The effects of child-centered play therapy on the behavioral performance of three first grade students with ADHD.

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Abstract

A single-case multiple baseline across participants design was used to investigate the effects of child-centered play therapy (CCPT) on hyperactivity/impulsivity and inattention in 3 first grade students. Students were referred to our study by classroom teachers using a behavior checklist. Parents and teachers filled out the Attention Deficit Disorders Evaluation Scale (4th ed., McCarney & Arthaud, 2013) to qualify students for our study. Students who scored in the moderate or severe range from the same classroom were selected for our study. The Direct Observation Form (DOF; McConaughy & Achenbach, 2009) was used to assess behaviors across baseline, treatment, and maintenance conditions by trained observers. Students participated in an average 3 CCPT sessions each week for 6 weeks, for a total of 18 sessions. Visual inspection techniques were used to analyze the effects of CCPT on attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) behaviors. Results indicated that there was a small effect size for CCPT on ADHD behaviors. Analysis of individual subscales revealed moderate or large effect sizes increasing time on task and decreasing total problems in the classroom, sluggish cognitive tempo, immature/withdrawn behavior, intrusive behavior, and oppositional behavior in individual participants. The Behavior Intervention Rating Scale (BIRS; VonBrock & Elliott, 1987) was completed out by the teacher posttreatment as a measure of social validity. The teacher indicated that CCPT was an appropriate intervention for students with ADHD, has utility in the school setting, and would recommend CCPT to other teachers. Limitations, suggestions for future research, clinical implications, and conclusions are presented.