

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS & INTERACTIONS GENERATE AND MOTIVATE CHANGE: INSIGHTS FROM A GRADUATE WHO IS NOW A TREATMENT COURT COORDINATOR

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HELPING ACHIEVE RECOVERY TOGETHER, h.a.r.t.



WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND YOUR PARTICIPANT AND THEIR EXPERIENCES

- Character 1 →

- Lost wife to breast cancer
- Received love and support from family/friends/community
- “It is terrible that this happened - I am so sorry for your loss”
- Eventually processed grief and went on to live a fulfilling life

- Character 2 →

- Lost wife to heroin overdose
- Received scorn, blame and disinterest from family/friends/community
- “She was a druggie – she did this to herself”
- Processed grief by intentionally overdosing himself

WHERE IS YOUR PARTICIPANT IN THE CHANGE PROCESS AND WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Our participants don't come to us of their own accord – they aren't out in the community, voluntarily seeking treatment
- They are referred to us because they picked up a criminal charge
- Many participants may feel “forced” in the beginning
- This doesn't mean they aren't ready to make a change – but it is important to remember that many of them aren't
- Identifying their stage of change helps to establish an effective plan for motivating a behavior change
 - How do they see the problem?
 - What protective factors exist in their lives – what can be used to encourage motivation?

STAGES OF CHANGE - PRECONTEMPLATION

- No plans for change within the foreseeable future, defined as the next 6 months
 - A person in the precontemplation stages often sees no need to change the problem behavior
 - Unaware that their behavior of problematic
 - Blame is often placed outside of the problem: "if my drinking bothers you so much then don't be around me"
 - Place an emphasis on the cons of changing; fails to see the benefits
 - Internal process

STAGES OF CHANGE - CONTEMPLATION

- Starts to plan for change in the foreseeable future, defined as the next six months
 - A person in the contemplation stage is beginning to develop discrepancy – they begin to see that their behavior is problematic
 - In this stage, individuals start to evaluate the pros and cons of making a change in a more thoughtful manner
 - Even though thoughts of change are forming, participants may still feel ambivalence
 - Internal process

STAGES OF CHANGE - PREPARATION

- Plans for change become concrete, occurring in the next 30 days
 - A person in preparation begins to take small steps towards changing a harmful behavior
 - There is a belief that a more positive lifestyle can be achieved
 - Internal & external process

STAGES OF CHANGE - ACTION

- Plans for a behavior change are visible and measurable
 - A person in the action stage has recently changed their behavior in the last 6 months
 - They have concrete plans to continue developing skills to sustain their recent change
 - Internal & external process

STAGES OF CHANGE - MAINTENANCE

- Behavior change is sustained for 6 months or more
 - A person in the maintenance stage intends to maintain their change long-term
 - They do work such as aftercare and relapse prevention in order to avoid reverting to an earlier stage
 - In this stage, a person has internalized concepts learned in treatment and incorporates them into their daily lives

STAGES OF CHANGE - RELAPSE

- We have all heard “relapse is a part of recovery but it isn’t a requirement”
- Try changing this to “relapse ***may*** be a part of recovery but it isn’t a requirement”
- If your participant experiences a lapse, it is important not to shame them for the re-emergence of a past behavior
- Use the lapse to identify any gaps that may have existed in their treatment plan
 - Establish what led to the lapse
 - Identify triggers and reinforce coping skills
 - Acknowledge how difficult it may have been to admit to the lapse and offer affirmation of their ability to move forward

WHERE IS YOUR PARTICIPANT NOW? 10 CHANGE PROCESSES TO MAKE AND MAINTAIN CHANGE

- Consciousness raising
- Dramatic relief
- Self-reevaluation
- Environmental reevaluation
- Social liberation
- Self-liberation
- Helping relationships
- Counter-conditioning
- Reinforcement management
- Stimulus control

HOW TO INFLUENCE THE CHANGE PROCESS

Meet your participant “where they are”



RADICAL DOUBT

“I think therefore I am” Rene Descartes

Perception is reality

Our thoughts influence and give life to our beliefs, both rational and irrational

Thoughts and beliefs influence our behaviors, which result in certain outcomes that can in turn reinforce our thoughts and beliefs



LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT: LABELING THEORY

“I THINK THEREFORE I AM”

- Many participants already think poorly of themselves – they don’t need us to think poorly of them as well
- Negative behavior may stem from many sources but once an individual is labeled as “criminal”, stigma from self and others may serve to reinforce deviant behaviors associated with crime
- Criminal behavior may become stable and chronic
- Lemert (1976) deviant behavior can become “means of defense, attack or adaptation”
- Being labeled by others as criminal offender may initiate processes that reinforce and stabilize further criminal behaviors

STICKS AND STONES: PUBLISHED IN THE CHRISTIAN RECORDER IN MARCH OF 1862

- “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me”
- Who really believes this is true?
- Broken bones eventually heal – sure, they may ache from time to time when the weather changes, or if you recently did physical labor but on a daily basis, most people do not think of their past breaks
- Hurtful words can impact us on a daily basis, in ways we may not even realize



USING THE MAGIC RATIO TO CREATE A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

- Initially researched by relationship expert John Gottman, this ratio is important to the healthy functioning of any partnership, including the therapeutic partnership
- It takes 5 positive interactions/remarks to offset 1 negative interaction/remark

WHY EMPATHY?

SOCIAL WORK DICTIONARY, DEFINES EMPATHY AS "THE ACT OF PERCEIVING, UNDERSTANDING, EXPERIENCING, AND RESPONDING TO THE EMOTIONAL STATE AND IDEAS OF ANOTHER PERSON"

EMOTIONAL EMPATHY

- Feeling what another person feels
- Knowing what another person is feeling
- Having the intention to respond compassionately to another person's distress

COGNITIVE EMPATHY

- Using an affective response to another person's feelings
- Cognitive capacity to take on another person's perspective
- Regulating – origin of feeling from self / origin of feeling from another

COMBATTING STIGMA – EMPATHY & ATTENDING SKILLS

VERBAL ATTENDING SKILLS

- Silence
- Verbal tracking – summarize and reflect
- Clarify when needed

NON-VERBAL ATTENDING SKILLS

- Eye contact
- Body language
- Vocal qualities – tone and intonation
- Mirroring

ASPECTS FROM NARRATIVE THERAPY

- While we are not using narrative therapy as an intervention, there are concepts found in narrative therapy which can help establish a positive relationship with your participant
- **1. Be respectful** - participants are individuals who are not defective or deficient; instead, they are brave for trying something new, even though it might be scary and unknown
- **2. Don't blame** – your participant isn't the problem; instead, they engage in problematic thought-patterns and behaviors which result from a lack of appropriate coping skills
- **3. The participant is the expert** – only the participant is the expert of their own life; they are the ones who will ultimately make the change

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

As a kid growing up



PERSONAL TESTIMONY

The accident



PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Addiction begins...



PERSONAL TESTIMONY

What led my participation in a drug treatment court?



PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Why my time in Recovery Court was impactful



PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Using skills learned in RC to propel me forward



PERSONAL TESTIMONY

How my personal experiences as a drug treatment court participant help me do 'the work' now



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