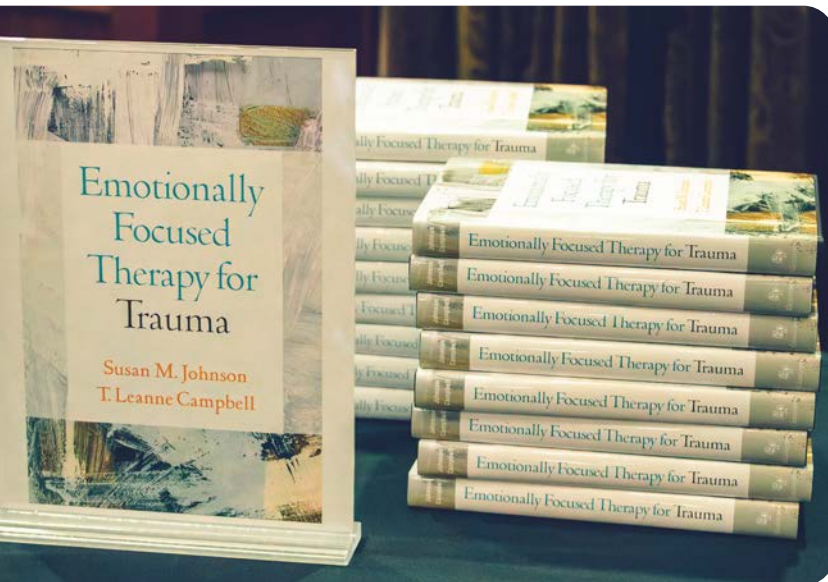


# the EFT community news

68th ISSUE JANUARY 2026



International Centre for Excellence  
in Emotionally Focused Therapy

## Vision Statement

ICEEFT is the home and centre for educating mental health professionals committed to expanding Emotionally Focused Therapy in the world and creating a professional network for those interested in this model.



## A Message from the Chief Editor

David Fairweather

Welcome to the 68<sup>th</sup> issue of *the EFT community news*! It has been a great honour to serve as Chief Editor of this wonderful publication for the past 6 years and I want to sincerely thank John Douglas for inviting me to take on this role. Much gratitude also to the writers and contributors over the years, and of course, the Editorial Board members for their keen insight and dedication. A very special thank you to Jackie Evans for her immense talent, tireless commitment, and for making it fun all along. Great appreciation also to you, the readership, for supporting the ICEEFT organization and for valuing this newsletter as part of your membership. And finally, of course, thank you to Sue. Your wonderful model continues to inspire so many of us far and wide. To me, you'll always be that feisty and magnetic young professor, forty years ago, who strode into the University of Ottawa lecture hall, wearing leather pants, and telling incredible stories about psychotherapy, the power of empathy, and the healing force of authentic emotional connection in rela-

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tionships. You changed my life, as you have changed the lives of so many others! And with that said, I say goodbye and again, thank you! I am very happy now

to welcome EFT Trainer Giulia Altera as the incoming Chief Editor of *the EFT community news*!

David Fairweather

### THANK YOU! To our Chief Editor, David Fairweather

David Fairweather brought four decades of clinical experience to this newsletter, a wonderful depth of knowledge of EFT, a calm and easy-going nature, and an endless sense of humour that always made working with him a pleasure. The ICEEFT Board is immensely grateful for his commitment to maintaining both the integrity of the EFT model and the high standards of this publication.

As David steps back from training and editing du-

ties, we want to extend a massive thank you and best wishes for the future. Thank you David!

### Welcome Giulia Altera!

As we bid farewell to David, we introduce EFT Trainer Giulia Altera as she steps into the role of Chief Editor. Giulia fell in love with EFT from her first encounter with Sue. Since becoming a trainer in 2020, she has supported the spread of EFT not only in her home country of Italy, but also in Brazil, Iran, and other international settings. A passionate reader and writer, she has accepted this role with enthusiasm. ICEEFT is delighted to welcome Giulia into this role.

## A Moment in History and a Launch Forward for the Treatment of Trauma

On January 8, 2026, with a full house in Victoria, British Columbia, and over a thousand online registrants, we gathered for the launch of *Emotionally Focused Therapy for Trauma*, Sue Johnson's final professional book, co-authored with Leanne Campbell. The positive energy was palpable and uplifting!

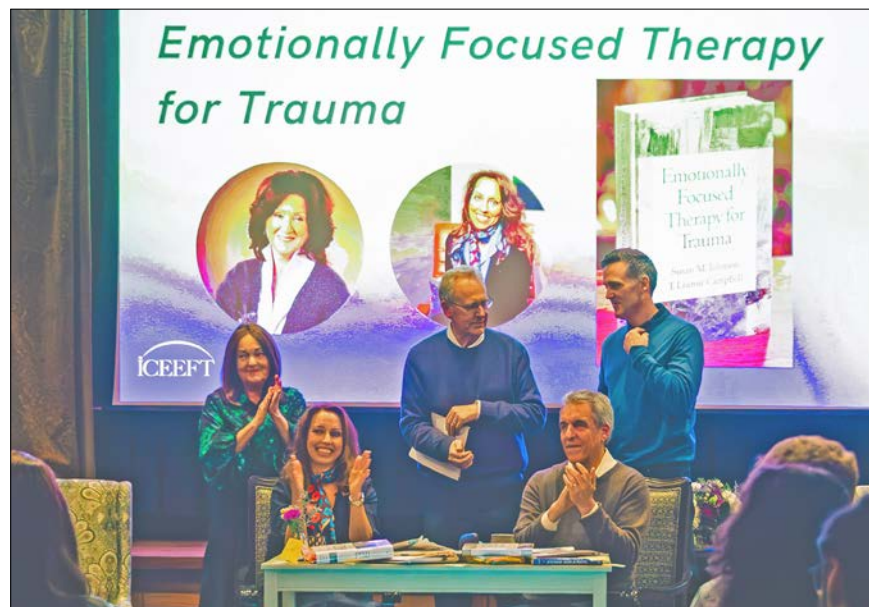
The hybrid event brought together members of the EFT community from around the globe for an evening of reflection and discussions on trauma and attachment, and how EFT has the potential to revolutionize the treatment of trauma.

