



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP & MARRIAGE EDUCATION TRAINING

Evaluation of University of Missouri Graduate Course: Couple and Marital Relationships in Child Welfare (Fall 2010, 2011, and 2012)

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I. Overview of HRMET and Evaluation

The goal of the Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education Training (HRMET) Project is to meet the safety, permanency, and well-being needs of vulnerable children and reduce racial disproportionality in the child welfare system. HRMET's approach is to increase child welfare workers' access to relationship and marriage education (RME) by creating a cost-effective and sustainable multi-state, five-tier delivery saturation model. This model brings together Cooperative Extension's existing resources and experiences, lessons learned from recent federally funded Healthy Marriage projects, social work's experience developing curricula and training child welfare workers, and an eight-state team of the nation's leading Extension Specialists in Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS).

This portion of the project will contribute to the HRMET effort by gathering information from students enrolled in the 14-week graduate course, which utilized the new HRMET curriculum, and was offered at the University of Missouri during Fall 2010, 2011, and 2012. The information gathered from these students will provide insight into the clarity and usefulness of the course content as well as the initial impact on students' capacity to facilitate healthy couple/marital relationships with current/future clients. This information can help the HRMET team refine the curriculum for future implementation.

The major findings of this course evaluation include the following:

- The course had little or no impact on perceptions and beliefs about the value of marriage and relationships to parenting. However, the beliefs and perceptions at the pre-test were already positive.
- The course did impact how participants felt about working with clients and families on healthy relationship issues and increased their general feelings of efficacy about working with families on these issues.
- Most of the participants indicated that the course was worth their time and valuable, and particularly favored the tools and skills they had opportunities to practice in class and apply afterwards.
- The instructor was rated positively and perceived as knowledgeable about healthy relationships and child welfare.
- Respondents indicated they would recommend the course to others.
- Improvements in knowledge, ability and skills, and resource awareness had all significantly improved following the course, an improvement that continued to be observed 6-months later.
- High levels of confidence in applying course content was noted following the course as well as 6-months later.
- At 2-month and 6-month follow-ups, the majority of participants reported using the materials, with application of concepts across all core HRMET course concepts.

II. Course Evaluation Development and Response

The HRMET evaluation process was developed by the evaluation team at the University of Georgia as well as the principal investigators (PIs) for the project. The current report will discuss the outcomes based on findings from the evaluation surveys of students enrolled in the University of Missouri graduate course, "Couple and Marital Relationships in Child Welfare." The 14-week course was cross listed through the Department of Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS 7001-03) and the Department of Social Work (Soc Wk 7001 -04, 05, 06) and offered during the fall semesters of 2010 (n=10), 2011 (n=12), and 2012 (n=9). A copy of the course syllabus is provided in Appendix A.

The data presented in this report were collected from 30 graduate students from all three courses (data from one student who took the course in 2010 were not examined because the student was involved in the development of the course materials and thus may be positively biased). The pre-test survey instrument was administered using Survey Monkey prior to the beginning of the course. At the end of the course, the facilitator distributed post-test paper surveys to the students that were then mailed back to the UGA evaluation team. As well, follow-up surveys were administered, using Survey Monkey, approximately one-week, two-months and six-months following the graduate course. All analyses were conducted by the UGA evaluation team.

Of the 30 students who participated in the course and evaluation, 30 completed the pre-test, 30 completed the post-test and 28 responded to the one-week follow up post-test, 26 responded to the two-month follow-up, and 23 responded to the six-month follow-up. A total of 28 students completed the pre-, post- and one-week post-test as well as one of the two- or six-month follow-ups; 21 students completed all five surveys.

III. Demographic and Employment Profile of Respondents

Of the 28 students who completed the pre-test and one-week follow-up surveys, the most prevalent reason for attending the course was a personal desire for professional growth (64.3%), with the other reasons for attending being that it was required (35.7%) or it provided a continuing education opportunity (3.6%). Students found out about the course from a variety of venues including: an instructor or faculty member (57.1%), a listserv (14.3%), email (10.7%), or supervisor (3.6%).

Basic demographic information was collected including gender, age, race, educational level, and marital status. The majority of the respondents were female (96.4%) and they ranged in age from 22 to 46 years ($M=29.29$; $SD=8.29$). Most (89.3%) of the respondents reported their race as Caucasian, 3.6% as American Indian, and 7.1% as other. None of the respondents considered themselves to be of Hispanic origin. Regarding education, all of the students had a college degree: 92.9% had a Bachelor's degree and 7.1% had completed an advanced degree (such as a Masters or PhD). Lastly, regarding their current living/marital situation, 71.4% of respondents reported being single/not married (50.0% were in a relationship) and 28.6% were married.

With regard to their current positions, five (17.9%) respondents reported currently working in the child welfare field at the start of the course: three worked as child welfare agency caseworkers/staff members (one state- and two county-level), one worked with the Division of Youth Services, and one worked at an emergency shelter at a child advocacy center. As well, one student reported working in the mental health field and one student did not specify their current profession. As seen in Table 1, the seven professionals had spent, on average, about 2.27 years in their current positions and 2.78 years employed in the child welfare field.

Table 1. Years of employment

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Years in current position	7	2.27	3.26	0.25	9.5
Years in child welfare field	6	2.78	3.59	0.25	9.5

To further ascertain respondents' experience in the field and to help measure the impact of the number of families that could potentially benefit from healthy relationship and marriage education, the students who reported currently working in the child welfare field were asked to report on the number of families they

served in the last three months. On average, respondents (n=6) worked with about 24 families during the past three months, with a total of 143 families served. As shown in Table 2 below, when broken down by family type, each student worked, on average, with 4 married couples (16.7%), 10 cohabiting couples (41.7%), and 9 single parent families (37.5%) in the last three months.

Table 2. Average number of families served in last three months

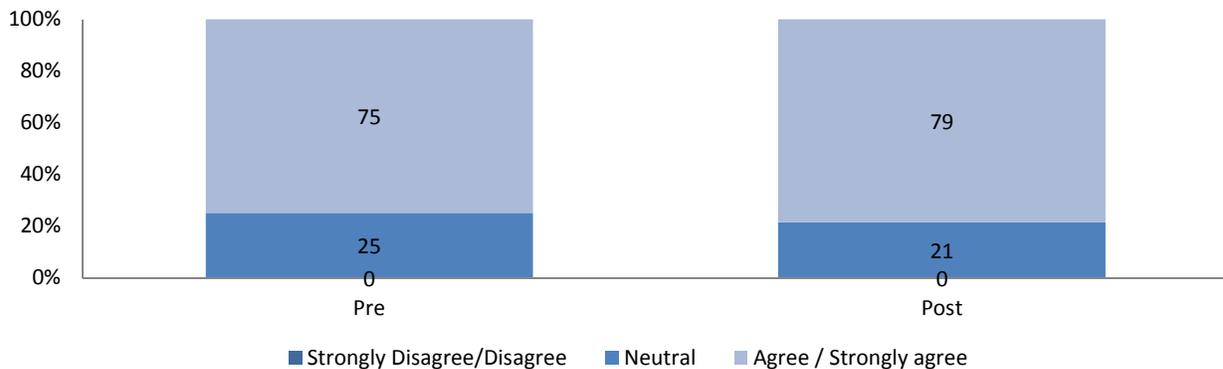
	Mean	SD	Range	Sum
Total families	23.83	15.88	0-40	143
Families that included a married couple	4.00	5.69	0-15	24
Families that included a cohabiting couple	10.00	10.00	0-25	50
Families that included a single-parent	9.00	6.23	0-15	54

IV. General Attitudes on Marriage and Relationships

Because the course was developed with the intent to facilitate the formation and stability of healthy marriages, respondents were asked a series of questions (five items) to gauge their views on marriage in general¹. Mean scores were computed based on their responses (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree) at pre-test and one week post-test. A summary of students’ scores is illustrated in Figure 1.

Overall, respondents’ attitudes were relatively positive and consistent over time. On average, 75.0% and 78.6% of students tended to agree about the importance of marital preparation, intentionality, and strong couple/marital relationships on successful parenting on their pre-test (M=3.89; SD=0.49) and one-week post-test (M=4.07; SD=0.57) survey, respectively. A repeated measures ANOVA revealed no significant within-subjects effect (pre-post difference), $F(1, 27) = 2.91$ ($p = .10$), suggesting no major changes in student attitudes over time. Thus, *students, on average, reported similarly positive attitudes about the importance of marriage and strong couple/marital relationships on successful parenting following the course.*

Figure 1. General attitudes regarding marriage and relationships



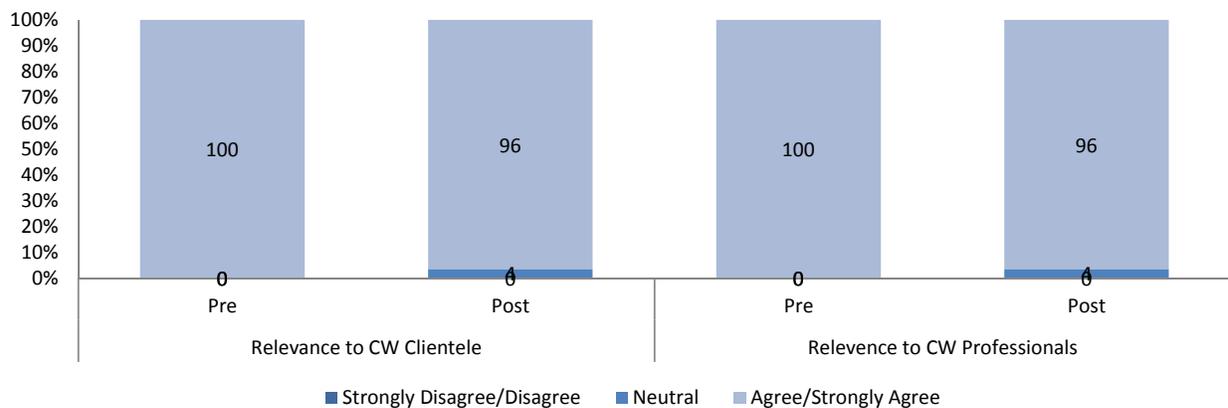
¹ For listing of individual items comprising aggregate measures as well as means and standard deviations for aggregate and individual items see Appendix B.

V. Relationship and Marriage Education in Child Welfare

Next, given the focus of the course, questions were asked of students to determine how they viewed the potential helpfulness and relevance of healthy relationship and marriage education (RME) in the child welfare field. To gauge this, students were asked to identify their level of agreement regarding (1) the relevance of RME to child welfare clients (two items), and (2) the relevance of RME to child welfare professionals' job (three items). Mean scores were computed based on their responses (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree) at pre-test and one week post-test².

As observed in Figure 2, the vast majority of students, on average, agreed or strongly agreed that RME was relevant to Child Welfare clients (Pre: M=4.11, SD=0.50; Post: M=4.25, SD =0.60) and Child Welfare professionals (Pre: M=4.36, SD=0.41; Post: M=4.46, SD=0.51). A repeated measures MANOVA revealed no significant difference over time, $F(2, 25) = .849$ ($p=.440$). Thus, *students' perceptions of the relevance of RME to their clients and their job were positive at the start of the course and remained positive following the course.*

Figure 2. Relevance of RME to Child Welfare clientele and Child Welfare professionals



Further, students were also asked to report on the helpfulness and the appropriateness of child welfare professionals being trained in and offering RME³. As seen in Figure 3, nearly all students (Pre: 93.3%; Post: 100%) thought it would be 'helpful' or 'very helpful' for child welfare professionals (CWPs) to attend courses and trainings like HRMET designed to address education on healthy couple and marital relationships. As illustrated in Figure 4, the majority of students (Pre: 93.3%; Post: 100%) also felt that it would be 'appropriate' or 'very appropriate' for CWPs to help their clientele develop skills needed to have healthy couple and marital relationships. A repeated measures MANOVA revealed no significant difference over time, $F(2, 26) = 2.35$ ($p=.12$). In short, *perceptions of the helpfulness of RME courses and training and the appropriateness of CWPs offering RME were positive at both the start and conclusion of the course.*

² For listing of individual items comprising aggregate measures as well as means and standard deviations for aggregate and individual items see Appendix B.

³ Means and standard deviations for individual items are presented in Appendix B.

Figure 3: Helpfulness of training CWP's to support healthy relationships and marriages

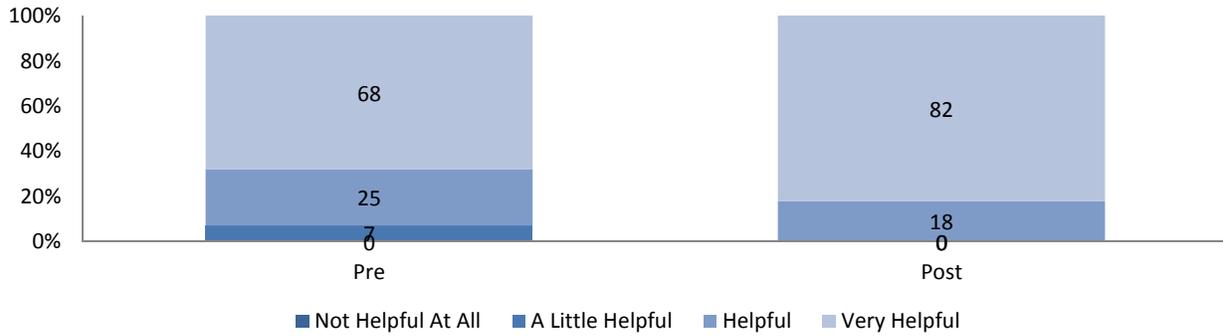
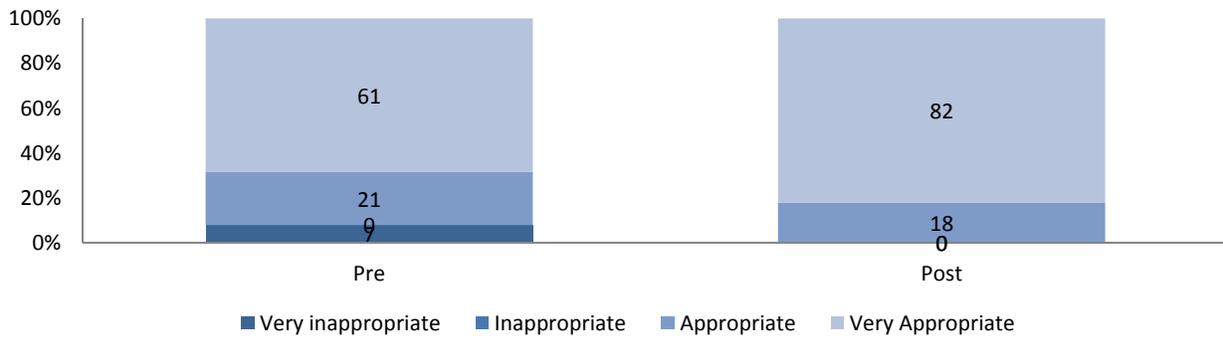


Figure 4: Appropriateness of CWP's assisting individuals and families develop RME skills.



VI. Graduate Course Impact

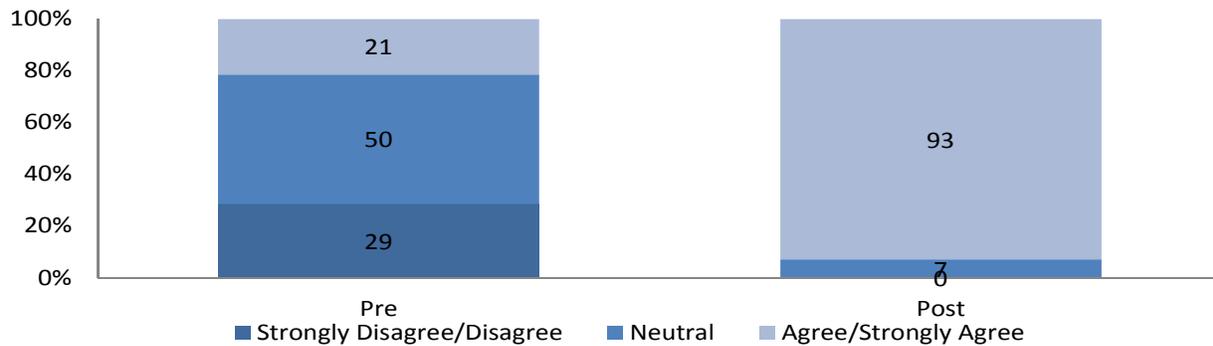
The students were asked in the pre-test, and again at the one-week follow-up, about their knowledge, abilities, comfort, and resource awareness related to incorporating healthy RME and information into case planning, assessment, and practice. Below is a summary of students’ pre- and post-course changes as well as their self-perceived reports of change⁴. Repeated measures MANOVA revealed an overall significant within-subjects effect (pre-post difference), $F(3, 25) = 29.79$ ($p = .000$). Post-hoc univariate tests are described below.

Changes in knowledge. Students’ knowledge of ways to incorporate healthy RME and information into case planning, assessment, and practice were assessed via three items. These questions assessed areas related to specific skills for healthy couple relationships, strategies for working with diverse clientele, and information on how to help clientele manage relationship challenges. Mean scores were computed based on their responses (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree) at pre-test and one-week post-test.

As observed in Figure 5, prominent shifts were evident over time, as only 21.4% of students agreed or strongly agreed on having knowledge in this area at pre-test ($M=2.94$, $SD=0.69$), yet, at one-week follow-up, 92.8% of students agreed or strongly agreed to these same items ($M=4.29$, $SD=0.52$). Repeated measures ANOVA revealed an overall significant within-subjects effect (pre-post difference), $F(1, 27) = 84.94$ ($p = .000$). Thus, *students’ knowledge of ways to incorporate healthy relationship and marriage education and information into aspects of their job noticeably improved following the course.*

⁴ For listing of individual items comprising aggregate measures as well as means and standard deviations for aggregate and individual items see Appendix B.

