

Drop Your Agenda

It's a good practice to listen to the client and give them the session they have in mind. Many therapists push their own ideas and preferences onto their clients, often without realizing it. Most of the time, pushing our agenda is well-meaning. We want the best for our clients, and we think we know how to give them a great session, even if it's not what they were originally asking for.

So what does pushing your agenda onto your client look like?

Let me give you a real-life example. A client comes in and asks for a session but asks that you please leave their neck alone. The client tells the therapist he's going to physical therapy for his neck pain and does not want the therapist to work on it. The therapist has had many successes working on necks before, so she convinces the client to let her work on her neck. The next day, we get a phone call from an unhappy client who tells us a sad story of just wanting to come in for a massage. He told the therapist what type of session he wanted. The therapist had a different idea and proceeded to work on the neck after being asked not to several times. The following day, the client has increasing pain and is angry because his wishes were not followed.

This same story could be repeated with an infinite number of variations. Some clients wanted areas worked on, but the therapist thought it would be better to skip the areas. Clients have wanted a light massage in specific areas, but the therapist thought it would be better to work deeper in those areas. The client has a vision of what they want, but the therapist thinks they have a better idea.

Let's never forget, it's the clients' session, not ours.