

THE EFFECTS OF A COMMUNICATION GROUP FOR
MARRIED COUPLES: AN OUTCOME STUDY

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CHAPTER I

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In recent years, marital therapy has emerged as a distinct psychotherapeutic subspeciality. The development of marital therapy has been influenced by the developments in two separate fields of clinical practice: marriage counseling and family therapy. Both of these fields have been directly involved in a change in focus away from the individual and intrapsychic processes toward family and marital relationships (GAP, 1970). These two fields have developed along parallel but surprisingly separate lines, until recently (Olson, 1970).

Marital disharmony and termination of unhappy marriages by divorce have been increasing at a rate which has drawn much attention. The field of marriage counseling developed out of a need for professionals to treat couples who were having relationship difficulties. While earlier approaches involving the marital relationship have been described as marriage counseling, some professionals feel that the term marital therapy more adequately conveys the range and variety of approaches employed (Olson, 1970). Recent reviews by Gurman (1973a, 1973b) reflect the numerous methods which have developed to treat the marital pair. One approach which is increasing in popularity is marital group therapy.

The field of family therapy began in an effort by therapists involved in individual psychotherapy to increase their effectiveness. These therapists found that often much of the progress that was made in individual therapy was nullified when the patient was sent back into his unchanged family. They began to see that the patient's family was disturbed, and as a result began focusing their efforts on treatment of the family. The rapid growth of the field of family therapy is reflected in the great amount of literature being published on the subject (Haley, 1971; Glick & Haley, 1971).

One of the approaches to family therapy that has developed treats the family as a communication system. This systems-communications approach is widely used and has had major impact upon the field of psychotherapy and especially marital therapy (Olson, 1970). Family therapists are now recognizing the importance of the marital subsystem and beginning to focus on it within family therapy (Bowen, 1966). Their finding has been that problem children come from homes where the husband-wife relationship is disturbed. Satir (1967) clearly states this view: "The marital relationship is the axis around which all other family relationships are formed. The mates are the 'architects' of the family" (p. 1).

While the areas of marital counseling and family therapy have developed somewhat independently, their similarities and the knowledge which each field has discovered are slowly being recognized by both fields. A recent review (Olson, 1970) was written in an attempt to integrate the literature of both fields. Now both marital and family therapists are finding their various approaches oriented toward the same goal, i.e., the changing of interactions and relationships among

family members and specifically between husband and wife.

There has been a rapid increase in the field of marital therapy in recent years as evidenced by increased publications and the development of various approaches. While the number of various therapeutic approaches used in dealing with marital problems has increased rapidly, there has been an extreme lack of empirical validation of their effectiveness. Most of the published literature focuses on clinical practices and techniques with a considerable emphasis on illustrative case descriptions. Recent reviews of the marital therapy literature all conclude that empirical validation of marital therapy approaches has been lacking and in some cases nonexistent (Gurman, 1971, 1973a, 1973b; Lebedun, 1970; Olson, 1970; Wells, Dilkes, & Trivelli, 1972). The need for an empirical evaluation of the effectiveness of each of the various marital therapy approaches is recognized by all of these authors.

One approach to marital therapy which has become widely used is based upon systems-communications theory. The practice of treating the couple within a marital group has also increased. It appears that an empirical evaluation of the effects of a marital group which focuses upon improving marital communication is needed.

Systems Orientation

The theoretical orientation for the present study is that of systems-communications. The married couple is viewed as an ongoing interactional system in which their relationship is defined through their communications. Each individual is viewed as an open subsystem which influences and is influenced by the marital system. A system

includes more than just the sum of the individuals, it also includes the relationships between the individuals. There is a quality to the relationship which is not included in the individual personalities but emerges out of their interactions. The marital system, then, consists of the individual personalities plus the interrelationship between them that results from their interactions. Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967) define a human interactional system as "two or more communicants in the process of, or at the level of, defining the nature of their relationship" (p. 121). The patterns of communications or interactions are the characteristics of the marital system which tend to remain stable, within limits, and are not only the means of observing the relationship which identifies the system, but are also responsible for defining the relationship.

All systems are characterized by some degree of wholeness; that is, the system behaves as a whole or a unit. In the marital system, the behavior of one spouse is related to and dependent upon the behavior of the other. Any behavior that occurs between any two persons is the product of both. Any behavior of one spouse both influences and is influenced by the other spouse. Thus, a change in one member of the couple will result in a change in the other and in the total system.

A simple linear (cause-effect) model of causation is not adequate or even appropriate when recognizing the mutually causative marital system. Human interaction systems are open in that they influence and are influenced by their environment. However, any input introduced into such an ongoing interaction system (whether by the members of the system or its environment) is acted upon and modified by the system.

The outcome is not determined as much by the initial conditions as by the nature of the process. Within an ongoing system such as a marriage then, not only may the same initial condition lead to different results, but different initial conditions may lead to equal results. In addition, several variables usually contribute to a single effect. In explaining behavior between marital partners, it is necessary to look at the interaction process itself. The observed interaction process involves ongoing circular patterns of behavior and feedback loops with no identifiable beginning. A particular behavior is both response and stimulus observed as part of an ongoing uninterrupted sequence of interactions. The beginning of a sequence of interactions is an arbitrary choice about how the sequence is punctuated (Watzlawick et al., 1967). Thus, the decision of which spouse is to blame for the marital difficulties is arbitrary, depending upon which spouse is seen as responsible for beginning the pattern of interactions. Either spouse can be seen as the initiator and "cause" of a problem. Disagreement between spouses about how to punctuate a sequence of events is a major factor in most, if not all, relationship struggles.

Patterns of behaviors within a marital relationship are observed to occur repeatedly, sometimes with little variation. Jackson (1965b) accounts for these regularities in describing the family (or married couple) as a:

rule-governed system: that its members behave among themselves in an organized, repetitive manner and that this patterning of behaviors can be abstracted as a governing principle of family life (p. 1).

The family rules are the inferences about the couple's relationship agreements which prescribe the acceptable limits of each individual's behavior over a wide variety of content areas. These agreements, both

implicit and explicit, organize the interactions into a self-regulating dynamic system and act to maintain a balance or homeostasis in the relationship (Jackson, 1965b). The system exerts effort through various homeostatic mechanisms to resist any drastic change. These mechanisms operate much like an error-activated thermostat through negative feedback to keep the fluctuations in behavior within the acceptable range as agreed upon. Thus, the marital system will resist a change in one spouse with pressure to regain a balance in the relationship. When viewed in the context of the system, a symptom in one member is seen as being functional in maintaining a balance.

A crucial problem for marriage partners is the working out of a mutually acceptable relationship between them and agreed upon family rules. Haley (1963) has pointed out that many marital conflicts center around problems regarding what the family rules are and who determines the rules. Each partner wants to establish and maintain a behavioral system which provides him or her with maximum satisfaction. Spouses negotiate for an agreed upon definition of themselves within the relationship, for acceptable rights and duties. This bargaining process has been described by Jackson (1965a) as "quid pro quo" (literally something for something). Spouses exchange behaviors in a reciprocal manner, whether consciously or unconsciously. They determine through their interactions which behaviors they are willing to give and take in relation to the other person. The maintenance of the marital system and the success of the marriage is dependent upon this process.

Communication Concepts

An emphasis on marital communication is intimately related to the idea of viewing the married couple as a system. Communication, both verbal and nonverbal, is the means through which persons relate as a system. Epstein and Westley (1959) point out that: "communication among the members is necessary to the successful functioning of the family. ...it should be obvious that needs cannot be satisfied, problems solved, or goals reached without communication" (p. 1). In any dynamic interactional system, there is a continuous fluctuation in behaviors. In order to keep these behaviors within acceptable limits and maintain homeostasis, the system requires feedback (or communication). Communication within a marriage, is in fact, an almost constant exchange of information. A basic principle of communication theory is that within any interpersonal situation, it is impossible to not communicate. All behavior has communication value, including any symptoms. Even silence, or refusal to talk, conveys a message, one which is often a forceful comment on a relationship.

Communication not only conveys information, but at the same time it affects feelings, behaviors, and relationships. Jackson (1965b) maintains that all communication involves an attempt at defining the relationship. Any communication implies a commitment to some relationship and the limits on the commitment. Elaborating upon the work of Bateson (1951), Jackson has identified two aspects or levels of a communication with two different functions. The report level is synonymous with the content of a message, and conveys information

about facts, feelings, opinions, etc. The command level conveys how the message is to be taken. It defines how the receiver is expected to define the relationship. Whenever a person communicates information, he/she is also asking that the receiver respond to him/her in a certain way. Thus, a communication not only reflects the relationship, at the same time it also defines the relationship.

Haley (1959) and Satir (1967) have identified four fundamental elements to a communication. These are: (a) the sender ("I"), (b) the message ("am saying something"), (c) the receiver ("to you"), and (d) the context ("in this situation"). Problems in communication may arise from a lack of clarity within any one of these parts or from an incongruency between these elements. Dysfunctional communication occurs when: (a) what is thought that is being sent, (b) the information sent, (c) the information received, and (d) the conditions of the transaction, do not match.

Verbal communication is often hindered because the sender uses a word in one way and the listener receives the word as if it meant something entirely different. Satir (1967) notes that words are often unclear in themselves due to three properties which they possess. First, the same word may have different denotative meanings. Second, the same word may have different connotations. Third, words are abstractions, only symbols which stand for their referents. Since this confusion in word meaning exists, it is important for the sender to clarify and qualify the thoughts he/she is expressing. One way this is done is for the sender to specify that the words he/she is using refer to his/her own thoughts, feelings, and perceptions which are not necessarily congruent with the thoughts of others. Satir feels

that the consequent of the sender who does not recognize the different meanings of words is overgeneralization. The use of overgeneralization is a hindrance to clear communication, making it more difficult for the person to check out the correspondence between his perceptions and the world. The sender who overgeneralizes makes certain inadequate assumptions which result in unclear communication. He/she will assume that: (a) one instance is an example of all, (b) other people share his/her feelings, thoughts, perceptions, (c) his/her perceptions are complete, (d) what he/she perceives will not change, (e) there are only two possible alternatives in perceiving or evaluating, (f) characteristics which he/she attributes to people are part of those people, (g) he/she can automatically tell what others are thinking, feeling, or perceiving, and (h) others automatically know what he/she thinks, feels, or perceives without being told. A marital partner who overgeneralizes makes the false assumption that he/she can read his/her spouse's mind and the spouse should be able to read his/her mind. A person who overgeneralizes also tends to make the false assumption that his/her view is the only correct view.

The message is the object of the communication. As previously indicated, there are two aspects of a message: the report (content) aspect and the command (relationship) aspect. Uncertainty in the content aspect hinders communication. Many problems in communication may also result from the relationship aspect not being clarified or agreed upon. Satir proposes that certain characteristics of messages for both levels, such as fragmentation, incompleteness, or vagueness, hinder clarity and communication. The receiver of the message is left guessing or making assumptions about the meaning of the message.

Satir recognizes that absolutely complete communication is impossible, and in fact, extreme attempts at completeness with overqualification hinder communication.

More than one message is communicated at the same time through more than one channel. A person simultaneously communicates by his/her words, tone of voice, facial expression, gestures, and other behaviors. As long as the same message is communicated through all channels, communication is improved by this redundancy. Dysfunctional communication can occur when contradictory messages are communicated at the same time through different channels. An example is the spouse who says "I'm not angry" while at the same time slamming a door.

