

FINDING YOUR WAY OUT OF BEING DEPRESSED

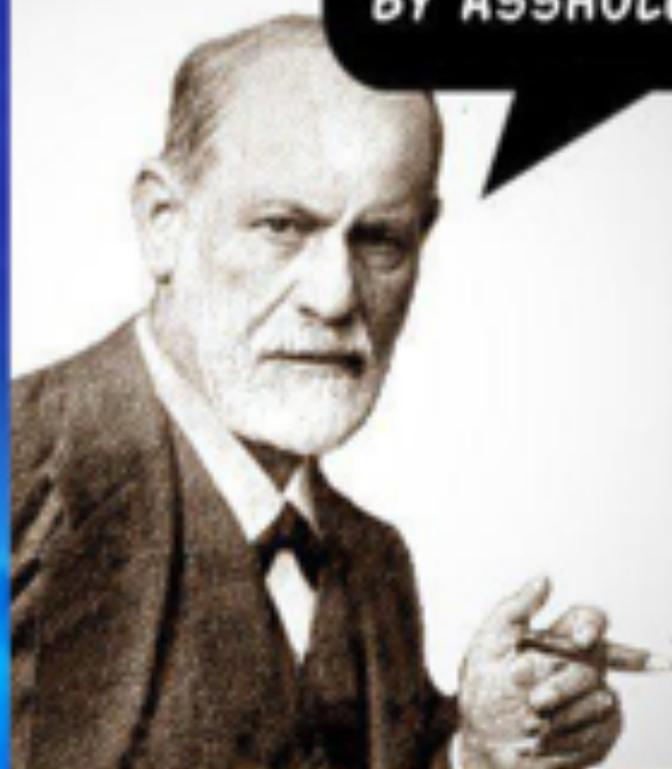


DAVE BENDER, Ph.D.

JIM HOLMES, Ph.D.



**BEFORE YOU DIAGNOSE
YOURSELF WITH DEPRES-
SION OR LOW SELF-
ESTEEM, FIRST MAKE
SURE YOU ARE NOT, IN
FACT, JUST SURROUNDED
BY ASSHOLES.**



Bottomless Pit



**Classic image of
depression**

Where Are We Going Today?

1. Making Sense Of Being Depressed
2. Develop Individualized Case Formulations
3. Generate Individual Treatment Plans

Putting All The Pieces Under One Roof



What Does DSM Tell Us?



- ❖ **You can have the blues like Bob.**
- ❖ **Or, you can really be in sad shape like Fred....**

- DSM conveys the severity, frequency, and duration of episodes.
- Doesn't tell you why this person is depressed or what to do.



Sometimes Reasons for Depression May Be Obvious



Reasons For Depression May Not Be So Obvious

Jane had been crying for days but did not know why.

“There is no reason for me to be depressed. It must be a chemical imbalance.”



**For Many People,
Depression Just Happens—
Like A Dark Cloud That Comes
Over Them**



OKAY SO WHY DO I
GET DEPRESSED?



There is a different answer for every person who is depressed.

We first need to understand the general patterns of how and why people become depressed.

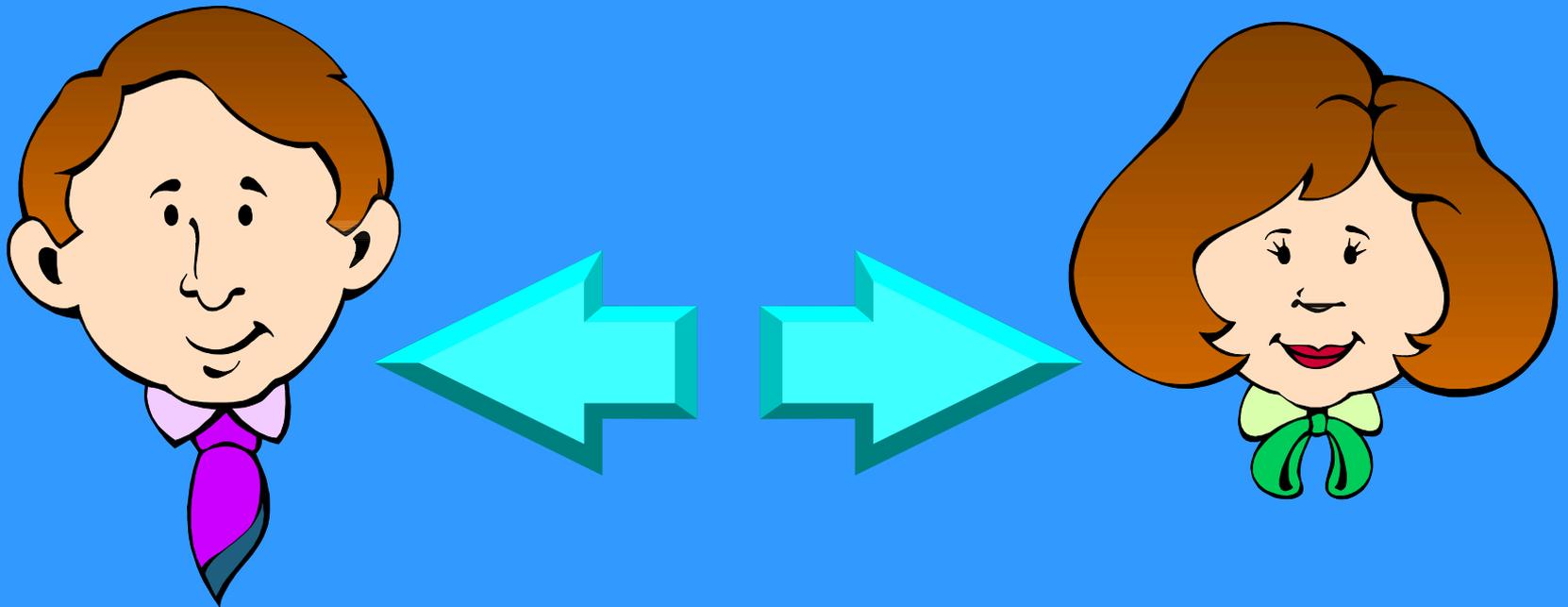
Becoming Depressed *Always* Makes Sense

In 40 years, I never met a person for whom it did not make sense for them to be depressed.

