



Specialising in Personality Disorder
and Complex Trauma



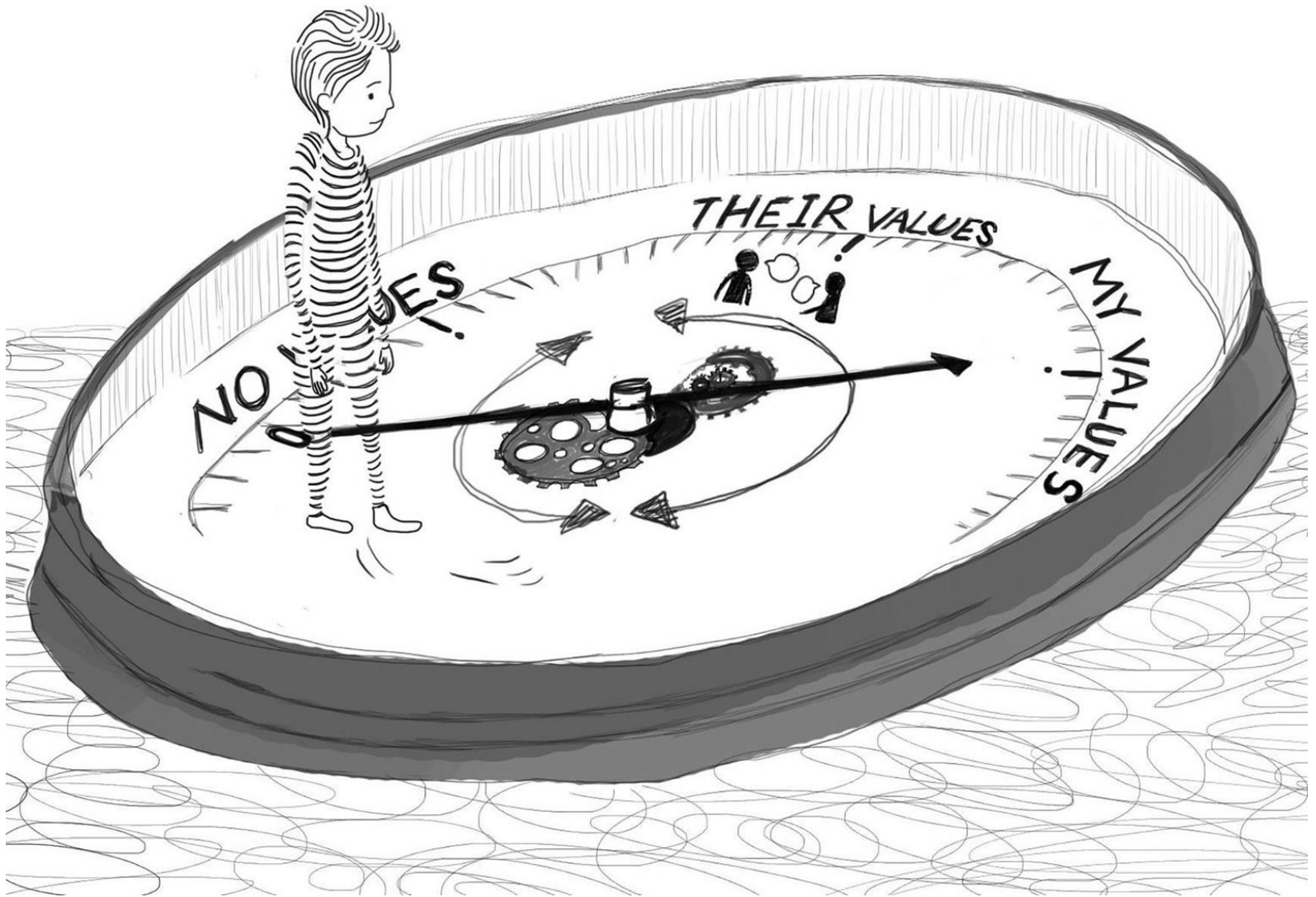
Fostering change within an ACT framework Part II:

Clarifying values in clients with fragmentation of self

Presenter: Ashlyn Hansen

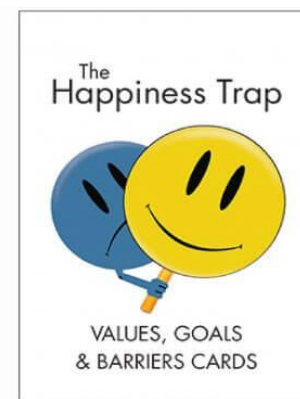
Date: 21st June 2023





Questions to elicit values

- What do you want your life to be about?
- What do you want to have stood for?
- Who or what matters to you? **Why** do they matter to you?
- Who is someone you admire? What do you admire about them?
- Someone you **don't** like or admire?
- At the end of your life, what do you want to look back on? How do you want to be remembered?
- If only _____, then I would _____
- Card-sorting activity
- Checklists
- Other techniques?



