



COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING CLIENT CO-OPERATION

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IN TODAY'S SESSION

- Getting clients on board with your plan
- Agreeing on a way to move forward and forming a collaborative relationship
- Understanding dissonance theories
- Transactional Analysis

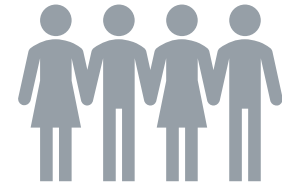
PERSUASION - GETTING CLIENTS ONBOARD WITH YOUR PLAN



Source Factors



Message Factors



Audience Factors

SOURCE FACTORS

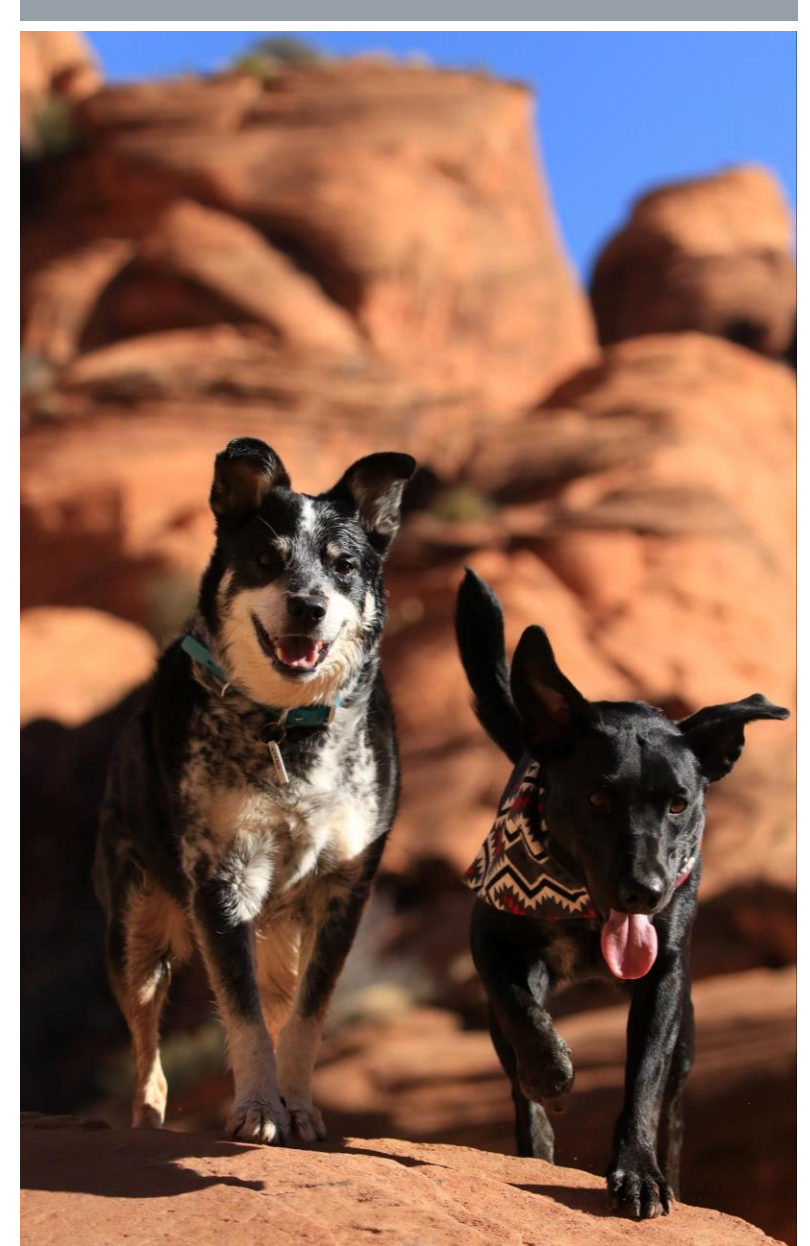
- Experts are generally more persuasive than non experts (Hovland & Weiss, 1952).
- Trustworthiness and credibility of the communicator (Bochner & Insko, 1966).
- Identity of the source proceeding the message (Tormala et al., 2007).

