

Understanding Context and Differences

Without realizing, the therapist may be letting contextual and client-therapist differences cloud their judgment, preventing empathy and understanding from growing and being communicated.

Use this worksheet to review a session and interaction with a client to see if context and personal differences are standing in the way of the therapeutic alliance (modified from Nelson-Jones, 2014).

1. Reflect on each of the following factors:

- Race
- Culture
- Social class
- Family
- Medical and health conditions
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Financial
- Any other important context or factors?

2. Consider sessions earlier that day or that week. With which clients do you notice a difference in the above factors?

3. How did each one go? Were there any difficulties or did sessions progress as planned?

4. List factors that appear to influence how you react with clients:

- 5. Recognize and reflect that some of your biases may be harming the therapeutic alliance you are forming with your clients.**

How could you form stronger bonds, show more understanding, and develop empathy?

References

- Nelson-Jones, R. (2014). *Practical counselling and helping skills: Text and activities for the lifeskills counselling model*. SAGE.

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