

Case Formulation in Emotion-Focused Therapy

LESLIE S. GREENBERG
RHONDA GOLDMAN

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE APPROACH

Emotion-focused therapy (EFT) also known as process-experiential therapy (PE), is a neohumanistic experiential approach to therapy reformulated in terms of modern emotion theory and affective neuroscience (Greenberg, 2002; Elliott, Watson, Goldman, & Greenberg, 2004; Greenberg & Johnson, 1988; Greenberg, Rice, & Elliott, 1993; Greenberg & Watson, 2005). This model is informed by both humanistic-phenomenological theory (Rogers, 1951, 1957; Perls, Hofferline, & Goodman, 1951), emotion and cognition theory (Arnold, 1960; Fridja, 1986; Pascual-Leone, 1984, 1991; Leventhal, 1986; Greenberg & Safran, 1987), affective neuroscience (Le Doux, 1996; Davidson, 2002; Lane & Nadel, 2000), and dynamic and family systems theory (Thelen & Smith, 1994). EFT focuses on moment-by-moment awareness, regulation, expression, transformation and reflection on emotion in the practice of therapy with the goal of strengthening the self and creating new meaning.

The EFT approach to case formulation is very much embedded within the humanistic tradition, specifically client-centered and Gestalt therapy. Neither of these therapy theories, however, originally developed a case formulation approach. Gestalt therapy (Perls et al., 1951) did not directly use case formulation, but it did identify certain problem determinants such as interruptions to contact with self and other or neurotic self-regulation. In-

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