Credibility increases persuasiveness
when the argument is strong



INGRATIATION AND RECIPROCITY

- Genuine ingratiation
 - People are generally more persuadable if they like the message source (you). However, they are also good at seeing through transparent ingratiation. If they believe ingratiation to be transparent, it can often have the opposite to desired effect – people become less open to persuasion (Gordon, 1996).
 - Be nice, listen to their story, allow irrelevant details if possible, empathise with their situation, try to understand their goals and frustrations. If they come to you, offer them something to drink, if you go them, accept something to drink.
- Reciprocity
 - Doing them a favour will encourage compliance (Regan, 1971).
 - Offer the dog some treats, a toy to take away, hold doors for them, anything else you can think of!



MESSAGE FACTORS

- Perceived manipulation – people are more easily persuaded when they do not believe the message is designed to manipulate them (Walster & Festinger, 1962).
- Powerful linguistic style likely to be more persuasive – avoid hedging language, avoid hesitations (Blankenship & Holtgraves, 2005).
- Repetition of a statement can give it a ring of truth (Moons et al., 2009).

What statements are key to your approach?

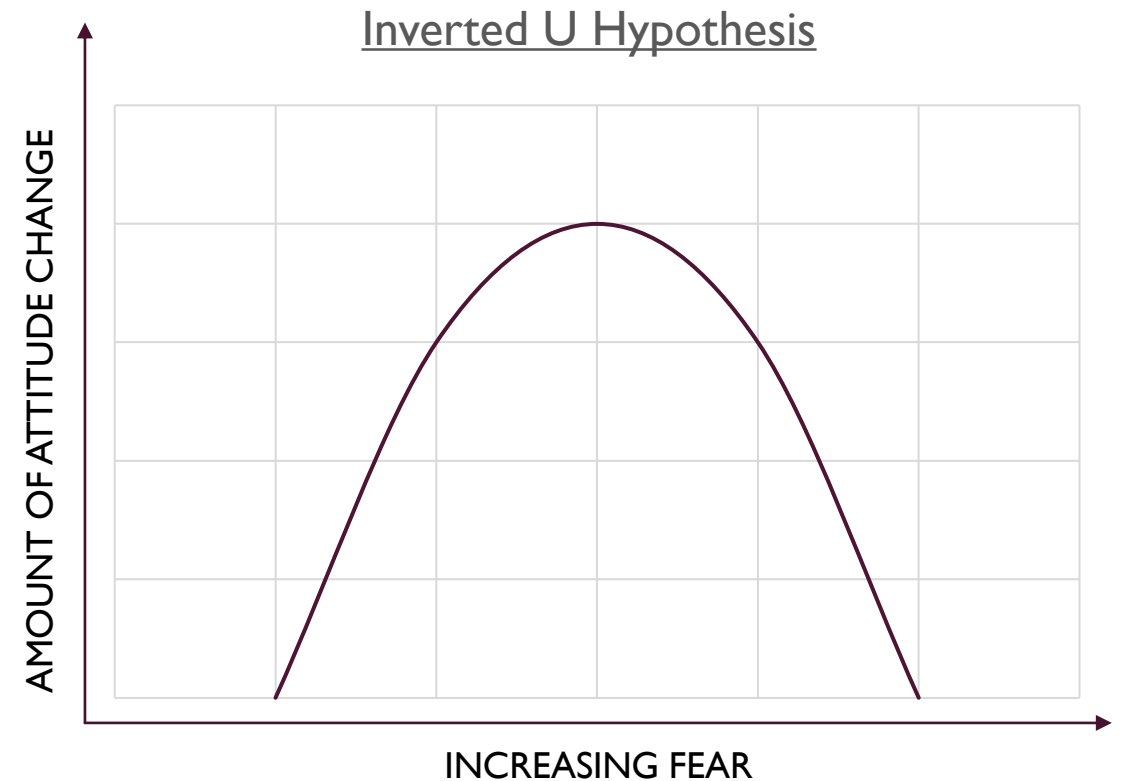
“Building a strong attachment is key to helping rehabilitate anxious dogs”

“Fear cannot be reinforced”

“Physical punishers are associated with higher levels of aggression”

FEAR AND PERSUASION

- Should we be using fear to change our clients' behaviour and does it work?
- Moderately fear arousing messages can enhance persuasion (McGuire, 1969)
- Highly fear arousing messages do not enhance persuasion, and can in fact have the opposite effect (Greenberg et al., 1997).



