

Kacper Wilk

Received: 07.04.2025

Accepted: 17.12.2025

Published: 04.08.2026

Indicators of change in process-oriented psychology: application, methods and effectiveness

Wskaźniki zmian w psychoterapii w nurcie psychologii procesu oraz jej zastosowanie, metody i efektywność

Polish Society of Process-Oriented Psychology, The Scientific Research Committee, Warsaw, Poland

Correspondence: Kacper Wilk, Polish Society of Process-Oriented Psychology, The Scientific Research Committee, Świętokrzyska 32, 00-116 Warsaw, Poland, e-mail: kwilk8@st.swps.edu.pl

doi <https://doi.org/10.15557/PIPK.2026.0019>

ORCID iD

Kacper Wilk <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5513-2153>

Abstract

Introduction and objective: Process-oriented psychology is a contemporary psychotherapeutic method that combines the principles and techniques of various therapeutic approaches – primarily Jungian psychoanalysis and the humanistic-experiential approach – with its own theoretical and practical framework. The method focuses on expanding the client's awareness by working with their experiences. Given its relatively recent emergence, comprehensive scientific descriptions of process-oriented psychology remain limited. This review aimed to identify current approaches to measuring its effectiveness and to outline directions for future research. Articles describing applications, interventions, and outcomes in process-oriented psychology were collected and analysed. **Materials and methods:** To illustrate how changes resulting from process-oriented psychology interventions have been measured, a wide range of diverse studies was reviewed. Changes in psychotherapeutic, psychoeducational, and developmental processes were described both qualitatively and quantitatively, and concerned individual as well as group interventions. Peer-reviewed scientific articles, conference presentations, and theses were included. **Results:** Findings indicate that research on process-oriented psychology most often assesses clients' functioning, symptom severity, and well-being, typically using self-report measures. Evidence suggests that process-oriented psychology may be effective in reducing depressive and anxiety symptoms and in enhancing self-esteem, sense of coherence, functioning, and overall well-being. **Conclusions:** Further research is needed to strengthen the empirical foundation of process-oriented psychology. Future studies should employ widely used measures of psychotherapy effectiveness to enable comparison with other therapeutic methods. Particularly valuable would be large-scale quantitative studies across multiple centres practising classical process-oriented psychology, as well as randomised controlled trials of standardised techniques, followed by meta-analyses.

Keywords: process-oriented psychology, process work, effectiveness of psychotherapy

Streszczenie

Wprowadzenie i cel: Psychologia procesu jest nowoczesną metodą psychoterapii łączącą założenia i techniki wielu nurtów terapeutycznych, przede wszystkim psychoanalizę jungowską i podejście humanistyczno-doświadczeniowe, z własnym zapleczem teoretycznym i praktycznym. Metoda ta skupia się na poszerzaniu świadomości klienta poprzez pracę z jego doświadczeniami. Krótki czas funkcjonowania psychologii procesu na rynku usług psychotherapeutycznych wiąże się z brakiem wyczerpującego opisu tej metody w piśmiennictwie. W celu określenia aktualnych form pomiaru efektywności psychologii procesu oraz wytyczenia kierunków do dalszych badań zebrano artykuły opisujące jej zastosowanie, formy interwencji i efektywność. **Materiał i metody:** Aby zaprezentować przykłady pomiaru zmiany, którą powodują interwencje psychologii procesu, przedstawiono szeroki wachlarz różnorodnych badań. Zmiany w procesach psychotherapeutycznych, psychotherapeutyczno-psychoedukacyjnych i rozwojowych były opisywane w formie jakościowej i ilościowej oraz dotyczyły interwencji indywidualnych i grupowych. Przedstawiono recenzowane artykuły naukowe, wystąpienia konferencyjne i prace dyplomowe. **Wyniki:** Przegląd wskazuje na to, że najpopularniejszymi badanymi indykatorami efektywności psychologii procesu są poziom funkcjonowania, nasilenie objawów i dobrostan klientów. W badaniach stosuje się narzędzia kładące nacisk na subiektywne oceny klientów. Psychologia procesu może być potencjalnie skuteczną metodą w redukcji objawów

psychopatologicznych, w tym depresyjnych i lękowych, oraz wzmacnianiu samooceny, poczucia koherencji, poziomu funkcjonowania i dobrostanu klientów. **Wnioski:** Konieczne są dalsze badania nad efektami psychologii procesu. Warto korzystać z popularnych narzędzi określających efektywność psychoterapii, by ułatwić porównanie z innymi metodami. Zwłaszcza cenne wydaje się prowadzenie ilościowych badań w dużych populacjach klientów, przez wiele ośrodków stosujących klasyczną psychoterapię w nurcie psychologii procesu, i randomizowanych badań kontrolowanych wystandaryzowanych technik w wyselekcjonowanych grupach badawczych, a następnie przeprowadzanie metaanaliz.

Słowa kluczowe: psychologia procesu, psychologia zorientowana na proces, efektywność psychoterapii

INTRODUCTION

Process-oriented psychology (PP) is a relatively recent method of psychotherapeutic work with individuals, couples, groups, and communities. It was proposed by Arnold Mindell in the 1970s (Cotter, 2021). PP is practised in many countries worldwide, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Spain, Slovakia, Japan, Ukraine, Italy, Israel, India, Greece, Germany, Egypt, Iraq, Kenya, Russia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Czech Republic, Australia, and Poland – countries in which schools affiliated with the International Association of Process Oriented Psychology (IAPOP) operate (International Association of Process Oriented Psychology, 2025).

The core assumption of psychotherapeutic work in PP is the expansion of a client's self-awareness by drawing information from their experiences. Experience is described as a flow of signals that carry meaning (Cotter, 2021). The client may be aware of these signals to varying degrees, and the signals may be closer to or more distant from their sense of identity, more or less familiar, and either egosyntonic or egodystonic. When the client is aware of the signals, and these signals are closer to their sense of identity, more familiar, and egosyntonic, they are considered primary signals. Signals of which the client is less aware, which are more distant from their sense of identity, less familiar, and egodystonic, are referred to as secondary signals. The boundary between them is called the edge by PP practitioners. It represents an obstacle to becoming aware of or identifying with an experience, and is conceptually similar to resistance or a defence mechanism (Wilk, 2022). Experiences are further categorised according to the way in which the client perceives them; this perceptual mode is referred to as a channel. Channels are divided into simple, sensory-based channels, such as visual, auditory, proprioceptive, and movement, and more complex channels, including the relationship and world channels, which encompass experiences emerging in social interactions.

