

Knowledge and Attitude of Mental Health Professionals towards Transactional Analysis

Dr. Akhilesh M., MBBS^{1*}, Dr. Anil Kakunje DPM, MD.²,

Ms. Haseena Abdulla MSc, PTSTA³

ABSTRACT

Knowledge and attitude towards Transactional Analysis was studied during a two-day workshop for 24 mental health professionals, which included residents of psychiatry, psychologists, social workers and mental health nursing faculty. A specially designed 10 item questionnaires was used for a pre and post-test which evaluated on various aspects of transactional analysis to know their attitude and knowledge towards this therapeutic tool. Participants were asked to rate their experience of the workshop. Written informed consent was taken from all participants. Results showed that 9 out of 10 questions had a marked, positive change in the post test results. The 2 days' basic course made a positive impact on the attitude and knowledge of Transactional Analysis of all participants. The acceptance (feedback) of the session, by the participants, delivered an average score of 8.68 on a 10-point scale. Mental health professionals must necessarily attend workshops on Transactional Analysis to make use of this relatively less used therapeutic tool to their practice. Transactional Analysis with proper training can have a wide range of clinical applications in various psychotherapeutic settings.

Keywords: TA, Transactional Analysis, Game, Psychotherapy, Berne, Ego

Transactional analysis (TA) was introduced by Eric Berne (Johnsson, 2011) and received widespread acceptability in several psychotherapeutic scenarios and was known to be effective in enhancing peoples' mental health (Murakami et al., 2006). TA is a theory of personality and human relations and it offers systematic methods for personal growth and professional development. It provides a picture of how people are structured psychologically (Etemadi-Chardah, Matinpour, & Heshmati, n.d.) and provides an insight into communication between people and the how the breakdown in communication occur. It aims at making maximum therapeutic use of the actual occurrences (transactions) in therapy

¹ Junior Resident, Department of Psychiatry, Yenepoya Medical college, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.

² Professor and Head, Department of Psychiatry, Yenepoya Medical College, Yenepoya University, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.

³ Provisional Trainer and Supervisor, ITAA (International Transactional Analysis Association, San-Francisco), Director - Lifelab International, Manipal, Karnataka, India.

*[Responding Author](#)

Received: February 15, 2019; Revision Received: March 24, 2019; Accepted: March 31, 2019

Knowledge And Attitude Of Mental Health Professionals Towards Transactional Analysis

groups, consisting of transactions between patients and between the patients and the therapist (Berne, n.d.). The core ideas of TA are ego states, life positions and psychological games one play (Ertem & Eker, 2016).

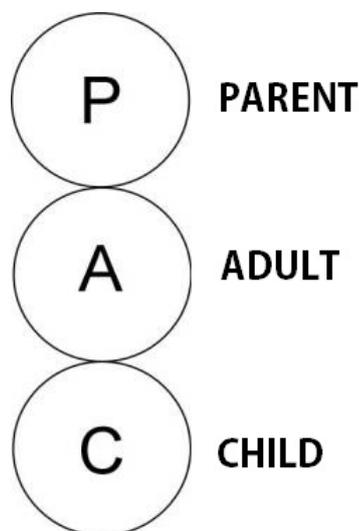


Figure 1- Ego states in Transactional Analysis

Berne conceptualized behavior as interaction between 3 ego states; Exterio psychic, Neo psychic and Archaeo psychic (Figure 1). Colloquially they stand for Parent, Adult and Child ego states respectively. An ego state may be described pragmatically, as a coherent system of thoughts and feelings manifested by corresponding patterns of behavior. The Parent ego state comprises of thoughts, feelings, behaviors and attitudes that are learned from our significant parental figures. The Adult ego state appraises the environment objectively and calculates the possibilities and probabilities on the basis of the past experiences. The Child ego state is the part of our personality which is relived within each one of us as a little boy or a girl, who feels, thinks, acts, talks and responds just the way he or she did when he or she was a child of a certain age (Berne, 1972 p 30-31). Each of these ego states is complete with elements of Superego, Ego and Id in its own structure (Berne, n.d.).

