

PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES WITHIN PERSON-CENTERED THERAPY THROUGH THE EYES OF OLDER ADULTS

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Aims: This research aims to evaluate psycho-emotional challenges for older adults and the relevance of person-centered therapy (PCT) for older adults.

Methods: Forty senior adults, aged above 65 years ($M = 71.7$; $SD = 4.6$) were assessed with the the Self-Esteem Scale ('SES') and the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE). Socio-demographic data, including gender (57.5% women), marital status (37.5% married) and education (39.2% mandatory school) were also assessed. Bivariate associations were performed.

Results: Results yielded a set of five descriptive categories that captured the distinct ways older adults perceived psycho-emotional challenges and that reflected the individual's perceived importance of PCT: 'time perspective', 'the aging body', 'autonomy and control', 'cognitive endurance' and 'loss and reminiscing'. Regarding bivariate associations, results indicated that 'autonomy and control' was associated with the 'aging body' ($r=.552$, $p < .001$) and 'cognitive endurance' with 'time perspective' ($r=.425$, $p < .001$). This latter was also associated with 'loss and reminiscing' ($r=.616$, $p < .001$).

Conclusions: This study highlights the importance of PCT for older adults facing psycho-emotional challenges in old age. Interventions with older adults may benefit from clearly understanding older adults' specific issues as an important component for promoting successful aging and reducing health disparities.