THE BEHAVIOUR REPORT

- What is the best way to remind clients of the interventions you discussed and persuade them to implement these measures?
 - You could consider a follow up report, tape recording of the session, recording a video explaining the interventions or something else entirely.
- For easier messages, video communication is often most persuasive. However, difficult messages are often considered more acceptable in written form (Chaiken & Eagly, 1983).

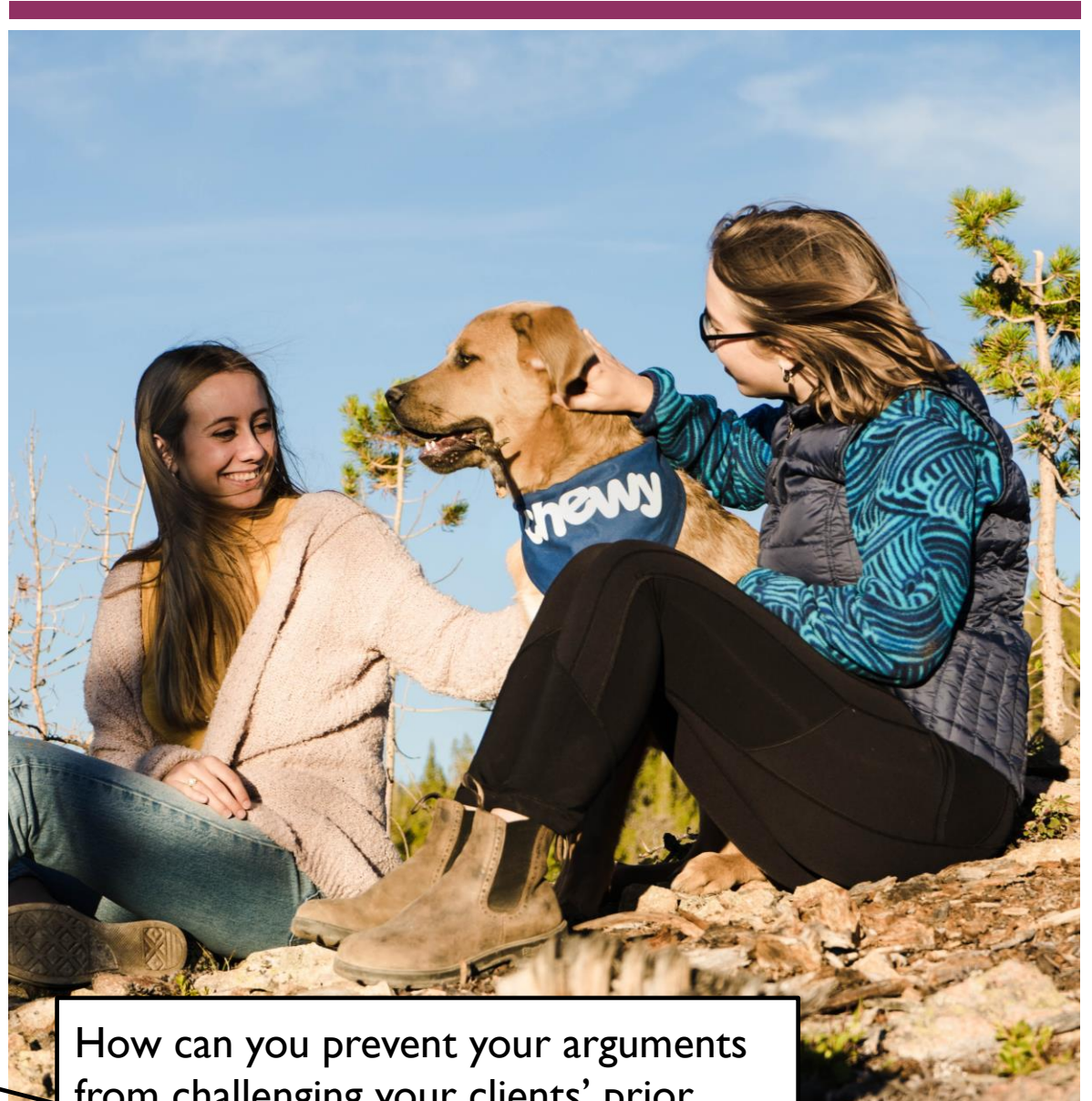
A photograph of two dogs standing on a reddish-brown rock. On the left is a black and white speckled dog with a blue collar, looking towards the camera with its mouth open. On the right is a black dog with a red collar, looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred, warm-toned landscape.

