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Yang Li and W.Q. Vivian Lou

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Applying the Satir Model of Counseling in mainland China: Illustrated with 20 Case Sessions

Yang Li, M.Ec., Beijing, China

Lou, Vivian, W.Q., Ph.D., University of Hong Kong

Abstract:

Counselling services in Mainland China are now beginning to be provided as part of their health care system due to the growing awareness of needs associated with mental health. Furthermore, the need for a higher quality of counseling services has been steadily increasing. The Satir Model has shown tremendous vitality in its acceptance as a treatment modality ever since it was introduced to China in 2003, and given its compatibility with Chinese culture and tradition. Along with this compatibility, it provides therapeutic solutions to mental health problems that are particularly associated with the *negative* influences of Chinese culture and tradition. Here, the authors analyze several possible negative influences in the culture; such as invalidation of self, high expectation towards self and incongruence when expressing feelings. The authors then illustrate how the Satir Model helps people to recover their wounded selves through this transformational counseling process.

This study is illustrated by an analysis of 20 sessions of counselling experiences in Beijing, China. With its strength-orientation and change-directed therapeutic approach, the Satir Model has shown its effectiveness in helping Chinese people experience higher self-esteem, take more personal responsibility, increase their ability for choice making and for personal congruence.

Key words: Satir model, Chinese culture and tradition, mental health problems, counseling

Introduction

Contemporary counseling services have had a short history in China, but it is now developing more quickly. It was not until 1980s that psychiatrists in China started counseling services. In the 1990's, both theoretical research and counseling practice began developing rapidly. In 2002, counseling became a profession and the testing system for psychological counselors was established (Ministry of Labor, 2002). With the rapid development of a modern society in China, more and more mental health problems emerged. According to the latest data, in mainland China the number of people with mental health problems accounts for 17.5% of the total population of

those over 18 years old, and 6.14 million are psychologically disabled (Han, Zhi & Yang, 2009). Driven by fast growing demands, the necessity of counseling has aroused great public attention and consequently several different counseling institutions were established in a very short period of time: public health departments (counseling clinics in psychiatric hospitals and general hospitals), counseling centers of universities and schools, as well as private counseling institutions (Chen, 2006). Counselors in the first two kinds of institutions are mainly university graduates in psychology and psychiatry who have a profound theoretical knowledge, but have limited practical experience. Those in private institutions are often lacking in both theoretical knowledge and practical experience, since they came from a variety of backgrounds with most having had only a short period of exam-oriented training to become qualified psychotherapists. Therefore, the counseling environment is quite disordered and sometimes disappointing (Liu & Yu, 2007). Under these circumstances, on-the-job training has become crucially important.

Various training programs developed that were targeting to improve counseling skills, and were introduced from abroad since the 1990s. The first overseas training program was introduced by scholars from Germany targeting at psychiatrists and it has become the most influential series training program in China. This China-Germany program was mainly on psychodynamic, behavioral, systemic family therapy and hypnotherapy (Zhao, 2009). Later on, training on humanistic psychology was also introduced into Mainland China (Che, 2009). Recently, training on structural family therapy was found popular in the professional training market since its first introduction by Dr. Lee Wai Yung in 2000 (Fu, 2008).

As one of the main streams of family therapy, the Satir model was introduced to mainland China by Mrs. Monita Choi in 2003. Dr. John Banmen, Dr. Maria Gomori, Mrs. Sandy Novak, Dr. Marie Lam and Dr. Sok Fun Lam are the main professional trainers. The trainees ranged from counsellors in schools and hospitals to private therapists and psychiatrists, college teachers of psychology, professional trainers and psychology amateurs.

As one of the trainees, the author has completed the professional course of training on the Satir model for therapists (Level 1) by Dr. John Banmen and the advanced training on Satir transformational systemic therapy by Dr. John Banmen and Mrs. Kathlyne Maki-Banmen, and practiced as a volunteer counsellor at the Beijing Satir Centre.

This paper is aimed to describe and analyze the author's experiences in applying the Satir Model in counseling to 16 clients in Beijing. Reflections were made on

common mental health problems that were in the context of influences of Chinese culture and tradition followed by the effectiveness of the Satir Model in promoting these clients' positive change.

