

CommonGround: Recovery Oriented Practice Supporting Client Choice

Amanda #1

We work with a lady who tends to collect junk (in our opinion) which she fills her apartment with. She has a Section 8 rental subsidy, and we provide intensive case management services to her. Despite multiple efforts over the years, she will not allow anyone to help her keep her apartment in some semblance of a safe and orderly condition. She cannot bear the thought of parting with anything.

As time has passed, the condition of her apartment has continued to deteriorate. The landlord has received complaints from other tenants in the building about the stench emanating from her apartment during hot summer months. Her apartment is so piled up with stuff that there is no sitting room and the client sleeps on the floor because her bed is covered with the collected paraphernalia. The landlord is justifiably concerned about the potential for fire as the client has old newspapers piled up on her gas stove, right over the pilot light. (She has refused our offer to move them to a safer location.)

The landlord is a nice man who is understanding of this client's needs and limitations. He has worked with our agency for years and is complimentary about client/Casemanagement relationships he has had in the past. He does not want to evict a disabled person, thereby creating a homeless crisis for her, but also realizes the medically unsafe and physically hazardous situation that currently exists, as do we. He is asking us to address it, but the client is not able to agree to have anything touched. She continues to bring home "junk" and pile it in her apartment.

Darnell #2 Darnell is diagnosed with schizophrenia and living in a supported apartment program. He has been newly diagnosed (x6 months) with Type II diabetes related to his use of olanzapine (Zyprexa). Despite numerous attempts to educate the client about diabetes, the dangers inherent in consuming sugar and the option of drinking non-sugar beverages, Darnell continues to drink sugared cola. He is considered competent (in a legal sense) to make his own medical decisions. Workers are feeling concerned and don't want to be a part of this client's decline into advanced diabetes. During the team/staff meeting they begin talking about an intervention to actively limit the client's choice. They are considering advocating for a money management plan that will limit Darnell's spendable income so that cola and other high carbohydrate foods will be more difficult to get.

- As a group, complete the Intervention Assessment form on the next page. Remember, the intervention you are assessing is to control the client's money through a rep payee or some other arrangement which will limit the clients spendable income and thus result in less access to carbohydrates that exacerbate diabetes. Assess the presence of toxic help and see if there are other interventions that could be a win/win i.e., that address both staff concerns and the client's right to choose.

Example: Darnell - The Intervention Assessment Form

1. What is the choice the client is making that we are uncomfortable with? *Darnell is not following diabetic diet as recommended by doctor*
2. What is the intervention we are considering?
Rep payee to control expendable income used for soda and other "forbidden" foods
3. How might this intervention help client?
4. How might the intervention harm client?



5. What is the client really learning through our intervention? *Note: more than one thing can be true so check all that apply!*

- To be sneaky To trust us That we have the power to control him/her
- To not do it when we are around To trust her/himself and her/his judgment
- To fear us
- To lie to us or not volunteer information That we care about him/her
- Other: (Explain)

6. Does the proposed intervention achieve a short-term goal or a long-term goal? Does achievement of the short-term goal jeopardize the long-term goal? Explain:

7. Your assessment of the proposed intervention:

	Staff Concern	Client Choice
Lose		
Win		

Alternative Interventions:

What might a lose/lose intervention be?

What might a win/lose intervention be?

What might a win/win intervention be?

Table 1: The Comfort Zone Decision Making Chart

Example: Amanda has decided to keep a neat and sanitary apartment.

