

Tough Kids, Cool Counseling

Part II

Specific Counseling Techniques and Strategies

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Blog and Resources: johnsommersflanagan.com

Workshop Overview

- This part II of an R-rated workshop
- It's a blend of theory, clinical experience, and evidence-based material (relational and technical)
- Caveats and excuses
- Working with youth is not a perfectly linear process – and neither is this workshop

Participation Guidelines

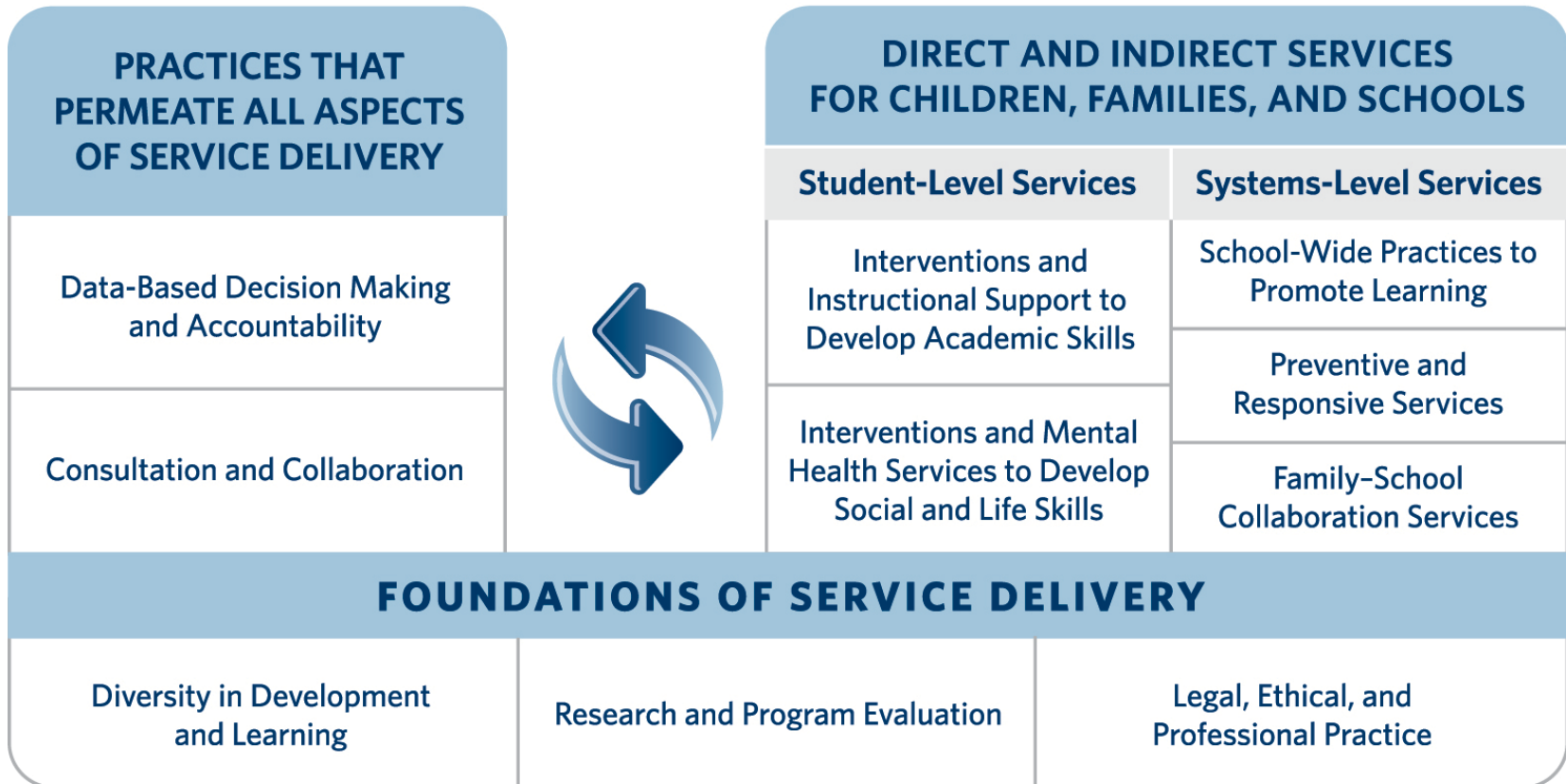
- Input is welcome, not mandatory
- Try to make connections with your work
- Be open to new and old ideas
- Communicate respectfully
- It's okay to critique what you see
- Have as much fun as you can while learning

Learner Objectives

1. Articulate evidence-based relationship and technical factors that contribute to positive counseling outcomes
2. Acquire skills for using numerous cognitive, emotional, and constructive intervention strategies
3. Develop awareness of and be able to address important multicultural counseling issues with teenagers

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Model for Services by School Psychologists



HELPING STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS ACHIEVE THEIR BEST

Technical Procedures

Opening Thoughts

1. My Hour of Solution-Focused Perfection
2. Biking Home
3. Why Technical Procedures are the Essence of What We do

Embracing the Evidence

- Should we be more:
 - Relational? or Technical? or
 - Both?

