**Case Conceptualization & Tools with Children, Adolescents and Families**

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| **Question** | **Goal** | **Examples of Tools to Use with Young People** |
| **What has client been up to?**  ***E.g., trying to make \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ go away*** | Look for avoidance/fusion; relational frames (meanings of events, relationships, behaviors). This may look like very subtle shifts in attention, emotion, or activity level during the session. Once you notice such a shift, that tends to be a useful moment to engage them in a drawing exercise. But you can start anywhere, really, and this can be a good icebreaker. | Ask child/teen to draw:  …*a picture of you and what you are fighting with*  *…colors for what it’s like to be you right now*  *…shapes to show me the size of what you are struggling with*  Process: Notice the client as they are drawing. Be curious about what shows up for them. |
| **What has the client done to fix the situation?**  ***E.g., what has the client/his or her family tried so far?*** | Look for unworkable behaviors. These will be behaviors that the child comes back to again and again, and they will have predictable effects. They may feel familiar, and have similar antecedents across situations. They also very likely belong in a the same functional class (e.g., avoidance of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) | Keep a working list of behaviors, such as…  …yelling at mom  …playing Xbox instead of homework  …fighting at school  …substance use, cutting  Process: Gently stop the client when these behaviors show up in session, and go into experiential exercise |
| **How has that worked?**  ***E.g., (pre-values intervention) How’s that been going? Is life how you want it right now?***  ***(post-values intervention) Has that led you to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (value)?*** | Structure situation so client comes to his/her own conclusions. Don’t explain to the child, but simply notice, take stock, and empathize. The goal, via the experiential exercises, is to help the client “get” this on a gut level rather than cognitively | Experiential exercises  …Putting yourself back into your owns shoes, in that moment  …Noticing how your body feels/felt in that moment  …What shows up now?  Process: Watch the client closely – notice when they are truly present/when they “go away” |
| **What has this taken away from her/him?** | Get a sense of the cost of this pursuit. Again, this should be experiential rather than cognitive. | Experiential exercises  …Can you remember the last time you felt “good” or “happy?  …Can you go back to before this started? (sometimes they can’t)  …Imagine there’s a place where everything in your life was set right…(values exercise)  Process: See if the client can think of a happy time/event. If they can’t, try the last exercise. Notice what shows up for you as you engaged the client in these exercises. |
| **If things could be different, what would that look like?** | Begin conversation about values, and see what shows up. This question is linked to the one above. | Experiential exercises  …Story of You  …Imagine a world where  …Walk back through a painful situation (an argument, being ostracized, failing a test, etc.)  Process: Note whether “not possible” shows up for client. See if you can get a sense of how stable and deep that experience of “not possible” or “not for me” is. What shows up for you? |
| **What obstacles get in the way?** | Assess what the client’s perceptions are of why they are “stuck”. Link this with behaviors that promote and maintain being stuck. What are the antecedents to those behaviors? | Experiential Exercises  …Compass worksheet  Process: This may occur over the course of several sessions. Call the client’s attention to what happens when the antecedent occurs, as well as how the behaviors worked. |
| **What does the client do in session? What transitions happen?** | Look for narrowing, or rigidity of behavior; stereotypy – consider whether behavior is under aversive antecedent control/consequential control – or both. | Experiential Exercises  …Mindfulness meditation – does this seem familiar? Walk back in time…  Process: Look for opportunities presented by subtle shifts in behavior or emotion that may reveal triggers of functional avoidance/opportunities for defusion/exposure |
| **What skills are in place? What skills are needed?\*** | \*Children, especially younger children, may not have the necessary skills in place to engage mindfully in purposeful action. It is critical to assess this. | Use shaping, modeling, massed practice, homework to enhance generalization, enlist team comprised of parents, teachers, friends to assist and reinforce skills practiced, reinforce effort rather than outcome |

Mindfulness/Defusion: Be Present

Acceptance: Open Up

Valued Action: Do What Matters

Cognitive Fusion

Experiential Avoidance

Unworkable Action