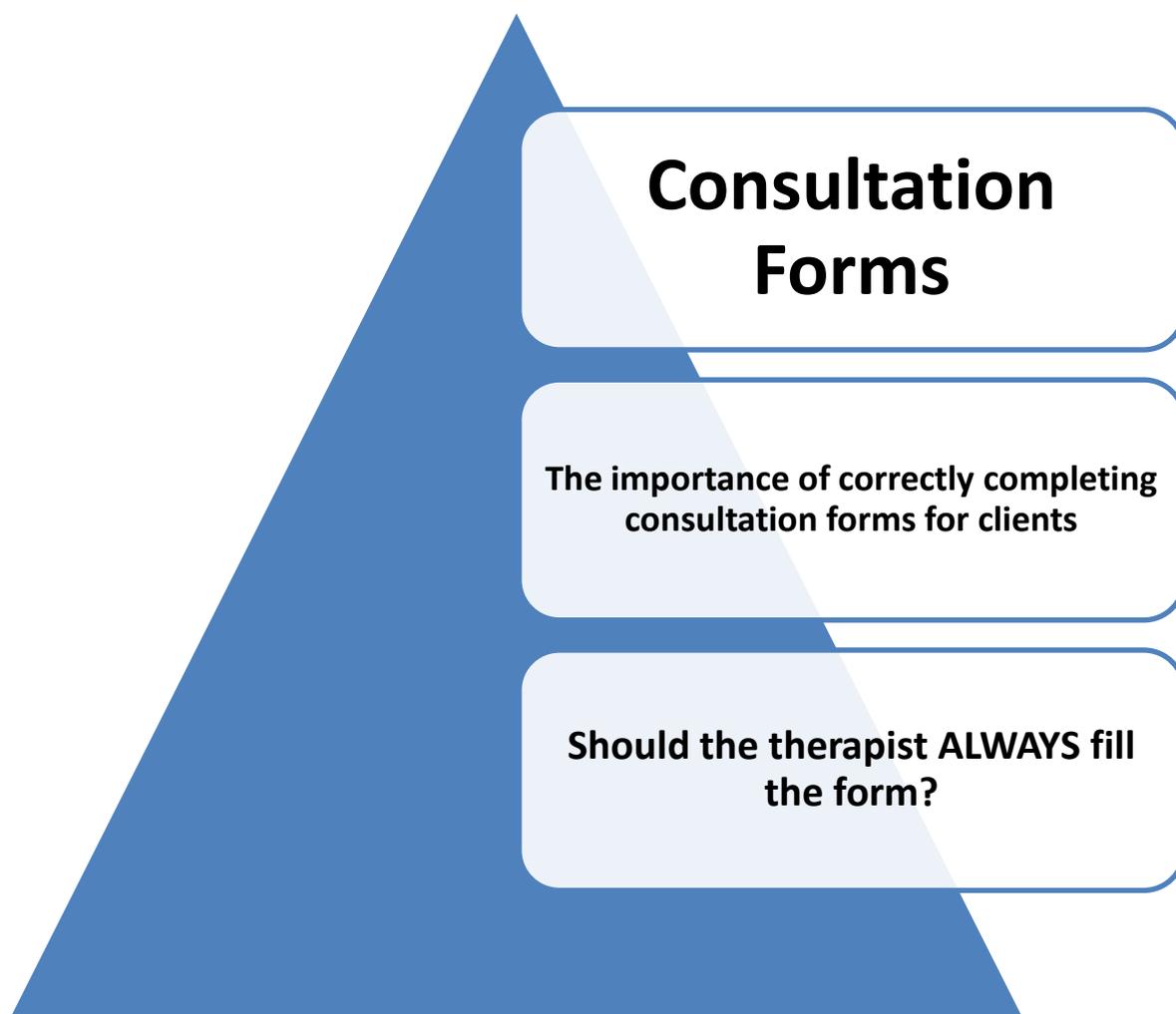


The Beauty & Holistic Industry



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The Key Features and Purpose of Action Research

The key purposes and features of action research are to use various methods with the view of improving practice. Evidence gathered can be used in the evaluation and analysis of the particular practice in order to suggest and where actionable implement improvements and changes.

Whilst carrying out action research in all area and practices researches will utilise many methods using a varied range of skills. These methods will indefinitely involve others, which lead to why action research is often referred to as P.A.R (Participatory Action Research).

"A primary purpose of action research is to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives. A wider purpose of action research is to contribute through this practical knowledge to the increased well-being - economic, political, psychological, spiritual - of human persons and communities, and to a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the wider ecology of the planet of which we are an intrinsic part."
(Reason P & Bradbury H, Handbook of Action Research, Sage Publications, 2001, p2)

The Action Research Cycle

Although the action research process has set methods it should still be looked at as an open ended research. In simple terms the cycle starts with an idea of implication of action for possible change, debate or improvement, these actions can be formulated in with a simple diagram. Reflection and evaluation following the completion of the research may well present the need for further action research. You could say in all areas and practice action research is a necessity due to the evolution of all industries, where one question/issue is addressed, the answer to it generates new questions, the depth of research will be down to the related questions and or issue.

