



Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education Training Toolkit Overview



Healthy Relationship Principle/Skill

TOOLS



Care for Self – Be physically and mentally healthy

- Eat healthy and exercise regularly CFS-T3, -T6, -F4
- Set regular sleep and wake times CFS-T3
- Notice and appreciate the good things in your life CFS-T4, -T5, -T7; CRE-T1
- Find ways to serve and use your strengths. CFS-T8, CNT-T2
- Look for the positive meaning in your life CFS-T5; CNT-F2
- Manage stress in healthy ways CFS-F3; CFS-T1, -T2, -T4; MNG-T1, -T2, -T3, -T4



Choose – Make intentional relationship choices

- Decide, don't slide CHS-T1
- Commit effort to the relationship CHS-T2, -T4
- Focus on each other's strengths CHS-T4, -T5; CRE-T1
- Avoid hurtful thoughts and behaviors CHS-T3
- Find ways to grow your relationship. CHS-T2, -T4
- Envision a healthy future together CHS-T6



Know – Get to know your partner well

- Ask about partner's life, thoughts, and feelings. KNW-T1, -T3, -T4
- Be sensitive to partner's worries and needs KNW-T3
- Recall positive experiences together KNW-T5; CRE-T1
- Express sincere interest KNW-T1; SHR-T2
- See things through partner's eyes KNW-T3
- Discuss what you expect in the relationship. KNW-T2, -T3, -T4



Care – Show affection and respect

- Express caring actions, not crabby reactions CRE-T4, -T5; SHR-T2
- Be open and listen to your partner. CRE-T5
- Focus on the good in your partner. CRE-T1, -T2
- Accept and value differences CRE-T2, -T3
- Give love in the way your partner likes to be loved CRE-T2, -T3
- Show appreciation. CRE-T1, -T2, -T4
- Make time for togetherness CRE-F2; SHR-F3; SHR-T1



Share – Develop and maintain your friendship

- Schedule meaningful time together. SHR-F3; SHR-T1, -T4
- Find common interests and activities SHR-T1, -T4
- Create couple traditions and rituals SHR-F2, -F3; SHR-T4
- Work towards common goals SHR-T3
- Nurture positive interactions SHR-F2; SHR-T1, -T2; CHS-T3, -T4
- Send clear and positive messages SHR-T2, -T5; CRE-T5
- Turn toward partner's bids for connection. SHR-T2, -T6
- Envision yourselves as a "team" SHR-T3; CHS-T6



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Manage – Deal with differences in healthy ways

- Understand there cannot always be agreement MNG-F2, -F3
- Use soft start-ups: share concerns in a calm, respectful tone MNG-T5, -T6; CRE-T5
- Avoid criticism and defensiveness MNG-T1, -T4, -T5, -T6
- Stop conflict before it escalates. MNG-T1, -T2, -T3, -T4, -T5, -T6, -T7 ; CRE-T5
- Take “time outs” but come back to talk MNG-T2, -T4, -T5
- Soothe and support each other MNG-T1, -T3, -T4, -T5
- Be open to forgiveness MNG-F3
- Maintain emotional and physical safety MNG-F3, -F4; MNG-T1, -T3, -T4; CFS-F3



Connect – Engage a positive social network

- Grow and maintain extended family relationships CNT-T3
- Be part of a supportive network of friends. CNT-F2
- Engage jointly in community organizations and service CNT-T2
- Seek out resources to strengthen your relationship CNT-T1

Care for Self (CFS)

F1 Care for Self: Maintaining Physical, Sexual, Emotional, and Spiritual Wellness

Brief summary intended to provide professionals with background information about self-care in couple relationships.

F2 Caring for Yourself to Care for Others

Fact sheet that will help clients understand specific healthy behaviors to promote physical, sexual, and emotional wellness.

F3 Intimate Partner Violence

Fact sheet that will help clients understand the definition and risks of Intimate Partner Violence.

