Cheat Sheet

Solution-Focused Client Types “DOS” and “DON’TS”

1. The Visitor: This relationship to therapy is characterized by no personal motivation for change and no complaint. The client is often sent to therapy by another, or is in therapy in order to please another.

   Main goal: For the client to return to therapy

   Do:
   ● Affirm client’s presence in therapy
   ● Compliment client’s strengths
   ●Sympathize with client’s current circumstance
   ● Focus on joining and helping the client feel understood

   Don’t:
   ● Insist the client take responsibility
   ● Assign tasks or homework

2. The Complainant: This relationship to therapy is characterized by intimate familiarity with the problem without recognition of personal contribution to the problem or its solution. The client can detail the problem and its effects, but cannot yet see how to personally influence change.

   Main goal: Restraint and patience on the part of the therapist, so that the client will take personal responsibility for the solution.

   Do:
   ● Thank the client for providing useful information about the problem
   ● Affirm the client for living with the problem
   ● Assign observational or reflective tasks

   Don’t:
   ● Insist the client has a role in the problem’s solution
   ● Assign behavioral tasks
3. **The Customer:** This relationship to therapy is characterized by desire and readiness to change the problem, and this is evidenced by the client’s verbal communication.

**Main goal:** For the client to begin and continue tasks that change, or solve, the problem.

**Do:**
- Assess and compliment the client’s past, and current, efforts at solving the problem
- Collaborate with the client on continued change

**Don’t:**
- Avoid or neglect assigning tasks

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**Let’s chat**
Let me know if this cheat sheet was helpful by e-mailing me at ili@familytherapybasics.com. You can also discuss the cheat sheet in the Get Refreshed therapist community; join now at http://facebook.com/groups/familytherapybasics.