The 8IATC received funding from the Australian Government.
The Brain, The Unconscious and Adventure Therapy

Martin Ringer
Three themes

95% of our essential ‘experience’ is unconscious

Therapeutic change occurs with bodily movement, emotion and recall of past difficulties

Multiple memory systems mean that learning occurs in complex ways

*Then we look at implications for adventure therapy*
95% of our essential ‘experience’ is unconscious

‘Thinking fast and slow’

Human functioning is embodied, intuitive and even thinking involves ‘somatic markers’

Interpersonal communication is a soup of unconscious processes
So...we don’t really know what is going on

Which means?...
Therapeutic change occurs with bodily movement, emotion and recall of past difficulties.

Efrat Ginot’s work on therapeutic change in psychoanalytic psychotherapy and related fields.
Multiple memory systems: Implications for adventure therapy

Explicit memory systems
Semantic memory
Episododal memory

Implicit memory systems
Working memory
Procedural memory

Implications?...see later
Explicit memory systems – learning is consolidated with integration

Semantic memory – Building helpful stories (cf narrative therapy)

Episodal memory – Enabling recall and generalizing to semantic memory

The two together – working with contradictions

Implicit memory systems – learning occurs in the moment of the action

Working memory – needs optimum conditions for transfer

Procedural memory

Semantic memory – learning occurs through neural patterning - practice
Multiple memory systems and learning from adventure therapy experiences

ACTIVITY

1. Concrete experience

2. Express, observe and reflect

3. Examine: form new abstract concepts and generalizations

4. Test the reviewed concepts in new situations

Expression, observation and reflection help to consolidate events in episodal memory

Integration of episodal memory develops new working models and schema in semantic memory

Figure 8.2 The experiential learning cycle in relation to memory systems
Source: Adapted from Greenaway (1993) and Kolb (1984)
RE: The predominance of the unconscious in human functioning

Don’t rely on rationality and algorithms (CHANGES...)

Let go and notice

Use your feelings as information

Drop the illusion of control

RE: Ginot’s findings

Do some of the talking when the feelings are evoked. Don’t wait until ‘de-brief’ time

Catch the moments when they arise

PTO
Multiple memory systems

**Working memory:** Create safe emotional climate

**Procedural memory:** Accept that you’ll never know what they learn and they may never be able to articulate it (Implications for evaluation?)

**Episodal memory:** Use de-briefs to evoke memories and feelings – remember Ginot?

**Semantic memory:** Work with discrepancies with episodal memory and build functional narratives (cf. narrative therapy)
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