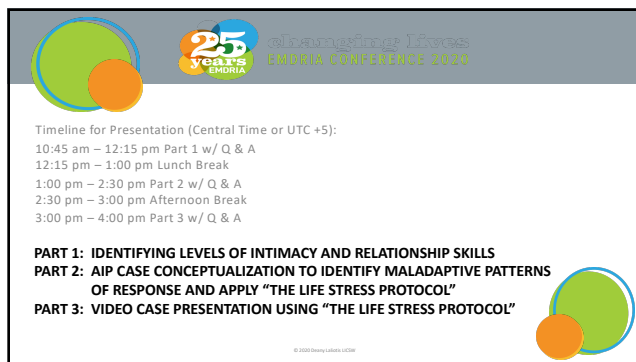
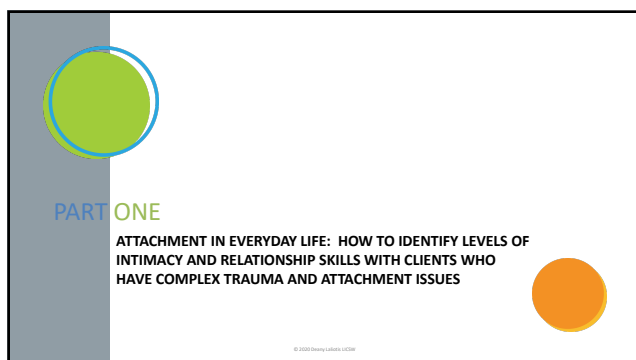



1



2



3




Attachment in Everyday Life

- Our everyday life as we knew it has irreparably changed due to the coronavirus pandemic that continues to run havoc in communities all over the world.
- Consider that you're participating in this workshop with a couple of hundred people, maybe more. We're all in different places and yet we're having a shared experience. And, while that's extraordinary when we think about it, it's not the same. I, for one, am really, really missing the experience of gathering together. The energy, the excitement, sometimes the drama; as the quintessential extrovert, this is a tough one for me.
- However, as has been the case for all of us, where there is loss, there is also opportunity. **For me,** it's a chance to connect with all of you on another level...thank you for joining me in this presentation.

© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

4




Attachment in Everyday Life

- We are all wired for connection. Some of us feel the absence more than others and for different reasons.
- Internal working models of attachment, operating at non-conscious levels have encoded strategies of affect state and arousal regulation; storing critical information about the mind and body of self and other (Schore, 2004).
- These internal working models inform our experience of self and other; our experience of separateness and connectedness versus being isolated and alone; how we have coped during this period of social and physical distancing.

© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

5




Attachment in Everyday Life

- While most people are better able to cope when life is "normal," now that many social and emotional outlets are temporarily foreclosed, people struggle to maintain that sense of connectedness in the context of being socially distanced and as a result, feel and are more isolated.
- With less social interaction, there is less physiological social engagement, which can further impact our connections with one another.
- Now more than ever, our challenge as EMDR therapists is to help our clients develop ways to stay connected, and to learn to connect in different ways with different people.


© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

6




Attachment in Everyday Life

- Our ability to establish and maintain relationships over the course of our life span determines, to a great degree, how well we live, are able to adjust to life changes, and how well we age. We know that those who make an effort to maintain relationships with others throughout their life will age better; without intimate and social connections, we become symptomatic and suffer with anxiety, depression, and cognitive decline.
- People who have a history of complex developmental trauma, enduring conditions of social oppression and adversity that have been endured for generations, are at even greater risk for developing mental and physical illness as they age (Felitti, et. al.).




© 2020 Deany Lalot, LICSW

7




Attachment in Everyday Life – Levels of Intimacy

- My goal is to offer you a conceptual map - way of thinking about and working with our clients to help them develop their social and interpersonal skills as a means of getting their emotional needs met on a number of different levels.
- Introducing: **Levels of Intimacy** maps out different social and emotional needs we all have and can be met in different ways and in various contexts. Each level has unique qualities to it. Using this conceptual map, we can assess both the client's current capacities, level of skill and interest in developing the capacity for more connectedness, and to identify what they need to learn in order to respond and adapt optimally to their current and future life circumstances.
- Let's start at the end: Ask your 80 year-old self, "What kind of life do I want to have?"




