Welcome, everyone, to the National Criminal Justice Training Center webinar. Our topic today is developing effective working relationships with victims and offenders for community corrections professionals. Presenting today's webinar is Dr. Anjali Nandi. And my name is Greg Brown. This project was supported by a grant awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this webinar are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice.

Let's go ahead and try our first poll question. This is a simple question to find out who's joining us today. The question is, which of the following best describes your role? Your choices are victim services or a victim advocate, probation or another community corrections-based organization or professional, law enforcement, tax, social workers, mental health professionals, or other.

And as you can see from the results, it looks like 13% of our audience today are victim services, victim advocate professionals. 51% are probation community corrections professionals, 8% law enforcement, and 16% are certified counselors, social workers, or mental health professionals with 13% being other.

This webinar is the first in the series designed to provide professionals in the criminal justice system information on evidence-based and best practices in helping people change unhealthy behaviors. Developing working relationships that are supportive, empathetic, accountable, and help facilitate change in individuals that have caused harm is critical in improving outcomes and, where possible, healing the harm that's been caused.

With that, I am pleased to introduce you to our presenter, Dr. Anjali Nandi. Dr. Nandi is an instructor with the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College. She is also the chief probation officer for the 20th Judicial District of the State of Colorado. Additionally, Dr. Nandi is a published author, having co-authored nine books. With that, Dr. Nandi, I'll turn the time over to you.

Thank you very much, Greg, and it's a pleasure to be here. I'd like to start by placing why relationship is so important. And we're starting with a little bit of a technical slide that talks about the importance of relationship when we're looking at outcomes. And the kinds of outcomes that we're looking at are behavior change outcomes. So thinking about criminal justice clients, we're really focused on long-term behavioral change. And so when we look at long-term behavioral change, there are several things that we can attribute why long-term behavioral change happens.

A huge majority of it is because the individual clients, the individual person comes in with certain things that either support long-term change or take away from long-term change. So things that support long-term change are things like what their understanding of the issue is or what their social support is, their own particular features. You all have probably experienced some clients who you could lock them in a closet, and they will still do well. They will get better. You could not provide them any resources, and yet they still change for the positive.

And then you've probably experienced clients with whom, no matter what you do, you could offer them the best of everything, every possible resource, and yet, no change happens. And that's the individual client driving the outcome by about 40%. But the next biggest contributor to what drives an outcome is the relationship that the client has with the practitioner. And I know we have folks from a variety of different places and perspectives on this webinar. We have victim services folks, we have probation, community corrections, law enforcement, folks from the therapeutic world.

It doesn't matter what your position is. The relationship really matters. It predicts 30% of the outcome. And when we're talking about relationship, we're not talking about a buddy-buddy kind of, I'm-your-best-friend relationship. We're talking about relationships that's really clearly defined. And that's really going to be the focus of our conversation today is, what are these relationships? What did they look like? How do we develop them? Why are they so hard for us? And what do we do to support ourselves as we're learning to develop these relationships?

The other two big chunks that contribute to outcomes are something called the placebo effect, which I know you are all familiar with. But it's essentially the stuff that people come in with about anticipating how this is going to be. So if they come in thinking, this is going to really work for me. This is going to help me get myself together and be successful, that increases the likelihood of their outcome which contributes to about 15%. And then, the final piece is the actual intervention.

And the intervention that we use, whether it's cognitive behavioral interventions or whatever the intervention is that you use, that contributes 15%. So this is the really interesting thing. I often joke and say I went to school for a really long time to learn about interventions and what were the most evidence-based interventions. And yet, if I don't have the relationship, I'm sunk because the intervention itself will carry me only so far. So that's really why we're going to talk about relationships and the importance of it.

In this webinar, what we're going to do today is Greg and I are going to talk back and forth about some of these really difficult issues that will sometimes show up, the things that make relationships tough. So Greg, as you're listening to this, can you share with us, from your perspective, why are relationships in our criminal justice world so difficult? What are some of the prickly pieces that show up that make this hard?

Great question, Anjali. I think that one of the things that we have to remember is that we exist as part of an adversarial system. And so that adversarial system and that process takes place. The court makes their decision, community-based supervision, or they're coming out on parole, and then that relationship changes significantly. It's not an adversarial process. This is a process of helping people look at changing behavior. So that's why we know that the relationship is so important.

I think that one of the other challenges that we see in the work that I do in training and being involved in probation for over 30 years is that we tend to want to spend time with people that we enjoy spending time with. They may be doing well on probation. And we tend to not want to spend time with those people who might be a little bit more antisocial, have some more cognitive distortions, may have done some pretty-- engaged in some pretty bad behavior. And so that's one of the other things that undercuts it is we tend to not spend enough time with the people who really need our intervention and attention.

Yeah, Greg, you really hit something that's so close to home I think for a lot of us is looking at who do we spend our time with when we are working with our clients. And like you said, we tend to want to spend time with folks who, for the most part, are lower risk. We can relate to them; we enjoy them. And that's where the first strategy comes in, which is empathy.

And for those of you who heard empathy and are rolling your eyes and vomiting a little bit, this piece around empathy is so critically important. I would imagine that you all have heard this over and over again. And I'm sorry that it's the first thing I'm talking about. And yet, it is one of the most crucial pieces. So let me talk a little bit about why.

When Greg says that there are certain people who we don't want to spend time with, we really-- high risk, anti-social, the folks who have a lot of cognitive distortions when they're coming and talking with us, it's really difficult to be able to sit with that and suspend our judgment and hear what the other person is trying to say. So empathy is this really interesting piece. Empathy is actually divided into two pieces. There's cognitive empathy, and there's affective empathy.

Cognitive empathy means that I understand cognitively. I can connect with them. It makes sense. I get it. I get what they're saying. Affective empathy is I can feel what they might be feeling. And unfortunately, cognitive empathy is not enough. Meaning, it's not enough for me to cognitively get why somebody would have chosen to do to particular thing. I have to be able to understand their feeling. And empathy does not mean that I agree with it. It doesn't mean that I'm making it OK, and it's definitely not excusing the behavior.

What it is doing is conveying an emotional response. And really interestingly, conveying an emotional response, understanding connecting with the emotion does a variety of things to start to build a relationship. And one of the biggest things it does is it meets the other person neurologically. So a little bit later on we'll talk about the brain and why this piece around empathy is so important. But I just wanted to start with that first strategy.

