

The Dark Side of Poly

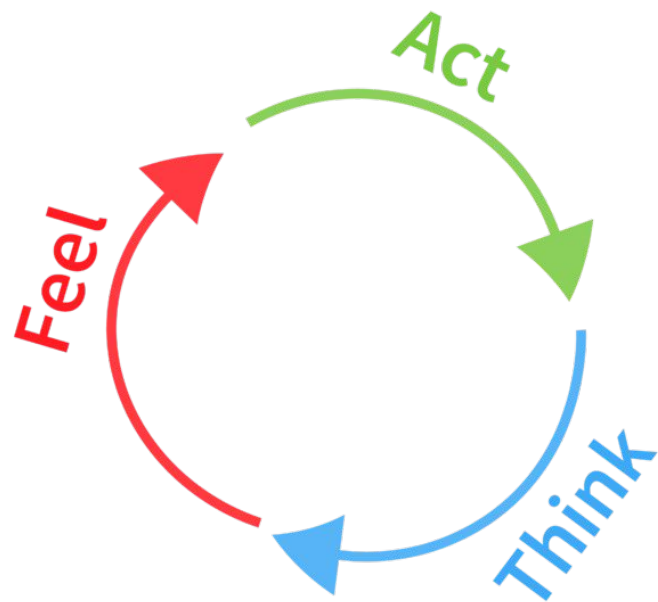
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Introductions

- Wyatt George, M.S.
 - Counselor at Wellspring Counseling Center that specializes in working with gender, sexual, and romantic minorities
 - Personally involved with the poly community for about 7 years
- Class Introductions
 - Name
 - Pronouns, if you'd like
 - Would you describe yourself as a Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter person? Why?

Background

- Intro to Human Behavior
 - Physical and Psychological Needs
 - Environmental Responses
 - Evolutionary Optimization
 - Interplay between Actions, Cognitions, and Emotions



There's a reason behind everything that we do!

Exploring Emotions

- Primary vs. Secondary Emotions
 - Primary Emotions
 - Define
 - I.e. You are anxious because of a big test tomorrow, You feel sad because your partner yelled at you
 - Secondary emotions
 - Define
 - I.e. I am jealous of my metamour because they are more attractive than me

Exploring Emotions

- Types of Secondary Emotional Reactions
 - Discomfort with or judgement about your primary emotion
 - Emotions evoked from your perceived identity
 - Intense emotions from past events
 - Emotions from assumptions you make about your world
 - Emotions from your fear or anticipation of the future
- Failure to recognize the difference between primary and secondary emotions can result in hurting yourself or others

Exploring Emotions

- Differentiating between Primary and Secondary Emotions
 - Is this emotion a direct reaction to an external event?
 - Is the emotion becoming more intense over time?
 - Do you experience the emotion more frequently than the events that prompted the emotion?
 - When the initiating event receded, did the emotions recede?
 - Does the emotion continue long after the event, interfere with your abilities in the present, and affect new and different experiences?
 - Is the emotion complex, ambiguous, and difficult to understand?

Exploring Thoughts

- Cognitions
 - Define
 - Thoughts influence Emotions which influences Thoughts
 - I.e. I feel sad because I think I am worthless.
 - Why is this important?

Exploring Behaviors

- Behaviors
 - Define
- Rinse and Repeat

The interplay between these three concepts is the unseen process behind our fears

Common Fears in Poly

- Rejection
 - What this can look like in relationships
 - Reluctance to pursue / enter into relationships
 - Attempting to please everyone (besides yourself)
 - Maintaining a disingenuous persona
 - Inability to voice concerns or thoughts
 - Passive-Aggressive Behavior
 - Common Causes
 - Family of origin / childhood rejection
 - Low self-esteem
 - Bullying

Common Fears in Poly

- Abandonment
 - What it can look like
 - Intense reactions to perceived signs of abandonment
 - Emotional blackmailing
 - Taking on roles and responsibilities that are actively disliked
 - Consistently leaving relationships before you are left
 - Needing constant reassurance from partner(s)
 - Common Causes
 - Family of Origin
 - Attachment Styles
 - Prior negative relationship history

Common Fears in Poly

- Humiliation / Shame
 - What it can look like
 - Intense anger reactions
 - Self-blaming thoughts and behaviors
 - Avoiding certain things
 - Attempting to deceive your partner(s) and yourself
 - Common Causes
 - Okay, seriously though, a lot of stuff begins with the family
 - Past relationships
 - Culture

Common Fear in Poly

- Fear of Failure
 - What It Can Look Like
 - Remaining in a relationship despite dissatisfaction
 - Doing certain behaviors or milestones because it's what you “should” do
 - Common Causes
 - Family, again
 - Culture

Potential Solutions

- Honest introspection
- Accept your role in these fears
- Logically question your own thoughts and emotions
- Normalize the existence of these fears
- Develop a strong support network
- Find your “worst case” and develop confidence in your ability to handle it
- Prioritize communication
- Savor the goodness in all of your relationships
- Develop coping skills to address “in the moment” emotions
- Find a good, understanding therapist to work on deeper concerns

Activity

Discussion / Processing