# Session Feedback

The session demonstrates a compelling and skillful therapeutic engagement, marked by a strong attunement to the client's emotional landscape. Your capacity to move with Julie from a place of generalised annoyance toward a deeply embodied recognition of grief and loss is clinically significant. The work of somatic exploration—shifting the anger from an abstract concept to a specific, physically felt sensation in her stomach—is particularly effective. This grounding in bodily experience allows for a more integrated and less intellectualised processing of her pain. Your reflections, such as *“it’s like you kind of got this energy and you put yourself... and it's just not received,”* beautifully validate her internal reality without imposing an interpretation. The alliance is clearly robust, evidenced by her willingness to explore frightening terrain and her statement, *“I feel like you get it.”* This foundation of trust is the cornerstone of the work you are undertaking together.

A critical area for reflection involves the therapist's occasional use of synthesising or interpretive statements that, while likely intended to validate, may risk subtly redirecting the client's narrative. Phrases like *“you've been so constricted and pushed in and locked in”* or *“you become this person that doesn't have ideas”* are powerful metaphors. However, juxtaposed with moments where you expertly held space for her own descriptions (e.g., the leaf floating, the bowling ball in her stomach), there is an opportunity to consistently privilege her generative language. A disciplined curiosity, perhaps asking, *“You described yourself as a leaf falling without knowing where it will land—what is the experience of that ‘not knowing’ for you?”* could further empower her as the author of her experience. This minimises the risk of a subtle, well-intentioned paternalism where the therapist becomes the arbiter of her story.

The management of affect and session boundaries presents another nuanced learning point. When Julie stated, *“It feels too much... it feels like it's overwhelming me a little bit,”* your invitation to *“breathe into it”* and *“stay with it”*, followed by the reassurance that *“neither is right,”* was clinically sound in aiming to build tolerance. However, the sequence might benefit from a more explicit collaborative check-in on her window of tolerance in that moment. Could the intervention be framed with even

more granularity, such as, *“I hear it feels overwhelming. Would it feel possible to just notice the edge of that overwhelming feeling together for a moment, or is the need to step back stronger right now?”* This explicitly hands the control and wisdom back to her nervous system. Furthermore, the session's end, where significant new material about her husband arises, is a common therapeutic challenge. Your handling was appropriate by acknowledging and proposing to revisit it. To strengthen this, one might consider a more structured transitional ritual for ending, especially after such deep work, to support the cognitive and emotional shift back to her daily life.

The therapeutic work is poised at a crucial juncture between insight and potential behavioural change. Your final reflections accurately named the core conflict: the cost of compliance versus the fear of self-assertion. Your question, *“how bad would that really be?”* effectively begins to deconstruct the catastrophisation. Moving forward, the focus might deepen on the relational templates she anticipates replaying. For instance, her fear that her husband *“doesn't get it”* mirrors the historic injury with her mother. The therapy could explore this not as a fact but as a fearful expectation—a “script” she assumes will be followed. Exploring the differences between her husband and her mother, or gently questioning what tiny, low-stakes experiment in self-expression might look like, could build a bridge from insight to agency. The profound grief of feeling lost is now in the room; the next phase involves co-constructing what “finding” a sense of solid ground might incrementally look and feel like for her, always using her own metaphors as the guide.