A Welcome from the Director

Sue Johnson

Welcome to our Special Issue of the EFT Community News, the ICEEFT newsletter that members receive four times each year. We encourage you to share this sample, our Special Issue, with your therapist colleagues who might be interested in learning more about EFT, Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy (EFCT) and ICEEFT.

Many of the articles in this issue are modified and updated versions of articles from previous newsletters and have been selected to give new readers general information and a taste of what the ICEEFT community is up to.

With over 2300 members, ICEEFT is a growing and thriving community of therapists who I am delighted to call my colleagues. Whether you are already an EFT enthusiast or just interested in learning more, I would like to invite you to join ICEEFT; you will receive regular newsletters and other benefits such as reduced prices on training videos. I hope that you will enjoy reading this issue.

Vision Statement
ICEEFT is the home and centre for mental health professionals committed to expanding Emotionally Focused Therapy in the world and creating a professional network for those interested in this model.

Featured Articles

1. A Welcome from the Director
   Sue Johnson
2. What is EFT?
3. Leading Edge of EFT
   Sue Johnson
4. ICEEFT Mission Statement, Brief History & General Membership Requirements & Benefits
5. EFT Summits
   Jim Thomas, Leanne Campbell & David Fairweather
6. Emotionally Focused Family Therapy – EFFT
   Gail Palmer
7. Images & Metaphors: The North Wind & the Traveler
   Alison Lee
8. Learn & Grow as an EFT Therapist
   Douglas Tilley & Robert Solley, with Veronica Kallos-Lilly
9. The Role of A.R.E. in the Hold Me Tight® Educational Program
   Kristy Kosser
10. Using Hold Me Tight in Couple Therapy
    Douglas Tilley
11. Therapist Toolbox: Using Attachment Based Reflection to Help De-Escalation
    Rebecca Jorgensen
12. ICEEFT is “International”
    Yolanda von Hockauf
13. EFT Training DVDs
    Lorrie Brubacher
14. Attachment Pearl
    Sue Johnson
15. Contacts – EFT Centers, Communities & ICEEFT-Affiliated Organizations
What is EFT?

...Emotionally Focused Therapy

Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) is usually a short term (8-20 sessions), structured approach to couple therapy originally formulated in the early 80’s by Drs. Sue Johnson and Les Greenberg. EFT is also used with families and individuals. Dr. Johnson further developed EFT to blend attachment theory with systems theory and experiential therapy and there now exists a substantial body of research outlining its effectiveness. Research studies find that 70-75% of couples move from distress to recovery and approximately 90% show significant improvements. The major contraindication for EFT is on-going violence in the relationship. EFT is being used with many different kinds of couples in private practice, university training centres and hospital clinics and many different cultural groups throughout the world. These distressed couples include partners suffering from disorders such as depression, post traumatic stress disorders and chronic illness.

Strengths of Emotionally Focused Therapy:

- EFT is based on clear, explicit conceptualizations of marital distress and adult love. These conceptualizations are supported by empirical research on the nature of marital distress and adult attachment.
- EFT is collaborative and respectful of clients, combining experiential Rogerian techniques with structural systemic interventions.
- Change strategies and interventions are specified. Key moves and moments in the change process have been mapped into nine steps and three change events.
- EFT has been validated by 30 years of empirical research. There is also research on the change processes and predictors of success. Visit the EFT Research page at www.iceeft.com for more information.
- EFT has been applied to many different kinds of problems and populations.

The Leading Edge of EFT

In the world of research, EFT continues to lead the way. In terms of the gold standard set out by bodies such as APA for psychotherapy research, EFT epitomizes the very highest level set out by this standard. Over the last 25 years, the EFT research program has systematically covered all the factors set out in optimal models of psychotherapy research.

Several research projects deserve special mention. The recently completed Ottawa study to show that EFT can change the security of the bond between couples was very successful, as was the accompanying brain scan study showing that with EFT, we can change the way partners’ brains respond to contact comfort and perceive threat. As John Bowlby told us, a felt sense of security makes the world a safer place. After EFT, women’s brains seem to be significantly less reactive to the threat of electric shock when their husbands, now a safe haven cue, hold their hands. Another study in Ottawa examined the process of change in
couples struggling with the forgiveness of injuries and found results similar to the other 8 studies of change in EFT. My colleague, Dr. Wayne Denton, reported positive findings in his study of EFT with depressed couples and the outcomes on EFT with distressed couples who struggle with second stage breast cancer.

A pilot study using EFT with military veterans was completed at the Baltimore, Maryland, Veteran’s Administration and is now in review. There is also an active group of EFT therapists in the VA hospitals in the USA who continue, with the help of colleagues such as Dr. Kathryn Rheem, to offer EFT to traumatized soldiers and their partners. EFT continues to reach new populations and these studies, among others, continue to solidify EFT’s research base and provide EFT clinicians with a solid foundation for clinical practice.

Recently, two exciting new training DVD’s were completed; one *EFT in Action*, focuses on EFT with war vets. The other, *EFT with Same Sex Couples*, shows EFT practice with a gay male couple and a lesbian couple.

Now in 20 languages, my book *Hold Me Tight* (HMT) continues to reach new couples every day. The Relationship Education and Enhancement Program which includes the HMT book, a Facilitator’s Guide and the DVD, *Hold Me Tight, Conversations for Connection*, a program for groups (couples and individuals) is being used successfully in many countries throughout the world. Research about its efficacy is underway in North America and Europe. European trainers, such as Berry Aarnoudse, are conducting training groups for therapists who wish to lead HMT groups.

