Therapeutic Implications & Strategies:

Bowlby's 5 Therapeutic Tasks

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The 5 Therapeutic Tasks

1. Provide clients with a safe haven and secure base from which they can begin to explore painful memories and emotions
   - Provision of a secure base by a sensitive and responsive therapist allows clients to devote attention and energy to exploration, take the risks involved in reflecting on painful experiences, and accept revisions in working models suggested by the therapist
2. Explore and understand how the client currently relates to other people, based on particular goals, perceptions, expectations, and fears
   - The therapist needs to encourage and assist the client in learning about maladaptive consequences of his or her major pattern of relating to others
   - These cognitive biases are largely unconscious, clients need the help of a therapist's sensitive interventions (e.g., mirroring, interpreting) if they are to become aware of previously unrecognized biases and failed relational strategies
   - Clients also need a therapist to provide reality-testing tools that reveal the dysfunctional nature and destructive consequences of misguided working models



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The 5 Therapeutic Tasks

3. Examine the client's particular relationship with the therapist, which is an example of the client's self-destructive modes of relating to close partners
   - Inevitably includes the transference and projection of established working models onto the therapist and the therapeutic relationship.
   - Bowlby (1988) suggested clients' examination of their attitudes and feelings toward the therapist, and their patterns of relating to them, provides an opportunity to understand how working models are expressed in a particular relationship and how they typically distort the course and experience of the relationship.
4. Clients to reflect on how their working models of self and others are rooted in childhood experiences with primary attachment figures
   - Clients often need to understand how these experiences shaped their maladaptive beliefs and behaviours before they can revise and update them in beneficial ways
5. Helping clients recognize that although their working models may once have been adaptive, or at least seemed better than the alternatives, when interacting with non-optimal attachment figures, they are no longer functional
   - Through this process, clients can improve their reality testing skills and create more realistic working models of self and others in the context of current relationships



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