Relationship Enhancement Group for Couples

TI 039 - Thematic

By
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Developed 1987
Edited 2006

The Clearinghouse for Structured/Thematic Groups & Innovative programs
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Overview
Relationship Enhancement Group for Couples
TI 039

Issues addressed through lectures, discussions, and experiential exercises, include identification of pleasing and displeasing behaviors, individuality in a love relationship, anger and constructive fighting, conflict resolution, non-verbal communication, relaxation techniques (including body massage), and intimacy issues chosen by group. Manual: 57 pages, 15 handouts

GOALS: To assist couples in the further development of skills necessary to successful intimate relationships

TARGET: Couples in stable, committed relationships

LENGTH: 8 weekly sessions of 2 - 2.5 hours

SIZE: 6 or 7 couples maximum

OTHER: This program is a revision and adaptation of Student Couples Workshop developed by Marv Moore & John Hinckle at Colorado State University.

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Assumptions and Interaction Rules for the Leaders

Here are some assumptions underlying the philosophy of the program; you may wish to add more of your own.

A) A love relationship with the opposite sex, married or unmarried is a desirable state, but good relationships are made through hard work, they don’t just happen. Couples must continually work together to keep their relationship exciting.

B) An exciting, growing love relationship, or a state of satisfying intimacy, is based on honest open communication between partners on almost all important issues.

C) Intimacy in a relationship is a cyclical thing; there are times of closeness interspersed with times of psychological distance. Honest communication is one way by which the cycle moves—sometimes from closeness to distance, and back to closeness again. Thus honest and open communication can at times cause one member of the couple to “back-off” a bit psychologically, perhaps to think things through. At other times the sharing and caring it facilitates can deepen the intimate contact. This whole process is a natural one, but is seldom expected by couples.

D) Constructive fighting or sensible management of aggression is one of the most important processes to be mastered in the area of honest communication. Constructive fighting is like dancing; it has to be learned.

E) The resolution of the inevitable conflict and friction which arises in an intimate relationship requires that each person be aware of his or her own feelings, be able to communicate these to the other partner, and be able to negotiate the changes which may be necessary in each person’s behavior so that a lasting resolution occurs.

F) The meaningful expression of reciprocal affection (sexual as well as non-sexual) is equally important in maintaining the cyclical flow of intimacy.

Based on these assumptions, the primary purpose of the “Relationship Enhancement Group” is to teach the participants some concepts and exercises for improving their interpersonal communication—including techniques of constructive fighting, conflict resolution, and expressions of affection.

There is another way to say this. Every love relationship has its healthy and unhealthy aspects. For the most part, these groups are aimed at the healthiest part of each participant and his or her love relationship. Of course, it is hoped that what is learned in these seminars will help couples to approach some of the unhealthier aspects of their relationship; but the seminars are not offered as money-back guarantee “cures” for less healthy relationship problems. There are some aspects of every love relationship that are amenable to change only via a long-term process of growth, such as taking part in psychotherapy or just living.
Interaction Rules to Consider as Guides for Your Group

The following are some interaction rules you might like to consider as guides for your group:

1) Be as honest as you possibly can with your partner and other group members.

2) Don’t be anywhere you don’t want to be, or can’t tolerate being. It’s each group member’s responsibility to let others in the group know when they are pushing too hard, or stepping on toes. You don’t give up your right to privacy by being in this group.

3) Don’t protect your partner; your partner can take care of himself. It is a natural instinct to be protective, but it often impedes the process of growth in honest communication.

4) The group makes a contract as far as possible to abide by these rules, especially not to push someone who cries “halt!”

5) As a general rule, the guidelines for good communication to be discussed in depth next time will be followed throughout the course of the group. This is to both facilitate communication within the group as well as to provide practice using this technique—one which is felt will be exceedingly helpful for your relationship.

A general format for structuring the groups:

Formats suggested herein are put forth to provide a minimal framework within which both leaders and participants can be free to experiment.

A) The first session will probably consist of two main processes:
   1) introducing the scope and content of the group, and
   2) cementing, so far as possible, the commitment of participants to this process.

B) Successive groups will probably follow roughly this format:
   1) feedback—rehash of previous groups and/or exercises assigned as homework
   2) exercise—discussion—encounter of week’s emphasized topic, and
   3) introduce the theme of the subsequent group, including homework if there is some.

*This program is taken almost exclusively from the “Married Student Couples Workshop” developed in 1970 at Colorado State University by Marv Moore and John Hinkle.
Session 1: Setting Goals & Getting Acquainted

**Preparation:** Review the two sets of information at the beginning of this manual:
- Assumptions and Interaction Rules for Leaders
- Interaction rules to consider as guides for Your Group

**Handouts:**
- Developing Behavior Change Goals Background Information
- Preliminary Goal Setting Worksheet
- Pleasing and Displeasing Behaviors Instructions
- Partner Observation Checklist

**Materials:** Pens and paper for each participant

**A. Warm-up and Getting Acquainted**

1. Short period of non-verbal exercises such as passing between each other, shaking hands, shaking an arm, shaking a shoulder, shaking a leg; make a noise as you pass; change facial expression; loosen up; even play children’s games such as London Bridge, etc.

2. If the non-verbal exercises are not your “cup of tea,” use a method of getting the group acquainted which is comfortable to you. The point is to set the atmosphere for sharing and fun and to get the couples comfortable and interacting.

**B. Introduction to the Relationship Enhancement Group**

Present the philosophy of the group ("Assumptions and Interaction Rules for Leaders") and specify the interaction rules ("Interaction rules to consider as guides for Your Group"). One or both co-leaders may wish to share in this presentation.

Again emphasize that a commitment to this group is an 8-week process. You are assuming by the participants’ presence that they expect to participate for the full workshop. It is unfair to the rest of the group, and to the leaders, if they hedge on this commitment. If, at the end of the first session they are ambivalent about their participation, it would be better that they drop out now rather than in the middle of the process. Suggest that they let you know after the group if there is a problem or if they know that one of them won’t be there for a specific group—please try to discourage this.

**C. Developing Behavior Change Goals Activity**

Discuss “Developing Behavior Change Goals,” using the printed information. Then pass out both the “Developing Behavior Change Goals” handout and the “Preliminary Goal Setting Worksheet.” Explain the handouts.
Allow time for participants to read them. Answer any questions. Work with participants to help them follow the guidelines/procedures found there. They will first do Steps 1-4, then Step 5, Step 6, and Step 7.

After the exercise is completed, collect the revised final goals from each person.

Assemble the large group and discuss what the group has been like for the participants.

D. Prepare Participants for Next Week’s Session

Explain that the group will attempt to teach a technique for good communication which will serve as an underlying current throughout the group. Indicate that subsequent groups will be more interactive and exciting.

E. Discuss the homework: Pleasing & Displeasing Behaviors

Present the philosophy that the group experience will be greatly enhanced, as will its effect on their relationships as couples if they accomplish the homework tasks between sessions.

Tell couples that these tasks will both emphasize what they just learned in this session and/or present a foundation for working in the next session.

Ask the couples to get together and agree to a time in the next few days to discuss:
  • the things each one could be doing to accomplish their own goals
  • determining if there is a way to help one another obtain their goals

Pass out and explain the take-home exercise on “Pleasing and Displeasing Behaviors.” Hand out the information sheet and the “Partner Observation Checklist.”

You might want to review the important points in “Developing Behavior Change Goals.”
Developing Behavior Change Goals: Background Information

Participants in workshops for the development of improved personal skills frequently do not have clear goals in mind, goals they desire to work toward during the training experience. In this group, clear goals definition is considered central to learning during the entire program. Is this, therefore, important that you the leaders know the general purpose of the relationship enhancement groups. The purpose is two-fold: to teach couples various skills for improving the interpersonal communication and to provide them with opportunities to try out new ways of interaction in their relationship.

Our work with the program indicates that participants profit most from the experience when they actually generate specific goals for themselves. We have found it important that the participants generate even more specific goals for themselves than the goals stated as the general purpose of the program. It is not realistic to expect that each participant will desire to profit from the program in exactly the same way. Individualized, personally relevant goals are the most valuable. Because of the importance for you to have your own goals in mind during the program, we shall use this session for developing goals you desire to work toward.

It appears that no matter how vague or general the goals of a training experience are, participants do have at least some implicit goals in mind. Some participants state goals that are primarily on the dimension of feelings (e.g., “I will feel more like telling my partner that I am angry with her when I am angry”); others state goals that more reflect behavior change (e.g., “I will tell my partner that I am angry with her when I am angry”). For this program we shall focus on stating goals in behavioral terms.

Goals on the behavioral dimension seem to be a more direct index of personal change in this program than do those on the feeling dimension. It seems to be more meaningful and relevant to focus on behavior change (which may lead to feeling changes) than to focus on feeling change (which may lead to behavior change). This is not to say that feeling changes are not considered to be important, but rather that they are not always the most appropriate point at which to focus.

However, it is often difficult to generate behavior change goals which are not so general as to be useless. They may easily not be specific enough to give a definite criterion against which to evaluate yourself. The following procedure has been found to be helpful in developing individualized behavior change goals. In defining behavior change goals for yourself, keep in mind the following characteristics of a good goal:

- Choose change goals that are important and relevant to improving the relationship between you and your partner.
- Choose change goals that are behavioral (things you do and say).
- Choose change goals that are specific.

Setting up Meaningful Goals. Let us elaborate on each of these points before you begin to set up your own goals. Consider these points as steps you would go through in setting up behavior change goals:
1) Choosing *important* and *relevant* change goals is the most important step in goal setting. Such goals are ones meaningful to you and ones that you are willing to work toward. They are also goals that you feel you have a *realistic* prospect of achieving.

2) It is important that you state your goals in *behavioral terms*.

   a) To get at this you might ask, “How would I act or behave differently if I reached my goal?”

