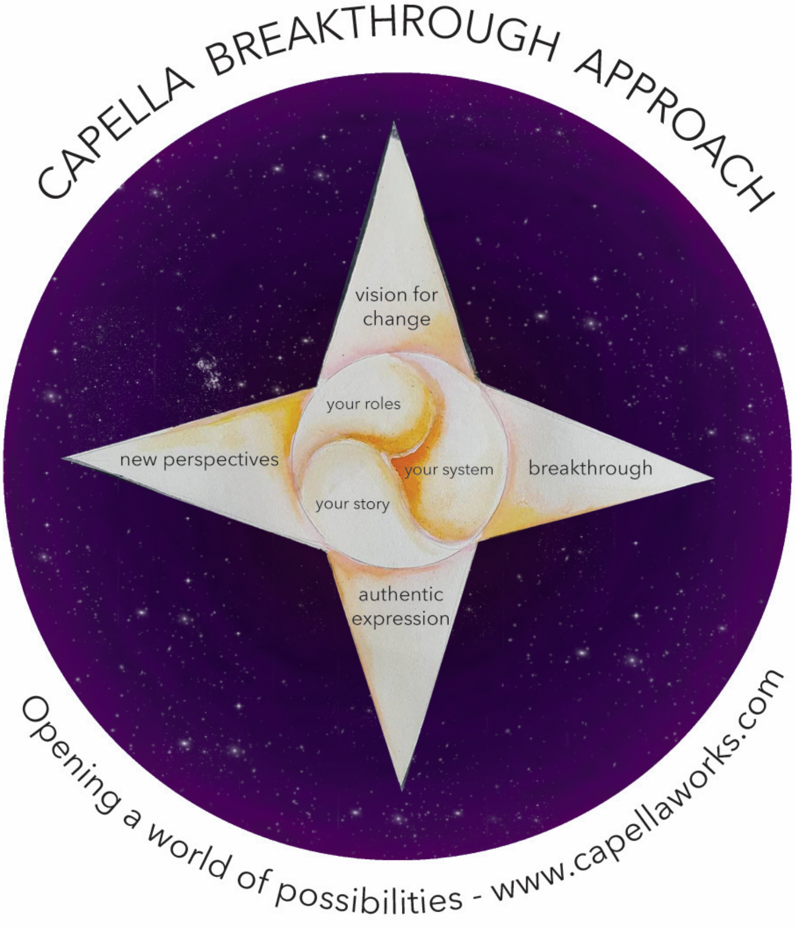
Capella's Breakthrough Journey Coaching & Facilitation Skills Handbook



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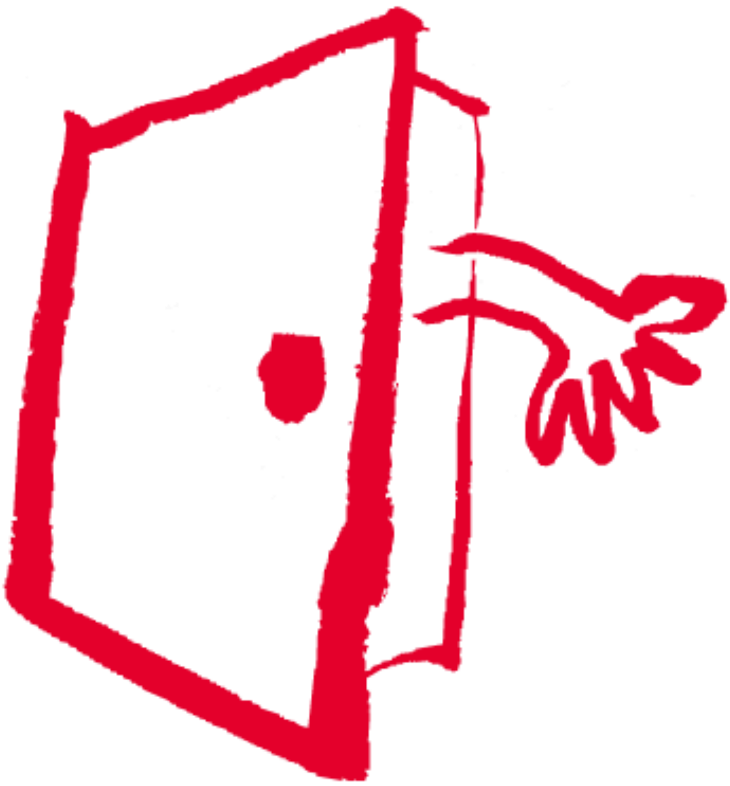

Capella's Breakthrough Journeys and 1:1 coaching sessions are designed to support both people and organisational development processes, focussing on developing effectiveness, engagement, wellbeing, creativity and innovation.

This handbook is a resource for anyone interested in integrating our Breakthrough Journey approach into their professional practice as they support others with change and transformation.

My grateful thanks to my sociodrama tutors Francis Batten and Ron Weiner for so much good learning, and to colleagues and business partners for all the great ideas and support. And to anyone reading…. have fun, trust the process, and enjoy!

Jos

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Capella's Breakthrough model

A triple focus

We use innovative and creative techniques to re-shape issues in three key areas:

1. Your stories
2. Your systems
3. Your role states

The four experiences

We believe these are vital in order to transform problems and develop opportunities:

1. Gain new perspectives
2. Experience authentic expression
3. Create vision for change
4. Achieve breakthrough

Stories

We work with 'old story/new story', discovering patterns of inhibiting beliefs and world views, then creating and bringing to life new 'self-stories' which empower and enable change and innovation.

Systems

We help you understand the influences, networks and structures which shape your world. Clarifying what aspect of a system is behind a particular issue is key to resolving it and moving things forward.

Roles

We work with you to identify both strengths and gaps in your approaches and skills, using role mapping and role training. You can then more consciously step into innovative and productive role states such as 'creative thinker' and 'effective strategist'.

Creative problem solving

When we access a state of deep connection with ourselves, others and the world around us, we feel more peaceful, alert, purposeful and alive. Problem solving becomes easier, solutions present themselves intuitively and collaboration flows. By dropping your brainwaves from a beta to an alpha state, you can feel simultaneously more relaxed and more alert and perceptive. In this way remarkable things can be achieved.

Our sessions are designed to support people in accessing this state of natural connection and insight to make deep and lasting change.

Kinaesthetic working

The activities detailed in this handbook get people up on their feet rather than sitting at a table. This can be as simple as standing in a line to demonstrate where you stand, literally and figuratively, in a discussion. It frequently involves movement in connection with other people in a group, getting people out of their heads and connecting with each other. Active approaches mean that as well as engaging our full creativity, fully engaged participation is easier to achieve, and creative, spontaneous solutions naturally emerge, providing excellent conditions for innovation and growth.

Unlocking unconscious solutions

We believe that most people are much smarter than they realise, and that everyone is hard-wired to tell and respond to stories and the world of the imagination. Capella's approach deliberately creates a relaxed and imaginative environment, offering multiple opportunities to step back, see the bigger picture and tell the story of what we see, leading others as we do so.

The 'magic' of this process happens as we trick the brain into unlocking the unconscious solutions it holds hidden from view. We do this through using concretisation (representing abstract ideas with objects / in physical space): when solution seeking this is done by imagine yourself into a story where you have already solved the problem — then working backwards from there becomes surprisingly easy.

Capella Breakthrough Journey practitioner roles

As a Breakthrough Journey practitioner, you will work with three key roles.

As a **coach or group facilitator**, you will be listening, observing, asking the right questions and giving useful feedback to enable learning about self and situation to take place.

As a **storyteller**, you will be offering your clients a powerful and engaging way of holding and sharing information and insight, using the power of the imagination to open up new possibilities and learn from significant events.

And as a **systems enactment director**, you will help those you are supporting to bring their inner and outer world system to life in the room, allowing them the space to rehearse, experiment, explore and directly dialogue with key aspects of self, notional others and even abstract concepts or states such as 'innovation', 'frustration' or 'inner peace'.

These three roles of **coach**, **storyteller** and **enactment director** weave together fluidly, allowing the practitioner and client to work together to recognise emerging issues and arrive at key breakthrough realisations. As a Breakthrough Journey practitioner you will be sensitive to emerging truths, attuned to your own somatic process, alert to your client's patterns and potential change points.

The three levels of being: me, others and the wider world

Breakthrough Journey practitioners pay attention to three levels of our 'self story': clients' internal states or self-relationship (intra-personal), their relationships with others (inter-personal) and their presence and actions in the wider world (social). These levels each affect the other: the impact of constructive inner re-alignment is largely testable by trying out new approaches in the relationship or external situations spheres, while these in turn can often only be shifted or influenced by a change in the inner state. Consequently during any given session we move our focus fluidly between these levels, in response to the emerging needs of the client.

Supporting human communities

As human beings we have a fundamental need to be part of community, supporting each other, both inspired and held steady by good leadership. In order to create these conditions, we need to spend time together, to get to know each other, share ideas and best practice, problem solve and create connections.

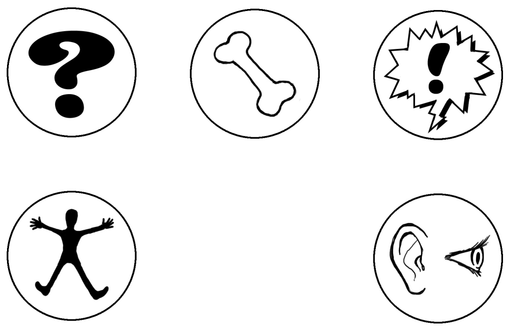
Our job is to support groups in creating these cultural conditions and processes. By taking the time to find out what is known by participants, we ensure each session is fully focused on exploring their opportunities, challenges and needs, helping them to form open, supportive relationships and leading people on a journey they will both enjoy and remember.

Mapping systems

Systems mapping is a great way to help people move out of silos and begin to understand other people's roles or challenges. These activities can be the beginning of the journey towards greater empathetic connection.

Mapping and enactment work can be used to better understand organisational structures and explore options for re-shaping and creating new internal alliances. It can also be used within teams to map collaboration potential or develop interpersonal skills such as negotiation or rapport building.

The art of storytelling



Being able to tell someone their own story can be a powerful change experience, whether your audience is an individual coaching client or a group your are facilitating.

In essence story-telling techniques can be reduced to the following 'how-to' tips:

Using a memory technique called 'bare bones'

Strip the story back, mentally listing its absolute essentials (you should be able to count these on the fingers of one hand).

Enter an imaginative, creative state where a detailed picture emerges as you describe events

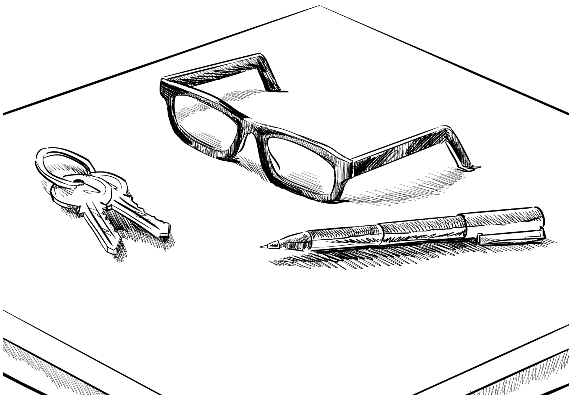
This helps you to bring the listener with you into the story. The key here is showing a situation through the senses – what you can actually see, hear, and feel – rather than describing abstract states such as 'angry' or 'happy'.

You trust your creativity at this point rather than trying to remember or rehearse a fixed performance – if you get self-conscious, a good mantra is 'any old rubbish' – whatever comes out of your mouth will be perfect, and this is a good way of silencing an inner critic.

Use your body and voice to add further magic to the telling

You can gesture to unseen objects or places, using pose to 'become' a character, speaking quietly or more loudly, using rhythm or dramatic pauses. These performance skills are to be used with caution in 1:1 work, as for an audience of one a full-on performance can be a little overwhelming – however, they are still useful to keep in mind as subtle enhancements, and can also be very useful during system enactment activities, where they make the experience of 'inhabiting' an imaginative space much richer, becoming great development tools for clients to try out as they experiment with new ways of being.

Concretisation is storytelling



In its simplest form, concretisation – the use of objects to represent abstractions such as absent people, events or qualities – is storytelling. You use nothing but the imagination when you say, 'this cushion is now representing my manager'. Without an understanding of storytelling, and how powerful our imaginations are in making all things possible, this work is hard to comprehend. If you have confidence in the power of the story-telling process, even the most sceptical of clients is freed up to follow you down the path of creativity and possibilities.

Our ultimate goal is to support our clients in becoming their own story-tellers, re-shaping their life stories so they can move forward with a confident belief in what is possible and how they can move things forward.

Breakthrough psychology

Can behaviours really be transformed?

When working with business clients to look at their organisational challenges and opportunities, we hear again and again how important it is for them to motivate the people they work with.

We have all been part of organisations which are locked into a negative downward spiral, with high staff turnover and the consequent loss of expertise, time and money.

Most people have also been in team situations where one person with a negative mind-set or behaviours has had the capacity to torpedo progress and development far beyond their official sphere of influence or level of seniority.

Yes I can... using solutions-focussed psychology to create positive change

Our approaches are all underpinned by positive psychology, which is about developing and enhancing well-being, resilience and a solutions-focused approach to life. Rather than focusing on problems, we try to define existing successes – and ask how can these be extended or replicated. In this way we grow both optimism and creativity.

Growth mindsets

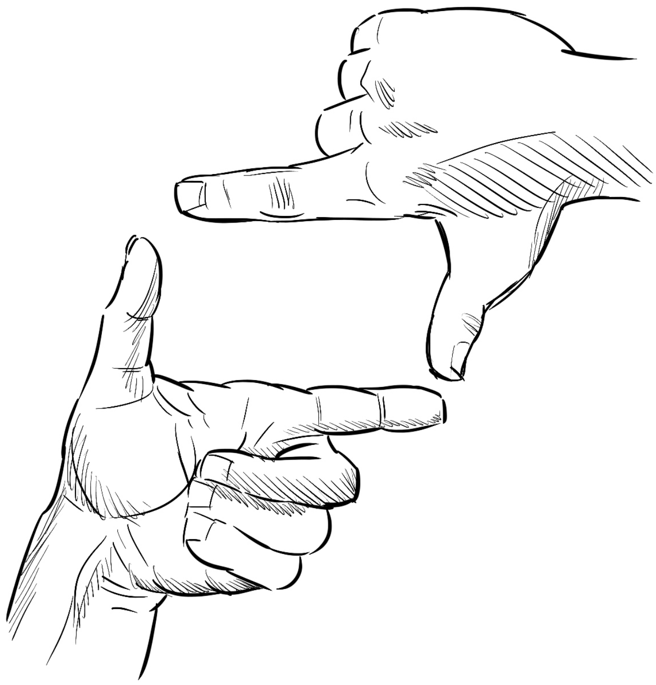
We support everyone we work with to adopt a **growth mindset.** This means taking an experimental approach, trying new things in order to learn, putting in effort to gain mastery, learning from mistakes and actively seeking feedback, rather than fearing failure and avoiding exposure.

