How to Work with Difficult Cases

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The Florida Housing Coalition, Inc., is a nonprofit, statewide membership organization whose mission is to bring together housing advocates and resources so that all Floridians have a quality affordable home and suitable living environment.
Case Management Must Haves
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<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| **Trauma Informed**        | • Recognizes that individuals experiencing homelessness have a higher prevalence of trauma histories  
                              • “What is wrong with you?” to “What happened to you?” |
| **Recovery Oriented**      | • Recognizes the participant as the expert and their strengths are essential to their recovery  
                              • Recovery looks different for everyone |
| **Housing Focused**        | • Stable housing is always the goal  
                              • Housing First philosophy |
| **Person Centered**        | • Assessments are focused on strengths  
                              • Offer choice in decisions (housing, treatment, programs) |
You Are NOT

• A Parent
• Family Member
• Therapist
• Friend
You ARE

- Advocate
- Educator
- Care Coordinator
- Support Person
Dear stress,

Let's break up.

Me
What Makes a Case Difficult?
Quick Poll – Have you Had a Difficult Case?

YES

Or

NO
### Some Reasons (Client)

- Fear of Failure or Success
- History of Trauma
- Current Trauma
- *Could be Disability*
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<th>Some Reasons (Worker)</th>
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<td>Insincere</td>
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<td>Too many cases</td>
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<td>Inexperienced</td>
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<td>Lack of good supervision</td>
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Something is going on. We need to recognize that and assume everyone is just doing the best they can with what they have.
Working With the Client
Example - John

- Residing at your shelter for 6 months
- “Frequent Flyer” for accessing services
- Hard to contact/misses appointments
- Burned bridges for housing programs
- Not following through with recommendations
What Are Your Ideas?
Questions to Consider

• What are the goals listed on John’s housing plan?
• Are these still his goals? Do we need to review the plan?
• Is there conflict between the goals and his actions?
• On a scale of 1 to 10, how willing is John to accomplish his housing goal?
• Is there ambivalence?
**Precontemplation:** Individuals do not even consider changing (Denial)

**Contemplation:** Individuals are ambivalent about changing

**Preparation:** Individuals prepare to make a specific change

**Action:** Actions are taken by individuals which demonstrate they are moving from ambivalence to actual change

**Maintenance:** Individuals have incorporated the new behavior and made the change(s)
Using the MI "Ruler"
DEARS – Five Principles

• Develop Discrepancy
• Express Empathy
• Amplify Ambivalence
• Roll with Resistance
• Support Self-efficacy
Roadblocks to Listening

The first 5 categories can take away the client’s autonomy:

1. Ordering, directing or commanding.
2. Warning or threatening.
3. Moralizing, preaching, giving “shoulds” and “oughts”.
4. Advising, offering solutions or suggestions.
5. Teaching, lecturing, giving logical arguments.
Roadblocks to Listening

The next responses point out inadequacies and faults:


7. Name calling, stereotyping, labeling.

8. Interpreting, Analyzing, Diagnosing.
Working With Ourselves
Being Our Authentic Self

Use of Self
• Use of Personality
• Use of Belief System
• Use of Relational Dynamics
• Use of Anxiety
• Use of Self Disclosure
Use of Personality

Your mastery of skills appear to have the least impact on client satisfaction when compared to your **authenticity** and how you use personality traits.
Use of Belief System

Belief systems are a method for understanding, organizing, and making sense of the world around us. Not always spiritual in nature.
Use of Relational Dynamic

Concepts from Carl Rogers:

• Congruence
• Unconditional Positive Regard
• Empathy
Use of Anxiety

Difficult cases will produce some anxiety within us.
Recognize it and talk about it.
Use of Self-Disclosure

Ask yourself:

• “Am I doing this for the client, or is this more related to my own interest?”

• What is my goal in self disclosing my experiences?

• How do I predict sharing this with the client will benefit the client?
Supervision

The supervisory relationship is built on trust, confidentiality, support, and empathic experiences.

Other qualities inherent in the supervisory relationship include constructive feedback, safety, respect, and self-care.