

Satisfying Our Deep Need for Connection and Safety

An Attachment-Informed Psychotherapy Group

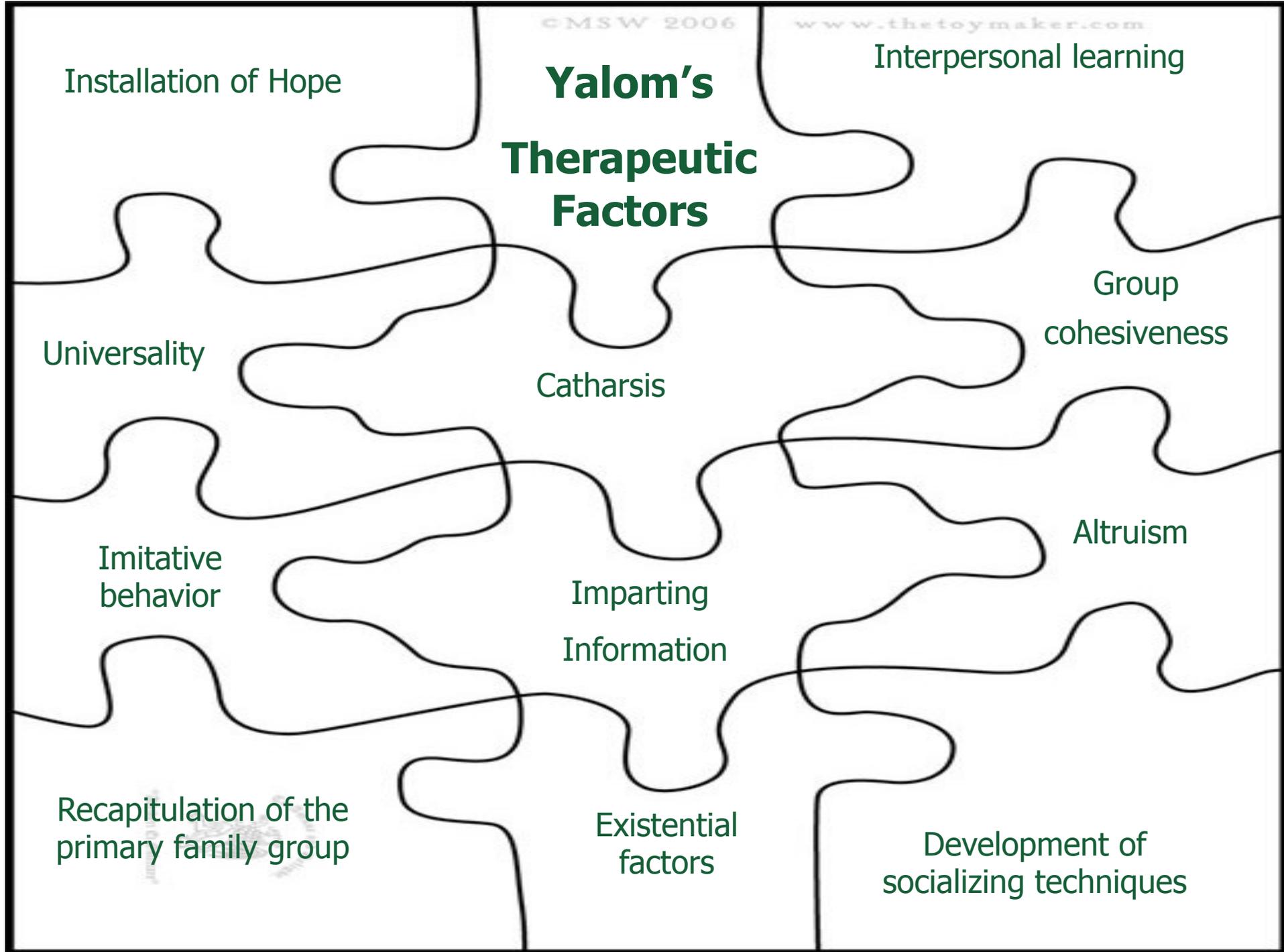
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CANALES
ASSOCIATES

Why groups?