The Satir Model in the Context of China

The main focus of the Satir Model is on change towards greater wholeness, more harmony, greater responsibility and ultimately, a fuller life (Banmen, 2008a, P.16). The core of the Satir Model is to promote the client's transformation from DOING to BEING. DOING includes the upper five layers of the iceberg metaphor, which are behaviors, feelings, feelings about feelings, perceptions, and expectations. BEING is the life force of a person, which includes the two deeper layers of iceberg: yearnings and self. According to the Satir model, humans are born to be in the BEING part, where there is a positive life energy with love, peace, harmony, joy and connection. However, people can not always stay there. Since the time they were very young, most had been confronting incidents that led them to make a decision that they were not good enough. This drove them into the DOING mode, struggling for being loved, validated, accepted and connected. Different symptoms then emerged (Maki-Banmen, 2009). The Satir Model is to help people experience their BEING energy and to make a decision to stay there. The symptoms then disappear accordingly (Banmen & Maki-Banmen, 2009).

The Satir Model has shown its great vitality ever since it came into China. One of the possible explanations is its compatibility with Chinese culture and tradition. Table 1 lists a comparison between therapeutic beliefs of the Satir Model and Chinese traditional values.

Table 1

A comparison between therapeutic beliefs of the Satir Model and Chinese traditional values:

Concerning	Satir Model	Traditional Chinese Values
Nature of Human Beings	"People are basically good, but sometimes need help to experience and manifest this aspect of themselves (Banmen, 2008b, P.3)"	"People at their birth, are naturally good. Their natures are much the same; although their habits are widely different" 《Three-word Phrases Bible of China》
Ability to Grow	"We have the internal resources to move beyond the basic coping level as well as the ability to harness our external resources in order to grow (Banmen, 2008b, P.3)."	"As Heaven's movement is ever vigorous, so could people ceaselessly strive and grow" 《The Book of Change》

Role of the Family	"The family system is the basic learning and living unit and, as such, needs to be included directly or indirectly in all therapy (Banmen, 2008b, P.3)."	"Harmony in the family is the basis for success in any undertaking"---Famous Chinese Proverb
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Furthermore, “Congruence” (one of the overall therapy goals of the Satir Model), provides another wonderful aspect of compatibility with Chinese culture and tradition. It advocates a state of being as well as a type of quality communication which takes into account the consideration self, others, and the context of the communication. Hence, at the BEING level, Chinese cultural tradition and the Satir Model have been closely connected, constituting the basis for the adaptation of the Satir Model in China, although it is derived from the west.

The Context that Influences Mental Health of Chinese People

The prevalence of mental health problems in China has attracted more and more attention. As described in an article of Global Times on November 15, 2007: "The World Health Organization estimated that the number of people having mental health problems in China is about two hundred million to three hundred million and it is predicted that the burden caused by mental health problems will account for one fourth of the total illness burden in 2020." When he was interviewed by Global Times in 2007, Professor Chen Yanfang, the deputy director in the Chinese Society of Psychiatry (CSP), the deputy director in the Classification and Cure Committee of the World Society of Psychiatry, and the spokesperson in the Chinese Health Department, said it is estimated that over 30% of Chinese people have been affected by depression, over 30% by anxiety, and over 42% by insomnia. But despite these great social demands, seeking help from counseling services still has barriers (Global Time, 2007). The first is that having mental health problems is felt as a personal and social disgrace and people feel ashamed to seek help from counseling; the second is that sometimes the counselors' skills are disappointing; the third is that counseling services are relatively expensive, especially when it is not covered by the public health security system.

Although there is still a long way to go before counseling will be widely accepted, more and more people are beginning to seek help for parenting and adolescence problems. When I searched "parenting" and "counseling" together in Chinese in Google, there were 2.87 million results, and for "adolescence" and "counseling", there were 2.75 million results. Two possible reasons can be identified. First, parents are especially concerned for their children due to the birth control policy in China. Hence, parents are willing to pay for these counseling services. Second, teachers at school are

also willing to recommend to parents to seek help so that under-achievers at school can be helped in due course. The Satir Model, with its advantage of having the whole family included, becomes easier to be accepted under this context.

