

16 Session AEDP & The AEDP Research Project: Bridging the Clinician-Researcher Divide

AEDP Research Team

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Overview of Presentation

Part I: An overview of AEDP Psychotherapy Research

- Research Program & Design
- Key findings from Outcome Studies
- Studies In Progress

Part II: Clinical Illustrations with Session Videos and empirical data

- Healing from the get-go
- Corrective Emotional experience
- Core State and Transformational affects



Research Program: Its Ethos, Methods, and Findings



AEDP Practice-Research Network (PRN)



PRN

**Collaboration between practitioners
and researchers (Castonguay, 2011)**

Practice-based evidence



AEDP PRN

Seamless integration of research and practice

Congruent with AEDP philosophy

Contributing to AEDP theory and practice

Ethos of AEDP Research

Ecological validity

- **Private Practice Settings**
- **Relatively Diverse Patients**
- **Responsiveness/Flexibility (Vs. Manualized)**
- **Videotaping**
- **Transdiagnostic**

Rigor and Comparability

- **16 sessions**
- **6- and 12-month follow-ups**
- **Major Outcome Measures**
- **Process Measures**
- **Videotaping Sessions**



AEDP Research is growing Strongly

Phase I

- 66 Patients
- Benchmarking

A total

120 patients

45 therapists

Over 1900 sessions

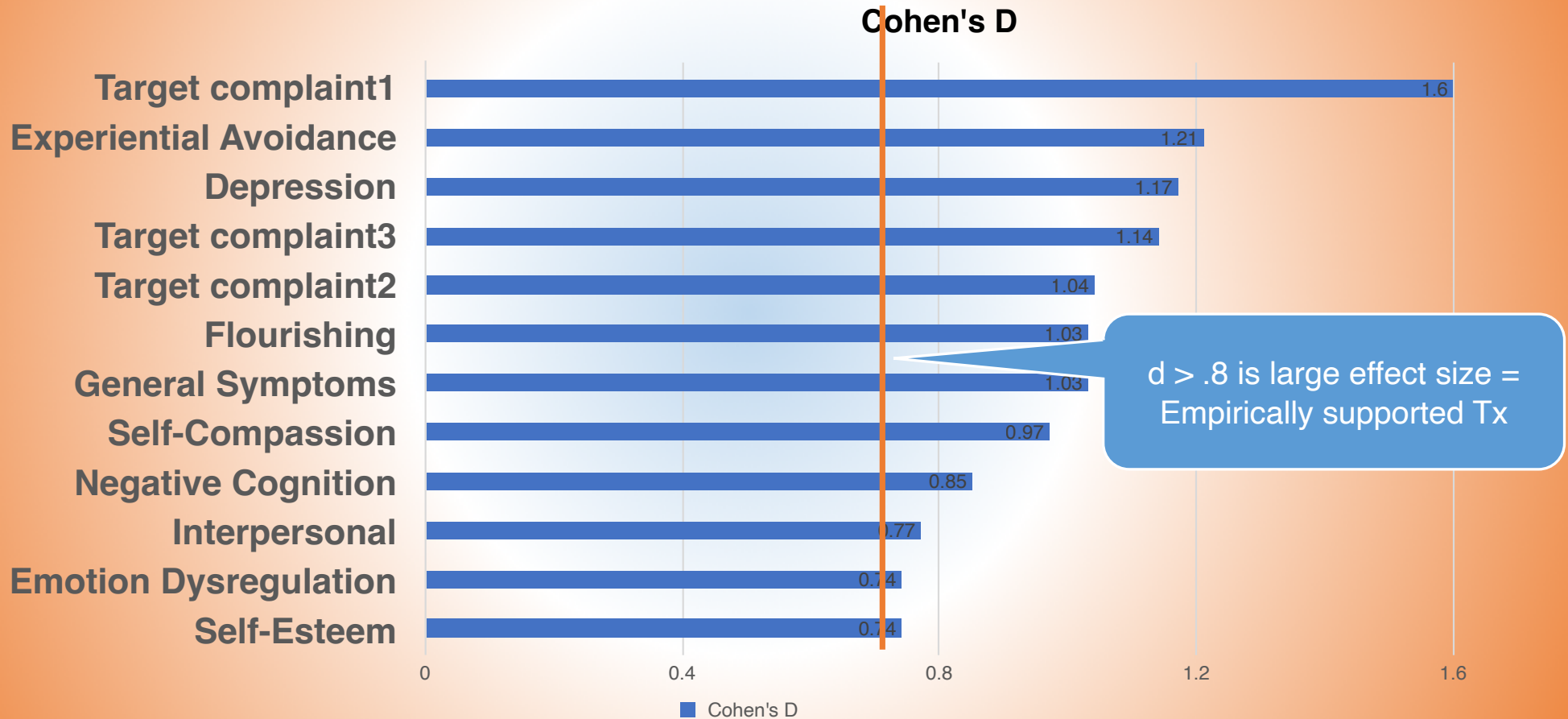
Phase II

- 54 Patients
- Adding Uniquely AEDP Process e.g., Flourishing Scale



Key Findings: Demonstrating Effectiveness of AEDP

How effective is AEDP?: Phase I Study

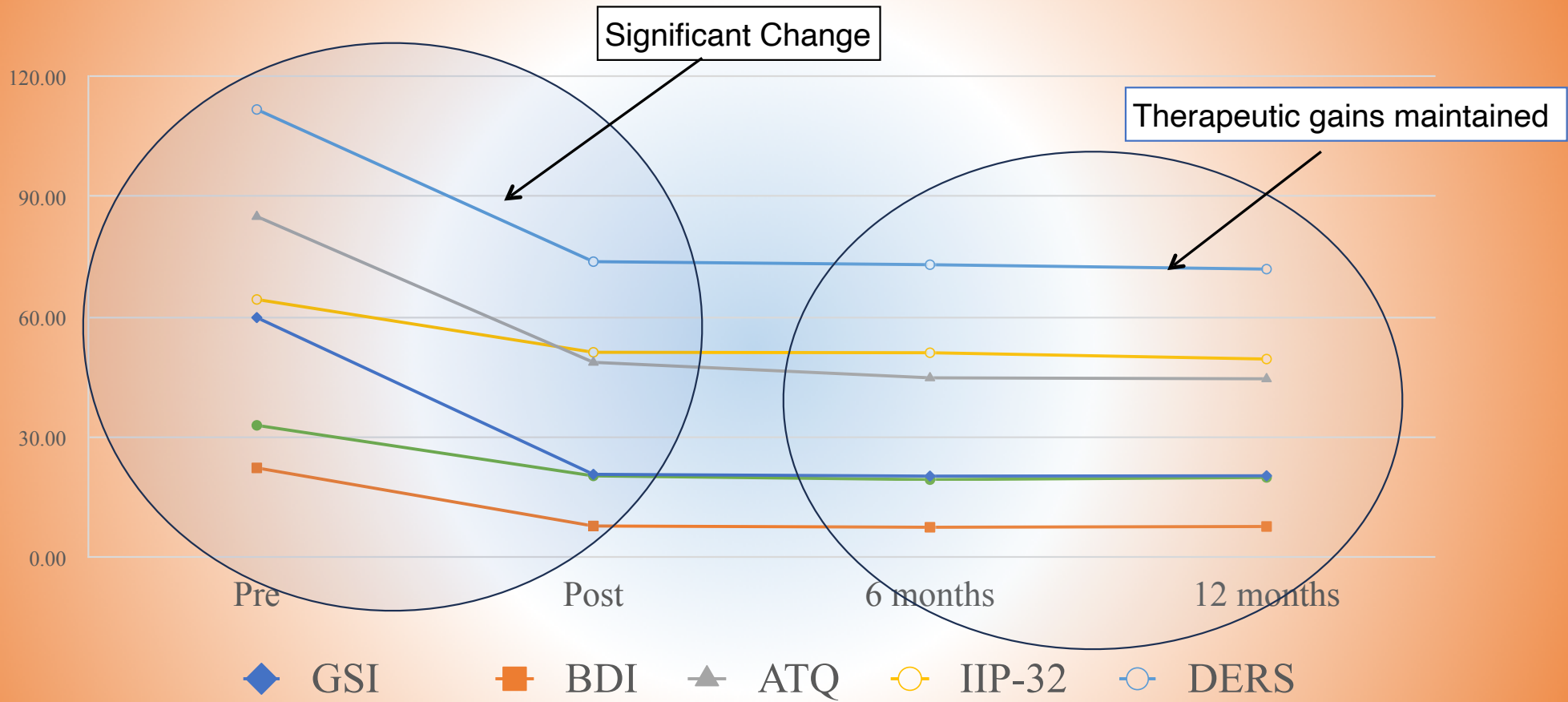




FOLLOW UP for the 62 patients (Iwakabe et al., 2022)



