


Emoting and Behaving: Blending EFT and CBT While Working With Couples

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Outline: What to Expect


- EFT Theory
 - CBT Theory
 - How they're similar, how they're different
 - Interventions and stage-based approach
 - Role play
 - Practice with a group vignette
 - Questions
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Integrative






Integrative Movement

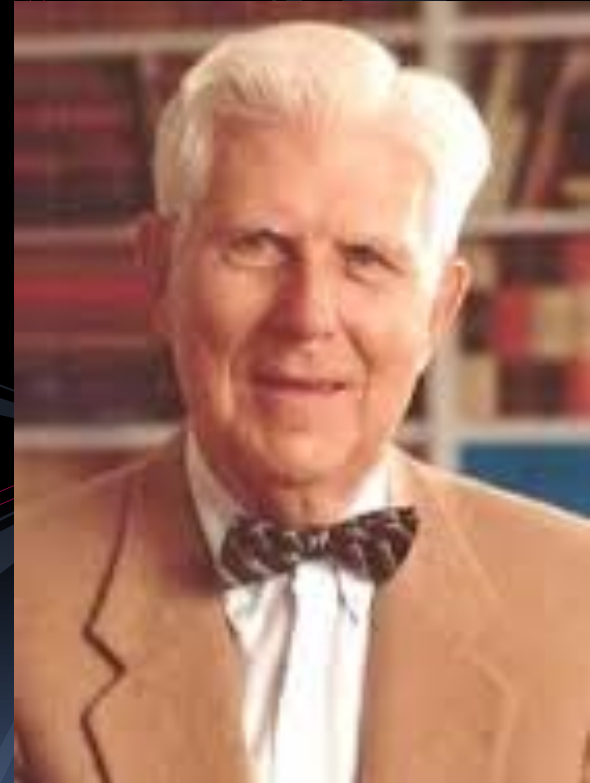
- Paradigm shift to move to integration or *informed* eclecticism to support merging of concepts across diverse orientation.
 - Need arises in response to ongoing development in the field and attempts to incorporate new therapies and strategies into traditional methods
 - Focus on implementation based on common factors and evidence-based constructs.
 - World Peace...
- 



Evidence-Based Treatment

- Focus:
 - We must understand theory
 - We must understand change
 - We must understand change events
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EFT and CBT






Founders & Key Figures

EFT came from taping couples and watching how people change – finding what was important

- Leslie Greenberg
- Susan Johnson

CBT is a classification of therapies which emphasize how emotional and behavioral responses to life events are mediated by idiosyncratic interpretations that may be biased by cognitive distortions

- Aaron Beck
 - Skinner, Pavlov...
- 




Attachment

Their role in the theory, and their non-role





Complementary Principles


- EFT- Individuals actively participate and own some responsibility in the construction of their experiences and schemas about self and others as they interact in their environment.
 - CBT- Individuals are responsible for the way they respond emotionally and behaviorally to relational situations. Schemas influence the interpretation or experience of these situations
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Complementary Principles: Distress

- EFT - Relationship distress is maintained by absorbing negative affect.
- CBT – Thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are interdependent; Cognitive distortions influence emotional distress and maladaptive relational behaviors.
- EFT - Affect reflects and primes rigid, constricted patterns of interaction and interpersonal behaviors (the dance).
- CBT – Relational distress results from negative behavioral transactions.
- EFT - Patterns make safe emotional engagement difficult and create insecure bonding.
- CBT - Interactional patterns are circular (reciprocal) and escalate in intensity.




Common Strengths of EFT

- Clear, explicit conceptualization of relationship distress.
 - Change strategies and interventions are specified.
 - Empirically validated.
 - Applicable to many different kinds of problems and populations.
- 



Common Strengths of CBT


- Clear, explicit conceptualization of distress and emotions.
 - Change strategies and interventions are specified- coping skills.
 - CBT is empirically validated.
 - CBT has been applied to many different kinds of problems and populations.
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Conceptualization & Assessment





Principles & Concepts

- EFT - Looks within at how partners construct their emotional experience of relatedness.
 - Looks between at how partners engage each other.
 - Similarly, CBT looks within at automatic thoughts, assumptions and standards in the creation of relational experiences.
 - Looks at couple's cognitive processing and behavioral interactions between partners
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Relational Distress

- High levels of negative affect:
 - Absorbing states more compelling than positive affect
 - Gender differences in coping
- Negative attributions are the norm:
 - Character blame
 - CBT – Automatic thoughts or ideas and beliefs are accepted as true rather than called into question



