



The Path To Lifelong Competence & Expertise For A Psychotherapist Begins With Lifelong Learning And Continuing Education?

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to investigate cognitive & behavioral psychotherapists' experience of the impact of lifelong learning on professional development during training, focusing on the acquisition of knowledge and the development of psychotherapeutic skills. Experienced cognitive and behavioral psychotherapists working in training institutions for psychotherapists were selected (N=5 & N=5 respectively) and content & narrative analysis was conducted on interviews with them. The results indicated that curiosity and awareness of lifelong learning was experienced as having a positive impact on learning and the development of professional skills by facilitating the development of theory- and knowledge-based professional subjectivity, a personally grounded, professional attitude. Important elements of this development are "shared experience," "personal influence," and "knowledge integration." Curiosity and awareness of lifelong learning proved to be an important factor in terms of professional advancement for future psychotherapists. It was important for psychotherapists working in clinical work to discover and relate to their own competencies in the process of developing a personally grounded, professional attitude. Learning never stops for mental health professionals. Laws and practices change over time, so therapists need to keep learning to give the best care. Getting a specialization is only the beginning. Mental health professionals must continually update their skills and knowledge to access better opportunities and remain relevant in their field. Ongoing education ensures that therapists can provide the best care for their clients, using the latest tools and techniques.

Keywords: Psychotherapist, Lifelong Learning, Professional attitude.

Lifelong education means continuous development of knowledge and skills. On this path, it is necessary for a person to keep taking his knowledge and skills towards continuous development so that even after our formal education, we can take our skills, our experience, our knowledge towards perfection, there is no place for stagnation in this. The need for knowledge is felt throughout life, no matter in which area a person is working. Lifelong education is a form of elementary education that focuses on personal development. Although there is no standardized definition of lifelong education, it is generally used to refer to education that takes place outside a formal educational institution such as school, university, hospital, training institute. Through this, a person voluntarily acquires knowledge in the best way with the aim of achieving his personal fulfillment and uses that knowledge for social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development and treatment of others. This also builds competitiveness and employability, as well as plays an important role in your own professional development so that you can do the best.

Generally, the process of making an unhealthy person healthy again with the help of techniques like drugs, surgery etc. is called treatment or therapy. Treating mentally ill and emotionally disturbed people with

psychological methods is called psychotherapy. It is also called clinical intervention because in this, the clinical psychologist tries to influence the behavior of a mentally or emotionally disturbed person using his professional capacity. Generally, the use of psychotherapy is beneficial for those mental patients who suffer from psychoneurosis. It is also used with other types of mental patients such as patients of psychosis or schizophrenia, but it is mandatory to give medical therapy to such patients in addition to psychotherapy.

Some important definitions of psychotherapy are given as follows:

"Psychotherapy is a form of treatment for problems of an emotional nature in which a trained person deliberately establishes a professional relationship with a patient with the object of removing, modifying a retarding existing symptom of mediating disturbed patterns of behaviour and of promoting positive personality growth and development."

-Wolberg: The Techniques of Psychotherapy, 1967, p. 3

"Psychotherapy...is planned activity of the psychologists, the purpose of which is to accomplish changes in the individual that make his life adjustment potentially happier, more constructive or both."

-Rotter: Clinical Psychology, 1971, p. 79

According to Nietzel, Bernstein & Milich (1991), **"Psychotherapy involves at least two participants, one of whom has special training and expertise in dealing with psychological problems and one of whom experiences adjustment problems and both of them have established a special relationship to reduce the problem. The psychotherapeutic relationship is a nurturing but purposeful relationship in which many methods of psychological nature are used to bring about disrupted changes in the client."**

From the analysis of these definitions, it is clear that in psychotherapy, there is a conversation between the patient and the therapist through which the patient expresses his emotional problems and mental worries and the therapist establishes self-confidence and self-respect in the patient by giving special sympathy, suggestions and advice, due to which the patient's problems gradually end and the ability to adjust properly is re-developed in him.

Behaviour therapy is a term that is very popular in clinical psychology. The term 'behaviour therapy' was first used in a paper published in 1953 by Lindsley, Skinner and Solomon. Although it was not used by these psychologists later, another famous psychologist, Eysenck, continued to use it. It is now widely used in clinical psychology.

