Decision Making- challenges for professionals and clients

Professional Development Foundation
Sharing our passion for learning

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Developing your own framework

- The aim of this seminar is to suggest that we need address the complexities involved in decision making and have a clear model that enables us to address issues in professional practice. Based on three areas:

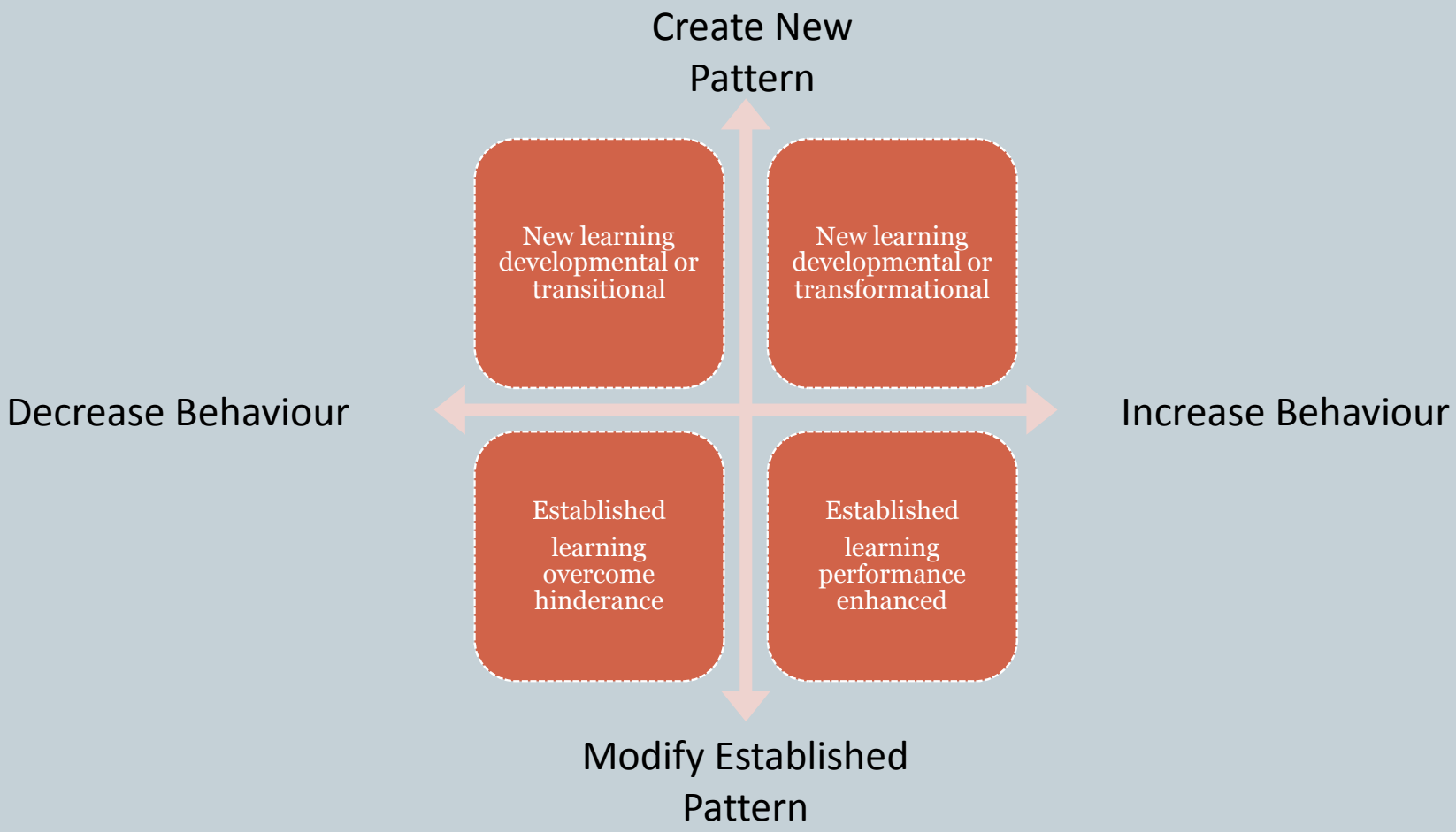
  We need:

