



# Intervention for senior couples according to the style of the attachment bond in the context of caregiving

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## PROBLEM

- Love attachment changes with old age.
- For elderly couples, sickness, loss of physical or cognitive autonomy of their partner, represents a challenge as it would for any adult couples (Schmaling & Sher, 2000).
- Spouse caregivers whose love partner is sick or has lost autonomy are going to be confronted to changes in their responsibilities, roles, lifestyle, future and also changes in the way they see themselves and others. Cohabiting with a spouse puts the caregiver in the best position to respond to their different needs.
- No treatment nor intervention is specifically prepared for close spouse caregivers. Intervention workers wish they were better equipped to assist these caregivers and their specific needs.

## OBJECTIVES

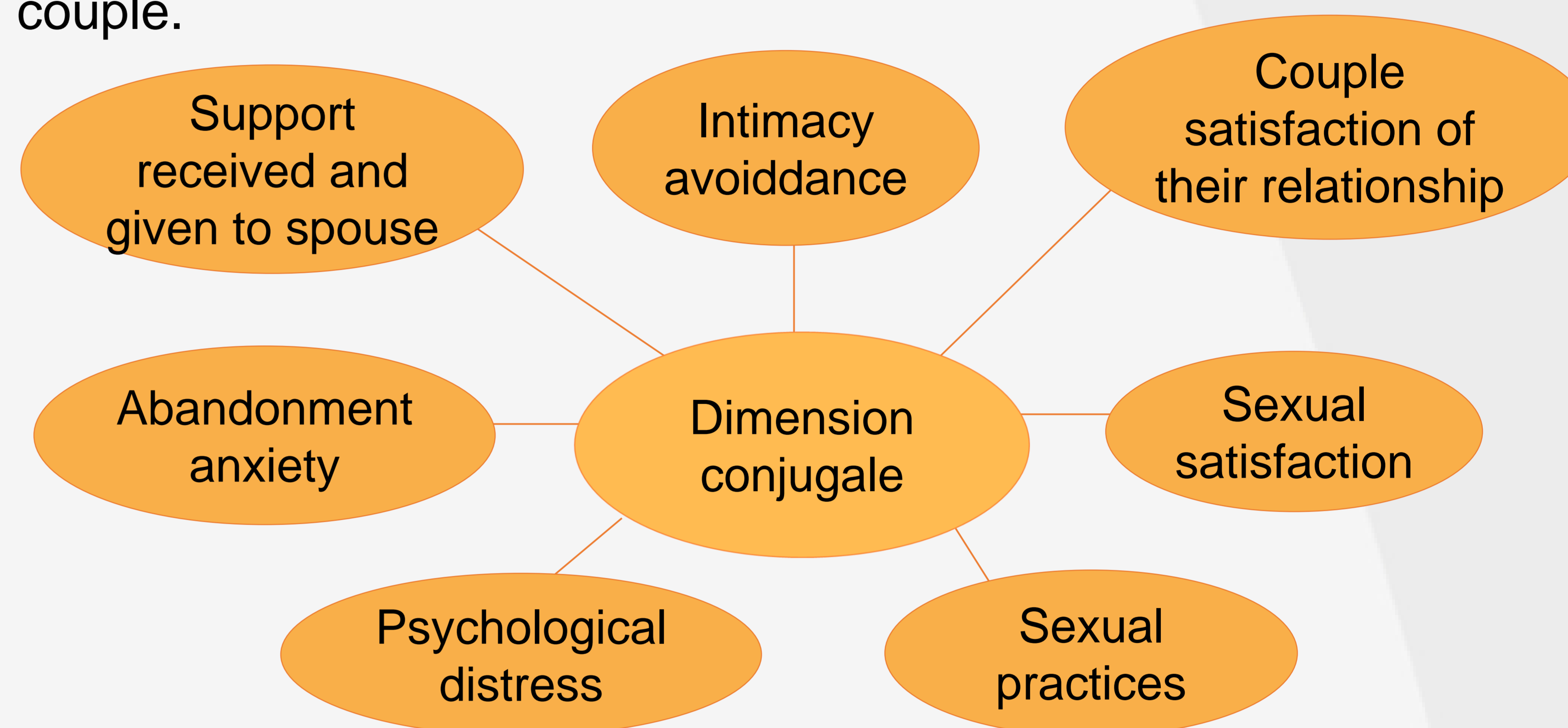
- Identifying and better understanding the attachment bond of elderly caregivers within their couple relationship.
- Identifying and better understanding the elderly caregivers' needs related to the emotional bond developed in their couple relationship, according to their attachment style / dimension.
- Suggesting different approaches supporting elderly spouse caregivers in correlation with their emotional attachment developed in their couple relationship.

## RESULTS

- Spouse caregiving impacts the life of caregivers : exhaustion, distress, more responsibilities, new roles to take on, etc.
- Spouse caregiving also has an impact on conjugal relationships : communication, conjugal satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, conjugal support, attachment.
- Through statistic analysis, this study will allow to associate some of the caregivers' needs to an attachment dimension.
- This study will also allow to elaborate intervention programs related to the attachment style for intervention workers helping those caregivers.
- These programs will be gathered in an intervention kit intended for intervention workers.

## METHOD

- Censusing writings on elderly couple's love attachment, spouse caregiving and on intervention programs supporting spouse caregivers.
- Building a bank of questionnaires evaluating the impact of caregiving on a couple.



- Collecting a sample group of 220 spouse caregivers according to the following criteria (T1) :
  - to have been in a couple relationship for 5 years
  - to be 50 years old or more and retired
  - no exclusion regarding the partner's diagnostic
  - cohabiting non-required.

Contacting **100** participants, 12 months later (T2), to validate the stability of their attachment in the context of caregiving.

- Quantitative analysis with the SPSS software
  - Cluster type analysis to identify the needs of caregivers in correlation with their attachment styles or dimensions of their love attachment
  - ANOVA type analysis to verify the stability of attachment in the context of caregiving between T1 and T2.

## CONCLUSION

- By meeting professionals' needs, we suggest their intervention be adapted to the specific reality of spouse caregivers, using the attachment theory.
- This intervention kit could be used when training workers who intervene with spouse caregivers.
- This is a social innovation which will be transferable to other service dispensers intervening with elderly couples in a context of caregiving.

