Using assessment tools in counselling practice

Fast track 4
Matching professionals with assessment tools

• **Psychiatrist**: mental health screening, IQ tests, personality profile or DSM-criteria.
• **Psychologist**: personality profiles, DSM-criteria, identification of strengths and resources or IQ tests.
• **Intake worker for a child safety department**: screen for risk of abuse or neglect, ascertain a history of violence or abusive behaviour also the urgency of the case.
• **Social Worker**: assess community support and linkages, identify strengths and resources.
• **Counsellor**: reflection and personal insight, good listening skills, focused discussion, getting the full story, finding relevant referrals, identify client strengths and resources, validate and affirm growth and work with the client not for the client.
• Have a think of more tools.
Wheel of life

• You need a sheet of paper and pen.
• Start drawing a very large circle the size of the page.
• Divide the circle into eight equal parts.
• Put a wheel with four large spokes or eight small spokes running through the centre.
• At the end of the spokes write the following words: work, study, fun, relationships, relaxation, sleep and rest, thinking and planning and physical fitness.
• Imagine tat each spoke from the centre of the wheel to the edge is a scale from 0 to 10. 0 is the centre and 10 is the edge of the wheel.
• Give yourself a score of out of 10 for each category.
• Once you have scored all the categories with a score draw a line to connect all the scores to create your personal shape wheel.
• Imagine if a wheel shaped as yours is was carrying you through life, what would that feel like?
• Lets reflect
• How do you think this would be helpful in counselling?
First wheel example
Second wheel example
Path to life

- This is a tool that shows the client a pathway for their life experiences and how their life has been shaped by their pathway.
- Draw a road either straight lines, wavy or whatever suits it is not written in stone.
- At the beginning of the road you write I was borne and at the end the word now.
- You then mark the pathway with the events of your life. E.g.: my dog ran away, my nana died, when I left home, when I married or my first job.
- Once the pathway is finished the counsellor has a discussion with the client around the key life events.
- Reflection: draw your own pathway and reflect on how your life has been influenced by the events both positive and negative.
- It is good to remember we learn a lot from both the positive and negative events in our life.
Volcano

• The volcano shows the road to anger assisting a client to understand if they are passive/ aggressive / passive aggressive or assertive.
• You draw a volcano on a piece of paper
• You divide the volcano into three parts.
• Part one: what was the event that made you angry (what happened)?
• Part two: what was the next event and how did you feel?
• Part three: what was the last event and what was your behaviour?
• At the top of the volcano you write the words that express your emotions and behaviours. E.g.: sad, yelling, frustrated, fear, go silent, smack my kids or drive the car in a crazy manner.
• You then look at the outcomes for the client and have a discussion on how they react in a situation.
• Reflection: draw your own volcano or one for a member of your family and see how they work up to stress or anger.
Volcano example

1. Kids have drunk all the milk.
2. No petrol in the car.

Overwhelmed, Sick in turning, Frustration, Angry all day, Screaming
The volcano may be the end of relationships

Knowledge is power so working with a client to understand the way they react in situations and understand that patterns can be changed if the client applies themself and they want to make a change.
Strength cards

• **Available online (the link is in your handouts).**
• Strength cards are a range of picture cards that are used with a client as each card has a strength and colourful pictures.
• Strength cards for kids – once again they are bright and colourful cards with strengths written on them for the kids to work with.
• There are many cards available you can even create your own for use. The purpose is to open opportunities for discussion on strengths and to introduce solution focused conversation and the clients own strengths.
• I personally use stones with positive words on them and have the client create a rock garden of strengths.
Drawing

• Have a child use a box of coloured pencils or crayons to indicate an emotion. E.g.: draw angry, or happy.
• Keep the page and the next appointment ask the child to draw their family.
• You look at the colours used for the family members as well as the size of the family members in relation to them.
• You can then bring the first drawing with the colours of the emotions and talk to the child about how the colours relate to the drawing of the family.
• Often times with a child they will draw an angry dad in the colour for anger. This has the opportunity to open up dialogue to talk to the child about the anger.
Reflection

• Think about how you may use strength cards.
• Think about how you may use the volcano.
• Reflect on your own wheel.
• Think about how you may use the pathway tool.
• Think about how you may use drawing with both adults and children.
• Have a look on the internet for other resources and think about how you can create some of your own.
Life is a river: it is always moving