

Navigating Differences in Social Experience in the Therapeutic Dyad

Ben Medley, LCSW

AEDP Institute Senior Faculty

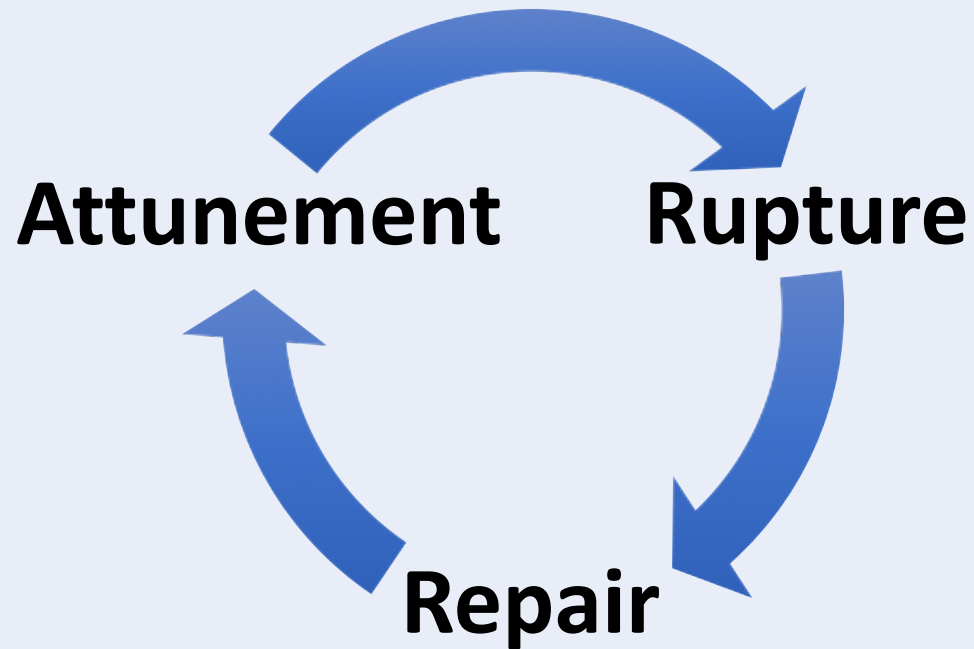
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The # 1 predictor of positive treatment outcomes is the therapeutic relationship

