



**Emotion Theory Summary, Task, Systematic
Evocative Unfolding
& Empty Chair Work**

EFT Level 1,
Day 2, 2019

Day 2 Schedule



Time	Topic
9.30 – 10.00	A. Emotion Theory Summary; Therapeutic Tasks and Task analysis
10.00 – 11.00	B. Evocative Empathy & Systematic Evocative Unfolding; video
11.00 - 11.15	Break
11.15 – 12.30	B. cont., SEU Exercise
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 15.30	C. Empty Chair Work; exercise
15.30 – 15.45	Break
15.45 – 17.00	D. More on Empty Chair Work



Summary of EFT Emotion Theory (in “client language”)

- **A. Why Emotions are Important:**
 - 1. They tell us what is important to us.
 - 2. They tell us what we need or want, and that helps us figure out what to do.
 - 3. They give us a sense of consistency and wholeness.
- **B. Three main ways to get stuck in emotions:**
 - 1. ***Ignore important aspects of our emotions:*** Sometimes we get stuck in an emotion because we’re *missing* an important *piece* of it.
 - 2. ***Use other emotions to cover up the most useful emotions:*** The most important emotion is sometimes *underneath* the most obvious emotion.
 - 3. ***Let our emotions get out of balance:*** Sometimes the level of emotion is *too much* or *too little*.



Change Principles of Emotional Processing (Adapted from Greenberg, 2004)

- 1. ***In general***, promote emotional awareness/ symbolization
- 2. ***With overwhelming or interrupted emotions***, promote emotion regulation
- Emotional Deepening Sequence:
- 3. ***With undifferentiated or secondary emotions***, help clients deepen and differentiate experience: “You have to arrive at an emotion before you can leave it.”
- 4. ***With maladaptive emotions***, change emotion with emotion by helping clients deepen to core pain and accessing heart-felt unmet need.
- 5. ***With adaptive emotions***, promote of expression of emotions to others/self
- 6. ***After emotion work***, promote reflection and development of meaning perspective



Emotional Deepening Sequence

- Current consensus model in EFT:
- **Pre-deepening (Undifferentiated/
Instrumental/Overwhelmed/ Interrupted)**
- **=> Secondary Reactive**
- **=> Primary Maladaptive**
 - Noncore
 - Core => unmet need
- **=> Primary Adaptive**



Therapeutic Tasks

- From cognitive science research on human problem-solving
 - ♦ Research method: Task Analysis
- Clients bring specific immediate problems (cognitive-affective tasks) to sessions
- *Interpersonal* tasks (e.g., resolve dissatisfaction with therapy, obtain support)
- *Intrapersonal* tasks (e.g., resolve internal conflict, find a productive therapist focus)



Elements of a Therapeutic Task

- In recommended order of learning:
 - *1. **Marker** (observable sign of experiential state of readiness to work on task)
 - 2. **Therapeutic work** that facilitates client movement
 - 3. **Resolution** or end state
 - 4. **Client steps** to resolution
 - ◆ Measured by 6-point *Degree of resolution scale*

Current EFT Specific Task Markers

A. Interpersonal/Relational Markers	Tasks
1. <u>Begins therapy</u>	Alliance Formation
2. <u>Alliance Difficulty</u> : (a) Confrontation: Expresses or implies complaint or dissatisfaction about nature or progress of therapy, or therapeutic relationship; (b) Withdrawal: disengages from therapy process	Relational Dialog
3. <u>Vulnerability</u> : Expresses distress over strong negative self-related feelings (usually with hopelessness & sense of isolation)	Empathic Affirmation
4. <u>Contact Disturbance</u> : Immediate in-session state takes client out of psychological contact with therapist (hearing voices, dissociation, panic, narrowly focused interest)	Contact Work (Pre-therapy)

Current EFT Specific Task Markers

B. Experiencing Markers:	Tasks
1. <u>Unclear Feeling</u> : (a) Vague/nagging concern; (b) global, abstract, superficial, or externalized mode of engagement	Focusing
2. <u>Attentional Focus Difficulty</u> : (a) Overwhelmed by multiple worries or one big worry; (b) Stuck/ blank: Unable to find a session focus	Clearing a Space

Current EFT Specific Task Markers

C. Reprocessing Markers:

Therapeutic work

1. Narrative pressure: Refers to a traumatic/painful experience about which a story wants to be told (e.g., traumatic event, disrupted life story, nightmare)

