Couple Awareness and Communication

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Along with many other psychologists and sociologists, I am alarmed by the rapid increase in divorce rates. Toffler, in *Future Shock*, suggests one result of increasing technology might be the break up of the basic family unit.

Gone are the days of the average couple meeting and settling down in the same town they have always lived in, surrounded by a secure and stable milieu. No longer are most women satisfied to take on the role of housewife, accepting their main responsibility as cleaning, cooking, and clothing their families.

A marriage in our increasingly changing society is made up of two people who are going to learn and grow in different directions. Trying to force growth at the same rate and direction is disastrous. In order to have a fully actualized marriage the couple must learn to communicate their needs, desires, expectations, and growth to one another. Towards this goal the CAC* approach is valuable.

Peter Fleming
Director, The Pellin Institute

Note: *Couple Awareness and Communication = CAC*
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COUPLE AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION

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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS
The CAC approach embodies the knowledge of four different psychological dictums—Gestalt Therapy (Perls), Behavior Modification (Skinner), Effectiveness Training (Gordon), and Contribution Theory (Fleming, Pellin). In each of their respective sections I have included a brief summary of their overall approach and certain segments included in the CAC Group Program. It is important to note that these sections are included only as a refresher/introduction and that the counsellor is expected to have a working knowledge of these areas.
GESTALT THERAPY
"The immediate aim of Gestalt Therapy is the restoration of awareness." In Gestalt Therapy there is a main goal of making the individual whole, and releasing his potential. Awareness itself will bring development and change. We can become greatly healed by becoming conscious of the unconscious parts of ourselves.

The Gestalt Therapist brings with him to the situation his own ideas. Gestalt is concerned with humanness not as defined by psychoanalytical and behavioral terms. The emphasis is on positive directions and goals of living, and Gestalt is designed to help the individual produce them. The patient specifies changes he desires in himself, and together with the therapist he slowly increases his awareness of how he defeats himself. The therapist helps him experiment with change. Blocks in awareness and behavior are revealed as they emerge. Increased awareness of our avoidances and the ability to expand our experiences will increase our capacity for living.

The basic principals of Gestalt Therapy are largely the work of one man, Frederick S. Perls. Fritz Perls founded his ideas in the concept that nothing exists except the now. He believed that now=experience=awareness=reality; that the past is no more and the future is not yet. Working in and with the now is the base for doing Gestalt therapy.

If we put together the phenomenological approach to therapy, that is, the awareness of what is, and the behavioral approach with its emphasis on behavior in the now, we have Gestalt Therapy. The Gestalt
approach attempts to understand the existence of an event through the way it happens, and tries to understand becoming by the "how" rather than the "why" through pervasiveness and through the tension of unfinished situations. In a neurosis a part of our personality or our potential is not available, for our behavior and emotions are unknown to us.

Thinking is rehearsing for the role we believe we must play in society. When we are not sure in a situation whether or not our performance will be well received, we get stage fright. This stage fright is defined in Gestalt terms as anxiety. Anxiety is the time between the present and the future, and being caught in the time lapse.

"I maintain that all therapy that has to be done can only be done in the now." What is going on this minute matters, and anything else can be interfering. A gestalt technique to let us understand and stay in the now is the "awareness continuum". This exercise means discovering and being fully aware of each actual experience. While we stay with this some unpleasant situation arises and we are aware of that situation, we experience the situation and react to it. This enables us to deal with that situation, rather than avoiding. Avoiding situations lets us remain with the concept that we are children. Maturation is the development from environmental dependency to self-support.

In life and in therapy we come to points where we are stuck between our child concept and becoming self-supporting. The Gestalt term for this is "impasse". An impasse occurs when we cannot produce our own support and when environmental support is not forthcoming. Psychoanalysis
tends to foster childishness in two ways: 1- by continuously relating
issues to a father image, to childhood trauma, or to transference.
2- by telling the patient through an intellectual interpretation that
the therapist knows more than the patient knows about himself, that the
patient is stupid and immature. This prevents the person who is in therapy
from understanding and discovering him.

In the now we are behaving in a certain way that will or will
not facilitate our development, our acquisition of a better ability to
cope with life. What we do now will or will not make available what was
unavailable before, help us fill the voids in our existence. Learning and
discovering is actually uncovering our own ability in order to find our
potential, to see what is going on inside ourselves. Through this learning
we can discover how we can cope with difficult situations.

Splits in our personality result from the separation of the two
sides of our nature. We have disassociated ourselves from other parts of
our personality, and we need to integrate our opposites in order to become
whole. Gestalt Therapy places a strong emphasis on centering, on reconciling
the splits in ourselves so that they no longer waste energy struggling
with each other, so that they may join and be a productive combination.

In Gestalt Therapy we look at how we manipulate our language.
The more alienated we are from ourselves, the more we will use nouns
rather than verbs, especially the word "it". "It" is a thing, used
to avoid being alive. When we are alive, we talk; we are voicing.
When we are "dead" we "have" a voice with words. We need to replace "it"
with the word "I". By doing this we own more of our actions. We need to say "I hurt" rather than "it hurts", "I am happy" rather than "it makes me happy". (See appendix for transcript of Gestalt group)

When looking at the process of Gestalt Therapy it is helpful to examine what are called the layers of neuroses. The Gestalt Therapist sees the patient move through several stages to get to greater awareness. The first stage or layer is called the phony layer. A person who is in this stage will play games; act in a way he believes he should act rather than doing what he really wants to do. After this, the person moves into a layer of phobic feelings, during which time he is frightened of or resists change. Here something called the impasse occurs. The impasse is the awareness of being stuck in one place, being unable to get out of the trap we are in. When the person moves through the impasse feelings, a third layer appears. During this time the person becomes implosive, inwardly turned, introspective. This is often a dead time, with a lot of stillness and thought. After the person has been implosive for some time the explosion or fourth layer occurs. The explosive layer is the realization or the awareness, which is demonstrated by experiencing joy, grief, anger or orgasm. The power of the explosion depends upon how much energy has been tied up. The last and final stage is the authentic layer in which the person responds on a genuine, sincere, and game free basis.

"Projection means you imagine the other person is feeling an emotion that is really your own." We often imagine that those around us are acting the same toward us as other people did in our past. This doesn't necessarily mean we ourselves are acting that way. What we are
doing is projecting our feelings onto another person. Guilt is projected resentment. When we feel guilty we can find resentment as the nucleus of our guilt. Resentment allows us to hang on, to remain where we are. We need to let go of our resentments.

Dreams are important in Gestalt Therapy as a massage from ourselves to ourselves. The dream is speaking to whatever part of us that is listening. Dreams are a spontaneous expression. Every part of the dream is a creation, a part of the dreamer. We often try to project our dreams, to disown, to alienate certain parts of ourselves and put them out into the world rather than having them available to our own potential. To own these parts again we must use special techniques known to Gestalt therapists.

When the therapist avoids interpretation, the patient finds out more for himself. In dreamwork the therapist tries to find the repetitions in the dream, and to pick up on the avoidances. Then the patient "talks" to these parts, by using an empty chair to represent the parts. It is important for the person to play objects in the dream as well as people. We tell a lot about ourselves by becoming the objects in our dream.

Patient: I am walking along carrying my briefcase...

Therapist: Be the briefcase.

P: Okay...I am small and brown and square. On the outside I am covered with hard, thick leather. I have a thick outside to protect the important stuff inside. I've got to keep the stuff inside. I have a lot of secrets to protect...
The more the therapist refrains from telling the patient what he is like and what he feels, the greater chance the patient has of discovering himself and not being misled by the concepts and projections of the therapist.

Nature creates emotions as a means of relating, not as something to be discharged. We were made to cope with the world in different intensities. When we are aware of ourselves and of others, we are always aware of something. This does not mean we are aware of "everything", but rather of some "one thing" which emerges. At this time we need to listen well to ourselves, and listen to the voices within us which speak to us. By listening carefully we can discover who the voice is which speaks to us. The voice may be one of the parts of ourselves, or be someone else.

Gestalt Therapy has a thoroughness and applicability to every day life. The healthy organism in its environment is constantly attending to matters of importance and to maintenance. These transactions keep our equilibrium running smoothly. Awareness can facilitate our ability to put a concentration of energy into complex situations.

In Gestalt work we don't need to wait until we feel an apparent emotion. We can start from scratch. There are two positions from which to work. One is from a specific incident, feeling, or problem which has emerged for us. The other is from the place of just wanting to "work" and not having a specific idea. Either way, something will emerge. "By peeling away the skins of the onion that is my whole complicated personality, I can reach the true feelings underneath."
Sometimes the feeling which seems apparent is directed toward a present day person or event and is only a disguise that covers a reaction toward something from our past. By uncovering the present we also uncover and face the past, learn to accept and live with that part of us which is our past. When we over react to someone or something in the present because of someone we are aware of from our past, it means we have "swallowed down" that person. The person stays in us like an undigested piece of food, and the way to digest them is through experiencing them as a part of ourselves. When we blame our mother for hurting us, we ourselves are hurting. Until we encounter that mass of indigestion, we will hurt others in the way that we were hurt. To grow to our full potential we need to go back to the unfinished situations we contain, to let ourselves feel the emotions we have pushed away, and to experience the parts of ourselves which are just like the people who have hurt and frustrated us. This is real therapy work, and by doing it we can chew up the undigested lumps of people, integrate what is useful to ourselves, and spit out the rest.

