

Effectiveness of Behavior Therapy

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Abstract

Behaviour therapy is based on scientific method. It is deemed that Behaviour Therapy is systematic, empirical and experimental than other traditional. In this theory, goals should be stated in behavioural, specified and measurable terms. The focus of treatment is on present. The doctrine of the therapy is yet the behaviour is long standing, they are maintained by factors in the current environment. The paper is reviewed to observe effectiveness of behaviour therapy in various psychological disorders.

Keywords: behavior therapy; cognitive behavioral; commitment therapy

Introduction

Behavioral therapy is an umbrella term for types of therapy. This form of therapy looks to identify and help change potentially self-destructive or unhealthy behaviors. It's based on the idea that all behaviors are learned and that behaviors can be changed.

Behaviour therapy initiated in the early 1900's. This recognised as a psychological approach in the 1950's & 1960's. Behavior therapy is rooted on the principles of classical conditioning developed by Ivan Pavlov.

By this point it understands that behaviour is learned. It is acquired largely through modelling, conditioning & reinforcement. Every behaviour is goal directed. Behaviour is the major factor of habits, thoughts and emotions. Behaviour is determinant of personality. Though heredities have their peculiar role in person, but individual differences are resulting primarily from different experiences.

As view of Seligman (2006) behaviour therapy targets at present not the past. This works on visible behaviours rather than unconscious forces. Behaviour therapy has short term treatment. This therapy has clear goals and rapid changes.

The behavioural approach to therapy assumes that behaviour that is associated with psychological problems develops through the same processes of learning that affects the development of other behaviours. Therefore, behaviourists see personality problems in the way that personality was developed. They do not look at behaviour disorders as something a person has, but consider that it reflects how learning has influenced certain people to behave in a certain way in certain situations.[1].

Behaviour therapy is based upon the principles of classical conditioning developed by Ivan Pavlov and operant conditioning developed by B.F. Skinner. Classical conditioning happens when a neutral stimulus comes right before another stimulus that triggers a reflexive response. The idea is that if

the neutral stimulus and whatever other stimulus that triggers a response is paired together often enough that the neutral stimulus will produce the reflexive response. Operant conditioning has to do with rewards and punishments and how they can either increase or decrease certain behaviours.

Review of Literature

1. Corsini & Wedding, 2000 stated that behavioral therapy can be applied to treat many psychological disorders including anxiety disorders, sexual disorders, depression, interpersonal and marital problems, chronic mental conditions, childhood disorders, eating and weight disorders as well as prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease
2. Zara Samad et al (2011) reviewed systematically the effectiveness of behavioural therapy in depressed older adults. They searched electronic databases to July 2009. This contents reference lists of systematic reviews and identified studies from the search strategy. Research has to randomised controlled trials (RCTs) of behavioural therapy compared with waiting list controls or other psychotherapies in older adults (aged till 55 years) with clinical depression were included. Results found that four RCTs were included in the meta-analysis. For post-treatment self-rated depression symptoms, behavioural therapy was not significantly more effective than a waiting list control [standardised mean difference (SMD) of -0.52, 95% confidence interval (CI) -1.35 to 0.30, $p = 0.21$, $n = 117$], cognitive therapy (SMD of 0.23, 95% CI -0.24 to 0.70, $p = 0.33$, $n = 134$) or brief psychodynamic therapy (SMD of -0.37, 95% CI -0.84 to 0.11, $p = 0.13$, $n = 69$). For post-treatment clinician-rated depression, behavioural therapy was not significantly more effective than cognitive therapy or brief psychodynamic therapy but was significantly more effective than a waiting

list control (weighted mean difference (WMD) of -5.68, 95% CI -7.71 to -3.66, $p < 0.001$, $n = 117$).

