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► [Adapting psychotherapy to the individual patient: Culture.](#)

Smith T.B., Domenech Rodríguez M., Bernal G. [Request reprint](#)

Journal of Clinical Psychology: 2011, 67(2), p. 166–175.

Meta-analytic review commissioned by a US task force concludes that mental health services targeted to a specific cultural group were several times more effective than those for clients from a variety of backgrounds, and that more effective treatments had more cultural adaptations.

Original abstract This article summarizes definitions, means, and research related to adapting psychotherapy to clients' cultural backgrounds. We begin by reviewing the prevailing definitions of cultural adaptation and providing a clinical example. We present an original meta-analysis of 65 experimental and quasi-experimental studies involving 8620 participants. Substance abuse treatments or prevention programmes were excluded unless they also targeted psychological variables such as depression or self-concept. The omnibus [effect size](#) of 0.46 indicates that treatments specifically adapted for clients of colour were moderately more effective with that clientele than traditional treatments. The most effective treatments tended to be those with greater numbers of cultural adaptations. Mental health services targeted to a specific cultural group were several times more effective than those provided to clients from a variety of cultural backgrounds. We recommend a series of research-supported therapeutic practices that account for clients' culture. Among these are that clients will tend to benefit when psychotherapists try to align treatment with clients' cultural backgrounds. This seems particularly the case for Asian-American clients and adult clients, who the research showed tended to benefit most from culturally adapted treatments relative to other client groups.

 This article was in a [special issue](#) of the *Journal of Clinical Psychology* devoted to adapting psychotherapy to the individual patient. For other Findings entries from this issue see:

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