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Training Through Naming: A Process of Psychotherapist Skill Development Utilizing Recursive Frame Analysis

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Abstract

Recursive frame analysis (RFA) is both an advanced qualitative research method and a therapeutic tool that is used to map psychotherapy discourse. RFA tracks the therapeutic conversation to show how the therapy talk moves from one act to another. This paper describes the implementation of a training process for family therapy students in a family therapy clinic and the student therapists' experiences of learning through this process, called Naming the Session. We present the organic development of the training process, its roots in RFA, and the student therapists' perceptions of how Naming the Session impacted them as trainees. We further present how Naming the Session was useful in the growth of supervisors-in-training who were also a part of this training process.

Keywords

Psychotherapist Training, Recursive Frame Analysis

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Recursive frame analysis (RFA) is both an advanced qualitative research method and a therapeutic tool that is used to map psychotherapy discourse. RFA tracks the therapeutic conversation to show how the therapy talk moves from one act to another. This paper describes the implementation of a training process for family therapy students in a family therapy clinic and the student therapists' experiences of learning through this process, called Naming the Session. We present the organic development of the training process, its roots in RFA, and the student therapists' perceptions of how Naming the Session impacted them as trainees. We further present how Naming the Session was useful in the growth of supervisors-in-training who were also a part of this training process. Keywords: Psychotherapist Training, Recursive Frame Analysis

This paper is an initial clinical qualitative research endeavor, exploring how supervisor and supervisees learn how to learn and act as therapists (Chenail, 1991). The literature is lacking in training process evaluations from the trainee's perspective. This article is partially an attempt to fill this gap, highlighting student therapist perspectives of a training process I (MR) am calling Naming the Session that developed organically during a semester long practicum. The paper is also an attempt to exemplify how RFA might be used not only to understand what has occurred in therapy, but also as a means of training therapists to become more creative and effective. The basis of the training process, with roots in recursive frame analysis (RFA), is provided. Then, the student therapist voices will explain their experience of this endeavor.

Clinical Training of Family Therapy Students

The training context in which this process developed was a university family therapy clinic that engages in live supervision. Live supervision refers to a supervisor watching a supervisee conduct psychotherapy in vivo—in the moment, rather than watching video of the therapy, or hearing about it post facto. In live supervision, there are teams of 4-6 students with a supervisor (the lead author in this situation). While one or two student therapists are in the therapy room consulting with the client, the rest of the team watches the session from behind a one-way mirror. At various points in the session, the supervisor might call into the room via a telephone to provide feedback and suggestions and/or the therapist may excuse themselves from the therapy room to go behind the mirror and consult with the team. Clients are aware and have provided consent that there is a supervisor, as well as other therapist trainees, behind a one-way mirror. The training that Naming the Session occurred in happened over three therapy teams, two of which consisted of Master's students while the third was comprised of doctoral family therapy students. For both of the Master's teams there was a supervisory assistant, which is a doctoral student who is training to become a supervisor.

The family therapy program the clinic is housed in operates primarily from a strengths-based perspective. While there are many particular therapeutic models that are housed within a strength-based perspective, the main focus of these orientations is that clients already come to therapy with all of the strengths and resources that they need to assist them in leading a more fulfilling life. Keeney and Keeney (2013) explained, “The goal of therapy is to bring forth a context that offers more resourcefulness than suffering” (p. 3). A resource can be anything—a personality trait, belief, behavior, relationship, or event-- that helps promote a positive contextualization in a person’s life (Ray & Keeney, 1993). As it pertains to the training process presented in this article, identities are also potential resources. For instance, an identity of “I am a loser” will likely not be resourceful for someone and will restrict and limit the person in terms of living their full potential. However, an identity of “I am capable” will lead to many more options and growth opportunities for the person.

Strength-based therapy is usually predicated on the concept of utilization. Milton Erickson, a master hypnotherapist, is usually credited with introducing utilization into the psychotherapy lexicon. O’Hanlon and Weiner-Davis (1989) explained, “Erickson viewed clients as having within them or within their social systems the resources to make the changes they needed to make. The therapist’s job is to access these resources and help clients put them to use in the appropriate areas of their lives” (p. 16). Strength-based therapists help connect people to the wide array of resources in their lives. These may include their relationships with others, past successful behaviors, useful personality traits, and ways of viewing themselves—their identities.

