



# A Systematic Review Study on Human Givens Therapy's Effectiveness

## *Human Givens (İnsana Verilen) Terapinin Etkililiği Üzerine Bir Sistematik Derleme Çalışması*

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### ABSTRACT

Human Givens Therapy (HGT), which is a short-term therapy with an individual-oriented, eclectic and integrative style, in which the therapy process is structured in line with the needs of the individual. At the same time, it is one of the therapies approaches that stand out abroad in the context of new and short-term approaches. With this study, it is aimed to evaluate the research involving HGT practices and to present a framework for HGT in the literature. Searches for the last 10 years were made with "human givens therapy", "human givens approach" and "human givens" keywords on Google Scholars and databases. English or Turkish full-text PDF format articles in the fields of psychology/psychological counseling, where these keywords are mentioned and content is related, were selected. 9 articles were accessed in line with the articles content and article titles. Due to the lack of studies on this approach in Turkey, this research is the first study in Turkey in which HGT is introduced and discussed.

**Keywords:** Human givens therapy, human givens approach, human givens, systematic review

### ÖZ

Human Givens (İnsana Verilen) Terapi (HGT), bireyin ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda terapi sürecinin yapılandırıldığı birey odaklı, eklektik ve bütüncüsel tarzı ile kısa süreli bir terapidir. Aynı zamanda, yeni ve kısa süreli yaklaşımlar bağlamında yurtdışında öne çıkan terapi yaklaşımlarından biridir. Bu çalışma ile alan yazında HGT uygulamalarının yer aldığı araştırmaları değerlendirmek ve HGT'ye ilişkin bir çerçeve sunmak amaçlanmıştır. Google Akademik ve veri tabanları üzerinden "human givens therapy", "human givens approach" ve "human givens" anahtar kelimeleri ile son 10 yıla ait taramalar yapılmıştır. Bu anahtar kelimelerin geçtiği ve içeriğin ilgili olduğu, psikoloji/psikolojik danışmanlık alanlarında yapılan İngilizce veya Türkçe tam metin PDF formatındaki makaleler seçilmiştir. Makaleler içerikleri ve makale başlıkları doğrultusunda, 9 makaleye erişilmiştir. Türkiye'de bu yaklaşıma ilişkin çalışmaların olmaması nedeniyle bu araştırma HGT'nin tanıtıldığı ve ele alındığı ilk bilimsel çalışmadır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Human givens terapi, human givens yaklaşımı, human givens, sistematiik derleme

## Introduction

In the 1990s, Griffin and Tyrrell developed Human Givens Therapy (HGT) as a brief therapy approach that can be tailored to the individual, drawing from several methods used by other therapy approaches. According to HGT, a lack of fulfilling one's basic needs is the cause of psychological problems (Griffin and Tyrrell 2004). Although physical, psychological, and emotional needs are essential for the survival and well-being of the individual, emotional needs are more significant to appease than others. Safety, sense of control, autonomy, attention, being part of a community, the emotional bond one needs or establishes in a community, the sense of achievement and competence, purpose

and meaning, and the status of the individual in social groups are the foremost emotional needs (Griffin and Tyrrell 2004, 2007). In order to meet these needs, there are some innate resources that the individual can exploit. Long-term memory, empathy and bonding ability, imagination, a rational mind, the ability to instinctively understand the world, the observing self, and the power/capabilities of our brain are among these resources (Griffin and Tyrrell 2004, 2007, Human Givens Institute 2008). While individuals are affected by their unmet needs at different levels, they are also affected by how they use their resources while trying to meet these needs (Griffin and Tyrrell 2004). The needs (Dunne nd) that stand out in this approach are given Table 1.

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**Table 1. 9 Emotional needs of individuals**

Emotional Needs	Importance
Security	It is a need that contributes to our full development.
Attention	Giving and receiving attention is a need that can feed us.
Control	A need to have a sense of autonomy and control.
Meaning and Goals	It is a need that affects how we are affected by what we think and do.
Privacy	A need that offers the opportunity to reflect and reinforce experiences.
Community	The need to feel connected to a large group.
Intimacy	It is the need to form emotional bonds with other people, such as friends and romantic partners.
Status	It is the need for a sense of status within social groups.
Achievement	It is a need for a sense of competence.