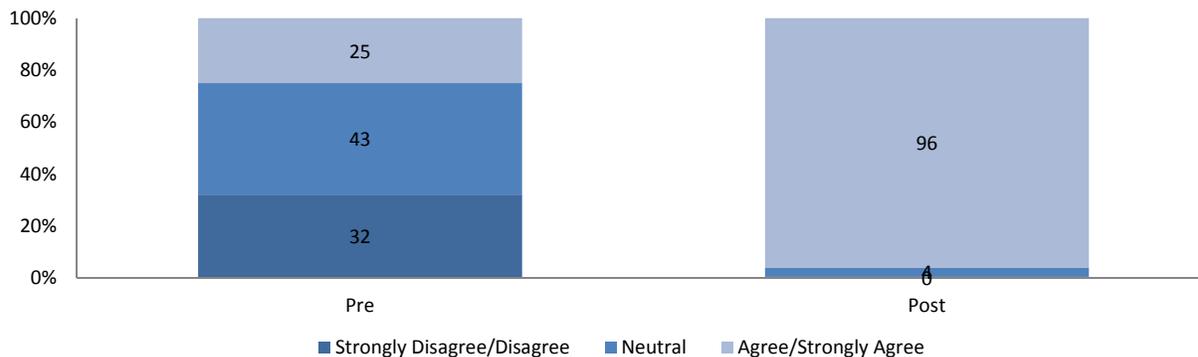
Figure 5. Knowledge of healthy relationship and marriage education.



Changes in abilities and comfort. Students’ ability and comfort with incorporating healthy RME and information into case planning, assessment, and practice was assessed via four items. These questions assessed areas related to ability to assess for marital/couple relationship problems, formulate culturally appropriate interventions for relationship strengthening, comfort discussing with families how couple issues impact child outcomes, and comfort with providing information to strengthen couple relationships. Mean scores were computed based on their responses (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree) at pre-test and one week post-test.

As observed in Figure 6, improvements in ability and comfort were observed. Compared to pre-test when only 25.0% of students agreed or strongly agreed on having the ability and comfort with offering RME (M=2.88, SD=0.70), 96.3% of students agreed or strongly agreed to these same items at post-test (M=4.29, SD=0.54). Repeated measures ANOVA revealed an overall significant within-subjects effect (pre-post difference), $F(1, 27) = 77.435$ ($p = .000$). Thus, *students’ ability and comfort with incorporating healthy relationship and marriage education and information into aspects of their current or future job in child welfare noticeably improved following the course.*

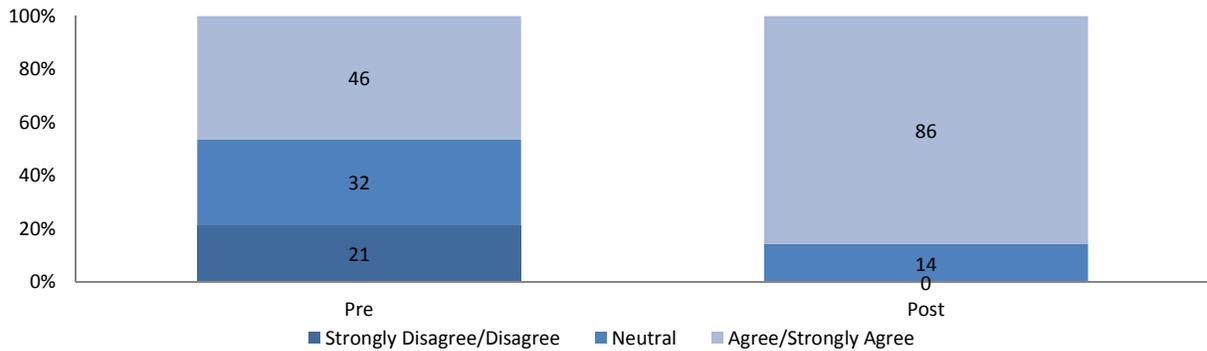
Figure 6. Ability and comfort with offering healthy relationship and marriage education.



Changes in resource awareness. Two items were used to assess students’ awareness of resources and local educational and counseling services that can assist healthy couple relationship formation. Mean scores were computed based on their responses (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree) at pre-test and one week post-test. Results, depicted in Figure 7, illustrate that only 46.5% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of such resources at pre-test (M=3.16, SD=0.84). However, at one-week

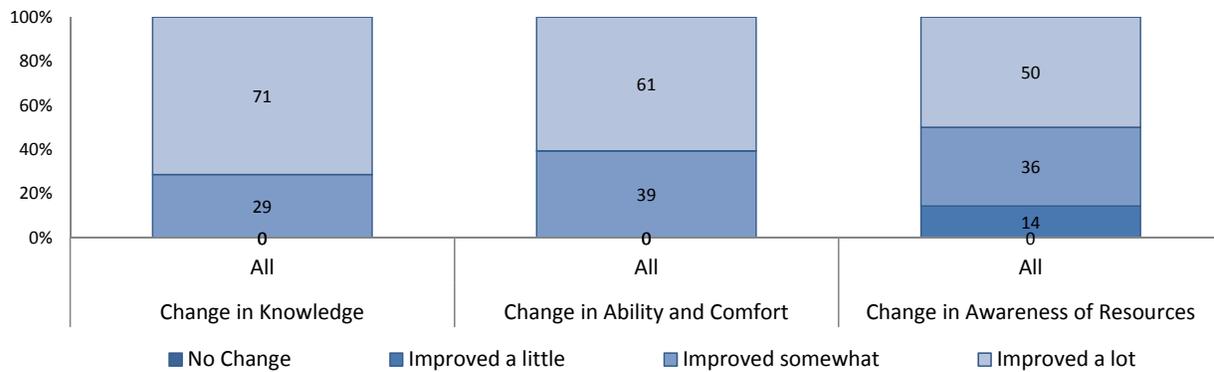
follow-up, 85.7% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of available resources (M=4.12, SD=0.67). Repeated measures ANOVA revealed an overall significant within-subjects effect (pre-post difference), $F(1, 27) = 24.473$ ($p = .000$). Thus, *students' awareness of resources that can assist healthy couple relationship formation noticeably improved following the course.*

Figure 7. Awareness of resources and services to support couple relationships.



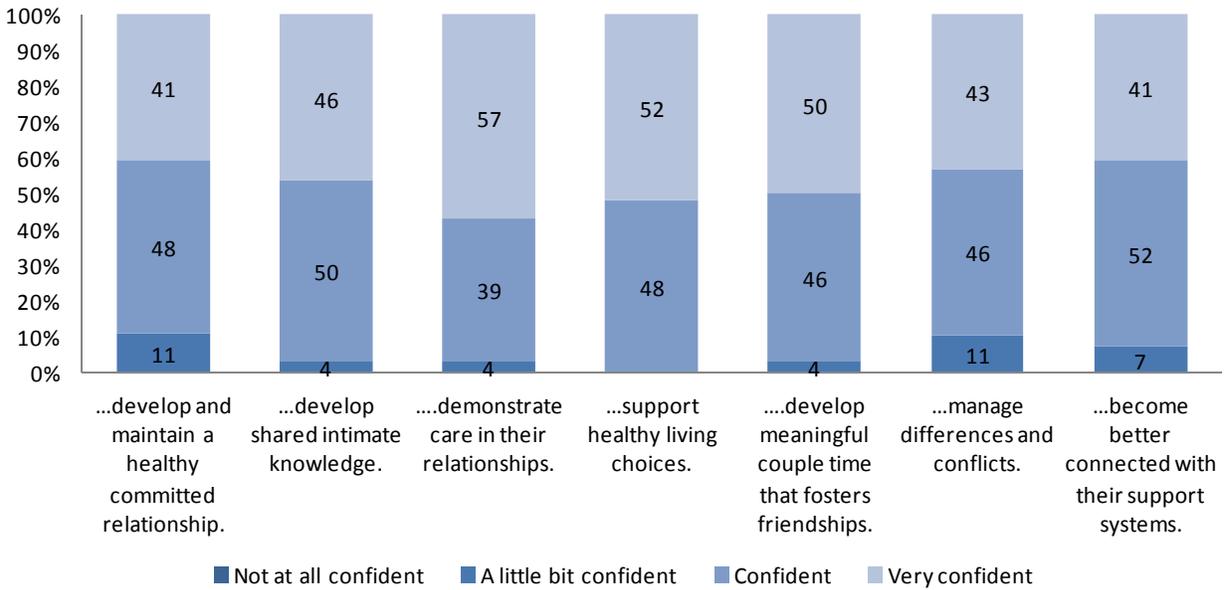
Perceived change in knowledge, ability/comfort and awareness. Students were also asked directly to report how much they felt they improved in each of the areas described above. All of the students (100%) reported they improved ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ in knowledge and in ability/comfort. Additionally, 85.7% of students felt the same regarding their improvement in awareness of resources (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Perceived change in knowledge, ability/comfort and awareness



Changes in confidence. Immediately following the conclusion of the course (post-test), all of the students felt confident in helping individuals and couples apply the core concepts taught from the National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Model (NERMEM). The NERMEM reflects seven empirically supported practices and skills associated with healthy relationship development: choose, know, care, care for self, share, manage and connect. As shown in Figure 9, a majority of the students felt confident or very confident in helping individuals and couples develop and maintain a healthy and committed relationship (86.7%), develop shared intimate knowledge (96.7%), demonstrate care in their relationships (96.7%), support healthy living choices (100%), establish meaningful couple time (96.7%), manage differences and conflicts (90.0%) and become better connected to support systems (93.1%).

Figure 9. Students’ confidence after the course in helping individuals and couples.



Sample comments by students regarding what they will do differently as a result of this course.

“I can now provide clients relevant information and offer resources for those that want to have stronger relationships that I did not have access to prior to this class.” (Fall 2010)

“I can use the 7 principles now with clients. I can recognize these more with couples. I am more equipped with tools I can use to help struggling couples.” (Fall 2010)

“I will look at more than just the child’s welfare in a situation because the parent’s relationship impacts the child so much.” (Fall 2011)

“[be] more conscious of ‘red flags’ in relationships (and) more aware of ‘red flags’ in children’s behavior.” (Fall 2011)

“Manage conflict, implement tools, change thinking, improve relationships, recommend resources.” (Fall 2012)

“Continue to work on building a healthy relationship and begin reaching out to family/friends for support.” (Fall 2012)

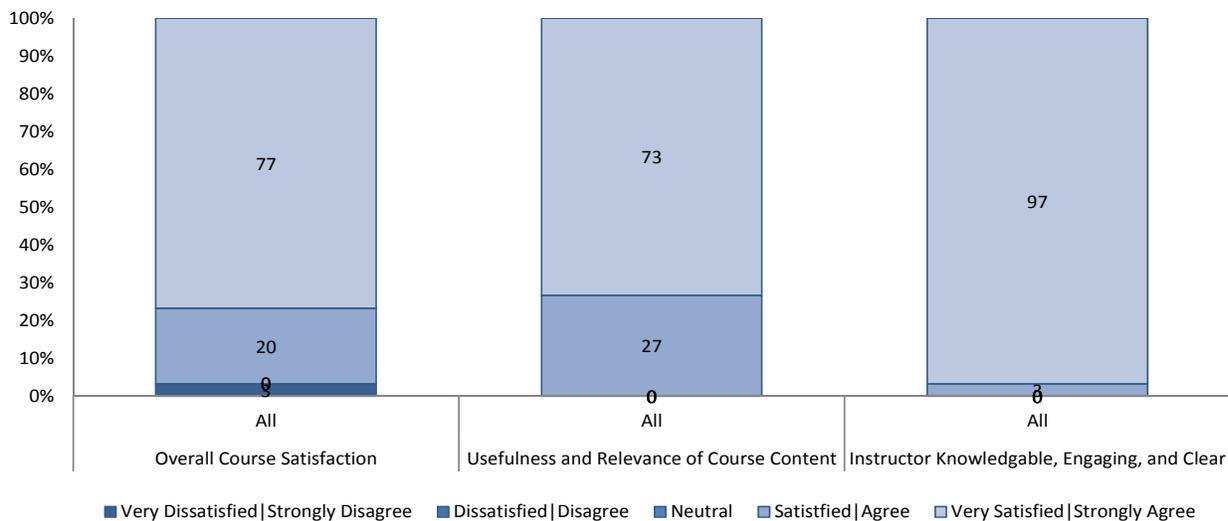
VII. Overall Reflections of the Graduate Course

Prior to the course, students were asked to describe their expectations for the HRMET graduate course. Overall, students were expecting to gain knowledge about healthy (vs. unhealthy) relationships and how they relate to child abuse (e.g., “... I hope to learn more about the ways in which marital relationships are associated with child welfare...” - Fall 2010); develop skills and acquire tools to utilize with clients (e.g., “To learn skills and tools to help my clients. Become more informed on healthy relationships.” - Fall 2011); and learn new approaches and gather more resources for strengthening families (e.g., “I would like to learn strategies for healthy relationships that I can teach to my clients” - Fall 2012).

In the post-test assessment, the respondents were asked to provide feedback specifically on their course experience⁵. Overall satisfaction with the course was assessed via a one-item measure (1= very dissatisfied; 5= very satisfied). Next, mean scores were computed reflecting students’ rating (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree) of the usefulness and relevance of the course to their work (five items) and their impressions of the instructor (five items). Last, students were asked whether they would recommend this course to others.

As seen in Figure 10, almost all of the students (96.7%) indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the course. Also, as shown in the middle column, all students (100%) tended to agree that the course provided useful and relevant content. Looking more specifically at certain individual items, all students (100%) tended to agree or strongly agree that the course met their expectations. Additionally, most students agreed or strongly agreed the course was relevant to the work they do or plan to do (86.2%), provided them with knowledge and skills for assessing and working with individuals and couples within the child welfare system (96.7%), and was compatible with the needs of the individuals/families they work with (83.3%). Overall, students found the course to be highly useful and applicable for working in the child welfare field.

Figure 10. Course Satisfaction, Relevance, and Quality of Instructor



Sample comments from participants regarding satisfaction with training.

“Well organized and systematic presentation of material! Excellent use of class members [of] various backgrounds and experience in discussion.” (Fall 2010)

“This class has been one of the best classes I have taken at the University of Missouri.” (Fall 2011)

“I wasn’t sure what to expect upon enrollment. I liked the organization of the class. It focused on implications of unhealthy partnerships on children, and then addressed how to create healthy relationships.” (Fall 2011)

“I was very pleased with content. It is helpful in all areas including daily life.” (Fall 2012)

⁵ For listing of individual items comprising aggregate measures as well as means and standard deviations for aggregate and individual items see Appendix B.

With regards to instructor ratings, all of the students (100%) ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that the instructor was knowledgeable and presented material well. For example, most students tended to agree or strongly agree that the instructor was knowledgeable about RME (100%) and the child welfare profession (93.3%), and that the instructor was engaging (100%). Last, all (100%) of the students indicated that they would recommend this course to others.

Sample comments from participants regarding instructors.

“[Instructor] is an excellent teacher. He is kind and encouraging...” (Fall 2010)

“Instructor was fantastic and very personable.” (Fall 2011)

“Instructor had a lot of knowledge on relationships & kept interest of students.” (Fall 2012)

“[Instructor] is an amazing and insightful professor and professional. I really appreciated and value his contributions to this course and sharing his personal life as well.” (Fall 2012)

Immediately following the course, students were asked to report what they felt was most and least useful about the course. Of the 30 students who completed the post-test, all 30 (100%) provided feedback regarding what they found most useful. Many of the students commented that the resource tools, information disseminated, and the practical skills and strategies learned were most useful:

- *“Learning more about what factors influence relationship cohesion and success and learning about and having access to tools that can serve to support and enhance relationships.”* (Fall 2010)
- *“Practical skills to use with actual clients in practice in the future.”* (Fall 2010)
- *“The practical tools and concepts. I really liked the books we read and feel confident recommending them to clients.”* (Fall 2011)
- *“The ability to directly apply the course materials to everyday life & work.”* (Fall 2012)

Although few comments were shared regarding what was least useful, students mostly expressed concerns about assignments, particularly class readings (either being too extensive or repetitive):

- *“A lot of the required research reading was redundant. It repeated itself. It said the same thing in a different way. So much research! Too much summary writing.”* (Fall 2010)
- *“Developing our own tools. Especially since not actively working for an agency. Felt like it was reinventing the wheel.”* (Fall 2011)
- *“The extensive reading. Less reading would have allowed for more time to focus on specific readings.”* (Fall 2012)

Students were also asked if there were any topics that should have been covered in the course that would be helpful to child welfare professionals. Students shared a diversity of responses:

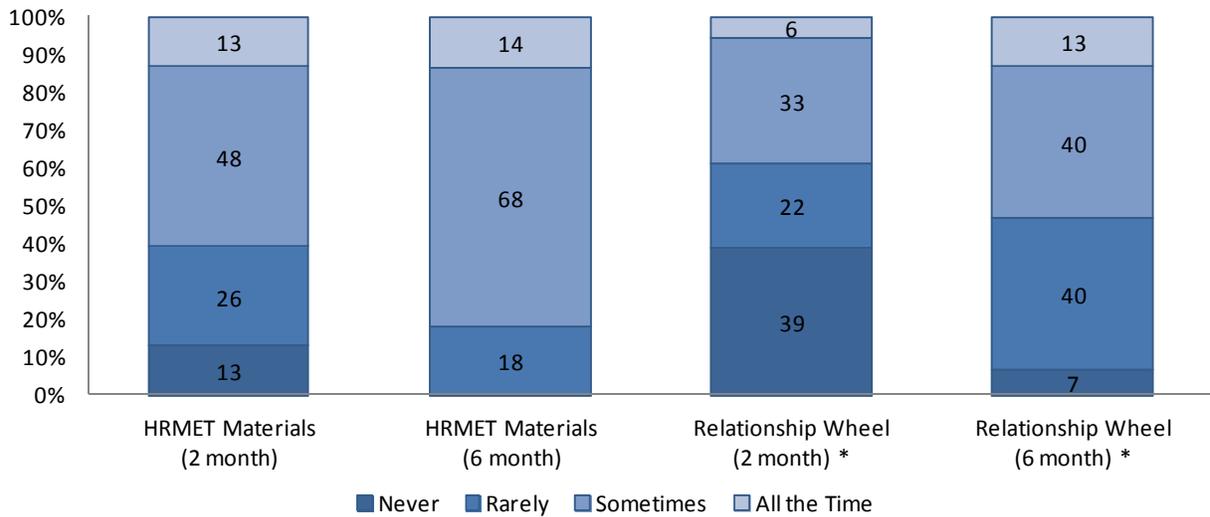
- *“More access to resources for low income stressed couples/families.”* (Fall 2010)
- *“More on how to deal with couples and situations who have substance abuse issues, alcohol issues, neglect and how that impacts our relationships with each other and our children. More on DV & SV.”* (Fall 2010)
- *“Same sex relationships and adoptive parents.”* (Fall 2011)
- *“I might have liked to know a little bit about what happens when children are placed with child services/ how parent education helps get children back w/ families.”* (Fall 2012)

VIII. Two-Month and Six-Month Follow-Up

Approximately two- and six-months after completing the course, students were emailed and asked to complete a follow-up survey on how they have used the information from the course in their work. Of the 30 students emailed, 28 responded to at least one of the follow-up surveys: 26 at two-month follow-up and 23 at six-month follow-up. In addition to being asked to provide comments about the course, students were asked how often they had used the HRMET materials (e.g., teaching tools and fact sheets for each of the NERMEM concepts) they received.

