

Creating learning environments for psychotherapy trainees to practice deliberately

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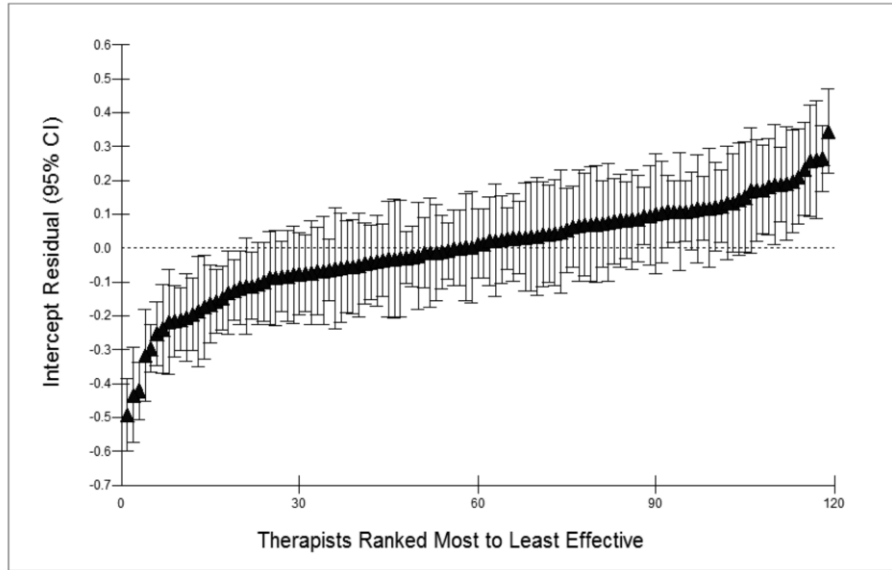
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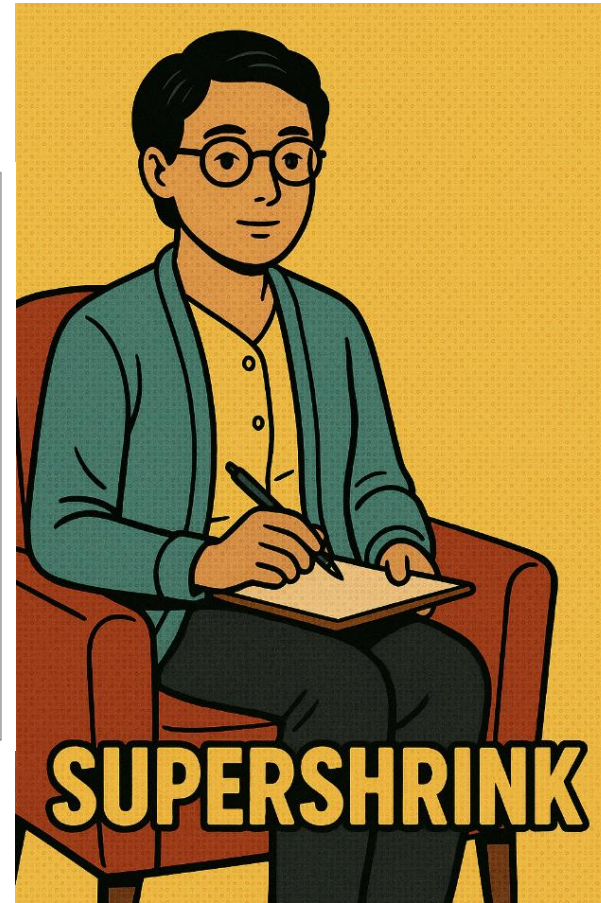
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What are we looking for?



(Saxon & Barkham, 2012)