As HGT focuses on the feelings, learnings and processes that the individuals have acquired over time from the moment they are born, it progresses with an eclectic and integrative style through the use of other therapy schools. It presents this eclectic and integrative style with the service principle it offers in a short period of time in about one or two sessions. In this principle, the focus is on the need of the individual. Once this need is identified, appropriate solutions are sought for it (Griffin and Tyrrell 2004, Corp et al. 2008).

There are some steps to follow when designing therapy sessions in HGT. These are *rappor building*, adopting an empathetic approach, and focusing on understanding the client. Besides, special care is given to evaluate the client's utterances from a new perspective. This step consists of the contents of other therapy schools. The next step is gathering information about the client's needs. After the collection of the necessary information, the goal setting is applied to achieve the goals in parallel with the individual's needs. After that, agreeing a strategy comes as part of determining the strategy on how to reach the desired purpose/target. The proposed strategy must be realistic and achievable. The general strategy used by HGT is the APET model, which will be covered in the following sections. It is also important to check the condition of the *accessing resources* of the individuals to attain the results in the steps so far. Moreover, it is crucial for the intervention process to comprehend the strengths of the individuals and have an insight into what happened during the periods when they were at peace in their life. After all these issues are resolved, the need for change is discussed with the clients and the *rehearsal phase* is started. In this part, they are asked to imagine themselves in coping skills that will be effective for them, with techniques such as imagery, metaphors, and reframing (Griffin and Tyrrell 2004).

The APET model is used to maintain the balance and well-being of an individual when emotional problems arise. APET stands for A-activating agent, P-pattern, E-emotion, T-thoughts. With the stimuli coming from the environment, we create patterns

that match in our brain as a result of our given nature or through learning, and are also represented by emotions. This interaction gives rise to thoughts. The critical point in this model is the patterns. These patterns have an impact on our feelings and thoughts. Patterns are constantly formed as a result of our interaction with the surroundings. APET is similar to the ABC model of cognitive therapy. The pattern matching part is also similar to the concepts of cognitive distortions, basic and intermediate beliefs used in cognitive therapy. Both approaches focus on perceived meaning and consider how thought and behavior patterns affect the functionality and reality of the individual. While developing the APET model, Griffin and Tyrrell (2004) created a holistic model by taking into account what is effective in other techniques and approaches. In addition to cognitive-behavioral therapy, techniques in short-term solution-focused therapy, motivational interviewing, hypnotherapy and behavioral therapy were also utilized (Griffin and Tyrrell 2004). Among the therapy techniques that HGT finds effective and makes use of are relaxation, metaphor, imagination, storytelling, and breathing exercises. One of the techniques specific to HGT is the *rewind technique*, which is used when working with trauma.

In the rewind technique, which can be used after completing an expert training, the clients are asked to imagine or recall themselves in a safe place in a state of trance and relaxation. Then they are asked to imagine that they own a video player or TV, and by asking them to watch themselves on the screen, it is tried to create an emotional distance. They will then continue to imagine themselves from a moment when the trauma did not begin, to a point where the trauma ends and they feel safe. With the role of video player or TV ownership, it is tried to have control over the scenes. By imagining themselves pressing the rewind button of the remote control, they will move from one safe point to another, back from the moment of trauma. The only one watching the movie are the clients, they can watch the images over and over or fast forward. The repetitions here continue until they do not evoke emotion in the clients. If it is desired to instill confidence in future situations, the clients are asked to imagine a scenario in

