



Couples Conference 2025 - Main Conference - May 2, 3, 4

The Couples Conferences have become a leading vehicle for learning clinical applications and the latest research on facilitating treatment with couples. At this Conference, you will learn from leading-edge theorists and practitioners as they define, describe, and discuss differing approaches that initially promote closeness and those that move toward managing difference and facilitating differentiation. By the end of this Conference, you will have advanced and refined your own thinking about how to approach the challenge of facilitating intimacy.

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Overview of what you will learn

Attendees will increase their clinical effectiveness by:

- Comparing and contrasting differing professional perspectives and translating these into specific interventions
- Evaluating basic principles and techniques of contemporary schools of therapy
- Utilizing multi-level therapeutic communication
- Comprehending the commonalities that underlie successful clinical work
- Appreciating the historical development of psychotherapeutic disciplines in working with couples

Eligibility

The Couples Conference is open to professionals in health or mental health-related fields, including physicians, doctoral-level psychologists and dentists who are qualified for membership in, or are members of, their respective professional organizations (eg. AMA, APA, ADA), and to professionals with health-related graduate degrees (eg. MSW, MSN, MA or MS) from accredited institutions. Full-time graduate students in accredited programs leading to such degrees will be accepted if they supply a letter from their department on letterhead stationery, certifying their full-time status as of May 2024.

Continuing Medical Education Policy on Disclosure

The Milton H. Erickson Foundation is justifiably proud of the conferences and other educational opportunities it sponsors, taking care that the conduct of these activities conforms to the standards and principles of behavioral and medical sciences, thus insuring balance, independence, objectivity and scientific rigor in all its individually sponsored or jointly sponsored educational activities. All faculty participating in a sponsored activity and those who review and therefore are in control of content are expected to disclose to the activity audience any significant financial interest or other relationship (1) with the manufacturer(s) of any commercial product(s) and/or provider(s) of commercial services discussed in an educational presentation and (2) with any commercial supporters of the activity. (Significant financial interest or other relationship can include such things as grants or research support, employee, consultant, major stockholder, member of speaker's bureau, etc.). The Foundation's compliance with these standards assures that potential conflicts of interest are identified prior to our educational activities. The intent of this disclosure is to provide listeners with information on which they can make their own judgments. It remains for the audience to determine whether there are interests or relationships that may influence the presentation with regard to exposition or conclusion.

The Milton H. Erickson Foundation Board of Directors, Administrative Staff and the following presenters have indicated neither they nor an immediate family member has any significant relationship to disclose.

Faculty

• Lilian Borges, MA, LPC

- Lilian Borges, MA, LPC, is a licensed professional counselor with more than 18 years of experience doing and teaching psychotherapy, Ericksonian hypnosis and brief therapy. She is an invited teacher at the Milton Erickson Foundation for their extensive hypnosis training programs. Lilian has been conducting seminars in the United States and internationally about couples therapy, and Ericksonian therapy.

- **Elliot Connie, MA, LPC**

- Elliott Connie, MA, LPC is a psychotherapist that practices in Texas. He is the host of the popular daily podcast, “The Aha Moments”. He has worked with thousands of individuals, couples, and families applying the solution focused approach to help them move their lives from the current problems towards their desired futures. He is the founder and Director of The Solution Focused Universe, an online learning community that also conducts training to help professionals master the Solution Focused Approach in their work. He is recognized around the world speaking at national and international conferences and events in such places as throughout the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, South Africa, Russia, Switzerland, England, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Scotland, Holland, Canada, and Asia training practitioners to apply solution focused questions and techniques in their work. He has authored or co-authored 4 books including “The Art of Solution Focused Therapy”, “Solution Building in Couples Therapy”, “The Solution Focused Marriage”, “Solution-Focused Brief Therapy with Clients Managing Trauma”, and the new book “The Solution Focused Diamond”.

- **William Marsh**

- Dr. Cozolino is a psychotherapist, Professor of Psychology at Pepperdine University, and Adjunct Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is the author of The Neuroscience of Psychotherapy: The Making of a Therapist and The Neuroscience of Human Relationships. He is also the author and co-author of many articles and book chapters, including “Sensation, Perception and Cognition” (with Daniel Siegel) in The Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry. Dr. Cozolino has diverse clinical and research interests and holds degrees in philosophy and theology, in addition to his doctoral in clinical psychology. He has conducted empirical research in schizophrenia, child abuse, and the long-term impact of stress. Recently, his interests have turned to a synthesis of the biobehavioral sciences and psychotherapy. He maintains a clinical and consulting practice in Los Angeles.

- **William Doherty, PhD**

- Bill Doherty is a Professor in the Department of Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota where he directs The Minnesota Couples on the Brink Project and The Citizen Professional Center. Clinically, he focuses on couples on the brink of divorce, on relational ethics in the everyday lives of clients, and on political stress in relationships. Following the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, he co-founded [Braver Angels](#), a citizen initiative bringing conservatives and liberals together to counteract political polarization and restore the fraying social fabric in American society. Braver Angels now has volunteers working in all 50 states. His latest book is The Ethical Lives of Clients: Transcending Self-Interest in Psychotherapy, published by the American Psychological Association. Among his awards is the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Family Therapy Academy.

