

Process vs. protocol: using contextual behavioral science to be a better couples' therapist.

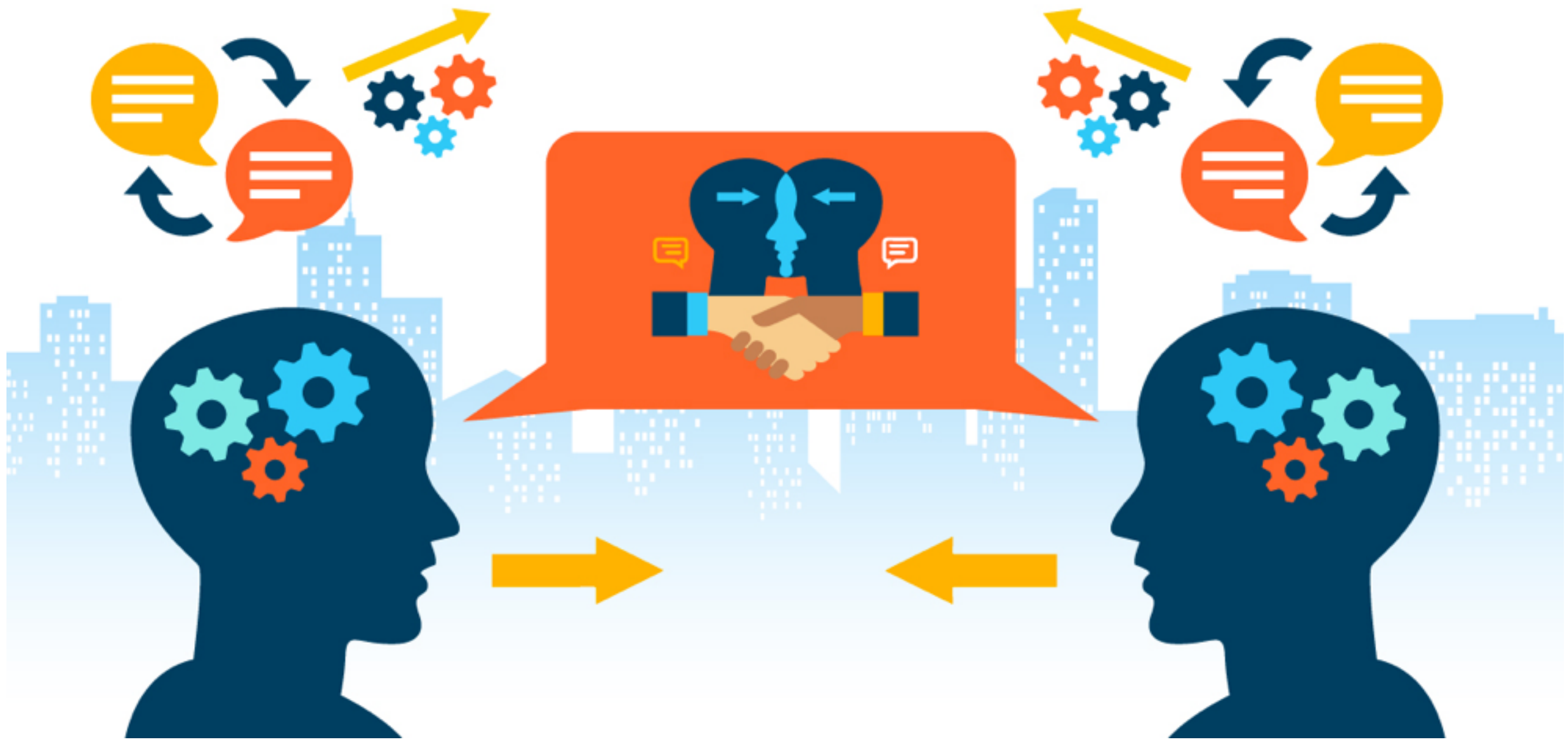
Corey Porche, MS, LPC
Camelia House Counseling and Education
coreyporchelpc@gmail.com

