Part 1: What is AEDP?
What we are, where we are, where we’ve come from, and where we are going….

Part 2: Beyond Safety, to Vitality and Truth
The Neurobiological Core Self & Recognition in the AEDP treatment of Dissociation

DIANA FOSHA, PH.D.
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For more on AEDP, visit us at www.aedpinstitute.com
The work that follows reflects the collaboration of the members of the AEDP Institute Faculty and community

Diana Fosha, Director
Anne Cooper
Ron Frederick
Kari Gleiser
Jerry Lamagna
Benjamin Lipton
David Mars
Jenna Osiasen
Karen Pando-Mars
Natasha Prenn
SueAnne Piliero
Eileen Russell
Steve Shapiro
Barbara Suter
Gil Tunnell
Danny Yeung

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and along with,
to quote D. W. Winnicott,
“… my patients, who paid to teach me”
Part 1: What is AEDP?
What we are, where we are, where we’ve come from, and where we are going.

Some New AEDP references

Hot off the press:

In press:

Preview of coming attractions:

**AEDP 101**

"The patient needs to have an experience, a new experience. And that experience should be to be good. From the first moment of the first contact, and throughout the treatment thereafter, the aim and method of AEDP is the provision and facilitation of such experiences" (Fosha, 2002).

"The unit of intervention is not the therapist's comment, but the therapist's comment and the patient's response. What matters is the patient's experience of the intervention and her/his subsequent response ... The only thing that matters is that the shifts in the patient's moment-to-moment experience be dynamically processed and empathically used to inform the therapist's next intervention" (Fosha, 2000, p. 214).

**Some AEDP Practice Guidelines**

- be a transformance and transformation detective, on the lookout for glimmers of it
- promote patient safety, and therapist risk-taking
- undo the patient's aloneness in the face of overwhelming emotional experience
- notice, stay with, unpack
- make the implicit explicit, and make the explicit experiential. And thus turbocharge neuroplasticity
- entrain the self-at-best to work with self-at-worst
- nothing that feels bad is ever the last step: process to affective shift from negative to positive (always accompanied by positive affective/somatic markers)
- work to promote the patient's felt sense of existing in the heart and mind of the other, i.e., in your heart and mind
WHAT WE PRIVILEGE, WHAT WE TRACK in AEDP

- glimmers of transformance: we are transformance detectives (and notice them side by side with manifestations of resistance)
- glimmers of resilience (and notice them side by side with manifestations of vulnerability and triggers)
- glimmers of transformation/healing/new & emergent/change for the better (and also notice everything that stands in their way)
- glimmers of (any of the constituents of) secure attachment and all the receptive affective experiences associated with giving and receiving attachment, care, empathy (and also notice everything that stands in their way)
- glimmers of positive affects associated with change for the better (and also notice everything that stands in their way)

DYADIC MINDFULNESS: AEDP 301

Additions to Objects of Mindfulness and especially Dyadic Mindfulness, which in AEDP we call Metatherapeutic Processing:

In AEDP, in addition to body, emotion, sensation, breath, we have some additional objects of mindful attention, especially dyadically mindful attention, which when experientially explored, constitutes its AEDP’s GEMs, and the fundamental AEDP method of GEM-to-GEM tracking

- Transformance
- Receptive affective experiences, especially as the constituents of the secure attachment we are seeking to co-construct, dyadically explored
- Dyadic/relational experiences
- Experiences of transformation

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AFFECTIVE CHANGE PROCESSES, especially those privileged by AEDP (a non exhaustive list)

- The Experience and Expression of Categorical Emotions: processing emotion to transformation: the shift from negative to positive
- Shedding Defenses, Removing Blocks
  - Explicit Experiential Work with Relational Experience
    - the *in vivo* here-and-now *experience* of attachment
    - right-brain-to-right-right communication (> 30 sec): gaze, contact, connection
    - receptive affective *experiences* (attachment, care, empathy, recognition)
    - positive intersubjective *experiences*: moments of meeting, contact, delight
    - dyadic experiences of resonance;
    - repair in the wake of a disruption of attunement and the re-establishment of a coordinated state
- Undoing Aloneness
- The shift from no to yes: flipping the switch. With digital circuitry when a switch changes from 'no' to 'yes', all circuits downstream have potential to change also. This is rapid electronically. But with feelings, it can be rapid or it can be a gradual cascade.
- Privileging Transformance Manifestations & New, Emergent Transformational Experiences, and amplifying positive experiences associated with change for the better
- The Empathic Reflection of the Self & the Experience of Recognition: recognition of experiences uniquely /idiosyncratically/ precisely salient to self; recognizing aspects of self experience: agency, will, desire, drive. [SRP (Panksepp’s self-related processing)]
- Intra-Relational Work with Ego States: internal attachment work; processing the moment-to-moment experience of relatedness to self
- Somatic Focusing, Experiencing
- Metatherapeutic Processing of Transformational Experiences: The affirmation of new, emergent, positive transformational experiences through alternating waves of experience and reflection on the experience

