



**CERTIFIED
PRACTISING
COUNSELLORS
AUSTRALIA**

CPCA Journal

Autumn 2024

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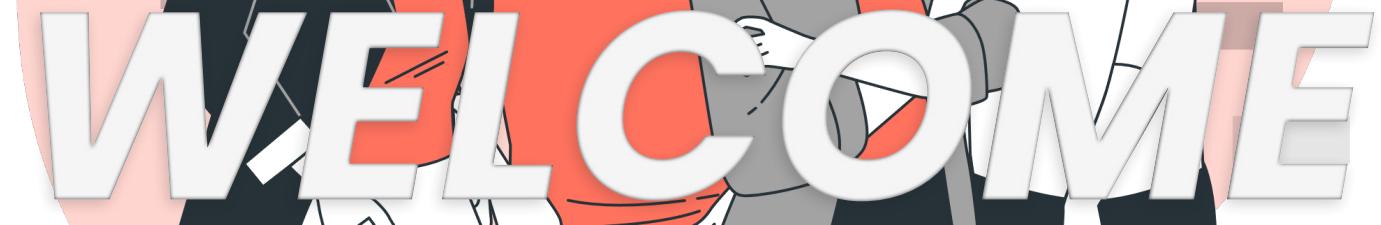
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WELCOME

President's message

Mark Cresswell

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Journal of the Certified Practicing Counsellors Australia.

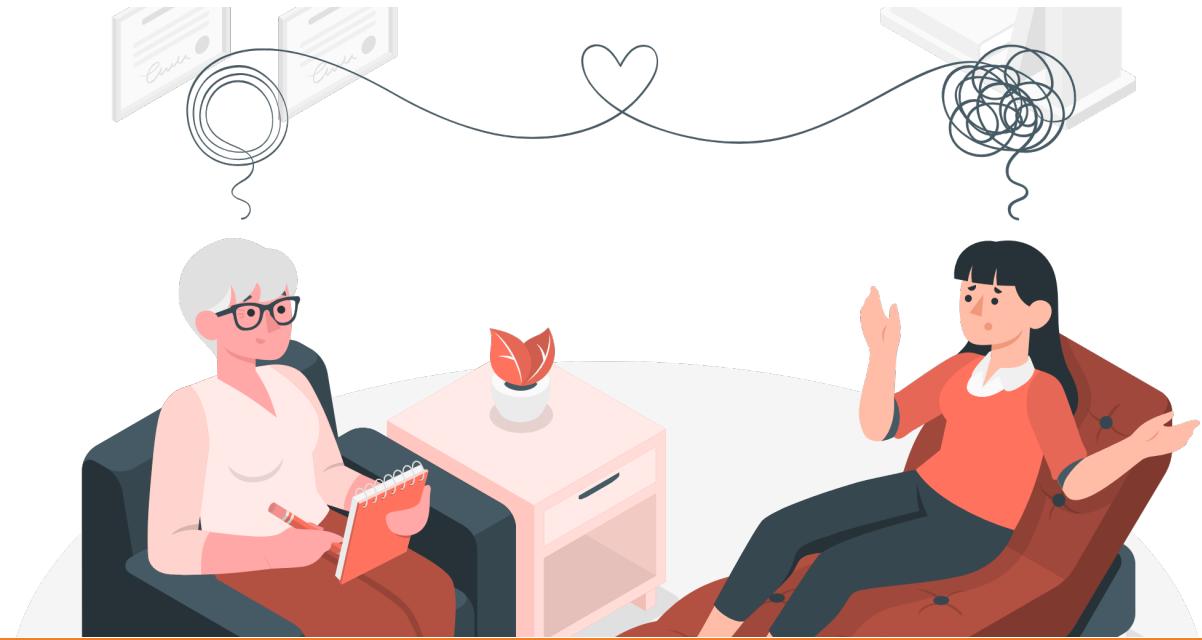
I look forward to your feedback and future contributions

Each edition has a theme which is aimed at providing an insight into real world counsellor experiences and the ways we approach these. It is hoped that by doing this, our members can perhaps learn a new approach or be able to apply a different lens to their own practice. After all, it is the community of practice that makes growth and best practice possible at the client level. On that note, this issue also includes some real world informed resources prepared and published by counselling practitioners. I am proud to say that I am one of them.

