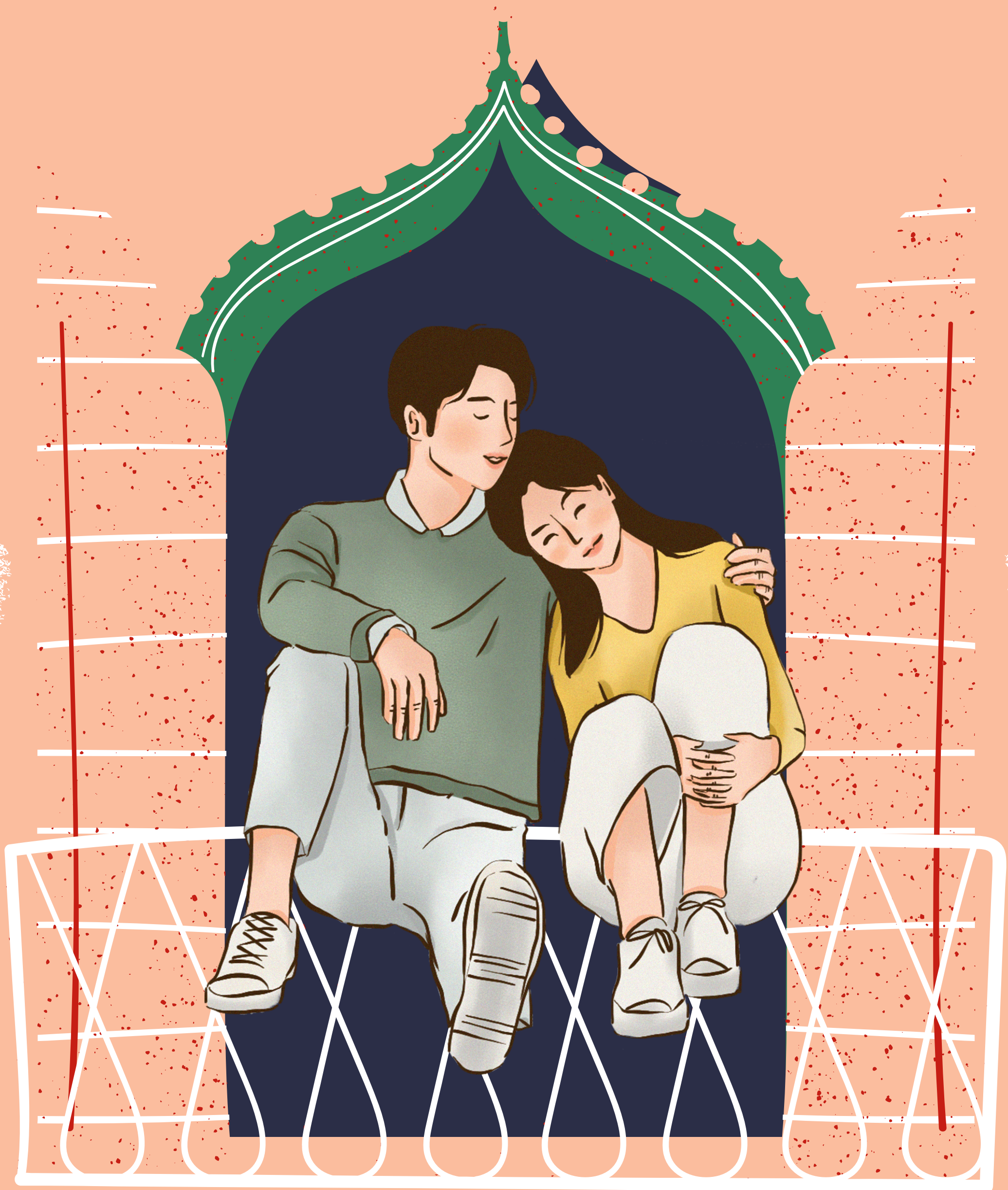



WELCOME TO COUPLES THERAPY



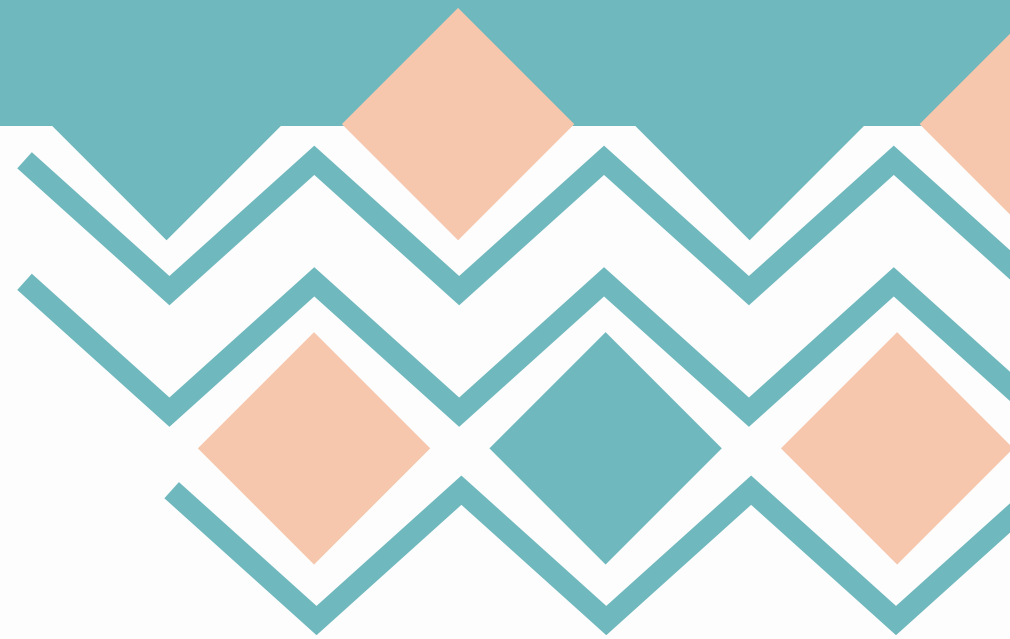
Dr. Mark G. Karris

An illustration featuring two hands, one in a blue sleeve and one in a white sleeve, holding a red string. The string is looped to form a heart shape. The background is a warm, light orange color. A white rectangular box with a torn edge is positioned at the top, containing text.

