

Attachment Injuries

From OCFI Externship July 2003 & An Externship in Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy

A betrayal of trust – abandonment at a crucial moment of need.

Form of relationship trauma – define relationship as insecure.

Create impasses in relationship repair.

Attachment significance – not content – is key.

Indelible imprint – the only way out is through.

Resolution of Attachment Injuries

1. Articulate injury & impact (Client says, "NEVER AGAIN!")
2. Other acknowledges hurt partner's pain. Elaborates on evolution of event. (They say how it happened. They become predictable to other spouse.)
3. Hurt partner integrates narrative & emotion. Accesses attachment fears and longings.
4. Other owns responsibility (rather than defends) and expresses regret. Stays empathically engaged.
5. Hurt partner asks for comfort & reassurance.
6. Other responds – antidote bonding event.
7. Relationship is redefined as safe haven. New narrative is constructed.