So before sending your report consider:

- Do your clients need persuading?
- What is their preferred format?
- How can you make your report (in whatever format) more persuasive?

AUDIENCE FACTORS

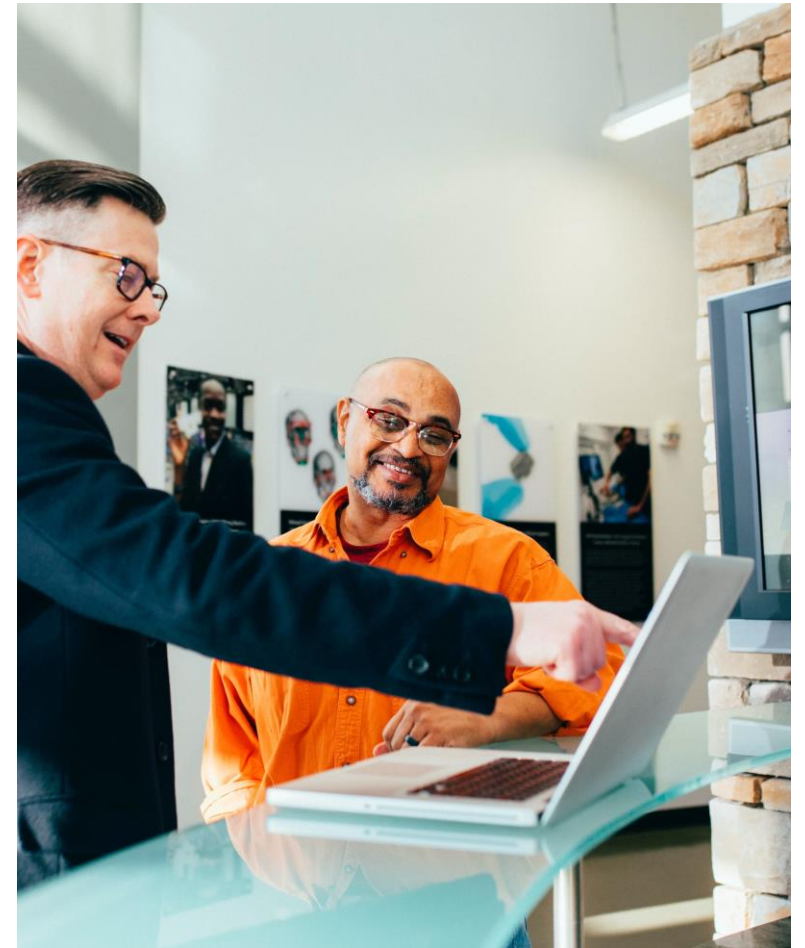
- Age, gender, and self esteem (Carli, 1990; Rhodes & Wood, 1992; Visser & Krosnick, 1998).
- Prior beliefs affect persuadability – disconfirmation bias:
 - Arguments and facts that are incompatible with prior beliefs are scrutinized longer and judged weaker (Edwards & Smith, 1996).
 - This effect is magnified if the prior beliefs are accompanied by emotional conviction (Edwards & Smith, 1996).



How can you prevent your arguments from challenging your clients' prior beliefs?

MULTIPLE REQUESTS

- Using a two step procedure can be a powerful way to increase your persuasive power:
 - Foot-in-the-door tactic – if someone agrees to a small request, they will be more likely to agree to a later, larger request. Only works if the first is not too small, and the second request not too large (Foss & Dempsey, 1979).
 - Two-foot-in-the-door tactic – a series of graded requests rather than jumping from one request to another can be even more successful (Dolinski, 2000).
 - Door-in-the-face tactic – a person is asked a large request, which is expected to be rejected, followed by a smaller request (Patch, 1986).



MULTIPLE REQUESTS – PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

- Foot in the door:
 - “Firstly, to help with Fido’s aggression, there is a process called counter-conditioning which is... does that sound okay to you?”
 - “In order to make that counter-conditioning successful, we will need to make sure Fido does not have any scary experiences at other times meaning...”
- Door in the face:
 - “In order to stop this behaviour using punishment, you will need to be ready to punish Fido immediately after every single incident which he barks at the postman, it will have to be timed just right, and will need to be a powerful punisher, and you will have to continue this throughout his life. Does that sound like something you might be able to do?” “No”
 - “In that case, there is another strategy we can use which involves teaching Fido to go to his bed when he hears the doorbell”.

