

Betrays: Structuring Your Approach

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I N S T I T U T E

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How it all started

PACT = Psychobiological Approach to Couple Therapy®

Stan Tatkin's first papers appeared in 2003

Started with a simple idea that couple therapy should shift it's paradigm to partners being in each other's care and emphasize interactive regulation over self-regulation

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Couple Therapy

IS A SPECIALTY!

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Secure Functioning as Therapeutic Stance

- Social justice
 - Relationships should be:
 - Just
 - Fair
 - Sensitive
 - Collaborative
 - Cooperative
 - Transparent
 - Without pretense

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Pushing Down the Tube of Secure Functioning

undifferentiation lying blaming addictions cheating secrecy

A Psychological Approach to Couples Therapy

Therapeutic Alliance

- Acting out should not be rewarded with therapy
- Therapeutic alliance is gained through
 - Supportive confrontation of maladaptive behaviors
 - Clinging group
 - Interpretation of maladaptive behaviors
 - Distancing group
- Acting out against the therapist or therapy must be dealt with first

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Clarification

- Don't trust what people say
 - People lie
 - People withhold information
 - People don't know what they're talking about
 - People will hide or will not know what they really want
 - People will hide or not know what they are up to in therapy

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Clarification


- Therapist must "find" people with theory and skill
- We find people through the body
- The primary goal of therapy is clarity on the way toward secure functioning
- Corral partners so they must clarify themselves
 - Skillfully defeat avoidance and deception
- Only then can they move forward based on what's true

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Sewing Partners Together:
Techniques for Moving Couples
Toward Secure Functioning

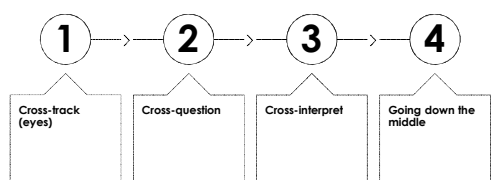
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Crossing Techniques



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Crossing Techniques



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Why Use Crossing Techniques

- Get more information quickly
- The target partner is relatively undisturbed by questions, comments, or interpretations aimed at him/her
- Crossing interventions bypass defense
- Assumes that partners are in each other's care
- Assumes that partners are experts on each other
- Tests the non-target partner's knowledge and understanding
- The target partner gets to be a fly on the wall

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Other Techniques

1 → 2 → 3

Declarations Bending metal Corralling questions

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Corralling Questions

- The power of corralling questions
 - The corralling Q catches people in lies, people who aren't telling the truth
 - Throw the corralling Q down the middle ("Do you guys tell each other everything?")
 - Spot somatic response in both partners (if exists)
 - Respond to somatic response ("Oh, I'm confused. One said yes, the other no.")
 - Use their reactions against each other ("I guess you guys don't have an agreement.")
 - Tighten the queries ("What wouldn't you guys tell each other?")
 - It's a trap they can't get out of

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AROUSAL REGULATION

- Increase each partner's window of tolerance
- Know when to initiate an intervention
 - ✓ Don't intervene too soon
 - ✓ Don't wait too long (keep couples in window)

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What is a Betrayal

- The breaking of a social contract
- Discovery of important information that, if shared, would change everything
- Having done something disloyal, dishonest, or otherwise dismissive that breaks one's confidence or trust in a partnership

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What is Constitutes a Betrayal

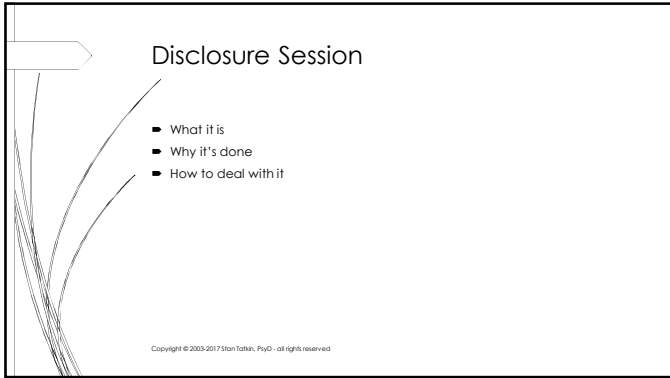
- Discovery of
 - A love affair
 - A secret "other" family
 - Embezzlement, hidden monies, hidden bank accounts, hidden spending
 - Misinformation about oneself such as sexual orientation and preference, age, religion, and historical facts
- Disloyalty wherein one partner either satisfies his/her own interests or other third party interests at the cost of the other partner

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Things to Consider About Betrayal

