Preparation For Marriage

DP 028 - Developmental

By

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Preparation for Marriage Workshop

Thomas Miller

Session I: values and expectations of partners. Session II: guided imagery to increase awareness of marriage expectations. Session III: effective listening and responding skills practice. Session IV: a model communication process between couples, feelings checklist. Session V: exercise and fantasy to help partners understand their own and their partner's style of conflict resolution, practice in effective conflict resolution. Session VI: sexuality/lovemaking discussion to express feelings about giving and receiving pleasure in the relationship. Session VII: budget simulation, examination of partners' values and methods of money management. Session VIII: flexible time for discussion of issues most relevant, consideration and affirmation of partners'commitment.

GOALS: To confront important issues related to marriage; to promote communication between partners concerning these issues; to enhance partners'interaction skills

TARGET: Couples with a definite first-time marriage commitment

LENGTH: Originally designed as a weekend workshop, but adaptable to 8 sessions of 2 hours each

SIZE: 4 - 10 couples

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PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE WORKSHOP OUTLINE

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**Target Population:** Couples who have made a definite marriage commitment and who are being married for the first time.

**Group Size:** 4-10 couples Workshop has been run with as few as 2 couples and as many as 9.

**Format:** The group was originally designed and run as a weekend workshop. However, with minor modifications, it is easily translatable into a structured group of eight approximately 2 hour sessions (see workshop outline for suggested divisions).

**Goals:**

1. To present the opportunity for participants to confront important issues and questions related to their decision to marry.

2. To allow partners to communicate about those issues and questions as they affect their relationships.

3. To give couples the opportunity to learn about and develop an expanded skill repertoire in dealing with each other in their relationship.

**Pre-Group Tasks:**

1. Screening interviews

2. Facility reservations

3. Materials needed (See Appendix A)

**Workshop Outline:**

Friday evening (7:00-10:00 p.m.)

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**A. Orientation and Warm-up**

**Goals**

1. To help people get to know one another.
2. To establish a feeling of common purpose.
3. To identify common obstacles faced by couples who intend to marry.
4. To begin the process of partner communication.

1. Name tags (5 minutes)
2. Important marriage problems (5 minutes)
3. Personal Introductions (10 minutes)
4. Overview of workshop (10 minutes)

**B. Values Voting (10 minutes)**

**Goals**

1. To allow each participant to make relatively unthreatened affirmation of a variety of marriage-related value issues.
2. To begin to define the topical parameters of the workshop.
C. **Values Continuum** (15 minutes)

**Goals**
1. To demonstrate the range of possible alternative positions on a variety of marriage-related issues.
2. To allow partners to observe each other's positions on these important issues.
3. To further define the topical parameters of the workshop.

D. **Expectations Sharing** (20 minutes)

**Goals**
1. To make the participants' and facilitators' expectations for the workshop as explicit as possible.
2. To give the facilitators a chance to address inappropriate participant expectations.

E. **Guided Imagery - A day in your life** (30 minutes)

**Goals**
1. To allow participants to become aware of some of their expectations for their own married life.
2. To facilitate communication of these expectations, especially on subjects on which these expectations are frequently not explicit (children, use of time and money, anger, sex).

F. **Reasons for marriage** (30 minutes)

**Goals**
1. To uncover some of the myths of marriage.
2. To demonstrate the numerous reasons people marry.
3. To facilitate communication about why each partner wants to marry.

G. **Listening triads** (30 minutes)

**Goals**
1. General orientation to effective listening skills.
2. Allow participants to experience and contrast the effects of both good and bad listening behavior.

H. **Homework and closing** (15 minutes)

**Goals**
1. To summarize the events of the evening.
2. To assign homework (Family Life History Survey) which enables partners to connect with issues related to families of origin.

Saturday morning (9:00-12:00)

3. A. **Re-introductions** (5 minutes)

**Goals**
1. To begin a process of warming up for the day.
2. To help people recontact with each other.
B. Ice-breaker (5 minutes)

Goals
1. To get people involved with one another in a fun way.
2. To set the tone for the communications work which will follow.

C. Process homework (5 minutes)

Goals
1. To give participants a chance to discuss their reactions to the Family Life History Survey.
2. To present some basic concepts of the family as a system.

D. Effective listening and responding skills (90 minutes)

Goals
1. To provide a general orientation to effective listening and responding skills.
2. To give participants an opportunity to practice active, reflective listening. To help participants learn to listen for feelings as well as content.

E. Lecturette (15 minutes)

Goal
To present a simple model of the communication process in couples.

F. Break (15 minutes)

G. Feelings checklist (20 minutes)

Goals
1. To help participants become more aware of the different feelings they experience.
2. To give partners a chance to communicate to each other about important feelings they experience.
3. To continue the process of communicating understanding by identifying how feelings are communicated in their relationships.

H. Expressing feelings stems (25 minutes)

Goals
1. To help partners identify feelings they have which occur in specific situations in response to specific behaviors of their partner.
2. To continue the process of communicating understanding by communicating specific feelings to their partner.

Saturday afternoon (1:00-5:00)

5. A. Conflict (90 minutes)

1. Warm-up: Stand-off exercise

Goals
1. To get partners actively involved with one another after the break.
2. To allow couples to experience and process an analog conflict experience.
3. To introduce the issue of conflict and cooperation.
2. Fantasy

Goals
1. To assist couples in learning their own and understanding their partner's style of conflict.

3. Lecturette

Goal
1. To present specific information couples may use in the resolution of conflict situations.

4. Practice

Goal
1. To give couples the opportunity to practice some basic conflict resolution skills.

6. B. Analog: Love making (60 minutes)

Goal
To raise issues related to giving and receiving pleasure in their relationship.

C. Break (15 minutes)

D. Inner/outer circle sexuality discussion (60 minutes)

Goals
1. To allow participants to express their general feelings about sexuality in marriage.
2. To allow participants to hear opposite sex viewpoints about important sexual issues.
3. To encourage couple dialog on sexual issues.

E. Take homework, plan Sunday session, closing (15 minutes)

Sunday morning (9:00-1:00)

7. A. Warmup (additional values exercise) (30 minutes)

Goal
To start each couple interacting in a positive manner.

B. Budget simulation (60 minutes)

Goals
1. To stimulate participants' thinking about their personal values regarding money management.
2. To assist partners in examining their assumptions, expectations and interactions regarding money management.

C. Break (15 minutes)
8.
D. Flexible time for discussion (topics have included religion, inlaws, roles, division of labor, sexuality, finances, dealing with friends). (75 minutes)

**Goal**
To allow participants to deal with important issues of their own choosing.

E. Commitment exercise (45 minutes)

**Goal**
To present partners with an opportunity to consider and affirm their commitment to each other.

F. Verbal and written feedback about workshop (15 minutes)

**Goal**
To elicit verbal and written feedback about participants reactions to the workshop. To close workshop.
PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE WORKSHOP

SCREENING INTERVIEW

Goals:
1. To establish appropriate participant expectations
2. To detect inappropriate group members

Questions:
1. What are the couples' plans for marriage?
   A definite date is not important, only that the couple has made a serious and long-term commitment to each other.
2. Has either partner been previously married?
3. Why does the couple want to participate in the workshop?
4. Is the couple doing any other formal marriage preparation?
5. Is the couple currently experiencing a problem which they hope the workshop will alleviate?

