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## Introduction to The Gottman Method of Relationship Therapy

## Introduction to Gottman Research

- The story behind the research
- The story of the research
- The Gottman Research Lab
  - [Lab Film](#)

## Gottman Research

Began in Year	Number of Couples	Sample Comments and Sample	References
1. 1980	30	Young Couples	Levenson & Gottman 1983, 1985
2. 1983	79	Varied From Newlyweds To Old Age	Gottman (1994)
3. 1986	56	Couples With A Preschool Child (Midwest Sample)	Gottman, Katz, & Hooven (1996)
4. 1989	63	Same As 1986 Study (Seattle Sample)	None
5. 1989	130	Newlyweds (Seattle Sample)	Gottman, Coan, Carrere & Swanson (1998)
6. 1989	156	Middle-Aged And Sixties Couples (San Francisco Bay Area)	Levenson, Carstensen & Gottman (1994)
7. 1989	160	Four Groups: Highly Abusive, Moderately Abusive, Distressed Non-Violent, Happily Married Non-Violent	Jacobson & Gottman (1998)

## What is dysfunctional when a relationship is ailing?

More negativity than positivity in conflict discussion  
 Escalation of negative affect – The four horsemen  
[Four Horsemen Film](#)

## 4 Horsemen and Their Antidotes

- Criticism – Softened Startup
- Defensive – Accept Responsibility
- Contempt – Respect, Appreciation, Talk about Yourself, Not Your Partner
- Stonewalling – Soothe

## What else is dysfunctional when a relationship is ailing?

- Emotional disengagement & withdrawal
- The failures of repair attempts
- Negative sentiment override
- Maintaining vigilance and physiological arousal
- Chronic physiological arousal
- Failure to Accept Influence
  - Emotional disengagement
  - Escalation in response to low intensity negative

## What is functional when a relationship is going well?

- Match in preferred conflict styles
- Dialogue rather than "gridlock" with perpetual problems
  - Soft Startup
  - Accepting Influence
  - Effective Repair Attempts
  - De-escalation of negativity
  - Anger OK (without four horsemen, abuse)
  - More positive affect during conflict for newlyweds
    - Predicts relationship stability and happiness
  - Dialogue regarding perpetual problems
- Preemptive repair

## Sound Relationship House Theory



## Gottman Assessment

## Assessment - Overview

- Three session process – 90 minutes each
- Session 1
    - Informed Consent, Narrative, Oral History, Conflict Discussion, Explanation of Questionnaires
  - Session 2
    - Individual Interviews
  - Session 3
    - Feedback session

## Session 1

- Informed Consent
- Narrative
- Oral History
  - [Oral History Film](#)
- Conflict Discussion
  - [Conflict Discussion Film](#)
- Explain questionnaires

## Questionnaires

- Paper-based
- Gottman Checkup
  - [Gottman Check-Up Film](#)

## Session 2

### Individual Interviews

- Individual narrative
- Relevant family history
- History of prior relationships
- History of prior therapy
- Commitment to the relationship and discrepancies
- Hopes and expectations for the relationship (including getting out)
- Personal goals
- Cost/benefit analysis

## Session 3

### Feedback Session

- Overview of the history of the relationship and the genesis of the concerns
- Explain these in the context of the Sound Relationship House results
  - State their interventions associated with each level
  - Briefly explain each level
- Summarize Diagnostic Formulation
- Propose treatment plan, revise with partner's input
- Entire presentation should be 10-15 minutes

## Gottman Method: Friendship Interventions

## Overview

- Friendship Interventions
  - Philosophy, Purpose, Goals

## Key Friendship Interventions

- Love Maps
  - Creating A Love Map of Your Partner's World
- Fondness and Admiration
  - "I Appreciate" Checklist
- Turn Towards
  - Stress Reducing Conversation
  - [Stress Reducing Conversation 17:00 - 26:00](#)
  - Build A Ritual Connection

## Gottman Method: Conflict Interventions

## Overview

- Philosophy, Purpose, Goals

## Key Conflict Interventions

- Flooding
  - Pulse Rates, etc.
  - Soothing exercise

## Four Horsemen

- Criticism
  - Defensiveness
  - Contempt
  - Stonewalling
- [Four Horsemen Film](#)

## Softened Startup

- Softened Startup
- I feel.....when, and I need.....
  - Exercise from the 7 P's book
- [Soft Startup Film](#)

## Gottman Rapaport

- John Gottman developed this technique using Anatol Rapaport's Technique for Diplomacy
- Speaker uses soft startup to discuss an issue, feelings, needs
  - Listener listens and writes
  - Listener empathizes
    - Example, "I can see why you would feel that way because....."
  - Listener repeats back speaker's position to the satisfaction of the speaker
  - Switch roles

## Dreams In Conflict

- Structured interview partners use to discuss a perpetual problem
- Speaker describes his or her position through asking a series of questions asked by the listener
  - Questions help speaker describe "symbolic meaning" or "life dreams" behind the issue
  - Increased understanding between speaker and listener
  - Switch roles
  - Increases depth of understanding leading to better compromises or living better with differences
- [Dreams in Conflict Film](#)

## Compromise Ovals

Partners draw an oval within an oval on a sheet of paper

- Inner oval
  - Contains areas where each partner cannot be flexible
- Outer oval
  - Contains areas where partners can be flexible
- Partners share contents of inner and out ovals with one another
  - Ask one another a series of questions to better understand each other's flexible/inflexible areas
- Attempt to identify a better, more acceptable compromise

## Gottman Resource - Books

- Gottman, J.M. (2015). The seven principles for making marriage work (revised edition). New York: Harmony
- Gottman, J.M. (1999). The marriage clinic: A scientific based marital therapy. New York: W.W. Norton & Company
- Gottman, J.M. (1998). Raising an emotionally resilient child. New York: Simon & Schuster
- Gottman, J.M. & Gottman, J.S. (2008). And baby makes three (revised edition). New York: Harmony

## Gottman Resource - Books

- Gottman, J.M. (2002). The relationship cure. New York: Harmony
- Gottman, J.M. (2013). What makes love last. New York: Simon & Schuster
- Gottman, J.M. & Jacobson, N. (2007). When men batter women (revised edition). New York: Simon & Schuster
- Gottman, J.M. (2014). Principia amoris: the new science of love. New York: Simon & Schuster

## Gottman Resources - Books

- Gottman, J.S. & Gottman, J.M. (2015). 10 principles for doing effective couples therapy. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

## Gottman Resources

- [www.gottman.com](http://www.gottman.com)
  - Couples Workshops
  - Professional Trainings
  - Research Overview
  - Products for Couples and Clinicians

## Summary and Conclusions

- Research
- Theory
- Intervention

## Contact

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