



Learning to Love

Treatment of Disorders of Intimacy & Sexuality

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Background Info

Claudia has been arrested on manslaughter charges. But before her trial, the prosecuting attorney requires she undergo a psychiatric examination to see if she is able to stand trial. Claudia and her lawyer countersue, and in this scene, is grilled by the prosecuting attorney on whether or not she is "nuts." She does very well, and just previous to this monologue, the prosecutor has just asked Claudia if she loves her mother.

When I was a little girl, I used to say to her, "I love you to the moon and down again, and around the world and back again," and she used to say to me, "I love you to the sun and down again, and the stars and back again." Do you remember, Mama? And I used to think, "Wow, I love Mama and Mama loves me, and what can go wrong? What went wrong, Mama? I love you and you love me, and what went wrong?"

You see, I know she loves me, and I know I love her, and- so what? She's over there, and I'm over here, and she hates me because of the things I've done to her, and I hate her because of the things she's done to me. You stand up there asking, "Do you love your daughter?" And they say, "Yes," and you think you've asked something real, and they think they've said something real. You think because you throw the word 'love' around like a frisbee that we're all going to get warm and runny? No. Something happens to some people. They love you so much, they stop noticing you're there, because they're so busy loving you. They love you so much, their love is a gun, and they fire it straight into your head. They love you so much you go right into the hospital. Yes, I know my mother loves me. Mama, I know you love me.

And I know that the one thing you learn when you grow up is that love is not enough. It's too much, and it's not enough.



Fusion

Mark Karpel, M.S.

- Partners in an ambivalently fused relationship experience not only the gratifications but the anxieties of fusion.
- They have differentiated sufficiently to feel threatened by the loss of self that accompanies fusion.
- However, they have no haven outside of the fused state since they are not sufficiently individuated to feel comfortable as separate persons.
- Outside the fusion, they are *always* lonely, never *just* alone.”

