



**Working with and Supervising
Unfinished Business (UFB)
when there are *Current Interpersonal Issues (CII)***

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Where Therapists get Stuck

- Clients get triggered and distressed in current interactions with their significant others.
- Therapists *follow* clients into their stories of what's happening *currently with significant other*.
- Current interpersonal issues with significant other arise often *because there is UFB*.
- When therapists facilitate UFB, the client's narrative usually returns to what is happening currently with the significant other.
 - **This is problematic to resolving either UFB or CII, because the tasks for each are different.**

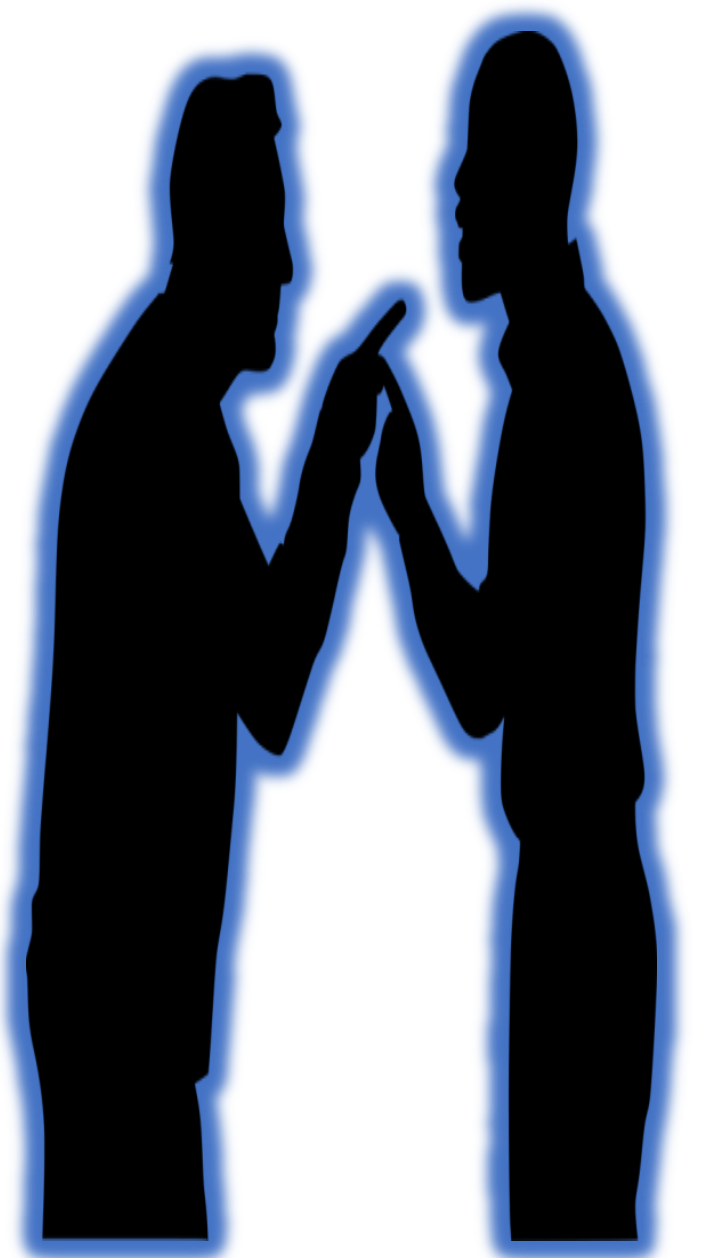


Marker: Current Interpersonal Issues (no UFB)

- Issue is current and ongoing
- Secondary reactive emotions, *“How could he do that!”*
- Current underlying feelings of sadness, anger, ...
- There is an immediate need to symbolize and differentiate one’s primary feelings and needs (from other and self) given the current issue:

Example: Issue with husband, mom, or friend.

- *“I am so upset about this situation!”*
- *“I need to know what to say or do about this difficult situation”*



Current Interpersonal Issues are Different from UFB



- Issue with other is current: feelings are not about the past.
- About current ongoing experiences, not childhood past memories.
- Primary presenting feelings are usually adaptive and lead to clarity about current needs from self and other.
- Need is current, not a past unmet interpersonal need.