  - A clear Mission (Purpose)
    - That meets the situation we face
  - A framework of to understands underlying Attitudes (Perspectives)
    - That are capable of informing our approach
  - A respectful Process for working
    - That enables us to act effectively
- A Decision MAP helps us to create a compelling story of value to our clients. by understanding what will appeal to clients.
- Combining your own understanding of your work and the literature on, decisions and story telling provides a useful way to MAP our decsions.

Lets look at my starting point by 1975….

- The Purpose of the service we provided from 1975 was to assist children seen as impossible to stay in and thrive in school. This involved working with them but also coaching teachers, parents and other professionals to manage their own behaviour.
- The Perspectives we drew upon were mostly behavioural and increasingly cognitive and other systems based theory from sociology – with a value base in humanistic psychology.
- The Process we used was based on five phases, DEFINE - Define the "Shared Concern", Explore features of influence, Formulate a shared understanding (co construct a story and a new story), Intervene at Personal, Interpersonal and Systems levels, Evaluate and sustain progress.
- In terms of a decision model we looked at four types of learning.

What type of learning?



However this approach was based on certain assumptions

- Traditionally – we think of this as based in rationality
  - Codified knowledge base (which we apply logically)
  - Accuracy is equated with responsibility (O'Donohue and Henderson, 1999)
  - We have protocols for structured decision making
  - We can trace cause effect relationships (mainly linear)
  - Behaviours are sequentially and functionally related
- And this served us very well
  - We created a highly effective service for our clients
  - This service was widely replicated
  - Change was maintained
  - Increasingly we were asked to coach others in different industries and it worked for them – so the approach was generalisable.

Learning from practice about decision making

- What was the most useful experience of making tough decisions you ever had that is based in these assumptions? (Could be negative or positive.)
- What did you learn from that?
- How did that help your journey to becoming the practitioner you want to be?
- What frameworks in practice conform to such assumptions?

What does the research on decision making tell us?

- Traditionally – we think of this as based in rationality
  - Codified knowledge base (which we apply logically)
  - Accuracy is equated with responsibility (O'Donohue and Henderson, 1999)
  - We have protocols for structured decision making
  - We can trace cause effect relationships (mainly linear)
  - Behaviours are sequentially and functionally related
- This came under increasing assault
  - Actuarial based decisions are more accurate than clinical ones (Meehl, 1997)
  - Practitioners have scant awareness of the factors that influence their judgements, O'Donohue and Henderson's (1990)
  - Demand for consumer voice and client autonomy (Miller and Lane, 1993)
  - Clients may be more expert than the professional (Lane and Corrie, 2012)
  - The gaps in what we need to learn tend to outweigh what we have learned so far, even for very experienced practitioners. (Leahy, 2003)
  - Self deception in decisions – we think we are better than we are. (Bachkirova, 2012)
  - Professionals along with scientists are not accurate decision makers (Sterman, 1994)
    - It is part of the human condition

What gets in the way?

- In some fields this has led to increased demand to use evidence based practice only, so what's wrong?
- Co-variation – we tend to underestimate linkages.
- Preconceived notion of client need which warp our use of incoming data (filtered through our lens)
- We infer relationships that do not exist.
- We are overconfident in our judgements and capacity to influence change
- We suffer from hindsight bias – all things look like patterns after the event.
  - Arkes, 1981, O'Donohue and Henderson, 1999

