

Practicing Self-Expression with a Two-Chair Enemy Image Role Play Process

Setting up the role play

1. Identify who's playing what roles ("Initiator" and "Other") and the situation
2. Requests to practice partner
3. Requests to coach
4. Self-empathy before role play starts

A. The "Initiator" first plays the role of expressing themselves fully, especially their judgments/demands, to the "Other" with whom they are experiencing conflict. Someone else plays the role of the Other, practicing skills of empathy

1. Initiator can practice ending on a present request -- "connecting request"
 - a. request for reflection, e.g. "Would you tell me your understanding of what I said, so I can know if I was clear?"
 - b. how do you feel about what I've said?"
2. Elements of empathy -- presence, understanding/meaning, need language/deepening, and reflecting action
3. The person playing the Other may also periodically want to ask for a pause in the role play and do Self-Empathy, and then go back into the role play

B. The Initiator now plays the role of the Other, expressing fully, especially judgments that the Initiator believes the Other may have of them. Someone else plays the role of the Initiator, with skills of empathy.

C. The Initiator now plays themselves again, starting from the beginning of the dialogue, this time attempting to create connection. The person playing the Other responds again with skills of empathy, but also somewhat closer to how the real “Other” might respond.

1. Initiator now attempts to express more from Observations, Feelings, Needs, and Requests
2. Initiator can request how challenging they would now like the Other to be played.