While therapists utilize clients’ resources to help move them toward their goals, a microskill for doing this is focusing on the unique way that the client thinks and speaks. One way of doing so is for the therapist to utilize the client’s language. This helps in the joining process (Berg, 1994) as well as helps the therapist to get closer to the client’s worldview. This is based on a not-knowing approach where the client is the expert on his or her experience and meanings (Anderson, 1997). That is, while the therapist is an expert on the process of therapy, they do not know how the client constructs their own understandings of who they are and how they make sense of the world. The therapist listens to the key words and phrases the client uses and ensures their own use of this type of language. This aids in understanding and connecting to the client’s position (Fisch, Weakland, & Segal, 1982) which provides greater depth to the therapeutic relationship.

Recursive Frame Analysis

Recursive frame analysis (RFA) was originally developed by Brad Keeney as a means to notate the conversation of therapeutic conversations (Chenail, 1991, 1995; Keeney, 2013; Keeney & Keeney, 2012) and help clinicians summarize their sessions. Originally designed to track the therapeutic conversation and then used as an advanced qualitative research tool, RFA can also be used as a clinical template to help therapists move therapeutic conversations from the initial problem galleries that tend to occur at the beginning of sessions to more resourceful galleries that provide hope as therapists help move clients toward a more desired experience. Keeney and Keeney (2012) explained:

RFA was originally intended to help therapists emphasize the performance side of their presence inside the interactivity of therapy. When used during a case, it challenges a therapist to move past the presenting act, acting in any way that makes a difference for forward movement—or any kind of movement away from the vicious circles in which clients find themselves trapped. (pp. 517-518)

RFA is used as a way to understand any therapeutic conversation, regardless of theoretical model. The therapist pays attention to the frames—how the client understands and states an idea—as well as how multiple frames relate to one another—a gallery. A gallery is considered a class of frames. What is intended is for the therapist to understand how frames are connected in order to develop a systemic viewpoint (Keeney, 1990). Galleries may hold multiple frames within them and there may be multiple galleries within one therapeutic session. The goal is to move initial problem galleries into therapeutic galleries where the various frames are utilized as resources.

Over time, Keeney moved away from explaining RFAs through the notions of frames and galleries and instead talked about them as storyboards, with the basics of a three-act play (Keeney & Keeney, 2012; Keeney, Keeney, & Chenail, 2012). Like many stories and fairytales, most RFAs follow the three-act format of beginning, middle, and end; however, RFAs do not have to be limited to three acts. Yet, when in this format, the plot line tends to represent an opening act that highlights the client's complaints and problems. There is then a transitory middle act that bridges between the initial problem frame and the successful outcome of the third act. The third and ending act of RFAs includes talk focused on resources.



As I (MR) understand RFA and trained the supervisees, Act I was the client's presenting problem(s). This is what was originally called the problem gallery in the RFA literature. There could be many problem galleries that clients present, as they may start a session with one problem (e.g., miscommunication with partner), then later in the session discuss a second problem (e.g., stress at work), and still later in the session present a third problem (e.g., resentment toward parents). Most clients, in session, bring into the conversation multiple problems. Thus, there are multiple problem frames that would fall within the class of problem gallery. Many times, therapists and/or clients may recognize that these problem frames have a connecting thread through them, such as all involving self-esteem or overcompensating. Clients are likely having these difficulties because they have adopted a limiting identity, which then stabilizes based on a vicious circular pattern (Keeney & Keeney, 2013). That is, clients develop and maintain a context that is impoverished because their view of themselves--their identity-- restricts their creativeness and perceived possibilities.

Act II arises when there is a shift in the therapeutic talk away from the problem frames, which most likely contains a metaphor of the client holding a limiting identity. Instead, Act II occurs when the therapeutic talk highlights how there is at least one resourceful identity that the client embodies but is most likely not utilizing. Act II usually happens when there is a reframe. That is, there is a shift from a frame of problem to a different frame—usually one that centers around resources. As I trained the students, we discussed Act II as the identification of a resourceful identity.

