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Outline—Client Anxiety-Hospitality

Note: Original issue of client hospitality and making them comfortable enough to let down their guard and trust us to work in partnership with us. Coming at it now from slightly differing angle of high anxiety of clients as they adjust in more difficult times.

I will tell you I would start maybe with an encouraging word that not a lot of what I would say will be much different because of what is going on with Covid.

Because we are Christians and our God is timeless and our faith **should be** and is most helpful when it is consistent. Having organizational guiding principles and a personal philosophy that you adhere to helps you know where to turn. And just like God is our solid rock and foundation, being a rock and strong foundation for our clients is a start to easing **their** anxiety. Here at the CLC, our principles are rooted in equality, justice, **client dignity and empowerment**. We work in PARTNERSHIP at all times.

A. My Personal Philosophy for carrying out my practice in general then is to:

- I. Take all people and situations as they come. (Welcome the Stranger, everyone precious child of God, all wonderfully made in his image, all equal)
 - a. Be present in that moment only.
 - b. “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” — Romans 8:28
- II. Be adaptable (Lean not on your own understanding, with God all things are possible)
 - a. Not always ask why but why not? Pray on the situations for understanding.
 - b. “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” — Jeremiah 29:11
 - c. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, **and do not rely on your own insight.**” — Proverbs 3:5
- III. Treat people with dignity (Should not judge, romans 13:8 approach to disagreements...)
 - a. Avoid judgment (Lawyers use a lot of normative statements, and Christians do too so consider if we are judging and back that off. Outside of explaining what the law truly requires, be careful to tell people what they “need” to do.
 - i. Normative' means 'what you should do' or 'what you must do', the rules that you are supposed to follow. So 'non-normative' means 'what is recommended to be done', the suggestions on how to do things well (within the formal specifications laid out in the 'normative' part). It can also mean 'how people generally do things' whatever the formal rules say. www.quora.com/What-is-the-difference-between...
 - ii. Consider people’s situations are different from yours. You might do the same in their situations.

- IV. Show you care (Love your neighbor as yourself)
 - a. **Competency is a given, but caring is extra!**
 - b. Show you care through genuine, authentic connection.
 - c. Act with intention [plan to do all things that are important]---show you care.
 - i. Corollary --A lack of intention will cause you act in ways you didn't intend. When people get hurt or don't feel you care, you will find yourself saying that wasn't your intention. But what was your intention. If you didn't set an intention for people to be cared for and weave it through your day, and therefore through your practice, and then in a matter of speaking, it was your intention for them to be hurt
 - ii. To carry out the intention—successful execution requires planning.
 - 1. Set aside time to discuss what a successful client experience would look like and feel like.
 - 2. What would common concerns be?
 - 3. Regularly review the experience—particularly when variables change—like with Covid. Or there may be variables you didn't realize changed—parking, web, voicemail, etc. Check regularly through client's eyes.
 - a. Evaluations, you and volunteers, different perspectives.

This weaves into helping the clients more specifically with Anxiety

B. Client Anxiety

- a. Known Variables- non legal examples [Ease anxiety with logistical information before come, reassurance before and during, reminders, easy signs & paperwork, support, hospitality, breaks]
 - i. Chaos of getting family together /organized to leave house
 - ii. Leaving house at all
 - iii. Going downtown
 - iv. Going to new places
 - v. Navigating directions, parking
 - vi. How to accommodate medical /disability issues- bathroom, walking, steps
 - vii. Meeting new people
 - viii. What if don't understand / need help? Bring support?