      For example, “What would I be doing differently if I felt more comfortable displaying my feelings toward my partner?” To this question you might say, “I would tell her of my feelings toward her more often.”

   b) Another question that may be helpful in specifying a goal in behavioral terms is to ask: “How could I tell if I had changed in some manner?”

      For example, “How could I or someone else tell if I stopped making decisions about matters relevant to the two of us without considering my partner’s opinions?” You might answer that with, “I could be observed actively seeking out my partner’s opinions.”

3) The behavior change goals you choose should also be *specific*. You may begin with the global goal of “improving communication between you and your partner.”

   A number of questions can be asked to help make this goal more specific. “What kinds of things would I be referring to by improving communication?” “In what situations would I desire to improve communication?” By now you can think of other questions that could be asked of such a goal to make it more specific.

That is enough talk about how to begin to set meaningful behavior change goals. Now, you try it. Use the following worksheet to help you.
**Preliminary Goal-Setting Sheet**

**Step 1:** Go off by yourself and begin thinking of behavior change goals which you feel important and relevant to enhancing and improving the relationship between you and your partner.

You might begin by asking the question, “What things do you desire to have happen to you in relation to your partner as a result of participating in this?” List at least five ideas for goals below.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7.

**Step 2:** Out of this list, choose the two most important goals and list them below in order of their importance to you.

Goal 1:

Goal 2:

**Step 3:** Now let’s see if these two goals can be (or need to be) stated in more behavioral or specific terms. Refer back to our discussion of goal setting when needed.

Goal 1: Answer the following questions about Goal 1 in the space below.

1. What would I be doing with my partner if I were accomplishing my goals?

2. What specific things would I be saying to my partner while I was accomplishing my goal?

3. How would I be feeling inside as I’m doing and saying what my goal entails?

4. In what situation(s) or circumstances would I be accomplishing my goal?
Goal 2: Answer the same questions about Goal 2 in the space below.

1. What would I be doing with my partner if I were accomplishing my goals?

2. What specific things would I be saying to my partner while I was accomplishing my goal?

3. How would I be feeling inside as I’m doing and saying what my goal entails?

4. In what situation(s) or circumstances would I be accomplishing my goal?

**Step 4:** Now ask yourself: Which of your two goals do you think have the greatest possibility of accomplishing as a result of this course? Goal ________________________________.

Why?

**Step 5:** After you have tentatively generated the two most important goals for you, divide up into small groups of three (or four) and work with each other to further clarify your goals if necessary (get in a group which does not include your partner).

Each participant reads his goals to the group.

Then go back through each participant’s goals to see if any of the goals may be more clear by being stated in more behavioral or specific terms. Refer back to our discussion on goal setting when needed.

After you have clarified your goals with the others in the group, state your goals below with any changes you have made.

Goal 1:

Goal 2:
Step 6: Now get together with your partner for another examination of your goals.

1. First, share your two goals with your partner. Your partner should repeat back to you your goals as he or she heard it, until you feel he or she heard it like you intended.

2. Second, your partner should react to your goals as you stated them. Keep your reactions to the feeling level if you can (i.e., “Your planning to do what makes me feel…”).

3. Third, for each goal go back through the questions on the first page and this page and react to each other’s answers.

4. Fourth, your partner should tell you what goals he or she would like to have you accomplish as a result of the course. If your partner’s goal for you is different than yours, you may do one of the two things: (1) add the goal to your list if you agree with your partner, or (2) leave your list as it is. If you add another goal, go back and answer the questions in page 1 for it.

Step 7. Finally, with the whole group together, present the two behavior change goals you desire to work toward. If the group makes any suggestions for clarifying your goals, consider them and decide how you wish to state your final revised goal. List them below.

   Goal 1:

   Goal 2:

Make a second copy of these goals and give it to the leaders. Be sure your name is at the top. Keep the information sheets for yourself, perhaps planning to review them before the end of the group to see what progress you have made.
Pleasing & Displeasing Behaviors: Partner Observation Checklist Instructions

The following is a list of everyday behaviors that you and your partner may see in each other, and which you may find either pleasing or displeasing. The purpose of this checklist is to help you make specific observations of the things your partner does each day. You will fill out the checklist once a day to record the actions of your partner that are pleasing or displeasing to you. The important thing here is that the pleasing and displeasing events are those things your partner does rather than those things that other people do. The data that you will be collecting are a vital part of the program, so it is very important that you carefully and accurately observe and record the frequency of each behavior.

What are pleasing and displeasing partner events? By “pleasing” events we mean events that make life easier for you (e.g., you were picked up on time), which involve things you particularly like to have done for you (e.g., a favorite food or dessert was fixed for you). Conversely, “displeasing” actions are those things which you find annoying, which make your life more difficult, which involves things you particularly dislike having done for you, or which you, or which you think are not appropriate.

How to select behaviors that apply to your partner. The particular actions of your partner that you find pleasing or displeasing are certainly very much an individual matter. To assist you in recording those events, we have provided a set of checklists of numerous examples of typical partner actions. It is unlikely that all of the behaviors on the checklist will pertain to your own partner. Please read through the list of behaviors and indicate (by placing an “X” next to the item number) those behaviors that are appropriate to your relationship. You should mark all the items that occur in your relationship that you find particularly pleasing or displeasing.

Adding items to the list. Within the areas covered by the checklists, there may be events which are particularly relevant to your relationship but which were not included on the checklist. Please feel free to add these to your checklist in the spaces provided and report these items just as you would the others. An item added to your list must be an event which has a definite beginning and ending and it must be countable.

How to record the frequency of each behavior. Beginning in the center of each page of items are seven double columns for the days of the week. The first double column is for the first day (tomorrow), the second double column is for day two (the next day), and so forth to day seven. Be sure to write in the appropriate date and the day of the week at the top of each double column on the first page.

Heading the left half of each double column you will find the letter “F” (which stands for frequency). In this column record the total frequency of each behavior for the appropriate day. The right half of the same double column will be labeled with either a “P” or “D.” In this column, the number of times that the behavior occurred as a please or displease (“P” or “D”) is recorded.
Remember that only you can decide which events are pleasing and displeasing. If an item occurs on a particular day that is neither pleasing nor displeasing, don’t record it. Only record those times that are either pleasing or displeasing to you and indicating which.

We have found that people are more accurate if they set aside a fixed time each day to complete their ratings. We would suggest that you set time each evening to complete this and systematically go through the checklist making the necessary ratings and frequency counts.

*Please return all of the checklists next week!*
Partner Observation Checklist

Name: _________________________  Date: ______________

F = Frequency | P = Pleased | D = Displeased

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<td>Agreed to splurge on something</td>
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<td>Paid bills on time</td>
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<td>Gave me money to spend on me</td>
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<td>Spent more than budget allowed</td>
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<td>Bought something important without consulting me</td>
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<td>Made a mistake in checkbook</td>
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<td>Wouldn’t let me buy something</td>
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<td>Didn’t pay bills on time</td>
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<td>Partner said I looked nice</td>
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<td>Partner complimented me</td>
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<td>Partner was thoughtful of me</td>
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<td>Partner engaged in habit I find irritating (specify)</td>
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Relationship Enhancement Group for couples TI 03  The Clearinghouse
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<td>Bothered me</td>
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<td>Complained</td>
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<td>Partner was affectionate to me</td>
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<td>Partner kissed/held me</td>
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<td>Told me I was loved</td>
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<td>Let me know I was appreciated</td>
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<td>Was responsive sexually</td>
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<td>Let me know he or she enjoyed sex</td>
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<td>Initiated sexual advances</td>
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<td>Rejected my advances</td>
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<td>Was insensitive to me feelings</td>
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<td>Was aloof/distant toward me</td>
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<td>Helped in planning an outing or trip</td>
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<td>Was good with my friends</td>
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<td>Refused to help me with company</td>
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<td>Embarrassed me with friends</td>
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<td>Let me at home while he or she went out</td>
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<td>Did something nice with the kids</td>
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<td>Helped me with the kids</td>
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<td>Was unkind to the kids</td>
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<td>Criticized me about the kids</td>
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<td>Handled a family crisis without bothering me</td>
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<td>Made me lunch</td>
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<td>Ran an errand with me/for me</td>
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<td>Made something special for me</td>
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<td>Made an unappetizing meal</td>
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<td>Bothered me while I was working</td>
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<td>Helped me around the house</td>
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Session 2: Communication Skills

Handouts:
- Communication in a Loving Relationship
- Communication Guidelines to Try

A. Session Review

Collect the “Pleasing and Displeasing Behaviors” homework as couples come in, insuring that all have names. Do not discuss this homework yet. If there are any questions or comments, indicate that they will be dealt with later in the group.

Spend a very few minutes on questions, comments and feelings about the last session. Don’t spend too much time here, for there is much to cover.

B. Speaker & Listener Roles: Introduction & Role Play

1. Teach the “listener” and “speaker” roles in communication and the good feedback model using the information in the handout, “Communication in a Loving Relationship.” You will give this handout to the couples.

2. Role-play an interaction with your co-trainer—expressing positive feedback.

3. Have the couples role-play. Ask the couples to get into groups of two couples (if odd number, join in one yourselves.) Have one couple volunteer to take on speaker-listener roles, while the other observes in order to give feedback later.

One member of the couple takes on the speaker role and tries to communicate to his or her partner one or more of the behaviors that was found to be particularly pleasurable or important, based on what was found out by doing the homework. The listener practices the empathetic listening role and after the speaker acknowledges that he or she was heard, provides the speaker with his or her feelings.

After about 5 minutes have the couple stop this interaction and have the observing couple provide feedback as to what they observed.

4. Have couples practice all the roles.
   - Switch couples, give the same task, with the first couple now observing.
   - Switch back to couple #1, have them switch roles, same task.
   - Switch to couple #2, have them switch roles, same task.