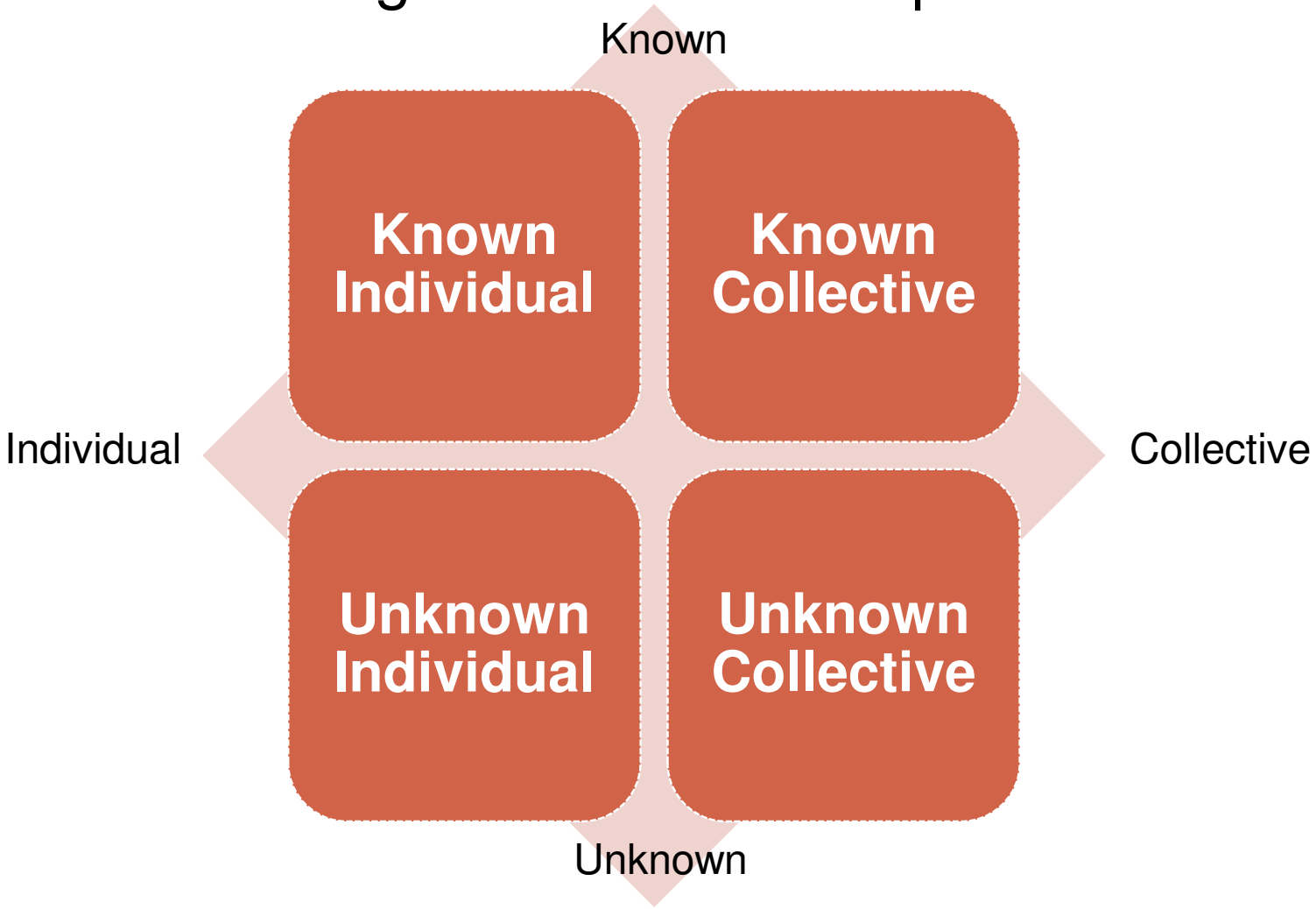
What can we do about it – perhaps create protocols that address these areas?

- Learn to use hueristics to our advantge
  - Check we have…. Not relied on what is immediately available in memory, over categorised people/behaviours based on similarity to prototype, not anchored our beliefs rather than disconfirmed them, not sought information to confirm our beliefs, not assumed relationships that do not exist (illusion). (Kahneman, Slovic, Tversky, 1982)
- Understand and apply Attribution theory
  - Check we have…. considered internal and external, stable and variable causes rather than jump to one or the other – we each have an attribution bias so we need to test this. (Fosterling 1988, Brewin, 1989)
    - What checking systems do you have or could develop?

