Welcome to our 2015 Special Issue of the EFT Community News, the ICEEFT newsletter that our 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 4,000 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.
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 centers 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.

For a more detailed description and further information, please go to www.iceeft.com under the “About Us” menu.

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, ICEEFT and OCFI continue to work out of the same office.

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 2015, there are over 4,000 members, 39 ICEEFT affiliated Centers, Communities & Organizations around the world and 16 EFT outcome studies and 9 EFT process & predictors research publications demonstrating the efficacy of EFT. 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 at www.iceeft.com.

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 and Forum (option not available to Associate Members)

ICEEFT Facts

- There are 39 ICEEFT affiliated Centers, Communities & Organizations (see the listing on page 20)
- There are currently over 4000 ICEEFT members
- There are 40 Certified EFT Trainers
- There are over 375 Certified EFT Therapists worldwide
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 30 years, the EFT research program has systematically covered all the main factors set out in optimal models of psychotherapy research.

Several research projects deserve special mention. The 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 perceived 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 there are several studies showing positive outcome using EFT with PTSD couples.

A pilot study using EFT with military veterans was completed at the Baltimore, Maryland, Dept. of Veteran’s Affairs. 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.

New and recent training DVD’s include: Shaping Secure Connection with live sessions and commentary about Stages 1 and 2 of EFT. EFT in Action, focuses on EFT with war vets. Another, EFT with Same Sex Couples, shows EFT practice with a gay male couple and a lesbian couple. On Target Interventions in the Age of Attachment provides an approximate 6 hour introductory workshop on Emotionally Focused Therapy. Most are now available as digital downloads and we also now offer the first EFT interactive digital training program: The EFT AIRM training program.

Love Sense, my latest book, provides a revolutionary understanding of why and how we love, based on cutting-edge research and the book continues to sell well.

Now in over 20 languages, my book Hold Me Tight (HMT) continues to reach new couples every day. The HMT® Relationship Education and Enhancement Program which includes the HMT book, a Facilitator’s Guide and the DVD, Hold Me Tight®: Conversations for Connection, is a program for groups (couples and individuals) and is being used successfully and with increasing frequency in many countries throughout the world. Research about its efficacy has been undertaken with positive results soon to be published.

The 2004 book, The Practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy: Creating Connection which includes outcome data, continues to sell well not only in English but has now been translated into Dutch, Spanish, Taiwanese Chinese, mainland Chinese, German, Korean, Finnish, Russian and Italian. The demand for the basic 4-day EFT Externships and Core Skills trainings continues to grow in Europe, Oceania, Asia and in North and South America – offered by 40 ICEEFT Certified EFT Trainers. We continue to receive consistent
rave reviews about the quality of these events. The *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* has published studies that testify to the impact of these trainings on participants’ professional and personal lives.

Enormously successful conferences such as the amazing 2012 EFT Summit in New York continue to inspire us all. The 2011, 2013 and 2015 Creating Connections conferences in the Netherlands on EFT, Neuroscience and Attachment, as well as the recent Sex & Attachment: Coming Together conference in New York, were stellar events offering leading edge science to practitioners from all over the world.

I invite you to visit the ICEEFT website 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
Director of ICEEFT & OCFI

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**Emotionally Focused Family Therapy – EFFT**

Emotionally Focused Family Therapy promotes the development and renewal of secure attachment bonds among distressed family members. To this end, the EFFT therapist helps build stronger families through 1) recruiting and strengthening parental emotional responsiveness to children 2) accessing and clarifying children’s attachment needs and 3) facilitating and shaping caregiving interactions from parent to child. It is the privileging of emotion and the creation of affectively charged bonding experiences that alter the family system and shift negative interactional cycles into positive bonding events that ultimately define the family as secure.

