

Psychological Treatment: Foundations and Techniques

Brief description of course content (according to the programme's verification report)

Experimental psychological treatments. Physiological deactivation techniques. Graduated and intensive exposure techniques. Consequence management techniques. Social skills training techniques. Cognitive and coping therapies. Biofeedback techniques.

Learning outcomes

The Psychology degree verification document specifies that the educational objectives to be attained in this subject, expressed as a result of learning, are the following:

1. To acquire knowledge about the history of psychological treatments with an experimental basis.
2. To dominate the theoretical and experimental foundations of the main intervention techniques and evidence-based psychological treatments.
3. To identify components of the main evidence-based techniques for intervention and psychological treatment.
4. To understand the areas of application of the main evidence-based techniques for intervention and psychological treatment.
5. To apply this knowledge to the design, development, assessment and application of a treatment plan in the area of anxiety disorders.
6. To apply this knowledge to the design, development, assessment and application of a treatment plan in the area of disorders associated with the stress of daily life.

Expressed in terms of “Knowledge”, “Skills” and “Attitudes/Values”, the specific objectives to attain upon finishing the module are the following:

Knowledge (To know)

- To understand the historical development of psychological treatments with an experimental basis.
- To know the theoretical and experimental foundations of the main psychological treatment techniques, their field of application, the description of their components and new developments.

Skills (Know how)

- To know how to apply intervention techniques to assess and treat different psychological problems.
- To know how to apply interpersonal relationship skills in the therapeutic context.

Attitudes and values (Knowing how to be)

- To develop a favourable attitude towards multidisciplinary work in the area of psychological disorders.
- To favour a helping disposition towards people with psychological disorders and to respect the deontological principles of the profession of psychology.

Planned learning activities

Theory Syllabus

1. **Topic 1.** Psychological treatments with an experimental basis. Experimental and clinical psychology. The first attempts: Pavlov, Watson and the Yale Group. The origins of behavioural therapy: South Africa, England and the United States. The historical evolution of behavioural therapy.
2. **Topic 2.** Physiological deactivation techniques. Theoretical and experimental foundations of relaxation-based techniques. General aspects of the procedure. Specific deactivation techniques: Jacobson's progressive relaxation, Schultz's autogenic training, Benson's breath-meditation training.
3. **Topic 3.** Graduated exposure techniques. Theoretical and experimental foundations of treatments based on gradual exposure techniques. Areas of application of systematic desensitisation. Description of classic systemic desensitisation. Variations on systematic desensitisation: eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing, desensitisation through virtual reality.
4. **Topic 4.** Intensive exposure techniques. Theoretical and experimental foundations of treatments based on intensive exposure techniques. Area of application for intensive exposure techniques. Technique description: implosion therapy, intensive live exposure, intensive exposure (live and in the imagination). New developments in intensive exposure: narrative exposure.
5. **Topic 5.** Consequence management techniques. Theoretical and experimental foundations of treatments based on consequence management techniques. The operating techniques for modifying behaviour: behaviour acquisition, maintenance and reduction. Token economy programmes and behavioural contracts. Self-control.
6. **Topic 6.** Social skills training techniques. Theoretical and experimental foundations of social skills training. Diagnostic and functional assessment of social skills. Components of social skills training. Types of social skills.
7. **Topic 7.** Cognitive therapies. Theoretical and experimental foundations of cognitive therapies. Albert Ellis' rational-emotive behaviour therapy: components of the therapy, main irrational beliefs. Aaron Beck's cognitive therapy: components of the therapy, cognitive distortions.
8. **Topic 8.** Coping therapies. Theoretical and experimental foundations of coping therapies. Coping therapies: Meichenbaum's stress inoculation model. Problem-solving skills.
9. **Topic 9.** Other psychological treatment techniques: Biofeedback. Behavioural activation. Functional analytic psychotherapy. Acceptance and commitment. Mindfulness. Theoretical and experimental foundations. Main characteristics.

Practical Syllabus

The practical syllabus corresponds to fundamental contents of the theoretical syllabus, and it will be developed in the form of workshops. Its basic goal is the application of different psychological intervention techniques and treatments in simulated and natural contexts.

PRACTICAL EXERCISES GROUPS M2, T1 AND T2 INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES APPLIED TO STRESS MANAGEMENT IN DAILY LIFE

The activities to be carried out in this practical exercise are structured in the following sequential stages:

1. stage.- To understand the conceptual framework the practical exercise is carried out in and evaluate the problems of stress in yourself (self-applied practical exercise) or another person.
2. stage.- Self-application or application on another person of a set of psychological intervention and treatment techniques, in their natural context, which allow them to acquire skills to cope with stress: deactivation techniques (muscle relaxation, abdominal breathing and themed imagination) and cognitive techniques (training in self-instructions and problem-solving).
3. Stage.- Self-application or application on another person of a set of intervention techniques, in their natural context, which allow them to use the skills learned in the the previous stage for stressful situations in daily life with the aim of reducing their impact: exposure techniques, both live and in the imagination.
4. Stage.- End of the training programme and maintenance of the achievements.

WORK METHOD

Attending the practical classes. Preparation and individual work. Model observation. Writing behaviour essays. Feedback from classmates and teaching staff. Positive reinforcement. Completing tasks between sessions (where the intervention techniques will be applied in the natural context). Review and correction of completed tasks.

GROUP M1 PRACTICAL EXERCISES These will consist of modelling a simulated consultation scenario through role play, with different actions related to the treatment techniques studied in this module.