The fundamental techniques of process work include:

- identifying process structure, which involves deepening understanding of an experience by analysing its primary or secondary nature and the channel in which it appears;
- amplification of experience, meaning the intentional modification of how the experience is perceived – for example by increasing or decreasing its intensity, or shifting it to another channel;

- working with the edge, including increasing awareness of the difficulty associated with experiencing a given phenomenon;
- integration of experience, which involves incorporating new insights gained from the experience into everyday life and behaviour (Szymkiewicz, 2013).

Amplifying signals enables a deepening of experience and an increase in awareness, which may lead to meaningful insight (Greń et al., 2023).

APPLICATION OF PROCESS-ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGY METHODS

PP methods encompass a wide range of psychotherapeutic and developmental interventions used with individuals, couples, groups, and communities. Owing to their flexible adjustment to clients' needs, PP interventions can address a broad spectrum of difficulties and concerns.

PP psychotherapy is applied, among others, to individual clients with affective disorders (F30–39) and neurotic disorders (F40–48) (Tschuschke et al., 2010), including those with accompanying physical symptoms (Sedláková et al., 2020), eating disorders, self-harm, insomnia (Fukao et al., 2007), or panic attacks (Vassiliou, 2008). It is worth noting that in community mental health centres in Poland, these diagnostic groups (F30–39, F40–48) constitute the majority of outpatient clients (Kiejna et al., 2023).

PP interventions can also be incorporated into inpatient settings (Cotter et al., 2022). They may be used with clients with dementia-related disorders (Spalding and Khalsa, 2010), who form the second-largest group of hospitalised patients in Poland (Kiejna et al., 2023).

PP therapy is further applied in work with clients with addictions (Hauser, 2008), codependency (Szymkiewicz, 2013), and with children (Camastral, 2008), including those with intellectual developmental disorders and a history of abuse (Szymkiewicz, 2013). It is also used with individuals belonging to marginalised or discriminated groups, such as clients in consensually non-monogamous relationships (Henrich and Trawinski, 2016). Researchers additionally highlight the potential of PP for integrating psychedelic experiences and reducing harms associated with psychoactive substance use (Greń et al., 2023).

In the context of group interventions, PP can be applied as a component of group training programmes (Yang and

Jeon, 2016), as well as a tool for working with conflicts within groups, including conflicts and community responses to significant social issues through “worldwork” interventions (Audergon and Audergon, 2017; Kobayashi, 2009).

Due to the broad range of interests among process-oriented psychotherapists, many tools and interventions have been developed. To a large extent, PP is an eclectic method that adapts techniques from other therapeutic approaches (Cotter and Callery, 2023).

PROCESS-ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGY AND OTHER PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC APPROACHES

PP originates from Jungian psychoanalysis, and its founder himself completed formal training in that tradition (Mindell, 2018). Similar to psychoanalysis, PP assumes that therapy involves bringing unconscious material into awareness through techniques designed to amplify and work with expressions of the unconscious (Greń et al., 2023). Psychoanalysis is a relatively well-researched psychotherapeutic method with extensive empirical support. This is demonstrated by recent individual studies showing its effectiveness in reducing psychopathological symptoms and contributing to client recovery according to clinicians’ assessments (Özyıldırım et al., 2023), as well as its efficacy in decreasing anxiety and depressive symptoms, enhancing quality of life, and strengthening clients’ adaptive coping strategies (Conceição et al., 2024). Meta-analyses likewise indicate its effectiveness in reducing the severity of various psychopathological symptoms and personality disorders (de Maat et al., 2013). The Jungian version of psychoanalysis also shows effectiveness in symptom reduction and exerts a positive influence on clients’ interpersonal relationships and personality maturity. Its effects appear long-lasting, and the ratio of effectiveness to cost is satisfactory (Roesler, 2020, 2013).

In psychotherapeutic practice, PP combines its psychoanalytic foundations with many elements of other approaches, particularly those within the humanistic-experiential tradition (Elliott et al., 2021). These approaches focus on the client’s present-moment experience, which may be elicited or modified through experiential techniques, role-playing, and following the client while providing an accepting space that facilitates change. Examples include Gestalt therapy (Mann, 2020), psychodrama (Cruz et al., 2018), emotion-focused therapy (EFT) (Şenol et al., 2023), and person-centred therapy (De Sousa, 2023).

The approaches mentioned above have been studied for their effectiveness and show positive outcomes. The effectiveness of Gestalt therapy is reported in individual studies – for example, among older adults, it reduces depressive symptoms and strengthens independent emotional and intellectual functioning (Shariat et al., 2020), and among individuals with multiple sclerosis, it reduces anxiety symptoms (Javadi Larijani et al., 2023). Reviews

also document its effectiveness in reducing various psychopathological symptoms and, for instance, increasing clients’ sense of self-efficacy (Raffagnino, 2019). Similarly, psychodrama shows effectiveness across various client groups and difficulties, for example in reducing anxiety, aggression, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder symptoms in children (Mojahed et al., 2021), as well as in reducing post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in populations with substance-use disorders (Giacomucci and Marquit, 2020). Literature reviews also document the effectiveness of group psychodrama in reducing symptoms such as anxiety and depression, behavioural disorders, and in increasing well-being and quality of life (López-González et al., 2021; Ulusoy et al., 2023). Research on EFT demonstrates its high effectiveness in reducing maladaptive emotion-regulation strategies (Shokrolahi et al., 2022) and its effectiveness in reducing difficult emotions and unmet emotional needs, including in comparison with other therapeutic modalities (Haghighi et al., 2022). Literature reviews also document the effectiveness of EFT in reducing various symptoms, including depressive and anxiety symptoms, trauma-related symptoms, and eating disorders (Fülepe et al., 2021). The effectiveness of person-centred therapy and preventive programmes based on it is also reported in numerous studies. It has been shown to strengthen psychological resilience among individuals experiencing peer violence (Fitri et al., 2022); to be effective in adaptively modifying adolescents’ attitudes toward addictions (Isma and Nassima, 2022); to strengthen psychological resilience and hope among women with a history of suicide attempts (Rezapour-Mirsaleh et al., 2023); and to increase self-esteem among individuals experiencing body-related shaming (Pulungan and Harahap, 2024).

