

A background network diagram consisting of numerous small, interconnected nodes and lines, creating a complex web-like structure. The nodes are represented by small circles in various shades of purple, pink, and grey, connected by thin, light-colored lines. The overall effect is a dense, interconnected network.

# ***Increasing Client Engagement in the Group Treatment Setting***

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# ***The Question....***

- To Change or Not to Change.



***“We must meet people where  
we find them, but that does  
not mean we need to leave  
them there!”***





**What is the most common number of therapy sessions clients attend seeking SUD services?**



# ***Fostering Partnership***

- Don't sign the contract...
- Put down your pen and paper in the room.
- Check our own reactions and responses to our clients.





## **Knowledge vs. Skill**

- What is the difference?
- How does this apply to our clients?



# ***When we see someone talented***

- They were born to be good at this thing.
- We like to predict people's abilities.

I AM NOT AFRAID. I WAS  
BORN TO DO THIS.

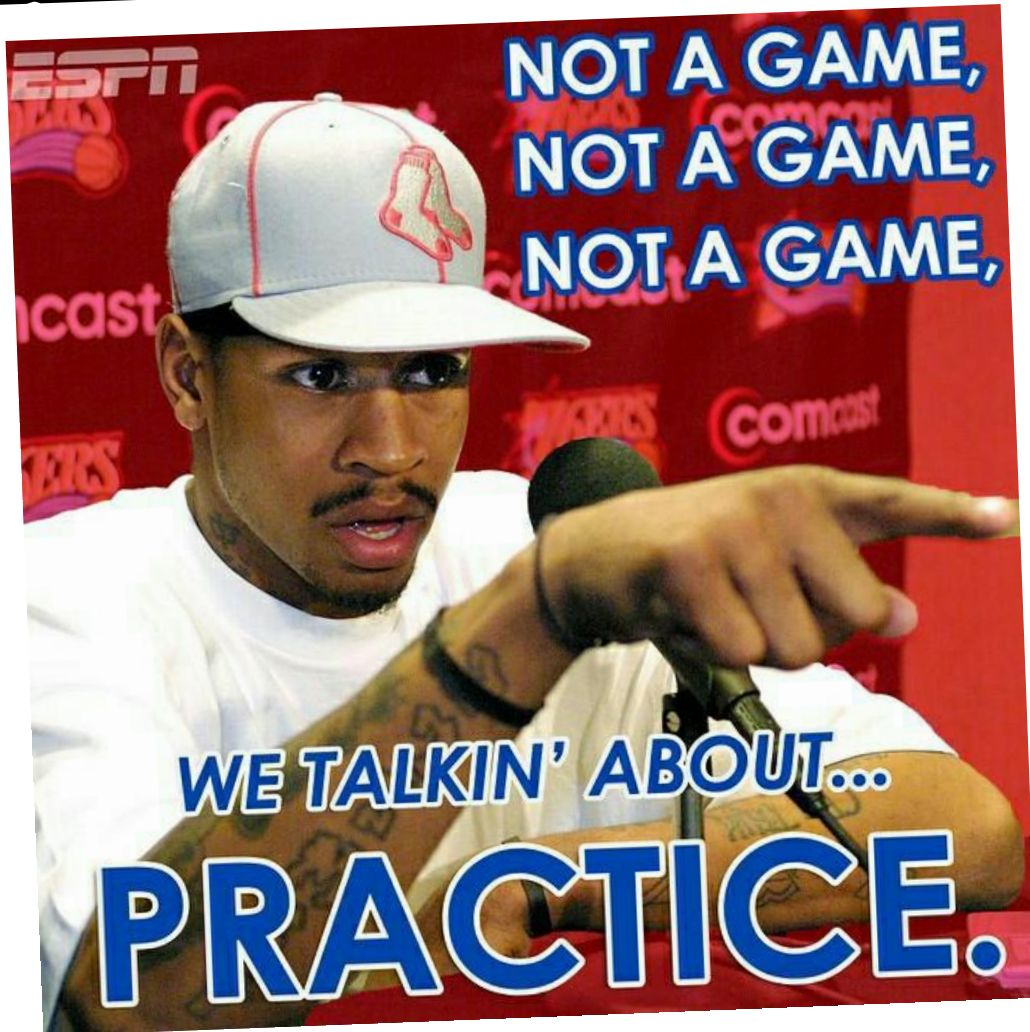




- What are they and how did you strengthen them?
- Now...Share it with a new friend please!

**Think of your own  
unique talents/gifts**





## ***Born to be Great vs. Practice***

- Want to build expertise ---  
----Practice!
- Very specific changes in  
approach.



# **Regular**

# **Practice**

- “I am going to go shoot around”
- Mindless practice pushes us further away from our goal.





