

**Problems – Possibilities  
Resources – Restraints  
A Versatile PPRRactice Map**

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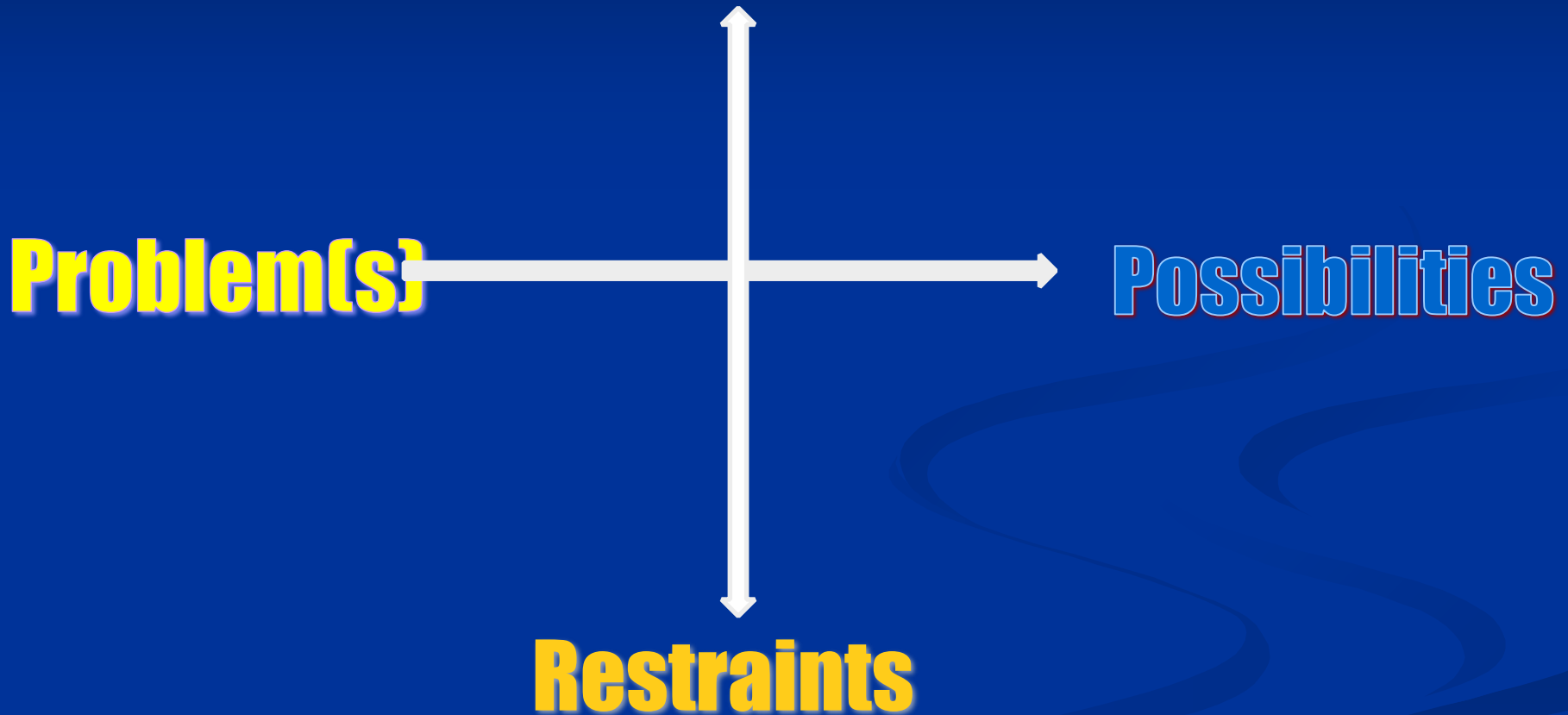
**Centre for Systemic Social Work 2017**

**Resources**

**Problem(s)**

**Possibilities**

**Restrains**



# Practice applications

## 1 Self-reflexive internal guide

- At first I used the model as an internal heuristic framework.
  - Where was I?,
  - Was this OK?
  - If not where should I be moving to?
  - And so on .. Until a particular family session

# Practice applications

## 2: Family re-positioning

- During a 3<sup>rd</sup> session a family became embroiled in an argument over whether the 17 year old daughter (recently discharged from a de-tox type programme) should go to a weekend festival. It was hard for me to follow the logic of their argument and they seemed oblivious to my attempts to join into their conversation.
- I occupied myself by drawing out quite a large version of the PPRR map on the table and gradually the family members turned their attention to my artistic efforts.

**Resources**

**Problems**

**'Going to the  
Festival'**

**Restrains**



# Practice example 2 cont..

- ‘As I was listening to you talking I thought of it this way... and explained what I meant by the the diagram.
- I made a small square piece of paper with their name on for each person, and asked them to physically position themselves on the diagram in relation to their posture towards the possibility of ‘Going to the festival’
- They took turns (in a way they werent doing verbally) in physically positioning and explaining themselves on the map.

**Resources**

**Father**

**Mother**

**Daughter**

**Problems**

**'Going to the Festival'**

**Mother**

**Father**

**Restraints**

# Prac app 2 cont Next session

- Daughter (smiling): I've got a 'New Dad'! I didn't realise that he could be interested in what I want to do, never mind enthusiastic.
- Dad: 'I enjoyed being seen as helpful for a change! I realise that she has thought this through more than I knew'
- Mother: I didn't like it so much, I would rather be... but what I did enjoy watching them get on better. It's safe to leave them in the house alone now!

