Module 10 — Marriage & Couples Therapy

Assessment & safety · formulation · session tools · plan, secrets policy & outcomes

Blank worksheets for printing — a teaching aid for supervised skill practice, not a validated instrument.

Assessment & Safety

See each partner alone before a change-oriented course. Any safety item contraindicates ordinary conjoint therapy.

Partner A

Partner B

Relationship (marriage / committed / premarital)

Safety — any one item: do not proceed with ordinary conjoint therapy

- [ ] Either partner is afraid of the other
- [ ] Coercive control (isolation, monitoring, threats, or economic domination)
- [ ] Recent injury, strangulation, or sexual assault by a partner
- [ ] Weapons, stalking, or a credible threat
- [ ] A partner will not allow a private session, or is being coerced to attend

Hold — do not start change work yet

- [ ] An ongoing affair is still secret from the other partner
- [ ] Acute crisis (active suicidality, mania, or psychosis) is not yet stabilized

Complete before proceeding

- [ ] Individual session with partner A
- [ ] Individual session with partner B
- [ ] IPV questions asked of each partner alone
- [ ] Written secrets policy agreed before the individual sessions

Decision (proceed / hold / stop) and why

Couple Formulation

Name the cycle in language both partners would recognize. Four Horsemen are an observation; they do not require Gottman Method as the treatment.

Presenting problem

Negative cycle (who does what next)

Model you will use

Four Horsemen observed

- [ ] Criticism
- [ ] Contempt
- [ ] Defensiveness
- [ ] Stonewalling

Repair attempts (made? accepted?)

Theme (the difference they are polarized around)

DEEP — differences

DEEP — emotional sensitivities

DEEP — external stressors

DEEP — pattern / mutual trap

Partner A: secondary emotion, primary emotion, attachment need

Partner B: secondary emotion, primary emotion, attachment need

Session Tools

Rehearse with the couple's real topic. Do not assign these exercises when the safety decision is stop.

Speaker-listener — one person has the floor; the listener paraphrases before answering; then switch.

Topic	Speaker	Listener's paraphrase	What to retry

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Repair — name the horseman, pick an antidote (gentle start-up, appreciation, take responsibility, self-soothe), write the sentence.

What happened	Antidote	Sentence they will try

Behavior exchange — each partner increases one specific positive behavior.

Who	Positive behavior	When	How it will be acknowledged

Plan, Secrets Policy & Outcomes

CSI-16 range is 0-81. Scores under 51.5 fell on the distressed side of a DAS cut-point of 97.5 in Funk & Rogge (2007). That is a research threshold, not a diagnosis.

Protocol

Secrets policy (no-secrets / limited-secrets / not yet agreed)

What the policy does and does not cover

Focus (check those that apply)

- [ ] Communication
- [ ] Conflict / gridlock
- [ ] Infidelity
- [ ] Sexual problems
- [ ] Parenting stress

- [ ] Finances
- [ ] Illness or medication affecting the relationship

SMART goal

Specific — what exactly will happen?

Measurable — how will you know?

Achievable — realistic next step?

Relevant — why it matters / which value?

Time-bound — by when / how often?

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS)

Goal name

Level	What this outcome looks like
-2 Much less than expected	
-1 Somewhat less than expected	
0 Expected outcome	
+1 Somewhat more than expected	
+2 Much more than expected	

Current level (circle one): -2 -1 0 +1 +2

CSI-16 log — each partner, separately

Date	Partner A (0-81)	Partner B (0-81)	Note

Date	Partner A (0-81)	Partner B (0-81)	Note