

Topic - Session 07

Fear and trust I

Background information

Fear plays a key role in evolution to be a sensible emotion: Fear warns us from dangers and protects us from taking too many risks in unknown situations. However, fear can also narrow one's life and possibilities.

This becomes clear through the **Learning zones model**: The **comfort zone** (green area) is a space of confidence, competence, and contentment. There is no fear here, but also no learning. The **learning zone** (orange area) is a space of growth and expansion of competencies. This can also lead to insecurities and feeling unwell, having mild fears and also having increased awareness/alertness. The **panic zone** (red area) is marked by strong fear, which makes us unable to grow/develop skills. Therefore, it is sometimes necessary to overcome one's fear, in order to make new experiences, expand one's area of competencies and integrate new behavioural patterns, without pressure (expansion of the comfort zone).

As in the excerpt from **Ronja, the Robber's daughter**, sometimes it is necessary to face difficulties and find out what there is to do and what to expect – only a confrontation with whatever we fear makes it possible to learn how to deal with it.

The goal is to try out perceiving one's fear and explore possibilities of how to cope with it. Individual observation and analysis of different levels of fear are necessary, for example the fear spiral (perceiving the situation (dangerous!) – Evaluation of fear (for example “now something bad is going to happen”) – body reactions (becoming tense, breathing quickly) – impulsive behaviour (for example fleeing). Further, strategies to overcome fear can be trailed, for example: choosing the do the opposite, focused body relaxation, breathing techniques (calm and deep breathing, for example 1x in and 2x out, breathing into the belly, out through the nose, pursed lip breathing) and self-regulating and calming thoughts (“I can do this!”).

Key questions

Do you know the feeling of having fear?

How or where do you feel the fear? Which body reactions do you know of yourselves? Which thoughts?

What would you like to do when you are afraid? (Flight? Freeze?)

Is there something that you can do, when you need to overcome your fears? If so, what?

Learning goals

To recognise individual signs of fear and nervousness.

Recognising fear and discomfort as a natural reaction to something new, and unknown.

Understanding the rationale of confrontation: overcoming fears is sometimes necessary, in order to change something. Expanding the comfort zone by being “brave” to do something (despite fears) and moving into the learning zone.

Getting to know strategies to overcome/cope with fear.