Managing/Ending Relationships

TI 030 - Thematic

By

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INTRODUCTION

For what purpose is the manual intended?

This manual is intended for use by leaders of structured groups in two major areas of focus:

1. managing relationships; and
2. ending relationships.

By putting these two areas together into one manual we hope to broaden the perspective of group leaders by providing suggestions for exercises for persons at all positions on the relationship continuum. Some of the suggested training issues, such as communication and negotiation, will be applicable either to a workshop on managing relationships, or to a workshop on ending relationships. Other training issues will be applicable only to one type of workshop. For instance, the discussion of the emotional phases occurring after physical separation will be applicable only to a workshop focused on ending relationships.

Target Populations

1. Managing Relationships:

   The workshop on managing relationships is intended for individuals who are involved in a relationship which is primary for them, and who are committed to working toward the betterment of that relationship. Individuals need not be married persons, nor even cohabitants. However, the workshop is intended for persons who are involved in an important relationship. Couples need not be excluded, as long as they are aware that the focus of the workshop will be on the issues of an individual who is in relationship, and that they will be asked to work separately when work groups are formed.
2. Ending Relationships:

The workshop on ending relationships is intended for individuals who have either recently ended a primary relationship; or who are still in a primary relationship, but are sure that the relationship will end within the next three months. The same consideration for couples applies that is mentioned in the comments regarding the target population for the managing relationships workshop.

Leaders

It is suggested that the workshop be led by two persons, and it is preferable to have one male and one female. Two trainers will allow better monitoring of small group discussions, and better detection of individual group members who may be in emotional pain as a result of issues raised during the sessions.

It is suggested that at least one of the leaders have experience in facilitating structured group programs, and that both leaders have at least some experience in individual and couples counseling.

Format of Manual

This manual includes descriptions of eleven group exercises, eight of which are suggested for a 4-session workshop on MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS, and nine of which are suggested for a 4-session workshop on ENDING RELATIONSHIPS. All eleven descriptions contain enough background information to enable group leaders to facilitate the workshop using this manual as the primary, or only, resource. A list of references appears at the back.

This manual contains outlines and hand-outs for each of the four sessions for each of the two workshops:
The manual also contains eight worksheets for use in the various exercises. These worksheets are contained on pages 58-71.

In the descriptions for several exercises, instructions for clients are actually written out in a word-for-word transcript, in quotes. This seemed to be the most effective way to write the exercises, but in no way is intended to discourage facilitators from changing the wording to fit their group's needs and their own styles.

A note on CLIENT CONTRACT for workshop

The outlines for session #1 for both the workshop on MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS and the workshop on ENDING RELATIONSHIPS contains the item: "Establish client contract for workshop." It is suggested that the facilitators ask the participants to agree to the following (verbal) contract:

a. I agree to attend all four sessions.

b. I agree to be on time for all four sessions.

c. I agree to identify and label my goals for myself in the workshop.

d. I agree to keep a written journal during the course of the workshop, and to include in my journal my reactions to the experiences I have during the workshop sessions. I understand that the journal belongs to me and will not be collected, and that it will be useful to me in the last session when we work on planning future directions.

e. I accept the role of the workshop leader(s), which is to provide a quality learning experience, and I accept my responsibility for what occurs in my own relationships.
It will of course be effective for the group leaders to agree to a contract to attend and be on time for all sessions, and to do their best to provide a quality learning experience.
DEFUSING THE IDEAL RELATIONSHIP VISION

In the self-exploration, or self-knowledge, portion of the workshop experience, it will be advantageous for the participants to feel that it is understandable and legitimate for them to have feelings of disenchantment or dissatisfaction with their partnership. For this reason it may be helpful for the group leader(s) to explain the concept of the ideal relationship vision, and how such an ideal vision can contribute to relationship difficulties. Paul Popenoe explains how this ideal relationship vision is formed, and specifically how ideal marriage perceptions can be harmful to newlyweds.*

Instead of recognizing that they were playing a game which was new to the world and for which they had to make up new rules as they went along, each really tried to play an old childhood game. And each, without knowing it, was really trying to play a different game.

Each has for years dreamed of marriage and lived it out in imagination. Martin has pictured the delights and satisfactions which it would bring. He has seen himself the hero of a domestic drama, and his fancy has elaborated lovingly the scenes which he would stage. He has a role already written and rehearsed, and from the moment he said "I do", he began to play that role.

Since it was a husband and wife drama, he sought out a leading lady. When she agreed to marry, Alice unwittingly accepted the role which Martin had written, just as Martin unwittingly accepted the role which Alice had written for him in her version of the play. But of course they had never learned the parts written by their new mate. They had learned their partnership roles on their own, and they had learned roles different from those their mate intended.

How can any domestic drama be a smooth and finished performance when the hero and heroine are reciting lines from different authors?

Format

Arrange the participants into small groups. Groups of four will probably be a good blend of diversity and intimacy. Ask the participants to team up with other persons whom they do not already know well, in order to provide unbiased listeners regarding relationship issues. If both members of a couple are present, ask them to join separate groups. Then read or present a facsimile of the account of Paul Popenoe regarding ideal relationship visions. After presenting this concept, it would be well to allow a few moments of silence, while the participants (presumably) search their memories for similar experiences. Then, ask the participants if they have experienced a rift between expectations and reality which could be accounted for by conflicting "ideal relationship visions."

It is quite likely that some discussion will occur, and that this concept will even be experienced as a revelation by a few participants. It would best be mentioned to the group that ideas for communicating and negotiating conflicting needs arising from different "ideal relationship visions" will be presented later. The initial purpose of this discussion is to raise awareness of the understandable and legitimate causes of relationship strife.

Structure the small group discussions by asking each group member to take one or two minutes to introduce h/self and share with the others some way in which the concept of the "ideal relationship visions" is relevant to their own experiences. Then, ask the group members to take another minute or two, and to respond to each of the others, in turn, and to let them know what they heard the others communicate. It is likely that this exercise will accelerate the building of a sense of community among the members of each group.
THREE PHASES OF RELATIONSHIP DIFFICULTIES:
DISILLUSIONMENT, EROSION, AND DETACHMENT*

Purpose and Format

This section of the workshop is designed to be conducted first with a lecture, and then with participants working with one another in rotating dyads. The lecture format is desirable because of the amount of information to be provided. The purpose of the rotating dyads is to provide the opportunity for participants to interact with more of the members of the entire group. They have previously worked in quadrads, and will continue to do so. They will be given an opportunity to form new quadrads for some of their subsequent work, and the interaction in this exercise will help give them a basis for choosing groups.

The specific method for conducting the exercise in rotating dyads will depend upon the physical setting, and on the leaders' preferences. One suggestion is to have the participants form two concentric circles, with the persons in the inner circle facing out so that they can pair up and converse with individuals in the outer circle. Leaders may ask that participants introduce themselves and give one personal reaction to the lecture material recently provided. After giving each member of the dyad one minute to speak, one of the circles may be asked to revolve, resulting in new pairings. Leaders may wish to make known the purpose of providing participants with the opportunity to get to know which other persons they may wish to work with later.

There is no compelling reason why the rotating dyad format must be utilized.

If the leaders feel that the use of quadrads was particularly successful in the previous exercise, participants may simply be asked to remain in their small groups for this exercise as well. If the latter choice is made, vary the format by asking each group member to share with the others his/her completions of these 2 sentence stems:

1. "What I want to tell you is . . ."
2. "What I don't want to tell you is . . ."

This format may induce even more intimate sharing.