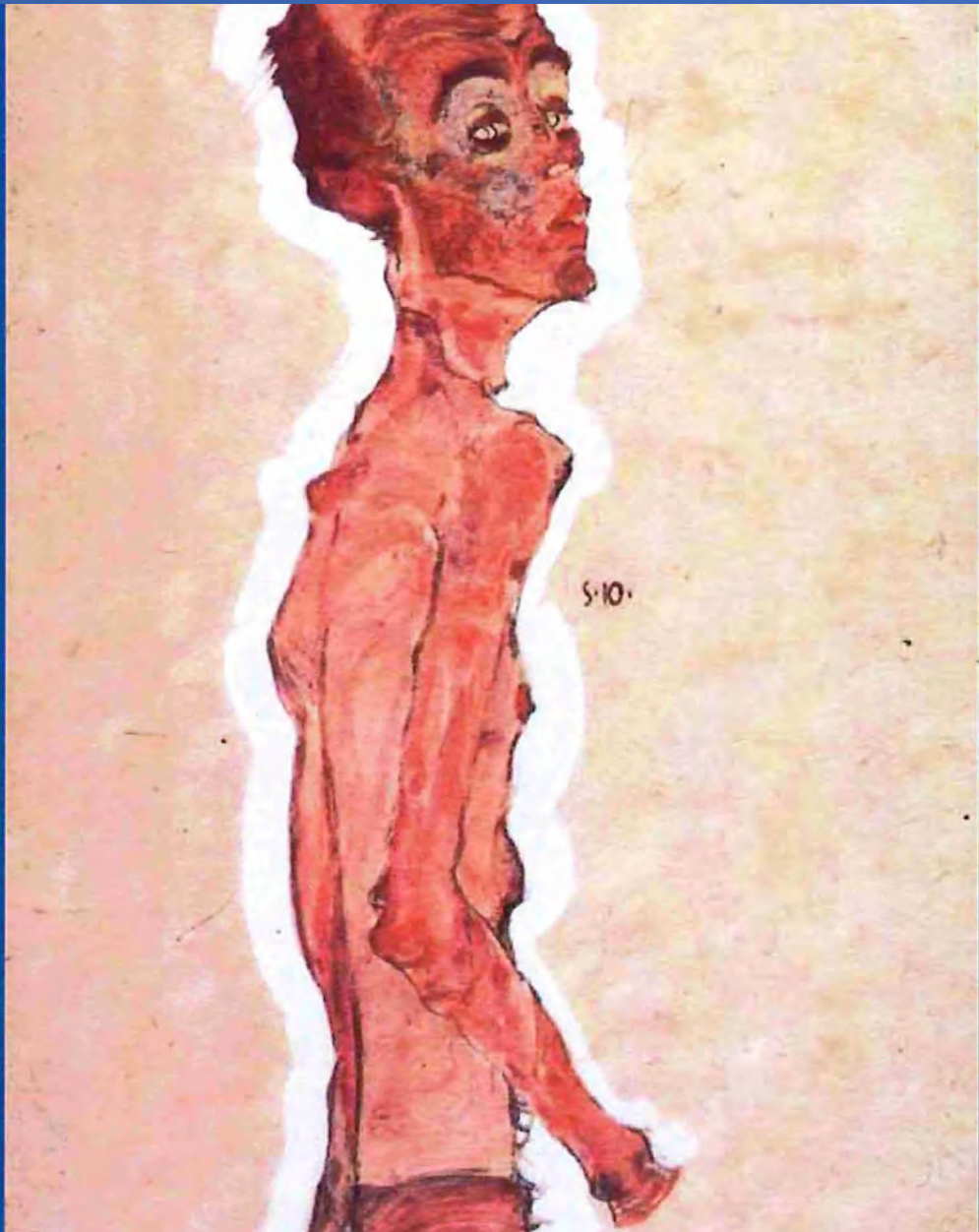


Brown's Criteria – Secure Attachment

- 1) Felt Safety
- 2) Being Seen & Known
- 3) Felt Comfort
- 4) Being Valued
- 5) Being One's Unique Best Self

Creation of the Punitive False Self

- Parent ignores the emotional attunement with the emerging self in order to mold them into objects.
- Infant needs met with inconsistent and unreliable attunement, develops a sense of self as unworthy of attention and incapable of influencing others who care.
- Parent intrusively over-involved, creating false self that is based upon compliance and externally imposed standards.





SELF-DEVELOPMENT (FONAGY)

The self exists only in the context of the other; the development of self is tantamount to the aggregation of experiences of the self in relationships.

Invariant aspects of self-other relations are abstracted into internal, representational, mental models and are structured into “internal, representational, mental models.

The inter-subjective development of the self includes instruments, sensory/perceptual, and affection-action states.



Early Maladaptive Schemas

- Are self-perpetuating
- Are more resistant
- Are at the core of self-concept
- Are actively maintained
- Are tied to high levels of affect and arousal
- Lead to distress



RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY


And there is a big part of you in me now. I'm struggling to get rid of it; it is a lot like exorcising a demon – except that the you in me is like an implosion of blackness more than an explosion of rage. Oh yes, when your personality surfaces in me, I become punitive, paranoid, critical and blaming. All I feel is hate and fear. But when that passes, I'm left with a black hole, devoid of feeling. I'm empty, an emptiness that is palpable and painful. It's a blackness I can't describe. It is as if my knowledge and duplication of your horror is robbing me of who I really am. I, the real person, the person who's been lost for so long, is missing. And sometimes, it feels that if I can't rescue her soon from that void, she'll be lost forever.



Crittenden's Criteria

Type A: Suppresses negative feelings to prevent repercussions from attachment figure A3 (compulsive caregiving) A3 (compliance)

Type C: Overstated display of feelings which serve to elicit responses from attachment figure with expectation of danger c3 (aggression) C5 (danger)



Contradictory Aspects of Sexual Arousal

When the template formed was based on an early experience of terror related to abandonment or engulfment by the caregiver, potential relationships can activate intense survival fears. The individual experiences the contradictory emotions of sexual arousal while simultaneously feeling fear and a lack of deserving kindness and affection.

The fears can either shut down potential sexual arousal or potentiate.



LOVE MAP

Personalized, developmental representation or template in the mind and in the brain that depicts the idealized lover and the idealized program of sexuo-erotic activity with the lover, as projected in imagery and ideation, or actually engaged in with that lover.







