

What's useful for helping us to
stay open to receiving new
information about ourselves?

helpful

|

harmful

Using the 'Here and Now' relationship

"We learn best about ourselves and our behaviour through personal participation in interaction combined with observation and analysis of that interaction."

- Irvin Yalom, 'The Gift of Therapy', (2001)

The here-and-now

The here-and-now now refers to the immediate events of the (coaching session), to what is happening **here** (in this office, in this relationship, in the space between me and you) and **now**, in this immediate hour.

Why use the here-and-now now?

The rationale for using the here-and-now rests upon the idea that what goes on within the coaching relationship is like a microcosm for what goes on 'out there' in the rest of the coachee's life.

"Eventually (provided we do not structure it too heavily) the interpersonal patterns of the client will manifest themselves in the here-and-now of the coaching relationship. The client's patterns of behaving will enter into the client's relationship with the coach..." So instead of needing to get lots of context, we can trust that what's most relevant is likely to surface in the 'here-and-now' of the coaching session.

The Here-and-Now Energises Coaching

Work in the here-and-now is always more **exciting** than work with a more abstract or historical focus...

Origins of the 'Here and Now' approach...

“People want to interact with others, are excited by **giving and receiving feedback**, yearn to learn how they are perceived by others, want to let go of their masks and connect.”

- Irvin Yalom, 'The Gift of Therapy', (2001)

In **1946**, the state of Connecticut sponsored a workshop to deal with racial tensions in the workplace. Small groups led by the eminent psychologist **Kurt Lewin** and a team of social psychologists engaged in a discussion of the 'back home' problems brought up by the participants. The leaders and observers of the groups held nightly post-group meetings in which they discussed not only the **content**, but also the '**process**' of the sessions.

- The content, here, refers to the words and concepts expressed.
- The process refers to the nature of the relationship between the people interacting.

News spread about these evening staff meetings, and the members of the groups asked to attend... and the group members observed themselves being discussed by the leaders and researchers.

There are several published accounts of this momentous session at which the importance of the here-and-now was discovered. All agree that the meeting was electrifying; **members were fascinated by hearing themselves and their behaviour discussed**. Soon they could stay silent no longer and interjected such comments as “No, that wasn't what I said,” or “how I said it,” or “what I meant.” The social scientists realised that they had stumbled onto an important axiom (truism) for education (and coaching as well): namely that **we learn best about ourselves and our behaviour through personal participation in interaction combined with observation and analysis of that interaction**. People engaged in discussing the here-and-now are energised, engaged, and will always say that they come alive when focusing on the here-and-now.

People want to interact with others, are excited by **giving and receiving feedback**, yearn to learn how they are perceived by others, want to let go of their masks and connect.

“Better relationships lead to better outcomes”

(sources – American Psychological Association (APA), Nov 2019; Psychotherapy (Vol. 55, No. 4))

“**Self-disclosure and immediacy.** Using the immediate situation to invite your (client) to examine what is happening in the... relationship. **It may involve disclosing aspects of your emotions or personal life in ways that can feel risky and unfamiliar.**”

Fostering mutuality and collaboration

One big shift in psychotherapy in recent years is toward greater **mutuality**—the notion that psychotherapy is a **two-way relationship** in which the therapist and client are **equal partners** in the therapy process. Therapists make this stance apparent in an ongoing way by, for example, **disclosing their feelings when appropriate** and actively inviting feedback from patients about how therapy is going.

Research supports the benefits of both mutual and collaborative approaches. For example, one analysis of 21 studies finds that when therapists **share their feelings** about the patient or the therapy relationship—a mutual approach known as “**immediacy**”—the patient’s mental health functioning and insight improve.

In terms of **outcomes**, the relationship between patient and psychologist matters - a lot. That’s the main takeaway from a new collection of meta-analyses released by an American Psychological Association task force charged with examining the latest evidence on relationship factors in therapy (2019).

The Task Force on **Evidence-Based** Relationships and Responsiveness concludes that a number of relationship factors, such as:

- agreeing goals
- getting client feedback throughout the course of treatment
- and repairing ruptures

Their conclusion is that these **relationship factors** are as powerful, if not more powerful, than the particular treatment method a therapist is using.