

WIRED for HEALING

AEDP:

The Dyadic Healing of
Attachment Trauma

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New York
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Healing Unexplainable Pain
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A Motto for Translational Research? ... the whole structural connection of the thing... up and down, both ways

“Which end is nearer to God, if I may use religious metaphor, beauty and hope, or the fundamental laws? I think that the right way of course, is to say that what we have to look at is *the whole structural interconnection of the thing*; and that all the sciences, and not just the sciences but all the efforts of intellectual kinds, are an endeavor to see the connections of the hierarchies, to connect beauty to history, to connect human history to human psychology, human psychology to the working of the brain, the brain to the neural impulse, the neural impulse to the chemistry, and so forth, *up and down, both ways*. And today we cannot, and it is no use believing that we can, draw carefully a line all the way from one end of this thing to the other, because we have only just begun to see that there is this relative hierarchy. And I do not think either end is nearer to God.”

Richard Feynman, quoted in Edelman, 1992, emphasizes added, and “man’s” changed to “human”).

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AEDP is.....

... a healing oriented therapeutic method that uses the active promotion of dyadic social bonds to:

- reduce stress
- co-create safety
- promote emotion regulation &
- expand the realm of transformational experiences

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AEDP is.....

... a healing oriented mind/body therapy that

- cultivates **interpersonal rhythms**
- nurtures the capacity for people to use **right brain-to-right brain communication**, i.e., their voices and faces, **to regulate emotional states**
- uses **experiential methods** to **regulate intense emotions** – both
 - the **“heart-breaking, gut-wrenching”** emotions of trauma, and
 - the **positive emotions** of healing transformation
- uses **metatherapeutic methods** to **integrate somatically based emotional experiences** with **relational and reflective capacities**.

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AEDP's Therapeutic Stance:

- **Positive embodied** attachment informed and intersubjectively engaged therapeutic relationship that seeks to replicate “the sociobiology of kin-recognition, secure attachment, limbic resonance, mammalian caregiving and early development”
- **Relationally reparative stance** aimed at undoing aloneness in the face of embodied experience
- **Attachment-based, affect-facilitating** therapeutic relationship
- Embodied positive **emotional engagement, dyadic mindfulness**, and **affirmative advocacy** on behalf of clients and their knowing

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AEDP is.....

... a healing oriented, mind/body experiential therapy with roots in

- Attachment theory and research
- Interpersonal Neurobiology
- Emotion theory
- Transformational studies
- Somatically based trauma studies
- Psychodynamics, Relational Psychoanalysis
- Developmental studies of caregiver-child interactions
- Positive neuroplasticity studies

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AEDP ...

“... helped me see the truth lives in the body.
The sensation of lining up our external actions with our
inner truth (whatever that may be) is powerful on both a
visceral and emotional level.”

(according to patient SD)

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Steve Porges on AEDP

“From the outside, it looks like a well choreographed opera pulling the observer through the client’s emotional challenges being guided by the combined energy of the client’s sincere wish to transform and the therapist’s confidence in the transformative process.”

(personal communication, 10/28/17)

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At its essence, AEDP is change-based & healing-oriented in its therapeutics

- At its essence, **AEDP is transformation-based & healing-oriented** in its therapeutics, i.e., its theory of therapy
- We already all believe in quantum change. it is called trauma. **AEDP is about quantum change in the realm of healing**
- In AEDP, healing is not just a desired outcome; it is also a *process, an experience, and a dispositional tendency always at the ready.*
- **Healing from the get-go.** Enter *transformance*, but 1st, **neuroplasticity**

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Neuroplasticity

- *"The power to direct our attention has the power to shape the brain's firing patterns, as well as the power to shape the architecture of the brain itself"* (Siegel, 2010).
- *"Many tastes we think 'natural' are acquired through learning and become 'second nature' to us. We are unable to distinguish our 'second nature' from our 'original nature' because our neuroplastic brains, once rewired, develop a new nature, every bit as biological as our original"* (Doidge, 2007).

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The Constituents of Well Being

The World Happiness Report (2015)

from WHO (the World Health Organization, not the band)

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From **The World Happiness Report (2015)***: The 4 constituents of well-being

- **Sustained positive emotion: savoring** (AEDP: privileging the positive; “stay with it;” metaprocessing)
- **Recovery from negative emotion: resilience** (AEDP: processing to an affective shift, experientially heightening resilience)
- **Empathy, altruism and pro-social behavior** (AEDP: therapeutic stance, dyadic regulation, core state)
- **Mindfulness: counter to ‘mind wandering’ and ‘affective stickiness’** (AEDP: focus, staying with, metaprocessing)

Reference: Davidson & Schuyler (2015), pp. 88-105
<http://worldhappiness.report/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/04/WHR15.pdf>

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Conclusions from The World Happiness Report (2015)*

“The circuits we identify as underlying these four constituents of well-being all exhibit plasticity and thus can be transformed through experience and training....”

