



*Taking Your Relationship to the Next Level*

**ELEVATE Georgia DFCS Pilot Training:  
Summary Evaluation Report**

**September 2016**



For more information about the training in Georgia, contact

Dr. Ted Futris ([tfutris@uga.edu](mailto:tfutris@uga.edu))



Report prepared by

Dr. Ted G. Futris, Evin W. Richardson, & Avery Campbell  
Department of Human Development and Family Science  
College of Family and Consumer Sciences  
University of Georgia

Released September 30, 2016

This study was conducted as part of a collaborative effort between UGA Extension, The Couples and Relationship Enrichment (CARE) Laboratory at UGA, and Foster Care Services, Division of Family and Children Services. Funding for this project was provided by the State of Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS Contract 42700-040-0000046861). Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services.

Thank you to the following persons for their support of this project:

Dianne Kelly, Foster Care Services Director

Regional Directors, Division of Family and Children Services

Verdell Daniels and all of the helpful support staff from the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia

All of the foster caregivers who participated in this pilot study.



To learn more about the Couples and Relationship Enrichment (CARE) Laboratory, visit <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/hdfs/care-lab>.

Learn more about how UGA Extension is strengthening relationships at [www.gamarriages.org](http://www.gamarriages.org).

## I. Overview of ELEVATE DFCS Pilot

Nearly half (47%) of children in foster care live in non-relative foster homes and almost two-thirds (63%) of these children live with married foster parents. While foster youth benefit from being exposed to healthy couple and co-parenting relationships and stable families, foster parents are at elevated risk of experiencing marital and co-parenting challenges due to the unique and many stressors they experience (e.g., traumatic experiences of foster youth, challenges with both foster and birth children, financial strain, increase on time demands, legal processes, lack of permanency, ambiguous loss). Negativity in the couple/co-parenting relationship often leads to ineffective parenting, which compounds the stress already experienced by foster children. Common conflicts experienced by foster parents include a lack of equal commitment to fostering, role ambiguity, lack of communication, and disagreement on parenting decisions. Thus, the couple relationship of foster parents is taxed following the placement of a child in their home, and this may jeopardize placement quality and stability. While the need for healthy marriage and relationship education for foster parent couples is recognized<sup>1</sup>, this type of training is not currently included in the required training for foster parents. The 1-day ELEVATE training at the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia (AFPAG) Conference in Jekyll Island, GA on February 27, 2016 addressed this gap in services.

*We just finished a week with 4 children in our house.... so exhausted would best describe our last week. No romance, no privacy the last week. Two of our foster children have been with us for 9 months... Visits are always hard on everyone and take us all a few days to get back to normal.... Tired has taken on a whole new level since we became foster parents a year ago. We talk daily about school, kids, work and lack of sex. We have a blow out (verbal argument) about stress, kids, no time to ourselves about once a week.*

Foster parent training participant

ELEVATE<sup>2</sup> is a couple's education curriculum that blends practical skills with an understanding of the physiology of human interaction (the heart-brain-behavior connection) to enhance individuals' and couples' healthy relationship knowledge and skills. The central core content and framework of ELEVATE are based on the *National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Model*, or NERMEN<sup>3</sup>. NERMEN was developed by the National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Network ([www.nermen.org](http://www.nermen.org)) working group and derived from the extant literature on predictors of marital quality. Grounded in best-practices of family life education, two distinct characteristics of ELEVATE are (1) the practical strategies and tools taught and (2) the inclusion of mindfulness practice activities that help couples regulate their heart-brain response to stressful triggers. This 8-hour, hands-on training engages couples in learning and practicing the seven core principles and skills research has identified as essential to maintaining healthy and stable relationships: (1) caring for one's personal health, (2) making intentional relationship choices, (3) exploring and understanding each partner's world, (4) engaging in nurturing, caring, and affectionate behaviors, (5) promoting and maintain a couple identity and friendship, (6) managing stress, differences and conflict, and (7) engaging a positive social network of support.

For the current pilot, the ELEVATE training was delivered in a 1-day, 6.5 hour, format by the curriculum author and co-facilitated by the second author of this report. An overview of the curriculum content is provided in **Appendix A**. The following report summarizes findings based on data collected from 16 foster caregiver couples who completed the ELEVATE training.

