

Intentional Practice: A Method for Supporting Adults to Deliver Moment-To-Moment Trauma-Informed Practice

‘Respond’ to Need and Not ‘React’ to Behaviour

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How do we make a positive difference in the lives of our clients?

<http://www.lifebuoyancy.org/research-and-evidence/>

Overview

- Principles and context
- What is intentional practice?
- Science and applications
- Summarising key intentional practice “thinking skills” and questions?
- A case example (Bernie Noonan, Uniting Country SA)

Foundational Assumption 1

In each and every interaction or intervention point between a young person and a supporting adult there is an opportunity for growth.

But not every interaction is a growth experience?

Activating Versus Suppressing Experiences

Experiences can range on a continuum from activating to suppressing. The same event can be experienced as activating or suppressing depending on the individual.



Suppressing Experiences

Inhibits healthy growth/wellbeing/learning outcomes



The same event, program, relationship or intervention



Activating Experiences

Activates healthy growth/wellbeing/learning outcomes





Foundational Assumption 2

There is No 'Perfect Recipe' for a Young Person
(or recipe book for parenting, teaching, youth working or
case management).

Every young person is unique and has different needs and experiences.

Intentional Practice provides you the 'Recipe Process'. It brings high awareness to a child or young person's experiences/context, the intent and purpose behind your work, and the impact or effects of your interventions and/or moment-to-moment interactions.

Foundational Assumption 3

Trauma-Informed Practice is set of skills (in particular thinking skills) which need to be developed, practiced and coached (training is only one capacity building process).

Intentional Practice is a 'skill' focused approach that grows key thinking and behavioural skills to 'respond' to need and not 'react' to behaviour in a mindful and individually tailored way.

It teaches practitioners 'how to fish' (think trauma-informed and develop activating strategies/scripts), as opposed to providing all the fish. It is a method to build individual and collective skill capacity.

What is Intentional Practice?

Intentional Practice is an umbrella term that refers to any intervention where the supporting adult (or program/institution) brings moment-to-moment awareness (or mindfulness) of the desired outcomes (“what”) and associated processes (“how”) within the intervention. This is founded upon the following key questions:

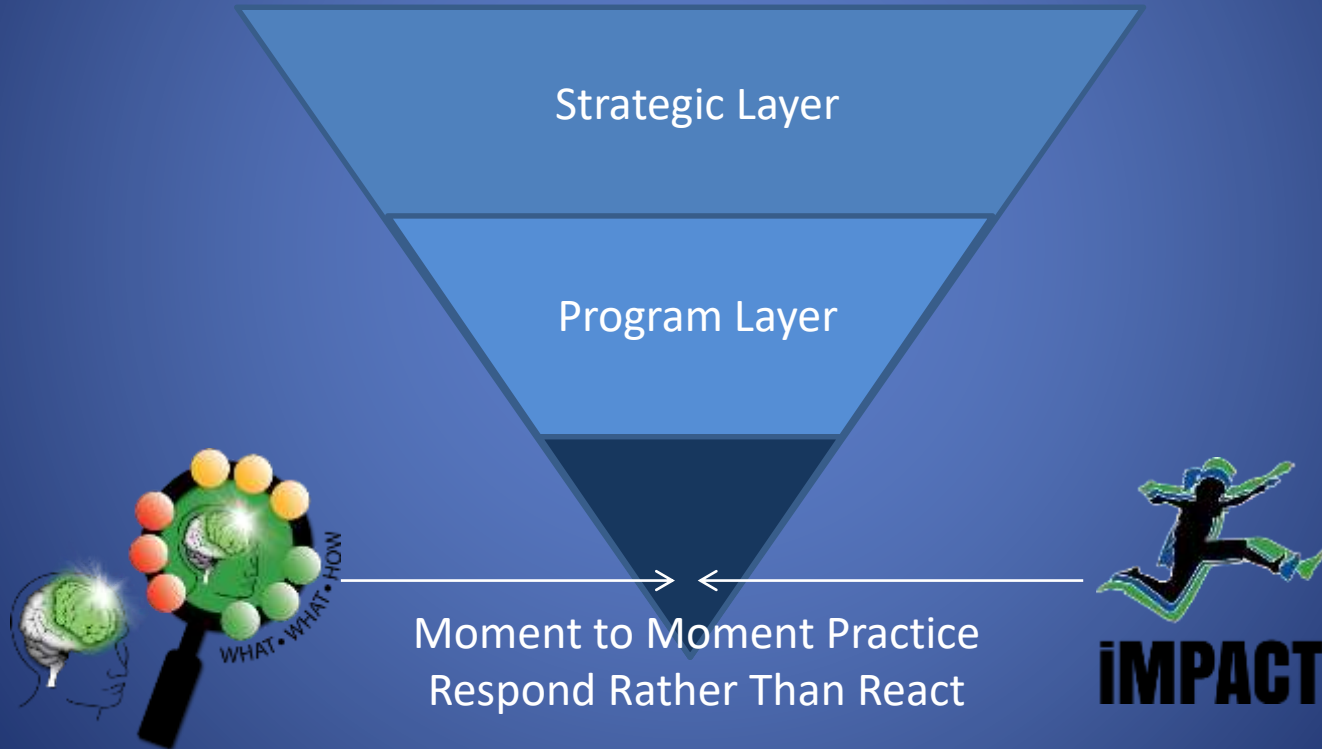
- **What** is the intent or energy we are bringing to an individual relationship or intervention process?
- **What** outcomes are we are hoping to achieve?
- **How**, or by which method, are we seeking to deliver these outcomes?