Act III is the implementation of the resourceful identity identified in Act II. Even though people might accept that they have a resourceful identity, change usually does not happen until they engage the world through that resourceful identity. The resourceful identity must become a context for the client in understanding their life. This shift from a limiting identity to a resourceful identity is concomitant with a change in the client's position from

limited to limitless. Thus, the movement from Act II to Act III occurs when there is not only identification of the resourceful identity but the client is actually implementing it—they are living their life through this positive context.



While RFA has been used as a qualitative research tool, it also is used to help therapists know whether there is therapeutic change. Keeney, Keeney, and Chenail (2012) provided a challenge to therapists based on their three act RFA understanding, “Take more responsibility for how you interact with a client so as to co-create a context that will serve change, or else risk doing little to advance the client’s situation” (p. 14). This therapeutic responsibility is based on helping clients shift from their initial limiting identities to first identify one or more resourceful identities and then implementing these resourceful identities.

In order to help move from one act to another, therapists must pay attention to the words, phrases, actions, and metaphors that focus on something else other than the problem talk and limiting identities. Chenail, Somers, and Benjamin (2009) conducted a recursive frame qualitative analysis of marriage and family therapy (MFT) progress note tipping points, examining how MFT student therapists recorded the talk of the session. They found that progress notes usually focused on the problem galleries as well as solution galleries. These researchers also focused on tipping points—those times in the documents where the therapeutic conversations shifted from having a problem focus to a solution focus. They suggested that progress notes that demonstrate tipping points help to highlight the therapeutic progress in sessions. As a continuation of this, I (MR) developed a process that attempted to help student therapists to more consciously enhance tipping points in session. I call this process Naming the Session.

Training Through Naming

Keeney and Keeney (2012) explained that the use of RFA can help student therapists to move beyond an established model and develop their own unique therapy based upon the frames that both therapist and client developed during the session. While the intention of the Naming the Session process was not for specific family therapy model development, it was encouraged for therapists to figure out how to move from the problem frames of client impoverished identity to frames that focus on the implementation of client resourceful identity. Naming the Session occurred in the following steps: reading about RFA; conducting an RFA while watching a video therapy session from a master family therapist; student therapists naming their own therapy sessions after they had concluded; student therapists naming a session during the course of that session; and lastly for student therapists to hear and breathe life into a resourceful client identity immediately upon introduction by the client in the session, culminating in the client’s implementation of that resourceful identity. The following section describes in more detail each of these steps.

Training occurred at the university’s family therapy clinic where we engaged in live supervision. Teams consisted of four to six student therapists, a doctoral supervisory assistant, and the faculty supervisor (the lead author). Student therapists were asked to read an article that presented the use and function of RFA (see Keeney et al., 2012). We then watched an

actual session by Keeney that is housed in the university's online video database. While watching the session, the therapy team jointly developed an RFA of it in order to practice making distinctions in therapeutic talk and conceptualizing how a conversation can move from Act I's problem frames to Act II's identification of resourceful identities and then to Act III's implementation of resourceful identities.

The next phase of this process occurred when student therapists were asked, at the end of each of their sessions, what they would name that session. Each student therapist on the team, as well as the supervisory assistant, was asked to provide a name for each other's sessions as well as their own. We then chose one name that seemed to best encapsulate the talk of that particular session. Student therapists were encouraged to use these session names to help them fill out their progress notes at the conclusion of the session.

Names of the sessions were intended to come from the phrases the client actually used in that particular session. Student therapists were encouraged to name the session based on what we wanted the client to move toward rather than what they wanted to move away from. That is, names of sessions should not focus on Act I's impoverished identity but rather Act II's resourceful identity or Act III's actions of how the client could implement that resourceful identity. For instance, one client was feeling overburdened by expectations she felt was placed on her by her family. Initially, student therapists wanted to name that segment, "Feeling overburdened." While this name might have been accurate, it was also limiting. It did not help move the client, or the therapist, toward possibilities. Instead, after prompting, a more resourceful name of "Being an Independent Woman" was discussed as the client had stated she wanted to be more independent from her family but felt burdened by family obligations.

Once students were able to resourcefully name sessions at their conclusion, they were asked provide a name while the sessions were in process. This usually happened with the non-therapist team members behind the mirror. In order to do this, student therapists needed to listen to the therapeutic talk and make distinctions as to impoverished and resourceful identity talk. When the session was named behind the mirror, the supervisor would either call in and discuss the name with the therapist on the telephone or have the therapist take a consultation break and discuss the name during this time. Student therapists were then encouraged to provide an end of session message and/or a homework assignment that focused on the implementation of the resourceful identity that had been named.

