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, The Practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy: Creating Connection, 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.

Research includes 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 drsuejohnson.com/videos. There are three positive outcome studies of the educational program based on EFT (Hold Me Tight* Program: Conversations for Connection) and the program has been adapted for specific populations such as couples facing heart disease, Christian couples and families with teens. 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

- Tulloch, H., Bouchard, K., Clyde, M.J., Madrazo, L., Demidenko, N., Johnson, S., & Greenman, P. (2020). "Learning a new way of living together: A qualitative study exploring the relationship changes and intervention needs of patients with cardiovascular disease and their partners." BMJ Open 2020;10:e032948. (doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2019-032948)
- 2. <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.
- Wiebe, S.A., Elliott, C., Johnson, S.M., Burgess Moser, M., Dalgleish, T.L., Lafontaine, M-F., & Tasca, G.A. (2019). "Attachment Change in Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy and Sexual Satisfaction Outcomes in a Two-year Follow-up Study." *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy*, 18(1), 1-21.
 Alder, M.C., Dyer, W.J., Sandberg, J.G., Davis, S.Y., & Holt-Lunstad, J. (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.
- Wittenborn, A.K., Liu, T., Ridenour, T.A., Lachmar, E.M., Rouleau, E., & Seedall, R.B. (2018).
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- Weissman, N., Batten, S.V., Rheem, K.D., Wiebe, S.A., Pasillas, R.M., Potts, W., Barone, M., Brown, <u>C.H., & Dixon, L.B. (2017).</u> "The Effectiveness of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy With Veterans With PTSD: A Pilot Study." *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 17(1), 25-41.
- 6. <u>Lee, N.A., Furrow, J.L., & Bradley, B.A. (2017)</u>. "Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy for Parents Raising a Child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder: A pilot study." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 43(4), 662-673.
- 7. Wiebe, S., Johnson, S. M., Burgess-Moser, M., Dalgleish, T., Lafontaine, M., & Tasca, G. (2017). "Predicting follow-up outcomes in Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy: The role of change intrust, relationship-specific attachment, and emotional engagement." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 43(2), 213-226.
- Wiebe, S., Johnson, S. M., Burgess-Moser, M., Dalgleish, T., Lafontaine, M., & Tasca, G. (2016). "Two-year follow-up outcomes in Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy: An investigation of relationship satisfaction and attachment trajectories." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 43(2), 227-244.
- 9. <u>Burgess-Moser, M., Johnson, S. M., Dalgleish, T., Lafontaine, M., Wiebe, S., & Tasca, G. (2015)</u>. "Changes in relationship-specific attachment in Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 42(2), 231-245.
- Dalgleish, T.L., Johnson, S.M., Burgess Moser, M., Lafontaine, M. F., Wiebe, S.A. & Tasca, G.A. (2015). "Predicting change in marital satisfaction throughout Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 41(3), 276-291.
- 11. <u>Johnson, S.M., Burgess Moser, M., Beckes, L., Smith, A., Dalgleish, T., Halchuk, R., Hasselmo, K., Greenman, P.S., Merali, Z. & Coan, J.A. (2013).</u> "Soothing the threatened brain: Leveraging contact comfort with Emotionally Focused Therapy." *PLOS ONE*, 8(11): e79314.
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- Therapy (EFT) for Female Survivors of Childhood Abuse." *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice,* Vol.2(3), 209-221.
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- 19. <u>Couture-Lalande, M.-E., Greenman, P.S., Naaman, S. & Johnson, S.M. (2007)</u> "La thérapie de couple axée sur l'émotion (EFT) pour traiter les couples dont la femme a le cancer du sein: Une étude exploratoire / Emotionally focused therapy (EFT) for couples with a female partner who suffers from breast cancer: an exploratory study." *Psycho-Oncology*, 1(4), 257–264. (*Journal of the Psychological, Social and Behavioral Dimensions of Cancer*).
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- 22. <u>Clothier, P., Manion, I., Gordon-Walker, J. & Johnson, S. M. (2002)</u>. "Emotionally Focused Interventions for Couples with Chronically III Children: A two year follow-up." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 28(4), 391-398.
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- 25. <u>Johnson, S., Maddeaux, C. & Blouin, J. (1998)</u>. "Emotionally Focused Family Therapy for Bulimia: Changing Attachment Patterns." *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, 35(2), 238-247.
- 26. <u>Gordon-Walker, J., Johnson, S., Manion, I. & Cloutier, P. (1996)</u>. "Emotionally Focused Marital Intervention for Couples with Chronically III Children." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical*

