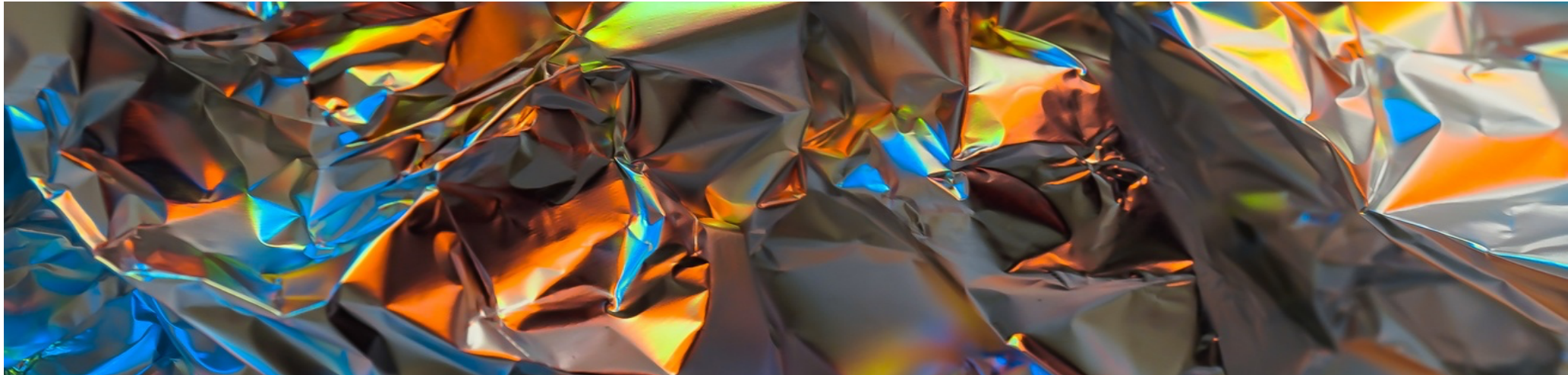# The ABC's of AEDP:

Acronyms to get you started or
Keep you on track with the practice of AEDP

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Senior Faculty, AEDP Institute

What is AEDP?

AEDP is a comprehensive and holistic model of psychotherapy that focuses on facilitating psychological healing and transformation through affective and somatosensory experiential techniques informed by a radically relational therapeutic stance.
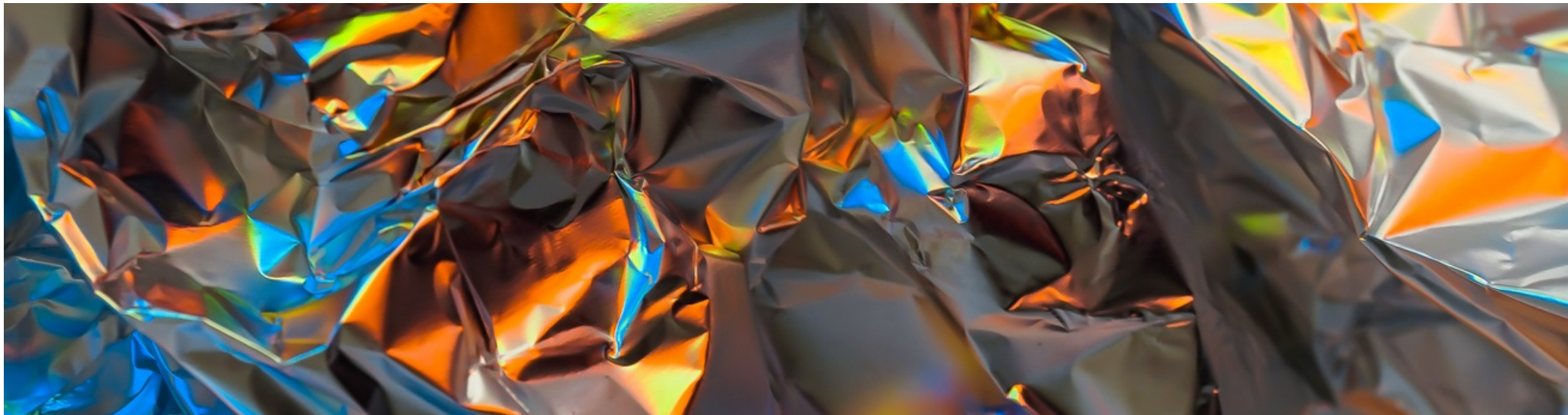
Core Principles of AEDP

- **Healing and growth are innate, wired-in, adaptive processes**
  AEDP recognizes that people have an innate, "wired-in" capacity for self-healing and growth that can be facilitated by the therapy relationship.

