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SELF-DISCLOSURE: A LITERARY REVIEW

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research for this professional paper was to explore the literature available on self-disclosure in order to answer these questions: (1) What are the most widely used measures of self-disclosure? (2) What is the role of self-disclosure as a personality construct and in interpersonal relationships? (3) What are the principal variables that facilitate self-disclosure? (4) What is the function of self-disclosure in therapy and experimental situations? (5) What are the implications of research in self-disclosure for group psychotherapy?

The results of numerous studies indicated that by employing self-disclosure questionnaires, useful information may be obtained from subjects concerning typical patterns of self-disclosing behavior.

As a personality construct, researchers have found that self-disclosure may be affected by child-rearing practices and family patterns. Sex and racial and cultural factors also affect the amount of information that a person discloses. There is some indication that self-disclosure is positively related to mental health.

Numerous studies have shown the importance of self-disclosure in interpersonal relationships. A strong correlate of disclosure output to a given target person is the amount of disclosure input from that person. It has been found that subjects tend to know more about their friends and colleagues whom they like best. Researchers have shown that a relationship exists between the extent a person is touched by a target person and the extent that he touches that person.

Studies have demonstrated that therapist or experimenter self-disclosure may affect therapy or experimental results. Interviewing techniques and varying levels of self-disclosure used by an experimenter or therapist indicated that the nature of a subject's responses may be affected in an experimental situation.

Studies concerning self-disclosure in group psychotherapy have indicated that (1) the higher the self-disclosure, the more positive the behavior change, (2) patients attain popularity in groups by participating in self-disclosure, (3) self-disclosure is related to cohesiveness in groups, and (4) the quantity of self-disclosure must be increased if the patient is to receive optimal assistance from the group experience.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Sidney Jourard has written convincingly of man's need to make himself known to his fellow man. He has suggested that self-knowledge and healthy personal relationships are built on self-disclosure. By expanding upon the writings of early personality theorists, Jourard has advanced and tested his theory and as a result has moved to the forefront in contemporary counseling thought.

(Self-disclosure is a basic component of the existential question of what it means to be a "real-self-being") (Jourard, 1964).

Horney (1950) stated that "the real self is that central, inner force, common to all human beings, and yet unique in each, which is the deep source of growth...the most alive center of ourselves...it engenders the spontaneity of feeling" (p. 17). Maslow (1954) believed that all men have an inherent tendency to self-actualize or develop one's potentialities.

Jourard (1968) defined the "real self" as a process that can never be fully known because it is constantly changing. The real-self refers to a subjective experience which comprises feeling. When the real-self is repressed or ignored, Horney (1950) has described this as alienation from the self. Since man has the desire for openness to the world and wants companionship with others (Friedman, 1960), he has the tendency to establish relationships with others based upon honest

communication of the self.

Jourard initially termed revealing personal information as real-self communication. He later decided upon a more neutral term-- self-disclosure. Jourard (1964) wrote that to disclose means "to unveil, to make manifest, to show" (p. 19). In other words, self-disclosure means to let yourself be known so that others may see and perceive you. A person may disclose in many different ways: by speaking, by facial expressions, by gestures, or by omissions of these behaviors.

Jourard (1964) hypothesized that the goal of disclosure is "to be perceived as I know myself to be" (p. 181). He feels an individual will disclose in low-risk situations in which he perceives the other as trustworthy and when he feels that it is crucial that his true self be known. It can be said that self-disclosure operates upon the principles of operant behavior in that an individual receives either positive or negative reinforcement by the response of the other person (Jourard, 1964). This feedback may be seen as evidence from the other that he accepts and understands his disclosure, and is, therefore, viewing him in a different way.

Jourard (1968) suggested that there are particular factors that determine the amount of self-disclosure that an individual will reveal. A person's role, his personality, and the actions of the other person have the greatest influence. Dependence upon another, an excessively

strict conscience, and generally accepted rules for social behavior hinder full communication.

As a psychotherapist, Jourard, (1971) in asking his patients to reveal personal information, questioned why these patients would reveal to him facts about their life that they had kept secret from others for years. He concluded that his clients wished to give him information that would help him to help them to cope more effectively in society. He hypothesized that there is a correlation between making oneself known and mental health. Believing this to be true, Jourard initiated research to study the dynamics of self-disclosure.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study is to review the research literature concerning the nature of self-disclosure and to examine the variables which affect this process.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to survey current literature concerning the dynamics of self-disclosure. Helping patients to communicate personal information about the self has long been advocated by members of the helping professions. Since the advent of Jourard's writings, the past fifteen years has witnessed the completion and publication of numerous studies concerning various aspects of the

self-disclosure process which have substantiated many points of Jourard's theory. It is the researcher's intent to present pertinent information on the topic so that the reader may gain a greater insight into the process of self-disclosure and will realize its message, not only for counselors, but for all human beings.

GENERAL QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1. What are the most widely used measures of self-disclosure?
2. What is the role of self-disclosure as a personality construct?
3. What is the role of self-disclosure in interpersonal relationships?
4. What are the principal variables that facilitate self-disclosure?
5. What is the function of self-disclosure in experimenter-subject, interviewer-interviewee, and therapist-client relationships?
6. What are the implications of research in self-disclosure for group psychotherapy?

GENERAL PROCEDURE

The data for this professional paper was compiled through a review of literature that was available in the Montana State University

Library, Bozeman. Pertinent materials were selected from professional journals as well as from other available publications.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to that pertinent information found in the Montana State University Library. No independent investigation was carried out although some of the researcher's ideas are included.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are defined according to their meaning for this study:

1. Self-Disclosure: Explicit communication by an individual to one or more others of some personal information that the individual believes those others would be unlikely to discover unless he himself discloses it. This information must be "personally private;" in that it is not something that the first individual would disclose to everyone who might inquire about it (Culbert, 1970).

2. Target Person: Individual who receives disclosure.

SUMMARY

Self-disclosure, the process of communicating personal information about the self, has been suggested by personality theorists to be a component of healthy personality. In the past decade much research has

been reported concerning the situational and personality factors that determine the amount of information a person will reveal.

