

Blamer Softening

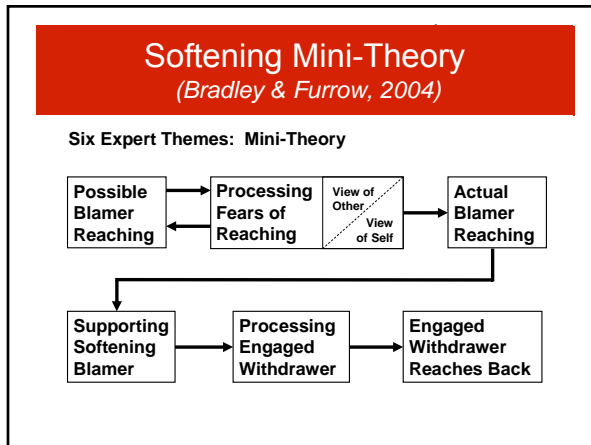
502 - EFT TRACK: New Research
Findings in EFT for Couples

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Blamer Softening in EFT

- “Watershed event” critical to treatment success (Johnson and Greenberg, 1988)
- Best sessions of EFT characterized by depth of experiencing and intimate emotional disclosure. These disclosures were often reciprocated between partners. (Greenberg et al. 1993)
- Common therapeutic impasse. (Johnson & Talitman 1997)
- Proposed mini-theory of blamer softening identifies key themes related to successful softening events based on expert examples (Bradley & Furrow 2004)



Blamer Softening Interventions

Common softening interventions

- Evocative Responding (20%)
- Validation (17%)
- Heightening (16%)
- Empathic conjecture/interpretation (8%)

(Bradley & Furrow, 2004)

EFT and Emotional Experiencing

- EFT treatment effects associated with specific interventions - more than empathy (Goldman, Greenberg, & Angus, 2006)
- Positive outcomes in EFT treatment have been associated with therapist’s ability to deepen client’s emotional experience. (Goldman, Greenberg, & Pos, 2005)

Question

Does the expert mini-theory of blamer softening describe the softening events of second generation EFT therapists?

- Presence of additional softening themes
- Are patterns of emotional experiencing similar to expert level successful softening events?

Sample

- **Couples**
 - 10 couples (9 Caucasian, 1 African American)
 - Softening session Mean 16.4, Median 14
 - 90% of softenings were with female partner
 - Avg. years together: 14.51 years Median 9 years
 - Avg. years married: 6.5 years Median 11.4 years
 - Previously married: 30% male 10% female
- **Therapists**
 - 8 therapists (2 male 6 female)
 - Age: 26 - 51
 - Average years of EFT practice: 3.39 (1 – 5)
 - 5/8 had attended EFT externship
 - 2 MSW's, 5 MFT's, 1 Psychologist

Method

- EFT-CS
 - Coding system designed to identify specific EFT interventions (Bradley, 2001; Bradley & Furrow, 2004)
- EXP (Klein, Mathieu, Gendlin, & Kiesler, 1969)
 - Client Experiencing Scale
 - Therapist Experiencing Scale
- Vocal Quality (Rice & Kerr, 1986; Rice, Koke, Greenberg, & Wagstaff, 1979)
 - Client Vocal Quality
 - Therapist Vocal Quality

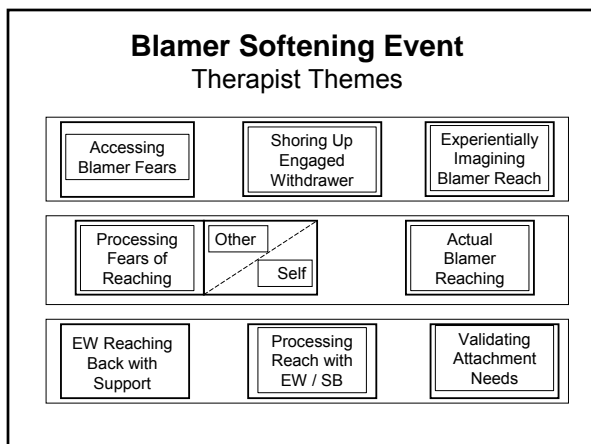
Procedures

- 10 segments collected: 9 successful softening sessions and 1 unsuccessful softening attempt
- Transcribed at talk-turn level and coded by two teams. (Two raters per team).
- Inter-rater reliability ratings (3 transcripts)
 - EFT-CS $\kappa = .76 - .79$
 - C-EXP $\kappa = .61 - .83$
 - T-EXP $\kappa = .61 - .83$ (Manner), $\kappa = .60 - .63$ (Referent)
 - CVQ $\kappa = .72 - .78$
 - TVQ $\kappa = 1.0$
- Thematic analysis of therapist themes.

