

Creative Approaches in Counseling Asian Americans

Austin Finney, MA Student

Mentor: Dr. Debolina Ghosh

Indiana University - Purdue University Columbus

Introduction

There are currently 20.6 million individuals who identify as Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander residing in the United States according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020). However, only 4.9% of those who identify as Asian American reported actively utilizing mental health services (SAMHSA, 2012).

Potential Causes:

- Barriers include lack of financial resources, stigma associated with mental health care, language barriers, and lack of culturally competent care (Nguyen, 2014).
- There remains a notable dearth of information regarding culturally competent care for Asian American clients who do seek mental health services (Okazaki, 2014).

Goals for Study:

1. Identify counseling methods that provide the most culturally competent services to Asian Americans
2. Determine creative approaches* used by mental health professionals when working with Asian American clients

* Creative approaches include counseling techniques such as sand tray therapy, art therapy, clay therapy, and other expressive therapeutic approaches

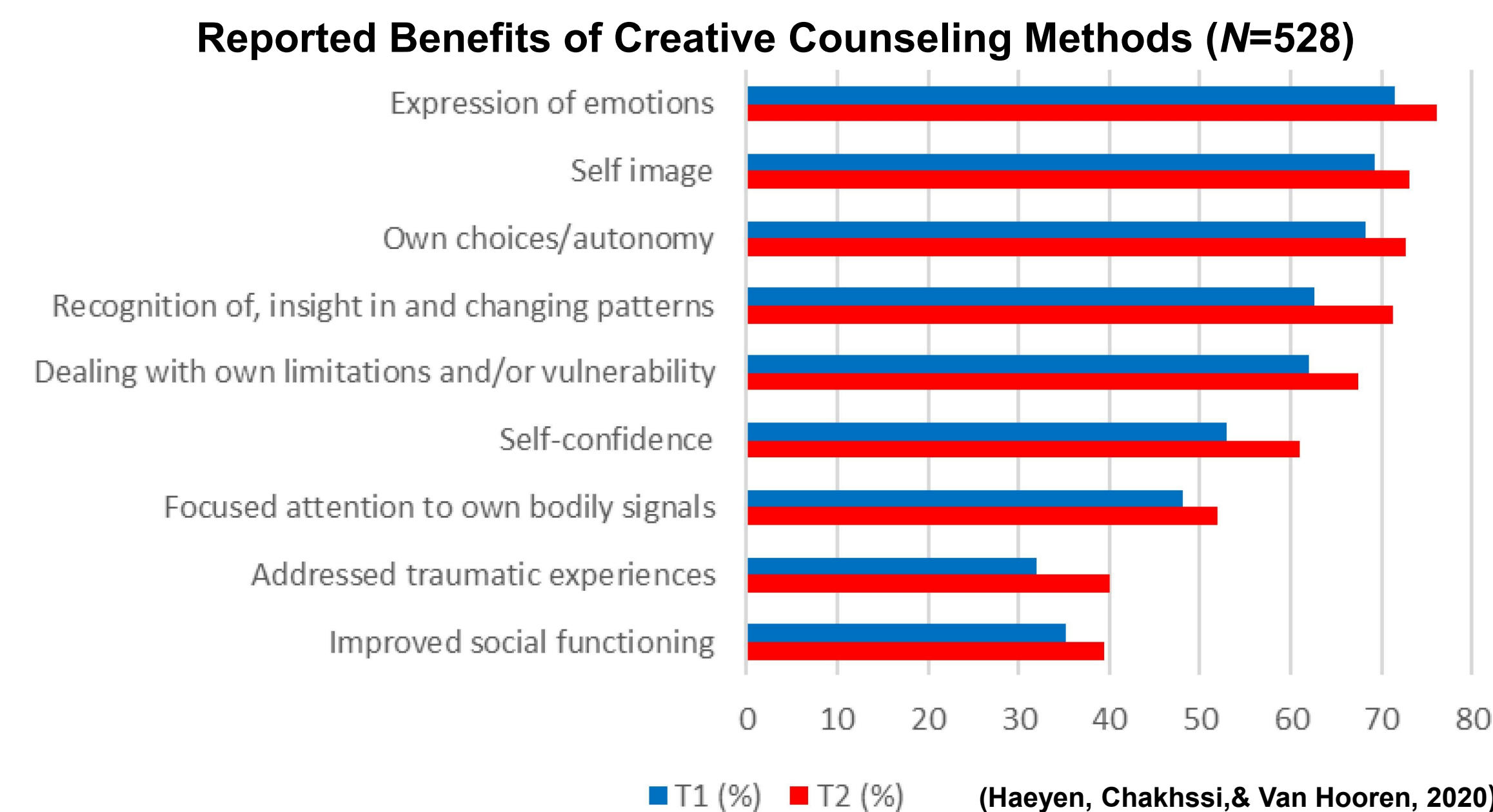
TABLE 1. Treatment, need, and sociodemographic characteristics among white and Asian respondents to the 2012–2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Variable	Whites (N=108,404)		Asians (N=8,121)		p
	N	%	N	%	
Received any mental health treatment in the past year	20,630	19.0	468	5.8	<.001
Perceived need in past year	24,648	22.7	661	8.1	<.001
SPD in past year ^a	17,524	16.2	907	11.2	<.001
MDE in past year ^b	10,494	9.7	451	5.6	<.001
Age					
18–25	40,470	37.3	3,262	40.2	<.001
26–34	21,471	19.8	1,904	23.5	
35–49	30,163	27.8	2,241	27.6	
50–64	16,300	15.0	714	8.8	
Sex					<.005
Male	50,852	46.9	3,881	47.8	
Female	57,552	53.1	4,240	52.2	
Overall health					<.001
Excellent	26,724	24.7	2,420	29.8	
Very good	45,152	41.7	3,273	40.3	
Good	27,246	25.1	2,002	24.7	
Fair to poor	9,282	8.6	426	5.3	