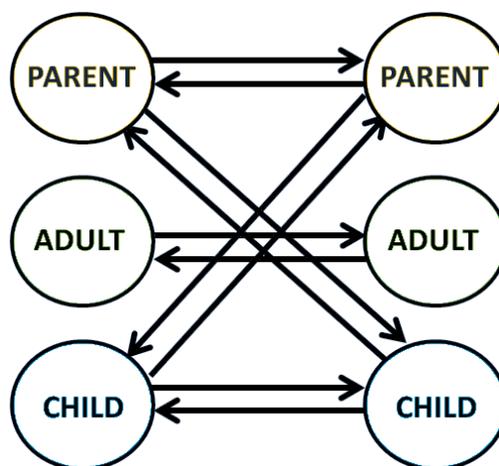


Figure 2 – Complementary and Crossed transaction

Knowledge And Attitude Of Mental Health Professionals Towards Transactional Analysis

When communications occur to and forth between any two ego states of an individual it is intrapsychic transaction, which means ego states are engaged within the person. Communication where two individuals' ego states are involved would be interpersonal transactions. For instance, communication from one ego state (transactional stimulus) is sent and the other person responds from the expected ego state then the communication is complementary transaction. When the response is from the unexpected ego state then it is called crossed transaction. (Figure 2). Crossed transactions are indicative of poorly structured relationships (Berne, n.d.). Another type of transaction is the ulterior transactions, which appear overtly between Adult ego state to Adult ego state, but on a psychological level it involves the Parent ego state and the Child ego state. Ulterior transactions are usually part of games patient's play. There is a total of 9 possible vectors in a relationship between two individual. And the communications can be analyzed by Structural analysis, Game analysis and Relationship analysis.

Since TA helps in patient's ability to tolerate their anxiety and to control their acting out, it has several advantages on psychotherapies. Berne categorized treatment in TA based on four different levels as follows: 1) Social control 2) Treating symptoms 3) Transitional treatment & 4) Treating the play (Clayton & Dunbar, 1977).

Aim: To understand the attitude and knowledge of mental health professionals towards Transactional Analysis.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Ms. Haseena Abdulla, is a Provisional Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analyst (Psychotherapy), conducted 2 days official basic introductory TA workshop for mental health professionals, which included residents of psychiatry, psychologists, social workers, psychiatric nursing faculty to improve their awareness and knowledge about the subject, on 27 & 28th March 2018, at Yenepoya Medical College, Mangalore. A total of 24 participants took part in the workshop. Their attitude and knowledge regarding the subject was studied in this session. The workshop generated lively discussion and interest among the participants.

A specially designed 10 item multiple choice questionnaire, which was validated by 5 independent experts was circulated among all the participants. A Pre-Test and a Post Test was conducted on various aspects to know the attitude and knowledge towards this unique therapeutic tool and also to know the knowledge gained in the session. Written informed consent was taken from all the participants. The questionnaire included the following questions:

1. Who invented transactional analysis?
2. In Transactional analysis, the ego-states mapped in interpersonal relationships are?
3. According to TA, the healthiest life position a person can hold is?
4. Which of the following is not a core TA model?
5. Which is not a type of blackmail?
6. The extero psychic ego represent-
7. Possible number of vectors in a relationship-
8. All are applications of TA except
9. Not a type of diagnosis of ego state –
10. The aim of change under TA is to move towards-

Each question was given one mark for the right answer and zero for wrong answer. No negative marking was there. Maximum possible score was 10. An extra question was added

Knowledge And Attitude Of Mental Health Professionals Towards Transactional Analysis

in the post test to rate the whole experience of the session on a 10-point scale in order to gain a better perspective on the acceptance of this therapy.

RESULTS

The age of the participants varied from 26 to 40 years and previous experience in the field of mental health varied from 2 years to 10. However, the results showed that for all participants the post scores had shown significant improvement in all but one questions, irrespective of age and experience (Figure3). The maximum marks possible were 10 and the mean average score for pretest was 5.0833 and for posttest is 8.375 (Figure 4)