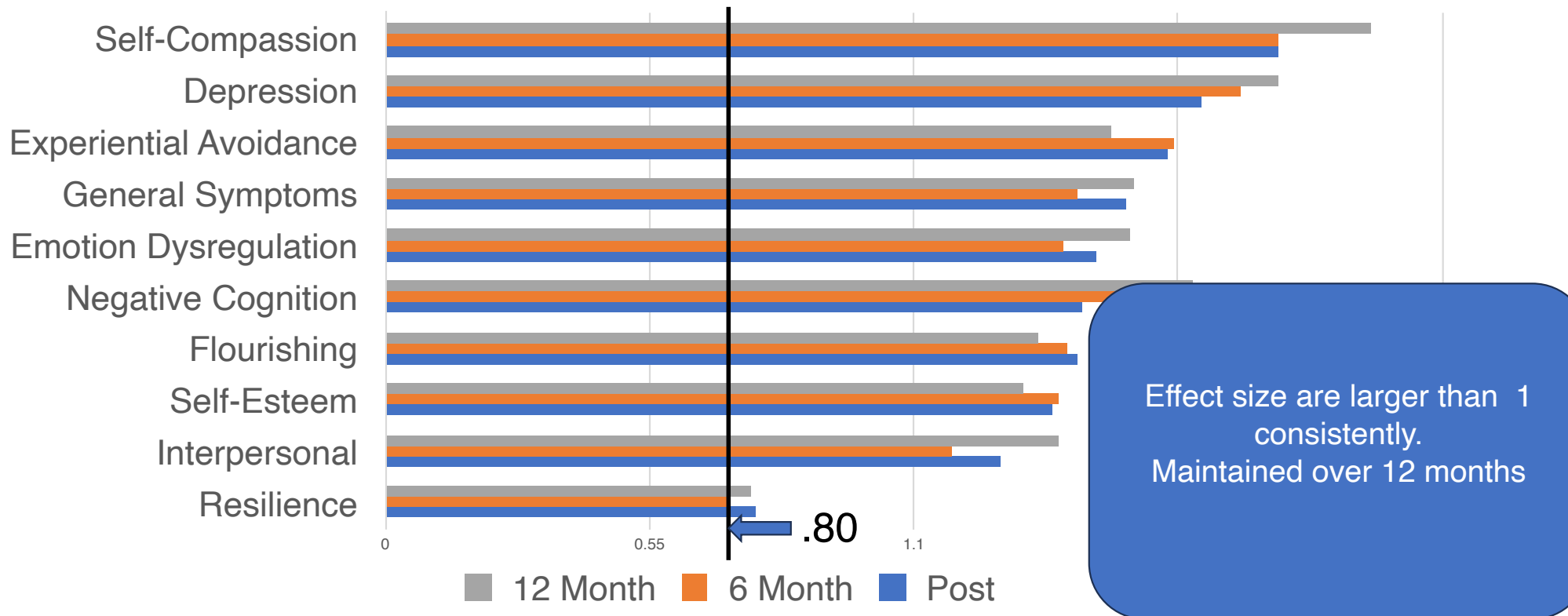
Outcome, 6- and 12-Month Follow-up



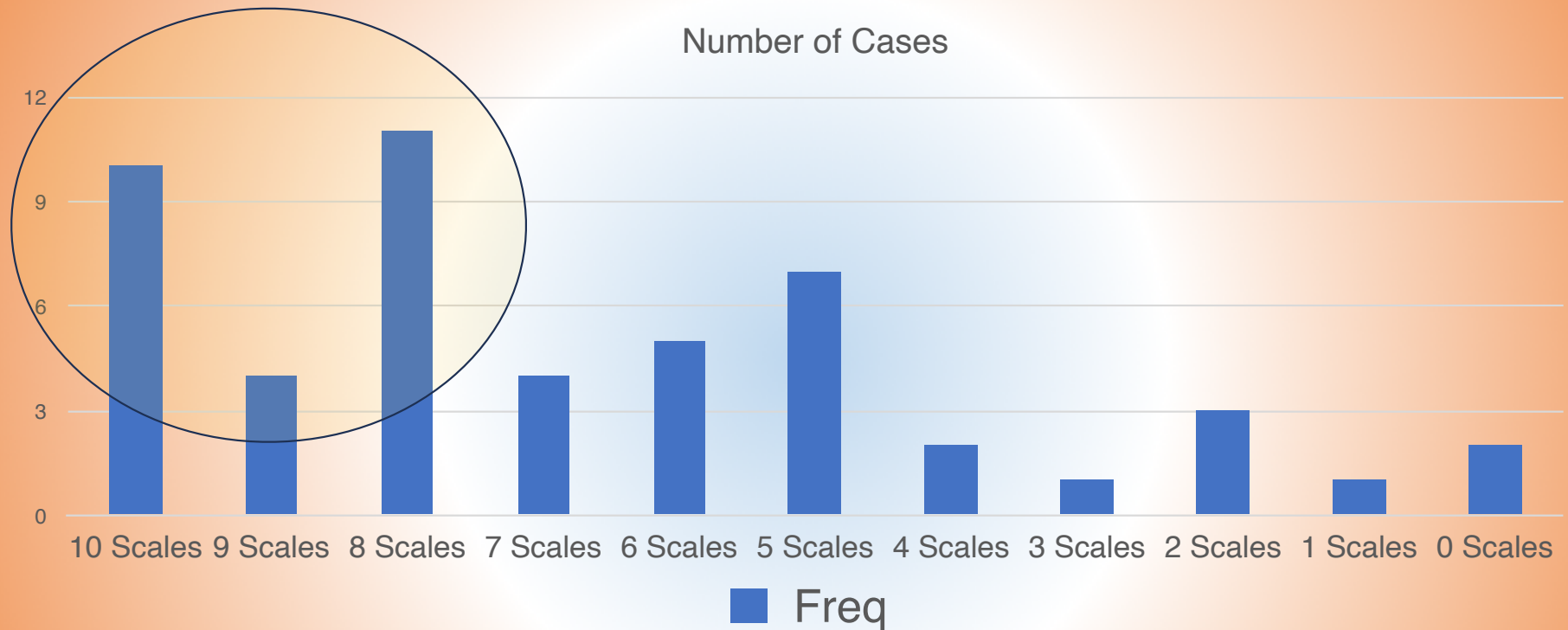
GSI (Psychological Symptoms), BDI (Depression), ATQ (negative thought), IIP (Interpersonal problems), DERS (Dysregulation of Emotions), & AAQ-II (Experiential avoidance)

Phase II: Effectiveness Confirmed (N=54)

Cohen's D effect size > .80 (large effect size)



How Pervasive is Change in AEDP?



64.8% of patients (35 out of 54) or had clinically significant change on more than **6** scales.

46.3% of patients (25 patients) had clinically significant change on more than **8** scales.

Key Findings: Transforming Lives with AEDP

- AEDP alleviates psychological symptoms and improves positive psychological functioning, i.e., flourishing, self compassion.
- Therapeutic gains are maintained over 1 year after termination, in the absence of additional therapy.
- Two studies (Phase I & II) show similar results, confirming the effectiveness of AEDP.
- The AEDP Outcome Research Project is steadily progressing and accumulating different types of evidence supporting the effectiveness of AEDP in private practice settings.

The background features a composite image. On the left, there is a blue-tinted image of laboratory glassware, including a round-bottom flask and a glass tube. On the right, there is an orange-tinted image of a brain scan, showing a cross-section of the brain with various structures highlighted. In the center, there are three small white symbols: a plus sign (+), a solid dot (•), and an open circle (○).

Our current research

- AEDP change mechanisms
- Working alliance and Therapeutic relationship
- Flourishing and Positive Emotions

Working alliance Development and Depression



Research Question

How do the working alliance develop in AEDP? Are there different patterns of the alliance development in AEDP?

Are the developmental patterns related to outcome?