PP emphasises the connection between body and psyche and incorporates body-oriented work (Vasičáková Očenášová, 2016), using techniques similar to those applied in dance and movement therapy (Millman et al., 2021). PP also employs meditative and mindfulness-based techniques (Demyanenko and Uninets, 2024), similar to those found in third-wave cognitive behavioural therapies inspired by Buddhism and Hinduism (Shah, 2021). Its principles enable work aligned with the internal family systems model (Demyanenko and Uninets, 2024; Green, 2008) and systemic therapy (Calatrava et al., 2022; Cotter, 2021). Within group interventions, PP applies the principle of deep democracy, which holds that all voices should be heard and all perspectives included (Wilk et al., 2025a). Certain elements of this approach resemble the assumptions of open dialogue (Buus et al., 2021), which has been implemented in Poland as part of community-based psychiatric care (Trojańska, 2018).

Dance and movement therapy shows effectiveness in individual studies, including reductions in depressive symptoms (Hyvönen et al., 2020), improvements in mothers’ well-being and their subjectively assessed relationship with their

children, as well as reductions in children's behavioural problems (Kedem et al., 2021). Reviews and meta-analyses have demonstrated its positive impact on cognitive and executive functions and memory among individuals with neurodegenerative diseases (Wang et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2022). The effectiveness of third-wave cognitive behavioural therapies is well documented in meta-analyses, showing reductions in symptoms – including depressive, anxiety, and eating-disorder symptoms – and improvements in well-being and quality of life (Jenkinson et al., 2022; Lawlor et al., 2020; Perkins et al., 2023). Internal family systems therapy demonstrates effectiveness in numerous studies, including reductions in depressive symptoms and physical pain among patients with rheumatoid arthritis (Shadick et al., 2013), reductions in depressive symptoms among female students (Haddock et al., 2017), and reductions in depressive and trauma-related symptoms (Hodgdon et al., 2022). Systemic therapy is effective in reducing mood, anxiety, psychotic, and substance-use-related symptoms, behavioural disorders, and in facilitating adaptation to life changes such as illness and disability, as well as improving communication between family members (Carr, 2016; Retzlaff et al., 2013; Vossler et al., 2024). The effectiveness of open dialogue in improving psychological and social functioning was demonstrated, among others, by the study by Pocobello et al. (2024).

Various studies have also examined the effectiveness of PP across populations from diverse cultural contexts.

EFFECTIVENESS OF PROCESS-ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGY AND ITS ASSESSMENT

Studies evaluating the effectiveness of PP have employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. Case studies describe the individual course of psychotherapy and its effects on the client. Researchers have focused on describing change in terms of reductions in depressive, anxiety, and other symptoms, as well as overall psychopathology, changes in clients' functioning (e.g. at the individual level, in interpersonal and social relationships),

and changes in self-esteem and self-criticism. Quantitative studies, in turn, have used questionnaire-based instruments designed to measure changes in effectiveness indicators at a minimum of two time points: before and after the intervention.

Tab. 1 presents the indicators of change analysed in quantitative studies. It also provides information on the components of these indicators and the instruments used to measure them. The content of some indicators overlaps, as the constructs they assess are interrelated. Similarly, measurement instruments may include elements of multiple indicators.

To illustrate the current state of research on the effectiveness and efficacy of PP, a selection of studies is presented below. Relevant articles were collected using academic search engines, including Google Scholar, from databases such as PubMed, MEDLINE, and EBSCO. No restrictions were applied regarding publication dates. The general findings are summarised in Tab. 2, with a more detailed description provided in the following section.

One of the largest research projects examining the effectiveness of psychotherapy, including PP, was conducted in Switzerland as part of the PAP-S project (Tschuschke et al., 2010, 2009; von Wyl et al., 2013, 2021), which analysed the effectiveness of ten psychotherapeutic approaches. Studies with repeated measurements, conducted before and after the intervention using psychometric instruments, were used to determine the overall effectiveness of psychotherapy. Assessments included symptom severity, interpersonal relationships, and social role functioning (Outcome Questionnaire-45-2, OQ-45), overall severity of various psychopathological symptoms (Brief Symptom Inventory, BSI), depressive symptoms (Beck Depression Inventory, BDI), and the level of psychological, social, and occupational functioning (Global Assessment of Functioning Scale, GAF). In the context of PP, Hauser et al. (2022) described its effectiveness based on PAP-S findings (Tschuschke et al., 2013). The PP intervention group comprised 60 participants, of whom 27 completed both pre- and post-intervention assessments. Statistically significant improvements were

Indicator type	Tools	Indicator components
Symptom severity	BDI, BSI, OQ-45, ŠIP, CORE-OM	Depressive symptoms; anxiety; somatisation; obsessive-compulsive symptoms; phobias; paranoia; psychoticism; addictive behaviours; interpersonal sensitivity and hostility; general symptoms/difficulties, including those reported by the client
Functioning	GAF, OQ-45, ORS, CORE-OM	Individual, interpersonal, and societal functioning, including: suicide risk; aggression and self-harm; maintenance of hygiene; communication skills; cognitive and emotional difficulties affecting behaviour; employment and related challenges/successes; physical activity; presence of meaningful social relationships; pursuit of goals and interests; social and life problems; functioning in social roles; social conflicts
Well-being	ORS, CORE-OM	Subjective personal and overall well-being
Other	SOC-13, IDI, SRS, EXP, PI	Sense of coherence; level of engagement in experiencing; intercultural sensitivity; client evaluation of psychotherapy sessions, including overall assessment, relationship with the therapist, work on topics important to the client, and the method or intervention used

BDI – Beck Depression Inventory; **BSI** – Brief Symptom Inventory; **CORE-OM** – Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation – Outcome Measure; **EXP** – Experiencing Scale; **GAF** – Global Assessment of Functioning Scale; **IDI** – Intercultural Development Inventory; **OQ-45** – Outcome Questionnaire-45-2; **ORS** – Outcome Rating Scale; **PI** – Process Index; **SOC-13** – Sense of Coherence Scale; **SRS** – Session Rating Scale; **ŠIP** – Individual Symptoms Scale.