B. Large-group sharing.
Return to the large group and share what went on in the small groups, feelings of comfort–discomfort, etc.
Inform participants that this method of communication will feel awkward at first and certainly isn’t recommended for all communication. However, it is a good skill to use, after it has been practiced enough to become more natural, when it is important that communication occur. Note also that individuals may find one role easier than another, and/or will be differing in ability to use this model.

C. Communication Practice Homework
Hand out the “Communication Guidelines to Try.” Request couples to again contract with each other for a time in the next few days to get together and practice these communication techniques, but not on an issue of great concern in the relationship.

Try practicing on one of the following:
- “Something I wish we’d do more often is . . . .”
- “I really like it when you . . . .”
- “Something I wish you would do more often is . . . .”

Warn couples against judging/”coaching” in a negative sense, monitoring their partner’s communication, and punishing them for not using the model. Rewarding partners for using the model is great on the other hand.
Communication in a Loving Relationship

During the course of this group we will keep referring to the model of communication, which will: (1) make it more likely that what you think or feel will be understood; and (2) enable you to learn what effect those thoughts or emotions have on your partner. This technique is not presented as the *answer* to good relationships, nor even as the best way to communicate. Rather, it is presented as one way that has been found to work exceedingly well.

Throughout the group experience there will be occasions when the leaders will ask you to “give feedback” to one another concerning feelings you are having or information that you have about each other. This communication of feedback process is seen as a skill, which if learned, will enrich and deepen your relationship. But, as is the case with the learning of any new behavior, practice is required in order to gain a sense of mastery of the skill. Finally, again as in the learning of any skill, following the “rules” or “guidelines” may seem mechanical or unnatural at first, but is necessary in order to learn.

**Speaker & Listener Roles**

*Speaker and Listener Roles*. We will talk as if there are two distinct and separate roles in the communication process—that of “speaker” and “listener.” Each of you will take on only one of these roles at any given point in time.

The person who is the *speaker* has as the primary task, the communication of what they feel and think, as clearly and as honestly as is possible. This implies that the speaker will have taken the time to become *aware* of himself or herself, in order to determine exactly (or as clearly as is possible at the time) what he or she wants to convey to the other, of that self-awareness. For example, after a hard day, the speaker may wish to communicate what has happened and how he or she feels in response to what happened. Thus, taking the time to become aware of her/his needs will make it clear that a previously planned discussion of a coming vacation is not what should be initiated; otherwise, much of this frustration may be expressed in relation to the vacation plans. Essentially, this process involves searching one’s awareness to find the topic or information that is needed to communicate and then trying to convey this as clearly and honestly as possible to the listener.

The other “responsibilities” of the speaker’s roles are to:

a) present only one idea or feeling at a time  
b) present it as fully as is necessary, but briefly and concisely  
c) allow the listener a chance, after each communication, to take on the speaker role to communicate back information or feelings  
d) present the feeling or thought in a way that is most likely to be heard (refer to guidelines to be presented later).

The *listener role* has its primary responsibility that of understanding what has been said and conveying that understanding back to the speaker. This understanding is of both what the speaker *said* (content) and its *meaning* (what it must feel like). This listening then, is far from a passive process! It involves an active desire to understand what is being said, to determine its meaning or
importance for the speaker, and to convey back this feeling in such a way that the speaker feels heard and understood.

There are several human reactions that consistently get in the way of being a good listener:
- thinking about your response to what’s being said, and hence not really listening
- listening to a few words and then assuming that you know what’s being said
- defending or arguing against what’s being said
- just responding to the content (what happened) and ignoring the feeling
- getting involved in your own feelings—perhaps in reaction to what’s being said, and no longer listening

It is important to try not to be distracted in any of these ways when you are in the listening role. At the same time, recognize that we all get distracted sometimes!

When one of these “non-listening” responses does occur, the best approach is to convey that to the speaker (e.g., “I’m trying to listen, but I keep coming up with the solution instead of listening to your problem. I guess I want to help you more than listen.”)

Often such statements will clear the air for further listening, but if nothing else, it will let the speaker know what is going on with you. And, more importantly, that you are trying to hear!

