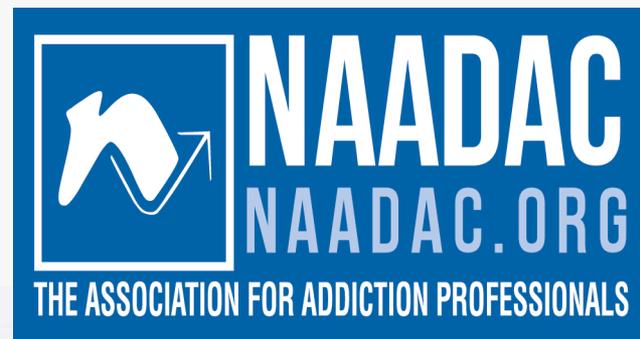


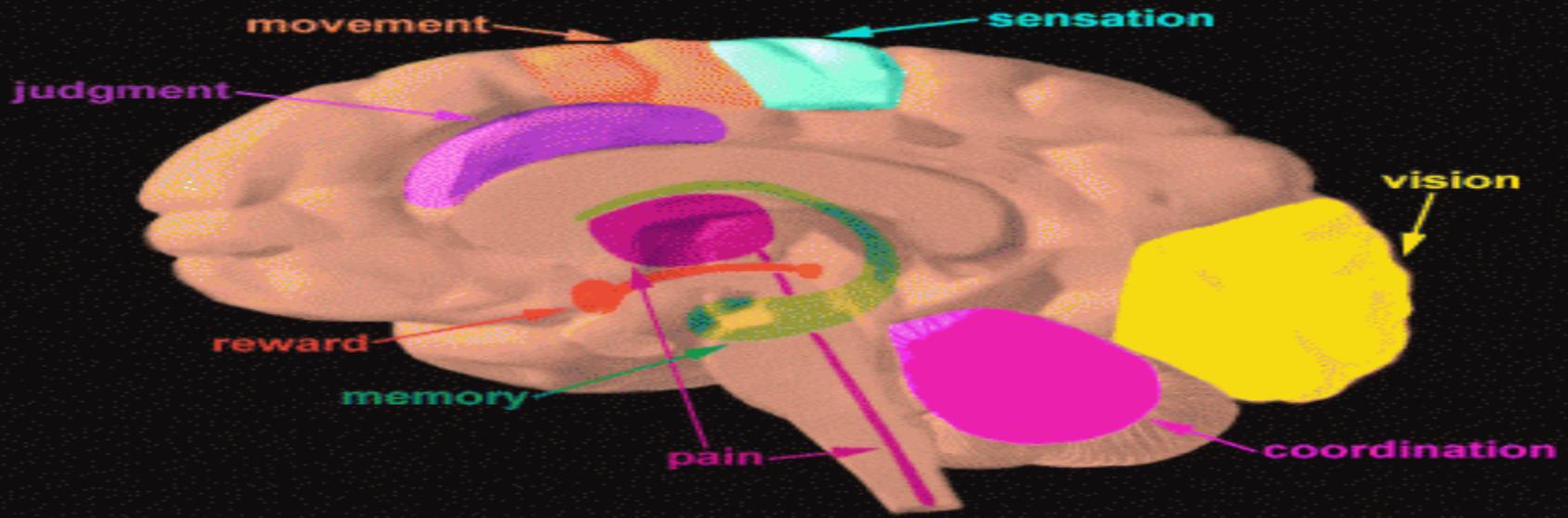
Romancing the Brain

Multiple Pathways of Recovery Conference

January 13, 2022

Presented by Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, BSW, NCACII, CDCIII, SAP



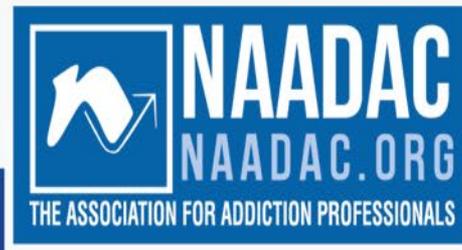


Your brain governs specific functions. * sensory (blue) * visual (yellow) * reward pathway (orange), * cerebellum (hot pink) for coordination and the hippocampus (green) for memory, thalamus (magenta) which receives information about pain coming from the body (magenta line within the spinal cord), and passes the information up to the cortex. Nerve cells or neurons connect one area to another via pathways to send and integrate information. The distances that neurons extend can be short or long. This pathway is activated when a person receives positive reinforcement for certain behaviors ("reward"). + NIDA 2016

