

Experiential & Emotional Conceptualization & Intervention in Psychotherapy

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Training in Unified Psychotherapy

TUP Level One / Part Three

August 2023

TUP

Disclosure



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TUP Level One Webinars

Working Interactively with Cognition, Emotion, & Behavior

- ▶ TUP 1-1. **Unified Framework** - June 9, 2023
- ▶ TUP 1-2. **Cognitive Focus** - July 21, 2023
- ▶ TUP 1-3. **Experiential & Emotional Focus** - August 4, 2023
- ▶ TUP 1-4. **Behavioral Focus** - September 8, 2023
- ▶ TUP 1-5. **Developmental Focus** - October 6, 2023
- ▶ TUP 1-6. **Unified Treatment Planning** - November 3, 2023

TUP Level Two will be offered in 2024:

Working Contextually with External & Internal Influences



TUP Discussion Groups

There will be a free discussion group after each live webinar.

► TUP 1-3. **Experiential Focus** – August 18, 2023

Discussion groups will encourage *application of skills* and concepts with clients.

Email Jeff to receive a Zoom invite to these discussion groups:

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Experiential Webinar Outline

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Case Formulation
- ▶ Functional Analysis & Guided Discovery
- ▶ Foundational Skills w/ Video Demonstrations
- break -
- ▶ Restorying & Emotion Narratives w/ Live Demo
- ▶ Advanced Experiential Approaches
- ▶ Key Strategies for Experiential Psychotherapy
- ▶ Discussion



Experiential Training in a Unified Context

- ▶ Some experiential psychotherapy trainers might try to convince you that you should practice an experiential approach *instead* of your current approach.
- ▶ In this webinar, we will be encouraging you to incorporate some of these ideas into your current practice. We will encourage you to *expand your repertoire* of strategies to better serve each individual client.
- ▶ For most clients, it will be helpful to *focus on emotions* at times and to focus on other dimensions at other times.
- ▶ The *TUP 1-1* and *TUP 1-6* webinars describe specific methods for choosing how to combine diverse strategies in practice.



Constructing Your Own Theoretical Orientation

- ▶ In the past, psychotherapists were encouraged to **choose** a **single** theoretical orientation that was consistent with their personal worldview.
- ▶ It was expected that psychotherapists would practice their chosen orientation **consistently**.
- ▶ Psychotherapy integration encourages more flexibility in **combining** concepts and interventions from different sources.
- ▶ **Training in Unified Psychotherapy** encourages you to think of **constructing** your personal orientation over time. This allows you to expand your repertoire of ideas and strategies as you learn from diverse theoretical sources.



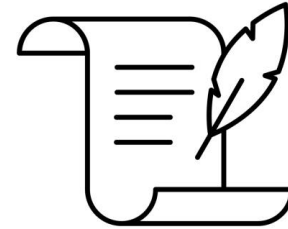
Experiential Themes in Psychotherapy

- Phenomenology
- Maladaptive Emotions
- Emotion Regulation
- Experiential Avoidance
- Self-Actualization
- Authenticity
- Awareness & Experimentation
- Motivation
- Authentic Happiness
- Creativity
- Spirituality
- Transpersonal Psychology



Historical Context

- Humanistic and existential approaches to psychotherapy developed in the middle of the 20th Century.
- The two most prominent humanistic psychotherapies were...
 - Carl Rogers' *Person Centered Therapy*
 - Fritz Perls' *Gestalt Therapy*
- An early existential psychotherapy was...
 - Victor Frankls' *Logotherapy*
- These theories embraced a *phenomenological* perspective that viewed the client as the expert on their own experience.



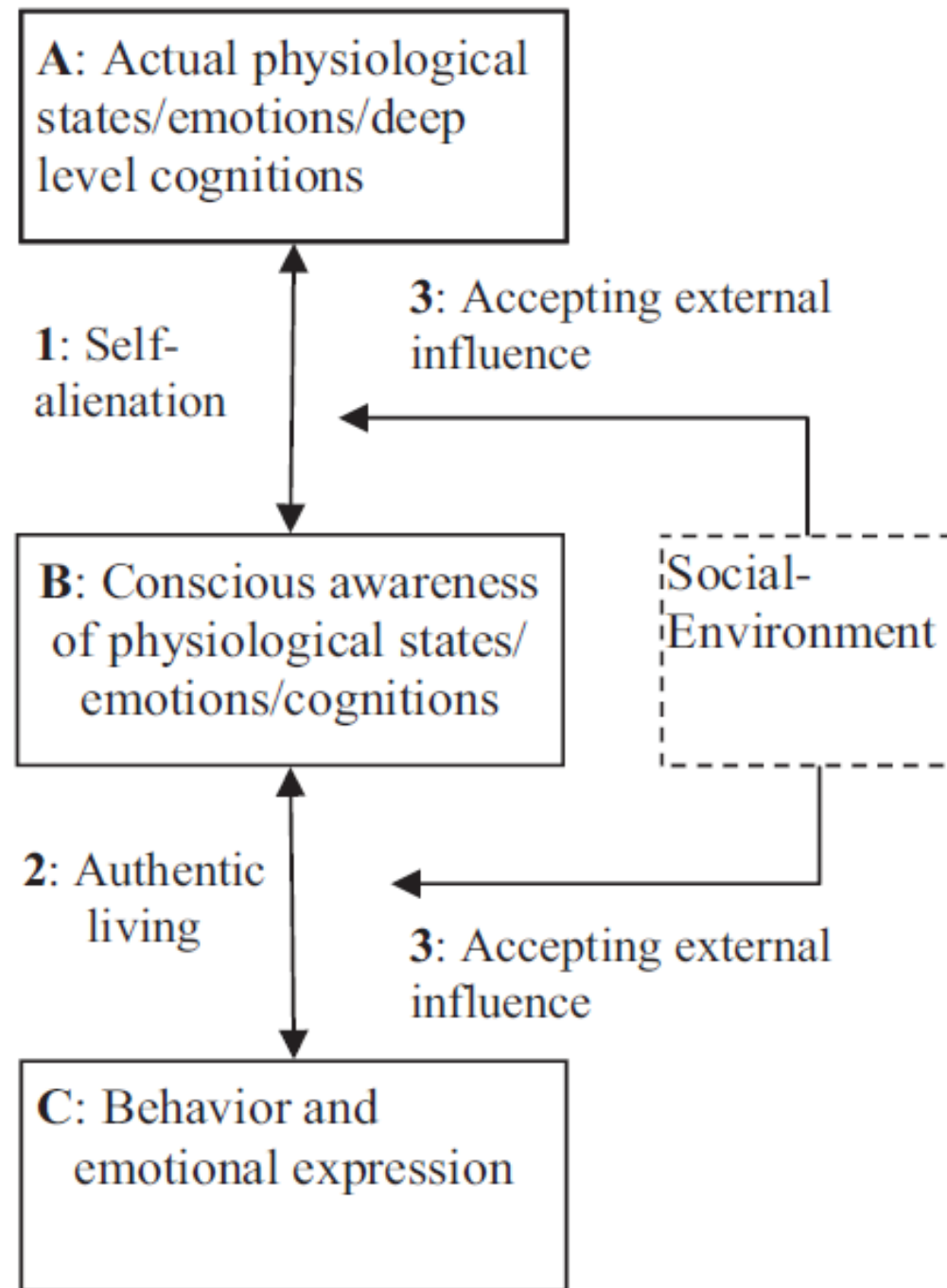
Authenticity

- Comes from the Greek authentes for “master” or “one acting on his own authority”
- Became an ideal in the 17th and 18th centuries (Trilling, 1972)
 - Stronger emphasis on the importance of the individual
 - More of a distinction between one’s unique individuality and one’s public self (Taylor, 1991)
- Closely associated with Existentialism
- A core feature of Humanistic Therapies
- Difficult to define

Authenticity (Wood, 2008)

- Positive psychology started to research
- Developed a model based off of Rogers' thinking
- Barrett-Lennard described as involving “consistency between the three levels of (a) a person's primary experience, (b) their symbolized awareness, and (c) their outward behavior and communication” (1998, p.82)

The Person-Centered Conceptualization



Authenticity Scale (Wood, 2008)

1. I think it is better to be yourself, than to be popular.
2. I don't know how I really feel inside.
3. I am strongly influenced by the opinions of others.
4. I usually do what other people tell me to do.
5. I always feel I need to do what others expect me to do.
6. Other people influence me greatly.
7. I feel as if I don't know myself very well.
8. I always stand by what I believe in.
9. I am true to myself in most situations.
10. I feel out of touch with the "real me."
11. I live in accordance with my values and beliefs.
12. I feel alienated (or "cut off") from myself.

Authenticity Is Not Easy

- Can disconnect from one's experience (self-alienation)
 - A lot of people are not in touch with their emotions
 - An essential task of Experiential Therapies
 - The core of Emotion-Focused Therapy
- Difficult to behaviorally be authentic (authentic living)
 - We live in a social world and our actions impact the people around us
 - If do not care, becomes a narcissistic authenticity (Taylor, 1991)
 - Need to find the balance
 - The goal of Logotherapy and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

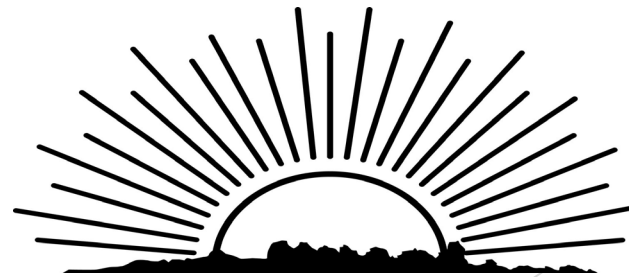
Phenomenology

- Study of “phenomena”, experience, or consciousness from a first person perspective
- Many different perspectives
- 3 primary phenomenologists
 - **Edmund Husserl**
 - Bracketing (epoche)
 - Reduction proper
 - **Martin Heidegger**
 - Concept of dasein (embeddedness)
 - **Maurice Merleau-Ponty**
 - Strong emphasis on the role of the body (embodied)

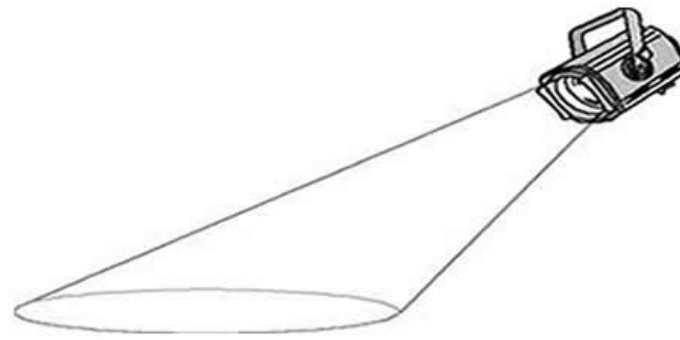
Phenomenology

- “Within the phenomenological perspective, clients are viewed as having privileged access to their unique experiences. Client processes of discovery and choice are therefore emphasized over the taking of an interpretive or advisory focus.” (Elliott & Greenberg, 1995, p. 123)
- This client-centered viewpoint was a contrast to the *medical model* of psychoanalysis that emphasized the expertise of the analyst.
- Focusing on the client’s personal experience was also a contrast to the *mechanistic* view of human nature espoused by behaviorism.

