



## Resolving Sensory Dissonance and Disconnect

\*it is recommended that this handout only be used for review after watching the video

### Dissonance and Disconnect versus Consonance and Relationship/Connection

- ❑ Concepts that apply to reflexes, sensory and motor systems, emotions, etc ... not just cognition
  - ❑ At any given moment, most people are experiencing a combination of:
    - ❑ Real and accurately interpreted
    - ❑ Real and inaccurately interpreted
    - ❑ Current
    - ❑ And past
    - ❑ Sensory and emotional information
  - ❑ Without connection and accuracy, it can be very hard to function - imagine a soldier, returned from combat, sitting in his home and simultaneously getting a signal of danger and safety (reflex dissonance - two competing signals) - this is very disorienting and then hard to function emotionally and cognitively
    - ❑ This can happen from recent or distant physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual violence, loss, threat, or neglect
  - ❑ In my experience reflex consonance and relational stability lead to sensory stability, emotionally stability, cognitive and verbal stability, and then things like executive function, etc
    - ❑ Conversely, reflex or sensory dissonance (fragmentation) or disconnection (dissociation) lead to unstable emotions, behaviors, cognition, and verbal ability
- ❑ In my experience, it is best to start with sensory accuracy in the present, which is needed for both positive and negative functions (i.e. applies to stress and non-stress responses), and is appropriate for any background
  - ❑ This can be as simple as initiating an assessment sequence that is sensory, verbal (descriptive/acknowledgement/naming phase), and experiential
  - ❑ 1) "What am I noticing/feeling?" (**sensory inventory stage**) - take 10 seconds to give attention and notice. This can be of your internal state (body, emotions, thoughts) or external state (auditory or visual or sensory space). The goal is to notice accurately, not to fix, suppress, or even describe.
    - ❑ It does not matter what you are feeling, but **that you are feeling.**
    - ❑ **Even negative or unpleasant emotions or sensations should be felt and described accurately**
  - ❑ 2) "Can I describe or acknowledge it accurately?" (**verbal/naming stage**) - can be as simple as a couple of words or 30 minutes long, but the goal is accuracy
    - ❑ At any point in these first two steps I can ask myself - anything else? I want to complete the inventory phase accurately, not rush.
    - ❑ Once described, I can also ask myself - "is this accurate?" Sometimes it will be and sometimes not! If it is accurate, the goal is accomplished.
  - ❑ 3) Experience what I just described (**experiential/bonding stage**) - this often feels vivid, quieter in your head, has a sensory texture and has a relational sense of presence
    - ❑ In this sense, we are alternating between a verbal/cognitive and sensory/non-verbal state - like alternating between your left and right side when walking. Both are good, but we want to alternate.

- ❑ Sensory or non-verbal means that your thoughts are shaped as textures ... it does not mean being quiet. You can be quiet and still have word based thoughts. You can be speaking and using textured/sensory language and expressions.

### Practical Opportunities for Application

- ❑ Notice, describe and then experience your oral/airway/nursing reflexes - simply notice and experience your mouth and the air in your nose accurately
  - ❑ This can start at the front (experience your lips) and move all the way through your teeth, palate, and throat
  - ❑ Generally, feeling your throat sounds like the “ng” sound at the end of the word “running”
  - ❑ Feeling the entire phonetic progression from front to back would be the sounds - A-U-M-N-G
  - ❑ The key is to feel the sounds, not do the sounds
  - ❑ It is possible to do the nursing reflexes in a state of sensory dissociation, so generally asking yourself the question - “can I feel/experience my mouth or the sound?” - works better than simply doing the motions.
  - ❑ The question prompts the sensory assessment
  - ❑ Also learning to focus and verbalize what you do feel (reality) instead of what you think you “should” feel (interpreted confusion) will be important
  - ❑ Generally, if you fully stimulate from the lips to throat, then after a period of time (ranging from 5 seconds to 10 minutes based on the depth of sensory disconnect) you will notice that you have started to either swallow or yawn; you may then notice/inventory other items
- ❑ Doing this will generally result in starting to feel yourself accurately
  - ❑ Therefore, if you are tight, you will feel tightness; if you are angry, you will feel anger; if you are uncertain whether you should feel anger, you will feel uncertainty about anger!
  - ❑ Feeling yourself accurately takes some getting used to - but generally it is best to notice accurately, describe accurately, and then go back to the sensory/bonding/oral reflexes if needed to help you be still and honest (and keep you from suppressing or trying to fix it)
- ❑ The nursing/bonding reflexes (when done to focus on accuracy and not symptom suppression) will generally result in a feeling of warmth, or calm (peace), or honesty - physiologically a bonding or vagal response
  - ❑ They will allow you to feel yourself accurately, so that will feel like yourself (whether you know yourself accurately or not)
  - ❑ Feeling accurately is necessary for proper physiologic function - if you don’t feel real physical needs accurately, then the brain will not respond with action appropriately
  - ❑ You will also tend to notice your own stress/personality responses (fear of getting it wrong, feeling foolish, etc ...)
  - ❑ You should simply describe what you are feeling honestly (out-loud or in writing), check if it is accurate, and then see if you can still feel your oral reflexes
- ❑ One application would be to allow noticing of facial features (focused on accuracy, description and then experience) - for those who have been around people masked, they literally may not notice/perceive the full face ... we don’t need to re-live this, just re-start the perceptive process in the present.
  - ❑ Without that accuracy, interactions are difficult because of not interpreting emotions correctly or not expressing them yourself in your own face

