

# **Additive Empathetic Responding**

**Jacob Campbell, Ph.D. LICSW at Heritage University**  
**Fall 2025 Week 12 SOWK 530**

## **Agenda**

- Week 12 expectations
- Additive empathy and interpretation

## **Learning Objectives**

- Identify and apply the components of additive empathy and interpretive responses in client interactions.

**Plan for  
Week 12**

# Week 12 Activities

## What You Should Be Doing This Week

**Read** and do  
a quiz for  
chapter 17

### Six Replies Across any of the Forums

- Chapter 17 Discussion
- Develop a Handout or Information Sheet About Content in the Chapter
- Exploring the Meaning and Use of Confrontation in Practice
- Practice Effective Assertive Confrontation
- Using Reddit to Practice Surface and Additive Empathetic Responses

# Types of Empathy

## Fundamental Expressions

### Emotional Empathy

expressed feeling and an understanding that infers or reflects clients' emotions

### Cognitive Empathy

is the translation of such feelings into words

# Components of Empathy

## Three Parts of Empathetic Responding

We recognize ourselves  
as different and similar  
to the client

Self-Awareness

Skills in both turning on  
receptivity and turning it  
off

Person  
sharing  
something to  
respond to

Affective Sharing

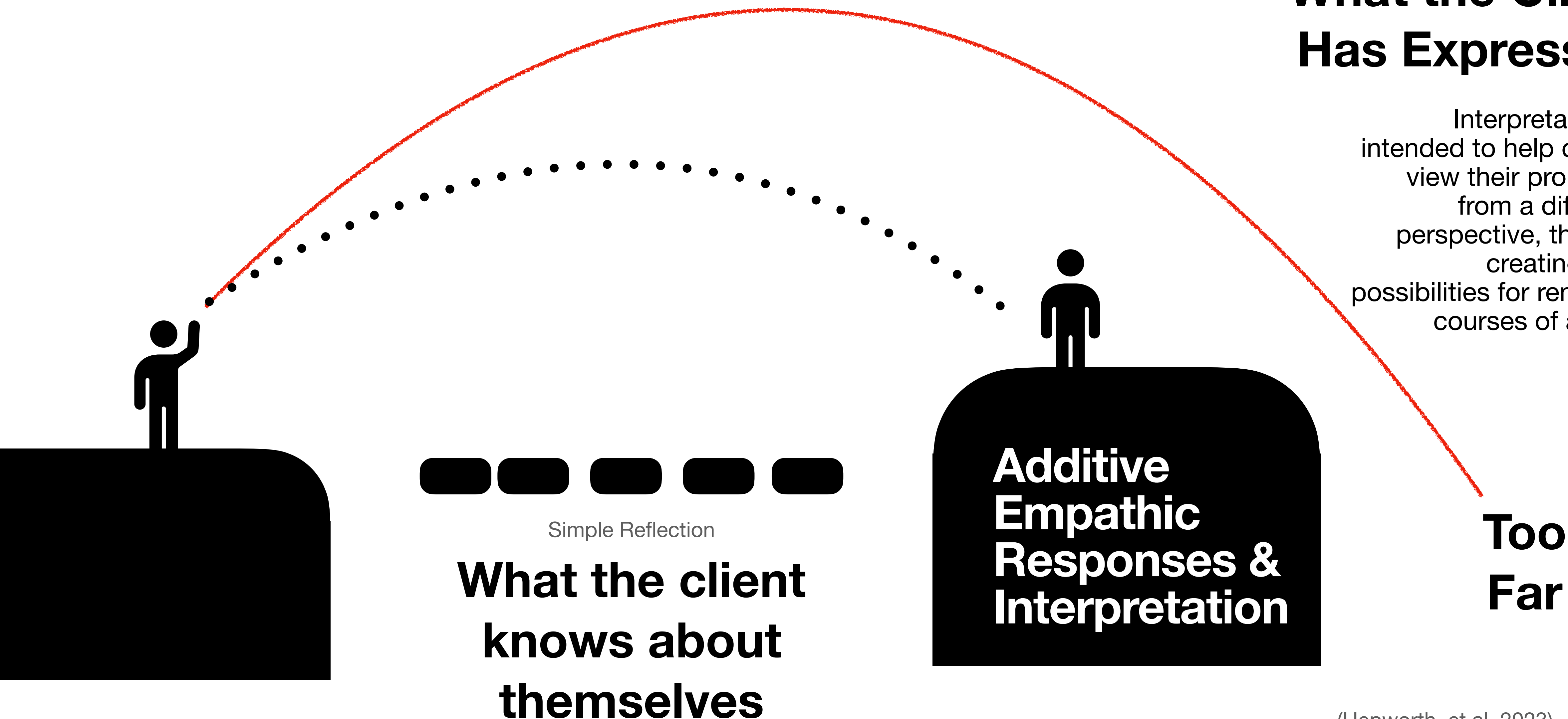
Empathy

Mental Flexibility

(Hepworth, et al. 2017)

# Going Beyond What the Client Has Expressed

Interpretation is intended to help clients view their problems from a different perspective, thereby creating new possibilities for remedial courses of action



(Hepworth, et al. 2023)

# Pitfalls of Additive Empathy

(Hepworth, et al. 2023)

## Moderate Interpretations vs. Deep Interpretations

- Working relationship has evolved
- Engaged and ready for self-exploration
- Pitch these responses to the edge of clients' self-awareness
- Avoid making several additive empathic responses in succession
- Phrase interpretive responses in tentative terms
- Note clients' reactions after offering the interpretation
- Acknowledge your probable error & respond empathically
- Culturally differences



# Ways of Using Additive Empathy

## What Context Do we Use it

- Deeper feelings
  - Identify feelings implied or hinted at in clients' verbal messages
  - To identify feelings that underlie surface emotions
  - To clarify the nature of feelings clients express only vaguely
  - To identify feelings manifested only nonverbally
  - Challenging beliefs stated as facts



# Ways of Using Additive Empathy

## What Context Do we Use it

- Deeper feelings
- Underlying meanings of feelings, thoughts, and behavior
- Wants and goals
- Hidden purposes of behavior
- Challenge beliefs stated as facts
- Unrealized strengths and potentialities