Mindfulness

In all our work we offer 'pause points' to raise awareness, practice noticing and staying fully present in the moment. Research has found that the use of mindfulness can have a direct impact on the brain's 'hard wiring', and that frequent use develops both resilience and clarity of thinking.

Re-Framing

This powerful change tool invites deeper reflection about beliefs and assumptions relating to self, wider world and future. We interpret events and situations via the 'lens' of our self beliefs: if these are negative, we make negative assumptions and assign meanings which confirm our original self / world view. By questioning the validity of these kind of beliefs and assumptions, and looking for more objective evidence, we can start to change them, which in turn allows for new approaches – hopefully creating a positive upwards spiral change effect.



Resilience

Being realistically optimistic, bouncing back in the face of setbacks through accessing internal 'mental toughness', staying determined and taking things a step at a time: all these are attributes of resilience, enabling people to persevere until they succeed. Many people you work with will have already developed significant resilience during their life journey, and acknowledging this can further increase internal strengths and resources.

Believing in others

Evidence shows that other people's unspoken beliefs and assumptions about what you are capable of makes a direct impact on your progress and achievement. This of course works in reverse so by showing you believe in the potential of those around you, you are becoming a powerful force for positive change. At every stage we work to show people their full potential and believe in the very best versions of themselves and their work.

Positive psychology - PERMA for wellbeing

The acronym PERMA stands for:

- **P**ositive emotions
- **E**ngagement
- **R**elationships
- **M**eaning
- **A**ccomplishment

Positive psychologists believe that these five attributes are key to creating and sustaining well-being and happiness. You can talk to clients about which of these are well-established in their lives, and which need more attention and development.

Positive emotions can be consciously developed, through establishing some very simple habits and routines. These might include any of the following:

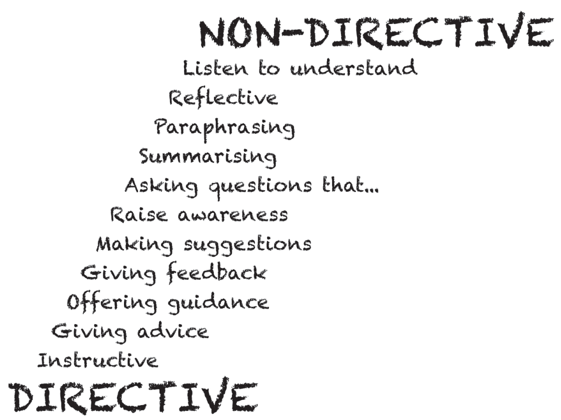
- Write down 3 good things at the end of each day
- Practice gratitude – notice all the things in your life which are good and say thank-you to the world.
- Look in the mirror and smile at yourself
- Try to be your own best friend
- Write nice things about yourself – or ask others to write nice things about you – and stick them on the wall where you can regularly see them
- Practice deep breathing – this really helps your mood and wellbeing
- Use physical exercise to increase endorphins and wellbeing
- Smile and laugh, even if it feels mechanical at first – the muscle movement boosts the chemicals in your brain which make you feel happy
- Help others in small ways where this is welcomed and possible – it makes you feel better as well as generating mutual goodwill and wellbeing

Coaching, mentoring and facilitation

Coaching and mentoring are both approaches which draw out skills and help give a sense of choice, purpose and direction. Gaining confidence in working out your own solutions and experiment with different approaches can be transformative. A good coaching relationship makes people feel special, fully seen and heard, and creates a place where you know that what you think and feel are important. This in itself can be a transformative experience.

What's the difference between coaching and mentoring?

Coaching is a non-directive activity, which uses skilled listening and reflective questioning to help the client work out solutions and effective strategies for themselves. Coaches will offer feedback and make suggestions, but they don't need to know more than their client does about the focus of the conversation to be of use to them.



Mentoring is a more directive relationship. A mentor will often have more experience than their mentee – whether this is industrial/professional experience and skills or life experience. Mentors are more likely to use their know-how to make constructive suggestions and give advice.

Group facilitation work often requires a delicate and sometimes frequently shifting balance between these two roles. However, change is usually more likely if the person works out, or at least articulates, ways forward for themselves. Knowing the difference between coaching and mentoring and explaining this to the groups you work with will make it easier to select the best approach in each situation.

A coaching checklist

This checklist is designed to help you keep 1:1 coaching sessions productive and on track. A bit of structure can go a long way!

Beginning: have you got a clear agreement with your client on the session focus?	
Clarify this by writing down your client's response to these two questions: 1. What would you like to focus on today? 2. How will you know if this session has helped you?	*Check*

Middle: are you fully client-centred?	
1. Have you asked for your client's ideas before making suggestions or giving feedback? *It's very easy to jump in with your insight or experience – consciously hold back with this so the client arrives at solutions wherever possible in their own time, making the discovery fully their own.* 2. Are you fully unpacking information before exploring forward-looking options? *The options will be deeper and more effective when you reach them.* 3. Have you helped your client by supporting them to self-notice? *For example, you pause and follow through if you hear them say:* • *"When I feel that way then...."* • *"I think sometimes part of me really wants to..."* 4. Have you 'noticed' with them? *Look for opportunities for developing insights and making internal shifts: re-framing, growing strengths and developing self-agency. Explain these concepts, as this kind of 'psych-ed' offers very useful learning.* 1. Have you used concretisation? *This gives tangible control and deepens the change work. Use objects, post-it notes, empty chairs, drawings etc.*	*Check*

End: are you both clear on the way forward?	
1. Are recorded actions in your client's words not yours? This ensures ownership and full accountability. Actions should be specific, doable, able to be followed up and written down. 2. Have you referred back to the agreement you made at the beginning of the session about the work to be done? *Questions here might include: "Have we done this? What's the impact? How has this left you?"* 3. Have you asked for feedback? *Asking for feedback shows that you take the work seriously and also models reflective practice. Feedback is important for all clients in all sessions. You may not need to use prompt questions – if you do you could try something like:* *'What worked best for you in this session? Is there anything I could do to improve?'* *I have a section on my (computer based) notes for feedback, and either record it as the client speaks, or hand them a laptop or notepad for them to write it down. An example of a more detailed feedback sheet you can send your client for completion outside the session is included overleaf.*	*Check*

At all points

1. Ask yourself, 'am I fully present?' Am I staying tuned in and conscious?

Kindness and gentle reassuring humour is great. Be really professional in your role, and show you highly value the coaching relationship. Celebrate where you see good things, be 100% positive about potential, aspiration and what can be achieved through effort and self-belief.

2. Has your client done most of the talking?

Give lots of room and space – your client should be doing most of the work, remember that you're just facilitating the process and supporting them on the way

Group facilitation skills

There are a number of factors which contribute to facilitation best practice:

Set up the room for action

Whenever possible using a circle of chairs in the centre with tables pushed back round the edge. This signifies a different kind of experience from the minute the group walk into the room, is great for getting participation during group debrief, and is also a key part of the warm-up, signalling your expectation that people will share and get involved. You can ask the group to help with moving furniture if you're short of time – the process can function as a team warm-up activity.

Group bonding

Help people learn names and a little bit about each other. The more individual bonds there are across a group the stronger that group will be, so explain this is why you will continue to mix up pairs and small groups throughout the day.

Group contract

Make sure you have a clear contract with the group – what do you all want to achieve together, how will you know if you've done so? – and orientate them with a basic plan for the day / programme. agree basics dos and don'ts to create a safe working space for everyone

Pace

Keep the pace engaging, but don't go so fast that people don't have time to process as this may cause them to feel overwhelmed. Pay close attention to the group in order to sense when the pace needs to be picked up to energise the room, or dropped down to allow for full participation and assimilation of learning.

Differentiation

Create opportunities for faster participants to extend what they have done, or support others in completion. Use open checking questions or discreet assessment activities to make sure everyone is clear about content and new concepts. Find ways to simplify content/explanations when needed for individuals.

Stay flexible

Be prepared to follow the group and leave your plan behind or adapt it if it's clear that there are issues which really matter, need to be followed or need more time. If you can’t do this, explain why, which shows that you’ve noticed the issue and take it seriously.

Co-facilitation

If you have someone helping you, make sure you check beforehand who will lead on which activity, and leave room for observations and input from your partner.

Rehearse key instructions

It can help to plan these in advance – this level of clarity inspires confidence in the group.

Model new activities

You can use notional ‘pause’ and ‘play’ buttons to stop the activity periodically and comment on what you’re doing and why, as well as get feedback from the group on what they see, leaving ample space for their questions.

Resources

Many of the activities described here will use scrap paper / A4 / post-it notes and marker pens. Rolls of wall-paper lining paper are great when working with groups, as everyone can see and easily add to what’s recorded.) Found objects (from bags, in the room, keys, pens etc) can be good markers when mapping. A laminator really helps make bespoke resources feel more professional.

Responding to disruption

Even with great preparation, confidence and experience, things don’t always go smoothly, and it’s important to remain clear that despite your considerable influence on the group experience, group members will still sometimes bring disruptive experiences and attitudes into the room. In these cases if you can sustain a peaceful, mindful approach, noticing what’s happening and responding professionally rather than internalising a sense of failure, the group will stay safe and is much more likely to be able to absorb the problem than be derailed by it.

Responding to whole group resistance

Points where a whole group experiences resistance to an activity tend to be signalled by behaviours such as restless shifting, nervous laughter, disengagement (lack of eye contact), or passive hostility. This is usually because the activity is moving the group out of their comfort zone, asking them to try new skills or experiences. Noticing this aloud with the group and referring back to the growth mindset concept is a powerful and effective response, which generally re-assures people. Remind them that resistance is a normal response, to be expected and not feared.

On other occasions groups experience resistance when they are collectively triggered by unconscious feelings acted out by group members. This is less usual in a professional environment when the session is being well run, but might happen for example during an organisational re-structure, when people are feeling insecure. Finding out about organisational conditions before working with a group will help you to depersonalise these experiences and maintain a mindful and supportive approach with your group, helping keep the group safe and positive.

Listening and asking questions

What’s the question?

Understanding what questions to ask and when are essential aspects of working collaboratively and effectively. Engaging your own curiosity about the other person and their circumstances is a good place to start when forming questions. Open questions are more useful than closed questions. Here are examples of both:

1. Closed question: How much exercise do you need each week?

2. Open question: What would "being fit" look like for you?

The closed question might be making an assumption that exercise is the way in which the other person would like to improve their fitness. Closed questions often point to solutions imagined by the person asking the question rather than those discovered by the person answering.

Open questions allow space and time to think, reflect and form answers. Very often the best are short questions and might provoke silence. Sitting in silence might feel uncomfortable for both of you and requires patience and often courage. The end result, however, can be powerful.

The following question types will all elicit different kinds of information:

1. Summarising: “What I’m hearing is….?”

2. Unpacking / going deeper: “Can you tell me more about…?”

3. Temperature checking: “How comfortable do you feel with…?”

4. Forward action prompt: “So how can you make that happen…?”

5. Checking motivation: “So why did you….?”

6. Developing self-awareness: “What do you notice about yourself then?”

7. Learning from the past: “What might you do differently if that happened again?”

8. Offering a theory about what was going on, then checking your client's understanding of this theory or perspective: "Can you give me another example of…? What do you think this means….?"

9. Language for making suggestions / offering feedback:
    - "I wonder if…."
    - "I might be wrong about this, but I'm guessing that…."
    - "Maybe… what do you think?"

Listening skills carousel

Being a 'good listener' means different things depending on the situation you're in: keeping an ear open for your children at home while you listen to the radio needs 'cosmetic' listening skills, while chatting socially involves conversational listening skills – turn taking, interrupting etc. When someone is actively listening they concentrate to take in information – you can tell this is happening by the level of eye contact and their attentive body language.

Deep listening requires you to create an empathetic connection, entering an energetic feeling state which allows you to listen to someone on several levels at once – to what they are apparently telling you as well as the often unspoken truth behind their words. This kind of listening takes energy, and can't be sustained for long periods without resourcing yourself effectively. It can be a very useful skill to have as a facilitator or coach; in fact, it is probably the most important one.

How it works

1. Create two concentric circles of people, the inner one facing out and the outer one facing in, creating a circle of facing pairs.

2. Ask each pair to designate who will speak initially and who will listen.

3. The speaker will talk for one minute only about a topic assigned by the facilitator (a subject which is easy to think of something quickly is useful – for example, telling a story involving alcohol). The facilitator uses a stopwatch to time it. The other person does not speak, attempt to clarify or ask questions, only making eye contact and using body language to show that they are listening (for example nodding and holding an open posture).

4. After the minute, the listener feeds back everything they can remember and the speaker stays silent, not interrupting or clarifying anything.

5. Once the listener has finished feeding back to the speaker, then the speaker can fill in anything missing from the story.

6. The people on the outer circle then stand up and move one seat to the left. Everyone now has a new partner. Speakers and listeners reverse roles. The former listeners speak for a minute using something from their own experience, not repeating the story they just heard. The process is the same.

7. The group then reforms as a whole and discusses their learning. How did it feel to know that you could speak and someone was mandated to listen? How did it feel to speak and know you were not going to be interrupted? How often do we listen with such intention?

Group warm-ups

Why warm up your group?

You are likely to encounter less resistance if, before starting an activity, you fully engage group members through plenty of warm-up. While time pressures can mean it's tempting to reduce this stage, generally work is much more effective when the group has been fully warmed up to their task. There are **four key areas of warm-up**:

Warm up to action

Activities which get the group moving round the room, loosening up, being spontaneous, being part of a crowd activity (for example, map of the world and continuum lines - see next page for activity details).

Warm up to topic

Activities involving easy pre-tasks to get the group thinking or recalling previous topics (barter cards, four corners, find-the-answer matching cards)

Warm up to the group

Activities which help the group get to know each other (step forward if, you'd never guess, find someone who). Sharing anecdotes and story 'snapshots' can be a good way to approach this too.

Warm up to full participation

Explain the concept of growth mindsets. After activities, notice any good participation levels, remark on these. Make this a key value of the group (you're the leader, so this is part of your responsibility)

All of the following warm-up activities are designed to get groups moving about, relaxing, enjoying themselves, working as a team and preparing to be fully engaged in the main content of the session.

Warm-up activities

Check in

Ask participants to talk about their day/week/year, speaking not as themselves but as an object they carry with them most of the time, such as keys, phone, shoes or bag. Encourage them to use the first person as the object, so they talk about themselves in the third person: "I'm Jason's keys. He's needed me a lot this week as he's been constantly in and out of the house, driving everywhere. He's been a bit stressed at points, but yesterday felt much better because…" This activity warms participants up to concretisation, using their imaginations, speaking about themselves in the third person and sharing personal experiences and states. An all-rounder, so a good starting point.

Step forward if

People stand in a circle. Someone says 'step forward if'... (for example: if you have more than 2 siblings, if you play an instrument etc). This is then randomly repeated by others on whatever topics they choose. This activity gives group members a chance to satisfy curiosity and make connections with each other.

Map of the world

Ask people to spread out and make a 'map' to show where they were born, where they live now or their favourite place (the team work is for the group to determine directions, relative distances etc). Ask a few people to talk about this place.

