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## Shift Your Lens: The Power of Reframing Problems

Lesson 5.1: An Effective Counselor Appreciates the Power of Reframing

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Changing the meaning of something and seeing it from a different perspective

Effectively:

- Defusing/deflecting an issue
- Changing the small to family's perspective
- Avoiding the cycle of punishment and blame

Reality Therapy vs. Solution-Focused Therapy

- Reality encourages client to take responsibility for emotional responses
- Solution focused look for more positive explanations

Lesson 5.2: If at First You Don't Succeed, Try Again. If That Doesn't Work, Try Something Else

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6 Reasons we continue to do things that are not working:

1. We develop habits
2. We become defensive
3. We fail to recognize redundancy
4. Traditions and wisdom encourage otherwise
5. We evaluate in terms of success and failure
6. We are stubborn

Be creative when trying new approaches!



Lesson 5.3: Resist Using "Resistant" and Other Counterproductive Terms

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Resistance (Corey):  
"idea, attitude, feeling or action that fosters the status quo and gets in the way of change"



Lesson 5.4: Look Beyond the Behavior to Avoid Escalating the Cycle of Aggression

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Identify the real reasons behind misbehavior such as:

- Poor self-concept
- Multiple, intense stressors
- Inability to distinguish feelings from behaviors

Responding in a calm, collective manner can help in:

- Displaying sensitivity and acceptance toward the issue
- Improving self-concept
- Eliminating, reducing, or reframing life stressors
- Teaching youth to identify emotional triggers
- Increasing the likelihood of responding in rational, empathic ways
- Modeling appropriate ways to deal with stress

Lesson 5.5: Pay Attention to What You Pay Attention To

Make sure to focus on strengths and what the client can do rather than the things they cannot!



Lesson 5.6: Incorporate Strategies from Sports Psychology and Solution-Focused Therapy to Shift the Focus

Sports Psychology:

- Focus on solution/strength/ability
- Normalize common struggles and developmental concerns
- Use positive imagery and hypothetical situations

Solution-Focused Therapy:

- Presuppositional Questions: aim to alter perceptions in regards to change.
- The Miracle Question: helps identify what client wants and see the future without the issue
- Exception-Oriented Question: helps explore times when the issue wasn't present or the goal was achieved

Lesson 5.7: Use Reality Therapy Principles to Help Youth Make the Connection Between What They Want and What They Are Doing or Thinking

Focus on youth's wants and needs!

- Encourages and enhances self-evaluation
- Lessens their defenses
- Avoid asking "why" or "how come"

- As youth begin to evaluate their behaviors, the counselor should assist them in developing a plan for new behaviors.

Lesson 5.8: Use Metaphors and Anecdotal Stories to Plant Seeds and Facilitate Growth

Potential benefits:

- Provides alternate interventions when behavioral and cognitive are not working
- Youth are less resistant as they discuss values in ways that are not overbearing or judgemental
- Provides imagery for better conceptualization
- Helps youth remember better
- Integrates humor and makes counselor seem more like a "real person"

Lesson 5.9: When Kids Feel They Have Only Two Choices, They Will Choose Smart Ass Over Dumb Ass Any Day

- Many behavior or emotional disturbances are symptoms of learning disabilities.
- "Masks" used to hide feelings of being stupid: not caring, boredom, or acting out
- Remember to look beyond the behavior and identify the unmet needs or real issue



Lesson 5.10: Don't Underestimate the Power of Diagnostic Labels

Diagnosing is not an accomplishment, something is accomplished when:

- The diagnosis is accurate
- Diagnosis is appropriate and least restrictive
- Youth and family are educated about it
- Implementation of treatment or educational plan is helpful

Misdiagnosis can be very damaging!

Lesson 5.11: All Helping Professionals Have a Responsibility to Make the Assessment Process More Kid-Friendly

Helpful steps for helping professionals:

- Ask yourself: Is this accurate? Is this appropriate and least restrictive? Is the "picture" we are creating beneficial? How can we better serve the youth and their families?
- Watch your language
- Do not attribute behaviors to specific diagnosis or previous event.
- Be conscious of cultural variations and explanations before deciding on a diagnosis.
- Reframe behavior, symptoms, and diagnosis
- Beware of the limitations of tests

### References

Richardson, B. (2001). *Working with challenging youth: Lessons learned along the way*. Philadelphia, PA: Brunner-Routledge.

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- Advantages:**
  - Challenging reflecting on how
  - Changing the youth's view of themselves
  - Reframing the cycle of positions and blame
- Reality Therapy or Solution-Focused Therapy:**
  - Reality-orientation: client to take responsibility for emotional responses
  - Solution-Focused: look for more positive experiences

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## Lesson 5.1: All Effective Counselors Appreciate the Power of Reframing

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- Changing the meaning of something and seeing it from a different perspective
- Effective in:
  - Diffusing/deflecting an issue
  - Changing the youth's/family's perspective
  - Avoiding the cycle of pessimism and blame
- Reality Therapy vs. Solution-Focused Therapy
  - Reality: encourage client to take responsibility for emotional responses
  - Solution-Focused: look for more positive explanations

### How Can We Reframe These?

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- "It's all my fault!"
- "Nobody ever listens to me."
- "Anyone could do what I do."

### Helpful Tips to Remember Before Reframing a Behavior

1. Meet clients where they are and understand the issue from their perspective first.
2. Youth and their family must be in agreement with the reframe.
3. Seeing things positively must not be confused as being naive.
4. If the reframe is not working, try something different.

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## 5 Useful reframes for working with challenging youth and families:

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1. Resistance is attributed more to the counselor-client relationship rather than to the individual themselves.

2. Our ideas of change are inconsistent with the client's.

3. When the relationship is not evolving as you expected, what you are getting is feedback, not resistance.

4. The ways in which professionals view misbehavior is different than how youth view it.

5. Resistance could be signs of strength and courage.



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