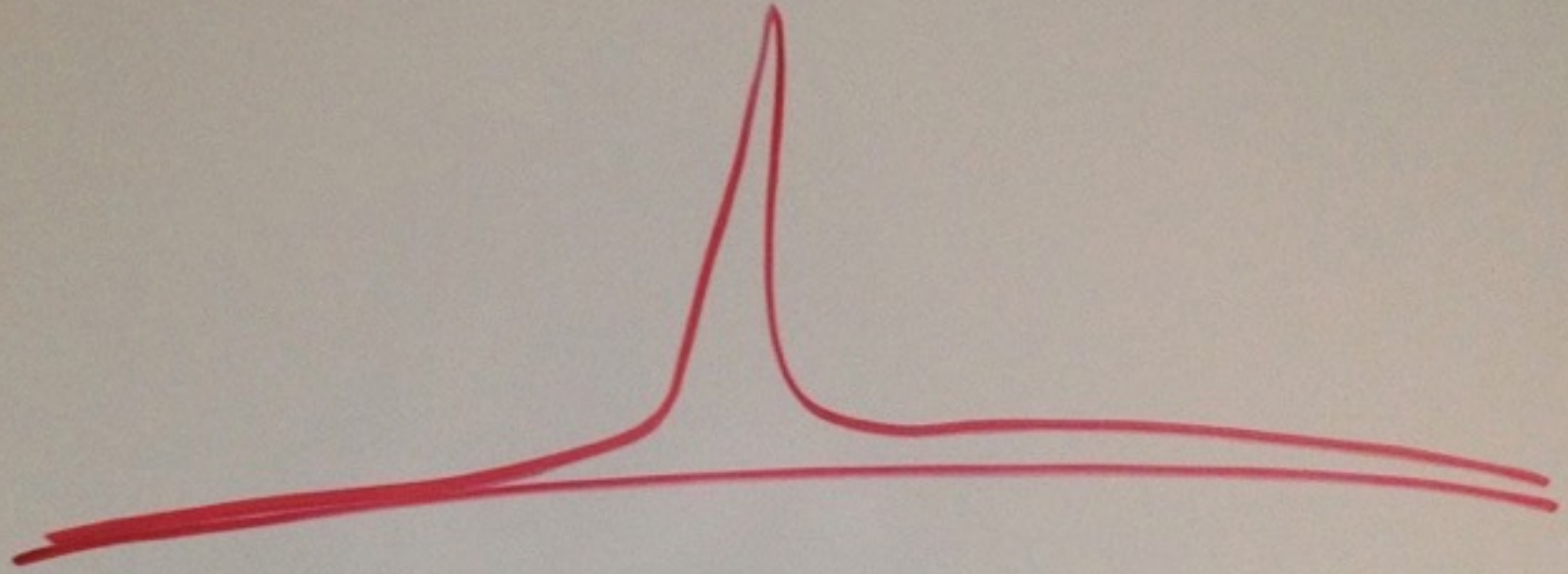
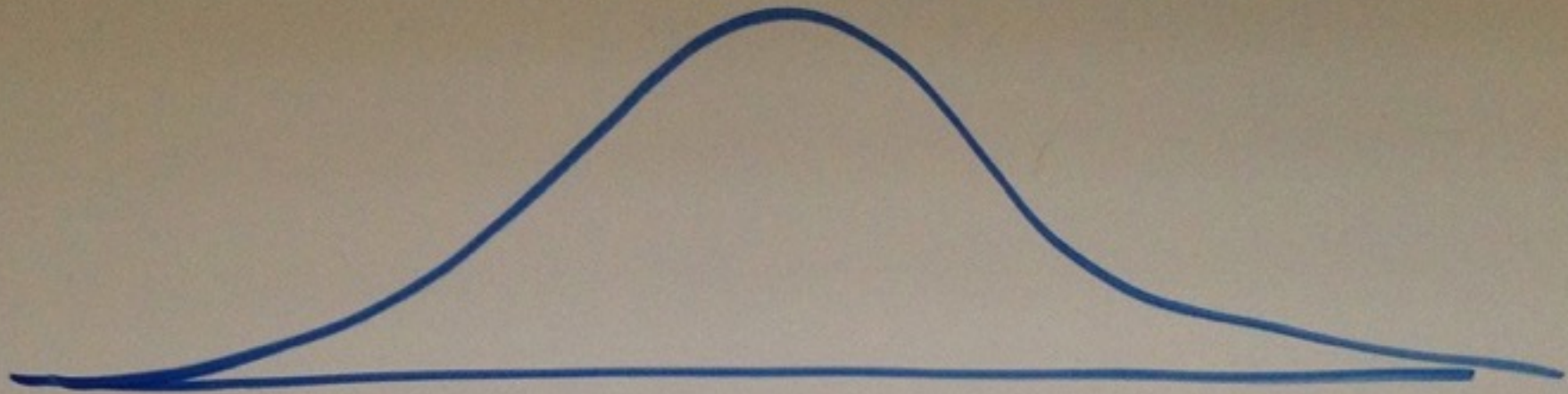