- **Identify Issues For Research** – Consider if the research is a benefit on a personal level and or a professional level this will help identify the basis of the research issue.
- **Plan Research Methods – Things to consider** - What methods are readily available to you, do any of your chosen methods require outside resources and will the methods used contribute to your research on many levels or just one.
- **Carry Out Research** - With your methods discussed and prepared set a disciplined timescale for you to carry out the research. Prepare a plan to help facilitate this process and have everything in place ready to carry out a professional research process.
- **Collect, Analyse all Data and Formulate an Action Plan** – Look at the ways you collected your data, put these into a format that allows you to analyse all your finding in a fair and honest way.
- **Reflect and Evaluate, Put into Action** – Look at all your results, consider what the advantages and the disadvantages are linked to your findings, both on a personal level and a professional level. Access the possibility of putting your findings into action and the openings for more research, if needed.

Diagram showing a simple Action Research Cycle



A Model for Action Research

When adopting any model for action research you must be prepared to adapt as you proceed, this is because any of your actions may have implications on the actual research progression. You may find that at the start of the research, although you are trying to work to a plan, you find yourself carrying out other tasks such as more observations relating to why you are doing the research. Most ideas/models of research are aimed at providing improvements and can become problematic as your personal views, beliefs and values may start to over influence aims and outcomes. What you believe might be a benefit to your practice may become a downfall for another, so an air of respect and caution must be adhered to with all models used. I mentioned in the previous section on the research cycle that any action research should be looked at as open ended and this is often shown in many models as spirals, thus presenting continuous avenues to follow. With this in mind and the implications linked to changing directions view them not as a complication but as a challenge to further a wider search of understanding with regard to the research.

Initiating Action Research:

The importance of correctly completing consultation forms for clients over the last few years, especially within the public service industry, which includes Beauty & Holistic Salons, Spa's, Gym's and parts of the NHS, seems to of lost a degree of importance. It is through personal experience and conversations within the beauty/holistic industry that the importance of how consultations are carried out needs to be readdressed. I have found that consultation form completion appears to have become less important mainly due to time restraints imposed partly through financial constraints linked to staffing. Clients are regular asked to complete forms themselves and occasionally via email. I ask how this "can give a full professional account of the client's needs both on a psychological and a spiritual level" I believe not.

Any client who books for a holistic treatment or attends a medical appointment does so in the expectation that the therapist etc. is a professional and as such they will expect expert advice. For research purpose I will be concentrating on the Beauty and Holistic industry, with the occasional mention of the NHS.

Within the Beauty and Holistic industry a good consultation is absolutely essential, as it is at this stage the discussion of the client's needs are identified along with any possible contra-indications linked to the treatment being carried out. A consultation conducted by the therapist asking the client questions and filling in the form enables any professional decisions to be made in order to decide what needs have to be met in order to give a professional treatment.

The aims of a consultation are:

- To find out what the client wants to achieve from their treatment
- To determine what the client needs from their treatment
- To ensure that the treatment is suitable for client
- To determine the need for any special care
- To build a good rapport
- To answer any questions the client

Ask yourself can the above be fully met if a client fills in their own consultation form, whether before the treatment or even prior to their visit? I believe not, a good example of why client completion of their own form can create concerns was fully demonstrated when my wife recently

attend a salon for a series of 7 specialised treatments. Upon arrival at the salon she was handed a 2 page consultation form to complete prior to even meeting the therapist that was to carry out the procedure, when the salon owner was asked if this was the normal practice she replied "Yes" due to the time required and it will be checked by the therapist. I enquired what happens if my wife is dyslexic or cannot read the reply I received was that never occurs and if it did the client would say. My wife filled in the form; however she did not sign the disclaimer at the end, in the belief that the therapist would check the form. 7 treatments and 7 weeks later, at the end of the course of treatments, the form still had not been thoroughly checked and no signature was every asked for.

This error is partially the fault of the therapist for not going through the form and partially the fault of the salon for having the client fill in the form. If the importance of consultation was realised and carried out correctly this error would not have occurred, thankfully in this case my wife was fully aware of the procedure and any concerns linking to it. So ask yourself again can the professionalism be fully met if a client fills in their own consultation form, whether before the treatment or even prior to their visit?

On many occasions clients/patients are required to fill in their own forms, this action although may be time saving for the establishment can create more costly errors with incorrect information given and lack of information given. It is because of situations like the examples given that I believe my research is justified and will hopefully serve to identify room for improvement within the industry for all client consultations.