170 Tab. 1. Change indicators used in PP research

Citation	N	Effect description
Tschuschke et al., 2013	27	Increase in therapeutic effectiveness measures Increase in functioning Decrease in overall symptom severity Decrease in depressive symptom severity
Sedláková et al., 2020	35	Decrease in overall symptom severity Decrease in somatisation Decrease in psychological difficulties
Hauser, 2008	13	Increase in sense of coherence Increase in engagement in experiencing (therapeutic process element)
Collins and Wells, 2006	9	Increase in well-being Increase in functioning Increase in self-esteem Decrease in psychological difficulties Decrease in risk to self and others
Staszewska, 2009	5	Increase in satisfaction with interpersonal relationships
Yang and Jeon, 2016	116	Increase in well-being Increase in functioning
Kobayashi, 2009	61	Increase in intercultural sensitivity

Tab. 2. Quantitative research results

demonstrated across all outcome measures, with large effect sizes: BDI – 0.81, BSI-GSI – 1.00, OQ-45 – 1.04, GAF – 1.25. Sedláková et al. (2020) conducted a study involving 67 clients experiencing somatic symptoms, randomly assigned to an experimental group ($n = 35$), which received PP psychotherapy combined with treatment as usual (TAU), and a control group ($n = 32$), which received TAU alone. Participants were diagnosed with affective and anxiety disorders (F3, F4). Individuals with diagnoses classified as F0, F1, F2, and F6, those with oncological symptoms, and those receiving other forms of psychotherapeutic support were excluded. Prior to the interventions, psychometric assessment was conducted using the BSI, Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation – Outcome Measure (CORE-OM), Individual Symptoms Scale (ŠIP), and the Outcome Rating Scale (ORS). After the intervention, the ŠIP was re-administered in the experimental group, and one week later all measures were repeated in both groups. The results showed a significant reduction in overall symptom severity and somatisation (BSI), as well as improvements in the domain combining clients' difficulties, well-being, and overall functioning (CORE-OM) in the experimental group, with no significant changes observed in the control group. The intensity of symptoms reported by clients (ŠIP) decreased significantly in both groups, although the decrease was greater in the experimental group. As the ŠIP was administered three times, it was possible to demonstrate that scores immediately after the intervention and one week later were both lower than at baseline. The change between the first and second measurement was greater than between the first and third, suggesting that the positive effects of the intervention were partially sustained. With respect to well-being (ORS), personal, relational, and overall well-being scores differed significantly across measurement points in the experimental group, whereas no statistically significant change was observed in the control group.

Hauser (2008) conducted a study involving 13 individuals with opioid dependence who completed two PP sessions lasting 55–60 minutes each. A repeated-measures design was used, employing instruments such as the Sense of Coherence Scale (SOC-13), the Experiencing Scale (EXP), and the author's proposed Process Index (PI). The results indicated an increase in clients' sense of coherence and in experiential engagement, a key element of the therapeutic process.

A pilot study conducted by Staszewska (2009) as part of a diploma thesis examined changes in the quality of the therapeutic relationship and clients' satisfaction across various life domains between consecutive sessions. The study used the ORS and the Session Rating Scale. Clients participated in three to five sessions during which measurements were taken. The small number of eligible participants (five) precluded statistical analysis, rendering the findings insufficient for drawing firm conclusions. Nonetheless, it may be noted that all clients showed improved satisfaction with interpersonal relationships between the first and last session. A case report by Fukao et al. (2008) documents the effects of applying PP psychotherapy. The client, a woman in her forties, sought help for mental health symptoms including hyperventilation, anxiety symptoms, depressive moods, excessive sleepiness, and a general sense of fatigue. During the psychotherapeutic process, she also disclosed eating disorder symptoms and self-harming behaviours. She had a history of physical abuse by her father and neglect by her mother, and she displayed a tendency towards dependent behaviours. The PP intervention enabled the client to adopt an observer stance towards her intrapsychic experiences, which contributed to increased independence, greater courage in facing difficulties, and enhanced self-control. As a result, she was able to regulate negative eating tendencies and discontinue self-harm.

The case study presented by Camastral (2008) describes the course of a PP intervention with a family system in

which significant changes occurred. The primary client was a six-year-old boy experiencing nightmares and nervousness. The child's behavioural difficulties emerged after his parents' divorce and the resulting changes in caregiving arrangements. The intervention involved observing the client and applying PP techniques during play sessions, which the mother attended as a witness. The therapeutic process led to increased awareness of the family situation and systemic roles. Both the boy and his mother demonstrated improved communication skills and greater assertiveness towards the child's father. By deepening her awareness of her role, the mother was able to relieve the child of certain burdens and assume responsibility for managing contact with his father.

A study conducted by Collins and Wells (2006) examined the effects of group-based PP interventions on clients and included both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The study sample consisted of 27 participants. The qualitative findings indicated subjectively perceived increases in self-esteem, coping abilities, and reductions in self-criticism. Clients reported greater self-awareness, enhanced self-knowledge, reduced self- and other-directed criticism, a sense of calm, and enhanced creativity. They began to view themselves as allies and to evaluate themselves more positively as individuals. Clients also expressed favourable attitudes toward PP as a method, considering it worth recommending to others, distinct from standard mental health care, and potentially a valuable addition to the spectrum of psychotherapeutic services. The quantitative analysis was conducted on a relatively small subgroup ($N = 9$) and revealed substantial improvements, including reductions in functional difficulties, problem severity, self-criticism, and risky behaviours towards oneself and others, alongside increases in well-being and self-esteem. The magnitude of change reached 76% for risky behaviours towards oneself and others and 60% for self-esteem – results that are striking yet require confirmation in future studies with much larger samples.