Camélia House
Counseling and Educational Services
708 Jefferson Blvd. Lafayette, LA 70501



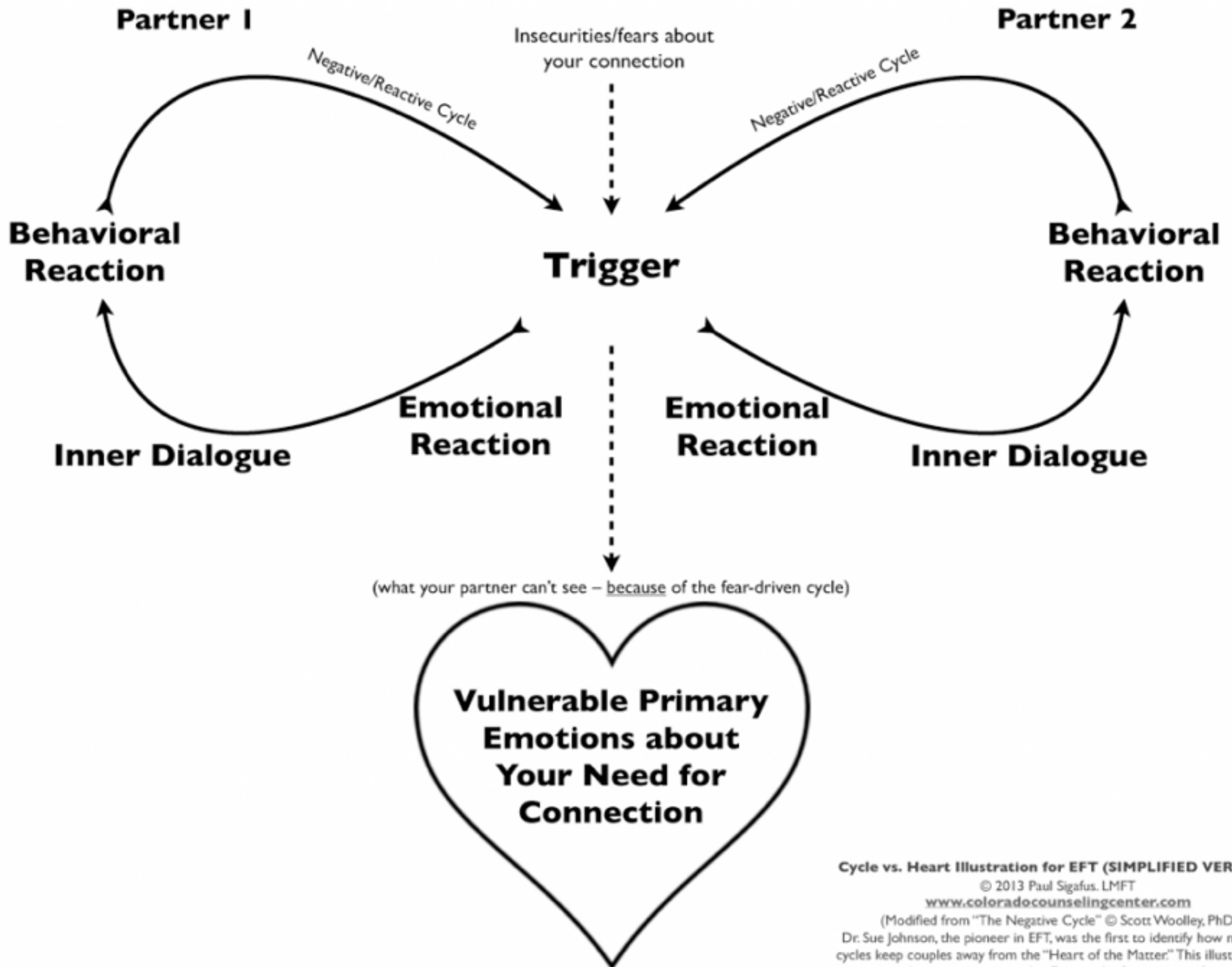












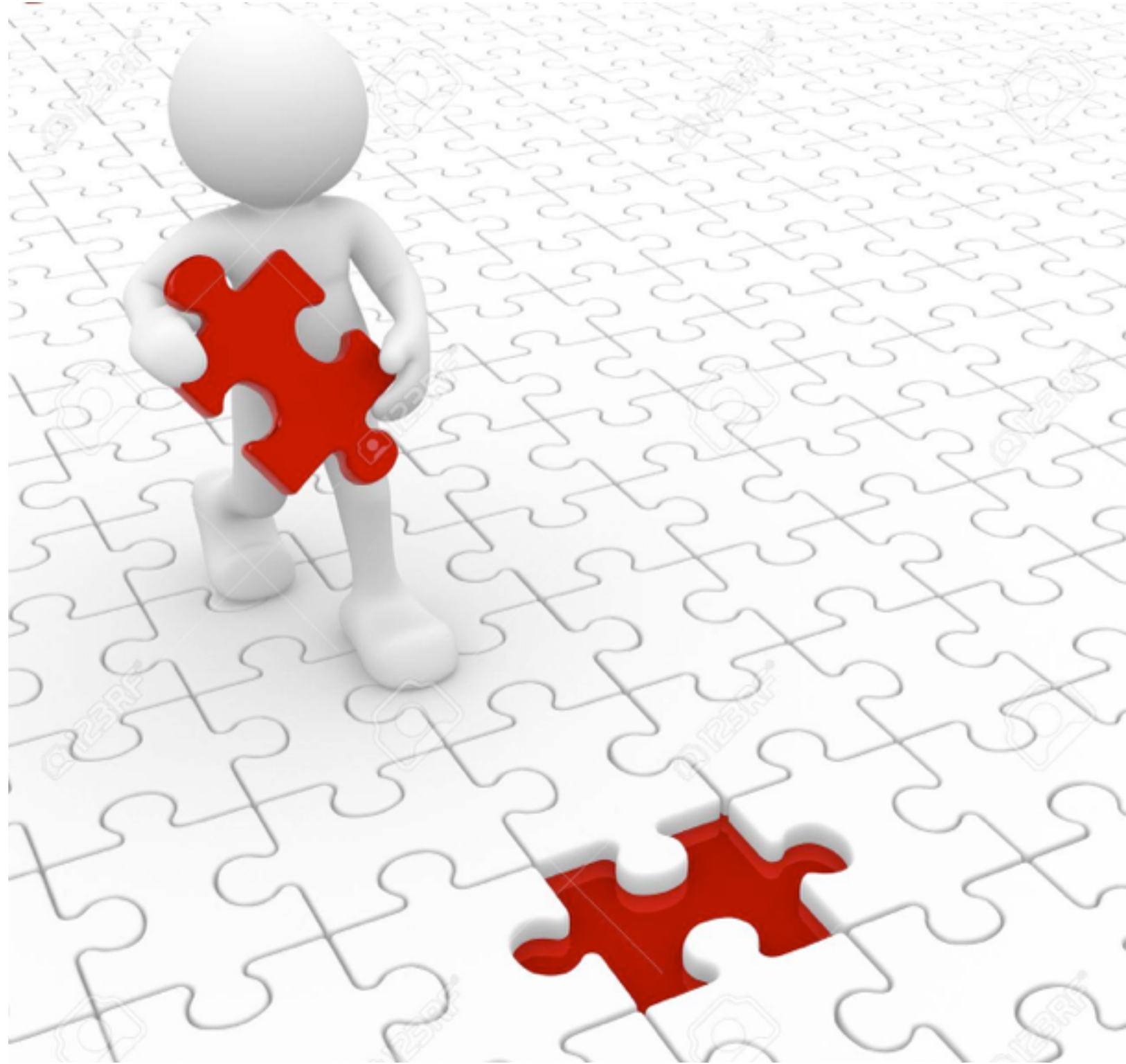
Cycle vs. Heart Illustration for EFT (SIMPLIFIED VERSION)

© 2013 Paul Sigafus, LMFT

www.coloradocounselingcenter.com

(Modified from "The Negative Cycle" © Scott Woolley, PhD.)

Dr. Sue Johnson, the pioneer in EFT, was the first to identify how negative cycles keep couples away from the "Heart of the Matter." This illustration is just my attempt to visually organize her concepts.)



Evidence Based Therapies

- Traditional Behavioral Couple Therapy
- Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy
- Emotion Focused Couple Therapy
- Cognitive Behavioral Couple Therapy





Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy

- DEEP Analysis of characteristics each partner brings to the interaction and the context in which that interaction occurs
- Understands how both are caught in a vicious cycle
- Resolved by altering triggering actions or inactions and sensitive reactions
- Empathetic Joining and Unified Detachment
- Contingency based processes vs. rule governed behavior as it occurs in session



A Unified Protocol for Couple Therapy (2010)

- Provide a contextual, dyadic, objective conceptualization of problems
- Modify emotion driven, dysfunctional, and destructive interactional behavior
- Elicit avoided, emotion-based private behavior
- Foster productive communication
- Emphasize strengths and encourage positive behaviors

Provide a contextual, dyadic, objective conceptualization of problems

- Fundamental attribution error
- Removes blame from individual partners to interactional dynamics
- TBCT, CBCT, IBCT do this in feedback session. EFT refers to the “negative interaction cycle”

Modify emotion driven, dysfunctional, and destructive interactional behavior

- Physical abuse, sexual coercion (extreme)
- Verbal abuse, yelling, and interrupting
- TBCT and CBCT use rules
- EFT and IBCT speak directly to therapist
- Time outs, freedom of movement, etc.

