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Reaching into the Meantime

Relationship-building and
complex care challenges

Sabine S. Silberberg, MA

Counsellor/Expressive Arts Therapist

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Obstacles and multiple barriers to connection can be

a multiplicity of physical challenges
mental health concerns
(active) addiction
conditions related to determinants of health
poverty
marginalization



All of these are typically

- interrelated
- virtually impossible to disentangle within lived experience
- not acknowledged as such by most care systems
- funded by requirements to prioritize one over the other



possibly underlying thread:
overwhelming stress/ trauma

most common impact of trauma:
detachment/ disconnection



Relational Approaches

Client-centered (Carl Rogers)
commonly practiced in counselling and other (clinical)
services, core aspects:

Empathy

Genuineness

Unconditional positive regard

Non-directive

How far does it reach?



Harm Reduction

“meeting people where they’re at” -
Relating and engagement through

Acceptance
Non-Judgmental Attitude
Compassion
Respect
Pragmatism

(international harm reduction association, 2010, www.ihra.net)

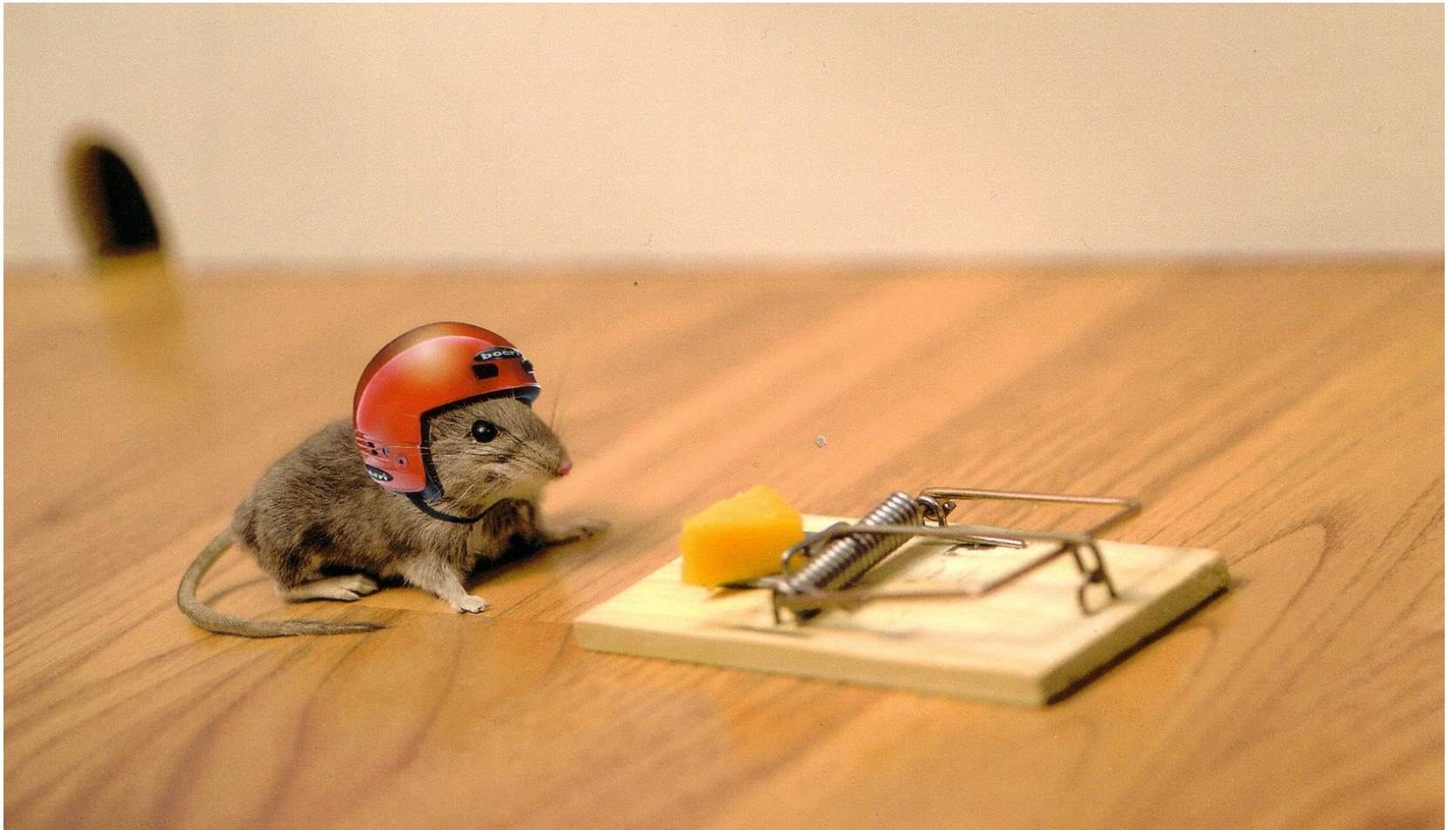


Harm Reduction Principles and Values

- move us beyond moral implications
- acknowledge the social complexity of addiction
- draw on a human-rights framework



harm reduction bottom line:



Acceptance and Engagement

- How?



Harm-Reduction Based Counselling

Ongoing lowering thresholds of context, process, relationship may translate into

- continued learning from clients
- “no mask” person-to-person encounter AND transparency of dynamics
- considering environment and space
- flexible appointments and time frames
- client determines content – intention without agenda
- maintaining an interest in understanding the thresholds and barriers to connection

Challenges

- Challenging behaviors
- Being with continued suffering
- Expectations of ourselves (professional & personal)
- Expecting to make a difference
- Assuming something should be “fixable”
- Invisibility of “success”



Acceptance and Engagement Resources:

