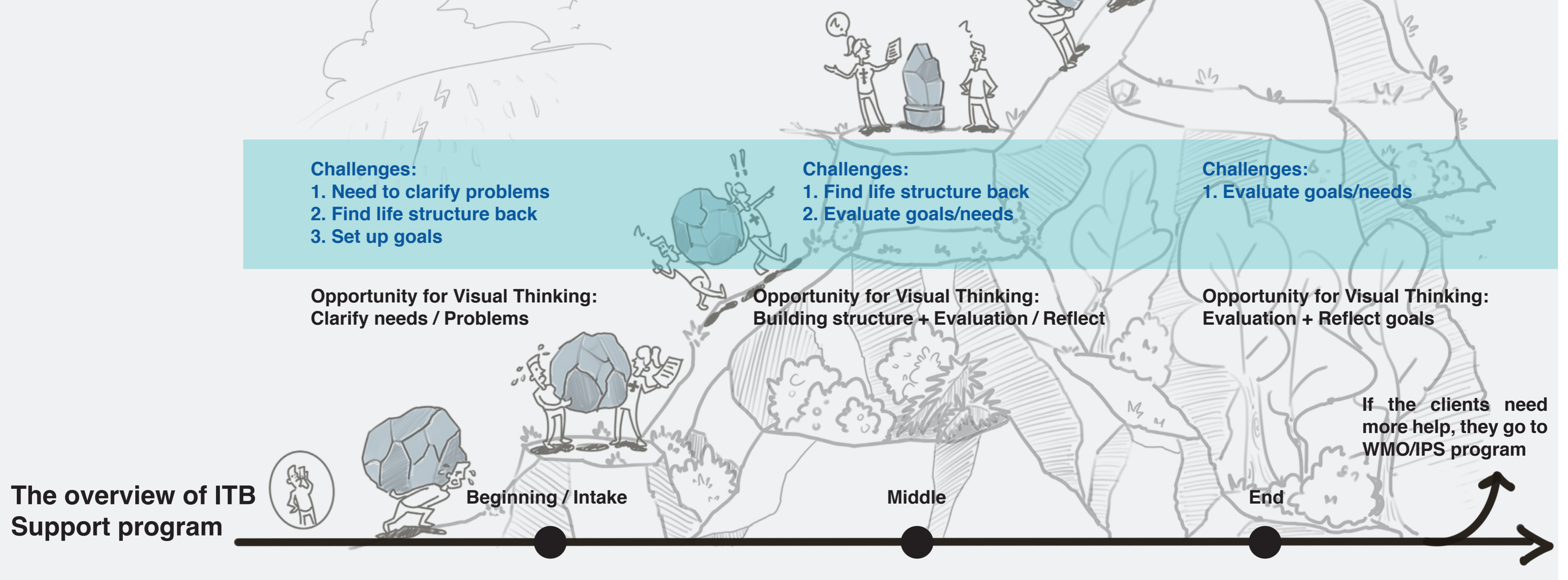


Improving Doctor-Patient Communication by Visual Thinking Tool Design

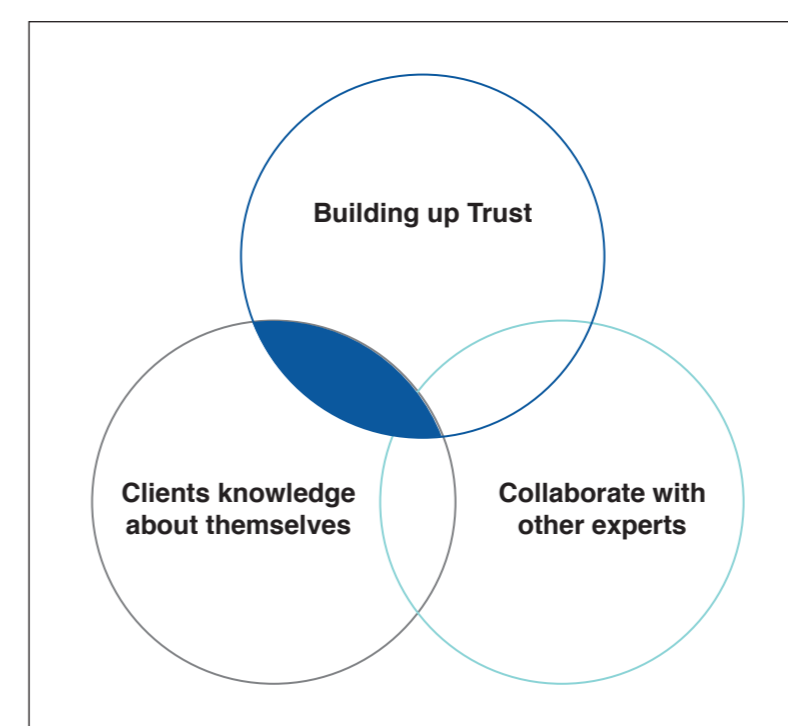
To use the transition process of visualized thinking to help clients have clarity and use story-telling to build up the structure for their issues and emotions.



Initial Challenge

The challenge for the GGZ Delfland ITB support program is to help people with psychiatric symptoms to clarify and prioritize their complicated life issues. Life problems are often related to finance, daytime activities, work, housing, and social relationships among other factors. Helping people to clarify which questions have the most significant influence is essential. When people define their concerns with the social workers, they can find the right treatment, or different support, such as financial aid or job search. The GGZ Delfland is researching for a new intervention to help them provide a less hierarchical communication to clarify a client's mental and life problems. Then, through improved doctor-patient communication, better help for the clients to find the right treatment can be expected (GGZ Delfland).

The ITB Support program has to strengthen the Structure of each session and make conversations visible to provide clients with a fruitful collaboration, highly engaging and supportive communication.



