Mastering the Clinical Conversation: Language as Intervention

By Matthieu Villatte, Jennifer L. Villatte, Steven C. Hayes

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This compelling book provides psychotherapists with evidence-based strategies for harnessing the power of language to free clients from life-constricting patterns and promote psychological flourishing. Grounded in relational frame theory (RFT), the volume shares innovative ways to enhance assessment and intervention using specific kinds of clinical conversations. Techniques are demonstrated for activating and shaping behavior change, building a flexible sense of self, fostering meaning and motivation, creating powerful experiential metaphors, and strengthening the therapeutic relationship. User-friendly features include more than 80 clinical vignettes with commentary by the authors, plus a "Quick Guide to Using RFT in Psychotherapy" filled with sample phrases and questions to ask.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Beautifully written, this book imparts a deep understanding of language's relationship to psychopathology and its effective use in psychotherapy. The theoretical presentation is exceptionally rich and the many examples of clinical application are particularly informative. Chapters address the fundamental tasks of therapy, from conducting functional assessments to building the client's sense of self, fostering meaning and motivation, and enriching the therapeutic relationship. A 'must read' for psychotherapists and students."--**Michelle G. Craske**, PhD, Department of Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles

"A fascinating, very accessible account of RFT and its application to psychotherapy practice. The book offers a gorgeous balance of conceptual thinking and practical applications. It is a mind-expanding resource for psychotherapists of all orientations and levels of experience."--**Jacqueline B. Persons**, PhD, Director, Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Science Center, Oakland, California

"Inspiring. Important. This book challenges every psychotherapist to pause and look again at the most basic tool of our trade--language--and the enterprise of meaning making. Its broad scope offers the promise of connection across models and perspectives as well as better ways to lead our clients into transforming moments in therapy."--**Susan M. Johnson**, EdD, School of Psychology, University of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

"In this remarkable book, Villatte, Villatte, and Hayes bring to life the ways in which language and the use of symbols structure our experience. They explore how language shapes the therapeutic relationship and process, as well as clients' suffering, and how it can be a vehicle for igniting change. A cornerstone of this approach is RFT, beautifully articulated and described here. Clever, illuminating vignettes are sprinkled throughout. This book is a treasure trove of clinical wisdom with regard to the role of questioning, dialoguing, reflecting, and challenging in the therapy context. It is a gift to all psychotherapists."--**Paul Gilbert**, PhD, FBPsS, OBE, Head, Mental Health Research Unit, University of Derby, United Kingdom

About the Author

Matthieu Villatte, PhD, is Research Scientist and Clinical Trainer at the Evidence-Based Practice Institute in Seattle. He has conducted workshops on the clinical applications of RFT and contextual behavioral science in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe. He is also an associate editor of the *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science*. Dr. Villatte's current work focuses on the dissemination of evidence-based practices, and he has published articles and book chapters on RFT, contextual behavioral science, and cognitive-behavioral therapy.

Jennifer L. Villatte, PhD, is a clinical psychologist committed to advancing health equity through contextual behavioral science. She is Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Washington, where she partners with innovators in computer engineering, human-centered design, and data science to maximize the effectiveness and reach of behavioral interventions that enhance individual and community well-being.

Steven C. Hayes, PhD, is Nevada Foundation Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of

Nevada, Reno. He has served as president of multiple scientific and professional organizations, including the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) and the Association for Contextual Behavioral Science. His work has been recognized by the Award for Impact of Science on Application from the Society for the Advancement of Behavior Analysis and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the ABCT, among other awards. The author of 41 books and over 575 scientific articles, Dr. Hayes has focused on understanding human language and cognition and applying this understanding to the alleviation of human suffering and the promotion of human welfare. His books include *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Second Edition*, and *Mindfulness and Acceptance: Expanding the Cognitive-Behavioral Tradition*.

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