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Mantra for therapists

I have gathered over the years of practice of psychotherapy a list of helpful guidelines that assist me in respecting and honoring clients/patients and the sacredness of our clients' story. I wish to offer here my list of « mantra » for therapist. They address the three concepts I have explained in the conclusion chapter and illustrate them in action: reflexivity, positioning and ethics-in-practice.

MANTRA FOR THERAPISTS (from A to Z)

- A. Honor the client's pace, rhythm and timing.
- B. Do not go faster than the client.
- C. Do not assume that the client has understood or agreed check it out.
- D. Avoid intentionally or unwittingly disqualifying client's stories by premature understanding.
- E. Check with the client to see if they had an opportunity to say what they wanted to say at least one time per session.
- F. Use outcome-measure to control the quality of your work with clients. (Boss scale, Helping alliance questionnaire, Miller's scale of therapeutic alliance, 2004...)
- G. Check with the client to see if you have heard and not misunderstood what they have said.

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Mantra for therapists (2)

- H. Give to the clients a chance to correct any misunderstandings that they may have developed, and to clarify and expand on what they have told you.
- I. Avoid premature assumptions.
- J. Prefer lateral interactions to hierarchical ones.
- K. Learn the unique sense that each client makes of his or her own illness and its circumstances.
- L. Be willing to let go of early assumptions and stereotyping thoughts.
- M. Be willing to challenge yourself and be challenged.
- N. Maintain coherence with the language, vocabulary and metaphors of clients.
- O. Use cooperative and positive language, a language that invites client into a conversation with you.
- P. Remember your questions always have an intent they communicate something about you and what you think (Tomm, 1988).
- Q. Remember your questions will shape the future conversations.
- R. The questions you ask and the ones you do not ask influence the construction of the clients' answer and their narratives.

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- S. Use a cooperative and positive language that invites clients into a conversation.
- T. There are many possible versions of a patient’s illness and wellness; circumstance, context, and you, the listener, influence the telling.
- U. Try to interact and respond to when the client asks for your response. If not you create resistance.
- V. Actions speak sometimes louder than words, as the proverb says.
- W. Invite clients to tell about their inner concerns, what it is like for them.
- X. **Think of yourself (as a therapist) as a momentary guest in the life of my clients. I am not familiar with them, with their lifestyles, or their context and the history of their pain and turmoil.**