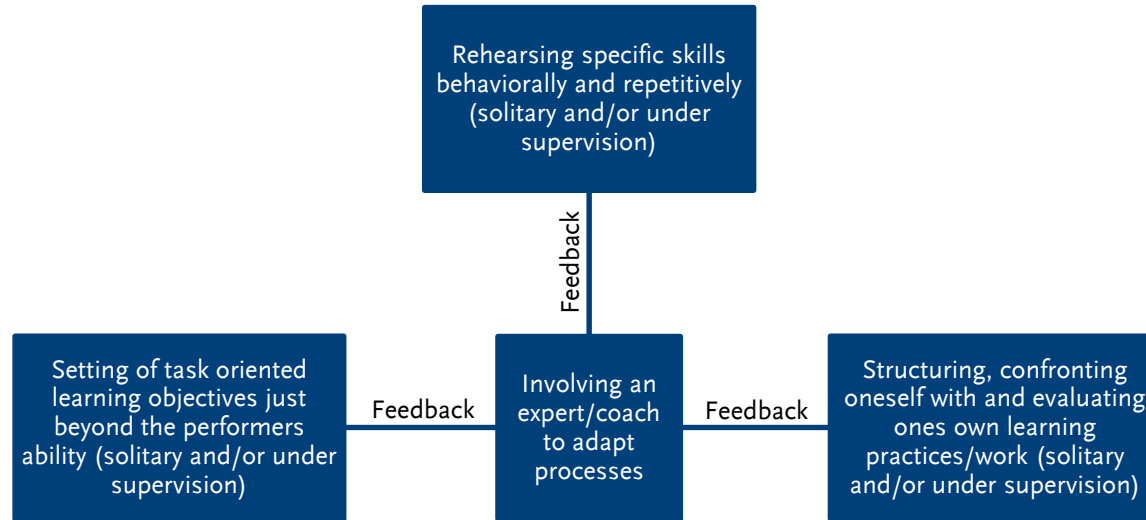
What characterizes a „supershrink“?



Deliberate Practice

(Maybe...)

What is deliberate practice?



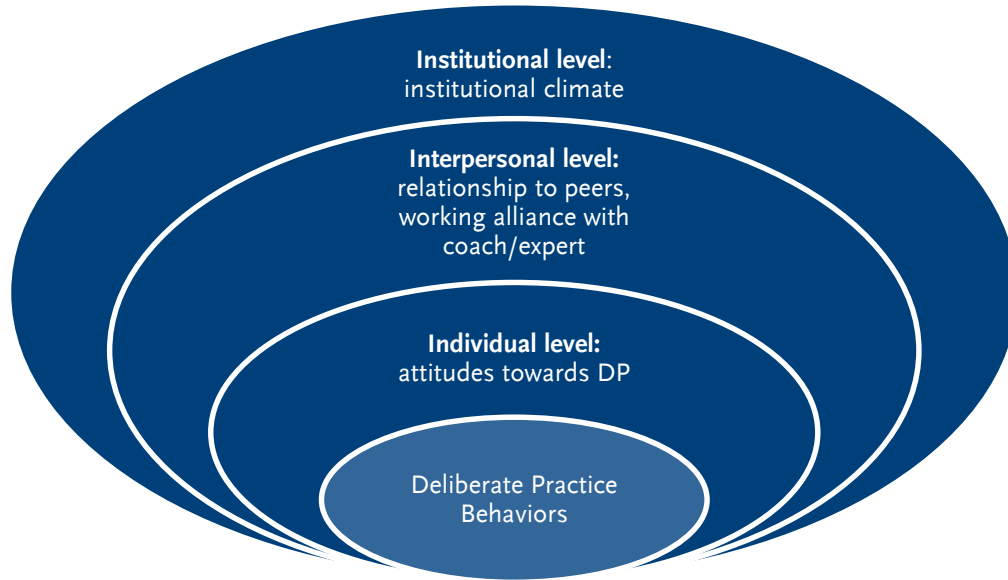
Integrative DP model unifying different DP concepts from psychotherapy

Blümel, S., Schmid-Pleines, C., Pape, M. and Steins-Loeber, S (under review). *Unification and Assessment of Deliberate Practice in Psychotherapy: Towards a Shared Understanding.*

Research Question:

How can we facilitate DP when becoming psychotherapists?

What comprises the learning environment?



Layers of learning environment

Adapted from Blümel et al. (under review)

Why should we care about the learning environment?



Individual level

- moderate attitude-behavior relation (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977)
- attitudes → behavioral consequences such as scheduling, investing time in practice (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1993; Ericsson et al., 2018; Manturzewska, 1990)
- **positive attitudes towards DP predict DP related behaviors (H1)**

Why should we care about the learning environment?

Interpersonal level

- peers
 - DP training can provoke feelings of discomfort, shame, judgement, stress, anxiety (Barrett-Naylor et al., 2020; Mahon, 2024, Axelsson et al., 2024)
 - peer support considered essential to meet emotional demands and challenges of DP (Mahon, 2024)
 - **positive relationships between peers predict DP related behaviors (H2)**
- coach/expert
 - importance of a supportive coach/expert (Mahon, 2024; Husby, 2025)
 - strong relationship between coach/expert and learner necessary for supportive environment (Axelsson et al., 2024; Kivlighan & Kivlighan, 2023)
 - **positive relationships between coach/expert and learner predict DP related behaviors (H3)**

Why should we care about the learning environment?



