



INTRODUCTION TO COUPLES COUNSELLING

DAY ONE

WELCOME!



2 OVERVIEW OF COURSE

Day One: • Differences between Individual/Couples Counselling; Different Models;

- Essential Communication skills to teach your couples;
- Couples Dialogue; facilitating your couples expressing difference & frustration.


Day Two: • Ethical Issues in Couples Counselling;

- Transference; Concepts of Attachment & Differentiation;
- Working with the couple's 'Dance of Disconnection'.

Day Three (with Simon Adamson): Stages of relationship & diagnosis of stage;

- Working with hostile couples; understanding & de-escalating conflict;
- Working with avoidant couples.

Day Four: Homework & exercises for couples clients;

- How to conduct your first couples session;
 - Making a Treatment Plan for the journey ahead.
- 

3 INTRODUCTIONS

1. Your name;
2. Tell us something briefly about your therapy practice;
3. What would you like to get from this course?

4 A QUESTION

What are the main differences between individual & couples counselling?

5 DIFFERENT MODELS OF COUPLES COUNSELLING

- Dr Ellyn Bader & Peter Pearson's 'Developmental Model'
- Drs Harville Hendrix & Helen LaKelly Hunt's 'Imago therapy'
- Dr Sue Johnson's 'Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy'
- Drs John & Julie Gottman at The Gottman Institute
- Terry Real who founded The Relationship Life Institute
- Esther Perel who is an expert on cross-cultural relationship, sexuality & affairs

6 COMMUNICATION

- Number one issue couples bring in;
- Verbal or non-verbal?
- Biased towards women?

7 NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

- Marshall Rosenberg
- With couples, this structured method of communication can be used:
 - By the therapist as a way of rephrasing the language the couple use in the therapy session; &/or
 - As an education tool whereby the therapist can teach the structure to the couple.

8 COMMUNICATION

‘You get up far too early in the morning when you’re going to work & you make a terrible noise in the kitchen! You don’t care that I’m still trying to sleep. If you must have breakfast at that time, why on earth can’t you shut the kitchen door?’



9 JUDGEMENTS, ASSUMPTIONS & ACCUSATIONS

*‘You get up **far too early** in the morning when you’re going to work. And you make a **terrible noise** in the kitchen! **You don’t care** that I’m still trying to sleep. If you must have breakfast at that time, **why on earth** can’t you shut the kitchen door?’*

10 COMMUNICATION

‘When you get up at 7am to go to work, I can hear you having breakfast in the kitchen, which keeps me awake. I feel irritated because I need to sleep longer. Would you mind shutting the kitchen door at those times?’



|| NON-CONFRONTATIONAL COMMUNICATION

- Observation/Description/Fact/Trigger;
- Feelings
- Needs
- Request (optional)

12 WARNINGS AND COMMON TRAPS

- ‘I feel that you.....’
- Some ‘feeling’ words ending in ‘ed’ that imply fault with the other person

13 CASE STUDY

- Partner A is working on her new business. She loves the task of setting it up & imagining possibilities for the future.
- Partner B thinks A is a workaholic; He thinks that A should relax & chill out more.
- How would each partner express themselves using one sentence?
- Video.

14 **IMAGO RELATIONSHIP THERAPY™**

- **Founded by Harville Hendrix, & Helen LaKelly Hunt**
- **Concept of the 'Imago'** - A composite image of all the positive & negative traits of our primary caretakers deep in our unconscious mind; a blueprint of the person we need to be our partner in a committed intimate relationship.
- **Intimate adult relationships provide the opportunity to heal & return to wholeness** - Our parents are the ones who wounded us & it is they who could help us heal. A primary love partner who matches their traits is their stand-in.

15 STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

- Successful relationship requires that differences are able to co-exist
- ‘Objective reality’ has no place in relationships
- Importance of validation
- I – Thou dialogue
- Different types of structured dialogue

16 TERRY REAL SAYS:

‘Objective reality has no place in close personal relationships. The relational answer to the question: “Who’s right & who’s wrong?” is “Who cares?” Let go of being the voice of authority & speak about your subjective experience – This is how I feel. This is what I recollect. This is what I imagine. A little humility works wonders.’

17 3-STEP IMAGO™ DIALOGUE

1. SENDER:

- Check if partner is available & send message using 'I' language.

RECEIVER:

- Mirrors - 'I heard you say ...' / 'Did I get that?' / 'Is there more?'
- (Sender continues if there's more. Receiver mirrors as before. Step one is the longest).
- Summary

2. RECEIVER VALIDATES:

- 'That makes sense to me ...' / 'I understand that you ...' / 'Given that ...'

3. RECEIVER EMPATHISES:

- 'And I imagine you might be feeling ...' (suggests feeling words)

8-step
Dialogue

18 IMAGO™ DIALOGUE: APPRECIATIONS

THERAPIST SENTENCE STEMS TO HELP DIALOGUE

SENDER:

- Check if partner is available & send appreciation using 'I' language -
 - 'What I appreciate about you is ...'
 - 'Why that's important to me is ...'
 - 'How I feel about that is ...'

RECEIVER:

- Mirrors - 'I heard you say ...' / 'Did I get that?' / 'Is there more?' / Summary
- Validates - 'That makes sense to me ...'
- Empathises - 'I imagine you might be feeling ...'

19 IMAGO™ DIALOGUE: FRUSTRATIONS

SENDER:

- Check if partner is available & send frustration using 'I' language -
 - 'One frustration I have is ...'
 - 'What I'm afraid of is ...'
 - 'What hurts is ...'
 - 'What that reminds me of from childhood is ...'

RECEIVER:

- Mirrors - 'I heard you say ...' / 'Did I get that?' / 'Is there more?' / Summary
- Validates – 'That makes sense to me ...'
- Empathises – 'I imagine you might be feeling ...'

20 IMAGO™ DIALOGUE: FRUSTRATIONS

THERAPIST SENTENCE STEMS TO HELP DIALOGUE

- *‘The way I feel is ...’*
- *‘What I'm afraid of is ...’*
- *‘The story I tell myself is ...’*
- *‘The way I protect myself is ...’*
- *‘What hurts is ...’*
- *‘What this reminds me of from the past is ...’*
- *‘What I long for is ...’*

21 IMAGO™ DIALOGUE: FRUSTRATIONS

- Behaviour Change Request