Out of the 30 students, 27 (90.0%) reported using the materials at either the two-month and/or six-month follow-up. As shown in Figure 11, a majority of the students at two-month (60.8%) and six-month (81.1%) follow-up had utilized the HRMET materials either sometimes or all the time. When it came to using the Relationship Wheel with the individuals and families they serve, 38.9% of the students who responded at the two-month follow-up reported using the wheel sometimes or all of the time, and at six-month follow-up the percentage increased to 53.3%.

Figure 11. Students’ Application of Material



* The relationship wheel was not introduced until 2011, so data only represents responses from 2011 and 2012

At the two- and six-month follow-up, students were also asked to provide feedback regarding their application of the core concepts taught from the National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Model (NERMEM) since completing the course. Of the 28 students who completed either the two-month or six-month follow up, 27 (96.3%) reported that they discussed or taught at least one or more of the concepts when working with their clients. Table 3 lists the key concepts presented during course, the number of students who reported applying each of the concepts at two- and six-month follow-up, and examples of ways they did so. Various individuals also reported utilization of the concepts in their own personal lives, illustrating retention and application of the course concepts and improving likelihood of later utilization with their clients. As one student commented regarding the ‘Care’ concept, *“I referred to one of the handouts with a friend of mine in an informal setting. I have also applied these principles to my own relationship and my own life. It has not come up in a professional setting, but I do anticipate it being useful with a different population”* (Fall 2011).

Table 3. Number of students who applied course concepts and examples

Concept	Total (N=28)	2-mth (n=26)	6-mth (n=23)	Example
Choose - The central importance of intentionality and commitment	18 (64.2%)	14 (53.8%)	11 (47.8%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I encouraged a couple to remember why they started dating/ good memories.” (Fall 2010) • “I discussed finding qualities important to an individual to make a life-long commitment to another person, and finding those qualities before choosing their partner.” (Fall 2010) • “I work with young mothers experiencing an unplanned or crisis pregnancy. Much of what I do now is case management, but discussions lead to the absence or presence of the baby’s father. Although I am not a counselor, I listen to the girls talk about why or why not they want the baby’s father involved and discuss with them the importance of commitment and how the decisions that the mother makes will ultimately affect the overall wellbeing of her child.” (Fall 2010) • “I use choose the most when working with clients who have left an abusive relationship and are entering a new one. I talk with these women about being intentional of who they choose to date and how they would like the relationship to progress.” (Fall 2011) • “I work in the mental health field and some of their stressors are around their relationship. I discuss commitment with them and if they are in it and committed and if not we have to work towards that.” (Fall 2011) • “I talk with my clients about the strengths of their relationship. And the strengths of the partner.” (Fall 2012)
Care for Self - Maintaining physical, psychological, and sexual health and wellness as an individual	20 (71.4%)	15 (57.6%)	12 (52.1%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work with the young mothers with the goal in mind to reach self-sufficiency. We assess their levels of depression, anxiety, and relationship satisfaction using the Burns assessment tools and if they are feeling down or anxious in the beginning of our time, we want to make them feel better and more confident when termination happens. We also discuss sexual health and birth control with our clients.” (Fall 2010) • “We hosted an oatmeal day to start a conversation on the importance of eating healthy for your heart.” (Fall 2010) • “Strongly encourage every family to get plenty of rest, especially mom’s who are still recovering from delivery. Explain to families every family has different needs and responsibilities so they need to decide what is best for themselves and their families. Often time encourage families to take time for themselves, make sure they get plenty of sleep, eat during meal times and spend time outside the hospital.” (Fall 2011) • “This is one of the most used tools because we work with individuals with mental and physical disabilities and we work on improving their health on a daily basis.” (Fall 2011) • “I have discussed the importance of maintaining good, positive self-care strategies and how it will in turn benefit loved ones. You cannot be there for others if you are not first in first tune with your own needs.”(Fall 2012) • “Use the tools to show both children and their parents how important it is to take care of yourself. I taught the parents that if they do not take care of themselves, they will not be able to take care of their children properly.” (Fall 2012)
Know - The development of intimate knowledge of partner	17 (60.7%)	13 (50.0%)	10 (43.4%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I have used this element when discussing the above tendency to move quickly into living together (getting to know their partner prior to putting that kind of strain on the relationship) but primarily with clients in a current relationship when they are wanting to enhance their relationship.” (Fall 2010) • “Suggested a couple complete a questionnaire on the other person to deepen their knowledge of each other.” (Fall 2010) • “My department held an event for Valentine’s Day. We invited families and their children to come and participate. The evening included food and we separated children from their parents. Parents took part in a version of the newlywed game for fun and were given a lesson on love languages. The kids played Wii and other games in the room next door.” (Fall 2011) • “Referred people to the quizzes in Seven Principles for Making Love Work.” (Fall 2011) • “I mainly encourage women to question if and how they really know their partner new partner. We might talk about some important things to understand and know since many of these women have been in either an abusive relationship most of their life or have been in multiple abusive relationships.” (Fall 2011) • “Clients who have been in a domestic violence situation with their partner, and are curious as to how they really ‘know’ their partner. What are the yellow flags and red flags? How well do you know a new partner?”(Fall 2012)

Table 3. Number of students who applied course concepts and examples (continued)

Concept	Total (N=28)	2-mth (n=26)	6-mth (n=23)	Example
Care - Demonstrating kindness, affection, understanding, respect, and caring support	20 (71.4%)	14 (53.8%)	13 (56.6%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I work with my clients to help them understand the importance of respecting themselves and their partners, showing kindness, and doing small things that let others know that they are important in their lives.” (Fall 2010) • “I share with clients ideas learned in class about 5 minute connections and other items that I put in my ‘tool box’.” (Fall 2010) • “I have made this an important tool to use to help them see the difference in their attitudes with one another when they demonstrate care with one another.” (Fall 2011) • “Talked about the 5 love languages and finding ways to show mutual respect in relationships.” (Fall 2011) • “Encourage clients to tell their partners how they like to be loved and cared for as well as find out how their partners like to be cared for and showed love.” (Fall 2011) • “I have discussed different strategies with bickering parents about how they can openly and more importantly KINDLY communicate with one another before an argument blows out of proportion.”(Fall 2012) • “A family I worked with had trouble demonstrating this not only to each other but to their child so I had to address ways to show respect and care within the family dynamic.” (Fall 2012)
Share - Developing and maintaining friendship and sense of “we”; spending meaningful time together	14 (50.0%)	10 (38.4%)	7 (30.4%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I have used tools from Gottman's book related to developing the ‘sense of we’ with clients that want to enhance their current relationships and decrease conflict.” (Fall 2010) • “I brainstorm with clients ways to spend time together as a couple that are low-cost and quick connections.” (Fall 2010) • “Making date nights and date night ideas. Finding common hobbies or activities with each other.” (Fall 2011) • “Encourage clients to find ways to spend time with friends, family and significant others through similar interests or taking turns doing one person’s activity and their own.” (Fall 2011) • “Rituals and traditions are important in a couple relationship”(Fall 2012) • “Used this for divorced parents to learn to coparent” (Fall 2012)
Manage - Strategies of engagement and interaction around differences, stresses and issues of safety	14 (50.0%)	9 (34.6%)	7 (30.4%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We talk a lot about issues of safety. We safety plan and discuss the importance of asking for help and managing stress within themselves. In so many cases these women are really starting from scratch in learning the basics of relationships and self care.” (Fall 2010) • Take 5 when you are stressed. The listener-speaker technique.” (Fall 2011) • “Encouraging talking about issues and not letting them build, communication in ways that partner will hear and understand.” (Fall 2011) • “I apply principles from manage to many of my clients. With some clients it is to help them address differences with significant others, but it has also been useful for addressing difference/conflict with other family members, friends, and roommates. (Fall 2011) • “I tell my clients that all couples argue but what makes the difference is how we handle the situation” (Fall 2012) • “This was used to help children of divorced parents manage the two separate lives they live.” (Fall 2012)
Connect - Engaging social support, community ties, and sources of meaning	18 (64.2%)	16 (61.5%)	9 (39.1%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I help clients constantly search out sources of support in their community and within their family.” (Fall 2010) • “I have used this element with one client thus far, in respect to the couples' involvement with their church and church groups.” (Fall 2010) • “I have planned community activities, forums, and health fairs for residents of public housing. These were developed to build social support and awareness of resources.” (Fall 2011) • “Refer many parents/families to community resources to help provide additional support when they leave the hospital.” (Fall 2011) • “Connect is something that is usually involved in treatment plans with communities etc. so they end up enhancing their relationship and connect with their other.” (Fall 2011) • “I have discussed the importance of social support in the community and have connected my clients to resources that would benefit them, particularly community resources that they had not accessed or heard of. I mention the importance of using these resources to better their social situation and gain access to more support.”(Fall 2012) • “This is used often as a social worker as we are very resourceful and find the importance in making connections with community agencies in order to better serve our clients and their families.” (Fall 2012)

In addition, students were asked to describe at least one specific example of how they used the information from the course when working with individuals and/or families. At two-month follow-up, 16 of the 26 respondents shared an example that reinforced the usefulness of the course and tools shared during the graduate course, and 7 of the 23 respondents shared an example at six-month follow-up. One student described her experience helping a male client who reported conflict with his wife but wanted to maintain the relationship:

I shared with the client several of the Marriage Garden Lessons and information from the Love Notes series. We discussed his perception of these tools and how they might be used to enhance his own relationship and decrease conflict between he and wife. He reports utilization of the tools he chose, and also reports decreased conflict, even reacting in surprise when he recounted how long it had been since they had been in an argument (reported slight disagreements but no big arguments). (Fall 2010)

Another student at two-month follow-up described helping a couple who had difficulty spending time together:

One couple has opposite schedules. He works nights and she works days and it can't be avoided due to their need for income. I talked about flex times they can share instead i.e. when he comes home and when he wakes up to go to work. They also are working with their bosses to align at least one day off that is the same for both of them. I encouraged them to use that time together...going to the zoo, walking their dogs. (Fall 2011)

Additional examples of student's comments include:

So many of the tools we became familiar with are useful. The managing stress tool is something I have used in my group sessions with my clients. Managing stress and self care are critical to moving forward with my clients. For many of them, the time they are with me is the first time they have been on their own in their lives. They lack basic functioning skills. I will utilize these tools as I continue to develop my practice. I use the analogy of the flight attendant instructing passengers to put on their oxygen masks before trying to help others often as I explain that we must first take care of ourselves and then can help others or we are of no use to anyone. (Fall 2010)

I have been able to pull out the relationship wheel with teens in group setting. Allow them to address an issue of discussion about family. Asking what one area could they work on and how. Also asked them one area they would like to see their family work on and how; then explored how to talk to parents about ideas. (Fall 2011)

I have a couple that needed to work on how to create rituals in their relationship. I utilized an assessment from the marriage garden. That's how they realized that they needed to spend some more time together and make rituals. (Fall 2012)

Students were also asked to share any additional feedback about the course or their experience with what they learned. Consistent with prior comments, one student reinforced the importance of opportunities during the course to apply and practice the skills being taught:

It was a very interesting course, with the utilization of tools and how the tools worked being of the most interest. The first half of the course was a little heavy on the research reading - I think many of the studies were redundant and some of that time might have been spent in more productive ways, such as more implementation of the instruments in mock or real settings. (Fall 2010)

Another student noted the potential usefulness of the content in the future:

I truly enjoyed this course. Currently I am not in a position where I regularly apply these principles in practice. I know that I have absorbed a lot of the information and believe it is likely that I apply some of the principles without consciously realizing it. I do think this information will

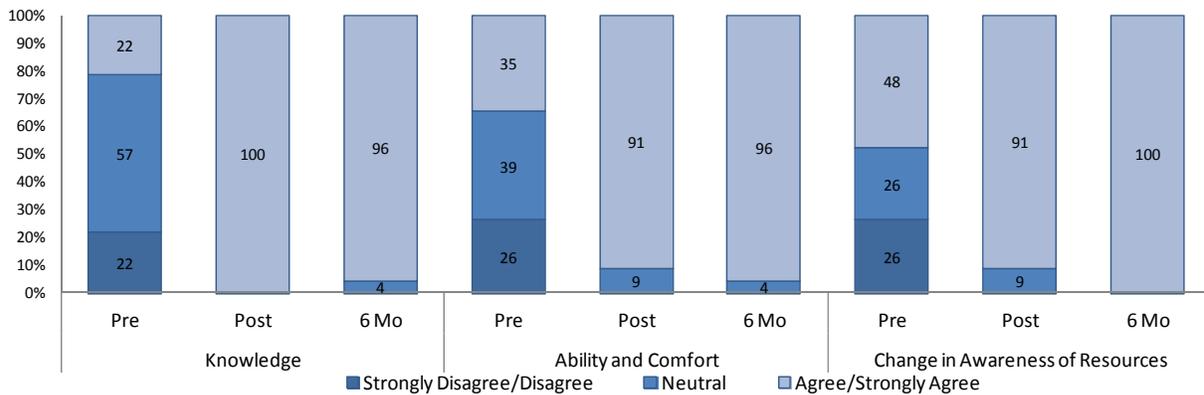
be useful in the future, and can foresee myself utilizing it regularly in different settings. I often review the binder of information to keep it fresh in my mind. (Fall 2011)

Sustained Retention of Program Material.

Six months following participation in the course, respondents were re-evaluated on their knowledge, ability, comfort, and resource awareness related to incorporating healthy RME into the services they provide (for specific content questions, refer to section VI and Appendix B). In order to identify levels of stability and change in training impact, six-month scores were compared to pre- and one-week post-training scores. For uniformity in comparisons, results presented here are only for those individuals that completed all three surveys (n = 23 individuals who completed the six-month follow up). Figure 12 offers a summary of participants’ responses, and changes in mean levels are described in more detail below.

A repeated-measures MANOVA revealed an overall significant within-subjects effect (differences over time) across all three areas, $F(6, 82) = 9.16$ ($p = .000$). Considering each area individually, repeated measures ANOVAs involving three time points found a significant within-subject effect (i.e., a significant overall difference between at least two assessment points) for knowledge ($F(2, 30) = 40.44$; $p = .000$), ability and comfort ($F(2, 30) = 15.78$; $p = .000$), and resource awareness ($F(2, 30) = 30.15$; $p = .000$). Follow-up tests found a significant mean difference in levels between pre-test and 1-week post-test levels as well as between pre-test and six-month post-test levels. Significant mean differences were found in levels between one-week and six-month post-test levels. *Thus, six-months following the course participants continued to report an elevated knowledge of, as well as ability and comfort with, incorporating healthy relationship and marriage education and information into aspects of their job, and a heightened awareness of resources that can assist healthy couple relationship.*

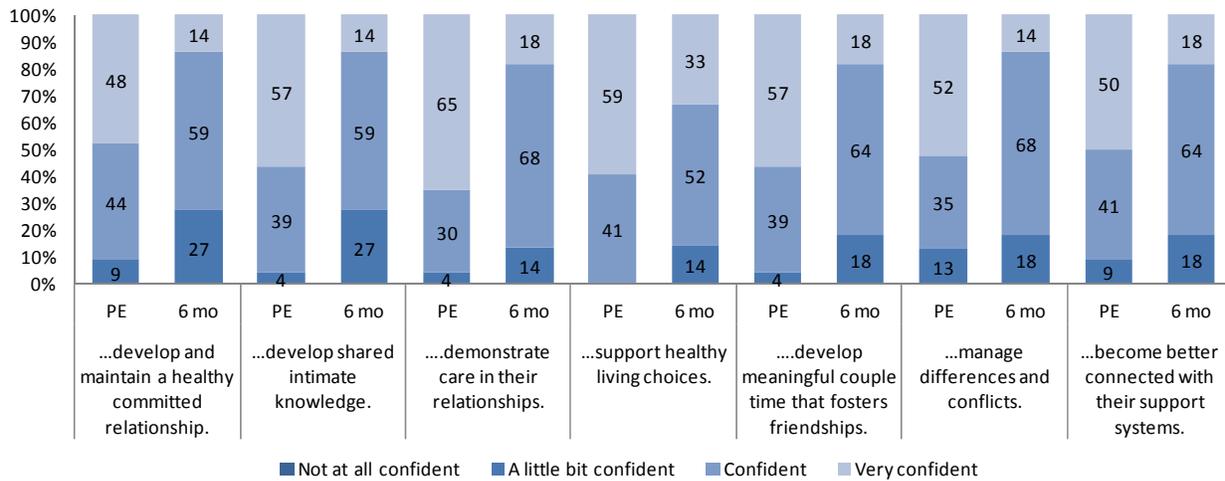
Figure 12. Sustained changes in knowledge, ability and comfort, and resource awareness.



Sustained Confidence. Levels of confidence in helping individuals and couples apply the seven core NERMEM concepts were also reported at six-months following the course (see Figure 13). Compared to responses at post-test, a majority of the 23 participants who completed both the post-test and six-month follow-up still felt confident or very confident at the six-month follow-up in helping individuals and couples develop and maintain a healthy and committed relationship (91.3% vs. 72.7%), develop shared intimate knowledge (95.6% vs. 72.7%), demonstrate care in their relationships (95.6% vs. 86.4%), support healthy living choices (100.0% vs. 85.7%), establish meaningful couple time (95.6% vs. 81.8%), manage differences and conflicts (87.0% vs. 81.8%) and become better connected to support systems (90.9% vs. 81.8%). To detect if differences in mean levels of confidence were significant for each concept, seven

paired sample t-tests were conducted⁶. Results showed significantly lower levels of confidence at six-months post-training for all seven principles: Choose ($t(21)=2.57, p < .05$), Care for Self ($t(21)=2.23, p < .05$), Know ($t(21)=3.51, p < .01$), Care ($t(21)=2.98, p < .01$), Share ($t(21)=2.43, p < .05$), Manage ($t(21)=2.11, p < .05$), and Connect ($t(20)=2.02, p < .05$). *Despite significant drops in confidence scores, participants still, on average, reported high levels of confidence in applying most of the core NERMEM concepts over time.*

Figure 13. Sustained confidence helping individuals and couples apply NERMEM concepts.



