

# Creating a Container

## Deborah Kennard, MS



1

### **Notice and Offer Container:**

So we are nearing the end of our time and I would like to be sure you have all of the time you need to feel complete and safe when you leave the office today. Would you be interested in a containing resource to help with this?

2

### **Specify What Needs to be Contained:**

First, let us decide what it is you feel the need to contain?

3

### **Mindfully Invite and Offer Menu:**

Okay, so just allow the perfect container to come to mind that will be big enough and strong enough to hold your . It could be as small as this coffee cup or as large as Mother Earth, or anything in between.

4

### **Enhance/Deepen:**

Great. So imagine that (name container) and how does it go in?

5

### **Mindfully Deepen:**

So just allow it to enter (name container) from that (name entry point) and let me know when you feel it is all inside.

6

### **Sealing Container:**

Would you like to (close the door, put a lid on it), or have you already done that?

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7

### **Somatic Linking:**

"So just sense the \_\_\_\_\_ being contained in the  
(name container), and what do you notice in your body now?"

8

### **Extra Layers/Menu:**

Great. Now just see if there is anything else you need to feel that  
is safe and contained. You could put a lock on a door, have a special being as the  
guard, you could put it into a cave in a mountain...

9

### **Deepen/Check for Completion:**

Great. So really sense the \_\_\_\_\_ inside the  
(describe container). And what are you noticing in your body now?.

10

### **Spiritual/Energy Resource:**

Would you like to invite healing or spiritual energy or light to penetrate the  
(container) to help heal the \_\_\_\_\_ ?

11

### **Enhance/Deepen/Complete:**

Just allow that \_\_\_\_\_ (energy/light) to penetrate that \_\_\_\_\_ and  
let me know when it feels complete.

# "The Answer"



The first information we want to get is regarding your strengths and what you do under stress. This information will help us in the preparation phase for you. We will see what you are really good at doing and also what is less developed for you. This information will be useful as we continue the EMDR treatment process.

**As you answer the following questions, there is no need to read into them too much. Whatever comes to mind first will be fine.**

What are you most proud of?

What is difficult for you to do?

What do you do when under stress?

How do you handle extreme pressure?

How are you with deadlines?

How do you get your "way"?

Is it easy for you to say "no"?

Do you cry easily?

What do you do when you are upset?

Do you cry in front of others?

Would you call yourself a "rule follower"?

How do you deal with conflict?

In an emergency situation what are you likely to do?

Is it easy for you to ask for help?

Is it difficult for you to accept help?

How convincing are you?

What are you likely to do when someone tells you "no"?

How do you handle negative feedback or criticism?

Therapist may take a moment to look for patterns, then take a guess: So it sounds like you are good at \_\_\_\_\_, and it is harder for you to \_\_\_\_\_. When you get close to pain I wonder if you will \_\_\_\_\_ (Looking for what is over and under developed for the client).



# The Answer Patterns



What patterns am I seeing in the Answer Questions? (These are not necessarily discussed with client, this just helps you formulate your understanding.)

- ▶ How do they regulate affect?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ▶ What else do I feel curious about?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ▶ What do I notice about the client's posture, voice, and the way they answered the questions?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ▶ What are the current resources? (What does the client do well?)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ▶ What is under developed for the client?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ▶ What character types are you seeing in the client and why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ▶ What resources are you seeing as a possibility?

# Character Types



Character Types	Possible Negative Belief	Over-Developed	Under-Developed	Needed to Hear
The Invisible One	I'm in danger. I'm going to die.	Disappearing Survival Defenses Sensitivity	Safety, Grounding, Feeling Emotions	"You are welcome here." "You are safe now."
The Emotional One	I'm in danger. It's not safe to feel safe.	Merging into another person. Knowing how others feel. Sensitivity	Boundaries, ability to self sooth	"It is okay to feel safe when you are safe."
The Nice/ Nonthreatening One	I'm helpless. I'm powerless.	Getting pity. Being a victim.	Personal power. Self-soothing	"I'm here for you." "You can get your needs met."
The Independent One	I'm alone.	Competency, Ability to take control	Asking for help. Trusting others to help.	"You can get support." "It's okay to ask for help."
The Rock	I don't matter. My needs don't matter.	Being dependable Tolerating negative Enduring suffering	Knowing what they want Asking for what they want Action	"What you want matters."
The Chameleon	I'm not enough	Adaptation to environment Ability to manipulate and adapt	Being honest Knowing who they are Being straight forward	"It's okay to just be you." "You matter"
The Hero	I'm not safe, I'm powerless	Setting firm boundaries Withstanding pain	Being vulnerable. Connecting with authentic emotions.	"It's safe to connect."
The Doer	I need to be perfect I'm not enough	Energy, working hard, taking action	Play Connection Self Care	"You don't have to work so hard" "It's okay to play"
The Life of the Party	I don't matter	Energy, fun, action	Rest, being grounded and authentic	"You matter." "You don't have to work to be noticed."