This paper presents a review of the literature related to the nature of self-disclosure and examines the variables which affect this process. This is done in an effort to promote understanding of Jourard's theory and to allow the reader to gain insight into the dynamics of personal communication.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

It is this researcher's intent to review literature relating to the verbal disclosure about oneself. First, various measures of self-disclosure are described and their validity is considered. The role of self-disclosure as a personality construct and in interpersonal relationships and the principal variables that facilitate disclosure are reviewed. The function of self-disclosure in experimenter-subject, interviewer-interviewee, and therapist-client relationships is described. Finally, the review considers the implications of research in self-disclosure for group psycho-therapy.

MEASURES OF SELF DISCLOSURE

Jourard's Self-Disclosure Questionnaire

The major impetus for research in assessing individual differences in self-disclosure has been Jourard's Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ). The original instrument, a paper and pencil measure, described by Jourard and Lasakow (1958), consists of sixty items covering six areas of personal information: Attitudes and Opinions, Tastes and Interests, Work (or studies), Money, Personality, and Body. Subjects are requested to indicate the extent to which the information has been revealed to four target persons: Mother, Father, Male Friend, Female Friend, or Spouse. Items are scored as 0-no disclosure to the

target person, 1-disclosure only in general terms, or 2-full and complete disclosure about the item. Average scores are derived for each target person (summing across areas) and overall scores are also calculated (summing across areas and targets).

Subsequent research has employed variations of the measure which differ in a number of ways, including questionnaire length, different target persons, and different target area. Few studies employ behavior measures, for example, disclosing information to an experimenter or other subjects. Though such differences exist, virtually all of the research on self-disclosure has employed the Jourard scale or variations of it.

Validity of the JSDQ

Pedersen and Higbee (1968) examined two forms of the JSDQ, the original sixty item version and the shorter twenty-five item measure, and obtained evidence for convergent and discriminant validity by means of multitrait, multimethod matrices, but there was also variation between the two methods of measuring self-disclosure. Studies by Jourard (1961c), Halverson and Shore (1969) and Taylor (1968) provided evidence that the JSDQ is independent of intelligence; and therefore, provides discriminant validity.

Jourard (1961b) reported that productivity on the group Rorschach correlated .37 ($p < .05$) with total scores on the JSDQ, and

interpreted the finding as supportive of the construct validity of the instrument.

It may be noted that the predictive validity of the JSDQ has been questioned in numerous studies. Researchers have been unable to find a relationship between the JSDQ and actual disclosure in a situation. Pedersen and Breglio (1968b) found little relation between actual self-disclosure to an interviewer and either form of the questionnaire except in the content area of studies.

Using self-introductions in a classroom situation, Himelstein and Kimbrough (1963) found little relationship between reported and observed self-disclosure. Order of appearance was the major determinant of self-disclosure as there was a trend for individuals to reveal more information as the sequence of introductions proceeded. The authors suggest that predictions could be more accurately made by controlling situational factors than by the use of a psychometric device. Similarly, Vondracek (1969a) found low correlations between the questionnaire and the amount and intimacy of the disclosure in a study of college students.

There is also little evidence of a relationship between the JSDQ and ratings of actual disclosures made by peers. In a study of sorority and fraternity membership, Himelstein and Lubin (1965) reported a nonsignificant relationship between scores on a modified SDQ and sociometric nominations of "most likely to confide." In addition, they found

an inverse relationship between "disclosing to" and "being disclosed to." Pedersen and Breglio (1968b) did find that amount and intimacy of disclosure on written self-descriptions were correlated with total scores on the sixty-item JSDQ, but not on the twenty-five-item JSDQ. In another study of sorority and fraternity membership, DeLeon, DeLeon and Sheflin (1970) report that the JSDQ offers validity for males but not for females.

It may be concluded that the JSDQ does not accurately predict actual self-disclosure. The discrepancies indicated in the validity studies may be attributed to the fact that scores on the JSDQ reflect subject's past history of disclosure to target persons. When actual self-disclosure is measured, the subject is disclosing to an experimenter or to peers whom the subject has never met. West (1971) adds that the construct validity of the JSDQ has not been questioned since the JSDQ purport to assay the communication patterns of individuals with regard to specific target persons. For this purpose, the validity remains unchallenged.

Other Measures of Self-Disclosure

Several researchers have constructed other instruments to measure self-disclosure to be used for specific types of subjects and experimental situations. The most widely used measures will be discussed briefly:

1. West and Zingle (1969) describe a Self-Disclosure Inventory for Adolescents.

2. A system of scoring self-disclosure by pre-adolescents in interviewing situations has been developed by Vondracek and Vondracek (1971).

3. The Social Accessibility Scale was developed by Rickers-Ovsiankina (1956) and a fifty-item version was described by Rickers-Ovsiankina and Kusmin (1958). The instruments differ from the JSDQ in that (a) subjects indicate what they would disclose rather than what they have disclosed, and (b) target persons are listed as stranger, acquaintance, and best friend.

4. Verbal Accessibility (Polansky, 1965) has been measured by the incomplete sentence method.

5. The Depth of Intra-personal Exploration scale is described by Truax and Carkhuff (1965). The scale quantifies the degree and depth of client self-disclosure and self-exploration in the psychotherapeutic encounter.

6. Taylor and Altman (1966) constructed psychometric materials for use in research on interpersonal exchange and self-disclosure. Six hundred seventy-one items about aspects of the self were scaled for intimacy and topical categories. The statements may also be used as stimulus materials for experimental manipulations and as a means for scoring speech content of self-disclosure.

PARAMETERS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

Parameters of self-disclosure are (1) breadth or amount of information disclosed, (2) depth or intimacy of information disclosed, and (3) duration or time spent describing each item of information.

It has been indicated that in actual disclosure, a correlation of .42 was obtained between the variable of intimacy and duration of disclosure (Vondracek, 1969a). As a result, these two variables may be considered partially independent. An inverse relationship between amount and intimacy of disclosure was first found by Jourard and Lasakow (1958) and later replicated in studies by Fitzgerald (1963), Hood and Back (1971) and Taylor (1968).