The term 'behaviour modification' is sometimes used in place of 'behaviour therapy'. Although the two terms are used interchangeably, some psychologists make a distinction between the two. Psychologists who consider the principles or rules given by Skinner as the basis of behaviour therapy use the term 'behaviour modification' whereas psychologists who consider social learning and/or cognitive learning as the basis of such therapy use the term behaviour therapy more. But the above difference between these two terms does not create any complex problem and people often use these two terms interchangeably.

Now the question arises that what is behaviour therapy? Behaviour therapy is a technique of psychiatry in which mental diseases are treated with some methods which are based on the major principles and rules in the field of conditioning, especially by Pavlov and Skinner and in the field of cognitive learning. Wolpe (1969), who is a well-known supporter of behaviour therapy, has defined behaviour therapy as, "It is the use of experimentally established learning rules with a view to changing maladaptive behaviour. Maladaptive habits are weakened and discarded: adaptive habits are initiated and strengthened."

It is clear from the above definition that in behaviour therapy, an attempt is made to strengthen adaptive behaviour instead of maladaptive behaviour so that the person behaves normally properly.

In behaviour therapy, the following two assumptions are made about a maladapted person:

(i) A maladapted person is a person who, for some reason, has not been able to develop or learn sufficient capacity to deal with life's problems.

(ii) Such a person learns some faulty adjustment patterns which are automatically maintained by being reinforced from some source or the other.

Today's situation is that behaviour therapy has become an important treatment method for clinical psychotherapist all over the world. There are dozens of professional journals in this field which emphasize on behavioral approaches in the field of clinical psychology. Prominent among these journals are Behaviour Therapy, Behaviour Modification, Cognitive Therapy and Research, Journal of Behaviour Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry. Therapists gain a lot of knowledge from these. If they read them regularly and contribute to their research, then believe me, you are moving ahead on the path of learning.

In behaviour therapy, an attempt is made to eliminate maladjusted behaviour and teach adjusted behaviour by establishing a relationship between the person's observable behaviour and observable reinforcement. In behaviour therapy, no statement is made on the patient's internal events such as his image perception,

evaluation and self-statements etc. In other words, in behaviour therapy, therapists ignore the patient's cognitive processes. In cognitive behaviour therapy, which is also called cognitive therapy in short, the treatment is done keeping in mind these cognitive processes of the patient, which has proved to be comparatively more beneficial. Thus, while defining cognitive behaviour therapy, it can be said that it is such a behaviour therapy in which cognition or thinking is considered to be the cause of mental illness and cognitive restructuring of the patient is done by adopting different techniques so that the patient is able to succeed in adaptive behaviour by abandoning wrong thinking and belief and developing appropriate thinking and belief in its place.

In the words of Nietzel, Bernstein & Milich (1991), cognitive therapy is defined as, "Cognitive therapy is defined as a treatment approach that tries to change the maladaptive behaviour of the patient by affecting his cognition (beliefs, schemas, self-statements and problem-solving measures). On analyzing the definition, we get the following facts about the nature of cognitive behaviour therapy-

(i) In cognitive behaviour therapy, wrong cognition or thinking is considered to be the cause of pathological behaviour.

(ii) In this therapy, an attempt is made to remove this wrong cognition or thinking of the patient and develop correct cognition or thinking in its place. This process is called cognitive restructuring.

Thus, the purpose of the present research paper was to explore the perceptions of lifelong education among psychotherapists. Data were collected using interview schedule. There were 05 Cognitive Psychotherapist and 05 behavioral Psychotherapist. Their age range varied from 28 years to 52 years. Ex-post facto research with exploratory orientation was used. Purposive sampling was used to collect the data.

The study participants were 10 cognitive and behaviour oriented licensed psychotherapists, five in cognitive psychotherapist. All of them were involved in psychotherapeutic work in public and/or private care, and all of them were involved in 'lifelong learning' as a mandatory element in their psychotherapeutic training. All of them were continuing work in cognitive psychotherapy and five in behavioral psychotherapy with a psychotherapist of their choice. In order to allow respondents to have a certain view of lifelong learning as well as to retain relatively recent memories of their personal treatment, therapists were selected who had been active in such work for more than 5 years.

Lifelong learning plays an important role in the lives of people working in the field of diagnosis. As a Psychotherapist progresses by adopting practical and experimental methods, his knowledge reflects unprecedented progress. Therefore, it is very important for Psychotherapist to upgrade their acquired knowledge and continuously improve it. In this research, work has been done keeping in mind the dimensions of the professional life of Psychotherapist. For lifelong learning, it is important what kind of role your personality plays in it. In lifelong learning, the intellectual ability of Psychotherapist, their attitude, their perception, their interest all play an important role. Through this research, an attempt has been made to know in depth about the thinking of Psychotherapist, how do they think about the method of lifelong learning?