Your Brain Loves

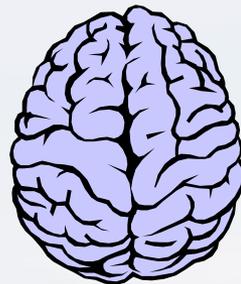
Your Own Natural & Organic Rewards

- * Food
- * Water
- * Sex
- * Nurturing



Creating Healthy Relationships in Self & Families

- Many of our clients come from families that had few healthy examples or models.
- Families learn from generation to generation – without new input – we just keep doing the same thing – looking for different outcomes....
- Working through “family” pain needs to deliberate ...it is not pleasant – it can be exciting!
- The brain is plastic – you can change its functionality for positive & for negative results
- It takes time – not an overnight success!



Understanding the Limbic System

- Your Limbic system is located deep and in approximately the center of your brain
- It is the oldest system of your brain – the mammalian brain
- It pre-historic time, it was the largest mass area of your brain
- It is the part of the brain that most people use most often in conflict and trauma – feelings/emotions are stored in this area of the brain

The Instinctual Brain...You Influence it or You Don't

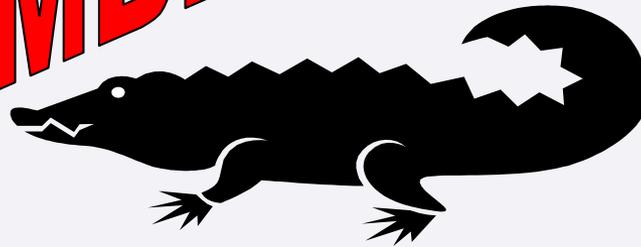
BUT!!

you better!

LIMBIC

DON'T YOU EVER!

YOU



Absolutes

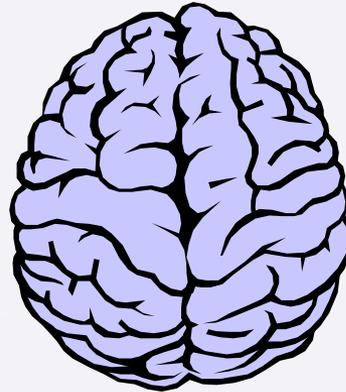
WONT

NO

How???

!

Should



Always

**EVER
EVER**

If you ever...

Never

**Fight
Flight**

Could

How Did Your Brain React?

- How does your brain react in these life situations?
- Did the sense of “fight or flight” trigger in your brain? What is “freeze”?
- What internal response did you feel and want to give back? Anger, resentment, fear?
- How would you typically react if you were “on the street” in your everyday life?
- How do we create a third action rather than freeze, flight or fight?

Understanding the Frontal Cortex

- Located in the front part of the brain
- Its functions are decision making, problem solving, creativity, discovery, reasoning
- It can be trained to be mindful and in mannerisms that are delayed reactions
- It reacts positively to options
- It is like your inside computer
- It helps you to sort, process and store information

Creating Stronger, Positive Pathways...

Cortex



**Let Us Find
Another...**

YES! Often

I believe...

Will you



Consider

I wonder

Stand Still!

I would like

Lets Discover

Is it possible

Back-up the Train

Please

Thank you

The Frontal Cortex - Discovery

- We learn impulse control
- Maturity and imagination develops
- Decision making – judgment – reasoning
- Creativity and discovery
- Problem solving
- Personal Empowerment
- Conflict & Trauma Resolution
- Romance develops into maturity and commitment

Is What I am Going to Say...

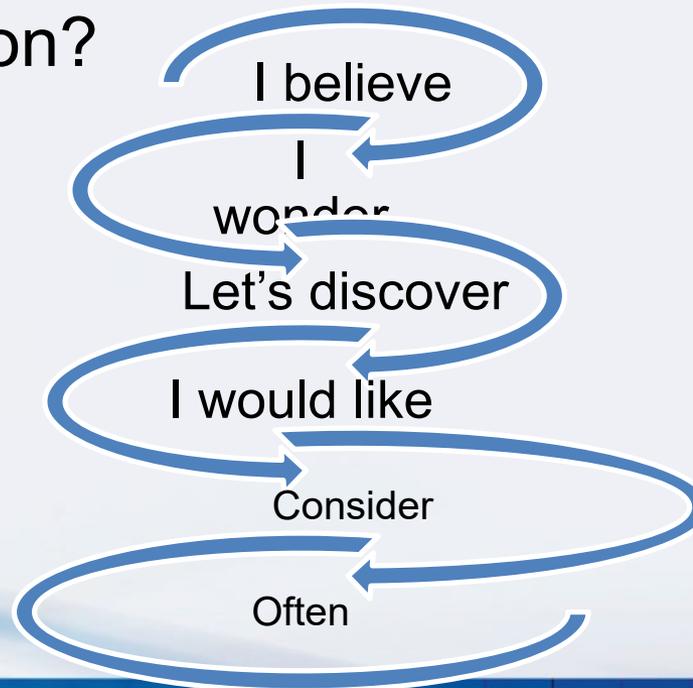
One helpful skill to learn is the ability to stand still in the moment. In standing still in the moment, you learn to stop or slow down your thoughts, understand your feelings and process how you want to handle potential conflict:

Three Major Questions:

- 1) Is what I am going to say (words and phrases) and the way I am going to say it (tone, inflection, and gestures) going to build the relationship up?
- 2) Is it going to keep the relationship level?
- 3) Is it going to tear the relationship down?

Being Deliberate

- Phrases like “Thank you,” “Please,” “I am sorry,” and “I did not intend to ...” give people more power in their lives or diminishes their power?
- What do these words or phrases add to a conversation?



Phrases that “Romance” the Brain

- Is it possible
- Have you had an opportunity to
- I wonder what would happen if
- Help me understand
- I’m confused, I thought
- Is this ok with you
- I’m curious about
- Please explain to me



More “Romancing” the Brain

- I am sorry
- Is there another way I could (say this, do this, explain this, etc).
- Let us discover, consider, believe
- Often, this is a misunderstood (action, behavior, word, etc.)



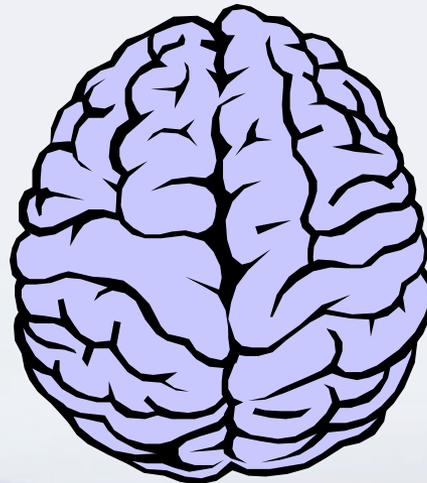
The Brain Resonates with....

- My pleasure to
- Please
- Thank you
- May I have permission
- Please tell me what you mean by this
- When you have a minute, would you please



The Brain Kicks In Thinking Mode With.....

- Will you agree to this...
- I would like to find a solution, together...
- Would you consider...
- I would like to assist you, is that ok...
- Your thoughts...
- Your Ideas...



Five (5) Stages of Relationships

- **Honeymoon**
- Disillusion
- **Misery**
- **Awakening**
- **Peace/Calm**



Honeymoon Stage

- Please take a Trip down Memory Lane with me

* Were you, at one time, looking for that prince or princess?

* Think back to the beginning of that time, the beginning of the relationship, what did you feel and what did you do?

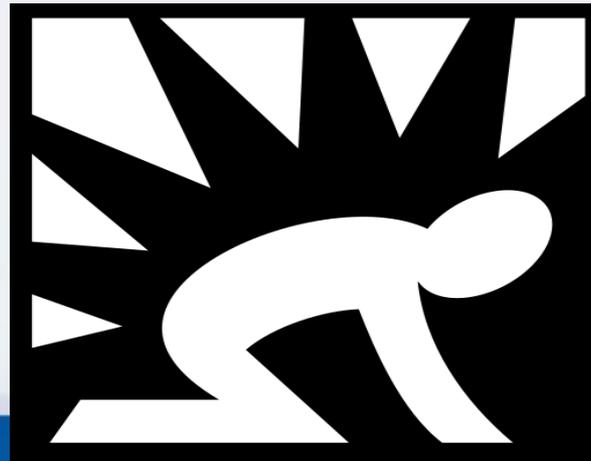
- Exciting
- Scary
- Fun
- Lots of communication
- New feelings
- Hopes
- Dreams
- Careful
- Thoughtful
- Sex was great
- I got cards and notes
- Special nights out

Disillusionment Stage

- Sometimes referred to as the Familiarization or Adjusting to Reality stage.
- Your endorphins cannot keep producing at the same level as before. You become more relaxed in the relationship, as does your partner.
- You and your partner are human, and your flaws are beginning to show. There's generally enough goodwill left over from the honeymoon stage that you can overlook most flaws.

