Building Healthy Relationships

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Our Game Plan

Keys to Relationships
Building the Toolbox
Relationship Check-Ins
Relational Functioning; What goes “Wrong?”
How Do Problems Develop?

Clients struggle communicating
Interactional patterns get stuck
Positive affect is diminished
Problem solving skills are decreased because of emotional activation
Relationship Dynamics
Most relationship problems (69%) are “unsolvable” based on personality differences between partners.

Thus, the focus should be on SOLVABLE problems.
The Gottman Institute

Observational data
Divorce prediction
Apartment Lab
Sound Relationship House
4 Horseman

https://www.gottman.com
The Sound Relationship House

- Create Shared Meaning
  - Make Life Dreams Come True
- Manage Conflict
  - Accept Your Partner’s Influence
  - Resolve ‘Solvable Problems’
  - Dialogue About ‘Perpetual Problems’
  - Practice Self-Soothing
- The Positive Perspective
  - Turn Towards Instead of Away
- Share Fondness and Admiration
- Build Love Maps
  - Know One Another’s World
Positive Connection

Manage Conflict

Shared Meaning

Positive Connection

Shared Meaning

Manage Conflict
“Emotional Bank Account”

If you feel like your partner is your friend...

...you will live life together in a way that helps you feel that life is a bit more wonderful...

...you will give them the benefit of the doubt when you disagree...

“Emotional Bank Account”

Positive connection

Shared Meaning

Manage Conflict
THE FOUR HORSEMAN

CRITICISM: Verbally attacking personality or character.

CONTempt: Attacking sense of self with an intention to insult or psychologically abuse.

DEFENSIVENESS: Seeing yourself as the victim in efforts to ward off a perceived attack and reverse the blame.

STONEYWALLING: Withdrawing as a way to avoid conflict in efforts to convey disapproval, distance, and separation.
Stop the Four Horsemen with their Antidotes

- CRITICISM: Teach Gentle Start Up
- DEFENSIVENESS: Take Responsibility
- CONTEMPT: Build Culture of Appreciation
- STONIEWALLING: Do Physiological Self-Soothing
“I want to feel connected to you.”

1. Turning Toward
2. Turning Against
3. Turning Away

Adds to the emotional bank account.
In a Nutshell, what works?

Intervention studies that have produced *lasting results* have changed three things:

1. Increased positive feelings *outside* the conflict situation (e.g., when things are going well)
2. Reduced negative feelings during conflict
3. Increased positive affect during conflict
TIP!

"Every positive thing you do in your relationship is foreplay."

John Gottman
TIP!

- Date nights // Fun!
- Simple “getting to know you” conversations
- Love mapping (dreams, stories)
- High fives
TIP!

- Complain w/o blame
- Listen w/o interrupting
- Validate one another
- Repair strategies
Tip!

- Share life goals
- Find ways to support one another’s dreams
- Identify shared values
To make a relationship last, relationships must focus on **friendship**, learn to **manage/repair conflict**, and create ways to **support each other’s** hopes and dreams.
Relationship Check-Ins at HEDCO

- **WHAT:** Free, one-time session for any relationship focused therapy

- **GOAL:** The focus is to recognize and develop strengths in the relationship.

- **WHO:** Open to partners, friends, roommates, families, siblings, etc.
A Year At a Glance

~ 3,000 sessions
~4,200 people served
~800 sessions per academic term
7.5% no show rate
Collaborative; Team Oriented
Any Questions?

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