**Ten Differences Between Therapeutic and Forensic Relationships\***

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|  | **Traditional Therapy Care Provision** | **Forensic Evaluation** | **Forensic Therapy** |
| **The goal of the professional in each relationship** | Therapist attempts to benefit the patient by working within the therapeutic relationship | **Evaluator advocates for the results and implications of the evaluation for the benefit of the court** | Improve psychological functioning especially related to improving psycholegal variables |
| **Whose client is patient/litigant?** | The mental health practitioner | The attorney | The attorney and therapist |
| **The relational privilege that governs disclosure in each relationship** | Therapist-patient privilege | Attorney-client and attorney work-product privilege | **Varies**  |
| **The cognitive set and evaluative attitude of each expert** | Supportive, accepting, empathic | Neutral, objective, detached | Hybrid of both, but possibly because of care provision align with client |
| **The differing areas of competency of each expert** | Therapy techniques for treatment of the impairment | Forensic evaluation techniques relevant to the legal claim | Therapy techniques for treatment of the impairment and psychological protocols |
| **The nature of the hypothesis tested by each expert** | Diagnostic criteria for the purpose of therapy | Psycholegal criteria for purpose of legal adjudication | Hybrid of first 2 columns |
| **The scrutiny applied to the information utilized in the process and the role of historical truth** | Mostly based on information from the person being treated with little scrutiny of the information by the therapist | Litigant information supplemented with that of collateral sources and scrutinized by the evaluator and the court | Depends, can be affected by “demand characeristics” |
| **The amount and control of structure in each relationship** | Patient structured and relatively less structured than forensic evaluation | Evaluator structured and relatively more structured than therapy | Patient (and possibly court and/or attorney) Structured |
| **The nature and degree of “adversarialness” in each relationship** | A helping relationship; rarely adversarial | An evaluative relationship; frequently adversarial | Potentially adversarial (possibly toward therapist) |
| **The impact on each relationship of critical judgment by the expert** | The basis of the relationship is the therapeutic alliance and critical judgment is likely to impair that alliance | The basis of the relationship is evaluative and critical judgment is unlikely to cause serious emotional harm | Need alliance and critical judgement and savviness with psycholegal dynamics |
| **How success is defined** | Increased insight and behavioral change | Identify psycholegal factors to legal status | Level of improvement in psycholegal status |

\*Adapted from Greenberg, Stuart A., Shuman, Daniel W., *Irreconcilable Conflict Between Therapeutic and Forensic Roles,* Professional Psychology: Research and Practice (1997) Vol. 28, No. 1, 50-57