Gestalt Therapy is a way of consciously acting out our unconscious fantasies. In Gestalt Therapy we are on our own to discover in ourselves where we are. Some Gestaltists believe that nobody ever got better in the psychiatrist's office. Insights alone aren't enough, we need self-awareness plus experience in new behavior in order to change.

The difference between the psychology of adjustment and Gestalt Therapy is that in adjustment we want only to be able to get along better
with our neuroses. In Gestalt Therapy we are really grown oriented.
We want to know who we are, and we are willing to give up our defenses
and be vulnerable for a while. Self hatred can feel like helplessness.
We are scolding ourselves for being bad or sick or stupid. The truth
is that we wouldn't be scolding ourselves if we were all bad. The
scolding proves we have standards for ourselves; that part of us "wants"
to be better. We get courage from our hope for change.

"As awareness leads to some action, so does the deliberate
acting lead to expanded awareness." By becoming our unconscious
activity we increase our awareness of the activity. When we increase
our awareness we begin to learn who we are, what we feel, and what we
do to ourselves.
HUMANISTIC BEHAVIORISM
Behaviorism has come a long way since Pavlov and his experiments with salivating dogs. Today it is a major branch of psychology and must be at least considered in any new approach. "Behavior is controlled by its consequences" is a simplistic but accurate overview of behaviorism's theoretical viewpoint. It is no longer necessary to spend years delving into a client's childhood, the only important thing is the behavior occurring in the here and now. The way we behave is a direct result of past conditioning and present consequences. These consequences can be labeled into three general categories: reinforcement, extinction, and punishment. B. F. Skinner, who is responsible for the current behavioral system of operant conditioning, stresses that the most effective and important tool in the modification of behavior is reinforcement. Reward or "positive reinforcement" is any consequence of a behavior which increases the probability of a reoccurrence of that behavior. Extinction is withholding the positive reinforcer, no matter what the response. The withdrawal of a positive reinforcer or presentation of an aversive stimulus immediately following a behavior which results in a decrease of the probability of a reoccurrence of that behavior is punishment. For instance, if I give my professor this paper and he gives me an A, he is reinforcing my work. If he says nothing about the paper, he is using extinction. If he gives me an E, he is using punishment. It is important to note that many behaviorists believe that punishment should not be used except in extreme cases. Rather, the behaviorists suggest that a school is better run with candy than a paddle.

Central to this approach is what is known as the shaping of behavior. In shaping behavior, the desired responses are "elicited"
and reinforced. The basis of behavior shaping rests on two principles: "Thorndike's Law of Effect--an organism will learn to repeat a behavior for which it is rewarded and to avoid one for which it is ignored or punished, and 2) complicated behavior patterns, particularly those that can be described as skillful, are gradually learned in small steps that come progressively closer and closer to some optimal level of performance." Skinner described therapy as a deliberate adjustment of the relationship between the person and the environment in which he interacts to the betterment of the net functioning of the whole system, which is partly defined by the therapist and partly through experiment.

This scientific approach to behavior has brought much criticism from the humanistic psychologists. "Behavior-control studies view personality as primarily a function of outside environmental stimuli, social interactions, and social roles. It is at once a highly optimistic (modifiability of behavior) yet threatening view (danger of imposing behavior on others) of man."

For years the behaviorists and existential psychologists have disagreed and fought one another on what seems to be irreconcilable differences. Recently there has been a movement to combine the two philosophies into a workable therapeutic model. Lois Brien points out that they "share in common a language that emphasizes operational definitions of specifiable behaviors and a concern with the role of reinforcement or reward as a determinant of behavior. The behavioristic psychologist further believes that observable behavior is the only legitimate subject matter of psychology, and the only criterion against which the
outcome of any experimental procedure, including psychotherapy can be evaluated. "The phenomenologist, on the other hand, considers all that goes on inside a person - that is, his sensations, perceptions, cognitions - in a word, his experiencing - as valid psychological data, even though these events cannot be verified but must be inferred and labeled as hypothetical constructs by another person. Thus changes in such constructs as self-concept or self-awareness, or ego control are acknowledged as valid psychological data and valid criteria against which the outcome of therapy can be appraised." Within the use of introspection lies the major conflict of the two philosophies. For the behaviorist, introspection is not acceptable data because clients' thoughts and feelings are neither observable or verifiable. The procedure lacks the chief methodological virtue of science: a position of an unbiased observer outside the system which he observes. Consequently it is impossible for the therapist to remain objective when working with subjective data.

The humanistic psychologists argue that the client's perceptions are true for him at the moment, and in that sense no verification is needed. On one hand, Gestalt therapists have combined these views by working with the observable, the obvious - body postures and movements, tone of voice, and accepting the client's cognitions as acceptable material to work with. However, behaviorists further argue that extreme display of emotionality is undesirable, and the Gestalt therapist is in fact reinforcing the displays and not trying to help the client work through his feeling which produced the outburst.
Osgood in attempting to resolve this specific conflict and overcome the limitations of the S-R model has proposed a mediating stage between the stimulus and response. This is a covert process representing the person's internal cognitive reactions to the stimulus, producing a S-r-s-R model. If true, this intervening variable must be considered and dealt with in order to produce effectual or long lasting change in the individual.

Many of these theoretical/discrepancies between behaviorism and phenomenology are open for debate. However, in an applied level the two approaches can be combined, lending an increased objectivity to the phenomenologist's approach and a greater humanistic acceptability to the behavioral approach.

William T. Sellman, a private psychotherapist in Michigan, has applied this model in his work and found it "amazing--the two techniques join together quite well to produce an effective approach for change". He cites the case of Helen who came to him excessively overweight. She had previously participated in a psychotherapeutic group and later a behaviorally oriented weight reducing program without achieving any satisfactory results. Mr. Sellman set up a reinforcement schedule for weight loss, and concurrently had Helen participate in an ongoing Gestalt group. Within three months she had lost 45 pounds. He attributes this success to Helen systematically working through her personal unresolved conflicts which contributed to her nervous eating habits and then reinforcing her weight loss. Behaviorism's main tactic of reinforcing acceptable behavior, or in humanistic terms, giving support
for a person's strengths, is a powerful tool to use in conjunction with more traditional approaches. Sellman's concentration on Helen's weight loss is such an example. Although case studies such as this one are not empirically controlled, they do lend credibility to further research and application of the humanistic behavioral approach.
EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING
Dr. Thomas Gordon has developed a program for increasing the "effectiveness" of parents, teachers, administrators and others through focusing on some basic communication skills. His major premise is that these skills are teachable and that people in a relationship can live in harmony by finding equally satisfying solutions to their problems. These skills are active listening, learning to send "I" messages, and no-lose problem solving.

Active listening is listening from an objective, open-minded place. When a person is able to feel and communicate genuinely her acceptance of another, she has a great capacity for being a powerful helping agent to the other person. When we are able to communicate acceptance, we give the people with whom we are communicating with a relationship in which they may grow freely, develop their potentials, make constructive changes, learn to solve problems, and generally move toward psychological health and creativity. Acceptance is like soil to grow in, to become what we are capable of being. Couples then must learn how to demonstrate their feelings of acceptance, their "good will" for one another.

The effect of acceptance is an inner feeling of being loved. When we feel truly loved inside, we have a place in which to grow and change within the safety of being loved. Acceptance must be demonstrated in order to have influence. We can demonstrate this by learning to talk to each other in a constructive way. Therapeutic communication means the messages have a healthy effect. This sort of communication makes the other person feel better, encourages her to talk, helps her express
her feelings, and fosters increased self esteem. It also helps to reduce fear and opens a road to constructive change. We can demonstrate our acceptance in two ways - through speaking and through listening.

Non-verbal messages are important in the language of acceptance. These messages aren't spoken, yet are received by the listener. We send these messages via postures, facial expressions, gestures, through the distance we keep from each other, through the rigidity or flexibility of our bodies. If we wave our hand away from us with the palm outward, the message may be received as "get away, don't bother me". If we change the position of the palm toward us and wave toward ourselves the message can be interpreted as "come here". The first gesture communicates non-acceptance, the second, acceptance. Another way to show acceptance is by not interfering or correcting. Often a wife will correct her husband's attempts in the kitchen, or he will correct her when she lifts the hood of the car. Then they complain and feel resentment when chores are not equally shared. A third way of showing acceptance non-verbally is saying nothing. This gives partners a chance to talk freely without interruption until they have clearly stated their message.

