

EMOTION FOCUSED THERAPY (EFT)

Communication Matrix

<p>HEALTHY COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires conscious effort • maximize 	<p>ACCESSIBLE (i.e., being vulnerable & showing your true self) [being EXPRESSIVE, e.g., use “I statements”]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I feel ...” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - primary (softer) emotions: sad, mad, glad, <i>afraid</i>, <i>embarrassed</i> (or shame); hurt/disappointed, <i>grief</i>, guilt, lonely ... • “I need ...” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - closeness, safety, warmth, softness, consistency ... 	<p>RESPONSIVE [i.e., being RECEPTIVE to your partner]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen attentively • respond <i>empathically</i> to partner’s emotions and requests that you meet his/her needs
<p>UNHEALTHY COMMUNICATION (“the cycle”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • often occurs automatically • minimize 	<p>PURSUER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • often uses “You statements,” e.g., name-calling. • above attachment needs are not being met by one’s partner, but Pursuer often expresses this message indirectly through the first two Horsemen. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Horseman 1 – Criticism (e.g., nagging) ○ Horseman 2 – Contempt 	<p>WITHDRAWER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finds critical environment aversive, and therefore withdraws in an attempt to avoid it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Horseman 3 – Defensiveness ○ Horseman 4 – Stonewalling

GOALS IN EFT:

- 1) Identify and minimize/stop “the cycle,” i.e., the Pursuer-Withdrawer interactions that actually make the unhealthy communication style of each partner worse, and lead to greater emotional distance and marital unhappiness.
- 2) Shift from the rigid positions of Pursuer and Withdrawer to being flexible and changing positions. That is, the Pursuer, rather than criticizing and/or being contemptuous of one’s partner, can instead express underlying feelings and needs (*) or be responsive to his/her partner (**). Similarly, the Withdrawer, rather than becoming defensive or stonewalling, can try new behaviours such as responding empathically to the feelings and needs of his/her partner (^) or be accessible to his/her partner by expressing his/her feelings and needs (^).