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1 Courtesy of Heather MacDuffie, e-mail communication to AEDP Listserve, 2012.

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WORK WITH THE RELATIONSHIP in AEDP
Affective Change Processes Involving Relational Experience

- Explicit, Experiential Work with the Experience of Attachment: processing and working through, i.e., State 2 work, of attachment experience (adaptive and maladaptive aspects)

- Experiential Work with Receptive Experiences (empathy, attachment, care, recognition, transformation)

- Experiential Work with Moments of Positive Relational Experiences: moments of: meeting, soothing, seeing, understanding, helping, intersubjective contact, delight, repair, recognition

- The Experience of the Dyadic Coordination of Affective States: relational experiences of attunement, disruption and repair; and re-coordination

- Undoing Aloneness

- Intra-Relational Work with Ego States defense &/or processing work; internal attachment work; explicit focus on processing the moment to moment somatic/affective experience of relatedness to self

- Experiential Work with and the Affirmation of New, Emergent, Positive Relational Experiences: Metaprocessing Transformational Experiences
  Alternating waves of experience, with reflection on the experience, and the experience of the reflections leading to new emergent experience; then repeat the same process with new experience emerging from the transformational processing. There are many different aspects of transformational experience which are metaprocessed. Here I list some relational aspects of transformational experience and their metaprocessing (non-exhaustive list):
  - what is it like to do this with me?
  - what is it like to do this together?
  - “we”ness exploration
**AEDP: Essentials in Emergence**

**Transformation**
-- healing from the get go

-- transformance based understanding of the phenomena of both change for the worse (psychopathology) and change for the better (transformation)

-- articulation of multiple paths of transformation: affective change processes

**Undoing Aloneness**
-- centrality of aloneness in AEDP’s conceptualization of the development of psychopathology AND centrality of “undoing aloneness” as a key element in AEDP’s therapeutics

-- attachment-based and intersubjectively engaged therapeutic stance: going “being mirroring” by being explicitly affirmative, validating, inviting, welcoming, explicitly emotionally engaged (empathic, delighted, concerned, willing to help)

-- dyadic affect regulation

**Phenomenology of Transformational Experience**
Moment-to-moment tracking, phenomenologically guided & differential phenomenology to guide the work

-- somatic affective markers of transformational experience and processes that feel “right” and are on track

-- differential phenomenology of affects that need transforming vs. transforming affects

**Experiential work with experiences of emotion, self, attachment, relatedness and transformation**
-- articulation and definition of different aspects of relational experience (of both patient & therapist)
  -- expressive
  -- receptive
  -- dyadic

-- experiential work with relational experience
AEDP: Essentials in Emergence  (cont’d)

-- articulation of many affective change processes
and thus multiple paths for experiential transformational work

-- different experiential techniques to gain rapid access to and process somatically based adaptive potentially transformative experience, the genuine, core affective experience characterizing the many affective change processes

-- privileging the shift from negative to positive (from feeling bad to feeling good, from no to yes) that marks the transformation of previously overwhelming experience and the beginning of the active engagement of resilience and adaptive action tendencies previously also inaccessible

Metatherapeutic Processing of New, Emergent, Positive Transformational Experiences

-- key understanding: experientially processing transformational experience is transformational and unleashes a transformational process

-- phenomenology of transformation
  -- different metatherapeutic processes with their characteristic transformational affects

-- metatherapeutic processing: dialectical experiential and reflective techniques for working with transformational experience:
  -- metaprocessing: experiential & reflective techniques for working with in-the-moment change and the experience of change for the better, and with the positive affects that accompany change for the better, be it big or small