3. Charmaine K. Higa-McMillan (2015) examined 111 treatment outcome studies including testing 204 treatment conditions for child and adolescent anxiety published between 1967 and middle of 2013. Samples considered for research were children and youth (1-19 years old) with anxiety and avoidance problem. This review proved that behavior therapy is effective for treatment purpose.
4. Steven W Evans et al (2013) done research to update the Pelham and Fabiano (2008) review of evidence based practices for children and adolescents with ADHD. They reviewed systematically of the literature published between 2007 and 2013. The article consists criteria established by the society of clinical child and adolescent psychology (Southam-Gerow and Pienstein, in press). The conclusion was that the behavior parent training, behaviour classroom management, and peer intervention are well established treatment.
5. According to Weiten, 2007, Treatments in behavioral therapies apply the learning principles to change maladaptive behaviors
6. Seligman, 2006 stated that about the outmoded behavioral approach is no longer used as it once was. It has moved towards a more collaborative treatment with cognitive therapy and as such this has meant a more applicable approach

Objectives:

1. To examine the effectiveness of techniques of behavior therapy

Types of behavioral therapy

There are a number of different types of behavioral therapy.

- 1) Cognitive behavioral therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy is extremely popular. It combines behavioral therapy, which focuses on patterns of action, with cognitive therapy, which focuses on patterns of thought. Treatment is centered around how your thoughts and beliefs influence your actions and moods. It often focuses on your current problems and how to solve them. The long-term goal is to build thinking and behavioral patterns that help you achieve a better quality of life.

- 2) Cognitive behavioral play therapy

Cognitive behavioral play therapy is commonly used as a treatment for mental health conditions in children. By watching a child play, a therapist is able to gain insight into what a child is uncomfortable expressing or unable to express. Children may be able to choose their own toys and play freely. They might be asked to draw a picture or use toys to create scenes in a sandbox. Therapists may teach parents how to use play to improve communication with their children. In this form of play therapy, the therapist also takes a more direct approach by working with both the child and the caregivers to teach the child how to cope well and achieve their defined goals. The therapist is doing more than just watching the child play.

- 3) Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)

ACT is a type of psychotherapy that includes behavioral analysis performed by a mental health clinician. While sometimes compared with CBT, ACT has its own specific approach. ACT is based on relational frame theory, which focuses on mental processes and human language. In ACT, people are taught mindfulness skills and acceptance strategies with the goal of increasing psychological flexibility. Additionally, commitment and behavior change methods are used.

- 4) Dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT)

DBT was created by Dr. Marsha Linehan to help treat the symptoms of borderline personality disorder (BPD), an emotional regulation disorder marked by suicidal behavior, depression, unstable personal relationships, and other symptoms. DBT can also be helpful for

conditions other than BPD. DBT consists of four elements, known as modules:

core mindfulness

interpersonal effectiveness, which is used to improve relationships with others and yourself

emotional regulation

distress tolerance

People receiving DBT are taught skills and coping strategies to help them lead healthier, happier lives.

Effective Behavior Therapy Techniques

There is no single type of behavior therapy. In fact, what defines behavior therapy are many different types of specialized therapies, including the following:

- Cognitive behavioral therapy. The therapist helps the person identify unhealthy thought patterns and understand how those thoughts contribute to self-destructive behaviors and beliefs. Once the patterns are known, the therapist works with the person to think more constructively.
- Modeling. The therapist acts out a non-fearful response to a negative situation, and the person's anxiety may be reduced by imitating the non-fearful response.
- Classroom management. Teachers participate in promoting the student's positive behaviors, blocking negative behaviors, and focusing the student on academic work.
- Parent training. The child's parents are taught ways to reinforce positive behaviors, deter negative acts, and enhance the parent-child relationship. Parents are instructed on observing the child, using praise and positive attention to reward good behavior, setting rules, and addressing negative actions.
- Peer intervention. One or more of the student's peers help them address behavior problems. The peers are taught by a teacher to encourage positive behavior in academic performance and social settings. In addition to proving successful in boosting the student's health and well-being, the peer assistants benefit from their participation because it reinforces their positive behaviors and enhances their sense of responsibility.

Among the mental health disorders that can be treated with behavior therapy are addiction and substance use, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, eating disorders, insomnia, antisocial and borderline personality disorder, criminal actions, chronic pain, fatigue, and general stress. ABA has also been applied to enhance early-childhood education, sports performance, and organizational behavior management.

Discussion:

Behavioural therapy in depressed older adults appears to have comparable effectiveness with alternative psychotherapies. Further research is recommended with the need for larger sample sizes, more clarity on trial design and the intervention, longer term follow-up and concomitant economic evaluations.

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