

Margret Otto, LSCSW **Chronic anxiety viewed through basic and constructionist theories of emotion**



A review of the differences and similarities between classical and constructionist theory of emotion will be elucidated... While Bowen family systems theory is broader than any of the theories of emotion, the constructionist view of emotion does have specific implications for the theory and its applications. This new view of emotion may expand the usefulness of Bowen theory in the future.”

Bowen family systems theory (BFST) is composed of core concepts that describe relationship processes and related symptoms. These concepts were developed independently of current research. Those steeped in and most knowledgeable of the theory have an eye to neuroscience and the research findings on emotion that refute or support the theoretical concepts. This includes theories of emotion and their scientific underpinnings. The classical view of emotion, which has been the dominant societal view of emotion, has been the primary theory used in the explanation of the underpinnings of emotion with BFST.

If the classical view of emotion is disproven, the core concepts of BFST will be challenged with a different theoretical accounting of emotion generation. The core concepts of chronic anxiety, symptom development and homeostasis need to be addressed by applying a different theory, the constructionist theory of emotion. This has large implications for BFST and its application to the clinical phenomena. The focus of the presentation is on the theoretical application of the constructionist theory of emotion, rather than supporting or refuting the research.

3rd International Conference on Bowen Family Systems Theory



A review of the differences and similarities between classical and constructionist theory of emotion will be elucidated. Dr. Bowen used both theories in his descriptions of emotion which will help illustrate the variation and differences between the two theories of emotion. Application of the constructionist view of emotion to the core concept of chronic anxiety will be critical due to the importance of the emotional system as a basic driver of the relationship process. The theoretical implications for the concepts of the feeling and intellectual systems are also important. While Bowen family systems theory is broader than any of the theories of emotion, the constructionist view of emotion does have specific implications for the theory and its applications. This new view of emotion may expand the usefulness of Bowen theory in the future.

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Kerstin Sofia Andersson, Coordinator
kerstinsofia@bowen2020.com
<https://bowen2020.com/>