

Experiential Exercise Day 2

Topic: *Working with Portrayals*

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is to practice skills around setting up and staying with portrayal work. Focus on bringing specificity, engaging the body, and using imagination to *portray* some affective experience that has been blocked or incomplete up to this point.

Patient: **Option 1, Grief Portrayal:**

Work with your own material or role play a patient whom you think would benefit from **a grief portrayal around loss** (e.g. relational loss, career upset, physical injuries, etc.)

Option 2, Reparative portrayal with a younger part:

Work with your own material or role play a patient who could benefit from bringing some healing, understanding or compassion to a younger part of the self that has been insufficiently acknowledged or needs some healing work.

Therapist: Ask patient what he/she/they would like to work on for this practice. Be specific/Set up a portrayal: Ask for specific details (e.g. sight, smell, touch, sound, etc.). Remember to use the present tense.

Try to practice some of these interventions:

-Specificity and establishing/strengthening connection

- “What do you call your mom/dad?”
- “What is your 5-year-old self wearing?”
- “As you look at her/him/they now, how do you feel towards them?”
- “As you look at him/her/they, notice if you feel any sensations or impulses and welcome whatever comes up with open arms”

-Hold a tight focus: Stay with the emerging feelings or sensations.

- “Feel the sensations in your hands, arms, legs, and notice what they want to do”
- “What does the sadness/tension etc. want to say?”
- “What is your younger part feeling? What does your younger part need from you (that she /he/they never got back then)?

-Deepen emotional experience:

- “Is there something the lump in your throat (or tight body part...x,y,z) wants to say?”
- “If there were no limits, what would you want to say or do?”
- As you look at your younger part, what do you want to say or do?
- “What do you do/say exactly?”

-Validate:

- “You’re doing great”
- “I know this is difficult AND you’re doing it!...”
- “It takes courage and this is such important work”

-Provide Dyadic Affect Regulation

- “Can we stay with this for just 15 more seconds?”
- “Feel me with you as you ride those waves”
- “See if you can stay with the X (feeling) and with me until you feel some relief or until it shifts”

-Metaprocess:

- (m)etaprocess at any given moment (“what does it feel like to acknowledge that?”)
- (M)etaprocess at the end (“what was it like to have done this with me?”)

Witnesses: What to look for during practice round:

- Notice your shifting felt sense as you witness the process
- Notice what in the Therapist’s guiding/intervening through the Portrayal helps the patient to process emotion/s - that has been blocked or incomplete up to this point - or to a corrective emotional experience.