When the student therapists had achieved this ability, they were encouraged, once they heard a resourceful identity metaphor during the session, to breathe life into the metaphor. This was initially difficult for some of the therapists as it required a more performative aspect of therapy, where the students needed to engage in improvisation and become weavers of the metaphors that naturally occurred during the sessions (Keeney & Keeney, 2012). Many of the student therapists were used to sitting back and asking questions; having been taught not to impose their ideas on the clients. Breathing life into the resourceful identity, with the framework of naming that session, helped shift the therapeutic conversation from Act I to Act II. This necessitated the student therapists learning how to weave the various metaphors of the session together, through repetition, so that a larger viewpoint and context was created (Keeney & Keeney, 2019). The improvisational nature of Acts II and III led to the student therapists taking ownership of movement within a session.

Therapy then focused on moving from the identifying of the resourceful identity in Act II to the client's implementation of that identity—a movement to Act III. This required therapists to further breathe life into the resourceful identity metaphor where they used a variety of therapeutic techniques, such as repetition, intensification, and reframing.

Student Therapist Experience

The Naming the Session process organically developed based on my (MR) wanting to help the student therapists more quickly shift the therapeutic talk from a focus on impoverished identities to resourceful identities. While we might look at the actual therapeutic talk to consider the effectiveness of the training, an alternative means of analyzing this process is through the student therapists' experiences of utilizing it. This section provides the student therapists' voices of their understandings and experiences having been trained to help clients by focusing on naming their sessions and breathing life into the identified resourceful client identities.

At first, most of the student therapists found naming the session to be difficult, but quickly learned how to do it with increased practice and conversations behind the mirror. This practice helped the therapists to shift from primarily viewing the limiting client identities of the problem galleries in Act I to then identify more resourceful identities that could lead the therapeutic discourse into Act II. Although there was some challenge of engaging in this process, the student therapists seemed to actually enjoy it. The following presents the student therapists' voices regarding their initial struggles yet positive experience of participating in the Naming the Session training process.

At first I found it challenging to name sessions, trying to find that one nugget within the conversation that resonated and felt authentic. I quickly discovered that naming a session helped to tease out the overarching theme of not only that particular session, but the overall tone of the client's therapeutic process.

"Naming the session" was a little hard for me to do in the beginning. It was new to me, and just like everything else that is new to me, it took practice in order for it to click more naturally.

Naming the session was a challenging and interesting practice for me. At the beginning, I started naming the sessions in terms of problems and complaints. My supervisor explained to me that the idea of naming the session was to think about where the client wants to move in terms of future and goals.

At first, it was challenging to come up with a few words to describe sessions that I either conducted or observed behind our one-way mirror; however, this way of conceptualizing sessions has helped me capture themes across sessions whether I might be behind the mirror or in the room.

Student therapists initially found the Naming the Session process challenging as they tended to focus titles on the problem frames (i.e., impoverished identities) as well as sometimes longer titles that could have been more focused. However, over the course of the semester, they were able to develop session names that were concise and included the client's resourceful identity.

The student therapists found the Naming the Session process quite useful as a way of learning how to be a therapist; both in the practical skills of therapy and in the conceptualization process. Given that the family therapy program we were all housed in is a strength-based program, students were able to quickly move from hearing client deficits to client strengths during the therapeutic talk. These next excerpts of the students' experience focus on how they found the Naming the Session process to be useful to their growth as student therapists.

Naming the sessions was most useful in two ways; it allowed me to review the session and look for themes that came out during the session that focused on the client's strengths and future growth. Secondly, it was a great way to remember the session when reviewing past notes.

The reason why I was really struggling with initially using this tool was because my thoughts and therapeutic approach was very unorganized and using this tool was beneficial to help me become more organized.

Naming each session has helped me learn how to understand my client and the themes that shine bright within their session. Naming the session not only helped me grow as a therapist, but it also helped the client and me remember previous sessions to continue talking about important topics that we were not able to complete in the previous session.... I learned how to pay close attention to the words and ideas that were emphasized by my client through either emotion or repetition. As my client revealed these themes to me, I made sure to repeat and give distinctive attention to them throughout the rest of the current session as well as the sessions to come in the future.

