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Alberta Health Services

Knowledge Bites Lunch 'n' Learn

May 7, 2020

Presenters



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Korie-Lyn Northey BA, RSW

Community Addiction Services Administrator Grande Prairie Area AHS Congruence Couple Therapy:

An Integrative
Approach
in
Addiction and
Concurrent Disorder
Treatment

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Alberta Gambling Research Institute, Major Grant

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 Canadian Depression Research and Intervention Network, Regional Depression Research Hub (CDRIN)

Research Team

Principal Investigator:

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Research Team Investigators:

- Darren Christensen, PhD, University of Lethbridge
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Research Assistants:

- Samuel Ofori-Dei, PhD student
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- Rebecca Knighton, PhD student

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4 AHS Strategies

https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/about/Page12951.aspx

- Patient and family-centered care
- Workforce engagement to improve patient and family experience
- Generate, share and use evidence in the delivery of care
- Use information and technology to transform care

What's an Innovation?

"Turning an idea into a solution that adds value from a customer's perspective."

Nick Skillicorn

Leader in thought leadership on the science of improving creativity

GAP-MAP (Wild et al., 2014) Underserved populations

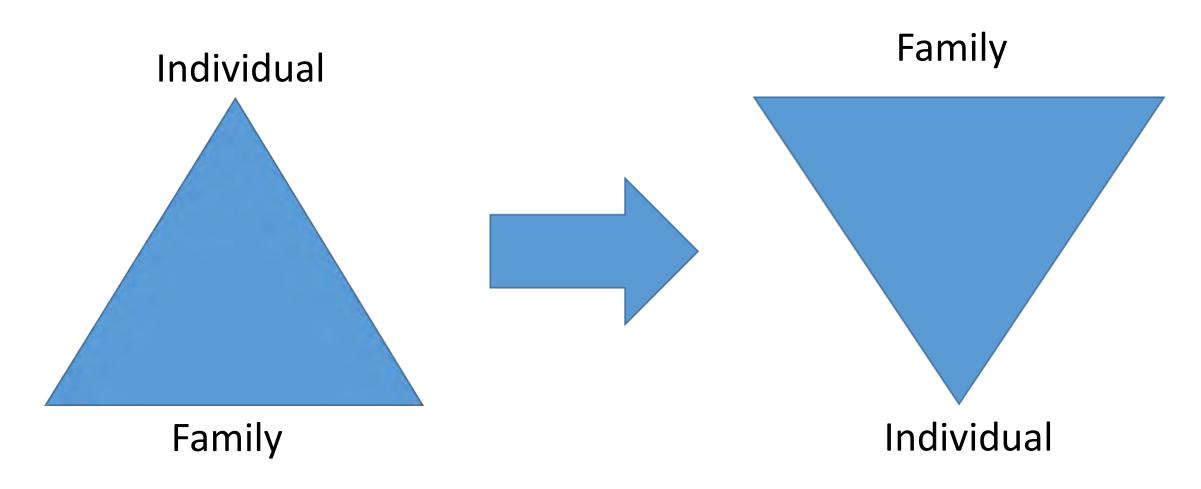
- Children and youth: impacted by parental addiction and mental health problems, early psychosis.
- Families: Mental health and addictions counselling that adopts a family system perspective, rather than simply focusing on the individual as separate from the family.
- People with dual diagnosis and/or other complex need;
 Post-traumatic stress disorder

Training and System Needs (GAP-MAP)

Cross-train mental health and addictions
 workers so they are competent to deal with a
 variety of client issues.

 Specialized training in mental health and addiction for staff.

Inverting the Pyramid

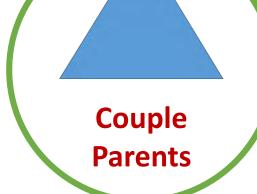


PAST

ACE

FUTURE

New Generation



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Congruence Couple Therapy

- Person-centered
- Relationship-focused
- Trauma-informed
- 3 A's: Awareness, Acknowledgment and Alignment

"It is more important to know what sort of person has a disease than to know what sort of disease a person has."

-Hippocrates

Congruence Couple Therapy Program of Research

PI: Bonnie Lee, PhD

Phase I:

8 In-depth case studies

(2001-2002)

An Empirically-Derived Relational Framework

Phase II:

CCT Training Evaluation

(2004-2006)

Cohort Study

Phase III:

Multi-site Pilot RCT Outcome Study

(2009-2011)

Phase IV:

RTC of GD vs AUD in AHS (2016-2018)

iKT workshop with AMH stakeholders

Congruence Couple Therapy for Pathological Gambling

Bonnie K. Lee

International Gambling Studies, Vol. 8, No. 1, 113-129, April 2008

'Bringing Torn Lives Together Again': Effects of the First Congruence Couple Therapy Training Application to Clients in Pathological Gambling

BONNIE K. LEE1 & MARTIN ROVERS2

Contemporary Family Therapy https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-020-09536-8

ORIGINAL PAPER

Couple Therapy in Substance Use and Gambling Disorders: Promoting Health System Change

Bonnie K. Lee 1 - Robert Gilbert - Rebecca Knighton 3,4

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International Gambling Studies, Vol. 8, No. 1, 95-111, April 2008

