

Immanuel Approach Safety Nets, Second Intermediate Scenario: (Practice Exercise/Role-play to Follow Completion of Video Training Segment #8)

Karl D. Lehman, M.D., Immanuel Approach Basic Training Videos (2/16/24 update)

NEW Most lay-person facilitators will not need to know or use these interventions: Most lay-person facilitators, who are doing the Immanuel Approach with a small circle of family and/or friends and/or colleagues, will never need the enhanced+ safety-net demonstrated in training segment #8 and included in this exercise/role-play. Also, if you are an experienced prayer minister or mental health professional, and you are already comfortable with the attunement interventions described in training segment #9, then I expect you will use those interventions with any recipient who is really stuck in a really intense traumatic memory (as opposed to the more cumbersome interventions included in this exercise). *However*, if you are not yet comfortable with the training segment #9 attunement interventions, and if you are going to be leading Immanuel Approach practice exercises in large group settings and/or you know you are going to be working with recipients who have really intense traumatic memories, then it would be good to practice the interventions included in this exercise.

NEW Combination exercise and role-play: Note that this exercise will actually be a combination of real exercise components and role-play components. The recipient will go to a real positive memory and establish a real connection with Jesus at the beginning of the exercise, the recipient will go to a real mild-moderate traumatic memory in the middle of the exercise, and the facilitator will coach the recipient back to three real positive memories and then a real renewed connection with Jesus at the end of the exercise. *However*, the recipient will only *pretend* to be *really* stuck in a *really* intense traumatic memory. Please do NOT use the negative content firestorm marathon that I used in the training segment #8 demonstration. Even in the simulated scenario with the recipient only pretending, it will be helpful skill practice to go through the very directive, persistent sample coaching for getting back to positive memories, and to practice using three successive positive memories to build momentum.

Reminder regarding Confidentiality: If there are poignant, beautiful details that you would like to be able to share with others, *please, please, please* ask the recipient's permission.

A. Splinter-free safety-net positive memories: As with all safety-net and trauma-healing exercises, it is important to use splinter-free memories so that you have a splinter-free safety net.

B. Multiple memories to build momentum: The whole point of this exercise is for the facilitator to practice coaching the recipient to three different positive memories in succession. So it is absolutely necessary that you have your notes regarding at least three of the recipient's positive memories. *NOTE: if the recipient does not already have at least three splinter-free positive memories in which they have been able to connect with God, they should not be the recipient for this exercise.*

NEW C. What about those who have not (yet) had experiences of connecting with God? This intermediate safety-net exercise absolutely requires that the recipient have at least three splinter-free positive memories where they have been able to establish a connection with God. *Do not do this exercise with a recipient who does not yet have at least three splinter-free positive memories where they have been able to establish a connection with God.*

D. Practice teams should stay the same: For this exercise, it is *very* important for the facilitator and recipient to have worked together in previous exercises, so that the facilitator is familiar with specific details from the recipient's positive memories.

F. Short term and priming memory: As always, read through the facilitator instructions immediately prior to going through the exercise.

Facilitator instructions (~40 min for each recipient):

1) Choose traumatic memory: Help recipient use the following guidelines to choose an appropriate mild-moderate traumatic memory: **For time efficiency, ask recipient to do this before the practice exercise (as preparation homework).**

- A memory you have talked about before, and that has been emotionally connected when you have talked about it in the past. (Please do not use a memory that you have talked about, but with emotional numbness/disconnection – we don't want a major traumatic memory to connect emotionally for the first time in the middle of your beginner exercise.)
- A memory you have talked about before *without getting stuck and/or decompensating*. (You did not need a lot of time to get back on your feet, and you did not need others to help you get back on your feet.)
- If the traumatic memory from the earlier safety-net exercises worked well, you can use it again.

2) Positive memory recall and appreciation (5-7 min):

- Coach recipient to use their strongest splinter-free memory for their initial positive memory. If you notice splinters in their positive memory, help them switch to one of their other positive memories that is totally splinter-free.
- Coach recipient to close their eyes, and to imagine, describe, and appreciate their *splinter-free* positive memory.
- If recipient gives a sparse description and does not reconnect with the memory, gently prompt them to fill in more details until they connect with the memory and feel appreciation.

3) Interactive connection invitation and request (5 min):

The recipient has their eyes closed, they're imagining themselves inside the memory, and they're feeling grateful. Now coach them to ask for help with the transition to an interactive connection. **Sample coaching:** "Okay, now I want you to pray something like, 'Jesus, I welcome You to be with me in this memory, help me to perceive Your living presence – help me to make the transition from **remembering** you with me to perceiving your presence as living and interactive.' And then notice and describe everything that comes into your awareness, regardless of whether it feels important, makes sense, or is neatly packaged."

4) Immanuel Approach Safety Nets (28 min):

***For those who do *not* perceive Jesus and establish an interactive connection:**

Do NOT go to the traumatic memory. (Remember, this is the second safety net). Instead, use this exercise for troubleshooting.