- **Rebecca Jorgensen, Ph.D.**

- Rebecca Jorgensen, Ph.D. is a Certified Trainer of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy (EFT), and one of the original International Centre for Excellence in EFT (ICEEFT) Certified Trainers. She is also an ICEEFT Certified

Supervisor for EFT with Couples, Individuals and Families as well as an AAMFT Supervisor. Rebecca completed her training with Dr. Johnson, and had the good fortune of training with Sue regularly until the month preceding her death in 2024. Dr. Jorgensen holds a Faculty position at Alliant International University and is Director of the Alliant Training and Research Institute for EFT and the San Diego Center for EFT. She is a co-developer of Building A Lasting Connection® that provides products and workshops for couples and relationship educators and is co-owner of the EFT Counseling and Education Center that provides counseling and education to clients. She developed the best selling training video EFT Step by Step with Psychotherapy.net and Emotionally Focused Therapy: A Complete Treatment endorsed by Dr. Sue Johnson. While Rebecca continues to provide training and supervision to clinicians around the globe, she also maintains a clinical practice seeing couples in an intensive therapy format.

- **Martha Kauppi, MS, LMFT**

- Martha Kauppi, LMFT, is a marriage and family therapist, educator, author, speaker, and AASECT-certified sex therapist and supervisor. She has a lifelong career in health and sexuality, and is a senior trainer of the Developmental Model of Couples Therapy. Her private practice in Madison, Wisconsin, specializes in complex relational therapy, sex issues, and alternative family structures, including consensual non-monogamies. As the founding director of the Institute for Relational Intimacy, Martha offers unique trainings to help therapists all over the world become comfortable, confident, and competent working with relational intimacy challenges and sex issues. She is the author of Polyamory: A Clinical Toolkit for Therapists (and Their Clients).

- **Rick Miller, MSW**

- Rick Miller, LICSW, is a psychotherapist with over 37 years of clinical experience whose career has evolved beyond practicing psychotherapy into becoming an acclaimed expert in interpersonal dynamics. Clients and institutions he works with report tremendous satisfaction with their results as a result of his focus on the experiential aspects of day-to-day life and the enhancement of interpersonal connections. Attendees at his speaking engagements consistently rate him higher than most speakers based on his approachable style and inspiring messages. He is also an author, business consultant, public speaker, and teacher working with individuals and groups across the globe. He helps clients and audiences learn how to make life more fulfilling by paying particular attention to feelings and using one's internal body experiences to achieve success. He emphasizes that everyone has every resource they need within themselves by utilizing this awareness rather than pushing it aside. As a gay man, Rick uses a warm, relational style drawing on his own experiences to create a distinctive model for his clients emphasizing a practical, holistic approach. This paradigm gives attention to the unique ways gay men experience pain, their shared developmental challenges, and experiential opportunities to build comfort and alignment between mind and body. Not only has he written extensively on this topic, he has taught and inspired psychotherapists and medical professionals all over the world. Rick is a pioneer in creating mind/body and hypnotic scripts for gay men, has trained medical and mental-health providers how to

create and use them, and wrote the first-ever book on the topic. Rick has brought this same model of enhancing richness in interpersonal interactions to the nonprofit organization he founded and of which he is executive director, Gay Sons and Mothers, educating groups, businesses, and individuals about the unique and powerful influence mothers have on their gay sons. He's also founded a series for clinicians, Secrets of the Masters, in which he interviews noted authorities in informal settings.

- **Tammy Nelson, PhD**

- Tammy Nelson, PhD, is a renowned expert in the field of sex and couples therapy. She is a TEDx speaker, the host of the podcast The Trouble with Sex, and the author of six books, including Getting the Sex You Want and Open Monogamy: A Guide to Co-Creating Your Ideal Relationship Agreement. She is a Board Certified Clinical Sexologist, a Certified Sex and Couples Therapist, and AASECT Certified Sex Therapist and Certified Imago Relationship Therapist and the founder and Executive Director of the Integrative Sex Therapy Institute. She has been featured in hundreds of press articles including in the NY Times, Washington Post, NY Times Magazine, Wall Street Journal, Time Magazine, and a guest on radio, podcasts and on television in the US and around the world. She can be found at www.drtammynelson.com

- **Terry Real, LICSW**

- Terry has been a practicing family therapist for more than thirty years, and his work has been featured on NBC Nightly News, Today, Good Morning America, the CBS Early Show and Oprah, as well as in The New York Times, Psychology Today, Esquire, and numerous academic publications. His most recent book Us: Getting Past You & Me to Build a More Loving Relationship is a New York Times Bestseller. In 2007 his first book I Don't Want to Talk About It: Overcoming the Secret Legacy of Male Depression quickly became a National Bestseller. Terry founded the Relational Life Institute (RLI), which is dedicated to teaching the general public how to live relational lives and to teaching mental health professionals the practice of Relational Life Therapy. RLI uses Terry's work to advance the concept of "Relational Living" to help people address relational and psychological health in three critical relationship areas: parenting, coupling, and workforce effectiveness. The institute offers workshops for couples and professional trainings around the country as well as support services, books, CD's and other products.

- **Ari Tuckman, PsyD**

- Ari Tuckman, PsyD is a psychologist, certified sex therapist, and ADHD expert. He is a popular and dynamic presenter who routinely earns excellent reviews for his ability to make complex concepts understandable and useful. He has given more than 450 presentations, across America and in nine other countries. He is the author of four books on adult ADHD, including his most recent book, ADHD After Dark: Better Sex Life, Better Relationship.

How the Conference Will Work

The Conference will be held on Friday, May 2nd; Saturday, May 3rd; and Sunday, May 4th. Friday, May 2nd begins with an introduction to the Couples Conference with the conference organizer Jeffrey Zeig, PhD and Lilian Borges, MA, LPC. This convocation begins at 8:45am.

