

Poster presentation

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Assertiveness training as a major component element of a psychoeducational program addressed to psychiatric patients and their families

Nick Degleris*¹, Eleftheria Mantelou¹, Andreas Solias¹,
Diamanto Karamberi¹ and Agathon Mlinie²

Address: ¹Psychotherapeutic Center of Piraeus, Greece, 18535 and ²EABCT, Honorary President

* Corresponding author

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Background

J. Wolpe defined assertive behavior as the appropriate expression of any emotion excluding anxiety toward subject to better express his opinions toward others, to recognize and to accept the opinions of other people and to express his feelings without aggressivity. As a result, the adoption of this type of behavior becomes apparent by means of procedures focusing on the acquisition of social dexterity. In conclusion, these techniques aim not only at allowing the person to feel assertive about his opinions vis-à-vis his interlocutor, but also to express his feelings without aggression. A psychoeducational intervention improves the understanding of mental illness, increases the patient's coping ability and supports cooperation between patients and mental health professionals. In the provision of a psychoeducational approach an assertiveness training program can be developed to suit the needs, the expectations and the capabilities of patients, significant others, care team members and the mental health organisation in general.

Materials and methods

The overall process involves learning about the different components of behavior in its different aspects, e.g. the motive or vocal level and interpretation of roles aiming at the adoption of the desired behavior. The content of verbal responses is also taken into consideration.

Results

The assertiveness techniques may be proposed for individual or group therapy for small groups under the direction of one or more therapists.

Conclusions

That assertive training applied on a group of psychiatric patients appear affective within a reasonable timeframe, independent of the motive for treatment, the coexisting psychopathology and the dominant or latent manner in which the lack of assertiveness is expressed.

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