In-person contributions from George Faller, David Fairweather, Robin Williams Blake, Jim Furrow, Gail Palmer, and Leanne Campbell were interspersed with video clips of Sue and world-renowned attachment specialist Mario Mikulincer. Speakers were gathered around a kitchen table with teacups and sticky notes strewn about—an ode to the setting in which the book had been written—flanked by a screen to feature the words and wisdom of Sue and Mario.

The tone of the conversations struck a beautiful balance—honouring Sue and her extraordinary contributions to the field, while also looking ahead with inspiration and momentum. There was a shared feeling of hope about the difference this work can make as the EFT model continues to expand by formally addressing and outlining an EFT approach to treating chronic, cumulative, and acute trauma.

**CLICK HERE** to watch a recording of the event.

**CLICK HERE** to purchase a copy of the book.



## We All Want to be Found



Raphael Mestres

**CLICK HERE** to read this article in Portuguese.

*"It's fun for a child to hide. But it would be a disaster not to be found."*

This maxim by the renowned psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott has stayed with me ever since I heard Dr. Sue Johnson discuss it in an interview with Dr. Rick Hanson. The great insight from that conversation was that this doesn't apply only to children. Deep down, we all hide — and we all want to be found. And it's disastrous when we are not.

The feeling is easy to imagine. A child gets excited after finding a good hiding spot. There's even that delightful chill in the stomach — that's the goal. She hears the other children being found and stays quiet, proud of her cleverness. Time passes; the sound of play fades, the laughter stops, daylight dims, and silence takes over. She remains there.

In a heartbeat, excitement gives way to frustration — and then to fear: Where is everyone? Did they forget me here?

We don't want to be forgotten. We don't want others to stop looking for us. After all, not being found is a disaster.

Most people hide because they've been hurt and learned that hiding keeps the pain away. Others were taught that this is what one should do. And some may simply find it fun to hide, like children do — without realizing the danger in that.

And this is precisely where our work as EFT therapists comes in: helping people be found in their hiding places, soothing the fear of being forgotten there, and creating enough safety for them to be seen and to rediscover those they love.

In EFT, we call these moments of being truly seen and emotionally responded to *enactments* or encounters — choreographed emotional encounters where experience comes alive in the room and new patterns of connection begin to take shape. In EFCT, these are the moments when partners risk stepping out of their defensive positions to reach for each other in new, more open ways. It is within these moments of contact that healing unfolds.

In EFIT, enactments happen when an individual client dares to step out from the emotional strategies that have long kept them safe yet alone — and begins to engage differently with their own inner world or with an attachment figure internalized from the past. These moments invite the client not to talk about emotion, but to experience it differently, in motion, within a safe and responsive bond with the therapist.

For example, a woman who has always appeared strong and unshakable pauses, takes a breath, and says softly, "I don't think anyone really knows how afraid I am of losing my importance to others — of being left alone if they see my weakness."

The therapist stays close, mirrors her emotion, and validates her longing to be accepted as she is. In this shared moment, she experiences — perhaps for the first time — that it is safe to be found.

At other times, the enactment unfolds inwardly: a client may be invited to turn toward a younger part of the self that has long been exiled. "You didn't do anything wrong," she whispers to the small, trembling image of herself she can now sense. "You just wanted someone to notice you."

In another session, a man who grew up with a distant and critical father imagines facing him now. His voice trembles, but he continues: "You scared me. I needed you to tell me I was enough."

Each of these moments is an *enactment* — not a role play, but an experience of contact, where emotion finds new expression and the self reorganizes around safety and interpersonal connection. This is where healing happens: when emotion moves, and the person can finally feel accompanied in places that once felt unreachable.

Moments like this don't happen by chance. They arise



## the EFT community news

when we, as therapists, slow the process down enough for emotion to surface and for new experiences to unfold. The most powerful tools we have in EFT are simply slowing down and using encounters. We invite clients to discover and own their automatic patterns of protection from difficult emotions, and then invite them to step out of their automatic hiding patterns and to stay present with what's really happening inside. This slowing creates the safety needed to risk being found.

After all, this is the beauty of EFT: offering a clear map to what is most human in us — our capacity to seek and to offer emotional safety.

One of the phrases that has touched me most in training is, "I see you. I see your pain." What more do we need than to be seen — to know that someone can truly see our pain? To know that we are not alone or invisible?