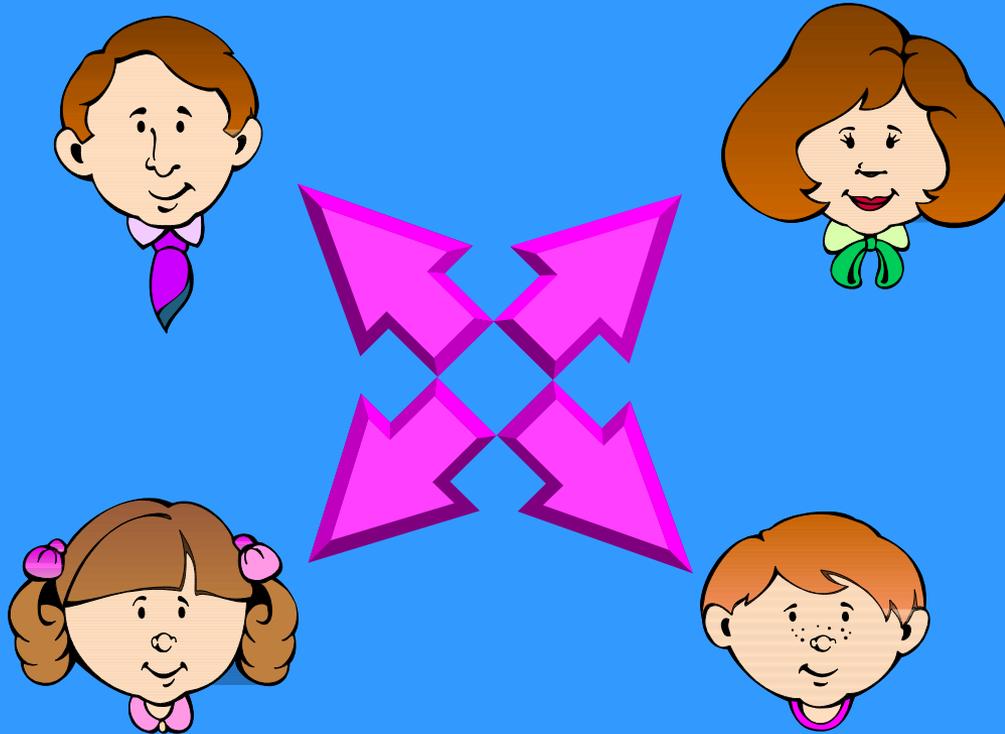


RELATIONSHIPS

Your life includes relationships, your place or position with regard to another individual.

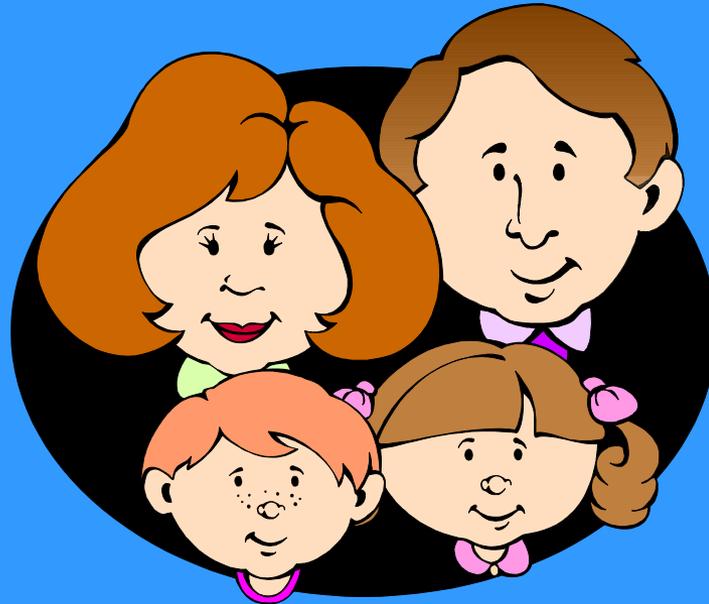


STATUS

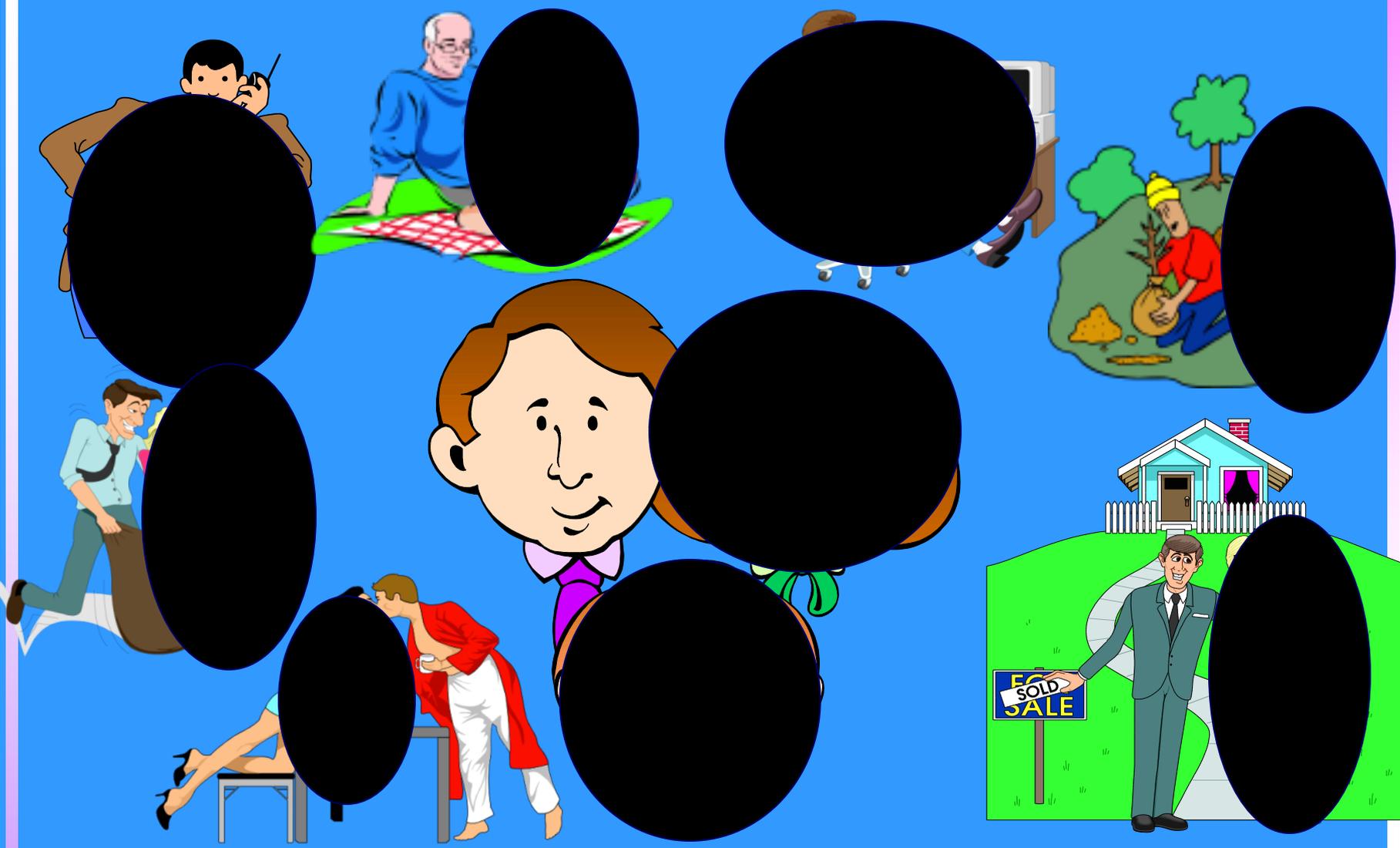


Your status is your place with regard to people and everything else in your world.

