Reaching in Smaller Steps - Clinician dialogue

Guide a collaborative conversation about reaching in smaller steps while checking fit and participant choice.

Mental health professionals | 15 minutes

Fictional example: Sam tries naming that a canceled plan felt lonely rather than making a global accusation.

Invite and obtain permission

Offer: "Would it be useful to explore reaching in smaller steps using an ordinary or fictional example? We can adapt it, observe, or stop." Ask what the person wants from the conversation.

Elicit before teaching

Ask: "How does this show up, if at all, in your own words?" Offer this idea tentatively: Vulnerable contact is offered in manageable doses. Ask what fits and what does not.

Guide the task

Draft one low-intensity reaching statement and a less exposed alternative; practice only with clinician support and mutual consent. Ask for permission before giving an example. Use this fictional illustration if useful: Sam tries naming that a canceled plan felt lonely rather than making a global accusation.

Reflect and check accuracy

Reflect only what was offered: "I heard you describe ___. What did I miss?" Ask: What level of openness is manageable today? Avoid assigning motives or interpreting silence as agreement.

Respond to a mismatch

If the person rejects the frame, say: "Thank you for correcting it. What would be more useful?" Return to their language or choose a different approach.

Close with agency

Ask which observation, question, or support request the person wants to keep. Confirm a manageable ending and appropriate follow-up; do not turn a tentative possibility into a homework obligation.

Reflection

What would tell me to adapt, stop, or seek supervision?

Scope and adaptation

Joint exercises require private safety assessment, voluntary participation, and appropriate EFT training. Do not invite joint vulnerability, enactments, or disclosure where coercion, violence, fear, or retaliation may be present. Use individual support and appropriate referrals instead. This collection concerns attachment-based Emotionally Focused Therapy, not tapping or Emotional Freedom Techniques.

Original AI-assisted educational draft; independent clinical review pending. Version 1.0. Background: What is EFT?. Full source links and scope: library.morethantherapy.org/approaches/resources/EFT-A06-3