Intervention Strategies and Timescales:

A therapist completing and carrying out a client consultation can have an effect on business performance, especially when linked to time allowances, time is money. The strategy of my research will serve to identify possible opportunities to improve client/patient service and identify problem areas, my research will deal with both as important opportunities for improvement. I will ask other members of the industry to adopt new ways of working in order that they too can benefit from the findings, and if needed implement their own strategies. The involvement of others for fills the aim of my strategy relating to client consultation and in turn helping improve business performance. Although my action research paper is just being completed in written form, my actual research has been on-going since 2010. This research paper when completed will be the conclusion and will present my findings following a total timescale of just under 3 years. Ethical, Political and Confidentiality considerations:

My topic of research has to be carried out considering all and any Ethical, Political and Confidential concerns. By developing guidelines at the start of my research, in order to maintain professionalism throughout, I consider the following to be of great importance relating to research ethics. Ethics both personal and professional, within the beauty and holistic industry, can be described as the rules or morals of professional behaviour. This professional behaviour should cover;

- Competence
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Integrity

Due to the industry I 'am basing my research on the political aspect appertains more to that of individual salons rather than on a broader level, thus working towards and within the above detailed guidelines there should be no conflicting issues or concerns.

Due to the sheer nature of my research confidentiality is important when gathering my survey results, in order to maintain confidentiality I have adopted an “anonymous” response system. In order to maintain an ethical approach to the research I will observe and work within the following guidelines.

- To identify the relevant issues professionally
- What if any are the parameters of the research
- What legal guidance exists?
- What do peers advise?
- Is there guidance available from industry relevant bodies?

Research Methodology

When looking at appropriate and relevant literature for referencing information relevant to my research I look towards social media sites, beauty blogs, magazine articles and web site news/articles. All of these resources present both formal and informal views of therapist and other professionals within the industry. The main beauty blog I use as a reference source is Salon Geek, this site is a place where therapists and other professionals from the industry share their thoughts and concerns on all subject of the beauty and holistic industry. Being linked directly with therapists via the blog allows me to evaluate the views of the majority rather than a majority in an up to date manner. Magazine articles tend to be edited thus losing part of the authenticity however they do provide a valuable reference source with a more legal aspect to them. Two magazines I regularly read to broaden my knowledge of the industry and what is evolving is The Guild and Choice Health Magazine. Web site articles again can be valuable source of referencing, such sites I use are The CMA (Complementary Medical Association) and The Beauty Guild.

www.salongeek.com/

The world's largest community of **Salon** Professionals

www.choicehealthmag.com/

Take your therapy skills and business to the next level. Find out what the experts say and read.

www.the-cma.org.uk/

Promoting ethical, responsible, professional complementary medicine to the public and the medical profession.

www.beautyguild.com/

The official website of **the Guild** of Beauty Therapists

Quantitative and Qualitative data collection

In order to gather a broad spectrum of information for my research I will utilise a quantitative collection process to target a majority audience. I believe that this method will provide me with responses that are not influenced by business profit etc. I class this as an advantage because data collection will be collated and calculated as a statistical percentage rather than individuals experiences. However a disadvantage is that a percentage of responses may be falsified by respondents that don't have real concerns. As this method of data collection tends not to provide and in depth portrayal of validity, it still remains important to my research.

To provide a more in depth approach to my data collection I will use a qualitative method to collect information. This information will be collated from actual salon and spa owners, along with industry

insurance representatives. It will help provide a different perspective relating to reasoning and concerns relating to client consultations.

By using both Quantitative and Qualitative data collection methods I aim to provide more reliable information for use in the evaluation of my research and summary of any possible or recommended improvements.

Methods selected for research in this area

To obtain information for the collation of research I have opted to use four different methods of collection.

1 - I will use a basic questionnaire style email; this email will be sent to 100 randomly selected spa/salon owners, both small and large businesses. I estimate that I will only receive responses from 40% of those emailed, due to email spam software systems, however all responses will be valuable to my research. Below is an example of the email questionnaire.

Dear Salon Owner,

I'm compiling an "Action Research" paper to look at and analyse the full importance of consultation within the Beauty & Holistic industry. My research will look at ways to address any current issues that arise regarding the importance of carrying out a full consultation. I will analyse the different formats used within the industry and the outcomes each format produces. The overall outcome will look at providing information to help all parties involved in the consultation process make the right choice both for the client, the therapist and keep within the law.

Please spare a few moments to add your comments and thoughts to the questions below.

1 - Whether it is ok for the client to fill the form in on their own, & therapist then reads through it.

2- The therapist fills the form in with the clients input.

3- The format of having clients fill in the form prior to their visit to the salon.

I would love to hear your salons thoughts on all the above, all replies will be kept and recorded as anonymous. If you'd like to comment I'd be grateful. My findings will be published by Beauty Finder in due course.

Thank you in advance

David Vickers

TSL Holistic Centre

2 – I have enlisted the help of the industry recognised company Beauty Finder; they have displayed upon their site the following;

[Client Consultation Forms: Review from TSL Holistic Centre](#)

Consultation Forms: The importance of correctly completing consultation forms for clients.

Ask yourself it is ok for the client to fill the form in, should the therapist ALWAYS fill the form in with the clients input and what do you think about the format of having clients fill in the form prior to their visit to the salon or clinic.