What I found most useful of this way of learning is that I would place my focus in listening carefully to the client words, especially those that he/she repeated many times during the session and seemed to be meaningful and powerful in his/her world. I would also be paying more attention to goals and solutions rather than complaints/problems.

Student therapists believed that this process better enabled them to really listen closely to the client's talk; and in particular to the strengths and resources of the client's experience rather than the deficits and problems. This focus on strengths is a collaborative process between therapist and client where the therapist hears not only the client's initial focus on problems but can hear the unfocused strengths and solutions (Reiter & Chenail, 2016). Recursively, the client is able to shift their focus to the therapist's focus--from problems to strengths.

The Naming the Session process was partly intended to help beginning therapists to be able to better conceptualize their sessions. Student therapists had expressed that they were trying to be with the client in the moment but somehow had difficulty putting the various pieces together in a session. By naming the session, therapists were encouraged to develop a foundational theme/metaphor that they could then weave the various talk and ideas from a session into a coherent whole; a context that could be resourceful for the client. The student therapists could then breathe life into that resourceful metaphor. The following excerpts demonstrate the student therapists' growth in being able to increase their skill at conceptualizing a session.

Naming the session really made me look over my session and see themes and future possibilities. It allowed me to focus on certain metaphors that we used during the session and weave them into the title for me to be able to touch upon them again in future sessions.

...I immediately started to pick up on repetitive terms from the client... The therapeutic relationship was maintained because as the therapist, I was able to hear strategically and rule out the noise of the conversation, and for the client they felt their story was heard when it was repeated back to them in

summarizations. This tool allowed me to have a foundation to pull questions, statements or techniques from to explore more with the client.

The idea of naming the session worked as a catalyst for me to understand how to conceptualize a case not only during pre-session and post-session but also during the session.... Naming the session allowed me to hone my skill of taking my ideas and then continue making them more concise and understandable.

Naming the session helped me to conceptualize a session, as this title was a summary of the most important piece of the session and it will help me keep in mind the important movements that the client wanted to achieve in terms of goals and future.

Through naming sessions, I have learned that each session is unique yet connected to the session-before and the session-after.... By naming each session, both therapists and clients are reminded of clients' goals, dreams, and hopes.... To me, giving a name to a session is like giving voice and breathing life into my clients' stories.

By going into a session with an ear toward making a distinction between limiting identities and resourceful identities, student therapists found themselves more focused on the client's talk as well as perceiving themselves to be more competent therapists. They were better able to help the therapeutic discourse move from an Act I of problems to an Act II or Act III of helping the client create a resourceful context that leads them closer to their goals.

Case conceptualization happens within a single session as well as between multiple sessions. The Naming the Session process attempted to help student therapists weave together the multiple names of sessions to highlight client growth and movement toward goals as well as enhance the possibilities of the client actively living identities that they find resourceful. The following student therapist excerpts describe the students' learnings of how to connect sessions based on the Naming the Session process.

Naming the Session forced me to stay focused on continuity from session to session. For example, one of the first titles we came up with was "Creating an adult marriage." Just by reading the title, I was able to remember what we were working on and did not need to review all my notes because it was a reminder to me as to what our goal in therapy was. This led to the following session title being "Learning to rally," as our client had begun playing tennis with her husband, which was a beautiful metaphor in learning how to build a partnership and be a team.

Naming the session helped me to conceptualize the case, as each name was like a piece of a puzzle that when put together a bigger picture or image could be seen and understood. Each session name had its uniqueness, so when merging all the names together I would get a summary of some of the most important themes, movements and goals of my clients.

Naming the session helped me see not only the uniqueness of each session but also the connectedness of every session to each other. Naming the session has helped me see each step my clients take to get to where they are now from where they used to be and get to where they want to be in the future.

Naming the sessions was useful to help the student therapists understand the various resourceful metaphors within each session as well as how the various names, and the frames that were constituted within that name, could be woven together to create an overarching context that was useful for the client to move them toward their goals.