Now, empathy is not empathy without really clear boundaries. So many times, when I talk about empathy, people will respond by saying, wait a minute, does having empathy mean that we just let people do whatever they want because we understand what they're going through? No, absolutely not. Just because I understand doesn't make it OK, and that's where boundaries come in. So boundaries are really clear statements about what's OK and what is absolutely not OK. It's the negotiables and the nonnegotiables. So clarifying boundaries needs to happen quite frequently.

So an empathy statement with boundaries could sound something like, I really hear that you're going through an extremely hard time right now. And I do need you to show up on time, for example, right, if that's the boundary I'm setting. I do need you to take your UA. Let's talk about what happens when you do or when you don't or what the consequences are. So I've done both the empathy piece and the boundary piece.

The third strategy is about clear expectations, making sure that the person understands what's expected of them and what their next steps are. Being clear about expectations really helps clarifying those boundaries, but also a strong alliance where we know what we're working towards. And that brings up role clarification, what I'm doing and what you are doing, what the expectations are of me and what I can expect of you. Both clear direction and role clarification are really helpful throughout.

Unfortunately, we tend to do role clarification and expectation clarification when things go wrong, or we do it right at the beginning. So I intake, I'm really clear with people, and then, when they mess up, I say, boom, here's your boundary. And unfortunately, what we need to be doing is clarifying boundaries throughout. And that might sound like recognizing when people are doing it right.

Thank you for coming on time. It helps us get through this paperwork in a more timely fashion. So just making sure there's boundary-setting, clear direction, role clarification. It's not just happening when people are doing something that we don't want them to do. It's especially happening when they're doing things that we do want them to do. So we're really working hard to catch them doing things right.

And that leads us into reinforcement. So reinforcing positive behavior increases the neural connections about those behaviors. So every time we reinforce a particular behavior, we say, great work doing this particular thing, that thing, that behavior gets reinforced and strengthened in the person's brain. Of course, we have to really mean it, which sometimes is tough. Each one of these is tough in their own way.

And the last piece, the sixth strategy for supporting relationship and structure is being a guide, which kind of falls in this really interesting spot. I know, for me, I've definitely run the continuum from wagging my finger all the way to trying to rescue people, neither of which are terribly helpful. They definitely ruin me, but they're extremely unhelpful for the client. And so we have to be really careful about stepping into what we call a drama triangle. And this drama triangle, if you all can imagine a triangle, there are three points to this triangle. There's the victim, the rescuer, and the persecutor.

And as I describe that, I'm hoping you can sense in yourself that you've probably been in all three places at some point in your life. Just this morning I did both-- I did all three, victim, rescue, and persecutor when I was getting coffee with my daughter. My victim sounded like, gosh, nobody understands how hard I work. That was the victim statement. The rescuer-- I'm really trying to help everyone. And the prosecutor-- well, if they don't listen to me, let them do it by themselves. I'm out of here.

So those pieces, in a personal way, I can relate to really well. And then I know that I've fallen into these very points in the drama triangle multiple times while at work. And of course, our clients gravitate to different points on this drama triangle. And we have to be so careful not to step into it.

So if a client is holding the victim stance, we have to be really careful not to jump to the persecutor or to jump to the rescuer, but really empowering the clients and letting them know that it's their job to take the next step. It's our job to support, to provide ideas, but it's really their job to choose.

So Greg, as you're listening to these, what are some that you find particularly important and maybe even particularly difficult for us in the criminal justice world?

Great question. I think that one of the things that comes up for me is when to do this? And obviously, we want it to be a conversation, and we want people to have input into it. And we'd like to lead them down the path of them coming up with the ideas about negotiables and nonnegotiables. But when do you do this in the relationship?

Because we know how important that relationship is. Is it when we're signing terms and conditions and setting the rules? Or is this more of a process that we're introducing and working with someone through as we develop that relationship?

I think what my clients would say is the reinforcement. I had drilled into my head the 4 to 1 ratio, and sometimes that's really hard. You run out of things to do to say if you're not really creative-- and so that 4 to 1 ratio of reinforcing the things that they've done well and then obviously addressing places where they're still struggling or having technical violations on their supervision.

Yeah, thank you. Let's find out from the audience, shall we, about what they find themselves struggling the most with? And the way we're going to do that is through a poll. So Greg, can you walk us through that again, please?

I can, thanks. So the second poll question is, which areas do you find yourself struggling with the most? Is that in the empathy area, boundaries and clear direction, role clarification, reinforcement, or being a guide? It looks like reinforcement is the area that most people struggle with at 27%. It looks like 22% being a guide, 21% empathy, 19% on boundaries and clear direction, and 10% on role clarification, Anjali.

Thank you for doing that, Greg. Gosh, that's interesting, right? It's such a spread of-- and almost an equal spread across several of these. And role clarification it sounds like-- I'm sorry, reinforcement it sounds like it's one of the tougher ones, which is what you called out as well. Reinforcement is really tricky.

You talked about the 4 to 1 ratio. And our audience participants are probably really familiar with that 4 to 1 ratio that, ideally, what the research indicates is that, in order for a behavior change to be facilitated and to stick, we need positive reinforcement to negative reinforcement at the ratio of 4 positives to 1 negative.

Sometimes people think that in every interaction they are having with someone, that they need to do four positives before they can say anything that's negative. And I just want folks to take a deep breath because, what we're really talking about is, overall in your conversation, in the 10-minute conversation or the 30-minute, whatever your conversation is that, overall, your positives outweigh the negatives. So I hope people are not worrying, thinking, oh, my gosh, I can never say anything negative to folks. It really just is in the course of that relationship or in the course of that conversation.

And then the folks we're talking about struggling with several other pieces as well, being a guide, empathy, boundaries. The empathy and boundaries piece is really interesting because that's really where the relationship starts. So we talk about it as boundaried empathy because, if we're not careful, our empathy can lead us into some really unhelpful places and potentially unhealthy places for us if we don't have really clear boundaries. What I'm going to do is start by laying out some of the steps that are helpful to think about when starting up a conversation with somebody or a relationship with somebody in our criminal justice world.

And this information really comes from a trauma-informed place, so a place that understands that, oftentimes, when people walk into our offices, there may be a lot more going on than meets the eye. One of the pieces is to understand that, in order for me to have any kind of a working relationship with someone, they have to feel safe. Feeling safe means that they're in the working part of their brain as opposed to the reactionary part of the brain.

So that first step is noticing when they are reactionary. And I know, in previous webinars, we've talked about a flipped lid. Folks are probably familiar with this hand model of the brain where, if you imagine your thumb being your limbic system, sometimes called the lizard brain, the fingers, when they fold over, they are the frontal cortex or the wizard brain. So essentially, you have the lizard, which is the reactionary brain and then-- or the emotional brain, and then you have your wizard, which is your thinking brain.