Verbal communication can be achieved through active listening and reflective responding. Talk is essential, and how partners talk to one another is crucial. Correcting, lecturing, whining, shouting, mocking or judging are not effective ways of communicating. The key to effective communication lies in the way we speak to each other.
To begin with, we must learn the simple "door openers" which promote further communication. These responses do not communicate any judgments or feelings, they merely convey that the person is listening, is ready for conversation. They invite the partner to continue. A few of the basic responses might be:

"I see"
"You did, huh"
"No fooling"
"Tell me about it"
"Would you like to talk about it"
"I'd be interested to hear your point of view"
"This seems like something important to you"

These "door openers" convey acceptance and respect by telling the partner "you have a right to express how you feel". We feel good when we are made to feel worthy, respected, significant, accepted, and loved. By offering verbal invitation we become open to seeing each other's expressiveness and expansiveness.

Active listening is a remarkable way of involving the sender of the message with the receiver. What often goes wrong in communication between two people is that there is a misunderstanding of the sender's message on the part of the receiver and neither is aware that the misunderstanding exists. Below is an example:

Wife: Preparing meal
Husband: "How much time until dinner's done? It won't be long, will it?"

If the wife decodes accurately, she will understand her husband is hungry. But suppose she decodes the message to mean that he is anxious to eat so that he can run off to a meeting afterwards, leaving her alone? Then we would have a breakdown in communication. Here we have a problem, neither one understands the other. The wife then decides to check out with her husband what she has decoded. She says "I hear that you're in a hurry".
Then this gives him a chance to respond to her by saying "No, I didn't mean that. I meant that I'm really hungry and I want dinner to be ready soon". When the wife "fed back" her understanding of her husband's message, she was using active listening. In this case, she first decoded the message with a misunderstanding, but her feedback told him just that, so he sent another message. The second message brought real understanding. Here are some other samples of active listening:

| Wife sighs | "Well, I better do the dishes"
| Husband    | "Sounds like you're feeling tired and it looks to you like there's a lot of work to do"
| Wife       | "I sure am tired"
| Husband    | "You'd like some help"
| Wife       | "Yes, I would"

| Husband    | "Guess what honey, I got the day off"
| Wife       | "You're sure feeling happy about that"
| Husband    | "Am I ever!"
| Wife       | "There's nothing to do around here"
| Husband    | "You're wondering what we could do today"
| Wife       | "Yes, let's do something together. Let's go for a picnic."

In active listening the receiver tries to understand what it is the sender is feeling, or what his message means. Then the receiver puts his understanding into his own words and feeds it back for the sender's verification. The receiver doesn't send a message of his own, he feeds back only what he feels the sender's message meant. It is important that the receiver not include evaluation, opinion, advice, logic, or analysis in the feedback.

There are certain attitudes which must be put together in order to use active listening. Without these attitudes, the method will sound false, empty and insincere. You must want to hear what your partner has
to say, which means you must be willing to find time to listen. If you
don't have time then you need to say so. You must be able to accept the
feelings of your partner, whatever they may be. Part of that is accep-
tance of feelings different from your own, or from those you feel your
partner "should" have. You must be genuine in your desire to listen and
be helpful. You must feel a deep trust for your partner, in his capacity
to handle his feelings and to work out his problems. You must understand
that feelings are not permanent, they change. Hate can turn to love, dis-
couragement to hope. You must be able to view your partner as someone
separate from yourself, as a unique person.

There is an obvious risk in active listening. It forces us to let
go of our own feelings and listen to things we often may not wish to hear.
Through listening to feelings which are laid for us to hear, we become more
genuine and more clear in our own feelings. Our attitudes and feelings
change when we listen to how our partner really feels. This can be scary.
"To be open to the experience of another invites the possibility of having
3
to reinterpret your own experiences."

Often we try to send messages which tell someone what they should do,
what they are like, how they have been wrong. In order to own our behavior,
we need to exchange the words "you" for "I". This is called sending "I messages'.
We sometimes try to disguise "you" messages with "I" messages, by saying things
like "I feel you are a slob". This is as much a you message as "You are a
slob". We can get around this by dropping the "I feel" and stating only
what we did or what happened. "I was disappointed" is a clear "I" message.
"I" messages are messages which come from us, which own our behavior and
our feelings, which do not try to blame or accuse another for what happened to us. These I messages should be put into circulation slowly in a relationship. If we rush into telling all of our pent up feelings at once, we erupt like a volcano. This is not helpful to the partner. We need to change a little at a time.

Unlike other feelings, anger is almost always directed at someone else. It is almost impossible for "I am angry" to not have an "at you" attached. Anger is usually apparent in us after we have experienced another feeling first. When a wife calls her husband at the office and nobody answers the phone, she is worried. She is scared. This is her initial feeling. When she discovers he stopped over at a friend's house, she becomes angry. She then turns her anger toward him, instead of saying "I was afraid". When a wife forgets to send her husband a birthday card, he is hurt. His secondary feeling is anger, and he expressed the anger rather than the primary feeling of hurt. We can overcome this by stopping to become aware of what is really going on inside when we are feeling angry. Sending "I" messages will eventually help us to understand what's going on inside each other. When we have a feeling for each other, we begin to be able to problem solve without being winners or losers. In effectiveness training, this is called "no-lose" problem solving.

When conflicts arise in a marriage, with effective communication we can learn to solve them without playing win-lose. Ideally, both partners want their needs met. No-lose is a method of problem solving through mutual agreement. No-lose can be easily employed to
resolve conflicts between individuals who possess equal or balanced power. When this method of problem solving is put to work, both partners win because the solutions arrived at are acceptable to both.

The no-lose method can be described briefly as follows: The partners encounter a conflict of needs. One partner asks the other to participate with him in an exploration of suitable solutions to the conflict. One, or both, offer possible solutions. They critically evaluate them and eventually make a decision on a final solution acceptable to both. No power is required to force compliance with the solution because both have accepted it and neither are resisting. Here is an example of no-lose problem solving:

| Husband  | "I'd like to spend today at the beach." |
| Wife     | "I'd rather go to an air-conditioned movie." |
| Husband  | "Well, I really want to be outside." |
| Wife     | "But it's hot at the beach, and I want to get cooled off." |
| Husband  | "What do you suggest we do?" |
| Wife     | "How about going for a picnic under the trees?" |
| Husband  | "That sounds okay with me, but let's go for a drive out into the country for our picnic. We can roll down the car windows and the breeze will keep us cool." |
| Wife     | "Okay. I'll pack the lunch and you get the blankets and other things into the car." |

In this example the couple used the no-lose method to come to an agreement about how to spend their day together that was suitable to both of them. No-lose problem solving works because a person is more willing and motivated to carry out a decision he made himself than one which is imposed and forced upon him by someone else. It is to the advantage to a couple to work out their differences so that they both are satisfied and come to an agreement where they both get something. Often in a
relationship it is easy for each of the people to simply go his or her own way to avoid having a quarrel. The example of no-lose problem solving shows that the couple were able to find an activity which they could share and which met the needs of them both.

Effectiveness training consists of basic learnable skills for relationships. Through the use of active listening, sending "I" messages and putting "no-lose" problem solving to work, much of the storm and stress of a relationship can be relieved, thus lending more time to the growing closeness of those who love each other.
CONTRIBUTION THEORY
Contribution Theory offers a way of understanding and healing our hurt by making a contribution. We can contribute from our hurt. It is not necessary to absolve past hurt but it is necessary to be aware of it, own it, and use it. "Growth is what we do with our pain."

There are two types of contribution--those which are conscious and those which are unconscious. When a conscious contribution is being made we are aware of the specific contribution and the authority and recognition we will receive for doing it. The most common example of this is making a contribution from our knowledge. The unconscious-identity contribution is made without knowing it. We are not aware of our self-identity--it is "the me that you see, the me that I am". Other people are keenly aware of our unconscious presence in the world. Self-identity is formed in the way our needs manifest themselves; how they develop and grow, are satisfied or unsatisfied over the year. Our identity evolves around two basics--what we do and what we feel. We change because of what we do, not because of what we talk about doing.

HURT ————> AUTHORITY ————> RECOGNITION

We develop authority by what we do. Authority is knowing with confidence and assuredness what talents, knowledge, and material goods we have from which we can make a contribution. It is a conscious contribution, and in order for authority to exist it must be a socially
acceptable force met with all the responsibilities it entails. Hurt without recognition drives us to develop authority—to continue to create until we reach authority. The true healing of hurt comes from recognition of our authority.

There are forces around our hurt which motivates us to build authority. Any hurt can be a motivating force to make us change. Each of us has different types of hurt which affect us and are manifested uniquely. However, there are a few broad areas of hurt that almost all of us have to a degree: the hurt of rejection, vanity, and hostility.

