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Supporting Client-Centered Practice through Critical Self-Reflection: The Intentional Relationship Model

Celeste Januszewski, Evguenia Popova, Jenica Lee, Renee Taylor
University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Effective client-therapist communication is essential for client-centered occupational therapy (OT), and employing therapeutic use of self is a strong priority for OT practitioners. Therapeutic use of self must be informed by human diversity, defined by differences in gender, age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religious views, sexual orientation, disability status, and a wide range of other social and cultural dimensions. The extent to which a client and the OT are the same or differ influences the nature of the relationship, and the OT is responsible to be able to critically reflect upon and adjust their practices to better understand and accommodate the ways in which they differ from their clients.

The Intentional Relationship Model (IRM)* provides a conceptual framework for effective client-therapist interpersonal communication. The model stresses strategic application of therapeutic communication modes for establishing effective client--therapist communication, particularly during challenging interpersonal events which can result from cultural differences. The Clinical Assessment of Modes (CAM) questionnaire will be introduced, including a brief description of psychometric findings.

Objectives: Participants will be able to:

- 1) Describe the fundamental components of IRM
- 2) Explain how IRM can be applied to tackle interpersonal challenges in communication resulting from human diversity factors
- 3) Identify how the CAM can support OTs to build critical self-reflection of therapeutic use of self

*Taylor, R. R. (2008). *The intentional relationship: Occupational therapy and use of self*. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Co