

Lecture#7

Couples Assessment

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Outline

- Marriage Assessment
- Marriage Assessment – Domains
- Gender difference in Assessment
- Couples Assessment – Three groups
- Rationale to use Assessment with Couples
- Important Marriage Assessment Tools
- Marriage Checkup

Christian Marriage Counseling

- Christian marriage counseling helps couples find harmony in their relationship with each other and with God.
- Discussing the discord in their marriage and helps the couple become familiar with how God wants the relationship to flourish.
- God's Word reminds the couple that a marriage is sacred and that it is possible to overcome the obstacles that too much pride can bring to a marriage.

Marriage Counseling Goals

1. Identify strength and growth areas
2. Strengthen communication skills
3. Identify and manage major stressors
4. Resolve conflicts
5. Develop a more balanced relationship
6. Explore family of origin issues
7. Discuss financial planning
8. Establish personal, couple and family goals
9. Understand and appreciate personality differences

David Olson & Jeffery Garrett (2006)

Domains of Marital Assessment and Counseling

- Family & Friends
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Spiritual Beliefs
- Forgiveness
- Children & Parenting
- Cultural/Ethnic Issues
- Couple Closeness and Flexibility
- Family Closeness and Flexibility

The four general categories for couple's assessment:

1. Personality issues, which are individual characteristics.
2. Interpersonal issues, such as personal beliefs and expectations.
3. Interpersonal issues, such as communication and relationship issues
4. External issues or factors outside the couple relationship that affect them.

Marriage Counseling Theories

- Behavioral Couple Therapy (Jacobson & Margolin, 1979)
- Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy (Jacobson & Christensen, 1996)
- Cognitive-Behavioral Couple Therapy (Baucom & Epstein, 1990)
- Insight-Oriented Couple Therapy (Snyder & Wills, 1989)
- Emotion-Focused Couple Therapy (Greenberg & Johnson, 1988)
- Solution-Focused Couple Therapy (deShazer, 1985)
- Systems Therapy (Minuchin, 1974)
- PREP (Markman, Floyd, & Stanley, 1988)
- Interpersonal Communication Program (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1976)
- Relationship Enhancement (Guerney, 1977)
- Christian Couple Counseling (Clinton, 1999)
- Christian Theories; Hope-Focused Couple Therapy (Worthington, 2005)
- Relationship Counseling (Parrott & Parrott, 1996)

HOOK , . WORTHINGTON, *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 2009;

Gender and Marriage in Couples Assessment

- Women and men have different needs
- Women are at a higher risk of experiencing sexual abuse in childhood, rape in adolescence, domestic violence in adulthood
- Many women suffer from pre-menstrual syndrome involving mood swings potentially results in more diagnoses of depression
- Double burden on working mothers, maintaining family and work
- Life-events exclusively affect women: post-partum depression
- Hormonal differences between men and women result in a different response to life events

Assessment in Every Day Life

Assessment and it impacts on Life.

- A cholesterol or blood pressure check leading to changes in eating habits or lifestyle
- Vital Symptoms and treatment
- A poor grade on an exam motivates one to study harder?
- The speedometer of a car helps to control the speed of car

But how does this translate to my work with couples?

Important Assessment Tools for Counselors:

- For over 3 decades, pastors and counselors in USA and Canada have used variety of Marriage assessment tools and feedback program to understand and help couples at every stage of their relationship.
 - **PREPARE AND ENRICH**
 - **Marriage & Emotional Assessment Tool**
 - **CLM Marriage Assessment**

Assessment can help ...

- PREPARE – pre-marital couples
- ENRICH – married couples with or without children (healthy couples/couples in crisis)
- MATE – Couples over the age of 50

Assessment tools are used in a various settings

- Premarital counseling
- Marriage Enrichment Counseling
- Marriage Crisis Counseling
- Marriage education and ministry
- Mentoring
- Seminars/Small Groups/ Retreats
- Church-wide needs assessment
- Personality Functioning and Differences

Goals of Couples Assessment

- Reduce divorces rate
- Enhance marital happiness and satisfaction
- Prepare couples for marriage
- Address conflicts and issues in marriage

Assessment of Premarital couples

- Premarital couples are typically quite idealistic about their relationships
- “This is my soul mate, what could possibly go wrong?”
- For premarital couples, assessment highlights not only their strengths, but their growth areas.
- Assessment personalizes the premarital counseling experience and primes couples for feedback.
- The PREPARE/ENRICH Inventories include an *Idealistic Distortion* scale that measures the extent to which each individual is viewing their relationship through “rose-colored glasses.”