The hurt of rejection can begin very early in life. When a baby is put down, it can feel rejection and if that feeling isn't understood referrals can be made. A referral is something that happens to us in the present which reminds us of a past event—it cues a whole pattern of emotions. For instance, when I call up a girl for a date and find out she is "busy", I have a lot of feelings of rejection by referring back to the emotions involved in past instances of being let down. A person with a lot of rejectiveness should make a contribution around people work; teachers, social workers, psychiatrists. Acceptance is very much sought after and needed. Authority develops around sharing knowledge and caring. Feelings of accomplishment
come from helping and watching people grow.

Individuals who don't have a lot of rejectiveness will likely be cold, aloof, and wealthy. When J. Paul Getty's grandson was kidnapped, they had to cut his ear off before the millionaire would pay the ransom. He obviously didn't need family approval. This type of person is characterized by the motivating force of vanity.

The ache of rejectiveness compares to the emptiness of vanity. There is a need to play god—to feel on top of things. Acclimation, creativity, and risk taking are used to gain applause and admiration. Often "vain" persons won't want to share their secrets or knowledge. A person with the motivating force of vanity is likely to be in a profession such as acting, athletes, singing, or modeling.

At universities rejectives are grouped together and find it hard to let vanity show; especially around looking attractive and dressing up. It is important for all of us to express vanity. For instance, the healthiness of owning our vanity around sexuality allows us to enjoy and appreciate our bodies.

The motivating force of hostility centers around security needs. When security needs aren't met, we lash out. It is important to recognize and accept these needs, especially around space and material things. If our needs for security are met, we aren't possessive with people, we give up our need to control those people around us and those we love. The hurt of possessiveness can keep us in continual shakiness if we don't find
a way to satisfy our needs. We want our children/spouse to be all ours, but we must let them go. We can own a car, but we cannot own a person. If we try to own a person, we can hurt ourselves when the time comes to let go. Jealousy comes out of hostility; we often think of the people we love as our territory. One of the basic ways to develop authority is to build a secure territory and to have the materialistic things we need.

If we fail to recognize these needs, we force our pendulums to swing. For instance, I have a lot of pain around needing a permanent and secure place to live, it seems as though I'm always moving. When I think of moving out to San Francisco for three months, then moving again to a graduate school, I get really upset and high.

We get hurt when our emotions are very high or very low. Most emotional swings are compulsive and unconscious. We need to become aware of how we make ourselves high or low and we need advisors to help us recognize when our swings are hurting us.
Our true strength lies in the calm. Creativity and goals come from being high or low; production occurs when we are calm. Being in the calm is having the ability to tap our strength and talent. While in the calm we are aware of ourselves, others, and the overall pros and cons of a situation or decision.

The reason that we are low is that we were high. Energy takes us into a high. In a high we lack the awareness of how we are in our environment and of how we may be hurting others. We need highs to push ourselves. After a high, comes a low—the greater the high the greater the low. When we're low we are attracted to hurt and we welcome people who will feed that hurt. When low it is difficult to see the worthwhileness of a goal, but we need lows for the recharging of emotional energy, impetus for change, and development of goals. When low, everything seems worthless and dark, we lack the awareness of what is useful.

A tolerable low or high is being able to see both the positive and negative aspects of a situation. Intolerable lows/highs are very unpleasant and involve not seeing or making choices; only feeling the intensity of emotion and being unaware of others' needs. This results in further pain and hurt. Consequently, the swinging can become a vicious cycle, low-high-low, consistently getting more and more hurt. In order to get out of a low we need rest and feelings of accomplishment to bring us into the calm. If we have gotten feelings of accomplishment from the high or rested afterwards, the low is lessened. It is sometimes necessary to stop ourselves from getting too high so as not to require struggle out of the ensuing low. Rest keeps the pendulum from swinging. It is both simple
and teachable. Rest is needed to integrate, mush up, and digest our work and emotional experiences. Within rest lies our true self, without rest lies our self destruction. We need rest and we sabotage ourselves around rest really easily. Sleep isn't necessarily restful, it can bring both highs and lows. The pendulum is relatively still when we rest. We are continually in a very high or low space without rest. What is restful differs for each person; mainly it is doing something enjoyable that brings us to our calm. Sitting outside while reading a book is restful for me; swimming a long distance isn't--but it is for Joanne who was a lifeguard. Each person needs to determine what is restful for them. Rest is not escape--the lack of rest leads to escape. Addictions come from people not knowing how to get the rest they need. If a person is not getting enough rest his pendulum swings, and big mistakes occur. The most important thing is to teach the person how to rest, then find out why he isn't getting the rest he needs. Through rest we gain strength to create; the feelings we get from creating, from completing a project/task are what keeps us going. These Feelings of Accomplishment (FOA) can also bring us out of a low and into a calm. FOAs occur when we do something and are successful in doing it. "When we put effort toward a goal we can get feelings of accomplishment from the day-to-day, moment-to-moment tasks we perform to reach that goal." We must be in touch with these small tasks in order to ever reach our goal.
The accepted effort is a smooth flow of energy in which we are enjoying what we are doing. We are then unconscious of the effort we are putting out, but we are conscious of the task itself. When an accepted effort turns into a rejected effort we become aware of each particle of effort we are putting forth. Overshooting our goals by too much enthusiasm or goal orientation can make an effort rejected. We need to reach out to other people and feel ordinary (okay) about our efforts in order for them to be accepted.

We achieve this purpose through a series of accepted efforts and feelings of accomplishment. Just as there are little FOAs (writing a letter) and big FOAs (finishing a doctoral thesis) there are small and large purposes. "Superficial purpose" is doing things which are fun and interesting—swimming, going to a party, or watching television. FOAs achieved from this are small and scattered. We need this here and now fun but it is not enough. The underlying purpose is having a long-term interest—raising a family, a career, having a home. It is something that is ordinary and grounds us. FOAs from this type of purpose are even and stable. The major defining characteristic is that the FOAs end—the kids grow up and leave, one reaches 65 and retires.
A friend's mother went through a period of being extremely depressed and low. She said she had felt so "empty" since all her children had either left home to get married or gone to college. The FOAs from her underlying purpose (raising a family) had come to an end. After this, she became increasingly involved in doing volunteer work with the blind, which led her into the last and most unknown type of purpose called the Broad Purpose. It is a life long interest in something that is never fully achieved (setting up an experimental free school such as A. S. Niel). There is a type of spark involved which results in a lot of large FOAs. The development of a broad purpose is often slow, unconscious, and doesn't occur until late in life.

Purpose is also development. "If I am not developing in a purpose, contributing from it, that purpose is not with me...Through purpose people can make works of art of their lives. Through purpose the most negative of emotions can be useful. Repressed groups are often not taught about purpose. It is a lesson kept for the privileged."
Purpose

To teach the skills of awareness and communication in order to facilitate the development of a more satisfying relationship. There will be an opportunity to use these skills and the advice of the leader for individual couple problems, although it is not intended for individual psychotherapy. The program is of use both for prevention and intervention, as long as both partners fully agree to participate. Even so it should be noted that starting communication in the midst of a crisis is difficult, and may require more intensive work.

Clientele

This program is designed for any two persons, regardless of sex or marital status, who wish to build on their strengths which already exist, and to evaluate their weaknesses.

Duration

Short term. Twelve weekly group meetings, six biweekly individual conferences, and one intake interview for each couple. Groups will last approximately $2\frac{1}{2}-3\frac{1}{2}$ hours, individuals one hour. Group size to average six couples, one leader.

Caseload

Each program entails a total of 78 hours (36 group, 36 individuals, 6 intake). Time investment per week is six hours (one group, three individuals). Couple average per program is 13 hours. Maximum caseload for a leader is six programs, 36 couples.
Cost and Availability

By utilizing a combination of group/individual techniques, CAC hopes to maximize the advantages of both while minimizing cost. After a training period, it is quite possible for para-professionals to assume the role of leader. This program is suitable both to the public and private agency.
GUIDE FOR THE TEACHER
No one is a Cinderella or Prince Charming. The tale of two people meeting, falling in love, having a few newlywed fights, and then living happily ever after is a dangerous and misleading myth. Building a satisfying relationship is hard work that starts on day one and continues until death. Yet it is one of the most rewarding and enriching processes we can undertake.

CAC is a common sense approach to working with couples. There is no such thing as a model or ideal for a couple. Each couple has its own individual strengths and weaknesses. Set up a model and people will critically evaluate themselves against it, ending up with a whole new set of "shoulds".

Communication and awareness can envelop all types of individual differences. They are teachable skills. In all the books I've read, I have never heard a more simple or accurate definition of awareness as that given by a girl who walked into a crisis center and said to a friend, "When somebody says something to me I just answer back in my head. But sometimes I really listen to them and it does something to me. I think that's what awareness is". Communication is relaying to another person what that "something" is.

An essential tool in communication is evaluating against hurt. Evaluating against hurt is being aware of how your actions affect others—whether an action will do another more harm than it does you good. For instance, is it more hurtful for Mary to hear that you think her nose is
a bit crooked and ugly or for you to keep this feeling to yourself?

