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INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL SECTION ON LEARNING EMOTIONALLY FOCUSED COUPLES THERAPY

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This introductory article briefly describes the purpose and content of the special section on Learning Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy, including a short description of the four manuscripts that follow and their relevance to clinicians regardless of model, training, or license.

The purpose of this special section is to highlight three cutting edge articles relating to the experience of learning Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT). The year 2010 marks 25 years since the initial publication regarding a new, emerging model of couples' therapy, later named EFT (Johnson & Greenberg, 1985, 1988; see Johnson, 2004 for a comprehensive description of EFT). Since that time, there has been a literal explosion of research regarding the clinical and cost-effectiveness of the model (Byrne, Carr, & Clark, 2004; Caldwell, Woolley, & Caldwell, 2007; Johnson, Hunsely, Greenberg, & Schindler, 1999; Wood, Crane, Schaalje, & Law, 2005) and its practical utility across a number of presenting problems (Johnson, 2002; Kowal, Johnson, & Lee, 2003; Reid & Woolley, 2006; Smith, 2005). Specifically, existing research suggests that EFT can be an effective couples-based approach for treating the effects of childhood sexual abuse, depression (Denton, Burleson, Clark, Rodriguez, & Hobbs, 2000; Dessaulles, Johnson, & Denton, 2003), attachment injuries (Makinen & Johnson, 2006), as well as helping couples facing trauma, for example couples with a chronically ill child (Walker, 2008) or breast cancer (Naaman, 2009). Likewise, an emerging body of literature has applied EFT to specific issues confronting Latino/a immigrant (Parra-Cardona, Córdova, Holtrop, Escobar-Chew, & Horsford, 2009), First Nations (Berg, 2009), intercultural (Greenman, Young, & Johnson, 2009), and same-sex (Josephson, 2003) couples. The growing interest in and proliferation of scholarship about Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy over the last decade has been astounding.

Despite well over 125 professional or scholarly manuscripts in print (as of 2010) relating to EFT, there is a clear lack of research regarding the experience of learning this structured, manualized approach to couples therapy. In many ways, the model developer and core trainers have struggled to produce materials, procedures, and requirements fast enough to meet the rapidly growing, international demand for training (Johnson, Bradley, Furrow, Lee, Palmer, Tilley, & Woolley, 2005; Johnson, 2010; see also http://www.iceeft.com/). In an effort to provide needed information about how EFT training impacts the personal and professional lives of the clinicians who have sought it, this special section highlights three distinct manuscripts regarding that training process. The section also concludes with a commentary on the three articles by model developer Susan Johnson.

The first article, "Short-Term and Long-Term Effects of Training in Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy: Professional and Personal Aspects" by Michelle Montagno, Mira Svatovic, and Hanna Levenson, is a prospective (pre, post, and follow-up) study of the impact of EFT training on clinicians. Drawing upon data gathered from clinicians receiving their initial EFT training at five distinct sites, this methodologically sound, longitudinal study tracks changes in key training outcomes (EFT knowledge and competence, openness to own feelings, self compas-

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sion, use of attachment behaviors, own personal relationships) across three time points, including an 8-month follow-up posttraining. The authors also utilize two new measures, of interest and relevance to trainers across models, to track emotional processing and knowledge and competency in clinicians.

The second article, ''The Experience of Learning Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy'' by Jonathan Sandberg and Andrea Knestel, is a retrospective study of the impact of EFT training on clinicians, nearly half of whom had received advanced level EFT training. The focus of this study was to identify which aspects of the EFT model (theory, alliance, interventions, perceived impact on clients, and impact on self) influenced clinicians to seek out training and to elicit in-depth descriptions of how that training has impact their professional and personal relationships. In addition, the article focuses on some of the unique difficulties that confront trainees as they attempt to learn and master EFT.

The third article, ''Supervising Emotionally Focused Therapists: A Research-Based Model'', by Lisa Palmer-Olsen, Lisa Gold, and Scott Woolley, draws upon data gathered from certified EFT therapists that had participated previously in EFT supervision to create a concrete, research-based framework for EFT supervision, the first of its kind. The unique contribution of this article to the training and supervision literature at large, as well as to those specifically in the EFT community, is that the authors use direct feedback from supervisees to shape their groundbreaking conceptualization of a model-specific framework for supervision. As is EFT, the proposed model of supervision is established upon the foundation of attachment theory.

Lastly, the special section concludes with a commentary by Susan Johnson, the model developer, and literally the voice and face of EFT. In her insight piece, Johnson places the results of these three studies within the larger body of EFT effectiveness and training research, as well as describes their unique contributions and surprising findings. In the end, she eloquently describes the need for each therapist to find a model they can call home and encourages clinicians, regardless of model, training, or license, to learn to fully ''engage with their clients in an endless enterprise called learning how to be more alive and more human together''.

In this special section, we hope readers, most often clinicians on the front lines of treatment, are inspired to learn more about and develop safe and secure connections, both within the therapy room and in the world we live in.

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