I'm compiling an "Action Research" paper to look at and analyse the full importance of consultation within the Beauty & Holistic industry. My research will look at ways to address any current issues that arise regarding the importance of carrying out a full consultation. I will analyse the different formats used within the industry and the outcomes each format produces.

The overall outcome will look at providing information to help all parties involved in the consultation process make the right choice both for the client, the therapist and keep within the law.

My findings will be published by Beauty Finder in due course. If you'd like to commentTSLHolistic@aol.com

Thank you in advance David Vickers TSL Holistic Centre

The above will help generate a wide response of emails, presenting the views from people at all levels within the industry. It will serve to provide information for evaluation both on a quantitative and a qualitative level.

3 – Verbal responses will be obtained and recorded on a personal level. This information will be gathered by visiting other salons to see how they carry out consultations. I will also be talking to other therapists, clients and the general public.

4 – Social media sites and industry related blog sites will be used to obtain immediate response to my research. An example of this is detailed below, as collected from the social site "Facebook".

[Dave Vickers](#)

Consultation Forms - I 'am writing an action research paper linked to the importance of correctly completing consultation forms for clients. I 'am looking for people comments on whether it is ok for the client to fill the form in, the therapist should ALWAYS fill the form in and what people think about the format of having clients fill in the form prior to their visit to the salon. If you'd like to comment please do so on here or I'd be grateful if anyone would like to email me their thoughts on this matter. TSLHolistic@aol.com . Thank you in advance xxx

[Michael Q](#) In my experience most people are very poor at completing forms and data quality is poor, if left to their own devices. I do agree with Debbie that talking direct with your client is important and will help you build a relationship with the client and understand their requirements better...

[Star E](#) I think it's a joint effort, the therapist can gently probe for answers -I would not like to leave my clients to fill the form in. Also most forms these days are quite pitiful in both the data asked for and how it is worded.

"do you drink water" well who isn't going to say 'yes' to that - a caring therapist however might probe further to find out the frequency and quantity of water to ascertain any hydration issues

All these methods will provide a variety of research data collection and will help me evaluate. Understand and reach a conclusion for any recommended actions.

Data Collection:

I collected data using my four chosen methods –

1 - Email Responses

2 - General Responses (Obtained from industry survey)

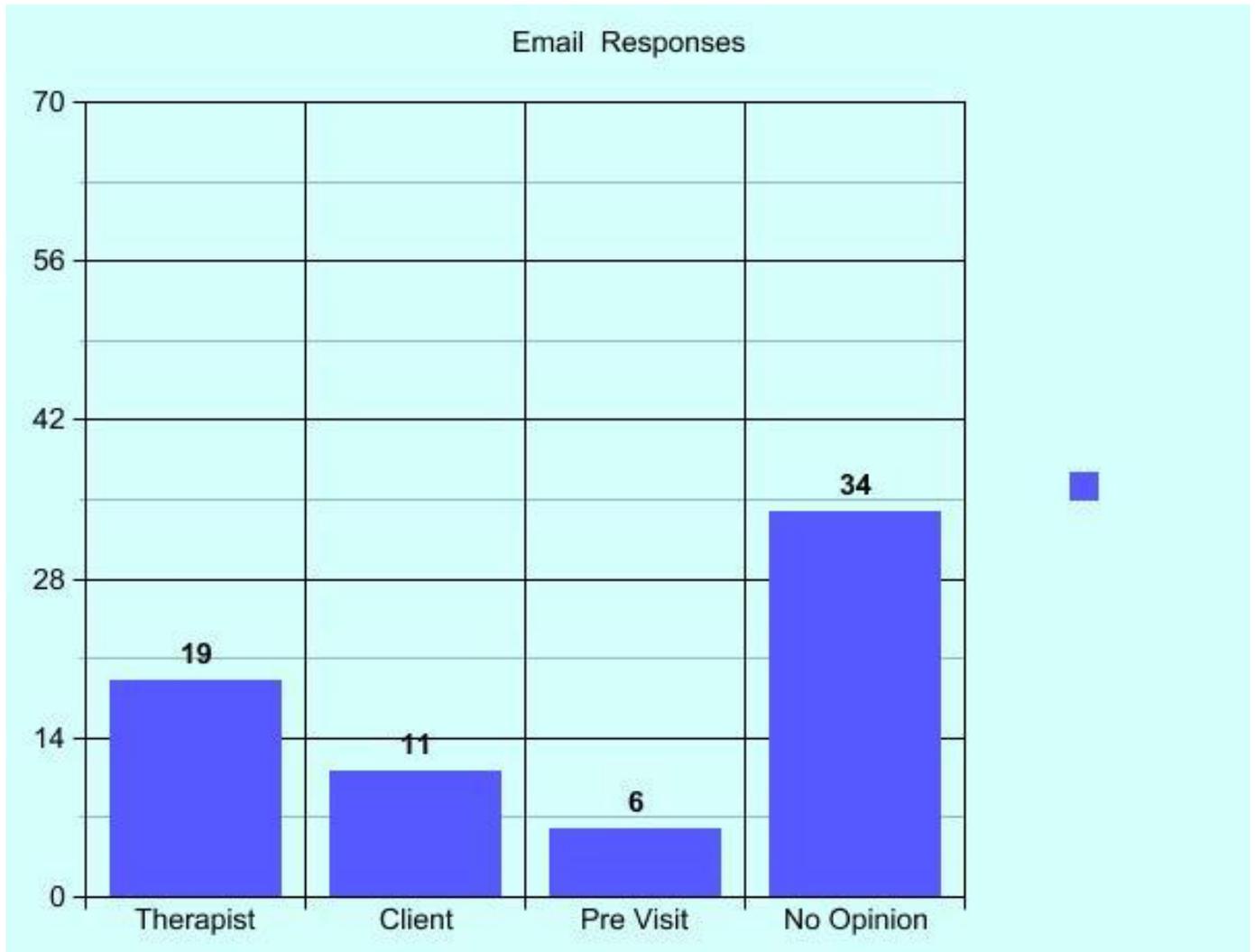
3 – Verbal Responses (Obtained from asking existing & new clients at the TSL)

