

*Section: Modern Positive Psychotherapy (PPT) practice***Intrapersonal Differentiation through Five Capabilities in Five Stages with Positive Psychotherapy: The Positive Intrapersonal Differentiation Model (PID Model)****Ali Eryilmaz**

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Abstract

The psychotherapy literature emphasizes the importance of the differentiation process for healthy individual development. One of the key characteristics of Positive Psychotherapy is its grounding in differentiation. The purpose of this study is to develop a model that will help clients achieve intrapersonal differentiation across five stages, using five capabilities grounded in Positive Psychotherapy. The developed model is referred to as the Positive Intrapersonal Differentiation Model (PID Model). According to the model, honesty is used in the observation stage; patience in the inventory stage; hope in the situational encouragement stage; achievement in the verbalization stage; and time capability in the broadening of goals stage. The study also provides an example of a psychotherapy session based on the PID Model. The developed model can be used in the process of intrapersonal differentiation.

Keywords: Positive Psychotherapy, intrapersonal differentiation, capabilities, five stages

Introduction

The psychotherapy literature emphasizes the importance of the differentiation process for the healthy development of the individual (Choi & Murdock, 2017; Hung et al., 2022; Licht & Chabot, 2006). One important characteristic of Positive Psychotherapy is that it is a psychotherapeutic school grounded in differentiation (Peseschkian, 1987). During Positive Psychotherapy, individuals learn to distinguish between primary and secondary capabilities, which are reflections of their capacities to love and know, and behaviors that are important to them. Human differentiation constitutes all physical, mental, and social functions (Peseschkian, 2016). In fact, differentiation is an important component of the psychotherapeutic process (Peseschkian, 1987). Beyond the psychotherapeutic process,

individuals also undergo differentiation throughout their developmental journey. Peseschkian (2016) conceptualizes this process as the interactional stages. The interactional stages comprise three: attachment, differentiation, and separation. The differentiation stage, in particular, underpins both physical and psychological development. The acquisition of socially desirable behavior determines differentiation (Eryilmaz, 2020). This occurs through the differentiation of a person's capacity for recognition and learning, and the formation of secondary capabilities that enable the person to regulate their nature and express themselves socially (Peseschkian, 1987).

In the literature, the process of differentiation is examined in two important dimensions: intrapersonal and interpersonal (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Interpersonal differentiation is understood as the

differentiation of the self (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Interpersonal differentiation is defined as an individual's ability to balance intimacy and autonomy (Skowron, 2004). It is defined as the ability to experience independence. Differentiation, at this point, entails maintaining a strong sense of personal beliefs despite pressure from others (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The interpersonally differentiated self encompasses both intimacy and differentiation from others, reflecting a person's ability to engage in close, physical relationships with others without losing their identity (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). These individuals protect their sense of self. They remain committed to their own values even when exposed to environmental pressures (Bowen, 1993). Those who fail to differentiate healthily strive for others' approval. They are also fixated on the relationship patterns of their family of origin and experience complex emotions. Furthermore, these individuals tend either to avoid others or to become excessively involved with them (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). They may remain emotionally distant from others because they perceive closeness as a threat. Consequently, they cannot tolerate differences between their own values and opinions and those of others (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

Intrapersonal differentiation is also considered an inner psychic dimension. It is the ability of an individual to create a balance between their feelings (emotional functions) and thoughts (cognitive functions) (Eryilmaz, 2020; Licht & Chabot, 2006). Intrapersonal differentiation is also defined as an individual's ability to think logically under stress; to distinguish between emotions and thoughts; and to provide the most appropriate problem-solving response (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Individuals with intrapersonal differentiation can remain calm when experiencing stressful events (Ross & Murdock, 2014). They can shift their attention to other things. They can engage logic and reasoning (Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Skowron et al., 2003). Thus, individuals maintain their autonomy in close relationships by functioning at both emotional and logical levels (Eryilmaz, 2020). If individuals exhibit low personal differentiation, they tend to operate at the emotional level. Their thoughts are often influenced by their emotions. Even their thoughts are suppressed by their feelings (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Individuals with high levels of intrapersonal differentiation from their family can easily distinguish their thoughts from their emotions (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Those with low levels of differentiation have very high levels of emotional intensity (Bowen, 1993). It has been found that individuals with healthy differentiation make decisions by considering their feelings and impulses (Skowron, 2004). Those with healthy differentiation have strong characteristics such as remaining calm and acting logically in the face of adversity (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