Lecture Material

Practitioners who have worked with many hundreds of separating persons over the years have repeatedly observed a natural progression of phases in the separation process. Although these phases will be listed numerically, and described separately, it is important to note that these are EMOTIONAL, and not CHRONOLOGICAL, phases. A given individual may experience some signs of two or more phases simultaneously, experience the phases in a different sequence, or may leave and later return to a given phase. It does seem as though all phases are likely to be experienced as part of the emotional reaction to the weakening and ending of a relationship which has been primary in terms of commitment, emotional support, and self-concept.

Phase 1: Disillusionment

Emotional separation often begins innocently and insidiously. Idealized romantic fictions tend to be dropped. Disillusionment may be signalled by the decision: "Perhaps I cannot transform this person into exactly the partner I want." Partners may begin to concentrate on the negative aspects of the
relationship, forgetting the positive. This phase can be helpful in integrating expectations, such as we discussed as "ideal relationship visions", with reality. The disillusionment can be healthy to the extent to which open communication and negotiation take place. The relationship "contract" may be reworked for the betterment of the partners. This phase can be fairly easily reversed.

Phase 2: Erosion

If negative emotions are stockpiled for a long time during the disillusionment phase, they may not be able to be negotiated. In this event, they may have to be purged, or acted out. Erosion may be thought of as a wearing away of marital satisfaction. It may also be described as a chipping away at the self-worth of the partner. Self-enhancement may tend to be at the expense of the mate. There is an emphasis on taking rather than giving, on how much one is pleased rather than on how much one pleases.

Partners may stop confiding in one another, and emotional energy may be invested in some outside activity or person. Sex may become a battleground. Impotence or disinterest may be an expression of anger which is not more openly expressed.

There is a very dangerous aspect to the erosion phase. The chipping away at the partner's self-worth may acquire some payoff value in the form of a feeling of superiority. There may therefore be a reinforcement of habits which are destructive to the relationship.

Successful intervention once the erosion phase is reached is more difficult than during the disillusionment phase, because of the build-up of
resentment and mutually destructive habits. However, with enough motivation and willingness to practice communication and negotiation, the strength and solidity of the relationship can still be renewed.

Phase 3: Detachment

If the erosion phase is a chipping away at the account of relationship satisfaction, then the detachment phase marks the bankruptcy of the account. There may not even be enough caring left to fight. Eyes may be "on the escape hatch". The underlying feeling is "I don't care". Emotions are deadened, or transferred to another person, or to a hobby, animal or job. Detachment involves thoughts of a future without the partner. Fantasies about single life often occur. There may be a preoccupation with figuring the material gains and losses of a split. There may be preparations or rehearsals of independence, such as insistence on one's own nights out, weekends away, or career preparation.

Certain questions typically arise: "Do I have the strength to go it alone?" "Is the chance for happiness worth the loss of security?" An anger, which is an anger of justification, often occurs, giving an impetus for parting.

The dissolution process is extremely difficult to reverse once the detachment phase has been reached. At this point, the main forces holding the relationship together are inertia and fear of the (unknown) problems of becoming independent. New life can still be infused into the relationship. However, it takes a very determined effort on the part of both persons, and quite likely therapeutic help.

Having explained these three phases to the participants, it will be helpful to reemphasize the idea that the phases of disillusionment, erosion, and detachment are emotional, and not chronological phases.
ASSESSING THE COMPATIBILITY OF RELATIONSHIP GOALS AND SELF GOALS

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants to gain a clearer understanding of both their own individual goals and of their goals for their relationship. The exercise is designed to provide the opportunity for group members to assess whether and under what conditions their individual and relationship goals are compatible.

This exercise is an adaptation and expansion of an exercise described in chapters 5 and 6 of Alan Lakein's book, How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life. It will include writing tasks for the participants, and three worksheets for this purpose have been designed (see pages 59-61). Group members will be asked to identify their own individual lifetime and short-term goals. They will then be asked to attempt to think for themselves and their partners, and to identify as well as they can their mutual relationship goals. Then, the participants will be asked to assess the relative compatibility of their individual and relationship goals. Finally, and very importantly, they will be asked to determine what concessions, compromises, or adjustments would be needed on the part of their partners and themselves in order to achieve compatibility of goals.

Distribute the three worksheets, and proceed as follows:

"I am going to lead you through a self-discovery exercise. The idea for this exercise was inspired by an exercise in a book by Alan Lakein. The exercise is designed to help you to examine and achieve increased clarity regarding your own goals in life, and also to assess the compatibility of your individual goals with your goals as a person in a relationship. As we proceed with the exercise, allow your thoughts and fantasies to run freely."
There is nothing indelible or permanent about this exercise. You are reassessing your goals, not signing a contract.

"For the next four minutes think of yourself as a single and independent individual, and write down all of your own lifetime goals that you can think of. Please do not judge or censor your ideas; just write down whatever comes into your mind. You may list general goals, such as "happiness"; or specific goals, such as "walking the entire Appalachian Train... Begin". (Allow four minutes or longer.)

"And now, I want you to spend three additional minutes re-stating three major life goals. You may wish to amend or to combine some of your goals. For instance, if you listed among your life goals (1) happiness and contentment, (2) building a home, and (3) living in the mountains, you may wish to restate a goal such as 'Building a home in the mountains and living there peacefully for a year or more...' ... Begin." (Allow three minutes or longer.)

"Now that you have a set of three major life goals which you may consider, pursue, revise, or discard, I want you to imagine as vividly as possible that you have six months to live. You have an incurable condition which will not cause you any loss of health or abilities, but from which you will suddenly expire in six months. All final planning, such as wills, burial arrangements, and financial arrangements for your family are complete. Spend about four minutes writing down the things you are going to do for the next six months... Begin." (Allow four minutes.)
"And now, I want you to take the second sheet of paper, which says 'Phase 2 -- Relationship' near the top. I want you to think of yourself as being in partnership. I want you to begin to think about your lifetime goals for you and your partner in the relationship. Think of lifetime goals which are meaningful for you and which you think would also be agreeable to your partner. This will be the only instance in this workshop in which we will ask you to think for your partner. Try it this time, and spend about five minutes, as before, writing down all of the lifetime goals which come into your mind . . . lifetime, mutual relationship goals . . . Begin."
(Allow five minutes.)

"Now, as before, I want you to spend three additional minutes restating three major goals . . . Begin."
(Allow three minutes.)

"And now, as before, imagine that you and your partner will suddenly expire in six months, and spend four minutes writing down what you feel would be your mutual plans for the next six months. . . Begin."
(Allow four minutes.)

"Now, we have two areas in which you may assess the compatibility of your goals: within yourself, and between yourself and your partner. Spend a minute or so looking over your own lifetime and six-month goals. Remembering that you may rearrange, edit, or discard these goals, consider ways in which your short and long term goals are compatible or incompatible with one another. If your answers to the lifetime and six-month questions are dramatically different, you may have a goal conflict, and it will be in your interest to do some thinking about these issues."
"Spend a minute or so comparing your individual and mutual relationship goals. Think about how important the goals are to you, and think about the value to you of maintaining your relationship. Pay careful attention to the areas of compatibility and incompatibility between your individual goals and your mutual relationship goals. Try to envision ways in which mutual concessions or compromises could potentially result in goal compatibility."

"For instance, let us assume that you are an outdoor enthusiast, and enjoy athletic outdoor pursuits. Your first choice as to how to spend your last six months might be to backpack through the mountains for the entire time. Let us imagine that your partner also enjoys the outdoors, but is not as athletic as you, and does not enjoy the rigors of living in a challenging environment. Your partner might be willing to spend your final six months at a seaside resort, where indoor living accommodations would be available, together with the ocean. Jogging on the beach and swimming might not be as appealing to you as backpacking in a pristine environment. However, the pleasure and comfort of being with your partner might induce you to compromise one aspect of your goal in order to have another. In this case, we could say that your goals were dissimilar, but compatible through adjustment."