Each day will feature two keynote presentations; a topical panel discussion; and a series of workshops. Keynote presentations and topical panels will be one hour in length. Workshops will be two hours in length. Three workshop sessions will be held concurrently, and registrants may choose which session they would like to attend.

Friday, May 2nd and Saturday, May 3rd will have a total of 6 CE credits available each day. Sunday, May 4th will have a total of 5 CE credits available. There will be a 15-minute break between sessions, and one lunch break in the middle of the day.

Conference attendees may present questions to the Faculty using the Zoom chat feature. The Erickson Foundation will have a moderator collecting questions for the Q&A time at the end of each presentation. If you would like to pose a question to the faculty, please use the Zoom chat feature to message our Q&A moderators.

In order to provide the best experience for all, please make sure your audio is muted when you join the conference. This will help prevent any inadvertent noise and distractions.

The Conference will be streamed live using the Milton H. Erickson Foundation's Zoom channel. It is recommended that registrants for the Conference download the Zoom app. This app is available on the Google Play Store for Android; the App Store for iOS; as well as for Mac and PCs directly through their site at <https://zoom.us/>. Please note - you **do not need to sign up for a paid account** with Zoom to access our Conference. You can sign up for a free account to access the stream via the links we provide.

If you are not familiar with Zoom, there are a lot of support resources, including tutorial videos on how to use the app. You can find these support documents here - <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>

The Erickson Foundation will record the conference and provide online streaming access to registrants of the Conference until November 8th.

If you have any issues connecting to the conference, please contact support@erickson-foundation.org

Join the Zoom Meeting

There will be one link for the conference. The link will be sent in an email. You will receive the email with the link each morning of the conference days. If you are having any issues with the link contact support@erickson-foundation.org.

If you do not receive the link 30 minutes before the conference, please check your Spam folder first and if you still cannot locate the email contact support@erickson-foundation.org.

Do NOT share the link with others. The links are only sent out to those who registered for the conference.

Conference Handouts and Review

Handouts for the Couples Conference will be made available here: <https://www.couplesconference.com/2025-handouts/>

The Couples Conference will be recorded in its entirety. Registrants of the live conference will get access to review the conference recording for six months. The recordings will be made available on the conference review page at a link that will be provided after the conference through email.

Continuing Education Certificate of Completion

Registrants of the Conference will be able to get their certificate beginning Monday, May 8th. This process can be completed entirely online by following the steps outlined on this page:

URL: <https://catalog.erickson-foundation.org/page/evaluation-how-to>

Pricing

Main Conference - May 2, 3, 4
All Conference Days
17 CE Credits included

Live access to conference, access to conference recordings for 6 months

Cost - \$399

Conference Schedule

Key

- *CE - Continuing Education Credit*
- *K - Keynote*
- *P - Panel Discussion*
- *WS - Workshop*

Friday, May 2 - Couples Conference Day 1

Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
CON	May 2, 2025 8:45am - 9am PDT <i>Not for credit</i>	<u>Convocation</u> Join Jeff Zeig, Director of the Erickson Foundation to provide an introduction and overview of the conference.	Jeff Zeig, PhD Lilian Borges, MA, LPC
K01	May 2, 2025 9am - 10am PDT <i>1 CE</i>	<u>Keynote 01 - Solution Focused Brief Therapy: Bringing Couples Together with Hope</u> The word "Solution" in the title of the Solution Focused Approach. The key tenant of this way of working actually has nothing to do with solutions, it has everything to do with hope. Just as when working with individual clients, working with couples means we have to use skillfully crafted questions that move the couple from despair to a hoped for future. As the couple answers these questions they come back together in deep and meaningful ways that will last. In this lecture the presenter will share the keys to asking the kinds of questions that consistently produce positive results for couples. <i>Educational Objectives:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the power of hope in the Solution-Focused Approach and its transformative impact on couples. 2. Learn the art of asking the right questions that move couples from conflict or despair to a positive, hopeful future. 3. Explore practical techniques for helping couples reconnect and foster deep, lasting relationships through meaningful dialogue. 	Elliott Connie, MA, LPC

Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
WS01	May 2, 2025 10:15am - 12:15pm PDT 2 CE	<p><u>Workshop 01 - Solution-Focused Couples Therapy</u></p> <p>This presentation will provide an overview of Solution Building Couples Therapy (SBCT). The presenter will introduce the Diamond Approach to SBCT and will provide detailed explanations of each step of the Diamond Approach. Participants will see real examples of actual couples engaged in SBCT. Participants will engage in in-depth discussions about how to conceptualize cases from this perspective.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the fundamentals of the Diamond Approach of Solution Building Couples Therapy 2. Articulate the underlying principles associated with Diamond Approach 3. Implement SBCT from the Diamond Approach with clients effectively 	Elliott Connie, MA, LPC

Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
WS02	May 2, 2025 10:15am - 12:15pm PDT 2 CE	<p><u>Workshop 02 - The Three Stages of Affair Treatment – Using Integrative Relationship Therapy Treatment</u></p> <p>In this cutting edge training we will discuss the varieties of affairs and the many ways that relationships can heal from the betrayal that affects intimacy. We will review the stages of recovery that lead to long term healing. Issues around trust, forgiveness, new visions of monogamy, sexuality and connection for the future of the couple's relationship will be addressed. We will review three phases of treatment and the steps of the recovery process. It is crucial to understand the triangulation that can occur when therapists do not explore their own bias and countertransference and we will look at how to avoid unintentional shaming and client retaliation. We will look at the power of the third in the relationship, including the therapeutic as well as the romantic. This workshop will delve into the meaning of each type of affair and participants will learn interventions to help repair, restructure and redefine the future and help clients create a new monogamy for a stronger more insightful and connected partnership. This workshop will move beyond a victim, perpetrator and rescuer model of therapy and will create sustainable monogamy agreements where transparency and authenticity promote resiliency.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand infidelity using the three-part definition and how partners are affected in a marriage or committed partnership. 2. Learn the betrayal trauma effects on relationships and how collusion and bias play a part in the secondary gain of the role of the third in infidelity 3. Identify why the current therapy isn't working and why some systems of recovery from affairs can retraumatize clients. 4. Identify the three phases of treatment after an affair including the crisis, the insight and the vision phase and how they can improve treatment outcomes 5. Discover the difference between implicit and explicit monogamy and create new monogamy agreements 6. Create a revised formula for treatment plans after infidelity breaches, to include long term sustainable monogamy 	Tammy Nelson, PhD

Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
WS03	May 2, 2025 10:15am - 12:15pm PDT 2 CE	<p><u>Workshop 03 - Here We Go Again: Why Do Couples Keep Having the Same Fights?</u></p> <p>Couples usually get stuck on the same topics and feel frustrated that they keep running around the same unsatisfying circles. This could be the big three (parenting, sex, and money) or it could be other topics. They come to couples therapy hoping to break out of these ruts—and fearful that they can't. Often, they expect the therapist will explain to their partner why they need to make most of the changes and why the first partner is right about what they're asking. This sets up the therapy to be just as stuck. Avoiding this trap requires the therapist to stay away from problem-solving and to instead focus on teaching the necessary skills for the partners to tolerate their differences—to focus more on the process of their disagreements than the content. Breaking free of these old patterns requires strong leadership by the therapist to help each partner see how they contribute to the dynamic—and how they therefore have the ability to get more of what they want if they approach their partner differently. This begins by creating greater clarity for each partner about what they want and why they want it, beyond the surface level where they get stuck. Then we need to help the partners negotiate more effectively so they can create a sustainable agreement. Finally, we teach the partners how to do the better thing when it's hard to do which is where the rubber really meets the road. By building better differentiation, the partners learn to not only resolve the current fights, but also to strengthen the relationship overall and enjoy each other more.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify how couples get and stay stuck on the same old fights 2. Explain to each partner why it's more helpful to focus on the process of their arguments rather than the content 3. Apply more effective strategies to help each partner shift their half of the dynamic 	Ari Tuckman, PsyD, CST

K02	<p>May 2, 2025 1:30pm - 2:30pm PDT</p> <p>1 CE</p>	<p><u>Keynote 02 - How to Open A Relationship While Enhancing Intimacy: What We Can Learn From Male Couples</u></p> <p>For decades, many male couples have successfully navigated open relationships. But it's been done quietly, and the mental health and couples fields have only recently begun addressing models of consensual non-monogamy. Join Rick Miller, LICSW during this keynote as he discusses his work with male couples who have navigated the terrain of open relationships in the context of couples therapy. He will provide guidelines for success and failure, including his model in which couples incorporate honest communication, and modes for assessing how the model is working and what can shift. He will provide videos of a couple who have struggled with honesty and fears, yet found a way to strengthen their joint intimacy by incorporating individual needs. Attendees are encouraged to step out of their own comfort zones to consider appreciating and supporting a consensual non-monogamy model with couples wishing to explore their options.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendees will learn about how open relationships can be successfully carried out in a long term relationship while simultaneously deepening intimacy. 2. Attendees will learn how to provide guidelines to couples who are considering opening up their relationship. 3. Attendees will learn to challenge their existing beliefs regarding relationship models as well as how increase their confidence in navigating these discussions in couples therapy. 	Rick Miller, MSW
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Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
WS 04	<p>May 2, 2025 2:45pm – 4:45pm PDT</p> <p>2 CE</p>	<p><u>Workshop 04 - Breaking the Spell: Harnessing Hypnosis to Transform Troubled Relationships</u></p> <p>In relationships, couples often find themselves trapped in unhealthy patterns—emotions, behaviors, and dynamics that feel almost impossible to escape. These recurring negative patterns can be thought of as “bad trances,” unconscious states that influence how partners interact with one another. Just as a trance limits an individual’s ability to break free from automatic thoughts and actions, these relational trances prevent couples from making meaningful changes in their interactions. In this workshop, you’ll learn how to identify and break these negative trances using key insights from hypnosis, allowing couples to build healthier, more conscious connections. No prior hypnosis knowledge is required—this workshop will give you practical, easy-to-implement strategies to help couples reset their dynamics and foster positive change.</p>	Lilian Borges, MA, LPC

This workshop will blend theory and hands-on practice, offering you tools that can immediately improve the therapeutic outcomes for couples dealing with entrenched patterns. Whether you are new to hypnosis or already familiar with its concepts, you'll leave with a deeper understanding of how to guide couples toward healthier, more fulfilling relationships.

Educational Objectives:

1. Identify three common signs of a "bad trance" in a couple's relationship.
2. Demonstrate two effective techniques for breaking negative relational trances.
3. Apply a simple hypnosis-based trance technique to shift the dynamics between a couple.

Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
WS05	May 2, 2025 2:45pm – 4:45pm PDT 2 CE	<p><u>Workshop 05 - From Avoidant to Happy: Helping Male Couples Connect</u></p> <p>Male couples face challenges of being overly independent, and frequently come to couples therapy due to loneliness and feelings of betrayal based on awkward communication styles. Though each partner yearns for their intimate and emotional needs to be met by the other, many gay men lack these skills due to the secrecy and shame which are typical aspects of gay development.</p> <p>He will share a video of a couple who went from experiencing distance and questioning their relationship to achieving intimacy and connection through the couples work they did.</p> <p>This workshop will define how norms in the gay community encourage avoidance, and how male couples can benefit from learning how to communicate, hear, and nurture each other, enhancing secure functioning. Clinicians will feel confident with existing modalities for treating couples and will be able to adapt these skills to successfully treat male couples.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendees will list developmental challenges unique to gay men. 2. Attendees will learn how to decrease avoidance and promote intimacy with male couples. 3. Attendees will discuss how to encourage male couples to increase their modes of communication with each other. 	Rick Miller, MSW
WS06	May 2, 2025 2:45pm – 4:45pm PDT 2 CE	<p><u>Workshop 06 - Recognizing and Healing Attachment Distress in Couples Therapy Using Emotionally Focused Therapy</u></p> <p>EFT is a structured, experiential model of couple therapy, rooted in adult attachment theory, that helps partners move from conflict, distance and distress to increased openness, trust and deeper emotional engagement; from an insecure to a secure and enduring attachment bond.</p> <p>The effectiveness of EFT is strongly supported by over 30 years of respected outcome research, with success rates of up to 70%, and a growing body of process research that helps identify the most impactful interventions that help create lasting change.</p> <p>Most therapists see couples and many lack a clear, empirically supported treatment model that increases effectiveness. This introductory presentation provides new and experienced therapists the theory and essential practice elements for working with emotion as used with diverse populations and presenting issues.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce participants to the dance of couple disconnection from an attachment perspective. 2. Discuss the 5 basic moves of the EFT Tango, the EFT guide to working in the present process. 3. Equip therapists to utilize the affect assembly to support couples in changing the emotion of their dance of distress. 	Rebecca Jorgenson, PhD

Saturday, May 3 - Couples Conference Day 2

Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
K03	May 3, 2025 9am - 10am PDT 1 CE	<p><u>Keynote 03 - Desire's Landscape: Mapping Complexity in Sexual Relationships</u></p> <p>This keynote session will delve into the complex world of sexual desire, exploring why discrepant desire is such a challenging issue for clients and therapists alike, and providing a comprehensive systemic framework for understanding and addressing it. Attendees will be offered a practical and innovative tool for parsing complex and interconnected factors, providing a deeper understanding that will reshape your approach to one of the most pervasive and complicated relational sex issues.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants will be able to identify and explain the multifactorial components influencing sexual desire, including sexual, physical, emotional, relational, cultural, and sociopolitical factors 2. Participants will be able to apply the presented rubric/Venn diagram tool to assess and categorize the various factors contributing to desire discrepancy in clinical cases 3. Participants will be able to describe the importance of trauma history, systems of power and privilege, and other contextual elements to both the personal experience of desire, as well as dynamics between partners 	Martha Kauppi, MS, LMFT
WS07	May 3, 2025 10:15am - 12:15pm PDT 2 CE	<p><u>Workshop 07 - The Desire Dilemma: Powerful Tools for Addressing Desire Discrepancy in Couples Therapy</u></p> <p>Are you finding it challenging to make progress with couples experiencing mismatched libidos? This in-depth workshop will equip you with powerful techniques to simultaneously engage and constructively challenge both the lower and higher desire partners. Learn to explore common inhibiting factors affecting sexual desire, identify and avoid typical therapeutic pitfalls, and learn effective first-session strategies to lay a strong foundation for treatment. Observe video demonstrations of pivotal therapeutic moments and discover methods to establish personalized, meaningful goals for each partner.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to describe two main features of a self-motivated aspirational goal 2. At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to identify three potentially harmful clinical pitfalls when working with a desire discrepancy 3. At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to describe an approach to warmly challenging a higher desire partner who pressures their partner for sex 	Martha Kauppi, MS, LMFT

Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
WS08	May 3, 2025 10:15am - 12:15pm PDT 2 CE	<p><u>Workshop 08 - The Three Stages of Affair Treatment – Using Integrative Relationship Therapy Treatment</u></p> <p>In this cutting edge training we will discuss the varieties of affairs and the many ways that relationships can heal from the betrayal that affects intimacy. We will review the stages of recovery that lead to long term healing. Issues around trust, forgiveness, new visions of monogamy, sexuality and connection for the future of the couple's relationship will be addressed. We will review three phases of treatment and the steps of the recovery process. It is crucial to understand the triangulation that can occur when therapists do not explore their own bias and countertransference and we will look at how to avoid unintentional shaming and client retaliation. We will look at the power of the third in the relationship, including the therapeutic as well as the romantic. This workshop will delve into the meaning of each type of affair and participants will learn interventions to help repair, restructure and redefine the future and help clients create a new monogamy for a stronger more insightful and connected partnership.</p> <p>This workshop will move beyond a victim, perpetrator and rescuer model of therapy and will create sustainable monogamy agreements where transparency and authenticity promote resiliency.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand infidelity using the three-part definition and how partners are affected in a marriage or committed partnership. 2. Learn the betrayal trauma effects on relationships and how collusion and bias play a part in the secondary gain of the role of the third in infidelity 3. Identify why the current therapy isn't working and why some systems of recovery from affairs can retraumatize clients. 4. Identify the three phases of treatment after an affair including the crisis, the insight and the vision phase and how they can improve treatment outcomes 5. Discover the difference between implicit and explicit monogamy and create new monogamy agreements 6. Create a revised formula for treatment plans after infidelity breaches, to include long term sustainable monogamy 	Tammy Nelson, PhD

Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
WS09	May 3, 2025 10:15am - 12:15pm PDT 2 CE	<p><u>Workshop 09 - Equipping Clients to Live Relationally: The Map, The Toolbox, The Process</u></p> <p>RLT (Relational Life Therapy) has three phases. One is waking up the clients (joining through the truth). Two is doing deep trauma work in the presence of the partner. And, three is relationship skill building.</p> <p>It is a combination of all three of these phases together that produces the quick profound transformational change RLT is known for. This workshop will give therapists a new map to give to their clients—how to think relationally along with the beginnings of a new tool set for example ‘how to speak up for yourself with love’, how to handle a disgruntled partner, and others. I’ll share with you a new vision of how to live relationally and nuts and bolts concrete practices to achieve it.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce participants to a new vision of equipping our clients to live fully relational lives 2. Equipping therapists to teach ‘relational mindfulness’—from triggered to intentional. 3. Introduce participants to concrete relational skills for example letting go of ‘objective reality’ in favor of negotiating subjective differences. 	Terry Real, LICSW
P01	May 3, 2025 1:30pm - 2:30pm PDT 1 CE	<p><u>Panel 01 – Sex and Relationships: Three Perspectives</u></p> <p>Couples therapists have more conversations and treatment options than before, including discussions about relationship structures as well as sexuality. Participants will have the opportunity to hear about different approaches to couples therapy and relationship structures and ask any questions they may have.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce participants to a new vision of equipping our clients to live fully relational lives 2. Equipping therapists to teach ‘relational mindfulness’—from triggered to intentional. 3. Introduce participants to concrete relational skills for example letting go of ‘objective reality’ in favor of negotiating subjective differences. 	Martha Kauppi, MS, LMFT; Tammy Nelson, PhD; Rick Miller, MSW

Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
K04	May 3, 2025 1:30pm - 2:30pm PDT 1 CE	<p><u>Keynote 04 - Intimacy as Insurrection: Love in an Unloving World</u></p> <p>Leading men, women and non-binary people into true intimacy is synonymous with leading them beyond patriarchy. Traditional gender roles were never built for intimacy, but for stability. For example, the traditional term masculinity MEANS invulnerability—the more invulnerable you are the more manly you are and visa versa. Yet, you cannot be intimate and invulnerable at the same time. Leading men into intimacy means nothing less than reconfiguring who they are as men. Traditionally women and partners of men are socialized to over accommodate and resent. More modern women and partners have been taught to speak up with individual empowerment, but rarely with ‘relational empowerment.’ RLT (Relational Life Therapy) teaches people to stand up for themselves and love and cherish their partner in the same breath. “Loving power” also goes beyond the morays of patriarchy, we therapists are intimacy merchants. Our work is at once therapeutic and social activism. This address invites participants to acknowledge this concept and learn to use it skillfully.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce participants to a new vision of equipping our clients to live fully relational lives 2. Equipping therapists to teach ‘relational mindfulness’—from triggered to intentional. 3. Introduce participants to concrete relational skills for example letting go of ‘objective reality’ in favor of negotiating subjective differences. 	Terry Real, LICSW
P02	May 3, 2025 9am - 10am PDT 1 CE	<p><u>Panel 02 – Lies and Deception in Couples Therapy</u></p> <p>It’s said that the truth shall set you free, so why do romantic partners lie to each other? Or to their therapist? And how important are the facts anyway in couples therapy?</p> <p>Actual or perceived dishonesty can wreak havoc on a relationship and can stall therapeutic progress. Most couples therapists don’t want to get bogged down on fact checking, but sometimes the details do matter—perhaps to the other partner, perhaps as revealing about the individual speaking, and perhaps as revealing about the couple’s dynamic.</p> <p>Outright falsehoods, lies of omission, and even shading the truth can signal conflict avoidance, a lack of differentiation, insufficient empathy, poor self-awareness, out of control behavior, poor emotional regulation in the receiver, and much more. Join our panel to discuss why clients struggle with the truth and how to address it with both partners, from the small lies of convenience to the larger betrayals. Honest conversation is both a vehicle for growth as well as a goal of treatment.<i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce participants to a new vision of equipping our clients to live fully relational lives 	William Doherty, PhD; Elliott Connie, MA, LPC; Ari Tuckman, PsyD, CST; Lilian Borges, MA, LPC

		<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Equipping therapists to teach 'relational mindfulness'—from triggered to intentional.3. Introduce participants to concrete relational skills for example letting go of 'objective reality' in favor of negotiating subjective differences.	
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Sunday, May 4 - Couples Conference Day 3

Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
K05	May 4, 2025 4 pm - 5pm PDT 1 CE	<p><u>Keynote 05 - The Hidden Power of Hypnosis in Couples Therapy: Unlocking Trance to Transform Relationships</u></p> <p>Hypnosis is often viewed as a mysterious, external practice, but it is, in fact, deeply woven into the fabric of psychotherapy—particularly in couples therapy. Trance states, which allow individuals to shift perspective, process emotions, and experience deep healing, are integral to many therapeutic approaches, from psychoanalysis to family systems. Whether consciously recognized or not, couples therapists are already utilizing hypnotic tools in their work. This keynote will illuminate how hypnosis plays a vital role in enhancing couples therapy, deepening emotional understanding, and breaking through stuck relational patterns. By becoming more attuned to the hypnotic elements present in therapeutic work, therapists can sharpen their skills and provide even more profound and impactful treatment for their clients.</p> <p>This session will explore the foundational mechanisms of hypnosis, how they align with the therapeutic process, and how you can intentionally use hypnotic tools to guide couples toward lasting change. Whether you're a seasoned practitioner or new to hypnosis, you'll leave with a new understanding of how to integrate trance into your couples therapy practice for greater results.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize two common trance-like techniques already used in couples therapy. 2. Define hypnosis and understand its relevance to modern therapeutic practices. 3. 	Lilian Borges, MA, LPC
WS 10	May 4, 2025 10:15am - 12:15pm PDT 2 CE	<p><u>Workshop 10 - Unlocking Individual Transformation: The Power of Solo Sessions in Couples Therapy</u></p> <p>In couples therapy, it's not uncommon for therapists to find that one partner may need to explore their personal issues separately to facilitate healing within the relationship. Referrals for individual work can sometimes feel complicated, but when used strategically, they can be a powerful tool for enhancing the couple's therapy journey. This workshop dives into the art of working with a partner individually while maintaining a focus on their relationship dynamics. We'll explore the attachment framework to help clients understand their attachment styles, reduce defenses, and build empathy for their partner's needs. Together, we'll discuss why and when individual therapy is appropriate, how to ensure it aligns with couples therapy, and how to handle the potential challenges and ethical considerations that come with individual sessions. Whether you're new to referring or looking to refine your</p>	Lilian Borges, MA, LPC

approach, this workshop will provide a roadmap for successfully navigating the individual therapy aspect of couples work.

This workshop will blend case examples, practical strategies, and ethical guidelines, equipping you with the confidence and clarity needed to make informed decisions about referring a partner for individual work.

Educational Objectives:

1. Identify the pros and cons of referring a partner to individual therapy within the context of couples counseling.
2. Name at least two key reasons for referring a partner to work individually on relationship issues.
3. Understand the most critical mistake to avoid when conducting individual sessions with a partner in the context of couples therapy.
- 4.

Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
WS11	May 4, 2025 10:15am - 12:15pm PDT 2 CE	<p><u>Workshop 11 - How To Talk With Anyone About Anything</u></p> <p>Talking is the most dangerous thing most people do, and listening is the most infrequent. Participants in this workshop will learn that “how” we talk, not “what” we talk about is the source of all human conflict. And they will learn a new way of talking without criticism, listening without judgment, and connecting beyond difference that will be transformative in all aspects of their lives, including how they do couple's therapy.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss with others the root source of human conflict. 2. Teach the difference between monologue and dialogue. 3. Use the dialogue process in the clinical practice. 4. Teach dialogue to the general public. 	William Doherty, PhD
WS12	May 4, 2025 9:45pm - 11:45pm PDT 2 CE	<p><u>Workshop 12 - Promoting Clients' Self-Care Supports Relationships</u></p> <p>Stressed out, burned out couples don't have the time or energy to take care of themselves, let alone to nurture their relationship. They come to couples therapy, but then say they're too busy when they don't apply what is discussed in session. They're cutting corners on sleep, diet, and exercise and thereby have less cognitive and emotional bandwidth, including for their partner. They're more irritable with each other, less patient, and less tolerant of differences. They can easily fall into a zero-sum tug of war where both partners hope for more support from the other, but neither has it to give, furthering the discontent with each other.</p> <p>Everyone knows the obvious good advice on sleep, diet, and exercise, yet then doesn't always do it. What does this poor self-care reveal about the individual or the relationship? What are the deeper individual and relationship dynamics that interfere with this self-care? For example, someone who struggles to set limits with work or children and thereby loses time with their partner at night. Is it a problem of limit setting earlier in the day or an avoidance of their partner at night? In order to promote better self-care and more energy for the relationship, we need to identify and address these primary causes.</p> <p>There is also the possibly contentious situation where one partner wants the other to engage in better self-care. Whose goal is this? And how do the partners negotiate this apparent difference in priorities?</p> <p>Promoting self-care benefits the relationship and promoting better relationship functioning benefits self-care..</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss with others the root source of human conflict. 2. Teach the difference between monologue and dialogue. 3. Use the dialogue process in the clinical practice. 4. Teach dialogue to the general public. 	Will Marsh