Interviewers' Statements:
1. Times, dates, place of workshop;
2. Explain goals, format, and nature of the workshop;
3. Indicate that the workshop is designed to foster intimate interaction between partners on significant issues in their relationship. Frequently, new key issues may arise in relationships. Couples in the workshop sometimes become aware of new or stronger feelings (both pleasant and unpleasant). It is possible that one or both partners may discover some things they don't like. All these outcomes are positive. However, the nature of the workshop is such that these issues won't be able to be dealt with in depth. Couples are responsible for working through (or not) these issues. Facilitators may want to indicate that help may be available if necessary.
Procedure:

Participants are encouraged to react to the homework assignment. Stimulus questions might include:

1. Did you find out anything about your partner that you didn't already know? How did you feel about that?
2. How does it make you feel thinking about the history of your families with your partner?
3. How similar or different do you think your families really are?
4. How much do you think your family background is going to affect your adjustment to your new partner?

Introduce the concept of families as systems. Each couple comes from a completely different interactive family system. They have gotten used to the rules of that particular system and have based their interactions with others on many of those rules. As they try to build their own family system they will be trying to keep as many of the familiar rules, at least those that have traditionally worked, as possible. They will be trying to convince their partner, sometimes in very subtle ways, that their rules are the ones which should be followed in the new family. The stresses and strains of developing a new, unique and creative set of family system rules will occupy a significant part of their early married life. They will, at the same time, be continuing to examine the rules of their original family system. Some of these rules may be rejected. Others may be strengthened upon re-examination.
A. Orientation and Warm-up

Goals: (Time: 30 minutes)

1. To help people to get to know one another;
2. To establish a feeling of common purpose;
3. To identify common obstacles faced by couples who intend to marry;
4. To begin the process of partner communication.

Procedure:

1. **Name Tags** (5 minutes)
   On arrival, each person is given two 3 x 5 index cards. On the first card they write their name and three personal characteristics. On the second card, they write their partner's name and underline it, followed by three important characteristics of their partner. Partners then wear both cards which describe them.

2. **Important Marriage Problems** (5 minutes)
   Also on arrival, each person is asked to respond independently in writing to the following question: what are the three most important problems you think couples face as they prepare for marriage? When all participants have arrived, facilitators broadly categorize participant responses, then post around the room on newsprint. (See Appendix B for a list of topics generated in previous workshops.)

3. **Personal introductions** (10 minutes)
   Participants introduce their partners to the whole group, mentioning the characteristics they put on their partner's name tag and why those characteristics are important to them.

4. **Workshop overview** (10 minutes)
   The goals and schedule of the workshop are reintroduced.
B. **Values Voting** *(10 minutes)*

**Goals:**

1. To allow each participant to make relatively unthreatened affirmation of a variety of marriage-related issues.

2. To begin to define the topical parameters of the workshop.

**Procedure:**

Leader reads statement. Participants respond based on how they feel about the issues as follows:

- strongly agree: stand up
- agree: raise hand
- uncertain: cross arms on chest
- disagree: thumbs down
- strongly disagree: wave thumbs down

How many of you...

1. think your parents had a "good" marriage?

2. think that agreement about religion is important in marriage?

3. think it's too easy to get out of a marriage nowadays?

4. think that marriage should be a 50-50 proposition?

5. think that marriage should be a 100-100 proposition?

6. think, as did George Bernard Shaw, that "people in love are under the influence of the most violent, most insane, most illusive and most transient of passions and they are required to swear that they will remain in that excited, abnormal, exhausting condition until death do they part?"

7. want your marriage to be like your parents' marriage?

8. feel the husband should prepare and administer the family budget?

9. feel the husband should always (most of the time) initiate sex?

C. **Values Continuum** (15 minutes)

Goals:

1. To demonstrate the range of possible alternative positions on a variety of marriage related issues.

2. To allow partners to observe each other's positions on some important issues.

3. To further define the topical parameters of the workshop.

Procedure:

Each of the following statements is defined by two polar positions, at either end of a continuum. Opposite ends or sides of the room are designated to represent each pole position. As each statement is read, participants place themselves at the point on the continuum which best represents their feelings about that issue.

With couples, men and women are instructed to stand with their backs to the other group until they have assumed their position on a given issue. They may then turn around to see how their partner stands on the issue. Facilitators can suggest that couples keep notes about questions on which they disagree, since there is limited time to discuss during the workshop.

Suggested Statements:

1. What is the approximate percentage of awake time you should spend with your spouse (or totally alone)?
   - 0%
   - 100%

2. How do you feel about divorce?
   - From: should not happen under any circumstances
   - To: OK at the drop of the first angry word

3. How are you at making decisions?
   - From: completely unable to make decisions, even about what to wear
   - To: don't waste a second in thinking - lightening fast decisions about everything

4. How much personal freedom do you have? (now/in marriage)
   - From: all decisions made for you
   - To: complete freedom to choose for yourself in all things

5. How do you feel about premarital sex?
   - From: never under any circumstances
   - To: OK on first date
6. How neat do you need to keep your personal space?
   from: always neat as a pin
to: doesn't matter how it looks

7. How similar (all things considered) are your two families?
   from: very similar on most characteristics
to: very different on most characteristics

8. How flexible do you feel in interpersonal relationships?
   from: can adapt to even unpleasant situations with ease
to: generally get very uptight when I'm around others

9. How well do you know yourself?
   from: quite well; I have it all together
to: not at all; I'm a mystery to me

10. How well do you know your partner?
    from: quite well, and can usually predict what s/he will do
to: not at all; I'm continually amazed at the things s/he does

11. What percentage of the family income should the husband earn?
    0% __________________________ 100%

12. How much responsibility should the wife have for child-rearing?
    from: none at all
to: total

13. What percentage of the family decisions should be made by the husband?
    0% __________________________ 100%

14. It's O.K. for the wife to work.
    from: totally agree
to: totally disagree

15. It's O.K. for the husband to have extramarital affairs.
    from: totally agree
to: totally disagree

16. It's O.K. for the wife to have extramarital affairs.
    from: totally agree
to: totally disagree
D. **Expectation Sharing**  (Time: 20 minutes)

Goals:

1. To make the participants' and facilitators' expectations for the workshop as explicit as possible.

2. To give the facilitators a chance to address inappropriate participant expectations.

Procedure:

Participants are divided into groups of four. Spouses are instructed to be in different groups. The task of each group is to raise and discuss as many expectations as they can become aware of in the time allotted (about 10 minutes). At the end of that time, the groups are each instructed to choose a spokesperson to report the group's conclusions back to the others. At this time, it is appropriate for facilitators to be sure that the participants understand that the nature of the workshop is that a number of issues may be raised during the course of the workshop, and that some of them may stimulate strong feelings on the part of one or both partners. Some process time will be given during the course of the workshop, but couples should plan on spending time alone in order to fully resolve issues which come up. Facilitators can suggest that couples take notes of important points or feelings that they want to remember, since it may be the case that they may be lost in the fast pace of the workshop.