And yet, we all have our natural hiding places — our reactivity and our protective emotions. They serve an important purpose and arise for good reasons, even though their impact can be negative. We know this so well through our clinical work. In EFT terms, secondary emotions like anger, criticism, or withdrawal often serve as hiding places for our primary vulnerabilities — the fear of rejection, the shame of not being enough, the terror of abandonment. When we slow down with our clients and help them access how they avoid their core emotions and then safely explore what lies beneath the surface, we're essentially helping them risk being found in their deepest needs.

I remember a couple where the husband "hid" behind analysis and control. He approached his marriage like a manager — precise, organized, always trying to make it work. His reasoning was so sharp that it was hard for his wife to share her experience with him. One day, I invited him to slow down and explore what was really at stake when he needed to stay in control. I asked, "What memories do you have of needing to be so alert?" He paused, then spoke of painful experiences from his childhood. When he reached one especially difficult story, he froze, his eyes filled with tears. I said, "Could you let your wife see that emotion now?" He nodded, turned to her. She cried. He cried. They held each other. In that moment, he was finally found — and from then on, he could begin to rely on her as a safe place for his difficult emotions.

The spirit of our time moves against our deepest needs,

offering us increasingly sophisticated and effective hiding places and making the chances of being found ever more remote. This need to be found is not only a fundamental element in our EFT therapy, it is also a common need for all of us as human beings.

We've learned to hide behind our status, our political opinions, our economic power, our social media personas, our use of alcohol or drugs, our critical thinking, our ideals of self-sufficiency, our accumulated knowledge — and so many other things that keep others from looking at us and saying, "I see you. I see your humanity. I see your pain."

We post carefully curated images of our lives while hiding our struggles. We debate ideas passionately while avoiding the vulnerable admission, "I'm lonely." We achieve professional success while our relationships starve for emotional presence. The more sophisticated our hiding places, the more isolated we become.

Of course, we don't want to go around displaying our pain. It feels wrong — private, even. But ultimately, it is our contact with that pain, with our vulnerability, that allows us to form real connections with others — the kind that nourish our most basic human need, the one that Dr. Sue Johnson has done such extraordinary work making explicit: our attachment needs.

As I write this, I can't help wondering how often — as a therapist and as a person — I still find myself hiding, waiting to be found. Hiding becomes such an automatic mechanism that we often don't notice we're doing it. However, when we speak from a place of deep connection with our emotional experience, we have the power to draw others to us.

In the end, it's not about exposing our pain, but about being connected to it — to our vulnerabilities, our humanity, to who we truly are — without yielding to the spirit of the age that tells us, "Project the right image first." Only then can we find the humanity in others — and be found in our own. After all, we may "have fun" hiding, but it is disastrous if we are not found.

Raphael Mestres, MA, Psychologist  
EFT Therapist with additional training  
Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil

[CLICK HERE](#) for references.

# Super Early Bird pricing now available!



## *GROWING THROUGH* **CONNECTION**

**May 9 - 11, 2027**

VANCOUVER • CANADA

Join colleagues from around the globe for the world's leading gathering for Emotionally Focused Therapy and attachment science.

Hear from internationally renowned presenters:



**Gail Palmer**  
EFFT co-developer



**Leanne Campbell**  
EFIT co-developer



**Jim Coan**  
psychologist & neuroscientist



**Gordon Neufeld**  
developmental psychologist



**Mark Solms**  
neuropsychologist

Attendees will also choose from various workshops led by EFT experts, offering practical tools and strategies you can take directly into your work with couples, families, and individuals.

See the next page for the Summit schedule and visit the website for full workshop details.

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**EFTsummit2027.com**

# EFT World Summit 2027

## SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE



### MAY 9

6:30 - 8:30 PM EVENING GATHERING & ENTERTAINMENT

### MAY 10

8:30 - 9:00 AM OPENING CEREMONY

9:00 - 10:30 AM **PLENARY:** Leanne Campbell & Gail Palmer

10:30 - 10:55 AM **COFFEE BREAK**

10:55 - 12:25 PM **MORNING WORKSHOPS** — choose 1 of 3

12:25 - 1:40 PM **LUNCH BREAK**

1:40 - 3:10 PM **PLENARY:** Mark Solms

3:10 - 3:30 PM **COFFEE BREAK**

3:30 - 5:00 PM **AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS** — choose 1 of 3

### MAY 11

8:30 - 10:00 AM **PLENARY:** Gordon Neufeld

10:00 - 10:20 AM **COFFEE BREAK**

10:20 - 12:00 PM **MORNING WORKSHOPS** — choose 1 of 3

12:00 - 1:00 PM **LUNCH BREAK**

1:00 - 2:30 PM **PLENARY:** James Coan

2:30 - 2:50 PM **COFFEE BREAK**

2:50 - 4:20 PM **AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS** — choose 1 of 3

4:20 - 5:20 PM **PANEL DISCUSSION** - all plenary speakers  
Moderated by Paul Greenman

5:20 - 5:45 PM **CLOSING CEREMONIES**

For plenary titles and descriptions, workshop titles and descriptions, and all other Summit information visit [eftsummit2027.com](http://eftsummit2027.com)