Assessment of Married couples (Not in Crisis)

- Married couples who are not yet in crisis often resist talking proactively with one another about their relationship.
- Just like going to your doctor for a physical can help identify and treat mild conditions before they become severe, an occasional marriage check-up can lead to productive discussion, behavior change, and relationship improvements.
- Marriage therapists often note that most couples who present for marriage counseling waited longer than they should have to get help.
- Assessment can motivate couples to seek help earlier.

Assessment of Married couples (In Crisis)

- Couples in crisis also need assessment.
- Unlike premarital couples who deny problems, couples in crisis tend to dwell only on the negatives and have a difficult time finding something positive to talk about.
- Assessment can help identify areas of agreement and relationship strengths that can be used to encourage and build other aspects of their relationship.
- Counselors also profit from the direction provided by assessment results as couples in crisis often need to feel improvements quickly before they become discouraged and give up on their marriage.

Rationale to use Assessment with Couples

- 1) Research demonstrates assessment is a powerful intervention with couples.
 - Research study by Olson & Knutson (2005) demonstrated significant improvements in the relationships of premarital couples who took the PREPARE Inventory and received just 4 sessions of feedback with a pastor or counselor.
 - Research led by Everett Worthington (1995) found that assessment alone accounted for up to 1/3 of the impact married couples experience in marriage counseling.

Rationale to use Assessment with Couples

- 2) Assessment helps couples for feedback by increasing their curiosity and personalizes the feedback/teaching to their specific relationship needs.
 - PREPARE/ENRICH counselors have noted reduced counseling drop-out rates when the inventory is given in the first 2 sessions because couples are curious and want to come back to receive their results.

Rationale to use Assessment with Couples

- 3) An inventory designed to assess couple relationships can help direct the course of counseling and marriage enrichment, leading counselors and couples to target the areas that need the most work.
 - It saves time for counselors, allowing them to understand a couple at a deep level without several hours of interviewing.

Rationale to use Assessment with Couples

4) Assessment changes the dynamics of marriage counseling and education.

- Going over inventory results provides a more objective view of the relationship, adding a calming structure to the difficult work of premarital and marital counseling.
- Men, in particular, seem to appreciate the feedback and results as a context in which to work on their relationship.
- The more objective nature of the assessment results are easier for men to digest and are a welcome addition to the sometimes more subjective opinions and feelings of their spouse or counselor.

Rationale to use Assessment with Couples

- 5) Following the completion of an inventory, couples often begin to discuss aspects of their relationship that were assessed.
 - The questions get couples thinking and talking to one another about topics they might not have otherwise discussed. Such discussion raises awareness that can begin the process of behavior and attitude change.

PREPARE & ENRICH TOOL

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Welcome to Focus on the Family's

Couple Checkup

Make the most of your relationship

Learn and share together as you discover your strengths and growth areas, whether you're dating, engaged or already married. You'll explore areas of ...

Communication Roles Finances
Affection Conflict ... and more

\$29.95

Take the checkup that's right for you!



Dating

Get Started!

Things are getting more serious...
The Dating Couple Checkup will help you determine the best next step.

Engaged

Get Started!

Falling in love was the easy part!
Now let the Engaged Couple Checkup help you prepare for marriage.

Married

Get Started!

How healthy is your marriage?
The Married Couple Checkup will help you identify your strengths and areas for growth.

Marriage Assessment Tool

Prepare/Enrich

- A couple assessment tool
- Identifies a couple's strength and growth areas.
- Widely used for premarital counseling, marriage counseling, and marriage enrichment
- Based on a couple's assessment results, a trained facilitator provides 4-8 feedback counseling sessions.