Enter **AEDP**

Reference: Davidson & Schuyler (2015), pp. 88-105
<http://worldhappiness.report/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/04/WHR15.pdf>

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Conditions that promote POSITIVE NEUROPLASTICITY, i.e., change for the better

- **focused attention** (activates the nucleus basalis, which secretes acetylcholine, which strengthens synaptic connections)
- **emotional arousal**: need to work at the edge: safe but not too safe
- **novelty** (also stimulates growth of new neurons)
- **repetition, practice** of new experiences, skills
- **motivation**: when an organism is motivated to learn (drive to explore), the brain responds plastically
- **pleasure/reward** (dopamine and acetylcholine consolidate the changes just made) – manifested in positive affect and positive affective markers

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Mechanisms of Change in AEDP

- **Transformance, Privileging Healing** – the glimmer— the daisy – Positive Somatic Affective Markers
- **Undoing Aloneness & Dyadic Affect Regulation** - It takes two to tango Attachment & Intersubjectivity. Safety, Connection, Dyadic Affect Regulation, Positive Bond
- **Experiential Work with Embodied Experience** - EXPERIENTIAL Work with the experience of: Emotion, Relationship, Receptive Affective Experiences, Healing, Transformation EAffective Change Processes
- **Transformation as a Transformational Process** — METATHERAPEUTIC PROCESSING -Work with Transformational Experience Guided by a Phenomenology of the Transformational Process:
- **Emergence** - Privileging the New, the Good, the Positive, the Emergent – Working the Edge of Transformational Experience

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Ultimately, AEDP's
fundamental change mechanism is
the focus on &
the experiential work with
the **MOMENT of CHANGE** for the **BETTER**
and then exp. work with what emerges



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Fundamentals of AEDP

A Healing Orientation

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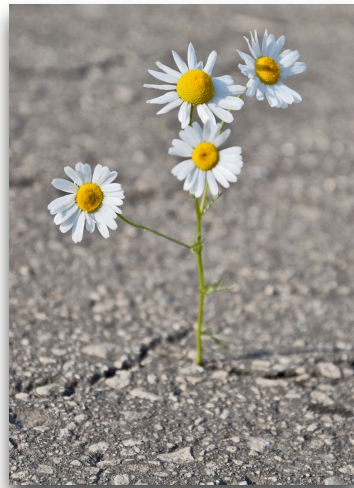
**“the realignment of one’s mode of being...
a signal switch and a track change”**

"**Healing** is not simply the receipt and integration of some exogenous corrective experience but, rather, or also, **the realignment of one’s mode of being** from resistance to transformance, from conservation and safety to expansion and freedom. **It is a signal switch and a track change.** One starts to use something that has been there but has been dormant or distorted and therefore unable to serve one’s needs for expansion, exploration, and the elaboration of one’s true self."

Russell, 2015, p. 252

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What is transformance?

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Transformance

- *"People have a fundamental need for transformation. We are wired for growth and healing. And we are wired for self-righting, and resuming impeded growth. We have a need for the expansion and liberation of the self, the letting down of defensive barriers, and the dismantling of the false self. We are shaped by a deep desire to be known, seen, and recognized as we strive to come into contact with parts of ourselves that are frozen"*

Fosha, 2008

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Transformance is... Neuroplasticity in action

- Wired deep within our brains we find innate dispositional tendencies reflecting a wired-in drive toward growth, learning, healing, and self-righting. They are there for the activating and press toward expression when circumstances are right. Unlike the conservative motivational strivings under the aegis of resistance, which consume and drain psychic energy, transformance-based motivational strivings, when actualized, are energizing and vitalizing.
- Positive markers – vitality affects – energy and vitality
- Moment to-moment
- Always present as dispositional tendencies
- Always in balance with the forces of resistance

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The fundamental importance of SAFETY...



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...for TRANSFORMANCE, and its vitalizing affects, to come to the fore



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Fundamentals of AEDP

Undoing Aloneness & Co-Creating Safety

The Experiential Route

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Bowlby on Emotions & Attachment Bonds

“Many of the most intense emotions arise during the formation, the maintenance, the disruption, and the renewal of attachment relationships. . . . Because such emotions are usually a reflection of the state of a person’s affectional bonds, the psychology and psychopathology of emotion is found to be in large part the psychology and psychopathology of affectional bonds”

(Bowlby, 1980).