"As another example, let us still imagine that you are an outdoor enthusiast, and want to spend your last six months backpacking. This time, let us imagine that your partner's passion is Broadway shows and art museums, and that s/he wishes to spend your final six months in New York City. In this case, there may exist a goal conflict for which no mutually acceptable compromise exists."
"And now, take the third sheet, which says 'Phase 3 -- Compare and Adapt' and take five minutes or so to answer items 7-10."

(Allow five minutes.)

Ask if there are any questions, or if any group members have situations of goal conflicts which they may wish to share and explore. Be sure to make the point that the value to them of their relationship right now may, if there is conflict in the relationship, not be as high as it can potentially be. Mention that in the latter phases of the workshop, important issues which may need communication, and skills for negotiating those issues, will be emphasized.
ASSESSING COMMUNICATION ON MAJOR ISSUES

The purpose of this section of the workshop will be to bring to the attention of the participants three major areas of relationship issues, and to help participants to assess the degree to which these issues are communicated or would best be communicated in their relationship. The three areas of issues being suggested are:

A. Resentments and appreciations,
B. Intimacy and Distance, and
C. Power and Control.

For each of these three areas a worksheet for the participants to fill out has been designed (see pages 62-65). Working in quadrads is suggested. If one of the exercises in Section I (Self-Knowledge) has been conducted with rotating dyads, then by now participants have probably made enough contact with one another that they will have feelings about those other individuals with whom they will enjoy working. If so, forming quadrads via a milling exercise will probably be suitable. Leaders may want to ensure that no quadrads are formed with either no females or no males. This will be particularly important during this 2nd section (Communication) of the workshop, due to the nature of the issues to be discussed. Feelings regarding those issues may typically differ somewhat for males and females, due to
social learning influences which still exist, and it will be advantageous in terms of overall awareness for these differences to be represented in each quadrad.

Format

This exercise is designed to be conducted in four parts: three parts focused on specific issues, and a part for evaluation and synthesis. Worksheets are provided for the first three parts. Assemble the quadrads.

Distribute the worksheet concerning resentments and appreciations, and give the following instructions:

"Communication is almost universally identified as a key factor in relationships. Rather than attempt to explore communication as an issue in and of itself, we are going to explore more specific and concrete issues, with communication as our main theme. The first specific issue, as you can see by the worksheet we have provided, is communication of resentments and appreciations.

"As persons in relationship live together, it is common for the behaviors which were used to attract one another and to initiate the relationship to occur less frequently, and for routine behaviors to predominate. This process, often described as a decrease in romantic excitement has certainly been portrayed in works of fiction as well as in sociological and psychological treatises on marriage. A major theme of this process noted often by marriage counselors is that persons in relationship "take things for
granted," and fail to clearly communicate their likes and dislikes to one another.

"Unfortunately, as described earlier in our discussion of the EROSION phase of relationship difficulty, the communication which does exist may focus on negative aspects of the relationship, ignoring the positive. We feel that it is healthy for individuals to communicate with one another about both their resentments and their appreciations. We do not believe that resentments can be healthily communicated in any fashion. For now, let us simply say that it is healthy to describe another person's specific behavior and our emotional reactions to that behavior, but that it is not healthy to give a negative global judgment of another person. We will provide a more thorough discussion of ways to communicate sensitive issues in the next section of the workshop.

"Communicating one's resentments serves at least three purposes:

1. It provides us with an outlet for our feelings, so that we do not stockpile them for a future mishap;

2. It shows the other person that we are respectful enough of his/her strength to believe that s/he can handle our feelings; and

3. It provides the other person with information which s/he needs if s/he is to make a beneficial concession or compromise.

"Communicating one's appreciations also serves at least three purposes:

1. It reaffirms the basic attractions and appreciations which led to the initiation of the relationship;

2. It provides the partner with knowledge of which of his/her behaviors are succeeding, and with the motivation to continue
them; and

3. It tends to defuse some of the tensions which may exist in response to resentments, and provides an atmosphere in which mutual efforts may be made to improve the relationship.

"Now, take five or more minutes to complete the worksheet on communication of resentments and appreciations."

(Allow five or more minutes.)

"Now, I would like you to share, in turn, three statements with the other members of your group: Take five minutes for that exercise.

1. What I would most like to communicate to my partner about resentment and appreciation is _____________.
2. I want to communicate this because I feel _____________.
3. I am hesitant to communicate this because I feel _________."

"Now, take another 6 or 7 minutes to speak to the other 3 members of your group to tell them, in turn, what you remember hearing them say, and, in brief, how you experienced it."

(Allow 6 or 7 minutes.)

Distribute the worksheets concerning intimacy and distance, and give the following instructions:

"Intimacy is a very important issue in a relationship, and it is therefore a very important issue for mutual communication. Intimacy, physical and
emotional, is the ingredient that really differentiates a primary affectionate relationship from any other important relationship. We are calling this issue **Intimacy and Distance**, because intimacy cannot be naturally maintained at a constant level. A relationship would tend to be experienced as boring and bland if there were no exciting moments of heightened affection and intimacy. And, maintenance of a social, familial, vocational, and economic life - as well as maintenance of individuality - would be quite impossible if we were at a constantly high level of intimacy with our partners.

"We would like to refer to the Gestalt notion of contact and withdrawal - of ebb and flow - to elucidate this point. The Gestalt notion is that contact and withdrawal, or ebb and flow, or intimacy and distance, are a part of the rhythm of life. The Gestalt concept involves figure and ground. When we are intimate with our partner, the other aspects of our life recede into the background, against which the feelings of intimacy stand out in relief. When we are pursuing another area of our life, for example our vocation, the intimacy with our partner recedes into the background against which our vocational pursuits stand out in relief. Although no important aspect of our life disappears completely, it recedes into the background as we pay the appropriate attention to the activity at hand.

"When viewed in this way, we hope that intimacy and distance will not be seen as rival or apartheid forces, but rather as important parts of a continuum. In an important relationship, there is difficulty if we somehow block intimacy from emerging as figure, or if resentments and frustrations emerge as figure instead. In this event, communication of how we experience
the distancing is important if we are to work through the blockages and reestablish a mutually acceptable degree of intimacy."

Ask the participants to complete the Intimacy and Distance worksheet, and to share with their fellow group members in two stages as before.

"Although it may be a distasteful topic to consider, control is nonetheless typically identified as one of the major issues in relationships in which there is dissatisfaction. Communication and negotiation of such issues in a relationship is quite important for the satisfying and productive continuation of the relationship. The exercise on NEGOTIATION, of which the next section of the workshop is comprised, will help you to develop the skills relevant to the working through of control issues. At this moment, we are interested in the process of identifying and communicating these issues."

Ask the participants to complete the Power and Control worksheet, and to share with their fellow group members as before.
Finally, ask the group members to go over in their minds the issues which they've been asked to work on, and to identify in their own minds whether any of these issues are likely to be of continuing concern to them. Ask them also to assess the degree to which the exercise has been helpful to them in their effort to distill out the key issues relative to their relationship. And, ask them to think over the issues which may have come to mind during the exercises conducted during the SELF-KNOWLEDGE section of the workshop, and to think about any common themes which may have emerged.

Give them another fifteen to twenty minutes to share their reactions to those questions. Ask them to share with one another any new issues which may have emerged as surprises or revelations, as well as hopes or fears about what they have learned.
A PARADIGM FOR ASSERTIVE NEGOTIATION
OF FEELINGS AND REQUESTS

This phase of the workshop will consist of both lecture/illustration and practice exercises. Having helped the participants to identify certain issues which are typically less than adequately communicated in relationships, and having helped them to assess their need and desire to communicate with their partners about these issues; it will now be of major importance to help them to develop the skills needed to effectively communicate and negotiate feelings and requests.