David Olson & Jeffery Garrett (2006)

What relationship areas are assessed by the Prepare-Enrich Tool?

- 12 Relationship Scales -- communication, conflict resolution, roles, sexuality, finances, spiritual beliefs and more
- 5 SCOPE Personality Scales
- 4 Couple and Family Scales -- based on the Circumplex Model
- 4 Relationship Dynamic Scales

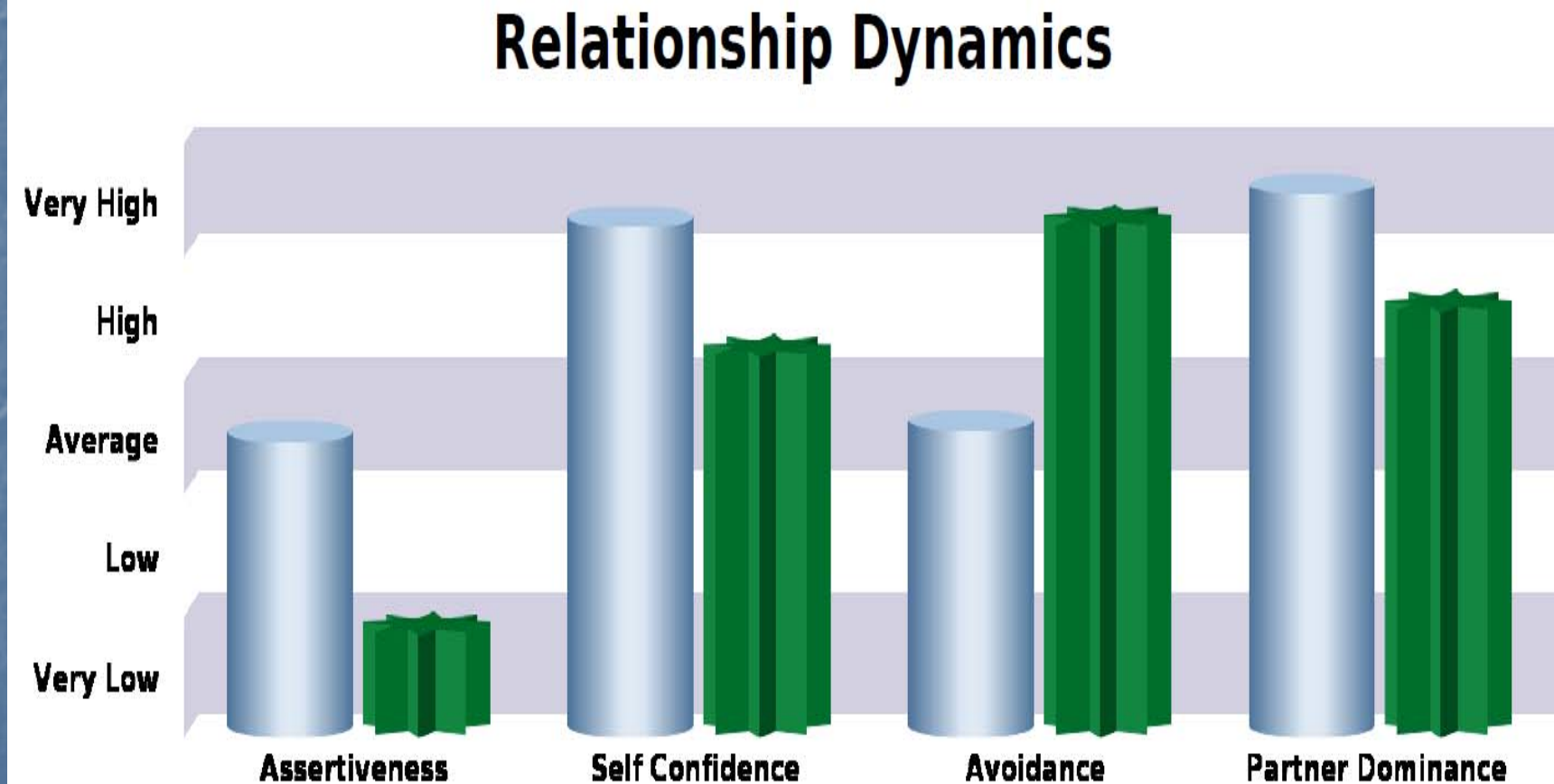
David Olson & Jeffery Garrett (2006)

