EFT’s Attachment Injury Resolution Model (AIRM): The Path to Repairing Broken Bonds and Rebuilding Trust

Based on the work of Dr. Sue Johnson in Emotionally Focused Therapy - and a specific model of forgiveness and restoring trust.

Presented by: Lorrie Brubacher, M Ed, ICEEFT Certified Trainer with gratitude to Dr. Lillian Buchanan, co-developer of AIRM interactive video training program © 2014

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Following the presentation participants will be able to:

1. Describe love as an attachment Bond.
2. Identity the Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy stages of change.
3. Define the construct of an “Attachment Injury”
4. Identify key steps of the EFT Attachment Injury Resolution Model (AIRM) for forgiveness and rebuilding trust.
5. Recognize two key elements of how these steps are taken:
   a. Facilitating increasingly deeper levels of experiencing.
   b. Shaping enactments that create forgiveness and reconciliation.
Outline

1. Set the context:
   • Love is an attachment bond
   • EFCT Process for Repairing tattered and broken bonds.

2. Define the construct of “Attachment Injury”

3. Review the steps in the Attachment Injury Resolution Model (AIRM)

4. See the AIRM in action
   • deepening emotional experience
   • shaping healing enactments

www.iceeft.com  www.drsuejohnson.com

Emotionally Focused Therapy and the Revolutionary new Science of Romantic Relationships
website resources

www.gcceft.com  www.lbrubacher.com
Welcome

Founded in 1998 by Dr. Sue Johnson and her colleagues, in Ottawa, Canada, the Centre offers educational courses and training to mental health professionals (externships, workshops, core training etc.), provides certification for EFT therapists around the world and undertakes clinical research studies. ICEEFT works closely with its various affiliated EFT

“A life-changing book! Dr. Johnson elucidates the science of love, convincingly demonstrating the underlying emotional logic of relationships. It will enrich the lives of all who read it.”


(Published in the UK as The Love Secret)

“This is a fascinating, paradigm shifting book, impressive in its scope and depth and staggering in its implications for us all. It is a giant leap forward. It is also a great, fun read - enjoy!”

— Dr. Drew Pinsky on Love Sense
Welcome to the Greensboro Charlotte Center for Emotionally Focused Therapy

We welcome you to browse our site for information about Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT), upcoming EFT training opportunities and contact information of local EFT therapists.

Upcoming Events

- Monthly EFT in Action
- Four Day Introductory Externship in EFT
- Core Skills in EFT for Couples Advanced Training

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Become A More Effective Couples Therapist...  
Learn how to practice one of the most effective approaches to couples therapy.

Winnipeg Emotionally Focused Therapy Training

Emotionally Focused Therapy

The science of love and relationships is ushering in a new era for couple and family therapy. Based on the neuroscience of adult love, EFT is validated by 30 years of scientific research.

EFT is a short-term, structured and tested approach to reduce stress in adult love relationships and create more secure attachment bonds. It is also used with families.

Formulated in the 1980's EFT is growing in popularity across North America and internationally.

Research studies find that more than 70% of couples move from distress to recovery and approximately 90% show significant improvements.

Initial Training: Externships in Emotionally Focused Therapy (click here for details) next externship In fall of 2015, details pending.

Advanced Training:

2015 Core Skills Advanced Training Program in Emotionally Focused Therapy (click here for details)  
Begin March 23, 2015

Special Topics:
- Emotionally Focused Individual Therapy: February 9 – 10, 2016 in Winnipeg
- EFT's Model for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

All training:
- led by Dr. Susan Hiller, a founding EFT and the International Center for Externships in
Emotionally Focused Therapy for Couples
Dr. Sue Johnson

accompanying workbook

Emotionally Focused Therapy
Books for Couples by
Dr. Sue Johnson

Hold Me Tight

Love Sense
Attachment as a Theory of Love

As put forth by John Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth, Cindy Hazan and Phil Shaver

Attachment Theory:
Emotional accessibility and responsiveness are the key ingredients that define the security of a bond and the quality of a relationship.

The basic attachment questions about attachment needs:
– Can I count on you, depend on you?
– Will you respond to me when I need you?
– Do I matter?
– Do you need me?
– A.R.E. you there for me?

Accessible
Responsive
Emotionally Engaged
Love sense: The Revolutionary New Science of Romantic Relationships

- Adult romantic love is an attachment bond, just like the one between mother and child. p.20
- Emotional dependency has been pathologized, but effective dependence is our greatest source of strength. p. 21

The EFT Steps and Stages

Stage One: De-escalation

Stage Two: Restructuring the Bond (Beginning a new dance - unresolved attachment injuries are likely to come alive)

Stage Three: Consolidation
The EFT Steps and Stages
Stage One: De-escalation

Step 1. Alliance & Assessment

Step 2. Identify negative interactional cycle and attachment issues

Step 3. Access underlying emotions supporting reactive moves in the cycle.

