

Enlighten

Sharing intimate information with your partner to enlighten each other about your relationship



Objectives

- Understand the importance of shared intimate knowledge to create and maintain stable, healthy relationships.
- Identify what individuals and couples need to learn about themselves and each other and what they each bring to the relationship.
- Identify relationship-building activities and resources to help couples develop shared intimate knowledge.

Background Reading for Facilitator

- NERMEM Chapter – *Know: Maintaining Knowledge of Your Partner's World*

Facilitator Materials

- Candy rewards for “Newlywed Game” activity
- Participant workbook materials (1 tip sheet; 6 worksheets)
- Video: *The Story of Us* (2:49 min.)
- Video: *German Coast Guard* (0:52 sec.)
- Relationship Wheel

Participant Workbook

- Tip Sheet: *Getting to Know Your Partner Well* – p. 25-26
- Worksheet: *Love Maps* – p. 27
- Worksheet: *Great Expectations* – p. 28
- Worksheet: *Talking About Money* – p. 29
- Worksheet: *Financial Goal Setting* – p. 31
- Worksheet: *Expense Planning Sheet* – p. 32
- Worksheet: *My Action Plan* – p. 1

Session Overview at a Glance

- Enlighten – Introduction (Slides 1 & 2)
- Remembering the past (Slides 3-6)
- Maintaining intimacy (Slides 7-10)
- Expectations (Slides 11 & 12)
- Summary and action plan (Slide 13)

60-90 Minutes

2-5 Minutes

18-25 Minutes

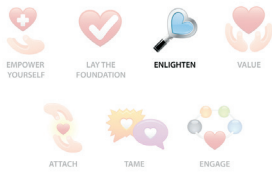
22-30 Minutes

13-22 Minutes

5-8 Minutes

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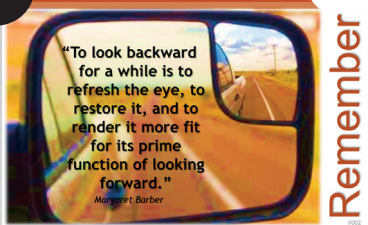
ENLIGHTEN



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Remember Positive Memories



KEY POINT

Introduce importance of maintaining a constant understanding of each other.



VIRTUAL ADAPTATION



Icebreaker: Pass the Word (New Virtual Activity) – See p.109 in *Adaptations for Virtual Delivery* guide.

[Optional: If you are teaching the 90-minute module version, start the class with a 1-2 minute mindfulness practice. This could be a helpful way to get all of your couples to be present, in the moment, and focused on what they are about to learn. It can also provide additional practice to develop this helpful skill!]

As we strengthen the commitment we have in our relationship, or as we previously discussed “building or maintaining the foundation for our house,” we need to reflect on who we are, who our partner is, and how this informs our choices and commitments.

Healthy couple relationships rely on each partner being enlightened – knowing, remembering, and appreciating each other’s history, experiences, preferences, dreams, and fears. Being enlightened requires a constant effort to understand each other’s changing circumstances, wants, and needs. This knowledge is used to support each other and the relationship.

[Advance to Slide 2. Ask for a volunteer to read it.]

Much like the point made in this quote, as you move forward in your relationship together, it’s important to reflect on where you have come from. Ask yourself, “How did I get here?” and “Why am I here?” There are times when we have to remind ourselves about the how and the why in order to move forward.

We will spend some time reflecting on your past and give you some time to consider what is important for your future. Also, we want to emphasize the benefits of focusing on the positives in your relationship.

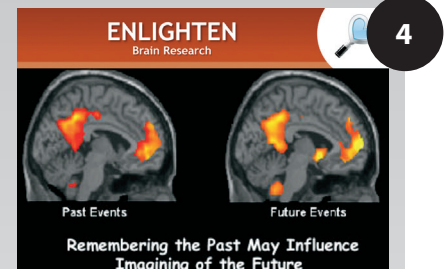
Many of us likely know people who tend to be negative. They often focus on or dwell on what is not going well or the problem – they see things as “half empty” instead of “half full.”