Misery Stage

- Also known as Power Struggle, Disappointment, or Distress stage
- Aware of the differences between you and your partner. Depending on your style of communication, you might: avoid, accommodate, judge, compete, and fight in the conflict. Conflict continues to grow.
- People in the Misery stage ask themselves:
 - “Why did I ever get involved with this person in the first place?”
 - “What was I thinking?”
 - “Will this *ever* change?”
 - “Is there no way out?”



Awakening Stage

- Also called the Stability, Friendship, or Reconciliation stage.
- Couples express feelings of commitment, connection, trust, and love.
- Confident in your ability to resolve most of your issues.
- You begin to reestablish your own outside interests
- There is some danger of boredom with your partner, so you have to work to maintain the connection you made in the Honeymoon stage.
- To help a couple move to this stage, it is vital that they learn how to listen and communicate with each other.

Peace & Calm Stage

- Other names are Commitment, Acceptance, Transformation, or Real Love.
- Fewer than 15 percent of couples make it to this stage.
- You are with your partner because you have *chosen* him or her, faults and all, not because you *need* him or her.
- You and your partner are a team and look out for each other's best interests.
- Your relationship becomes a true partnership.

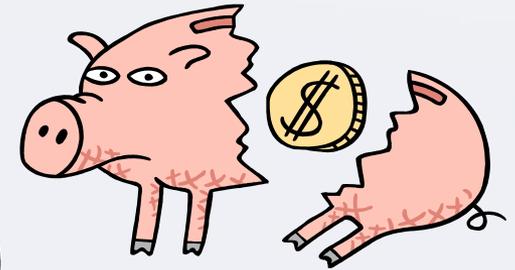


KEEP
CALM
AND
BE YOURSELF

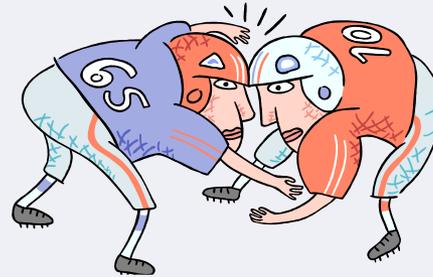
Awaking to Peace & Calm

Four (4) Types of Agreement

- Financial



- Physical/Spatial



- Emotional/Social



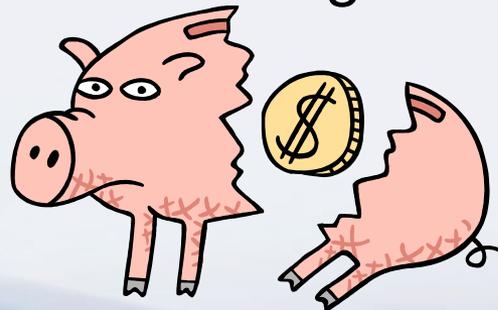
- Spiritual



Financial Agreements

What do you need to be in financial agreement?

- Who works?
- What do you need for the household?
- One joint checking account or two separate checking accounts?
- Savings, money for retirement and money for vacation?
- What about donations? Is tithing something you believe in?



Physical & Spatial Agreements

What do you need?

- Expectations for the sexual relationship, physical exercise, the manner in which you take care of yourself
- Physical environment
- Physical safety and personal boundaries



Emotional & Social Agreements

- Emotional agreement means learning your partner's emotional strengths and weaknesses
- Giving a little extra special consideration to get through
- Emotional agreement is reciprocal

