Using Contextual Behavioral Sciences to be a Better Couple Therapist

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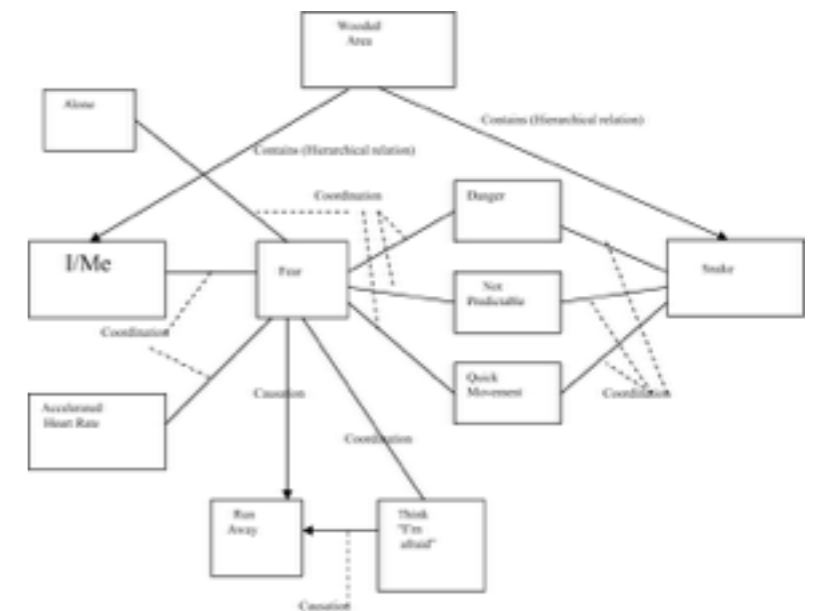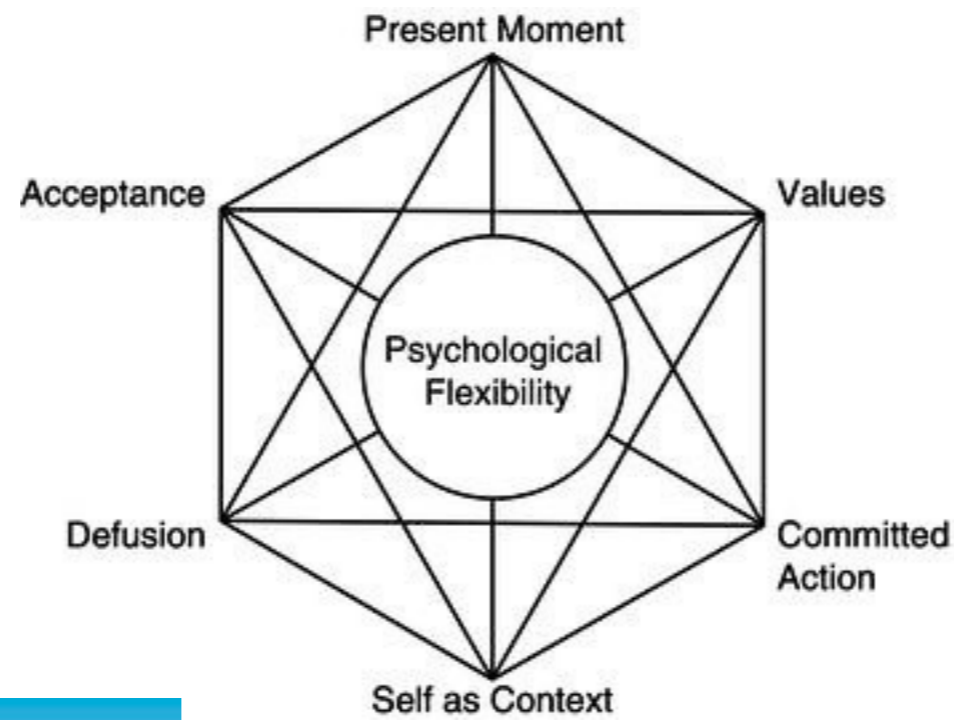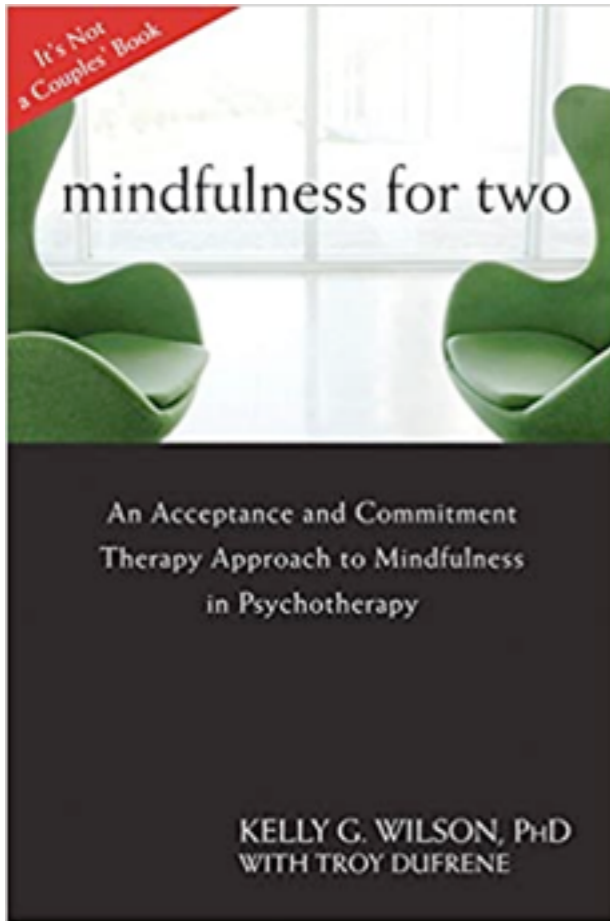