

## **Psychotherapy as an Information Sharing Strategy for the Reduction of Traffic Offences in Nigeria**

<sup>1</sup>Habibu M.

[hmukhtar.library@futb.edu.ng](mailto:hmukhtar.library@futb.edu.ng), [habiburuma8@gmail.com](mailto:habiburuma8@gmail.com)  
+23408038461486

and

<sup>2</sup>Maidabino A.A.

[librarian@futb.edu.ng](mailto:librarian@futb.edu.ng), [maidabinoforyou@gmail.com](mailto:maidabinoforyou@gmail.com)  
+2348065395802

<sup>1&2</sup>Federal University of Technology Babura, Jigawa State Nigeria

### **Abstract**

*Psychotherapy as a form of information sharing strategy is a verbal interaction between a therapist and a client, an interaction modelled on doctor-patient relationship found effective in transforming public behavior especially in public health profession. Road safety operatives as trained personnel and saddled with responsibility of reducing traffic offences to ensure free flow of traffic and safety of all road's users need to envisage psychotherapy approach in their operational activities in sharing of information to reduce eventualities leading to mob action by errand road users. The study identifies and describes the conceptual evaluation of psychotherapy and its values in information sharing environment. In addition, it describes how its adoption by road safety operatives can lead to the reduction of traffic offences in Nigeria. The efficacy of psychotherapy in facilitating information found to be effective and therefore the study recommends evidence-based investigation on the use of psychotherapy approach by road safety operatives in facilitating information sharing with road users for the reduction of traffic offences in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Psychotherapy, Information Sharing strategy, Traffic Offences*

### **Introduction**

In Nigeria today, we are faced with increasing rate of road traffic crashes because of the increased prevalence of preventable traffic offences (Kazim, 2023). Deaths and injuries because of road traffic crashes are massively destroying lives beyond those of the actual victims, limiting future productivity and draining money from economies despite being largely preventable. Road mishaps are the single biggest non-natural killer of children and young people (Okafor, 2021), thus there is a need to prioritize strategies and approaches to integrating road safety into public health, developing 'place-based approaches and accessing expertise. Use of psychotherapy as information sharing strategy may significantly contribute to the reduction of traffic offences which in-turn minimize Road Traffic Crashes (RTC) on Nigerian road and ensure safety of all road users. Road safety operatives responsible for ensuring the reduction of traffic offences and safety of all road

users through rebuts public education, enlightenment and enforcement need to establish set of interventions that contribute significantly to the reductions of traffic offences, promote and ensure drivers compliance with traffic rules. Given the current nature of driving culture in Nigeria and its anticipated effects on public health, it is vital for road safety management to invest now in effective prevention measure by training their personnel on the use of psychotherapy as an information sharing strategy in the reduction of traffic offences to ensure free flow of traffic and safety of all road users.

Information sharing for the purpose of direct road user care, assisting assessment, treatment and the maintenance of safety can be directly connected with psychotherapy that aims to improve individual or societal wellbeing. This includes sharing with family members or carers and other professionals such as road safety personnel providing care and treatment. It is important to advise road users of potential benefits of disclosure of confidential information in this context. Though there is the need to safeguard the confidentiality of information that road users share with road safety personnel and optimize the quality of their expectation that the shared information will be kept confidential. The objective of the study is to explore the potentials embedded on the use psychotherapy as an information sharing strategy to facilitate effective communication between road safety operatives and road users with intention of correcting road mishaps on Nigerian road.

### **Concept of Psychotherapy in Facilitating Information for the Reduction of Traffic Offences**

Norcross (1990) Define psychotherapy as the conscious and intended use of clinical and interpersonal methods of treatment, derived from the proven statements of psychological sciences to people in the modification of their behavior, cognitive properties, emotions and / or other individual characteristics on those that seem desirable to participants in this process. In addition, Urban and Ford (1990) John and Rita (2015) Describe psychotherapy as a way of intervening in a person's behavioral circumstances to correct or modify their attitude towards a particular type of difficulty. Bruch (1981) in John and Rita (2015) Define Psychotherapy as a situation in which two people interact and try to come to an understanding of one another, with the specific goal of accomplishing something beneficial for the complaining person. This clearly indicates that psychotherapy is a strategy put in place through good inter-personal relationships in modifying individual unacceptable behavior in society, endangering their safety to more acceptable behavior suitable for individual and societal progress which is fundamental in the reduction of traffic offences by road corps operatives.

