

Box 1.3 The EFT EAR of Attunement

The EAR of attuned listening (Brubacher, 2020) is an acronym similar to attuning with CARE (context, attachment, relationship, emotion; Furrow et al., 2022). The EAR of attunement helps us keep in mind that *context* is everywhere - in emotion, in attachment, and in relationships through which we restructure by shaping engaged encounters. We need to constantly attune to impacts of context. It is the air we breathe.

E - signifies attuning to the *emotional process* as it unfolds in the present moment in session and to the ways that culture impacts a client's emotional experience and expression. Emotion is contextual – a continual loop of self and system in interaction. Attuning to emotion requires a therapist to be constantly tuning in to how the client is regulating their emotion, what are the contextual impacts on how they are engaging with their emotion, and what is the optimum level of engagement for this particular client in this moment. That is, what is the depth of emergent emotional experiencing that is increasingly active, vivid, immediate, shifting or resolving. Clients are most open to change when their emotion is engaged in an alive, deep manner, yet within manageable depths, where they remain able to think and feel clearly, without freezing or becoming overwhelmed.

A - signifies attuning to the attachment dynamics and strategies clients develop for responding to threat. Attuning to attachment means attuning to the degree of coherence in a client's narrative and making room for clients to tell their stories in a way that shows respect for their context. Contextually, threats may be racial, ethnic, cultural, or interpersonal. Attuning to clients' perceived threats and strategies for responding to lack of safety entails attuning to historical and current dangers that clients are facing. Attuning to attachment includes attuning to whom clients can turn to for support - historically and in the present. Who are the key attachment figures populating our clients' worlds? How do they see themselves in the eyes of their key attachment figures? What pivotal events have shattered their trust and sense of safety or have bolstered their sense of trust and positive views of self, other, and the world? What are the clients' attachment strategies and patterns for coping and regulating emotion?

R – signifies Restructuring, Respecting Racial-socio-cultural experience, and drawing on Relational Resources. Engaged interpersonal encounters are the crux of change in EFT and the apex of the EFT tango. Attuning to the relational aspects of clients' lives, including experiences of exclusion and marginalization to reshape, through encounters, is how we restructure attachment, view of self, view of other, and create a safer world.