This example is obvious, but evaluating against hurt is not always so easy. It is a personal process. Many times it is possible to communicate something potentially hurtful to the other person without hurting him.

Let's say I am an advanced skier and my wife Nancy is a novice. Instead of saying, "I really miss Sheila, she was such a great skier" or Your're a really bad skier", I can evaluate what I want from Nancy and communicate that. I might say, "Nancy, it gets really boring for me, spending all my time on the bunny hill. How about if you take some ski lessons? Then by the end of the season we can ski on the intermediate slopes together; and while you are having your lessons, I can ski on the more advanced slopes".

A couple may think this process is difficult, but it is one of the most useful tools for them to know.

Two people cannot live together without some sort of communication or awareness of each other. What they presently communicate about is the starting point - build on this, strengthen it in small steps.

Take a couple with the typical "paper at the breakfast table" routine, teach them how to communicate resentments, and you are weakening their relationship. This couple first needs to relearn the sharing of fun, excitement, and joy in small ways. In other words, a couple needs to be learning awareness and communication of both easy and hard things, involving both joy and anguish.

A common mistake of marriage counselors is to concentrate on only one side of the relationship, assuming that once the resentments are brought out into the open and dealt with, the sharing of joy comes
easily. This is just not the case. In order to deal with anything from huge pent up resentments to common everyday problems there must be a willingness or "good will" which is fostered by the sharing of the positive.

It is not good enough just to help a couple rebuild their foundation, reopen communication, or solve a few problems. They will be back in six months or a year at the counselor's office. Teach them how to keep their foundation strong, how to communicate openly, and how to solve their own problems. They must learn tools that they themselves can use.

One way to do this is to help a couple come to an awareness of their weaknesses and teach them how to build on their strengths. At least as much attention should be given to strengths as to weaknesses. I define a strength as a way we nourish ourselves and others; a weakness as a way we hurt ourselves and others. These definitions cut down the need to moralize. As a teacher you need to be aware of exactly what your morals and opinions are so that they don't enter into counseling as definite "shoulds and shouldn'ts". For instance, how do you react to unmarried, previously divorced, or racially mixed couples?

Since there is a good possibility of unmarried couples seeking counseling I'd like to talk a bit about marriage as an institution. We all have our own private views around getting married, coming from our religious backgrounds, upbringings, or our own experiences. Marriage as an institution does have its advantages, just as getting a bachelors
or high school diploma makes one more acceptable in the job market, having the socially sanctioned slip of paper certifying that one has been dutifully wed according to the state law makes one more acceptable to society. Getting married represents a commitment that is socially recognized by almost any member of society. Approaching someone and saying "here we are and we're living together" produces quite a different reaction and attitude than saying "I'd like you to meet my husband". Living together is a risk that many people are taking before getting married. Living together is not easy in society, however, it has definite advantages as a prelude to marriage. The time spent living with one another before becoming married can be very valuable as an introduction to life together. Taking time to begin to know the person you intend to marry can be eye-opening and help to take away some of the initial shock and hardship of beginning a marriage.

Although perhaps superficial, one way to get immediate recognition of a relationship is to have that slip of paper. Many job applications ask "are you married?" Some jobs assume that if you are married, you will be more settled and stay with the job longer. Telling interviewers that you are not married could be a mark against you. Looking for a place to live, buying a house, renting an apartment, are all made easier by marriage.

No matter how much one does not want to accept it, having recognition of a relationship is important. Recognition and support come more easily when married, especially around having children. Although the current "Hollywood" trend is to have children out of wedlock, it still is not socially accepted. I agree that it should
be accepted, but unless I am willing to live on a farm and be self-
sufficient, I at least have to consider society. Being legally
married and having children avoids the hassels of both the adult
and the child being ridiculed and condemned by others. When a child
enters into a relationship, its need must be considered. A couple
may decide to live together without being married, put up with some
problems and do fine, but I question the fairness of subjecting the
child to possibly being hurt by that decision.

Whether married or not, it is important to have a verbal or
perhaps spiritual commitment to each other. The commitment I'm re-
erring to is not along the traditional marriage vows of promising
each other to live together (and be happy) whether sick, strong, poor
or rich. In any relationship there is both positive and negative aspects
involving both joy and sorrow. A commitment is needed to work things
out, to keep sharing and communicating even when things get rough. This
commitment has to be there whether one is living together or legally
married. It must be verbalized and understood. Communication of this
commitment to one another is the beginning of a lasting relationship.

In this short discussion I have tried to keep my own opinions
and interpretations of marriage separated from advice. A counselor's
first responsibility is not to hurt anyone, thus creating a safe environ-
ment. During a group a counselor told me I was bad when I spoke sharply.
This "insight" was more useful for me when I later heard that she was
scared I would snap at her. When making interpretations or value judg-
ments the risk is taken of dumping part of ourselves on another person
without owning what is ours. "I messages" (see pages 27, 28) are just as important for the counselor to use as the participants.

It is necessary to facilitate a person's awareness by dealing with "obvious" - a physical concrete reality - and not interpretations. For example, an obvious is that someone is putting all their weight on one foot. The interpretation is that the person is feeling unbalanced and unsteady. An obvious is when George told Mary she was ugly and she cried. An interpretation is that George is mean and purposely wanted to hurt Mary. If a person has obviously hurt another, that awareness is important and should be pointed out to that person but not analyzed.

One way two people hurt each other quite obviously and easily is through competition. In every relationship there is bound to be some sort of competition. What is important is to recognize when it is happening and communicate about it. Contributions should be adding to each other and accumulating, they shouldn't be compared or in competition. It isn't necessary for each person to prove what he or she is contributing to the relationship. Taking one another for granted, having the attitude that "this is your job" is competition. The awareness of the other person is lost. One way to cut into this is to become aware of when, how and around what competition occurs. Then to sit down and whenever possible set clearly defined limits. For instance, if Mary is "better" figuring out the checkbook and Larry is better at helping the children with arithmetic, there is no reason to compete over who is better at math.
When this is not possible, just talking about competition, listening to one another, and gaining an increased awareness of one another can drastically reduce the competition.

Directly related to competition is blaming. When communication breaks down it is necessary to look at oneself and not start blaming. Blaming is looking at failure. Communicating doesn't mean agreeing on everything, but it does mean being aware of those things which are disagreed about. There must be communication around differences and that communication must not break down. When negative feelings occur they must be talked about. This is a matter of Communicating. The important thing is to say "we have a negative feeling and we need to communicate about it". This is not a matter of assigning blame.

One of these negative feelings is anger, leading to fights, arguments and disagreements. These are all normal and natural in a relationship. Anger is usually combined with another feeling, and it is important to be aware of both feelings. (See effectiveness section - pages 22-30) Anger is wrapped up energy that has to come out. If little bits of anger are not expressed, they accumulate, resulting in the classic blow up. Usually anger becomes hurtful and destructive when it occurs. One way of doing this is to give resentments and demands. A resentment is dislike or anger at another's actions, the demand is strongly asking the person to do something differently in the future. Like anger, resentments and demands should be given as they occur. It is important for the partner to listen to these, so it is usually a good idea not to respond to resentments right away.
When anger occurs our pendulum swings into the high, we lose an awareness of those around us, and we are potentially hurtful both to others and ourselves. (See contribution theory section - pages 31-39).

When high with anger many people become poisonous and run the risk of harming the relationship instead of improving it. The dilemma is letting the anger out and not being hurtful. Sometimes I feel I have to scream just because someone isn't listening to me; other times I scream because the energy is there. At these times the screaming is what is important, not the content. What I suggest to couples is that they decide upon a few words or phrases that when they get angry they can scream. When they get upset they can scream this phrase as loud as or as often as they want. After doing this, stop a few minutes and come down. Then continue communicating about the anger using resentments and demands. The agreement will continue, voices may become raised, but some of the potentially hurtfulness has been minimized.

The complementary to resentments and anger is appreciations. I have as much trouble giving appreciations as resentments. An appreciation is letting another know that you are thankful for something they have done, that you are aware they have done it. In some ways appreciations are like reinforcers. (Humanistic behaviorism - pages 16-21). We need to know we are appreciated and recognized. If Larry is working overtime to make up for the lack of Mary's wages because she is pregnant, he needs appreciation for that. At the same time Mary needs appreciation and support for having the baby. Appreciations should be given often, whenever that feeling occurs. It is easy to diffuse a resentment or appreciation by combining them together.
"I'm really angry that you changed the margins on my typewriter, but thanks for returning it" diffuses the anger. "You look really pretty tonight, but why did you use my toothbrush" diffuses the appreciation. Resentments and appreciations should be given separately with a time lapse between them.

