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VALIDATION AND INVALIDATION

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VALIDATION



Validation

- Communicating that a person's responses do make sense and are understood
- Validation can be used to decrease emotional arousal on affective and physiological levels

Valid: What does it mean?

- At once relevant and meaningful
 - ▣ To the case or circumstances
- Well grounded or justifiable
 - ▣ In terms of empirical facts
 - ▣ Logically correct inference, or
 - ▣ Generally accepted authority
- Appropriate to the end in view
 - ▣ i.e., effective for reaching the individual's ultimate goals

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"I don't reimburse. I validate. I listen and acknowledge how difficult it was for you to find a place to park."

Validation

- Validating communicates: “I respect and accept who you are as an individual today and how you have become the person you are today.”
- To be done effectively, often needs to begin with regulating one’s own emotion

Effects of Validation

- Validation communicates acceptance and understanding
 - ▣ Results in lowered arousal and vulnerability
- Invalidation communicates criticism, contempt, dismissiveness, illegitimacy, and disregard
 - ▣ Results in increased arousal and vulnerability
- Individuals who receive validating responses during stressor tasks experience significantly lower levels of negative affect, heart rate, and skin conductance in comparison to others who receive invalidating responses

(Fruzzetti & Fruzzetti, 2003; Fruzzetti & Iverson, 2004; Shenk & Fruzzetti, 2011; Swann, 1997)

What to validate? What not to validate?

What to validate:	What not to validate
Emotions	Judgments
Wants or desires	Non-facts
Beliefs and opinions	Inaccurate mind-reading
Actions	Fortune-telling
Suffering	Content of invalid worries

Validation Catch Phrases

I could see how...
I can see that...

It makes sense
that...

I get that you're...

Am I
understanding this
(rephrase)...?

You're having the
thought that...

I understand that...
It's
understandable
that...

I hear you.
I hear that you
are...

I feel that way too
sometimes...
It's OK that...

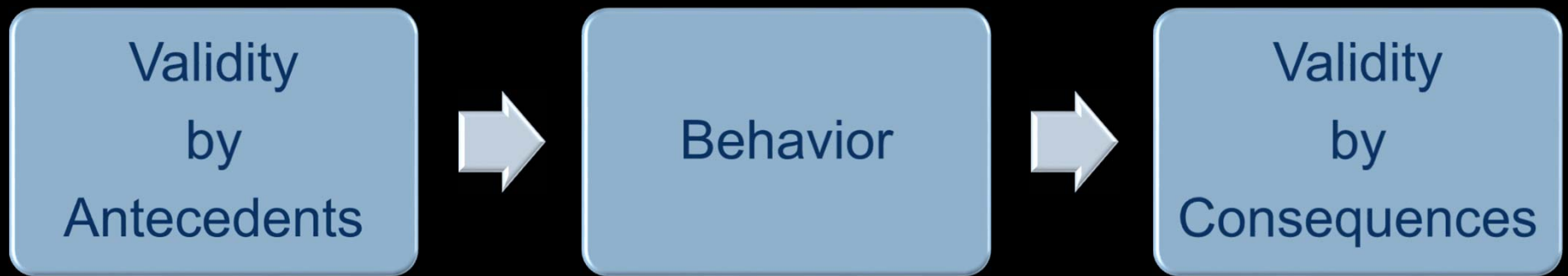
If it was me, I
would be... (similar
feeling/reaction)

That
sounds...(reflect
back)

Most people would
feel... (similar
feeling/reaction)

Of course!

Determining Valid Behavior



Validation

1. Paying attention
2. Active listening
3. Therapeutic mindreading
4. Making sense of bx due to past or biology
5. Making sense of bx due to the present
6. Radical genuineness

Validation

1. Mindful Listening
2. Reflecting and Acknowledging
3. Clarifying and Summarizing
4. Putting Behavior in a Larger Context (making sense of bx due to past or biology)
5. Normalizing (making sense of bx due to the present)
6. Radical genuineness; Expressing Equality and Respect; Reciprocating (Matching) Vulnerability
7. Responding with Action

(Fruzzetti & Iverson, 2004; Linehan, 1997)

Levels of Validation

- 1) Staying Awake: Unbiased listening and observing
- 2) Accurate reflection
- 3) Articulating the unverbalyzed emotions, thoughts, or behavior patterns
- 4) Validation in terms of past learning or biological dysfunction
- 5) Validation in terms of present context or normative functioning
- 6) Radical Genuineness

What Validation IS NOT

- General “positivity”
- General warmth
- Necessarily agreeing
- Legitimizing the invalid
- Parroting the other person
- Implying satisfaction or liking
- Just the inverse of invalidation