(Nguyen, 2014)

Methods

- Interviews with licensed mental health professionals currently working in the field
- Interviews will be 30 minutes via Zoom consisting of predetermined questions in a semi-structured interview format
- Questions include interviewee's experiences counseling Asian American clients, using creative counseling methods, and perceived results in utilizing creative counseling methods in a multicultural context
- Qualitative data will be gathered by categorizing each response based on counseling technique utilized and the effectiveness of each intervention



Result Hypothesis

- Using creative techniques can facilitate communication between the client and counselor (Capuzzi & Gross, 2013).
- The therapeutic relationship accounts for roughly 60% of growth in a counseling setting (Tishby & Wiseman, 2018).
- Poor communication may present a significant barrier for some Asian Americans when seeking counseling (Nguyen, 2014).
- Utilizing creative approaches such as sand tray therapy and other expressive art forms may lower barriers to communication and strengthen the therapeutic relationship

Discussion

- Data will add useful information to the fields of both multicultural counseling and creativity counseling
- Results will increase the limited literature regarding counseling Asian American clients
- Findings may reduce barriers to effective counseling for Asian Americans and thus aid in addressing the disparity in mental health utilization by this population
- Future research may identify differences in effectiveness of creative approaches to counseling used among groups within the Asian American community
- Understanding the differences and similarities among groups within the Asian American population may help further clarify best practice in counseling methods

References

- Capuzzi, D., & Gross, D. R. (2013). *Introduction to the counseling profession (6th ed.)*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Haeyen, S., Chakhssi, F., & Van Hooren, S. (2020). Benefits of art therapy in people diagnosed with personality disorders: A quantitative study. *Frontiers Psychology, 11*.
- Lee, M., Bhimla, A., Lu, W., & Ma, G. X. (2021). Correlates of mental health treatment receipt among Asian Americans with perceived mental health problems. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research, 48*(2), 199–212.
- Nguyen, D., Bornheimer. (2014). Mental health service use types among Asian Americans with a psychiatric disorder: considerations of culture and need. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research, 41*(4), 520-528.
- Okazaki S., Kassem. (2014). Addressing Asian American mental health disparities: putting community-based research principles to work. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 5*(1), 4-12.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2012). Racial/Ethnic differences in past year mental health service use among adults. *National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 11-20*.
- Tishby, O., & Wiseman, H. (2018). *Developing the Therapeutic Relationship: Integrating Case Studies, Research, and Practice* (Eds.) APA.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). 2020 Census Redistricting Data. <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/data/redistricting-supplementary-tables/redistricting-supplementary-table-02.pdf>