4 corners

Designate 4 corners with any category set (eg. 'agreement with proposition: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree', or 'learning styles: activist, theorist, pragmatist, reflector'). Ask people to go to the corner they most identify with. They can then talk to others in that corner about their choice. Finally, buddy with someone from a different corner to debrief (discuss any observations, internal reactions or points of interest regarding the activity they have just performed). This can be repeated with different category sets as required.

Barter cards

This is a great activity for either reviewing or introducing a set of key concepts, and a lot of fun for participants. Print out your chosen concepts on A4 paper, then cut into strips or ‘cards’, laminating if you want to re-use them. Each group member takes a card, then mingles with others, enthusing about the value and potential usefulness of the concept they currently own in an attempt to make a swap for a different card. Make sure the group keep moving on to ensure maximum coverage of concepts.

Continuum lines

This helps get information about the group quickly and without people having to speak out. For example: ‘Stand at this end of the line if you know a lot about this subject, at that end if you've never come across it before, or wherever you fit along the line. Check with people around you to decide whether you think you're standing in the right place'. Once everyone is in place, check with random people what it's like to be standing in their position.

Hand tangles

Get people in a circle. Ask them to step forward into a huddle, close their eyes, reach into the centre and take two random hands before opening their eyes to see the ‘tangle’. The team challenge is to untangle without letting go of hands (make sure you check first if anyone prefers not to have too much proximity, has a disability etc – give them an opt-out option to observe/suggest solutions from outside the circle instead).

Floating stick

Get a long bamboo stick, or similar. Groups of about 8 form two rows of 4+, facing each other. They then have the challenge to rest the stick on their forefingers only, and lower it to the ground without dropping it. (Hint – the trick is to relax and synchronise in 'flow', without too much fuss or control. They should work this out together).

Timelines

Ask the group to create a visual timeline together charting key moments in their collective history. Wallpaper lining paper is ideal for this. Mark in key milestones first, then fill in the gaps with both professional and personal memories. Sketching, colour and descriptive words will help bring this to life. When complete, ask the group to explore it together in pairs, noticing what stands out as significant, unexpected or useful.

Self-awareness and self-agency: working with roles

When we pay attention to what's happening inside ourselves we notice how what we call our personality is actually a composite of many different 'aspects of self' or role states, each with their own way of approaching the world. When these roles work together constructively life is easier and choices and actions can become more effective. When there is inner conflict between these internal roles, or over-developed roles are in the driving seat, we are more likely to have a hard time.

Most of the time we don't notice which part of us is in the driving seat, or make fully conscious choices about which role to draw on when responding to situations. We also often don't believe that a positive inner state can belong to us – even when we've experienced it in the past, at moments when life feels more negative, it can be hard to believe that previous strengths are still ours.

Developing a deep and visceral understanding that positive role states can exist and belong to us even when we can't easily access them or experience them spontaneously is one of the keys to healthy growth and positive change.

The following activities all offer more chances to learn more about the internal choices available to you, using physical objects to represent and then map these aspects of self, as well as key people or factors around you and your wider situation.

Once you're inside your story in this way, you can negotiate internal change more easily. By giving a voice to an aspect of self on the map, it is able to make requests, offers and negotiate, all to create more balance and positivity. This kind of concretisation (representing ideas with objects in physical space) is a powerful technique which makes it much easier to do this kind of exploration than talking about thoughts and feelings in the abstract.

It's important to remember that even seemingly negative aspects of self have been developed for a good reason in response to situations previously encountered, so we need to be respectful and considerate of all of them. This can be powerful work, so tread lightly at first, making sure that you focus mostly on positive aspects of self if you or the person you're working with is emotionally under-resourced.

The approaches and activities in this section can help when you see that emotional issues are adversely affecting your client's performance and wellbeing, and also more generally when you would like to precipitate self-awareness and behaviour change in those with more negative mind-sets and approaches. Emotional transformation is one of the most rewarding and energising aspects of great facilitation and coaching – tread mindfully, be respectful – but enjoy!

When working with 'deep state' processes and in creative flow, it is completely natural to be tuned in to your own and your client's emotional state and processes: we notice the heart, the mind, the body and the spirit. While all the activities in this section of the handbook are informed by emotional process work, this section more specifically explores ways of supporting clients with emotional transformation work.

2. Self

The activities in this section help clients to explore, understand and re-shape their self-relationship and self-narrative. This work underpins both the development of positive and supportive relationships with others, and the setting and realisation of intentions and changes in life situations.

The wheel of everything

Background

This tool is great to use in the first session as it shows you how your client feels about various areas of their life. It can also be a useful check-in tool if you want to see the bigger picture at any point or explore how things have shifted over time.

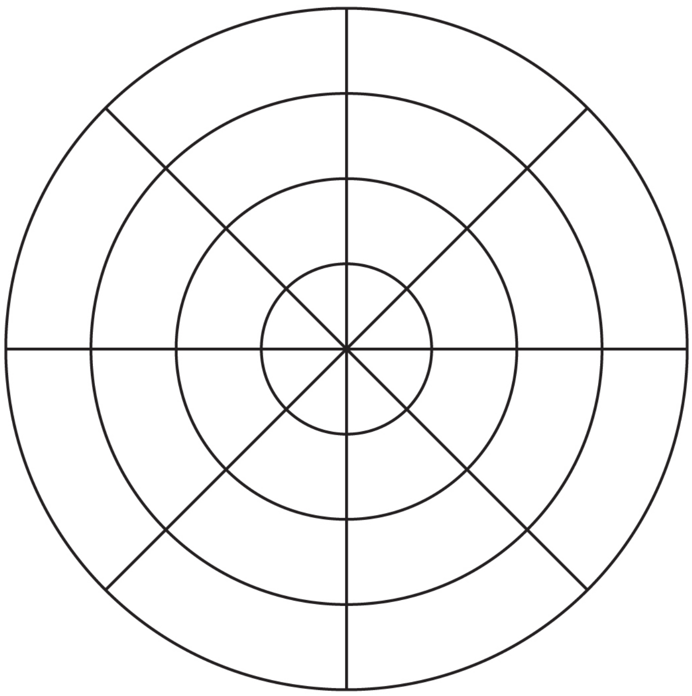
How it works

1. Work out together which areas of work and life are important, and use these to label the segments of the wheel (you can offer suggested categories or let the client determine these for themselves).

2. Scale each segment/category, using dots or crosses to show how easy/difficult things are for the client in this area. Nearer the centre things are easy and fulfilling – nearer the edge they are more challenging or areas of concern.

3. Once areas of contentment and concern are visible, these become the starting points for further discovery questions and exploration.

The wheel of everything



What areas of life are important to you?

Choose some from the list below, and/or add some of your own.

Mark how things are going for you in each area,

If things are going well or feel easy, mark near the centre of the circle in that segment.

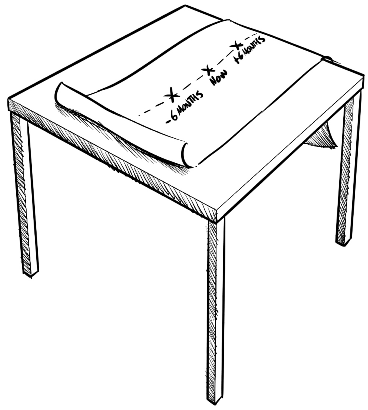
If things are going badly or feel more difficult, mark near the edge of the circle in that segment. Or anywhere in-between!

Then discuss what you see.

Home / family	***Relationships***	***Meaning / purpose / motivation***
Work skills	***Relaxation / wellbeing***	***Community***
Self-confidence	***Hobbies***	***Friendships***
Projects	***Health and fitness***	***Career development***

Timelines

Background



The object of this activity is to be able to clearly see what has happened in the past, ‘visit’ different time-points and notice the impact of events or key situations.

NB This activity can be very helpful while action planning, as in line with a solutions focused ‘appreciative enquiry’ approach you can find out what in the past has gone well and might be worth taking forward or further extending/replicating.

How it works

1. Discuss with your client the scope of the activity (what times will be included) and decide where the timeline will be laid out (you can use a table top or wallpaper roll on the floor).

2. Choose either random objects (items from their bag, chairs in the room etc.) or pieces of paper / post-it notes to mark key points on the timeline.

3. Accompany them as they place these markers, naming them either out loud or writing down what each one represents.

4. Once the timeline is in place, step back and ask them what they notice about it. Which points feel most important and why?

5. If they wish, they can ‘visit’ points on the timeline and reflect in more depth / detail about what happened there and the impact of this time on their life going forward.

6. As an optional extra they can then extend the timeline into the future and talk about what they’d like to happen going forward.

Developing internal resources: circle of strengths

Background

This exercise from psychodramatist helps clients to 'anchor' the internal and external resources available to them in life. This is an important pre-step when addressing potentially challenging issues, allowing deeper, safer and better held work to take place.

How it works

1. Suggest that before exploring the presenting issue, the client can if they wish create a physical 'circle of strengths', using objects and/or labels on A4 paper.

2. Explain that this will allow them to feel stronger and safer as they explore potentially challenging material.

3. Ask them to choose objects to represent each thing or aspect of self which gives them a feeling of strength and support (you can use coloured scarves if you have a collection of these available).

4. Name each object as it is laid on the floor to create a circle. Explain what it represents and how this gives strength, resource and wellbeing. Make sure the circle is big enough to do other activities within.

5. To deepen the activity, the client can alternatively speak 'as' the object, for example, "I am home. I give security and refuge… I'm comfortable and cosy and have been there for years."

6. When it looks like the circle is in place, check that it is fully completed. When you have confirmed nothing is missing, invite the client to step inside the circle, and experience what it feels like.

7. You can now explore the challenging material from a well-established 'safe space'.

When the session is complete, de-role the objects by naming each one, "You are not my best friends, you are a red scarf", and re-place them where they belong.

Continuum lines - re-framing ‘either/or’ thinking

Background

This is an enactment version of cognitive re-framing. Here we help participants to notice any negative core beliefs about their own state or potential, what evidence supports these and what evidence supports new, emerging and more enabling beliefs.

How it works

1. Use an object or labelled paper to mark the place of the self-belief: ‘I’m not creative’, ‘I always have to take responsibility’, ‘life is always too busy.’ The word ‘always’ is a clue to spotting these beliefs.

2. Invite your client/volunteers from a group to step into this role state and speak as this point of view, asking interview style questions to draw out information:
   - How long have you existed?
   - What needs to happen for the world to work best, from your point of view?
   - What happens in daily life which confirms your view of the organisation/world?

3. Create a continuum line, with a polar opposite marked at the other end by a chair, object or labelled paper. The old belief is at one end of the continuum. What belief might they find at the opposite end?

4. Ask your client/group volunteers to step into the space at the opposite end. They may need to do this before they can identify the belief there, and they may need you to model this if it’s a long way away from their inner experience and sense of ‘normal’.

5. Ask them to get into this mindstate first of all by finding a physical stance which represents the new state, if necessary imagining someone they consider to be very well-established in these areas.

6. Ask what it’s like to be at this end of the continuum. If the client/group is struggling to respond, step into the space yourself and get them to ask you questions, or if they can’t do this, speak directly from the role. Find out what feels possible at this end of the room, where in their life they could use more of this new quality.

7. Then walk up and down the space between the two extremes. Try out the middle ground, and speaking from there.

8. Debrief and share on feelings and learning from the activity.

Once upon a time… the power of the third person

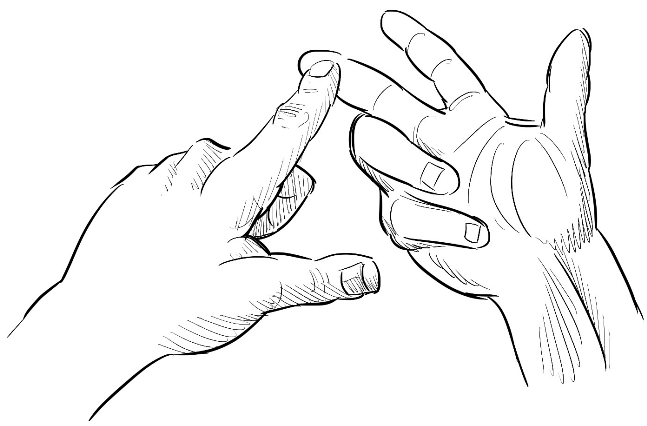
Background

This activity encourages participants to become the author of their own stories, re-shaping them to suit emerging creative purpose and intention. Storytelling creates an illusion of separation by speaking in the third person (he/she/it), allowing us to express our experience and knowledge of the world through a less personal or seemingly direct filter. This ‘illusion of distance’ is especially useful which telling our own stories.

How it works

1. Work out together the important parts of the story. This could be an overview of a whole team journey to date – what were the very key turning points? It could be a recent situation or event.

2. Count them off on the fingers of one hand. It can be helpful to have a beginning (what got the story started, some orientation), a middle (the central opportunity or challenge) and an end (response to this, anything that happened to move things forward). It might be that the end is an imagined one if you are looking ahead to the future.



3. Practice telling the story to each other in a simple form to a partner, who then tells it back, adding a bit more animation and descriptive detail.

4. Debrief, sharing how the story made you both feel, what was the important learning from the process, any surprises, anything it reminded you of in your own life (meeting someone with some personal sharing can build a lot of trust, as long as it is not something you need the client to keep confidential, as this is not their responsibility).

5. Participants can write the story down after the session has finished.

Post-it note role mapping

Background

In this table-top activity we use 2 colours of post-it notes or scraps of paper to map both external elements of a situation and the roles we use to respond to it, then re-align these more positively to gain inner peace, confidence, clarity and purpose. As an alternative to paper you can use objects for mapping – this can be more tangible and evocative/memorable – using either objects you've already found or anything that's to hand in the room.

How it works

1. Use the first colour post-it notes to map the elements of a situation: who is involved, any challenges, key opportunities, resources etc.

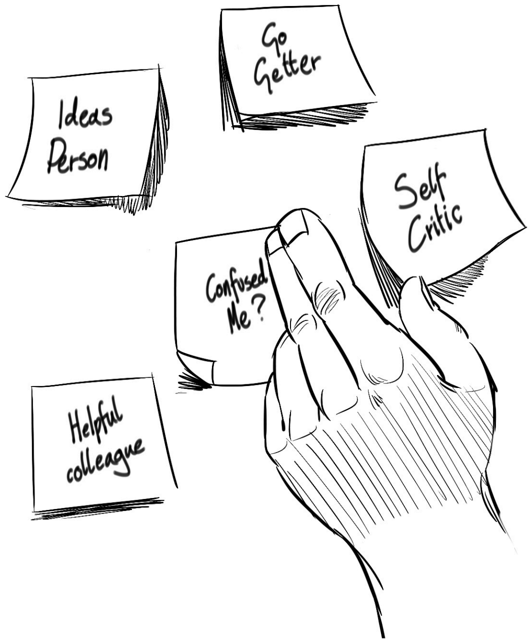
2. Check with your client, or group participants if you're using this with a group, how these various elements should be placed in relation to each other (what's central, what's peripheral, where the key connections are).