The receiver of a message is committed to communicate some message in return since it is impossible to not communicate in any interpersonal situation. Watzlawick et al. (1967) identify four alternatives which a receiver of a communication has. The receiver can accept, reject, or modify the message, or he/she can develop a symptom which makes it impossible for him/her to respond and for which he/she is "not" held responsible. The receiver contributes to dysfunctional communication by making a commitment himself/herself (agreeing or disagreeing) to an unclear or incongruent message. In doing this, the receiver extends an unclear transaction and commits himself/herself to a statement he/she is not certain about. By making a commitment, the receiver implies that the message was clear when in fact it was not. Functional receivers postpone commitment and request clarification of the message. In addition to not committing themselves to an unclear position, they also provide feedback to the sender concerning his/her communication. During the course of any conversation, the roles of sender and receiver

fluctuate very rapidly so many characteristics apply to the communicator rather than the role. Satir (1967) states that a person who communicates in a functional way can: "Firmly state his case, yet at the same time clarify and qualify what he says, as well as ask for feedback, and be receptive to feedback when he gets it" (p. 70).

The last element of a communication, the context, is the situation in which the communication takes place. The context includes all the circumstances which interact with a message, such as the time of the meeting, place, type, and personal factors. The context involves the cultural implications of the situation for each of the communicants. Many times, misunderstandings occur between newly married persons because they come from different backgrounds and the cultural expectations are different for each. In addition to these factors, the interactional system is also part of the context. The relationship and prior communications between the involved persons become the context for subsequent interactions. Thus, not only is communication influenced by its context, communication also defines certain elements of its context.

Interaction Testing

Research investigators studying marital and family relationships have become increasingly interested in direct observation of actual interaction of couples and other family groupings. The aim of these family interaction researchers has been to move away from general clinical impressions toward more systematic, objective methods of measuring interaction. Their focus has been upon identifying those characteristics of marital and family interaction that differentiate

between healthy and disturbed relationships. Many attempts have been made in recent years to develop a sound methodology for assessing marital and family interaction; including a number of large scale studies (e.g., Mishler & Waxler, 1968; Riskin & Faunce, 1970; Winter & Ferreira, 1969). As a result, a variety of objective, behavior measures of marital interaction has been developed. Direct behavioral observation of marital interaction has taken many forms. A few studies have taken place in naturalistic settings such as the home; the majority, however, has taken place in laboratory settings. Marital interaction stimulated by a structured experimental situation has been referred to as interaction testing (Gurman, 1973a).

Various techniques have been employed to stimulate marital interaction in the experimental setting. Assigned discussion topics have commonly been used, an example being Watzlawick's (1966) "Plan something together" task. Standard psychological test materials such as TAT cards (Winter & Ferreira, 1967) and Wechsler intelligence scale items (Bauman & Roman, 1966) have been used to stimulate discussion. A Color Matching Test was used by Goodrich and Bloomer (1963). The Revealed Differences Technique developed by Strodtsback (1951) has often been used. In this technique, family members individually complete a questionnaire dealing with family issues. The items on which they disagree are revealed to all members, and the family is asked to arrive at a joint answer. A similar technique is Ferreira and Winter's (1965) Unrevealed Differences Task. Spouses indicate their own personal preferences on a situation-choice questionnaire involving neutral situations. The couple then indicates their mutually agreed upon choices without having their individual preferences revealed by the

experimenter. The interaction stimulated by all of these techniques is felt to be typical of a couple's pattern of interaction. A wide variety of other, less commonly used, techniques are described by Straus (1969) and by Winter and Ferreira (1969).

The method of measuring communication is probably of more significance than the method of stimulating communication. A large number of communication scoring systems has been developed, each with different characteristics (Riskin & Faunce, 1972). Some studies have attempted to develop a system by which all communications could be coded, while others have counted only a certain kind of communication and ignored other kinds. On some coding systems, a statement is placed into only one category, on others, a statement receives a score on all categories. The unit of analysis is sometimes a single word, act (or speech), idea, theme, sequence or some unit of time.

One of the first instruments to be used to score family interaction was Bales' Interaction Process Analysis (1950), originally designed for measuring small group interaction. On this instrument, all interpersonal behavior is placed into one of 12 categories designed to define positive instrumental acts versus negative expressive acts. Another commonly used scoring system is Leary's Interpersonal Checklist (1955), originally developed as a method of personality assessment. The Interpersonal Checklist classifies all interpersonal behaviors according to a dominance-submission dimension and a hostility-affiliative dimension.

A somewhat different scoring system is Riskin's Family Interaction Scales (1964). Riskin's scoring system was specifically developed to code family interaction, and was developed out of the

systems-communications theoretical orientation (Riskin, 1963). These scales focus more specifically on communication characteristics than Bales' or Leary's systems. Each communication (speech) is scored on all six scales: clarity, topic continuity, commitment, agreement, affective intensity, and quality of relationship. In addition, interruptions and who-speaks-to-whom are noted. A number of other comprehensive systems for scoring marital and family communications have been developed (e.g., Mishler & Waxler, 1968; Lennard & Bernstein, 1969; Raush, Barry, Hertel, & Swain, 1974).

While the methodologies developed for coding interaction differ widely, the consistent finding has been that marital systems which are experiencing difficulties in adjustment are also experiencing difficulties in communication. Out of the various studies, many different measures have been found that discriminate between adjusted and problem marriages. Riskin and Faunce (1972) have identified some measures which have been consistently found. These include: clarity (Riskin & Faunce, 1970); support, especially positive affect (Schuham, 1970; Murphy & Mendelson, 1973b, Raush et al., 1974); agreement (Winters & Ferreira, 1969; Schuham, 1970; Raush et al., 1974); and acknowledgment (Mishler & Waxler, 1968; Lennard & Bernstein, 1969; Raush et al., 1974). The communications of adjusted married couples have been found to consistently show more clarity, positiveness, agreement, and indications of listening than those of maladjusted married couples.

CHAPTER II

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The clinical practice of marital therapy has grown dramatically in recent years, with the marital group format becoming one of the most frequently used treatment approaches to marital difficulty (Lebedun, 1970). The use of a systems-communications based approach to marital difficulty has also increased in popularity (Olson, 1970). The basic assumption of this approach holds that a direct relationship exists between communication and marital adjustment; i.e., that marital difficulty is primarily the result of disturbed communication.

Bardill's (1966) position reflects this assumption:

Couples with marital problems tend to communicate progressively less as their conflict deepens. When communication does take place, it is often ambiguous or contradictory. Even simple tasks often result in arguments because of the nature of the ambiguous communications and, on other occasions, there are contradictions between the different levels of communication. (p. 70).

This assumption is probably the most widely held belief among clinicians treating married couples. Eighty-five percent of the family therapists surveyed by GAP (1970) stated that improved communication was their primary goal for all of the families they saw. The validity of the assumed relationship between communication and marital adjustment has support from sources other than clinicians. Lack of communication is the predominant complaint of couples seeking help for marital difficulty (Krupinski, Marshall, & Yale, 1970). Empirical research involving

self-report measures also supports a relationship between communication and marital adjustment. Navran (1967) found a high positive correlation between married couples' scores on a marital adjustment scale and a communication inventory. Murphy and Mendelson (1973a) found a similar relationship using similar inventories. The development of a systems-communications approach to group marital therapy appears justified; however, the necessity for an empirical evaluation of any treatment approach is widely recognized.

While the practice of marital group therapy and systems-communications based marital therapy has increased, there is still lack of adequate empirical research on these treatment approaches or on an approach combining the two methods. Recent reviews of the marital therapy literature all show an extreme lack of empirical evaluation of the effects and effectiveness of almost all approaches (Gurman, 1971, 1973a, 1973b; Lebedun, 1970; Olson, 1970). All of these authors conclude that an adequate evaluation of each marital therapy approach is currently needed. Although there has been a recent trend toward experimentation, previous marital therapy studies have in general been quite weak. The great majority of studies have not included a no-treatment control group. Interpreting a study of this nature is extremely difficult as the current literature offers no baseline on "spontaneous" recovery in marital problems without intervention.

The most common outcome criterion in marital therapy studies has been a global rating, such as "improved" or "very much improved". The majority of the studies has relied on patient self-report data, with few studies using any form of behavioral observation. While

self-report measures have proven valuable in providing some understanding of marital relationships, some investigators question reliance upon the truthfulness and perceptiveness of marriage partners (Olson & Rabunsky, 1972; Gurman, 1973a). These authors recommend that an emphasis be placed on obtaining information about relationships and communications from direct observation of the couple's behavior. Levinger (1963) and Olson (1970) strongly recommend a multidimensional assessment of the effects of therapy. These authors feel that both self-report and behavioral observation methods are useful, and that the combination of these subjective and objective measurements in the same study provides the most meaningful information. A review of the literature on family interaction research reveals that several objective methodologies for assessing marital interaction have been developed. In addition, several factors in marital interaction have consistently been found to be related to healthy functioning (Riskin & Faunce, 1972).

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the effects of a treatment program for married couples based upon the systems-communications approach: the marital communication group. It was the goal of this study to incorporate the requirements for a strong marital therapy evaluation study as suggested by reviewers of the marital therapy literature. Specifically, a no-treatment control group was included so that an adequate comparison could be made. Multidimensional measurements were made on each couple, including both self-report and behavioral observation measures. The measures used in the present study were selected because they had been found to be valid predictors of marital adjustment as well as being consistent with the theoretical orientation of this study. Gurman (1971) proposed that ideally

theory, therapeutic goals, intervention strategies, and evaluation techniques are consistent with each other such that each assists in the development of the others. This mutual development within the systems-communications orientation was also a goal of this study.

It was expected that the communication group treatment would be more effective than no treatment in improving marital adjustment and marital communication. It was therefore hypothesized that there would be a significant difference between the mean change scores of couples in the communication group treatment and the mean change scores of couples in the no-treatment control group on all of the dependent measures: (1) self-reported marital adjustment, (2) self-reported functional communication patterns, (3) directly observed clarity in communication as reflected by the use of (a) clear statements and (b) unclear statements, (4) directly observed positiveness in communication as reflected by the use of (a) positive statements and (b) negative statements, (5) directly observed agreement in communication as reflected by the use of (a) agreement statements and (b) disagreement statements, (6) directly observed acknowledgment in communication as reflected by the use of (a) acknowledgment statements, (b) recognition statements, and (c) nonacknowledgment statements.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were 16 married couples (32 individuals) who contacted the Division of Community and Social Psychiatry, University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, Texas expressing an interest in participating in a marital group which focused on improving communication. Eight of the couples were referred for help with their marital difficulties by various mental health professionals. The remaining eight couples were self-referred. Eight couples were randomly assigned to the experimental group and eight to the control group after a matching of couples on current level of marital discord. The first eight couples to complete the initial interview were grouped into four levels on the basis of their pretest scores on the first dependent measure, the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale. The four levels were: high, medium high, medium low, and low. One couple from each level was randomly assigned to the experimental group and one to the control group. The same procedure was followed with the next eight couples to complete the initial interview.

Only 14 couples (28 individuals) were included in the final sample. The data on two of the initial 16 couples were lost after the beginning of the treatment conditions. One couple in the control group chose not to wait and received counseling from another source

during the waiting control period. One couple in the experimental group dropped out of the marital group after attending the initial two sessions. Both spouses stated that they were satisfied with their marital relationship and did not wish to continue in the marital group or any other form of treatment. Neither of these two couples were included in the data analysis.

Subjects ranged in age from 20 to 46, with a mean of 26.8. Couples had been married from four months to nine years, with a mean of 3.5 years. Number of children ranged from zero to two. Eleven individuals had some graduate education, seven had a college degree, five had some college experience without obtaining a degree, and five had a high school diploma. Those couples who participated in a marital group were charged a fee based upon their ability to pay. The maximum (full pay) fee was \$50 per couple for the entire experience, with the minimum fee charged being \$10.