Unfortunately, when we don't feel safe, we literally flip our lids, and we lose the connection to our wizard, our thinking brain. And so we get stuck in reactivity. We get stuck in emotion. It's very difficult to have a sense of humor or get creative. We tend to be involved in some big emotion, emotion that doesn't quite match the situation. It's really hard to be logical. All of these are signs of flipping your lid. And if some of you are not relating, I can-- I'm hoping that you can relate to an experience of being really, really angry.

When I get really angry-- which isn't terribly often. But boy, when I get angry, it's quite tough for me to hold onto my frontal cortex. And so it becomes really tough for me to see anything positive in that moment. And if somebody cracks a joke, my immediate retort is, that's not funny. So I've lost my sense of humor. I also start repeating myself.

And you might see clients doing that where they're repeating themselves, saying the same thing, or if you say something like, OK, let's problem-solve, they're just not able to connect with you. They start repeating themselves. We can only problem-solve from our frontal cortex, not from our limbic system. And if we've lost that frontal cortex, that wizard, then we've really lost the ability to think logically.

So the first step in re-establishing safety, of course, is noticing, have they lost their frontal cortex. And then, I talked a little bit about this before, but empathy is one of the fastest ways, neurologically, to help the lid come back down. Expressing empathy-- when people do fMRIs, so functional MRIs of the brain to see where is the blood flowing, when somebody conveys empathy to the other person, we notice more blood flow going into the frontal cortex and away from the limbic system.

Whereas, if we provide advice, if we tell people to calm down, if we flip our lids, blood rushes into the limbic system, and we really see a diminishing effect in the frontal cortex and people really have a hard time. So respect and empathy are one of the fastest ways to help people feel safe. And of course, when people aren't feeling so safe, or they're dissociating, or not feeling terribly grounded, using grounding techniques can be very helpful.

So let's just take a quick look at the brain before we go deeper. So again, we have that frontal cortex, the forward-looking, future-focused brain. And then we have the emotional brain, the past-focused brain, the nonlogical, the reactive, overemotional.

And unfortunately, if we are in a conversation with somebody, and they feel like this is a conflict, what happens for them immediately is, safety becomes paramount, and so all the blood rushes into their limbic system, and, literally, they have a harder time hearing. Maybe they don't-- aren't able to problem-solve. They can't see complexity.

So when you're talking about an adversarial system, as Greg put it, we're in an adversarial system. And then we ask clients to shift and say, well, wait, no, I'm here to help you. I'm here to facilitate your positive behavior change towards a more prosocial lifestyle. That kind of shift is really hard for them to believe because they have a lowered ability to see complexity once they've lost that sense of the frontal cortex. And of course, any positive memory is compromised.

I'm guessing that you all can relate to me that, when I'm really upset about something, like, if I'm upset with my partner for-- I'll use a silly example-- not taking out the trash again, when I'm really upset about it, I can't remember a single time that he has actually taken out the trash, even though, believe me, it's happened a bundle of times.

So that positive memory is compromised. And if we give a client example, when the client is sitting in front of us, and we represent a system that has never quite been supportive of them, it's very hard for them to have any positive associations or positive memory of being supported in this system.

So Greg, as you're listening to this, what are some strategies that you have found, either yourself with clients, or that you've noticed other probation officers you've worked with use to really help people start this relationship that is really tough to start because, like you said, we're starting from an adversarial space.

Great question. I think there's a whole bunch of things that you can do, as a system. I know that we spent-- for instance, we spent a lot of time designing our probation department, which is in a courthouse to look very different than a courthouse-- very welcoming, what our mission statement is, what we're there to do, and training everyone from the support staff and first contact with that client to all of our volunteers. Everyone understood how important it was for us to establish a different relationship and experience that they had had coming up into our system, so I think being able to do that.

The other piece is just trying to keep it simple until you develop that relationship. So if you need to cover some things in that first meeting around terms and conditions, keep it pretty simple and straightforward. I've even said, cover the most important condition, which is don't go out and commit any more crimes, please.

And then, maybe if there's a no-contact order or something like that, a safety issue for victims, making sure those are covered, but not going into the you know 18 or 20 conditions that were ordered by the court, but to let that relationship develop over time, not in that first meeting, but to actually talk with them.

And one of the first questions we asked everyone when they came in is, tell us about your journey. How did you end up here today? And just let them talk, not confront any cognitive distortions, or this happened to me or the cops are just out to get me. But you just let them tell their story at least once.

I love how you described that. There's something so respectful and welcoming about it. Ultimately, what you're conveying is, you are welcome here, and I'm going to listen. And at some point, we're going to disagree. And I will move this into maybe a skills conversation or confront you at some point, but, when I first meet with you, I really want to hear your story. I love how you put that. So yes, indeed, when we are starting up establishing safety, one of the pieces is about respect, which is, I think, what Greg was talking about.

And then, the other is to make sure that they feel like we have a shared purpose. And the shared purpose has a lot to do with mutual goal-setting. Are we oriented, are we moving, towards a similar goal? And if nothing else-- and I remember one client, we were having a goal-setting conversation. And he said to me, well, my only goal is not to see you any longer. And I thought that was perfect because that's my goal too, right? Our goal is to help our clients never have to see us again, to go on to be contributing, prosocial members in our society.

So can we really talk about shared purpose and then keep them in that conversation by showing respect? If you notice that the person's lid has, indeed, flipped, we might need to get out of the content of the conversation and back into just re-establishing safety.

So an example of that is, if we're having a conversation let's say about a hot UA or we're having a conversation about police contact, that's the content of the conversation. If you start to notice the client's lid has flipped-- they're getting highly emotional, they're getting very agitated, we need to drop the content for a second and get back to helping the client return to the conversation. So that's what I mean by getting out of the content and get back to safety.

We really need to work to have the conversation at the right level. Where is this client? What does this client really need right now? Is it a containment issue where we need to respond with enhanced structure? Is it that they don't have the skills, so we need to support them? Or is it a motivation conversation?

Or is it a support conversation? So making sure that we're having the conversation at the right level-- and sometimes safety has gone right out the window, and we need to reestablish it, which might sound like me saying, I've noticed that something I said has really bothered you. And I'm sorry, that's absolutely not what my intention was. So let's try this again.

So that might be a way of apologizing or contrasting. I want to make sure that you know that this is not about you getting a violation of probation for example, or this is not about you getting arrested. What this is about is us having a conversation about what you can do next time you're faced with a situation like this. So that would be a contrast, what this is and is not about. And then just reminding people about mutual purpose, that we're both here with similar goals, to really help them navigate the system and get them moving into a prosocial lifestyle once and for all.

