




**Psychotherapy:
Crazy–But It Works!**

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Huh?

What we know about psychotherapy

- Psychotherapy is effective
- Demonstrated in RCTs and in practice
- As effective as medications
- Longer lasting, fewer side effects, less resistant to additional courses
- What makes psychotherapy work?
- Did we evolve to benefit from psychotherapy?

Healing in an social context

- Ants do it! (and bees)
- Facial Expression of Pain
- Human healing practices






The Social Brain

Social Cognition

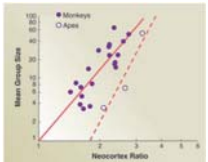

REVIEW
Evolution in the Social Brain

R. L. M. Dunbar and Suzanne Shultz

The evolution of unusually large brains in some groups of animals, notably primates, has long been a puzzle. Although early explanations tended to emphasize the brain's role in sensory or motoric competence (foraging skills, navigation, and way-finding), the balance of evidence now clearly favors the hypothesis that it was the computational demands of living in large, complex societies that selected for large brains. However, recent analyses suggest that it may have been the particular demands of the more intense forms of partnership that was the critical factor that triggered this evolutionary development. This may explain why primate sociality seems to be so different from that found in most other birds and mammals. Primate sociality is based on bonded relationships of a kind that are found only in parrots in other taxa.

Brain evolution against the steep selection gradient created by the high costs of brain tissue. In this respect, most of the ecological hypotheses proposed to date also fail. None can explain why primates (which have especially large brains for body mass, even by mammal standards) need brains that are so much larger than, say, squirrels, to cope with what are essentially the same foraging decisions.


As an alternative, Byrne and Wilson proposed the Machiavellian Intelligence hypothesis (MI) in the late 1980s. They argued that what did distinguish primates from all other species (and, hence, what might account for their especially large brains) was the complexity of their social lives. Unfortunately, the term “Machiavellian” was widely interpreted as implying deceit, manipulation, and amoralistic traits that most

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Electrical sockets

- We learned NOT to do this→



- Classical conditioning?
- Vicarious learning?
- Evolved to avoid electrical sockets?
- Verbal persuasion with **trusted** others!

So, how does it work?

- **REAL RELATIONSHIP EXPECTATIONS ACTIONS THERAPISTS**

Risks for mortality

Obesity Lack of Exercise

Pollution Smoking

Loneliness

The Washington Post

February 08, 2018

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Rob Porter is my ex-husband. Here's what you should know about abuse.

"Then there is the just-as-serious issue of being believed and supported by who you choose to tell. Sometimes people don't believe you. Sometimes they have difficulty truly understanding what you are trying to tell them. Both Willoughby and I raised our cases with clergy. Both of us had a hard time getting them to fully address the abuse taking place."

"It wasn't until I spoke to a professional counselor that I was met with understanding."

So, how does it work?

- **REAL RELATIONSHIP EXPECTATIONS ACTIONS THERAPISTS**

Placebos– The amazing influence of the mind


Nothing works better!

For pain, Parkinson's disease, irritable bowel syndrome, depression, anxiety, fitness, taste, athletic performance....

Fitness (Crum et al. 2007)


- Randomly assigned
- Given information... or not
- No differences in activity in 4 weeks
- Informed group decreased
 - Weight
 - Blood pressure
 - Body mass index
 - Waist to hip ratio

"This is good exercise"





Versus

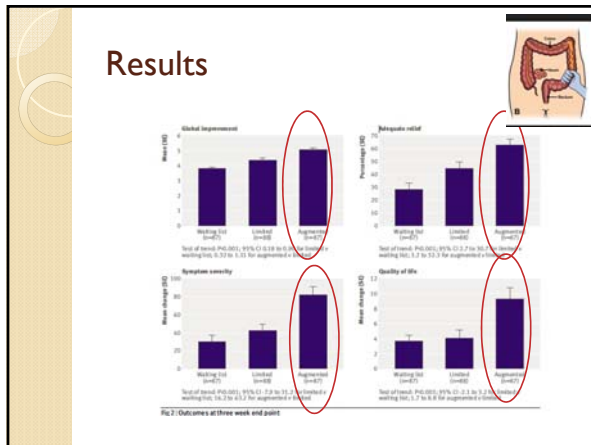
No information



Effects of relationship in placebo (Kapchuk et al., 2008)

- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Acupuncture Placebo
- Three conditions
 - Wait list (no placebo)
 - Limited interaction-- <5 minutes
 - Augmented interaction—warm, empathic, caring, but no intervention
- Results...



So, how does it work?

- **REAL RELATIONSHIP EXPECTATIONS ACTIONS THERAPISTS**

**SET GOAL.
MAKE PLAN.
GET TO WORK.
STICK TO IT.
REACH GOAL.**

Evidence is clear....

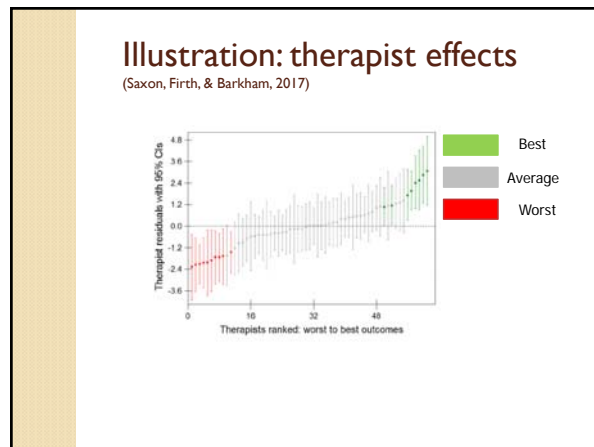
- Treatments with a focus on client's problems are more effective than unstructured treatments
- Attribution of progress to one's **hard work** = **less** relapse than
- Attribution of progress to **external source** = **greater** relapse
- Key: Belief that hard work is beneficial

So, how does it work?

- **REAL RELATIONSHIP**
- **EXPECTATIONS**
- **ACTIONS**
- **THERAPISTS**

Therapists– the forgotten factor

- Definition: Some therapists consistently attain better outcomes than other therapists
- Not due to contribution of patients
- Identify the best therapist....



Multiple Pathways

- **REAL RELATIONSHIP**
- **EXPECTATIONS**
- **ACTIONS**
- **THERAPISTS**



Thank You

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Deliberate Practice for Therapists
Better Outcomes For Clients

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