

SUPPLEMENTAL EXCERPT
FOR AUDIOBOOK LISTENERS

THE PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR
HEALING
DEVELOPMENTAL
TRAUMA

*Using the NeuroAffective Relational Model to
Address Adverse Childhood Experiences and
Resolve Complex Trauma*

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North Atlantic Books

Huichin, unceded Ohlone land
aka Berkeley, California

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Introduction

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We want to begin this book by inviting you take time to reflect on your intention for reading this book:

- What are you hoping to learn that could support your professional work?
 - If you did learn this, how might it impact your professional work?
 - What would you most like to happen?
- What are you hoping to learn that could support your personal growth?
 - If you did learn this, how might it impact your personal growth?
 - What would you most like to happen?

The Trauma-Informed Movement

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on the following questions:

- What did you have to do in order to stay safe in your early environment? For example, did you learn to keep quiet? Did you learn to fight? Did you learn to stay away from potential conflict? What adaptations did you learn to make?
- How did you carry forward the adaptations you made during childhood into your adulthood?
- How might these adaptations now be causing distress in your adult life?

As you reflect on these questions, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, and body.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

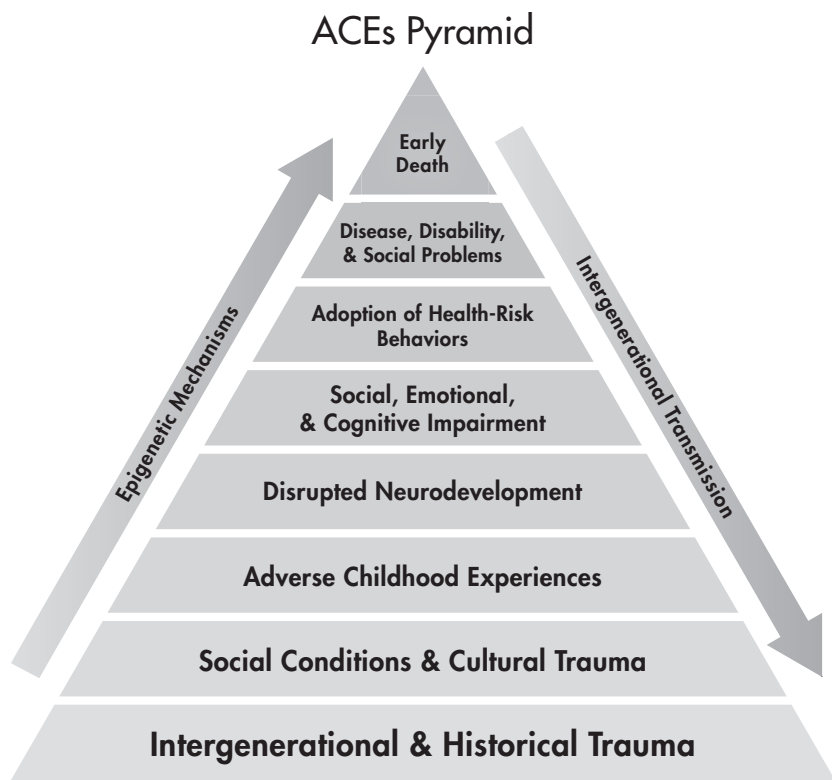
We invite you to calculate your own ACEs Score by responding to the following questions.⁸ Give yourself 1 point for each question where you experienced that category of trauma *before your eighteenth birthday*.

- 1. Emotional abuse:** Did a parent or other adult often or very often insult, demean, belittle, humiliate, verbally assault, or threaten to physically assault you? _____
- 2. Physical abuse:** Did a parent or other adult often or very often grab, slap, push, or hit you? _____

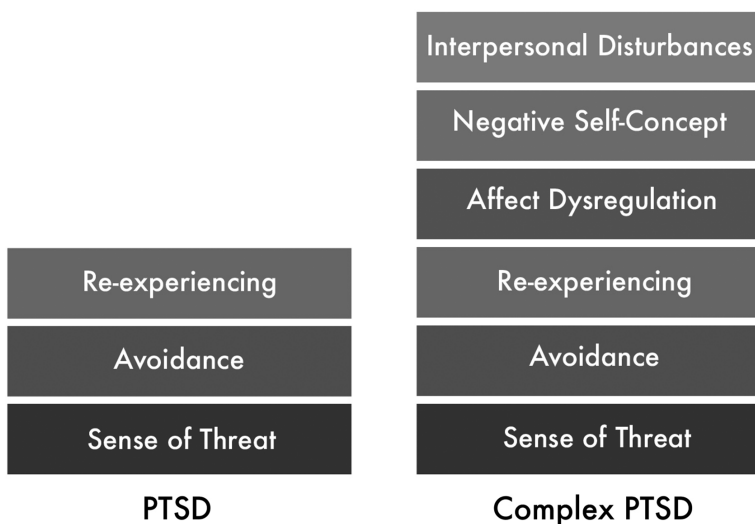
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3. **Sexual abuse:** Did a parent, adult, or someone at least five years older than you ever touch your body in a sexual way or attempt or have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you? _____
4. **Emotional neglect:** Did you often or very often feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were important; or your family did not look out for each other, feel close to each other, and support each other? _____
5. **Physical neglect:** Did you often or very often not have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, had no one to attend to your medical and dental needs, or had no one to protect you? _____
6. **Loss of parent:** Were your parents separated or divorced, or did you lose a parent for any reason? _____
7. **Domestic violence:** Did you often or very often witness or hear violence between your parents or other adults where someone was being grabbed, shoved, slapped, hit, kicked, had something thrown at them, sexually attacked, or threatened with a weapon? _____
8. **Family member with addiction:** Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, who used illicit drugs, or who was addicted to any other substances? _____
9. **Family member with depression/mental illness:** Did you live with anyone who was depressed or mentally ill, attempted or committed self-harm and/or suicide, or hospitalized for mental illness? _____
10. **Family member incarcerated:** Did you live with anyone who went to prison? _____
ACEs Score (0–10): _____

Upon completion of your ACEs Score, we invite you to reflect on how your score might relate to your psychological and physical health as an adult.



PTSD and C-PTSD Symptoms



Shock Trauma (“Mortal Threat”)



Developmental Trauma (“Threat to the Self”)



REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to reflect on the following questions:

- Can you identify an experience where you felt objectified, dehumanized, or “othered”?
- Can you identify an experience where you may have objectified, dehumanized, or othered another person?
- Can you identify an experience where you felt fully seen for being you—welcoming all aspects of your authentic Self?
- Can you identify an experience where you may have fully seen another person—welcoming all aspects of their authentic Self?

As you reflect on these questions, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, and body.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on how a trauma-informed understanding may support you in your:

- Professional development
- Personal growth
- Family relationships
- Friendships
- Social, political, or environmental work (i.e., work to make the world a better place)

As you reflect on these questions, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, and body.

NARM Organizing Principles

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

As openly and compassionately as possible, we invite you to take a few moments to reflect on:

- Moments of connection in your life
- Moments of disconnection in your life

As you reflect on connection and disconnection in your life, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, and body.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

For this 50-50 balance exercise, you will need a partner. This exercise is best done silently. We invite you to take time after the exercise to debrief this experience with your partner.

- Start by asking your partner to stand in one place facing you, about ten feet in front of you. Their job is simply to stand there.
- As you stand facing your partner, take time first to just sense your own Self—noticing any sensations, emotions, thoughts, or impulses. Then take time to sense your partner—noticing what it's like to bring them into your attention. Notice the balance between staying connected to yourself and connected with your partner.
- Still facing your partner, find a place in relationship to your partner that feels balanced. Move yourself as needed so you can feel 50 percent connected to yourself and 50 percent connected to your partner. Mark this spot in your mind.

(continued)

- Now slowly begin moving backward, away from your partner. When you move ten to twenty feet back, stop, and notice the balance now between staying connected to yourself and your partner. We invite you to take time here, noticing your internal states.
- When you're ready, begin slowly moving forward and past your initial 50-50 spot, until you are right up face-to-face with your partner. Stop, and notice the balance now between staying connected to yourself and your partner. We invite you to take time here, noticing your internal states.
- When you're ready, start slowly moving backward until you find your ideal balance point in relationship to your partner. Please note, this may have changed since the first time you did it, so take time to see where your new balance spot is. Stop when you can experience 50 percent connection to yourself and 50 percent connection to your partner. We invite you to take time here, noticing your internal states.
- If your partner would like a turn, now is the time to switch roles so your partner gets a chance to experience this 50-50 exercise as well.
- Moving into debrief, we invite you to share what this experience was like with your partner, particularly noticing which side of the 50-50 felt more comfortable for you (far away or close up) and how your initial 50-50 spot may have shifted at the end of the exercise.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on:

- Meaningful relationships in your life and how you have navigated the fear of disconnection and loss. You might first reflect on relationships during childhood and then on relationships you've had as an adult.
- What has been your relationship to the fear of relational loss?
- What strategies did you use to protect against relational loss?

As you reflect, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, and body.

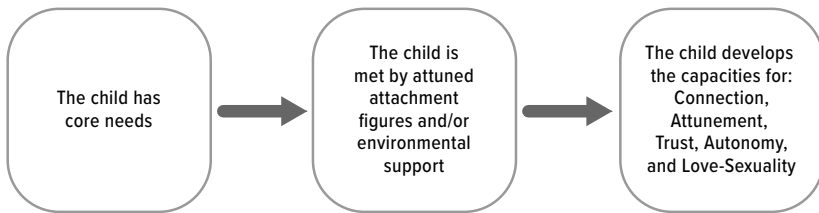
REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on the following questions:

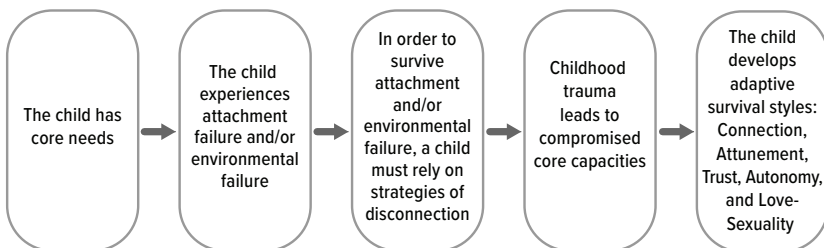
- What's it like to reflect on your desire for connection and intimacy?
- What's it like to reflect on your fear of connection and intimacy?
- How is it for you to hold both of these sides of the core dilemma?

As you reflect on these questions, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, and body.

Secure Attachment



Attachment and Environmental Failure



REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments with each of the adaptive survival styles and notice what you experience internally as you reflect on these questions:

- **Connection:** Reflect on a time you felt most connected—to yourself, to another person, to a pet, to nature, to God.
- **Attunement:** Reflect on a time you expressed your needs—and someone responded positively.
- **Trust:** Reflect on a time you depended on someone—and they came through for you.
- **Autonomy:** Reflect on a time you stood up for yourself in a relationship—and the other person did not reject you.
- **Love-Sexuality:** Reflect on a time you reached out with love—and it was reciprocated by another person.

As you reflect on these questions, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, and body.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments—with as much self-compassion as possible—to reflect on:

- Some area in your life where you feel self-critical and self-rejecting.
- If one of your clients were struggling with these same feelings, what would you want them to understand?
- What is it that gets in your way of providing this kind of understanding to yourself?

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on:

- Your relationship to anger.
- What is the scariest thing for you about feeling anger toward someone you love?

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on:

- An experience in your life where you showed up in a more authentic way than you have in the past.
- As you reflect on this, what are you noticing about your quality of presence and sense of aliveness?

Disidentification → **Loneliness** → **Freedom**

Self-Hatred → **Self-Acceptance**

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on:

- A time you felt particularly quiet inside.
- A time you felt particularly connected to your heart.
- A time you felt particularly alive.
- What are you noticing now as you reflect on these internal states?

Pillar 1: Clarifying the Therapeutic Contract

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a moment to bring to mind one of your clients.

- Why are they coming to see you for professional help?
- Imagine that you asked them this question: “What is it that you’d like for yourself from our work together? You don’t have to worry about it being possible or realistic.” How do you imagine they may answer you (in their own words)?
- This exercise invites you to reflect on your client’s deepest intention for themselves.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to reflect on:

- Something you may be struggling with in your own life—for example, working too much, fighting with your partner, or having difficulty saying no and setting boundaries.
- See if you’re able to clarify an intention for yourself. For example, “I would like to work less,” “I would like to stop fighting with my partner,” or “I would like to set stronger boundaries in my life.”
- We invite you to take a few moments to notice how it is to simply state this intention for yourself.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to bring to mind a decision that you have faced—perhaps choosing between two different events, two purchase options, or two job opportunities.

- Reflect on the decision you made.
- How did you know to make that decision?
- What was it that you experienced as you clarified what you chose?

If possible, you may even put yourself back to your making the decision and noticing what you become aware of in your body, emotions, or thoughts.

Pillar 2: Asking Exploratory Questions

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take five minutes to simply *be curious*.

- Give yourself permission to follow your curiosity—whether this means to be curious about something in your environment, about exploring something outside your present environment (like going outside), or about focusing internally and being curious about your body sensations, emotions, images, or thoughts.
- We invite you to notice how easy or difficult this might be for you to shift into a space of being open and curious.
- We also invite you to notice how this exercise feels overall.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to reflect on:

- A challenging theme in your life. For example, perhaps an area where you often feel unsupported, ignored, or easily triggered.
- Once you've chosen your theme, pick a specific experience where this theme emerged. For example, if you often feel unsupported, let's say you were recently planning a party with several friends and ended up feeling left with having to do all the work.
- Reflecting on this specific example, see if you can notice what happens in your thoughts, emotions, and body sensations.
- Particularly focus on how you are relating to this experience now in the present moment.
- Are you criticizing yourself?
- Do you feel embarrassed?
- Do you wish you could've handled it differently?
- Do you feel self-compassion and understanding?

We invite you to notice how you are in relationship in the present moment to this specific experience and the overall theme.

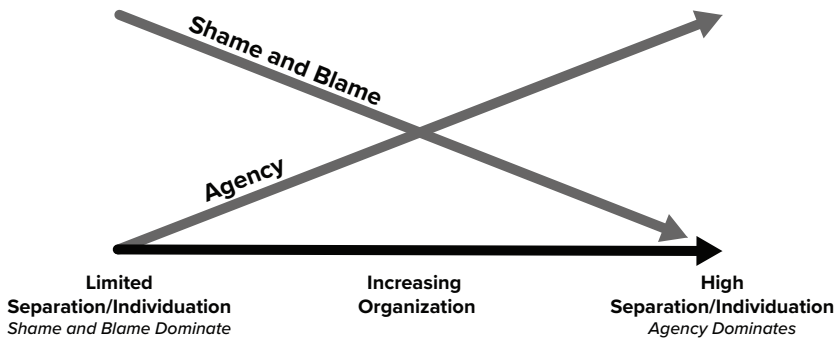
REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to reflect on:

- Something that you have been frustrated by or recently complained about to a partner, friend, or therapist. For example, it might be your work, your relationship, or a political or social issue.
- We invite you to reflect on what it is exactly that you are frustrated about.
- Notice the language you use to describe your frustration.
- Try to pinpoint the focus of your frustration.
- As you are able to gain greater clarity on the source of your frustration, see if you can gather any other information about this dynamic.
- We encourage you to bring open curiosity to this issue, even if you have reflected on it many times before.

We invite you to see what new information might emerge for you now as you practice curiosity and self-inquiry.

Pillar 3: Reinforcing Agency



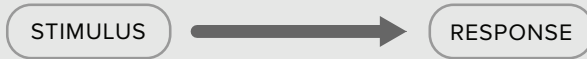
REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on this question:

- How does it “protect” you to see the problems in a close relationship—with a partner, a loved one, a friend—as the other person’s fault?

As you reflect on this question, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, and body.

