



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) groups

Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT), developed by Susan Johnson and Les Greenberg, is grounded in attachment theory: we're wired for close emotional bonds, and distress often reflects disruptions to them. EFT works with the negative cycles driven by attachment fears, reaching the deeper emotions and needs underneath. Best known in couples work, it's adapted here for groups.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- A fit if you want to understand and change your relational patterns.
- Not for acute crisis or concrete skill-building. In crisis? Call or text 988.
- Significant interpersonal trauma may call for individual stabilization first.

What it's used for

Depression, anxiety, grief, relationship difficulties, and trauma.

Attachment injuries: moments you felt abandoned or unsupported when you most needed care.

Good when you feel disconnected or stuck in patterns you can't break.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Sessions usually run 90 minutes, blending attachment teaching with experiential work.

2 The therapist helps you slow down, name what's underneath, and speak more vulnerably.

3 Less structured than CBT or DBT, more relational than a support group. Can be intense.

EFT's evidence is strongest in couples work; the group format builds on that foundation.

- A 2016 review found EFT **highly effective for relationship distress**, with recovery rates of 70 to 73 percent across studies.¹
- A 2025 trial of the individual format (EFIT) found large reductions in depression and anxiety versus waitlist.²
- The group format itself is earlier in formal research, applying well-evidenced principles.

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

- **Bring the real reaction.** The here-and-now is the material.
- **Let yourself be reached.** Receiving care is part of the work.
- **Give it several sessions.** Trust builds slowly.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1** Is the leader trained in EFT, and through ICEEFT?
- 2** Is it a closed time-limited group, or an ongoing open one?
- 3** What does it cost? Is there a sliding scale option?

Ready to find a group?

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If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact. Sources on page 2.



Sources

Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Wiebe, S. A., & Johnson, S. M. A review of the research in emotionally focused therapy for couples. *Family Process* (2016).
- 2 Wiebe, S. A., et al. A randomized controlled trial of emotionally focused individual therapy (EFIT) for depression and anxiety. *Psychotherapy* (2025).

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