## **Purposeful Practice**

- “I am going to go and shoot around until I make 10 free throws in a row”
- Specific goals
- Long term goal of what you want it to look like
- Focus- can not just go through the motions.
- Leave your comfort zone and do that over and over
- Get feedback!





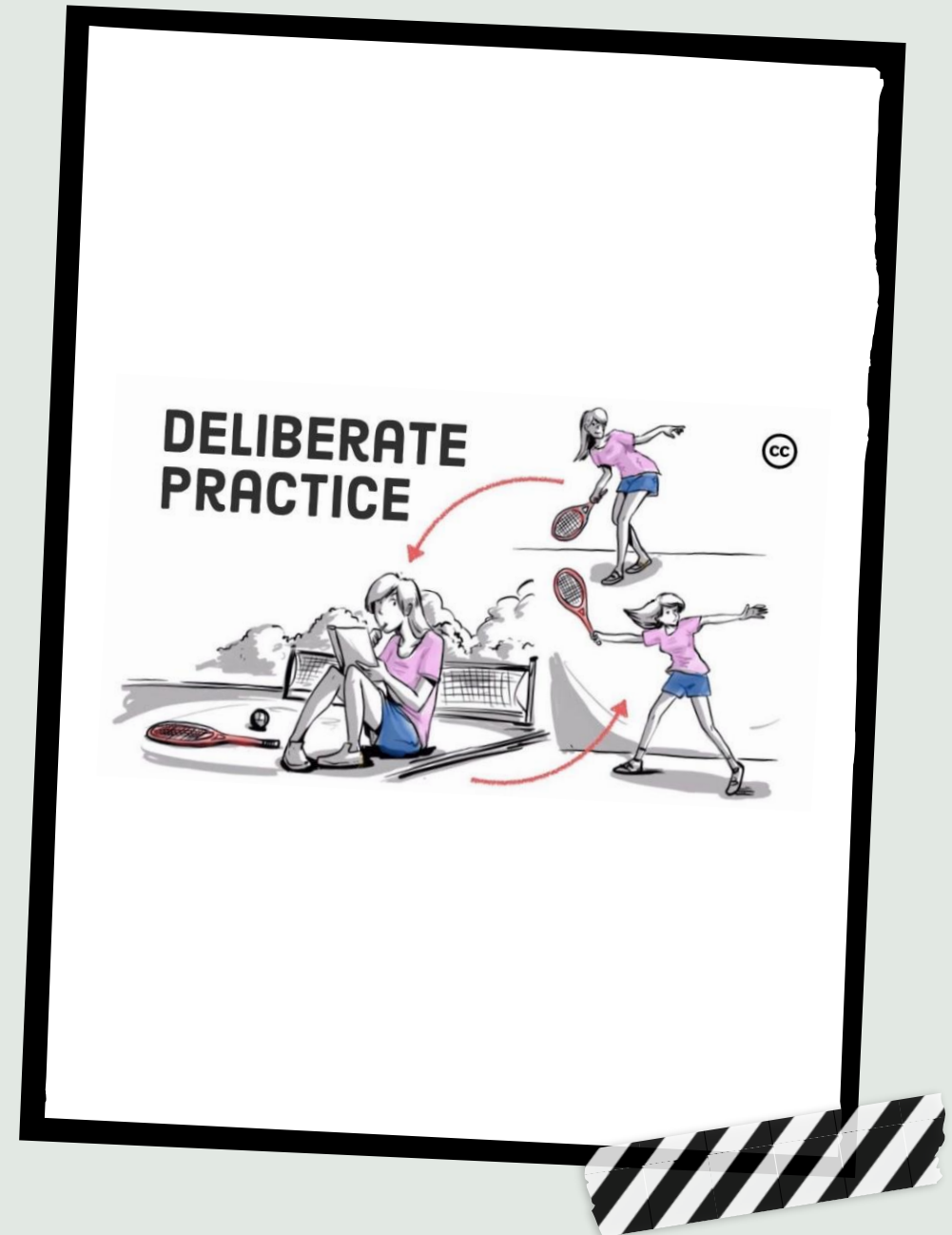
## **The Role of Focus**

- In the beginning, showing up and putting in your reps is the most important thing.
- But after a while we begin to carelessly overlook small errors and miss daily opportunities for improvement.
- This is because the natural tendency of the human brain is to transform repeated behaviors into automatic habits.
- EX: When you first learned to tie your shoes, you had to think carefully about each step. Today, after many repetitions, your brain can perform this sequence automatically. The more we repeat a task the more mindless it becomes.



# Deliberate Practice

- Purposeful practice with the knowledge and information to know exactly where weak points are and how to work on them that you are constantly outside of your comfort zone, so you are consistently growing.
- Break overall process down into components identifying weaknesses you have in areas.
- Work in ways to improve those areas.
- Process is like building blocks, continuing to work on the uncomfortable part.
  - + Present the material: beginner, intermediate, and advanced practice.





