

Presentation title: “Offering your eyes for healing in eye to eye Gazespotting”.

Abstract:

A primal need of a human being is to connect with another human. It seems that one's eyes need to find the eyes of another for this connection to be complete, as the eyes are a part of the body we search for instantly, when we are looking to connect.

Thanks to this deeply imprinted orienting of the eyes, we are able to distinguish which eyes/objects are safe, and which eye gaze is to be avoided. Eyes can speak more than words with all micro movements, pupil dilation, contraction, and subtleties of fine muscles surrounding the eyes.

In Brainspotting we have the Outside and Inside Window and we know that the eyes are the window to the deep brain. Eye contact seems to invite us to the possibility of looking through the “windows” to a completely different and vast landscape, an unknown territory. In eye to eye gazing we go much beyond what we can formulate and comprehend.

Shakespeare's words: “Your eyes are the window to your soul” remind us of this universal phenomenon, how through the window of the eyes we can deeply connect with another person and *see someone behind the eyes*. And what we see will inevitably affect us.

What does it all mean for Brainspotting therapists who work daily with eye gazing, either to the pointer or in space, or at times into the therapist's eyes. Brainspotting is a process which intensely involves the therapist's presence, engaging his subcortical brain and the body. In eye to eye Gaze spotting, the therapist will instantly move from being engaged in witnessing someone's process whilst in deep attunement, to being explicitly and centrally present, she/he will become a very part of the client's process.

Eye to eye gazing can be penetrating and powerful. This level of engagement can be overwhelming, and powerful reactions may indicate a deep resonance with the client's processing and at times a presence of countertransference. Especially in our work with clients with complex trauma, in this intensely engaging process of eye gazing, we can find ourselves overwhelmed or incapacitated. Yet, Brainspotting therapists need to be prepared to work on this kind of level of intimacy and intensity, and be prepared to contain their intense reactions.

In our day to day life it is vital that we are able to regulate a level of intimacy, depending on: the context or situation, the role in the relationship and the complex interpersonal dynamics we share with different people. Similarly, there seems to be a kind of process through which we can adjust and fine tune, which would determine how much we would allow the eyes of the other to *come in* through the windows of our eyes. This *window* can be regulated on a dimension of being closed to open, like pupils regulate the amount of light coming in from the outside.

In a unique inter-personal space in therapy, the Brainspotting therapist will allow a different level of experience, depending on how prepared he/she will be in that moment to receive eye gazing, to hold it, contain and resonate or perhaps even to engage in some kind of shared processing.

Through PowerPoint presentation and small group practice, participants will have the opportunity to explore the impact of eye gazing in the context of the therapeutic relationship. As a group we will explore the phenomenon of eye to eye gazing, its subtleties and we will share our experience.

Offering our eyes is a great gift of healing. An exploration of how prepared and able we are to do so, will be the main focus of our inquiry.