Enormously successful conferences such as the amazing 2012 EFT Summit in New York continue to inspire us all. The recent 2011 and 2013 Netherlands conferences on EFT, Neuroscience and Attachment were both stellar events that offer leading edge discoveries to therapists. In 2013, I was very honored to share the podium, for example, with Gallese and Fogassi who were part of the team who discovered mirror neurons.

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A new book for the public will be out in January 2014. *Love Sense – The Revolutionary New Science of Romantic Relationships*, is my attempt to show the world how far we have come in our understanding of adult love and our ability to shape these relationships.

I invite you to visit the ICEEFT site for a more comprehensive description of EFT events and research. We are, every day, learning, discovering and growing as a model and a community.

Sue Johnson
Certified EFT Supervisor & Trainer
Director of ICEEFT & OCFI
ICEEFT Mission Statement

ICEEFT serves as a centre of excellence for the promotion of secure, resilient, and successful relationships between partners and within families. Our mission includes the further expansion and refinement of the Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) model through process and outcome research. Another aspect of our mission is to educate health professionals and to increase public awareness about the efficacy of EFT and its role in strengthening relationship bonds.

A Brief History of ICEEFT

In 1998, Sue Johnson and a core group of her EFT colleagues decided to open the Ottawa Couple and Family Institute (OCFI) with the goal of having like minded therapists provide services to the Ottawa community, as well as to create a home for EFT research and training.

Over the next several years, the Institute was expanded by adding therapists, initiating various research studies and increasing EFT training programs. We developed a structure to specify requirements to certify EFT therapists, supervisors and trainers. We instituted a Listserv to provide a forum to connect and share ideas and questions for people who had taken an EFT Externship and wanted to stay in touch with this new EFT Community. We also created a Directory of therapists, supervisors and trainers and Sue developed several EFT training DVD’s.

With the continuing growth of all aspects of the Institute, we decided in 2004 to split the organization. The OCFI was incorporated to provide EFT therapy services to the Ottawa community whereas research, educational courses and EFT training became the focus of the new International Centre for Excellence in Emotionally Focused Therapy (a not-for-profit corporation). In the interest of efficiency and cost effectiveness, OCFI continues to provide administrative services for ICEEFT.

In the summer of 2008, the EFT Trainers met for the first annual retreat near Ottawa to assess the current state of our organization and to look at future possibilities. Discussions focused on how to enhance, grow and formally expand ICEEFT further. From that retreat we took a leap forward to create a general membership of ICEEFT and to invite all those who have completed an EFT Externship to become more involved. For those interested but not yet having taken an externship, an associate level of membership was added in 2011. In 2013, there are over 2300 members. Our newsletter - The EFT Community News - was launched in spring of 2009 and has subsequently been published quarterly.

General Membership Requirements & Benefits

The General Membership is open to anyone who has undertaken an approved EFT Externship. Associate membership is available to anyone. The Board and Trainers of ICEEFT want to expand ICEEFT, to facilitate greater communication and sharing within the EFT therapy community, and provide an opportunity for greater networking and growth of EFT in general. You are invited to join and grow with us.

To become a member, an online application form is available for viewing on the ICEEFT website.
Benefits of membership include:

- Quarterly electronic / printable newsletters & access to archives
- Discounts for conference (Summit) registration (15%)
- Discounts for purchase of training DVD’s (15%)
- Listing on the website Directory (optional / not available to Student and/or Associate Members)
- Opportunities for volunteer involvement on Committees or other ICEEFT initiatives
- Invitation to submit questions, EFT tips or items for publication in our newsletter.
- Attend periodic free webinars with EFT Trainers
- Be part of the EFT Listserv (option not available to Associate Members)

EFT Summits

Emotionally Focused Therapy has been the nucleus of three conferences so far. The first EFT Summit was held in Ottawa, Canada in May, 2006, organized by the International Centre for Excellence in Emotionally Focused Therapy and supported by the Ottawa Couple and Family Institute. Over 300 EFT therapists came to hear from Sue Johnson and her colleagues about the growing world of EFT: theory and practice; experiences with various populations; trainings; research; and future directions. It was at this initial summit that Sue delivered the landmark plenary address: “A New Era for Couple Therapy: Theory, Research and Practice in Concert,” which was published the following year in the Journal of Systemic Therapies and has since been included in the cd of articles for every externship participant. The success of the event led to an agreement at the 2008 EFT Trainers Retreat that ICEEFT, working with affiliated Centers, would coordinate future periodic EFT Summits. In addition to EFT, these conferences would include prominent plenary speakers whose work included complementary and/or interesting perspectives that gave EFT therapists a valuable sense of where EFT fit into the larger picture of current psychotherapy and neuroscience.

In bright sunny San Diego, close to 400 therapists converged on the Doubletree Golf Resort for 3 days of EFT heaven in January, 2010. Organized by the San Diego Center for Emotionally Focused Therapy and co-sponsored by the International Centre for Excellence in Emotionally Focused Therapy, the Summit provided attendees with a unique opportunity to discuss, practice and deepen learning in EFT principles and practices.