-- emergence based understanding of transformational phenomena

-- centrality of experiences guided by the “sense of truth” and the sense of things that feel “right” and “true” in the emergence of the experience of the essential self and the construction of an individual’s coherent and cohesive autobiographical narrative
**AEDP: Hx**

The roots of AEDP and the crises that led to it

a. psychoanalysis and the crisis of accountability and effectiveness

b. STDP accountable and effective but crisis of aggressive stance and even more importantly its pathology oriented understanding of the phenomena of therapy, specifically understanding psychopathology as a reflection of the harsh superego’s punishment of the self

c. thus AEDP, reflecting its roots AND in response to the crises that gave rise to it
   -- accountable and effective
   -- affirmative validating stance of empathic, “together with,” engagement
   -- transformance-based, healing oriented understanding of the phenomena of both psychopathology and healing
   -- the crucial importance of positive affect in a transformational model

the articulation of a phenomenology and a transformational theory

“... while its roots are psychodynamic (Davanloo, etc.), [AEDP’s] heart is experiential and phenomenological” (Ken Benau, AEDP listserve, July 2013)

**AEDP: In response to the crises that made it necessary** articulated

a. a theory and phenomenology of transformational experience;
b. a theory and phenomenology rooting transformational experience in relational safety, i.e., attachment, resonance, recognition, intersubjectivity; and

b. articulated its own specific path

Neglected in other approaches, and building on and assuming the contributions of other approaches, these are the phenomena that AEDP privileged, leaned into and build its theory on:

-- healing and transformance based phenomena
-- attachment based stance, tive delight
-- self-at-best manifestations
-- the moment
-- what’s new, emergent & positive
AEDP as transformational theory and AEDP as a specific model

While AEDP’s articulation of the phenomenology of the transformational process guides its own therapeutics, the phenomenology of the transformational process is not model-specific.

Affective change processes

Some phenomenological and experiential contributions
-- transformance detection
-- affective change processes
-- dyadic affect regulation
-- experiential work with attachment
-- experiential work with the positive realm of relational experiencing
-- experiential work with the receptive affective experiences
-- positive affective somatic markers of transformational experience
-- experiential processing to an affective shift
-- an affective shift from negative to positive being an opportunity for metaprocessing
-- metatherapeutic processing and the transformational spiral
-- gaze up as marker of healing affects
-- sense of truth as an affective market of core state
-- the experience of recognition and the sense of things being right in the sense of self

Reflecting its history and its own emergent transformational theory, AEDP Theory Biases

-- healing and transformance based phenomena
-- attachment based stance, sprinkled with intersubjective delight
-- self-at-best manifestations
-- the moment
-- what’s new, emergent & positive
AEDP as a therapy (in contradistinction to as a transformational theory) need not be the be-all and end-all. However --and this is a big however-- AEDP does not claim that its path is the one and only path.

Clinical phenomena and quandaries that AEDP thus defined doesn't apply to or address, e.g., defenses that don’t melt, enactments, are a spur to:

a. engage the wisdom of all the other approaches that have something to say about it (and, from an AEDP perspective, be in dialectic conversation with them)
b. developing and expanding AEDP theory and technique, e.g., Intra- Relational AEDP (AEDP I-R)

Correcting for declared AEDP biases: The Other Side of the Dialectic.

Entraining the Triangle of Comparisons

-- self-a best AND self at worst, transformance AND resistance: there is self-at-best, but also the richness of phenomena are in the realm of self-at-worst

-- there is the moment and not just the moment: and there

history over time, the kaleidoscope of all the moments over time constituting the individual’s history. the world in a

grain of sand (Blake) but also the infinitude multitude of grains of sand, each different from the other (I am making

assumptions that grains of sand are like snowflakes)

-- what’s emergent and present, but not only what’s emergent and present

Areas of challenge to present day AEDP

-- (in response to Andrea Goldberg and the discussion that ensued on the AEDP listserve:) transference/countertransference phenomena, enactments

-- especially, those experiences that evoke hatred and anger in the therapist (personal triggers, but also excluded truth)

-- what to do when defenses don’t melt, when self-at-best explorations meet walls, recalcitrance, and other self-at-worst phenomena
Part 2:
BEYOND SAFETY, TO VITALITY AND TRUTH