- **Psychological healing takes place within the context of a safe, trusting, and affirming relationship**
  AEDP emphasizes the transformative power of a secure therapeutic relationship, where the client feels met, heard, understood, and accepted.

- **The therapist is an active, empathic and affectively engaged collaborator**
  In AEDP, the therapist takes an active, radially relational role in the therapeutic process, responding with emotional attunement and explicit empathy.

- **Emotions are the key to psychological healing and transformation**
  AEDP focuses on the experiential exploration and processing of emotions as the primary catalyst for healing and growth.

- **Moment-to-moment tracking of embodied experience is the key to accessing core emotions**
  AEDP focuses on close tracking of implicit affective and somatosensory phenomena and bringing them into explicit awareness.

- **Metatherapeutic Processing (Metaprocessing) transforms implicit knowing into explicit understanding**
  Collaborative reflection between client and therapist on the experience of change creates an explicit understanding of what has occurred and a portal to further deepen and broaden that understanding.

Key Clinical Techniques in AEDP

Experiential Focusing

Guiding clients to mindfully attend to their moment-to-moment embodied experience, fostering self-awareness and integration.

Affect Exposure and Regulation

Moment-to-moment facilitating of the client's safe exploration and processing of somatic experience and core emotions leads to their adaptive completion.

Transformance Tracking

Observing and highlighting the client's innate capacity for growth, resilience, and transformation, fostering a sense of agency and hope.

Dyadic Attunement

The therapist's attuned presence and empathy for the client's emotional state helps to identify emotional experience and create a safe and compassionate space for its expression.

Metatherapetuic Processing (Metaprocessing)

Dyadic reflection on the client's experience of positive change fosters explicit understanding and catalyzes further healing and transformation.

These key AEDP techniques work together to support clients in experiencing, expressing, and transforming their emotional states, ultimately leading to lasting healing and personal growth.

PRESENCE:

"Being open to what's happening

as it's happening."

(Siegel, 2014)

BEING

IS THE

DOING

Breath

Breath

Gaze

BE-ING

Emotions

Nonverbals

Internal Focus

Attunement •Resonance • Empathy• Reflection

- We understand what others feel by a mechanism of action representation that allows empathy and modulates our emotional content

- *Resonance*: Shared circuits act like a translator, converting the states of others into our own state representations

- *Empathy*: Reflection on the shared state to understand the experience of the other—Theory of Mind
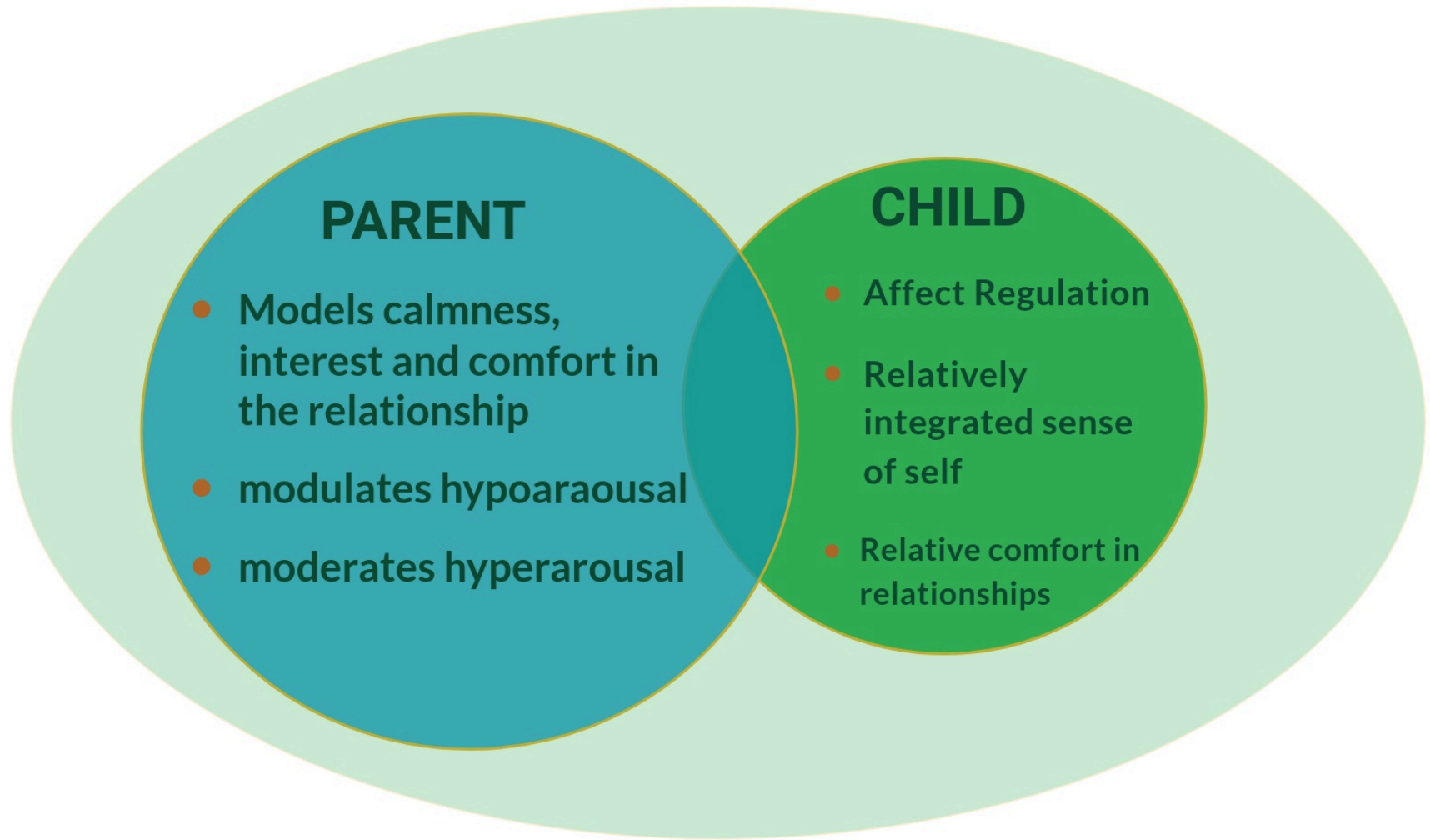
Empathy: Surfs Up!