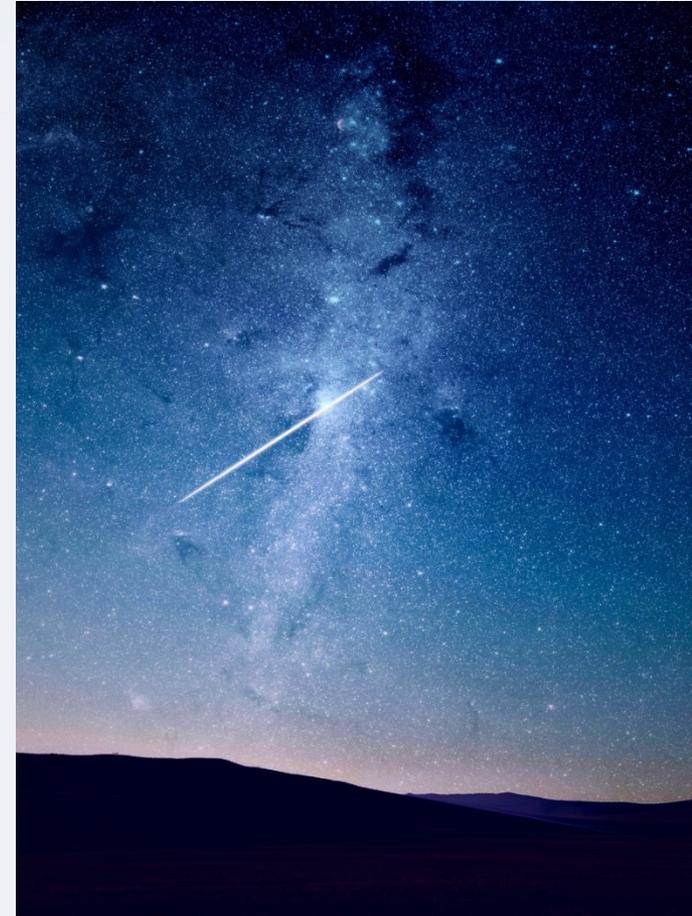


Emotional & Social Agreements

- Do you expect unconditional love and support?
- Do you expect understanding and a person to listen to your hurts?
- How is that played out at the end of day, on the weekend, after an argument?
- Do you go to bed on your fight, in anger?
- What do you need for resolution?

Spiritual Agreements

- Every person comes to this life with a spiritual piece
- How we relate to that spiritual side is dependent on the fabric of our background
- Not everyone identifies their spiritual side
- Yet, everyone goes about trying to fill it in some manner

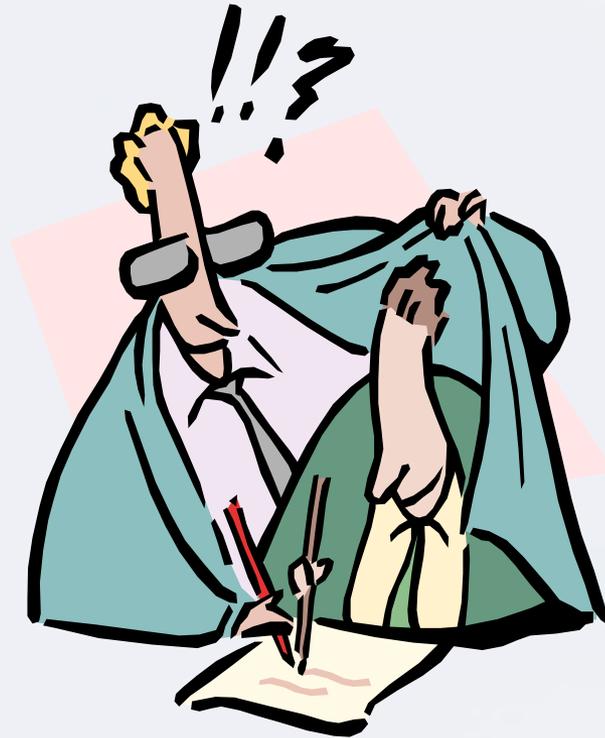


Family Agreements

- Once you decide as a couple or family what your agreements will be in each of these areas, it helps to write each of these on paper.
- Put them in a dual frame and have as a focal point somewhere in your home – a mantel, bookshelf, etc., so that when an issue or argument begins to rise, it can be agreed to revisit these agreements and to be a reminder to each person to put needs first, not wants.
- When a couple or a family makes these types of agreements, after really listening to each other, and keeps these agreements, a peace and calm is achieved – a sense of relief.
- If there has been a lot of “unhealth” in the family – this will take more time to achieve. If everyone agrees to work on it, support each other and back up the train with someone gets derailed – it will happen!
- Teamwork – makes the dream work!

A HEALTHY Relationship DOES NOT Intend to:

- Manipulate
- Keep Score
- Control
- “You owe Me” Attitude
- “My Turn”!



