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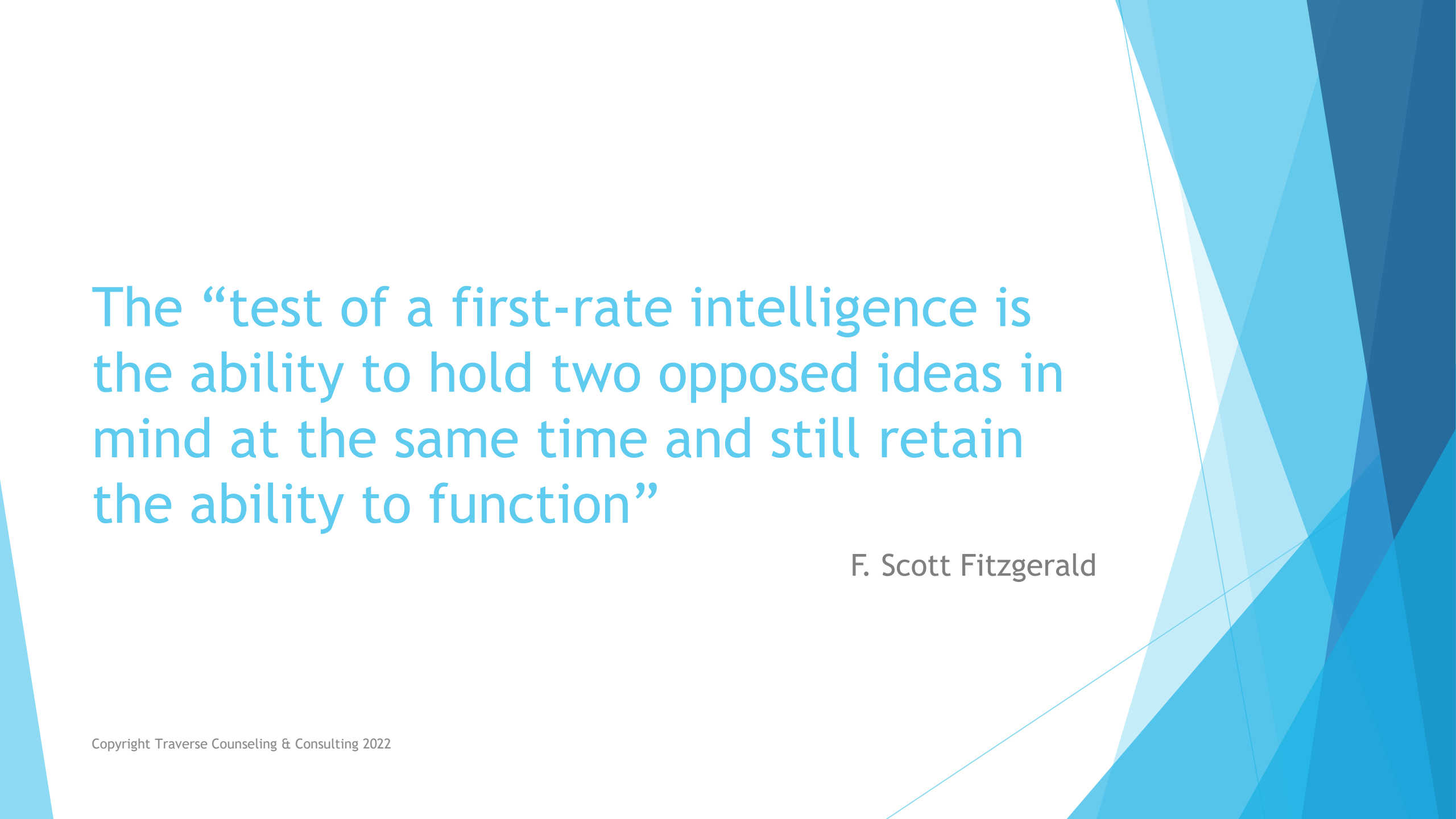
School Leadership: Addressing Complex Problems

Traverse Counseling & Consulting, GBC

Outcomes

- ▶ Participants will have greater clarity in evaluating the multiple agendas of different stakeholders within complex student problems.
- ▶ Participants will have a greater understanding of how their own experience can assist and pose challenges for them in managing complex problems.
- ▶ Participants will apply principles to case studies.