Examining content of information disclosed, Levin and Gergen (1969) found that persons reveal more positive information when trying to appear pleasing to others than when trying to be honest. In examining marital relationships, Levinger and Senn (1967) concluded that wives tend to communicate more unpleasant feelings, including anxieties, than do husbands.

SELF-DISCLOSURE AS A PERSONALITY CONSTRUCT

Self-Disclosure and Family Patterns

One question that researchers have attempted to answer concerns the effect of child-rearing practices and family interaction upon self-disclosure. Jourard (1961) pioneered this idea by exploring the

differences between members of the Methodist, Baptist, Jewish and Catholic faiths to determine the degree of closeness to target persons as measured by the JSDQ. There was no significant interaction between denominations and disclosure to mother, father, or closest male friend for either sex. It was found that Jewish college males are more likely to reveal to the significant others in their life than the comparable Protestant or Catholic students. However, Low (1964) did not find a difference between Jewish and Protestant groups. In an investigation of the relationship between expressed religious commitment and self-disclosure, Jennings (1971) found little correlation between self-disclosure and whether religious beliefs are "liberal or conservative." Results did indicate a tendency for commitment to lessen as beliefs became more liberal. Presumably, any effects of religious background on disclosure are mediated by a close family orientation.

Dimond and Munz (1967) in a study of ordinal positions of birth and self-disclosure in high school students, found that later-born individuals disclosed more than first-born children. The authors hypothesized that though first-borns may possess greater affiliative needs than later-borns, later-borns are more adept at satisfying them by establishing interpersonal relationships. In a replication study conducted by Dimond and Hellkamp (1969) using white and Negro subjects, it was found that first-born Negroes disclosed less than any other group of ordinal position of birth and race.

In a study of self-disclosure and relationship to target person, Pedersen and Higbee (1969) found that disclosure to parents was correlated with subject's ratings of parents on such adjectives as close, warm, friendly, and accepting. It was found that females that rated their mother as cold, distrustful, and selfish, tended to score high on the Social Accessibility Scale which measures willingness to disclose to stranger, acquaintance, and best friend. Ohlsen (1974) studied the effects of divorce on self-disclosure and it was found that a child from a female-based home does not disclose any more or any less than a person from a non-divorce situation. Though the divorce group disclosed less to father, they did not spread disclosure to other target persons. From these results, it may be hypothesized that family relationships contribute more to whom a person discloses to, rather than the amount he discloses. Supporting this premise were Doster and Strickland (1969) who, in an examination of child-rearing practices, found that high disclosers perceive their parents as more nurturant than low disclosers. Children from low nurturant homes disclose more to friends than parents while the reverse is true with subjects from high-nurturant families.

Sex, Race, and Cultural Factors in Self-Disclosure

Sex differences. Sex has been determined as one of the most valuable and consistent predictors of self-disclosure. Jourard and Lasakow (1958)

first studied sex differences in an investigation that indicated that females report more overall disclosure than males. These results have been replicated in numerous studies of college students (Himelstein and Lubin, 1966; Pedersen and Breglio, 1968a; Pedersen and Higbee, 1969; Jourard, 1961d; Jourard and Richman, 1963). Dimond and Munz (1967) discovered this phenomena in high school students and Rivenbark (1971) in adolescents. Jourard (1964) hypothesized that the low disclosure of males is directly associated with less empathy, insight and a shorter life-span in males.

Since men, doubtless, have as much 'self,' i.e., inner experience, as women, then it follows that men have more 'secrets' from the interpersonal world than women. It follows further that men, seeming to dread being known by others, must be more continually tense than women. It is as if 'being manly' implies the necessity to wear neuromuscular 'armor'... (p. 47).

A number of contradictory results have been reported concerning sex differences. Rickers-Ovsiankina (1958) found that there was no significant difference between males and females in total self-disclosure. However, the scale used in this study differed from Jourard's scale in terms of both instructions and target persons. Similar findings have been reported by Weigal, Weigal and Chadwick (1969); Dimond and Hellkamp (1969); and Vondracek and Marshall (1971).

In justifying his results, Jourard (1964) has suggested that these contradictions may be a result of the geographic location of these studies. He explained that in the southeastern portion of the country where his data is collected, "Men are men and women are women,"

(Jourard, 1964,181) thus suggesting that there is a difference in sex role expectations. Sex differences may be more pronounced in the Southeast than in the northern and western United States.

It is interesting to note that no study has reported that male self-disclosure is actually greater than female disclosure, perhaps indicative of actual sex differences. Cozby (1973) suggested that greater attention must be paid by researchers as to types of items which reliably discriminate between males and females, and types of situations in which males and females would differ in disclosure output.

Sex differences have also been reported in relation to target persons, or those receiving the disclosure. Generally, self-disclosure is greater within sexes than between sexes, with the exception of married couples. Dimond and Hellkamp (1969); Dimond and Munz (1967); and Jourard and Richman (1963) reported that in comparison with males, females report relatively high self-disclosure to mothers and female friends. In a study of prisoners in correction institutions, Brodsky and Komaridis (1968) found contradictory results in that male prisoners reported more disclosure to mothers and female friends than fathers and male friends.

Racial and ethnic group factors. In the realm of national differences, Jourard (1961d) determined that British co-eds were consistently lower disclosers to target persons than were comparable American females.

Although the two groups differed in average disclosure-output, they agreed markedly in attitude concerning the relative disclosability of the questionnaire items to target persons. Melikian (1962) studied self-disclosure among university students in the Middle East. He did not find a difference between nine different nationalities, but did find a significant group by target interaction.