Despite the fact that China has adopted an open door policy for more than 30 years, Chinese culture and tradition still has a great influence on the Chinese people, particularly to their parenting, and for child and adolescent development (Lau, 1996; Bond, 1996; Yang, 1999). The following discussions offer to identify factors that might have an influence on child and adolescent development in the Chinese context.

1. "Modesty helps one to make progress, whereas conceit makes one lag behind."

This well-known proverb in China is to encourage people to be modest and not to boast so that they can do better and better. One observation in China is that Chinese people tend to be very humble in feelings of having pride in themselves. According to Sommer (1984), the Chinese counterpart to the word *pride* (*Jiao Ao*) has the connotation of Hubris, and Chinese people were found to be less likely than were Americans to judge pride as an emotion that they would like to experience (Russell & Yik, 1996). The Satir Model assumes that judgments of our feelings will create "feelings about feelings" and creates the debilitating experience of "I can't feel what I feel!" This becomes a basic restriction that underlies our felt limitations and rules about sensing and expressing ourselves. This is also where self-condemnation starts (Satir, Banmen, Gerber & Gamori, 1991, P. 62). Under this experiencing of self-condemnation, and strengthened by even modest requirements from parents and teachers, many Chinese children gradually establish a concave lens in front of themselves (Choi, 2008). "The reflection in [their] concave lens makes children suspect themselves, condemn themselves, undervalue themselves, and [they] may live in this shadow lifelong" (McKeen & Wong, 2007).

"Feelings" and feelings about what they are feeling does not exist independently without one's perceptions. According to Bond and Hwang's study (1986) on why the Chinese would hold a less positive self-concept than do Americans, the norm in Chinese societies for humility may lead to a less positive evaluation of the self (Bond, 1996, P256). A surprising case in contemporary China is that of a teacher who assigned students to do a weekly homework assignment to write down something sparkling about themselves, and as a result the students wrote more about their shortcomings than their virtues - and nearly one third of the students could not find anything sparkling about themselves at all (Wang, Chao & Zhang, 2002).

Under the process of modernization and globalization, the use of the "personal

concave lens” has been frequently criticized by researchers; and researchers have advocated changes in terms of parenting and one’s self-evaluation (Bond & Hwang, 1986; Yang, 1999; Lau, 1996; Bond, 1996; Wang, et al., 2002; Lian, 2005). However, a new tendency of parental boasting appeared, taken through the adults' convex lens, which can also do harm to their children's self esteem. The children’s reflection in the convex lens makes these children swell with conceit, and they either think that there's nothing to learn or mistrust their parents (McKeen & Wong, 2007).

In summation, some of the adult generation who were born in the 1970’s and before have grown up under this particular “concave lens effect.” They were socialized to learn to oppress feelings of self-pride, which was associated with a less positive self-evaluation.

2. "Failure is the mother of success."

This proverb is to encourage those who failed to learn from it so that they can do better next time. One of the applications of this proverb in China is seen to be associated with "Frustration Education" with particular Chinese cultural characteristics. According to the Encyclopedia of Psychology edited by International Union of Psychological Science (1984), "Frustration Education" focuses on individual differences on setting goals, making plans and playing social roles, and it emphasizes the utilization of circumstances and even changing the circumstances if necessary (Yang & Peng, 2004). The application of Frustration Education was found to be extreme and focused on error-finding but not on the lesson learned. Parents and teachers were found to take every chance of their children's failure to criticize their children (Wang et al., 2002) and even to deliberately create circumstances to make their children taste failure (Liao & Zhao, 2004).

"Constant [experiencing of] tasting failure can cause great negative emotions on adolescents, including but not limited to depression and anger, which make them feel inferior or to have an impulse for attacking, and in the worst cases, to lose interest in life itself"(Yang & Peng, 2004). Under the power of parental control (Wu, 1996) and to maintain obedience in filial piety (Yang, 1989; Saari, 1990; Wu, 1985), children have the tendency to adopt silence, negativity or passive resistance, sometimes even turning the aggression inward (Ho, 1996). The Satir Model assumes that "their (children’s) earlier experiences of the world had inspired inner rules for survival, and they are now acting accordingly" (Satir et al., 1991, P. 30). Some of the adult generation, who had such experiences in their childhood, adopt old, incongruent coping styles such as blaming, placating, being super-reasonable and/or irrelevant under stress.