3. Use the second colour post-it notes to map typical role states used by the group – these are the ways we typically respond to the situation (enthusiastic follower, hard-working list-maker etc)

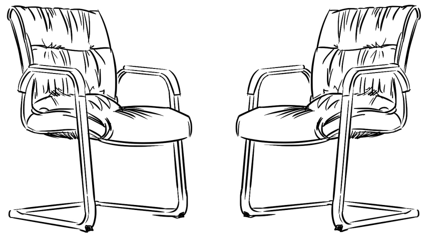
4.Ask the client/group to consider what new roles they might want to introduce in response to the situation, what existing roles are under- or over-used, and place post-it notes accordingly. Focus especially here on roles which capture innovative and creative approaches, such as 'ground-breaking experimenter' or similar.

5. If the client/group are sufficiently warmed-up to participation, ask them to speak from some of the roles marked on the post-it notes. For example, "As a creative innovator, it feels frustrating that we don't have time to get together and share the great things we're all doing."

6.Debrief key learning together.



Empty chair role reversal



Background

The ‘empty chair’ technique is a powerful way to see things from more than one point of view, encouraging people to use their imagination and empathy to step into someone else’s shoes. Concretisation (the use of objects and physical space to represent ideas) makes the work deeper than abstract reflection, effecting faster and more lasting change.

This activity looks similar to classic role-play but in fact explores role mapping and role development – rather than simply playing out a scenario, it involves interviewing in role, swapping between roles and becoming more conscious of the dynamic interplay inherent in the situation.

How it works

You can use this technique to explore the dynamics between two or more people, for example when practising skills such as pitching a new idea, negotiating etc.

1. Set out two empty chairs and decide what or who each chair represents – create ‘typical’ characters in a scenario, and give them names.

2. Ask the group which chair they would like to look at first, then when they have chosen, invite a volunteer to sit in that chair.

3. Ask them some easy questions to get them into the role, using the second person, ‘you’, and speaking about the client in the third person. For example, “*So, you’re Jake’s boss. How long have you worked with him? Can you give me one or two words to describe him?*

4. Having got the volunteer speaking comfortably from role, extend the questions to elicit an opinion, preference, request, piece of advice for the character represented by the second chair: *“I think Jake would be happier at work if he could delegate more.”*

5. Invite the volunteer to ‘reverse roles’ – to move to the second chair, then repeat the last words spoken by them when they were sitting in the previous chair.

6. Invite a response from the new position, then continue to swap between the two chairs for as long as is useful. You can have more than two chairs to move between, once you get used to the method.

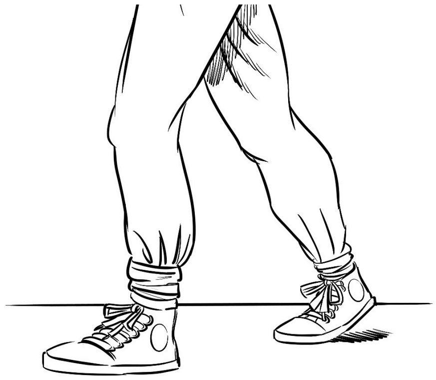
7. Invite the volunteer to step outside the scenario and re-join the rest of the group. Ask the group what they notice about what’s happened and what’s been said.

8. Other people can try out the same process, further developing the learning.

9. Debrief on key learning for the group.

Making positive lifestyle changes

Background



We are what we do, as much as what we think, feel and perceive. Developing a healthy lifestyle which accommodates our individual situations and states is essential to more general well-being and effectiveness, especially for those with chronic and long-term health conditions.

Most people now understand the basics of living healthily:

- **Eat well** (lots of vegetables, home-cooked rather than factory prepared food, minimum sugar and salt, healthy fats, whole grains, reduced meat consumption, social eating and time to digest).
- **Move your body** (regular gentle physical movement, stretching, exercise for good muscle tone, all building endorphins, the brain's 'feel-good' chemicals)
- **Reduce stress** (don't pile on too many tasks, make time for things you enjoy, including the everyday aspects of life, use mindfulness/meditation/noticing techniques to relax, don't spend too much time on gadgets, get good quality social and community time)
- **Sleep well** (avoid gadgets before bed-time, get good sleep routines in place, relax and wind down in good time, get to bed early enough)
- **Take a balanced approach to change** (avoid 'boom and bust' attempts to make improvements such as yo-yo dieting and the setting of unrealistic expectations about new routines that are unlikely to sustain)

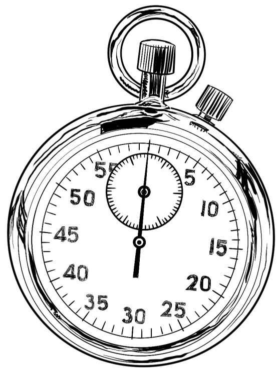
However, understanding in the abstract about 'healthy' is very different from living and experiencing it tangibly. That is the focus of this activity.

How it works

1. Notice together what is already going really well in terms of healthy lifestyle habits and practices, and celebrate this.
2. Use role reversal techniques so the client can ask their body, 'What do you want, as my body? What would you really appreciate?' You can do the same with the mind, heart and spirit if appropriate.
3. Offer your client a physical object as a gift – a stone, a drawing, something they can keep. Tell them, 'This is to make things easy for you…. When you have this, making the change should be easier.' You can name it if you wish, for example, 'this is your well-being,' or 'this is some space and time'. Ask them if they'd like to accept that gift. If they do, once they are holding it, ask them what has changed, and what they might now do differently.
4. Record intentions in an 'action plan' list. Make sure these are manageable and realistic. They might be as simple as, 'notice when I'm feeling tired'.
5. Review these intentions the next time you meet. Ask what helped to follow them through? What go in the way? If there are significant obstacles, again you can use role reversal techniques to explore and address these.

Managing time

Background



Time management is an overused term, which has wide-reaching implications when ignored. Many people use it to describe someone who is consistently late for meetings or misses deadlines regularly, and these can be classic indicators of someone who is overwhelmed by their task list. However, others who are highly organised and never miss a beat can also have time management issues.

Consider: are you getting the most out of your time? Do you frequently feel stressed or pushed, rather than enjoying a pleasurable flow of achievable but challenging tasks? You may have a problem with saying no. Or perhaps you don't like to hand over work to other people because (what you say to yourself) "it's my job; I should do it" when what you really believe is "only I can – and should – do it".

Over-committing and under-delegating are classic behaviours of impossibly busy people. What they're often missing is that they deny others the opportunity to learn and up-skill by taking on too much work and sacrificing their leisure, relationships and sometimes their mental health to the invisible task-master who is actually themselves.

How it works

1. Use the 'wheel of everything' activity to map key areas of your life, work or both. Mark you happy you are with the amount of time you give to each.

2. Create three 'zones' in the room – a 'red' zone, an 'orange' zone and a 'green' zone. If you have them, use coloured pens to mark these on paper.

3. Cut up the wheel of everything sheet into segments, and place them in the appropriate zone – in the red zone if their time allocation is a long way from the client's ideal, in the orange zone if they need a bit of adjustment on time allocation, and in the green zone if the amount of time they need is the same as the amount they get.

4. Visit the green zone first. Check out what strategies the client has used to create good balance here, and why things are going so well.

5. The move to the orange zone. See if there are any easy, minor adjustments to create an optimum time balance.

6. Ask the client who they see as having excellent time management skills. Use an object to represent this person and place them in the action space.

7. Finally, go to the red zone. First notice what it feels like to stand there. Then invite the client to ask their 'time management expert' for some advice. Suggest they move to stand in the space of the expert.

8. Ask them a few easy questions as the 'expert'. How long has the expert known the client? Do they want to support them? Say you understand they're great with time management and boundaries… is this true? Then ask

them if they have any constructive suggestions for the person stuck in the red zone. Ask them to speak directly to that person, saying ‘you’. If they drift out of role, remind them who they are speaking as.

9. Finally, ask the client to step back into the red zone. Stand in the ‘expert’ space, and repeat the good advice back to them so they can hear it directly.

10. Move out of the action into a ‘noticing space’, and discuss what has been said.

11. Deconstruct the scene, debrief and share.

Mapping through extended metaphor

Background

Using metaphor to explore the culture and practices of organisations and groups can offer a safe distance for people to talk about their experiences and often unlocks creativity in the group. Here we use the metaphor of the body, but you can use other entities as a representation of the organisational system, to uncover information about how it functions - another example that works well is a form of transportation such as a bus - driver, conductor, passenger, etc.

How it works

1. Give each person some post-it notes and ask them to think about their group, team or organisation as a body with parts and systems and organs, etc.

2. What part(s) of the body best describes each person's function? There can be more than one and people who are not present can be represented as well. Each part should be marked on separate post-its.

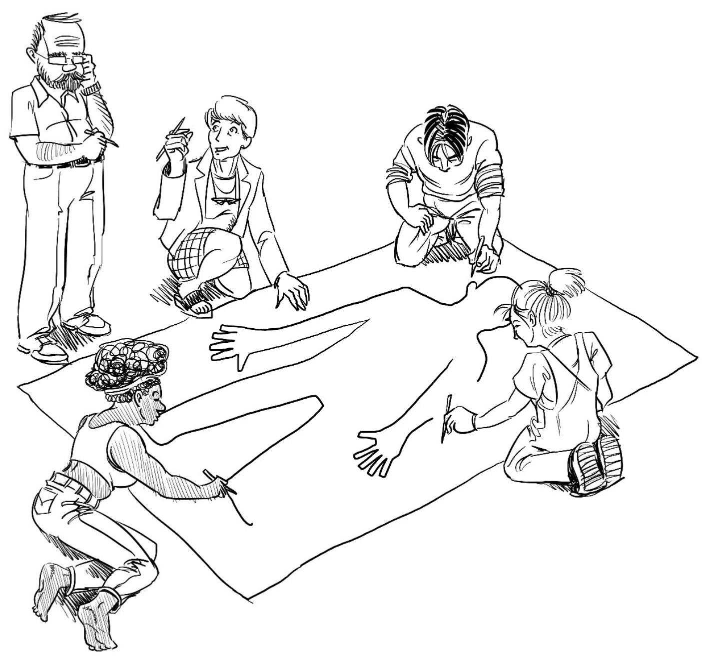
3. Each person will take a turn and put the post-its on an outline of the body. This can be done on a floor, a wall and does not require the outline of the body to be visible. The group can negotiate where everything goes.

4. After every person has had a turn, ask the group questions about their creation and what it says about the organisation. Here are a few suggestions:

    - How healthy is this body?
    - About how old is this body (not in chronological years necessarily)?
    - What parts of the body are missing or weak?
    - Are there any parts of the body that need to function better together?
    - How will this body evolve? What might it look like in 3 years? 5 years? 10 years?
    - What actions can the group suggest that will help this body function well or better?

5. Ask the group to debrief together, sharing their feelings about any roles they took, then more generally about the process and any learning from it.

6. Capture any actions that the group wants to take forward on a flipchart.



Sharing circles

Background

This activity is one we use again and again at the end of a session. It's really important to allow enough time to consolidate and capture key learning, and reflecting on session content as a group is a great way to do this.

How it works

1. Set out a chair for each participant in a circle, and ask everyone to sit next to someone they haven't actively worked with so far (continuing to mix the group up encourages multiple connections to form, which makes a stronger whole-group bond than allowing people to default to quickly-established mini-groups).

2. Let everyone know the ground-rules – you will pass round an object and whoever is holding it speaks until they've finished, when they pass it on to the person next to them. Others simply listen, not interrupting the speaker with comments or questions, however affirming.

3. Decide what questions you want people to respond to for each round. These might include what people most want to remember, what the big question was for them, what surprised them most, what they will do next as a result of the session. Stick to one question per round, and a maximum of three rounds.

4. When the sharing circle is finished, give participants five minutes at the end to make notes on what they'd like to remember from the session in six weeks time.

3. Others

Activities in this section raise awareness of our inter-personal skills and how the role states we take play out in our interactions and relationships, giving opportunities to try out and practice new approaches. We show how to use peer feedback and group work to learn more about how others see us and what shapes and drives our external personas. On an organisational level, we describe activities which help organisations to look outwards towards their stakeholders and customers, and inwards to map and define how to best share skills and develop interactional skills.

Inter-personal skills checklist

Background

The inter-personal skills check-list below focuses on understanding your client's support needs: developing any gaps here can be key to maximising performance and confidence in a professional role.

How it works

To get into 'deep state' and approach this from an intuitive rather than analytical level, try taking five conscious breaths together and then setting an intention (for example, to gain more clarity, to deepen understanding etc) before talking the following checklist through.

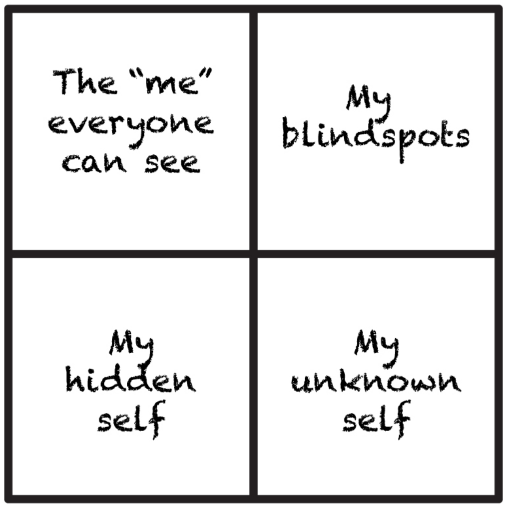
Are these statements true for you? If not always, then which situations make them easier or harder?

Verbal Communication:	I find it easy to talk to people
Non-Verbal Communication:	My body language is usually relaxed and confident
Listening Skills:	I find it easy to listen to other people and remember what they say
Negotiation:	I'm good at making sure everyone's happy with a decision
Problem Solving:	I'm good at working out what to do when things are confusing
Decision Making:	It's easy for me to make good decisions and share these with others
Assertiveness:	I can stand up for myself without getting stressed or angry
Organisation:	I can meet deadlines – knowing what I need to do is easy for me.

How do you like to work?

- I'm an **activist** – I get bored if it takes too long
- I'm a **reflector** – I like to have all the information, with plenty of time to consider it
- I'm a **theorist** – I like working with experts who know what they're doing, and understanding why we're doing things the way we are
- I'm a **pragmatist** – I want to know if ideas will work in real life, once they're put into action

What others see — the Johari Window



Background

Self awareness is key to developing collaboration – where are our core strengths, what gaps can be filled by others? Unless we understand and are honest about our own abilities, it's hard to plan joined-up approaches.

A Johari window is a psychological tool created by **Joseph Luft** and **Harry Ingham** in 1955. It's a simple and useful way to develop self-awareness, and is also great for sharing reflection about strengths and weaknesses between group members.

The idea is that aspects of self fall into four categories: those which are publicly evident, kept secret, blind spots (which others see but we don't recognize) and those which are unconscious and unseen by everyone.

Seeing our blind spots helps us to grow and develop, making more informed choices about what we do. The more your own perception of self matches the perception of others the more likely you are to be in a good state.