The paradigm to be taught is borrowed from ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING methodologies. The bare bones of the paradigm are:

I see . . .
I feel . . .
I imagine . .
I want . . .

These four sentence stems may be written on a chalkboard or hung up on newsprint while the paradigm is explained. The following paragraphs will include the concepts which would best be explained.

"Whenever we are endeavoring to make a request that another person change behavior which we may experience as inconvenient or upsetting, it is very important to communicate in such a way as to minimize the chance that the other person will become defensive. Once the other person begins to defend h/self from our communication, s/he will not be able to understand any more of our point of view.

"The first precaution we may take is to phrase our words in "I" language rather than "You" language. When we are communicating about ourselves, it is easier for people to listen nondefensively. When we are communicating about another person, that person may tend to look very critically at what we are saying, and to jump to the defensive if s/he feels s/he is being
misrepresented.

"The next precaution we may take is to avoid making generalizations about the other person, and instead to describe that person's behavior in specific terms. Thus, we may say "I see that you are a half hour late for dinner" instead of "You're always late for dinner." The latter statement is much more incendiary, and more likely to result in a defensive response than is the former statement. And, starting a negotiation with "you always" is a tactical error simply because it is a sweeping generalization, and therefore is probably untrue (nobody is ALWAYS anything - other than "human", "breathing", etc.).

"The next precaution we may take is to express our own feelings on the issue. This serves to keep the focus for the moment on ourselves, thus minimizing chances for defensiveness. And, it gives the other person the opportunity to understand our human emotional response to his/her behavior. This step may be discarded if we have in the past expressed our feelings and been told directly that the other person does not care about our feelings.

"The next precaution we may take is to express the conclusions we draw from the other person's behavior - in a tentative way ("I imagine . . ."). This is not one of the major components of the paradigm, but is still often helpful.

"The final component of our initial negotiating statement is a clear expression of our request ("I want . . ."). We are not likely to receive any favors, concessions, or considerations which we are unwilling to ask for openly, directly, and firmly."
Thus, we may open an issue for negotiation by saying:

"I see you are a half hour late for dinner;
I feel disappointed and angry;
I imagine that you are not appreciative of my efforts; and
I want you to either be on time or to call me to say you'll be late."

Another example:

"I hear you yelling at the children, and I've heard you yell at
them three times this week;
I feel angry and disregarded;
I imagine that you do not take my opinions on raising children
very seriously; and
I want you to deal with the children in ways other than yelling."

Another example:

"I hear you telling me you're too tired to have sexual intercourse
with me;
I feel rejected and hurt;
I imagine that you feel no affection for me; and
I want you to express the affection you have and to go with me to a
psychotherapist to find out what is keeping you from having the
affectionate feelings you once had."

Having explained and illustrated the paradigm for assertive negotiation, it will be helpful to provide the participants an opportunity to practice the technique with a person who is not their partner. This will give them a chance to experiment with the method, and to try to adapt it to their own interpersonal style. It may be best to have the group members work together in pairs, so as to maximize the practice time each person has.
Arrange the group into pairs, and ask them to spend 2 or 3 minutes thinking of an issue or two to practice with. Ask the participants to choose a moderately difficult, moderately emotionally charged issue to practice. Too highly charged an issue may be too difficult to share with the non-partner, and too easy an issue will not call upon them to work enough on developing the skills. Be sure to emphasize this point.

Ask the participants to take 5 minutes for each of them to practice expressing feelings and requests according to the paradigm. This is not to be conducted as a role play. Ask the person listening to imagine how s/he would be responding, and to give feedback - in a non role play fashion - to the speaker.

After 10 minutes, reemphasize three major points:

1. Describe the other person's behavior in specific terms;
2. Label your feelings;
3. State your wishes.

Then, ask the participants to take another 5 minutes each, and to work on practicing a slightly more heavily loaded issue, this time without concern for using the paradigm exactly ("I see . . . I feel . . . I imagine . . . I want . . ."). Ask the participants to remain aware of the above-mentioned three major components of their statement, and to work on expressing themselves in as forceful and genuine a fashion as possible.

At this point, reconvene the entire group, and ask for reactions as to how easy or difficult it was for the people to express themselves in the recommended way. Ask whether there were any issues which a person was unable to express to his/her satisfaction. If any person does share such as issue, ask if s/he would like you to role play it. An apt demonstration will serve to demonstrate that even a difficult and emotionally-laden issue can be
brought up for negotiation in an effective fashion. Experience in both individual and group work has shown us that such demonstrations by the leader/therapist can be of significant value.

If the person with the difficult issue is willing to do so, the trainer may wish to ask the person to take the role of his/her partner, and then for the trainer and participant to role play a series of interchanges. If no participant is willing to try such a role reversal, then two co-leaders may demonstrate such a series of interchanges, using either an issue from among the participants or an hypothetical issue. It will be advantageous to provide a few such demonstrations as role models of effective negotiation skills.

End this phase of the workshop by reemphasizing the major components of the assertive paradigm, and by soliciting some feedback as to how the paradigm and the practice work were experienced by the group.
SYNTHESIS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

The purpose of this exercise is to initiate a process through which participants may integrate the various insights and awarenesses they have gained in the workshop experience, and plan their future endeavors. The journals which participants have been keeping will be used to complete this exercise.

Format

This exercise will be conducted in the quadrads in which the group members have done most of their work. First, deliver a short lecturette concerning goal setting; emphasizing the advisability of breaking major long-term goals down into smaller, definable, achievable tasks. Make this lecturette as simple or elaborate as your interests and goals dictate, and as time allows. Then, distribute the worksheet for SYNTHESIS and FUTURE DIRECTION (pages 67-70). (Separate worksheets have been devised for MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS and ENDING RELATIONSHIPS). Ask the participants to review their journals, and to then complete the worksheet.

Then, ask the group members to take a few minutes to explain to the others how they intend to accomplish specific tasks as a way of working progressively toward the attainment of major long-term goals. Ask that group members then give the person who has shared their plans some feedback as to the feasibility and the practical progression of their plans.

End this exercise by stating that the plans which participants have devised are not a written contract; they are neither unalterable nor indelible. Offer the suggestion that the more-or-less formal stating and subsequent
reassessment of goals and tasks may help persons to work more effectively toward a satisfying, productive, meaningful lifestyle; and to provide evidence for and reinforcement of progress.
EVALUATING ASSUMPTIONS FREQUENTLY MADE ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants to prepare themselves to make as free and self-affirming a decision as possible about whether to remain in their relationships. In order to do so we feel it is helpful for individuals to clear out any assumptions or beliefs which may unnecessarily restrict their thinking. Restricted thinking may cause persons to remain unaware of all the possibilities open to them. (It is important to note that "possibilities" in this case includes possible ways to negotiate a more satisfying relationship as well as possible ways to end a relationship).

The format of this exercise is to first ask participants to read a series of twenty assumptions (see page 66), indicating whether they believe the statements to be true or false; and then to engage in a discussion aimed at educating participants in the assumptions of most mental health professionals. The purpose of the questionnaire is to induce the group members to become more invested in the exercise by putting their opinions on the line. We feel that participants will learn more by thinking their assumptions through critically, and that they are more likely to do so after first committing themselves to a stand on each item.