# Prac app 2 Summary

- In this example the map was used to explore the similarities/differences between family members and see how easy/difficult was for persons to move around the map (flex-able) and position themselves differently and thus open up different possibilities.
- Extensions to this initial use of the map include client-therapists; supervisor – supervisee; team members; management groups etc

**Resources**

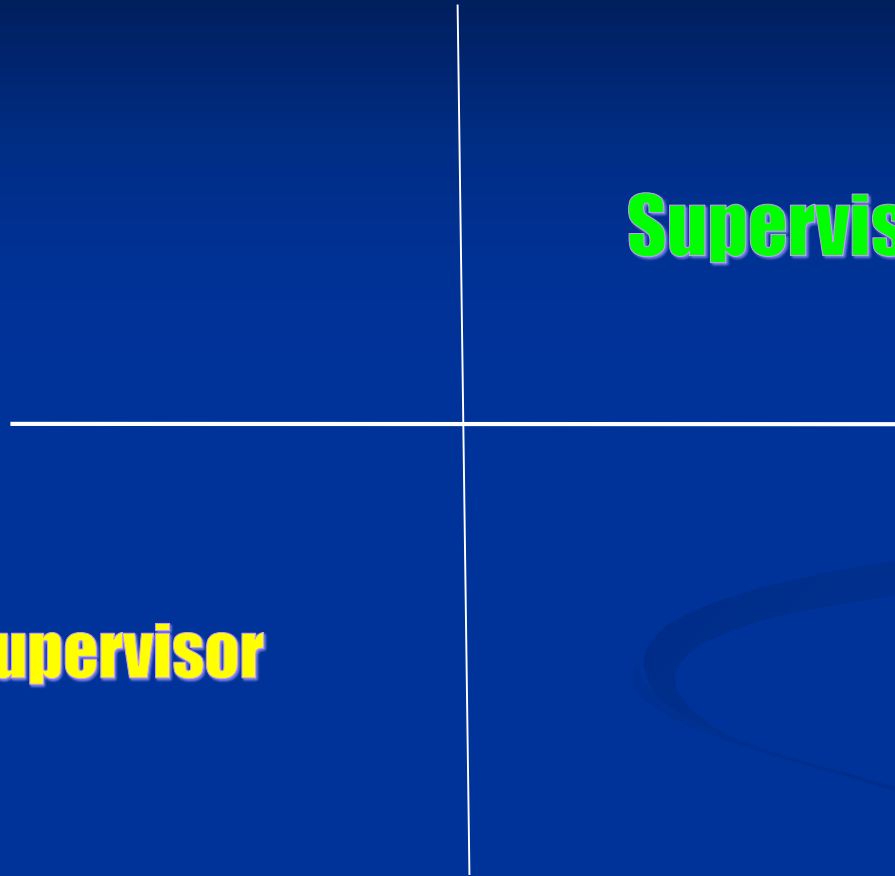
**Supervisee**

**Problems**

**Possibilities**

**Supervisor**

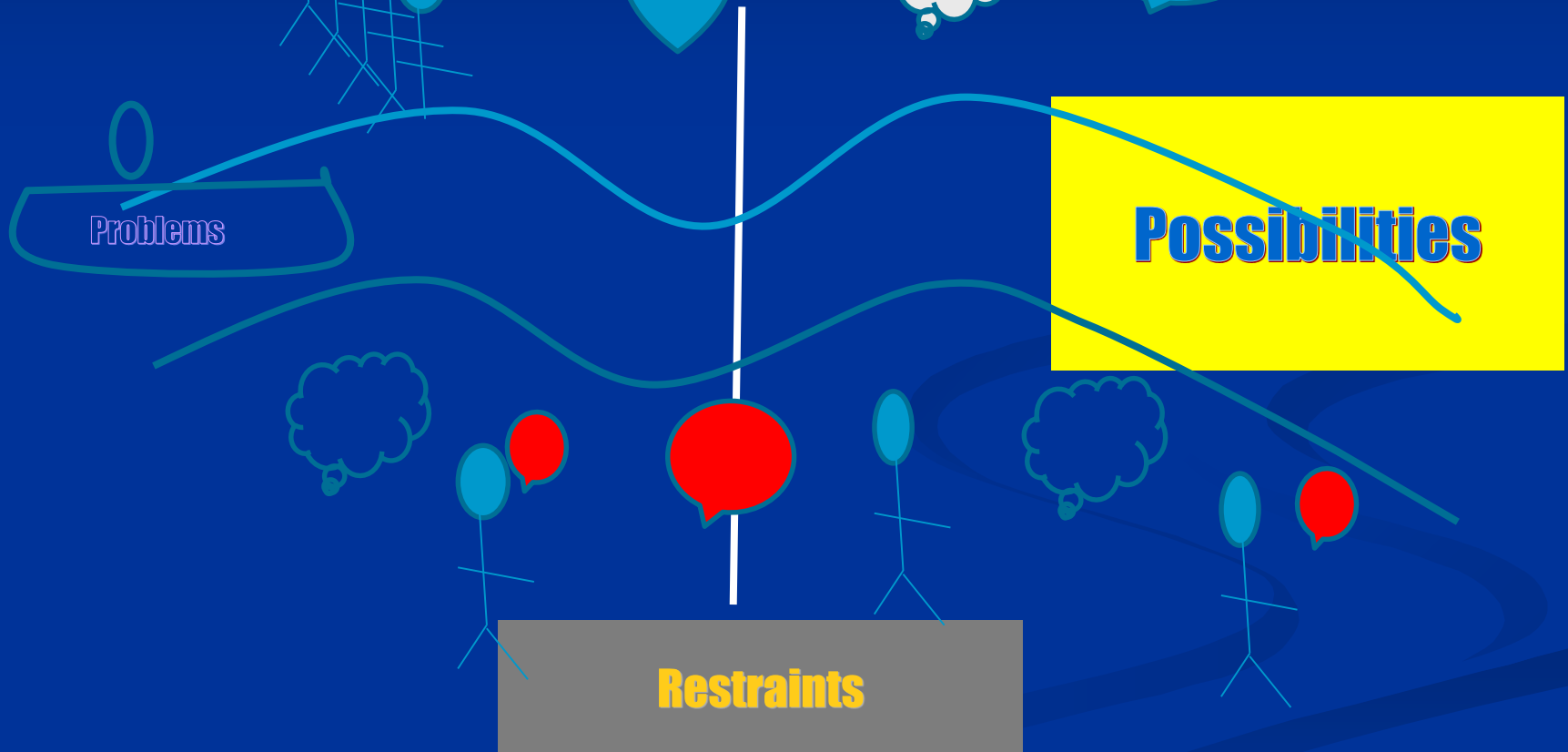
**Restrains**



# Variations on the map in different territories

- Make your own: Sometimes clients do not respond to the map as I drew it out but given the opportunity were able to create their own. Examples include:

# Resources



# Variation 2: Enacting PPRR

- Four family members positioned themselves with their 'backs against the wall' as their starting point and then each person advanced as far as they thought they had progressed towards the possibilities they had identified which were listed on the opposite wall. They found they were at different points along the way, which triggered useful conversations. They swapped ideas about the kind of things (ideas, people, habits) that tended to 'hold them back', 'trip them up', or 'undermine their confidence' (restraints), and those things that tended to 'encourage them to try difference', 'persist even though they get upset' and 'realisations that it didn't always have to be the way it used to be' (resources). This wisdom was generated collectively, and amplified by reflexive questions from the therapist. 2 sessions later the exercise was repeated and the family were able to name those therapist practices that were resources and those they experienced as restraining.

# Let's take a break ...

- So far we have mainly explored the use of PPRR with/for families. The last example indicated how the therapist and therapist practices can be included in the picture to produce a more second order view.
- Lets take a break from reading and turn to the an exercise in reflexive development for therapists.
- This exercise and any emergent reflexive development is situated the concepts of coherence; co-ordination and mystery, borrowed from Pearce (1990?).
- Coherence relates to your personal/professional sense of self, I-identity, which requires self-reflexive abilities