***For those who *do* perceive Jesus and establish an interactive connection:**

Help connect with trauma: After recipient has described their connection with Jesus, coach them to describe their traumatic memory until they are emotionally connected to it. **Sample coaching:** "Okay, now I want you to close your eyes, imagine yourself back inside the traumatic memory, and describe the details until you feel connected to the negative emotions from inside the memory." **Note: If you and/or recipient are concerned that negative emotions might get too intense, including fewer details and describing from outside-observer perspective are lower intensity options**

Validate pain, help with transition to safety net: As soon as recipient is strongly connected to the traumatic memory, and *before they have finished telling their pain story*, you will pretend you are coming to the end of available time for a healing exercise, and that *you need to interrupt them* to deploy the safety net. Validate the pain in the memory and help recipient accept changing gears to safety net. **Sample coaching:** "I am so sorry, but we're coming to the end of our time. This is going to be hard, but I'm asking you to do it anyway – we need to change gears and go back to your initial positive memory and connection with Jesus, so that we can get the plane back on the ground."

"I totally understand that this painful memory place is very important and needs to be cared for – we're not trying to dismiss, or invalidate, or minimize this memory or the pain in this memory, and we're not trying to just stuff it back down so that we can forget about it. **I am 100% certain** that Jesus has a plan for healing this memory, and I **really** encourage you to find a facilitator who can help you do that. But for right now, in this group setting, we need to 'switch gears' and help you use the positive-memory safety net so that you can get back to a good place for the end of the exercise."

Recipient pretends to resist transition (Facilitator can remind recipient, and even read sample script if necessary. To both facilitator and recipient: just do the best you can to pretend and practice this scenario). **Sample recipient:** "I don't want to go back to some stupid positive memory. I don't want to focus on positive memories and try to stir up appreciation – I want you to stay here with me in this bad place until I feel better."

And it's hard to imagine how God could fix this memory – God can't change what already happened – it was terrible, and there's nothing He can do about it. I can't see what God could do that would make it any better.

And it doesn't feel like there's *any point* in going back to the positive memory – that just seems like a stupid idea – it doesn't feel like that would help at all.

More validation, persist with directive coaching. **Sample facilitator coaching:** “Yes, those are understandable and common thoughts and feelings when you're inside a traumatic memory that has not yet been healed. And I understand that, from where you are now – on the *inside* of this unhealed trauma – you can't see or feel how God can help or heal this place. But I'm absolutely certain that it will help for you to experience God's living presence *with* you in this place, and that God has a plan for healing this memory. And again, I *really* encourage you to find a facilitator who can help you do that.

And I really get it that this is hard – from where you are now – in this deep place of pain – you can't *feel* that it will help to go back to the positive memory, and it's really hard to change gears from wanting me to stay with you in your pain to going back to the positive memory; but I'm asking you to do it anyway. For right now, in this group setting, we need to switch gears and get your plane back on the ground, so I'm asking you to let me help you use the positive-memory safety net so we can get you back to a good place for the end of the exercise.”

Recipient begins to cooperate. **Sample recipient:** “Yeah, okay. This feels really bad – to just try to think happy thoughts – but I understand. I don't like it, but I'm willing to do it anyway.”

Coach back to positive memory. **Sample coaching:** “Okay, good. So now I would like you to keep your eyes closed, imagine yourself being back inside of your memory of _____ (fill in) and describe the memory in as much detail as possible. I want you to focus on and describe the details until you *feel* strong appreciation.”

Recipient pretends to have trouble. **Sample recipient:** “Boy, I'm really having trouble getting back into it. I can hardly remember any of the details, and I can't feel any positive emotions from the memory at all.”

Encouragement, specific memory prompts. **Sample coaching:** “Yeah, that's how it is when your relational circuits are totally off line – it's really hard to recall the details from positive memories, and you can't feel the positive emotions from inside the memories. So I'm going to give you a lot of help.

Remember, _____ (remind recipient of general setting of memory). I want you to picture it, I want you to imagine yourself back in the memory, and I want you to add a couple more details.”

Recipient pretends to have more trouble. Sample recipient: “Okay, yeah. I can sort of remember, but it’s not very clear and I still can’t feel anything from the positive memory. I don’t think this is working.”

Persist with encouragement and directive coaching. Sample coaching: “Again, that’s how it is when your relational circuits are totally off line – it’s really hard to recall positive memories, and initially you can’t feel any positive emotions and you can’t feel that it’s working. But I want you to just try it anyway.

So, again, _____ (remind again re general setting). I want you to picture it, I want you to imagine yourself back in the memory, and I want you to add a couple more details – even though you can’t feel the memory at all yet”

Recipient begins to recall details. Sample recipient: “Okay, yeah.” ***Adds a few details*** “But I still can’t feel any appreciation, or any of the positive emotions from the memory.”

Persist with encouragement and directive coaching. Sample coaching: “Yes, it’s especially hard at the beginning, when your relational circuits are still really off. But I want you to keep going – I want you to just keep focusing on and describing the details, even though you can’t feel them yet.”

“So I’m going to give you some more help: _____ (prompt with a few more specific details from the memory). I want you to picture it, I want you to imagine yourself back in the memory, and I want you to add some more details.

