

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide features several concentric circles in shades of purple, green, and dark blue. A bright white starburst with multiple points is positioned at the top left, overlapping the circles.

ReKINDLE

Relationship Counselling

Module 5

Written by Sian Hines



Module 5

Calm Down & Move Forward

- Stopping cycles
- Event Feeling Belief Truth (EFBT)
- Love language
- Apology language & how to apologise
- Polyvagal system for general couples
- Stress responses
- Mindfulness
- Happy hitlists
- How to continue being closer through relationship goals
- DEARMAN

Intimacy Continued

Couples Therapy, Series 3, Cyn & Yaya. BBC iPlayer.

What did you think was happening in their relationship?

What did you learn?

As the sessions were progressing, what do you suspect was going on behind the scenes?

Intimacy Continued

- What dynamics are playing out
- What are you learning?
- What questions do you have?
- Are they looking at their own needs and why they are reacting as they are?
- What is missing from their relationship?
- How is the therapist helping them?

Case Study Discussion

Married couple. Male/Female, together 5 years, married 2. No children.

Sex life has stalled. Female has stopped initiating sex because the male shuts down during intimacy.

Both say they want to have a sex life.

- What would your steps be to move forward for both?
- How would you approach this couples presenting issue?
- What trigger points would you be looking out for from each?

Calm Down & Move Forward Recap on EFT

Module 2 introduced Emotionally Focused Therapy.

The 3 stages being:

- De-Escalation
- Restructure
- Consolidation

De-Escalation and Restructure is all about understanding the patterns that are negative and the behaviour that is impacting the relationship.

Calm Down & Move Forward Recap on EFT

Up until this stage we have worked on understanding:

- What element is missing from the relationship
- Emotions
- Identification of what type of relationship it is
- The 'type of couple' they are
- Withdrawer/Pursuer
- Attachment
- Parent Adult Child
- Drivers
- Distorted Ways of Thinking
- Four Horseman
- Drama Triangle

All this work falls into De-Escalation and Restructure

Calm Down & Move Forward Recap on EFT

The consolidation stage is all about:

1. Helping partners solidify new patterns of interaction.
2. Encouraging ongoing emotional expression and support.
3. Developing strategies for maintaining a secure bond outside of therapy.

This Module involves a variety of tools to help with consolidation. Plus, shows how to slow down and embed all the previous work on understanding and challenging.

Stopping Cycles – The 5 R's

Recognise progress to forgive and forget or remembering and recovering.

Reminding that fixing problems in a relationship is not something that happens instantly, it takes time and lots of small steps.

Remember to show appreciation and gratitude

Reiterate the best fix here is to be slow, literally breath slowly and feel the feelings in their body.

Reflecting

- *What am I responding to?*
- *What is behind my response?*
- *What is going on inside me?*
- *What do I know about my partners' response?*
- *How does my partner react to my reaction?*
- *How do I let my partner know what I need?*

Case Study Discussion

Young couple, mid 20s. Together 4 years.

Male has cheated 4 times during this relationship.

Female wants answers as to why

Male does not know why he did it.

What would your steps be to move forward for both?

Stopping Cycles – EFBT

CBT is a strong way to help a person understand problems by breaking them down into smaller parts, these parts being:

- situations
- thoughts
- emotions
- physical feelings
- actions

Stopping Cycles - EFBT

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Working with E F B T

Event

This is the triggering event.
Something that you saw,
was told, read or heard.

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Feeling

These are the feelings that
you are feeling as a result of
the event.....anxious, sad,
angry, disgusted,
judgemental as examples.

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Belief

This is the negative core
belief that you think and feel
about yourself, highlighted
more by the triggering event.

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Truth

These are the facts that go
against the belief. The things
you have forgotten about
yourself, the things surrounding
the event that may change how
you view everything.

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Stopping Cycles – EFBT

EFBT is a combination of CBT and DBT.

It will help to change negative thoughts and behaviours (CBT route)

It will also help to understand emotional reactions and help to identify bigger pictures and to learn the skills to regain control (DBT pathway route)

Once EFBT has been identified the three of you can talk through ways to manage and move on from it. In time the couple can do this outside of the therapy room.

Stopping Cycles – EFBT

Event

Counsellor seeks out what has caused the upset, something that has triggered a response.

Feeling

Work with the Wheels of Emotions or similar and identifying what feeling is being carried because of the event.

Belief

Discover the core belief that has either been created or reactivated because of the event.

Truth

List all the facts that disprove the belief. This is rational mind practising. Identify all the facts that create the event/reaction to it. The aim of these facts are to explain the event so it can be looked at from a different perspective.

Stopping Cycles - EFBT

An EFBT example

Argument with partner due to being late again, or losing something important, forgetting an appointment.