4 – Blog & Social Site Responses (Obtained from posting questions in different formats on a variety of sites)

In order to collate a broader outlook for my research data I have chosen to show the "No" responses as "No Opinion". I cannot give nor do I want to assume any reasons for not receiving a reply from the person or persons my request, for my research, was sent to.

1 - Email Responses

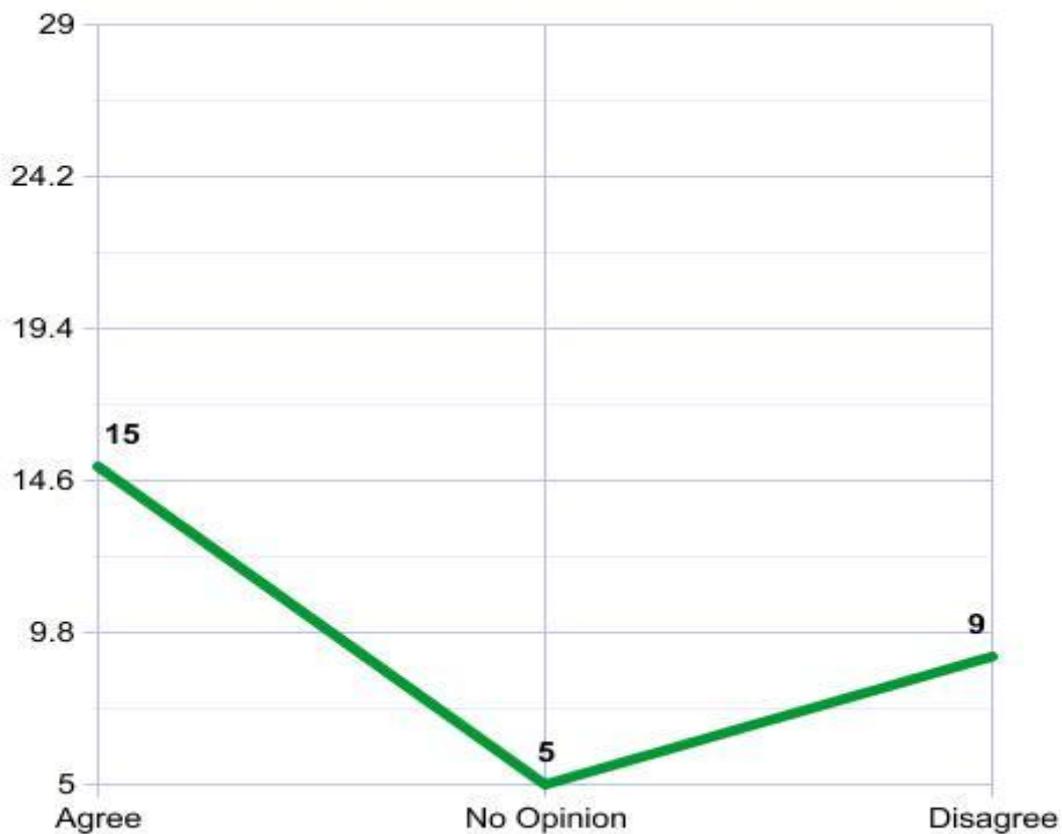
A total of 70 emails were sent to randomly selected salons and spas throughout the UK, each recipient was given 30 days to respond to the questionnaire email, no replies were counted as no opinion.