Classical Conditioning Model



NARM Agency Model



REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on:

- Some current life experience you are having with a friend, partner, client, or other person that feels challenging and frustrating.
- See if you are able to reflect on your role in this challenging and frustrating relational experience.
- If you are able to take accountability for your part in this relational challenge, we invite you to reflect on what impact your behaviors might have had on the other person.

As you reflect on this experience, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, and body.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to notice how it feels to shift nouns to verbs by reading each paired sentence on the left and right. As you read each sentence pair, we invite you to reflect on a scenario in your life that may relate to the theme, first reading it through the sentence on the left (e.g., “I feel shame after I share vulnerably with my partner”) and then the sentence on the right (e.g., “I shame myself after I share vulnerably with my partner”). We invite you to pause after each sentence pair and notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, body, and overall sense.

- I feel shame ➡ I shame myself
- I feel pressure ➡ I put pressure on myself
- I feel stress ➡ I stress myself out
- I feel burnout ➡ I burn myself out
- I am an idiot ➡ I tell myself I am an idiot

Pillar 4: Reflecting Psychobiological Shifts

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to:

- Check in with yourself and notice how you are feeling in this moment.
- Recall a time in your life when you experienced fullness, richness, or abundance, even if just for a brief moment.
- Reflect on the various images, thoughts, and emotional and sensory details of this experience.
- Notice if you experience any psychobiological shifts in your present experience—cognitively, emotionally, or somatically.
- Compared to how you felt before you started this exercise, what are you noticing now?

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on:

- An area in your life that you used to feel very sensitive and self-conscious about (e.g., your intelligence, your looks, etc.) and now no longer are.
- What has helped you along the way to decrease or better manage this sensitivity?
- With curiosity, reflect on all the aspects that have led to this powerful shift in your internal world.

As you reflect on this question, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, body, and overall sense.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

For this exercise, you will need a partner.

- You can invite your partner to choose one particular theme that they would like to have more clarity about or are struggling with. For example, "I want to stop being so insecure around my friends."
- Your intention is to simply:
 1. Ask questions about this theme—how it plays out, how it impacts their life, and what are they hoping to be different.
 2. Reflect any psychobiological shifts—noticing and sharing what you become aware of as they reflect on this theme.
- Perhaps you might notice a softening in the face, a tear in their eye, a deeper breath, an expression of relief or hope, increased eye contact, or a new way of perceiving this theme. Gently reflect these shifts back without making any interpretations, just describing what you are noticing.
- You might ask them what it was like to receive your reflections.
- And for yourself, notice how it was for you to simply be curious and reflecting these (often subtle) shifts.
- Did you notice any shifts between states of connection and disconnection?
- What impact do you think even this small exercise might have on your partner in relating to this theme?

NARM Emotional Completion Model

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

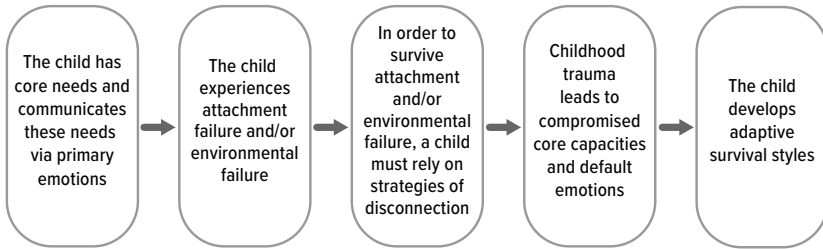
As we start this chapter on emotions, we invite you to take a few moments to reflect on:

- A positive experience you have had in your life where you shared your heart openly with another person—an intimate partner, friend, parent, or other family member.
- As you reflect on this experience of sharing your heart openly, we invite you to notice how it affects you.
- We also invite you to reflect on how this experience may have impacted your life moving forward.

Secure Attachment



Attachment, Relational, and Developmental Trauma



REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on your relationship to your emotions— the ways you both connect to and disconnect from your emotions.

- *Connection to emotions:* Whether “positive” emotions like joy, gratitude, and love or “negative” emotions like fear, anger, and grief, we invite you to reflect on the ways that your emotions might contribute to and possibly enrich your adult life. As you reflect on the role emotions play in supporting your adult life, we invite you to notice what you experience physically and emotionally.
- *Disconnection from emotions:* We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on the ways you have learned to avoid and push away your emotions. As you reflect on the ways you have learned to disconnect from your emotions, we invite you to notice how it feels internally.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on:

- Your relationship to your own anxiety. Perhaps pick something specific you may feel anxious about—for example, something in your relationship, at work, or making a life decision.
- What deeper need or emotion might your anxiety be signaling?
- If you're able to identify this, what do you notice as you reflect on this deeper need or emotion underlying your anxiety?
- What do you notice internally as you reflect on your relationship to anxiety?

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on your relationship to your own anger:

- Do you feel angry easily?
- Does it take a lot to make you feel angry?
- Do you never feel angry?
- What are some ways you might turn anger in against yourself?
- What are some ways you might turn anger out against others?
- What do you notice internally as you reflect on your relationship to anger?

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on your relationship to your own grief:

- Do you allow yourself to feel the grief of significant loss?
- Does it take a lot to make you feel grief?
- How do you differentiate between grief and depression?
- Can you remember a time that you allowed yourself to fully grieve?
- What do you notice internally as you reflect on your relationship to grief?

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to reflect on:

- Emotions that are more familiar to you and that you more commonly experience—noticing your relationship to these emotions, including how it feels internally to reflect on them.
- We then invite you to reflect on emotions that are less familiar to you and that you less commonly experience—noticing your relationship to these emotions, including how it feels internally to reflect on them.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to:

- Make a list of your *default emotions*—the emotions that are familiar and easy for you to access.
- Make a list of your *primary emotions*—the emotions that may be unfamiliar and more difficult for you to access.

As you reflect on your lists, what do you notice in your internal experience as you reflect first on your default emotions and next on your primary emotions?

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to reflect on:

- The ways you have learned to stay connected to yourself emotionally.
- What has helped you learn to stay present with your emotions?
- How has this impacted your personal and professional life?

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take your time in reflecting on your relationship to the following emotional states:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| • Connection | • Play/humor |
| • Compassion | • Pleasure |
| • Confidence | • Aliveness |
| • Hopefulness | • Gratitude |

As you reflect on these internal states, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, and body.

NARM Relational Model

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few minutes to reflect on why you chose to become a therapist or helping professional:

- Were there any early life experiences that might have impacted or inspired you to choose this profession?
- What did you learn from your early life experiences that supports you to be effective in this job?
- What did you learn from your early life experiences that might make it difficult for you in this job?

As you reflect on these questions, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, and body.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

This exercise requires you having a partner. This exercise has several names: sometimes we call it the Mirror Neuron Dance, the Attunement Dance, or the Resonance Dance.

- With your partner, choose who will be the leader and who will be the “mirror.”
- Once you've set up the roles, the leader will take five minutes, and during this time they can move as freely as they wish within their environment.
 - The mirror's job is simply to follow and mimic the behaviors and expressions of the leader.
 - During this time, it is best for both of you to be silent, so as to direct focus on your internal experience.
- Once complete, check in first with the leader and ask how it felt to be mirrored.
 - What did you (the leader) notice about the mirroring?
 - What did you notice especially when your partner (the mirror) was in tune versus when they were not in tune?
 - How did this impact your internal experience?
- Then check in with the mirror and ask how it felt to be the mirror.
 - What did the mirror notice about attuning and following you?
 - What was going on internally for the mirror—were they trying really hard to do it right, were they judging or criticizing themselves when they felt they did it wrong, were they able to be present within and engaged with their partner at the same time?
- After you've completed the check-in, switch roles, and follow the same process in your new roles.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

Helplessness

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on:

- Helplessness and your relationship to your own helplessness.
- Consider ways your unconscious sense of helplessness may affect your therapeutic engagement with your clients.
- We invite you to take a few moments to notice how you are feeling overall—specifically noticing how you are feeling about yourself.

Empathy

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on:

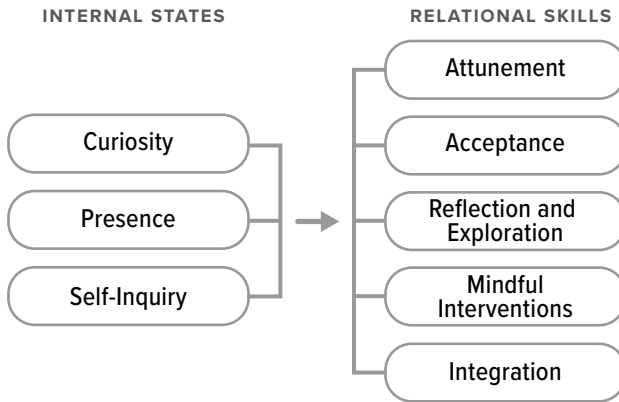
- Empathy and the various ways you experience and demonstrate empathy in your life.
- Consider ways your sense of empathy may affect your therapeutic engagement with your clients.
- We invite you to take a few moments to notice how you are feeling overall—specifically noticing how you are feeling about yourself.

Helplessness + Empathy

We invite you to take a few moments to:

- Differentiate your sense of empathy from your need to do something with it.
- Consider ways these might play out for you as a therapist.
- We invite you to take a few moments to notice how you are feeling overall—specifically noticing how you are feeling about yourself.

Application of the NARM Relational Model



REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on your internal strategies of doing and efforting when working with clients:

- It might help to choose a specific client and reflect on the internal volume of your strategies—you can imagine a volume control that goes from 10 (most internal noise) to 0 (least internal noise).
- Where is your internal noise volume as you sit with this client?
- How does your internal noise volume impact your capacity for presence and curiosity?
- What else do you know about the impact of your internal noise?

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

Difficulty in Relationship

We invite you to choose a current client or relationship you are struggling with.

- Bring their image into your mind.
- If possible, recall your last meeting, or a particularly challenging meeting.
- We invite you to reflect on the following questions:
 - What feelings, sensations, or impulses are you noticing?
 - How are you showing up with this client/person?
 - What is your relational impact on this client/person?
 - Are there relational patterns here that you are familiar with from past relationships?

Transforming through Relationship

We invite you to choose a current client or relationship you feel happy or confident about.

- Bring their image into your mind.
- If possible, recount your last meeting, or a particularly fulfilling meeting.
- We invite you to reflect on the following questions:
 - What feelings, sensations, or impulses are you noticing?
 - How are you showing up with this client/person?
 - What is your relational impact on this client/person?
 - Are there relational patterns here that you are familiar with from past relationships?

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on a time that you were able to stay present and connected in yourself while staying connected and openhearted with another person.

- What do you notice about your capacity to connect with heartfulness and love?
- We invite you to take a few moments to notice how it feels to reflect on this—specifically noticing how you are feeling in your heart.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to:

- Set an intention from your heart for yourself moving forward in your life.
- What might be the optimal outcome if you are able to actualize your heart's desire moving forward?
- As you reflect on your heart's desire, we invite you to notice what you experience internally in your thoughts, emotions, and body.
- *We especially invite you to take a few moments before moving on to feel into your heart.*

NARM Personality Spectrum Model



REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on three different clients:

- An “easier” client: one who is engaged, collaborative, thoughtful, hard-working, and enjoyable to work with.
- A “more challenging” client: one who has made some progress, and can at times be enjoyable to work with, but has also been difficult.
- A “more problematic” client: one who feels stuck, resistant, or adversarial and has created problems for you in terms of boundaries, stress, or other countertransference strain reactions.

As you reflect on each client, we invite you to notice your internal experience.

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

What we invite you to do over the next pages is to choose a client, preferably a client you find challenging—perhaps someone you have already been thinking about as you've been reading this chapter—and as you go through each of these ten psychobiological traits, score your client on each category. As you'll see, the scoring scale is between 10 and 1; 10 represents the highest capacity with this psychobiological trait, and 1 represents the lowest capacity with this psychobiological trait. Once you go through all ten categories, you will have a score somewhere between 100 and 10. On page 292 you can calculate the final score of your client and answer the reflective questions provided there.

Connection

| ORGANIZED SELF | ADAPTIVE SELF | DISORGANIZED SELF |
|---|---|--|
| More Connection | Disrupted Connec- tion | Profound Discon- nection |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internalized subjecti- fication; experiencing oneself as a subject | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited experience of internalized subjecti- fication; experiencing oneself less as a subject | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internalized objectifi- cation; experiencing oneself as an object |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing connection to one's physical, emo- tional, psychological, and spiritual Self | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disrupted connection to one's physical, emo- tional, psychological, and spiritual Self | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very little connection to one's physical, emo- tional, psychological, and spiritual Self |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More coherent and stable sense of Self | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less coherent and stable sense of Self | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of coherent and stable sense of Self |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More embodied, less symptomatic, more resilient | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less embodied, more symptomatic, less resilient | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highly disembodied and symptomatic, not resilient |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More socially engaged and greater ease in connection with others | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less socially engaged and less ease in con- nection with others | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socially disengaged and difficulty in con- nection with others |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More fulfilled in one's relationships with oth- ers and life experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less fulfilled in one's relationships with oth- ers and life experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unfulfilled in one's re- lationships with others and life experience |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater capacity for heartfulness and love | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compromised capacity for heartfulness and love | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimal capacity for heartfulness and love |
| Organized Self | Adaptive Self | Disorganized Self |
| 10–7 | 6–4 | 3–1 |

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

- Think of a client in terms of:
 - Capacity to experience themselves as a subject
 - Capacity for connection to themselves (physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual self)
 - Capacity for stability in themselves
 - Capacity for resilience
 - Capacity for social engagement
 - Capacity to feel fulfilled by relationships and life experience
 - Capacity for heartfulness and love
- Provide them with a score between 10 and 1: _____

Separation-Individuation

| ORGANIZED SELF | ADAPTIVE SELF | DISORGANIZED SELF |
|---|--|--|
| More Separation- Individuation | Disrupted Separation- Individuation | Minimal Separation- Individuation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity for differentiation and psychological independence from attachment figures and others in one's life, leading to a stronger sense of Self | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compromised capacity for differentiation and psychological independence from attachment figures and others in one's life, leading to a more unstable sense of Self | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little capacity for differentiation and psychological independence from attachment figures and others in one's life, leading to a fragmented or minimal sense of Self |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less identified with old identifications and object relations, adaptive strategies, and coping mechanisms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More identified with old identifications and object relations, adaptive strategies, and coping mechanisms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly identified with old identifications and object relations, adaptive strategies, and coping mechanisms |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing awareness of unconscious protection against attachment and relational loss | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong unconscious protection against attachment and relational loss | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme unconscious protection against attachment and relational loss; fusion with parents and significant others |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More identified with adult consciousness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More identified with child consciousness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly identified with child consciousness |
| Organized Self | Adaptive Self | Disorganized Self |
| 10–7 | 6–4 | 3–1 |

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

- Think of a client in terms of:
 - Capacity for differentiation and independence from others
 - Capacity for freedom from identifications and adaptive strategies
 - Capacity for awareness of unconscious protection against attachment and relational loss
 - Capacity to live in adult consciousness
- Provide them with a score between 10 and 1: _____

Self-Regulation

| ORGANIZED SELF | ADAPTIVE SELF | DISORGANIZED SELF |
|---|---|--|
| More Self-Regulation | Disrupted Self-Regulation | Dysregulation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing capacity to regulate one's internal states (i.e., physiology, emotions, behaviors) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compromised capacity to regulate one's internal states | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimal capacity to regulate one's internal states |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing capacity for object constancy, affect tolerance, and distress tolerance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compromised capacity for object constancy, affect tolerance, and distress tolerance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimal capacity for object constancy, affect tolerance, and distress tolerance |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less reliance on others and one's environment to regulate and soothe | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing reliance on others and one's environment to regulate and soothe | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demanding while at the same time resisting and rejecting others and one's environment to regulate and soothe |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater ability to relax and feel balanced | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less ability to relax and feel balanced | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very little ability to relax and feel balanced |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing states of physiological fluidity and flow | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing tendency toward states of physiological tension and collapse | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience chronic states of physiological tension and collapse |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing overall state of health and well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing tendency toward anxiety, depression, and other mental and physical disorders | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience chronic anxiety, depression, and other severe mental and physical disorders |
| Organized Self | Adaptive Self | Disorganized Self |
| 10–7 | 6–4 | 3–1 |