## May 9 Training Workshops Available

Attendees choose 1 of the full-day workshop options

**Workshop fee \$95**

\*additional to Summit registration

8:30 - 10:00 AM	Workshop - part 1
10:00 - 10:30 AM	BREAK
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Workshop - part 2
12:00 - 1:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK
1:00 - 2:30 PM	Workshop - part 3
2:30 - 3:00 PM	BREAK
3:00 - 4:30 PM	Workshop - part 4
6:30 PM	Summit begins with evening gathering & entertainment



## Multicultural Realities and EFT Extra-CARE (Part One)



*Paul Guillory*



*Brandy Hall*

Building on the CARE framework (e.g. Johnson & Campbell, 2021; Campbell et al., 2022), this article is intended to expand on the existing CARE literature, specifically with respect to multicultural realities and clinical interventions with people who are members of diverse groups in therapy. For example, how do we help a Black couple process the impact of racial distress that results from a racially demeaning and targeted joke made by a supervisor at work when they have very different views as to what should have been the “right” reaction in the moment and what should be done in the aftermath. We hope to engage the reader in a clinical journey into the internal and interpersonal world of the culturally different who live in a larger cultural White context (Helm & Carlson, 2013). Our focus is outlining EFT clinical formations and interventions with the goal of enhancing psychotherapy for those clients who are culturally different and marginalized.

We suggest that therapists tune in with Extra-CARE, i.e. extra **C**ontext, **A**ttachment, **R**elationship/therapeutic alliance, and **E**motion) when working with couples from marginalized groups impacted by cultural realities. By multicultural realities, we mean cultural, racial, and minority stress. These are extra stressors along with the extra psychology that marginalized couples cope with regularly, that those from the majority White culture do not typically face. This argument is based on the reported literature regarding historical oppression, current discrimination and negative bias experiences, and the internalized cultural deficit model for people who are marginalized within cultures where there

is a majority dominant cultural group (APA, 2021; Comas-Diaz, et al., 2019; Carter, 2007; Aponte & Wohl, 2000; Davis, et al., 2022).

These are not just cultural elements to be understood within each cultural group but significantly emotional, reactive, stressful, multicultural experiences and an extra-psychological set of appraisals and internal view of self and others. These unique multicultural realities occur between the dominant group and marginalized groups, and impact lived experiences with unique internal psychological effects causing psychological stress and suffering (Meyer, 2003; Carter, 2007; Hardy, 2023; Edwards, Wittenborn, & Allan, 2025).

Consistent with the extra-stress and extra-psychological implications of the cultural realities of marginalized people, there have been several recommendations for adaptation of clinical models while maintaining the fidelity of the clinical approach. See Chu & Leino (2017), Hwang (2006), Sorenson & Harrell (2021), and Edwards, Wittenborn, & Allan (2025).

The Extra-CARE model suggests recognizing the intrapsychic depth of cultural realities, the resulting implication of the internalized deficit model on interpersonal safety, and the potential emotional reactivity of multicultural identity. For example, a Latina client’s fear of rejection may not be rooted in early attachment experiences, but in multicultural negative narratives about Latinas’ women’s worth being tied to her cultural group, or simply being viewed in a negative way as an immigrant. Extra-CARE means extra-assessment of the unique experiences of multicultural people. Just as EFT therapists do not expect couples to be knowledgeable about attachment and emotion theory, we should not expect marginalized people to be experts in cultural realities.

Broaching multicultural realities is about setting the foundation for intrapsychic clinical depth work on attachment and identity. Of course, marginalized persons who are highly reactive and rigid regard-

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ing their marginalized identity are likely to avoid engaging in any or limited discussion of race/culture according to Helms (1995). It is most clinically productive to ask marginalized couples questions about their cultural realities, not as an isolated topic, but integrated into questions about their personal development and attachment relationships. For example, after asking about early attachment relationships ("Tell me about your relationship with your mother," or, "Can you give me three adjectives to describe your relationship with your mom/dad when you were young?"), we might integrate cultural questions ("Do you strongly identify with a cultural group? What does that mean to you?" Or, "Do you think racism (or any ism) or discrimination impacted your parents' lives in any way?" Or, "What has been the significances of race, skin color or hair?"). This allows cultural reflection to benefit from the psychological depth already activated by attachment questions.

This integrated process has two important reasons. First, individual development and attachment-related assessment inquiries invite partners to focus inward on their thoughts and memories about important milestones and relationships. According to Main, et al. (1985), as multiple attachment questions are asked sequentially, participants turn inward in greater psychological depth. Second, as cultural realities questions are integrated after a series of attachment questions, the cultural reflections of clients benefit from the depth exploration of attachment histories.

### **Stage One EFT Extra-CARE Creating the Safety for Exploring Extra-Wounds**

#### Stage One: Considerations

- EFT clinical attitude.
- Clinical interview that includes attachment and cultural questions that might provide emotional handles, i.e., emotional phases, images, or words to use with EFT interventions.
- Listening for and understanding cultural stereotypes embedded in the negative cycle.
- Curiosity and understanding of harsh internal

and interpersonal critic with attachment and cultural lens.

- Processing race-based events with impact on emotions and view of self and others.
- Encouraging the fight against the multicultural negative pattern on view of self and others.