E. **Guided Imagery**  (Time: 30 minutes)

Goals:

1. To allow participants to become aware of some of their expectations for their own married life.

2. To facilitate communication of these expectations, especially on subjects on which these expectations are frequently not explicit (i.e., children, use of time, anger, sex).

Procedure:

Facilitator begins by introducing a sequence of deep muscle relaxation, during which participants are encouraged to become as relaxed as possible. Facilitator then suggests that participants will have the opportunity to imagine a typical day in their lives, five years after their marriage. They are encouraged to get as detailed a picture as possible based on the suggestions given by the facilitator. Suggested stimulus questions include:

1. What is your general living situation? (Where do you live; type of dwelling; the people you live with).

2. Imagine your early morning routine from the time you get up to the time breakfast is complete.
3. Do you or your spouse go anywhere after breakfast? Where?

4. What responsibilities do you have at that time? How do you feel about them?

5. Who do you associate with during the morning?

6. A friend calls you on the phone. From what environment do you know the friend?

7. Imagine your typical lunchtime routine.

8. Where do you go after lunch? What do you do? How do you feel about those activities?

9. Imagine your dinner time routine. Do you eat out? If not, who's responsible for meal preparation? Clean-up?

10. After dinner, you make plans to go somewhere together. Where is it that you go? What do you want to do there?

11. During the evening, your spouse says something that makes you angry. How do you react? How does your spouse react? What happens?

12. At bedtime, imagine that your partner wants to make love, but you don't. How do you let your spouse know that? How does your spouse react?

Facilitator then allows the participants to slowly return their consciousness to the room and to the workshop. Couples are then instructed to discuss their experience together. In particular, couples are encouraged to discuss four issues:

(a) children in the relationship;
(b) plans for the trip;
(c) handling anger;
(d) refusing love-making.
F. **Reasons for Marriage**  
(Time: 30 minutes)

**Goals:**

1. to uncover some of the myths of marriage;
2. to demonstrate the numerous reasons people marry;
3. to facilitate communication about why each partner wants to marry.

**Procedure:**

Facilitators conduct brainstorming session to develop as many reasons for marriage as possible. After about five minutes, or when the group runs dry of ideas, the Common Reasons for Marriage (Appendix C) is distributed. Each participant is instructed to rank the five most important reasons for their decision to marry. That completed, they are then asked to rank the five most important reasons their partner would choose. When both partners have completed both sets of ranks, they are instructed to compare their lists and discuss them.

G. **Listening Triads**  
(Time: 30 minutes)

**Goals:**

1. to provide a general orientation to effective listening skills;
2. to allow participants to experience effects of both good and bad listening behavior.

**Procedure:**

1. Participants brainstorm both verbal and non-verbal good and bad listening behaviors. Facilitators make list on blackboard for each category, encourage specific/observable behaviors (5 minutes).

2. Participants divide into triads (couples will be split up). This can be done in dyads or quads, but triads are the most effective. One person becomes a talker, the others are listeners. Talkers speak twice for about 90 seconds each on anything. (Sometimes they did a vacation activity, an interesting story, a joke, etc.) For the first 90 seconds, listeners act as "good" listeners, using some of the behaviors generated in the brainstorming. For the second 90 seconds, listeners model "bad" listening behavior. For the bad listening condition, the talker is instructed to try to maintain eye contact with listeners and to keep their attention engaged. The leader is responsible for switching the group from good to bad listening (10 minutes).

The exercise is completed when each person has been a talker.

Allow each group to discuss the experience among themselves briefly.
3. Processing as a full group (10 minutes).

How did it feel to be a good or bad listener?
How did you like or respond to not being listened to?
What happened to your ability to talk in both conditions?
What happened to your understanding of what was said?
What situations in your relationship would be facilitated by good listening behavior?
Are there situations in which good listening behavior would be non-facilitative? Why?

4. Facilitator suggests partners talk about issues in exercise around listening/non-listening which might be a part of their relationship (5 minutes).

H. Homework and Closing (15 minutes)

Goals:

1. to summarize the events of the evening;
2. to assign homework which enables partners to connect with issues related to families of origin.

Procedure:

Facilitators review the progress of the first evening and give participants an idea of what will be in store for them the following day. An opportunity for questions is given. The homework handouts, the Family Life History Survey (Appendix D), are distributed. It is suggested that some time at the beginning of the morning session be devoted to discussion of these instruments.
SATURDAY a.m. (9:00 a.m. - 12:00 NOON)

A. Re-introductions

Goals: 1. To begin a process of warming up for the day.

2. To help people recontact with each other.

Time (5 minutes)

Procedure:

Partners reintroduce each other to the group by giving their name and something unique or unusual about their partner.

B. Ice Breaker

Goals: 1. To get people involved with one another in a fun way.

2. To set the tone for the communications work which will follow.

Time (10 minutes)

Procedure:

1. Have partners face each other standing up.

2. One partner decides to go first.

3. The person who starts says the word "yes". The other responds with the word "no", "mimicking the voice tone and facial expression of the "yes-person." For instance, if the "yes-person" says "yes" very sweetly, the "no-person" would respond just as sweetly using the same facial expression.

4. Reverse roles, with the new "yes-person" trying out a different set of expressions and tonality. Some suggested expression are "I love you", "I don't know", "I don't want to", "Please". Some suggested tonalities are angrily, impatiently, firmly, doubtfully, helpfully.

5. Repeat the process three or four times, each time changing expression and tonality. Encourage the partners to try exaggerated expressions.

C. Homework Processing

Goals: 1. To give participants a chance to discuss their reactions to the Family Life History Survey.

2. To present some basic concepts of the family as a system.

Time (10 minutes)
D. **Effective Listening and Responding exercise**

**Goals:**
1. To provide a general orientation to effective listening and responding skills.
2. To give participants an opportunity to practice active, reflective listening. To help participants learn to listen for feelings as well as content.

**Time (30 minutes)**

**Procedure:**

1. **Baseline**
   
   (a) Couples pair up and decide which person will go first.

   (b) The speaker decides to talk about concern which has been important to that person during the last six months. It should be a concern which does not involve the partner directly.

   (c) The speaker then tries to describe what it was like to go through that problem situation to the partner, communicating an important part of his or her experience to their partner.

   (d) The partner (listener) tries to listen as effectively as she/he can, using both verbal and non-verbal responses. The listener's goals are to try to fully and completely understand the partner, and to communicate that understanding to partner (do the best job of listening you can).

   (e) At the end of ten minutes, the couples reverse roles and repeat steps 2-5.

2. **Process/Evaluate**

   (a) After the second round of discussion, each partner on their own writes a summary list to include the following:

   1. What was the most important content issue raised by the partner?

   2. What were the feelings that were expressed by the partner, both feelings he/she had when talking and the feelings expressed about the situation in the past?

