

Empathic Validation 1

Empathic validation with the patient's current state of mind is the initial stance of the MBT clinician at the beginning of every session. Until a joint affective platform shared between the patient and clinician is established it is not possible to move further in the session.

The patient begins the session by saying she is 'good'. In MBT such generalities may be accepted as part of normal social discourse but they are often benignly questioned as they indicate non-mentalizing. In this therapy the clinician quickly questions the 'sort of good' to stimulate a freer interactive process.

It transpires that the patient has been to court which was arranged quickly and took her and the clinician by surprise. In this video the clinician begins to focus on the surprise.

From here the clinician needs to empathically validate her experience. To do so he needs to show her that he is seeing things from her perspective. It is important to be empathic about her basic emotional state (see basic emotions in MBT-I) rather than any secondary or social emotional state. Empathic validation requires the clinician to engage in a process of identifying the basic or primary emotion. Only then is it soothing by making someone feel understood.

If possible the clinician also needs to show that he understands the **effect** that the problem is having on her. In this case this is only partially achieved. However she does express her fear that her reaction to the shock of the sudden summons to court could make her vulnerable to 'messing things up'. So her surprise and anxiety, the **affect**, has the **effect** of making her potentially self-destructive.