### **Stage Two EFT Extra-CARE Creating Safety for Intrapsychic Exploration of the Deficit Model**

#### Stage Two: Considerations

- EFT clinical attitude.
- Increased spontaneous discussion of view of self and other regarding cultural distress.
- Accessing multicultural needs and longing for acceptance, being chosen, and worthiness.
- Increased tolerance of vulnerability to cultural deficit appraisals that in moments of crisis can promote cultural self-hate and internalized racism. Compassion.
- Lingering longer with cultural identity triggers to explore view of self and others.
- Use of dreams, images, culturally based messaging (cultural myths and affirmation scripts).
- Promoting exploration of cultural strengths.
- Softening internal multicultural appraisals and defensiveness.

Just as EFT therapists use EFT interventions to process attachment distress and emotional experiences, they can also process cultural realities distress with EFT interventions and Tango moves. In the broader sense, the EFT model is a clinical model that can process emotional stress and attachment disconnections. The extra focus of the adapted EFT EXTRA-Care frame would include attachment distress and when present, distress cues from multicultural realities (i.e., experienced racial/multicultural bias, discrimination, or racial/multicultural assaults). This underscores the complexities of multicultural realities and psychotherapy. That is, the therapist would have to



have dynamic considerations of attachment focus and a multicultural focus. As Hwang (2006) suggests, dynamic sizing, or the clinical skill of flexibility and agility to shift dynamically between or integrate attachment and/or cultural focus is needed. The therapist must also shift dynamically between two types of cultural appraisals. First, there are appraisals of the model of self (“I’m not good enough.”) Second, there are appraisals of the internalized cultural deficit (“Black people are seen as less than.”) For example, when Marcus said, “I’m always suspect,” he was expressing both a personal view of himself influenced by the relationship negative cycle and also influenced by the negative cultural view of Black men. This culturally influenced view of self is

what Hardy (2023) refers to as the “invisible wounds.” Therapists need flexibility to be able to address both levels. An EFT Extra-CARE approach would include responsiveness to an internalized deficit model, cultural competency, and cultural humility. As in all EFT therapy, adapted Extra-CARE would prioritize attachment and emotional experience.

Paul Guillory, PhD  
EFT Trainer

Brandy Hall, MA  
EFCT, EFIT and EFFT Therapist

[CLICK HERE](#) for a list of references.

## Updates from the ICEEFT Operations Team

It’s hard to believe another year has gone by but, looking back, there have been many milestones for the ICEEFT community, not least of which is that we are now well over 10,000 members strong with more than 110 centres and communities in over 40 countries. This is a testament to everyone who works, officially or otherwise, to promote EFT in their communities and practices. Thank you everyone!

With regard to the Operations Team specifically, I’m very happy to welcome Alizah Cameron as our new Marketing & Event Coordinator. Alizah facilitated the recent *EFT for Trauma* book launch (see pg. 2), will lead planning and logistics coordination for the 2027 EFT World Summit (see pgs. 5-6), and will be involved with several other projects designed to raise EFT’s profile around the globe.

I’m also pleased to have Dani Parry with us for an eight-month co-op term from the University of Victoria. Dani has been combing through the tremendous amount of EFT material, hunting for all the best quotes, video clips and references, to draw on for future course preparation, member resources, outreach and marketing.

Work to upgrade and modernize our internal systems continues. A priority is launching French and Span-

ish versions of our sites so members can use ICEEFT in their preferred language. This requires a substantial effort that includes translated content, improved navigation, and testing across devices and regions. Progress is steady and we’re targeting launch in early 2026.

As in many organizations, the Operations Team is exploring what the rise of AI will mean for ICEEFT. As an organization focused on humanistic values and personal connection, we’re moving cautiously and deliberately. The approach is to assess specific, limited-use cases where AI can add practical value, put governance and human oversight in place first, pilot tools with clear safeguards for data safety, and provide staff training before any wider adoption. These are interesting times with interesting opportunities. We don’t want to fall behind, but even more importantly, we don’t want to let efficiency or automation come at the expense of our human relationships — with each other and with you all.

On behalf of the Operations Team, I wish you a healthy, peaceful, and connected 2026.

Christian Fink-Jensen  
Executive Director / COO ICEEFT

# 2025 ICEEFT Award Recipients

## 2025 Research Fellow Award

**AWARDED TO: Jonathan Sandberg**

The ICEEFT Board is proud to announce that Jonathan Sandberg, PhD, is the 2025 recipient of the ICEEFT Research Fellow award. Jonathan stood out among several worthy candidates for his ongoing contributions to EFT literature and through his scholarship, teaching, and practice. Jonathan is a professor in the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University where his research focuses on the relationship between emotional/physical health problems and marital dynamics, particularly attachment security. His EFT-related contributions include the study of learning EFT, the application of EFT to Spanish-speaking cultures, and the development of the BARE assessment tool. In addition, Jonathan has published numerous articles relating to the experiences of racial and ethnic minority individuals, couples, and families, and their experiences in therapy and with mental health in general. He is a certified EFT Therapist and Supervisor with decades of experience working with families, couples and individuals. Congratulations Jonathan and thank you for your dedicated effort to support the mission of ICEEFT and the development of EFT throughout the world.

## 2025 John Douglas Award, North America

**AWARDED TO: Becky Wofford**

ICEEFT is pleased to name Becky Wofford a recipient of the John Douglas Award for 2025 for her contributions to the expansion of EFT in Atlanta. With a masters degree in Marriage and Family Therapy, Becky currently serves on the Board for the Atlanta Center for Emotionally Focused Therapy (ACEFT) as the Chair of Community Connection. Becky has provided steady, thoughtful leadership by guiding her team in offering a consistent stream of engag-

ing trainings, meaningful community events, and the intentional development of a strong, capable facilitator team. Her leadership reflects both a deep commitment to the EFT model and a genuine care for the people who practice it. Because of her efforts, the Atlanta community continues to grow in depth, cohesion, and clinical excellence in EFT.

