

WORKING WITH EMOTION IN EFT-C



EMOTION
FOCUSED
THERAPY
INSTITUTE

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PLAN FOR WORKSHOP

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
- Review and setting the stage for 4 days - Emotional Deepening - Reactivity and Escalation	Stage 4: - Restructuring - Enactments - Blocks & Shame spirals - Homework - Emotional injuries	- Emotional Injuries - Working with Identity-related issues such as dominance	Self-soothing and individual processes

General Format of Didactic Lecture and Discussion, Observation through Videotaped Demonstration, and Small group practice.

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Emotion-Focused Couples Therapy

The DYNAMICS of
EMOTION, LOVE, and POWER

Leslie S. Greenberg
Rhonda N. Goldman



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FAMILY PROCESS

Working with Identity and Self-soothing in Emotion-Focused Therapy for Couples

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This paper will outline new developments in Emotion-Focused Therapy for Couples (EFT-C) (Greenberg & Goldman, *Emotion-focused couples therapy: The dynamics of emotion, love, and power*, Washington, DC, American Psychological Association, 2008). People are seen as primarily motivated by their affective goals and the regulation of emotional states. The three motivational systems of attachment, identity, and attraction/liking, viewed as reflective of the core concerns people bring to therapy, are briefly outlined and elaborated. The five-stage model of EFT-C is briefly described. The paper will then provide two illustrations, one that demonstrates how EFT-C therapists work with core issues related to identity, and the other that shows how therapy can promote self-soothing. In the

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- Conflict in couples arises out of unmet attachment and identity needs.
- Over time distressed couples develop **constricted interaction** and **emotional response patterns**.

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Secondary emotion
("protective")

Primary emotion
(Adaptive or Maladaptive)

Anger
Sadness
Fear
Shame
Interest
Love
Joy





Instrumental

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RESOLUTION IN EFT-C

- Secondary emotions are unconscious attempts to avoid feeling the more vulnerable emotions activated by a situation ("survival strategies").
- Resolution occurs when the EFT therapist creates a safe environment to help the couple reveal their underlying vulnerable emotions and respond constructively to those of their partner.

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7

Six



Nine





Just because you're right doesn't mean i'm wrong, you just haven't seen life from my Position

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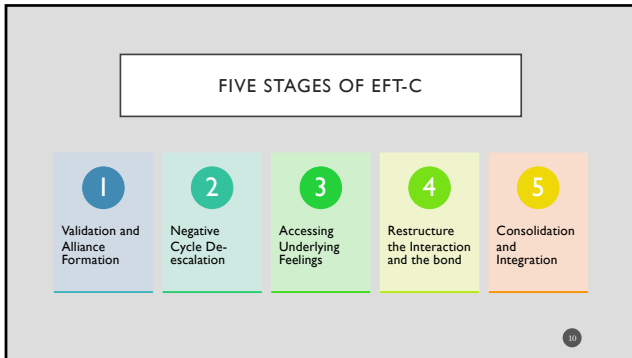
The Five stages and Fourteen Steps of EFT-C

Greenberg & Goldman (2008)

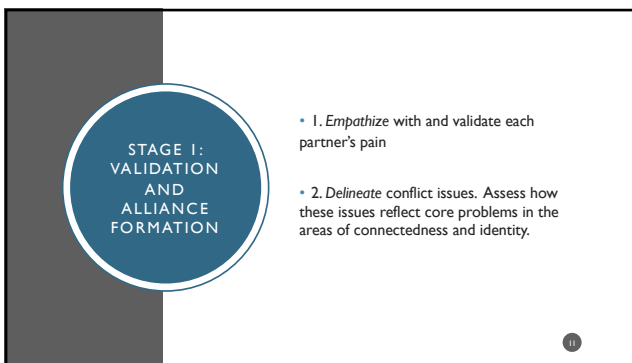
STAGES OF TREATMENT

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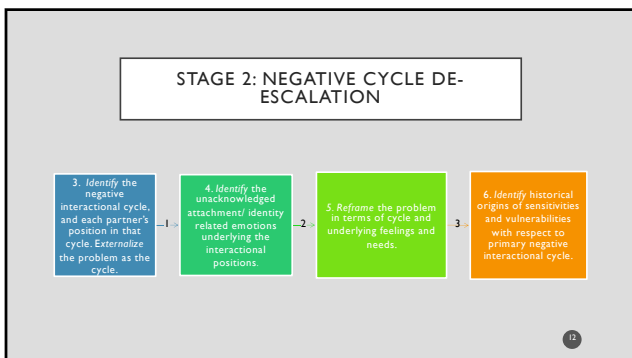
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STAGE 3:
ACCESSING
UNDERLYING
FEELINGS

- 7. Access unacknowledged feelings/needs underlying interactional positions and express them
 - Softening of blamer- sadness, loneliness, anxiety
 - Withdrawer re-engagement - anxiety, anger
 - Dominant goes one down – shame, fear
 - Submissive asserts – fear, inadequacy, anger
- 8. Identify & overcome blocks to accessing.
- 9. Promote identification with disowned needs/aspects of self, integrating these into relationship interactions.

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STAGE 4: RESTRUCTURE THE
INTERACTION AND THE
BOND

10. Promote acceptance by the other of partner's experience/aspects of self.

11. Facilitate the expression of needs and wants to restructure the interaction, and create emotional engagement.

- Promote softening events
- Structure emotional engagement-bonding and validating events.