Have you ever seen the sun rise?



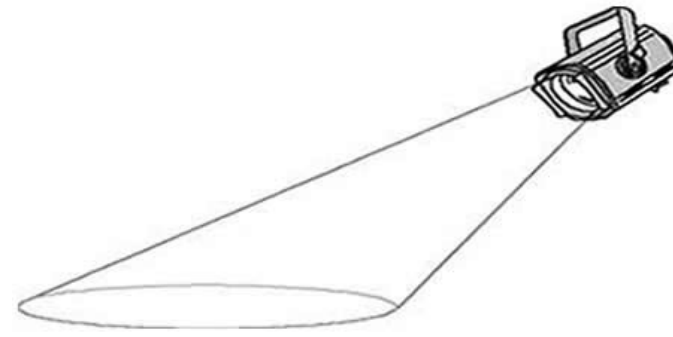
Focusing on Experience



"Experience is, for me, the highest authority. The touchstone of validity is my own experience. No other person's ideas, and none of my own ideas, are as authoritative as my experience. It is to experience that I must return again and again, to discover a closer approximation to truth as it is in the process of becoming in me."

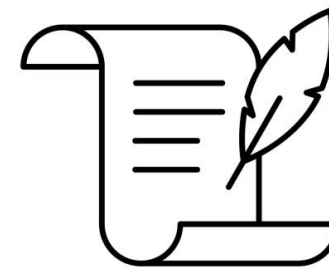
Carl Rogers

Focusing on Emotion



- Emotion is seen by many experiential psychotherapists as closer to a person's ***phenomenological*** experience than their thoughts or actions.
- Emotion can be seen as a ***entry point*** into personal experience.
- From a unified perspective, emotions are always ***interacting*** with cognition and behavior.
- Emotional experience is ***shaped*** by both external and internal influences.

Emotion-Focused Therapy

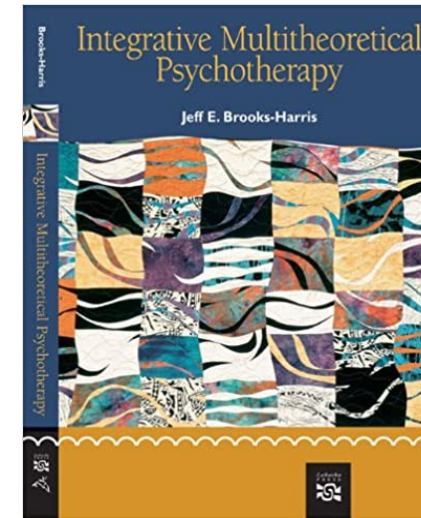


- EFT is a contemporary integration of...
 - Carl Rogers' *Person Centered Therapy*
 - Fritz Perls' *Gestalt Therapy*
- developed by **Leslie Greenberg** and his colleagues.
- EFT takes the idea of ***following*** and using ***empathy*** from Person Centered Therapy.
- EFT draws upon ideas from Gestalt for ***leading*** the client and to ***evoke*** emotional responses.
- Originally called *Process Experiential Psychotherapy*.

Focusing on Emotion

Markers for Focusing on Feelings

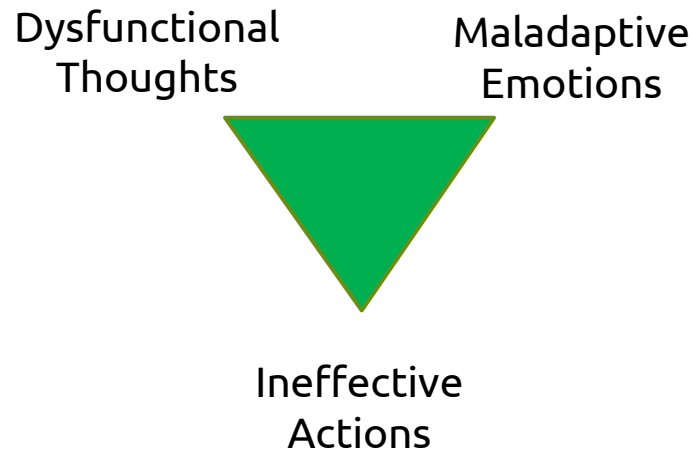
- Unexpressed Emotions
- Unrealized Goals or Dreams
- Lack of Personal Awareness
- Conflicted Sense of Self
- Existential Issues



(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 96)

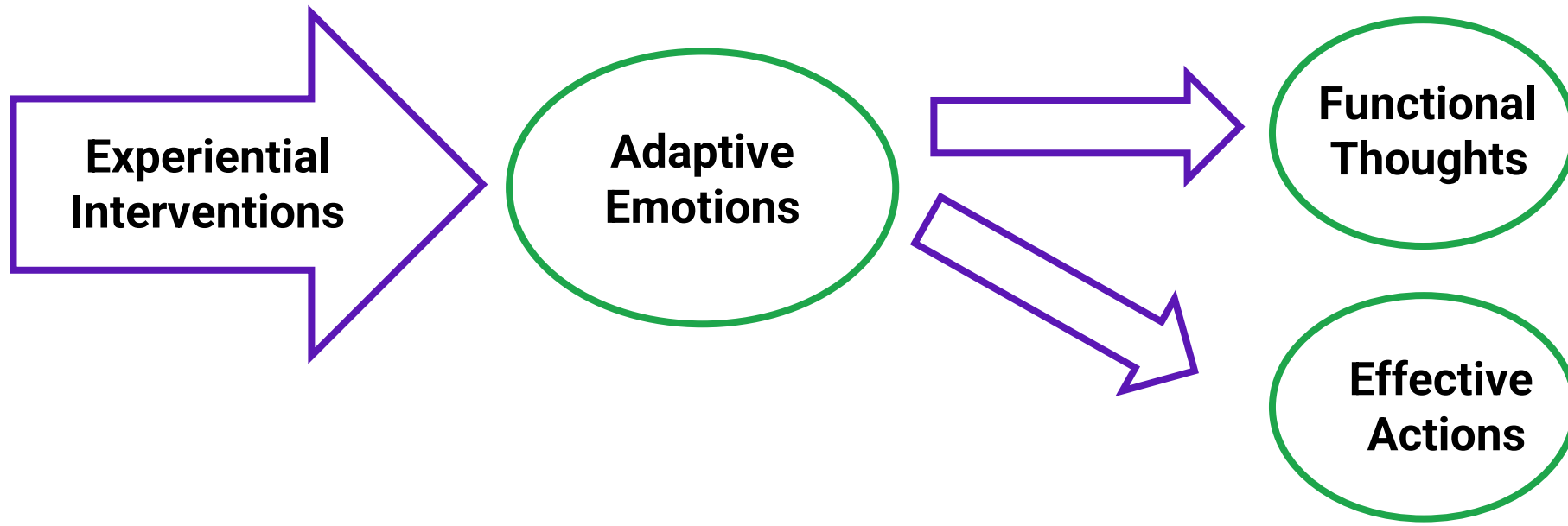
Multidimensional Survey

TUP encourages the use of a Multidimensional Survey as a part of *Unified Treatment Planning*.



After looking at the interaction between thoughts, feelings, and actions, some clients may identify feelings as one *focal dimension* for exploration and change. (Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 94-102)

Impact of Experiential Interventions

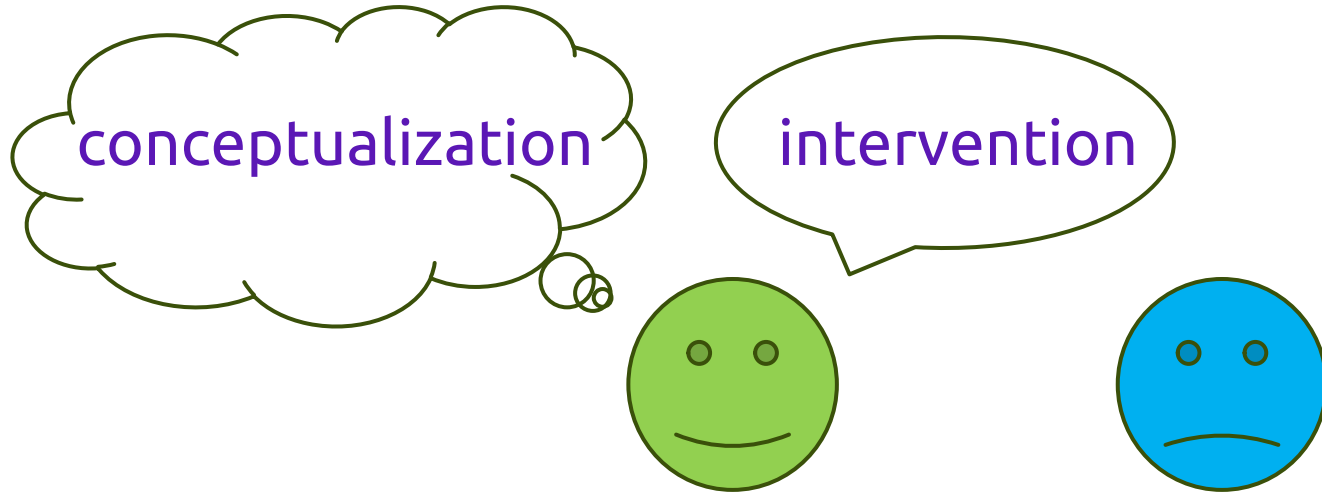


Experiential interventions are designed to have a *primary* impact on adaptive emotions and a *secondary* impact on cognition and behavior.