Therapists who are adept at moving couples through the Stages and Steps of the model can apply these same skills to their work with families. The primary differences are the increased level of complexity with multiple family members, the significance of the care-giving aspects of attachment and the influence of the hierarchal nature of the parent-child relationship. What is noteworthy about the parent-child relationship and distinguishes it from adult love, is that this reciprocal attachment relationship lacks mutual responsibility to meet one another’s attachment needs. Parents are responsible to meet children’s attachment and caregiving needs and children do not have this responsibility towards their parents. The EFFT therapist therefore guides the attachment dance to catalyze parental accessibility and responsiveness, increasing parental supportiveness and sensitivity to the child. In healthy emotional and psychological development, a parent nurtures the child toward adulthood, tuning in to the child’s cues for comfort and cues for wanting to explore. The EFFT therapist then focuses on the attachment needs and longings in the child and helps to create the safe secure environment for these needs to be met.

The EFFT therapist creates these changes in the family system by working within dyadic conversations, since attachment and the building of secure bonds is a dyadic process. Depending on the level of reactivity of the family, the nature of the presenting problem and family constellation, the EFFT therapist works with varying combinations of dyadic or triadic family groupings and at other times with the family as a whole. The EFFT therapist needs to carefully assess the needs of each family member to determine how the therapy can most effectively reach the goal of creating a stronger, more secure base. This requires flexibility and openness from the therapist. Since the EFFT therapist is tapping into an evolutionary, biological human need to care for the young, family sessions frequently move more...
quickly than Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy.

**Case Example**
Following a very difficult separation, a couple seeks family therapy for themselves and their three teenage children as they begin to plan their marital reconciliation. The EFFT therapist begins by tracking the interactions to make explicit the negative cycles in the family. She reflects and validates both Dad’s efforts to reach his children by telling them how they should be behaving and feeling, and Mom’s efforts to protect the connections by mediating and blocking the interactions between Dad and the children. Each of the children have their own way of protecting themselves in the cycle, ranging from becoming angry and “freaking out” to being quiet and complacent. The EFFT therapist views the parent’s reactive positions as being driven by their inherent desire to take care of their children and honours this longing directly through acknowledging and validating their caregiving motivations. The EFFT therapist understands that it is the parents’ own deep guilt and shame over the pain their children endured from their marital distress that is scrambling their natural ability to emotionally attune to their children. Through slowing the interaction down, focusing on the emotional music of the dance, and highlighting the good intentions of the parents, the EFFT therapist begins to change the music and move the family towards cycle de-escalation. The therapist can then help the children feel safe by validating and making sense of their reactive positions, and helping them to take risks in the session. Children are encouraged to open and share their pain directly with their parents in a way that it can be healed. The children share their loss, sadness, fears and helplessness. The therapist supports the parents to hear these messages by shoring up and reinforcing their natural care-giving responses. The parents are then able to reach back and respond to their children. They offer comfort and support and invite the children’s participation and inclusion in the future changes the family is facing.

Attachment theory guides the family therapist directly to the heart of the matter with their families. In session, the EFFT therapist accesses new softer emotional experiences and creates change through structuring enactments where children share openly and vulnerably and parents listen and offer comfort. Attachment guides the family therapist to facilitate moments of secure bonding, rather than to solve problems or to fix family members. In conclusion, EFFT provides the map for how to facilitate and engage families in building their own safe haven, and in doing so, strengthens family bonds and promotes resilience in children.

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

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**THERAPIST TOOLBOX**

**The Moment of Meeting:**
**First EFT Session**

Despite many years of working with couples, I still get a little nervous and excited before the first session. It is almost like a first date where you are not quite sure who they are and what exactly is going to happen. Except, of course, they are even more nervous than you are! The couple is in distress, both hoping for help and afraid that help may not be possible. The first session is also a bit like the moment dogs meet in a park: Who are you? How will you react to me? Will you be playful or attack?
We all remember the famous Yogi Berra quote “If you don’t know where you are going, you will end up somewhere else.” Couples generally come in to therapy trying to tell us about ways they understand problems in the relationship and bring examples and evidence: power struggles, character flaws, and communication difficulties. It is important to be focused in order for the first session to be productive. I generally have 3 major goals for the first session:

✓ Create alliance
✓ Track the negative cycle
✓ Provide hope

Here are my signposts for a successful first session:

• I feel connected to both partners
• I begin to have a sense of their cycle
• I am reframing their interactions, content and affect through an attachment lens
• I am able to focus on the present moment
• I structure an enactment and process it
• I end with a plan

