

Clinical functional analysis and the process of change



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The Basic phenomena



Antecedent



Behavior



Consequence

“Men act upon the world and change it, and are changed in turn by the consequences of their action”

(Skinner, 1957 in *Verbal Behavior*, p. 1).

Symbolic behavior (relational framing) changes the three term contingency (A B C)

- Humans learn early to relate stimuli (phenomena, events) in a particular way (relational framing). This learned ability changes the way antecedents and consequences can acquire function for human behavior.
 - Responses of the behaving person can acquire complex antecedent functions for further behavior and become "self-instructions" (tell you what to do and for what)
 - Responses of the behaving person, in the form of abstract, overarching verbal constructions, can acquire reinforcing or punishing functions.
 - The above increases the behavioral flexibility for humans and has some side-effects
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The light side of the force

- We are able to sidestep immediate gratification
- We can go for "long term consequences"



The dark side of the force

- Our ability to follow self-instructions can lead to vicious circles
- Experiential avoidance



Establishing observational distance to your own responding as a key strategy

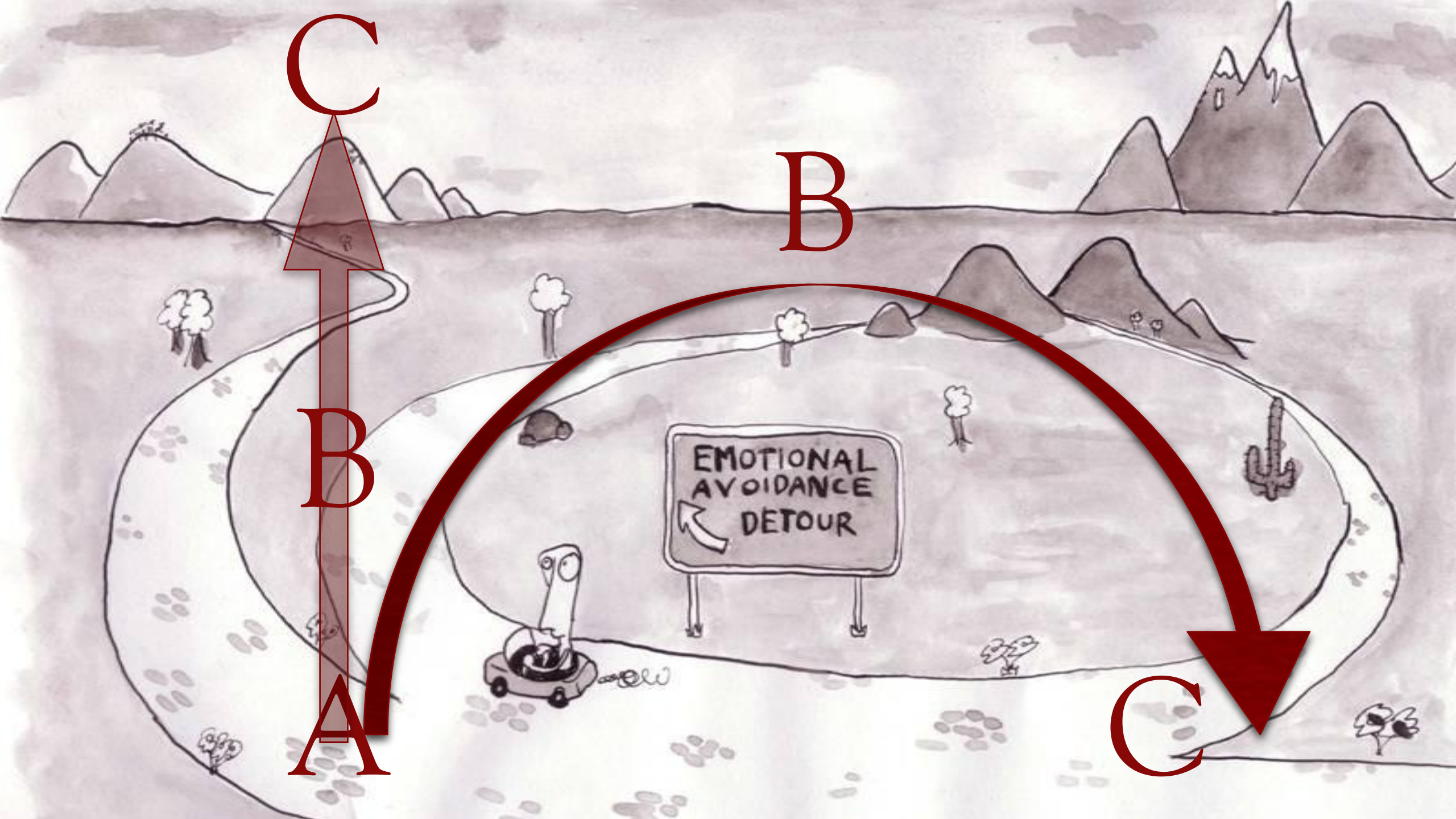
- To the extent to which a person interacts with her/his own self-instructing responses in coordination, these responses will have strong influence on subsequent behavior and the person risks missing other aspects of the current context (including other responses of her/his own) and be trapped in vicious circles (fusion & experiential avoidance)
 - Thus responding to your own responding in hierarchy with "deictic I" (with an observational distance) is an antidote to the above and the very essence of psychological flexibility
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Q & A