Reflecting on Practice

- How often do you focus on emotions as a focal dimension for exploration and change?
 - Almost every session with almost every client
 - With most clients but not every session
 - With some clients but not most
 - Rarely or never
- What psychotherapy interventions do you use most frequently to encourage adaptive emotions?

Conceptualization & Intervention

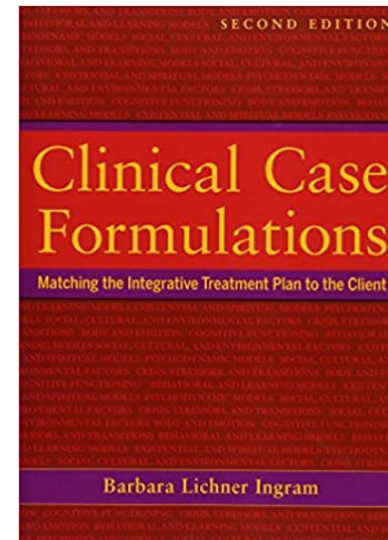


- ***Conceptualization*** involves using psychological theories to think about clients' problems and how we might help them.
- ***Interventions*** are things we say and do to help our clients.

Emotional Case Formulation

The problem requires an *Emotional Focus* to help the client improve...

- Awareness
- Acceptance
- Understanding
- Expression
- Regulation of Feelings



(Ingram, 2012, p. 157)

Experiential Conceptualization

Why do Humans have Emotions?

Emotions are designed to help humans...

- Direct their attention to what is important.
- To synthesize complex experiences to their most essential aspect.
- To motivate people for action.
- Help them adapt to their environment.

(Greenberg, 2011)

Primary, Secondary, & Instrumental Emotions

Instrumental Emotions

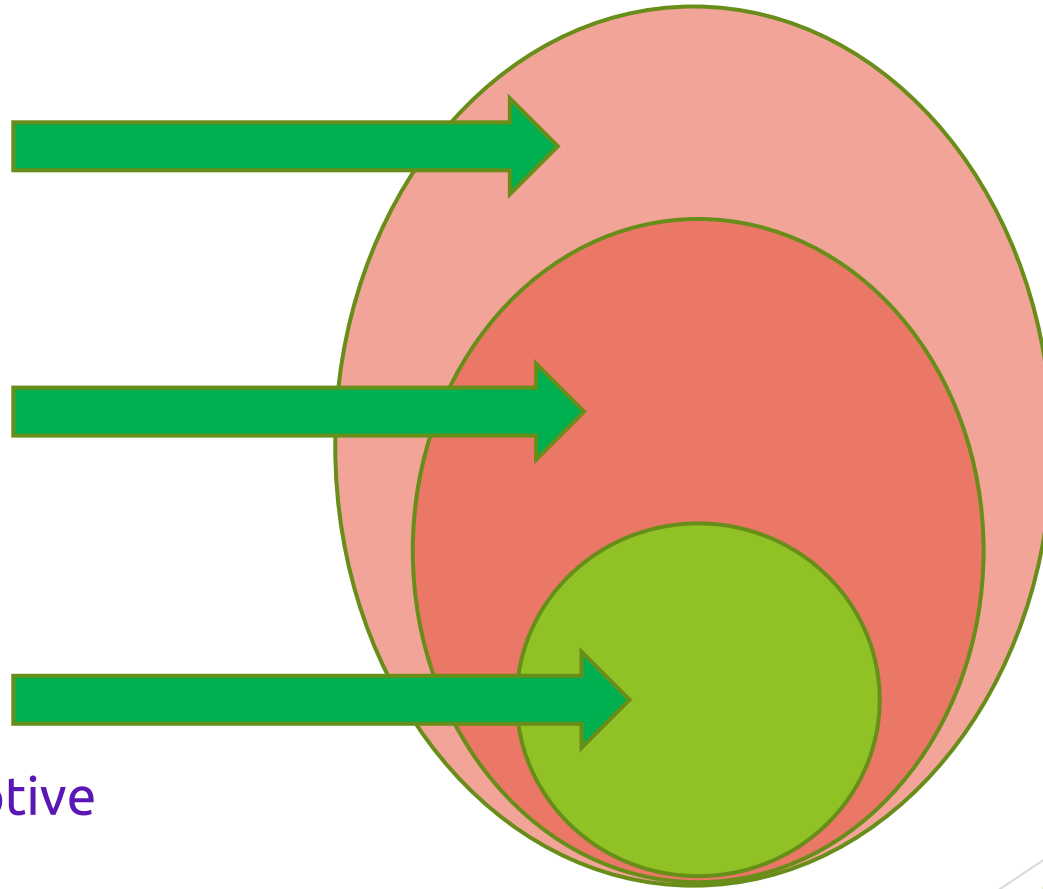
are displayed to others to serve a social purpose.

Secondary Emotions

are a reaction to a primary emotion or to a thought.

Primary Emotions

are at the core of experience but may not be recognized or displayed outwardly. Primary emotions may be adaptive or maladaptive.



Emotional Adaptation

Emotions have evolved to help people ***adapt*** to the environments they encounter.

Primary Adaptive Emotion Responses

“The normal function of emotion is to rapidly process complex situational information to prepare the person to take effective action.”

(Elliott, Watson, Goldman, & Greenberg, 2004)

Adaptive Emotional Responses

- **Fear** is an adaptive response to...
danger.
- **Anger** is an adaptive response to...
violation.
- **Sadness** is an adaptive response to...
loss.
- **Guilt** is an adaptive response to...
doing something *wrong.*
- **Pride** is an adaptive response to...
doing something *well.*

Maladaptive Emotional Responses

- ***Fear*** is maladaptive when you are not in danger.
- ***Anger*** is not helpful when you have not been violated.
- ***Sadness*** is maladaptive when there has not been a loss.
- ***Guilt*** and ***Shame*** may be harmful when you have not done anything wrong.
- ***Pride*** may be maladaptive when you haven't done something well.
- Any of these emotions can be **maladaptive** when they are disproportional to the situation.

Maladaptive Emotions

- ***Emotion Focused Therapy*** (EFT) suggests that emotions are vital in the construction of the self and are key variables in how one interacts with their environment.
- The adaptive value of emotions lies in their ability to alert an individual of both potential negative and positive outcomes of present or future environmental experiences (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997).
- ***Maladaptive emotions*** often involve “over-learned responses” from previous experiences that begin to negatively affect an individual’s ability to function in their current environment (Greenberg, 2008).

Maladaptive Emotions

Psychological problems are often associated with maladaptive emotions, including:

- Unresolved grief
- Fear of day-to-day stressors
- Overwhelming guilt and shame
- Anger at self and others

(Greenberg, 2011)

A Simple Foundation for Unified Psychotherapy

Cognition	Emotion	Behavior
A D	A P T	I V E
M A L	A D A P T	I V E

Adaptive or Maladaptive?: An over-simplified place to start



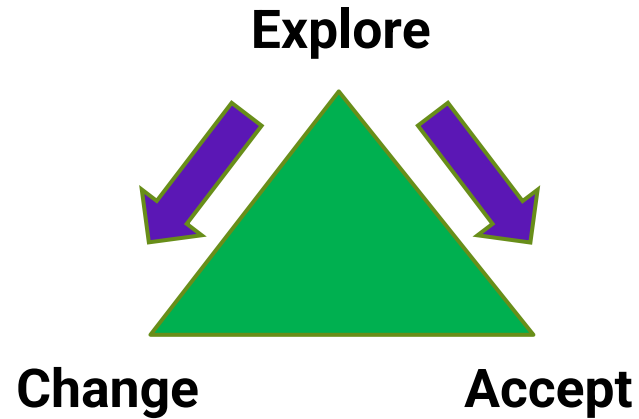
Is this an adaptive emotion or is it maladaptive?

Adaptive Function of Emotions

- ***Adaptive Emotions*** match the situation in a proportional manner, help synthesize and evaluate situations, and organize people for effective action.
- ***Maladaptive Emotions*** do not match the situation, are disproportional responses, result in inaccurate evaluation, or interfere with effective action.

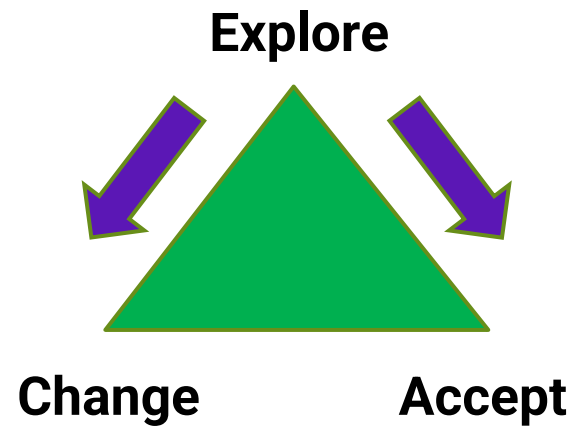
(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 82; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997)

Emotional Exploration, Change, & Acceptance



Exploring Emotions

It is important for psychotherapists to help clients explore feelings and to identify categorical emotions (like anger, fear, sadness, shame, guilt, pride, or attachment) as well as individual experiences of these emotions. Once specific feelings have been highlighted, their function can be explored in order to determine if they are adaptive or maladaptive.



Transforming Maladaptive Emotions

- Some emotions are **maladaptive** and may need to be transformed.
- Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT) describes maladaptive emotions as “over-learned responses” from previous experiences that begin to negatively affect an individual’s ability to function in their current environment (Greenberg, 2008).

Emotional Exploration, Change, & Acceptance

Accepting Difficult Adaptive Emotions

- Some emotions serve an adaptive purpose but may be **difficult** to accept or **painful** to feel.
- EFT points out that the adaptive value of emotions lies in their ability to alert an individual of both potential negative and positive outcomes of present or future environmental experiences (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997).
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) emphasizes the importance of **remaining open and receptive to internal experiences** that may be distressing. Making contact with these feelings in the present moment is a part of emotional acceptance.



Examples of Emotional Change & Acceptance

	Maladaptive Emotions that may be Transformed	Difficult Adaptive Emotions that may be Processed and Accepted
<i>Coming Out</i>	I am ashamed of being gay. I hate myself because God hates gays.	I am angry at my father for rejecting me and teaching me to hate myself based on his religious beliefs.
<i>Grief</i>	I feel hopeless. I can't go on.	I feel heartbroken. It's hard to keep going but I know that I will survive if I put one foot in front of the other.