Jourard and Lasakow (1958) reported less disclosure by blacks than by whites. This finding has been replicated by Dimond and Hellkamp (1969) and Littlefield (1974). In the latter study, the researcher studied male and female samples of black, white and Mexican-American ninth graders and found that the white group reported the greatest amount of self-disclosure and Mexican-Americans the least amount. The Mexican-American males reported the least amount of self-disclosure and the white males the highest. Jourard and Devin (1962) compared self-disclosure scores for Puerto Rican and American college males, matched for age, religion, and fathers' occupational level. The Puerto Ricans had significantly lower total disclosure scores than the Americans. Jourard (1964) concluded that it may well be true that Americans talk more about themselves than just about any other cultural group.

Personality Correlates
of Self-Disclosure

Jourard (1959) has suggested that making oneself known to a significant other is a prerequisite for personal growth and maintenance of healthy personality. In referring to the concept of self-actualization (Maslow, 1954), Jourard (1958) argued that people stop growing when they repress some aspect of the self. This results in a blockage of the processes of knowing others and becoming known to others. Thus, neurotic and psychotic symptoms might be called "devices to avoid being known" (Jourard, 1964, p. 25).

Jourard has suggested in his writings that disclosure should be negatively related to clinical maladjustment and positively related to mental health. A number of authors have related scores on self-disclosure scales to various measures of adjustment, including personality inventories, self-esteem measures, and behavioral functioning. It is indicated that self-disclosure is positively related to adjustment; however, a few studies are consistent with the prediction of a curvilinear relationship between self-disclosure and adjustment (Jourard, 1964; Culbert, 1970). (The individual who never discloses may be hampered in establishing close relationships with others) In contrast, the person who reveals a great deal of information about himself, not only to someone close, such as parents and spouse, but to anyone, may be seen by others as maladjusted and self-centered. The medium

discloser generally maintains a moderately close relationship with others and may disclose a great deal to someone who is very close.

Measures of Mental Health

Mayo (1968) compared a group of neurotic in-patients both with a group who had neurotic symptoms but who appeared to cope without seeking help and with a group of normals. Findings did not show that low self-disclosure is associated with neurotic breakdown as distinct from neurotic symptoms; however, neurotics reported lower self-disclosure than normals. Those with neurotic symptoms who had not broken down were more like the normal group in the relation they reported between self-and-other disclosure and in the contribution that other-disclosure made to their own disclosure. Shapiro (1968) requested college students to rate themselves on self-disclosure in relation to an experimentally arranged dyadic interaction, and correlated these ratings with scores on the Maudsley Personality Inventory. He found that self-disclosure was positively related to Extraversion and negatively related to Neuroticism. However, in a similar study, Stanley and Bownes (1966) found no consistent relationship between self-disclosure and Neuroticism on the Maudsley.

In an examination of college students, Pedersen and Higbee (1969) using a specially derived "Personality Inventory," found no overall relation between personality variables and self-disclosure,

although personality variables interacted with sex in determining disclosure to various target persons. Pedersen and Breglio (1968a) related the same scale to actual self-disclosure and found that unstable males showed a disproportionately large amount of self-disclosure in personal areas. Similarly, Persons and Marks (1968) found the most pathological subjects among prisoners were most disclosing in an interview situation.

Three studies have reported correlations between the JSDQ and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. Mullaney (1964) found self-disclosure to be negatively correlated with Introversion in college students. Himelstein and Lubin (1966) reported higher scores on the K scale which measures defensiveness for low disclosure college males, although there was no difference for females. Also related to defensiveness, Jourard (1961b) found that self-disclosure is positively related to the number of responses on the Rorschach. Truax and Wittmer (1971) also administered the MMPI and found a tendency for the least well-adjusted individual to show the greatest self-disclosure and for the more well-adjusted students to show the least self-disclosure when target person was closest friend.

Self-Concept

Several studies have been undertaken to determine whether a person's view of himself is a factor in his disclosure to the people with whom he is involved. An investigation by Jourard (1971) found that

the attitudes of females toward themselves are related to the disclosure to their parents but not to disclosure to their peers. Jourard (1971) suggested that these correlations may indicate that a person's self-esteem derives from the experience of having been accepted by his parents (Jourard and Remy, 1955). By accepting himself, he is more likely to accept others. As a result, he will be better able to establish closer relationships with others than a person who consistently denies part of his self.

To support this hypothesis, Shapiro (1968) found that self-disclosure was positively related to reported self-esteem when self-disclosure was measured in relation to an experimental interaction. Vosen (1967) in studying a measure of self-esteem before and after participation in a sensitivity group, found a positive relation between self-disclosure and self-esteem in that members with a low self-disclosure rating indicated a decrease in self-esteem following the group experience. Contradicting these results, Fitzgerald (1963) found no relationship between self-esteem and reported self-disclosure to peers.

It is apparent that the studies cited in this section show contradictory findings which implies that personality characteristics associated with self-disclosure are not clearly understood. Altman and Taylor (1973) have suggested that attempting to find specific trait-disclosure relationships is unrealistic and have approached the problem,

instead, by exploring the relationship between personality and self-disclosure in the context of specific relationships and settings. The authors attributed one of the problems to the JSDQ. This questionnaire has not been shown to predict actual disclosure, but is best used as a measure of a person's past history of disclosure since it has been found that the highest personality trait-JSDQ correlations involve peers (Swensen, 1968). Cozby (1973) has suggested that the experimenters should focus instead upon the subject's willingness to disclose to an acquaintance, a stranger, or the experimenter to determine his disposition to disclose.

SELF-DISCLOSURE IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Self-Disclosure and Reciprocity

A strong correlate of disclosure output to a given target person is the amount of disclosure input from that person. Jourard (1959) has called this input-output correlation the dyadic effect. He has suggested further that the capacity to disclose information about the self in a manner that is appropriate to the setting in response to another is one of the best indicants of healthy personality.

Jourard (1959b) studied the "dyadic effect" within a group of nine female nursing college faculty members. The amount of disclosure to a co-worker correlated highly with disclosure received from that person. Jourard and Landsman (1960) replicated the study with a group

of male graduate students. In a large population of college students, Jourard and Richman (1963) further supported reciprocity of disclosure by finding significant positive correlations between input and output for both sexes and all targets. Similar results were observed by Worthy, Gary, and Kahn (1969) in a study of college females.