Ask: If you think, overall, negatively about your partner what could this do for how you think about your future together? What about if you think positively?

Researchers have found that a very similar brain network that reconstructs the past is activated when we visualize the future.

[Advance to Slide 4] Here is an illustration of one person’s brain showing the same parts of the brain activated when that person was asked to recall a past experience and to visualize a future event.

A study such as this reminds us of the importance of how we make meaning of our pasts and how they affect our future. If we look back on our experiences and see only failure or focus on unpleasant memories, it makes it more challenging to envision positive and hopeful dreams for the future.



KEY POINT

Remembering the past may influence imagining the future.



SPECIAL NOTE

Source for Brain

Image: Schacter, D., & Addis, D. (2007). *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 362, 773-86.



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Video: The Story of Us



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The Story of Us



- ✓ When/how did you meet?
- ✓ When did you know this relationship was different?
- ✓ When did you decide you were committed?



KEY POINT

Take time to remember your story together.



VIDEO

Story of Us

(2:49 MINUTES)



Download from

www.nermen.org/ELEVATE.php

Original Source:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF7A9SWGoQ4

SPECIAL NOTE

If you have individuals whose partner is not present, ask them to think about these questions.

When calling on participants to share, be sure partners have agreed it is ok to share their response with the group. Be respectful of their choice to keep their story private.



Your relationships have a unique history that evolved from shared experiences. There are things you cherish about each other that remind you of why you are together. Over time, with all that goes on in our lives, we can sometimes lose sight of those memories – that “story of us” – and that can take a toll on the relationship. Fortunately, like what you are about to see here in this video, it’s never too late to remind yourself and your partner of that story. In this clip, the couple is on the verge of dissolving their relationship and the husband and wife have just attended together one of their children’s activities. The husband has asked whether the wife would like to go with them to a Chinese restaurant (Chow Fun’s) or head home on her own. This is a symbolic decision. This restaurant was one they often went to together as a family and it causes the woman to reflect on their history together ...and their future...

Video: *Story of Us*

Let’s take an opportunity now to reflect on your history together. [**Advance to Slide 6**]

Activity (Our Story)

- Have partners turn towards one another and discuss the following four questions. They do not have to answer all of them, or answer them in the order they appear. They can choose any of the questions to answer.
- Provide participants about five minutes to discuss.
- Mention to them that you will be asking them to share some of their responses, and to discuss with each other which questions they feel comfortable sharing their responses to with the group.
- Call on some couples to share about different questions they answered together.

Ask: What are some things you do to remember the good moments you share together?

Here, today, you are creating (I hope) new positive moments together. To help you remember these moments, you have a workbook documenting some of your experiences. And, feel free to use your mobile devices to take a photo of yourselves together, here today!

[**Do not advance to Slide 7 yet**] In addition to remembering our past, we must also enlighten ourselves about what is important in the here-and-now.

Ask: What is intimacy?

[After a few responses, **advance to Slide 7**] True intimacy is about “in-to-me-you-see.” I am sure that one of the reasons that you are together is that you feel your partner “gets you.”

Ask: What are some of the things we want (or expect) our partner to know about us?

Clearly, these things are very important, no matter how small or simple they may seem. We want our partners to understand our wants, needs, likes, dislikes, hopes, dreams, fears, and desires. And, just because you knew these things at one point in time in your relationship, does not mean you stop seeking enlightenment in trying to understand each other’s worlds. We strive to maintain shared meaning in our relationships over time.

Shared meaning reflects not just what we say (or do), but how we say it and what we truly mean by our words (and actions) – the “story of us.” Let’s take a moment to watch what can happen when we don’t have shared meaning.

[**Advance to Slide 8**]

Video: *German Coast Guard*

As life events (good and bad) occur and as your family grows, you and your relationship will evolve. Healthy couples seek to understand each other regularly – to maintain shared knowledge about each other, or intimacy – as their lives move forward with time. Many of us are familiar with updating apps on our phones and other devices. It is also important to seek out updates on our partner – to stay current on what is going on in their life.



KEY POINT

Understand what true intimacy is and the importance of building shared meaning in the relationship.