Examples of Emotional Change & Acceptance

	Maladaptive Emotions that may be Transformed	Difficult Adaptive Emotions that May be Processed and Accepted
Addiction	I feel ashamed of the things I did while I was using meth. I will never be normal again.	I regret the mistakes I made when I was using meth. I feel remorse about hurting my family.
Job Interview	I am so angry at those bastards on the selection committee. They are obviously treating me unfairly.	I am disappointed that I didn't get a job offer. It may help for me to get some volunteer experience in this area before I apply again.

Collaborative Dialogue

- ▶ **Collaborative Dialogue** involves discussing treatment choices and options openly with clients and making decisions together (Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 98).
- ▶ The decision between focusing on **changing** maladaptive emotions or **accepting** uncomfortable but adaptive emotions provides an opportunity for collaborative dialogue.
- ▶ A psychotherapist can explain the difference between a transformation-oriented strategy (e.g., EFT) and an acceptance-based strategy (e.g., ACT) and make a collaborative decision about these complementary options.

Reflecting on Practice

How much do you emphasize each of these processes?

- Emotional Transformation
- Emotional Acceptance

Can you think of an example from your own life of...

- a *maladaptive emotion* that can be modified?
- a *painful but adaptive emotion* that can be accepted?

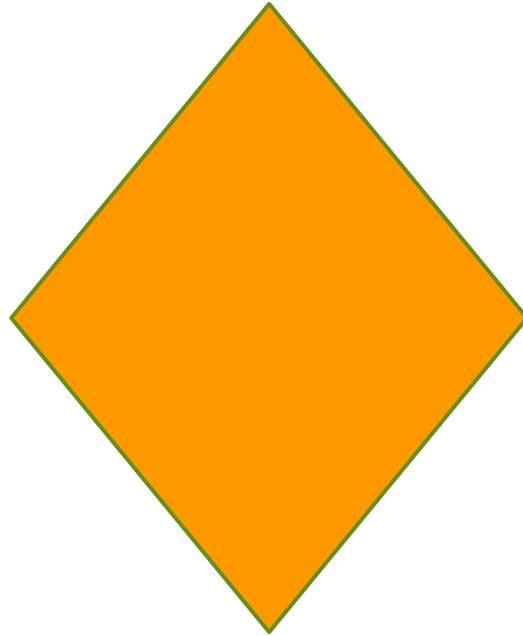
Functional Analysis & Guided Discovery

- ▶ **Functional Analysis** was developed by Behavior Therapists to discern the value and function of specific actions.
- ▶ TUP expands the applicability of functional analysis and uses this process in a more **multidimensional** manner.
- ▶ An integrative psychotherapist can explore the functional value of emotions and cognitions; not just behaviors.
- ▶ Functional analysis can also be applied to developmental, interpersonal, systemic, cultural, and biological processes.
- ▶ For example, is your role in your family system still serving an adaptive purpose?



Functional Analysis

**Explore Current
Functioning**



Support Adaptation

(highlight strengths, solutions,
accurate perceptions,
adaptive emotions, etc.)

**Accept Reality and
things that can't be changed**

(difficult truths,
uncomfortable feelings,
environmental limitations, etc.)

**Change Maladaptive
Patterns**

(dysfunctional thoughts,
maladaptive emotions,
ineffective actions, unhealthy
relationships, oppressive systems)

Guided Discovery

- ▶ **Guided Discovery** and **Socratic Dialogue** are parts of Cognitive Therapy used to discover more functional ways of thinking.
- ▶ These processes can be used to uncover and encourage more adaptive emotions and more effective actions, not just cognitions.
- ▶ Embracing a **multidimensional** approach, guided discovery can also be used to explore more adaptive interpersonal interactions, social roles, and health practices.

Foundation Skills – Three Levels

COGNITION	EMOTION	BEHAVIOR
Exploration & Functional Analysis of Current Patterns		
Guided Discovery to Uncover More Adaptive Functioning		
Enacting Adaptation Outside of Psychotherapy		

Foundational Experiential Skills for UP

Exploration & Functional Analysis of Current Patterns	Guided Discovery to Uncover More Adaptive Functioning	Enacting Adaptation Outside of Psychotherapy
<p>Focusing on Emotions and Increasing Insight into the Experiential-Affective System</p> <p>Understanding the Context and Impact of Specific Feelings</p> <p>Analyzing the Functional Value of Current Emotions</p> <p>Exploring Primary Emotions that May Underlie Surface Feelings</p>	<p>Supporting Adaptive Emotions that are Already within Awareness</p> <p>Discovering More Adaptive Emotions and Experimenting with Them</p> <p>Developing an Attitude of Authenticity that Supports Experiential Willingness rather than Avoidance</p> <p>Making Contact with Uncomfortable Emotions that May be Adaptive</p>	<p>Supporting Adaptive Emotional Expression in Day-to-day Life</p> <p>Expanding and Refining Emotional Awareness and Expression Over Time</p> <p>Working Interactively and Contextually to Support Adaptive Emotions</p>

Foundational Skills – Part One

COGNITION	EMOTION	BEHAVIOR
	Exploration & Functional Analysis of Current Patterns	



Exploration & Functional Analysis of Current Patterns

- EXP-1.** Focusing on Emotions and Increasing Insight into the Experiential-Affective System
- EXP-2.** Understanding the Context and Impact of Specific Feelings
- EXP-3.** Analyzing the Functional Value of Current Emotions
- EXP-4.** Exploring Primary Emotions that may Underlie Surface Feelings

Demonstration Video A

Exploration & Functional Analysis of Current Emotions

Jeff will help Sarah identify emotions related to seeing her father.

Which of these skills did you see Jeff using?

- EXP-1.** Focusing on Emotions and Increasing Insight into the Experiential-Affective System
- EXP-2.** Understanding the Context and Impact of Specific Feelings
- EXP-3.** Analyzing the Functional Value of Current Emotions
- EXP-4.** Exploring Primary Emotions that May Underlie Surface Feelings



Foundational Skills – Part Two

COGNITION	EMOTION	BEHAVIOR
	Guided Discovery to Uncover More Adaptive Functioning	

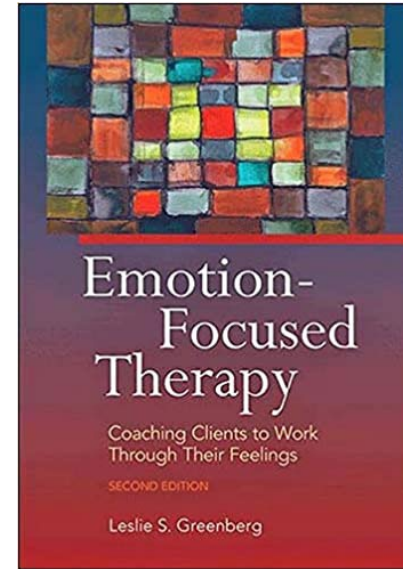
Guided Discovery to Uncover More Adaptive Emotions

- EXP-5.** Supporting Adaptive Emotions that are Already within Awareness
- EXP-6.** Discovering More Adaptive Emotions and Experimenting with Them
- EXP-7.** Developing an Attitude of Authenticity that Supports Experiential Willingness rather than Avoidance
- EXP-8.** Making Contact with Uncomfortable Emotions that may be Adaptive



Facilitating Access to More Adaptive Emotions

- Shifting Attention
- Access Needs and Goals
- Positive Imagery
- Expressive Enactment of the Emotion
- Remembering Another Emotion
- Talking about an Emotion
- Expressing an Emotion on the Client's Behalf



(Greenberg, 2008, ch. 8)

Video Demonstration B

Guided Discovery of Emotions

Jeff helps Sarah explore the interaction of anger and sadness.

Which of these skills did you see Jeff using?

- EXP-5.** Supporting Adaptive Emotions that are Already within Awareness
- EXP-6.** Discovering More Adaptive Emotions and Experimenting with Them
- EXP-7.** Developing an Attitude of Authenticity that Supports Experiential Willingness rather than Avoidance
- EXP-8.** Making Contact with Uncomfortable Emotions that may be Adaptive



Foundational Skills – Part Three

COGNITION	EMOTION	BEHAVIOR
	Enacting Adaptation Outside of Psychotherapy	

Enacting Adaptive Emotions Outside of Psychotherapy

- EXP-9.** Supporting Adaptive Emotional Expression in Day-to-day Life
- EXP-10.** Expanding and Refining Emotional Awareness and Expression over Time
- EXP-11.** Working Interactively and Contextually to Support Adaptive Emotions

Video Demonstration C

Enacting Adaptive Emotions Outside of Psychotherapy

Jeff helps Sarah explore conflicting emotions of fear and guilt and translate emotions into actions.

Which of these skills did you see Jeff using?

EXP-9. Supporting Adaptive Emotional Expression

EXP-10. Expanding and Refining Emotional Awareness and Expression over Time

EXP-11. Working Interactively and Contextually to Support Adaptive Emotions



Reflecting on Video Demonstrations

- What did you think of these three demonstrations?
 - **Exploring and Functional Analysis of Emotions**
 - **Guided Discovery to Uncover More Adaptive Emotions**
 - **Enacting Adaptation Outside of Psychotherapy**
- When you focus on emotions with your clients, does it look like this or somewhat different?

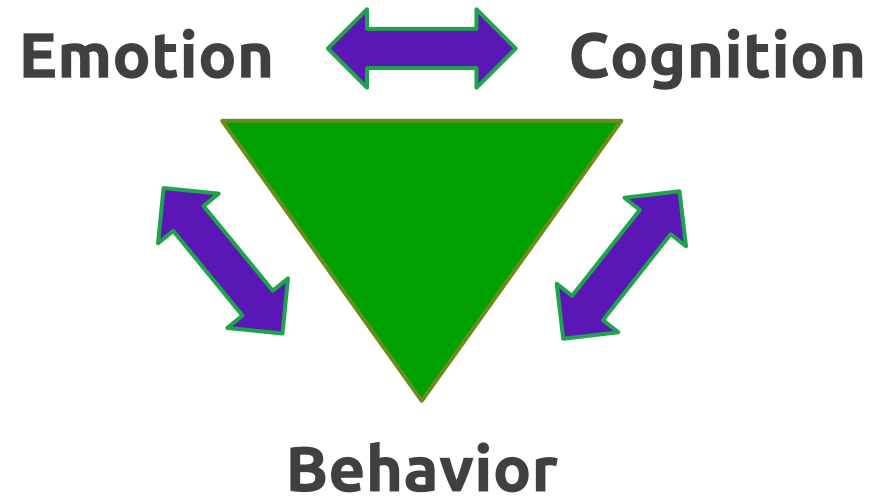
Discussion

Do you have any questions about the first half of the webinar?