I commend this journal to you and hope it gives you things to consider in your own practice. I also hope you will consider your own ability to contribute to the journal. We all have our experiences and perspectives, and I am sure they all bring value to the counselling community.



Mark Cresswell
President
CPCAus



Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy

Mark Cresswell

Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, as developed by Albert Ellis, is a mainstay of the therapeutic process for many counsellors/therapists. It has proved to be a singularly effective tool in helping clients to achieve their goals in counselling. The principle of living rationally is one that, perhaps, should be encouraged more widely and taken up more openly in practice. Irrational thoughts and beliefs are the cause of faulty thinking and ineffective behaviours. The more we can think and act rationally the better off we, and society, will be.

What is REBT? How does it work?

1. REBT is a cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) that focuses on helping people deal with irrational beliefs and learn how to manage their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in a healthier, more realistic way.

2. ABC Model: This is a core concept in REBT. A: Activating event, which refers to something happening in the environment. B: Belief, representing an individual's thoughts about the event or situation. C: Consequence, which is the emotional response resulting from those beliefs. During REBT, therapists guide clients to apply this model to their daily lives. By identifying

activating events, challenging irrational beliefs, and altering emotional responses, individuals can overcome psychological distress.

3. There are three main principles involved in the application of REBT:

- a. Self-Acceptance: You are worthy of self-acceptance. Your behaviours don't make you any less worthy. You are worthy by virtue of the fact you are human.
- b. Acceptance of Others: Others are also worthy of acceptance. Their behaviours don't make them any less worthy. They are worthy by virtue of the fact they are human.

Realism: Negative events are a part of life, and expecting constant positivity is not rational and all beliefs about this are open to challenge.

4. REBT helps people respond rationally to situations that would typically cause stress, depression, or negative feelings. It encourages realistic expectations and adaptive coping strategies.

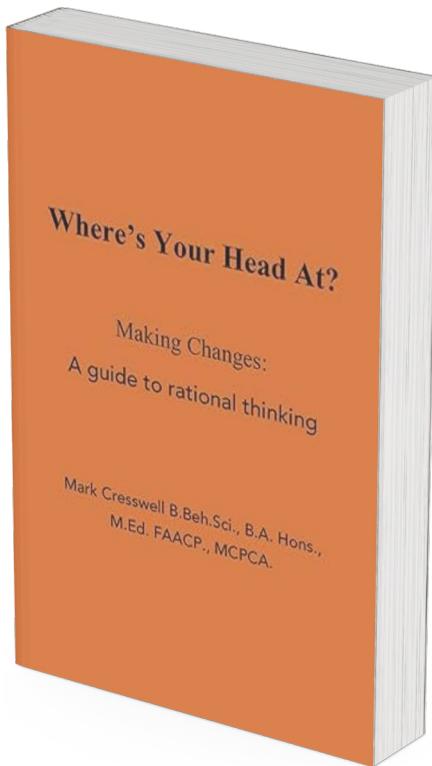
Remember, REBT emphasizes that our beliefs, rather than external events, significantly impact our psychological well-being. By challenging irrational thinking patterns, individuals can lead more fulfilling lives.

Are you a counsellor or therapist looking for a simple yet effective way to guide homework for your clients? This tool enables you to give the client a concrete method of recording and analysing their thoughts and behaviours, enabling you to review the results of their real-world experiences.

Are you an individual looking to begin or continue your journey to a new way of living rationally? This book makes a complete pocket companion. Discrete yet useable on any occasion. Perfect for reviewing what's happening for you in real time.

This book provides examples and opportunities for self-analysis of beliefs that lead to irrational thought and behaviours. It will help to guide

anyone on their journey to rational thought. Whether that journey is just beginning or in progress, there is something in this workbook for everyone.