How do we accomplish these goals? I start by remembering that I am a process consultant and my role is to reflect what is going on in their relationship, rather than to offer solutions to content problems. I listen to their stories and look at their interactions through the attachment lens: Who is angry and protesting the distance and disconnection? Who is defending against criticism and messages of failure? How are bids for connection made and responded to? Is the shutting down a sign of reactivity or detachment or another attempt to get a response? As always, in EFT we use RISSSC (Repeat; use Images; use Simple words; go Slow; use a Soft voice; use Client words) and focus on reflecting and validating over and over again. This not only slows down the process and gives the couple a sense of being heard, understood and accepted, but also gives us a chance to resonate with their emotions and create a better alliance. We take any opportunity to touch primary emotions, connect them to secondary emotions and validate the reasons for negative action tendencies.

Building an enactment will give us an opportunity to see whether they can do it and how responsive they are. It can often create a new positive moment for the couple, which I will use to celebrate their strengths and provide hope. “You (female partner) never knew how overwhelmed he was by the conflict, feeling as if he is in a car that is spinning out of control and he doesn’t know how to stop it, so all he can do is to stop talking and shut down. And I see how your whole body turned to him just now and you are saying to him, ‘I never knew how terrible it was for you and I feel bad that I caused this.’ And you (male partner) for the first time feel heard by her. I am so impressed that you both were able to be open here today. This is what we will be working towards and building on together.”

There are some special considerations in this general process. If a couple arrives in the midst of a crisis and emotions are escalated, I may not be focusing so much on doing enactments and trying to get a sense of their full cycle. I will work to contain high reactivity by validating the pain and fear, while setting limits. It is also important to pay attention to signs of potential contraindications for treatment, such as physical violence, ongoing affairs or serious substance abuse. For example, if there is mention of physical violence, I will ask questions to learn the extent of it, whether one of the partners is afraid and whether there is a commitment to stopping the violence. Another example of adjusting my approach is when I begin to get a sense that the partners have different agendas for the relationship and couples therapy. It is important to reflect that information back to them and frame the focus of the assessment process as figuring out whether we can find a common goal for treatment. When ending the session, I might say something like: “I have a sense from our short time together that both of you have been unhappy and stuck in a negative pattern for quite a long time. You (leaning out partner) have come to a point where you are not really sure there is any hope for the relationship. And you (leaning in partner) had not realized how hopeless he has become and you are wanting to
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, Love Sense* and *An Emotionally Focused Workbook for Couples: The Two of Us* are 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 “EFT Publications”.

Contact Local EFT Centers
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 and at www.iceeft.com.

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 page 3. To join, go to www.iceeft.com and click on the Members 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 18-19 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 by 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.

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How do you begin an EFT session? How do you effectively bring an EFT session to a close? There are a range of EFT-congruent options for beginning and ending sessions. The EFT Trainers were polled and seventeen trainers contributed their reflections on how they prepare for sessions and typical approaches they use to open and close sessions with couples.

Preparing for Sessions

1. Review notes before a session:
   - It can make an enormous difference in session to begin with a clear focus that comes from taking the time to prepare. Review notes and significant images or client words that capture attachment emotions and dance steps. Reflect upon specific nuances of the couple’s unique cycle, their pain and isolation, and their longing for connection.

2. Identify where the couple is on the EFT map:
   - Prior to every session, think about the current EFT Stage/Step. In Stage 1, ask yourself, “Am I aware of each partner’s typical position in the cycle and of how they are triggered into their typical action tendencies?”
   - In Stage 2, review the risks they have been taking and the safety they have been developing.

3. Choose a goal for the session:
   - For example, write, “Stage 1 goal for today: Clarify the cycle,” or “Identify specific trigger for pursuer’s despair,” or “Access primary emotion of withdrawer.”
   - Tune into your relationship with the couple to enhance the primary goal for each session. Partners will experience the therapist as a safe haven for comfort and a secure base from which they can explore/create change.

