

Expanding and Deepening Attachment-Related Affect in the Withdrawer Re-Engagement Change Event

Goal: To practice using Empathic Reflections (of words, facial, bodily or tonal hints of emotion), Evocative Responses, Conjectures, Heightening, R.I.S.S.C. to expand and deepen primary emotion in Karl's position of withdrawal. Set up enactments and help him find (access and disclose) the need embedded in his primary emotions and fears

Karl & Tara have de-escalated, but Karl withdraws and Tara gets exasperated when she cannot get a response.

1. Karl: *I still try so hard to meet her expectations, and often just freeze and give up. I even numb her out when I can tell she's giving up on me!*"

What is Karl's apparent secondary emotion? _____

Empathically reflect it to him: _____.

What is his/her action tendency? _____.

Empathically reflect it to him/her it: _____.

What is his attachment meaning? _____

Evoke more (e.g. What triggers this sense she is giving up? What does this feel like to think she may be giving up on him? Etc)

Again make an empathic reflection of what he shared _____.

Before looking at an example below *, make an empathic conjecture as to how this secondary emotion (feeling numb) is linked to what he does (his action tendency in the cycle) of giving up. _____

* Example of a conjecture at how feeling numb (secondary emotion) is linked to his giving up (action tendency): *"You try so hard to give her what she wants, and when you see she is disappointed (**trigger**) - it is too hard to bear (hint at his primary pain) and you just go numb – and give up - is that it?"*

Wait for his confirmation/tweaking and reflect what he gives you: _____

Conjecture at underlying primary emotion* _____.

* Example: You almost sound exhausted with trying so hard to please her? I almost hear a fear of fear of failing Tara / of being rejected by Tara/ fear of her wrath etc)

Check for accuracy _____(Is that it? Is that how it is for you?)

Reflect and heighten any emerging primary fears _____ with repetition, simple, slow,

soft voice, using images and his words _____

Take turns using several **reflections, heightening, evocative responses, conjectures, R.I.S.S.C.**

2. Then – as his emotion deepens, Karl says:

“I don’t take chances in our relationship. It’s just so ingrained in me that things are going to go wrong - and all I can count on is myself. I’m so careful not to upset her, I often freeze. I am so afraid of getting it wrong with her!”

Use Reflections, Evocative Responding, Conjectures to deepen his primary emotions and fears (likely exhaustion / pain at placating, hiding, failing and fears of rejection/failure)

Alternate several of these interventions above.

3. Then - Set up an enactment for Karl to tell Tara what this tiptoeing and freezing, and fears are like for him:

- Help him to tell you clearly, while the emotion is alive.
- Ask him to share it with her
- Process – with him - What is it like to tell her?
- Process - with her - What is it like to hear this from him?

4. As you stay with Karl’s pain, exhaustion and fears of upsetting or losing Tara, he says, “*I am lonely too. I do want us to be close and I don’t want her to hurt - to be lonely.*”

Reflect and heighten Karl’s emerging longing to move into the relationship instead of tiptoeing on the edge, worrying about upsetting Tara.

5. Set up an enactment for Karl to share his longings and fears with Tara:

Could you tell her about _____?

Process enactment with both partners.

6. While his fears and longings are fully felt in the moment, ask Karl what he wants or needs from Tara to stay this close to her?

Imagine that Karl says – “*I just want a chance to be close to Tara and to be enough for her.*”

7. Shape an enactment for Karl to take the risk of asking. He may say something like, “*Can you just give me a chance to be enough for you? To be close even when I get it wrong sometimes? Can you not get on my case so much, and just let me know I am o.k. for you?*” Support Tara to respond to Karl’s engaged and assertive stepping into the relationship.