

Ethical Openness in Value-Diverse Clinical Work: Lessons From RO-DBT - Case Vignettes

Discussion Questions for Each Case

- 1. Values** - What is the values-based rupture(s)?
- 2. Neuroception** - What neuroceptive state might the therapist be in? What threat cues might the therapist be detecting?
- 3. Self-Enquiry** - What are some good self-enquiry questions for this clinician?
- 4. Flexible Mind** - What strategies could the clinician use to enhance openness, social safety, and flexibility?

Vignette 1: The Political Comment

Dr. Rodriguez identifies as politically progressive. Her client, Jake, is a 45-year-old veteran being treated for depression and social isolation. During a session discussing current events, Jake says: "Honestly, I think immigrants are ruining this country. Nobody wants to say it anymore." Dr. Rodriguez feels immediate anger and tension in her chest. She notices a desire to challenge the statement and internal labeling of Jake as prejudiced. Jake pauses and says, "You probably think I'm a terrible person."

Vignette 2: The Religious Client

A psychologist working with a gay male client, David, for anxiety and relationship difficulties. David belongs to a conservative religious community. During treatment he says: "I believe my attraction to men is sinful, and I need to become a better Christian." The therapist strongly believes affirming LGBTQ identity is ethically necessary.

Vignette 3: The Vaccine Debate

A client with health anxiety says: "I don't trust vaccines. The government lies all the time." The therapist strongly supports public health measures. As the client continues, the therapist notices the urge to correct misinformation, as well as a sense of being intellectually superior.

Vignette 4: The Privileged Client

A wealthy executive complains: "People today just don't want to work." The therapist grew up in poverty. Immediately, she feels irritation, judgment, and emotional distance.

Vignette 5: Therapist Values Disclosure

After months of treatment, a client asks: "Can I ask you something? Did you vote for Trump?" or "Are you religious?" or "Do you support abortion?"

The therapist immediately experiences anxiety.