Cycle of Secure Attachment

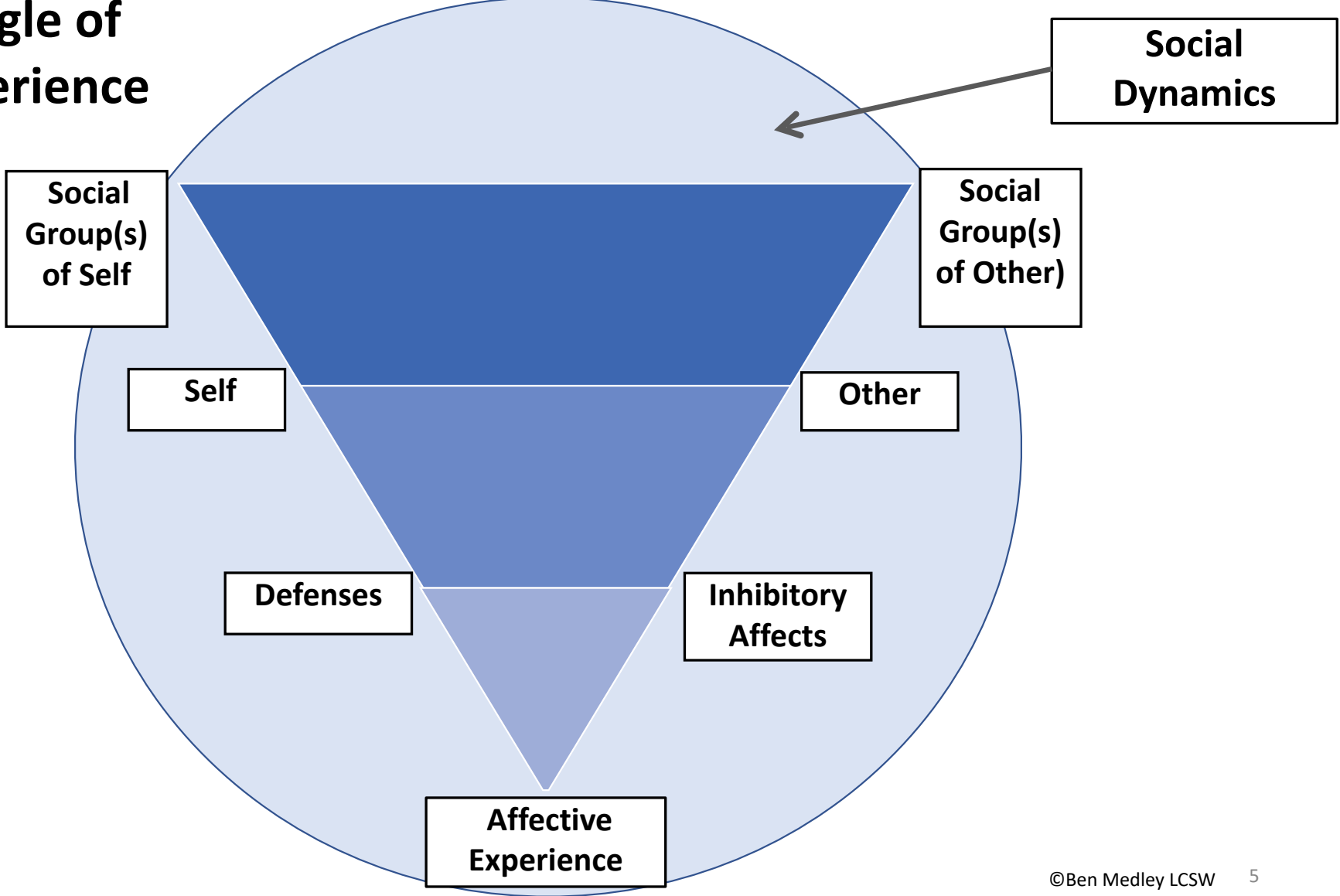


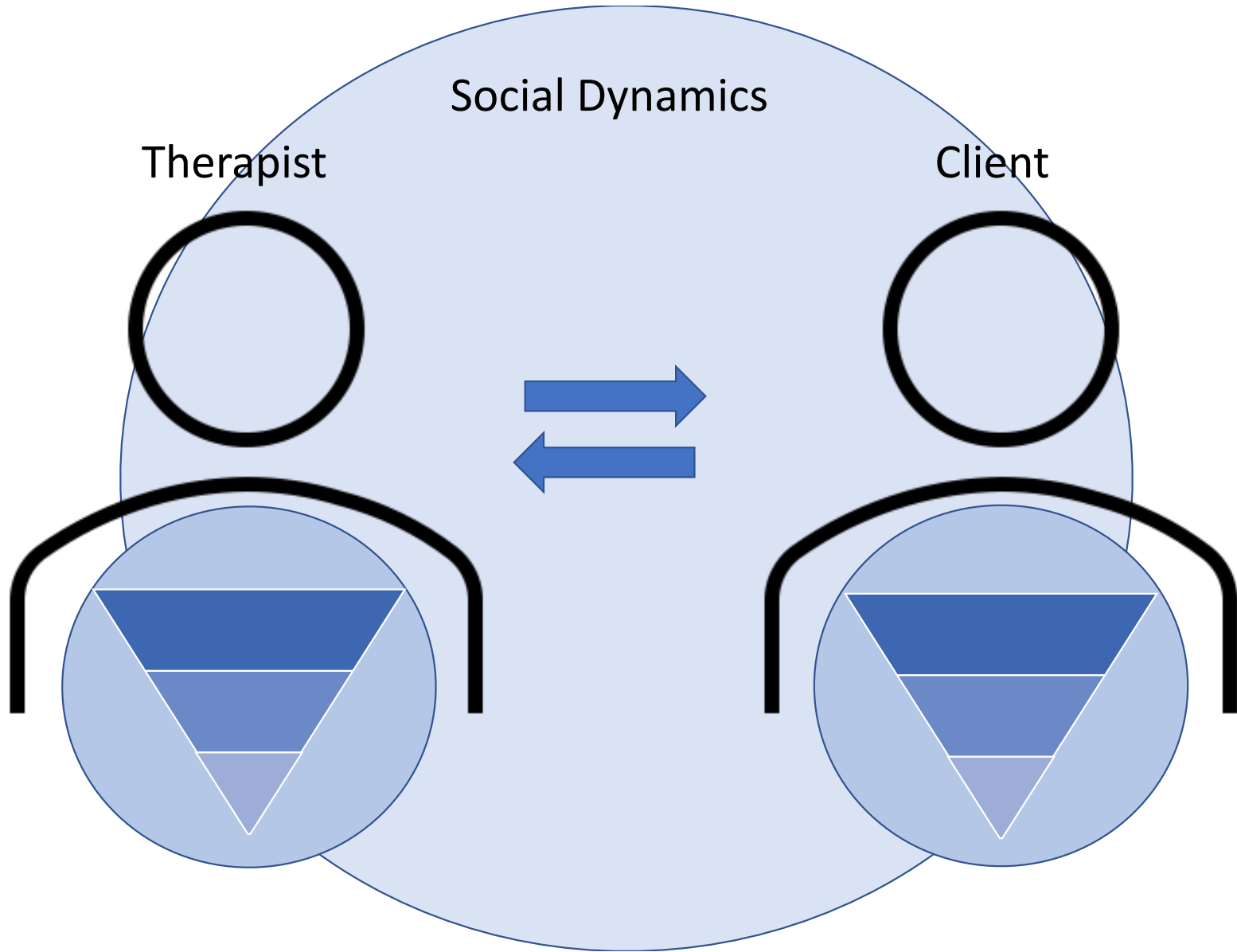
The Therapeutic Relationship

Both the client's and therapist's social identities and social experiences are an important part of therapy and the therapeutic relationship



