

The Healing Power of Emotion

Frye



Get the Books!

- The Healing Power of Emotion
 - Edited by Diana Fosha, Daniel Siegel, Marion Solomon
- Handbook of Emotion
 - Michael Lewis & Jeannette Haviland-Jones
- Working with Emotions in Psychotherapy
 - Leslie Greenberg & Sandra Paivio
- Transforming Power of Affect
 - Diana Fosha

What We Will Cover

- 9:00-9:30 Introduction
- 9:30-10:30 What is Emotion?
- 10:30-12:00 Emotion as Integration
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch
- 1:00-2:00 The Affective Communication Cure
- 2:00-3:00 Video/Individual
- 3:00-3:30 Video Couple
- 3:00-4:00 Discussion/Wrap-up

What is Emotion?

- Questions:
 - When you say was emotional what do you mean?
 - When you say nothing emotional happened, what do you mean?
 - Where does emotion come from and reside?

What is Emotion?

- EMOTION in Latin means “to move”
- Emotions are adaptive not rational or irrational

Is Emotion a...

- an element that links people together (sociology)?
- fundamental part of development (attachment, developmental psychology)?
- way that the body is connected to the brain and coordinated with its various layers (neuroscience)?

Emotion as Integration

- “Because the mind’s energy and information flow is both embodied and relational, regulating this flow is both neural and interpersonal.
- Daniel Siegel

Emotion as a Part of Neural Integration

Neural Integration

- Emotion as INTEGRATION



Neural Integration

- Integration is the linking of different parts into a whole.
- Emotional experiences shift our state of integration. It can increase or decrease integration.
 - e.g. emotionally well experiences vs. emotionally distraught experiences
- Emotion refers to moments when the state of integration is altered.
 - Moments where linkage in the brain or relationships is altered.

Neural Disintegration

- When emotional needs exceed the emotional competence of others, the self must compensate for the environmental failure. (disintegration/defense mechanisms)
 - In a state of feeling distraught, terrified, or shattered actual parts of our mind literally separate/divide.
 - Sight from hearing, touch from smell
 - Ability to be in the present moment is lost
 - Disintegration/defense mechanisms are a temporary survival skill to restrict the impact of emotion feared to be unendurable to the psyche.
 - Neural disintegration can:
 - paralyze our thoughts
 - distort our perceptions
 - imprison our behaviors

Intense Affective Experiences

- “In combat a man sees his best friend die a sudden and violent death”
 - when emotional needs far exceed emotional responses it will result in more severe neurological disintegration (i.e. dissociation)

Disintegrated Experiences

- Disintegrated experiences produce rigid or chaotic patterns
 - Chaotic (under-regulation of emotion)
 - thoughts are intrusive
 - emotions are unstable
 - behaviors are impulsive
 - Rigid (over-regulation of emotion)
 - thoughts are inflexible
 - behavior is inflexible
 - emotions are closed

Disintegrated Experiences

- The aim of disintegration is to restore emotional safety. The mind and the body can only endure so much (numbing, shocking, etc.)
- Adaptive in the short term but maladaptive in the long term.
 - Disintegration typically shows up in procedurally learned defense strategies
 - Formal Defenses-(aimed to minimize reality) repression, denial, minimization, isolation of affect.
 - Primitive Defenses- (aimed to manipulate reality)-externalization, projection, somatization, introjection.
 - Organization of Self Defenses-(aimed to separate from reality)-dissociation
 - Relational Defenses-(aimed to avoid re-experiencing emotional pain) withdrawal, angry protest, clinging.

Disintegrated Experiences

- Disintegrated neurological clusters/patterns (procedurally learned tendencies) form through life experiences.
- 7 categorical emotional states that are associated with procedurally learned tendencies.
 - joy, surprise, fear, anger, sadness, disgust, shame.
 - experience shame, accompanied by physical tightening and hiding in the face of criticism (relational defense)

Procedurally Learned Tendencies

Cluster

Anger often leads to:

Asserting, defending

Sadness often leads to:

Seeking support, withdrawing

Surprise/Excitement often leads

Attending, exploring

Disgust/Shame often leads to:

Hiding, expelling, avoiding

Fear often leads to:

Fleeing, freezing, giving up

Joy often leads to:

Connecting, engaging

Links are created between differentiated circuits that now become an procedurally learned tendencies.

Procedurally Learned Tendencies

- Respond automatically to emotional and sensorimotor cues.
 - example:
 - Client was abused by father
 - Client dis-integrates to create safety (heightened alert, muscular tension, etc.)
 - Client approaches intimate relationship (emotional cue) as an adult resulting in procedurally learned patterns of heightened alert and increased muscular tension (a disintegrated state).
 - Client trembles when touched by romantic partner in anticipation of abuse even when other actions would prove more adaptive to current reality.
 - Client is not integrated enough to engage in pro intimacy behaviors . Stuck with an outdated tendency.

Emotional Integration

- Emotion is then:
 - “a window into disintegrated/integrated states”
 - “a window into a change event”
- Psychotherapy is facilitated integration catalyzed by the use of emotion in the therapeutic relationship.
 - EMOTIONALLY BEING WHAT THE ENVIRONMENT WAS NOT.
- By being what the environment was not (affect facilitating, understanding, empathizing), seeks to undo disintegrated procedural tendencies and set up an environment where these tendencies are no longer needed and integration can occur.

