

Relationship Enhancement Flyer

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CNL-521 Counseling Couples and Families

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October 15, 2025

Improve relationships with your partner and children.

Multi-couple.

Evidence-based program.

From Challenge to Grace-filled Connection: A Guided Journey for Couples



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Couple Relationship Enhancement Program

Using integrative behavioral couples theory (IBCT).

Program Overview

- Statistics about divorce rates, high distress in couples, and effects on parents and children.
- Fix my spouse! A common complaint about the other person's actions or how they continually behave.
- Interventions that work for families. Take action.

Statistics – What happens to others?

The common wisdom says 50% of marriages end in divorce. However, recent statistics indicate divorce rates declined yet remain at 40% (Doss et al., 2016).

- Marriages in the 2010s have divorce rates under 20% after 14 years and experience divorce trends similar to those married in the 1950s (Bailey et al., 2025).
- Still, 33% of married couples suffer distress (Doss et al., 2016).
- Cohabiting couples suffer higher distress and separation rates than married couples.

Relationship distress and emotional dysregulation cause many issues. Additionally, parental emotional dysregulation (e.g., harsh reactivity) affects both partners and their children.

- Parental distress causes three times more adverse childhood effects (ACEs) and behavior problems (Crouch et al., 2019; Rutherford et al., 2015).
- Parental education programs focusing on communication improve satisfaction by 1.44 times.
- 81% of U.S. adults believe in God, and over 3,000 peer-reviewed studies show a connection between faith and better health (Rhodes, 2022).

Conflict themes:

- Control and responsibility between equals.
- Distance and closeness.
- Predictability versus spontaneity.

Program Benefits:

- Acceptance of each other.
- Improved communication.
- Better conflict coping.

Program

Interventions:

- Acceptance.
- Tolerance.
- Change.

Please, fix my spouse!



ID 7974619 Sad © Pemotret Dreamstime.com

Problem: He always ... She continually ...

"He always leaves a mess around the house. I do everything around here, and I work too." A spouse may respond with, "She continually complains. I work hard. I feel exhausted when I get home." Three common conflict themes in integrative behavioral couples therapy (IBCT) escalate, creating couple distress (Gehart, 2024).

- The exchange above indicates a common conflict theme: Control and responsibility in the equal division of parenting and labor.
- Second conflict theme involves emotional distance and closeness, indicated by feelings of rejection followed by thoughts like, "He does not love me," and behaviors such as clinginess, insomnia, or impaired functioning.
- Third conflict theme: This theme involves predictability versus spontaneity. When one seeks spontaneity in their life, and the other becomes fearful of losing predictability, frustration and outbursts occur due to these fears.

Underlying fears and frustrations lurk in each of these example conflict themes.

Benefits of the program

Through the IBCT relationship enhancement program, the couple grows in closeness, understanding, intimacy, and life satisfaction (Gehart, 2024; Kaslow et al., 2012).

- Each partner feels accepted for who they are.
- Open communication increases about conflict.
- Coping skills improve to avoid conflict escalation.

These factors decrease distress in the couple and will subsequently decrease distress and poor behavior in the children (Rutherford et al., 2015).



ID 92061577 Different Families © Rmarmion Dreamstime.com

Interventions in the program

The IBCT program's interventions span cognitive and behavioral strategies (Gehart, 2024). Strategies include acceptance, tolerance, and change.

- Acceptance: This strategy comprises two approaches. First, empathetic joining describes pain in a grace-filled, calm, and nonblaming way (Rhodes, 2022). Second, unified development describes acceptance of the current situation.
- Tolerance building: This includes (a) highlighting problem behavior's positive aspects (Gehart, 2024), (b) practicing negative behaviors exposing its absurdity, (c) faking negative behaviors at home, and (d) self-care.
- Change techniques: These include communication and problem-solving skills, and behavior exchange.

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