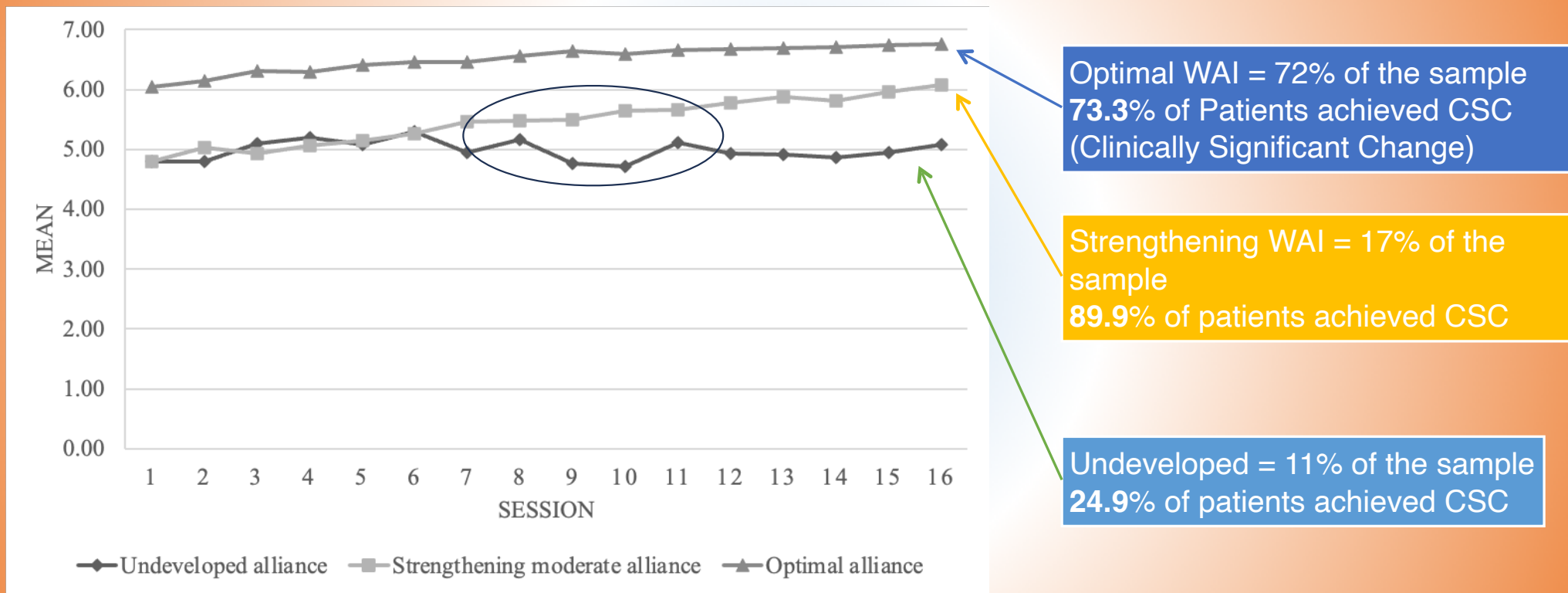


Method

100 dyads from both Phase I and II.

Cluster analysis

Alliance developmental Patterns and Proportion of Clinically Significant Change in Depression



If the alliance does not improve by middle sessions (7, 8, 9) then the treatment may not be effective.

Positive Emotions and the Working Alliance



Working Alliance & Positive Emotion

Working Alliance – Essential to Successful Treatment
Positive Emotions – Ignites the Patient’s Motivation and Change

