

CAUGHT IN BARBED WIRE

**USING METAPHORS AND REMAINING
INCLUSIVE IN COUNSELLING PRACTICE
AND SUPERVISION**

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INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

- **About metaphors**
- **Examples from practice and supervision**
- **Remaining inclusive: challenges and opportunities**

ABOUT METAPHORS

- **What are metaphors?**
- **How do we use them?**
- **Why are they helpful?**

A LOT OF INFORMATION IN A CONCISE PHRASE

“Most of the time he’s quite calm, but sometimes he does become very angry.”

“It seems he can **keep** his temper **under control** most of the time, but his angry feelings **build up** inside until eventually he **loses** it and starts to shout.”

“It’s like living with a volcano!”



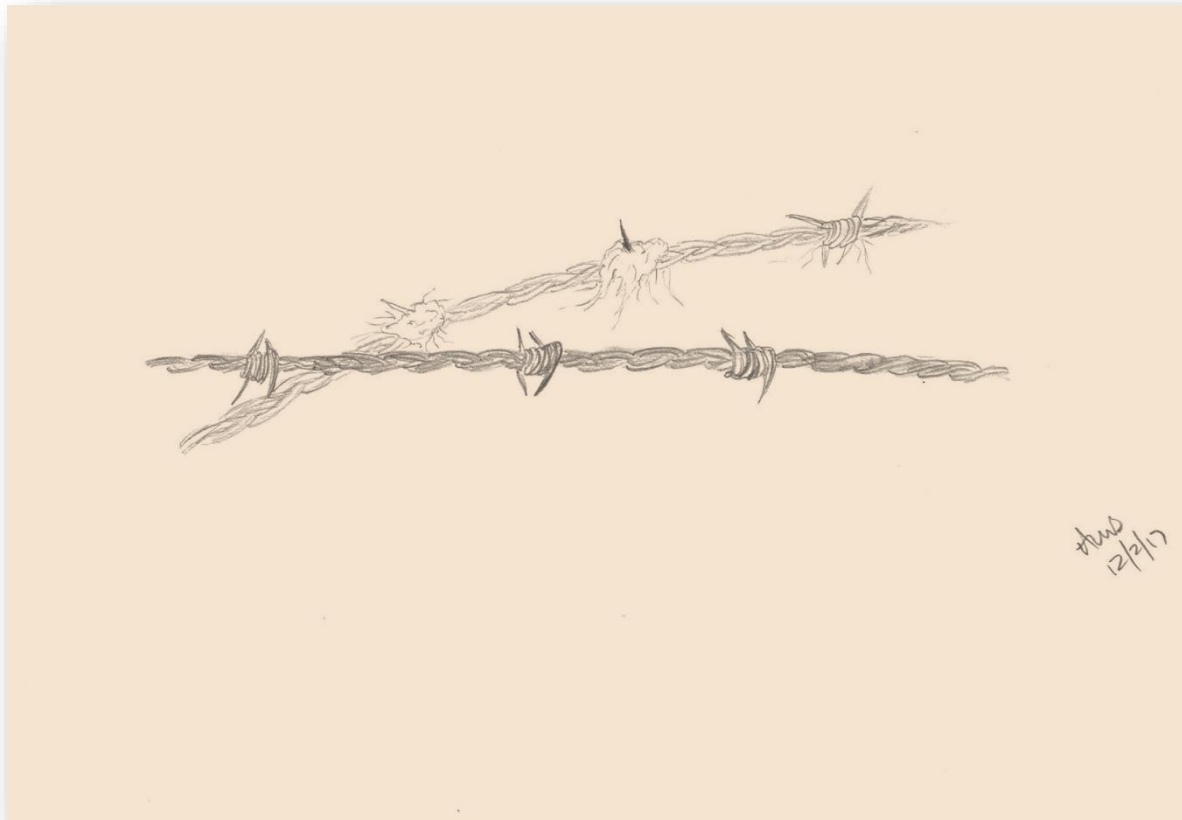
CLIENT WORK

Use of metaphor by client and therapist well established in counselling practice

'Distance' created by metaphor can help client to approach difficult feelings

Enables clients to recognise inner resources and capacity for healing/growth

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THE HOUSE OF BOMBS



THE CHALLENGE OF REMAINING INCLUSIVE

- **Metaphors can be culturally specific**
- **Danger of making assumptions about the client's meaning**
- **Importance of staying with the client's metaphor**

THE POSSIBILITIES OF 'CLEAN LANGUAGE'

- Using only 'Clean Language', ie *exactly* the words the client uses
- Enabling the client to develop his/her metaphor without imposing our own
- Transformative power of metaphor

‘CLEAN LANGUAGE’

‘Clean’ because it doesn’t unwittingly impose counsellor’s own metaphors and assumptions on client’s experience

Questions about attributes, location, metaphor, relationships, sequence, source and intention

“And when...what kind of...whereabouts...and what happens when...and what happens to...and where does [x] come from...and what would [x] like to happen?”

Four stage process:

- **Identify metaphor**
- **Develop metaphor**
- **Work with metaphor**
- **Mature the changes**

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