

DEFUSING WITH BUTTERFLY HUG FOR MEDICAL STAFF

Group protocol via Zoom or other devices

PHASE 1: (decompression and defusing with the goal to take home less “stress”) The goal is to recover from the load of stressful situations experienced during the work in the hospital with Coronavirus patients and challenges.

A. **PRESENTATION.** I am Robert...., a psychologist from the Crisis Unit established by the Management of our hospital to do something useful with you and for you. In this situation, we are not only experiencing indirect traumas, but we are all very exposed too. In the language of trauma, we are victims in many ways, since while treating those with the Coronavirus but we could get the disease too. Our family could have already got it or they might do in the future.

We are all seeing this GROWING TREND that makes it difficult for us to let something go. We are always exposed.

We must make QUICK DECISIONS. Sometimes they may be typical of our role. Sometimes not. Quite often, we do not have the resources to address this in all its aspects. This is the reason why we are here, for an emotional decompression that can allow us to go on and to take a bit more trust and relief back home with us.

B. **CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT.** I must abide by professional confidentiality towards you. Nothing is recorded, no notes are made. Let’s all agree that you can share ONLY what concerns you personally. Can you do that? (ask for non-verbal consent by nodding)

C. **RESPECT YOUR TURN TO INTERVENE.** In some moments, you will feel urged to comment what others are saying. I am asking you to wait for your turn to speak to respect everybody’s space.

We will apply what we call defusing (critical stress management) with bilateral stimulations of EMDR therapy.



PHASE 2:

A. **Now, I give you the floor.** I would like that you speak only about yourself,
About what you have experienced directly,
How you have reacted,
How you have been reacting since you heard the first news from China to today (an ongoing event, with a beginning but with no visible end now)

(Second meeting) what happened since we met with the group last time? In the last week? Everyone gives their feedback.

- B. OK. Now we can access the **worst part of what you have described. Think about the worst image.**
OK, now the **emotion** you get and what is the level of disturbance from 0 to 10.
OK notice where you feel it in your **body**.



3 sets of 30" Let the images flow without clinging to any in particular. Just like when you are on a train and you watch outside the window: the images of the landscape just flow by (there can be also strong abreactions).

- C. **STABILIZE** with breathing or grounding to bring them back here and now. "Now let's do this all together".

1. Breathing exercises: put a hand on your chest and one on you tummy. Breathe counting until 1, breathe out until 2 and so on, thus keeping a 1:2 ratio --- pleasant feeling ---

2/3 sets for 8-10" --- find a word associated with the pleasant feeling ---

2/3 sets for 8-10" --- with a key word or a positive belief or thought about yourself.



2. Exercise of the square. Now follow me. Breathe counting until 2, hold your breath until 2, breathe out counting until 4, and concentrate on the pleasant feeling, word and bilateral stimulation.



3. Grounding – The group stands up together.

PHASE 3: ENHANCEMENT. RESOURCE INSTALLATION

- A. OK, now think about some of your **strongest points**, what helped you to survive until today, that supported you (if this is difficult, refer to those things that have helped in the past. Sometimes they say "this precise moment in the group"). We ask them to say it aloud, so everyone can be enhanced by another person's resource.



2 sets for 10"

- B. OK, think about a **word** that connects to your resource.



2 sets for 10" (short sets so as not to open additional traumatic material --- use if needed the metaphor of the drawer). Take a deep breath.



- C. **Dust removal exercise.** Now let's stand up again, feet well-grounded on the floor. Let's think about the most critical point and let's remove all the dust (shaking their arms, legs, etc.). Let's go through all the parts of the body starting from the head. Then sit down.
- D. **POSITIVE CLOSING.** I want to thank you for what you have shared,
For what you are doing. Solidarity is embracing you and supporting your work remotely.
Thank you for all.
We will be here if you need anything and we will be able to meet again on.....