**Table 2. Compilation of studies using Human Givens Approach**

Source	Sample Characteristics	Research Pattern	Data collection tool	Aim	Result	Observation
Adams and Allan (2019)	44 participants (34% male, 66% female): mean age 37	-An observational and quasi-experimental research -3 session interventions (experimental-control group)	-Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation Outcome (CORE)-10 -Outcome Rating Scale (ORS) -Session Rating Scale (SRS) -Impact of Events Scale – Extended Version (IES-E)	It is aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the rewind technique in HGT in trauma and compare it with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).	Rewind technique appeared to be more effective than control treatment sessions. 40% recovered and 57% recovered safely. -The effect size of HG treatment was found to be higher than CBT. -Rewind technique is considered to be a promising alternative trauma treatment.	-
Adams and et al. (2020)	274 clients/war veterans: Average age 39-46 Average 5-6.5 HG treatment sessions	HG rewind trauma focused therapy application. An observational prospective design was used in each of the four studies.	-Impact of Events Scale –Extended Version (IES-E) -Clinical Outcomes for Routine Evaluation (CORE-OM). -Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) -Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9).	It is aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the rewind technique for treating trauma-focused stress in clinical settings in Great Britain.	In four studies, 83-96% of clients recovered safely. According to the surveys, there is no reliable change in 4-17%.	-
Andrews and et al. (2011)	Adults referred for primary anxiety, depression, and psychological stress management by general practitioners or nurses working in general medical practice over a 12-month period	Pretest-posttest=> ANOVA	CORE-10 (Clinical Outcomes Routine Evaluation)	The effectiveness of HGT in the management of emotional stress in primary care centers was investigated.	After the pre-test and post-test, it was observed that the treatment was effective and patients remained in the treatment.	-
Andrews and et al. (2013)	Those who attended a treatment session in which HGT was recommended to manage their psychological distress and at least one measurement was made after their initial assessment: 3885 adult clients	-The effect size was checked before and after the treatment. -APET was applied. -Potential differences in treatment effects relative to planned and unplanned termination were examined. -Drug use was examined.	-Clinical Outcome in Routine Evaluation Outcome Measure (CORE-OM)	It is aimed to evaluate the feasibility of HGT.	Pretreatment effect size. It shows that patients treated using the HG approach are relieved of psychological distress.	-

**Table 2. Continued**

Source	Sample Characteristics	Research Pattern	Data collection tool	Aim	Result	Observation
Attwood and Atkinson (2020)	17-year-old male student-with learning disability	HGT intervention with single-subject case study-	Qualitative data: Written transcript of sessions, researcher's field notes=> Thematic analysis	With the uptake of HGT by the educational psychologists, it is aimed to support the emotional health and well-being of students over the age of 16 with learning disabilities.	Positive impact of HG-based intervention: Enabling the student to achieve their goals in the context of the school, supporting the student's self-efficacy and motivation	-
Burdett and Greenberg (2019)	Service users between 2014-2016: Adult patients with post-traumatic stress disorder  Adult patients with dissociation problem and adult patients with improved access to psychological therapies=> King's College London	Quantitative-statistical analysis (regression, demographic information)	CORE-10 (10-item Clinical Results Routine Evaluation)	It is aimed to determine whether the treatment offered as a service is effective or not.	The patients in the two groups also responded to the treatment in a similar way. It was observed that job seekers and those living alone benefited less from treatment.	-
Sodani and et al. (2019)	Purposive sampling: 6 Couples/ Students of Shahid Chamran University	Experimental case study (HGT and Adlerian Therapy [AT]), 3 couples each 5 sessions	-Oxford Happiness Questionnaire -Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being - 5 therapy-oriented sessions	The effect of HGT and AT university students on happiness and well-being	The therapies have been effective in changing lifestyles and increasing couples' happiness. HGT is less effective than AT.	- The evaluation of the couples was fulfilled 1 month after the therapy.
Tsaroucha and et al. (2012)	Adult patients with moderate to mild depression -The findings of the research conducted by the Primary Care Foundation were used. - General Practitioner Practices (United Kingdom)	Quasi-experimental non-equivalent group design: Experimental (HGT) and control group	SWLS (the satisfaction with life scale)-CORE-OM: NHS Standard (the clinical outcomes in routine evaluation outcome measure)-The ENA (the emotional needs audit): HG Standard.	To investigate the effectiveness of the HGT mental health service.	Improvement in emotional well-being in the first 4 months -The development continued in the experimental group, including the measurements made during and after the referral and the following 1 year. -HGT yields results in 1-2 sessions compared to the control group.	Measurements were made with the well-being questionnaire after 4-8-12 months of referral.

**Table 2. Continued**

Source	Sample Characteristics	Research Pattern	Data collection tool	Aim	Result	Observation
Yates and Atkinson (2011)	HG intervention for three young people with low self-esteem, depression or anxiety  Two 16-year-old (in high school) teenage girls and a 14-year-old boy with moderate anxiety and low self-esteem	Exploratory case study design	Beck Youth Inventory, Second Edition (BYI-II)	It is aimed to use HGT in meeting the emotional needs of adolescents with low subjective well-being.	HG therapy provided positive improvement in cases.	-

which they can accomplish something. Once the clients achieve it, they are released from the trance and the rewind technique is completed (Griffin and Tyrrell 2004).

