

Repositioning Therapies of Depth, Insight and Relationship

Executive Summary and Recommendations



June 2021



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Project leads



Linda Michaels, PsyD, MBA is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Chicago. She is a Co-Chair of the Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN), a grassroots non-profit that advocates for therapies of depth, insight and relationship. She is also an Associate Editor of *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, and a fellow of the Lauder Institute Global MBA program. She has published and presented on the value of psychotherapy, the therapeutic relationship and technology, and scientism. Linda has a former career in business, with over 15 years' experience consulting to organizations in the US and Latin America. Her clients were Fortune 1000 companies from a variety of different industries, in the US and Latin America, and her work was focused on helping organizations grow and achieve sustainable competitive advantages by developing and implementing marketing, brand and innovation strategies. In addition to her doctorate degree in clinical psychology from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology, Linda has an MBA from Wharton, and a BA from Harvard.



Santiago Delboy, LCSW, MBA is a psychotherapist in private practice in Chicago, IL. He is a graduate of the Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Program at the Chicago Center for Psychoanalysis, and is currently a Reflective Practice Supervisor at The Family Institute at Northwestern University, Faculty at the Institute for Clinical Social Work, and Clinical Associate Faculty at the Chicago Center for Psychoanalysis. His most recent paper, on race and social class in the therapeutic dyad, was published earlier this year in *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*. Prior to becoming a clinician, Santiago spent over a decade in the corporate world, working in marketing research and consumer insights, both in Peru -his home country- and in the U.S. In his last role, he was a Consumer Insights Expert in the Marketing Practice at McKinsey & Company, a global management consulting firm. At McKinsey, he worked with businesses in multiple industries, focusing on market segmentation, branding, and developing marketing and business strategies to drive growth. He earned a Master of Business Administration from The University of Texas at Austin, and a Master of Social Work from Loyola University Chicago.



