

Need Behind the No Process (Dyad Practice) Handout

Hearing and saying no with courage and compassion

This Need Behind the No (NBN) process and practice goes with making solution requests. People often find both hearing a “no” to their request and saying “no” to someone’s request to be difficult and sometimes triggers the Fight-Flight-Freeze reaction.

Need Behind the No Process

1. Clarify the request and need(s) that the request is attempting to meet.
2. [*Self-Connection Practice or Self-Empathy?*]
3. Connect empathically with the need(s) that are behind the “no” to the request. What needs are keeping you or the other from saying yes?
4. Search for a new request/strategy to get the needs met for self and the other.

Partner Exercise: Hearing “No” with Empathic Communication Skills

1. [Person A] thinks of a situation where they want to practice hearing and responding to a “no,” and tells their practice partner [Person B] the role to play of saying no.
2. [Person A] makes a solution request (specific, action language) to [Person B], connecting the request to a need or needs behind the request.
3. [Person B] says “no” in some way.
4. [*Person A*] pauses to do *Self-Connection Practice* or takes a time out for *Self-Empathy*.
5. [Person A] empathizes with [Person B’s] response, getting to needs keeping them from saying yes.
6. [Person A] either makes a new solution request seeking to get the needs met for both people, or asks [Person B] if they have a request that would do this.

Partner Exercise: Saying “No” with Empathic Communication Skills

1. [Person A] thinks of a situation and tells [Person B] the role they will play and the request to make.
2. [Person B] makes the request of [Person A].
3. [*Person A*] pauses to do *Self-Connection Practice* or takes a time out for *Self-Empathy*.
4. [Person A] empathizes with [Person B], possibly clarifying the request and connecting with the need(s) behind the request.
5. [Person A] expresses what need(s) are keeping them from saying yes.
6. [Person A] either makes a new solution request seeking to get the needs met for both people, or asks [Person B] if they have a request that would do this.

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