This exercise may be conducted in groups of four to six individuals. This size is small enough to ensure enough "air time" for each person, and large enough to have enough diversity of ideas. If the exercise is conducted in quadrads, it will be important for the group leader(s) to decide whether or not to arrange participants in the same quadrads used for other exercises. Since this exercise involves the process of convincing individuals of the correctness of certain ideas according to "authoritative sources", rather
than involving the sharing of feelings and experiences, it may prove helpful to use different groupings of individuals for this exercise.

After arranging group members into small groups of four to six, distribute the list of assumptions and ask participants to indicate TRUE or FALSE for each item. After the completion of this task, ask each group to discuss each item, and ask them to reach a consensus on each item in 20 minutes. Then, share with the entire group that the consensus of mental health professionals is that every statement on the list is basically, mostly, or usually TRUE. Find out from each group whether there were items on which they reached a consensus of false. Be attentive for any signs on the part of group members indicative of a desire on their part to defend their opinion, and allow an expression of their defense before proceeding to explain the reasons for believing in the basic or usual truth of the statement.

It is quite important to be clear, rational, nonjudgmental, and non-dogmatic in explaining the assumptions. And, the assumptions are written in such a way as to make this possible. For instance, statement #1 is "Breakups would best be planned, if possible." It does not read "Breakups should be planned . . ." The wording allows the leader(s) to explain the assumption in nonabsolute terms.

Having taken the time to support the merit of each statement (average 15-25 minutes), ask the groups to take an additional 15 minutes to go over once more those statements which group members may have difficulty in accepting. Ask the groups to try to gain an appreciation for the merit of those assumptions with which they have some difficulty.
End the exercise by stressing the following points:

1. Freedom of choice is strongly supported by having a clear idea of those things which turn out to be basically, mostly, or usually true in the real world.

2. We are not stupid, unworthy, or bad for having some incorrect assumptions about the world. We are merely not yet informed.

3. Learning supportable assumptions about relationships may not cause us to become less concerned in general; it may cause us to shift our concern to issues about which it is in our best interest to be concerned (e.g.: we may become less concerned over assumption #8, but more appropriately concerned with assumption #19).

4. By getting a clearer picture of what is likely to be true, and by concerning ourselves with appropriate issues, we will be able to maximize our problem solving abilities.
Understanding Feelings Associated with the Ending Process

The following exercise is conducted as a guided imagery experience, with participants sharing emerging feelings with other group members in groups of four. This exercise is intended to help the participants to get an in-depth understanding of the emotional process which they either are going through or have gone through as they went through the emotional stages which Kessler referred to as DISILLUSIONMENT, EROSION, and DETACHMENT.

We are providing a word for word transcript of the directions for this exercise, which you may adapt to your own style and preferences as you see fit. Arrange the participants in groups of four and proceed.

ARRANGE GROUP IN SMALL GROUPS OF 4.

"We've already explained the stages that a relationship typically goes through in its ending: DISILLUSIONMENT

EROSION

DETACHMENT

"We're now going to give you opportunity to more fully consider your own experiences in light of this information; to locate yourself in this process; and to identify the major feeling states which this process has engendered in you.

"In order to do this I will lead you through an exercise in which you can just focus on your own experience, without need to interact with others who are here.

"I'm going to begin this experience with a brief relaxation exercise. The purpose of this exercise is to help you to screen out unnecessary distractions so that you can focus yourself on your own inner experience.

"And so I want you to arrange yourself as comfortably as you can in
your chair, arranging your back, neck, and head in as comfortably aligned a position as possible."

RELAXATION

"And now, I'm going to ask you to recall certain experiences to mind, and to picture these experiences as vividly as you can. When I describe a type of experience to you, I'll ask you to picture either a specific scene which you can remember, or an imaginary scene which exemplifies or represents the type of experience I'm describing. Whether you recall a specific scene or imagine a typical one, imagine the scene as vividly as you can. Give yourself permission to feel any emotions which arise. These feelings will be your teachers, and will help you to identify any issues which you may wish to resolve in order for you to continue as healthily and happily as you can with your life.

"Again, take a slow, deep breath . . . exhale, and relax.

"And now I want you to recall to mind the first time you can remember feeling strongly disappointed with your relationship. Recall this experience as vividly as you can. Fill out your memory of this experience with as many details as you can . . . the physical setting . . . the season of year . . . people who may have been present . . . your mate's facial expression . . . your mate's tone of voice . . . and the thoughts and feelings you remember having. Stay with these images and feelings for a little while.

"And now, I'll ask you to say "goodbye" to this memory, realizing that you may return to it if it's important for you to do so. And now, just return to feelings of relaxation. Take a slow, deep breath . . . exhale, and relax."
Trainers: take a few minutes to help the participants to again achieve a deeply relaxed state.

"And now I want you to bring back to mind the first time you can remember thinking that the relationship might end in the foreseeable future. Recall this experience as vividly as you can. Complete your recollection of this experience by including as many specifics as possible . . . When did this occur? . . . Where? . . . Who was present? . . . Picture your partner's face and voice as you were thinking that the relationship might end. Again, stay with these images and feelings for a little while.

"And . . . again, get ready to leave this image, remembering that you may return to it if you wish. And, relax . . .

"And, now, I want you to think of a scene in which you and your partner were not behaving in a mutually enhancing way - a scene in which you may have actually been mutually detracting - or destructive. Though it may be uncomfortable for you to recall such a scene, I'll ask you to do so because it will help you to understand better how your relationship was undermined. Again, think of the time and place of the scene. Think of as many of the details as you can, and stay with the thoughts, feelings, and images that the scene brings out.

"Again, get ready to leave this scene, . . . and relax . . .

"And now, I want you to recall to mind a time when you first remember thinking: "I just don't care anymore." . . . in effect, the time when you may have first felt that you would soon be out of the relationship. Picture your partner as you may have while thinking these thoughts. Picture your partner's posture, facial expression, and voice. Recall this as vividly as you
can, and just be with the thoughts, feelings, and images that come up.

"And now, I'll ask you to get ready to leave these images behind, and to again become aware of the presence of three other individuals with you in your group. Continue to relax . . . I'll give you a few more minutes to just relax with your eyes closed, and to think about the parts of your experience which you would like to share with the other three members of your group. I will ask you to share only those aspects of your experience which you will really like sharing. In a minute or so, I'll ask you to open your eyes . . . and to look around at the other members of your group . . . and to share in turn with one another any feelings which seem important to you right now. When I ask you to open your eyes, I'd like you to immediately move into this next phase of the exercise without interruption. And now, whenever you feel ready, just slowly open your eyes and continue."
AFTER DETACHMENT, WHAT?:

Physical Separation, 2nd Adolescence, Mourning, Hard Work*

Purposes of this Exercise:

1. To provide participants with an understanding of the emotional phases which practitioners have observed in separating persons following the resignation experienced in the detachment phase.

2. To provide participants with an opportunity to share some of their own poignant emotional experiences with other individuals by working in the same quadrads used earlier in the workshop. Because of the emotionally disrupting nature of many of the experiences observed during these phases of separation, many individuals question their own emotional strength or feel that their experiences are unusual or bizarre. Providing both information about these emotional phases, and an opportunity to share them will result in reassurance and support on the part of group members.

Format:

Participants will first be asked to reconvene in the quadrads in which they have been working. They will then be informed of the nature of the information to be provided and asked to think about it to determine whether any of the leader's account of these experiences are descriptive of their own. Let the participants know that they will have

*Kessler, Sheila. The American Way of Divorce (op. cit.)
an opportunity to share their experiences with one another in a mutually supportive way.