VIDEO

German Coast Guard
(0:52 SECONDS)

Download from
www.nermen.org/ELEVATE.php

Original source:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=yR0IWICH3rY



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Love Maps

- ✓ The information you store about your partner's dreams, joys, fears, likes, and dislikes, etc.
- ✓ Happy couples know about each other's worlds and they regularly seek updates about each other.

KEY POINT

Understand the value of maintaining current love maps.



SPECIAL NOTE

There are several apps available that are designed to help couples stay in-tune with each other's love maps. For example, The Gottman Institute offers a great app called "Gottman Card Decks" which is inspired by Dr. John Gottman's research-based approach to improving relationships. It can be accessed at <https://www.gottman.com/couples/apps/>



Another way to think of intimacy is in terms of "love maps."

Love maps are developed as you pay attention to the details about each other's preferences and have a good knowledge of each other's world.

A powerful predictor of relationship stability is how much detail partners know about each other. This includes little things like knowing each other's favorite TV show or favorite snack, to knowing each other's bucket lists [*Highlight examples listed earlier, above*].

All are significant "points" on the map.

Let's take a moment to test your knowledge about each other. Who is familiar with the "Newlywed Game?" Well we are going to play something like it!

Activity (Love Maps)

- The following game is similar to the "Newlywed Game" television show.
- Prior to the session, choose four questions from the worksheet on **page 27** to use for the game. Select questions that would be relatively easy and fun for couples to respond to.
- Have each couple identify who will be 'partner one' and who will be 'partner two' during the game. This is not intended to be a competition between male and female partners in the class. Thus, partner one vs. two assignments should not be gender specific.
- First, ask two of the pre-selected questions to 'partner one.' Emphasize that 'partner one' should answer the question based on how 'partner two' would respond. Thus, re-phrase the questions on **page 27** accordingly. For example, instead of "Who is your best friend?" ask "Who is your partner's best friend?" Answers should be written down (provide index cards or scrap paper if possible) and not seen or shown to 'partner two.' Clarify that partners will be sharing their responses with each other and not to the larger group.
- Second, repeat this process and ask the remaining two questions to 'partner two.'
- Last, starting with question one, repeat the question and allow time for 'partner one' to show his/her response to 'partner two' and for 'partner two' to verify if the response is accurate. Allow at least 20 seconds for couples to process the question and response. Repeat this for the remaining three questions. If desired, alternate between 'partner one' and 'partner two' questions.


Ask: How did it go? Did you learn new things about each other?

The better partners know each other and keep track of changing love maps, the deeper and more meaningful their relationship will be. Couples who are familiar with each other's love maps will also be better able to cope with stressful events and conflict.

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Love Maps Game


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How current are your love maps?


KEY POINT

Love maps need to be updated on a regular basis.



SPECIAL NOTE


For this game, consider offering candy to couples whose responses match. For individuals without a partner, ask them to fill in the Love Map worksheet for their absent partner or for themselves. Then, they can sit back and enjoy the game.



WORKBOOK


Love Maps, p. 27.

Objective: identify several facts about themselves and see how well they know their partner.



VIRTUAL ADAPTATION

Love Maps – See p.109 in *Adaptations for Virtual Delivery* guide.



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Setting Expectations in the Relationship



KEY POINT

Reinforce the need to establish clear and realistic expectations, and provide opportunity to discuss expectations about money.



WORKBOOK

Great Expectations, p. 28. Objective: facilitate discussion about each partner's expectations for their partner and the relationship.



Our love maps also include expectations – what we know about our partner's expectations regarding home, work, and personal life.

Sometimes, conflict arises when our expectations are unmet. Some expectations are minor (like leaving the toilet seat up or down) while others can be rather important (including matters like money, housework, in-laws, sex, children).

No matter how big or small the issue, we shouldn't assume our partner will "just know" what we expect. Expectations need to be shared, and they need to be reasonable; otherwise we risk setting our partners up – and our relationship up – for failure.

As homework, take time to complete "*Great Expectations*" on **page 28** in your workbook.

