



Perfectionism as a Predictor of Clinical Interviewing Skills in Psychology Graduate Students

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Introduction

- Psychology trainees report feelings of incompetence and apprehension over their abilities in their first therapeutic encounter (Williams, Judge, Hill, & Hoffman, 1997)
- 83.2% of trainees with less than 1.5 years of counseling experience reported pervasive feelings of inability (Orlinsky et al., 1999)

Introduction

- Low self-efficacy is related to adverse clinical outcomes, including alliance rupture, client disengagement, and premature termination
- Feelings of incompetence also lead to adverse outcomes for the therapist: stress, burnout, and exit from the profession

(Theriault & Gazzola, 2010; Theriault, Gazzola, & Richardson, 2009)



Imposter Phenomenon

- Beginning trainees worry that clients will recognize their lack of experience. They personalize negative therapeutic encounters as incompetence, leading them to feel as if they are frauds (Bischoff & Barton, 2002)
- Imposter Phenomenon (IP): an “internal experience of intellectual phoniness” (Matthews & Clance, 1985) in individuals who are successful but are unable to internalize their success (Bernard, Dollinger, & Ramaniah, 2002; Clance & Imes, 1978).

Imposter Phenomenon



Imposter Phenomenon Characteristics (Clance, 1985):

- “Superwoman/superman” aspects

Extreme focus on perfectionism, thus increasing the risk for burnout (Cowman & Ferrari, 2002; De Vries, 2005; Kumar & Jagacinski, 2006)



Perfectionism


Trait Perfectionism:

- Reflect the need to BE perfect
- Self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially-prescribed

(Hewitt, Flett, Turnbull-Donovan, & Mikail, 1991; Hewitt & Flett, 1991)



Socially- Prescribed Perfectionism (SPP)

- Most consistently associated with maladjustment (Besser, Flett, & Hewitt, 2010)
 - Extraversion and SPP (Holden, 2019; Gladding, 2018; John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008; Hill, McIntire, & Bacharach, 1997; John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991)
 - SPP predisposes people to cognitions of falling short of other people's expectations (Smith et al., 2018)
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2020 Study



Method



Purpose:

- Determine if and how socially-prescribed perfectionism influences clinical psychology trainees acquisition of clinical interviewing skills

Participants:

- 98 first-year clinical psychology doctoral students enrolled in an introductory skills lab course






Measures

Skills in Psychological Interviewing: Clinical Evaluation Scales (SPICES) (Ketterer, 2014)-
Measures a clinician's understanding of and effectiveness in clinical interviewing

Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS)
- **Socially-Prescribed Domain** (Hewitt & Flett, 1991)





Laboratory Session	Experimental Process
Pre-Test	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Interview with standardized patient (SP) (Depression)- Assessments: MPS, SPICES
Session 1 & 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Suicide Assessment Didactic- Interaction w/ SP (Social Anxiety)- Feedback from group facilitator, peers (SPICES)
Session 3 & 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Suicide Assessment Didactic- Interaction w/ SP (Bipolar Disorder)- Feedback from group facilitator, peers (SPICES)



Laboratory Session	Experimental Process
Session 5 & 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Suicide Assessment Didactic- Interaction w/ SP (Abuse)- Feedback from group facilitator, peers (SPICES)
Session 7 & 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Suicide Assessment Didactic- Interaction w/ SP (PTSD)- Feedback from group facilitator, peers (SPICES)
Post-Test	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Interview with SP (Depression)- Assessments: MPS, SPICES

Results



SPP Pre-Test to Post-Test:

- M (Pre) = 43.83
- M (Post) = 43.81
- $p = 0.985$

SPICES Pre-Test to Post-Test:

- M (Pre) = 80.72
- M (Post) = 93.10
- $p < 0.001$

SPICES correlation with SPP:

- $r = -0.208$
- $p = 0.04$

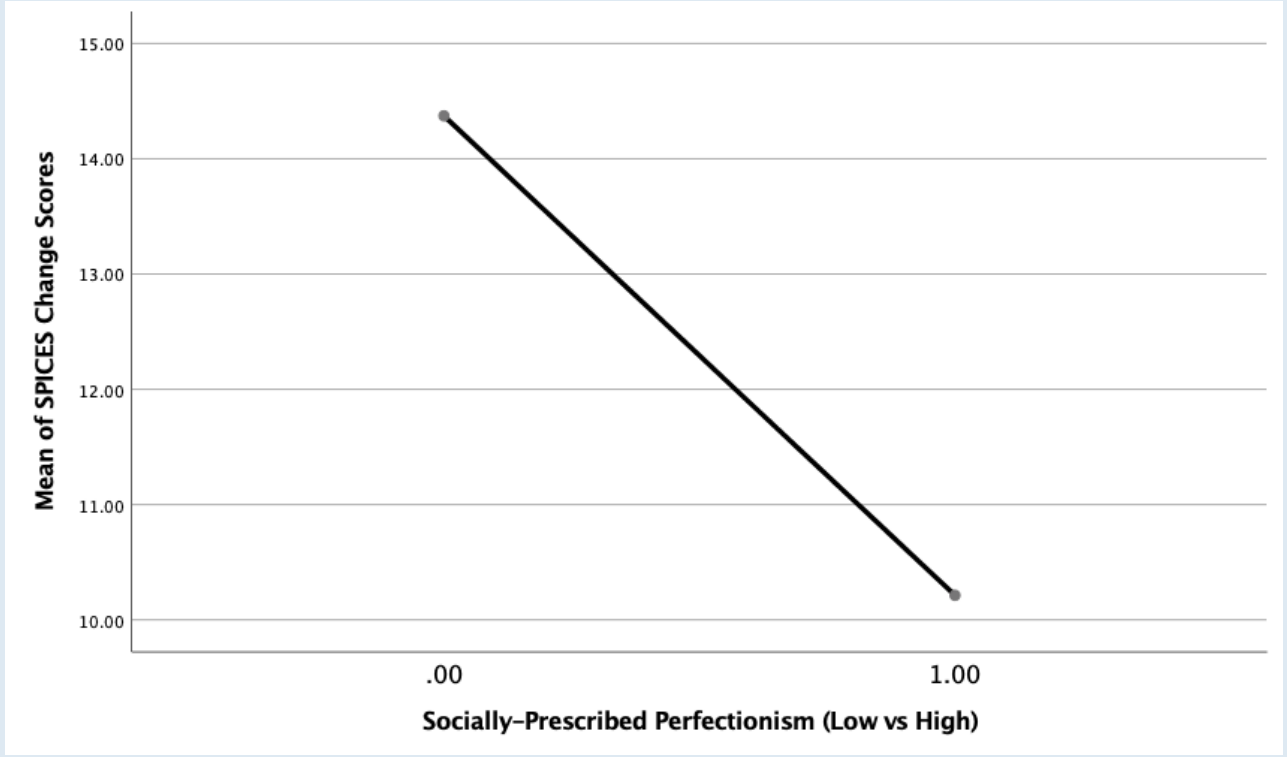
Perfectionism as a Predictor:

- $p = 0.04$

SPICES Change Scores analyzed with SPP scores:

- $p = 0.033$








Conclusions

Results support Socially-Prescribed Perfectionism as a trait.

Socially-Prescribed Perfectionism is negatively correlated with clinical interviewing skills.

Individuals higher on Socially-Prescribed Perfectionism were significantly impacted in their acquisition of clinical interviewing abilities.

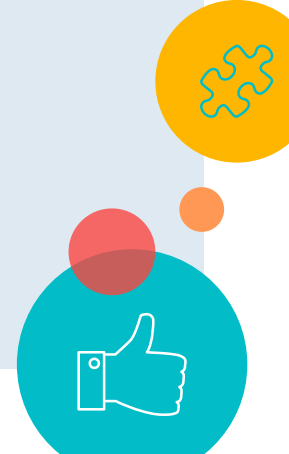




Future Directions

Psychology trainees are likely to bring perfectionistic tendencies with them when they begin practicum.

This study allows us the opportunity to identify these individuals and implement targeted strategies, either in the course or through supervision, to allow these psychology trainees to be more effective therapists.






Any questions?


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