Feeling - withdrawal, insecure, anxious, overthinking, inferior

Belief - I am no good, I am not a good person, I fail at everything

Truth - Separate list about the facts to do with the situation, for example how busy was each client, what was the weather like (sounds weird but has an impact), sleeping patterns, hunger, looking at all the things that they have done and done well to counter the belief.

Stopping Cycles - EFTB Exercise

In 2 groups, consider these 3 Scenarios:

Scenario number 1

Couple living together Male/Female. ADHD diagnosed (partner B)

Partner A (male) likes things extremely tidy; Partner B (female) struggles to keep it up to that level. Partner A left for work normal time. Partner B is running around late looking for things that they need for the day, doesn't load the dishwasher, leaves dirty clothes around, tap left dripping. Partner A comes home before Partner B and instantly sends an angry message.

- What could be the feelings?
- What could the core beliefs be for both?
- What are the truths (facts) that go against the negative core belief and could help to see this event differently.
- What questions would you pose to the couple to help them get there?

Stopping Cycles - EFTB Exercise

Scenario number 2

Married couple Male/Female, 3 years post affair.

Partner A is the person that had the affair. It was on a work trip. Partner B is a stay-at-home mum. Partner A came home and spoke about a work trip, back to the same place that the affair happened. Partner B sees it as a betrayal again and forbids him to go. Partner A says that he must. Partner B has been settling youngest child into nursery and juggling school runs for older child.

- What could be the feelings?
- What could the core beliefs be for both?
- What are the truths (facts) that go against the negative core belief and could help to see this event differently.
- What questions would you pose to the couple to help them get there?

Stopping Cycles – EFTB Exercise

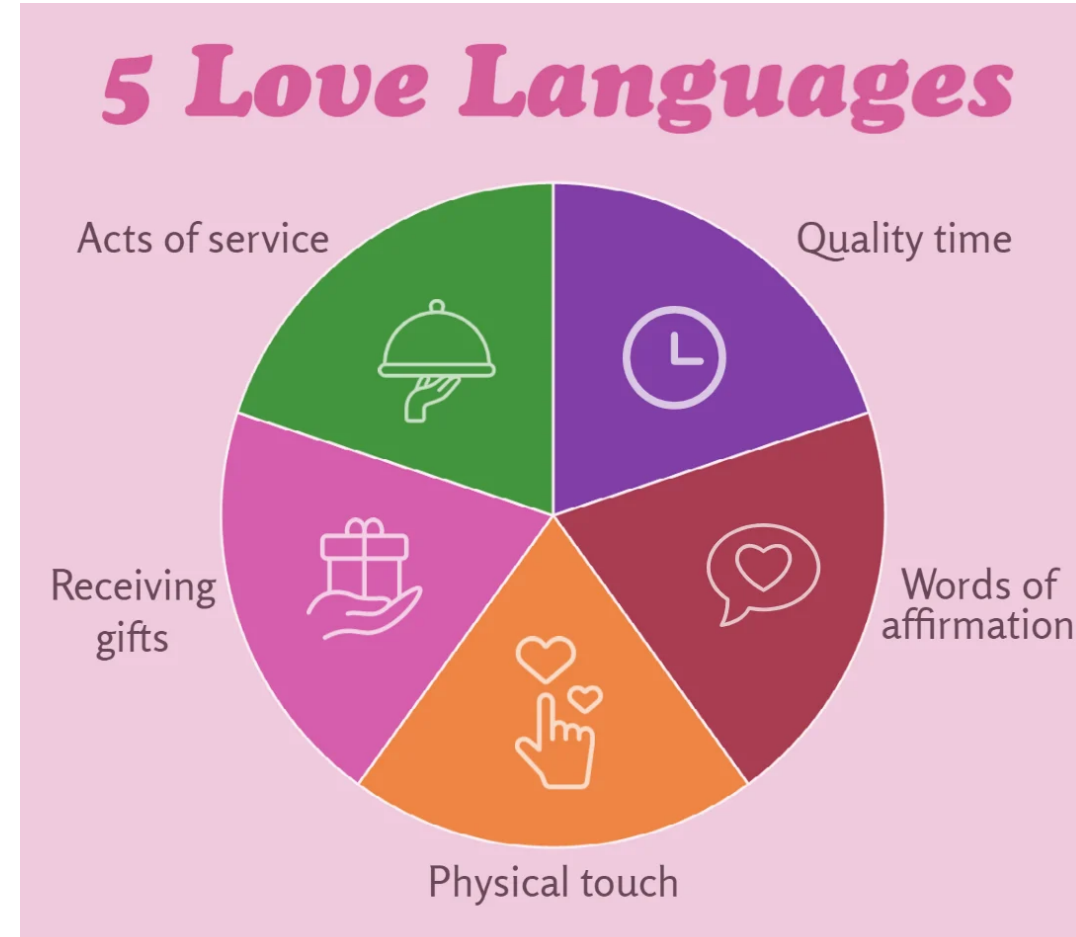
Scenario number 3

Married couple, 3 children ranging from 11 to 18.