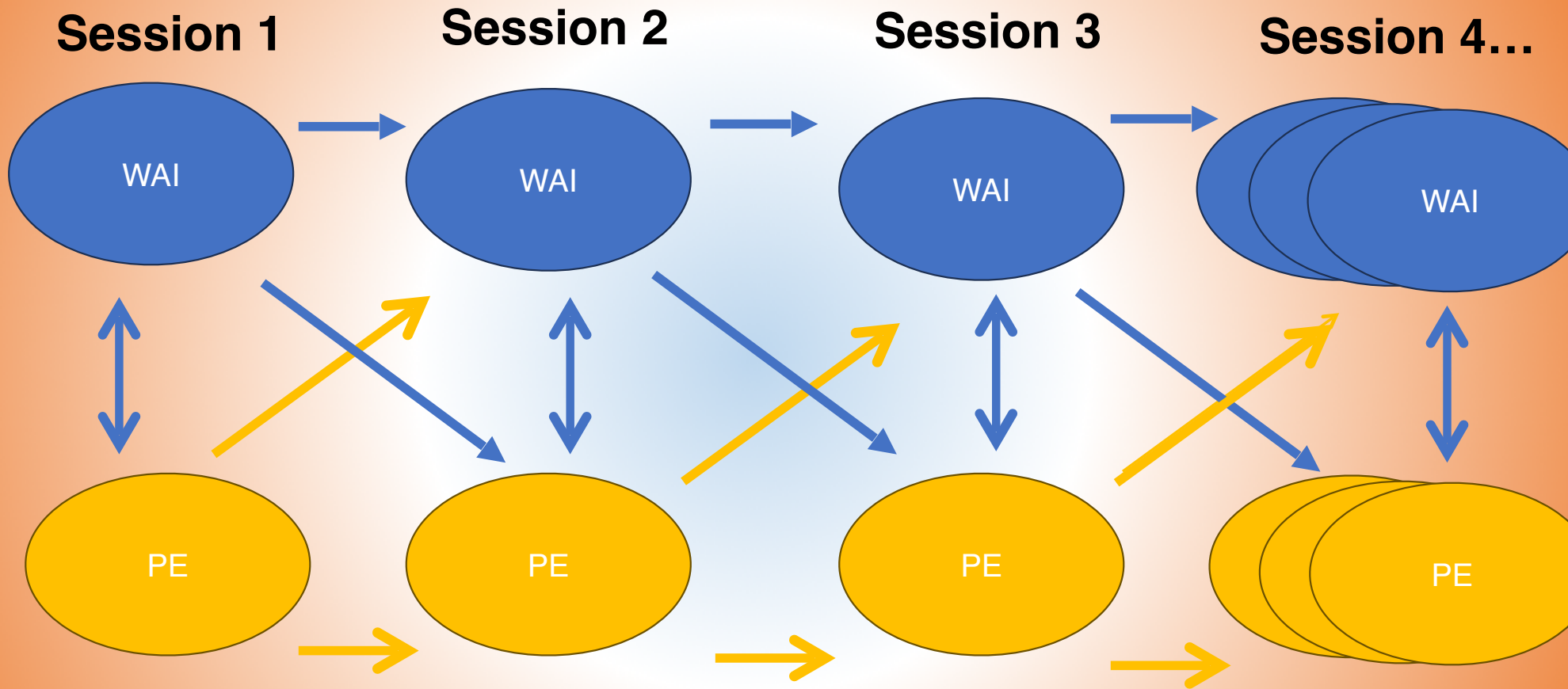


Research Question

Does patient in-session experience of positive emotions contribute to the working alliance or does the working alliance contribute to patient in-session experience of positive emotion?

Notsu, H., Iwakabe, S., & Thoma, N. C. (2023). Enhancing working alliance through positive emotional experience: A cross-lag analysis. *Psychotherapy research : journal of the Society for Psychotherapy Research*, 33(3), 328–341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10503307.2022.2124893>

The relationship between positive emotions and the working alliance



Positive emotions contribute to the building of the working alliance

Positive emotions are not simply the result of good therapeutic work but lead to setting next stages for good work.



Development of Moments of Flourishing Experiences Scale (MFES)

- Vitality
- Calmness
- Gratitude and relational positive emotions
- Engagement and a sense of purpose



Preliminary Findings

Flourishing level in the first session had a significant effect on the changes in **general symptom, automatic negative thoughts, self-esteem, emotionality, and flourishing** at termination.

First session **WAI** nor patient session evaluation on **depth** had a significant relationship with outcome variables.

Flourishing **can occur** from the initial session and has a unique significance (empirical validation for healing from the get-go)

Fosha, D., Coleman, J. J., Iwakabe, S., Gretton, H., Nakamura, K., Nunnink, S., Joseph, A. J., Quirk, K., & Owen, J. (2024). The development of the moments of flourishing experience scale: A new scale to measure positive, affect-based flourishing state experiences. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2024.2377167>

The background of the slide is a highly detailed fractal image. It consists of numerous intricate, self-similar patterns. The primary colors are various shades of blue, ranging from deep navy to light sky blue, and white. The patterns include tight, multi-layered spirals, some with a central point of convergence. There are also large, branching, lace-like structures that resemble snowflakes or coral. The overall effect is a dense, textured field of mathematical beauty. The text 'Case Illustrations' is centered over this pattern in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

Case Illustrations

Three
vignettes
were
selected
based on

High Post-Session **Flourishing** Score rated by patient

High Post-Session SEQ **Depth** Score (Deep, Significant)

Successful Post-Treatment Outcome

The availability of **Post-treatment note** by patient available

One vignette taken from the **first, middle, and late** phase.