Measures

The Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (LMA) (Locke & Wallace, 1959) was used to obtain a measure of self-reported marital adjustment (see Appendix A). This instrument has been used as extensively as any such instrument and has much reported evidence for its high validity and reliability (Straus, 1969). The LMA is composed of those 15 multiple-choice items from Locke's (1951) complete marital questionnaire which were found to discriminate most effectively between successful and unsuccessful marriages. Possible scores range from 2 to 158 for each spouse, with a high score reflecting high adjustment. Locke and Wallace found this short form to significantly discriminate between

a group of well-adjusted married couples and a group of maladjusted married couples. The mean adjustment score for the well-adjusted group was 135.9 and the mean score for the maladjusted group was 71.7. The split-half reliability coefficient found using the Spearman-Brown correction was .90.

The measure of self-reported marital communication was obtained using the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI) (see Appendix B). The MCI was developed by Bienvenu (1968) to measure the characteristics and patterns of marital communication. This inventory consists of 46 items to which each marital partner responds with one of four responses from "Usually" to "Never". Possible scores range from 0 to 138 for each spouse with a high score indicating a high level of functional communication. Bienvenu (1970) found that the MCI discriminated significantly between couples who were seeking marital counseling and couples not known to have marital difficulties. In two related studies, Murphy and Mendelson (1973a, 1973b) found the MCI to correlate with self-reported marital adjustment and with researchers' observation of marital interaction. Split-half reliability using the Spearman-Brown correction was .93.

A marital decision making task patterned after the unrevealed differences task of Ferreira and Winter (1965) was used to generate a sample of marital interaction. This fairly standardized task has been used to generate interactional data in numerous studies of marital and family interaction (Riskin & Faunce, 1972). The questionnaire used in the present study consisted of six situations which married couples often face, with 10 alternative choices for each situation (see Appendix C). Couples were required to mutually agree on the three

alternatives liked best and the three liked least for each item. All situations were of a neutral type with an effort made to insure reasonably equivalent alternatives. The questionnaire items included: colors for a new family car, places to go on your next vacation, favorite television programs, and desserts for dinner tomorrow night. Two equivalent forms were constructed so that couples would not discuss the same situations twice (i.e., on both pretest and posttest).

The marital communication variables measured in the present study were: clarity, relationship, agreement, and acknowledgment. These four measures were selected because of their empirically established validity and their consistency with the systems-communications theoretical approach of this study. Each of the four variables have been included in numerous coding systems and have been found to consistently discriminate families (and couples) with relationship problems from those without problems (Riskin & Faunce, 1972). The first three categories (clarity, relationship, and agreement) were selected from Riskin's Family Interaction Scales (1964). Riskin's definitions of these categories were used in constructing the scoring criteria for this study. The fourth category (acknowledgment) was not included in the original Riskin scales, although it overlaps with a category Riskin called commitment. Titchener, Heide and Wood (1966) expanded the Family Interaction Scales to include a separate scale for scoring acknowledgment (called receptivity). Mishler and Waxler (1968) also used an acknowledgment category. The acknowledgment scale used in the present study was constructed following Titchener's receptivity scale and Mishler and Waxler's acknowledgment code. Previous studies using the four communication measures used in the present study have

found average inter-rater reliability, defined as speech-by-speech agreement, to range between 75 and 99 per cent agreement (Riskin & Faunce, 1970; Titchener et al., 1966).

The communication scales as used in the present study are briefly described below. (See Appendix D for the detailed scoring manual).

(1) Clarity. This scale measures whether the speech was clear or not to the rater. Speeches were scored as clear (C), unclear (UC), or nonscorable on clarity (NSc). A speech was scored unclear because of vagueness, incompleteness, incongruency between tonal and content aspects, lack of fit with the context, or speaker qualities. Speeches which were unclear due to mechanical reasons or being interrupted were judged nonscorable on clarity.

(2) Relationship. This scale measures the affective content of the speech. Speeches were scored as positive (+), negative (-), or neutral (0). Positive speeches included friendly, supportive, approving statements. Negative speeches included critical, hostile, attacking statements.

(3) Agreement. This scale measures whether the speaker explicitly agrees or disagrees with the previous statement by his/her spouse. Speeches were scored as agreement (Ag), disagreement (DAg), or nonscorable on agreement (NSag).

(4) Acknowledgment. This scale measures the degree to which the speaker acknowledges both intent and content of the preceding statement(s). Acknowledgment refers to an indication by the speaker that the previous statement was heard correctly. Speeches were scored as acknowledgment (Ac), recognition (R), nonacknowledgment (NAc), or nonscorable on acknowledgment (NSac). A speech was scored

acknowledgment when it contained explicit evidence that the previous statement was received accurately. A speech was scored recognition when it implied that the previous speech was heard, but lacked explicit evidence necessary to make a judgment on how correctly the previous statement was heard. A speech was scored nonacknowledgment when it clearly did not recognize or respond to the previous statement.

A total of nine dependent measures of the couples' communication were obtained using this coding system; the number of: clear statements, unclear statements, positive statements, negative statements, agreement statements, disagreement statements, acknowledgment statements, recognition statements, and nonacknowledgment statements.

Procedure

Each couple was seen for an initial interview and pretest session by the experimenter. The research study and marital communication program were described at this time, and each individual was asked to sign a subject consent form indicating his/her intention to voluntarily participate in the study (see Appendix E). All couples were informed that participation in this study required the couple to not be involved in any concurrent treatment program. A limited amount of general biographical information about the couple was then obtained (see Appendix F).

After this general information interview was completed, spouses were seated such that it was not possible for them to see each other's responses on the questionnaires. They were instructed to fill out each of the questionnaires without discussing the items between them, and to answer each question honestly according to the way they felt

at that moment. In addition, they were informed that all responses were confidential and would not be revealed to their spouse. Each person then completed the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (LMA) which was introduced as a questionnaire concerning personal satisfaction with the marriage. Each person then completed the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI). The MCI was introduced as an inventory concerning the degree and patterns of communication in the marriage.

Upon completion of the MCI, the unrevealed differences task was begun. Each spouse was handed a copy of the Marital Decision Making Questionnaire Form A and instructed to indicate his/her personal preferences on each item, indicating the three best-liked and the three least-liked alternatives. When both marriage partners had individually completed the Decision Making Questionnaire, they were seated at a table next to each other. In place of the completed forms, each couple was given another blank copy of the Marital Decision Making Questionnaire Form A. They were then asked to fill out the questionnaire as a couple, discussing each item and arriving at mutually agreed upon choices. The experimenter left the room while the couple talked between themselves and completed the joint form. The discussion was audiotaped with their permission and limited to 20 minutes (none of the couples required the full 20 minutes to complete the task). At the conclusion of the unrevealed differences task, each couple was told that group assignments would be made as soon as possible and that the experimenter would contact them. As soon as a total of eight couples had been interviewed, group assignments were made and the couples notified by telephone. (This procedure of

assignment was repeated with the second eight couples to be interviewed).

Couples assigned to the experimental group began participation in a marital communication group as soon as a time could be arranged. The marital communication groups met once a week for eight weeks with each session lasting approximately one and one-half hours. Two treatment groups of four experimental group couples each were conducted by the author. The first such group began with four couples and ended with three, after one couple dropped out of the program. Care was taken to insure the equality of the two group experiences by introducing the group activities in planned sequence and at the same relative time. Control couples were told that there would be a waiting period of about eight weeks before there would be a communication group available to them. They were encouraged to contact the author in the event a crisis occurred during this waiting period. None did, although one control couple was lost to the study because they sought help from another counselor during this time.

At the end of the treatment program for the experimental couples and an equivalent time period for the control couples, a second interview session (posttest) was arranged with each couple). At this time, each couple again completed the LMA, MCI, and unrevealed differences task (using Marital Decision Making Questionnaire Form B) with the same instructions. Feedback from those experimental couples who had completed the communication group was also obtained at this second interview (see Appendix G). A marital communication group was begun for the control couples as soon after this posttest session as schedules could be arranged. Control couples were also interviewed following

their participation in the communication group program.

As indicated, the marital discussion on the unrevealed differences task was audiotaped. So as to insure the confidentiality of the couples involved, the tapes were identified by number rather than name. A verbatim transcript was made of the first seven minutes of each audiotaped interaction session (see Appendix D). (For one couple, the posttest discussion was only 3 minutes 35 seconds. An equal time from the pretest was used in the analysis for this couple). This procedure was used to control for equality of size of observation sample and was based on the finding of previous researchers that four or five minutes of discussion is sufficient to get an adequate picture of the communication patterns of most family groups (Riskin, 1964; Riskin & Faunce, 1970; Terrill & Terrill, 1965). The unit of analysis for the present study was the scorable speech as defined by Terrill and Terrill (1965): "a relatively continuous utterance by an individual which is either interrupted, or if briefly interrupted, apparently uninfluenced by the interruption" (p. 264). A relatively continuous utterance was operationally defined as a statement which contained no pauses of longer than two seconds. After an accurate transcript had been prepared, the scorable speeches were numbered for identification purposes. This transcribing and unitizing process took about three hours for each seven minute segment of marital interaction.

All discussions were scored on each of the coding categories previously described: clarity, agreement, relationship, and acknowledgment. Each speech received a score on all four categories. The scoring was done by two trained scorers using both the transcript and the audiotape. Both raters were Ph.D. candidates in clinical

psychology. One had completed the predoctoral internship, the other was currently on the internship. Neither scorer knew which experimental group to which the couples belonged. To facilitate the scoring process, a detailed scoring manual was constructed by the author and made available to the raters (see Appendix D). In addition, both raters spent 15 hours in training with the author prior to the independent rating of any live data. Each rater scored approximately half of the marital discussions involved in this study. Four randomly chosen discussions were independently scored by both raters to provide a measure of inter-rater reliability as defined by percentage of speech-by-speech agreement between the two raters. A consensus score was used in the data analysis for the statements on which the raters had independently disagreed. The scoring process took from one to one and one-half hours for each marital discussion.

Design

The basic experimental design for this study was a pretest-posttest completely randomized design with two experimental groups: a communication treatment group and a no-treatment control group. A separate analysis of variance was run on each of the 11 dependent measures using the couple's joint change score on each variable for the analysis. A couple's change score was obtained by subtracting the pretest score from the posttest score. An analysis of variance also was run on the couple's overall improvement score on each of the four behavioral observation communication scales.

Therapeutic Approach

Therapy Goals

The therapeutic approach for the marital communication group treatment program was based upon the systems-communications theory as previously described. This approach views the married couple as an ongoing interactional system in which their communications define the nature of their relationship. The therapy client in this approach is the marital relationship. The major therapeutic goal of the marital communication group treatment was to help married couples learn to communicate in a functional way, thus, allowing them to work out their relationship with mutual satisfaction. The communication groups focused upon helping couples experientially learn improved ways of communicating.

This systems-communications approach emphasized a number of aspects of functional marital communication in working toward the accomplishment of the major goal. The first emphasis of the program was to help marriage partners accept mutual responsibility for improving their relationship. In an effort to accomplish this, couples were helped to recognize how they interact as a system and that their relationship is the result of both individual's communications. This approach focused on helping each marriage partner become aware of the effects his/her communications have on his/her partner and the effects of his/her partner's communications on him/her. This reciprocal nature of communication offers the means for either person to effect change in the spouse and the relationship. Expected reciprocation brings about an increased willingness to initiate change.

A second emphasis of this approach was on helping married couples to communicate honestly and openly. Dishonest communication, or a refusal to communicate, creates distrust, vague fears, misunderstandings, and limits the resolution of disagreements. Open and honest communication increases trust, understanding, empathy, and is required for a satisfying, intimate marital relationship. Each individual is the only one who can accurately express his/her feelings and ideas. Within this approach, each individual was clearly given the responsibility of speaking for himself/herself. One ground rule for the group was no mind reading. Each person was expected to state his/her own thoughts and feelings, but not his/her spouse's thoughts and feelings. This acknowledgment and acceptance of each individual's uniqueness helps each person to be more comfortable communicating openly. In addition to a better understanding of their partner's feelings, honest communication helps individuals to clarify their own feelings and positions. Finally, open communication allows married couples to express negative feelings in direct ways that can be resolved, rather than in indirect ways which can be highly destructive.