Costs of a HEALTHY Relationship

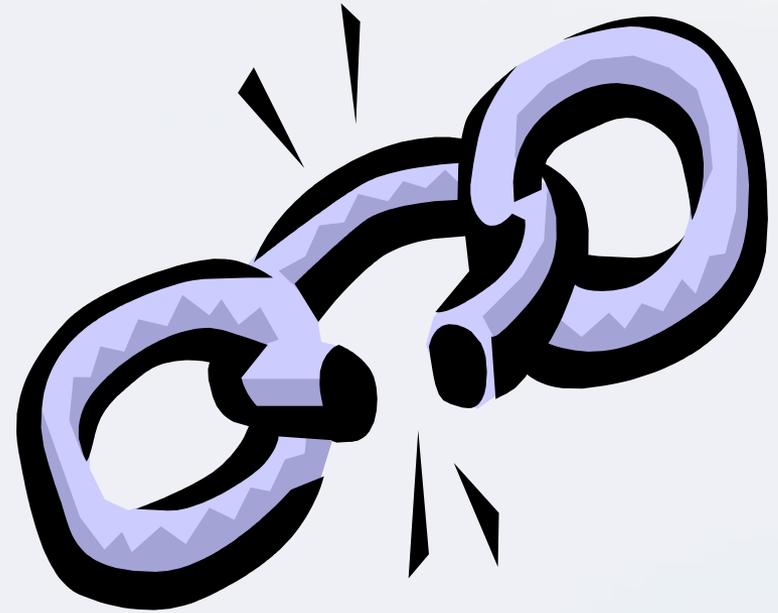
- Risk
- Time
- Money
- Energy
- Reputation



- Heart
- Dreams
- YOUR Agenda
- YOUR Customs
- YOUR Taste/Style

It Can be Broken by the Following Behaviors

- X Lying
- X Stealing
- X Sexual Deviance
- X Neglect
- X Abuse of ANY Type
- X Outside Sexual Relationships



Repairing Relationships

- Life offers many situations and circumstances that damage relationships.
- A person does not get through any relationship without some damage.
- It is not always the damaging effects of “what happened” that make the damage so destructive
- It is the manner in which individuals involved deal with the damage that causes the ongoing hurt and deep feelings of unresolved resentment, lack of forgiveness and loss.

Repairing Damaged Relationships

- The first step in repairing a damaged relationship - identify the relationship that has been damaged and the root cause of the damage. Was the surface issue that you and the other involved individual identified as the source of the problem the actual root cause or was there something deeper and more difficult to identify that lead to the hurt?
- Next step is to validate your feelings around the hurt, unresolved resentment, lack of forgiveness or loss. Being able to identify your feelings helps reduce any chaos or “feelings of craziness” around the situation.

Repairing Damaged Relationships

- Now, here comes the tough step.
- Check in with the other party or parties to see what they recall and how they feel about the situation or circumstance. This is more than just asking their perception of what happened. It also attempting to understand the context in which it happened.

Life Happens

- We all know that “life happens.”
- Yet when it is happening to another person and that person then affects us in a negative manner, we tend to take it personally.
- Understanding the other person’s life situation might also help you to see that what was going on for them was not “all about you.”
- Maybe it was about them.
- Their life situation caused an inability to really see or feel what was happening to you at the time.

Repairing Damaged Relationships - Steps

Follow these guidelines to help the individual explain their story, of how “life happened” to them:

- ✓ Check out their perception of the situation.
- ✓ Listen without judgment (that is, suspend judgment).
- ✓ Do not jump in as he or she tells the story. The person is telling you what was actually happening in his or her life at the time.
- ✓ Stand still in the moment (use a mantra if need be) to just sit and listen.

Five Styles of Communication

- Five Styles:

- 1) Competing
- 2) Avoiding
- 3) Compromising
- 4) Accommodating
- 5) Collaborating



Style – Compete In All Things Important

Fuming – Hot Temper – Not Rational

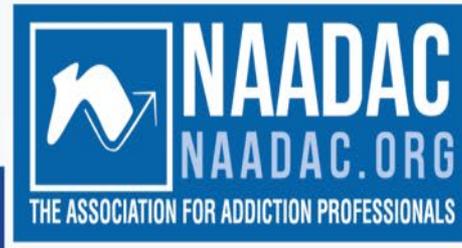


Compete



Competing Style

- The attitude is “I’m going to win; you’re going to lose.”
- There are only two possible outcomes from conflict: winning and losing.
- Winning is associated with status and competence.
- Losing is associated with loss of status, incompetence and weakness.
- Prime importance on personal goals to the virtual exclusion of any concern for the relationship.
- Protection of personal goals is taken as an index of successful combat.
- It’s a dog-eat-dog world.
- Nice guys finish last.
- Method of control: **RESENTMENT**



Style 2

Don't talk about it, not tonight/today, can's we discuss this later.....