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

- Think of a client in terms of:
 - Capacity to regulate their internal states (i.e., physiology, emotions, behaviors)
 - Capacity for object constancy, affect tolerance, and distress tolerance
 - Capacity for less reliance on others and their environment to regulate and soothe
 - Capacity to relax and feel balanced
 - Capacity for states of physiological fluidity and flow
 - Capacity for overall state of health and well-being
- Provide them with a score between 10 and 1: _____

Agency

| ORGANIZED SELF | ADAPTIVE SELF | DISORGANIZED SELF |
|---|---|--|
| More Agency | Disrupted Agency | Minimal Agency |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing capacity to take ownership for one's life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compromised capacity to take ownership for one's life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little capacity to take ownership for one's life |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking ownership for one's emotions, reactions, and behaviors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty taking ownership for one's emotions, reactions, and behaviors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to take ownership for one's emotions, reaction and behaviors |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less tendency to reactivity, blame, and feeling the victim of others and external circumstances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing tendency to reactivity, blame, and feeling the victim of others and external circumstances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of reactivity, blame, and feeling the victim of others and external circumstances |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less dependent upon environmental response for one's well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More dependent upon environmental response for one's well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly dependent upon environmental response for one's well-being |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel more firmly grounded in one's adult self; more connected with adult consciousness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less grounded in one's adult self; more identified with child consciousness states | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little access to adult self; highly identified with child consciousness states |
| Organized Self | Adaptive Self | Disorganized Self |
| 10–7 | 6–4 | 3–1 |

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

- Think of a client in terms of:
 - Capacity to take ownership for their life
 - Capacity to take ownership for their emotions, reactions, and behaviors
 - Capacity for less reliance on reactivity, blame, and feeling victim
 - Capacity for less dependency upon environmental response for their well-being
 - Capacity to be grounded in their adult Self
- Provide them with a score between 10 and 1: _____

Intimacy and Therapeutic Alliance

| ORGANIZED SELF | ADAPTIVE SELF | DISORGANIZED SELF |
|--|--|---|
| More Therapeutic Alliance & Capacity for Intimacy | Disrupted Therapeutic Alliance & Capacity for Intimacy | Weak Therapeutic Alliance & Capacity for Intimacy |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing capacity for intersubjectivity and intimacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compromised capacity for intersubjectivity and intimacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal capacity for intersubjectivity and intimacy |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience therapist and others in one's life as being resource for support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compromised ability to experience therapist and others in one's life as being resource for support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal sense of therapist and others in one's life as being resource for support |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acting in collaboration with therapist and others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience increasing ambivalence about support from therapist and others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act adversarial or outright rejection of support from therapist and others |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to experience therapist or other people as real human beings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly experience the therapist or other people through the filter of transference and projections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not experience the therapist or other people as real human beings but through the filter of transference and projections |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to develop trust, goodwill, and warmth with therapist and others in one's life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly challenged in developing trust, goodwill, and warmth with therapist and others in one's life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not trust therapist and others in one's life, viewing them as objects that intend to exploit, deceive, or harm |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge therapeutic and relational boundaries and respect boundaries of therapist and others in one's life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge therapeutic and relational boundaries but are increasingly less clear or comfortable with boundaries of therapist and others in one's life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deny, reject, or directly challenge therapeutic and relational boundaries with therapist and others in one's life |
| Organized Self | Adaptive Self | Disorganized Self |
| 10–7 | 6–4 | 3–1 |

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

- Think of a client in terms of:
 - Capacity for intersubjectivity and intimacy
 - Capacity to experience therapist and others in one's life as resources for support
 - Capacity to act in collaboration with therapist and others in one's life
 - Capacity to experience therapist and other people as real human beings
 - Capacity to develop trust, goodwill, and warmth with therapist and others in one's life
 - Capacity to acknowledge and respect the therapeutic and relational boundaries
- Provide them with a score between 10 and 1: _____

Empathy

| ORGANIZED SELF | ADAPTIVE SELF | DISORGANIZED SELF |
|---|--|--|
| More Empathy | Disrupted Empathy | Minimal Empathy |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to relate to what another person is experiencing from within the other person's frame of reference ("put yourself in their shoes") | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty relating to what another person is experiencing from within the other person's frame of reference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to relate to what another person is experiencing from within the other person's frame of reference |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to sense into what another person may be feeling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty sensing into what another person may be feeling (increasing failure of empathy) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to sense into what another person may be feeling (failure of empathy) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to have greater accuracy in differentiating one's own feelings from another's feelings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in differentiating one's own feelings from another's feelings (increasing unmanaged empathy) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to separate one's own feelings from another's feelings (unmanaged empathy) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension and appreciation of another's experiences and motivations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasingly challenged in comprehension or appreciation of another's experiences and motivations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not comprehend or appreciate another's experiences and motivations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curiosity and tolerance of differing perspectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compromised capacity to have curiosity and tolerance of differing perspectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disregard and intolerance of differing perspectives |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing, understanding, and caring about the effects of one's behaviors on others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in recognizing, understanding, and caring about the effects of one's behaviors on others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to recognize, understand, and care about the effects of one's behaviors on others |
| Organized Self | Adaptive Self | Disorganized Self |
| 10–7 | 6–4 | 3–1 |

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

- Think of a client in terms of:
 - Capacity to relate to what another person is experiencing from within the other person's frame of reference
 - Capacity to sense into what another person may be feeling
 - Capacity to differentiate their own feelings from another person's feelings
 - Capacity for comprehension and appreciation of another's experiences and motivations
 - Capacity for curiosity and tolerance of differing perspectives
 - Capacity to recognize, understand, and care about the effects of their behaviors on others
- Provide them with a score between 10 and 1: _____

Self-Awareness and Insight

| ORGANIZED SELF | ADAPTIVE SELF | DISORGANIZED SELF |
|---|--|---|
| More Self-Awareness & Insight | Disrupted Self-Awareness & Insight | Minimal Self-Awareness & Insight |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to inquire and explore inward, to question beliefs and assumptions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compromised capacity to inquire and explore inward, to question beliefs and assumptions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little capacity to inquire and explore inward, to question beliefs and assumptions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to tolerate uncertainty and complexity; accepting not-knowing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty tolerating uncertainty and complexity; reducing complexity to simple answers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to tolerate uncertainty and complexity; relying on polarized, all-or-nothing thinking |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity for self-discovery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less capacity for self-discovery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal capacity for self-discovery |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less need of mirroring from others and environment for their sense of Self | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More dependent on mirroring from others and environment for defining their sense of Self | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly dependent on mirroring from others and environment for defining their sense of Self |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested in developing increasing understanding and depth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested primarily in cognitive/behavioral change and symptom reduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disinterested in new learning about Self |
| Organized Self | Adaptive Self | Disorganized Self |
| 10–7 | 6–4 | 3–1 |

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

- Think of a client in terms of:
 - Capacity to inquire and explore inward, to question beliefs and assumptions
 - Capacity to tolerate uncertainty and complexity
 - Capacity for self-discovery
 - Capacity for less reliance on mirroring from others and environment for their own sense of Self
 - Capacity for interest in developing increasing understanding and depth
- Provide them with a score between 10 and 1: _____

Consensus Reality

| ORGANIZED SELF | ADAPTIVE SELF | DISORGANIZED SELF |
|--|---|--|
| Clearer Consensus Reality | Disrupted Consensus Reality | Distorted Consensus Reality |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to differentiate between what is real and what is not | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty differentiating between what is real and what is not | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to differentiate between what is real and what is not |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capacity for reality testing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenges with reality testing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extreme distortions in reality testing (i.e., delusional thinking) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capacity to relate to commonly accepted worldview | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adherence to inaccurate beliefs about oneself, others, and the world | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adherence to false and distorted beliefs and perceptions (i.e., delusions and hallucinations) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasingly less identified with and living free from the filters of identifications, projections, transference, thoughts, beliefs, guilt, shame, and anxiety | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasingly identified with and living through the filters of identifications, projections, transference, thoughts, beliefs, guilt, shame, and anxiety | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significantly identified with and living through the filters of identifications, projections, transference, thoughts, beliefs, guilt, shame, and anxiety |
| <i>Note: "reality" is culturally dependent and must be assessed in a culturally-respectful manner.</i> | | |
| Organized Self | Adaptive Self | Disorganized Self |
| 10–7 | 6–4 | 3–1 |

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

- Think of a client in terms of:
 - Capacity to differentiate between what is real and what is not
 - Capacity for reality testing
 - Capacity for relating to (culturally dependent) commonly accepted worldview
 - Capacity to live free from the filters of old identifications, projections, transference, thoughts, beliefs, guilt, shame, and anxiety
- Provide them with a score between 10 and 1: _____

Self-Activation

| ORGANIZED SELF | ADAPTIVE SELF | DISORGANIZED SELF |
|--|--|---|
| More Self-Activation | Disrupted Self-Activation | Minimal Self-Activation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing connection to one's life force and sense of aliveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compromised connection to one's life force and sense of aliveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very little connection to one's life force and sense of aliveness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to channel impulses in constructive and creative direction | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compromised ability to channel impulses in constructive and creative direction | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Channeling impulses in unhealthy direction, including acting-in and acting-out strategies |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capacity for self-acceptance and self-compassion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compromised capacity for self-acceptance and self-compassion; frequently relate to oneself through self-rejection, self-criticism, and self-hatred | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimal capacity for self-acceptance and self-compassion; regularly relate to oneself through self-rejection, self-criticism, and self-hatred |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capacity for healthy aggression | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasingly unhealthy aggression, toward oneself and others | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unhealthy aggression, directing violence toward oneself and others |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to initiate, carry through, and set the course of one's own life | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less ability to initiate, carry through, and set the course of one's own life | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to initiate, carry through, and set the course of one's own life; active self-sabotage |
| Organized Self | Adaptive Self | Disorganized Self |
| 10–7 | 6–4 | 3–1 |

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

- Think of a client in terms of:
 - Capacity for connection to their life force and sense of aliveness
 - Capacity to channel impulses in constructive and creative direction
 - Capacity for self-acceptance and self-compassion
 - Capacity for healthy aggression
 - Capacity to initiate, carry through, and set the course for their life
- Provide them with a score between 10 and 1: _____

Presence

| ORGANIZED SELF | ADAPTIVE SELF | DISORGANIZED SELF |
|---|---|--|
| More Presence | Disrupted Presence | Lack of Presence |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing capacity to be in the here & now and live in the present moment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compromised capacity to be in the here & now and live in the present moment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to be in the here & now and live in the present moment |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of future and relationship to past are coherent and integrated with the present | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreshortened sense of future and repression of past memories; internal conflict with past and future disrupt the present | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to perceive a future different from the past; profound internal conflict leads to fragmentation of past and future and dissociation from the present |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing capacity to experience expansion, aliveness, flow, creativity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compromised capacity to experience expansion, aliveness, flow, creativity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability and often resistance to experience expansion, aliveness, flow, creativity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing capacity for pleasure and enjoying life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less capacity for pleasure and enjoying life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal capacity for pleasure and dissatisfied with life |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing sense of psychological, emotional, and spiritual freedom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less sense of psychological, emotional, and spiritual freedom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very little sense of psychological, emotional, and spiritual freedom |
| Organized Self | Adaptive Self | Disorganized Self |
| 10–7 | 6–4 | 3–1 |

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

- Think of a client in terms of:
 - Capacity to be in the here and now and live in the present moment
 - Capacity to have an organized, integrated present, past, and future
 - Capacity to experience expansion, aliveness, flow, and creativity
 - Capacity for pleasure and enjoying life
 - Capacity for sense of psychological, emotional, and spiritual freedom
- Provide them with a score between 10 and 1: _____

Final Scoring for Your Client

| ORGANIZED SELF | ADAPTIVE SELF | DISORGANIZED SELF |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Total Score | Total Score | Total Score |
| 100–70 | 69–40 | 39–10 |

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

- Provide them with a final score between 100 and 10: _____
- Questions to reflect on (based on client's final score):
 - What's your overall sense looking at your client through this lens?
 - What might this suggest about treatment?
 - What might this suggest about prognosis?
 - What other support may be indicated?
 - How might this relate to your work with this client?
 - How might this relate to your feeling about your client?
 - How might this relate to how you view yourself as a therapist?

REFLECTIVE EXERCISE

We invite you to take a few moments for a personal reflection using the NARM Personality Spectrum:

- In your life now, we invite you to reflect on your present capacity on each of these ten psychobiological traits, and use those to reflect on your overall psychobiological capacity in your present life. We invite you to go back through the ten psychobiological traits and score yourself if that feels useful. If you scored yourself, please write this present score down.
- Then think back to an earlier time in your life, perhaps as a teenager or young adult; we invite you to reflect on your capacity on each of these ten psychobiological traits at that point, and use those to reflect on your overall psychobiological capacity at that time. We invite you to go back through the ten psychobiological traits and score yourself if that feels useful. If you scored yourself, please write this past score down.
- Now we invite you to compare where you are now (present score) to where you were then (past score).
 - If your present score has increased from your past score, what has helped you shift in terms of increasing your psychobiological capacity?

We invite you to notice your internal experience as you reflect on this exercise.

