

Engaging the Practice of Emotionally Focused Family Therapy: An Advanced Workshop Level Two Training

Gail Palmer

Workshop Description:

Emotionally Focused Family Therapy (EFFT) is an attachment-based approach that combines both systemic and experiential interventions to restore family relationships and strengthen their resilience. A primary goal of EFFT is to reduce problematic behavior by creating new patterns of emotional accessibility and responsiveness that offer a secure base for children to develop and families to thrive. EFFT provides a practical approach to engaging families at an emotional level. Accessing, processing, and connecting family members through the power of emotional experience promotes healing and fosters a family's resilience to the everyday and unexpected challenges of life.

This advanced training builds on previous EFFT training providing further training on the six core competencies of EFFT practice. Participants focus on key change events in EFFT and therapist practices used to promote parental openness and child vulnerability. The training provides direction in transforming parental intention into more effective engagement of caregiving and engaging attachment responses within the family system. Specific strategies are reviewed for working through relational blocks and re-engaging attachment related-needs across the family. This training follows an intensive focus on key elements in the EFT process applied to family relationships. Demonstration and practice exercises provide participants opportunities to deepen their EFT skills in intervening with family relationships broadening their understanding of emotion and attachment in family life and strengthening the bonds they share.

Workshop Format

This two-day advanced training focuses on increasing therapist competence in EFFT assessment and treatment practices that guide families through resolving relationship blocks and promote more secure familial bonds. This advanced workshop concentrates on specific practices for working through negative patterns, accessing and deepening emotional experience to promote corrective emotional experiences in family relationships. Video examples and practice exercises provide opportunities for participants to observe EFFT in action and further their understanding and skill in this innovative approach to transforming family distress.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Conceptualize family distress from an attachment lens
- Assess for safety and determining appropriate and relevant family members for treatment
- Promote parental investment and goal alliance in family treatment
- Lead EFT tango in family sessions
- Process parental blocks to caregiving to create parental accessibility and responsiveness
- Access child vulnerability related to attachment needs and process blocks in a safe and developmentally appropriate way
- Structure meaningful enactments within a family context
- Structure family sessions to meet the unique needs of stepfamily life

Presenter:

Gail Palmer, RMFT, MSW

is a founding member of the Ottawa Couple and Family Institute and Co-Director of the International Center of Excellence in Emotionally Focused Therapy. She holds a Masters degree in Social Work and is a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist in Canada. Over the past 30 years, Gail has worked closely with Dr Sue Johnson, creator of Emotionally Focused Therapy, and is an experienced supervisor and trainer in EFT. She currently offers workshops, externships and core skills trainings to mental health professionals in a variety of different settings across the world. She chairs the ICEEFT Education Committee and is responsible for mentoring and training EFT trainers internationally. Gail is an adjunct faculty member at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Canada and a sessional lecturer at Oxford University, Oxford, England.

Gail has a particular interest in applying the model with work with families. For the past decade, Gail has been one of the lead EFT trainers who have developed and expanded on Sue Johnson's EFFT method as described in Johnson, S.M. (2004) *The Practice of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy: Creating Connection*. New York, NY: Brunner Routledge. This work has included EFFT trainings across North America, Europe and Australia/New Zealand, presentations at EFT summits, workshops at the Networker and AAMFT, publications in the EFFT workbook and casebook, articles in professional journals and the ICEEFT newsletter. Professionally, Gail's primary passion is to help therapists who are both new to EFT and trained in EFT, to bring the powerful interventions and skills of this model to the family therapy room.

Research and Related Resources

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