- Withholding of information or other treasonous behavior
- Did the person come forward?
- Was the person caught by their partner?
- The length of time before the person came forward or was caught
- Was there lying?
 - The longer lying continues and the more elaborate the lying, the worse the betrayal
- Was there gas lighting
 - This is perhaps the worst, and if often used, can be difficult to repair


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Disclosure Session

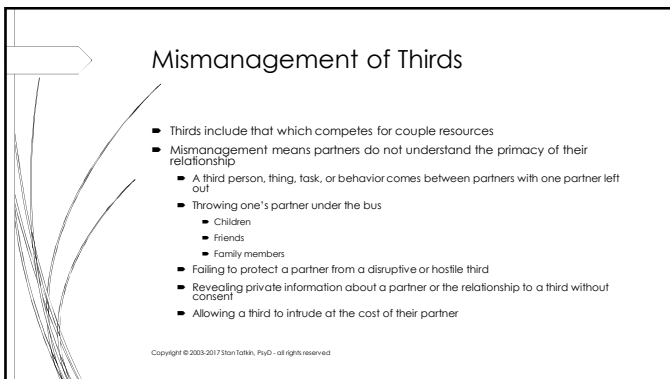
- What it is
- Why it's done
- How to deal with it

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Mismanagement of Thirds

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Mismanagement of Thirds

- Thirds include that which competes for couple resources
- Mismanagement means partners do not understand the primacy of their relationship
 - A third person, thing, task, or behavior comes between partners with one partner left out
 - Throwing one's partner under the bus
 - Children
 - Friends
 - Family members
 - Failing to protect a partner from a disruptive or hostile third
 - Revealing private information about a partner or the relationship to a third without consent
 - Allowing a third to intrude at the cost of their partner

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Work with Betrayal

PURPOSE

- **Assessment**
 - To discover events wherein either or both partners felt betrayed by the other
 - To determine the level of betrayal perpetrated or experienced
- **Intervention**
 - To highlight betrayal as a psychobiological impediment to secure functioning
 - To contain and regulate both partners, while holding them to the issue of betrayal
 - To structure the therapeutic process of working through betrayal so partners move toward secure functioning

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Work with Betrayal

PRINCIPLES

- Betrayal is an enormous threat to the safety and security system.
- The therapist must determine the existence of betrayal by gaining the agreement by both partners that it occurred.
- The process of repair is less challenging if both partners have betrayed each other.
- Generally, the wrongdoer is viewed as the partner with the least power and the injured partner is viewed as the partner with the most power.
- Until the wrongdoer buys back into the relationship, the injured partner gets a temporary pass with regard to his or her part in the betrayal.
- The therapist must cultivate feelings of regret in both partners to discourage future betrayals.

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Work with Betrayal

INSTRUCTIONS

- Support both wrongdoer and injured partner so both recognize you understand their positions
- Educate partners about:
 - The effect of betrayal on the relationship's safety and security system
 - The effect of betrayal on the injured partner's brain
 - The repair of betrayal, and amount of effort that will be involved
- Assure partners that the process will be difficult for both, but the outcome will be good (secure functioning)
- Hold the wrongdoer in the position of having the least power and influence over the future of the relationship, and the injured partner of having the most

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Work with Betrayal

INSTRUCTIONS cont.

- **Confront:**
 - The wrongdoer's efforts to escape responsibility for the betrayal and for doing what is necessary to buy back into the relationship
 - The injured partner's efforts to escape loss by releasing the wrongdoer from his or her responsibility
 - The couple's efforts to escape loss by bending reality and not fully working through betrayal toward achieving secure functioning
- **Scan for deception**

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Deception

1	2	3	4	5	6
Lying (acute)	Lying (chronic)	Withholding information	Deflecting	Shifting blame	Gaslighting

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Deception

Analyze	Analyze versus speculate
Manage	Manage your bias
Recognize	Recognize evasiveness
Beware	Beware of aggressiveness
Convey	Convey versus convince
Understand	Understand non-verbal cues

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Tracking Deception

People deceive with their words, faces, voices, and bodies

- Self-soothing movements
- Unnecessary movements
- Body pointing
- Eye blocking
- Motor disruptions
- Motor jerkiness
- Narrative errors
 - Switching out topics and returning to track consistency
 - Story backwards and forwards

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NARRATIVES LIE

There are reasons why words are NOT reliable

- Real time is too fast
- People don't know what they are doing (most of the time) or why
- In the absence of knowing, people make shit up
- People also lie
- Track Grice's maxims of coherent/collaborative speech
 - Quality
 - Quantity
 - Manner
 - Relation