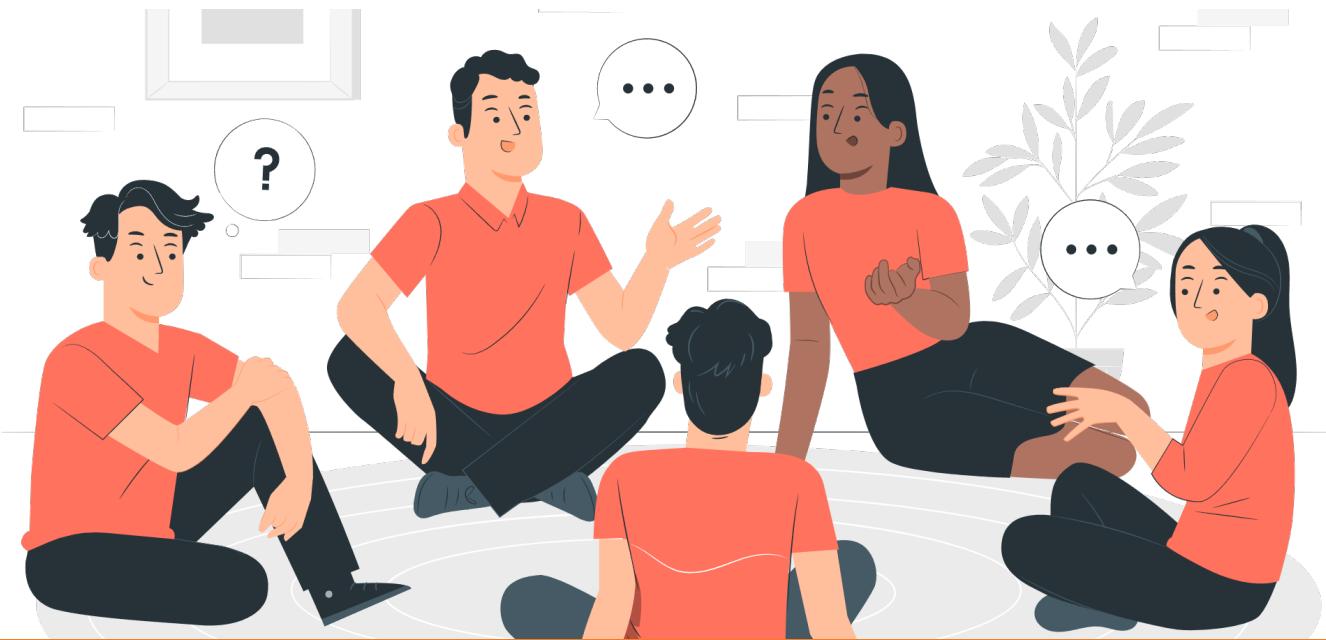


Where's Your Head At?

**Making Changes:
A guide to rational thinking**

Mark Cresswell B.Beh.Sci., B.A.Hons., M.Ed.
FAACP, MCPCA.

<https://amzn.asia/d/67YbqiW>



Understanding the purpose of interventions and navigating their intention.

Samantha Gall

Interventions used in Counselling aim to support and create positive change in clients' lives. Interventions can assist in the prevention of reverting back to old habits, help work towards goals, strengthen capabilities, increase motivation and opportunities and transition clients from where they are now to where they want to be, (Michie et al., 2014). Whilst interventions can be performed individually and within multiple settings, it is important that they are specific and purposeful, directing treatment and intervention plans developed with a client.

Many interventions used in Counselling can target unhelpful, repetitive thinking patterns and aim to replace harmful thoughts, unrealistic expectations, or biased thinking. Others create a possible future where the client can engage with what might be or could happen, coming to terms with change or their own negative emotions.

Interventions sometimes might involve assessing for safety risks and making a plan to keep your client safe and other times interventions may look different due to your theoretical framework for understanding a client's needs and for formulating a rationale for

specific interventions. You may also consider whether or not your interventions are evidence-based. This may not always be necessary, but you also want to think about methods and interventions that have been helpful and have research to back up your techniques and application with clients.

Interventions can be counsellor-centered interventions, where the counsellor does something to or for the client or client-centered interventions that empower the client, helping them develop their capacity to intervene in their own area of concern, (Nelson-Jones, 2014)

While one specific intervention may work well for a client with a presenting issue; for another, it may be a challenge or unhelpful. Documenting what works and doesn't work, can help you keep track of your client's progress and focus on choosing appropriate and helpful interventions in the future.

