

Module 5: Strategies for Change

This module introduces the complex concept of change. Trainees are asked to be humble in the face of the multiple factors contributing to change in addition to strategies and techniques including: the strength of the working alliance (16) the patient=s readiness to change (17), and the strength of the patient=s social network (18). They are introduced to the substages of change: relinquishing the old pattern, initiating and then maintaining the new one. Figure 1 describes the relationship between generic change strategies and the substages of change. Trainees are supplied a glossary defining each of the generic change strategies.

They are then shown a lengthy table with glossary describing strategies and techniques associated with the various schools of therapy (Emotion-focused, Cognitive, Behavioral, Interpersonal-Psychodynamic, and Systems) or ECBIS. It is emphasized that each of these perspectives is part of the general whole as suggested in Figure 2.

The goals of module four include: 1) Understanding the substages of change., 2) Understanding the various strategies for change, and 3) a beginning understanding of the principles for strategy selection. Trainees are given two sets of transcripts each containing 10 different therapeutic interchanges.

At the end of each interchange, they are posed 2-3 multiple choice questions asking them to define the substages of change being passed through in this dialogue, the generic change strategies used and the ECBIS strategies being used. They are asked to compare their answers with each other during the seminar and to explain their differences. Trainees often find this homework exercise very interesting, exciting and satisfying because they are reading real dialogues and are becoming able to understand what the therapist is thinking. They are also given two sets of 2 short-paragraph vignettes. They are asked to describe what generic and ECBIS strategies they would use. In these ways they become increasingly more familiar with how these strategies are used. They are also shown brief videotape vignettes from prominent therapists representing each of the ECBIS schools (19) as well as one from one of the authors (Beitman BD, videotape of Dr. Beitman's therapy session with MC, University of Missouri, 1996). To demonstrate that psychotherapy does not always work and that therapists are sometimes quite helpless they are shown a videotape vignette of a frustrated therapist (Beitman BD, videotape of Dr. Beitman's therapy session with J, University of Missouri, 1990).