A psychotherapy and psychoeducation programme based on PP was implemented for a group of students in Korea, and its effects were examined (Yang and Jeon, 2016). The study included 116 first-year students from Hannam University. The programme consisted of 15 group sessions, with measurements conducted before and after the intervention. Statistically significant increases were observed in positive thinking, positive peer relationships, positive self-awareness, subjective well-being, functioning, and overall well-being.

Kobayashi's (2009) thesis describes an analysis of the effectiveness of a "worldwork" intervention in increasing participants' intercultural sensitivity. The study involved attendees of a six-day seminar. Pre- and post-intervention measurements were conducted using the Intercultural Development Inventory, with 61 participants completing both assessments. The findings demonstrated an increase in participants' intercultural sensitivity following the intervention.

DISCUSSION

Analysing the effectiveness of PP is ethically necessary: individuals in distress should be offered methods most likely to produce quick and lasting improvement at minimal cost, in line with the "minimax" principle (Cauffman and Weggeman, 2023). Psychotherapy places financial, temporal, and emotional demands on clients, and may produce side effects (Strauss et al., 2021). Client preferences must be taken into account, as therapies aligned with those preferences lead to better outcomes and lower dropout rates (Swift et al., 2018). Research on the effects of PP can confirm its effectiveness both generally and for specific client groups or intervention techniques, as well as in comparison with other approaches. Such research may also support the development of the method by identifying directions for broader modifications and specific adjustments tailored to individual client characteristics.

The collected studies show that PP interventions may contribute to reducing psychopathological symptoms – including anxiety, depression, and somatisation – and to improving functioning, self-esteem, sense of coherence, personal, relational, and overall well-being, as well as clients' quality of life, in accordance with the World Health Organization's definition of health (Christoforou et al., 2024). Client-reported symptoms decreased following PP interventions, and this change was partially maintained over time. The frequency of clients' risky behaviours also declined. Case studies highlight the broad impact of PP across many areas of clients' lives, showing reductions in problematic behaviours and improvements in communication within their social environments. The influence of PP extended beyond the clients themselves and indirectly affected their surroundings. A recurring effect accompanying PP was the widening of clients' awareness of their inner experiences and interpersonal situations. Group interventions based on PP were positively evaluated by clients and associated with various beneficial outcomes, such as improved coping abilities, reduced self-criticism, increased self-awareness, positive thinking and creativity, and enhanced peer relationships. Clients also developed greater intercultural sensitivity through PP-based seminars.

PP demonstrates positive effects on individuals, groups, and communities. It can enhance awareness and communication at intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social levels. Positive outcomes were observed among clients of different ages, including both adults and children, and across various ethnic backgrounds, indicating the universality of PP. Its positive impact on self-esteem may support the well-being of individuals with histories of emotional neglect in childhood (Wilk et al., 2024). Likewise, sense of coherence – also positively influenced by PP – is associated with well-being (Arya and Lal, 2018) and good physical health (Bladh et al., 2023).

The principal limitation of the reviewed studies was their relatively small sample sizes. In some cases, the findings can only be considered preliminary indications for further analyses, as the size of the study groups precluded meaningful statistical analyses and the drawing of reliable conclusions. Furthermore, the high heterogeneity of the included studies means that conclusions regarding the effectiveness of PP should be drawn with caution. At the same time, this diversity makes it possible to view research on PP from different perspectives and in various applications, along with the measurement methods used. While the use of techniques borrowed from other psychotherapeutic approaches – whose positive effects on clients have been scientifically demonstrated – may be an important predictor of PP's effectiveness, further research on such interventions within PP is necessary. The effects of these interventions should be compared between therapists trained in the original modalities from which they originate and PP psychotherapists.

DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

From the perspective of the variables discussed, the first domain for studying the effectiveness of PP should be the client's perspective, as psychotherapy is ultimately intended to achieve the client's goals. Satisfaction with the psychotherapeutic process itself, individual interventions, therapy outcomes, and their impact on self-esteem should be measured. The psychotherapeutic process may contribute to changes in personality (Nguyen et al., 2020). Therefore, changes in self-esteem may constitute one of the most important indicators of PP effectiveness. To assess the client's perspective, established questionnaire-based instruments should be used, and new measures should be created or existing ones adapted. At the same time, qualitative data are particularly valuable in this area. The second research domain for PP should encompass the medical perspective, based on the biopsychosocial model (Smith, 2021). Common measures of symptom severity, disability, and psychological, social, and physical well-being should be applied, along with variables indirectly related to health. Standardised, widely used methods are especially valuable, as they facilitate comparisons between the outcomes of PP and other forms of psychotherapy. A potentially very valuable category of tools for PP may be those that integrate both domains – for example, the ŠIP, in which clients identify the symptoms they are struggling with. A similar approach could be extended to dimensions of well-being or levels of functioning. All measurement tools used should demonstrate good psychometric properties, and their use should not impose an excessive burden on the client. Each study on PP should obtain approval from an ethics committee to maintain a balance between scientific value and participant comfort.

Research on process-oriented psychology should follow the minimax principle. Until a robust scientific foundation is established, the focus should be on the most precise and

efficient methods for measuring the effectiveness of PP. Quantitative studies enabling future meta-analyses should be prioritised. As an initial step, repeated-measures studies using self-report questionnaires should be conducted on large samples, coordinated across centres practising classical PP. Key variables include therapy satisfaction, self-esteem, severity of depressive and anxiety symptoms, level of functioning, well-being, and quality of life associated with it (Wilk et al., 2025b). Next, the measurement of transdiagnostic factors should be implemented, including resilience, stress and coping abilities, emotion-regulation difficulties, perceived self-efficacy, and sense of coherence. To allow for more definitive conclusions, objective medical data should be collected alongside questionnaire data, and control groups should be incorporated into study designs. To distinguish the effects of PP from independent factors, variables such as client engagement, capacity to benefit from therapy, number of missed sessions, quality of the therapeutic alliance, and therapist-rated engagement should be monitored. Specific experiential measures assessed with tools such as the EXP and the PI may be particularly valuable for determining the intensity of client involvement. In the early stages of psychotherapy, appropriate interventions should enhance the client's capacity to benefit from therapy and counteract factors that reduce its effectiveness. Measures of PP effectiveness should also be related to the financial costs of therapy, its total duration, and the period during which the client receives interventions.

