

CONFUSION INDUCTIONS: A PRAGMATIC GUIDE

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Confusion inductions will be discussed in terms of where and when to use them and with what client populations. Several formats will be presented with demonstrations and opportunity for skill training in small supervised practice groups.

1. Conceptual Basis of Confusion Inductions:

When something incomprehensible is heard, the listener must leave the outside world and search inward for decoding meaning; thus dissociation begins. Secondly, there is the need to make a complete response in a cooperating relationship. When this response is disrupted, it sets up a tension and tendency to rebound into full response at the next adequate opportunity.

2. Indications: Use with intellectualizing, analytical, skeptical, hypervigilant, rigid, overcooperating clients.

3. Contraindications: Do not use with recently traumatized clients or those with poor ego boundaries unless rapport very well established.

4. Patterns of Confusion:

- General format: establish context of mutual cooperation and coordination, disrupt with a statement that seems to have its own meaning but is irrelevant to the current context, lead to restabilize with a facilitating or deepening suggestion.
- Temporal distortions: Today is today but it was yesterday's future even as it will be tomorrow's was.
- Spatial distortions: This chair is here to you and there to me, but this chair is that chair to you there...
- Use of ambiguities, homonyms, antonyms, etc.

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5. Issues of Coherence and Consistency: Does the hypnotist have to be consistent?

6. Demonstration of an Ericksonian Confusion Induction

7. The Inverse House (wherein all rules of position and sequence are absurdly reversed)

8. Dual Inductions (alternating speech then overlapped and finally resolved with unity)

9. Exercise (groups of 3 or 4): Start with conversational induction of 5 truisms, then add a similar but confusing statement, followed by a reassuring deepening suggestion. Discuss the effect on the subject, and integrate the observations of the consultants.

REFERENCES

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