

The background features a textured, light-colored paper surface. In the upper right, there is a faint, stylized illustration of a mountain range. On the right side, a willow tree with dark, thin branches and small, dark buds is depicted. The overall color palette is muted and earthy.

Relationship Enhancement

An Introduction to Deep Empathy

For more information go to

www.nire.org

Basic Information

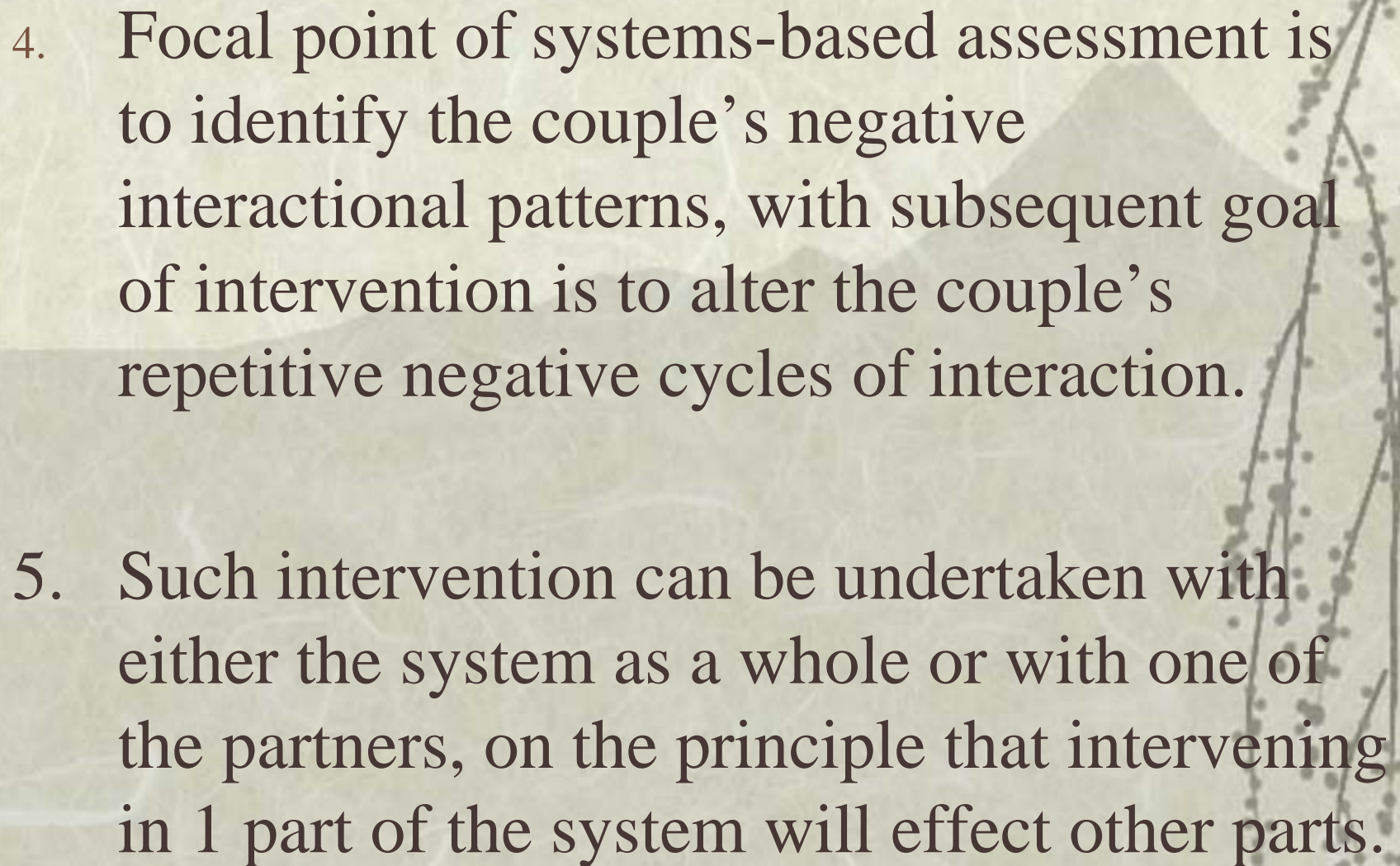


- ❖ Conceived by Bernard Guerney as an integrative therapy.

- ❖ Systems theory-based and integrates
 - Client-Centered Theory (Carl Rogers)
 - Learning and Behavioral Modification (Albert Bandura and B.F. Skinner)
 - Interpersonal Theory (Henry Stack Sullivan)
 - Psychodynamic Theory (Sigmund Freud)

Systems Theory Implications

1. Couple's relationship transcends either individual.
2. How a couple interacts will impact and define the nature of the couple's relationship.
3. When a couple's relationship is flexible and adaptable, it will flow more smoothly.

