

Have you ever wondered...

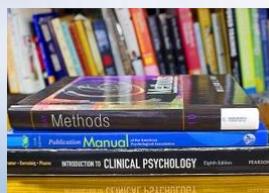
## Just what do Psychologists do?



### The Black Ribbon Box

There is often a lot of misunderstanding about ‘what psychologists do’...

People often assume that psychologists or counsellors spend a lot of time solving their client’s problems or ‘fixing’ what is ‘wrong’ with them.



Well, yes, it is true that we do try to support people to manage problem issues in life.

But, what most people don’t understand is that more often than not, it is the client who holds the knowledge and the key to their own success.

A few years ago, as a recent graduate, I worked with a young girl who illustrated this beautifully and in fact, provided me some tools to assist with my future practice.

Sophia (not her real name) was 14 years old and had survived a traumatic early life characterised by neglect, violence and abuse.

The fact that she had survived at all was a testament to her strength!

Of course as a relatively new counsellor, I thought I had countless ideas on how to assist her in working through her past experiences. When she came to see me I immediately felt compelled to help her 'fix' her past, address her pain and minimise her trauma.

What happened next could be described as a short but powerful lesson in human spirit.

Sophia explained to me that she had a lot of horrible feelings that made her feel sad and depressed.

So one day she decided to see her mind like her bedroom:

she decided she would tidy all of the things away that she didn't need at that time.

she thought about all of her 'bad feelings' and how they badly affected her life.

she decided that they wouldn't be of use to her.

so she put all her 'bad feelings' into a box with and tied it up with a black ribbon.



At my first meeting with Sophia, she declared to me:

*'You're not going to make me open my black ribbon box until I'm ready!'*

She explained that she had a lot of horrible feelings in that box, feelings that made her feel sad and depressed.

What was most profound however, was her acknowledgement that she knew she would have to take out these ‘bad’ feelings one day, but for now, they were not going to help her...

...and so she used the ‘black ribbon box’ as a means of managing her own traumatic pain, and in so doing, she committed herself to living a life that would break her history of addiction and poverty.

Now, while in her childlike fashion she didn’t know it, what Sophia actually described was a powerful way of managing negative emotions.

In recent years, psychology has developed new therapies such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) that support individuals to do more than just alleviate symptoms:



The focus with this type of therapy is on accepting what is out of your control while committing to living a more fulfilling life.

It is possible to break free from the negative patterns in your life so you can reach your fullest potential.

It requires some commitment from you but if you are willing to do this, your ‘black ribbon box’ can be permanently unpacked and you can begin to live a life that no longer weighs you down.

Are you ready to look more closely at your ‘Black Ribbon Box’?



Some questions to ask yourself:

- Have I experienced some form of trauma or issue in life that is difficult to deal with?
- What life experiences have I had that might be holding me back from living a fulfilled life?
- What’s in my ‘black ribbon box’?
- Am I ready to open the door to the possibilities of a life free from excess baggage?

At inSync for life we realise that past hurts and traumas can affect you and your relationships in so many distressing ways, especially if you feel like you have ‘tried everything’.

Our trauma-informed therapists can support you to help you realise that you truly hold the key to your own success.

All you need to begin this new journey in life is the desire to open your ‘black ribbon box’.

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