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

- Working with the client to agree upon:
 - A basic formulation of the behaviour problem – why the dog is behaving like this? (Based on evidence)
 - A practical and realistic (SMART) goal
 - The next steps to achieve that goal
- SMART Goals:
 - Specific, Measured, Achievable, Realistic, Timed
- Don't lecture the client, work with them to find a solution, make them feel involved and invested in the process (see *action research* for more on this).



SMART Goal Example:

“I want Fido to be able to walk through the quiet park without barking at any strangers by the end of the year.”

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

- The psychological experience of competing cognitions (dissonance) is unpleasant so we are motivated to reduce that unpleasant feeling by seeking harmony in our attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour (Festinger, 1957).
- Effort Justification (Aronson & Mills, 1959)
 - The harder the goal to achieve, the more people will value that goal to justify their effort.
E.g., if a dog owner has placed a lot of effort into having a well disciplined dog, the value they place on this will be higher, so this goal may need reframing.
- Selective exposure hypothesis (Frey, 1986)
 - People tend to avoid potentially dissonant information.
E.g., “**punishment is bad for your dog**” may result in dissonance in some owners and be ignored whereas “**punishment won’t help reduce this behaviour**” does less likely to induce dissonance because dealing with a specific behaviour is less likely to relate to people’s attitudes and core beliefs.

SELF PERCEPTION THEORY

- People's attitudes can sometimes be formed by observing their own behaviour.

E.g. if you have a set budget for dinner, then proceed to break that budget, you may then decide "I was willing to pay a little bit more".

- We can use this to our advantage in consultations by observing the clients behaviour, and reinforcing good interactions with the dog. For example:
 - "I can see you praise Fido lots, are you a big believer in positive reinforcement?"
 - "The way you are avoiding putting Fido in stressful situations is great and will definitely be helping, we just need to make that management even more airtight". s

SOCIAL JUDGEMENT THEORY

- Social judgement theory suggests people compare persuasive messages against their current attitude.
- Anchor – is a reference point for making judgements, formed of one's own attitude on a topic.
- The attitudinal continuum is made up of three regions:
 - Latitude of acceptance (LoA) – region containing beliefs a person finds acceptable.
 - Latitude of rejection (LoR) – region containing inconsistent or unacceptable beliefs.
 - Latitude of non-commitment (LoNC) – beliefs considered neither acceptable or non-acceptable.

EXAMPLE – HOW TO DEAL WITH AN AGGRESSIVE DOG

Belief	Owner I
Counter-conditioning	Latitude of Non-Commitment
Desensitisation	
Comfort them and remove from the situation	Latitude of Acceptance
Ignore them and remove from the situation	
Firmly say “NO”	
Sharp jab in the chest	Latitude of Non-Commitment
Stamp on the dog’s foot	Latitude of Rejection
Shock the dog	

EXAMPLE – HOW TO DEAL WITH AN AGGRESSIVE DOG

Belief	Owner 2
Counter-conditioning	Latitude of Rejection
Desensitisation	
Comfort them and remove from the situation	
Ignore them and remove from the situation	Latitude of Non-Commitment
Firmly say “NO”	Latitude of Acceptance
Sharp jab in the chest	
Stamp on the dog’s foot	Latitude of Non-Commitment
Shock the dog	Latitude of Rejection

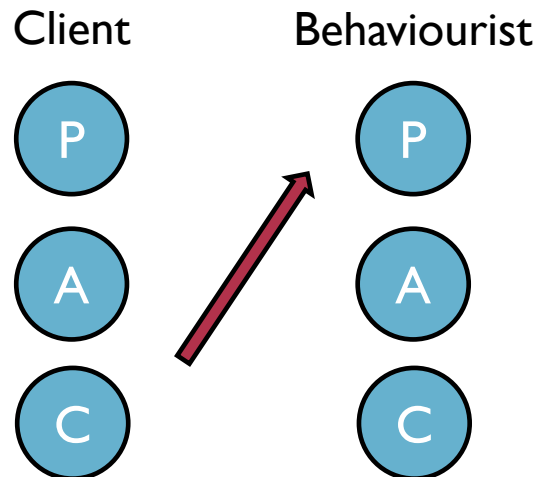
A TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

- Parent State – part of the personality comprising of one's own rules and injunctions around life, often influenced by one's parents, upbringing, and culture.
 - “We can't let the dog get away with this”
- Adult State – rational and decision making side of the personality.
 - “Let's to find a practical solution to deal with this”
- Child State – comprising of one's emotional responses, irrationality, and creativity.
 - “My dog is making me so mad”



A TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

- We need to consider:
 - What states are our clients operating in?
 - What state are we responding in?



