

Translating Presence Into Paperwork



Documentation Language for Humanistic and Depth-Oriented Therapy

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Purpose of this handout

This document offers example language for psychotherapy documentation that reflects humanistic, relational, somatic, and depth-oriented work while remaining compatible with insurance and medical necessity standards.

These phrases are examples, not scripts.

Use what fits your voice, your client, and your clinical judgment.

Let the session lead. Let the note follow.

Attunement and Presence

Humanistic • Person-Centered • Attachment-Based • Somatic

- Therapist provided attuned presence and emotional containment during client's expression of affect.
 - Therapist maintained a grounded, non-directive stance to support emotional regulation.
 - Therapist reflected emotional content and underlying themes to support felt understanding.
 - Therapist adjusted pacing in response to client's nervous system cues.
 - Therapist remained emotionally available and responsive throughout session.
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Meaning-Making and Insight

Jungian • Psychodynamic • Humanistic • Narrative

- Therapist facilitated exploration of personal meaning connected to current emotional distress.

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- Therapist supported identification of recurring emotional and relational themes.
 - Therapist assisted client in recognizing internal narratives influencing perception and behavior.
 - Therapist encouraged reflective processing of life transitions and identity development.
 - Therapist supported insight into the emotional significance of present experiences.
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Parts, Polarities, and Inner Dynamics

Jungian • Depth-Oriented Humanistic • IFS-Informed

- Therapist supported client in identifying and differentiating internal emotional states.
 - Therapist facilitated exploration of conflicting internal responses.
 - Therapist assisted client in observing internal reactions with curiosity rather than judgment.
 - Therapist supported integration of avoided or disowned emotional experiences.
 - Therapist helped client recognize protective internal strategies and their impact on functioning.
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Agency, Autonomy, and Values

Humanistic • ACT-Informed • Existential

- Therapist emphasized client autonomy in exploring options and choices.
- Therapist supported clarification of personal values guiding decision-making.

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- Therapist reinforced client's capacity for self-trust and internal guidance.
 - Therapist assisted client in aligning behaviors with stated values.
 - Therapist encouraged self-directed experimentation with adaptive coping strategies.
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Emotional Processing and Regulation

Emotion-Focused • Somatic • Humanistic

- Therapist supported client in tolerating emotional activation without avoidance.
 - Therapist normalized emotional responses within the context of lived experience.
 - Therapist provided grounding interventions during heightened affect.
 - Therapist assisted client in staying present with emotional experience.
 - Therapist supported modulation of emotional intensity through pacing and regulation.
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Relational and Attachment-Oriented Work

Attachment-Based • Relational • Psychodynamic

- Therapist explored relational patterns impacting current interpersonal stressors.
- Therapist supported identification of attachment needs and boundaries.
- Therapist assisted client in recognizing relational triggers and adaptive responses.
- Therapist reinforced therapeutic alliance as a stabilizing relational experience.
- Therapist supported development of healthier relational expectations.

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Somatic and Nervous System–Informed Interventions

Somatic • Polyvagal-Informed • Trauma-Informed Humanistic

- Therapist guided client in noticing physiological responses associated with emotional states.
- Therapist supported nervous system regulation through grounding and orienting strategies.
- Therapist assisted client in increasing awareness of bodily cues.
- Therapist encouraged mind-body integration to support emotional regulation.
- Therapist supported return to baseline following emotional activation.

Existential Themes and Identity Work

Existential • Humanistic • Jungian

- Therapist supported exploration of identity-related concerns and life meaning.
- Therapist assisted client in processing existential stressors impacting mood and functioning.
- Therapist encouraged reflection on purpose, choice, and responsibility.
- Therapist supported integration of changing self-concept.
- Therapist explored values and meaning in the context of current life stage.

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Integration and Clinical Progress

Integrative • Client-Centered

- Client demonstrated increased insight into emotional and relational patterns.
 - Client reported improved capacity for emotional reflection rather than reactivity.
 - Client identified adaptive responses to previously distressing situations.
 - Session focused on consolidating insight and supporting ongoing integration.
 - Therapist supported transfer of in-session awareness to daily functioning.
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Final Reminder

Documentation is not a performance.

It is a translation.

You are allowed to sound human.

You are allowed to practice depth-oriented work.

You are allowed to meet requirements without shrinking the soul of your sessions.

Disclaimer

This resource is intended for educational and informational purposes only. The language examples provided are illustrative and are not intended to replace clinical judgment, individualized assessment, or professional consultation.

Therapists are responsible for ensuring that all documentation complies with applicable laws, ethical standards, payer requirements, and agency or supervisor guidelines. Use of this material does not guarantee insurance coverage, reimbursement, or protection from audits.

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Clinical documentation should always reflect the unique needs, presentation, and treatment of each client. Adapt language as appropriate to your scope of practice, theoretical orientation, and the specific clinical context.