If I understand the system,
I make better decisions.

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The “test of a first-rate intelligence is
the ability to hold two opposed ideas in
mind at the same time and still retain
the ability to function”

F. Scott Fitzgerald

Systemic Assessment

- ▶ What does each interested party want?
- ▶ Where is there alignment and conflicted interests?

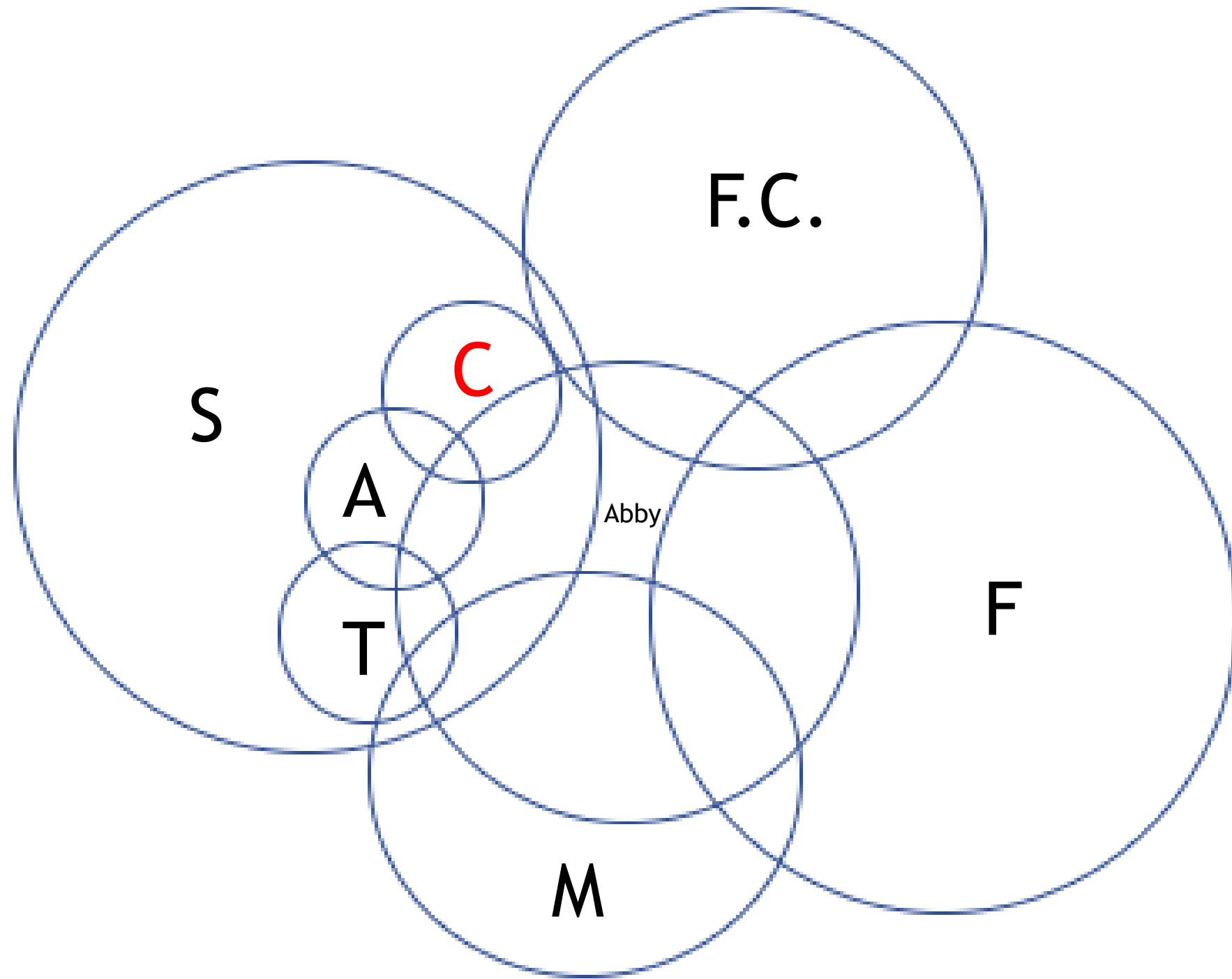
Case Study: Abby

- ▶ Abby, age 14, was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes at age 7. She wears a pump but has so far refused a CGM because she doesn't want "another thing" attached to her. She is well-liked by peers and just joined the high school dance team. She has recently lost some weight, which she attributes to being on the dance team. She does pretty good in her classes, except math because she "hates numbers."
- ▶ Abby's Mom asks about her blood sugars each evening and after she comes back from her dad's. When Abby has mentioned a blood sugar out of range, her mom sighs and says "You've been doing this forever. How hard is it to press a few buttons?" Now Abby usually tells her mom a "good" blood sugar, which makes Mom smile.
- ▶ Abby has two younger brothers, ages 11 and 8. Abby's parents divorced four years ago, and her mom remarried last year. She sees her dad every other weekend. Her parents and her step-dad all work full-time. Abby's 8-year-old brother has recently been diagnosed with ADHD, and her middle brother's teachers have been contacting