Risky Business: Working with Compulsive and Self-endangering Behaviours in Trauma Survivors

Program Outline

Day 1:

1. Why self-endangering behaviour
   a. Traditional models
      i. Borderline personality disorder, impulse control disorder(s), and behavioural addictions
      ii. Another (evidence-based) view: The Reactive Avoidance model (RAm)
         1. Effects of childhood trauma and attachment disturbance
         2. Fear structures, trauma schema, and conditioned emotional responses
         3. Emotional dysregulation
         4. Functions of Distress Reduction Behaviours (DRBs)

2. An overview of specific DRBs
   a. Self-injury, risky sexual behaviour, bingeing and purging, reactive aggression, triggered suicidal behaviour, problem gambling, compulsive stealing, problematic internet use, compulsive buying, firesetting, hair pulling and skin picking
   b. Non-DRBs that nevertheless involve maladaptive coping
      i. Dissociation, substance abuse

3. Assessing DRB in context
   a. Immediate risks and comorbidities
   b. New assessment tools
      i. Review of Distress Reduction Behaviours (R-DRB)
      ii. Functions of Distress Reduction Behaviours (F-DRB)
      iii. Memories-to-Triggers Worksheet (MTW)

4. Safety, stabilization, and harm reduction
   a. Environmental safety and stability
   b. Safety from self-harm
   c. Reducing the destabilizing effects of triggered states
      i. Proactive resilience
      ii. Mitigating triggered distress
   d. Harm reduction strategies

5. Acceptance and mindfulness
   a. Settling, metacognitive awareness, and letting go
   b. Urge and emotion surfing
   c. Mindfulness applications for DRBs
   d. A hybrid approach
Day 2:

1. **Trigger management**
   a. Psychoeducation on triggers
   b. Identification: Direct and indirect
   c. Trigger linkage
   d. Intervening in triggered states
      i. Actions that immediately address triggered responses
      ii. Positive self-talk and metacognitive statements
      iii. Counter-behaviours
      iv. Pre-and post-trigger activities that decrease reactivity

2. **ReGAINing for DRBs**
   a. Recognize
   b. Ground
   c. Allow
   d. Investigate
   e. Non-identify

3. **Processing trauma- and attachment-related memories**
   a. Emotional processing
      i. Fear structure and trauma schema
      ii. What happened to habituation and how does this change things?
      iii. Counterconditioning
   b. Implications of new reconsolidation research
   c. Multiple memory targets: Sequential processing
   d. Processing explicit versus implicit memories
      i. Explicit $\rightarrow$ implicit
      ii. Direct implicit
      iii. In vivo processing of implicit memory
   e. Steps of processing
      i. Prebriefing
      ii. Exposure
      iii. Activation
      iv. Disparity/new information
      v. Counterconditioning/extinction
      vi. Debriefing/closure

4. **Intervening in three forms of compensatory avoidance**
   a. Self-injury
   b. Risky sexual behaviour
   c. Food bingeing and purging