

Affirmation in AEDP

Affirmation is an intervention that is often referred to in AEDP and in somewhat different ways. In general it is an intervention that regulates shame and anxiety and promotes safety by sending out a message of support, appreciation and understanding (validation). I found that different trainers in AEDP seem to emphasize the use of affirmation at different stages in their “protocol” which I grouped in 6 different types. Each has a somewhat different form and intention.

1.

Affirming Delight

A quintessential Diana Fosha intervention that can be used pretty much at any point, but may be especially important in State 1 for melting defenses and creating safety.

- That is so beautiful
- That touches me so deeply
- I actually feel a lot of compassion for you right now
- I am so impressed with your understanding of yourself
- I really appreciate that you are willing to do this with me.

2.

Affirming (exception to) Defenses

Again very typical for Diana Fosha’s work that can be used in State 1 for melting defenses and creating safety.

- You say that you are usually reserved, but I feel that you are very open with me
- I can see that rational understanding of things has helped you to get through all this
- The capacity of detaching yourself has saved your life
- You don’t have to cry
- Of course you don’t want to go there

3.

Affirming Resilience

A lot of examples of this in Diana Fosha’s vignettes, but now there is a whole resource book by Eileen Russell. It is important to affirm resilience whenever possible but can be especially encouraging for patients in State 1.

- I feel so much admiration for how you in the midst of so much violence found a way to maintain your self worth
- It is amazing how you got out so aware and connected in spite of so much loss
- You have such strength!
- So much wisdom in that decision

4

Affirming Emergence

This is the A in Ben Lipton's "SANER" protocol and are interventions to support and highlight what starts to emerge. It promotes the transition from State 1 to 2.

- That is important
- Thank you for sharing this
- So courageous to bring this up
- Wow!
- I appreciate your trust in me to talk about this
- Such a deep issue

5

Affirming Support

The second step in Natasha Prenn's protocol, aimed at emotionally supporting the patient in State 2 to continue processing intense emotion

- You are being so brave
- This is hard
- I see this is a lot
- You are helping me
- You are doing very well

6

Affirming Transformation

I found this particular in the work of Jerry Lamagna, highlighting the emergence of new experience in the patient, promoting the transition from State 2 to 3.

- Wow!
- That is so new
- That is huge!
- Can you see how different that is?
- I feel you much more centered this week.
- You did wonderful work today