

Resourcing Opens the Gates to Deep Processing Work

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Innate Path attracts a specific type of client. The kind of client that's looking for the most cutting edge therapy available. They are ready to jump in and take a deep dive into their most terrifying experiences. We attract the pioneers, explorers, and adventurers. So it makes sense that when we talk about resourcing, activities that help calm the nervous system and lead to a sense of security and stability, our clients are less excited than they are about taking ketamine and discovering new parts of their psyches.

I get it. Who wants to imagine themselves holding their childhood teddy bear during a safe space visualization exercise when they could be floating through the galaxy on ketamine? Or who would rather slow down therapy to get an adequate amount of rest and build healthy habits when they could instead jump deeper into their traumatic memories and complete the process as fast as possible?

Resourcing actually leads to faster somatic processing. Here's how.

It seems counter-intuitive, but slowing down helps to speed up the process (really!). This happens because our minds are a powerful tool and they stop us from going places we can't handle. If we have no way to calm our nervous systems, we won't be led to the dissociated memories that will aggravate our nervous systems. Our defenses are smarter than that (luckily!) and they'll wait until we know we can handle it before bringing forth destabilizing material.

Analogy: The Strange Situation

In the 1970s, researchers devised an experimental situation to test attachment patterns in toddlers. They found that those with a healthy attachment pattern tended to explore more and venture farther from their mothers before returning for love and connection. The toddlers used their mothers as a "secure base," and knowing they had a safe resource to come back to, they were able to roam farther. Many of the toddlers who had insecure attachment stayed very close to their mothers, clinging to her, feeling unable to explore at all.

I oftentimes think of this experiment during medicine sessions. When my clients feel a secure base in themselves, confident in their self-regulation skills and ability to self-comfort, their exploration deepens during sessions, and they process more material. When they don't have that secure base, it feels more dangerous to enter uncharted territories, and they are unable to engage in deep processing.

This herein lies the importance of resourcing: it helps to build that secure base that then allows clients to explore and process their past traumas, their symptoms, and their psyches.

For example, in one of my most recent medicine sessions, my therapist noticed that I was stalled, unable to go deeper into processing. He correctly guessed that I didn't have enough resource to allow myself to explore and so he brought some extra resource into the session. Having done previous inner child work with him, he encouraged me to contact the character of an inner child that usually helps me feel safe. Visualizing this character, I immediately softened my defenses and I was able to do much deeper processing than just moments before.

Seriously, it works.

I know that finding safety and stability is not nearly as sexy as taking a deep dive off the edge of your consciousness. But think of it this way: it's way easier to take that deep dive when you've got a secure harness that you trust will bring you back. If you don't have that harness, you may never choose to jump.