Empirical data was collected through semi-structured interviews. All psychotherapists were interviewed based on predefined issues and open-ended questions, followed by additional questions. The questions were thematically related to the topic of the study and formed the basis for subsequent data processing using thematic analysis (Miles and Huberman, cit. 1994). The interviews were transcribed and meaning-bearing units were identified and coded. Related codes were grouped into subcategories, which in turn were grouped into three categories. Data processing eventually resulted in an overall theme. The interviews were recorded after taking participant's prior consent. The language of the schedule was English. There were 10 questions to understand the perceptions of psychotherapists towards lifelong education. The responses were recorded in verbatim for maintain proper narratives.

With reference to results, each question is being discussed in detail about the various responses given by the interviewee.

Result:

The analysis of the data shows that Life Long Learning favors the learning and emergence of psychotherapeutic skills among the respondents at the overall level, which can be summarized in the theme of the development of Life Long Learning. To get a deeper understanding in this study, 08 open-ended questions were asked to the respondents and whatever they answered along with their experience was noted as it is and then presented in the table next to the results in narrative form, following the procedure of categories and coding. The results will be reported in the form of narratives, with shades reflecting personal experiences.

Theme: 1-Semantics of Lifelong Learning

Categories	Cognitive Psychotherapist (5)	Behavioral Psychotherapist (5)
Maintain previous knowledge	10%	30%
Upgrade previous knowledge	20%	10%
Mastering comprehensive Understanding	20%	50%
Continuous engagement in learning for betterment	50%	10%

Table: 1-Semantics of Lifelong Learning

Table no.1, To know what cognitive and behavioral psychologists understand by lifelong learning? What do they think is meant by lifelong learning? On the basis of data, the content analysis of the obtained responses brought forth sparsely distributed four response categories as mentioned in Table no. 1., out of which cognitive psychotherapist responded in majority as giving **continuous engagement in learning for betterment and improvement**, on the other hand behavioral psychotherapist predominantly responded on **mastery in comprehensive understanding**.

Narrative Of Cognitive Psychotherapist- “To improve, continuous engagement in learning is necessary, this is the true meaning of continuous learning. Staying engaged in continuous learning, forcing yourself to learn at every moment is the main element of continuous learning”

Narrative Of Behavioral Psychotherapist- “Lifelong learning means to gain a comprehensive understanding of what you have learned so that you can provide professional satisfaction to yourself and also provide good treatment to those receiving treatment”

Theme: 2--Frequency of updating Ourselves.

Categories	Cognitive Psychotherapist (5)	Behavioral Psychotherapist (5)
Everyday / Every moment	70%	20%
Whenever free	10%	40%
Occasionally	10%	20%
Sometimes	10%	20%

Table: 2-Semantics of Lifelong Learning

The content analysis of the obtained responses brought forth was distributed across four response categories. **Table No.2,** highlights the most dominant response categories. As is evident from the **Table no. 2** that Cognitive Psychotherapist reported that they update ourselves in every moment or every day. On the other hand, 40% Behavioral psychotherapist reported Whenever they are free, tries to update himself.

Narrative Of Cognitive Psychotherapist- “As a cognitive psychotherapist, we have to take care of every technique so that the clients can get better results. For this, continuous learning is necessary, without learning you cannot get the best results. The key to success is consistency - learning every day, trying every day, achieving small victories every day. Those who practice continuously, perform consistently, are also victorious and as a psychotherapist, our victory lies in our clients being able to find themselves free from any type of diseases.”

Narrative Of Behavioral Psychotherapist- “The techniques that behavioral psychotherapists use to treat their clients need constant practice, so they keep practicing the techniques they have already learned to put them to good use. Because of this, they don't get much time to learn something new. It is better to master what you have learned than to learn something half-heartedly. But it is not that we don't want our own professional development, we can do it whenever we get time.”

