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Abstract:

Brain Basics for Brainspotting Therapists will provide a “neuroexperiential” understanding of brain regions and functions which are most pertinent to Brainspotting (BSP) Therapy clinical practice. When the neocortical, conscious brain studies the subcortical unconscious brain, we shift in our ability to be better attuned BSP practitioners. As in Quantum Physics, anything observed changes, so our own brains have a shift in the experience and understanding of our BSP Theory and Practice when we study the brain. Brain study enhances our understanding of our neuroexperiential BSP model to better attune to our clients, and to our Limbic Countertransference responses to them.

In operationalizing this neuroexperiential “brain studies brain” phenomena, an experiential exercise will give participants a tool that utilizes the clients brain-body to experience to gain an embodied experience of what BSP therapy feels like. The client’s experience informs any questions to the therapist any further clarification about what BSP therapy entails, and provides a basis for the therapist to further describe BSP “in the Tail of the Comet” – attuned to what the client has experienced and references. Offering this BSP exercise to clients and colleagues gives a uniquely personal felt sense of “Where we look affects how we feel”, providing a context for imparting any further information about how a BSP session might work and why we utilize the visual field in the manner that we do. A direct link will be made to Inside Window and Outside Window setups from the experience in this exercise to further educate clients or colleagues about how BSP works based on their own unique experience. I often hear that BSP practitioners struggle to find the words to convey what BSP is and how it works in the subcortical brain. An exercise that utilizes

the very parts of the brain we are trying to speak about is highly effective in having the client's own brain-body system educate them about how BSP works.

Damir del Monte's teachings regarding regulating and non-regulating (or less effective) brain areas will be discussed as neurobiological reasons to W.A.I.T and to be in the Tail of the Comet when the client is on a Brainspot. An understanding of Frank Corrigan's theory of the relevance of the midbrain Superior Colliculus for orienting to and initiating full (or significant) resolution of trauma assists our attunement to the client who is processing on the relevant eye position based on "where they looked affected how they felt".

Additionally, the following will be discussed in lecture, PowerPoint and Q& A: Brain terminology and function deepens a neuro-informed way of practicing BSP Therapy with clients. Terms relating to location (i.e. dorsal, ventral, lateral, medial, rostral, caudal, etc.) and specific initialized location descriptors (vmPFC, dlPFC, vmPO, etc) are important for understanding what specific area in the brain is being discussed and what its function is. Further brain "geography" will include the lobes of the brain and basic functions associated with them. Brain views will be shown (i.e. sagittal and coronal views) for correct orientation to a portion of a brain show in a diagram. The brain's evolutionarily dictated organization from survival to homeostasis helps us to understand how the "D's" of the DSM are erroneous – they are not "disorders", but rather survival responses based on an individual's orientation to original threat and trauma . Interoception, exteroception and neuroception will be discussed to deepen practitioners awareness of the multiplicity of the brain-body experience and why we would intervene only minimally once the client is on a Brainspot .

Brief Agenda:

An exploration of both Frank Corrigan's Superior Colliculus, "First Responder to Orienting", in the midbrain; and Damir del Monte's regulating areas of the brain, agranular isocortex and parts of the allocortex, will focus on our current theories of how Brainspotting (BSP) may work in the brain. An experiential exercise will give a model for introducing BSP to a client or explaining to a colleague. Brain basics functionally and anatomically will include descriptors for location (dorsal, lateral, medial, etc) and their initialized versions for further location specificity (dlPFC, vmPFC, etc) for clarity regarding brain area locations and function. The brain's evolutionarily dictated triage of survival, then homeostasis and restoration will be discussed with a focus on relevance to BSP sessions with clients.

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