Mom that he is being "disruptive" in class. Abby's mom calls you to talk about Abby not caring for her diabetes. She asks you to write a report that she can bring to court, illustrating how she should have more parenting time. The following week, you receive a subpoena from dad to appear in court.
- ▶ Abby's English teacher brings you a paper that Abby has written that talks about depression and suicide. The teacher shares with you that she also has diabetes and knows what depression is. She told the student that she can call her 'any time' to talk. She wants you to take action immediately.
- ▶ When you meet with Abby says she's tired of having diabetes and doesn't want to do it anymore, and unless you have diabetes, you don't understand. Abby's friend meets with you and states she wants to lose weight like Abby can from her diabetes.

What additional information would
be helpful to you in discerning?

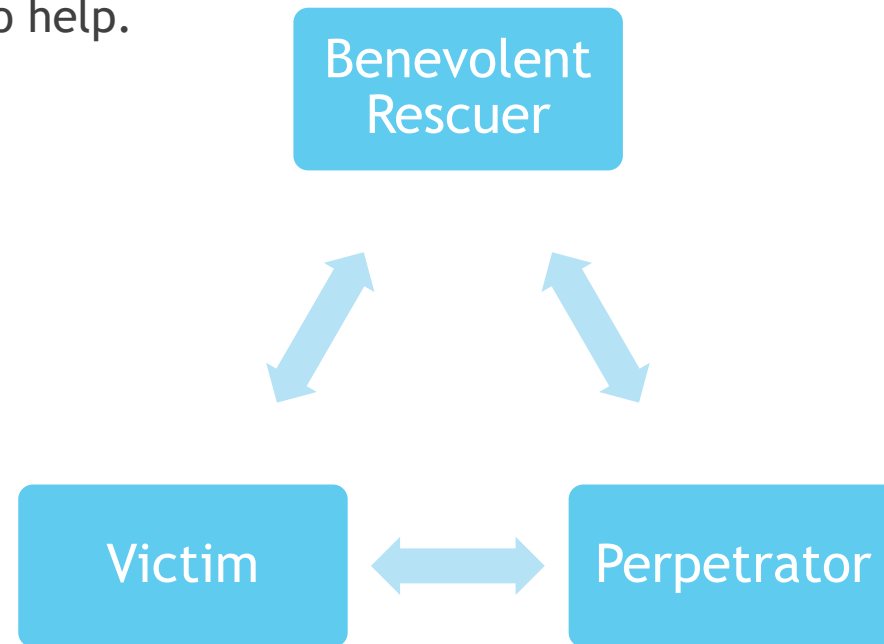
Pitfalls

- ▶ Misprioritized interventions
- ▶ Taking sides
- ▶ Blame and Pathologizing
- ▶ Poor self-care
- ▶ Isolation
- ▶ Unmanaged counter-transference
- ▶ Lack of consultation
- ▶ Reacting to symptoms rather than leading to wellness



Welcome to the Triangle

- ▶ Relationships are based on “Threes,” not “Twos”
- ▶ When relationally are “stuck” we seek others to help.
 - ▶ Therapists/counselor
 - ▶ Children
 - ▶ New Partner/affair
- ▶ Leadership is Key!
- ▶ If you “follow,” you won’t last.
 - ▶ Reacting is not Leading
- ▶ How do you know you are triangulated?



