

Individual Sessions

Usually done after first 1 or 2 couple sessions, for the following purposes:

1. To foster alliance.
2. To observe and interact with each partner in context without other partner.
3. To hear how each partner sees and feels about their partner and the relationship.
4. To obtain information and check hypotheses (e.g. competing attachments, level of commitment, previous attachment trauma that may be impacting the relationship in the present, contraindications, fears of safety etc.).
5. To refine impressions of attachment fears and needs underlying their interactional positions and to begin to articulate them.

Checklist

Secrets: An EFT therapist informs individual clients that s/he cannot work effectively with partners to make their bond more secure if s/he is holding secrets. Thus, s/he lets individuals know, before they begin to disclose that if they share anything that seems relevant to repairing the relationship and that they are uncomfortable sharing with the other partner, that s/he will encourage them to share it with the other partner before the next session. Alternately if they feel they need help to share it, the therapist assures them s/he will support them to share it in the next session. This is done in a collaborative manner, such as exploring the impact on the partner and the relationship were they to continue holding this secret.

Some of the following items have frequently been previously discussed in the couple sessions, but an individual may disclose and engage differently with his/her experience when the other partner is not present. An EFT attunes to *how* the stories are told as much as to the content.

Comfort Seeking

How you seek comfort? How do you comfort or soothe yourself when you are not at ease in your relationship? Who, if anyone do you reach to when you are in distress?

Previous relationships: What were they like? How did they end? Patterns or themes that recurred?

Commitment. Confirm that each partner is wanting to engage in repairing the relationship. If seeming detached or ambivalent about the relationship, the therapist can ask, “What keeps you in the relationship?”

Touch and physical intimacy: How do you feel about the quality of touch and physical intimacy in your relationship?

Affairs: Have you ever had affair? If so, is it over? Does your partner know? Have you ever suspected that your partner was having an affair?

Violence or abuse: Is there physical violence or abuse of any kind? Check whether the partner feels emotionally or physically fearful of the other partner.

Addictive Behaviors: (numbing behaviors that typically make one’s emotional life inaccessible.) Explore how substances / other addictive behaviors (such as pornography) are part of the negative cycle.

Family of Origin / Childhood:

What was it like growing up in your family? Who did you feel closest to?

Who did you go to for comfort when you were feeling sad, scared?

What was your relationship like with your father? Your mother? Any other significant attachment figures?

Describe parents’ relationship – did they comfort one another? How did they deal with conflict? Did you see them argue and reconnect after arguments? What did it look like/feel like for you? Was there ever any physical violence?

Were there any significantly good or bad things that happened to you growing up?

Did anyone ever touch you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable?

Is there any history of mental health problems in your family?

Mental Health Concerns Inquire about history of mental health difficulties – and previous treatment and how the partner feels about recounting this.

Before Ending Is there anything we haven’t touched on that you feel would be important for me to know about you to help your relationship?