<sup>1</sup> Futris, T. G., Richardson, E., Duncan, J., & Mallette, J. (2015). Meeting the Couple and Co-Parenting Relationship Needs of Foster Parents in Georgia: A Needs Assessment of DFCS County Directors. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Extension. Available at [http://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Foster-Parent-Assessment\\_DFCS-Report.pdf](http://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Foster-Parent-Assessment_DFCS-Report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Futris, T. G., Adler-Baeder, F., Ketring, S., Smith, T., et al. (2014). *ELEVATE: Taking Your Relationship to the Next Level*. Published by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities: Publication No. FCS-2047) and the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension (Publication No. HDFS-E-161). Available at <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/nermen/elevate>

<sup>3</sup> Futris, T. G. & Adler-Baeder, F. (Eds) (2013) *The National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Model: Core Teaching Concepts for Relationship and Marriage Enrichment Programming*. (Publication No. HDFS-E-157). Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension. Available at <http://www.nermen.org/NERMEN.php>

## II. Outputs: Foster Parent Participants

The Division of Family and Children Services identified 14 foster parent couples who registered for the ELEVATE training hosted on February 27, 2016 during the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia (AFPAG) Conference in Jekyll Island, GA. Directors from Regions 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 13 each identified one foster parent couple, Regions 6 and 10 each identified two foster parent couples, and Region 12 identified three foster parent couples. On the day of the training, 21 participants, representing 11 of the 14 registered couples, attended (one foster parent attended without his spouse who was ill and could not attend the AFPAG Conference). Additionally, five foster parent couples attended the training as walk-ins. ***A total of 31 foster parents, representing 16 couples, completed the training.***

As summarized in **Table 1**, the majority of attendees ( $N = 31$ ) identified as Caucasian (71%) and most had completed at least some college (68%). Additionally, just over half (58%) reported that they work full time outside the home, while the remaining worked either part time (13%) or were unemployed or retired (29%). The majority of participants (75%) reported an annual income of \$40,000 or higher. On average, the couples had been married approximately 15 years ( $M = 118.44$  months;  $SD = 105.46$  months) and had been fostering for approximately 20 months ( $M = 20.25$ ;  $SD = 47.55$ ).

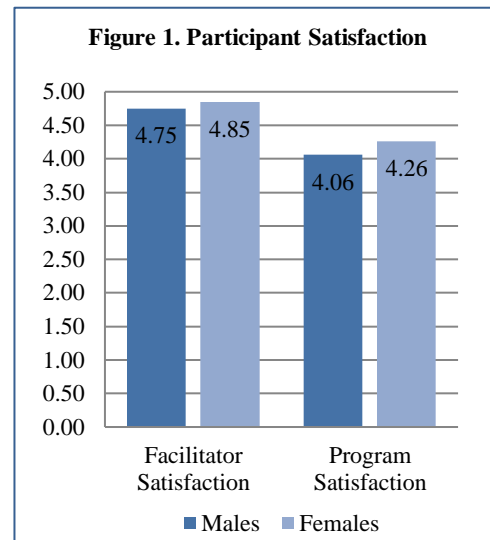
**Table 1: Individual Demographics Characteristics**

	All (N=31)	Male (N=16)	Female (N=15)
Age, <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	46.48 (10.42)	47.13 (10.51)	45.80 (10.66)
Race/Ethnicity, N (Valid %)			
Caucasian	22 (71.0%)	11 (68.8%)	11 (73.3%)
African-American	4 (12.9%)	2 (12.5%)	2 (13.3%)
Other	5 (16.1%)	3 (18.8%)	2 (13.3%)
Education, N (Valid %)			
> High School	2 (6.5%)	2 (12.5%)	0
High School/GED	8 (25.8%)	6 (37.5%)	2 (13.3%)
Some College	11 (35.5%)	5 (31.3%)	6 (40.0%)
Technical/Vocational degree	3 (9.7%)	1 (6.3%)	2 (13.3%)
Associate's degree	2 (6.5%)	0	2 (13.3%)
4-year college degree	3 (9.7%)	1 (6.3%)	2 (13.3%)
Post-college degree	2 (6.5%)	1 (6.3%)	1 (6.7%)
Employment, N (Valid %)			
Full time	18 (58.1%)	10 (62.5%)	8 (53.3%)
Part-time	4 (12.9%)	2 (12.5%)	2 (13.3%)
Unemployed/Retired/Disabled	9 (29.0%)	4 (25.0%)	5 (33.3%)