Domains of Marital Assessment and Counseling

- Abuse
- Commitment
- Personal Stress Profile
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Partner Style & Habits
- Financial Management
- Leisure Activities
- Sexual Relationship

- Family & Friends
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Spiritual Beliefs
- Forgiveness
- Children & Parenting
- Cultural/Ethnic Issues
- Couple Closeness and Flexibility
- Family Closeness and Flexibility

Relationship Dynamics

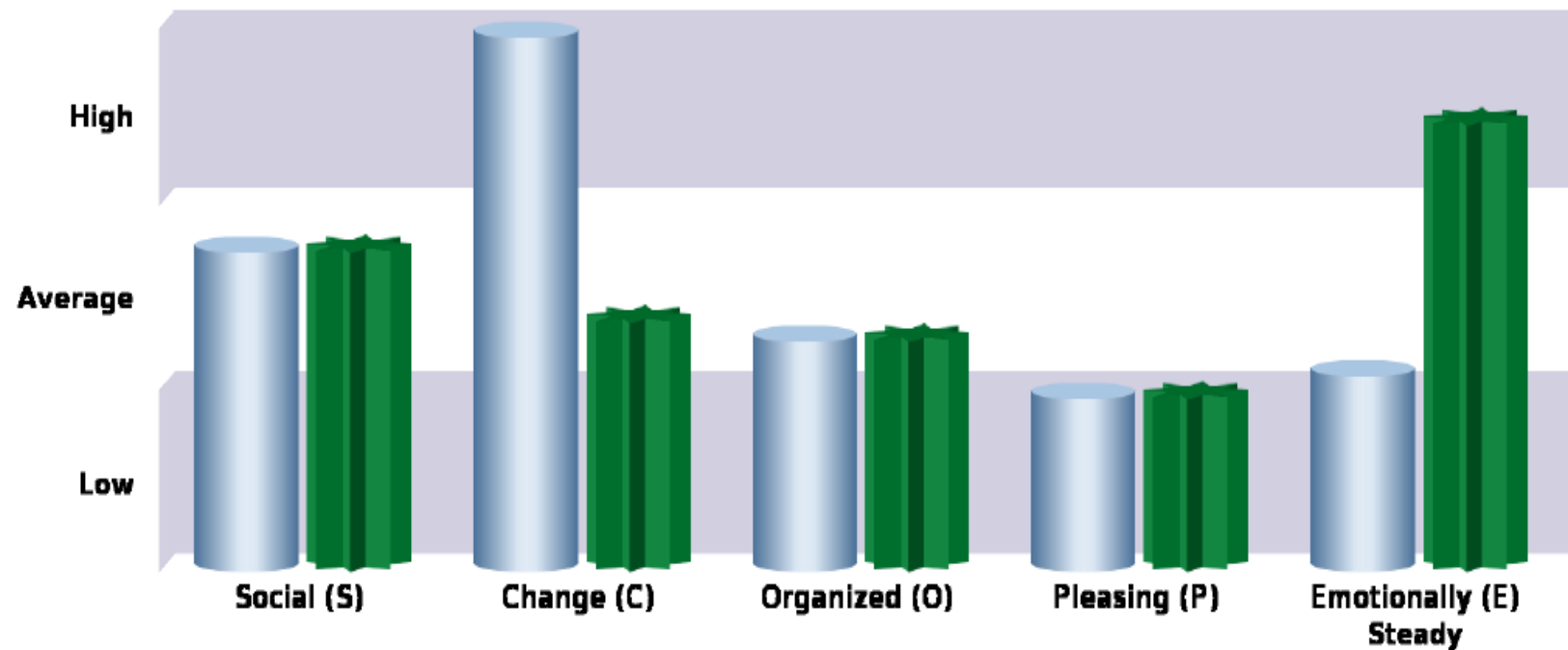


Relationship Dynamics

- **Assertiveness** is the ability to express one's feelings and ask for what one wants.
- **Self Confidence** focuses on how good one feels about oneself and their ability to accomplish what they want in life.
- **Avoidance** is the tendency to minimize issues and reluctance to deal with issues directly.
- **Partner Dominance** focuses on how much one feels controlled or dominated by their partner.