The Triangle of Social Experience





3 Common Causes of Social Ruptures in the Therapeutic Relationship

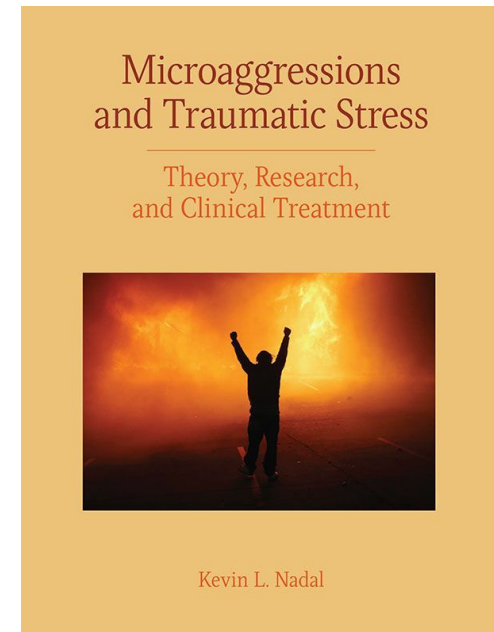
1. Unexamined social experience and internal working models of self, others, and social groups
2. Overemphasizing, avoiding or minimizing social experience
3. Microaggressions



Microaggressions

“Microaggressions are verbal, behavioral, and environmental manifestations of bias; although they are often unintentional or unconscious, they communicate a spectrum of negative messages, primarily to people of historically marginalized groups”

-Kevin L. Nadal





3 Types of Microaggressions

Microassaults

Microinsults

Microinvalidations



Microaggressions in Therapy

- Missteps are inevitable
- Microaggressions that occur outside of therapy can happen inside therapy
- Social ruptures can disrupt connection if not addressed



3 Steps for Repairing Social Ruptures

1. Recognize when a social rupture occurs
2. Address and examine effects
3. Repair the rupture

Repairing: When the Therapist Causes a Social Rupture

- Take the AEDP stance with cultural humility
- Affirm client
- Minimize defensiveness
- Accept, recognize and manage your connection to oppressing groups and social dynamics
- Validate client's experience





“Often individuals from marginalized groups are not looking for anything profound, just an honest acknowledgement of their pain and struggle. If you are unsure of what to do, start with offering your presence; listen and acknowledge pain that others are experiencing. This culturally humble stance provides the foundation for the daily practices of being an ally.”

-Hook, Davis, Owen & DeBlare-



Repairing: When the Therapist Causes a Social Rupture

- Affirm and encourage expression of affective experience
- Take responsibility
- Notice and focus on moments of shift and change
- Metaprocess
- Leave an opening for future dialogue



Attachment and the Therapeutic Relationship

“The experience of making an impact on an attachment figure and being able to have a sense of agency in relational experiences, a profound and healing experience for most people, is all the more so for those individuals with histories of trauma, neglect, abandonment, and loss who felt helpless to affect their dyadic partners.”

-Diana Fosha-

Microaggressions in Therapy

- Microaggressions can also be generated by clients
- These microaggressions can be triggering
- Therapists too can have Internalized Oppression



Repairing: When the Client Causes a Social Rupture

- Don't avoid or minimize
- Take the AEDP Stance with cultural humility
- Self-disclose and acknowledge your own feelings
- Support the client in repairing the rupture





Repairing: When the Client Causes a Social Rupture


- Support Exploration of Internal Working Models
- Recognize External Social Dynamics
- Metaprocess
- Get Support

Calling In

“Calling *in* is a call *out* done with love....People change from the inside because they want to call on themselves to be better people...there’s an overuse of calling out in situations when being less punitive can actually become a more effective strategy. Even if someone is wrong, we can offer them the grace of being wrong about it...these are human beings and if you fail to see their humanity you will always thwart your own goals of changing hearts and minds.”

-Loretta J Ross



A misty, sunlit forest landscape with trees and hills. The sun is low in the sky, creating a soft, golden glow and long shadows. The trees are dense and have some autumnal colors. The mist is thick and fills the valleys between the hills.

“It’s a whole new world that people can have conversations and work things out. It doesn’t have to be anger and hate and resentment.”

-Client



Effective Social Repairs

- Lead to a stronger, more secure therapeutic relationship
- Can update internalized working models of social groups, self and others
- Change the client and change the therapist



“If you have come to help me you are wasting your time. If you have come because your Liberation is bound together with mine, let us walk together.”

-Lilla Watson-