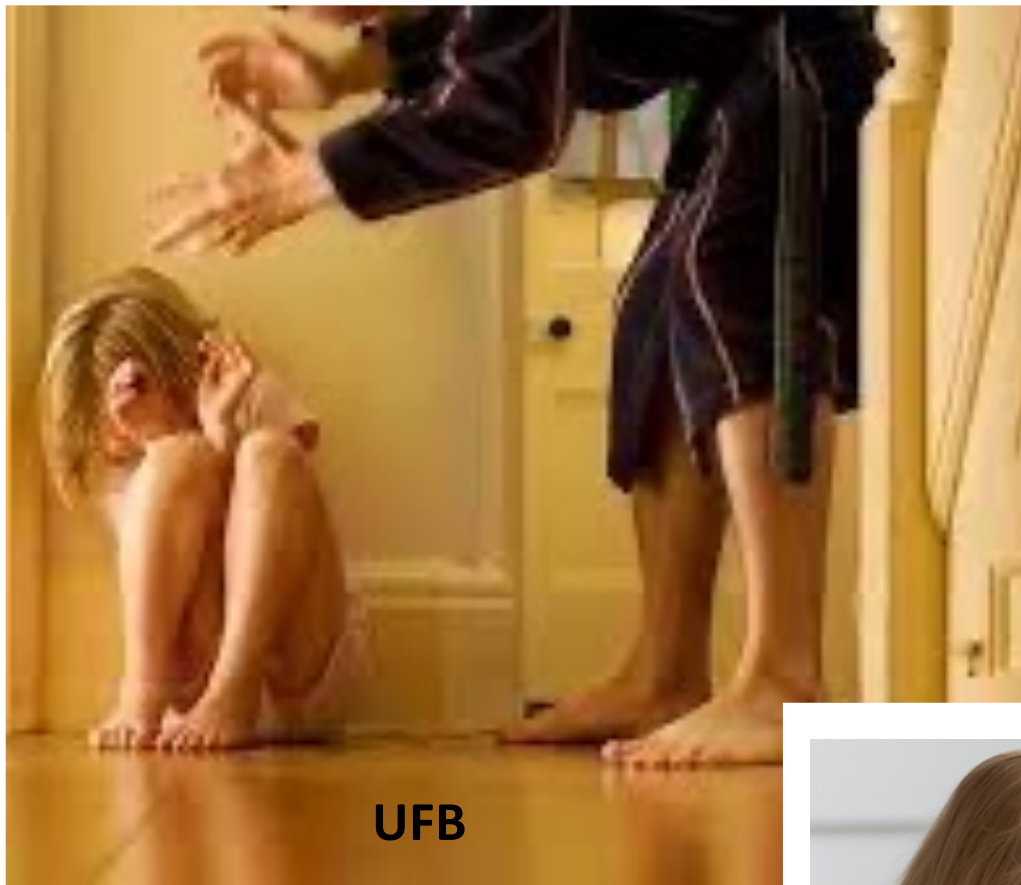


Marker: Unfinished Business

- **Longstanding** feelings such as hurt, resentment, resignation, complaint, blaming, longing.
- These feelings are related to another person who has played a **significant attachment role** in the client's life.
- These feelings are **currently being experienced often**.
- The feelings are being **blocked or interrupted** in some way.
- **Client is stuck** in the cycle of bad feelings about the other that will not go away.