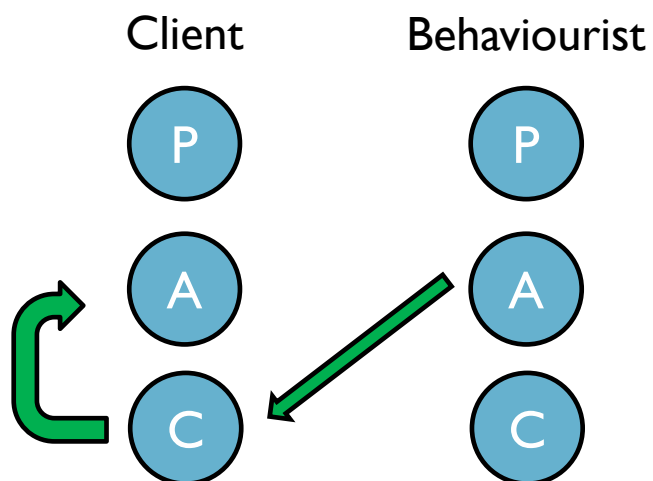
Example:

Client: “I cannot stand him biting the furniture”

Behaviourist: “You should expect these sorts of mistakes from a puppy”

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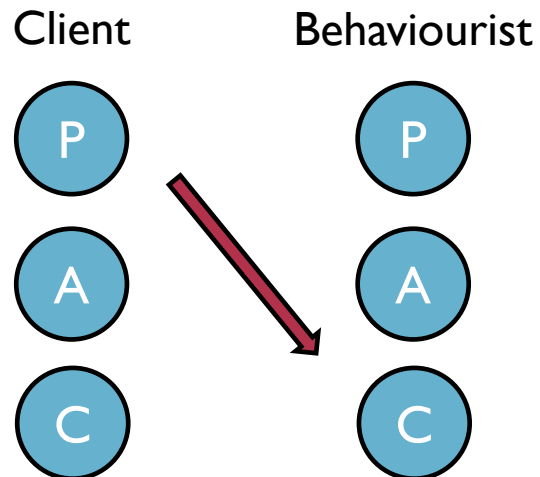
Example:

Client: "I cannot stand him biting the furniture."

Behaviourist: "Puppies often do bite the furniture and it can be really hard to stop. However, there are things we can do to protect your furniture and reduce the chances of this occurring."

A TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

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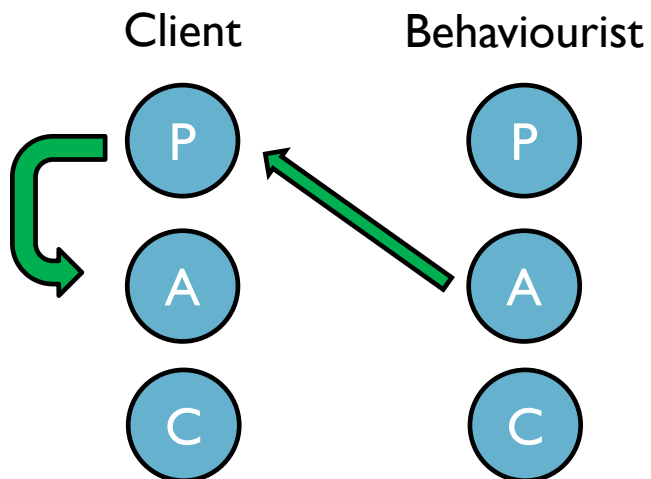
Example:

Client: "He needs to be punished for bad behaviour"

Behaviourist: "You can't punish him, that's wrong and will never work"

A TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

- We need to consider:
 - What states are our clients operating in?
 - What state are we responding in?



Example:

Client: “He needs to be punished for bad behaviour”

Behaviourist: “Punishment is one way to reduce unwanted behaviour in some cases. However, because Frank’s aggression is caused by an emotional reaction, punishment won’t stop him feeling scared. Instead, we are more likely to find a successful solution by teaching Frank strangers predict something good happening.”

ANY
QUESTIONS