## III. Program Experience

At the conclusion of the training, a brief survey was administered to capture participants' immediate reactions to the training experience. A 7-item scale was used to assess participants' perspectives of the facilitators (e.g., "The facilitator(s) explained the course material clearly and answered questions well," "The facilitators were effective in stimulating participation") and a 6-item scale was used to gauge their views about the program itself (e.g., "The program was relevant and useful to me," "The facilities were comfortable," "The program was what I expected"). Participants rated their level of agreement to each item on a scale ranging from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (5) *Strongly Agree*. **Appendix B** provides detailed information on the ratings for each facilitator and program item.

On average, participants rated the facilitators ( $M = 4.80$ ;  $SD = 0.36$ ) and the program ( $M = 4.16$ ;  $SD = 0.34$ ) very positively. As illustrated in **Figure 1**, both male and female participants expressed high satisfaction ratings. Next, participants rated the overall quality of the facilitators and program as either (1) *Poor*, (2) *Fair*, (3) *Average*, (4) *Good*, or (5) *Excellent*. All ratings were either *good* or *excellent*, with 81% and 71% of the participants rating the facilitators and program, respectively as *excellent*. When asked whether they learned strategies for lowering their risk of marital failure, 26% *agreed* and 68% *strongly agreed*. As well, 84% indicated that they would attend another workshop like this in the future (13% responded *maybe/probably* and 3% were *undecided/not sure*). Last, 90% of the participants either *agreed* (23%) or *strongly agreed* (68%) that they would refer this program to friends (10% neither agreed nor disagreed).



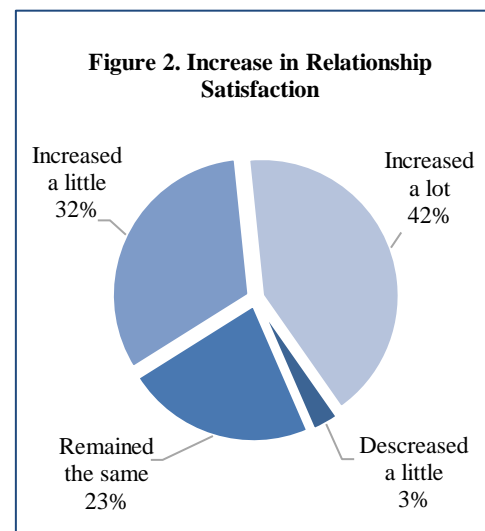
Sample comments regarding the quality of the training:

- *Everything was great. I am more of a hands-on person, so getting people up and active is better for me.*
- *I really enjoyed the session. Keep up the good work.*
- *I thought it was well run. Lots of info.*
- *Thank you very much for offering this training. There are a lot of resources available to foster children. However, foster parents are quite often overlooked.*
- *This class was excellent! The presenters did an awesome job.*

#### IV. Immediate Relationship Impact

At conclusion of the training, participants also rated their confidence level related to practicing the seven core relationship skills learned during the training. Response options ranged from (1) *Not at all confident* to (5) *A lot more confident*. As summarized in **Table 2**, on average, both male and female participants reported feeling *somewhat more confident* to *a lot more confident* in their ability to apply all seven healthy relationship practices. Nearly all of participants reported an increase in confidence for each core skill reviewed during the day: *Care for Self* (96.8%), *Choose* (96.8%), *Know* (100%), *Care* (100%), *Share* (100%), *Manage* (96.8%), and *Connect* (93.5%).

Additionally, when asked how satisfied they were with their relationship at the conclusion of the training, all of the participants reported that they were *satisfied* with 81% reporting that they were either *very satisfied* (36%) or *extremely satisfied* (45%). Importantly, as illustrated in **Figure 2**, 74% of the participants reported that their relationship satisfaction had increased as a result of participating in this training. Last, participants were asked how likely they would use the skills they learned in this training. All of the participants reported that they were either *somewhat likely* (13%), *likely* (26%) or *very likely* (61%) to use these skills.



