



Dissemination of a Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP)-Informed Intervention for Loneliness: Results from an Open Trial

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BACKGROUND

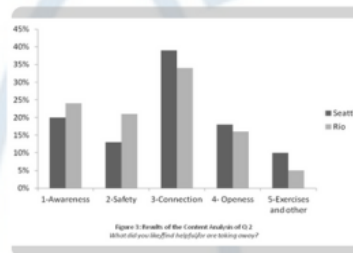
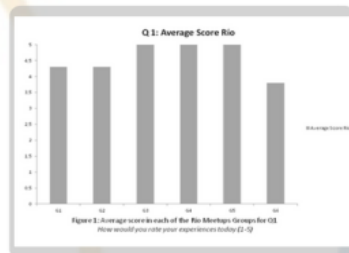
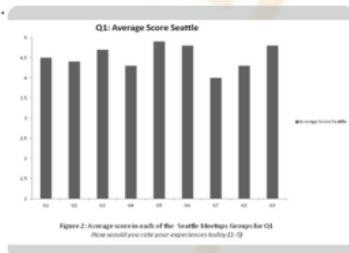
A lack of social connection or loneliness, described by poet Emily Dickinson as “the horror not to be surveyed” is a quiet devastation, a major public health epidemic (New York Times, September 5, 2016) linked to physical and mental ill health. In fact, data from 140 studies show that loneliness increases the risk of death more than excessive drinking, exposure to chronic air pollution and obesity, and as much as excessive smoking (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015). This project is an in-progress treatment development study assessing the impact of FAP’s Awareness, Courage and Love (ACL) model (Tsai et al., 2009) on increasing social connection and alleviating loneliness in individuals worldwide. The Live with ACL Meetups foster a safe and accepting space to be one’s true self, and yet create deep connections by being understanding, bold, and kind.

METHOD

Monthly online 90 minute experiential trainings led by the 3rd author of both professional and non-professional individuals (recruited mainly through the FAP Facebook group) who were interested in creating Live with Awareness, Courage and Love (ACL) Meetups through Meetup.com in their hometown began in October 2016. These leaders are provided with monthly protocols, and agreed that: 1) they are willing to be participant leaders, to lead vulnerability with ACL; 2) they are partnering in bringing ACL to a global audience, and their creative input and expertise are encouraged; 3) they can ask for donations of up to \$10 USD per attendee, but no one will be turned away due to inability to pay; 4) they will lead meetups in their hometown once a month or as their schedule permits; and 5) the ultimate aim is for non- professionals to feel comfortable in leading ACL Meetups so that this format can be widely disseminated.

RESULTS

Currently, Live with ACL Meetups have 4359 members in 27 cities, 12 countries (Belgium, Germany, Germany, Poland, Spain, Switzerland; Argentina, Brazil, Colombia; Australia, Canada, United States) and 4 continents (North America, South America Europe and Australia). In the following figures we show some of the feedback data from the attendees of meetups from Seattle and Río de Janeiro, regarding what they found helpful and what they would like to see changed. Figures 1 and 2 show the result for Seattle and Brasil for the Question **How would you rate your experiences today?** Figure 3 shows the result of a Content Analysis for the answers to the question : **What did you like/find helpful/or are taking away?**



Example of feedback comments from the attendees:

- Warmth of truly meeting several people, touching & being touched, experience of letting others see me more
- I am not alone in my struggles

DISCUSSION

This study implements an innovative approach to dissemination and implementation to address the inconsistent adoption of evidence-based treatments (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2006). As discussed by Addis, Wade & Hatgis (1999), barriers to dissemination include treatments that require expensive and time-consuming instruction and supervision that are not readily accessible. Dissemination and Implementation in this study are facilitated by: 1) using protocols that require minimal training or professional background; 2) using a readily available venue during the development process itself (Meetup.com) for both recruiting participants and delivering the intervention; and 3) recruitment of interested Meetup participants, typically non-clinicians, to participate in leading these groups. These groups facilitate exploring what deeply matters, sharing with courage, and listening with compassion. Participants leave with tools to enhance other relationships, and to move towards what they value most in life.



CALL FOR ACTION

If you feel called to impact lives in your hometown by starting a Live with ACL Meetup, please contact Mavis Tsai at mavist@gmail.com