10-minute Break

Is this a good time to take a break?

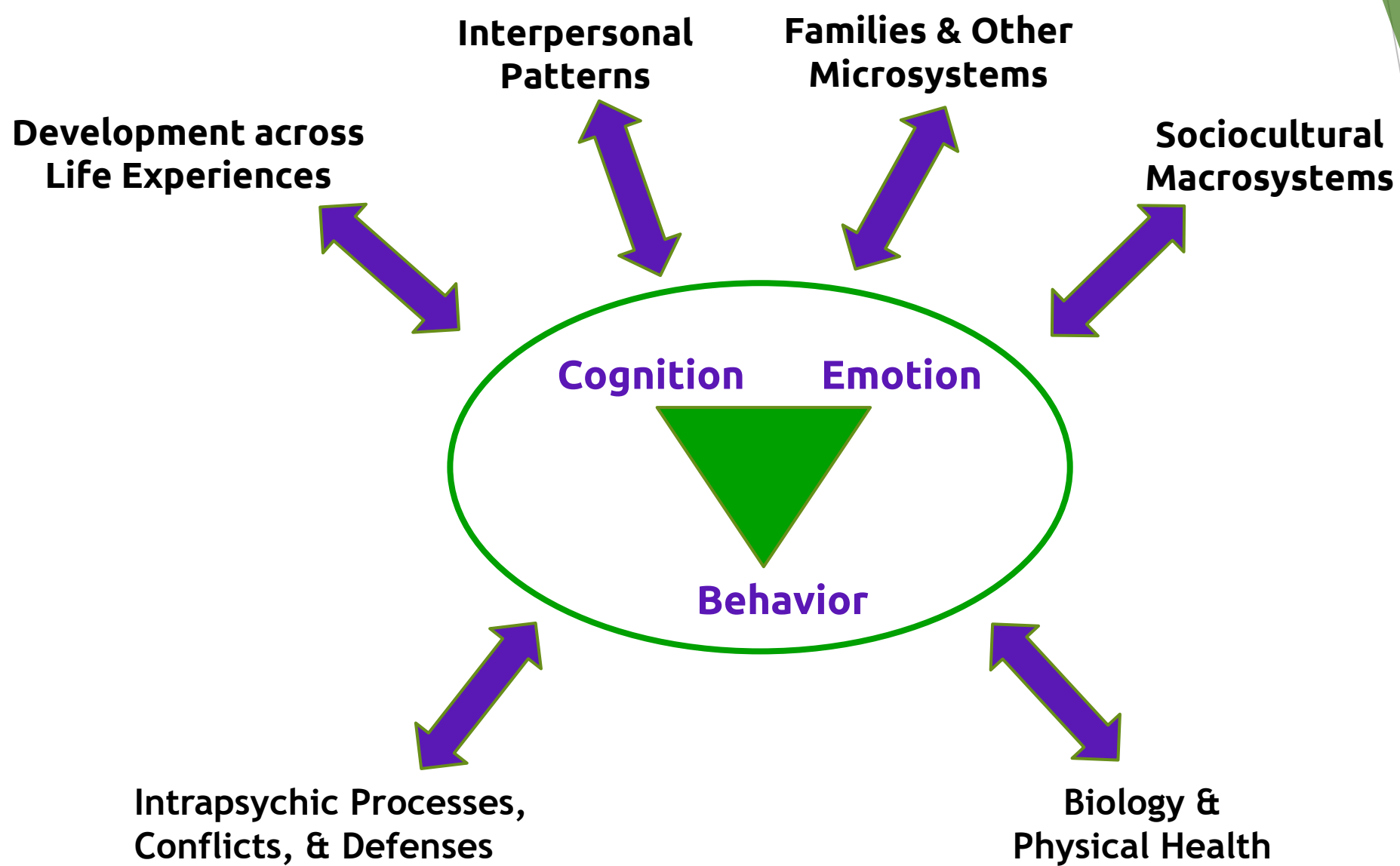
Emotions do not Exist in Isolation



- ▶ Humans are always thinking, feeling, and acting.
- ▶ These three dimensions are highly interactive.
- ▶ All three of these arrows are bidirectional.

Where do maladaptive emotions come from?

- Emotions are shaped by *external and internal* influences.
- **Development across Life Experience** is an external influence that account for the way all of our experience are internalized in the form of cognitions, emotions, and behavior.
- For example, *trauma* can profoundly affect one's emotional responses to day-to-day experiences.
- Trauma can profoundly *change* or *reinforce* one's feelings and the process of emotional processing.

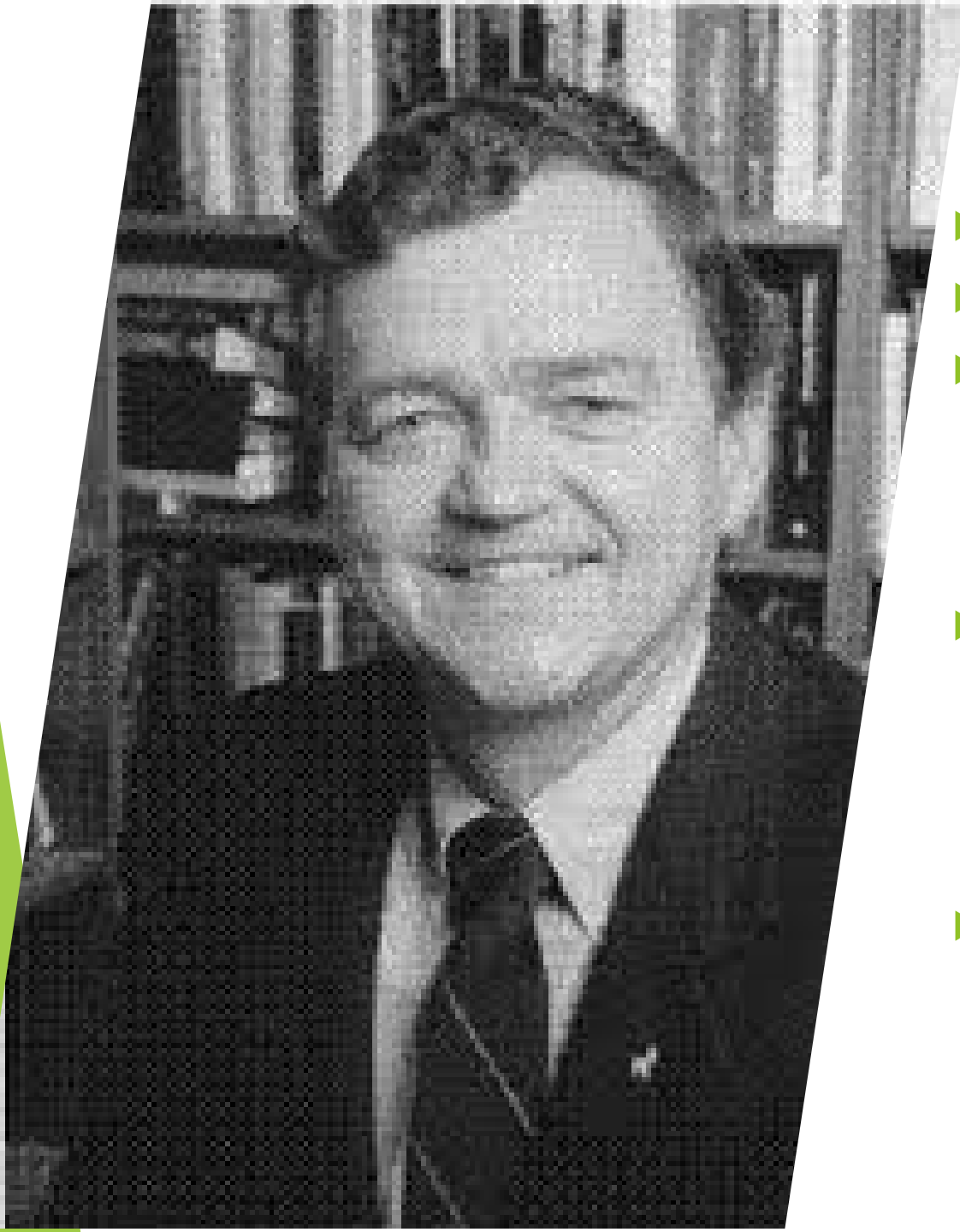


How Can We Understand Experiential Approaches?

Complex Dynamic Systems

- ▶ Start with complex dynamic systems
 - ▶ Many, many individual parts with tons of connections
 - ▶ Always changing
 - ▶ **Parts connected to a larger whole**
- ▶ We are in complex dynamic systems
 - ▶ Ourselves
 - ▶ Our bodies (embodied)
 - ▶ Emotions (experienced)
 - ▶ Thoughts
 - ▶ Behaviors (enactive)
 - ▶ Our world
 - ▶ Always are embedded
- ▶ Can change any of these pieces
 - ▶ Why the Dodo Bird Hypothesis holds





(Dis)Order

- ▶ Our worlds are so complex that it's overwhelming
- ▶ Never possible to be fully understand or control
- ▶ A primary goal is to maintain a level of organization/orderliness
 - ▶ Within ourselves
 - ▶ In the world around us
- ▶ Constantly making changes to maintain or enhance order
 - ▶ Called negentropy in physics
 - ▶ What Michael Mahoney called the **Core Ordering Processes**
- ▶ When unable to (re)organize well, can result in a psychiatric disorder
 - ▶ Why most psychiatric diagnoses include the word "disorder"?