Learning to communicate clearly is another aspect of functional communication which was emphasized in the groups. Unclear communication increases the chances for misunderstandings to occur. Clear communication avoids misunderstandings and allows the couples to revise inaccurate ideas, assumptions, and labels. Communicating clearly includes being specific, stating the message in specific behavioral terms when possible. Clear communicators also state the message in language easily understood by the listener. Communicating congruently is a part of clarity. A congruent communication is one

in which the same message is communicated both verbally and non-verbally. As a step toward becoming congruent, this approach focused on helping couples become aware of their nonverbal behaviors and the messages conveyed.

Communication involves the exchange of information between at least two people. The systems-communications approach emphasized not only learning to send messages in a functional way, but also learning to receive messages in a way that facilitates communication. A functional receiver is an active listener; one who makes an active effort to hear and understand. A functional listener makes sure he/she understands the message and then acknowledges his/her receipt of the message. If the message is not clearly received, the functional listener asks for clarification before acknowledging that he/she heard. In doing this, the listener provides feedback to the speaker about how the message was received while obtaining feedback for himself/herself. Through this process married partners can clarify many misunderstandings for themselves. Active listening also implies an interest in what the partner has to say, and thus, reinforces the process of communicating.

Communicating in a positive way was also emphasized in the group program. Negative communications tend to elicit negative feelings and more negative communications. When negative communications are used, the persons involved tend to stop listening to each other, the conversation (and marital conflict) tends to escalate and get out of control, and the conversation (and marital relationship) is often quickly terminated. Individuals experiencing discomfort in their marriage typically find it easy to recognize their spouse's faults,

and blame their spouse for the marital difficulties. In response to this situation, they try to influence their spouse with coercion or withdrawal, which escalates the problem. Positive communications tend to elicit positive feelings and more positive communications. In learning to communicate in a positive manner, couples are able to work out their relationships through a process of giving and receiving rather than taking and being taken. Positive communications tend to generate mutual acceptance, mutual respect, and a mutually satisfying relationship. The focus on positive ways of communicating does not mean that issues are left not being dealt with, only that positive communications are emphasized in resolving the issues.

Unresolved issues hinder functional communication. A final emphasis of the marital communication treatment program was to help couples learn to use the characteristics of functional communication to resolve disagreements and facilitate decision making. A basic ground rule for working out difficulties was to focus on the present, the here and now. Focusing on the past limits possibilities for change. Issues of the past may be relevant to the current situation, but they can be resolved only by deciding what to do about them in the present. A focus on the present also restricts the couple from blaming each other for past errors.

Therapist

Both treatment groups were run by the author, who was experienced in working with groups and couples, and working within the systems-communications theoretical approach. The therapist functioned as teacher, leader, model, and marital therapist in the group. At times,

he instructed and directed couples in improved ways of communicating. At times, he intervened in helping couples work through critical issues. Throughout the program, the therapist attempted to model all characteristics of functional communication setting the tone for an open, supportive group environment.

Treatment Characteristics

Two marital communication groups, of either three or four couples, met once a week for eight weeks. Each session lasted approximately one and one-half hours. The treatment approach typically focused on one couple at a time rather than on group process, as in some groups for individuals. All couples were given an opportunity and encouraged to participate in each activity. The therapist maintained a current summary of each group session throughout the treatment program to assist in insuring equality of treatment for all couples, both within a treatment group and between treatment groups.

A semistructured format was used in treatment. A specific series of exercises, tasks, and techniques in planned sequence was a part of the treatment program. However, the structure of the program was always flexible enough to be responsive to the particular needs of the couples in the groups. While the communication exercises focused on the process of communication, they allowed the content to be chosen by each couple. In addition, one focus of the program was to assist couples in using the learned characteristics of functional communication to deal with personal issues. As couples were working together on an issue, some techniques judged to be therapeutically beneficial were repeated.

There were four major components of the marital communication treatment program; four methods employed to facilitate change in the couples' interactions. The first major aspect of this treatment program was the use of a number of directed exercises and techniques which required specified ways of communicating. These activities included: warm-up exercises, roleplaying (used more than once), listening exercises (also repeated at times), trust-walk, sculpting, and a positive feedback procedure. (See Appendix H for a detailed summary of each group session and a description of each activity).

A second major aspect of this program involved the giving and receiving of feedback concerning how each couple communicates. At times, the therapist or other group members gave feedback to a particular couple, with an emphasis on stating the feedback in positive, constructive terms. Videotape replay of a portion of a group session was used as a supplementary means of providing feedback, allowing the couples to see how they communicate in addition to being told. Short videotaped segments were replayed of all couples while involved in three particular activities: their discussion of marital goals during the first session, their sculpting of their marital relationship, and their discussion of marital goals during the last session. Videotape replay was occasionally used at other times when judged to be beneficial by the therapist or requested by group members. A more indirect, but powerful form of feedback came from watching other couples in the group interact. Each couple was able to observe interaction patterns present in their own marriage from an objective standpoint.

The use of assigned tasks to be completed by the couples during the week was a third major aspect of this program (see Appendix H).

These homework assignments allowed a more direct intervention into the daily lives of the couples than group activities only. In addition, task assignment allowed the direction of activities inappropriate for a therapy session. A homework assignment was given at the end of each session (except the last). Each session (except the first) began with a brief discussion of the previous week's assignment. Initial homework assignments were oriented towards increased awareness of communication patterns, with homework assignments given later in the program oriented toward more positive and intimate behaviors.

The fourth major aspect of the marital group treatment involved focused communication between marriage partners. Spouses were engaged in talking directly to, rather than about, each other whenever they had an issue they wished to work on. Couples focused on using learned characteristics of functional marital communication in discussing the issue. The therapist also focused on the couple's communication process, making interventions to facilitate their communication. Some interventions directed the couple to change some aspect, such as: hold hands, turn chairs around, start over, or use a listening exercise. Other interventions included: giving feedback or checking-out an unclear message. All interventions were directed toward helping the couple resolve the issue to their mutual satisfaction.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The mean change scores and standard deviations of change scores for the two self-report measures, the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (LMA) and the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI), are presented in Table I. (Pretest and posttest means and standard deviations of all eleven individual dependent measures are included in Appendix I.) A positive change indicates improvement. The treatment group showed a larger increase in marital adjustment as measured by the LMA than the control group; however, this difference was not significant ($F=2.29$, $df=1/12$, $p<.25$). (See Appendix J for analysis of variance summary tables for each of 15 variables analyzed.) The treatment group showed a significantly greater increase in self-reported functional communication patterns as measured by the MCI than the control group ($F=6.59$, $df=1/12$, $p<.05$).

Inter-rater reliability for the behavioral observation measures was defined by percentage of speech-by-speech agreement between the two raters. Overall rater agreement was 81.6 per cent; however, percentages of agreement differed for each of the communication scales. Rater agreement was 91.2 per cent for the clarity scale, 94.9 per cent for the relationship scale, 75.3 per cent for the agreement scale, and 65.2 per cent for the acknowledgment scale. The per cent agreement for the acknowledgment scale was 77.4 when acknowledgment statements and

recognition statements were grouped together as positive indications of listening. The percentage of agreement for the relationship scale is somewhat meaningless due to the high proportion of neutral statements.

TABLE I
CHANGE SCORE MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS
FOR TWO SELF-REPORT MEASURES

Measure	Treatment Group		Control Group	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
LMA	+18.14	16.35	+ 4.00	18.49
MCI*	+17.42	11.83	+ 3.00	9.01

*p<.05

The mean change scores and standard deviations of change scores for each of nine individual behavioral observation measures are presented in Table II. A positive change for clear, positive, agreement, acknowledgment, and recognition statements indicates improvement. A negative change for unclear, negative, disagreement, and nonacknowledgment statements indicates improvement. While the control group showed a larger decrease in the use of clear statements than the treatment group, the difference was not significant ($F=1.89$, $df=1/12$, $p<.25$). The treatment group showed a larger decrease in the use of unclear statements than the control group; however, the difference was again not significant ($F=1.40$,

$df=1/12$, $p>.25$). There was a significant difference between the treatment and control groups on change in the use of positive statements ($F=8.12$, $df=1/12$, $p<.05$). The control group showed a greater increase in the use of positive statements than the treatment group. The occurrence of positive statements was, however, quite low for both groups. The difference between the mean change scores on positive statements was also quite small, 1.72 statements. No differences were found between the treatment and control groups on changes in the use of negative statements, agreement statements, and disagreement statements ($F<1$, $df=1/12$, $p>.25$ for each of these three measures). While the treatment group showed an increase and the control group showed a decrease in the use of acknowledgment statements, the difference was not significant ($F=1.10$, $df=1/12$, $p>.25$). The treatment group also showed an increase while the control group showed a decrease in the use of recognition statements. This difference was marginally significant ($F=3.81$, $df=1/12$, $p<.1$). The treatment group showed a larger decrease than the control group in the use of nonacknowledgment statements; however, this difference was not significant ($F=1.60$, $df=1/12$, $p<.25$).

The change scores on the observation measures within each communication scale were combined so as to give an overall improvement score on each communication scale. The clarity scale score equals the increase in clear statements minus the increase in unclear statements. The relationship scale score equals the increase in positive statements minus the increase in negative statements. The agreement scale score equals the increase in agreement statements minus the increase in disagreement statements. The acknowledgment scale score equals the increase in acknowledgment statements plus the increase in recognition

statements minus the increase in nonacknowledgment statements. The mean change scores on each of the four communication scales are presented in Table III. The treatment group showed a decrease. This difference was not significant ($F=2.39$, $df=1/12$, $p<.25$). The treatment and control groups showed no significant difference on either the relationship scale scores or the agreement scale scores ($F=1.56$, $df=1/12$, $p<.25$; $F<1$, $df=1/12$, $p>.25$). A significant difference was found between the treatment and control groups on the acknowledgment scale scores ($F=8.27$, $df=1/12$, $p<.05$). The treatment group showed an increase in overall acknowledgment while the control group showed a decrease.

TABLE II
CHANGE SCORE MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS
FOR NINE BEHAVIORAL OBSERVATION MEASURES

Measure	Treatment Group <u>M</u>	Group <u>SD</u>	Control Group <u>M</u>	Group <u>SD</u>
Clear Statements	+ .57	9.75	-11.14	15.59
Unclear Statements	- 5.57	7.83	- .71	7.54
Positive Statements*	- .29	.95	+ 1.43	1.81
Negative Statements	- .57	4.35	- 1.86	3.44
Agreement Statements	+ 1.86	9.86	+ .86	4.74
Disagreement Statements	+ 2.00	11.12	+ 2.43	14.02
Acknowledgment Statements	+ 2.71	5.91	- 3.28	13.93
Recognition Statements ^a	+ 3.00	12.48	-11.86	15.79
Nonacknowledgment Statements	- 5.86	7.36	- 1.14	6.57

^a $p<.1$
* $p<.05$

TABLE III
CHANGE SCORE MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS
FOR FOUR COMMUNICATION SCALES

Scale	Treatment Group		Control Group	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Clarity	+ 6.14	21.47	-10.43	18.55
Relationship	+ .29	4.89	+3.29	4.07
Agreement	- .14	14.52	- 1.57	12.92
Acknowledgment*	+11.57	20.63	-14.00	11.31

* $p < .05$

Each individual's evaluation of the treatment program was obtained in a post-treatment interview. The majority of the individuals saw the group program as effecting their marriage a moderate to a great amount, and the overall treatment program as very beneficial. No one saw the program as harmful. The most frequently mentioned changes in the marital relationship as a result of the program included: more mutual understanding and acceptance; a closer, more positive, emotional relationship; and increased openness in communication. Individuals indicated a number of aspects of the program that they found helpful. Almost all individuals indicated the opportunity to observe other couples interact was highly beneficial. Individuals indicated that this gave them the opportunity to see a different way of approaching their problems and that it gave them the opportunity to see that their problems were not unique. Group activities most frequently mentioned

as being most helpful included: the application of the principles in focused conversation, listening exercises, and sculpting. The most frequently mentioned homework assignments seen as helpful included the feedback discussion and the listing of satisfactions. The most frequent response to "what would you like to see more of" was a larger number of sessions. The most frequent response to "what would you like to see less of" was "nothing". A small number of individuals did indicate that the trust-walk and the videotape replays were not especially helpful. Three of thirteen couples completing the treatment program indicated they were going to continue in further treatment (one control couple moved out of town after the posttest).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis predicted that treatment group couples would show a larger increase in self-reported marital adjustment than control group couples. This hypothesis did not receive clear support from the results. Although the treatment group showed a larger increase in reported marital adjustment than the control group, the difference was not statistically significant. The difference in change on the LMA between the treatment and control groups suggest a tendency for the marital group program to increase marital satisfaction.