How it works

1. Ask the group to form pairs or small groups, where possible of people who work closely and amicably together.

2. Ask people to give feedback to others about how they function, their apparent preferences, aversions, things which are important to them. Make sure all feedback is framed positively ("You seem to like to be well prepared", rather than "You dither endlessly before making a start"). The subject of the feedback listens, and records what s/he agrees with - either in the 'me everyone can see' box if they were aware of this view, or the blind-spots if they weren't.

3. Group members then write down and share three things about themselves others are less likely to be aware of (after discussion this information goes in the 'my hidden self' section).

2. An extension activity to get more information about blind spots (the most beneficial area for growth and development) split the group into threes. Place their chairs so two are directly facing and the third is facing away at a right angle. The two people facing each other talk in very positive terms about the third person, who is sitting in the chair facing away and can't see them. The subject of the conversation remains silent – a 'fly on the wall'. The conversation ends with a developmental suggestion, along the lines of, "*You know, I think she could even….*" The three debrief together at the end, then swap round. The key to this activity is that it remains kind, supportive and positive. It can be a powerful experience to hear others say nice things about you, so be prepared for an emotional response from some people.

What I heard and saw: giving positive feedback

Background:

Giving and receiving feedback can be challenging for many people, but is a crucial skill for effective collaboration to take place. Learning to request, offer and accept constructive feedback is a key lever for change and development. This very simple activity gives you a chance to make that happen at the end of the main session activity.

How it works

1. Walk around the room and find something to say to each person that is:

   - Specific
   - Genuine
   - Descriptive
   - Positive

   Start what you say with,

   "What I notice/noticed was…"

   or,

   "What I hear/heard was…"

2. The only response anyone can give when they receive this compliment is "Thank you". Take a few moments after everyone has given and received the compliments to reflect on what's been said.

3. It might be useful to have these questions written on a flipchart. These are for reflection and leave the floor open for any comments they might have and want to express out loud.

   a) How easy did you find it to receive these compliments?
   b) Did you notice any themes or similarities among the things that people said?
   c) Did anything surprise you?
   d) Was there anything that you didn't believe?

4. After everyone has had a chance to think about it, ask each person to share one of the compliments that s/he received.

Exploring influences — force field analysis

Background

This approach was devised by Kurt Lewin in 1951. He argued that in order to understand a situation fully and plan for changes, we need to understand the forces influencing it, both those supporting and holding back change.

Force Field Analysis can be used to:

1. Help identify blind spots, new perspectives and points of leverage
2. Test realism of a goal and commitment to it
3. Test feasibility of an action plan

How it works

1. Write down the goal, draw a vertical line underneath it.

2. List helpful forces on the left of this line (+) and unhelpful ones on the right (-)

3. Consider:
    a) Forces under group's control
    b) Forces dependent on others (colleagues, clients, other stakeholders)
    c) Forces within the organisation and wider context (events, policies, norms)
    d) Strong forces use bigger writing to show influence
    e) Finally consider which forces can be increased, diminished, diverted to increase likelihood of success

Developing boundaries: choices and agreements

Background

Another very common development need is the ability to make clear choices, express preferences and hold boundaries with others. This skill underpins the ability to remain clear and confident in positively shaping our lives and making healthy choices. It helps build secure self-relationship, as parts of ourselves which feel under pressure or exhausted by responsibility and obligation can be better taken care of, and this in turn creates healthy and balanced relationships with others. It supports effective time management, delegation, and other very useful skills. Thanks to Susie Taylor for the warm-up activities.

How it works

1. If the client or group isn't yet clear about the value of learning to make clear choices and say no when appropriate, you can try these warm-ups first:

    a. In pairs (or directly with your client) one person must persuade the other to accept an object (this can be anything – a pen, pack of tissues or similar). Their partner must consistently refuse to accept it. Try this for a few minutes then debrief about the strategies used by both people and the learning from the activity.

    b. In pairs one person instructs the other person to do whatever action they choose (give the ground-rule before this that all instructions must be respectful, considerate and safe). These should include requests for help – for example, can you get me a drink of water? Again, debrief on the experience and learning.

    c. Use the 'Continuum line – re-framing either/or thinking' detailed (p. 27) to explore the polarities of someone who usually says yes to requests for help, someone who usually says no, and what a clear point in the centre looks and feels like.

2. Once people are clear on the use and value of being able to say a clear 'yes' or 'no' from a place of choice rather than obligation, your client/a group volunteer sits in a 'choice' chair, and practices clearly saying no to requests.

3. Try to make these the kind of real-life things they are being asked – you can speak as someone they work or live with to make the practice more real life and effective. Swap roles at points where you want to model calm, considerate but clear ways of saying no to others.

4. Debrief and share the learning from this activity.

Role development in 1:1 work: interaction rehearsals

Background

Once insight has been achieved and inner roles are in a more constructive alignment, a key breakthrough moment can be practicing the new approach, rehearsing what you will do and how you will speak when faced with a specific challenge or opportunity. This activity supports that rehearsal, preparing your client to move forwards with confidence and clarity.

How it works

1. Invite your client to find objects to represent the person/people they want to speak to in the interaction, and place these in the action space. Also place an object to be themselves.

2. Ask them to start by speaking ‘as’ one of the other people in the scene, to start the interaction off.

3. Then reverse their roles, swapping them across to respond as themselves.

4. If necessary, coach them by stepping into their role yourself, while they speak as the other person. This gives them ideas about what to say, how to present themselves etc.

5. Make sure a ‘noticing’ space is available for you both to step out of the action at points and reflect on what is happening.

6. Once the client has achieved the ‘aha’ moment, finding the words and actions they want to use, complete the scene by mirroring this back for them to see and further absorb.

7. Deconstruct the scene, debrief, share and reflect.

Role development for groups: change approach, change outcome

Background

This activity gives a chance to explore the practical application of new approaches or values, asking us to consider what roles we could play to elicit a different, more effective outcome in any given situation.

When mapping out systems we get a wider perspective, understanding better our role in that system. The first step is recognising which role you are currently in, often a tough task, and then deciding what might be more effective. This activity further develops the skill of role identification as well as supporting role development.

How it works

1. Choose a scenario (for example a colleague who is late for a deadline) and start with two volunteers in the key roles - the person who requested the work and the person who is late delivering it. They can be peers or have differing seniority.

2. Ask the group to suggest role names using at least one adjective and a noun for each character, e.g. Frustrated Team Leader and Overwhelmed Manager.

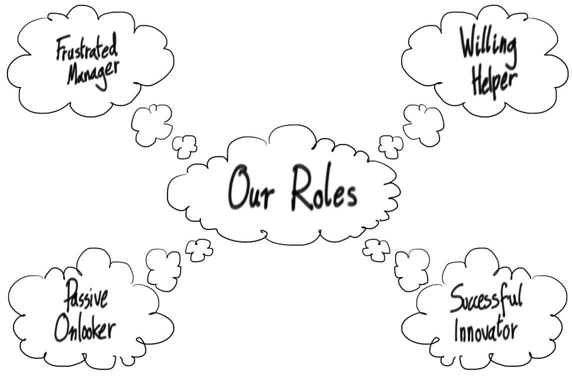
3. Play out the scenario. As you go, invite other people to introduce new characters into the action, with the group helping out the volunteers, suggesting how they might get involved and what role names they could take. If volunteers get stuck or aren't sure what to say next, someone else can step in and pick up the part, or stand behind them with a hand on their shoulder and suggest a line.

4. After the scene has ended, ask each role player to think of a more effective role they could have taken in the action. They might want to do this with another person in the group to determine what else they might do differently.

5. Play the scene again using the new roles.

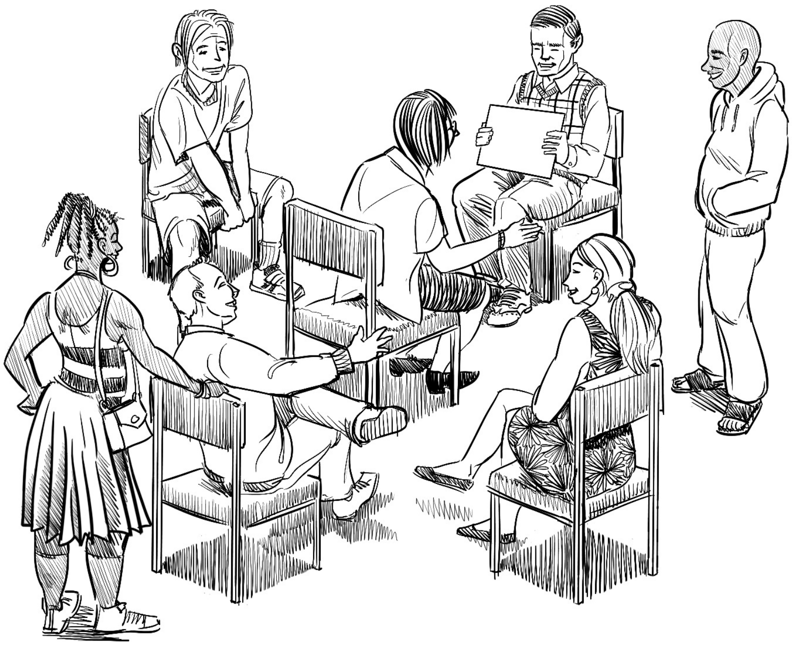
6. Debrief with the whole group to discuss how increased awareness of the roles we are playing and consciously shifting, even slightly, may have had an impact or not. Were there other roles that may have been introduced that could have had a greater, more positive effect?

Note: This activity needs lots of warm up activities prior and a scenario relevant to group members in order to work well.



Stakeholder/customer mapping

Background



Understanding the needs and motivations of stakeholders is a very useful exercise for all organisations to undertake. This activity encourages people to 'get into other people's shoes' in a very tangible way.

How it works

1. Ask the group to list their key stakeholders, recording each in visible writing using marker pens on A4 paper. Examples might be, 'leadership team, funder, manager, customer, administrator, HR lead, new recruit, etc'.

2. The group work together to place these on the floor, creating a 'map' using proximity and distance to show where connections and gaps exist. For example, the HR lead and the new recruit might be placed side by side in an organisation which actively develops emerging talent.

3. The group discuss what they notice having created the map.

4. Group members stand at the place on the map which most interests them, experimenting with speaking as if they were the stakeholder represented there. When speaking encourage them to use the first person. So, for example, 'Speaking as the customer here, I'm not interested in all these problems, I just want to get a great service…'.

5. You can invite dialogue between people representing different stakeholders if the activity is going well.

6. Finish by getting the group sitting in a circle of chairs, and debriefing together, sharing first from any roles they took, then more generally (at this stage ensure that all participants consciously let go of any roles they spoke from, so they don't leave unconsciously carrying a role).

Explaining what you offer: value proposition and key messaging

Background

'So what is it you do?' Answering this question in a simple, meaningful way can be a tough call for some organisations, especially those breaking new ground.

A 'value proposition' is a simple statement which explains how you propose to add value to the world. It can sound like a strapline, but it doesn't have to. It is clear and doesn't exclude any activity the company or group undertake. It can be a hard thing to arrive at.

'Messaging' is core statements which communicate what you really want people to take on board. These messages unpack your value proposition. Both of them need to develop in response to understanding the needs and interests of the people you're reaching out to, whether this is customers, stakeholders or employees.

How it works

1. This activity builds on the stakeholder/customer mapping activity above. Having identified your customer/stakeholder groups, place a chair for each of the main groups (a maximum of four or five), with a chair in the centre.

2. Ask volunteers to speak from each of the stakeholder chairs, and interview them about their needs, what problems they want solving, what they are looking for from the service or product the company or organisation provides.

3. A volunteer takes the central chair, and speaks as the service or product provider. They respond to each stakeholder/customer in turn, describing how they can meet their needs. Different people can move in and out of the various chairs to add their contributions.

4. You or another volunteer records key statements from both positions, either visibly on a whiteboard or flipchart, or with audio/video, or both.

5. Complete by summarising the key needs of each group, and the offer in response. Look for patterns. Which need is most universal among all the groups? This generally is a starting point for the value proposition.

6. Discuss together ideas for your value proposition. The criteria is that it clearly explains what's important and unique about what you do and is broad enough to cover everything.

7. Then agree the key messages, looking at what was said by people sitting in the central chair.

Getting things done: the power of collaboration and skills sharing

Background

Working together well. Feeling like you really belong. Not re-inventing the wheel. Playing to each other's strengths. Getting the point of even mundane tasks because you can see the bigger picture. Not being afraid to innovate and take the initiative. Feeling respected and appreciated. These should be work-place basics – the building blocks which support us in getting things done, loving what we do, experiencing success and staying healthy and well.

Getting to grips with the basics of collaboration isn't rocket science – it involves really listening to people, working out where you have common interests and processes, discovering how your areas of work can best knit together, knowing how to give good feedback, getting people involved with problem solving and planning, sharing the bigger vision, making sure there's opportunity for everyone to fulfil their potential and play to their strengths.

When teams are given a chance to talk about and experiment with these approaches and skills, and commit to their collective development, they are much more likely to thrive and feel purposeful.

One key aspect of great collaboration is skills-sharing. An indicator of a great team is when people are encouraged to play to their strengths, leading on what they are good at and enjoy doing. Good teams also support each other to develop skills and fill skills gaps. So for example if someone in your team is brilliant with spreadsheets, and that's an area of work another team member finds intimidating or confusing, they will be encouraged to buddy up in a peer mentoring arrangement.

This kind of skills sharing also works well within a wider organisation as a very organic and targeted form of professional development. This activity helps teams map team connections, as well as skills strengths and gaps, in order to plan for effective team development. It can also be useful when allocating project work to determine what skills are needed and how best to match them.

How it works

1. Prepare two sets of cards: 'skills' cards which read, 'I can help with…..' and 'offer' cards which read, '................can help me/us with ……………'

2. Ask people to make pairs or small groups with others who work with them most closely. Invite them to discuss the skills needed for tasks they do. Start with core skills (for example customer phone calls, sales pitches, recording financial transactions, networking) and then extend to any additional skills which are more rarely needed but still useful. Feedback to the whole group to make a collective list which is visible to everyone.

3. Back in the same pairs/groups, each person takes it in turns to identify skills areas or tasks they feel confident in performing - their areas of competence. Anything they consider especial expertise can be marked with a star. Many people will rely largely on feedback for this process. Be aware it can be uncomfortable and needs to be handled sensitively, especially for newer or less confident team members. Each person records their areas of competence on an 'skills' card: 'I can help with writing proposals, designing newsletters, planning complex projects, trouble-shooting IT'.

4. Invite people to imagine they're at a cocktail party. As they mingle they check out each other's offer cards, seeing if there's anything there which might be useful to them. If they find a match - someone strong in an area they are still learning - they complete an 'offer' card: 'Emily can help me/us with IT troubleshooting'. If the group is enjoying the task, can you ask them to shake hands on each 'offer' agreed.

Either the team leader/manager or a volunteer collects in the 'offer' cards (make sure people have written their names on them). Next time someone is experiencing frustration or under-performing in a particular area, suggest they ask for help from the person who offered to support them during the session.

