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Power of One: Notes and Activity List • AEE 2009

Introduction

- **GAS GAUGE** (ref: Karl Rhonke): Using a masking tape or rope line on the floor, invite the client to place him/herself along the line in “rating scale” sort of fashion. Process: information about answers, standing on the line (instead of one side or the other), etc.
- **PERSPECTIVE CIRCLE/CROSS ARMS** (ref: Unknown): Invite participants to “draw” a circle with their finger above their heads in a clockwise direction. Keeping this circle moving the same direction, lower it to about belly-button perspective. Now notice what direction the circle is moving (should be counter-clockwise). Discuss where people are coming from, looking at things differently, changing perspectives, etc. Now invite participants to cross their arms. Note which one is on top. Now switch. Note the discomfort or awkwardness.
- **OUR/OUR CLIENT’S STORY**: Start off by learning the story, then select the activity based on the story!
- **PROCESS ACTIVITIES**: Know their story and connect to it. Use support responses. Make observations and clarifications. Be curious. Explore story analogy or metaphor. Be careful to stay with your client – not jumping ahead to feelings or metaphors before the observations.

Round One: Engagement

- **SQUIGGLE DRAWING** (ref: Unknown): Invite your client to just scribble on a piece of paper for a short time (e.g., 30 seconds). Then exchange papers. With the “newly acquired” scribble, try to create a picture. This is the beginning of cooperative play and sharing. Themes can emerge that allow you to learn things about your client. Also, very little art skills are required.
- **KEY EXCHANGE** (ref: Karl Rhonke): Place two small carpet squares (or wash clothes or small tarp pieces) on the floor within arms reach of each other. Under each square, place a key. Invite your client to stand on one square and you stand on the other. The challenge is for you to get your key (under your client’s feet) and your client to get his/her key (from under your feet) at the same time without touching the ground! Discuss relationship, problem solving, communication.

Round Two: Communication

- **ENGINEER** (ref: Unknown): Give both the client and therapist a canister of Playdoh™. One of the pair is asked to use the objects to build a sculpture behind a small barrier that prevents the other person from seeing what has been created. Invite the developer to verbally describe the structure to the builder in an effort to create an identical image on the opposite of the barrier. Process communication – both giving and receiving.
- **STEALTH** (ref: Chris Cavert and Sam Sikes): Place 10 or so clothespins on his/her clothes. Invite your client to close his/her eyes by offering a bandana to cover his/her eyes or to simply close his/her eyes. Sitting or standing in one

spot, invite him/her to practice hearing you approach and stop you by pointing his/her finger before you get his/her clothespin. Switch roles! Discuss communication, power, relationship.

- **BRIDGE:** Describe the basic components of every bridge: 1) they have a beginning, 2) they have a definite ending point, and 3) they have a foundation that serves as a support and prevents collapse. Provide drawing materials and invite your client to draw a bridge. After the bridge is drawn, invite your client to draw him or her self someplace in the picture. Typical themes that get expressed parallel to uncertain start point include uncertainty about what's happening in one's life or the significance of his/her role in life events or where the client sees him or herself in the process of change.
- **BALLOON SONG** (ref: Unknown): Invite participants to perform a song using only the balloon that others will be able to identify (e.g., guess). Great for communication discussions!

Round Three: Trust/Support/Risk-taking

- **MOUSE TRAP SLAP** (ref: Sam Sikes): Demonstrate how to safely set a mouse trap. Using a set mouse trap and invite the participant to slap their hand down quickly upon the trap, holding it firmly to the ground, then quickly release the trap. Phew! Talk about commitment, risk taking, support.
- **FIND A TREE** (ref: Joseph Cornell): Take turns leading an "unsighted" partner to a tree (or other object). Let them investigate the tree and its surrounding area without opening eyes. Lead them back to the starting point. Open eyes and let them attempt to find their tree. Discuss support, safety, communication,
- **WALL WALK** (ref: unknown): Invite participants to close their eyes, putting their hands up as "bumpers", then move as quickly or slowly as possible to the wall – without touching the wall. Notice strategies, different actions of touching the wall, being far from the wall, slowing down near the wall. Great for discussion about taking risks.
- **PUSH AWAY** (ref: Karl Rhonke): Invite your client to face you and lightly touch palms. Take a small step back and gently lean toward each other and then gently "push away" from each other - back to a standing position. Slowly move apart from each other testing how far you can safely separate. Discuss safety, support, risk taking.
- **WEB LEAN/TOWARDS AND AWAY** (ref: Jim Cain and Tom Smith): Holding onto a 12 to 15 foot piece of webbing that has been tied into a circle*, invite your client to hold onto the webbing with you and lean back as far as possible, still maintaining safety for one another. Once into the webbing lean position, coordinate your movement from a standing position to a squatting position as you lean back, and then back up again. Discuss safety, risk, support.

* Use of a water knot is best for this purpose. This is an overhand knot on one tail with the other tail threaded back through the overhand knot in the opposite direction. For an animated version of how to tie the knot go to <http://www.animatedknots.com/waterknot/index.php?Logolmage=&Website>.

Closing

- **VISIONING PATH** (ref: Unknown): With a variety of pictures on a table or on the floor, invite your client to choose a picture that best reflects how s/he feels right at this moment and a second picture of where s/he would like to be in six months. Place the first picture at your client's feet and invite the client to place the second picture physically from the first one the distance it feels to get from where there are right now to that picture. Then give the client index cards to create path from first to second, writing one way to get there, i.e., attending therapy, practicing listening, etc. Process: journey of the individual, therapeutic alliance, accessing resources, planning, create small steps to make big changes, etc.

Our book, *Power of One: Using Adventure and Experiential Activities Within One On One Counseling Sessions*, has even more ideas! Find it at Wood N Barnes or Amazon.com or our websites!