For more information:

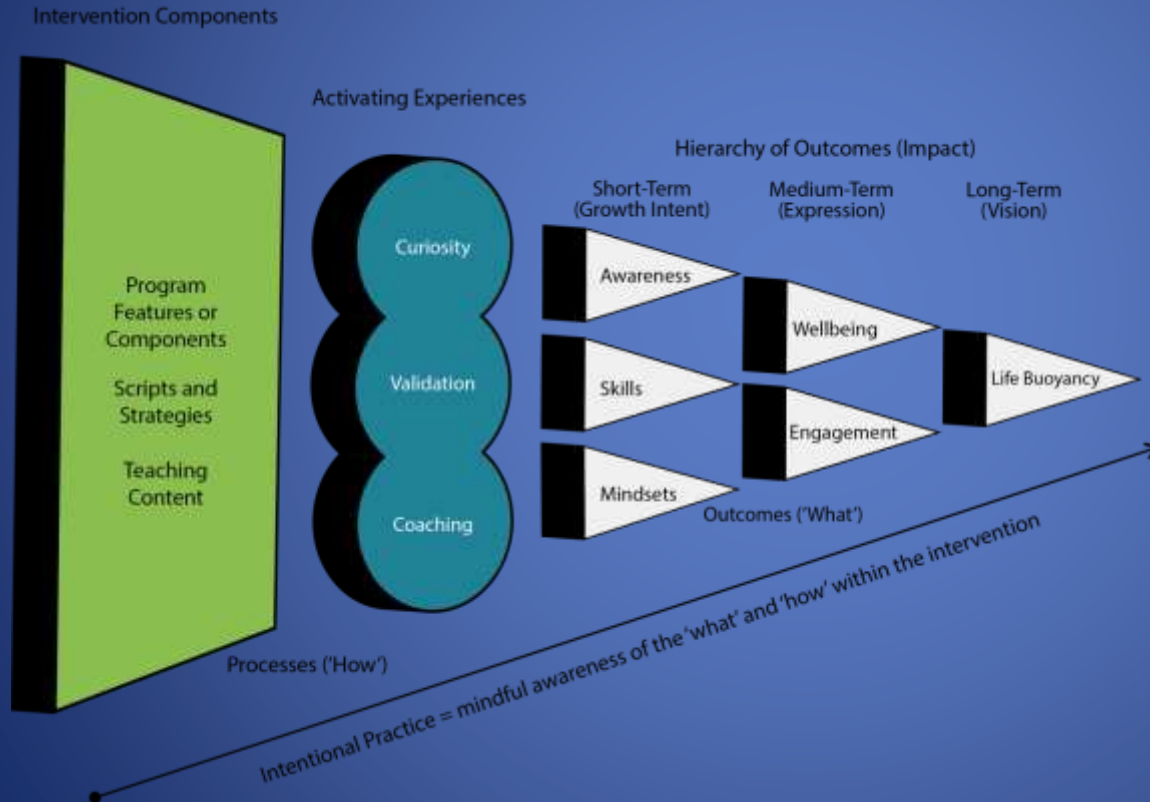
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJUkXu1KMyhCHQr6Q_Lxqdg