Elicit avoided, emotion-based private behavior

- Prevents partners from experiencing shared emotional closeness and taking joint corrective actions
- Vulnerable emotional reaction in oneself, avoid revealing this to one's partner, often revealing more accessible emotions (anger, annoyance, irritation, etc.)
- IBCT - empathetic joining, EFT - access unacknowledged emotions underlying each partner's position in the cycle, CBCT uses questions, reflections, and interpretations to draw out primary emotions
- CBS - This is our jam, right?!

Foster productive communication

- Addresses expression and listening skills
- TBCT and CBCT use direct training in communication skills (I-statements, paraphrasing, etc.)
- IBCT shapes better cmcn indirectly as well as directly
- Change the speaker's message into one that is fuller, richer, and more emotionally revealing
- Self-focused vs. communication ABOUT the partner

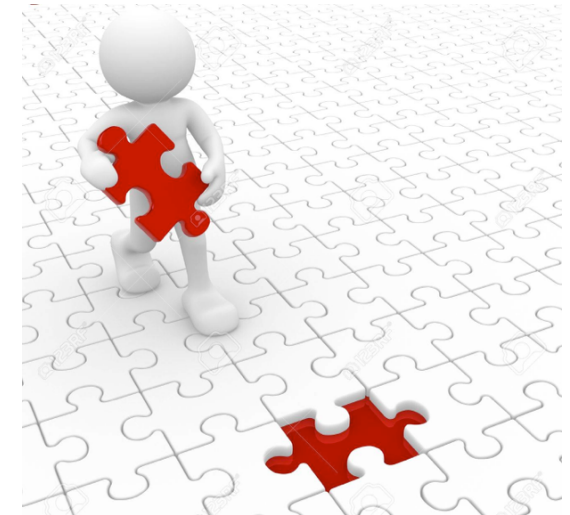
Emphasize strengths and encourage positive behaviors

- TBCT, CBCT, IBCT all assess for strengths in initial assessment. EFT asks for historical data such as what first attracted them to each other
- Some make deliberate attempts to prescribe positive behavior
- IBCT encourages positive behavior in less direct ways (i.e., when the couple successfully combats the cycle)
- IBCT and EFT try to create positive experiences of closeness and bonding by eliciting “softer more vulnerable” messages which often lead to a softer response by the other

