

Beyond Talk: Experiential Therapy Techniques to Enhance Your Practice

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Prelude: Conference Etiquette

- What did you learn in Kindergarten?
 - Do NOT talk out of turn, do not talk out loud when others are talking
 - Do NOT have side bar conversations (I will call you out on it and not apologize)
 - Raise your hand if you have a question
 - When asking a question, do not prelude with a story
 - Respect others
 - Turn off your cell phone – because if it rings, I WILL ANSWER IT AND YOUR LIFE WILL CHANGE COURSE....

Why Experiential Versus Talk Therapy

- Strength of the group is directly correlated to the number of one-to-one connections in that group
- Goal is to create those connections to facilitate a strong working group
- Engages body and emotions
- Insight through action

What are we going to do today?

- Group juggle
- Floor check
- Circle of strength
- Spectrogram
- Milling

The Preamble

- Full Value Contract
 - First finger: inclusion
 - Middle finger: respect
 - Ring finger: commitment
 - Pinky: safety
 - Thumb: fun

Group Juggle

1. Find a person across the circle from you
2. Say their name, or ask their name and say it
3. Toss the ball underhand so they can catch it
4. Put your hands behind your back for the first go around only (so we know who has had the ball)
5. Remember who you threw to
6. The last person throws it back to the leader
7. After pattern is set, repeat it three to five rounds with one ball
8. Add two more balls for the “juggle”

Floor Check

- Use printed pieces of paper with labels to represent the different options for the prompts
 - Eg Emotions, SUD symptoms, feelings towards something, experiences in treatment
- Ask a prompt, have the participants place themselves on the piece of paper that represents their answer.
- This puts members in clusters and has them discuss shared experience.
- If a participant is at a paper alone, the facilitator has them join another group.

Circle of Strength

- Give psychoeducation on importance of strength and resilience
- Gives clients insight into positives that others see in them
- Practice vulnerability in a safe way
- Choose a scarf that represents a strength of the person next to them and give example of strength.
- Go around the circle the other way
- Can opt to give a scarf to anyone else
- Place scarves on the floor connection to make a circle

Spectrogram

- Provide participants with a chance to see where they fit in the group and make connections
- Each opposite wall designates opposite end of a spectrum
- One side 0% the other side is 100%
- Participants place themselves along an imaginary line where they fall based on the prompt
- Ask them to speak to people near them
- Fold the spectrogram, have people at either ends talk to each other about why
- Explore outliers

Milling

- This one might drive you nuts... just warning you

References

- Giacomucci, S. (2021). Social work, sociometry, and psychodrama: Experiential approaches for group therapists, community leaders, and social workers. Springer.