The therapeutic relationship: alliance, ruptures and repair

What CRPO asks of the relationship (Competencies 4.2 and 4.3), the alliance and its evidence, how to notice and repair a rupture, self-disclosure, and CRPO's own exam tip on purpose.

Study aid, not legal advice. Last verified against the official sources linked below on 11 November 2026.

1 On the exam (CRPO's words)

- CRPO's blueprint: the therapeutic relationship is **at least 25 to 30%** of the assessment, the largest domain (Resource Manual, Test Blueprint Specifications).
- CRPO's tip 4: when a question **names a purpose**, for example rebuilding alliance, select only the responses relevant to that purpose.
- CRPO **does not publish** how many points any one competency carries within the domain.

2 What CRPO asks (4.2, 4.3)

- **4.2** Core conditions: empathy, respect and authenticity; rapport; a non-judgmental stance; theory in words the client understands; client autonomy; appropriate boundaries; physical and emotional safety; dependability.
- **4.3** Safe and effective use of self: awareness of your own subjective context and of power dynamics; keep your personal issues off the client; congruent communication; appropriate self-disclosure.

3 The alliance

- Agreement on **goals**, collaboration on tasks, and the emotional bond: a rupture is a strain in any of the three (Eubanks et al., 2018, Psychotherapy 55(4):508-519).
- Across 295 studies and more than 30,000 patients, the alliance was linked to outcome (**r = .278**), whatever the approach (Flückiger et al., 2018, Psychotherapy 55(4):316-340).

4 Notice a rupture

- **Quieter**: short answers, agreeing too fast, changing the subject, late or missed sessions.
- **Pushing back**: criticism of you or the work, doubt that therapy helps.
- **Ask** about the relationship itself, gently, rather than waiting for it to pass.

5 Repair

1. **Name it** without defensiveness: what you noticed in the session.
2. **Invite** the client's view, and listen for what did not fit.
3. **Own your part**, plainly, without making the client look after you.
4. **Adjust together**: the goal, the task, the pace or the way you work.
5. **Check back** later that the change is helping.

6 Why repair, and self-disclosure

- Resolving ruptures went with better outcomes (**r = .29**, 11 studies); training in rupture resolution **did not show a significant effect** (Eubanks et al., 2018).
- Self-disclosure and immediacy were most often followed by a stronger relationship and other gains (Hill et al., 2018, Psychotherapy 55(4):445-460).
- Disclose only for the client's benefit, briefly, and return the focus to them (**4.3e**).

Notice the strain, name it, own your part and adjust together: the repair is part of the therapy.

Official sources: CRPO Entry-to-Practice Competency Profile (4.2, 4.3) and CRPO Registration Examination Resource Manual. Condensed from Therapeutic Process and Strategy for the Exam. Independent study aid, not legal advice, not affiliated with CRPO or COMPASS.