Training Problem Gambling Counsellors in Congruence Couple Therapy: Evaluation of Training Outcomes

BONNIE K. LEE,1 MARTIN ROVERS2 & LYNNE MACLEAN3

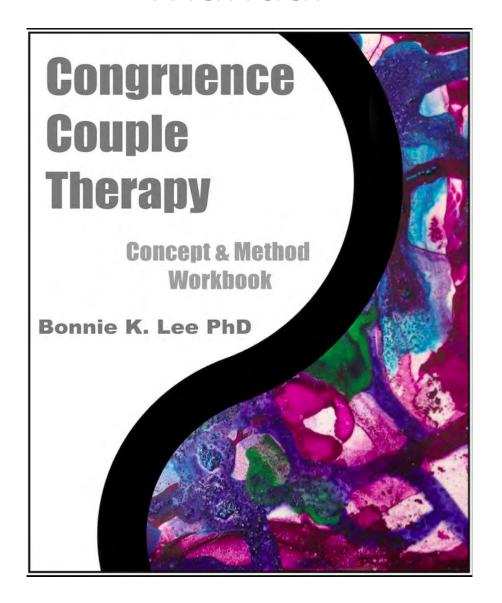
J Gambl Stud DOI 10.1007/s10899-014-9464-3

ORIGINAL PAPER

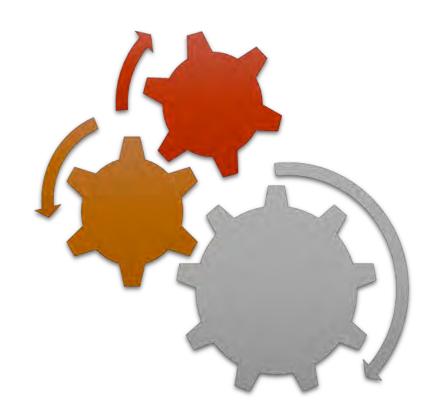
Congruence Couple Therapy for Pathological Gambling: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial

Bonnie K. Lee · Olu Awosoga

Manual



Integrated Systems



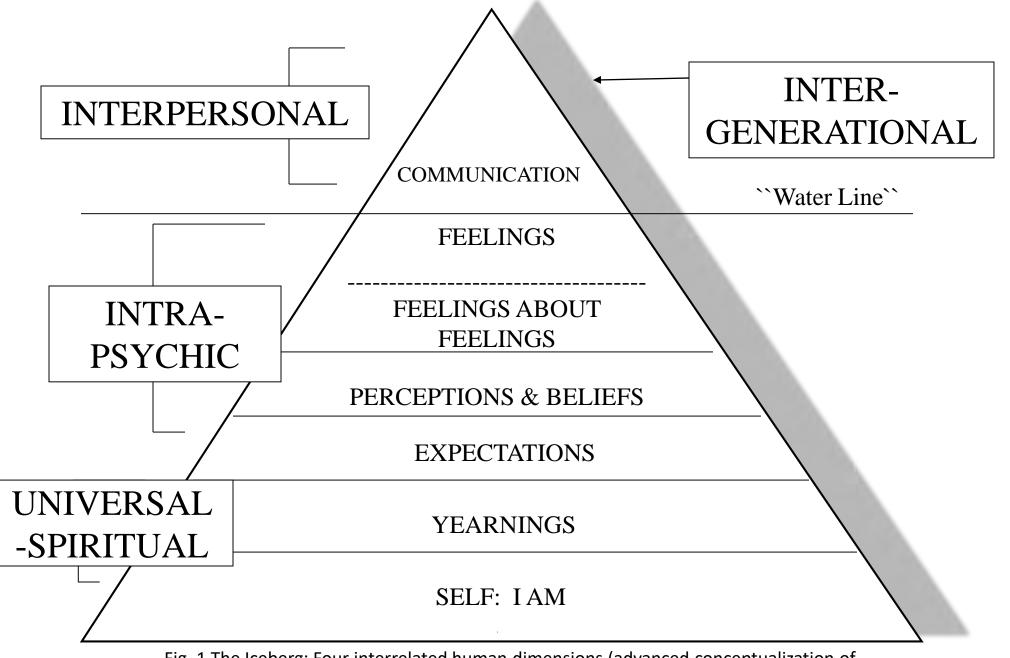
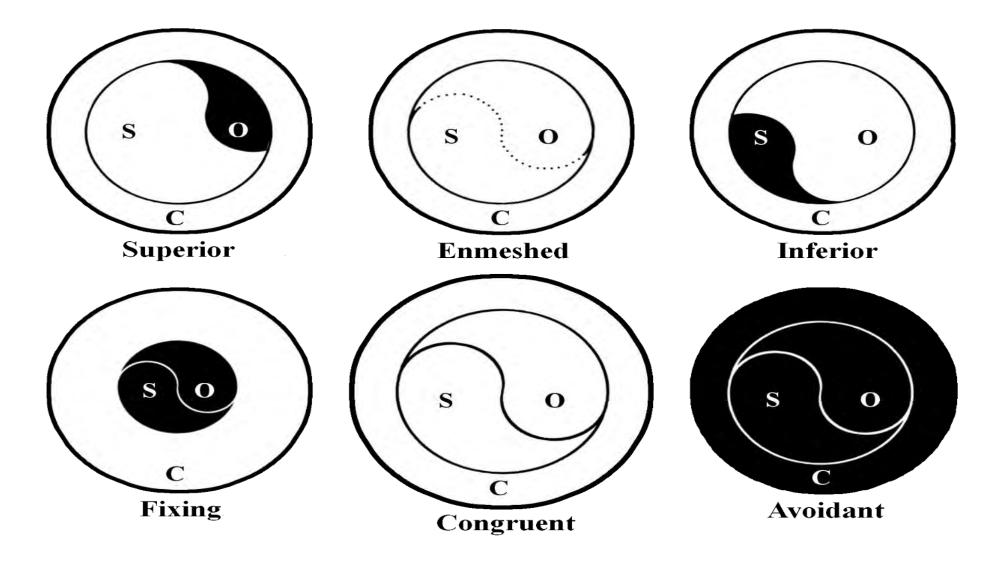