After hearing the information in a lecture format, participants will be asked to share with one another both experiences they have had and ways in which they have coped with their experiences. It may be helpful to emphasize the idea that every person in the workshop has in fact coped with his/her life situation. Whether s/he has coped in as effective, advantageous, and self-affirming a fashion as would have been desirable is another question. But each participant has coped, and this may be a supportive and encouraging message to give to all the participants. Instruct group members to focus their attention on one person at a time, and to give some reactions or feedback to that person after hearing his/her experiences. Ask group members not to try to solve one another's life difficulties, but to learn to appreciate one another's circumstances, experiences, and feelings.

Emotional Phases after Detachment

Phase 4 - Physical Separation

Physical separation may mark either the beginning or the end of trauma. For the individual who has prepared h/self for the split, the reaction may be primarily one of RELIEF. For the unprepared person, the reaction may be more like SHOCK. One almost universal reaction is loneliness. There may be some initial confusion, and anxiety about facing the unknown.

One common reaction which may be particularly puzzling to the
separated person is an emotional variability, which may be punctuated by feelings of excitement and depression. The excited feelings may be characterized by thoughts of all the new possibilities open to one in life, pride in one's strength and courage, and joy in the discovery of the advantages of freedom and independence. The depressed feelings may be characterized by fear, loneliness, guilt, and feelings that "I just can't make it alone." Just when the separated person is feeling that s/he is finished with the negative feelings, and is riding the crest of a high, s/he may be plunged into the abyss of despair and loneliness. The MOST IMPORTANT POINT is that this is a process WHICH WILL END. The highs and lows will become less exaggerated and less frequent, and the person will regain his/her equilibrium. It is especially important for a person experiencing these moodswings to know that such emotional lability in the aftermath of separation is not uncommon and will end.

Phase 5- Mourning

Mourning may be thought of as a psychic cleansing. The expression of grief feelings after the loss of any important person through death or separation is extremely important. If any human emotion can be thought of as a necessity, it is mourning following loss. If mourning does not occur soon after loss, it will occur unexpectedly at a later date. And, postponement of mourning may result in a constricted emotional life in the interim.

Mourning is a critical turning point following the ending of a primary love relationship. It is at this point that individuals turn from the past and face the future. Many persons report that they know exactly when they have reached the point of no return. They may mark this juncture with symbolic acts, such as the discarding of a wedding ring,
cancelling of a joint bank account, or ending the display of memorabilia. Mourning may unleash anger, usually at the former partner. Anger has some functional value: 1) By being angry we protect ourselves from more devastating feelings beneath (e.g. pain, humiliation); and 2) We may find it easier to let go of someone we're angry with than someone we love. One important caution is that we had best not displace our anger, and express it toward someone who will not comprehend it.

Many feelings may accompany mourning (anger, hurt, embarrassment, helplessness, loneliness, guilt, resentment, depressed mood, or panic). The agitation and anger may be regarded as part of a struggle against admitting that the loss has irretrievably taken place. When loss is accepted as irretrievable, feelings are no longer frantic, but are sad.

Phase 6- 2nd Adolescence

The excitement of possible new adventures and new risks may create an almost adolescent state. It is common for people to overreact, and perhaps to overindulge in sex, travel, hobbies, or vocational training. However, moderation and balance typically ensue. One particular overreaction may be "the clutch." A separated person may find a compassionate, supportive person, and may try very hard to maintain a longterm relationship.

The "2nd Adolescence" phase typically does not have the negative attributes of actual adolescence. The person usually has the maturity and finesse to fare much better in relationships. There is a new confidence in one's ability to withstand change. There is more congruence and self-esteem. The debilitating anxiety which may have been present
in earlier phases has been left behind. The excitement now experienced has an air of confident expectations of a better tomorrow.

Phase 7 - Hard Work

The separated person typically integrates the skills acquired during adult life with the renewed confidence experienced when leaving behind the anxiety of separation. It is time to pursue self-chosen goals with renewed vitality. Dreams may be broken down into achievable units. Instead of being acted upon, the now independent person becomes the actor.

Note: The seven phases described here are emotional phases - not chronological. The feelings associated with several phases may be experienced in a single day. Few individuals experience these phases at the same pace or in the same way. The entire process typically takes between six months and two years.
MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS
OUTLINE FOR SESSION #1

I. Welcome the Participants 10 - 15
   -- Re-emphasize characteristics of
target population
II. Introduce Leaders 5 - 10
III. Provide Overview of Purposes and Methods of Workshop
    -- Establish client contract for workshop 10 - 15
IV. EXERCISE: De-Fusing the Ideal Relationship Vision 20 - 25
V. EXERCISE: 3 Phases of Relationship Difficulties 40 - 45
VI. Wrap-up Discussion
    -- Re-emphasize client contract for Workshop 5 - 10
    -- Assign homework (journal) 90 - 120
MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS
OUTLINE FOR SESSION #2

I. Welcome the Participants 10 - 15
   -- Compliment them on returning
   -- Give a message of gentleness, and of respect for their struggles
   -- Give a message of the desirability of accepting responsibility for self and for hard work.

II. Ask for reactions to previous session 15 - 25
   -- Check out journals. Compliment persons who used journal assignment conscientiously.

III. EXERCISE: Assessing the Compatibility of Relationship Goals and Self Goals 45 - 50

IV. Discussion regarding conflict of Self Goals and Relationship Goals, and of need for values clarity for decision making. 15 - 20

V. Wrap-up discussion 5 - 10
   -- Continue journal assignment 90 - 120
MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

OUTLINE FOR SESSION #3

I. Discussion
   -- Reactions to previous session 10 - 15
   -- Awarenesses gained during week and entries into journal

II. EXERCISE: Communication 50 - 60
   A. Resentments and Appreciations
   B. Intimacy and Distance
   C. Power and Control

III. Discussion
   -- Troubleshoot issues which arise as a result of the communication exercise. 25 - 35

IV. Wrap-up Discussion
   -- Continue journal assignment 5 - 10
      (Emphasize advisability of bringing journal to final session for synthesis and planning)

90 - 120
MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS
OUTLINE FOR SESSION #4

I. Discussion
   -- Reactions to previous session 10
   -- Awarenesses gained during week and
     while making entries into journal.

II. EXERCISE: A Paradigm for Assertive
     Negotiation of Feelings and Requests 40 - 50

III. Discussion
     -- Troubleshoot issues which may arise
       as a result of the NEGOTIATION EXERCISE 5

IV. EXERCISE: Synthesis and Future Direction 35 - 40

V. Final Wrap-up Discussion
   -- Give message of gentleness, and of
     respect for their struggles. 15
   -- Give message of desirability of
     accepting responsibility for self and
     situation in relationship.
   -- Ask to have workshop evaluation
     forms completed. 105 - 120
MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS
Session #1

Brief Review of Material

1. Sometimes relationship dissatisfaction is set up in advance by incompatible "ideal relationship visions" of partners.
2. The DISILLUSIONMENT* phase may be characterized by the loss of romantic ideals.
3. The EROSION* phase may be characterized by satisfaction at the expense of the partner.
4. The DETACHMENT* phase may be characterized by the statement "I just don't care anymore."
5. Whatever the condition of your relationship is, you have a right to be there. Now it will be in your best interest to work on the relationship by resolving key issues.

Homework

Begin keeping a journal. Please be sure to include in your journal your reactions to the experiences you have in this workshop.

Brief Review of Material

1. We may have a goal conflict within ourself if our long term and short term goals are dramatically different,* and it will be in our interest to work on achieving clarity.

2. We may have a goal conflict if our individual goals and our relationship goals are different.

3. We can assess the degree to which mutual concessions and compromises can result in an alleviation of goal conflicts.

Homework

Continue to keep your journal. Please be sure to include your reactions to this session's exercise and discussions regarding compatibility of goals.

MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS
Session #3

Brief Review of Material

1. Communicating our appreciations to our partner helps to provide an atmosphere in which motivation exists to improve the relationship.