The second hypothesis predicted that treatment group couples would show a larger increase in self-reported functional communication patterns than control group couples. This hypothesis was clearly supported by the results. Treatment group couples showed a significantly larger increase in scores on the MCI than control group couples. This finding indicates that the marital group program was effective in improving the marital communication characteristics and patterns shown outside the laboratory situation.

The third hypothesis predicted that treatment group couples would show a larger increase in directly observed clarity in marital communication than control group couples. This hypothesis did not receive clear support from the results. No significant differences were found between groups on change in clear statements, unclear statements,

or clarity scale scores. However, the observed differences were in the predicted direction on all three measures. Treatment group couples showed little change in the use of clear statements, while control group couples showed a decrease. Treatment group couples showed a decrease in the use of unclear statements, while control group couples showed little change. On the combined clarity scale score, treatment group couples showed an increase, while control group couples showed a decrease. These results suggest a tendency for the marital group program to increase overall clarity in marital communication.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that treatment group couples would show a larger increase in directly observed positiveness in marital communication than control group couples. The results did not support this hypothesis. Control group couples showed a significantly larger increase in the use of positive statements than treatment group couples. This finding should be interpreted cautiously, however, The actual occurrence of positive statements was quite low. Zero positive statements were scored on both pretest and posttest discussions for seven couples. The treatment group showed a change from a mean of .57 positive statements per discussion to a mean of .28. The control group showed a change from a mean of .57 positive statements per discussion to a mean of 2.00. The actual difference between mean change scores on positive statements was small. Mean change score was $-.29$ for the treatment group and $+1.43$ for the control group; a difference of 1.72. When the treatment and control groups were compared on changes in negative statements and relationship scale scores, no significant differences were found. Taken together, the results indicate that no meaningful differences were found in changes

in positiveness of communication between the treatment and control groups.

The fifth hypothesis predicted that treatment group couples would show a larger increase in directly observed agreement in marital communication than control group couples. The results did not support this hypothesis. No significant differences were found between the treatment and control groups on agreement statements, disagreement statements, or agreement scale scores.

The sixth hypothesis predicted that treatment group couples would show a larger increase in directly observed acknowledgment in marital communication than control group couples. This hypothesis was clearly supported by the results. The differences were in the predicted direction on all four acknowledgment measures. Treatment couples showed an increase in the use of acknowledgment statements while control couples showed a decrease. This difference was not significant, however. Treatment couples showed an increase in the use of recognition statements while control couples showed a decrease. This difference was marginally significant. Treatment couples showed a larger decrease in the use of nonacknowledgment statements than control couples. This difference was also not significant. There was a significant difference found between treatment couples and control couples on acknowledgment scale scores. Treatment couples showed an overall increase in acknowledgment while control couples showed an overall decrease. These results indicate that the marital group treatment was effective in increasing the indications of listening in marital communication.

The results of the present study are generally consistent in

indicating the marital communication group program as being effective in improving marital relationships. Treatment couples clearly showed more improvement than control couples on reported functional communication patterns and observed acknowledgment in communication. Treatment couples showed an increase in indications of listening, in understanding each other, and in paying attention to each other's communications. In this case, both self-report and behavioral observation measures were consistent. Treatment couples showed improvement in acknowledgment in the structured discussion situation and reported improvements in communication outside the laboratory. Treatment couples also showed a larger increase in reported marital satisfaction and in observed clarity than control couples. As neither of these differences were significant, they do not individually offer clear support for the effectiveness of the treatment program. Each of these findings is, however, consistent with the findings on reported communication and observed acknowledgment, and is in the predicted direction.

The high variation among couples on most of the measures make it difficult to establish relationships. Some treatment couples improved a large amount, while some showed little improvement. Some control group couples improved, while some got worse. (The control couple who showed the most improvement stated that they had made a conscious effort during the waiting period to work out their own problems.) The variation included a unique quality to each couple's style of communicating. This uniqueness reinforces the soundness of using each couple as their own control when measuring observed communication characteristics. Some variation in the behavioral observation measures is a result of the reliability of the coding scales. Overall, the

inter-rater reliability was nearly as high as that reported from previous studies. The lower reliability on the acknowledgment scale appears to be a result of an additional category (recognition statements). The combining of the two indications of listening categories resulted in a level of reliability comparable to previous studies. The usefulness of two distinct categories of positive indications of listening was not established in the present study. While inter-rater reliability appears adequate, there is still considerable variation due to lack of consistency in scoring. Reliability could probably have been slightly higher in the present study had the raters been able to complete the scoring within a shorter period of time.

The results from two of the behavioral observation measures, relationship and agreement, were not consistent with the overall results. Treatment couples did not show a larger increase on the scales than control couples. One possible explanation might be that within the range of relationships observed, positiveness and agreement do not discriminate between healthy and unhealthy relationships. Clinicians and researchers agree that positiveness should discriminate. Some clinicians see the individuation of self within a relationship as an aspect of healthy functioning (Bowen, 1966; Satir, 1967). These theorists would predict that healthy couples would also show disagreements.

A second explanation appears more plausible: that the inconsistent findings are a result of the discussion task characteristics. The task was designed to involve neutral items and tended to evoke neutral responses. The actual occurrence of responses with a scorable positive or negative quality was quite low, probably too low to make

an adequate discrimination among groups. A behavioral observation task involving the discussion of conflict areas might elicit a larger number of responses scorable of relationship quality. The results on the agreement scale might also be explained as a function of task characteristics. The task required agreement on a large number of specific alternatives. This was a highly structured task in which couples typically discussed each item in order. Perhaps the task was so structured that it limited the style of agreement from being typical. Both positiveness and agreement have been found by a number of investigators to discriminate distressed from nondistressed marriages.

While not a part of the formal investigation, the difficulties involved in a study of this nature deserve some mention. The first major difficulty was the obtaining of a sample of distressed couples willing to participate in an "experimental" treatment program. Many couples pursued the program no further than an initial telephone conversation with the experimenter. This difficulty indicates a need to further merge clinical research with clinical practice such that treatment evaluation is automatically obtained. A large number of individuals who spoke with the experimenter indicated their spouse was not willing to participate in the program. Research or treatment of married couples requires a willingness on the part of two persons. A second difficulty involved the behavioral observation. A large amount of time was spent in the preparation of transcripts. The rating of discussions directly from videotapes rather than prepared transcripts would be less difficult and might be made without a large sacrifice in amount of obtained information.

The continued evaluation and development of the

systems-communications therapeutic approach to marital problems is a major area for future research. The development of a treatment approach is an ongoing process which requires the specification through empirical investigation of the effective change-producing elements, and the incorporation of these elements into future intervention programs. A number of investigations need to be made of the effects of certain general characteristics of the marital communication group treatment program. A comparison of the present treatment approach with an unstructured attention control group would delineate more clearly the effects due to the specific therapeutic techniques. A comparison of the systems-communications approach employed in a marital group setting with the same approach employed in a conjoint therapy setting would allow an evaluation of the effects due to the group treatment approach. Further research might investigate the effects of longer-term treatment, or the presentation of the program within a shorter time-span such as a week-end workshop format.

The current therapeutic approach employed a number of specific exercises and techniques felt by clinicians to be effective in treating distressed marital relationships. Future research should be addressed toward the establishment of an empirical basis for judging the benefits of these techniques. One possible approach would be a number of analogue studies, each investigating an individual technique. The marital group program was effective in improving marital relationships in the current sample. Further research is needed to determine the effectiveness of this approach in treating various populations: populations which differ in age, duration of relationship (including engaged couples), educational level, socioeconomic level, or severity

of marital discord. Further research is also needed to determine how well the changes effected by the program are maintained for a period of time following the program.

Evidence from the present study shows that some distressed marriages get better without intervention, while others get worse. The control group overall showed a decrease in clarity and acknowledgment in communication. Future research might investigate more closely the changes which occur in distressed marriages without intervention, with the goal of identifying those characteristics of marriages which improve and those characteristics of marriages which deteriorate. One further area of research which might be explored involved the behavioral observation methodologies. The findings from the relationship and agreement scales in the current study were not consistent with the other measures. The effects of task characteristics upon the resulting measures of communication need to be investigated. Specifically, the effects of various discussion tasks including neutral and conflict items upon observed positiveness and agreement for both distressed and nondistressed marriages might be investigated.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

This study investigated the effects of a group treatment program for distressed married couples using a systems-communications therapeutic approach. It was predicted that couples participating in the treatment program would show a greater improvement in their relationship than couples receiving no treatment. It was expected that this improvement would be reflected in changes in self-reported marital satisfaction and marital communication patterns, and in directly observed clarity, relationship quality, agreement, and acknowledgment in marital communication.

Treatment group couples showed significantly greater improvement on two measures: self-reported communication patterns and directly observed acknowledgment in communication. Although the differences were not significant, treatment group couples also reported a larger increase in marital satisfaction and showed a larger increase in observed clarity of communication than control group couples. It was concluded that the marital communication group treatment program was effective in improving distressed marital relationships. Implications for further development of the program were discussed along with directions for future research.

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APPENDIX A

LOCKE-WALLACE MARITAL ADJUSTMENT SCALE

WITH SCORING KEY

LOCKE'S MARITAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Check the dot on the scale line below which best describes the degree of happiness, everything considered, of your present marriage. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness which most people get from marriage, and the scale gradually ranges on one side to those few who are very unhappy in marriage, and on the other, to those few who experience extreme joy in marriage.

0	2	7	15	20	25	35
*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Very Unhappy			Happy			Perfectly Happy

State the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your mate on the following items.

Check One Column for Each Item Below	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Disagree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
2. Handling family finances	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Matters of recreation	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Demonstrations of affection	8	6	4	2	1	0
5. Friends	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Sex relations	15	12	9	4	1	0
7. Conventionality (right, good, or proper conduct)	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Philosophy of life	5	4	3	2	1	0
9. Ways of dealing with in-laws	5	4	3	2	1	0

10. When disagreements arise, they usually result in:
 a. Husband giving in 0
 b. Wife giving in 2
 c. Agreement by mutual give and take 10
11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?
 a. All of them 10
 b. Some of them 8
 c. Very few of them 3
 d. None of them 0
12. In leisure time do you generally prefer:
 a. To be "on the go" _____
 b. To stay at home _____
- Does your mate generally prefer:
 a. To be "on the go" _____
 b. To stay at home _____

(Stay at home for both, 10 points; "on the go" for both, 3 points; disagreement, 2 points.)

13. Do you ever wish you had not married?
 a. Frequently 0
 b. Occasionally 3
 c. Rarely 8
 d. Never 15
14. If you had your life to live over, do you think you would:
 a. Marry the same person 15
 b. Marry a different person 0
 c. Not marry at all 1
15. Do you confide in your mate?
 a. Almost never 0
 b. Rarely 2
 c. In most things 10
 d. In everything 10

APPENDIX B

A MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY

WITH SCORING KEY

A MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY

This inventory offers you an opportunity to make an objective study of the degree and patterns of communication in your marital relationship. It will enable you and your husband/wife to better understand each other. We believe you will find it both interesting and helpful to make this study.