Theme 3- Biggest requirement of this lifelong learning and continuing education

Categories	Cognitive Psychotherapist (5)	Behavioral Psychotherapist (5)
Grow the requisite knowledge and skills	10%	20%
Ongoing Professional development	20%	50%
Personal Development	10%	20%
Holistic Development	60%	10%

Table: 3- Biggest requirement of this lifelong learning and continuing education

When we asked them why lifelong learning and continuing education is important, what is its need in your personal life and your professional career? When we collected and analyzed the data obtained, the data was distributed in four response categories, which is shown in **Table No. 3**, we found that cognitive psychotherapists emphasized all-round/holistic development, while on the other hand, behavioral

psychotherapists considered lifelong learning and continuing professional development as the main need.

Narrative Of Cognitive Psychotherapist- “In order to develop our personality and all the dimensions related to us completely, it is necessary that we remain connected with body, mind and wealth by continuous learning. Our overall development is possible only when we learn every moment. According to me, every second, every minute, every hour, every moment teaches you something and when you teach completely and get involved, then you are able to see yourself in a form which is complete in itself. Being a Psychotherapist, I have to learn throughout my life for my all-round development as well as holistic. I always feel the need to learn. Today's new generation children are digitally far ahead of us and they learn new techniques very easily, so I also do not want to keep myself behind anywhere. I want that there should be no lack in me professionally so that I can give 100% to my clients too.”

Narrative Of Behavioral Psychotherapist- “If we want our professional development, if we want to be able to do well professionally, provide good services to people, give them good treatment, give them satisfaction, then it is necessary that we make lifelong learning and continuous education the basis of our life, without this we cannot develop professionally. We cannot establish ourselves, you will be able to include yourself in the chain of professional development only when you fully adopt lifelong learning and make continuity the basis, so according to me the biggest need today is lifelong learning and continuous education, which play the main role in our ongoing professional development.”

Theme: 4- Negative consequences occurred without lifelong learning and continuing education

Categories	Cognitive Psychotherapist (5)	Behavioral Psychotherapist (5)
Inadequate knowledge	20%	10%
Less expertise	60%	20%
Hopelessness	10%	10%
Worthlessness	10%	60%

Table: 4- Negative consequences occurred without lifelong learning and continuing education

To know what adverse consequences there could be if there is no continuing education and lifelong learning, data was collected from psychotherapists and Content analysis of the data reveals four broad categories showed in **Table no. 4.** and it was found that cognitive psychotherapists voted in majority for lack of expertise whereas behavioral psychotherapists voted in majority for worthlessness.

Narrative Of Cognitive Psychotherapist- “You keep trying to solve a problem, but because you don't know enough about it, you take a long time to solve it.....You use too many resources and the output is low. When you calculate or think about the path to excellence, everything seems blurry.....Work will feel like a burden rather than something to enjoy. Knowledge and skill acquisition is lacking Without regular study and learning, one's knowledge and skills stagnate or diminish over time. This can limit career and personal growth opportunities. Psychotherapists who do not study consistently perform poorly in sessions. This can negatively affect future prospects. Consistent study gives one the opportunity to gain new perspectives, discover interests, and develop critical thinking abilities. Skipping study means losing these valuable learning experiences. In academic and professional settings, people who learn widely often have an advantage over those who do not. Even a lack of learning can make a person less competitive than his or her peers.”

Narrative Of Behavioral Psychotherapist- “No one will value a psychotherapist who is not familiar with new techniques, in today's time clients feel connected to a therapist who keeps himself updated. There is no other option of development except continuous learning. Only you can establish yourself under continuous learning. But you should have knowledge of all the tricks of your profession, without this you find yourself worthless. If you are a psychotherapist then your life is completely meaningless without learning.....So we have to work hard so that we can transform our life into a respectable dimension... It is difficult to keep up with the progress but you have to keep in mind that you are constantly evolving. Failing to keep up with new developments through regular study makes it challenging to remain current and relevant. Lack of problem-solving and analytical skills can create a feeling of worthlessness in you. The mental exercise involved in studying helps to train and strengthen cognitive abilities like analysis, synthesis and problem-solving which is possible through learning. Neglecting learning can lead to a decline in these important skills.”

Theme No:5, Challenges Faced by Therapists Pursuing Continuing Education

Categories	Cognitive Psychotherapist (5)	Behavioral Psychotherapist (5)
Time management	40%	70%
Motivation	-	10%
Anxiety	-	10%
Unacceptable attitude: Back to the Learning Bench	60%	10%

Table: 5, Challenges Faced by Therapists Pursuing Continuing Education

To know what kind of challenges therapists face during lifelong learning and continuing education, after content analysis of the received data, we derived four broad categories which are displayed in **Table No. 5**, out of which 70% of cognitive psychiatrists have given majority to Unacceptable attitude: Back to the Learning Bench and 70% of behavioral psychiatrists have said that time management is the main challenge to them.