1) Pay Attention

- Listen and observe what the participant is saying, feeling and doing as well as corresponding active effort to understand what is being said and observed
- Demonstrate interest in the participant
- Requires:
 - ▣ keeping attention focused on the participant
 - ▣ attending closely to both verbal and non-verbal content
 - ▣ paying attention to what is important to the participant
 - ▣ engaged, reciprocal interaction pattern

2) Accurate Reflection

- Accurately reflect back to the participant their feelings, thoughts, assumptions, and behaviors
- Empowers and authenticates the individual
- Requires an understanding of the perspective of the participant as well as both the events that occurred and the participant's responses
- Non-judgmental stance (verbally and non-verbally)
- Present as hypotheses that may or may not be accurate

3) Articulating the Unverbalized

- Be sensitive to what is *not* being said by the other person
- Pay attention to facial expressions, body language, what is happening, and what you know about the person already
- Show that you understand in words or by your actions Be tentative as assumption may be invalid or only partially valid; be open to correction

4) Understand

- Look for how the other person feels, is thinking, or if he or she is making sense
- Given the person's history, state of mind or body, or current events (i.e. the causes)
- Even if you don't approve of the person's behavior, or if his or her belief is incorrect.
- Say *"It makes sense that you . . . because . . ."*

Note: Dialectics of Validation of Behavior

Behavior can be valid in terms of:

- Antecedent 1 but not Antecedent 2
 - Historical antecedent but not current antecedent
 - Current Antecedent 1 but not Current Antecedent 2 (e.g., emotion based on distortion of facts)
- Antecedent but not Consequence (e.g., being “right” but not “effective)
- Consequence 1 but not Consequence 2 (e.g., short term positive but long term negative)

5) Normalize

- Communicate that response is understandable
- Behavior is valid in terms of being well-founded on empirical facts or sound principles and thoroughly applicable to the case
- Behavior is valid because it's an effective means to long term goals
- Behavior is valid because it is a normative

6) Show Equality / Radical Genuineness

- ❑ Recognize the person as he or she is, seeing and responding to the strengths and capacities of the individual while keeping a firm, empathic understanding of the participant's actual difficulties and incapacities.
- ❑ Validate the individual not the response at this level
- ❑ Interviewer must be aware of the present
- ❑ Cheerleading: recognize and confirm the inherent ability the participant has to overcome difficulties

Types of Validation

- Explicit Verbal
- Implicit Functional

Validation Targets

- Behavior
 - Emotions, Pain, and Suffering
 - Physiological Responses
 - Cognitive Appraisals, Thoughts, Beliefs, and Values
 - Actions
- Inner Strength and Capabilities

Validate Emotion

Strategies:

- ▣ Provide opportunities for emotional expression
- ▣ Teach emotion observation and labeling skills
- ▣ Read emotions
 - Offer multiple-choice emotion questions
- ▣ Communicate the validity of emotions

Validate Behavior

Strategies

- ▣ Teaching behavior observation and labeling skills
- ▣ Identifying the “should”
- ▣ Countering the “should”
- ▣ Accepting the “should”
- ▣ Moving to disappointment

Validate Cognition

Strategies:

- ❑ Eliciting and reflecting thoughts and assumptions
- ❑ Discriminating facts from interpretations
- ❑ Finding the “kernel of truth”
- ❑ Acknowledging “wise mind”
- ❑ Respecting differing values

