

Safe Haven and Misattunement

Bowlby's 4 Points of Attachment

1. Safe Haven

Ideally, the client can rely on their clinician for comfort at times whenever they feel threatened, frightened or in danger.

2. Secure Base

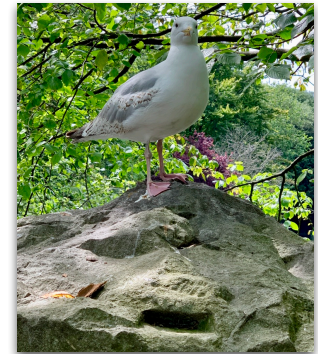
Here, the clinician gives a good and reliable foundation to the client as they go on learning and sorting out things for themselves.

3. Proximity Maintenance

This means that the client aims to explore the world but still tries to stay close to the clinician and excited to report their adventures.

4. Separation Distress

The client may become hyper focused on the therapist being present throughout the session and show anger at times they perceive the therapist is not fully present.



Safe Haven: Receptive Presence

- When we are without judgment or agenda, a felt sense of safety for the client is offered.
- As Receptive Presence brings safety, it makes room for the client's inner wisdom and inherent health to gradually transform.
- The client's system holds everything that is necessary for healing if the client has the capacity.



- This kind of interdependence is written into our humanness from the beginning of creation. We know that healing occurs at this level of interdependence right brain to right brain.
- When a client comes to us and discover a receptive presence on their own, the client is likely to feel respectfully joined, held, trusted, reflected, and supported.
- When we offer this level of support to our clients, they are able to repair old platforms and add new mapping from the experience.
- We understand that even though our client may want more, faster, and bigger sessions that we hold the safety in the space and move at a pace that is focused on healing and not rushing.



- If I am busy within myself trying to apply a protocol, assess a person, formulate a treatment plan, or select which evidence-based practice to employ, I am not present with my client.
- For my client to feel safe, I must also feel safe as the clinician and certain of my expectation.
- My sense of safety invites the client's nervous system to join and repair through modeling.
- It is considered best practice to slow our pace, get a sense of our inner peace, spend all the time we need to embody the work.
- Inner peace is one of the most important ingredients in working with Developmental Trauma.



- Giving complete, non-judgmental, responsive attention to another person through eye contact, and other more-or-less nonverbal forms of attention and response is important for repair of early platforms.
- Infants/toddlers are fully dependent on caregivers to meet their needs and this also plays out in our offices working with clients whose needs may not of been met when they asked.
- Experiencing attunement with another person is a basic need, essential for healthy development and healing.



Misattunement

- Misattunement was identified by Schore and Shore in 2008
- A lack of rapport between infant and parent or caregiver such that the infant's efforts at communication and expression are not responded to in a way that allows the infant to feel understood.
- Observed when an infant becomes upset because the caregiver is not able to meet their need.
- Caused from unavailable caregiver, medical reasons, and other circumstances



On Going Misattunement

- Ongoing misattunement disrupts the infant's ability to experience being the center of the caretaker's attention which is necessary for the infant to experience the world in relationship.
- This awareness of being the center of attention is important for the therapist to remember for the client's system to begin healing.
- The experience of misattunement can stunt physical growth in infants / children.



Misattunement is unavoidable

- The emotional effect lasts into adulthood, directly affecting the foundation for forming healthy relationships, feeling safe, and being able to successfully self-regulate.
- Misattunement is unavoidable and easily corrected with reattunement.
- Misattunement and Relapse are a normal and useful part of healing for the client.
- We give the client permission up front to let us know when they feel we are not available during session.



Reattunement

- Reattunement is when the well-functioning parents respond appropriately to soothe the baby when the baby may be responding as if they didn't get what they needed.
- We are always responsible for what might go wrong in a session and take every opportunity to repair misattunements.
- During the therapeutic process, reattunement works the same way, when the clinician is able to respond with agreement to the client's stress and shows the ability to say, "I am sorry".
- This reattunement is necessary for repair. It takes multiple times of reattunement to repair a person's earlier experiences.
- Saying, "I'm sorry" is a powerful ingredient for healing.



- Reattunement should be held in the forefront of healing for the client.
- Healing is a series of reattunements during the healing process.
- Reattunements can be seen as repair through responsible apology.
- The client often times comes to treatment looking through the eyes of trauma.
- This is often the result of repeated misattunements with caregivers, partners and therapist without repair.



Attunement allows us to feel safe

- We all need to experience attunement to recognize the felt sense of safety.
- Attunement allows us to feel welcome.
- Without safety, all the higher order functions like logic, concentration, retention and ability to respond and not react that follow may develop skewed.