Often when appreciations and resentments aren't freely given jealousy and envy may become predominating forces in the relationship. Jealousy is hard to work through because it involves an underlying insecurity of some sort, usually a fear of losing satisfaction of needs by losing the partner or a basic feeling of not being worthy of what the person does have. Envy occurs when some need isn't being met. Identifying the fear or lack of fulfillment is the crucial step to relieving obsessive jealousy and envy. The couple must communicate about these things, even though it may be painful. When dealing with this pain, each should be willing to comfort the other. By this sort of comfort I mean what a parent gives to a child who has fallen off a bicycle, but in a more adult way. This comfort is being taken care of: listened to, soothed, stroked. It is not taking care of the problem or getting rid of it. Saying "everything is okay, don't cry" is not true comfort, instead say "you're really upset, go ahead and cry. I'll hold you". When feeling scared or hurt we need both comfort and support, a combination of acceptance for being weak and support to help us deal with the problem. In any relationship the partners must be able to be both weak and strong and still have acceptance.

Muriel Shiffman, in her book "Gestalt Self Therapy", said
that her jealousy gradually subsided as she became increasingly secure in her relationship. Along with this process she used her techniques of self therapy to uncover her underlying emotions. A couple is made up of two individuals with their own personal problems which are bound to affect the relationship. Teaching the individuals Shiffman's techniques will help them work out on their own some of these difficulties which block their relationship. Briefly there are three different techniques:

I Exploring a known fantasy, one you have already discovered through self-awareness, intellectual observation of irrational patterns of behavior, or experiencing a hidden feeling in self therapy.

II Playing all the parts of a recurrent or disturbing dream.

III Playing an imaginary encounter with a person who had aroused an inappropriate reaction: irrational feeling, obsessive thinking, anxiety, depression, psychosomatic symptoms.

One of her own personal examples was based around feeling cold towards her own daughter:

What was happening to me? There must be something I was hiding to myself, something underneath that coldness. That was step one, recognize an inappropriate emotion. Step 2. Feel the apparent emotion? I was filled with righteous indignation: how ungrateful was she after all the freedom we gave her. We spoiled her. Step 4. What does this remind me of? All the freedom! I never had it so good! At her age home-life with my stepmother was like reform school. I lived in the dread of my stepmother's rage at the smallest infraction of her countless rules.

Suddenly I knew what the hidden feeling was—envy. It was as simple as that: I envied my teenage daughter for the freedom I had so desperately craved in my girlhood. So I let myself feel that envy and shame that went with it, and then it evaporated. The coldness, the feeling of separation from by daughter was gone too.
Along with the sharing of appreciations and "positive" things comes love, affection and sex. All three of these are different and need to be recognized as distinct. Love is a powerful awareness, one that is wanted and accepted. It is so powerful it can cut into the normal giving and receiving of a relationship. The classic line of "Have I got to tell you what I need and want? If you really love me you would know", is not necessarily true, no matter how much two people love one another. Because each person has a different set of referrals, it is necessary to communicate what is wanted in order to get it. These type of differences (or referrals) have to be spilled and spelled out. Just as desires change, so does love. The way a mother loves her baby changes as the baby grows up, and leaves home. As the child grows the mother's awareness of that child changes. The way two people love one another now is going to be different in five years. This does not mean better or worse, more or less. The love will just be different. A common pattern is to first fall in love with an image; two or so years later idiosyncrasies are noticed, and these small irritations cause incredible difficulties; for example, "you never used to slurp your cornflakes before". The person did, in fact, slurp their cornflakes all their life, but because we fall in love with an image, we did not notice that habit. After these are dealt with the couple begins to relate to each other as real people. When children are born both the dynamics and the awareness of a relationship change. A child's needs must often be met before the parent's, at least, the child brings with it new needs which must be considered. Often this presents a serious conflict and consequent readjustment. Knowing this "process" helps the couple realize that these difficulties are normal and natural.
The opposite of Love is indifference, not hate. Hate is a rejected or negative awareness, and indifference is the lack of awareness. No one can live consistently with hate, fear, or threats. Yet anger and occasional hate are part of the changing aspects of awareness in a relationship. Dave Pellin says, "You cannot destroy hate by destroying what you hate". You cannot destroy an awareness.

Affection involves a physical awareness. It can easily be confused with sex. Affection is two bodies soothing each other, giving one another comfort. The need for affection is much greater than the need for sex. Affection is having your hair brushed, your back scratched, getting a hug while shopping downtown, being held when you're upset. Two people can be feeling weak and upset and give affection to one another at the same time. Needs around affection have to be met outside the bedroom. If there are sexual problems in a relationship, one thing that might be lacking is the normal give and take of affection during the day.

Sex is the need for release, having the stimulation and high of an orgasm. In CAC a lot of attention is not directed primarily toward sex, because other than physical problems, most sexual difficulties result from not communicating. Does the couple feel free to tell each other what do do in order to reach sexual satisfaction? Granted, even if sexual needs are communicated, sex may become boring. In this case referring the couple to such books as The Joy of Sex can add the excitement of something new. In the case of physical problems referral to a doctor or even the Masters and Johnson report can be of benefit.
Needs around sex and affection change. Most people go through periods of needing a lot of sex or affection to not needing much at all. It's possible just to be turned off, not necessarily in regards to the specific person, but just to sex itself. This is part of the changing pattern of needs.

With all this change, communication has to be constant. Two people may have changing needs or disagree about major things but still communicate and have a satisfying relationship. This is communicating without having to win the argument, without having to convert the other person.

The CAC program presents skills which can lead to this type of open communication. Hopefully by learning these skills, the couple will be taking a major step towards making marriage a place where special communication needs are met, where most other needs are satisfied without always struggling, and when it is felt someone is really interested in who "I am". In other words, having a continuing, satisfying and enriching relationship.
INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP FORMATS
Individual Appointments

Taking risks in order to secure a more stable relationship is scary. The individual appointment gives you a solid block of time to reassure and support the couple's risk taking and growth. As much as possible their strengths should be stressed and ways of building upon those strengths should be discussed. Time for personal problems during groups is limited, so this time can be available for working through specific problems. Since you will only be seeing the couple individually every other week, it may be beneficial to make a progress report, i.e. how the exercises in and out of group are going for them.

It is my experience that the environment should be comfortable, with three chairs set up in a triangular fashion. The "typical" set-up of the counselor sitting behind a big desk literally distances the teacher from the clients. A comfortable, safe environment is essential in order to insure a willingness to work and take risks.
Group Format

At first glance, the group program may seem regimented. One reason for this is that the sequence of the groups is such that each group uses and builds upon the skills presented in the previous group. For each group there is an outline filled in with specific topics and exercises. This is to provide you with ideas and suggestions that have been effective with couples. Of course, the format is changeable and amendable to your personal ideas.

Essentially the group format is: a short discussion of a skill, an in-group exercise, time for working through personal couple problems, and directions for a take home exercise. Because of this take home exercise, there is up to a two hour time commitment out of group that the couple must fulfill. Also, I recommend each person keep a journal of their personal experiences in groups and in the take home exercises.

The basic material for the discussions is included in this guide. Since you will be leading these discussions and having direct contact with the couple, your personal beliefs, philosophies, and ideas are inherently more useful because you can "individualize" them for the specific group or couple. One of the more useful ways to teach skills is to use examples from the group, therefore, a portion of the discussion time might be used for this.

I anticipate that the time taken for personal problems in group could get out of hand quite easily. One way to minimize this is to make
clear that this time is not intended for individual psychotherapy. Rather, it is intended for resolving specific conflicts within a relationship. The method of counseling that you chose is personal. The CAC approach itself relies heavily upon behaviorism, Gestalt, Effectiveness Training, and Contribution Theory. However, since the purpose of this program is to teach the couple how to solve their own problems, the more ordinary the approach the better. By this I mean if in your counseling you use skills which the couple can readily learn (or will be learning by the termination of the program) then they will be more self-sufficient in problem solving. Using techniques which require extensive training is dangerous because the couple will get the impression that they need someone trained to help them resolve conflicts.

The group room itself should be comfortable and free from disturbance. Arranging chairs in a circular fashion promotes easy contact and discussion. It's important for the members to have contact and relate to one another. The group should provide a fertile ground for learning and growing. Because of this, one necessary rule is that no physical damage or harm is done to any person or property. This will insure a safe environment.
GROUP PROGRAM
Intake Interview

Group One  Expectations, Active Listening
Group Two  I Messages
Group Three Pendulum, Holding Back
Group Four  Love, Sex and Affection
Group Five  No-Lose Problem Solving
Group Six   Non-Verbal Communication, Rest
Group Seven Anger and Fighting
Group Eight Jealousy, Envy and Comfort
Group Nine  Competition
Group Ten   Saying No
Group Eleven Self Therapy
Group Twelve Purpose, Support Partners
INTAKE INTERVIEW

The purpose of the interview is not to collect details or facts, but to troubleshoot problems, observe communications, and relate pertinent information. Give a brief explanation of the program - its general philosophy, purpose and limitations. It is important that both partners attend the interview and that each be interested and willing to participate in the program. The necessary two hour time commitment to each other outside of group should be understood and agreed upon.