- Psychology, 64(5), 1029-1036.
- 27. McPhee, D., Johnson, S.M. & van der Veer, M.C. (1995). "Low sexual desire in women: The effects of marital therapy." *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 21(3), 159-182.
- 28. <u>Dandeneau, M. & Johnson, S. (1994)</u>. "Facilitating Intimacy: Interventions and Effects." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 20(1), 17-33.
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- 30. <u>James, P. (1991)</u>. "Effects of a Communication Training Component Added to an Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 17(3), 263-275.
- 31. <u>Johnson, S. & Greenberg, L. (1985)</u>. "Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy: An Outcome Study." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 11(3), 313-317.
- Johnson, S. & Greenberg, L. (1985). "The Differential Effects of Experiential and Problem Solving Interventions in Resolving Marital Conflict." *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 53, 175-184. (EFT, CBT and controls tested.)

Iranian Articles:

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- 38. Soltani, M., Molazadeh, J., Mahmoodi, M., & Hosseini, S. (2013). "A Study on the effectiveness of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy on Intimacy of Couples." *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol.82, 461-465.

Process & Predictors Research

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- 2. Burgess Moser, M., Johnson, S.M., Dalgleish, T.L., Wiebe, S.A., & Tasca, G. (2017). "The impact of

- blamer-softening on romantic attachment in Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 44(4), 640-654.
- 3. <u>Dalgleish, T.L., Johnson, S. M., Burgess Moser, M., Wiebe, S.A. & Tasca, G.A. (2015)</u>. "Predicting Key Change Events in Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 41(3), 260-275.
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 "Measuring Fidelity in Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT): A Pilot Test of the EFT Therapist Fidelity Scale." *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 43(3), 251-268.
- Schade, L.C., Sandberg, J.G., Bradford, A., Harper, J.M., Holt-Lunstad, J. & Miller, R.B. (2015) "A Longitudinal View of the Association Between Therapist Warmth and Couples' In-Session Process: An Observational Pilot Study of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 41(3), 292-307.
- McRae, T.R., Dalgleish, T.L., Johnson, S.M., Burgess-Moser, M., & Killian, K.D. (2014). "Emotion Regulation and Key Change Events in Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy." *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 13(1), 1-24.
- 7. <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.
- 8. <u>Zuccarini, D.J., Johnson, S.M., Dalgleish, T. & Makinen, J. (2013)</u>. "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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 NOTE: It is interesting to note that in this study, couples continued to significantly improve from the end of therapy to follow-up.
- 15. <u>Greenberg, L.S., Ford, C., Alden, L. & Johnson, S.M. (1993)</u>. "In-session change in emotionally focused therapy for couples." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 61(1), 78-84.
- 16. <u>Johnson, S.M. & Greenberg, L. S. (1988)</u>. "Relating Process to Outcome in Marital Therapy." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 14, 175-183.

EFT Relationship Education Program Research

- Kennedy, N.W., Johnson, S.M., Wiebe, S.A., & Tasca, G.A. (2019). "Conversations for Connection: An Outcome Assessment of the Hold-Me-Tight Relationship-Education Program for Couples, and Recommendations for Improving Future Research Methodology in Relationship Education." Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 45(3), 431-446.
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Reviews of EFT Research / Commentaries

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- 2. <u>Johnson, S. and Greenman, P. (2013)</u>. "Commentary: Of Course It Is All About Attachment!" *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 39(4), 421-423.
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- 4. <u>Fitzgerald, J., & Thomas, J. (2012)</u>. "A report: Couples with medical conditions, attachment theoretical perspectives and evidence for Emotionally-focused Couples Therapy." *Journal of Contemporary Family Therapy*, Vol. 34(2), 277-281.
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- 7. Furrow, J.L, & Bradley, B. (2011). "Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy: Making the Case for Effective Couple Therapy." In J. Furrow, B. Bradley & S. Johnson (Eds.), *The Emotionally Focused Casebook*, pp. 3-30. New York: Brunner Routledge.
- 8. <u>Johnson, S. M. (2008)</u>. "Couple and family therapy: An attachment perspective." In J. Cassidy & P. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research and clinical applications, 2nd Edition*, pp. 811-832. New York: Guilford Press.