- ix. Intimidated by Formal environments
 - x. Intimidated by Professionals
 - xi. Intimidated by Completing paperwork generally
 - xii. Literacy issues
 - xiii. Intimidated by Legal language
 - xiv. Worry about being off work or getting to work on time
 - xv. Worry about parking meter running out-ticket /cost/ person waiting/ bus
 - xvi. Many more!!
- b. Known Variables- legal [ease with information, support, follow up, connection to community resources]
- i. What to do with expected bad outcome?
 - ii. Worry it will be a worse outcome than expected and cause more chaos?
- c. Unknown Variables [ease with offer of prayer and connection to community resources]

Remember: **“Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength.”**

- i. Worry about what is going to smack them later as everything seems overwhelming already.
- ii. Attorney and Staff should emphasize:
 1. Cared for and not alone in this (God,Us, rest of support circle)
 2. Safe (Make referrals if determine that is not the case)
 3. This situation won't be forever (roller coaster example--- a big down now but eventually will come up)

C. Calming anxieties specifically

- a. Listen and take notes from first phone call or interaction of what that client wants to know about and what will be successful outcome for **them**. Its not just substantive issue. It's a people issue. Get a feel for what might be some of the blocks to them receiving information or executing advice so can be prepared to tailor your presentation of advice to them in a way that can help them better receive it. If they can't hear you or are completely overtaken with another issue and can't implement advice, your effort will be in vain. Be prepared to make referrals as necessary for supplementary services.
- b. Overall, provide concrete information, people, and connection to needed tangible resources and other information and support. Make *unknowns* known and let them know

where you are going to take them. Go at their speed. Use their frames of references. Always meet them where they are.

- c. Prepare entire physical space so that it will be as warm, welcoming, and comfortable to as most people as possible. Consider physical proximity, structure, items that create homey atmosphere, hospitality, etc.
- d. Be ready to receive clients ON Time to show respect for them. It is not just YOUR time that is important. They are taking time away from work, home, school, family, doctor's appointments, rest, etc. This person and their time is important. Don't forget that. Give them your full attention.
- e. Greeting. A professional yet warm greeting is important. Think about how you welcome people to your home and how you are welcomed. We are not just a law office but a community of God's representatives. Are we representing him well? Have we given a greeting that lets the person know they are in God's home and have arrived safely in his care?
- f. Physical environment—consider multiple spaces both away from you and near you to complete intake paperwork and interviews with requisite privacy, and not trigger them in any way. Consider noise, physical proximity, etc. Access to comfort needs.
- g. Help reduce anxiety by letting them know they are physically and emotionally safe now and throughout process. You are there to help give them information or appear in court with them to stand with them and help guide them through this difficult process. You will not judge them for being in this difficult situation for choices they have made or not not been able to make. Be patient as they struggle.
- h. Pre-appt Information: Logistics for appt, what to expect, assurances to help (not guarantees to solve or bring a particular result, but just to be there to help).
- i. Confirmation w/reminders of important info to bring or happen
- j. Greeting and information on who will see
- k. Comfort: Drink, Snack bowl, bathroom break, etc.
- l. Help: to complete intake and prepare for actual appt
- m. Close the gap between professional and client—genuine connection.
 - i. Take time first to get to know the client. Break the ice. Build trust. Think of welcoming someone to your home. You don't just bring them in the door and then say so tell me everything you are stressed and embarrassed about. You say, sit down, relax. So how are you? How are things? But we expect clients to go right to the worst things in their lives without any relationship being built.
 - ii. Iceberg--- most real issues are underneath the surface not being seen and are masked by legal issue presented. Legal problem may have been caused by those other issues, or may be what causes those issues. Either way, everything

becomes intertwined at some point. Solve those issues, and usually much of the legal issue will go away or become easier to deal with.

- n. Meet them where they are in terms of education, spirituality, etc.
- o. Information: Education on iss: ue, information for extended support
- p. Lifeline: What to do if / until. When leave ER/hospital they tell you if this happens do this, so give assurances yes, but also tell if worse or worst does happen, here's what you do. Can they come back? Can they do something else themselves?

D. For technological based appointments

- a. Still consider everything said. Work to humanize even more! Reminders, environment of what they see behind you. How do you greet them, time built in to get to know still, follow up, etc. How do they know to navigate the technology? Maybe it is little calls by other volunteers to do the other things. Maybe more referrals to other places during the Covid time for some of the needs. During Covid issue though there is more isolation, so more chance they will be more open to prayer or discussion. See where need is and follow that.

