Are Emotion Regulation Strategies able to be Taught to People with an Intellectual Disability?

Ian de Terte, Jenna McWilliams, & Janet Leathem.
Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand
Background

- People who work in the field have identified emotion regulation difficulties in people with an intellectual disability.
- Clinicians have identified emotion regulation difficulties as a percipient to challenging behaviours.
- Various people have been affected by such challenging behaviour.
Emotional Regulation Skills

- Identifying emotions
- Labelling emotions
- Tolerating emotions
- Adaptive/maladaptive strategies

Definition: “the processes by which we influence which emotions we have, when we have them, and how we experience and express them” (Gross, 1998, p. 275).
Anger-management programme
• Murphy, Lindsay, & Cox (2007)

Stepping Stones
• Haumietiketike
• Oxnam & Gardner (2011)

Transformers Programme
• McWilliams, Malcolm, Watson, de Terte, & Leathem (Manuscript in preparation)
The Transformers Programme

[Diagram of a human body with various feelings and sensations labeled, such as "Headache", "Narrow eyes", "Palm sweat", "Hot red face", "Tense breathing", "Sweaty", "Restless Fidgeting", etc.]
Six core coping strategies:

- Wisemind
- Taking yourself away
- Exercise
- Breathing
- Distraction
- Doing something fun
Who is taking part in the study?

Participants

- 5 participants (3 males, 2 females)
- Aged 17-42
- NZ European – 3, NZ Maori – 2
Assessments

Baseline Intervention Follow-up

T1 T2 T3 T4 T5 T6 T7 T8 T9 T10
Measures

Emotion Recognition

- Recognition of facial emotion task (Tottenham et al., 2009)
- Recognition of emotion in stories task (Owen, Browning, & Jones, 2001; Ribordy, Camras, Stefani, & Spaccarelli, 1988; Widen & Russell, 2010)

Coping Skills

- Profile of Anger Coping Skills (PACS; Willner, Brace, & Phillips, 2005)
Recognition of Facial Emotion Task
You opened a shoe box that you thought was empty and a bird flew out of it.
Three situations where the client was angry were identified by the key worker.

Then the client and the key worker were asked about different strategies that the client may have utilised.

A variation of this measure was developed that included sadness and worry.
Results: Face Stimuli

A graph showing the results of face stimuli with pre-treatment and post-treatment scores. The x-axis represents pre-treatment scores, and the y-axis represents post-treatment scores. The line of no change is depicted, and points A, B, C, D, and E are plotted on the graph indicating the improvement or decline in scores.
Results: Story Stimuli

- **Pre-treatment**
  - 2
  - 4
  - 6
  - 8
  - 10
  - 12

- **Post-treatment**
  - 2
  - 4
  - 6
  - 8
  - 10
  - 12

**Graph**

- **Improved**
- **Declined**
- **Line of no change**

- Points:
  - A
  - B
  - C
  - D
  - E
Results: Coping Strategies (A)
Results: Coping Strategies (E)
Discussion

- Clients with an ID may benefit from coping strategies
- Further analyses are being completed, but emotional regulation may be a product of IQ.
- Measurement of emotion identification
- Transformers programme may not do enough on emotion identification
Are emotional regulation strategies able to be taught to people with an intellectual disability?

de Terte, ID

2013