- Coordination relates to creating a fit with and between people
- Mystery reminds us that not everything can be coherent or coordinated.

# EXERCISE FOR READERS 1:

## Developing reflexive abilities

- Purpose: Orient practitioners to their preferred /default ways of approaching the work in hand (coherence/self-reflexive)
- Practicalities: Please take time out from reading to explore the map in relation to your own personal and professional reflexive development.
- Draw the map out either as presented or create one unique to you.

# Exercise 1: Coherence

## What pathway do I follow?

- 1 When I face a problem in my personal life
- 2 When I am helping someone else face a problem in their lives
- Are these two pathways similar or quite different? Neither answer is right or wrong, but can provide useful information relating to your emergent coherence. Many people find that they had not realised that there was a difference.
- What difference might these differences make?

# COHERENCE- SELF REFLEXIVITY

- Which quadrant do you feel most comfortable, skilled at working within (default position)
- Which quadrant do you aspire most to develop
- Which quadrant do you keep 'slipping out' of?
- Which quadrant do you depend on someone else (family/colleagues/team members) to remind/inspire you in thinking about?
- What are the differences/similarities between personal/professional life?

# CO-ORDINATION

## via RELATIONAL REFLEXIVITY

- Which quadrant shall we begin in?
- If we find ourselves having different views about which quadrant we should be in, how might we negotiate?
- How would you imagine me helping you to explore the quadrant you aspire to develop
- When I ask you questions from the x quadrant do you experience that as exciting or scary?

# Next: Deconstruction tool

- What was I going to do next? One evening I had the idea of using the map to 'sort' out ideas, practices and concepts into the different quadrants ... wouldn't that be neat .. and tidy. The next diagram (not sure if I need to include it) began well with particular concepts fitting clearly (or so I thought) into the quadrants. Gradually the map looked messy, but even worse there were some striking limitations...

# Problems as Frustrated dreams **Resources**

Resilience

No probs – skills need to learn  
It's never too late ..

Look to the future

Self-description

Determination

Hope springs ...