Narrative Retelling

2. Problematic Reaction Point: Describes unexpected, puzzling personal reaction (behavior, emotion reaction)

Systematic Evocative Unfolding

3. Meaning Protest: Describes a life event discrepant with cherished belief, in an emotionally aroused state

(Re)Creation of Meaning

Current EFT Specific Task Markers

D. Configuration/Introject Markers:

Tasks

1. Conflict Split: Describes conflict between two aspects of self, in which one aspect of self is (a) critical (self-criticism split), (b) coercive toward (coaching & motivational splits), or (c) blocks another aspect (self-interruption split).

- Two Chair Work (self aspects)
- Alternate task: Configuration Work

2. Attribution Split: Describes over-reaction to others, in which others are experienced as (a) critical of, (b) coercive toward, or (c) blocking of the self

- Two Chair Work (w Others as self aspect)
- Alternate task: Configuration Work (re: imagined Others)

Current EFT Specific Task Markers

D. Configuration/Introject Markers, cont:

Tasks

3. Unfinished Business/Unresolved Relationships: Blames, complains, or expresses hurt or longing in relation to a significant other

- Empty Chair Work
- Alternate task:
Speaking Your Truth Work

4. Anguish with inability to regulate: Expresses strong emotional pain in presence of severe self-criticism or lack of connection/support, and is not helped initially therapist empathic affirmation

- Compassionate Self-Soothing
- Alternate task:
Empathic Affirmation



Evocative Empathy and Systematic Evocative Unfolding (SEU)



Systematic Evocative Unfolding (SEU) - 1

- Developed by Laura Rice from Client-Centered therapy tradition
 - One of the first two tasks described (mid '70's)
 - Self-understanding task: Puzzling personal reaction (mystery)
- Uses perceptual-situation elements to access emotion schemes
 - Reprocessing task: Access episodic memory; heighten recall of affect



Systematic Evocative Unfolding (SEU) - 2

- Clinical applications: PTSD flashbacks; borderline processes;
 - Uncommon in depression
 - More common in anxiety, interpersonal difficulties
- Related task: Trauma Retelling
 - Narrative pressure without puzzlement
- Can also process difficult, problematic, intense or automatic reactions
- Can use with experiential homework
- Can combine with 2 chair work (anxiety splits)



SEU relies on Evocative Empathy

- The goal: To bring the client's experience to life using rich, evocative language, including metaphor & imagery
 - Client: I feel so down, so lost. I don't know what to do
 - Therapist: It sounds like all the lights have gone out and you are not sure where the light switch is?
- Listen with your body
 - Try to imagine client's emotional state as they speak to you



Evocative Empathy Responses

- Evocative Reflection (imagery, metaphor)
 - First person reflection
- Evocative Exploratory Questions
 - Scene-building questions
 - Differentiation questions
 - Emotion compass questions



Empathic Evocation uses the Emotion Compass

- Emotion compass [or pain compass]: strong feelings point to what is important
 - Attend to the client's intense, unprocessed and confusing feelings, meanings, wants etc.



Empathic Evocation involves Re-experiencing

- Vividly recall episodic memories
- Encourage specificity, concrete description of details
 - to access & process emotional experience



Differentiation of Emotions

- Help client *differentiate* the emotion to better understand it
 - “Bad”
 - => “Embarrassed”
 - => “Excruciatingly awkward to the point where I want to shrink into the ground”



Differentiation of Emotions, cont.

- Not just “angry” but what kind of of “angry”? eg:
 - “Cold rage”
 - “Frustrated fury”
 - “Mild irritation”



SEU Marker: Problematic Reaction Point

- **3 elements:**
 - 1. Stimulus situation described
 - 2. Personal reaction described (feeling or behaviour)
 - 3. Described as puzzling or not understood



Unfolding: Marker Work

- Group exercise: Describe possible PRPs

Microprocesses

Resolution Steps

Pretask Positioning
for Exploration

1. Marker: Problematic Reaction: (a) Stimulus situation; (b) Personal Reaction; (c) Puzzlement

Experience
Re-evoked

2a. Confirms what was felt as problematic

2b. Vividly re-enters scene

Tracking the
two sides

3a. Recognizes stimulus features that were salient

3b. Tracks personal meaning of stimulus by attending to A and/or B

A. Feeling Side:
Attends to emotional reaction to perceived stimulus

B. Stimulus Side:
Attends to subjective construal of stimulus (demand characteristics/potential impact)

4. **Meaning Bridge** (partial resolution):
Recognizes causal link between reaction and construal of stimular impact ("No wonder I reacted that way.")

