

# Applying Developmental Model Principles to escalating clients During couples therapy



*with  
Kelly Scharver*



October 4, 2023

# Integrate Neuroscience In early sessions



Teach clients about the parts of the **brain frequently activated in couples interactions** especially during conflict.



Build client's **awareness about their tendencies, body sensations, and projections** when their limbic systems are activated.

# Teach clients self-regulation strategies to guide them to the calm required for growth



Help partners identify a target word to **signify that they are triggered.**



Guide each partner in **developing their go-to self-regulation strategy.**



Teach clients **how to express what type of support they would like to receive from their partners** as they learn to change their knee-jerk reactions.

# Facilitate direct, **positive interaction**



When one partner begins to make positive statements, **encourage both partners to talk to one another.**



Develop rituals to **support positive interactions.**



**Let them know this can be a vulnerable process** and the normal fears that come up as they turn more vulnerable energy towards each other.



Once more positives interactions and self-regulation have increased, **guide them to deeper work that builds greater emotional capacity** and creates growth experiences in the session.