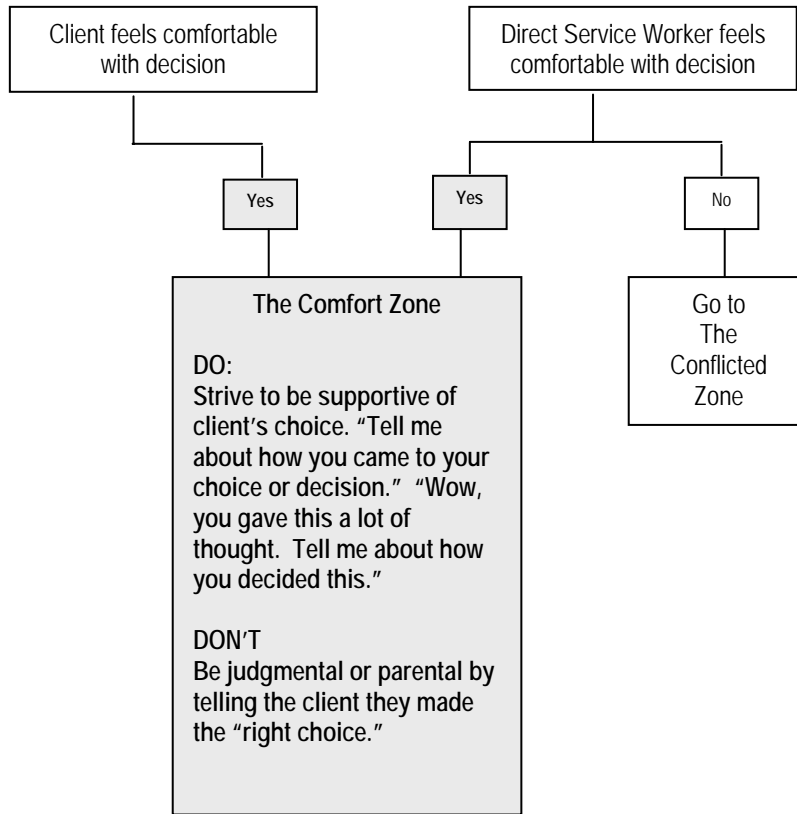


Table 2: The Conflicted Zone Decision Making Chart

Example: Amanda collects “junk” and won’t let anyone help her clean her apartment, even though it is so cluttered she has to sleep on the floor and other tenants have begun to complain about the mess and smell.

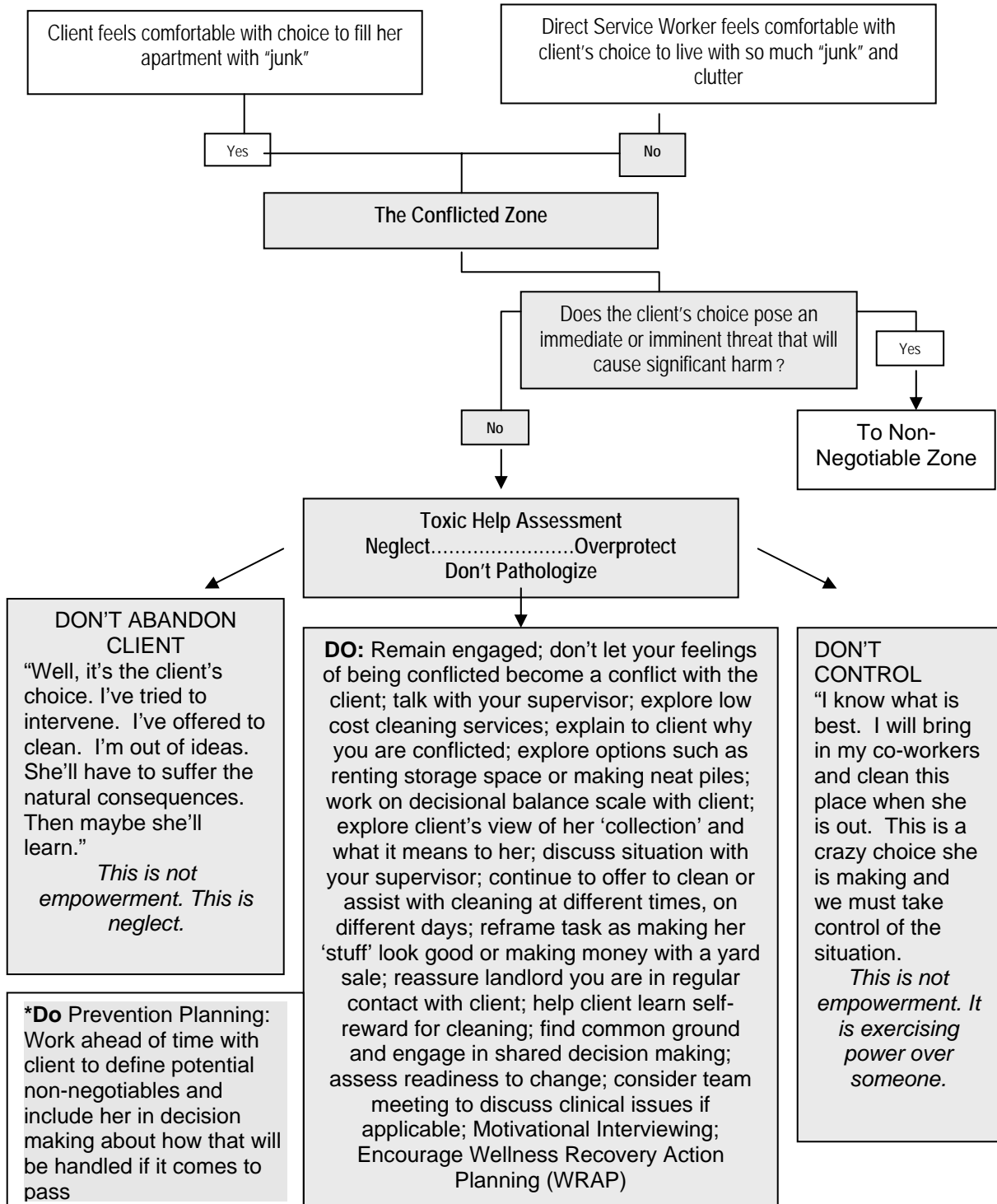
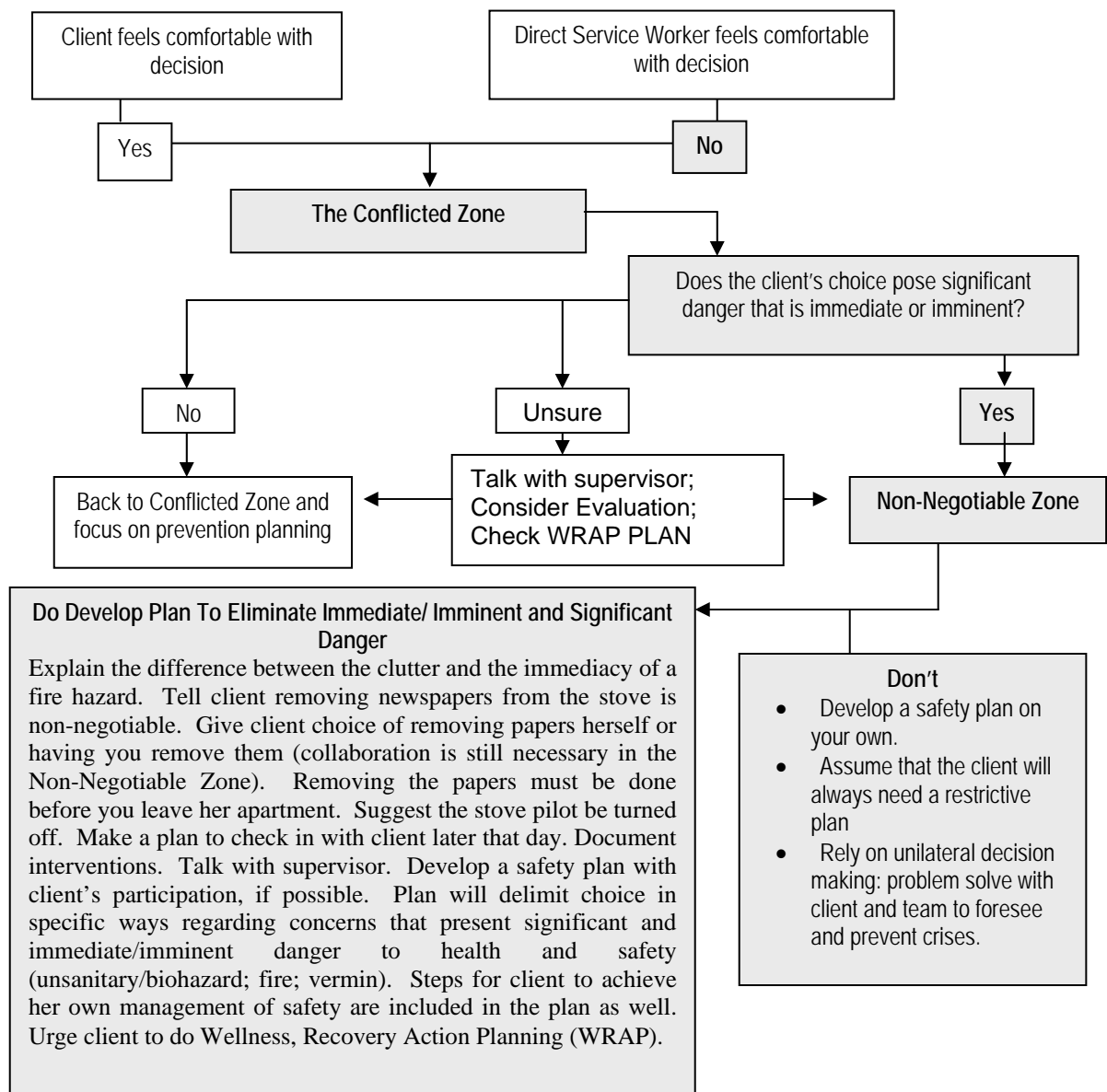