From Sue Johnson’s electrifying opening plenary remarks (which propelled the crowd into chants of “Sue, Sue” like a group of Springsteen fanatics shouting “Bruce”), the tone was set. What became obvious early in the Summit was the shared focus on the 4 P’s of EFT: Present-Moment, Primary Affect, Process and Position. In both the workshops and in discussions at break, while taking walks or dining together, or evenings in the bar, everyone shared a presence in the moment not often found in day-to-day interactions. What fun to interact with colleagues who practice experiential therapy and

Editor’s Note: Thanks to EFT Trainers Jim (2010), and Leanne & David (2012), for contributions to this article, which is based on their previously published articles in past newsletters. And special thanks to Robin Williams Blake (Toronto), our unofficial/official photographer!
retain that full presence in their daily lives! The combination of mindfulness and authenticity in our EFT community was wonderful to experience firsthand.

Comfort with experiencing and expressing primary affect also stood out among the attendees. In our many discussions outside of the workshops, EFT’ers shared from their professional and personal lives with a refreshing ease and grace.

Certainly everyone there was interested in and focused on process and positions. Some folks shared hearty laughter, poking fun at their own attachment styles and attachment dances in life and in the moment. We thrilled to hear trainers such as Jim Furrow and Brent Bradley breaking down the “nemesis” in EFT, Blamer Softenings. There were workshops that provided insight on working with diverse populations, including an exploration of unique factors that could impact gay and lesbian couple’s attachment dance and add layers of pain and possibility to their cycle. Jim Coan captivated the crowd while sharing research on the neurobiology of attachment. Now that is not an easy task, to interest clinicians in “brain” research, but he made tangible what we all experience with couples and families everyday in our work. When Barry McCarthy and Sue Johnson got into a friendly debate about attachment and sexual intimacy, everyone knew that they were all in the right place at the right time.

Yet, there were a few more P’s of EFT, or shall we say, about EFT’ers to be discovered at the Summit. Obvious was the passion. From the presenters to each attendee, the enthusiasm for this view of human relationships, the focus on attachment, and the possibilities that arise from helping people deepen their connection to those they care most about, were palpable. From an attendee who said, “I love this stuff!” to veteran trainers whose zeal for sharing their knowledge and eagerness to keep exploring the depths of this model, it was clear that the ICEEFT community practices EFT with gusto. Secondly, there was the P of purpose. It was invigorating talking with fellow clinicians who find a deeper purpose in their profession, and often in their personal lives, by engaging fully with the EFT and EFFT approach to relationships. Finally, there is the P of possibility. Presenters and fellow attendees often focused on the possibilities for couples and families rather than on some underlying pathology or limitation. Indeed, this can be taken for granted in the EFT community, but compared to other conferences, this non-pathologizing focus was significant. Whether this comes from Sue’s own determination to see what is possible rather than being limited by what is on the surface, the optimism that EFT therapists bring to their work, or some interaction between the model and our own inner nature, EFT therapists clearly believe in their clients’ innate need for and ability to create connection. Truly, a great conference!
And then there was New York City in July, 2012, starting with the warm welcome at the Roosevelt Hotel. Members of the New York EFT Center were out in full force to orient and make all 550 EFT attendees feel safe and secure in the big city.

From Sue’s inspiring opening speech to a procession of powerful keynote speakers – each with their own individual takes on central issues of love, relationships, emotions, and connection – to the complementary splendor of thoughtful and passionate presentations by EFT enthusiasts from near and afar, the excitement was constant and the appreciation to be able to attend such a special event was universal.

Beautiful, moving moments and nuggets of wisdom:

“You build a fort around your heart to protect you, but as time goes on it’s almost like that fort turns into a jail…Couples need to build the muscle memory to have that authentic conversation from a primary deeper place …” (George Faller).

“Emotions are our internal GPS…Being self-reliant leaves little room for effective dependence…You need to help each partner to lean in to the mistrust rather than run away…Your goal is to help each of them to go from hard eyes to soft eyes” (Kathryn Rheem).

“Depression is a logical consequence of separation / distress / loss” (Sue Johnson).

Other highlights included the “living room scene” where the keynote speakers, Sue Johnson, Phil Shaver, Dan Hughes, and Diana Fosha, gathered together, sharing and revealing poignant moments in their own lives that helped guide their personal and professional development and what brought them to the places where they are today.

At what other conference could a tango champion dance with a psychoanalyst only to have Dr. Sue Johnson cut in (at the coaxing of a standing-room-only crowd) and move with an attuned grace and flow that words cannot easily describe?

From the excitement and chaos and vigor of the city that never sleeps to the grounding, quiet, solid power that is the essence of EFT, everyone was bonded together by a common respect and appreciation for its powerful process and the magic that it so often brings to couples in distress and despair. It was a privilege to be a part of it!

We can’t wait! ...Planning has started for the next EFT Summit in 2015. Dates and location will be announced by the fall of 2013 or early 2014.

Hamming it up in NYC – Shelley Dell, George Faller & Kathryn Rheem (2012).

The crowd does the EFT Hand Dance (2012).
While EFT for couples has become the chosen method of intervention for thousands of therapists internationally, the application of the model in the context of family, is in a relatively embryonic stage of development. It seems that therapists encouraged with the results they see with their couples are eager to learn about EFFT so that they can treat their families with the same approach. Literature on EFFT can be found in chapters in Creating Connection (2004) and The Workbook (2005) and a handful of other articles (please see www.iceeft.com). Research is currently limited to one small pilot study (Johnson, Maddeau and Blouin, 1998) which compared EFFT with group treatment in families with an eating disordered family member. The results of this study were promising in that the findings revealed that EFFT was effective in reducing 44% of bingeing and 67% of vomiting symptoms.