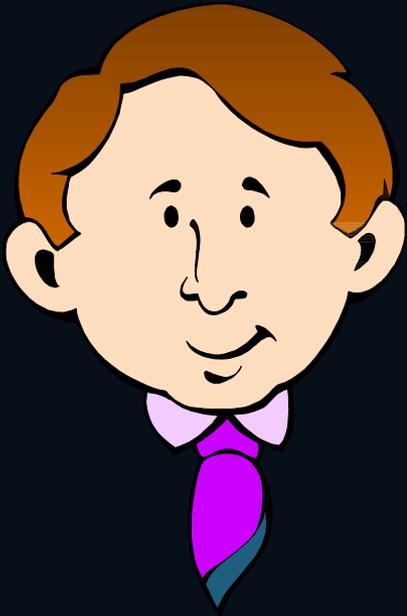
Relationships and Status



Steve lost his wife and son!



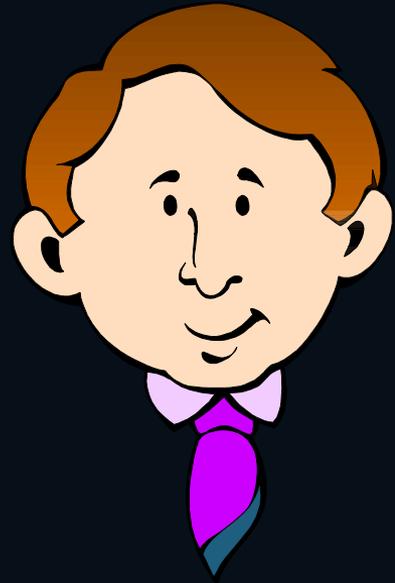
AN EMPTY VOID



When my wife son were killed,
my whole life came to an end. I
lost all hope for the future.
Nothing mattered—there was a
complete void—no reason to do
anything—I couldn't move.

Paradigm Case Of Depression

- Did not have the loss coming to him.
- A sudden, unexpected, and massive loss of status.
- No way to get back what he lost.
- Little behavior potential or reason to live.
- I might well have been depressed and suicidal.



EATING PROBLEMS

Neither food nor anything else would matter to you, so why eat?

Or, you frantically try to fill up the terrible void in your life with food.



Given Loss of Status and Behavior Potential:

- **Fewer reasons to do things, sit and stare at the wall and maybe lament the loss.**
- **With fewer things to do, you have less to think about and have fewer thoughts.**



Suicidal Thoughts!

- ❖ **Given the losses you suffered, wouldn't you be angry as hell?**
- ❖ **Why go on living?**
- ❖ **Can you live in a world in which such unthinkable impossible things happen?**

LOSS OF PLEASURE



If you lost a major part of your life, what would be left but to “lament the loss” by crying.

Little to care about.

Little to enjoy or take pleasure in.

SLEEP PROBLEMS

- **With little reason to do anything, why get out of bed? Sleep for long periods of time.**
- **Or, if focus on the pain and anger associated with loss, may sleep very little.**

Symptoms of Depression



- We just derived the DSM's "signs" and "symptoms" of depression.
- They make sense.

Easily understandable as reactions to the status loss Steve suffered.

Severity and Length



- How long will depend on when or if you regain the status you lost or gain equivalent status.
- Severity of depression will vary with how much status you have lost.



DEGRADATION CEREMONIES

More than one way to lose status.

