Handout to be distributed after the exercise.

THE PERSONAL GROWTH OF THE (ERICKSONIAN) THERAPIST

PSYCHOAEROBIC℠ Exercises
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Warmup Exercise One

Clinician Posture to Develop: A resource state for participating in PSYCHOAEROBIC℠ exercises — incompetence and playfulness.

Format: Dyads

Roles: One person is the Pitcher; the other is the Receiver.

Method: The Pitcher and Receiver identify and access incompetence: They enter resourceless states. The Receiver closes his/her eyes. The Pitcher offers a five-minute relaxation induction of hypnosis. Both the Pitcher and the Receiver exaggeratedly act incompetent (resourceless) in their respective roles, e.g., the Pitcher calls the Receiver by the wrong name or forgetfully repeats him/herself; the Receiver becomes agitated, etc. Participants do not share the style of resourcelessness they will play; they must be specific, consistent, and exaggerated in portraying their chosen incompetence. Also, it is best to develop the incompetence gradually during the course of the induction.

The Pitcher and Receiver do not reverse roles until instructed to do so.

Variations:
1. The Pitcher and Receiver identify the main incompetence strategy of their mothers and act exaggeratedly resourceless in the same way. The exercise is then repeated by identifying and exaggerating the incompetence of the father.
2. The Pitcher conducts one induction and takes two roles, acting exaggeratedly incompetent from the position of the father when leaning to the right, and acting exaggeratedly incompetent from the position of the mother when leaning to the left. The patient chooses to exaggeratedly play out the resourcelessness of one parent.
3. The Pitcher and Receiver role—play a therapy session or initial interview and act incompetent in their respective roles and/or from their parental positions of resourcelessness.
4. While acting incompetent, the participants move their feet in a dancing motion.
5. The Pitcher induces a specific incompetence in the Receiver.
6. The Receiver induces a specific incompetence in the Pitcher.
7. After the exercise, the Pitcher and Receiver have a discussion: Each can summarize the incompetent position of the other.
8. After the exercise, the partners incompetently guess the respective partner’s style of being incompetent.

Attitude: Participants must (1) name their incompetence; (2) stay specific in the task of portraying it; (3) exaggerate it; and (4) develop it gradually.
PSYCHOAEROBIC$_{SM}$ exercises are conducted to identify and access resource states. The exercises challenge people to discover strengths or weaknesses as therapists. They are not competitive events in which competency is judged. This exercise is meant to “burn out” “competence” cells in the brain so competence will not be an issue in future exercises.

Note: As with any exercise, only do those that are comfortable to you.