For more precise studies assessing the effectiveness of specific interventions, rigorous standardisation of procedures is necessary – both in terms of therapist actions and participant characteristics. One example might be research on amplifying proprioceptive signals in clients with specific somatisation symptoms or chronic pain. In such studies, sample sizes may be smaller and measurement periods shorter. At the same time, inclusion and exclusion criteria should eliminate as many confounding factors as possible (e.g. co-occurring somatic or mental disorders, use of medication or psychoactive substances). In such focused studies, the measured variables should be precisely aligned with the intervention and the sample. Examples include the severity of specific symptoms – such as psychotic symptoms, eating disorders – or risk factors for diseases and disorders, such as substance use. It may also be useful to consider tools typical of other therapeutic modalities whose elements appear in PP – for example, instruments assessing personality maturity within a psychodynamic framework.

The next step should be the implementation of randomised controlled clinical trials, which will determine the effectiveness of PP and allow comparisons with other forms of support and psychotherapy across diverse client groups, including marginalised populations. Additionally, the scope of measured variables should be expanded to include biometric markers. In parallel, qualitative research should be continued and broadened.

Conflict of interest

The author does not report any financial or personal connections with other persons or organisations which might negatively affect the content of this publication and/or claim authorship rights to this publication.

Author contribution

Original concept of study; collection, recording and/or compilation of data; analysis and interpretation of data; writing of manuscript; critical review of manuscript; final approval of manuscript: KW.

References

- Arya B, Lal DS: Grit and sense of coherence as predictors of well-being. *Indian J Posit Psychol* 2018; 9: 169–172.
- Audergon A, Audergon JC: Contribution of worldwork methodology for violence prevention and community recovery after mass violence: an example from Rwanda. *Psychother Politics Int* 2017; 15: e1405.
- Bladh M, Sydsjö G, Ekselius L et al.: Sense of coherence and health in women: a 25-year follow-up study. *BMC Womens Health* 2023; 23: 670.
- Buus N, Ong B, Einboden R et al.: Implementing open dialogue approaches: a scoping review. *Fam Process* 2021; 60: 1117–1133.
- Calatrava M, Martins MV, Schweer-Collins M et al.: Differentiation of self: a scoping review of Bowen Family Systems Theory's core construct. *Clin Psychol Rev* 2022; 91: 102101.
- Camastral S: No small change: process-oriented play therapy for children of separating parents. *Aust N Z J Fam Ther* 2008; 29: 100–106.
- Carr A: How and why do family and systemic therapies work? *Aust N Z J Fam Ther* 2016; 37: 37–55.
- Cauffman L, Weggeman M: Solution-focused applied psychology a design science research based protocol (SoFAP-P). *J Solut Focus Pract* 2023; 7: 1–32.
- Christoforou R, Lange S, Schweiker M: Individual differences in the definitions of health and well-being and the underlying promotional effect of the built environment. *J Build Eng* 2024; 84: 108560.
- Collins M, Wells H: The politics of consciousness: illness or individuation? *Psychother Politics Int* 2006; 4: 131–41.
- Conceição CTM, Meinão IM, Blay SL et al.: Effectiveness in the long-term follow-up of brief group psychoanalytic psychotherapy in quality of life, symptoms, coping, anxiety, and depression in systemic lupus erythematosus patients. *Med Res Arch* 2024; 12: 1–11.
- Cotter P: A comparison of process oriented psychotherapy with person-centred psychotherapy, cognitive behaviour therapy, analytical psychotherapy, brief psychodynamic therapy, gestalt therapy and Milan systemic family therapy. *Int J Psychother* 2021; 25: 9–25.
- Cotter P, Callery P: A process-oriented psychology (POP) approach to processing collective trauma in an Irish context. *Psychother Politics Int* 2023; 21: 1–22.
- Cotter P, Papasileka E, Eugster M et al.: Working with the chaos in an adult inpatient mental health setting: the role of an integrated therapies team. *Ment Health Soc Incl* 2022; 26: 230–241.
- Cruz A, Sales CM, Alves P et al.: The core techniques of Morenian psychodrama: a systematic review of literature. *Front Psychol* 2018; 9: 1263.
- De Sousa A: Client centered therapy: an overview. *Indian J Ment Health* 2023; 10: 145–155.
- Demyanenko B, Uninets I: Methodological bases of integration of positive psychotherapy with modern directions of psychotherapeutic assistance. *Glob Psychother* 2024; 4: 93–107.
- Elliott R, Watson J, Timulak L et al.: Research on humanistic-experiential psychotherapies: updated review. In: Barkham M, Lutz W, Castonguay LG (eds.): *Bergin and Garfield's Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change*. John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken 2021: 421–467.
- Fitri HU, Rasmanah M, Kushendar K et al.: Individual counseling client-centered approach in increasing the resilience of victims of bullying. *Couns-Edu Int J Couns Educ* 2022; 7: 176–180.
- Fukao A, Fujimi Y, Ushiroyama T et al.: Case of a female patient with eating disorder and major depression who was successfully treated by process-oriented psychology. *Aino J* 2007; 6: 71–73.
- Fülep M, Pilárik L, Novák L et al.: The effectiveness of Emotion-Focused Therapy: a systematic review of experimental studies. *Ceskoslov Psychol* 2021; 65: 459–473.
- Giacomucci S, Marquit J: The effectiveness of trauma-focused psychodrama in the treatment of PTSD in inpatient substance abuse treatment. *Front Psychol* 2020; 11: 896.
- Green EJ: Individuals in conflict: an internal family systems approach. *Fam J* 2008; 16: 125–131.
- Greñ J, Tylš F, Lasocik M et al.: Back from the rabbit hole. Theoretical considerations and practical guidelines on psychedelic integration for mental health specialists. *Front Psychol* 2023; 14: 1054692.
- Haddock SA, Weiler LM, Trump LJ et al.: The efficacy of internal family systems therapy in the treatment of depression among female college students: a pilot study. *J Marital Fam Ther* 2017; 43: 131–144.
- Haghighi H, Etemadi O, Ahmadi SA: Comparison of the effectiveness of emotion-focused therapy (EFT) and trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT) on adolescents' emotional experiences of parental divorce. *J Appl Psychol Res* 2022; 13: 251–267.
- Hauser R: Heroin addiction and altered states. Can a single process-oriented intervention help? In: *Deep Democracy Where Fields Meet*. International Association of Process Oriented Psychology, London 2008: 228–240.
- Hauser R, Heidelberg R, Weyermann R et al.: *Prozessorientierte Psychotherapie*. Psychosozial-Verlag, Gießen 2022.
- Henrich R, Trawinski C: Social and therapeutic challenges facing polyamorous clients. *Sex Relation Ther* 2016; 31: 376–390.
- Hodgdon HB, Anderson FG, Southwell E et al.: Internal family systems (IFS) therapy for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among survivors of multiple childhood trauma: a pilot effectiveness study. *J Aggress Maltreatment Trauma* 2022; 31: 22–43.
- Hyvönen K, Pylvänäinen P, Muotka J et al.: The effects of dance movement therapy in the treatment of depression: a multicenter, randomized controlled trial in Finland. *Front Psychol* 2020; 11: 1687.
- International Association of Process Oriented Psychology: *Diploma Level Training Schools*. 2025. Available from: <https://iaopop.com/training-centers/>.
- Isma B, Nassima T: The effectiveness of a preventive program based on the theory of Carl Rogers in changing adolescents' attitudes towards addiction (Field study in Oran, Algeria). *J EL-Bahith Hum Social Sci* 2022; 14: 529–538.
- Javadi Larijani F, Mojtabaie M, Moghaddasi M et al.: Effectiveness of gestalt therapy, behavioral activation and placebo on symptoms of anxiety in women suffering multiple sclerosis: a randomized controlled trial. *Int J Travel Med Global Health* 2023; 11: 227–233.
- Jenkinson E, Knoop I, Hudson JL et al.: The effectiveness of cognitive behavioural therapy and third-wave cognitive behavioural interventions on diabetes-related distress: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Diabet Med* 2022; 39: e14948.
- Kedem D, Regev D, Guttman J: Moving together: assessing the effectiveness of group mother-child dance and movement therapy. *Arts Psychother* 2021; 74: 101803.
- Kiejna A, Zięba M, Cichoń E et al.: Evaluation of mental health services delivered before and after the introduction of pilot Mental Health Centers in Poland using monitoring indicators. *Psychiatr Pol* 2023; 57: 1213–1229.
- Kobayashi A: An assessment of effects of the group process method of process work on the development of individuals' intercultural sensitivity: a quantitative and qualitative analysis. Union Institute and University, 2009.
- Lawlor ER, Islam N, Bates S et al.: Third-wave cognitive behaviour therapies for weight management: a systematic review and network meta-analysis. *Obes Rev* 2020; 21: e13013.