- ❑ Another application is linked/acknowledged regulation - instead of alternating between dysregulation and reliving traumatic experiences, it is possible to acknowledge them (either physically through touch or verbally), and then simply go back to see if you can still feel the oral reflexes and sensation accurately - this keeps you from sensory/reflexive dissonance
  - ❑ This requires acknowledgement, but not “going back to the memory”.
  - ❑ For example, for a concussion, I would make sure that I touch the part of my head injured and then notice and describe my head accurately and then use the oral reflexes if helpful
  - ❑ Language like - “feel your head with your hand and your hand with your head” prompts the two-part sensory connection (relational aspect). Similarly, “feel your mouth with your tongue and your tongue with your mouth” prompts the two-part sensory experience of your airway.
  - ❑ In this way, you can be using words, but prompting bonding or sensory reflexes.
  - ❑ Similarly, words like “notice what you actually feel” and “describe what you actually feel” ground in a relational/reality framework
    - ❑ Confusion, self-consciousness, and fear of failure are often the hardest to identify because you feel them while attempting the exercises!
  - ❑ If you are ever stuck, simply acknowledge what you are feeling (physically or emotionally) in the moment, check to see if it is accurate, and return to the oral/bonding reflexes to allow you to experience reality honestly
- ❑ The goal is to acknowledge and bring the hurting parts into present sensory accuracy and stability, not to re-live the past
  - ❑ The connection/awareness/acknowledgement is present, but the flow of traffic is into the peace/stability
  - ❑ Instead of getting out of the boat and drowning with the memory (re-living), you are welcoming that part into relational stability and honesty with God and yourself (they are getting in the boat) - people say this feels like “the person who was hurt” learning to do the reflex exercises and sensory stability
- ❑ The other purpose of encouraging verbal assessment is that it allows a feedback/accuracy checkpoint - without this you don’t know whether you or others are perceiving something correctly (and assumed accurate perception is a dangerous assumption!)
- ❑ This can also be done with visual or auditory space by noticing and then describing your current sensory space accurately, and then experiencing it accurately.
  - ❑ Since the goal is accuracy, this will relax you when the environment is relaxing and stimulate you when it is stimulating. We are calibrating responses, not managing them. These are not technically relaxation or trauma drills - they are sensory accuracy drills.
- ❑ This can be incorporated simply with “Aristotle’s 10 Categories” or other descriptive/cognitive organizers
  - ❑ It can be incorporated externally, but is often easier if someone is able to notice and describe themselves accurately
  - ❑ If they are in a state of reflexive dissonance (mixed fight or flight), then it might be hard to perceive sensation and emotions accurately (for themselves - internally; or for the external world and others)
- ❑ The primary danger is to do these exercises with an attitude or demeanor that is not life-giving. Please do not do that. The demeanor should suit the activity - to give life.
- ❑ If you have any questions, I am available, just reach out at the website contact form, or through e-mail - [lindemann@coalesco.co](mailto:lindemann@coalesco.co) (not .com)