Fig. 1 The Iceberg: Four interrelated human dimensions (advanced conceptualization of Satir et al. 1991; Banmen 1994; Lee 2002b) Reference: Lee, 2009

Communication Postures (Lee, 2017)



Three-headed Dragon:

Trauma + Couple Dysfunction + Addiction

(Lee, 2017; Gaelzer, 2019; Lee et al., 2020)



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Evidence-Based Practice: 3 Levels of Evidence

Clinical outcomes

Clients' feedback

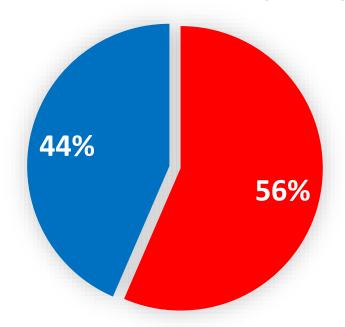
Counsellors' feedback



Source: Dreamstime.com

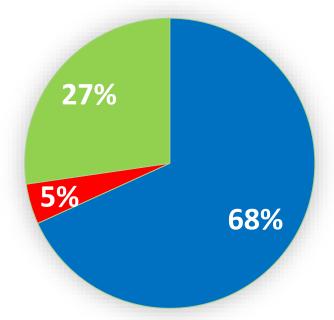
What are the Clinical Outcomes?

Clients and partners with and without addiction (N=46)



- Have Addiction
- Have no Addiction

Types of Addiction among Addicted Clients (N=46)



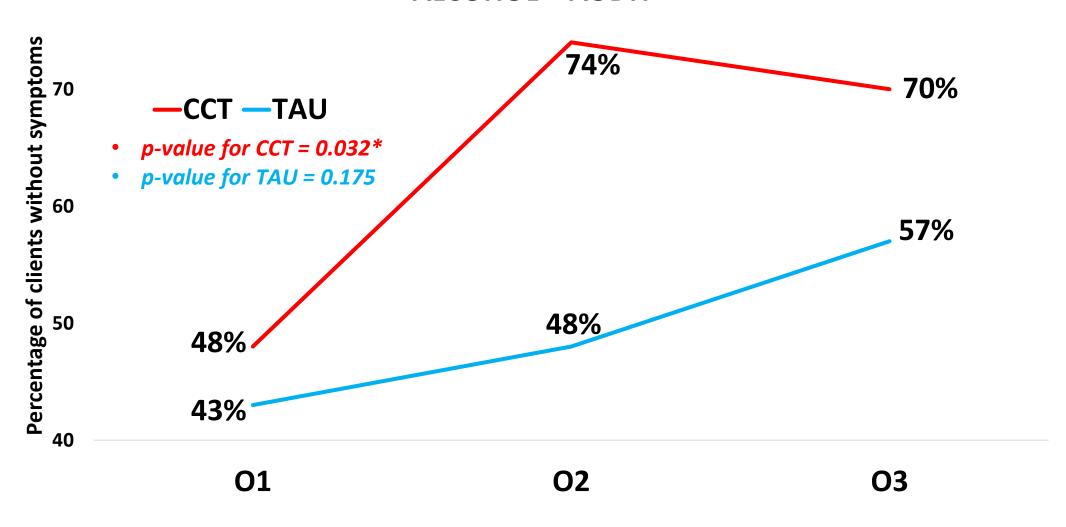
- Alcohol
- Gambling
- Alcohol & Gambling

