Values in Relationships - Clinician dialogue

Guide a collaborative conversation about values in relationships while checking fit and participant choice.

Mental health professionals | 15 minutes

Fictional example: Avery wants honesty and cannot require the other person to respond warmly.

Invite and obtain permission

Offer: "Would it be useful to explore values in relationships 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: A person can choose how to participate without controlling another person's values. Ask what fits and what does not.

Guide the task

Describe the quality you want to bring to one relationship and a boundary that protects agency. Ask for permission before giving an example. Use this fictional illustration if useful: Avery wants honesty and cannot require the other person to respond warmly.

Reflect and check accuracy

Reflect only what was offered: "I heard you describe ___. What did I miss?" Ask: What part of the relationship is yours to choose? 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

Values are personally chosen directions, not moral rankings or evidence of worth. Recognize structural barriers, disability access, and culturally varied meanings. Do not turn willingness into exposure to danger, excuse coercion, or prescribe one life path. These original exercises do not constitute a complete ACT protocol.

Original AI-assisted educational draft; independent clinical review pending. Version 1.0. Background: Valuing as a Choice. Full source links and scope: library.morethantherapy.org/recovery/resources/VAL-A16-3