"If you surf, you'd be better at empathy because you will have built into your body what it is about. Being present and getting in with the energy that is coming through you in the present. It is not a mental understanding."

Marshall Rosenberg
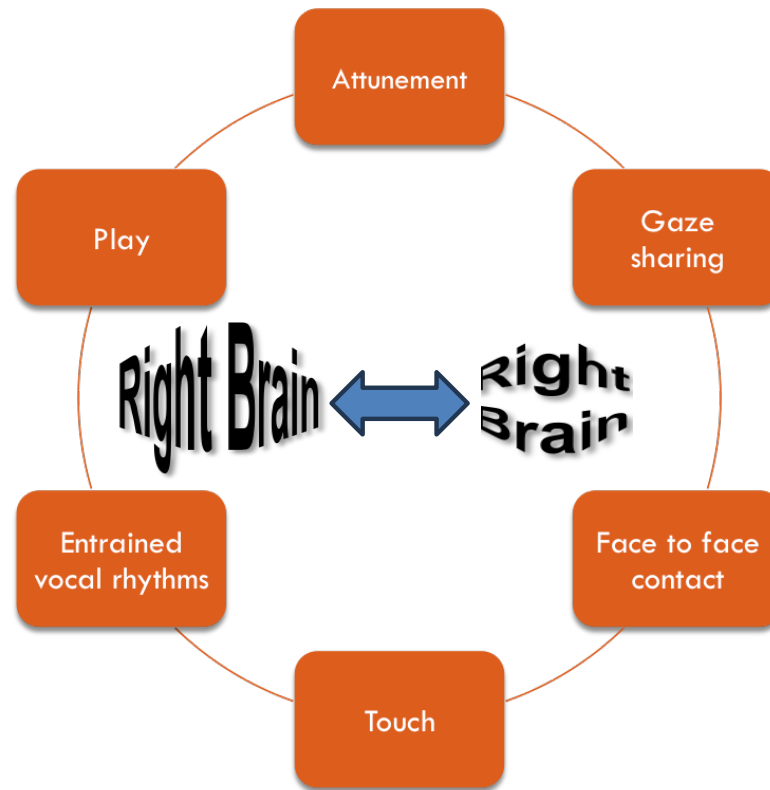
AEDP is rooted in Attachment

