

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the frame, creating a modern, layered effect. The central area is a plain white space where the text is located.

# General Therapeutic Principles

## Thoughts from those in the Field

# Utilizing an Accurate/Current Evaluation

- ▶ In order to work effectively with an individual who has developmental disabilities, the therapist must pay attention to the individual's specific abilities.
- ▶ Interventions should be tailored to the unique communication and reasoning skills a client offers.
- ▶ Higher level articulation skills do not translate into comprehension.

# Theory

- ▶ Various counseling theories were mentioned that provide a framework for the therapists work with the clients.
- ▶ Those mentioned include Adlerian, Cognitive Behavioral, Family Systems, Reality Therapy, and Solution Focused Brief Therapy.

# Context of Behavior

- ▶ Behavior must be placed in the context of the environment.
- ▶ The therapist must analyze the physical needs such as eating, sleeping, etc.
- ▶ This may have a strong link to the behavior.

# Structure

- ▶ Whether in individual or group therapy, having structure to the therapeutic interactions is important. Clients should understand their boundaries.
- ▶ Shorter more frequent sessions are needed for some clients. For example, they may need to meet twice a week for 25 minutes.

# Therapeutic Relationship

- ▶ Rapport must be established.
- ▶ Client must understand the reason for seeing the therapist.
- ▶ Be cautious with promises, appointments, and commitments. Don't use "maybe".
- ▶ Canceling a session can cause behaviors.
- ▶ Humor can be effective, but be cautious when using humor.

# Adaptations

- ▶ Communication with the client sometimes needs to be very literal and concrete. (Be sure the client understands the terminology being used.)
- ▶ Interactions involving visual activities (cards/cues) have been helpful with some individuals.
- ▶ Generalizing therapy can be a challenge, so therapists need to think of ways to do this.

# Progress

- ▶ Can be very slow at times.
- ▶ Need to look at the overall picture of the client.
- ▶ Be sure to remember those successes that you have experienced.
- ▶ Give plenty of praise to the client and encourage staff to do so as well.



# Goals

- ▶ Objectives for the client must be reasonable. For example, the first replacement activity may not be the best choice, but it may be better than the identified problem.
- ▶ At times it is helpful to have the client write their goals out and utilize this information from time to time and include replacement activities.
- ▶ Client's ability to attend to tasks may affect how the goals are approached.

# Social Skills

- ▶ One of the more common areas of need in the Developmental Disabilities population is social skills.
- ▶ Many times it is important to teach these skills through teaching and modeling strategies.

# Teaching Replacement Behaviors

- ▶ When teaching replacement behaviors, the instructions or steps may need to be repeated numerous times.
- ▶ Replacement behaviors should often involve one step only.

# Play Therapy

- ▶ If the activity is interesting, it may be beneficial to the client.
- ▶ Try to tie in an activity in which the client enjoys.

# Miscellaneous

- ▶ Visualizing a Stop Sign can help remind some individuals to change their behavior.
- ▶ What works with one client may not work with another.
- ▶ Contracts to remove themselves from stressful situations might be helpful (staff need to be trained).
- ▶ Encourage staff to fill up the clients day with positive activities.