



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

ECAY5008: Advocacy and Activism in the 21st Century

Theme 3: Empowering the 'Client': Examples from Practice

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



www.uwtsd.ac.uk

Empowerment and Advocacy

- “Advocacy provides the seeds of empowerment” (Sadd, 2014)
- Whatever we call the person we are working with (I.E. client, patient, service user etc.) one of the key principles of the relationship is empowerment

Solution Focused Brief Therapy

- Developed in the 1980s by psychologists Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg
- Promotes 'solution behaviour' rather than concentrating on 'problem behaviour'
- Looks at exceptions to perceived problems
- Focuses on what life might be like if the problem(s) were solved
- Client identifies solutions
- Client is the 'expert'



The Client as 'Expert'

- The Practitioner Model
 - Working with clients via 'scientific means'
 - Expertise accumulated
 - Problems and solutions
 - Solution Building

The Client as 'Expert'

- Client Model
 - Client is accepted as an 'expert' in their own lives
 - Client provides 'frames of reference' for the practitioner to follow

Changes - Aspirations

- When clients are asked:
- What they would like to see changed in their lives
 - They customarily answer with a description of their problems
 - Client definitions of problems are accepted
 - Clients are interviewed about what will be different in their lives when their problems are solved

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

Changes - Aspirations

- About their perceptions of exceptions to their problems:
 - Client's perceptions are respected as evidence of clients' inner resources (strengths) and sources of information about useful outer resources that exist in the contexts in which they live.
- As advocates we:
 - Listen carefully and work hard to respect the directions in which clients want to go with their own lives, and the words they use to express these directions.

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

The Art of Active Listening

- Practitioners who are accomplished at solution building have learnt how to listen to the client
- With solution- building ears,
- They hear the client's story
- Without filtering it through their own frame of reference

(Berg & Kelly, 2000, p. 15)

Formulating Questions:

- Interviewing a client is a process of;
 - Formulating and asking a question
 - Listening to the answer
 - And then formulating and asking another question
- In a solution-focussed interview
 - It is a practitioner's job to listen
 - And formulate
 - And the client's job to answer

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

It's all about the Details

- Clients often make vague statements and sweeping generalisations such as
 - “Things are going much better between my kids and me”
- Often, inexperienced interviews note these statements without asking for clarifications
- In Solution building, interviewers always attempt to clarify statements for both themselves and the client by asking for details

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

- For Example:
 - “Things are going much better between me and my kids”
 - “Good, what has been happening that makes you feel that things are going better?”

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

It's all about the Details

- Getting details means:
 - Asking questions
 - Who
 - What
 - When
 - Where
 - And How of the client's statement
- This is called the "who and how" questions
- These questions are the ones which will most likely get the descriptive clarifications from the client

Echoing

- Echoing is based on a practitioner's awareness that:
 - While it may be meaningful to them, the language clients use to describe their experiences and relationships is often vague to practitioners
 - One way to resolve ambiguity is to simply repeat or echo key words used by the client
 - Key words are those clients use to capture their experiences and the meaning they attribute to these experiences:
 - "My life is a mess"
 - "What do you mean by a mess"?

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

Normalising

- Normalising is an important aspect of interviewing a client
- A person in need of support may feel that their difficulties are not normal and may be embarrassed to talk about them.
- It involves letting the client know that their feelings are valid and relevant
- And working out with your client if their difficulties are within the 'normal' range of ordinary problems of living

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

The Use of Silence

- Most beginning practitioners are very uncomfortable with silent pauses in interviews, silences tend to make a new practitioner freeze.
- What silence means to the client is almost always different from what an anxious practitioner takes it to mean.
- Silence may mean the client is sorting out his or her thoughts,
- Is confused or angry about the situation just described
- Or is simply taking a short breather from the work at hand.

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

The Use of Silence

- It is important to respect silence.
- The solution building approach calls for practitioners to increase their toleration of client silences
- In western societies
 - After five seconds most people feel pressure to fill a silence by saying something
 - Silence for 10, 15, or 20 seconds is normal
 - By remaining silent, clients are given an opportunity to work on the answer.

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

Compliments

- Clients have personal qualities and past experiences that if drawn on can be of great use in resolving their difficulties and moving forward.
- Complimenting should not be motivated by a desire to be kind to clients
 - Nor should it be motivation to be liked by the client

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

Compliments

- A Direct compliment is a positive evaluation or reaction in response to the client
 - “You are a caring mother!”
- An Indirect Compliment is a question that implies something positive about the client:
 - “How have you managed to make the household so calm?”
- Indirect complimenting is preferable to direct complimenting because it's questioning format leads clients to discover and state their own strengths.

