


The Hold Me *Tight*[™] Program



CONVERSATIONS For CONNECTION

Facilitators Guide *For Small Groups*

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www.holdmetight.com



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN EMOTIONALLY FOCUSED THERAPY

The educational form of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy

www.iceeft.com

To be used in conjunction with:

The book *Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love*, 2008; Little, Brown and Company, www.holdmetight.com

The DVD *Hold Me Tight: Conversations for Connection*

The DVD *Creating Relationships that Last: A Conversation with Dr. Sue Johnson*



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Preamble

Hold Me Tight: Conversations for Connection is an 8 session (two hours each session) educational program based on the theory and practice of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT). The first session focuses on the new science of love and what it teaches us. The next seven sessions focus on helping couples shape and use the seven conversations laid out in the book *Hold Me Tight (Hold Me Tight)*.

EFT is an empirically tested model of couple therapy that has shown excellent outcomes with many different kinds of couples. There is also follow-up research that demonstrates the lasting effects of EFT interventions, and research on precisely how change occurs in this approach. The practice of EFT reflects the many studies of adult attachment theory – an empirically based perspective that forms the basis for the emerging science of love and loving. Over the last two decades, EFT has developed as a systematic and powerfully effective approach to reducing relationship distress and helping couples to create trust and intimacy. The ultimate goal in EFT is to enable partners to not only reduce conflict and distance but to shape their relationship into a more loving secure bond. EFT is the first couple therapy to be based on a well defined and tested understanding of adult love. It has also shown positive results with couples who are dealing with particularly difficult problems, for example, where partners are trauma survivors, are caring for a chronically ill child, or are struggling with depression as well as relationship distress.

EFT views the central problem in a distressed relationship as the loss of secure emotional connection and the pattern of negative interactions that both reflects and perpetuates this loss. Compelling emotional signals that are meant to pull a partner closer or reduce conflict, become distorted and shaded with criticism, anger or apparent indifference. Negative spirals of interaction then erode trust and continually exacerbate each partner's natural

vulnerabilities and sense of isolation. EFT helps partners to take control of this negative dance and to clarify their emotional signals about attachment needs and fears in a way that encourages their partner to respond with love and compassion. A new emotional experience of secure connection, a sense that the other person can be Accessible, Responsive and Engaged (A.R.E.) transforms love relationships. Partners can then shape A.R.E. conversations that offer a positive answer to the key question, “Are you there for me?” Partners who are able to openly reach for and connect with each other can create the effective dependency that makes for a safe haven bond. This kind of bond promotes the growth and resilience of both individuals.

EFT is taught all over the world and has been adapted in clinical practice to clients from many different cultural groups and educational levels.

A list of books, articles, chapters, training tapes and studies on EFT can be found on www.iceeft.com. The clinical manual for EFT for couples is the book entitled ***The Practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy: Creating Connection***, by Sue Johnson, (2004, 2nd edition), Brunner/Routledge.