## 2025 John Douglas Award, International

**AWARDED TO: Hendrik Weiss**

ICEEFT is pleased to name Hendrik Weiss a recipient of the John Douglas Award for 2025, for his outstanding and sustained contributions to the development of Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) in Germany. As a certified EFT therapist and supervisor, he has played a pivotal role in building a strong, ethically grounded, and clinically skilled EFT community within German-speaking contexts.

Through his leadership as a co-founder and board member of EFT Community Deutschland e.V., Hendrik has helped establish vital professional structures that support training, supervision, collegial exchange, and adherence to international EFT standards. His dedication to supervision—across couples, individual, and family EFT (EFFT)—has significantly shaped the next generation of EFT clinicians, fostering depth, rigor, and fidelity to attachment-based practice.

Hendrik's work is marked by a rare combination of clinical excellence, generosity as a mentor, and commitment to collaboration. His contributions have not only expanded access to high-quality EFT supervision and training in Germany but have also strengthened the connection between the international EFT community and local clinical realities. This award honors his enduring impact on the growth, integrity, and future of EFT in Germany.

# Attachment Across Borders: Expanding EFCT with Migrant Couples



*Liliana Baylon*

Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFCT) offers a clear map for understanding love and disconnection, yet for migrant and Latine couples, the terrain is often uneven. Attachment injuries do not exist solely between partners; they reverberate through migration stories, racialized experiences, and the inherited silences of survival. The emotional cycles of these couples are shaped by separation, loss of language, and adaptation within systems that often fail to see them.

Migration transforms attachment needs. Partners who have endured displacement or family separation may approach intimacy through survival patterns. One pursues connection out of fear of further loss, while the other withdraws to maintain stability. Underlying these recognized EFCT dynamics are layers of migratory sorrow and cultural narratives of resilience. In therapy, phrases such as “You don’t understand me” or “I did this for us” frequently embody both relationship and historical anguish. Understanding this dichotomy enables therapists to acknowledge attachment distress while respecting the social context that influences it.

EFCT remains a powerful model because it focuses on the universal longing for safety and connection. However, when culture and migration are ignored, interventions risk pathologizing adaptive behaviors. Expanding EFCT for immigrant couples involves cultural attunement within emotional attunement, the ability to hear how power, identity, and history shape the emotional music of the relationship. These

dynamics are not homogeneous between couples or cultural groupings. Variations in gender socialization, immigration status, linguistic proficiency, and proximity to systemic authority frequently structure the relational cycle, affecting who initiates, who retreats, and whose apprehensions stay unarticulated. Addressing these intra-group disparities enables therapists to contextualize interactional patterns without reducing them to deficit-oriented interpretations. This methodology corresponds with contemporary demands for culturally tailored EFCT that incorporates systemic awareness, therapist introspection, and the impact of overarching sociopolitical dynamics (Allan et al., 2023; Leeth & Mendoza, 2025).

Therapists can improve treatment by concurrently monitoring two interconnected processes: the attachment cycle between couples and the migration cycle, which indicates continuous movement among safety, threat, and adaptability. For instance, when one partner retreats during conflicts, the therapist may discern not only an attachment-based deactivation technique but also a survival habit influenced by previous experiences of shortage, surveillance, or role overload. During the session, the therapist openly identifies both cycles, assisting spouses in seeing how emotional detachment previously served to maintain stability or safeguard the family. An enactment may encourage the withdrawing spouse to articulate, using deliberate and supportive language, how their retreat serves to avert injury or disintegration. At the same time, the other partner contemplates how this withdrawal triggers anxieties of abandonment. The therapist reframes withdrawal as resilience influenced by context, holding both cycles in the room while directing the couple towards new attachment responses that facilitate the coexistence of safety and connection.

Supervision is essential to the cultural expansion of EFCT. Traditional EFCT supervision emphasizes emo-



## the EFT community news

tional tracking and cycle work; however, clinicians assisting immigrant couples need structured guidance on cultural countertransference and power dynamics. When a supervisee characterizes clients as “insufficiently emotional” or “excessively deferential,” supervisors might foster deeper inquiry. Is this resistance or a culturally constructed rhythm of respect and relationship security? Simultaneously, supervisors must consider how the therapist’s identities and institutional power influence the clients’ presence in the room. Variations in immigration status, color, linguistic proficiency, gender, and professional authority can exacerbate compliance, emotional suppression, or defensiveness among clients with histories of surveillance or punitive measures for visibility. Integrating cultural humility into EFCT supervision helps therapists analyze their interpretations of emotion and hierarchy, as well as how their presence may either limit or encourage emotional risk-taking in the therapeutic partnership (Ratanashevorn, 2024).

Therapist identity remains central. Cultural humility is not a destination but a stance of ongoing reflection. Engaging with immigrant couples requires understanding one’s own migration narrative, whether real or metaphorical, and its influence on empathy and boundaries. For those with immigrant heritage, sessions may elicit visceral recollections of loss or adaptability. For people who lack this ability, therapy becomes an endeavor of profound listening that facilitates personal transformation through narrative.