Male working full time and has been for years, Female returning to work now that youngest is in senior school. All household chores are shifting and female needs everyone to step up. Lots of reluctance from the male and their children, plus there is a lot of sulking happening.

- What could be the feelings?
- What could the core beliefs be for both?
- What are the truths (facts) that go against the negative core belief and could help to see this event differently.
- What questions would you pose to the couple to help them get there?

Stopping Cycles - Love Language



“Love can be expressed & received in all five languages. However, if you don’t speak a person’s primary love language, that person will not feel loved, even though you may be speaking the other four.”

Gary Chapman

Stopping Cycles - Love Language

When love isn't expressed in ways that resonate with a partner, it can create emotional distance or disconnect.

It can manifest as:

- Frustration
- Neglect
- Conflict
- Sadness
- Withdrawal

Stopping Cycles - Love Language

For reluctant couples understanding love languages.

Try highlighting the bigger picture of love languages.

So, what do love languages do?

Stopping Cycles - Love Language

Using love languages can help to:

Enhance communication

Create space for conflict resolution

Build emotional intimacy

Stopping Cycles - Love Language

Split into two groups and make 2 lists:

List 1: Potential actions that can be seen as hurtful within love language.

List 2: Suggestions that could be made to your couples to strengthen and improve their love languages.

Stopping Cycles - Love Language

Acts Of Service	Quality Time	Words of Affirmation	Physical Touch	Giving of Gifts
Creating more work	Lack of eye contact	Insults	Physical distance	Forgetting or refusing to celebrate important dates
Not contributing to tasks	Missed calls	Lies	One partner not initiating touch	Giving gifts with no meaning
Obviously not wanting to help	Being on the phone in your presence	Name calling	Lack of physical intimacy	Ignoring hints and requests and gift ideas
Acting burdened	Not pausing activities to talk to you	Cold shoulder	No kissing	Re gifting a previous gift to you
Expectations of things being done for them	No planned shared activities	Put downs in front of other people	No cuddling	Giving other people fancy gifts
Not offering to help out	Always being too busy	Not saying I love you	No hand holding	No gratitude for a gift
Not surprising their partner by doing nice things without being asked.	Putting one to one time at the bottom of the pile	Sarcasm or mocking	A partner rejecting your touch	Being negative about a gift
Putting others before their partner	Always being distracted	Not saying thank you	Giving someone else touch	Forgetting what has been given in the past

Stopping Cycles - Love Language

Acts Of Service	Quality Time	Words of Affirmation	Physical Touch	Giving of Gifts
Picking up groceries	Arrange a trip to something that their partner enjoys	I loved our first date, I still remember....	Touch their back as they walk past	Buy a book from their favourite author
Filling car up with petrol or diesel or charging it	Cook together	Thank you for clearing up after dinner	Sit together	Get them flowers
Walking the dog	Play a game together	My favourite thing you've done this week is....	Give back, shoulder, neck or foot massage	Get their favourite splurge coffee or tea
Doing a task as soon as asked or even better before being asked	Go for a drive	I am so proud of you	Hold hands where you can	Bring them lunch at work
Making a meal from scratch	Get a couples massage	Thank you for letting me sleep in	Lots of little kisses	Take them on a little shopping trip
Washing the car	Go on a walk or hike	I adore spending time with you	Cuddle before bed	Get them a card with a note inside
Planning dates	Do a sporting activity together	You make me laugh	Have a shower together	Listen and get them something for a special occasion that they truly desire
Booking appointment to dentist, opticians	Go for a breakfast, lunch or dinner	I feel safe	Hug before leaving the house	Take them on a trip
Doing their jobs because you can see that they are busy		I am so grateful when you do....	Little make out sessions	

Stopping Cycles - Qualities to Work Towards



Love Language Tips

Ensure that:

- Love languages are not getting used for scorekeeping.
- There is communication; love languages can change as life changes, so can what you feel about previously expressed needs. Are these changes being communicated and are they being listened to?
- There is no expectation that others have a responsibility to make you feel good (via love languages). There is a need to practise love language on yourself.
- There is more than just love language going on, think back to the list of elements required in a relationship in module 2
- Problems with love languages and relationships in general are tainted from the past.
- Good practise of inner healing and empathy is happening.

Discussion Point

Do you agree with the concept of love languages?

