Using Objective Structured Clinical Exams to Enhance Psychotherapy Skills Training and Assessment

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Objectives

- Identify key considerations in the development of OSCEs for formative and summative assessment of psychotherapy skills in PMHNP students
- Identify key considerations in the implementation of OSCEs for formative and summative assessment of psychotherapy skills in PMHNP students
- Discuss evaluation, lessons learned, and next steps in using OSCEs in PMHNP education

OSCE = Objective Structured Clinical Exam

Introduction

- Clinical training in psychotherapy is an essential component of PMHNP education (ANCC, NONPF)
- Developing psychotherapy skills is one of the most challenging learning requirements that PMHNP students face
- Need for effective methods for teaching and evaluating psychotherapy skills
Objectives Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE): Background

- Use of OSCEs in nursing education
  - Assess clinical competence
  - Establish readiness for safe practice
- Process
  - Formative OSCEs (low stakes)
  - Summative OSCEs (high stakes)
- Use of Standardized patients (SPs) in OSCEs
- Use of SPs in psychiatric training

Course: 3-credit adult psychotherapy course

Students: 18 PMHNP in 3rd (final) year of direct entry program

Course focus:
Supportive psychotherapy
Psychodynamic theory
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Selected Course Objectives:

- To develop competence in the use of essential communication and therapeutic skills.
- To develop an aptitude for self-evaluation in the use of such skills.
- To cultivate the capacity to reflect on interpersonal and emotional processes, patterns, and experiences in psychotherapy with the goal of improving mental health.
- To think critically about the use of psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic theory and practice.
- To apply psychotherapeutic theory and skills in implementing treatment goals.

In Course Student Preparation Prior to OSCEs

Readings and lectures regarding supportive, psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioral therapy

Observation and discussion of exemplar videos of faculty demonstrating psychotherapy skills with an SP in the context of simulated psychotherapy sessions

Practice of psychotherapeutic skills in role-play of simulated psychotherapeutic encounters with peers
Development of SP Scenarios

Information for each scenario:
- Major purpose of encounter
- Type of encounter (new patient, follow-up visit, emergency)
- Setting (as relevant) – place, time of day, time of year
- Patient characteristics (as relevant) – age, gender, race, vitals at time of encounter, appearance, affect
- Patient information
  - Identifying data and chief complaint
  - HPI
  - Relevant psychiatric history
  - Relevant past medical, social, and family history
  - Relevant currently prescribed and OTC medications
- Essential student skills and behaviors to be assessed during encounter
- Instruction on how SP should present and how to respond to certain actions/comment throughout encounter

Development of OSCEs

- Formative OSCE
  - 3 SPs were trained to portray 3 separate cases
  - 15-minute video recorded SP encounters
  - Focused on supportive psychotherapy skills

- Summative OCSE
  - Same standardized case for all (played by 3 separate actors)
  - 20-minute video recorded SP encounters
  - Focused on CBT skills

Example: Learning Objectives for Formative OSCE
(for both during interaction and in post-encounter analysis)
- To develop ease in interacting therapeutically with patients with mental health problems
- To demonstrate therapeutic communication and a variety of supportive psychotherapy skills in the context of an initial psychiatric interview
- To facilitate development of a therapeutic alliance with the patient
- To pick up on latent meanings of verbal messages
- To pick up on nonverbal behavior and messages as conveyed by patients
- To recognize and be able to articulate the effect of the patient on the therapist and vice versa
- To develop capacity to reflect on interpersonal and emotional processes, patterns, and experiences in psychotherapy
- To foster aptitude for self-evaluation of therapeutic skills
Example: Essential skills and behaviors to be assessed during encounter
(formative OSCE focused on ST skills)

• Greets patient and introduces self
• Demonstrates strategies to make patient comfortable
• Elicits chief complaint/presenting problem
• Utilizes exploratory interviewing to obtain history of recent problem and to begin obtaining psychiatric assessment data
• Utilizes a variety of supportive psychotherapy skills in context of interview
• Demonstrates skills in building therapeutic alliance
• Demonstrates empathy

Example: Essential skills and behaviors to be assessed during encounter
(summative OSCE focused on CBT skills)

• Demonstrates skills in fostering the therapeutic alliance
• Appropriately utilizes a variety of CBT skills in context of the session
• Follows CBT session structure (all elements)
• Manages time well
• Keeps focused on objectives of session

Resources Needed

• Standardized patients
• Separate space for students waiting for their turn for the SP encounter
• Rooms/space for SP encounters - spaces should look like a therapy office
• Videotaping capabilities (digital video camera) for simultaneous taping of 3 students
• Ability for faculty to monitor encounters (closed circuit cameras and headphones)
• Student ability to upload copy of encounter to laptop post-encounter
• Adjacent room for students to complete self-evaluations following scenario
• Faculty and assistants to:
  — Oversee and manage flow of students
  — Direct students to SP and start and stop video camera recordings
  — Label and transfer digital recordings of SP encounter to each student’s laptop
  — IT assistance on hand to help trouble-shoot any complications
Recruiting and Training SPs