EFT therapists who are skilled in the Steps and Stages of the model with couples can apply the same skills to families. The structure of the sessions differs, however, in that the EFFT therapist moves from assessing the family as a whole to creating the change in dyadic conversations and then consolidating the change with the larger family group. The EFFT therapist needs to be able to carefully assess the needs of each family member and establish compatible goals between family members to then determine how the dyadic sessions will unfold through the therapy process. This often requires flexibility and openness from the therapist as she/he tunes in to the family’s needs and structures the sessions accordingly. For example, one particular dyad may require more sessions than another grouping, and the EFFT therapist works with each dyad until the goal of a stronger, more secure bond is attained.

Stage one work helps the family redefine their presenting problem from either that of the identified patient, which is most commonly a child, or a more general perception of the family being a failure, to seeing the problem as the negative interactional cycle which creates family disconnection and fuels symptomology. With cycle de-escalation, the family members are then better able to have affiliative conversations that are often centered around loss, repair and reaching for comfort and support. This ultimately leads to feelings of cohesion, belonging and security for family members.

The primary difference in working with families in Stage 2 is the influence of the hierarchy and the
need for parental responsiveness toward the children. In families, the parent/child dyad is a reciprocal attachment in that both influence and shape each other but it is not a mutual give and take relationship. Generally, then in Stage 2, parents need to be engaged and/or softened before the child takes the risk to be more emotionally vulnerable with their parent. Parents may need individual sessions to help initiate the responsive attachment behaviours towards their children through exploring their own attachment histories and emotional blockages.

This is an exciting time in the development of EFFT as we see more families with a host of diverse struggles, at various stages of development in the life cycle, in a variety of constellations and with varied and distinct populations. Attachment is the overarching perspective that helps unite these groups and guides the therapist to provide their family clients with their best practice. EFFT is the map for how to facilitate and engage families in building their own safe haven. We can expect that in the future, as practicing EFFT therapists, researchers and teachers, we will continue to clarify and expand that map.

Gail Palmer, MSW, RMFT
Certified EFT Supervisor & Trainer
Co-Director, ICEEFT and OCFI Inc.

Images & Metaphors: The North Wind & the Traveler

A traveler was walking alone down a country lane. The Sun and the North Wind decided to have a contest, to see who could remove the traveler’s overcoat first. The North Wind tried first. He blew and he blew around the traveler as fiercely as he could, trying to rip the coat from the traveler. But the traveler wrapped his coat more closely around him and held it tighter. The more the wind blew, the tighter the traveler hugged the coat. The Sun said: “Let me try,” and as he gently shone his warmth on the traveler, the traveler opened his coat and within minutes took it off.

Arlene had had an affair that had ended nine months ago and Gerald had been struggling to understand why it happened and also to manage his fear that he would lose his wife. When he thought about the affair, he flew into a rage of berating and questioning Arlene, often until late into the night. Arlene had had difficulty with Gerald’s anger for years; she learned to shut down and pull away when she felt his anger. The more he was angry, the more she shut down and since the affair, this cycle was controlling their relationship.

In the therapy session, Gerald expressed an expectation that his wife would voluntarily open up and discuss her feelings about her former lover – Was she still thinking of him? Was she missing him? Was he in danger of losing her? He had difficulty seeing that Arlene was afraid to do this, because she feared initiating anything that might trigger a cycle.

The therapist used the story of the North Wind and the Traveler to help him understand the cycle that the couple got caught in, and how the environment it created was not conducive to her ‘taking off her coat’ and broaching this dangerous subject.

Alison Lee, Ph.D., Psych.
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Learn and Grow as an EFT Therapist

The following is a combination of two different articles by Doug and Robert, previously published in the ICEEFT newsletter, that suggests various ways to learn and grow as an EFT Therapist. A special thank you to Veronica Kallos-Lilly for editing them into one article.

Read Books, Chapters, and Articles on EFT
Numerous books have been written on EFT. *Hold Me Tight* is written for couples to read themselves. *The Practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy: Creating Connection* and *Becoming an Emotionally Focused Couple Therapist: The Workbook* and the *Emotionally Focused Casebook* are basic texts for learning the process and interventions in EFT. There are more than 100 articles and book chapters on the theory, practice and research on EFT. Visit www.iceeft.com for a complete list of readings on EFT and click on publications.

Contact Local Centers in EFT
Contact your local EFT Center or Community to find out about resources and events in your area. A list of EFT centers and communities can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

Take EFT Training Leading Toward Certification
- Externship in EFT (the basic, initial 4-day course in EFT)
- Core Skills Training (advanced training in EFT)
- Group and Individual Consultation in EFT, also offered long distance

Contact local centers for a list of their training events or go to www.iceeft.com and click on EFT Training Events.

Join ICEEFT
The membership requirements and benefits of joining are listed on pages 4-5. To join, go to www.iceeft.com and click on the ICEEFT member page.

Watch EFT Training DVDs
An excellent way to get the feel of EFT and learn the interventions is to watch the training videos of couple sessions. See the article on pages 13-14 and/or visit www.iceeft.com for information on available EFT training DVDs.