Clinical Transcript

Demonstrating the NARM

Organizing Principles

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
|---------|--|---|
| Brad | What would you like to get out of our time together today? | Pillar 1: Clarifying the Therapeutic Contract [chapter 3]. There are different ways to state this contracting question, but I prefer to keep it simple. |
| Aiyana | Something keeps coming up for me. It's anger. But it's really about my inability of accepting myself. I'd like to be real. So I guess it will be self-appreciation, caring for myself. | Often clients will have difficulty with this initial contracting question. I notice right away that Aiyana has answers, but she gives me several answers, and none were said very confidently. I am interested in this statement "caring for myself," because I see what she's doing right now, being in therapy, as an act of caring about herself. Highlighting how she is caring for herself right now might be an avenue to explore with her around agency [chapter 5], but at this point, I am |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Aiyana (continued) | | going to reflect on this statement in service of continued clarification into her intention for our session (Pillar 1). |
| Brad | What's it like to say that—that you'd like self-appreciation and caring for yourself? | As I continue to ask clarifying questions around her intention, my intention here is to see if this "self-appreciation" and "caring for herself" feels right for her in terms of what she'd like to get out of our time together. We do the best we can to use our client's exact words. Also, notice the agency language that I use in asking about how she relates to her internal experience—"what's it like to say that?" as opposed to something more open like "how does that feel?" This is an example of the structuralizing (versus processing) process described in chapter 5. |
| Aiyana | It's hard. I'm telling myself, "Oh, that's fake." | I notice how quickly she self-attacks. This may reflect a process of connection-disconnection. It was my impression that her stating that she wants to care for herself is a movement toward greater connection, and as we have discussed throughout this book, self-attack is a strategy of disconnection. |
| Brad | So there's part of you that brings up that you want to care for yourself, that you'd like self-appreciation. And then really quickly, it sounds like that there's another part that says that that's a fake concept to want for yourself. | I am just reflecting back the two sides, connection and disconnection, without choosing sides or asking her to choose sides. I want to see how she might relate to this. |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
|---------|--|---|
| Aiyana | Right. Like phony, selfish. | She's giving me an understanding of how she relates to her intention to care for herself, calling it "fake," "phony," and "selfish." I am also aware that there may be cultural and intergenerational binds here as well. Aiyana is a Native American woman who left her home community and created a life for herself different than the expectations of the family and cultural systems she was raised with and is now back interacting closely with. My early working hypothesis [chapter 4] is that there could be a bind here where caring for herself, seen from a certain perspective, is labeled fake, phony, and selfish. She may have also internalized this. |
| Brad | Selfish? Phony? | I am reflecting back these words to see if they still feel resonant for her and if she has any more she wants to add. |
| Aiyana | Yeah, those are the words that come up. | The wording she uses here, "the words that come up," is not from an agency perspective. The way she says it makes it sound like it just happened. But from an agency perspective, a more accurate description is that when she wants something for herself, she tells herself she is being selfish. |
| Brad | OK. Are those words familiar? Like when you've tried to care for yourself in the past— <i>[she jumps in to answer before I finish my sentence]</i> | This clarifying question emerges from my early working hypothesis. The words may not be at all familiar to her, or they may be very familiar to her, and either way it will give |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Brad (<i>continued</i>) | | me information that I will use to continue understanding how Aiyana is organizing her experience, specifically in relationship to her intention of self-appreciation and caring for herself. |
| Aiyana | Yes. Because it doesn't feel like I'm worthwhile to do that. I'll go through the motions of self-care ... | <p>Not feeling worthwhile is what we refer to as a <i>shame-based identification</i>. This could also be an example of splitting—the way as children we protect our caregivers by making us bad, or using her words, not feeling “worthwhile.”</p> <p>As she was saying this, I also started feeling sad, and she reports this same feeling as well. Although I have to check my Big C countertransference, my sense was that this was part of my resonance, or little c countertransference [chapter 8]. As for the sadness, we refer to grief as an opportunity for reconnection to the heart [chapter 7]. I am holding this as part of my working hypothesis—that part of her appreciating herself more fully may be about her connecting to unresolved grief.</p> |
| Brad | So if it's OK, maybe we can just slow down a little bit, because I was feeling into that sadness too. [<i>we both sit in quiet for a few moments</i>] So you've made attempts toward self-care, and you go through the motions, but you don't feel worthwhile to do that? | I invited her to slow down also to give myself time to practice self-inquiry, because I wasn't sure in the moment if the sadness was coming from me or I was picking it up from her, so it seemed useful to take a little time for us both to be with the sadness. Not all clients can be present to their internal states, so this gives me |

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| Brad (<i>continued</i>) | | a glimpse into Aiyana's capacity for connection, self-reflection, self-regulation, and presence [chapter 9]. |
| Aiyana | <p>I get the sense that I'm not worthwhile to do that, like it's frivolous, and couldn't be good for me. No, that's not it, like it shouldn't be... [<i>she sits in reflection for a few moments</i>]</p> <p>I guess it doesn't feel like I imagined it to be because people talk about self-care and... [<i>she doesn't finish her sentence and sits in reflection again for a few moments</i>]</p> <p>There's a disconnect within me for feeling it.</p> | As she shares her thoughts, they seem quite fragmented to me. The last part struck me as important, particularly due to my working hypothesis, that she might want something for herself—in this example, self-care—and begins to disconnect from her intention. So I will ask more about that as we continue to clarify the therapeutic contract (Pillar 1). |
| Brad | <p>Let me know how this lands for you, but it sounds like the disconnect comes because you don't feel worthwhile enough? Like somehow you don't deserve to treat yourself to self-care?</p> | I continue to ask clarifying questions (part of Pillar 1), but it's starting to feel like we may be moving into exploratory questions (Pillar 2), so I want to make sure that before I go any further I return to the initial question about what she wants for herself out of our process together (Pillar 1), which I will do next. |
| Aiyana | Yes, exactly, I don't deserve it. | This seems to land for her. I experience what feels like a settling. |
| Brad | <p>OK, so it seems like we're getting clearer on this theme. And from this place, I'm curious what would you like for yourself out of our time together?</p> | <p>I revisit the contracting question (Pillar 1). I want to point out that therapy doesn't start after we've agreed to a therapeutic contract. Pillar 1 can be very organizing for many clients.</p> <p>And for me as the therapist, the contracting process thus far</p> |

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| Brad (<i>continued</i>) | | <p>has given me so much useful information. As I have already named, I am starting to form a working hypothesis that holds a tentative understanding of the core dilemma—what might be getting in the way of what she most wants [chapter 2]—and that will inform my inquiry process moving forward (Pillar 2).</p> <p>I also want to point out that her struggle in answering my initial contracting question could be the exact situation she is dealing with—that she shuts herself down around self-care. And here she is getting “self-care” in therapy. My working hypothesis is that this might be creating a core dilemma for her.</p> |
| Aiyana | I guess... [<i>she pauses for a moment</i>] Accepting that I'm worthwhile. Like, I really have a hard time doing that—accepting that I am a valuable person, to myself. | This feels very powerful to me. Sometimes in NARM we call this a <i>kerplunk</i> moment, meaning that something lands for our clients as they connect to their intention; often there's a settling, grounding, and organizing process as clients connect to something true for them in an embodied way. |
| Brad | What's it like as you say right now, at least the intention for that? | I'm curious how she may be relating to what I named as a <i>kerplunk</i> moment. |
| Aiyana | It felt good to say that. I have kind of an opening in my body, a little bit more open. I don't feel scared or mad at myself for saying it. | I noticed what looked to me like a grounding or settling, so it's good to have her self-report align with my observations. |

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| Brad | Oh, so something seems different internally for you now the second time around. I notice that you're not calling yourself selfish or thinking it's phony. There seems to be a different experience than what was happening before. | I point out that this time she did not disconnect like she did previously when she stated her intention; that in the here and now she is relating to herself differently than she was even just a few minutes ago. Here I am supporting the possibility of agency [chapter 5]. Instead of relating to herself through self-criticism, there might be something new emerging. |
| Aiyana | Right. | |
| Brad | So how would it be for us to explore together what's getting in the way of feeling worthwhile? | We often word the contract as "what's getting in the way of" what the client says they most want for themselves, as opposed to agreeing to work toward a specific goal. This keeps the process more open and doesn't force us to choose sides in an internal conflict that we may not yet be aware of. Clients may want us to choose sides, and in those cases we would want to work directly with how they believe this would help them, again without colluding with a specific strategy that they may be using. Agreeing to explore the obstacles helps reinforce the client's capacity for agency and keeps us, as therapists, in an open, receptive, and curious place in relationship to our client's internal conflict. |
| Aiyana | Yes, I think that'd be good. I would like to. I'd really like to look at this. | This is the consent that allows me to know we can begin our exploratory process (moving into Pillar 2). I also felt into what |

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| Aiyana (continued) | | I would describe as a gentle fierceness. Almost as if right in this moment she is taking care of herself and appreciating herself just by identifying what she wants for herself. This often happens in NARM therapy—that by clarifying their intention, the client is already doing what they most want for themselves, or at least the beginning stages of it. |
| Brad | I appreciate the energy that's coming from you as you name that. And I'd be happy to explore this with you, and how this might be getting in the way of you caring for yourself. I am also aware that you may be doing in this moment what you would like for yourself. I mean, you could look at this process so far with me as an example of you taking action to address something that's important for you. And I would define that as an act of self-care. | Notice how I explicitly agree to the therapeutic contract. This now becomes the organizing thread as we move forward. We can always continue to refine and adjust, or even change, the contract. I then reflect back my observation that she's doing in this very moment what she wants for herself, which is part of Pillar 3: Reinforcing Agency. |
| Aiyana | This doesn't feel like self-care for me. Because I feel like I'm pushing myself. I do hope we come to some understanding about this. But I'm kind of nervous. | She holds a different perspective on what I shared. And I notice how she's reporting anxiety right now, compared to just a few moments ago where she was feeling open. I am curious about both. |
| Brad | OK, so you're feeling a little bit nervous. Are you saying that the nervousness is connected to how this doesn't feel like an act of self-care? | Pillar 2: Asking Exploratory Questions. I'm curious if her nervousness may be connected to what I reflected back to her. |

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| Aiyana | I picture self-care like a nice massage, or really relaxed, something I really enjoy. | I am hearing the word “relaxed” in contrast to what she said before about “pushing herself.” So I begin wondering if pushing herself could be a strategy that is getting in the way of giving herself the self-care she wants. And on a deeper level, if she doesn’t feel worthwhile, perhaps she may not feel she deserves “good things.” These reflections are all part of my working hypothesis. |
| Brad | So what I hear you saying is that because you’re feeling anxious, that doesn’t fit exactly with what you are perceiving as self-care. Although the thing that’s a little bit confusing for me is that before you felt like sometimes it felt phony when you were trying to do those things. | Notice how I reference back to the dynamic she shared earlier, where even hearing herself say she wanted self-care felt phony and fake. This is an intervention designed to support her reflection on how she is relating to this desire she has for herself. |
| Aiyana | Yes. Right. | |
| Brad | So, I don’t know about you, but it’s possible that maybe sometimes self-care might be things that also bring up some anxiety. | I am just reflecting this back as a possibility. Personal growth—which I do view as self-care—is often very difficult and can take people into scary places. |
| Aiyana | Right. <i>[reflecting on this for a few moments]</i> Self-care brings up anxiety? | She says this in a quizzical tone, like she’s not sure. |
| Brad | Before you were saying that some of the things that people talk about for self-care, they feel kind of phony to you. But then just now you were thinking about those same things for yourself. | I’m reflecting back a possible bind here: that she wants to feel more relaxed, for example, but then she feels that it’s phony. |

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| Aiyana | Right. It's true. It feels phony, some of the self-care things feel phony. | She is starting to gain greater self-awareness of a pattern. Remember, she said at the beginning she has trouble with self-acceptance and feeling worthwhile, so it makes sense to me that if she feels that, it would feel fake or phony to give care for herself as that requires her to feel accepting and worthwhile. |
| Brad | Yes, and right now, does this feel phony? | Pillar 3: Reinforcing Agency. I ask her to reflect on how it feels in this moment for her to relate to doing something for herself. |
| Aiyana | No, because I'm really invested in it. | My working hypothesis here: Because she is invested in this for herself, perhaps that means she does in fact feel worthwhile? |
| Brad | Invested in ... what's the "it"? | This is a good example of an intervention we refer to as drilling down [chapter 4], which is part of Pillar 2. |
| Aiyana | I'm invested in myself. | That's a big statement, and a shift from where she was earlier where she didn't feel worthwhile. This might be an example of a movement toward disidentification [chapters 2 and 6]. |
| Brad | And how is it for you to say that? | Pillar 4: Reflecting Psychological Shifts. I noticed a sense that I might describe as strength or confidence in how she was speaking and looking to me. |
| Aiyana | Relaxing. | Which is part of what she said she wanted before. I also notice her taking this in, which to me is an expression of self-care. |

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| Brad | Relaxing. | Mirroring back to her a word that feels significant in her process. This is a simple intervention in support of the relational process [chapter 8]. This mirroring intervention gives her an opportunity to be with her experience as I am holding space with her. |
| Aiyana | To ... feel ... <i>[it took her some time to get her words out]</i> To feel like I'm somebody, like I'm competent. | Another very powerful statement. |
| Brad | To feel like you're somebody, like you're competent. | Again, another mirroring intervention. I don't want to overcomplicate this; sometimes these simple interventions can be quite powerful. |
| Aiyana | Oh my God, here it comes, I'm going to cry. <i>[she starts softly crying]</i> | I don't know what's driving her tears, but for me, this feels like a reconnection to her heart. If you've lived for so many years feeling like you're not worthwhile, not competent and not a somebody—all deep shame-based identifications—beginning to feel in your body that you are worthwhile, competent, and a somebody can be very powerful. Additionally, she is reporting her body relaxing, which often signifies physiological loosening that can be accompanied by emotional feelings. |
| Brad | Is it OK to let yourself have the tears? Because I'll tell you something, Aiyana, it doesn't look phony to me. | I know that she might not feel that her crying feels like self-care, but I am inviting the possibility here that it is an act of self-appreciation and embodying authenticity. |

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| Aiyana | Yes, it feels real. [<i>more tears</i>] | She names what I feel inside myself, that these are very real and important tears, which could be an expression of the primary emotion of grief [chapter 7]. |
| Brad | You used the word “competent,” like you’re invested in feeling competent, but, the word you used before was “worthwhile.” | I’m curious how she is relating these two words. This is part of Pillar 2, drilling down [chapter 4]. |
| Aiyana | Yes. It’s like... [<i>holding back more tears, almost a sense of her choking on them</i>] This doesn’t happen a lot in my life. | |
| Brad | This? | Another example of drilling down. |
| Aiyana | Feeling competent. [<i>holding back tears</i>] I’m going to really lose it now. [<i>she starts crying more strongly</i>] | Notice the tears come strongly as she connects to this deep feeling of competence. She didn’t seem ready to take in what I had shared about feeling worthwhile, which is fine; it’s an example of something I would bookmark for possible revisiting later. |
| Brad | Just take your time. There’s no pressure. | I heard her at the beginning of the session talk about pushing herself. Part of my working hypothesis is that Aiyana may have some autonomy survival style patterns, which can include putting lots of pressure on one-self, and perhaps expecting that I have an agenda or expectations for her. So by inviting her to take her time I am reflecting that I have no agenda and am not expecting anything from her. I am just being present to her experience and don’t need anything from her; I’m also inviting her to be present to her experience and not push herself either. |

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| Aiyana | I never let myself cry. It feels really good to cry. | When a client says something like this, it usually refers to a primary emotion. Default emotions generally are easier and more familiar for a client, whereas a primary emotion is generally more unfamiliar. Default emotions don't generally feel good to connect with; in fact, they often feel overwhelming and out of control. When a client reconnects to their primary emotions, it often feels organizing and life-affirming—or, using her words, an act of self-appreciation [chapter 7]. |
| Brad | If it's OK, I'd like to share with you my perspective. [<i>she nods yes</i>] I'd like to share with you that from my perspective—this is an act of real self-care. | I'm responding to her saying it feels good. I am connecting it back to the things she mentioned she envisioned self-care to be, like a massage or other good feelings. This intervention is potentially supporting a new way of her relating to her own emotions. |
| Aiyana | Yeah, it is. [<i>her crying softens and she seems to relax again</i>] I think I just have looked at it as I have to always do the next thing to get to where I want to go. But this feels more real. To have someone be there with me. I can do it all day long in private. But it doesn't push me to be with it ... I just hide it. | I'm hearing that there is something important about this process being done with me, another person, that is supporting her to take her time to be with herself in a new way. I feel touched by her simple acknowledgment of our process, which for many clients can be experienced as deeply supportive and intimate. I also am feeling into some of what feels like my own Big C countertransference. I myself have my own autonomy patterns, and I know what it is like to push myself very hard. |

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| Aiyana (continued) | | So I am practicing self-inquiry to discern my own feelings from her experience. I am sitting both with feeling touched and reflecting on my own possible countertransference. All of this is part of the <i>R</i> in NARM [chapter 8]. |
| Brad | So you've chosen to kind of push your edge here. | Pillar 3: Reinforcing Agency [chapter 5]. I am flipping the script here. She's used the language around feeling pushed, and now I am framing it as her pushing her edge—as an act of self-care. |
| Aiyana | Yes. | This in itself feels like an acknowledgment of an increased sense of competence. |
| Brad | And how is it now that you're here? | Pillar 4: Reflecting Psychobiological Shifts [chapter 6]. |
| Aiyana | I'm feeling competent at feeling sad over it. | I hear an honoring of her reconnection to these core parts of herself. |
| Brad | Yes. And the way I translate that is just being competent at being real. You don't have to do anything for anyone else, you don't have to prove anything. You don't have to work so hard. You just get to be you. | Pillar 4: Reflecting Psychobiological Shifts, specifically reflecting the possibility of disidentification. She may be able to feel worthwhile just in being herself authentically. This can be profound healing, particularly for someone who has strong autonomy survival style patterns. Additionally, this demonstrates the process of intersubjectivity, because in this moment I was feeling touched from my own sense of being human and the work I have done to accept myself, which allowed me to connect to her increasing sense of feeling worthwhile as a human. |