human beings are relational

human beings are shaping beings

- presence/attention
- draw on the senses
- imagination

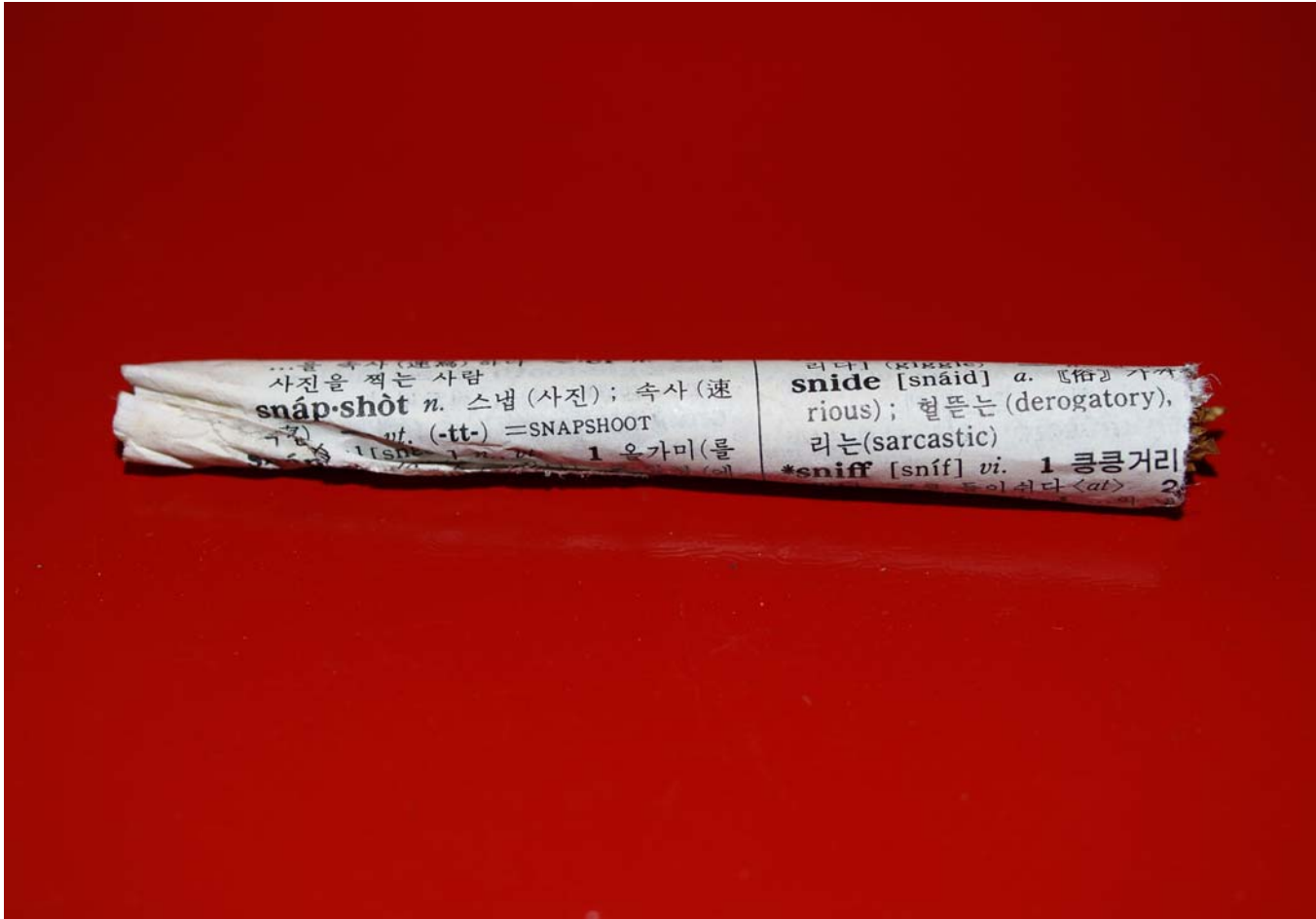


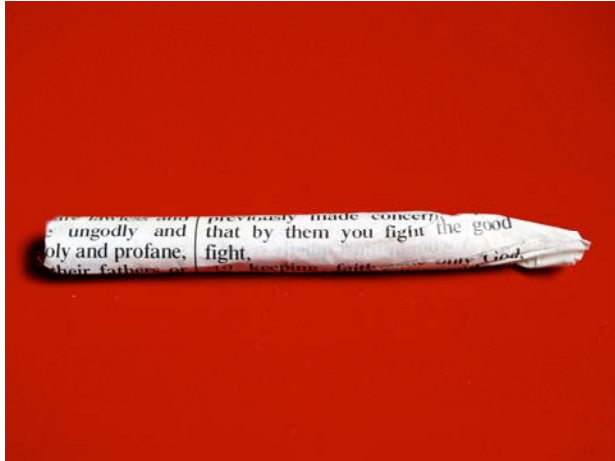
Engagement Happens Everywhere

- Receptionists
- Physical site
- Food services
- Management
- Clinical services
- Fundraising
- Volunteers
- Students



using additional avenues to connect

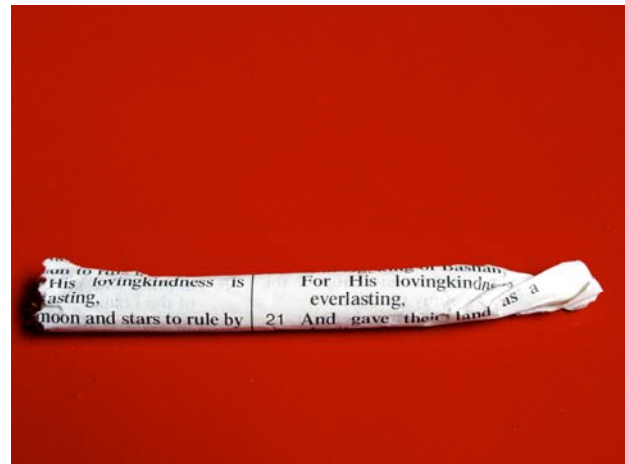




Reframing Perceptions

letting go of what
“making art” means

changing perspective:
finding something
beautiful in what is
already there



finding (oneself in) community

chance discovery

play

following the idea
as long as there is
shared interest





To be continued ...

and continued...



and so it goes...





Core of Engagement

- Dignity and respect
- Being with the person
- Humor and play
- Transparency



Quality of Engagement

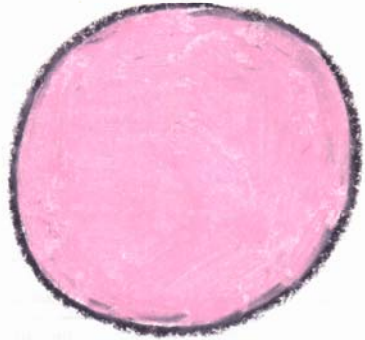
- Makes service provision possible
- Is important WHILE providing any services
- May develop into long-term connection



Most likely:

you are doing it without acknowledging it
as a (clinical) approach





boundary

working with what is

making it tangible



What supports our ability to engage clients?

Team or network or even one other person

- with shared values
- for mutual support
- to discuss, debrief, develop
- for a recognition of the impact of the work
- to keep the spirit alive:
If we facilitate connection,
we need connection



Thank you!

ssilberberg@drpeter.org

