Doing Recovery Perfectly and Other Absurd Ideas
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The first step is the only step a person can work perfectly.

When someone told me I live in a fantasy land I almost fell off my unicorn.

Objectives
1. Identify Stereotypes clients bring into treatment with them
2. Demonstrate a personal awareness of skills you possess in managing the therapeutic relationship
3. Explain methods to dispel “absurd” ideas clients possess
4. Discuss the impact culture has on the ideas with which clients present
There is no perfect recovery, counselor, treatment.....

It's fine to celebrate success but it is more important to heed the lessons of failure.
Bill Gates

Do we set clients up for failure?
Do we allow client’s to set themselves up for failure?
What client puts on self

- Pink Cloud
- Misconceptions about recovery
  - “If I quit using I will feel better”
  - “I have to catch up on all my bills (in the first weeks)”
  - “I have to work 3 jobs”
  - “My family will understand and everything will be OK”
  - “Life will be perfect once I quit using”
  - “I will never use again…I don’t even want to use”
  - “I have to do recovery perfectly”
  - “If I use I have failed”

Misusing recovery quotes

- “It works if you work it”
  - Addict thinking: ???
- “Fake it til you make it”
  - ???
- “One day at a time”
  - Addict interpretation: “I don’t have to plan ahead”
- “Easy does it”
  - Addict interpretation: ???
Here's some more

- “Think, think, think”
  - Addict interpretation: “But my sponsor told me I think too much”
- “This is a selfish program”
  - Addict interpretation: ???
- “Relapse is a part of recovery”
  - Addict interpretation: ???

Favorite Client Quotes

- “Going to meetings makes me want to drink.”
- “I’m not like THOSE people.”
- “I only had two drinks.”
- What are your favorites??
Belief about counselors

- “Are you in recovery”
- “You can’t help me if you haven’t been there”
- “You don’t understand”

Misconceptions - client perceptions

What are some of the misconceptions about counselors and counseling/treatment that clients bring with them?
What do we do?

- What are some ways to dispel "absurd" ideas clients possess
- Honesty about the process
- Helping them to see reality
- Using effective counseling methods and modalities

Improving Client Outcomes

Working with clients through an honest and caring therapeutic relationship.

- “I can't believe he lied to me” vs. “He is being as honest with me as he is able”
- “She came in with her own agenda” vs. “I work with her agenda”
Food for Thought

- Meeting the client where they’re at!??
- 90 in 90
- 12 steps in 12 days
- Change people, places, things (Really?)
- Childcare
- Hire as tech in 6 months
- “Have to do it my way” (counselor)
- Pink Cloud

misconceptions - counselor perceptions

- What misconceptions do counselors have about clients?
- From our own biases and beliefs
Know Yourself
Self exploration in how each counselor manages the treatment process with clients.

What we put on client
- Set client up for failure?
  - “12-Step programs are the only way”
  - Who’s treatment plan is it?
- Being the perfect counselor
- Telling too much...putting our stuff on them
Self disclosure

- Have to disclose recovery because:
  - “Relate to me better”
  - “Make them comfortable”
  - “Create trust”
- What is appropriate self disclosure?
- Self disclose without self disclosing

Protecting Client feelings

You are working with a client that has been doing well and making progress in treatment. She presents for a session and tells you she has a gift for you. She then gives you a $150 gift certificate to a local spa stating she knows you would enjoy it. When you try to turn down the offer the client becomes distraught and indicates that her feelings would be hurt if you do not accept the offer. She promises not to tell anybody you took the gift.
“I must protect her feelings”

Ethically, addictions counselors are obligated to help clients learn to live in reality, to live with disappointments as well as successes.

If we practice with competence while demonstrating honesty, openness and cultural awareness, we will aide client in making positive change in their lives.
Cultural impact on client perceptions
- The Culture of Counseling
- Family culture
- Generational
- Environmental
- Cultural communications
  - Example of Rogerian

What I need to know: Absurd ideas about culture and counseling
- “I must know everything about every culture”
- “I must be able to work with every client”
- “If he/she looks like them, they must be like them”
Below our level of awareness

“Actually, the most important part of culture...is that which is hidden and internal....the most significant part, however, is unconscious or below the...level of awareness and includes values and thought patterns.”

Michael Paige (1993), Cross Cultural Health Care Program

Cultural Influence

- Gender
- Ageism
- Race
- Socioeconomic
- Regional
- View of Authority
- Religion
- Addiction
- Family
Client Perceptions

Barbie is a petite, blonde, Caucasian, mid-income therapist working in an inner city clinic who’s client population is primarily low income, African American and Hispanic males. She is conducting an intake assessment on an African American male who is 6’4”, unemployed, living with a woman on government subsidies. He appears to be very resistant to sharing information with Barbie.

- What are some of the possible cultural dynamics that are in play during this session?

Cultural Beliefs of Clients

- People differ:
  - Seeking help
  - Experience pain
  - Label symptoms
  - Communicate symptoms
  - Beliefs about cause
  - Attitudes about therapy
  - Expectations of treatment
Dispelling fantasyland

Help clients to live in reality through living in reality ourselves.

I only hope that we don't lose sight of one thing - that it was all started by a mouse.

Walt Disney

Today you are you! That is truer than true! There is no one alive who is you-er than you!

Dr. Seuss