Institutional level

- organizational culture linked to positive outcomes in performance, employee engagement and innovation (Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024)
- in higher education, culture intending to enhance quality linked to improved learning and development of students (Bendermacher et al., 2017)
- institutional differences affect patient outcomes in psychotherapy research (Firth et al., 2019; Pybis et al., 2017; Xiao et al., 2023)
- differences in patient outcome between clinics could be explained by institutional climate and culture (Deisenhofer et al., 2024; Falkenström et al., 2018)
- **positive institutional climate predicts DP related behaviors (H4)**

Table 1. Results of hierarchical linear regression analyses to predict Deliberate Practice Behaviors

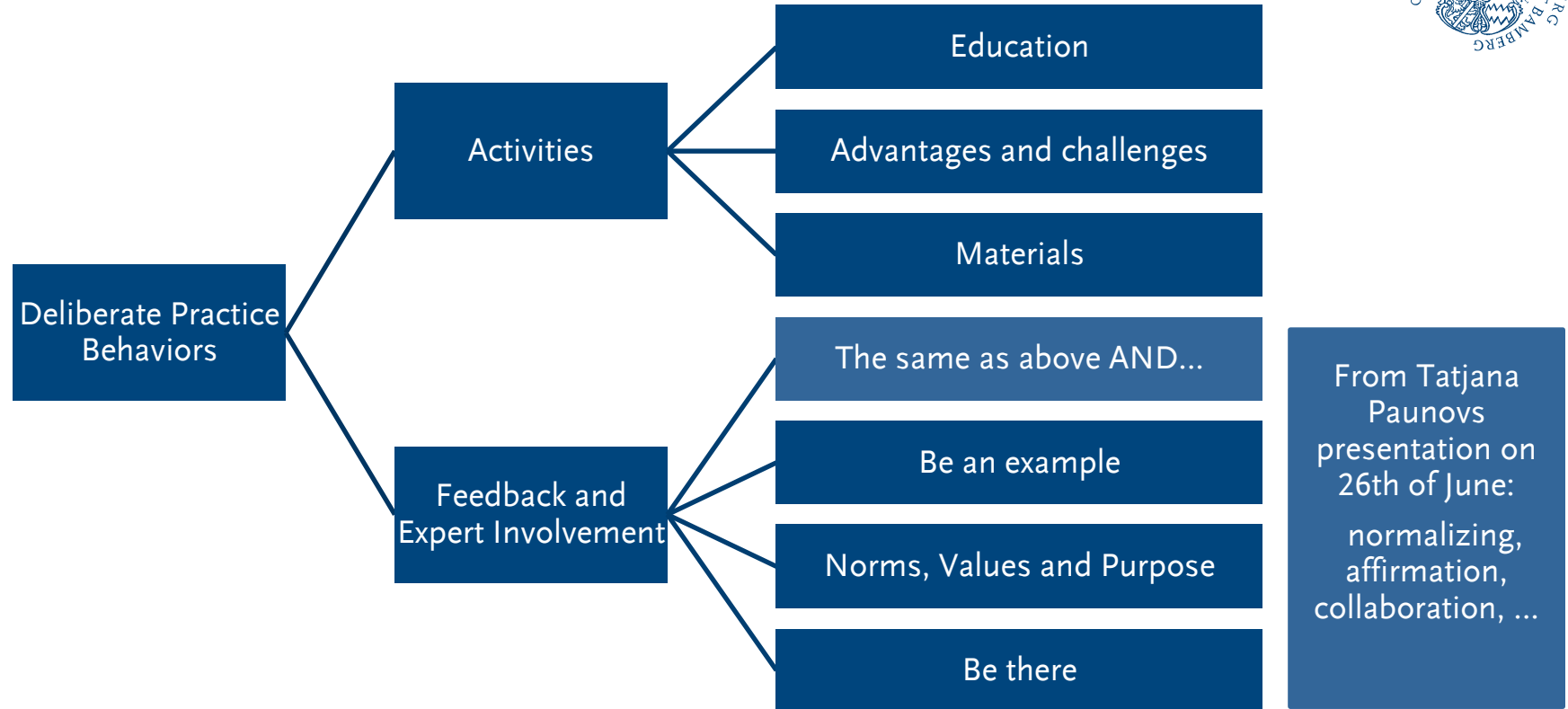
Predictors and steps	Deliberate Practice Behaviors (DPB)			
	Activities		Feedback and expert involvement	
	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Step 1 – individual level	0.17 *		0.05 *	
Attitude towards DP (DPA)		0.41 *		0.21 *
Step 2 – interpersonal level	0.05		0.10 *	
Attitude towards DP (DPA)		0.39 *		0.25 *
Engagement (GCQ-S)		- 0.01		0.01
Conflict (GCQ-S)		0.16		0.12
Collaborative bond (LAI)		0.14		0.32 *
Teacher competency (LAI)		- 0.13		- 0.20
Student investment (LAI)		0.17		- 0.01
Step 3 – institutional level	0.02		0.08 *	
Attitude towards DP (DPA)		0.38 *		0.22 *
Engagement (GCQ-S)		- 0.08		- 0.14
Conflict (GCQ-S)		0.14		0.09
Collaborative bond (LAI)		0.10		0.25 *
Teacher competency (LAI)		- 0.22		- 0.36 *
Student investment (LAI)		0.16		- 0.03
Institutional climate (SCISM-St)		0.21		0.40 *

