BWRT Extra Technique

Working with low PAL scores

Most of the time, it's easy to get a client's PAL up to the necessary 8 or higher. But not always. Sometimes there's a refusal to even contemplate that a higher number than they've quoted might be more relevant and then this paper will be useful.

Working with low PAL scores

To an extent, the success of BWRT® at all levels depends in part on the desire to escape an existing situation, the desire being indicated by the PAL. Experience showed right from the beginning that a PAL of less than 8 tended to be associated with lower success levels and higher recidivism.

Where the PAL is 8 or higher, the following can be ignored.

Generally, with a low PAL, one of the following situations exists:

1. The presenting issue is just a part of a wider problem
2. Lack of understanding about scoring the PAL
3. A lack of recognition of how uncomfortable the current situation actually is
4. There is a different and more important, but undisclosed, issue
5. Anxiety about how the 'new' self will fare
6. A lack of belief that change is even possible
7. An absence of a properly defined preferred response/circumstance
8. An agenda for maintaining the current situation

The following will help to overcome these difficulties – at least where it is actually possible to overcome them. Where it is not, then it is likely that either the client's personality or the presenting situation is not suitable for BWRT® and you might wish to offer a different style of working.

Here are questions to ask the client about each of the above situations, along with suitable responses to their replies where necessary:

The presenting issue is just a part of a wider problem
This would normally be revealed during the 'Pre Questions' and/or the ''Guilty Secret' work. Some of you might not have received the latter yet, so it's included at the end of this document and is always a good process to use for all clients.

Lack of understanding about scoring the PAL or
A lack of recognition of how uncomfortable the current situation actually is
Sometimes, a client simply doesn't realise how important the PAL is and if we tell them, there's a chance they'll simply try to please us by giving a higher number that they don't actually *feel.* A good approach here is to ask this question:

"Okay – if you knew it was going to be this way for the whole of your life and was never going to get even slightly better, what number would you put on it then, where 1 means you'd just get on with it and 10 means you can't bear to even think about it?"

If you get '8' or higher, you can now continue to the protocol.

There is a different and more important, but undisclosed, issue
Ask the client: *"If this was the only thing that would ever get fixed in your life and everything else would stay just as it is, would that be okay?"*

"No, it wouldn't" answers must be carefully investigated. Otherwise continue with more questions.

Anxiety about how the 'new' self will fare
Ask the client: *"On a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 high, how calm do you feel about going into the world as your new self?"*

Scores of 7 or lower must be investigated to discover what the client is concerned about, because the fear of change is balanced too finely with the discomfort of the presenting issue. Scores of 8 or above mean you can continue with more questions.

A lack of belief that change is even possible
On occasions an individual attends for therapy with no real conviction that they can be helped. There are a number of possible reasons, including: *"It's just the way I am,"; "My life doesn't work like that,"* or having been given the *"You'll never amount to anything,"* prediction at some point. This works as a powerful damper on the belief and expectation system and can prevent therapy from working at all.

Question for the client: *"If you had to bet on our chances of getting you sorted out, how high a bet would you make on a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 being the highest?"*

A 'bet' of 8 or above is completely acceptable, anything lower needs to be carefully investigated before continuing with more questions.

An absence of a properly defined preferred response/circumstance
This is a fairly difficult one to deal with, since we don't want the client to tell us what their preferred response is until the debriefing. (If they *do* tell us, we have become involved and our reactions have been processed by their reptilian and paleomammalian complexes and are thus less 'clean'.) Yes it is important that the response must be properly defined and desirable, so the best test would be along the lines of: *"If you **knew beyond doubt** right at this moment that how you WANT to feel instead of how you DO feel was going to happen today, how good would that be on a scale of 1 – 10?"*

Anything less than 10 means you need to impress on the client that they choose not what they think they are allowed or what is likely but what they actually WANT as long as it's Plausible, Possible, and Fair. After working on this, check the PAL with the presenting issue again.

If a 10, continue with the last question.

An agenda for maintaining the current situation
This will usually have been laid bare in the questioning phase but there are times when it persists. Say to the client: *"All problems, without exception, have some sort of benefit associated with them. Sometimes it's something we want to hang on to; sometimes it's a sort of resent that we'll be making somebody else's life easier, and sometimes it's something completely different. Now what we have to do is discover what your particular benefit is so that we can see if it's good to let go of it or not. So, tell me, what can you think of?"*

If the client insists there's nothing and they're still not responding with a high enough PAL for the presenting issue, it is a contra indicator for BWRT work.

