

MERGING MODELS:

Integrating Attachment, EFT, and Contextual Theory

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Agenda

Integration Overview

Theoretical Principles

Common Underpinnings

Integrated Model

Case Example

Consolidation & Discussion

Integration Overview

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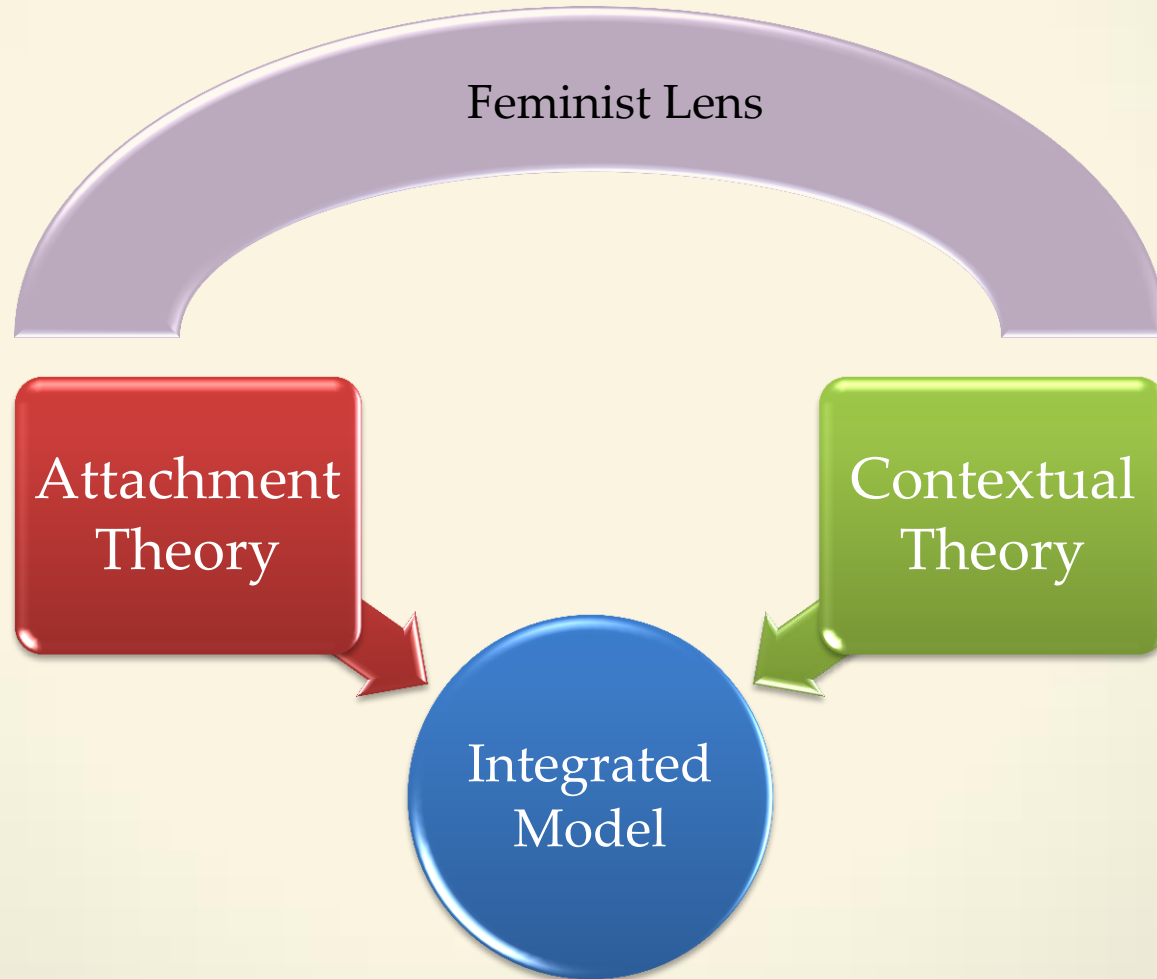