2. Communicating our resentments prevents us from "stockpiling" ill feelings for an explosion, and gives us specific issues to work on.

3. Intimacy cannot be expected to be constant; it flows and ebbs like the tides. Communicating about how our feelings of intimacy flow and ebb helps to enhance understanding and reduce feelings of rejection.

4. Power in a relationship is often a distasteful issue, but is better communicated openly than left to covertly undermine the relationship by incurring resentments.

Homework

Continue to keep your journal. Please be sure to include your reactions to today's exercise concerning the communication of issues of appreciations/resentments, intimacy, and power. Bring your journal to the final session.
MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

(Final) Session #4

Brief Review of Material

1. Improved skill at negotiating difficult issues can be learned by following certain suggestions.

2. When opening up negotiations regarding another person's actions, it is advantageous to:
   a. Describe the other's behavior in specific terms;
   b. Describe our own emotional reaction to the behavior; and
   c. State clearly what it is that we want.

3. We are more likely to work toward a more satisfying, self-affirming, life enhancing relationship if we set achievable short term goals which progress toward our long term goals.
ENDING RELATIONSHIPS

OUTLINE FOR SESSION #1

I. Welcome the Participants  
   -- Re-emphasize characteristics of target population.  
   10 - 15

II. Introduce Leaders  
   5 - 10

III. Provide overview of Purposes and Methods of Workshop  
     -- establish client contract for workshop  
     10 - 15

IV. EXERCISE: De-Fusing the Ideal Relationship Vision  
    20 - 25

V. EXERCISE: 3 Phases of Relationship Difficulties  
    40 - 45

VI. Wrap-up Discussion  
    -- Re-emphasize client contract for workshop  
    -- Assign homework (journal)  
    5 - 10

90 - 120
ENDING RELATIONSHIPS

OUTLINE FOR SESSION #2

I. Welcome the participants
   -- Compliment them on returning
   -- Give a message of gentleness, and
     of respect for their struggles.
   -- Give a message of the desirability
     of accepting responsibility for
     self and for hard work.

II. Ask for Reactions to Previous Session
    -- Check out journals. Compliment persons
      who used journal assignment conscientiously.

III. EXERCISE: Communication
    A. Resentments and Appreciations
    C. Power and Control
       (Skip "D" for Ending Workshop)

IV. EXERCISE: Negotiation

V. Wrap-up Discussion
   -- Troubleshoot issues which may
     have arisen during communication
     and negotiation exercises.
   -- Continue journal assignment.
ENDING RELATIONSHIPS
OUTLINE FOR SESSION #3

I. Discussion
   -- Reactions to Previous Session 10 - 15
   -- Awarenesses gained during week and
       while making entries into journal.

II. EXERCISE: EVALUATING ASSUMPTIONS 40 - 50
    FREQUENTLY MADE ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

III. EXERCISE: GUIDED FANTASY: 30 - 40
     UNDERSTANDING THE DETACHMENT PROCESS

IV. Wrap-up Discussion
    -- Troubleshoot issues which may have 10 - 15
       arisen during the previous two exercises.
    -- Continue journal assignment. (Emphasize
       advisability of bringing journal to final
       session for synthesis and planning). 90 - 120
I. Discussion
   -- Reactions to previous session. 10
   -- Awarenesses gained during week and while making entries into journal.

II. EXERCISE: After Detachment, What? 30 - 40

III. EXERCISE: Synthesis and Planning
      Future Direction 35 - 45

IV. Final Wrap-up Discussion
   -- Give message of gentleness, and of respect for their struggles. 15 - 25
   -- Give message of desirability of accepting responsibility for self and for quality of relating.
   -- Ask to have workshop evaluation form completed. 90 - 120
ENDING RELATIONSHIPS
Session #1

Brief Review of Material

1. Sometimes relationship dissatisfaction is set up in advance by incompatible "ideal relationship visions" of partners.

2. The DISILLUSIONMENT* phase may be characterized by the loss of romantic ideals.

3. The EROSION* phase may be characterized by satisfaction at the expense of the partner.

4. The DETACHMENT* phase may be characterized by the statement: "I just don't care anymore."

5. Whatever the condition of your relationship, you have a right to be there. Now it will be in your best interest to work on the relationship by addressing key issues.

6. Whether we are going to remain with a partner or separate, either way it is in our best interest to improve the quality of relating.

Homework

Begin keeping a journal. Please be sure to include in your journal your reactions to the experiences you have in this workshop.

ENDING RELATIONSHIPS
Session #2

Brief Review of Material

1. Communicating our appreciations helps to provide an atmosphere in which motivation exists to improve the quality of relating.
2. Communicating our resentments may prevent us from "stockpiling" ill feelings for a destructive explosion at a later time.
3. Power in a relationship is often a distasteful issue, but is better communicated openly than left to covertly undermine our attempts to relate in a nonantagonistic fashion.
4. Improved skill at negotiating difficult issues can be learned by following certain suggestions.
5. When opening up negotiations regarding another person's actions, it is advantageous to: a. Describe the other's behavior in specific terms; b. Describe our own emotional reaction to the behavior; and c. State clearly what it is that we want.

Homework

Continue to keep your journal. Please be sure to include your reactions to today's exercise on communication and negotiation.
ENDING RELATIONSHIPS
Session #3

Brief Review of Material

1. Freedom of choice is strongly supported by having a clear idea of those things which turn out to be basically, mostly, or usually true in the real world.

2. By acquiring a clearer picture of what is likely to be true about relationships and their ending, we will be able to make the best use of our problem solving abilities.

3. Gaining an in-depth appreciation of the emotional process we have gone through during the deterioration of a relationship is to our advantage, because it helps us to understand just how the relationship was undermined.

4. Our increased understanding of the evolution of past relationships will help us to acquire the ability to form more mutually enhancing relationships in the future.

Homework

Continue to keep your journal. Please be sure to include your reactions to today's exercises. Bring your journal to the final session.
Brief Review of Material

1. The actual physical separation of a primary relationship may bring about moodswings which are puzzling to us.

2. If there is one human emotion which may be regarded as "necessary", it is grief following the loss of an important person through death or cessation of social contact.

3. We are more likely to achieve mutually enhancing relationships in the future if we meaningfully integrate what we have learned, and set reasonable goals and expectations for ourselves.
THE DISSOLUTION PROCESS

DISILLUSIONMENT

- PHYSICAL SEPARATION
  - MOURNING
  - EXPLORATION
  - HARD WORK

DECISION TO STAY TOGETHER

DECISION TO SPLIT


ASSESSING THE COMPATIBILITY OF RELATIONSHIP GOALS AND SELF GOALS

Phase 1 -- Individual

1. Quickly write down all the individual lifetime goals that come into your mind (4 minutes):

2. Restate 3 major lifetime goals (3 minutes):

3. Imagine that you have 6 months to live, and write down your plans for the next 6 months (4 minutes):
ASSESSING THE COMPATIBILITY OF RELATIONSHIP GOALS AND SELF GOALS

Phase 2 -- Relationship

4. Quickly write down all the lifetime mutual relationship goals that come into your mind (5 minutes):

5. Restate 3 major lifetime mutual relationship goals (3 minutes):

6. Imagine that an inescapable natural disaster will end both your lives in 6 months, and write down what you imagine would be your mutual plans for the next 6 months (5 minutes):
ASSESSING THE COMPATIBILITY OF RELATIONSHIP GOALS AND SELF GOALS

Phase 3 -- Compare and Adapt

7. The lifetime individual and mutual relationship goals which I have identified are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totally Compatible</th>
<th>Compatible through minor compromise</th>
<th>Compatible through major compromise</th>
<th>Totally Incompatible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. The six-month individual and mutual relationship goals which I have identified are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totally Compatible</th>
<th>Compatible through minor compromise</th>
<th>Compatible through major compromise</th>
<th>Totally Incompatible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9. Assume that there are many possible mutual compromises. Think carefully about possible compromise situations, and enter below some examples of mutual adjustments which would need to be made to achieve such compromises:

My Adjustments

My Partner's Adjustments

-or-

10. I see the possibility of my partner and myself arriving at mutually compatible goals as: _____very likely _____possible _____cannot say _____doubtful _____close to impossible.
RELATIONSHIP/COMMUNICATION ISSUES
RESENTMENTS AND APPRECIATIONS

Take about 5 minutes to complete the following:

I resent the following things about my partner:

I appreciate the following things about my partner:

I have clearly and definitely expressed some of these resentments and appreciations to my partner (place an "X" next to each of the resentments and appreciations listed above which you have clearly expressed).