Think about:

- How do you know you are loved and respected if no words are spoken?
- Do you think that safety is a love language?
- How would you deal with a couple where one partner is sceptical of love languages?

Therapists Corner

Questions for your couples to think about:

- What do you do for your partner (acts of love) on a daily or weekly basis?
“When you do these things (acts of love) are they satisfying your needs or your partner’s needs?”
“Do you know what this act means for your partner when you go out of your way to do something special?”
- Do you understand the history behind the way they need to be loved?
- Can their struggle to adapt to a love language be accepted based on what you know about them?
- What are they not doing or doing right for their partners love language. (See table).
- How do you feel about the love languages? - explore, how you plan to incorporate love communication in the therapy room.
- What are daily acts of kindness that are routinely carried out? Get the couple to list them each session.

Stopping Cycles - Apology Languages

Apology Languages

Things to consider about apologies:

- How were apologies demonstrated growing up by parents, care givers, teachers?
- How were people held accountable?
- How were people punished for doing wrong as a child?
- Is apologising seen as a weakness?

Stopping Cycles - Apology Languages

The 5 languages of apology:

✓ **Expressing regret**

"I am sorry I snapped and yelled at you."

✓ **Accepting responsibility**

"I was wrong, I shouldn't have done that."

✓ **Making amends**

"I know I hurt you. What can I do to make it up to you?"

✓ **Genuinely repenting**

"I can only imagine how upsetting that was. Next time I will ____ differently."

✓ **Requesting forgiveness**

"I really value our relationship. Will you please forgive me?"

Video Learning

Short clip from Jimmy on Relationships about apologising.

Short and sweet but says what is needed.

Successful Apology



1. Recognition
2. Apologise
3. Forgive
4. Not expecting a reciprocal apology
5. Drawing a line

Stopping Cycles - Apology Languages

When one partner won't apologise, try using the following actions:

- Practise allowing gaps in the session for the client to listen to their own conscience.
- Practise allowing space for the client to exercise their right to be wrong.
- Bring into the session the opportunity to announce what is desired. (Ensuring that apologies are free flowing the other way around).

Stopping Cycles - Apology Languages

- Work on communicating needs and expressing why it's needed.
- Don't assign blame, work on empathy and bigger picture thinking.
- Work on forgiveness in some situations without an apology.

Therapists Corner

Get the couple to do singularly then discuss together

- My contribution to this mess was...
- How can I make this better for the future?
- What one thing could my partner do next time to avoid this problem?
- What one thing could I do differently to avoid this problem?
- How do we need to apologise to each other?

Case Study Discussion

Couple, male and female, married 8 years.

Good relationship overall, but issues with the female being unable to admit when they are wrong and apologise.

They view their partner as over reactional and pick fights with them.

They see their partner as sulky, and this causes friction between them both.

- What line of questioning would you take.
- What would you want to know?
- How can you challenge either one out of their responses?

Stopping Cycles - Calm & Slow Down

Parasympathetic system (also known as Ventral Vagal State) Window of Tolerance

This is associated with us being calm. When active, our heart rate is down, our breathing is regular, and our digestive system feels comfortable.

