

Negative Alterations Transcript

Video transcript for SHARE

Negative Alterations

Now we want to talk about negative alterations in cognition and mood and (*Negative Alterations of Cognition and Mood list*) when someone goes through a traumatic experience whether it's an acute experience or a chronic set of trauma events, it's going to affect the way they see the world. We would all understand that. It's going to change the way you think about the world, the way you perceive the world and this symptom cluster really just breaks that down and makes that a little bit more specific.

Beginning with emotions, the person who has been through this traumatic event is going to struggle with feeling positive emotions. They are literally going to feel incapable of feeling joy or happiness or, glee or any of those things that on a good day we all want to feel. However, what they do feel a lot of is anger and guilt and shame and fear and horror. A lot of people think that someone who has been through trauma is mainly going to have that fear and horror, that that's going to be the main thing that they experience or remember.

But what we have found and what we're told by the people who have lived through this, is pretty much the number one thing they have as a memory is the shame and sometimes the guilt. Which goes into that self-blame and whether it's survivor guilt or the fact that, if I had only, that shame is so intense that that impacts every area of their life. Because they're having problems feeling good about the world in general and good about themselves they also are going to affect their relationships and have a really hard time connecting. They're going to be more socially isolative or even when they are with a group they're going to be a little more withdrawn because it's really hard when your world is completely dark, to set their and talk about the news or the game or the weather or how someone else's kid is doing, when all your trying to do is struggle to breath.

And it's not just that it effects your emotions, and then that ability to connect, but it changes the entire worldview. Depending on your training you may have heard the word schemas are paradigms, when we work with kids we talk about having an invisible suitcase. But as those things we carry with us, that's true about the world and about ourselves. It may be that I can't trust anyone anymore. It could be that the world isn't safe. It could be I'm no good, I'm worthless. It could be more specific that people in authority aren't safe or that men aren't safe or women aren't safe or whatever they've been taught.

That invisible suitcase that we all carry with us, every single one of us, it affects every aspect of the individual's life. From their ability to be in safe and trusting relationships, to, their ability to engage in the world around them and if that's true in their everyday

world, that's going to be even more true in the therapeutic world. And when we're trying to reach out to someone to make that contact and to engage, we need to think about what are their previous experiences with someone who's an authority or caregiver, and how does that play into our therapeutic relationship.

Then we also need to be self-aware of what our own history is. What's in our invisible suitcase, have we experienced our own traumas, have we had our own experiences that's going to make us see them differently or ourselves differently, what's our worldview about the world being a safe place or a good place and all of those things come together. One of the examples we give is that it's never you and the person alone in the room. It's them and their invisible suitcase and you and your invisible suitcase.

This change in the worldview also goes back to how they see the original cause of the trauma that they may have distorted views of what happened and have excessive blame either towards themselves or to another group or to another person that may not be realistic but because of what they experienced is their way of processing it.

In going back to where we began with emotions, what the person experienced may have been so severe they experienced a form of dissociative amnesia while it was happening and they can't remember part of the events or maybe even the entire experience. As practitioners this is important for us to be able to know the difference and be able to distinguish whether there was a dissociative amnesia or if it could be caused by other things such as drug or alcohol use or a physical condition where maybe the person was hit and blacked out as part of say a concussion.

These next few clips will help demonstrate a few of the principles and symptoms seen in negative alterations in cognition and mood.

Perks of Being a Wallflower clip:

School children talking in the hallways.

Mr. Anderson: Wow! That was fast! You want another one?

Charlie: Yea.

Mr. Anderson: Alright.

Charlie: Mr. Anderson? *Sigh*. Can I ask you something?

Mr. Anderson: Yea.

Charlie: Why do nice people choose the wrong people to date?

Mr. Anderson: Um. Are we talking about anyone specific? Uh-huh. We accept the love we think we deserve.

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Charlie: Can we make them know they deserve more?

Mr. Anderson: We can try.

Charlie laughs under his breath.

So talking about those invisible suitcases, the very first clip we are going to look at is out of *Perks of Being a Wallflower*. And I think this is one of the most beautiful clips of having the suitcase. Charlie goes to talk to his teacher, Mr. Anderson, and he asks him, why do nice people choose the wrong people to date, and his teacher gives him one of the best answers ever. He says, we accept the love we think we deserve. And then Charlie asks him, well, can we make them know they deserve more, and he says we can try. And that's a lot of what we are doing in our work. We have people that are accepting the love that they think they deserve, whether it's from their selves or others and we get to help try.

Laws of Attraction clip:

Harmonic Music playing.

Female voice: It's a lovely story. They were deeply in love, so they ran away here and got married in secret. It's very romantic.

Male voice: The vows you have taken are holy and binding. You've exchanged rings as a token of your eternal love. I now pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss the bride.

Audrey: *Gasps awake and groans.* Oh. My god. Oh! My! God!

Daniel: *Groans.*

Audrey: Ahhhhhhh. Okay! Okay! Wake up, wake up!

Daniel: Uh. Morning.

Audrey: Wake up!

Daniel sniffs his nose and groans awake.

Audrey: Would you please look at your left hand please?

Daniel: What now?

Audrey: Please!

Daniel: Oh. Sigh Oh! Would you look at that? Oh, you got one too.

Audrey: Oh. Daniel, did we get married last night?

Daniel: Yes, I have a feeling we did.

Audrey panics in background saying Oh! Oh!

Daniel: The details are a bit fuzzy, but I think the bride was scintillating in a figure hugging Serena outfit and a *Sigh*. You're not happy?

Audrey: Do I look happy!

Daniel: Well, it's hard to say because you never seem to be happy around me and I always seem to make you angry and...

Audrey: Oh. Oh. It's all coming back. We've got to find the guy that did this and tell him we didn't mean it.

Daniel: Well, what if I did mean it?

Audrey: Oh, of course you didn't. How could you? You don't want to be married to me! *Sigh*. Mrs. Flannigan! Mrs. Flannigan! Mrs. Flannigan! Oh, Mrs. Flannigan!

Daniel: How do you know?

Audrey: Anybody, uh?

So this next scene is a little bit of fun. It's out of *Laws of Attraction* and we have two characters, Audrey and Daniel, who are rival divorce attorneys and they end up in Ireland and during the celebration one thing leads to another and they wake up the next morning both wearing wedding rings. Obviously this was not a planned event and so we have all the emotion happening and she says, okay we got to get this over with, we got to tell them we didn't mean it, and he's like well what if I did mean it. And then her responses, you don't want to be married to me and his response is how do you know. But in her worldview, in her suitcase, she has that a guy like him could never ever love a woman like her.