Where is the triangulation in this case?

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Boundaries and Roles

- ▶ When triangulation occurs, boundaries are blurred.
- ▶ When we change our role, we are crossing a boundary (Counselor vs. Advocate)
- ▶ How can blurred boundaries be helpful?
- ▶ When are they harmful?

Counselor, know thy role

Counselor vs Advocate

- If you advocate know that you may activate unhealthy family dynamics and aggravate the system

Who is your client - what are their goals?

- Student
- Family
- School

Job Description

- Support the student to be their best self in the school environment

Skills/Competencies


Countertransference

Do your work

Consult, consult, consult

Document that you have discussed this in your notes -- “Assessed for countertransference”

What triggers you?

A photograph of a wooden dock or pier extending into a body of water. The dock is made of light-colored wood and has a railing. The water is calm, reflecting the dock and the surrounding environment. On the right side of the image, there is a blue geometric overlay consisting of several overlapping triangles and polygons in various shades of blue.

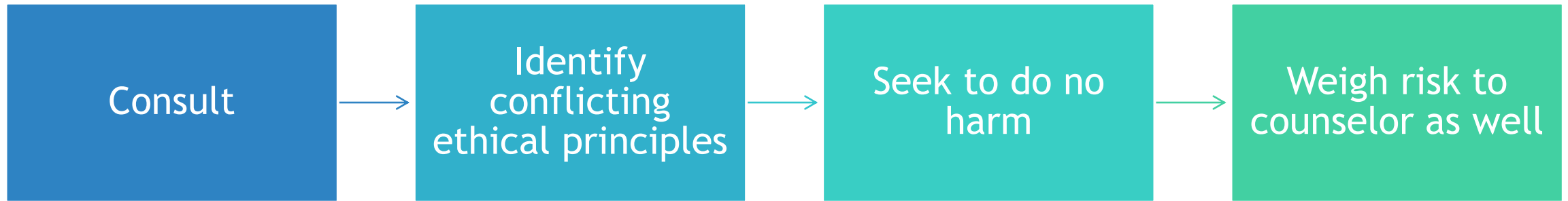
*As a counselor,
become aware of your
own stress, and have
ways to be restored.*

Consultation

- ▶ Mitigates the risk of being isolated and on your own
- ▶ Successful consultation looks like:
 - ▶ A safe place to organize your thoughts and reactions
 - ▶ Manage your counter-transference
 - ▶ Provide ongoing support and nurturance
 - ▶ Challenge your ways of viewing the issues at bay

What are the values at play?

- ▶ Safety and wellness
 - ▶ Medical need of the child
 - ▶ Mental well-being
- ▶ Agency of kid, parents, teachers
- ▶ Justice - obligation to act fairly
- ▶ Do no harm



Ethical decision making



**WE MUST
ALWAYS CHOOSE
SAFETY BEFORE
HAPPINESS**

“The Road to Hell is paved with Good Intentions”

~ Henry G Bohn, 1855

“Good Intentions are a wonderful place to *begin* and a terrible place to *end*”

Leadership: “To be one step ahead”

- ▶ We are all “called” to lead.
- ▶ Reactionary v. Proactive
- ▶ Styles of Counselor leadership are diverse.
- ▶ Counselor Leadership is an “Invitation”
 - ▶ “Will you let me lead?”
- ▶ Structural Leadership is critical as the level of distress increases
- ▶ Clarity of Purpose and Direction:
 - ▶ “Where are you leading them?”
- ▶ It requires skill: “How will you lead them?”
- ▶ Counselor Leadership as a Three-Legged Stool
 - ▶ Safety
 - ▶ Nurture
 - ▶ Challenge



Stress and Anxiety can consume
you.