Of course, all of this is complicated by the fact that we continually have to provide feedback to client when they do something well and when they don't do something well. And this makes relationship really tough because feedback is hard. It's hard to receive no matter what we say because it's interesting that feedback sits at the intersection of two very, very important and basic human needs, the need to be loved and accepted as who I am and then the need to grow, to self-actualize in some ways, or learn. And so feedback is right there.

When you're giving somebody feedback, you're skirting this line of, I accept to you, and here's your growing edge. And so I'm going to ask us to step away from thinking about clients for just a second to think about ourselves for a minute. When you receive feedback, I want you to think about what happens for you and how you respond.

So quite frequently, when I get feedback-- and sometimes I get feedback from a variety of different people. So maybe I'm doing a conference presentation, and there are 600 folks, and so I receive that much, a huge quantity of feedback.

And I can tell you that I will zoom through the positive feedback and get stuck on the negative feedback. And that's a human issue. It happens in our brain where we tend to put more valence or value on negative feedback and less on positive, which brings us back to that 4 to 1 ratio that Greg was talking about that we really need to up the positive feedback so that it holds some space in the client's brain or in our brains, for that matter.

We tend to prioritize negative feedback. That's one really interesting and unfortunate thing about us as humans. But we tend to prioritize negative feedback even if it is way outweighed by positive. And then the other thing is that feedback tends to kick us off what we call our homeostasis. So homeostasis is feeling OK. And then, you may have noticed that, when you get positive feedback, you swing to the positive, and you feel really good, and then slowly you come back to center.

And then, for some of us, when we get negative feedback, we swing way out, and it takes a little bit longer to get back. And I've known Greg for a really long time. And Greg is one of these incredible individuals who, when he receives feedback whether positive or negative, his swings are pretty small. Even if it's pretty negative feedback, he swings out a little bit, but he comes back to homeostasis quickly as opposed to some of the rest of us where, when we receive negative feedback, we swing way out. Greg, am I accurate on that?

Well, I think-- thanks for the compliment. I think it's so much practice of doing things wrong and getting so much feedback that I've gotten used to it.

[LAUGHS] Fair enough. So maybe it's sort of building a muscle, the feedback-receiving muscle perhaps. The reason I'm bringing this up, though, in the context of working with clients, is we have to know that, every time we give a client tough feedback, whether it's a conversation about their test results or how they're doing in treatment or their behavior or whatever it is, that they are going to have a swing.

They're going to swing off homeostasis. And just knowing that and knowing that, in order for feedback to really do its job, which is to change behavior, we need to allow that swing and then support them coming back to homeostasis.

And that coming back to homeostasis happens in relationship. So ideally, when they do make that swing, we don't kick them out of our office and say, go figure it out. We actually stay in relationship with them, support them, and support them coming back to homeostasis so that the feedback actually results in a behavior shift. So it really is our responsibility in a lot of ways to help those swings bring the client back to normalcy or homeostasis.

And so feedback is about a lot of different things. It's of course, positive, appreciating somebody, noticing, valuing them. It's also about coaching clients and helping them get better about their skills. And then sometimes it's about, you didn't do that very well, or that was not OK, really clear boundaries. So it's called evaluative feedback. But again, in order for feedback to stick, we need people in a learning mode not a performance mode, which is really important. Because sometimes, in our system, we force people into performance mode.

We essentially tell them, hold it together, be really compliant for a short period of time, and then get off whatever the sentence is, and then do whatever you want. That inadvertently, we sometimes provide that message of performance. You have to perform for me, as opposed to thinking about this in a really long-term way.

But actually what we're doing is setting up a learning process that you are with us, whether it's on probation or community corrections, or whatever it is. You're with us for a while-- six months, 2 years, 10 years, whatever it is. You're with us for a while. Let's take the long view.

And the long view is about learning as opposed to performing. And I think it's also important for us to be better at giving feedback, that we, as practitioners, learn to just check in and ask permission. May I give you my view on that? Or may I share something that I'm thinking about? And if you're not comfortable with asking permission because you really, really want to share this feedback, you could change it around a little bit and say, I'm going to share my view with you.

I'm going to give you some feedback. Feel free to take it or leave it. Because believe me the client will take it or leave it. So just articulating that allows for a little bit more choice. So asking permission-- very helpful. And then providing feedback in small chunks and checking in to see if they're still with you and being really careful not to provide too much feedback-- not to lump it all together.

Focus on impact versus our assumptions or getting up on our high horse, which is rather easy sometimes, at least for me, to do. Rather than doing that, really focusing on the impact of their action as opposed to saying, you're good or you're bad. I'm using those as really simple terms for morality.

It's really focusing on, here's what happened. Here was the impact of what you did. And then watching for what we call the yellow light-- when the lid is starting to fly off, when their lid is starting to flip-- notice that and helping to bring that lid back down. And making sure that we are asking for a really specific behavior change-- are we being quite clear about what we're asking for?

Feedback is best received when we're also being thought partners, meaning we're making, giving and receiving feedback, a habit, that we're providing it frequently, where, in every conversation with clients, we're noticing what they're doing well or what they're not doing well. And this information doesn't just apply to clients. It applies to each other, that we're consistently growing and changing.

And so these kinds of skills, whether it's creating a culture of feedback, making it a habit, or whether it's modeling the kind of behavior that we're looking for, what it's helping doing is helping facilitate awareness. It's helping facilitate a discovery of that particular person of themselves, of self-discovery.

We're allowing a safe enough space for them to be able to grow in that way. And of course, this isn't easy. And so the way we know that we need all our skills are when our emotions are high, clients' emotions are high, when the stakes are high, meaning something really matters, and when we differ in opinion. And of course, this could be little things, or they could be big things.

Our clients, at least some of my clients, are convinced that we deliberately mess with their urinalysis. So they pee in a cup, and they are convinced that we have an entire department devoted to diluting their urine or mixing it up or getting them results that don't quite represent what's been happening. So frequently, our opinions differ. And that's when we really need our skills. So the skills start with ourselves. They start with us. And the first step is really getting myself together, being mindful of, what do I need? And what am I willing to let go? Am I telling myself a story about this particular client?

So I'm going to ask Greg, in your experience, Greg, what are some of the toughest cognitive distortions to work with? What gets you going in a way that you realize, oh, boy, I really need to get myself together?

