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E kore au e ngaro, he kakano ahau: Whakapapa sharing in the context of therapy.

A thesis

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ABSTRACT

Māori experience disproportionately negative outcomes in mental health in New Zealand. The adaptation of therapeutic assessments and interventions to allow more culturally appropriate work with Māori occurs, however, little research promoting an understanding of client’s experience of these adaptations exists. One such adaptation is the sharing of whakapapa (genealogy) between therapist and client. Whakapapa sharing involves a level of therapist self disclosure not yet investigated in psychological literature. This Māori centred analogue study investigates the client’s experience of whakapapa sharing during the first session of therapy. A mixed, between and within subjects design was used, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed. 30 Māori women between the ages of 18 and 40 participated in two sessions of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, participants were allocated to either a Whakapapa Sharing group or a Therapist Non-Disclosure group. All participants completed questionnaires measuring the therapeutic alliance, therapy expectancy, outcome of therapy and a cultural questionnaire measuring participant knowledge of their own whakapapa. Participants from the Whakapapa Sharing group also reported on their experience of the sharing. Quantitative analyses revealed no group differences in either the therapeutic relationship measure or the outcome measure. All participants from the Whakapapa Sharing group, regardless of their level of knowledge of their own whakapapa, reported the whakapapa sharing as a positive experience. Further analysis of the qualitative data revealed five main themes; the whakapapa sharing process reported to promote engagement, was perceived as important for Māori, allowed the establishment of connections between therapist and client, provided clients with information with which to form judgements about the therapist and the sharing was seen to be an equitable experience. These
themes were arranged into a theoretical model, in which, all five were hypothesised to have a relationship with the power imbalance inherent between therapist and client. Whereby four of the themes were hypothesised to contribute to a decrease in the imbalance of power and the final theme was seen as a result of the decrease in the power imbalance. These tentative findings suggest that the exchange of whakapapa between a therapist and client may serve to decrease the power imbalance in the therapeutic relationship, and as such, it is an appropriate process of engagement in a therapeutic setting with Māori clients, who often experience marginalisation.
NGA MIHI

He mihi mahana, he mihi maioha, he mihi aroha hoki ki te hunga tautoko o tenei ara roa. Ki te whakaaro ahau ki tenei mahi, ka puta mai te whakatauki “Ma whero ma pango ka oti te mahi.”

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