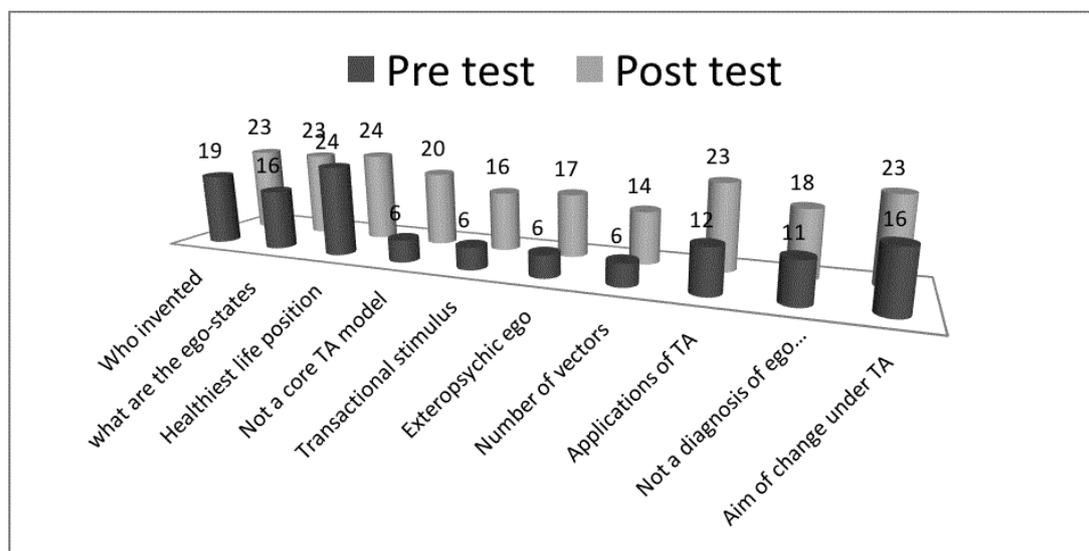


Figure 3- Comparison of pre and post test results

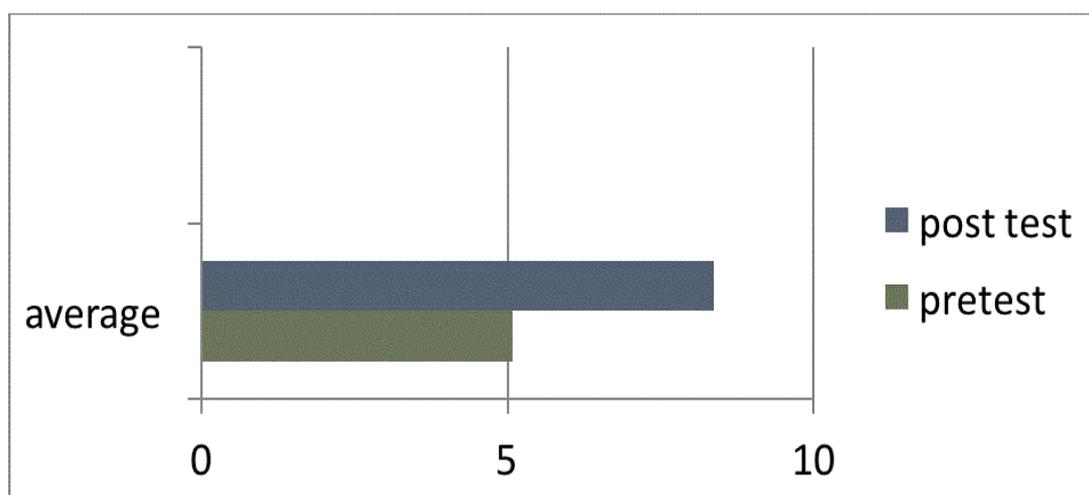


Figure 4- Average marks in pre and post tests

A 32.916 % increase in post test scores over pre-test suggests that even after having varied ranges of previous years of experience in psychiatry, knowledge regarding Transactional Analysis was limited and inadequate thus making the post-test acceptability more welcoming.

The two questions that showed maximum difference in the pre-and post test results were –

1. Which of the following is not a core TA model?
2. What does exteropsychic ego represent?

Knowledge And Attitude Of Mental Health Professionals Towards Transactional Analysis

For the first question, the options given were - Structural analysis, Functional analysis, Game analysis & Script analysis. Of which Functional analysis was the correct response. The extero psychic ego represents Parent ego state. These are part of basics of Transactional analysis and show the poor understanding of basics of the group prior to the workshop.

Whereas the question that showed the least difference in the pre-and post-test result was- According to TA, the healthiest life position a person can hold is?

The correct response was I'm OK and you are OK, which all the participants got right on pre-and post-test. The participants understanding can be attributed to their interest in the field and may be as it is the title of one of the bestselling books on this subject. The acceptance and usefulness of the session in psychotherapeutic setting by the participants delivered an average score of 8.68 on a 10-point scale.

DISCUSSION

After the 2-day workshop, it was observed that most of the answers in the post test were more accurate and there was a significant improvement from the results obtained in the pre-test. Also, the rating for the experience of the session had a mean average of 8.68 on a 10-point scale which shows good acceptability.

Strengths of the study were that it looked at knowledge and attitude of mental health professionals towards an uncommon psychotherapeutic technique in Indian context. A trained and certified professional was the resource person, immediate assessment, and involvement of various mental health professionals.

Limitations were small sample size and assessment done after a basic course without hands on clinical experience.