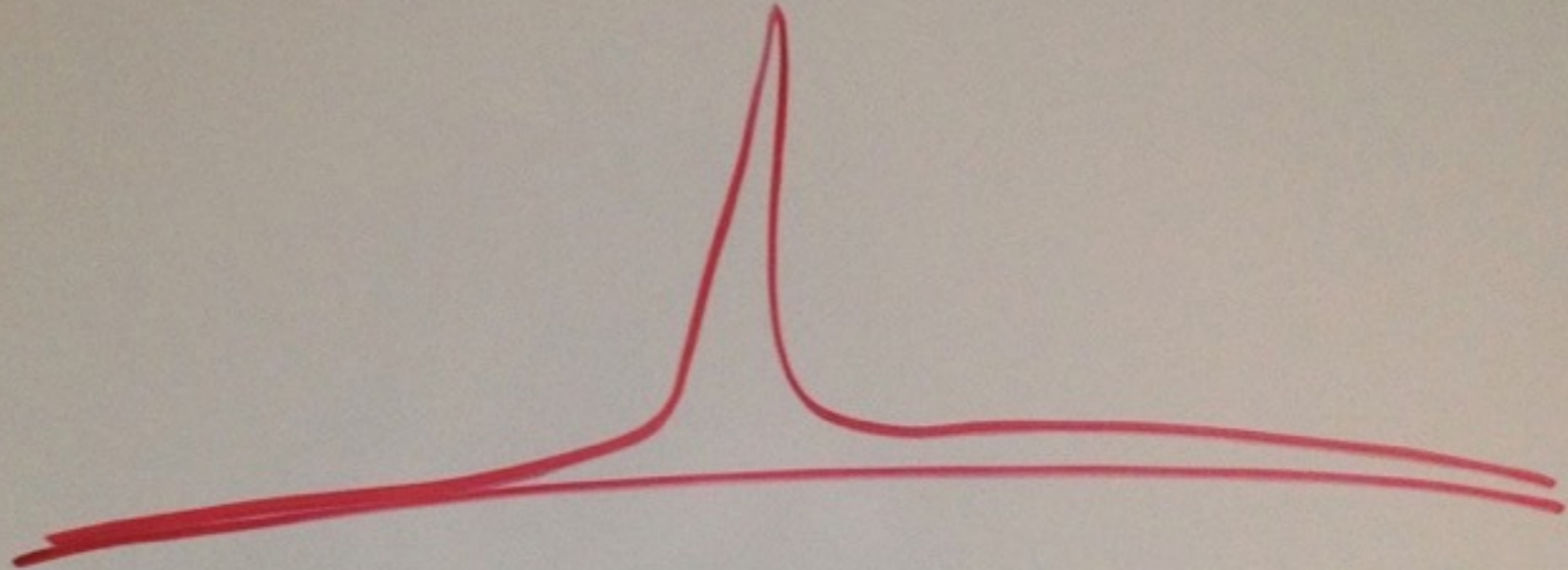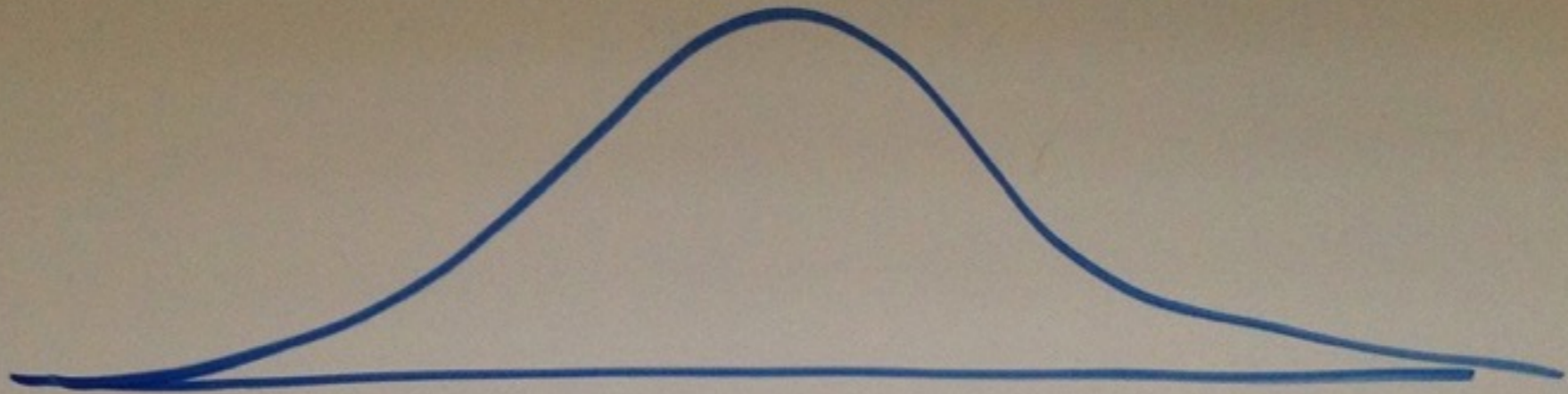708 Jefferson Blvd. Lafayette, LA 70501

