

"You Can't Push a Rope":

Engaging the Complex Patient With Acquired Brain Injury

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Outline

- Introduction
- Case Example
- Group Application Exercise
- Questions



Purpose

- Rehabilitation needs are becoming increasingly complex
- Individuals may have complex social history or support system
- Clients may not buy into rehab process or engage actively in therapy
- Therapists need new approaches...



"What do I do now?!"



Therapeutic Use of Self

- Where clients are not engaging actively, the way we approach them as both a therapist and an individual is critical to the success of the interaction



Therapeutic Use of Self

- Research shows that the way therapists present themselves as people impacts clients' benefit from intervention
- Successful rehabilitation is based upon a good working relationship, including a good emotional bond, with their therapist



Therapeutic Use of Self

- The “involvement of the therapist’s “self” or “personhood” occurs regardless of, and in addition to, the treatment philosophy or the approach” –Virginia Satir (1987)



Example: J. D.

- 21-year-old single man who completed Grade 10
- Previously worked as a cleaner at a downtown hospital
- Involved in motor vehicle crash in December/02
- Lives at home with parents, who are separated but living in the same house

Example: Patient J.D.

- OT and PT tried traditional approaches:
- Client did not engage in formal assessment
- Gait re-education **FAILED**
- Standing weight-bearing exercises **FAILED**
- Formal exercises on weight machines **FAILED**
- Dexterity activities **FAILED**
- Computer-based activities **FAILED**
- Functional activities **FAILED**
- Limited follow-through in home environment



Where do I find these activities?

- Draw on one’s own life experiences, interests and personality to find common ground
- In our case:
 - PT is a swimmer, scuba diver & pool exercise instructor
 - OT is a cartoonist, painter and potter



Approach Taken With J.D.

- Breakthrough in PT finally came with introducing hydrotherapy pool
- OT learned of client’s arts background and initiated creative activities such as pottery, drawing
- Client engaged in activities (did not want to stop!)
- Client spoke and socialized with others
- Client was self-aware of improvements
- Client initiated community follow-through
- Family could engage with client over activities

How is pool exercise valuable?

- Increases range of motion
- Initiates resistance training
- Facilitates weight bearing
- Cardiovascular exercise
- Minimizes risk of injury during rehab
- Enhances relaxation
- Decreases pain
- Patients report additional benefits...



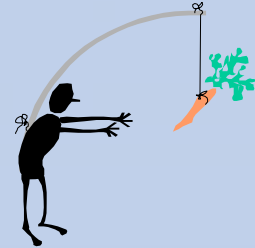
How are Arts Activities Valuable?

- Sensory stimulation
- Cognitive assessment and stimulation: Decision-making, attention, concentration
- Hand strength assessment & exercise
- Creativity / flexibility building
- Social interaction
- Potential community leisure pursuit
- Mastery of new skills



Our Approach

- Clinical use of treatment activities that are:
 - Inherently motivating
 - Meaningful
 - Non-threatening
 - Goal-directed
 - Sensory-stimulating



Summary

- By using our own interests to meet J.D. where he was, we found a way to engage him in valuable activities not just for therapy, but that he can enjoy in the community
- To engage the complex patient, look for shared interests to find meaningful activities as basis for therapy

Application Activity



- provide an opportunity to work together to engage two socially complex individuals with
ABI, by drawing on your own experiences/personalities/interests

Your Mission

- You all have stickers identifying your profession.
- Form multidisciplinary groups
- Develop treatment plans for a patient who recently sustained serious ABI...

Patient: Keith Richards

- 55-year-old rock star
- History of drug and alcohol use
- Sustained a brain injury as the result of a fall from a tree in May/06
- Supportive wife, ex-wife and 4 children
- Anxious to rejoin current Rolling Stones tour
- "I recovered... Six weeks, I mean not bad for a brain job."



Patient: Tony Soprano

- 47 year-old married father of two
- New Jersey organized crime boss
- History of anxiety and panic attacks
- Septic coma of 14 days, as the result of abdominal gunshot wound
- Anxious to return to previous roles



Please develop an innovative treatment plan...

Include:

- Engagement in a Physical goal
- Engagement in a Functional goal
- Engagement in a Psychosocial goal

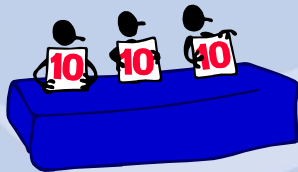


You have 10 minutes!



Conclusions

Presentation of Group
Treatment Plans



Conclusions

Engaging complex
patients with ABI
requires interventions that are as
innovative and unique as they are.



Question:

"How do I push a rope?"



Answer:

You can't push a rope.
You can only PULL.



Questions?



Thank you!

