

# **Takes Two to Tango and Three to Jive:**

## **The Therapists' Role in Helping Couples Throughout the Cancer Experience**

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# Presenter Disclosure

- **Speaker: Cheryl Dizon-Reynante, M.Ed., CCC**  
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- **Relationships with financial sponsors:**
  - **Grants/Research Support: n/a**
  - **Speakers Bureau/Honoraria: n/a**
  - **Consulting Fees: n/a**
  - **Other: n/a**

# Mitigating Potential Bias

- Not Applicable

# Learning Objectives

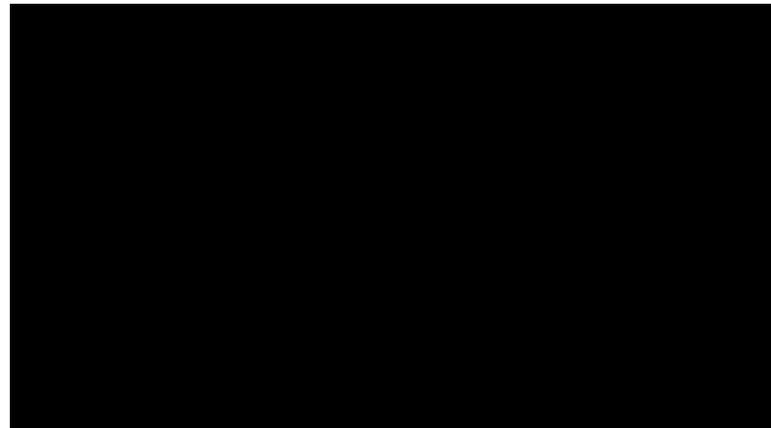
- List 5 reasons why it is important to support couples affected by cancer
- List the 3 stages of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT)
- Describe the 5 essential moves of the therapist that will assist the couple in developing closer bonds before, throughout, and after cancer treatment

# Why is it Important to Support Couples Affected by Cancer?

1. Reduces psychological pain and psychosocial distress for both partners
2. Lessens the likelihood of 'attachment injuries' which can occur at many points in the cancer journey
3. Verbalizes and normalizes the shift in the Caregiving System
4. Provides an opportunity for relationship growth, especially in cases of advanced cancer
5. In cases of death, prior couple work increases the likelihood that the bereaved spouse will access counselling, and reduce the likelihood of complicated grief and mental health difficulties

# Soothing the Threatened Brain (YouTube video)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2J6B00d-8lw>



# How Can Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) Be Effective?

- The EFT approach provides therapists with a “map” that helps couples to talk about strong emotions
- Externalizes cancer, treatment, symptoms as the problem, making it the common enemy, allowing the couple to collaborate
- The goal of EFT is not just to change the way people argue, but to create a more secure emotional bond that is long lasting

# Three Stages of Emotionally Focused Therapy

## 1. De-escalating the Negative Cycle

- Create an alliance, identify the negative cycle, access unacknowledged emotions (e.g. fear, hurt), frame the cycle as the common enemy

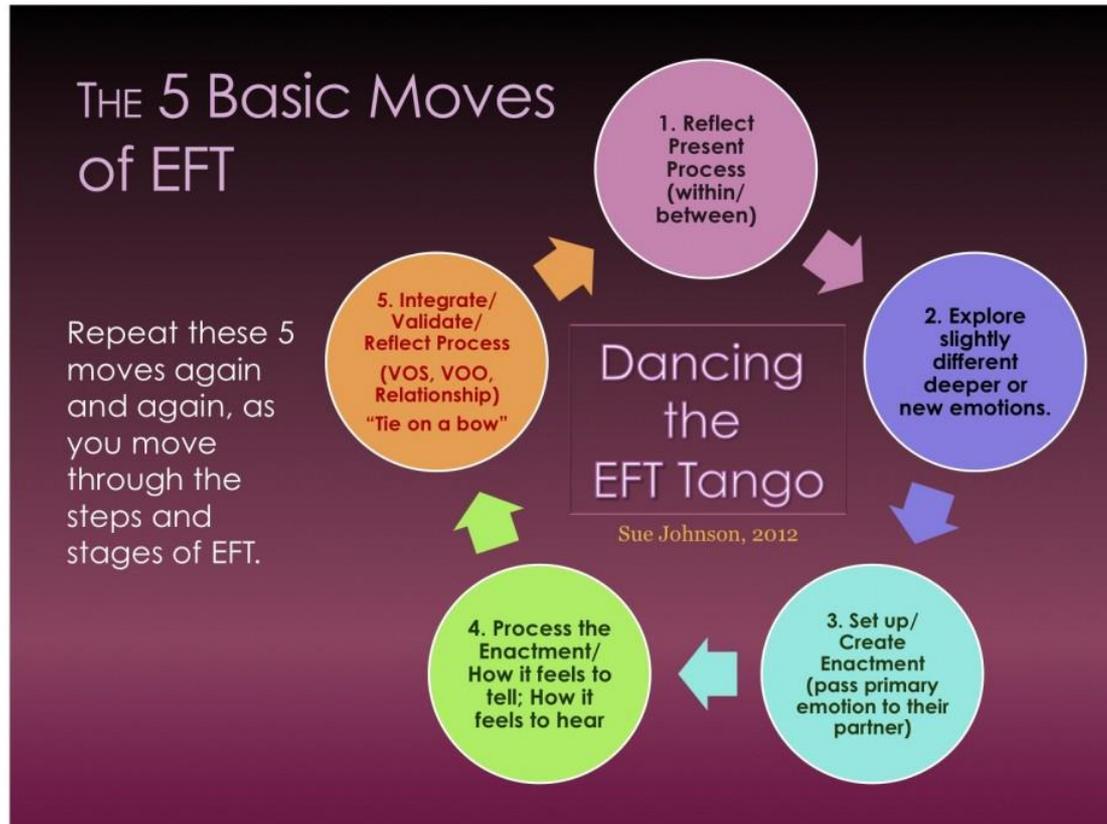
## 2. Restructuring the Bond

- The withdrawer engages more and the blamer softens, they are both able to communicate needs and wants

## 3. Consolidation

- Emergence of new solutions to old problems, the new cycle of secure attachment

# Five Essential Moves of the Therapist



Source: [www.rebeccajorgenson.com/the-eft-tango/](http://www.rebeccajorgenson.com/the-eft-tango/)

# More Information about EFT and Training in Winnipeg

- [www.iceeft.com](http://www.iceeft.com)
- Dr. Sue Johnson is a clinical psychologist, professor at the University of Ottawa, author, and innovator in the field of couples therapy
- Training: <https://www.lbrubacher.com/>

## Winnipeg Emotionally Focused Therapy Training and Consulting

- 4 Day Externship in EFT (Basic)
- The Core Skills Training Program (Four 2-day weekends)

# References

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