Permissions are obtained from patients for sharing their videos in academic meetings


Healing from the get-go

Feeling Weak to Feeling Strong

Case background

- **Patient:** Caucasian Female in late 40s
- **Presenting issues:** Anxiety, Self-esteem, and Stress related overeating
- **Clinical Range:** mild depression, Interpersonal problems, rumination, low self-esteem, emotion dysregulation, low self-compassion, experiential avoidance
- **Post Treatment:** Significant Improvement in all areas
- **6- and 12- month follow-up:** maintained therapeutic gains

Process Summary


- Segment starts after 30 min into the session.
 - Process data
 - Pre-treatment Flourishing 3.5 After the first session, 6.2.
 - High Session Depth
 - High Working alliance
 - Session Themes
 - Processing of anger at her father to completion
 - Relief
 - Realization (I have never done this)
 - Metatherapeutic processing of transformational affects
 - Tremulous affects
 - Mastery affects
 - Enlivenment affects
- 
- Hope (“I am capable of feeling confident”)

Patient's Note after The First Session

Releasing anger and frustration at my father - I **physically** felt this in my body and had to move my arms and hands to release the feelings of rage and frustration.

At the end of the session, I **felt strong**. Like I **can do good work** and **am capable of feeling confident**.

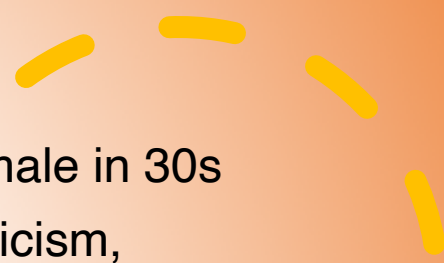
I felt **the need to cry for my younger self**, for the **dismissive and unkind way I had been treated**. We **stayed with** that feeling and it **passed**. I **have always pushed that feeling away** and it would rise back up. **When we stayed with it, it came and then receded**. This was a **relief**.



From Self-Criticism to Self-Acceptance: Corrective Emotional Experience in 6th Session



Case background

- 
- **Patient:** Asian American female in 30s
 - **Presenting issues:** Self-criticism, Avoidant behaviors, Low confidence
 - **Clinical Range:** Mild Depression, Interpersonal Problems, Low Self-Esteem, Emotion Dysregulation, Low Self-Compassion, Experiential Avoidance
 - **Post Treatment:** Significant Improvement in All Areas

Outcome and Process Summary

- Process Data
 - Pre-treatment Flourishing 2.65, Session 5 3.91, After 6th session, 5.87.
 - High Session Depth = 7
 - High Working alliance = 6.92
- Session Themes
 - Processing of Sadness to completion
 - Acceptance
 - Corrective Emotional Experience
 - Transformational affects and core state
 - Mourning the self
 - True self True other experience
 - Segment starts 22 Min into the session after the patient had two visible waves of sadness

Patient's Note after The 6th Session

I was feeling what I was doing (letting tears flow instead of having a full blowing sobbing) was not 'correct'. Th reassured me that I'm doing right and that she's here to support me.

This **sparked another wave of tears** because it felt like **finally** someone is **accepting me** as I am and **not judging** me for these waves of sadness.

The feeling of acceptance from Th and having her say that she's here with me and supporting me in the journey **helped me go through the sadness waves** and having **come out the other side**. I felt more **empowered**.

I felt this energy in the middle of my chest radiates to the rest of my body and my thoughts started to go towards **"I can do anything"**.

Desire for Freedom

Case background

- **Patient:** Mixed racial male in 40s
- **Presenting issues:** Anxiety, Repressed anger, Feeling something is wrong and I don't know why
- **Clinical Range:** Moderate depression, Interpersonal problems, emotion dysregulation, low self-compassion, experiential avoidance, low flourishing
- **Post Treatment:** Significant Improvement in all areas
- **Follow-up:** Maintained most of significant changes

Outcome and Process Data

- Process Data
 - Pre-treatment MFES = 4.22, In Session 11 MFES = 6.17
 - High Session Depth = 7
 - High Working alliance = 7
- Session Themes
 - Starting from Positive emotional State
 - Dyadic Expansion Affects
 - Enlivenment Affects
 - Mastery Affects
 - Core State – autobiographical narrative
 - Healing Affects
 - True self True other experience
 - The segment starts 27 minutes into the session.

