Couples Therapy for Domestic Violence: Finding Safe Solutions

TARGET AUDIENCE
This program is for couples who have experienced mild-to-moderate domestic violence in their relationship but want to remain a couple.

SUMMARY
Couples Therapy for Domestic Violence: Finding Safe Solutions, a community-based program, is a curriculum that is designed to provide assessment of and treatment for couples who choose to stay in a relationship after one or both individuals have been violent.

EVIDENCE
Results from one randomized controlled trial showed that at 6 months after program completion, couples in a multi-couple group showed significantly lower rates of male violence recidivism, marital aggression, and acceptance of wife battering and higher rates of marital satisfaction than those in an individual couple group or a comparison group. Two years after program completion, females reported that males who participated in either the multi-couple or individual couple therapy had lower rates of recidivism than men in the comparison group.

COMPONENTS
This program intends to help participants cease their violent behaviors and begin to create healthy, fulfilling relationships using an approach called Domestic Violence Focused Couples Treatment (DVFCT). Therapists facilitate this program and assess levels of intimate partner violence with couples and evaluate, at the beginning and the end of each session, the safety among men and women in gender-separate groups. The program highlights the following topics:

- Create a safety plan;
- Practice mindfulness strategies to recognize escalating anger and help minimize anger;
- Take time outs when needed;
- Examine drug and alcohol use; and
- Explore violence and learn tools to manage conflict and prevent violence.

This program can be delivered to individual couples or to groups of couples. This program does not focus on serious substance abuse problems, mental health issues, or individuals who would be considered repeat offenders or batterers.

PREVIOUS USE
DVFCT was developed at Virginia Tech in 1997, and the curriculum is currently being implemented on several Navy installations for the prevention and treatment of domestic violence. No other previous use information was located.
Couples Therapy for Domestic Violence: Finding Safe Solutions

TRAINING

Training is required for therapists. Facilitators attend a training on using the treatment manual before delivering the program, and they must undergo clinical supervision while working with couples. Please contact Dr. Stith using details in the Contact section for more information.

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for implementing this program include acquiring participant buy-in, recognizing this program may discuss material that is sensitive and personal, understanding that the manual will need to be purchased, hiring therapists to conduct sessions, ensuring facilitators receive training, and finding space and mutually convenient times to implement sessions.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu.

IMPLEMENTATION

If you are interested in implementing Couples Therapy for Domestic Violence, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu.

TIME

This curriculum contains 18 sessions, and each session is approximately 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

COST

The manual is available from several online retailers (e.g., Amazon, Barnes & Noble) for approximately $45.

EVALUATION PLAN

To move Couples Therapy for Domestic Violence: Finding Safe Solutions to the Effective category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence at least one external evaluation should be performed that demonstrates sustained, positive outcomes. This study must be conducted independently of the program developer.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu.

CONTACT

Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program.
Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: Clearinghouse@psu.edu

You may also contact Dr. Sandra Stith by mail School of Family Studies and Human Services, 101 Campus Creek Complex, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, email ssstith@ksu.edu, or visit www.apa.org/ pubs/books/4317268.aspx?tab=1.

SOURCE