

TRANSFORMATIONAL SYNERGIES:
Together, MDMA and AEDP™ psychotherapy
accelerate the healing of attachment trauma

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AEDP™ psychotherapy is....

... a healing oriented, mind/body experiential therapy that puts positive neuroplasticity in clinical action in an embodied, boldly relational context in order to treat & transform trauma & attachment trauma



AEDP psychotherapy is...

A word cloud of terms associated with AEDP psychotherapy. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape, with varying sizes and colors. The largest words are 'attachment' (green), 'transformation' (dark red), 'healing' (dark blue), and 'neurobiology' (red). Other prominent words include 'emotion' (purple), 'relationship' (black), 'change' (black), and 'connection' (black). Smaller words include 'rigor', 'growth', 'exploration', 'resonance', 'training', 'home', 'gratitude', 'engagement', 'positive', 'feeling', 'therapies', and 'community'.

change connection
emotion
exploration
rigor growth relationship healing
resonance training neurobiology home gratitude
attachment engagement
positive feeling
transformation
therapies experiential
community

AEDP psychotherapy is . . . empirically supported

- Iwakabe, S., Edlin, E., Fosha, D., Gretton, H., Joseph, A. J., Nunnink, S., Nakamura, K. & Thoma, N. (2020). The effectiveness of accelerated experiential dynamic psychotherapy (AEDP) in private practice settings: A transdiagnostic study conducted within the context of a practice research network. *Psychotherapy*, 57 (4), 548-561. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pst0000344>
- Iwakabe, S., Edlin, J., Fosha, D., Thoma, N., Gretton, H., Joseph, A. J. & Nakamura, K. (2022). Long term outcome of accelerated experiential dynamic psychotherapy (AEDP): Six and 12-months follow-up results. *Psychotherapy*. 59 (3), 431-43. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pst0000441>

Transformational synergies!

- MDMA enhances *access* and *receptivity* to:

- Experience
- Relational closeness
- Memory
- Emotion
- Transformation



- Why not pair with a transformational therapy that facilitates *access* and *receptivity* to and works rigorously with:

- Experience
- Relational experience/Attachment
- Memory
- Emotion
- Transformation



AEDP and MDMA

I want to show you today how MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, with an AEDP protocol, can be

EXPERIENTIAL

RELATIONAL

TRANSFORMATIVE

At every stage of the process: Preparation, Medicine Session AND Integration! Why not maximize the active mechanisms of change at every stage?!

Positive neuroplasticity

- Necessary catalysts to neuroplasticity:
 - New Experiences! (not thought, not stories, not familiarity, not protective/inhibitory processes)
 - Receptivity
- MDMA enhances access/receptivity to:
 - memories, emotion, connection, intrapsychic and relational domains
- AEDP amplifiers of neuroplasticity
 - Enhancing receptivity
 - Making the implicit, explicit; the explicit, experiential; the experiential, relational, and the whole lot transformational
 - Focusing on and deepening transformational experiences

Like MDMA, AEDP™ therapy works via a reduction of fear & an increase in oxytocin

We hypothesize the effectiveness of AEDP, like that of MDMA in helping transform PTSD, including severe and chronic PTSD is attributed to its capacity to:

- reduce fear, i.e., calm the amygdala and
- enhance connection, via the release of the transmitter oxytocin

AEDP and MDMA can work synergistically to heal attachment trauma.

AEDP simultaneously activates....

- The ATTACHMENT system

&

- POSITIVE
NEUROPLASTICITY



A 1-Sentence AEDP Theory of Psychopathology

Psychopathology is that which results from the individual's *unwilled* and *unwanted* **aleness** in the face of **overwhelming emotion.**



If adult attachment is:

- Leaning into others in moments of overwhelm, crisis physical/emotional vulnerability, intense emotion on the edge of, or exceeding, one's window of tolerance
- To make explicit and genuine use of the Other's :
 - Presence
 - Care, Love
 - Dyadic states of consciousness (ala Tronick)
 - Strength
 - Wisdom

THEN

Psychedelic-assisted Psychotherapy is inherently an attachment-based experience!

- With all the privilege and responsibility that accompanies such the role of attachment figure
- So . . .
- Why not utilize a therapy that works explicitly, experientially and transformatively with attachment and relational experience to heal attachment trauma?

AEDP™ Psychotherapy & Preparation

Preparation

- AEDP can kickstart the MDMA-assisted therapy process by starting the experiential/transformational work in the preparatory session.
 - Building more relational and emotional safety faster
 - Co-creating secure attachment from the get-go
 - Tracking and enhancing receptivity and the felt sense markers of receptivity
 - Dyadically regulating fear and other intense emotions that arise in preparation

Harnessing transformational relational experience

- Privileging the felt-sense EXPERIENCE of being 'in it' together
- Undoing aloneness experientially
- Tracking receptive affective experiences: how much is getting in?
- Explicit experiential work with experiences of attachment in the therapy dyad
- The relational co-creation of emotional safety and trust, experientially
 - Together, we will go anywhere you need to go

Relational strategies:

What is unique to AEDP™ therapy?