© 2020 Deany Lalot, LICSW

8




Attachment in Everyday Life

- When we are securely attached, we feel safe and comfortable in our environment and with that sense of security, feel the inclination to explore. As we do that, our need for novelty and adventure is stimulated, our emotional circuits grow and develop, and we make connections.
- People with complex trauma are less curious and uninclined to explore; instead they prefer a smaller world that is predictable as it provides them with a greater sense of safety and control.
- Consider with the onset of the pandemic, we are all less inclined to explore; or if we are determined to do so, have to work harder to generate safe opportunities for adventure and connection.




© 2020 Deany Lalot, LICSW

9




Attachment in Everyday Life

- One consequence of the pandemic has been the loss of "place" or "place attachment," which refers to the emotional bond we have to a physical space that we occupy and assign meaning to (Moser, Moser & McNaughton, 2014).
- Their study identified specific neurons called "place cells" and "border cells," that help us manage autobiographical memory through memories of people and events that occurred in the places we frequent.
- Without it, we lose our sense of self-identity associated with that place or activity, and explains the phenomenon of one day blending into the next, without being punctuated by activities we associate with a specific role and physical location e.g., going to school, work, place of worship, etc.




© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

10




Attachment in Everyday Life

- The activities we used to plan to participate in with family, friends, colleagues have all but disappeared.
- Other ritualized activities where we see some of the same people at the same places (going to the gym, yoga class, civic meeting, study groups, etc.) have been either cancelled or converted to an online format.
- AIP Model suggests that the confluence of present day circumstances and earlier life experiences (or lack thereof) determine to a great extent how we will respond to these current demands. So, what if we were to have a road map to help our clients develop ways to be more connected...especially now?




© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

11




Levels of Intimacy (Merlis, 2018; Merlis & Lalotis, 2020)

- Characterizes the nature and the context of a relationship with an "other."
- Developmental model proposes that one level builds on the next, but that each level has its own inherent value and meets a specific set of emotional needs.
- There are implicit and explicit "Rules of Engagement" for each level defining separateness and connectedness and how we make contact.
- Developmental milestones have to be mutually agreed upon before moving to the next level; involves a series of bids and negotiations that may or may not be reciprocated.




© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

12




Levels of Intimacy (Merlis, 2018; Merlis & Laliotis, 2020)

- The goal is to have relationships in most, if not all, categories.
- The higher the category, the greater the effort required to maintain it; fewer are sustainable.
- Incorporates the notion of a social economy that is mutually agreeable and satisfying.
- Allows for separateness and connectedness in different contexts.




© 2020 Deany Laliotis, LICSW

13




Five Levels of Intimacy

1. The Smiling Stranger
2. The Herd Member
3. The Friend
4. The Best Friend - Confidant
5. A Life Partner – Conscious Partnership




© 2020 Deany Laliotis, LICSW

14



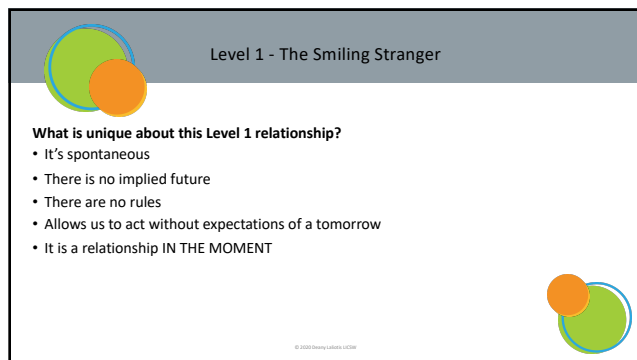
Level 1 - The Smiling Stranger

- Brief encounters such as a fellow pedestrian on the street, the grocery store clerk, a colleague in a workshop, a hiker on the same path, the person sitting next to you on a train or plane. You may or may not see them again.
- While we are out in our environment, our need to seek/explore gets stimulated. Our need for novelty and stimulation invigorates us with interest/excitement.
- When we have unexpected pleasant interactions, it adds richness and texture to our lives. Maybe we'll come home and tell the story about it to our partner.



