

COUPLES' EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING

Some Gestalt therapy theoretical considerations
V.Keturakis PhD

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MAJOR TOPICS

- What is couples' experiential training?
- Experiencing contact functions and boundary

Cycle of Learning

Concrete experience

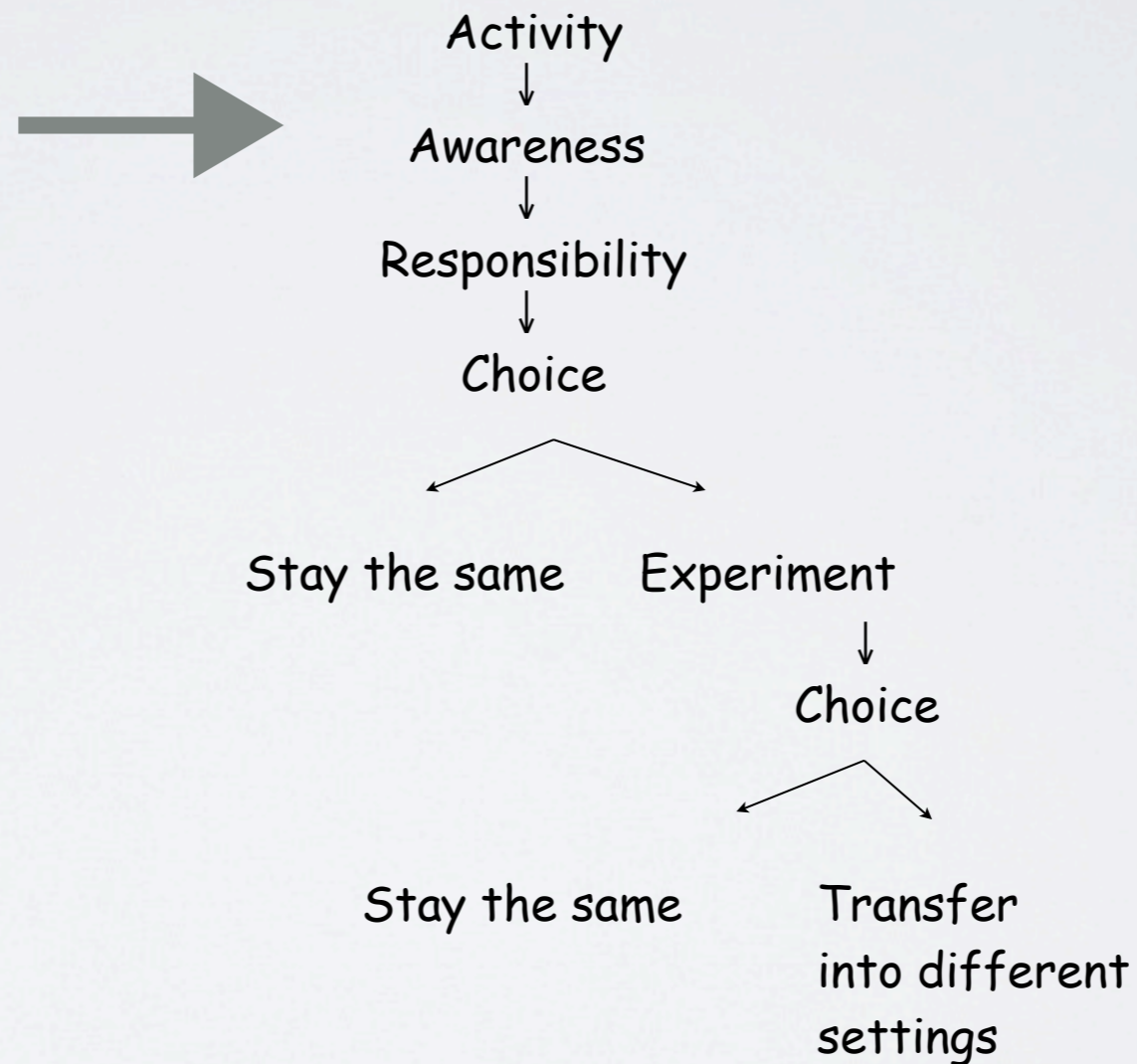
**Observation
and
reflection**

Applying
conclusions

Forming abstract
concepts

Levels of processing

<http://www.outwardbound.be/madzinga/reflections.htm>



AIMS OF THE TRAINING

- Possibility to refresh relationships in couples
- Develop awareness of partnership in couples' life

