

Preparation Hierarchy

Adapted from Rebecca Kase (2023) Kase and Co

The client does not need to be an expert at these. The therapist's nervous system and the power of co-regulation will support these skills through co-regulation. Indicators a client needs more time in skills building:

- Has few to no effective skills for regulating distress
- Struggles to identify feelings or somatic sensations
- Has high levels of dissociation or cannot maintain dual awareness
- Struggles to articulate thoughts, feelings, and/or sensations
- Has poor ego strength, struggles with self-worth, and is highly self-critical
- Struggles with impulse control regularly in a way that poses a risk
- Does not trust perception or feelings as a source of information
- Lacks safety in their life.

- 1) **Safe Enough to Feel:** The client needs to be safe enough to feel. This includes being safe in their life, the therapeutic relationship, and in their body to begin exploring sensations and memories. Healing cannot happen without safety.
- 2) **Notice and Name:** Once there is enough safety to feel, they can notice and name feelings and sensations. Do they have the ability to notice and put into words their internal experiences? If not, the therapist may focus on mind-body, mindfulness, yoga, etc to develop vocabulary and build this skill.
- 3) **Feel and Flex:** Following the ability to notice and name, then comes the capacity to flex and feel. Do they have the ability to tolerate feelings and experience them? Clients who avoid emotions and sensations or cannot regulate their internal state may need to spend additional time in preparation.
- 4) **Trust the Process:** The outcome of feeling safe enough to feel, learning to notice and name, and the ability to flex and feel is the capacity to trust the process. Trusting the process is an outcome of learning to regulate and have some efficacy over their internal environment.



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