

The Role of Empathy in Shaping the Lives of Justice-Involved Men

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Welcome

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Contact

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Healthy lives, Safe communities

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Please Be Patient With Us

- ⊗ We live in troubled times
- ⊗ We am going to be very provocative
- ⊗ We are going to be highly irreverent
- ⊗ This is a webinar for professionals only
- ⊗ We come in peace and believe in human dignity
- ⊗ We mean no harm
- ⊗ Please take everything we say in the spirit in which it is intended

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Please Note

- ⊗ We are including lots of extra slides!
- ⊗ These are for your enjoyment and thought.
- ⊗ They are a bonus and not the result of poor time management.
- ⊗ If we can cover them, we will. 😊

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Let's Be Clear

- ⊗ Not everyone present is at an equal stage in their career.
- ⊗ Some people demonstrate empathy more effectively than others.
- ⊗ Nobody's perfect.
- ⊗ No webinar can make you a master.

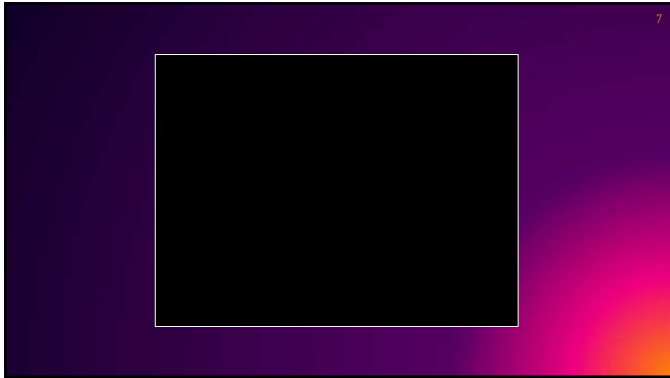
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Let's Be Clear

We do hard work



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But First, a Detour

- ⊗ We need to talk about masculinity and how it impacts empathy:
 - ⦿ In society
 - ⦿ In us
 - ⦿ In our clients




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Masculine Ideologies

- ⊗ Socially constructed ideas of what it means to be a man
- ⊗ Used to appraise men within their communities
- ⊗ Masculinity apparently is always in crisis



(Thompson & Bennet, 2017)

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Feminism and Men's Studies

- ⊗ Feminism and the study of gender
- ⊗ Masculinity as gender practice
- ⊗ Subordination of women and certain groups of men

(Thompson & Bennet, 2017)

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Masculine Ideologies

- ⊗ Organize masculinities
- ⊗ Have histories
- ⊗ Underpin practices and reproduce themselves
- ⊗ Enable and constrain choices and actions
- ⊗ Are in flux yet linger in time

(Thompson & Bennet, 2017)

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Gender Role Identity and Gender Role Strain

- ⊗ Gender role identity paradigm
 - ⊙ Internal sense of gender
- ⊗ However, gender roles are socially constructed and rooted on power differences
- ⊗ Gender role strain paradigm (or manhood impossible)

(Deau, 1984; Pleck, 1981)

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Pleck's (1981) Propositions

⊗ Gender roles:

- Defined by stereotypes and norms
- Are contradictory and inconsistent
- Are often violated
- Violation leads to social condemnation
- Violation leads to negative psychological consequences
- Violations lead to overconforming
- Violations have more severe consequences for men than women
- Certain prescribed traits are often dysfunctional (aggression, stoicism)
- Everybody experiences GRS in work and family roles
- Historical changes cause GRS

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Types of Masculine Role Strains

⊗ Discrepancy Strain

- Related to traditional/hegemonic masculinity
- High stress associated with IPV (including sexual), risky sex, STDs, and aggression (Reidy et al., 2015)

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Types of Masculine Role Strains

⊗ Dysfunction Strain

- Performing traditional masculinity has negative effects on self/others
- Violence, socially irresponsible behaviors, relational inadequacies (Brooks & Silverstein, 1995)
- Fear of intimacy, lower relational satisfaction, lower participation in child care, racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, ALEXITHYmia