Evidence-Based Relationship Factors

1. Congruence
2. Unconditional positive regard
3. Empathic understanding
4. WA1: Emotional bond
5. WA2: Goal consensus – Focus on strengths
6. WA3: Task collaboration (including homework)

Evidence-Based Relationship Factors

7. Rupture and repair
8. Managing countertransference
9. Progress monitoring (feedback)
10. Culture (scientific mindedness, cultural humility, charlar)

[See:

<https://johnsommersflanagan.com/2019/01/14/transforming-therapeutic-relationships-into-evidence-based-practice/>

Video Clip: Kennedy

- Kennedy is a 15-year-old referred by her parents
- This is session #1: 1:38 – 5:04
 - Watch for:
 - (a) first mention of suicide; (b) first focus; (c) problem-solving; (d) “gun” mention
 - What relational interactions are at the foundation of this opening?

Kennedy – Discussion

- First mention of suicide
- First focus (Distress . . . Why?)
- Problem-solving
- Gun mention

Technical Interventions

1. Problem-Solving (Behavioral Alternatives)

Principle: Problem-solving can help adolescents reduce their cognitive rigidity and emotional agitation while increasing mental flexibility (Nezu, Nezu, & D'Zurilla, 2013). Generating behavioral alternatives is the brainstorming stage of problem-solving.

Clinician Behavioral Examples

- Okay. Let's just make a list of your options.

Video Clip: Pete

- Pete is angry at a boy who tried to rape his girlfriend
- Watch for:
 - How brainstorming proceeds
 - Pete's affective changes
 - John's risky suggestion
 - Which EBRFs are integrated into this technical procedure?

Reflection

- Take a moment and consider:
 - What you saw/heard and thought was important
 - What you liked/disliked
 - Your reactions to Pete
 - Which EBRFs you saw/heard

Technical Interventions

2. Coping with Countertransference
3. Exploring Attributions and Core Beliefs and Constructing Alternative, Strength-Based Theories

Principle: Instead of immediately reacting to client issues with our own issues, we should help adolescents explore their own beliefs and personal theories and eventually help them move toward more constructive beliefs and theories about themselves.

Video Clip: Lee

- He wants to understand why his mother abandoned him [Note: This clip is not from the beginning of the session]
- Watch for
 - Your countertransference impulses
 - How Rita avoids acting on her impulses
 - Rita's exploration and questioning of Lee's internal beliefs or narrative

Reflection

- Consider:
 - Your reactions to Lee
 - What EBRFs you saw/heard
 - What you liked/disliked

Managing Countertransference

- Supervision
- Consultation
- Your own therapy
- Owning it
- Maintaining the student/client focus

Cultural Humility

- Cultural humility is an evidence-based orientation with three parts
 - An other-orientation instead of a self-orientation
 - Respect for others and their values/ways of being
 - An attitude that includes a lack of superiority

Cultural Awareness

- What cultural issues or reactions did you feel while watching and listening to Lee?
- Could you label these as positive, negative, or neutral?
- Can you transcend these “reactions” and embrace cultural humility instead?
- What would Carl Rogers say?

Technical Interventions

4. Four Forms of Relaxation

Principle: Relaxation is an evidence-based approach, but it can be tough selling it to adolescents (Long, 1992). Young people benefit from exploring self-soothing and self-control methods (Gaines & Barry, 2008).

Clinician Behavioral Examples

- Demonstrations
- Let's talk about how Steph Curry relaxes

Technical Interventions

5. Cognitive Storytelling

Principle: Students need a rationale to understand cognitive therapy; stories are memorable and can help (Friedberg & Wilt, 2010).

Clinician Behavioral Examples

- My Stories
- Your Stories
- Their Stories

Technical Interventions

6. Empowered Storytelling

- **Principle:** Students need to tell their stories. Expressive methods can help them gain distance (e.g., narrative externalization), deconstruct the problem, and re-construct a more adaptive meaning.

Clinician Behavioral Examples

- How about we develop a story about this?
- Case example

The Case of Latisha

- **Slide show**
- As we read Latisha's stories together, consider the creative process and what the stories mean to her.
- Think about your students and stories you might create with them.

Latisha's Book of Rules About Crying

[Bonus Section]

By Latisha and MB

Crying is stupid.

You can only cry when
someone dies.

If you do cry,
you can't cry in
front of
anyone!

You must cry
alone.

. . .IF you cry.

Top three things NOT to
cry about:

1. A stupid boy.

2. Getting your feelings
hurt.

3. Feeling alone.

Crying makes
you think. . .

which you
might not
wanna do.

Babies can
cry.

Widows can cry.

Crybabies can cry.

Crying hurts.

It gives you a
headache.

Crying makes
you tired.

The end.

A book about crying for baby M (Latisha's neice)

By Latisha and MB

It's ok for you to cry
when you squish your
fingers. . . .