Problem-freeing talk

Appreciative enquiry

Not all problem  
talk is problematic

'scaffolding'

'thickening'

Change is inevitable

Trust in the client

Imagination

Reflexive posture

Future dreaming amplifying

**Problems**

**Possibilities**

Change requires outside help

Understanding Problems

Deficit language

History as causal

Full assessment diagnosis

Problem-freezing talk

URPS

Pessimism

Therapist/supervisor as expert

Instructive posture

Maintenance of change  
depends on therapist

Change/learning is painful

Don't change

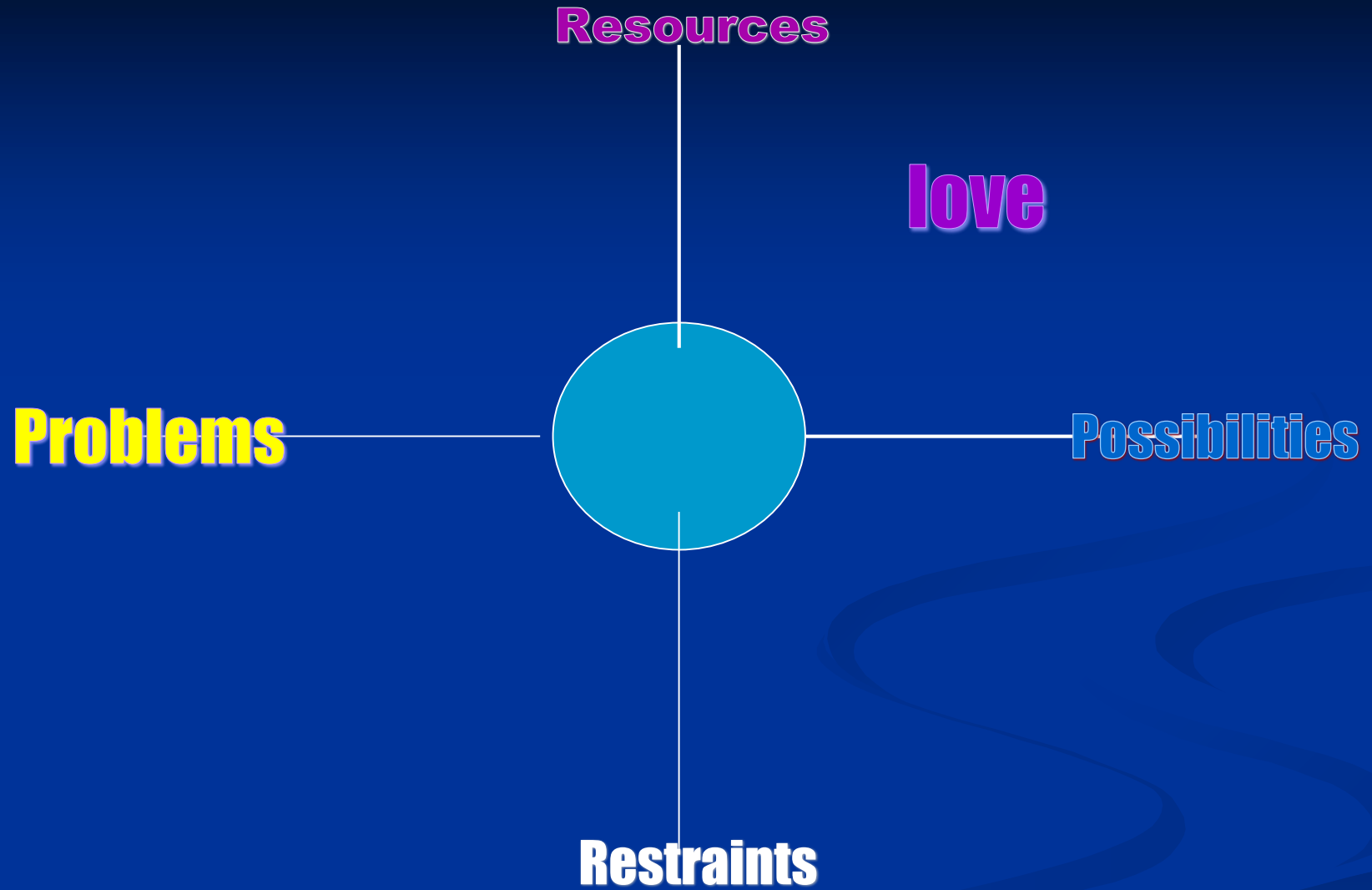
**Restraints**

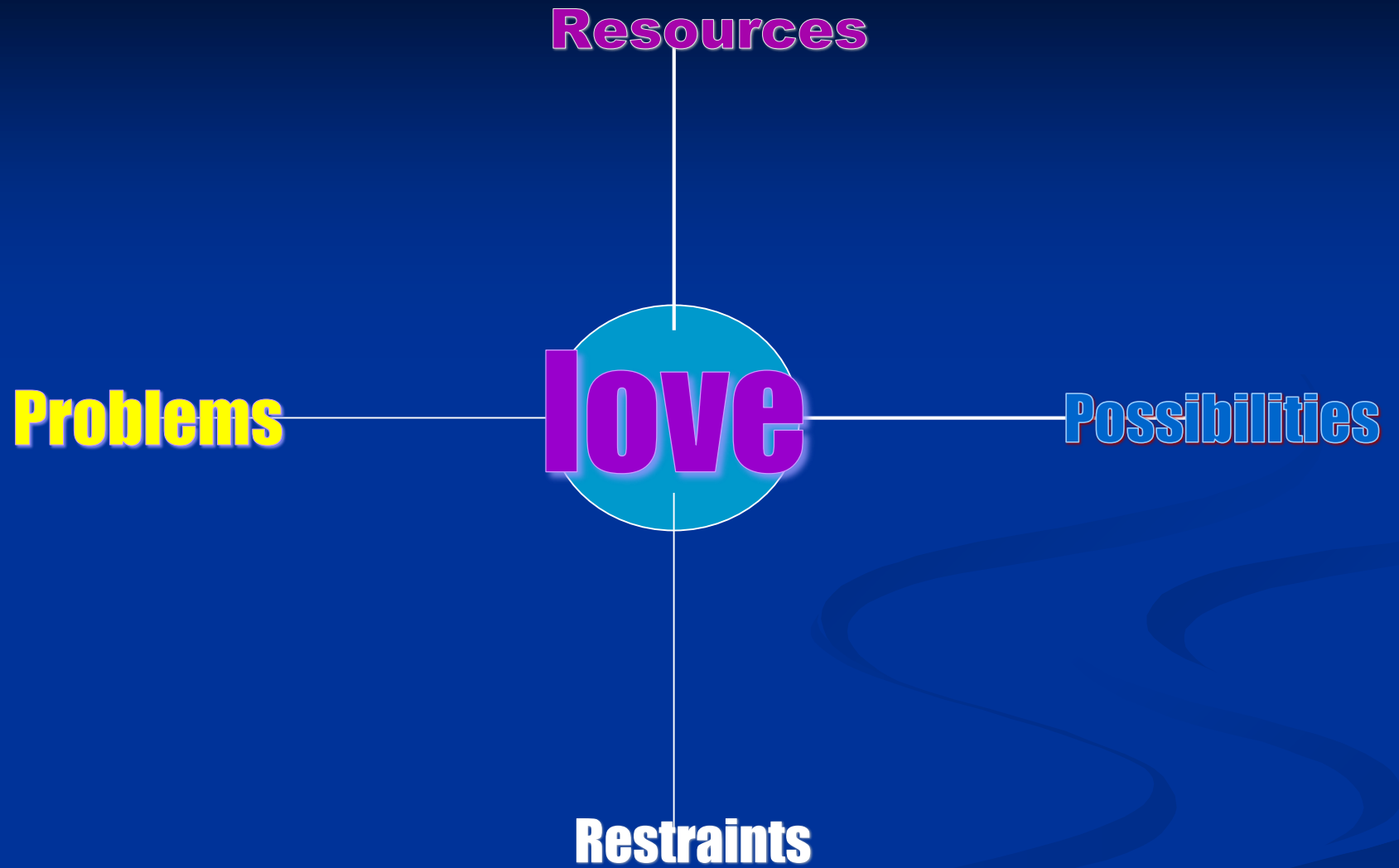
Blame

Problems as symptom of underlying pathology

# Limitations of 'sorting'

- Seemed static with a tendency to:
- 'Fix' each idea/practice into familiar positions
- Reduced curiosity and experimentation
- So wanted to use the map to explore the relationship of each practice to each of the 'pointers' of the compass.
- I drew a circle in the middle
- Instead of allocating an issue, idea, practice or concept to a quadrant I placed it in the middle and asked a series of questions that helped me to deconstruct often taken for granted ideas and practices.





# Deconstruction Example 1: Love

- I would, by default place love in the Resource-Possibility quadrant, and thus take it for granted that it was a good, positive, and resourceful emotion.
- Placing it in the middle and posing the following kind of questions:
  - What problems does love dissolve?
  - What problems does love create?
  - What possibilities does love open?
  - What possibilities does love close down?
  - How and when is love a resource?
  - How and when is love a restraint?

# Deconstruction questions:

- In this way 'love' or any other issue/idea/practice can be explored rigorously through a what I have called elsewhere the 'discipline of curiosity' to enable me go beyond my own preferences and I was became less assumptive in making meanings about certain words; less predictable in my responses; more open to meanings that I had not so far imagined; more flexible in opening space for different possibilities.

# Deconstruction questions:

- A young woman's group centred the idea of 'Speaking Out' (about their abusive experiences)
- A young man's group centred 'taking responsibility' for the abuse they had committed.
- A supervisee centred 'interrupting'
- A supervisee centred 'personal disclosure'
- A supervisor centred 'sharing my own knowledge' with supervisees
- In each of these examples new/different ideas were considered which generated different possibilities when previously there only seemed to be one way.
- Furthermore, people report that they continued to use this practice/process/routine for other issues they were facing

# Coordination

- Have you ever had an experience where you and a client or a supervisee have just ‘clicked’, without much effort at all. Conversations went smoothly, you felt the other person ‘got you and where you were coming from’ and you ‘got’ them, a pathway was coordinated and worked out quite easily and the session progresses ....
- It may well be that you share similar positions/ pathways through PPRR and makes coordination relatively easy.

