

How Do You “RATE”? A Simple Process For Emotional Health Care

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During the 20+ years of my clinical experience in acute psychiatric practice, I am often asked about my overall approach to emotional health care. In response, I have attempted to break the process down as simply as possible through what I term the “RATE” process, an acronym that I refer to as “Rapidly Assess, Treat and Evaluate”.

Step 1 -Rapidly Assess

It is my belief that the most competent psychiatric care begins with a thorough assessment, followed by rapid feedback about how to achieve relief from any pain and suffering. One simple and efficient way to “Rapidly Assess” an individual is to consider the use of web-based, automated assessment tools. The accessibility and availability of these automated assessment tools are much needed and long overdue, especially considering the way in which current systems of care have found greater “efficiency” in asking fewer questions during the data-collection process, which often results in more mistakes and omissions.”

The advantages of these web-based tools allow for access anywhere an internet connection is available, and allows an individual to complete them within the scheduling and environment of their choosing. By completing the assessment in this manner, the individual will likely be more relaxed, honest, thoughtful, as well as more thorough and accurate in completing his/her responses; thus, ensuring the provider more complete and accurate details. Additionally, an assessment that encourages completion in partnership, with an opportunity for the partner to also share their own “collateral” comments and information with the provider, can prove most insightful. As a side benefit, the automated assessment might allow a system of care to address clients’ needs faster, while at the same time making more effective use of the provider’s time.

Step 2 -Treat

After efficient assessment, it is important that the individual seeking improved emotional health most efficiently get connected to their journey of recovery as early as possible, preferably immediately, just as our current culture has come to expect. This immediate access to treatment can easily be accomplished by the use of technically-facilitated, or web-based, psychoeducational methods of intervention, which can be conveniently accessed online at any time, and usually at a much affordable cost.

Generally speaking, with any treatment, safety issues always come first, followed by addictions and other issues that would interfere with a life worth living. Subsequently, other conflicts and growth opportunities could be explored, including self-

esteem and goal setting, anger, guilt and shame, loss, stress, anxiety and depression, eating disorders, abuse, trauma, diet and exercise, or others. (Truly effective intervention for these conditions requires tremendous amounts of training, education, time and patience, which quickly exceed human capacity in light of the overwhelming needs of our society; but, the power of technical intervention is poised to creatively help solve these dilemmas, possibly for the first time in history.)

(A Note About Partnership): Ideally, the psychoeducational process takes place in the context of the best possible collaborative relationship. Of course the most ideal relationship would be an ethical and competent therapist; however, not everyone has access to this. Therefore, the healthiest possible partnership for processing the education is advised; perhaps a close friend or family member, or someone who has “been there” before and mastered a challenge, and now wants to help someone else. Of course, one could certainly complete the process alone, but partnership is always encouraged.

Step 3 -Evaluate

We tend to be most successful in any endeavor when we are clear about what it is that we are working on and measure the effectiveness of our intervention. This is why outcome measures are felt to be an essential element of one’s overall treatment. Of course, outcome measures are not absolutely necessary, but they most likely will improve one’s overall experience.

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MyTherapySession.com is an online resource that provides hope and help to individuals with various emotional health concerns. Through the use of web-based assessment tools and stepwise video learning modules with reflective journal prompts and selected (optional) spiritually sensitive observations, both consumers and healthcare providers can more efficiently and effectively address a variety of essential mental health concerns, including weight management, stress, anxiety and depression, self-esteem and goal setting, assertiveness, anger management, comprehensive addictions treatment, eating disorders, overcoming guilt and shame, and many more.