Factors Enabling or Prohibiting Application. Lastly, at two-month and six-month follow-up, participants were asked to describe factors that had enabled the successful utilization of HRMET tools as well as barriers or challenges that had been experienced. Overall, among students who had responded at two- or six-month follow-up ($n=28$), 21.4% ($n=6$) provided an enabling factor such as: the provided materials (tools and binders), the freshness of the information and practices, and the easy to assess activities. Five (17.8%) students described a barrier: materials not being available in Spanish, difficulty adapting the material to different situations, and difficulty including both spouses.

IX. Conclusion

Overall, based on responses from students who completed the 14-week graduate course at the University of Missouri, it is evident that the HRMET curriculum could be useful to social work graduate students and child welfare professionals. Evaluation data indicates that there were changes in the knowledge and attitudes of the students over time and that they have applied the information learned.

The overall impact of the training was summarized well by this participant’s comment:

“It brought a lot of assistance to me in my own life and in my career. I feel that I can approach couple relationships in a wider outlook. The HRMET training can benefit every couple and should be implemented everywhere. I plan to implement it more in my field of mental health services.” (Fall 2011)

⁶ Means and standard deviation scores for individual items available in Appendix B.

X. Appendix A: Graduate Course Syllabus⁷.

HDFS 7001-03 & SOC WK 7001-06 COUPLE AND MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS IN CHILD WELFARE

Instructor: Dr. David Schramm **Office:** Gentry Hall 306
Phone: 884-1995 **Office Hours:** By appointment (email is best)
E-mail: schrammdg@missouri.edu
Room: 113 Strickland Hall
Time: Tuesdays, 2:00 pm – 4:50 pm
Course Blackboard site: Log in at: <https://courses.missouri.edu>

Required Books:

Doherty, W. J. (2001). *Take back your marriage: Sticking together in a world that pulls us apart*. New York: Guilford.

Gottman, J., & Silver, N. (1999). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Markman, H. J., Stanley, S. M., & Blumberg, S. L. (2010). *Fighting for your marriage*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Course Description

This course will prepare professionals to understand and support healthy couple and marital relationships for underserved and overrepresented populations in the child welfare system.

Course Content

This course will address healthy couple and marital relationships for populations underserved in the general population and overrepresented in the child welfare system. It is designed to prepare students to foster the formation and maintenance of current or future healthy couple and marital relationships with a goal of improving outcomes for vulnerable children. An overarching theme of the course, which will be incorporated into most class periods, is exploring the influence of cultural diversity and diverse family structures on couple and family relationships. The first half of the course will maintain a heavier emphasis on theoretical, historical, and empirical research to increase knowledge, understanding, and awareness, which provides a context for understanding individuals and couples in child welfare. The second half of the course will focus more on research-based practical skills, tools, and relationship and marriage education resources that are specifically relevant to individuals, couples, and families within the child welfare system. As such, we will not only explore the principles and benefits of healthy couple relationships, but students will also be actively engaged in practicing skills and developing tools that they can apply personally and professionally in fostering healthy and stable relationships.

Intended Audience

This course was developed particularly for “helping professionals”, including child welfare workers and students who are preparing to work with families that have had experience with the child welfare system. Families in the child welfare system face unique challenges that make it difficult for them to develop and sustain healthy relationships and marriages. Child welfare workers’ direct work with these families puts them in a good position to support individuals and couples in developing and sustaining healthy couple and marital relations. Additionally, this course is also appropriate for students who plan to work in other professions that strive to support family health and stability through relationship and marital enrichment services.

Course Objectives

As a result of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define elements of healthy couple and marital relationships in culturally relevant terms.
2. Describe the theoretical perspectives and historical, cultural, political, and social trends of couple and marital relationships.
3. Analyze the economic, social, physical, and mental health benefits of healthy couple, marital, and co-parenting relationships for children, parents, and society.
4. Summarize the research-informed principles, practices, and processes that undergird healthy couple relationships.
5. Identify macro- and micro-level risk and protective factors for families.
6. Become more sensitive to similarities and diversity in couple and marital relationships as a function of culture, socio-economic context, and family composition.
7. Critically analyze research-based couple and marital relationship education resources.
8. Acquire knowledge, tools, and skills that support the formation of healthy marital and couple relationships.
9. Develop competencies to help individuals and couples strengthen their relationships.

⁷ Re-formatted from original Fall 2012 syllabus, but all content is consistent with original.

Guiding Principles

This course is guided by some underlying principles and practices adopted by the National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Network (NERMEN; www.nermen.org) which include:

- Theory and research should guide the selection and development of resources.
- Educational programs should be based on solid research and tested for effectiveness.
- Educational materials, resources, and approaches should be appropriately responsive to cultural diversity and developmentally appropriate.
- Relationship and marriage enrichment educators should advocate a “do no harm” approach; such that safety in relationships is a priority.
- It is important to be inclusive in outreach programming to individuals and couples, married and non-married.
- A variety of family forms can provide healthy environments for children.
- Programmatic goals focus on building individual, couple, and family strengths.

Given the diverse nature and needs of populations served by the child welfare system, these guiding principles will serve as a foundation for the content presented and discussion that evolves during each class.

Readings and Blackboard

The required readings for each week are posted on Blackboard. You may access the course via <http://courses.missouri.edu>. Under course login, select Blackboard and enter your PawPrint. If you have difficulty logging in to the course or you do not see the course listed, please contact the *Mizzou IT Help Desk* at 882-5000. You *MUST* enable Compatibility View with Internet Explorer 8.

Format of the Class

All class communication, assignments, readings, etc. will be delivered through Blackboard, so please access Blackboard frequently each week. Teaching methods will consist of lectures, class discussions, and occasional media clips. As mentioned earlier, the first half of the class centers primarily on theoretical, historical, and empirical research to increase knowledge, understanding, and awareness. The second half of the course will focus more on research-based practical skills, relationship and marriage education resources, and training that are specifically relevant to individuals, couples, and families within the child welfare system. As such, we will take time during class, particularly during the last seven weeks, to discuss the principles and learn to apply them in working with child welfare families by developing tools that can be used to help individuals and couples.

Expectations

It is essential that you access the Blackboard course site Monday through Friday for course announcements, submit assignments, access course readings, etc. I will respond to private questions within 24 to 48 hours, be timely on grading and posting grades on written assignments, and help build a learning community.

Class Attendance/Discussion/Participation (28 points)

Participation in class discussions is expected and welcomed. A portion of your grade will be based on both your contributions and ability to answer questions over readings during the classes. We will have frequent class discussion and I expect you to participate. Points will not be awarded for relating personal experiences or opinions. Expect to be called on to answer questions over readings every class period. I may ask for volunteers but individuals may be called on. Bringing your knowledge, questions, comments, and practice experience to the classroom will enhance the learning environment. Up to 2 points per class period will be given each week for active and frequent participation, 1 point will be given for minimal participation, and 0 points will be given for no participation/absence. I will take notes and transfer that to the gradebook the following day.

Attendance is required and will be monitored throughout the semester. *Unexcused absences will be deducted from the final grade assigned for the course in addition to a loss in participation points.*

Weekly Reflection and Questions (5 points per week)

Each week you will be required to read the assigned readings and type up 3 questions you had about the readings (about the content, not methods section or how they ran their statistics, etc). These questions are worth 1 point each if you provide meaningful and thought-provoking questions.

You will also be required to type up a paragraph that summarizes your thoughts, insights, and reflection on the readings and the assigned weekly topic as a whole. Use your readings – I will look to see how/whether you are pulling from the readings. This paragraph will be worth 2 points if you meaningfully elaborate on the topic and examine the topic from a perspective that contributes to group understanding of the topic; otherwise, only 1 point will be awarded. Zero points will be awarded if you simply summarize the readings.

The weekly questions and reflections must be posted to the **Discussion Board on Blackboard no later than noon each Monday**. Late postings will not be given credit. We will begin the second week of class (first reflections/questions are due Monday, Aug. 27th).

Assignments

Each of the written assignments below must be submitted through the **Blackboard Assignment Manager** (accessible via the *Assignments* button on the Course Navigation Menu) by the date/time specified and saved with your last name in the title (e.g., Casestudy1_schramm.doc). Assignments will not be accepted via E-Mail. All late assignments/papers will receive a 5-point per day penalty.

Family Case Study Papers (10 points per week)

Beginning the first day of class you will be assigned a case study family (these will be uploaded to Blackboard, along with instructions as to which family is yours). Fellow classmates may have the same case study family. During each class period we will discuss a topic and related research/theory that may relate to your family. Your assignment each week, beginning the second week of class, is to consider how the topic the previous week relates to your family. Incorporate readings and discussion from lecture in your paper. You will be required to submit (via Blackboard under “Assignments” tab) a 1-page (some weeks this may be shorter), single-spaced typed paper that addresses the questions below that pertain to that week. **This is due by noon the Monday prior to class.** Note that some questions may not pertain to your case study family situation. Answer the questions that apply. Type out the questions that you answer so I can see the questions you are answering.

Week 1 – Theory

- What else would you like to know about your case study family – are there other details that are missing?
- List who is considered to be part of the family.
- How do individuals and systems work together? (use systems concepts we review)
- From what you know about this family, does it seem like they have healthy relationships?
- Describe the nature of their relationships – describe the various systems and subsystems.
- Identify the strengths of your case study family.

Week 2 – Benefits

- What else would you like to know about your case study family – are there other details that are missing?
- How might spillover affect the parent(s)’s health/well-being and their children’s health/well-being?
- How might you address or share information about spillover with the parent(s)/family?
- Describe the dynamics of the couple relationship and any potential effects (positive and/or negative) they could be having on the children.
- What specific information from the readings might be applicable?

Week 3 – Cultural

This week’s paper will focus more on your own cultural sensitivity, background, and personal reflection. Answer some of the questions below for this week.

- What was your experience like growing up? Were you exposed to cultural/racial/SES diversity?
- In what ways might your own cultural experiences (or lack of) and values affect how you work with others that are different from you?
- What are your views on marriage, cohabitation, divorce, etc.?
- How was your belief system formed?
- Do you have close personal relationships with people who are culturally and socio-economically different?
- Do you have the desire, knowledge, and skills to integrate culturally relevant considerations into your work?
- Describe any goals you may have to strengthen this area of personal growth.

Week 4 – Macro

- What else would you like to know about your case study family – are there other details that are missing?
- At a macro level, describe the community your family lives in.
- What do you need to know about your community?
- Based on where your case study family lives, do some searching to identify macro risk and protective factors. These could include the local school dropout rates, birthrates, unemployment rates, incarceration, SES, marriage rate, divorce rate, etc.
- Describe some potential community strengths and challenges – do some research online of that community.
- Thinking back to family policies – are there some that may influence what is happening in the community and how might they be influencing the family indirectly or directly?
- How might current policies influence their decision to marry – policies that serve as barriers or incentives to marry? (if this applies to your family)
- How might a lack of support from schools, agencies, etc. influence your family?
- What community resources may your family need? Describe some real potential services for your family that may be available in their community.
- What specific information from the readings might be applicable?

Week 5 – Micro

- What else would you like to know about your case study family – are there other details that are missing?
- Describe factors that are creating stress for the family. Relate back to risk and protective factors.
- Potential factors may include high economic stress, housing, education, employment, gender distrust, family and community support, etc.
- How do these types of factors influence couple relationships and the quality and stability of their family life?
- What specific information from the readings might be applicable?

Week 6 – Family Forms and Functions

- What else would you like to know about your case study family – are there other details that are missing?
- Provide a reflection on how your case study’s family structure/form may affect process/interactions within the family – couple, parent-child, extended family, etc.
- Describe the role of father or father figure in the child’s life. (if applicable)
- Describe the nature of the couple relationship and how that impacts co-parenting and in turn the parent-child relationship.
- Explore, explain, and hypothesize how the couple/family formation patterns and processes might be affected by contextual factors such as race and ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and physical and mental health.
- Describe any family transitions you noticed and explain how they may be affecting the functions and processes in the family.
- From a structural functional perspective, how well do you think each of the 3 functions are being met?
- What specific information from the readings might be applicable?

Week 7 – Domestic Violence

- What else would you like to know about your case study family – are there other details that are missing?
- Identify any past or present issues that may be related to the ideas surrounding the Power and Control Wheel.
- Does information from the Power and Control Wheel apply to your family? In what ways?
- What types (if any) of domestic/interpersonal violence are present in your case family?
- Assess your case study’s current or prior experience with intimate partner violence and describe your recommendations, concerns, what you would do, who you would contact, etc.
- If there is no domestic violence in your case family, describe what you might do if you did suspect it?

During the first 10-15 minutes of each class you will pair up with your classmate who has the same case study family and you will share answers to the questions. The purpose is to learn from each other’s perspective. Then I will ask some of you to provide a brief background of your case study family situation and share insights into how the topic we discussed the previous week may influence your family.

**As in real life, unpredictable circumstances and challenges often arise, so I will occasionally send you changes/life events that occur that will affect your family.

Developing and Testing “Tools”

Beginning Week 8 (Oct. 9th) we will switch gears and focus more on principles and skills that can help individuals and couples develop and maintain healthy relationships.

This assignment has three parts: *Equipping Your Toolbox*, *Trying Out the Tools*, and *Reflecting on the Toolbox*.

- I. ***Equipping Your Toolbox. (70 points total)*** Each week (beginning Week 8) you will work on creating a “tool” that corresponds with the topic for the day. These “tools” will be something that should be meaningful and realistic, with the ultimate purpose of helping you assist individuals, couples and families you work with or those you will work with in the future. The idea is that if you are working with an individual or couple and you feel like they would benefit from you sharing a tool on a certain topic, you will have it readily available to share it, discuss its importance, and leave it with them. You will find a tool “template” on blackboard that you should use for each tool. I have also posted the actual tools we have created/adapted that we currently use to train child welfare workers. Use the template and create a tool for each topic. Feel free to visit websites (including the ones below) and books for existing tools you can adapt. **If you adapt a tool using information from a website, book, etc. be sure to give appropriate credit on the tool itself** (see how we have done that with the real tools). Some helpful websites to get you started include:

www.nermen.org

<http://twoofus.org>

<http://www.stepfamilies.info/>

<http://missourifamilies.org/>

<http://www.buildingstrongfamilies.info/>

www.healthymarriageinfo.org

<http://www.smartmarriages.com/index.html>

<http://www.arfamilies.org>

****I will post some existing tools on Blackboard for you to explore****

The end product should be a “tool box” that you will **turn in with the final paper on December 7th by midnight via Blackboard**. Again, save it with your name in the title (e.g. Toolbox_schramm.doc). Accompanying each “tool” should be a brief overview (typed) describing 1) the tool and the principle it goes along with (e.g. Care, Share, etc.), 2) why you chose that tool, 3) the purpose of it/what you hope it will accomplish, 4) the target audience (foster parent, stepparents, single parents, couple, etc.), and 5) give an example of how you envision it being used. How would it look similar or different if it was being used with a single parent versus a couple? As a reminder, the review (see above) of each tool should be saved in a separate document from the tool itself. The “tool box” should only consist of the 7 tools that you created.

A few things to keep in mind – from our pilot training with child welfare workers we learned that these tools should be simple, easy to read and understand, and not take too much time to explain or complete. Some may be designed to do with the person/couple on the spot, while others it may be more appropriate for them to work on something after you leave, and follow up with them the next time you visit.

Your toolbox assignment is worth 70 points total. Each tool is worth 10 points each (5 points for the tool you turn in and 5 points for answering each of the 5 questions above).

II. *Trying Out the Tools.* (10 points per week)

- A. Trying out tools with your case study family. Beginning Week 8 you will be given a different card each week (this may go on Blackboard) that describes a scenario that is taking place in your family – one in which you have the opportunity to try out a tool, provide some education, teach a skill/principle, etc. Your assignment each week is to write about what you would/could do to help the individual/couple. You will be required to submit (**via Blackboard under “Assignments” tab**) a 1-page, single-spaced typed paper that describes the issue that is occurring on the “card” and possible ways you could provide assistance – specifically by using a tool that you will create/adapt. Describe why you think that tool would be helpful, what you hope to accomplish, etc. The template you will use for the tools you will create each week are on blackboard under Tool Templates. You will also notice some actual tools that we give to child welfare workers to use with their families. Feel free to be creative and develop your own tools, or find research-based information or Extension fact sheets, information from websites, etc. to develop your tool within the formatted template that is provided. Please be sure to give proper credit to the website/author/source if you adapt something for the tool you create. *Note – this tool you choose to write about here does NOT need to be the same tool you equip in your final toolbox, but it can be.* **Each weekly assignment (paper) is worth 10 points.**

During the first 10-15 minutes of each class you will pair up with your classmate who has the same case study family and you will share your thoughts on what tool(s) you chose and why.

- B. For the second part of the “Trying Out the Tools” assignment you will put into practice the tools you have created/learned about. You will try out a total of two tools (separate topics) with individuals or families you know and/or work with. I encourage you to practice it with someone other than a spouse/partner or family member, but this is acceptable if you do not have access to other individuals/couples/families. You need to actually use the tool – not simply talk about it with the family/individual.

After trying out the tool, post a reflection on the **Blackboard Discussion Board** for others to see in the form of a 1 page summary that explains who you practiced using the tool with (participant[s]), what tools were used (content), your observations of how things went (process), and what you learned/what you might change, etc. (reflection). The first tool of your choice should relate to the topics of Choose, Know, or Care, and should be completed by **Nov. 19** (1 page reflection posted on **Blackboard** by midnight). The second tool should come from the topics of Care for Self, Share, Manage, or Connect and the same requirements apply. This one is **due Dec. 7 by 5:00 pm.**

Each of your experiences and write-ups will be worth 15 points each and will be graded on how well you answer the questions above.

- III. *Reflecting on the Toolbox.* (50 points) For the third and final part of this assignment you will write a 4-5 page, double-spaced paper. The paper should synthesize the applied portions (lessons learned from using the tools) and theoretical portions (case study, theories, readings, NERMEN model) of this course. The paper should also describe how you expect to apply what you learned in class with real individuals/couples/families you may work with. You should also reflect on the course and let me know whether you found the readings and reflections helpful, what were the most meaningful concepts, were there research findings that stood out more than others, was the content of this course helpful for your own relationships/future relationships? How helpful were the books? This reflection paper is **due Friday Dec. 7th** by 5:00 pm (via **Blackboard**).