2 - General Responses (Obtained from industry survey)

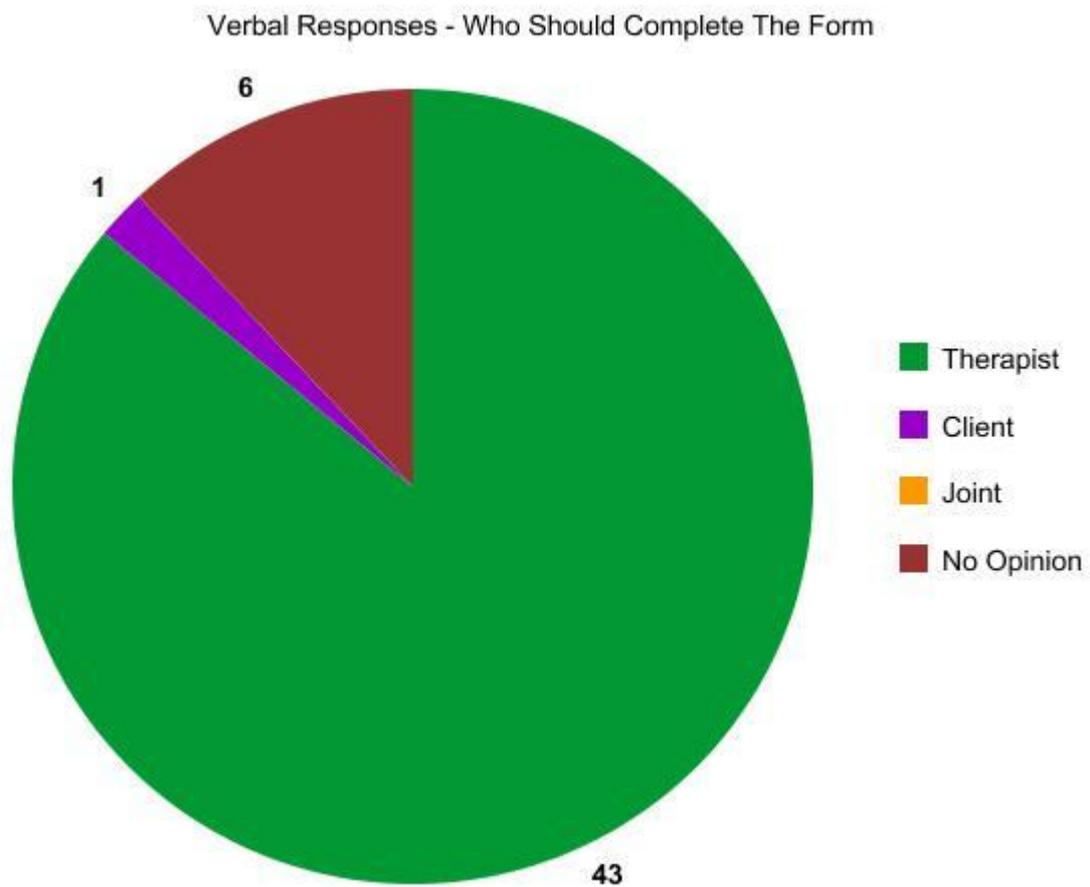
My request for an industry response to my research was posted on the industry recognised company Beauty Finder, and sent via IPTI (*Independent Professional Therapists International*). I.P.T.I. is an Association for alternative, complementary and health and beauty therapists. Information was gathered over a 30 day period.

General Responses - Therapist always fills in the form



3 – Verbal Responses

I chose to pose the question “Who should complete the consultation form” to 50 randomly selected new and existing clients of the TSL Holistic Centre. The clients asked were all age ranged, with the youngest being 16 and the eldest being 78, this gave a clearer view of individual opinions,



4 – Blog & Social Site Responses

Research data relating to my concerns, that encouraged my research, has been obtained via several sources linked to blog sites and social media sites. Questions were posted on various subjects where consultation was mentioned as well as more direct questions being posted by myself. As a majority of the responses were posted as comments rather than specific answers I broke down them into 30 of the most detailed comments and what they most related to.

