

PREFACE

There are two ideas, or more accurately, two passionate beliefs, at the core of this book. The first is that the field of psychotherapy has to move beyond specific models (empirically supported or not) to a comprehensive and integrative framework that simultaneously incorporates and transcends those models. This belief is strongly linked to the quest for a common factor approach (Sprenkle, Davis, & Lebow, 2009). The movement toward a comprehensive and integrative approach heralds the emergence of psychotherapy as a mature clinical science.

The second idea is that the field of psychotherapy has to incorporate the systemic beliefs and practices that drove the creation and growth of the field of family therapy. Over the last 40 years, family (and couple) therapy has become a valued and recognized specialty within the mental health field. Despite this development, the psychotherapy field is still dominated by the concepts of individual psychopathology and individual therapy. It is time for the general field of psychotherapy to recognize that all psychotherapy occurs within a biopsychosocial context that includes our biology, our selves, our relationships, our families, our community, and even the society in which we live.

The challenge of this imperative is that it complicates things. It is far easier to just think about an individual and his or her problems. It is also

far easier to treat an individual than a couple or a family or to include social justice in the mandate of the therapy. Most therapists do not have a framework for simultaneously embracing the individual and his or her context. This book aims to remedy that deficit. The breadth of what we offer in this book extends beyond what is typically called a model of therapy; consequently, we refer to integrative systemic therapy as a perspective rather than a model.

THE HISTORY OF THIS BOOK

This book began over 25 years ago when Doug Breunlin came to work with Bill Pinsof at the newly reorganized Family Institute at Northwestern University (also known as The Family Institute of Chicago). Bill had been working on his *Integrative Problem-Centered Therapy* (1995) since the early 1980s, trying to create a comprehensive framework for integrating family, individual, and biological therapies. Doug had been working on his *Metaframeworks* (Breunlin, Schwartz, & Mac Kune-Karrer, 1992, 1997) perspective for integrating different metatheories or metaframeworks to provide a comprehensive and integrative framework for understanding families and organizing family therapy. Bill's work had been strongly influenced by his long association (since the late 1970s) with Jay Lebow and other colleagues at The Family Institute. Doug's prior work occurred at the Institute for Juvenile Research (IJR) in Chicago, in close collaboration with Dick Schwartz and Betty Mac Kune-Karrer. Not coincidentally, these two institutions were the founding centers for family therapy theory and practice in Chicago.

Bill and Doug came together to integrate their respective problem-centered and metaframeworks models, but more important, to jointly harness their efforts to transform the practice and theory of psychotherapy in line with the core beliefs articulated in the previous section. They began exploring the possibility of integrating their models. At first glance, Doug's metaframeworks perspective provided an elegant and elaborate assessment framework for thinking about family systems. Bill's integrative problem-centered model provided a detailed, integrative, and multisystemic intervention framework that complemented the metaframeworks perspective. Jay Lebow's work on psychotherapy integration elaborated the broader theoretical context of both models, and Cheryl Ramage's work on feminist family therapy laid the groundwork for a modern and nuanced discourse on gender. What has emerged is not yet one more model, but rather a perspective on psychotherapy that transcends the models.

The Family Institute has been a center for psychotherapy training and practice since its inception in the late 1960s. This made it an ideal context

for testing and refining the emerging integrative perspective. Specifically, at the same time that Doug came to The Family Institute, Cheryl Rampage arrived to create the Institute's new Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy Program (MSMFT Program) at Northwestern University. Under Cheryl's (and a succession of program directors') leadership, the program became an ideal laboratory to explore and refine Doug and Bill's combined perspective.

Bill Russell (hereafter called Bill R.), who had trained with Doug at IJR, joined The Family Institute soon after Doug. Working as a core faculty member of the MSMFT Program, Bill R. taught the combined perspective for many years and progressively got more involved in facilitating its emergence as the core perspective of the MSMFT Program and the clinic at The Family Institute. Eventually, Bill R. began to press Doug and Bill on the need for further articulation and clarification of the key features of the perspective. From that moment in the early 2000s, Bill R. became the absolutely irreplaceable and invaluable shepherd of the project that culminates in this book. Without his supportive and friendly tenacity, his clarity of focus and purpose, and his passion for the emerging perspective, you would not be reading this today. Our debt and gratitude to Bill R. are enormous.