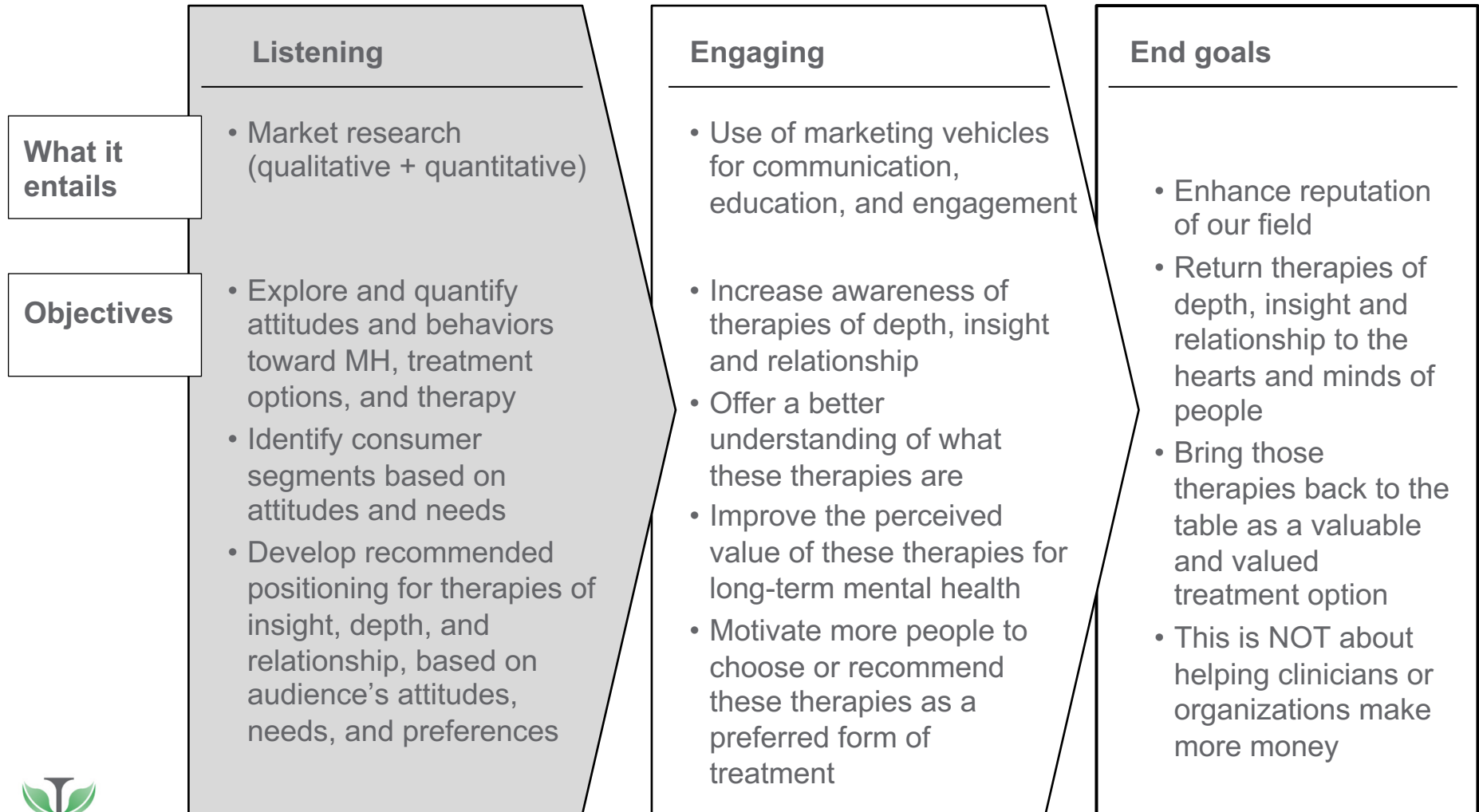
Executive Summary

- Therapies of depth, insight, and relationship are misunderstood, undervalued, and overlooked by the public – and it's valuable to assess these issues through new tools, methods and perspectives
- While the general public appreciates mental health issues, they don't generally have strong awareness, understanding, or opinions about therapy
- While not all are interested, some segments of the population are open to therapies of depth, insight and relationship:
 - “Skills” and “depth” are equally valued, followed closely by feeling cared for and not judged by the therapist
 - People accept that therapy takes time and can be worth the investment
 - The vast majority prefer therapy that gets to root causes and offers lasting benefits
 - Having an empathic, validating therapist and learning new coping skills are critical
- People are more likely to consult with their doctor and insurance to start therapy, instead of word of mouth and online search
 - In choosing a therapist, practical considerations top the list, while theoretical orientation is towards the bottom
 - Main objections to seeking therapy include expense, duration, and preference for handling problems oneself or with family/friends
- Psychoanalysis and CBT have similar awareness and self-reported familiarity, at around two thirds of respondents. All other forms of therapy have lower awareness levels
- In order to communicate the value of therapies of depth, insight, and relationship based on the general population's attitudes, needs, and preferences, our message needs to rest on four dimensions:
 - **Feel heard:** Therapy is a place where you will be heard and understood without judgment
 - **Change and choice:** Change old patterns of behavior and relationships, to make different choices in your life
 - **Worth it:** Therapy is worth the effort, the time, and the investment, because you are worth getting to know, and grow
 - **Get to the root:** Therapy is a way to increase self-awareness and get to the root of the problem
- Importantly, our research also suggests a number of messages *not* to convey to the general population
- In order to accomplish our long term goals, delivery of our messages will require:
 - Dissemination and acceptance of these recommendations throughout our professional community
 - Ongoing, coordinated, aligned, and concrete support by PsiAN and its partner organizations