Therapists have both a way of seeing how people function and what therapy can do for them (i.e., the therapist's conceptualization) as well as a way of engaging in therapy (i.e., the therapist's style). While Naming the Session provided student therapists an opportunity to expand their conceptualizations both within a single session and over the course of multiple sessions, it also provided the therapists with the freedom to engage the client in their own unique way. Thus, new aspects of the student therapists' styles rose to the surface. The following excerpts portray the student therapists' understandings of how their style of therapy was impacted by engaging in the Naming the Session process.

Naming sessions changed my therapeutic style in the sense that it helped me to appreciate metaphors in a way I hadn't before.... Metaphors have never been my strong suit, and this technique challenged me to broaden my ability to see things in a different way.

Before using this technique, I used to get really stuck in the therapy room and had to go back to consult with the team. However, naming the session allowed me to be in the moment and pull from key terms that the client used without feeling the need to consult with the team within 20 to 30 mins of the session. This tool really helped in my growth as a therapist to become more organized, relaxed, and in the moment with my clients.

An issue that I had been facing during therapy was the ability to explain an idea or reflection to my client in a quick and understandable manner. Naming each session using about three words helped me learn how to automatically narrow down my ideas into exactly what I need to say in order to cut out any unnecessary words.

I think that my style as a therapist changed in a positive way, as by naming the session I was focusing on the meaningful words and phrases that the client mentioned. I was also focusing in ways of conceptualizing the case in terms of positive and hopeful outcomes that would help the client move forward. My style has become more purposeful, direct, and solution oriented.

Student therapists found that having the framework of attempting to name a session provided them the framework to enhance their ability to listen closely to the client's talk and decipher the primary metaphors that spoke about the client's resourceful identities. This allowed them to more easily shift the therapeutic conversation from a focus on problems, deficits, and limitations to an identification of the various resources in the client's life. Once they were able to collaboratively identify resources the therapists learned how to breathe life into that identity so that the client was implementing it as a part of how they engaged their environment.

The student therapists' focus on the clients' resourceful identities provided a medium in which the therapists' resourceful identities could shine as well. Their style as a therapist changed as they became more confident, relaxed, focused, competent, and knowledgeable. This change occurred on both a skills and conceptual level. They were able to view themselves as a key ingredient in the movement of therapy where they were able to collaborate with the client in bringing out the client's unfocused resourceful identities.

Supervisor in Training Experience

During the development of the Naming the Session process, there were two supervisory assistants (SAs) who worked on different Master's student therapist teams. These two individuals were doctoral students who were at the end of their coursework and were supervisors-in-training. Their experience was in many ways similar to the student therapists' as the SAs were enabled to enhance their own therapeutic work. However, they had a unique experience as the Naming the Session process allowed them to learn various modes of how to be a supervisor.

The supervisors-in-training learned how to listen to the therapeutic talk on multiple levels. This included hearing specific details, such as the particular language the client and therapist used. Second, the SAs were able to better hear the various metaphors that were present in the talk, such as the client's initial limiting identities as well as the metaphors that suggested more resourceful identities. Third, the SAs learned to focus interpersonally, understanding how therapist and client connected through their talk and how they each did so through their own strengths and resources. The following excerpts demonstrate how the supervisors-in-training bolstered their supervisory skills.

As a supervisory assistant, I was able to pay attention to the details of therapists' strengths and areas for growth, upon which the foundation of my feedback to each therapist was built.... One of the most useful things about this way of learning to be a supervisor is that in order to help therapists bring themes together, I had to pay greater attention to the details of what was going on in the session and of what was going on between the therapist and the client in the room. As I was listening to the details, I came to realize that there were also themes in therapists' interactions with their clients, which brought the therapists' strengths and their areas of growth to my attention.

It allowed me to tune my ear to the client's language in a way that would be beneficial for both the client and the therapist.... Naming the session helped me as a supervisor assistant to help the therapist bring in themes that would help the client visualize their goal and help the therapist tie in themes across sessions. One useful aspect of naming a session is that it is a good indication of where the session is going.... If the therapist struggled to find a name for the session that was positive or helpful, it would be a good indicator that the therapist would need to shift their focus in session. As a supervisor assistant, this helped me to assist therapists in conceptualizing a case, carrying it throughout sessions, and creating change for the client.