Key Clinical Outcomes: CCT vs TAU

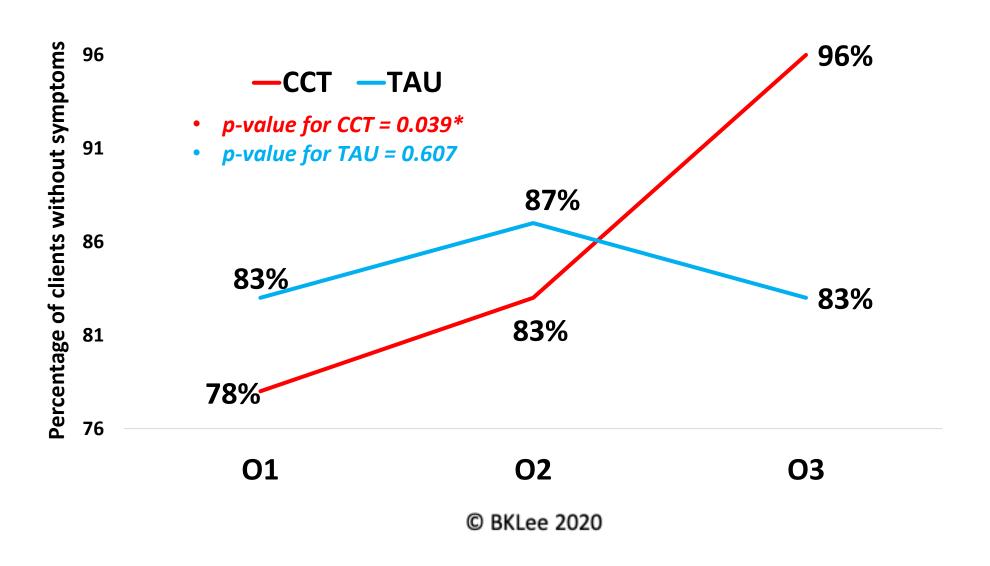
(Lee et al., 2020)

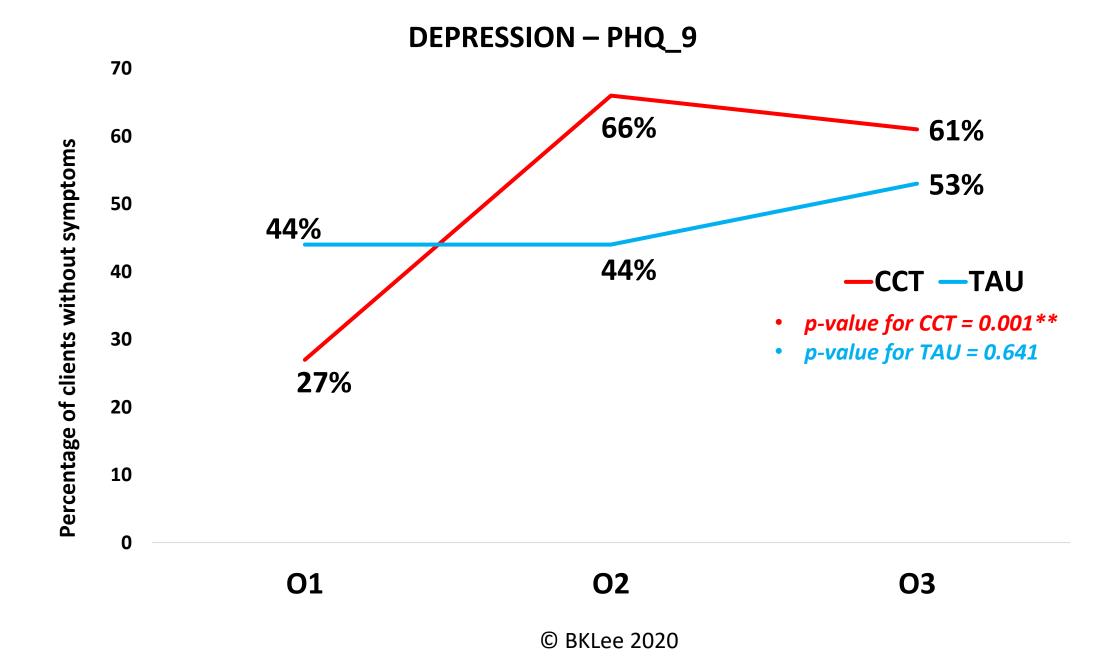
- Addictive disorders
 - Alcohol
 - Gambling
- Mental health
 - Depression
- Emotion regulation
- Couple adjustment

