

Exercise walk-through

9.1

Treatment models and outcome evidence: evidence and transfer

GRE · GRE Subject Test · GRE Psychology

Concepts 1 (1)

Concepts 1 (1)

Each therapy family proposes a mechanism. Psychodynamic work targets unconscious conflict and early relationships, using transference; object-relations variants emphasise early relationships in particular. Behavioural treatment applies learning principles: systematic desensitisation traditionally pairs a graded fear hierarchy with relaxation (counterconditioning), while exposure approaches need not use relaxation pairing. Cognitive-behavioural therapy identifies and tests distorted thoughts and adds behavioural activation. Person-centred work offers empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence; Gestalt work stresses the here and now.

Concepts 2

Concepts 2

Outcome claims need controls because of spontaneous remission and regression to the mean: people seek help at their worst and improve anyway. A randomised controlled trial with a waitlist or placebo comparison separates treatment gain from natural course. Efficacy is performance under controlled conditions; effectiveness is performance in ordinary practice. Meta-analysis pools trials for a more stable estimate.

When bona fide therapies show comparable mean outcomes, the common-factors hypothesis credits shared ingredients such as the working alliance, expectancy and empathy rather than branded techniques. Comparable means do not prove identical mechanisms, and a single trial cannot settle the question either way.

Check the transfer argument

Check the transfer argument

Shared recruitment and setting can limit generalizability. Biased measurement, publication bias, incompatible outcomes and weak allocation can persist in a meta-analysis. Inspect study quality and heterogeneity; pooling does not create independent, representative evidence where the original studies lack it.

Accept a different explanation when its evidence and limits are justified.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 A client with a specific phobia is taught relaxation and then works through a graduated hierarchy of feared situations. This is: [1]

A. psychodynamic therapy B. a behavioural technique C. person-centred therapy D. biological treatment E. psychometric assessment

2.2 The strongest design for concluding that a new therapy causes improvement is: [1]

A. pre- and post-treatment measurement of treated clients B. a series of detailed case reports C. a randomised controlled trial with a comparison condition D. testimonials from recovered clients E. therapist ratings of their own success

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 A client with a specific phobia is taught relaxation and then works through a graduated hierarchy of feared situations. This is: [1]

A. psychodynamic therapy B. a behavioural technique C. person-centred therapy D. biological treatment E. psychometric assessment

2.1 Answer: B. Exposure paired with relaxation is counterconditioning, a behavioural method. The other options do not satisfy the stated defining conditions.

2.2 The strongest design for concluding that a new therapy causes improvement is: [1]

A. pre- and post-treatment measurement of treated clients B. a series of detailed case reports C. a randomised controlled trial with a comparison condition D. testimonials from recovered clients E. therapist ratings of their own success

2.2 Answer: C. Only a controlled comparison separates treatment gain from spontaneous remission and regression to the mean. Compare the exact process, design or evidence, rather than an associated keyword.

Exercises 2.3-3.1

2.3 Revisit the worked case. State one conclusion its evidence supports and one stronger conclusion it does not support. Explain the difference. [2]

3.1 A review combines ten small trials, all drawn from one type of clinic. Why does having ten studies not ensure a universal conclusion? Give the interpretation, supporting reasoning, a relevant alternative or limitation, and an appropriate check. [4]

Exercises 2.3-3.1

2.3 Revisit the worked case. State one conclusion its evidence supports and one stronger conclusion it does not support. Explain the difference. [2]

2.3 Use the worked case evidence to support a bounded claim and explain why a causal, universal or stronger claim needs additional evidence. The claim must fit the specific design and observed process.

3.1 A review combines ten small trials, all drawn from one type of clinic. Why does having ten studies not ensure a universal conclusion? Give the interpretation, supporting reasoning, a relevant alternative or limitation, and an appropriate check. [4]

3.1 Shared recruitment and setting can limit generalizability. Biased measurement, publication bias, incompatible outcomes and weak allocation can persist in a meta-analysis. Inspect study quality and heterogeneity; pooling does not create independent, representative evidence where the original studies lack it. Award B1 each (authored) for the interpretation, its reasoning, a relevant limitation/alternative and an appropriate check, up to four points. Accept a different justified answer satisfying these demands.