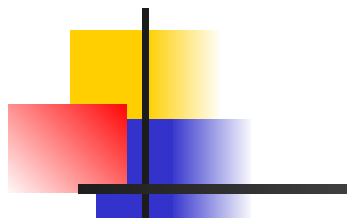
Recognition and
Re-examination of
self-schemes

5a. Recognizes broader personal meaning system (self-schemes: "I am...", "I need...", "I should...", "I do...")

5b. Explores further: Re-examines self-schemes and their consequences through exploratory associations to other life situations.

Considering
New Options

6a. **Resolution** New understanding of own style of functioning (disembedding) and a sense of having the power to change (possible new options considered)





Stages of Model

- 1. Problematic reaction
- 2. Re-evoke experience
- 3. Identify salience
- 4. Meaning bridge
- 5. Recognize and re-examine personal style
- 6. Resolution



Stage 1: Marker

- Client: Describes puzzling, unexpected personal reaction
- Therapist:
 - Identify marker
 - Propose task



Stage 2: Building the scene

- **Client: describes the situation vividly and concretely almost as if they were playing a movie of the scene**
- **Therapist: helps client to construct the details so as to bring situation alive in the session**
- **The more vivid the description the more likely that clients will access their emotional response**



Stage 2: Building the scene

- Determine when reaction occurred
- Get an impressionistic sense of how things had been going just prior to reaction
- It is important to expand the moment when reaction occurs in order to identify the stimulus or trigger



Stage 3: Identify Salience

- Track the feelings
- Identify moment when feelings change
- Help client identify trigger e.g. thought, tone of voice, facial expression
- Explore meaning of stimulus
- Explore clients' construal of situation



Stage 4: Meaning Bridge

- Identify dominant scheme or way of being
- Meaning Bridge provides self-understanding of PRP
- But: leaves open problematic nature of:
 - Characteristic style
 - Important value
 - Organizing emotion scheme



Stage 5: Recognition and re-examination of self schemes

- Listen for and encourage broadening
- Help client explore broader meanings
- Help client explore alternative self-schemes as they emerge



Stage 5

- Explore characteristic style / scheme
- Examine origin
- Examine its accuracy in light of other examples
- Evaluate its efficacy currently



Stage 6: Consideration of new options

- Listen for and explore emerging new understanding:
 - of self in relation
 - self-in-the world
- Help client explore implications for change



Example... exercise

- Resolving Problematic Reactions (Elliott, APA, in press): Gina, The Failure to Grieve: 0 – 4:20; 8:20 – 19:35
- Alternatives:
 - Elliott APA outtakes: The Affair; The Strange Gesture
 - Live demonstration



Unfolding: Skill Practice

- Client: Present marker
- Therapist: Reflect & confirm marker; offer task
- Therapist: guide the client to take you back through the PRP
 - Listen for key moment: when PRP occurred
 - Help client elaborate/specify reaction
 - Help client identify trigger



Empty Chair Work for Unfinished Business



Empathic Attunement Essential for Chair Work

- 1. Therapist's inner experience:
 - Letting go
 - => Entering fully
 - => Resonating
 - => Grasping
 - => Expressing

Empathy Tracks: Types of Empathy/Empathic Response

Client Experiential Track	Target/Micro-marker (What the therapist is listening for)	Typical Therapist Response
Central content	The gist or main point; central idea; essence; substance; crux	Empathic Reflection (the main point)
Emotion	Poignant, touching emotionally alive experiencing; vulnerability	Evocative Reflection; Empathic Affirmation
Edge	Important, emerging, unclear experiencing	Exploratory Reflection; Empathic repetition (micro-empathy)
Person	What it's like to be the client; mode of existence; contact boundary between self and world	Empathic Formulation ("Oh!, so no wonder you...!")
Process	Immediate experience, task, action, manner, including different parts / voices of the person	Process Observation
Implicit	Unspoken but sensed present experiencing	Empathic Conjecture
Bypassed	Avoided, minimized, ignored, side-tracked experiencing; also unreflective, critical of self or others	Empathic Refocusing



