

The Experiential Therapy Thang...

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Prelude: Conference Etiquette

- What did you learn in Kindergarten?
 - Do NOT talk out of turn, do NOT talk out loud when others are talking
 - Do NOT have side bar conversations (I will call you out on it and not apologize)
 - Raise your hand if you have a question
 - When asking a question, do NOT prelude with a story
 - Respect others
 - For today:
 - Turn off your cell phone – because if it rings, I WILL ANSWER IT AND YOUR LIFE WILL CHANGE COURSE....
 - Please limit leaving the room and returning

Why Experiential Versus Talk Therapy?

- Strength of the group is directly correlated to the number of one-to-one connections in that group
- Goal is to create those connections to facilitate a strong working group
- Engages body and emotions
- Insight through action

What are we going to do today?

- Introductions and Expectations
- Full Value Contact
- Body Scan Guided Imagery
- Milling
- Photo Process
- The Observing Self
- Step in Sociometry
- Processing time / Q&A

Full Value Contract

- Inclusion
- Respect
- Commitment
- Safety
- Fun

Body Scan Guided Imagery

- Sit (or lie down) in a comfortable position.
- Close your eyes and take slow, deep breaths.
- Bring awareness to your breathing, noticing any sensations or tension.
- Slowly move your attention upward: legs → stomach → chest → shoulders → arms → neck → face
- As you notice tension, breathe into that area and allow it to relax.
- Finish by taking a few deep breaths and gently returning attention to the room.

Milling

- Start by walking around, without aim or direction, gaze down, not paying attention to anyone else, not acknowledging anyone else personally, nor directly.
- Start walking around again; now slow your pace and begin to pay attention to one another. Your eyes engage as you pass. You find yourself in front of someone and stop. As you look into this person's eyes, let yourself become aware of the person that is there. Open your awareness to the gifts and strengths and potential in this being.

Milling (con't)

- Now continue milling about the room, looking at each other as you pass. Now find yourself in front of another person. As you look into their eyes, let yourself become aware of the pain that can be there.
- Now continue milling about the room. You find yourself in front of yet another person. Look into their eyes, consider how good it is to connect together, to be in the same space and time with this person.
- Finally, let your awareness drop deep within you, sinking below the level of what words can express, to the deep web of relationship that underlies all experience.

The Observing Self

- The Observing Ego comes from the Therapeutic Spiral Model, a psychodramatic approach used when working with trauma survivors.
- It represents the part of the self that can step back and observe experiences without judgment.

Purpose

- Helps individuals notice their thoughts, feelings, and internal states from a safe distance.
- Encourages self-awareness and emotional regulation.
- Supports trauma work by creating a non-judgmental inner perspective.

How the Observing Self Exercise Works

- The participant (protagonist) begins seated in a chair during a group or individual session.
- They choose a picture card or object to represent the observing self.
- The card is placed somewhere visible (e.g., taped to a wall) so it can “observe” the person during the session.
- Standing next to or holding the card, the person speaks from the observer role to themselves, using neutral, non-judgmental statements about thoughts, feelings, and inner experiences.
- After speaking, the person returns to their chair and reflects silently.

Step In Sociometry

What is Step In Sociometry?

- An experiential activity used in psychodrama and group therapy.
- Participants respond to prompts by stepping forward or backward to show agreement, experience, or intensity.
- Helps visually represent similarities and differences within a group.

Purpose

- Builds group connection and empathy.
- Encourages self-reflection and sharing.
- Helps participants realize they are not alone in their experiences.

Conclusion

- Process
- Q&A

Thank You

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