



## Developmental Couple Therapy for Complex Trauma (DCTCT)

- DCTCT is a model of couple therapy that works from a developmental perspective to help couples cope with the long-term impacts of childhood trauma.
- This therapy was specifically designed for couples that have had traumatic experiences in childhood that have affected their relationships. In the couple context, childhood traumas can make it difficult for partners to engage with each other. Instead of turning to each other for support and comfort, people who have been traumatized in childhood often find that closeness feels frightening and dangerous.
- The overall focus of this therapeutic model is to help couples learn how to tolerate, understand, and manage their own and their partner's emotions, how to understand each other's perspectives, and how to be present and engaged to meet one another's emotional and attachment needs.
- Throughout the process of therapy, we will use exercises to help you develop the tools to develop the kind of close, loving, and supportive relationship you desire.
- The focus in the later stages of the therapy is on helping you to work with your partner to process some of the impact of your traumatic experiences on you and your relationship. Some of this will involve sharing the stories of your experiences and how they are living in your relationship in the present and slowly learning new ways of being together.
- Stage One – Establishing Context
  - Establishing safety, therapeutic alliance
  - Psychoeducation (creating a common goal)
    - Trauma and relationships
    - Trauma and attachment
    - Trauma and sexuality
    - Shame
    - The negative cycle and dyadic traumatic reenactment
    - What is mentalizing?
    - What is emotion regulation?
  - Containing conflict
- Stage Two – Capacity Building in the Attachment Relationship Context
  - Building mentalizing capacities
  - Building emotion regulation capacities
- Stage Three – Attachment-Focused Dyadic Processing
  - Attachment histories living in the present
  - Dyadic traumatic reenactment
  - Disclosure – telling the stories
  - Trauma processing in a dyadic context
  - Sex and sexuality
- Stage Four – Consolidation
  - Consolidation