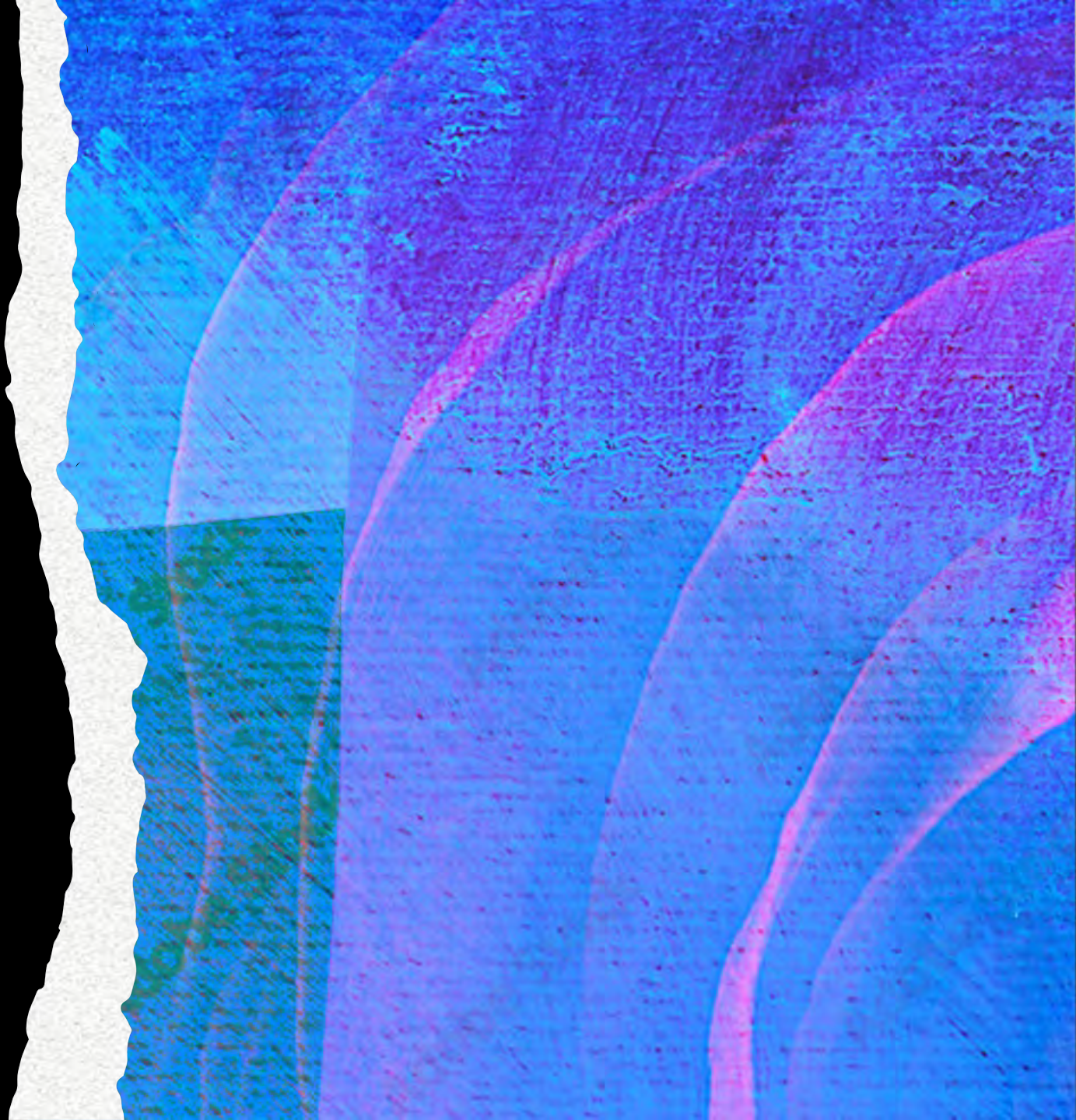
Romance Addiction

- Addicted to trauma
- Fall in love with unavailable person
- Allow self to be abused
- Repeat fantasies of old idealized love
- Powerless over own behavior
- Inability to say 'No'
- Abnormal jealousy and possessiveness
- Need to create drama
- Preoccupied with fears of abandonment
- Unable to express love
- Feelings are all or nothing
- Don't know their needs, emotions, values
- Addicted to pain
- Ruled by libido
- Excessive need to control
- Over-focused on appearance
- Continually critiques self/other
- Negative caretaking
- Overfocus on other rather than self
- Inability to accept and let go
- Won't let people in
- Gets nervous when close
- Picks fights to avoid closeness
- Can't make commitment

Metacognitive

Metacognition means treatment of one's mental content as "objects" on which to reflect, or in other words, "thinking about one's thinking."