Emotional Integration

Past



Now

Us

Malin Triangle

Emotion as Interpersonal

Relational Integration

- When we feel love for another, our whole being longs for connecting ourselves with that person in mind and in body.
- Emotions regulate and prime our experiences of connectedness/integration.
 - Connection elicits pro emotions
 - Threats to connection elicit negative emotions.

Relational Integration

- Integration of the mind happens when we feel safe and seen.
 - Safe-being relaxed and open to others and to our own experiences as they unfold
 - Seen-feeling of being real, of being connected, of not being alone
- When we are safe and seen we have a sense of “feeling felt” and being psychologically held in the mind of another.

Relational Disintegration

- Disintegration of the mind happens when we feel **unseen and unsafe**
 - **unseen-isolated and alone**
 - in a state of arousal (excitement) we can feel shame
 - **unsafe-threatened and guarded**

Integrated Experiences

- Integrative experiences are marked by a sense of **flexibility** or **coherence**
- connected, open, harmonious, engaged, receptive, emergent, compassionate, and empathic.

The Affective Communication Cure

Affective Cure

- The experience of emotion opens up a window to change.
- Experiencing feared emotions confers a sense of mastery.
- Emotion brings access to new resources and repertoire of behaviors
- Emotion is the royal road to the sub-cortical unconscious.
 - Deep experiences unlock deeper experiences
- Emotions signal clients that something significant is occurring.

Affective Communication

- The essence of affective communication is being inside the client's world as an other, and the client feeling it and knowing it.
 - Two models of relating:
 - sensitive responsiveness-attunement
 - using own affective response-feeling felt
- The client needs to feel like they exist in the heart and mind of you as their therapist.
- Empathy, sharing, and resonance serve to amplify the clients affective experiences while melting away defenses and procedurally learned tendencies.

Feeling Felt

- The client needs to feel like they exist in the heart and mind of you as their therapist.
 - Lead in's
 - Therapist Immediacy “I feel sadness well up inside of me as I hear you talk about
 - “What is it like for you to see the tears in my eyes as you talk about this”?
 - “In a way this is your journey, but in a way it's our journey and I am there with you in some way”

Feeling Felt

- By having the client focus on their experience of the therapist, the therapist gains a “*felt reality*” and the connection with the therapist becomes real.
- This work also shift the focus from “what they experienced” to what is it like for you to share your pain and your aloneness with me.
- This keeps the client from leaving the session in the darkness and isolation of experiencing

Attunement

Affective Communication

- It is also important that the client's experience of their intense feelings is one of **ACCEPTANCE** and **OPENNESS**.
- Lead in's
 - “tell me more about the sadness”
 - “I can see how abandoned and alone you felt”

Affective Communication

- Relational
 - Intensify client therapist interaction/relationship
 - Basic Question- How do you feel here with me? and how do you experience me?
 - counselor- “I really want to have a sense of how you’re feeling talking with me.”
 - Reason-the therapeutic relationship is a rich arena for corrective emotional experiences to take place.

Affective Communication

- Relational
 - Expression of support and affirmation
 - validating, affirming, and appreciating
 - offering encouragement
 - acknowledging, amplifying healthy responses.
 - recognizing and appreciating self-empathy and self-care.
 - exploring reactions to support and affirmation

Affective Communication

- Relational
 - Expression of empathic response
 - explicit expression of empathy
 - “You felt embarrassed and experienced a great deal of fear when....”
 - exploring reactions to empathy
 - “How is it for you to have me join you in your feelings of embarrassment ”?

Affective Communication

- Relational
 - Expression of therapists emotion
 - acknowledging the impact that that client is having on you
 - “I feel deep sadness as you shared...”
 - “This session has meant alot to me because...”

Working with Affect

- **Red** and **Green** Signal Affects
 - **Red** Affects
 - anxiety, shame, helplessness, and despair
 - **Green** Affects
 - hope, trust, curiosity, openness, and the zest for exploration.

Red Signal Affects

- Working with Anxiety
 - anxiety often is an indicator that defenses have been broken through and vulnerability is setting in.
 - Have client describe physical experience of anxiety
 - “where is the anxiety located”
 - what sensations accompany anxiety”
 - Physical experiences (placement) of anxiety can have implicit or subcortical significance. Identifying the location activates the memory.

Red Signal Affects

- Working with Shame
 - Identify the visceral cues of shame existing (looking down, looking away)
 - Have the client name the shame
 - Shame typically primes withdrawal and defense.
 - Facing the shame and having the counselor not run out of the room begins the corrective process.
 - The counselor validates the shameful experience while also reframing it as a “unhealthy behavior acting out to meet a healthy need”

Green Signal Affects

- When green signal affects show up they are competing affects that are a part of emotional replacement.
- Name the affect and draw attention to it.
 - “when you say that I can see an openness in you and an excitement to understand more”
 - “I noticed you looked down when I said that, almost uncomfortable to experience hope from what I had said”
 - This challenges internal disintegrated responses of dismissing, minimizing, or distracting.