General Practice Considerations
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Clients expect therapists to respect, rather than challenge, their beliefs.

(Schaffner & Dixon, 2003)
General Practice Considerations, cont.

• Tips for Clinicians from D'Andrea and Sprenger
  1. Recognize and assess your own reactions to a divergent belief system.
  2. Guide introspection with validation and understanding of the client's worldview.
  3. Use the client's values and beliefs to guide them on a path to a deeper understanding of what happiness is for them.

• Other Recommendations
  • Ask about celebrations
  • Honor differences
  • Validate non-religious experiences
  • Focus on personal responsibility
  • Respect privacy
  • Engage in self-reflection
  • Be sincere
  • Seek consultation

(D'Andrea & Sprenger, 2007)
General Practice Considerations, cont.

• Therapists should not endorse the stereotype that atheist clients lack morality because they do not hold religious or spiritual beliefs.
  • Moral beliefs can develop from a wide array of sources outside religious doctrine.

• **Avoid using reassurances** that may typically soothe R/S clients:
  • “Things happen for a reason”
  • “Events are all part of a larger plan”

• Consider **Existential-Humanistic** or **Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy** frameworks in clinical practice.
  • Atheistic people tend to believe that they themselves are responsible for creating meaning and purpose in their lives.

  (Brewster et al., 2014)
References


References, cont.