- The group as microcosm
- Exposure and resolution of human dilemmas
 - Intimacy issues, interpersonal
- Live practice - rewiring the brain
- Learning new behaviors, learning about feelings
- Exposure to multiple perspectives
- Provide a corrective experience



Why study groups?

Counselman 2008

- Presence in the here-and-now
- Comfort with affects in the room
- Closeness and separateness
- Empathic connections
- Sensitivity to shame, envy, jealousy, rivalry...
- Exploration of resistance
- Difference in communicating
- Awareness of group dynamics

A word on culture

- Culture of independence - “me do it”
- Culture of dependency – “what should I do”
- Culture of secrecy - “what happens in the family...”
- Culture of words - ”swearing,” idioms
- Culture of Timing - Absences, timeliness
- Culture of participation

Evolution of Psychotherapy

Classical

- Conflict and ego/wishes
- Drives and instincts
- Guilty man
- One person psychology
- Intrapsychic
- Therapists abstinence
- Dispassionate guide
- Opaque
- Interpretation and understanding



Contemporary

- Deficits and self/needs
- Attachment &rel
- “tragic man”
- Two person psych
- Intersubjective
- Therapist engagement
- Participant observer
- Presence
- Relationship and empathy

Why attachment-based treatment?

Peter Costello (2013)

- Creation of a progressive more secure relationship
- ...facilitation and strengthening of adaptive capacities by addressing the emotions and the communications that the patient has learned to suppress or to overemphasize in early attachment relationships.

Attachment Theory

- Simple
- Normative
- Normalizing
- Developmental
- Pathology informative
- Systemic
- Sustaining
- Depth oriented
- Compatible with Neuroscience

Characteristics of An Attachment Figure

Mary Ainsworth

1. We monitor emotional and physical closeness

Proximity seeking.

2. We reach out when we are uncertain or upset.

Safe haven.

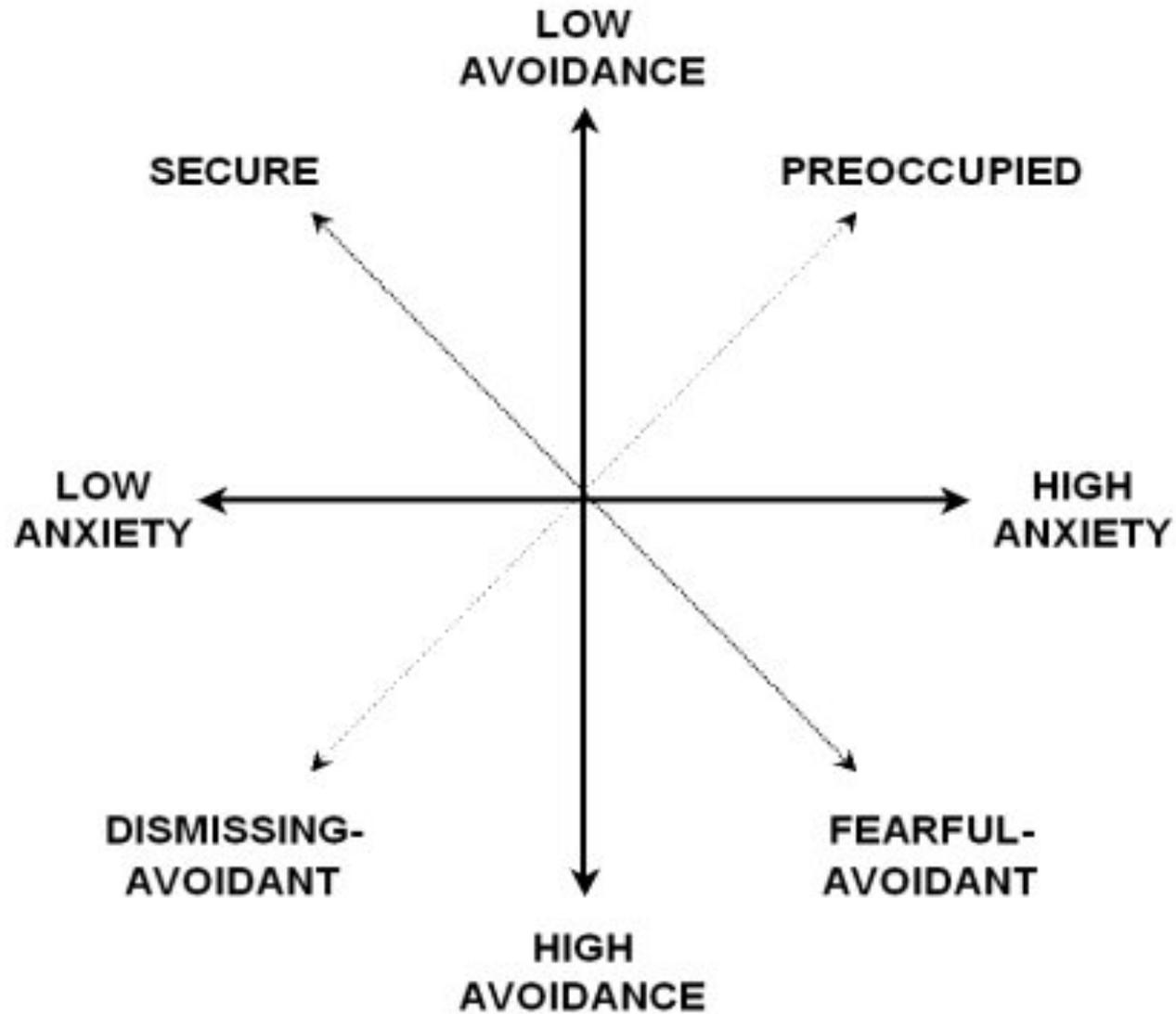
3. We miss them when they are distant.