- Formal Public Ceremonies
- Informal/Private Ceremonies

DEGRADATION CEREMONY



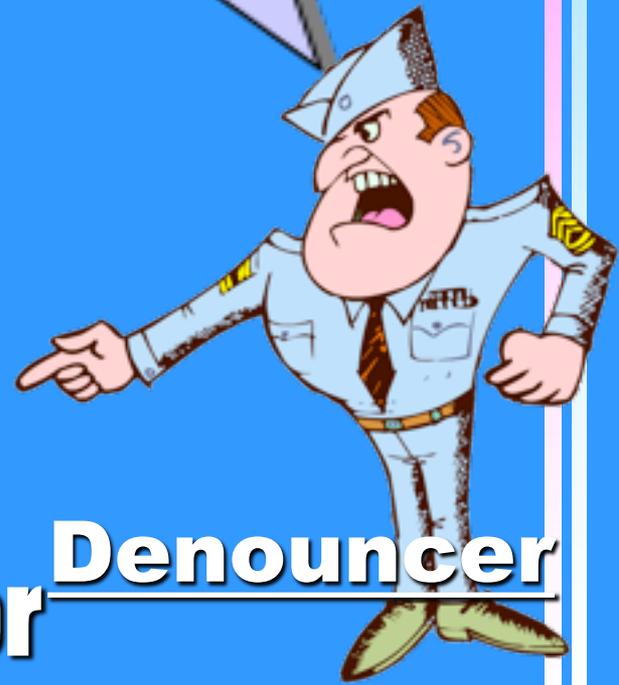
Witnesses

1. Heinous or Unacceptable Behavior



Perpetrator

2. Re-describe History



Denouncer

Reduced Status

DEGRADATION CEREMONY



Denouncer

DEGRADATION CEREMONY



Perpetrator



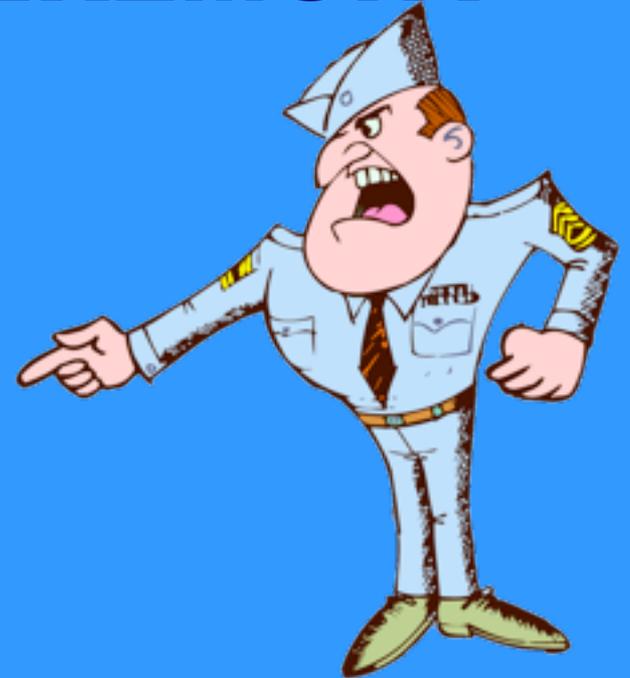
Denouncer

DEGRADATION CEREMONY

1. **Heinous or Unacceptable Behavior**



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DEGRADATION CEREMONY

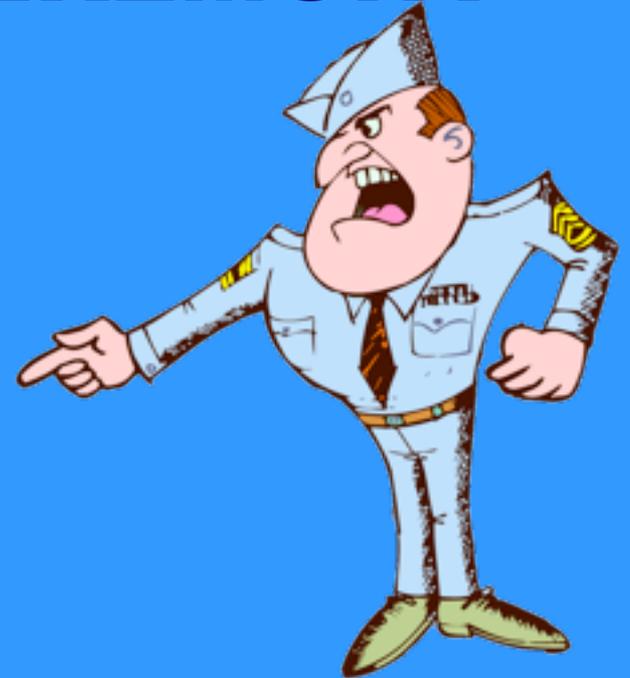
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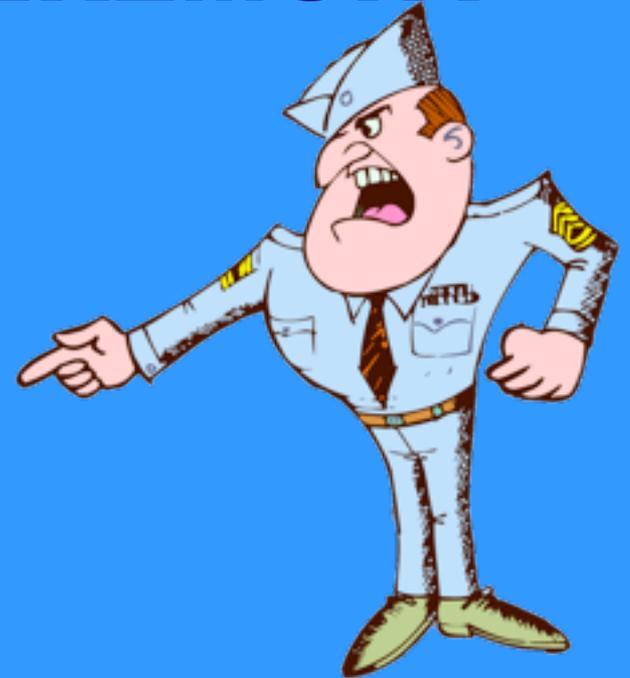
Perpetrator



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Witnesses

RESULTS OF DEGRADATION CEREMONY



DEATH



*Now Private
Jones!*

Retired And Depressed



Become depressed even
when good things
happen?

How crazy is that?

How does that make
sense?

Most Degradations Take Place In Private/informal Ceremonies



Transformations Of Paradigm Case

- Not always a single massive loss.
- Losses can accumulate over time
- Can become aware of losses over time.
- Does not have to be unexpected.

TRANSFORMATION SELF-DEGRADATION

Denouncer and Perpetrator
can be the same person

SELF DEGRADATION CEREMONY



Degrade self by acting as both denouncer and perpetrator.

You may go through a ceremony in your head—

—or you can degrade yourself without thinking about it...

it's just the way you are!

I have always been a loser and I will never change



How We Get Depressed But Not Know Why

- Degrade self.
- Accept degradation from others....
- *Without realizing it.*



Having A New Part In Your Drama



Becoming a mother—
how does your place or status change?

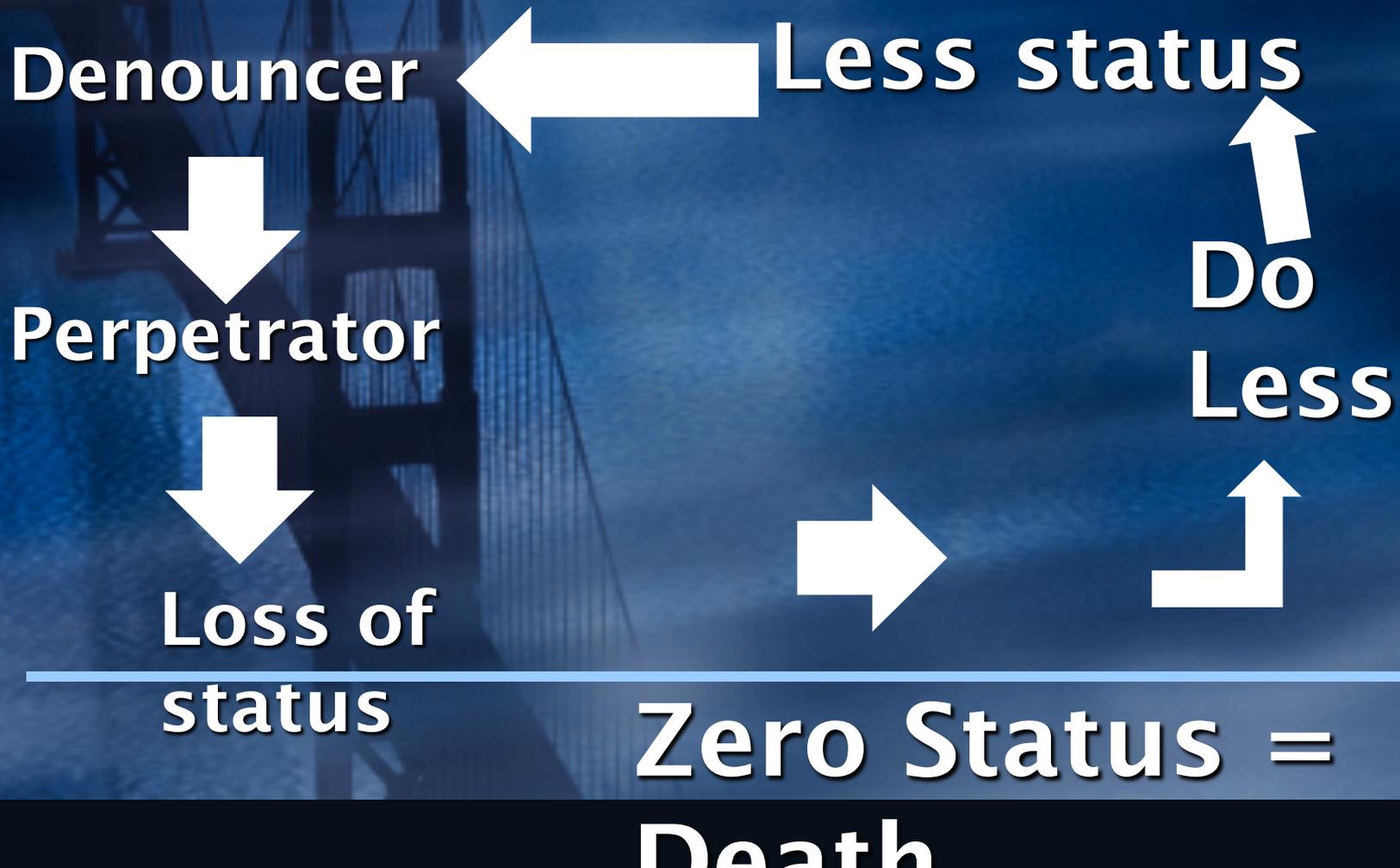
POST- PARTUM DEPRESSION

Your new role in this drama may not be one you expected ...or want.