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Bowlby on Attachment:

An integral part of human nature, a vital role to play in life



- “The urge to keep proximity or accessibility to someone seen as stronger or wiser, and *who if responsive is deeply loved*, comes to be recognized as an integral part of human nature and as having a vital role to play in life”
- (Bowlby, 1991, p. 293)

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UNDOING ALONENESS



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UNDOING ALONENESS:
Attachment Relationships: Major Organizers
of Brain Development



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UNDOING ALONENESS: ATTACHMENT
Co-creating SAFETY
The transmission of support

Image courtesy of Ben Lipton

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Love & care in the face of distress



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RESONANCE, INTERSUBJECTIVE DELIGHT



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AEDP's Therapeutic Stance: How to Undo Aloneness

- be a transference detective,
- be kind, be real, be present, be generous, be with
- be tender and own lapses with sincerity
- undo the patient's aloneness in the face of overwhelming emotional experience
- make use of regulating power of gaze, attuned eye contact
- go beyond mirroring, help, engage in dyadic affect regulation
- foster positively toned interactions
- repair negatively toned interactions
- make the implicit explicit, and make the explicit experiential
- stay with it and stay with me: 30 sec or more needed for new synaptic connection
- 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

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Fundamentals of AEDP

Experience,
Experience,
Experience

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ACCESSING BRAIN SYSTEMS

**ATTACHMENT
EMOTION
SOMATIC EXPERIENCE
HEALING
TRANSFORMATION**

Bypassing defenses and anxiety, and accessing somatically-based, wired-in, adaptive processes, naturally wired to lead intrinsically adaptive ends

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The “E” in AEDP is for EXPERIENTIAL

***E*xperiences of ATTACHMENT
*E*xperiences of EMOTION
*E*xperiences of SOMATIC sensations
*E*xperiences of HEALING
*E*xperiences of TRANSFORMATION**

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How Do We Rewire Attachment Models?

AEDP works experientially with

1. The Attachment Relationship
2. Moments of Change for the Better, i.e., Now Moments & Wow! Moments
3. Transformational Experience, i.e., Metaprocessing
4. Emergence: Staying on the Edge of Positive Neuroplasticity by Focusing on What's New and Emergent

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Porges: The Features of Safety

- *“Connectedness is a biological imperative” (Porges, in press)*
- *“A bias on the features of danger neglects the profound sensitivity that humans have to features of safety and how exposure to these features can promote development and foster resilience... Thus, it is not merely the removal of features of danger, but the active presentation of features of safety that our nervous system craves.” (Porges, 2015)*
- *“The neuroception of familiar individuals and individuals with appropriately prosodic voices and warm, expressive faces translates into a social interaction promoting a sense of safety” (Porges, 2011).*

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AEDP: Dyadic Affect Regulation

“The capacity to fully experience one’s feelings, particularly when they are intense and/or painful, is greatly enhanced by being able to do so with a supportive, empathic, and emotionally present other who is willing to share experiences and help with their management. This is the essence of dyadic regulation: the individual has expanded affect regulatory capacities resulting from the combined resources of the dyad, which s/he eventually internalizes, that is, makes her/his own. Being in an emotionally connected relationship based on empathic attunement and support enhances the person’s capacity to feel without needing to develop strategies to minimize, numb, or mute feeling”

Fosha, 2001

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THERAPEUTIC ACTIVITIES DYADIC ENGAGEMENT

- Psychobiological state attunement
- Empathy
- Affective resonance
- Gaze sharing – eye contact
- Mutually shared pleasure
- Affective engagement
- Play



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Allan Schore: Positive Affects of Resonance Are Required for Optimal Brain Growth

- The maintenance of positive affective states associated with dyadic experiences of affective resonance has been shown to be crucial to optimal neurobiological development. "The baby's brain is not only affected by these interactions, its growth literally requires brain-brain interactions and occurs in the context of a positive relationship between mother and infant" (Schore, 1996, p. 62).
- "The mother's face is triggering high levels of endogenous opiates in the child's growing brain. These endorphins ... act directly on subcortical reward centers of the infant's brain" (Schore, 1996, p. 63).
- The child is motivated to enter into such a "reciprocal reward system" because "euphoric states are perhaps the most appetitively compelling experiences available to life forms as so far evolved" (Schwartz, 1990, p. 125, quoted in Schore, 1996, p. 62).