# Coordination: On the other hand..

- You might have experienced some difficulty in coordinating with a client/supervisee. You seem to 'pass each other by' (Pearce)
- Lets imagine that two people meet and (unbeknown to one another)
- One person (A practitioner) likes to 'take time' and thoroughly understand the problem a client brings and what restrains them from moving before you explore possibilities.
- The other person (eg A client) wants to 'get on with it' and explore different possibilities and what resources the practitioner and their agency has available to help them.
- Without discussing this through RR then you may each continue to act from their own position, perhaps promoting one another to take that position more strongly, eventually frustrating one

# ‘Passing each other by ..’

- Practitioner and client may even begin (privately or otherwise) to describe one another in unkind, or unhelpful ways:
- ‘He is so negative and problem focussed/saturated’, cant he be more positive and think about what is possible? Perhaps if I tell him a few more of my ideas he will ‘get me’
- ‘She is so headstrong, with no sense of the difficulties she is facing and is overly optimistic. Perhaps, if I just make her aware of a few of the consequences of the problem she faces then she might ‘get me’.
- They might, eventually get each other, after a while or end the episode and/or relationship feeling frustrated, blaming the other for not getting it, or blaming themselves for not being able to get their point across.
- These two (or more) people could be friends, family members, members of a club, practioner/client, supervisor/supervisee(s) or manager and practitioner.
- Each of these relationships have different responsiblities. We as practioners and/or supervisees have particular responsibility to understand the other, centre ourselves in the others experience and start where they are rather than

# Starting where the other is...

- Having a reflexive awareness of you own position/starting point
- Explore with the other(s) what their current position/pathway is
- Having a willingness and flex-ability to (temporarily) step out of your position and centre your self/step into the current position of the other before introducing any variation
- Centring yourself in the position of the other whilst retaining your ability to relate to the other positions/quadrants.
- Learning how to move from problem to possibility along the others pathway.
- Generating opportunities for the other to consider different pathways, as well as their current one.
- Inviting the other to try your ways as a variation/experiment.

# What I had to learn..

- That there are many different pathways from problem to possibility.
- I had a preference to go to possibility through resources (the clients and my own)
- Even when I started with a client in the problems restraints quadrant I would try and lead them from restraints up to resources to possibilities.
- Some people reach new possibilities through a story of struggle and hardship. The 'resource story' is perhaps a sub-text in the journey, but not the 'head line'. It may challenge a persons sense of modesty to talk of themselves as resourceful (brave, inventive, optimistic, persistent). They may talk about, facing one damn thing after another, jumping hurdles, stumbling along....