[If you have at least five minutes (e.g., you are delivering the 90-minute version of the module), have couples start the "Great Expectations" worksheet on page 28 in class. First, provide participants about two minutes to fill out their own worksheet on page 28. When done, ask participants to use the remaining time to discuss their responses with their partner (or reflect individually if there is no partner present). Close this activity by asking couples "were there expectations that surprised you?" Reinforce the "Things to Remember" listed at the bottom of page 28 in the workbook.]

Importantly, be sure to check-in with each other regularly to see how you are doing meeting those expectations and to see if your expectations have changed or if you have new ones.

Here, today, let's spend some time discussing expectations about money.

[If time is short and the "Great Expectations" worksheet is assigned as homework, build in time during the next class to process how this discussion went.]

Money is one of the most common topics couples disagree about. Sometimes one partner likes to spend money and the other likes to save; other times couples get behind on bills and argue about who is to blame. What are your expectations about how money should be managed? What are your goals?

Activity (*Talking About Money*)

- Provide participants about five minutes to fill out the worksheet on **page 29** together.
- Ask them to focus on “Clear Expectations” and “Setting Goals” (“Reaching Your Goals” will be filled out later in the TAME session).

Ask: As you discussed your expectations and goals, did you find that agreement was reached easily?

If not, it’s ok. Disagreements about saving and spending money can cause a lot of conflict, but taking time to talk openly and honestly about financial values and goals is important.

Later in the program, we will discuss ways to manage those differences and come back to this worksheet to focus on making a plan to reach some of your financial goals.

To further help you in discussing and managing your finances together, we have also included in your workbook two additional worksheets on **pages 31 and 32**.

[If you have at least five minutes (e.g., you are delivering the 90-minute version of the module), walk couples through the “Setting Financial Goals” worksheet on page 31. Explain S.M.A.R.T. goals, and then provide participants about two minutes to write down a few goals in each category (short-term, intermediate, and long-term) in their own workbook. Clarify that they don’t need to worry about the costs and details for now; these can be filled in together as homework. When done, ask participants to use the remaining time to discuss their goals with their partner (or reflect individually if there is no partner present). Close by reminding couples to fill in the rest of the worksheet at home, and then work together to complete the “Planning Your Expenses” worksheet on page 32. Encourage them to discuss how their spending aligns with their goals and what adjustments need to be made so they can reach their financial goals.]



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Setting Expectations in the Relationship

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KEY POINT

It is helpful to communicate with your partner on expectations about money management and goals.



WORKBOOK

Talking About Money, p. 29. Objective: identify financial goals based on needs and wants and develop a plan to help reach their goals.



Setting Financial Goals,

p. 31. Objective: assist participants in further defining financial goals at home.

Expense Planning Sheet, p.32.

Objective: assist participants to continue financial planning at home.

13 Action Plan

What do
you plan
to do?



KEY POINT

It is important to regularly self-evaluate how well and how often you are sharing personal information and expectations in your relationship.



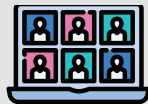
WORKBOOK

My Action Plan, p. 1.

Objective: encourage participants to document at least two new things (per module) they will try to do.



VIRTUAL ADAPTATION



Action Plan – See p.110 in *Adaptations for Virtual Delivery* guide.

In healthy, stable relationships, true enlightenment involves cherishing the past, maintaining an intimate knowledge about each other, and discussing and working together to meet each other's expectations.

Take a look at your **Relationship Wheel** [or refer to **page 7** in the workbook if you do not have wheels] and remember to ask yourself these questions on a regular basis:

- Do I ask my partner about their life, thoughts, and feelings?
- Am I sensitive to my partner's worries and needs?
- Do we recall positive experiences together?
- Do I express sincere interest in my partner?
- Do I reveal my thoughts and feelings to my partner?
- Do I discuss what we expect in our relationship with my partner?

Based on what we have covered, what do you plan to do in order to enlighten your understanding of each other? Take a moment and write at least one new thing down in your workbook on **page 1**.

[As participants complete their action plan, review the flip chart listing the participants' expectations (from Introduction). Check-off each topic that was addressed.]