

Therapeutic Alliance and Post-Intervention Outcomes in a Sample of South Asian Canadians Receiving Culturally-Adapted CBT: Considering Client and Therapist Perceptions

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1. INTRODUCTION & AIM

- Standard cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) rooted in Western culture, not always effective for minority groups
- Culturally-adapted cognitive behavioural therapy (CaCBT) aims to consider client culture in therapy, tailoring the intervention to client needs for better efficacy and symptom improvement
- Previous work is mixed as to whether therapeutic alliance helps boost outcomes, suggesting client perception of alliance may hold more importance
- No such work done with CaCBT

Objective: To explore how therapist and client perceptions of therapeutic alliance may be associated with improved efficacy for an RCT of standard CBT and CaCBT for South Asian Canadians

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Client Perception

	Treatment (n=64) [mean (SD)]	Control (n=56) [mean (SD)]	Mean difference (CI)	p value
HADS Depression				
Baseline	9.91 (2.77)	10.00 (3.29)	9.96 (9.41, 10.51)	<.001
12 weeks	5.75 (3.70)	6.61 (3.32)	6.17 (5.56, 6.79)	
36 weeks	5.98 (4.22)	5.95 (3.43)	5.96 (5.23, 6.66)	
HADS Anxiety				
Baseline	14.02 (3.70)	13.82 (3.26)	13.93 (13.29, 14.57)	<.05
12 weeks	9.70 (4.01)	9.45 (3.26)	9.56 (8.92, 10.19)	
36 weeks	9.73 (4.12)	9.71 (3.57)	9.71 (9.02, 10.41)	
HADS Total				
Baseline	23.92 (5.13)	23.82 (4.82)	23.88 (22.97, 24.79)	<.001
12 weeks	15.45 (6.71)	16.05 (5.33)	15.73 (14.69, 16.77)	
36 weeks	15.72 (7.42)	15.66 (5.95)	15.67 (14.45, 16.90)	
BSI				
Baseline	28.84 (14.59)	28.07 (11.50)	28.49 (26.05, 30.86)	.125
12 weeks	19.39 (11.69)	21.18 (11.92)	20.28 (18.17, 22.39)	
36 weeks	21.61 (15.57)	20.13 (12.04)	20.83 (18.28, 23.39)	
WHODAS^a				
Baseline	41.37 (18.09)	38.54 (16.71)	39.92 (36.41, 43.43)	.062
12 weeks	29.66 (18.30)	30.15 (17.57)	29.94 (26.52, 33.63)	
36 weeks	29.26 (21.40)	26.73 (15.62)	27.97 (24.21, 31.74)	

- Associated with symptom reduction for depression ($p < .001$) and anxiety ($p < .05$)
- Not significantly associated with BSI or WHODAS

Therapist Perception

	Treatment (n=67) [mean (SD)]	Control (n=59) [mean (SD)]	Mean difference (CI)	p value
HADS Depression				
Baseline	9.99 (2.74)	9.93 (3.24)	9.94 (9.41, 10.47)	.350
12 weeks	5.63 (3.68)	6.47 (3.30)	6.03 (5.41, 6.64)	
36 weeks	5.91 (4.16)	5.97 (3.35)	5.91 (5.24, 6.58)	
HADS Anxiety				
Baseline	14.06 (3.63)	13.86 (3.20)	13.99 (13.38, 14.59)	.578
12 weeks	9.70 (3.94)	9.42 (3.18)	9.56 (8.92, 10.20)	
36 weeks	9.76 (4.02)	9.66 (3.49)	9.71 (9.04, 10.38)	
HADS Total				
Baseline	23.92 (5.13)	23.82 (4.82)	23.88 (22.97, 24.79)	.450
12 weeks	15.45 (6.71)	16.05 (5.33)	15.73 (14.69, 16.77)	
36 weeks	15.72 (7.42)	15.66 (5.95)	15.67 (14.45, 16.90)	
BSI^a				
Baseline	29.17 (14.51)	28.39 (11.46)	28.79 (26.43, 31.15)	.475
12 weeks	18.95 (11.77)	21.32 (11.76)	20.24 (18.13, 22.34)	
36 weeks	21.17 (15.54)	20.08 (11.74)	20.62 (18.14, 23.11)	
WHODAS^b				
Baseline	40.98 (18.08)	38.67 (16.57)	39.76 (36.26, 43.27)	.721
12 weeks	29.01 (18.62)	30.32 (17.44)	29.70 (26.05, 33.35)	
36 weeks	29.03 (21.21)	26.83 (15.48)	27.87 (24.15, 31.59)	

- Not significantly associated with any outcomes (anxiety, depression, BSI, or WHODAS)

2. METHOD

Sample and Intervention:

- Data from a previously published RCT (Naeem et al., 2025) was used for this sub-analysis
- The current work looked at a final sample size of **146 South Asian Canadians** who were enrolled in the original RCT
- Enrolled participants were **randomized to either the control group (standard CBT) or intervention (CaCBT)**
- **Self-reports were completed at 3 timepoints**, at baseline, post-intervention (12-weeks), and a 36-week follow-up

Variables of Interest:

1. Anxiety and depression → Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) total score
2. Anxiety → HADS anxiety subscale score
3. Depression → HADS depression subscale score
4. Psychological and somatic symptom severity → Bradford Somatic Inventory (BSI)
5. Functional impairment → World Health Organization Assessment Schedule 2.0 (WHODAS)
6. Therapeutic alliance → Working Alliance Inventory (WAI-C for client perceptions; WAI-T for therapist perceptions)

Analysis:

- Bivariate correlation analyses, descriptive statistics, and ANCOVA were conducted using SPSS v. 29 to explore associations amongst variables of interest across timepoints (baseline, post-intervention (12-weeks), 36-week follow-up)

4. CONCLUSION & FUTURE WORK

Conclusion:

- **Client perception was associated with depression and anxiety**, but not BSI or WHODAS
- Therapist perception was not significantly associated with any outcomes
- Suggests **client perception is an important factor** in determining outcome improvement

Future Research:

- Future research should explore the degree to which client and therapist perceptions of therapeutic alliance are associated with outcomes across **various interventions**
- Future research should also consider these associations for different groups of **ethnic minorities**
- Future research may also consider how these associations may differ across **different cultural adaptations** of therapy

REFERENCES

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