Empty Chair Work for Unfinished Business: Change Processes

- 1. Mentalization/internalization process: working with mental representation of Other
- 2. Gestalt completion principle organized around adaptive emotion sequence: emotion => need => action (action program/script that needs to run to completion)
- 3. Evoking/accessing of implicit self/other schemes through: Imagery, enactment, episodic memory
- 4. Role of strong emotion (generally sadness + anger)
- 5. Optional: Perspective alteration: Taking on role of Other => new view of self/other (meta-perception meaning change)



Clinical Applications:

- 1. Works well with externalizing process
- 2. Major task with depression (loss-related depression / grief)
- 3. Major task with some kinds of trauma / abuse (nonsupportive significant other; sometimes abuser / perpetrator)
- 4. Can use with both past and current relationships



Useful Alternative: “Speaking Your Truth”

- Early in therapy or for clients with furniture allergies
- What is it that you wish you could tell them?
- What is in your heart?
- What is your Truth in the relationship?
- (Tell me)



Unfinished Business Marker:

- 1. Bad feelings (hurt, anger, resentment)
- 2. Toward a specific developmentally-significant other (e.g., parent, spouse, intimate or authority)
- 3. Lingering: unresolved and current (experienced in session)
- 4. Restricted: feeling is not fully or directly expressed, as indicated by self-interruption in the form of:
 - ♦ Verbal signs: giving up, despair, cynicism
 - ♦ Nonverbal signs of self-interruption (e.g., biting lips, gulping down tears, tightening jaw / fist)



End State/Goals:

- 1. Completed expression of unexpressed feelings at a high level of arousal
- 2. Letting go of unfulfilled expectations/ needs re: other
- 3. Change in perception of self (Self scheme: separate, stronger, more positive)
- 4. Interpersonal understanding/ insight into other (change in Other scheme) (sometimes forgiveness)
- 5. Emotional relief

Task Resolution Scale

1. Marker: Blames, complains, or expresses hurt or longing in relation to a significant other.
2. Setting up/starting. Speaks to imagined other and expresses unresolved feelings (e.g., resentment, hurt).
3. Expressing and differentiating. Differentiates complaint into underlying primary feelings; experiences and expresses relevant emotions (e.g., sadness, anger, fear, shame) with a high degree of emotional arousal.
4. Partial resolution. Experiences unmet need(s) as valid and expresses them assertively.
5. Changed view of other. Comes to understand and see other in a new way, either in a more positive light or as a less powerful person who has/had problems of his/her own.
6. Full resolution. Affirms self and lets go of unresolved feeling, by understanding, forgiving, or holding other accountable.



Therapist Responses

1. Listen for, reflect toward possible unfinished business markers (including during other tasks, e.g., two chair dialogue).

2. Offer task

- Obtain client agreement by offering experiential teaching, experiential formulation related to task
- Help client make psychological contact with, evoke presence of representation of other
- Listen for and help client deal with difficulties engaging in task.

3. Use empathic exploration responses • Encourage first-person language

- Recognize and distinguish primary and secondary emotions
- Listen for, help client work with emergent self-interruptive processes,

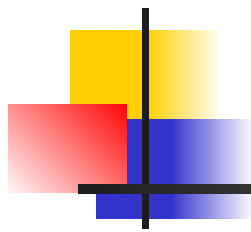
4. Help client explore and express unmet needs

- Provide empathic affirmation for emerging unmet needs.

