

Pillar IV Reflecting Psychobiological Shifts

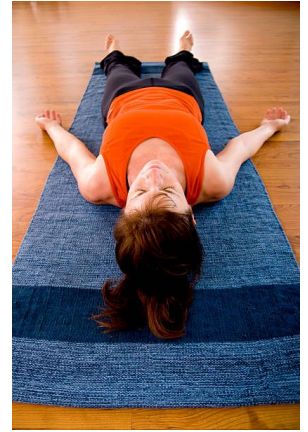
A resource-based skill to counteract our brain's "negativity bias" and the tendency to view the present and future through the lens of the past.

We track all levels of experience with our clients (somatic, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and relational).

This is the integration phase (savasana in yogic practices). Take time to slow down with meaningful shifts. It's easy to rush by.

A psychobiological shift is a "crack in the monolith" of survival style identifications.

We are increasing our client's capacity for greater experiences of somatic settling, presence, emotional depth by reflecting shifts as they happen in real time.



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Disidentification occurs when clients are able to shift out of their survival patterns and into ways of being that align with what they most want for themselves (the contract).

These moments are **very impactful**. The very thing that the client wants is happening right here, right now: “You say want you connection (contract), and a moment of connection between us is happening right now. What’s happening inside in this moment? I notice that tears are forming.”



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Therapist self-disclosure can be a very meaningful moment of connection and can help deepen client's integration: "I feel touched seeing you be kinder to yourself." **Must be genuine and come from your heart.**

New neural pathways are forming during times of integration and reorganization. Slow down and **savor**. It is best to continue to walk down this pathway **over and over** again both in therapy and out in life to strengthen and expand this new way of being.

Example: Asking for what you need is met with a nourishing response (**corrective/disconfirming**). Try this with people in your life who are wise!



The essence of trauma is disconnection...

So the real question is: “How did we get separated and how do we reconnect?”

(Gabor Maté)



It is easy to get lost in a client's stories. These stories start changing as the underlying internal states are shifting. Old narratives shift and clients relate to memories differently.

We want to reinforce states of reconnection to self when we observe them, as these are important moments of integration and reorganization.

A significant resource for a client is the increasing capacity to stay present to shifts between connection and disconnection.

Normalize the movement from connection to disconnection. Moments of expansion and connection are generally followed by a wave of contraction and disconnection. AND THAT'S OK.

Slowing down with moments of reconnection and integration makes old strategies to stay disconnected less necessary!



Reflecting Psychobiological Shifts - Languaging

I notice you smile when you say that.

I see tears forming in your eyes.

Just notice that there's a place to "rest in your belly."

I notice that you make eye contact (relaxed and alert) with me.

And it's nice that you're not pressuring yourself right now.

Your face softens as you mention holding a boundary with your friend.

Your shoulders dropped, more flow your breath and your voice is deepening (settling)

Wow! What you said was so real to me. How is it to notice that congruence? Head and heart are the same.

What you might hear from your client: "It feels safer to look at you now." "It feels like I have come home." "Your office looks different now." "Wow, all of a sudden I am feeling tired."

Memory Reconsolidation

One way to help our clients chip away at shame based identifications: “I’m bad for needing. Who I am is wrong. I can’t do relationships.”

Old emotional learnings can be updated.

Step 1: The original memory and its emotional learning is up and running. It feels “true”.

Step 2: A new emotional learning is also up and running and mismatches the original learning.

Step 3: The brain is now in a labile state in the mismatch and open to change. There is now a positive association with the memory.

Memory Reconsolidation Case

Adult female with vicious inner critic. At work, she tells herself that she must be in control or bad things will happen. When she messes up or doesn't have an answer, the voice says, "What's wrong with you, work harder!" She reports feeling burned out and chronically anxious.

Give me a recent example when you felt like you messed up at work. Put yourself in that moment, but this time imagine that your inner critic is quiet. What do you notice in your body?

Implicit memory system can be accessed and updated in the soma: "I feel a super hot feeling in my chest."

How old is that sensation in your body? "My mind flashes back to age 10 and I'm in the kitchen in my childhood home."



Memory Reconsolidation Case

At age 10, mom was addicted to opioids. And father was emotionally and physically abusive. Parentified child. Very responsible at a young age. High stress at home and school- no where felt safe. No room for error.

Client recalls a promise she made to herself in the kitchen: **“I must always be on top of things.** I can’t let anything fall between the cracks or bad things will happen and I will die!”

I’m wondering. Can you imagine being with your 10-year old self? Could you even imagine stepping into her shoes? From your adult brain looking at that scene and that promise, what do you notice now?

Laughing, the client mentions how absurd it is and mentioning all the times she messed up recently and nothing bad happened.



Memory reconsolidation case

When the old emotional learning and the new emotional learning are both up and running, a “mismatch” emerges.

THEY BOTH CAN'T BE TRUE!

For this client, the old emotional learning became open (labile) to a new learning (“I can mess up and sometimes bad things don’t happen, and I’m still here.”). Over time, the job of the inner critic was no longer needed and started to quiet.