Session	Date and Time	Topic and Details	Faculty
K06	May 4, 2025 1:30pm - 2:30pm PDT 1 CE	<p><u>Keynote 06 - When Political Divides Become Relational Divides</u></p> <p>Politically mixed couples face special challenges during a time of political polarization, and even couples who vote similarly may have conflict over how strongly they feel about the current political environment and how to deal with extended family differences over politics. This is new territory for couples therapists, complicated by the fact that many of us have strong political convictions. This presentation will cover sources of today's polarization, special assessment issue for couples in conflict over politics, and tools for helping them buffer their relationships against these political stressors and engage in constructive coping. The presenter will also discuss how he has adapted couple therapy principles in designing workshops that bring "reds" and "blues" together through the national nonprofit Braver Angels.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the scope and sources of today's high levels of political polarization. 2. Discuss how political stress can affect couple and family relationships, and ways to assess these effects. 3. Describe tools for helping couples cope with political differences in ways that buffer their relationships and potentially improve them. 	William Doherty, PhD
P03	May 4, 2025 2:45pm - 3:45pm PDT 1 CE	<p><u>Panel 03 - Relational Trauma in Couples Therapy</u></p> <p>Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of affair recovery is the worry by the betrayed partner that the unfaithful partner has not in fact ended contact with the affair partner or will re-establish contact. This can be especially pernicious and enduring when the unfaithful partner has been discovered to have had additional contact after vowing to end it. For many betrayed partners, these subsequent discoveries can feel like even deeper betrayals than the initial infidelity, even more salt in the wound. The unfaithful partner will swear up and down that there has not been any additional contact and that there will not be in the future. The betrayed partner desperately wants to believe it, but also needs to protect themselves against further pain. The dilemma for both partners (and the therapist) is that we cannot prove a non-event—it's possible to show that something did happen, but a lack of evidence may also simply mean that it has not yet been discovered. "Is it really over?" will never have a fully satisfying answer, but both partners need to find a way to a satisfying enough answer. We will discuss how to help struggling couples in this crucial and challenging aspect of affair recovery that can sometimes be more difficult than the white hot emotions of the initial discovery.</p> <p><i>Educational Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the unique challenges of this stage of affair recovery 2. Apply strategies to help clients navigate the inherent uncertainty of all relationships 3. Facilitate discussions on what constitutes evidence and what are its limits 	Terry Real, LICSW; Rebecca Jorgenson, PhD; William Marsh,

CLOSING	May 4, 2025 3:45pm - 4:00pm PDT <i>Not for Credit</i>	Closing	Jeff Zeig, PhD; Lilian Borges, MA, LPC
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Continuing Education Accreditation Information

The Couples Conference is open to professionals in a health-related field with a master's degree or higher, and students currently enrolled in an accredited graduate program in a health-related field. The Couples Conference offers a maximum of 17 CE credits, equivalent to 1 credit per hour of conference.

- **A.C.C.M.E.**

- The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc. is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

- **A.M.A.**

- The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc., designates this live activity for a maximum of 17.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

- **A.P.A.**

- The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc. is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc. maintains responsibility for this program and its content.

- **A.S.W.B.**

- The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc., #1489, is approved as a provider for social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) www.aswb.org, through the Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc. maintains responsibility for the program. ASWB Approval Period: 05/02/2021 – 05/02/2025. Social workers should contact their regulatory board to determine course approval for continuing education credits.

- **B.R.N.**

- The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc., is approved by the Board of Registered Nursing in California to offer continuing education for nurses (Provider no. CEP 9376). This program is eligible for a maximum of 19.0 contact hours.

- **CA B.B.S.**

- Licensees with the California Board of Behavioral SciencesThe Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc is approved to provide CE's by the NBCC and the APA in the state of California. As of 7/1/15, California BBS accepts CE

hours from CE providers approved by either the NBCC or the APA for all license types per Title 16 California Code of Regulations (16CCR) § 1887.4.1 and § 1887.4.3

- **Florida L.C.S.W., L.M.F.T., L.M.H.C.**

- The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc. is approved by the Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling as a provider of continuing education (CE Provider #: 50-2008).

- **N.B.C.C.**

- The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc. has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 5056. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc. is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs.

- **New York L.C.S.W. and L.M.S.W.**

- The Milton H. Erickson Foundation is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #SW-0304.

- **NY L.M.F.T.**

- The Milton H. Erickson Foundation is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Mental Health Practitioners as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed marriage and family therapists. #MFT-0052.

- **NY L.M.H.C.**

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- **New York Psychologists**

- The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc. is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Psychology as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed psychologists #PSY-0069.

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The Couples Conference is organized by **The Milton H. Erickson Foundation, Inc.**, a federal nonprofit corporation, formed to promote and advance the contributions to the health sciences by the late Milton H. Erickson, MD. In addition to organizing congresses, workshops, Brief Therapy and Couples Conferences, the Erickson Foundation also organized eight landmark Evolution of Psychotherapy Conferences in 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017, 2020, 2021, and 2022, attracting more than 8,000 professionals from around the world at each conference. The Milton H. Erickson Foundation does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, national or ethnic origin, physical challenge, gender or sexual orientation.

Disclaimer

If the Milton H. Erickson Foundation (hereby referred to as MHEF) cannot hold the Couples Conference due to acts of nature, war, government regulations, disaster, civil disorder or curtailment of transportation facilitating other emergencies making it inadvisable, illegal, or impossible to provide the facilities or to hold the meeting, each prepaid attendee will receive a copy of related handouts and any other materials that would have been distributed. Fixed expenses will be paid from the pre-registration funds. Remaining funds will be refunded to pre-registrants. MHEF is not responsible for any other costs incurred by pre-registrants in connection with the Couples Conference.

The views and opinions expressed by presenters are their own and do not necessarily represent those of MHEF.

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Cancellation Policy

Please email support@erickson-foundation.org for written registration cancellations. Cancellations submitted on/or before March 31st will be given a full refund. Cancellations submitted after April 1st but before before April 24, 2024 will receive a full refund, with a \$50 service fee. Those who cancel after April 24 and before April 30, 2024, will receive a 50% refund. We will not issue refunds for cancellations made after May 1, 2024. Please allow 8-10 weeks processing. If paying by check, please note that those who submit a non-sufficient fund check will be charged a \$20 service fee.