The Neurobiological Core Self & the Role of Recognition in the AEDP Treatment of Dissociation

SOME RELEVANT AEDP REFERENCES to the topic at hand
(references to developmental and neuroscience research at the end of the section)


INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY
The Neurobiological Core SELF as Fundamental Integrator: Damasio, Panksepp
The CNS in Emotion Regulation

“Ignoring the origins of things is always a risky matter”
(Edelman, 1992, p. 33)

“The core-SELF, i.e., the respective neural networks, provides primordial neural correlates that represent organisms as living creatures” (Panksepp & Northoff, 2008; use of capitals in original).

“The True Self comes from the aliveness of the body tissues and the working of the body functions, including the heart’s action and breathing. …..[It is] at he beginning, essentially not reactive to external stimuli, but primary… (the True Self) collect[s] together the details of the experience of aliveness…..[and is] the summation of sensori-motor aliveness” (Winnicott, 1960, p. 148-9).

“[The core self is] a dynamic collection of integrated neural processes, centered on the representation of the living body, that finds expression in a dynamic collection of integrated mental processes” (Damasio, 2010, p. 9).

“…the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self, hitherto divided … becomes unified…” (William James, 1902, p. 171)
INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY
The Neurobiological Core Self & Self-Related Processing (SPR) (cont’d)

The neurobiological SELF
- is constituted of the coordinated functioning of subcortical midline structures in conjunction with cortical midline structures (with the periaqueductal gray at the relay center, massive interconnections link upper brainstem regions to higher medial regions of the frontal and prefrontal cortices, and vice-versa)
- fundamental integrative function
- automatic, affective, and action-based
- coherence
- self-related processing (SRP) and the self-related valuation of stimuli
- seeking (motivation): drive (energy), direction, reward (dopamine)

The Midline Structures of the NEUROBIOLOGICAL CORE SELF: Subcortical (Limbic) & Cortical:

The coordinated functioning of subcortical midline structures in conjunction with cortical midline structures is what constitutes the neurobiological self
- periaqueductal gray
- superior colliculi
- brainstem region
  - connect to
    - medial regions of the prefrontal cortex
    - medial regions of the frontal cortex

The midline structures of the neurobiological core self have a bidirectional connection to and with
- insula
- anterior cingulate
- right hemisphere
INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY
The Neurobiological Core Self & Self-Related Processing (SPR) (cont’d)

SOME QUALITIES OF THE NEUROBIOLOGICAL CORE SELF
The self’s activities are guided by self-related values, i.e., the values selectively accorded to environmental stimuli reflecting their salience to self – and those values being both unique to the individual and emergent.

- coherence, organization
- drive, direction
- self-related values: the values selectively accorded to environmental stimuli reflecting their salience to self; unique to the individual and emergent
- sense of identity
- agency, initiative
- ownership of experience
- behavioral coherence
- viewing the world through the lens of self-related values
- felt sense of “I”
- guided by recognition processes

The bidirectional coordination of subcortical and cortical midline structures that constitutes the neurobiological core SELF is manifested through the fundamentally integrated affective/cognitive processes that give rise to

- identity
- agency
- ownership of experience
- behavioral coherence

TAGS OF THE NEUROBIOLOGICAL CORE SELF (see next page)

- the tag of coherence
- the tag of seeking
- the tag of recognition, and its marker: the click of recognition
- the tag of aliveness, vitality, energy

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INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY
The Neurobiological Core Self & Self-Related Processing (SPR) (cont’d)

The SEEKING SYSTEM in SRP (Panksepp, Northoff)

The SEEKING system is “the active explorer inside the brain” (Panksepp, 2009, p. 9)
“This appetitive motivational system energizes the many engagements with the world as individuals seek goods from the environment as well as meaning from everyday occurrences of life. …[It is] a system that energizes our intentions in actions.” (Panksepp, 2009, p. 9)
- motivational system, reward system: dopamine mediated
- cued by the felt sense of recognition
- direction, drive
- fuel for life: “neural energy,” vitality
- pleasurable

DOPAMINE, Fuel of the Seeking System

Dopamine is the fuel of the self’s seeking. Like oxytocin, dopamine flows in conditions of low stress and threat (MacDonald, 2012, personal communication). In facilitating environments, i.e., in transformance-based conditions, the seeking system of the neurobiological core self can come to the fore and epigenetically unfold. However, in affectively thwarting environments, where stress/threat are high, not regulated and thus cannot be rapidly metabolized (Schore, 2009), the combo of oxytocin and dopamine is supplanted by the neurotransmitters of stress management.²

² While dopamine and cortisol (the HPA axis) are inversely related, oxytocin and dopamine are congruent and positively correlated (MacDonald, 2012, personal communication).

