

THE LANGUAGE OF CONNECTION



OVER ARCHING PRINCIPLES

- Connect
- Respect
- Assume Good Intentions

LANGUAGE THAT CONNECTS

- Promotes Dialogue and communication
- Empowers and encourages self definition

LANGUAGE THAT SEPARATES

- Generalizes
- Categorizes
- Makes Assumptions
- Gives permission to make clinical decisions based on pre-conceived notions

MY ASSUMPTIONS

- All people need and want to connect
- Destructive behavior is an unskilled and ineffective attempt to connect
- Person in question does not know how to articulate their needs
- Person in question feels desperate, isolated, panicked, confused, angry

MY ASSUMPTIONS, CONTINUED

- Clinicians are also feeling desperate, panicked, confused, angry
- Have the power to set the terms of the relationship
- Behavior is socially acceptable and rewarded
- Also need connection
- Working with people who appear to reject connection (help-rejecting)
- This is painful
- Use power (language, behavior, interventions) to avoid and deny pain of disconnection and rejection

MY PHILOSOPHY

- We occupy the same universe as our clients
- Connection is the foundation of healing and recovery
- Language and behavior either separates or connects

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER IN THIS PHILOSOPHY: PEER REFLECTION

- GETTING HELP FROM YOUR CO-WORKERS
 - Speak respectfully about the client and the situation—imagine someone is having this conversation about yourself or a loved one
 - Use I statements
 - I feel
 - I need
 - I want

GETTING SUPPORT FROM CO-WORKERS CONTINUED

- Keep focus on yourself and off your client
- Be mindful of the goals and values of connection, respect, and assumption of good intention
- Strategize to speak and behave in ways that foster these goals and values, despite frustration

HELPING YOUR CO-WORKER

- Validate the feelings of your co-worker
- Help your co-worker stay focused on his/her feelings, rather than client's behavior
- Be supportive of both co-worker and client
- Be respectful of both co-worker and client