

The Unique Skill of Couples Therapy

Building Lifelong Love in Commitment, Cooperation,
Communication and Community

Presented by:

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The Unique Skill

- Clinicians see couples in many contexts
- Seeing couples requires more than just seeing two individuals conjointly or at the same time. It presents a different dynamic that is challenging and sometimes confusing
- Having a paradigm for couples' treatment can be helpful and interesting

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Understanding the Unique Skill of Couples Therapy Requires:

- Redefining "Couple"
- Understanding Couple personalities
- Exploring the Basic Tasks of Couple
- Setting the Goals of therapy
- Treating Couple
- Employing New Techniques
Using the 4 C's

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What is a Couple?

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Shifting the Paradigm of Couple

- A new paradigm requires new ways of thinking.
- Characteristics of paradigm shifts:
 - Challenging common notions and beliefs
 - Experiencing confusion and paradox
 - Thinking “out of the box”
 - Creating a “new” language
 - Constructing new metaphors
 - Increased resistance



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The Redefinition of “Couple”

- Couple is not a thing; it is a process, a way of being.
- Couple is an entity; it has its own personality and goals.
- Couple is not meeting an ideal; it is creating possibilities.
- Couple is not static; it is living in the present.
- Couple is not an act of compromise; it is the ability to cooperate.
- Couple is not a place to get to; it is a place to come from.



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Barriers To Couple

- **Cultural Barriers**

- Individualism
- Workplace
- Education
- Religion
- Media
- Gender roles
- Inter-cultural/LGBT
- Legal system
- Network Interference

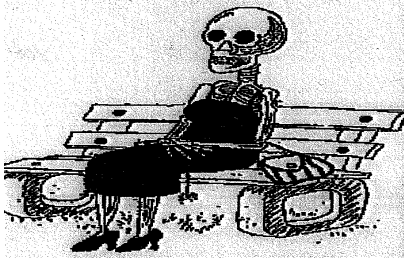


- **Personal Barriers**

- Family history
- Relationship hx
- Hx in therapy
- Expectations

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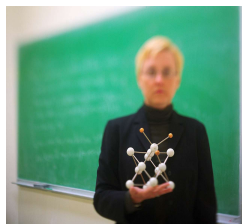
Waiting...
for the perfect man!



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Couple Personalities

- Romanticized
- Role-defined (Traditional)
- Independent (Self-focused)
- Co-creating (Dynamic)
 - Many possibilities/variations
 - Operates outside the box
 - 100%/100%
 - Flexible in dealing with change



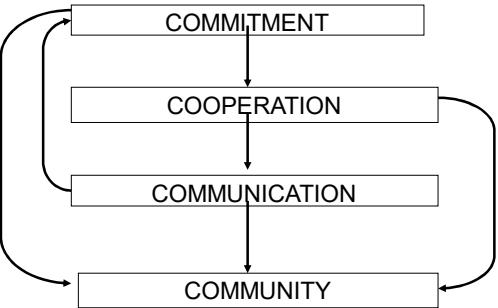
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Goals of Couples Therapy

- Creating the entity “Couple”
- Recognizing and Accomplishing the Four Basic Tasks of Couple (in this order)
 - Commitment
 - Cooperation
 - Communication
 - Community



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DOING COUPLES THERAPY

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What Makes It So Difficult to Work with Couples?



- Listening to complaints from partners about each other
- Teaching communication skills too early and watching them used as a club against their partner
- Expecting the therapist to fix the other person in the relationship
- Being placed in the role of mediator
- Dealing with differing emotional/cognitive styles
- Managing overt and covert hostility
- High levels of frustration and despair

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Therapeutic Barriers to Couple



- Pathologizing
- Homeostatic myth
- Inflexibility of our training
- Insurance
- Individual Therapy

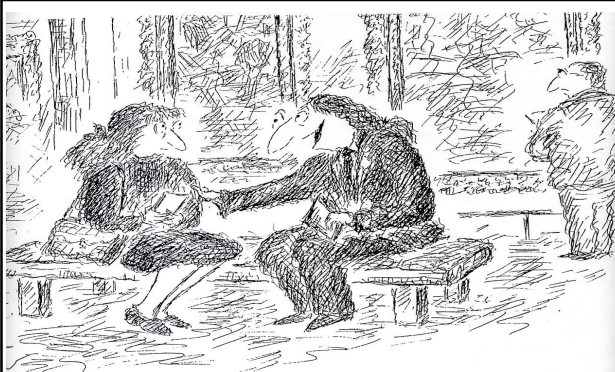
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Commitment



- Creating the entity Couple
- Creating a vision
- Stating the future/now
- Creating “being”
- Therapist’s intention and commitment
- Commitment to relationship, not person
- Creating new rituals
- Teach listening for what is possible– NOT what is wrong
- Positive Psychology approach
- Assessing Commitment
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

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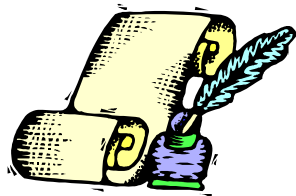


“Katia, I know that with the right combination of therapy and medication I could have a committed relationship with you.”