Distinct skills contribute to its characterization, such as the ability to reflect on one's mental states, elaborating a theory of the other's mind, decentralizing, and the sense of mastery and personal efficacy.



F. SCOTT PECK

“ Love is the will to extend oneself for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth...

Love is as love does. Love is an act of will — namely, both an intention and an action. Will also implies choice.

We do not have to love. We choose to love.



Relational Episode (RE)

- Discrete episode of explicit narratives about relationships with others or with the self
- Pick ten narratives about a relational episode and identify
 - Wishes, needs, or intention (assertions, opposed, control, close, love, achieve, feel good)
 - Responses of others (strong, controlling, upset, bad, rejecting, helpful, likes me, understands)
 - The responses of self (helpful, disrespected, opposed, helpless, disappointed, anxious)



Imago

Imago Therapy

We all have unconscious images of the ideal partner we are looking for. This image, our image, is a composite of the positive and negative characteristics of our primary caretakers.

We unconsciously choose a partner who will remind us of the best and worst of our caretakers in an attempt to heal childhood wounds and meet our unmet needs.



Target Symptoms for “Earned Secure Attachment”

- Turning towards other people for self-soothing and intimacy.
- Establishing a coherent narrative regarding one’s life.
- Establishing metacognitive thinking in relation to family of origin.
- Minimize idealization and family loyalties.
- Establishing clarity with regards to self and self in relation to significant others.
- Resolution of significant losses in one’s life.

MARY MAIN

Her interest was in the narrative coherence. Rather than focusing on the individual's story, she looks at the structure of the story. What the person allows themselves to know, feel, and remember in telling the story.

Breaks in the story, disruptions, inconsistencies, contradictions, lapses, irrelevancies, and shifts are linguistic efforts to manage that which is not integrated or regulated in experience or memory. Fonagy calls this "mentalizing" affective experience to reflect upon the diversity and compliance of internal mental states.

Specific memories are used as evidence; supporting general descriptions of primary relationships is important.

State of Mind Regarding Attachment

COHERENCE: (Truthful, Succinct, Relevant, Clean)

Steady flow of ideas, intent and thoughts, feelings, clear truthful, consistent, plausible, responses, complete, but not long.

COLLABORATIVE

Speaker appears to value attachment relationships and experiences.

CONSISTENCY

Descriptions of relationships with parents are supported by specific memories.

Cohesive Narratives

Repeated Narration

- Organization of trauma memory
- Fear reduction through habituation

Meaning Analysis/Contextualization

- Revision of beliefs about self and others (trauma schemas are past versus present)
- Integration of trauma memory into a life history
- Exploration and resolution of feelings other than fear, shame, guilt, anger, and loss

The background features a stylized profile of a human head facing right. The interior of the head is filled with various shades of teal, green, and light blue, representing different brain regions. The colors are layered and somewhat translucent, creating a complex, artistic effect. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

Scales for Organized States of Mind

Secure

- Coherence of transcript
- Metacognitive monitoring

Dismissing

- Idealization of parent
- Lack of recall
- Dismissing derogation
- Fear of loss

Preoccupied

- Involving/Preoccupied anger
- Passivity of discourse



Scales for Organized States of Mind

Idealization

- Discrepancy between overall picture of parent from speech and readers' inferences about actual behavior.

Inability to Recall

- Frequency of "do not remember" (marked traumatic memory loss)