   3. When your partner was listening to you, what were the behaviors she/he had which meant she/he was understanding and actively participating with you?
Effective Listening and Responding Exercise (contd)

4. When your partner was listening, what behaviors indicated to you that he/she was not fully engaged or understanding?

b. Have the couple share their lists with each other, starting with number 4. They should try to be as behaviorally explicit as possible, including ideas about how the partner responded verbally as well as the content of the partner's communication.

Process Questions (may be done in dyads or as whole group discussion):

1. How well could you answer the questions, especially numbers 1 and 2?

2. How easy was it for you to keep the focus of conversation on your partner?

3. How easy was it for you to talk for the whole 10 minutes?
E. Lecturette

Goal: To present a simple model of the communication process in couples.

Time (15 minutes)

Procedure: Ideas to be included might be:
The importance of effective communication skills, effective listening, and responding. It is important for each couple to be aware of their communication style and develop one which works for them. They need to learn about and be able to share what it is that the partner does which helps them to experience each other, to feel loved, valued, understood and which validates the relationship as one which can continue and is important to each partner.

A basic model of the communication process might be included such as:

Both initial message and feedback have verbal and non-verbal forms. In each case, the verbal may be consistent or inconsistent with the non-verbal.

Questions for the receiver to think about:
- What is it that I'm listening for?
- What is it that she/he is trying to tell me?
- What is the most appropriate response for me to make?

1. Have the couple practice using this information by repeating the instructions in Section D-1. Encourage the couple to use the feedback given to them by their partner in Section D-2 as well.

2. Facilitators should circulate among the couples to provide assistance for questions and to help couples accurately reflect.

3. Give couples a chance to adjust their feedback to each other based on this second trial at effectively listening. Help them understand that they are just beginning on a long process of learning about each other and that they should be encouraged to continue this kind of feedback as their communication patterns develop.

C. Break
Time (15 minutes)
G. **Feelings Checklist**

**Goals:**
1. To help participants become more aware of the different feelings they experience.
2. To give partners a chance to communicate to each other about important feelings they experience.
3. To continue the process of communicating understanding by identifying how feelings are communicated in their relationships.

**Time (25 minutes)**

**Procedure:**
1. Partners sit in their dyads.
2. Each partner completes the Feelings Checklist (Appendix E) on their own.
3. When both have finished, the couple has a conversation about their responses.

H. **Expressing Feelings Stems**

**Goals:**
1. To help partners identify feelings they have which occur in specific situations in response to specific behaviors of their partner.
2. To continue the process of communicating understanding by communicating specific feelings to their partner.

**Time (25 minutes)**

**Procedure:**
1. Partners sit in their dyads.
2. Each partner completes the Expressing Feelings Stems worksheet (Appendix F) on their own.
3. When both have finished, the couple has a conversation about their responses.
4. A second list of feeling stems is provided (Appendix G) for couples who would like to work in this area more on their own.

**Lunch Break**

**Time:** 60 minutes
A. **Conflict Resolution**

1. **Warm-up**

**Stand-off exercise***

Goals:
1. To get partners actively involved with one another after the break.
2. To allow couples to experience and process an analog conflict experience.
3. To introduce the issue of conflict and cooperation.

Time (10 minutes)

Procedures:

1. Couples stand facing each other at approximately arms length. If one partner's arms are shorter, split the difference.
2. Each person's feet must be side-by-side and smack together.
3. Partners place their palms toward each other at about shoulder height.
4. The object is to make the partner lose balance by making contact with the hands (palms open) only.
5. There are two variations to this exercise. In the first, partners try and hit at their partner's hands, but holding on and lengthy pushing is not allowed. In the second, partner's hands must remain in contact throughout the exercise (or until one or the other loses their balance).
6. Encourage the partners to compete with each other. Ask them to become aware of their desire to "win" or to give in. Is there any cheating going on? What does that mean for the couple?
7. After both the above competitive variations have been tried several times by all couples, ask them to stand again facing each other at arms length, with their palms lightly touching each other. Have them close their eyes and cooperatively move their hands in patterns which feel good to them, a kind of hand dance. Have them take turns leading and following the movement but allow only non-verbal communication.

2. Guided Fantasy

Goal: To assist couples in learning their own and understanding their partners' style of conflict.

Time (30 minutes)

Procedure: Stimulus script

1. Your relationship is generally very good, but even the best relationships experience conflict at some time. Let your mind wander back to the last significant conflict you had with your partner. Recall the events leading up to the conflict. Who initiated the interaction? How? Whose issues was it (yours, your partners, or both)? How did you feel when the conflict began? How do you think your partner felt? Did you let your partner know your understanding of his/her feelings and ideas? How? How did you feel about the timing of the conflict (when, where)? How did you express those feelings?

Allow yourself to recall the whole process of the conflict as it was actually played out. (space) Was anyone else involved in the conflict? How long did it take for the initial interaction to finish? How did you finally stop your interaction? Was the conflict resolved at that point? How typical was this conflict of your general interaction pattern? What did you like and not like about the way you, as a couple, dealt with this conflict?

2. Give the couple 10-15 minutes to process the fantasy with each other. They can share their thoughts and feelings about the way they interact in conflict situations. A couple of stimulus questions might be:

What is the meaning or value of conflict in your relationship?

How does communicating your understanding of your partner's position affect the resolution of the conflict?

3. Lecturette

Goal: To present specific information couples may use in the resolution of conflict situations.

Time (15 minutes)

Procedure: Talk from handouts (Appendix H - Skills for successful confrontation in a conflict situation and Appendix I - Guidelines for fair fighting)

4. Practice

Goal: To give couples the opportunity to practice some basic conflict resolution skills.
Time (30 minutes)

Procedure:

1. Give couples the two handouts - Skills for successful confrontation in a conflict situation (Appendix H) and Guidelines for fair fighting (Appendix I).

2. Have couples identify an unresolved conflict they are currently facing.

3. Using the handout as a guide, begin the process of communicating about the conflict.
   1. practice paraphrasing
   2. practice being behaviorally specific
   3. practice diagnosing causes
   4. practice generating alternatives
   5. choose most acceptable alternative
   6. decide on implementation strategy

5. Facilitators should circulate freely during this time, making themselves available to the couples for consultation on the ways in which the couples are interacting. Most couples will not complete the whole sequence. A few will not get past the initial stage of paraphrasing and defining the problem. The most important aspects the couples should practice are the initiation and listening skills.
B. Analog Love-Making

Goal: To raise issues related to giving and receiving pleasure in their relationship.

Time (60 minutes)

Procedure:

1. It is at this time when it will be beneficial having a large room in which couples can spread out and find a degree of privacy.

2. The specific purpose of this exercise is to raise issues and feelings related to giving and receiving pleasure. Couples may participate at any level at which they feel comfortable, or not participate at all. (Those who choose not to participate in the physical activity may choose to spend some time talking with each other about feelings they have concerning physical contact and giving pleasing behaviors in their relationship).

3. Have all couples find the most private place in the room they can and still be in range of your voice. Sometimes it is appropriate to move furniture to create private spaces.

