

The Core Ideas of Couples Therapy with the Modules (Copyright by Eckhard Roediger)

This are the core ideas of schema therapy with couples working with the Module system:

- Couples are stuck in **dysfunctional interaction patterns** (so-called **mode cycles**). These entrenched cycles are the enduring problem of the couple, while the content of the conflicts is interchangeable and constantly shifting. We focus our work on these cycles, preferably on the one currently displayed in session (in-session work).
- This cycle can be directly observed and jointly analyzed (Modules 1 and 2). Looking together **in session at the presented mode cycle** (while standing) helps maintain the therapeutic alliance and allows the problem to be viewed “from the outside.” Relationships are built up on the “attachment leg” and weakened on the “self-assertive leg.” Relationships work best when attachment and assertiveness are flexibly balanced (the so-called Adult mode).
- The couple first learns to recognize and **interrupt the dysfunctional cycles (timeout)**, and then to rebalance themselves internally (Modules 3 and 4). From this distance, the couple can reconnect with their need for attachment or learn to bring assertiveness into the relationship in a functional way.
- If one partner finds it difficult to **reach inner balance**, this can be fostered through targeted chair dialogues (jointly or in individual sessions, Modules 5 and 7).
- **Resource-activating imagery** can facilitate access to blocked needs or child modes (Module 6).
- If the process is blocked by **Inner Critics**, these must be recognized and jointly sent into a “timeout” (Module 8). In the activated modes, the relevant childhood schemas are at work.
- In **joint imagery exercises**, these childhood scenes can be re-experienced, and the partner can provide emotional care to the activated emotional state (the so-called child mode). This deepens the couple’s emotional connection (Module 9).
- Functional behavior may be practiced in **roleplays** during sessions if needed (Module 10).
- Through structured, **Connection dialogue training**, the couple finally learns to perceive and accept the partner’s position and to resolve substantive problems in an attachment-oriented manner (Module 11). Throughout the entire process, resources are activated through **homework assignments** (Module 12).
- The work is open-ended. We act as catalysts, helping the couple find the **life arrangement** working best for them. This may include a relationship arrangement with more distance or even a separation, which we accompany too (Module 13). Thus, therapy cannot fail!