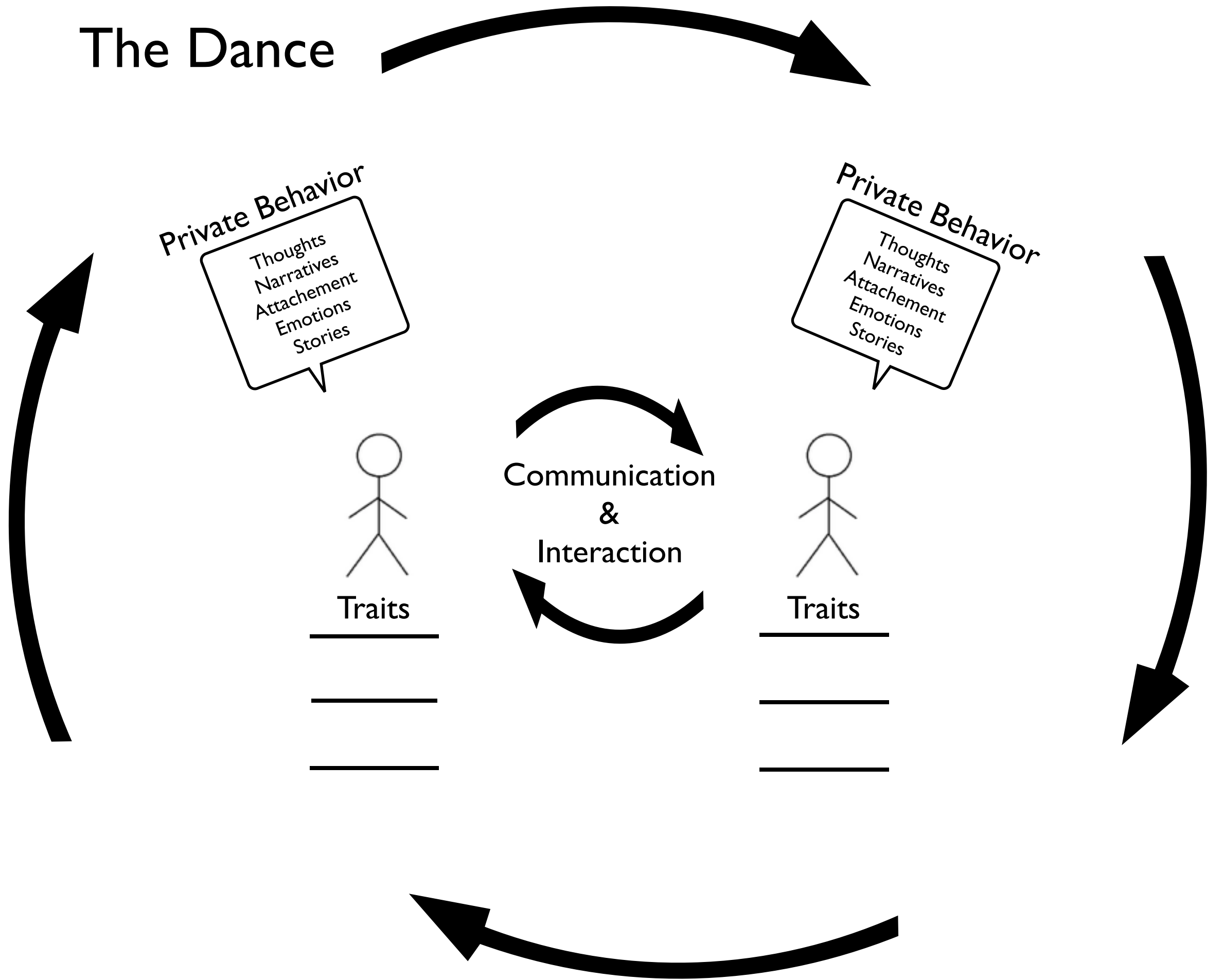
Contextual Behavioral Sciences



- Functional analysis of behavior
- Language
- Rigid or Flexible responding
- Contingency based processes in the room



The Dance



Private behavior

- bring them in the room, do something different with them
- Expose EACH partner to them (contact what lies under harsher stories / emotions. Share them)
- soften them (Me focused instead of You focused)
- Looks different in couples work (Milk, milk, milk might not be appropriate)