Questions should be asked so that you can get a good feel of the situation and the conditions under which the couple live. For instance, do they feel that finances, children, relatives, living space, or work pose problems or strain their relationship?

Each person will separately write down three strengths and three weaknesses of their relationship. These can be as little or as large as they wish. When they are finished, have a short discussion of the lists. Are there any strong disagreements? Does one person take the initiative over the other? Observe their communication.

Fees, meeting times for group and individual appointments will be set. They will be asked to consider their personal expectations between this time and the first group meeting.
FIRST GROUP MEETING

I Your Personal Introduction

II Exercise - Expectations
Pass paper and pencils to each person. Write down a short list of their own personal expectations - what they hope to accomplish in the program. It is important to keep these lists short, concise, and realistic. Starting with yourself, have everyone share their lists. No discussion.

III Discussion Active Listening (Effectiveness Section pages 22-27)

IV Exercise Active Listening
Choose someone you don't know and divide into pairs. Decide which of you will start by talking. Now, as your partner talks, see if you can use the skills of active listening. Remember the most important thing to do is to listen, talk only to clarify what is being said. For the talkers, tell your partner what it was like for you growing up. Share as many of your fears and joys as you feel comfortable telling. 30 minutes later, have partners switch roles. Whomever was the listener will now be the talker.

V Take Home Exercise
Come back together as a group. During the week, I want you to do a blind walk with your partner. Each of you take a turn to be the leader. When you are the follower, keep your eyes shut, except for a brief instant when your partner says click. In other words, you are a camera. As the leader you are the photographer, so lead your partner around the house and outside and when you see something interesting, position their head and
body and say "click". Remember that when you are leading, your partner cannot see, so be careful. As the follower you'll have to trust your partner. Do this for 30-40 minutes and then switch. Afterwards sit down and share your experiences, but do not discuss them. Try to use active listening in this instance and as much as possible this next week.
SECOND GROUP MEETING

I  Share experiences of the Blind Trust Camera Walk

II  Discussion  using I Messages (Effectiveness Training pages 27-28)

III  Exercise
    Break off into pairs, one person talking, the other listening.
    Give your partner I messages. If you feel stuck, then just
    stop until another thought comes. Switch after 10-15 minutes.

IV  Discussion  Personal Problems
    Back as a group, have a short discussion of using I messages.
    Was it easy or hard? When did you receive I messages and when
    were they "you" messages? Personal Problems is a time to use
    the advice and skills of the teacher for solving specific
    problems in your relationship.

V  Take Home Exercise  I Messages
    Set aside thirty minutes for four nights this week and do
    this same exercise we did tonight. Try to get comfortable
    with using this method so that it comes naturally.
THIRD GROUP MEETING

I DISCUSSION Pendulum (Contribution Theory pages 35-37)

II EXERCISE Getting High
Find partners, or threes, with someone other than your spouse, with whom you feel you could get high. Now go away and get high, doing any activity which makes you high.
Leader intervenes after people seem high, tells them to freeze, then listen to their breathing and come down. Have them get high again, come down again. This exercise not only shows us how we get high, but how to come down when we are very high.
Take a fifteen minute break afterwards and tell people to quietly spend time by themselves.

III DISCUSSION Personal Problems
Talk about how people see themselves as getting high, how it affects their ability to communicate.

IV EXERCISE Holding Back
Get together with your partner. Explore how you hold back from each other. Do this by saying this sentence, "I'm holding back from telling you..........." and finish. Switch back and forth using this sentence. No discussion. The exercise should last 15 minutes.

V TAKE HOME EXERCISE
This week continue using I messages and active listening.
Be aware of when you are high and low. Set aside two half hour sessions. Do the same exercise as we just did, but instead
use "I hide my feelings from you by......." After each session spend a half hour apart, remembering what your partner has said to you.
FOURTH GROUP MEETING

I Discussion Love, Sex and Affection (CAC Section pages 54-56)

II Exercise Ideal Mate
Pass out paper and pencils. Make a want ad for your ideal mate. Include specifics. What qualities would she/he have? Take 15 minutes to do this. Reread your ad, and remember that your ideal mate does not exist. Break up into pairs with your partner. Decide who will start. Spend 10-15 minutes repeating and finishing this sentence: "I expect you to........" Switch after each sentence.

III Personal Problems

IV Take Home Exercise Wants and Needs
Take turns expressing what you need from each other. Be very specific and detailed as you tell your partner what you need from him. Begin each sentence with the words "I need...." Take about fifteen minutes to make a long list of needs. Now take turns saying exactly the same things you just said, only replace "I need" with "I want". Be aware of how you feel as you say this new sentence. Are your things really need or wants? Are your needs something that spares you the inconvenience of doing something for yourself? Now repeat the sentences with "I want" and add whatever comes into you head. The word "wanting" has two basic meanings: to desire and to lack. Go over these same lists of wants and needs again, and express the feeling of lacking or absence that you feel in yourself that lies behind the want or the need. For example,
if my want is "I want you to approve of my housekeeping",
then the lack might be "I feel a lack of approval for what
I do", or possibly, "I lack a feeling of confidence in my own
work". Try to be really honest in expressing and taking
responsibility for your own feelings of lacking. Now take
five or ten minutes to share your experiences as you did
this, and to discuss what emerged in this experiment.

This exercise comes from John O. Stevens exercises for
couples, pages 197-8 in Awareness: exploring, experimenting,
experiencing.
FIFTH GROUP MEETING

I Discussion  No-Lose Problem Solving
Using examples from the group  (Effectiveness Training pages 28-30)

II Exercise  Planning an Activity
Pair up with your partner. Decide the day and time for you to do some activity. Then decide what you both will do. Do not use something you have already planned. Use no-lose problem solving.

III Personal Problems

IV Take Home Exercise
This week use the no-lose method at least two times. Be especially aware of how you and your mate communicate non-verbally...facial expressions, movement of arms, posture, etc.
I  **Exercise  Molding and Gibberish**
Pair off with someone other than your mate. Talk in gibberish, express emotions such as anger, sadness, being happy, bitchy, whiny, bossy, or comforting. The leader directs when to change emotions. These emotions should be expressed through the tone and volume of your voice, but without using words. Spend a couple of minutes with your eyes closed, listening to your breathing. Now pair off with your spouse. Take turns pretending that your partner is a mannequin. Position his body and facial expression the way they look when they are angry, sad, or holding back. When you are being positioned, how does your face and body feel? Now switch.

II  **Discussion  Rest  (Contribution Theory pages 36-37)**

III  **Exercise  Solitude, Personal Space and Rest**
Pair off and take turns discussing what your needs are around having time by yourself-solitude, personal time (other than time at work or with children) and what is restful for you. Tell your partner to what extent these desires are being met and find some brief solutions for times when they aren't met. Spend 20 minutes on this exercise.

IV  **Personal Problems**

V  **Take Home Exercise  Rest**
Separately make lists of how you keep yourself from getting the rest you need. Include a list of what is restful that you can do by yourself and what you and your partner can do together. Get together and discuss your lists.
SEVENTH GROUP MEETING

I Discussion Anger and Fighting (CAC section pages 50-51)

II Exercise Resentments and Demands
   In pairs, facing one another, give your partner a short
   list of resentments and demands. Give four, keeping them
   as concise and short as possible. If you get stuck just
   wait until another comes to you. Do not respond to your
   partner's demands, it's essential that this is safe so
   the resentments can come out. Wait five minutes and switch,
   when you have finished, come back to the group. No discussion.

III Personal Problems

IV Exercise Appreciations
   Do the same exercise as for demands, except give your
   partner some appreciations.

V Take Home Exercise
   It is important that resentments, demands and appreciations
   are not stored up, waiting for some big explosion. During
   the next week, everyday give your partner at least one
   resentment and demand and one appreciation. The resentments
   should be given at a separate time from the appreciations.
EIGHTH GROUP MEETING

I Discussion Jealousy and Envy and Comfort (CAC Page 52)

II Exercise Comfort
Break up into threes. Take turns having each person ask for something they want from the others in your group. Before asking, spend a few minutes remembering what you need from people when you're hurting or feeling weak. Now, the only rule is that you must ask for what you want using non-verbal communication.

III Personal Problems

IV Take Home Exercise
This week spend one hour exploring your jealousy and envy.
I want to stress that it is important to listen to one another and remember that each of us is different with different sets of referrals. Also, explore massage. If you haven't done this don't be scared, it isn't necessary to know a whole lot of techniques. Using a good lotion, explore your partner's back, arms, hands, feet. Let your own hands touch and feel. Be aware of your bodies.
I Discussion Competition (CAC section pages 49-50)

II Exercise Competition
Pair off and decide separately something you want to talk about. Now start talking at the same time. Really try to communicate to your partner that your idea is better to talk about than theirs. Do this for 10-15 minutes. Now using the sentence "I'm better than you at...." tell your partner an example of how you are better. Switch after each sentence. Do this 5-6 times.