So I think two things come up for me. The first is the person who really is pretty paranoid and angry about the world and thinks that everyone is out to get them, kind of like the UA example that you gave. All the cops are out to get me. I wasn't really doing anything wrong. They pick on me in my town.

Especially in smaller communities-- and I do know that we have tribal probation officers, community corrections people on this call. The smaller communities about everyone's against me. They all know what I did and just those cognitive distortions.

And then I think the second most challenging population for me is high-risk female offenders and just what they bring to the table and trying to sort through that. And I think you talked about it a little bit earlier with the drama that can be happening and the things that are happening to them. And they've got traumatic events. And those are challenging kinds of conversations for me to try to keep on track and to follow these principles.

Yeah. I appreciate your honesty during answering that question because, in a lot of ways, the things that are hard for us reveal a little bit about us. They reveal what our values might be or what our edges might be. So for me, one of the particular cognitive distortions of clients that I struggle with is folks who come across as pretty entitled and have a really hard time taking any responsibility, which I know some of you might be thinking, oh, my gosh, that's 90% of our clients.

But I do mean this to the nth degree, super entitled and, really, this is everybody else's fault. It's a little bit like what Greg's talking about around the paranoia piece, everybody is out to get me, but it says something about me. It reveals my values, and it reveals things that trigger me.

And so just like Greg was saying, there are certain clients, certain populations that are particularly harder. And we need to know that about ourselves so we know, OK, I need to get myself together about this. So Greg, what are some skills that you use when you are faced, let's say, with a super high-risk female client, or maybe you're faced with somebody who has some pretty severe cognitive distortions and paranoia? What do you do to really stay in the conversation and honor the relationship?

Great question. So I'll take the most challenging one for me, which would be the high-risk female population. And I would say trying to follow the principles, making sure that you have a relationship-- I think the thing that I've learned, especially as a supervisor, maybe you're interacting with a PO and their client is that, if you don't have a relationship with that client, you're only going to cause more damage usually if things are kind of escalated and trying to get things to change.

So making sure you have a solid relationship with that person-- you know who they are. You know them by name. You know what's going on in their case, when they're doing well, and just making sure that they know that you know that they're not a number. So having that relationship I think is really important.

I have found really helpful those simple grounding techniques that you can use with getting in touch with your senses and having a little reminder card under my key pad on my computer. So if I'm seeing a conversation escalate to go back and look at those six senses and see if I can come up with something to help reground them. And the other thing I think is being vulnerable.

Like, when you make a mistake and you miss where they're at, take responsibility for it, and model that kind of behavior. Model that I can be wrong, and I'm still here, and I'm still supposed to supervise you and help you through this process and hold you accountable, but I make mistakes too. So let's start over again. Please, forgive, and I'll do a better job going forward.

Yeah, that vulnerability piece, gosh, it's so incredibly important because vulnerability takes so much courage. And it's such incredible modeling. Because to me, what it's modeling is the ability to learn and grow and try it again. There's a lot of, I think, humility that's required in being vulnerable and more than anything else, such great modeling for the clients, so thank you for sharing that with us.

Some things to consider are things like timing. Am I timing these conversations correctly? Is now the time for us to be able to have this kind of feedback conversation? Or is it later, and maybe I prioritize something else? Am I talking about the right topic? We talked about this a little bit earlier. Is it at the right level? Meaning, is it a structure issue that you need some more structure or skills? Is this a one-time thing? Is it a pattern?

We definitely don't want to have *Groundhog Day* type conversations with clients. And I'm referencing probably an old movie here, but what I mean by that is, we don't want to have the same conversation with clients over and over and over again. If that's happening, we're having the conversation at the wrong level. So there's something to be looked at right there. So that's about talking about the same topic and the right topic.

And then, are there emotions that need to be addressed? Is there enough safety right now to have this conversation? What kind of outcomes am I looking for? And I might following up with a client so that they know that this is really important? And ideally, in order for us to support a strong relationship with long-term behavior change, we need to really keep people in what we call a learning zone. And if we talk about pressure to perform, do really well or else, complete probation successfully, do everything I tell you or else, that's performance pressure.

And then there's a level of safety, either a lot of safety or low safety. We can create this four-box model where, at the bottom where you see the apathy zone, people really don't care. If you tell them, it doesn't matter how you do on probation, they probably don't care. If it really matters, and we're telling them that, if you don't do everything perfectly, you'll receive these really crazy consequences, they're in this anxiety zone versus being too comfortable. And where we want them to be really is in the learning zone, which is really paying attention to supporting them through this safety process and into skill development.

But because we're talking a lot about being aware of ourselves, one of the things that we also need to be aware of is our own biases. We talked a little bit about clients that challenge us. Greg shared his tough clients. And I shared a little bit about the things that are tough for me. We all, as human beings, have what we call implicit biases. And they're implicit because we take them for granted. They're not really clear. If you ask me if I have a bias about a particular thing, I'd probably say no, but it shows up in my action, and that's the really key piece.

Let me just stick with implicit bias for a couple of minutes, and then we'll talk about how it shows up in the workplace. So we have these things in our brains called heuristics, these very quick ways of making decisions about things. And we need them. So I want to make sure that you all know that bias is normal. It's a part of being human. Where we get into trouble is when we don't-- aren't aware of our biases, and we don't watch the impact of our biases on our actions with people.

So I'll give you a personal kind of silly example just to highlight a bias, and then we can talk about some of the more problematic biases. So a couple of years ago, I was going through the house-buying process, and it requires a gazillion things to keep track of. And one of the things that I needed to do was to set up an appointment with an inspector for the house. And my realtor friend said, oh, you should call Chris. Chris is fantastic.

So I said, OK, I will call Chris. And I called Chris, the inspector. And in my head-- and here's what I mean by implicit bias-- I did not know that I had a vision, a particular picture of what an inspector looks like. Because when I called Chris, a female voice answered, and I was immediately-- I immediately paused in my brain.

I thought, oh my gosh, I just realized I had a bias. Chris is a female. I, in my head, thought inspector is going to be male. He's going to be tall. He's going to have a ladder. He's definitely going to drive a truck, probably has a beard. And I wasn't aware of my implicit bias until I had a female Chris answer the phone.

Now, in that moment-- and I hope some of you are not just rolling your eyes thinking, oh, my gosh, who is this person-- super biased. But in my head, this is where I saved myself. I'm redeeming myself here. I thought, come on, get it together. She's probably a fantastic inspector. And for those of you who are saying, "for a woman," no, no, no, that's not what went through my head. But those are the ways in which our implicit biases could impact our actions.

