

Differentiation

Differentiation of Self

- Identify own thoughts, feelings, wants and desires
- Express thoughts, feelings wants and desires congruently
- Be an effective Initiator: contain self, manage defenses, open vulnerability
- Actively manage emotional contagion, resist getting swept up in partner's feelings

Differentiation from Partner

- Listen without interrupting or defending self
- Ask other-directed questions
- Have genuine interest and curiosity about partner's internal process
- Understand partner in light of his/her history
- Work to develop and express empathy
- Manage emotional contagion

Evolution of Differentiation

1. Internal self reflecting and identifying one's own thoughts, feelings, values, wants and desires
2. Developing the increasing ability to express congruently one's own thoughts, feelings, wants and desires. To expose "who I am."
3. Developing awareness of the partner as separate and different
4. Developing an increasing ability to listen, hear and then respond effectively
5. to these differences – with clear boundaries
6. Developing the ability to create an environment in the relationship that supports desired changes

Self-Capacities that are Developed and Strengthened by using the Initiator Role

- Increased ability to internally self reflect and self-define
- Increased self accountability
- Increased capacity to self-soothe
- Clearer boundary definition
- Increased ability to self-validate

Self-Capacities that are Developed and Strengthened by using the Inquirer Role

- Increased anxiety tolerance
- Ability to delay gratification
- Increased capacity to self-soothe
- Increased capacity to experience empathy
- Increased acceptance of other as separate and different from self