Types of Interventions

Interventions as mentioned can take many forms. They can be clinical; practical; purposeful and self-reflective. At the heart of any intervention are cores skills that counsellors need to employ. These include listening to their client, working collaboratively as a team, providing opportunities for clients to advocate for themselves and respecting the individuality of clients. There is no one intervention that fits all clients and there is no one client that fits only one form of intervention.

The list below are some examples and applications of interventions when working with clients. Interventions can include:

- Administering a questionnaire to assist with diagnosis/assessing symptom severity and risk factors.
- Discussing behavioural journaling, letter writing
- Teaching self-soothing techniques, including breathing techniques, mindfulness, meditation, and visualisation
- Helping a client identify negative impact of thoughts and behaviours and positive consequences.
- Using motivational interviewing to strengthen commitment to therapy and to change behaviours that are dysfunctional.
- Helping a client identify and challenge cognitive distortions, and to replace with positive affirmations.
- Educating clients about presenting issues.
- Assisting clients in improving problem-solving skills, including clearly defining problem, brainstorming possible solutions, evaluating the pros and cons of each, and implementing a plan of action
- Teaching conflict resolution skills
- Using art therapy techniques, to support client expression of feelings.
- Reviewing contractual agreements in place to determine if they still support client needs.
- Reviewing progress toward treatment goals and updating treatment plans

- Discussing a safety plan for when client feels like acting on thoughts of self-harm.

Practical applications of interventions may entail:

- Discussing limits of confidentiality /what information shared around concerns and the benefits of care coordination and referral options.
- Assigning journaling reflecting thoughts, behaviours, actions, and emotions.
- Providing resources and information to read, listen to and review.
- Exploring, prioritising, and supporting goal setting with a client. For example, using the SMART.
- Selecting a type of therapy that is responsive to the presenting issues of a client. For example, Person-Centred Therapy; Cognitive Behavioural Therapy; Solution Focused Therapy; Acceptance and Commitment Therapy; Complicated Grief Therapy; Gestalt Therapy; Narrative Therapy or a Integrative Therapy.

Adapted from (Grisworld. B, 2024).

The essential nature of Counselling and interventions shared across all approaches are active listening, expression of warmth, empathy, and support (Frank & Frank, 1991). Interventions allow the counsellor to support clients to work towards addressing needs and areas of concern. The application of interventions can improve the psychological, social or emotional wellbeing of a client, providing opportunities for a client to achieve their identified goals, and supporting recovery moving forward.

Having a strong knowledge of various therapies, and emerging trends will help improve work practices of counsellors and maximise benefits for clients. Ultimately when engaging with clients, it is extremely important as a counsellor to assess clients' needs, select the most appropriate therapies and interventions for the situation/s that client's present with.

Grisworld, B Articles (2024) Navigating the Insurance Maze. Available at: <https://theinsurancemaze.com/articles/> (Accessed: 16 March 2024).

Frank JD, & Frank JB (1991). Persuasion and healing: A comparative study of psychotherapy (3rd ed.). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

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Michie S, Atkins L, West R. (2014). The Behaviour Change Wheel: A Guide to Designing interventions. London: Silverback Publishing.

Nelson-Jones, R. (2014). Practical counselling and helping skills. Sage.



Samantha has over 22 years' experience in Community Services and Care and Education Sectors. Before embarking in private practice as a Professional Supervisor, she previously held positions as a Guidance Counsellor within Catholic and Independent Queensland Schools, as well as a Senior Teacher in secondary schools. More recently as a Trainer and Assessor across the Australian College of Community Services and Care, a private RTO, training and assessing for qualifications that include Mental Health, Counselling, Community Services, Youth Work, Alcohol and Other Drugs, and Child, Youth and Family Intervention. Samantha also has vast experience working in both the Private and Not-For-Profit sectors as a Professional Supervisor, Counsellor, Team Leader, and Manager within Youth Services and Community Services. She draws on all these experiences, as well as in her current roles as a Trainer and Assessor and Professional Supervisor, focusing on professional supervision, career and professional development and transitional support.