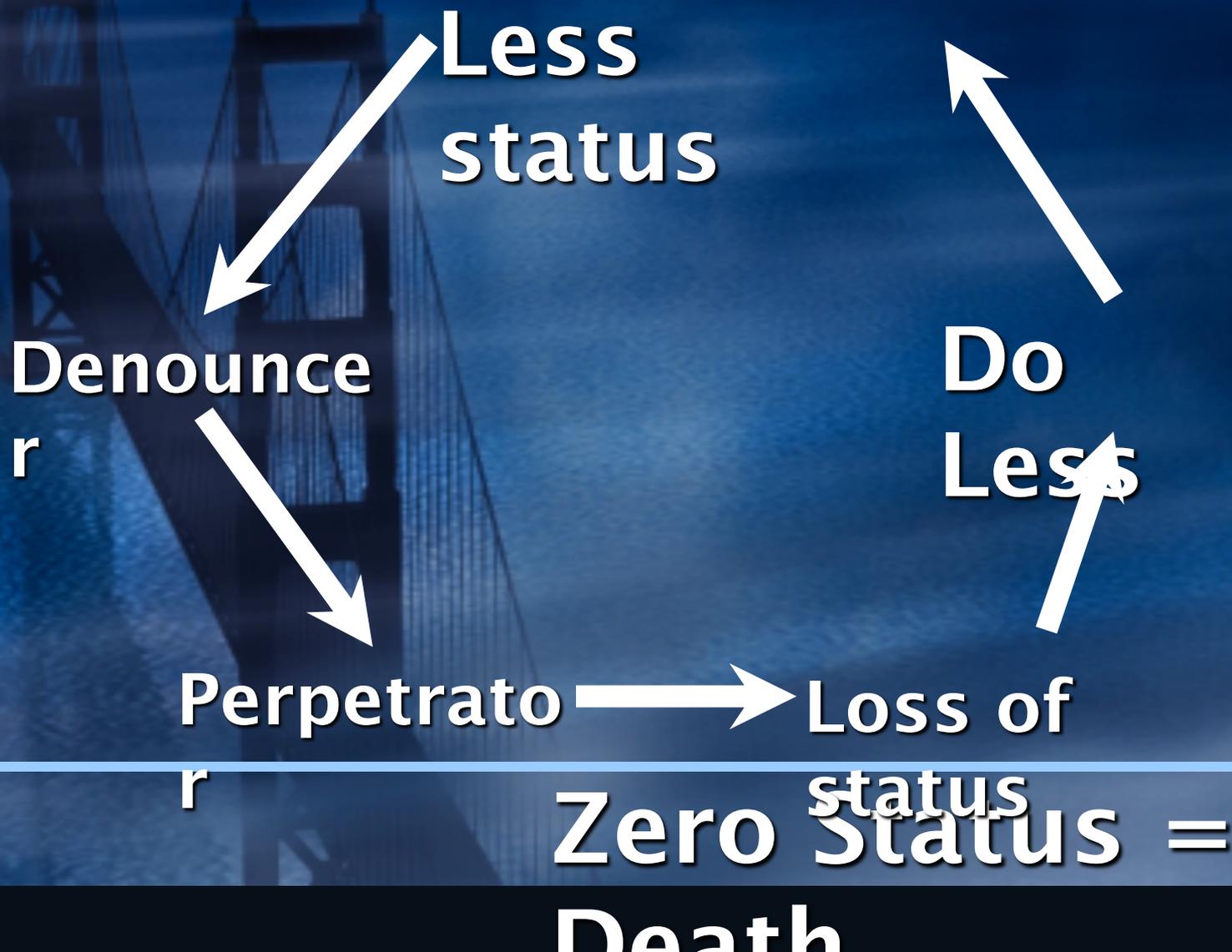
Depression Cycle

Increased depression



Depression Cycle

Increased Depression



OTHER APPROACHES

Less and less evidence to support physiological causes or treatment.

Other approaches:

- Treat depressed people as irrational—more crazy

- **Antidepressants and Placebos**

**Double blind studies a good model
for drug outcome research
unless...**

double blinds are not blind!



RESEARCH ON ANTIDEPRESSANTS

- No evidence of chemical imbalance unless and until treated with meds.
- Long term drug treatment increases chemical imbalance.
- On a long-term basis, med treated patients do far worse than non-med treated patients.

Old Wine in New Bottle?

1. Real world losses usually require reconstructing world.
2. More comprehensive than just how I think.
3. Changes required may include changing relationships, way of living, other elements in life
4. Nothing irrational in how person views losses such as death, divorce, loss of love, job, home.

People Make Sense

You Make Sense of Them

If Person DOESN'T Make Sense

- It is because we are missing something
- Some pattern of behavior we do not recognize

“Dinner at 8:30”



Big argument with my wife.

Did not get it resolved.

Done with work at 5:30

Got home at 6:00

Served dinner at 8:30

Steak, rare

Usually have dinner at 6:30.

Not 8:30.

I hate steak rare.

Any confusion about
what happened at 8:30?



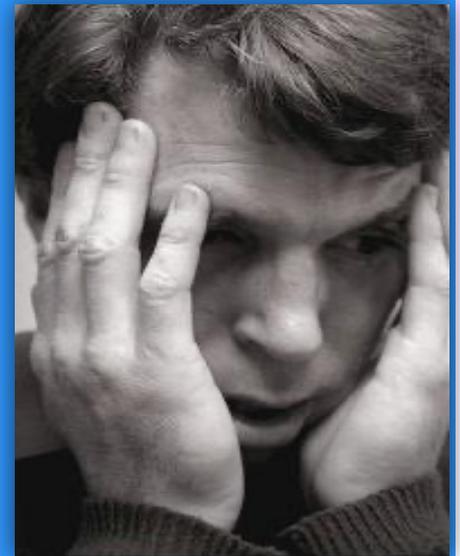
SAVING THE COUNTRY



Signs and Symptoms... *of What?*

Do not have independent description of pathology or depression other than list of symptoms.

Symptoms don't give you pathology.