**Feedback Model**

```
Step 1

“What I hear you saying is…”
message (verbal + non-verbal)

(speaker) You ---------------------------------------------- (listener) Me

“That makes me feel…”
“Inside I feel…”
“And I feel…”
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The feedback model represented above is a procedure for providing another person with information about how we are affected by him or her. When it is done well, it provides special information about someone else’s behavior and whether it is having the effect he or she intends.
Step 1: The first step in the feedback model is to insure the accuracy of communication. It is an attempt to let the speaker know how you are interpreting what is said. For example:

Mary: I blew it again today!
John: You sound upset. You are saying that your meeting with Larry didn’t come off well?
Mary: Yeah, but I’m more angry than upset. He went ahead with the program, even after my objections!

Note that in John’s first statement he both acknowledged what he thought Mary was feeling and checked our if he was understanding her message. This enabled Mary to indicate that she was feeling angry and elicited another statement that provided even more information.

Step 2: The second step in this model is to convey any feelings you have in response to what was said. This gives the speaker information as to how you are responding or how it affected you.

John: Thanks for remembering!
Mary: Are you saying that you appreciate my sending the package for you?
John: Yes, I’d forgotten it and it did need to be in the mail today.
Mary: Thanks for thinking of telling me. I enjoy doing things for you when I feel that you appreciate them.

This, very simply then, is the basic model of communication we will be stressing during the course of the group. You will be getting many opportunities to practice it, both in the group and hopefully at home. We urge you to keep it handy, so that you can consult it during the coming weeks as you try to put some of these ideas into practice in your relationship.
Communication Guidelines to Try

The following are some “guidelines” for communicating you might think about and try.

1) **Try to be descriptive, not evaluative or judgmental.** Let the person know what he is doing and how you feel about it. For example, “When you keep interrupting me, I get very angry and usually stop listening to you.” This approach leaves the other person free to use or not use the feedback. Whereas, saying that the person is “insensitive” is evaluative and is likely to produce a defensive reaction.

2) **Be specific, not vague and general.** To tell someone that he or she is not “interesting” will not really tell what behavior you are responding to. Try, especially with unfavorable things to (a) be specific about what behaviors you are responding to; (b) what you don’t like about them; and (c) how you feel in response to those behaviors.

3) **Give feedback about things a person can do something about.** To be told that you are “obnoxious” as if not as helpful as to be given specific behaviors which lead you to that impression. This also allows the person to identify behaviors in him- or herself that he or she may want to change.

4) **Feedback is most readily accepted when it is asked for.** Being ready to hear enhances the receiver’s ability to hear and learn from the communication, since it comes in response to a need within him or her.

5) **Feedback is most effective at the earliest time after the behavior occurs.**

6) **Check out feedback to insure clear communication.** Frequently it may be necessary to ask the receiver to try and rephrase what he or she heard, to see if it is what the sender intended.

7) **To give feedback is very different from demanding that someone change.** How the feedback is used is up to the receiver. It need not be adopted. However, it does provide information as to how the behavior is experienced by you, and that effect may not be desired and hence serve to motivate change.
Session 3: Individuality in the Love Relationship

Materials: Pencils and paper for each participant

Handouts:
- Communication in a Loving Relationship (hand this out again)
- Guidelines for Communication (hand this out again)
- Separateness Questions
- Memorandum Regarding Next Session

A. What Leads You to Feel Best About Your Partner? (for Women)

1. What are the women feeling?

Have the groups form two circles, the women in the center and the men sitting in a circle around their partners.

Then give the following instructions: “I would like for all of the women to share with each other your answers to this question: ‘What leads you to feel best about your partner as a unique individual?’ All the men are to just listen until later.”

Initially present this topic without any illustrations. Let the participants themselves come up with answers, which provide ongoing illustrations. If they do not do so, then restructure by giving an illustration.

In order to encourage spontaneity, use no particular order such as going in sequence around the circle. Let the woman answer spontaneously; only encourage the hesitant if necessary.

Encourage them to make additional comments if what the others have said caused them to think of some other aspect of their partner that they are very satisfied with, but do not pressure the group for more.

2. What are the men feeling?

After all the women have responded, ask the men: “What did you feel listening to what your partner said and to what other women in the group said?”

The women are now to listen. Again, let the order of response be spontaneous, although sometimes you may need to encourage the hesitant.

It is important to help the men focus about feelings only. Frequently, they will move away from describing the feeling and start discussing why they felt that way. If the men become preoccupied with explaining why they felt that way, then restructure with a comment, something like this: “Just try to describe what you were feeling while listening to what the women said.”
If negative feelings or regrets seem apparent, encourage the men to report these if they felt them. Note that it is important from the beginning that they communicate exactly what they were feeling, negative as well as positive feelings.

B. What Leads You to Feel Best? (for Men)

1. What are the men feeling?

Now reverse the roles, and the seating, with the men being in the center of the circle.

Instructions are the same as above: “What leads you to feel the best about your partner as a unique individual?”

The men are to discuss this amongst themselves with the same instructions and cues as above. The women are to listen.

2. What are the women feeling?

When the men have finished, instruct the women: “What did you feel while you were listening to your partner and to the responses of the other men?” Same cues as leader aides are used as above. The men are to listen.

C. What Satisfies You Least (for Women)?

1. What satisfies you least (for women)?

Again have the men and women change places, the women now being in the center of the circle. This time ask the women to discuss this question: “What satisfies you least about your partner as a unique individual?”

2. What are the men feeling?

The men respond as above: “What did you feel as you were listening to your partner and to what the other women were saying?”

D. What Satisfies You Least (for Men)?

1. What satisfies you least (for men)?

Again change places, with the men now in the center circle. They are to respond amongst themselves to this question: “What satisfies you least about your partner as a unique individual?”

2. The women are to respond again to the question: “What did you feel while you were listening to your partner and to the responses of the other men?”
E. Sharing Reactions

Each couple now is to find a place by themselves and share their reactions with each other about the experience so far. In this sharing exercise, each couple is instructed to use the good feedback model in rules that they learned in the previous week.

To help them, hand out individual copies of the diagram and the criteria for their information: “Communication in a Loving Relationship” and “Guidelines for Communication.”

**Break Time:**

*About after one hour, take a 5–10 minute break before proceeding with the last exercise.*

F. Separateness Handout

1. Give each participant paper and pencil and ask them to spend about 15–20 minutes writing short answers to the questions in the “Separateness Questions” Handout.

2. For the remainder of the group, discuss as a group (all copies) the “Separateness Questions” handout.
   - discuss each question separately
   - encourage spontaneous discussion
   - don’t hesitate to ask participants how they answered or feel about the questions

G: Memorandum & Homework

Hand out the “Memorandum” explaining what next session’s workshop will involve.
Separateness Questions Handout

Introduction: You are now going to think about separateness in your love relationship. Separateness is defined as: (1) being apart from your partner in solitude, whether it be to sleep, to read a book, or to go for a walk; (2) being involved with a friend or friends apart from your partner’s relationship, for example, going out with the boys, going out with the girls, going hunting with a friend, going shopping with a girlfriend, etc.

The questions:
1. Do you think there is a need for separateness in a love relationship? Why?
2. What specific things do you do to be apart from your partner? How do you feel when you are doing these things?
3. What does your partner do to be apart from you? How do you feel when he or she does these things?
4. How do you initiate separateness in your relationship? In other words, how do you make it clear to your partner that you would like to be by yourself when you need to?
5. How do you encourage separateness in your partner? In other words, what feelings or behavior do you pick from your partner that indicate he or she would like to be apart from you?
6. What things in your relationship work against your being apart when either of you needs to be separate for a while?

Good Feedback Model

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{What I hear you saying is…} & \quad \text{message (verbal and non-verbal)} & \quad \text{me} \\
\text{you} & \quad \text{Inside it makes me feel…} & \quad \text{When you say that, I feel…}
\end{align*}
\]

Note: The receiver of feedback is in charge of his own life. He can accept or reject the feedback, he can change or not change, whether or not he accepts the validity of the feedback.

Criteria for Good Feedback
a. Descriptive of my feelings rather than evaluative of the other person
b. Specific rather than general
c. About behavior that can be changed, whenever possible
Memorandum

To: Participants of the Relationship Enhancement Groups

Re: Non-verbal workshop: Becoming Aware of Yourself & Your Partner (Session 4)

Next week the non-verbal workshop will take a half-hour longer than the other sessions. So plan to start on time and continue for 2 1/2 hours.

Dress casually! The women should wear slacks and no hose. You and your partners will be involved in several exercises in which you’ll be moving around a lot and will need to be comfortable.

The workshop will include:
  • Tension relaxation techniques
  • Self-awareness exercises
  • Other awareness exercises
  • Rudiments of massage training

You and your partner will be introduced to a relaxed method of body massage. You will learn by massaging your partner’s hands, head, and feet. Instruction for massaging the rest of the body at home will be provided.

Important: For the introduction to massage each couple will need to bring two things—massage oil and one bed sheet. The sheet is to protect the carpet from oil stains.

Make your massage oil as follows: 2/3 vegetable cooking oil, 1/2 baby oil, and a half bottle of Oil of Clove. Oil of Clove comes in a tiny bottle and may be bought at any drug store. Mix your massage oil in a plastic container that has a squeeze spout (an inexpensive hair tint bottle works very well; a clean mustard squeeze bottle will also work).

Also, you may want to go to one of the local stores which sells massage oil and pick out one to use. Either way, be sure and bring something!
Session 4: Non-Verbal Workshop  
(Becoming Aware of Yourself and Your Partner)

Materials: Extra bed sheets and massage oil (for those who forget)

Handouts:
- Jacobsen’s Relaxation Techniques
- Excerpt from Sense Relaxation: Below Your Mind
- Excerpt from Keep in Touch with Massage
- Procedure for Full-Body Massage

A. Introduction

1) Explain the purpose of non-verbal workshops:
- To teach you some ways to pay more attention to your own senses; to encourage you to be more alive in, within yourself.
- To make you aware of non-verbal communications in your love relationship and relationships with other people.
- In particular, to teach you how a greater awareness of this kind of communication can expand your relationship and create a more satisfying intimacy.

2) Stress again the fact that the interaction rules given during the first session are still in effect, namely:
- be honest with yourself and the group, and
- don’t do anything you don’t want to do

Note: In this workshop the rules mean that a person should not participate in the exercise if he or she feels too uncomfortable to do so; simply suggest that he or she sit out and watch the exercise until he or she feels more like participating.

B. Relaxation Exercise

For this part of the workshop and the introduction above, plan approximately 30 minutes.
- Have all the participants lie on the floor on their backs and relax them—according to the Jacobson Relaxation instructions (see attached instructions).
- Go slowly and communicate relaxation in your voice; try to maintain a slow, constant pace. That is important for all the exercises in this workshop. It is so important that it is probably a good idea for you to practice relaxation methods and the leading of some of the awareness exercises before you lead the actual workshop.
- Applications of the relaxation method: Before moving to the self-awareness exercises you might wish to add a few comments on how people can use this method of relaxation, e.g., to go to sleep, to decrease tenseness before exams, to decrease tenseness before going to the doctor or dentist, or to relax at any time.
C. Self-Awareness Exercises: 15 or 20 minutes

- While the participants are still lying on the floor and relaxed from the Jacobson method, ask participants to practice focusing awareness on different parts of their bodies.