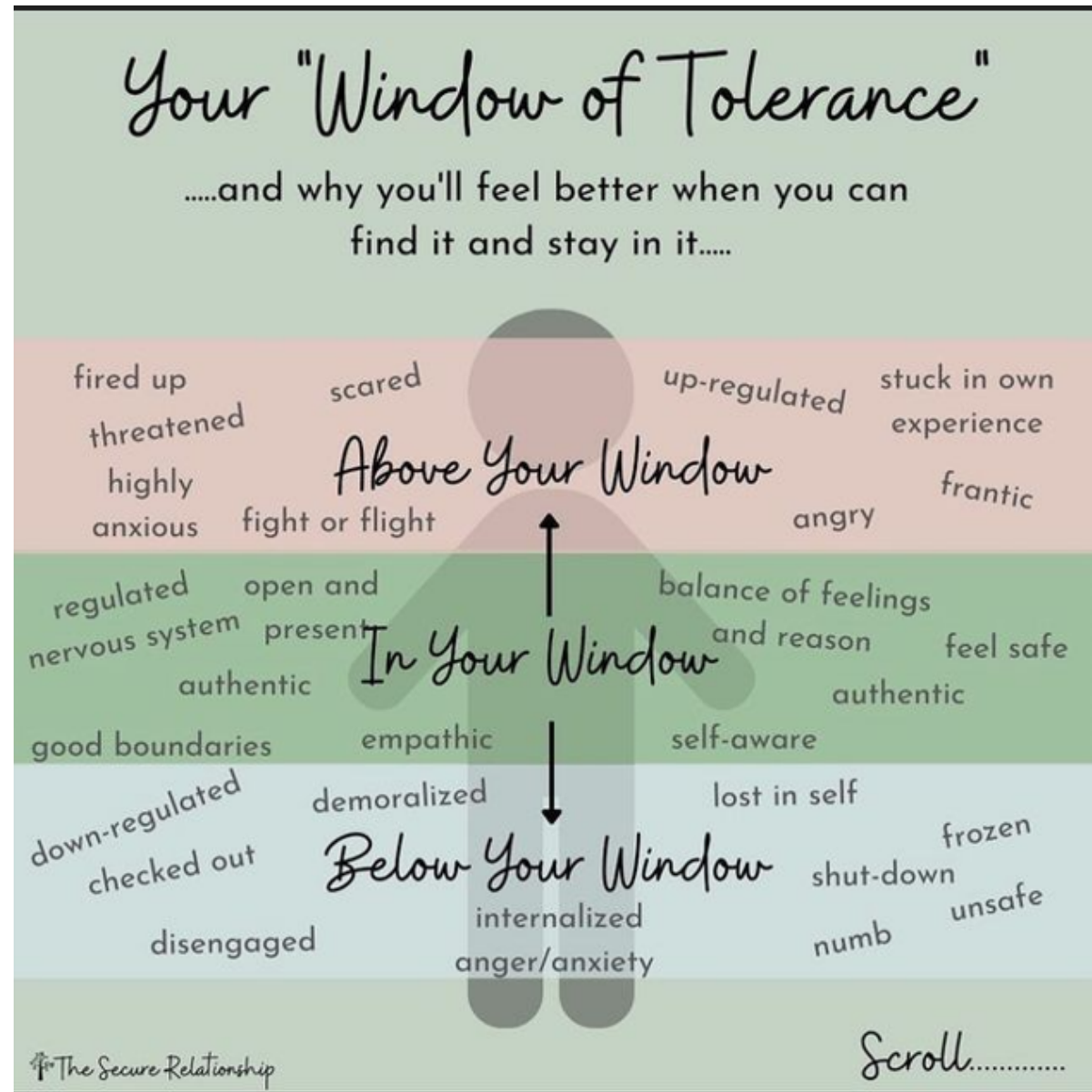
Sympathetic–adrenal system Hyper Arousal

This is us on high alert, our heart rate is elevated, adrenaline is secreted, and ingestion and digestion are difficult.

Dorsal Vagal State Hypo Arousal

This is us on shutdown, it relates to freezing and feeling stuck in a state. This in time can lead to feelings of dissociation, numbness, and disconnection.

Window of Tolerance



Stopping Cycles - Calm & Slow Down

The Fight Stress Response can show itself as:

Anger outbursts, bullying controlling ways, irritability, judgement, slamming doors, impulsive self-harm such as punching doors/walls, head butting.

The Flight Stress Response can show itself as:

Workaholic tendencies, overthinking, anxiety, OCD, difficulty sitting still, avoidance, sadness, perfectionism.

The Freeze Stress Response can show itself as:

Dissociation, isolating, tiredness, indecision, over sleeping, numbness, difficulty expressing emotions, feeling stuck.

The Fawn Stress Response can show itself as:

Overwhelm, lack of boundaries, co-dependency, excessively engaging, high 'please others' behaviour, self-critical, sadness if unable to rescue.

Therapists Corner

Mini Exercise - Ask the couple:

Do you recognise each other's stress response?

Fight/Flight/Freeze/Fawn

What can they do to get back into their window of tolerance section?

Do you see a pattern in your history of that stress response or was it different?

What do you remember from your childhood?

Ask the couple to consider the following:

- What are the signs that you are outside your window of tolerance?
- What could you do to prevent yourself from getting stressed?
- What could your partner do to prevent you from getting stressed?
- What could you do to calm yourself down once you are stressed?
- What could your partner do to calm you down once you are stressed?
- What can you do to reassure yourself of the relationship connection you have?
- What things could your partner do to reassure you of the relationship connection you have?

Stopping Cycles - The Flooding Questionnaire

Couples Therapy Framework

Flooding Questionnaire (as devised by J Gottman – Featured in The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work.

