evaluate the efficacy of the program). Trainees are asked to classify their intentions for each verbal statement from each of the third sessions using the Intentions list developed by Hill and O’Grady (6). The trainees also complete the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI) (7), which measures the strength of the therapeutic alliance.

Their patients complete the following forms after session 3: the Patient Reaction System (8), which measures specific reactions to specific therapist verbal interventions during the third session; the WAI; the Session Evaluation Questionnaire (9), which measures general qualities of the session; and the Treatment Outcome Profile (TOP) (10), which measures satisfaction with treatment, symptoms, quality of life and work, and social functioning. The TOP is also completed before the first session, which serves as a baseline comparison to determine whether the sessions have had an impact on patient functioning. Although the completion of pre-training activities may seem daunting, the forms and tapes provide a great deal of information about trainee competence which can be subsequently compared to their performance in the similar posttraining activities.