Table 3: The Non-Negotiable Zone Decision Making Chart

Example: Amanda has been collecting “junk” (in our opinion) and takes it to her apartment. She can’t seem to bring herself to throw anything away. The landlord has received complaints about a bad smell coming from her apartment during hot summer months. Her apartment is so piled up with “junk” that there is no sitting room, and the client sleeps on the floor because her bed is covered with the collected paraphernalia. The landlord is justifiably concerned about the potential for fire as the client has piled old newspapers on her gas stove, right over the pilot light and, even if we ask her, she refuses to move them to a safer location.



The Intervention Assessment Form

1. What is the choice the client is making that we are uncomfortable with?
2. What is the intervention we are considering?
3. How might this intervention help client?
4. How might the intervention harm client?



5. What is the client really learning through our intervention? *Note: more than one thing can be true so check all that apply!*
- To be sneaky To trust us That we have the power to control him/her
- To not do it when we are around To trust himself and his judgment
- To fear us
- To lie to us or not volunteer information That we care about him/her
- Other: (Explain)

6. Does the proposed intervention achieve a short-term goal or a long-term goal? Does achievement of the short-term goal jeopardize the long-term goal? Explain:

7. Your assessment of the proposed intervention:

	Staff Concern	Client Choice
Lose		
Win		

Alternative Interventions:

What might a lose/lose intervention be?

What might a win/lose intervention be?

What might a win/win intervention be?