© 2020 Deany Laliotis, LICSW

15



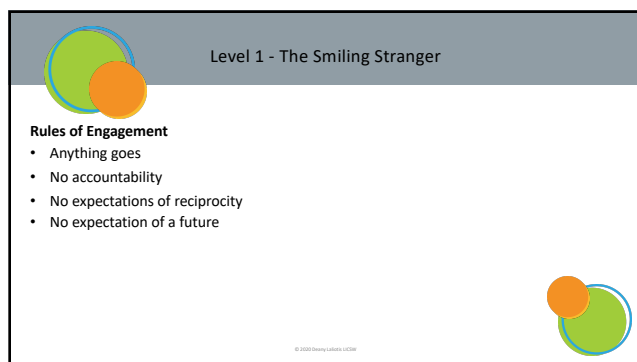
Level 1 - The Smiling Stranger

What is unique about this Level 1 relationship?

- It's spontaneous
- There is no implied future
- There are no rules
- Allows us to act without expectations of a tomorrow
- It is a relationship IN THE MOMENT

© 2020 Deany Lalot, LICSW

16



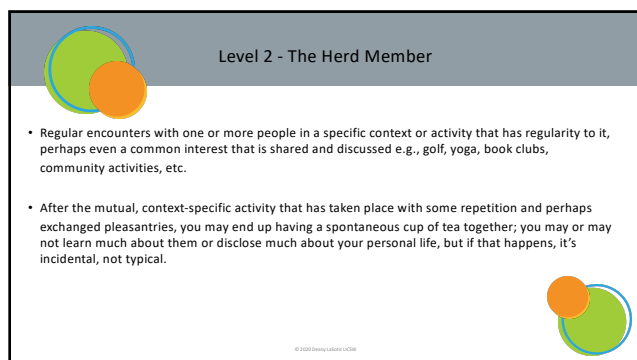
Level 1 - The Smiling Stranger

Rules of Engagement

- Anything goes
- No accountability
- No expectations of reciprocity
- No expectation of a future

© 2020 Deany Lalot, LICSW

17




Level 2 - The Herd Member

- Regular encounters with one or more people in a specific context or activity that has regularity to it, perhaps even a common interest that is shared and discussed e.g., golf, yoga, book clubs, community activities, etc.
- After the mutual, context-specific activity that has taken place with some repetition and perhaps exchanged pleasantries, you may end up having a spontaneous cup of tea together; you may or may not learn much about them or disclose much about your personal life, but if that happens, it's incidental, not typical.

© 2020 Deany Lalot, LICSW


18



Level 2 - The Herd Member


What is unique about this Level 2 relationship?

- It is context-specific
- Conversation focuses on the mutual interest or activity at hand
- Limited self-disclosure; superficial
- Safe enough
- No expectation of individualized attention, e.g., to be empathetic



© 2020 Deany Lalotia, LICSW


19



Level 2 - The Herd Member


Rules of Engagement (unspoken but generally understood)

- The relationship and the conversation is cordial, if not friendly.
- Keep it light: you do not disclose your inner thoughts, feelings, personal struggles or difficulties.
- Be an active player: you must invest time and energy in L2 settings in order to maintain L2 involvements. It's where friendships can be cultivated over time.
- You can be part of more than one "herd," but only if you can maintain your "active status."
- Never quit a "herd" until you have firmly established yourself in another one.
- Come and go over the lifecycle.



© 2020 Deany Lalotia, LICSW


20



Level 2 - The Herd Member


What else happens in a L2 relationship?