Directions

1. Please answer each question as quickly as you can according to the way you feel at the moment (not the way you usually feel or felt last week).
2. Please do not consult your husband/wife while completing this inventory. You may discuss it with him/her after both of you have completed it. Remember that counseling value of this form will be lost if you change any answer during or after this discussion.
3. Honest answers are very necessary. Please be as frank as possible. Your answers are confidential. Your name is not required.
4. Use the following examples for practice. Put a check (✓) in one of the four blanks on the right to show how the question applies to your marriage.

	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Some- Times</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>
Does your husband/wife like to talk about himself/herself?	_____	_____	_____	_____
Does he/she let you know when he/she is displeased?	_____	_____	_____	_____

5. Read each question carefully. If you cannot give the exact answer to a question, answer the best you can but be sure to answer each one. There are no right or wrong answers. Answer according to the way you feel at the present time.

	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Some- Times</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>
1. Do you and your husband/wife discuss the manner in which the family income should be spent?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
2. Does he/she discuss his/her work and interests with you?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
3. Do you have a tendency to keep your feelings to yourself?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
4. Is your husband's/wife's tone of voice irritating?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
5. Does he/she have a tendency to say things which would be better left unsaid?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
6. Are your mealtime conversations easy and pleasant?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
7. Do you find it necessary to keep after him/her about his/her faults?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
8. Does he/she seem to understand your feelings?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
9. Does your husband/wife nag you?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
10. Does he/she listen to what you have to say?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
11. Does it upset you to a great extent when your husband/wife is angry with you?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
12. Does he/she pay you compliments and say nice things to you?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
13. Is it hard to understand your husband's/wife's feelings and attitudes?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
14. Is he/she affectionate toward you?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
15. Does he/she let you finish talking before responding to what you are saying?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
16. Do you and your husband/wife remain silent for long periods when you are angry with one another?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Some- Times</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>
17. Does he/she allow you to pursue your own interests and activities even if they are different from his/hers?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
18. Does he/she try to lift your spirits when you are depressed or discouraged?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
19. Do you fail to express disagreement with him/her because you are afraid he/she will get angry?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
20. Does your husband/wife complain that you don't understand him/her?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
21. Do you let your husband/wife know when you are displeased with him/her?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
22. Do you feel he/she says one thing but really means another?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
23. Do you help him/her understand you by saying how you think, feel, and believe?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
24. Do you and your husband/wife find it hard to disagree with one another without losing your tempers?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
25. Do the two of you argue a lot over money?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
26. When a problem arises that needs to be solved are you and your husband/wife able to discuss it together (in a calm manner)?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
27. Do you find it difficult to express your true feelings to him/her?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
28. Does he/she offer you cooperation, encouragement and emotional support in your role (duties) as husband/wife?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
29. Does your husband/wife insult you when angry with you?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
30. Do you and your husband/wife engage in outside interests and activities together?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Some- Times</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>
31. Does your husband/wife accuse you of not listening to what he/she says?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
32. Does he/she let you know that you are important to him/her?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
33. Is it easier to confide in a friend rather than your husband/wife?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
34. Does he/she confide in others rather than in you?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
35. Do you feel that in most matters your husband/wife knows what you are trying to say?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
36. Does he/she monopolize the conversation very much?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
37. Do you and your husband/wife talk about things which are of interest to both of you?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
38. Does your husband/wife sulk or pout very much?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
39. Do you discuss intimate matters with him/her?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
40. Do you and your husband/wife discuss your personal problems with each other?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
41. Can your husband/wife tell what kind of day you have had without asking?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
42. Does he/she fail to express feelings of respect and admiration for you?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
43. Do you and your husband/wife talk over pleasant things that happen during the day?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
44. Do you hesitate to discuss certain things with your husband/wife because you are afraid he/she might hurt your feelings?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
45. Do you pretend you are listening to him/her when actually you are not really listening?	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
46. Do the two of you ever sit down just to talk things over?	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

APPENDIX C

MARITAL DECISION MAKING TASK

Instructions for the Marital
Decision Making Task

Both marital partners initially completed the Marital Decision Making Questionnaire individually. The instructions on the front page of this questionnaire were read by the experimenter. In addition, the spouses were instructed to: "Fill out the questionnaire indicating your own personal preferences for each item. Do not discuss the items as you answer them."

The individually completed questionnaires were taken by the experimenter and the couple was then seated at a table together. They were asked to complete an identical form of the questionnaire, this time with the following instructions: "I'm going to ask you to fill out this same questionnaire as a couple now. Your individual answers will remain confidential unless you indicate them to each other. The answers to these questions do not involve the concepts of good-bad or right-wrong, but simply reflect the fact that different people may have different likes or dislikes. You are to discuss these items and fill out the questionnaire choosing answers as a couple that apply to both of you. Each of you participate. I'm going to tape record your discussion, which will be confidential as I indicated. I'll wait outside the room so you may feel free to discuss your ideas. You will have 20 minutes, to complete your form. Any questions? If you finish before 20 minutes, open the door." After any questions were answered, the experimenter turned on the recorder and left the room.

MARITAL DECISION MAKING QUESTIONNAIRE

Form A

You will find 6 situations listed below that a married couple sometimes has to make a decision on. Under each statement, you will find 10 possible choices. You are to choose the 3 alternatives that you like the most and the 3 alternatives that you like the least and list them in the spaces provided. Even if you have a difficult time choosing, please fill in all of the spaces.

1. Choose from the list below the colors for a new family car that you like the most and that you like the least.

	<u>Like the Most</u>	<u>Like the Least</u>
Yellow		
Red		
Purple		
Green		
Brown		
Orange		
Blue		
White		
Gold		
Black		

2. Choose from the list below the meals for dinner tomorrow night that you like the most and that you like the least.

	<u>Like the Most</u>	<u>Like the Least</u>
Chicken		
Steak		
Mexican Food		
Hamburgers		
Spaghetti		
Chinese Food		
Fish		
Pizza		
Pork Chops		
Stew		

3. Choose from the list below the places to go on your next vacation that you like the most and that you like the least.

	<u>Like the Most</u>	<u>Like the Least</u>
Mountains		
Disneyland		
Stay Home		
Lake		
Florida		
Europe		
Visit Relatives		
Mexico		
Ocean Cruise		
Washington, D.C.		

(Continued on next page)

4. Choose from the list below the favorite television programs that you like to watch the most and that you like the least.

	<u>Like the Most</u>	<u>Like the Least</u>
Gunsmoke		
As the World Turns		
Johnny Carson		
Let's Make a Deal		
Kung Fu		
NFL Football		
Evening News		
Marcus Welby, M.D.		
Hawaii Five-O		
Hee Haw		

5. Choose from the list below the items for you to purchase next that you like the most and that you like the least.

	<u>Like the Most</u>	<u>Like the Least</u>
Color TV		
Boat		
Furniture		
Clothes		
New Car		
Stereo		
Washer-Dryer		
Motorcycle		
Vacation Cabin		
Refrigerator-Freezer		

6. Choose from the list below the sports activities to play (do) that you like the most and that you like the least.

	<u>Like the Most</u>	<u>Like the Least</u>
Tennis		
Swimming		
Bicycling		
Skiing		
Softball		
Bowling		
Skating		
Volleyball		
Badminton		
Golf		

MARITAL DECISION MAKING QUESTIONNAIRE

Form B

You will find 6 situations listed below that a married couple sometimes has to make a decision on. Under each statement, you will find 10 possible choices. You are to choose the 3 alternatives that you like the most and the 3 alternatives that you like the least and list them in the spaces provided. Even if you have a difficult time choosing, please fill in all of the spaces.

1. Choose from the list below the type of pets that you like the most and that you like the least.

	<u>Like the Most</u>	<u>Like the Least</u>
Hamster		
Bird		
Little Dog		
Big Dog		
Skunk		
Monkey		
Cat		
Horse		
Rabbit		
Goldfish		

2. Choose from the list below the desserts for dinner tomorrow night that you like the most and that you like the least.

	<u>Like the Most</u>	<u>Like the Least</u>
Ice Cream		
Cookies		
Apple Pie		
Pudding		
Pecan Pie		
Chocolate Cake		
Fruit		
Donuts		
Strawberry Shortcake		
Cherry Pie		

3. Choose from the list below the things you like the most to do or go to on a Saturday night and that you like least.

	<u>Like the Most</u>	<u>Like the Least</u>
Movie		
Concert		
Stay Home		
Camping		
Restaurant		
Party		
Hockey Game		
Rodeo		
Dancing		
Basketball Game		

(Continued on next page)

4. Choose from the list below the places to live that you like the most and that you like the least.

	<u>Like the Most</u>	<u>Like the Least</u>
California		
Wyoming		
New York		
Colorado		
Hawaii		
Tennessee		
Alaska		
Arizona		
Florida		
Minnesota		

5. Choose from the list below the magazines to subscribe to that you like the most and that you like the least.

	<u>Like the Most</u>	<u>Like the Least</u>
Time		
Sports Illustrated		
Cosmopolitan		
Esquire		
TV Guide		
Reader's Digest		
McCall's		
Consumer's Guide		
Better Homes and Gardens		
National Geographic		

6. Choose from the list below the famous people you might want to meet in person that you like the most and that you like the least.

	<u>Like the Most</u>	<u>Like the Least</u>
Barbra Streisand		
President Ford		
Sammy Davis, Jr.		
Joe Namath		
Carol Burnett		
Jackie Onassis		
Bob Hope		
Billie Jean King		
Paul Newman		
Mary Tyler Moore		

APPENDIX D

SCORING MANUAL FOR COMMUNICATION SCALES

Scoring Manual

I. Preparation of Transcript

A verbatim transcript was prepared from the audiotape of each discussion, including all ungrammatical constructions, fragments of speech and meaningless utterances. Each transcript was identified by the same code as the corresponding audiotape.

A rough transcript was initially made. In addition to the discussion content, the speaker for each speech, either husband (H) or wife (W), laughter (L), interruptions (I), and simultaneous speeches (S) were noted. A check was made as to its accuracy and the scorable speeches were numbered. The discussions were timed, and the segments to be used in the analysis were marked. In addition, pauses of over two seconds during which the context of the conversation indicated a need for a response were marked. The transcript was then checked by a second transcriber for its accuracy. Any segments during which something was spoken but the content could not be ascertained were indicated (...).

II. Coder Training

Two coders will be used in the study so that a reliability check can be made on the scoring system. Both coders will be involved in a training procedure prior to the scoring of the actual data. After a review of the scoring categories and examples, both coders will independently score the same sample discussion. Then together with the investigator, they will discuss any questions or problems they had in scoring the sample and will arrive at consensus agreement on the score for every statement in the sample. This procedure will be repeated on an additional two sample discussions. Further examples which help to clarify the scoring categories may be added to the manual during this phase. During both the training phase and data scoring phase, neither rater will know the name of the couple he is scoring or the experimental group to which they belong.

The scoring will be done according to the following general instructions:

1. Score each statement on all four scales. Each statement will receive one score in each of the four categories.
2. Score each discussion using the typescript as you listen to the audiotape. Use both verbal content and voice quality to decide on a score.

3. Use the definitions and examples given in the scoring manual as a reference as you score each discussion.
4. Indicate your scores on a separate sheet of paper, using the short abbreviations for each category given in the manual.

III. Coding Scales

1. Clarity scale:

This scale refers to whether the speech is clear to the rater. The rater should avoid imputing motives and score from an objective position. The speech is to be given only one of the following scores:

a. Clear statement (C):

A statement which is explicit, unambiguous, and spoken in a way which is consistent with the verbal content is scored (C). The content meaning which the speaker is trying to convey is understandable by the rater without extreme difficulty.