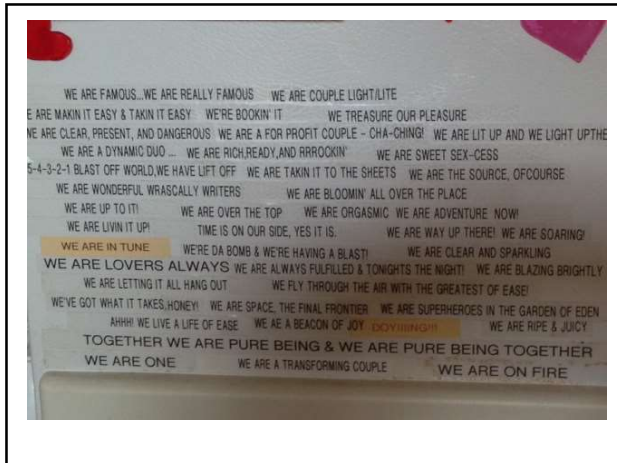
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How To Create A Couple Proclamation

- Short and succinct
- Couple focused
- State as fact not hope
- Present tense
- Positive language
- Inspiring for both
- “We are...”
- Non-verbal expression

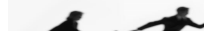


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Cooperation

- **Teamwork**
 - Defining team
 - Setting team goals
 - Exploring coaching
 - Developing cohesion by seeing outside threats/challenges
 - Creating projects
 - Establishing accountabilities
 - Diverse strengths
 - **Requests and Agreements**
 - Turning complaints into requests
 - Respecting requests
 - Making agreements
 - Honoring one's word
 - When's and how's
 - Gifts – not compromise
 - Generosity
 - **Assessing Cooperation**
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Communication

(necessary but not sufficient for co-creating Couple)ufficientto co-creating Couple)

- **Verbal** (Dedicated/responsible speaking and listening)
 - Language constructs the future
 - Fighting fair
 - Structured speaking
 - Acknowledgement
 - Feedback and echoing
 - Reframing (renaming more powerfully)
 - What About Sex?
 - Say “we”
- **Non-verbal**
 - Reading body language and other non-verbal cues
 - Creative visualization
 - Controlled aggression
 - Trust exercises
 - Touching
 - Physical representations
- **Assessing Communication**



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Community

- **Types**
 - Found or Created
 - Vertical Community (Extended family)
 - Horizontal Community (Friends and peers)
 - Identified reference or model groups
- **Groups**
 - Couples group treatment
 - Couples Coaching Couples®
 - Post-treatment couples support groups
- **Assessing Community**
- **Sharing “Couple” with others**



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Fifth C: Couple Consciousness

- Seeing the world through a “couple” filter
- Couple as source
- Couple as possibility
- Couple as a way of being
- Lifelong Love



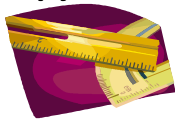
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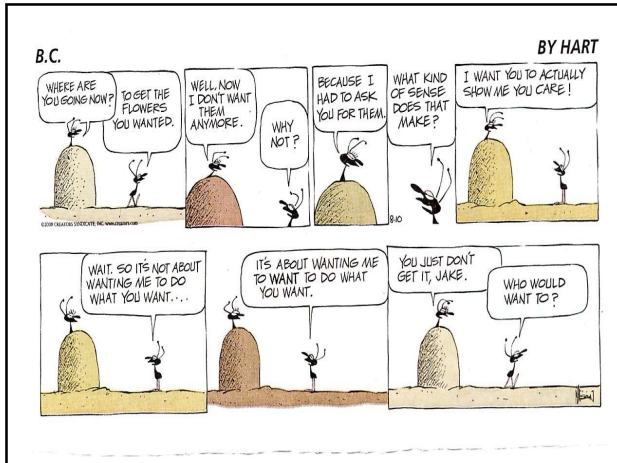
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Some Principles of Couple Power Therapy in Practice

- Proclaiming
- Reframing
- Acknowledging
- Creating Possibilities and Opportunities
- Teaching and Learning
- Inquiring and Exploring
- Coaching – giving and receiving
- Expanding from Doing to Being



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The P-R-A-C-T-I-C-E Paradigm

- Put the principles into life
- Practice them over and over
- Create ritual practices
- See the possibility in everything
- “Think” couple
- Celebrate couple

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Contact Information

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