Summary of Points

Class Participation/Discussion	28 points
Weekly Reflections and Questions	65 points
Family Case Study Papers	70 points
Equipping Your Toolbox	70 points
Trying Out the Tools (case studies)	70 points
Trying Out the Tools (people)	30 points
Reflecting on the Toolbox	50 points
Total	369 points

Grading Scale – Grades are based strictly on the percentage scale below and include + and – grades.

97-100%	=	A+	73-76%	=	C
93-96%	=	A	70-72%	=	C-
90-92%	=	A-	67-69%	=	D+
87-89%	=	B+	63-66%	=	D
83-86%	=	B	60-62%	=	D-
80-82%	=	B-	0-59%	=	F
77-79%	=	C+			

COURSE OUTLINE

**The readings may be tweaked from week to week, but I will let you know ahead of time*

Week 1 – August 21: Theory, History, and Trends in Attitudes and Behaviors Related to Marriage

Learning Objectives:

1. Explore the historical aspects of marriage and family formation trends.
2. Using a strengths-based and ecological perspective, review how human systems and relationships are influenced by complex, multilevel entities.
3. Define healthy (and unhealthy) marriages and relationships across cultural contexts.
4. Examine public opinion and attitudes about marriage.

Required Readings:

Cherlin, A. J. (2010). Demographic trends in the United States: A review of research in the 2000s. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72, 403-419.

Dixon, P. (2009). Marriage among African Americans: What does the research reveal? *Journal of African American Studies*, 13, 29-46.

Edin, K., & Reed, J. M. (2005). Why don't they just get married? Barriers to marriage among the disadvantaged. *The Future of Children*, 15(2), 117-137.

Fein, D. J. (2004, July). *Married and poor: Basic characteristics of economically disadvantaged couples in the U.S.* MDRC Working Paper.

Moore, K. A., Jekielek, S. M., Bronte-Tinker, J., Guzman, L., Ryan, S., & Redd, Z. (2004). *What is a "healthy marriage"?* *Defining the concept (Brief #2004-16)*. Washington, D.C.: Child Trends.
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/pdf/Child_Trends-2004.pdf

Week 2 – August 28: Benefits and Impact of Healthy Marriage and Couple Relationships

Learning Objectives:

1. Examine research findings on the benefits of healthy couple and marital relationships for adults and children.
2. Examine the consequences of unhealthy and unstable relationships and marriages for families and communities.
3. Understand the importance of maintaining and fostering healthy co-parenting relationships between resident and non-resident parents.

Required Readings:

Amato, P. R. (2005). The impact of family formation change on the cognitive, social, and emotional well-being of the next generation. *The Future of Children*, 15(2), 75-96.

- Amato, P. R. (2008). *Recent changes in family structure: Implications for children, adults, and society*. Fact sheet prepared for the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center website, posted May 2008. <http://healthymarriageinfo.org/docs/May08changefamstructure.pdf>
- Carlson, M. J., & McLanahan, S. S. (2006). Strengthening unmarried families: Could enhancing couple relationships also improve parenting? *Social Service Review*, 80, 297-321.
- Staton, J. *What is the relationship of marriage to physical health?* Fact Sheet prepared for the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center website, posted May 2008. www.healthymarriageinfo.org/docs/phnmarriagefs.pdf
- Moore, K. A., Kinghorn, A., & Bandy, T. (2011). Parental relationship quality and child outcomes across subgroups. *Child Trends Research Brief*, #2011-13. Available: http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2011_04_04_RB_MaritalHappiness.pdf

Week 3 – September 4: Cultural Diversity and Competency

Learning Objectives:

1. Examine how couple and marital formation patterns and processes can be affected by contextual factors such as race and ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and physical and mental health. (Emphasize the potential for similarities *and* differences between *and* within groups).
2. Understand how cultural and personal beliefs, values, and practices influence couple and marital behaviors and relationship stability.
3. Assess how personal beliefs, values, and biases (along with social prejudices and stereotypes) influence one's work with diverse populations to promote (or hinder) healthy relationships and marriages.

Required Readings:

- Bryant, C. M., Wickrama, K. A. S., Bolland, J., Bryant, B. M., Cutrona, C. E., & Stanik, C. E. (2010). Race matters, even in marriage: Identifying factors linked to marital outcomes for African Americans. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 2, 157-174.
- Bulcroft, R. A., & Bulcroft, K. A. (1993). Race differences in attitudinal and motivational factors in the decision to marry. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 55, 338-355.
- McPhatter, A.R. & Ganaway, T. L. (2003). Beyond the rhetoric: Strategies for implementing culturally effective practice with children, families, and communities. *Child Welfare*, 82(2), 103-124.
- Miller, O. A., & Gaston, R. J. (2003). A model of culture-centered child welfare practice. *Child Welfare*, 82(2), 235-250.

Week 4 – September 11: Macro-Level Risk and Protective Factors and Social Policy

Learning Objectives:

1. Analyze the patterns of institutional support/discrimination in relation to family formation patterns and well-being for couples and families of various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.
2. Discuss the influence of community characteristics on family formation patterns and well-being for couples and families of various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.
3. Examine how current local, state, and federal initiatives and resources impact family resiliency and couple and family well-being.
4. Identify how state and federal policies create barriers and incentives to marriage in low-income families.
5. Use examples and information from the readings to support your answers.

Required Readings:

- Brotherson, S. E., & Duncan, W. C. (2004). Rebinding the ties that bind: Government efforts to preserve and promote marriage. *Family Relations*, 53, 459-468.
- Huebner, B. M. (2007). Racial and ethnic differences in the likelihood of marriage: The influence of incarceration. *Justice Quarterly*, 24, 156-183.
- Karney B.R., Story L.B., Bradbury T.N. (2005). Marriages in context: Interactions between chronic and acute stress among newlyweds. In Revenson T.A., Kayser K., Bodenmann G. (Eds.), *Emerging perspectives on couples' coping with stress* (pp. 13-32). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Pinderhughes, E. B. (2002). African American marriage in the 20th century. *Family Process*, 41, 269-282.

Week 5 – September 18: Micro-Level Risk and Protective Factors

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the individual, couple, and familial strengths and challenges that influence couples and families in the child welfare system.
2. Explore factors, practices and attitudes that foster resiliency and promote healthy couple and marital relationships.
3. Apply empirical and theoretical frameworks to determine how individuals and couples in the child welfare system form and maintain healthy relationships.

Required Readings:

- Conger, R. D., Conger, K. J., & Martin, M. J. (2010). Socioeconomic status, family processes, and individual development. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72, 685-704.
- Conway, T., & Hutson, R. Q. (2008). *Healthy marriage and the legacy of child maltreatment*. CLASP Policy Brief No. 12. http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications_archive/files/0213.pdf
- Larson, J. H., & Holman, T. B. (1994). Premarital indicators of marital quality and stability. *Family Relations*, 43, 228-237.
- Orthner, D. K., Jones-Sanpei, H., & Williamson, S. (2004). The resilience and strengths of low-income families. *Family Relations*, 53, 159-167.
- Seligman M., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14.

Week 6 – September 25: Family Forms, Functions, and Transitions**Learning Objectives:**

1. Explore how couple processes vary as a function of various family forms.
2. Recognize how the quality of the couple relationship influences the quality of co-parenting and parent-child relationships.
3. Explore how individual and family transitions influence couple and family functioning and children's safety, stability, and well-being.
4. Integrate family systems and developmental theories for use in formulating interventions and/or approaches that will promote child well-being through healthy relationships, marriages, and families.
5. Apply strengths-based assessments and practice with children, couples, and families.

Required Readings:

- Adler-Baeder, F., Robertson, A., & Schramm, D. G. (2010). Conceptual framework for marriage education programs for stepfamily couples with considerations for socioeconomic context. *Marriage and Family Review*, 46, 300-322.
- Leon, K. (2007). *Divorce and adults*. (MU Extension Guide Sheet No. GH6601). Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Extension.
- Leon, K., & Cole, K. (2004). *Helping children understand divorce*. (MU Extension Guide Sheet No. GH6600). Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Extension.
- Parke, M. (2003). Are married parents really better for children? What research says about the effects of family structure on child well-being. *CLASP Policy Brief, Couples and Married Series 3*: 1–8. Available online: http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications_archive/files/0128.pdf

Week 7 – October 2: Domestic Violence**Learning Objectives:**

1. Use a cultural perspective to examine tactics of abuse (Power and Control Wheel) and the prevalence of domestic violence.
2. Examine personal and societal factors that are associated with domestic violence in a variety of cultural and socio-economic contexts.
3. Explore the consequences of domestic violence on victims, their children, batterers, the community, and society as a whole.
4. Learn to assess the potential for or presence of domestic violence in relationships and families and identify referral services.

Required Readings:

- Johnson, M. P. (2009). *Differentiating among types of domestic violence: Implications for healthy marriages*. In H. E. Peters, & C. K. Dush (Eds), *Marriage and families: Complexities and perspectives* (pp 281-294). Columbia University Press.
- Johnson S. P., & Sullivan, C. M. (2008). How child protection workers support or further victimize battered mothers. *Affilia*, 23(3), 242-258.
- Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. (2006). *A framework for understanding the nature and dynamics of domestic violence*. Available: <http://www.mocadsv.org/Resources/CMSResources/pdf/dv101.pdf>

Be familiar with: St. Louis County Greenbook Initiative. (2007). *The co-occurrence of child maltreatment and domestic violence: Guidelines for case management*. Available: http://www.thegreenbook.info/documents/STL_casemgmt.pdf

Week 8 – October 9: Maintaining Physical, Psychological, and Sexual Health and Wellness as an Individual – “Care for Self”**Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand that cultivating individual wellness and health supports the health of the couple relationship.
2. Understand how the physical, psychological, and sexual health of individual partners impacts relationship quality.
3. Understand strategies for creating a healthier physical living style, nurturing individual psychological well-being, and promoting sexual health.
4. Identify available activities and resources to support healthy living choices.

Required Readings:

- Booth, A., & Johnson, D. (1994). Declining health and marital quality. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 56(1), 218-223.
- Peterson, C., Park, N., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2006). Greater strengths of character and recovery from illness. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1(1), 17-26.
- Troxel, W. M., Robles, T. F., Hall, M., & Buysse, D. J. (2007). Marital quality and the marital bed: Examining the covariation between relationship quality and sleep. *Sleep Medicine Reviews*, 11, 389-404.

Week 9 – October 16: Importance of Intentionality – “Choose”**Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand that healthy relationships require sustained effort over time.
2. Understand how choices individuals and couples make lay a strong foundation for a safe, stable, and satisfying relationship.
3. Identify relationship-building activities and resources that can help individuals and couples develop and maintain a healthy and committed relationship.

Required Readings:

- Goddard, H. W. (2007). Commitment in healthy relationships. *The Forum for Family and Consumer Issues*, 12 (1). Retrieved July 21, 2010, from <http://ncsu.edu/ffci/publications/2007/v12-n1-2007-spring/godddard/Godddard.pdf>
- Markman, H. J., Stanley, S. M., & Blumberg, S. L. (2001). *Fighting for your marriage: New and revised edition*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Chapter 15.
- Stanley, S., Rhoades, G., & Markman, H. (2006). Sliding versus deciding: Inertia and the premarital cohabitation effect. *Family Relations*, 55, 499 – 509.
- Umaña-Taylor, A. J., & Fine, M. A. (2003). Predicting commitment to wed among Hispanic and Anglo Partners. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 65, 117-129.

Week 10 – October 23: Developing Mutual Understanding in an Intimate Partnership – “Know”**Learning Objectives:**

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

Required Readings:

- Gottman, J. M., & Silver, N. (1999). *The seven principles for making marriage work* (Chapter 3, pp. 47-60). New York: Crown Publishers, Inc.
- Van Epp, J. (2007). *How to avoid marrying a jerk* (Chapter 4, pp. 52-73). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Week 11 – October 30 – No Class**Week 12 – November 6: Demonstrating Kindness, Affection, Understanding, Respect, and Caring Support – “Care”****Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand how showing kindness, understanding, respect, and caring can help couples create and maintain stable, healthy relationships.
2. Understand the importance of focusing on positive characteristics of partners within a relationship.
3. Identify relationship-building activities and resources to help individuals and couples demonstrate care in their relationships.

Required Readings:

- Gottman, J. M., & Silver, N. (1999). (Chapter 4 & 5) in *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Hawkins, M. W., Carrère, S., & Gottman, J. (2002). Marital sentiment override: Does it influence couples' perceptions? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 64, 193-201.
- Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Griffin, D. W. (1996). The benefits of positive illusions: Idealization and the construction of satisfaction in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70, 79-98.

Week 13 – November 13: Developing and Maintaining Friendship and Sense of “We”; Spending Meaningful Time Together – “Share”

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the value of developing and maintaining a close friendship as a part of a healthy relationship.
2. Develop an ability to provide understanding and opportunities to help couples foster a shared sense of couple identity.
3. Identify relationship-building activities and resources to help individuals and couples develop meaningful couple time that fosters friendship.

Required Readings:

- Doherty, W. J. (2001). *Take back your marriage: Sticking together in a world that pulls us apart*. New York: Guilford. (Chapters 4, 5, 8, 9, and 10)
- Gable, S. L., Reis, H. T., Impett, E. A., & Asher, E. R. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of sharing positive events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 228-245.
- Gottman, J. M., & Silver, N. (1999). (Chapter 2 & 11) in *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Huston, T. L., Coughlin, J. P., Houts, R. M., Smith, S. E., & George, L. J. (2001). The connubial crucible: Newlywed years as predictors of delight, distress, and divorce. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80(2), 237-252.
- Markman, H. J., Stanley, S. M., & Blumberg, S. L. (2001). *Fighting for your marriage: New and revised edition*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Chapters 4, 9, 10 (Ch. 11 in the new book).

Week 14 Thanksgiving Week – No classes

Week 15 – November 27: Strategies of Engagement and Interaction around Differences, Stresses, and Issues of Safety – “Manage”

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand that differences and conflict are normative aspects in all relationships.
2. Understand the effects of intimate partner and co-parental conflict on adults and children.
3. Understand the methods of emotion regulation, stress reduction, positive communication, and healthy conflict management.
4. Identify relationship-building activities and resources to help individuals and couples manage differences and conflicts.

Required Readings:

- Fowers, B. J. (2001). The limits of a technical concept of a good marriage: Exploring the role of virtue in communication skills. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 27, 327-51.
- Markman, H. J., Stanley, S. M., & Blumberg, S. L. (2001). *Fighting for your marriage: New and revised edition*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8.
- Stanley, S., Markman, H., & Whitton, S. (2002). Communication, conflict, and commitment: Insights on the foundations of relationship success from a national survey. *Family Process*, 41, 659-675.
- Warner, C. T. (1999). What we are. Available at http://www.arbinger.com/downloads/what_we_are.pdf

Week 16 – December 4 (last day of class): Engaging Social Support, Community Ties, and Sources of Meaning – “Connect”

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the benefits of engaging social support and building community ties on sustaining healthy relationships and marriages.
2. Develop skills for helping individuals and couples engage in and draw upon social connections with family, friends and community members.
3. Identify sources of community supports (i.e., schools, sports, faith groups) and shared meaning (i.e., rituals, spirituality, values) in a variety of cultural contexts.
4. Identify relationship-building activities and resources to help individuals and couples become better connected with their support systems.

Required Readings:

- Dehle, C., Larsen, D., & Landers, J. E. (2001). Social support in marriage. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 29, 307-324.
- Doherty, W. (2001). *Take back your marriage: Sticking together in a world that pulls us apart*. New York: Guilford Press. (Chapter 11)
- Gottman, J., & Silver, N. (1999). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Random House. (Chapter 11)
- McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Brashears, M. E. (2006). Social isolation in America: Changes in core discussion networks over two decades. *American Sociological Review*, 71, 353-375.