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- The background of the slide features a soft-focus landscape. In the upper portion, there are rolling mountains under a pale sky. On the right side, a willow tree with long, thin branches and small, dark buds hangs down. The overall color palette is muted, consisting of earthy greens, greys, and browns.
4. Focal point of systems-based assessment is to identify the couple's negative interactional patterns, with subsequent goal of intervention is to alter the couple's repetitive negative cycles of interaction.
 5. Such intervention can be undertaken with either the system as a whole or with one of the partners, on the principle that intervening in 1 part of the system will effect other parts.

Summary of RE

- ❖ Both a psycho-educational program and a brief therapy model that employs a skills-training methodology for empowering even the most distressed couples and families to resolve problems on their own
- ❖ Couples learn to resolve issues, restore intimacy, and increase relationship satisfaction.
- ❖ Families learn to improve communication, how to effectively resolve conflicts, and how to manage family transitions.

Goals

- ❖ Facilitate the safe and constructive accessing of negative emotion in order to liberate positive emotion in the relationship.
- ❖ Create a therapeutic family system in which its members are able to support one another's positive growth and constructive change well after therapy. Self-generative System.



10 Skills Taught to Couples

- ❖ Conflict management
- ❖ Empathy and Deep Empathy
- ❖ Expressive Communication
- ❖ Discussion/Negotiation
- ❖ Facilitation
- ❖ Problem/Conflict Resolution
- ❖ Self-Change
- ❖ Helping Others to Change
- ❖ Generalization
- ❖ Maintenance Skills



Basic Methods and Procedures

- ❖ Administering
- ❖ Instructing
- ❖ Demonstrating
- ❖ Reinforcing
- ❖ Modeling
- ❖ Pre-emptive Modeling
- ❖ Prompting
- ❖ Coaching
- ❖ Supervising Home Assignments

RE Methods continued

- ❖ **Administering** – what the therapist does to structure the process or move it forward. Ex: Intake process, choosing format, topic selection, home assignments, using special therapy techniques.
- ❖ **Instructing** – explaining goals, rationale, and guidelines for RE skills and dialogue process. Answering client questions.
- ❖ **Demonstrating** – therapist showing the couple, role-play, videotape, audiotape. First demonstrate before expecting couple to practice or use skill.

RE Methods continued

- ❖ **Reinforcing** – not simply to encourage but also alleviate the performance anxiety and modeling it for partners to use when providing feedback. Most relevant early in therapy.
- ❖ **Modeling** – involves the therapist taking what the Expresser or Empathizer has said and showing how it can be rephrased so that it becomes more skillful. Use this to suggest additional ideas or feelings that would further amplify the Expresser's feelings or deepen the empathy of Empathizer.

RE Methods continued

- ❖ **Preemptive Modeling** – therapist anticipates that the Expresser might say something unskillfully or omit an underlying positive. Model in advance. Preferable to having to provide corrective feedback.
- ❖ **Prompting** – therapist making suggestions regarding a way of beginning, continuing or correcting an expressive statement or an empathic response. As couple becomes more skilled, prompting replaces preemptive modeling.

RE Methods continued

- ❖ **Coaching** – monitoring and facilitating better performance, increase clarity of expression and empathize more deeply. Reframing to deepen the focus of couple's dialogue or identifying when dialogue is at impasse.
- ❖ **Supervising home assignments** – all home assignments should be negotiate with couple. Ex: watch video, implement agreed-to plan, RE activities, etc.

Empathy

- ❖ Empathy is *central* to RE Therapy
 - It is the underpinning of much of what the therapist does in the practice of RE.
 - It is the foundational skill of the couple's dialogue process and one of the keys to fostering understanding, acceptance and intimacy in a couple's relationship.

Goal of Empathy

- ❖ Erasure of a sense of differentness and separateness.
 - ❖ Identification with the speaker.
- ❖ Identify totally with the experience of another on the other person's terms.
 - ❖ Both a verbal process and an experiential process on both the cognitive and emotional levels.

“Empathy is Not a Technique, it is first and foremost an experiential process of identifying with another person.”



It is connecting with the other person’s experiences, feelings, concerns and desires, as well as understanding the meaning that a person attaches to an event.

Being selflessly present for them.

“Walking in Another Person’s Shoes”

Deep Empathy

“Connecting with the other person’s experience, feelings, concerns, and desires in all their breadth and depth, on the other person’s terms.”



Verbal Expression of Deep Empathy

Giving good verbal empathy to a person consists of using techniques in such a way that you are that person.

Involves going beyond what the other person has said and reading between the lines so that you are able to identify deeper dimensions and meaning. The unstated but implied meaning of the other person's experience.

Two Modes of Deep Empathy

❖ **You Mode**

Conventionally taught, using the pronoun you to represent the experience of the speaker/expresser.

❖ **Identification Mode**

Listener/Empathizer uses the pronoun I to represent the experience of the speaker/expresser as though the empathizer were the expresser. Assuming the others identity.

Reference

- ❖ Scuka, Robert F. (2005), Relationship enhancement therapy. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.