Patient's Note after The 12th Session

(Significant and helpful aspects of session)

Hearing and feeling Richard's being proud of me. Feeling the connection and care from Richard.

Knowing that I could share openly and feel whatever I felt and it was welcomed.

I **felt connected with** Richard and cared for and know that he trusts me to feel all my feelings and I **can return to a safe place and be calm.**

It gives me **confidence** to know that he trusts me and gives me **freedom** to do this on my time. It is liberating and gives me **healthy stable energy.**

Conclusion: Proven Impact of AEDP

- **Clinically validated:** Large effect size across all scales, matching other evidence-based treatments
- **Lasting results:** Benefits maintained one year post-therapy
- **Dual focus:** Reduces suffering while enhancing flourishing
- **Transformation from day one:** "Healing from the get-go" empirically supported
- **Unique measurement:** Only therapy tracking in-session flourishing in every session
- **Research integrated into community:** Validating theory and uncovering new clinical phenomena

Future Directions

- Using moment-to-moment analysis to advance AEDP theory on flourishing and transformational affects
- Identifying effective intervention components through 9+1 Scale
- Creating research-based training tools from our growing database

Thank you!

AEDP Institute, Senior faculty, faculty, supervisors, and therapists who participated in and supported the study.

The patients who participated in the study.

Nate Thoma, Liza Greville, Heather Gretton, Sarah Nunnink, Jenn Edlin, Jesse Owen, Bruce Wampold, Modum Bad

AEDP Research Team Members

Andrew Joseph



Diana Fosha



Lauren Lepow



Kaori Nakamura



Richard Harrison



Main Findings

Iwakabe, S., Edlin, J., Fosha, D., Gretton, H., Joseph, A. J., Nunnink, S. E., Nakamura, K., & Thoma, N. C. (2020). The effectiveness of accelerated experiential dynamic psychotherapy (AEDP) in private practice settings: A transdiagnostic study conducted within the context of a practice-research network. *Psychotherapy*, 57(4), 548 –561. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pst0000344>

Iwakabe, S., Edlin, J., Fosha, D., Thoma, N. C. Gretton, H., Joseph, A., & Nakamura, K. (2022). Long-term outcome of accelerated experiential dynamic psychotherapy: Six and 12-month follow-up results. *Psychotherapy*. 10.1037/pst0000441. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pst0000441>

Harrison, R. L. (2020). Termination in 16-session accelerated experiential dynamic psychotherapy (AEDP): Together in how we say goodbye. *Psychotherapy*, 57(4), 531- 547. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pst0000343>



Notsu, H., Iwakabe, S., & Thoma, N. C. (2023). Enhancing working alliance through positive emotional experience: A cross-lag analysis. *Psychotherapy research : journal of the Society for Psychotherapy Research*, 33(3), 328–341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10503307.2022.2124893>

Iwakabe, S., Edlin, J., & Thoma, N. (2021). A phenomenological case study of accelerated experiential dynamic psychotherapy: The experience of change in the initial session from a client perspective. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/int0000261>

DiCorcia, M., Iwakabe, S., Thoma, N. C., & Yamazaki, W. (2023). Transformational process scale: An initial validation and application to the first psychotherapy session. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, 33(3), 248–264. <https://doi.org/10.1037/int0000296>



***Transformance
Journal:***

Volume 11 Issue 1, The 16-
session AEDP Issue

[Introduction to Special Issue](#)

Shigeru Iwakabe, PhD and Diana Fosha, PhD

[16-Session AEDP: AEDP, Only More So](#)

Diana Fosha, PhD

[Together We Say Goodbye: Termination in 16-session AEDP](#)

Richard L, Harrison, Ph.D.

[“Unequivocal Affirmation” of True Self in 16-session AEDP with Gay Men: Using Relational Metaprocessing to Increase Receptive Affective Capacity](#)

Gil Tunnell, PhD.

[Race Matters: Co-Creating Secure Attachment from the Get-Go and the Work of Identity Consolidation for a Black Patient with a White Therapist](#)

Stephen McDonnell, LCSW

[Dyadic Accompaniment for Healing Sexual Trauma in a 16 session Treatment](#)

Judy Silvan, LCSW

[Time & Slowing, Attachment & Loss in 16-Session AEDP Therapy](#)

Gail Woods, LCSW, LMFT