

D6 dd GP deconst IV

Pt. And I ask myself, “Why are you acting out like that? You know? Eating them chocolate Reesie cups and stuff. What are you doing? You have diabetes!” My energy level is just so low right now. I’m tired, I’m down, and it’s a struggle to get to class. It’s a struggle to go to school and to stay and try to focus because I know I’m so scared of failing and I know that I need this because this is my future. And, I don’t know, I’m trying so hard. But, I feel that everything is just so stressful. You know, if you can’t even do something so simple as to just go to school. You know? And it’s...it is so stressful!

The patient is regressed, child-like, and hopeless in the Guilty Perpetrator State. In this state, the self is devalued and others are idealized. Despite her progress in treatment up to this point, the patient feels she can never live up to what’s expected of her.

T. Well these all sound like good reasons to give up on recovery. Why go through the recovery process and be so uncertain of everything?....What’s it been like to be out of treatment for so long? We had only one session for the past five weeks.

The therapist provides experiential challenge, thereby attempting to deconstruct the patient’s hopeless state. In particular, the therapist is implying that the patient is making a choice to not participate fully in treatment.

Pt. I’ve been thinking about you, wishing I could come ‘cause I don’t really have anything else going on.

T. Is there any relief though in not coming?

In addition to the challenge, the therapist is hoping the patient will be able to verbalize her ambivalence about treatment, so that she doesn’t have to act on it.

Pt. No, because...

T. Because it seems like you put everything else ahead of this and every week it is rescheduling.

Pt. I’ve been thinking about that and I ask myself why.

T. There has to be a reason why you don't want to come?

Pt. No, I don't. I don't (quietly).

T. You are not the helpless sick little girl; you can make your own life and make these decisions for yourself. You know you don't have to be in recovery if you don't want to. It's a choice. It's not too hard to go back to being sick again.

The therapist applies a more direct challenge, suggesting that the patient has a choice to either re-engage in treatment or remain ill. The therapist attempts to remain neutral between these two options.

Pt. But I want to. I want it. I want it.

T. Well, that's something that you have to decide.

Pt. I need it, I want it, I need it.

T. Because there are a lot of bad things about recovery. It involves being scared all the time because you are being tested in the real world. It involves taking hard looks at yourself. It involves being unsure and uncertain, because this is how life is. There is no guarantee, it's just very uncertain. And the question is, is all this worth it to you compared to the certainty you have that you're great, that you can do whatever you want and take away any pain with drugs and alcohol. It seems much simpler, even better that way.

Pt. I just wanted to tell you to shut up. Just shut up and stop talking 'cause I don't want to hear what you have to say.

In response to the therapist's repeated challenge, the patient has moved from the guilty perpetrator state to the angry victim state.

T. Well good, good, I mean you need to do more of this. Well, I'm really glad you could tell me that you are feeling that way. So are you feeling pretty angry at me?

The therapist changes tact from experiential challenge to experiential acceptance in response to the patient's shift in state of being.

Pt. Yeah, yeah.

T. You don't look angry. You look like a helpless little girl.

Pt. I don't know.

T. And I'd rather see you angry. I'd rather see you angry because, you know, instead of taking it all inwards and making yourself sick again.

Pt. Yeah you're right. You're right. I'm not allowing myself to feel what I really want to feel. I'm turning it against myself and that's not good.

T. Only you can determine what is good for you.

Pt. It's not good. It's not good 'cause like you said, I turn it against myself, you know?