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

Compliments

- A Self-Compliment
 - “I decided to quit Smoking!”
- The job of the practitioner is to recognise such compliments as possible signs of progress and reinforce them with indirect compliments.

Affirming Clients' Perspectives

- A perception is some aspect of a person's self-awareness or awareness of his/her life.
- This awareness is achieved through the senses
- The person's capacity to think and feel and their intuition
- Perceptions are holistic
- Including a person's thoughts, feelings, behaviours, and experiences.

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

Affirming Clients' Perspectives

- Practitioners learn about a client's perceptions
 - By asking the client to describe them in words
- The client's description of their perceptions may be productively thought of as the interplay between the client's experiences and frame of reference.

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

Returning the Focus to the Client

- Often clients talk about what they would like others to do differently
- They tend to talk as though they are powerless in their circumstances and at the mercy of others.
- It is important to listen to and respect these perceptions because they represent how client's view these certain parts of their lives.
- To be able to move from a sense of powerlessness to a sense of empowerment, the client needs to shift their focus.

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

Returning the Focus to the Client

- Practitioners can help clients to make this shift:
 - “What tells you that your children can be more helpful?”
 - “When things are going better, what will be happening differently?”
 - “What will others notice you doing differently?”

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

Exploring Client Meanings

- Clients often wonder about
 - The meanings of events in their lives
 - And sometimes ask their practitioners for their thoughts about these meanings.
 - In solution building
 - The Practitioner does not attempt to interpret clients' experiences for them
 - Questions are commonly used to invite clients to struggle with and construct their own meanings
 - Asking if something clients did in the past or are contemplating doing in the future might be useful/helpful
- (de Jong & Berg, 2002a)

Structure of a Solution-Focussed Interview

- The Goals:
 - Vision from the present and the future
 - What the client is doing now for the goal
 - The goal is related to the outcome, to the clients wishes
 - The positive details of client's future
 - Specific steps
 - Action plan in detail

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

Structure of a Solution-Focussed Interview

- The Goals are:
 - Always negotiated with the client
 - Rather small than big
 - Measurable
 - Realistic and achievable

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

Structure of a Solution-Focussed Interview

- The general phase patten of a solution focussed interview:
- Describing and identifying problems, hardships
 - The client is given the chance to describe his/her concerns
- Developing a well-formulated goal(s)
 - What is different when problems are solved?
- Exploring exceptions
 - Was there a time in their life when the problem was not occurring or was smaller
- Feedback at the end of the session
 - Compliments what client is already doing well
- Evaluating client's progress
 - Using scaling questions

(de Jong & Berg, 2002)

Locus of Control

- Julian B. Rotter's theory of locus of control, developed in 1954, is a key concept in personality psychology.
- It describes how individuals perceive the control they have over events in their lives, which can be categorized as either **internal** or **external**.
- **Internal Locus of Control:** People with a high internal locus of control believe that they have significant personal control over their actions and outcomes.
- They attribute success or failure to their own efforts and abilities. For example, they might think, "I did well on the test because I studied hard."

See for example (Rotter, J.B. and Mulry, R.C., 1965)