Attachment
Theory

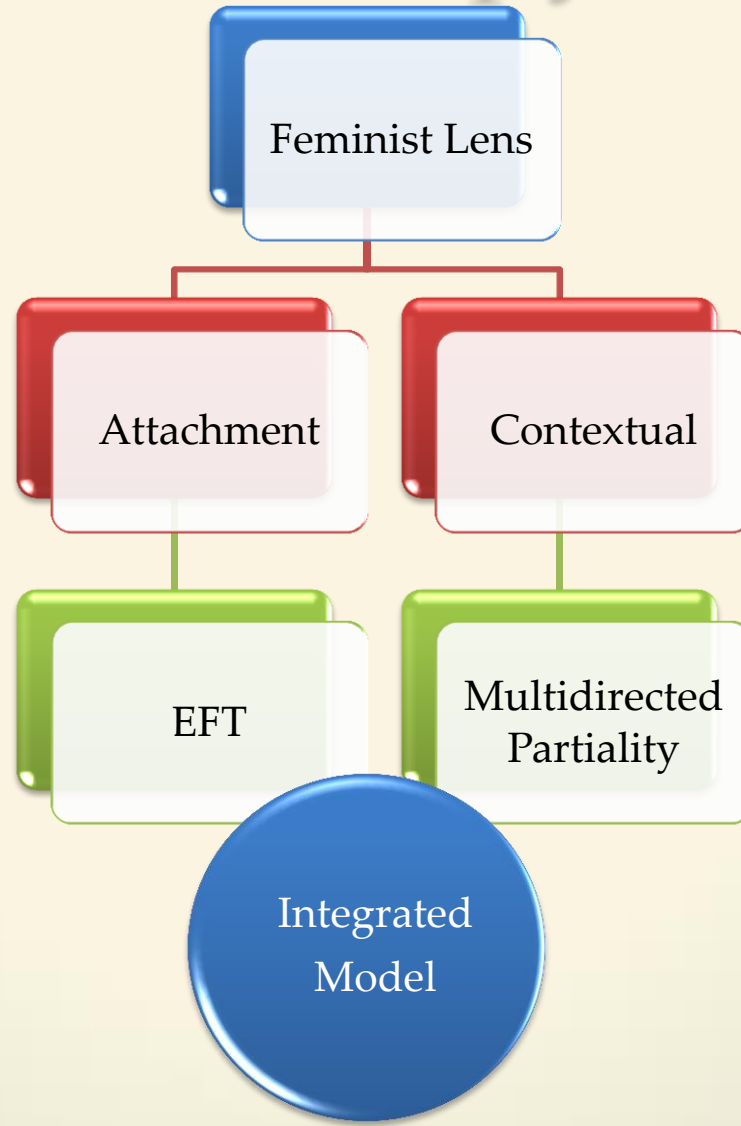


Contextual
Theory

Integration for Couples Therapy



Integration for Couples Therapy



Theoretical Principles

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Feminist Lens, Attachment, EFT, Contextual Theory

Feminist Lens

- One cannot not “do” gender in a relationship
- Feminism is relational and intersectional
- Cultural humility stance

(Knudson-Martin, et al., 2015; Teravlon & Murray-García, 1998; Watts-Jones, 2010; West & Zimmerman, 1987)

Romantic Attachment Theory

- Childhood internal working models (IWMs) are transmitted into romantic partnerships and are blueprints for:
 - identifying, interpreting, responding to distress
 - interpreting partner responses to distress
- IWMs characterize attachment orientations

(Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005,2012; Nisenbaum & Lopez, 2015; Rholes & Simpson, 2004)

Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT)

- Couples become “stuck” in negative interaction patterns consisting of attachment fears/longings/anxieties



(Johnson & Brubacher, 2016; Johnson, Makinen, & Millikin, 2001)

Stage 1: De-escalation of Negative Cycles of Interaction

1. Delineate conflict issues; core attachment struggle
2. Identify negative interaction cycle
3. Access unacknowledged feelings
4. Redefine problem in terms of underlying feelings

Stages 2-3: Changing Interactional Positions; Consolidation & Integration

5. Promote identification with disowned needs
6. Promote acceptance of the other's experience
7. Facilitate expression of needs/wants

8. Establish new solutions
9. Consolidate new positions

Contextual Theory

- Relational Ethics (RE)
- Interpersonal experience of dialogue
- Rebuilding trust, using relational resources
- Crediting, acknowledging