In the last few years, Anthony Chambers joined our team. His youth, and his deep dual understandings of race and couples therapy, energized and expanded the emerging perspective. His passion and commitment to family psychology, building on Bill Pinsof's and Jay's early work in the field, brought the feedback of a new generation of scholars and practitioners to our work. Anthony's feedback drove our decision to change the name of our perspective from *integrative problem-centered metaframeworks* to *integrative systemic therapy*.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS BOOK (AND ONLINE)

The mission of this book is to present a comprehensive, unifying, complex, and intricate perspective on the theory and practice of psychotherapy that is accessible to students of psychotherapy as well as informative and useful to seasoned practitioners. It is not a cookbook, nor a primer. It lays out the key concepts of integrative systemic therapy (IST) and details its practice. It is full of transcripts and examples of our work, each an amalgam of the multitude of cases we have all treated and supervised over the last 40 years. Case examples are somewhat simplified to demonstrate in limited space the essential characteristics of IST. We have also disguised details of the case examples to honor individuals' confidentiality.

We begin in Chapter 1 with a case example that includes multiple treatment episodes over a number of years. In Chapters 2 through 4, we

then move into the core ideas, the blueprint for therapy, and the essence of IST—the transformation of problem sequences into solution sequences within client systems. In Chapter 5, we present the hypothesizing metaframeworks for thinking about problems and systems, which are followed by the planning metaframeworks in Chapter 6, for intervening into and transforming client systems. After exploring the art of facilitating a transformative and collaborative conversation with clients in Chapter 7, we describe in Chapter 8 how reading the feedback from clients creates and refines our hypothesizing and our planning. In Chapters 9 through 11, we address and illustrate the application of IST to families, couples, and individuals. And we conclude the book in Chapter 12 with a discussion of IST as a framework for therapists' learning and growth over their professional life course.

In addition, we have provided two downloadable chapters online (<http://pubs.apa.org/books/supp/pinsof>). Online Chapter 1 takes readers through a day in the life of an IST practitioner. It illustrates the comprehensive nature of IST and the diversity of therapeutic pathways that are possible within IST. Online Chapter 2 shows how IST practitioners can use empirical feedback provided by clients to inform decision making. This chapter follows one client system—a couple—through their therapy journey as they provide clinical data via a measurement and feedback system that was developed in concert with IST.

For us and hopefully for you, IST, in its comprehensiveness and richness, will become a challenging, helpful, and evolving framework for your own thinking about and practice of psychotherapy. It will help you find and use a coherent path through the many models of psychotherapy that exist today and that will exist in the coming years. We believe, because it has made us more thoughtful and effective therapists for our clients, IST will expand your thinking and improve your practice. Welcome.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to have worked in an environment where thinking systemically has always been valued and encouraged. Even a book with six authors is influenced by many other people. We are grateful for the support we have received from our Institute colleagues, both past and present, especially Jayne Kinsman, Shayna Goldstein, and Liz Jacobson for discussing their IST journeys with us; Janine Jolly, Katrina Sharzinski, Neil Venketramen, and Christine Webster for their careful reviews of an extensive body of literature; and Dick Schwartz and Betty Mac Kune-Karrer for their earlier contributions to metaframeworks, many of which were subsumed into IST. The teaching

faculty and supervisors in the MSMFT Program at Northwestern University have helped us test and refine our ideas over the years and have been unfailingly supportive of this endeavor. Our students, who learn IST well, have offered numerous suggestions leading toward valuable refinements.

Jo Ann Casey was devoted, tireless, patient, and obsessive in keeping track of all of our outlines, drafts, and copies. She has literally and figuratively kept us and the book together. Without her passion and care in every phase of the preparation of the manuscript, as well as her extraordinary skills in formatting and proofreading, we would still be working on this manuscript. Diane Russell offered valuable technical assistance with the IST diagrams. Our editors at American Psychological Association Books, Susan Reynolds and Susan Herman, have been patient, supportive, and encouraging from the beginning.

Finally, we pay tribute to the many theorists and model builders whose brilliant concepts and strategies have been incorporated into the integrative systemic therapy perspective.