- You might say: “Focus now on your breathing, neither help it or hinder it, just allow it and pay attention to it; focus on your skin, feel the temperature of the room; move from head to foot trying to be aware of the floor as it touches your body; feel your clothing as it touches your skin (on your shoulders, legs, etc.).”
- While the participants are still in the relaxed state, read the attached excerpt from Gunther’s book *Sense Relaxation: Below Your Mind*.

D. Take a Talking Break

About now is a good time to spend a few minutes letting people talk about what has happened to them so far.

*Don’t “therapize” the talking break*—merely encourage sharing of feelings and experiences.

E. Other Awareness Exercises

- Begin with all the participants moving among each other. Instructions: shake hands as you pass, shake an arm, a shoulder, a leg, slow eye contact, hand shake, shake with both hands, make a face, a noise, etc., but don’t talk with one another!
- Stop in front of your partner, sit down, close your eyes, and get acquainted with each other’s hands. After a few seconds: have a conversation with each other through hands; one person sends a message, the other responds, and so on. Then let yourself have a playful conversation… solemn conversation… a fight… make up now… and say goodbye.
- Decide non-verbally who will touch first and who will be touched. Then close your eyes and get acquainted with your partner’s face and head. Leader should give paced, steady cues like, “be sure to touch the hair… notice what the nose is shaped like… don’t forget about the ears, etc.” Now open your eyes.
- Spend a few minutes thinking about the past two experiences. Try to become aware of your own feelings about what just happened, both the good feelings and any less positive ones you may have felt.
- Spend a few minutes talking with your partner about what you personally were aware of during these experiences. Use the communication model that we have been stressing throughout this group.

F. Break & Optional Discussion

It has been a good idea to allow the couples to take a 15-minute break at this point to allow them the time to talk with one another about what they experienced.

When the group gets back together after the break you may, if you want or if you feel it would be good in your particular group, encourage a brief discussion concerning the feelings that were generated up to this point. If you don’t think that would be best in your group, or don’t wish to do this, move on to the introduction to massage exercises.
G. An Introduction to Massage

1. Demonstrate the basic movements for hand, head and foot massage.

2. Then have the participants work in either of two ways.
   - One way is to divide the group into two couples each, having the spouse massage the head, and the members of the other couple each massage the hand or feet if you like.
   - The other way is for each couple to work by itself, taking turns being massaged and being the masseur (masseuse).

H. Ending Your Group:

You might wish to end your group with some non-verbal show of group feeling. For instance, you might have everyone stand in a circle with arms around each other; you may feel or evolve some other way of ending your group; or you may not wish to use this kind of conclusion at all.

Good luck!!
Jacobsen’s Relaxation Techniques

Relaxation of Arms (Time: 4-5 min.)

Settle back as comfortably as you can. Let yourself relax to the best of your ability…Now, as you relax like that, clench your right fist, just clench your fist tighter and tighter, and study the tension as you do so. Keep it clench and feel the tension in your right fist, hand, forearm…and now relax. Let the fingers of your right hand become loose, and observe the contrast in your feelings…Now, let yourself go and try to become more relaxed all over… Once more, clench your right fist really tight…hold it, and notice the tension again… Now let go, relax; your fingers straighten out, and you notice the difference one more… Now repeat that with your left fist. Clench your left fist while the rest of your body relaxes; clench that fist tighter and feel the tension…and now relax. Again enjoy the contrast… Repeat that one more, clench the left fist, tight and tense… Now do the opposite of tension—relax and feel the difference. Continue relaxing like that for a while… Clench both fists tighter and tighter, both fists tense, forearms tense, study the sensations… and relax; straighten out your fingers and feel that relaxation. Continue relaxing your hands and forearms more and more… Now bend your elbows and tense your biceps, tense them harder and study the tension feelings… all right, straighten out your arms, let them relax and feel that difference again. Let the relaxation develop…Once more, tense your biceps; hold the tension and observe it carefully… Straighten the arms and relax; relax to the best of your ability… Each time, pay close attention to your feelings when you tense up and when you relax. Now straighten your arms, straighten them so that you can feel most tension in the triceps muscles along the back of your arms; stretch your arms and feel that tension. And now relax. Get your arms back into a comfortable position. Let the relaxation proceed on its own. The arms should feel comfortably heavy as you allow them to relax… Straighten the arms once more so that you feel in the tension in the triceps muscles; straighten them. Feel that tension… and relax. Now let’s concentrate on pure relaxation in the arms without any tension. Get your arms comfortable and let them relax further and further. Continue relaxing your arms even further. Even when your arms seem fully relaxed, try to go that extra bit further; try to achieve deeper and deeper levels of relaxation.

Relaxation of Facial Area with Neck, Shoulder, and Upper Back (Time: 4-5 min.)

Let all your muscles go loose and heavy. Just settle back quietly and comfortably. Wrinkle your forehead now; wrinkle it tighter… And now stop wrinkling your forehead, relax and smooth it out. Picture the entire forehead and scalp becoming smoother as the relaxation increases… Now frown and crease your brows and study the tension… Let go of the tension again. Smooth out the forehead once more… Now, close your eyes tighter and tighter… feel the tension… and relax your eyes. Keep your eyes closed, gently, comfortably, and notice the relaxation. Now clench your jaws, bite your teeth together; study the tension throughout the jaws. Relax your jaws now. Let your lips part slightly… Appreciate the relaxation…Now press your tongue hard against the roof of your mouth. Look for the tension… All right, let your tongue return to a comfortable and relaxed position… Now purse your lips, press your lips together tighter and tighter…Relax the lips. Note the contrast between tension and relaxation. Feel the relaxation all over your face, all over your forehead and scalp, eyes, jaws, lips, tongue and throat. The relaxation progresses further and further… Now attend to your neck muscles. Press your head back as far as it can go.
and feel the tension in the neck; roll it to the right and feel the tension shift; now roll it to the left. Straighten your head and bring it forward, press your chin against your chest. Let your head return to a comfortable position, and study the relaxation. Let the relaxation develop… Shrug your shoulders, right up. Hold the tension… Drop your shoulders and feel the relaxation. Neck and shoulders relaxed… Shrugs your shoulders up and forward and back. Feel the tension in your shoulders and in your upper back… Drop your shoulders once more and relax. Let the relaxation spread deep into the shoulders, right into your back muscles. Relax your neck and throat, and your jaws and other facial areas as the pure relaxation takes over and grows deeper… deeper… even deeper.

*Relaxation of Chest, Stomach and Lower Back (Time: 4-5 min)*

Relax your entire body to the best of your ability. Feel that comfortable heaviness that accompanies relaxation. Breathe easily and freely in and out. Notice how the relaxation increases as you exhale… as you breathe out just feel that relaxation… Now breathe right in and fill your lungs; inhale deeply and hold your breath. Study the tension… Now exhale, let the walls of your chest grow loose and push the air out automatically. Continue relaxing and breathe freely and gently. Feel the relaxation and enjoy it… With the rest of your body as relaxed as possible, fill your lungs again. Breathe in deeply and hold it again… That’s fine, breathe out and appreciate the relief. Just breathe normally. Continue relaxing your chest and let the relaxing spread to your back, shoulders, neck, and arms. Merely let go… and enjoy the relaxation. Now let’s pay attention to your abdominal muscles, your stomach area. Tighten your stomach muscles, make your abdomen hard. Notice the tension… And relax. Let the muscles loosen and notice the contrast… One more, press and tighten your stomach muscles. Hold the tension and study it. And relax. Notice the general well-being that comes with relaxing your stomach. Now draw your stomach in, pull the muscles right in and feel the tension this way… Now relax again. Let your stomach out. Continue breathing normally and easily and feel the gentle massaging action all over your chest and stomach… Now pull your stomach in again and hold the tension… Now push out and tense like that; hold the tension… once more pull in and feel the tension… Now relax your stomach fully. Let the tension dissolve as the relaxation grows deeper. Each time you breathe out, notice the rhythmic relaxation both in your lungs and in your stomach. Notice thereby how your chest and your stomach relax more and more… Try and let go of all contractions anywhere in your body… Now direct your attention to your lower back. Arch up your back, make your lower back quite hollow, and feel the tension along your spine… and settle down comfortably again relaxing the lower back… Just arch your back up and feel the tensions as you do so. Try to keep the rest of your body relaxed as possible. Try to localize the tension throughout the lower back area… Relax once more, relaxing further and further. Relax your lower back, relax your upper back, spread the relaxation to your stomach, chest, shoulders, arms and facial area. These parts relaxing further and further and even deeper.

*Relaxation of Hips, Thighs, and Calves Followed by Complete Body Relaxation*

Let go of all tensions and relax… Now flex your buttocks and thighs. Flex your thighs by pressing down your heels as hard as you can… Relax and note the difference… Straighten your knees and flex your thigh muscles again. Hold the tension… Relax your hips and thighs. Allow the relaxation to proceed on its own… Press your feet and toes downwards, away from your face,
so that your calf muscles become tense. Study that tension… Relax your feet and calves… This
time, bend your feet towards your face so that you feel tension along your shins. Bring your toes
right up… Relax again. Keep relaxing for a while… Now let yourself relax further all over.
Relax your feet, ankles, calves, and shins, knees, thighs, buttocks and hips. Feel the heaviness of
your lower body as you relax still further… Now spread the relaxation to your lower body as you
relax still further… Now spread the relaxation to your stomach, waist, lower back. Let go more
and more. Feel that relaxation all over. Let it proceed to your upper back, chest, shoulders and
arms and right to the tips of your fingers. Keep relaxing more and more deeply. Make sure that
no tension has crept into your throat; relax your neck and your jaws and all your facila muscles.
Keep relaxing your whole body like that for a while. Let yourself relax.

Now you can become twice as relaxed as you are merely by taking a really deep breath and
slowly exhaling. With your eyes closed so that you become less aware of objects and movements
around you and thus prevent any surface tensions from developing, breathe in deeply and feel
yourself becoming heavier. Take in a long, deep breath and let it out very slowly… Feel how
heavy and relaxed you have come.

In a state of perfect relaxation you should feel unwilling to move a single muscle in your body.
Think about the effort that would be required to raise your right arm. As you think about raising
your right arm, see if you can notice any tensions that might have crept into your shoulder and
your arm… Now you decide not to lift the arm but to continue relaxing. Observe the relief and
the disappearance of the tension…

Just carry on relaxing like that. When you wish to get up, count backwards from four to one. You
should then feel fine and refreshed, wide awake, and calm.
From “Keep in Touch with Massage”  
By Bernard Gunter

To facilitate the practice of massage, here are some suggestions to make your efforts more successful:

(1) Whenever possible, massage toward the heart, upward on the arms and legs, downward from the neck and shoulders;
(2) As you work, try not to break contact with the person’s body; keep at least one hand on the individual. Leaving with both hands can cause a subtle disturbance in your partner;
(3) A hot shower or bath before a rub adds extra pleasure and relaxation;
(4) Because rubbing the dry human skin can cause friction, it is advisable to use some form of oil. This is especially true of males who have a great deal of hair on their bodies;
(5) A gentle, firm touch is best, but different areas of the body require modifications in the amount of pressure to use—ask your partner. After a while you will get the feel of it;
(6) A quiet room at a comfortable body temperature is best. Soft music or the sounds of nature are desirable. If possible, a massage out-of-doors in the sun is ideal;
(7) Make sure the person who has been massaged takes some time to digest the effects before getting up;
(8) It is rewarding to keep talking to a minimum during the treatment or refrain from any kind of verbal communication altogether;
(9) The person being massaged should try to keep his or her mind on what is happening, feeling the experience and allowing whatever wants to develop in his or her body, without trying to hinder or help.

It is not always necessary or desirable to massage the whole organism. Often concentration on one area will provide great release; this is especially true of the hands, feet, and back of the neck. One could spend an hour on the feet alone, and since the organism is interconnected, the whole body would benefit. There is a special type of massage known as zone therapy which treats all diseases through the manipulation of designated areas in the foot. Quite remarkable results are reported.

The back of the neck is, for most people, area of the body with the greatest tension. Here, at the bridge between the head and the body, the stress of cutting off feelings and desires is centered. It is important to release this tension, and massage is a direct way of accomplishing this.