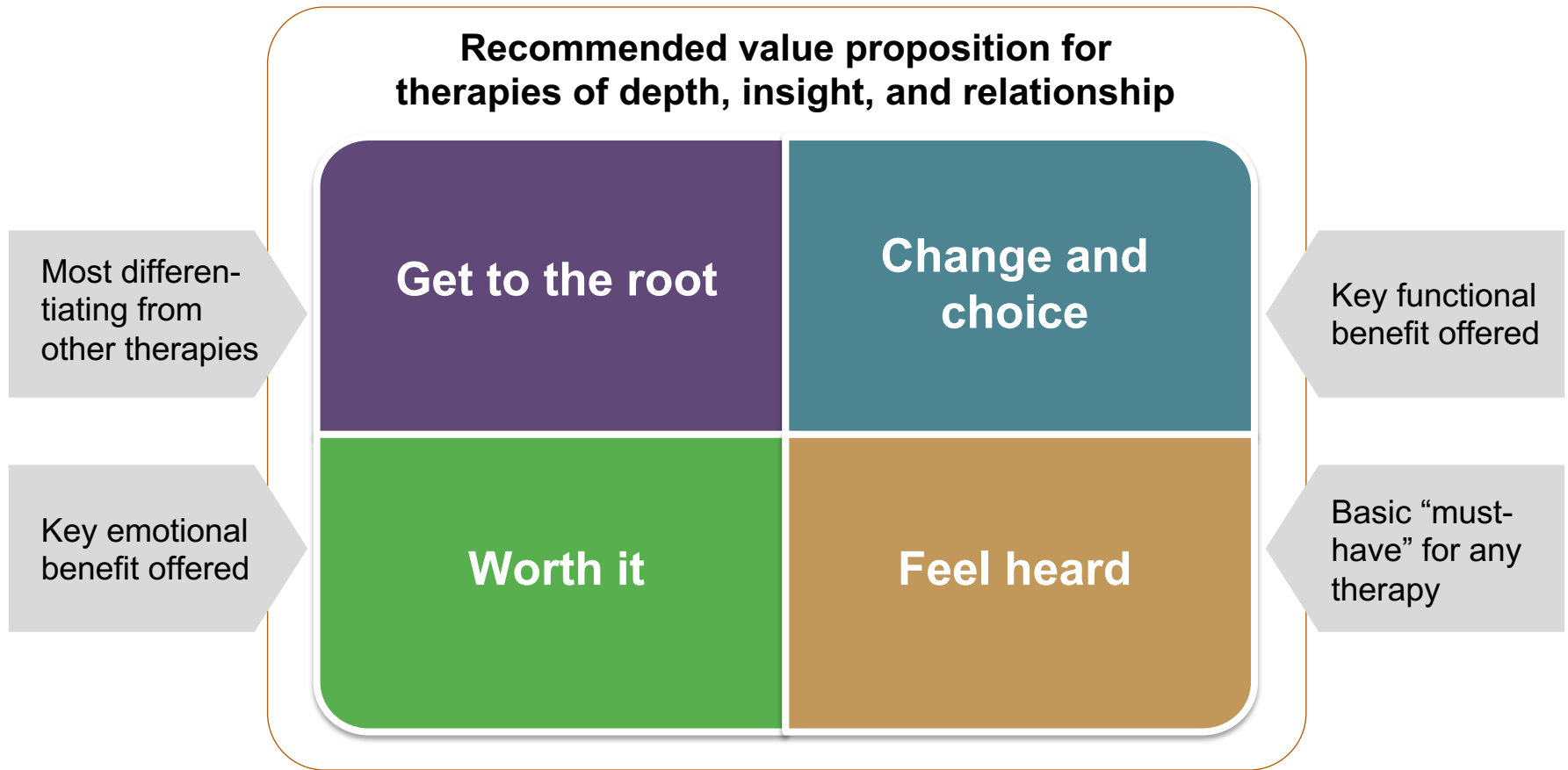


Dealing with branding problems requires listening to the public first, in order to engage with them and reach our end goals

This recommendations in this document are the “bridge” between Listening and Engaging



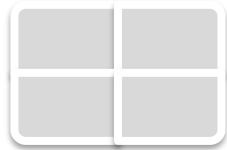
To engage with the public in an impactful and meaningful way, our messages must be rooted in and guided by these four pillars



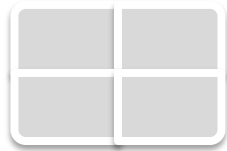
When connecting with the public, our communication must rest on all these pillars, as they will resonate –based on our research- on a significant section of that audience



Basic “must-have” Feel heard



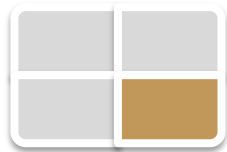
Get to the root



Worth it



Change and choice



Feel heard

Core Message

Therapy is a place where you will be **heard and understood without judgment**

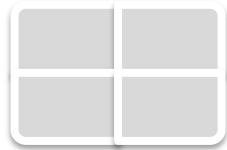
Supporting data

- 66% of respondents believe that *“the most valuable aspect of therapy is sharing your thoughts and feelings without feeling judged or ashamed”*
- 59% of people think that *“feeling heard and understood by someone who cares”* is one of the most important benefits of therapy
- *“Talking to someone who is not judgmental”* and *“feeling understood and heard”* are top benefits valued by ~60% of people with personal experience in therapy (and by almost half of those without)
- The relatively high importance of the therapist’s personality (50% considering it one of the most important factor) can be understood in this context
- In qualitative interviews, people highlight the importance of feeling not judged, understood, validated, and safe, in the context of a reliable, trusting, and mutually respectful relationship