12. Promote self soothing and emotion transformation in each partner.



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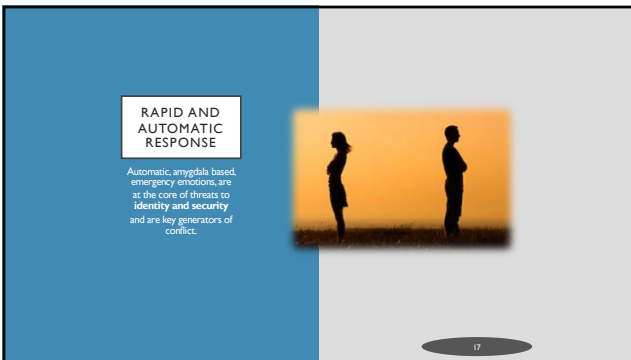
STAGE 5:
CONSOLIDATION
AND
INTEGRATION

- 13. Facilitate the emergence of new interactions and solutions to problematic interactions and issues.
- 14. Enact new positions and consolidate new narratives.

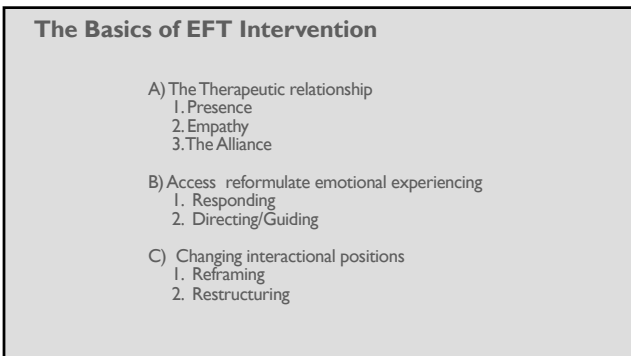
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Interactional Stances

- Lean in. Warm close.
- Sit back. Distant and descriptive
- Direct. Guide enactments

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BASIC INTERACTIONAL INTERVENTIONS

1. Tracking & reflecting patterns & cycles of interactions
2. Framing & reframing problems in terms of negative cycles (attachment/identity) responses.
3. Using enactments to shape interactions: plan and oversee events to modify, step by step, each partner's interactional position.

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Identify Negative Cycle

Work with the couple to describe the cycle

- Identify who is pursuing for emotional closeness or dominating and who is protecting against intrusion or submitting
- Identify the Cycle as well as Interactional Positions

In both partners:

1. Behaviours
2. Perceptions - View of Self and of Partner
3. Secondary – Reactive Emotions
4. Primary Emotions
5. Attachment and Identity Needs

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IMPORTANCE AND SUBTLY OF LANGUAGE, VOCAL QUALITY

Are Clients Expressing Primary Vulnerable, Adaptive Emotions?
Maladaptive Emotions that need to be transformed? Secondary
Emotions that need to be bypassed?

C: "How could you hurt me like that? I was so hurt!" (crying but sound
angry, expressing it in a blaming way)

C: "That was so awful, you just left me!" (crying but accusing tone)

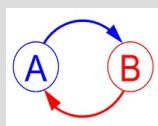
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The EFT Cycle

Perceptions/Meaning (see?)

Perceptions/Meaning



Behaviour (do?)
Secondary Emotion (feel?)
Emotion
Primary Emotion (emotion?)
Unmet Attachment &
& Identity Needs(need?)

Behaviour
Secondary
Primary Emotion
Unmet Attachment
Identity Needs

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Identifying the Cycle

- Continually return to identification of the cycle and naming the position that the partners rely on when they are feeling threatened, vulnerable or confronted i.e. when their attachment or identity needs are activated.
- Need to continually attune to underlying attachment and identity needs and conceptualize the partners' experience from their unmet needs.
- **Access unacknowledged feelings** that underlie their position in the cycle. Ask yourself what would you feel in response to partners' positions *and* conjecture

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Identifying the Pursuer and Withdrawer

- Look for examples and stories that describe who is pursuing for emotional closeness who distances, who defines who defers?
- You will be observing reactive behaviors and secondary emotions, so you must find search behind the protective/defensive stances at the underlying emotions to find the positions and the original cycle.

There can be two cycles.

1. The basic cycle and then a reactive cycle given the circumstances of the relationship.
2. A second less dominant cycle which is not the presenting problem

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REFRAMING PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF NEGATIVE CYCLES

3 PERSPECTIVES

1. **Systemic/Interactional Perspective:**
each partner helps create and is a victim of the other's behavior (affiliation/influence)
2. **Emotion Perspective:**
secondary emotions
primary underlying emotional experience
3. **Motivational Perspective**
attachment/identity perspective/affection
closeness/self esteem or worth/liking

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REFRAME IN TERMS OF UNDERLYING FEELINGS AND NEEDS

- C: (wife who is running into husband's lack of responsiveness): *It's like you try this one and boom, there's a wall. Another one, another wall. I have run out of avenues. I cannot get through to him.*
- T: *It's like you end up feeling so hurt and alone and needy (reframing in terms of underlying feelings and needs.)*

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EFT Reframes

- Validate each partner's position before you reframe as it is a challenge to their reality
- Each partner needs to have started to name their underlying emotions.
- Highlight underlying adaptive feelings and needs "I distance because I am afraid of failing you or being criticized." and "I become enraged with you because I can't get you to respond to me at all."
- Reframes help partners see themselves and their partner differently

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Examples of Emotions (Primary & Secondary)

Pursuer

Hurt
Lonely
Sad
Unwanted
Isolated
Abandoned
Desperate
Disconnected
Deprived
Longing

Distancer

Rejected
Overwhelmed
Numb, Frozen
Afraid, Scared
Not Wanted or Desired
Empty
Walled off

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Examples of Emotions (Primary & Secondary)

Dominant

Angry
Contempt
Arrogant
Right
Underlying Shame
Underlying fear of loss of control
Invisible

Withdrawer

Inadequate
Afraid of failure
Judged
Criticized
Afraid
Unsure
Shame
Unexpressed anger

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