Differentiation is a crucial indicator of individuals' psychological health (Eryilmaz, 2020; Jenkins, 2005; Ross & Murdock, 2014). Low levels of differentiation have been associated with exhibiting high levels of depressive symptoms, experiencing more stress and anxiety, and having physical health problems (Choi & Murdock, 2017; Hooper & Doehler, 2011). Positive differentiation processes have been associated with healthy psychosocial development (Jenkins, 2005), maintenance of positive interpersonal relationships (Skowron, 2004), and improved problem-solving skills in social contexts (Choi & Murdock, 2017). Furthermore, differentiation also affects the psychotherapy process. A positive differentiation process increases therapeutic alliance and reduces symptom burden (Grosse-Holtforth et al., 2014). Positive Psychotherapy is also a differentiation model. Individuals begin to participate in this differentiation process with their capacities to love and know. Over time, the use of primary and secondary capabilities plays a significant role in the differentiation process (Peseschkian, 2016). Some individuals differentiate healthily, whereas others differentiate in an unhealthy manner. Psychotherapy is an important tool in transforming an unhealthy differentiation process into a healthy one. The relationship between the psychotherapist and the client in the psychotherapeutic process is an important component of the dynamics of healthy differentiation (Eryilmaz, 2020). The literature contains numerous studies and explanations of the differentiation process (Bowen, 1993; Eryilmaz, 2020; İmamoğlu, 1998; Peseschkian, 2016; Witkin et al., 1979). However, from a Positive Psychotherapy perspective, there is also a need to develop models of how people engage in intrapersonal differentiation processes. As a result, this study aims to present a systematic

model for providing intrapersonal differentiation based on the five stages of Positive Psychotherapy and five capabilities.

Methodology

This study aimed to develop a model to contribute to the process of individual differentiation. For this reason, the developed

model was named the PID (Positive Intrapersonal Differentiation) Model. The PID Model aims to facilitate the differentiation of individuals through five stages and five capabilities during the psychotherapy process. A summary of the PID Model is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. The Content of The PID (Positive Intrapersonal Differentiation) Model

Order	Stages	Capabilities	Goals
1	Observation	Honesty	To accept the reality
2	Inventory	Patience	For building optimistic thinking
3	Situational Encouragement	Hope	To see an opportunity
4	Verbalization	Achievement	To use problem-solving strategies
5	Broadening Goals	Time	To concentrate on other positive events

A key question is how the model relates to each stage and capability. A detailed explanation of the relationship between stage, capability, and goal facilitates understanding of the model. The PID (Positive Intrapersonal Differentiation) Model's explanation, based on the stages of Positive Psychotherapy, is as follows:

Observation – Honesty – Acceptance: The first stage of Positive Psychotherapy is observation-distancing. In this stage, the client attempts to understand the situation they are experiencing. The goal is to encourage the client to accept the event or situation that is causing negative emotions and thoughts. The most important capability needed by both the psychotherapist and the client at this point is honesty. If the client honestly accepts their experience, they are more likely to accept the emotions it evokes. In this stage, the psychotherapist generates at least 10 reasons for the client to accept the situation. The question to ask the client at this stage is: "If we think the situation is acceptable, what are our 10 reasons for accepting it?"

Inventory – Patience – Optimistic Thinking: The second phase of Positive Psychotherapy is the inventory phase. Due to the intense emotions they experience, clients approach the situation and their experiences with a pessimistic perspective. Some clients tend to catastrophize the situation. During this phase, the psychotherapist must demonstrate to the client that the situation or experience is not a disaster. To achieve this, the psychotherapist

must exercise patience to help the client recognize that other negative situations or experiences may be more likely than the current one. At this point, the psychotherapist should ask the client, "What would you say if you compared the outcomes of your experience or situation with other negative outcomes and experiences?" The answers to this question demonstrate that the situation or experience is not a disaster for the client. This encourages clients to approach the situation or experience with more patience.

