

Emotionally Focused Therapy Interventions With Adult Individuals and Couples

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Meet the Presenter



Paul Greenman, PhD, CPsych, is an EFT therapist, supervisor, and trainer. In addition to providing services to clients at the Ottawa Couple and Family Institute (OCFI) and the family medicine unit of the Montfort Hospital in Ottawa, he is a full-time professor of psychology and former chair of the Department of Psychoeducation and Psychology at the Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO) in Gatineau, Québec. Paul has collaborated most recently with Sue Johnson and colleagues at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute on the development of the “Healing Hearts Together” program, which is an adaptation of “Hold Me Tight” groups for cardiac patients and their spouses.



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Disclosures

- I have no conflicts of interest to disclose.



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Learning Objectives

1. Describe how attachment science applies to clinical case conceptualization for work with individuals and couples in psychotherapy settings.
2. Apply macro- and microinterventions of the EFT model to individuals.
3. Apply macro- and microinterventions of the EFT model to couples.



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Overview

- 1) Synopsis of attachment science as it applies to individual and couple therapy in the EFT framework.
- 2) The “EFT Tango”
- 3) Basic EFT interventions
- 4) Emotionally focused individual therapy (EFIT)
- 5) Emotionally focused couple therapy (EFCT)
-Clinical vignettes



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Attachment

- **Seeking and maintaining contact with significant others (“attachment figures”) are innate tendencies that motivate human behaviour and ensure the survival of the species.**
 - *Dependence on others is necessary and persists throughout life.*
 - *Dependency resulting from secure attachment facilitates autonomy.*
- **Secure attachment provides protection (“safe haven”) and a secure base from which to explore the world.**
- **Insecure attachment is at the core of emotional distress.**
 - **Intrapsychic**
 - **Interpersonal**

(Johnson, 2019, 2020; Marganska et al., 2013; Marques et al., 2018; Nielsen, Lønfeldt, et al., 2017; Nielsen, Hageman, et al., 2019; O’Brien et al., 2019; van der Feltz-Cornelis et al., 2019)



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Attachment

- Accessibility and emotional sensitivity on the part of attachment figures (parents, friends, life partners) strengthen attachment bonds and provide emotional balance.
- Fear and uncertainty activate attachment needs.
- There are a limited number of attachment orientations.
 - Secure, insecure, disorganized
- Isolation and loss of attachment bonds are traumatic events, to which the person responds in a predictable way.
 - Anger, protest, clinging, depression/despair, detachment
- “Working models” of self and other

Dancing THE EFIT TANGO



The encountered figure in Move 3 can be:

- a therapist
- a part of self
- an imaginary other /often an attachment figure



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Basic EFT Interventions

- *Reflect* emotional experiences, interactions, behaviours, habitual ways of engaging others
- *Validate* habitual emotion regulation strategies, ways of perceiving, action tendencies, moments of blockage, attachment needs and fears, and related changes - the new dance steps.
- *Ask evocative questions* – unveil the usual ways of constructing experience. Review key moments in the process. Name and integrate elements of emotional experience. "What happens inside you when...?"
- *Use experiential elements* (repetition, images) to deepen client engagement.
- *Empathic conjectures*
- *Deepen* using “proxy voice.”
- *Reframes*
- *ENGAGED ENCOUNTERS (enactments)*



RISSSSSC

Repeat

Images

Simple

Slow

Soft

Somatic

Specific

Client's words



Emotionally Focused Individual Therapy (EFIT)



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Stages of EFIT

STAGE ONE: Stabilization

- Assessment & Treatment Goals using UP model (Barlow et al., 2018)
- Identify regulation patterns; models of self and other; negative cycles that prime distress, depression, and anxiety
- Assemble/Deepen — Access core “frightening, alien, and unacceptable” emotion
- Frame problem in terms of negative dramas with key others that trigger vulnerabilities and unmet needs, followed by constricted ways of addressing these.
 - This triggers and confirms negative patterns.

(Johnson, 2023)

Stages of EFIT

STAGE TWO: Restructuring Attachment-Models of Self and Other for Emotional Balance

- Deepen/Distill core fears, vulnerabilities, insecurities, and existential dilemmas
- Promote acceptance by self, key others
 - Real or representational
- Structure corrective emotional experiences
 - Acceptance of needs
 - Coherent, secure models of self and other

STAGE THREE: Consolidation

(Johnson, 2023)



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Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy (EFCT)



EFCT Stages and Steps

STAGE 1

- 1) Create an alliance and assessment
- 2) Identify the negative interaction cycle
- 3) Access underlying attachment related emotions
- 4) Reframe the problem in terms of the cycle and attachment emotions

STAGE 2

- 5) Own disowned needs, emotions and share
- 6) Promote acceptance and responsiveness
- 7) Ask for needs and wants - bonding

STAGE 3

- 8) Facilitate creation new solutions
- 9) Consolidate new cycles



Stages of EFCT

1

Stage I:

De-escalation

2

Stage II:

**Withdrawer re-
engagement and
pursuer softening**

3

Stage III:

**Consolidation and
integration**



Conclusions

- It's about attachment!
 - Emotional connection provides emotional balance.
- Five basic moves in therapy can lead to lasting change.



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

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Q&A



- We will now discuss questions that were submitted via the Q&A feature throughout the presentation.
- Due to time constraints, we will not be able to address every question asked.



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