Combining Approaches: Interactions


- Rigid repetitive interactional patterns:
 - No exits – no detours/ repair impossible
 - Rigid narrow positions – fight/flight/freeze
 - Most common patterns
 - Criticize, complain, express contempt
 - Defend, distance, stonewall



Results: reinforcing cycles or reactivity/
protective strategies (individual safety first)



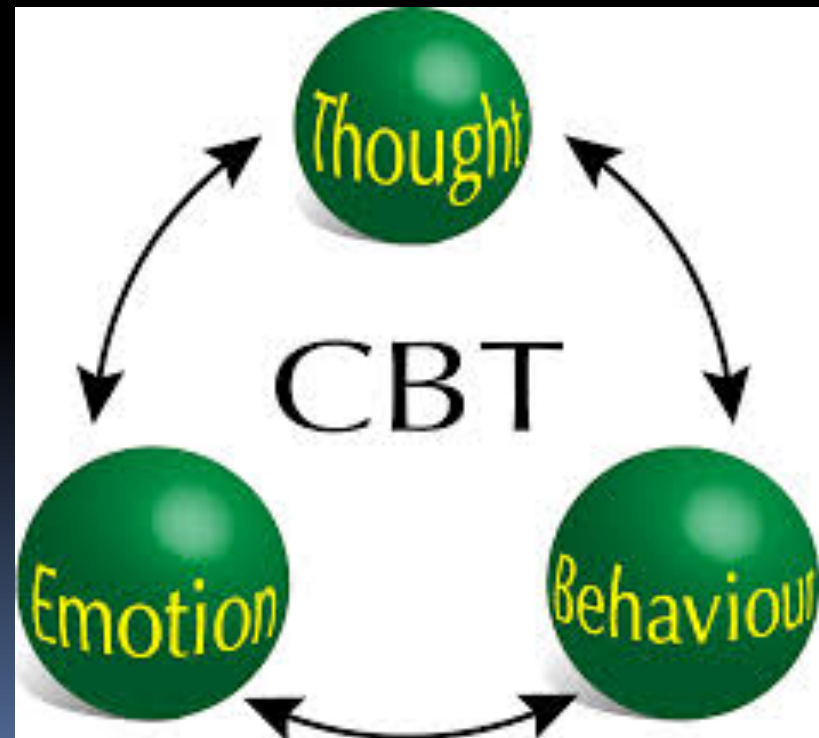
Affect & Communicating

- Partners cannot attune to one another because they are so absorbed in their own negative affect.
 - This negative affect is influenced by cognitive distortions and misinterpretations of attachment events and injuries.
 - Ineffective and unproductive communication skills further inhibit the expression of needs, desires and emotional states.
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Identifying Thoughts


CBT – Five types of cognition

- ▣ Selective attention
- ▣ Attributions
- ▣ Expectancies
- ▣ Assumptions
- ▣ Standards





Cognitive Distortions

- Mental filter
 - Disqualifying the positive
 - Overgeneralization
 - Magnification (catastrophizing) and minimization
 - Personalization
 - All-or-nothing thinking
 - Labeling and mislabeling
 - Jumping to conclusions; Mind reading, fortune teller
 - Should statements
 - Emotional reasoning
- 



Experience

Insight vs. Behavior




Experience
is the
teacher
of all
things.

