

Created for Thoughtful Engagement

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 By Holly J. Bean, PhD, LCPC, CTRS

Summer

Summer has landed for 2021, as of June 20th, which also doubled as Father’s Day. This summer promises to be very different from last summer, 2020, where the COVID-19 Pandemic brought much of our activities to a halt.

The thought of summer has the ability to bring with it a nostalgic review of childhood. I remember lazy summer days spent lounging outside, going to camp, swimming, riding my bike to and fro, and staying up late to watch the fireflies or the stars in the dark night sky.

For two weeks every summer my father would pile all seven of us in his old station wagon, along with suitcases and other necessities and drive to Syracuse, NY for a visit to my favorite aunt. The drive was about 8 hours, but felt like an eternity. Dad would drive all night, after working all day, and arrive early in the morning exhausted, but content. In those days, we did not stay at hotels. We would drive straight through to any destination.

In previous blogs the therapeutic activity known as reminiscing was discussed. I have found it fascinating to learn how others passed their summer months. Creating a current day ‘scrap book’ of past summer memories by printing out pictures from the internet with inscriptions from your client is a lovely way to learn more about their lives, while offering a tangible scrap book for family and friends to read. Reminiscing does not require pre-planning or any other type of material, just a ready ear and the ability to ask open-ended questions (questions that require more than a yes or no answer).

To take advantage of summer solstice landing on Father’s Day, one might share a bit about one’s own dad, without too much disclosure – perhaps he was a WWII Air force pilot, a minister, and built kayaks (this would be my dad’s information). The internet picture search could include these pictures:







Reminiscing can bring about happy and not so happy memories. The Thoughtful Engagement Specialist will want to be aware when the conversation may turn sad for the client. Redirecting the client is at times needed. This is a skill that can be honed. My father would become very sad when discussing his brother who had been shot down during WWII. Redirecting the conversation to earlier times in their relationship would help bring back a smile to my dad’s face. Statements like, “I can tell that you loved him very much. I haven’t heard what hobbies or interests he had, would you like to share?” Redirecting any type of difficult conversation requires the TEP specialist to remain calm and speak with empathy. While reminiscing can bring about lovely memories, it also can serve as a reminder that these things have passed and the loved ones that were once such a critical part of our lives are also passed.

Your supervisor can help you process these situations. It is also important to document in the daily log the reminiscing session so that others can gain an understanding.