

Couple therapy – EFT steps and stages

An EFT therapist follows a nine-step, three-stage EFT map to help couples **arrive at relationship satisfaction and secure connection** ... the EFT therapist follows this map as a process consultant, not as a coach, a teacher, a purveyor of wise insight, or a strategist solving problems, but as a consultant who focuses on present process to help couples make sense of their disconnection and to **create new patterns of interaction that foster a secure bond**.
(Brubacher, 2018, p. 8)

Stage 1 – De-Escalation of Negative Cycles of Interaction – Relationship Stabilization

Step 1 – Creating an alliance and delineating **conflict issues** in the core attachment struggle.
Step 2 – Identifying the negative **interactional cycle** where these issues are expressed.
Step 3 – Accessing the **unacknowledged emotions** underlying interactional positions.
Step 4 – **Reframing the problem** in terms of the negative cycle, underlying emotions, and attachment needs.

Stage 2 – Changing Interactional Positions

Step 5 – Promoting identification with disowned attachment **emotions, needs, and aspects of self** and integrating these into relationship interactions.
Step 6 – Promoting acceptance of *each* partner's experience and **new interactional responses**.
Step 7 – Facilitating the expression of needs and wants and creating **emotional engagement and bonding events** that redefine the attachment between partners.

Stage 3 – Consolidation and Integration

Step 8 – Facilitating the emergence of **new solutions to old relationship problems**.
Step 9 – Consolidating new positions and **new cycles of attachment behaviors**.

(Johnson, 2020, p. 21)

References:

Brubacher, L. L. (2018). *Stepping into emotionally focused couple therapy - Key ingredients of change* (1st ed.). New York: Routledge.
Johnson, S. M. (2020). *The practice of emotionally focused couple therapy - Creating connection* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.