

CLINICAL AND COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

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The meaning of a master therapist: Filipino clinical practitioners' perspective

This two-phase study attempted to understand the meaning of a master therapist based on the perspective of two groups of selected Filipino clinical practitioners, the master psychotherapist group and their fellow professionals in the field of psychology. A preliminary survey was conducted first to determine the master psychotherapist group and then to determine how fellow practitioners define a master therapist. A qualitative interview making use of digital recorder was then conducted to determine how the master psychotherapist group defines a master therapist. Data was analyzed using the interpretive phenomenological analysis. Findings revealed that both the master psychotherapist group and their fellow practitioners in the field of psychology perceive a master therapist in bifurcated terms. The meanings associated with being a master therapist focused more on qualities and skills which are usually developed through education and specialized trainings, but have had its foundation in childhood particularly in relation to family upbringing. Certain expectations based on profession significantly influenced the way fellow professionals described a master psychotherapist. It was concluded that fellow professionals define a master psychotherapist in the light of his/her professional and personal attributes. Moreover, master therapists are those persons born with the natural inclination to develop the attributes of a therapist and who were later nurtured by a supportive environment. Recommendations for the professionalization, contextualization and promotion of clinical practice of psychotherapy in the Philippines were emphasized.

Biography

Marissa C Esperal has completed her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Southern Luzon Polytechnic College (now Southern Luzon State University). She has obtained her first Master of Arts degree in Education with specialization in Guidance and Counseling at the Philippine Normal University in Manila in 2003, Master of Arts degree in Psychology by the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City in 2010 and a PhD in Psychology by the same university in 2011. She is a registered Psychologist and a registered Guidance Counselor. Currently, she serves as the Vice-President for Academic Affairs in Southern Luzon State University in Lucban, Quezon, Philippines.

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