Step 4. Frame problem – cycle, underlying attachment needs and fears

The EFT Steps and Stages
Stage Two: Restructuring the Bond

(Steps 5 - 7 are done twice - for the Withdrawer-Re-engagement process and the Blamer Softening process)

Step 5. Access implicit needs, fears, models of self. Deepen, distill and disclose

Step 6. Promote acceptance by other – expand dance

Step 7. Structure emotional engagement – express attachment needs – antidote /bonding events.
The EFT Steps and Stages
Stage Three: Consolidation

Step 8. Integrate new cycle with old problems -
Support the emergence of new solutions to
pragmatic issues and differences.

Step 9. Consolidate new, more responsive positions
and cycles and stories of secure attachment.

What is an attachment injury?

"One partner violates the expectation that the other will offer comfort and caring in times of danger and distress."

"That event changed everything between us.
"It just broke me."
"Never again can I trust him/her!"

• Redefines the relationship as insecure.
• Shatters the attachment bond
• A single event with a disproportionate influence that changes everything
An Attachment Injury

- An attachment injury is an event “where one partner violates the expectation that the other will offer comfort and caring in times of danger and distress.” (p.145, Johnson, Makinen and Millikin, 2001).

- Incidents in which one partner responds or fails to respond at times of urgent need seem to influence the quality of an attachment relationship disproportionately. (Simpson & Rholes, 1994).

- “What matters most to Pain Central is not the philosophical category a slight belongs to but the level of jeopardy it threatens ……… like a shattered knee or a scratched cornea, relationship ruptures deliver agony.” (p. 95, Lewis, Amini & Lannon, 2000, A General Theory of Love).

An Attachment Injury:

- a betrayal of trust or abandonment at a crucial moment of need

- a specific incident in which one partner is inaccessible and unresponsive in the face of the other partner’s urgent need for … support and caring.

- a relationship trauma that defines the relationship as insecure.

- “a single shattering events” - a “sudden snap” – Love Sense

- has “disproportionate influence” - changes everything

- “indelible imprint” (Herman) ptsd symptoms - only way out is through

- a “never again will I trust...” moment

- If unresolved, attachment injuries block the repair process and prevent development of trust and a safe and secure bond. – (Johnson, Makinen & Millikin, 2001)
The “Attachment Injury Resolution Model” (AIRM)

Johnson, Makinen & Millikin, (2001) developed a model in the Emotionally Focused Approach for resolving relationship injuries that block the process of relationship repair in couple therapy and validated the effectiveness of this AIRM.

The Attachment Injury Resolution Model is a Stage Two process. Attachment Injuries are acknowledged in the negative cycle in Stage One, and are resolved in Stage Two (after de-escalation and sufficient withdrawer engagement).

A model within a model - an 8 step repair process specifically addressing the injurious incident - a series of enactments between injured and injuring partners - reaching and responding

- a type of apology that has the capacity to restructure an attachment bond shattered by a “sudden snap” of broken trust.

AIRM
(Attachment Injury Resolution Model)

Therapist Focus and Interventions for each step in the process of Forgiveness and Resolution of an Attachment Injury
The 8 Steps of the AIRM

Cycle De-escalation Related to the Injury
1. *Injured partner* articulates injury & impact.
2. *Offending partner* may engage in reactive responses (minimizing, denying, defending, discounting).
3. *Injured partner* integrates narrative and emotion and accesses attachment fears and longings associated with injury event.
4. *Offending partner* understands significance of the event and acknowledges the partner’s pain and suffering.

The 8 Steps of the AIRM

New Cycles of Emotional Engagement - Forgiveness and Reconciliation
5. *Injured partner* moves toward a more integrated articulation of the injury and ties it to attachment bond.
6. *Offending partner* empathically engages, acknowledges responsibility and expresses empathy, regret and/or remorse.

Consolidation
7. *Injured partner* asks for reparative comfort & caring.
8. Bonding event which is an antidote to the traumatic experience. Relationship is redefined as a safe haven.
AIRM goes Beyond Forgiveness

Repairing injuries is much bigger than cognitive forgiveness and letting go of resentment.

