Therapeutic Use of Self
Therapeutic Use of Self: What is it?

- A technique used in psychotherapy, Occupational Therapy & Nursing
- Conscious use of one’s personality and knowledge
- Involves thoughtful self-disclosure & non verbal language
- “The use of oneself in such a way that one becomes an effective tool in the evaluation and intervention process”

- Our proposal: Therapeutic Use of Self to treat issues of attachment
Therapeutic Use of Self

- Involves determining what is clinically appropriate for the patient

- It has a purpose

- What is beneficial for one patient could be disruptive and even harmful to another
Therapeutic Use of Self: *Buffering the Power Differential*

- There is an inherent power difference between a provider and a patient.

- Therapeutic Use of Self recognizes the existence of different kinds of power and uses that to benefit the patient.

- Let's talk about Isa…
VIDEO:
Karen Rentas, Isa’s Story
Isa

- Significant history of trauma
- Mother abandoned her when she was 5 years old
- Sexual abuse by her father
- Reports she raised herself
- Completed up to 7th grade
- Opioid Dependence now in Methadone treatment
- Labeled as ‘non-compliant’
- Bilingual, Spanish is her first language

First Home Visit:
  - Sitting on the floor while she was sitting on her bed
Therapeutic Use of Self: Using Intentional Self-Disclosure

• Affect refers to an observable expression of emotion
  ➢ Tearful
  ➢ Flat
  ➢ Tensed Forehead (worried, surprise)

• Selectively disclosing how I feel in response to what the patient is sharing, in a way that is therapeutically beneficial
  ➢ A patient discloses with great difficulty a traumatic experience. Provider internally responds with racing heart and some discomfort in stomach.
  ➢ Provider decides to disclose part of his/her reaction; “wow, as you were telling me what happened, I could feel it in my stomach… I could feel how overwhelming that was for you”
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