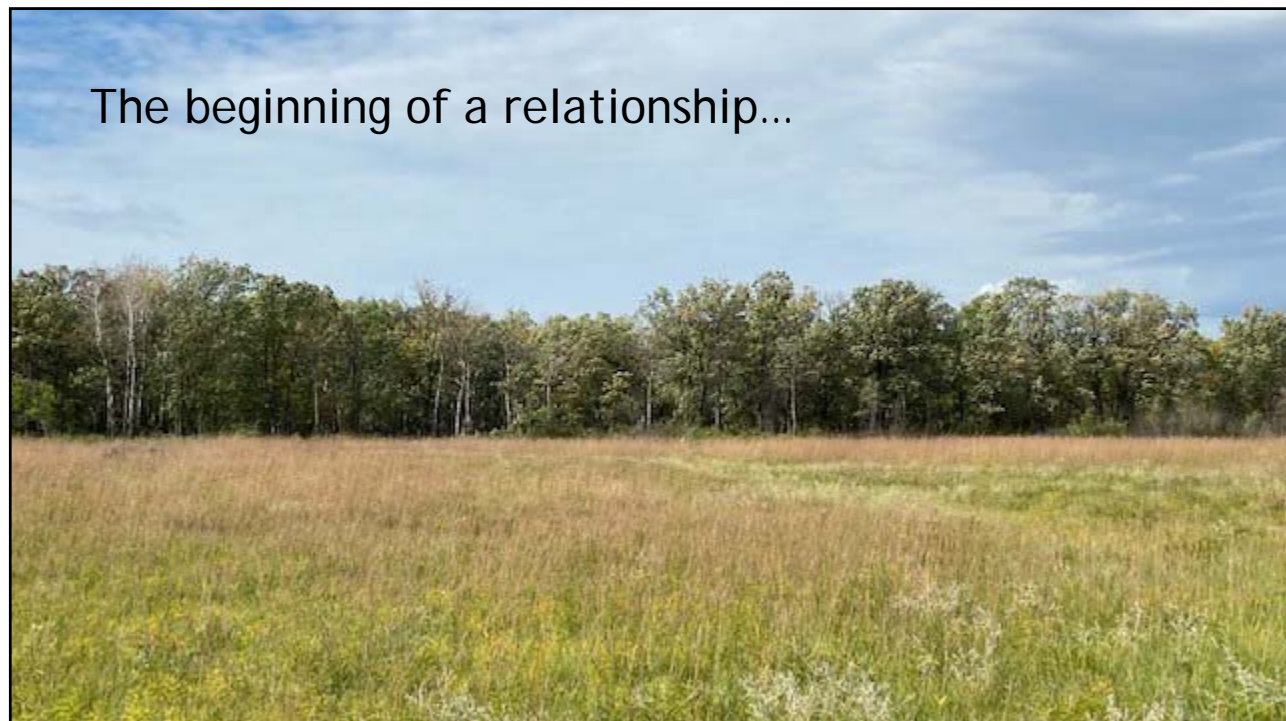


The Ethical and Moral Imperatives of Relationship Building in Occupational Therapy

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Outline

- Consider why client-centredness is necessary but not sufficient to occupational therapy relationships
- Describe an ethical and moral perspective on relationship building
- Identify three stumbling blocks to relationship building from a moral perspective
- Propose strategies for building collaborative relationships

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► A story...

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Client-centred Practice Key Concepts - Necessary...

client choice
and informed
decision making

client rights to
make decisions
about needs and
services

collaboration

attention to
power
structures

fostering trust



(DMHW & CAOT, 1983; CAOT, 1997; Law et al. 1995; Sumsion, 2000; Sumsion & Law, 2006; Townsend et al., 2013)

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...but not
sufficient
because...

Language can be oppressive and
restrictive

Insufficient consideration of the
therapist's social identities

Inadequate consideration of the
relational context of occupational
participation

Restall & Egan, 2021

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To tweak or to
reimagine?



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An Ethical and Moral Perspective of Relationship Building

- ▶ Morals are:
 - ▶ Social rules of behaviour
 - ▶ Code to facilitate cooperation and prevent harm within and among groups
 - ▶ Rules that the vast majority of people across geographies and cultures would agree to

