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Which aspects of the therapeutic alliance are valued by people with aphasia in Speech and Language Therapy? A Q methodology study

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Background
The quality of the therapeutic relationship, also known therapeutic alliance, affects treatment adherence, depressive symptoms, engagement and treatment efficacy.

However, little is known about which aspects of the therapeutic alliances are valued by people engaging in aphasia rehabilitation.

Aim
To identify which elements of the therapeutic alliance are important to people with aphasia engaging in speech and language therapy following a stroke

Methods

Phase 1
- Statements relevant to the therapeutic alliance were extrapolated from the literature (n=453)
- A representative sample of statements was identified (n=38)

Phase 2
- People with aphasia (n=23) sorted statements hierarchically on a grid (Fig.1) in terms of importance.
- Data were analysed using a by-person factor analysis

Results
Five distinct viewpoint emerged from analysis:
- Support me, acknowledge me
- Be frank with me, motivate me
- Direct me, challenge me
- Understand me, laugh with me
- Hear me, encourage me

Conclusions
- The findings highlight the importance of adopting a flexible approach to meet the relational needs of a heterogeneous population
- Q methodology is a both viable and valuable tool for measuring subjectivity in this population