“Client Empowerment and Preparing for Letting Go”

Presenter
Mark Sanders, LCSW, CADC
“Your job is to put yourself out of business. You want to do your work so well that you’re no longer needed. If you do that you will always be in demand.”

Joe Lassner, PHD
Empowerment

1. Separate the person from their behavior.
2. An internalized belief that people are more than their diagnosis.
3. A deeply held belief in the capacity of people to change and grow.
4. Empathy is empowerment.
Empowerment Continued

5. An equal partner in the recovery plan.

“Each patient carries his own doctor inside himself.”

Norman Cousins, Anatomy of an Illness
Empowerment Continued

6. Utilize principles of Logo Therapy.

“Purpose is empowering.”
Logo Therapy

Definitions
A form of psychotherapy than emphasis meaning/purpose.

A therapy that helps clients discover their purpose. It is derived from the Greek work “logos,” which means “purpose.”
Statue of Liberty
Developer - Viktor Frankl

“You can take everything away from a person except for one thing: the freedom to choose how they will respond to whatever horrible circumstance they find themselves in.”

Viktor Frankl - Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy
Things That Give Life Meaning
The attitude that one takes toward unavoidable suffering
Meaningful work
Love and belonging
“Doing the will of God”
Ruby Bridges
Empowerment Continued

Questions

What is your previous life suffering preparing you to do with the rest of your life?

What is the reason you survived that?
Empowerment Continued

7. A deeply held belief that many solutions are within the person seeking help.
Unfinished business and the challenge of letting go
Varieties of Counselor/Case Manager Unfinished Business

- Abandonment issues
- Co-dependence – the need to do for others what they can do for themselves
- Boundaries
Types of Family Boundaries

- **Loose** - everyone doing their own thing
- **Enmeshed** - too close
- **Healthy** - a balance between interdependence and independence, space, freedom to communicate your own hopes, dreams, wishes and aspirations
Unfinished Business Growth Model

Client
Thriver
Survivor
Victim
Empathy

Counselor
Victim
The Process of Letting Go

When is it time?

“People are ready to end therapy when they can **work** and **love**.”
“Even illnesses which are biological in nature improve when you have good interpersonal relationships.”

Irving Yalom, PhD.

“We all need 3 to 5 people in our life to have a sense of community.”

Pat Love, PhD
The Process of Letting Go

Important Points

1. The more sudden and unexpected the discharge, the more difficult.

2. The longer the relationship between the helper and the client, the more difficult the discharge.

3. The more sudden and unexpected the discharge, the more difficult.

4. It is helpful to know how clients have dealt with separations in the past.
The Process of Letting Go Continued

Questions

1. Did we discuss the process of ending in the beginning? (Informed Consent) “How will we know when it’s time for our work together to end?”

2. Is the decision to end mutual?

3. Are there sound clinical reasons to discharge?

4. Does the client have sources of support, community and activities which give life meaning?
5. Am I delaying discharge because I like the client personally?

6. Am I discharging quickly because I don’t like this client?

7. Am I thinking about discharge because this client is succeeding and many recent clients have had bad outcomes and I want to, “Quit while I’m ahead?”
8. Am I delaying discharge because I am a perfectionist?

9. Am I delaying discharge because of a physical attraction?

10. Am I delaying discharge because I need to be needed?

11. Am I delaying discharge because of abandonment issues?

12. Am I delaying discharge because I don’t know how to end?
Stages of Discharge and the Role of the Counselor

1. Denial

A. Bring it up

B. Expect and explain regression

C. If the client stops attending sessions, reach out
Stages of Discharge and the Role of the Counselor Continued

2. Anger
   A. Try not to personalize it
   B. Normalize it
3. Sadness

A. Allow open expression

B. Express feelings of your own
Stages of Discharge and the Role of the Counselor Continued

4. Release

A. Discuss client progress
B. Discuss work that’s yet to be done
C. Discuss your relationship
D. Express sincere confidence in the client’s ability to succeed