Samantha's unique background in community, youth and education services has enabled her to give an independent perspective on the whole care entity, organisational structures and behaviour as well as providing professional supervision, individual planning, and career guidance and support. She is the recipient of the Pride of Australia Medal for Queensland for her work with at risk youth; has received a National Excellence in Teaching Award (NETiA) for Excellence in Secondary Teaching; and appeared in the Courier Mail QWeekend 50 Bright Stars list of movers and shakers in education.

To contact Samantha regarding Professional Supervision needs, email Insight Professional Supervision at Insight_ps@outlook.com



What is guided relaxation?

Katie Brown

The benefits of meditation, mindfulness and yoga are well known, but there is another practice which can be just as effective at creating calm – guided relaxation.

Guided relaxation is a form of yoga which involves coming into a position of supported rest, which automatically promotes the relaxation response. Gradually awareness shifts from the external to the internal world, muscle tension begins to release, the breath begins to slow and lengthen invoking a sense of stillness and peace in the mind, culminating in an environment where healing and deep rest can occur.

A complete guide to practising guided relaxation for everyone from seasoned yoga teachers to beginners would include:

- Positions for your practice
- Benefits of relaxation
- How to get the most from your practice
- A beautiful choice of more than 30 scripted relaxations
- Relaxations include chakras, the seasons, elements of nature and positive affirmations and other techniques

The benefits of deep relaxation can include:

- Improving physical and mental health
- Reduce depression and anxiety
- Improved digestion and immune function
- Boost energy levels
- Ease insomnia
- Lower high blood pressure and improve cardiovascular health
- Reduce muscle tension and ease chronic pain

Guided Relaxation

Your essential guide to remaining calm

For yoga teachers, health professionals and anyone wishing to relax

Dr Katie Brown
katiebrownyoga.com

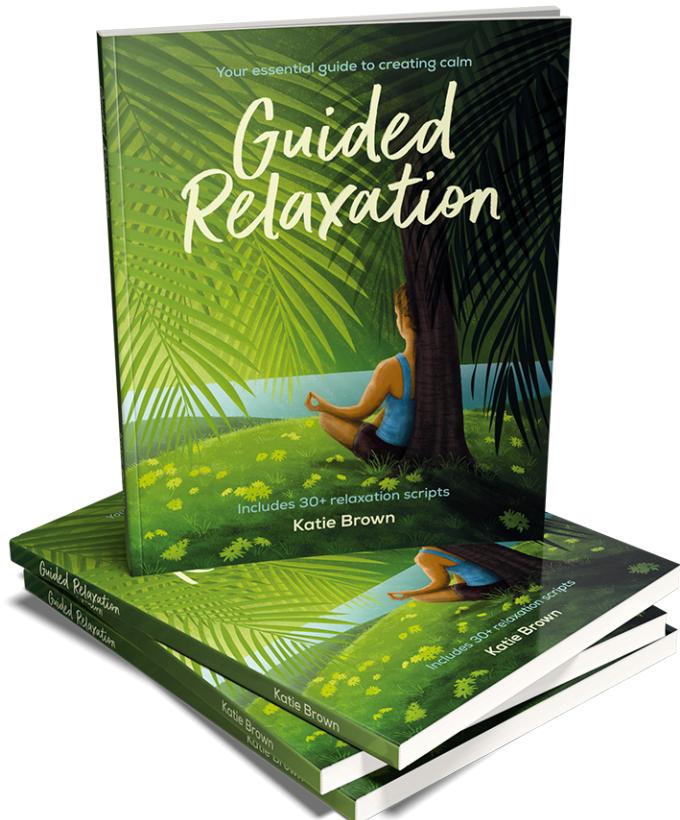
Unhook, unwind, unravel...

Step inside the pages of Guided Relaxation and open up a world of tranquility and calm where you will be guided on an internal journey to quieten the mind, release tension and create peace and wellness.

Northern Beaches based author, Katie Brown has been teaching yoga (and writing and enjoying Guided Relaxations) for more than 20 years. She's a mum-of-three teenagers, is Vice President of the International Yoga Teachers' Association (IYTA) and runs her own yoga business

Katie was inspired to write this book after finding that Guided Relaxations proved to be a lifeline during times of stress and anxiety – and she has seen how her students and children have loved the deep sense of calm the practice provides.

