The Missing Link:
Why the vast majority who would benefit choose not to see a therapist?

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Improving Therapist Effectiveness: What does and does not Work?

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One year ago, colleagues and I released the largest, longitudinal study of therapist effectiveness ever published. The study examined outcomes of 6500 clients treated by 170 practitioners whose results had been tracked an average of 5 years—some as long as 17 years!

The result? Clinician outcomes, on average, not only did not improve, but actually slowly and inexorably worsened with time and experience—and this, despite the fact that
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The Evolution of Psychotherapy

What’s happened?


The Evolution of Psychotherapy

Origins of the “Talking Cure”

The Evolution of Psychotherapy

“Psychoanalysis is not a fad; It is a science. Do not underestimate it. It can help...

The Evolution of Psychotherapy: The Missing Link?

• In 1952, Eysenck publishes a review of 24 studies of psychotherapy and concludes:
  • “The results...fail to support the hypothesis that psychotherapy facilitates recovery.”

Hans Eysenck, Ph.D.


The Evolution of the Species

The Missing Link

The absence of “intermediate links...is the most obvious and grave threat against my theory...”

The Evolution of Psychotherapy

The Missing Link

- Discovered in 1912 in Sussex, England;
- Considered definitive proof of human evolution;
- The missing link between apes and humans;
- 500 scientific articles written over a 40 year period.

Eoanthropus Dawson
The Evolution of Psychotherapy: The Evidence

- Sixty years and 1000’s of studies later:

  “The best research evidence conclusively shows that individual, group and couple/family psychotherapy are effective for a broad range of disorders, symptoms and problems with children, adolescents, adults, and older adults.”


The Evolution of Psychotherapy: More Evidence

• In most studies of treatment conducted over the last 40 years, the average treated person is better off than 80% of the untreated sample.

• The outcome of behavioral health services equals and, in most cases, exceeds medical treatments.

• On average, mental health professionals achieve outcomes on par with success rates obtained in randomized clinical trials (with and without co-morbidity).


The Evolution of Psychotherapy: The Missing Link

Despite being on the scene for nearly 150 years, psychotherapy does not, and has never had mass appeal:

• *The majority of people who could benefit (~25%), do not go (75-85%)*
• *Fewer and fewer are turning to psychotherapy—33% less than did 20 years ago;*
• *Most never return after the first appointment (~57%).*

The Evolution of Psychotherapy:

The Missing Link

“Fifty years of research has still not produced better methods for engaging and retaining people in therapy…”

The “Good News”

- Project started in 2008/09
- The biggest expansion of mental health services anywhere in the world, ever.
- Access to psychological care has improved each year of the project.
- Recovery rates equivalent with data from randomized controlled trials.

The “Bad News”

Despite the 1 billion pound investment over 9 years:

- 85% of those in need do not get treatment;
- 56% did not engage or discontinued after a single visit;

The Evolution of Psychotherapy

“Once you remove the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable must be the truth.”

Sherlock Holmes
The Evolution of Psychotherapy

• Annually, more people attend and pay out of pocket to work with a reader, medium, or clairvoyant than see mental health practitioners.

• Throughout the “Great Recession” and continuing today:
  • Psychic services industry has grown at an annual rate of 2-3%;
  • In the U.S., from 2007-2012, spiritual advisors raked in 2.1 billion dollars.

The Evolution of Psychotherapy
Helpfulness, Satisfaction, Improvement

- Helpfulness of professional mental health providers, friends, and psychics.

Helpfulness, Satisfaction, Improvement & The Therapeutic Relationship

“The powerful sense that there are patterns, forces, energies, and entities operating in the world that...go beyond the boundaries of natural phenomena...”

The Evolution of Psychotherapy

"They [psychic healers] are proving by the most brilliant new results that the therapeutic relation may be what we can at present describe only as a relation of one person to another person."

William James

The Evolution of Psychotherapy:

“In the past decade China and India have taken steps to expand access...includ[ing] traditional healers, herbalists, and spiritual guides.

Carey, B. (May 18th, 2016). China and India burdened by untreated mental disorders. 
The Evolution of Psychotherapy:

"It is time to connect our science to our humanity, and in doing so to raise the sights of both“

Physicist Nick Turok