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## Dr. Thoraiya Kanafai

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### The effectiveness of online vs face-to-face psychotherapy during the Covid-19 pandemic in the United Arab Emirates

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an abrupt and immediate change to the way in which mental health services are delivered. To mitigate against lockdown protocols imposed on a global scale, many individuals seeking mental health services were obliged to use online mental health services in place of face-to-face services. The study reported here investigated the differences in individuals' experiences of online psychotherapy sessions compared to in-person psychotherapy services using a cross-sectional, within groups design. Forty-nine clients from a mental health clinic in the UAE, who received psychotherapy in both modalities, completed self-report questionnaires measuring satisfaction with therapy and working alliance. Results indicate that clients' satisfaction levels did not significantly differ between online and in-person therapy sessions. However, clients rated their perceived working alliance with their therapist for in-person therapy sessions significantly higher than for online therapy sessions. Implications for future research are discussed.

**Keywords:** Teletherapy, COVID-19, in-person therapy, therapeutic relationship, working alliance

### Biography:

**Dr. Thoraiya Kanafai**, is a Ph.D. graduate in the Department of Clinical Psychology from Walden University in the United States. After completing her education in Canada and working in many different settings, she moved to the Middle East and has worked in countries such as Bahrain, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia. She is a Canadian licensed psychotherapist and a Canadian licensed suicide interventionist. She has been featured in magazines and newspapers as well as presents different psychological topics on radio shows and TV channels. She has conducted many workshops and presented seminars on various topics pertaining to psychology and mental health. She currently has over fifteen years of experience in the field of psychology and mental health.