

“Better relationships lead to better outcomes”

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“**Self-disclosure and immediacy.** Using the immediate situation to invite your (client) to examine what is happening in the... relationship. **It may involve disclosing aspects of your emotions or personal life in ways that can feel risky and unfamiliar.**”

Fostering mutuality and collaboration

One big shift in psychotherapy in recent years is toward greater **mutuality**—the notion that psychotherapy is a **two-way relationship** in which the therapist and client are **equal partners** in the therapy process. Therapists make this stance apparent in an ongoing way by, for example, **disclosing their feelings when appropriate** and actively inviting feedback from patients about how therapy is going.

Research supports the benefits of both mutual and collaborative approaches. For example, one analysis of 21 studies finds that when therapists **share their feelings** about the patient or the therapy relationship—a mutual approach known as “**immediacy**”—the patient’s mental health functioning and insight improve.

In terms of **outcomes**, the relationship between patient and psychologist matters - a lot. That’s the main takeaway from a new collection of meta-analyses released by an American Psychological Association task force charged with examining the latest evidence on relationship factors in therapy (2019).

The Task Force on **Evidence-Based** Relationships and Responsiveness concludes that a number of relationship factors, such as:

- agreeing goals
- getting client feedback throughout the course of treatment
- and repairing ruptures

Their conclusion is that these **relationship factors** are as powerful, if not more powerful, than the particular treatment method a therapist is using.