And….

- Understand cognitive distortions, use schema
  - Overgeneralising from limited data
  - Seeing things in dichotomous terms – all or nothing, for/against
  - Exaggerating greatly the significance of an event (catastrophising)
  - Labelling – then acting as if the label is always true
  - Believing something is true because it feels true – emotional reasoning (Corrie, 2009)
- However, the assumptions about rationality and linearity still apply – what if those cannot be sustained, what if the world is more complex than our protocol implies and we need to:
  - Cope with complexity, confusion and conflicting perspectives,
  - Accept anomalies in the data available,
  - Take risks – if we cannot know for sure it will work (Stice, 1987)
- Has this ever applied to your decision making – when?

Working in four decision quadrants



In which quadrant do you primarily work?

Where does your work mainly sit? What do you draw upon to aid decisions?

Quadrant 1. Known and Individual –

We are seekers after an individual truth to decide what will work for this client in this context. We can draw upon theory, evidence or hypothesis testing.

Quadrant 2. Known and Collective

We can draw upon a collective understanding of the client's issues; we have an evidence-base to enable us to structure our decisions. The client is offered a predetermined coaching/other intervention – this is what we use here, so.....

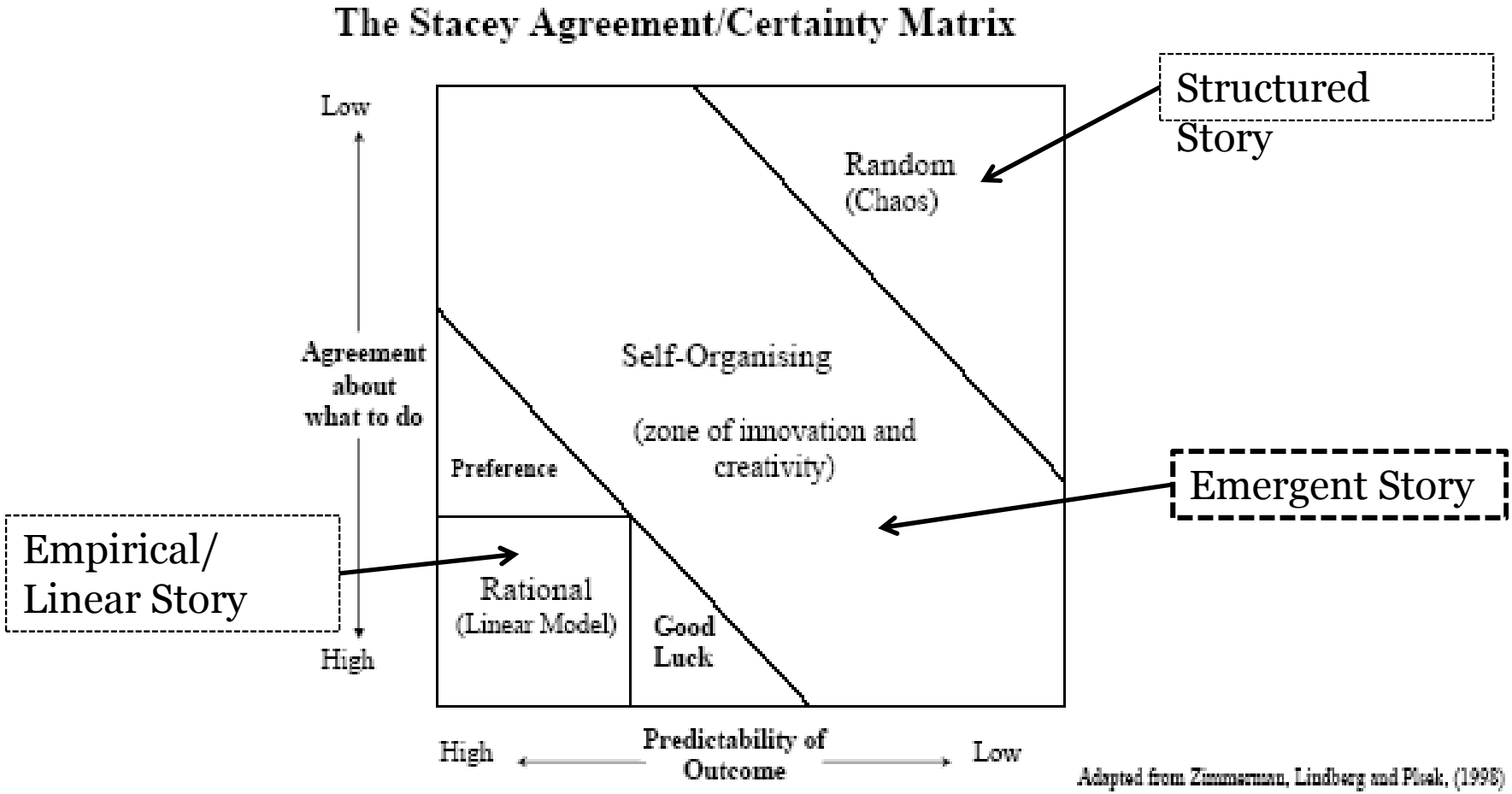
Quadrant 4. Unknown and Individual

We are faced with an individual journey into the unknown; neither client nor practitioner knows what might be appropriate, how (or if) to generate change.

Quadrant 3. Unknown and Collective