**Table 2. Level of Confidence in Practicing Seven Core Healthy Relationship Practices**

	<u>Total (N = 31)</u> <i>M (SD)</i>	<u>Males (n = 16)</u> <i>M (SD)</i>	<u>Females (n = 15)</u> <i>M (SD)</i>
<u>Empower Yourself.</u> Practicing healthy living choices, including eating well, getting regular sleep and exercise, having quiet time for yourself every day, and managing the stress in your life.	4.16 (0.78)	4.00 (0.63)	4.33 (0.90)
<u>Lay the Foundation.</u> Prioritizing your partner and relationship by committing effort every day to make the relationship work and thinking about how much your choices affect your relationship.	4.42 (0.81)	4.25 (0.86)	4.60 (0.74)
<u>Enlighten.</u> Recognizing and understanding your partner’s current life stressors, major aspirations, and hopes in life.	4.32 (0.66)	4.13 (0.62)	4.53 (0.64)
<u>Value.</u> Expressing your love, appreciation, and respect your partner every day.	4.58 (0.67)	4.31 (0.80)	4.87 (0.35)
<u>Attach.</u> Sharing information about your interests and daily activities with your partner and taking time to listen to what your partner would like to share.	4.48 (0.77)	4.19 (0.91)	4.80 (0.41)
<u>Time.</u> Managing differences and conflict in healthier ways, including seeing your partner’s point of view, expressing your feelings in a safe and calm way, using “time outs” as needed, and being open to forgiveness.	4.35 (0.84)	4.13 (0.81)	4.60 (0.83)
<u>Engage.</u> Reaching out to friends, family and others who care about you and your partner and who can support your relationship.	4.19 (0.95)	4.06 (0.93)	4.33 (0.98)

*Note:* (1) Not at all confident; (2) About the same as before; (3) A little more confident; (4) Somewhat more confident; (5) A lot more confident

Sample comments regarding immediate impact on relationship quality:

- *I believe that I can approach things in a more caring way.*
- *I have gained knowledge and a better understanding on how to deal with issues.*
- *We learned ways to reduce stress and ways to promote attachment with a busy lifestyle.*
- *It’s a good reminder to focus on your partner.*
- *The material is relevant and applicable to anyone who is in a relationship.*
- *Opened better gates for communication; good reminders.*
- *I have gained relationship understanding as well as tools to not only practice but teach.*
- *We will be more attentive to each other.*
- *Ultimately, we will be happier.*



## V. Change in Relationship Quality

In order to measure the short-term impact of the ELEVATE training, participants were asked to complete a survey prior to the training and the same survey 4-6 weeks following the training. All of the 31 participants who completed the training responded to the pre-training survey either online (prior to attending the training) or using the paper and pencil version (the morning of the training). Of the 31 participants, 25 individuals completed the post survey either online or via a paper version that was mailed to those who did not have an e-mail address. **The 25 respondents represented 14 of the 16 couples in the pilot study, with data from both partners for 11 couples.**

Participants responded to a series of questions about their relationship behaviors and quality based on the seven healthy relationship concepts learned during the ELEVATE training. Participants rated how much they agreed with statements about their self-care (*Empower Yourself*), their commitment and intentionality (*Lay the Foundation*), their knowledge of their partner (*Enlighten*), their use of positive conflict management behaviors (*Tame*), and their connection to others in the community (*Engage*) on a scale of 1 (*Very strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Very strongly agree*). They also rated how often they engaged in certain behaviors related to showing affection and respect (*Value*) and the fostering the intimacy (*Attach*) on a scale of 1 (*Never*) to 7 (*More often than once a day*). **Appendix C** provides the complete list of items and descriptive statistics for each ELEVATE indicator.

**Table 3** provides the mean scores (and standard deviations) at pre- and post-survey for all seven ELEVATE indicators of relationship quality, along with t-value (and p-value) scores assessing whether statistically significant improvements were detected. On average, participants reported engaging in behaviors reflective of healthy relationships prior to the training. Statistically significant increases in these positive behaviors were found for 5 of the 7 indicators of healthy relationships, with one (*Tame*) approaching statistical significance. **Table 4** presents the same information by gender. Although the sample size limits the power to detect statistically significant changes, analyses suggest that male participants may have benefitted most from the training. In other words, male participants not only reported engaging in more self-care behaviors (like female participants) after the training, but they also reported engaging in more behaviors that fostered affection and respect (*Value*), intimacy (*Share*), healthy conflict management (*Tame*), and positive connections to others who support their relationship (*Engage*).