HGT can be used in different problem areas and in different groups. Its fields of practice are education, social services, physical pain, individuals with inadequacy in a certain area, emotional disorders, panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, anger problem, addictions and trauma. Although there are studies on its effectiveness in different fields of study, there are limitations in accessing all of them. It is seen that many studies have been published in journals with the theme of *Human Givens*, but access to the content requires a subscription. In addition to the field of psychology working with people, it is an approach open to the participation of individuals from different disciplines in education with its APET model, individualized and different theoretical approaches. Since the structure of this therapy model covers the neocortex and pathology in which the practitioners go through the certification process, it is also necessary to gain knowledge and competence in these subjects to complete the training process. However, the limitations of the open access publications make it difficult to get an idea about the effectiveness of the therapy. This limitation is also emphasized in studies on HGT. Yet, the successful completion of the therapy process in a short period of time, such as one or two sessions, makes the content and scope of this approach even more significant. The eminent feature of these accessible studies is that they are in the form of case studies. This reveals the importance and necessity of systematic review studies of the aforementioned publications in terms of presenting the overall outline.

Firstly, this study covers the literature review on HGT and presents a general framework for the human givens approach through these compiled studies. Secondly, it introduces HGT, which is one of the new and short-term approaches in the field of guidance and psychological counseling, and seeks to create opportunities for future studies on this approach.

## Method

One of the research methods that helps to gain insight into the effectiveness of therapies and treatments is systematic review. Efficacy studies based on reliable evidence are a key resource for researchers and practitioners. With the inclusion and exclusion criteria, random or systematic errors are tried to be avoided and progress is made according to the selection criteria. This situation also enables transparent progress by providing a standard during the literature review (Ata and Urman 2008, Bown and Sutton 2010). Studies with systematic reviews also allow other researchers to repeat the results. In the first stage of systematic review studies, the question to be answered is determined and inclusion and exclusion criteria are ascertained accordingly. A general search is made for the question for which an answer is sought by literature review. Selections are made in line with the determined criteria, and the data that will be required for the research are summarized. A general evaluation is made for the existing table, the analysis is completed and the results are interpreted (Perestelo-Perez 2013).

## Procedure

The structure of the research is based on the relevant review study articles on therapy (eg, Corcoran and Pillai 2007, Çakıcı et al. 2021, Gök 2021). And, for the framework of the research, "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) Guidelines" (Moher et al. 2009) was used. The articles referenced in the research were accessed via Google Scholar and EBSCOHOST, Scopus, Sobiad, Taylor and Francis Online Journals, Sage Journals, Springerlink, ULAKBİM, Wiley Online Library databases in September 2021. Selected articles include full-text, open-access, online articles on HGT published in English and/or Turkish. The following criteria were taken into account in the selection of articles in the research: the language of the article should be Turkish or English, it should contain the keywords "human givens therapy", "human givens approach", "human givens", the subject content should include research on HGT, it should be related to the field of psychology/psychological counseling and the research should be up-to-date published in