Avoid



Avoiding Style

- We are both going to lose, so I'll leave.
- There is a feeling of hopelessness.
- Avoiding protects the person from the useless and punishing experience of endless struggles that cannot be won.
- Rather than suffer, I will leave physically or psychologically.
- An Avoider might adopt the role of a detached observer.
- Roll with the punches and live to fight again another day.
- Getting angry means losing control.
- It is unfair to lose control, so leave.
- Method of control: **WITHDRAWAL**

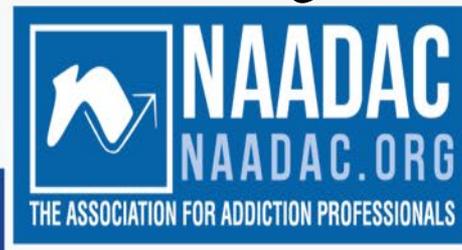


Style 3

You Get This and You Get That! Half & Half – No Favorites!



Compromise



Compromising Style

- You get half the cookie, and I get half the cookie. We both lose a little and compromise. It's better to get something than nothing.
- A secret variation of losing/winning.
- Soften the effects of losing by limiting gains of the other person.
- Arrive at compromise by somebody playing the “judge.”
- Ringing oratory invoking everything from “the democratic process” to “the rules.”
- Nobody wins, and nobody loses.
- Evokes the attitude that “war is hell.”
- Method of control: **RULES**



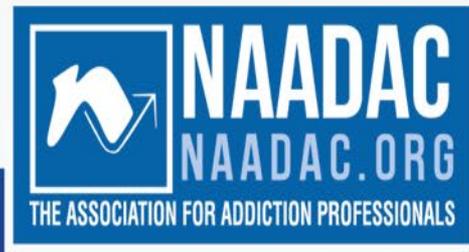
Style 4

- *Accommodate*



Accommodating Style

- The primary concern for the effect of conflict is on the well-being and durability of relationships.
- The assumption is that human relationships are fragile, that they cannot endure the trauma of working through differences.
- There is a fear of losing the relationship.
- Appease others by ignoring or denying their behavior and avoid conflict by ignoring or denying how you feel about their behavior.
- Personal objectives are set aside, and the relationship lends itself to one-sided domination.
- There is an attitude of forced, cheerful compliance.
- Eventually, the “Mt. St. Helens” effect will play out (“Tic, Tic, Boom!”) or it is like a time bomb (“TIC TOC, TIC TOC ... BOOM!”).
- Method of control: **GUILT**



Style 5 – Preferred Style

We All Win!

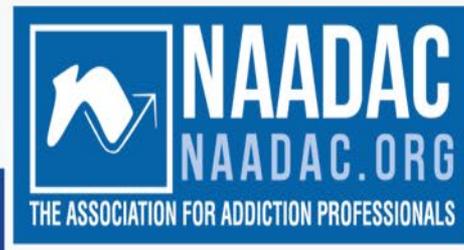


Collaborate



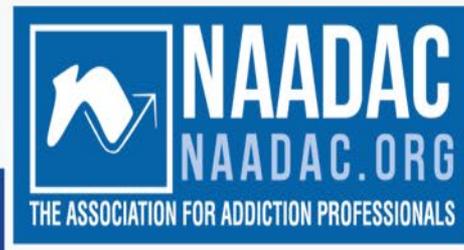
Collaborating Style

- This has an altogether different attitude that results in a different behavior.
- We can both win.
- Importance is attached to the well-being of the members of the relationship and to the relationship simultaneously. The two sets of goals are not seen as mutually exclusive as with other styles.
- Conflict is inevitable because we are different from one another. This leads to differences in opinion. The most common reasons for differences are incomplete understanding and commitment to inequality.
- A collaborator has a tolerance and acceptance of differences.
- You have the right to feel, and so does the other person in the conflict.



More Collaborating...

- Let's differentiate (and get out of our feelings) and then integrate (and create more closeness ... let's be solution focused).
- The real paradox of control is to not control! The real power comes into play when you both allow each other to get out your feelings and then think of the other's perspective to the point of creating more closeness through the understanding and then, through that, you come to a place to problem solve that takes the feelings, points of view, background and perspectives of both parties into play. This is true integration of both parties.
- The paradox of control: **REAL POWER**



Keep the Conversation Going

- Your needs are important too

Keep the conversation going or take a break and agree to come back to the conversation when things have cooled

Say what you don't like – words, behaviors and what you want to see different in the future

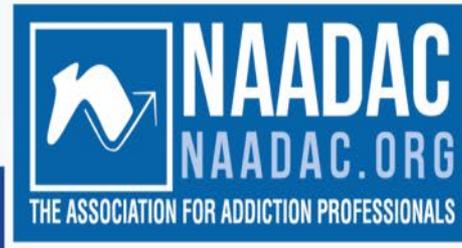
Share the responsibility of solving the problem by changing your behavior

Positive Affirmations

Positive affirmations build up your own self-esteem. They also give background and ideas to build the self-esteem of others.