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| Aiyana | Yes. Which is really nice. <i>[more relaxing and settling]</i> | Many of these interpersonal experiences are not verbally communicated, yet it often seems they are felt by both therapist and client. |
| Brad | Yes. | |
| Aiyana | I feel like tingly right now, in my hands and in the back of my head. | Pillar 4: Reflecting Psychological Shifts. Sounds like there are some shifts happening physiologically for her now, which often comes with disidentification and an increasing sense of being fully human. |
| Brad | Does it feel OK? | I just want to make sure these sensations are OK for her to stay present with. |
| Aiyana | It feels good. | Since she says it feels good, I will just give her space to be with it. |
| Brad | Hey, maybe it's like a massage after all? | After a few moments, I make a little joke, which is a reference back to what she said earlier about what she thought of as self-care. I also have noted from our previous session that she appreciates humor. |
| Aiyana | It's my little soul massage. <i>[laughter]</i> Feels good. | Beautiful language here: "soul massage." |
| Brad | <i>[We sit in silence for several moments where it seems she is very relaxed and settled. And then I notice a slight shift in her.]</i> So how are you doing as you're giving yourself a soul massage? | I noticed something shift in her, so I want to check in. I am wondering if there might've been a movement toward disconnection after a significant few moments of connection. Tracking connection–disconnection is part of Pillar 4. |

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| Aiyana | I was looking outside and then started doubting myself, like, “Oh my gosh, what am I doing here?” | Now she is describing the movement toward disconnection with the beginning of self-attack through doubting or judging herself and her efforts toward self-care and deeper self-appreciation. We anticipate this disconnection will happen, and we don't try and force our clients to stay in the connection. Ultimately we are supporting the increasing capacity for clients to stay present to both sides of the connection-disconnection dynamic and learn to tolerate complexity. |
| Brad | If it's OK, let's try to answer the question that you asked yourself, which is: “What are you doing here?” | Pillar 2: Asking Exploratory Questions, but this time I am using her own question but asking it in a way that is intended to take the self-criticism out of it. |
| Aiyana | I am trying to ... [<i>she pauses to reflect</i>] ... No, I am working on acceptance of myself as worthwhile. | This goes directly to the root of this whole process, which is about agency, disidentification and connection to her authentic Self. |
| Brad | And I caught this little switch that you made from “I'm trying to” and then changed it to “I am.” | Reflecting back how she corrected herself away from efforting to accepting. This agency intervention reflects how she is shifting old self-rejecting patterns and increasing self-compassion. |
| Aiyana | Yes. | |
| Brad | Does that feel different than trying? | Pillar 2 in support of Pillar 3, continuing to refine the difference here in how she's showing up with herself. |

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| Aiyana | Yes, because I am actively showing that I'm worthwhile. | Again, a reinforcement of agency and disidentification. She can now show up the way she most wants to that she shared with me from the beginning of the session during the contracting process. |
| Brad | Yes, and again, if it's OK, I'd invite you to just notice how that feels to be present with this. | Pillar 4: Reflecting Psychobiological Shifts. I was observing that strength and confidence that I observed before. Many clients will move right past these shifts, as sometimes they are very subtle, so this is an invitation to check in with her internal state to see how it is to be connected at this moment. |
| Aiyana | Yes, I feel it in my stomach, like a calming down. It's like a little tingle in the top of my stomach now. Normally I'm like a big ball in my stomach, constricted. But not now. | Supporting the physiological shifts as part of Pillar 4. I anticipate that it very likely will shift at some point, but I am not pushing in any way, just being present to the experience as Aiyana is present with herself in this moment. |
| Brad | And I want to point out that this releasing and calming comes when you're able to proclaim for yourself that "I am worthwhile." | This is an example of threading, which is part of Pillar 3: Reinforcing Agency. The calming down didn't come out of nowhere. Remember, she said she was nervous before and also pushing herself, both descriptive of sympathetic nervous system states. So she is able to shift into a more parasympathetic nervous system state that allows for calming and settling as she is able to proclaim for herself that "I am worthwhile." |

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| Aiyana | Right. I am really worthwhile! [said emphatically, like she was trying it out] Wow! It has been a long time since I've said that. I'm really trying to break out of that old pattern. | Supporting her to have time with these shifts. Now she's trying it out cognitively, by repeating this word "worthwhile" and seeing how that feels to be present with it. She realizes that she has not been treating herself like she's worthwhile for a long time, which represents a shame-based identification. |
| Brad | I see that, yes. | Part of Pillar 4, reinforcing that she is breaking out of this old pattern right now in real time. Many times clients dismiss or minimize this occurrence, so I want to gently remind her that this is what's happening. I felt quite moved by sharing in this process with Aiyana, and in this moment I was feeling into a sense of warmth in my heart. |
| Aiyana | I don't know why, but I've done a lot of things, and none of them felt fulfilled ... or noticed. But right now, I'm being noticed. That's what I'm doing. | This feels very important to me, that she is giving herself this "noticing." She is also being noticed by me in a compassionate way, which supports her to relate to herself differently than viewing herself through objectification, self-rejection, and self-hatred. |
| Brad | You're allowing yourself to be noticed. | Pillar 3: Reinforcing Agency through reflecting the language back in a way that highlights the new way she is relating to herself, allowing herself to be noticed by herself and me. People who don't feel worthwhile generally relate to being noticed through self-shame and self-rejection. Right now, she is using being noticed to relate to herself in a different way. |

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| Aiyana | Allowing myself to be ... [<i>she takes a moment to reflect</i>] Oh my! [<i>begins laughing</i>] ... to be really noticed, yes, that is amazing. | I view this as a moment of reconnection. I observed, and felt within myself, a lot of life energy surging up as she said this. |
| Brad | And if it's OK, I'd invite you to give yourself some time with that. Giving yourself the permission to be noticed. | Pillar 4: Reflecting Psychobiological Shifts and offering an invitation to be present to what she's experiencing. Notice that we're not pushing for our clients to experience "positive" states; we're just inviting them to be present to what is happening. I am anticipating that at some point she may shift toward disconnection, and if so, we will explore that process. |
| Aiyana | Yes, it feels OK. At this moment, I'm feeling it ... [<i>pauses</i>] ... that I'm really like ... [<i>pauses</i>] ... I can't say the word. | It seems to me she's feeling into something very deep and profound. |
| Brad | It's OK, there's no rush, just take your time. | Naming a strategy she has used and reminding her that I have no agenda for her and that she can take the time she needs with her experience. |
| Aiyana | That I'm really worthwhile. That I am an important person. | Sometimes in these moments, it almost feels like a rebirth. I feel it can be a very sacred process of profound transformation as we dissolve the old patterns that have been limiting us and embody a new way of feeling about ourselves. A coming home to our true and most authentic Self. |
| Brad | If it's OK, just continue to take your time with that. | Pillar 4: Reflecting Psychobiological Shifts by continuing to invite her to take all the time she needs with this new experience. This might be seen as the savasana phase of NARM. |

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| Aiyana | <p>We've talked about that being in two worlds, and you know that is really hard. You have to leave some people, a little bit, not all the way, but they get mad at you for going to school or they get mad at you for changing. They think you've changed because you got an education, and then they don't want to talk anymore. Or the relationship just feels different than it used to because they think you're too smart now. This just came up for me. <i>[pauses to reflect]</i> ... Wow, I'm having a huge breakthrough here ... to really be noticed and witnessed. I'm going to sit with that.</p> | <p>Now she's describing the bind, or what we call the <i>core dilemma</i>. She is naming that people have reactions as she embraces increased autonomy, agency, and self-activation. There are current people in her life, but I sense that there are deeper cultural and intergenerational binds here too (often these cultural and especially intergenerational binds are unconscious and therefore go unnamed). The act of separation-individuation is a threat to a child when experiencing attachment and environmental failures, so the adaptive survival style patterns serve to inhibit our movement toward authenticity.</p> <p>This piece of feeling noticed and witnessed, to me, speaks to the new ways she is allowing herself to show up and relate to herself showing up with greater self-compassion. Also notice at the end she says, "I'm going to sit with that." For the first time, she's giving herself more space and not relating to herself with such pressure. That's another possible sign of disidentification.</p> |
| Brad | <p>So there's some people in your life, whether past or present, who have noticed you, but when they see you doing these things for yourself like getting educated and getting a career and all these things, they have a belief about you or have some kind of judgment about you? They have a reaction to you?</p> | <p>Pillar 2: Asking Exploratory Questions. What I am specifically curious about is: from this place of feeling more connected, how does she feel about people who may have given her the message that her authenticity is a threat? I wonder if there may be some emotion around it. This speaks to the Emotional Completion Model in NARM [chapter 7].</p> |

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| Aiyana | Yes, definitely a reaction. | Acknowledging the reality of how they have been with her, as opposed to taking responsibility and blaming herself for other people's reactions—this reverses the splitting that we hold in child consciousness where we internalize others' reactions as something about us personally. This is all part of the process of shifting from child consciousness into adult consciousness. |
| Brad | And what do you feel about that now, about those people? Here you are, following your sense of self and what's right for you, and they have this reaction to you doing that— <i>[she jumps in before I finish my sentence]</i> | Pillar 2, continuing to ask about how she feels as she reflects on their reaction to her authenticity and self-activation. |
| Aiyana | I feel really clear right now, I feel super clear. I'm the same person, I'm the exact same person. So that belongs to them, not to me. | Here is a protest, an expression of healthy aggression. I could feel the clarity, strength, and confidence. This feels like another significant shift. |
| Brad | Yes, I invite you to just notice that "it belongs to them, not to me." <i>[I give her a few moments to reflect on that]</i> And from my perspective, to say something like that you only can say when you feel worthwhile. | Pillar 4, which includes a piece of psychoeducation here, where I am tying together this statement to the experience of feeling more worthwhile. It's in service of supporting disidentification and adult consciousness. |
| Aiyana | Yes, everything's brighter. Like, visually. Outside like the room just got really clear. The background ... <i>[looking around more]</i> Oh my goodness, I feel really clear. I feel really worthwhile right now! | Often when clients are reconnecting to themselves in this way, they will report significant physiological shifts, and one that is common is seeing more clearly. We don't exactly know what is happening |

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| Aiyana (continued) | | physiologically, but we have many years of anecdotal evidence within somatic psychology that describes the profound shifts in clients' eyes when these internal trauma patterns shift; and clients often report seeing more clearly or even seeing more, like taking in more of their environment. It's a joke in our trauma trainings that a long-term client will notice a painting in our office that has been there for ten years, but it's the first time they've really "seen" it. |
| Brad | And I noticed that it flowed easier off your tongue that time. | Pillar 4. Earlier she was saying "I feel worthwhile" timidly or even questioningly, but this time she said it confidently. |
| Aiyana | Right. Yes, it's nice. | In this moment, as I looked at her, she looked like she was beaming, as if she was coming alive. |
| Brad | It's nice. And what are you noticing internally, in your body, as you're sitting with this clear, nice feeling? | Pillar 4. This intervention is designed to support the possibility of an anchoring of this powerful experience in her body. |
| Aiyana | Clear. Relaxed. I am feeling worthwhile. | I am observing that she reports her internal experience with greater confidence and strength, which is quite different than how she was earlier in the session. |
| Brad | And last time when you were in this place, you had these thoughts of people who have been in your life who have had a reaction to you really showing up and being worthwhile and being seen and received. | This is part of Pillar 4 that is almost an anticipation of a possible disconnection. I noticed last time that the disconnection came as she was feeling worthwhile and then started thinking about these people in her life who have |

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| Brad (<i>continued</i>) | | a reaction to her autonomy and authenticity, so I bring it up to see how she may be relating to it from this place. It's also a way of keeping connection and disconnection in relationship. It's so easy for clients to feel that they have to choose one side, and I am bringing it up here to support the possibility she can hold both without having to choose one, and find a new way of relating to this core dilemma. I use this intervention quite often as I find that this capacity to hold dual awareness supports increasing psychobiological capacity. |
| Aiyana | Yes. | |
| Brad | And now? | |
| Aiyana | I feel OK. I feel comfortable, relaxed. Normally I would have that shame, but I don't have of any of that. I would normally be in my head right now and I'm totally not there. I feel good. I feel noticed. I feel important to myself. Like I'm noticing all these ways I'm with myself. | She's speaking to the integration process of reconnecting back to herself and supporting greater organization and coherency. |
| Brad | Again, I invite you to take all the time you need with that, with your own noticing of yourself. | Pillar 4, supporting her to be present to this process in this new way. Supporting disidentification and perhaps planting the seeds for post-traumatic growth. |
| Aiyana | I feel competent, happy inside. | Notice she returns to the word "competent" from the beginning of the session. We've been working this thread the entire session. This is the power of Pillar 1 in helping organize, |

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| Aiyana (continued) | | frame, and support working with complex trauma patterns without moving into fragmentation or overwhelm. |
| Brad | So this is completely an invitation and we don't need to do this. But since you're at this place of feeling relaxed, happy, and competent inside, I'm going to make the invitation that if you want to, if you want to challenge yourself even a little bit more, you can bring up a few of these people who have had a reaction to you changing, and notice what happens for you as you reflect on them. Again, it's an invitation and if you don't feel like doing this, that's perfectly fine. | This intervention is an invitation to see how she is relating to the same dynamic that she experienced before but from a different place. It may support her movement toward increasing disidentification. It's also going to give me more information about how she is relating to herself in this moment. |
| Aiyana | Sounds good. I'm going to do it. | If she wouldn't want to, that's completely fine, and I would go in another direction. It's really just an invitation for self-inquiry. |
| Brad | OK, just do it in a way that feels right to you. | Wanting to remind her of this pattern of how she pushes herself and that she can determine for herself—based on her own sense of Self—the right way to do this reflective exercise. |
| Aiyana | [she takes time to reflect] That made me dizzy. | She is describing a physiological reaction, which I am curious about. |
| Brad | Made you dizzy? | Asking directly about her experience. |
| Aiyana | Yeah, kind of makes me dizzy. And I feel kind of squeezed inside, like in my stomach. I want to do it again. | Now she refers to the squeezing she has mentioned previously that happens in her stomach. Then she says she wants to try again, which is |

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| Aiyana (continued) | | interesting—instead of running away from the dizziness, which many clients might do, she chooses to revisit it. |
| Brad | OK. Again, please do it in the way that works for you. | Reminding her indirectly that she doesn't have to push herself, part of an old familiar pattern. |
| Aiyana | Yes. | |
| Brad | So from this place of feeling more competent, how is it this time to reflect on these people who have had reactions to you? | As I check in, I thread back that she was feeling more competent when I offered this invitation as a platform for reflecting on these people. |
| Aiyana | Much better. It was nice. | I find it interesting to hear how her experience shifted. |
| Brad | What was different about it this time? | I am genuinely curious about what was different this time around, so I move into inquiry (Pillar 2). |
| Aiyana | I noticed smiles from them. Before I was seeing something different, but this time I was actually able to see smiles. | Of course, she's just envisioning these people, but whereas previously she saw them having a reaction to her, this time she's seeing smiles. |
| Brad | What do you think those smiles are in response to? | Pillar 2: Asking Exploratory Questions. This was not a random question. The intention was to invite a reflection of how she is feeling about herself. It's possible that she might be experiencing herself now as worthwhile and feeling more confident to show herself to others, even those who have had reactions to her in the past. |
| Aiyana | See, that question ... [<i>she stops before finishing this sentence and reflects</i>] The thought | I notice a quick disconnection, using a self-rejecting strategy (while she's projecting the "fake |