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The roots of resilience: Existing in the heart and mind of the other

"The roots of resilience and the capacity to withstand emotionally aversive situations without resorting to defensive exclusion are to be found in the sense of being understood by and *existing in the mind and heart* of a loving, attuned, and self-possessed other"

Fosha, 2000.

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Working with Relational Experience

Developing a Sense of Existing in the Heart and Mind of the Other, as oneself

Existing in the heart and mind of the other: how to work experientially with receptive affective experience, and use the client's sense of feeling felt and being seen, to deepen our clients' resilience and sense of self

When working from an attachment perspective and working to create a therapeutic relationship characterized by secure attachment, the importance of "taking in" and thus making use of what is given is crucial, and indispensable in doing transformative work with attachment trauma.

- Receptive Affective Experience
- Feeling felt, feeling seen, feeling cared about
- Explore the client's experience of the therapist's empathy and care
- How to work with blocks to taking in empathy and care

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Work with Receptive Affective Experience

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EXPERIENTIAL work with Receptive Affective experiences

feeling seen

feeling felt

feeling cared for

feeling helped

feeling loved

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Fundamentals of AEDP

Privileging the Positive

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Damasio:

"Human emotion is not just about...

..... sexual pleasures or fear of snakes. It is also about the horror of witnessing suffering and the satisfaction of seeing justice served; about our delight at the sensuous smile of Jeanne Moreau or the thick beauty of words and ideas in Shakespeare's verse; about the world weary voice of Fischer-Dieskau singing *Bach's Ich habe genug* and the simultaneously earthly and otherworldly phrasing of Maria Joao Pires playing any Mozart, any Schubert; and about the harmony that Einstein sought in the structure of an equation."

Damasio, 1999

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Why Privileging the Positive? Broaden & Build, Promote Thrival

- **Why focus on positive affects & positive affective interactions** (Willie Sutton)
- **Vitality & energy:** fuel for life
- **Positive affective interactions**
 - Constituents of secure attachment (Schoore, Panksepp)
 - Contributors to resilience (Tronick, Trevarthen)
 - Quality of relationship over time (Frederickson, Gable, Algoe)
- **Positive affects: Flourishing** (Frederickson)
- **Neural energy** (Panksepp): The Seeking System
- **Motivation to learn, explore:** Zest
 - "We shall not cease from exploration" T. S. Eliot
 - Memory consolidation (Adcock, LaBar)

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Fundamentals of AEDP

Experiential Work with
Transformational Experience

Metatherapeutic Processing

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FOCUS ON TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCE: Neurotransmitters

METAPROCESSING,
Transformational Affects & Positive
Affect:

Oxytocin (Safety, Calm),

Dopamine (Exploration, Vitality),

Endorphins (Well Being)

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METAPROCESSING: The Processing of Transformational Experience

- **Metatherapeutic processing**, or **metaprocessing** for short, is the **experiential processing of the experience of transformation**, constituting of alternating waves of experience and reflection
- The explicit focus on the experience of transformation activates another round of transformation
- AEDP privileges the experience of transformation and the sense of aliveness that marks it
- Metatherapeutic processes are accompanied by their own specific *transformational affects*, which are invariably positive

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Metaprocessing & Pleasure: The processing of transformational experience & the positive affect associated with it



- "When the mind regards itself and its own power of activity, it feels *pleasure*: and that *pleasure* is greater in proportion to the distinctness wherewith it conceives itself and its own power of activity"

Spinoza

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**Metaprocessing &
The Felt Sense of the Connected “Me”**
Self comes to mind, Experience comes to Self



”In the forward-moving feast we call self ... there [is] a *feelingness* of the experience of the connected me”

Damasio, 2010

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THE MOMENT OF CHANGE

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The Moment of Change



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The Moment of Change



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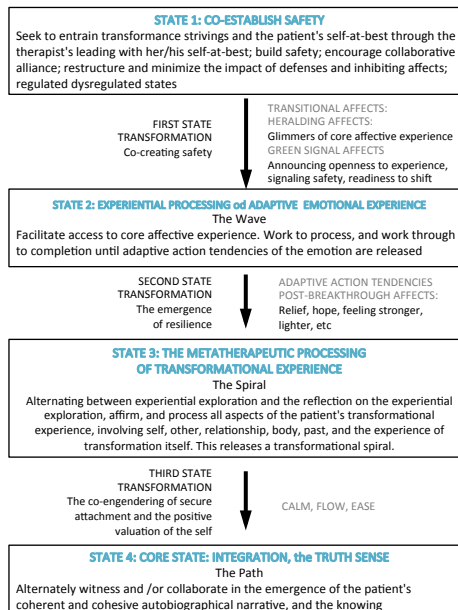
IN CONCLUSION