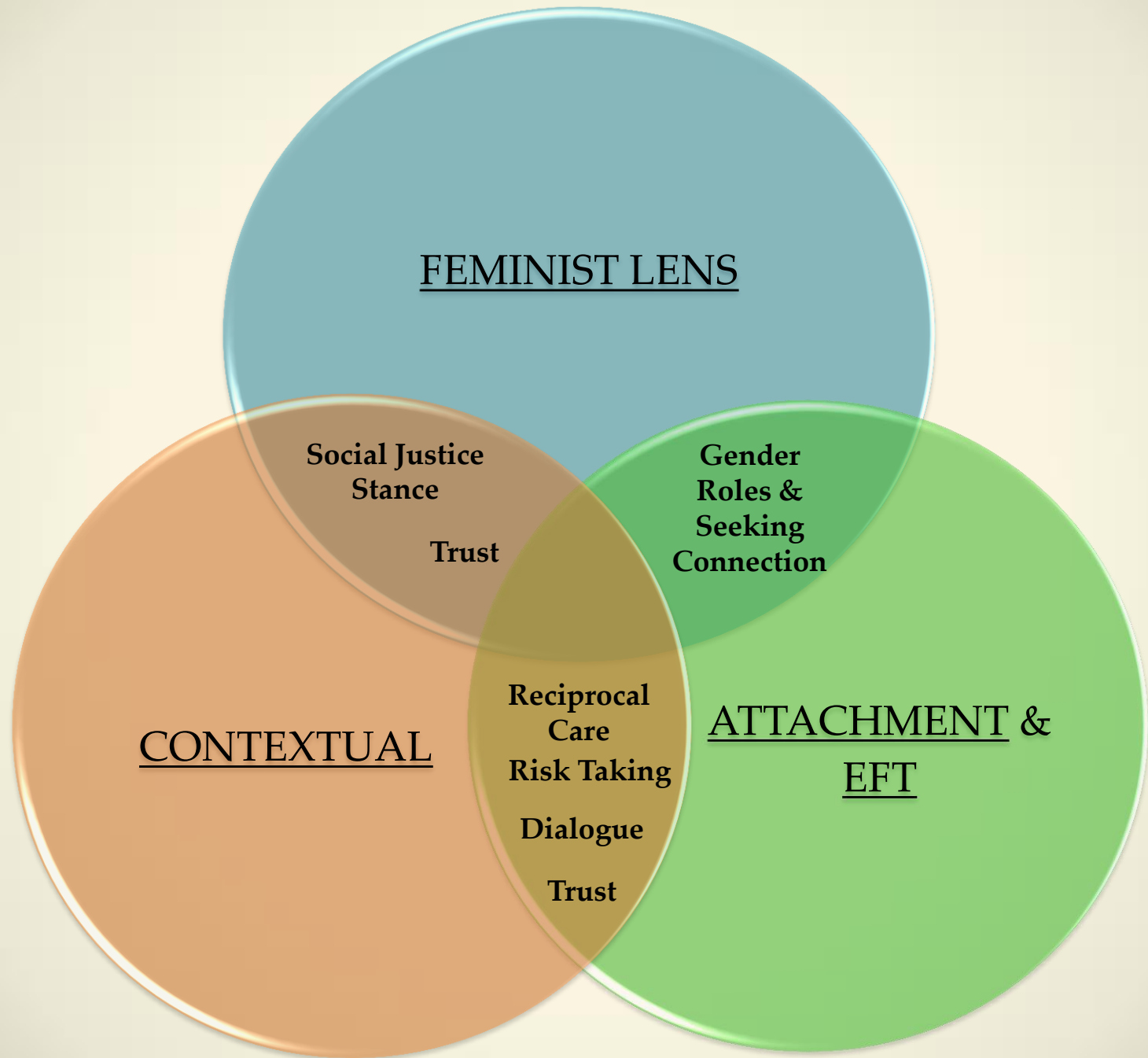
(Adams & Maynard, 2004; Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986; Fishbane, 1998; Friedman, 1989; Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013; Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2003; Van der Meiden, Noordegraaf & Ewijk, 2017)

Multidirected Partiality (MP)

- Grounded in therapist's empathy
- Modeling trust, loyalty, respect, transparency
- Each member knows the therapist is on their side

Common Underpinnings

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Expanding EFT

- Increased focus on relational accountability, loyalty, acknowledging, and crediting
- Expanding family of origin work

