

Self-Care 2

Therapeutic Relationships

“Good fences make good neighbors.”

-Robert Frost

Introduction

Interpersonal skills help form an important relationship between therapists and clients. This therapeutic relationship is the basis of all treatment approaches regardless of their specific aim.

Introduction

Research has found repeatedly that development of a positive alliance (i.e., therapeutic relationship) is one of the best predictors of positive outcomes in therapy.

The Therapeutic Relationship

Therapeutic relationship Relationship between therapist and client that seeks to support the therapeutic goals of the client.

The Therapeutic Relationship

Empathy Ability to understand the unique world of another.

- Empathetic listening = trying to understand the other person.
- Experience the client's world as if it were their own.
- Client perceives our empathy both verbally and nonverbally.

The Therapeutic Relationship

Acceptance Accepting the client for who he or she is.

- Physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional aspects.
- Unconditional positive regard.
- Valuing clients because their humanity warrants your care.
- Nondiscrimination with respect to race, nationality, gender, religion, or sexual preference.

The Therapeutic Relationship

Safety Freedom from danger.

- Scope of practice = safe treatment of client conditions.
- Professional boundaries = predictable and safe interactions.
- Communication = sessions based on client goals.

The Therapeutic Relationship

Trust Willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of another.

- Earned by responsible acts of both parties.
- Grows when risk taking is met with responsible behavior.
- Often results in better therapeutic outcomes for the client.
- Behave consistently in a professional manner.

The Therapeutic Relationship

Respect Consideration/thoughtfulness exhibited by words/actions.

Demonstrated by:

- Informed consent.
- Protecting client information.
- Modifying massage in response to client request.
- Maintaining professional boundaries
- Valuing client's personal space, privacy, time, and financial restrictions

The Therapeutic Relationship

Respect Consideration/thoughtfulness exhibited by words/actions.

Demonstrated by:

- Draping the client
- Acknowledging and not abusing the power differential.
- Not denigrating other therapists or methods.
- Not performing services for which we are not licensed.
- Referring clients to the appropriate health care provider.
- Show respect for the diversity of different cultures.

The Therapeutic Relationship

Power differential Imbalance of power between client and therapist.

- Client has a particular need and comes to the therapist for help.
- Therapist has knowledge, skills, and abilities in a specific area.
- Client is vulnerable = needs help, undressed, and lying down.
- Perceived therapist authority = positioned over the client.
- Vulnerability of client puts therapist in a position of power.
- Does not empower the client to say no easily to the therapist.

Boundaries

Boundary Parameters indicating a border or limit.

Characteristics of Healthy Boundaries

- Awareness: avoid mood altering substances.
- Congruency: boundaries are compatible with core values.
- Mutuality: respect for the boundaries of others.
- Protection of worth and uniqueness of self and others.
- Flexibility and Adaptability: based on different situations/people.

Types of Boundaries

Physical boundaries

- Create a safe space around us.
- Help define the who, when, where, how and under what circumstances we feel safe with touch.
- They change quickly in massage relationships.
- Depth, duration, and sensitive areas.
- Inadvertent touch, scents, and draping.
- Hugging: only clients who request one

Types of Boundaries

Intellectual boundaries

- Encompass our beliefs, thoughts, and ideas.
- Agreement with others = safety, validation, and closeness.
- Disagreement = challenged, rejected, and vulnerable.
- Posters, calendars, and art can be offensive to clients.
- Don't disregard personal beliefs or ideas of clients.

Types of Boundaries

Emotional boundaries

- “Seek not, forbid not.”
- Since clients may feel vulnerable or exposed after sharing feelings, refrain from bringing it up in subsequent sessions.
- If your client had an emotional release during a session, gain consent before working on that area again.
- Not within our scope of practice:
 - Encouraging clients to share emotional content.
 - Processing the emotions.
 - Delving for deeper held emotions.
 - Offering unsolicited insight or advice.
 - Intentionally evoking emotional responses in the client.

Types of Boundaries

Time boundaries A session is a contract with the client for our time.

- Be ready when client arrives. Music playing and table dressed.
- Begin and end the session on time.
- Focusing on the client during the session. No calls or texts.
- Have policies for:
 - Late therapist and early or late client.
 - Cancellations, no-shows, and office hours.

Types of Boundaries

Location boundaries

- Social settings are not appropriate for massage.
- Don't give your professional opinion or advice socially.
- Office space = clean, professional, and barrier-free.
- Out-calls: inform a colleague of location and time.

Types of Boundaries

Appearance boundaries

- Instills a sense of trust.
- Appropriate for your locality and workplace setting.
- Neat, clean, no scents or odors, nails trimmed, hair pulled back.

Types of Boundaries

Financial boundaries

- Fees, when and how to pay.
- Trades with other therapists.

Boundary Management

After boundaries are established, they need to be managed throughout the course of the therapeutic relationship. When our clients see us in settings outside of side of our office, we must still exhibit professionalism. Boundary violations vary widely and range from mild inconsiderateness to the more serious sexual misconduct.

Boundary Management

Learning to Say “No” Firmly restate your boundaries when clients request that you bend the rules on their behalf.

Boundary Management

Professional Distance When space is provided for clients to relax and be themselves, healing is more likely to occur.

Crossing Boundaries: Common Mistakes

- Lack of proper training and experience
- Intentionally evoking an emotional release
- Asking a client to be your friend
- Making comments about a client's appearance
- Ignoring contraindications

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