Therapy-on-Sea

Flashback Attachment injury.

The injury is the defining moment where the relationship changed.

Attachments Injuries and the flashbacks that go with them need to be worked through as a couple.

- Using the knowledge that we have in relation on emotions and feelings.
- Using I statements in conversations
- Recognising argument styles
- Understanding ego states

Ask the couple if they can think of a situation or event where the relationship was challenged, where trust was breached. Work through the following:

- Did they both talk about it? If yes what was the result?
- Does the event ever come up again in conversation?
- Does the event ever come up again in each other's mind?
- Do they still have unresolved feelings as a result of the event and do those feelings affect their relationship today?

Attachment injury flashbacks can impact in the form of:

Intrusive memories – unwanted memories – producing painful feelings, images, memories from the past – insecurity/anger/paranoia.

Avoidance and numbing – a self-protection response – can cause emotional distance in the main relationship and other relationships. Losing interest in things that they used to love, problems feeling happiness and love, avoiding everything that bears a reminder of the trauma.

Hyperarousal - this is another form of protection that a person can put themselves in because of an attachment injury. The body goes through physical changes preparing itself as if the event/situation is happening again. It means constant alert which can be draining and lead to sleep problems, anger outbursts, anxiety, problems concentrating, feelings of guilt or shame, self-destructive behaviour....to name a few symptoms.

Hypoarousal – the opposite to hyperarousal. It is another way of coping with overwhelming stress—by slowing down. Our nervous system essentially hits the brakes, lowering overall activity to protect us from too much stimulation.

Hypoarousal can show up in different ways. Some people might feel mildly foggy, disconnected, or fatigued, while others might experience more intense symptoms like dissociation.

Sian Hines Counsellor and Hypnotherapist (Ad Dip Psy C, Prof. Dip Psy C)

Therapy-on-Sea

The plan

The plan is to (for each partner – it is important to remember that there is a path that is normally hidden which they have both inadvertently walked on, that has added to the initial action)

1. Identify the injury.
2. Feel the impact.
3. Hear the pain.
4. Grieve the loss.
5. Acknowledge responsibility.
6. Reach out to each other.
7. Respond
8. Switch roles if necessary.....a break at this point might be a good idea....fresh air, 10 minute decompress.

Impacts of changes or flashbacks in a relationship

With all these changes comes a strong combination of emotions and feelings. Such as:

Stress

Anxiety

Anger

Resentment

Sadness

Apathy

Insecurity

Confusion

The different ways that people deal with these changes can be a contributing factor to conflict in a relationship.

One of the biggest elements that we as counsellors are working towards is to rebolster the couple's friendship, so that they can rediscover what brought them together.

Therapy-on-Sea

Reconnecting after a conflict or flashbacks

Teach the couple a re-contact framework

Space – Both will need space to cool off and process separately. What is a reasonable amount of time for this to happen? Stick to it.

Speak – Speak in I and/or We statements. Share your perspective in that way.

Listen – Active listening after a conflict is so important. Listen to learn not listen to defend

Action – Take responsibility for your part in the conflict. A conflict takes two people reactions, it's not purely down to one person.

Understanding – Work on seeing it from your partners perspective. This is not a caving in on principles but looking at bigger picture (Remind them of PAC or ID/EGO/SUPEREGO)

Seek – Look for areas that you both agree, and the values align. This is to build a foundation for handling disagreements in the future.

Boundaries – Create agreed boundaries that stop future conflicts from getting too deep and difficult. Considering each other's needs and limits.

Appreciations – Show each other appreciation for how the conflict has been resolved or moved through to a pause.

Engage – Ensure that as soon as possible you both do activities that build on a positive and calming emotional connection.

Sian Hines Counsellor and Hypnotherapist (Ad Dip Psy C, Prof. Dip Psy C)