4. Vision and action

Knowing what you want to happen and why is the first step to gaining clarity of vision and a sense of purpose. Working organisationally, good leaders know where they're going and can help others see how to get there and what's in it for them if they get on board. Sustaining this clarity consistently over time helps to create an organisational culture which inspires and supports great working practices and high levels of engagement and motivation.

It's clear that having clear and inspiring vision and values makes a huge difference to realising your potential. The activities in this section are designed to generate this clarity and inspiration, then ensure that it is turned into practical and achievable actions, fulfilling your clients' potential and realising their dreams.

Future projection — unlocking unconscious solutions

How it works

1. Decide between you where your start and end points will be – choose one place in the room to represent now, another for the future.

2. Ask how far ahead in time the client would like to explore.

3. Invite them to 'visit' the future by physically walking towards it while you accompany them.

4. When you arrive at the place in the room which represents this future time, ask some easy questions to anchor the client in the time change illusion *("What is the date?" "How old are you now?" "What's the weather like now it's winter?")* **[Note**: Insist answers are in the present tense, without conditionals: *"I might have / I would / if I*" are all to be avoided – it breaks the magic spell.]

5. Once these easy questions have been answered, you can ask "So, w*hat's happening now?*" Encourage the client to describe their notional future, while you ask questions about it to get more detail. They should be describing a future where the challenge has been overcome or the opportunity fully developed – if not, steer them in this direction. Congratulate them as they speak, as if the good things had really happened: *"Well done! That sounds amazing…"*

6. Ask what they did or what happened in order to be able to arrive at this positive state, breaking this down into a time sequence if necessary.

7. Conclude by asking them to give some advice to their past self, who you can recall were thinking about these issues in a coaching session some time ago with you.

8. Finally, invite them to step out of the role of their future self, put away any objects representing past or now, then debrief on both the process and the content.

9. An easy adaptation of this as a group problem solving activity is to take three bits of paper and write an aspect of the problem on each, or three inter-related issues. Participants then fluidly take it in turns to pick up and pass around the pieces of paper, speaking about the problem from a notional future where the problem has already been solved, and describing what was done to solve it. One person's idea tends to inspire another, especially towards the end of a session where pre-work has been done to generate a solutions phase.

Success stories and vision stories

Storytelling is the oldest form of leadership

Making vision and values relevant to everyone requires two things – a consistently re-enforced global message, brought to life by people's real experiences, and a local interpretation of that message so that individuals and teams can make sense of it for themselves.

For this to happen, all leaders and managers need to be on board, as do key influencers in the system. Spoken, written and visual communications need to consistently promote it. People need opportunities to share about it together and make it meaningful to them, and get ownership. This all takes time and commitment, to make sure great ideas don't become yesterday's news but really power organisational growth and development long-term, with positive, life-affirming and creative approaches becoming the DNA of the organisation. The activities which follow are designed to help with that process.

Background

Being able to tell a good story is the secret to getting other people to come on board with your ideas. Leadership is fundamentally the ability to let people know where you're going, why they should follow you and how you're going to get there. This activity breaks down the skills needed for good storytelling in an accessible and easy to understand way, so your presentations and pitches are highly engaging, coherent and compelling.

How it works

Stage 1 - What's your story about?

Ask participants to work together to answer the following questions:

- who is the audience?
- what is the theme or purpose of the story – to celebrate a succes? To inspire your audience about the future?
- what mood do you want to create?

Stage 2 - What are the bare bones of your story?

People should be able to count off on one hand the main points of their story. Encourage them to strip out any kind of detail at this stage.

Success stories generally refer to past events, and usually have a three point structure:

3. Beginning - introduce the scene (where are we and who's there)
4. Middle - outline the challenge or opportunity
5. End - describe how this was resolved or moved forward

Vision stories look ahead, and for these you need a different structure, speaking in the first person plural (we):

1. Vision
2. Why it matters
3. How you can get involved
4. What does success look like (impact)

You can combine past event and vision stories into one presentation – 'this is where we've been', followed by, 'this is where we're going'.

Stage 3: Putting in the detail

Put people in pairs. Ask them to think about 2-3 places in the story where they're describing a place, person or situation which could be brought to life. Think about what you can see, hear, or even touch or smell. Ask them to practice telling the story using these details, then give each other feedback.

Stage 4: Practising performance

Ask the pairs to tell their stories again. This time, experiment with their voices - loud or soft at different points to catch people's attention, using silence and pauses for the same effect. Also experiment with using their bodies to tell the story - pointing at imaginary things (doors, people), standing like the character they're describing, making sure they make great eye contact. Make sure each person gets peer feedback after they have told their story

Stage 5: Hearing the stories

One of the most powerful parts of this activity is creating space for more confident group members to have a go at telling their stories to the group. You will probably need to be assertive in encouraging the first person to step forward - after that you can ask them who they might like to hear from. Remind people about growth mindsets (see p. 10) and the value of taking risks in order to learn. Then celebrate once they're done.

Wheel of what is known

Background

This activity give groups a chance to share and clarify information prior to any kind of strategic planning process. It's an adaptation of the 'wheel of everything' (a snap-shot diagnostic scaling exercise, see p. 24) which allows group members to share their perspectives on key aspects of a project or the work a team is doing together. For smaller groups it can be done as a table-top exercise on flip-chart paper, or for bigger groups on the floor using a 'string wheel' with A4 paper placed inside segments marked on the floor with 5 pieces of string tied together in the centres and laid out like the spokes of a wheel.

How it works

1. Print out or hand write labels for the following categories (laminating these means they can be re-used):
   - Group behaviours/habits
   - Opportunities
   - Challenges
   - Stakeholders/customers
   - Value proposition for the service or product / Aim of group
   - The big question
   - What isn't known
   - Current capabilities / solutions / services
   - Future capabilities / solutions / services
   - Industry sector trends

2. Draw a large circle and divide it into 10 equal segments, like a wheel (use flipchart paper or a wallpaper lining roll for this). Cut out the segments and attach a label to each. Distribute the labelled segments around the room.

3. Ask participants to circulate, writing on segments they want to contribute to. Make sure people use felt pens or sharpies so their writing is visible. Some people will have more knowledge in certain areas - this is fine - but everyone can write anywhere they want to.

4. Re-assemble the segments to create a wheel (the sequence doesn't matter - it's easiest for visibilty to use blu-tac or tape to stick these on a flipchart paper on the wall).

5. Give each group member three or four sticky dots and ask them to place them to show which of the comments they think are the most important. This makes sure everyone reads what other people have put, as well as highlighting the group interest or concerns.

6. Talk the group through the most important points, asking questions to further unpack as useful, and noting information to help you during the rest of the session.

Setting goals and creating outstanding action plans

Background

Many people never get a sense of clarity or purpose about choices on direction, pace or the journey ahead, instead continuing to step on their personal treadmill. This may be because they are never asked about it. In the increasingly frenetic ‘fire-fighting’ pace of both work and home, taking time to focus on where you would like to be in future often gets neglected.

Leaders often take time to reflect and truly determine what they want and why, with others following them because they offer a good way forward. Self-leadership is one of the great benefits of intention setting and planning.

Writing an action plan is not as easy as populating a spreadsheet or table. The best plans are created and owned by an individual and reviewed regularly - make it a ‘live’ document, not something that sits in a folder. The goals are aspirational and SMART:

S - specific, significant, stretching
M - measurable, meaningful, motivational
A - agreed upon, attainable, achievable, acceptable, action-oriented
R - realistic, relevant, reasonable, rewarding, results-oriented
T - time-based, time-bound, timely, tangible, trackable

S.M.A.R.T. Goal & why it's important	Actionable Steps	Training, education or additional resources I need	People who will hold me accountable and support me	How I will gather and record feedback	Key dates for review

They take into consideration the investment in time and energy of not only the person writing the plan but the system supporting that person in fulfilling it and holding the person accountable. Often this is the hardest part of the action plan and the reason plans are not effective.

How it works

1. Ask each group member to note down actions they can take personal responsibility for, using the categories in the table below (please note this can be adapted to suit your needs).

2. List headline versions of these so they’re all visible to the group (A4 notes done with markers, copied onto a flipchart etc).

3. Ask the group to add any important actions which are missing. Discuss who could move these forward.

4. Discuss together the following points, first in pairs, then with the wider group:

Does the plan

- link to your values?
- have enough flexibility to accommodate what you cannot predict?
- include space to name the small steps and regular practices that lead to goal fulfilment?
- contain short, medium and longer term targets?
- have a way to track and record progress?
- include rewards or celebrations when goals are met?

5. Ask for volunteers to collect notes from group members and write the full plan up into a document which can be circulated to the group for review and then use.

Ideas sharing stations

Background

This is a very practical way of aggregating information or ideas held by a group. It's a good alternative to sitting people in groups to make notes on flipchart paper, and gives you more control over pace and timing. It's ideal for unpacking and capturing people's feelings and thoughts about organisational culture and values, but can equally be used to explore any group's ideas and perspectives, for example as part of a review of the year or during a training session.

How it works

1. Use a length of wallpaper lining paper (this is a cheap and flexible resource, useful for drawing out extended processes such as timelines and customer/user journey processes). Lay it along tables, with room to walk on both sides.

2. Mark the length of paper into square sections. Label each section with relevant topic headers (for example, 'what's great about working here', 'the big question', 'what surprises you', 'challenges', 'opportunities', 'we should do more of', 'we work best when….' etc). Alternate the sides of the table the labels go on, so there is plenty of room for people to stand, talk and write on each side.

3. Ask pairs to choose a section and make notes on that topic inside the square. These can either be written directly or go on post-it notes. Tell them they have two minutes to do this.

4. After two minutes, call 'all change'. Everyone moves along one section around the tables, and adds to the next section.

5. Continue until everyone has read/contributed to all sections.

6. Take photos and distribute in a powerpoint if people need to access the notes for future reference

7. If useful, you can finish with a group discussion of the ideas which have been shared and recorded.

Change the situation

Background

Here you use the system enactment approach to bring a situation to life and rework it to experiment with a new outcome. This is a good activity to follow inner role state work as a 'test' to see how new positions might play out in external situations. Used this way, it can be very brief as an adjunct, or used more fully as the main focus of a session.

How it works

1. Ask team members to tell you about their current collaboration situations – either internally or with members of other teams.

2. Work together to mark out an action space – where is the situation taking place? How can that be best represented? (consider moving chairs, tables etc)

3. Who is in the situation? Use objects or paper as placeholders, work out where they should sit in the space.

4. Bring the situation to life – ask for volunteers to step into the role of the various characters, and give them a line or two, probably one following on from the other, e.g.:

    a. *"I just wanted to say thank you for all the care you've taken over this"*
    b. *"Oh don't worry, is there anything else I can do to help?*

5. Ask the group to decide on a challenge or opportunity for these characters to explore. Play this challenge out (different people can 'hot-seat' the characters if they have an idea for developing the action).

6. Experiment with alternative responses at an appropriate point in the action.

7. Try applying a range of generic role states as the characters play out the scene (confident leader, shy volunteer etc). This creates a deeper awareness about how inner states/attitudes/approaches generate varying responses from others – for example a confident role invites a positive response, whereas a closed-down role tends to invite rejection.

8. Deconstruct the scene, and share/debrief together on key learning.

5. Deeper change

While as coaches and facilitators our focus is always on the realisation of external life goals, very often people's barriers to achieving these are internal 'old story' inhibitions and cognitive distortions, which are then mirrored by external challenges and disruptions. This section contains activities for deeper therapeutic change work with clients.

Therapeutic coaching

There is much debate about the boundary between coaching and counselling/ psychotherapy. Our assumption here is that it is possible to create therapeutic and healing spaces using coaching and facilitation modalities, without being a therapist.

Psychotherapists are fully equipped to meet and support powerfully challenging emotional disruption and distress: mental health disintegration, complex trauma, and forensic work is all within their remit.

As a coach, therefore, it is important that you know when you are out of your depth and when to refer on to someone fully professionally trained to work psychotherapeutically. But you can still be of great use to your clients to assist with cathartic processes, deep inner work and developing very real inner well-being. As a coach/facilitator you won't be exploring 'back story' in any depth – this is very much the realm of the therapist – but you can help unpiece the puzzle of self, change stuck old stories, occasionally bear witness to cathartic release and assist with inner re-alignment at a deep level.

The following emotional intelligence precepts can be a helpful starting point for this kind of work:

2. **We are responsible for our own actions and feelings.** We naturally respond emotionally to what others do, but we remain responsible for our own feelings at all times – that way, we don't get used to feeling like a victim.

3. **Asking for what you want is very helpful as long as other people have a real choice about how to respond** rather than feeling pushed (if people don't know, they can't respond). It's helpful to understand the value of **clear requests and agreements** as part of healthy communication.

4. **Self-care and self-value is a great foundation for all healthy relationships** – if you value yourself and take your own needs seriously you're in a much better position to do the same for others.

5. **Learning to notice / take care of your more vulnerable feelings** and stay open generally makes you a stronger person.

6. **Knowing your own strengths and values** really helps you stay steady when things get tough.

Getting started: three things

Background

Giving you both an easy starting point by getting to know a bit about each other is very helpful to forming a trusting relationship in a first session, and can also be a good way of checking in at the beginning of future sessions. However, not everyone knows what to say! Giving your client the concrete non-verbal task of choosing objects right at the start helps both them and you to warm up to speaking about themselves as the activity unfolds.

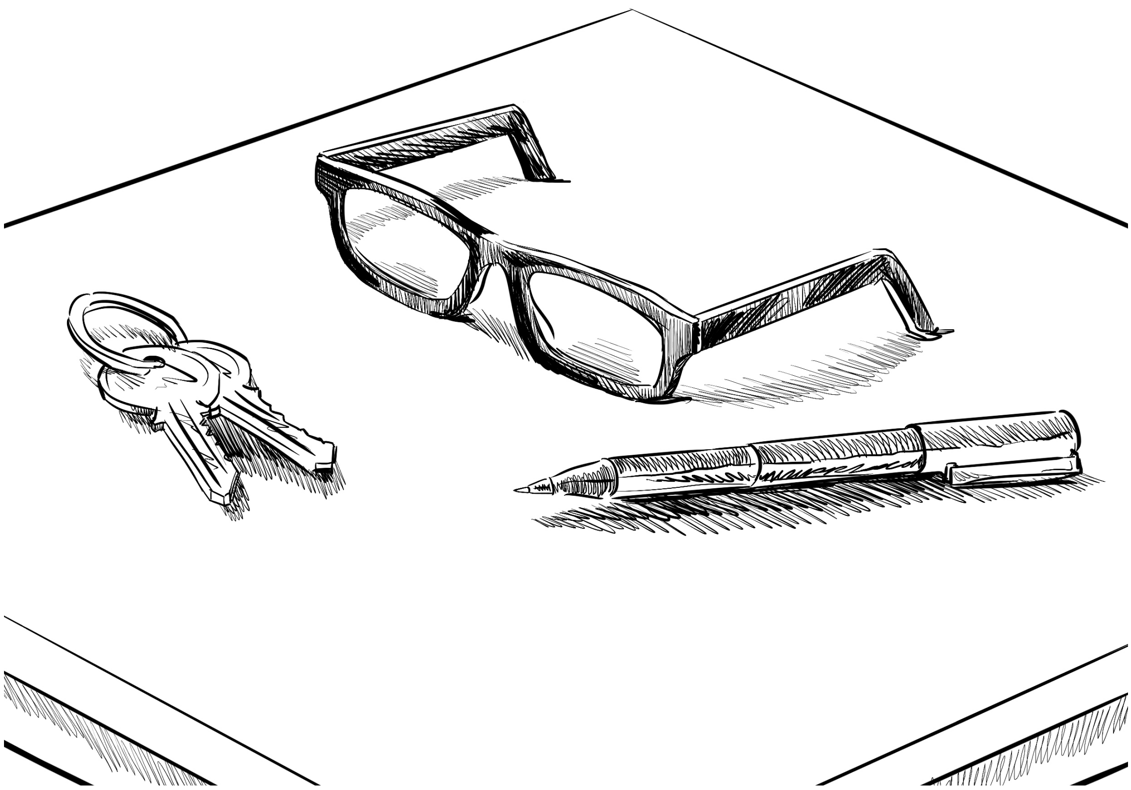
How it works

1. Prior to the first session, ask your client to bring along three objects (or photographs of objects) that have some meaning for them. Alternatively they can choose three objects from what's available in the room (you can have fun assembling object bundles for this purpose or rely on what is already there).