# **Deliberate Practice and Neuroplasticity: Lots of Repetition and Feedback**

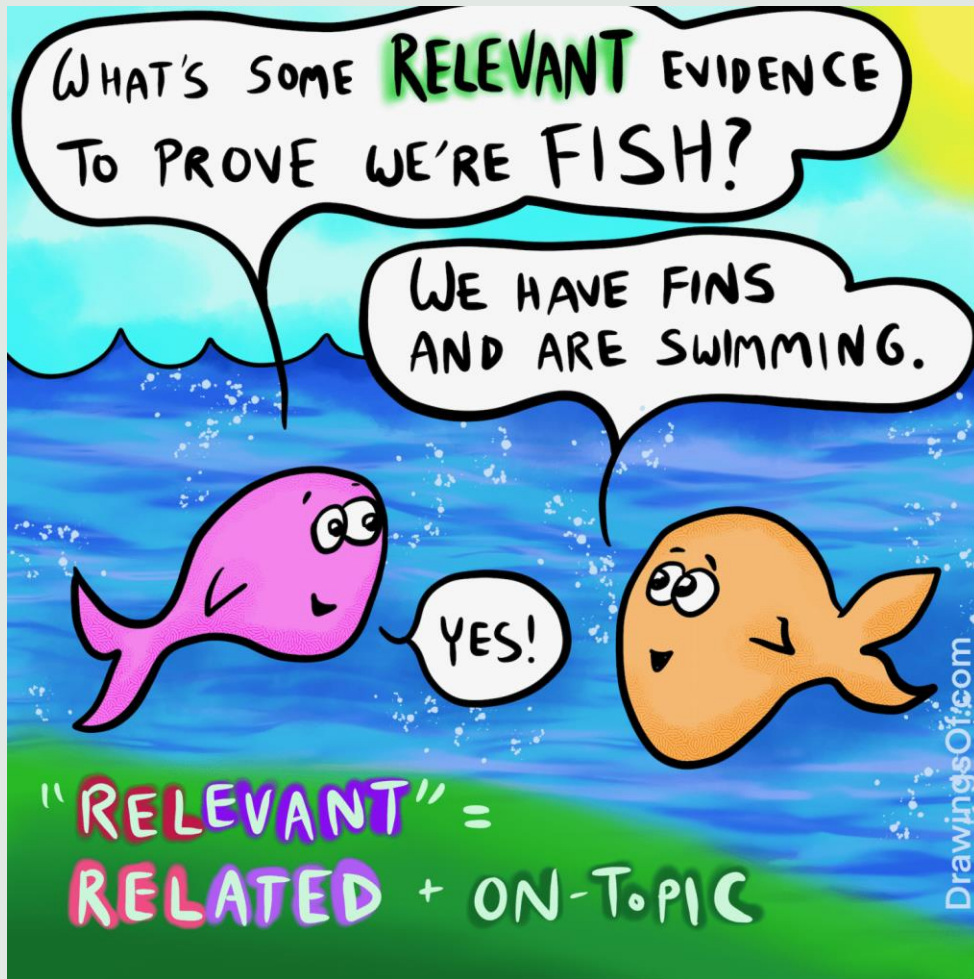
- Learning starts with attention.
  - + To pay attention it gets into our short-term memory.
- Repeat that thing it then builds neural connections.
  - + Biological Process
- Neurons in our brain get built like cobwebs when we first learn a new thing.
  - + Thin & Fragile
- More we practice we take the Cobwebs and turn them into cables.
  - + Pushing ourselves outside of our comfort zone allows us to grow.
  - + When we go on autopilot, we get stunted, growth is not occurring at that time.

# **Incorporating the Fundamentals of Learning in Group Delivery**

- Embrace the Principles of Learning:
  - Attention!
    - Turn into unconscious automated processes (Tying your shoes)
  - Include Life Experiences (Scaffolding)
  - Respect Autonomy and Self-Direction.
- Real World Problem-solving
  - Maximize repetition and practice in life like context.







## ***Is this relevant?***

- Relevance ties in significantly to the "why" behind learning
- Facilitator can help patients see the relevance by clearly connecting the topic to patients' life goals.
- Patients will engage more deeply in the session content if the material relates to their everyday life.
- Patients need to be shown concrete examples and see how topics relate to them, thus making the concepts less abstract and scary.



# ***Mindful vs***

# ***Mindless***

- Mindless activity is the enemy of deliberate practice.
- The danger of practicing the same thing again and again is that progress becomes assumed.



# FEEDBACK



## **Feedback**

- Reliable feedback is prerequisite for learning.
- EX: A lack of reliable and timely makes it difficult for clinicians to develop progressive expertise that you see in other professions.
  - + Sessions usually occur unobserved behind closed doors.
  - + Little time is devoted to observing other therapists and receiving coaching on your own skills.
  - + Working in a silo can stunt your professional growth and lead to burnout.





