



Building Professional Excellence- Part 3
Session 6: Boundaries and Power Differentials in Helping Relationships

Webinar Follow-up Question and Answer Session with Dr. Donna Dannenfeler.

1. Question from Latoya Moss

So what happens if/ when you are in an agency and they design the room...in regards to putting a desk in between you and the client?

Answer

That has happened to me when I worked in public school districts and I simply moved the furniture around. And on several occasions I bought my own furniture.

2. Question from Charles Schwartz

Writing ideas down for the client, that were discussed during the session, as a reminder for the client, do you like that? This is not the same as holding pen and paper during the session.

Answer

If the session is over and you're writing it down as a reminder for the client I would ask the client if they would like me to write it down for them first. If they do I would certainly do that for them.

3. Question from Galina Constantinides

How do you deal with situation when the client is taking control by telling their story in a way to show they are in power?

Answer

I allow that to take place. The session is theirs and if they need that power I give them room to experience that. I will reflect what they said to make sure that I understand their point of view. Often times in that situation I will reframe the story and provide an alternate point of view for the client offering them a different way to look at the situation. In this way they feel that they have kept their power and we are just having an objective conversation looking at the situation in different ways. My point is not to struggle for the power, that will not help your client, it actually wastes time and more often than not they will not return.

4. Question from Patricia Kryger

Have you run into a client in the community? With respect to position of power, suggestions on how to best handle?

Answer

Yes I have. I actually wait for them to acknowledge me. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. I hold a friendly stance, acknowledging them, but it's short in duration.

5. Question from Zylphia Beverly

What are ways to express positive boundaries to talk with the child without them (parent)and not be threatened?



Answer

I tell my parents at the beginning of our time together that what their child says in confidence must remain in confidence unless I feel the child will hurt themselves, at which point I will fill the parent in with what's going on with the permission of the child. I also tell the child when I feel their parent needs to get involved. It's only happened when I thought the child will hurt themselves or another. I also explain to the parent that if I tell them what their child has said their child will not trust me and that will destroy the counseling process.

6. Question from Nicole Ford

Dr. Donna, as a certified hypnotist, when it comes to hypnosis, do you discuss with the member how hypnosis is only a tool and the member has the power even though you are the authority with the power and trained to influence their subconscious mind?

Answer

Sort of. I do not use the word "power". I tell them I will guide them into a hypnotic state and place suggestions into their subconscious. In other words, I am their guide into the state of hypnosis. I have been told by a few clients that they can't be hypnotized, a clear sign that they don't want to be vulnerable to the process. I respond by saying, "Actually you can be hypnotized. People that cannot be hypnotized have less than a 70 IQ, which means that they have a very low IQ and they don't have the ability to focus for the duration of the exercise. When I say that, interestingly enough they comply.

7. Question from Erica Henry

Can you give us another example of how you would bring a session to a close? What is another question or statement you would pose to a client as a session is ending?

Answer

There are many ways to end a session. The one thing to keep in mind is that you want your client to walk out of your session feeling better than they walked in. So there are many statements I use and it is very dependent on the issues that came up in our session.

Some examples:

"So, as we end this session can you tell me what came to mind that surprised you during this session?"

"It was great meeting with you today. Do you see things better now? What will you do this week that will help you to get through next week in a way that will serve you?"

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