**IN THIS WELCOME PACKET,
I PROVIDE VALUABLE
INFORMATION TO SUPPORT
YOU ON YOUR COUPLES
THERAPY JOURNEY.**

*I am so excited to be
walking alongside you both*

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Falling in Love

**“I love you so much.
I can’t picture life
without you.”**

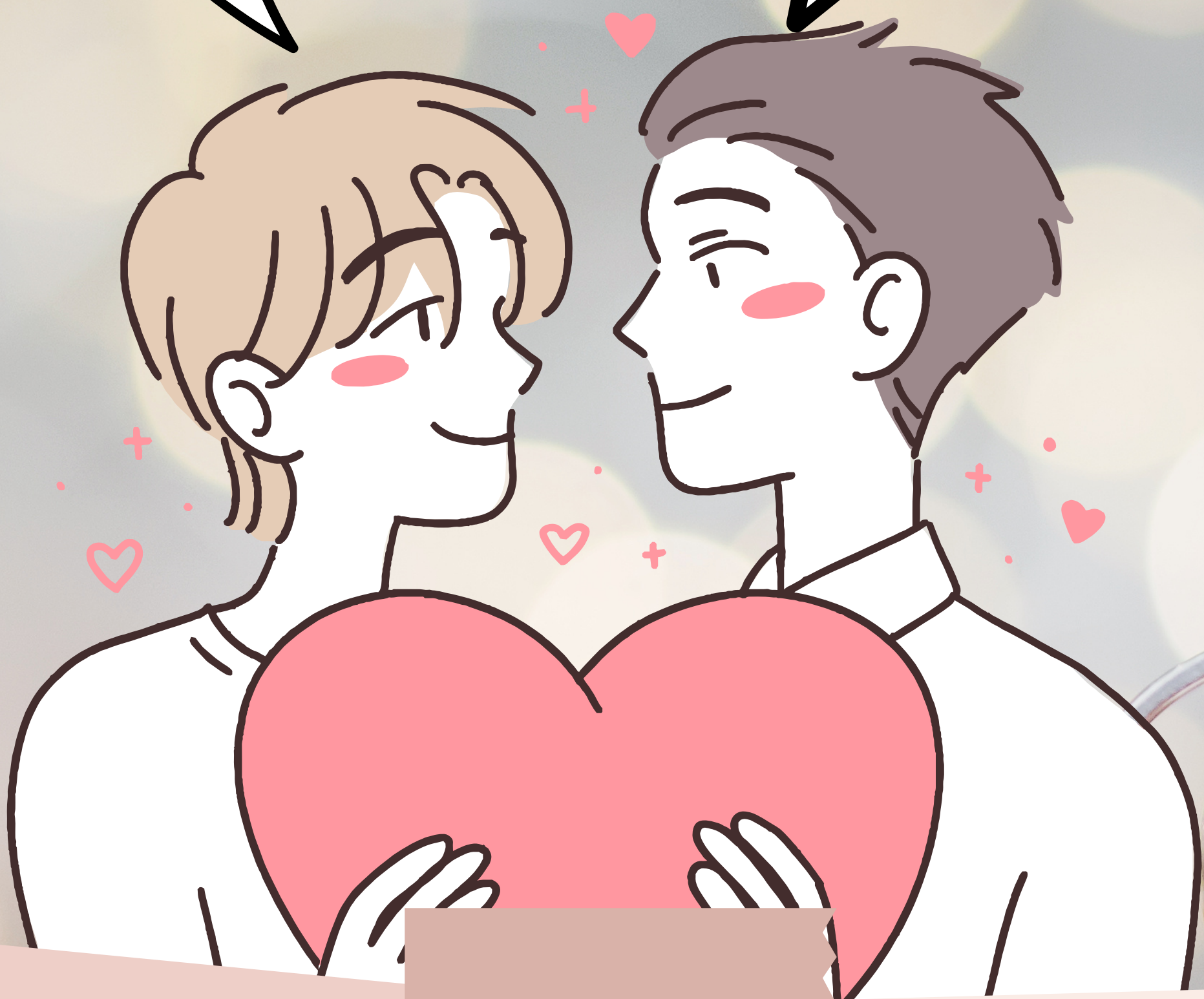
**“I love you! You are the
best thing that ever
happened to me.”**