## **Connection to Life**

## **Experiences**

- Clients bring a wealth of past experience that can be applied and connected to topics; even if the concepts and skills you're introducing are new, past experience can still be applied.
- Clients will be more motivated to engage with the content and contribute to the conversation if they feel they have something worthwhile to contribute.
- Group discussions, debates, and mingles are all activities that allow patients to evaluate, reflect, and review their own experiences in light of whatever the session topic is.





# **Scaffolding: Building a Foundation for skill development**

- Start with essential and a foundational skill.
- Within that skill we break it down into three areas:  
Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced.
  - + EX: Relationship Challenges-Focus on building active listening skills
    - Start with reflecting back to the other person what they are saying.
      - + Keep it simple to start.
    - Then we want to focus on the tone, pace and volume of the message being delivered.
    - Focus on body language and facial expressions.





# ***The most challenging part of the group process for staff***

- How do I start the group?
- How do I get the group engaged?



***“Let’s see how this goes”***



***“I will see what  
the group wants to  
talk about today”***





# **What we do know about group...**

- Therapy and group can actually make people worse!
  - + Not a benign process
- The Ingredients to create harm (Moyers & Miller, 2013):
  - + Low in Empathy
  - + Low in Positive Regard





## ***Helper***

### ***Characteristics***

- Under what conditions would you be totally open, honest and vulnerable with someone?

# ***Setting up your own Group to Engage***

“ We were created for social connection. We are at our best when we have healthy relationships with people who genuinely care about us, respect us, and lift us up.”