**Table 3: Change in Relationship Quality (N = 25)**

	Pre M (SD)	Post M (SD)	t-value	p-value
Care for Self ( <i>Empower Yourself</i> )	4.60 (.830)	5.08 (.562)	3.902	<b>.001</b>
Choose ( <i>Lay the Foundation</i> )	5.87 (.882)	6.19 (.743)	2.233	<b>.035</b>
Know ( <i>Enlighten</i> )	5.63 (1.03)	5.76 (.939)	.877	.389
Care ( <i>Value</i> )	5.43 (1.06)	5.85 (.994)	3.282	<b>.003</b>
Share ( <i>Attach</i> )	4.92 (1.23)	5.43 (.875)	2.191	<b>.038</b>
Manage ( <i>Tame</i> )	5.33 (.775)	5.56 (.820)	2.012	.056
Connect ( <i>Engage</i> )	5.95 (.829)	6.23 (.770)	2.983	<b>.006</b>

Note: bold p-values reflect statistically significant differences in pre- versus post-survey scores at  $p < .05$ .

### Sample comments regarding the quality of the training:

- *We will be more attentive to each other.*
- *I was interested in how to keep and maintain the spark in my marriage. This course helped me realize some of my own faults.*
- *I gained that need to work on keeping it together, not getting loud.*
- *I feel that I learned a lot and I plan to use the things I learned. I hope my husband does too.*

**Table 4: Change in Relationship Quality by Gender**

	Males (n = 13)				Females (n = 12)			
	Pre M (SD)	Post M (SD)	t- value	p- value	Pre M (SD)	Post M (SD)	t- value	p- value
Care for Self	4.55 (.479)	4.94 (.450)	2.931	<b>.013</b>	4.64 (1.10)	5.24 (.648)	2.477	<b>.031</b>
Choose	5.82 (.711)	5.96 (.794)	.996	.339	5.92 (1.06)	6.44 (.623)	2.059	.064
Know	5.57 (.998)	5.53 (1.04)	.371	.717	5.70 (1.09)	6.00 (.791)	.784	.450
Care	5.40 (1.12)	5.88 (1.04)	3.134	<b>.009</b>	5.47 (1.05)	5.81 (.989)	1.606	.136
Share	4.60 (1.28)	5.18 (.854)	2.379	<b>.035</b>	5.26 (1.10)	5.70 (.851)	.750	.469
Manage	5.36 (.724)	5.62 (.832)	2.342	<b>.037</b>	5.30 (.846)	5.50 (.839)	.964	.356
Connect	5.67 (.788)	6.00 (.803)	2.518	<b>.027</b>	6.25 (.785)	6.47 (.678)	1.609	.136

Note: bold p-values reflect statistically significant differences in pre- versus post-survey scores at  $p < .05$ .

## VI. Conclusion

Overall, the foster caregivers who completed the ELEVATE training at the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association Conference reported:

- Overall satisfaction with the training, including positive ratings of both the facilitators and overall program;
- Immediate increases in relationship satisfaction at the conclusion of the training;
- Feeling more confident in their ability to apply the healthy relationship skills learned during the training; and
- Intentions to use the skills they learned.

Importantly, these immediate impacts of the training translated into behavioral changes in behaviors reflective of healthy relationships. Compared to self-reports before the training, participants reported an increase in their engagement in these positive behaviors, and this change was especially evident among the male participants. In conclusion, *the findings of this pilot study suggest that the ELEVATE training may be helpful to foster caregiver couples by attending to skills that enhance healthy couple (and co-parenting) relationships which in turn promote stable homes for children in foster care.*

### Sample of additional comments from participants.

- *I enjoyed the program and it works.*
- *Thank you for having the class, I feel like it has really helped our marriage, we have the circle with the reminders taped to our bathroom mirror to keep reminding ourselves.*
- *Wasn't sure what the program was about but was excited to learn more about avenues and ways to strengthen/support our marriage.*
- *It has great value in having great practical resource of ways to improve not only marital relationship but also the foster child relationships.*
- *It holds value. Our relationship is the foundation for our family. We learned ways to reduce stress and ways to promote attachment with a busy lifestyle.*
- *It was very informative. I learned new things, and was encouraged and motivated to work harder at the techniques I already knew.*



