

ST-C Module 4: Rebalancing after separation. Getting back into healthy adult mode (E. Roediger)

After module 3 the couple should have managed to learn how to interrupt their cycles and separate into two different rooms. The next task is getting back into a state of emotional balance. Mode cycles usually lead to disconnection from each other. Stopping a fight and going into different rooms helps to cool overshooting emotions down, get away from the dominant “leg”, rebalance on both “legs” and reconnect sufficiently with their need for attachment again.

Therapist: *“After you separated into two rooms please remember what we talked about and think of our two core needs. You might also take a look at the MCC and ask yourself, which need got out of sight during the clash? Try to get in touch with it again. Try to “stand on both legs” and search balance again. Standing and walking works best making use of both our legs. Looking at the scene from an outsider perspective could be helpful. Or you might ask yourself what I would say if I were there. Which leg is coming to short? And if you try to stand on both legs... what are you actually wishing for?”*

Identifying the active and the blocked child mode

We recommend to put the coping modes (“front stage”) and the child modes (on “backstage”) on separate chairs for both clients like shown on the figure “ST-C chair positions” below do identify the active and the blocked child mode.

It is important to distinguish between **anxious protectors** and **angry protectors**. The active emotion of an anxious protector is fear or sadness, maybe helplessness. They are in touch with their vulnerable child mode. The blocked child mode is the angry child side and the need for assertiveness or respect and safety. Thus, this need has to be activated and strengthened. The angry protector is a passive-aggressive version of an externalizing mode and thus standing on the assertiveness leg. The blocked side is the vulnerable side and the need for attachment. So, they have to soften up again and shift to the attachment side (like all externalizers). Finally, there are only two types of clients and two roads to take to re-balance the situation.

Well-functioning couples with sufficient healthy adult modes might be able to get in touch and express a balanced wish to the partner in a functional way after re-connecting again. Others might just manage to continue every-day life in a cooled down way. If one or both partners have difficulties to get balanced you can use the chair dialogues from module 5 and 7 or the imagery exercises in module 6 and 8.

ST-C Chair positions of both partners