Reach Out to Your Local Colleagues
Find – or start – a peer study or consultation group in EFT in your community. Groups are fabulous! They provide connection and camaraderie to offset the often isolated environment of private practice, as well as being perhaps one of the best ways to practice, discuss and maintain skills. Reviewing cases together, especially with video, can really bond the group and provide enjoyable and productive reinforcement of the EFT material. You will find that EFTers are friendly, caring and validating folks. If you have a group you meet with already and other members are interested or involved with EFT, then consider making EFT a specific focus. You could seek out existing EFT groups, or start your own. People from the trainings are often open to the idea of being part of a group.

Email Groups
These could be seen as a variation of consultation groups. You can use the EFT listserv, and/or start your own groups with your training colleagues. This forum is particularly useful for those who are in remote locations or have other limitations to being part of a live group.

Review Your Notes
I keep my EFT training notes and handouts by my office chair and review them occasionally during the...
weeks between trainings. I browse them to refresh my memory but I also find it especially helpful and reassuring when I’m feeling vulnerable—for example, when that tough couple is coming in and I need a little extra support. From time to time I cull through my notes, marking my favorite parts with a highlighter. I also include inspirational quotes, like Sue’s “Go into the primary feelings, stay there, walk around in them [and then do the enactment].” Applying the EFT Case Conceptualization form from the EFT Workbook is another way to keep the EFT model alive between training sessions.

Hone Specific Skills
Pick a particular skill or area you want to improve and set a time frame to concentrate on that skill. For instance, “This week I’ll focus on identifying attachment needs and reframes.” Both the time frame (per week, per session, per day) and the particular skill can be varied according to your goals. Some general categories for practice might include things to observe, things to listen for, and interventions (including cycle tracking). You can also customize this technique according to what you think would be most helpful to focus on with individual couples in your practice. With a couple that has a hard time identifying primary emotions, you might want to really attend to primary emotion in their session. Or for a couple with a complicated cycle, you might want to draw and fill in the layers of the infinity loop to provide clarity.

Review Recordings
Ever wish you could rewind part of a session and do it over? Well now you can! If you record sessions (which of course is highly recommended), take time to review your recordings on your own. This can be a great way to practice with less performance anxiety than live in the room, while still working with the real interactions of your clients. You can practice most things that you could do in a live session while re-experiencing while watching the recording. You could review a session just looking for attachment needs or primary emotions. You could think of alternate interventions, how you might have “stacked” more interventions than you did, or reflect on choice points in the session and how you may have responded differently, etc. Reviewing difficult sessions can be especially helpful. If you gain some insights that would be helpful or reparative to the couple, you can even come back to them in a subsequent session and do it over for real! But watch for negative cycles with yourself!!! Be accepting of your own learning process, the mistakes, missed opportunities, and detours along the way. The more compassionate you can be with yourself, the more you can be open, curious, and willing to take new risks – and the more growth you will experience.

Lead a Hold Me Tight relationship enhancement group with couples
The HMT group Facilitator’s Guide, books and live couple demonstration DVDs are available at www.iceeft.com under the Hold Me Tight® menu.

Hopefully, you will find some of these ideas helpful to carry on the momentum of those fantastic trainings.

Douglas Tilley, LCSW-C
Certified EFT Supervisor & Trainer
Annapolis, MD

Robert Solley, Ph.D.
San Francisco, CA

ICEEFT Facts
- There are 30 ICEEFT affiliated Centers, Communities & Organizations (see the listing on page 20)
- There are currently over 2300 ICEEFT members
- There are 30 Certified EFT Trainers
- There are over 250 Certified EFT Therapists worldwide
The Role of A.R.E. in the *Hold Me Tight®* Educational Program

Some of the major principles and messages elucidated in the book *Hold Me Tight* surround the questions: a) are you Accessible to me? b) are you Responsive to me? and c) will you Engage with me? These questions are alluded to through the acronym A.R.E. In couple therapy, as well as in the *Hold Me Tight* Educational Program (HMT group), the goal is to help couples become more Accessible, Responsive, and Engaged with one another. As the conversations in the HMT groups evolve, so does the role of the facilitator. Based on the principles of the A.R.E. questions, the facilitator has the opportunity to model what each couple is learning by being accessible, responsive, and engaged with each couple throughout the process of the eight weeks.

In my experience facilitating these groups, I have been able to see how my actions have mirrored the importance of the acronym A.R.E. which is shared below.

**Accessible**
I like leading a HMT group with a smaller number of couples because it allows me to model accessibility to each of the couples first hand. Even though the group is designed for non-distressed couples, there is a lot of risk involved during the in-class exercises, especially if the topic touches an unresolved raw spot. Just as we would not expect a partner to risk exploring and discussing his or her fears alone in therapy, it becomes important that through our presence, we create some level of safety for the couples in the group so that we are not setting them up to face it alone. This is especially true during in-class exercises when things in a conversation may take an unexpected turn. As a facilitator, I do “check ins” and spend a few minutes with each couple during the exercises. This may consist of reflecting and validating if they are getting “stuck” or evoking and heightening if they are on the cusp of reaching for one another. However, if new and difficult emotions or raw spots emerge and the couple is suddenly paralyzed in fear and despair, the facilitator might have to take a few minutes to help create the safety necessary for the couples to reconnect. To me, this seems like a lovely opportunity to model accessibility within a small group, not only physically with the couple, but as a safe presence while they wrestle with new and possibly difficult emotions and find a way to reconnect again.

