

# THE THERAPY MANIFESTO

## SELF SPACE

### 1. Human first, therapist second.

We aren't "blank slate" therapists. Sitting human to human is where healing happens – not sitting expert to human, or authority to human. But human to human.

### 2. Make the journey.

To the greatest depths of human trauma: death, infertility, infidelity and depression, as well as the seemingly smaller moments of pain: a crush that goes unnoticed or feelings of jealousy towards a friend. It's all grist for the mill.

### 3. Know yourself.

Confront the complicated, painful, embarrassing and dark aspects of yourself. When we know this, we can know it in others in a more loving way.

### 4. The relationship.

Is the thing that really matters. Provide a relationship which clients can use for their own personal growth. You can't change them. But the relationship can.

### 5. Good enough.

Don't waste your time trying to be a perfect therapist. We'll never be that, and we know that's not helpful to our clients. Good enough is enough.

### 6. Listen with heart.

With ears. With eyes. With mind. With undivided attention. And, with heart. Listen and be alive to what is said, and unsaid.

### 7. Trust the clients' capacity for change.

Favour fluidity over rigidity. No one is fixed. Everyone can change. Everyone is a continually changing constellation of potentialities, not fixed.

### 8. Radical empathy.

They will come hurting, confused, troubled, anxious, alienated, terrified, doubtful of self-worth, uncertain as to who they are. Just as we've felt. Understanding is called for here. Take an empathetic stance, this is a gift.

### 9. Direction, not destination.

A good life is a process, not a state of being. It is a direction not a destination. The work is in the walk towards it, whatever "it" is.

### 10. Quit the jargon.

As Jung said: know all the theories, master all the techniques, but as you touch a human soul be just another human soul.

### 11. A gentle hand, and a kick up the arse.

Offer a combination of empathy and challenge, both a gentle hand and a kick up the arse, will often help clients to return to a place of balance when they come up against it all.

### 12. Review the work.

Never leave it too long to examine and reflect on what's happening in the space between you both in that therapy room. Reflect on the here and now. Attend to the work and where it's at.

### 13. Own your mistakes.

Admit them, hands up and hand on heart. An open admission of error is good role-modelling for clients and another sign that they matter to us.

### 14. Look out the other's window.

Try to see the world as our client sees it. Not just as you see it. Sometimes an extra step into another's world is needed, especially when lived experiences can feel so different, immerse yourself in the beauty of finding out more through the client.

### 15. Flexible but contained.

As much as we offer flexibility around appointment times, location and regularity – never compromise on clinical recommendations. Invite them back. Have clear boundaries. Be realistic with how long it takes.

### 16. There are no quick fixes.

We're not in the business of promising clients quick fixes. The only way out is through. Good therapy takes time. We don't rush it in pursuit of productivity. Honour the process.

### 17. Look after you.

Psychotherapy is a demanding job, we have to be able to tolerate the isolation, anxiety, and frustration that are inevitable in the work. But we don't have to hold this alone. Reach out.

### 18. Don't get complacent.

Yes, only the wounded healer can truly heal. But the wounded healer also needs continual learning and development, robust supervision, personal therapy, and to never forget we're all apprentices in the enterprise of being human.

### 19. Go beyond the diagnosis.

Too often, diagnosis limits the way we see the person. Look at defence mechanisms as brilliant creative adjustments. Hold them with compassion. See the whole person.

### 20. Be creative.

Remember the breath, the body, movement, song, story, play, image and projective work, writing. Therapy is a creative act.

