

Guided Imagery and Progressive Muscle Relaxation in Group Psychotherapy

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Group psychotherapy effectively promotes positive treatment outcomes in patients in a cost-effective way. Its efficacy is in part attributable to variables unique to the group experience of therapy as compared with individual psychotherapy (Bottomley, 1996; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). That is, the group format helps participants feel accepted and better understand their common struggles; at the same time, interactions with group members provide social support and models of positive behavior (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Thus, it is useful to examine how stress reduction and relaxation can be enhanced in a group context.

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the research base on guided imagery and progressive muscle relaxation in group psychotherapy contexts. I provide overviews of both guided imagery and progressive muscle relaxation, including theoretical foundations and historical context. Then I examine guided imagery and progressive muscle relaxation as used on their own as well as in combination as part of group psychotherapy (see Baider et al., 1994, for more). Throughout the review, I highlight themes in the research. Finally, I end by pointing out limitations in the existing literature and exploring potential directions for future research.

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Each paragraph begins with a 0.5" tab.

References

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