I can feel more emotion, intensity, and energy in myself when I am expressing my resentments appreciations

Of all the time I spend with my partner, resentments and appreciations are expressed, either openly or covertly, the following percentages of the time:

% resentment % appreciation

I believe that my partner and I would both like to communicate more appreciation for another; but being the first to do so would be a concession or a defeat, and neither of us wants to make the first move.

true false
RELATIONSHIP/COMMUNICATION ISSUES

INTIMACY and DISTANCE

Take about 5 minutes to complete the following:

I feel closest to my partner when s/he
(list three specific behaviors of your partner):

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________

Now, place an "X" next to any behavior listed above if you have clearly and specifically told your partner that that behavior results in your feeling closer.

I feel most distant from my partner when s/he
(list three specific behaviors of your partner):

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
Now, place an "X" next to any behavior listed above if you have clearly and specifically told your partner that that behavior results in your feeling more distant.

When I feel close to my partner, I let him/her know this by:

When I feel distant from my partner, I let him/her know this by:

I feel rejected and/or threatened when my partner places some distance between us.

_____ TRUE

_____ FALSE
RELATIONSHIP/COMMUNICATION ISSUES

POWER and CONTROL

Take about 5 minutes to complete the following:

When I wish to exert influence on my partner, I use

_____ withholding of affection       _____ indisputable logic
_____ guilt induction                _____ authority
_____ money                           _____ affection
other (be specific)                   ______________________________________

When my partner wishes to influence me, s/he uses

_____ withholding of affection       _____ indisputable logic
_____ guilt induction                _____ authority
_____ money                           _____ affection
other (be specific)                   ______________________________________

The one of us who would lose more as a result of separating would be

_____ myself                        _____ my partner.
and I _____ do                      _____ do not believe that this has an influence on the
task of who has more power in the relationship.

In our relationship, the power is distributed approximately as follows:

 _____ % self                        _____ % partner
ASSUMPTIONS FREQUENTLY MADE ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS*

(Answer True or False for each item.)

1. Breakups would best be planned, if possible.

2. In general, self-survival supersedes maintenance of a relationship.

3. Less ambiguity in breakup can reduce grieving time.

4. Talking about problems during a relationship is better than not talking about them.

5. One will not die from normal grief.

6. Grieving does not last forever.

7. Re-negotiating a "friendship" out of a "lovership" is not always possible.

8. Being threatened by an extra lover is not being immature.

9. People who have recently broken up are generally very needy for support and caring, and vulnerable to entering into dependent relationships.

10. It is smart to be careful about getting involved with someone recently separated.

11. It is better not to get quickly re-involved in another relationship if you are recently separated.

12. It is important to recognize and accept that there are "impediments" in people which are not likely to change.

13. Bad relationships are hardly ever the result of one person.

14. There is no perfect time to break up and avoid trauma.

15. If you "want out" of a relationship, you don't have to justify your feelings.

16. There is no such thing as a perfectly secure relationship (there are no guarantees).

17. Reasons for having gotten involved at one point may not be sufficient to maintain the relationship.

18. The period following a breakup can be a rich time for personal growth.

19. Following a couple's breakup, mutual friends may drop out of the picture.

20. Being lonely and living alone are not one and the same.

*Written by Dave Coffman and Josie Black, Counseling-Psychological Services Center, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
Please read through your journal before completing this worksheet:

1. My present emotional state is most like the one described as
   _______ detachment,
   _______ physical separation,
   _______ mourning,
   _______ second adolescence,
   _______ hard work,

   and in order for me to help myself through this emotional phase, I want to
   _______ accept myself and my feelings.
   _______ change my behavior toward my partner.
   _______ other (specifically) _______

2. Fill in the chart below by specifically identifying issues in your relationship related to the topic indicated, and state the degree to which you have communicated your feelings on these matters to your partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resentments</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appreciations</th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. My ability to communicate important issues to my partner, and to negotiate for understanding and/or concessions is
   _______ not adequate,
   _______ fair,
   _______ good,

   AND IS _______ remaining the same;
   _______ improving;

   and if I am to negotiate more successfully, I'd better _______

   _______

4. Mourning the loss of my relationship has affected and will probably affect me in the following ways.

   Past: _______

   Future: _______

5. I am thinking of myself as an independent person and doing things independently in the following ways:

   _______

   _______
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My major long-term goal is</th>
<th>I will reassess my plans during (week, month), and the criteria for success are</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The specific short-term tasks which I would best accomplish on the way to my major goal are</td>
<td>The skills which I will use to accomplish these tasks are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS
SYNTHESIS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Please read through your journal before completing this worksheet:

1. My present emotional state is most like the one described as erosion, disillusionment, detachment,

   and in order for me to help myself through this emotional phase, I want to accept myself and my feelings; change my behavior toward my partner; other (specifically)

2. The goals of myself and my partner which are most compatible are

   The goals of myself and my partner which are least compatible are

   The following specific concessions or compromises would make our goals more compatible

3. Fill in the chart below by specifically identifying issues in your relationship related to the topic indicated, and state the degree to which you have communicated your feelings on these matters to your partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resentment</th>
<th>Appreciations</th>
<th>Intimacy</th>
<th>Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. My ability to communicate important issues to my partner, and to negotiate for understanding and/or concessions is: not adequate fair good

   And is staying the same; improving;

   And if I am to negotiate more successfully I'd better
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Long-Term Goal is</th>
<th>Specific Short-Term Tasks</th>
<th>Skills Which I Will Use to Accomplish These Tasks</th>
<th>Criteria for Success in Task Completion</th>
</tr>
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</table>

I will reassess my plans during {week, month), and the

[70-]
ENDING RELATIONSHIPS
WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Please use the code shown on the right to respond to the following items. Thank you.

1 = strongly agree
2 = agree
3 = cannot say
4 = disagree
5 = strongly disagree

1. The group leaders were successful in promoting a safe, supportive atmosphere in which risk-taking and positive growth were possible. 1 2 3 4 5
2. The leaders are knowledgeable about the subject matter. 1 2 3 4 5
3. The leaders seemed to be well prepared for each session. 1 2 3 4 5
4. The leaders seemed to be genuinely respectful, and treated each participant as an individual. 1 2 3 4 5
5. The explanation of the emotional phases of relationship deterioration makes a lot of sense. 1 2 3 4 5
6. The issues which we explored relative to communication were relevant. 1 2 3 4 5
7. The training on assertive negotiation skills was effective. 1 2 3 4 5
8. The assignment to keep a journal was helpful to me. 1 2 3 4 5
9. There was an effective balance between experiential exercises and the presentation of information. 1 2 3 4 5
10. The program was successful in achieving its stated goals. 1 2 3 4 5
11. What were the most significant or beneficial parts of the workshop for you?
REFERENCES