Doing a functional analysis: the beginning and end of all change strategies

- Find and name, in co-operation with the client, the current problematic strategy the client uses and clarify relevant antecedents and consequences (functional analysis, A B C analysis, creative hopelessness)
 - Train the client in establishing observational distance (framing in hierarchy with deictic I, defusion/self as context) to self-instructing responses functioning as important antecedent factors to the problematic strategy, in order to alter the functions of such responses as they emerge.
 - Train the client in using observational distance (framing in hierarchy with deictic I) of both antecedents and consequences that support an alternative strategy (taking direction, valued action)
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C

B

B

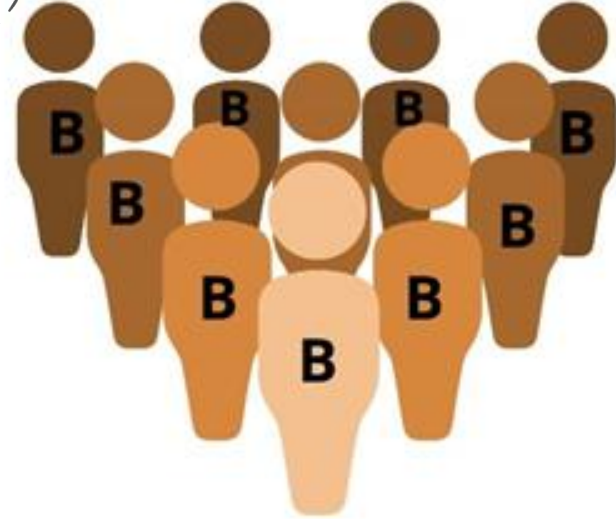
A

EMOTIONAL
AVOIDANCE
DETOUR

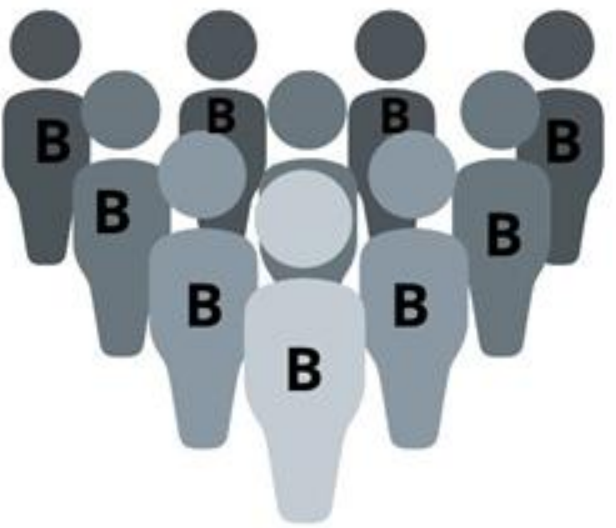
C

Functional Classes of Response

Functional Class
ABC
1

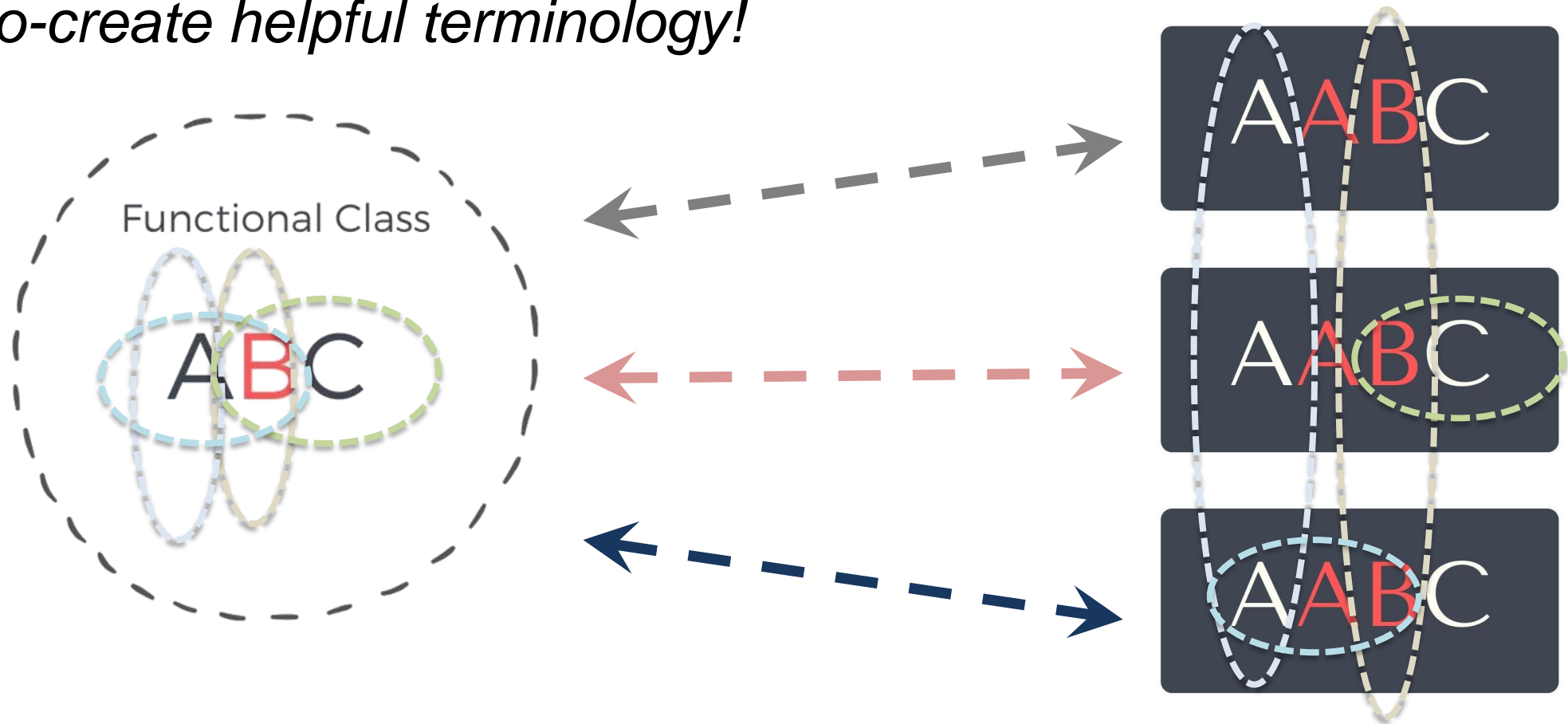


Functional Class
ABC
2



From concrete examples to a functional class

Co-create helpful terminology!





Q & A



Break



Illustration and exercise

Functional analysis: What is the problematic strategy (B) of the client? Work towards an agreed term, summarizing the strategy. What are central private responses (A) that trick the client into doing that? Work towards an agreed term. What are the consequences?

Establishing an observational distance: Use the terms agreed on and elaborate. "I am here noticing that thing". Try to talk in a way that establishes a distinction between the response and the person who has that response

