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Can Pre-treatment Motivational Groups in FATJAM Promote Therapeutically-Relevant Changes for Juvenile Fire Setters and Bomb Makers in a Forensic Psychological Setting?

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Juvenile Firesetters and Bomb Makers

- Juvenile Fire Setters and Bomb Makers have increasingly become a public safety concern.
- Annually JFSBs account for:
  - 80,000 structure fires
  - 300 deaths
  - $1.2 Billion in property damages
- JFSBs account for 50% of arson arrests in the U.S. and 60% of annual residential fires. (FBI, 2011)
- Average age ranges from 9-12 years old, with males making up 80-90% of JFSBs. (Gilman and Haden, 2006)
Individual Characteristics

- Common characteristics displayed by JFSBs include:
  - Aggression
  - Social Skills Deficits
  - Deviance and Vandalism
  - Covert antisocial behavior
  - Difficulty expressing emotions

- Fires may be venues for relieved boredom, pure impulsivity, or covert means of retaliation.

  (Gilman and Haden, 2006)
“Forensic Assessment and Therapeutic Jurisprudence Assessment Model” is an evidence based treatment approach
  - Cognitive behavioral framework
  - Risk oriented skills-based mental health intervention program

Community based treatment options
  - working in conjunction with police and firefighters
  - in-depth interview style assessment recommended.

(Johnson, 2010)

(Slavkin, 2002)
Motivational Interviewing in Group Therapy

- Motivational Interventions allow for several avenues of approach
  - Different theoretical orientations
  - Immerse several SES backgrounds with one common purpose

- MI is used with the consideration of three main purposes:
  - enhance retention and engagement in treatment
  - improve motivation for change
  - change behavior

(McMurran, 2009)
Purpose of Treatment

- Serves a purpose not just for the juvenile offender
  - Allows family as well as therapists to help break the cycle of different social behaviors
  - Shows a peaceful way to utilize the decision making process
  - Gives insight on how juveniles are not perpetrators, but victims of repeated events of crime

  (Center for Early Adolescence, 2011)

- Cognitive skills are tested in several ways
  - Demonstrates anger
  - Express daily thought processes with family, friends, and other populations
MI Interventions For JFSBs In A Group Context

- (MI) is an evidence-based approach that is an effective means of engaging juvenile offenders in needed services
  
  (Stein et al. 2006)

- Methods of conducting interventions
  - group discussions amongst all participants
  - eliciting and evoking change talk (what would they want, need, or desire to happen)

  (Doran et al. 2011)
Continued

- Different Therapies
  - music- best relates to and puts them in a calm state
  - expressive- what can be written, or oratorical presentations
  - play therapy- physical activity as well as mentally challenging strategies

- Exploring Confidence
  - develops ways to build self- esteem
  - become more sociable with peers
  - expressive in nature as opposed to limited with communication

(Doran et al. 2011)
Prior Steps to Group Therapy

- Interview Process
  - Ask questions and assess chronic issues
  - Develop a group with common interests
  - Questionnaires, assessments

  (Yalom, 2007)

- Orientation
  - Explanation of goals and terms
  - Establish limitations and expectations
  - Build relationship with trust
Treatment Process

- Duration
  - Gender mix, separate meetings
  - Develop mentorship program
  - Counsel through sub groups

- Challenges
  - Shift through different therapies
  - Ethnic, gender inequalities
  - Modifying existing groups

(Rose, S. 1998)
MI as Pre-treatment for JFSBs

- MI as a pre-treatment option to CBT has been found to:
  - increase positive outcomes and compliance with homework
  - higher expectancy in one’s ability to change
  - may be considered a catalyst to initiating change prior to beginning treatment session.
  
  (Westra & Dozois, 2006)

- Therapist pre-group preparation considerations for group therapy:
  - screening interview
  - psychiatric history
  - mental status examination
  - Inclusion criteria
  - Exclusion criteria

  (Gupta, 2005)
Biopsychosocialcultural Factors Related to Pre-Treatment in JFSBs MI Groups

- Socioeconomic Status
  - wealthy as opposed to lower class citizens
  - different privileges available to several backgrounds
  - abundance of resources available compared to limited communities

- Emotions/Psychological
  - many may not have received love from family and loved ones
  - difficulties expressing their anger and frustration in a more positive way
  - may promote a more resilient mindset to change behavior

(Singh, A.N. 2007)
Continued

• Ethnic/Cultural
  ○ can determine what population they communicate with
  ○ different mentalities on how they may interact with the general population
  ○ can be a positive way to see the other side of other ethnicities
Therapeutically Relevant Changes Associated with MI Group Therapy for JFSBs

- Major Changes
  - more positive outlook on how to communicate
  - examines the social impact that is seen toward a certain culture
  - allows for better ways of being expressive with emotions

- Roles
  - juveniles have become more vocal with peers and have a more positive regard to emotions
  - Parents may find avenues to become more relevant in the lives of an adolescent (no control issues)

(Singh, A.N. 2007)
Future Implications

- Research focus on:
  - Individual responses to MI intervention
    - retention, motivation to change, and recidivism
  - Group reactions to MI interventions within a forensic clinical setting
  - Interferences with FATJAM model
  - Clinician training of MI in implementing pretreatment strategy.

(McMurrnan, 2009)
References


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