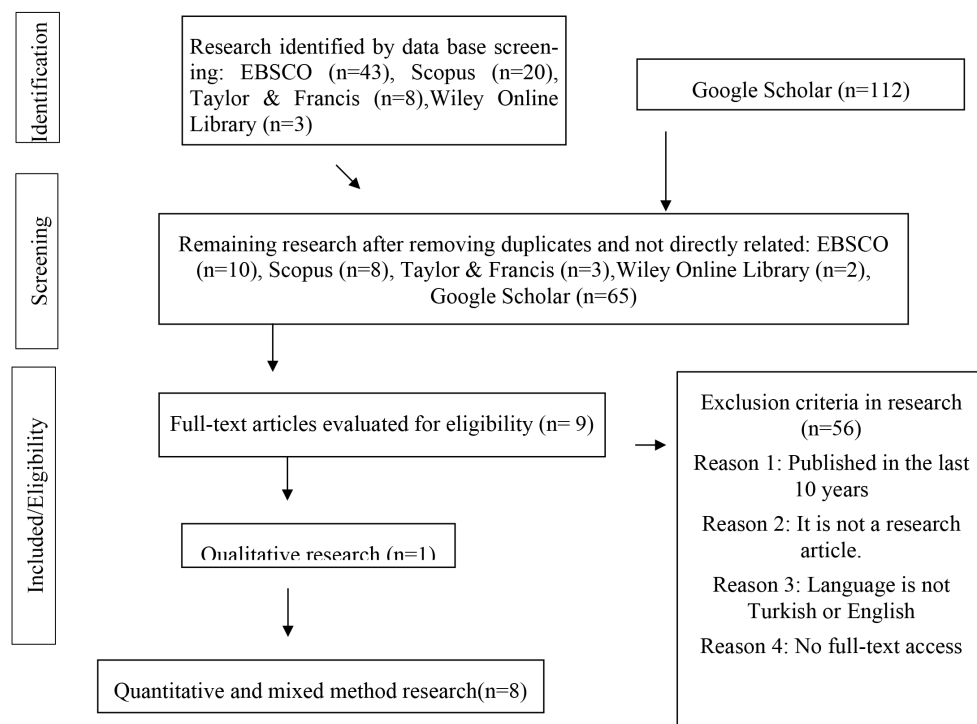
the last 10 years. If the same study was published by the same authors on different internet platforms, the original study was included in the research. No research has been found so far on this subject in the literature in Turkey. In the searches made with the mentioned keywords in line with the determined criteria, a study ranging from 0 to 112 was accessed through Google Scholar and related databases. While 112 results (40 results that can be considered directly related) can be reached from these articles on Google Scholar, results between 0-43 (15 results that can be considered directly related) have been reached in the databases. Nine articles meeting the criteria mentioned in the studies were included in this study. Studies that were of the same type and did not meet the language criteria such as thesis, e-book, review, literature review, etc. were eliminated. In the context of the study, research inclusion and exclusion information is presented in Figure 1, with support from Page et al.'s (2021) systematic review criteris for PRISMA.

## Results

Due to the limited number of articles published on HGT in the last 10 years, these studies have not been classified within themselves. Studies in the foreign literature were compared, taking into account the classifications in Table 1 (sample, research design, purpose and result, observation).

Two of the nine studies in Table 1 are studies published in an indexed journal (Andrews et al. 2011, Adams and Allan 2019). When the studies in Table 1 are examined, it is seen that 2 studies were conducted with adolescents between the ages of 14-17. Studies consisting of a qualitative and a quantitative case

study (Yates and Atkinson 2011, Attwood and Atkinson 2020) focus on learning disability, self-esteem, depression, anxiety and well-being, which are the fields of study of HGT. While one of the remaining 7 studies is about a mixed sample (Andrews et al. 2013), the sample of the other studies can be defined as an adult group in general. Among the adult participants in the studies, there are individuals, who received clinical support due to depression, anxiety and psychological stress (Andrews et al. 2011, Yates and Atkinson 2011, Tsaroucha et al. 2012), war veterans (Adams et al. 2020), and people with traumatic experiences (Adams and Allan 2019, Burdett and Greenberg 2019). One study defined as a general group is a quantitative study on the happiness and well-being of university students (Sodani et al. 2019). Studies for adults include a case study (Yates and Atkinson 2011), 3 quasi-experimental studies (experiment-control/pretest-posttest) (Tsaroucha et al. 2012, Adams and Allan 2019, Burdett and Greenberg, 2019). There is one observational/quasi-experimental study (Adams et al. 2020) and one experimental study (Sodani et al. 2019). Except for one qualitative study (Attwood and Atkinson 2020), other studies were conducted using the quantitative method. Only two of these nine studies are observational studies: One of these includes a short period such as one month (Sodani et al. 2019), while the other includes 4-8-12 months of observation (Tsaroucha et al. 2012). In two of the quantitative studies conducted with adults, it was seen that HGT was compared with CBT (Adams and Allan 2019) and Adlerian Therapy (Sodani et al. 2019), and the effectiveness of the therapies was examined. As a result of these studies, HGT was found to be more effective than CBT, while its effectiveness was found to be lower when compared with Adlerian Therapy. In



**Figure 1.** Inclusion Flowchart in PRISMA Framework

terms of its technical effectiveness, there are studies (Adams and Allan 2019, Adams et al. 2020) on the effectiveness of the rewind technique, which is specific to HGT and used when working with trauma. These studies contend that this technique is effective in healing depression and can be used as an alternative technique when working with trauma. The remaining research is focused on the effectiveness of HGT. The results of these six studies reveal that HGT is instrumental in easing depression. Tsaroucha et al.'s (2012) observation results which lasted over a year indicate that the effectiveness of HGT in one or two sessions is still observable in the following months.

