Values behind Striving - Clinician dialogue

Guide a collaborative conversation about values behind striving while checking fit and participant choice.

Mental health professionals | 15 minutes

Fictional example: Morgan wants a promotion for security and also fears being overlooked.

Invite and obtain permission

Offer: "Would it be useful to explore values behind striving using an ordinary or fictional example? We can adapt it, observe, or stop." Ask what the person wants from the conversation.

Elicit before teaching

Ask: "How does this show up, if at all, in your own words?" Offer this idea tentatively: Ambition can be examined for meaning, social context, and personal cost. Ask what fits and what does not.

Guide the task

Distinguish a valued aim from a need to prove superiority or avoid shame without labeling either motive as your whole identity. Ask for permission before giving an example. Use this fictional illustration if useful: Morgan wants a promotion for security and also fears being overlooked.

Reflect and check accuracy

Reflect only what was offered: "I heard you describe ___. What did I miss?" Ask: Which motive would you like to give more influence? Avoid assigning motives or interpreting silence as agreement.

Respond to a mismatch

If the person rejects the frame, say: "Thank you for correcting it. What would be more useful?" Return to their language or choose a different approach.

Close with agency

Ask which observation, question, or support request the person wants to keep. Confirm a manageable ending and appropriate follow-up; do not turn a tentative possibility into a homework obligation.

Reflection

What would tell me to adapt, stop, or seek supervision?

Scope and adaptation

Explore patterns as collaborative hypotheses. Do not infer personality from sibling position, treat recollections as recovered facts, blame people for coping, or frame structural inequality as a lack of effort.

Original AI-assisted educational draft; independent clinical review pending. Version 1.0. Background: Alfred Adler: Theory and Application. Full source links and scope: library.morethantherapy.org/approaches/resources/ADL-A18-3