- Robyn L. Gobin

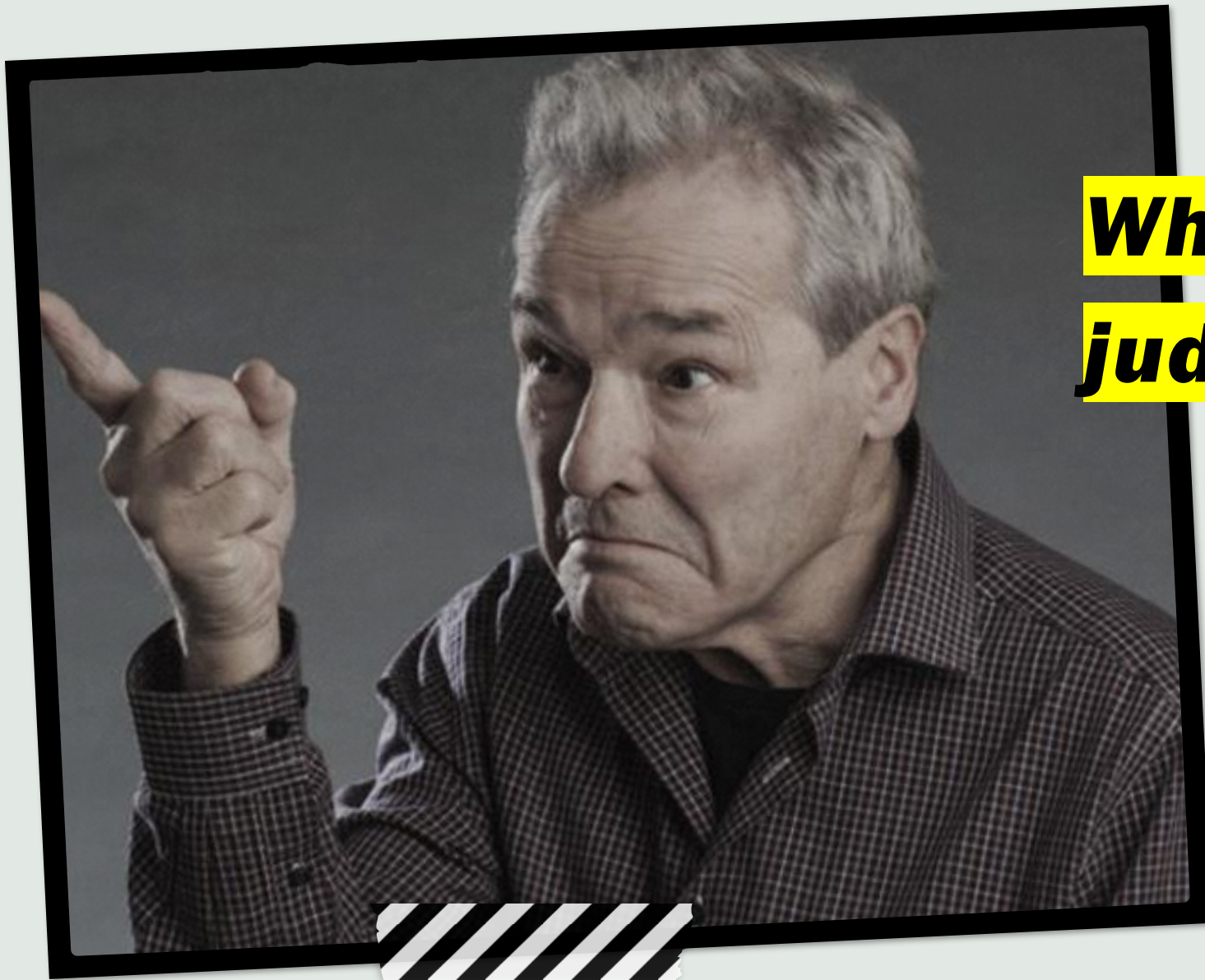


# **Create a List with your Partner**

What I currently do that builds and strengthens clients' inner motivation to make change.

What I currently do (or maybe have done in the past) that builds and strengthens clients' resistance to making change.





## **Who likes to be judged?**

- Think about a time someone criticized you for something you did *and insisted* you do it a different way.
- What was your inner reaction?
- What came out of your mouth?



## ***What our clients carry with them***

- Perhaps they've been told countless times by health care providers, friends, or family members that they need to change....
- They may anticipate the discussion and feel defensive before the subject is even raised.



# ***Defending our views of ourselves***

- Pressure to change sends one clear message: **THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOU!**
- We all have a desire to maintain a positive view of ourselves
- Shift from trying to figure out what we want into protecting ourselves.



## ***Don't try to control me!***

- We are highly motivated to feel in control of our own actions and decisions.
- When our autonomy is threatened, respond by reasserting it.
- Reactance is highly likely when:
  - Someone tries to get another to stop doing something that is important to them.
  - Pressures for a change that the other is not ready for.





***The impact***

***of***

***Reactance***

- The more reactance is experienced, the more attractive the threatened way of responding becomes.
- Think about: A time someone told you that you couldn't have something that you believe you had a right to.
  - Did you want it even more?
  - Did you become resentful?



## **Ambivalence Amplified**



- When we push for one side, we get more of the other naturally.



# Resistance



- Resistance is highly responsive to the counselor style.
- Resistance in newer editions broken into:
  - + Discord
  - + Sustain Talk
- Labeling behavior as resistance is blaming the client for what arises in the relationship.



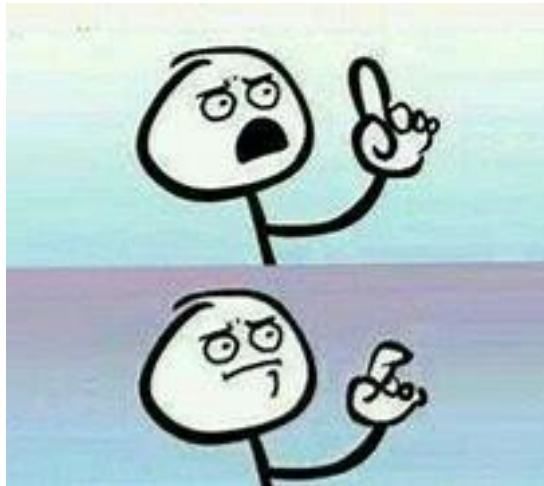
# Discord



- Something has come between the engagement
  - + Highlights this is a two-person engagement.
- About the relationship you have with the client.
  - + Communicates we are in a collaborative partnership
  - + The words I use and way I engage can either increase or decrease discord.
- The way I engage impacts the depth and potential of the relationship.
- Speaks to the role of the helper.
  - + We can be responsible for creating discord.



## **Sustain Talk**



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One side of the Ambivalence.

---

About the target behavior or change.

---

Sustain talk cannot be recognized without first identifying a focus.