We are faced with a collective need or competing needs in a social system with no agreed understanding or knowledge-base on which to draw; we cannot agree what to do for the best.

Why might this be necessary in decision making?



Perhaps we need to go deeper and wider

- Think differently – experiment with ideas and behaviours so new possibilities emerge
  - de Bono, Six Thinking Hats, Kline, Time to Think, de Shazer, Solution Focussed, Fransella, 180 Role Reversal……
- Think Wider – see the world through a wider angle lens that goes beyond personal models
  - Wilbur, Integral, Kolb, ways of grasping and transforming experience, Chapman, Integrated Experiential….. etc
- Think deeper – go within self to the implicational level
  - Gendlin, Felt Sense, Tesdale, Implicational level, Bruner, Narrative, Gunaratana, Mindfulness, Scharmer, Presence……
- Think with more complexity – see the world as interconnected and non linear
  - Cavanagh and Lane, professional spaces, Corrie and Lane, story structures, Stacey, complex responsive processes……

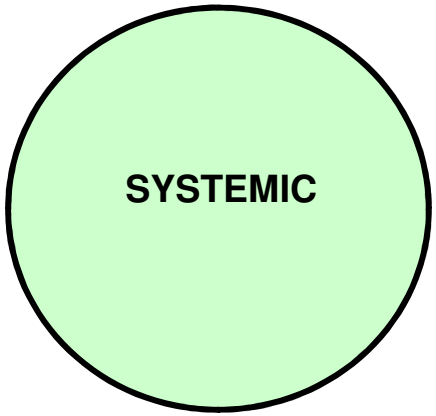
Creating a Decision MAP
What sits within the framework?

- What is the fundamental purpose of your practice - Mission?
  - What is the purpose in working with this client or in this role?
  - Who is or needs to be involved and what are the expectations?
  - What are the questions, concerns, solutions we need to explore?
  - What is the wider context that will influence the work and gives it
  - meaning
- All of these create the system boundaries for the work, consider:
  - Is the knowledge base on which you rely, known, unknown or unknowable?
  - Is it individual (personal to us or client) or a collective understanding?