Derogatory Dismissal of Attachment

- Cool, contemptuous, derogatory dismissal of relationships

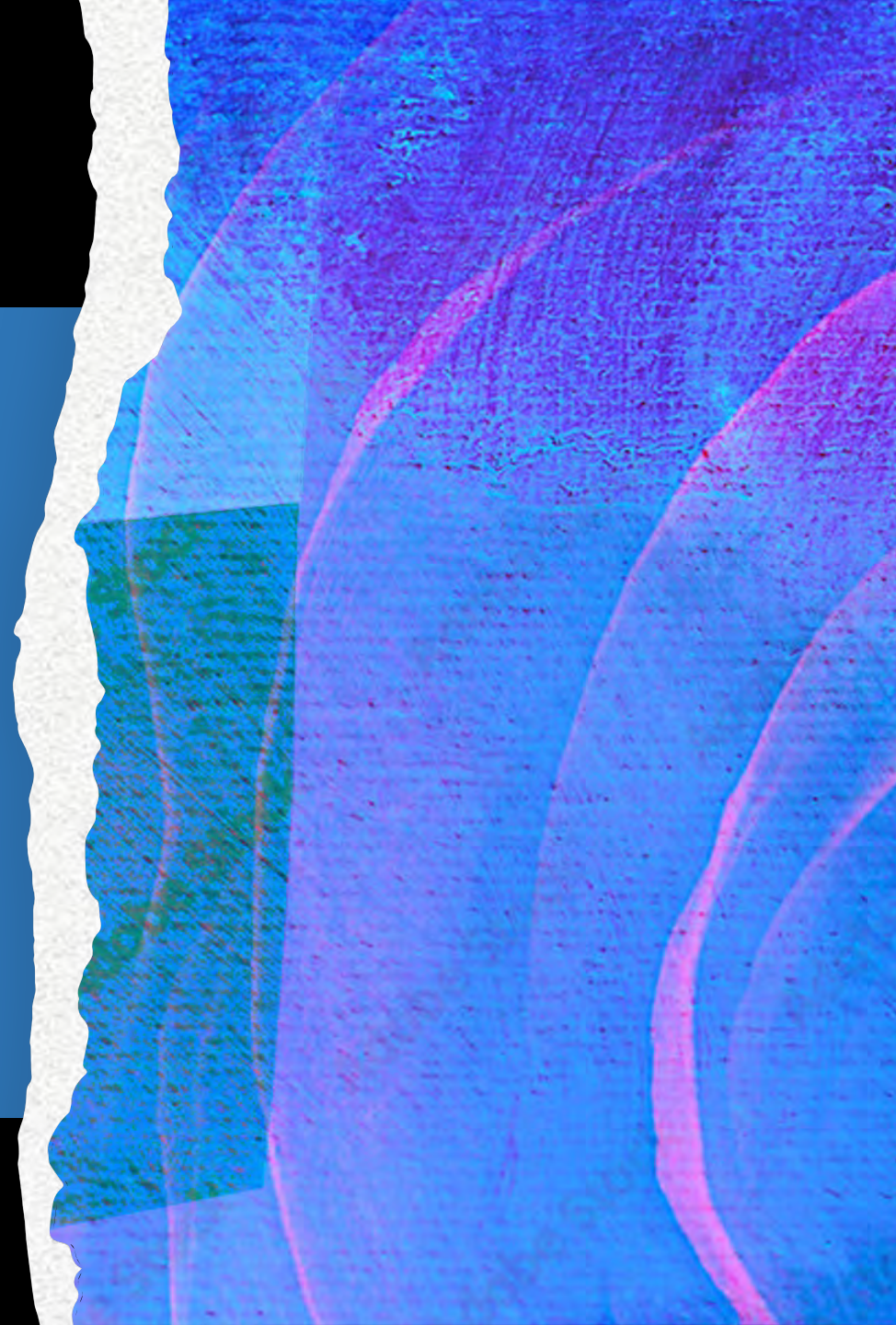
Fear of Loss through Death

- Based on adults' discussion of their own child — unfounded current fear of possible child's death

Scales for Organized States of Mind

Coherence

- Consistency and connectedness of thought, such that parts of discourse related form a logical whole.
- Speaker's ability to present and access the past in a way that is reasonable and understandable.
- Unified yet free-flowing picture of experiences, feelings, and ability to point to principle and rationale behind response.
- Transcript tells the story without altering it to get listeners impression on being in dysfunctions, omissions, and intrusions



Scales for Organized States of Mind

Metacognitive

- Awareness of thought and cognitive process
- Recognize things are not as they appear (appearance relation)
- Same thing may appear different to different persons
- Representative change of the self, what I thought then is not how I think now.

The Four Domains

1. Monitoring – the ability to distinguish, recognize, and define one’s own inner states (emotions and cognitions) and following behaviors during “here and now.” Is composed of four facets:

- The ability to recognize one’s own representations (thoughts and beliefs)
- The ability to recognize and verbalize one’s own emotions
- The ability to establish relations among the separate components of a mental state
- The ability to establish relations between the components of mental states and behavior

The Four Domains

2. Integrating – is the ability to produce coherent descriptions of people's mental processes and states over time

- The ability to describe understandable and coherent links among thoughts, events, actions and behaviors
- The ability to describe transitions among different mental states and explain the reasons why
- The ability to form generalized representations of his/her mental functioning
- The ability to reconstruct and describe to the interviewer one's own mental functioning

The Four Domains

3. Differentiating – the ability to recognize the representational nature of one's own and other individuals' thoughts

- The ability to differentiate between classes of representations
- Imagination
- Evaluation
- Expectation
- To distinguish between representation and reality

The Four Domains

4. Decentering– the ability to infer others' mental states in a plausible manner and adopt their perspective, recognizing that it is distinct from our own.

