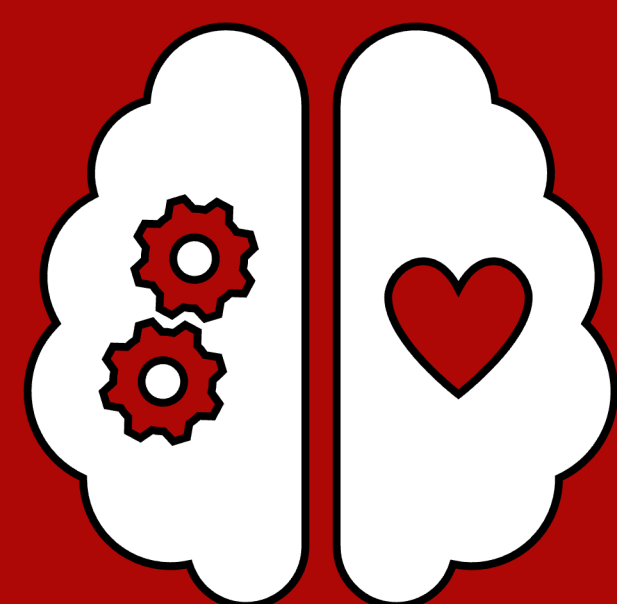


Transforming Trauma:

Comparing the Methodology of Executive Function Coaching and Trauma Informed Care



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Background and Research Questions:

- **Rising Mental Health Issue:** Mental health has become an increasing concern, especially for vulnerable populations like foster care children.
- **Statistics:** 80% of foster care children experience significant mental health issues, compared to 18-22% in the general population (NCSL, 2019).
- **Executive Functioning (EF):** EF refers to cognitive processes like task initiation, working memory, sustained attention, impulse control, and goal-directed persistence (Dawson & Guare).
- **Trauma's Impact on EF:** 90% of foster care children experience trauma, which negatively affects their executive functioning (Bremner, 2006; Functional Family Therapy, 2022).
- **Research Focus:** Explored how to combine Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) and Executive Functioning Coaching (EFC) to create a specialized treatment for comorbid foster care children.
- **Goal:** Assess the characteristics of TIC and EFC and propose a combined treatment model for this population.

Bremner, J. D. (2006). Traumatic stress: Effects on the brain. *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*, 8(4), 445–461.
<https://doi.org/10.31887/dcn.2006.8.4/jbremner>

Dawson, P., & Guare, R. (2012). *Coaching Students with Executive Skills Deficits*. Guilford Publications. ProQuest Ebook Central.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/radford/detail.action?docID=868510>.

Functional Family Therapy. (2022, August 4). *Alarming foster care statistics that cannot be ignored*. FFT. Retrieved April 10, 2023, from <https://www.fftllc.com/blog/alarming-foster-care-statistics#:~:text=Mental%20Health%20Concerns%20in%20the%20Foster%20Care%20>

National Conference of State Legislatures. (2019, November 1). *Brief mental health and foster care*. National Conference of State Legislatures. Retrieved April 21, 2023, from <https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/mental-health-and-foster-care>

Methods:

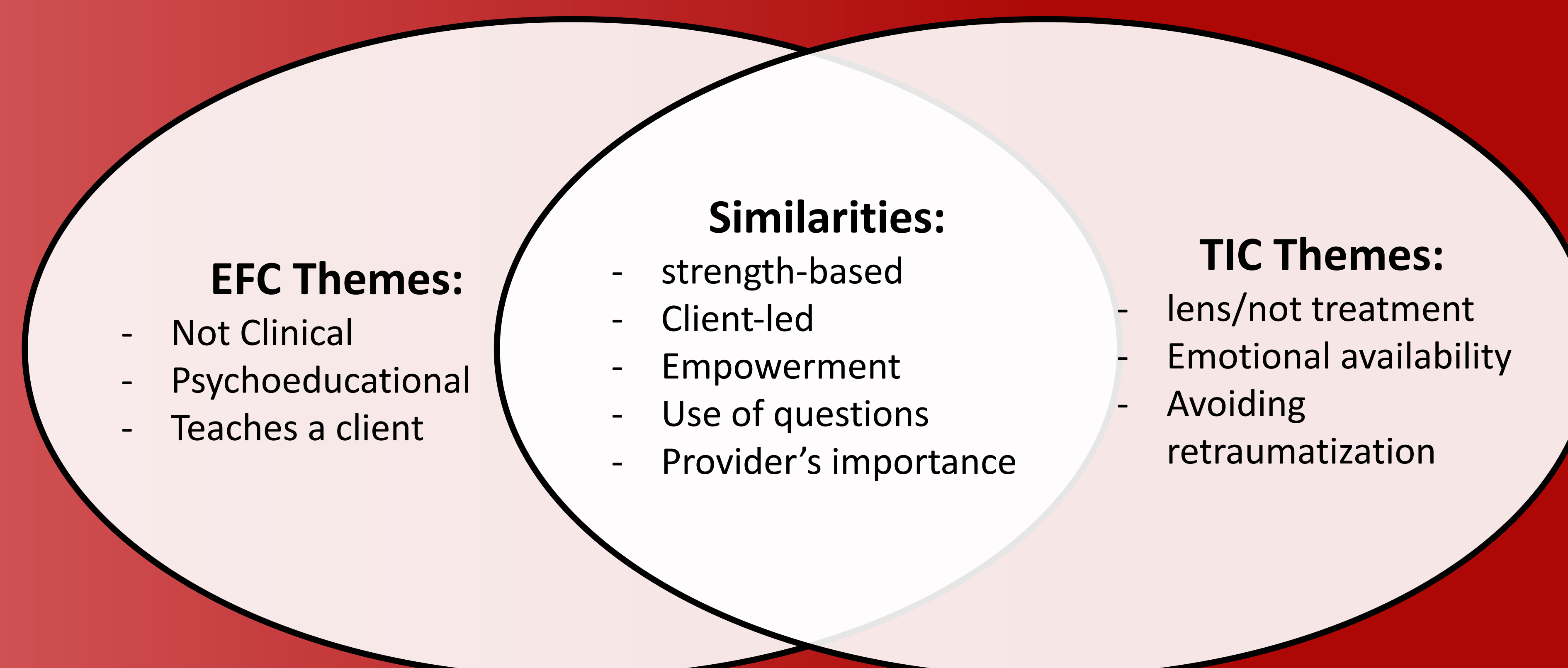
- Qualitative research NVivo for literary analysis
- Analyzed 10 articles (5 on Executive Functioning Coaching (EFC) and 5 on Trauma-Informed Care (TIC))
- Coded and identified common themes from articles
- Developed a workshop based on the themes for Trauma-Informed Executive Functioning Coaching (TI-EFC)
- Workshop delivered through a recorded Zoom presentation

Future Directions:

- TIC and EFC can be effectively combined to create TI-EFC without compromising its non-clinical nature
- **Research Needs:**
 - The connection between trauma and executive function
 - How to treat executive dysfunction linked to trauma
 - Best approaches to serve foster care children post-trauma

Results:

- The key findings from my study can be divided into three sections: EFC key themes, TIC key themes, and shared themes (Graph 1).
- EFC key themes are that it is not clinical, it takes a psychoeducational approach, and it prioritizes teaching a client about how ADHD or EF struggles effects brain functioning. TIC key themes are that it is a lens not a treatment, it requires emotional availability from providers, and it involves reframing treatment to avoid retraumatization.
- The shared key themes: 1) strength-based theory, 2) the autonomy of the client (or being client-led), 3) empowerment and resiliency of client, 4) provider's use of questions, and 5) the importance of provider's disposition.
- What TI-EFC would look like: Because TIC is a lens and not a treatment, TI-EFC would keep the basis of EFC while adding in the elements of TIC. The main additions would be considering how trauma effects client's actions and treatment, leading a client in understanding the tie between trauma and EF, using metacognition to find practical coping skills to aid in the treatment, and prioritizing preventing retraumatization by understanding a client's triggers.



Graph 1: Similarities and Differences of EFC and TIC

Workshop/ Training:

This workshop is meant to act as an example of how this treatment may look. See QR code below!

