The use of task analysis to test a model of change for the expanded Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT) task of focusing

The trauma researcher van der Kolk wrote that for some people traumatic experiences are encoded primarily in right-brain experiential (non-verbal) memory, in the form of emotions, images and bodily sensations and are not processed on the symbolic or verbal level thereby leaving the experiences unintegrated. The aim of the current research was to investigate a model of bringing previously suppressed or incomplete memories of painful or traumatic events back into awareness in such a way that they can be processed and integrated. The model to be tested was proposed by the author and expanded the Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT) task of focusing to include processing painful or traumatic events. Task analysis is a method developed to discover and validate client processes of change was employed. EFT was developed using task analysis so it was considered the appropriate methodology for this investigation. Client who experienced painful of traumatic event of low level intensity and not having risk of destabilization was invited by the therapist to be a part of the study. 12 single sessions were visually recorded and transcripts produced. Rigorous observation of the recorded sessions of clients working with their therapists on resolving their painful/traumatic events using the expanded focusing task were undertaken by the author and a second rater who was familiar to the task and EFT. A sequential three stage empirical model emerged from the analysis. The implementation of task analysis enabled the researchers to build an empirically derived model of how therapeutic change occurred for clients who present with a felt sense of emotional pain due to an unresolved painful/traumatic event. The resultant empirical model describes a newly named EFT task for processing trauma when the marker is identified as a felt sense of emotional pain.

Recent Publications

Biography
Melissa Harte is an experienced Psychologist and presenter, passionate about dealing with psychological issues from a whole-of-person perspective. She has completed her Doctorate degree in Counseling Psychology and is pursuing Masters in Clinical Psychology at Swinburne University of Technology in Australia. She has established the Harte Felt Centre to ensure a safe environment for client-centered healing practices in Australia that provides a supportive community for both practitioners and clients.