EXPERIENTIAL PART

- Time for various experience:
 - allmost all sensory modalities - seing, hearing, touching, smelling.
 - tasks/structured in group and in pairs.
 - physical tasks exercise type, coordination tasks, balancing task
- Result oriented tasks: to cross imaginary river...,
- Process oriented reflections

CONTACT FUNCTIONS

- Experience of “touch”
- Visual - seeing others and intensive stimulation of spring blossoms.
- Auditory - voices of people, birds singing, kids playing, wind blowing.
- Touching - very intense - touching other people men and women, touching your partner in supporting and balancing.
- Smelling - various senses of trees blossoming
- Speaking - asking, shouting expressing and talking to each other.
- Moving - playing and finding oneself in unusual positions

MEETING AT THE BOUNDARY

- Group tasks - most look confluent - absorbed in group thinking, feeling and group work.
- Reflection of group tasks- first differences stand out - some feel one way others differently.
- Tasks in couples/pairs - physical experience of the other, leaning at each other.
- Blind walk - two kinds of observations
 - comfortably melted in other persons will and hands
 - huge discomfort feeling not safe, not cared off.
- Solo - silent exercise to overview the day and find symbol representing ones state. Receiving strong reaction - "no, we want to be together".
- Rope walking - thinking does not help, first encounter with bodily kinesthetic sensations and emotional reactions.

SHORT CASE DESCRIPTION

- Actively seeking sensations
- Going for more challenge, risking.
 - During blind walk gets his wife fall on the lake bridge - bruising her leg (She was in her first trimester of pregnancy). Reacting to this was devaluation - nothing important.
 - During rope walk - they got on the rope despite our warning.
 - No contact boundary experienced - I can conquer the problem, situations etc.
- First strong reaction to invitation to talk to each other in front of the group (We do not expect therapy here).
- Contact boundary experienced when “failing” to approach local people in social tasks. Many locals reacted with suspicion and cautiousness

PAUSE

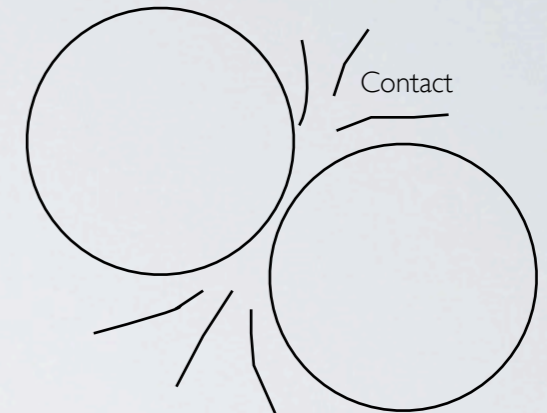
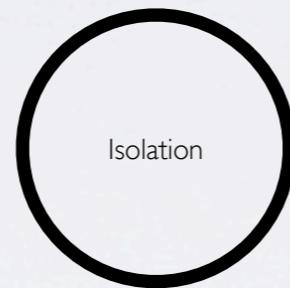
- Time for pause, stopping - observation work
- Time for reflection by attending, verbalising sharing and .. listening.
- Time for new experience

POSSIBILITY FOR GESTALT FORMATION AND RESOLUTION PROCESS

First observations from experience - vague, not clear comments.	What do we notice in general? General sensations, thoughts etc. Attitude - let's go playing	What do we notice specifically about each of us being in this day? Comments: I do not to be alone, I want to ...	What do you want to try/ experiment in this task? Get's back to figure sharpening	Trying out, experimenting different ways of being together, o acting, saying	What do we take away, what do we want to say?	
Undifferentiated field	Figure formation	Figure sharpening	Self/ environment scan	Resolution (Intending, planning executing, verifying)	Assimilation	Undifferentiated field
Interruption examples: jumping to abstract conclusions, having very important observations	Interruption: impatience to move to "couples' tasks", to get new challenge	Interruptions seen: i don't want anything, everything is ok,	?	?	?	

POSSIBILITY FOR CONTACT WITH PARTNER

- For those couples who were withdrawn or/and isolated they had possibility to experience contact - to meet each other.
- For those couples who were confluent they had possibility to withdraw to meet each other in person



Circle of relating©
Robert W.Resnick PhD and Rita F.Resnick
PhD