Narratives

- ▶ These are abstract concepts
- ▶ Need to a way to ground the idea
 - ▶ Can do so with narratives
- ▶ **We organize our lives through our narratives**
 - ▶ The unit of meaning
 - ▶ The stories we live by
- ▶ Narratives are representations of the person's experiences
 - ▶ Do not capture the full story
 - ▶ Just parts of it
 - ▶ Not true or false in the classic sense



Truth Criteria

- ▶ Correspondence
 - ▶ How well does it represent something “out there”?
- ▶ Pragmatic
 - ▶ How well does it allow you to function?
- ▶ Coherence
 - ▶ Definition: how well something is integrated
 - ▶ i.e. Have a logical connection or consistency
 - ▶ How well does it fit within the systems?
 - ▶ The way to understand narratives
 - ▶ A human drive

Restorying

- ▶ Our narratives are not set in stone
 - ▶ Can be changed subtly or significantly
- ▶ Can change parts or all of the narrative
 - ▶ Change the parts themselves
 - ▶ (Re)ordering
 - ▶ (Re)emphasizing
 - ▶ Adding in missing details
 - ▶ How relate to other narratives
 - ▶ Replace entirely

Restorying

- ▶ Certain types of stories tend to create more coherence
 - ▶ e.g. Traumas (which cause “narrative wreckage”) vs. the Hero’s Journey
- ▶ Must be willing and able to make the changes
 - ▶ Avoidance or resistance is a barrier
- ▶ **The goal of psychotherapy is restorying to create more coherence**

The Foundation of Restorying

- ▶ Restorying is difficult
 - ▶ Particularly if it involves a central belief or value
- ▶ A good relationship makes the person feel more comfortable
 - ▶ Facilitates examining the stories and making changes
 - ▶ Lowers the natural barriers to change
- ▶ Without a good relationship, it's an uphill battle
- ▶ Why building and maintaining the therapeutic relationship is foundational

Ways to Restory

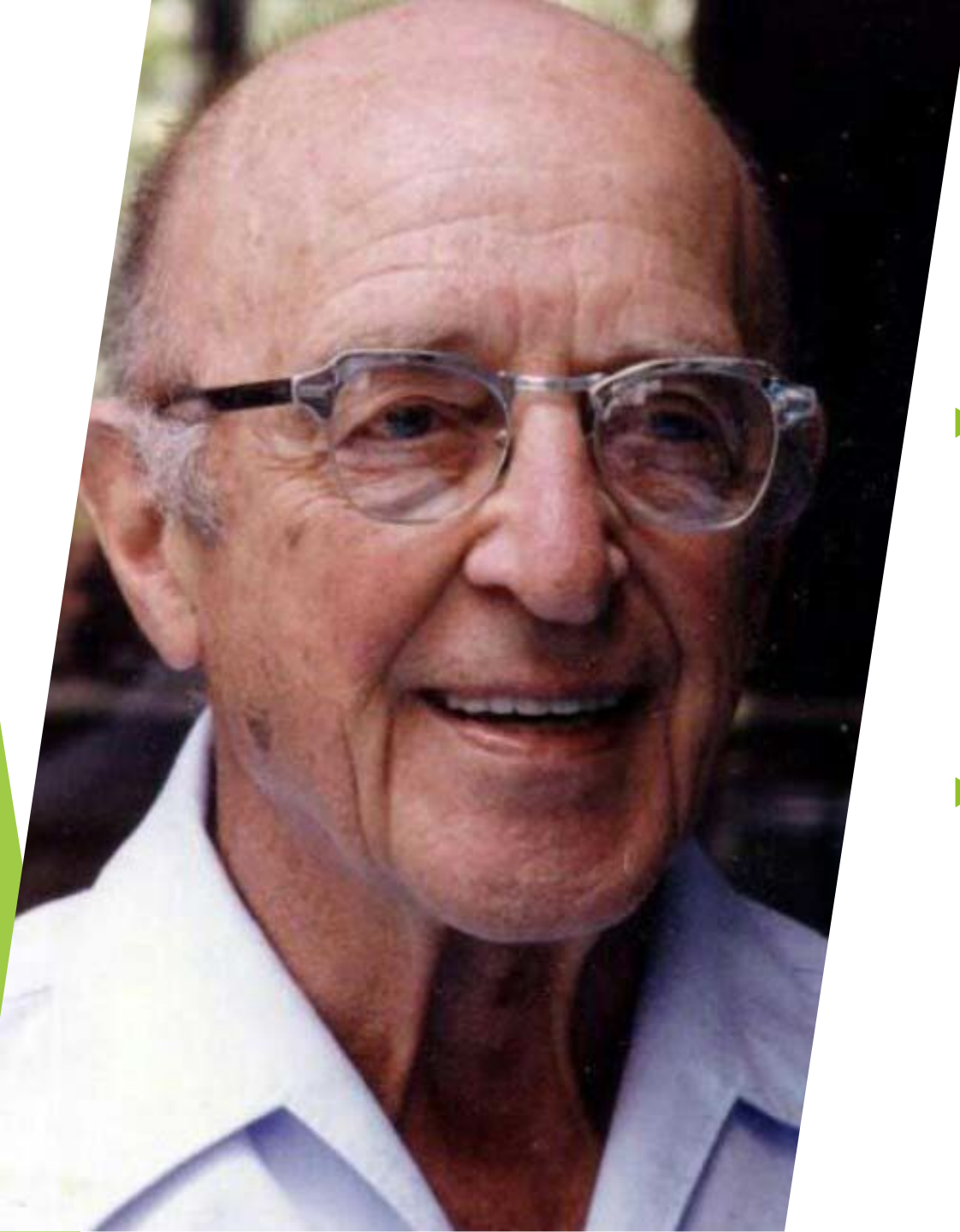
- ▶ Descriptive
 - ▶ Fleshing out the story better
 - ▶ Better understand the parts and the connections
 - ▶ e.g. Humanistic/Experiential Therapies
- ▶ Interpretative
 - ▶ Adding new knowledge to change the ways the parts work or interrelate
 - ▶ e.g. Psychodynamic Psychotherapy
- ▶ Direct changes
 - ▶ Conscious decisions to alter parts of the system
 - ▶ e.g. CBT
- ▶ Indirect changes
 - ▶ Adjustments to the internal environment that have downstream effects
 - ▶ e.g. Medications, exercise, neuromodulation

Description

- ▶ We rarely describe what is happening in depth
 - ▶ Usually superficial
 - ▶ Enough to get by
- ▶ Not enough time or bandwidth (attention) to do more
- ▶ But some things are complicated or confusing
 - ▶ A superficial narrative is insufficient
- ▶ Helpful to flesh out what's happening
 - ▶ e.g. Lists or journaling
- ▶ Talking to another person can be even better
 - ▶ Putting it into a story rather than just having it in our heads
 - ▶ What a bartender or a friend can do

Our Friend, Empathy

- ▶ Can do more than just listening
- ▶ By conveying your understanding of what's happening, it helps the person refine their understandings further
- ▶ Why empathy is such a useful tool
- ▶ The listener observes things that the patient isn't paying attention to
 - ▶ Particularly the emotional undercurrents
 - ▶ See in body language and tone of voice
- ▶ Allows the person to have a more complete picture
- ▶ Now in a better position to make their own changes
 - ▶ We don't need to change people, they can change themselves



Advantages of Empathy

- ▶ An effective intervention
 - ▶ Large evidence base
 - ▶ Foundational in many Experiential Therapies
 - ▶ Particularly Person-Centered Therapy
 - ▶ Along with Unconditional Positive Regard and Congruence
- ▶ Is minimally directive
 - ▶ Allows the person to figure it out for themselves
 - ▶ Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985)
 - ▶ Autonomy
 - ▶ Relatedness
 - ▶ Competence



Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT)

- ▶ A blending of Person-Centered Therapy, Gestalt Therapy, and Focusing
- ▶ Empathy is foundational
- ▶ Stronger focus on emotions
 - ▶ Central to the theory and the approach
 - ▶ Rogers focused more on the narrative itself

Going Beyond Empathy...

- Empathy is highly collaborative
 - A co-constructionion of the narrative
- Is there a way to be more patient directed?
 - Through Focusing (Gendlin, 1998)
 - Connecting with and exploring the Felt Sense
 - Applied mindfulness



6 Steps of Focusing

- ▶ Clearing a space
- ▶ Noticing the Felt Sense
- ▶ Getting a handle
 - ▶ What is the quality?
- ▶ Resonating
 - ▶ Do the word(s) capture the Felt Sense
- ▶ Asking
 - ▶ “What makes this problem so ____?”
- ▶ Receiving
 - ▶ Whatever comes with a shift

The Problems with Focusing

- ▶ Deeply experiential and body-oriented
 - ▶ Not everyone is ready to do
 - ▶ Some may be put off by it
- ▶ Not commonly used, even in EFT
- ▶ Emphasizes an exploration rather than a description
 - ▶ Provides an incomplete narrative
- ▶ No significant evidence-base
- ▶ Harder to connect with the rest of TUP

Emotion Narratives

- ▶ Can go in a related, but different direction
 - ▶ Be more descriptive (i.e. more phenomenological)
- ▶ Start with the emotion and build the story around it
- ▶ Can incorporate a reflective learning element
- ▶ When to use:
 - ▶ Whenever there is an emotion
 - ▶ Can use with current or recalled emotions
 - ▶ Can be pleasant or unpleasant emotions or confusion
 - ▶ The patient or the clinician can suggest using the process
 - ▶ Patients can learn to do on their own with practice

Suggestions

- ▶ Practice makes perfect
 - ▶ Including yourself
- ▶ Providing background can help
 - ▶ Utility of being experiential
 - ▶ Utility of being descriptive
 - ▶ Want to bring into words
 - ▶ Bottom-up processing
 - ▶ Decreases activity in the amygdala and increases activity in the prefrontal cortex
- ▶ Emotions are information that isn't in a verbal form
 - ▶ Need to translate/decode them
- ▶ Don't move to cognitions too quickly
- ▶ Some people lack a broad emotional vocabulary
 - ▶ Can work with them to find the right words

The 5 Steps

1. Noticing the presence of an emotion

- ▶ Internal sensations
- ▶ Body language
- ▶ Tone of voice
- ▶ Behavioral activation

2. Connect with it

- ▶ Shifting your attention to it
- ▶ Choosing your attitudes towards it (Bracketing)
 - ▶ Taking an accepting and curious approach
 - ▶ Unbiased
 - ▶ “Let’s explore this.”
 - ▶ Allowing it to be a part of you

The 5 Steps

3. Decoding (the reduction)

- ▶ Asking yourself “What’s the best way to describe this?”
- ▶ Finding the right word(s)
- ▶ Involves speaking from the emotion
 - ▶ Helping it to say what it needs to
- ▶ Double checking
 - ▶ Seeing if the word(s) feel right
 - ▶ If not, can go back to part 4
- ▶ May need to do multiple times if there are mixed emotions