Falling in Love

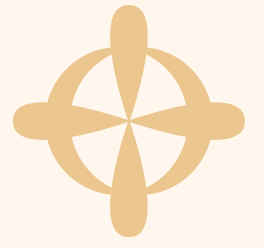
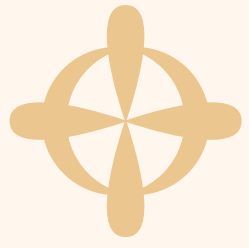
“I can’t wait to see you again and feel your touch.”

“You are all I think about. I can’t wait to hang out again.”

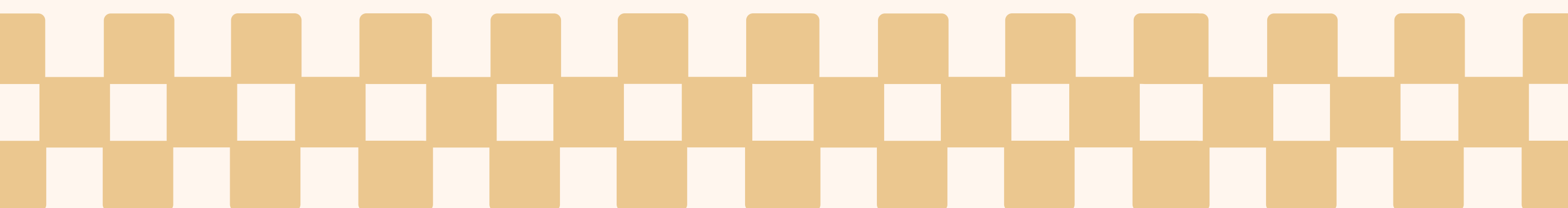


In those initial days of our relationship, being together felt like a walk in the park. We were thrilled, utterly smitten with each other, and could chat for hours, without a care in the world. We both had this irresistible urge to showcase the finest aspects of ourselves. We listened attentively, always ready to see the best in each other and in our shared future. Love was in the air, and it was unmistakable.

*LOVE
BECOMES
COMPLICATED*



- 1 Stressors
- 2 Overworked & Exhausted
- 3 Kids
- 4 Relational Misattunements
- 5 Societal and Global Trauma
- 6 Miscommunication
- 7 Broken Trust
- 8 Past Unresolved Trauma
- 9 Emotional and Sexual Disconnection
- 10 Financial Challenges



Negative Cycle



What is the Negative Cycle?

One of the most destructive elements that can lead to disconnection in relationships is the negative cycle driven by painful emotions, which have taken on a life of their own. This cycle or pattern is the result of the cumulative impact of unaddressed hurts, moments of misunderstanding, and missed opportunities to connect that pile up and get in the way of feeling close and connected.