- 9. <u>Johnson, S.M. (2007)</u>. "The Contribution of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy." *Special Edition of the Journal of Contemporary Psychology: Humanistic Psychology*, 37(1), 47-52.
- 10. <u>Johnson, S.M. (2007)</u>. "A new era for couple therapy: Theory, research and practice in concert." *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 26(4), 5-16.
- 11. <u>Caldwell, B. E., Woolley, S. R., & Caldwell, C. J. (2007)</u>. "Preliminary estimates of cost-effectiveness for marital therapy." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 33(3), 392-405.
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- 13. <u>Johnson, S. M. (2003)</u>. "The revolution in couples therapy: A practitioner-scientist perspective." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 29(3), 365-385.
- 14. <u>Johnson, S.M. (2003)</u>. "Couples therapy research: Status and directions." In G.P. Sholevar (Ed.), *Textbook of Family and Couples Therapy: Clinical Applications*, pp. 797-820. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing Inc. (APPI).
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- 16. <u>Johnson, S.M. & Lebow, J. (2000)</u>. "The coming of age of couple therapy: A decade review." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 26(1), 23-38.
- 17. <u>Baucom, D., Shoham, V., Mueser, K., Daiuto, A. & Stickle, T. (1998)</u>. "Empirically Supported Couple and Family Interventions for Marital Distress and Adult Mental Health Problems." *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 66(1), 53-88.
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Meta-Analyses

- 1. Wood, N. D., Crane, D. R., Schaalje, G. B., & Law, D. D. (2005). "What works for whom: A meta-analytic review of marital and couples therapy in reference to marital distress." *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 33(4), 273-287. *NOTE:* Refers to EFT
- 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.
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- 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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- Professional Lives." *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 12(1), 38-57.
- 3. <u>Sandberg, J.G. (2011)</u>. "Introduction to the Special Section on Learning Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy." *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 37(4), 377-379.
- 4. Montagno, M., Svatovic, M. & Levenson, H. (2011). "Short-Term and Long-Term Effects of Training in Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy: Professional and Personal Aspects." *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 37(4), 380-392.
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Programs Based on EFT Research

- 1. <u>Tulloch, H., Greenman, P., Demidenko, N., & Johnson, S. (2018)</u>. *Healing Hearts Together Relationship Education Program Facilitator's Guide for Small Groups*. Ottawa, Canada: ICEEFT. **NOTE:** This HHT Facilitator's Guide is in press in Dutch, Farsi, and Hungarian.
- Johnsons, S.M., & Sanderfer, K. (2017). Created for Connection: The Hold Me Tight® Program for Christian Couples – Facilitators Guide. Ottawa, Canada: ICEEFT.
 NOTE: This Facilitator's Guide is in press in Chinese (simplified), Hungarian, and Spanish.
- 3. Aikin, N., & Aikin, P.A. (2017). Hold Me Tight ®/Let Me Go Program for Families with Teens—Facilitators' Guide. Ottawa, Canada: ICEEFT.

 NOTE: The HMT/LMG Facilitator's Guide is in press in Chinese (simplified), Danish, Dutch, Farsi, German, Greek, Hungarian, Norwegian, Polish, and Spanish.
- 4. <u>Johnson, S.M. (2009)</u>. *The Hold Me Tight® Program: Conversations for Connection.* Ottawa, Canada. ICEEFT.
 - **NOTE:** The HMT Facilitator's Guide has been translated into Chinese (complex), Hungarian, German, and Swedish, and is in press in Danish, Farsi, French, Greek, Italian, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, and Ukrainian.
- 5. <u>Johnson, S.M., & Rheem, K. (2006)</u> *Becoming a couple again: A post-deployment program for military couples.* Washington, DC: Strong Bonds-Strong Couples, Rheem Media.