The Mission Statement

Introduction

A mission statement is used as a focal point when beginning a session using spatial techniques. It is a statement written on a piece of paper and placed somewhere in the room. The client then stands in a position in respect to the mission statement.

The statement can be anything, it doesn't really matter. It can be a drawing or written statement that represents or symbolises the clients problem, goal, wish or need. The client may also choose an object in the room if that is more appropriate.

The Process

Here follows a breakdown of each stage of the process.

Choosing What to Write

To help the client choose what to write, ask them:

- "What do you want?" or
- "Why did you come here?"

Sometimes they don't know. If they don't, ask them to put on the paper what the paper wants to have put on it, or write something that (seemingly) has no relevance to them at all. This process takes the responsibility away from the client by dissociating them from having to come up with something.

The Paper

One important aspect of the mission statement is also in the size of the paper, have a selection of sizes for the client to choose from, say 'Post-it' note up to flipchart/easel pad size, as the scale of the mission statement is important. Considering that some problems are bigger than others. It might be written in large letters or it might be so small that it's almost impossible to see it.

Placing the Statement

Once the mission statement has been completed, it is placed in space.

The questions a facilitator may use for this are:

- "Place that where it needs to go." or
- "Place that where it would like to go." or
- "Place that where you would like it to go."

The Clients Space

After the mission statement is placed in space, the client is asked to place themselves in relation to the mission statement. The facilitator may ask:

- “Now, place yourself where you would like to be in relation to that.”

Placing the statement correctly is as significant as having the client find out where to stand. The person may choose to have their back to it or they may even sit on. Some will have it so far away that they have it in the next room, as if it’s something they could never reach, and others will have it just out of reach. Some may stand on it and then realise that it isn’t really that close to them.

The mere act of processing these thoughts and making these decisions about the mission statement is a complete microcosm of how a person lives their life. All of their issues can come up in this one simple act.

Knowing When You're Done

A particular end point will be reached when the client is in just the right space and the statement is in just the right space. To get to this point, a process called “The Clean Set-up” is used.

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Last update: **24/09/2017 22:06**