

## THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The following five chapters summarize key theoretical constructs that inform the couple theory practice model, which is discussed in Section III of the text. In Chapter 3, we discuss certain tenets of social theory. Aspects of identity, including racial identity development, shame, and stigmatization are discussed. This analysis illustrates how social and institutional factors influence clinicians and couples as they embark on a course of couple therapy that addresses the legacies of childhood traumatic experiences.

The next chapter of this section, Family Theory (Chapter 4), is pivotal in offering an understanding of interactional factors that characterize the couple's relationship patterns. Areas of focus include the victim–victimizer–bystander dynamic, power and control issues, distancing and distrust, sexuality issues, and boundaries and communication patterns between the couple.

The last three chapters of this section—Trauma Theory, Object Relations Theory, and Attachment Theory—focus on the individual dimensions of the practice model. The chapter on trauma theory (Chapter 5) emphasizes the neurobiological responses to traumatic events that persistently influence the affect, cognition, and behavior of adult survivors. In this chapter, readers are informed of research findings in the field of traumatology.

In Chapter 6, we summarize concepts from both American and British object relations theorists. Constructs from the

American school highlight relevant themes related to separation individuation that affect traumatized couples. Constructs from the British object relations theorists highlight concepts related to the relationally based practice model. Last, in Chapter 7, we discuss the burgeoning influence of attachment theories on, and linkages with, contemporary trauma theories.