The 5 Steps

4. Storying

- ▶ Adding the context
- ▶ “How does this emotion fit into the story?”
- ▶ Telling the story along with the emotional content

5. Reflective learning

- ▶ “What does this mean for me?”
 - ▶ At the moment?
 - ▶ Overall?
- ▶ Want to be unbiased
 - ▶ Can take the perspective of an outside observer

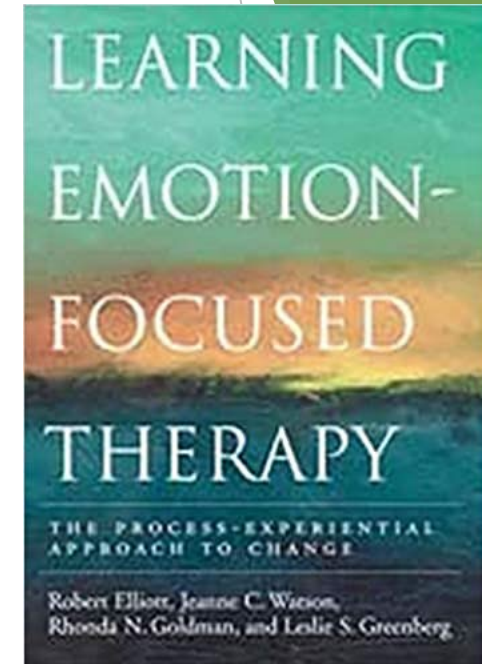
Let's Do Some Practice

We'll do 2 examples:

1. A pleasant emotion
2. An unpleasant emotion

Advanced Experiential Interventions

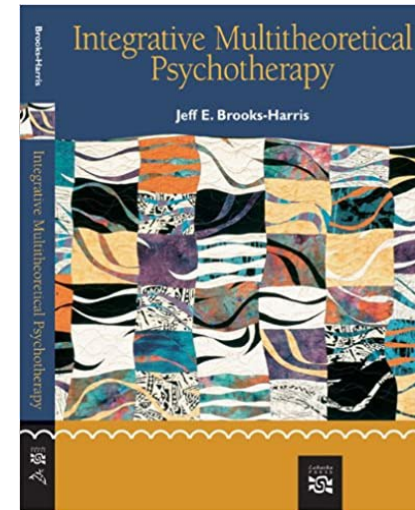
- Experiential Focusing (Gendlin)
- Reprocessing Problematic Experiences (Rice)
- Two-Chair Dialogue (Perls/Gestalt)
- Empty Chair Experiment (Perls/Gestalt)



Elliot, Watson, Goldman, & Greenberg (2004)

Experiential-Humanistic Key Strategies

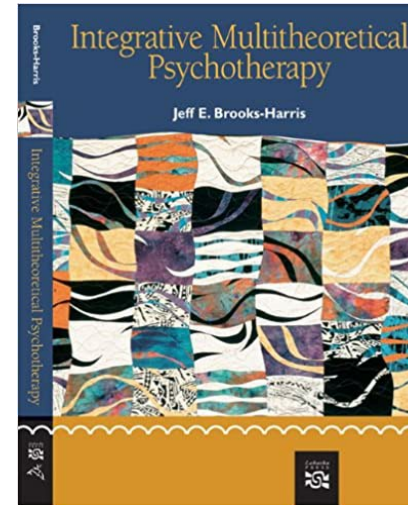
- Identifying Feelings
- Clarifying the Impact of Feelings
- Encouraging Expression of Feelings
- Fostering Self-Actualization
- Communicating Empathy & Positive Regard
- Supporting Authenticity



(Brooks-Harris, 2008, Chapter 6)

Training in Unified Psychotherapy

- Integrating Parts of Self
- Focusing Attention
- Fostering Here-and-Now Awareness
- Creating Experiments
- Accepting Freedom & Responsibility
- Recognizing Existential Limitations



(Brooks-Harris, 2008, Chapter 6)

1. Identifying Feelings

Identifying specific feelings and distinguishing them from thoughts and physical sensations

Source: Gestalt Therapy & EFT

- If clients enter psychotherapy with limited awareness of emotional experience, it may be useful to attend to and identify specific feelings.
- When exploring feelings, it is important to make a distinction between emotions and thoughts.

(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 201-204)

2. Clarifying the Impact of Feelings

Clarifying the impact of feelings on thoughts, actions, and other dimensions of human functions

Source: Gestalt Therapy

- If clients are unaware of how their feelings are affecting other areas of their lives, it may be useful to clarify the impact of feelings.
- Conducting a brief survey of the way a particular feeling impacts other dimensions of life helps illuminate the way emotions impact thoughts, feelings, and relationships.

(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 204-206)

3. Encouraging Expression of Feelings

Encouraging awareness and expression of feelings in order to embrace adaptive emotions and let go of maladaptive feelings

Source: Gestalt Therapy

- When clients are unaware of their own feelings, or ignore and suppress them, you should encourage awareness and expression.
- As you are exploring feelings and trying to understand whether they serve an adaptive purpose, it may be helpful to provide an explanation of this view of emotions so that clients can understand the purpose of your questions.

(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 206-208)

4. Fostering Self-Actualization

Celebrating the desire for growth and fostering self-actualization as an innate human need

Source: Abraham Maslow

- Celebrating the desire for growth and self-actualization is especially important early in psychotherapy when clients may feel discouraged because they haven't been able to solve their own problems.
- One way to encourage growth is to move from abstract ideas like actualization toward more concrete goals and plans. Growth is a process of movement, and when movement begins, it can often perpetuate itself.

(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 208-210)

5. Communicating Empathy and Positive Regard

Communicating empathy and unconditional positive regard in a congruent manner that encourages growth

Source: Person-Center Therapy

- Communicating unconditional positive regard, congruence, and empathy is useful when clients lack trust, are anxious about psychotherapy, appear fearful of being judged, or demonstrate a self-protective interpersonal style.
- Clients often come to psychotherapy with a history of harsh judgment or personal rejection. By offering a supportive environment based on unconditional positive regard, clients can feel free to be themselves.

(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 210-212)

6. Supporting Authenticity

Supporting the discovery and expression of a client's personal sense of authenticity

Source: James Bugental (1965)

- When clients are living in a manner that is incongruent with their true self, it is appropriate to support the discovery and expression of a personal sense of authenticity.
- Because clients may be accustomed to hiding authentic parts of themselves from others, psychotherapy can be a safe place to experiment with self-exploration.

(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 212-215)

7. Integrating Parts of Self

**Identifying, connecting, and integrating
different parts of self**

Source: Gestalt Therapy

- If clients are unaware of different parts of themselves that are competing or conflicting with each other, or merely disconnected, it is useful to identify those parts and introduce them to one another so that they may begin to complement each other and find a coherent way to coexist
- Naming different sides of oneself and exploring them independently may be the first step toward contact. Differentiation is often the precursor to integration.

(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 215-218)

8. Focusing Attention

Focusing attention to increase awareness of feelings, thoughts, actions, or physical sensations

Source: Gestalt Therapy

- If clients are out of tune with feelings, thoughts, actions, or bodily sensations, it is useful to focus attention on these experiences.
- Focusing attention on bodily sensations that might indicate certain feelings or that might be sending certain messages involves movement in two directions. First, there is movement toward the body that involves letting go of the verbal world to focus on the subtle language of the body.

(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 218-220)

9. Fostering Here-and-Now Awareness

Fostering here-and-now awareness in order to promote discovery and growth

Source: Gestalt Therapy

- When a client is overly concerned with the past or the future, it is important to foster here-and-now awareness so that change can occur in the present.
- Here-and-now awareness sometimes brings the therapeutic relationship into central focus. When you encourage a client to disclose what is going on in the here-and-now, it may encourage exploration about thoughts and feelings about you as a therapist or you as a person.

(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 220-223)

10. Creating Experiments

Creating in-session experiments to facilitate discovery and change

Source: Gestalt Therapy

- When spoken therapy is not enough to affect maximal progress and change, it may be helpful to employ in-session experiments. First sentence from Suggestions for Use paragraph in book.
- Experimentation frequently involves encouraging clients to exaggerate their behavior or to act in ways that are forbidden. Sometimes the rules that you are encouraging clients to break are rules they learned in society or in their families. At other times, the prohibitions on certain behaviors are self-imposed.

(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 223-225)

11. Accepting Freedom and Responsibility

Promoting an acceptance of freedom and responsibility that leads to mature decision making

Source: Viktor Frankl (1969)

- When a client conforms excessively to social standards, looks only to others for guidance and authority, or loses sight of abilities within themselves, a psychotherapist can emphasize the need to recognize freedom.
- Encouraging clients to make decisions based on acceptance of responsibility often involves using language to describe things in a different way.

(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 226-228)

12. Recognizing Existential Limitations

Facilitating recognition of existential limitations like death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness

Source: Irvin Yalom (1985)

- If a client displays restricted growth and experience through over focusing on everyday concerns or under attention to deeper levels of being, it may be useful to facilitate recognition of existential limitations like freedom, isolation, meaninglessness, and death.
- When you work with clients as they face existential limitations, it is important to spend time on both sides of the existential divide. People must often spend sufficient time facing the darkness before they can emerge into the light on the other side.

(Brooks-Harris, 2008, p. 228-230)

Reflecting on Experience

Are there other experiential strategies that are a regular part of your repertoire?

How Do Transcendent Experiences Fit into Experiential Psychotherapy?

Conceptualizing the Experience

- Need a framework to:
 1. Describe the experience
 2. Understand/**order** how it works
- Hard to conceptualize
 1. Ineffable
 2. William James and Aldous Huxley
- Self-transcendent experiences (Yaden, 2017)
 1. More common than you'd think

Not All Transcendent
Experiences are *Mystical*.

How Many People Practice Mindfulness?



TUP

<https://www.psychiatrictimes.com/view/the-effect-of-mindfulness-on-outcomes-in-psychiatric-patients>

Have Been In a Flow State?



<https://ideas.ted.com/the-key-to-productivity-is-tapping-into-your-flow-state-heres-how/>

Been in Love?



<https://bestlifeonline.com/love-signs-men/>

Felt Awe?



<https://wtop.com/health-fitness/2019/02/why-experiencing-awe-can-make-you-a-better-person-according-to-science/>

Had a Peak Experience?

