

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH COUNSELING CLIENT PERCEPTIONS OF
CONTRIBUTIONS TO PRE-TREATMENT CHANGE

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The notion of pre-treatment change (i.e., changes that occur *after* the initial contact with a counseling provider is made but *prior* to the first counseling session) originated with the work of Milton Erikson, and later, within the context of solution-focused counseling. How counselors view the phenomenon of pre-treatment change has an impact on counseling clients' overall change processes: pre-treatment change that is explored can contribute significantly to the formation of solutions. The purpose of this study was to examine client perceptions of contributions to pre-treatment changes.

This study utilized Q methodology in order to capture client perceptions of contributions to pre-treatment change. Thirty-six participants from three counseling venues completed Q sorts. Four factors, representing six distinct views of contributions to pre-treatment change, emerged from data analysis. The four factors (which represented six views due to the existence of two bipolar factors) that emerged from the study were named (a) problem legitimacy, (b) spiritual resources, (c) hope, and (d) pathways. The results of the present study, conducted in such a way as to assist and encourage clients to make sense of their experiences prior to counseling, suggest that meaningful pre-treatment changes can almost always be identified, or brought forth for consideration.