

Common elements and differences among treatment approaches to complex post traumatic stress disorder: A commentary on five case studies

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Abstract

Treating people who have experienced deep and prolonged developmental trauma, i.e., Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (cPTSD), can be challenging given the complexity and severity of their presentations. The main features of Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, i.e., affective and behavioral dysregulation, altered self-experience and identity disturbances, relational difficulties, negative self-concepts, and negative pathogenic beliefs, are, at the same time, therapeutic goals and obstacles to treatment. Therefore, clinicians must be aware of these difficulties in order to identify them and be ready to treat them when they arise during therapy with the same client. For this reason, the clinical cases presented in this issue of the *Journal of Clinical Psychology: In Session* provide a very useful overview of how to deal with these manifestations from the perspective of different models of psychotherapy. This commentary, after briefly reviewing the clinical features and therapeutic difficulties of these clients, offers a critical summary of the commonalities and differences between the various approaches presented by the clinical cases in this special issue. The purpose is to help the reader navigate the key aspects of treating the pathogenetic processes involved in cPTSD and to identify the different therapeutic tools that may be applicable to the different clinical presentations.

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