Researchers have extended the investigation of reciprocity to different relationships and types of subjects. Levinger and Senn (1967) investigated independent ratings of disclosure by two different members of the same relationship. Using married couples, the correlation between reported output and reported input was .91 for husbands and .71 for wives. As in the Jourard and Richman (1963) study, Levinger and Senn pointed out that the input and output scores were obtained from the same person which may have resulted in the high input and output scores.

Rivenbark (1971) used samples of subjects ranging from sixteen to eighteen years of age and found a high correlation between input and output scores.

In a few experiments, subjects were confronted with a confederate who disclosed at either a high or low level. Chittick and Himelstein (1967) in attempting to manipulate self-disclosure in a group setting, instructed confederates to vary the amount they disclosed in introducing themselves and it was found that subjects varied the amount they disclosed proportionately. The researchers concluded that

situational factors influence disclosure of information more than personality variables. This has been referred to as the "Asch Effect," that is, naive subjects will conform to standards presented by responses by other persons present. In a study by Gary and Hammond (1970) with alcoholics and drug addicts, disclosure was manipulated by varying intimacy. Results showed that in spite of the popularity differences which involved significant prestige factors, the subjects tended to give intimacies in terms of how much they received.

It has been suggested that the subject may be imitating the responses of the confederate rather than engaging in a reciprocation process. A study by Tognoli (1969) did not support this hypothesis. In his investigation he did not allow subjects to imitate by eliminating the confederate's statement as an option for the subject's response and the results still indicated reciprocity.

A few researchers have predicted that a curvilinear relationship exists between subject disclosure and disclosure by the target person. Levin and Gergen (1969) hypothesized that medium amounts of disclosure by an individual signals his desire for a closer relationship and his trustfulness, yet one who communicates a large amount of information about himself may be seen by others as untrustworthy and lacking discretion. When testing this hypothesis, the examiners did not find a curvilinear relationship; rather the greater the amount of information disclosed, the greater the absolute amount returned. Contradicting

this finding, the subjects revealed proportionately less as their partner revealed more.

Worthy, Gary and Kahn (1969) attempted to establish the relationship between liking and self-disclosure and the effect of receiving self-disclosure on liking. By testing several predictions based upon the social exchange theory, it was found that the exchange of self-disclosure was governed by the norm of reciprocity and that self-disclosure was positively related to liking.

The curvilinear relationship between self-disclosure and adjustment is consistent with the principle of reciprocity in self-disclosure. Culbert (1970) has theorized that there may be difficulty in a relationship if there is a large discrepancy between members and self-disclosure. In studies by Pedersen and Breglio (1968a) and Pedersen and Marks (1970), psychopathology was associated with particularly high levels of self-disclosure. Mayo (1968) found that most neurotic in-patients indicated greater output of self-disclosure than input, whereas this was not true for the normal groups. A dissertation by Leuchtmann (1969) reported that some subjects may react negatively to highly personal information by strangers.

Self-Disclosure and Liking

Jourard and Lasakow (1958) found that disclosures of information to mother and father correlated significantly with liking. A

follow-up study by Jourard in 1959 demonstrated the effects of closeness in a relationship upon self-disclosure. He hypothesized that the relationship reflects the affection, love, or trust that exists between persons. The results showed that the female subjects varied in the amount of disclosure output to colleagues with degrees of liking for the colleague; that is, the subjects tended to know more about their colleagues that they liked best than those whom they liked less well. A 1960 follow-up study by Jourard and Landsman of males revealed similar results in that the personal information which the subjects revealed to other males was highly correlated with the degree to which they knew the others and the amount that the others had disclosed to them. However, the relationship between disclosure and liking was not obtained with this male sample. Jourard and Landsman (1960) concluded that these results parallel the statements made by other researchers that describe men as strong and silent and distrustful of feelings while women are typically pictured as more emotional, expressive, and having much faith in others that they like. It is also possible that the male group was not as cohesive and lacked a large amount of contact and interaction.

Peace Corp trainees were examined by Halverson and Shore (1969) and it was determined that self-reported social accessibility related to how well the person is liked by peers and how effective and adaptive the person is in forming interpersonal relationships. Fitzgerald (1963) studied the relationship of self-esteem, social distance, and the areas

of disclosure revealed in a small denominational college for women. It was found that there was a greater amount of information disclosed to the girl in the class liked best, a lesser amount to the "average" girl (one midway on the social distance continuum) and a still lesser amount to the girl liked least. Expressed self-esteem does not significantly affect amount disclosed. The author concluded that self-disclosure affects social distance and that two individuals differing in levels of self-esteem could reveal the same information about the self but for different reasons.

Worthy, Gary and Kahn (1969) suggested that liking leads to disclosure to another person and also disclosure from the other will lead to greater liking. Subjects in the experiment rated each other on liking and then chose items of information to disclose to each other subject on each of ten trials. On the first trial it was found that most material was revealed to the most liked target and least was disclosed to the least liked target. Contradicting these findings, Derlega, Harris and Chaikin (1973) studied female subjects who were exposed to one of three levels of disclosure input: conventional low disclosure, conventional high disclosure, or deviant high disclosure. There was no relationship between level of disclosure and liking and the researcher suggests that a ceiling effect for liking may occur at a low level of intimacy so that increasing intimacy of disclosure does not lead to increased liking.

A curvilinear relationship between self-disclosure and liking was predicted by Cozby (1972). Strong support for this theory was obtained in an experiment where it was noted that a high-disclosing person may arouse anxiety in the target person with his overly intimate disclosures, and so the high discloser may be seen as providing negative outcomes for the subjects.

A study by Erlich and Graeven (1971) used male subjects who were assigned to high and low intimacy experimental conditions and were requested to talk about themselves with a confederate who used a script to control intimacy level. It was found that there was no difference in rated liking of the confederate in the two conditions. This finding lends support to Jourard and Landsman's (1960) suggestion that the relationship between disclosure and liking may be different for males and females.

