



General tips on using Getting to the Heart of the Matter tools:

- Establish a warm and welcoming rapport before introducing the assessment tools. Clients need to feel comfortable and trust that you are leading them to a meaningful and fun activity. These tools are best implemented in a fun, playful, accepting environment where clients know they can take risks.
- Provide clear instructions in a light, fun conversational tone. Give an example of how to do it using a non-nutrition topic, if the client seems confused or hesitant. Make it a playful activity so clients can relax as they reveal their truths.
- Believe that these techniques work and that you will be a success. Clients can pick up on any uncertainty or hesitation.
- If you're concerned or nervous about trying this new assessment approach, ask your client in advance for permission and support to try something new. Assure her that your goal is to serve her better. Ask for feedback if you're interested in hearing your client's perspective.
- After providing simple and clear instructions, focus on the client's voice, face and words instead of the assessment process. Be fully present to pick up on her emotions and words.
- Probing will get you closer to the heart. Use phrases like "tell me more" or "help me understand" to dig deeper. The tools are just a starting point for your probing questions.
- It takes time to shift from logic-based to emotion-based assessment tools. Try using only one tool at a time and commit to using it at least ten times before deciding if it is an effective tool for you. Your success is tied to your comfort, something that will come only with practice.
- Consider practicing the tools with colleagues and friends before trying them with clients. Or observe colleagues who have greater comfort and success with them before trying them yourself.
- These tools are intended to circumvent rational thinking and lead to emotion-based conversations. Once you're there, be as fully present and authentic as possible to continue the emotion-based conversation. Your client can feel if you're being open, honest and authentic or hiding behind a WIC mask.
- Clients are revealing their hearts to you during these activities. Be sure to support and accept anything they say without judgment or comment. We can't correct the emotions or feelings of others but we can lead them to new ways of thinking or behaviors that allow more positive emotions.
- Don't force anyone to work with any of the tools. We always respect our clients' decisions with total acceptance and warm regard.