

Creating a Power-fully Safe Environment

Checklist for Therapists, Mentors and All Helpers

- _____ I greet and call each person by the name they choose
- _____ I smile at and make eye contact with each person
- _____ I focus each day on people's strengths, gifts and talents
- I ask about their goals, hopes, interests and dreams
- _____ I'm interested in the well-being of others and what they can do for themselves, not in something I might give them or do for them
- _____ I make suggestions for things that would help my client, not me
- _____ I truly listen and care about what my client has to say
- _____ I ask clarifying questions when I don't understand
- _____ I understand the whole situation before offering any suggestions
- _____ I am interested in the other person's success and hope that things go well for them (not for my own self-interest)
- _____ I admit mistakes I make to my client and say that I am sorry
- _____ I don't expect my client to be perfect. My client is not afraid to talk about mistakes as they know I will help them recognize and work through it without using words of blame or shame.
- _____ I understand complex post-traumatic stress and can educate my client on how it may be affecting their progress (validating and normalizing)
- _____ I never ask someone to take a risk I would not be willing to take myself
- _____ I let others think things through on their own and respect that sometimes they may prefer to think a problem through without my guidance (most people do sometimes)
- _____ I ALWAYS keep things private when I am asked to (with exception of child protection issues for minors, and criminal acts for adults, which have been explained at our FIRST meeting)

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Checklist for Helping Spaces

- _____ To extent possible, materials and décor are multi-cultural and welcoming
- _____ Various options for lighting (dim, as well as bright)
- _____ Space is suited to the age group (remembering that people of all ages like to express themselves and play!)
- _____ There are options for chair *and* floor-sitting (big pillows, bean bag chairs)
- _____ Space is allowed for wheel chair and other accommodations, as needed. People using space do not feel that this is a burden or extra work for you.
- _____ Helpers get creative with making space for movement, as needed
- _____ Helpful materials for all ages:

Basic art supplies (crayons, markers, glue, scissors, paper); magazines; sand tray and manipulative materials; “hand” occupiers such as stress balls, block puzzles, the “Tangle”, play doh
- _____ Helpful materials for teens especially:

Music players; games such as “Jenga”, chess/checkers, the “Ungame”, “Moods”; deck of cards; journaling worksheets and books; books of teen-friendly poetry
- _____ Helpful materials for young children:

Diverse people figures, dolls, animals and families; appropriate toys to work through aggression; masks or dress-up clothes for fantasy play; ball toss/target play for mastery

Great Words in a Power-full Setting

- “This is the place where you get to make all the choices”
- “You are the expert on your life. You’ll know what’s best”
- “I trust you”
- “What you think matters”
- “I’m really sorry (_____) happened to you”
- “You are making so many choices”
- “You are really working hard at this”
- “All of your feelings are OK”
- “You can decide what makes you feel safe here”
- “I’ll follow your lead”