- López-González MA, Morales-Landazábal P, Topa G: Psychodrama group therapy for social issues: a systematic review of controlled clinical trials. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 2021; 18: 4442.
- de Maat S, de Jonghe F, de Kraker R et al.: The current state of the empirical evidence for psychoanalysis: a meta-analytic approach. *Harv Rev Psychiatry* 2013; 21: 107–137.
- Mann D: *Gestalt Therapy: 100 Key Points and Techniques*. Routledge, Abingdon-on-Thames 2020.
- Millman LM, Terhune DB, Hunter EC et al.: Towards a neurocognitive approach to dance movement therapy for mental health: a systematic review. *Clin Psychol Psychother* 2021; 28: 24–38.
- Mindell A: Dream body/dreambody on the history and theory of processor-oriented psychology. *J Psychol Clin Psychiatry* 2018; 9: 00490.
- Mojahed A, Zaheri Y, Moqaddam MF: Effectiveness of group psychodrama on aggression and social anxiety of children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: a randomized clinical trial. *Arts Psychother* 2021; 73: 101756.
- Nguyen PLL, Kim HL, Romain AMN et al.: Personality change and personality as predictor of change in psychotherapy: a longitudinal study in a community mental health clinic. *J Res Pers* 2020; 87: 103980.
- Özyıldırım İ, Baykara S, Erteki BA et al.: The effectiveness of psychoanalytic psychotherapy in individuals diagnosed with PTSD due to torture and severe human rights violations. *Torture J* 2023; 33: 41–53.
- Perkins AM, Meiser-Stedman R, Spaul SW et al.: The effectiveness of third wave cognitive behavioural therapies for children and adolescents: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Br J Clin Psychol* 2023; 62: 209–227.
- Pocobello R, Camilli F, Ridente P et al.: Evaluating Open Dialogue in Italian mental health services: evidence from a multisite prospective cohort study. *Front Psychol* 2024; 15: 1428689.
- Pulungan WS, Harahap ACP: The effectiveness of group counseling services a client-centered approach to increase the confidence of students who are victims of body shaming. *Scaffolding J Educ Islam Multicult* 2024; 6: 261–274.
- Raffagnino R: Gestalt therapy effectiveness: a systematic review of empirical evidence. *Open J Soc Sci* 2019; 7: 66–83.
- Retzlaff R, von Sydow K, Beher S et al.: The efficacy of systemic therapy for internalizing and other disorders of childhood and adolescence: a systematic review of 38 randomized trials. *Fam Process* 2013; 52: 619–652.
- Rezapor-Mirsaleh Y, Talebiyan E, Azizpour S et al.: The effectiveness of Rogers's client-centered therapy on resilience and hope of women who committed suicide. *J Res Psychopathol* 2023; 4: 37–45.
- Roesler C: Contemporary psychotherapy research, psychodynamic psychotherapy and Jungian analysis. *Psychologia* 2020; 62: 94–105.
- Roesler C: Evidence for the effectiveness of Jungian psychotherapy: a review of empirical studies. *Behav Sci (Basel)* 2013; 3: 562–575.
- Sedlákova B, Dominik T, Kolařík M: Process-oriented approach to working with body symptoms. *Int Body Psychother J* 2020; 19: 43–55.
- Şenol A, Gürbüz F, Dost MT: Emotion-focused couple therapy: a review of theory and practice. *Psikiyat Güncel Yaklaş* 2023; 15: 146–160.
- Shadick NA, Sowell NF, Frits ML et al.: A randomized controlled trial of an internal family systems-based psychotherapeutic intervention on outcomes in rheumatoid arthritis: a proof-of-concept study. *J Rheumatol* 2013; 40: 1831–1841.
- Shah M: Acceptance-based therapies and Asian philosophical traditions: similarities and differences in the concept of acceptance. *J Ration-Emot Cogn-Behav Ther* 2021; 39: 1–13.
- Shariat A, Ghazanfari A, Yarmohammadian A et al.: The effectiveness of gestalt therapy on depression, self-differentiation, integrative self-knowledge and positive psychological characteristics in the elderly. *Aging Psychol* 2020; 6: 267–249.
- Shokrolahi M, Hashemi SE, Mehrabizadeh Honarmand M et al.: Comparison of the effectiveness of emotion focused therapy (EFT) and cognitive analytic therapy (CAT) on anxiety sensitivity, pain catastrophizing, experiential avoidance and cognitive emotion regulation in patients with chronic pain and alexithymia. *J Res Behav Sci* 2022; 19: 739–752.
- Smith RC: Making the biopsychosocial model more scientific – its general and specific models. *Soc Sci Med* 2021; 272: 113568.