Locus of Control

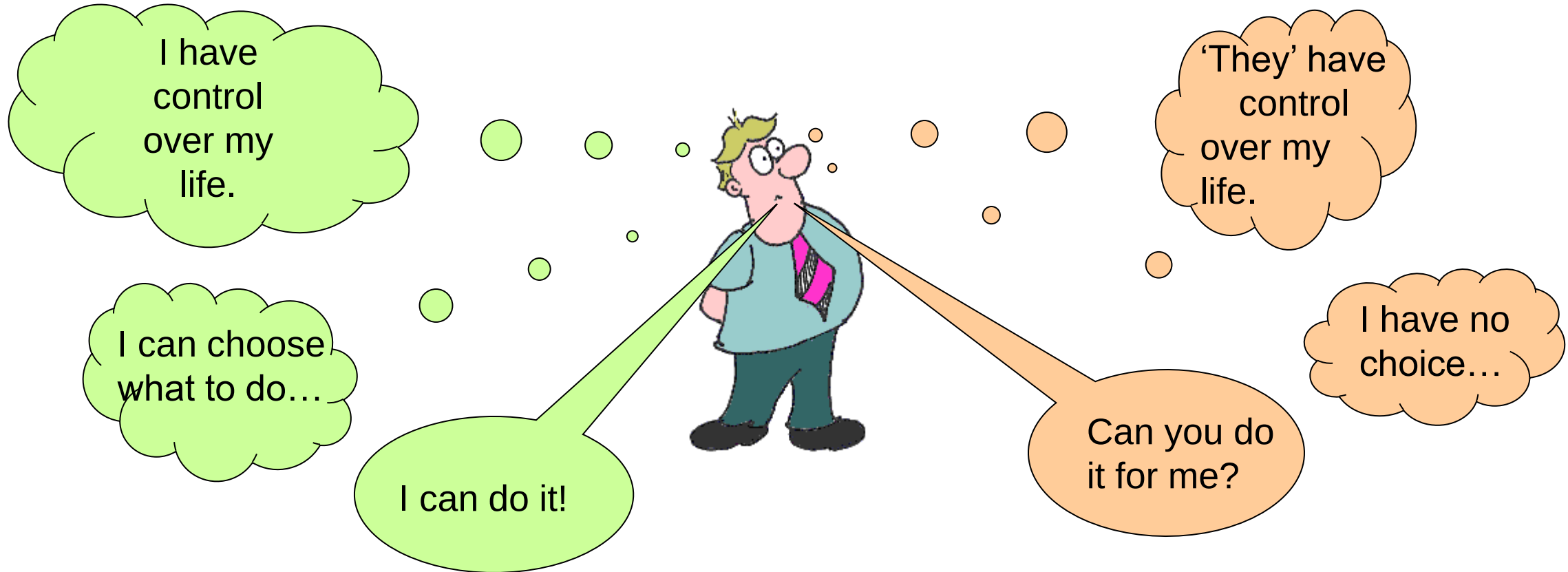
- **External Locus of Control:** Individuals with a high external locus of control feel that external factors, such as luck, fate, or other people, have a greater influence on their lives.
- They might say, "I did well on the test because it was easy," attributing their success to external circumstances rather than their own efforts.
- Rotter's theory suggests that those with an internal locus of control are more likely to take responsibility for their actions and are better at resisting social pressures.
- Conversely, those with an external locus of control may feel less **empowered** to change their circumstances

See for example (Rotter, J.B. and Mulry, R.C., 1965)

Locus of Control

Internal

External



Locus of Control

How might this theory be useful in advocacy?



Johari Window

- The Johari Window is a psychological tool developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955 to help individuals understand their relationships with themselves and others.
- It is often used to improve self-awareness, personal development, and communication within groups.
- The Johari Window emphasizes the importance of self-disclosure and feedback to expand the Open Area, thereby improving communication and relationships.