The Jourard and Landsman (1960) study also paved the way for an investigation by Pedersen and Higbee (1969). The researchers found that the characteristics of the target person that determine disclosure may vary from one target person to another. Disclosure scores were correlated for mother, father, best opposite-sex friend, and best same-sex friend with ratings of these targets on a scale of eleven adjectives. For both males and females, liking was significantly related to disclosure only for father and opposite-sex friend. For each target there were sex-differences in the adjectives that were related to

self-disclosure. For both sexes, few characteristics of the same-sex friend were related to disclosure to the friend.

Jourard and Lasakow (1958) found that disclosure to spouse is greater than any other target which suggests that love results in greater disclosure than liking. It might be expected then, that self-disclosure would be related to marital satisfaction. Empirical evidence is weak for this hypothesis as Katz, Goldston, Cohen and Stucker (1963) report that for males, marital satisfaction is related to greater disclosure of anxieties, but not for other topics. Levinger and Senn (1967) found that satisfaction is related to expression of pleasant feelings and Shapiro and Swensen (1969) found no relationship between marital satisfaction and disclosure.

Self-Disclosure and Physical Contact in Interpersonal Relationships

Jourard (1968) designed a Body-Contact Questionnaire that measured the degree to which people reveal their bodies to the sight and touch of selected target persons and demonstrated that there could be patterns and differences. Consequently, he initiated studies to determine whether self-disclosure to other people and making oneself accessible to their touch are related.

Jourard and Rubin (1968) investigated physical contact and self-disclosure and concluded that touching is necessarily a reciprocal phenomenon which can be compared to the "dyadic effect" noted in

self-disclosure (Jourard, 1964). Both men and women touch their opposite-sex friends nearly three times as much as they do the other target persons. Men touch their mothers to the next highest degree, followed by the same-sex friend and father. Females touch their parents about equally and their girlfriends to a lesser degree. The two measures of intimacy, self-disclosure, and body contact were virtually independent. Jourard and Rubin (1968) cited the emphasis on physical contact and sexuality in our culture as a determining factor in the results of this study. In a similar study, Pedersen (1973) reaffirmed the idea of reciprocity when he found a perfect relationship between the extent a person is touched by a target person and the extent he touches that person. In addition, the results indicated that body accessibility and self-disclosure are related for all target persons.

Silverman, Pressman and Bartiel (1973) examined the relationship between self-disclosure and self-esteem by means of touch. It was discovered that the higher the subject's self-esteem, the more intimate the subject was in communicating through touch, especially in communicating with a female. High-esteem subjects found the task easier and perceived the communication as being transmitted more clearly than low-esteem subjects.

In a study of physical and body contact exercises in an encounter group, Cooper and Bowles (1973) found that a relationship existed between

physical contact and increased willingness to disclose.

DISCLOSURE IN THERAPY AND EXPERIMENTS

The therapist, interviewer, and experimenter, whether it be for the person's own benefit or for scientific reasons, seeks information about another person's private self. The studies in this section demonstrate that the effects of therapist or experimenter self-disclosure may have a number of practical and methodological implications for therapy outcome and experimental results.

The correlates of self-disclosure relate very directly to the issue of therapist transparency; that is, the extent to which the therapist engages in self-disclosure in a counseling relationship.

According to Jourard (1964):

Increasing numbers of psychologists and psychiatrists are coming to see psychotherapy, not as something which one does to or for a patient, a treatment that calls for careful techniques or verbal responding, but rather as an exploration of the possibilities for dialogue between these two people...As time proceeds, the pair become increasingly able to carry out unself-conscious dialogue, so that the patient has no doubts in his mind concerning the subjective being of his therapist when the two are together; and the therapist is likewise clearly informed of the patient's experience as it unfolds (p. 185).

Clearly, this issue is complex and cannot be decided apart from such factors as goals or stages of therapy and therapist personality (Yalom, 1970). If, however, to the extent that clients' disclosure is a significant goal, therapist transparency is a valuable means. By

his capacity of modulating his own self-disclosure, the therapist is in an ideal position to facilitate client disclosure.

Jourard (1964) hypothesized that if a researcher misrepresented himself to his subject, the subject will reciprocate with distorted responses. Pilot studies of other researchers had touched upon this fact and had demonstrated that such a dyadic effect does exist between experimenter and subject. The following studies are the results of experiments when the experimenter reveals personal information about himself to the subject.

Shapiro, Krauss and Truax (1969) studied the relationship in formally non-therapeutic encounters between levels of perceived empathy, warmth and genuineness received from significant persons and the amount and type of self-disclosure given. It was found that individuals who were perceived as offering highest levels of therapeutic conditions were given the most disclosure. The authors concluded that individuals are most open with those whom they perceive as most understanding, warm and genuine. Similar results were obtained in an experiment by Bundza and Simonson (1973).

Powell (1968) examined the effectiveness of different experimenter responses in inferring verbal behavior in an unstructured interview. It was found that subjects disclosed more when the interviewer responded to the subject's self-references with open disclosure than when he used approval-supportive or reflection-restatement

techniques. In a similar study, Vondracek (1969) also found that interviewing techniques significantly affected the amount of self-disclosure by the subjects; however, a "probing" technique used by the interviewer was most effective in eliciting amounts of disclosure. This result contradicts the findings of Jourard and Landsman (1960) and Jourard and Richman (1963) who reported the operation of a dyadic effect in the disclosing behavior of the individual.

Jourard and Jaffee (1970) studied college students who were matched for past and anticipated disclosure rate. The experimenter openly discussed his feelings regarding each of twenty items, followed in turn by the subject's reactions. The interviews for the four groups differed only in the length of the interviewer's comments over the twenty topics. A significant relationship existed between the length of time the interviewer spoke and the duration of the subject's remarks. In addition, there was a significant increase found in the number of topics discussed during the session compared with the number they indicated they would be willing to discuss when questioned prior to the interview.