SCOPE Personality Scale

SCOPE Personality Scales



David Olson & Jeffery Garrett (2006)

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SCOPE Personality Scale

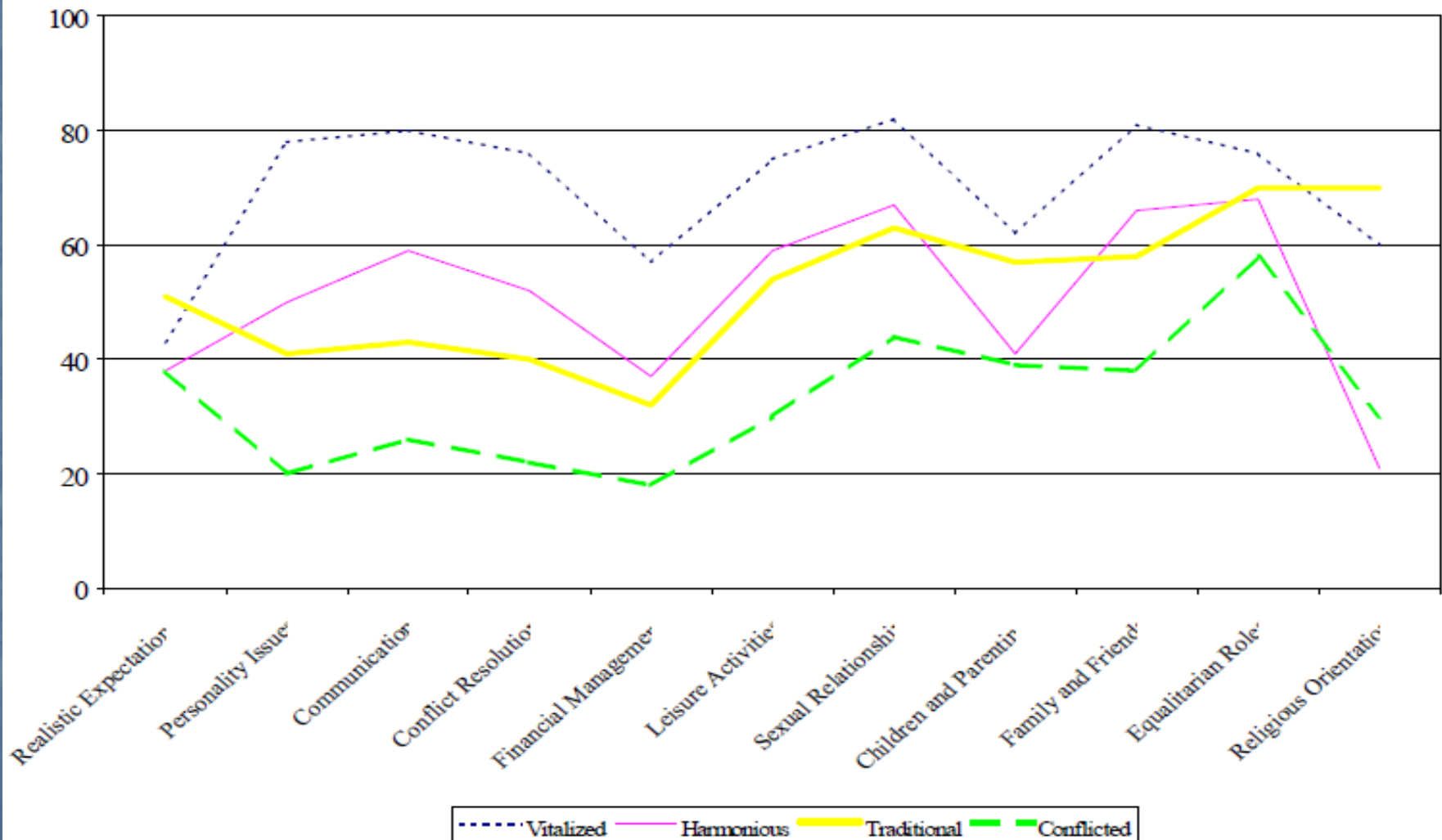
- **Social (S):** This trait reflects preference for, and behavior in social situations.
- **Change (C):** This trait reflects openness to change, flexibility, and interest in new experiences.
- **Organized (O):** This trait reflects how organized and persistent a person is in their daily life and work. It also reflects persistence in pursuing goals. It also reflects persistence in pursuing goals.
- **Pleasing (P):** This trait reflects how considerate and cooperative one is in their interactions with others.
- **Emotionally Steady (E):** This trait reflects the tendency to stay relaxed and calm even when faced with stress, versus those who are more reactive to stress in their life.