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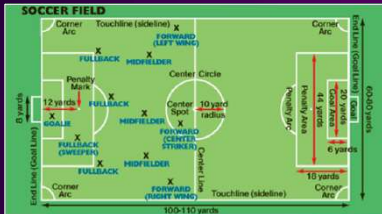
Types of Masculine Role Strains

- ⊗ Trauma Strain
 - ⊙ Socialization under traditional masculinity inherently traumatic (Levant & Pollack, 1995)
 - ⊙ Emotion socialization leads to mild-moderate alexithymia (Levant, 1998)
 - ⊙ Groups particularly affected:
 - ⊙ Men of color, athletes, veterans, survivors of child abuse, and GBT men

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Transformative Masculinity

- ⊗ Males as fully human - non-oppressive
- ⊗ There are many ways of practicing masculinity



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Defined

Responsivity definition, the quality or state of being responsive (dictionary.com)

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HOW DO PEOPLE RESPOND TO TREATMENT?

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Bonta (2007)

"3) the *responsivity principle* describes how the treatment should be provided. ...

"*Responsivity principle*. Maximize the offender's ability to learn from a rehabilitative intervention by providing cognitive behavioural treatment and tailoring the intervention to the learning style, motivation, abilities and strengths of the offender."

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrs/pblctns/rsk-nd-rspnsvty/index-en.aspx>

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Pygmalion Effect
(self-fulfilling prophecy)

Our actions (towards others) → impact → Others beliefs (about us) → challenge → Others actions (towards us) → influence → Our beliefs (about ourselves) → Our actions (towards others)

Dr. Gwen Willis: Why do we label people by the very thing we don't want them to be?

HELLO
I AM
what you label me

Cognitive Transformation Use Person-First Language

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WHAT'S MISSING?

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Historical Overview

⊗ 1895-1985

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By the Most Rigorous Standards

- ⊗ Punishing people doesn't reduce risk
- ⊗ Treatment can work
- ⊗ Treatment with community supports works better
- ⊗ Justice can take many forms

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My Concern

During the past 30 years, the majority of our progress has been technological



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Martinson, 1974

...probable duration of this
...not know.

Does nothing work?

Do all of these studies lead us irrevocably to the conclusion that nothing works, that we haven't the faintest clue about what works and reduce recidivism? And if so, what then?

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1989:

Paul Gendreau

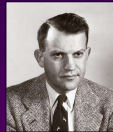
- ⊗ "Something works"
- ⊗ "What works!"



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1979: Edward S. Bordin

- ⊗ Therapeutic alliance:
 - ⊙ Agreement on relationship
 - ⊙ Agreement on goals
 - ⊙ Agreement on tasks
 - ⊙ (Norcross, 2002, would add client preferences)
 - ⊙ Over 1,100 studies have emphasized the importance of the alliance in psychotherapy since (Miller, 2011)



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Hope Theory, 1999

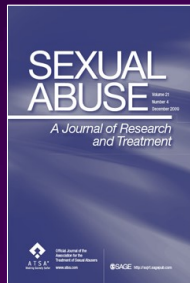
• C.R. "Rick" Snyder:

- Agency Thinking
 - Awareness that a goal is attainable
- Pathways Thinking
 - Awareness of how to do it



• *"Therapists who are burned out or otherwise fail to convey hopefulness model low agency and pathways thinking."* (in Hubble, Duncan, & Miller, 1999)

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Marshall, 2005

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Marshall, 2005

- ⊗ Warm
- ⊗ Empathic
- ⊗ Rewarding
- ⊗ Directive



Problem:
Many people think they have these qualities, but don't

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Parhar, Wormith, et al., 2008

- ⊗ Meta-analysis of 129 studies
- ⊗ *In general, mandated treatment was found to be ineffective ... particularly when the treatment was located in custodial settings, whereas voluntary treatment produced significant treatment effect sizes regardless of setting.*



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Walfish et al., 2012

- ⊙ No differences in how clinicians rated their overall skill level and effectiveness levels between disciplines.
- ⊙ On average, clinicians rated themselves at the 80th percentile
- ⊙ Less than 4% considered themselves average
- ⊙ No one rated themselves below average
- ⊙ Only 8% rated themselves lower than the 75th percentile
- ⊙ 25% rated their performance at the 90th% or higher compared to their peers



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Implication?