****Information in this syllabus is subject to change. I will promptly let you know if or when things change****

XI. Appendix B: Descriptive Statistics for Evaluation Variables.

Figure 1: General attitudes regarding marriage and relationships		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: pre = .63; post = .71)	Pre	28	3.89	.49	3.0-4.6
	1WK	28	4.07	.57	3.0-5.0
Strong marital/couple relationships lead to successful parenting	Pre	28	4.29	.71	2.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.68	.48	4.0-5.0
There should be a longer waiting period required before marriage.	Pre	27	2.93	.92	2.0-5.0
	1WK	28	3.39	1.03	1.0-5.0
All couples should receive marriage education before getting married.	Pre	27	4.11	.80	2.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.21	.79	2.0-5.0
Too many couples rush into child bearing without having a strong couple relationship.	Pre	28	4.07	.66	3.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.11	.83	2.0-5.0
Young couples focus too much on the happiness they expect from marriage and not enough on the hard work a successful marriage requires.	Pre	28	4.04	.79	2.0-5.0
	1WK	28	3.96	.96	2.0-5.0
Figure 2: Relevance of RME to Child Welfare clientele		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: pre = .30; post = .57)	Pre	28	4.11	.50	3.5-5.0
	1WK	28	4.25	.60	2.5-5.0
Child welfare clients' participation in marriage/relationship enhancement programs can help reduce incidences of child abuse and neglect.	Pre	28	4.00	.61	3.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.14	.65	3.0-5.0
The clients I work with can benefit from participating in programs that focus on enhancing marriage/couple relationships.	Pre	28	4.21	.69	3.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.36	.78	2.0-5.0
Figure 2: Relevance of RME to Child Welfare professionals		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: pre = .60; post = .67)	Pre	27	4.36	.41	3.7-5.0
	1WK	28	4.46	.51	3.3-5.0
The knowledge and skills I learn about working with couples will help me perform my job more effectively.	Pre	27	4.48	.58	3.0-5.0
	1WK	27	4.30	.78	2.0-5.0
Child welfare workers need knowledge and skills about enhancing marriage/relationships in order to do their job more effectively.	Pre	27	4.30	.61	3.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.57	.57	3.0-5.0
Understanding characteristics of healthy marital/couple relationships will strengthen my assessment and case planning skills to reduce abuse/neglect.	Pre	27	4.30	.47	4.0-5.0
	1WK	27	4.52	.58	3.0-5.0
Figure 3: Helpfulness of training CWP's to support healthy relationships and marriage		N	M	SD	Range
How helpful do you think it would be for child welfare professionals to attend training on supporting healthy relationships and marriages.	Pre	28	3.61	.63	2.0-4.0
	1WK	28	3.82	.39	3.0-4.0
Figure 4: Appropriateness of CWP's assisting individuals and families develop RME skills		N	M	SD	Range
In your opinion, how appropriate is it for child welfare professionals to help individuals/families develop skills needed to have healthy relationships/marriages?	Pre	28	3.46	.84	1.0-4.0
	1WK	28	3.82	.39	3.0-4.0

Figure 5: Knowledge of healthy relationship and marriage education		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: pre = .70; post = .79)	Pre	28	2.94	.69	2.0-4.3
	1WK	28	4.29	.52	3.3-5.0
I understand specific skills that support healthy couple relationship development.	Pre	28	3.29	.81	2.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.36	.49	4.0-5.0
I am aware of strategies to strengthen the couple relationships of clientele who are diverse in culture, race, gender, social class, sexual orientation and age.	Pre	28	2.75	1.04	1.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.29	.71	2.0-5.0
I know how to help individuals/families I work with manage challenges in their relationships.	Pre	28	2.79	.74	2.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.21	.63	3.0-5.0
Figure 6: Ability and comfort with offering healthy relationship and marriage education		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: pre = .71; post = .83)	Pre	28	2.88	.70	2.0-4.3
	1WK	28	4.29	.54	3.3-5.0
I know how to assess for marital/couple relationship problems with the individuals/families I work with.	Pre	28	2.57	.84	2.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.21	.63	3.0-5.0
I am comfortable discussing with the individuals/families I work with how their marital/couple issues and problems impact their child's safety, permanency and well-being.	Pre	20	3.15	.93	2.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.46	.58	3.0-5.0
I am comfortable with providing information to individuals/families I work with on ways they can improve their marital/couple relationships.	Pre	28	3.11	1.03	2.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.39	.57	3.0-5.0
I am able to formulate culturally appropriate interventions for specific individuals/couples to strengthen their couple relationships.	Pre	28	2.64	.91	1.0-4.0
	1WK	27	4.04	.81	2.0-5.0
Figure 7: Awareness of resources and services to support couple relationships		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: pre = .79; post = .56)	Pre	28	3.16	.84	2.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.11	.67	3.0-5.0
I am aware of resources available that I can use with individuals/families in supporting couple relationships.	Pre	28	3.00	.90	2.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.04	1.00	2.0-5.0
I am aware of local educational and counseling services that strengthen couple relationships that I can refer individuals/families to.	Pre	28	3.32	.95	2.0-5.0
	1WK	28	4.18	.55	3.0-5.0
Figure 8: Change in knowledge		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: post = .62)	1WK	28	3.68	.40	2.7-4.0
My understanding of specific skills that support healthy couple relationship development.	1WK	28	3.82	.39	3.0-4.0
My awareness of strategies to strengthen the couple relationships of clientele who are diverse in culture, race, gender, social class, sexual orientation and age	1WK	28	3.40	.74	2.0-4.0
My knowledge of ways to help individuals/families that I work with manage challenges in their relationships.	1WK	28	3.82	.39	3.0-4.0

Figure 8: Change in ability and comfort		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: post = .57)	1WK	28	3.54	.45	2.8-4.0
My ability to assess for marital/couple relationship problems with the individuals/families I work with.	1WK	28	3.64	.56	2.0-4.0
My comfort discussing with the individuals/families I work with how their marital/couple issues and problems impact their child's safety, permanency and well-being.	1WK	28	3.54	.74	1.0-4.0
My comfort with providing information to individuals/families that I work with on ways they can improve their marital/couple relationships.	1WK	28	3.68	.55	2.0-4.0
My ability to formulate culturally appropriate interventions for specific individuals/couples to strengthen their couple relationships.	1WK	28	3.32	.82	1.0-4.0
Figure 8: Change in awareness of resources		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: post = .18)	1WK	28	3.21	.69	2.0-4.0
My awareness of resources available that I can use with individuals/families in supporting couple relationships.	1WK	28	3.07	1.02	1.0-4.0
My awareness of local educational and counseling services that strengthen couple relationships that I can refer individuals/families to.	1WK	28	3.36	.83	1.0-4.0
Figure 9: Confidence in using specific NERMEM concepts.		N	M	SD	Range
As a result of this course/training, how confident do you feel in helping individuals/couples:					
Develop and maintain a healthy committed relationship. (CHOOSE)	Post	27	3.30	.67	2.0-4.0
Develop shared intimate knowledge. (KNOW)	Post	28	3.43	.57	2.0-4.0
Demonstrate care in their relationships. (CARE)	Post	28	3.54	.58	2.0-4.0
Support healthy living choices. (CARE FOR SELF)	Post	27	3.52	.51	3.0-4.0
Develop meaningful couple time that fosters friendships. (SHARE)	Post	28	3.46	.58	2.0-4.0
Manage differences and conflicts. (MANAGE)	Post	28	3.32	.67	2.0-4.0
Become better connected with their support systems. (CONNECT)	Post	27	3.33	.62	2.0-4.0
Figure 10: Training Satisfaction		N	M	SD	Range
Overall how satisfied were you with this course/training?	Post	30	4.67	.80	1.0-5.0
Figure 10: Course Relevance and Usefulness		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: post = .87)	Post	30	4.61	.49	3.6-5.0
The course/training met my expectations.	Post	30	4.73	.45	4.0-5.0
The course/training was worth my time.	Post	30	4.77	.43	4.0-5.0
The content was relevant to the work I do or plan to do.	Post	29	4.41	.73	3.0-5.0
The course/training provided knowledge and skills for assessing and working with individuals and couples within the child welfare system.	Post	30	4.63	.56	3.0-5.0
The content of the course/training was compatible with the needs of the individuals/families I work with.	Post	30	4.47	.78	3.0-5.0

Figure 10: Instructor Rating		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: post = .68)	Post	30	4.82	.28	3.8-5.0
The instructor(s) seemed knowledgeable about healthy relationship and marriage education.	Post	30	5.00	.00	5.0-5.0
The instructor(s) seemed knowledgeable about the child welfare profession.	Post	30	4.63	.67	3.0-5.0
The instructor(s) was engaging of participants/students	Post	30	4.83	.38	4.0-5.0
The instructor(s) gave clear instructions	Post	30	4.73	.52	3.0-5.0
The instructor(s) answered questions clearly	Post	30	4.90	.31	4.0-5.0
Figure 11: Students' Application of Material		N	M	SD	Range
How often have you utilized the Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education Training (HRMET) materials with the individuals/families you worked with?	2 mo	23	2.61	.89	1.0-4.0
	6 mo	22	2.95	.58	2.0-4.0
How often have you utilized the "Relationship Wheel" you received at training with the individuals/families you work with?	2 mo	18	2.06	1.00	1.0-4.0
	6 mo	15	2.60	.83	1.0-4.0
Figure 12: Knowledge of healthy relationship and marriage education		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: pre = .61; post = .84; 6mo = .85)	Pre	23	3.01	.64	2.0-4.3
	1WK	23	4.39	.48	3.7-5.0
	6 mo	23	4.29	.49	3.3-5.0
I understand specific skills that support healthy couple relationship development.	Pre	23	3.39	.49	2.0-5.0
	1WK	23	4.43	.51	4.0-5.0
	6 mo	23	4.35	.72	4.0-5.0
I am aware of strategies to strengthen the couple relationships of clientele who are diverse in culture, race, gender, social class, sexual orientation and age.	Pre	23	2.83	1.07	1.0-5.0
	1WK	23	4.48	.51	4.0-5.0
	6 mo	23	4.26	.62	3.0-5.0
I know how to help individuals/families I work with manage challenges in their relationships.	Pre	23	2.83	.72	2.0-4.0
	1WK	23	4.26	.62	3.0-5.0
	6mo	23	4.26	.54	3.0-5.0
Figure 12: Ability and comfort with offering healthy relationship and marriage education		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: pre = .56; post = .77; 6mo = .85)	Pre	23	3.06	.74	2.0-4.3
	1WK	23	4.39	.56	3.3-5.0
	6 mo	23	4.20	.47	3.3-5.0
I am comfortable discussing with the individuals/families I work with how their marital/couple issues and problems impact their child's safety, permanency and well-being.	Pre	16	3.25	1.0	2.0-5.0
	1WK	23	4.48	.59	3.0-5.0
	6 mo	23	4.26	.45	4.0-5.0
I am comfortable with providing information to individuals/families I work with on ways they can improve their marital/couple relationships.	Pre	23	3.22	1.04	2.0-5.0
	1WK	23	4.48	.59	3.0-5.0
	6 mo	23	4.22	.52	3.0-5.0
I am able to formulate culturally appropriate interventions for specific individuals/couples to strengthen their couple relationships.	Pre	23	2.70	.93	1.0-4.0
	1WK	22	4.18	.80	2.0-5.0
	6 mo	23	4.13	.63	3.0-5.0

Figure 12: Awareness of resources and services to support couple relationships		N	M	SD	Range
Overall computed score (alpha: pre = .82; post = .63; 6mo = .64)	Pre	23	3.11	.89	2.0-5.0
	1WK	23	4.22	.65	3.0-5.0
	6 mo	23	4.30	.48	3.5-5.0
I am aware of resources available that I can use with individuals/families in supporting couple relationships.	Pre	23	2.96	.93	2.0-5.0
	1WK	23	4.22	.90	2.0-5.0
	6 mo	23	4.26	.45	4.0-5.0
I am aware of local educational and counseling services that strengthen couple relationships that I can refer individuals/families to.	Pre	23	3.26	1.01	2.0-5.0
	1WK	23	4.22	.60	3.0-5.0
	6 mo	22	4.32	.65	3.0-5.0
Figure 13: Confidence in using specific NERMEM concepts.		N	M	SD	Range
As a result of this training, how confident do you feel in helping individuals/couples:					
Develop and maintain a healthy committed relationship. (CHOOSE)	Post	23	3.39	.66	2.0-4.0
	6 mo	22	2.86	.64	2.0-4.0
Develop shared intimate knowledge. (KNOW)	Post	23	3.52	.59	2.0-4.0
	6 mo	22	2.86	.64	2.0-4.0
Demonstrate care in their relationships. (CARE)	Post	23	3.61	.58	2.0-4.0
	6 mo	22	3.05	.58	2.0-4.0
Support healthy living choices. (CARE FOR SELF)	Post	22	3.59	.50	3.0-4.0
	6 mo	22	3.19	.62	2.0-4.0
Develop meaningful couple time that fosters friendships. (SHARE)	Post	23	3.52	.59	2.0-4.0
	6 mo	22	3.00	.62	2.0-4.0
Manage differences and conflicts. (MANAGE)	Post	23	3.39	.72	2.0-4.0
	6 mo	22	2.95	.58	2.0-4.0
Become better connected with their support systems. (CONNECT)	Post	22	3.41	.67	2.0-4.0
	6 mo	22	3.00	.62	2.0-4.0

XII. Appendix C: Students' Comments

The comments presented below were collected from students who responded to the pre- and post-test, as well as the follow-up surveys conducted one-week, two-months and six-months following the training.

Students' expectations about this course (Pre-test).

Fall 2010

- I expect to gain knowledge and tools on how to help couples improve their relationships for the well-being of not only themselves but of their family as well. I also expect to gain knowledge on how the environment affects the dynamics of the family and relationships across cultures (families in poverty vs. middle class families, etc.)
- I expect to leave this class with a better understanding of relationships and ways to assist clients with building stronger relationships with their spouse and children.
- I hope to learn more about the different aspects of relationships that have been found to be important to the success or lack of success of relationships. I hope to learn more about the ways in which marital relationships are associated with child welfare. I hope to learn ways of educating and counseling clients that want help with their close relationships (I currently work with the substance abuse population).
- I know very little about marital and family counseling and education. I am expecting to learn more about skills to work with young people regarding healthy relationships and ways to educate the public on how to maintain healthy marriages and relationships.
- I would like to learn more about how and at what point we should intervene in our helping roles. Is it at the high school level? The junior high school level? Before individuals are given a marriage license? How do we institute changes in our society? What is going to work hands on?
- My expectations are to develop more skills and tools needed to provide competent counseling to individuals, couples, or children.
- To identify, develop and sustain the ability to recognize, introduce, and nurture good family/parenting relationships in all persons, regardless of sex, race, culture, income, handicap or LGBTQ status

Fall 2011

- Learn more about supporting/encouraging/recognizing healthy relationships.
- To learn skills and tools to help my clients. Become more informed on healthy relationships.

Fall 2012

- A better understanding of tools/ approaches. Knowing how the different circumstances change approach
- Hoping to learn skills that can be applicable to LGBT families
- I would like to learn strategies for healthy relationships that I can teach to my clients
- to learn skills for interventions on improving relationships

Students' evaluation about the course (Post-test)

Fall 2010

- At times the instructions for assignments were a bit unclear but Dr. Schramm was helpful at helping students to better understand expectations.
- Currently I work with individuals as a substance abuse counselor, so am not engaged in couples counseling directly; however many of my current clients are in relationships and relationship issues can be a resource or detriment to the individuals. Therefore I can use the knowledge and resources learned
- Dave is an excellent teacher. He is kind and encouraging. Too many long research studies to read each week that seemed very repetitive at times.
- I really enjoyed the course content and the instructor. I really feel that this information is relevant to my work and will provide me with helpful information in the future.
- The information from this course was inquisitive and thought provoking. I am not sure if I will pursue a career with marriages, but if I do the information is helpful.
- Well organized & systematic presentation of material! Excellent use of class members various backgrounds and experience in discussion.

Fall 2011

- Dr. Schramm is wonderful, knowledgeable, and approachable.
- I think it would be helpful to have more tools that are applicable to families in the child welfare system. I also think some training/practice in class of how to use the tools would be beneficial, such as using role playing.
- I wasn't sure what to expect upon enrollment. I liked the organization of the class. It focused on implications of unhealthy partnerships on children, and then addressed how to create healthy relationships.
- Instructor was fantastic and very personable. Very knowledgeable and flexible on deadlines, etc.
- The material was wonderful and it was a class that I gained and learned so much from. The instructor was always prepared and had well organized information.
- This class has been one of the best classes I have taken at the University of Missouri.
- Wonderful class. I was very well educated on the 7 principles.

Fall 2012

- Dr. [Schramm] was very clear & knowledgeable about the topics in relationship quality and child welfare. He was easy to work with and gave lots of helpful-real-experience related examples.
- I learned a great amount from this course and was very pleased with it. I will definitely use the knowledge I have gained in the future.
- I learned some tools that my clients can use to improve their relationships with their partner and children. I liked the course because it put into context why some groups may be more vulnerable to not be able to have a good relationship. Many people, especially minorities, have to face many stresses because of their lack of opportunities.
- I was very pleased with content. It is helpful in all areas including daily life.
- Instructor had a lot of knowledge on relationships & kept interest of students.
- The instructor was very well informed & encouraging.

Students' comments on confidence gained (Post-test)*Fall 2010*

- I feel that I do not have enough experience with working with couples to be "very confident" but this class gave me much knowledge to begin.
- I would answer 'very confident' but I believe I personally need to grow and develop more to be very confident. When I started this class I would have classified myself as not at all confident.
- Still have room to grow, but overall this course has given the many tools that will help me when working with families.
- The little that we were able to utilize the information gathered and share our tools with couples helped to increase my confidence level.

Fall 2011

- Feel much better prepared and will continue to enhance my skills to feel more confident all around.
- PowerPoint's and examples were really helpful.
- The information has helped me understand so much about couples training and I can't wait to utilize it in my work!
- The information shared in class was presented by reading research and journal articles. I appreciated this approach due to content in class, which could be seen as "value based." With the articles evidence based practice was the focus.

Fall 2012

- I feel much more confident and comfortable identifying positive and negative traits in a relationship. Although I would need a little more experience because of my lack of knowledge before I felt comfortable engaging with other couples, I have already seen positive changes in my own relationship using these tools.
- I think I have the knowledge now, but I still need to learn more about connection.
- I think that my knowledge of the course material has greatly increased & I hope to be able to use it in the future.
- The tools/components were very well presented. Discussion of how to CREATE tools could be enhanced.

What students found most useful about course (Post-test)*Fall 2010*

- Discussion. Tool box
- Discussions in class, case studies.
- Gaining an understanding of ways to improve marital relationships.
- Learning about tools to use. The readings from the books were more helpful than the article readings.
- Learning more about what factors influence relationship cohesion and success and learning about and having access to tools that can serve to support and enhance relationships.
- Practical skills to use with actual clients in practice in the future.
- The interaction between class members and the three books we bought. I also feel that the case studies were helpful because it allowed us to put it into practice what we were learning in a beginner fashion
- The tools utilized and the instructor's enthusiasm and knowledge.
- Using the tools in real life.

Fall 2011

- Adaptable to any helping profession that works with families. Not just for child welfare.
- All the tools and books.
- Applying the tools, creating your tools, also applying everything to your case study family. Everything was helpful!
- Developing and discussing tools and the case families.
- It was very good! It explored every area that I would have wished!
- Readings from the texts. Using tools made helped strengthen confidence in using tools and content.
- The instructor's expansive knowledge and experience.
- The practical tools and concepts. I really liked the books we read and feel confident recommending them to clients.
- The tools and learning about the 7 HRMET principles.
- The tools. The tools were so eye opening and a great source for couples. HRMET is a wonderful program that I will utilize.
- Vast amount of journal articles. I will use in future for trainings and personal information.

Fall 2012

- I really liked the care for self and know sections in this course. They taught me great pointers in maintaining mine and my partner's happiness in a relationship.
- It helped in my own personal life as well as gave me tools to help others--applying it to case study was useful in how to implement.
- Learning the importance of each component (tool) & how to implement them in various relationships.
- Learning to formulate the tools (how to boil down the message so it was useful and informational. Course readings also interesting.
- N/A
- The ability to directly apply the course materials to every day life & work.
- The professor's enthusiasm about the material & the discussions about the topics (& how to relate to personal relationships)
- The readings and the discussion really developed a group of tools and information to make a positive difference in the lives of couples and families.
- The tools for sure.

What students found least useful about the course (Post-test)*Fall 2010*

- A lot of the required research reading was redundant. It repeated itself. It said the same thing in a different way. So much research! Too much summary writing
- Everything was useful.
- Having to post 3 questions every week.

- Reading the numerous studies - I think it would be more beneficial for the studies to be summarized and studied in that way...for some of them anyway. I know it is important to continue to subject ourselves to research in order to conduct research of our
- Some of the readings were very long and not the most interesting.
- Cutting back on readings would be helpful.
- The article readings for me didn't help much. It gave some insight but not overall helpful.

