

# How to Fall in Love with Session Limits & Do Transformative Short-Term Work

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# So many students, so little time....

- Demand for counseling services is 5 times the rate of enrollment (CCMH, 2016)
- Doing More with Less
- Ubiquity of Session Limits

# One man's crisis is another man's opportunity...

- How we can be more poetic & musical about our sessions
- How limits can paradoxically free us up to take more risks & establish greater momentum in sessions

# Therapy as a Poetic Form

- “I dwell in Possibility/A fairer House than Prose”-Emily Dickinson
- “Poetry without verse is like playing tennis without a net”-Robert Frost
- Sonnet Example
  - Compresses
  - Explores & contrasts
  - Turns

# Shall I Compare Thee?

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;  
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

# Working Dynamically from a Relational Perspective

- Family Backdrop (Mitchell, 1988)
- Multiplicity & Not-Me (Bromberg, 2006; Stern, 2009)
- Enactments (Bromberg, 2006; Stern, 2009)

# Zeroing In on a Conceptualization & Creating a New Relational Experience

- Focal Problem (Grayson, 2002)
- Focal Theme (Grayson, 2002)
- New Relational/Emotional Experience

# Keeping the Musical Line Going: A New Slant on Working Dynamically

- Vertical vs. Horizontal
  - “If I Loved You”, Rodgers & Hammerstein
- Focal Theme Example
  - Rachmaninoff Symphony no. 2 in E Minor, Mvmt 3

# Are these ‘transformative moments’ measurable?

Subscale	10/30/2015 Missing Data BASELINE	11/02/2015	11/03/2015	11/10/2015	11/13/2015	11/17/2015	11/24/2015	12/01/2015	12/08/2015	12/15/2015
Depression	99	94	94	91	85 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	85 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	85 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	85 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	89 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	73 ↓ <sup>1</sup>
Generalized Anxiety	95	90	90	90	90	83	83	83	83	71 ↓ <sup>1</sup>
Social Anxiety	95	85	89	85	85	85	85	80	85	80
Academic Distress	83	43 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	57	49	70	57	57	63	70	57
Eating Concerns	39	57	57	57	65	65	65	65	65	65
Hostility	94	51 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	58 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	64 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	58 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	64 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	58 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	64 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	74 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	69 ↓ <sup>1</sup>
Alcohol Use	46	56	56	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
Distress Index	99	83 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	87 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	86 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	86 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	80 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	80 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	82 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	86 ↓ <sup>1</sup>	71 ↓ <sup>1</sup>
SI/HI	4/0	3/0	3/0	3/0	2/0	2/1	2/0	2/0	2/0	2/0

# Putting it all together...

- Improvising on 12 Bars
  - Coltrane’s “Bessie’s Blues”
  - Developing the Student’s Voice & Your Own Therapeutic Voice
- Creating Poetic & Musical Lines that lead to transformative moments
- Enduring Lessons in the Process-“So long lives this..”

# Selected References

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Stern, Donnel B. (2009). *Partners in Thought: Working with Unformulated Experience, Dissociation, and Enactment*. New York: Routledge.

# What do you think??

- Questions
- Thoughts
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