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INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY
The Neurobiological Core Self & Self-Related Processing (SPR) (cont’d)

The Link with NEUROPLASTICITY (Doidge, Siegel)

The qualities of pleasure and reward are essential features for processes that support neuroplasticity (Doidge, 2007; Siegel, 2010): pursuits that are rewarding and pleasurable become recursive appetitive processes, where more begets more and thus the brain changes (Fosha, 2009a, 2009b; Fredrickson, 2001, 2009; Ghent, 2002). Vitality and energy are the affective/somatic markers of such processes. Manifestations of seeking, in conjunction with the self-related valuation of stimuli, are to be found in experiences of agency, initiative, enthusiasm, and drive (From Fosha, in press, p. 8 in manuscript).

Manifesting neuroplasticity in clinical action transormance, positive affect, motivation/drive and energy are organically aligned (Fosha, 2010).
APPLIED INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY

THE FELT CORE SELF: Positive experiences of
- vitality, energy
- recognition
- meaning
- knowing, truth

The felt core self. Deeply felt moments of personal truth, vitality, energy, agency, and coherence from a self-related perspective, spontaneously emerge at meaningful moments of existence; they are also a feature of core state, the state of calm and integration that is the culmination of the transformational process. Deeply pleasurable --again pleasurable not in the sense of happy, but in the sense of feeling deeply right and true-- at these moments, the individual has a sense that “this is me.” Metaprocessing the experience of such moments leads to further unfolding: both the felt sense of “I” and the “this is me” experience deepen, consolidate and becomes more textured. This is the felt core self: it is as close as we get to an instantiation of the neurobiological core self in actual experience.

If the self that is evident at moments of self-at-best living is the diamond in the rough, the self that emerges in moments of core state experiencing, the felt core self, is a brilliant crystalline diamond, all facets sparkling, clean and sharp. Such moments allow us to directly witness, experience, and thus grasp the essence of core self though its phenomena and experiential manifestations.

There is something in such moments that is orienting, organizing and transformational. A paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1970) takes place: there is a re-organization of self based on felt core self experiencing, which affects self in both feed-forward and feed-back mechanisms. There is a re-representation of everything in light of the new experience: it is this new self, so to speak, that will now define the lens through which self-related processing will proceed from this point forward, including how the past is viewed.

3 Where positive refers not necessarily to happy, but rather refers to experiences marked by a felt sense of feeling “right,” or “true.”

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ON RECOGNITION – the Glimpse of the Core

Recognition is the phenomenon through which we glimpse core self and truth prior to being in core state

“I see you.”
And I see —and feel—you, even before you see —and feel—youself

Recognition, via the self-related processing (see below) it evokes and is guided by, sometimes offers us a glimpse —and sometimes more than a glimpse— into experiences and fundamental understandings that we usually only have access to in core state: core self, truth, and the sense of knowing. The clouds part and there it all is.

Recognition, i.e., re-cognition, is not a primarily left brain phenomenon, rather it is deeply integrative re-cognition— probably involving one’s own SRPs, as well as the pre-frontal cortex and the mirror neuron rich insula

Guided by Truth & Recognition, SELF Comes to AEDP (SELF Emerges from “We”)
And so, we return to the beginning:

there is dissociation, fragmentation, numbness and then there is the self and its
tags and glimmers

which one do we lean into, while keeping the other one in mind?

IN CONCLUSION:

“…
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time”

T. S. Eliot *Little Gidding* (No. 4 of ‘Four Quartets”)
SOME REFERENCES for recent RESEARCH relevant to the NEUROBIOLOGICAL CORE SELF & DISSOCIATION


COMPREHENSIVE AEDP REFERENCES

DVDs
  www.apa.org/videos/4310759.html

BOOKS

BOOK CHAPTERS & JOURNAL ARTICLES


Fosha, D. (2009). Healing attachment trauma with attachment (…and then some!). In M. Kerman (Ed.), *Clinical pearls of wisdom: 21 leading therapists offer their key insights* (pp. 43-56). New York: Norton.