E. Other verses of comfort:

- F. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. **Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.**" — John 14:27
 - G. "**Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid,** for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." — Isaiah 41:10
 - H. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, **because he cares for you.**" — 1 Peter 5:6-7
 - I. **4.** "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving **let your requests be made known to God.**" — Philippians 4:6
 - J. "Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; **he will never permit the righteous to be moved.**" — Psalm 55:22
 - K. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life...can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?" — Matthew 6:25-27
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- L. **1 Peter 3:14** — "But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated..."
- M. **Psalm 34:4** — "*I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.*"
- N. **Psalm 56:3** — "*...when I am afraid, I put my trust in you.*"
- O. **2 Timothy 1:7** — "*...for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.*"
- P. **1 John 4:18** — "*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.*"
- Q. **Psalm 94:19** — "*When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul.*"

- R. **Isaiah 43:1** — *“But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”*
- S. **Proverbs 12:25** — *“Anxiety weighs down the human heart, but a good word cheers it up.”*
- T. **Psalms 23:4** — *“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.”*
- U. **Joshua 1:9** — *“I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”*
- V. **Matthew 6:34** — *“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”*
- W. **Deuteronomy 3:22** — *“Do not fear them, for it is the Lord your God who fights for you.”*
- X. **Revelation 1:17** — *“When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he placed his right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last...”*
- Y. **Mark 5:36** — *“But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.”*
- Z. **Romans 8:38-39** — *“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*
- AA. **Zephaniah 3:17** — *“The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing...”*

* If find at any point that person is looping then consider two key points, one that helping to understand may need to stop giving information as may not be able to do anything with it.

1. Amygdala (Fight, flight or freeze) v. PFC.

a. When the amygdala is activated, the prefrontal cortex is bypassed and they cannot properly make executive decisions.

b. Help the person relax, allows them to make better decisions. Focusing on anything other than them relaxing and being comfortable is wasted energy for both of you because they cannot properly take in complex information and make quality decisions.

2. Circle v. Decision tree

- a. If client going in circles and you are both repeating your selves, try mapping out the two main options.
- b. If you find they have a series of objections. Map out what the concerns and options are relevant to those two main options and take them through making the decisions.
- c. Once an option is ruled out, cross it out and ask client to agree you will not go back to them.
- d. Once there is only one box left, that is the decision. If client wants to go back to others that have been crossed out, you remind them why they were ruled out. Usually they stop going there, but occasionally, they will tell you the REAL reason or issue they have.
- e. Either way, you can get out of the circle, except for those clients that may have something clinically diagnosable at the highest level. I always just offer that they are welcome to take the chart and think it over and come back when they are ready to make a decision as it is not my job to make the decision for them or force them to go forward, it is only to advise them so if their real decision today is to do NOTHING, then that is ok. Because that is what going in a circle with objections is. We've already addressed the objections and now we are going back to old objections again, so the real issue is they feel scared maybe about going forward and that's ok. They can choose not to go forward today, think about the advice and come back when they are ready.

BB. STAFF anxiety.... Love your neighbor as yourself

Reducing their anxiety starts with your own.

You have to be in a good place.

Centered, grounded, feeling safe and secure.

In control. Not controlling. But in control.

Can't be God's instrument to change world if you feel like your world is spinning out of control.

SOOOO. Do some things to ease your own anxiety every day.... Most important thing....

Your self care....

Every night, time off from what you are doing at work.

Rest. Adequate sleep for your immune system to not be sick, to drive safely, and to think clearly. These brains are tools. Our nation needs them more then ever. If you can't fight off a virus, you will not be around to help anyone. No one ever put on a grave about how hard someone worked! Your known by your relationships or lack thereof. Connect with others and make time for yourself.

Be a human being not a human doing. Great quote. Let your creative mind come out. Your brain is solving things while you sleep and also while you play.