To become familiar with the body of another, to touch and caress, to relax and stimulate from head to toe can break down many walls and bring people closer together. It can and should be a very positive experience within the relationship.

In jest, I often talk about my plan for world peace in which each person in the world would massage and be massaged by a new person every day. This means that at least two hours a day would be spent in meeting and giving and receiving warmth, comfort and well-being to and from another human being. There is little doubt that such a touching experience would have a positive effect on how one functions on the other 22 hours of the day.

It would be worth a try.
Procedure for Full Body Massage

OIL:
- 2/3 vegetable oil
- 1/3 baby oil
- a few drops of oil of clove

PREPARATION:
1. Rinse hands in rubbing alcohol
2. Energize hands—fist and thrust
3. Oil shoulders and back of neck.

Recipient is face up.

NECK: (lying on back)
1. Circles from outer shoulder to hairline
2. Turn head: stroke down front of side of neck

FACE: (lying on back)
1. Thumbs-out from forehead at hairline, down face and chin
2. Gentle kneading of cheeks and under chin
3. Rubbing ears, feel with index finger the various creases of the ear, and finish by face by gently putting your index fingers in left and right ears, with the rest of your hand resting lightly on the head; hold that position a few seconds, then move away as slowly as you can

HANDS:
1. Corkscrew your fingers
2. Using thumbs-up massage
   a) back of hand; knuckles to wrist
   b) back of wrist; wrist to forearm
   c) palm of hand; base to heel
   d) wrist to forearm
3. Palm twist; thumb interlock, suction twist

ARMS:
1. Stroking up arm, around shoulder, and slide down sides of arm
2. Thumbs out arm, around shoulder, and slide down sides of arm
3. Kneading up inside, middle, outside of arm, and side down side of arm

FEET:
1. Corkscrew toes
2. Thumbs-out top of foot (base of toes to ankle)
3. Thumbs-up ankle to just above ankle
4. Circle over heel with palm of hand

LEGS AND THIGHS:
1. Stroke up lower leg and thigh and slide down side of leg
2. Thumbs-up thigh from knee and slide down sides to knee
3. Kneading up thigh from knee and slide down side of knee

Oil anterior trunk—stomach and chest
CHEST AND ABDOMEN:
1. *Stroke* up abdomen and chest, around shoulder and slide down sides
2. *Crossing* over abdomen and chest and slide down sides (up to chest only for women)
3. *Cupping* circles and *vibration* of small intestine
4. *Walking* and vibration over colon
5. With hands over back, *stroke* from lumbar areas around both flanks to mid-abdomen and down to pubis

Recipient turns face down (prone)

Oil back of lower extremity and buttock

BACK OF LOWER EXTREMITY AND BUTTOCK:
1. *Stroke* up calf, thigh, and over buttock; slide down sides of legs
2. *Thumbs-out* up calf and thigh; slide down sides
3. *Kneading* up calf and thigh, inside, middle and outside; slide down sides
4. *Wringing* up calf and thigh; slide down sides

Oil back

BACK:
1. *Stroking* up back, over shoulder and down sides
2. *Crossing* up back and down sides
3. *Circles* with thumbs, neck to shoulder
4. *Thumbs-up* with thumbs, neck to shoulders
5. *Circles* with fingers, shoulders to neck

From head of table:
6. *Hands out*, down back with palms
7. *Stroking* down back, over buttocks and up sides
8. *Circles* with one hand over entire back

Recipient turn face up (supine)

NECK:
1. *Lift* head to 3/4 neck flexion, then return
2. *Lift* head to 1/2 neck flexion, and *turn* to each side twice
3. *Lift* head to 1/2 neck flexion, *support* head with left hand and stroke up right side of back of neck with fingers of right hand. (Change hands for left side, support head with right hands, and stroke up left side of back of neck with fingers of left hand).

Allow silent time for absorption without any interruption following session.
Sense
from *Sense Relaxation: Below Your Mind*, Bernard Gunther, pp. 20-22.

Children by nature are sensitive, involved in sense play and exploration: in-a-sense. Social and formal education stress cognitive and motor functions of the organism without regard for sensory development. We teach them non-sense. This lack of sensitivity creates desensitization: an imbalance in being; a loss of feeling; senseless: inhibition-alienation-depression-anxiety-deadness.

Experiments: a sensory deprivation, a total cutting off of sense contact, causes hallucinations, disassociation and total disorientation.

We are organisms composed of organs.

The eyes-ears-nose-mouth-skin: the five sense organs. Babies are biologically organized, whole; seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touch-feeling directly without preference. We condition them to specialize: eye dominance. I dominate my organism: seeing is believing, see for yourself, great men are seers and visionaries: when we leave someone, we say “see you later,” never touch, or taste or smell you later.

See what I mean? The problem with eye specialization is that it tends to separate (especially when accompanied by excessive thought and chronic tension).

Seeing can divide space, keep things at a distance: I (separate from the world) see differences. What would happen to the racial question if we were all blind?

In our ignorance of the other senses, we become imbalanced, tense, insensitive. Listening to content rather than tone, rhythm, or pitch, we lose contact with the subtle messages of nature(all around) un/sound. Eating canned-frozen-artificially flavored food: is that why we have developed such bad taste?
Just look at most of our art, architecture, movies. Smell has become a bad word and whole industries are devoted expressly to its elimination. But the greatest avoidance concerns the largest organ of the body, the skin.

Young monkeys deprived of touch and closeness suffer from a lack of relatedness: even their physical growth is stunted.

A lack of physical contact in children; leads to heightened irritability depression and in extreme cases, autism; the loss of the will to live.

At a certain point, we stop touching children; we teach them to keep their hands to themselves, to not even explore themselves. They—we learn-teach to stay away from one another; to keep our distance; conditioning at arm’s length; shake hands quickly and avoid real contact. Sex is the only chance we really have to touch each other and it is often confined to so-called erogenous zones. Is it any wonder that we are tense, anxious, alienated; out of touch with our total body. that we are dis/integrated, dis/organized? That we need to rebalance, to re/integrate, to re/organize?

Sensory Awakening is a method which can help bring you back to your senses; to quiet excessive thought, to release chronic tension, to enhance direct sensory-reality in the here and now.

This process can show you how to allow greater sensitivity, feeling and awareness: aid you in letting yourself be more—your entire organism—open to the potentialities and possibilities with out/in you.
Session 5: Intimacy (Sexual and Non-sexual)

A. Discussion & Review
You may want to spend a few minutes talking about reactions and carry-over feelings about the non-verbal workshop, and to any subsequent “homework” experiences couples may have had.

B. Sharing with your partner
In this part of the session, each couple will find a quiet place to spend about 45 minutes to an hour together. Be sure to go over Instructions & Procedures (below) before sending each couple off to be by themselves.

Instructions & Procedures

1. **Where are you in the relationship?** For a few minutes, discuss with your partner this question: “Where are we in our relationship this very instance?” Essentially, you are to establish your psychological distance at this very moment. If you are close together and feeling positive about each other and the relationship, share this feeling and be clear about where you stand with each other. If *one or both you are mad at each other*, or have “a bone to pick” about something that has happened recently, now is the time to deal with it.

   Deal with it in the following way. Partner 1 says: “I have a bone to pick with you. I’m hurt, upset, etc. about…” Partner 2 responds by saying, “What I hear you saying to me is…and this is how it affects me or how I feel about what you are saying.”

   And if Partner 2 has a bone to pick, he or she also makes that clear in the same procedure, saying “I have a bone to pick with you also. I’m feeling…” Partner 1 responds by saying, “What I hear you saying is this…and it affects me like…”

   OK. *If both of you were angry and have dealt with your anger in this way up to this point, you have begun a constructive fight. Now make an appointment one or two days from now to discuss this issue further and cease your discussion of it right now.* In other words, let what you have said to each other incubate for one or two days and then share your feelings about it at that time.

   (NOTE: After 10 minutes give them the next exercise. Continue breaking in at 10-minute intervals to present the next exercise.)

2. **Intimate Experience.** Now that you have established where you are with your partner at this very instant, take a couple of minutes to think silently and separately about this question. “What was the most intimate experience for you that you can remember in your relationship with your partner?” After thinking about this, share this experience with him or her and tell him or her why it was meaningful for you. Remember the Good Feedback rules and try to listen and react with feelings and specific non-evaluative messages.
3. **Non-Sexual Intimate Experience.** Now think about this question. *If the first intimate experience you recalled was a sexual one, try to remember a non-sexual experience of intimacy with your partner that was especially meaningful to you. After thinking about it for a couple of minutes then share this your partner again telling him or her what was the meaningful about this experience to you; or, if the first intimate experience you recalled was a non-sexual one, then think of a sexual moment of intimacy that was especially meaningful to you and share that.*

4. **Moving Away Experience.** Think silently for a couple of minutes about this question. “*What things do you (my partner) do that make me want to move away from you, that makes me not want to move close to you?*” Then communicate your answer to your partner, remember the Feedback rules. If either the message or response is angry in affect, again stop at the point of having heard each other and having given back feedback; make an appointment in the next couple of days to discuss the issues further. This exercise, now, *is only* to get the messages clear and hear the immediate feedback; resolution may come later.

5. **Moving Closer.** Think about your answer to this question for a couple of minutes. And answer for your spouse. “*What things do you (my partner) do that make me want to move closer to you, that draw me near to you?*” Again give the feedback according to the feedback rules.

C. **Feedback Circles**

This is a similar exercise to the one in Session 1.

1. **Asking for Intimacy & Affection.** Have the group form two circles, the women in the center and the men on the outside. Then give the following instructions: “I would like for all the women to share with each other your answers to this question: ‘How do you ask your partner for intimacy and affection?’ All the men are to just listen until later. Initially present this topic without any illustrations. Let the participants themselves come up with answers that provide ongoing illustrations. If they do not do so, then restructure by giving an illustration. In order to encourage spontaneity, use no particular order, such as going in sequence around the circle. Let the women answer spontaneously; only encourage the hesitant if necessary.

   Encourage them to make additional comments if what the others have said caused them to think of some other aspect of the question that they didn’t mention earlier; but do not pressure the group for more.

2. **Feelings/Responses.** After all the women have responded, ask the men: “*What did you feel when you were listening to what your partner and to what the other women said?*” Now the women are to listen. Again, let the order of response be spontaneous, although sometimes you may need to encourage the hesitant.

   It is important to help the men focus on feelings only. Frequently, they will move away from the describing the feelings and start discussing why they felt that way. If the men become
preoccupied with explaining why they felt that way, then restructure with a comment, something like this: “Just try to describe exactly what you are feeling, negative as well as positive feelings.”

If negative feelings or regrets seem apparent, encourage the men to report these if they felt them. Note that it is important from the beginning that they communicate exactly what they feeling, including negative feelings.

3. **Role Reversal.** Now reverse the roles, and the seating, with the men now being in the center of the circle. Instructions are the same as above in exercise 1. *The men are to discuss the question* among themselves and *the women are to listen.*

   When the men have finished, instruct the women: “What did you feel as you were listening to your partner and to the responses of the other men?” Same cues and leader aides are used as in exercise 2. The men are to listen.

4. **Whole Group Discussion.** Reassemble as a whole group and share as much with the whole group as you would like to about what has happened so far this evening. Then discuss the concept of intimacy in whatever way feels comfortable to you and the rest of the group.

   You may wish to suggest some books that the couples might want to buy and read in the area of sex and intimacy.
Session 6: Open Session

This is an open session. You can do whatever you and your group feel would be best.

In the past, groups have chosen to do more communicative exercises. They often have free discussion concerning issues of their relationships, children and their effect on couples, sexual expression within the relationship, more massage exercises (this must be planned in advance however), etc.

In choosing what you do, make sure that it’s appropriate for your particular group and the issues that appear relevant for the members.

Have fun!
Session 7: Anger & Constructive Fighting

Handouts:
- Constructive Fighting Guidelines
- Fight Analysis Questions

Materials: pillows

A. Introduction

Tell the couples that constructive fighting includes non-verbal and verbal expression of anger between partners. Tonight we going to