Expanding Contextual

- Utilizing attachment positions and language for efficient regulatory effect
- Attachment dialogue as method to increase range of expression

Integrated Model

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Reframe conflicts as attachment needs

Identify negative interaction cycle

Distill emotions down to attachment terms; restate cycle

Assess fairness, loyalty, entitlements (horizontal and vertical)

Explore marginalization/oppression

Enactments to express underlying attachment needs

Introduce the need for rebalancing relational ethics

Enactments for healing attachment experiences; focus on acknowledging injustices

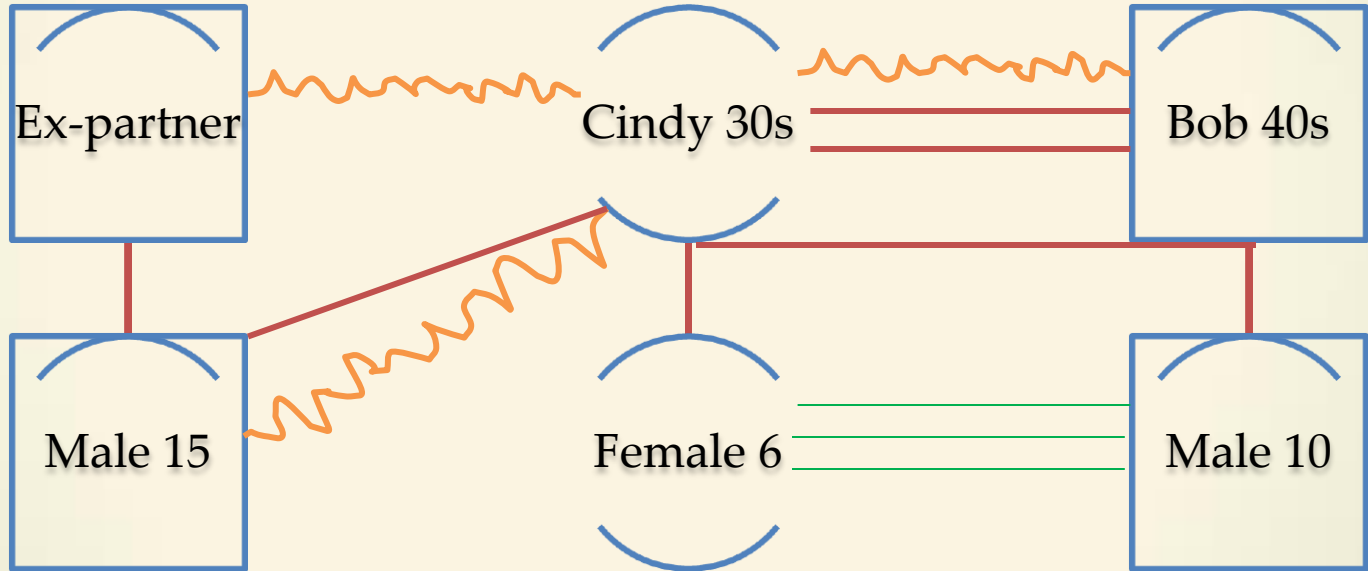
Foster reciprocal empathy, acknowledgement, crediting; move towards exoneration

Consolidate constructive ways of relating (vertical and horizontal)

Case Example

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Cindy & Bob



Cindy

Physically abusive to 15
year old

Affairs

Witnessing mother's
sexual assault

FOO addiction pattern

Bob

Substance dependence

Scapegoats Cindy's 15
year old son

Verbally/emotional
abusive

FOO psychological abuse

Assessment

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Intervention with Integrated Model

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Reframe conflicts as negative interaction cycle

Each resists the other's re-engagement

Attachment fears: self as unlovable, undeserving, incompetent, abandonment anxiety

Mutual lack of trust; injustice mirrors vertical experiences; destructive entitlement

Strong religious identity; strict gender roles; low SES

Enactments to express underlying attachment needs

Introduce the need for rebalancing relational ethics

Enactments for healing attachment experiences, with focus on acknowledging injustices

Foster reciprocal empathy, acknowledgement, crediting (vertical and horizontal)

Consolidate constructive ways of relating (vertical and horizontal)

Consolidation & Discussion

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