Supervisors-in-training, similar to their student therapist counterparts, found Naming the Session to be a challenge at first, but quickly adapted and learned how to utilize this process for client, therapist, and their own growth. The process aided in providing a guide in which to focus; a focus that spoke of movement away from client's initial limiting identities to the more resourceful identity metaphors that had been present in the therapeutic talk.

Naming the Sessions provided an opportunity for the SAs to personalize the process of therapy for both the therapist and client. Given that session names needed to be based on the language occurring in the session (preferably words and phrases presented by the client) and focused on where the client wants to go, SAs were able to challenge student therapists to more accurately hear the client's talk as well as become creative in keeping the therapeutic conversation and techniques focused on the client's preferred direction. The following excerpts

depict how the supervisors-in-training utilized the Naming the Session process to help them help the student therapists to better conceptualize therapeutic cases.

Naming sessions collaboratively with the team behind the mirror helped me understand each therapist's goal for each session. Naming sessions can help therapists organize each session towards a specified goal, and it also helps therapists pay attention to where they may be stuck through paying attention to themes throughout the case.

Naming the session helped with conceptualizing a session because it tended to focus on something positive, useful, or goal related. It allowed me to develop interventions and suggestions for the therapist to use in the room with the client. When a name was clear and specific it allowed me to create interventions that were clear and specific but also creative and unique to the client....Naming sessions helped me as a supervisor assistant to conceptualize a case over time with a clear mental picture of where the client wanted to be.

SAs were able to help student therapists breathe life into resourceful metaphors as there became a clearer therapeutic focus. This focus moved away from the initial problem frames that the client presented toward frames that highlighted where the client wanted to go and the contexts in which the clients could experience themselves as having the resources to get there.

Naming the Session provided a space for the supervisors-in-training to self-reflect on their own identities and style of being both a therapist and supervisor. The training process was intended to be model-free; meaning that a teacher/supervisor/therapist from any approach could use this way of training as it allows the therapist to utilize ideas and techniques from their preferred model. One of the primary aspects of identity that developed for both student therapists and supervisors-in-training is that of being a creative therapist where improvisation was a key ingredient (Keeney & Keeney, 2019). The following supervisor-in-training excerpts describe how they understood their growth, especially around creativity and improvisation, developed through the Naming the Session process.

My natural inclination to listen to people's stories was helpful as I was engaging in the naming the session process....We learned that we should always have people's positive resources and resourceful identities in mind when we name sessions. Throughout the naming the session process, I paid attention to the unique outcomes of each session and each case through which I helped the therapists see their strengths that were not originally a part of their professional identities.

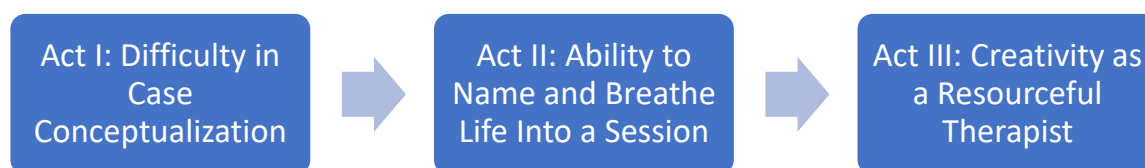
Naming a session helped me to bring more creativity into the room both as a therapist and as a supervisor. I was able to develop metaphors related to the name of the session and ideas that connected to the central theme. This gave me the tools to help therapists conceptualize their case and create change in the therapy room.

The Naming the Session process provided space for improvisation and creativity for all members involved, including client, student therapist, supervisor-in-training, and supervisor. The framework was generic enough that therapists and supervisors were able to utilize whatever model they chose or to go into the process without a specific model to see what developed.

Act IV (Future Pathways)

Training through Naming the Session was not an intentioned supervisory and teaching method. It grew organically from attempting to help student therapists become more able to move therapeutic conversations from being stuck on the vicious cycles of client stories to more virtuous cycles of resourceful contexts. There was much talk behind the mirror on how we would post-facto name the sessions and which names (i.e., which therapeutic metaphors) were most apropos and most useful to enhance the therapeutic conversation. These conversations about the therapeutic conversations helped everyone to make clearer distinctions between limiting and resourceful identities.