IS LOW EMPATHY SOMETHING THAT
UNEMPATHIC PEOPLE CAN'T SEE?

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Consider

PEOPLE WHO COME UP
WITH THEIR OWN IDEAS
ARE MORE LIKELY TO
FOLLOW THROUGH

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Conclusion:
What works?

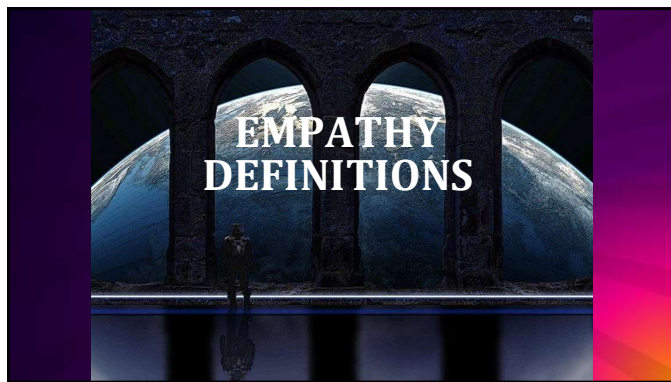
Who works?

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Risk and Need

- ⊗ Empathy has not been found to be a risk factor in meta-analyses
- ⊗ However, it is a key component of treatment needs:
 - ⊙ Attitudes towards women
 - ⊙ Relationships
 - ⊙ Understanding the needs of children
 - ⊙ All risk factors that have an interactional component

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WHAT IS EMPATHY?



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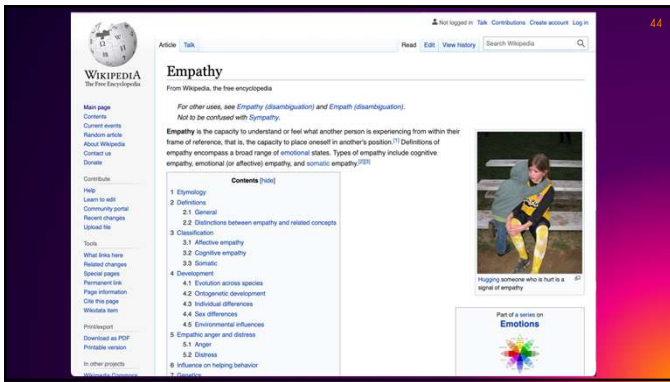
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It's Complicated



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The screenshot shows the Wikipedia article for 'Empathy'. The title is 'Empathy' and it is described as 'From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia'. A note says 'Not to be confused with Sympathy.' The main text defines empathy as 'the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within their frame of reference, that is, the capacity to place oneself in another's position.'^[1] It lists types of empathy: cognitive, emotional (or affective), and somatic.^{[2][3]} A table of contents is visible on the right side of the article.

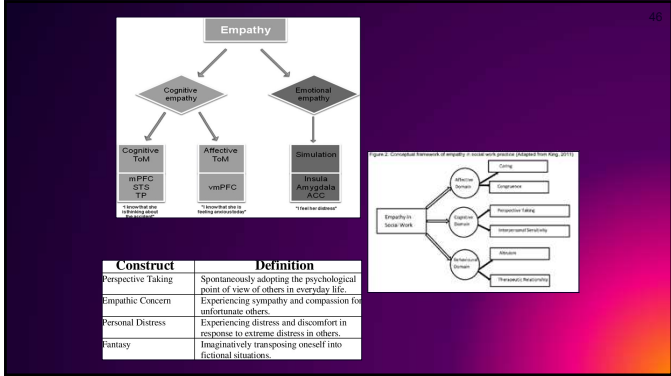
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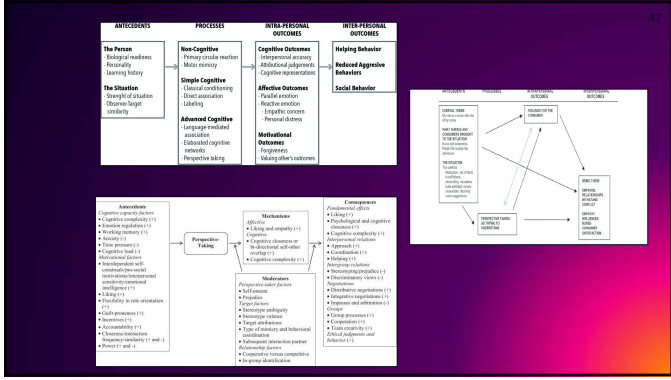
What if our clients have never experienced real empathy?