ALCOHOL – AUDIT

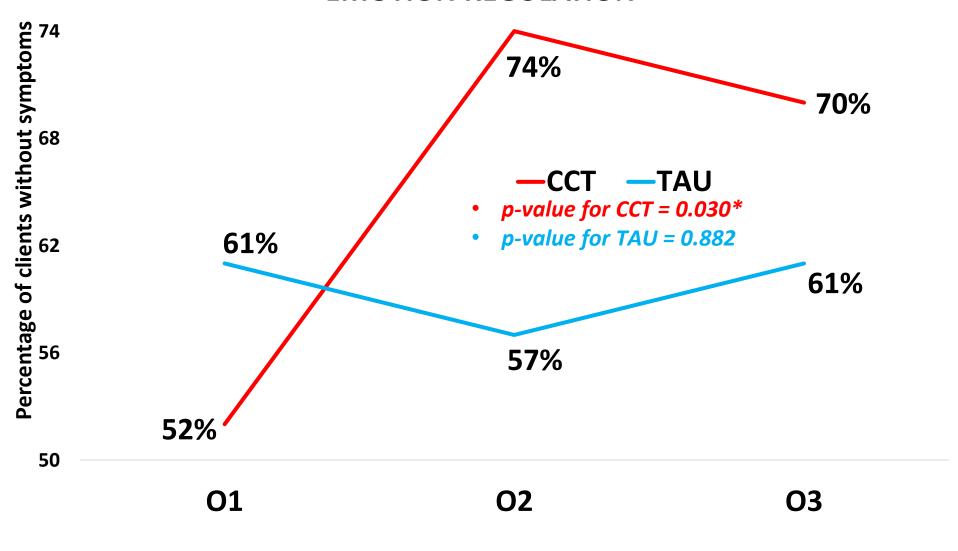


GAMBLING - PGSI

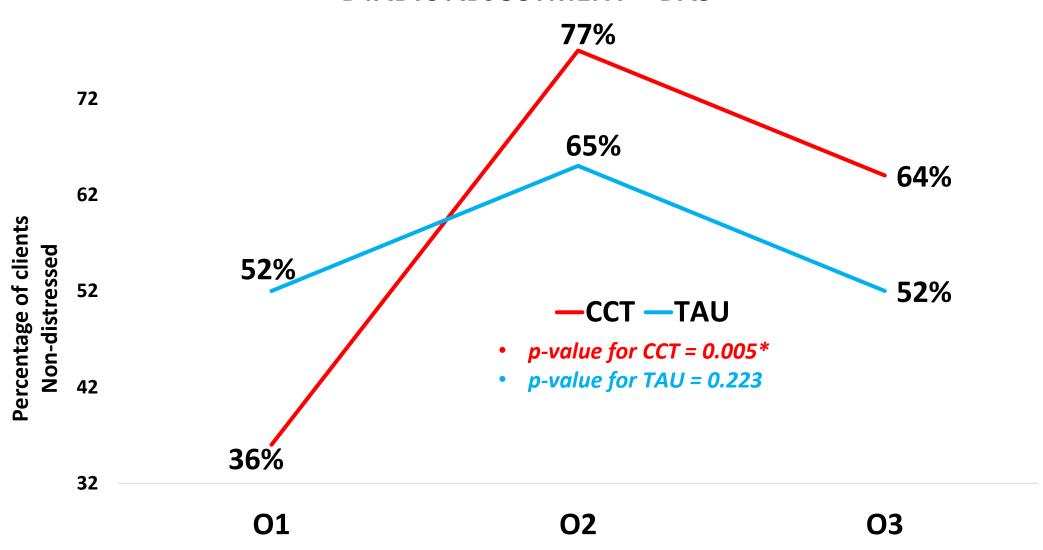




EMOTION REGULATION

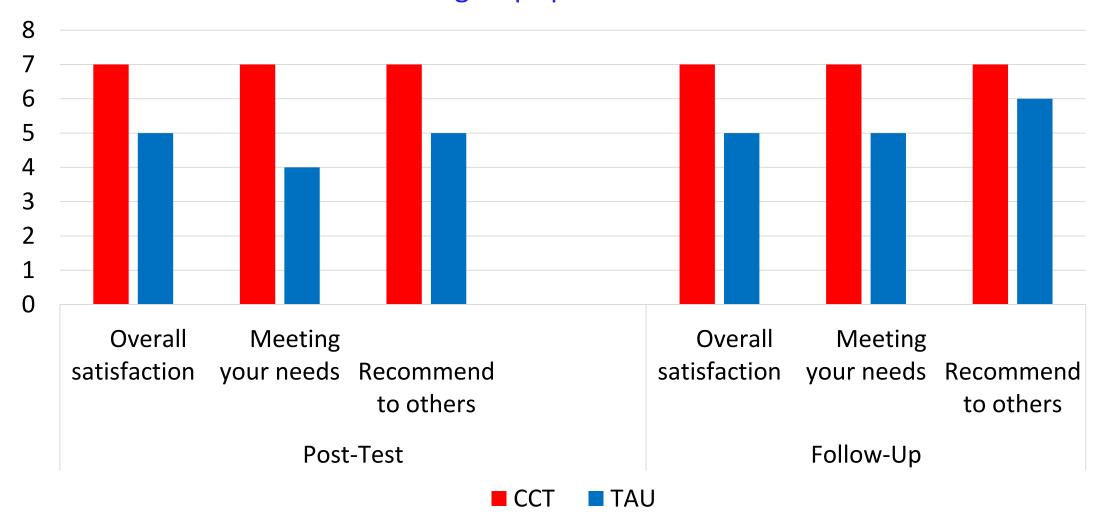


DYADIC ADJUSTMENT – DAS



Client Satisfaction Scale (1-7)

Between groups p-value = 0.001**



SUMMARY

- CCT showed significant reduction in clinical symptoms in all measures sustained into follow-up.
- CCT is effective with concurrent disorders.
- TAU did not show significant reduction in key clinical symptoms.
- Significant between-group difference in Client Satisfaction for CCT and TAU with CCT at the highest level of satisfaction.

What do the Clients Say?

Patient-Oriented Research

 Alberta SPOR Graduate Studentship in Patient-Oriented Research Award (Alberta Innovates)

Yanjun Shi, M.Ed. Masters in Counselling Psychology

• Supervisors: Dr. Bonnie Lee; Dr. Noella Piquette

Patient Advisory Committee: 7 members

METHOD (SHI, 2019)







Participants



Thematic analysis

One-on-one

Sub-sample from CCT Therapy Study

CCT: n = 10

TAU: n=10



RESEARCH QUESTION

Is couple therapy needed to support

addiction recovery?