While there are several unique patterns that couples can find themselves in, the most common one involves one partner typically pursuing in an angry or critical manner (often concealing their true desire to address disconnection), while the other partner withdraws and distances themselves (often in response to implied criticism). The more one partner pursues, the more the other withdraws, and they become entangled in a recurring cycle.

Communication Breakdown

"You are so selfish. You never listen to me! Go and be on your dumb phone."

"You are so emotional. You are always nagging and complaining!"

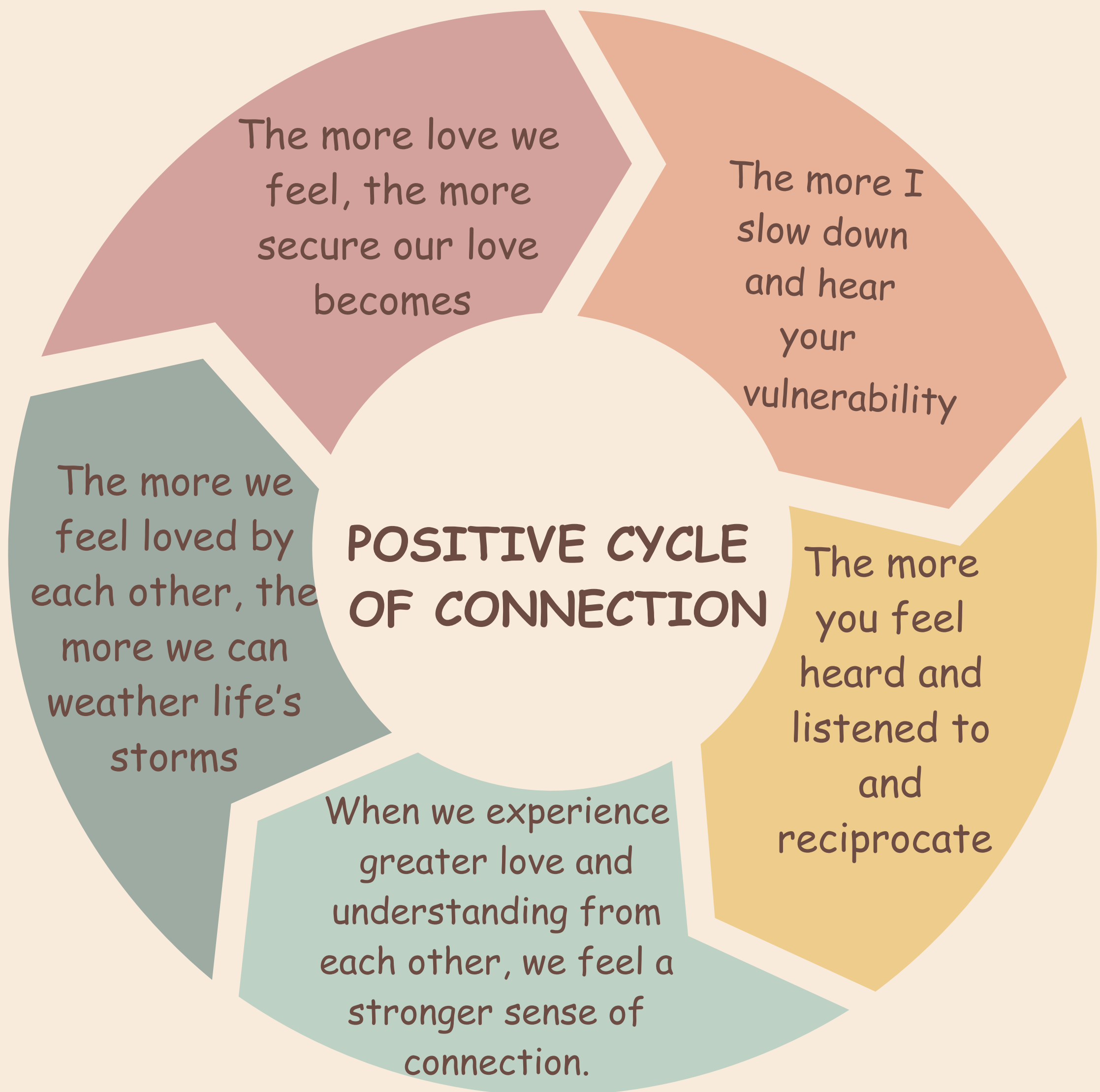
What we hear

What's going on underneath

"I feel alone and not special to you. I get loud with the hopes you will hear my longing for intimacy and connection."