PSYCHOPATHOLOGY IS A DEFICIT



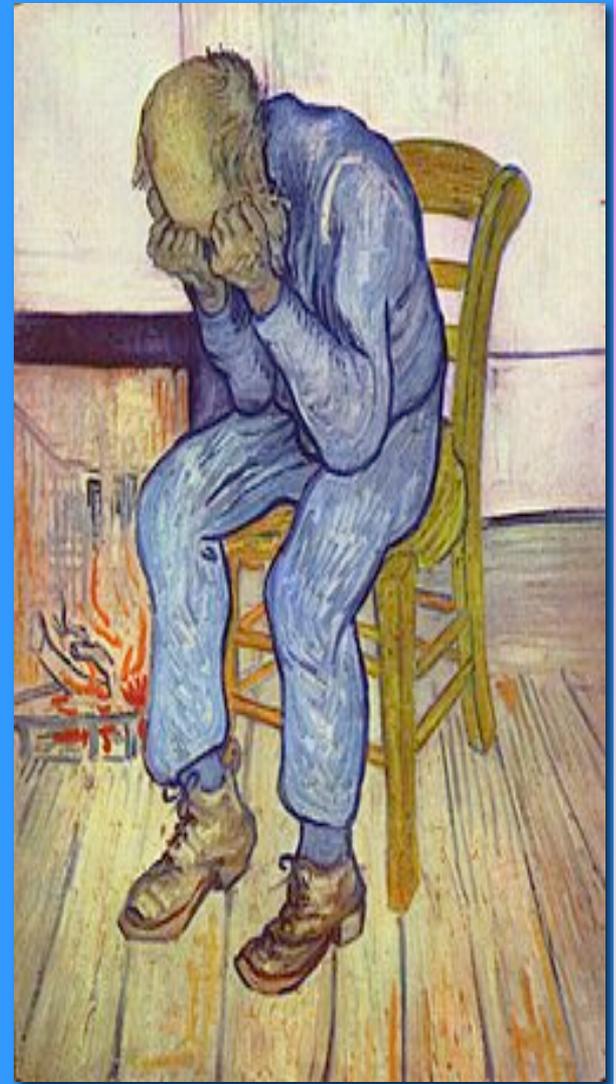
To be in a pathological state is to have a significant restriction in your ability to do what you need to be able to do.

**PATHOLOGY IS WHAT
YOU CANNOT DO!**



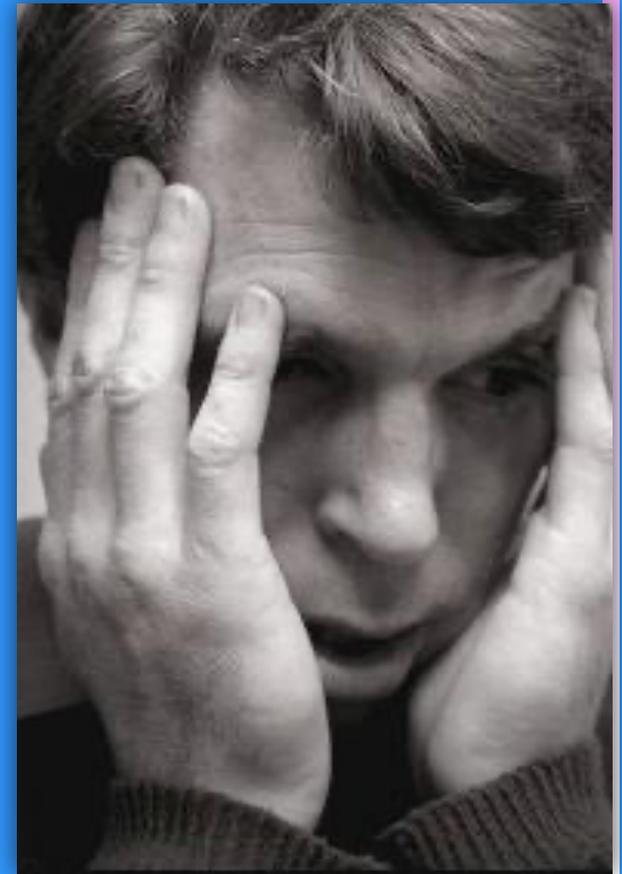
Therapy With Depressed Clients

- Don't do much, say much, think much.
- May not communicate at all.
- Resist any attempts to cheer them up or make them feel better.
- Anybody who compliments them is either foolish or up to something>>>



**We don't treat depression,
we treat individuals who
are depressed**

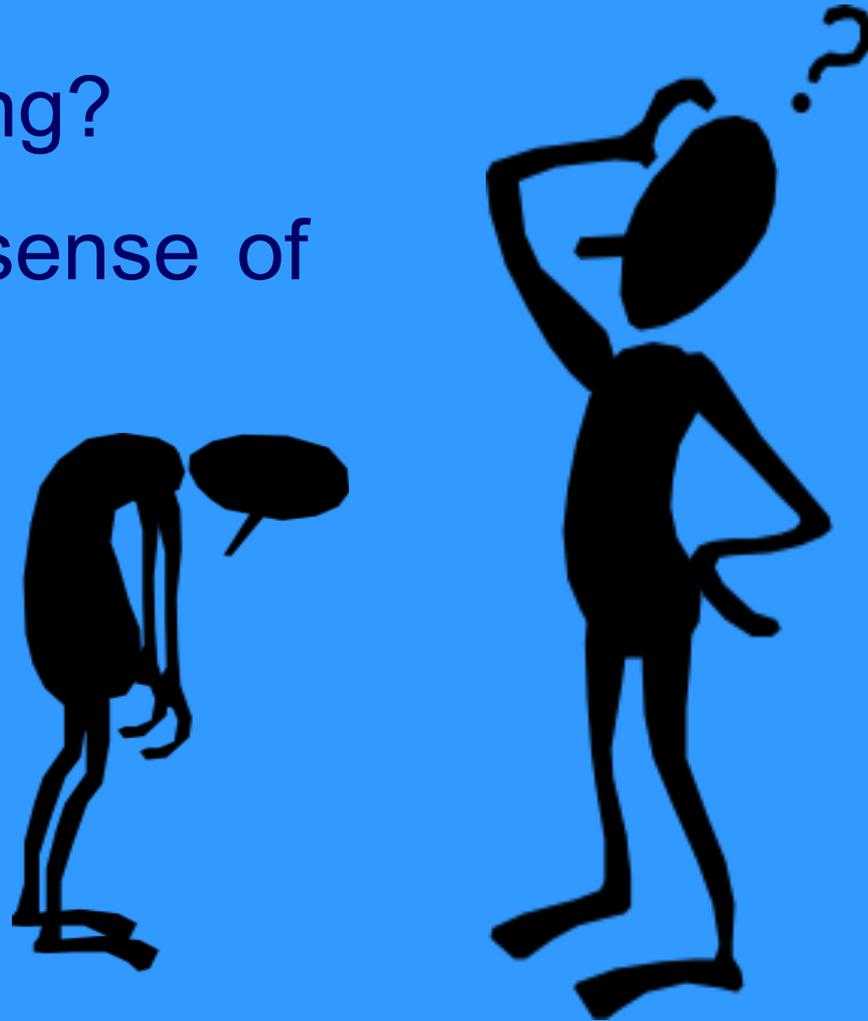
**What do we
need to know
to decide
what to do
for this man?**