Julius Caesar



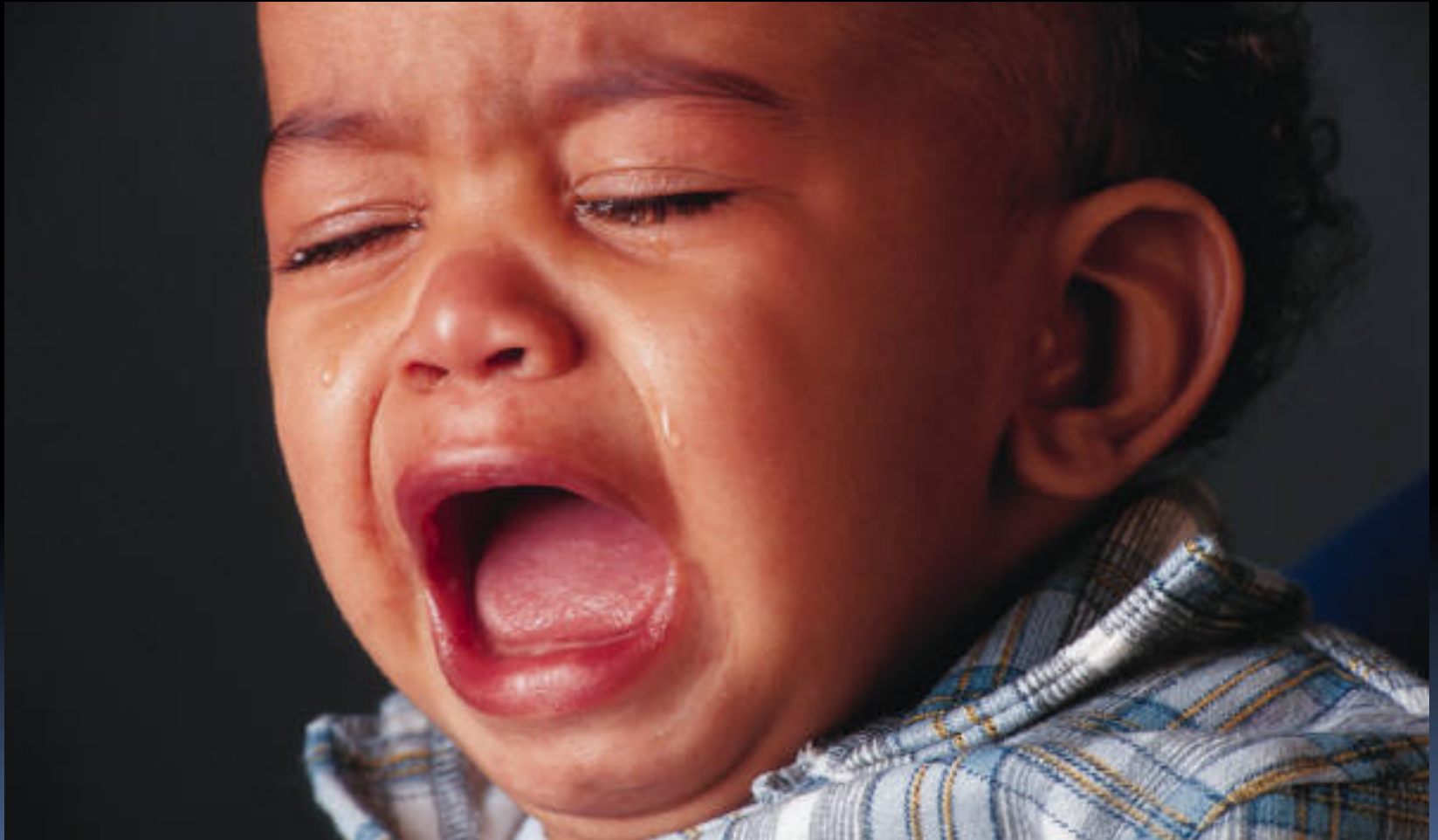
Focus of EFT: The 4 P's

- Experiential
 - **1. Present**
 - **2. Primary Affect**
 - Systemic
 - **3. Process (time)**
 - **4. Positions / Patterns**
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4 P's (cont'd): The first

- Present experience
 - Deal with the past when it comes into the present to validate client's responses as it relates to how they coped/survived
 - When emotion is re-experienced it is now in the present
 - Focus is on current positions/patterns- clarify the core beliefs
 - Don't ask "why", focus on what is.
 - Sound similar????

“Why” and CBT



4 P's (cont'd): The second

- Primary emotions
 - Validating and moving from secondary to primary emotions
 - Stay with emotions, create safe haven
 - Organize the emotion of a past experience so that client can engage in the here & now


[illegible]

Primary


- Anger
- Fear
- Surprise
- Disgust
- Sadness
- Joy

Secondary





Key Issues when focusing on Emotion

1. Involvement: requires direct engagement and experience of the emotions.
 2. Exploration: leads a process of emotional discovery based on personal experiences.
 3. New emotion: discover and expand previously unrecognized or unformulated emotional experiences. Support engagement with primary emotions.
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4 P's (cont'd): The last two

■ **Process patterns**

- Look individually how each person is processing in the moment
- "What happens...then what...then what"

■ **Positions**

- The position each partner is taking in the relationship
- Work to create new position & new patterns



Goals in Treatment

EFT

- To expand and re-organize key emotional processes.
- To create a shift in partners' interactional positions.
- To foster the creation of a secure bond between partners.

CBT

- Decrease cognitive distortions/distress
- Enhance behavioral interactions
- Observers and Evaluators of thoughts- Schema




EFT: Second Session

Guess her character...