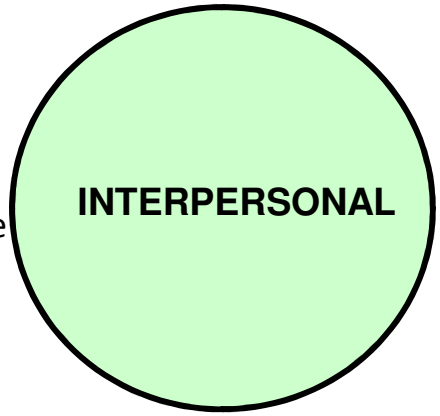
Creating a Decision MAP
What sits within the framework?

- What Attitudes (perspectives) influence your decisions?
  - Beliefs (self, others, change)
  - Models (personal, interpersonal, systemic)
  - Meaning (library of scripts, values and ethics)
  - Approach to evidence or science
- What perspectives do you use?
- What perspectives are excluded with what implications for the story your client tries to tell?

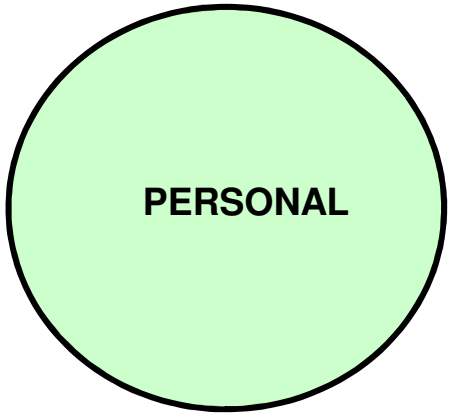
Fields of Vision – perspectives on change



- **We**
- Organisations/Community
- Natural groupings eg family,
- Client in relation to multiple others
- Journey of client in systemic coaching relationships
- Social determinism – we, not I or you
- New Science/Complexity Theory



- **You and Me**
- Interpersonal process
- Contingent process
- Multiple worlds
- Discursive Narrative subject as a position within a discourse
- Eco-systemic
- You and me – multiple selves vary by context



- **I**
- Models of Self – I
- Cognitive
- Humanistic
- Growth, skills, performance, development

What can we do that makes a difference?

- **We work with a modern scientist practitioner model that deals with the complexity people face within organisations, communities, as individuals and in groups.**
- **If we can call upon four modes of knowledge:**
  - Scientific
    - Not just the empirical (correct ways of gathering data, value free, setting free,) but different forms of scientific philosophy and consequently of enquiry
  - Technical rational
    - beyond setting, divested of practice knowledge, evidence base? (What works agenda, manualised, best practice, **EBT/M/P**)
  - Reflective
    - practice as deliberative action based on reflection within specific context. (Multiple forms)
  - Critical deconstruction
    - to challenge existing dominant stories.
- **Then we can legitimately look in more detail at the stories our clients tell us and those we tell about our practice.**

Adapted from Gibbons, and Scott et. al. (see Lane and Corrie, 2006)

Meaning (scripts and influence)

- Library of accepted scripts
  - What are scripts?
  - Whose scripts?
  - Why scripts?
    - Meaning as part of a script
    - Scripts provide guidance
    - Scripts provide boundaries
  - Where do scripts come from?
    - For you
    - For the client
    - For significant others (individuals, groups, entities)

Levels of influence

Local influences (that is, belief systems, values, ethics, priorities and processes operating internally to any single employing organization or service setting, training scheme, corporate structure or governing professional body).

National influences (for example, the ideology of the political party in power that informs policy development and shapes public expectation; the state of the economy; broader social, cultural and political priorities and the prevailing views of human nature dominant within society).

Global influences (international trends in welfare or the delivery of health and social care; concerns affecting the global community including wider social, political and economic factors).

Working with the stories we tell and enabling our clients to tell their stories.

- We can work with our clients to re-vision:
  - Our Mission – what we agree with our client as the purpose of the encounter between us – where are we going and why. (negotiated identity)
  - Our Attitude – what informs our work – what perspectives can inform the journey we agree to undertake. (what evidence can we use)
  - Our Process – what happens when we work – what different processes are most appropriate given our purpose and the perspectives that inform it in order to most effectively undertake our journey.
  - So as long as we see science as it is currently practised and recognise that to be professional involves more than technical application but includes emerging identify – we have a version of professionalism that moves beyond applying research/techniques to practice towards creating a compelling story based on negotiated practice.