III Personal Problems

IV Take Home Exercise
Discuss how you compete with one another. Say "I am competing", whenever you feel it.
I  **Exercise**  Saying No
When answering a demand or in order to break through
competition, it is important to be able to say no. Break
off in diads. Think of something to demand of your partner
that you know they don't want to give to you. Using any
verbal means try to get your partner to agree to do what
you want. Keep answering "no" to your partner. After you
have finished, wait for five minutes and then switch. After
you are done, I want you to write down the times you felt
most inclined to say "yes", and how you felt then. Being
able to say no is essential in any relationship, when you
really don't want to do what is asked of you.

II  **Personal Problems**

III  **Take Home Exercise**  Resentments and Demands
Separately make a list of 10 demands, each being as specific
as possible. Half should be short range, something that can
be done this month. Whether little or big each demand should
be asking for something that you want from your partner that
you aren't getting. Take three days to work on these demands.
Three nights from tonight exchange your lists after dinner.
Do not discuss them. Spend the next two days deciding to
what extent you are willing to meet your partner's demands.
Is the demand in conflict with your needs? To what extent?
Set aside a two hour block that will be free from interruption
to discuss each other's lists. Be specific and use "I" messages
and no-lose problem solving. If you get stuck on a demand wait until our next meeting and continue with the other demands. Remember to be specific.
I  **Personal Problems**  Stuck Resentments and Demands

II  **Discussion**  Self Therapy  (CAC Section pages 52-53)

III  **Take Home Exercise**  
    Practice doing self therapy at home. Bring your experiences back to the next group.
TWELFTH GROUP MEETING

I Discussion Purpose (Contribution Theory pages 38-39)

II Exercise Support Partners
Approach one or two of the other partners (couples) and
get their addresses and set up a time that you can get
together. Sometimes it is necessary to have a third
person to mediate. You can use the other partner to give
you support.

III Exercise
Get together with your partner and make a list of your
strengths, weaknesses, and how you can continue building
on your strengths as a couple. Include areas of communi-
cation you need to continue working on.

IV Conclusion Wrap-up
Transcript  October 17, 1974

Gary: Close your eyes and rehearse what you are going to say in the round this morning. While you are doing this drop out any excuses. When you feel tempted to make an excuse tack on the sentence "and I don't have to explain that".

Ben: I'm aware of my heart beating really fast and feeling speedy. I just finished cleaning the kitchen and was really rushing...that was kind of an excuse. I need a lot of rest and I'm wiped-out, and I really wanted to come to your group Gary. That's it!

Kathy: I'm really feeling all sorts of nostalgia, homesick. I'm also feeling pleased at myself, and I'm not going to explain that. I'm really distant from people. I don't want to look at them, and I don't have to explain that.

Mark: I feel resentful that you weren't here in time Gary. I woke up early and I couldn't see anything or hear anything but I know there was something wrong. Ever since then I've felt tight all in here (points to stomach, across chest). Yeah, I feel real shitty.

David: I'm feeling really, really irritated. I feel like it's really overwhelming me. I got into it half way and didn't finish.

Gary: Are you irritated at someone here?

David: Yes

Gary: Do you want to deal with it now?
David: No

Gary: OK

June: (Long silence) Uh..I...(cough)...um...(lights cigarette)
I'm sad that Catherine and Ken are leaving tomorrow, even
though in a week I'll be going somewhere for the week off.
So I guess that it won't be too bad (short laughter).

Karen: I'm feeling pretty good, and I'm still not trusting my
good feeling. I'm scared something is going to go wrong
just like it did yesterday. Right now I want to have
some fun, and I'm not going to explain that.

Henreit: I'm irritated at you, David, for leaving me hanging in the
air. I am wondering who is the person you are pissed at
...if it's me. You said that stuff and really built me
up and then didn't finish what you started. I'm feeling
pretty good this morning.

Joanne: Before I went to sleep last night I was thinking that my
clothes at home probably won't fit me. On one hand that
feels good because I lost all that weight but I don't
know how I'm going to get new clothes that fit. And
I am disgusted with the clothes that I have on, baggy
sweater and pants (points to them). Plus I looked all
over and couldn't find my favorite bra.
Gary: I am unsure of what I want to do with this morning's group. I came with about three ideas and it seems that any one of them will go. I'm really with you, David. And I'm a bit uptight, and I don't have to explain that. OK I have been thinking a lot lately about going home and having to deal with a lot of shit that I know is going to happen, but I can't anticipate. Rather, I'm not going to have two groups to go to every day to work out problems. I really want something concrete to take home with me, to get in touch with how to give myself good advice, comfort, nourishment. I have an idea around this. My grandfather's name was Hepa and when I was with him I felt really important, he gave me a lot of good advice and affection. Sometimes when I feel stuck around something Hepa pops into my head and is reassuring, sometimes hard. Close your eyes and go back to a time you were with your "Hepa", a person you have a lot of good referrals around. How do you feel when you are with this person. How do they look, their eyes, the way they walk, the way the sit. Imagine having a conversation with them. (Five minutes later) Slowly come back to the group. Look around you and take other people in. What are you aware of as you look? Have any perceptions changed since doing the round? Close your eyes again and think of
Kathy:
a time you really wanted this person around and he/she wasn't there. The more recent the better. Are you scared, sad, feeling stuck? What's that like?
(five minutes later) Come back to the group. I want to do some empty chair work between you and your person.

Kathy: I'm really feeling stuck this morning about being homesick. My thoughts just keep drifting to back home, my friends and what they are doing, how I had a good time this summer, my parents. But then I'm also saying God damn, I paid a lot of money to come here at Pellin in Italy and here I am wanting to go home.

Gary: Who is your special Person?

Kathy: Aunt Lucille

Gary: OK, put Aunt Lucille in the other chair and talk to her about feeling homesick.

Kathy: Aunt Lucille, right now I really am missing home, and it's a really hard space for me. And I've been working here and doing good stuff but I'm still homesick. I think about going home, about people at home. The thing is that when I'm home I was wishing I was somewhere else too. But right now I'm thinking a lot about going back to Ann Arbor, seeing my friends, and getting a place to live. And I feel like I am wasting my time being here.
Gary: Be Aunt Lucille (Kathy moves to the other seat). Is that the way she sits? (nods)

Aunt L: Kathy, I can really understand you missing people. When I moved to California I had a hard time, cause I didn't know very many people and felt lonely. (long pause)

Gary: Tell Kathy a few things you did to make things easier on yourself.

Aunt L: I spent a lot of time doing little things...I worked really hard on different jobs. Kathy, I feel that there is nothing wrong with being homesick.

Gary: Switch. (Kathy moves, long pause) What's happening?

Kathy: I'm thinking there isn't anything wrong with being homesick. I'm still aware that I am thinking of home alot, because there are alot of people I really care about. I also feel kinda dissatisfied with being here, I should be satisfied here, Aunt Lucille.

Gary: Tell her about your dissatisfaction.

Kathy: I feel the people that I really want to learn to live with are at home. I just want to see them, even for a little while. Feeling like...uh...I like the people here, but I just haven't known them for very long. Sometimes I think
it's just too hard to deal with this many people...so many people. I should be able to live with this many people, I should get real close to everyone. I should be glad for this opportunity. I mean I was looking forward to being here for so long, now that I am here I'm not happy. Really stupid. I heard what you said, and I think it is OK for me to think a lot about the people at home, cause I'm going to be going back there.

Gary: Ask Aunt Lucille for a couple of things that you can do for yourself while you are here. Something that you can do today or this weekend.

Kathy: Aunt Lucille can you tell me a few things that I can do for myself while I am at Pellin that will help me to have less high expectations?

Aunt L: You don't need to get close to everyone here...don't push yourself so fast. I feel it's all right for you to spend time by yourself. If you don't become life-long friends with the people here it isn't going to matter that much. Spend some time today reading a book and writing in your journal. And talk to somebody for awhile about feeling homesick.

Gary: Switch. Kathy, are you willing to do those things? (she nods) Ask someone to spend some time with you, to talk about missing people.
Kathy: Ginny, will you talk to me today? (Ginny nods)

Gary: Kathy, go spend some time by yourself, maybe write in your journal.
FOOTNOTES

Gestalt Therapy


Humanistic Behaviorism


8 William T. Sellman, MSW, Personal Communication (June-September 1973).

**Effectiveness Training**


2 Ibid, p

3 Ibid, p

**Contribution Theory**

1 Peter Fleming, Lectures (Pellin Institute, Italy) June, 1974.

2 Ibid, May 1974

3 Ibid, August 1974

4 Peter Fleming, Lecture (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Grypon House, April 1974).

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1 Mark Keith, Personal Communication (Italy: Pellin Institute) November 1, 1974.


5 Chapman, *Joy of Sex*
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--------------- The Whirlpool and the Calm (In Process for Publication, 1974).


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