3 Stages of EFT

1. Create and maintaining a therapeutic alliance.
 2. Accessing and reformulating emotion.
 3. Restructuring key interactions.
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Stage 1 Interventions

Therapeutic Alliance

1. Empathic Attunement
2. Acceptance
3. Genuineness
4. Continuous active alliance monitoring

CBT- Joining

1. Empathic and reflective listening to build alliance
2. Summarize reciprocal concerns
3. Define concerns in dyadic terms to establish neutrality

Stage 2 Interventions

Accessing and Reformulating Emotion

1. Reflecting emotional experience
2. Validation
3. Evocative responding
4. Heightening experience
5. Empathic conjecture and interpretation

CBT- Focus on Emotions

1. Containing the experience/expression of emotions
2. Communication skills training – couple discussion focused on sharing thoughts and feelings

*Both EFT and CBT address primary and secondary emotions to find adaptive ways to negotiate differences

Stage 3 Interventions

Restructuring of Interactions

1. Tracking, reflecting, and replaying patterns & cycles of interactions.
2. Framing and reframing problems in terms of negative cycles and attachment responses.
3. Restructuring and shaping interactions through enacting new behaviors based on altered perceptions, emotional responses, and new ways of communicating.

CBT – Creating opportunities to practice behaving in new way.

- Guided Behavior Change (CBT)-Increase caring behavior while decreasing negative behavioral interactions
- Communication skills training – decision-making and problem-solving discussion



EFT

- Heightening/ Digging deeper
- Evocative responding
- Understand your own emotions (some thoughts)
- Describing core emotions
- Needs and desires defined
- The Dance
- Current experiences
- Assessment
- Mapping
- Clinician role- process consultant

CBT

- Socratic Questioning
- Exposure
- Labeling cognitions, behaviors and emotions
- Listing core beliefs
- Value-directed action
- Behaviorism
- Present Moment
- Ambivalence assessment
- Chain Analysis
- Clinician role- collaborative empiricism



Enactments

Phase 1: Making the request to make contact

Phase 2: Maintaining the focus, blocking
detours, and containing and framing
escalations

Phase 3: Processing each partner's experience
of the enactment



Restructuring Interactions

- Enactments- Used to shape and restructure interactions.
 1. Enacting present positions
 2. Choreographing specific change events to introduce new behaviors
 3. Turning new emotional experiences into new interactions
 4. Highlighting rarely occurring responses.
- CBT- Homework (following in-office enactments) – to replace dysfunctional existing patterns with new positive ones, couple needs to rehearse new patterns repeatedly under real-world conditions.


Nine Steps of EFT

- *Stage 1: Therapeutic Alliance:*
 - *1. Alliance and Acceptance ,*
 - *2. Identify the negative interaction cycle, and each partner's position in that cycle.*
 - *3. Access unacknowledged emotions underlying interactional positions.*
 - *4. Reframe the problem in terms of underlying feelings, attachment needs, and negative cycle.*
- *Stage 3: Restructure Interactions:*
 - 8. Facilitating the emergence of new solutions to old relationship problems.*
 - 9. Consolidating new positions and new cycles of attachment behaviors.*
- *Stage 2: Access and reformulate Emotion:*
 - *5. Promote identification with disowned attachment emotions, needs, and aspects of self, and integrate these into relationship interactions.*
 - *6. Promote acceptance of the other partner's experiences and new interactional responses.*
 - *7. Facilitate the expression of needs and wants and create emotional engagement and bonding events that redefine the attachment between the partners.*



Nine Steps of EFT

Steps 1 – 4 Assessment & Cycle De-escalation

1. Alliance & assessment: Creating an alliance and delineating conflict issues in the core attachment struggle.
 - What are they fighting about and how are they related to core attachment issues.
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Nine Steps of EFT

Steps 1 – 4 Assessment & Cycle De-escalation

2. Identify the negative interaction cycle, and each partner's position in that cycle.

- Goal is to see the cycle in action and then identify and describe it to the couple and work to stop it.
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Nine Steps of EFT

Steps 1 – 4 Assessment & Cycle De-escalation

3. Access unacknowledged emotions underlying interactional positions.

- *Goal is to help each partner to access and accept their unacknowledged feelings that are influencing their behavior.*
 - *Both partners are to reprocess and crystallize their own experience in the relationship so that they can become emotionally open to the other person.*



Nine Steps of EFT

Steps 1 – 4 Assessment & Cycle De-escalation


- 4. Reframe the problem in terms of underlying feelings, attachment needs, and negative cycle.*
 - *The cycle is framed as the common enemy (externalizing the problem) and the source of the partner's emotional deprivation and distress.*





Nine Steps of EFT

Steps 5 – 7 Changing Interactional Positions and creating new bonding events


5. Promote identification with disowned attachment emotions, needs, and aspects of self, and integrate these into relationship interactions.
 - Goal is to help the couple redefine their experiences in terms of their unacknowledged emotional needs.
- 



Nine Steps of EFT

Steps 5 – 7 Changing Interactional Positions and creating new bonding events

6. Promote acceptance of the other partner's experiences and new interactional responses.


- *Goal is to work to get each partner to accept, believe, and trust that what the other partner is describing in terms of underlying emotional needs is accurate.*
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Nine Steps of EFT

Steps 5 – 7 Changing Interactional Positions and creating new bonding events


7. Facilitate the expression of needs and wants and create emotional engagement and bonding events that redefine the attachment between the partners.