Findings

Therapist Themes

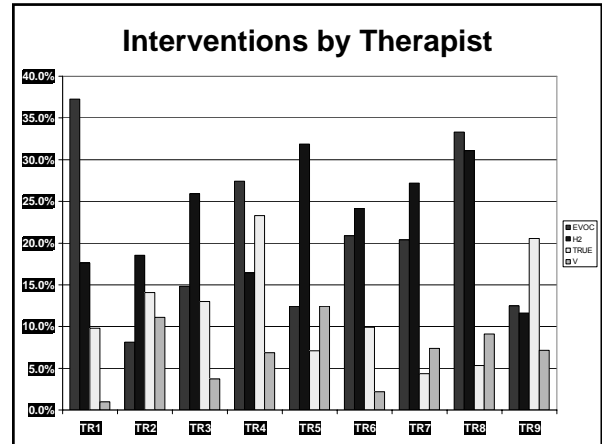
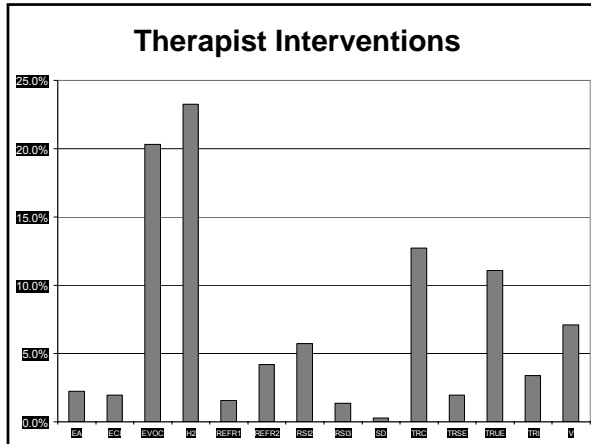
- Confirmed previous themes
 - Possible blamer reaching
 - Processing fears of reaching
 - Softening reach
 - Engaged withdrawer reaching back
 - Processing with support the softening reach
- Expanded model to include
 - Accessing blamer fears
 - Shoring up engaged withdrawer
 - Validating partners' expression and efforts to meet one another's attachment needs.



Findings

Therapist Interventions

- Most Common: Heightening, Evocative Responding, Tracking Underlying Emotion, Validation
- Adherence: Less than 3% of the all interventions were not specific to the EFT model.
- Complex Interventions: One in ten times the therapist used a combination of interventions. Most often this combination included the use of heightening with a second or third intervention.



Findings

Emotional Experiencing

- Client Experiencing
 - 67% of EXP ratings at a productive level of experiencing
- Therapist Experiencing
 - 86% TEXP ratings indicate therapist focus and emotion

Discussion

Softening Events Characterized by

- Intense emotional experiencing
 - "Boiling point" – attachment affect up and running
- Therapist skill and experience with emotion - crucial
 - Therapist – elicits and expands primary emotion in processing attachment related fears.
 - Therapist intensifies client's emotional experience often using therapist's own emotional expression to promote a deeper more profound expression of attachment related affect.
 - Therapist –works from an emotional base to promote identification of attachment needs and longings.

Discussion

Softening Events Characterized by

- Focus on the blamer's attachment related fears
 - Negative view of the other - "You won't be there for me."
 - Negative view of self – "You won't want me."
- Therapist's focus is on blamer but softening work is ultimately "inside and in-between."
 - Therapist focuses on "shoring up" the engaged withdrawer and making sure the withdrawer is "front and center" – available.
 - Therapist processes the risk and reach of the blamer with both partners and may prompt a "reach back" from the engaged withdrawer.
 - Therapist validates a couple's efforts to respond to bids for attachment. Moving beyond the fear that so often blocks the one's ability to be accessible and responsive to these fundamental needs of a couple bond.

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