3. "Be strict to myself, be kind to others."

This proverb expresses the kind nature of Chinese people and represents one of traditional Chinese moral merits. It fits social harmony so well that it has been enthusiastically promoted by the whole society. There is no doubt that kindness is good, however, the first part of this proverb implies a high level of self-monitoring among Chinese people from a psychological point of view. A number of commentators (Hoosain, 1986; Yang, 1992) have pointed out to the large degree of self-monitoring in Chinese society, where people strive to change their behavior in accordance with the situation in which they find themselves. According to Yang (1992), this avoidance of being emotionally authentic may be attempted largely to avoid criticism and win approval by fitting in with others (Goodwin & Tang, 1996). But what is actually happening when hoping to be seen well by other people's vision? The Satir Model offers that

"When we judge ourselves in terms of conforming and obeying, we often feel anxious...In extreme situations, when people are being pushed to do and be something else, they might just give up and start feeling depressed... The tyranny of this push to conform is so strong that most people start early in life to live according to others' expectations. We bypass---and finally ignore---ourselves. Even though the tyranny hardly ever produces total conformity, we usually feel awful, discount or devalue our feelings, and gradually lose our identity" (Satir et al., 1991, PP. 9-10).

This allows us a glance in the inside world of many highly self-monitoring Chinese people who are experiencing inside conflicts and often feel unsatisfied with themselves. Actually, this constitutes an imbalance within oneself, with others and with the situational context, as emphasized in the Satir Model. Without a balance of "self, others and context," it is easy for people to adopt incongruent coping strategies and then acquire associated mental health problems.

4. "Han Xu"----Implicit communication and indirect expression of emotions

The Chinese phrases "*Han Xu*" refers to a mode of communication (both verbal and nonverbal), which is contained, reserved, implicit and indirect. "*Han Xu*" is considered a social rule in Chinese culture (Yu & Gu, 1990). By not showing joy, sadness, or anger, the Chinese avoid imposing their feelings on others and thereby maintain harmony (Bond, 1993; Bond & Hwang, 1986). The expectation of retaining harmony poses requirements for many Chinese people to ignore or oppress their feelings. As a result, internal conflicts or bad feelings about self are created under the pressure of incongruence, and this gap becomes enlarged in interpersonal

relationships. The Satir Model assumes that:

"Unexpressed anger at someone else, for instance, may result in feeling horrible about ourselves and treating ourselves badly. And if we meet someone who also denies his or her anger, we may find ourselves speaking politely on superficial level while we battle each other on an unspoken level through our respectively denied parts" (Satir et al., 1991, P. 179).

Ignored or oppressed feelings are actually realistic, therefore they usually emerge more powerful later on. Because of the oppression or ignorance, anger may come along.

"The parts we decide we should not express eventually surface in devious, often destructive way. This usually entails emotional or physical pain, or both." (Satir et al., 1991, P. 179)

"*Han Xu*" applies not only to how to repress negative emotions, but also the positive emotions such as love, concern, and appreciation. According to Potter's research in villages in mainland China (1988), sharing emotions was not a sign of expressing intimacy between individuals. A father who expressed affection for a son was thought to invite a breakdown of the proper respect and obedience owed the elder by the younger. Rather than affirming the social structure, love was seen to endanger it (Bond, 1996, P. 171). The traditional rearing style's influence, such as "Beating represents intimacy, blaming means love" and "Spare your stick, spoil your Kid" has meant that love and care are often turned into requests and orders, and expectations are always expressed in a blaming way (Jiao, 2007; Lei, 2008). The Satir Model assumes that

"Their (parents') respective survival patterns often prevent the messages from being received as intended. As children, we may have often misinterpreted our parents' messages, especially if these communications sounded like orders without any explanations" (Satir et al., 1991, P. 56).