- Therapeutic stance of explicit affirmation, encouragement and delight

- Going beyond mirroring and helping

- Promoting and embodies sense of Self

- Promoting client's felt sense of exiting in therapist's heart and mind

- Focusing on the "Me" of the client and the "We" of the dyad

- Receptivity to being impacted by the client

PARENT
- Models calmness, interest and comfort in the relationship
- modulates hypoaraousal
- moderates hyperarousal

CHILD
- Affect Regulation
- Relatively integrated sense of self
- Relative comfort in relationships

Adapted from Knipe, 2019

BEING
IS THE
DOING

BE-ING

Breath

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Gaze

Co-Regulation in Action

Therapist's calm presence softens defenses and regulates anxiety

Client feels increasingly safe and secure in self and relationship

Client's system calms and becomes more resilient (Self-at-Best)

Therapist increasingly attuned to client's state

P A I R R

PRESENCE: Grounded and mindful in the present moment

"Am I aware of my body and open to my physical and emotional experience?"

ATTUNEMENT: Tracking R and L brain processes moment to mome

"Am I tracking my own and my client's verbal and nonverbal, moment-to-moment communications?"

INTENTION: Actively caring and wanting to help: positive vulnerabi

"Am I explicitly conveying my care, concern and openness to deep engagement?"

RESONANCE: Moment of Meeting

"Am I slowing down and allowing myself to be impacted by my client and communicating this when helpful?"

REFLECTION: Metaprocessing

"Am I actively and explicitly reflecting with my client on their experience with and of me?"

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SANER Protocol

Putting it all together...

Slow Down	Affirm	Notice	Explore	Reflect
• "Could we slow down for just a moment?" • "Is it ok to slow down for a moment here?"	• "What you are sharing with me is so important." • "What you are landing on here is so important." • "This is so important."	• "What are you noticing inside right now?" • "What's happening inside right now?" • "I just noticed X happening, did you notice that too?"	• "Let's stay with that for just a moment." • "Is it ok to be curious about this experience together?" • "What happens as you notice that?"	• "What was that like?" • "How is it to do this together right now?" • "What is it like to share this with me?"

Invite your client to pause and slow down.

This orients your client toward their present moment experience.

S SLOW DOWN

"Could we slow down for just a moment...?"

Affirm your client.

Reassure the nervous system, soften defenses, regulate anxiety and provide a solid foundation for experiential exploration.

A **AFFIRM**

"What is happening right now is really important."

Make the implicit explicit

Draw your client's attention to something specific that you are are noticing

N NOTICE

"I'm noticing that...."

Invite your client to take time to "feel into" what is happening here and now.

"Drop down" into the body and emotions

EXPLORE

E

"What are you aware of inside as we're noticing this together?"

Invite your client to reflect on what just happened.

"Wire in" the new experience.

R REFLECT

"What was that like to experience?"

"What was that like to experience with me?"

SANER Protocol

Putting it all together...

Slow Down	Affirm	Notice	Explore	Reflect

Slow Down
- "Could we slow down for just a moment?"
- "Is it ok to slow down for a moment here?"
- "Can we pause and make some room for this?"

Affirm
- "What you're sharing with me is so important."
- "What you're landing on here is important."
- "This is really important."

Notice
- "What are you noticing inside right now?"
- "What's happening inside right now?"
- "I just noticed X happening, did you notice that too?"

Explore
- "Can we stay with that for just a moment."
- "Is it ok to be curious about this experience together?"
- "What happens as you notice that right now?"