Similarly, Davis and Sloan (1974) found that self-disclosure was strongly facilitated by disclosure by the interviewer, but was sustained at a high level only if the interviewer continued to disclose. Davis and Skinner (1974) interviewed male and female undergraduates, eliciting disclosure from them on ten high intimacy topics. Before

disclosure on each topic, the subjects were exposed to identical disclosures by the male interviewer, or by a male audiotape model, or received no disclosure at all. It was found that interviewer disclosure elicited the greatest disclosure by subjects and exposure to the model facilitated disclosure only marginally. The authors concluded that this result suggests favoring a social exchange rather than a modeling account of self-disclosure reciprocity in interviews.

Vondracek and Vondracek (1971) in a study of sixth grade school children found that an adult interviewer who discloses will elicit more disclosure than an interviewer who does not. The authors theorized that the content of disclosure input may be a stimulus for immediate recall of certain personal experiences and/or a mechanism for the removal of inhibition in content areas. Erlich and Graeven (1971) also examined the content of disclosure but did not find evidence of topical reciprocity in their male college student sample.

A few studies have examined the possibility of pre-training a client to self-disclose during a counseling interview. Doster and Brooks (1974) found that interviewees exposed to behavioral demonstrations talked longer, engaged in higher levels of self-disclosure, and were more revealing of unfavorable information about themselves than interviewees receiving minimal preparation. Stone and Stebbins (1975) used three modeling procedures; video, audio, and no model and tabulated the number of self-references emitted during a twenty minute

interview. It was found that the video model was most effective, followed by the audio model.

An interviewer, in addition to eliciting greater disclosure, has been found to be rated as more trustworthy by subjects (Drag, 1968), and viewed more positively (Jourard and Friedman, 1970) than non-disclosers.

The nature of subject's responses may also be affected in an experimental situation. Subjects who receive experimenter disclosure have been shown to vary their self-presentation on tests of personality and ability. A study of paired-associate learning by Marshall Frey (1967) demonstrated that in an experimental setting, subjects who have participated in an interview with the experimenter based on mutual self-disclosure, prior to the conduct of the learning experiment, took about one-third fewer trials to learn a paired-associate list to criterion than did subjects who did not know the experimenter.

Jourard and Kormann (1968) found that subjects who have exchanged personal information with an experimenter changed their responses on the Edwards Personality Preference Schedule more than subjects who had not interacted with the experimenter. Examining experimenter-subject acquaintance and performance on a projective personality test, Heifitz (1967) reported that the experimenter group produced more responses judged "more revealing" than did members of a control group. These findings suggest that when people are tested by a person with

whom they have become personally acquainted, they are less defensive, or more self-disclosing than when the tester remains a stranger (Jourard, 1971).

Cozby (1973) suggests that future research will determine the conditions in which the disclosure of information by the subject or experimenter will affect the outcome of the experiment. He implies that more work should be done in the area of experimenter bias and suggests that controls for amount of time the experimenter spends with the subject should be included.

IMPLICATIONS FOR GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY

Most group therapists will agree that one of the principal interaction goals in a therapy group is self-disclosure. Every group is concerned with the interaction of its members, each of whom is a unique individual. The group goes through interactive phases during the course of its development. According to Yalom (1970), the initial phase is characterized by a period of orientation in which the group members attempt to structure the group and find meaning in therapy. Next they encounter a stage of conflict as they cope with interpersonal dominance. Following this, the group concentrates on maintaining a spirit of harmony and conflicts give way to freedom of communication and mutual support. It is at this point that the group members experience less risk in revealing themselves. Carl Rogers (1970, p. 19) explained this

phase in his discussion of encounter groups:

The individual has come to realize that this is in part his group. He can make it what he wishes. He has also experienced the fact that negative feelings have been expressed and accepted or assimilated without catastrophic results. He realizes that there is a freedom, albeit a risky freedom. A climate of trust is beginning to develop. So he begins to take the chance and the gamble of letting the group know some deeper facet of himself.

It may be assumed that self-disclosure as a value in groups is pivotal in that many of the good things that happen in groups happen because of self-disclosure. Yalom (1970) pointed out that as the members become more comfortable with revealing personal information, the other groups members' involvement will increase. This leads to responsibility and obligation to one another. He further suggests that revealing and receiving material from others will commit an individual more than any other force operating in the group.

There has been little research done on the value of self-disclosure in group psychotherapy but most evidence points to the therapeutic importance of self-disclosure in groups.

In an early study Peres (1947) found that successful and unsuccessful group psychotherapy differed in that successful patients in group therapy made significantly more personal references as did the non-benefited patients. Truax and Carkhuff (1965) analyzed tape-recorded interactions of hospitalized mental patients and institutionalized juvenile delinquents to determine the patients' level of self-disclosure or transparency. It was found that for mental patients,

the higher the self-disclosure, the more positive the patient change; whereas for juvenile delinquents, the less self-exploration, the more positive the behavior change. Truax concluded that while self-disclosure is helpful in producing positive changes in the mentally ill patients who experience internal problems, self-disclosure may be of no value, or even harmful to the socially ill person.

Yalom (1970) in an attempt to study determinants of popularity found that patients attain popularity in therapy groups by participating in self-disclosure, self-exploration, and leadership behavior.

Studies concerning group cohesiveness have shown that both the quality and quantity of interaction are related to the cohesiveness of the group. Lott and Lott (1961) paired groups of students, and each subject's ratings of how much he liked the other was compared with the frequency of communication. It was found that cohesiveness and amount of communication are related even when the opportunity for interaction is the same for all groups.

In studying the relationship between participation, self-disclosure, and perceived cohesiveness, Johnson and Ridener (1974) found that self-disclosure was not associated with any category of participation, but after four sessions was associated with males' and females' perceived cohesiveness scores. Ribner (1974) investigated Egan's (1970) theory regarding the effects of utilizing a group contract on self-disclosure and group cohesiveness. He found that an explicit

contract can help create a group climate conducive to personal growth. There was a significant increase of both frequency and depth of self-disclosing behavior in the groups, but the contract did not affect the level of intimacy of topics discussed. Increased self-disclosure had the opposite effect on members' mutual liking in that as disclosure increased, members' attraction to other members decreased.