According to John and Rita (2015) Psychotherapy can be define as a process that involves a trained professional who abides by accepted ethical guidelines and has skills and competencies for working with diverse individuals who are in distress or have life problems that led them to seek help (possibly at the insistence of others) or they may be choosing to seek personal growth, but either way, these parties establish an explicit agreement (informed consent) to work together (more or less collaboratively) toward mutually agreed on or acceptable goals using theoretically-based

or evidence-based procedures that, in the broadest sense have been shown to facilitate human learning or human development or effectively reduce disturbing symptoms.

Based on the definitions above, psychotherapy can be seen as an intentional friendship between two people using a variety of skills based on theoretical knowledge or evidence-based processes to help individual solve problems or certain difficulties. This shows that psychotherapists engage in certain behaviors of listening, questioning, interpreting, explaining, advising, and so on, which may be used in different proportions to address different problems or difficulties. These potentials embedded in psychotherapy in addressing individual and societal problems may be utilized by road safety operatives to facilitate information sharing between road users in the reduction of traffic offences to reduce eventuality leading to mob actions by errand road users in their daily operational activities.

Psychotherapy represents a key technology of contemporary selfhood which is primarily oriented towards individual adjustment. However, it also possesses a transformative capacity that extends beyond the individual client. Psychotherapy can be used as a mechanism for effective information sharing to enforce and educate traffic offenders more, especially in the current situation that Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) consume human's life and their properties worth millions of naira which is because of high level of traffic offences (Sirwan et.al 2023). With pragmatic approach, psychotherapy has the capacity of facilitating information sharing and reducing traffic offences such as use of phone while driven, wrongful overtaking, overloading, light sign violation, dangerous driven, seatbelt violation, tyre violation etc to the bearest minimum. This is because psychotherapeutic attitudes have circulated well beyond the consulting room, they have both reflected and reshaped the values of modernity. Psychotherapy has helped usher many shades of emotionality into public view. It has made the personal political in ways that have reframed hitherto private conduct and has inspired significant re-negotiations of what it means to live the 'good' life (Pols, 2018)

Corps operatives as security agents need to come with new ideology, principles and philosophy on the reduction of traffic offences. To achieve these values there is the need to introduce new ways of interpreting road users personal experience, perception, and assumptions in the driving culture which can be achieved by effective information sharing using psychotherapy. The purpose of psychotherapy is to treat emotional, behavioral or mental dysfunction, remove negative symptoms such as anxiety or depression, modify or reverse problem behaviors, help the individual cope with situational crises such as bereavement, pain, or prolonged medical illnesses, improve the individual's relationships, manage conflict or enhance positive personality growth and development (Sharma, 2018).

Psychotherapy is an effective psychological intervention for a multitude of psychological, behavioral, and somatic problems, symptoms, and disorders and thus rightfully considered as a main approach in mental and somatic health care management (Goldfried, 2013). This means that psychotherapy can significantly contribute to the process of reducing traffic offences through an

effective information sharing model to understand the gravity of the offence committed and probable consequences by expressing personal experiences, feelings and understandings using psychotherapeutics process and techniques.

Frank (1986) believed that all forms of psychotherapy provide a context which enables clients to transform the meaning of their experiences and symptoms in such a way that they help them to feel better, function more favorably, and think more adaptively. These potentials embodied in psychotherapy, its efficacy can change driving culture positively and improve productivity among the corps operatives. This is because even when there are standard roads across the country with the current driving culture Nigeria will continue to experience Road Traffic Crashes (RTC) because of high level of traffic offences. With practical approach on the used psychotherapy to facilitating information sharing in enforcement and educating road users, corps operatives significantly can change the poorly driven culture in the country and reduce Road Traffic Crashes (RTC) to minimal level.

Information sharing on the other hand, can be understood as ‘a set of activities by which information is provided to others, either proactively or upon request, such that the information has an impact on another person's (or persons') image of the world and creates a shared, or mutually compatible working, understanding of the world’ (Sonnenwald, 2006 as cited by Sovalainen, 2017) this show that information sharing means giving information to others and receiving information that has been provided by the information giver which requires communicative activities such as face-to-face conversations, instant messaging, email, video conferencing, company wikis or information transfer from senders to recipients or exchange of knowledge between knowledge owners and knowledge reorganizers.

Krikelas (1983) defines Information sharing as an act of disseminating message, the messages may be communicated in written (graphic) verbal, visual or tactile forms, Haythornthwaite (2010) described the concept as a process that can come about as direct transfers from one individual to another. Information sharing can be defined as an activity through which ideas, experience, opinions, facts and documents are transferred from an individual (or group) to other people (Sovalainen, 2017). This shows the relevance of information sharing in the attainment of the road safety operative’s objective there by improving their visibility in the motorist’s practical activities through effective information sharing strategies.