These are examples of possible answers. At one time these were needed adaptations for the person to other stay safe or maintain a connection to a caregiver, then become a pattern of relating to others. All people have multiple character types. Each character type has a strength in it. The goal is to help create balance and more choices so the authentic self can be present. The possible negative belief is just an example and there may be many other options. "Inspired by Ron Kurtz, 1990 and Pat Ogden, 2002



In the next section we are looking at various areas of strengths. I will be taking a guess about where you are in each of these areas. My guess will be based on the answers to The Answer questions. It is very helpful to have you correct me after I guess. We will then decide on a resource to practice.

Good at being firm

Good at being flexible

**(Boundaries)**

Ability to freely give and receive  
Clear about personal rights and rights of others ability to choose

Good at calming yourself alone

Good at reaching out for comfort

**(Affect Regulation)**

Ability to regulate affect alone or with others

Good at making things happen

Good at going with the flow

**(Personal Power)**

Clear about wants and needs Clear about choices  
Aware of effect they have on others

Good at verbal expression

Good at listening

**(Verbal Expression)**

Able to put words to feelings  
A balance of listening and expressing

Good at convincing

Good at noticing what others want

**(Influence)**

Ability to reach out for help Ability to ask for what you  
want Doesn't take advantage or get taken advantage of

# Pendulation Exercise



Adapted from Peter Levine

This is a way to allow the client to practice changing state by noticing a mild disturbance and then going from that to a place of calm or relaxation.

This needs to be done very slowly and mindfully so the person can tolerate the experience.

The therapist is slowly guiding the client through the experience of noticing this contraction and expansion.

1

"I'd like to invite you to bring up something that is mildly disturbing, maybe some recent irritation, and focus on how you are experiencing that in the present moment. If we were to scale the hardest thing at a 10 and the easiest thing at a 0, it may be something like a 3 on the disturbance level."

2

"I'd like you to do this very slowly and gently and notice how you are experiencing this in your body. If this is too big or overwhelming, just notice the edges of the sensation in your body."

3

"I would like to invite you to gently feel into this experience of disturbing noticing whatever is here...  
physical sensations like tension, pain, tingling, heaviness...  
or emotions like sadness, grief, anger...  
or energy like tingling, pulsating or vibrating...."

4

"Whatever is here, I'd like to invite you to welcome it by saying (sadness, pain, etc) you are welcome here, you are welcome here." Invite them to repeat this a few times.

5

"Notice what changes as you welcome what is here."  
"You may notice sensations like hot, cold, tingling tightness"  
"You may notice visual images like colors, shapes, or images"  
"You may notice a motion or a direction"  
"You may notice textures like rough, smooth or jagged"  
"Here is a list of words that may help: foggy, frozen, heavy, crushing, light, contracted, piercing, stagnant, empty.."

# Pendulation Exercise



6

"If you would like you can come up with a word that describes this experience, if so, what would that word be?"

7

TRUTH of the Moment:

"Focus on what is happening now in the present moment. If you can, be really honest with yourself about what is here and the true sensation of each moment, observing it moving or shifting. If possible, observe it with curiosity as if you are watching water move through a stream."

8

Finding the Oasis

"Now I would like to invite you to notice a place in your body that feels totally different, a part that is not experiencing the disturbance, that feels calm, neutral, peaceful, settled, grounded, connected, comfortable or any different more pleasant experience." 8 "Spend some time feeling into this part of your body, even if it is only a tiny spot on the tip of your toe or nose."

"Begin noticing the felt sense of experience with this part of your body and sense into this part as you did with the activation."

"Here is a list of words that may help: calm, relaxed, peaceful, content, neutral, warm, light, still, expansive, flowing..."

9

"If you would like, you can choose a name for this sensation or experience, like "Calm" or "Peace".

10

"Now I would like to invite you to go between those two places using the name to connect to them if that works for you."

(Allow them to spend some time going from one to the other.)

"If it works for you, slowly move your awareness back and forth between those areas of..... and ..... (If they reported the name you can use it here .... ie. "Fear and Calm"

"Pay attention to what happens"

"Notice if your body automatically has a release like a breath or a movement or any other change."