4. There will be three rounds of rubbing, each with a slightly different focus. Each rubbing activity lasts five minutes. Processing of each round lasts 10 minutes.

Round 1: Male rubs back of female

Female rubs male back
During round 1 the object is for the "rubber" to rub as she/he thinks their partner would like to be rubbed. Other than touching, there is to be no communication between the two. Processing at the end of the round should include how it felt to be rubbed and to be the rubber. Did the rubbee get rubbed the way they would like to have been? How easy was it for the rubber to know what their partner wanted. How did they know?

Round 2: Male rubs female's head

Female rubs male's head
During round 2 the object is for the rubbee to communicate to their partner when they like what the partner is doing. However they may not use words, only non-verbal communication. It is permissible to "help" the partner give the rubbee what she/he wants by moving the rubber's hands in the manner desired.

Round 3: Male gets choice of foot, back or head rub

Female gets choice of foot, back or head rub.
During Round 3 the object is for each partner to communicate freely and fully about what they are currently experiencing, using both verbal and non-verbal feedback. The rubber may ask the partner to tell them what they want. The rubbee’s responsibility is to get the most pleasure possible from their partner.

Processing can include comparisons of the couple’s reactions to each of the three communication situations, how they felt being able to communicate fully about giving and receiving pleasure, and discuss any issues which might have arisen about their ability to understand, give, or receive pleasure from their partner.

5. The break scheduled after this activity is for couples to "come down" from this experience. Some couples may want to use the break to continue processing.

C. Break

Time (15 minutes)
D. **Inner/Outer Circle Discussion**

Goals: 1. To allow participants to express their general feelings about sexuality in marriage.

2. To allow participants to hear opposite sex viewpoints about important sexual issues.

3. To encourage couple dialog on sexual issues.

Time (60 minutes)

Procedure:

1. Arrange the group in two concentric circles, men inside, women outside.

2. Men hold open-ended discussion, facilitated by male leader on the topic of "Your expectations of sex life in marriage."

   One space is left vacant in the inner circle. One woman at a time may take that space to make a comment or ask a question, but they must leave the circle when that is done. (20 minutes)

3. Groups switch. Now women are on the inside and the men are on the outside. The topic for the women, facilitated by the female facilitator, is "What is the purpose, meaning, or value of sex in marriage?"

   Again one space is left in the inner circle for men who want to comment or question. (20 minutes)

4. The group combines for general processing and feedback. Some suggested process questions:

   (a) What did you learn, get confirmed or disconfirmed about men, women or sexuality?

   (b) Are there some ideas presented here that you disagree with?

   (c) How easy is it for you to talk about this subject? What are the ways in which it is more or less difficult to discuss sexuality? (20 minutes)

5. Hand out Homework assignment - Incomplete Sentence Stems (Appendix J). This is given not as homework, but as a resource for couples to use to continue their involvement with each other around the issues of sexuality. Couples often find that they have an easier time discussing some of these issues if they take some formal time and go through the questions, taking turns.
E. **Summary of the day and planning**

1. Give participants a chance to talk some about their reactions to the activities of the day. Ask them to think of any topic areas which they would like to be addressed tomorrow. Let them know that there will be a one hour segment on financial planning. There will also be a segment of 60-90 minutes in which they may raise any topics they would like. Some groups have wanted to go into more depth in the issues of sexuality, finances, or communication. Others have wanted to deal with issues not otherwise raised in the workshop, such as religion, in-laws, division of labor, dealing with friends, and children. (15 minutes)

2. Facilitators may make some agreement with the group about what would be the most beneficial way for them to use the time. This may include anything from just facilitating discussion on a topic of interest to designing a 90-minute experiential module on an important issue.
Sunday A.M. (9:00-1:00)

A. Warm-up

Goal: To start each couple interacting in a positive manner.

Time (15 minutes)

Procedure:

1. On a separate sheet of paper, each person writes 5 (or 10) positive strengths of their partner.

2. Couples sit together and alternate sharing what they have written. No discussion - only reporting. Partner must acknowledge hearing each strength by saying "Thank You" or something similar.

3. Couples discuss how it was for them to think of partner strengths and to hear about their own strengths.

4. Short Group Process (optional)
B. **Budget Simulation**

**Goals:**
1. To stimulate participants' thinking about their personal values regarding money management.
2. To assist partner's interaction about and to examine their assumptions and expectations regarding money management.

Time (60 minutes)

**Procedure:**

1. Hand out or display budget worksheet (Appendix K)

2. Have couples allot husband and wife income according to their most reasonable expectations for their first year of marriage. Have them make an estimate of deductions from gross income (FICA, taxes). Facilitators should encourage couples to realistically plan their income and deduction figures to match reasonable expectations for their specific group.

3. Split up couples - have each person individually determine appropriate budget amounts in all categories. They should feel free to work with both incomes.

4. Have couples join together when each has completed the worksheet to compare their budgets.

5. Ask each couple to make one budget combining both proposals.

6. Process in groups of 6-10
   1. What issues were raised by this exercise?
   2. What budget categories were or were not used?
   3. Did final lists look more like his or hers? Why?
   4. (if couples used same income base) share with group some of the amounts on major items (e.g., rent, auto, food, credit)

7. (Optional if time allows)
   a. Arrange the group in 2 concentric circles, men outside, women inside.
   b. Women hold open-ended discussion, facilitated by female leader on the topic of "my feelings about managing our financial resources"
One space is left vacant. In the inner circle, one man at a time may take that space to make a comment, or ask a question, but they must leave the circle when that is done.

G. Groups switch - Now men conduct discussion on "what I learned about our values from this exercise."

Same rules apply

Break

Time (15 minutes)
C. **Flexible Time**
   
   **Goal:** To allow participants to deal with issues of their own choosing.
   
   **Time (60-90 minutes)**
   
   **Procedure:**
   
   Facilitators will have considered group input from previous evening's sessions and will be ready to present appropriate design.

D. **Commitment Exercise**

   **Goal:**
   1. To present partners with an opportunity to consider and affirm their commitment to each other.
   
   **Time (45 minutes)**
   
   **Procedure:**
   
   1. Participants sit alone with sheet of paper and pen.
   2. They are instructed to communicate to their partner in writing the nature and depth of their commitment to each other.
   
   Participants may write in any form that feels appropriate (poems, songs, short phrases, contracts, metaphors, narratives, letters and drawings have been used).
   