Narrative Of Cognitive Psychotherapist- Even today, society and our thinking influence our approach to learning. When an adult learner is fully established, he finds himself more resistant to change. His thinking, his experiences and even his way of working influence lifelong learning and he develops a reluctance to accept new ideas, which takes learning away from him. The reality is that age and experience have both positive and negative effects on learning - adults find themselves learning less quickly as they age. However, I have often found that if they move in this direction, the depth of learning and the ability to take knowledge and skills to an exceptional personal level increase. Adult learners recognize the direct relevance of learning to their lives and are better at learning material oriented toward solving problems; and practical knowledge that will improve skills, make work easier and increase confidence. In addition, the brain gets better at learning, so the speed of learning increases with practice.

Narrative Of Behavioral Psychotherapist- I and many behavioral psychotherapists like me have many responsibilities. Not only do we have family responsibilities, we also have professional responsibilities that matter a lot to us. We are both fully committed to our responsibilities, so finding time for lifelong learning is a tough task in itself. More important than lifelong learning is the proper use of what we have learned. Lifelong learning can only happen if you have time, it is very important to prioritize time. We need efficiency and flexibility, which is possible only when we can repeat what we have already learned. So, we use distance learning to learn, but that too is missed due to lack of time. We understand that personal obligations can hinder the learning process.”

“As a psychotherapist I want to keep myself involved in lifelong learning, but there are some problems that I face, one of the biggest challenges is time management. Therapy sessions are so important that it is not easy to manage time in them.... Along with the session being very long, the goals that are set with the client are also very long, the structure of the environment is also such that it takes time. Along with all this, if we plan to go out and learn something, then the biggest problem we face is time management, however despite this, since I have associated myself with lifelong learning, I have learned how I can enhance the therapeutic process, reduce stress and make the client and myself feel better about life by prioritizing session planning, setting clear goals, allocating enough time, minimizing distractions and creating a focused environment.”

Theme No:6, Perfect Roadmap for Continuing Education in Professional development as Psychotherapist

Categories	Cognitive Psychotherapist (5)	Behavioral Psychotherapist (5)
Attending Professional Events viz	10%	10%
Using Practical approach	10%	30%
Focused learning towards Psychotherapy techniques	70%	10%
Association with Expert therapist for learning viewpoint	10%	50%

Table: 6, perfect Roadmap for Continuing Education in Professional development as Psychotherapist

When data was collected on what is the perfect road map of continuing education in your professional development, after content analysis we found four broad categories which showed in **Table no. 6**. In which 70% of cognitive psychotherapists added Focused learning towards Psychotherapy techniques while on the other hand 50% of behavioral psychotherapists added Association with Expert therapist for learning viewpoint.

Narrative Of Cognitive Psychotherapist- “An ideal roadmap for professional development is that as a cognitive behaviour therapist we should focus deeply on the techniques used in our psychotherapy. Understand and implement them and our implementation and implementation process should be such that it gives maximum effective results. For this we should also pay attention to the activities going on around us – we should pay attention to whatever seminars and conferences are taking place but one thing to be noted here is that we should not participate in anything just to attend it, it is very important for us to be focused and keep in mind the need for our professional development. We should focus on that and we should know and understand only those things which make us professionally strong.”

Narrative Of Behavioral Psychotherapist- “As a practicing psychologist, I believe that the path of professional development is through your own mentor or expert therapist. If you want to develop yourself professionally, establish yourself, strengthen yourself, then you should learn from your senior, from an expert, from your mentor. You should respect their experience. You should have faith that what they are telling you is very important which can be used in our future sessions, and we will not find this knowledge written in any book.”

Theme No.:7, Public Expectations for Competence as psychotherapist

Categories	Cognitive Psychotherapist (5)	Behavioral Psychotherapist (5)
Yes	80%	60%
No	20%	20%
Don't know	-	20%

Table: 7- Public Expectations for Competence as psychotherapist

As a psychotherapist, do you meet the expectations of your clients? When we collected data on this and did a content analysis, we got data in three categories which are shown in **Table No. 7**. A majority of 80% cognitive psychotherapists and 60% behavioral psychotherapists answered yes, according to them they fully meet the expectations of their clients.