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- Not enough time...

- My journey through couple therapy

- Andrew Christensen: the man, the myth, the legend

- CBS

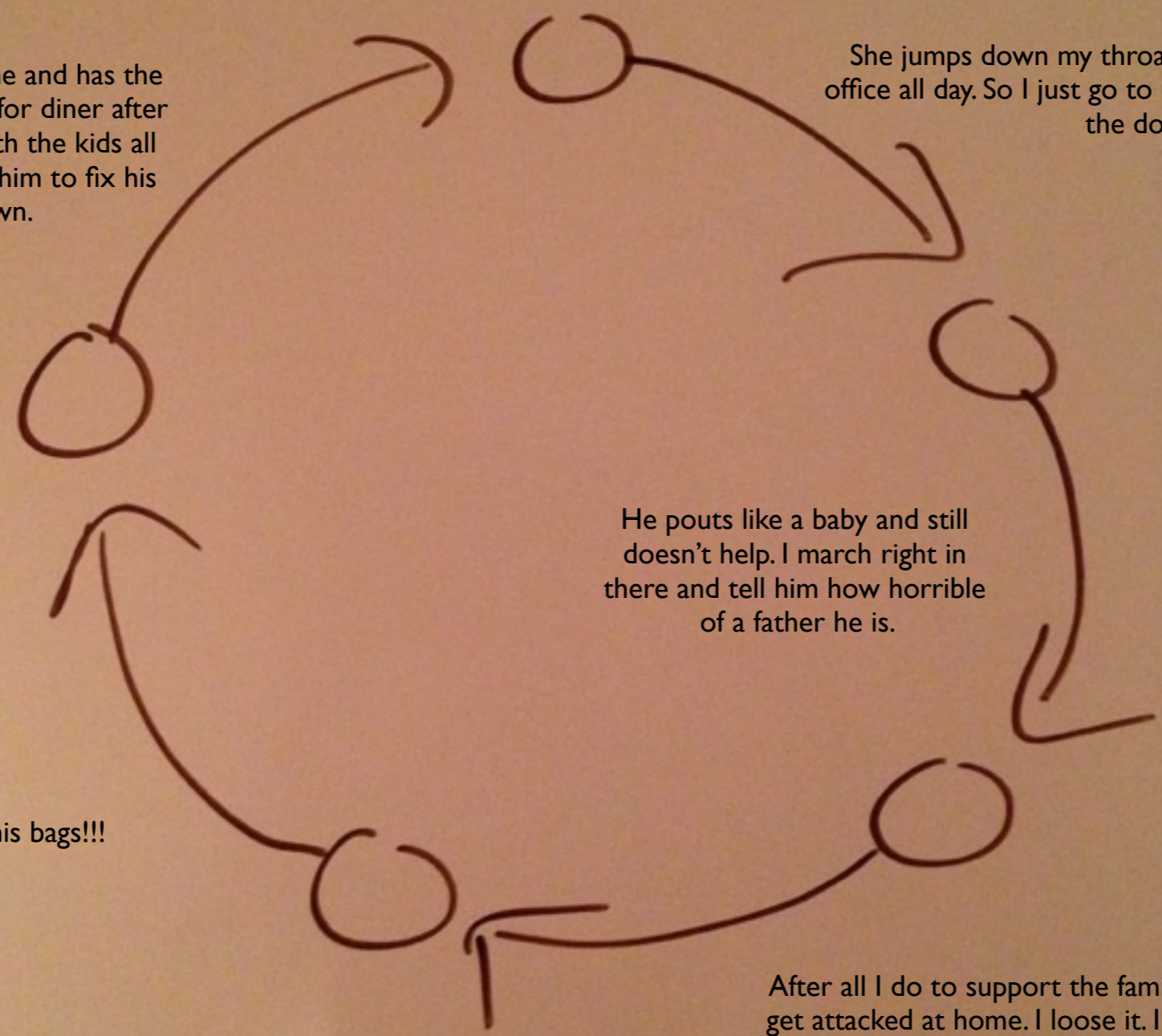- Watch video and practice

- Debrief and Q&A

mindfulness for two

An Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Approach to Mindfulness in Psychotherapy

KELLY G. WILSON, PhD
WITH TROY DUFRENE

It's Not a Couples' Book

foxylearning

Awesome online learning for behavioral science!