What sits within the framework?

What process do you use?

- What we do (what happens – what potential if facilitated)
- Many roads can lead to Rome
  - Sometimes linear, often non linear
    - Empirical/linear Story
    - Emergent Story
    - Structured Story

Think of a recent decision you made with a client….

- What was the decision you needed to make – why?
- Through which perspective did you view it, personal, interpersonal, systemic?
- What did you gain and lose by this choice?
- Whose agenda was served?
- Who and what shaped the decision you made?
- What was most influential in shaping the decision?
- What was least influential in shaping the decision?
- Who benefitted who lost out?
- What values, beliefs, intentions underpinned it?
- What might have been enabled by a different stance?

IBM Global Study of 1,500 leaders (2010)

1. The world's private and public sector leaders believe that a rapid escalation of 'complexity' is the biggest challenge confronting them. They expect it to continue , indeed, to accelerate in the coming years.

2. They are equally clear that their enterprises today are not equipped to cope effectively with this complexity in the global environment.

3. Finally, they identify 'creativity' as the single most important leadership competency for enterprises seeking a path through this complexity.

So, how are these objectives different than CEOs' past aspirations, now that they've identified escalating complexity as their greatest challenge in the new economic environment?

Previously, CEOs recognised the need for business model innovation, but today they are struggling to find the requisite creative leadership to produce such innovation.

In the past, they told us they needed to be closer to customers; today they need to go much further and bring customers inside their organisations.

If we are to address this we need to approach our decision making in ways that are sufficient for the world we face – traditional linear thinking will not suffice.

Summary

- A model can assist with telling more effective practice stories:
  - But you need to be clear on your
    - Mission
    - Attitudes
    - Process
    - And it needs to conform with cultural story telling traditions to be compelling

And remember, there are no predetermined destinations but thank you for taking this journey with us.

References, further reading

Key texts:

- Modern Scientist-Practitioner, a guide to practice in psychology, 2006, *Lane and Corrie, Routledge – explores your identity as a professional so you can create more effective stories about practice*
- Constructing Stories, Telling Tales – a guide to formulation in applied psychology *(2010, Corrie and Lane, Karnac Books) - explores how we can understand our own and clients stories*
- Decision Making in Counselling and Psychotherapy – (2012, Open University Press) *explores decision making in known/unknown contexts - useful across a range of professions.*

Others that are useful

- The Case for Coaching, *2006, Jarvis, Lane and Fillery-Travis, CIPD - explores the evidence base for coaching, literature, surveys, cases*
- The Art of Inspired Living, *Corrie, 2009, Karnac Books – explores tools you and your clients can use in coaching from positive psychology – how they can build their own story*
- Integrated Experiential Coaching, Chapman, 2010, Karnac
- Business Coaching International, Stout Rostron, 2009, Karnac

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- By Public Works (1 year)

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Empirical, Emergent or Structured Stories

- Empirical works from an existing evidence base or hypothesis testing framework
  - It assumes a cause/effect and linear process
  - It works from the clients story but views that as an example of an existing stock of stories which can be informed by an evidence base
  - Most appropriate in the rational space - agreed and predictable
- Emergent Story works from the ground up
  - Looks for what themes emerge in the conversation and what we notice.
  - Uses tension and anxiety creatively
  - Most appropriate in the space of ambiguity on the edge of chaos
- Structured Story works from the top down
  - Provides boundaries using predetermined lenses to organise the story
  - Helps hold anxiety so that we can work with the context
  - Most appropriate in chaotic contexts

"What are the implications for our professional development?