The clinician is noticing any physiological changes that are happening and

encouraging the client to "notice" and encouraging the slow gentle pacing

When the clinician appears to be complete the clinician may say something like:

"Good, I notice your breathing is slowing down and you appear more relaxed.

What are you noticing?"

The client can then report the experience.



# Virtual EMDR Mechanics



Teletherapy appears to be here to stay. There are many ways that the traditional S.A.F.E. EMDR practices and procedures can be used in the virtual environment. This document will give specific instructions for use in teletherapy.

1

Preparation phase in teletherapy checklist.

2

Instructions for Virtual EMDR Script



## Preparation Phase Checklist

Assure that the client is properly prepared for reprocessing. The mechanics for reprocessing should be completed the session prior to the first reprocessing session.

Inquire/Experiment with how you are on the screen. Experiment with gallery view or speaker view, distance from the screen, and positioning.

Instruct the client on how to pin your video so it stays on your screen if using zoom. (There are 3 dots... beside the picture, click on those and “pin video” will be an option.)

For reprocessing practice the eye movements on the screen with clinician’s face in view and the clinician’s face to the side, out of view. Which is preferred?

For client tapping option:

- a. Self-tapping with arms crossed and tapping on sides of arms.
- b. Self-tapping on knees or table.
- c. Clinician alternatively slapping down on desk. (Sound/Tapping option)

Check on client privacy. This can be used as a boundary experiment.

Make a plan for disconnection and reconnection. Possibly using this as an experiment, predicting the screen freezing or losing sound. Possibly having a plan B or a plan to text or call if disconnected. If disconnected be curious about the experience after reconnecting.

# Script for Mechanics in Virtual EMDR



**Practicing the Mechanics:** This is preparing for doing Phases 3 and 4. It is not to be done on the first day with clients unless there is a plan to reprocess on the 2nd session.

## Initial set up:

Experiment and check on various aspects of the screen. Is the client comfortable with the distance, the sound, gallery vs. speaker view? Instruct the client to pin the video if using Zoom, so the screen does not suddenly switch during reprocessing.

## Eye Movements Distance:

For all of the eye movement options, please make sure that the client's eyes are moving past the center line. If not, experiment with options such as "landscape" mode or a different device. Please make sure you are practicing on the device they will be using for the reprocessing session.



**"We are going to practice the eye movements. First we will practice with just my hand visible on the screen and then with my hand and face visible on the screen, then you can decide which you prefer."**

## Speed:

"I will start out fast and slow down if needed. We want it to be as fast as you can tolerate. You do not need to try hard to focus on the fingers, it is just a way to help you move your eyes back and forth." The therapist starts with fast movements and only slows down if the client says they need slower.

## Directions:

"There are times when a change in direction can be useful so would it be okay to practice diagonal movements?" The therapist does diagonal movements starting from top left first, then the other way, from top right.

## Tapping

"There are times when it can be useful to switch from eye movements to tapping. Would you like to practice tapping on yourself, there are several options. (Therapist demonstrates each option with the client.) First practice by crossing your arms across your body as if you are giving yourself a hug, then tap on the sides or your arms. Next, you can practice tapping on your knees like so. The next option is to tap on the desk or object in front of you like a book. Which one of these options do you feel fits best?"

# Script for Mechanics in Virtual EMDR



## Sound/Tapping:

“ Another possible option is for me to tap on my desk or knees in a way that you can hear and see.” Therapist makes a large movement, alternating each hand hitting down on a surface or their own knees hard enough to make a sound, bringing the hands up high, about face distance so the client can see the hands.”

## Reminder Instructions:

“The EMDR process is intended to bring balance to your system. I will be asking you some questions with the intention of helping you to find the root of your presenting issue. As we have discussed, some disturbing experiences become stored in your system with the original images, sounds, thoughts, emotions and body sensations. When these memories are activated in the present it may feel like an over-reaction but it is just the inadequately processed memories that are being activated. As we go through this process the best thing you can do is notice your experience and give honest feedback. You do not need to try to do anything. I will do the eye movements for a while and then stop and ask you what you are noticing. At that time you can just give me a snapshot of what you are experiencing. I do not need to know everything that you experience. Whatever you experience is okay.”

Dual Awareness/Noticing the experience/The Train/Video metaphor.

“Some people like to use the metaphor of watching the experience go by like looking out of the window of a train or watching a video on a screen. Would one of those feel useful to you?”

## Stop Signal:

“If you would like to stop at any time, it is okay. Would you like to raise your hand or do a time-out signal?”

Therapist demonstrates the two methods and asks the client to practice doing the signal.