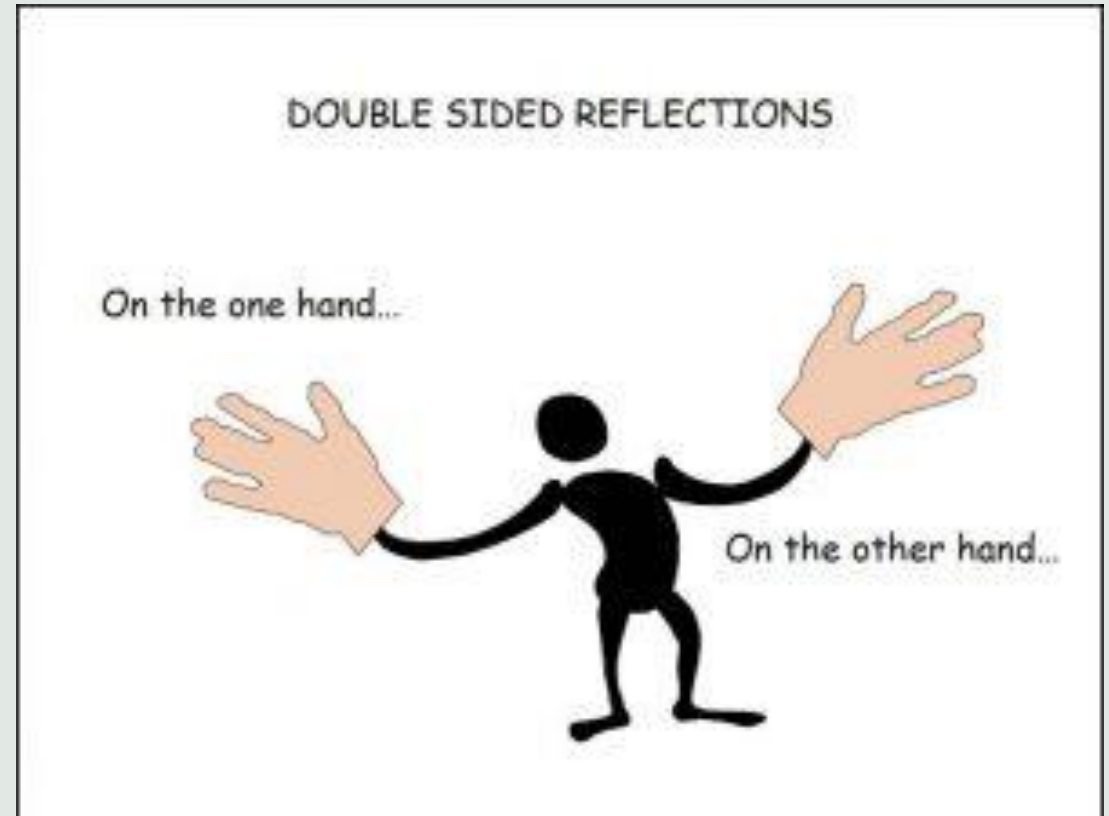
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Sustain talk is a normal part of ambivalence.



# Softening Sustain Talk

- We have to honor the sustain talk in order to soften it.
- Ways to Soften:
  - Generalize the sustain talk
  - Offer a double-sided reflection
    - Sustain Talk on the front end and Change talk on the back end.
- What you say and how you say it comes out of that moment to guide them towards the change.
  - There is no rehearsed line or script.





**Double-Sided  
Reflection**

---

Sustain talk is the first part.

---

Change talk is the end part.

---

Honoring both sides of ambivalence.

---

Communicate to the other person that you are attending to their whole story.

---

Intention is to put two things together that create discomfort.



# ***Fixing Reflex***

- Normal reaction a helper can have when met with ambivalence.
- Our own belief that a person should do a particular thing to progress or succeed.





# **“Yeah, but.....”**

01

Helper argues for change while the individual argues for the status quo.

02

End up playing out the ambivalence in an individual's head in the room.

03

Fixing Reflex strengthens the person's position.

- Think about your own response to working with youth vs adults.



# Fixing Reflex



**Molly Seidel**

@ByGollyMolly12



On my flight was talking to a guy next to me & it came up that I run. He starts telling me how I need to train high mileage & pulls up an analysis he'd made of a pro runner's training on his phone. The pro runner was me. It was my training. Didn't have the heart to tell him.

9:29 PM · Aug 27, 2021

**3,457** Reposts   **822** Quotes   **56.5K** Likes   **376** Bookmarks



376



## **Drop the Rope**



- Efforts to control other people diverts people energy from dealing with ambivalence to fighting off whoever is trying to take away our right and ability to make our own choices.
- So...what does this mean for the work that we do?



## ***Client Centered Therapy***

- “If I feel that I have to convince or persuade people to change things that they do not want to change, I am going to walk out at the end of the day feeling pretty bad about my work.”
- Not our “job” to tell them they are in denial or get them to admit that they have a problem.
- If we have to convince or persuade someone to change then we have lost the client centered path.



# ***Some Frames that are not Client***

## ***Centered***

“Come back when you are ready”  
“They don’t want it bad enough”  
“They have to hit bottom”

Communicates:

“Come back when your sicker”

Or

“Go out and keep using”

Phrases and frames that are  
counter to the MI spirit and  
Engagement



## **Client Centered Therapy**

- Starts with giving up our “expertness”
- Recognize the wisdom that the other brings into the room.
- Respects their understanding of themselves.
- No one is an expert on someone else’s life.
- We need their expertise to help facilitate change.