**What if there are both
Current Interpersonal Issues *and* UFB?**



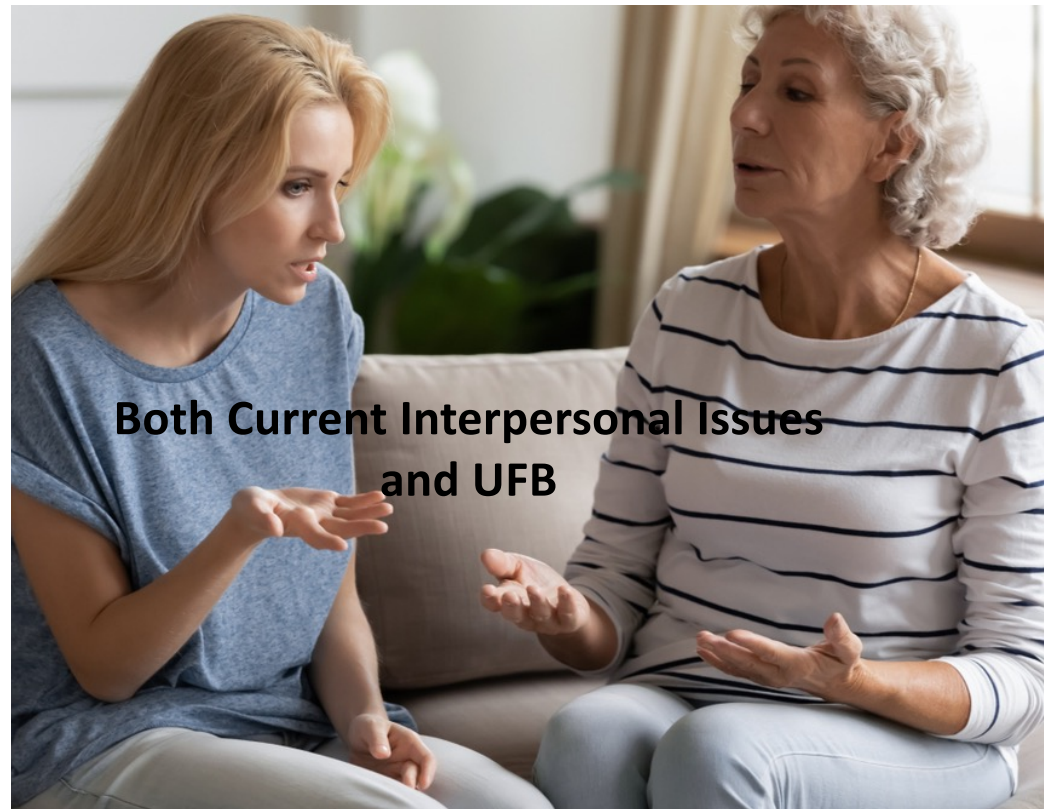
UFB



Current Interpersonal Issues

Possible Presentations

- **Current Interpersonal Issue**
- **UFB**
- **Current Good Relationship with Parent AND UFB**
- **Current Interpersonal Issues and UFB**



**Both Current Interpersonal Issues
and UFB**

UFB

Focus on
Childhood Unmet
Interpersonal
Needs



Therapist Intervention Steps

1. Validate Pain/Distress of Current Interpersonal Issue:

“I can see that this issue... is very painful and important to you!”

- *May need a session on this*

2. Provide Rationale of why it's helpful to:

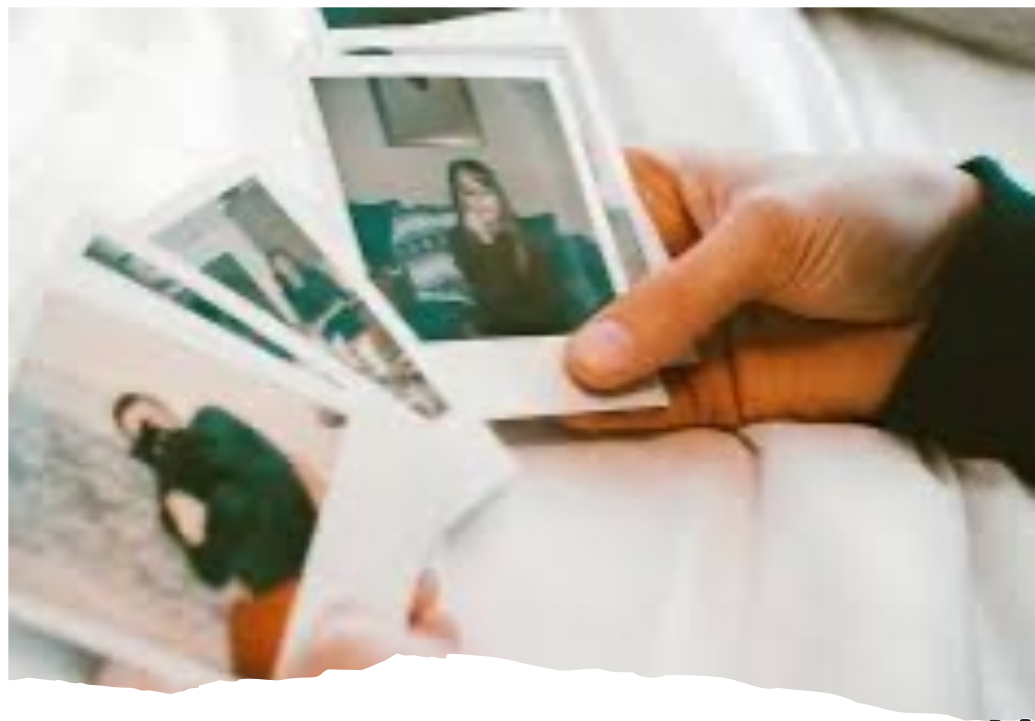
a) **Keep it on two separate tracks:**

i) *Past UFB and ii) Current Issues*

b) **First** focus on the past childhood wounds

c) Tell client you will return to the current issues later.

3. Facilitate UFB intervention



How?

- Need to define UFB and CII each & work with them separately
 - Understand and Specify Current Interpersonal Issues/Relationship and Past UFB
 - Use timelines
 - Episodic Memories and Age Regression from Childhood
 - Separate Childhood Unmet Needs from Current Needs



Empathic Affirmation of Unmet Needs

- Providing empathic affirmation for core heartfelt unmet needs is fundamental.
- They must be supported by therapist as a human need that:
 1. Makes sense!
 2. Is valid!
 3. Should have been met!

How processing UFB gets off track!

UFB shifts into the present:

- *If you really loved me now you would acknowledge and apologize for your behavior when I was a kid!*
- *Why do you **still treat me like this now?***
- *You ignored me when I was a child and **now you are trying to be in my life, how dare you!***

