

Facilitating Compassion Focused Dialogues

The following statements serve as useful prompts during compassion focused dialogues and help deepen compassion towards the self or other individuals.

-Witness/acknowledge (sensitivity to suffering, non-judgement)

'I can see that you are feeling/thinking etc.....'

-Understand/empathise

'It makes sense you feel this way because....'

-Clarify motivation

'What I want for you is....'

-Clarify feeling towards

'I feel.....to see you having difficulty'

-Clarify need (unmet)

'Given that you are feeling...what you need is....'

-Key message you want the person to know/hear

'I want you to know that you can/are....'

-Redirecting and broadening attention or highlighting memory

'It might be helpful to remember...'; 'It might be helpful to focus on....'

-Predict, understand and plan for blocks to compassion

'Hearing this I imagine you are feeling...but this is understandable because....'

-Compassionate way of responding behaviourally

'It might be helpful to try....'

Facilitation notes:

- It can be helpful to start with witnessing/acknowledging the experiences of the person or 'self' in the opposite chair. This relatively neutral first step can help to prime the client's response before moving to more affect-laden stages where blocks can be encountered.
- It can also be helpful to expect, predict and normalise the client's blocks, fears or resistance to compassion. Such reactions to compassion can then be met with

understanding and provide a source of therapeutic insight (e.g. 'given what you've been through, it makes sense that you would feel hesitant trusting others').

- In compassion focused therapy, compassion is never applied 'cold' but is preceded by intentionally accessing and embodying the client's 'compassionate self'. This often involves the use of soothing-rhythm breathing, changes to posture and facial expression, and a focus on the qualities and motivation of compassion.

Citation:

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