**Responsive**
In these groups, being responsive goes hand-in-hand with accessibility. Not only are we encouraging our group members to share and risk with each other during the in-class exercises, we are also asking them to do the same within the large group. There are several instances when couples are invited to voluntarily respond or share with the larger group about their own experiences. For some, it proves to be no big deal, but for others it is quite a leap. As the couples in the group begin to share and lean on each other, not only during the in-class exercises but also during discussions, it opens up the opportunity for the facilitator or other group members to become responsive to each member’s needs. It can be a simple reflection from the facilitator to a partner in an in-class exercise such as, “That was really hard for you to say” or “This seems difficult for...
you to digest”. This lets each partner observe and feel what it is like to be responded to. It goes back to the attachment question, “Will you be there for me when I really need you?” and a facilitator is able to help that answer be “yes” for each couple, as well as the entire group.

Engaged
As a facilitator, not only do you have to be accessible and responsive, but you also have to be engaged and emotionally present with each couple and the group. Group members need to know that you value who they are individually and as a couple, and that their relationship is important to you. They need to know you are committed to staying with them as a couple and as a group throughout the eight weeks – remaining open, providing safety, and being there when they really need you.

Listed above are a few of the pivotal things I learned as I began facilitating these groups. Although groups may differ according to age, number of participants, location, etc., a constant for the therapist with every group is to allow him/herself to lead while still being emotionally present with the members and to realize that what truly matters is to be with the group during this process. It can be easy to get caught up in the content of the group, just like in therapy; however, in my experience, it is the facilitator’s slowing down and being accessible, responsive and engaged, that will really help the couples deepen their connection during the program.

Kristy Koser, M.A.
Certified EFT Therapist
Harrisonburg, VA

Hold Me Tight® Relationship Education and Enhancement Program

The Hold Me Tight®: Conversations for Connection Program is comprised of the following:

- The DVD Hold Me Tight®: Conversations for Connection
- The DVD Creating Relationships that Last: A Conversation with Dr. Sue Johnson
- The Facilitator’s Guide for the Hold Me Tight®: Conversations for Connection Program (includes a CD with digital versions of PowerPoint slides, handouts and a flyer template)

Hold Me Tight®: Conversations for Connection is an 8 session (two hours each session) or weekend format educational program based on the theory and practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy (EFCT). 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.

For more information or to purchase, please visit www.iceeft.com
Using *Hold Me Tight* in Couple Therapy

Mary walked into my consultation room waving a turquoise-colored book high above her head, exclaiming, “I love this book! “Yes,” I said, joining her. “My wife and I have eaten many of those recipes.” Mary looked at me, very confused, looked back at the book, saw what she was holding and burst out laughing. She was holding in her hand a copy of *The South Beach Diet* (also in a turquoise book jacket), which she had picked up by mistake. “Oh, I meant to bring *Hold Me Tight*! I love that book – it really puts into words so many of the things I’ve been feeling for years. We have been stuck in this terrible dance and I’ve felt alone and disconnected, and we don’t confide our feelings to each other.”

I had given *Hold Me Tight* to Mary and her husband at our first therapy session. Over the years, couples have asked me if I could recommend a good book for them to read to help them with their marriage. So I was glad when *HMT* came out and I could whole-heartedly recommend a book from an EFT perspective. Since we know that the power of EFT is in working with the here and now process, I didn’t really see how any book could improve this process or impact the outcome. But as couples gave me feedback about how it was helping them, I started giving a copy of *Hold Me Tight* to all couples I see in therapy. In the beginning I wondered: Would partners read it? Would they identify with it? I never imagined that it might be useful in moving the treatment process forward, but I have found exactly that.

Now, within the first few sessions of treatment, I usually ask couples the question, “If I give you a book to read that may help us in therapy, will you read it?” Only one couple has said no. With several couples, one partner, most often the husband, says he doesn’t read much and isn’t sure. But to my surprise most partners, including most of the men, were eager to read it. Many partners did not read the whole book, but many did, and most read much of the book. A surprising number of couples bring the book to each session.

My impression is that *HMT* enhances the therapy process in the following ways:

1) *HMT* helps couples build a personal model of “secure attachment.” With many couples, one or both partners have never had the experience of being securely attached, either while growing up or in their present life. By reading *HMT*, partners can sample the experience of other couples and relate it to their own experience. Often, when reading the book, partners see how relying and depending on another is part of healthy development and living, and they begin to accept it as part of their own relationship.

2) *HMT* helps couples identify cycles and patterns of negative interaction. The first comment I get from many couples about the book is that their “dance” is a lot like the dance of one of the couples described in the book. This creates an easy segue into assisting the couple in exploring their own cycle and the underlying painful experience.

3) *HMT* provides couples with a language for understanding their primary emotional experience. One female partner announced that she couldn’t relate to all the talk in the book about vulnerability and fears and went on to announce that, in her words, her “primary emotion” was anger and that she just didn’t feel fear. Several weeks later she
had become more engaged through the therapy sessions with her painful underlying experience, especially her fears of abandonment. In the session, after thinking about her life and reflecting on the book, she revealed that she now realized that her desires to be close increased her sense of vulnerability and fear and that her anger was just her protective defense. In this case HMT gave her a language to help her explore and understand what she was feeling and doing.

4) HMT can provide a sense of structure to the therapy process. The power of EFT is in reprocessing emotional experience and shaping new interactions, not in simply doing a series of tasks or exercises. However, some couples are very vocal about wanting a definite structure for the therapy process. They not only want the therapist to be clear about his/her treatment direction but they want a tangible process that they can see and understand. Integrating the book into the treatment process is easy to do and gives the couple a concrete direction and set of steps, while allowing the therapist the flexibility to help the couple process their ongoing emotional experience and to initiate new interactions using the conversations in the book. Indeed, the conversations in HMT flow in the same direction as the nine steps of EFT.

