

Your solution or my getaway? The differential impacts between analytical and experiential responding.

In everyday life interaction and psychotherapy, people engage in emotional experience sharing, which involves a listener (therapist) and a teller (client) with disequilibrium internal states. Experiential and analytical responding styles were found often used by listeners in the affect regulation process. However, the impacts on listener were seldom discussed and less is known on the differential influence between the two responding styles. This study aims to investigate the phenomena, and we hypothesize that the experiential responding style is associated with elevated mood change and distress level. College students are recruited in the experiment. Participants were exposed to a dyadic communication situation when listening to the recording of one's monologue on the family conflict and were instructed either to provide feasible solutions that help improve the situation or to feel and imagine the situation experienced by the teller. Significant difference was found in the mood change of participants using two responding styles. Participants using experiential style experience a less positive emotion, more negative emotion and higher distress level than those using analytical style. Results are discussed in terms of the cost of using two responding style and its implications in therapeutic process, which brings concern to the emotional effect on therapists.