- Asking this question frequently:
  - What are you setting out to achieve when you practice?
  - What is a relationship with you going to be about and why?
  - What is the context in which you work best? What sort of conversations happen in that context?
  - What is the relationship with colleagues going to be about?
  - What type of client Purpose is best served by your service offer?
  - What boundaries do you place on the Purpose of the work that would lead you to refer the client elsewhere??
  - What definitions of yourself as a practitioner (including your sense of professional identity and role) inform your practice?
  - What are the CPD implications of working with clients, in teams, within contexts shaped by local, national and global influences?

What makes a good story.....

- They have an appeal to, or in some way resonate with those who seek our services, are thought-provoking and generate curiosity.
  - So what are you doing to provoke thought and curiosity in staff, clients/customers, peers, managers (stakeholders)?
- They are richer in the connections they make between individuals and contexts.
  - How are you helping individuals make richer connections between ideas, each other and in broader contexts?
- They challenge stereotyping or self-perpetuating labels.
  - What stereotypes are you promoting or disputing? What ideas are self perpetuating and how do these help or hinder change?

What makes a good story.....

- They assume evolution, change and progress are possible.
  - So do you assume change is possible or dismiss it? What are you telling others about the possibility of change?
- They conceptualise individuals connected to the story as active, competent, responsible and reflexive.
  - How are you helping others to feel that they are actively involved, responsible and able to reflect and ask awkward questions?
- The key ‘character’ in the story has a positive moral or ethical code (tightly or loosely defined) and their actions are consistent with this.
  - What assumptions about character are you making ?

Adapted from Sluzki’s (1998)

What questions might we ask when we practice – what is the story we tell?

- How do different aspects of the story connect with each other to make sense of the presenting concern? What is left in and left out, with what implications for the thread of the story? (This is concerned with the narrative structure.)
- What is the degree of richness of the story and how was the explanatory account put together? Who contributed information/ideas to its development? How were ideas incorporated and discarded? How rich is the story as revealed by its quality, style and complexity? (This is concerned with the narrative process.)
- What is the content of the story? The 'what' consists of information at the level of data (client's and practitioner's), theory, models developed by others and research. What theories of causation are the participants proposing to explain the predicament and do they identify possible new story content? (This is concerned with narrative content.)

As professionals, we navigate

- between presenting stories about our clients that are acceptable and functional within our professional and stakeholder contexts,
- embodying stories in our work that are authentic and meaningful in our own personal context, and,
- engaging in stories that are reflective and generative.

- We risk our feasibility with stakeholders if we fall short in the first instance,
- our integrity with ourselves if we fall short on the second, and,
- our credibility with clients if we fall short on the third.

- **Creating a compelling story about our professional practice requires us to navigate these stories – navigating these, changes the assumptions we make about professional development.**

How might we approach those challenges?

- Learning in the context of work;
  - Continuous, socially mediated, personal, so meaningful to self, and stakeholders. (Larson, 1997, Lo, 2004, Reynolds, 2004, CIPD, 2010, PDF, 2000)
- Learning for own development in context
  - Negotiated understanding of purpose, perspective, process so can promote feasible and desirable change for self and others. (Hargreaves, 1972, Pollard, 1986, Corrie and Lane, 2010)
- Learning with and for others – client as primary and autonomous
  - Enhancing meaning through multiple sources, propositional and implicational. (Bruner, 2002, Eraut, 2000, Lane and Corrie, 2006, Sterman, 1994 Teasdale, 1997)

Final Challenges (Your story as a practitioner)

- What stories do we tell?
  - Who owns the story – does it own us?
- What do our stories do?
- Does the story meet the context?
- Can we tolerate the uncertainty of emergent stories?
- Stories within stories
  - Are some invisible even to us?
  - How might we explore these?
- Be careful not to 'strip the storyteller of the story' (Gergen & Davis, 2003; p.241)

Being responsible for the stories we tell.

Questions for reflection…..

- Do I hold a story as a professional, and if so how?
  - How does your story fit within emerging local, national and global themes?
  - Is there a need for an explicit process?
  - How do you gather evidence for the story?
  - What implicit contracts are associated with your stories?
  - How do you make these explicit
  - How does your story resonate with your client?
- What makes your story worth telling?