- Spalding M, Khalsa P: Aging matters: humanistic and transpersonal approaches to psychotherapy with elders with dementia. *J Humanist Psychol* 2010; 50: 142–174.
- Staszewska KA: Measuring the effectiveness of therapy sessions conducted by process work practitioners: a pilot study [Internet]. 2009. Available from: <https://iipop.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/dissertations/staszewska-Measuring%20the%20effectiveness%20of%20therapy%20sessions%20conducted%20by%20Process%20Work%20Practitioners.pdf> [cited: 22 February 2025].
- Strauss B, Gawlytta R, Schleu A et al.: Negative effects of psychotherapy: estimating the prevalence in a random national sample. *BJPsych Open* 2021; 7: e186.
- Swift JK, Callahan JL, Cooper M et al.: The impact of accommodating client preference in psychotherapy: a meta-analysis. *J Clin Psychol* 2018; 74: 1924–1937.
- Szymkiewicz B (ed.): *Psychologia procesu: teoria i praktyka*. Wydawnictwo ENETEA, Warszawa 2013.
- Trojańska M: „Otwarty dialog” – środowiskowy model wsparcia osób w kryzysach psychicznych i ich rodzin. *Niepelnosporność. Dyskursy Pedagog Spec* 2018; 30: 222–233.
- Tschuschke V, Cramer A, Koemeda M et al.: Abschlussbericht Praxisstudie ambulante Psychotherapie Schweiz (PAP-S) für Institut für Prozessarbeit (IPA). Teil 1 [Internet]. 2013. Available from: <https://www.institut-prozessarbeit.ch/images/MediaDir/uploads/forschung/PAPS-AbschlussberichtIPATEil1.pdf> [cited: 22 February 2025].
- Tschuschke V, Cramer A, Koemeda M et al.: Fundamental reflections on psychotherapy research and initial results of the naturalistic psychotherapy study on outpatient treatment in Switzerland (PaP-S). *Int J Psychother* 2010; 14: 23–35.
- Tschuschke V, Cramer A, Koemeda M et al.: Psychotherapieforschung – Grundlegende Überlegungen und erste Ergebnisse der naturalistischen Psychotherapie-Studie ambulanter Behandlungen in der Schweiz (PaP-S). *Psychother Forum* 2009; 17: 160–176.
- Ulusoy Y, Sumbas E, Sertkaya B: Psychodrama as an intervention management instrument for internal/external adolescent problems: a systematic literature review. *Arts Psychother* 2023; 83: 102000.
- Vasičková Očenašová Z: Where one cannot speak, there one can dance: a comparative analysis of dance movement therapy and Processwork. *Body Mov Dance Psychother* 2016; 11: 277–289.
- Vassiliou L: A process oriented approach to panic attacks. In: *Deep Democracy Where Fields Meet*. International Association of Process Oriented Psychology, London 2008: 212–222.
- Vossler A, Pinquart M, Forbat L et al.: Efficacy of systemic therapy on adults with depressive disorders: a meta-analysis. *Psychother Res* 2025; 35: 867–883.
- Wang LL, Sun CJ, Wang Y et al.: Effects of dance therapy on non-motor symptoms in patients with Parkinson's disease: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Aging Clin Exp Res* 2022; 34: 1201–1208.
- Wilk K: Współwystępowanie akceptacji choroby, mechanizmów obronnych i dolegliwości bólowych w populacji kobiet z endometriozą. In: Maciąg M, Danielewska A (eds.): *Medyczne i społeczne aspekty zdrowia człowieka*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Tygiel, Lublin 2022: 166–175.
- Wilk K, Kowalewska E, Jakubowska M et al.: The comparison of four models of community psychiatry – a systematic review and preliminary meta-analysis of the ACT model. *Clin Psychol Psychother* 2025a; 32: e70048.

- Wilk K, Starowicz A, Szczecińska M et al.: Childhood emotional neglect and its relationship with well-being: mediation analyses. *Eur J Trauma Dissociation* 2024; 3: 100434.
- Wilk K, Szczecińska M, Kowalewska E et al.: A retrospective analysis of the effectiveness of a community mental health center program in improving patient well-being. *J Sex Ment Health* 2025b; 23: 37–44.
- Wu CC, Xiong HY, Zheng JJ et al.: Dance movement therapy for neurodegenerative diseases: a systematic review. *Front Aging Neurosci* 2022; 14: 975711.
- von Wyl A, Crameri A, Koemeda M et al.: Praxisstudie ambulante Psychotherapie Schweiz (PAP-S): Studiendesign und Machbarkeit. *Psychother Wissenschaft* 2013; 3: 6–22.
- von Wyl A, Crameri A, Koemeda-Lutz M et al.: Praxisstudie ambulante Psychotherapie Schweiz (PAP-S): ein spezifischer Blick auf den Therapieprozess und Genderfragen. *Psychother Forum* 2021; 25: 22–29.
- Yang MS, Jeon JK: The development and effect verification of BigBang group counseling program-focusing on the process oriented psychology. *J Digit Converg* 2016; 14: 43–54.