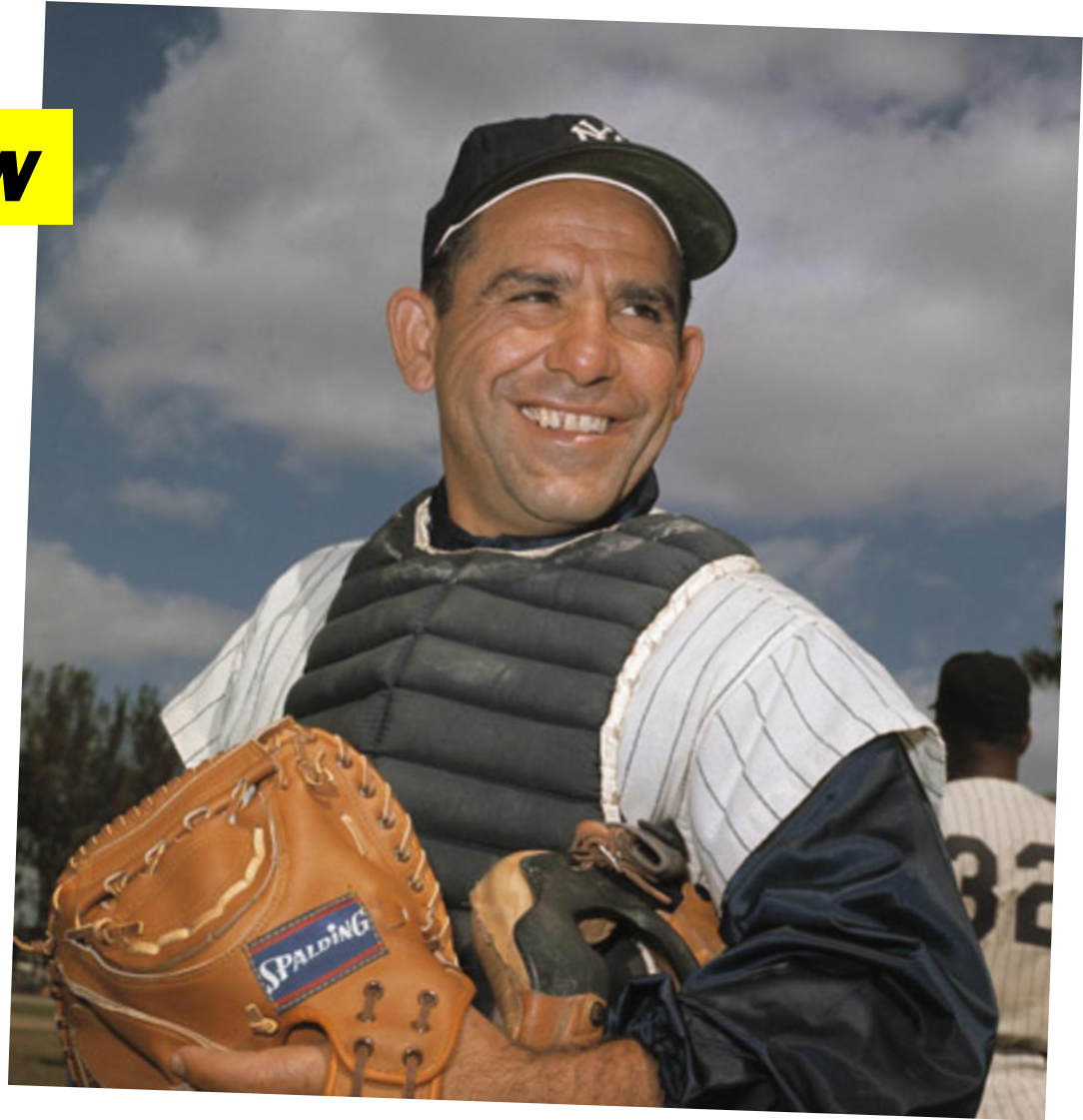
# ***Style of Motivational Interviewing***

If you went to a foreign country, what kind of Guide would you want ?



***“If you don’t know  
where you’re  
going, you might  
not get there.”***

***-Yogi Berra***





Strength Focused  
vs Deficit  
Focused

***Change our  
Goggles***



# Strengths Based

- Based on a foundation that people have innate drive to flourish.
- Clients bring strengths with them that will be supportive of them flourishing.
- We don't "install" anything into our clients, we help pull it out.



# **A Taste of Motivational Interviewing**

One speaker, one listener

Speaker: Identify a change you are considering, something you are thinking about making in your life BUT have not decided. It is something you feel two ways about.

Counselor: Do not persuade or try to fix anything. Don't offer advice. Ask the questions on the next slide, listen carefully to the responses and summarize what they have told you.



# **A Taste of Motivational Interviewing Script**

What is a change you are thinking about making in your life?

Why would you want to make this change?

If you decide to make this change, how might you go about it in order to succeed?

What are your top three reasons for wanting to make this change?

