

Healing Space

From the Vulnerable Child to the Authentic Essence

Brurit Laub

Abstract

The goal of the Healing Space procedure is to assist the client in developing a compassionate relationship between the adult self and the vulnerable child. Various therapeutic approaches such as Hypnosis, Psychodrama, Gestalt, Neuro Linguistic Programming, Internal Family System, Voice Dialogue, Ego State Therapy and Schema Therapy have adopted inner child work which attempts to repair attachment wounds and internalize new attitudes toward self and others. Inner child work in EMDR therapy mostly relates to the nurturing/protective aspects of the adult-child relationship (Steel, Parnell, Schmidt, Manfield and Gonzales & Mosquera). The Healing Space procedure addresses the vulnerable child, similar to Knipe's 'Loving Eyes' procedure, but it expands it further. The therapist resonates dialectically to the denied and undeveloped aspects of the client such as helplessness, shame and guilt and brings them to the fore, recognizing and legitimizing them so that they become more accessible. This facilitates a dialectical movement between the client's various aspects of vulnerability and their opposites such as competence, pride and self-acceptance. The therapist also creates a repairing experience by responding to the client in dialectically opposed ways to those he negatively experienced with significant others. The therapist directly approaches the vulnerable child with compassion thus modeling for the client how to contain and accept the child's feelings. When hostile and disconnecting parts appear in the client's attitude toward the child the therapist helps the client to process their past protective role briefly. Gradually the client learns to rely on the developing compassionate relationship between the adult self and the child. This enhances the client's growing sense of wholeness and often a spontaneous emergence of the client's authentic Essence. The therapist identifies the Essence and validates it. The Healing Space is internalized by repeating it during EMDR therapy and by daily encounters with the child at home. This procedure can be used at preparation, as an interweave during EMDR processing, as well as in closing of a session.

The innovative elements in this procedure are: an emphasis on the integrative role of the dialectical movement between opposites, dialectical attunement and interventions of the therapist, the active compassionate modeling of the therapist and the recognition and validation of the client's Essence.

The Healing Space will be illustrated with video clips.

Learning Objectives:

1. Develop accurate dialectical attunement to the client's vulnerable child.
2. Learn how to model compassionate holding so the client can internalize it.
3. Recognize denied aspects of the client and facilitate the dialectical movement between them and their opposites to foster the acceptance of opposites and a sense of wholeness
4. Identify and validate the emergence of the client's authentic Essence.
5. Supply the client with an accessible tool to contain and cope with vulnerable situations thus enhancing relationship skills.