

## Essay 1 - Unit 2

Marli Cristiane da Silva

Instructor: Dr. Stephen Maret

Course: PSY444: Psychotherapy

01/29/2023

### 1 - Chapter 2

1# The phrase "the authentic therapist" means the idea of a therapist who is genuine, honest, and true to themselves in their work with clients. Studies have shown that authenticity is an essential aspect of therapy, where therapists are expected to be self-aware, transparent, and consistent in their practice. To achieve authenticity, therapists must possess certain personal characteristics. For example, self-awareness allows therapists to understand their thoughts, feelings, and tendencies, which in turn helps them to connect better with their clients. In the same way, self-acceptance is essential as it enables therapists to be comfortable and confident in their identity rather than trying to fit into a specific facade. It can also give the therapist the opportunity to be open to change. Honesty is another key aspect that allows therapists to be transparent and genuine with their clients, thus building trust and fostering a positive therapeutic relationship. Authentic therapists can be open and vulnerable with their clients, which creates a deeper level of trust and understanding. This allows clients to feel safe and secure in the therapeutic space, which is necessary for them to explore their secret thoughts and emotions. Authentic therapists

also have a good understanding of their limitations and preconceptions. They can recognize when they might be affecting their ability to provide the best possible care for their clients. Moreover, authenticity also includes being non-judgmental and respectful of the client's beliefs and values and not imposing their own on the client. An authentic therapist can understand and accept the client's perspective, even if it differs from theirs.

Authenticity is a fundamental aspect of therapy and is essential for therapists to work with clients effectively. An authentic therapist can create a safe and comfortable space for the client, understand and connect with them, and provide the best possible care for their clients.

2# - Some theories, such as the person-centered approach, emphasize that therapist self-disclosure is a vital component of the therapeutic process as it can help to establish trust and build a therapeutic relationship with the client. According to Bray (2001), when used sparingly, professionally, and suitably, counselor self-disclosure can create trust, nurture compassion and support the therapeutic alliance between counselor and client. However, it is also essential for therapists to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate forms of self-disclosure.

In summary, appropriate therapist self-disclosure should meet the following criteria:

- It is relevant to the client's concerns and the therapeutic process.
- It is timed appropriately and does not interrupt the client's strategy.
- It is restricted in content and does not reveal excessive personal information.
- It is used to improve the client's self-understanding.
- It is congruent with the therapeutic relationship.

Inappropriate therapist self-disclosure, on the other hand, may include the following:

- Revealing personal information that is not relevant to the therapeutic process.

- Interrupting the client's process with excessive self-disclosure.
- Disclosing too much personal information that may compromise the therapeutic relationship.
- Using self-disclosure as a way to distract from the client's concerns.

It is essential to mention that the standards for appropriate therapist self-disclosure may vary depending on the theoretical orientation and the specific context of the therapy.

References:

1 -Bray, B. (2022, July 15). *Counselor self-disclosure: Encouragement or impediment to client growth?* Counseling Today. Retrieved January 29, 2023, from <https://ct.counseling.org/2019/01/counselor-self-disclosure-encouragement-or-impediment-to-client-growth/>

3# - There is a constant debate in the field of therapy concerning whether therapists should be or not be instructed to experience their treatment before they become practitioners. In my opinion, therapists should undergo personal therapy before becoming practitioners.

My argument for this position is that personal therapy can help therapists better understand and work through their own emotional issues, improving their ability to empathize and connect with their clients. My own experience supports this; after undergoing personal therapy, I could see a greater capacity for self-awareness, insight, and emotional regulation by learning with my therapist.

Another argument is that personal therapy can help therapists identify and work through any countertransference issues that may arise during the therapeutic process, which refers to the

therapist's emotional reactions to the client and can interfere with the therapeutic relationship and treatment outcome if not addressed. Personal therapy allows the therapist to become aware of these reactions and manage them healthily.

Moreover, personal therapy can also help therapists maintain their emotional well-being and prevent burnout, which could negatively impact the therapeutic relationship and treatment outcome.

For those reasons, personal therapy can provide therapists with the necessary tools to become more effective practitioners, ultimately benefiting both the therapist and the client.

12# - Humor has two faces: it can be used as a good or a lousy tool in therapy.

In a good way, humor can have a wide range of therapeutic values in therapy. Developing a sense of humor can help reduce stress, anxiety, and tension and promote well-being. Humor can also help to improve communication and build an affinity between therapist and client. Laughing together can create a sense of connection and bonding, making it easier for clients to open up and share their thoughts and feelings.

Humor can also be used as a coping mechanism for dealing with difficult situations. It can shift a client's perspective and provide a new way of looking at things. Humor can also be used to challenge negative thoughts and beliefs and help the client to see things in a more positive light. Humor can also be a therapeutic tool for exploring complex or sensitive topics. For example, a therapist might use humor to explore a client's fears or insecurities in a way that is less frightening and more approachable.

However, humor should be used with caution and sensitivity. Humor should never be used to ridicule or criticize the client or their concerns. It is also significant to be conscious that humor

can be culturally and personally sensitive, and what one person finds comic, another individual may not. Therefore, it is essential to consider the client's cultural background, personal beliefs and values, and current situation before using humor in therapy.