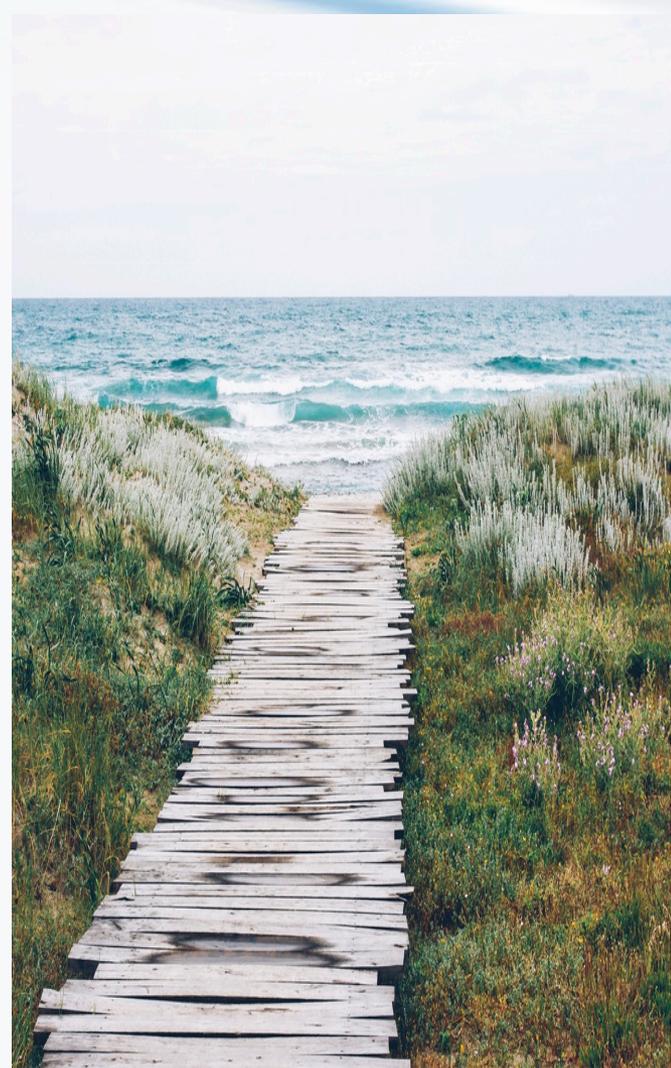
How to use positive affirmations:

- **Make a list of positive affirmations – use a sticky pad and place them in strategic places**
- **Build an “affirmation box” – great way to get others involved**
- **Is your self-talk constructive and positive?**
- **Is it negative and destructive?**



Affirmations Examples

- I'm a good parent
- I work hard
- I am responsible
- I am a good person
- I am a good counselor
- I can still learn new things
- I love life
- I love others
- I can change



Affirmation Box

- “What I like about you is ... ”
- “When you helped me out with _____,
it made me feel wonderful!”
- “You have a beautiful heart”
- “I can always count on you”
- You are amazing
- I love you



Meditating on the Positive

- ✓ Taking the Confusion and Negative out!



Creating a Mantra

- *A mantra can be used to change your brain and your self-direction.*
- Mantras assist you through the tough times.
- Mantras remind you of what you already know & believe.
- Learning a higher level of self and impulse control is possible and attainable.
- It truly is a “brain choice”



Creating Your Mantra

Develop your own statement that you believe and will say when you feel like you want to explode, yell, fight, scream, or basically, lose control...

Example: “I think I can, I think I can!”



Healing & Nurturing Yourself

- Dance
- Music
- Writing
- Sharing
- Laughter
- Praying
- Mediating
- Forgiving



Courageous People

- **Courageous people make big efforts to be transparent**
- **Put their dukes down**
- **Create meaningful conversations**
- **Risk their ego for the possibility of creating a new life change & movement toward intimacy**
- **Intimacy is broken down to four interconnecting words:**
 - **In – To – Me - See**



Thank You!

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