Stress and Structure

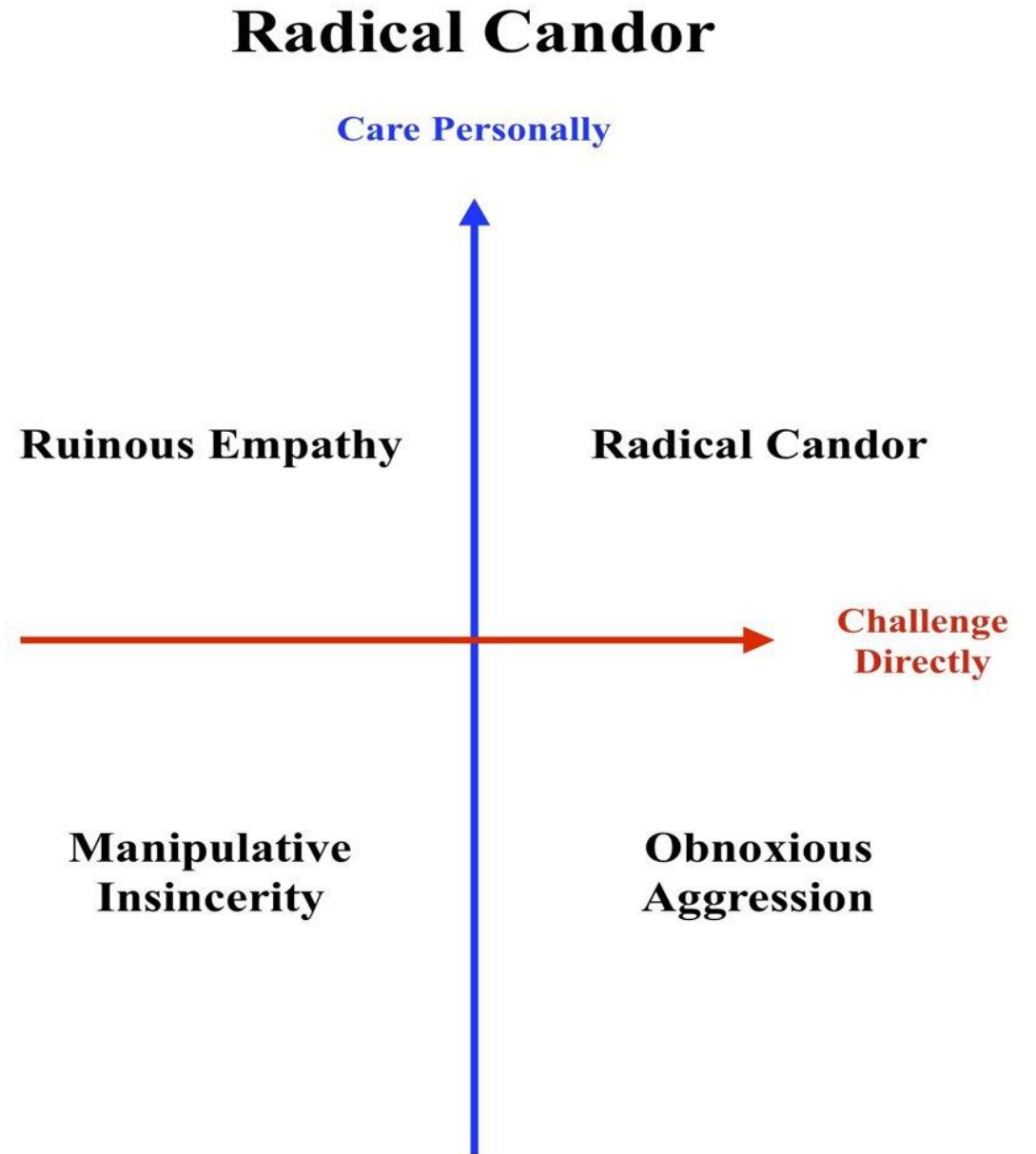
Anxiety fuels Conflict

Structure Reduces Anxiety and creates “Safety”

Well-constructed counseling provides a structure to reduce Anxiety.

Leadership of the process is Key.