CASE FORMULATION

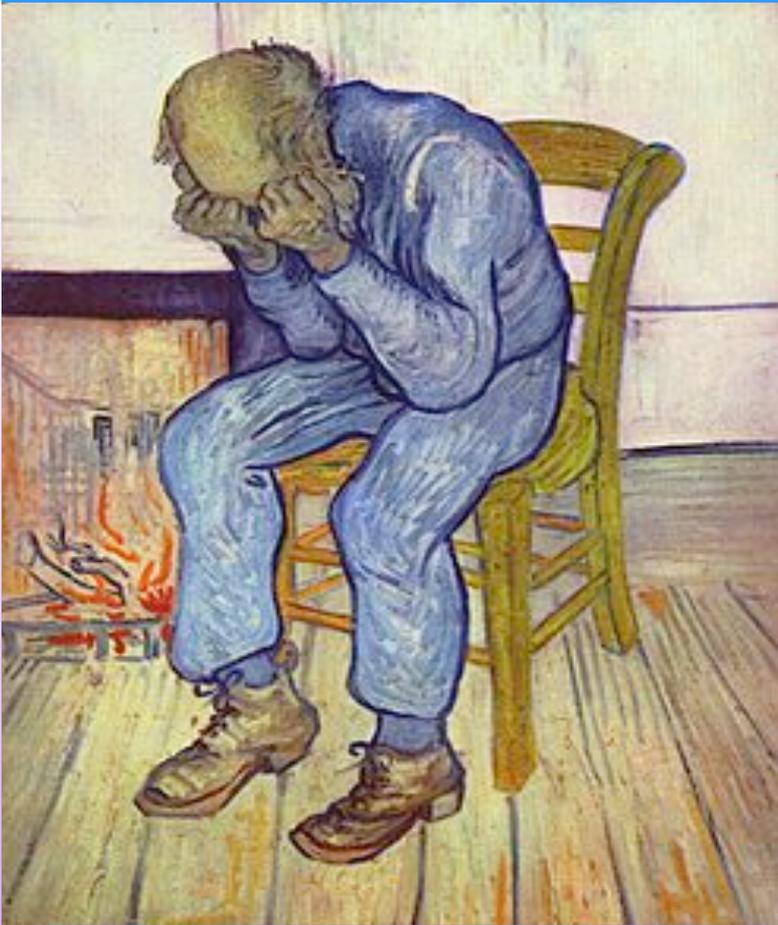
What's gone wrong?

How can I make sense of
where he is?



What would you want a diagnosis to tell you?

What's gone wrong and what can I do about it?



Case Formulation

- Do detective work?
- What does “bank robbery” tell you?
- No DX will give you the detail you need

Description and Treatment

Have a good description of client's deficits, don't need much explanation.

The treatment plan follows directly from case formulation.

An Adequate Case Formulation

It should:

- provide an explanation that holds the facts together.
- portray what has gone wrong with the person's life.
- account for all the important specifics in question.
- show what sense the client makes.
- lead directly to treatment plan.

CASE FORMULATION and PATTERN RECOGNITION

1. Gather the clinical data.
 - a. get the facts
 - b. ask what needs to be understood
 - c. look for status principles that would explain the particulars.

Alternatively—

- a. talk to the client**
- b. listen**
- c. look for the pattern.**

Guidelines

The primary guidelines are:

- 1. Drop the details and look for the pattern.**
- 2. Don't make anything up.**

TREATMENT PLANS

Okay, what can I do now?



**Promise Them
Anything**

**But Give Them
Behavior Potential**

OR NOT !



GOAL OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

1. Reduce deficit so that person is no longer in pathological state.
2. Increase status + behavior potential
3. Increase skills and/or knowledge
4. Replace lost status + increase some other status

People get better

- Their status increases.
- Able to negotiate status assignments.
- Regain lost status or achieve some new status

STATUS ASSIGNMENTS

Status assignments do not determine *what facts are* but do determine *how the facts will count*.

Gain Status From Accreditation Ceremonies

**Arise, Sir
Knight.**



Other Accreditation Ceremonies



DEPRESSION WORKSHEET

- What status loss has taken place?
- What degradations have occurred?
- Why is this client unable to refute or negotiate degradations?
- What accreditations would be appropriate and effective?
- How can I increase client's behavior potential?

Psychotherapy Policies

General Policies—

Do these unless:

- Show client how she makes sense.
- Be on the client's side.
- Treat client as a person.

General Status Dynamic Policies

Show each client:

- How what she does makes sense.
- That she is a-priori acceptable.
- She is an agent who has strengths.
- She is someone who counts .
- She is eligible to assign statuses to the therapist.
- She is therapist's ally.

LEGITIMIZE, LEGITIMIZE, LEGITIMIZE

- Show client how actions make sense.
- Behavior always makes sense.
- Doesn't mean it is moral, right, rational, or anything else—
just that it is understandable.
- What status give clients when you make sense of what they do?

DECRIMINALIZE

Not all mistakes are crimes

Lesser offenses

Hanging Judge

POLICIES FOR DEALING WITH RESISTANCE

Don't do things that generate resistance:

- Start with where client is
- Coercion elicits resistance
- Appeal to what matters
- Legitimize/decriminalize
- Respect both sides of ambivalence

Policies for Increasing Client's Personal Power

- Use action language, not causal language
- Don't buy victim acts
- Assign client status of person who directs, manages his world
- Assign status of perpetrator, not victim
- Treat client as responsible/competent person

Images Can Be Used For

- Diagnosis
- Insight
- Treatment



IMAGES FOR DESTRUCTIVE/DEGRADING RELATIONSHIPS

1. Monkey nuts
2. 12-foot alligator
3. Poisonous trees



DEAL WITH FEELINGS

- Don't shoot the messenger
- If want to know how someone feels, don't ask how they feel—ask what they are thinking
- Deal with reality basis of feelings — don't talk about them.
- Lion in the room

Dealing With Death-Grief

Grief Reminders

- Surf in a storm
- Pruned
- No time limit—
revisit loss at any time
- One size doesn't fit all
- Companions of uncertain
status

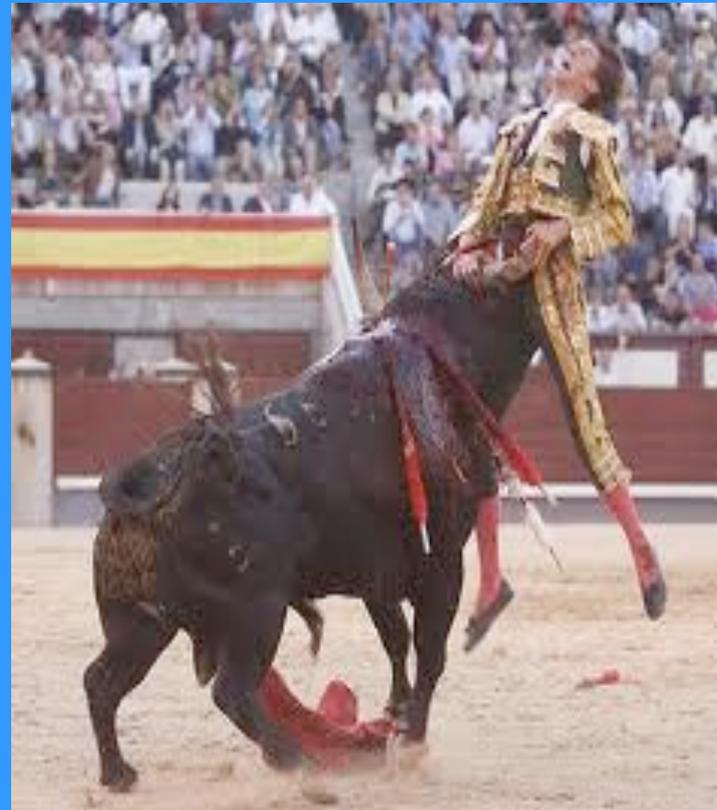
PRUNED!