Opening Sessions

1. Establish a focus for the session:
   - From the couple’s content quickly focus on the process, underlying perceptions, reactions, and responses, to explore the Stage/Step of EFT that you hope to cover in the session.
   - Be explicit about the focus for this session and get the couple’s buy-in around that. For example, “We are really understanding how you guys are getting caught and one thing I have been wondering about is what is fueling the caught places. Can we focus there?”

2. Engage in the present moment:
   - When partners describe recent events, bring the process into the here-and-now by asking how they are feeling as they recount the event.
   - Check if they were able to step out of the negative dance, and/or to share their underlying fears and needs directly with their partner.

3. Connect the present process to the previous session:
   - Review highlights and images from last session, emphasizing the cycle in Stage 1 or the disclosure of a primary emotional experience in Stage 2.
   - Recap and invite their thoughts or comments about the last session.
   - Follow-up on homework, if discussed.

4. Examples of open-ended beginnings:
   - “How are you with each other today, right now, as we begin our time together...?”
“Has anything significant happened in the week where you felt especially connected/disconnected?”

5. The manner of opening sessions is different in Stage 1 and Stage 2:
Whether beginning with a general check-in or with more specific reflections, images or questions, all EFT therapists begin with an intention to move from the content into exploring the relevant Step of EFT as quickly as possible.

Stage 1 Example: “In our sessions, we have been exploring the dance that you both get caught in. I wonder if you are noticing it more at home?”

Stage 2: Build directly on the previous session. Recap the work you have done, check in to see how each one is doing, and ask if it would be alright to return to the reengagement or softening task you were exploring. Be sure to get the “observing” partner’s consent as well.

Closing Sessions
1. Summarize, meta-process or step back to reflect upon the work of the session.
This includes presenting an overview of the cycle and/or heightening the shift, bonding moments, attachment longings, or even the stickiness experienced in the session if it has been a difficult one.

2. Engage the person of the therapist.
• Therapists acknowledge the apparent powerlessness in the face of the cycle. For example, “I am really sad along with you at how the cycle sucked you both in today, leaving you both feeling defeated and alone.”
• When the session needs to end before completing a task, therapists can express sadness that the session needs to end even though the work is incomplete. Recapping where their work will pick up at the next session and asking for willingness to pick up at this point, helps to convey hope and direction.
• EFT therapists engage themselves by commending the couple on their hard work and courage and letting them know how they have been moved by the vulnerability or determination shown in session.

3. Validate and affirm risks taken and courage shown.
Concrete, vivid and specific feedback about what they have done in session makes the work more alive and engaging and hence contributes more readily to transformative change.

4. Seed an attachment image of the direction in which the couple is headed.
For example, “I can see that if you continue to explore these fears that suck you into these self-protection modes, that soon you, John, will be able to let Ann in just a little more to that place that feels so undeserving, and you will experience that she really does admire you. And Ann, you will begin to feel safe enough to retire the sentinel that scrutinizes his every move. You will begin to sense how very precious you are to him. You will both experience it is safe to count on one another.”

5. Be intentional and explicit in preparing for closure.
During the last quarter of a session, consider how to bring the work to a close in a safe and coherent way. During the final 5 to 15 minutes, engage the couple in the closure process. For example, “We’re going to have to stop soon – how are you doing right now? Let’s go over what we talked about today. There are a lot more feelings going on than we first knew, in particular that fear of asking for reassurance. Can we pick up on that next week?”

6. Evoke partners’ feedback and collaboratively create a coherent picture or story of what happened in the session.
For example:
• “How was this session for you today?”
• “How was it for you to experience each other in this more vulnerable or honest way today?”
• “Did you see (experience) your partner (or yourself) in a new or more vulnerable way?”
• “How did you experience the negative cycle today? What did you notice about how you get sucked into old patterns?”

Invite them to direct their reflections to one another. If a change event is achieved, heighten their contribution.

7. Responding to requests for homework.
Some trainers are very focused in their choice of Step and Stage specific homework while others seldom give homework, noting that in EFT, an experiential therapy, corrective emotional experiences happen in-session and thus homework is unnecessary. Nevertheless, couples frequently request it, and many trainers encourage reading Hold Me Tight or Love Sense or An EFT Workbook for Couples.

