

# Working with Clients’ Defenses: Experiential Dynamic Therapies and Emotion- Focused Therapy

In the field of counseling/psychotherapy, there are few topics that are more pervasively misunderstood than the nature of emotions and their significance to human health. Even the founders of many influential approaches (i.e., Aaron Beck, Albert Ellis) believed that emotions are best controlled - rather than deeply experienced, reflected upon (processed), and communicated; fields such as affective neuroscience have demonstrated that this is simply false. Just as thoughts can be accurate/adaptive or inaccurate/maladaptive, emotions can be “on target” or “off-base”; they can also be primary or secondary (the latter is often an emotional defense of the primary emotion). Moreover, all human beings—and especially therapy clients—use defenses to avoid experiencing and dealing with their emotions. Most therapists are not taught basic knowledge of emotions and defenses. Rather, they are often taught to simply “follow the client’s feelings.” However, many feelings are actually defenses against the underlying (primary, true) feeling (i.e., sadness covering anger). If a therapist does not recognize which emotions are primary and which are defensive/secondary emotions, then one may be encouraging a client to heighten their defenses, which is almost always anti-therapeutic. Clients who defend against their emotions lose the important information that emotions can provide. This webinar will teach you how to bypass your clients’ defenses and to work directly with their emotions, because emotions are fundamental sources of information and knowledge about one’s self and the world around them.

Target Audience		
Psychologists Therapists	Social Workers Psychiatrists	Counselors Nurses
Course level: Intermediate		

## Learning Objectives

- At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:
- (1) Explain how defenses are often maladaptive in clients’ lives.
  - (2) Describe the difference between primary and secondary emotions as well as the difference between adaptive and maladaptive emotions.
  - (3) Recognize the wide range of defenses.
  - (4) Explain why promoting the client’s experience of safety is essential to bypassing clients’ defenses.
  - (5) To be able to utilize the Triangle of Conflict and Triangle of Persons as conceptual aids to guide moment-to-moment intervening.

## Seminar Schedule

The webinar outline is attached. See the Live Webinar page for the start and end times.

## Outline

Begin Noon EST  
Overview  
Why is focusing on emotions so central to effective, long-lasting, enduring change in counseling?  
What emotions are and why they are important.  
Why working with defenses and resistance is so important.

Empirical Support for these Approaches (EFT and STDPs)

Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT) Principles  
Emotions: Adaptive and maladaptive; Primary and secondary  
Arriving and Leaving  
Emotion regulation skills

Intensive Short-Term Dynamic Therapy (ISTDP)

1:30 BREAK (15 min)

Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy (AEDP)  
What is “core affect”?  
A very different way to bypass defenses: Safety, safety, safety

Affect Phobia Therapy (APT)

Defense restructuring: defense recognition, then defense relinquishing

Ethical Issues in working with patients with Medically Unexplained Symptoms (MUS)

Ends 3:15pm

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## The Presenter

Andre Marquis, Ph.D., is a professor of counseling at the University of Rochester, as well as a licensed mental health counselor in New York with a small private practice. Marquis’ teaching, research, and scholarly interests include psychotherapy integration, group therapy, psychopathology, relational psychodynamics, affect-focused therapies, developmental constructivism, and integral metatheory as a framework to coherently organize theory, research, and practice. He has taught group therapy at the masters and doctoral level 26 semesters. Marquis has authored or co-authored Integral Psychotherapy: A Unifying Approach, Understanding Psychopathology: An Integral Exploration, The Integral Intake: A Guide to Comprehensive Idiographic Assessment in Integral Psychotherapy, Theoretical Models of Counseling and Psychotherapy, and dozens of peer-reviewed scholarly articles. Marquis serves in various editorial roles for peer-reviewed publications. He has taught more than 20 different courses in counseling,

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This seminar has been reviewed and approved by Keith Hannan, Ph.D., Laura Davie, LICSW, Tina Jenkins, Psy.D., and Loreen Yearick, MSN, RN. This approval expires on March 1, 2028.

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