## Appendix A. Overview of the ELEVATE Training Content

Module	Overall Objective <sup>a</sup>	Time (Minutes)
Introduction	Establish clear goals and expectations for the training, understand how relationship emotions, thoughts, and behaviors influence, and are influenced by, the body's physiological response system, and identify the core principles and qualities of health couple relationships.	60
<b>E</b> mpower Yourself (Care for Self)	Engage participants in cultivating individual wellness and health in order to support the health of their couple relationship.	60
<b>L</b> ay the Foundation (Choose)	Support participants in making deliberate and conscientious decisions to be committed, intentional, proactive, and strengths-focused in their relationships. Help participants understand that healthy relationships required sustained effort over time.	45
<b>E</b> nlighten (Know)	Help participants understand the importance of intimate knowledge of their partner's personal and relational needs, interests, feelings and expectations.	45
<b>V</b> alue (Care)	Guide participants in understanding how expressing kindness, respect, and focusing on the positive characteristics of their partners promotes stability in their relationships.	45
<b>A</b> ttach (Share)	Demonstrate to participants the value of and strategies that promote developing and maintaining couple time, a shared sense of couple identity, and a close friendship in order to sustain a healthy relationship.	45
<b>T</b> ame (Manage)	Clarify to participants that conflict is normal in couple relationships, and identify strategies to manage stress and regulate emotions in order to engage in behaviors that promote positive communication and conflict management practices.	60
<b>E</b> ngage (Connect)	Help participants understand the benefits of engaging in social support on sustaining healthy relationships and guide participants in identifying sources of personal and community resources that support healthy couple relationships.	30

**Note:** Each module is based on concepts (in parenthesis) from the *National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Model* (NERMEM). **Source:** Futris, T. G., & Adler-Baeder (Eds.). (2013) *The National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Model: Core teaching concepts for relationship and marriage enrichment programming.* (Publication No. HDFS-E-157). Athens, GA: The University of Georgia. Available from <http://www.nermen.org/NERMEM.php>.

## Appendix B: Post-Program Survey Response Indicators.

<b>Program Experience</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Range</b>
Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your facilitator(s) and the program.				
The facilitator(s) explained the course material clearly and answered questions well.	31	4.87	.341	4-5
The facilitator(s) was effective in stimulating participation.	31	4.81	.402	4-5
The facilitator(s) cared about group members and offered support and encouragement during the following programs.	31	4.77	.425	4-5
The facilitator(s) managed the time and flow of the sessions effectively.	31	4.74	.575	3-5
The facilitator(s) drew upon his/her own experiences in an appropriate and effective way.	31	4.74	.575	3-5
I liked the facilitator(s).	31	4.87	.341	4-5
The program was relevant and useful to me.	31	4.71	.461	4-5
The program site was accessible.	30	4.83	.379	4-5
The facilities were comfortable.	31	4.58	.672	2-5
The length and time of sessions fit well with my work/family schedule.	31	4.26	.855	2-5
The program was what I expected.	30	4.40	.724	3-5
I have learned strategies for lowering our risk of marital failure.	31	4.58	.720	2-5
I would refer this program to friends.	31	4.58	.672	3-5
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the facilitator(s)?	31	4.81	.402	4-5
Overall, how would you rate the quality of this program?	31	4.71	.461	4-5
Would you attend another workshop like this in the future?	31	1.23	.617	1-4
<b>Immediate Relationship Impact</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Range</b>
As a result of participating in this program, how confident do you feel now compared to before in each of the following?				
Practicing healthy living choices, including eating well, getting regular sleep and exercise, having quiet time for yourself every day, and managing stress in your life.	31	4.16	.779	2-5
Prioritizing your partner and relationship by committing effort every day to make the relationship work and thinking about how your choices affect your relationship.	31	4.42	.807	2-5
Recognizing and understanding your partner's current life stressors, major aspiration, and hopes in life.	31	4.32	.653	3-5
Expressing your love, appreciation and respect to your partner every day.	31	4.58	.672	3-5
Sharing information about your interests and daily activities with your partner and taking time to listen to what your partner would like to share.	31	4.48	.769	3-5
Managing differences and conflict in healthier ways, including seeing your partner's point of view, expressing our feelings in a safe and clam way, using "time outs" as needed, and being open to forgiveness.	31	4.35	.839	2-5
Reaching out to friends, family	31	4.19	.946	2-5
In general, how satisfied do you feel with your relationship?	31	4.26	.773	3-5
As a result of participating in this program has your satisfaction with you relationship....	31	4.13	.885	2-5
How likely are you to use the skills you learned in this program?	31	4.48	.724	3-5

