Working with states of well-being

Purpose:

- Instead of concentrating on problems and unpleasant feelings, the aim is to establish a positive, desired emotional state as a "main symptom" in the search for a solution that is always available when the client needs it.
- The attempts to find solutions can then be tested "emotionally" again and again to see if they are okay and whether they might have to be changed.

Method:

- If the client – as is to be expected – describes their problem, you can ask questions that seek the desired state of mind. You assume that, if someone is unhappy with a situation/the way they feel when they'll know another state of mind.
  - What it would be like if things were the way you wanted them to be?
  - Have there been exceptions? What did that feel like?
  - When you think of someone who is able to do this, what might they feel like?
- Once a desired emotional state has been found (you can also notice this in bodily reactions), stay with that and ask in an interested way about all the aspects of that experience:
  - What exactly does it feel like?
  - Where exactly in your body can you feel it?
  - If the feeling had a colour, a consistency, or a dimension – what exactly would it look like? More like ..., or more like ...? Does it have sharp or fuzzy edges? (Come up with your own words, try to sense the feeling, let your imagination free)
  - What posture does your body take on?
  - What does your breathing feel like?
  - What images, what smells, what sounds, what tastes come to mind? (You can ask about each of these individually)
  - What sentence best describes you when you feel like this? I am great? I am valuable? I can do this?
  - What symbol might remind you of this state?

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Note the following:

- It's not important to tick off all the aspects, and you can also add others. Expand on the aspects where the feelings are strongest.
- When you repeat the exercise and the desired state is reached, always use the words of the client, don't change the wording. Just as a certain colour, posture, or sound belong to the feeling, the specific words used to describe the situation make accessing the desired state possible. Even if you might think your words may sound "more pleasant", "better" or "more pertinent", that's not important. (Unless the client finds your suggestion feels more right)
- Observe closely the facial expressions, the posture, and the breathing of the client. Besides what the client says, these are the most important indications of whether the desired emotional state has been reached. And go with the client – try to relax your body, have the confidence to give up your inner distance. After all, it's difficult to relax when the other person was sitting very stiffly and showing no emotions.

Finishing off:

- Now ask the client what their strongest impression was, the one that can help them to find that feeling again: their specific way of breathing, the attitude, the words, the colour. Practice going into and out of that feeling by asking the client after the exercise whether they can remember a less pleasant (but not a really bad) situation. They will immediately stand differently, change their facial expression, breathe differently, etc. (memories are also physical experiences and we react as a whole). Then you can ask the client to go back into the pleasant emotional state and observe what the best way to achieve that is. Your role in this is then to introduce the other parameters (using the patient's words) so that the client can get into that state again completely. Do this a few times and then ask the patient to do the exercise now and again.

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