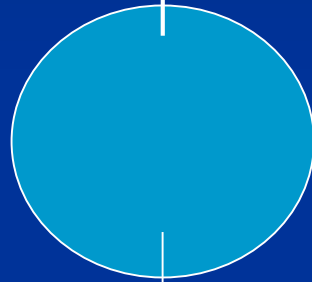
**Resources**

**Problems**

**Possibilities**

**Confusion**

**Restrains**



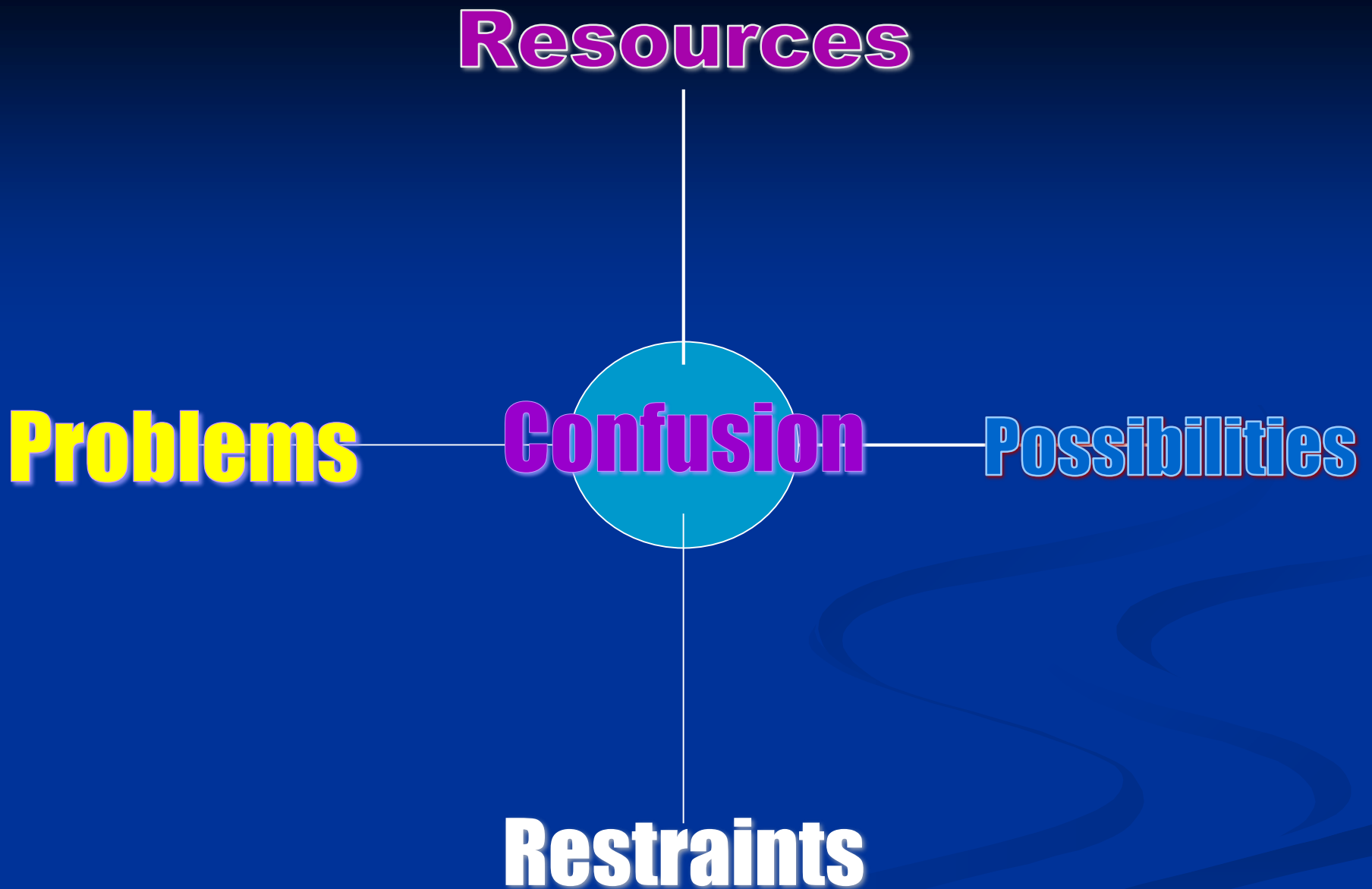
**Resources**

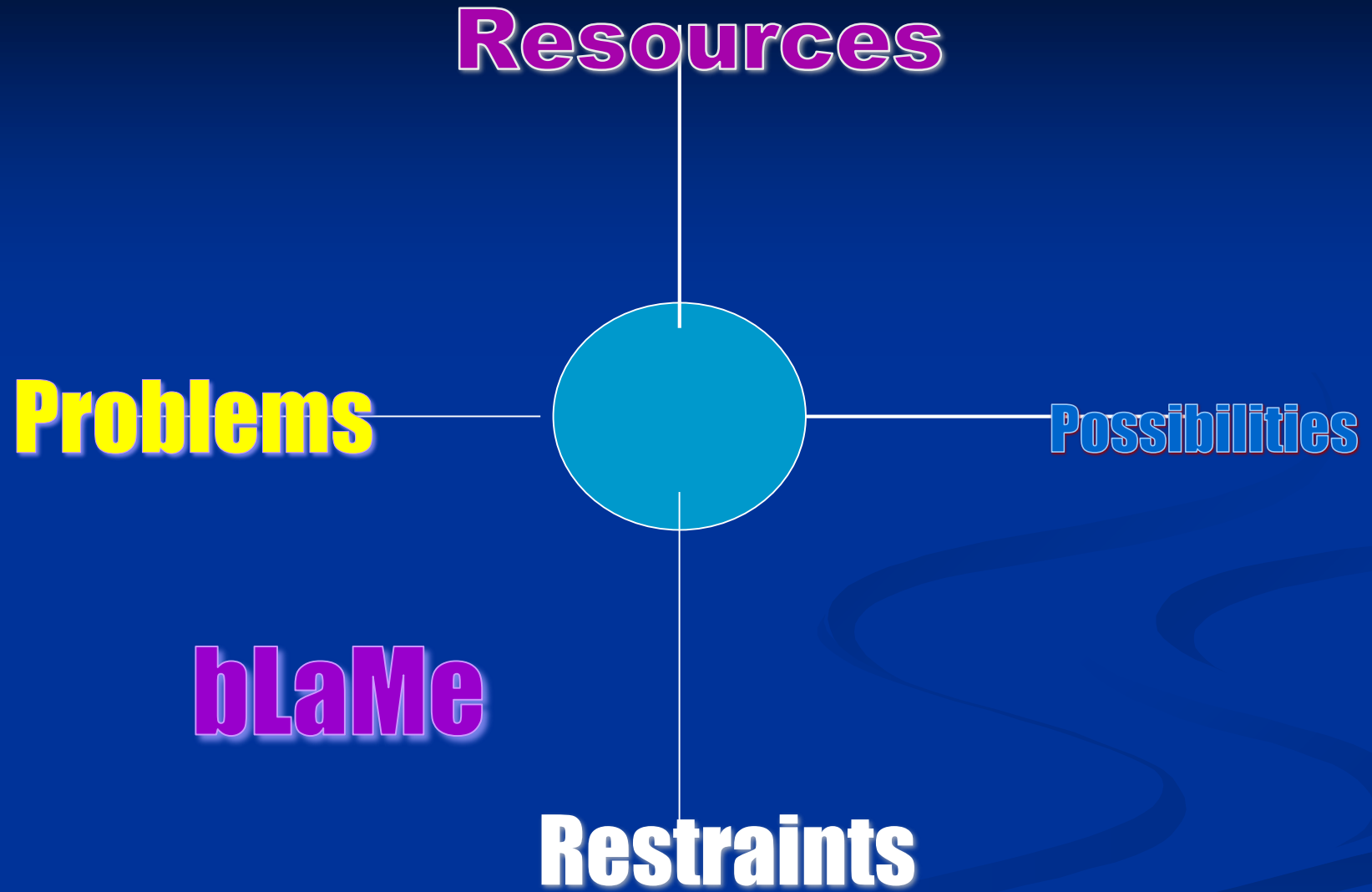
**Problems**

**Confusion**

**Possibilities**

**Restrains**





**Resources**

**Problems**

**bLaMe**

```
graph TD; Resources --- bLaMe((bLaMe)); bLaMe --- Problems; bLaMe --- Possibilities; bLaMe --- Restrains
```

The diagram features a central light blue circle containing the text 'bLaMe' in a bold, purple, sans-serif font. Four white lines radiate from this central circle to four text labels positioned at the top, left, right, and bottom of the frame. The labels are: 'Resources' at the top in purple, 'Problems' on the left in yellow, 'Possibilities' on the right in blue, and 'Restrains' at the bottom in white. The background is a solid dark blue with faint, wavy, lighter blue patterns in the lower right quadrant.

