

## CLINICAL SUPERVISION 2

The whole purpose of therapy is to help create movement, to help the client move from a position that is clouded, confused and ineffectual, to a place that is clear and beneficial. How do we create such therapeutic movement? This is the pivotal question in therapy, because without being able to 'set up' the conditions for movement positive change remains elusive and the client is in danger of continuously going through the 'revolving door of therapy', simply moving from one place of support to another, never truly breaking his/her unhelpful patterns and cycles. Below are listed eight points we believe are critical for the therapist to understand, to assist the client in creating positive change. Creating movement (positive change) means enabling the client to change his or her perspective. If clients can only see their issues from within their own perspective, it is unlikely that the change they seek will be possible. At Reach we believe that we need to help clients to step away from a wholly personal perspective and take a 360-degree tour around their issues, in order to be in a position to make choices that are better informed.

### 1. Humour

"The shortest distance between two people is laughter". Laughter is a universal language. It is a language we all understand. Often when a client has been derailed by negative experiences, the ability to laugh has been subdued and in some cases is no longer present. Although we are dealing with the serious matter of people's lives and therefore need to be always sensitive and compassionate, the truth is that humour is a wonderful way of lightening the atmosphere and enabling clients to see their reality in a different way. Of course, humour must be appropriate so we're not talking about laughter for its own sake or to cover up an absence of knowledge or skills. We're simply saying that there are times when the best way to help a client see what needs to be seen is through humour, making light of a situation in such a way that both parties can explore the issue(s) from a number of perspectives. This works especially well with children and young people.

### 2. Say What You See

It is critical when walking through the minefield of the client's life that you 'say what you see'. Whatever methods, strategies or interventions you may think are most effective in assisting the client, the method/strategy that we believe unquestionably bears the greatest fruits is to 'say what you see'. Honesty, appropriately used, shines a piercing light on what needs attention. Clients are best able to see themselves in an honest mirror and when you say what you see you nearly always help them to see and focus on what needs to change. Saying what you see needs kindness and great tact.

### 3. Fearlessness

This relates particularly to the previous point. Too often the therapist does not say what needs to be said because of his or her own shortcomings and inadequacies. In other words, therapists can be overly concerned by how the client may feel and may even refrain from speaking truthfully out of fear of being seen to be wrong in their assessment. As therapists we are not in the room to be liked. Of course, we have to create a healthy therapeutic relationship but that has to be based on integrity and if we are too 'afraid' to say what needs to be said, then the real question is 'ought we to be in the room?'

Clients need to see themselves reflected in an untarnished mirror which will give a true image. Taking this analogy further, the therapist is the mirror in which the client sees herself. The clearer you are, the better it is for the client to see her true reflection, to work with it and amend it where necessary. If you are blocked in this regard, then it is imperative that you make the necessary adjustments.

#### **4. Analogy, Metaphor and Story Telling**

Often the best way of ensuring a client holds on to a salient point is to present a story, analogy or a metaphor that helps remind them of that key point. For example, if you were to tell a client it's really important for her to take back control of her life, she may remember this point, but that suggestion is more likely to sit both in the conscious and unconscious mind significantly longer, and in fact is more likely to remain a permanent fixture, if you were to say: 'You cannot drive a car from the back seat. If you are sitting in the back seat, you can't reach the steering wheel, the pedals, the gear lever etc. So how could you possibly control the car from there? In the same way, if you're taking a back seat in your own life, how can you possibly influence your destiny?' The metaphor of the car will reverberate in the client's consciousness long after the conversation. The power of analogy, metaphor and storytelling must not be underestimated.

#### **5. Self-Disclosure**

The greatest gift you will give to your client is the gift of yourself. Most of us in the therapeutic arena know that self-disclosure has a place as long as it is appropriate and relevant. It can often be the bridge between client and therapist, conveying an understanding and empathy that would otherwise take many years to establish. So, sharing information about yourself, when and where that suits the dialogue, is fine. However, the ultimate in self-disclosure is quietly giving the gift of yourself, through your attitudes, your temperament and your actions. It should be clear, not just through what you say but how you are, that this is a journey that you have taken and understand and are therefore qualified to help the client find the way. Clients respect nothing more than feeling you really know where they're coming from because you've been to your own personal hell and made it back!

#### **6. Diet and Nutrition**

As this handout is about helping to create therapeutic movement the inclusion of diet and nutrition may seem a strange choice. However, the most intimate relationship we have (apart from with our emotions) is with food. That which we put into our mouths affects our whole organism anywhere between seconds and hours later. The correlation between food and mood is becoming increasingly illuminated and it is indisputable that 'you are what you eat'. So, one of the ways that you can help clients change their perspective is to help them to develop a better understanding of diet and nutrition so that they can make choices that better help them on their journey (see *Persuading the Body* 1, 2 & 3). We need ninety nutrients a day for optimum health - sixty minerals, sixteen vitamins, eleven amino acids and three essential fatty acids. Without these ninety nutrients we cannot function at our best. This is why it is important to help clients understand the deep, subtle relationship that we have with food and nutrition – it will unquestionably change their lives.

## 7. Empowering Activities

Anyone who is familiar with the Reach Approach will know that we believe in client resources. It is our view that therapy often expects too much of clients who are locked in trauma, especially when in most cases we only see a client for one hour per week and somehow believe that is sufficient to meet their needs. For some, there is no doubt this is adequate, but for far too many, this falls well short. Therefore, we have produced hundreds of handouts, numerous CDs, videos/DVDs etc. and have encouraged a culture in which clients take back control of their lives via the many activities they are taught and encouraged to undertake e.g., invocation, still time, creative visualisation, positive affirmation, personal prayer, just to name a few. For us therapy is also about education, encouragement, and support, which naturally leads to empowerment.

## 8. Presence

It may seem an obvious remark to make and yet if you as a practitioner search your heart, how much effort do you actually make to be present in the room? How often do you drift in and out of awareness, losing vital bits of detail along the way? It is so easy to drift in and out of consciousness whilst in a session and in doing so lose important bits of data that may well unlock the client's view of herself and her world. To be truly present takes practice and concentration. If you take being present for granted, you're in danger of not giving it the respect it deserves and important insights are lost, keeping you in a place where you're limited in your ability to help your client(s). So, practice being present. It is arguably the most important contribution you'll ever make to your client's journey. This is an awareness that more experienced practitioners need to focus on as complacency and even arrogance may lead them to think this does not apply to them. In fact, they are much more likely to have lost this practice/skill if they have not given it the attention it needs over the years.

These eight points are not meant to be a definitive list, but they are a wonderful starting point for helping to create therapeutic movement where it is lacking. Each point can stand alone but they are almost always best executed in pairs. Next time you're working with a client and you're not sure whether you're helping them to better see themselves and their world, consider the relevance and application of these eight points.

## SUMMARY

1. **Humour** – Helps the client to step outside of an often 'locked' perspective.
2. **Say What You See** – Honesty, delivered with kindness, offers the client the 'clearest' mirror.
3. **Fearlessness** – By your being true and courageous the client finds his truth and courage.
4. **Analogy, Metaphor and Story Telling** – Enables a better grasp of critical insights.
5. **Self-Disclosure** – A true reflection of **you** helps the client to celebrate herself.
6. **Diet & Nutrition** – Food deeply affects mood, personality, and performance.
7. **Empowering Activities** – Enable the client to reclaim power, control, and self-respect.
8. **Presence** – By being fully available in the moment, 'magical' therapeutic events fill the room.