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| Aiyana (continued) | comes, "They're just fake smiling at you." That thought came back really quick. | smiling" onto them, clearly she's the one who is thinking this), but I am also aware of how conscious she was of this shift toward disconnection. To me, this demonstrates increasing psychobiological capacity (adult consciousness). |
| Brad | I notice how you tracked that thought coming back really quick this time. Those thoughts are often unconscious for most of us. So you caught that old thought. | Part of Pillar 4, tracking connection and disconnection, and a little bit of psychoeducation. |
| Aiyana | But I don't feel that now. Like I would usually tighten my stomach around these thoughts. But I don't feel that now. | I am noticing here her language is reinforcing agency. She's aware now that the tightening that she experiences somatically is related to these self-rejecting thoughts. |
| Brad | OK, so you just noticed it as a thought, but you didn't tighten your stomach. | Pillar 3: Reinforcing Agency. Reflecting back to how she related to her internal experience differently this time around—she didn't identify with it. |
| Aiyana | And then I'm thinking, no, they wouldn't do that. | This is a new way of relating to herself and her vision of those in her life. Oftentimes we are caught in projections onto those around us, and it's possible she's shifting those projections. |
| Brad | So if they wouldn't do that, and if they're not faking, what might they be smiling in response to? | This question, asking what they are smiling in response to, is inviting her to identify something internally about herself that they may be seeing and responding to with an authentic smile. |
| Aiyana | [tears softly coming again] Watching me become important to myself. | Disidentification. Instead of relating to herself as not worthwhile, now she is embracing this |

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| Aiyana (continued) | | process of becoming important to herself. Which is what she said she wanted at the beginning of the session, an expression of self-care and self-appreciation. |
| Brad | That was my guess too. | Not only was it a guess, I was feeling it toward her too. I was very moved to watch her becoming important to herself. I felt a strong sense of heartfulness, which I had actually been feeling throughout the session, but it definitely became obvious in this moment [chapter 8]. |
| Aiyana | Yes. | |
| Brad | How is it to take that in? | Pillar 4: Reflecting Psychobiological Shifts. |
| Aiyana | It feels nice. Feels like a smoothness, and feels like a smoothness coming through me. [<i>gesturing a flowing movement across her torso</i>] | Different than the constriction she described earlier. |
| Brad | Yes, if it's OK to take your time with that. It's very different than that stomach tightening that you've had in the past. | Notice how I am weaving in the old state of disconnection as she is presently experiencing this state of connection. |
| Brad | How are you doing overall? | |
| Aiyana | Good. Really good right now. | |
| Brad | Well, I don't know exactly what those people are really thinking about you. But I do know for me that I really appreciate seeing you become important to yourself. | I was speaking from my sense of heartfulness. Part of Pillar 4 can be appropriate self-disclosure by the therapist. We need to be mindful that it be authentic and done in relationship. I was feeling very touched and honored to be part of this process and wanted to share that with her. |

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| Aiyana | Thank you, Brad. It's been a long push ... but I feel like I've arrived. | Notice the language of the "push" that goes back to the old strategy of working hard, pressuring, pushing. But this moment of feeling that she has "arrived" is very powerful and significant. |
| Brad | And maybe there's a possibility that it doesn't have to be pushed so much moving forward. | I'm offering the possibility that she may be able to embody her growth without these old strategies, as she has today in our session. This reflection of a new possibility relates to her original intention of wanting to show up with greater self-care. |
| Aiyana | Right ... that's one of the things about the people in my life. If you're not having that struggle, like there's something's wrong with you. I don't have to have that struggle anymore. I don't have to. | This is very common from clients who have come from certain communities or cultures, that one way they have adapted is to push, pressure, work hard, and if there's not a struggle, then there's risk or danger. I have experience of that myself based on my own cultural and intergenerational trauma, so I know that firsthand. I get the sense that she may be speaking to something very big here that may relate to cultural and intergenerational trauma patterns. This runs very deep. The question for another time will be how Aiyana is able to embody deeper into her authenticity while still being able to feel connected to her family and culture in an authentic way. This relates to the 50-50 balance [chapter 2]. |
| Brad | Yes. And I imagine that you may continue to bump up against | For future sessions with Aiyana, I imagine we will continue to |

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| Brad (<i>continued</i>) | that bind, especially since these people are still so actively in your life. | <p>address these larger binds that run so deep. I also like to anticipate possible challenges that seem likely, as it allows clients to relate to the potential challenge from a place of adult consciousness where they don't have to disconnect; in fact, they often relate to this potential challenge with a sense of confidence, strength, and hope.</p> <p>We referred to "consensus reality" in chapter 9, which is acknowledging the reality of being an adult in a complex world. We don't want to infantilize or lie to our clients that everything is going to be perfect from here on out. Again, this intervention is designed to strengthen her feeling of competence by supporting the possibility for increasing capacity to tolerate distress.</p> |
| Aiyana | Yes, probably so. | Seems to me she's responding from adult consciousness here. |
| Brad | So I mean, you know, this ... the funny thing about this work is that on some level, it looks like a small little piece of work, but it's— [<i>she interrupts me with excitement</i>] | I'm reflecting back my sense that what she has connected to here today is significant, and it's so easy to minimize it. Like I mentioned previously, I felt as if there was a sacred quality to it, a rebirth, a coming back home to herself. |
| Aiyana | It's really, really, really big! [<i>laughter</i>] | I can see her taking in the significance of this. |
| Brad | Yes, it's really big, really big. | I start wondering if there may be another disconnection coming as I see her really sitting with the depth of connection she's presently experiencing. |

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| Aiyana | I feel so clear. It's almost like I've been in a fog before this. It's not like some huge life-changing event. I mean, obviously it is. I don't know, maybe I'm going back. I'm doing it, I'm starting it ... | <p>She's using similar language to what she used before about feeling "clear." Again, this is common for clients coming out of these adaptive survival style patterns to experience greater clarity after "fog." In fact, alterations in consciousness are a symptom for many people who have experienced developmental trauma. Some people refer to it as a "trance," and here Aiyana calls it a "fog." For clients with strong dissociative features, it can be experienced like a deep fog, and coming out can be powerful.</p> <p>So Aiyana begins feeling into the clarity, and then she starts feeling the internal bind again ("I'm going back. I'm doing it, I'm starting it"). The question I am holding here: What would it mean for her if this were a "life-changing event"? How would that impact the people in her life? How might it impact her relationship to her family, her community, and her culture?</p> |
| Brad | You're starting what? | Pillar 2: Asking Exploratory Questions. I'm wanting to understand exactly what she's starting. |
| Aiyana | Feels like I'm ... talking it backwards. | At this point in our session, she has become very aware of her internal process. To use her language from earlier, she is "noticing" the ways she is relating to herself, which is reflective of increasing agency. |

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| Brad | And again, this is the second or maybe third time you've caught that so quickly. And that's probably going to happen. Those thoughts are usually part of the process. But you're developing an ability to notice them and be with them differently than you have before. | Pillar 4, I am supporting her in tracking her shifts between connection and disconnection. I am reinforcing agency here too. |
| Aiyana | Yeah, I feel really good about that! So thank you for that. | She references me, and I'm happy to take some of the credit here, but as Larry likes to say, we're only the "copilot." She's the one who is fueling this transformative process. |
| Brad | Thank you. <i>[we sit in silence for a few moments as I feel things settling]</i> Quite a massage, huh? | I am referencing the massage joke from earlier, as a way of reinforcing that she is engaging in self-care and that comes out of her relating to herself as worthwhile. Humor, when used judiciously, can support the disidentification process. We often see clients begin taking themselves less seriously. Therapy can feel quite playful in these moments. |
| Aiyana | <i>[laughter]</i> Yes! My soul massage. | Reinforcing for herself that she can take care of herself and it doesn't have to be experienced as a threat. |
| Brad | Does this feel like an OK place for us to wrap up, or is there anything left over for you? | We're out of time, but I just want to make sure if there's anything left, she has a chance to name it. Obviously we can't get to everything in one session, and in NARM we don't put pressure on ourselves to tie everything up. But if there is something still up for her, we can bookmark it for our next session. |

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| Aiyana | <p>I feel good. Thank you. I felt very natural working with this. I didn't feel any sense of you trying to take me anywhere. It felt very noninvasive. This felt very powerful—to sit here and experience that depth of feeling, and to connect to what I was seeking, it just feels really amazing.</p> | <p>This is nice feedback for me. The noninvasive part highlights the importance of the NARM Relational Model. It does help me as the therapist to create a certain internal and relational space that clients experience as noninvasive.</p> <p>Additionally, the NARM focus on contracting, inquiry, and agency supports the client experience of having the sense that they're steering the ship of the therapeutic change. I believe the time we took to contract and establish relational consent around what she wanted for herself supported her internal sense that she was driving this session. I wasn't trying to get her anywhere, make anything happen, or fix anything; I was bringing the NARM relational skills to support us both being curious, interested, and present to her intention and what might be getting in the way of her connecting to her aspirations for herself. She's naming her increasing psychobiological capacity (adult consciousness), and it does feel enlivening and empowering.</p> |
| Brad | <p>Thank you.</p> | <p>As we ended, I was feeling moved by the deep sense of heart connection. I was feeling into gratitude for Aiyana that I could participate in this process with her. "Thank you" doesn't begin to capture my gratitude.</p> |

Clinical Transcript

Demonstrating the NARM

Organizing Principles

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| Larry | What would you like for yourself from our session today? | Asking for the client's intention as the first step of Pillar 1 [chapter 3]. |
| Rich | <p>I thought about it prior to the session, and two things popped up. One that is more of a preface, which is probably less of what I'd like to get out of our session but more of a statement. I know that in therapy clients get very personal and really experience a lot of emotion. And I wanted you to know that sometimes this is really uncomfortable for me, thinking of being nearly a forty-year-old-man sobbing.</p> <p>So, really what I'd like to take a look at is that I'm married, and now separated, and probably heading for divorce. And some of the advice that's been given to me is that I should just be completely alone for a period of one year—no romance, no dating at all—and there's fear, dread, and apprehension that comes up with the thought of that. And that's really what I'd like to explore.</p> | Rich is not directly telling me what he wants yet but is sharing with me a fear, which seems important. |

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| Larry | OK, you said there were two things, and is there another one as well? | |
| Rich | Yeah, the first thing was just almost like my apprehension towards like the raw emotion that clients experience during therapy and my discomfort with that. It's like, if I am to shed tears, it sounds uncomfortable because there's probably a lot there. But the second thing I think it would probably be more pertinent to explore, which is what I mentioned with the celi-bacy, no dating for a year. | The fear that I hear is that he is going to get emotional in the session and that it could impact the therapeutic process. As for the advice about abstaining from relationships, I'm sure whoever has given him this advice means well, but there may be something to explore about his relationship to the advice, because it frightens him. I want to stay open to what he is sharing, not take sides, and help him explore what he believes will be best for himself. |
| Larry | Well, and just to be clear, there's no expectation that just because other people may have shed tears that you're supposed to or anything like that. If you're feeling emotional and you're struggling with it, that's something we can explore in the course of the session. It's all ultimately your choice, whether you choose to express it outwardly or just feel it inwardly. So I just want to be clear that there is no expectation on my part about how you show up emotionally. | I am making clear that I don't put expectations on him regarding how he relates to his emotions. He gets to have his own relationship to his experience, and I will support that. |
| Rich | OK, I understand. | |
| Larry | I've heard a couple things. One is that somebody recommended that you take this year off from all relationships and sexuality and everything. And then I heard you have a kind of fear reaction to thinking about that. | While I am holding the advice he got with neutrality, the fact that he has fear about it tells me that there is something worth exploring here. This is part of the clarification process in Pillar 1. |

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| Rich | Yeah. | |
| Larry | So what would be the optimal outcome of our work today—if at the end of our time you really got what you wanted, what would that be? | I am looking for whatever his intention might be. Pillar 1: Clarifying the Therapeutic Contract. |
| Rich | Maybe to explore what is blocking me from following through with an entire year of abstinence and no dating, what's so terrifying about that, and how can I get past it. | He is operating under the assumption that he has to do this or that it might be a good idea. I don't take sides in this internal struggle, for or against, but I do note his perspective. |
| Larry | Well, there's an assumption in there that you actually want to do that. I mean, it sounded like this wasn't something that you came up with? If I understood you correctly, this was something that somebody recommended to you? | Clarifying to understand where this advice was coming from. |
| Rich | Yeah. | |
| Larry | I wouldn't want to just make that same assumption myself. As we do the exploring, perhaps you will decide if that is actually something that seems right for you or not. And then if it does seem right for you, and there's fear with it, that also could be part of the exploration that we do together. | I am clarifying the therapeutic framework. And I am adding an element that he doesn't bring up, about the assumption that this is what he should be doing, because to ignore it is to tacitly accept that the advice he is getting is correct for him. Also I am differentiating between the behaviors he is considering and what he might most want for himself internally. |
| Rich | OK, that makes sense. Yeah, I would like to explore if abstaining from relationships for one year is right for me, and if it is right for me, I'd like to know what's blocking me from making that leap. | He is putting the cart before the horse: first we have to explore if it is right for him and if it is something that he wants to do. |

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| Larry | I wouldn't want to start off assuming that someone's advice is something you automatically should take. I don't have a position on it one way or the other, except that I wouldn't assume it automatically. It's your life and your decision—if you choose to or not to. | I clarify my position. I tend to challenge any and all assumptions about what is supposed to happen in the therapeutic process that a client comes in with. Otherwise, the open inquiry that we hold in NARM [chapter 4] is already being compromised. |
| Rich | Makes sense. | |
| Larry | So did you say more than one person mentioned this to you, or was it just one person? | I am gathering information about what is influencing his assumption. |
| Rich | More than one person, and then reading some books. They talk about the withdrawal period and it got me thinking, "Oh, maybe I am a love addict." I seem to relate to many of those symptoms. And maybe the healthiest thing I could do would be to follow through with that advice of a certain period of abstinence. And as I reflected on that possibility, that's when a lot of anxiety came up. I don't know if I can do that—which to me only felt like more evidence of the idea that it would be good for me to try. | Separate from how he internalized this advice, I am also wondering if there is a real part of him that wants to get out of the possibly compulsive relationship pattern that he has been in. |
| Larry | Well, that's one possible interpretation. But there could be other elements in your reaction too. The way I work is that I don't like to make assumptions without really exploring it together. | NARM is driven by open curiosity and an inquiry process, and we don't make assumptions without exploring the details. Assumptions can be driven from child consciousness, so we want to support how a client is relating to these beliefs from the present moment. |
| Rich | OK, maybe we could simply explore whether or not a lengthy period of no dating would be a good decision for me or not? | |

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| Larry | I think that may be a useful place to start, to see if you're really on board with the personal recommendations and books you read, to see if that's really right for you. So as you've read and talked to some people, I hear you're questioning if you are a love addict. And I'm just curious about this concept and how you relate to it, maybe we could start there? | This is part of the clarification process that is involved in establishing the therapeutic contract [chapter 3]. I am clarifying with him what he means by "love addict" and how this might relate to what he's wanting for himself out of our time together. |
| Rich | OK, that sounds good. I think the concept is maybe primarily twofold: one is I think the discomfort that I've described simply just being single, not dating, not being in a relationship—and that kind of stands out to me a lot. And then secondly, like my wife that I'm separated from, and other women that I have dated, seem to have similar patterns where they get overwhelmed and then distance themselves, and then I draw closer. So just from my own experience and the information I have, it seems that I have a pattern to my romances, and a pattern that I'd like to break free of. | Here he mentions that he has a pattern that he would like to break free of, which seems to be grounded in his own desires rather than based on another person's advice. We may be getting closer to an intention that can orient our work together (Pillar 1). |
| Larry | Now I hear you talking about your relationship to relationships, or your relationship to romantic relationships in particular. | This is my way of reflecting to him that the focus of the session is now getting a little bit clearer. We're clarifying his intention. |
| Rich | Yeah. | |