- It's an opportunity to make a "bid" to further develop the relationship beyond the unplanned meetings of the "herd" that bring people together.
- A bid is defined as a direct but spontaneous invitation to get together, either around the mutual activity, or for a separate occasion.
- A bid is made in such a way that communicates interest, but allows the other person to graciously decline without negative consequences.



© 2020 Deany Lalotia, LICSW


21



Level 2 - The Herd Member


What else happens in a L2 relationship?

- If the person accepts the bid, that signals a mutual interest in exploring the prospect of spending more time together.
- If they don't accept, it's either because they don't have the economy of time or energy, or there isn't a mutual interest.
- If they decline, but express an interest in getting together at some point in the future, that person becomes a "prospect."



© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

22




Level 2 - The Herd Member

What else happens in a L2 relationship?

- Never pursue a bid without receiving a clear signal from the other.


What happens when you break an unspoken "rule"?

- People will generally pull away.
- In extreme cases, you'll be shunned and get pushed out of the herd.
- Some period of time needs to pass before you can attempt to re-engage.




© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

23




Level 3 - The Friend

- Someone with whom you share common interests, mutual attraction and shared appreciation, e.g., someone that you've been on a social committee with and are now spending time together outside of this mutual setting.
- Often built on a L2 relationship that was cultivated through making a successful bid.



© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW


24



Level 3 - The Friend


What is unique about this Level 3 relationship?

- No longer context-specific and spontaneous; get togethers are planned.
- Roles are less defined than a L2, so it's more challenging to establish and maintain.
- Offers considerably more stimulation, intimacy, sense of caring and mutuality than a L2.
- Requires greater social skill and judgment to successfully navigate and maintain over time.



© 2000 Deany Laliotis, LICSW


25



Level 3 - The Friend


Rules of Engagement

- Reciprocity is key. Once you've made an invitation to make a plan, wait for the other person to reciprocate.
- More time together allows for the establishment of patterns of negotiation and accommodation, e.g., when calls are returned, how often plans are made, etc.
- Pacing is important. If you spend too much time together without having invested a sufficient amount of time in the relationship, it could unravel.



© 2000 Deany Laliotis, LICSW


26



Level 3 - The Friend


Rules of Engagement

- Limit the amount of sensitive and deeply personal self-disclosure. Wait until the friendship "feels" solid and comfortable for both parties.
- Careful not to be too demanding for time and attention or to be a priority over other relationships.
- Can be more complex, but not much more. Can't express anger or disappointment.
- Limit details about other friendships.
- Little or no talk about the friendship itself; generally reserved for L4 and L5.



© 2000 Deany Laliotis, LICSW


27



Level 3 - The Friend


What else happens in a Level 3 relationship?

- There's an increasing amount of mutual self-disclosure that evolves over time.
- There is more investment in time, energy and effort in order to establish the relationship as more than what it's been.
- At the same time, as you get to know one another, you learn the others habits, idiosyncrasies.
- Because it requires more investment, there are fewer L3 relationships than L2s.




© 2020 Deany Lalotia, LICSW

28




Level 4: Best friend

- These friends are people that you know and know you well. You feel truly seen, understood and accepted...warts and all! These are our best friends and confidants. They've been through thick and thin with us, as we have with them. There's no holding back, no hiding out.
- These are rare and extremely special relationships that we can count on our hands over the course of a lifetime. Some last a lifetime; others don't due to life changes such as divorce, illness, death, and other circumstances that are beyond our control. Can be local or long distance.
- Existing L3 relationship can only develop into a Level 4 when both parties have an open "slot."
- People with insecure anxious attachment tend to not read the "road signs" and persist in pursuing a L4, coming across as needy, insecure and are often rejected.



© 2020 Deany Lalotia, LICSW


29



Level 4: Best friend


What is unique about a Level 4 friendship?

- They take a long time to cultivate.
- Many shared interests and activities, often with partners and other family members.
- Emotional attunement: generous supply of empathy and compassion.
- Openly discuss your relationships with others such as family, other friends, co-workers.
- Offer reality testing for one another, and at times, confront the other when hurtful or inappropriate.
- Share our life stories.
- Speak at one another's funerals.



