

Exercise #2: “What’s Missing?”

Read through the following therapy interaction, this time conceptualizing Amanda as a plural system. Then, discuss the following questions:

What do you think might be happening within the system during this session?

What are your impressions of this therapy session, and the therapist’s interventions?

What comes up for you if you imagine working with this client?

Therapy Interaction #1

Therapist: How have you been feeling after last week’s conversation about dating and relationships?

Amanda: Um, things are about the same for me I guess. I still feel confused in my relationship...I don’t know whether my partner really understands me. But opening up is scary. Ugh, this is just the same as last week. It’s not that complicated—maybe if someone’s giving me the cold shoulder, it’s because there’s something wrong with *me*.

Therapist: I think you’re bringing up something really important Amanda—the need to feel understood in your relationship, and also the fears that can come with that vulnerability.

Amanda: Being understood would be nice, but I get so anxious, even when things are going well. I just need to realize that feeling scared is a sign of weakness.

Therapist: How do you feel when you notice that pattern?

Amanda: I feel like you’re ignoring me! And just...more confused I guess.