5. Persistence, Patience, Insistence, and Discipline – Page Version

Introduction

The four qualities, namely persistence, patience, insistence, and discipline, that we are discussing in this section are absolute necessities for every caregiver. They also are qualities that we want to cultivate in all of our clients.

As always, we strongly urge you carry out the activities that we recommend. We repeat that you never should post anything that could reveal the identity of another person, as this can be extremely damaging and is, in our view, unethical.

Persistence

Persistence is very important for the caregiver. Many times, it takes a great deal of persistence to build up a relationship with a client. Also, frequently, it takes a great deal of persistence to get to the core issues of a client and to work through each of those issues. Thus, our message is to stay with it and be persistent. Persistence also plays a role in the formation of therapeutic and educational groups. Sometimes, it has taken us as much as 18 months to form a group. We thus believe in being pit bulls.

A further point in this regard is to support and encourage clients to be persistent. Very frequently, it is very difficult for them to get through the psychological and practical parts of their lives. Such support and encouragement can be crucial.

Activities

Describe a situation in which your persistence assisted in the formation of a good relationship with a client.

Describe a situation in which your persistence assisted in getting to a client’s core issues.

Describe a situation in which your support and encouragement assisted a client in getting through a difficult situation.

Are there situations in which you should not be persistent? Give an example.

Patience

Patience can be very difficult for both the caregiver and the client. Frequently, we know where we want the client to go, where he or she will go eventually, but have to wait for him or her to go there himself or herself. The client also can be very impatient with the pace of the change that she or he is experiencing and with other people and circumstances in his or her environment. Again, we find that one of the roles of the caregiver is to support and encourage the client in waiting and being patient. Very occasionally, distracting activities can help. We don’t particularly endorse this as a strategy, as it can lead to avoiding facing real issues.

Activities

Give a situation in which you as a caregiver were impatient. How did you deal with it?

Give a situation in which your patience paid off.

Give a situation in which you supported and encouraged a client in her or his impatience. How did it turn out?

Are there situations in which it is not good to be patient?

Insistence

In our view, there are very few situations in which the caregiver needs to insist on something. Rather, we feel that the client must take responsibility for her or his own life. However, in our view, a few such situations do exist. Examples are taking steps when the client would put himself or herself or another person or an animal in danger. Another situation is when the client is not thinking rationally, that is, is seeing visions or hearing things or “is not in this world”. Still another situation is when a client is not taking responsibility, particularly for his or her own actions. Again, we say this carefully.

Activities

Give a situation in which you were unnecessarily insistent.

Give a situation in which you had to be insistent.

Discipline

Discipline is necessary for both the caregiver and the client. For both, it means coming to appointments on time and, if it is not possible for the appointment to take place, calling it off in a timely manner. For the client, if the contact is online, it means finding a suitable place for the meeting that is free of noise and interruption and in which the client is alone. For both, it means carrying out the tasks that each has promised. For the client, it means taking responsibility for his or her own life. Frequently, a part of the reaction to trauma is to let go of good discipline that has been built up over time. Other clients may never have had discipline in their lives and it may be difficult for them to learn it. Still other clients use what might be considered to be excess discipline as part of a reaction to a traumatic situation. Such discipline may give a degree of certainty and stability in an otherwise difficult situation. Another possibility is that lack of discipline is a rebellion against otherwise difficult external or internal forces. Further, there may be cultural aspects to discipline. In any event, discipline is part of the therapeutic process for virtually all clients.

Activities

Give a situation in which you as the caregiver lost your sense of discipline. How did you handle it?

Give a situation in which the client did not have sufficient discipline, in your view. How did you handle it?

Give a situation in which the client had too much discipline.

How do you handle the question of discipline with clients in general?

Are there situations in which discipline is not necessary?

Some Final Remarks

Persistence, patience, insistence, and discipline all are important qualities for both the caregiver and the client. They are important parts of establishing the relationship between the caregiver and the client as well as being part of therapeutic process.

In the next section, we will look at the identification of the client with the caregiver and vice versa.