Note. $N = 141$; ΔR^2 indicates the change in R^2 ; β is the standardized regression coefficient. DPB = Deliberate Practice Behaviors with the subscales activities and feedback and expert involvement; DPA = Deliberate Practice Attitudes; GCQ-S = Group Climate Questionnaire – Short Form; LAI = Learning Alliance Inventory; SCISM-St = School Climate and School Identification Measure – Student. * $p < .05$.

What did we find?

- H1 
- H2 
- H3  
- H4 

What to look out for, when implementing DP?



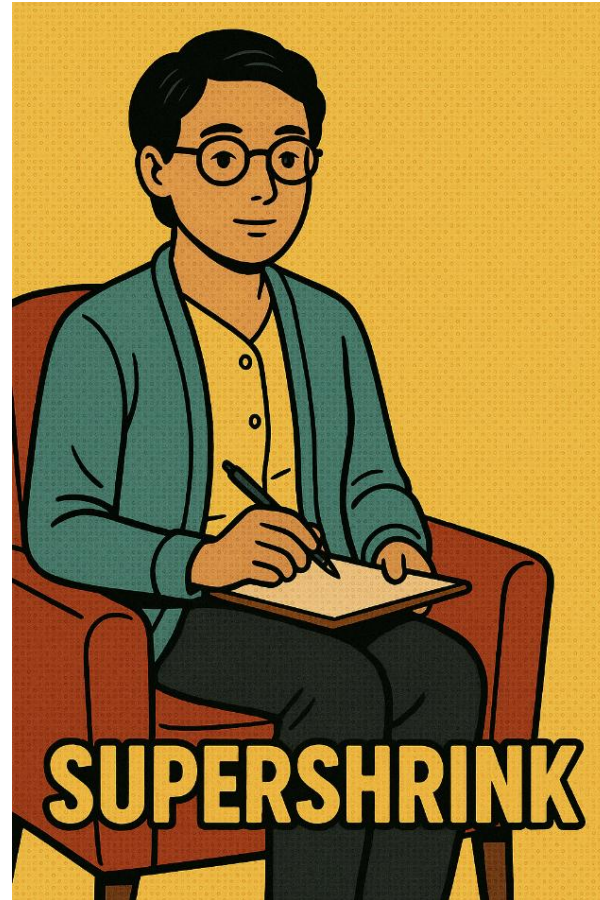
Some limitations



- CFA on DPB and DPA scales still pending
- Self-assessment of DP behaviors might overestimate actual behavior
- We didn't find scales specific for our RQ → had to adapt some of the measures

Next steps...

...because we're still
looking for:



Next steps...



For DP research in general	For implementations of DP in psychotherapy training
• Link between DPB, DP diaries and psychotherapy outcomes	• Use of AI as an expert/coach
• Test whether DP is superior to other ACTIVE learning models for acquiring psychotherapeutic skills	• Comparisons of different learning environments
• Test whether DP is superior to acquiring psychotherapeutic skills is associated with psychotherapy outcomes	• Exploration of the relationship between expert/coach and learner

Thank you for your time and attention!

I am happy to discuss questions or comments anytime!
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