



UNSW
SYDNEY

**Centre for Social Research in
Health**

UNSW Arts & Social Sciences



Where mental wellbeing thrives



Bias, context and how they inform your
work:

The world is not black and white.

Our experience guides us

- We all have background experiences
- Whether we can consciously acknowledge them or not these guide our interests and our interpretation of things.
- Rorschach and Thematic Apperception Tests were early uses of this.

Implicitly understanding things

- You may have heard of implicit attitudes
- These are attitudes that we are not consciously aware of that can also shape our perceptions and behaviour.

Harvard IAT

- <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/australia/takeatest.html>
- Disclaimer: If you are unprepared to encounter interpretations that you might find objectionable, please do not proceed further. You may prefer to examine [general information about the IAT](#) before deciding whether or not to proceed.
- **I am aware of the possibility of encountering interpretations of my IAT test performance (on race, Gender, sexuality etc-my addition) with which I may not agree. Knowing this, [I wish to proceed](#)**

Are even obvious biases always obvious

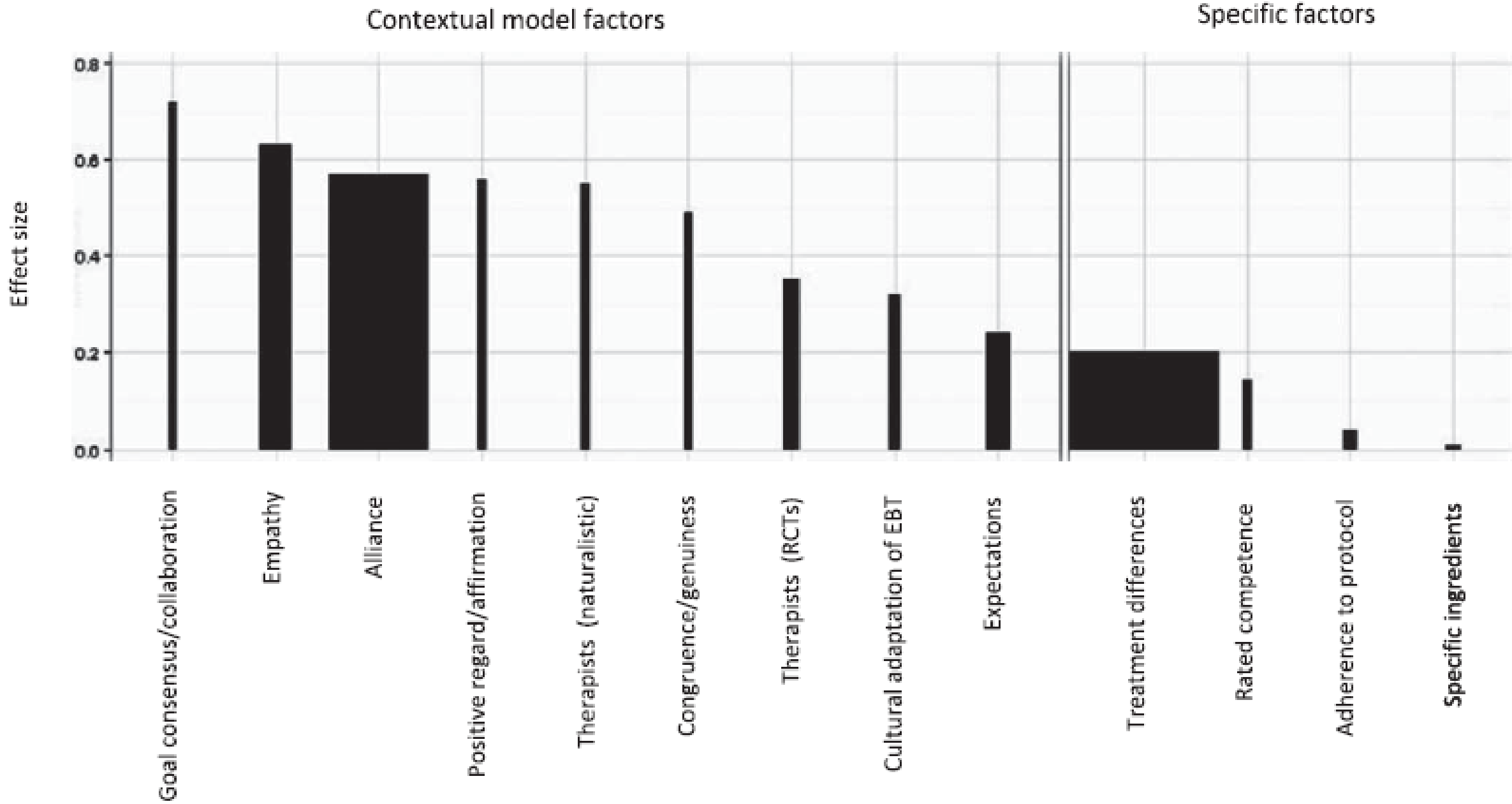
- Satisfaction survey at an NGO
- Whether it was held in a party atmosphere or over the phone the same satisfaction results were gathered.
- The results were responsive to organisational change over time
- Not much work on peer delivery, and it's old. My experience showed no great difference.
- Trust relationship?

Evaluating Outcomes

- Can we really measure outcomes? We're people and can't be described by a bunch of numbers.
- Personal vs clinical outcomes
- Are we after symptom/substance reduction or a better life?
- The Dodo Bird conjecture- Bruce Wampold.
- What are the common factors in improving wellbeing?
- Are there people who don't like this theory?
- Are they right?

Evaluating Outcomes

- Why bother?
- As someone who is 'into' outcomes I'm shocked at how often they are disregarded.
- Evidence for improved outcomes, particularly for people who are experiencing difficulties
- Provides evidence that what we're doing works
- Provides specific evidence about what parts of what we're doing are making the difference.



Context and evaluation-assisting the trust relationship

- Essential that those who will be affected by the research are involved in determining and conducting the research.
- The priorities of the different groups involved will be different based on their perspectives*
- Establishing trust can take many forms: peer delivery, in a setting that is comfortable for the participants, taking time to know the participants, assurances of the anonymous and voluntary nature of any research.
- Timing of delivery? Practicalities? Context of emergency event.

*Griffiths, Kathleen M., Jorm, Anthony F., Christensen, Helen, Medway, Jo, & Dear, Keith B.G. (2002). Research Priorities in Mental Health, Part 2: An Evaluation of the Current Research Effort Against Stakeholders' Priorities. 36(3), 327-339.

Context and evaluation-assisting the trust relationship

- Only by giving a voice to all who will be affected by your research can you reduce the biases that will inevitably be in your work.
- You will discover questions you will not have thought of.
- There may be a juxtaposition between the views of those accessing the service and what is seen as important by the organisation, or funders.
- Whoever gathers the information has to understand why it's done: hint, it's not just because management wants it.

How can outcome measures be made relevant to service delivery.

- Are outcome measures helpful for your work?
- Never get any feedback, forms just disappear into the admin void?
- No training in the measures?
- No time?
- Are they difficult for the people accessing the services to complete?

Context and evaluation-assisting the trust relationship

- The trust relationship requires that you are worthy of that trust.
- We are in powerful positions, we are not very vulnerable.
- We are only doing our jobs when we make people more powerful and less vulnerable to circumstance.