How important is it to make this change on scale of 1-10? Follow up by asking why are you a \_\_\_\_\_ rather than a lower number?



# ***A Taste of Motivational Interviewing***

- How would the conversation have felt if the person asking the questions was more directive?
  - + Told you how much you needed to change
  - + Gave you reasons for making the change
  - + Emphasized the urgency of change
  - + Told you how to change



# **The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing**

- “People have to know you care before they care how much you know”
- Heart set *and* a Mindset



# ***The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing***

Allows us to  
acknowledge what  
we are bringing  
into the room

*And*

Set it aside to  
be present for  
where our  
clients are  
coming from.



# **Motivational Interviewing**

*“MI is a particular way of talking with people about change to strengthen their own motivation and commitment.”*





# Personalizing the MI Spirit

- **Partnership**: Who surprised you by treating you as an equal, a collaborator? Who served as a guide for you?
- **Acceptance**: Who communicated deep acceptance of you just as you were?
- **Compassion**: Who was concerned for and committed to your well-being, maybe even placing it before their own?
- **Empowerment**: Who brought out the best in you? Who saw strengths or talents in you that you didn't know you had?

“When have you experienced this from someone in your own life?

Who was one person who did this for you?

What did they do to convey this to you and what did you appreciate?



# ***Turning what's wrong into what's strong***

- Believe that people have inside them the capacity and potential for change.
- Like going on a treasure hunt for the persons strengths, capacity, ability, and efforts.
- Shifting from a deficit to a strength-based perspective.



# ***The Feeling we leave others with***



- Your day is done, and you your last client is outside talking to a friend. You hear them talking about the session they just had.
  - What are they saying about you and their experience?
- Think about the words, body language, and tone used to describe what the person would be saying.



# ***So how do we get better in the field?***

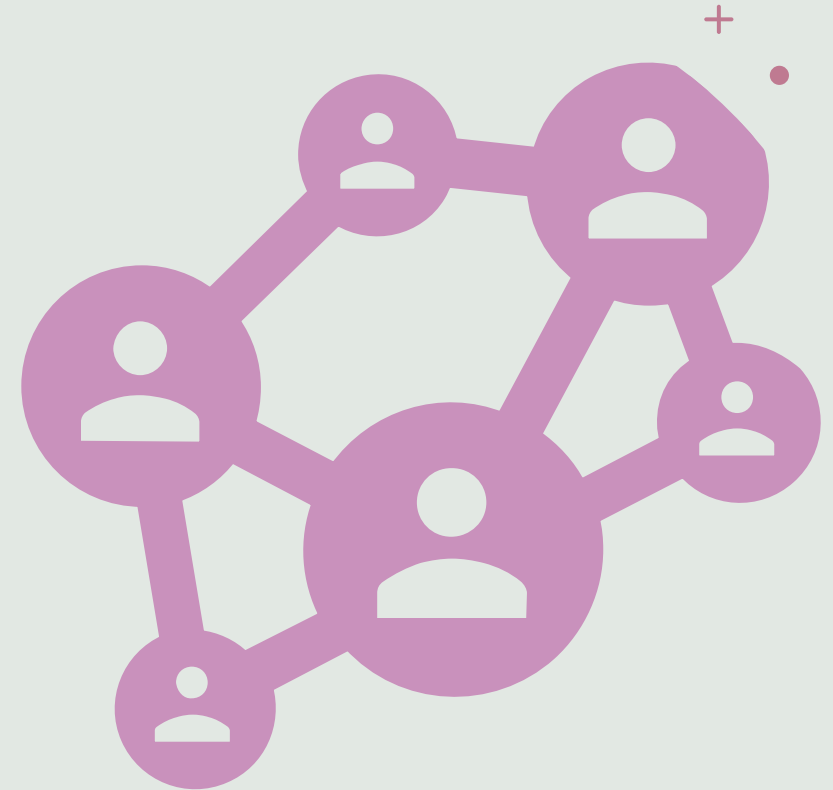
- Through deliberate practice
- Two components to deliberate practice:
  - + Intentionally engage in activities to improve specific aspects through repetition and successive refinement.
    - Repeated Practice increases comfort and proficiency.
  - + You receive reliable feedback about your performance.
    - Critical for helping shape behaviors.
- Gets us out of our own head!
- Motivational interviewing is paying very specific attention to what the client is saying and doing in the moment.



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# Creating the Atmosphere for Change

- Atmosphere of safety that helps people to look in the mirror, see an often-uncomfortable truth, and let it change them.
- We want to decrease the barriers for a person to be imperfect.
- Context and spirit behind your words is important.
- “All change is self-change, to which clinicians are sometimes privileged witnesses and facilitators.”



# ***Thank you!***

- Justin Wolfe LCPC, CADAC, CRC, PCGC, CCTP
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