Emotion Distancing Dialogues

Emotional distancing aims to help individuals down-regulate and contain intense or overwhelming emotions. In doing so, emotionally distanced dialogues support the development of distress tolerance and emotional regulation.

**Process of dialogue:**

1). The individual describes feeling emotionally overwhelmed.

   *Facilitator:* “It sounds like you are feeling a huge amount of rage right now.”

2). The facilitator invites the individual to distance themselves from the emotion by placing it in an empty chair.

   *Facilitator:* “Imagine that your anger is held in this seat. [Facilitator introduces a chair].”

3). The facilitator invites the individual to describe salient characteristics of the emotion.

   *Facilitator:* “What does your anger look like? What colour is it? What does it sound like?”

4). When sufficiently down-regulated, the facilitator invites the individual to continue exploring their emotional experience from a distance using third person-language.

   *Facilitator:* “What is your anger saying? [Gestures to the empty chair]. How is that understandable? What does it need?”

**Facilitation notes:**

- If emotional distancing does not succeed in down-regulating affect, the facilitator can invite the individual to experiment with changing characteristics of the emotion (e.g. making it smaller, quieter, or moving the chair further away).

**Further Reading:**

Citation:


For further chairwork guidelines and facilitation notes visit www.chairwork.co.uk