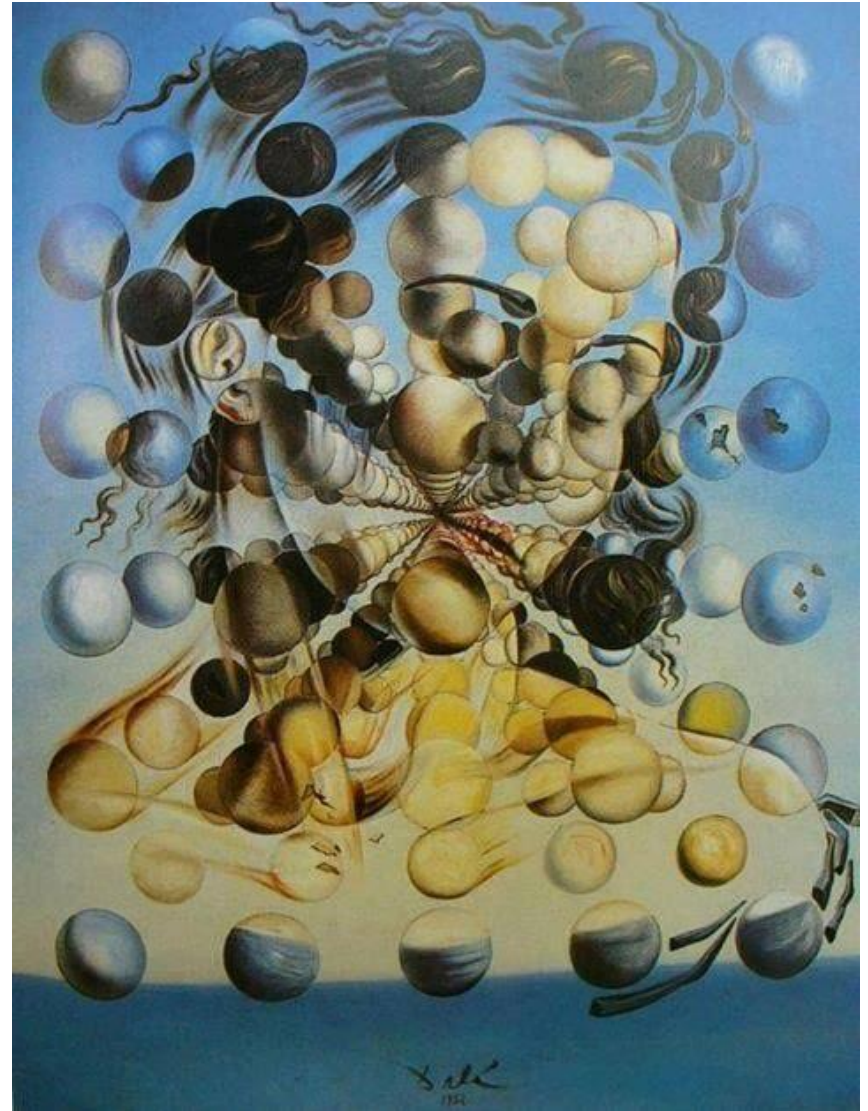


"Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does. It is up to you to give [life] a meaning."

-Jean-Paul Sartre

Sense of self

- Continuity and coherence of internal experiences and intentions across contexts, including personal past, present and future.
- Trust in the validity of my experiences, openness to updating and integrating new or conflicting information.



Challenges for the therapist

- Values seem to be held inconsistently, clients wish to constantly change values that have been identified
- Despite clear effort, interest, and desire to engage, clients seem to connect with values in ways that seem inauthentic or based on what they believe the clinician expects
- The client is uncertain about what is truly valued and why
- It's difficult for the client to separate “shoulds” from what is truly valued
- Values turn into rules or ways to self-criticise
- Values are focused on other people's actions rather than what I would like to do or stand for
- As the clinician, you find it difficult to identify avoidance due to fusion with difficult thoughts or emotions & create choice points, without imposing your own beliefs about what the “true” value is

Some ideas for working with these issues

- Explore rather than challenge
- Consider the client's Window of Tolerance and how you are supporting them to emotionally regulate while reflecting on values
- Psychoeducation around “when values become rules” early in treatment
- Provide more scaffolding / mirroring back to the client around what seems to matter to them
 - Deliver with openness to being wrong. If the client tells you that you are wrong, accept this and return to exploring with curiosity
- Lots of positive reinforcement for small actions that do seem consistent with client's values
 - Keep in mind how much tolerance the client has for receiving praise & modulate based on how they like to receive praise
- Mindfulness of values conflicts and how you may inadvertently express judgement of the client's true values

References & further reading