ACE

Present Moment

Acceptance   Values

Psychological Flexibility

Defusion   Committed Action

Self as Context

ACBS WORLD CONFERENCE IX
July 13-15, 2011   PARMA, ITALY

Cycle vs. Heart Illustration for EFT (SIMPLIFIED VERSION)
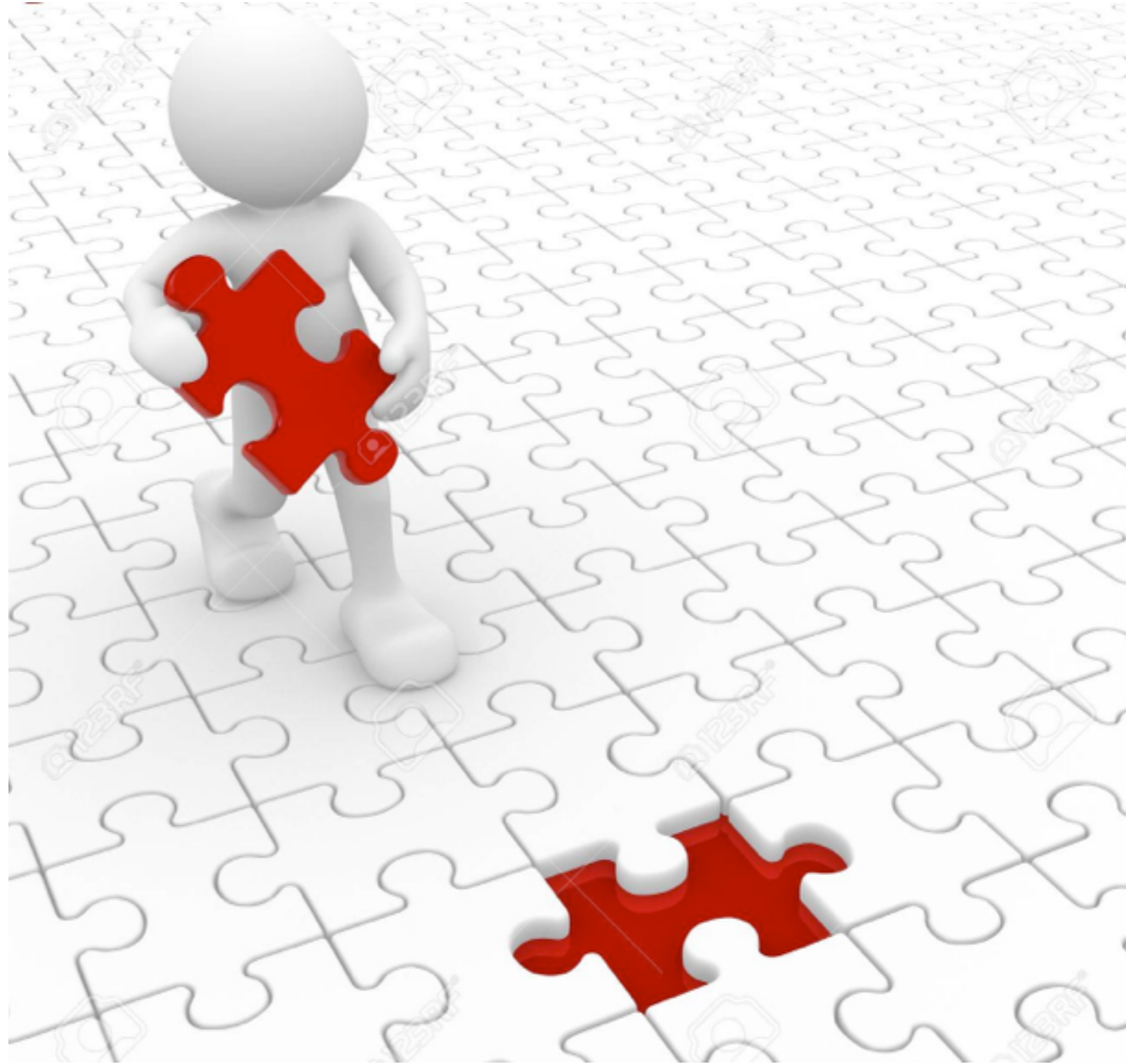
Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy

- 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 themselves and avoid revealing this to their partners and often reveal 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

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 ($S = E \triangle R$)