Traits of self and other

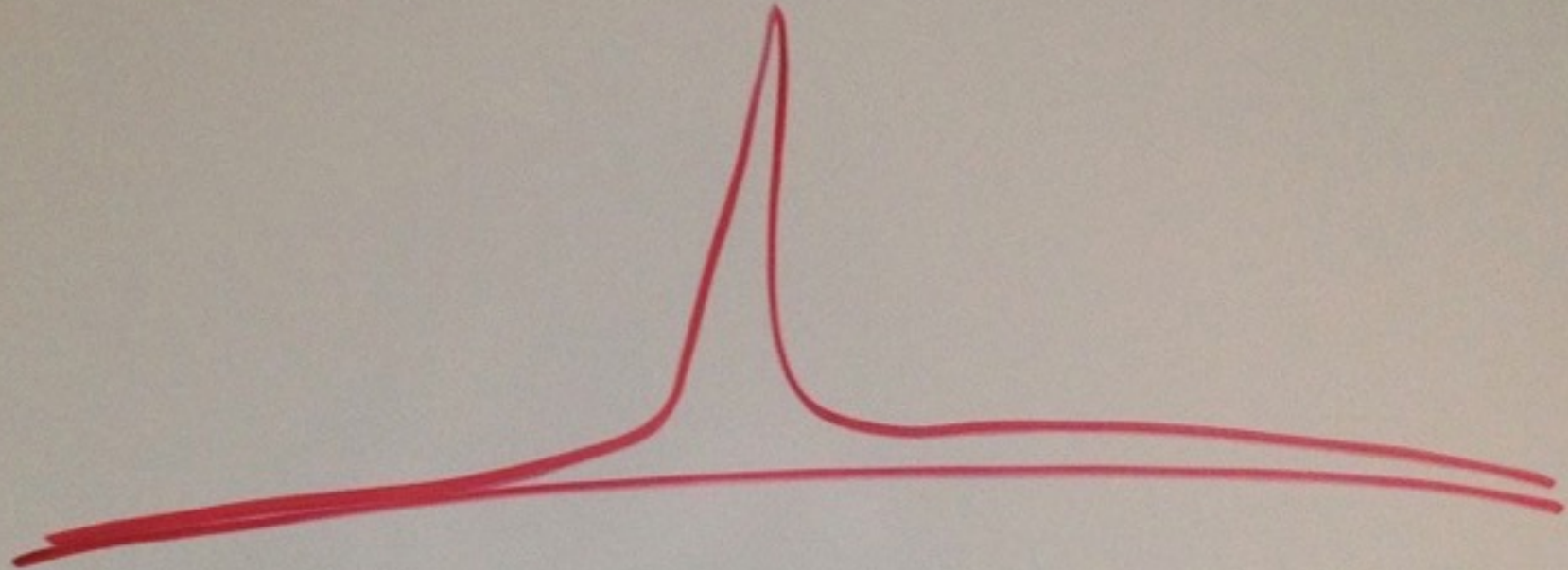
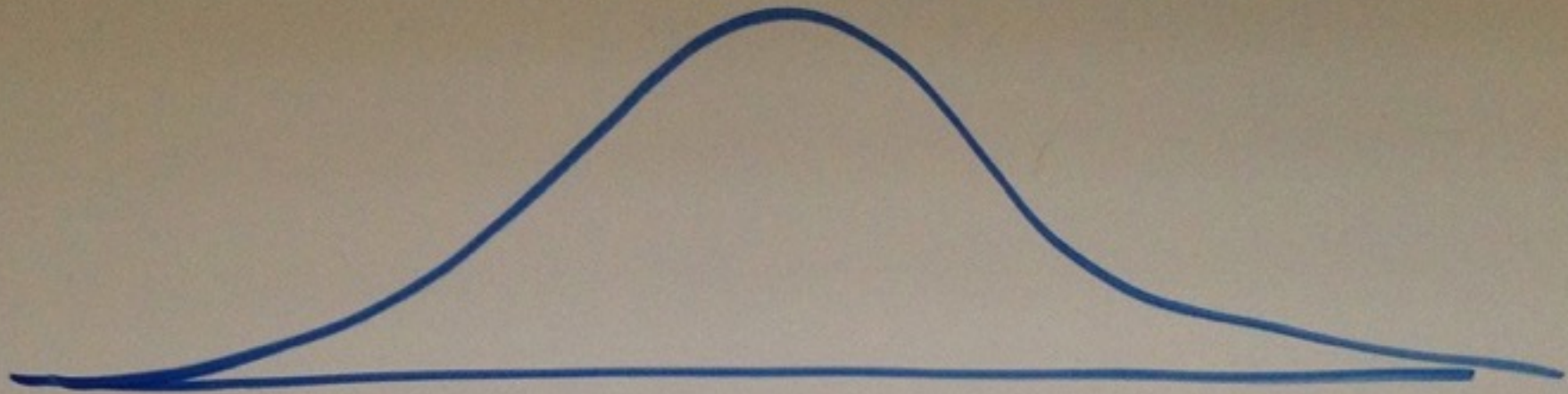
- Bring them into the room and do something different with with them
- Looking for exceptions to aversive reaction (gratitude, remember what attracted you)
- Self / other as context vs. content (through time vs. only against you)
- Predictability vs. Reactivity ($S=E \Delta R$)
- Name tags, etc.

Contextual, dyadic, objective conceptualization of problems (the dance)

