EFT Research

Following the short summary is a list of studies and commentaries on Emotionally Focused Therapy research.

Short Summary of EFT Research

Question: Does EFT conform to any "Gold" standard in terms of research validation and the standards set out for psychotherapy?

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 factors set out in optimal models of psychotherapy research.

The meta-analysis (Johnson et al, 1999) of the four most rigorous outcome studies conducted before the year 2000, showed a larger effect size (1.3) than any other couple intervention has achieved to date. Studies consistently show excellent follow-up results, and some studies show that significant progress continues after therapy. EFT has a body of process research showing that change does indeed occur in the way that the theory suggests. This level of linkage between in-session process and rigorous outcome measurement is unusual in the field of psychotherapy. Subsequent meta-analyses confirm the efficacy of EFT.

EFT is the only model of couple intervention that uses a systematic empirically validated theory of adult bonding as the basis for understanding and alleviating relationship problems. The generalizability of EFT across different kinds of clients and couples facing co-morbidities such as depression and PTSD has been examined and results are consistently positive. Outcome and process research addressing key relationship factors, such as the forgiveness of injuries, has also been conducted with positive results. EFT studies are generally rigorous and published in the best peer reviewed journals.

In brief, EFT researchers can show that, as set out in the Johnson 2004 (3rd edition, 2019) seminal text, *Creating Connection: The Practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy*, EFT works very well, results last, we know HOW it works so we can train therapists to intervene efficiently and we know it works across different populations and problems. It also links congruently to other bodies of research such as those examining the nature of relationship distress and adult attachment processes.

Recent research involves outcome studies of couples facing trauma and stressful events (the Dalton and MacIntosh studies, and a study on EFT effects on attachment security with an FMRI component.) The FMRI study shows that EFT changes the way contact with a partner mediates the effect of threat on the brain. A short video, *Soothing the Threatened Brain*, summarizing this study can be viewed on <u>drsuejohnson.com/videos</u>. There are three recent positive outcome study in progress of the new educational program based on EFT (Hold Me Tight[®] Program: Conversations for Connection). A pilot study has also been completed at the VA in Baltimore on EFT with veteran couples dealing with PTSD.

Completed and ongoing EFT research consistently supports the efficacy of the Emotionally Focused Therapy model.

Outcome Research

- 1. <u>Beasley, C.C., & Ager, R. (2019)</u>. "Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy: A Systematic Review of its Effectiveness Over the past 19 Years." Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work, 16(2), 144-159.
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- <u>Alder, M.C., Dyer, W.J., Sandberg, J.G., Davis, S.Y., & Holt-Lunstad, J.</u> (2018). "Emotionally-focused therapy and treatment as usual comparison groups in decreasing depression: A clinical pilot study." *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 46(5), 541-555.
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- 12. <u>Dalton, J., Greeman, P., Classen, C., & Johnson, S. M. (2013)</u>. "Nurturing Connections in the Aftermath of Childhood Trauma: A randomized controlled trial of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy (EFT) for

Female Survivors of Childhood Abuse." *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice,* Vol.2(3), 209-221.

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- <u>Naaman, S., Johnson, S.M., & Radwan, K. (2008)</u>. "Evaluation of the clinical efficacy of emotionally focused therapy on psychological adjustment of couples facing early breast cancer," (Doctoral Dissertation). School of Clinical Psychology, University of Ottawa, Canada.
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NOTE: Also listed under Meta-Analyses

- 25. Johnson, S., Maddeaux, C. & Blouin, J. (1998). "Emotionally Focused Family Therapy for Bulimia: Changing Attachment Patterns." *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, 35(2), 238-247.
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- 29. <u>Goldman, A. & Greenberg, L. (1992)</u>. "Comparison of Integrated Systemic and Emotionally Focused Approaches to Couples Therapy." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 60(6), 962-969.
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Process & Predictors Research

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- 6. <u>Greenman, P., & Johnson, S. (2013)</u>. "Process Research on EFT for Couples: Linking Theory to Practice." *Family Process, Special Issue on Couple Therapy*, 52(1), 46-61.
- Zuccarini, D.J., Johnson, S.M., Dalgleish, T. & Makinen, J. (2013). "Forgiveness and reconciliation in Emotionally Focused Therapy for Couples: The Client Change Process and Therapist Interventions." *Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy*, 39(2), 148-162.
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Reviews of EFT Research / Commentaries

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- 3. <u>Priest, Jacob B. (2013)</u>. "Emotionally Focused Therapy as Treatment for Couples With Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Relationship Distress." *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy: Innovations in Clinical and Educational Interventions*, 12(1), 22-37.
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- 16. Johnson, S.M. & Lebow, J. (2000). "The coming of age of couple therapy: A decade review." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 26(1), 23-38.
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Meta-Analyses

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- Johnson, S., Hunsley, J., Greenberg, L. & Schindler, D. (1999). "Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy: Status & challenges (A meta-analysis)." *Journal of Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 6, 67-79. NOTE: Also listed under Outcome Research
- 3. <u>Dunn, R.T. & Schwebel, A.I. (1995)</u>. "Meta-analytic review of marital therapy outcome research." *Journal of Family Psychology*, 9(1), 58-68.

Research on EFT Training / Learning EFT

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Miscellaneous

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Programs Based on EFT Research

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- 3. <u>Aikin, N., & Aikin, P.A. (2017)</u>. Hold Me Tight *®/Let Me Go Program for Families with Teens— Facilitators' Guide*. Ottawa, Canada: ICEEFT. *This program & guide has been translated into Farsi.*
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- 5. Johnson, S.M., & Rheem, K. (2006) Becoming a couple again: A post-deployment program for military couples. Washington, DC: Strong Bonds-Strong Couples, Rheem Media.