Separation is distressing

4. They have our back.

Secure base

Bartholomew and Horowitz's model



Characteristic of Attachment Figure

Mary Ainsworth

1. We monitor emotional and physical closeness with our loved one. **Proximity seeking.**
2. We reach out for our attachment figure when we are uncertain or upset. **Safe haven.**
3. We miss them when they're physically or emotionally distant. **Separation is distressing**
4. We rely on them to back us when we go out into the world.
Secure base

Secure Attachment

Personally

Body Regulation

Attunement

Emotional Balance

Response Flexibility

Soothing Fear

Insight

Empathy

Morality

Interpersonally

Disclose well, open

Tolerates conflict

Express negative
transference

Better caregiving to others

More empathic

Forgives more easily

Reflective capacity

ABLE TO FEEL AND DEAL

Preoccupied in Groups

- Flooded with emotions
- More self critical
- Seek out praise and caregiving from others
- Less empathic
- Difficultly forgiving
- More jealous and preoccupied with other
- Sensitive to abandonment and rejection
- FEEL BUT NOT DEAL (Fosha, 2007)



Avoidant in Groups

- Values independence and achievement
- Devalues dependency and vulnerability
- Tend to prefer thinking to feeling
- uncomfortable with group cohesion
- Poor memories of childhood
- DEAL BUT DON'T FEEL (Fosha, 2007)



Fearful

- Engage in both avoidance and hyperactivation
- Concerned with safety
- May dissociate to cope with pain/distress
- Fearful of abandonment and rejection
- Pull away from others
- Often history of trauma
- Can't FEEL OR DEAL (Fosha, 2007)



Contributions of Attachment studies to group work

For the Client

- An understanding of how an individuals' IWM of self, others, and groups develop over a life time and influence current relationships
- An understanding of how one is able to be vulnerable, regulate emotions, and empathize with others



For the clinician

- Increases our appreciation and empathy for resistance as an adaptive strategies
- Increases our insight into different goals some members may have and how members may influence one another
- Facilitates our understanding of what group is best for an individual

Features of Attachment-based Therapy

- Access of emotions
- Use of dyadic affect regulation strategies
- Exploration of context
- Value of defenses
- A deep prioritizing of bottom up processing

Setting the culture of group: the group's relationship to the leader

PDR

Model for

- Safety and care
- Presence and availability
- Containment and holding
- Intervention
- Self reflection

Making the group relevant