So I'm telling you this story. And hopefully you're giggling and chuckling a little bit. But I'm telling you the story to kind of convey how deeply held these implicit biases. Are and if you would ever ask me about women's rights or women's empowerment, I'm all about that. And yet, in my own brain, I have this bias. So they're deeply held, they're implicit, but, if we're not careful, they impact our actions. And sometimes, if we're not careful, we will confirm our bias by looking to other people who are similar to us and ask them to confirm our bias.

So an example of that might be, if I have a particular bias about a client-- let's say I think the client is really not motivated to be here. I might talk with somebody who agrees with me about that bias related to a client, and that's confirmation bias. Confirmation bias happens all over the place. Another example of confirmation bias is, if I have a bias about Greg, for example.

Let's say I think Greg acts a particular way, I would then go to people who thought a similar thing about Greg, or I would watch his actions. And let's say 9 times out of 10 he was perfectly fine, the 10th time he engaged in that behavior, I would say, see, I was right. Greg does this behavior. So that's confirmation bias. And we sometimes do this with clients where we essentially set them up.

So there's this really interesting research that was done to look at our beliefs in our clients and whether they're going to be successful or not. And when we think a client's going to be successful, we treat them a little bit differently. If we walk in thinking, oh, my gosh, this client is never going to make it, it impacts how we act with them if we're not careful.

And so the reason we're bringing this up is because it's so important for us to pay attention to what are our biases. And again, the fact that you have a bias isn't the problem. The issue is whether it changes your actions with people. Greg, is there anything else about bias that you want to mention before I move to the next slide?

Well, I think it's a great topic. And obviously, we could spend a lot more time on it especially in the work that all of us do. I think that one of the things I've encouraged people-- because I think that certain crimes can push buttons for us. And it's something-- if we've been the victim of a theft or a burglary or something like that-- and to be aware of those kinds of things and to pay attention to that.

I've even purposely, in some cases, not read the pre-sentence report before I've met with someone because I feel it's really important to hear their story and tell me their journey to this office and to this department before I go and actually read the entire case. Because I know how important that relationship is and to be paying attention to my biases.

Yes, yes, absolutely. I think that piece is really important. And I think we can help each other with it. I think, if we have honest and strong relationships with each other, we can ask some interesting questions. Isn't it interesting that you are treating this client this way, but a similar client differently. What's going on there? So just helping, I think, keep each other on track.

Yeah, I think that's a really good point, Anjali. I know one of the things that, with your support in consulting with the department, we really talked about, when a client pushes your buttons, bringing someone else in. Have a co-worker sit-in on that conversation and give you feedback about how you handled it.

Because one of the things that happens in community-based corrections is you get a caseload, you get clients, and your interactions are pretty tied to that. There's not a lot of witnesses or people who can give feedback. And so being able to other people witness that and give you feedback is really helpful, especially when someone is pushing your buttons, or maybe challenging you in ways that you're struggling with.

Very, very true. Thank you for that. So the last couple of pieces that I want to make sure we cover are to do with having these conversations or having these conversations where we're working on safe relationships, watching our own biases, and what to pay attention to, and what not to pay attention to. So in the next couple of slides, we'll talk about what the research indicates does not work in order to facilitate strong, effective relationships, and then what seems to work. And then we'll end with some areas to be curious about.

So in terms of brief conversations, what the research suggests doesn't work is giving advice and, in particular, giving advice without permission. There's some research that shows-- and this is really, it makes me laugh. But when we give advice, we experience pleasure. So if I'm telling Greg what to do or telling him, well, when I had this problem, here's what I did-- the pleasure sensors in my brain are on fire. I feel a dopamine dump. So when I'm giving advice it feels good.

But if we put the same functional MRI on Greg's brain, as I'm giving him advice, Greg, do you want to guess what sensors in your brain would be going off?

Dismissing what you're saying, not paying attention to it, and probably thinking of everything I can possibly do to disagree with the advice that you're giving me.

You got it. [LAUGHS] Yeah, well done. So there are two things that happen in the other person's brain. One is arguing against whatever that feedback is, whether I'm right or not is quite immaterial. That's sort of this arguing back-- so aggression, and then pain. So interestingly enough, when somebody is receiving unsolicited advice, pain sensors and aggression is going up in the other person's brain even though I'm really enjoying giving the advice-- so really, really unhelpful. I'm not saying that we don't have helpful things to share. We sometimes absolutely do.

And so if you do have advice to give, ask permission. And that might sound like, I have some ideas. Would you be open to hearing them? And if the client says no, great, good boundaries on the client, and the client saved me a few minutes of my time because I would have given advice that they never would have listened to anyway. Oftentimes, the client says yes. And if they do say yes, provide your advice as options so that the client can still have choice about it. There's still agency that we're allowing the client to have.

So that might sound like, I think you have several options in front of you. The ones that I see are A, B, or C. What do you think you want to do? That's a way of providing advice with choice. Another thing that doesn't work is shaming. As soon as we feel shame, we flip our lids, and we get stuck in our limbic, lizard, reactive brain, so really unhelpful. Telling people what they're doing is wrong, providing discrepancy-- here's why what you're doing is not OK-- also unhelpful. It does something very similar that Greg just described, kind of that arguing aggression response.

It also doesn't help when we're indifferent. Unfortunately, if the client feels that we're being indifferent towards them, it doesn't facilitate safety, nor does it facilitate any commitment to long-term behavior change. And then it's unhelpful when we threaten extreme consequences that the clients know will not happen. It loses its potency. What does work is helping the client develop some kind of a discomfort. I'm using the word discrepancy here.

Really what we're talking about is discomfort between, let's say, what they're doing and where they want to go or their values, developing a little bit of an itch. We change our behavior when we're uncomfortable. But we can only admit that we're uncomfortable in a safe space, which is why we spend so much time talking about safety. It does work to help people heighten awareness, and we've talked a bunch about that and providing information in the option method that I suggested, staying curious and inviting the person to be curious with you, and then providing options and maybe highlighting what the natural consequences might be.

So those are some of the things that do work. And then, something for us to get curious about with a client, as we talked a little bit about inviting curiosity-- is what are their concerns? What are the benefits and downsides of what they're doing or not doing? What abilities do they have? What abilities do they need? What are some of the possibilities that are sitting in front of them and maybe even possibilities that they're not quite seeing just yet. How could things be better, and how could things be worse with or without change?

And then, what do they intend to do? What's their intention next? These are the pieces that will really help us guide through an effective relationship. And what we're talking about when we're talking about an effective relationship is one that's really focused on that long-term behavior change as opposed to short-term compliance.

So Greg, we have another poll coming up here about some of these strategies that we've talked about and really a question about where people feel like they need more training. So could you help us with this poll, please?