BWRT®

'Guilty Secret' Questionnaire

It is recommended that you use the questionnaire overleaf with all clients since it can often do more for effective preparation than any other single question.

1: Most people have a secret, or even several secrets, and would be horrified if the whole world were to know about it. Now, if you have such a secret, I'll never ask you to tell me about it but it helps the therapy greatly if I know there's something there. So is there anything that you really want to keep absolutely to yourself?

<u>No</u> **<u>Yes</u>**
↓ →

Continue with any further questions.

1.1: Okay, thank you, And can you now tell me how bad that would feel on a scale of 1 – 10 if *everybody* knew about it? Make it really vivid in your mind.
   We need the highest possible PAL here.
If < 6 we can probably ignore it.

1.2: Good, thank you. Now can you tell me if this is (a) about the way you are, so that you didn't choose it; or (b) it's about something you did; or (c) it's about something you still do. You can tell me it's any of those, all of those, or just 'a' and 'c', for instance.
   This covers every eventuality and we need to know in order to allocate the best replacement response.

1.3: Okay – now, sometimes, anxious secrets of that sort can get in the way of the best results for therapy. It's possible to take the anxiety out of it while we're working if you want to so we can get the best result for you. You won't need to say even one word about it but I'll only work at it if you agree. We can still do some good work, though, if you don't want to. So, yes or no?

Yes [   ]; No [   ]
a b c choice/combination:

If 'yes' to 1:3: This routine is going to be directive, rather than content free and you will begin by helping the client to grasp the idea that sometimes a guilty secret can contribute to physical illness. When this is the case, the therapy we are doing might well make changes for the future, but in order for that to work, we have to disable the associated guilty feelings at least for a while. Get agreement on this point before continuing.

You will be using prefabricated replacement responses dependent upon which of the (a), (b), or (c) responses your client has given.

(a): *You didn't choose it, so it's not your fault*

(b): *You've been punished enough now*

(c): *When you are stronger you will stop doing that*

Any combination of 2 or 3 of a, b and c: *You're making changes today*

(This last option is <u>almost</u> universal enough to be applied to all circumstances but the first three are more 'targeted' and might be better with specific circumstances.)

- We avoid the PAL here – we need to deal with this issue and close it in one session
- Hold some representation of the secret in thoughts, then Zoom and freeze
- Fade to pale colours - this is like NLP but we avoid fading to black and white so there is still a connection with reality but greatly diminished
- Now the Replacement Response but handled like suggestion therapy: *"Now I want you to create an image in your mind that means <whichever of the above is valid> and drag it in front of that frozen image so that it become such apart of that frozen image that you can really **feel** it, and just nod once when you have it."*
- Continue as the standard protocol (6 loops) but without testing the PAL

*NB: If we test the PAL in this routine the client might be fearful that the therapy won't work if the PAL isn't reduced enough. We **can** enquire as to how much (<u>not 'if'!</u>) less uncomfortable the secret feels now we've worked at it, confirming that it's good when it's reduced. If it's the same, we can say that this proves it to be static and therefore not affecting anything. If it's more uncomfortable, we can say this shows it to be active and there's a need to desensitise it – and the client now has two choices:*

1. *Go through the above again working harder with the replacement response.*
2. *Tell you what the secret is so that you can help them disarm it.*

Example 1:
The client has agreed there is a guilty secret and wants to work on it. They've said that it was about something they did (Q 1.2, option (a)) and it's something they still do (Q1.2, option (b)). So here, the replacement response in the loops will be for any combination of options: *"Now I want you to create an image in your mind that means **You're making changes today** and drag it in front of that frozen image so that it become such apart of that frozen image that you can really **feel** it, and just nod once when you have it."*

Example 2:
This time, the client has chosen only option (a) in Q1.2, so here the replacement response in the loops would be: *"Now I want you to create an image in your mind that means **You didn't choose it so it's not your fault** and drag it in front of that frozen image so that it become such apart of that frozen image that you can really **feel** it, and just nod once when you have it."*