

Scheduling the Un-Scheduled

Introduction

When a client lives and exists within their problem space, they are at risk of having the problem reinforced either from the environment or from the structure of the problem itself. The problem becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. We are living in its pattern and therefore we are living and breathing proof of its truth, however we are not the pattern itself!

Reinforcement

Reinforcement literally means to 'add force to, intensify'. There are two types of reinforcement, positive and negative, we could be reinforcing the problem state or reinforcing the expansion of the problem domain into the potential space. We will briefly look at un-scheduled and scheduled reinforcement.

Un-Scheduled Reinforcement brings Oppression

It is considered that the un-scheduled nature of problems, i.e. when we are not sure when the problem will come again, as it has an intermittent nature, brings about the intensification of the problem state, sometimes to very undesirable ends. We can live in fear of the thought of the symptoms appearing, and not the symptoms themselves, i.e. if I don't drink, I will remember the pain, feel depressed and want to hurt myself.

Scheduled Reinforcement brings Relief

Running an iterative process on the problem, allows time, structure and process to enter into the problem domain. It is during this stage that the problem starts to give up its hold on its boundaries, and as they diminish / expand outwards, new information leaks in offering potential solutions.

The old pattern or process cannot exist alongside the structured scheduled steps the client is experiencing. Also the use of drawing and writing down the answers, shows the new knowledge emerging which cuts through the old linguistic, verbal patterns of the client, and therefore begins opening the door to the '[Potential Space](#)' for the client.

David Grove on Scheduling

A story David shared with me to explain these concepts, describes two experiments on chickens:

In the first experiment, when the chickens pecked for food they were randomly shocked (unscheduled); the chickens eventually stopped pecking for food and died. The same experiment was performed again. This time, however, the chickens were shocked every 4th time they pecked

(scheduled). The chickens continued to eat the food and, strangely enough it seemed that they could live with the scheduled shock, even though the shock was more frequent than the random shocking.

As well as the repetitive delivery of the questions, the facilitators' use of rhythm assists the client in scheduling their world, and developing a process that can take them out of their world.

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