Or when you're scared. . .

Or when you
fall over.

It's ok for you to cry
when you don't feel
good. . . .

Or when you
have a bad
dream. . .

Or when you're around
strangers and it makes
you scared.

If you cry,

I will hold you.

If you cry,

I will try to make
you happy.

If you cry,

I will give you a
bottle. . .

Or feed
you. . .

Or talk to
you. . .

Or rock you.

If you cry,

I think something is
wrong, and I want to
make you happy.

When you
are happy,

I feel happy.

I love you,
even when
you cry.

If someone tells
you to stop crying,

I will tell them to
shut up and go
away.

I will say,

“It’s oooooookkkk!”

Even when you cry,

don't worry.

You will be happy again.

The end.

Technical Interventions

7. Asset Flooding

Principle: Addressing attachment insecurity requires support, not criticism; criticism can cause dysregulation (Narrative/SFBT; Adlerian; Attachment, Hughes, 2006; CBT application)

Clinician Behavioral Examples

- Use several counselors/educators
- Check in and debrief: “How does it feel to focus on your strengths?”

Technical Interventions

8. Be Playful and Spontaneous

Principle: Spontaneity is a part of genuineness/congruence . . . but you should plan for it (Friedberg et al., 2013).

Clinician Behavioral Examples

- Dollar game
- Do you know what I like about anger?
- I'm talking too much. I'm going to be quiet and listen to you more

Technical Interventions

9. Early Interpretations

Principle: If it's clear we like and respect our clients and are committed to their development, we can take risks and offer early surface interpretations to work on important issues more quickly (Adlerian)

Clinician Behavioral Examples

- You might have some perfectionistic thoughts
- Sometimes you spoil the good things you do

Case Example: Sean

- Reported self as “angry all the time.”
- Watch for:
 - Early interpretation
 - What are the pros and cons of the early interpretation?

Technical Interventions

10. The Fool in the Ring and the Satanic Golden Rule

Principle: Feindler (1986) developed the fool in the ring technique. The concept of the Satanic Golden Rule can help students see that it's better to lead than controlled by others

Clinician Behavioral Examples

- I heard you can be nasty to adults, but you're being nice to me. Why's that?
- Demonstration

Suicide Interventions

11. Alternatives to Suicide
12. Neodissociation
13. Safety Planning – See Stanley and Brown –
Bonus Video with Kennedy

Principle: AtS reduces mental constriction and stimulates problem-solving. We should collaborate (especially with the client's healthy ego state) on options to self-destructive behavior

Free Suicide Resources: johnsommersflanagan.com

Case – Kennedy – Safety Planning

- Collaborative safety (crisis) planning:
- 34:32 – 39:03/39:59 – 43:27
 - This involves collaborative work on identifying individual warning signs, coping responses, social distractions, support networks, and environmental safety (e.g., firearms)

Safety Planning

- How Can I Make My Environment Safe?
- My Unique Warning Signs
- My internal Coping Strategies
- People and Settings that Provide Support and Distraction
- Who Can I Ask for Help?
- Professionals or Agencies I Can Contact for Support
- How I Can Make My Environment Even Safer?

Safety Planning

- I want you to live
- But I know it's your choice to live or die
- Most people feel better after 3-4 months of counseling
- Why not give it a try, you can always choose to die later
- [Mostly adapted from Jobes, 2016; **What would Linehan say?**]

Termination

Termination with students may be sudden, unpredictable, or repeated.

Termination Tasks

- Identify goals
- Reflect on progress
- Reminisce as appropriate
- Ask for feedback
- Write a note – give a final consolidation gift?
- Hope for the future
- Adjust the door

- See:
<https://johnsommersflanagan.com/2014/04/07/handling-termination-in-counseling-and-psychotherapy/>

Review: Principles and Techniques

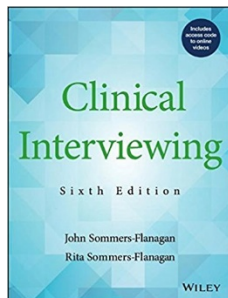
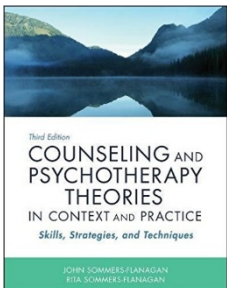
- What are some of the EBRFs?
- What technical procedures do you want to remember and try out?
- How does cultural humility fit for you?

Conclusions

1. The WHOLE purpose of techniques
 2. Engage and have interest
 3. Music Video
 4. Closing comments
- For more information:
johnsommersflanagan.com

Resources

- Go to <https://johnsommersflanagan.com/> for free stuff on suicide, parenting tip sheets, mental status examinations, psychotherapy theories, the miracle question, and much more.
- Plus many books: https://www.amazon.com/John-Sommers-Flanagan/e/Boo3oLK6NM/ref=dp_by_line_cont_book_1



- Video training on suicide assessment and intervention is here: <http://www.psychotherapy.net/video/suicidal-clients-series>