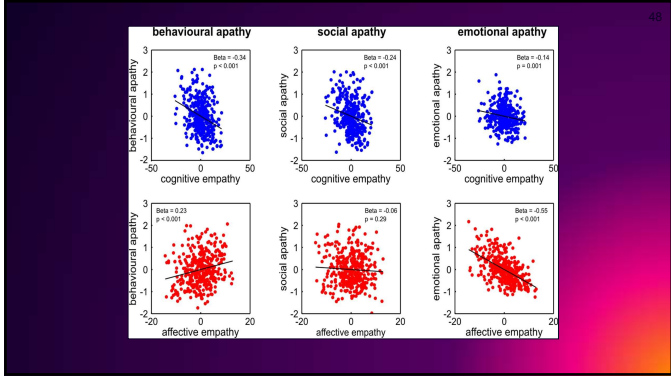
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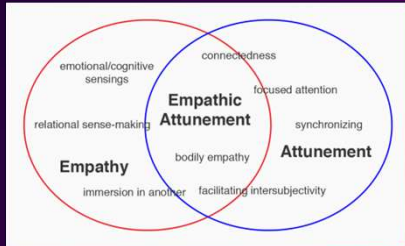
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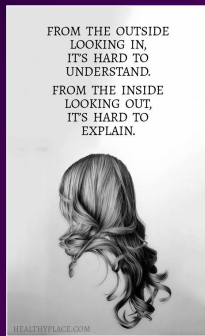


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Why So Complicated?



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Missing the Point in Group

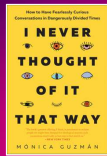
- ⊗ Client 1: *I used to hate my father. He was always beating up my mother. One night I was hiding under a table in the next room and I wished him to die. And almost immediately, he really did die. He dropped dead of a heart attack.*
- ⊗ Client 2: *That must have come as a great relief.*
- ⊗ Client 1: *Umm... No...*

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Missing the Point

- ⊗ Client: *Now that the election is over and X is taking office, I'm really concerned about the future of my family. I just want my daughter to be okay...*
- ⊗ Therapist: *And were you not concerned about the 30,000 missing emails from Y's server?*
- ⊗ Since then, entire books and articles have been written about therapist and client antipathy around diverging political views



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Andrew (2023)

- ⊗ Empathy is the only antidote to shame
 - Shame's three components:
 - *I don't trust the world, so I keep to myself*
 - *I want this, but I do that (value conflicts)*
 - *Loss of empathy for self and others*

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Andrew (2023)

- ⊗ Shame and the trauma whisper
 - ⊙ *I don't matter*
 - ⊙ *I'm not lovable*
 - ⊙ *The world is not to be trusted*

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What Gets in Our Way?

- ⊗ Our own restricted abilities?
 - ⦿ "Isn't that interesting"
- ⊗ Caste systems
 - ⦿ They've been convicted and we mostly haven't
 - ⦿ Power, race, privilege, gender
- ⊗ Our desire to fix things
 - ⦿ Grief that we can't prevent harm
 - ⦿ But we can still say "gotcha"

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Implication

**BE RESPONSIBLE FOR
THE INTERVENTION,
NOT THE OUTCOME**

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What's Your Anchor Point?


- ⊗ For Christians:
 - ⦿ They are all children of God
- ⊗ For Atheists:
 - ⦿ Demonstrating empathy comports with the best science
- ⊗ For Buddhists:
 - ⦿ Empathy is part of the eight-fold path
- ⊗ For Muslims:
 - ⦿ Empathy is central: Faith means wanting for others to have the same opportunities and lives you have for yourself

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Monty Roberts


If you act like you've only got fifteen minutes, it will take all day. Act like you've got all day, it will take fifteen minutes.