   3. When both partners have completed their task, they can get together to share what they have written.

E. **Evaluation**

   **Goals:** To elicit verbal and written feedback about participants' reactions to the workshop.
   
   To close workshop
   
   **Time (15 minutes)**
   
   **Procedure:**
   
   1. When most couples have completed sharing their commitment hand out evaluation form (Appendix L)
   2. When most have completed written evaluations - gather group together.
   3. Give participants a chance to express any feelings they would like concerning what they have learned, how the workshop has been for them, and any thoughts they'd like to share with other participants.
   4. After a comfortable time collect all evaluations and end the workshop.
Appendix A

Preparation for Marriage Workshop

Material Needed:

1. Name Tags
2. 3x5 cards and a way to pin them on
3. Pencils
4. Newsprint
5. Refreshments (optional, but nice)
6. Blackboard
7. Handouts
   a. Why People Do Get Married
   b. Family History Questionnaire
   c. Feelings Checklist
   d. Expressing Feelings Stems
   e. Sexual Feelings Stems
   f. Additional Feelings Stems
   g. Conflict Resolution
   h. Guidelines For Fair Fighting
   i. Evaluation
Appendix B

Important Marriage Problems Identified by Workshop Participants

Communication
- poor communicating leading to misunderstanding
- communicating with each other
- not empathizing with the other's problems
- not listening totally to what partner is saying
- withheld feelings

Children
- children's discipline
- raising children
- how to raise kids

Sex
- sexual needs
- sexual expectations

Financial
- money planning and control
- generating income
- too little money and not enough time

Career
- occupational choice
- job status
- conflict between job and family
- relocation

Growth
- knowing that each other will change and learning to grow together
- keep growing together and not apart
- not having similar values and expectations
- clash of personalities
- find others' opinions you may have overlooked
- a lot of marital details are overlooked but suddenly become important
- matching two different lifestyles
- avoiding life style ruts

Time
- quality time
- lack of time to oneself
- too much quantity and not enough quality time
Appendix B (cont'd)

General

- age differences
- social background differences
- disagreement over future plans
- roles
- decisions by mutual consent
- major decisions
- decision making
- habits
- boredom
- conflicts of interest
### Appendix C

**Common Reasons for Marriage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Your Ranking</th>
<th>Your Partner's Ranking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Sexual attraction</td>
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<td>b. desire for approval</td>
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<td>c. security</td>
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<td>d. fear</td>
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<td>e. loneliness</td>
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<td>f. romantic attraction (emotional stimulation)</td>
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<td>g. pressure from parents</td>
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<td>h. society expects marriage</td>
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<td>i. romantic tradition (&quot;and they lived happily ever after&quot;)</td>
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<td>j. economic security</td>
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<td>k. it will help me be more responsible</td>
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<td>l. my spouse will take care of me</td>
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<td>m. I can lean on my spouse</td>
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<td>n. I can dominate my spouse</td>
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<td>o. together our strengths make us powerful</td>
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<td>p. to have children</td>
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<td>q. my spouse is like one of my parents</td>
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<td>r. she is pregnant</td>
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<td>s. common interests</td>
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<td>t. my partner loves me</td>
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<td>u. I love my partner</td>
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<td>v. my partner is my friend</td>
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<td>w. physical attraction</td>
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<td>x. my partner is my ideal of opposite sex person</td>
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<td>y. my partner cares about me</td>
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<td>z. similar values</td>
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<tr>
<td>aa. we talk about things that I have never previously discussed with opposite sex peer</td>
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<td>bb. we never argue</td>
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<td>cc. to get away from home</td>
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<td>dd. my partner is good at love-making</td>
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<td>ee. she had an abortion and I feel guilty</td>
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<td>ff. we're living together and deep down think that's wrong</td>
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Others:

| gg. | |
| hh. | |
| ii. | |
| jj | |
| kk. | |
APPENDIX D

Family Life History Survey

1. I was born
   a. on the Eastern seaboard.
   b. in the Southern United States
   c. in the Midwestern United States.
   d. in the Southwestern United States.
   e. in the Western United States.
   f. outside the United States.

2. My place of rearing was
   a. a metropolis
   b. suburbia
   c. a medium-sized town
   d. a small town
   e. a rural area

3. My religious background is
   a. Catholic
   b. Jewish
   c. Protestant
   d. Moslem
   e. none
   f. other

4. My parents are
   a. first-generation Americans
   b. second-generation Americans
   c. third-generation Americans (or earlier)
   d. not American citizens

5. The highest annual income earned by my parents was
   a. over $55,000
   b. over $40,000
   c. over $25,000
   d. over $10,000
   e. $10,000 or less
   f. don't know

6. The highest educational level reached by my father was
   a. grade school
   b. high school
   c. college
   d. graduate school
   e. a doctoral degree

7. The highest educational level reached by my mother was
   a. grade school
   b. high school
   c. college
   d. graduate school
   e. a doctoral degree
Appendix D (contd)

8. **My position in the family was**
a. oldest child
b. middle child
c. youngest child
d. only child
e. one of several in the middle

9. **The number of children in my family was**
a. very large (seven or more)
b. large (five or more)
c. average (three or four)
d. small (two)
e. only one

10. **My parents were**
a. very close in age
b. less than five years apart
c. less than ten years apart
d. less than fifteen years apart
e. fifteen or more years apart

11. **My parents' experience with divorce was that**
a. neither was ever divorced
b. one had been previously divorced
c. both had been divorced
d. they were divorced when I was a child (12 or under)
e. they were divorced when I was in my teens or older

12. **In my parents' families (including grandparents and parents' siblings)**
a. there have been no divorces
b. there has been one divorce
c. there have been two divorces
d. there have been three or more divorces

13. **In my family rearing the person who seemed most in charge was**
a. my mother
b. my father
c. neither parent
d. I never thought about who was in charge

14. **In our community my parents were**
a. considered important people
b. included among the people of some standing
c. just average socially
d. below average socially
e. considered outsiders
II. Present Life Experiences

1. Financially and socially I feel the next five years
   a. will be reasonably successful
   b. will consist of two steps forward and one back
   c. are impossible to predict at present
   d. the future scares me

2. About my health at the present time, I would say that
   a. I have always had perfect health, and I am certain
      I'll stay that way
   b. For the last few years, my general condition has been
      below par, but I believe I'll regain excellent health
      in the near future
   c. For some time now I have had a chronic illness (or
      disability) which is serious, and the probability
      of improvement is small
   d. I don't know for sure. I guess I'm as healthy as
      anybody, but I haven't had a physical for years.

3. About my psychological adjustment, I would say that
   a. I feel fairly secure emotionally
   b. I am happiest not living alone
   c. I probably do best living alone
   d. I do not think about my emotions

4. Like many people I am
   a. sometimes uneasy when I am alone
   b. sometimes uncomfortable when in a crowd
   c. sometimes concerned about dying
   d. hardly ever concerned with such matters

5. With regard to children
   a. I have doubts about how good a parent I would be
   b. I very much want a child of the same sex as I am.
   c. I am not sure I want children
   d. I do not care what sex the child is, but I do want
      to have one
   e. I would like to have at least four or five children
   f. as far as I am concerned, my marriage would be most
      successful without any children

6. With regard to getting married at this particular time, I feel that
   a. since most of my friends are already married, I would
      like to be too
   b. marriage would be an important stabilizing
      influence in my life
   c. the person I wish to marry will not wait if we
      do not get married now
   d. there is no special reason for marrying now but I
      do not wish to disappoint my friends and relatives
   e. it is as good a time as any to marry
III. The Person I am Thinking of Marrying

1. My prospective mate
   a. is extremely attractive physically
   b. is not unusually attractive physically, but is likeable
   c. is someone I do not think of in terms of physical beauty or good looks
   d. embarrasses me because of his (her) looks