Narrative Of Cognitive Psychotherapist- “Yes, I live up to my clients' expectations. I am available to them as a therapist should be to his clients. I am knowledgeable, understandable and emotionally available to them, whether it is their first session or the last. I understand their disappointments and motivate them to move forward. I do not impose my expectations on them. I work more at an in-depth level than at a surface level, which is why I reach the client's expectations in some time.”

Narrative Of Behavioral Psychotherapist- “Yes, if a behaviour therapist has to face any difficulty, then that difficulty is time. Our sessions take a little more time but the clients in front understand this and so do we. It will take a little more time but we will achieve our goal, so we have to make more effort to reach the expectations of the client but when the clients take the last session from here and find a change in their behaviour, they are completely satisfied with us and they understand that this therapy is time consuming but at the same time it gives good results.”

Theme No.:8, Will to meaning as Psychotherapist

Categories	Cognitive Psychotherapist (5)	Behavioral Psychotherapist (5)
Established ourselves as Expert Psychotherapist	20%	10%
Provide Best treatment services to clients		
Gain Clients Belief	30%	60%
Handle own Personal as well as Professional issues quickly through development	10%	20%
	40%	10%

Table: 8- will to meaning as psychotherapist

What is your wish as a psychotherapist? When we tried to explore this and collected data on it, after content analysis we got data in four broad categories which is shown in **Table No. 8** in which majority 60% of behavioral psychotherapists said provide best treatment services to clients and 40% of cognitive psychotherapists said handle own personal as well as professional issues quickly through development.

Narrative Of Cognitive Psychotherapist- “If I talk about will to meaning, there are many such wishes which I still want to fulfill but professionally I want to provide the best service to my clients and give them back the peace which they have not got for years. I want to end their journey of suffering, bring a change in their thinking, show them a new version of themselves. I really care for them and expect their happiness and well-being. My clients are not numbers for me, they are humans with whom I have established a therapeutic relationship. It is true that these are different from our personal relationships but they are relationships, which I want to maintain wholeheartedly and this can happen only when I can understand everything well professionally. Can learn. Can remember everything. Can learn every small and big aspect. Can achieve the goals that have been set during therapy. I believe that every person deserves healing and happiness.”

Narrative Of Behavioral Psychotherapist- “As a behavioral therapist, I wish for good development of both myself and the other person. As a therapist, I try to maintain my development along with the development of my clients. Although people keep their professional development very separate from their personal life, they do not have any emotional attachment with it, but a therapist is emotionally attached to his client as well. He knows his entire case history, case study, what difficulties he is going through, what problem he is facing, he is also attached to this... So, I would like to say that I have an emotional attachment in both personal and professional matters, but I know where to draw the line and I love my job equally. Where I am today, I see and supervise individual clients, counsel new interns, hire new therapists, lead consultations, consult with other professionals so that I can provide the best services to my clients and resolve their issues quickly. Seeing clients is my job and seeing their progress makes me happy; hence, I want to keep myself updated both personally and professionally. I want their development in both ways so that there is a balance in both my personal and professional lives. This is why, when difficulties arise, I am able to handle my situations. There are some times in this profession which are very hard when you are feeling pain but overcoming it reflects your personal and professional development.”

DISCUSSION & SUGGESTIONS:

In today's era, lifelong learning is very important. It not only helps you in your daily life, but when you prepare yourself for this process, believe me, you will find yourself better than before. Also, there is a wider perspective of how small we humans are on this planet and the process of learning continues until you die. Before dying, even on our deathbed, we learn what we have lost and gained in our lives. Lifelong learning prepares us to make excellent contributions in our personal and professional lives. Staying updated and lifelong learning is a process in itself. Behavioral and cognitive psychotherapists were included in this research as a sample so that their perspectives could be understood in depth and a new perspective related to continuous learning could be given to the upcoming psychotherapists and therapists who have already established themselves. Here are some tips, which have been concluded by analyzing the data obtained from the interview schedule with therapists for Lifelong Learning or Continuing education.

- 1. Develop a sense of curiosity and always ask questions. This will help you stay interested in learning new things and motivated to acquire knowledge.**
- 2. Read books, articles, and other materials on a variety of topics to increase your knowledge and understanding. This will help you stay informed about the world around you and make connections between different areas of knowledge.**
- 3. Attend training sessions and conferences in your industry or field to stay updated with the latest developments and trends. This will help you improve your skills and knowledge, and keep you engaged with your work.**
- 4. Build a network of contacts in your field or industry, and connect with them regularly to exchange ideas and knowledge. This will help you stay informed about new developments and opportunities and build valuable relationships.**
- 5. Take online courses, attend workshops, or enroll in a formal education program to learn new skills and knowledge. This will help you stay relevant in your field and adapt to changing circumstances.**
- 6. Follow thought leaders in your industry or sector on social media or other platforms, and engage with their content. This will help you stay informed about new developments and trends and gain insight from experts.**
- 7. Be open-minded and be willing to challenge your assumptions and beliefs. This will help you avoid getting stuck in old thinking and adapt to changing circumstances and information.**
- 8. Stay motivated and curious to learn things and explore everything in every possible way.**
- 9. Many institutions offer online video courses, webinars, and self-guided learning programs that count for CE credits from most boards and associations. You can find and inspire others to receive affordable and in-depth training on a huge range of specialties and medical approaches.**
- 10. For more practical engagement, check out CE workshops, multi-day seminars, and conferences hosted by medical training providers near you.**
- 11. Many accredited universities now offer micro-credential programs in specialized areas of medicine that are more affordable and flexible. These can significantly enhance your expertise and credentials.**
- 12. Working one-on-one with an experienced supervisor or mentor in the area you wish to focus on can provide invaluable insight.**
- 13. Forming or joining a peer mentorship group can be a cost-effective way to further learning through case consultation, discussion of readings, and collaborative problem-solving.**

In today's mental healthcare environment, it is critical that allied health professionals maintain and develop the requisite knowledge and skills that define their competency upon entering the field. Despite the emphasis on lifelong learning as an integral part of the mental health profession, no major research has been done to assess it. All psychotherapists, whether behavioral or cognitive, understand its importance and are working towards it. The more awareness we have on this topic, the sooner we will be able to provide our best services to society.

Knowing updated therapeutic models helps you better understand the needs and circumstances of each client and increases clinical versatility to precisely match interventions accordingly. It also allows you to diversify your practice areas and potentially reach a diverse client population.

While pursuing continuing education strengthens you, it also sends a powerful message about who you are as a professional by prioritizing your growth. It demonstrates a commitment to your intellect, inner curiosity, self-discipline, and consistency.

Therapists who approach their craft with a growth mindset are more open-minded, adaptable, and creative in meeting each client's needs. An eagerness to learn also enhances other important qualities in therapists such

as self-awareness, humility, and empathy.

Through continuing learning activities, professionals can ensure that their foundational knowledge and clinical approach remains firmly rooted in the latest approaches and findings from peer-reviewed research. This could mean adopting more effective strategies for certain mental health conditions, better understanding the neurological basis of behavior, or identifying evidence-based ways to customize treatment plans for specific populations. Lifelong Learning provides you new therapeutic models with updation and increased clinical versatility to precisely match the need of the clients' interventions which are unique and related to differ circumstances. It also allows you to diversify your areas of practice and potentially reach new client populations.

Conclusion:

Mental health professionals have an ethical responsibility to maintain their qualifications by pursuing continuing education throughout their careers. Earning continuing education credits through courses and training is essential for individual practitioners to stay informed of the latest evidence-based practices, research, and new knowledge in this dynamic field. Whether it is to meet licensing requirements set by licensing boards or to maintain ethical standards to provide the highest quality, culturally competent care, mental health professionals such as social workers and other professionals must engage in lifelong learning. Continuing education ensures that mental health professionals adhere to the latest scientific foundations and the best possible care standards.

It also allows them to provide more effective practice and support the overall well-being of the diverse clients who depend on them. High-quality continuing education from credible providers helps professionals earn the minimum number of credits needed to satisfy their licensing boards. Ultimately, continuing education enables mental health professionals to provide the best possible care to their clients.

Interview schedule

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the term “lifelong education and continuing education”?
2. How much time do you give yourself to update yourself?
3. What is the need of this lifelong education and continuing education as a Psychotherapist?
4. What adverse situations can you face if you do not update yourself?
5. What kind of challenges do Psychotherapist face while pursuing continuing education?
6. What is the right roadmap for continuing education in Professional development as a Psychotherapist?
7. Are you meeting the public's expectations for competence as a Psychotherapist?
8. What is your aspiration/Will to meaning as a Psychotherapist?

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