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PEMA CHÖDRÖN

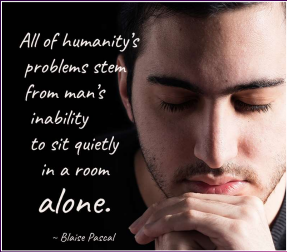


The Answer to Anger & Aggression is Patience

Patience has a lot to do with getting smart at that point and just waiting; not speaking or doing anything. On the other hand, it also means being completely and totally honest with yourself about the fact that you're furious.

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Why?



All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone.
- Blaise Pascal

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Getting Started: Specific Steps

1. Get into the mindset that you are creating new mindsets
2. 10,000 foot rule
3. Relax your body
4. Lower your shoulders
5. Slow your breathing
6. Reject all distractions
7. Spend 1st 20% of every interaction engaging
8. It's hard to argue with a relaxed person

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Micro-skills (Andrew, 2023)

- Receive information verbally and nonverbally
- Bring it to your heart
- Consider what it's like to be them or what they must be thinking
- Seek the felt sense beneath the words
- Respond with a gentle guess that starts by naming that felt sense
- Watch how that response lands —
How does it travel through their life experiences?
- Stay attuned to their reactions
- Repeat, going ever closer to accurate empathy

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Micro-skills (Andrew, 2023)

- Sitting with suffering
 - No fixing
 - No going to our story
- Not sympathy
 - all barriers / "power-over" thoughts
 - Indicate we're lost in our own material and experiences
- Consider moving to an internal monologue of "May I be of service" and "I am here for you"
- Listening is a full-body experience

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Cultivate

- ⊗ Yoga Mantra:
- ⊗ Inhale peace, exhale compassion
- ⊗ Inhale love, exhale wisdom
- ⊗ Inhale wisdom, exhale love
- ⊗ Inhale confidence, exhale connection

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Openness and Surprise



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Client Statements

- ⊗ Go Upstream
 - ⊙ "Still Small Voice"
 - ⊙ What's the statement behind the statement?
- ⊗ Summarize
- ⊗ Reflect it back
- ⊗ Check for accuracy

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Exercise, part 1

- ⊗ Take a client statement (including strong discord/sustain talk)
- ⊗ Write 3-5 possible meanings
 - ⊙ (Try to capture more than they said but not more than they meant)
- ⊗ Go "upstream": what are 2-3 deeper meanings?
 - ⊙ (small, still voice exercise)
 - ⊙ (Good Lives Model common life goals exercise)
- ⊗ Write out 3-5 reflections

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Exercise, part 2

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- ⊗ Write our 3-5 responses
 - ⊙ (These can involve reflecting the client's thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, meanings attached to statements, etc.)
- ⊗ Write out three possible ways to check for whether or not your reflections and responses were accurate
- ⊗ Ask for feedback
 - ⊙ Directly: "did I get it" "What am I missing" "Am I understanding you?" Etc.

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Telling "The Hard Truth"

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- ⊗ Feedback Sandwich
 - ⊙ Affirm => Feedback => Affirm
- ⊗ Elicit => Provide => Elicit
 - ⊙ Ask permission to give feedback, give the feedback, then elicit the client's thoughts about your feedback
- ⊗ Motivational approaches are not necessarily as "warm and fuzzy" as some might think

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The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing

- ⊗ Partnership
- ⊗ Acceptance
- ⊗ Compassion
- ⊗ Evocation



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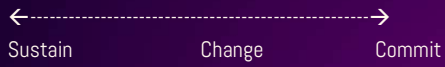
Four Processes

- ⊙ Engaging
- ⊙ Focusing
- ⊙ Evoking
- ⊙ Planning



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Talk



There is no such thing as "resistance"

There is discord and sustain talk
"I'm not gonna; you can't make me"

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Change Talk

- ⊗ Desire "I want to..."
- ⊗ Ability "I can..."
- ⊗ Reason "There are good reasons to..."
- ⊗ Need "I need to"

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Responding to Change Talk

- ⊗ *When you hear change talk, don't just stand there!*
- ⊗ Elaborate (tell me more)
- ⊗ Affirm
- ⊗ Reflect
- ⊗ Summarize

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Getting Moving: OARS

- ⊗ Open questions
- ⊗ Affirmations
- ⊗ Reflections
- ⊗ Summaries

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Reflective Listening

- Simple Reflection
 - Exact words
 - Closely related words
- Complex Reflection
 - Continuing the paragraph
 - Reflecting emotion

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CONSIDER ...

