Developing Trust as a Novice Occupational Therapist
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Introduction

Literature Review:
• Trust necessary for effective healthcare relationships because it influences a client's acceptance of care and outcomes\(^1,2\)
• Trust in healthcare providers reliant on their clinical experience and self-confidence\(^1,2\)
• Novice OTs lack self-confidence due to their limited clinical experience\(^3\)
• Novice OTs' inexperience and lower self-confidence may hinder the development of trust in their clients, yet it hasn't been addressed by existing research

Research Questions:
• What is the perspective of novice OTs as they try to develop trust in their clients despite their inexperience and lower self-confidence?
• What behaviors do they purposefully use or avoid when trying to develop trust in their clients?

Methods

Research Design: Qualitative descriptive methodology

Data Collection Method: Informal semi-structured interviews

Participants:
• 4 females, < 5 yrs. of experience, average age of ~30 yrs.
• Convenience sample
• Settings: Pediatric home-health and early intervention, pediatric outpatient, continuing care retirement community and inpatient psychiatric hospital, adult acute hospital setting

Data Analysis Method: Thematic analysis

Findings

Necessity of trust
• Increased client buy-in and participation
• Increased carry-over beyond therapy
• Greater progress and goal attainment

Facilitators of trust
• Collaborative, client-centered therapy
• Clear and confident communication
• Therapeutic-use-of-self and strong interpersonal skills

Barriers to trust
• Therapist-as-expert, authoritative approach
• Lack of self-confidence
• Being younger and/or lacking life experience

External influences
• Treatment by colleagues
• Clients' perception of the professional title
• Client's perception of OT as a similar, familiar type of person

Expectations of novices
• Difficult transition with numerous challenges
• Reported that novices are more likely to have distrustful clients, but they have not experienced it personally

Discussion

Discussion and Implications:
• Trust is not static, and novices purposefully use specific strategies to strengthen trust in clients
• Findings corroborate and extend existing literature about trust in healthcare relationships by identifying barriers to trust and external influences on trust
• Discrepancy between the expected and actual experiences of the participants suggests that clients tend to trust novices despite their inexperience and lower self-confidence
• Critical for novices to demonstrate self-confidence
• Both novice and experienced OTs can apply the findings to more easily and effectively develop trusting therapeutic relationships with their clients

Limitations:
• Qualitative research design
• Small, homogenous sample from a convenience sample limits generalizability

Future Research:
• Specific indicators of trust in clients
• The influence of age on trust
• The effectiveness of the identified strategies

References