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| Larry | This idea of being celibate for a year, I would call that a strategy. So let's say that this strategy were to work exactly as everybody predicted and that you would hope, what would be the hopeful result of that year's abstinence? | By asking him what he would like to get out of the strategy, I am inviting a clearer intention. |
| Larry | And what you're describing in terms of the relaxation that you experienced was also very visible. I could see the muscles in your face relaxing and your shoulders relaxing a bit too, so it fits with what I was observing. | Often as clients get closer to something that feels meaningful to them, there is an internal shift that can be observed in relaxation or settling in the body. |
| Rich | Yeah, I could feel it like from my head to my toes. It's interesting. | He's describing his somatic experience, something that is quite difficult for clients to do at least initially. |
| Larry | And so it's useful then to see that these other things you described—like if I'm celibate for a year, then I'll have a new relationship to romantic relationships and I'll have a better one—that's what we refer to as strategies. I make this important distinction between strategies and the core intention, and sometimes, just as you've discovered, the core intention is often much simpler. What I hear you acknowledging is that your desire is really just to have the capacity for a healthy relationship. | This intervention is designed to distill out his own intention—his heart's desire—from all the advice that he has been given. |
| Rich | Yes. | Seems like this reflection landed for Rich. |

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| Larry | And part of what you find helpful that you've already said is that you're aware of old patterns for yourself, that there are some things that have gotten in the way, certain choices that you've made around certain kinds of women that you're attracted to, for example. There is no guarantee about the relationship itself, but we can certainly work with what gets in the way on an emotional level, on a psychological level, of having the kind of relationship that you most want. | This is clarifying the contract of what we are going to do together, which sets up our exploration of the obstacles in the way of him having the kind of relationship he wants. |
| Rich | Yeah, definitely, what's getting in the way of me having a healthy relationship. | He consents to our working agreement, which allows us to have a contract to orient to as we move forward. This is the Pillar 1 process. |
| Larry | Can you share with me an experience in relationships where you have noticed internal obstacles getting in the way of having a healthy relationship? | This is an example of how we use deconstruction of experience as part of Pillar 2 [chapter 4]. |
| Rich | Yes. Immediately, as I think about any romantic relationship, I start to feel anxiety—like what if she leaves me? | |
| Larry | So as you start to get closer with someone in a relationship, then are you saying that this anxiety about being left, is that what comes up for you? | I am always trying to clarify and simplify the narrative. |
| Rich | Yeah, I think so. It's not present all the time, but it's when I'm in the kind of relationship I want to be in, it seems coupled with a fear that comes and goes, which is what if she leaves me. | He continues to clarify and help me better understand how he's organizing and relating to this internally. |

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| Larry | And what are you experiencing right now, Rich, as you talk about this? | I can feel something shifting for him, so I invite his awareness to his experience. This is Pillar 4: Reflecting Psychobiological Shifts [chapter 6]. |
| Rich | It does feel calming in my body to name it. | Notice that as he is able to stay present with his experience, he begins to feel calmer. |
| Larry | I'd invite you to take a moment with that. And just to notice that as you name it, something in you starts to calm. | Pillar 4: Reflecting Psychobiological Shifts. |
| Rich | Yeah, definitely. | |
| Larry | Is there any emotion there as you start to calm, anything that you're aware of, any particular emotion? | I ask this question because I am sensing sadness starting to surface. This is what I am picking up in the resonance. But I don't name that for the client. That would be more interpretive than we tend to be in NARM. Instead, I ask from my curiosity. |
| Rich | A little bit of sadness. Oh, that's the feeling I've been experiencing. | Here he names the emotion for himself, which is optimal from a NARM perspective. Remember back to the beginning, where he had apprehension of sobbing and being emotional. Now he is able to begin feeling that sadness somewhat. |
| Larry | I'm assuming here, so please tell me if this is right or not, but what it sounds like is that as you open your heart more to somebody, then this anxiety of being left comes up. Tell me if that seems right to you. | This assumption emerges out of my working hypothesis, which is how we organize the information that our client is sharing with us. Because I am edging toward interpretation here, I ask the client if it seems right for him, as opposed to me telling him what he is feeling. I am putting pieces together that he has previously shared with me, but I am introducing a new aspect of opening his heart, so I want to make sure this resonates for him. |

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| Rich | Yeah, definitely. | |
| Larry | I know you said that you're in the process of a separation right now. Is there some ways you're experiencing now what you had feared? | I am bringing to his attention the experience in his current life that he described earlier. Part of Pillar 2 is focusing more on the client's current life, and how they are relating to their current life, as opposed to focusing primarily on history. We are curious as to their direct experience in the here and now. What is unfinished from a person's personal history tends to surface organically when we stay with a clear focus on the here and now. This is the phenomenological process of this work. |
| Rich | Yes. | |
| Larry | When you think about being left, please share any associations around that, and they don't have to make completely logical sense. When you think about those times you're getting closer to a romantic partner, I wonder if we can look more closely at the anxiety that you have identified. | This is drilling down, an intervention part of Pillar 2. I am working more and more on the level of direct experience. And inviting him to explore the anxiety. |
| Rich | It feels like a very overwhelming fear. I don't know how to describe it. Like an obsessive fear, it becomes the most important thing. It's like, "Oh my God, I'm about to be left," and it becomes more important than anything. It becomes a primary focus of all my attention. And it also feels almost life-threatening. It just feels like such intense fear that brings me back to childhood feelings, really intense primal fears that I'm going to be abandoned and not going to be OK. | I am hearing child consciousness and the strategies that he uses to try to manage this fear of abandonment. You can also see the direct relationship here between the unresolved fear of attachment loss from childhood and the fear of relational loss in adulthood. I notice he mentions childhood feelings and want to ask further about this. |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
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| Larry | So I'm hearing that one of the deepest fears around this is that you're going to be abandoned and/or you're going to at least feel abandoned. | Clarifying the anxiety he's describing and seeing if I am capturing it the way he is relating to it. |
| Rich | Yeah. | |
| Larry | And then you made a connection to something, I wasn't sure exactly what, but something related to your childhood. Was it your childhood in general or something specific in your childhood that you were talking about? | Pillar 2. I am reflecting and clarifying the narrative. |
| Rich | Definitely my childhood. I know that there's an old feeling of terror if I'm abandoned. And I know that I was burned really badly when I was about eighteen months old and separated from my family and in a burn unit for a month. And I don't know if that was the beginning of this feeling that I'm being abandoned and like my life is over. So yeah, I remember my whole childhood, throwing a tantrum if I didn't know where my mom was, and then moving into my teenage years of dating feeling like, "Oh my God, what if she leaves me and gets sick of me." And into my adulthood and even into my marriage. | It's very common in NARM that as we begin exploring the here-and-now symptoms and difficulties, unresolved themes from the past emerge organically. He is clearly beginning to come in contact with what sounds like significant developmental trauma. |
| Larry | So is there an emotion in you right now as you think about these experiences and reactions that you've had over your life? | I ask this question about emotion because I can see and feel that emotion is surfacing. This is the first step of the NARM Emotional Completion Model [chapter 7]. |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
|---------|---|--|
| Rich | Yes. A sadness of how that fear has been present for most of my life, and sadness that this fear has caused me a lot of suffering. | Grief as a primary emotion often emerges as clients begin to reconnect to themselves in this way. |
| Larry | How does that affect your feelings towards yourself when you acknowledge the suffering that you've experienced around this fear of abandonment? | In NARM we focus on how the relationship to oneself is distorted in adapting to developmental trauma. Rather than having him regress to what sounds like significant early trauma, I explore how bringing up the theme of his suffering affects his relationship to himself in the present. Optimally, before addressing significant trauma, a certain amount of self-acceptance and compassion is already present. This compassion serves as an antidote to possible regression and counteracts the universal theme that children blame themselves on some level for whatever trauma they experience. |
| Rich | It brings up a negative sense of myself, like "I'm no good. I'm just going to bring that fear into the next relationship, and that fear is going to be like the virus that infects the whole thing." And then it feels like, "Oh God, there's something wrong with me." | Here he is blaming himself for the difficulties he has experienced, what we introduced in chapter 2 as shame-based identifications. As clients begin to connect to primary emotions, self-shaming can emerge as a way of moving away from the primary emotions and reinforcing the old adaptive survival patterns |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
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| Larry | Notice how quickly all those linked together—there was a judgment and then there was a kind of futurizing that because of this issue then you're going to mess up future relationships and you'll never "get it right." | This is an example of threading, part of Pillar 3: Reinforcing Agency [chapter 5]. Threading is like a connecting of dots—disconnected aspects of our experience—that can be experienced as very organizing for clients. The client tends to have various reactions and is not always aware of the sequential nature of those reactions. Threading tends to be organizing to the client and minimizes any tendency to fragment. |
| Rich | Yeah, that's definitely all there. | |
| Larry | But what I didn't hear is how it is to just look at the pain and the hurt that you've been carrying around and the fear that you've been carrying around about being left. If it was a friend of yours, or if you have a niece or a nephew or something like that, if it was somebody that you cared about and they were starting to realize some of what you're realizing, that they had a fear of abandonment for as long as they can remember—how would you feel towards that person? | When a person is stuck in child consciousness, they automatically blame themselves. Here I am externalizing the dynamic with the anticipation that if it were anybody other than himself, he would feel compassion. This externalization process begins to build a bridge to embodied adult consciousness and to the compassion that usually comes with that. This is an example of how we may use Pillar 3: Reinforcing Agency. |
| Rich | I might feel a lot of sympathy. I'd feel sorry for them that it happened. And also I'd feel sad. If I was watching someone I loved, I'd feel sad to watch them experience that. | When he thinks about this in relationship to somebody else, he does feel what he calls sympathy, as well as sadness. Here the grief is emerging again. |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
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| Larry | Right, sympathy and compassion is exactly what I feel as I hear <i>your</i> story. Certainly being separated for a month at eighteen months old is a hugely painful and difficult experience for a small child. | I share my personal emotional reaction. This is part of the relational and intersubjective orientation that we use in NARM [chapter 8]. I use his word, "sympathy," and add my own, "compassion." The word <i>sympathy</i> feels too mild for the kind of pain he is talking about. |
| Rich | Yes. | |
| Larry | Do you remember, or do you know from family stories, whether they were able to visit you at all or were you completely isolated? | Gathering information as part of Pillar 2. |
| Rich | It was a burn unit in Barcelona, they were able to look at me through glass for I think a couple hours, but there was no ability to hold me or even touch me or anything. It was all through glass. | I feel an ache in my heart as I am hearing him talk about this. |
| Larry | What do you experience as you talk about that now? That they could see you through glass but there could be no holding or touching? | I notice an emotional reaction in him, which I am inviting his attention to. |
| Rich | At first like almost right now there's like a pain, like a sadness, and also a kind of frustration too, like an anger, I feel like, "This is fucked!" | As he is talking about the different reactions, anger seems to be the dominant emotion here, and it ultimately seems to be the most useful as an antidote to collapse and depression. This is the first step of the Emotional Completion Model as he identifies and relates to his primary emotion of anger [chapter 7]. |
| Larry | And what happens as you let yourself feel some of the anger that's there about that? | Inviting his awareness to his emotional experience. |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
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| Rich | I don't know. The first thing I thought was almost like some sort of disassociation from it, like I was talking about it like it happened to someone else. But then, I don't know, maybe a little bit feeling of relief. | What I imagine he means is that he senses there is more anger there than he is comfortable allowing so he starts disconnecting from it. It is significant to note that as he allows himself to feel some of the anger, it actually brings relief. This is Pillar 4 territory, the shifting of very deeply held and embodied adaptive survival patterns. |
| Larry | It makes sense that you might be feeling all of those different things. You can feel more than just one reaction at a time. | I am supporting him here to allow the complexity of emotion. |
| Rich | Yeah. | |
| Larry | Do you have any memories at all of that experience? | I am asking for memories that are likely to be constructs of things he was told by his family, given his age at the time. However close to the original reality that the constructs may or may not be, they are informing his reactions in the here and now and in his life in general. |
| Rich | Not really memories but feelings that feel so familiar for me. | |
| Larry | Like what? Can you give me an example? | It is important to be as concrete as possible here. This is a Pillar 2 intervention, drilling down. |
| Rich | Just like a feeling of being small, and just freaking out if I didn't know where my mom was, just like real terror. | This narrative rings true to me. This terror might lead back to the present-day anxiety and fear he has been sharing about in regards to being in romantic relationships. |
| Larry | Yeah. | |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
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| Rich | And I think I can almost remember being angry too. Like, "How dare you fucking leave me there!" | Anger is useful here, as a part of the protest that he is beginning to feel. |
| Larry | "How dare you fucking leave me there." Can you notice any emotion that goes with that? | I invite his attention to the emotion that may be driving his reaction. |
| Rich | Yeah, it felt good to be connected to that emotion. It feels like in the center of my chest there's a little more strength and a little more confidence. | As anger gets integrated, clients often report feeling stronger. |
| Larry | And if it's OK to take a little time with that ... [<i>Rich sits quietly for a few moments</i>] You're noticing a little more strength and increased confidence in the center of your chest. | Pillar 4: Reflecting Psychobiological Shifts. |
| Rich | Yeah. That's what it feels like, it kind of feels more adult. More strength, like I can do this, I can succeed and be OK. | What he is describing sounds and feels very important and reflects the integration process. In embodied adult consciousness, he is experiencing the increasing psychobiological capacity that is part of feeling into our adult Self. It is not uncommon to hear a client reference "growing up" in this way. |
| Larry | Let's look at another aspect of this. If you think about an eighteen-month-old child who's just had a severe burn, and then this complete physical separation, and the opportunity for only a little bit of time during the day to have some visual contact with the people who are most important to you—what happens for you as you reflect on this? | Notice how I am inviting him to look at the child's experience while remaining in increasing adult consciousness. |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
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| Rich | Yeah, I feel more anger than anything else. This is fucked up. Like I just want to punch the wall or something like that. It feels like, "This is bullshit!" | His anger is obviously building but in a contained way, which is consistent with the NARM Emotional Completion Model, rather than "getting it all out." |
| Larry | Except I don't think it's the wall that you're angry at. | This ironic comment is designed to help him stay focused on what the anger is really about. This is again consistent with the emotional completion process. The desire to punch the wall is a good example of an acting-out strategy. Clearly it is not the wall he is angry at, and while most clients would know this cognitively, this intervention invites them to reflect deeper on the protest and anger. |
| Rich | Yeah. | |
| Larry | But I hear the anger. | |
| Rich | Yeah. | |
| Larry | And the protest too—you said this is fucked up, this is not right. | I remind him of what he said a few moments earlier. As the energy of this anger becomes integrated, that is what brings healing. |
| Rich | Yeah. | |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
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| Larry | And just notice how that affects you to, again, to feel a little bit of that anger, a little bit of that protest. | I invite him back to the felt experience of his anger because protest was the original message to the environment, and as an adult, it is a message to himself that he doesn't deserve what he is experiencing, which is an antidote to the self-blame that children feel. This communication of the primary emotion is the second step of the Emotional Completion Model, which leads to the third step around being present with oneself and one's emotions in a new way. |
| Rich | Yeah, it feels good. There is a more alive feeling of the protest. It feels like this is what's right. And anger is really directed at my parents, even though I know now it wasn't their fault, but the feeling is like, "Fuck you. How could you just leave me here?" | He reports feeling more aliveness as the anger gets more integrated. This is the third step of the Emotional Completion Model. His adult understanding that it wasn't his parents' fault doesn't seem to be getting in the way of the anger/protest completion. It is not unusual for clients to go prematurely to understanding and forgiving their parents as a way of not feeling the emotions that need to be felt. That doesn't seem to be happening here. In fact, that he can hold both the adult understanding and the emotional charge at the same time is significant. Adult consciousness is capable of holding increasing complexity, even of contradictory emotions and thoughts, and reflects the resolution of splitting. |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
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| Larry | And of course you can, from an adult place, get more understanding of the situation, but we're also trying to look at what this experience was like for you, and also what you needed to do as a small child to survive and manage for a month in this environment and with this lack of physical connection to your parents. | I explain to him exactly what I am doing. Ultimately it is not about blame, it is about renegotiating this very difficult event. There is a little bit of psychoeducation going on here as well, which is an aspect of Pillar 4. I am also reflecting with him about what a child would have to do internally in order to survive this kind of experience. What the child had to do internally reflects the adaptation that they made to survive, which they usually carry forward that adaptation into adulthood. This NARM intervention is meant to increase his awareness of his childhood experience without regressing to and reliving that experience. |
| Rich | That's interesting you said what I needed to do to survive and manage. It almost comes back oddly to what I said, I didn't want it to be necessarily what I wanted to get out of our time today, but what I feel is like an apprehension towards feeling too much emotion or crying or something like that. What I needed to survive was that I needed like my mom and dad to hold me. And I think eventually maybe I just kind of felt like I need to shut down and not feel this intense longing. | His insight seems quite to the point. This feels significant because it comes out of his direct experience and has the sense that it is an embodied cognition, as opposed to a disconnected cognitive insight. |
| Larry | My experience in working with these kinds of dynamics with other people, which is generally shutting down is the only strategy that is available to a small child. At first, they might feel anger, they might feel longing, | We use psychoeducation as part of Pillar 4. I am helping him view this childhood experience through a child's eyes, but without having him regress or relive the experience. My intention is to support him in identifying |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
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| Larry (<i>continued</i>) | they might feel tremendous grief, but all of those emotions feel too dangerous. It feels like there's no resolution. And for an eighteen-month-old child, a month is an eternity. It's not like if you're a grown person and even a month would be terrible, a month of isolation, but you can still visualize a future beyond that. But an eighteen-month-old little child, who lives so much in the here and now, that month is forever. And so then they've got to find some way to deal with what feels like to them like a never-ending reality | and understanding the adaptations that he would have had to make to survive that experience, and by extension, helping him understand the struggle around relationships and fear of abandonment that he has experienced his whole life. |
| Rich | Yeah, it's interesting you say that because I'm having multiple associations right now. One which is the feeling of shutdown, which I already mentioned, which is like, "Ugh, I don't want to cry or feel too much emotion as we begin this." But also when you say that feeling of thirty days being as if it's an eternity, when I think of that it's like that's what I think of when I imagine being out of relationship for a year, and I tell myself that it's not that long. | Notice how he is relating to these multiple associations more from adult consciousness, not feeling so reactive or urgently needing to do something (from child consciousness). |
| Larry | Well, and the message that you've been getting from books and from other people, they were suggesting you have no physical contact for one year. | It is very obvious here how the well-meaning advice from books and friends has put him in a very powerful dilemma. It really helps us see why "advice" can be damaging because it is ignoring the larger context of his life. It is a behavioral attempt to deal with the symptom that he has had of being anxious when he is not in relationship. |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
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| Larry (<i>continued</i>) | | In NARM we do not weigh in for or against the advice, but instead we engage the client in an exploration, so that the client can see for themselves what they need to do. |
| Rich | Thirty days and no contact, that feels like eternity. Naming it gives me some kind of freedom from it. | He is describing the powerful impact the psychoeducation is having on him, which is an optimal outcome. "Freedom from it" is part of the disidentification process [chapters 2 and 6]. |
| Larry | Yeah. I invite you to notice how experiencing this freedom feels like in this moment. | Pillar 4: I reflect the shift toward increasing connection, which accompanies the freedom from the shutdown and aloneness he has felt all his life. |
| Rich | Again, that similar feeling—more confidence, more like relating to the man and the adult that I am, that can walk through difficulties rather than relating to that feeling of being a child, that this is overwhelming and feels like eternity. It helps me relate more to myself in the present as an adult. | So much of the NARM approach constellates around supporting the possibility of the client experiencing increasing confidence in their ability to face both the challenges of life and whatever difficult emotions come up in any given situation. What he is describing reflects more of the embodied adult consciousness. |
| Larry | Right. And again, that seems really significant, that part of your consciousness has been very much caught up in this whole theme of abandonment and being left. And what I hear you describing is that you're coming back to yourself more in the present moment. | This is Pillar 4: reflecting and reinforcing important psychobiological shifts. |
| Rich | Yeah, which is really good. | |