- Secure attachment is forged through the facilitation of deep emotional experiencing
- Moment to moment tracking of relational events
- Working with receptivity as a precursor to felt experience (of the relationship or internally)
 - i.e. “Is this getting in? How much? How can we help it get in more?”
- Making the implicit, explicit, and the explicit, experiential, and the experiential, relational
- Eliciting the patient’s emotional experience of the relationship as a transformative process

The language of explicit relatedness in preparation sessions:

- “How are you experiencing me right now?”
- “How do you see me experiencing you right now?”
- “What’s it like to see me tear up/get angry on your behalf?”
- “How is it to share this with me?”
- “How connected are you feeling to me right now?”
- “Can you feel me here with you? What’s that like?”
- “What is it like for us to do this together?”
- “How is it to imagine us being together for the medicine session?”
- “How’s it been for us to do this work today together?”

AEDP Psychotherapy & the Medicine Session

AEDP is a 4-State Emotional Processing Model

- MDMA elicits access to deep emotion, including painful, dissociated, traumatic affects
- AEDP knows how to facilitate experiential access to full waves of healing emotion, TOGETHER:
 - “Stay with it, Stay with me”
 - So traumatic emotion gets processed
 - Attachment trauma gets healed
 - Secure attachment gets forged
- In AEDP, we know how to bring authentic relational presence to accompany and transform the “pathogenic affects” of unbearable aloneness, despair, shame, hopeless.

The dance of emotion and connection



Facilitating Completion of Emotional Waves

- The AEDP 4 State Model has a methodology for completion of emotional processing
 - Deepening and completing the wave
 - Exploring emergent emotional experience on the other side of the sadness/anger/fear/relational affects, i.e. feeling care for, understood, etc
- Vital to avoid trauma getting 'stuck' part way through

AEDP Portrayals:

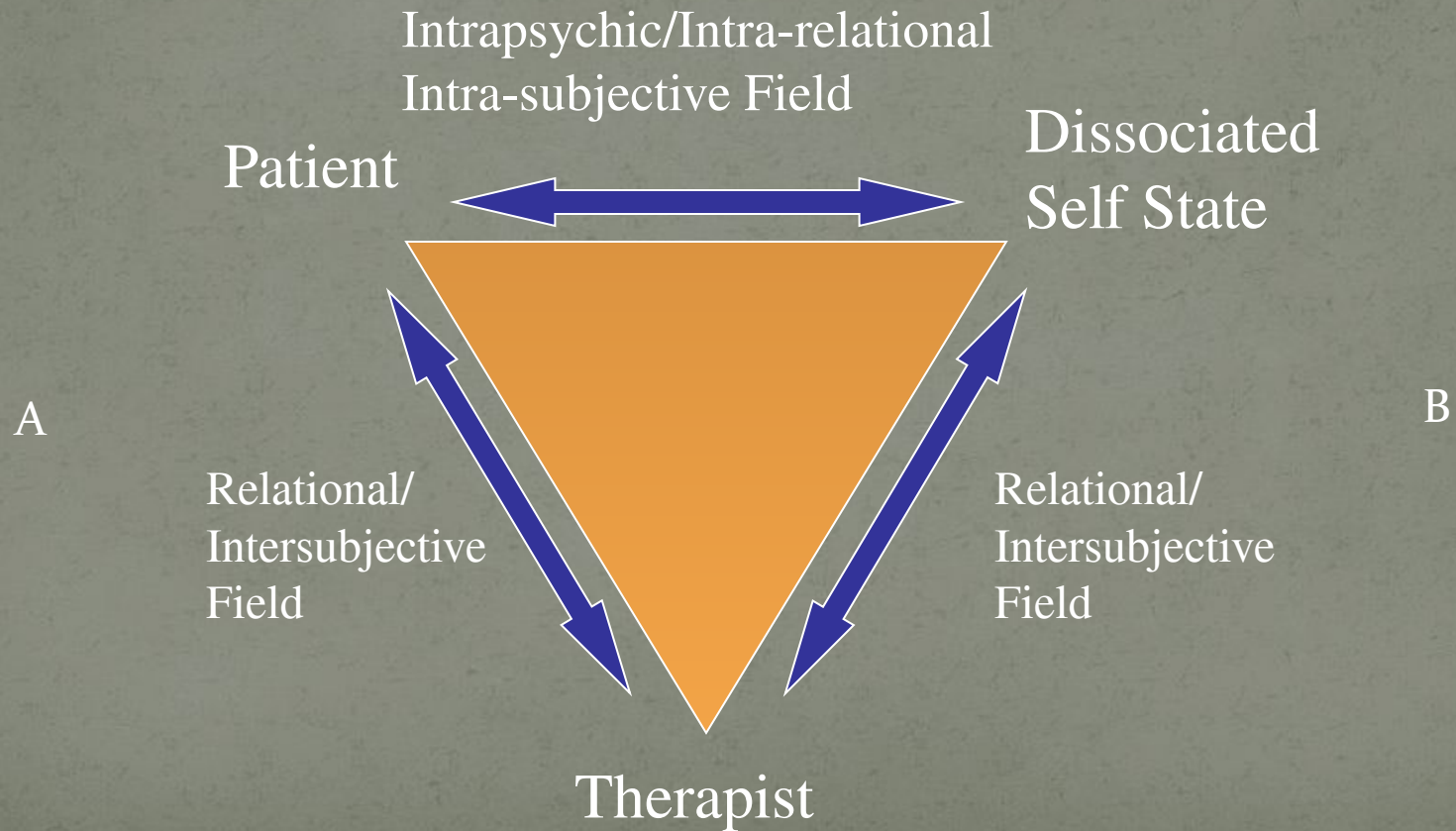
A key experiential tool

- Imagined, fantasized scenes to deepen core, adaptive emotion
- Not rehearsals for action (necessarily), but chances to free up emotions/actions/impulses unedited by social convention
- Make as specific and vivid as possible, engage all the senses, and stay through the full wave
- Interpersonal (angry confrontation, conversation with a loved one who died) or intra-relational (reunion or care-giving between parts of the self)
 - Types: reparative, closure-seeking, grieving, attachment-building

PARTS WORK

Intra-relational: Avenues of Connectivity

C



Intra-relational portrayals

- Side A: Between Therapist and Patient
 - Any experience that is better done symbolically than enacted (angry impulses; soothing, connection)
- Side B: Between Therapist and Dissociated Part
 - Corrective attachment experiences: soothing, comfort, rescue, protection; experiences of being seen, being loved, being cared about. Modeling for eventual Part C portrayal, or just for attachment's sake.
- Side C: Between Patient and Dissociated Part
 - Repairing ruptures, providing soothing, comfort, rescue, corrective attachment experiences, bonding, providing protection against abusers, creating intra-subjective delight

AEDP Psychotherapy & Integration

After the MDMA Medicine session:

- Experience continues to happen!
- Transformation continues to happen!
- Neuroplasticity continues to happen!

- These are active processes available to be harnessed!

- AEDP has a rigorous methodology to do so:
 - States 3 & 4: The Experiential Process of Transformational Experience

Experiential / reflective interventions to
BROADEN & BUILD the positive affects
associated with transformation and
change-for-the better to promote
FLOURISHING



METATHERAPEUTIC PROCESSING:

The experiential processing of TRANSFORMATIONAL experience

★ METATHERAPEUTIC PROCESSING, or METAPROCESSING for short, is the experiential processing of the experience of transformation, constituting of alternating waves of EXPERIENCE and REFLECTION.

★ Metatherapeutic processes are accompanied by their own specific TRANSFORMATIONAL affects, which are invariably positive

★ Explicitly focusing on the experience of transformation activates another round of transformational experience

★ **MEMORY RECONSOLIDATION:** juxtaposing the the good, new, here-and-now experience with the old, there-and-then experience

★ **CONSOLIDATION OF THERAPEUTIC RESULTS:** multimodal rehearsal and encoding, helps **INSTALL** the new experience

★ **BROADENING & BUILDING** (Frederickson, 2014): progressive rounds experiential work with the positive transformational affects leads to an upward spiral, that leads to a **BROADENING** mindset and the **BUILDING** of resources

★ **Cascade** in a recursive, positive emotional interactions

★ **Catalyzes** a non-finite transformational spiral

The Transformational Affects Associated with Meta-therapeutic Processes”: The Healing Vortex

- The **mastery affects** associated with the undoing of shame and fear: pride, joy, confidence
- The **emotional pain** of mourning the self
- The **tremulous affects** of newness: sweet, uncertain, trepidation, surprise, “weird, odd”, no words
- The **healing affects**: feeling emotional, moved, touched, gratitude, love toward self and Other
- The **enlivening affects**: delight in the unbrokenness of the self, exuberance, exploratory zest
- The **realization affects** associated with grasping the magnitude of the transformation: ‘wow’ ‘yes!’ ‘this is unbelievable’

** We name, focus on, explore, deepen, spiral into and reflect on all of these emergent affects!

The language of transformational work:

- “When you think back on your medicine session last week, what happens NOW?”
- ”How are you feeling changed or different after that experience?”
- “What do you notice in your body right now?”
- “Stay with that sense of new/strange/different/weird. How are you experiencing that felt sense?”
- “If you put yourself back in the medicine, really reconnect with it, what do you notice?”
 - This can help inter-weave altered and normal states of consciousness

In Conclusion . . .

- AEDP can catalyze MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, with its rigorous and detailed experiential, attachment and transformational methodology

AND

- MDMA can open the doors of receptivity and connection to maximize AEDP interventions

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN!

To Download a Copy of these slides:

- <https://aedpinstitute.org/kari-gleiser-maps-slides/>



A poem by Emily Dickinson

The Brain—is wider than the Sky—
For—put them side by side—
The one the other will contain
With ease—and You—beside—
The Brain is deeper than the sea—
For—hold them—Blue to Blue—
The one the other will absorb—
As Sponges—Buckets—do—
The Brain is just the weight of God—
For—Heft them—Pound for Pound—
And they will differ—if they do—
As Syllable from Sound—