<http://www.lifebuoyancy.org/intentional-practice/>

Intentional Practice: Multi-Levelled Application



Modelling



Raymond, I. J. (2018). A programme logic framework designed to strengthen the impact and fidelity of wellbeing and behavioural interventions. In P. Slee, G. Skrzypiec & C. Cefai (Eds.), *Child and adolescent well-being and violence prevention in schools*. London: Routledge.

Raymond, I. J. (2016). *Can intensive wilderness programs be a catalyst for change for young people at risk of offending, educational disengagement and poor wellbeing?* (Doctoral Thesis). Flinders University, Adelaide. Retrieved from <https://theses.flinders.edu.au/view/ea878663-d366-41cf-a11b-dc7a75e412c7/1>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJUkXu1KMyhCHQr6Q_Lxqdg

Core Thinking Skills – ‘What is my Intent’?

What is our intent when working with children and young people:

- Change
- Punish
- Grow
- Compliance
- Manage behaviour
- Manage risk
- Teach
- Fix
- Supervise

What category of intent do you want to bring stronger focus to?

Core Thinking Skills – ‘What’s Happening’

What am I observing?

What is under the surface (iceberg)?



Under the Surface (Needs)

For clients with backgrounds of extended trauma, their under the surface experiences include

- Lack of feelings of safety and trust
- Higher underlying feelings of fear and shame
- Higher internal, stress or arousal state
- Mindset (or internal working model) that ‘adults can’t be trusted’, ‘the world is unpredictable’ and ‘I am at fault for what has happened to me’
- Much higher needs for control, to feel worthwhile or competent, and to form connections or experience acceptance.



Core Thinking Skills: 'What's Important'

Am I grounded and safe base figure?

What is my growth intent?



Growth Intent

Growth Intent is the key feature of intentional practice. It asks the practitioner what do we want to grow in the client in the moment. It is not a case plan goal, but something that can be brought to awareness in the moment.

Growth intent can be brought to both implicit and explicit teaching methods.

What's Important – Growth Intent

For clients with backgrounds of trauma, our growth intent will bring a stronger focus to growing: (not exhaustive list).

- Safety, stability and trust
- Mindset that 'adults can be trusted, and the world is predictable'
- Mindset that 'I am valued and worthwhile'
- Grow awareness of emotions, triggers and how they express in the body
- Grow skills to be mindful and express feelings in healthy ways
- Growing healthy connections with other people
- Growing skills to self-soothe or regulate
- Growing a growth mindset



Core Thinking Skills

How Will I Act?

The 'how' in intentional practice is not defined. Supporting adults are encouraged and empowered to draw upon their existing skills, knowledge and formulate scripts and strategies with high awareness of their intent and impact on the client (using both implicit and explicit methods).