5) While therapists don’t like to admit it, we all can lose focus and, as a result, lose momentum in this process-oriented therapy. When lost, therapists can use HMT to bring them back to content that can be a door back into working with the experiential process.

6) Finally, a big advantage of using HMT in therapy is that, between sessions, the couple has a voice keeping them focused on their negative cycle, their underlying fears and longings, and a model for a way out of their pain. Now that I have been using HMT in my work with couples, I don’t know how I ever got along without it. I hope you will enjoy using it too.

Douglas Tilley, LCSW-C
Certified EFT Supervisor & Trainer
Annapolis, MD
Using Attachment Based Reflection to Help De-Escalation

Change occurs in EFT in two main ways, through partners’ new understanding of relational distress and through corrective emotional experiences. In de-escalation this new understanding externalizes the problem to the cycle rather than each partner villainizing the other.

Sue often quotes Rogers saying, “A good reflection is not a repetition, it is a revelation.” In EFT what we reveal during de-escalation with a good reflection is the emotional experience at two levels, secondary and primary, framed in attachment significance. The expression of attachment based emotional experience is new to therapists learning EFT. While we come in to this process masterful at listening and reflecting, Emotionally Focused Therapy calls to us to reflect emotion based in relationship significance and interaction patterns. This is new languaging and like any new language takes practice to master.

Here are a few examples of good reflections and how those reflections change when they are attachment based:

Example 1
Client says: “When I try to do something for her and see I’ve disappointed her it hurts (holding chest) and I get frustrated. I take it as much as I can and then I go away.”

Therapist reflecting emotion: “It’s like your heart aches and you just can’t take it, so you go away.”

Therapist reflecting emotion with attachment base: “You want so much to please her. When you see her look disappointed in you it’s too much, it hurts, right there in your heart. You try to stay and it gets frustrating to have disappointed her again. The message that you’ve disappointed her again is just too much, so you go away.”

Example 2
Client says: “It’s always about her. She just goes off and does her own thing like nothing I feel is important. It’s like it’s her way or the highway. I just get so angry.”

Therapist reflecting emotion: “It seems like nothing you feel is important and you get so very angry.”

Therapist reflecting emotion with attachment base: “You want so much to know you’re important and it seems like you can’t get through to her. When she does her own thing it’s like you might not matter at all. In those moments you feel so unimportant and then you just get angry.”

In the negative cycle, attachment based emotion reflects fears of abandonment and rejection. These fears are often expressed in themes of finding the other unresponsive, being unvalued or inadequate, feelings of loss or aloneness, and experiencing a lack of safety and support. In essence, attachment based emotion reflects themes based on unmet attachment needs. The basic attachment needs are to have a felt sense of acceptance, belonging, comfort and safety.

As you reflect your clients’ attachment based emotions during de-escalation, you will reflect both secondary and primary affect emphasizing the relational significance. This will help your clients externalize the negative cycle and to understand the fears and unmet needs that drive it so they can achieve de-escalation faster.

Rebecca Jorgensen, PhD
Certified EFT Supervisor & Trainer
TRI EFT Alliant
ICEEFT is International!

Yolanda von Hockauf

EFT is expanding around the world! As of this writing, EFT trainings of various kinds have occurred in:

- Australia
- Belgium
- Canada
- Chile
- China (Hong Kong and Mainland)
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- England
- Greece
- Guam (US Territory)
- India
- Ireland
- Italy
- Japan
- Korea
- Mexico
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Switzerland
- Taiwan
- The Netherlands
- Singapore
- Slovenia
- South Africa
- Sweden
- United States (all of the 48 continental states)

Since the first version of this article was published in the 2010 ICEEFT newsletter by Scott Woolley and myself, eight more countries have been added to the list. Why is EFT continuing to develop around the globe? The original article described the universal appeal of EFT and why it has such a strong draw to clinicians and the general public. Below are several other powerful factors that we believe combine to create this success.

First of all, as trainers, our philosophy is to help a country or area grow in EFT “from the inside out”. What this means is that we form connections with key therapists within a country, who either have taken an externship elsewhere and/or are interested in sponsoring a first externship in their own country. These colleagues are highly involved from the beginning, often assisting with small group exercises, acting as cultural and language “translators”. These sponsoring therapists provide a bridge between the trainees in their own country and us, the trainers and ICEEFT. It is also tremendously reassuring to have a welcoming face when we arrive in a new country: someone who helps us feel at home, connected and supported as we introduce the universal language of attachment to groups that may initially feel very “different” to what we are accustomed. It doesn’t take long to establish a common bond through the EFT model!

Our next step is to support local EFT therapists to become certified. This can be challenging since often they are meeting with couples in a language other than English. The commitment and effort of therapists translating segments of their sessions into English is inspiring and moving…..and underlines the importance of developing Certified Supervisors within the country. As therapists develop competency in EFT and become certified, we actively encourage them to work toward Supervisor status so they can provide accessible supervision in their own language. At this stage we also look for the traits that are required for qualified Supervisors to become Certified EFT Trainers. The satisfaction of seeing this level of growth is profound, and is highly congruent with the core EFT values of collaboration and support.