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| Larry | But notice that this space was available to you with just a little help from me. And in just forty-five minutes being together, you were able to access this feeling, which shows me that it's available to you. It doesn't mean you'll always feel it all the time, but you know that this is there. | In response to his comment, I am supporting confidence that this capacity is always available when we explore whatever dynamics are getting in the way. |
| Rich | Yeah, you're right. It was available to me, it's just like a shift in perspective. | Here he is referencing the felt-sense quality of being in embodied adult consciousness. |
| Larry | Yeah. A shift in perspective. | I repeat his very important comment as a way of reinforcing and anchoring its importance. |
| Rich | Yeah, I think so. Just kind of relating from a child perspective versus relating from an adult perspective. | |
| Larry | And going back to something that came up earlier in this session, we saw this pattern where as you get closer to a romantic partner and start to open your heart more, then this fear comes up stronger. So let me put that kind of side burner for a second and just ask you to think about what would a child in this isolation ward do with his heart? Particularly his heart towards the people that he loves and completely depends upon, his parents in other words, what would he do with his heart? | I am helping make a connection between a pattern in his life in general and having to spend a month in isolation as a child. |
| Rich | The child would just shut down and not want to feel the intense longing, I would imagine. | |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
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| Larry | And you just used specific words that feel very important: "the intense longing." I also imagine that a child would be longing to be touched, more than I think most adults can even begin to imagine. | I have no doubt that it is very helpful for him to identify this intense longing and the early roots of that longing. Remember, he used the label "love addict" before, which did more to conceal these internal dynamics than clarify. With our exploration, he now has more information for what might have been driving these behaviors and feelings, and he has more "adult" capacity to make decisions aligned with his authentic desires. |
| Rich | Yeah, definitely. And just hearing it named like that is kind of intense just because it's like, "Oh, shit, that's that feeling." That intense longing, that describes the feeling that I've experienced probably my entire life. | He makes an important connection to what he has experienced most of his life. |
| Larry | And from that perspective we can understand again how as a child when you couldn't find your mother, how strong your reactions that you described would be. | I weave the narrative back to how he would get so anxious when he couldn't find his mother. I am taking the various fragments of the narrative and helping him thread them together into a more coherent tapestry. |
| Rich | Yeah. | |
| Larry | So just so you know, we're coming to the last few minutes of our time here together. | When we are dealing with themes of abandonment, it is important for therapists to be aware of the possible associations between ending the session and the client's early experience of abandonment. |
| Rich | OK. | |

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| Larry | But we still got a few minutes left. I just wanted you to know so that it wouldn't feel abrupt. | |
| Rich | I appreciate that. Yeah, it's cool just to name some of these things. There seems to be a certain strength in the awareness of them. Yeah, intense longing, that's something I felt. And the ability also to access this place of strength is also really powerful. | He keeps emphasizing strength, which is again part of an increasing psychobiological capacity. |
| Larry | It's very touching. | As part of the NARM Relational Model and Pillar 4, self-disclosure is about therapists sharing how we are being impacted by being with our clients' experience. It supports an authentic connection between two humans and supports heartfulness. |
| Rich | I hope that if, and most likely when, I do shift back into that state of intense longing, or child state, that I can try to remember the possibility of being able to access this place of strength and confidence in my adult Self. | He is referring to using the learning of this session as a resource moving forward, not in an efforting way, but more of like a touchpoint to support his continued growth. |
| Larry | It can really make a difference when you know this is available to you, even in those moments when you're stuck in some old pattern. You know that this kind of strength and confidence is still there, it's not lost, it just sometimes goes missing for a little while. | Psychoeducation and a little bit of clarification on my part. In NARM we hold that these states are part of our inherent nature, part of our birthright. Access to them on the level of awareness can be diminished or lost in adapting to developmental trauma, but the states themselves are never lost. |
| Rich | Yeah, that's good to know. | |

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPT | ANNOTATION |
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| Larry | OK, well, now I think we are getting to our time here. | |
| Rich | OK, beautiful. Thank you so much. I really appreciate it. And I think I got a lot out of our short time, so I'm very grateful. | |
| Larry | I'm glad. I appreciate you sharing this very personal piece of your experience with me. So thank you. | |

NARM Protocol

| | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| CURIOSITY AND PRESENCE | Attunement | Intention | Help client clarify intention and sense into client's distress | NARM Emotional Completion Model |
| | | Client Intervention | Clarify the therapeutic contract — Pillar 1 | |
| | | Self-Inquiry | Notice how it feels to be with the client | |
| | Acceptance | Intention | Make space for client's complexity | |
| | | Client Intervention | Ask exploratory questions — Pillar 2 | |
| | | Self-Inquiry | Notice the impulse to rush, fix, label, take sides | |
| | Reflection and Exploration | Intention | Understand how client organizes their inner experience | |
| | | Client Intervention | Clarify the core dilemma | |
| | | Self-Inquiry | Lightly hold working hypothesis | |
| | Mindful Interventions | Intention | Hold possibility of new way of client relating to self and world | |
| | | Client Intervention | Support increased sense of agency — Pillar 3 | |
| | | Self-Inquiry | Notice tendency to be goal-driven | |
| | Integration | Intention | Support client's increase in psychobiological capacity | |
| | | Client Intervention | Reflect psychobiological shifts — Pillar 4 | |
| | | Self-Inquiry | Notice capacity to be present with and affected by client's shifts | |

NARM Personality Spectrum Worksheet

Your Name:

Date:

Choosing a client, please fill out the spectrum below.

| PSYCHOBIOLOGICAL TRAITS | ORGANIZED SELF | | | | ADAPTIVE SELF | | DISORGANIZED SELF | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|---|-------------------|---|---|---|
| | Circle one along the spectrum 10 (very high) to 1 (very low) | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Connection <i>capacity for connection to oneself and others</i> | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Separation-Individuation <i>capacity for differentiation, independence, and adult consciousness</i> | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. Self-Regulation <i>capacity to regulate one's internal states</i> | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Agency <i>capacity to take ownership for one's life</i> | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. Capacity for Intimacy/Therapeutic Alliance <i>capacity to experience others as a source of support</i> | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

| PSYCHOBIOLOGICAL TRAITS | ORGANIZED SELF | | | | ADAPTIVE SELF | | DISORGANIZED SELF | | | |
|--|----------------|---|---|---|---------------|---|-------------------|---|---|---|
| 6. Empathy <i>capacity to relate to the internal world of others</i> | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. Self-Awareness/Insight <i>capacity for inquiry and self-discovery</i> | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. Consensual Reality <i>capacity for experiencing life with minimal projections</i> | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. Self-Activation <i>capacity to initiate and set the course for one's life</i> | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. Presence <i>capacity to be in the here and now (present moment)</i> | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| TOTAL SCORE (out of 100) = | | | | | | | | | | |

Please note: The NARM Personality Spectrum is not an evidence-based diagnostic tool. It is a therapeutic tool that can support helping professionals in reflecting on their clients. The scoring range helps us recognize where clients are on the spectrum of Self-organization. This personality spectrum provides therapists with a framework for assessing where their clients are on a range from greater organization (Organized Self) to less organization/more disorganization (Adaptive Self) to significant disorganization (Disorganized Self).

Identifying the level of organization–disorganization is important as it helps therapists have a clearer sense of their clients’ internal world; better understanding of their client’s capacity; an accurate sense of client buy-in and prognosis; realistic expectations that inform how therapists show up in the therapeutic relationship; recognition for how interventions are being

received and how they are impacting the client's process; a tool for assessing a client's process over the course of therapy; and a framework to evaluate how effective NARM might be for this specific client in supporting them in their change and growth process.

Scoring Ranges

100–70: Organized Self range

Clients in this range may have more developed, secure, and well-organized psychobiological capacities that lead to them moving through their lives with greater flexibility and resiliency. Of course these individuals will still experience challenge, distress, and symptoms, but they have a more secure base with which to recover and move forward without undue preoccupation with the past and anxiety of the future. Their coping strategies tend to be more on the healthy, mindful side—things like exercise, healthy eating, social engagement, and just a general self-care orientation. They have fewer internal obstacles that are getting in their way of growth and development, and they spend more time in adult consciousness. Their observing ego is stronger, with greater capacity for self-reflection, self-awareness, and self-insight. These clients often have greater capacity for agency, to see their part in their own challenges and suffering, as well as self-activation, cultivating greater creativity, intimacy, success, and fulfillment in multiple areas of their lives. Therapeutically, there tends to be very good prognosis for treatment. These clients are more open, engaged, and collaborative, and they engage with the therapist in the spirit of goodwill. The therapeutic process is often enriching for both client and therapist.

69–40: Adaptive Self range

Clients in this range may have more disrupted, less secure psychobiological capacities that lead to them moving through their lives experiencing frequent challenge, distress, and symptoms. These clients often experience various psychobiological symptoms and disorders. Their coping strategies tend to be more problematic, and though they may experience some sense of flexibility and resiliency, they often get in their own way of self-activation, success, and fulfillment in multiple areas of their lives. They may take them-

selves and their issues quite seriously and have significant internal obstacles that are getting in their way of growth and development, and they spend more time in child consciousness. They are often caught in preoccupation with the past and anxiety of the future, making it difficult for them to be present and open. Their observing ego is weaker, with compromised capacity for self-reflection, self-awareness, and self-insight. A diminished sense of agency leads to more difficulty seeing their part in their own difficulties and suffering, and they may rely on acting-in and acting-out strategies including blame and shame. Therapeutically, at least initially, there tends to be a good to fair prognosis for treatment. These clients are more challenging, in both their capacity to use the therapeutic skills and their engagement with the therapist. The therapeutic process may at times be quite challenging and frustrating for both client and therapist.

39–10: Disorganized Self range

Clients in this range may have severe and profound psychobiological limitations that disrupt their ability to move through their lives without experiencing consistent challenge and distress. These clients often experience chronic psychobiological symptoms and syndromes, including significantly disabling psychological and medical conditions. They are often desperately seeking help while at the same time feeling frustrated and unsatisfied at receiving the help they are receiving; they often dismiss, minimize, or outright reject support. Their coping strategies are limited in general, and they tend to act in and act out, at times in ways that can be off-putting, threatening, and even dangerous for themselves and others. They tend not to experience a sense of flexibility and resiliency and may disrupt movement toward self-activation, success, and fulfillment in multiple areas of their lives. They may take themselves and their issues extremely seriously and have profound internal obstacles that are getting in their way of growth and development, often experiencing the world strongly through child consciousness. They are often unable to differentiate the present from the past, have unclear and incoherent narratives of the past, and feel uncertainty or a sense of a foreshortened future. They often do not experience resiliency or agency in their lives and may blame others for their problems. They do not experience an observing ego and have impaired capacity for self-reflection, self-awareness, and self-insight. Therapeutically, at

least initially, there tends to be a fair to poor prognosis for treatment. These clients have limited capacity overall, may express resistance to using therapeutic skills for themselves, and may engage with the therapist in a challenging, adversarial, or even threatening manner. The therapeutic process may be extremely challenging, frustrating, and troubling for both client and therapist.

One important additional note about clients in the Disorganized Self range: clients are humans, and even when they are struggling with a poor prognosis and limitations in multiple areas of their lives, we stay committed to them receiving the most optimal care. Oftentimes these clients do require more support than we alone can provide, and we work with them to assure that they are getting the support they need. We also want to remember that a client's disorganization and symptoms do not define the person. The person sitting in front of us is so much more than these symptoms and their suffering. We always meet our clients holding dual awareness—the reality of the level of their challenges (using the NARM Personality Spectrum to assess) as well as the hope for them to heal (using the NeuroAffective Relational Model to treat).

We have both worked with clients who fall in this range and who have experienced significant healing and change. We have met clients who had been rejected by countless treatment providers and yet through NARM have found deeper connection to the health and aliveness within. Because someone is experiencing more limitation in their present life does not mean anything negative about the person or about their potential for healing and growth. As human beings, we are all struggling to some degree. We hope that therapists keep in mind that the NARM Personality Spectrum is a tool for humanizing our clients' experience. We hope that this tool for identifying our clients' present capacity can help us provide more effective treatment for all our clients.