The Naming the Session process can also be viewed through a recursive frame analysis. Act I began with the student therapists struggling to conceptualize a case and knowing where to go. In essence, they had an impoverished experience. Act II occurred when they were able to begin to name sessions either from behind the mirror or after their session. The student therapists had shifted from not knowing what to look for and focus on to being able to identify and discuss—to breathe life into—one or more resourceful identities. Act III was when there was a shift in the student therapists' identity, where they viewed themselves as being resourceful and creative. When we finished the semester, the students experienced themselves as competent and capable clinicians, in the session, better able to sift through the therapeutic discourse to bring forth resourceful metaphors that were useful for them to help their clients experience themselves as resourceful. That is, we found that the more resourceful student therapists experienced themselves in the therapy room, the greater their clients experienced themselves as having resourceful identities.



Naming the session has the ability to help therapists move the therapeutic discourse from a problem focus (Act I) to a focus on resourceful identities (Act II) and the living of those resourceful identities (Act III). However, there is the possibility that it may be limiting if the therapist zooms in too close on one resourceful identity and does not highlight other resourceful metaphors that are brought up in the therapeutic conversations. This is an advanced skill where therapists need to weave various resourceful metaphors together, having them spin a therapeutic story that is coherent and internalized by the client.

While the student therapists found Naming the Session to be extremely useful to their growth as a therapist, both in terms of conceptualization and practice, they also believed the process could be even more useful. Collaboration is an important aspect of family therapy. While we worked on therapeutic teams behind the mirror, we collaborated with one another in listening to the therapeutic talk, picking out the important resourceful themes and metaphors, and constructing pathways to help implement those resourceful themes. The Naming the Session process could potentially be enhanced by collaboratively naming sessions with clients. This would ensure that the resourceful themes and metaphors are endorsed by the client. The student therapists expressed their ideas on how the Naming the Session process could be enhanced:

I would say by keeping a ledger of all titles and perhaps after several weeks looking back on them as a group and having the therapist summarize the case just by the titles. It will help the therapist remember what they have been

working on and to see if they have been successful with working on the client's issues with them.

Maybe, part of the training could include sharing session names with the clients. In sharing, the client could agree/disagree with the name and through conversation the name could be adjusted to a better definition of how the client thought of the session and over time of his/her case. This would become a co-constructive practice where the client would be part of the construction process.

Naming the session can be even more useful when we collaborate with clients in the process. What do our clients think the name of each session should be? What do our clients think their resourceful identities are?... Rather than assigning names to our clients' experiences on their therapeutic journey, we can learn to give voice to what our clients desire and hope for their own lives.

While it was a helpful tool for therapists and supervisors to use, it would be interesting to see what would happen if the client was more involved in naming the session. It could be useful for clients to collaborate with the therapist in naming the session so they could take that name home as a vivid reminder of their work in therapy. Something short, descriptive, and memorable that reminds them of their goal or the progress they have made or are making in therapy.

As it occurred, the naming of the session occurred outside of the client's awareness. However, the names were based upon the collaborative talk that was happening between client and therapist. Student therapists had been encouraged to only use words and phrases that they heard from the therapeutic conversation. However, while the names of the sessions—that is, the resourceful themes and metaphors—were taken from the therapeutic talk, client, therapist, team members, and supervisor may put varying weight as to the importance of that theme.

Bringing the name back into the therapeutic conversation and having talk about that theme would be another way to highlight the recursiveness of the therapeutic process. This would allow adjustment not only of the name, but a thickening of description of the frames that led to that title. That is, the name of the session is just the title to therapeutic talk that is useful for helping the client to achieve his or her goal.

Naming the Session seems to have many benefits. First, it helps therapists to better train their ears to listen more closely to the client's talk. Since the names that are derived in session should come from the client's own language, therapists are trained to make distinctions about key words and phrases from the client's speech. Second, Naming the Session aids therapists in having a focus on resourcefulness. What the therapists are learning is how to listen for behaviors and metaphors that are strength-based and resourceful. They are better able to make distinctions in the focus of the session from impoverished to resourceful identities. Third, Naming the Session helps therapists learn how to make therapy a performative act (Keeney & Keeney, 2013). This mainly comes when the therapists have been encouraged to breathe life into the named resourceful identity. Fourth, Naming the Session helps the therapists to track whether there has been movement in their sessions away from a limiting client identity to the mobilization of a resourceful client identity.

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