Read each Statement and identify T for true or F for false. Keep a score for both answers.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Our discussions get too heated | T/F |
| 2. I have a hard time calming down | T/F |
| 3. One of us is going to say something we will regret | T/F |
| 4. My partner gets too upset | T/F |
| 5. After a fight, I want to keep my distance | T/F |
| 6. My partner yells unnecessarily | T/F |
| 7. I feel overwhelmed by our arguments | T/F |
| 8. I can't think straight when my partner gets hostile | T/F |
| 9. Why can't we talk more logically | T/F |
| 10. My partners negativity often comes out of nowhere | T/F |
| 11. There is often no stopping my partners temper | T/F |
| 12. I feel like running away during our fights | T/F |
| 13. Small issues suddenly become big ones | T/F |
| 14. I can't calm down easily during an argument | T/F |
| 15. My partner has a long list of unreasonable demands | T/F |

Scoring – Give yourself 1 point for each T answer

6 or higher – Indicates that you tend to get flooded during arguments with your partner. Flooding almost guarantees that your discussion won't end the conflict. There is too much agitation to really hear what is being said. Learning how to calm down is essential.

Below 6 – Flooding is not a huge problem in your relationship. You are able to confront differences of opinion with your partner without feeling overwhelmed. This means that the chances of feeling victimised or hostile towards your partner is low. Communication happens and conflicts are moved past with relative ease.

Stopping Cycles - Calm & Slow Down

- Breathing
 - Box Breathing
 - Belly Breathing
 - Anchor Breathing
 - Alternate Nostril Breathing
 - Voo Sound Breath
- Mindfulness and Meditation
- Somatic movements
- Cold water exposure
- Appreciations and Gratitude
- 5 senses grounding

Stopping Cycles - DEARMAN a DBT Process

Dialectical Behavioural Training (DBT)

Discovering a way to handle emotions and reactions in tense interactions with their partner.

Introducing an essential pause.

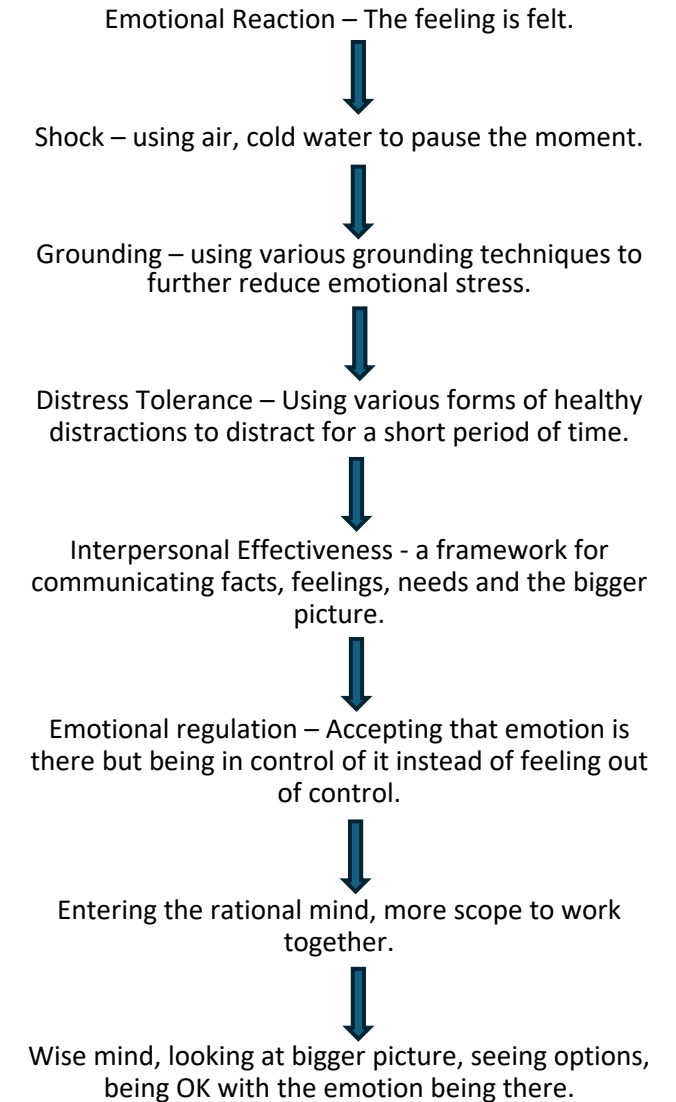
A contract of 'ok I need some time here' needs to be set up.

Agreement that it is non-judgemental.

Working with the emotional mind and helping them to accept it.

Helping the couple move into rational mind, facts, evidence and probabilities.

Allowing the wise mind to come into focus.



Stopping Cycles - DEARMAN a DBT Process

DEARMAN Technique

Helps us with effective communication in interpersonal relationships

D

Describe the current situation using facts. Let the other person know what you are responding to.

E

Express how you feel about the situation. You shouldn't assume the other person knows how you feel

A

Assert yourself. Express clearly what you need. Remembering again that others don't know what you want unless you communicate this.

R

Reinforce or reward the person by explaining the positive effects that come from you getting what you need.

