

Introduction

Several studies have examined the effectiveness of treatment for complex PTSD. (Bessel A. van der Kolk , 2007 ; Christina W. Slotema , 2019 ; Alexandra Howard,2021) Complex PTSD is hard to treat compared with PTSD. These reports highlighted the need for further study to overcome the difficulties in treating complex PTSD.

Study of FAP

In Japan, the Free From Anxiety Program(FAP) has been practiced as an approach to trauma treatment. Developed by **Ohshima** in 2001, this therapy of Japanese origin is effective in treating various problems including PTSD symptoms.

Ohshima (2001) reported prompt, distress-free improvement of symptoms.

Ohshima (2003) divided 90 patients into control and FAP therapy groups and measured their pre- and post-treatment SDS and MAS. FAP therapy promoted integration of traumatic memories/emotions and improved dissociation. While patients tested after one-month of FAP therapy showed elevation of depression and anxiety on remembering offensive situations, control patients showed no changes.

Kudo (2003) evaluated 76 patients before and 2-4 weeks after treatment. The pre-post difference was significant, and effectiveness persisted throughout the study period.

Ohtsuka (2020) measured PCL-C and GHQ12 before and after FAP therapy in 20 PTSD patients requiring 14 interviews on average. PCL-S (pre: 44 to post: 33) and GHQ12 (pre: 5 to post: 3) dropped below critical levels. The pre-post difference in PCL-S was significant.

Characteristics of FAP

1. Lack of distress.
2. Short treatment period.
3. Long-lasting effectiveness.
4. Integration of traumatic memories/emotions and improved dissociation.

Case study of FAP therapy (7 interviews in 1 month)

Chief complaint

Suicidal thoughts. Attempted suicides at the ages of 20 and 24 immediately following intimate interpersonal relationships.

Beginning from infancy, games and dreams related to suicide were a constant part of life, and Client (CL) had a sense of alienation in interpersonal relationships.

Because interpersonal relationships would exhaust CL, CL is currently working alone. CL lacks emotions such as anger and loneliness, and is in a state of apathy.

Considering these conditions are consistent with the state of complex PTSD in ICD-11 and derive from the trauma of long-term bullying beginning from preschool days, we proceeded with treatment using FAP therapy.

●GHQ-12, PCL-S
#1⇒#7

- GHQ-12 3⇒0
(Threshold value 3)
- PCL-S 41⇒17
(Threshold value 45-50)

Interviews

【 # 5 】 The negative self-image diminished during the therapy, especially in relation to the “bullying trauma” .

【 # 6 】 The sense of suicidal thoughts weakened. And CL was able to talk in a relaxed manner in the backstage room of a music concert even though there were many people.

【 # 7 】 The sense of suicidal thoughts almost completely gone, and CL says “My mind about the past has been organized”.

Discussion

Problems of Complex PTSD treatment

1. Severity of illness
(Kevin F.W. Dyer 2009)
2. Difficulty and long duration of treatment
(James A. Chu MD 2011)
3. Traumatic amnesia
(Reginald D.V. Nixon et al, 2005)

Benefits of FAP therapy

1. Safe
2. Achievement of efficacy in a short period
3. Outcomes not dependent on skill level of therapist
4. Ability to approach the problem of traumatic amnesia

Several problems are encountered in the treatment of complex PTSD. Because complex PTSD is hard to treat, the outcome of a case may vary depending on the skill level of the therapist.

The presence of traumatic amnesia also may hamper trauma treatment because it interferes with the approach to traumas related to symptoms.

FAP therapy is advantageous in overcoming these problems. FAP enables intervention without asking the client to recall the details of past trauma. It does not lower the adaptation of the client, allowing treatment to proceed in a safe and speedy manner. Providing a simple approach to treating traumas, FAP therapy is expected to achieve therapeutic effects without depending on the skill level of the therapist.

FAP therapy is an excellent treatment method that provides therapists with a sense of confidence and enjoyment in their efforts to support clients in overcoming traumas and living as they wish.