
Abstract

A case study on the weight loss history of a severely obese client and the significance of supportive psychotherapy from the perspective of changes in object relationships

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Based on the case description of a severely obese client who requested bariatric surgery, this study investigated the weight loss history and the significance of supportive psychotherapy from the perspective of changes in object relationships. Stress-related eating, which exacerbated obesity, occurred in situations in which the client felt victimized by imagining what was expected of her by others, and because she felt guilty for thinking that she had caused the death of a person close to her. The clinical psychologist observed the client's relationships with others via her descriptions and understood her feelings. The client was able to grasp her relationships from a bird's-eye view by internalizing the psychologist's perspective. This helped her to control her stress-related eating. However, the control was initially unstable, but became stabilized with the recovery of ambivalence toward the deceased, and the realization that her expectations of herself and others were unrealistic. Thus, the client's eating behavior stabilized with the transition from a paranoid-schizoid position to a depressive position, and this process was supported by the clinical psychologist's supportive involvement.

Keywords: severe obesity, object relationships, supportive psychotherapy, stress-related eating, weight loss
