

THE WICKED AND THE WONDERFUL IN THE STUDY OF RUPTURE REPAIR

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Alliance Focused Training (AFT) is an empirically supported approach for helping therapists develop the skills to build and maintain their alliances with patients, essential to any effective treatment. More specifically, AFT helps therapists develop their abilities to recognize alliance ruptures and work constructively with them when they occur. Ruptures are marked by movements away (withdrawals) and movements against (confrontations) by patients and therapists. Rupture repair involves processes to improve communication and promote corrective experience, including efforts to renegotiate an in-session therapy task or to explore a rupture to clarify underlying needs (via the principle of metacommunication: communication about the communication process as it unfolds). AFT is founded on principles in experiential learning (including reflective and deliberate practice) and was developed at the Mount Sinai Beth Israel Psychotherapy Research Program with support from our National Institute of Mental Health.

The keynote will introduce rupture repair as a critical change process in psychotherapy and a perspective on its empirical study. I will position our research program with regard to current perspectives on psychotherapy research and on guideline development for treatment and training.