

**EMDR CONFERENCE 2023**  
**CHANGING LIVES**


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## Looking at Our Consulting Relationships Through the Attachment Lens

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## AIP model

Our perceptions and responses in any of our relationships are influenced by our stored adaptive and maladaptive information.

A consulting relationship works best within a trusting relationship.

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## History of attachment security

Consultee with a childhood history of attachment security = lots of stored adaptive material related to relationships.

PCs = I trust your feelings and intentions toward me are positive, I trust you're on my side, I trust you're not judging me.

Epistemic trust = I trust you, therefore I trust what you tell me.

Consultee doesn't fear judgments, consultee is open to learning from you, consultee is open about their struggles.

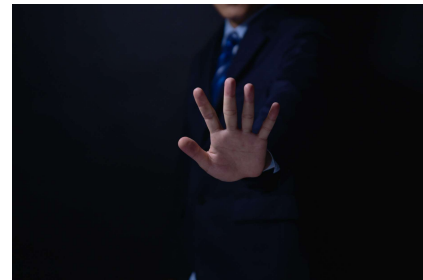
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## Non-secure attachment history

Consultee with a childhood history of non-secure attachment = stored unprocessed maladaptive material related to relationships.

NCs = May not believe the intentions behind your words are completely positive. There may be covert judgments behind your words. You may be having negative thoughts or feelings about me.

Defenses may become activated.



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## Dismissive attachment patterns

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Dismissive Attachment Pattern (Derogatory subtype) = I don't easily trust. I have to think more of me or less of you so that you are less threatening to me.

Dismissive Attachment Pattern (Idealizing subtype) = I don't easily trust. I manage my anxiety by convincing myself that I have everything I need. We're good. I'm good.

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## Additional patterns

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Preoccupied Attachment Pattern = I don't easily trust that you will meet my needs or trust that you will value me. I may be a bit overwhelming to you in terms of needing reassurance or getting my needs met.

Additional Unresolved/Disorganized Pattern = carrying some unprocessed trauma that can get activated within the relationship or by helping people with trauma. Can cause dysregulation, disorientation.

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## It's helpful to stay mindful of our own tendencies

Defenses coming from a dismissive, preoccupied, or disorganized attachment pattern in our consultees can easily trigger any defensive tendencies we carry.

As consultants, we need to think in terms of addressing any non-secure tendencies we have so that we can respond to non-secure words/actions with secure-based words/actions.

Secure-based words/actions involve mentalization on our part.

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## The pause...

Am I feeling distress? Negative sensations? Or negative beliefs right now?

Could the consultee be picking up on my anxiety?

Am I feeling a little threatened by the consultee's defense mechanisms or dysregulation?

Could the consultee be reading some frustration, defensiveness, impatience or judgments in my voice or mannerisms?

Can I take a moment to pause, step back, self-regulate, and then step back into a nonjudgmental, curious, reflective mode?



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## Responding from a secure base

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Be curious. Humble. Genuine.

Correct misunderstandings nonjudgmentally:

“Help me understand what you were trying to say.”

“I may not have used the right words to convey what I was trying to say...”

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## Responding from a secure base

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Invite clarification:

“Help me understand, from your perspective, where I can be the most helpful to you...”

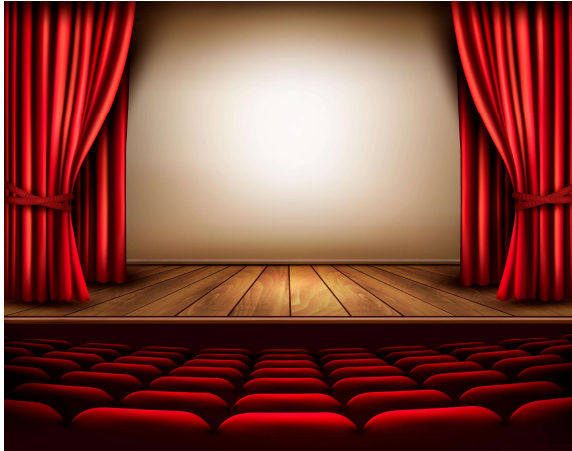
Correct misunderstandings nonjudgmentally, with humility and grace:

“I must have misunderstood. Help me understand what you were trying to say.”

“I may not have used the right words to convey what I was trying to say...”

“Let me give some thought to this.”

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## Set the stage for security

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Set the stage for open communication. "I take my job as consultant seriously, so I'll be looking for areas in which I can help you. Let me know if I say something that doesn't make sense."

Set the stage through preliminary agreements as recommended by Maria G. Masciandaro, PsyD.

Taking the time to go through expectations and develop a mutually agreed upon plan prevents many misunderstandings and problems down the road.

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## Set the stage for trust and connection

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Don't forget to provide positive reinforcement whenever it might be appropriate.

Small talk is not wasted time. It's how we develop a sense of trust and comfort with one another.

As Dan Siegel says, Connect, then correct or redirect. Take time to develop the relationship.

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# Thank you!

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