

CONFLICT TO CONNECTION CONVERSATION MAPS HANDOUT

6 Conversation Maps (Inner and Outer) for Restoring Empathic Connection

In this approach, there are 6 types of empathic conversation “maps” for restoring connection and acting from compassion (internally and with others) when there is disconnection or conflict. I (John) have associated these maps with different patterns of thinking/belief and with an empirically supported model of emotion circuits/networks in the brain, developed by affective neuroscience (researcher Jaak Panksepp). Panksepp identified 7 emotion circuits: CARE, RAGE/ANGER, FEAR, PANIC/GRIEF, SEEKING, PLAY, LUST. The intention of these conversations is to activate the CARE circuit.

Two types of inner conversation involving FEAR or ANGER towards others:

- **Preparing to Respond with Compassion**, a conversation map for when there are emotions of ANGER in you towards another person, and judgments of wrongness toward that person. [Enemy Image Process]
- **Recovering/Debriefing with Resilience**, a conversation map for when there are emotions of FEAR/anxiety/stress or PANIC/GRIEF (fear of loss of connection) in relation to something that has happened and known or anticipated judgments of wrongness and negative consequences towards you. [Mourn Celebrate Learn]

Two types of inner conversation between parts of self:

- **Self-Compassion Conversation**: a conversation map for when you are experiencing the emotion of ANGER *towards yourself* about a past choice/action you took, and perhaps FEAR/anxiety/stress, and shame or guilt, as well as thoughts of self-judgment. There may be a disruption of the PLAY/joy emotion circuit. [Chooser-Educator]
- **Internal Mediation Conversation**: a conversation map for when you are experiencing the emotion of FEAR/anxiety/stress about a future decision or direction, and perhaps PANIC/GRIEF, confusion, stuckness, depressed, and having thoughts of inner demand such as “I can’t”, “I have to”, or “I should.” There may be a disruption of the SEEKING/enthusiasm emotion circuit. [Internal Mediation]

Two types of outer conversation with another person:

- **Having Difficult Conversations**: a conversation map for talking with someone when you’re experiencing the emotion of FEAR/anxiety/stress due to disagreement, lack of acceptance, and potentially angry reactions. [3Chairs Process]
- **Reconciliation, Healing, and Forgiveness**: a conversation map for talking with someone when there is ANGER and emotional hurt/pain (in you and/or them), as well as judgments of blame. [Healing & Reconciliation Process]

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