Among the tasks of the mind is to reduce the difference between the prediction and the sensation

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Application

"I went to the grocery store, and for the first time ever I knew what I wanted"



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Analysis

- ⊗ Trauma interferes with decision-making
- ⊗ Trauma interferes with prediction of sensations
- ⊗ Trauma interferes with prediction of happiness
- ⊗ Trauma interferes with the belief that predictions and decisions are possible
- ⊗ Trauma focuses on surviving threats in the moment
- ⊗ Move beyond teaching how to make lists
- ⊗ Move beyond decision-making skills

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Reflection

1. *That's fantastic. There you were, able to focus on what you wanted and not on what others wanted from you.*
2. *Hey, that's great! In that moment, you were aware of the things that mattered most to you*
3. *Good for you. Staying focused on what matters to you in a busy place like a grocery store can be a real challenge.*

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Application

"I can't tell you what I'm thinking. It's too confusing. I'm not sure you'd get it. Look, never mind."



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Translation

- "Other people have always told me what to do.
- I've had to hide to avoid being beaten
- Now you're asking me to express my thoughts freely; that's dangerous
- I've learned not to trust my thoughts and feelings
- Survival has meant focusing outside myself
- My capacities to observe my thoughts and feelings have atrophied.
- It's safer to shut down."

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Reflection

1. Describing your experience is really hard.
2. It's really hard to talk about these things when you don't know if I'll really get it.
3. There's a bigger piece of all of this that I may not be seeing.
4. If you were to really talk about these things, you'd need to know that others will understand and respect you.

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Cultural Trauma

"What's it like to be working with a white guy like me?"

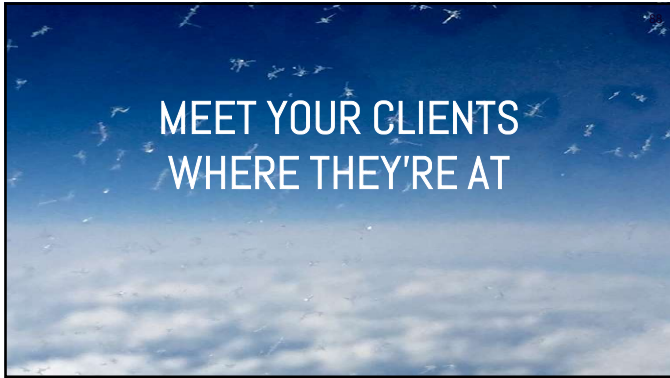
- Activation of cultural trauma can happen at the epigenetic level
- We forget how much power we have over clients

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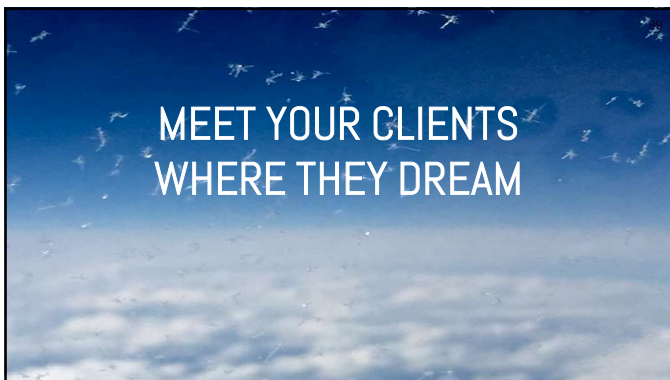
Possible Reflections

- ⊗ You might be wondering if someone like me – who comes from outside your culture – can understand you and you have every right to be suspicious about all of this.
- ⊗ With everything going on for you, including having to talk with a counselor who's not from your same culture(s), it's probably better if you don't completely trust me.
- ⊗ At some point, if you'd be willing to talk with me about our cultural differences, I would be honored to listen and respond as best I can.

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