Treatment-as-Usual

MISSING PIECES



Unresolved Issues (Shi, 2019)

Unhealed relational injuries

Unresolved communication difficulty

He's angry at me for the things that are recurring for the last 8 years. (Irene)

We were living together like roommates...I was always scared to come home...

Basically, he'd sit on one end of the couch, I would sit on the other end. (Debra)

Divergent Paths (Shi, 2019)

Kept in the dark

Disconnection

I can't really go to his counsellor or his doctor to tell them "Oh he's doing this, this, this! (Kayla)

There is less communication...I feel less connected to him. (Frances)

Adapting to Recovery (Shi, 2019)

Adapting to growth of one partner

Changing roles and patterns

I come from a place where I was constantly trying to please him...

And to him that's me disconnecting, but that's really just me being a person!

He has every right to be insecure...

I had all these things in my life that didn't involve him and it didn't make sense to him.

(Irene)



Congruence Couple Therapy

THE
COMPLETE
WORK

Conjoint Improvement (Shi, 2019)

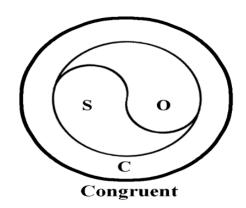
Straight Communication

Openness Clarity

- I used say to him "Do you want to go out for dinner?"
- Now I would say "I'm hungry. I want to go out for dinner."
- You get yourself all worked up rather than just putting it out there. (Debra)
- I'm allowed to have a voice, but I'm also able to be clear about why I feel that way. (Beth)

Self and Other (Shi, 2019)

RESPECTING DIFFERENCES



RESPECTING SELF

 Realizing that somebody else's problem is somebody else's problem and the only problem that you can fix is your own. A lot of that came in realization in the couples therapy.

• I can be clear, I can be intelligent, I can be non-belligerent about it.

(Beth)

Understanding each other's Trauma (Shi, 2019)

Promoting empathy

Building understanding

- Part of the reason why she holds onto me so hard [was that] she's been abandoned several times in her life.
 And I didn't know the severity of that hurt.
- It came out of the couple therapy.
- I really didn't know the extent of her fear on so many levels.

(Caleb)

Changes with Children & Family (Shi, 2019)

Better Parenting

Family Togetherness

- I definitely try to communicate with my kids a little better... I'm a lot more compassionate, a lot more caring... more understanding and I try to listen to them a bit better than how I used to.
- It helped us to grow a little stronger and closer as a family, too. We tend to do a lot more stuff as a family as opposed to before, I'd be sitting around the fire and having a few beers with my buddies. (Andrew)

Prohibitive Cost & Lack of Expertise (Shi, 2019)

Prohibitive Cost

Most counsellors lack Expertise in Couples + Addiction

• If you don't have benefits ...cost of counselling can get very expensive.

(April)

 We were open with her about our addiction issues, but she just does not have the skills working with addicts.

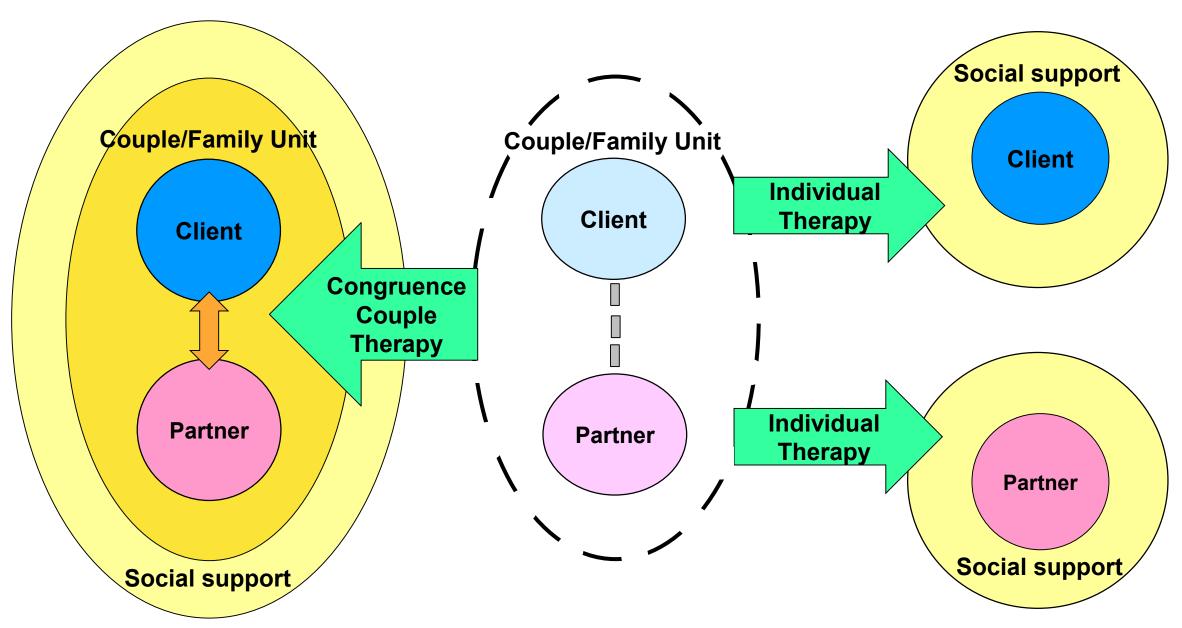
(Iris)

 We have not found anyone who was particularly good at dealing with couples in the context of addiction. (Isabelle)

Limitations of Couple Therapy

 Limited time for individual exploration and undivided support from one's counsellor.