Fall 2011

- All the journal reading articles. I feel many were repetitive and had one good point.
- Can't say that there really was anything.
- Excessive, tedious amounts of background readings and research.
- Developing our own tools. Especially since not actively working for an agency. Felt like it was reinventing the wheel.
- Some readings seemed redundant.
- Some research articles covering cultural population were not needed for me.

Fall 2012

- Case studies (families)
- I can't think of anything. Maybe more LGBTQ inclusive.
- lots of small assignments
- None. Everything was useful. :)
- Some of the articles, especially toward the end of the semester, got somewhat tiring and boring to read. A few of them seemed like common sense.
- The extensive reading. Less reading would have allowed for more time to focus on specific readings.

Topics students thought should have been covered in the course that would be helpful to child welfare professionals (Post-test)

Fall 2010

- I really believe we covered everything I could think of
- More access to resources for low income stressed couples/families
- More on how to deal with couples and situations who have substance abuse issues, alcohol issues, neglect and how that impacts our relationships with each other and our children. More on DV & SV.
- Not much of if anything was discussed regarding sexual health.

Fall 2011

- Intervention methods.
- More information on creating healthy relationships targeted for undereducated and impoverished populations. While the information was pertinent, I felt most was written for middle class mainstream. It did not specifically address barriers and stressors that accompany poverty..
- Same sex relationships and adoptive parents.
- Seemed comprehensive.
- That marriage doesn't work for everyone.

Fall 2012

- I know it will help me in my own relationship, but I would also use these to help individuals in my future professional practice.
- I might have liked to know a little bit about what happens when children are placed with child services/ how parent education helps get children back w/ families.
- Maybe more about the systems of child welfare for couples in that situation.
- No
- Perhaps how to deal with helping professionals. Some people are apprehensive/hesitant to accept help.

What students responded they would do differently as a result of the course (Post-test)*Fall 2010*

- I can now provide clients relevant information and offer resources for those that want to have stronger relationships that I did not have access to prior to this class.
- I can use the 7 principles now with clients. I can recognize these more with couples. I am more equipped with tools I can use to help struggling couples.
- I love sharing my knowledge from the course with others. I will pay closer attention to relationships around me and even my own!
- I will be more cognizant of the strain on families with low SES
- It made me reevaluate my own relationship.
- More coursework and or personal education on relationship building and maintaining on all levels
- Only include pertinent article readings. Most were redundant at best and didn't need to be included for the overall themes to be explored.
- Speaker/listener technique.

Fall 2011

- Approach my own relationships differently and give advice to others differently.
- Everything. I will be providing all of my clients the goals and tools.
- I will look at more than just the child's welfare in a situation because the parent's relationship impacts the children so much. Personally, I'm applying many of principles in my own relationship so that I can have more experience with them when working with clients.
- Implement the knowledge into my professional career.
- Make the principles a priority in helping relationships.
- More conscientious of "red flags" in relationships. More aware of "red flags" in children's behavior. Specific instruments to educate on practical issues. I will use all of the above. As a social worker, I believe my role entails vast amount of education for clients I serve.
- Previously have not worked in child welfare. Developed new skills.
- Think about how a couple is functioning and where support is needed.

Fall 2012

- Continue to work on building a healthy relationship and begin reaching out to family/friends for support.
- Great job! Great course! Great instructor!
- Have healthier relationships in my personal life. =)
- Look at my own relationships differently as well as give better advice.
- Manage conflict, implement tools, change thinking, improve relationships, and recommend resources.
- Nothing.

Overall comments regarding the course (Post-test)*Fall 2010*

- Dr. Schramm was a very effective instructor - the material covered was interesting and relevant, generally speaking. It was beneficial for my present employment and helped prepare me for future career changes.
- Fantastic course! Instructor was great!
- I was really excited when I heard about this class and really enjoyed it each week. I have talked to other students not in the class who also seemed very interested and wished they had taken it.
- Maybe role play the 7 principles to give us ways we can work on these concepts with couples and individuals.
- Please keep doing this. It is important!!
- Too many evaluations!

Fall 2011

- Awesome and highly recommended!
- Dr. Schramm was an amazing teacher who loves what he does. We learn a lot from him.
- The class was amazing and beneficial.
- Wonderful teacher. So positive!

Fall 2012

- Dr. Schramm is an amazing and insightful professor and professional. I really appreciated and value his contributions to this course and sharing his personal life as well.
- Love Dr. [Schramm]
- Really enjoyed it, especially CARE!
- This training and the way it was presented is very relatable and it was taught effectively. I really like Dr. Dave because he is extremely knowledgeable and a great teacher.

How the course was of assistance to the students (One week post-test)*Fall 2010*

- I am more comfortable and aware of resources available to families.
- I think that the class has assisted me in understanding the importance of a healthy marriage and the effects that unhealthy relationships can have on children.
- Provided resources for myself and my clients, validated my intuition with regard to couples relationships and how they affect children.
- Thanks to HRMET I can now recognize specific skills couples can work on. I am also more equipped with tools to address specific skills.
- The information about the seven core components of the NERMEN model has been of the greatest assistance, as well as access to resources I did not have prior to the course.
- The tools were very helpful
- This class provided us with usable examples of different types of interventions and exercises we can use with both individuals and couples in the future. Equipping the toolbox assignment was very helpful for future practice.

Fall 2011

- Gave me the knowledge and skills to talk with individuals/couples about relationships and common relationship problems and how to work on them.
- I have a better understanding of how healthy marriages equal better parenting.
- I think the training was most helpful in the latter half of the class, when we were discussing and creating tools for couples/individuals. These resources are/would be very helpful to families.
- The training broadened my horizons when discussing how to help these individuals and connect them with resources that could actually be helpful.
- It brought a lot of assistance to me in my own life and in my career. I feel that I can approach couple relationships in a wider outlook. The HRMET training can benefit every couple and should be implemented everywhere. I plan to implement it more in my field of mental health services.
- It brought many things to my attention that I had not thought about or did not know before. It gave me a lot of knowledge that will be helpful to me in my profession later.
- It has given me tools to use with clients to address issues of their relationship. It has also given me evidence based research that I can use at my agency and with my clients.
- It provided me with functional understanding of the principles of healthy relationships, as well as information on how to utilize the information in a helpful way.
- It was most helpful by providing me with research on healthy relationships and with tools to use with couples to help build a healthy relationship.
- More informed of research to support causation of marital relationship quality and child welfare. Have some working knowledge of specific areas to educate couples in order to improve situation.
- The tools are great!! Can't wait to use them with my client!

Fall 2012

- I learned so many new things, such as tools and trainings to help a couple connect and share in a healthy relationship. I also learned about different cultures and ethnicities and how they have different views on marriage and cohabitation. I think this training helped me become more culturally competent when talking to a variety of couples!
- I plan to become an LCSW couples therapist and this training was the most helpful course I have taken within my college career. I feel more confident and possess an extensive amount of knowledge that I will carry into my future practice.

- It has helped me personally with my own marriage. It also helped me understand how much a marriage can impact your children. I always knew that there was a connection but I never really realized how much a relationship can affect a house hold and relationships within the family.
- The class was very useful in providing new information that I could use working with a variety of clients. It was also useful when contemplating my personal relationship.
- This training assisted me with improving my own relationship with my partner. I was able to assist other couples as well such as my friends.

Additional feedback about the course or experiences with what students learned (One week post-test)

Fall 2011

- Great course - highly recommend it to anybody who works with couples or families!
- The project is amazing and I would love to see it in more social service/DFS programs.

Fall 2012

- It was excellently taught and I hope not only to share my newfound knowledge with clients but in my own relationships as well
- PER EMAIL SENT TO INSTRUCTOR ON 1/24/13: I wanted to let you know I am already putting the knowledge learned in your course to use during my advanced clinical practicum! I have a client at True North who just met a guy Saturday night, and 4 days later (on Tuesday) had been inseparable from him and claimed she's "in love" with him, that he's perfect, and he's the one. I pulled out the Van Epp equation Intimacy = Talk + Together + Time. I was so happy that I actually remembered it -- and used the perfect time! :) If it's okay with my supervisor, I will have her fill out a "KNOW" worksheet that I create since she is very interested in learning what questions to ask a potential romantic partner. Very excited to put the information to practice!

How students applied the principle "Choose" (Two month post-test)

Fall 2010

- Discussed finding qualities important to an individual to make a lifelong commitment to another person, and finding those qualities before choosing their partner.
- Encouraged a couple to remember why they started dating/ good memories
- I work with battered women so preserving the relationship is not usually a goal we have. However, helping her to have a voice and regain her power to choose whether or not to leave the situation or remain in it is empowering for her.
- I work with young mothers experiencing an unplanned or crisis pregnancy. Much of what I do now is case management, but discussions lead to the absence or presence of the baby's father. Although I am not a counselor, I listen to the girls talk about why or why not they want the baby's father involved and discuss with them the importance of commitment and how the decisions that the mother makes will ultimately affect the overall wellbeing of her child.
- Some of the clients are work with are quite young, and others have experienced divorce - I have found that it is quite common for the population I work with to move quickly from one relationship to another, and to quickly make decisions to move in with the person they are dating. I have used the choose element to discuss the role of intentionally making a decision to be together based on care and intimate knowledge of one another as opposed to falling into relationships.
- The use of the Marriage Commitment Statement!!!!

Fall 2011

- Currently, I am not working, but do volunteer with teens. The group has as its goal to benefit and respect each person. With this focus the group is constantly reminded to keep the other person's best interest as the goal.
- Encourage families/parents to communicate during this stressful time.
- Helped singles really think about what they want in a partner and the commitment level in a relationship.
- I cannot think of a specific example of using this with individuals or families that I have worked with recently. It has not come up with the individuals I have worked with in recent months, but I do foresee it being useful in the future.
- I don't think I've outright applied this topic to any of my families. My position is not to reinforce relationships but rather to support the community as a whole.

- I have applied choose with my clients in that they can choose the commitment level they have with involvement in their children's lives. I have also had to deal with the fact that a parent's choice in partner may lead to that individual not being able to see their child because of that partners past abuse towards the child.
- I use Choose the most when working with clients who have left an abusive relationship and are entering a new one. I talk with these women about being intentional of who they choose to date and how they would like the relationship to progress.
- I work in the mental health field and some of their stressors are around their relationships. I discuss commitment with them and if they are in it and committed and if not we have to work towards that.
- Reminding clients to be aware of how their actions affect others and to consider the best option for response before acting

Fall 2012

- I have not had much interaction with families but I know that other caseworkers have been emphasizing the importance of choosing to spend time and effort with their families.
- I have used this personally but do not have any clients at this time (unemployed). I have done this through reading material and counselling.
- I talk with my clients about the strengths of their relationship. And the strengths of the partner.

How students applied the principle "Choose" (Six month follow-up)

Fall 2010

- Gave information to families
- Same as last survey
- With two clients in particular who were debating whether to start or continue relationships with men they had recently met.

Fall 2011

- Asking what it is you want out of a relationship and clarifying ones 5 year goals.
- Daily
- Discussing the tool and their own commitment to the relationship and if they are willing to or not.
- It is important to decide and be committed to one another.
- When discussing with a client strengths and weaknesses of the couple

Fall 2012

- N/A unemployed
- Use the tool
- Yes

How students applied the principle "Care for Self" (Two month follow-up)

Fall 2010

- Hosted an oatmeal day to start a conversation on the importance of eating healthy for your heart.
- I have not used this element.
- Identifying and employing ways to eliminate the ""Victim Mentality"".
- Shared with a couple close to me how taking care of themselves can impact their relationship.
- This is one of the most important issues we talked about in my opinion. Taking care of ourselves is of the utmost importance or we are absolutely no good for anyone else in our lives. I work on this quite a bit with my clients.
- We work with the young mothers with the goal in mind to reach self-sufficiency.
- We assess their levels of depression, anxiety, and relationship satisfaction using the Burns assessment tools and if they are feeling down or anxious in the beginning of our time, we want to make them feel better and more confident when termination happens. We also discuss sexual health and birth control with our clients.

Fall 2011

- As therapists we focus a lot on care for self. Often we look at PTSD, depression and anxiety symptoms of clients and teach them new ways to manage them. These usually include relaxation techniques, referrals to doctors if necessary, and other ways to care for mental health.

- Care for self is addressed in the volunteer group. There is focus on keeping thoughts about self in a healthy balance. Also dating and friend relationships are addressed, again with the focus on healthy balance.
- I have not applied this.
- Reminding clients how they may not be able to care for others in full capacity if they are not caring for themselves also
- Strongly encourage every family to get plenty of rest, especially mom's who are still recovering from delivery. Explain to families every family has different needs and responsibilities so they need to decide what is best for themselves and their families. Often time encourage families to take time for themselves, make sure they get plenty of sleep, eat during meal times and to spend time outside of the hospital.
- Taking 5 for self, finding hobbies/goals that they enjoy, exercise, and being open with their partner about their sex life.
- This is a big one that gets ignored in my clients' relationships but it is things that we work towards through their treatment plans. This is also something that I have applied to my own life. I have discussed the significance of self care with many, if not most, of the individuals I am currently working with. I like to highlight the importance of taking time for one to rejuvenate and ultimately have better relationships with those around them.
- Trying to start a support group for moms. Currently, I am thinking the topic should be self care. Of course, the group is intended to be sustainable and eventually the members will pick their own topics.

Fall 2012

- I have discussed the importance of maintaining good, positive self care strategies and how it will in turn benefit loved ones. You cannot be there for others if you are not first in tune with your own needs.
- I have seen many caseworkers emphasizing the importance of not only caring for self but for keeping a healthy environment and attitude for the families safety.
- Taking care of ourselves will influence the way that we interact with our partner, children, etc.
- This goes along with the stuff I said earlier but I have also been working on taking better care of myself through slowing down and trying to prioritize.
- This has been used for all clients.

How students applied the principle "Care for Self (Six month follow-up)

Fall 2010

- discussion, reading recommendations, group work
- gave information to individuals and families
- I have been working with adolescents to teach them how to care for themselves through obtaining and maintaining self respect, self esteem, and self worth.
- In particular with clients that describe potentially harmful relationships; with others addressing relationship conflict in the context of recovery-- we can be of little benefit to others if we are not taking care of ourselves.
- Same as last survey
- The students in this program are able to understand and maintain a healthy lifestyle through the use of workshops and daily physical activity.

Fall 2011

- Again, I've worked one on one with residents of public housing to discuss matters that pertain to self care. I've worked to engage and probe with residents followed with case management services and referrals.
- Daily with most clients
- Did not discuss because was not relevant
- Taking time for oneself and resting,
- This is one of the most used tools because I work with individuals with mental and physical disabilities and we work on improving their health on a daily basis.

Fall 2012

- N/A unemployed.
- Use the tools to show both children and their parents how important it is to take care of yourself. I taught the parents that if they do not take care of themselves, they will not be able to take care of their child properly.
- Yes.

How students applied the principle “Know” (Two month post-test)*Fall 2010*

- Brainstorming with clients ways to spend time together as a couple that are low-cost and quick connections.
- I concentrate more on helping my clients learn intimate knowledge of themselves and rediscover who they are. We discuss working with a partner as well. It is important to spend time getting to know your intimate partners and taking the time necessary to cultivate that intimacy.
- I have not discussed this topic with my clients.
- I have used this element when discussing the above tendency to move quickly into living together (getting to know their partner prior to putting that kind of strain on the relationship) but primarily with clients in a current relationship when they are wanting to enhance their relationship.
- Suggested a couple complete a questionnaire on the other person to deepen their knowledge of each other.
- Using the Gottman 16 question "How well do you know your Partner" exercise, because it seems to fan hope when couples feel as though they or their partner have lost interest in each other.

Fall 2011

- Applied information only with my own partner. We have set aside a weekend to regroup with each other focusing on our friendship. Also we are experiencing some changes in finances so that will also be a topic addressed.
- Encourage clients to communicate with significant others and get to know each other better
- Family members and couples are often aware of how their loved ones respond under stress. Encourage to continue to explore these reaction and feelings to better support one another.
- I cannot think of a specific example of using this information with a client in recent months. Again, I foresee it being useful with a different population in the future.
- I have not had to apply this
- I mainly encourage women to question if and how they really know their new partner. We might talk about some important things to understand and know since many of these women have been in either an abusive relationship most of their life or have been in multiple abusive relationships.
- My department held an event for Valentines Days. We invited families and their children to come and participate. The evening included food and we separated and children from their parents. Parents took part in a version of the newlywed game for fun and were given a lesson on love languages. The kids played Wii and other games in the room next door.
- Referred people to the quizzes in Seven Principles for making marriage work.
- This one can be confusing for individuals so I explain to them the importance of knowing your partner and everything about them.

Fall 2012

- Clients who have been in a domestic violence situation with their partner and are curious as to how they really "know" their partner. What are the yellow and red flags? How well do you know a new partner?
- I don't know how this has been implemented.
- I have only done this personally. I have put more investment in my marriage by setting up date nights and making changes within the house hold. I have worked on making my marriage a priority rather than on the back burner.
- With my clients, I let them know that it's beneficial to express interest for what our partner does. Also, it's good for the relationship to ask each other about daily activities.

How students applied the principle “Know” (Six month follow-up)*Fall 2010*

- Developed training for foster parents
- Same as last survey
- With a client that had moved in with a man less than 2 weeks after meeting him and was beginning to experience difficulties in the relationship.

Fall 2011

- Daily
- I used this as a tool for them to decide on whether or not they want to stay together.
- Spending time together intentionally discovering or rediscovering about each other.

- Understanding the "9p's"
- When discussing strengths with client

Fall 2012

- N/A unemployed
- Use the tools from the binder
- Yes

How students applied the principle "Care" (Two month follow-up)

Fall 2010

- Identifying and creating measurable changes in couples's communication habits with each other.
- Share with clients ideas learned in class about 5 minute connections and other items that I put in my "tool box".
- The same applies for this element as the above mentioned two – but again primarily with those already in a committed relationship as a tool for enhancing their relationship satisfaction and reducing conflict.
- This is huge in any relationship. Often individuals report feeling invisible in their relationships. I work with my clients to help them understand the importance of respecting themselves and their partners, showing kindness, and doing small things that let others know that they are important in their lives. These ladies often do not understand the importance of support and caring because they feel isolated and alone and this is something we work on. Being both supported and supportive in our relationships.
- We assess with our clients about how supportive the baby's father is, or possibly if there is a lack of support. Because I'm just learning the position, I do not go any further as far as counseling, etc. However, we also have a support group a few times a month that focuses on supportive relationships (fathers, mothers, mentors, workers are all involved) and discussing the strengths of the young mothers.