5. Encourage elaboration of imagined perspective of other.

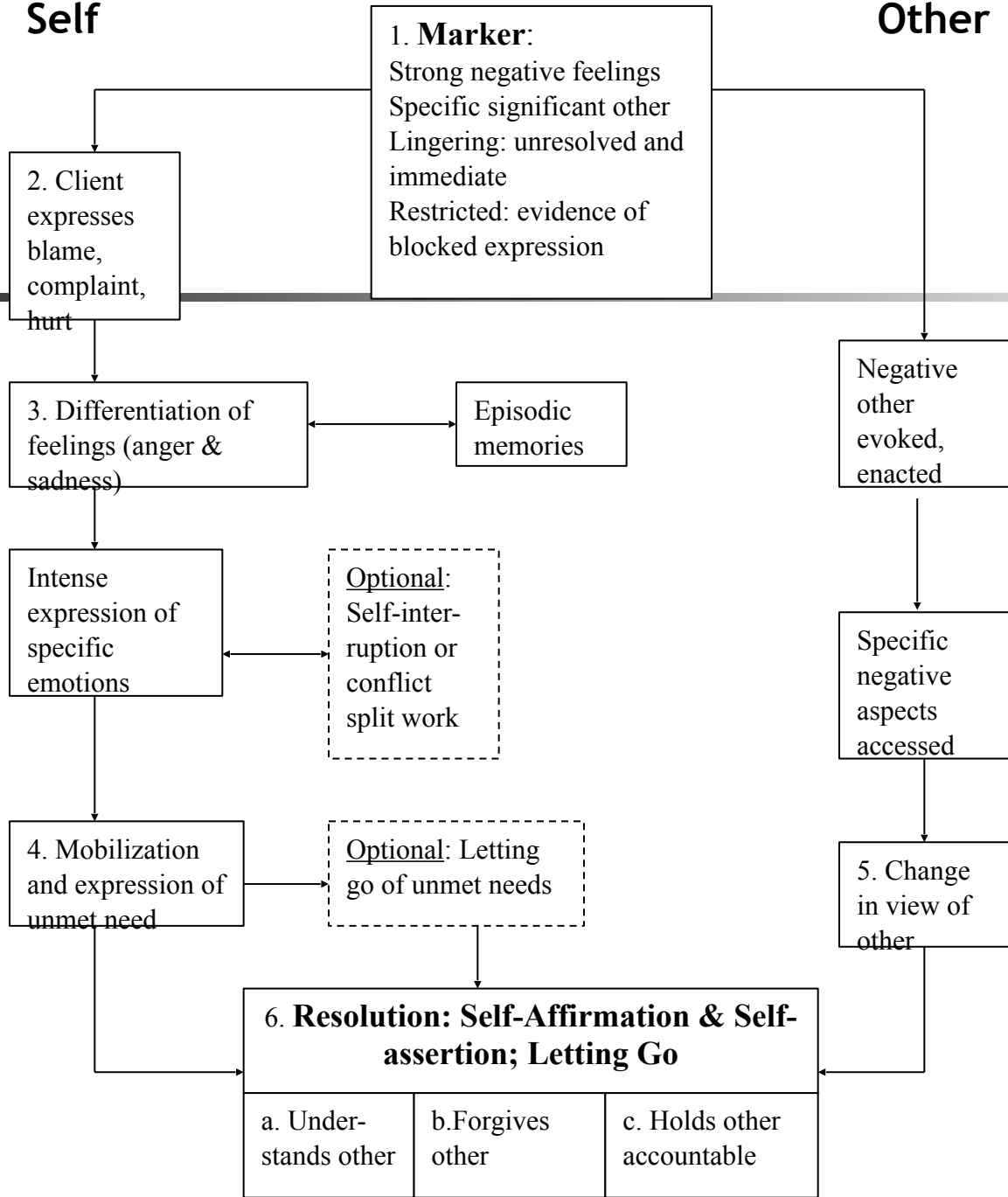
6. Encourage dialogue, offer support for forgiveness, understanding, or holding other accountable

- Help client explore and appreciate emerging self-affirmation.



Self

Other





Example

- Initial piece of Empty Chair used to explore a relationship:
- EFT over Time, Session 2: 16 - 26
- 16.40: Pre-marker
- 17.00: Introduces task



Exercise/skill practice...

- For practice: OK to use “mini-unfinished business” (non-central current or recent relationship, e.g., old friend, work colleague or boss)
- Remember to monitor safety, emotion regulation



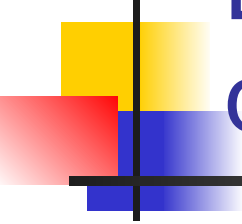
UFB: Useful tips - 1

- 1. Don't propose when client is already highly aroused (consider: Meaning Protest)
- 2. Don't (usually) use until 4th session
- 3. Usually needs several sessions
- 4. Close relationship with Two Chair split and enactment tasks
- 5. Use Focusing to deepen



UFB: Useful tips - 3

- 6. Other possibilities:
 - Imagine Other present in empty chair but talk to therapist (Paivio)
 - Therapist can mediate for client
 - Imagine Other in nonlocalized manner but talk to therapist
 - Talk to therapist as if they were the Other



Based on the exercise, what questions do you have?