**Possibilities**

**Restrains**

# Keeping the Model Reflexive

- Any model that strives to achieve clarity can slip into certainty
- Maintaining the advantages of clarity through reflexivity

**Resources**

**Proble  
ms**

**Possibilitie  
s**

**Resources**

**Restrains**



# Variation:

## What are you bringing to therapy?

- Quadrants or any other diagrams can give a helpful sense of orderliness, neatness and clarity To avoid temporary clarity drifting into permanent certainty it is important to play.
- Playing around with the diagram may initiate different forms of interviewing. For example sliding the RR axis to the left of Problems can create a different kind of conversation:
- ‘Before asking about the reason that brought you here, could I ask you what might influence how therapy goes.. For example what qualities are you (each) bringing that would help the work to go well? What kind of things are around that might make it difficult to make use of therapy?’

'What are you bringing  
to the work?

**Resources**

**Problems**

**Possibilities**

**Restrains**



# Navigating around the map

## Using the map to navigate relationships

- Posture of ‘model/routine/manual decides’: professional decides without reference to the client (“this is how it is done”) (fidelity to the model)
- Posture of self reflexivity .. Professional works according to their own preference/habits. This may include a (silently/unvoiced) RR when the therapist reads the effects of on client and moves according to their ‘reading’ of the effects of what they are doing )
- Posture of Relational reflexivity .. Professional actively engages client(s) in choosing/moving/changing
- How would ..

# Exploring the Relationship between Problem-Restraint

- Questions intended to fully explore problem(s) and the restraints which feed it/keep it in place. Adapted to fit
- What are ways in which this problem/issue has restrained you from being able to think/act/develop etc?
- What restrains you from tackling this problem?
- When you start to sort out the problem what gets in your way/keeps tripping you up?
- What do I need to understand about the problem?
- Which feels more influential in your life the problem or the restraint?
- More ... more .. more

# Exploring the relationship between Problem-Resource

Questions intended to fully explore problem(s) and the resources which potentially can help to overcome it. Adapted to fit

In dealing with this difficulty

- what new resources/strengths have you noticed yourself developing?
- Which resources have been particularly helpful to you?
- Which of your usual resources have come to your assistance in this let you down when you least expected it?
- What kind resources would you need from me or someone else?
- Which of your usual resources have let you down when you least expected it?

# Exploring the relationship between Resource - Possibility

Questions intended to fully explore what possibilities might become available Adapted to fit

- Now that you have begun to see the 'light at the end of the tunnel' what might be the next step
- Since you developed a closer (re-newed) relationship with this resource (eg confidence) what possibilities are beginning to emerge for you?
- If I was to lend you my confidence what possibilities might we come up with?
- Let's imagine that ...
- Now that ..
- Amplificatory/thickening/scaffolding conversations

# Exploring the relationship between Restraint - Possibility

- What kind of possibilities has X restrained you from engaging with or enjoying?
- How has X (eg pessimism) restrained you from...
- If you were to overcome X what possibilities would you like to see available to you
- Now that you have seen a way to avoid being so restrained by X would it feel OK to talk about what might be possible for you/your relationship
- Now that you have experienced Y for a little while now how strong/frightening does X seem?
- How long would you have to be doing Y, before it felt stronger than X

# PPRR & CMM

- PPRR looked a little flat and two dimensional, although I wasn't using like that in practice.
- Conversations with colleagues and in workshops led me to combine it with CMM, a model I had been using since 1982.
- Currently, I use the hierarchical/ladder model of CMM (Pearce and Cronen).

# COORDINATED MANAGEMENT OF MEANING

*CULTURE*

*SOCIETY*

*STORIES ABOUT SIGNIFICANT  
RELATIONSHIPS*

*SELF-STORIES*

*DEFINITIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS*

*EPISODE of*

*CONVERSATIONS*

Problems  
Possibilities

# COORDINATED MANAGEMENT OF MEANING

*CULTURE*

*SOCIETY*

*STORIES ABOUT SIGNIFICANT  
RELATIONSHIPS*

*SELF-STORIES*

*DEFINITIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS*

*EPISODE of*

*CONVERSATIONS*

Resources  
Restrains



# Examples of topics that have seemed of significance

- clients include:
- 'speaking out'
- 'looking after myself'
- Supervisees include
- 'personal disclosure'
- 'taking a risk'
- 'interrupting'

# PPRR and the 'actually not knowing' position.

- Each person in a pair chooses something that has happened in their practice (or their personal lives) and keeps it to themselves. The other person interviews them about its influence using PPRR as a guideline.

- Sample questions
- Q: When you think about this event would you place it more as a difficulty or more as an achievement ?
- A: Difficulty
- If you think about it as a difficulty are you aware of which direction you want to move in? To sit awhile and consider what the difficulty means to you and to become more familiar with its effects in your life.

Collective CV  
skills, experience and  
history

Inspiration

Aspiration

Challenges

United  
position  
statement

Frustration

Hesitation

Obstacles  
and Barriers