I have a more sensitive response to a comic situation, as I come from a family where humor was a very restrictive option. It was sometimes interpreted with disrespect and followed by punishment. So, as a therapist, I need to work on this point to achieve a better understanding of humor with my clients.

In my opinion, having a sense of humor can also have therapeutic benefits for clients and therapists. However, using it appropriately, sensitively, and with the client's best interest in mind is important.

## 2 – Chapter 3

19# Meeting psychological needs through one's work as a counselor can be a complex and controversial issue. On one hand, counselors are human beings with their own psychological needs, just like anyone else. It is natural for us to seek fulfillment and satisfaction in our work. On the other hand, counselors are also responsible for providing a safe and supportive environment for clients and maintaining professional limits.

The American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics states that counselors must avoid dual relationships that could damage their professional judgment or risk exploitation or harm to the client. A dual relationship is defined as "any relationship that could impair the counselor's objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing counseling duties." A counselor should not use the therapeutic relationship to meet their needs, whether emotional, financial, or sexual.

Furthermore, counselors should be aware of their own tendencies and potential countertransference, which can surge by meeting psychological needs through work.

While it is natural for counselors to seek pride and satisfaction in their work, they must maintain professional limits and avoid double relationships that could impair their professional assessment or risk exploitation or injury to the client. This can be achieved by continuously self-reflecting and seeking necessary supervision and guidance.

#### References:

American Counseling Association. (n.d.). ACA Code of Ethics. Retrieved from <https://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics>

21# – When faced with an ethical dilemma in therapy, I will take the following steps in the way to make a better and ethical decision:

1. Consult ethical codes: Review the ethical codes of your profession and relevant laws to determine what is required or prohibited in the situation.
2. I will analyze my beliefs and own concepts about the dilemma.
3. Seek supervision: Consult with a supervisor or colleague to gain additional perspectives on the ethical dilemma and explore potential options.
4. Consider the potential consequences: Evaluate the potential consequences of each option, including the impact on the client, other concerned parties, and my ethical obligations.
5. Prioritize client well-being: Put the client's well-being first and consider what is in their best interest.

6. Obtain informed consent: If the ethical dilemma involves disclosing confidential information, ensure that the client is fully informed and has given informed consent.
7. Document the decision: Document the ethical dilemma and the steps taken in making the decision, including any consultations, to ensure responsibility and transparency.

Making ethical decisions in therapy requires careful consideration of ethical codes, seeking information from others, evaluating potential consequences, prioritizing client well-being, obtaining informed consent, and documenting the decision.

23#- As a therapist, I will employ some guidelines to determine when and how to make a referral a client to another counselor/therapist, being them:

1. Client needs: After considering the client's specific needs, such as their presenting problems, treatment goals, and cultural background, I will determine if another counselor may be better equipped to meet their needs.
2. Competence: Assess my competence and determine if I lack the necessary skills, knowledge, or experience to effectively address the client's needs.
3. Dual relationships: Avoid dual relationships with clients, such as personal relationships, that may compromise the therapeutic relationship, and refer the client to another counselor if necessary.
4. Conflicts of interest: Be aware of potential conflicts of interest and refer the client to another counselor if necessary.
5. Client autonomy: Respect the client's autonomy and allow them to choose the counselor they feel most comfortable working with.

6. Emergencies: Refer clients in emergencies, such as a crisis or risk of harm, to appropriate resources for immediate assistance.
7. Legal obligations: Follow legal and ethical obligations, such as reporting abuse or mandated reporting requirements, and refer clients to appropriate resources as necessary.

Under these conditions, I think it may be appropriate to refer a client or potential client to another counselor: if their needs exceed my competence, if a dual relationship exists, if there is a conflict of interest, if the client requests a referral, if there is an emergency, or if there are legal obligations that require referral. As a therapist, I should prioritize the client's well-being and ensure a respectful and supportive referral process.

29# - In professional counseling, ethical practice is of the utmost importance key. Counselors should follow several essential guidelines to ensure that they provide the best possible care for their clients while maintaining professional boundaries. Some of the most critical guidelines include, in my opinion, and accord with the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics:

1. Maintaining confidentiality: Counselors must ensure that client information is kept confidential and only shared with others on a need-to-know basis.
2. Maintaining professional boundaries: Counselors should avoid dual connections that could harm their proficient review or risk exploitation or harm to the client.
3. Obtaining informed consent: Before beginning therapy, counselors must explain the nature of the therapy, the expected outcome, and the risks involved to the client and obtain their informed consent.

4. Awareness of cultural diversity: Counselors should be conscious of and susceptible to cultural distinctions, and the effect culture can have on the therapeutic relationship.
5. Awareness of countertransference: Counselors should know their tendencies and potential countertransference and work to manage them healthily.
6. Continuously self-reflecting and seeking supervision: Counselors should continuously reflect on their behavior, thoughts, and emotions and seek supervision and guidance if necessary.
7. Accepting the codes of ethics of their profession: Counselors should accept the codes of ethics of their profession and follow the guidelines set by the regulatory bodies.

By following these guidelines, counselors can provide the best possible care for their clients while maintaining professional boundaries.