- 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
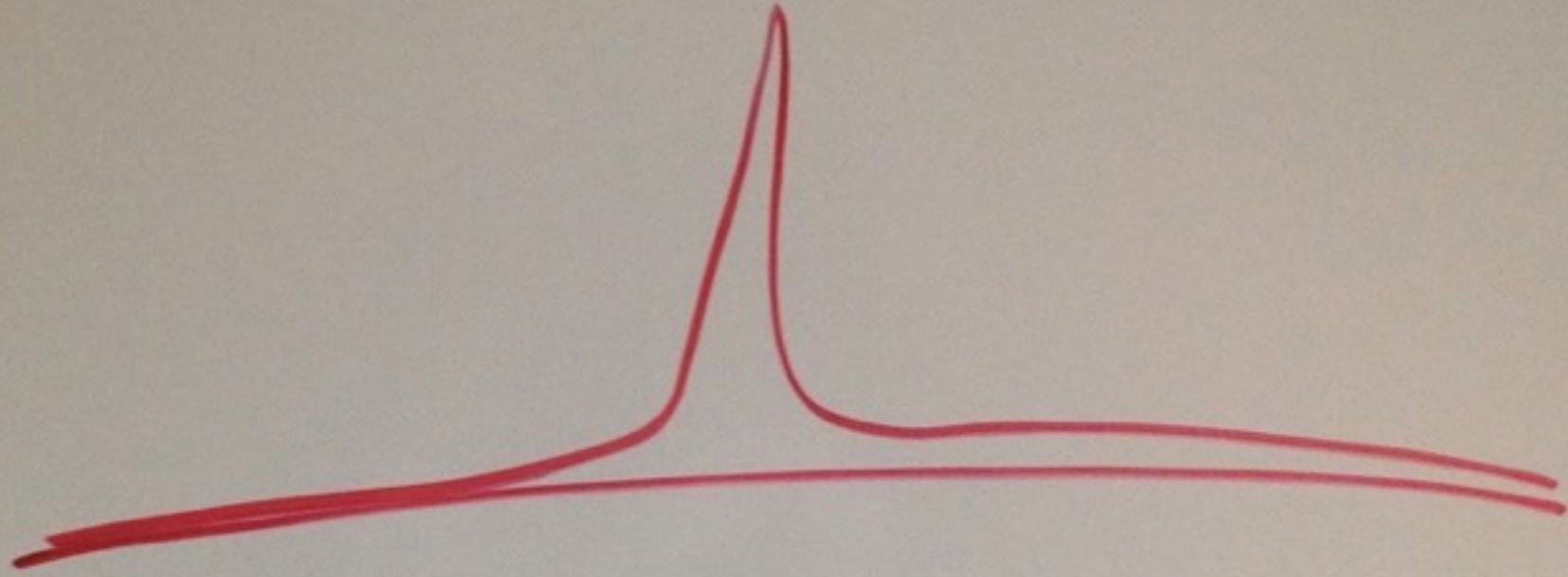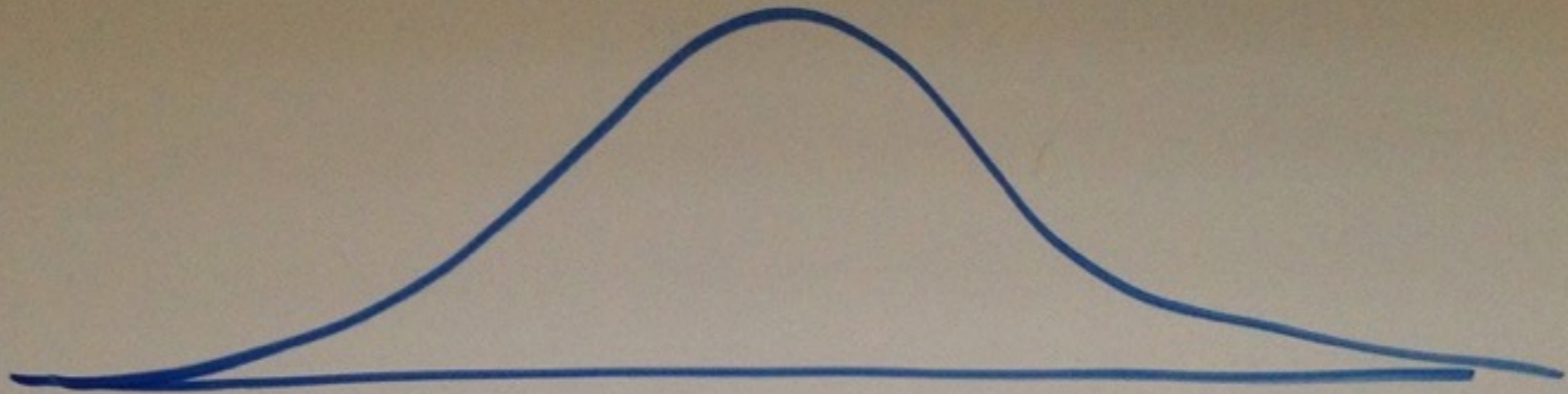
The Dance
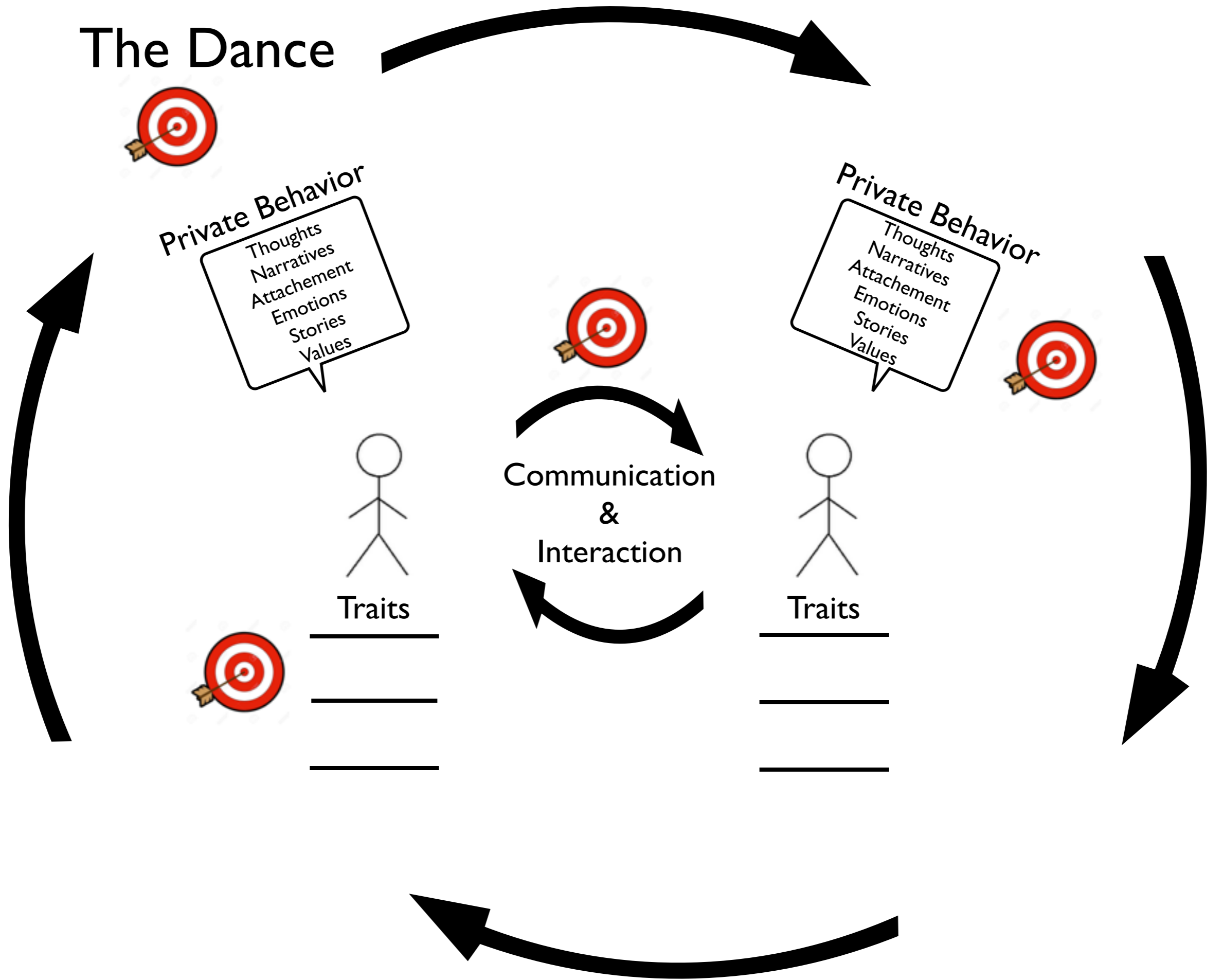
Private Behavior
Thoughts
Narratives
Attachement
Emotions
Stories
Values
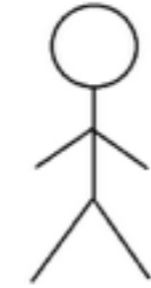
Private Behavior
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Communication
&
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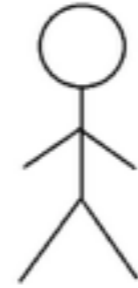
Traits

Traits

When my partner <u>questions</u> something I'm doing

I think he thinks I'm <u>stupid</u>

I feel <u>like a child</u>

I <u>withdraw</u>

When my partner <u>withdraws</u>

I feel <u>abandoned</u>

I <u>call her names</u>

- ## When my partner <u>questions</u> 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 <u>stupid</u>

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

I feel <u>like a child</u>

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 <u>withdraw</u>

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 <u>withdraws</u>

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 <u>abandoned</u>

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 <u>call her names</u>

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

Breakout Session

- Watch 5 three minute video clips with minimal therapist intervention

- Break out into groups of 4 to discuss what you saw, how you might intervene (3 minutes. Please come back quickly)

- Return to group to watch the next video

- Break out

- Please make mental notes of anything that stands out as we will all come together at the end to debrief.

- Q&A

Breakout Session

- Were you able to identify targets via this conceptualization (specific examples)

- How would you intervene (specific examples)

- Are their things you do already in your practice which you feel are relevant to this conceptualization?

Resources

- contextualscience.org

- Integrative Behavioral Couples Therapy

- coreyporchelpc@gmail.com