9. Note taking for therapists.
During session, jot down key client words and images that capture emotional experiences, attachment fears and needs, and triggers and attributions in the cycle. At the end of the session, asterisk or underline salient words and images, note key elements of session and identify the Step to focus on in the next session.

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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, PhD, Psych.
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Co-Director, ICEEFT and OCFI Inc.
ICEEFT is International!

Although she grew up in England, Sue Johnson is Canadian and ICEEFT was founded in Ottawa, Canada. Starting in the 1980’s, Sue travelled to locations throughout North America and soon thereafter, to countries in Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand “planting the seeds” of EFT. Many EFT enthusiasts from Canada, USA and later, other countries, stepped forward to help grow the EFT model throughout the world.

Since then, ICEEFT Trainers have been actively training therapists around the globe, offering the full range of EFT Externships, Core Skills, supervision, special advanced topics and facilitating Hold Me Tight® Program workshops. The ICEEFT International Committee actively works to help make EFT training accessible to diverse educational and economic situations around the world.

EFT Training is presented in many languages such as Dutch, French, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Finish, Swedish, Danish, German, Greek, Italian, Russian, Hebrew, Afrikaans, etc. Currently, there are ICEEFT members from 40 countries and ICEEFT-Affiliated Organizations in nine countries – and the number keeps growing!

Hold Me Tight (Sue Johnson’s book for the general public based on EFT) has been translated into or is “in press” in over 20 languages and Creating Connection – The Practice of Emotionally Focused Therapy is also available in several languages.

Love Sense was published in 2013 and within a few months, was in print in Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, German, Italian and Korean, and in press in Chinese, Portuguese, Taiwanese and Turkish.

The international expansion of EFT is enriching the model as we learn to adapt the core concepts of attachment, emotion and intimate relationships to a range of cultures. This is done in collaboration with each country and truly makes ICEEFT and EFT “international”!

The photos shown here are just a small sampling.

Yolanda von Hockauf, MEd, RMFT
Certified EFT Supervisor & Trainer
Director, Vancouver Couple & Family Institute

Hong Kong
Bestselling Books by Dr. Sue Johnson

Hold Me Tight...A map that can guide us in creating, healing and sustaining romantic love.

Love Sense...A revolutionary understanding of why and how we love, based on cutting-edge research.

Available from major booksellers or at drsuejohnson.com

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)

SOLD SEPARATELY OR AS A SET

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
EFT Summits

Editor’s Note: Thanks to EFT Trainers Jim (2010), and Leanne & David (2012), for contributions to this article. And special thanks to Robin Williams Blake (Toronto), our unofficial/official photographer!

Ottawa ~ 2006

To date, Emotionally Focused Therapy has been the nucleus of three conferences (Summits). The first EFT Summit was held in Ottawa, Canada in May, 2006, organized by ICEEFT and supported by the Ottawa Couple and Family Institute. Over 300 EFT Therapists came to hear Sue Johnson and her colleagues talk 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 on 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 fits into the larger picture of current psychotherapy and neuroscience.

San Diego ~ 2010

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 ICEEFT, this Summit provided attendees with a unique opportunity to discuss, experience and deepen learning in EFT principles and practices.

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. Jim Coan

Jim Coan charmed the audience during his plenary address (2010).

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 fun to interact with colleagues who practice experiential therapy and retain that full presence in their daily lives! The combination of mindfulness and authenticity in our EFT community was wonderful to experience firsthand.
captivated the crowd while sharing research on the neurobiology of attachment – 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.

From the presenters to each attendee, the enthusiasm for this EFT 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.

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. EFT therapists clearly believe in their clients’ innate need for and ability to create connection. Truly a great conference!

New York City ~ 2012

And then there was New York City in July, 2012, starting with a warm welcome at the Roosevelt Hotel to the over 500 attendees. 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 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

The crowd does the EFT Hand Dance (2012).
“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.