Examples:

"I'd like to go to the mountains." (Positive tone)
 "Which ones do you like?"
 "I think seeing a movie is a good idea."

b. Unclear statement (UC):

A statement for which the meaning the speaker is trying to convey is not clear to the rater is scored (UC). This confusion in meanings may result from different sources.

A statement meaning may be unclear because the words themselves do not make sense. The words are vague, sentence structure is garbled, pronouns are used in a way in which their referents are indistinguishable, or the statement is self-contradictory.

Examples:

"Fish isn't good for you."
 "We might as well eat hamburgers or something, whatever."
 "Well, we could go to a movie, but then there aren't any good ones showing."
 "Those others are not like theirs."
 "It's kind of, you know."
 "Sort of."
 "Maybe."

A statement meaning may be unclear because of an inconsistency between the verbal content and tonal aspects of the speech. What the person says does not fit with how he says it. This includes sarcastic responses.

Examples:

"I like that choice." (Neutral or negative tone)
 "I didn't really want to do that." (Disappointed tone)
 "That's OK." (Irritated tone)
 "I think that's a good idea." (Said sarcastically)

A statement may be unclear because of a lack of fit with the context of the conversation. This includes incongruent laughter.

Examples:

A: "I enjoyed doing that the last time."
 B: "I can't think of anything."
 (B's speech would be scored unclear).

(Appropriate topic changes which are otherwise clear are scored C).

A statement may be unclear because of incompleteness. Only uninterrupted speech fragments are scored in this category.

Examples:

"Well, I guess, I."
 "If we say that, then."
 "The mountains are."

A statement may be unclear because of the manner in which it is made. It may be spoken too fast, too soft, or mumbled.

A pause following an explicit request for a response by the other individual is also scored unclear.

c. Nonscorable Statements (NSc):

All statements not scored either clear or unclear are scored in this category. Speeches which are interrupted before a judgment can be made, or unclear for mechanical reasons are scored in this category. Appropriate positive laughter with no verbal content is also nonscorable on clarity.

Example:

A: "Let's"

B: (I) "I wish you..."

(A's speech is nonscorable on clarity).

2. Relationship scale:

This scale refers to the affect level of a communication (both verbal content and tonal expression). The speech will be given only one of the following scores:

a. Positive statement (+):

A statement which conveys approval, friendliness, support, praise or a recognition of the worth of the spouse is scored (+).

Examples:

"Good idea."

"I'm happy with your choice." (Neutral or positive tone)

"Thank you."

"Honey..."

b. Negative statement (-):

A statement which conveys disapproval, criticism, blame, attack, hostility, frustration with the partner, suggestions of inadequacy in the partner, or making fun of the partner through content or tone of voice is scored (-).

Examples:

"That's not a very good idea."

"I wish you would shut-up."

"Make up your mind." (Frustrated tone)

"You probably don't remember, as usual."

"You're being stubborn again."

"I can't believe you would even say that."

"You really like that?" (Implying that they really don't)

c. Neutral statement (0):

All statements not scored either positive or negative are scored in this category.

Example:

"How much time do we have?"

"I'd like to learn to ski."

3. Agreement scale:

This scale refers to whether the speaker explicitly agrees or not with the previous statements. The verbal content of a speech is of more importance in scoring this category than tonal expression. The speech is to be given only one of the following scores:

a. Agreement statement (Ag):

A statement in which the speaker explicitly agrees with his partner's statement is scored (Ag).

Examples:

"That's a good idea."
"I'll go along with that."

The following statements are scored agreement when the nonverbal communication also indicates agreement.

"Yeah."
"All right."
"OK."
"Uh huh."

A statement which clearly indicates both agreement and disagreement is scored agreement, unless the speaker emphasizes the disagreement.

Example:

A: "I like red, green and blue."
B: "I like red and blue but green's not really one of my favorites."
(B's speech is scored agreement).

b. Disagreement statement (DAg):

A statement in which the speaker explicitly disagrees with his partner is scored (DAg). The disagreement may be expressed as a correction of a previous statement.

Examples:

"No, I don't like that one."
"Let's choose this instead."
"That's not exactly what I would have chosen."
"Yes, but..."
"I think that really means..."

A pause following an explicit request for a statement concerning agreement is scored disagreement.

Example:

A: "I like blue, do you?"

B: (Pause)

(B's speech is scored disagreement).

Sarcastic remarks directed towards the spouse's position are scored disagreement.

c. Nonscorable statement (NSag):

All statements not scored either agreement or disagreement are scored in this category.

Examples:

A: "Let's go to the beach."

B: "I hope we're done by 2 o'clock."

(B's speech is nonscorable on agreement).

A: "Would you like this one?"

B: "Maybe, maybe not."

(B's speech is nonscorable on agreement).

The following statements are nonscorable on agreement when the nonverbal communicating does not indicate agreement but simply recognition of a speech.

"Yeah."

"All right."

"OK."

"Uh huh."

The first statement in each transcript is nonscorable on agreement because of the lack of a preceding statement from which to base a judgment.

4. Acknowledgment scale:

This scale refers to the degree to which the intent and content of the previous statement are taken into account by the speaker. This scale codes whether or not the speaker indicates that he heard his spouse's statements. The speech is to be given only one of the following scores:

a. Acknowledgment statement (Ac):

A statement which indicates that the speaker accurately heard what his spouse said is scored (Ac). To be scored acknowledgment, a statement must contain explicit

evidence that the previous speech has been heard correctly, and is an appropriate response.

Examples:

"California's good, but I like this one better."

"How come you chose steak?"

A: "I like blue the most."

B: "That's one of my favorite colors, too."

(B's speech is scored acknowledgment).

A: "I think it would be fun to go to Mexico."

B: "Would you enjoy Washington, D.C. as much as Mexico?"

(B's speech is scored acknowledgment).

b. Recognition statement (R):

A statement which implies that the previous speech was heard but lacks explicit content of the previous speech is scored (R). This category includes those conventional cursory expressions which typically stand alone.

Examples:

"Yes."

"Yeah."

"All right."

"Right."

"Maybe."

"I agree."

"Uh huh."

"O.K."

"Well."

"No."

"Me too."

"Mm hm."

"I put that one too."

"Sounds good."

"Really."

"I know that."

"You liked that?"

c. Nonacknowledgment statement (NAc):

A statement which gives no indication that the previous speech was heard accurately, which clearly does not recognize or respond to the previous statement is scored (NAc). Included in this code are those statements which show a misunderstanding or an ignoring of previous statement. A large proportion of interrupting and simultaneous speeches will be scored nonacknowledgment. Inappropriate topic changes are scored nonacknowledgment.

Examples:

A: "I wish"

B: (I) "I like Colorado."

(B's speech is scored nonacknowledgment).

A: "Which one did you pick?"
 B: "I hope this does some good."
 (B's speech is scored nonacknowledgment).

A: "Let's go to the beach."
 B: "When's the best time to get tickets for a football game?"
 (B's speech is scored as nonacknowledgment).

A pause following an explicit request for a response by the other individual is scored as nonacknowledgment.

Example:

A: "Do you like Marcus Welby?"
 B: (Pause)
 (B's pause is scored as nonacknowledgment).

d. Nonscorable statement (NSac):

All statements not scored either acknowledgment, recognition, or nonacknowledgment are scored in this category. This includes statements giving no acknowledgment of the previous statements, but following a statement that does not require an acknowledgment.

Examples:

A: "California."
 B: "Hawaii."
 (B's speech is nonscorable on acknowledgment).

A: "I figured that hamburgers would be quicker."
 B: "I thought maybe..."
 (B's speech is nonscorable on acknowledgment).

The first statement in each transcript is nonscorable on acknowledgment because of the lack of a preceding statement from which to base a judgment.

APPENDIX E

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM

SUBJECT CONSENT

I have been asked to participate as a subject in the research project entitled The Effects of a Communication Group for Married Couples: An Outcome Study under the direction of Norman Henry.

The purpose of this study is to determine what effects participation in a communication group for married couples has on marital interaction. The focus of the group experience will be on improving communication between spouses. Participation in this study involves two interview sessions involving each couple alone and eight group sessions in which four couples will meet together. These group meetings will last approximately one and one-half hours and meet once a week. The experimental measurements will be obtained during the two interview sessions. Each couple will be asked to fill out two short questionnaires about their marriage and then to discuss between themselves some given topics. This discussion will be tape recorded so that it may be scored at a later time. So that confidentiality of these measurements may be insured, the discussion will be identified by number rather than name to all research assistants.

There are two different procedures couples may be randomly selected for, both of which involve all ten meetings but in a different order. One group of couples will participate in the first interview, and then begin the communication group experience. The second interview session for this group will occur within a week after the end of the group sessions. The second group of couples will be asked to participate in both interview sessions prior to participation in the group experience. This will involve an eight-week wait between interview sessions, with the communication group beginning immediately after the second interview. It is possible that during the eight week period, a couple may experience an increase in discomfort or conflict. Should any crisis come up during this time, the investigator will be available for counseling, which will not disqualify the couple from participation in the project. Participation is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. There will be a charge for the communication group experience. The charge will be based on a sliding scale with the fee dependent on income. The maximum charge will be \$50 per couple for the entire experience with the minimum charge being \$10.

1. I understand that informed consent is required of all persons in this project.
2. The principal and alternate procedures, including the experimental procedures in this project, have been identified and explained to me in language that I can understand.
3. The risks and discomforts from the procedures have been explained to me.
4. The expected benefits from the procedures have been explained to me.

5. An offer has been made to answer any questions that I may have about these procedures.
6. I have been told that I may stop my participation in this project at any time, without prejudice.

I voluntarily agree to participate as a subject in the above named project.

Date

Signature of Subject

Signature of Witness

Signature of Authorized Third
Party and Relationship to the
Subject

Using language that is understandable and appropriate, I have discussed this project, and the six items listed above, with the subject and/or his authorized representatives.

Date

Signature of Project Director
or his Representative

APPENDIX F

SUBJECT INFORMATION FORM

Subject Information

Names _____

Address _____ Home Phone _____

Husband

Wife

Age _____

Race _____

Education _____

Occupation _____

Work Phone _____

Income _____

Previous Marriage _____

Religion _____

How Committed to Marriage
(with 10 equal to totally) _____

Years Married _____

Children	Name	Age	Relation
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

Fee _____

APPENDIX G

POST-TREATMENT INTERVIEW

1. How much did the group program effect your marriage?
 - (a) a great amount
 - (b) a moderate amount
 - (c) little or none
2. Was the overall group experience:
 - (a) very beneficial
 - (b) moderately beneficial
 - (c) slightly beneficial
 - (d) slightly harmful
 - (e) moderately harmful
 - (f) very harmful
3. In what way has your marriage relationship changed as a result of the group?
4. How was the group helpful?
5. Which group activity or exercise was most helpful?
6. Which homework assignment was most helpful?
7. If you had the program to go through again, what would you like to see more/less of?
8. Do you plan on continuing in any other form of treatment at this time?

APPENDIX H

MARITAL COMMUNICATION GROUP CONTENT

Session 1

After each person had learned the names of all group members, the group was separated into unrelated, same-sex dyads for a mutual interview. Each of these arranged pairs engaged in a general "get to know each other" conversation for approximately 15 minutes. At the end of this time, each person introduced the individual he/she had been talking with to the group. The group leader then presented the following list of characteristics of functional marital communications:

- (1) Accept mutual responsibility for improving the relationship.
- (2) Speak for yourself.
- (3) Learn to listen.
- (4) Be honest and open about your feelings.
- (5) Speak clearly and congruently.
- (6) Be specific.
- (7) Communicate in a positive manner.
- (8) Focus on the present.

Group members were given paper and pencil, and encouraged to write these characteristics down as they were discussed.