2. After initial introductions, ask them to show you the three things and talk about why each is significant to them.

3. Show three things of your own and discuss why they're important to you. You're asking them to share with you so reciprocating creates a balanced relationship.

4. An alternative to this form of the activity is to guess why each object might be significant, then check if you were right. You can use three drawings instead of three objects if you want to show things which aren't possible to bring into the room.



Getting started: body pose (show me with your body)

Background

This is a very simple invitation to 'inhabit' a state or way of being, and works well during systems enactment. It utilises a key story-telling and drama technique to warm someone up to a new state or perspective

How it works

1. Decide together with your client what object will represent the role state you wish to explore (for example, confident speaker, clear choice maker, inner stuckness). Alternatively you can write the role on paper instead (use marker pens for visibility), or do both. Using an object can help transition to the imagined reality that this quality exists independently and is present and visible in the room.

2. Ask your client to place the object/paper somewhere in the action space – check with them where feels right.

3. Invite them to step into this space, perhaps holding the object or paper if that helps to anchor the 'becoming' process.

4. Ask them to 'show me with your body' what this state is like. Mirror or model this a bit if they are unsure – try out different poses.

5. Once they have the body pose, it is a much easier next step to address the role state directly – see role reversal activity on page 24.

6. Whether or not you use the verbalisation option, make sure they step out of the role and put the object/paper down before starting to comment on what they observe about the activity. It is a good idea to create and mark a 'noticing' role for this purpose, which you can step into together.

Getting started: object led stories

Background

This activity is very useful to support issue discovery, or deepen intuitive perception and understanding of deeper issues and considerations. It's also a good warm-up to a session. The client uses a random object to generate a story, which offers learning about themselves or their situation.

How it works

1. Ask your client to choose an object randomly. It's helpful if you have a selection of things to hand, on a shelf where they are easily accessed without being obviously there for the session only, so the client can move towards them.

2. Invite them to make up a story about the object. Leave the invitation open – the object can feature in the story, or can be the narrator. The story can be very simple in form. If they struggle to think of a story, break it down – beginning – where are we? What's happening? Middle – something dramatic happens. What? End – how is the story resolved?

3. Tell the story back to them. Ask them to listen out for the theme of the story, also how it makes them feel.

4. Discuss together if the story mirrors the client's situation in any way. If so, what is the story telling you? Reflect together.

Developing skills: four beautiful roles

Background

When working with emotional distress, it's hugely helpful to establish strengths, resources and both internal and external 'allies' to create a safe container for any cathartic release. Modelling positive role states, offering these as alternatives to known disruptive or unhealthy ways of being, can feel like a lifeline and be a real inspiration, especially when they are personified as roles you can step in and out of and explore.

These four roles are described in 'The Fourfold Way' by Angela Arienne (Cotati, 1993)

I have called them 'four beautiful roles' because this is how I experience them. 'Walking the beauty way' is how people from First Nation or native American traditions describe a sacred life of connectedness with 'all our relations' (the natural world) ourselves and the mystery of a magical universe. Allowing ourselves to be deeply beautiful in the way we are both inside and out is a truly life-affirming choice, and these four roles are a great way to access this kind of beautiful living.

How it works

1. The four roles are:

    - **Visionary**, telling the truth without blame or judgement
    - **Healer**, following what has heart and meaning
    - **Warrior**, showing up and being present
    - **Teacher**, being open to outcome

2. Write these on separate pieces of paper. Use colour to bring them to life and make them look attractive.

3. Offer them to your client or lay them on the floor where they are easy to see. Ask which one feels most appealing or useful.

4. Find a place in the room for this role. Take it in turns to step into it, saying, "From this place I can…"

5. You can integrate this activity with role reversal, allowing the client to give advice to themselves from any of these roles. For example, "As the visionary, I support you to clearly explain your thoughts and feelings to the people who are important to you."

6. Once you have both stepped out of the role, spend a little time reflecting on the experience. How did it feel? What did you notice? Was there resistance? Insight? New resources?

7. You can leave these roles marked in the room during a session as a resource which can be called on at any time.

Developing internal resources: balance with nature

'This we know, the earth does not belong to us. We belong to the earth.' Chief Seattle

Background

Balance, peace, harmony, equanimity. This is the language of wellbeing and inner strength and purpose. One way to develop and support inner balance is by paying attention to our wider relationship with the natural world. Being aware of this innate connection helps to reduce feelings of isolation, and almost literally allows us to 'stay grounded', drawing in inspiration, vitality and strength.

How it works

There are a few options here:

1. Walk and talk outside. Coaching while walking is a great way to draw in energy and inspiration. Meet up in a park, go for a gentle woodland or hill walk, and allow the rhythm and pace of your movement to draw you into reflective and dynamic conversation. Don't forget to pause frequently to take a few conscious breaths and notice everything around you.

2. Ask your client to gather a collection of objects from the natural world and bring them to a session. Talk about the qualities they represent. Use them as resources during concretisation work.

3. Suggest your client (or both of you) regularly spend conscious time outside as part of a daily routine shift: five-ten minutes meditation, a short walk, finding a favourite spot to say out loud all the things in your life you're grateful for: these are all gently transformative practices

4. Try out a different point of view during a session: role reverse into 'becoming' a tree, bird or animal. This allows you to imagine a more instinctive, innate way of being, with less mental process and more 'just being who I am'. A 'birds-eye' view offers a chance to see the bigger picture, while 'becoming' a tree or a mountain gives a different sense of space, time and passing seasons.

5. Bring the natural world into your work-space: have images and objects which bring the beauty of nature into the room. These can be evocative and help to create a nurturing and spacious environment. If you represent aspects of nature you have an affinity with (animals or birds you identify with, shapes and textures you love) that's another way of authentically 'showing up', and will encourage your client to be fully present also.

Work with the five senses: use incense or dried sage to infuse the workspace, put gentle music on for relaxation work or during 'absorption' activities, make sure there is colour and natural texture in the room. As physical beings these cues affect us more than we often realise.

Developing internal resources: somatic listening and touch

Background

'Mirror neuron' is a scientific term for the way our brain responds when we observe another person's physical state. If we see them kicking, the part of our brain which fires up when we kick is also activated. If we see them laughing, the same thing happens.

This neurological process is the foundation of human empathy, and as practitioners we need to develop our skills in using our own body responses and sensations to help us listen more deeply to others. Once in tune and in a state of rapport deeper trust and the consequent change can take place.

Touch is natural. It helps us. Deprived of touch, young children are unable to grow, thrive or function socially. However, because of the innate connection between touch and intimacy, and also because of the complexity of unspoken social and cultural rules about touch (which change from country to country), many professions have created a very simple boundary to solve the problem of potential inappropriacy: don't touch.

This prohibition, while solving one problem, creates others. Both caring and healing touch are very natural ways for us to listen more deeply to each other and facilitate developmental processes.

How it works

1. Drop your awareness down into a still deep place inside yourself and check your own body and felt sense. What do you notice? Doing this will unconsciously support your client to deepen their own awareness, and will give you intuitive pointers about what's happening for them.

2. Trust any impressions or feelings which appear as you do this. Check – is this mine or theirs? It's important to know when your own unconscious process is showing up, and setting this aside for a time when you are not focussed on your client.

3. If you feel your client will benefit from caring touch – for example, you holding their feet to help anchor them back into their body, or a hand on their back or arm around the shoulder if they are crying – calmly check with them if that feels OK. (Learning to tell others when touch does and doesn't feel comfortable is a very useful skill for your client to develop, and can mirror abilities to create more general healthy boundaries).

4. If you are holding feet, try gentle massage on the top of the foot. This helps lymph drainage, and is very soothing and healing without being too intrusive. Again, check with your client if it is something they want. Be very respectful at all points.

5. If you have your hand on someone's back or shoulder, let yourself gently 'listen' through the touch. Energetically, much feeling is stored and processed at points up and down the spine, and if you develop your intuition you will be able to connect with the feelings of others in a gently healing way – this is a completely natural thing to do.

6. Key questions when using touch include: *'Am I being respectful? Has this been chosen by me client? Do I feel comfortable? Is it appropriate to the situation?'*

   NB. If you are using healing touch with a young person or vulnerable adult it is important that this is in line with all safeguarding processes, which should be in place in whatever organisational context you are working in (for example 'story massage' work can done with whole classes, in a fully open and safe way).

Self and relationships: understanding and shifting cognitive distortions

Background

David D. Burns in his book, Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy (Signet, 1981) helpfully outlines a list of ten common 'cognitive distortions', or ways to perceiving the world which are detrimental to our own wellbeing and that of those around us. Being able to spot these and share this 'psych-ed' know-how can be a helpful starting point for positive change. I've added some 'new story' ideas for a more positive take on these. So here they are…. Something to watch out for!

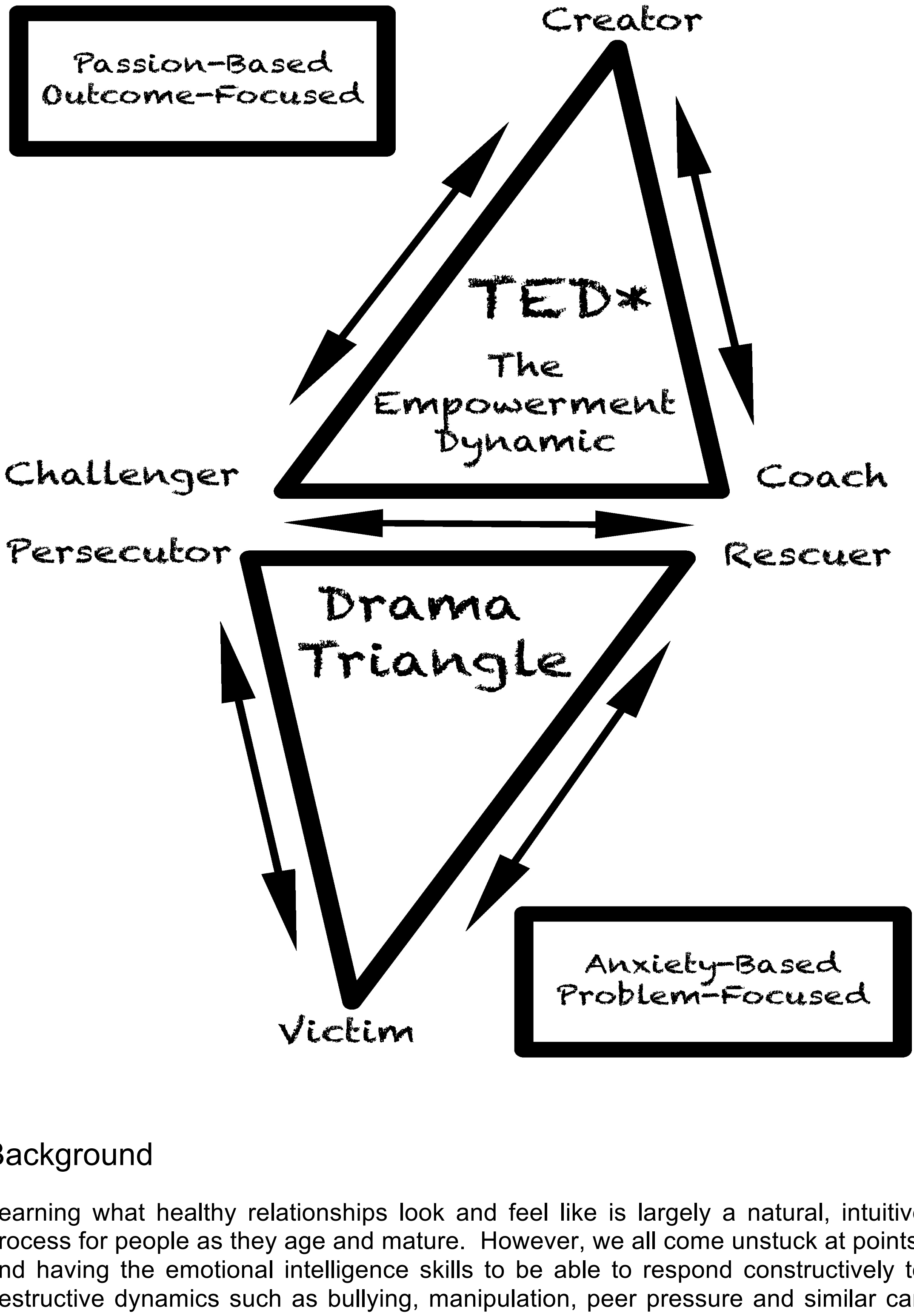
How it works

If you spot a cognitive distortion when you're working, you can explain the concept to your client. It can really help depersonalise a pattern when you see it's something that many other people have also experienced.

OLD STORY	NEW STORY
All or nothing thinking: you look at things in absolute, black and white categories.	More than one thing can be true at the same time, and things change – I can just notice what's happening in the moment.
Overgeneralisation: you take a negative event and assume it is a never-ending pattern.	Just because this has happened now doesn't mean it will always be the same. We can make new choices together.
Mental filter: you see negatives and ignore positives.	I can deliberately work to spot the good things and what I'm doing well, training myself to notice and celebrate these.
Discounting positives: you insist that your positive qualities and accomplishments 'don't count'.	Well done me for what I have done well! Although actually, I'm interested in enjoying what I do rather than proving myself.
Jumping to conclusions: you either assume people are reacting negatively without any evidence or predict that bad things will happen with no evidence.	I'm going to take the time to check before deciding on what's going on and what to do about it.