Hopper, E & Gleiser, K. (*in preparation*). Reaching across the abyss: Relational stance and relational strategies to heal from neglect and emotional abuse. In: E. Hopper, F.


http://pcsp.libraries.rutgers.edu


www.transformancejournal.com
THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF
THE TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESS
The 4 States and 3 State Transformations

STATE 1: TRANSFORMANCE
Glimmers of resilience, health, strength; manifestations of the drive to heal

STATE 2: THE PROCESSING OF EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE
Categorical emotions; attachment experiences; coordinated relational experiences; receptive affective experiences; somatic “drop-down” states; intersubjective experiences of pleasure; authentic self states; embodied ego states and their associated emotions; core needs; attachment strivings.

STATE 3: THE METAPROCESSING OF TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCE
THE TRANSFORMATIONAL AFFECTS
The mastery affects (e.g., pride, joy); emotional pain associated with mourning-the-self; the tremulous affects associated with the experience of quantum change; the healing affects (e.g., gratitude, feeling moved) associated with the affirmation of the self; the realization affects (e.g., the “yes!” and “wow” affects; the “click” of recognition) associated with new understanding

STATE 4: CORE STATE AND THE TRUTH SENSE
Openness; compassion and self-compassion; wisdom, generosity, kindness; clarity; calm, flow, ease; the sense of things feeling “right”; capacity to construct a coherent and cohesive autobiographical narrative

FIRST STATE TRANSFORMATION
Co-creating safety

SECOND STATE TRANSFORMATION
The emergence of resilience

THIRD STATE TRANSFORMATION
The co-engendering of secure attachment and the positive valuation of the self

TRANSITIONAL AFFECTS
HERALDING AFFECTS:
Glimmers of core affective experience
GREEN SIGNAL AFFECTS
Announcing openness to experience, signaling safety, readiness to shift

ADAPTIVE ACTION TENDENCIES
POST-BREAKTHROUGH AFFECTS:
Relief, hope, feeling stronger, lighter, etc

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Security of attachment is relationship-dependent.

THE SELF–OTHER–EMOTION TRIANGLE
The Internal Working Model Enlarged to Include Emotion and its Regulation

AFFECTIVE STATE associated with the gestalt of each Self-Other-Emotion configuration

THE SELF–AT–WORST

THE SELF–AT–BEST

COMPROMISED SELF
DEFENSE
EMOTION
(PATHOGENIC AFFECTS & UNBEARABLE STATES OF ALONENESS)

TRIGGERING OTHER
RED-SIGNAL AFFECTS

EFFECTIVE SELF
SOFT DEFENSES
EMOTION
(CORE AFFECTIVE PHENOMENA)

REALISTIC OTHER
GREEN-SIGNAL AFFECTS
1a. SELF-AT-WORST FUNCTIONING—PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

DEFENSES
against emotional experience; against relational experience

RED-SIGNAL AFFECTS:
anxiety, unease, trace amounts of pathogenic affects

PATHOGENIC AFFECTS

UNBEARABLE STATES OF ALONENESS

Does not lead to core affective experience

1b. SELF-AT-BEST FUNCTIONING—FLOURISHING

SOFT DEFENSES
Communication, delay, appropriateness

GREEN-SIGNAL AFFECTS
Hope, curiosity, willingness to trust, to take risks

CORE AFFECTIVE PHENOMENAA

TRANSFORMATIONAL AFFECTS; ADAPTIVE ACTION TENDENCIES

CORE STATE
THE TRIANGLE OF RELATIONAL COMPARISONS
Its Interrelatedness With the Triangle of Experience and the Self-Other-Emotion Triangle

TRIANGLE OF RELATIONAL COMPARISONS
C Current relationships
T Therapeutic relationships
P Past relationships

SELF–OTHER–EMOTION TRIANGLE (Self-at-Worst or Self-at-Best)
S Self
O Other
E Emotion

TRIANGLE OF EXPERIENCE
D Defense
SA Signal affects (Red or Green)
E Emotion