Leading with Radical Candor



Ruinous Empathy v. Radical Candor

Ruinous Empathy

- Minnesota Nice
- If you don't have something nice to say you.....
- Avoidance
- Fear
- Keeps people "stuck"

Radical Candor

- Humble
- Helpful
- Immediate
- In person/In private
- Not personalized
- Courageous

Let's Revisit Abby

- ▶ Abby, age 14, was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes at age 7. She wears a pump but has so far refused a CGM because she doesn't want "another thing" attached to her. She is well-liked by peers and just joined the high school dance team. She has recently lost some weight, which she attributes to being on the dance team. She does pretty good in her classes, except math because she "hates numbers."
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Interventions

- ▶ Thoughtful/purposeful
 - ▶ Consider ethics
- ▶ Prioritize
 - ▶ Where do I put my energy first?
- ▶ Alignment with other professionals
 - ▶ Principal, other counselors, attorney for the district
- ▶ Art of Influence
 - ▶ The power of relationships
- ▶ Every *action* will have a *reaction*
 - ▶ You are creating discomfort
- ▶ ***Document rationale***
- ▶ Feedback will help with next steps

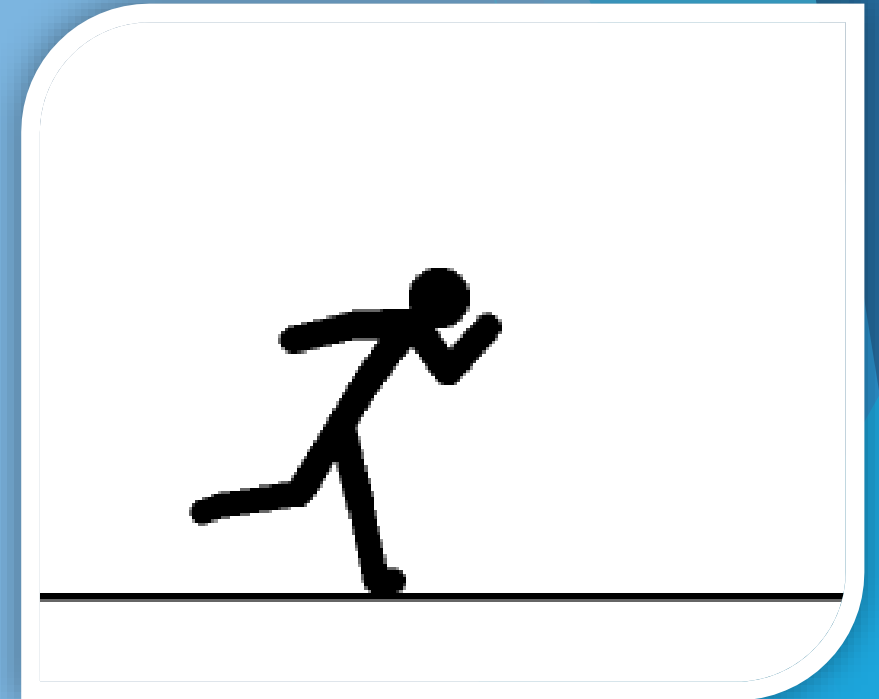
Structural Interventions

- ▶ Organizational Interventions
 - ▶ Hold an organizational meeting to prioritize needs of the systems at play
 - ▶ Invite an administrator to be informed of the situation, how it will be managed, and provide additional support to you
- ▶ Boundary Interventions
 - ▶ Ex: Do I need to address boundary concerns about teacher/student with an administrator?
- ▶ Counseling Interventions
 - ▶ Ex: coping strategies, stress management

Knowing When to Exit.....

- ▶ When safety is compromised and cannot be repaired.
- ▶ When it's not healthy for you to stay in it. It's not "life-giving."
- ▶ When you feel unqualified or limited in competency
- ▶ It is not within your role/authority
- ▶ What are effective/ethical ways to step out of the work?

"The Gambler" - Kenny Rogers



When in doubt -
Consult. Get help.
Do not stay isolated.



Traverse Counseling & Consulting

www.traversecc.org
(952) 595-5967

Traverse provides services for families, couples, adults, children and teens with a variety of family systems issues:

Family Transitions

Parenting Issues

Child, Individual, Couple/Marital Therapy

Exceptionalism

Discernment

Medical Family Therapy

Video Game/Internet addiction

Dispute Resolution services

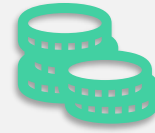
Training and Consultation for Faith Communities

STOP TALKING

Needs of children



Safety



Significance



Belonging



Child as the symptom bearer

Toxicity in a system create a developmentally inappropriate load for children and youth to bear - this has implications for a young person's development and can manifest in many symptoms

Discuss ways that you have seen kids in the classroom impacted by the 'symptom' within their family system?