Situational Encouragement – Hope – Opportunity: The third phase of Positive Psychotherapy is situational encouragement. Positive interpretations made during this phase are important motivators for clients. Ensuring that clients adopt a positive perspective is crucial to personal differentiation. It is necessary to support clients in this direction. For this reason, clients must recognize opportunities in their experiences. According to Peseschkian (2016), the concept of true positivity combines positive and negative. The psychotherapist should ask the client, "What opportunities can you find in this experience or situation?" The answers to this question help the client see that the situation or experience contains many opportunities. This increases their hope.

Verbalization – Achievement – Problem Solving: The fourth stage of Positive Psychotherapy is the verbalization stage. This stage is the action stage. It is the stage where the client's conflicts are resolved. Another reason for

the lack of intrapersonal differentiation is the failure to address the client's problem as experienced. In this stage, the client attempts to resolve the problem by following the problem-solving stages through psychotherapy. Taking the client's problem as a reference, the psychotherapist tries to solve the problem together with the client by asking questions such as: "What is the problem you are experiencing? What are the causes of this problem? What solutions can be developed for this problem? What is the most appropriate solution? How can the most appropriate solution be implemented in real life?" At the end of the process, they develop a plan. To solve the problem and develop a plan, it is necessary to activate the capability required to achieve it.

Broadening Goals – Time – Concentrate on Positive Events: The fifth stage of Positive Psychotherapy is the verbalization stage. This stage corresponds to the termination stage. During the intrapersonal differentiation process, life continues even after clients have resolved their problems. During this process, clients should focus on events and activities that generate more positive feelings and thoughts rather than focusing on negative emotions and thoughts. This is where clients need to allocate their time. Clients use time effectively, both for themselves and for others. During this stage, the psychotherapist should ask the client, "What kinds of activities could you engage in to generate more positive feelings and thoughts?"

2.1. Using the PID (Positive Intrapersonal Differentiation) Model in the Psychotherapy Process

It is necessary to frequently utilize intrapersonal differentiation during the psychotherapy process. Clients experience many real-life events between sessions. These real-life events also generate negative emotions and thoughts in clients. Intrapersonal differentiation during psychotherapy not only helps clients regulate themselves but also teaches them how to reduce and regulate negative emotions (Blatt, 2008), which are a significant cause of psychopathology in analytical therapies.

This section of the study presents an example of an intrapersonal differentiation session application during psychotherapy. The client is a 36-year-old woman. She is a lawyer by

profession. Her husband is a 37-year-old teacher. The couple has an 8-year-old daughter.

Describing the Event or Situation That Causes a Differentiation Problem

Psychotherapist: How was your last week?

Client: Okay, but I've been experiencing some difficulties.

Psychotherapist: What would you say if you mentioned them?

Client: My husband has genital warts. I'm bothered by this. I'm wondering if it stemmed from an extramarital affair. I'm also concerned about how this could adversely affect my health. Also, my husband delayed telling me. If my husband had told me sooner, I would have been more comfortable.

Observation Stage – Using Honesty Capability – Acceptance:

Psychotherapist: You're worried about your spouse's health problem and are also experiencing insecurity.

Client: Yes, that's exactly right.

Psychotherapist: Let's identify together why this situation is acceptable.

Client: Okay, that would be great.

Psychotherapist: What would you say if you said, "This is acceptable because"?

Client: No one voluntarily wants genital warts on their genitals, so it's acceptable.

Psychotherapist: Great. What's another one?

Client: It's acceptable because humans are biologically structured, and these warts manifest themselves biologically.

Psychotherapist: You mentioned that people are biologically predisposed to this condition.

Client: Absolutely.

Psychotherapist: What's another one?

Client: It's acceptable because my spouse, the father of my child, isn't just anyone.

Psychotherapist: Great. It's acceptable because it's someone with whom you have an emotional connection.

Client: Absolutely.

Psychotherapist: What else?

Client: It's acceptable because my husband was upset and uncomfortable with it.

Psychotherapist: Finally, if you could give another reason, what would it be?

Client: It's acceptable because it's not something you want voluntarily.

Inventory Stage – Using Patience Capability – Optimistic Thinking

Psychotherapist: You expressed yourself very well.