Five Common Relationship Patterns:

1. **Vitalized couples:** very satisfied, skilled in communication and conflict resolution.
2. **Harmonious couples:** mostly satisfied across most areas of their relationship.
3. **Conventional couples:** Somewhat satisfied, often committed, not as skilled in communication or conflict resolution.
4. **Conflicted couples:** Lower level of satisfaction and struggle in their relationship.
5. **Devitalized couples:** Lowest level of satisfaction and have broken relationship.

David Olson & Jeffery Garrett (2006)

Positive Couple Agreement Score Scale Means for Couple Types in the Validation Sample



Report Section

- Background Information 3
- Couple Typology / Strength & Growth Areas 4
- Overall Satisfaction & Idealistic Distortion 5
- Relationship Dynamics 6
- Commitment & Abuse 7
- Personal Stress Profile 8
- Core Relationship Categories 9-17
- Additional Customized Categories 18-20
- Couple Map 21
- Family Map 22
- SCOPE Personality Scales 23-25

Couples in successful marriages experience a great number of personal benefits

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Teamwork | 7. Good Neighbors |
| 2. Self-discovery | 8. The Best Caregivers |
| 3. Maturity | 9. Friends |
| 4. Wealth-building | 10. Children |
| 5. Healthy Lifestyles | 11. Mental and Emotional Health |
| 6. Workplace Success | 12. Sex |

Source: Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher, "The Case for Marriage"

CLM Marriage Assessment

- 1A. We approach our life together as a team.
- 1B. We know how to tackle a project together and successfully complete it.
- 2A. My spouse is very gifted and uses his/her gifts to enrich our family.
- 2B. My spouse is very aware of my gifts and encourages me to use them to enrich our family.
- 3A. Marriage brings out the best in me.
- 3B. I can look back on my marriage and see how, through it, I have become a better person.
- 4A. I am satisfied that we have the money we need to live the life-style we want to live.
- 4B. We agree on our approach to money, how we are to save, spend, and give a portion of it to charity.
- 5A. We are committed to and work at living a healthy lifestyle including nurturing a spiritual life.
- 5B. We have a healthy balance of work, leisure time, diet, exercise, spirituality, and sleep.
- 6A. My relationships at work (or home for the homemaker) are very positive and productive.
- 6B. I am confident at what I do, and receive affirmation and encouragement for it.

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CLM Marriage Assessment

- 7A. My spouse takes good care of me when I am not feeling well.
- 7B. My spouse is the first person that I turn to for care when I am not feeling well.
- 8A. It is very important to us to be a good neighbor and pay attention to what is going on in the community.
- 8B. We are active in helping our neighborhood and community become a better place to live.
- 9A. My spouse and I are good friends and have fun going through life together.
- 9B. We regularly make time for fun and leisure activities that we do together.
- 10A. For those with children: Our children wonderfully enrich our marriage.
- 10B. Parenthood has brought us closer together.
- 11A. We have little stress in our lives. We exercise, eat right, and make time for spirituality.
- 11B. We are very good at dealing with conflict and dealing with difficult issues.
- 12A. I am satisfied with our sexual life and find it pleasurable, meaningful, and frequent enough.
- 12B. As we get older we are able to speak with each other about our changing needs related to sex.