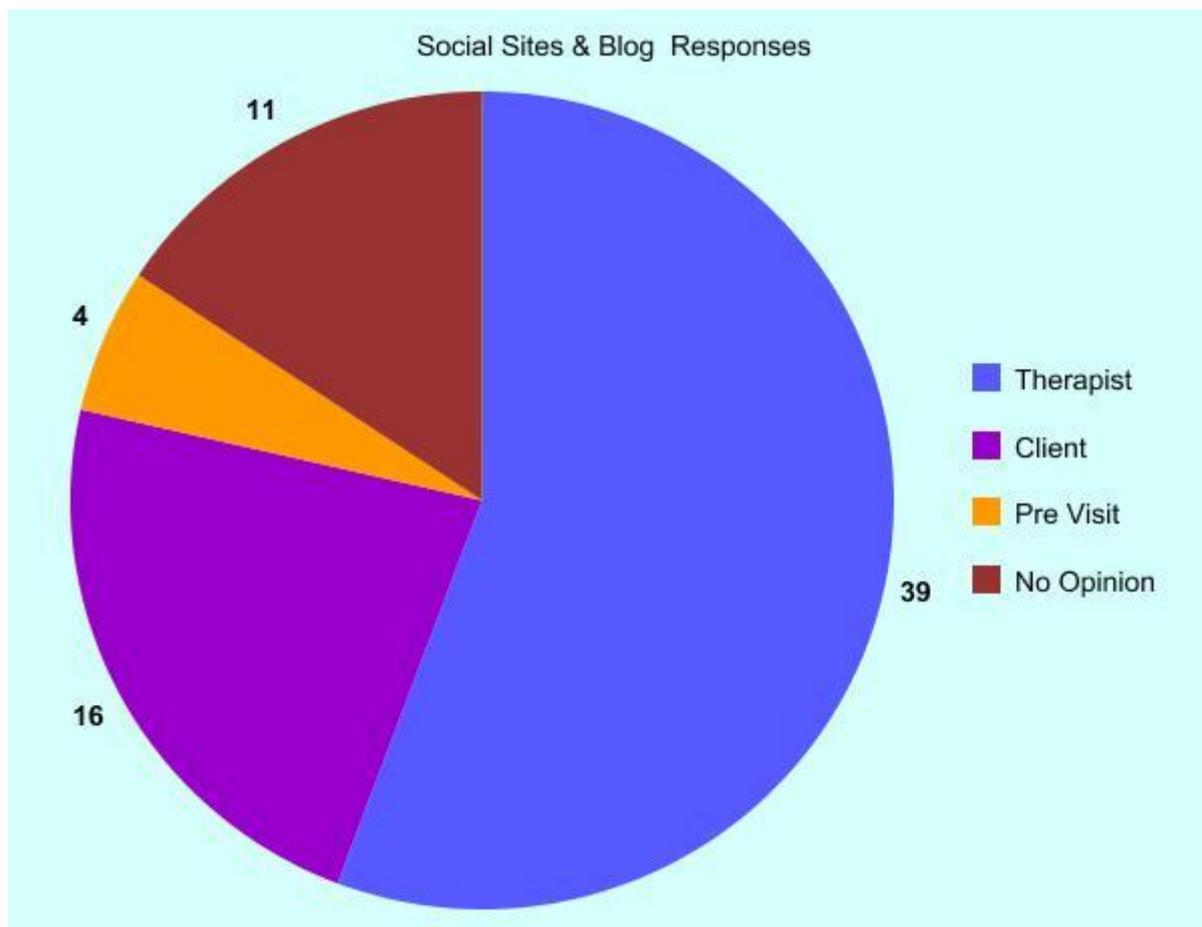
These were: Should the consultation form be filled in solely by:

The Therapist

The Client

Pre Visit

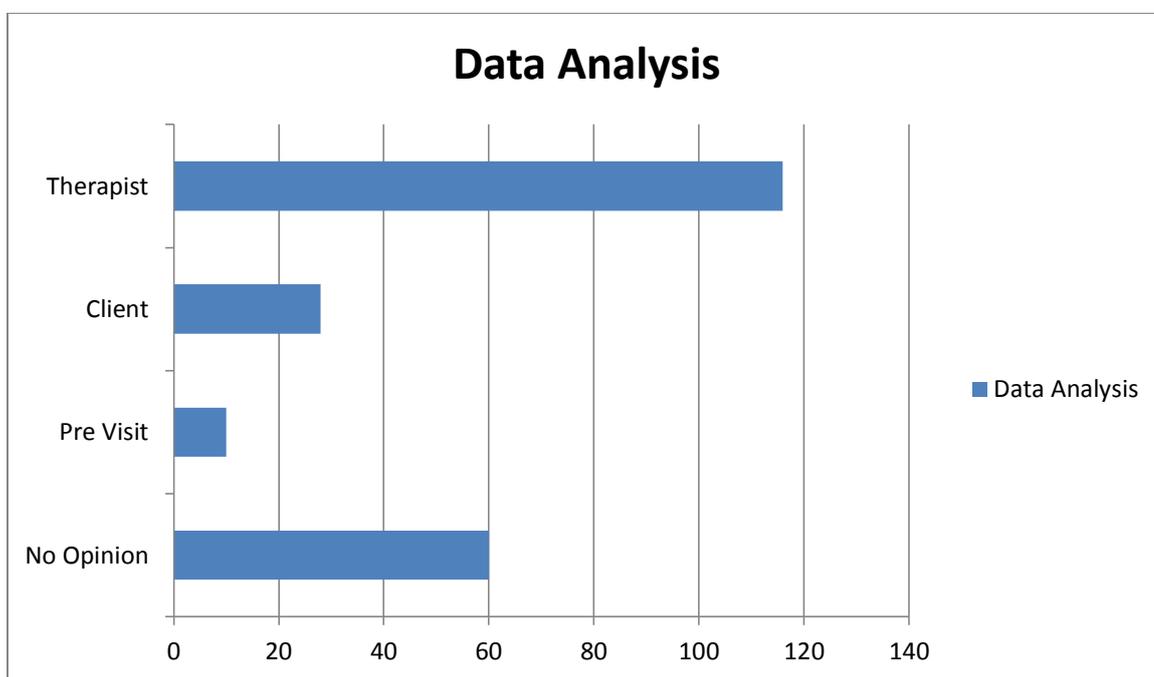
No Opinion



Data Analysis:

Having collated data through varied methods and from different resources I will now look at ways of analysis. Given the different types of methods of collection used for data collection and the responses received it is better to collate all the responses as a whole. Due to the responses being collated in a numerical format analysis will be best conducted through the use of a graph.