Fall 2011

- Encourage clients to tell their partners how they like to feel loved and cared for as well as find out how their partners like to be cared for and showed loved
- Explain to parents/families everyone copes differently during a crisis or stressful situations and there is no "right" or "wrong" way to react. Assess care giver's support system and encourage needed support during this time.
- I am able to present this information as a volunteer with teens. I am able to apply choose by helping to develop a common theme with adults and teens focusing on the importance of each person. Having this focus promotes an atmosphere of choosing to respect each other regardless of social, financial, athletic, intelligence ranking in the groups.
- I do not generally talk about care with partners since we mainly focus on healing from a violent relationship.
- I have to apply this to how partners treat each other and how that can impact the child.
- I referred to one of the handouts with a friend of mine in an informal setting. I have also applied these principles to my own relationship and my own life. It has not come up in a professional setting, but I do anticipate it being useful with a different population.
- I've done my best to demonstrate empathy when working with families who are continually kicked down. I try to verbally tell families or individuals that I understand the support they are able to offer their kids even in light of everything they are dealing with.
- In the mental health field clients' relationships can really deteriorate quickly. And the need to show care between couples.
- Talked about the 5 love languages and finding ways to show mutual respect in relationships

Fall 2012

- I have discussed different strategies with bickering parents about how they can openly and more importantly KINDLY communicate with one another before an argument blows out of proportion.
- I have seen a lot of caseworkers emphasizing the focus on caring and providing for their families and children, as well as to themselves for the importance of providing for their children.
- Same as above
- We need to learn to value the differences.

How students applied the principle “Care” (Six month follow-up)*Fall 2010*

- Developed training for foster parents
- I have been working with adolescents to gain an understanding of being able to care for themselves and others around them.
- Same as last survey
- When the child goes home on a furlough, I am able to help the parents understand that respect and support will help in their child's progress in the program.
- With all clients that are married or in relationships that discuss conflict, the aspects of care are included in conversations as changes the client and discussions clients can have with partners that can potentially increase the positives of the relationships.

Fall 2011

- Daily
- I have made this an important tool to use to help them see the difference in their attitudes with one another when they demonstrate care with one another.
- I've utilized this when working with public housing residents in the importance of respecting one another's neighbors and demonstrating appropriate behaviors. Mostly in the capacity of open-ended questions when working one-on-one with residents.
- Using the five love languages.
- When discussing the way in which the couple argues and what is helpful/harmful to relationships

Fall 2012

- A family I worked with had trouble demonstrating this not only to each other but to their child so I had to address ways to show respect and care within the family dynamic.
- N/A unemployed.
- Use the tools from the binder to help families learn to show respect and demonstrate support towards each other for the betterment of their child.
- Yes.

How students applied the principle “Share” (Two month follow-up)*Fall 2010*

- 5 minute connections ideas
- Friendship interview: where each partner interviews the other for 30 minutes about things that show their personal side; such as what they wanted to be when they grew up (say at age 13), or their first experience driving a car, and so on.
- I have used tools from Gottman's book related to developing the sense of we with clients that want to enhance their current relationships and decrease conflict.
- Many of the women do not know what being a part of a "we" is. We work on the idea of being intimate and working all of these issues together to create one healthy relationship. This is hard to describe because I do not work with clients who are typically trying to salvage or work on a healthy relationship. I am usually working towards them deciding to end it or not return to a dangerous situation.
- We always welcome our clients to attend meetings and the support group with their significant other/baby's father. However, we do not discuss many of the tools that were discussed in the HRMET course. I think that this may be a good idea, though, and I may discuss this with my field instructor. Perhaps introducing some tools for our mothers who's baby's father is involved and who want to strengthen their relationship would be a helpful idea. Because our clients are of low-income, I think that the tools that involve cost-friendly ideas to spending meaningful time together and to escape some of the stress of being young parents may be ideal.

Fall 2011

- Creating date nights, special inside moments i.e. squeezing hand 3 times for I love you, going to bed together at the same time.
- Encourage clients to find ways to spend time with friends, family and significant others through similar interests or taking turns doing one persons activity and their own

- Encourage parents to share with one another. Also encourage parents/families to share their emotions with myself or other hospital staff so concerns can be addressed.
- Friendship is something that my clients don't seem to think about when they are in a relationship because they see it just as a relationship.
- I promote share mainly with other social support systems outside of an intimate partner relationship. Many of the same techniques are used, getting dinner together, enjoying a night out, and doing activities with friends or family.
- Not applied
- The volunteer work with teens meets on a routine basis. When people don't show up for meetings, there is follow up. A teen within the group will call or send card.
- This is also something that I apply to my own relationship. I have talked about it with one or two individuals, but it has not come up much in my current setting.

Fall 2012

- Again. This is more on a personal level. My family has tried to find more togetherness time as well as having date nights. We have gotten rid of our cable as a way of spending more quality time together.
- I don't know how this has been applied yet.
- Rituals and traditions are important in a couple relationship

How students applied the principle “Share” (Six month follow-up)

Fall 2010

- gave information to families
- Have used this in particular with clients struggling with the beginning of a relationship - slowing it down; also with clients expressing relationship conflict in long-lasting relationships as a means to increase lost intimacy.
- Same as last survey
- Same as last time

Fall 2011

- Daily
- I try to get them to utilize this but it can be difficult in low income families that work a lot.
- Making date nights and date night ideas. Finding common hobbies or activities with each other.
- When counseling a family whose father/spouse is in Afghanistan and discussing ways to support one another.

Fall 2012

- N/A unemployed
- Used this for divorced parents to learn to coparent.

How students applied the principle “Manage” (Two month follow-up)

Fall 2010

- I have not yet used this element in my practice.
- Using the Gottman Island Survival Game: Players imagine their cruise ship just sank in the Caribbean, and they have made it to a deserted island alive. Some items from the ship have washed ashore, and there is a storm coming, so the players have limited time to select from the items what they can carry with them to safer ground. Players all receive the same list of 26 items. Each writes down on a separate piece of paper what they consider the ten most important items to keep from the inventory list based on their survival plan.
- We talk a lot about issues of safety. We safety plan and discuss the importance of asking for help and managing stress within themselves. In so many cases these women are really starting from scratch in learning the basics of relationships and self-care.

Fall 2011

- Encouraging talking about issues and not letting them build, communication in ways the other partner will hear and understand.

- I apply principles from manage to many of my clients. With some clients it is to help them address differences with significant others, but it has also been useful for addressing differences/conflict with other family members, friends, and roommates.
- I have applied with this time managing skills and trying to set aside time for each other and the family in general.
- Teen are encouraged to talk about differences and to interact with each other in a structured setting. However, during unstructured time issues do come up. They are managed either in private or in group, whichever is more appropriate.
- There is a lot of stresses when you have a mental illness and learning how to manage them can be difficult so it is something that I work on a lot with them.
- We may do some conflict management if it seems to be an area of concern for the client.

Fall 2012

- I don't know how this has been applied yet.
- I tell my clients that all couples argue but what makes the difference is how we handle the situation
- We have tried to work on organizing our time and priorities. We have sought counselling for our relationship as well as our son in help in managing some stressful issues.

How students applied the principle “Manage” (Six month follow-up)

Fall 2010

- Same as last survey
- Same as last time
- Using with clients in recovery to address additional relationship stressors that are a result of the changes that happen when one begins working a program of recovery (in addition to existing relationship stressors).
- We help the parents and individuals understand what stresses that their children are going through and ways to help manage that stress.

Fall 2011

- Daily
- Take 5 when you are stressed. The listener speaker technique.
- This is a difficult one when it comes to my mentally ill clients because managing is something they struggle with.
- When discussing the difficult times the family above were going through.

Fall 2012

- N/A unemployed
- This was used to help children of divorced parents manage the two separate lives they live.

How students applied the principle “Connect” (Two month follow-up)

Fall 2010

- Connect is very important for my clients. They usually feel completely disconnected from the community, and others. They often do not have any means of social support. We work to cultivate community ties and support networks within the community. If they feel less isolated and alone they may feel less likely to return to their abusers who are often their only ties to the community.
- Helping clients constantly search out sources of support in their community and within their family
- I have used this element with one client thus far, in respect to the couples' involvement with their church and church groups.
- We always discuss with our young mothers about the different resources in the communities, social support groups, and different community ties. I think that being here as community support and listening with empathy as the mothers discuss their hard times is comforting to them.
- Working with couples first individually, then as a couple, to identify activities that work to build social support, community ties, and sources of meaning for each individual, then as a couple, and working together as a team to encourage both the individuals participation and participation as a couple in such activities.

Fall 2011

- Connect is something that is usually involved in treatment plans with communities etc. so they end up enhancing their relationship and connect with their other.
- Connecting with a small group at church, volunteering together.
- I continually assess individuals' levels of connection to the community, social support, and essentially how they're functioning in the environment as a whole. I help individuals make connections when they're weak or missing whenever possible.
- Not applied.
- Refer many parents/families to community resources to help provide additional support when they leave the hospital.
- Reminding clients how if they are limited in social supports their few people that are there for them may feel overwhelmed and may not be as supportive at times due to burn out (not as a certainty but as a possibility)
- See Share.
- Teens have a common goal. They keep up with each other through structured discussion and free time.
- We have started a coffee and chat every Wednesday morning for residents. This is indented to build community and allow an outlet for folks to get to know their neighbors in a positive atmosphere.

Fall 2012

- I am already looking on how to start a support group
- I have discussed the importance of social support in the community and have connected my clients to resources that would benefit them, particularly community resources that they had not accessed or heard of. I mention the importance of using these resources to better their social situation and gain access to more support.
- One of the biggest assets that the agency offers is connecting individuals with the community for the purpose of meeting needs and caring for their families.
- We have been getting more involved in our church community through small groups and volunteering.

How students applied the principle “Connect” (Six month follow-up)*Fall 2010*

- As above, especially using as it relates to relation changes that happen in the recovery process.
- Discussion, resource identification, provide transportation
- Same as last survey
- Same as last time

Fall 2011

- Connect with a small group at Church, find mentors
- Daily
- Did not discuss
- I have planned community activities, forums, and health fairs for residents of public housing. These were developed to build social support and awareness of resources.
- I use this tool a lot to give the client support and to connect them with their community resources on a regular basis.

Fall 2012

- N/A unemployed.
- This is used often as a social worker as we are very resourceful and find the importance in making connections with community agencies in order to better serve our clients and their families.
- Yes.

Specific examples of how students used information from course (Two month follow-up)*Fall 2010*

- A male client that reported conflict with wife, despite his reports of caring deeply for her and wanting to maintain the relationship. I shared with the client several of the Marriage Garden Lessons and information from the Love Notes series. We discussed his perception of these tools and how they might be used to enhance his own relationship and decrease conflict between he and wife. He reports utilization of the tools he chose, and also reports decreased conflict, even reacting in surprise when he recounted how long it had been since they had been in an argument (reported slight disagreements but no big arguments).
- I complimented one guy about working out so much and asked how taking care of himself was impacting his relationship. He had never thought about how self-care was having a positive impact on his relationship with his wife.
- I have just been mainly observing so far, but am hoping to incorporate some of the course/training with the individuals I work with soon. I think it would be a good idea to introduce some of the tools that were discussed in class to the workers here to see if they think it would be helpful for our clients.
- I have not been given an opportunity to give out any information. I work with juveniles only and rarely see parents. I would only share information as the need arises.
- So many of the tools we became familiar with are useful. The managing stress tool is something I have used in my group sessions with my clients. Managing stress and self-care are critical to moving forward with my clients. For many of them the time they are with me is the first time they have been on their own in their lives. They lack basic functioning skills. I will utilize these tools as I continue to develop my practice. I use the analogy of the flight attendant instructing passengers to put on their oxygen masks before trying to help others often as I explain that we must first take care of ourselves and then can help others or we are of no use to anyone.
- The most memorable to date has been with a couple who although not married, has been in a committed relationship for almost three years. Both are previously married and divorced, and although interested and committed to a long term relationship, seem to be hindered by each of their own past experiences, and the projection of those on their current relationship.

Fall 2011

- I have been able to pull out the relationship wheel with teens in group setting. Allow them to address an issue of discussion about family. Asking what one area could they work on and how. Also asked them one area they would like to see their family work on and how; then explored how to talk to parents about ideas.
- I have used the knowledge that I have gained for the class by valuing the importance of both parents being in a committed loving relationship is what is best for the child. I worked with a family where the parents were in a committed relationship. The father was being deported and the mother asked if I would write a letter explaining he just had a child. I did provide a letter for the family because I believed it was important for the dad to be there to provide for his child and be present in his life, as well as to be there for the child's mother.
- I work in mental health facility but one of the groups I run is called relationships and interpersonal communications. Individuals attend this group, not couples. While I do not intentionally incorporate course materials in this group a lot of the information retained from the course comes across.
- I worked with an individual who was experiencing conflict with his wife, where she would make false accusations about his behavior. I referenced the Manage lesson to help the individual learn healthy ways of addressing this conflict, such as setting relationship ground rules, using I-statements, and active listening techniques to discuss and resolve the issue.
- I've used the information directly when attempting to develop a curriculum for the support group I am trying to get underway. Less specifically, I appreciate I have this knowledge and skills to help families. Perhaps in a future position I will have more opportunities to work with families in this capacity (I am in my last semester of grad school and am in a practicum).
- One couple has opposite schedules. He works nights and she works days and it can't be avoided due to their need for income. I talked about flex times they can share instead i.e. when he comes home and when he wakes up to go to work. They also are working with their bosses to align at least one day off that is the same for both of them. I encouraged them to use that time together...going to the zoo, walking their dogs.
- Yes a lot, I have used them more within my family because they are all married. I have explained bids to them several times and used all of the tools.
- Yes I have used the healthy relationship and marriage education training materials constantly at my internship. I am dealing with women who are often in very unhealthy relationships and their children are being exposed to domestic violence.

Fall 2012

- A client who was in a domestic violence situation with an exboyfriend for several years is now dating a new partner and she has only known him a very short time. She has the "love googles" on, which is a wonderful time in a relationship, but she has been spending ALL of her time with him and disregarding her own life. She said she is scared because she thinks he's perfect and asked how to know if someone really is - because she's afraid he will be violent as well. I used the "KNOW" material: how do you really know someone and what the red and yellow flags are, what questions to ask him, and the Van Epp Intimacy equation. It seemed to really click in her mind that she didn't REALLY know this person at all after a couple of weeks.
- I have a couple that need to work in how to create rituals in their relationship. I utilized an assessment from the marriage garden. That's how they realized that they needed to spend some more time together and make rituals.
- I have not really had the opportunity to use the information in depth yet
- I work in a hospital with pediatric patients so this information does not apply as much as if I was working at a child welfare agency or with couples.
- However, we have had bickering parents and I have discussed options for open communication and trying to get along. I went over different strategies with both parents for how they could better their relationship especially for the sake of their sick child.
- Only in our marriage currently. I do not have a job currently.

Specific examples of how students used information from course (Six month follow-up)*Fall 2010*

- Exercise with group of adolescents: discussion followed by role play exercise.
- I developed training for foster parents in our circuit on specific issues I learned from class. I also regularly share tools with families I work with in every day home visits and conversations.
- I have kept the handouts from the program and have reviewed them in order to be able to support the parents when they are in need of service.
- I maintained many of the workbooks/websites we learned about in the course...discuss relationship issues with clients on a regular basis because, generally speaking, people working recovery program have a variety of relationship issues. Specifically...have discussed at length the concept of "know" with client that moved in with a man less than two weeks after meeting, and they subsequently began having arguments. To supplement discussions, also provided her with work from the Marriage Garden.

Fall 2011

- Have been unemployed since graduation, have not had an opportunity to use with people or families.
- I am able to share this information with other professionals.
- I have discussed the tools without fully saying these are the tools we are going to work on. I have implemented the basis info from each tool into my own words to explain to my clients.
- I have used specific examples, such as the wheel and types of love learned in class when helping couples. Have also used the information on healthy conflict before.
- I rarely work with couples and never in the capacity of family therapy or child welfare. Regardless, I find the information important and expect it will be beneficial in future positions.

Fall 2012

- Sometimes. For example, a client was having problems with her partner. I used some tools from class and we worked on the way that they could spend more time together and why this was beneficial for them.
- Unemployed so I have only used it for my own relationship or to help a friend in their own relationship.

Additional feedback from students about the course and/or experiences with what they learned (Two month follow-up)*Fall 2010*

- It was a very interesting course, with the utilization of tools and how the tools worked being of the most interest. The first half of the course was a little heavy on the research reading - I think many of the studies were redundant and some of that time might have been spent in more productive ways, such as more implementation of the instruments in mock or real settings.
- The instructor was a good fit. He was knowledgeable, compassionate, passionate, and kind. Their research reading was too repetitive and often not interesting. The tool work and case studies were more helpful than anything in my opinion.

Fall 2011

- A great learning experience. I need to incorporate this into my practicum setting.
- I truly enjoyed this course. Currently I am not in a position where I regularly apply this principles in practice. I know that I have absorbed a lot of the information and believe it is likely that I apply some of the principles without consciously realizing it. I do think this information will be useful in the future, and can foresee myself utilizing it regularly in different settings. I often review the binder of information to keep it fresh in my mind.
- It was wonderful and I learned so much knowledge then I can ever imagine and having the material helps for visuals for myself and others.

Fall 2012

- I would love to have materials about couples, in Spanish. Thanks.

Additional feedback from students about the course and/or experiences with what they learned (Six month follow-up)*Fall 2010*

- Excellent course: has improved both my professional and personal experience. I recently changed jobs, so have not worked with clients directly except on a limited basis. Will have the opportunity in the near future to apply it regularly.
- Not feedback about the course, but clarification of my answers...the number of families worked with only include the number in the Strengthening Families Program (which includes parents and children) because I primarily work with individuals. Therefore, I use the information and tools learned in the course with individuals – to then use in their relationships - more than I do with families themselves.

Fall 2011

- Again, I think the course is very beneficial. However, being a grad student and working in a practicum which entailed a different setting than child welfare/marital or family therapy, I rarely used the information. I functioned as a case manager/advocate in my last position. I expect to use the information from HRMET more frequently in my next position, working in mental health services.
- I loved the class and it will forever help me in my work with others and in my own relationships.
- The professor was a huge part in the amount of information taken away from this course.

Fall 2012 (No feedback)