

Chapter 26

More About Consent from Parts

The more complex the trauma is in early childhood, the more likely that clients will have a system of parts that present in ways that will need focus and attention in the client's recovery. Getting consent from all parts prior to using a resource, reprocessing a target memory, or moving in a therapeutic direction is incredibly helpful. Getting consent gives the client parts an opportunity to speak and express worries. Those concerns are important. It is often better to attempt to address any concerns of a part prior to starting a task, than in the middle of it. Asking for consent gives me a chance to get to know parts and gives them a chance to get to know me. Inquiry allows parts to come to understand that I care about what parts think and what their concerns are. One of my assumptions about trauma is that a lot of the trauma was done to them. We do not approach therapy as something that we do to them. Consent allows parts to consult and collaborate in all aspects of the client's recovery, allowing the client to have the disconfirming experiences of voice, agency, evaluation, and consent.

Some trauma therapists approach consent with client parts as a way to sneak compliance from the client's parts for an intervention that the therapist would like to do to the client. I view consent as a way to gain vital information from the client's system before, during, or after the client experiences the intervention.