**Empty Chair Dialogue with a Part of the Body the Client Appreciates**

**Overview:** The purpose of this exercise is to enable a client/protagonist to experience appreciation for their body through psychodramatic role-play/role reversal with an empty chair**.** Taking the role of the appreciated part of the body can build a bridge to the body and deepen the sense of appreciation for one’s body in a holistic and creative way. This is in contrast to—and can be an adjunct to—a primarily cognitive approach, such as talking or journaling about their appreciation.

**Identify the Appreciated Part of Body**: Client/Protagonist identifies a part of their body they like and appreciate (eyes, hands, lungs, ears – the body part can be inside or outside).

**Role-Reversal with Body Part:** Client moves to the empty chair and assumes the role of the appreciated body part. Give client a few minutes to settle into role. Coach them to immerse themselves in the role, for example, by imagining how that part of the body might sit in the chair (give menu of options, if needed—straight and tall, relaxed and comfortable, looking back and forth, leaning in, relaxed and gently stroking hands, etc.)

**Interview in Role of Body Part**: Director/therapist interviews the client in role of the body part, asking any or all of the questions below. (*These questions are suggestions and good for learning. Listen to the client/protagonist and use your own clinical judgment and spontaneity to develop your own questions. If you get lost, just go back to why the client/protagonist chose this particular body part and how it is helpful to them).*

Whenever the questions below indicate [client], use the client’s name.

* What part of [client] are you?
* What do you look like? Please describe yourself.
* In what ways do you help [client].
* For what purposes or activities are you most valuable to [client]?
* How long has [client] recognized your value?
* In what ways does [client] express their appreciation toward you?

**Invite Appreciated Part of Body to Address the Client:** *Invite the client, still in role of appreciated body part, to speak directly to the client in the empty chair. Encourage the client to stay in role as part of body and respond to your questions—not to you, but to the client seated in the empty chair*

* What is your relationship with [client]?
* How long have you been helping [client]?
* How has [client] taken care of you?
* What do you love or admire about [client]?
* What are the characteristics of [client] that influence you to be so helpful?
* What is your message to [client] today?

Example:

*Cathy, I am your eyes. I have been with you since you were born. I remember when we had our operations--when you were a child and then again recently. I am glad you have taken good care of us over the years. We let you to see the world with all of its delights and sorrows, a beautiful sunrise on the beach, a sad homeless person on the street. We admire how committed you are to your health and wellness. We see how hard you try. Even when you mess up, you get back on track and try again. Today, our message is to keep focusing on your positive characteristics, such as your kindness and patience, and to turn your kindness inward as much as outward.*

**Note**: If client begins to bring in negative information, such as lack of care of the body part, validate the statement and then gently invite them to return to positive dialogue*.* Example*:* Director might say*, OK, Cathy’s eyes, sometimes Cathy hasn’t always taken the best care of you. You said she spends too much time looking at a screen these days. Can you remind her of one time when she did?*

**Invite Client to Return to Own Role Receive the Message:** After appreciated body part gives its message to the client, invite the client to sit in the other chair, now returning to their own role. Give the client a moment to settle, and then invite them to take in all that was expressed by the body part. Repeat the message from the body part. (Example: *Cathy, your eyes reminded you to keep focusing on your positive traits, such as your kindness and patience, and to be kind to yourself*.) Invite client to put their hand on the body part and take a few deep breaths to integrate the message.

**Client Gives Final Message to Body Part**: Direct the client to respond to the message given by their appreciated body part. Example: *Thank you for letting me see that the world is as beautiful as it is discouraging, and especially for reminding me to be kind to myself.*