"If something leads us to question whether mutual love and trust really exist, our survival responses automatically come into play" (Satir et al., 1991, P. 35). Thus, problems emerge in lots of parent-children relationships and in couple relationships, which are generated accordingly.

In sum, Chinese culture and tradition has been affecting Chinese people consciously and/or unconsciously in their socialization process. The above cultural sayings exemplify four features (e.g., being modest, error finding, self-monitoring and the indirect expression of emotions) which also have their positive merits. However,

when they go the extreme in the way they are practiced in families and societies, people are not able to connect with their life energies nor to develop their full potential. Eventually, some may develop coping behaviors that we can associate with mental health problems.

The Satir Model has brought benefit to a great number of people in over 20 countries on five continents since the 1960s, because it has shown dramatic compatibility with diversified cultures. As discussed above, The Satir Model's basic beliefs are consistent with Chinese traditional values and can be applied in a Chinese context (Tang, 2009). The therapy techniques have been developed according to its deep understanding and its positive attitude towards human-beings.

Applying Satir Model – Case Illustration

Case background

The author conducted 20 therapy sessions for 16 clients using the Satir Model. Among the 16 clients, five are male and 11 female. Ten of them are at an age between 30 and 40; four of them between 40 and 50, and another two are in their twenties and fifties respectively. Concerning their occupation, five are senior enterprise employees, three are teachers, two are private business owners, two are housewives, and the other four are government officials; a policeman, a nurse and a student quitting from high school, respectively. Demographic characteristics and presenting problems are listed in Table 2.

Table 2:

Demographic characteristics and presenting problems of the clients

Client	Age	Gender	Family Background	Occupation	Presenting problems
Client 1	30-40	female	Married, with a 8 – year-old son	Private business owner	Losing interest in work, even in life
Client 2	50-60	female	Married, with an adult son	High school teacher	Family conflicts with husband and her son
Client 3	40-50	female	Married, with a 24-year-old son	High school teacher	Conflicts with her son after her son quit from college study
Client 4	30-40	female	Single, her father	Senior enterprise	Being unable to get

			died in her childhood	employee	married
Client 5	40-50	male	Married, with a 12-year-old son	College teacher	Being anxious and perplexed about his future life
Client 6	40-50	female	Married, with a son in middle school	Government official	Being troubled by extra-marital affairs
Client 7	30-40	female	Divorced, living with parents	Nurse	Being troubled by anxiety and unable to get married
Client 8	30-40	female	Married, without children	Housewife	Being anxious in relationships and always feeling unsafe
Client 9	30-40	female	Single	Resigned Senior enterprise employee	Being depressed
Client 10	30-40	female	Married, with a 6-year-old daughter and a 3-year-old son	Housewife	Being anxious in relationship with her daughter
Client 11	30-40	male	Married, with a 6-month-old son	Private business owner	Family conflicts with parents, in-laws, and wife
Client 12	40-50	male	Married, with a 8-year-old son	Policeman	Being unable to control anger, and aggressive
Client 13	30-40	male	Married, without children	Senior enterprise employee	Not knowing what he wants to do for work
Client 14	30-40	male	Married, with a 4-year-old daughter	Senior enterprise employee	Conflicts with wife, parents, colleagues and supervisor
Client 15	30-40	female	Married, with a 4-year-old daughter	Senior enterprise employee	Being troubled by suppressed emotions and dares not to cry

Client 16	20-30	female	Single	Drop-out student from high school	Severe depression
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Case conceptualization

Under the deep influence of Chinese traditional cultures and morals, the inner worlds of Chinese people are quite complicated and may be often conflicted. However, the iceberg metaphor of the Satir Model offers an explicit description of their inside world. It allows therapists to perceive what is happening in their clients' deeper inner worlds, despite what the outside behaviors or problems are. *Congruence* is another useful concept in estimating why the problem has become a problem: Can the clients touch and accept all their feelings inside? Do they understand their deeper yearnings inside and express or fulfill their yearnings in a direct way? Can they connect with their life energy?

