

Counsellor process notes

Notice my blinking in the first few moments when I am at my most nervous before settling into the process.

2.24 – “this is between us” – not true in this context, something I can say to clients but isn’t applicable here.

2.50 – “straight from brain to mouth” – I am a human being who wants this to be a safe zone for the client. I am not over formal and I am warm and things I say aren’t ‘polished’.

3.40 – “Anticipatory feeling” – explaining what I have heard, which helps client feel like I want to understand and I am listening

3.43 – client: “Thank you” client liked the word

4.00 – Check for confidentiality of remote working - cats coming in etc. Human, not over formal, client can relax.

5.00 – client referring to documents, for good of viewer rather than natural for client perhaps? Understandable.

6.34- clients awareness of what he is saying and how he is saying it shows he is familiar with self reflection and awareness. Self-scrutiny.

8.20 – clients minimal eye contact during explanation of situation- own nature or not yet comfortable with me / situation.

9.30 – OK to dart about – wrapping the client in acceptance and warmth.

9.40 – Ink in glass of water – visual representation of what had been discussed, landed for client.

10.33 - client: “I really love that”

11.44 and 12.14- mutual smiles – alliance being formed.

13.00 – This explanation was very clear in my head, but lost shape as it came out of my mouth. Though client seemed to respond positively to the muddle.

14.00 – client ‘took’ haunted as a fitting word.

14.47- clarification of ‘coping strategies’ – to catch all strategies.

15.18- My eyes betrayed some of the concern I felt that Ken may be talking about things which are highly personal and this recording is intended to be shared with others.

15.28 – I was pleased I didn’t take the opportunity to smile or congratulate Ken for being off drugs and alcohol – I am not here to praise him and he doesn’t need to impress me. I would have accepted him then as I do now.

15.49 – Ken laughing and smiling describing his reliance on substances – I didn’t share this. Mirroring smiles and laughter isn’t always appropriate, this is one such example.

17.20 – heavy emotion shared here. Myself feeling tears coming into my eyes due to the pain I see in a man who cannot accept his past self, when that man needs acceptance more than anything.

17.33 – “because it is you, you can’t extent that compassion?” Helping the client to gain clarity on what he is actually saying by saying what I have heard.

20.45 – Not sharing smiles when topic isn’t a happy one.

21.15 – reflection of ‘impossibly high bar’ relating to autism. Prompted further exploration from client.

23.52 – Paraphrase – invited more exploration from client. Looking back I think it may have been more useful perhaps to consider the ‘illusion’ of control the client speaks of.

24.25 – Client realised he had said ‘I never will’ - this is the power of stating back to the client the things they have said – the further exploration can reveal new learning.

26.40 – ‘big stick’ – further exploration spontaneously from client.

27.05 – Client laughing, laughter not shared by counsellor as content is incredibly painful and heavy. I think it may have been helpful to actually say this to client ‘I can’t share your laughter’

27.18 – “ like you’re constantly punishing yourself for who you were” – very quick “yes” from client, this seemed to land right.

28.55 – again a wide eyed look from me as I ask a question which may lead into disclosure which I am concerned about on behalf of Ken. I think I could have verbalised this and just stated my own fears of opening up a topic which Ken didn’t feel conformable going into in this setting. Though I’m sure he would have said and we can delete any videos etc.

31.56: “Lonely, maybe not lonely...” – Reflection. Prompted further exploration.

32.36: Client: “I’m very loved” – mutual smiles. This is something I say to my son so this really triggered my own depth of feeling to this particular phrasing.

34.40- “Interesting you should say that, when you can’t accept the whole of you, all of you” noticing the total contrast in what the client feels from others and how he sees his own past self.

34.42: Exhalation from client – reflection felt relevant. “wow” This is why it is so important to hold the entirety of the client in mind throughout, rather than simply reflecting and paraphrasing things said immediately before responding. Attending to deeper themes can be very valuable.

35.00 – I was emotional here, wet eyed. Wishing like hell the client could accept all of him. Went back to questions here, conscious of time but also perhaps moving away from my own emotions.

35.38- “tentative” in response to client’s response. Saying what I hear. Led to deeper exploration.

37.00 – Time permitting I would normally have explored if the client is going to see our work as well as an opportunity to see ‘how a counsellor counsels’ and how it will be different and more productive this time.

37.34 – Very conscious here of sensitive content around harm to self. Big eyed look.

38.36 – here I have gone still as I am putting myself into the hotel room with the client. I find this happens naturally and seems to help me to journey with the client. I also became emotional during this time when the client talked of tears over his eyes. Feeling some of the emotion the client perhaps denies himself around such a heart wrenching moment.

41.00 – I would have liked to talk about this more but felt very conscious of time. This does happen and is part of managing time, things have to be missed at times, but can be returned to later.

42.25- Hand on face showing how I am trying to hold the enormity of the clients experience.

43.30 – Rather than reflect on the particulars here, due to time constraints I focused on the cognitive process I had seen at play. How the client is aware of what he is saying and the possible insights he can gain from reflecting on what he speaks about first. This may have been perceived as diminishing, by the client.

45.02 – Quick ending as emotional and worried about time!! Would usually prefer to summarise or invite client to consider his thoughts about session under normal circumstances.