© 2020 Deany Lalotia, LICSW


30



Level 4: Best friend


Rules of Engagement

- Makes time for the friendship, no matter what else is happening.
- Returns calls and texts within the same day.
- Offers advice, particularly when asked.
- Can be direct when appropriate when needed.
- Look out for one another and are protective when called for.
- Self-disclosure is mutual and expected.
- Require regular tending to; can become a L3 with distance
- There can only be a couple of L4s in one's life at any given time in order to effectively manage the demands of maintaining the integrity of the relationship.



© 2020 Deany Lalot, LICSW


31



Level 4: Best friend


What else happens in a Level 4 relationship?

- Deeper self-disclosure takes place incrementally over time as both parties take turns revealing their vulnerabilities.
- If there are several L4s in one's life, it is important to not overcommit; it takes time and energy away from another L4 and can be hurtful and potentially damaging to the relationship.
- Important to have some communication about the relationship itself as the need arises; Will express concern to the other if there is distance or an unexpected change.
- Repair after a miscommunication or a rupture is critical to preserve the integrity of a L4; otherwise, it becomes distant, and over time can turn into a L3.




© 2020 Deany Lalot, LICSW

32




Level 5: The Life Partner

- This relationship is what we typically think of as our primary intimate partnership; one with whom we share a life with, may live with, have children with; but couples who are life partners may or may not have a CONSCIOUS PARTNERSHIP, where they are committed to maintaining the relationship proactively.
- Partnerships in this day and age are less about survivability and propagation of the family per se, and more about personal growth, generativity and general life satisfaction. Only in recent times has the "self" as a separate entity been assigned a value, let alone in the context of a partnership.
- Not every partnership aspires to or needs to be relating at a Level 5 in order to be a mutually satisfying relationship. They may have other L2s, L3s and L4s with whom they get other intimacy needs met.



© 2020 Deany Lalot, LICSW

33




Level 5: The Life Partner

What is unique about a Level 5 partnership?

- They ask themselves and one another, "How are we doing as a couple?"
- Their mutual goal is to strengthen and deepen their intimacy.
- It's about "WE" rather than "US." "WE" is about two people who like each other, play with each other, accomplish things together, love and pleasure one another. By contrast, "US" is less about the two people and more about acting and reacting as one. It's the difference between "surviving together" versus "being together."

© 2020 Deany Lalotia, LICSW



34



Level 5: The Life Partner


Rules of Engagement

- There is a presumed equality in the partnership. Important decisions are always made through negotiation, rather than compliance and social convention.
- Each member of the partnership is actively concerned with and cares about the other's well-being.
- See themselves as active partners towards the goal of mutual satisfaction and happiness.
- Develop policies about how they're going to address relationship concerns, crises, ruptures.
- Plan time and structure discussions (like a business meeting) about how they're doing in order to be productive and manage "slippage."

© 2020 Deany Lalotia, LICSW



35




Level 5: The Life Partner


What else happens in a Level 5 relationship?

- A partnership can be catapulted into a conscious partnership as their response to a crisis in the relationship or threat of separation.
- Or, over time, a Level 5 partnership can devolve into a L4 or L3 due to competing demands of parenthood, neglecting their own personal and relationship needs.
- A recognition that the partnership also includes taking care of others, such as children or elderly parents, while at the same time, maintaining care of the partnership.
- A strong and ongoing commitment to the health and integrity of maintaining a conscious partnership can be supplemented with couples' therapy.

© 2020 Deany Lalotia, LICSW




36



Attachment in Everyday Life


Question and Answer Period:

1. Were you able to envision your lifestyle at age 80? If so, to what extent did that vision include relationships of different types?
2. If you were to take a snap shot of your relational life right now, what types of relationships do you have more of? Are you happy with the ratios?
3. What level relationship would you like to have more of in your life? Do you have more of a road map on steps to take toward that goal?
4. What are some of your questions?




© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

37




PART TWO

ATTACHMENT IN EVERYDAY LIFE: HOW TO IDENTIFY LEVELS OF INTIMACY AND RELATIONSHIP SKILLS WITH CLIENTS WHO HAVE COMPLEX TRAUMA AND ATTACHMENT ISSUES




© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

38




Attachment in Everyday Life

- As we discussed earlier in this presentation, this is a time of change, of loss, of ongoing life stress due to the conditions under which we are living, and the uncertainties about the future.
- This is also a time of opportunity to work on issues that are only now surfacing under these current conditions.
- While the current conditions are inherently stressful, at the same time, our response to our situations make it more or less stressful. When it becomes more stressful due to one's reactivity, addressing the patterned response that is not adaptive to the situation and replacing it with a more adaptive pattern of response not only helps the client cope, it addresses developmental deficits and needed life skills.




© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

39




Attachment in Everyday Life

- These maladaptive patterns of response are frequently rooted in formative attachment experiences where the client was wounded as a child and left to their own devices in order to cope.
- These patterns, while adaptive as survival strategies in childhood, can become habituated over time and develop a life of their own separate and apart from the formative experiences they are rooted in.
- These patterns get triggered under stress, as the client automatically reacts to the present circumstances AS IF it were the same situation in the past.
- Identifying the pattern and replacing it with one or more adaptive responses can be part of an AIP-informed treatment plan.




© 2020 Deany Laliotis, LICSW

40




The Standard Protocol of EMDR Therapy Precepts

- Present-day problems are informed by past experiences that are inadequately processed and maladaptively stored.
- Identifying these formative life experiences that set the foundation for the client's current difficulties and targeting them for reprocessing will permanently change how they are encoded in the brain.
- Once the past experiences are reprocessed, the client's current difficulties will resolve due to the past-present connection(s).




© 2020 Deany Laliotis, LICSW

41



The Standard Protocol of EMDR Therapy Precepts

- Sometimes, however, the present-day circumstances need to be targeted separately due to second-order conditioning; i.e., they have taken on a life of their own separate and apart from the root causes.
- Once the present-day circumstances have been successfully reprocessed, developing a template for future actions to address needed skills and behaviors ensures the client will have a more adaptive response to similar situations going forward.



© 2020 Deany Laliotis, LICSW

42

Reasons to Modify the Standard Protocol of EMDR Therapy

- More clinically expedient when addressing emergent or ongoing life stress situations.
- To help the client cope with ongoing daily life stress e.g., dealing with children at home, work demands or lack thereof, fear of getting sick, dealing with illness, death of a loved one, etc.
- Client is preoccupied with present-day concerns; decrease in their level of psychosocial functioning due to the client's maladaptive coping strategies and emotional reactions.
- Time-constraints due to limited availability, lack of resources such as child care, finances.
- Client is more emotionally resourced to address current life context vs. past life context.

© 2020 Deany Laliotis, LICSW

43

Reasons to Modify the Standard Protocol of EMDR Therapy

- To increase stability and ability to cope by applying a more titrated approach to memory processing.
- Memory reprocessing and reconsolidation yields more effective treatment outcomes than resourcing alone.
- The client is not emotionally prepared to deal with the implications of addressing their developmental trauma.
- Optimizing the client's ability to respond more adaptively to the current life stress, decreasing the emotional load from the past, promoting a greater sense of agency, resilience and well-being.

© 2020 Deany Laliotis, LICSW

44


The Life Stress Protocol

What is it and how is it different than the standard protocol?

- It uses the present-day situation (recent experiences) or triggers as the Target Memory. Unlike targeting earlier past experiences, these targets are more often situations that are unremarkable as a stand-alone event, but nonetheless trigger a maladaptive response.
- The Desensitization Phase includes more active interventions on the part of the therapist by way of cognitive interweave strategies to both access and limit channels of associations.

© 2020 Deany Laliotis, LICSW


45



The Life Stress Protocol


What is it and how is it different than the standard protocol?