Table 3 listed three observations on the 16 clients' inner worlds with the help of both the iceberg metaphor and *congruence*:

Table 3
Observations on the 16 clients' inside worlds

Common observations	Observation 1 Low self-esteem	Observation 2 High expectation towards self	Observation 3 Incongruence in feeling expression	
Possible influencing Chinese culture and tradition	Concave lens effect and misuse of "Failure is the mother of success"	High level of self-monitoring in compliance with "Being strict to myself"	Indirect expression of emotions	
Number of clients suffering from this	10/16 clients	11/16 clients	8/16 clients	
Typical iceberg	Behavior Disregard or even give up themselves	Used to criticize others or perfectionism	Love and care expressed in a demanding way. Hurt and fear expressed in a blaming way	
	Coping Blaming	Super-reasonable /blaming	Super-reasonable /blaming	
	Feelings Anxiety, anger	Anxiety, anger	Hurt, fear, anger	
	Feelings about feelings Resentment	Resentment	Ashamed and/or resentment	
	Perceptions I am not good enough. Others are always ready to find errors in me.	Everyone should be strict to himself/herself	Expressing feelings directly is dangerous or inadequate	
	Expectations I should do better so that others could be satisfied with me.	I should meet my inner standards and so should others	I should not express feelings directly and others should understand me	
	Yearnings Being validated, accepted and appreciated	Being validated and accepted	Being loved, accepted, understood and connected	
	Self I am not good	I am not good	I am not good	
	Impacts on meta-goals	Low self-esteem; Incongruent coping; No choice;	No choice; for feelings	Lack of responsibility

The effectiveness of therapy using the Satir Model to facilitate inner transformation

The author, in her role as therapist, conducted individual counseling for these 16 clients using the Satir Model. The result is that after therapy, each seemed more hopeful, powerful, relaxed, and realized that they had more choices. This reflects the

four basic universal, or meta-goals, of the Satir Model: Responsibility, Better choice making, Self-esteem, and Congruence (Banmen, 2008a, P. 4).

In the 20 therapy sessions, several of the Satir Model's therapeutic beliefs and techniques were proved to be effective in promoting change-directed inner transformation.

1. Use of self to model self-esteem and self-value.

"Low self worth meant that a person would undervalue his or her own thoughts, feelings, wants and the like, and overvalue those of others. The resources inherent in these parts of a person would therefore be lost and symptoms would arise...As Satir believed that each human being had what they needed in terms of resources, the goal of therapy therefore is to assist the client to access what is already there (Banman, 2008a, P. 125) ."

As previously mentioned, some people have been influenced by the Concave lens effect and under the negative influence of misuse of the Chinese proverb: "Failure is the mother of success." As a result, their self worth was inevitably undervalued. The author used herself as an example, to offer to her clients the experience of recognizing the beauty of themselves and their worth of being respected, appreciated and loved. When they experienced this, it was quite different from their self images, and they felt peaceful, joyful, harmonious and strong. These beautiful feelings drove them to see themselves in a positive, new way. After they touched the positive aspect of their inner self and decided to keep contact with their self, many symptoms such as anxiety and anger disappeared naturally.

Client A was selected to illustrate how use of the self of the therapist enhanced the self-esteem of the client. Client A is a policeman over 40 years old. The reason he came to therapy was that he was facing many hurts; including marriage problems, parent-child relationship issues and interpersonal relationship problems. In the first session, the therapist found that he felt so bad about himself that he even gave up on living for himself for quite a long time. One of the therapeutic goals was to help him connect with his life energy and enhance his self-esteem:

C: (Client): I feel bored of myself and sometimes angry with myself.

T: (Therapist): (The author leaned forward and looked into his eyes, saying in a tone of appreciation) Oh? But you let me know in such a short time that you have at least 5 beautiful resources.

C: (unused to eye contact, surprised) Impossible!

T: You treat your son so well that no matter how difficult it is, you still keep him along with you. It's you who tell me that you are such a caring person with plenty of love.

C: ...En [yes], I have never thought of it this way.

T: After only a short period of time in parenting class, you have made such great progress on the relationship with your son. It tells me that you are a man of wisdom.

C: (*took a deep breath, the body seemed relaxed a little*) That's true.