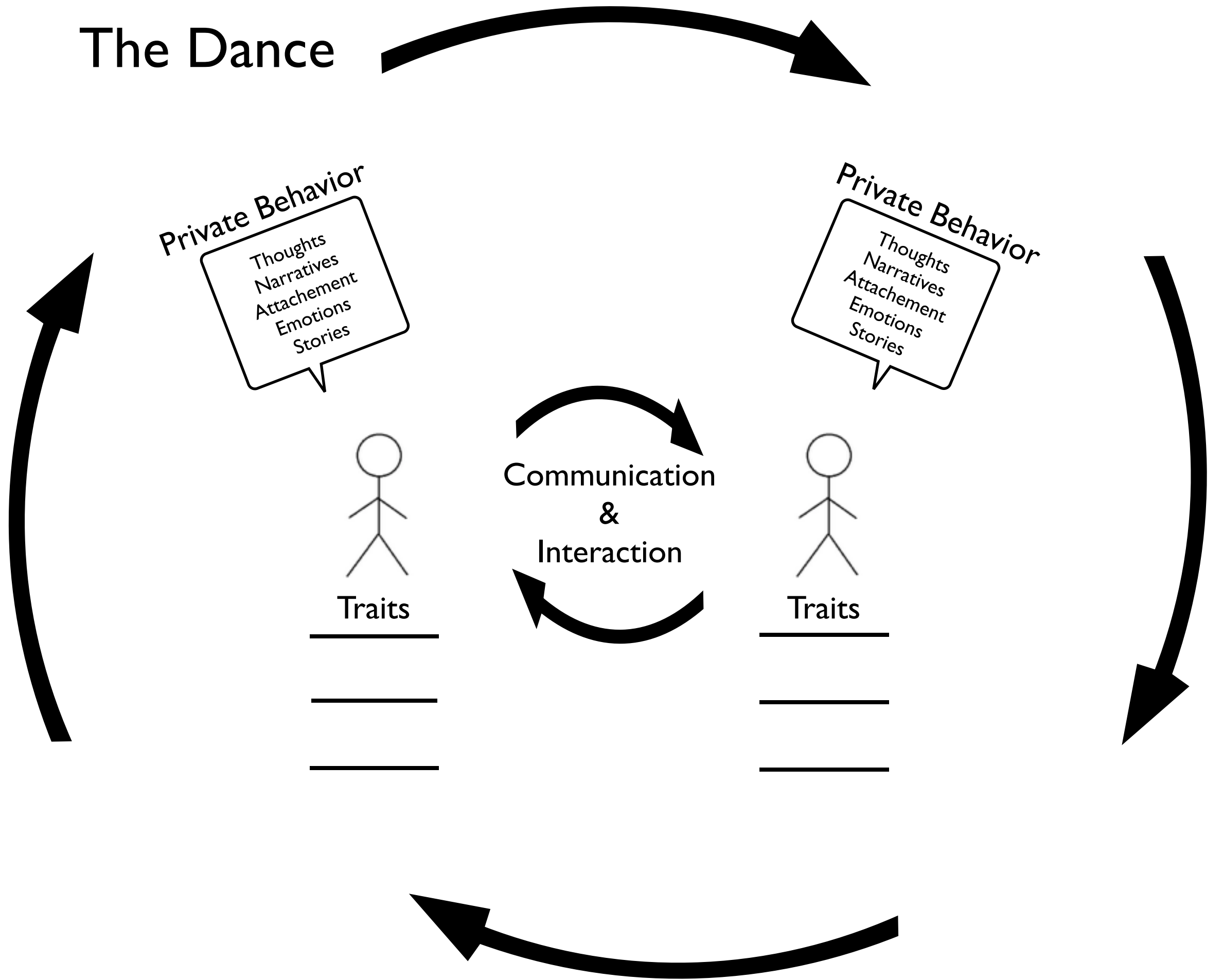
- Bring it into the room and do something different with it
- Get them to notice it, observe it, name it, etc.
- Predict it instead of reacting to it
- Reinforce when they do something different

Communication and interactions

- Bring it in the room and do something different with it
- Analyze it, then stop it, teach them to stop it
- Me vs You (softening)
- Modeling empathy, listening, perspective taking, acceptance, etc. by the therapist



The Dance



When my partner questions something I'm doing

I think he thinks I'm stupid

I feel like a child

I withdraw

When my partner withdraws

I feel abandoned

I call her names

- **When my partner questions something I'm doing**

I ask for clarification / I take a deep breathe / I see myself wanting to do what I always do

my partner no longer ask questions without clarifying that he doesn't mean anything but curiosity before he asks me questions / I just answer him

I think he thinks I'm stupid

I notice I think he thinks I am stupid / I take a deep breathe / I notice what I feel in my body

I feel like a child

I notice what I'm feeling / I recognize this part of the cycle / I share it with my partner in a non confrontational way

I withdraw

I tell my partner I need a time out / I go and wash the dishes / I stay / I answer him

I approach my partner

- **When my partner withdraws**

I give her space / I take a deep breathe / I go and wash the dishes / I go on Facebook to heckle people / I notice my feelings

I feel abandoned

I notice my feelings / I recognize this is part of our cycle / I loudly say that I am having feelings but understand she needs a time out / I give her time / I take a deep breathe / I care for myself / I gently approach her after 20 minutes

I call her names

I breathe / I walk into the kitchen / I ask that we don't let the cycle get us tonight / I do nothing / I ask if she wants to watch our show

The Dance