"I feel overwhelmed and inadequate. Your emotions feel so big to me. I don't know what to do. Out of fear I get defensive. I desperately want to be the partner that you deserve."

What We Are Aiming For



What to Expect



- I want to hear about your goals.

- I will explore each of your perspectives.

- I want to hear about your strengths.

- I want to hear about your hurts.

- I will explore your negative cycle.

- I will honor and explore your feelings.

- I will have you talk with each other.

- I will explore the wisdom of your body.

- I will provide relational wisdom.

- I will facilitate a safe environment.

- I will be your cheerleader and coach.

- I will monitor therapy's progress.

What is my Approach?



While I draw from many approaches, **Emotionally Focused Therapy** is my primary model of therapy. EFT is the most empirically validated form of couples therapy, helping couples recognize and transform harmful patterns, such as pursuing and withdrawing or criticizing and defending, into positive, self-reinforcing cycles that result in lasting improvements in the relationship.

Strengths of Emotionally Focused Therapy

Clear Understanding: EFT is based on a clear understanding of what goes wrong in relationships and what love between adults could look like. This understanding is supported by real research on why couples face problems and how adults connect emotionally.

Working Together: EFT is all about working together. Your therapist will use a mix of personal and systemic approaches while respecting your needs and feelings.

Specific Techniques: EFT uses specific evidence-based techniques to bring about change in your relationship.

Step-by-Step Guidance: EFT breaks down the process of change into nine clear steps and three important moments. This helps you see the progress and what to expect.

Proven Effectiveness: EFT is not just a theory; it's backed by more than 20 years of research. We know it works, and we understand how it works.

Versatile Approach: EFT can help with many different relationship problems and is suitable for various types of couples and individuals.

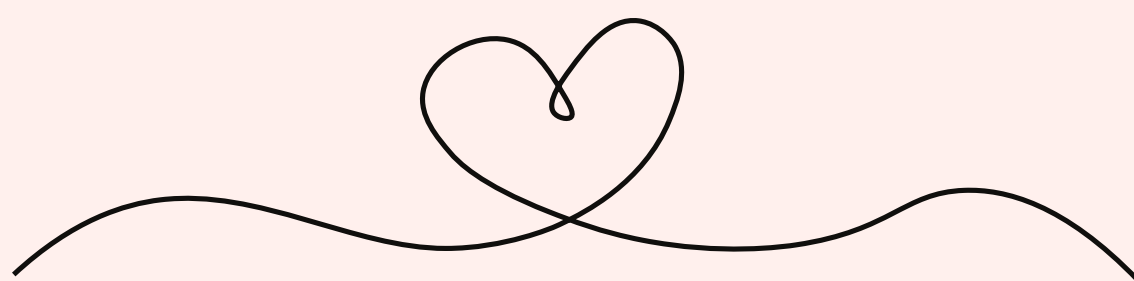
COUPLE THERAPY

TIPS




1. Embrace the Journey of Connection: Some folks come to therapy thinking that one or two sessions will “fix” them. Understand that couples therapy is a journey toward deepening your emotional connection. It's not a quick fix, but a process of growth and transformation. Recognize that rebuilding and strengthening your bond will take time.

2. Explore the Pain to Find Healing: In therapy, we may delve into painful emotions and experiences. This is an opportunity to understand and heal these wounds together. Remember, I'm here to guide and support you through these challenging conversations.



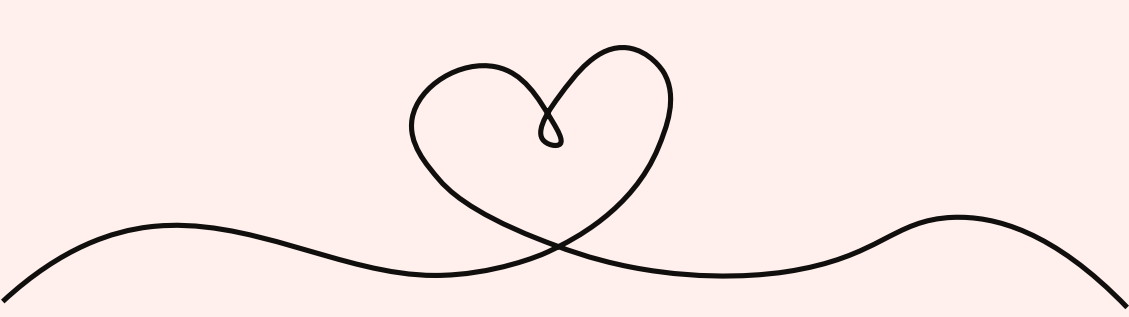
COUPLE THERAPY

TIPS




3. Keep it Real: Openness, truthfulness, and vulnerability are crucial to the process. As our relationship becomes safer, be willing to honestly share your thoughts, feelings, and fears. This vulnerability can lead to greater understanding and closeness.

