

HOW TO GET UNSTUCK WITH THERAPY CLIENTS CHEAT SHEET

7 Approaches

1 | The Clarity Approach

After working with a client for a significant amount of time, it's common to feel stuck. Typically, this is a result of the client reaching initial goals and both therapist and client needing clarity on how to move forward. Ask and answer:

- *Who is the client?*
- *What is the goal?*

2 | The Evaluation Approach

Perhaps, in order to foster further progress, it's necessary to review what the client has already accomplished. Consider:

- *What changes has the client made as a result of therapy?*
- *What is the client doing that is consistent with his/her initial goals?*
- Develop new, collaborative goals.

3 | The Transparent Approach

Bring your "stuckness" to the client. For example:

"I've been feeling a bit stuck in our work together. I must admit, I'm not sure how to move forward. We've accomplished x, y, z, and I see that you've (state changes) . . . I wonder, how might you want to move forward?"

Wait for the client's response. Allow the client to decide next steps.

HOW TO GET UNSTUCK WITH THERAPY CLIENTS CHEAT SHEET

4 | The Presence Approach

Accept where the client is, and be with them in the midst of their struggle.

- Ask questions to deepen clients' expressions of their experience--allowing them to go into the details, or,
- Provide a safe haven for a time, where clients can express themselves in ways other than talking, such as with play or art therapy techniques.

5 | The Theory Approach

If you're following a theoretical model, consult the theory.

- *How you have moved through the theory's steps and interventions?*
- *Where you are in the theoretical process?*
- *What does the theory "say" to do next?*

6 | The Self-of-the-Therapist Approach

Reflect on what you could be bringing into the therapeutic process with this client.

- *Is your reaction to the stuckness related to anything triggering about the client and his/her presenting problem?*
- *Could the client be facing something that is also present in your life, and you have not yet addressed?*
- *Is it possible you are experiencing feelings of inadequacy or ineffectiveness due to the stuckness, and this is affecting your approach, or your pace, with the client?*
- *Are you going through a personal crisis, or general work dissatisfaction?*

HOW TO GET UNSTUCK WITH THERAPY CLIENTS CHEAT SHEET

7 | The Feedback Approach

The stuckness could be a result of the client's therapy experience. For example, the client may not be satisfied with therapy, may be losing his/her motivation for therapy, or may be considering termination.

Ask your client:

- *How has therapy been helpful thus far?*
 - *What change have you been able to implement as a result of our work together?*
 - *As you consider our sessions, what conversations stick out as meaningful to you?*
 - *What conversations were not helpful?*
 - *Is there more you'd like to work on? If so, what goals do you have for this next stage of therapy? If not, how would you like to move forward? If relevant, introduce termination.*
-

Let's Chat

- If you'd like to chat about this topic, come join the Get Refreshed group for therapists: <http://facebook.com/groups/familytherapybasics>
 - If you have a question about this topic or cheat sheet, e-mail me at ili@familytherapybasics.com
-