



Ending Client Relationships

The Full Circle Experience

presented by Mary Leslie, MSW RCSW

Goals of the Presentation

- Broaden understanding of impacts and potential of “good endings” for clients and for care providers
- Bring greater awareness to own experiences of grief and loss around endings, and potential impacts of these
- Provide tools for laying a strong foundation, often in the first session, for well supported endings



Ingredients of a “good ending”

- Clients feel they have been well-supported
- The ending enhances the earlier gains made
- The client feels more aware of their own contribution and wisdom from time together
- Client departs with an enhanced sense of self



Your Positive Ending Experiences

- Recall a positive ending experience that you had with a client or as a client
- What made it special for you, in 2-5 words?



Typologies of Endings/Transfers

- One session only (ER, Crisis Situations)
- Employee Assistance Programs/ Insurance Programs with set numbers of sessions
- Individually contracted with no ending set
- Transfers to another service/counsellor or SW



Unexpected Endings

- Client initiated, circumstance stated or not
- Care Provider initiated, or Agency Imposed *
- Death or illness of client or Care Provider

* Siebold, C., (2007) covers this well



The Full Circle Experience

- What is meant by holistic perspective?
- Use of metaphors to book end sessions and provide structure for the sessions
- Maintaining a focus/checking in on client's progress and strengths throughout contact
- Take nothing for granted



In the Beginning is the Ending

- Viewing the contact with client from a holistic perspective
- Each session can have a purposeful ending
- Client/provider contract that emphasizes the importance of client's role
- Assessment of styles of coping/attachment styles begins at first session
- Client's previous history with care providers



Aaron Steven Kramer

Negative therapeutic endings almost always originate in the beginning and middle phases of treatment. They do not suddenly occur as the relationship is coming to a close. These stages do not proceed in a linear progression, but are, like a spiral, inextricably connected.

Kramer, S. A., (1990) p 14



Impacts of Provider's Own Ending Histories

- Name two to five words that come to mind about endings you have experienced, personally or professionally
- Are endings easy, or challenging for you, in any, or certain circumstances?
- factoring in these impacts with client sessions



The Ending Letter

- Transferring a client to another provider
- A joint process, written or just discussed
- Closing the circle
- How we acknowledge impacts of process for us with clients and/or others



Engaging Clients in Endings

- Some endings may warrant a revisit with client or offer of follow up
- Options for 'revisiting' an ending/walking a fine line
- Follow up with transfers to new providers
- Importance for provider of debriefing with peer or supervisor when endings are less than optimal



The Use of Rituals in Endings

- Definition of a Ritual:

any formal activity that endows events with a sense of being special. Rituals symbolize continuity, stability and the significance of personal bonds while helping people accept changes. The structure of rituals provides a safe framework for practitioners and clients to express feelings.

Walsh and Harrigan (2003) p 292, 293



Coping Styles/Attachment Styles

- Attachment Styles
- Virginia Satir's Coping Stances
- Synchronicity of client's and provider's coping styles
- Importance of Self-Reflection



Attachment Styles

or Adaptive Responses

Relationship Type	Parenting Behavior
• Secure	Responsive, Consistent
• Avoidant	Rejecting, Distant
• Ambivalent	Inconsistent/Intrusive
• Disorganized	Frightening, Confusing, Fearful

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Impacts of Processing of Childhood Trauma

- Using the Adult Attachment Interview tool developed by Mary Ainsworth and colleagues

New research confirms that “the reporting of a history of trauma or loss by itself did not predict a negative outcome for the child of that adult, ...

The important feature is how those parents have come to make sense of their lives that matters most.”

reported by Daniel Siegel and Mary Hartzell (2003), *Parenting from the Inside Out*, p 147



Metaphors

“The Metaphor is probably the most fertile power possessed by Man”

Jose Ortega Y Gasset (1883-1955)

in The Dehumanizing of Art

Quoted by Virginia Satir , (1991), p 274.



Virginia Satir on Metaphors

- Metaphors operate at several different levels at the same time...to make something unfamiliar, familiar...to create new possibilities and to engage the intuitive
- To activate the whole brain and engage the whole person.

Satir, (1991), The Satir Model



Your Own Metaphor for the Helping Relationship

- Take a moment to consider a metaphor that expresses how *you* envision the helping relationship



Quote by Virginia Satir

When I am completely harmonious with myself,
it is like one light reaching out to another.

At the outset, it is not a question of “I will help you”.

It is simply a question of life reaching out to life.

All life talks to life when it is in a harmonious state.

If my ego is involved or if I need them to get well,

Then it is a different story.

Richard Simon (1989, January/February), Reaching Out to Life,
Family Therapy Networker, p 37-43.



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Questions and Answers



Thank you

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