

Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents: Advanced Techniques

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Review of Emotional Immaturity

- ▶ Bodies grew up...
- ▶ Brains grew up...
- ▶ Think of small child
- ▶ Tiring!
- ▶ Low empathy

Emotional Immaturity, Con't.

- ▶ Simplistic, Contradictory
- ▶ Rigid, B & W, low stress tolerance
- ▶ Self-preoccupied
- ▶ Low self-reflection, high self-referencing
- ▶ Block reality
- ▶ Emotions rule
- ▶ External Emotional Regulation

Interpersonal Effects of Emotionally Immature Parents/People

- ▶ Emotionally immature relationship system (EIRS)
- ▶ Distortion Field
- ▶ Hostile toward your inner world
- ▶ No emotional autonomy
- ▶ No mental freedom
- ▶ Differences are a moral issue
- ▶ Right or wrong, good or bad

The Internal Effects

- ▶ No personal agency allowed
- ▶ my sxs make no sense, my problems are meaningless and not goal-directed; I must renounce my relationship with my true self
- ▶ Badness, Shame
- ▶ Guilt, Selfish
- ▶ Primal Wound (Firman & Gila)
- ▶ Rejection -> Abandonment -> Annihilation
- ▶ Did you sign the Secret Contract?
- ▶ No human rights, no individuality

The Impact on Relationships: It Feels Normal to...

- ▶ ...see others as more important
- ▶ ...feel bad about yourself
- ▶ ...feel emotionally lonely
- ▶ ...feel like you're struggling for attention
- ▶ ...feel mentally scrambled (Jenny Walters)
- ▶ ...watch what you say and do
- ▶ ...feel like you never are enough
- ▶ ...have relationships be hard

Deeper Goals for Treatment of ACEIPS

- ▶ Sxs make sense, problems have meaning for growth
- ▶ Reconnect to inner world, true self
- ▶ Reconnect to body signals
- ▶ Reclaim self-value; equal importance
- ▶ Freedom to think and feel *anything*
- ▶ Take feelings and needs seriously
- ▶ Work toward desired outcomes
- ▶ The smallest feeling, the dismissed thought

Advanced Techniques

Theory Driven: (Give client new ideas)

- ▶ The Primal Wound (Firman and Gila)
- ▶ Coherence therapy (Ecker)

Technique driven: (Give client new experiences)

- ▶ AEDP
- ▶ Gestalt Techniques
- ▶ Internal Family Systems (Schwartz)
- ▶ (NOTE: spontaneous expression to parents)

The Existential Problem: *The Primal Wound*

- ▶ True Self
- ▶ Nonempathetic attachment person = A break in the I-Self connection
- ▶ I-It, I-Thou (Buber)
- ▶ Lost relationship with true self (Firman and Gila)
- ▶ “Fall into non-existence;” annihilation
- ▶ The “survival personality”

Processing Emotional Injuries

- ▶ Psychoeducation
- ▶ When insight doesn't work
- ▶ *Where* is the memory stored?
- ▶ Primal Wound:
- ▶ Analyzing reenactments:
 - ▶ Reverie Association Technique: Describe current situation; when you felt this way before
 - ▶ Expand the Feeling Technique
 - ▶ Symptom deprivation Technique(Ecker)
 - ▶ "Notice that it's just a feeling" technique

AEDP: Processing the Closeness

- ▶ Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy (AEDP):
Diana Fosha *The Transforming Power of Affect*.
- ▶ The Core State
- ▶ How does it feel?
- ▶ What's that like?
- ▶ Where do you feel it in your body?
- ▶ Giving language to emotional intimacy
- ▶ Explicit acceptance and recognition

Gestalt Techniques

- ▶ Reclaiming your voice
- ▶ Empty chair advanced technique
 - ▶ 4th grade language
 - ▶ Take all the time you need
 - ▶ They are receptive, interested
 - ▶ "And in the future...I plan to..."
 - ▶ Thank them

Coherence Therapy

- ▶ Pro-symptom approach
- ▶ Personal Agency: my sxs make sense, my problems have meaning for growth; my problem is in my relationship with my true self
- ▶ Sentence completion advanced technique
- ▶ Juxtaposing mutually exclusive beliefs advanced technique
- ▶ How the brain changes

Internal Family Systems: Working with Personality Parts

- ▶ Richard Schwartz - multiplicity of personality
- ▶ The inner child, the protector, firefighter
- ▶ Your parts and their good motives
- ▶ Parts take over
- ▶ In Therapy:
 - ▶ Get permission from protectors; reassure protectors

Know Your Limits as a Therapist

- ▶ Countertransference frustration
- ▶ Boredom: reenacting the original emotional cut-off
- ▶ Desire to please
- ▶ Encourage agency but offer suggestions
- ▶ Phrase suggestions tentatively
- ▶ “Experimental method”
- ▶ Show how it’s done
- ▶ Phrase things neutrally, kindly, exactly
- ▶ Be with them.