Visual Thinking could help

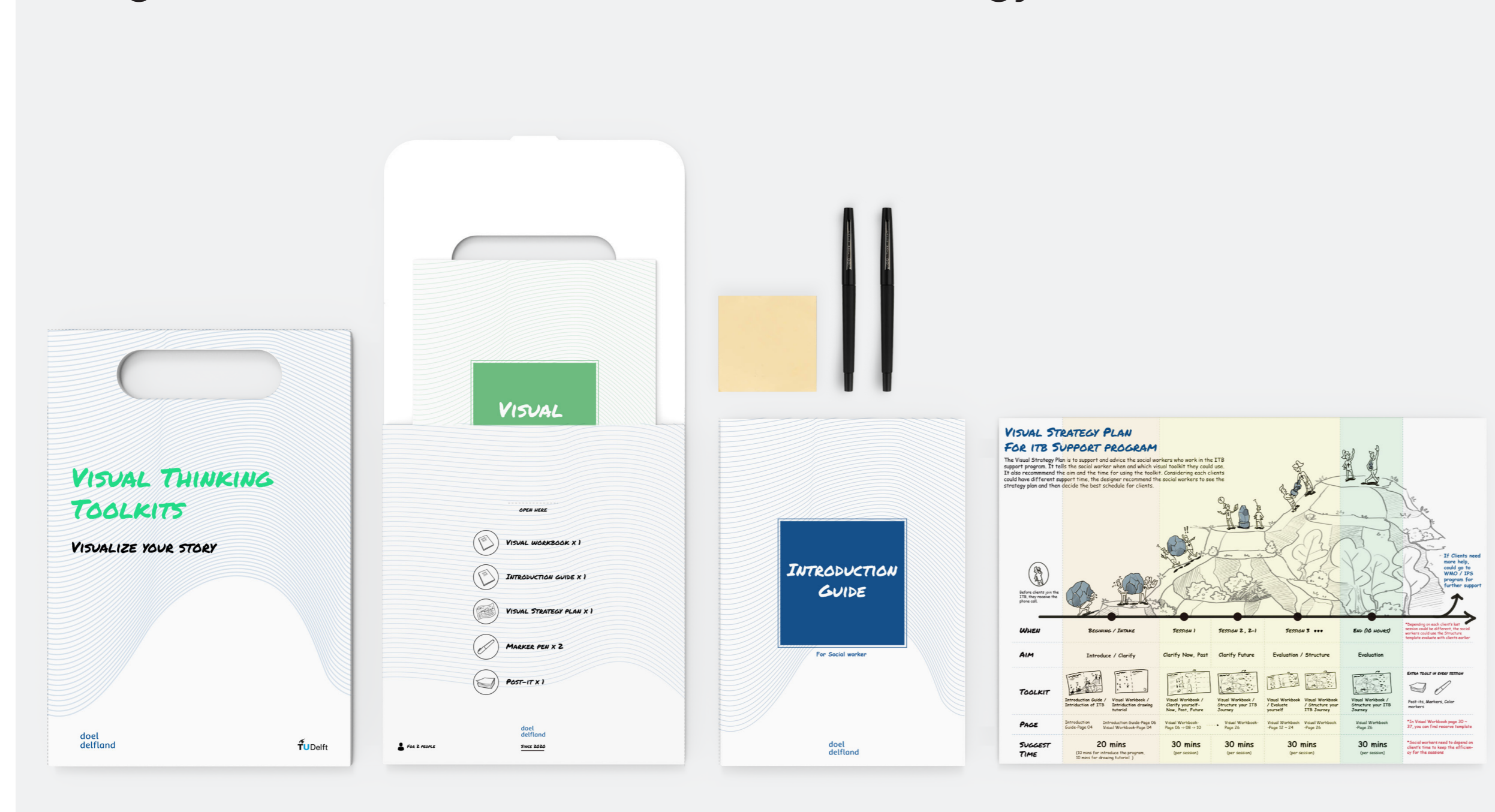
Therefore, the opportunities for Visual Thinking to adapt to and support the ITB support program include:

1. At the beginning/intake, the visual toolkit can help the clients clarify their needs or life problems and set up goals. Further combination with visual metaphors can inspire them to start to express their feelings.

2. During the middle stage, the visual story format helps clients build up their story based on the past, current, and future timeline. Then the clients can use the visual story they have built up to reflect and validate their needs or goals.

3. In the end, the visual story is used for evaluation and reflection with the social workers.

Design Solution - Visual Toolkit & Visual Strategy Plan



The research indicates that creative activity can help activate and boost psychosocial resources such as turning the focus towards positive life experiences, enhancing self-esteem, promoting identity building, and creating new opportunities for the patients (Reynolds, F., & Lim, K. H., 2007). Moreover, visual and storytelling can cut through age, culture, language, literacy and gender barriers (J Contin Educ Nurs, 1994).

the visual kit is two A5 size booklets, one A4 strategy plan, post-it notes and two markers, all packed in one package. Combining all visual exercises into one package makes it more

comprehensive and accessible for social workers. The workbook size was decided for easy carrying for clients and social workers.

