

Personality traits change as a result of therapy



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It is now well accepted that personality traits change in childhood and throughout much of adulthood. Combined with the recent findings showing that personality traits predict a wide range of desirable outcomes, such as better social relationships, work outcomes, health, and longevity, the question has been raised as to whether personality trait change can be accelerated through some form of intervention. Unbeknownst to many developmental researchers, clinical scientists have tracked personality trait change alongside typical clinical outcomes in clinical intervention studies for decades. In this talk, I will present the findings from a meta-analysis of over several hundred clinical studies, many of which were true experimental designs, which show that personality traits can be changed and changed substantially in a relatively short period of time. In addition to the results of this review, I will discuss the theoretical and ethical issues that arise when considering whether to intervene to change a person's personality.