• Challenging for clients with destabilizing factors, e.g. continued substance use, unemployment, homelessness



Shi, 2019



CCT preserves couple relationship as a natural resource in addiction recovery.

Conclusion



CCT supports individual and relational growth.



CCT holds potential to sustain long-term recovery and prevent relapses.

What do the Counsellors Say?

(Lee, Shi & Knighton, 2019)

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THREE FOCUS GROUPS

LED BY INDEPENDENT FACILITATORS

After Training

- Perceived value of CCT
- Implementation needs

Mid-term (1 year)

- Novel aspects of CCT
- Preparation and support during the study

End of project (2yrs, 4 mos)

- Outcome comparisons between CCT and TAU
- Recommendations to the field

Gaps in Services and Training

• We didn't do any integration of family members...it would always be with the individual, so your only treating half the couple. (C1)

 Clients would come in and request to be seen as families and as couples and I just didn't feel we had that skill level or knowledge base. (C4)

Benefits of seeing Couples

- See whole picture when other person is there. (C4)
- Observe couples and have them practice new skills in session more likely that they will generalize this to home life. (C5)
- Witness other person's therapy so to speak and see partner in a different light. (C2)
- Huge advantage to have them both in the room that things are clarified.
 (P2)

The CCT model

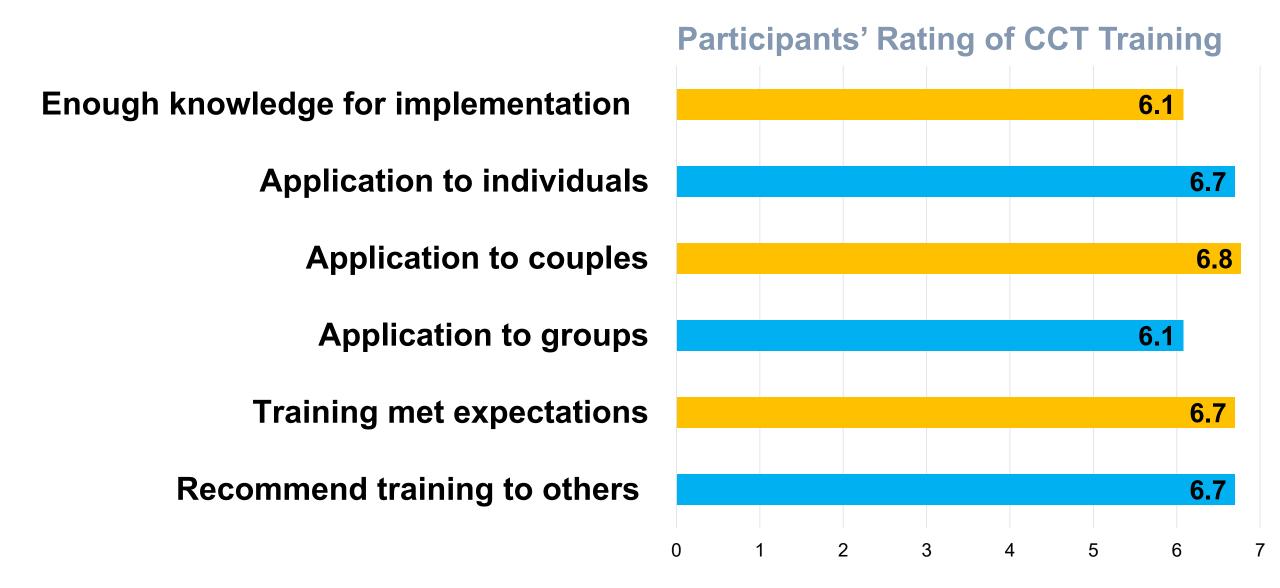
- Structure but also flexibility built within ... I can use my own style in my own way with working with people. (P11)
- A manual ... gave us the structure, the key concepts, definitions. (P4)
- Diagrams are becoming really useful I find to help us recall and remember things. (P4)
- Framework gave lots of room to enter into treatment from a variety of different doors. (P11)
- Going deeper and deeper, we're going into the roots of it. (P7)

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Training:

5 day workshop + Supported application

- A lot of supervision from the trainer but also peer supervision was really nice too to have a few sets of ears and eyes on your case to help you when we would get stuck.
- Written feedback from her or consulting with a coworker. (C4)



Overall mean satisfaction score = 6.5 (SD = 0.3) (Likert Scale 1-7)

Impact on Counsellors:

Challenging

Collaborative

Effective

Meaningful

- I really like training and I like the supervision ...an opportunity to participate in linking research and practice...very motivating to come to work. (C4)
- I like to be challenged and I want to use all my skills to be able to help people transform. (C1)
- Most of the work done in our clinic is quite solitary.
 This presented a welcome opportunity to work more closely with my colleagues, and to learn from their work. (C5)
- I think we as counsellors found this to be such meaningful work; I know that my overall job satisfaction has increased being able to incorporate couple's counselling into my practice. (C5)

Indigenous & Multicultural Compatibility:

Family values

Inter-relationships

Holistic

• I'm an indigenous counsellor...
the value of having family
involved. It's a really good fit
for the worldview of
indigenous people. It allows
us to use culturally sensitive
interventions. (C4)

Does it work with

Individuals?