M

Mindful of your goals. Keep your focus and attention on what you need to accomplish. Keep repeating what you need and ignore attacks from the other side.

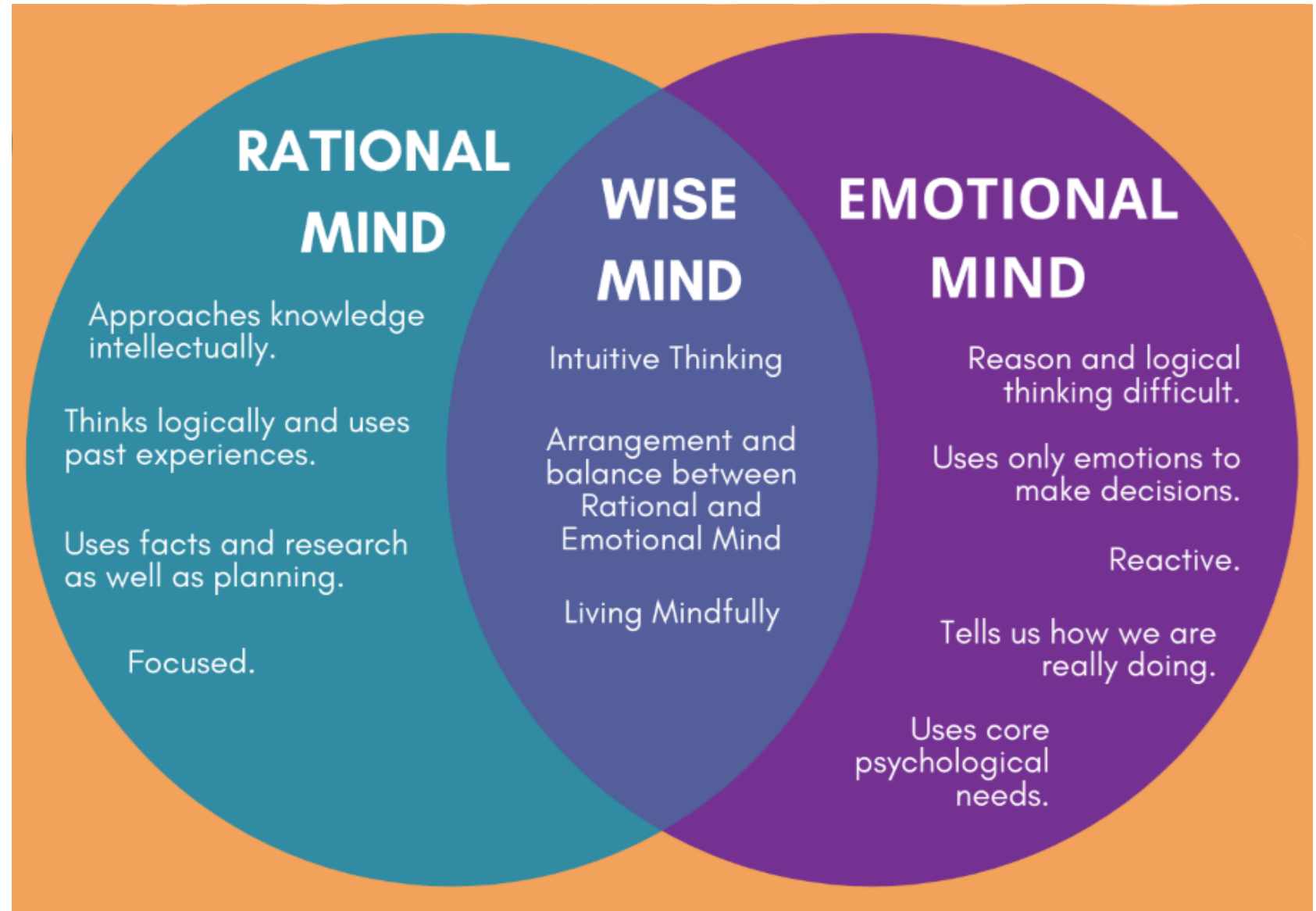
A

Appear confident and effective. Use a confident tone and state clearly what you need

N

Negotiate with the other person. Be willing to compromise and give a little to get a little. Focus on what will solve the issue.

Emotional Rational & Wise Mind A DBT Process



Emotional Rational & Wise Mind A DBT Process

Emotional Mind

This state of mind occurs when thoughts are being controlled solely by emotional reactions. There is no logical or rational thinking occurring, just impulsive responses. The facts surrounding situations are distorted and magnified because of the emotional reaction.

Negative Examples of Emotional Mind

- Being rude because you are unable to get what you need from someone.
- Arguing/Fighting with someone that you disagree with.
- Being impulsive for example - purchasing or booking something without thinking of the financial consequences.