One at a time, each couple discussed their goals for their marriage, including their marital goals for the group experience. An emphasis was placed on stating these goals in specific behavioral terms. The group then viewed a short videotaped segment of each goals discussion.

Homework Assignment. Each individual was to write down 5 to 10 current satisfactions that he/she gives to his/her spouse and 5 to 10 current satisfactions that he/she receives from his/her spouse. Satisfactions were to be stated in terms of specific activities.

Session 2

The second session began with spouses exchanging their lists of given and received satisfactions compiled the past week. Some of these satisfactions were shared with the rest of the group as spouses compared lists. Couples then communicated using a variation of Satir's (1967) series of interaction experiments. All couples went through the same sequence: talking to each other from across the room; talking while setting back to back; communicating through eye contact only; communicating through eye contact, gestures, and touches; touching only (eyes closed); talking face to face without touching; and finally, talking while touching and looking at each other. A number of situations were then roleplayed by various group members. In each situation, one person assumed one of Satir's (1972) dysfunctional styles of communicating: blaming, placating, irrelevant, and computing. The same conversation was repeated each time with both participants attempting to be functional communicators.

A feedback exercise was introduced by the leader and practiced by one couple. Each person was required to accurately restate the sender's message before giving his/her reply. This exercise has been termed content verification because it requires the receiver of a message to verify that the content of the message received was the same as that which was sent (Piaget, 1972). An acknowledgment training exercise was introduced following the feedback exercise, and practiced by the same couple. Each person was required to acknowledge that the sender's message was received and understood before initiating a reply. If the receiver was not sure that the message was understood correctly, he/she

asked for clarification before acknowledging receipt. A new statement was never to be originated until the content of the previous statement was understood and acknowledged. This exercise focused upon the development of active listening skills.

Homework Assignment. Each person was to write down 5 to 10 of his/her spouse's nonverbal communications along with the received meaning. At least two positive nonverbal communications were to be included.

Session 3

The lists of nonverbal communications compiled during the week were exchanged by the spouses and briefly discussed. Any misinterpretations of nonverbal behaviors were clarified at this time. The feedback and acknowledgment exercises introduced the previous week were reviewed, and practiced by all couples in the group. Each couple used these two exercises in sequence, that is, a couple began their discussion using the feedback procedure and then completed the same discussion using the acknowledgment procedure.

Couples were then taught the technique of reflective listening (Piaget, 1972). The primary focus in reflective listening is to verify the receipt of affective feelings rather than verbal content. In reflective listening, the listener tries to understand the meaning behind the words, how the sender is feeling as he/she speaks. The receiver then repeats back to the speaker the essence of the message. The receiver's task is to let the sender know his/her feelings were understood and accepted in a nonjudgmental way. As many couples practiced reflective listening as time permitted.

Homework Assignment. Each couple was to schedule two 30-minute periods during the week for on-task conversation. These talk-times were to be arranged so as to eliminate interruptions and interfering activities (that is, television off, kids in bed, newspaper down, and no other simultaneous activities). They were encouraged to try the listening exercises during this time, as well as making use of the other principles of good communication.

Session 4

A brief discussion of the talk-time assignment took place first. Any current issues for the couples were then dealt with by engaging the couple in focused conversation with each other. This technique was employed throughout the group program when any issue needed to be resolved. Spouses were asked to talk to, rather than about, each other, and were encouraged to make use of the characteristics of functional communication which had been learned. The therapist and group members acted as consultants in helping the couple work out their issue.

The rest of the session was spent sculpting each of the marital relationships. "A family sculpture is an arrangement of people or objects that expresses their family relationship to one another at a particular point in time." (Simon, 1972, p. 49). Each marital partner arranged himself/herself and his/her spouse in a physical arrangement which symbolized his/her perception of the marital relationship. Individuals created a live marital portrait by placing themselves and their spouse together in terms of postures, expressions, and spatial relationships representing actions and feelings. The therapist helped

each person more accurately show his/her relationship by labeling the expressions and distances. Both partners in each marriage sculpted both the current marital relationship and the relationship they would like to have.

Short video-taped segments of each of the sculptures were replayed. The discussion which followed focused on what it felt like to be in the relationship, the differences between the partners' perceptions, and the behavioral changes necessary to arrive at the desired relationship.

Homework Assignment. During the following week, each person was to do something special (not regularly done) for his/her spouse without telling what it was. This was to be something which each individual felt his/her partner would like.

Session 5

The leader began the session by asking the group members to guess the nice thing that their spouse had done for them the past week. The homework discussion also allowed the leader to insure that all individuals were thanked by their spouse for the gifts.

Couples then went on a trust-walk together (Satir, 1967). One member of each marital pair was blindfolded and his/her spouse led him/her on a walk through the inside of the building and around the outside. Both members were to focus on interpersonal feelings during the walk. The person leading was to make the walk as interesting and enjoyable as possible for his/her spouse. Spouses were to use any method of touch to communicate that they wished during the walk, however, no talking was permitted. After 12 to 15 minutes, the roles of leader and follower were reversed and the experience repeated. A discussion

followed concerning any thoughts or feelings experienced during the walk. Ten to fifteen minutes before the end of this session each couple separated themselves at a distance from the other group members. Each couple then exchanged massages of the shoulders, head, and hand. Each person received a massage lasting about five minutes. This last exercise lead directly into the homework assignment.

Homework Assignment. Couples were to give each other a massage during the week, picking times during which they would not feel pressured to hurry. Partners were encouraged to ask for their massage after a rough day or at some other time when they felt a need for support. During the massage, couples were to focus on the experience of giving and receiving pleasure through touch. The partner receiving the massage was to insure himself/herself an enjoyable experience by giving feedback and instructions to the giving spouse on what he/she experienced as pleasurable.

Session 6

The leader began by checking to make sure the exchanging of massages had been a pleasurable experience for all group members. In addition to using the previously learned communication techniques, two new procedures were employed in this session. The first procedure involved roleplaying with the roles of husband and wife reversed. The husband roleplayed his wife while the wife roleplayed her husband. The second new procedure involved practice at communicating negative statements in a more positive way. Each couple briefly practiced the positive statement procedure as they discussed the behaviors they liked and disliked about each other. Dislikes were stated in terms of

preferred behaviors, that is, stating the behaviors that the individual would like to see more of, or in place of the disliked behaviors. Frequently, individuals had extreme difficulty figuring out how to communicate in a positive way about particularly frustrating behaviors. Group members were quite helpful in these situations, when they obviously could be more objective about the situation. In addition to evoking less hostile feelings, statements of this nature also convey more specific feedback about what changes are desired.

Homework Assignment. Couples were to concentrate on giving each other feedback in a positive manner. This was to be done in two ways. First, each person was to find an opportunity each day of the week to tell his/her spouse the things he/she did which were liked. Second, feedback sessions were to be held twice during the week, at which time couples were to talk about both liked and disliked behaviors. However, as practiced in the group, any dislikes were to be communicated in a positive way, for example, "I would like it more if you...".

Session 7

This session began with a discussion of the previous week's homework assignment as the other sessions. Giving feedback in a positive way was practiced again by those couples finding it difficult. The rest of the session was spent dealing with specific issues of the couples making use of the listening exercises, roleplaying, positive statements technique, and videotape replay.

Homework Assignment. Couples were to go out on a date sometime during the week.

Session 8

At the beginning of this session, each couple had a chance to share where they went on their date. Two concentric circles were then formed with the wives in the center circle and the husbands in a circle on the outside of their wives. The wives then discussed among themselves what they liked about their spouses. The husbands listened and afterwards talked about the feelings they experienced while their wives were talking. The same procedure was then repeated with the husbands in the center circle.

Each couple then discussed between themselves their goals for their marriage for the coming year. These discussions took place using the acknowledgment exercise format with an emphasis on stating the goals in specific behavioral terms. Couples viewed short segments of each of these conversations on videotape replay. The brief time remaining was spent in a wrap-up discussion and good-byes.

APPENDIX I

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR

PRETEST AND POSTTEST SCORES

	Treatment Group			
	Pretest		Posttest	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
LMA	80.64	14.04	98.79	18.76
MCI	79.71	13.36	97.14	17.19
Clear Statements	108.29	28.82	108.86	22.89
Unclear Statements	14.57	5.13	9.00	5.03
Positive Statements	.57	.79	.29	.53
Negative Statements	5.14	4.41	4.57	6.65
Agreement Statements	27.14	6.47	29.00	6.76
Disagreement Statements	24.29	9.66	26.29	12.58
Acknowledgment Statements	34.14	7.95	36.86	9.15
Recognition Statements	34.86	16.30	37.86	13.96
Nonacknowledgment Statements	13.43	8.85	7.57	2.88

	Control Group			
	Pretest		Posttest	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
LMA	82.57	20.47	86.57	28.30
MCI	78.36	7.95	81.36	13.22
Clear Statements	126.14	24.69	115.00	25.04
Unclear Statements	15.57	7.30	15.00	8.33
Positive Statements	.57	.79	2.00	2.52
Negative Statements	4.00	2.38	2.14	2.79
Agreement Statements	29.00	6.73	29.86	9.37
Disagreement Statements	25.00	11.43	27.43	14.65
Acknowledgment Statements	39.00	10.82	35.71	11.04
Recognition Statements	49.00	25.25	37.14	15.84
Nonacknowledgment Statements	11.43	3.64	10.29	8.83

APPENDIX J

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY TABLES
FOR COUPLE CHANGE SCORES

LOCKE-WALLACE MARITAL ADJUSTMENT SCALE

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	700.07	1	700.07	2.29
Within groups	3,664.86	12	305.41	
Total	4,364.93	13		

MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	728.65	1	728.65	6.59*
Within groups	1,327.21	12	110.60	
Total	2,055.86			

*p<.05

CLEAR STATEMENTS

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	480.29	1	480.29	1.89
Within groups	3,044.46	12	253.71	
Total	3,524.75	13		

UNCLEAR STATEMENTS

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	82.57	1	82.57	1.40
Within groups	709.14	12	59.10	
Total	791.71	13		

POSITIVE STATEMENTS

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	14.29	1	14.29	8.12*
Within groups	21.14	12	1.76	
Total	35.43	13		

*p<.05

NEGATIVE STATEMENTS

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	5.79	1	5.79	<1
Within groups	184.57	12	15.38	
Total	190.36	13		

AGREEMENT STATEMENTS

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	3.50	1	3.50	<1
Within groups	717.71	12	59.81	
Total	721.21	13		

DISAGREEMENT STATEMENTS

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	.65	1	.65	<1
Within groups	1,921.71	12	160.14	
Total	1,922.36	13		

ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENTS

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	126.00	1	126.00	1.10
Within groups	1,372.86	12	114.41	
Total	1,498.86	13		

RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	772.57	1	772.57	3.81 ^a
Within groups	2,430.86	12	202.57	
Total	3,203.43	13		

^a $\underline{p} < .1$

NONACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENTS

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	77.78	1	77.78	1.60
Within groups	583.72	12	48.64	
Total	661.50	13		

CLARITY SCALE SCORES

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	961.14	1	961.14	2.39
Within groups	4,832.57	12	402.71	
Total	5,793.71	13		

RELATIONSHIP SCALE SCORES

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	31.50	1	31.50	1.56
Within groups	242.86	12	20.24	
Total	274.36	13		

AGREEMENT SCALE SCORES

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	7.14	1	7.14	<1
Within groups	2,266.57	12	188.88	
Total	2,273.71	13		

ACKNOWLEDGMENT SCALE SCORES

Source	Sum of Squares	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	2,288.65	1	2,288.65	8.27*
Within groups	3,321.71	12	276.81	
Total	5,510.36	13		

*p<.05

VITA

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Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: THE EFFECTS OF A COMMUNICATION GROUP FOR MARRIED COUPLES:
AN OUTCOME STUDY

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