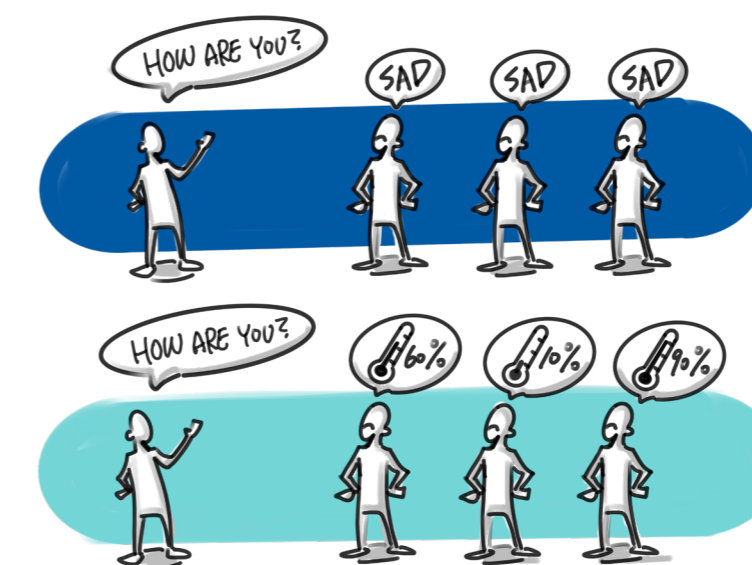
Two colors are used to separate the workbooks, the blue "Introduction guidebook" is for social workers, while the green "Visual workbook" is for clients. The separation is to improve the social worker's workflow efficiency and to help strengthen the "Do-it-Yourself" effect (Franke, N., Schreier, M., & Kaiser, U., 2010). When clients get the booklet and start to draw in each session, the ownership can be increased through the visual exercises, detailed elaboration on which is

provided in the follow-up paragraph. The Introduction guidebook for the social workers will explain how to guide the clients on using the Visual workbook.

The A4 size Visual strategy plan shows social workers the suggestions and timing for the use of each visual exercise during the ITB program. The post-its and markers are for the clients and social workers to do the Visual Thinking exercise.

Three value for using Visual Toolkit

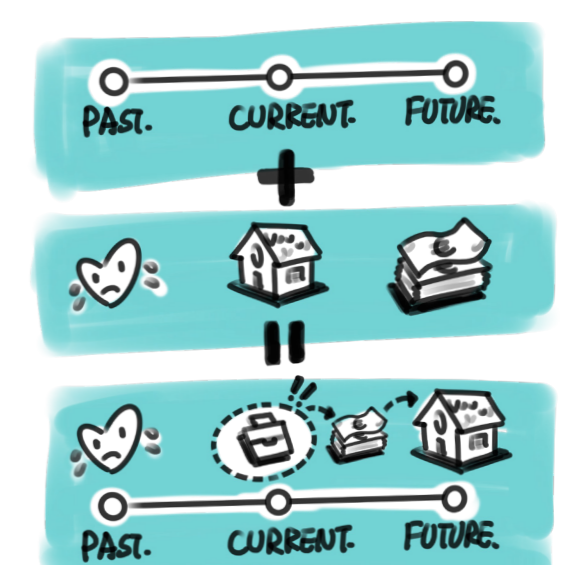
1. Clarifying the conversation



First, the research proves that using visualization to communicate can provide clarification between health experts and clients. From the literature, compared to linguistic ways of communication, Visual Thinking prompts people to think and search for the right images to represent their issues or feelings. The transition from words to images helps people to think deeply and supports them in clarifying their thoughts. All the interviews and testing in the thesis have produced the impressive results that clients also feel the VTD helps them get clarity of their complex and intertwined issues. Combining the five areas model of the CBT in the visual thinking exercise also provides people with a mission and extra support to reflect and distinguish their feelings and issues.

2. Structuring the story through the story format

Second, the research proves the VTD combined with storytelling format can help the clients structure their issues and manage their goals. Using the timeline and visual metaphors to inspire clients to talk about their issues can efficiently build up their life structure. The metaphor visualization triggers people to use it as a clear format to build on their story while the timeline offers the structure for them to figure the relations between the situations. In the end, clients can see their overall situation and contemplate their next action.



3. Create shared decision making + ownership

Finally, with the above benefits provided by the VTD and storytelling, the research proves that social workers drawing together with the clients provides the materials and starting point for creating the Shared decision making. The three values contributed by this thesis are beneficial for people who are interested in using the VTD to improve communication between health experts and clients. It provides health organizations with a new intervention to consider as a communication tool and even a support for therapy.



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