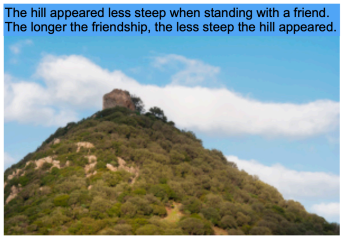
Getting by with a Little Help from Friends



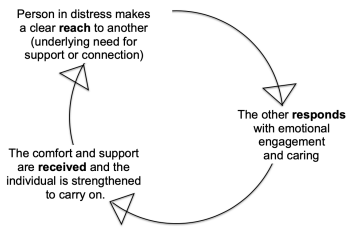
1

"Proximity to social resources decreases the cost of climbing both the literal and figurative hills we face, because the brain construes *social* resources as *bioenergetic* resources, much like oxygen or glucose"

- Coan & Sabarra, quoted in (Johnson, 2019a, p.1)

2

Effective Emotion Regulation Strategy



3

The Attachment Orientation to Anxiety and Depression - Depathologizing stance

- Attachment insecurity - makes people vulnerable to depression and anxiety - disordered versions of what is otherwise a healthy response - Bowlby
- *Sense of uncontrollability and perceived danger is a core common* factor in depression and anxiety - Barlow - *Unified Protocol of Emotional Disorders*

4

The Problem as the Pattern of Emotion Regulation

- Stuck patterns of emotion regulation strategies may appear as physical illness, depression, anxiety, trauma survival reactions, addictions, career problems.… Costello, 2013, *Attachment-based psychotherapy*, p. 194
- "Negative ways of viewing and dealing with distress form a self-perpetuating feedback loop that leads into the construction of further distress."
  Johnson, 2019, p. 79
- "In effective therapy, clients discover in an immediate, alive, and explicit way how their manner of engaging with their emotions shapes their suffering" (Johnson, 2019, p. 27)
- Therapists explore strategies, assemble and reprocess emotion, and use new emotional experience to shape new strategies for engagement.

5

The Problem as the Pattern in Couple Distress

https://vimeo.com/8199225

6

All mental health professionals watching client videos in this workshop are bound by professional ethics to keep the personal information confidential. The clients signed consent for these recordings to be used for therapists' professional development only, with the assurance that anyone viewing them will protect the clients' confidentiality as per standard professional guidelines and that any helping professional who recognizes them would refrain from viewing the session.

7

How a cycle erodes connection and safety - creating isolation and disconnection

Work in pairs to formulate the cycle:

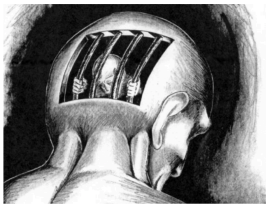
How you would describe this cycle to the couple? i.e.

"The more you... the more you... "(behavioral descriptors)

Drawing on the images, how might you reflect emotional experience? "Underneath you feel... underneath you feel…."

8

A Protection/Prison Pattern:

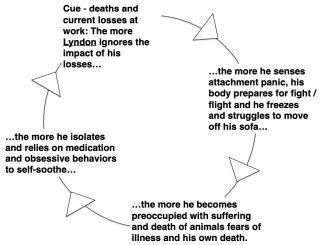


The Pattern of emotional Protection becomes a constraining Prison, a Problem Perpetuating Process.

Shut DOWN Shut IN Shut OUT © Johnson, 2019

9

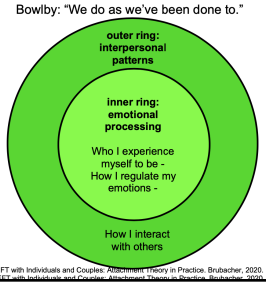
Perpetuating Cycle of Emotional Protection



10

Attachment Driven Psychotherapy - Internal and Interpersonal Patterns Mirror and Shape Each Other

Bowlby: "We do as we've been done to."



11

Strategies for Engagement

Identify coping strategies you have developed in response to attachment experiences / distressing moments in your life - early / present-day:

a trigger: _____

_____

_____

What attachment figures serve as resources for your emotion regulation and load sharing?

_____

_____

_____

12

The basics of EFT across modalities

- The EFT Map – The EFT Tango

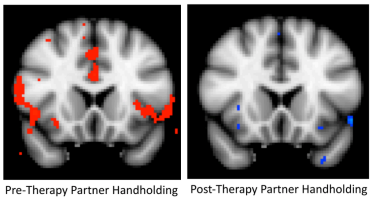
13

Soothing the Threatened Brain

- Neuroscience supports the science of adult love and how lovers regulate each other's physiology.
- Coan: When we are threatened, a feeling of connection to a person with whom we are securely attached is our *most efficient* way of regulating distress.
  - Social emotion regulation.
- 2013 study of EFT effects on attachment security with an fMRI component shows EFT changes attachment security and the way contact with one's partner mediates the effect of threat on the brain (safe haven, secure base).
- Outcomes extend beyond relationship satisfaction
  - shows that EFT changes attachment security and the way contact with a partner mediates the effect of threat on the brain

14

Changing Responsiveness to Threat with EFT



Pre-Therapy Partner Handholding Post-Therapy Partner Handholding

© S. Johnson https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2J6B00d-8Iw

15

The great scientist of the last century,
Albert Einstein, asked:

"How on earth are you ever going to explain in terms of chemistry and physics so important a biological phenomenon as …love?"

John Bowlby and the science of bonding he founded can do just this

Describe — Predict — Explain — Shape

Secure bonding is a fairy story no longer.

© S. Johnson

16

Strategies for Engagement (Emotion Regulation Strategies)

Reach and Receive

Push Hyperactivate

Turn Away Deactivate

"…we do what we know to get us through the night, and then, ironically often remain stuck in these constrained strategies and perspectives in the light of day" (Johnson, 2019, p. 75).

17