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Couples Form

Please complete the following forms independently. When you come to your first appointment, having a set of these forms completed for each of you will help me to better understand what is happening in your relationship.

When We Are Not Getting Along: My Feelings, Thoughts, and Behaviors
(2003 Douglas Tilley, LCSW-C)

Check all the statements that reflect the way you feel or what you do when you and your partner are fighting or not getting along. Look back over the list and circle a few to indicate the most important items.

What I do...

- I criticize.
- I attack.
- I blame.
- I defend.
- I analyze.
- I rationalize.
- I get quiet.
- I become cold or aloof.
- I clam up.
- I withdraw.
- I avoid conflict.
- I leave.

What I feel...

- I feel scared.
- I feel afraid.
- I feel hurt.
- I feel vulnerable.
- I feel worried or nervous.
- I feel disappointed.
- I feel let down.
- I feel sad.
- I feel alone or lonely.
- I feel hopeless.
- I feel down or depressed.
- I feel empty.
- I feel disconnected.
- I feel isolated.
- I feel ignored.
- I feel shut out or pushed away.
- I feel rejected.
- I feel abandoned.
- I feel misunderstood.
- I feel my partner is never there for me.
- I feel frustrated.
- I feel angry.
- I feel like getting back.

- I feel numb.
- I have trouble putting thoughts into words.
- I feel smothered.
- I feel it's always my fault.
- I feel judged.
- I feel blamed or criticized.
- I feel put down.
- I feel I don't know what I have done.
- I feel analyzed.
- I feel invalidated.
- I feel discounted.
- I feel attacked.
- I feel controlled.
- I feel intimidated.
- I feel dismissed or "blown off."
- I feel uncared for or unwanted.
- I feel unlovable.
- I feel unattractive.
- I feel unimportant.
- I feel inadequate.
- I feel small or insignificant.
- I feel I don't matter.
- I feel I've failed.
- I feel guilty.

In my body I feel...

- I feel my heart speeding up.
- I feel tense somewhere in my body.
- I feel uneasy in my stomach.
- I feel tightness in my throat.
- I feel pressure in my chest.

How we interact during conflict...

- I often want to avoid talking about our relationship.
- I become silent, withdrawn, and don't want to discuss things.
- My partner often pushes an issues and won't let it drop.
- I often want to push my partner to talk about our relationship.
- I often get angry and critical to get my partner to talk.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel like protecting myself. | <input type="checkbox"/> My partner withdraws a lot and wont face an issue when I want to talk. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel guarded. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel like clinging to my partner. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel flooded with emotion. | <i>Other Feelings...</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel unable to calm myself down. | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel overwhelmed. | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel confused. | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel unable to focus my thoughts. | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel blank. | _____ |

Understanding Your Negative Cycle

(Adapted from Patrick Prag, M.A., NCC)

Couples get caught in negative “cycles.” A negative cycle is a repeated pattern of negative behaviors, thoughts, and feelings that cause distress. You react to your partner’s reactions, and your partner reacts to your reactions. In turn, you go round and round in a seemingly never-ending cycle.

Understanding and untangling your negative cycle is the first step in climbing out of distress. To start understanding your negative cycles, please answer the following questions. First review and think about the “When We’re Not Getting Along: My Feelings, Thoughts, and Behaviors” checklist to remind yourself of how you **FEEL** and **INTERACT** when you are not getting along with your partner.

When my partner and I are not getting along:

I often react by (describe your behaviors)...

My partner often reacts to me by (describe his/her behaviors)...

When I feel this way, I see myself as...

When I feel this way, I long for or need...

My partner often reacts to me by (describe his/her behaviors)...

When I react the way I do, I guess that my partner feels...

Describe your repeating negative cycle (include how you and your partner trigger each other's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors).

Couples Diagnostic Questionnaire

1. What led you to decide to come to therapy together?
2. How long have you and your partner been together? (in what form (e.g. dating, living together, committed/married)?
3. What initially attracted you to each other? How did you decide to become a couple/live together/get married/etc.?
4. What do you find most fulfilling about your relationship?

5. What was the very beginning of your relationship like? How long did this phase last?

6. What was your first disillusionment? What happened and how did you resolve it?

7. When do you feel least fulfilled in your relationship?

8. In what significant ways are the two of you similar? Different? What methods have you worked out to accommodate or compromise on your differences?

9. Do you spend time in activities away from your partner? If so, how often? Do you spend time alone with people who are not mutual friends? Does this conflict in your relationship?

10. How comfortable are you doing activities away from your partner? How comfortable are you with your partner doing things away from you?

11. How safe do you feel expressing your innermost thoughts and feelings to your partner? How do you ask for emotional support from your partner when you are feeling vulnerable? Do you expect to get it?

12. Would your partner say that you are emotionally responsive to his/her vulnerability? Explain.

13. Do you take an active energetic role in nourishing the relationship? Does your partner do the same? How?

14. Do you support your partner's development as an individual? How? (give example). Do you support his/her/their growth as an individual even when you don't agree? How? (give example).

15. Do you believe that your partner is giving at least 50% to the relationship?

16. Do the two of you have joint commitments to projects, work activities, or social causes? If so, what?

17. Did you deliberately decide to create something together in one of these areas?

18. Does this project seem to add or detract from the bond between you?

19. If your relationship were a drama, movie, or book, what would it be titled? How would it end?