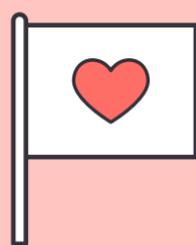


TOP 10 THINGS I'VE LEARNED AS A THERAPIST



1. Personal therapy helps me to be a better Therapist (and person)

Most Counsellors will acknowledge the value of personal therapy but the effects are more far-reaching than than the personal. Personal therapy enhances professional practice too, after all, what kind of advocate would I be for therapy if I hadn't experienced a good deal of it myself?



2. Everyone is capable of everything

I've worked with a lot of people whom have had terrible things inflicted upon them and also people whom have done terrible things to others. There is light as well as darkness within all of us.



3. The importance of keeping clear boundaries

Perhaps one of my biggest challenges. Boundary pushing behaviour usually stems from having our boundaries violated by others as is the case with many clients. As I have a natural inclination towards people pleasing this is an area that has provided me with a lot of learning and growth over the years.



4. A client's process is far more valuable than their story

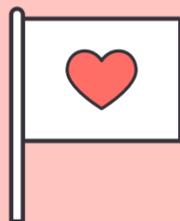
I don't mean that I'm not interested in what has happened to them, just that my focus is more on "What was that like for you?" "How did you manage those feelings?" This enables me to not get caught up in the "he said, she said" and pay attention to what is really playing out.



5. I don't always get it right

Over the years I have: said things viewed as inappropriate, been unclear with boundaries, not remembered things clients have told me, forgot about a booked session – I could go on. My intentions are always good but sometimes I mess up. I'm not saying these things are ok, just that I'm human too.

TOP 10 THINGS I'VE LEARNED AS A THERAPIST



6. Looking after myself is essential

How can I meet the needs of another if I am not meeting the needs of myself? As a Counsellor I am modelling a way of being as an effective parent does a child. Taking holidays/time off and keeping healthy both physically and mentally is imperative and trust me when I say, clients notice when this isn't being done.



7. The power of "No"

A small word with a big impact. I'm not just referring to encouraging clients to voice their "no" but for me to voice my "no" to them. Again, part of the role modelling process and demonstrating how it can be done respectfully and firmly. This could be me challenging a client by disagreeing with them or perhaps reinforcing a boundary.



8. Everyone is doing the best that they know

We are all products of inadequate parenting on one level or another and if we remember that our parents were our first role-models on how to behave/act/respond this can help us to understand that for a time at least, we didn't know any different.



9. It's not personal

The therapy room is a place of re-enactments of the past, repetitions of unresolved issues which are waiting to be understood and assimilated. The Counsellor becomes the face of the clients projections whether it is unresolved anger towards a parent or an uncaring husband, these are displaced parts of a clients experience which require attention and care.



10. I'm not an expert on my clients - they are

I have trained for a substantial period of time and have a good deal of knowledge about theories, interventions etc but when it comes to the client, they are their own expert. Many clients would not necessarily agree with this and for some clients, externalising their power and placing it with someone else is what is familiar to them. Trusting in my clients encourages them to reclaim the trust in themselves.