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SAFETY, EXPERIENCE, AFFIRMATION, INTEGRATION

The 4 States and 3 State Transformations of the Transformational Process in AEDP



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AEDP: The Transformational Process

Safety, Experience, Transformation, Integration

- State 1. Co-Create Safety, Detect Transformance,**
Undo aloneness, minimize barriers to somatically based experience & amplify glimmers of core emotion
- State 2. Facilitate and Process Emotional Experience (and the Experience of other Affective Change Processes)**
Process and work through til release of adaptive action tendencies & post breakthrough
- State 3. Affirm Transformation & Process Transformational Experience**
Metatherapeutic Processing
- State 4. Promote & Foster Reflection & Integration, New Meaning**
Core State: the sense of truth

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AEDP

Safety, Experience, Affirmation, Integration

1. **Co-Create Safety, Detect Transformance**
 - Undo aloneness & minimize barriers to somatically based experience
2. **Facilitate and Process Emotional Experience (and the Experience of other Affective Change Processes)**
 - Process and work through til release of adaptive action tendencies
3. **Affirm Transformation & Process Transformational Experience**
 - Metatherapeutic Processing
4. **Promote & Foster Reflection & Integration, New Meaning**
 - Core State: the sense of truth

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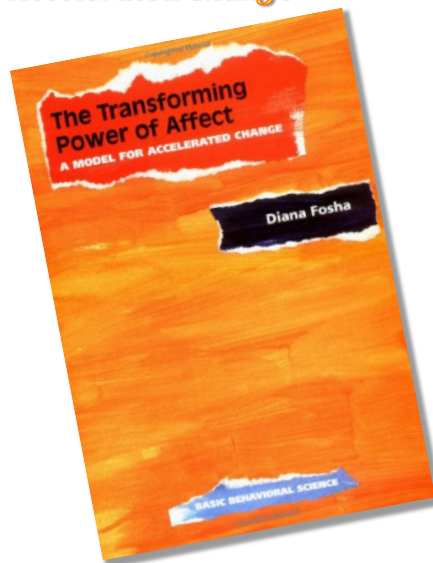


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Fosha (2000)

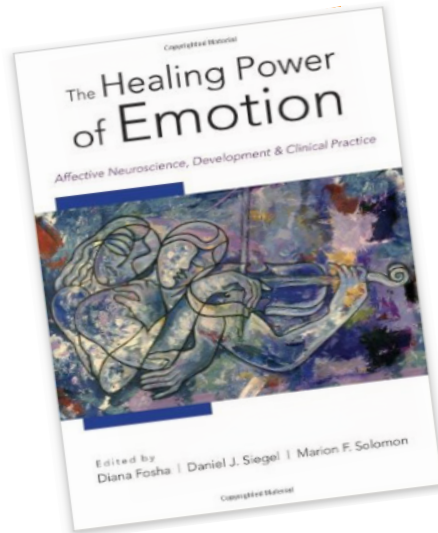
*The Transforming Power of Affect:
A Model for Accelerated Change*



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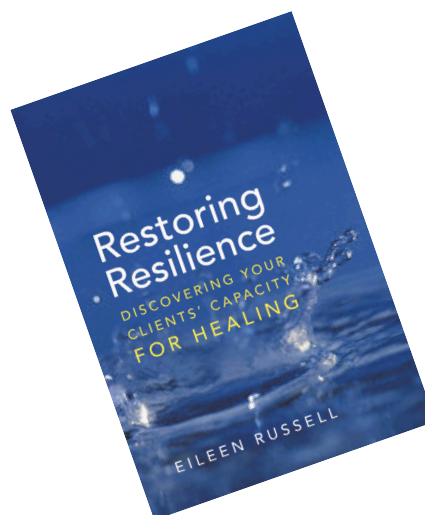
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*The Healing Power of Emotion:
Affective Neuroscience, Development and Clinical Practice*



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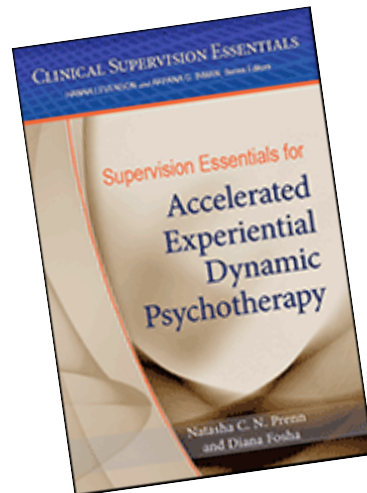
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