Pino and Cohen (1971) examined trainer style and trainer self-disclosure and the results favored the leader-guided (group process intervention orientation) over the group-centered (person-oriented intervention orientation) style. Fifty percent of the leader-guided T-groups' self-references were of an interpersonal variety, as compared to less than ten percent of the group-centered T-groups' self-references. The authors suggest that this result may stem from the greater effectiveness of the leader-guided style in helping set group norms. Further, they concluded that it is necessary to increase the quantity of self-disclosure to increase the value of the T-group experience.

Barbour (1972) in an article describing the self-disclosure aspects of psychodrama pointed out that a protagonist in the midst of an enactment repeatedly makes decisions about the extent of his self-disclosure. During the sharing session, each person has the opportunity for sharing personal information with the others and being provided

their responses. Instead of becoming less acceptable to the group for having disclosed, an individual may experience relief and acceptance by the group.

Chapter III

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The purpose of the research for this professional paper was to examine the literature available on the process of self-disclosure. The researcher attempted to examine the role of self-disclosure as a personality construct and in interpersonal relationships, and to identify the principal variables that facilitate self-disclosure. In addition, the researcher examined the function of self-disclosure in therapy and experimental situations and discussed the implications of self-disclosure in group psychotherapy.

The procedure used was to review the literature available on self-disclosure that might give some insight into the issues posed above. It is hoped that members of the helping professions, as well as all people, will realize the implications of self-disclosure in everyday living.

The review of literature was mainly limited to professional journals and other relevant publications concerning self-disclosure and related studies.

The results of numerous studies have indicated that by employing self-disclosure questionnaires, useful information may be obtained from subjects concerning typical self-disclosing behavior, assuming that

by controlling the conditions, behavior may be explained. Though the validity of the measures has been questioned by various researchers, they have provided the major impetus for research in assessing individual differences in self-disclosure.

As a personality construct, self-disclosure has been studied in various ways. Generally, researchers have found that self-disclosure patterns may be affected by child-rearing practices and family interaction. Sex has been determined as one of the most valuable and consistent predictors of self-disclosure. Findings have demonstrated that females disclose more than males in all age groups, which may be directly associated with less empathy, insight, and a shorter life-span in males. It has been determined that in the realm of racial and ethnic group factors, American females disclose more than British females and whites disclose more than Negroes or Mexican-Americans.

In relating scores on self-disclosure scales to various measures of adjustment, it has been indicated that self-disclosure is positively related to mental health. Researchers have suggested that a curvilinear relationship exists between self-disclosure and adjustment. Studies have shown a tendency for the least well-adjusted individual to give a disproportionate amount of self-disclosure. Correlations of self-esteem and disclosure indicate contradictory findings, but it is generally accepted that a person who is able to reveal personal information experiences greater self-acceptance as well as

acceptance by others.

Numerous studies have shown the importance of self-disclosure in interpersonal relationships. Reciprocity, or the "dyadic effect" in the disclosing process has been examined and determined that a strong correlate of disclosure output to a given target person is the amount of disclosure input from that person. The curvilinear relationship between self-disclosure and adjustment is consistent with the principle of reciprocity in self-disclosure.

In determining the effects of liking upon self-disclosure, it has been found that subjects tend to know more about their friends and colleagues whom they like best. In addition, it has been indicated that the characteristics of the target person that determine disclosure may vary from one target person to another.

In examining self-disclosure and physical contact, researchers have found that self-disclosure and touching are related and may be a reciprocal phenomenon, that is, a relationship was found to exist between the extent a person is touched by a target person and the extent that he touches that person. High-esteem subjects were more communicative through body contact.

Various studies demonstrated that the effects of therapist or experimenter disclosure may have a number of implications for therapy outcomes and experimental results. Therapists who were perceived as offering the highest levels of self-disclosure were given the most

disclosure by subjects. Interviewing techniques were found to affect the amount of personal communication for all age groups. When employing tests of personality and ability, researchers have found that the nature of a subject's responses may be affected in an experimental situation. These results have stimulated research in the possibility of pre-training clients to self-disclose during a counseling interview.

The significance of self-disclosure is highlighted in group psychotherapy. Self-disclosure may be seen as a necessary precondition for the implementation of various "curative factors" operating in groups. Though there has been little research completed in this area, it has been shown that (1) the higher the self-disclosure, the more positive the behavior change; (2) patients attain popularity in groups by participating in self-disclosure; (3) self-disclosure is related to cohesiveness of the group; and (4) it is necessary to increase the quantity of self-disclosure if the patient is to receive optimal assistance from the group experience.

CONCLUSIONS

After presenting this review of literature on self-disclosure, the author has arrived at the following conclusions:

1. By employing self-disclosure questionnaires, researchers may obtain useful information concerning typical patterns of behavior.
2. Self-disclosure varies according to family patterns, sex,

race, and cultural factors.

3. A relationship exists between self-disclosure and personal adjustment.

4. Self-disclosure is necessary to develop and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships.

5. The effects of therapist or experimenter self-disclosure have a number of practical and methodological implications for therapy outcome and experimental results.

6. By facilitating the operation of curative factors in a group, self-disclosure may be considered of great value in successful group psychotherapy.

7. More research is needed to investigate the self-disclosure process, especially its implications for members of the helping professions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been made as a result of the review of literature presented in this study:

1. New measures of self-disclosure must be developed so that research will not be subject to methodological limitations.

2. In the area of psychotherapy, more research must be implemented to examine populations typical of participants in individual and group therapy.

3. Since most self-disclosure studies have utilized self-reports and dyadic interactions, it is imperative that studies employ entire groups if knowledge is to be gained on the process of self-disclosure in therapy groups.

4. Most research has been completed on the forces operating to increase disclosure. In order to gain a greater understanding of the dynamics of self-disclosure, it is necessary to examine the forces that act to inhibit disclosure, such as discretion or the need for privacy.

5. Since it has been found that self-disclosure may be a necessary precondition for therapy, members of the helping professions would benefit from training programs which emphasize the importance of therapist and patient transparency.

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