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Score Computation & Interpretation

Score Computation

Number of 1s: _____ x 1 = _____

Number of 2s: _____ x 2 = _____

Number of 3s: _____ x 3 = _____

Number of 4s: _____ x 4 = _____

Total = _____

Score Interpretation

■ Without children:

- 22 or less = Very Successful Marriage
- 23 - 44 = Successful Marriage
- 45 - 66 = Marriage Needs Attention
- 67 - 88 = HELP!

■ With children:

- 24 or less = Very Successful Marriage
- 25 - 48 = Successful Marriage
- 49 - 72 = Marriage Needs Attention
- 73 - 96 = HELP!

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Marriage & Emotional Assessment Tool

Marriage & Emotional Assessment Tool



Date ____ / ____ / ____

Client Name _____ Case Number _____

Interpreter _____ Language _____

This form should be used when the initial intake suggests issues regarding the client's good faith marriage and/or emotional abuse during marriage. The questions are intended to be a conversational aid, and the interviewer should always ask the client for more detail when necessary.

Marriage & Emotional Assessment Tool

Previous Marriages

Have you been previously married? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What type of marriage? ☐ Traditional ☐ Civil ☐ Religious ☐ Other (explain) _____

How many times? _____

What country was your previous spouse a citizen of? _____

Did you ever file for immigration benefits through your previous spouse? (either for yourself, or for your children) ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, what happened? _____

When were you divorced? _____

Why did you get divorced? _____

Do you have the divorce decree? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has your current spouse been previously married? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many times? _____

When was he divorced? _____

Do you have the divorce decree? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you know at the time of your marriage to him, whether he was still married? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Marriage & Emotional Assessment Tool

Current Marriage

When did you first meet your current spouse? _____

Why did you decide to get married? _____

When and where did you marry your current spouse? _____

Do you have the marriage certificate? If not, why not? ☐ Yes ☐ No (explain) _____

Are you still currently married to your husband? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If not, when was the final divorce decree? _____

If yes, when was the last time you had contact with him? _____

What was your daily life like with your husband? (who did the chores, paid bills, social life, etc.) _____

Marriage & Emotional Assessment Tool

Emotional Abuse

Did he often get angry? _____

When got angry, what did he do? _____

Did it seem like he got angrier than a normal person would? (would he over-react?) ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did he insult or make fun of you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What did he say/what words did he use? _____

How often? _____

Did he ever do it in public? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you feel like you had to change yourself to avoid his insults? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did he try to keep you away from your family and friends? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did he destroy your possessions? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did he threaten to divorce or leave you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how does your culture view divorce? _____

What would have happened to you if he had divorced you? _____

Did he ever invade your privacy? (read your mail or email, listen to phone conversations and messages, look through personal belongings? Etc.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

How? _____

How often? _____

How did this affect you personally? _____

Did he ever hide or destroy important papers or personal belongings? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did he make any threats to harm you or your family? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did he threaten to turn you in to immigration? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did he threaten to or actually divulge personal secrets to others OR embarrass you in front of family and friends? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did he ever tell you he could legally hurt or control you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Marriage & Emotional Assessment Tool

Proving It

Have you sought mental health counseling? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you been to a domestic violence shelter because of his abuse? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Were there ever any other people around when he was emotionally or verbally abusive to you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you tell anyone about his emotional or verbal abuse? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Marriage Checkup

Areas of your Marriage	Dissatisfied Satisfied									
Financial management	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Companionship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Spiritual Growth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Leisure Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Friends & Extended family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Community & Church Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Parenting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Romance & Intimacy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Household responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Conflict Resolution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sexual Fulfillment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Batson, W. (2008). Tools for a Great Marriage: Family Builders Ministries.

Marriage Checkup

Q1- What are the best aspects of your marriage?

Q2-What are the areas that cause the greatest stress in your marriage?

Q3-What are you going to do during the next 90 days to build on the best aspects of your marriage and minimize the areas that cause the greatest stress in your marriage?

Summary

- Marriage Assessment – Domains
- Gender difference in Assessment
- Couples Assessment – Three groups
- Rationale to use Assessment with Couples
- Important Marriage Assessment Tools
- Marriage Checkup

References

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Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher, The Case for Marriage

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