Social media applications are another strategy found in information sharing. Mukhtar and Maidabino (2020) in their study use of social media applications by road safety personnel for public advocacy in Nigeria revealed that, road safety operatives used social media applications to pass information to road users in public advocacy. Social media applications served as educative mechanism by road safety operatives in reducing traffic offences in Nigeria. Therefore, information sharing strategies are communicative activities such as face-to-face conversations, instant messaging, email, video conferencing, sending text or image messages via mobile phone,

classification codes, query terms and query structures, and narrative description of the problem, company wikis, and social media applications.

Therefore, information sharing for the purpose of directing road user care, assisting assessment, treatment and the maintenance of safety can be directly connected with psychotherapy that aims to modify behavior and improve individual or societal wellbeing. This includes sharing with family members or carers and other professionals such as road safety personnel for the purpose of providing care and treatment. It is important for road users to understand the potential benefits of disclosure of confidential information in this context and its role in changing their driving culture. Though there is the need to safeguard the confidentiality of information that road users share with road safety personnel and optimize the quality of their expectation that the shared information will be kept confidential.

### **Psychotherapy Interventions in Facilitating Information Sharing for the reduction of traffic offences**

There are different Psychotherapeutic interventions from different schools of psychotherapy applicable in facilitating information sharing for effective communication with road users in the reduction of traffic offences. The study discusses three (3) schools of psychotherapy interventions this include psychodynamic psychotherapy, psychoanalytical psychotherapy and cognitive behavioral therapy which aims of exploring the basic intervention skills needed by road safety operatives in changing unacceptable behavior on the road.

#### **1. Psychodynamic Psychotherapy Intervention Skills**

**Mirroring:** Every explication or description of feelings, desires, impulses which are at least implicitly detectable in the client narrative or behavior (Nikendei et.al, 2019). This is the first intervention in psychotherapeutic process where the therapist observes client behavior to find out deficiencies with intention to help. In this intervention corps operatives while sighting and stopped an offender with traffic offence/offences should observe his behavior and determine the best communication approach to interact. This includes use of language, cracking of jokes, complementary, use of humor and facial expression to attract the attention of the offender.

These are the elements influencing the decision to be taken by the road user: his perception of the corps operative, or the extent to which he considers him to be competent, empathic and well disposed of the road users. The most important goal in this intervention is establishing relationships.

**Self-disclosure:** Any intervention in which the therapist deliberately shows himself as a counterpart with his own reactions, attitudes, opinions, and judgment's, with the aim of improving clients' interpersonal learning (Nikendei et.al, 2019). In this intervention the corps operatives present themselves as counterpart to traffic offender by indicating their competency and readiness to inculcate good driving culture. In this intervention stage, the traffic offenders explained the reason(s) facilitates the conduct of traffic offences. While carefully listening the traffic offender is also clarifying and assessing the presenting problem or situation.

**Clarification:** Every invitation given or request made to the client to explain, explore, or organize unclear/vague/puzzling/confusing/ contradictory information (Nikendei et.al, 2019). In this intervention the corps operatives request for explanation in the areas that are unclear or contradictory to traffic offender. The most important goal in this intervention stage is to have a clear understanding about the situation or problem to set psychotherapeutic goal.

**Confrontation:** Any intervention in which the therapist indicates contradictions by uniting/juxtaposing discrepant material which the client does not perceive as contradictory (normal), or does not perceive at all but acts out, somaticizes in turn (Nikendei et.al, 2019). In this intervention the corps operatives unite the discrepant issue raised by the offender for example when a road user over speed to reach target destination to render assistance to sick person, corps operative might unite the issue by explaining the consequences over speeding as hindrance to the target destination.

**Interpretation:** Any intervention that seeks to make conflicting patterns or problematic behaviors or experiences more understandable by giving them a meaning, while focusing on wishes and defenses (Nikendei et.al, 2019). In this intervention the corps operatives explain the likely effect or consequences such action. Interpretation is the last stage in psychotherapeutic intervention process where the corps operatives are expected to explain in detail to convince the traffic offender of the likely consequences of his action by giving examples of road traffic crashes caused by that traffic offence and its casualties.

## 2. Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy Intervention Skills

**Free associations:** this refers to techniques revealing instinctive needs and desires (Adam and Agnieszka, 2020). Free associations in therapeutic process aim to create relationships that facilitate sharing information between the road safety operatives and road users. In operational activities, the ability of road safety operatives to use psychological techniques to create free association with road users is the foundation of establishing good interpersonal relations that would facilitate information sharing and reduction traffic offences.