2. My prospective mate
   a. comes from a family I greatly admire
   b. comes from a family I feel very much a part of
   c. has so little family closeness I feel sorry for him (her)
   d. has very irritating parents, but I can overlook them

3. With regard to the family of my intended mate
   a. I am worried that she may become too much like her mother (or he like his father)
   b. I am concerned that she may become too much like her father (or he like his mother)
   c. I do not feel his (her) parents will play any significant role in our marriage
   d. I do not think he (she) is like either of his (her) parents

4. I feel that my intended mate's parents
   a. are better educated than my family
   b. have considerably more money than my family
   c. are not as socially acceptable as my family
   d. I do not think about them in this way

5. In the relationship with my intended mate I feel that
   a. he (she) is more in charge than I am
   b. we are equally in charge
   c. I am more in charge than he (she) is
   d. neither of us is in charge

6. With regard to companionship, my intended mate and I
   a. have many interests in common
   b. have independent interests, but are tolerant and supportive of each other's activities
   c. expect to develop interests in common
   d. seem to have relatively little in common when we are not busy with social activities

7. With regard to the question of marriage, my intended mate and I
   a. have discussed our doubts and fears of marriage
   b. have had some doubts, but have not mentioned them
   c. may be afraid of hurting each other by bringing up the question of whether we are making a mistake
   d. do not have any doubts whatsoever
   e. used to have doubts but overcame them
8. With regard to our contemplated marriage
   a. I would like to postpone it, but am afraid of the consequences
   b. despite my doubts I prefer to go ahead with it
   c. I feel I can overcome any doubts since my love is great enough for two
   d. I would have doubts no matter whom I was marrying

9. With regard to religion
   a. we are of the same faith and there are no conflicts
   b. neither of us has had serious religious training, and we do not intend to become involved with any church.
   c. we are of different faiths, but have agreed to rear our children in one of them.
   d. we have opposing religious views, but are tolerant of each other's ideas
   e. we would have no problems about religion if other people would stay out of our business

IV. Attitudes Preceding Marriage (For Engaged Couples)

1. My plans for marriage include
   a. a wish to travel as soon as possible
   b. a desire to move from our present area and establish a home elsewhere
   c. a desire to settle down where we are as quickly as possible
   d. I have no plans beyond wishing to get married

2. With regard to traveling and establishing a home
   a. my intended mate's plans include nothing that is incompatible with my own wishes
   b. we have not discussed this topic fully
   c. I am leaving the decisions to him (her)
   d. he (she) is leaving the decisions to me

3. With regard to sex
   a. my intended spouse has had experience, but I have not
   b. I am more experienced than he (she)
   c. It is important to me that he (she) has had sexual experience before marriage
   d. we have both had premarital sex experience
   e. we do not agree on our sex life at present
   f. we are limiting our sex activity until after marriage

4. With regard to having children
   a. I would like to have children as soon as possible
   b. I would leave the decision about when to have children to my intended spouse
   c. I would prefer to wait several years before having children
   d. I don't feel this is an important consideration
V. Marriage and the Future

1. With regard to my occupational or avocational interests
   a. I feel I have the courage to pursue both my marriage and my interests, even when they conflict
   b. I feel I could sacrifice almost anything in order to have a happy marriage
   c. I see no reason for conflict between marriage and my other interests
   d. my intended mate has no ambitions or professional commitments which will jeopardize or interfere with our marriage
   e. my intended mate's devotion to his (her) career interest is something I can easily admire and support
   f. my intended mate's devotion to his (her) career is something I hope I can get more enthusiastic about as I understand him (her) better

2. With regard to the future with my intended mate
   a. I sometimes think he (she) may become ill
   b. I fear that he (she) may become ill
   c. I fear that he (she) will become superior intellectually or more important than I can become
   d. I never have had any doubts

3. With regard to the future of our marriage
   a. I am worried about becoming poor
   b. I am worried about the influence of our in-laws upon us
   c. I am troubled about the question of how many children we should have
   d. it sometimes occurs to me that my intended mate might have an affair
   e. I prefer not to worry about things until they happen

Test C

Using a separate sheet of paper, write down in order of preference the three activities listed here which you like most and the three which you like least.

Motion Pictures
Competitive sports (tennis, bowling, and so on)
Spectator sports
Outdoor activities (fishing, walking, bicycling, and so on)
Special gatherings with friends
Reading
Art appreciation (listening to music, visiting art galleries, and so on)
Politics
Hobbies (woodworking, sewing, stamp collecting, and so on)
Membership in organizations (school or college clubs, union activities, and so on)
Business or professional activities (beyond ordinary office hours)
Creative endeavor (writing, drawing, singing, acting, playing a musical instrument)
Television
Driving in the automobile
Theater
Dancing
Discussion groups
Civic activities
Being with a few friends of my own sex

When you and your partner compare sheets, first note those activities which neither of you checked and decide whether you are both genuinely indifferent to all of these. Perhaps there are some in this group which you might enjoy trying together.
Listed below are feelings that most of us have in various situations. The intent of this exercise is to help you become aware of feelings you have and how often you communicate those feelings to your partner.

For each feeling make an "A" to indicate how often you are aware of the feeling and an "S" to indicate how often you verbally share that feeling with your partner. Try to represent your feelings and communication of these as accurately as possible without judging your self in terms of how you think things "should" be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>frequently</th>
<th>Feelings</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
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<tr>
<td>stubborn</td>
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Appendix F
Expressing Feelings Stems - I

This exercise is designed to help you identify feelings you have which occur in specific situations or in response to specific behaviors of yourself or your partner.

Take a few minutes alone to complete the following statements. You will then be giving these statements as messages to your partner. Try to complete the statements with specific behaviors.

1. I feel very happy when I

2. I feel very happy when You

3. I feel anxious when I

4. I feel anxious when You

5. I feel angry when I

6. I feel angry when You

7. I feel hurt when I

8. I feel hurt when You

9. I feel jealous when You

10. I feel proud when You
Here are some additional stems to stimulate your couple dialog about feelings.

1. I especially need you to care about my feeling scared when

2. When I am scared and need you to care, I would like you to

3. I especially need you to care about my feeling lonely when

4. When I am lonely and need you to care, I would like you to

5. I especially need you to care about my feeling angry when

6. When I am angry and need you to listen and care, I would like you to

7. I especially need you to care about my feeling happy when

8. When I am happy and need you to care, I would like you to

9. I especially need you to care about my feeling sad or hurt when

10. When I am sad or hurt inside and need you to care I would like you to
Appendix H

SKILLS FOR SUCCESSFUL CONFRONTATION

IN A CONFLICT SITUATION

The most successful strategy for dealing with a conflict is often to confront your partner and the situation in a way that defines the situation in a cooperative tone rather than in a win-lose power struggle. This strategy is often called a "negotiation" strategy. The skills listed below are ones which can help insure successful confrontation and thus negotiation of the conflict in a manner that strengthens, rather than destroys or hinders, the relationship between you and your partner.

INITIATION

It is important not to begin by attacking or demeaning your partner. A defensive reaction on the part of one or both of you usually blocks quick resolution of your differences. The following are skills that you can learn to help your partner hear what you are saying.