4. Practice Active Listening: Listening to your partner with empathy and without judgment is crucial (even though it can be really hard). Both partners are invited to commit to actively listening to each other's perspectives, even when it's difficult. I'm here to help if you get stuck.



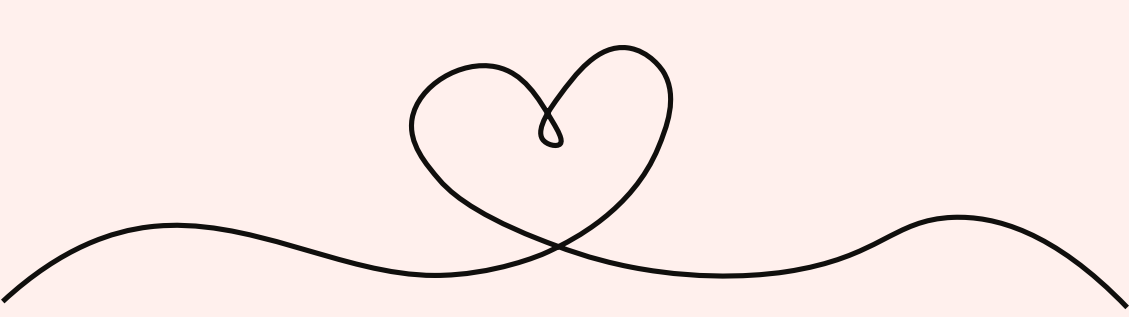
COUPLE THERAPY

TIPS




5. Stay Committed to the Process: Consistency and commitment to attending sessions and working on your relationship between sessions are essential. Achieving long-term change requires dedication and effort from both partners. In each session, I promise to provide the utmost professionalism and care.

6. Be Patient with Each Other and Yourself: Transformative change takes time. Be patient with your partner as they navigate their own growth, and also be gentle with yourselves as you both evolve in this process. I'm also aware that painful events and repeated patterns of disconnection can make this challenging at times.



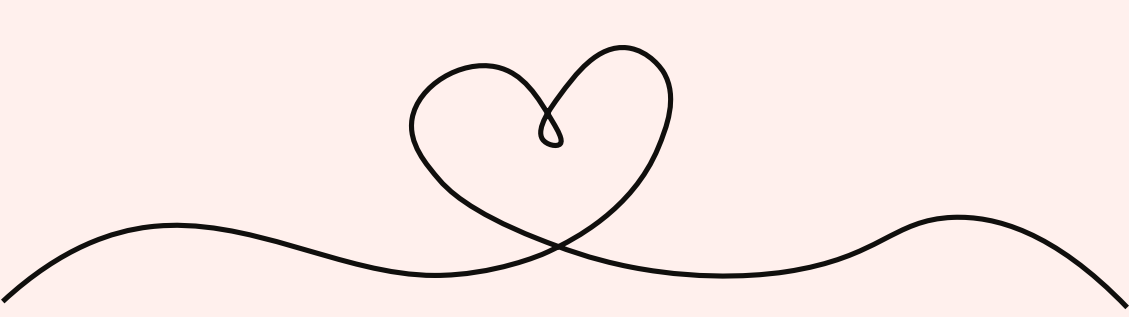
COUPLE THERAPY

TIPS



7. Embrace New Ways of Being: We will work on improving your communication skills and emotional responsiveness. I will help you both learn, through experience, how to be more accessible, responsive, and engaged with each other. I encourage you to practice these skills outside of therapy to reinforce positive interactions.

8. Trust the Process: Trust that the therapeutic process, guided by an Emotionally Focused Perspective, can help you achieve a more secure and satisfying emotional connection in your relationship. I know where I'm going, I have a therapeutic map, and I'm committed to walking alongside you during this process.



END GOAL



In the journey of couples therapy, I aim to nourish your relationship's soil, cultivating stronger communication and resolving the issues that brought you here. Together, we will strive to mend old wounds, rebuild trust, and reignite the flame of emotional and physical closeness between you. My goal is to fortify your bond, weaving a tapestry of enduring love while arming you with tools to weather future storms.





*I am looking
forward to
working with you!*

Dr. Mark G. Karris