Community Wise: Evaluating Treatment Fidelity

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This study focuses on evaluating the treatment fidelity of Community Wise, a multi-level intervention aiming to reduce substance use among formerly incarcerated individuals in Newark, New Jersey. These individuals had a substance abuse history. Community Wise seeks to promote critical thinking and dialogue among these individuals. Additionally, they strive to empower them to examine ecological inequalities and community level action to combat social issues.

As a group, we analyzed 16 sessions, 1-2 hours in length, between the Community Wise facilitators and participants. We then used a standardized fidelity measure to rate each session depending on the facilitator and group performances. Preliminary results showed an adherence of 70.6 percent, acceptable facilitator competence, and participants' critical consciousness of 47 percent.
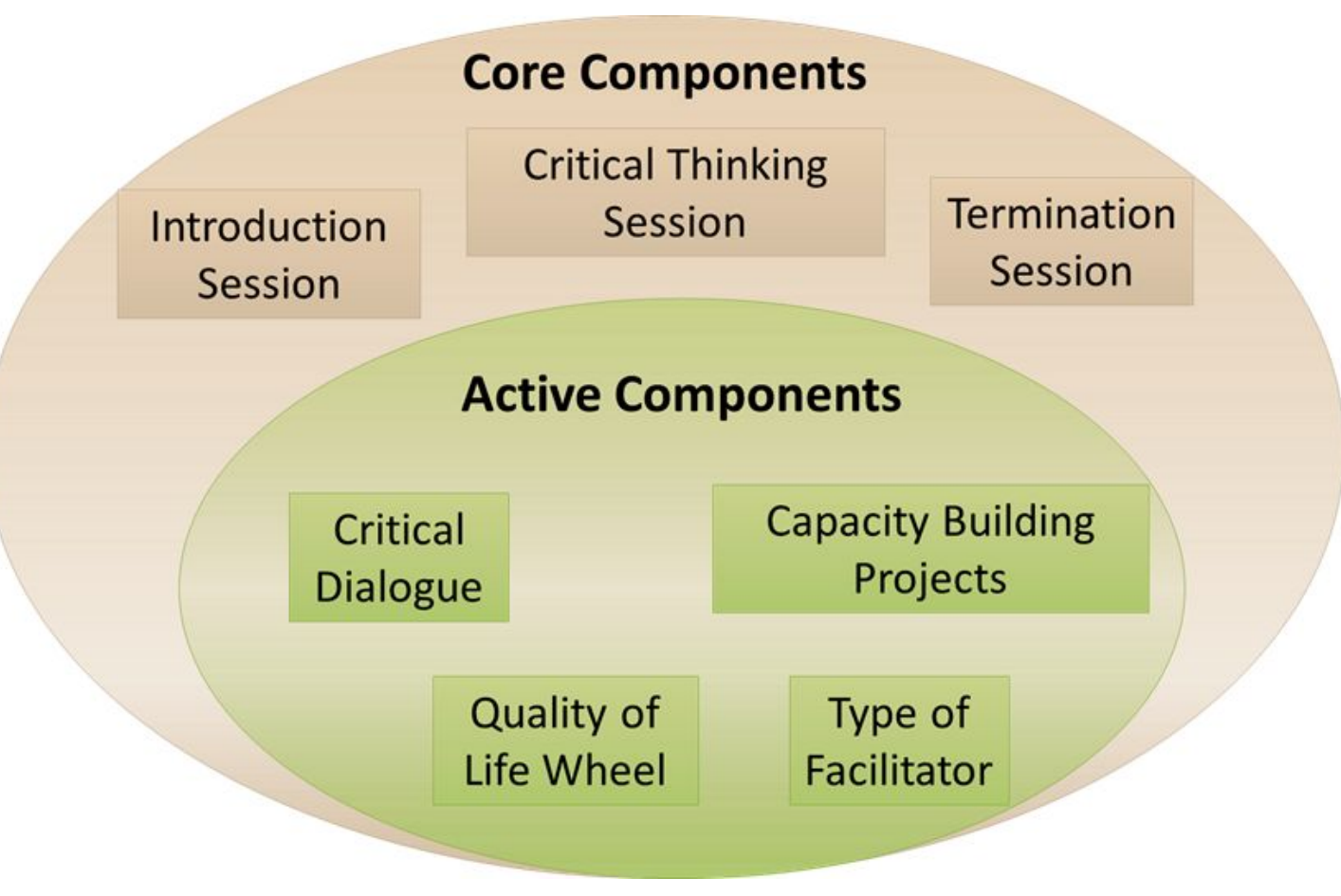
Over the course of this project, we learned many different skills such as time management, critical thinking, and how to increase inter-rater reliability. This project was a great step toward learning more about research, and researching our own interests in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on evaluating the treatment fidelity of Community Wise, a multi-level intervention aiming to reduce substance use among formerly incarcerated individuals with a history of substance abuse in Newark, NJ.

Community Wise seeks to promote critical thinking and dialogue among these individuals and empower them to examine ecological inequalities and community level action to combat social issues.

Core Components
- Introduction Session
- Critical Thinking Session
- Termination Session

Active Components
- Critical Dialogue
- Capacity Building Projects
- Quality of Life Wheel
- Type of Facilitator

TREATMENT FIDELITY

- In intervention research, **treatment fidelity** is defined as the methods that check the accuracy and consistency of the intervention to ensure that each part is implemented and completed in a similar manner across all participants over time.
- This process is important to improve the validity of the results.

METHODS

- Training with study principal investigator
- Individually listening to audio recordings of clinical groups sessions

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- Used the Community Wise manual and a standardized fidelity measure in Qualitrix to individually rate the same group session recording
- Met to establish inter-rater reliability

What is Inter-Rater Reliability?

IRR can be defined as the degree of agreement among raters. Numerous statistics can be calculated to provide a score of how much consensus exists between raters.

Why does it matter in educational research?: In IRR we trust
- The quality of a coding scheme and the ability to replicate results is connected with the overall 'believability' of the results. To publish results, we must demonstrate that our coding scheme is reliable.

- Continued to rate the same recording until inter-rater reliability reached over .90. Once this was achieved, raters were able to rate sessions on their own

This process ensured that the raters used the same system of judgments in order to measure the effectiveness of the facilitators, the engagement of the participants, and the overall progress of the intervention from session to session.

RESULTS

1. Undergraduate students rated a total of 16 sessions, four of which were rated by all three raters
2. Sessions ranged from 1 to 2 hours
3. Session ratings took approximately four hours to complete
4. Students and principal investigator met weekly or bi-weekly to discuss project and review ratings.

Fidelity Preliminary Findings

FIDELITY MEASURE	PERCENTAGE/MEAN (SD)
ADHERENCE	70.6%
FACILITATOR COMPETENCE	ACCEPTABLE
PARTICIPANTS CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS	47%

- Preliminary results
  - We only processed 16 out of 450 recordings
- We obtained 70% fidelity
  - Good, but has room for improvement
- 47% critical consciousness among participants
  - Critical consciousness: "The ability to intervene with reality in order to change it"

CONCLUSIONS

- What we learned:
  - How to communicate and collaborate well within group settings
  - Time management skills
  - How to acknowledge our own biases
  - How to identifying ecological inequalities
    - Micro-level
    - Meso-level
    - Macro-level
  - How to define and identify belief debating, critical consciousness, critical dialogue and other key terms
  - How to evaluate and interpret qualitative data
  - Methods of qualitative research and how community level interventions operate to achieve their goals

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