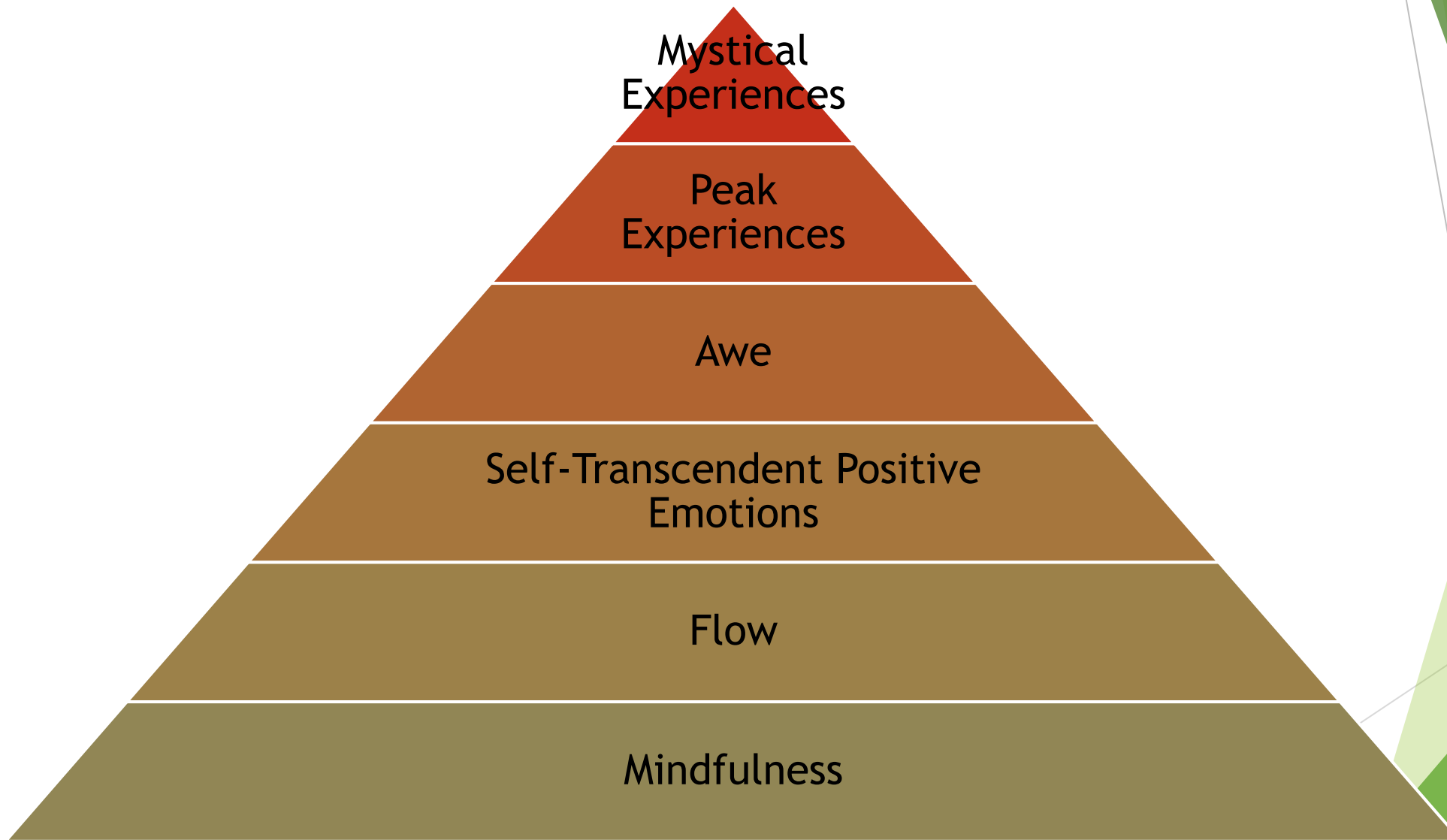


Had a Psychedelic or Mystical Experience?



Courtesy of Salt City Psychedelic Therapy and Research <https://www.linkedin.com/company/scptr>

Pyramid of Self-Transcendent Experiences



Self-Transcendent Experiences

- ▶ Transient mental states (Yaden, 2017)
- ▶ Two complementary aspects of the experience
 1. Decreased sense of self
 - ▶ Bodily sense and self-boundaries dissolve
 - ▶ Egolessness
 2. Increased connectedness
 - ▶ Including to the point of oneness/unity
 - ▶ Self and other become one (Aron, 1992)
- ▶ The higher up the pyramid, the more intense the experience
- ▶ All can be beneficial
 - ▶ Potentially more so as intensity increases?

Characteristics of a Peak Experience

- ▶ “Transient states of absolute Being” (Maslow, 1959, p.52)
- ▶ 17 characteristics including:
 - ▶ Ego transcendence
 - ▶ Fusion of the person and the world
 - ▶ Complete absorption
 - ▶ Richer perception
 - ▶ Disorientation in time and space
 - ▶ Intrinsic reward of the experience
 - ▶ Dichotomy transcendence
 - ▶ Momentary loss of fears, anxieties, and inhibitions
 - ▶ Greater acceptance and forgiveness of self and others
 - ▶ Sense of wonder and awe



An Intriguing Clinical Tool: Psychedelics

- ▶ Psychedelics are not new
 - ▶ Used for millennia in indigenous cultures
- ▶ A part of Transpersonal Psychotherapy
 - ▶ Maslow was one of the founders in the late 1960's
 - ▶ A spiritual focus
 - ▶ Not a religious one
 - ▶ Spiritual But Not Religious (SBNR)
- ▶ Psychedelic-Assisted Psychotherapy is the most well known
 - ▶ Use psychedelics to create a mystical experience
 - ▶ Clinician guides the patient
 - ▶ Better able to explore difficult topics
 - ▶ e.g. Traumas or existential issues

Psychedelic-Assisted Psychotherapy

- ▶ A number of agents can be used
- ▶ All more alike than different
- ▶ The psychedelics
 - ▶ Psilocybin
 - ▶ LSD
 - ▶ Ayahuasca
 - ▶ Ibogaine
- ▶ MDMA (What's found in Ecstasy)
 - ▶ Not a true psychedelic, an empathogen
- ▶ Ketamine
 - ▶ Not a psychedelic

Discussion

Do you have any questions or comments about any of these ideas?

Experiential Conceptualization Practice

1. In response to a single experience, it is common to feel two or three different emotions (or more). Please *list the emotions* that you are feeling about a particular situation.
2. As you reflect on these emotions, it may be helpful to see if you can identify *layers of emotions* using these definitions of primary, secondary, or instrumental emotions. Not every experience results in all three layers of emotions.
3. Some emotions are more helpful than others. Please read these two definitions (adaptive and maladaptive emotions) and think about which emotions are *helping you adapt* to the current experience.

Training in Unified Psychotherapy

If you'd like to become a part of this *interactive learning community*, please send an email to:

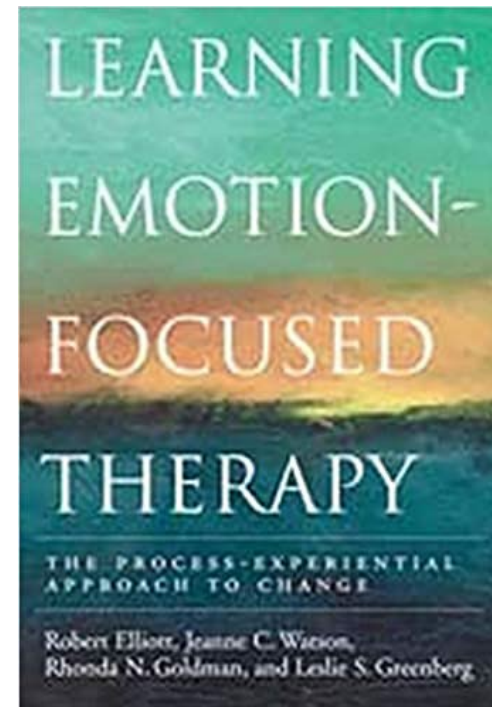
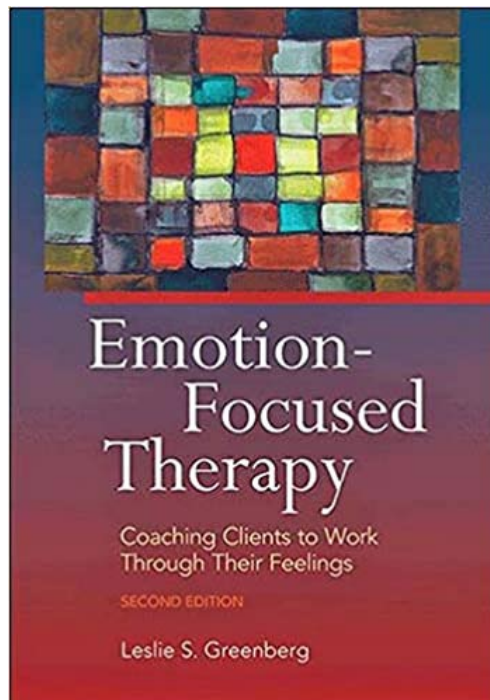
dr.jeff.e.harris@gmail.com

and ask to be added to the **TUPdates** google group.



Training in Unified Psychotherapy

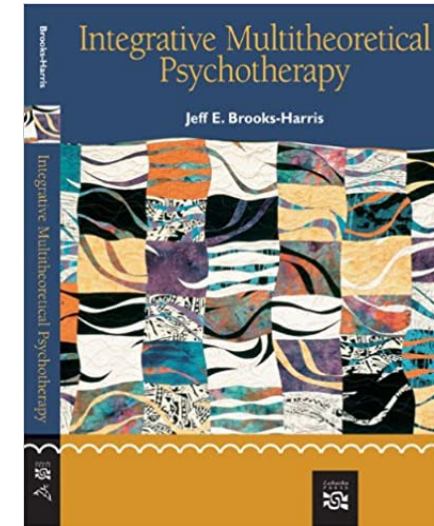
► Recommendations for Further Reading



Reference

Brooks-Harris, J. E. (2008). *Integrative Multitheoretical Psychotherapy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

***Multitheoretical Psychotherapy* (MTP)**
is one of the earlier
unified models that developed
into the current version of
***Unified Psychotherapy* (UP)**.



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