Recipient recalls more details, but still needs help. Sample recipient: “Okay, yeah.” **Adds a few more detail, but then stalls.**

Prompt with more specific details. Sample coaching: _____ (remind re a few more details) Picture it, and add a few more details, whether or not you’re feeling any appreciation or positive emotions yet.”

Recipient recalls more details, but still struggling. Sample recipient: “Yeah, okay.” ***adds a few additional details*** “Boy, I still feel bad, I’m still having trouble remembering details, and I still can’t feel the good memory.”

More encouragement, more details. Sample coaching: That’s fine. Let’s just keep going. And if you still feel bad when we’ve gone over all of the details from this memory, we can move on to a second memory. I know you can’t feel it yet, but it will work eventually.

And I’ll help you with a few more details. _____ (fill in a few more details). I want you to picture it, I want you to imagine yourself back inside the memory, and I want you to add a few more details.”

Recipient recalls more details. Sample recipient: “Yeah, okay.” **adds a few details.*
*NOTE: should include the Immanuel component of the positive memory at this point if they have not already done this.**

“Well, I definitely feel somewhat better – I definitely feel better than when we started.” (pause) “But I can’t really think of anything else from this memory.”

Coach to second positive memory. Sample coaching: “It seems like the benefits from the first memory have kind of leveled off, but you don’t seem to be feeling strong appreciation yet. So I’m going to use a very simple extra tool that will provide some extra appreciation boost – I’d like to move to one of your other positive memories, and do the exact same thing we just did for your _____ (summary words for the memory just described) memory. For example, we can use your memory of _____ (name two or three options from your notes re positive memories).

So I want you to keep your eyes closed, imagine yourself being back inside of your memory of _____ (fill in the blank), and describe the memory in as much detail as possible. And I’ll help you with extra reminders if you need it.

Recipient tries to connect with second memory, but still having trouble. Sample recipient: “Okay, yeah.” (pause for picturing memory, trying to connect.) “I’m not feeling nearly as bad as I was ten minutes ago, but it still feels kind of hard to get inside the memory, and it still seems more difficult than usual to remember the specifics.”

Prompt with details to help get started. Sample coaching: “Okay, I’ll give you a moderate level of help, and you can let me know if you need more. So imagine yourself being back inside of your memory of _____ (short description of second positive memory). And remember, _____ (prompt with a few details).

I want you to picture it, I want you to imagine yourself back in the memory, and I want you to add a couple more details.” (Pause for K to picture, connect)

Recipient recalls some, but still having trouble. Sample recipient: “Yeah, okay.” **adds a few details, but then stalls.** “I’m still having trouble getting the details.”

Prompt with a few more details. Sample coaching: “Okay, I’ll give you some more help. _____ (supply a few more details). Picture it, and add a few more details.

Recipient recalls some, but still having trouble. Sample recipient: “Yeah, okay.” **adds a few details, but then stalls.** “I’m still having a little trouble.”

K: “Yeah, okay.” **adds a few details – We can hear redwing blackbirds in the rushes, and an occasional white-throated sparrow in the distance – from the pine woods on the shore.*

Prompt with a few more details. Sample coaching: “Okay, so remember _____ (supply a few more details). Picture it, and add a few more details.

Recipient remembers the rest of second positive memory, but still not strong appreciation. **Sample recipient:** *Remembers the rest of second memory details, but then eventually, “Well, I feel some better, but I can’t remember anything else from this memory.” (Pause – you can feel that the benefits have leveled off)*

Coach to third positive memory. **Sample coaching:** “It seems like the benefits from the second memory have kind of leveled off, but you still don’t seem to be feeling *strong* appreciation yet. So I’d like to move on to a third memory. For example, we can use _____ (name two or three options from your notes re positive memories).

Recipient chooses memory. Sample recipient: “Yeah, okay. I’ll use _____ (name memory).”

Coach to recall and appreciation. **Sample coaching:** Okay, so I want you to keep your eyes closed, imagine yourself being back inside of your memory of _____, and describe the memory in as much detail as possible. I want you to focus on and describe the details until you *feel* strong appreciation. And let me know if you need help – if you need help, I can give you extra reminders again.

Recipient recalls third memory details and feels appreciation. **Sample recipient:** “Yeah, thanks. I’ll let you know if I need help, but I think I can do this one on my own.” *Recall and appreciation third memory.*

Coach interactive connection invitation and request. When recipient is connected to positive memory and feeling gratitude, coach inter-active connection invitation and request. **Sample coaching:** “Okay, now I want you to do the piece where you welcome Jesus to be with you in the memory, and ask Him to help you make the transition from **remembering** Him with you to perceiving His presence as **living and interactive** in the present. And then I want you to notice and describe whatever comes into your awareness.

If recipient connects with Jesus: Coach to describe in detail and enjoy time with Jesus.

If recipient is not able to connect with Jesus: Coach them to spend several more minutes with positive memory recall and appreciation and then try again. Keep repeating this cycle until they connect with Jesus or you run out of time. *At the very least, they will spend a lot of time recalling positive memories and being grateful.*