- What is tree like when it has been pruned?
- What is tree like later when it is not not dormant?



DO CAPEWORK

DON'T TAKE BULL BY THE HORNS



When you see a man painting a picture, keep your eye on the man.

That's where the action is!



SELF-CRITICISM

Become a more constructive critic

- One-armed Armenian Grandmother
- Hillary Clinton
- Hanging Judge
- Art Critic
- What kind of person would care about doing it right, ethically, esthetically satisfying

THERAPY EXERCISES

- Treat self as process not as object
- Rewrite history
- Omnipotence
- Defensive driving
- Constructive critic
- Increasing the size of your umbrella
- Prescribe a new role/status in play

OMNIPOTENCE

If you were God, what would you change? How would your life be?

Life Has No Meaning

- **Little white balls**
- **Not what you get out of it, what you put into it.**
- **Treat as meaningless, can't disappoint you**

Your Life As A Drama

Think about your life as a drama and begin to change your place in the world:

- View yourself as a process and not as an object —image of Act IV
- Recast your part in the play.
- You can become director, casting director, a better critic, or be a different character in the play.

- A drama is not a theory or a metaphor—it is how we understand and portray the continuity and significance of each person's life.
- Dramas portray a person's life or strategic portions of a person's life.
- Human behavior is intrinsically and fundamentally a way of creating and realizing personal and social dramas.

Basic Coping Package

You can only get certain things from certain places.

If you want something, go to where you are going to get it, not to where you aren't going to get it.

You must respect what's there to get out of it what's to be gotten.

You run into trouble if you try to make things what they are not.

You won't get from there what is there.

If you adjust to what's there, then you can work with it successfully.

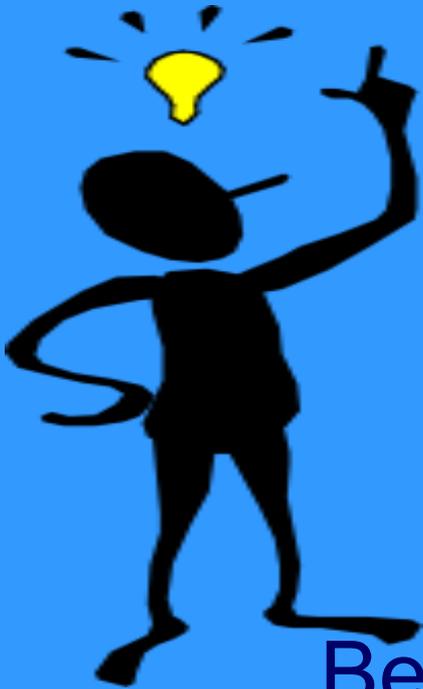
Rewrite Client's History

No behavior is immune from being treated as successful.

Can transform any behavior—even entire history from one of failure to one of success, from bleak to promising, from hopeless to successful all along.

Why should you be different now?

Rewrite Personal History



- ❖ Show person how it makes sense to be depressed.
- ❖ If you make sense now, you have always made sense.

Being a person who makes sense is higher status than one who does not.

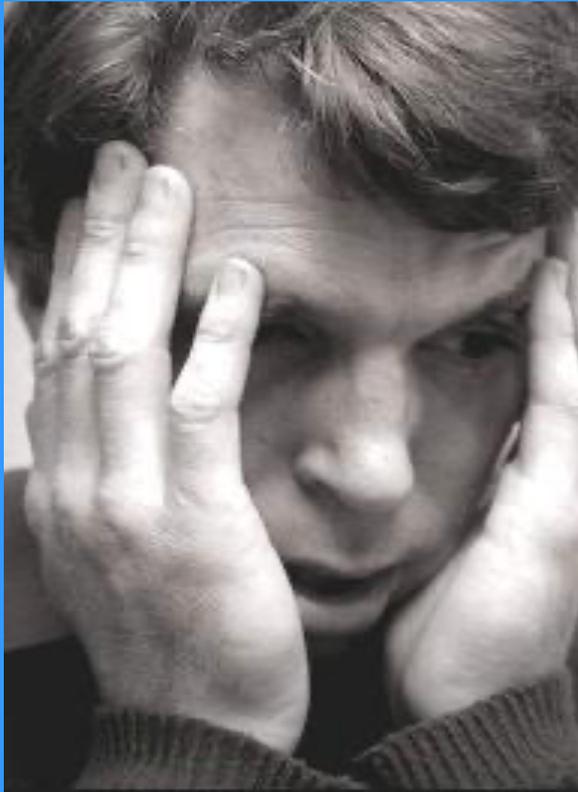
Ex Post Facto Creation of Reality

Any behavior or history of behavior can be described and treated as successful in some way—client has always succeeded in that way.

If client acts as successful and powerful agent now—has always been that way.

REJECT THE WORLD

Any pattern of avoidance can be described as either fear or anger—as either avoidance or rejection



Is this fellow avoiding the world or is he rejecting it—telling the world to go to hell?

MAD AS HELL!

- ❖ You become depressed when you suffer status losses that you did not have coming to you and can do nothing about.
- ❖ Given this kind of loss, you are likely to be mad as hell!
- ❖ Avoidance as fear or anger—choose anger



❖ As you become more depressed, you deal with world less and less.

❖ Angry at world and doing a good job of expressing it.

❖ The more depressed you are, the better job you are doing of rejecting the world, the more your status increases.



Increase Status Without Behavior Changing

Severely depressed people do not do much.

- ❖ May need to change place in the world without first having a change in their behavior.
- ❖ Change status of what they achieve by being depressed.

Increase Status or Resist Loss Of Status

- ❖ Sometimes the task is to regain the status the person has lost.
- ❖ At other times, the focus is on gaining other statuses that count for as much or more.
- ❖ Reject or negotiate negative status assignments from self or others

BARRIERS TO SELF-CONCEPT CHANGES

Self-concept *not a set of facts* about P, but
P's *summary formulation* of his status

“Isn't it remarkable what a person like me can accomplish?”

Not clear what if any facts will change self-concept

Self-concept a filter for all facts about P

Stopping Self-degradations



❖ Usually not aware of degrading self—just the way I am.

❖ Difficult to recognize and stop.



❖ Become a more effective critic.

ACCREDITATION CEREMONIES

- ❖ As we saw earlier, you gain status through accreditation ceremonies.
- ❖ Accreditation ceremonies can be public and formal and may include multiple people, or they can be private and involve only one person. “Darn, I wasn’t so bad.”



MANIC DEPRESSIVE STATES

In a manic state, you are trying to play a part that is, for you, unrealistic. You assign yourself a status that at some point you will not be able to carry-off successfully. When you lose that high status, you crash and do not have a future that matters, and you become depressed.



GRADUATION FROM THERAPY!

