Self-Awareness & the VCPR

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Self-Awareness

Emotional Awareness + Thought Awareness
When we suppress thoughts and emotions, we push them out of conscious awareness. When we do this, we hope that the thoughts and emotions will go away and no longer affect us in any way.

Tchiki Davis, Psychology Today

Self-awareness is the ability to see yourself clearly and objectively through reflection and introspection.

Courtney E. Ackerman, Psychology Today
Impacts of Suppression

- Emotions:
  - Numbing behavior
  - Dysregulated behavior
  - Stress-related physical impacts

- Thoughts:
  - Surge in unwanted thoughts
  - Rebound effect
  - Rumination
Benefits of Self-Awareness

1. Better understand and process your emotions
2. Understand how your behaviours impact others
3. Notice mindset patterns and behaviours that require shifting
4. Improve your ability to respond instead of react
5. Improve decision making with greater clarity
Better understand and process your emotions
- Euthanasia
- Moral distress

Understand how your behaviours impact others
- Client reactions
- Conflict with colleagues

Notice mindset patterns and behaviours that require shifting
- Cognitive distortions

Improve your ability to respond instead of react
- Manage irritability with clients and colleagues

Improve decision making with greater clarity
- More confidence in spectrum of care decisions
Emotional Awareness
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toxic Positivity</th>
<th>Validation &amp; Acceptance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Excessive and ineffective overgeneralization of a happy, optimistic state across all situations. Results in the denial, minimization, and invalidation of the authentic human emotional experience.” –The Psychology Group</td>
<td>Acknowledge, verbalize and release the full range of emotions (emotional agility)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t worry, be happy! Stay positive. It could be worse. It is what it is.</td>
<td>I’m here and I’m listening. I’m sorry this is happening. I see this is causing you some stress. This is hard. How can I help?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surface Acting</td>
<td>Deep Acting</td>
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'The irony is, the more we give our anger, fear, worry, sadness, whatever, permission to get loud, the quieter they become'

@feltsensewpg
Emotional Awareness

- Are you in tune with your emotions?
- Are you comfortable naming your emotions?
- Do you know how to feel and process your emotions?
- Do you have safe spaces to express your emotions?
Go Slow
Are you in tune with your emotions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>What in my body am I feeling?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>Are there emotions surfacing?</td>
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Are you comfortable naming your emotions?
Do you know how to feel and process your emotions?

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<th>Where in my body do I feel it? What sensations am I feeling?</th>
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<td>What am I feeling? Name the emotions.</td>
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<td>Needs</td>
<td>What do I need right now?</td>
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Name It

Feel It

Shift It (if required)
Do you have safe spaces to express your emotions?

- Trusted Colleagues
- Family & Friends
- Professional (coach, counsellor, therapist)
- Journaling (audio, written)
- Crying & laughing
- Music, dancing, drawing
Thought Awareness
Metacognition

“Capacity to see our thoughts as thoughts”
-UVA Health

“Ability to monitor and control one’s cognitive processes”
-Fleur & van den Bos
Where do our thoughts come from?

- Past data points
- Things we’ve learned (consciously, subconsciously)
- Events (trauma, stress)
“Whenever you get triggered, somebody pulled that trigger, perhaps, but who’s the one carrying the ammunition? How you handle the people who trigger you that’s your call. But at least know you’re the one with all the explosive inside you”.

–Dr. Gabor Mate
Get Curious

When I feel like this, what patterns are coming up for me?

What purpose does my response serve?

What ‘story’ am I telling myself?

What do I need to let go of?

What’s here for me to learn?
Reframing

Learn to look at things in a new way
Think-Feel-Act Cycle

Circumstance (Just the facts)

What I'm thinking about this

What I'd have to think to feel neutral

What I'd have to think to feel positive

Negative emotion

Neutral emotion

Positive emotion

How I behave

How I could behave

think

feel

act
Gratitude – Vitamin G

Dispositional/Emotion

Produces dopamine and serotonin

Mindfulness

Practice!
Bringing it All Together . . .
"A person’s ability to manage an emotional incident without feeling overwhelmed is called distress tolerance”

-Linehan, 2014

Distress Tolerance

Diffuse
Allow
Run Toward
Engage

-Barry McDonagh
<p>| | |</p>
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It took a lot of life experiences to learn how to suppress but we can learn how to feel and connect with ourselves and others.