Gert & Gert, 2020

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Stumbling Blocks



Failure to seek to understand meso and macro level contexts



Failure to recognize and address injustices and inequities



Failure to be vigilant about building and sustaining relationships

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Strategy 1

► Continuous curiosity and critically reflexivity about contexts

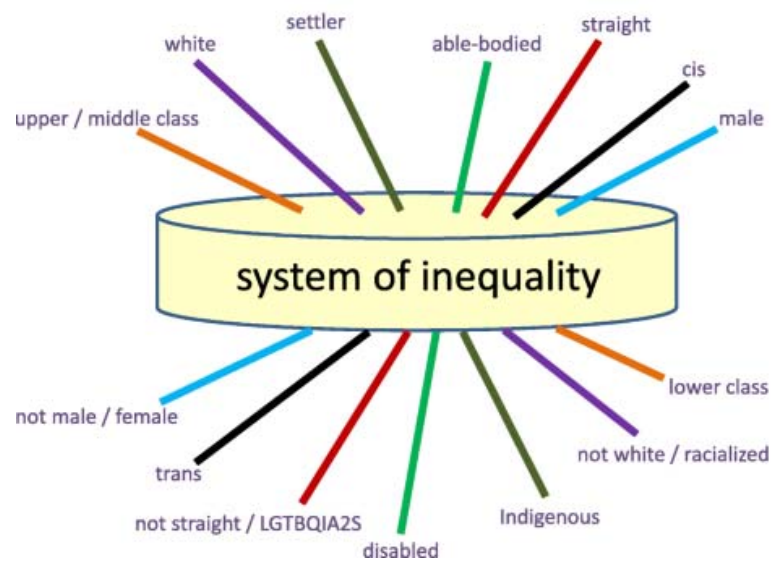
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Strategy 1: Context

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 qdwxudq#lqg#exlw#hgylrqp hqw
 dz v/#hj lvdwlrq/#srdflhv#lqg#xdiv
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 suhydbqj #vrfhwde#wlwghv#lqg#hkdyruv
 srz hu#hædwlrqv#z lklq#lqg#lp rqq #fræhfwlyhv

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The therapist



Nixon, S. (2019, p. 12)

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The practice setting

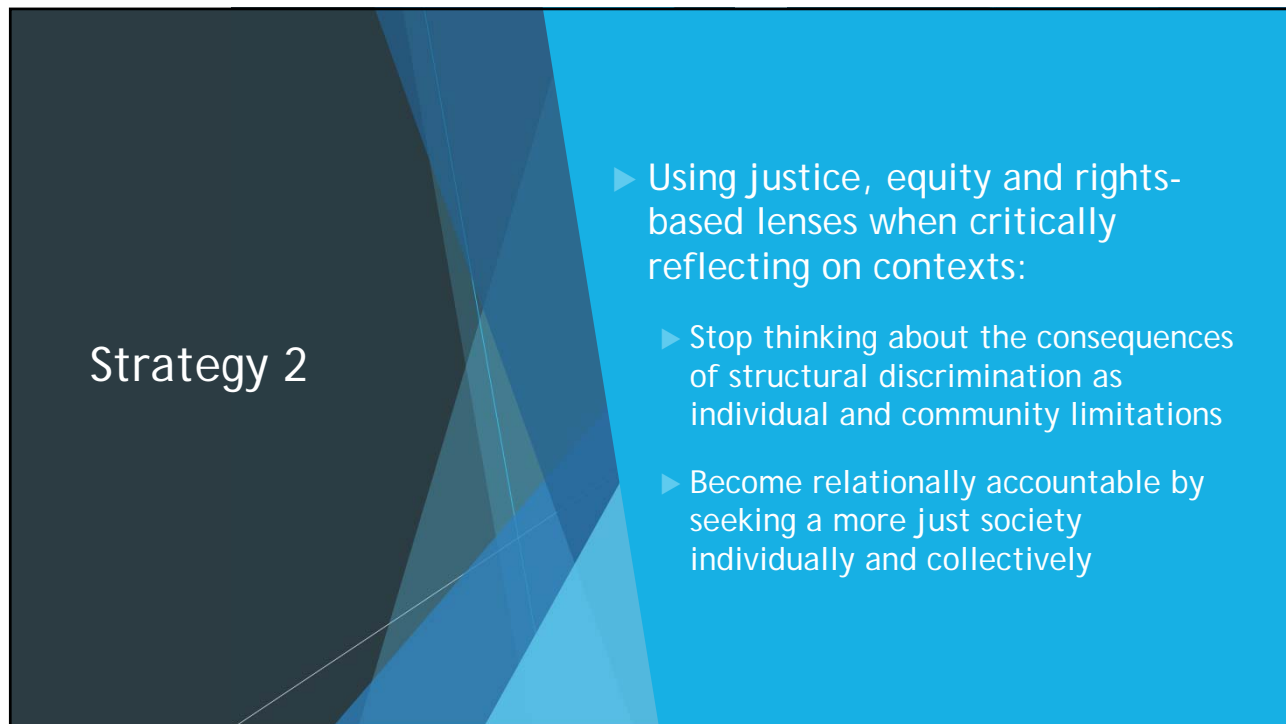


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The individual or collective