- **SP Recruitment**
  - Community
  - Staff and faculty from the Institute
- **SP Training**
  - SPs were given specific response statements for specific student questions
  - A list of spontaneous responses for the SP was also developed
  - Trained to give helpful formative feedback and accurate evaluations of the students
  - Rehearsal with faculty
- **Debriefing SPs**

Implementing the SP encounters

- Students received information about the scenario and time to prepare
- Each student interviewed their assigned SP in an individual exam room
- All interviews were videotaped
- Faculty monitored the encounters via closed circuit cameras and headphones in an adjacent room
- Instructor or assistant knocks on door to notify student that time is almost up (5-minute warning) then enters and turns off the video recorder at end of time.
- SP provides 2-3 minutes of verbal feedback to student focused on how SP felt during the interview
- Student leaves room
- A copy of the student’s recorded video is transferred to student’s computer
- Student completes a brief feedback/evaluation/reflection form in a separate room. During this time the SP completes a structured feedback questionnaire
- Each student received a digital copy of their encounter with the SP immediately following the interaction

Formative OSCE: Post Encounter Evaluation

- Student initial response (form provided)
- Feedback from SP (verbal and written)
- Student evaluation of SP experience (form provided)
- Faculty feedback to student
- Class discussion/debrief
Student Initial Response to SP Encounter

• How did the experience feel?
• What are your initial thoughts about the experience?
• What do you think you did well?
• What do you think you either did less well or could improve?

SP Feedback to Students

• How did you feel during the encounter?
• Please describe one or more strengths or positive aspects regarding the student’s style or the interview process.
• Please provide any feedback regarding areas that felt uncomfortable or unhelpful in interview.

SP Feedback/Evaluation to Students

• I felt comfortable with the student.
• I felt the student was judgmental.
• It was easy to talk to the student.
• The student helped me feel relaxed.
• I felt like the student guided the interview in a way that I felt like I understood what was expected of me.
• I felt that the student conveyed empathy for what I was conveying emotionally.
• The student encouraged me to tell my story.
• I felt confidence in the interview.
• I felt that the interviewer encouraged me to express how I was feeling.
• I felt a sense of trust with the interviewer.
• The therapist was encouraging.
• I felt that the student was mainly focused on getting information from me.
• There was a disorganized feel to the interview.

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<th>Somewhat</th>
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Formative OSCE post-encounter
student analysis/assignment

• Student receives digital copy of recorded encounter
• Student makes transcript of interaction
• Student annotates transcript
  – Labels supportive psychotherapy techniques used and rationale (if appropriate)
  – Comments (in transcript) on patient responses and any psychodynamic processes of patient that may be identified
• Student writes paper reflecting on experience
  – Self-awareness and self-evaluation
  – Observations regarding the affective component of the interview with particular attention to empathic responses
  – Observations of any patterns of nonverbal patient behaviors that suggested the use of various defense mechanisms (if possible)
  – Note the patient's narrative themes and suggests a tentative formulation

Student Evaluation of Formative OSCE

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<th>Mean Score</th>
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<td>Participation in SP encounter successfully provided realistic patient scenarios</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP encounter scenarios were useful and tested student interview skills.</td>
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<td>SP encounter scenarios were helpful in reinforcing course objectives.</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td>SP encounter scenarios helped to prepare me for the mental health clinical environment.</td>
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<td>SP encounter scenarios were valuable and allowed me to evaluate my own competencies/performance.</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<td>SP encounter scenarios were valuable and allowed me to practice in a risk free environment.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<td>The feedback from the standardized patient was helpful.</td>
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<td>I recommend that this exercise be continued for subsequent classes.</td>
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Summative OSCE: Post Encounter Evaluation

• SP feedback to student (verbal and written)
• Student and faculty evaluation using the Cognitive Therapy Rating Scale (Young & Beck, 1980)
• Faculty feedback to student
• Graded as part of final exam for course
Lessons Learned

- Helping students manage their anxiety
- Don’t mix pre and post encounter students
- Length of time that SPs can maintain good focus needs to be considered
- Be prepared for the unexpected

Next Steps in using OSCEs in PMHNP Education

- Further development, refinement, and testing
- Build a “bank” of...
  - Exemplar videos
  - SP scenarios for formative and summative OSCEs
- Extend SP practice and evaluation throughout PMHNP program
  - Assessment and diagnosis
  - Medication management sessions
  - Family/child scenarios
  - High stakes rare-event or emergency scenarios (e.g., suicidal patient)
  - Broaden OSCE use for evaluation of skills
- Documentation skills: SOAP notes, progress notes, case formulations, treatment plans

Questions and Comments?

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