**Clarifications and confrontations:** this refers to a technique that allows the client to become aware of his experiences experienced in psychoanalysis (Adam and Agnieszka, 2020). Road safety operatives used psychological techniques to clarify and explain the implication of traffic offences committed to the understanding of road users to in order prevent its future occurrence for better road used is the main focused of this intervention.

**Interpretations:** this refers to a technique that helps the client become aware of what was unconscious in him (Adam and Agnieszka, 2020). Interpretation is the ability of road safety operatives to use psychological techniques to explain and convince road users to avoid committing traffic offences in future for their safety and safety of all road users.

**Overworking:** the content of the interpretation, as well as the release of unconscious feelings and desires arouses a sense of danger and intensifies the operation of the patient's defense mechanisms and transient feelings (Adam and Agnieszka, 2020). This means the ability of corps operatives to



be consistent and actively engaged with different initiatives such as information sharing strategy to enlighten and educate users for better road used free flow of traffic and safety of all road users.

### 3. Cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy Intervention Skills

This therapy focuses on systematic reasoning errors that underline psychological problems. Beck introduced three main components of emotional disorders:

1. Automatic negative thoughts that disturb the mood of the individual and cause the appearance of subsequent such thoughts, which gives the effect of a falling spiral of thought-feelings

2. Distorting reality based on systematic logic errors such as:

- **Arbitrary inference** - drawing conclusions from incomplete, false or irrelevant premises
- **Excessive generalization** - based on a single negative event, anticipating such events
- **Selective abstraction** - focusing on some aspects of the situation and ignoring others
- **Exaggerating or diminishing** - focusing on the worst in a given situation, or vice versa refusing to recognize the importance of the facts
- **Personalization** - referring external circumstances to yourself when there are no grounds for it
- **Dichotomous thinking** - reasoning in terms of "all or nothing"

3. Depression schemes in which the assumptions of the individual about the world reflect his way of organizing previous experiences and create a system for classifying incoming information.

It is based on these psychological problems that cognitive-behavioral therapist design three (3) main phases of interventions focusing on "here and now" based on verbal contact.

Disclosure of thoughts, internal dialogue and interpretations (Adam and Agneiszka, 2020). Based on cognitive-behavioral therapy school, road users' disclosure of thoughts is the foundation in this phase of intervention. It emphasizes the importance of relationships, cooperation and mutual understanding between the road users and road safety operatives for internal dialogue and interpretation. Through cooperation and mutual understanding road users are expected to explain the reasons or conditions behind the conduct of the traffic offence while road safety operatives are listening and asking questions with intention of finding a proper solution to avoid future occurrences.

- i. Collecting arguments for or against its interpretations with the client. Because road users tend to be so-called dichotomous thinking, it is important for road safety operations to explain better understanding of road users between fantasy and reality on road usage.
- ii. Designing experiments that will check the accuracy of client interpretation and provide the basis for further discussion (Adam and Agnieszka, 2020). The main assumption of cognitive-behavioral theory is by changing the mindset of an individual, road safety operatives can change the road user's value system, which in turn causes a change in their behavior.

### **Summary**

Psychotherapy can be described as good interpersonal skills put in place to facilitate information for effective communication in providing solutions to mental disorder and its wellbeing and found to be effective in the reduction of road traffic crashes because of preventable traffic offences. Different psychotherapy intervention found applicable in the reduction of traffic offence such as psychodynamic psychotherapy, psychoanalytical psychotherapy and cognitive behavioral psychotherapy.

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that psychotherapy is a powerful mechanism in facilitating information sharing among the road safety operatives in the reduction of traffic offences. Psychodynamic psychotherapy, psychoanalytical psychotherapy and cognitive behavioral psychotherapy intervention skills found effective and applicable in facilitating information sharing between road safety operatives and road users and would significantly contribute to the reduction of traffic offences which in-turn reduces traffic crashes that is currently among the top leading causes of death especially among the young aged 15-29 (2009). Also, disclosure of information in the context of traffic rules and regulations has significant value in the reduction of traffic offences. Professionalism of road safety operatives and integrating psychotherapy in the conduct of their routing operational activities would facilitate information sharing and reduction of traffic crashes.

### **Recommendation**

1. The study recommends effective use of psychotherapy information sharing in the routine operational activities of road safety operatives.
2. The study also recommends training of road safety personnel on how to integrate psychotherapy in the reduction of traffic offences and compliance with road regulations campaigns.
3. The study also recommends evidence-based investigation on the use of psychotherapy in facilitating information sharing between road safety operatives and road users to develop framework for integrating psychotherapy information in the reduction of traffic offences in Nigeria.

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