I'd love to. So the third poll question is, what areas do you feel you could use more training in? The first choice is developing psychological safety. The second is engaging in difficult conversations. The third is balancing empathy with boundaries. The fourth is giving feedback. And then, the last one, which I need is all of the above. So the results-- developing psychological safety, 13%; engaging in difficult conversations, 27%, and that's the second highest; balancing empathy with boundaries, 15%, 9% of the attendees attended giving feedback; and then the last response, all of it, 48%.

Thank you, Greg. I just so appreciate the humility in this group. I was going to make that comment about you too, Greg, you saying all of it. But the fact that-- almost half the group said all of it-- to me, there's so much humility in there. There's such an acknowledgment that this stuff is hard, that I can have all the skills in the world. And then, when I'm faced with a client that's just triggering me up and down, that it's so difficult to use my skills, that it's so difficult to provide feedback in a way that the client can receive it. It's so easy in that moment to just say, client, here's what you're going to do. Let me tell you.

It's to me, sometimes when I'm struggling with a client, this feeling of being out of control a little bit. Like, my gosh, I have nothing to offer, or I don't even know what to do next. There's such a space for growth there. And I so appreciate that the audience was willing to just acknowledge that this stuff is hard and that we all could use so much support, really, around all of it. So thank you, Greg, for that. Could you lead us to some of the questions that might be coming up from our audience participants?

Sure, now we're going to move into the question-and-answer portion of the webinar. Let's also move to the next slide, so Dr. Nandi's contact information is displayed while we do the question-and-answer portion of the webinar.

I do have a question, Anjali, one of the things that I think that you touched on but comes up in conversations with people and trying to figure out how to hold people accountable is the whole-- is the research and what we know about proximal and distal behavior. Could you tie that into the things that you've been talking about today with the relationship and responses and things like that?

Yes, most definitely. You actually phrased the question really in an interesting way. When we're working on facilitating behavior change with clients, it's important for us to understand what can be achieved right now. And we call this proximal behaviors. And then, what are behaviors that we're working on in the long term? It requires a real understanding of where the client is. So proximal behaviors are those things that we can expect the client to do right now. Distal behaviors are sort of these longer-term pieces.

So an example might be-- let's say you have a client who really has a strong addiction to a particular substance. We know that one of the hallmarks of addiction is relapse. We also know that, if somebody is truly addicted to substances, they're going to have a really hard time getting sober quickly. Meaning, if you snap your fingers and say, OK, you have to be sober today, they're going to have a really hard time with it. So sobriety is a distal goal. But what are some things we can expect right now from this client?

And I am going to be a bit tongue in cheek here, but I know that a lot of my clients who have an addiction, they can still show up places. They will show up to their drug dealer's house in a snowstorm. And so, if they can do that, they can show up to treatment, and they can show up to their UAs. And so the proximal behavior is showing up. The distal behavior is sobriety. And the importance here in distinguishing the two is how we then respond when they don't do a proximal behavior versus when they don't do a distal behavior.

So we really strongly incentivize, obviously, both behaviors. But when we sanction, we sanction proximal behaviors way stronger than we sanction distal behaviors. So an example of that might be, if the client shows up for his or her UA, that's a positive, even if the UA was not clean because that's the distal behavior.

So I provide praise for showing up for the UA. As opposed to a client who doesn't show up for the UA, I would sanction that more strongly than I would sanction somebody who showed up for the UA, but it was not clean. Does that make sense, Greg? Is that what you were going for?

Absolutely, thank you. So we have a really interesting question. What would you do if you overhear a co-worker talking down to a client?

Ugh, that's such a great question. And it's such a relevant question, especially now. To me, this is about, what kind of a culture do we have in our organization. And so when you're asking this question-- what do I do when we hear someone, a staff member, treating a client poorly, perhaps disrespectfully, even, what do we do? One of the things that I would strongly encourage is for us to be gentle with each other and for us to get curious with each other rather than getting into morality or making assumptions about each other. Let's ask what's happening?

Because it could be that your co-worker is having a bad day, or it could be that your co-worker has a ton of implicit biases that they need to get curious about. But if we go the route of shaming each other, we're actually not growing; we're not learning. And so as tough as this might be, if you hear someone talking down to or disrespecting a client, get curious with them. What was happening? Hey, I heard you talking with this client. What was going on?

And let's say your co-workers says, oh, I didn't even recognize I was doing that. You could say, would you be open to my view of what I noticed? And if your co-worker says yes, you say something like, it sounded a little bit like you were talking down to them. So I just wonder where that might be coming from. So that could be one way, and that's the positive way that it would go.

It could be that you say, I noticed you talking in this way to a client. What was going on? And the person says, well, clients deserve to be talked to that way, then you know it's an entirely different situation. That's a different conversation that we have to have because then we're talking about beliefs and biases about clients in general and our lack of respect or empathy for them. Sometimes you can tell when that's an issue when the staff will call clients particular names or say, "those people."

We have to be really, really careful with that kind of language because, in our brains, we create groups. We create ingroups and outgroups. And we treat ingroups better than we treat our outgroups. And we have to be quite careful if we start placing our clients in outgroups and justifying mistreatment of them. So I probably over-answered that particular question, Greg. Would you add anything to that?

No, I think that some of the strategies that I see with departments that have made-- and remember, all of this is tied to having better outcomes. So this relationship piece, what we're talking about biases is, how are you most effective about what your community expects from you, which is helping this person be safer in your community and being a prosocial contributing member.

So I think creating the culture that you talked about where feedback is more normative than not, I think that one of the things that you see are groups that create communities of practice around talking about difficult clients and talking about ways to interact with them, using peer coaching, having a co-worker sit in and help you with difficult clients and have the permission and safety to give you feedback are all great strategies that help change that culture.

There are some excellent questions, Greg. They're tough questions, and they're excellent.

Yeah, well, here's one. Put on your therapy hat. And the question is, in your opinion, roughly how many sessions should you have prior to determining whether or not a therapeutic relationship will work? This person is asking the question, said, I had a colleague recently terminated after the first session, which, arguably, may have been too soon.

That's such a great question. And I yes. I think it's a little complex, so let's open it up a little. If the person terminated the relationship within the first session for personal reasons-- for example, I am too triggered by this particular client that I cannot work with them. Then kudos to that particular therapist for recognizing that and not creating any harm.

But if the reason for termination was because the client is, and then you fill in the blank, right? The client is too defensive, the client is unwilling to cooperate, the client is whatever. Then I would suggest we take a step back, and we really take responsibility for the safety and the relationship.