• I think that a lot of those concepts can be applied to individuals...it's continued to carry forward in our work with individuals too. (C2)

 Most clients find the CCT concepts valuable and easy to understand. (C5)

Integrative

Simplicity

- There has never been a model that put all these different components together. (P1)
- I'm almost surprised by its simplicity. (P6)
- All the pieces magically work together...We couldn't answer that question on what's the one thing. There isn't really one thing, it's just a combination of all these factors that work together. (P2)

Intergenerational

 We looked at their family of origin and their patterns of interaction. (C4)

 ...change the rest of their communication pattern for the rest of their lives. And hopefully improve the way they parent...
 Skills they pass on to their children. (P3) Counsellors' Observed Outcomes

Mental Health

• She can handle stress and anxiety and those triggers. She was aware of what those triggers whether its drinking, her mental health, her emotional dysregulation. (C2)

• Skills in communication and able to say what they need instead of complaining, we did the family of origin work ...we are talking about emotional regulation ...it just happens. (C1)

Counsellors' Observed Outcomes:

> Couple Relationship

- I certainly saw improvements in their communication... the feelings of trust, respect, honesty, all that improved from beginning to end. (C4)
- I know that we were able to meet with some of the couples that had gone through the CCT ... they were better able to understand maybe why their partner did what they did. So I think that was huge growth in understanding in them. (Manager)

Counsellors' Observed Outcomes:

> Alcohol Use, Gambling & Relapse Prevention

- It was just from daily, obsessive blackout drinking to relapsing maybe twice in the twelve weeks of CCT which was huge progress. (C1)
- Most clients saw a decrease in cravings and improved their response to their triggers; most were able to maintain abstinence throughout the course of CCT. (C5)
- They were able to **remain abstinent** from gambling and substance use so there was a lot of resiliency that got built. (C4)

The Three-Headed Dragon:

Addiction
Couple Dysfunction
Trauma

 Overall friendship and warmth increased, some had more of those tender moments... helpful to go through the timelines together and make links with the present. It gave them a new understanding of themselves, their addiction, and relationships and increased their empathy. Many expressed pride in their recoveries and in the work their had done over the course of CCT. (C5)

Existential & Experiential Spirituality

- They were encouraged to speak to each other in a way that would show their appreciation...I saw [their] self-esteem build and just a deeper respect for each other ...that was more about a spiritual or virtuous nature of the person. (C4)
- Self-worth just gets better over time as everything else is being worked on. Just a natural outcome of better communication, more connection, they're falling in love again so you just feel better about yourself when your relationship is healing. (C1)

Summation

 The couples are learning to turn towards one another as a natural resource, as a relapse prevention tool instead of programs (C2).

Summation

• Everyone in the system must change to ensure a higher chance of success, so it's very important to address the couple relationship. (C1)

Limitations

- Committed to staying in the relationship
- Some degree of stability
- Not currently in crisis: suicidal, recurrent domestic violence, homelessness
- Supplemental individual therapy or trauma work

Barriers

- I think it fits with the values of AHS but it doesn't always fit with the, and I'm going to use the buzz word here, with the "operational demands." (P4)
- There's not someone who is dedicated to couples counselling so it just makes it hard to keep it as a priority here at the clinic. (C2)

WAITING LIST

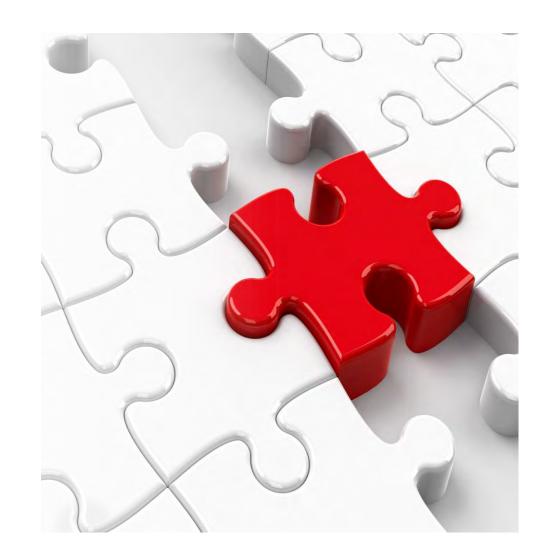
- We're not able to catch people when they need it and they're waiting too long.
 (C2)
- 74 couples, 6 months waiting list Edmonton
- 6 months waiting list Grande Prairie

• It would be a disservice to cease to offer something so necessary. (C5)

Points for Discussion...

 Do the 3 levels of evidence address AHS strategies and values?

What is your call to action?





Join the Relational Intervention Network

- Training
- Research
- Advocacy
- Education
- Advisory
- Lived Experience
- Publications

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 - To download Bonnie Lee's publications, go to: https://www.uleth.ca/dspace/handle/10133/546/browse?type=date issued