

Imposing and exposing values

[Health & Medicine](#), [Mental Health](#)



Imposing uses some type of force or manipulation or pressure for another to adopt or follow the same values as the one exerting the force. Exposing is simply putting or sharing one's values out there for others to take it or leave it. To expose your values means to open up and let it be seen, to speak up and tell people what your values are. An example would be you're pregnant teenager, and you tell your parents that you don't believe in abortion. You're exposing your feelings, your values on that issue. To impose your values means to make people do things your way, that only your way is 'right' it's almost like forcing someone to do it your way. An example would be a teenager gets pregnant, wants an abortion, and her parents force her to carry the baby to term and raise it, saying "as long as you're under my roof, you'll do as I say". that's IMposing their values. Values based counselling means that the counselor is always pointing to a better way, meeting the client where he or she is at, and guiding that person towards a higher place: a place of deeper truth, a place of greater meaning. Non-values oriented counseling will simply seek to return the client to a functional level, or simply at a place that is "best for them." Well in the example above what was "best for the wife" was divorce. Yet she may not realize, or even see, that there could be door for her that leads her to a joyful life with her husband. While we believe that all people have the capacity within them to change, that does not mean they can always see all the choices before them. Sometimes people are so heavily oppressed by their situation that they genuinely cannot see a way out, or are unable to discern the best possible path. This is where the values of the counselor are critical to effective therapy. Values are the whispers of our conscience that show us those things

in our lives that need to change, they help us understand not only the problems in our lives, but why they were problems. Without values, we are unable to identify destructive behaviors and patterns of thoughts that cause pain and brokenness. Values allow us to learn from the past, let things go, and illuminate a new path towards a brighter future. And while we may never actually reach the ideal, it is instead the journey towards it that holds the joy of living; that we live a life always walking forward, towards a better place, one that is full of hope, experiencing true freedom and purpose every step of the way.

I Don't Believe In Imposing Values On Clients This is probably the #1 concern we hear from professionals who feel hesitant about a transparent values approach regarding counseling and therapy. This section is written for therapists, but if you are a client this discussion may give you more insight into the world " behind" therapy. Most college textbooks will tell students of psychology to keep their values hidden to clients. This may have been true at one time, but with the vast use of the internet, it is a flawed premise based on a faulty assumption that clients are not pro-active in their mental health care. We will demonstrate why this philosophy of therapy is flawed with pro-active clients (it also should be stated that all clients who use the internet to find a therapist, are by definition, being pro-active in their mental health care). First lets define the difference between " hidden values" and " transparent values" therapy.

1. All therapists are human beings, and as human beings, all therapists also have a personal value system.
2. Therapists, the vast majority of them, do not compromise their own personal values in therapy.

If you are a therapist, both points are going to be true. Counselors, regardless of their personal values,

are neither expected to, nor do they by practice, compromise themselves in therapy. But does (a) having personal values, and (b) not compromising values equate to (c) imposing values? It does not. So let's assume two hypothetical therapists, Therapist A who believes strongly against imposing values in Therapy, and keeps his/her values hidden from the client, and Therapist B with transparent values. What is the difference between these two therapists? Well, both of them have a set of personal values. The only difference is that Therapist B has made his/her values transparent to the client upfront, before therapy even begins. Transparency is the only difference, nearly the exact opposite of imposing. Hidden Values Are More Imposing Because all clients who use the internet to find a therapist are being pro-active in their health care, we make the case that a therapist who tries to keep his or her values hidden is far closer to imposing on a client, than a therapist who has those values transparent. With transparent values, the client knows the values upfront, and then can make the choice to see.... or not to see.... a therapist before spending any money, and before investing any energy. With a "hidden values" therapist, the client has already spent money, and has already invested time, energy, and emotions into therapy. The values of the therapist then "leak" into therapy over time, and the client discovers, over time, that the therapist's values are polar opposite, and the client may feel defeated and give up counseling or go back to the search for a new therapist. Values and Beliefs It is not respectful to impose personal beliefs and values upon clients. It is the counsellor's role to accept the client for who they are and where they currently are in their life. Geldard and Geldard (2005) emphasise that when a counsellor's values are imposed on

an individual, they tend to react by rejecting those values without consideration and withdrawing from counselling. An involuntary client, who is unable to physically withdraw from counselling, may withdraw emotionally, and become unmotivated to accept the counsellor's suggestions. Imposing one's values upon the client is indicative of judgement. Paradoxically, when therapists accept the client for the person they are regardless of their values, over time, the client's values tend to grow closer to the values of the counsellor, as counsellors do become role models for their clients.