

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.

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6 Sealing Container:

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

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 the door, have a special being as the guard, you could put it into a cave in 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 is 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 relational patterns am I noticing?



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?



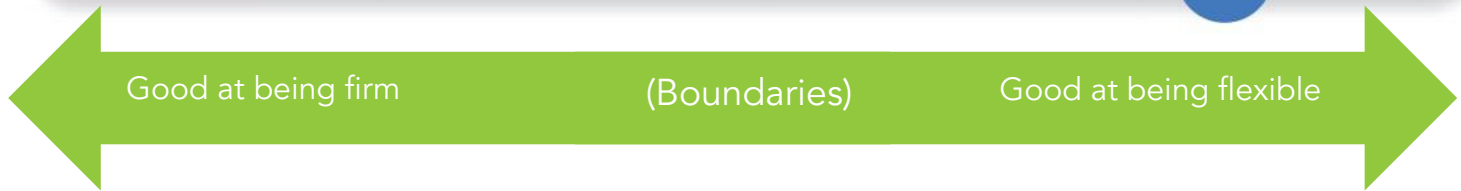
Which character types are you seeing in the client and why?



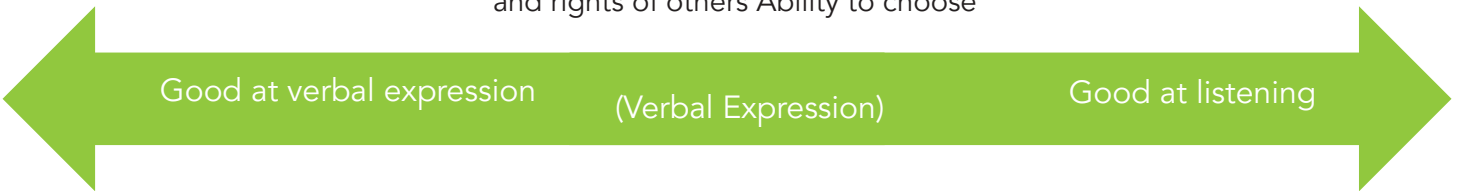
What resources are you seeing as a possibility?



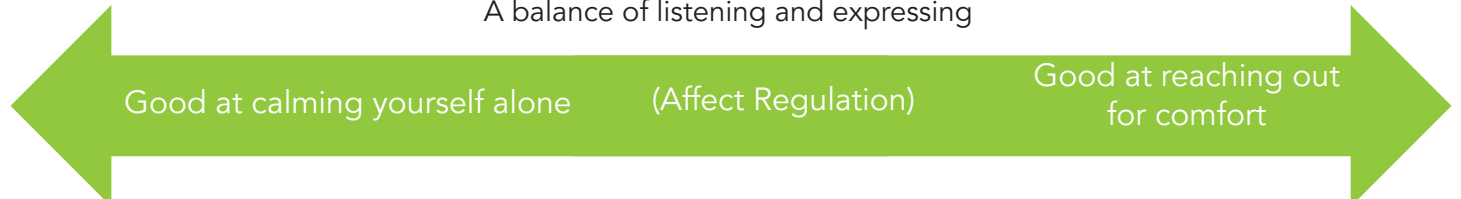
In next section we are looking at various areas of strengths. I will be taking a guess about where you are in each of these areas. My guess will be based on the answers to The Answer questions. It is very helpful to have you correct me after I guess. We will then decide on a resource to practice.



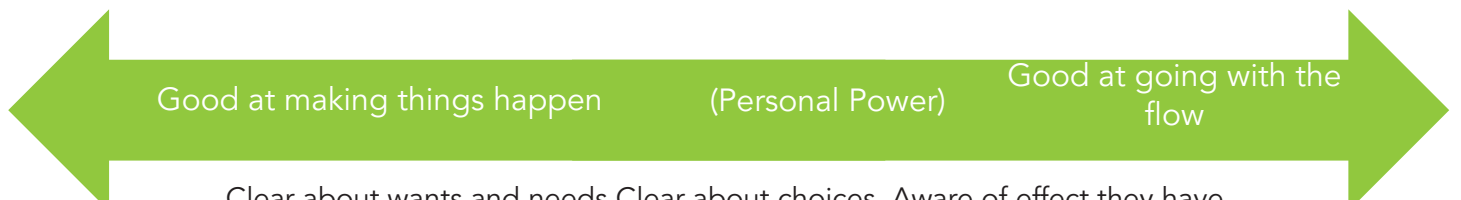
Ability to freely give and receive Clear about personal rights and rights of others Ability to choose



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



Ability to regulate affect alone or with others



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



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

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 other person. Knowing how others feel Sensitivity	Boundaries, ability to self soothe.	"It is okay to feel safe when you are safe."
The Nice/Non-threatening 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 is 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."

Those are examples of possible answers. At one time these were needed adaptations for the person to other stay safe or keep 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 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)

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 disturbance 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 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 disturbance 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.."

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."

"Spend some time feeling into this part of your body, even if it is only a tiny spot on 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 ofand.....(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.