Ultimately, EFCT with migrant couples is not about changing the model but deepening it. By holding migration, race, language, and faith within the same frame as attachment, therapists help couples reach for each other through layers of cultural complexity. In this work, love becomes both personal and collective, a reclamation of belonging across borders.

EFCT thus evolves into more than a method for repairing bonds; it becomes a way to restore connection in a world that often divides. When therapists engage each couple with curiosity, humility, and cultural sensitivity, they provide not just healing but also dignity, conveying that love, akin to migration, is a brave endeavor to return home.

Liliana Baylon, LMFT, RPT-S, EMDR Consultant  
EFIT, EFCT, EFFT Therapist & Supervisor

[CLICK HERE](#) to view references for this article.

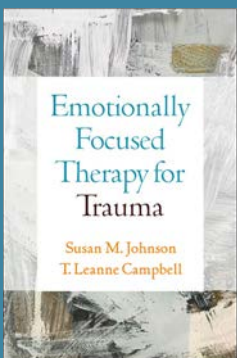
## Welcome!

We are happy to welcome two new ICEEFT-affiliated EFT groups:

- ▶ Polish Centre for EFT
- ▶ Emotionally Focused Therapy for Ukraine – EFT4UA

## Emotionally Focused Therapy for Trauma

by Sue Johnson & Leanne Campbell



This innovative clinician’s guide shows how emotionally focused therapy (EFT) is ideally suited to target core elements of recovery from common impacts of chronic, cumulative, or acute trauma.

***“Traumatic experience is not just painful, it changes how we engage with ourselves and our world.”***

— Sue Johnson

TO ORDER [CLICK HERE](#)

## ICEEFT Staff Spotlight

To help ICEEFT members get to know our team better, we're continuing the "Staff Spotlight" feature introduced in the October 2025 newsletter, highlighting one member of our staff by sharing a bit about their role and who they are beyond the job. In this issue, we're highlighting Moira O'Neill.

### Moira O'Neill

Moira O'Neill is ICEEFT's Office Manager, Membership Coordinator, and general multi-tasker. Having been with ICEEFT for over 20 years, there's not much that Moira hasn't done! Moira was there in the early years, helping Sue, John, Gail and Alison build the structure and mechanisms of ICEEFT and so looked after pretty much everything administrative. Currently, Moira still looks after all aspects of office management, from bookkeeping, payroll and bill payment to membership coordination and annual agreements. She also continues to facilitate the therapist certification process and generally supports ICEEFT members, Supervisors and Trainers.

Moira is also the Office Manager for the OCFI, the clinical therapy practice in Ottawa, Canada, where ICEEFT was born, and the two organizations continue to share office space — and Moira! — to the current day.

Tremendous fun at events and outside of work, Moira has a unique storytelling ability that is highly entertaining and always has everyone laughing. Her Scottish heritage and marriage to an Irishman, Gerry O'Neill, is evident with her dry sense of humour and immense knowledge of correct etiquette and superstitions. For example, she can tell you how to avoid the detrimental effects of many things, such as stepping on a crack.

As the first ever recipient of the John Douglas Award, Moira continues her commitment to support not only ICEEFT but also the growth of the EFT model worldwide.

For reference, these are the permanent members of our ICEEFT Operations Team:

**Christian Fink-Jensen** - Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer

**Moira O'Neill** - Office Manager; Membership Coordinator & General multi-tasker

**Jackie Evans** - Graphic Designer; Documentation Coordinator; Newsletter Editor & Coordinator

**Stephen Le** - Operations Manager

**Bert McCallum** - IT & Digital Marketing Manager

**Vanessa Baylen** - Training Events Manager

**Natalia Pimenta** - Member & Community Support Coordinator

**Alizah Cameron** - Marketing & Events Coordinator

**Joshua Hammill** - Developer & IT Support

**Matthew Settle** - Online Training Events Support & Coordination

**Lily Vokey** - Administrative Assistant; Social Media

For reference, these are the ICEEFT Board Members:

**John Douglas** - President

**Gail Palmer** - Vice President

**Leanne Campbell** - Vice President

**Paul Greenman**, Secretary

**Christian Fink-Jensen** - Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer

For reference, these are the Ex-Officio Board Members:

**Ali Barbosa**, Mexico

**Hanna Pinomaa**, Finland

**George Faller**, USA

**Jef Sloodmaeckers**, Belgium

**Robin Williams Blake**, Canada

**Sara Lamb**, Canada

**Jim Furrow**, USA - Honorary member

## ICEEFT Annual Trainer Retreat 2025

Since the inception of ICEEFT in 1998, trainer retreats have been central to the growth of EFT and to our international organization. A time to come together, to share ideas and experiences with one another, to inspire and be inspired, and to learn about developments in EFT and in ICEEFT. What began with a small gathering of trainers at Sue and John's cottage in the Gatineau Hills, complete with daily group swims to Blueberry Island, has now grown to a collection of over 75 trainers from around the globe – most assembling at major hotels in various locations. This year, 62 Trainers and 5 Trainer Candidates from 28 countries gathered in Victoria, BC, Canada. Many arrived early to combat jet lag and were greeted with an opportunity for a hello and welcome, and some food and drink before they settled in. All were present for a formal dinner the night prior to the start of the retreat and for the two days of meetings.

