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Essay unit 2

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The authentic therapist is the person that is not afraid to be who he/she is. The authentic therapist is comfortable in their own skin. They know their limitations and biases and are constantly evolving. Such a therapist is concerned with the quality of the relationship with the client more than with the progress or lack of in the treatment. The authentic therapist has a self care routine and understands that he cannot give what he does not possess. He is open and shows his true self without trying, simply because he is. I guess one could say that "he talks the talk and walks the walk". The characteristics of importance to me in an authentic therapist are constant self assessment, a deep understanding of his values but an equal respect for others values, the capacity to "sit with the client in the dark"(Brene Brown), to endure silence and appreciate its need.They have a sense of humor but are honest and sincere. They have the strength to face his own limitations and to seek counseling.

I truly believe in the benefits of therapists undergoing their own personal therapy. We read about understanding how the clients feel, but I would go further and say that therapy has allowed me to understand that what is clear to an outsider many times we cannot see it in ourselves. Working with their own therapists can help therapists understand triggers, deal with stress, to face biases and to work through their own issues that may come to the surface when working with a client that is facing a similar situation. Personal therapy also allows the therapist to understand the importance of the client-therapist relationship and to observe a seasoned therapist at work.

The success of the therapeutic process can be attributed mainly to the quality of the relationship between client and therapist. A client may be willing to vomit all the pains and the turbulence of his life, but it is only with someone they trust that they will be willing to face the ugliness or the unknown of pain. In order to be vulnerable and open with the therapist, the client needs to feel safe, comfortable and unjudged. The benefits of such a relationship allow the client and the therapist to be themselves. To face fear and pain, to deal with loss and fear. In a good relationship, clients and therapists are intune and capable of establishing realistic goals for the treatment and don't have unrealistic expectations of each other. In such relationship boundaries are healthy reminders of how far one can go, instead of harsh barriers of growth.

When I was seeking counseling, I didn't know what kind of professional I was looking for. But I realized really soon that it was not the kind of therapist that agreed with everything I said and was always empathizing with me. Not that I didn't care for empathy, but what I really wanted was growth, not someone tapping on my shoulder saying : "it must be really hard for you!"

Today I know exactly the kind of therapist that I want! I want someone that can see my pain and point me in the right direction. Someone that doesn't necessarily agree with me in everything but is sensitive enough to know what to say and how to say it. Someone that can read in between the lines and can endure my endless questions. A therapist that is not uncomfortable with my displays of emotions or lack of. The truth is I had to learn a lot about myself before I was able to understand what kind of therapist I was looking for.

I do believe that in many cases the therapist needs to take into consideration the social and environmental factors that are contributing to the client's psychological problems. Many times the pressure that society norms have on a person or community can make it very difficult for a client to deal with their issues. It may be a grieving mother that lost her baby at 36 weeks of pregnancy; her pain and sorrow may not be fully expressed or people may not understand why she just can't get over it! Very feel times family takes into consideration the ramifications of such loss to the other family members as well. The client may be a

teenager struggling to find his/hers sexual identity and because of societal pressures or environmental pressures cannot feel comfortable with his/her choice. Every case has to be dealt with in its uniqueness and assessment needs to be done in a cover all, as much as possible basis. By that I mean taking social and environmental factors into consideration when it is necessary.

The first intake sessions should cover consent forms and the termination policy. I would use termination when a client is not willing to do any work or to take a leading role on his treatment. Termination may be necessary if the nature of the client-patient relationship has been compromised or harm has been established or can become real. In instances where the client is not getting any benefit from the treatment and the therapist has exhausted all avenues of care. I would not terminate a relationship based on cultural differences or moral values because the therapist needs to aim to become neutral and focus on the client's needs.

When a client engages in self-destructive behaviors, as in an adolescent using hard drugs, the consent and disclosures policies were informed in the beginning of the treatment and I would reinforce them. I would try to talk to the client about the harmful behavior and my role in it. As a therapist the client's wellbeing may result in disclosing necessary information to parents or guardians. While privacy and confidentiality are a must have and an ethical obligation, when it comes to minors it has its limitations.

Even if I am opposed to involuntary counseling I still have a duty to help all clients that enter through my doors. One way of starting to build a relationship with the court mandated client may just very well be by talking about such a mandate. How it makes him feel, what are his thoughts about it? What would he rather be doing with his time? Why does he feel like that? Where did he get his views about counseling? What are the views? As counselors we need to understand that difficult clients are clients and that they deserve the best care possible and present a challenge not the impossible.