From the excitement, 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 2017. Dates and location will be announced in the fall of 2015.
A Brief Guide to Choosing ICEEFT Training Videos that Fit Your Learning Objectives

Many therapists are in a quandary as to which ICEEFT training video or dvd to purchase. This brief review is intended to help you choose. I would suggest you choose a video based on the area of EFT you want to focus on developing first. View one video at a time. Watch it many times, study it, stop as you listen and think of how you would respond before hearing how Sue (or occasionally another therapist) responds. All training videos reviewed below are available as dvds and most are also available in a downloadable digital format. The interactive AIRM training program is available for streaming or downloading only.

The Overall Model of EFT

Regardless of your level in learning EFT, there are three training videos that are sure to enrich your grasp of the model. Most recently produced is a video of Dr. Sue Johnson giving an enthralling one-day talk On Target Couple Interventions in the Age of Attachment (2014). The earliest training video (1993) Training DVD # 1: Healing Broken Bonds also known as ‘Mark and Pru’ remains both a historical testament to the durability and effectiveness of the model and presents a precise/condensed illustration of each Stage of EFT. Sue introduces each Stage and shows the same couple move through Stage One De-escalation, Withrawer Re-engagement, Blamer Softening and Stage Three Consolidation. To review the material from the Externship and better integrate an overall sense of the model, consider the 12 hour, 3 DVD set: An Externship in EFCT, which reviews the salient content of an Externship, including Sue illustrating each of the interventions and conducting two live sessions that are certainly worth viewing. Also include in your consideration as you choose your training videos that a fast-track into the EFT change process and an overall, applied sense of the model is to view the Hold Me Tight®: Conversations for Connection DVDs.

Distinguishing Stage One and Stage Two of EFT

What is especially striking of this newly released video set, Shaping Secure Connection: Stages One and Two of Emotionally Focused Therapy with Drs. S. Johnson and M. Best, are the two vivid illustrations of how we can shape love, both in Stages One and Two of EFT. Subtitles which identify the interventions and the therapist intentions, accompanied by discussions between Sue and Marlene before and after the session makes it a very powerful learning experience, both in terms of reviewing the EFT interventions and distinguishing Stage One from Stage Two.
Learning EFT Interventions

The training programs which are likely to help you most in learning the different EFT interventions are *Shaping Secure Connection*, described above, the interactive *AIRM Training Program* and *Interventions in EFT: Changing the Music, Changing the Dance*. All three list the interventions in subtitles and give descriptions of them. Lastly, *Promoting Key Change Events in EFT*, a creative series of interviews and discussion by Trainers Leanne Campbell and David Fairweather, focuses on specific interventions needed for change events.

Working with the Process of Emotion and Engaging Withdrawn Partners

*Training DVD #5: Re-engaging Withdrawers*, presents two live sessions by S. Johnson working first with a male withdrawer and then with a female withdrawer. Session # 1 remains the most stellar example of how an EFT therapist unpacks emotion, slowly, simply and concretely, linking cue/limbic danger appraisal, bodily response, attachment meanings and automatic action tendencies, to access and make coherence out of primary emotion underneath secondary reactive anger and numbing.

Working with Escalated Couples and Applying EFT Couple Therapy in the Face of Trauma

*Emotionally Focused Therapy in Action* is especially useful if you are interested in applying the model to a trauma couple. It is also the best example of working with a highly reactive, escalated couple. This video includes pauses in the therapy while we hear voice-overs of Dr. Sue Johnson describing her interventions and the therapeutic process while validating, tracking and de-escalating this highly escalated couple with a war veteran suffering from PTSD.

EFCT with Same Sex Couples

*Working Successfully with Same Sex Couples, The EFT Path to Secure Connection* 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 a very valuable EFT training DVD.

Attachment Injury Repair – Working with Relationship Traumas

*Emotionally Focused Therapy in Action* is especially useful if you are interested in applying the model to a trauma couple. It is also the best example of working with a highly reactive, escalated couple. This video includes pauses in the therapy while we hear voice-overs of Dr. Sue Johnson describing her interventions and the therapeutic process while validating, tracking and de-escalating this highly escalated couple with a war veteran suffering from PTSD.

You are certain to benefit from any of the valuable training videos available from ICEEFT. Read more about each video on the ICEEFT website at www.iceeft.com and choose according to your needs and interest.

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