Last year's retreat in the Netherlands followed soon after the loss of our leader and a giant in the field of psychotherapy, Sue Johnson. Her absence was missed. This year, the void remained palpable, but there was also a strong sense of a continued presence, and a living legacy that is swelling globally. As our dear colleague Jim Furrow aptly noted, "EFT is

a movement!" and continues to move those who are touched by this model.

Acknowledging that we were gathering on unceded and ancestral territory, our first day of meetings was opened with a welcome from a representative of the Songhees First Nation. This lovely introduction was appreciated by all and was a poignant and powerful reminder of the importance of history and context, and the way they shape stories and development on multiple levels, personal and interpersonal, family and community, and beyond.

Our two full days of meetings were complete with ICEEFT updates, as well as announcements from various Trainers from around the world about new and creative developments, innovative ways of applying the model, and the importance of ensuring the model's integrity. This year featured "Ted Talks" from three wonderful Trainers, Sandra Taylor, Heike McCahon, and Michael Barnett, centered on diversity, neurodiversity, and addictions, respectively. Their words and strong presence resonated with all and were met with three rounds of standing ovations. Already, their attention to these key matters have impacted trainers and trainings, as well as overall ICEEFT policy and procedures. We continue to grow through connection.





Our formal meeting ended with a ritual led with the solid presence and strong powerful voices of Kathryn de Bruin and Cindy Goodness Zane. Cindy opened the closing ritual with a chant and blessing from her Hawaiian heritage. The chant invited grounding, courage, and a sense of shared strength.

### E Hō Mai

by Edith Kanaka'ole  
(done three times)

E hō mai ka 'ike mai luna mai ē  
'O nā mea huna no'eau o nā mele ē  
E hō mai, e hō mai, e hō mai ē

Grant us knowledge from above  
The things of knowledge hidden in the chants  
Grant us these things

After the chant, Kathryn invited everyone into a circle. Drawing on a South African farewell tradition and

inspired by Peter Wohlleben's writing on how trees communicate through the mycorrhizal network, she framed the group as a connected forest system. She used the mother tree metaphor, captured by the image on the cover of the EFFT book, to honor Sue's role in nurturing and sustaining the larger EFT community. As participants walked the circle, each person collected a pine cone to take home as a symbol of connection and continuity. The slow procession allowed everyone to connect once more, share final acknowledgments, and offer farewells.

The overall sentiment was one of gratitude and connection. A meaningful journey with a shared purpose, and a strong sense that we truly are, better together.

ICEEFT Executive & EFT Trainers:  
Leanne Campbell, PhD, R.Psych  
Gail Palmer, MSW, RSW

## Changes to the ICEEFT Board

The annual Trainer's Retreat was also an opportunity to thank the dedicated Trainers who have served on the ICEEFT Board of Directors over the past years, and also to welcome new members.

### Thank you to the 2025 Board Members!

(Above from left to right)

**FRONT:** Ali Barbosa, Leanne Campbell, John Douglas, Gail Palmer, Ryan Rana.

**BACK:** Karin Wagenaar, Jim Furrow, Paul Greenman, Chris Fink-Jensen.

**MISSING:** Kyriaki Polychroni, Paul Guillory.



ICEEFT is very grateful to past and current Board members for the time invested to help guide our organizational policies and protocols, and further the growth of the EFT model.

### Introducing the 2026 Board Members!

(Above from left to right)

**FRONT:** Ali Barbosa, Leanne Campbell, John Douglas, Gail Palmer, & George Faller.

**BACK:** Jef Sloodmaeckers, Robin Williams Blake, Jim Furrow, Paul Greenman, Chris Fink-Jensen, Hanna Pinomaa.

**MISSING:** Sara Lamb.



## New EFIT Research Article



Visit the **EFT Library** on [iceeft.com](http://iceeft.com), for reference lists of various EFT publications, including links, where available, to publisher websites:

- EFT Articles
- EFT Chapters
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- Non-English EFT Publications
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### Keeping the Horse Before the Cart: The Importance of Stabilization in Emotionally Focused Individual Therapy (EFIT)

Brubacher, L. L., & Greenman, P. S. (2025).

*International Journal of Systemic Therapy*, 1–34.

#### **Abstract:**

Our goal in this paper is to highlight the significance of Stage 1 stabilization processes in Emotionally Fo-

cused Individual Therapy (EFIT). Stabilization is a prerequisite to the modification of working models of self and other that typifies Stage 2 of EFIT, and we propose that it also has significant stand-alone value as a change event. We begin by defining the process of stabilization and delineating how it is a foundational part of the overall Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) model of change. Then we illustrate the autonomous value of the stabilization change event and show how stabilization is related to outcome in theory and in practice. Third, we demonstrate the use of specific interventions, the macro-moves and micro-skills of EFT, for achieving stabilization in an extended therapist-client dialogue of client change through the four steps of stabilization. Finally, we discuss the potential for therapists to overlook stabilization and the disadvantages of doing so.

**CLICK HERE** to access the article.

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## EFT Centers, Communities & Other Affiliated Organizations

### LEGEND

\* EFT Centre – A group of EFT therapists led by at least one local Trainer

\*\* EFT Community – A group of EFT therapists led by at least one local Supervisor

\*\*\* Other EFT Organization – A group of EFT therapists that does not fit either of the above categories

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