## Appendix C: ELEVATE Indicator Items

Empower Yourself (Care for Self; $\alpha = .552$ )	Pre-Survey				Post-Survey			
	N	M	SD	Range	N	M	SD	Range
Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following.								
I have the power to manage the challenges in my life.	31	5.90	1.25	1-7	25	6.24	.663	5-7
I ask for help from others when needed.	31	5.19	.946	3-7	25	5.72	.843	4-7
I recognize my strengths.	31	5.45	.888	4-7	25	5.88	.781	5-7
I manage the stress in my life.	30	5.07	.785	3-7	24	5.54	.779	4-7
I eat healthy meals <u>every day</u> .	30	4.10	1.155	2-6	25	4.44	.917	3-6
I exercise at least <u>3 or more</u> times a week.	31	3.48	1.458	1-6	25	3.96	1.172	2-6
I get 7-8 hours of quality sleep <u>every night</u> .	31	3.74	1.731	1-7	25	4.24	1.615	1-7
I have quiet time for myself <u>every day</u> .	31	4.26	1.460	1-7	24	4.68	1.215	2-7

Lay the Foundation (Choose; $\alpha = .741$ )	Pre-Survey				Post-Survey			
	N	M	SD	Range	N	M	SD	Range
Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with how well each statement describes you.								
My relationship with my partner is more important to me than almost anything else in my life.	31	5.61	1.783	1-7	25	6.32	.852	4-7
I may not want to be with my partner a few years from now. (Reverse-coded)	31	1.55	1.207	1-7	25	1.52	1.262	1-7
I want this relationship to stay strong no matter what rough times we may encounter.	31	6.32	1.514	1-7	25	6.36	1.254	1-7
I commit efforts every day to making my relationship work.	30	5.70	1.149	2-7	24	6.04	.806	4-7
I always think about how my choices could affect my relationship.	31	5.58	1.205	2-7	25	6.12	.833	4-7
I always make an effort to focus on my partner's strengths.	31	5.26	1.182	2-7	25	5.80	.957	4-7

Enlighten (Know; $\alpha = .924$ )	Pre-Survey				Post-Survey			
	N	M	SD	Range	N	M	SD	Range
Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with how well each statement describes <u>you</u> :								
I know my partner's current life stresses.	31	5.32	1.326	1-7	25	5.76	1.012	4-7
I know some of my partner's major aspirations and hopes in life.	31	5.74	1.032	4-7	25	5.88	.881	4-7
I know my partner's current major worries.	31	5.52	1.411	1-7	25	5.76	1.021	4-7
I know my partner pretty well.	31	5.97	1.329	1-7	25	6.08	.909	4-7
Now, please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with how well each statement describes <u>your partner</u> :								
My partner knows my current life stresses.	31	5.39	1.202	3-7	25	5.48	1.229	3-7
My partner knows my own hopes and aspirations.	31	5.29	1.189	3-7	25	5.68	1.030	3-7
My partner knows my current major worries.	31	5.23	1.175	3-7	25	5.48	1.229	3-7
My partner knows me pretty well.	31	5.87	1.204	3-7	25	5.96	1.060	3-7