Repairing an attachment injury is finding the willingness to risk again. The *Healing Injuries Conversation* is an emotional process to forgive the most important people in your life *and being willing to put yourself in their hands and trust again.*

AIRM goes beyond forgiveness to resolution and secure bonding.

The key element in the change process is how the therapist shapes emotionally engaged responsiveness between partners.

Case Illustration of AIRM through the entire process

Process questions the therapist is asking herself as she prepares for Attachment Injury Resolution:

- Is the couple sufficiently de-escalated?
- Is the offending partner sufficiently engaged to participate in the AIRM?
- Is the injured partner engaged with primary experience?
Heightening emotional engagement with R.I.S.S.S.C.

**R:** The therapist intentionally REPEATS key words and phrases for emphasis. “Emotional handles” = poignant emotion-laden words and phrases. “Crushed” or “feeling disregarded.” Repeating deepens the experience.

**I:** The therapist uses IMAGES or word pictures that evoke emotions more than abstract labels do.

**S:** The therapist frames responses to clients in SIMPLE, and succinct phrases.

**S:** The therapist speaks in a SLOW pace to deepen client’s emotional experiencing.

**S:** The therapist uses a SOFT, low, soothing tone of voice to create safety and to encourage.

**C:** The therapist orders, distils and uses CLIENTS’ words and phrases in a supportive and validating way.

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**Prerequisite: De-escalation Markers –**

**Partners:**

- recognize and own habitual positions in the cycle
- can access softer emotions underlying negative dance
- can link partner’s behaviour to their own behaviour and emotions
- can link own behaviour to partner’s behaviour and emotions
- have a coherent story of the negative cycle as their common enemy
- have a new picture of their partner - as more fearful than dangerous and uncaring
- can recognize the cycle and interrupt it together
- may still be angry and mistrusting, but not as hostile
Forgiveness and Reconciliation
Study Conclusions

• The general EFT model for resolving these impasses is valid.
• EFT can impact distress for these couples caught in forgiveness dilemmas.
• Change is stable.
• Compound injuries in less trusting couples – need more sessions.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation
Study Conclusions

Resolver couples (63%) showed
• More disclosing of needs, less blaming and withdrawing and significantly deeper levels of experiencing. (Parallels softening research)
• Significant improvement on DAS (Both in non-distressed range.) Significant improvements for forgiveness.
• Both groups reported less pain. No significant difference.
• Results stable at 3 years follow up

Non Resolvers showed
• No significant changes on DAS, forgiveness.
• Lower trust at outset.
• Compound injuries (Power of faith - Johnson & Talitman, 1977)
AIRM References


Thank you for attending this workshop on the EFT Attachment Injury Resolution Model!

For further training you may order the AIRM interactive video training program, created by L. Brubacher and L. Buchanan, available through www.iceeft and www.attachmentinjuryrepair.com
Tap into the Magic of the Forgiveness Process:
How to use an evidence-based approach to help your couples get unstuck

The AIRM (Attachment Injury Resolution Model) Training Program designed by Lillian Buchanan and Lorrie Brubacher is the first ever EFT interactive video training program. Dr. Sue Johnson and colleagues developed the EFT AIRM and validated its effectiveness for resolving relationship injuries that block repair in couple therapy.

- Observe and personally interact with the interventions and B steps of the AIRM Brief video clips illustrate the moment-to-moment process through each step of the model. Between clips are descriptions of the therapist’s intentions in each step of the model.
- Identify markers of readiness – de-escalation and withdraw engagement – for this repair process. Receive immediate feedback on your choices.
- Choose your own interventions and receive immediate feedback about the intervention the therapist was using.
- A variety of modalities of learning experiences are interspersed throughout.
- This self-study program can be used flexibly at your own pace and is also ideal for peer or supervisor-lead groups.
- Approved continuing education hours expected to be available soon.

The Attachment Injury Resolution Model (AIRM) Interactive Video Training Program is based on the work of Dr. Sue Johnson. The AIRM is a clearly delineated and empirically validated model in Emotionally Focused Therapy for resolving relationship injuries that block the process of relationship repair in couple therapy.

Endorsed by Dr. Sue Johnson and International Centre for Excellence in EFT

"Lillian and Lorrie have really tapped into great creativity here – therapists will really learn from this lovely creative program – so much work – love the mix of live sessions – text of sessions - didactic material – exercises and feedback on the screen. Well done – marvellous team of Brubacher and Buchanan..." - Dr. Sue Johnson

"You have made the attachment injury concept, which historically has been overlooked and/or minimized by therapists, come alive in a way that research can never do. " - Dr. Judy Makinen, Certified EFT Trainer

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