

Staff emotions, beliefs, and reactions towards
challenging behaviour:
An interview study

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The interaction between client and staff member

- An important factor in the origin and the maintenance of challenging behaviour (CB)
- In our study
 - Staff emotions
 - Staff beliefs
 - Staff reactions
- The relationship between these variables remain unclear and results are mostly inconsistent
 - More attention to unfolding the meaning and content of the concepts on the basis of experiences of staff members themselves
 - No retrospective self-report

Procedure

- 28 settings were contacted
- Filming three different situations in which a client was showing CB and was in interaction with one particular staff member
- Staff members had to work with the client for minimum six months
- Clients:
 - Severe or profound ID
 - Self-injurious behaviour, stereotyped behaviour, and/or aggressive/destructive behaviour
- 12 dyads were willing to participate

Procedure

- Three fragments were selected
- Fragment duration: variation from 44s to 7 min 22s
- The interviews took place within three weeks after receiving the images
- Interviews: tape-recorded, length: 20 min to over one hour

Participants

- 12 staff members
 - Age: 22 - 41 years (mean = 30 years)
 - 9 female, 3 male
 - Experience with the client: 0.5 – 9 years (mean = 4 years)
- 12 clients
 - Age: 12 – 48 years (mean = 27 years)
 - 5 female, 7 male
 - 4 severe ID, 8 profound ID

Semi-structured interviews

- Staff member and researcher looked at the selected fragments together
- After each fragment, following questions were asked:
 - How did you feel during the CB?
 - How did you feel after the CB?
 - What did you think was the reason for the CB?
 - What did you do in this situation?
- Afterwards, some general questions were asked. In this study, we included the answers on the following question:
 - Do your feelings have an influence on how you react towards the CB?
- All the answers were screened for possible relations between beliefs and reactions

Data analysis

- Qualitative content analysis
- The tapes were transcribed to written texts
- Units of analysis: paragraphs or sentences that contain one idea, episode or piece of information
- Category system based on the interview questions
- Each unit of analysis was attached to one of the categories
- Inter-rater reliability

Results

are available from the researcher

Discussion

- The most reported interventions were directed at immediately trying to stop the CB. Only one staff member directly referred to the consequences of his reactions in the long term → in the future: not only asking what they do but also why they react like that
- No distinction was made between different types of CB but that would be an interesting subject for future research

Discussion

- Staff members often referred to thoughts that were playing in their head. These thoughts are not exactly the same as the ‘beliefs’ that were studied in the past in this context.
- Also taking into account relationships between positive emotions and reactions.
- In research about emotions and about relations between emotions and reactions, an indication of time is important.

Discussion

- Feelings of confidence because of the support staff members receive from colleagues are mentioned a lot
 - a good working team is important in working with clients who show CB
- Reflecting on emotions and beliefs and the possible influence of these variables on their reactions
- Working with video images and observations

Thank you for your attention!

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