Client: Thank you.

Psychotherapist: Now, how would you compare this situation to situations with worse outcomes?

Client: My husband could have gotten cancer, but he didn't.

Psychotherapist: That's right.

Client: Secondly, my husband could have infected me. But he didn't either.

Psychotherapist: Yes, you're right.

Client: Thirdly, my husband could have become defensive and become violent towards me.

Psychotherapist: Bravo.

Client: Fourthly, my husband could have cheated on me and contracted it from a woman.

Psychotherapist: Thank goodness that didn't happen.

Client: Fifthly, we could have been poor and lacked access to healthcare.

Psychotherapist: You put it perfectly.

Situational Encouragement Stage – Using Hope Capability – Opportunity

Psychotherapist: You expressed yourself very well.

Client: Thank you.

Psychotherapist: Now, we'll focus on what opportunities this experience might present. What opportunities do you think this experience might present?

Client: First, I thought it would offer an opportunity to learn how to cope with health crises.

Psychotherapist: That's right.

Client: Second, it will provide an opportunity to expand my health-related knowledge. I'm constantly researching.

Psychotherapist: You're gaining new information about your current situation.

Client: Yes.

Psychotherapist: So, what's another opportunity?

Client: It's an opportunity to test your fidelity. My partner isn't having sexual intercourse with anyone else. This makes me very happy.

Psychotherapist: It's an opportunity to see that your partner isn't betraying you.

Client: Absolutely.

Psychotherapist: Fourth, what would you say?

Client: My husband felt guilty about this and started helping me with the housework.

Psychotherapist: It has been an opportunity to understand you and to get to know you better.

Client: Yes, that's very interesting.

Psychotherapist: What's the latest opportunity in this regard?

Client: My husband and I have had the opportunity to re-evaluate the importance of personal hygiene.

Verbalization Stage – Using Achievement Capability – Problem Solving

Psychotherapist: You expressed yourself very well.

Client: Thank you.

Psychotherapist: If we see this as a problem, what can you do to solve it?

Client: First, the problem for me is that I look at websites and obtain information from them. There's so much information out there that I get confused and anxious.

Psychotherapist: Finding information from so many places makes you even more anxious.

Client: Yes

Psychotherapist: This distracts you from the root of the problem.

Client: Yes. First, I need to limit my information to websites. This is a health issue, and we need to seek help from doctors who specialize in this.

Psychotherapist: What else can be done?

Client: Secondly, I need to get tested for HIV. This increases my anxiety.

Psychotherapist: Very good.

Client: Thirdly, it's necessary to focus on the treatment method and choose the most appropriate and fastest treatment.

Psychotherapist: You've focused on an important point.

Client: Fourthly, it's about managing this process with my spouse. Not leaving him alone. He's also uncomfortable with this situation. Sometimes he can even feel ashamed.

Psychotherapist: How wonderful that you can understand your spouse.

Client: Thank you.

Psychotherapist: Fifthly, what do you think?

Client: I shouldn't make the situation worse. To do this, I avoid negative people, events, and situations.

Broadening Goals Stage – Using Time Capability- Positive Events

Psychotherapist: You expressed yourself very well.

Client: Thank you.

Psychotherapist: Now we'll focus on other positive things you're experiencing. Instead of constantly thinking about this problem, what other positive things can you focus on?

Client: First, I can go for a walk. Because walking relaxes me.

Psychotherapist: Great.

Client: Second, I can care for my child. I also enjoy spending time with my child.

Psychotherapist: You're thinking about spending quality time with your child.

Client: Yes.

Psychotherapist: What else could it be?

Client: Third, shopping. I feel valued when I shop.

Psychotherapist: Good. What else?

Client: Fourth, I could watch our favorite movies with my husband.

Psychotherapist: You mentioned watching movies.

Client: Fifth, I could take trips to different places. Traveling to other places, getting to know and seeing new places, not only relaxes me but also broadens my perspective.

Evaluation Phase

Psychotherapist: If you were to evaluate what we've shared, what would you say?

Client: I feel more secure now. My anxiety has transformed into confidence.

Psychotherapist: Great

Client: I realize it now. I'm making it worse.