F4 Healthy Living, Healthy Couples

Fact sheet that gives an overview of the MyPlate guidelines for eating healthy and being physically active.

T1 Signs of Stress

Clients will better understand the physical, emotional, and cognitive symptoms of stress.

T2 Managing Stress

Clients will identify healthy and unhealthy ways to manage stress and explore ways to employ healthy coping strategies in the future when stressed.

T3 Goals for Better Health

Clients will identify healthy choices they are already making that contribute to their health, and identify new healthy behaviors they will put into practice.

T4 Take Care of Yourself

Clients will become more aware of healthy activities they do and/or can do to make themselves feel better.

T5 What Went Well?

Clients will identify positive experiences in their life and recognize how they contribute to those positive experiences.

T6 Eating Together Brings You Together

Clients will recognize the health and relationship benefits of eating meals together as a couple and/or family.

T7 Using Spiritual Wellness to Strengthen Relationships

Clients will recognize the health benefits of engaging in activities that promote their spiritual wellness.

T8 My (and My Partner’s) Strengths

Clients will learn to recognize and use their, and their partner’s, strengths to improve their lives and relationships

Choose (CHS)

F1 Choose: Making Relationships a Priority

Brief summary intended to provide professionals with background information about the importance of deliberate action in couple relationships.

F2 Putting Effort into Your Relationships

Fact sheet that will help clients understand specific ways to make their relationship a priority.

T1 Choosing to Make a Commitment

Clients will become aware of factors to consider when deciding to commit to a new relationship.

T2 Making Decisions

Clients will be able to use a basic problem-solving approach that involves weighing the pros and cons when making decisions in their relationship.

- T3 Do You Avoid Hurtful Thoughts and Behaviors?**
Clients will become more aware of thoughts and behaviors that can help or harm their relationship.
- T4 Ways to Show Commitment**
Clients will identify ways they and their partner demonstrate their commitment to each other and to the relationship.
- T5 Focus on Strengths**
Clients will become more aware of their partner's strengths and the benefits of focusing on the positive qualities of their partner and the relationship.
- T6 Envision a Healthy Future Together**
Clients will identify relationship goals and reflect on ways to reach goals together with their partner.

Know (KNW)

- F1 Know: Getting to Know Your Partner Well**
Brief summary intended to provide professionals with background information about the importance of developing partner knowledge in couple relationships.
- F2 Getting to Know Your Partner Well**
Fact sheet that will help clients understand the importance of partner knowledge as well as specific information partners should seek to know.
- F3 Know the 10 Ps**
Fact sheet that will help clients understand ten types of information that partners should seek to know about each other.
- T1 Love Maps – 20 Questions**
Clients will identify their own likes and dislikes and see how well they know their partner's preferences.
- T2 Great Expectations**
Clients will learn about setting clear and reasonable expectations and the importance of communicating them to one's partner.
- T3 Knowing What Qualities Matter**
Clients will learn what qualities matter most to each other by rating them and then identifying ways they can work together to achieve the qualities that are most important to them.
- T4 Talking About Money**
Clients will identify financial goals based on needs and wants and develop a simple spending plan to help reach their goals.
- T5 Recalling Positive Experiences**
Clients will list and share several positive experiences with one another and identify what they learned about their partner from shared experiences.

Care (CRE)

- F1 Care: Showing Affection and Respect to Strengthen Relationships**
Brief summary intended to provide professionals with background information about expressions of affection and respect in couple relationships.
- F2 Showing Affection and Respect**
Fact sheet that will help clients understand specific ways they can express affection and respect in their relationship.
- T1 Appreciating the Positive**
Clients will identify, focus on, and communicate about positive qualities of their partner.
- T2 Caring in Action**
Clients will identify different ways they show and express love in their relationship and learn to recognize their partners' different expressions of love.
- T3 Love Languages**
Clients will identify their own primary love language and will be prepared to identify their partner's primary love language.
- T4 Name the Ways You Care**
Clients will identify ways they and their partners express caring for one another.
- T5 Caring Actions, Not Crabby Reactions**
Clients will understand the difference between caring actions and crabby reactions and be able to identify examples of both.