T: You said that you felt so bad when you speak straightforwardly in your working environment. It's telling me that you are genuine and brave. Sometimes everyone wants to speak straightforwardly, but only a few have the courage to do so.

C: Hey hey, that's the truth.

T: (*seriously*) You deserve my appreciation and respect.

C: (*tears sparkling in his eyes*) ...

T: Seeing all these resources inside of you, how do you feel right now?

C: I have never thought of it this way. I'm feeling good now.

T: Do you think you deserve to feel the love and respect for yourself?

C: ...En [Yes].

When the author met him for the second session, he looked more vigorous and it seemed easier for him to talk about his advantages. He began to talk about how to solve problems in a positive way. As for the rest of the nine clients with undervalued self-images, they all felt more confident and powerful to face and solve problems after experiencing a contact with their positive life energy.

2. Use a metaphor as a safeguard to protect the value of oneself from the high expectations that are made towards oneself.

"Another universal part is the inner judge who says, "You shouldn't have done that." Our judge and "shoulds" often go together. Satir reminded us that we can elect our own judges. We can specify the kind of judge that will help monitor what we are doing and support what we do. Most of us have a critical, censoring judge. We each need to develop our judge as a friend (Satir et al., 1991, P. 181). "

With the tool of sculpture and metaphor, the therapist helped the clients to regain control on their inner judge. They could decide when and how their inner judge would

supervise themselves. And the therapist helped them to develop an inside safeguard part which supported them all the time. After regaining the sense of mastery to judge and developing a safeguard part, the clients felt more powerful, relaxed and much safer.

Client B is selected to illustrate the use of sculpture and metaphor to create choice and sense of mastery. Client B is a housewife who is over 30 years of age, with one daughter and one son. The reason she came for therapy was that she often felt anxious and her relationship with her daughter was not very good. While exploring her iceberg, the client found that the pressure of being perfect influenced her in a dramatic way. The therapeutic goals were to regain the control on her inner judge and to improve her self-esteem:

C: I know that I should treat my daughter in a patient way, but sometimes I was not able to do so. Then, I felt anxious.

T: When you treated your daughter not in the way you expected, how did you think of yourself?

C: I was not good. I should treat her patiently and worried why was I unable to do so.

T: When you think in this way, what kind of feelings do you have?

C: Guilty, ashamed, and anxious.

T: When you have these kind of feelings, what did you do ?

C: I went out of control, lost my temper.

T: It sounds that you have an inner judge who is always judging you and he can control your emotions as well.

C: Yes, that is the case. If I can not meet his standards, I will feel anxious.

T: How about taking back the control from him? You can let him be on duty, but only according to your own will. You can have no more control from him.

C: It sounds good. But it's rather difficult since it is nearly an automatic reaction.

T: How about developing a safeguard inside your heart? He knows the beauty of you and the good qualities of you. When you meet some problems, the safeguard will remind you that you are so good and so beautiful. With the support from him, you can solve those problems peacefully (Sculpturing with candle, glasses and toys on the table).

*C: ...En, yes. I **am** good and beautiful. I'm now just facing some problems, I can solve them.*

T: How do you feel right now?

C: Relaxed, peaceful, without anxiety.

At the end of this session, the client expressed that it was so beautiful to experience being relaxed and peaceful that she decided to think about the safeguard more often. She also felt confident to deal with the relationship with her daughter. The safeguard metaphor also loosened the pressure of perfection on the rest of the similarly effected ten clients.

3. Exploring one's iceberg and coping stances to enhance congruence

Related Satir belief ---

"Congruence refers to a state of being as well as a quality of communicating. At the first of its three levels, congruence entails acknowledging and accepting our inner experiences (sensations, interpretations, and consequent feelings about those feelings) and being able to express them. Congruence at Level 2 involves listening to our perceptions and expectations, and translating those into a responsible pattern of meeting our needs by tapping our yearnings. At level 3, we move into harmony with our spiritual essence, or what Satir called the universal life force (Satir et al., 1991, P. 84)."