A FEW NOTES ON INVALIDATION



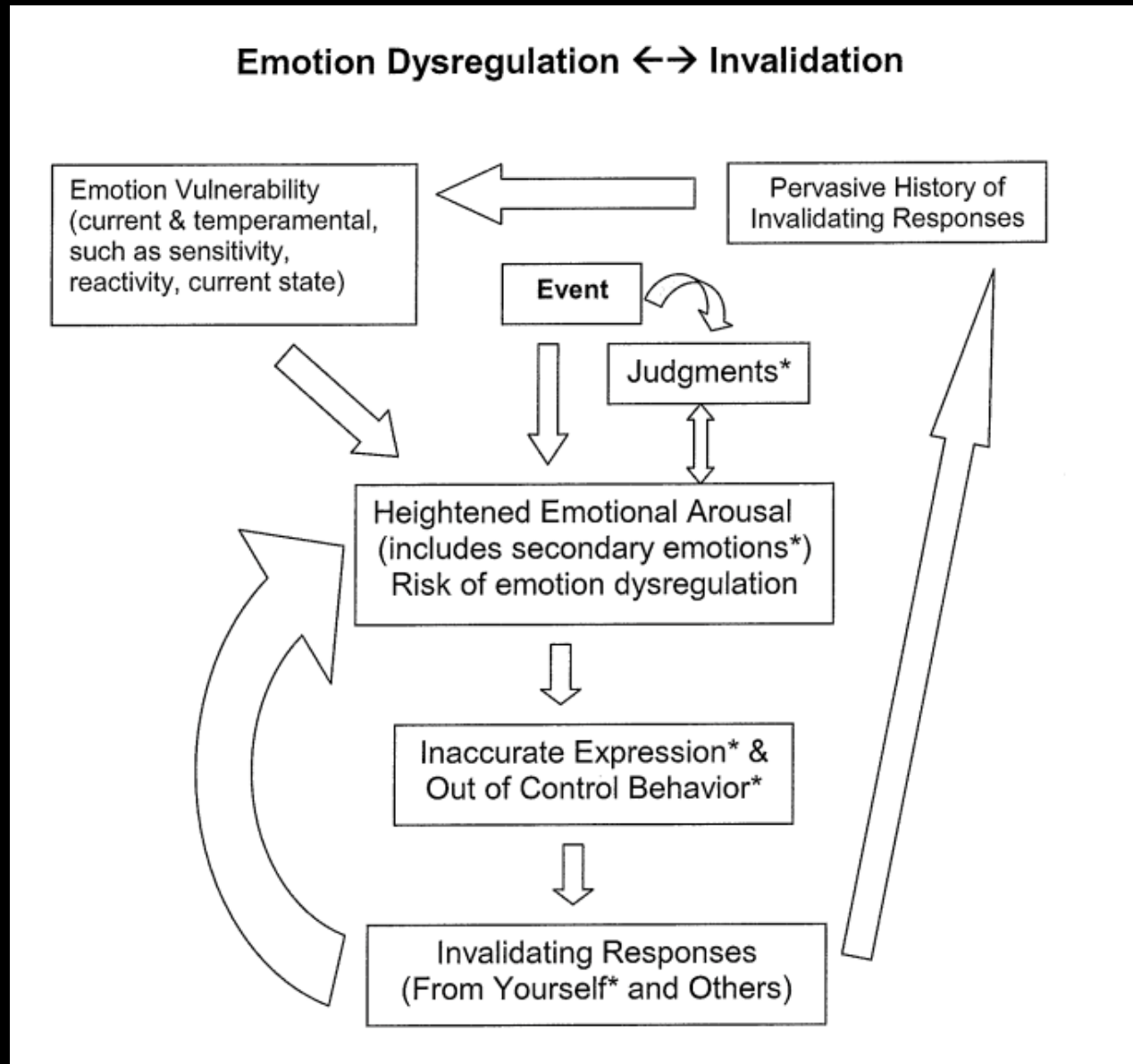
Invalidation is Helpful When...

- ❑ It corrects important mistakes (your facts are wrong).
- ❑ It stimulates intellectual and personal growth by listening to other views.
- ❑ Block/interrupt avoidance
- ❑ Weaken/suppress dysfunctional behavior

Invalidation is Painful When...

- ❑ You are being ignored
- ❑ You are not being repeatedly misunderstood
- ❑ You are being misread
- ❑ You are being misinterpreted
- ❑ Important facts in your life are ignored or denied
- ❑ You are receiving unequal treatment
- ❑ You are being disbelieved when being truthful
- ❑ Your private experiences are trivialized or denied.

Self-invalidation Processes (Fruzzetti)



SELF-VALIDATION



Self-validation

- Self-validation is simply giving yourself the recognition that you are a complete and whole person, and that you are okay as you are. You recognize that you do not need anything or anyone external yourself to declare that you are okay as a person, you have the power to do that yourself.

Example: which one is validating?

- Describe your own experience, point of view, emotion, or action in a matter-of-fact way.

- or -

- Say, “How stupid of me,” or put yourself down for your response.

Example: which one is validating?

- When you make a mistake, remind yourself that you are human, and humans make mistakes.

- or -

- Blame and punish yourself for being wrong; avoid people who know you were wrong.

Example: which one is validating?

- See yourself as “screwed up” or “damaged goods,” and give in to shame and misery.
- or -
- Respond and talk to yourself with understanding and compassion. Remind yourself that all responses are caused and make sense if you explore the reasons long enough.

Practice today...

- Validate your clients
 - ▣ In each session, make it a point to actively validate your client
 - ▣ When you are in a tug-of-war with your client, pivot to validation
- Validate yourself!
 - ▣ When you have a hostile, unpleasant client in your office
 - ▣ When you catch self-invalidation

Questions?

THANK YOU!