Ever since its introduction, Transactional Analysis was used for treating a variety of psychological disorders (Forghani & Ghanbari Hashem Abadi, 2016). It had been taught to management students, nursing and other paramedical students to improve the communication between them and patients (Ertem & Eker, 2016). However, research is lacking regarding its effectiveness in an Indian setting. Even though Eric Berne himself had written on transactional analysis on the first issue of Indian journal Psychiatry (Berne, n.d.), the field itself remains largely unused in therapeutic sessions also in India.

In previous such workshop in La Verne university, America; a 10-week course on TA was provided to the Nursing students and a patient satisfaction questionnaire regarding nurses' communication skill was compared between theirs and a control group. It was seen that there was a positive effect of the study on the communication skills of the nursing students which shows the effectiveness of this program. It was also noticed that the positive effect diminished over a period of 3 months, which shows the need for such short courses at regular intervals (WHITLEY-HUNTER, 2014).

In another study conducted in Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church Medical College in Kerala, a faculty development program was conducted by a Foundation for Advancement in International Medical Education and Research fellow based on TA principles. A 12-hour course was conducted with focus on intrapersonal and interpersonal processes. An assessment of participant's self-awareness was conducted at immediately after the program, at 3 months and after 1 year of the training. There was a mean improvement in the self-awareness

immediately after the session which improved steadily over the year as shown by the assessments at 3 months and 1 year (Rajan & Chacko, 2012).

Transactional analysis has wide reaching practical application today form marital, individual and group psychotherapy to counseling, organizational development, education etc (Berne, 2011). Transactional analysis use colloquial language and is easily understood by both the therapist and the client. This makes clear what needs to be changed for both the therapist and the client equally as they both use the same language (Pitman, 1982). Transactional analysis helps both in self-improvement as well as the improvement of the client. There are some limitations to this therapeutic tool also with the longer duration of therapy and the lack of trained professionals being the main issues.

CONCLUSION

Mental health professionals need to undergo Transactional Analysis workshops in order to bring about positive and impactful results in its clinical applications, which would go a long way in effective treatments of patients. Transactional Analysis with proper training can have a wide range of clinical applications in various psychotherapeutic settings. Hence conducting awareness programs as well as training programs about TA by trained professionals for its proper utilization as a psychotherapeutic tool is needed to widen the range of therapeutic interventions

REFERENCES

- Berne, E. (2011). *Games People Play: The Basic Handbook of Transactional Analysis*.
Berne, E. (n.d.). PRINCIPLES OF TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS, 8.
Clayton, S. H., & Dunbar, R. L. M. (1977). Transactional analysis in an alcohol safety program. *Social Work*, 22(3), 209–213. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/22.3.209>
Ertem, M. Y., & Eker, F. (2016). Therapeutic Approach in Psychiatric Nursing: Transactional Analysis. *Annals of Clinical and Laboratory Research*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.21767/2386-5180.100056>
Etemadi-Chardah, N., Matinpour, B., & Heshmati, R. (n.d.). Effectiveness of Transactional Analysis Group Therapy on Addiction Intensity of Woman Patients Treated with Methadone, 9(3), 10.
Forghani, M., & Ghanbari Hashem Abadi, B. A. (2016). The Effect of Group Therapy With Transactional Analysis Approach on Emotional Intelligence, Executive Functions and Drug Dependency. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.17795/ijpbs-2423>
Johnsson, R. (2011). *Transactional Analysis Psychotherapy - Three Methods Describing a Transactional Analysis Group Therapy*. Department of Psychology, Lund University. Retrieved from <http://lup.lub.lu.se/record/2175324>
Murakami, M., Matsuno, T., Koike, K., Ebana, S., Hanaoka, K., & Katsura, T. (2006). Transactional analysis and health promotion. *International Congress Series*, 1287, 164–167. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ics.2005.12.055>
Pitman, E. (1982). Transactional Analysis: an Introduction to its Theory and Practice. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 12(1), 47–63. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.bjsw.a054773>
Rajan, M., & Chacko, T. (2012). Improving educational environment in medical colleges through transactional analysis practice of teachers. *F1000 Research*, 1. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.1-24.v1>

Knowledge And Attitude Of Mental Health Professionals Towards Transactional Analysis

WHITLEY-HUNTER, B. L. (2014). Validity of transactional analysis and emotional intelligence in training nursing students. *Journal of Advances in Medical Education & Professionalism*, 2(4), 138–145.

Acknowledgements

The author(s) profoundly appreciate all the people who have successfully contributed in ensuring this paper in place. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be mentioned.

Conflict of Interest

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

How to cite this article: Akhilesh M, A Kakunje & H Abdulla (2019). Knowledge And Attitude Of Mental Health Professionals Towards Transactional Analysis. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(1), 947-953. DIP:18.01.107/20190701, DOI:10.25215/0701.107