  a. do some non-verbal warm-up exercises to get more comfortable with your angry, assertive feelings;
  b. go over the constructive fighting outline, and
  c. discuss between partners some questions about the way we fight.

Next week, each couple will be coached in an actual verbal fight, a fight over an issue important to both of you but not so important as to be too uncomfortable. The constructive discussions next week will procede according to the outline presented tonight. Also we will deal with ways to negotiate disagreements and differences.

B. Warm-Up Exercises

Group exercises.
The purpose of holding group exercises first is to get people bodily and actively expressing aggression with the least possible anxiety. It is believed here that the safety in numbers makes the process easier.

Also it is important for the leaders to be able to model this expression of feeling in order to give the couples a sense of “permission” to do the exercises. So try to get into it yourselves.

1. Leader Demonstration. The leaders start stomping around the room tightening muscles, making loud noises, and pounding or otherwise contacting the floor. Yelling, shouting, or grunting may accompany this exercise. Get the group to engage in this process as much as each individual is comfortable with.

2. Pillow pounding. Ask each participant to get himself a pillow or two and imagine the pillow is no one. Begin pounding with vocal sounds, if comfortable. Give instructions to begin the pounding very gently and controlled and notice what it feels like to be in control of one’s anger. You can hit just as hard as you wish. Give instructions to increase the intensity of the pounding until one is pounding just as hard as possible without hand pain. Verbal grunting and shouting may accompany the pounding.

3. Relaxation. Use the Jacobson relaxation method and focus on the difference between relaxing and aggression in terms of the body’s response. Ask the participants first to feel the residue of
their angry active behavior. Ask them next to focus in on the changes that take place as they tighten muscles and relax. The point here is teaching control, that is, you may be active physically or verbally with aggression and then initiate the process of changing to another feeling state.

4. Group discussion. Next have the group discuss what their reactions are to the process at this point. Encourage all participants to share their feelings. You may find you want to reiterate the interaction rules now. Do so if any group members are uncomfortable or hesitant about the exercises. As you proceed from here, encourage the group members to try the exercises, withholding judgment until afterwards, if they are not too uncomfortable.

Couple Exercises.
After the group exercises, the warm-ups, move to each couple working on some non-verbal communication of aggression with each other.

1. Variation of pillow pounding. In this exercise one partner pounds while the other partner watches. The variation is that the pounder imagines the pillow to be the watching partner. The pounder is to imagine he or she is angry at his partner, either for no reason at all, or for something recently done or felt. This may be a difficult exercise for the couple and they may express some anxiety about it or ask what the reason is for doing this. Simply explain that you would like them to try it and see how it feels, of course remembering the honest interaction rules. The couple does not have to try it if they do not wish.

After the person pounds, the two partners talk to each other. The pounder tries to describe what it was like inside to be beating his imaginary partner. The watcher tries to describe what it was like watching the experience. Then the partners switch place, the watch becoming the pounder, and repeat the exercise.

2. Arm wrestling. Both partners lie on the floor facing each other. The rules for the arm wrestling are set up to give the female an advantage. She gets to use both hands and the male uses only one. Both are to wrestle and fight with all their strength. These rules give the female a chance to win at arm wrestling, which is not usually the outcome. After this exercise is over, the couples should talk with each other, using the good feedback rules about what the experience is like. (You may “coach” the couples if you like—encouraging them to become involved).

3. Relaxation. Again use the Jacobson relaxation method to notice how it is possible to reduce the tension of aggressive behavior. Couples use the relaxation method long enough until they are relaxed and tension from the angry activity subsides. Again make the point that you are demonstrating to them how they can change and control their bodily expressions of feelings. If they are angry, they can express it and then relax. If they are relaxed and get angry, they can change in that direction as well.

4. Holding an escape exercise. Standing with one partner in front of the other, the partner in back holds the other one with a bear hug. The partner in front tries to escape while the one in back cannot let him or her go. They reverse the positions and repeat.
5. **Body wrestling.** Since the room is not big enough so everyone can wrestle at the same time, you will probably have to do this one or two couples at a time. The couple may begin wrestling by facing each other standing or facing each other on hands and knees. The rules for this wrestling match as follows: Each partner is to exert strong, firm energy in an attempt to control the other one. *Neither is to try to hurt the other one, only to control him.* Each partner has the responsibility to call “halt” if he or she is being hurt or his partner has gone beyond acceptable limits. If “halt” is yelled, then the partner must stop.

Tell participants to work hard and really get into the wrestling match so that they can feel their bodies working hard in an attempt to control and maneuver and push the other person around. Make the point that the wrestling match is not to turn into a sexual game play. This may happen as a way of dealing with the anxiety; ask the couple to try to be assertive, not loving, at this time, even though such a wrestling match *might* constructively end at home in a hugging match.

Point out after this exercise how couples might try this approach to fighting (1) to relieve tensions of a verbal fight, or (2) when a verbal impasse has arisen.

6. **Jacobson relaxation again.** Final note: Tell participants that we are teaching and asking you to experience these exercises because we would like to encourage you to experiment on your own with non-verbal ways of expressing aggression. We think that sometimes non-verbal expressions of aggression are as constructive and useful in fighting with each other as the verbal approach. Non-verbal fighting is not a substitute for verbal and rational discussion—it is in addition to one’s fighting style and techniques.

**C. Group Discussion.**
Again get the reactions of participants to the session so far.

*Break time!*

**D. Didactic presentation – Discussion of Guidelines for Constructive Fighting.**

Some group leaders have found it better *not* to give the outline to participants until after making the presentation.

Hand out the “Fighting Style Questions” and have each partner discuss his or her answer with his partner, using of course, the Good Feedback Model.

Final discussion: For the last 5–10 minutes, get reactions to whole session, and then close the session.
Guidelines for Constructive Fighting

These guidelines are presented to you as one way to insure that the fights that you have are most likely to be profitably for your relationship. It is expected that not all of these procedures will necessarily need to occur in your particular relationship in order for your fights to produce constructive change. Rather, it is hoped that you will try out this particular procedure and then modify it as you deem appropriate to improve the way the two of you interact in arguments. Perhaps the most important thing is that you try out this approach and then either accept these guidelines or some modification of them as your “rules for engagement,” i.e., your agreed upon way to fight with one another.

Stage One – Pre-fight Exercises

1. This is a solo affair. Before beginning a fight with your partner, hold a dialogue with yourself asking this question: “Am I generally or vaguely annoyed, or am I really angry about a specific issue?” Answer honestly!

2. Also solo. Assuming that you have found something worth fighting about, hold another dialogue asking the following questions.

   - Am I sure that I have identified the true issue and am not about to do battle over a trivial matter?
   - Am I ready to be honest as well as tactful in the encounter?
   - Am I ready to listen as well as talk?
   - Am I willing to confine myself to present things and not delve into the past?
   - Am I ready to follow up my anger with a specific demand for a change?
   - Am I willing to make a change if my partner demands one?
   - How well can I tolerate the tensions of this fight, right now?
   - How well can my partner?

3. Still solo. Imagine how you will actually conduct the fight, so far as this is possible. As you think about it in your mind, consider:

   - How you will place the fight.
   - Your “attack” when the fight begins.
   - The response you expect from your partner.
• What you hope to result as consequence of the fight.

4. Get with your partner and announce your intention to fight (e.g., “I have a bone to pick with you” or some other such phrase which will let your partner know that you want to fight. It should be something you both have agreed to recognize as the opening of a request to fight). Set up a time and place for the fight, and don’t bring up the issue again until that time!

**Stage Two – The Fight Itself**

1. At the time agreed upon to have the fight, as the aggressor, state your issue clearly. Remember the feedback rules that we have been using throughout the sessions:

   • Be specific rather than general.

   • Be descriptive of your feelings rather than evaluative of your partner.

   • Focus on behavior that can be changed.

   After you, as the aggressor, have stated “your case” or placed “your beef,” then be quiet! It is now the non-aggressor’s turn to respond, beginning first with what she or he heard you saying (e.g., “What I heard you saying is…”) and then launching a counter offensive if that seems appropriate.

   A counter offensive should be given according to the feedback rules as well, especially focusing on how the aggressor’s demands and feelings make you feel. The non-aggressor may, of course, wish to make some demands of his or her own. After the aggressor has placed his demands, the non-aggressor has heard them and has given his or her feedback, which may include counter demands, and the aggressor has heard those counter demands (using the good feedback model) then you are ready for the next step.

   However, it may be very appropriate at this point to reward the listening of your demands, by either acknowledging that this “listening behavior” is appreciated of in some fashion (verbal or non-verbally) thanking your partner. It is difficult to listen to someone’s anger and to try and respond first by listening instead of arguing, and if you wish to have this sort of behavior continue, it needs to be rewarded!

2. *This is not a quiet time.* It is an intermission that can last for half an hour to a week or more depending on mutual agreement. It is a time for another inner-dialogue, a dialogue focusing on your feelings about what your partner has said to you. The dialogue also focuses on what ways you are willing or not willing to accede to your partner’s demands for change.

3. This next stage comes after the quiet time. It includes sharing with your partner what has happened since Stage 1 of this particular fight. It may consist of bargaining, compromise, or agreeing to the partner’s demands. As always, the rules of good feedback are in effect. After both partners have reached some consensus, they should mutually agree to disengage and
carry out their agreement. Many rounds may be required, however, to reach this point.

In regard to compromising, you can agree to “exchange” demands. For example the argument may have been about who will do a specific household task, and an agreement can be reached that one party will do the dishes while the other will plan and prepare meals. If such an exchange is made, it is usually a good idea to “re-evaluate the agreement” at some later time (perhaps in a week or a month) in order to determine how well it is working.

Another approach, sometimes referred to as the “Good Faith” approach, is to agree to do something with the expectation that your partner will do something for you in the future. This is perhaps the ideal approach, but has as its limitation the fact that it only works when the partner does in fact later agree to do something that the other partner wants and that that partner is aware of this. Frequently, however, we lose sight of the fact that our partner is doing things for us, and we seem to need to ask for the accomplishment of a similar request before we are willing to reciprocate.

Here again, much will depend upon your own unique pattern of interacting, and on the specific demands of the situation which confronts you.

4. **Inner Dialogue.** This is another solo affair. Each partner should hold another inner dialogue with himself or herself, answering the following questions:

- What have I learned from this fight?
- How badly was I hurt? My partner hurt?
- How valuable was this fight for me and my partner in letting off steam?
- How useful is it in revealing new information about myself, my partner, and the issue of contention?
- What do I think about the new positions that we have reached?
- What did my expression of anger do to my self-esteem?
- Do I need to clear things up with my partner?
- What do I think about my own and my partner’s fighting styles, strategies, and weapons?
- **How could we do this better next time?**

5. **Stage 5 consists of making up, resuming peaceful relations, and enjoying a respite from fighting.** Fighting in the manner described in this outline assumes a mutual contract to make up and enjoy each other between rounds of a fight and between fights!

Some couples may find that they exchange steps 4 and 5, making up after a fight and moving into the inner dialogue after they have made up. Once again, it is important that each of you develop a fighting style that is mutually satisfying, with the “rules” to be followed mutually agreeable, well defined, and always negotiable.