- *Goal is to help couple learn to express their emotional needs and wants directly and create emotional engagement.*
- 



Nine Steps of EFT

Steps 8 – 9 Consolidation/Integration


8. Facilitating the emergence of new solutions to old relationship problems.
 - Without the old negative interaction style and with the new emotional connection and attachment, it is easier to develop new solutions to old problems.
- 



Nine Steps of EFT

Steps 8 – 9 Consolidation/Integration

9. Consolidating new positions and new cycles of attachment behaviors.

- *Help couple clearly see and articulate the old and new ways of interacting to help the couple avoid falling back into the old interactional cycle.*
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VIGNETTE PRACTICE




Stage 1

- In your first few sessions you learn that when they had first met, Michelle (Michael) had found Paul (Paula) to be strong and confident, and Paul (Paula) had felt loved and adored by Michelle's (Michael's) emotionality. But as their marriage evolved, with children entering the picture and Paul (Paula) achieving a series of promotions, Michelle (Michael) began to experience Paul (Paula) as cold and abandoning, and Paul (Paula) began to feel smothered by what he/she perceived to be Michelle's (Michael's) neediness. They were constantly triggered by each other's responses and behaviors, and their discord was having a detrimental effect on their children. Despite their conflict, both agreed to commit to couple's therapy for a specific period of time.



Stage 2


- Michelle (Michael) and Paul (Paula) demonstrate difficulty relating to one another and differences in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors frequently resulted in arguments and relational discord. They experience difficulty listening to one another's concerns and perspectives, and their interactions are characterized by reactivity and defensiveness. Michelle (Michael) described feeling disconnected from Paul (Paula) and she attributed his/her "separateness" and independent activities to a lack of love or interest her/him or the relationship. Paul (Paula) described feeling overwhelmed by Michelle (Michael's) outbursts and interpreted these as personal attacks.
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Stage 2 (cont'd)

- Paul (Paula) recognized that while confidence, drive, ambition and strength had been generously rewarded by his parents growing up, **tears and feelings were either ignored or scorned** upon with responses like “big boys/girls don’t cry” and “don’t cry over spilt milk.” While initially Paul (Paula) felt loved and adored by Michelle’s (Michael’s) ability to connect so completely to that lost and unacknowledged part of him/her, eventually he/she became overwhelmed and resorted to what he/she had learned while growing up: **feelings can be dangerous**.
- Michelle (Michael) on the other hand, had **responded to her/his parent’s disinterest by doing whatever she/he could to get their attention**. She/he was an unexpected pregnancy and the youngest of eight siblings. She/he learned at a very young age that in order to get her/his parents to respond to her/his needs she/he had to crank it up several notches. Early in their relationship she/he had found Paul’s (Paula’s) logical personality comforting and energizing, almost as though she/he had found a missing part of herself/himself that made her/him feel complete. As their relationship ensued however, she/he began to find Paul’s (Paula’s) logic and rationale threatening when combined with his/her prolonged absences, and she/he **regressed back to learned behaviors (e.g., tantrum-like, aggression)** that had served her/him well in the past.



Stage 3

- Michelle (Michael) and Paul (Paula) come to recognize that these defensive, learned behaviors are keeping them from having the relationship they want, and they are working hard throughout the process to be vulnerable, empathic and validating with each other. Focus in therapy is on learning techniques that allow them to dialogue intentionally, disagree maturely, encourage individual growth, re-romanticize their relationship, and create a conscious partnership.
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Overview of EFT Process

1. Three stages: 1. Create and maintaining a therapeutic alliance, 2. Accessing and reformulating emotion, 3. Restructuring key interactions.
2. Develop an alliance, identify cycle, identify and access underlying emotions, and work to deescalate
3. Engage the withdrawer
4. Soften the pursuer/blamer
5. Create new emotional bonding events and new cycles of interaction
6. Consolidate new cycles of trust, connection and safety, and apply them to old problems that may still be relevant



Questions?

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