My aim of the analysis will be to format a graph that takes into consideration all the results gathered. The final graph will be divided in to 4 sections, all relating to the same initial question, that being "Who should complete the client consultation form". Disagrees and nonresponses will be counted within the section labelled No Opinion, agrees will be counted under the section labelled Therapist.



Having input the collected data into the above graph you can clearly see that the greatest responses were for the therapist to complete the form and the lowest responses were for pre visit completion of forms.

Research Conclusion:

Following the completion and analysis of the data I collected, through the various methods, the results clearly show that the majority of replies are in favour of the therapist completing the client consultation form. What the results also show is that the industry, in my opinion, needs to continually monitor how consultation are carried out and by whom.

It does concern me that I had a total of 82 non response's (neither agree nor degrees were counted within this number). Their maybe certain contributing factors to this, from my initial email being classed a spam mail and never being opened to the fact that employees felt that they could not reply for concern over repercussion from employers. With this in mind I do feel that the results only serve to demonstrate a small fraction of opinions and would like to see individual companies and associates carrying out further investigation into the importance of correct client consultation.

A broader view needs to be taken with regard to this subject by not only therapists but employers and insurance companies. However many individuals and companies will always look for ways to

cost cut in the current economic which unfortunately creates barriers for improvements relating to the importance of client consultations.

A client consultation within the Beauty & Holistic industry, relating to treatments, has been and should always remain the most important factor of the treatment. If it is not the therapist that fills in and completes the consultation form how can we maintain this importance?

My research has served to highlight the possibility of a failing within the industry to provide clients with the best consultation process. It has always been the case that within our centre all therapists, me included, completes the form with input from the client. It is also important that each and every part of the consultation form that is completed is gone through with the client. In all the training courses we provide and deliver we cover client consultation in depth, explaining the full importance and will continue to in all future courses.

Other therapists, companies and insurance providers to the industry may need or want to relook at their current client consultation policies and take a moment to consider they fully cover the following:

- To find out what the client wants to achieve from their treatment
- To determine what the client needs from their treatment
- To ensure that the treatment is suitable for client
- To determine the need for any special care
- To build a good rapport
- To answer any questions the client

The industry has a professional responsibility to all clients, to ensure that it provides the best possible treatment from start to finish; can this be guaranteed if client completes their own consultation?

Recommendations and Actions

Any client who books in for a beauty or a holistic treatment does so in the expectation that the therapist is a professional and as such they will expect expert advice. A good consultation is absolutely essential as it is at this stage that you can discuss the client's needs and to identify any possible contra-indications. Valuable discussion can be achieved whilst "YOU" are filling out the form with your client.

As a professional you need to be very careful that you rely on your own judgement and that you do not allow yourself to be persuaded by a client's insistence to the contrary, can you be 100% sure this happens if your client has solely filled in the consultation form?

It is important to find out what objectives and expectations the client has so that the treatment can be designed to meet their needs. I believe that the best way to ensure a happy and satisfied client is to complete a consultation form with their input and for them in its entirety.

I would recommend that in all cases the therapist, the professional, carries out an in depth consultation with them, the therapist, completing the forms in full.

I believe that by taking this action the chance for errors and possible legal action being taken by disgruntled clients can be greatly reduced

Evaluation

Having looked at and evaluated all the data I collected and all the methods I used I feel that I utilised all current available resources to their full potential. My approach to my research subject came about through both personal and professional concerns regarding client consultations. I believe that the results provide me with the data that confirms that more development and education of all parties linked to the industry, in reference to client consultation, be pursued.

My research and data collection methods/resources have provided me with an open door opportunity to many professionals, at all levels, within the specialised field I work and teach in. These newly forged contacts will serve a good foundational platform on which I can further my research in ways to present more evidential data.

As I further my research information and data gathered will help strength my own personal skills in many ways, presenting future possibilities of new avenues of research.

My action research paper will be made available to all professionals within the Beauty and Holistic Industry. This can only serve to bring about possible changes as time passes, as with all research papers they provide a topic of discussion and debate, it is through these that changes will come about.

References & Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the therapists, clients and professional companies that provided help with my research data through personal input.

The following sites and resources also served as a valuable input to the compiling and completion of my research.

The Key Features and Purpose of Action Research Page 2
(Reason P & Bradbury H, Handbook of Action Research, Sage Publications, 2001, p2)

www.actionresearch.net/

www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/nsf02057_4.pdf

www.salongeek.com

The world's largest community of Salon Professionals

www.choicehealthmag.com

Take your therapy skills and business to the next level. Find out what the experts say and read.

www.the-cma.org.uk

Promoting ethical, responsible, professional complementary medicine to the public and the medical profession.

www.beautyguild.com

The official website of the Guild of Beauty Therapists

www.iptiuk.com

Industry recognised and approved professional insurance provider

www.beautyfinder.co.uk/