



MOVING FROM "GET" TO "GIVE"

GUIDING PRINCIPLES WHEN USING DECLARATIVE LANGUAGE & CO-REGULATION



1. ENTER EACH ENGAGEMENT WITH A POSITIVE INTENTION.



Your intention and mindset matter because the individual you are with will feel it, and respond in kind. When you assume a "giving" over "getting" mindset, they become more likely to open themselves up to vulnerability & learning.



This should NEVER be about compliance.

Often, when we offer autonomy (choice around how or if the individual joins), a competent role, & processing time*, the individual joins on their own.

If they don't, refer to #s 3, 4 & 5.

*Amount of processing time needed varies based on the individual and the situation.



2. INVITE BUT DON'T DEMAND.



3. USE A TONE OF VOICE THAT IS OPEN & INVITING AND A SLOWER RATE OF SPEECH.



Make sure you match your declarative statements with a tone of voice & rate of speech that is inviting. This might be curious, empathic, playful, or even neutral. When we use an impatient or sharp tone, or speak with a fast rate that does not allow for processing time, it will come off as a demand, and undermine the process you are trying to create.

Similar to #3, ensure your gestures, body position, & facial expressions are soft, warm, and inviting. Tense muscles communicate stress & the individual will feel it. Take a deep breath, or use a tool that works for you, so you communicate presence, openness, & support.



4. USE NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION THAT IS OPEN, UNDERSTANDING, & CONNECTING.



5. OFFER AUTONOMY & A COMPETENT ROLE THAT IS RIGHT FOR EACH UNIQUE MOMENT.



Meet the individual where they are developmentally, but also in each moment. Remember that anxiety, stress responses (fight/flight/freeze), decreased interoceptive awareness (IA), & negative episodic memories (EM), can get in the way of engagement, regardless of what you think the individual "should" be able to do.

When something is not working, it's important to give the individual the benefit of the doubt. Consider why you both might be stuck in that moment: Loss of autonomy? Uncertainty? Anxiety around feelings of competence? Attention? Comprehension? Processing time? Offer specific support that matches the moment.



6. SCAFFOLD LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT IN A DYNAMIC WAY.



7. EPISODIC MEMORY IS CRITICAL.



Use declarative language to reflect on the past & plan for the future, in an ongoing way. Enjoy letting your narratives develop over time. This is how we teach self-awareness, self-advocacy, repair, problem solving, time management, perspective taking, & more!

It is okay to set limits when needed, for example for safety. When you do, make sure the limit is reasonable & you have communicated it clearly & respectfully, and have explained your rationale, using declarative language. Understanding why you are setting the limit often helps the individual process and feel okay with it.



8. SET THOUGHTFUL LIMITS WITH CARE.



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