Rational Mind

This state of mind occurs when there is ability to think logically or be rational and reasonable about what is happening. Analytical and empirical thinking are predominant. There is no emotional reaction in the approach to solving problems.

Examples of Rational Mind

- Planning trips regarding transport timings, researching places to eat etc.
- Checking ingredients before starting a recipe.
- Studying for a test
- Looking at the bigger picture of a situation, e.g. your side of things as well as other perspectives.

Emotional Rational & Wise Mind A DBT Process

Wise Mind

Wise mind is part reason and part emotion.

To experience this, there needs to be recognition and acceptance of emotions. This synthesised with rational thinking enhances the recipients' understanding of any situation to achieve change.

Ultimately - calmness and intuition.

Finding the wise mind

The wise mind can feel different to each person. There is no hard and fast rule to finding it, but it helps to be calm and centred to enter this state of mind.

Practices to stimulate the Wise Mind:

- Embrace calmness and stillness. Slow the body down, sit still in it. Follow the breath in and out.

- Practice stepping back from situations.
- Recognise a lack of dread or anxiety around a decision.
- Feel the calm that follows the storm, something experienced immediately following a crisis or chaos.
- Grasp the whole picture where only parts were previously understood. Open perspective to see both sides.
- Experience the right choice about a problem, when the feeling comes from deep within rather than from a current emotional state.
- Recognise that you may desire an easier answer or outcome, but deep down you know ultimately that you must put the work in to get what you want.

Stopping Cycles - Video Learning

Introducing Evelyn and Alan.

Watch this video, then work through the clip with EFBT and then the DEARMAN process for moving forward.

Stopping Cycles - Appreciation & Gratitude

Gratitude and appreciation when practiced and shared has the power to turn moments into opportunities for connection and joy.

Within the work in the therapy room, we are helping the couple to shift their focus from what's wrong to what is also right at times.

This creates a foundation to repeat for a deeper appreciation and understanding of each other.

Expressing appreciation for your partner for the kind actions they do for you, creates a positive feedback loop That feedback loop can stop a fight or disagreement from building and flip a mood from negative to positive.

The gratitude of that appreciation helps partners feel valued and encourages more of the positive behaviours being acknowledged.

Think back to being at school and reacting positively to praise from your teacher, it is very similar here.

Stopping Cycles - Appreciation & Gratitude

So, consider Sian & Gavin 😊

At the beginning of the relationship whilst living together, Sian used to get up at 5.30am to see Gavin off to work. Gavin appreciated the gesture.

Fast forward two years and the appearance of daughter number 1, the early morning goodbyes at the door dwindled. There was a new joint priority... the baby.

Gavin was sad that Sian wasn't getting up but never said anything.

Sian was unaware but adjusting to being a new mum and was distracted.

Gavin started to leave the house feeling grumpy.

Sian felt resentful that Gavin was not trying to engage with her and always seemed to be dissatisfied.

Neither were talking feelings, both feeling under appreciated.

One of the things that we as counsellors can do is encourage the couple to feel and express and remind them that appreciation and gratitude is always required.

Stopping Cycles - Ultimate Case Study

Anna and Brian

Anna felt that she was doing everything to keep the relationship going, and that Brian took her for granted. Brian felt isolated and neglected and often found himself lacking the motivation to do the things he felt Anna nagged him to do.

Background:

Anna is thirty and works full time as a personal assistant whilst completing a Master's degree part-time in the evenings. Brian is also thirty and has completed his degree. Since graduating five years ago, he has held a variety of temporary jobs and is currently out of work.

Brian is not putting much effort into finding a job, Anna notices that he spends most of his day playing video games.

Other factors:

Engaged to be married.

Planning for children.

Not had sex for 4 months, Anna initiates, Brian declines.

Stopping Cycles - Ultimate Case Study

In groups, discuss how you would handle the beginning of the therapeutic relationship.

Sian will pass over extra information during your discussion time.

The aim is to find ways to:

- *Uncover all the issues*
- *Put the pieces of the puzzle together*
- *Build connection through understanding*
- *Make meaningful changes*
- *Look to the future*

Use all the techniques and tools that we have learned from module 1 till now.

Stopping Cycles – The Aim

The aim is to get the couple comfortable with:

- Being vulnerable
- Showing appreciation
- Communicating often
- Creating intimacy
- Working on the intellectual connection
- Working on the fun side of the relationship
- Sharing moments
- Having as much equableness and balance as possible
- Having acceptance for their partners' qualities
- Being committed to each other's goals and dreams

This is the pinnacle of the consolidation and attach stage of relationship counselling.

See you next time

From all of us at ReKindle... bye for now.