

Summary of Behaviour

The client exhibited a reflective and self-critical demeanor, frequently acknowledging progress while remaining judgmental of past behaviors. They discussed a history of self-harm, suicidal ideation, and interpersonal difficulties, noting improvements in emotional regulation and a shift from feeling emotionally exposed to having greater resilience. The client described using alcohol to manage social anxiety, which sometimes resulted in blackouts and risky situations, and expressed ambivalence about its role in their life. They reported significant fear of anger, associating it with destructive outcomes and making efforts to suppress it entirely. The client reflected on unresolved family dynamics, including guilt over interactions with their father before his death and challenges in their relationship with their mother. They also acknowledged avoidance patterns and noted progress through dialectical behavior therapy, particularly with techniques like self-soothing and acceptance.

Intervention

Motivational interviewing techniques were used to explore the patient's avoidance behaviors, alcohol use, and emotional regulation, particularly regarding anger and interpersonal relationships. Psychoeducation was provided on the effects of avoidance in suppressing emotions and its potential long-term impact, as well as the importance of acceptance and emotional processing. The therapist referenced dialectical behavior therapy concepts, such as self-soothing and acceptance, which the patient acknowledged as beneficial in the past. Reflective listening was employed to validate the patient's experiences while gently challenging patterns of self-condemnation and avoidance. The therapist used analogies to draw parallels between past self-harm behaviors and current drinking patterns, encouraging the patient to reflect on underlying emotional drivers. These interventions aimed to deepen the patient's insight into their coping mechanisms and emotional patterns, while fostering a foundation for future therapeutic exploration.

Response

The client displayed a combination of humor, self-awareness, and emotional vulnerability in response to the interventions. They acknowledged observations about avoidance and its impact on their emotional regulation and behaviors, including alcohol use to manage social anxiety. While they expressed fear and ambivalence about confronting painful emotions, they also recognized the potential benefits of doing so. The client reflected on

progress made through dialectical behavior therapy, including self-soothing techniques and acceptance, but continued to struggle with self-condemnation, which the therapist gently challenged. Their responses revealed both resistance and openness to deeper exploration, as well as ongoing difficulties with self-judgment and interpersonal relationships.

Plan

Continue weekly session using an integrated approach combining motivational interviewing to explore and shift alcohol use, emotion regulation, distress tolerance, self-soothing, acceptance, and supportive work on grief and family relationships. Between now and the next session, the client will track any alcohol use, including context, amount, and emotional state before and after drinking; complete a brief daily check-in noting one emotionally activating event, their main emotions, and how they responded; and intentionally practice one previously helpful DBT exercise at least three times, noting its impact. Next session will review these observations, map current work-related stressors and their interaction with mood and coping and gently deepen exploration of recent family interactions.