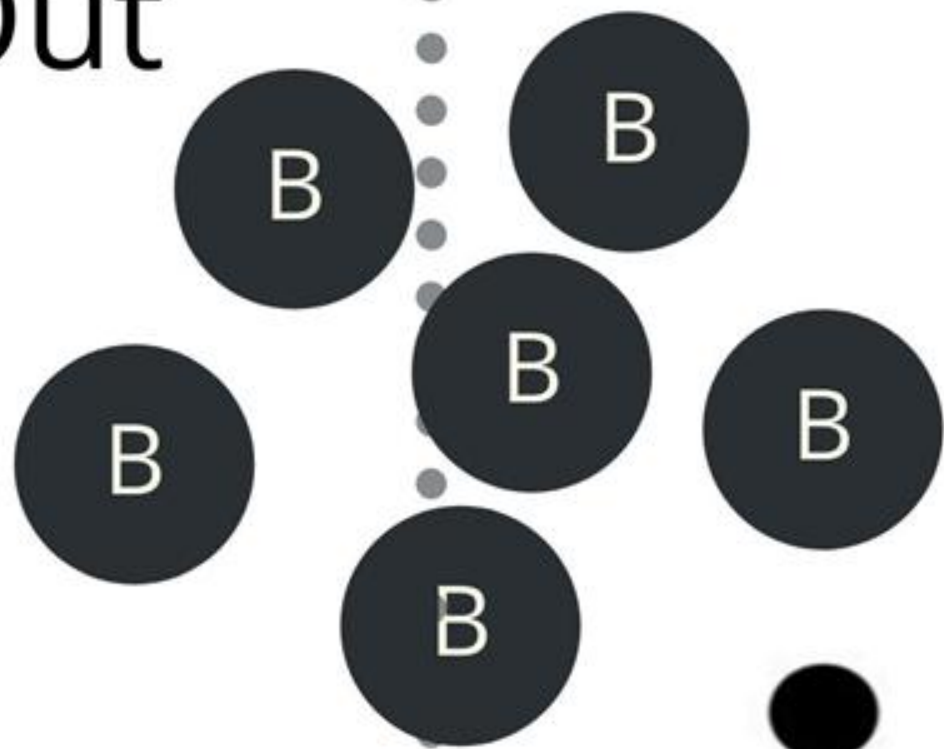
Taking direction: What is important to you? If you were free to choose, in what direction would you go? What concrete action will take you in that direction? Are you willing?



Q & A

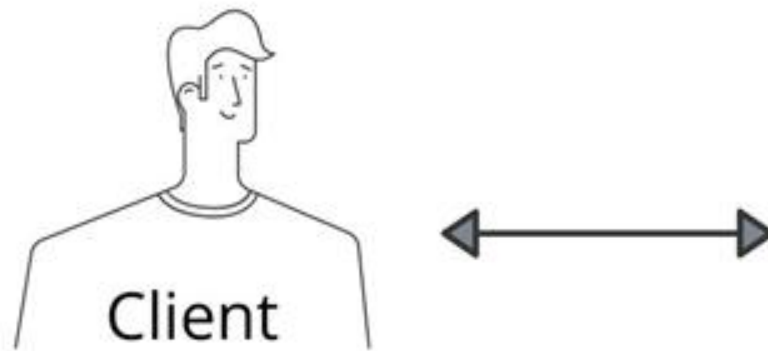
Out

IN





Q & A



- Bring up a daily problem
- Share with your partner to practice



- Do Functional Analysis the way we explained (following the 3 principles)



15 minutes of Role Play
5 minutes of feedback and discussion
Then come back to the larger group



- Look for the principles
- Give feedback after the interaction have finished



- Look for the principles
- Give feedback after the interaction have finished

Breakout rooms 20 minutes (Real Play)



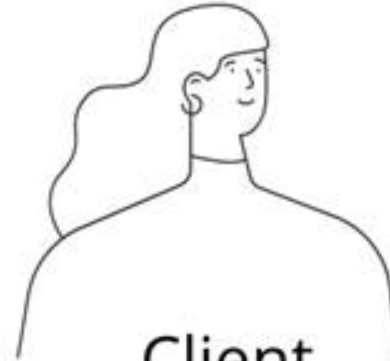
Observer

- Look for the principles
- Give feedback after the interaction have finished



Observer

- Look for the principles
- Give feedback after the interaction have finished



Client

- Bring up a daily problem
- Share with your partner to practice



Therapist

- Do Functional Analysis the way we explained (following the 3 principles)



15 minutes of Role Play
5 minutes of feedback and discussion
Then come back to the larger group

Breakout rooms 20 minutes (Real Play)

Skinner, in conclusion:

“A person who has been
“made aware of himself” by
the questions he has been
asked is in a better
position to predict and
control his own behavior”

(Skinner, 1974 in About Behaviorism p. 35).



Suggested Readings

- Haynes, S. N., & Williams, A. E. (2003). Case formulation and design of behavioral treatment programs: Matching treatment mechanisms to causal variables for behavior problems. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 19*(3), 164.
- Törneke, N., Luciano, C., Barnes-Holmes, Y., & Bond, F. W. (2015). RFT for clinical practice: Three core strategies in understanding and treating human suffering. *The Wiley handbook of contextual behavioral science, 254-272*.
- Skinner, B. F. (2011). *About behaviorism*. Vintage.
- Kohlenberg, R. J., & Tsai, M. (2012). *Functional analytic psychotherapy: Creating intense and curative therapeutic relationships*. Springer Science & Business Media.
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