Therapeutic Implications & Strategies:

An Attachment-Informed Approach to Bypass Coping Modes

1

A Narrative to Bypass Coping Modes…

- Coping modes reflect highly sophisticated cognitive-affective mechanisms for mitigating the pain that lives in maladaptive child modes (esp. the Vulnerable child)
- When coping modes are operating in a manner that seem impenetrable in session, or when mode flipping is making it difficult to make inroads, an option is to bypass working with the coping mode
- One possible option is to do so by introducing an attachment narrative
- The narrative is "their relationship story"
  - Drawn from your formulation and the administration of measures (ECR-RS, ASQ-SF)
  - Uses the language tied up in the characteristics that describe the attachment styles
  - Uses the terminology to label the attachment style
  - Casts a narrative that goes back to childhood and then moves forward to demonstrate the recurrence of patterns in romantic relationships
- The client can add to the story, fill in details, add relationships, outline critical relationship events/experiences that shaped the attachment style
- The story can move from the present to the future – what will become of the story?
  - Using security priming techniques might invoke security enhancing experiences/images that can be fed into the story's future
  - The end goal of the story is the healthy adult ('earned security')



2

© Gery Karantzas & Rita Younan (2022)