Key functional benefit

Change and Choice



Get to the root



Worth it



Change and choice



Feel heard

Core Message

Change old patterns of behavior, thoughts, feelings and relationships, to make **different choices** in your life

Supporting data

- 59% of people believe that “*the most important part of therapy is becoming empowered to make your own choices in life*”
- A majority of respondents (52%) believe that “*people should seek therapy when they want to change repeating patterns*”
- “Stopping old patterns” is seen as main benefit of tested therapy concept (53%)
- In qualitative interviews, people emphasize the value of therapy as a way to identify changes they would like to make, change repeating patterns, find new ways to feel and behave, pursue personal growth, and feeling empowered to make choices



Key emotional benefit

Worth it



Get to the root



Worth it



Change and choice



Feel heard

Core Message

Therapy is **worth the effort**, the time, and the investment, because **you are worth getting to know and grow**

Supporting data

- 67% of respondents believe that “*emotional and psychological problems inherently take time to understand and resolve*”
- 64% of people think that “*going to therapy is an investment in oneself that is worth making*”
- Being “worth knowing” is consistent with results supporting the importance of self-awareness and self-understanding
- In qualitative interviews, people with experience in therapy considered it a powerful experience and relationship, a process that takes time and offers the possibility to understand oneself better and feeling liberated
- As a result, the emotional benefit embedded in this component is two-fold: it speaks to the value of doing something worthwhile for oneself, and to the experience of being seen as a worthwhile human being



Most differentiating factor

Get to the root



Get to the root



Worth it



Change and Choice



Feel heard

Core Message

Therapy is a way to **increase self-awareness** and **get to the root of the problem**

Supporting data

- 68% of respondents believe that “the main goal of therapy is to better understand yourself and the root of your issues”
- 91% would prefer therapy that addresses root causes of symptoms, rather than only providing ways to manage symptoms (even if it takes fewer sessions)
- Majority of people (52%) considered the focus on “underlying causes” and increasing self-awareness as benefits of tested therapy concept
- About half of people (with or without therapy experience) consider “getting to the root of the problem” the most valuable aspect of therapy
- In qualitative interviews, people see increasing self-awareness and “getting to the root” as empowering and helpful to make sense of inner experiences and to find new ways of dealing with relationships and life



What not to say: Our research suggests the following messages should be avoided when talking directly to the general public

When communicating directly to the general public, we should not:

- Downplay the value of “learning” skills and strategies to “manage” thoughts and feelings (i.e., symptoms)
- Disparage claims to “evidence” (e.g. EBT) as merely a marketing ploy
- Dismiss people’s questions or desires for structure, guidance, or assistance
- Discourage or downplay a focus on symptoms and symptom relief
- Denigrate medications and their use
- Dismiss concerns about the expense or duration of treatment
- Focus on the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship (e.g., transference, enactments), even if we use them as part of our clinical approach
- Focus on the duration of treatment one way or the other – whether on long duration of depth therapy or in suggesting that short-term treatments might not be as effective



It will take a village and we need your support!

Engaging with the public will require...

- An ongoing, consistent effort that is sustained over time
- Alignment and coordination across multiple organizations
- Marketing capabilities and relationships with external agencies
- Financial resources: we won't be able to meet our goals for free!

We need your help to make it happen!

- ✓ Incorporate these recommendations when you connect with the public
- ✓ Look for opportunities to engage and educate about what therapy can offer
- ✓ Share these recommendations with your organizations and colleagues
- ✓ Volunteer with PsiAN's "Engagement Team" – or with any of PsiAN's initiatives!
- ✓ If you are a member of an organization, become a PsiAN partner
- ✓ Join PsiAN (it's free!)
- ✓ Donate to PsiAN!

Learn more about PsiAN at PsiAN.org





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