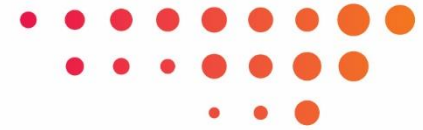




Specialising in Personality Disorder
and Complex Trauma



Validate the Valid: The use of validation as a therapeutic tool

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Project ECHO





Objective

To reflect on the importance of validation,
in particularly *why* we validate,
what to validate,
when to validate and
how to validate.

Why Validate?

Problem Solving & Invalidation of self beliefs



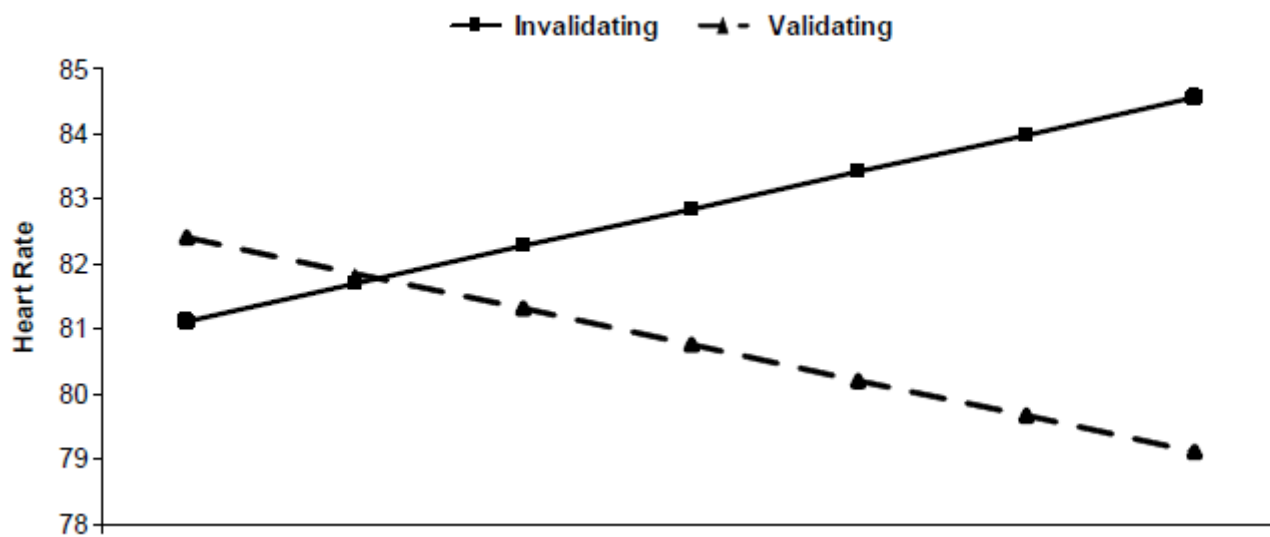
INCREASED EMOTIONAL AROUSAL!!

(sense of feeling out of control)



Unable to process new information

Why Validate?



© Shenk & Fruzzetti, 2011

What is Validation?

Validation is the act of recognising and acknowledging something or someone's experiences, as accurate.

Communication of:

- Empathy, that you see and understand their perspective.
- Acknowledging them and their reality, as they are.
- Finding the “grain of truth” in what is being communicated.

How Validation Helps

Validation helps to:

- Bring emotional arousal down
- Build connection and relationship
- Builds accurate expression of the experience (tease out what is valid in the communication)
- Normalises experiences and builds common humanity
- Models validation which can be internalised
- Opens perspective taking and problem solving minds



Brené Brown on Empathy vs. Sympathy



What to validate

- The significance of the issue/problem
- The emotions present and/or pain
- How the thoughts/urges/feelings make sense
- How the person's reactions make sense
- How the present difficulties link to past experiences
- The ultimate goal (even if means chosen aren't the most effective way of getting there)

What Validation is NOT

- Cheerleading, giving praise or encouragement
- Agreeing with the perspective
- Legitimising what is in fact not valid
- Repeating back or paraphrasing
- Implying satisfaction or liking
- Personalising their experience
- Problem solving or “fixing”
- Looking for the positives or “silver lining”
- Simply the opposite of invalidation

Invalidating the Invalid

Gently challenging what is not necessarily accurate or true is important in validating the person's experiencing.

Examples:

- Another person's intentions, perspective or reasoning
- Fixed polarised perspectives
- Suicide as the only option
- Judgemental self-beliefs

When to Validate

- Validate the valid **OFTEN**
- Try not to invalidate the valid
 - In body language, voice tone and facial expressions
- **NEVER** validate the invalid
- **OCCASIONALLY** invalidate the invalid
 - Accompanied with validating the underlying emotion/goal/experience
 - Acknowledge an increased emotional arousal may follow
 - Orient to co-regulation of that emotion

How we can Validate

*Our **body language, facial expressions** and **voice tone** have as much capacity to validate or invalidate as the words we choose.*

Basic Principles:

- **Be attentive:** *be aware of what is and isn't being said*
- **Be genuine:** *try to avoid tokenistic phrases*
- **Be mindful:** *help make the connection of the present to the past*
- **Be curious:** *asking a question rather than assuming*
- **Be human:** *acknowledge and normalise experiences*

References & Resources

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