## Discussion

This study was carried out within the scope of a systematic review study and drew a general framework on the effectiveness and usage areas of HGT through researches on this therapy approach. The limitations of accessible research on HGT are evident with the limited resources retrieved during the literature review (Corp et al. 2008). Since open access could not be provided to the studies published in the "Human Givens" journal, which has the same name as therapy and where research on HGT is published, we proceeded with the articles accessed through Google Scholar and other databases. The prominent point of the compilation study by Corp et al. (2008) which includes access to the "Human Givens" journal, as seen in this study, is the limitation of existing studies. This limitation does not mean only a numerical deficiency. As seen in Table 1, when working with small or large sample groups, limited information was given about the sample studied and the therapy practices carried out. There is no clear information about the nature of intervention applied, the competencies of the practitioner and the repeatability of the practices. The limitations of comparative studies, the deficiencies in research and practices in terms of visibility and reproducibility are thought to reduce their reliability as evidence-based practices. Particularly in case studies, limited information on the case and how the developments in the case occur, and the weakness of observational studies in the monitoring process can be given as examples of situations that reduce the reliability of research.

HGT (Griffin and Tyrrell 2004), which stands out with its personalized approach, needs some clarification, especially in structuring therapy sessions in a short time and presenting a clear intervention plan with different therapy techniques. When working with case studies and large groups, the question of how exactly does this approach fits such studies needs to be answered more comprehensively. Drawing from different therapeutic approaches such as the APET model, which also benefits from cognitive therapy (Griffin and Tyrrell 2007), can be a strength of HGT; on the other hand, uncertainties in the selection and integration of techniques into the process stand out as the weakness of the method as well. Although it provides services in different areas such as trauma, depression, anxiety, well-being, and education (Griffin and Tyrrell 2004, 2007), research on these broad fields of study remains quite limited. This increases the unknowns about HGT. Moreover, as it requires field knowledge of multiple areas of study such as Clinical REM, neocortex, etc.,

the scarcity of information defining the practitioner competence, becomes a challenging factor in the implementation of the approach.

While the studies are mainly quantitative for the adult group, there are also studies for adolescents. These studies suggest that more research is needed that goes beyond case studies when working with children and adolescents. Increasing qualitative research in therapy approaches where some uncertainties are prevailing as in HGT, can be a guide for understanding the nature of individualized therapy and eclectic applications. The collaboration of researchers in some of these studies (e.g. Yates and Atkinson 2011, Adams and Allan 2019, Adams et al. 2020, Attwood and Atkinson 2020) seems promising in terms of the continuity of the studies in the research domain. Regarding its eclectic and holistic nature, researches on HGT using different therapy models may have a positive outcome on its effectiveness. Thus, creating a valid and reliable foundation can be enabled for the legitimacy of HGT.

This approach, which has not been embraced in Turkey yet, seems to be adaptable to Turkish culture with its eclectic and holistic aspects. It can turn into a service that can be made accessible to individuals from different socio-economic levels, with a solution in one or two therapy sessions. Besides, HGT can provide faster service in less time to larger masses in crowded settings such as schools. Nonetheless, the low prevalence of HGT education throughout the world is seen as a limitation in terms of the limited number of therapists who adopt this approach. Consequently, the promise the HGT offers to improve with less time and cost, while expressing that change is possible in a brief period like one or two sessions make it more convenient. However, when the studies in the last 10 years and the systematic review study conducted by Corp and colleagues in 2008 are evaluated together, the limitations of the studies and the need to work with large and different sample groups are noteworthy, and it is thought that there is a need for more comprehensive information on the treatment plan and the process of the therapy sessions.

Expanding the scope of the research with international conferences, dissertations, and journals on HGT can provide more information about the approach. Compilations can be made by taking into account the resources such as the book (Griffin and Tyrrell 2007) in which case studies are included. Furthermore, the case-sharing of practitioners who have gone through the certification process required for HGT can also contribute to gaining more insight into the approach.

## Conclusion

HGT's emphasis on human needs, which has come to the fore over the past few decades, is quite significant. The fact that it includes methods adopted by different approaches is one of the aspects that show commonality, such as the importance given to meeting the needs of the individual. These common points can be reassuring for practitioners and client candidates. However, how to put the process into practice and how different sources of knowledge and skills can be used in a short time such as one or

two sessions are among the areas waiting to be clarified. Studies in which training and practical content in this field are transferred more; it is thought that it will make an important contribution to the intelligibility of the application and its applicability in different cultures.

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