- The therapist redirects the client back to the Target Memory more frequently, maintaining the focus on resolving the client's reaction to the current situation.
- Installation of a Future template immediately follows resolution of the Target Memory to generate an alternative pattern of response as a replacement for the client's maladaptive pattern. This helps offset the strength of the patterned reaction(s) that often has years of memory networks of experiences associated with it.



© 2020 Deany Lalot, LICSW


46



The Life Stress Protocol


AIP Case Conceptualization

- Current life difficulties are informed by past experiences that are inadequately processed and maladaptively stored.
- Targeting the current situation (recent experience) as the Target Memory directs the brain to associations more closely linked to the client's current situation.
- Accessing earlier associations and titrating the associative process by redirecting back to the Target Memory more frequently takes some of the emotional pressure off from the earlier life experiences without opening them up completely and potentially risk destabilizing the client.



© 2020 Deany Lalot, LICSW


47



The Life Stress Protocol

AIP Case Conceptualization

- As is frequently the case in attachment-related difficulties, there is also a considerable degree of developmental deficits in addition to the maladaptive patterns of response.
- Not only is there a strong memory network of experiences where this pattern has been enacted, often, there isn't an available alternative. In other words, the absence of the negative doesn't translate into a positive, adaptive response.
- In addition to "starting at the end," where the therapeutic contract is about "doing it differently," it is important to invite the client to contemplate the implications of a different outcome. For clients with complex trauma, their reaction has frequently served as a defense against more painful truths, such as empathic failure, betrayal and abandonment by primary caregivers.



© 2020 Deany Lalot, LICSW

48



The Life Stress Protocol – Case Presentation

“Emma” is a 30-year old who has been in EMDR psychotherapy with me for a year.

Initiated therapy after relocating from another part of the country. Was having difficulty settling into her new life and making friends because she was still in contact with her on-again, off-again boyfriend. Additionally, she was under socialized as a child, and was often left alone in her room. She describes having a lot of social anxiety in addition to being distracted by her relationship with her boyfriend.

She is the youngest of two children whose sister was hostile towards her. She grew up with a father who was a rageful alcoholic and a mother who was neglectful and preoccupied with her marriage, failing to protect the daughters from his rage and other, out of control behaviors, such as driving drunk with the girls in the car.

© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

49



The Life Stress Protocol – Case Presentation

Emma develops an addiction to alcohol and other drugs by the time she was a teenager. Her “first love” was a guy who was a heroin addict who later overdosed and died. Her current friendships consist of people she met in AA but are now long-distance relationships that have become more peripheral. She has since been in recovery for almost eight years without a relapse.

Her primary goal for therapy is to learn how to be in relationships that are “healthy and happy,” and to feel worthy of loving and being loved.

Over the course of therapy we have worked on a number of formative attachment experiences related to her childhood developmental trauma that includes her father raging and breaking things, blaming her for his drinking, her mother leaving the house while he is drunk and in a rage, her being alone in her room for prolonged periods of time as a representative sample. Additionally, there have been many memories of broken promises and attempts to control the situation as a kid to “make it stop.”

© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

50



The Life Stress Protocol – Case Presentation

Using the **Levels of Intimacy** as the conceptual map to better understand her strengths and weaknesses, Emma is very good at L1 and L2 relationships. She has several L3s and 1 L3/L4 back home that she still keeps in contact with. Additionally, she is very attached to her family and sees them as her “best friends,” especially now that her father is also in recovery. Meanwhile, after the last breakup that lasted three months, Emma “relapsed” back into the relationship with her boyfriend.

How do we understand her situation with her boyfriend?

She keeps putting in a bid to increase the level of intimacy in the relationship and is not met. Instead of pulling back and responding to the failed bid, she pursues him and gets hurt and abandoned all over again. From an AIP perspective, the past-present collision is clear: she keeps trying to figure out what there is to do to make it right, so he will stay in the same way she did with her father, to no avail.

© 2020 Deany Lalotis, LICSW

51