Psychotherapist: What else would you say?

Client: I thought I might be exaggerating. That's why I had difficulty accepting the situation.

Discussion

During psychotherapy, clients' access to positive emotions and thoughts is invaluable for their psychological functioning. Positive Psychotherapy is a form of differentiation analysis therapy. Individuals engage in intrapersonal differentiation through their capacities and capabilities. Developing systematic models to assist individuals in their intrapersonal differentiation processes also enhances the effectiveness of psychotherapy. In this respect, the PID model developed in this study constitutes a contribution to the literature.

Numerous studies have examined the importance of the differentiation process (Choi & Murdock, 2017; Hung et al., 2022; Licht & Chabot, 2006). These studies indicate that individuals who successfully achieve differentiation exhibit higher levels of well-being and greater physical health (Skowron, 2004). Differentiation not only increases life satisfaction but also marital satisfaction (Manzi et al., 2006).

Individuals with high levels of differentiation also experience lower levels of separation anxiety (Peleg & Yitzhak, 2010). Failure to differentiate leads to increased physical symptoms (Solomon et al., 2009). For example, individuals with high differentiation experience disorders such as fibromyalgia much less frequently (Murray et al., 2006). The importance of differentiation has been emphasized in both the general psychology literature and the field of Positive Psychotherapy. However, studies on how to address intrapersonal differentiation in psychotherapy are scarce. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by presenting a new model from a Positive Psychotherapy perspective.

People can successfully navigate the differentiation process through personal effort. At this point, this process is addressed through the concept of adaptive functioning level (Bowen, 1993). If an individual is aware of behaviors that indicate a higher level of differentiation, they can consciously implement these behaviors in relationships. Over time, these changes in conscious effort can increase the individual's level of differentiation. Based on this information, psychotherapists can help clients develop differentiation habits by using differentiation tools, such as the model developed in this study, as needed.

A few points should be emphasized when applying the model discussed in this study. First, clients' responses to the first question in the first stage vary depending on their perceptual capacity. Depending on their perceptual capacity, some clients answer this question readily, whereas others find it difficult. Another point is that, for some individuals, the experience can evoke intense emotions, which should be considered. The psychotherapist must be careful in such situations. It is functional to manage the process by supporting the client without forcing them. In the second stage, some clients may perceive the situation as unmanageable due to limited coping skills. In this case, it is necessary to emphasize clients' coping abilities with positive interpretations. In the third stage, exposing clients to opportunities helps activate their hopeful capacities and contributes to the emergence of the hope principle in Positive Psychotherapy. Additionally, psychotherapists can utilize a hypothetical thinking process with clients. In the fourth stage, clients need to address their problems using the

problem-solving steps. During this process, the psychotherapist should develop an action plan with the client. In the fifth stage, activities that elicit positive feelings and thoughts should be identified in collaboration with the client. The

psychotherapist should also practice time-management skills with the client throughout this process. The key points raised are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of PID Model

Order	Stages	Capabilities	Goals	Key Points to Consider
1	Observation	Honesty	To accept the reality	The capacity of perception The quality of the situation is causing negative emotions
2	Inventory	Patience	To build optimistic thinking	Coping capacity Positive interpretation
3	Situational Encouragement	Hope	To see an opportunity	Hypothetical thinking
4	Verbalization	Achievement	To use problem-solving strategies	Make a plan
5	Broadening Goals	Time	To concentrate on other positive events	Time management

Conclusion

The model discussed in this study is not intended as a general psychotherapy framework applicable across all symptom severity levels. It is important to remember that this model is a tool designed for use in specific clinical situations. The PID Model is highly effective for reframing, broadening the client's perspective, and helping the client resolve their problem by distinguishing between their feelings and thoughts. On the other hand, further research is needed to apply the PID model to highly

sensitive clinical cases such as grief or trauma. This would prevent misapplications and more clearly demonstrate the model's therapeutic effectiveness. Several suggestions can be derived from this study. First, the model discussed in this study can be used to regulate clients' emotions and thoughts during psychotherapy. Second, various experimental studies based on the model presented here can be conducted to assess its effectiveness. Third, research can assess the model's effectiveness among clients with diverse disorders.

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