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