



CASE DESCRIPTION - MARISOL

Summary:

Marisol is a 16-year-old high school junior who excels in art but avoids participating in group critiques. When asked to share her work, she often says, “Everyone’s thinking it’s bad,” and will quickly tuck her sketchbook away.

In an intake conversation, Marisol reports this thought has been around since middle school after a peer loudly mocked one of her drawings during class. She describes it as a “true story” her brain keeps telling her. When asked to rate how strong the story feels on a 0–10 scale, she says it’s “usually an 8 or 9” in group situations and “around a 4” when she’s alone.

When prompted, she can acknowledge that the thought works like a rule — “If I share my work, people will think it’s bad.” She says this rule keeps her “safe,” but also admits it stops her from showing work she’s proud of.

Marisol sometimes notices her mind “making up stories” during one-on-one conversations, but struggles to disengage from those stories in groups. She enjoys metaphor, imagery, and humor, and responds best to highly visual defusion activities.

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Therapist: “What’s your mind saying right now as you think about showing this piece in critique?”

Marisol: “That they’re all thinking it’s bad.”

Therapist: “Sounds like that’s part of the rule your mind has — If I share my art, people will think it’s bad. How strong is that rule right now, zero to ten?”

Marisol: “Like... an eight.”

Therapist: “Let’s see if we can play with this rule a little. What’s the opposite of that thought?”

Marisol: “That they’d think it’s good?”

Therapist: “Yeah — so your mind is saying one thing, but we can imagine the opposite might be just as possible. Which one feels more true right now?”

Marisol: “Still the bad one.”

Therapist: “Okay, so let’s not try to erase it. Instead, let’s draw that ‘They think it’s bad’ thought as a little character.” (Marisol draws a cartoon with crossed arms and a frown)

Therapist: “If that thought character could talk, what would it say?”

Marisol: (in a dramatic voice) “They don’t like your art.”

Therapist: “What would the opposite character say?”

Marisol: “They love it.”

Therapist: “Can you put them both in your drawing? Let’s give them each a speech bubble.” (She adds the second character with a big grin)

Therapist: “Now, when you look at both, which one do you want to listen to for the next 30 seconds?”

Marisol: “The happy one.”

Therapist: “Okay, and even if the other one’s still there, you can still make space for both and choose who to turn the volume up on.”

CASE
CONCEPTUALIZATION

What skills are you noticing Marisol has?

What things have been probed that Marisol responded to?

What are some areas of growth for Marisol?

What type of prompts seemed supportive for her?