Magnification or minimisation: you either blow things out of proportion or shrink their importance inappropriately.	It matters to me so I will take it seriously, but I know that ultimately everything will change and new options will turn up.
Emotional reasoning: you reason from what you feel, "I feel stupid, so I must be stupid." Or, "I don't feel like doing this, so I'd better not."	I can notice how I feel and care about that without losing my objectivity or sense of perspective. My judging voice may need some care too!
Should statements: you criticise yourself and others with 'shoulds' and 'shouldn'ts'.	There is no room in my life for 'should' – I do things because I choose to not because I'm obliged to. I can still choose to take responsibility and extend myself to support others, but I do have a choice about this.
Labeling: you identify with your shortcomings and give yourself negative labels, "I'm rubbish", "I can't keep up with anything" etc.	Let me check if that's true, or just an old familiar story I've been told and have now internalised?
Personalisation and blame: you blame yourself for things that weren't really your responsibility, or blame others while not recognising your own contribution to a problem.	It isn't helpful to me or others to judge. I can move beyond praise and blame to a steady place where I notice and make positive choices.

Self and relationships: stepping out of the drama triangle



Background

Learning what healthy relationships look and feel like is largely a natural, intuitive process for people as they age and mature. However, we all come unstuck at points, and having the emotional intelligence skills to be able to respond constructively to destructive dynamics such as bullying, manipulation, peer pressure and similar can be essential for well-being and self-esteem.

This model helps to explain why people sometimes get sucked into negative dramas with each other. Once you learn to spot the drama triangle, it is a great way to avoid both becoming stuck in a victim role or being blamed by others.

The three roles in the Drama Triangle are frequently inter-changeable – you may start in one role in relation to others but these tend to switch, sometimes quite rapidly.

The three roles are victim, persecutor and rescuer. The dynamic is only enacted when two or more people are taking on one of these roles.

How it works

1. Put three chairs in the formation of a triangle facing each other and explain to your client that these are representing the 'drama triangle', outlilning the three roles involved. Use A4 paper to label each chair with one of the three roles: victim, rescuer and persecutor.

2. Ask your client to sit in one of the chairs, and speak from that role. Ask them how they feel about the other roles from that position. Repeat this from each chair.

3. Now explore together how these roles can 'flip'. Agree and then play out a 'victim/persecutor' dynamic, using named characters to bring this to life, for example:
   - Rina, the employee (persecutor)
   - Tom, the colleague (victim)
   - Jan, the boss (rescuer)

4. When you have played out the conversation for a few minutes, representing each character between you, 'shift' each character to the chair on their right – so they change role – victim to rescuer etc. Continue playing out the scenario with the characters in their new roles.

5. This exercise shows how the Drama Triangle dynamic, once in place, tends to shift people between the three roles – persecutors become victims, rescuers become persecutors, etc. Once you are aware of the dynamic and can spot an invitation to join it from others in your life, it is much easier to avoid getting sucked into or generating negative blame-based dramas.

6. The more positive alternative to the Drama Triangle is called The Empowerment Dynamic (TED), also figured above, a triangulation of roles which can be positive and help create effective and useful change when relating to others. You can try this out as an alternative to the Drama Triangle.

Self and relationships: befriending our defences

Background

This model was developed by the wonderfully skilled psychodramatist and action methods practitioner Liz White. In her introduction to her booklet 'Welcome to Befriending Our Defences', she outlines the different relationships we have with role states:

- **Role perception:** we see and understand a role from a distance (we can see nurses in hospitals in role, but have no interest in becoming a nurse).

- **Role expectation:** we approach a role but don't yet take it (for example when preparing to take on a new job)

- **Role taking:** we take on a role but are not yet fully comfortable in it

- **Role playing:** we know how to take this role and can integrate it in our lives.

- Role overdevelopment: we use a role so habitually that it is played too often, and becomes routine and unspontaneous

- **Resistance to balancing roles**: we cling to familiar roles like a lifeline and resist the alternatives with alarm – to trust is to be a fool, to acknowledge vulnerability is to expose yourself, to step back from helping others all the time is to be lazy or selfish.

- **Role relief** – to put an overdeveloped role down and try out a new one. This can make people feel uncomfortable initially as they lost a very familiar comfort zone, but then frees up new energy and possibilities.

This last involves **recognising the price you are paying** for the attachment to an overdeveloped role (exhaustion, loss of sense of self, feeling unseen) and also **recognising our own adverse reaction to the new balancing role**.

Making friends with our resistance in effect allows us to make peace with parts of ourselves which are in conflict and to embrace change.

How it works:

1. Start with the circle of strengths activity (see p. 26). These strengths give us spontaneity – the chance to see and evaluate what's needed from a calm and centred place.

2. Place outside the circle four defensive 'bunkers' or role states, the places we sometimes retreat to when we feel anxious or threatened:

- ***The annihilator*** *(feelings of power and self-isolation caused by blaming and shaming others and seeing others as 'the enemy'. Afraid to admit to own feelings of vulnerability, shame and powerlessness).*

- ***The accommodator*** *(hyper-vigilant people pleaser, who will do anything to keep the peace and others' approval. Needs to be liked and often feels invisible. Finds it hard to admit to anger, bearing grudges, not being 'nice' inside).*

- ***The controller*** *(needs to anticipate and analyse difficulties, find solutions and impose these on others as rules or control mechanisms. Takes lots of responsibility, can't understand points of view of others who disagree with me. Secretly terrified of chaos and collapse, overwhelmed and unable to ask for help from others).*

- ***The cave dweller*** *(disappears, feels cynical and isolated, don't trust others, can have addictions, feels heavy and oppressed, keeps others guessing or gives them a hard time. Secretly feels very lonely, needs to make connections, talk and share without being patronised or judged).*

3. Check with your client which of these places feels familiar as their 'defensive base-line' when they are struggling.

4. Use clay or draw a representation of this defence role

5. Write or speak some appreciation of this role – their gratitude for its efforts on their behalf, what aspects of it they wish to keep, what changes they intend to make moving forward as they take on new roles.

6. Share and reflect on the process on completion.

Before you use this activity

It is important to try this activity for yourself, if possible with peer support, before trying it with others in order to integrate and get inside the learning and model authentic approaches. Also to appreciate just how powerful and potentially challenging this work can be – you need to approach with care and make sure you have good supervision in place if you are working at this level with clients.

Self and relationships: healing stories

Background

This story technique is very simple and can be a powerful change tool. Stories allow us to create both imaginative spaces for exploration and enough distance to reveal situations and states without feeling too directly exposed. Healing stories can be stories you hear or read and wish to re-tell a client, and this is a great way to work. Here we explore how to help a client create a healing story for themselves.

How it works

7. Make some ‘healing story leaves’. Cut leaf shapes out of green card, and write words you associate with healing on them: for example in my set I have ‘courage’, ‘honesty’, ‘despair’, ‘joy’, ‘friendship’, ‘stillness’ and many others. Listen inside yourself as you find the words you want to work with. Always include a blank leaf.

8. Ask your client to spend some time looking at the leaves, then choose one. Don’t ask them to explain their choice to you.

9. Build a simple story together. Decide where the story will be set, who will be in it, what is happening when the story opens. What is the main challenge or opportunity for the central character/s? How is this resolved?

10. Ask your client to tell you the story, then tell it back to them.

11. Reflect together on the content and themes of the story which spontaneously emerged. Did it touch on the healing theme/s chosen at the beginning of the activity? What was the learning from the story? Listen to your client’s observations, then share any of your own, using the formula, ‘If it was my story, then I would feel/think…’

Coaching and facilitation paperwork

This section provides pro-formas for the planning and recording which help ensure you are keep your work to a professional standard. It is important to take time to complete these reflective processes, and to ensure you have supervision in place to pick up on any learning and development points which arise from this reflection.

The following paperwork is all to be found in this section:

- 1:1 coaching agreement form
- professional coaching brief/agreement form
- Coaching/facilitation planning and preparation checklist
- Action plan form
- Coaching notes pro forma
- Coaching/facilitation self-evaluation sheet
- Individual session feedback form
- Group workshop feedback form

1:1 Coaching Agreement

Client:

Date:

About you:

- What are your hopes and expectations from the coaching process? (i.e. what do you want to see, hear or feel that will be different from where you are now?)

- What are your key areas for development?

What would be the most helpful outcomes for you from the coaching process?

1

2

3

Are you aware of any potential barriers or concerns relating to the coaching process?

The practicalities: (how much time would you like each session to take, how often would you like to meet, have you got a preferred day / time, where would you like to meet?)

How can we best keep in touch with each other?

- Email
- Face-to-face
- Notes
- Text
- Other?

Do you have any other support / resources / people involved which could help the coaching process?

How can we best measure success?

Are you happy to agree to these responsibilities?

- **Coach** – session preparation, fully covering objectives, follow up and review, confidentiality and professionalism, fully engaging with coaching process

- **Client** – reliably implementing action plan, fully engaging with coaching process

Ending the agreement:

We will regularly review progress, and expect to end the coaching relationship either:
- at the end of a pre-agreed number of sessions, or
- once outcomes have been agreed

The coaching relationship can be ended by mutual agreement at any point if necessary, with referral on elsewhere if appropriate and useful.

Signature and date

Client:

Coach:

Professional coaching brief / agreement

Company / Client:
Date:
About you: • What do you regard as your most significant achievements to date, both in and outside work? • In what areas do you currently feel successful? • What are your hopes and expectations from the coaching process? (ie what do you want to see, hear or feel that will be different from where you are now?) • What are your key areas for development?
Tell me about your work context and job role:
What would be the most helpful outcomes for you from the coaching process? 1 2 3
Are you aware of any potential barriers or concerns relating to the coaching process?
Do you have previous experience of being coached?
Do you have any other planned development activity?

The practicalities: (how much time would you like each session to take, how often would you like to meet, have you got a preferred day / time, where would you like to meet?)
How can we best feedback to each other? • Email • Face-to-face • Notes • Text • Other?
Do you have any other support / resources / people involved which will help the coaching process?
How can we best measure success?
Any pre-session information: (psychometrics, learning style info, 360 degree etc)?
Are you happy to agree to these responsibilities? • **Coach** – session preparation, fully covering objectives, follow up and review, confidentiality and professionalism, fully engaging with coaching process • **Client** – reliably implementing action plan, fully engaging with coaching process • **Client's manager** (if appropriate) – providing feedback, attending meetings as required
Ending the agreement: We will regularly review progress, and expect to end the coaching relationship either: • at the end of a pre-agreed number of sessions, or • once outcomes have been agreed If things are not going as well as expected for either coach, coachee or sponsor, any party can give clear and honest feedback about this in a respectful and professional manner. The coaching relationship can be ended by mutual agreement at any point if necessary, with referral on elsewhere if appropriate and useful.
Signature and date Client: Coach: Sponsor:

Coaching / Facilitation

Planning and Preparation Checklist

Referral, initial contact, context?	
Are objectives known?	
Have these been communicated?	
Any performance measures in place?	
Aware of any obstacles to performance?	
Current relationship – any issues?	
Any administration requirements / pre-session information?	
Session planned?	
Venue set-up and well prepared?	
Coach warm-up – aware?	
Coachee/s aware of safety information?	
Session planning includes appropriate variety of activities / formative assessment?	
If group coaching, group management strategies planned for?	
If group coaching, key instruction points rehearsed?	
Feedback opportunity in place?	
Session plan includes review and capture/anchor of key learning?	
Time in place for self-reflection?	
Supervision requirements?	

Action Plan

Desired outcome **Target date:**			
Why is this important?			
Support required / useful?			
Resources needed?			
Specific actions required (manageable chunks):			
Potential barriers/solutions to overcome these?			
Behaviours to work on:			
Milestones:	**Target Date:**	**Date achieved:**	
1. **2.** **3.**			
How will you celebrate and when?			

Coaching notes

Session 1 Date:	Session Objective / Topic	**Create coaching agreement, discover global objectives**
Notes from pre-conversation: **Global objectives and outcomes:** **Contract for this session:** **Key learning from session:** **Action points:** **Client feedback:** **Coach notes/reflection post-session:**		
Session 2 Date:	Session Objective / Topic	
Review of global objectives and outcomes: **Review of Action Points from last meeting:** **Contract for this meeting:** **Key learning from session:** **Action points:** **Client Feedback:** **Coach notes/reflection post-session:**		

Coaching / Facilitation Self-Evaluation

Coachee:		**Date / session no:**	
	Section 1 – Coach's Self-Evaluation		
How did you feel about the structure of the session?	Productive	**5 4 3 2 1**	Unproductive
How positive did the session feel?	Very positive	**5 4 3 2 1**	Negative
What level of rapport was achieved?	High	**5 4 3 2 1**	Low
How much responsibility did the coachee take for their decisions and actions?	Full responsibility	**5 4 3 2 1**	Low responsibility
How was the length of the meeting?	Too long	**5 4 3 2 1**	Not long enough
To what depth was an action plan prepared?	Very in-depth	**5 4 3 2 1**	Not much depth
Comments / learning:			

Section 2 – Self-Reflection Checklist		
Question	**Yes**	**No**
Did you prepare sufficiently for the coaching discussion in advance?		
Did you identify 'slip-back' areas and plan to avoid?		
Did you start the session by agreeing the outcome for the session?		
Did you provide sufficient support and challenge?		
Did you set goals at the right level?		
Did you serve as a role model?		
Did you clearly communicate the behaviour that was expected?		
Did you encourage the client to generate a wide range of approaches / solutions?		
Did you observe non-verbal behaviour carefully and check for incongruence?		
Did you separate observations from judgments?		
Did you focus your attention and avoid distractions when listening?		
Did you paraphrase or reflect what was being said in the discussion?		
Did you use relaxed body language and encouraging verbal cues?		
Did you use skilful questioning to promote sharing of ideas and information?		
Did you give specific and timely feedback?		
Did your feedback focus on behaviour and its consequences?		
Did you give both positive and developmental feedback?		
Did you facilitate achievement of goals rather than telling?		
Did you follow up to make sure progress is proceeding as planned?		
Did you have a good clear beginning and ending?		
Learning Points:		
Overall action plan:		

Breakthrough Journey client feedback form (1:1 session)

Your feedback is very useful to me in developing my professional practice and helping me to maintain high standards of work. Thanks for your responses.

QUESTION	SCALE 1 - 10	Comments
How clear and fit for purpose was our coaching agreement?		
How effectively was the coaching relationship developed?		
How effective were the activities?		
How relevant were the questions?		
How well did I listen to you?		
How much have I helped you raise awareness and insight?		
How useful were the take-away strategies and action planning?		
How useful were the challenge and motivational aspects?		
How effective have I been in working within your organisational context?		
How fully have I understood your support needs?		
How fully have I understood your issues?		
What were the best aspects of the coaching for you?		
How could I further improve our coaching sessions?		
What difference has the coaching made to your workplace performance?		
Any other comments?		

Group Workshop Feedback Form

Please take some time to respond as honestly as possible to the questions below – developmental feedback is especially useful in fine-tuning best practice!

QUESTION	SCALE 1 - 10	Comments
How effective were the activities?		
How relevant were the questions?		
How well did I listen to the group?		
How much have I helped the group to raise awareness and insight?		
How useful were the take-away strategies and action planning?		
How useful were the challenge and motivational aspects?		
How effective have I been in working within your organisational context?		
How fully have I understood your support needs?		
How fully have I understood your issues?		
What were the best aspects of the workshop for you?		
How could I further improve future sessions?		
What difference might the workshop make to your workplace performance?		
Any other comments?		