Share (SHR)

- F1 Share: Developing and Maintaining Friendships to Strengthen Relationships**
Brief summary intended to provide professionals with background information about couple identity and friendship in couple relationships.
- F2 Develop and Maintain Your Friendship**
Fact sheet that will help clients understand specific ways they can connect and strengthen their friendship with their partner.
- F3 Making Time to Connect**
Fact sheet that will help clients identify simple ways they can make time to share with their partner every day.
- T1 Ways We Like to Share**
Clients will identify individual and shared interests and activities that they can do together to strengthen their relationship.
- T2 Bids for Connection**
Clients will learn to notice and respond to each other's bids for connection to help keep their relationship moving in a positive direction.

- T3 Building a Couple Identity**
Clients will strengthen their couple identity by identifying and talking about shared values and goals, common purposes, and ways they can work together to protect their relationship from negative influences.
- T4 Couple Rituals and Traditions**
Clients will identify couple traditions and rituals already present in their relationship, as well as name new traditions and rituals they would like to start.
- T5 Sending Positive Messages**
Clients will identify some ways they can communicate positively with their partner and ensure messages are understood.
- T6 Am I Ready To Listen?**
Clients will better understand how distractions interfere with their ability to listen and communicate effectively with their partner.

- T3 Getting Worked Up**
Clients will better understand how their bodies respond to stress and specific events that lead to them becoming angry and experiencing negative emotional arousal.
- T4 Keeping Your Cool**
Clients will better understand various strategies to help manage situations of emotional arousal.
- T5 Keeping it Cool Together**
Clients will better understand various strategies to help calm down from emotionally intense times in couple relationships.
- T6 Managing Tough Talks**
Clients will better understand effective ways to communicate – both how they speak and how they listen – during conflict.
- T7 Applying the Brakes During Conflict**
Clients will learn conflict management strategies to help prevent arguments from escalating.

Manage (MNG)

- F1 Manage: Dealing with Differences in Healthy Ways**
Brief summary intended to provide professionals with background information about conflict in couple relationships.
- F2 Dealing with Differences in Healthy Ways**
Fact sheet that will help clients understand the healthy ways to manage conflict in their relationships.
- F3 Common Myths About Conflict in Relationships**
Fact sheet that will help clients understand that conflict is normal in relationships and the importance of managing conflict in healthy ways.
- F4 When Couples Fight, Children Suffer**
Fact sheet that will help clients understand the impact of couple/co-parenting conflict on parenting and children.
- T1 Anger (Mis)Management**
Clients will better understand harmful versus helpful ways of dealing with and expressing anger.
- T2 How our Bodies Respond to Stress**
Clients will better understand how their bodies respond to stress during conflict and healthy ways to manage stress and conflict.

Connect (CNT)

- F1 Connect: Engaging in a Positive Social Network to Support Relationships**
Brief summary intended to provide professionals with background information about social support in couple relationships.
- F2 Engaging Support as a Couple**
Fact sheet that will help clients understand specific sources of social support.
- T1 Connect to Support**
Clients will become aware of available support services and resources in and around their community, and learn how to avoid obstacles to receiving support.
- T2 Giving to Others**
Clients will understand how providing service to others can help strengthen their couple relationship.
- T3 Growing Family Connections**
Clients will recognize the numerous ways extended family members provide support for one another and identify ways they can build and maintain those relationships.

Based on T.G. Futris & F. Adler-Baeder (Eds) (2013). *The National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Model: Core Teaching Concepts for Relationship and Marriage Enrichment Programming*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension. Available at <http://www.nermen.org/NERMEM.php>



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