Reflect
- "What was that like?"
- "How is it to do this together right now?"
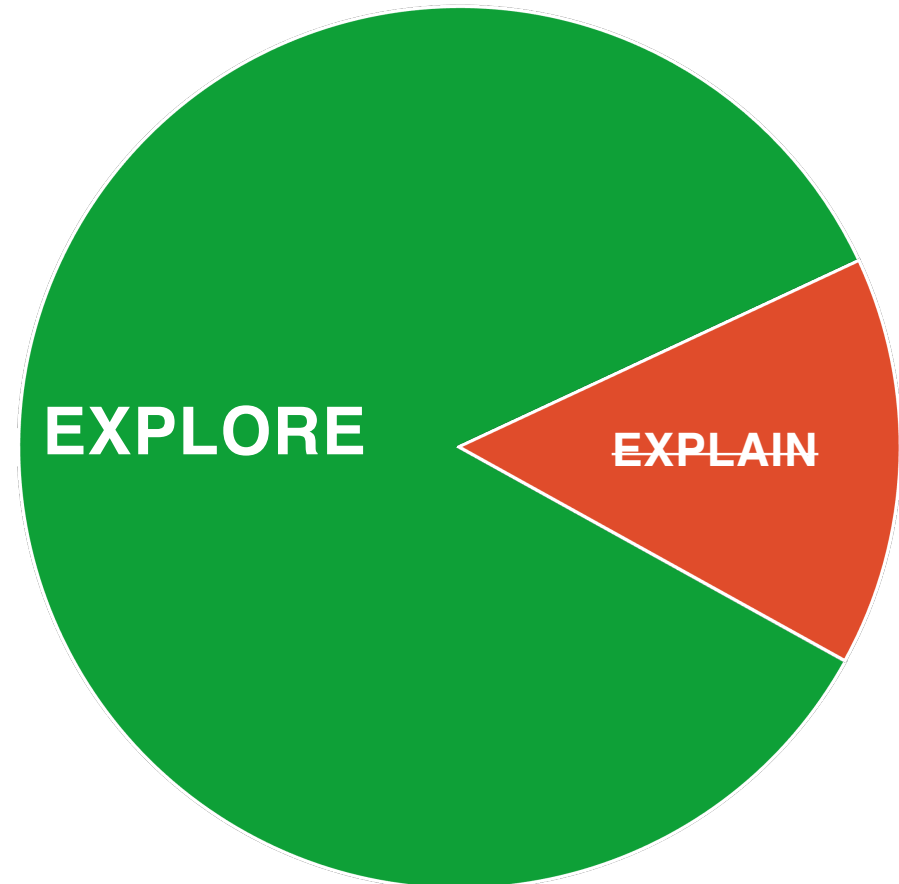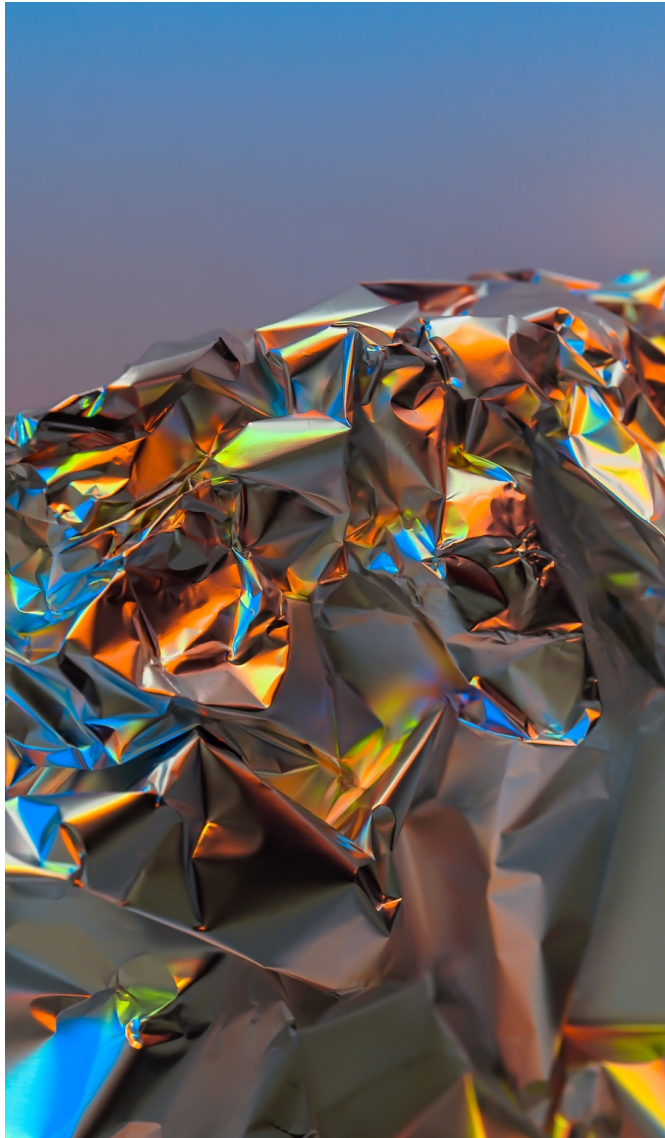- "What is it like to share this with me?"

Don't Explain...
EXPLORE

- "What are you aware of inside?"

- "Where are you feeling this?"

- "What's coming up right now?"

- "Just notice that feeling..."

- "Not from your head, but from your heart/gut..."

- "Do you feel me with you right now?"

- "What's it like to let yourself have these feelings?"

- "How are you doing right now?"

- "What shifted for you today?"

- "What would you like to take wit you from today?"

SESSION

EXPLORE

EXPLAIN

Demo