So when I first heard the question, I thought we were going into how many sessions do we really need to see clients for in order to see behavior change? But the first session is actually predictive of long-term behavior change. That first session matters an incredible amount because, in that first session, we are setting the placebo effect. We are essentially creating a strong empathic relationship in that first session. So that first session is crucial for developing strong, supportive relationships.

And sort of like what Greg said, in that first instance, to really hear the clients and hear their story becomes so incredibly important. So the person who's putting this question to us is asking, when is it too soon? How do you know? And if it's truly a personal thing, then, of course, kudos to you for recognizing your own limitations.

But if it's a concern about the client, then the practitioner might need a little more skill-building, that we give our clients a lot of space and room to be able to develop these relationships with us because they've probably not had safe and supportive relationships frequently with criminal justice professionals.

Thanks, Anjali. We have another question that said, would these principles and models presented on this presentation apply to victims as well? It appears that most of the presentation seems focused offenders as opposed to victims. And so I would say yes. What we're looking at here is, how do we develop relationships with people who become involved in the criminal justice system? Obviously, a lot of the research is around people who engage in harming behavior. But the principles apply across the board around behavior change.

And Anjali will probably tell you this. But lots of this research has come from multiple fields, from the health care field, to school settings. They've looked at behavior change and looked at the importance of relationship in multiple professions, and this is what works across the board.

Yes, definitely multiple fields, including relationships. So intimate partner relationships, the positive-to-negative feedback, the 4 to 1 ratio that Greg had talked about, that actually originally came from John Gottman's work with couples working together. So the question regarding whether these principles and models apply to victims, they apply to all of us, and they apply to us as humans. I definitely used more examples with clients involved in the criminal justice system. And I apologize if I have left our victim folks out. They absolutely do.

It's really interesting. Working with victims who come in with their own view about what's happening, and then the interesting way in which they walk into the trauma triangle, I think, is really, really important for us to pay attention to. Does the victim feel safe enough to share with us what's going on, and to not just share the impact of what has happened to them, but also to learn and grow from, is there any part in this that provides them a learning or maybe even a healing experience, so a restorative justice hat that we could potentially put in there for sure.

Thanks, Anjali. Here's another great question. How do you balance the needs of the offender to address their own trauma while encouraging accountability, balancing the needs of the victim, especially when the victim is a family member?

So I'm not sure if I understood the question correctly, Greg. You're saying, the question is, do we have to do something different when the victim is a family member in terms of just boundaries and keeping the victims safe, is that what the question is?

I think so. It's balancing the developing this relationship and understanding-- this person clearly understands that a lot of the people that we supervise that come through our doors have their own trauma. How do you also encourage accountability and balancing the needs of the victim within that context? So walking that tightrope of hearing them, understanding that a lot of different things probably brought them to this place and contributed to them getting into trouble, but also balancing that with perhaps a family member or a victim that maybe wanting more a more punitive response.

Yes, that's such a beautiful question because whoever asked this question really sees all sides of it. Essentially, what you're what you're hinting at is that when we're working in the criminal justice system, we're working in a system where we have multiple victims. Yes, we have the victim of the offense, but the offender, the person who committed the harm is also carrying some victimhood from maybe something that's happened in the past. And it's such a beautiful lens to hold.

In the trauma-informed world, we often talk about-- we use this phrase, hurt people, hurt people. So it really shows the complexity right there. And to me, the answer is buried in the question, which is, how do we be more trauma-informed with the clients that we're working with and the victims.

And then, how do we balance the needs of the victim who perhaps wants something pretty harsh with understanding that the client is really working on long-term behavior change. So balancing those two-- by holding those two equally is really important.

Here's a great one, which I've heard several times. What do you do when someone training you tells you to "throw the book at them," quote unquote, without getting the client's story?

This is very similar to an earlier question, right? What do you do when somebody is treating a client disrespectfully? I'll go back to something that Greg had said earlier, that our goal is to develop an effective relationship or just even to be effective. Let's take the word relationship out of there.

So if our goal is to be effective, and we define effective as recidivism reduction, prosocial behavior change-- if we define effective in that way-- or we can even be harsher. Let's define effective as the person no longer committing crime. All of that requires behavior change, and behavior change does not happen when we throw the book at somebody.

Think about ourselves. How many of us have been able to change our behavior successfully when harassed about it? We all struggle with behavior change, right? Whether it's something like drinking more water or eating healthier or working out. Talk about the number of times that we have relapsed and how hard it is. And if somebody threw the book at us, would we actually change, or would we pick up the book and throw it right back at them?

And it's really interesting because our clients do pick up the book and throw it back at us in a few different ways that are a little more subtle. So it's just ineffective. And luckily, the research is helping us understand what is effective and what's not effective.

Thank you. And this will be our last question for you to respond to just so we honor everyone's time. This one really is anchored in historical trauma. And I'll ask the question. Do you have any recommendations on how to deal with racial comments? An example would be addressing a behavior or action. And the response is, you're only doing this-- this is a quote, "You're only doing this because I'm native or because I'm black." End quote.

Yes, yes. So empathy is the best response. This is the client's reality. And whether or not they're using it as an excuse or whatever it is, it's the client's reality. And it may not be your reality at all. It may not be your reality that you're doing this because they're native or because they're black. You're doing this because you're responding to a particular behavior. But what the client is really saying is right underneath that statement, and that's where empathy comes in.

So rather than address that particular comment, we say something to what's underneath. And what's underneath is, you don't feel like I'm being fair. Or maybe what's underneath is, you're feeling targeted right now. Or maybe underneath what they're saying is, you're feeling picked on.

You don't feel like I truly get what's going on. All of those empathy statements. And what we're doing is we're stepping away from the inflammatory content, and we're getting underneath into the emotion. And that's where the power is. That's where the connection can happen.

Because saying, oh, no, I'm not is really not-- we get stuck in the content, and we're stuck in an argument. But that is such a fantastic question. I just have been loving these questions, Greg. Thank you for facilitating the question-and-answer piece.

Sure. And I would say the other piece to that is to use your motivational interviewing skills and ask the person. Part of my job is going to be giving you feedback and talking with you about how you're doing with what the court has ordered you to do. How can I do that in a way that we can have a conversation about it and talk about that specific piece? And I think the trust piece will come up as well as, it might be a warning sign that you don't have the level of relationship to have that conversation yet, and you've got to go back and build that relationship.

Thank you again for the excellent presentation today Dr. Nandi and insight and knowledge and sharing all that with us. Thank you for joining us today, and have a great day.