Value (Care; $\alpha = .917$ )	Pre-Survey				Post-Survey			
	N	M	SD	Range	N	M	SD	Range
On average, how often in the past month did <u>you</u> :								
Say “I love you” to your partner.	31	6.58	.765	4-7	25	6.64	.757	4-7
Do sometime nice for your partner.	31	5.16	1.319	3-7	25	5.48	1.194	3-7
Initiate physical affection with your partner (e.g., hug, kiss).	31	5.68	1.423	3-7	24	6.04	1.301	3-7
Share emotions, feelings, or problems with your partner.	31	5.03	1.581	2-7	25	5.64	1.287	3-7
Tell my partner things I appreciate about him/her and how much I care for him/her.	31	4.61	1.383	2-7	25	5.56	1.356	3-7
On average, how often did <u>your partner</u> :								
Say “I love you” to you.	31	6.42	.992	3-7	25	6.68	.627	5-7
Do sometime nice for you.	30	5.07	1.507	2-7	25	5.68	1.345	3-7
Initiate physical affection with you (e.g., hug, kiss)	31	5.58	1.361	3-7	25	5.96	1.428	2-7
Share emotions, feelings, or problems with you.	31	5.23	1.454	2-7	25	5.40	1.555	2-7
Tell you things s/he appreciates about you and how much s/he care for you.	31	4.58	1.708	2-7	25	5.40	1.780	2-7

Attach (Share; $\alpha = .783$ )	Pre-Survey				Post-Survey			
	N	M	SD	Range	N	M	SD	Range
In the past month, how often would you say the following events occurred between you and your partner?								
Have a stimulating exchange of ideas.	31	4.32	1.514	2-7	25	4.96	1.241	1-7
Engage in and/or talk about outside interests together.	31	4.52	1.786	1-7	25	4.96	1.457	2-7
Make time to touch base with each other.	31	5.71	1.553	1-7	25	6.28	1.061	4-7
Talk with each other about our day.	31	5.81	1.276	2-7	25	6.08	.954	4-7
Participate in and/or talk about one another’s hobbies.	31	4.03	1.722	1-7	25	4.88	1.201	3-7

Tame (Manage; $\alpha = .918$ )	Pre-Survey				Post-Survey			
	N	M	SD	Range	N	M	SD	Range
First, rate how strongly you disagree or agree with how well each statement describes you:								
I am able to see my partner’s point of view and really understand it, even if I don’t agree.	30	5.40	.968	4-7	25	5.40	.957	4-7
When things “get heated” I suggest we take a break to calm down.	30	4.57	1.357	1-7	25	5.24	9.26	4-7
I can easily forgive my partner.	30	5.73	1.172	3-7	25	5.76	10.91	4-7
I shout or yell at my partner.	29	2.34	1.233	1-5	25	2.04	1.060	1-4
I hit, grab, or push my partner.	29	1.10	.409	1-3	25	1.12	.332	1-2
I express my feelings to my partner.	29	5.34	1.289	3-7	25	5.48	1.085	4-7
I blame, accuse, or criticize my partner.	29	2.34	1.143	1-5	25	2.04	1.060	1-4
I avoid discussing the problem.	29	3.59	1.701	1-7	25	3.32	1.701	1-6
Now, please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with how well each statement describes your partner:								
My partner is able to see my point of view and really understand it, even if they don’t agree.	31	4.87	1.310	2-7	25	4.96	1.136	3-7
When things “get heated” my partner suggests we take a break to calm down.	31	4.13	1.648	1-7	25	4.68	1.215	2-7
My partner can easily forgive me.	31	4.97	1.560	1-7	25	5.40	1.472	2-7
My partner shouts or yells at me.	31	2.58	1.587	1-6	24	2.17	1.494	1-5
My partner hits, grabs, or pushes me.	31	1.10	.301	1-2	25	1.28	.843	1-5
My partner expresses his/her feelings to me.	31	5.20	1.243	2-7	25	5.44	1.261	2-7
My partner blames, accuses, or criticizes me.	31	2.87	1.688	1-5	25	2.40	1.607	1-6
My partner avoids discussing the problem.	31	3.13	1.688	1-7	25	3.00	1.658	1-7

<b>Engage (Connect; <math>\alpha = .827</math>)</b>	<b>Pre-Survey</b>				<b>Post-Survey</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Range</b>
Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with how well each statement describes you and your partner:								
Many of our friends are friends of both of us.	31	5.48	1.151	3-7	25	5.84	1.106	4-7
We know people who care about us and our relationship.	31	6.00	.966	4-7	25	6.40	.764	5-7
If we were to need help getting by or encountered a crisis, we would have friends or family to rely on.	30	6.07	1.048	3-7	25	6.32	.900	4-7
As a couple, we try to help others in need.	31	6.13	.922	4-7	25	6.36	.995	3-7