There are more than 30 guided relaxations as well as an easy-to-follow guide on how to do conscious relaxation, relaxation poses, breathing techniques. This book – with illustrations from illustrator, Ruth Wellman (who also enjoys guided relaxation) is a treat for the eyes, mind, body and spirit. Among the relaxation themes are relaxations for the seasons, the chakras, the elements, affirmations and visualisations to help issues such as anxiety and insomnia as well as a section for children. **Guided Relaxation by Katie Brown** is available as a paperback book or ebook and the recorded relaxations are available at katiebrownyoga.com



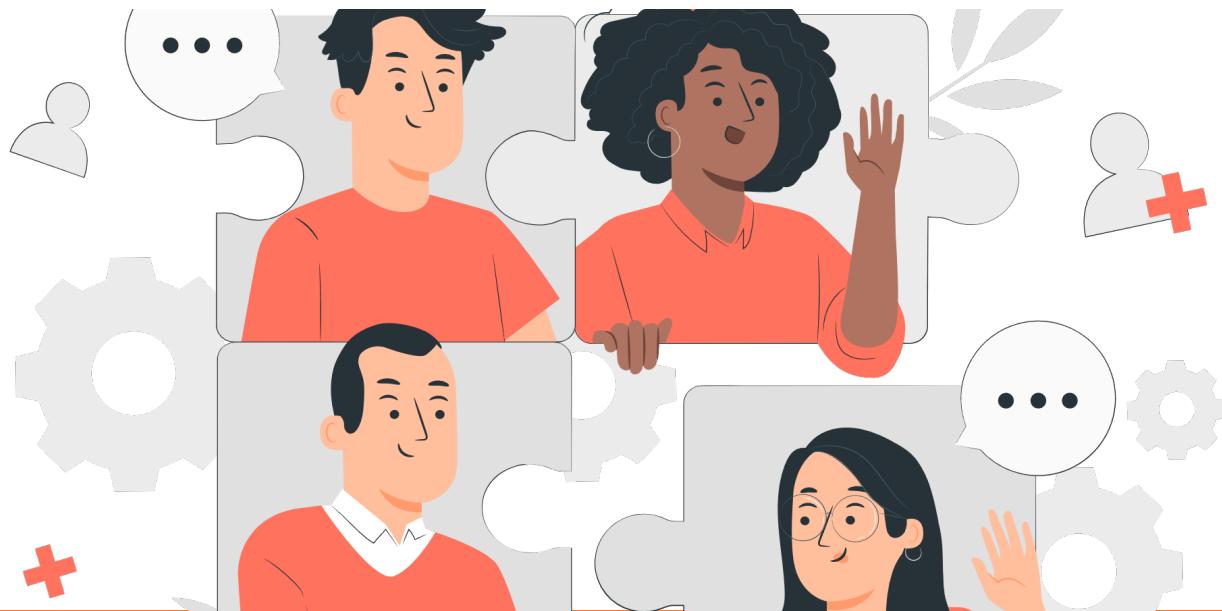
“This is the BEST gift ever!”

For review copies and audio relaxations please contact Katie.

Katie Brown is available for interview and comments.

Please call 0415 503 119 or email: katie@katiebrownyoga.com

or visit: www.katiebrownyoga.com



Intervention. Deciding on action.

Paul Farley

I like to be precise with personal words and actions and have found that in the administration of psychological therapy, definition and clarity are very beneficial. In keeping with this, the definition for intervention tells us that it is the '*act of intervening*'. So immediately there is a directive, and the directive is '*action*'. It might seem oddly contrary to note that one of the most useful pieces of advice I ever received from a supervising psychologist was that '*sometimes, you need to sit on your hands*'. Quite the paradox!

Yet, these two elements work closely together. When deciding to intervene, you've implicitly accepted the fact that it's necessary to act. Therefore, it is critical to define the type of action that will most benefit the client. There are Affective interventions, focused on a client's feelings rather than actions, and there are Cognitive interventions aimed at addressing a client's thought process. There are also Behavioural interventions designed to assist a client in modifying their harmful behaviours.