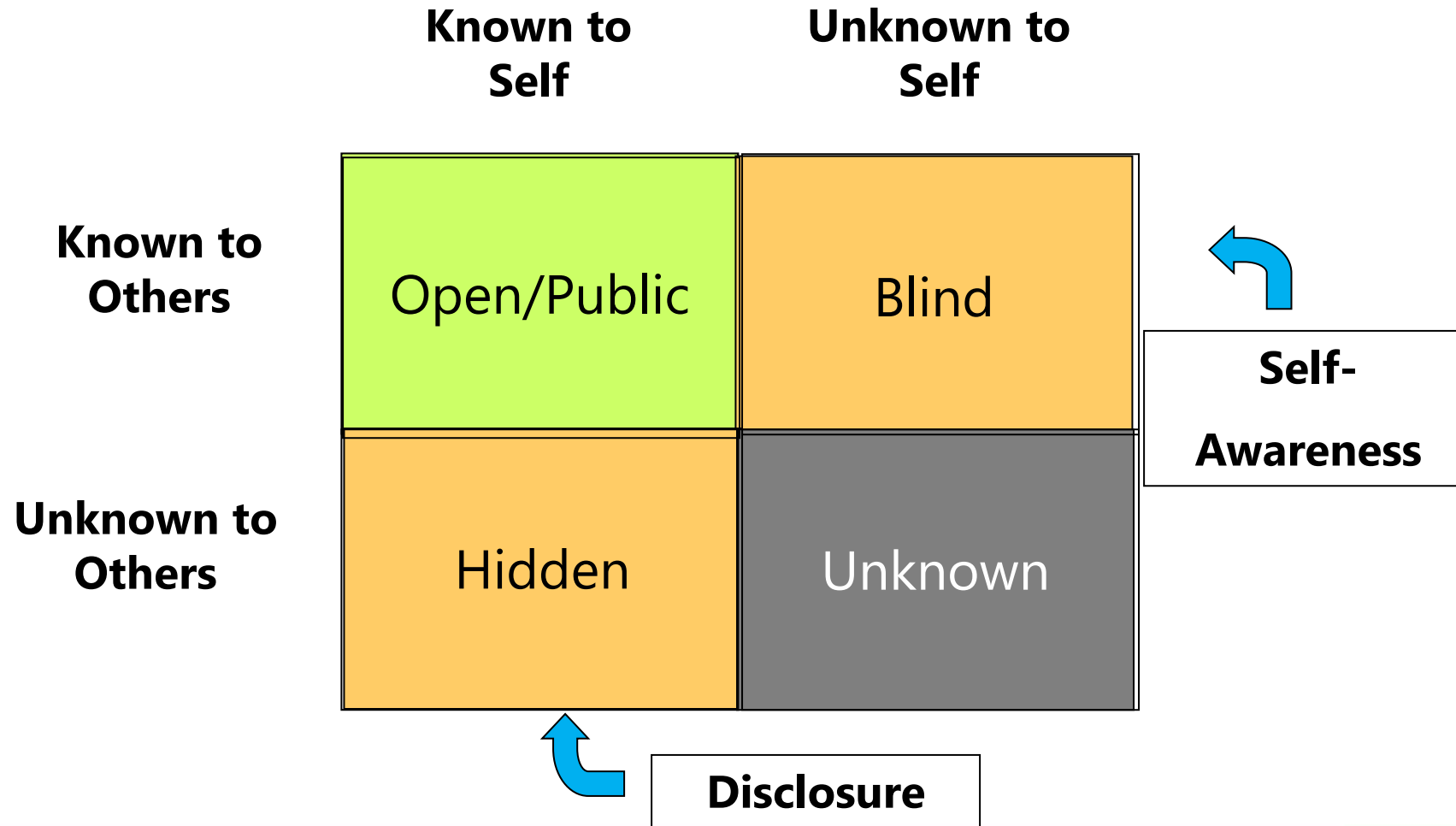
Luft, J., & Ingham, H. (1955)

Johari Window

- The model is divided into four quadrants:
- Open Area (Arena): This quadrant represents information about yourself that both you and others know. It includes behaviours, skills, and attitudes that are openly shared and acknowledged.
- Blind Area (Blind Spot): This quadrant contains information that others know about you, but you are unaware of. Feedback from others is crucial to uncovering these blind spots.
- Hidden Area (Facade): This quadrant includes information that you know about yourself but choose to keep hidden from others. It can involve personal secrets, fears, or private thoughts.
- Unknown Area: This quadrant consists of information that is unknown to both you and others. It includes unconscious behaviours, latent abilities, and untapped potential that can be discovered through self-reflection and new experiences.

Luft, J., & Ingham, H. (1955)

Johari Window



Johari Window

How might this theory be useful in advocacy?



References

- Bronfenbrenner, U. 1979). The Ecology of Human Development. USA. Havard Press.
- Capital Nurse (No Date) *Johari Window* NHS England Available at [Johari window.pdf](#) [Accessed 18/11/2024]
- Gentile, M. C. (2010). Giving Voice to Values. USA. Yale.
- de Jong, P & Berg, I K (2002) *Interviewing for Solutions* Brooks Cole Publishers
- Luft, J., & Ingham, H. (1955) 'The Johari Window as a graphic model of interpersonal awareness' University of California, Los Angeles, Extension Office *Proceedings of the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development*
- Rotter, J.B. and Mulry, R.C. (1965) 'Internal versus external control of reinforcement and decision time', *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 2(4), pp. 598–604. Available at: [Internal versus external control of reinforcement and decision time. – EBSCO](#) [Accessed 18/11/2024]
- Sadd, J (2014) *Why advocacy provides the seeds of empowerment* Available at: [Why advocacy provides the seeds of empowerment – Social care](#) [Accessed 18/11/2024]
- Thomson, N. (2016) *Anti-Discriminatory Practice*. U.K. Palgrave.
- Wilks, T. (2012) *Advocacy and Social Work Practice*. U.K. McGraw-Hill.