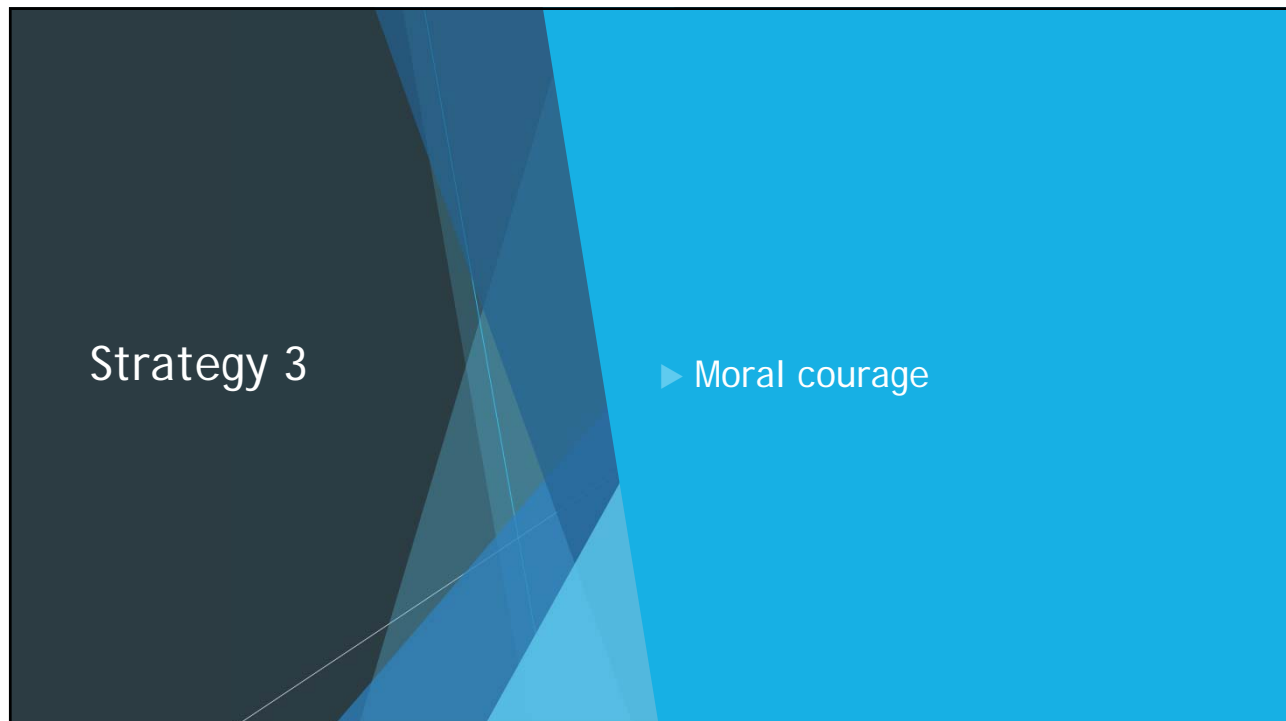
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Strategy 2

- ▶ Using justice, equity and rights-based lenses when critically reflecting on contexts:
- ▶ Stop thinking about the consequences of structural discrimination as individual and community limitations
- ▶ Become relationally accountable by seeking a more just society individually and collectively

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The slide features a dark blue background on the left with the text 'Strategy 3' in white. On the right, a light blue background contains a single bullet point in white text. The background is decorated with abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue.

Strategy 3

- ▶ Moral courage

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"Few are willing to brave the disapproval of their fellows, the censure of their colleagues, the wrath of their society. Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality for those who seek to change a world that yields most painfully to change."

Robert F. Kennedy

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Strategy 3

- ▶ Practice moral courage:
 - ▶ Understand the moral dilemma and potential courses of action
 - ▶ Assess the risks of potential courses of action
 - ▶ Build endurance to buffer potential risk consequences

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Collaborative relationship-focused practice



"An approach to occupational therapy that attends to, and concentrates on, the relational aspects of the therapist self and the individuals and collectives (that is, families, groups, communities and populations) who use occupational therapy services. These relationships are situated within the multilayered historical and contemporary contexts in which people live and occupational therapy occurs."

Restall & Egan, 2022, p. 100

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Act individual & collectively to:

- ▶ Think deeply and critically about therapy relationships with individuals and collectives
- ▶ Become increasingly aware of the ways that taken-for-granted ideas, beliefs and processes can be oppressive, unjust, and limit the rights of individuals and communities
- ▶ Develop creative solutions to reduce inequities in opportunities for occupational participation
- ▶ Cultivate the moral courage to disrupt oppression in all its forms

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To the
graduating
class

22



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