Through exploring their iceberg, the author helped clients to know what they really wanted and felt when exhibiting different kinds of behaviors. Clients experienced their power of congruence with help from the author/therapist and they saw the possibility of choosing a new way of communicating with people around them. This new way of being congruent can reduce conflicts and misunderstandings among people and make them experience more love and sincerity.

Client C is selected to illustrate how **congruence** could be encouraged by exploring their internal iceberg and the use of self of the therapist. Client C is a nurse who is over 30 years old. She had experienced a failed marriage. The reason she came to therapy was that she felt it difficult to want to engage into another marriage. During the therapy process, the author found that she was used to suppressing her feelings and would later release her anger through blaming others. One of the therapeutic goals was to let her see other choices and for her to be congruent:

C: In my previous marriage, I found that my husband had affairs with other women,

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but I said nothing because I wanted to maintain this marriage. But I would quarreled with him for other reasons, later on.

T: When you found this fact, how did you feel?

C: (tears came out) Hurt, sad.

T: Any other feelings?

C: Anger.

T: When you had such feelings, what did you do?

C: I could not tell others, and my only way was to suppress the feelings. Then, I could get another opportunity to quarrel with him later on, to release my anger.

T: Why could you not tell others?

C: ...Oh...My mother told me that a woman should be tolerant so that the marriage could be maintained. She was always unhappy.

T: Are you willing to be different?

C: I want to, but I don't know how to do that.

T: What did you want from him?

C: Love me in the way I wished and be loyal to me.

T: Did you ever tell him all these words?

C: No. I thought he should have already known that.

T: It sounds like he rarely heard directly from you what you really wanted and felt.

C: ...Not nearly.

T: If you tell him what you really wanted and felt instead of blaming him, what would have happened?

C: ...

T: Like this (the author took her hands and looked sincerely into her eyes): "I was really sad and feeling hurt. I love you. I hope we are loyal to each other."

How do you feel with me saying this to you?

C: ... (tears came out) touched. But how can I say this? Won't you feel that I am vulnerable?

T: I feel much closer to you now, don't you think so?

C: (Looking at the author's eyes and holding the author's hands) En, yes.

T: Is there any suppressed anger right now ?

C: No. I never thought I could communicate in this way.

T: How do you feel right now ?

C: More relaxed and alive. I feel excited about this new way of communicating, which brings about comfort to all. I feel more confident now.

The pressure of perfection on the client was also handled in this session. At the end of this session, she was very excited and said that nearly two-thirds of her problems had been solved. She was studying psychology at that time. According to what she had learned, she believed that only in the long term could therapy be effective. However, she was amazed by the Satir model, which made her experience a transformation in only one session. When the author met her for the second session one week later, she looked more natural, relaxed and confident. She told the author that she felt relaxed during the last week and solved a problem with her present boyfriend satisfactorily, in the new “congruent” way. As for the rest of the seven clients facing analogous conflicts, their confidence to deal with problems was raised after they experienced this new choice of being congruent.

In addition to the above mentioned beliefs and techniques, much of the transforming process for the clients was in taking responsibility for their whole inner icebergs, especially their feelings and also for the change of family rules. One thing to again emphasize is the use of self. The author found that the most crucial factor in all sessions was the use of the self of the therapist, which meant that I connected my own life energy of BEING and used this to connect with my clients' life energies. At this level, the transformational change toward BEING was achieved. Deep connection between people is quite unfamiliar to the Chinese, who have an implicit tradition. However, it is also this unfamiliarity that makes the use of self more powerful.

Conclusion

"The problem is not the problem; coping is the problem."-Virginia Satir. Although the troubles and problems of these 16 clients were quite different, their common psychological characteristics can be conceptualized in a deeper way through the Sair Model. The model, with its advantage of having shared values with Chinese culture and tradition, was proven to be effective in promoting the positive transformational changes of 16 clients in a short period of time by the use of many its impressive techniques. All clients became more responsible and congruent, they became better choice makers, and each had higher self-esteem to differing degrees. This brought

about inner peace, harmony, joy and power to them. From these experiences, the author found that the basis of the effectiveness of the Satir Model is its deep understanding of human beings and a lot to the transforming process of the clients genuine love for them.

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