- The ability to recognize, define, and verbalize other people's emotional inner state.
- The ability to recognize, define, and verbalize other people's cognitive inner state.
- The ability to establish relations among the separate components of others' mental state.
- The ability to establish relations between the components of one's mental state and one's behavior

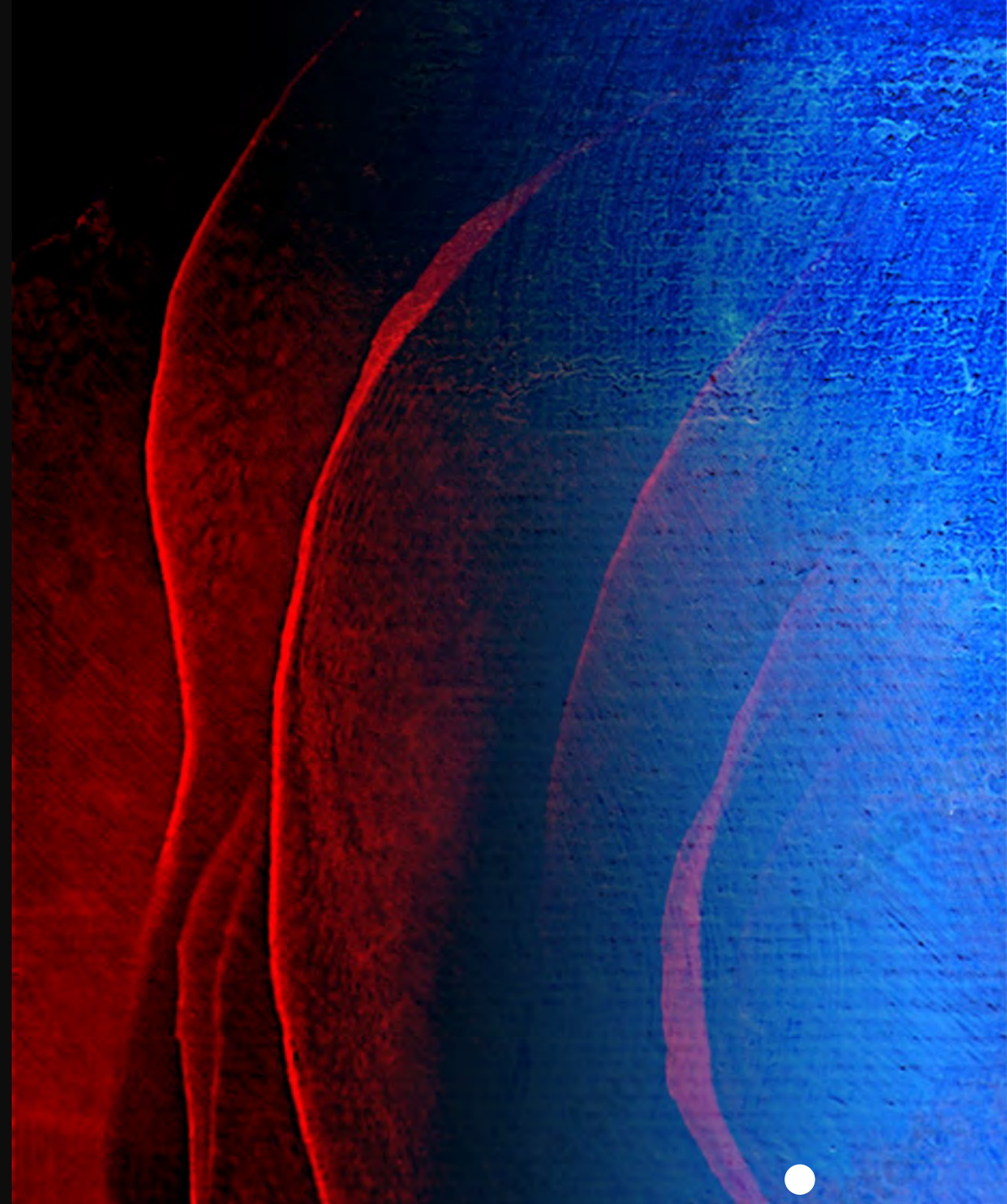


Therapist's Job with Attachment Trauma

- Transformation of the self through relationship.
- Provide a secure base for exploration, development, and change.
- Provide attunement in helping the client tolerate, modulate, and communicate difficult feelings.
- Affect-regulating interactions for accessing disavowed or dissociated experiences, strengthening narrative competence.
- Deconstruct the attachment patterns of the past to construct new ones in the present

Dissociation

Early dyadic processes lead to a “primary breakdown” or lack of integration of a coherence sense of self, i.e. unintegrated internal working modules.



Mentalization-based Therapy

With an improved ability to mentalize, patients not only process their own thoughts, feelings, and related behaviors differently, they also better understand that another person's thoughts, feelings, and behavior may differ from their own interpretation.

The goal of mentalizing is for patients to not only better understand themselves but also to improve theory of mind regarding others and to think about what may be driving other people's thoughts and behaviors. Such an ability will help the patient avoid misinterpreting another person's meaning and responds appropriately to them.

IDEAL PARENT

Integrated Psychotherapy

Brown & Elliott

1) Amplification of Self Qualities

- Aware of ways you are kind and ways you live with integrity
- Recognize who you are in different situations
- Situations you are most real

Self Structure

- Capacity for self-observance
- Subjective awareness of coherence
- Sense of continuity across time, place, stable inside-out orientation
- Move focus from monitoring needs of others at expense of self
- Not hiding from others
- Recognition of particular qualities of self that are stable and consistent
- Self-aging supporting these qualities
- Positive affect with self-representation



IDEAL PARENT

Integrated Psychotherapy

Brown & Elliott

2) Developing Self-agency

- Feel especially effective – goals
- Making an impact on your life
- Deep sense of effectivity
- Steps for being effective

IDEAL PARENT

Integrated Psychotherapy

Brown & Elliott