There are now trainers who train within their own country/language: Karin Wagenaar, Berry Aarnoudse, Barbara Kohnstamm (the Netherlands); and Hanna Pinomaa (Finland). There are also trainers who have a second language and travel to train: Ting Liu and Tat-Ying Wong (various Asian countries); and Normand Gingras (Quebec, Switzerland, France). Other Trainer candidates will soon be providing trainings in Spanish, French and German.

Sue Johnson’s books Creating Connections, Hold Me Tight, and the Hold Me Tight® Program are being published in so many languages that it is easy to lose count! This also connects us worldwide. More than once, we have heard therapists share parts of these books that have touched them and helped them feel connected across languages and continents.

We look forward to EFT enveloping the earth and helping millions of couples and families over time!

Yolanda von Hockauf, M.Ed., R.M.F.T.
Certified EFT Supervisor & Trainer
Director, Vancouver Couple and Family Institute
Many therapists are in a quandary as to which training DVD(s) to purchase. I would suggest that you choose based on the areas you want to focus on developing first and just watch one DVD at a time. Watch it many times, study it, stop as you listen and think of how you would respond before hearing how Sue responds. Learning EFT is a complex process and you are least likely to get discouraged if you attempt to add one aspect at a time to your skill set/way of being as a therapist. Then watch another one!

**The Overall Model of EFT**

To review the material from the externship and better integrate an overall sense of the model, consider Training DVD #1: Healing Broken Bonds also known as ‘Mark and Pru’ or the 3 DVD set: An Externship in EFCT. Training DVD # 1 takes you through a condensed version of each step and stage of the model. The externship DVDs include a review of the salient content of an externship, a review of the interventions, and two live sessions that are certainly worth viewing. Another DVD that will give you an overall, applied sense of the model as well as a tangible appreciation of attachment applied in adult love relationships is the Hold Me Tight®: Conversations for Connection DVD.

**Stage One of EFT**

The 2010 DVD, Stage One of EFT for Couples: Clinical Demonstration, recorded at Brief Therapy: Lasting Solutions conference 2010, is also good to get the more overall sense of the systemic part of the model, tracking the cycle, adding Step 3, the underlying emotion, and using the cycle reframe over and over again while preparing to move into Stage 2.

**Working with the Process of Emotion and Engaging Withdrawn Partners**

You may want to get Training DVD #5: Re-engaging Withdrawers if you are having particular difficulty with engaging withdrawns and if you want to grasp more fully how to work with the process of emotion (through the cue, limbic-danger appraisal, bodily arousal, meaning attribution, action tendency).

**Applying EFT Couple Therapy in the Face of Trauma**

If you are particularly interested in applying the model to a trauma couple you may want to see DVD# 2 Couples and Trauma. An especially attractive feature of this DVD is that it is nicely complemented by Chapter 7 of Sue Johnson’s (2002) Emotionally Focused Therapy with Trauma.
Survivors, “Defeating an Anxiety Disorder and Marital Distress.” This chapter includes transcripts from this DVD, a much more detailed case description and explanation of the process and interventions.

Also of relevance to trauma is the latest DVD Emotionally Focused Therapy in Action, produced by psychotherapy.net. Unique to this DVD are the pauses in the therapy while we hear voice-overs of Sue describing her interventions and the process while validating, tracking and de-escalating this highly escalated couple with a war veteran suffering from PTSD.

**Review the EFT Interventions**

*Training DVD # 4: Changing the Music, Changing the Dance* has the interventions labeled in subtitles so that is helpful when you are assessing your own interventions and perhaps needing to target using more reflection and less questions etc.

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**EFCT with Same Sex Couples**

*Working Successfully with Same Sex Couples, The EFT Path to Secure Connection,* the most recently released DVD, demonstrates in two live sessions with Dr. Sue Johnson how the power of EFT’s attachment frame and interventions are equally relevant for gay and heterosexual couples. This 4 hour video includes voice over commentary and a panel discussion with three EFT therapists about responding to the unique challenges faced by same sex couples, making this another valuable EFT training DVD.

You can learn from all of the valuable EFT training DVDs now available. Read more about each DVD on the ICEEFT website at www.iceeft.com and decide according to your needs.

Lorrie Brubacher, M.Ed., LMFT
Certified EFT Supervisor & Trainer
Greensboro Charlotte Center for EFT

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**Attachment Pearl**

*by Sue Johnson*

I would like to offer John Bowlby’s comment that unfortunately, an attachment figure may be physically present but emotionally absent. This is a crucial distinction. Single folks who live alone can also have an inner world rich with internalized attachment figures who offer a sense of emotional connection and so, a route to emotional security. Many partners and colleagues who do not grasp attachment theory confuse these two elements. Isolation is the result of emotional disconnection. Emotional connection in a more secure bond can happen in seconds. Mary, one of the partners in our ongoing fMRI study, told me yesterday, “I can’t believe the feeling I get now when he calls me and starts the call with ‘Hello beautiful’. This is different. My face just smiles for me.” At the beginning of our sessions, Mary’s partner, Jim, told me, “I don’t get it. I solve problems all the time. I come home on time now. We don’t fight as much, and she is still mad. What is it she wants anyway?” The answer is emotional presence. This is the core of true relatedness. When I first started seeing couples, I might have been as confused as Jim was. Now I remember Bowlby’s crucial distinction and help Jim be emotionally present in the session, telling his wife how ‘bitter’ it is for him when he cannot figure out what she needs from him.
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