To aide this process, scripts and strategies are designated as activating when they are:

- Experienced as validating
- Evoke curiosity
- Provide coaching or skill development opportunities









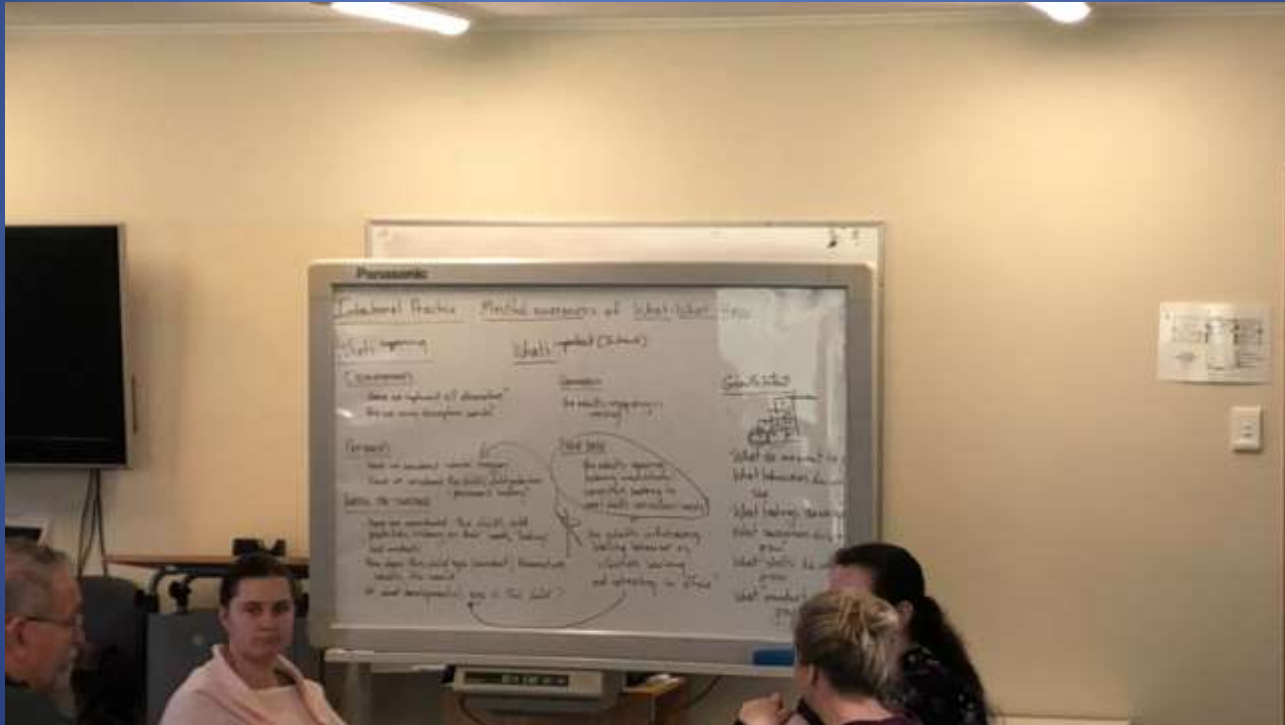








Clinicians as Coaches



Application

Uniting Country SA

Context

- 5 therapeutic houses for guardianship clients across regional SA
- Use TCI – to provide procedural guidance to staff around crisis and build more intentional post-debriefing processes
- Use 3 Pillars to provide foundational training
- Clinical psychology support

Role of Intentional Practice (IMPACT Program)

- To build our staff skills to respond rather than react, and guide them to support growth outcomes through all interactions (any moment and anytime)
- To develop and implement individual 'growth' plans for children and young people

Application

Uniting Country SA

Implementation

- Agency wide training (IMPACT Program)
- Embedding tools and advanced training (IMPACT Program)
- Clinical unpacking and deepening through 'growth action plans'

Impressions and Outcomes

- Represents a missing link in therapeutic care – growing internal capacity
- Good staff understanding and a common language to bring staff back to growth-focused care
- We talk about 'growth' as everything we do.

Next Steps

- Train-The-Trainer
- Additional embedding tools

Further Information

Intentional practice

- <http://www.lifebuoyancy.org/intentional-practice/>

Intentional practice research and evidence

- <http://www.lifebuoyancy.org/research-and-evidence/>

Further information and applications

- https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJUkXu1KMyhCHQr6Q_Lxqdg

IMPACT Program

- <http://www.lifebuoyancy.org/intentional-practice/>

IMPACT – Intentional Model and Practice Approach for Clients to Thrive



iMPACT

Further Information on Intentional Practice

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