Discerning the nuances of what/when can be complex, although in my experience it has mostly been the case that this is not a decision the therapist is required to make on their own.

This is where the two apparently contradictory notions mentioned above operate. Generally, the client will tell you what type of intervention they require, if you are willing to listen to them. They tell you this in the way they articulate their lived experiences to you, and paying close attention to the way they package and deliver those experiences will give the therapist direction about which intervention method will be most effective for that individual client.

It's been my experience so far that these clues from the client come across clearly in their pattern of communication with their therapist. If we examine the types of intervention listed above, it can be seen that they also fall neatly across the spectrum of the way people typically interact with one another: feelings, thought processes and actions.

Affective intervention focuses on a client's feelings. How events made them feel, how they processed those feelings, how they felt about those feelings. At the centre of the therapeutic process is the client, who will often seek therapy to manage feelings, so it seems appropriate that these types of interventions arise primarily.

They often lead into Cognitive intervention,

framed in the basic question of ‘*why do you think you felt that way?*’ By examining a client’s thought processes, Cognitive intervention with a trained therapist can often illuminate various ‘*kinks*’ in the way people think about things, or habits that develop in the thought process due to trauma/bias/experience and many other factors.

When interacting, it’s helpful to remember that 70-93% of the way people communicate is non-verbal. Within the sphere of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, the focus is on shifting thought/feelings to influence actions. So often, the visible or tangible part of the therapy process is in a client’s changed behaviours, but a large amount of the work usually comes well before a Behavioural intervention. When implementing a Behavioural intervention, the focus shifts from how we feel or think to how we act as a result of those feelings or thoughts. An effective Behavioural intervention sets a clear criterion for how the client wishes to behave, and clear criteria for measuring the extent to which that intervention was successful.

Throughout the therapeutic process, there will be a frequent need to revisit this first criterion and discuss the impacts, modify the methodology, manage success or setbacks and continually balance the realistic nature of expectations. Change takes time and it is during the Behavioural change process that a client can often become discouraged as it is the most immediately obvious place where ‘*the rubber hits the road*’, so to speak. As a therapist, it is important to be aware of the client’s thought process and feelings throughout any intervention: a crucial part of the process is to continually revisit these elements.

As I’ve progressed through my journey in this field, it has become clearer to me that intervention is inextricably woven into the client/therapist relationship. I have noticed that some clients do engage in therapy mainly to talk through something with a therapist with

the goal of orienting their own feelings towards it, and that such clients do not require much intervention. However, the vast majority of those I have worked with are seeking some type of change and require outside support to identify and define that change. This might loosely be termed a ‘client-initiated intervention’ for they’ve recognised a need in themselves and have taken deliberate action.

Ultimately, an effective therapeutical process will encompass intervention. It is important to note that I have only discussed intervention within the scope of voluntary psychological therapy. The word ‘*intervention*’ can assume different meanings outside this scope, but from this therapist’s perspective, ‘*intervention*’ is the result of a voluntary process and to be viewed as such.

I come from a trades background which is possibly somewhat unconventional for a therapist or counsellor but I have noticed that certain parallels exist between these professional fields. A customer has decided that outside help is needed for something they cannot do themselves. An effective tradesperson will listen carefully to the customer’s description of what they want or need and draw from their own experience and knowledge to determine the best way forward. The ability to listen is of prime importance, and good listeners are often highly successful in trades. Once agreement has been negotiated between customer and tradesperson, they will progress the task toward a tangible result. The way a skilled tradesperson undertakes a task will depend on the individual circumstances, much like the way a therapist might intervene after determining the most effective way to do so.

In any case, the common factor is that the initial action and information comes from the client. They are the medium through which the changes manifest and it’s a therapist’s responsibility to ensure that any intervention is oriented towards the clients vision of themselves and what they consider most important.



Super tools of therapy

Julie Pemberton

When deciding on using a therapy it can be confusing and even at times repetitive. Many questions should be running through your mind. What therapy do you like? What outcomes do you want to see with the client? Will my chosen therapy fit the client's needs? Have I enough experience to use this therapy?

