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email:research@relationships.com.au

ONLINE COUNSELLING

Hunt, S. (2002). In favour of online counselling? *Australian Social Work*, 55 (4), 260-267.

A brief 'surf on the net' indicates that online counselling is offered primarily as a fee of service and many online practitioners work in the field of mental health. In Australia, Kids Help Online offers free counselling online for young people using both chatrooms and email counselling. Other organisations are struggling to come to terms with this new concept and what it means for service delivery. The author offers some analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of online counselling and she leans toward the conclusion that online counselling is a form of intervention that may suit many organisations and their clients. (Author affiliated to Relationships Australia Queensland)

Mallen, M.J. (2006). Online counseling: Dynamics of process and assessment. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, vol. 66(8-B), 2006. pp. 4490.

The present study investigated the dynamics of an initial counselling session held in a synchronous chatroom environment between therapists-in-training at various graduate programs across the US and a trained counsellor posing as a client. Transcripts from the online sessions were analysed to investigate therapist responses and interventions. Therapists-in-training were also asked about their satisfaction with the experience, the relationship they were able to form with the client and previous online experience. Therapists-in-training expressed more positive views about online counselling after they had conducted the session in terms of the potential for a therapeutic alliance and desire for future training, although participants also expressed more negative views about the amount of work that could be accomplished during online counselling sessions. Significantly, however, therapists-in-training were able to accurately diagnose their client's presenting concerns at the conclusion of the session. (Author affiliated to Iowa State University, USA)

Lin, Shih-Hsun. (2005). Online versus face-to-face counselling: An examination of session evaluation and empathy. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol 66(4-A), 2005. pp. 1283.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the difference in individual counselling sessions between the traditional face-to-face and the online chat conditions. Forty volunteer clients (14 men and 26 women) and five trained counsellors at the University of Minnesota participated in this study. Clients were randomly assigned to have an individual counselling session with a counsellor in either traditional face-to-face or online (synchronous chat) condition. Results showed that clients perceived the degree of their counsellors' empathy higher in the traditional face-to-face condition than in the online condition. Also, clients evaluated their counselling sessions as having more depth in the traditional face-to-face than in the online condition. There was no significant difference in the discrepancies between the counsellors' and their clients' evaluations of the counselling sessions between the online and the traditional face-to-face conditions. (Author affiliated to University of Minnesota, USA)

Kids Help Line. (2006). 2005 Overview: What is concerning children and young people in Australia? *Kids Help Line*, Milton, Qld: Kids Help Line, 2006.

Information about children and young people who sought help through Kids Help Line telephone and online counselling during 2005 is presented. The report looks at: number of calls and web and email contacts; reason for the contact; geographic area; gender; cultural and linguistic background; and age. Common concerns among children and young people were: relationships with family; relationships with friends and peers; relationships with partners; emotional and behavioural management; mental health; bullying; child abuse; homelessness and leaving home; pregnancy; suicide related issues; eating and weight concerns; grief and loss; self image; and deliberate self injury.