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Tracking Deception

- Behavioral pauses
- Verbal/non-verbal disconnect
- Dis-synchrony between words and movement
- Sudden stopping, slowing down, or jerkiness in movement while talking
- Anchor point movements
 - Right after a question is posed
- Grooming gestures
- Freezing the face and/or upper body
- Too much eye contact
- Duping behavior (inappropriate smile)
- Hand to face movements (arousal going up)
 - Itching

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The Reveal of Hidden Information

There is no statute of limitations

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The Reveal of Hidden Information

Architecture

- Betrayal is in one direction only
- Injured partner shows signs of PTSD
 - Mood instability
 - Flashbacks
 - Sleep disturbances
 - Obsessions/persistence
- Injured partner must take position of power
- Wrongdoer must relinquish all power
- Wrongdoer must no longer be the gatekeeper of information
- Injured partner calls the shots until the wrongdoer buys back in
 - Pay to play
 - Price of admission is to become a better person

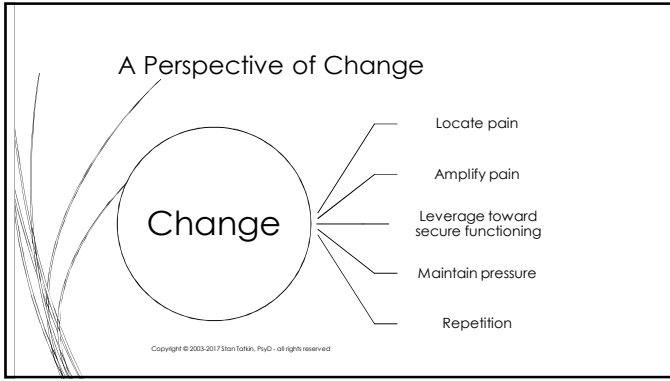
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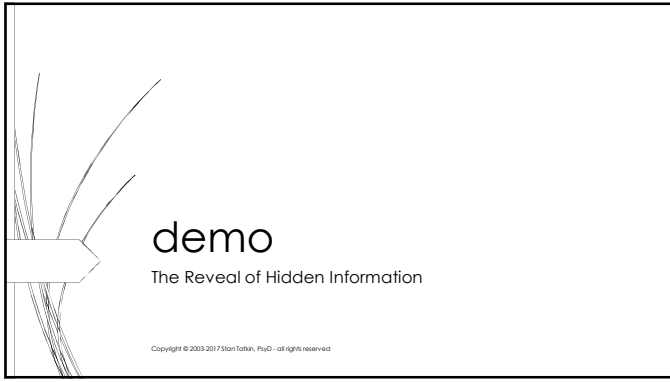
The Reveal of Hidden Information

Architecture

- Some allowance for imbalance between injured partner and wrongdoer
- Therapeutic focus shifts when wrongdoer demonstrates real change
- Injured partner no longer gets a pass
- NOTE: Sometimes, it works best when the injured partner files for divorce along with going to couple therapy
 - Creates a real, looming threat; the injured partner is serious


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King and Queen Pose



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King and Queen



- Understand couple's power dynamics
- Convey notion of equal but separate powers
- Elevate a disempowered partner
- Lower an entitled, dismissive or overly powerful partner
- Pro-relationship use of narcissism
- Declaration of devotion to something greater than self
- Strong intervention for betrayal and infidelity
- Adaptable for all gender orientations (use alternate myths)


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King and Queen



- Explain that each role requires certain postures
- Have an overly inflated or betraying Partner A kneel in front of seated Partner B
- Partner A takes Partner B's hands
- Feed kneeling partner lines (assume male kneeling):
 - ✓ "You are my queen."
 - ✓ "I live to serve you."
 - ✓ "I will fall on my sword for you."
 - ✓ "I surrender myself to your happiness."
 - ✓ "Your wish is my command."

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King and Queen (cont.) 

- Improvise lines tailored to relationship issues; examples with kneeling male:
 - ✓ Queen needs equality, respect, loyalty, allegiance, contrition
 - ✓ King needs humility, honor, purpose, path back to relationship
 - ✓ Both need to own roles as leaders and examples
- Partners switch lines but *not* positions
- Queen sells declarations with same sincerity as king
- Add and refine declarations to satisfy needs of each partner
- Bring couple out of the pose and debrief

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Conclusion

- Betrayal represents a major challenge to the couple therapist and couple alike
- Depending on the type of betrayal, the therapist must adopt an architecture for rebuilding trust
- The couple therapist must, at times, cast partners and hold them to their roles in order to convert disaster into opportunity for the couple
- Dealing with betrayals require therapist discipline to hold to structure and titrate partner distress
- Pain – regret – learning
- The therapist can effectively leverage the betrayal crisis toward secure functioning

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