Change this outline in any way that the two of you feel would better suit your particular needs. Think of this as simply an outline to help you begin this task and to provide with some options.
Fighting Style Questions

Discuss these questions with your partner, as far as possible using the communication techniques you have learned during these sessions.

- How do I place my grievances with my partner, or how do I typically pick a fight?
- How does my partner usually respond to my stated complaints?
- How does he or she respond to my anger?
- What is my usual psychological state when I pick a fight?
- Do I typically make-up after a fight? How?
- In what do I especially like about my fighting style as it now stands?
- In what ways do I “fight dirty” with my partner?
- What would I like to change about mine? His or her s?
- How often do we fight?
- Are the issues typically important, central issues in our relationship?
Session 8: Fighting as a Precursor to Constructive Change

Handouts: (one copy per person of each)
- Partner Observation Checklist Instructions (used in Session 1)
- Partner Observation Checklist (used in Session 1)
- Marital Communication Inventory
- Dyadic adjustment Scale

Materials: Paper and pencils; straws to draw

A. Discussion and reactions from last session
There may be a good deal of discussion and anxiety as an after-effect of the anger exercises.

B. Actual Fighting Role-Play
1. Begin by having all couples think for a few minutes about what they would like to fight with their partners about. Have them write down the “beef” they have. Persons almost always pick issues that are not too threatening, although many of the issues you will have to help couples with will not be resolved in the first or second round of the fight.

2. Break the group into two subgroups—with each leader proceeding with the exercise in their own group. Pick a couple to begin, possibly by drawing straws, and take the pair through Stage 1 of an actual fight.

3. Then leave that couple for Stage 2, the quiet time, and take another couple through Stage 1. Take each couple through stage 1 and then return to Couple 1 for Stage 3.

4. As much as you are able and willing, encourage the remaining couples to help you coach the fight. After Stage 3, you might want them to write their separate answers to the questions under Stage 4. For Stage 5, couples are own their. Take all couples through Stages 3 and 4.

C. Convene the whole group and discuss reactions and after-feelings to the experience.
Be sure to leave at least 45 minutes to close up the groups!

Spend about half an hour discussing the workshop with the members. Insure discussion of the following:
- Which session(s) were the most helpful and why?
- Which were the least helpful and why?
- What other criticisms and/or compliments do they have? Be sure and consider both content and process (they may have a lot of feelings about how things went).
- Recommendations for change.

In the last 15 minutes, pass out the research evaluation instruments and task them to complete them. Please stress the importance of their honest feedback!
A Marital Communication Inventory

Name: _________________________  Date: ______________

This inventory offers you an opportunity to make an objective study of the degree and patterns of communication in your marital relationship. It will enable you and your partner to better understand each other. We believe you will find it both interesting and helpful to make this study.

Directions:
1. Please answer each question as quickly as you can according to the way you feel at the moment (not the way you usually feel or felt last week).
2. Do not consult with your partner while completing this inventory. You may discuss it afterwards.
3. Honest answers are very necessary if this form is to be of value. Please be as frank as possible. Your answers are confidential.
4. Put an “X” in one of the four blanks to the right of the question to show how the question applies to your relationship.
5. Read each question carefully. If you cannot give the exact answer to a question, answer as best you can, but be sure to answer each one. There are no right or wrong answers. Answer according to the way you feel at the present time!

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
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<td>1. Do you discuss the manner in which the family income should be spent?</td>
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<td>2. Does he or she discuss work and interests with you?</td>
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<td>3. Do you have a tendency to keep feelings to yourself?</td>
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<td>4. Is your partner’s tone of voice irritating?</td>
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<td>5. Does he or she have a tendency to say things which would be better left unsaid?</td>
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<td>6. Are your mealtime conversations easy and pleasant?</td>
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<td>7. Do you find it necessary to keep after him or her about his or her faults?</td>
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<td>8. Does he or she seem to understand your feelings?</td>
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<td>9. Does your partner nag you?</td>
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<td>10. Does he or she listen to what you have to say?</td>
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<td>11. Does it upset you to a great extent when your partner is angry with you?</td>
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<td>12. Does your partner pay you compliments and say nice things to you?</td>
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<td>13. Is it hard to understand your partner’s feelings and attitudes?</td>
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<td>14. Is he or she affectionate toward you?</td>
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<td>15. Does your partner let you finish talking before responding to what you are saying?</td>
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<td>16. Do you and your partner remain silent for long periods when you are with one another?</td>
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<td>17. Are you allowed to pursue your own interests and activities even if they are different from your partner’s?</td>
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<td>18. Does your partner try to lift your spirits when you are depressed or discouraged?</td>
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<td>19. Do you fail to express disagreement because you are afraid he or she will get angry?</td>
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<td>20. Does your partner complain that you don’t understand him or her?</td>
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<td>21. Do you feel he or she says one thing but really means another?</td>
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<td>22. Do you let your partner know when you are pleased with him or her?</td>
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<td>23. Do you help her/him understand you by saying how you think, feel, and believe?</td>
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<td>24. Do you and your partner find it hard to disagree with one another without losing your tempers?</td>
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<td>25. Do the two of you argue a lot over money?</td>
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<td>26. When a problem arises that needs to be solved are you able to discuss it together (in a calm manner)?</td>
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<td>27. Do you find it difficult to express your feelings to her/him?</td>
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<td>28. Does your partner offer you cooperation, encouragement and emotional support in your role (duties) as a husband/wife?</td>
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<td>29. Does your partner insult you when angry with you?</td>
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<td>30. Do you and your partner engage in outside interests and activities together?</td>
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<td>31. Does your partner accuse you of not listening to what he or she said?</td>
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<td>32. Does he or she let you know that you are important?</td>
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<td>33. Is it easier to confide in a friend rather than a partner?</td>
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<td>34. Does he or she confide in others rather than you?</td>
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<td>35. Do you feel that in most matters your partner knows what you are trying to say?</td>
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<td>36. Does he or she monopolize the conversation?</td>
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<td>37. Do you talk about things which are of interest to both of you?</td>
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<td>38. Does your partner sulk or pout very much?</td>
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<td>39. Do you discuss intimate matters?</td>
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<td>40. Do you discuss personal problems?</td>
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<td>41. Can your partner tell what kind of day you have had without asking?</td>
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<td>42. Does he or she fail to express feelings of respect and admiration for you?</td>
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<td>43. Do you talk over pleasant things that happen during the day?</td>
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<td>44. Do you hesitate to discuss certain things because you are afraid he or she might hurt your feelings?</td>
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<td>45. Do you pretend you are listening when actually you are not listening?</td>
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<td>46. Do the two of you ever sit down just to talk things over?</td>
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Thank you for taking the time to complete this form!
Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Name: _________________________  Date: ______________

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always agree</th>
<th>Almost always agree</th>
<th>Occasionally disagree</th>
<th>Frequently disagree</th>
<th>Almost always disagree</th>
<th>Always disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Handling family finances</td>
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<td>2. Matters of recreation</td>
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<td>3. Religious matters</td>
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<td>4. Friends</td>
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<td>5. Sex relations</td>
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<td>6. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)</td>
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<td>7. Demonstrations of affection</td>
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<td>8. Philosophy of life</td>
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<td>9. Ways of deal with parents/in-laws</td>
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<td>10. Aims, goals, and things believed important</td>
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<td>11. Amount of time spent together</td>
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<td>12. Making major decisions</td>
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<td>13. Household of tasks</td>
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<td>14. Leisure time interests and activity</td>
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<td>15. Career decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>All the time</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>More often than not</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Never</td>
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<td>16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation or terminating your relationship?</td>
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<td>17. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?</td>
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<td>18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?</td>
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<td>19. Do you confide in your mate?</td>
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<td>20. Do you ever regret that you married or lived together?</td>
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<td>21. How often do you and your partner quarrel?</td>
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<td>22. How often do you and your mate get on each other’s nerves?</td>
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<td>23. Do you kiss your mate?</td>
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<td>24. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?</td>
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<td>25. Have a stimulating exchange or ideas?</td>
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<td>26. Laugh together</td>
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<td>27. Calmly discuss something</td>
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<td>28. Work together on a project</td>
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</table>
There are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate either item caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks (Circle yes or no).

Being too tired for sex:   Yes  No  Not showing love:   Yes  No

The X’s on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point “happy” represents the degree of happiness, all things considered in yours. Rate your happiness with an “X.”

X X X X X
Extremely Fairly A little Happy Very Extremely Perfect
Unhappy Unhappy unhappy happy happy

Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship?

_____I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to any length to see that it does.
_____I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.
_____I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
_____It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can’t do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
_____My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

Name: _______________________________________
Date: _______________________________________