If answering the questions causes more questions perhaps this is where you might decide to have an eclectic toolbox. An eclectic toolbox means that you take what parts of the therapy that work for you and use them as they are needed. You build yourself a super toolbox. Super tools can be very effective if chosen for the right client. How I started my super toolbox was working with the different therapies and deciding what ones I felt were closely aligned with my own values and beliefs.

Some therapies have been dropped by the modern-day counselor, but I feel that if you took a closer look at the super tools that therapies have, perhaps you will find a space for them in your toolbox.

Gestalt Therapy, I believe doesn't get as much of the limelight as it should. Fritz Perls was a co-founder of the humanistic therapy that identified that individuals should take responsibility of

their awareness both within their psychological and physical needs. Fritz Perls believed that if we took accountability for our own experiences and did not blame others for our own lack of control and stop taking of the role of victim, we would gain a full sense of our selves. As he was known to say *"I do my thing and you do your thing. I am not in this world to live up to your expectations, and you are not in this world to live up to mine"*

<https://en.empowerment-coaching.com/post/fritz-perls-suffering-rebellion-war-zen-theater-and-finally-psychotherapy#viewer-8ljn>

Top Dog versus Under Dog

This super tool of Gestalt addresses the opposing attitudes of a client's inner struggles. One is the Top dog where the personality sits with being in charge and wanting everything to go their way. The other is the Underdog refusing to follow the top dog is all about rebelling from this demand. Taking the time with the client to have a dialogue with them about what the top dog wants and how the under-dog refuses can align the client with the awareness and understanding of the conflict. This creates the opportunity for oneness with each part coming together and uniting.

Language is an important part of the process with the counselor using the here and now

dialogue to allow for the present to represent the client in their progress rather than focusing on the past. Using "I" statements will support the client in being able to own how they are fleeing rather than projecting on to others their emotional turmoil. For example: *saying you are making me feel angry could be turned into I am feeling hurt and confused.*

Another favorite of mine I use a lot is the "Empty Chair"

There are plenty of resources and information about Gestalt Therapy in which you can explore further super tools for your own eclectic toolbox

<https://www.gestaltcentre.com.au/>

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

This comes from being under the umbrella of Cognitive Behavior Therapy but focuses more on the super tools of the here and now.

Mindfulness is an imaginative approach to coaching and therapy that is founded on the creative application of values and mindfulness. Through thoughtful, values-based living, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy seeks to create opportunities for each person's potential for a rich, fulfilling, and meaningful life as well as to promote health, vitality, and well-being. Mindfulness has been practiced through ancient philosophies from across the world. Mindfulness is not just using meditative practices, it is about creating only positive moments but this is more about connecting with our emotions whether they are positive or not.

This is about connecting with ourselves and staying in the present moment rather than removing ourselves from our inner thoughts and creating chaos or avoidance. Practicing mindfulness allows you to be self-aware especially to understand you and the difference to your thoughts. Mindfulness is super tool in the fact that your client can take this anywhere they go. They can do practice one

minute every hour or longer times. This can be done in many ways through breath work, through holding on to an object to feel this in your hand and describing what it feels like or sounds like. There are many applications that are used through technology including tablets, smart phones and other technology you might use. There are plenty of free resources both on YouTube and Google for mindfulness processes.

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=russ+harris%2Fmindfulness

<https://www.actmindfully.com.au/about-mindfulness/>

My name is Julie. I work in community services because in my younger years I experienced blame and finger pointing from a counsellor and felt that others should not have to experience what I went through. My main passion is to work alongside someone to see that they have the opportunity to grow and develop, to live their lives in the way they want to.

Counselling I see as an opportunity to walk with people on their journey. More like a co-traveller than someone who is the expert. Being a counsellor is not just sitting in front of a client letting them know that you are listening to them, this involves validating how they are feeling, accepting that their lived experience has an important role in their recovery or healing journey. My values are about supporting people to seek a better life, to not tear others down just to make yourself feel better or superior. Counselling puts me in a position of being on that journey with someone and experiences their growth and empowerment.

I have a passion for study as well and look forward to working on a doctorate someday soon. study is never about having the right time its more along the lines of just getting in and doing it no matter what your circumstances are **BELIEVE IN YOURSELF**



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