3) Self-esteem

- Really liking oneself, and when in relationship
- Confident – skills development
- Deep sense of effectivity
- Stress managers

IDEAL PARENT

Integrated Psychotherapy

Brown & Elliott

4) Romantic Intimacy

- Find the right partner
- Day-to-day best intimate relationships
- Feel absolutely safe, discuss possibilities
- Very attuned
- Closeness and dislike
- Ask for what you want

Romance – Dan Brown, Ph.D.

- Imagine that as you **desire to get close, your partner wants to get close too.**
- You find it **very easy** getting close to (him or her).
- **Imagine a scene about the kind of *balance* or closeness and freedom** this relationship gives you.
- **Imagine *just the right kind* of relationship in which you are *totally secure*** so that it's really okay when (he or she) isn't around; and when around, (he or she) *protects your solitude and quiet time and things you need to do for yourself.*
- Picture yourself able to **ask for advice** or help and (he or she) *doesn't mind at all.*
- *Imagine* a scene in which you **are able to run to (him or her) at times** of need.
- More and more you're finding that this person is someone you **can really depend on, in a good, healthy way.**
- You can feel what it's like to know **that *this partner is there for you***, as you need.
- Imagine that you *actually find* some **comfort in relying** on (him or her).
- Imagine a partner with whom you have the *conviction* that (he or she) **cares about you as much as you care about** (him or her).
- You can *really know* that this partner has **strong feelings** for you as you do for (him or her).
- Imagine this is the kind of partner that is easy to discuss problems and upsets with.
- Imagine *just the right kind* of relationship where you are comfortable **expressing a wide range of emotions**, and (he or she) is quite fine with that.
- This is the kind of partner with whom you *really don't have to do anything to be loved.*
- Imagine a relationship in which you can **just be yourself** and are loved and appreciated simply for who you are.



IDEAL PARENT and IDEAL SELF-PARENT

Self-parenting: According to survivors, these are the qualities of the **IDEAL PARENT**:

- Unconditionally loving and accepting
- Affirming
- Takes responsibility
- Sets and teaches healthy boundaries
- Is protective
- Values play
- Is forgiving of mistakes
- Encourages growth
- Listens to child in open and receptive way

These are the qualities of the **IDEAL SELF-PARENT**.



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