1. Use personal statements. Acknowledge that what you say are your perceptions, thoughts, feelings, etc. Personal statements are characterized by using words like "I", "we", and "my" rather than "you", "some people", "one", etc. For example: "I think it's important that we try and understand each other." RATHER THAN "You never understand what I'm trying to say."

2. Describe your feelings directly. Use personal statements and specify the feeling by name, action, urge, simile, etc. For example: "I'm really upset and discouraged because I'm feeling like I can't talk to you. It's like I'm talking to a blank wall." RATHER THAN "You sure know how to get to me, don't you?"

3. Use specific behavior descriptions as much as possible. Describe the visible behavior of your partner in as specific a situation as possible. This is much more constructive than judging your partner in terms of your inferences about general or abstract situations. Let your partner know your response to that behavior. Be careful to avoid absolute words like "always" and "never" or "only,". A defensive reaction is likely to follow. For example: "When I see your clothes scattered all over the house, I get angry because I think you are not keeping our agreement to cooperate in keeping the house neat." RATHER THAN "You're lazy bum who only thinks of your own convenience. You always want to make more work for me."

4. Communicate your acceptance of and caring about your partner, even when you disagree with what she/he is saying or doing. Include positive statements about your relationship and its value to you as you introduce the conflict situation. FOR EXAMPLE: "I really want our relationship to be comfortable and loving, but there is something that is happening between us that is getting in my way. I'd like to try and understand what is going on when..." RATHER THAN: "You don't love me like you used to. You never have any time for me."
LISTENING

Once you have initiated the confrontation, you must be capable of hearing the other's point of view and she/he must feel heard. The following skills should help:

1. Don't immediately attempt to defend or explain our position or make demands or threats.

2. Do actively listen to the other person and communicate understanding. One way of doing this is to paraphrase the statements made by the other person. This allows you to make sure that your perceptions are correct and communicates caring and respect to the other person.

3. For similar reasons, it is a good idea to check out your perceptions of the other person's feelings. State your perceptions and allow the other person to verify or correct your perception.

DIAGNOSIS AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Once both parties have "heard" each other, it is important to define the problem or conflict in a way that both parties agree to and then begin a problem-solving approach to finding a solution. You may find the following steps helpful:

1. Define the problem:
   a. How do you define the problem? What is your behavior and that of the other person that contributes to the problem?
   b. How does the other person define the problem? What does he see as the behavior of yourself and himself which contributes to or represents the problem?
   c. How appropriate is your behavior and his/hers to the situation in which the problem occurs?
   d. What is the smallest possible definition of the problem?
   e. What are the areas of difference or disagreement between the two of you?
   f. What are the areas of commonality or agreement between the two of you?

2. Diagnose the causes
   a. As explicitly as possible, state the other person's behaviors that you find unacceptable in the conflict situation.
   b. As explicitly as possible, state your behaviors the other person finds unacceptable in the conflict situation.
   c. What events triggered the conflict?

3. Generate possible solutions.
   a. What do you need to do to resolve the conflict?
   b. What must the other person do to resolve the conflict?
   c. What are possible mutually desired goals for the resolution of the conflict?

4. Decide on a mutually acceptable solution
   a. What is the outcome of implementing each possible solution?
   b. What cooperative interaction will take place as a result of each solution being implemented.
   c. What solution do the two you feel will be most constructive?
5. Implement the solution
   a. Plan how you will implement the solution

6. Evaluate whether the solution solved the problem.

SOMETIMES YOU WILL FIND THAT THE OTHER PERSON IS NOT AT THE
MOMENT INTERESTED IN RESOLVING THE CONFLICT. When this is true, it is
important to include the following elements in your communications to the other
person.

1. Your understanding of the other person's concerns and his/her
   unwillingness to resolve the conflict at the present time.
2. What your intended behavior to resolve the conflict is going to be.
3. Your expectations as to the other person's response.
4. What you will do if the other person does not behave in the expected way.
5. How friendly, cooperative relations can be restored after your reaction to
   the other's violation of your expectations.
6. Let the other person know that you will be ready to listen and negotiate
   should s/he decide that s/he is ready to mutually resolve the conflict.
APPENDIX J

Incomplete Sentence Stems - Sexuality

These incomplete sentence stems are intended as an aid to your discussions with each other around the issue of sexuality in your relationship. Hopefully, completing these stems with your partner will lead to a deeper understanding of yourself and your partner. There are probably a number of ways you could use this instrument. You may decide to complete the sentence stems independently and then share your responses with each other. You may want to simply sit down with the sentence stems in front of you and take turns completing the statements as they come up. You don't have to take the stems in any order, and you may decide to skip some. It is possible that, as you go through this list, other stems may occur to you. Feel free to add to the list and respond to those additional stems which will help you understand you and your partner better. This is a good chance to practice listening and responding skills you learned in the workshop.

1. The best thing about being male/female is...
2. I'm embarrassed when...
3. The first information I got about sex was...
4. The first experience I ever had that I would define as sexual was...
5. My parent's attitude about sex was (is)...
6. When I find out someone is homosexual, I feel...
7. To me, sexual intimacy in our relationship is...
8. Our sexual attitudes are similar in that...
9. Something I learned about sex recently was...
10. Our sexual attitudes are different in that...
11. As far as masturbation is concerned, I...
12. My feelings toward you right now are...
13. I feel sexually turned on when I...
14. I feel sexually turned on when you...
15. Something that keeps me from feeling sexual with you is...
16. I would like our sexual relationship to be...
17. Right now I'm feeling...
18. I especially need you to care or pay attention to my feeling sexual toward you when...
19. When I am feeling sexual towards you and want you to pay attention, I would like you to...
20. Since talking about these things with you I have learned...
## Appendix K

### Budget Worksheet

Most reasonable estimate of
Husband's Gross Income
Wife's Gross Income
Less Applicable Deductions
Total Net Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Budget Categories</th>
<th>Alloted Amount Per Month</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent/Morgage (including taxes and insurance)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit purchases/loans</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Auto</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance Payments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance/Gasoline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Maintenance</td>
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<td>Recreation/Entertainment</td>
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<td>Savings</td>
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<td>Investments</td>
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<td>Medical/Dental</td>
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<td>Charity/Church</td>
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<td>Travel</td>
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<td>Personal &quot;Mad Money&quot;</td>
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Appendix L

EVALUATION OF MARRIAGE PREPARATION WORKSHOP

Please respond to the following:

1) Were you satisfied with the format of this workshop?
   ____ Yes ____ No  Why?

2) Were you satisfied with the content of this workshop?
   ____ Yes ____ No  Why?

3) Was this workshop useful to you personally?
   ____ Yes ____ No  Why?

4) Is there anything about your relationship you might change or do differently as a result of being in this workshop? If yes, please briefly describe what you plan to do. ____ Yes ____ No  ____ Not Sure

5) What did you like best about this workshop?

6) What did you like least about this workshop?

7) Any feedback you would like to give the workshop leaders?

8) Additional comments: