

Couples Research & Therapy Newsletter

The Newsletter of Couples Research & Therapy AABT – SIG Fall '01

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

Notes from Joanne & Jean-Philippe.....	1
Kudos.....	2
Editor's Comments Shalonda Kelly.....	2
Announcements.....	3
Rates of Marital Success & Failure James Cordova & Steven Sayers.....	4
Self-Help Book Review Jean-Philippe Laurenceau.....	6
What's In Press Kick-Off.....	8
Graduate Student Column Natalie Monarch Debra Larsen.....	10
Treasurer Report Erika Lawrence.....	13

Notes from Joanne & Jean-Philippe

Hello everyone! It is a bittersweet experience to write this, our last newsletter installment as Co-Presidents of the SIG. In a few weeks, at the convention, we'll be electing new Co-Presidents. So, we want to take this opportunity to tell you all what a pleasure it has been to serve as your SIG Co-Presidents, and we want to thank you all for your assistance in helping us continue to make the SIG a strong presence at AABT.

We very much hope that you will join us at the AABT Convention in Philadelphia. We've got a lot of great things planned and we look forward to seeing you there. Here are some highlights:

SIG Special Event – Thursday, November 15th, 12-3pm, Rooms 302/303. In response to the yearly call for a methodology seminar, this year's SIG Special Event session features a presentation by Niall Bolger, Ph.D., well-known methodology expert on the faculty at New York University, who will present a workshop on **“Analyzing Diary Data from Couples”**. A description of Dr. Bolger's workshop is below:

“Diary methods are becoming increasingly common in studies of couples. These methods are becoming popular because they allow one to examine patterns of change over time in a couple and to study couple differences in these patterns. The analysis of diary data from couples poses special problems, however, and this workshop will describe methods for tackling them. An example dataset will be used, and analysis approaches using HLM and SAS will be described. Participants will receive copies of the dataset and syntax for conducting the analyses.”

Although Dr. Bolger will be focusing on data collected using a daily-diary methodology, we want to note that the analyses and approaches he will discuss are applicable to all types of repeated measures dyadic data. Please join us for this very unique opportunity!

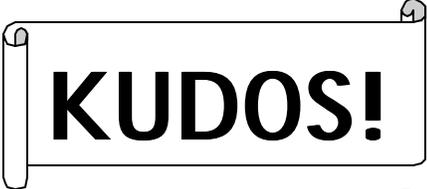
SIG Poster Exposition and Welcoming Reception – Friday, November 16th, 6:30-8:30pm, Grand Ballroom. We've got 5 fabulous posters to be presented:

Birchler, G. R., UCSD School of Medicine, & Fals-Stewart, W., Research Institute on Addictions. Use of behavioral couples therapy with alcoholic couples: Effects on maladaptive responses to conflict during treatment.

(Continued on the next page)

Couples Research and Therapy Newsletter

Editor: Shalonda Kelly, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, GSAPP
Rutgers University
152 Frelinghuysen Road
Piscataway, NJ 08854-8085
Phone: (732) 445-1791;
Fax: (732) 445-4888
skelly@rci.rutgers.edu



KUDOS!

MOVING UP!!

APA has accredited Idaho State University's 'new' doctoral program in clinical psychology, and they are hoping to attract more students. Our own Crystal Dehle is a faculty member there.

Barb Kistenmacher passed the licensure exam and started a small private practice in midtown Manhattan (near Grand Central Station), where she is taking referrals.

Jenny Langhinrichsen-Rohling received tenure and promotion at the University of South Alabama.

REPRESENTATION!

Kudos to each of the five presenters at this year's annual Couples SIG Poster Exposition, and kudos to Bill Fals-Stewart and Gary Birchler for the winning poster that was most consistent with this year's AABT Presidential initiative regarding increasing treatment effectiveness.

PERSONAL MILESTONES

Ben Karney just had a beautiful baby!

Jenny Langhinrichsen-Rohling had her third child, Ryan Alexander, born on March 23rd



CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN, CONTINUED

Cano, A. Wayne State University. Couples coping with chronic pain.

Fals-Stewart, W., Research Institute on Addictions, & Birchler, G. R., UCSD School of Medicine. Behavioral couples therapy with alcoholic men and their intimate partners: The comparative effectiveness of bachelor's and master's level counselors.

Flanagan, K. M., Penn State University, & Clements, M. L., Fuller Theological Seminary. Discounting marital positivity: How perceptions of typicality are related to satisfaction.

Sayers, S. L., McGrath, K., & Coyne, J. C., University of Pennsylvania Health System. Modification and extension of the conflict patterns questionnaire for use with patients with heart failure.

Also, please be sure to be there when we present the award for the poster most consistent with this year's AABT Presidential initiative, "To increase the number of clients receiving effective treatment by increasing the number of providers and provider systems applying effective treatment programs."

Annual SIG Business Meeting – Friday, November 16th, 10-11:30am, Room 406. We will catch up on SIG business, make decisions about future SIG goals and activities, collect dues, present the Graduate Student Poster Award, and elect the following new officers: Co-Presidents, Student Co-Presidents, and Newsletter Editor. Come ready to nominate and vote! Please don't miss this important meeting, and come early – last year it was standing room only. We're hoping for an even better turn out this year.

Graduate Student Poster Award – Presented at the Annual SIG Business Meeting. Join us as we recognize and celebrate the very important contributions being made by students to research on couples.

See you in few weeks!

Joanne Davila, Ph.D. & Jean-Philippe Laurenceau, Ph.D., SIG Co-Presidents

Editor's Comments

Shalonda Kelly, Ph.D.

Hello, couples SIG-ers! I'm sure that many of you are eagerly awaiting our chance to renew old acquaintances, learn new CBT technology, and share your work at the upcoming conference. This issue of the newsletter provides an exciting preview of this work, with our regular in-press column, announcements of important opportunities in the field, and updates on life milestones for our members in the "Kudos" section. James Cordova and Steven Sayers outline and assess the different

(Continued on the following page)

EDITOR'S COMMENTS, CONTINUED FROM P. 2

methods by which divorce risk is assessed, discuss the need for a risk model, and refer us to notable publications in this area. Given the high divorce rate, Jean-Philippe Laurenceau's overview of Blaine Fower's book is timely, as he highlights marital goals that can help couples to reap more satisfaction from their marriages. Finally, towards removing the necessity of maneuvering through the convention book, our graduate student co-presidents, Debra Larson and Natalie Monarch have again given us a detailed overview of couples-focused events, as well as a list of sites and restaurants of interest in Philly. The number and variety of these events are a testament to the dynamic work of our SIG members and leadership!

Like our co-presidents, I am a bit sad at ending my term as your newsletter editor. This position has given me a unique opportunity to network with many of you via discussing and reading your important contributions, build friendships, and expose myself to a wider variety of information on couples research and therapy than I had previously known. I am greatly appreciative of the willingness of many of you to share encapsulated versions of your work. In addition, I thank members such as Bob Weiss (we'll miss you at the conference) and Barbara Kistenmacher (the past newsletter editor) who regularly gave me helpful suggestions, and the current officers who gave me regular columns and reports. I anticipate that the future newsletter editor will similarly enjoy serving our SIG.

See you in a short while!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RESPONSE TO THE SEPTEMBER 11TH TRAUMA:

AABT will include a special event to educate interested professionals on the latest information regarding evidence-based approaches to crisis intervention following tragedies such as the September 11 attacks on the United States. It will take place from 8:30 PM until 10:00 PM on Thursday November 15, on the first evening of the AABT Meeting (Philadelphia Marriott). This event is free to all mental health professionals, regardless of whether they have registered for the general AABT meeting. The evening has been organized by Sonja V. Batten, Ph.D., and Melissa A. Polusny, Ph.D., the incoming and current presidents of the *AABT Disaster and Trauma Special Interest Group*. The list of distinguished speakers include Robin H. Gurwitsch, Ph.D., Edna B. Foa, Ph.D., Dean G. Kilpatrick, Ph.D., Steven C. Hayes, Ph.D., and Richard M. Gist, Ph.D. For more information, please check out the AABT website (www.aabt.org). **This event is not in the AABT program book, so please pass on this information!**

Excerpted from an e-mail notice received from Martin M. Antony, Ph.D. Program Chair, AABT 2001

NEW GRADUATE STUDENT OPPORTUNITY AT STONY BROOK:

Our own Rick Heyman and Amy Slep, research faculty at Stony Brook, are planning on taking one graduate student. Feel free to pass this information along to students of yours who may be considering Stony Brook, and let Rick and Amy know about excellent candidates at AABT.

FELLOWSHIPS FOR RESEARCH ON SEXUALITY:

The Sexuality Research Fellowships Program, funded by the Ford Foundation, seeks to contribute to a more thorough understanding of human sexuality by encouraging researchers to formulate new research questions, generate new theories and apply new methods in sexuality research. It provides dissertation and postdoctoral support for social and behavioral research on sexuality. It is intended for scholars conducting research in the United States (although a related initiative is targeted toward professionals and scholars in Vietnam). Each fall, the program sponsors a Fellows' conference so that Fellows can meet, form productive alliances and gain a better understanding of important research issues. For more information, please contact:

Social Science Research Council
810 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10019 USA
Phone: 212.377.2700
Fax: 212.377.2727
Email: info@ssrc.org

Rates of Marital Success & Failure

By Steven L. Sayers, Ph.D. & James V. Cordova, Ph.D.

What do we know about divorce rates and risk for divorce? We consistently hear the now infamous statistic that 50% of first marriages end in divorce, but what do we actually know about the meaning of this statement and of what genuine utility it is?

Population-based crude rates

According to the National Vital Statistics Report (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2001) the marriage rate per 1000 in the year 2000 was 8.7 and the divorce rate per 1000 was 4.1 (47% of the marriage rate) on a population base (in millions) of 273.1. This rate, often referred to as the *crude* rate, has been within that range since the 1970s. Essentially this means that each year the population loses half as many married couples as it gains. What are some of the issues with translating this into predicting that 50% of all first marriages will end in divorce? The first issue is that the people getting divorced in any given year are, for the most part, not the same people that got married that year. Most precisely, these data tell us in population terms, the number of marriages added to the general population in any given year (exactly analogous to the comparison of annual births and deaths, the only other statistics given in the same NVSS report). The composition of the cohorts that make up the crude rate influences this rate a great deal. For example, as the age at first marriage of baby boomers increased, the marriage rate decreased, and then

later the marriage rate increased as these baby boomers began marrying. Changes in the marriage rate, the denominator of the crude rate, thus affect the crude rate without a necessary change in the divorce rate.

“The annual divorce risk may be helpful in terms of predicting the number of divorces we can expect from within any given research sample, which may help in planning longitudinal studies”

Crude rates are useful in some ways. They allow researchers to make better educated guesses concerning the number of divorces we are likely to see within any given research sample, allowing us to plan our studies accordingly. In addition, at a societal level, these rates inform policy and resource allocation. Finally, they become embedded in the public consciousness, contributing to both to organizational agendas and to individual assumptions about their own marriages and the marriages of others. On the other hand, they are of little utility in estimating divorce risk.

Annual and Cumulative Risk

In fact, the principal difficulty with studying the prediction of divorce is that the annual rate of divorce is relatively low and thus, even within a relatively large sample collected for longitudinal couple research, one can expect to see relatively few divorces

over the course of the study. The NVSS estimates the 1990 number of divorces per 1000 married women over 15 years old to be 20.9 (2.09%). Thus, all else being equal (which of course they are not), in a sample of 500 newly-wed couples, one would expect approximately 15 divorces per year, accumulating about 75 divorces over 5 years (almost exactly the number of divorces reported by Kurdek, 1998, in his six-year longitudinal study of 538 couples). This is a cumulative risk over 5 years of 13.9%. In his sample of 73 established marriages, Gottman (1994) reported 9 divorces over a four-year period, a divorce rate of 3% a year (note the similarity to the NVSS rate). The four-year cumulative risk of the Gottman study is 12.3%.

In contrast, Martin and Bumpass (1989) reported a 23% 5-year cumulative risk of divorce for first marriages, using data from the June 1985 Current Population Survey. The *lifetime* risk was estimated at 64% , although there are important caveats to this estimate. This study was a population-based survey, but the assessment was a cross-sectional and retrospective interview of cohorts of women married since 1970. The data were then extrapolated to estimate lifetime risk, based on the retrospectively reported data for events in the period from 1970-1985. Women were the basis of this study because of a documented lower quality of marriage history data for males. Addition-
(Continued on the next page)

RATES OF MARITAL SUCCESS & FAILURE, CONTINUED FROM PG. 4

ally, rates were adjusted upward from 57% based on the estimable effects of underreporting.

The annual divorce risk may be helpful in terms of predicting the number of divorces we can expect from within any given research sample, which may help in planning longitudinal studies that aim to gather useful numbers of divorces over a reasonable period of time. The cumulative rates offer some estimate of the risk of marital disruption over an individual's lifetime. At the same time, these rates allow for no more refined prediction of divorce because they do not identify risk factors for divorce that tailor risk statements to individuals.

“Overall statements of risk of divorce have little meaning when the risk varies among individuals with different individual and relationship characteristics.”

Another factor that makes estimating divorce rates difficult is that the rate is different for different cohorts. As societal factors fluctuate, cohorts begin to vary in the likelihood of divorce. Rate estimates have to be extrapolated statistically for current marriages and there is disagreement as to the methods of extrapolation.

Definitions of marital success and failure

An additional issue is that researchers calculating divorce rates sometimes do and sometimes do not include separations (legal or otherwise) into the estimate. The NVSS report includes both legal divorces and annulments, but does not include legal separations. Glenn (1998)

used an alternative to simple separation or divorce in a study that examined marital success over the lifespan. Using data from the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago (Davis & Smith, 1994), he defined marital success as persons in intact first marriages who responded to a single question whether their marriage was “very happy” (the alternatives were “pretty happy, or “not too happy”). Failure of a first marriage was defined as marriages that were currently judged by the respondent to be less than “very happy” or a first marriage that ended due to legal separation, or divorce. Note that this definition integrates the idea of marital satisfaction and legal separation and divorce in the idea of marital success. The study found using this index that over 70% of respondents indicated having a successful marriage at one year, declining rapidly to 40% at 11 years of marriage, and approximately 25% at 51 years of marriage. Thus, using this rather strict, single-question, definition of marital success, approximately 75% of first marriages are at-risk of failure over an individual's lifetime.

The reader may note, however, that in Glenn's study lifetime risk of divorce is not the primary research question—the study challenged the oft-quoted U-shaped pattern of marital satisfaction across the lifespan—and it serves as an example of alternative definitions of marital success and failure. Also, readers should note that the data examined was not comprised of one sample followed longitudinally, but instead used 5, 10-year cohorts pieced together to form the sample.

Characterizing Individual Risk

Overall statements of risk of divorce have little meaning when the risk varies among individuals with different individual and relationship characteristics. Most informal discussions of divorce ignore very powerful demographic predictors of divorce, such as early age of first marriage, lack of a high school level education, having children before marriage, and previous marriage. The rates of marital dissolution for women who marry in their teens are twice those of women who marry after the age of 22 (Martin & Bumpass, 1989). Nonwhite ethnicity is a powerful predictor of marital instability, even though the reasons for the effects of ethnicity have not been extensively investigated. The 15-year cumulative risk of marital dissolution among the lowest risk groups (i.e., relatively higher education and age, no children before marriage, no previous marriages) is 18% for Caucasians but 38% for Blacks (White, 1990). A host of other factors also have been examined as predictors of marital success and failure, including dysfunctional communication, personality style (e.g., high neuroticism, low conscientiousness), wives' employment, and parental divorce (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

“Risk models could provide the overall framework for an explanatory model of marital dysfunction...”

The maximum benefit of this line research will be gained by using all these risk factors to develop a *risk model*, which would help explain who is statistically most likely to be at risk of

(Continued on page 7)

Self-Help Book Review

Jean-Philippe Laurenceau, Ph.D.
University of Miami

Beyond the Myth of Marital Happiness: How Embracing the Virtues of Loyalty, Generosity, Justice, and Courage Can Strengthen Your Relationship ([Blaine J. Fowers, Ph.D.](#); 2000, Jossey-Bass/Wiley, 241 pp.)

Sometimes we need to understand why we do things in order to understand what we may be doing wrong. Reading Dr. Blaine J. Fowers' Beyond the Myth of Marital Happiness invited me to rethink why we relate in marriage, so as to come closer to understanding what may be going wrong when marriages go awry.

"Man is by nature a social animal." (Aristotle)

The classical work of Aristotle makes note of a fundamental human motivation: the need to feel connected with others. Notably, Dr. Fowers also borrows central ideas from Aristotle to highlight the factors that contribute to a strong marriage. Many of these factors, however, are not discussed in your typical couples self-help book. As such, this book encourages a perspective that may be useful to both laypeople and academicians alike. Moreover, the reviewer of this book dusted off his collection of Aristotelian work in order to re-read some of his classical thinking, and he was pleasantly intrigued.

The central thesis of Beyond the Myth of Marital Happiness is that the almost exclusive focus on emotional satisfaction and need fulfillment in marriage has contributed to the ideal of marital happiness as a myth in American life. Modern conceptions of marriage (both lay and academic)

may be placing too much emphasis on satisfaction as a superordinate goal. As such, many entering this union may end up falling short of this expectation. While the obvious trend in divorce rates may reflect this state of affairs, recent research in marital relationships has also pointed to the finding that disappointment and disillusionment may explain dissatisfaction and divorce as much as does intractable conflict.

"Things that cause friendship are: doing kindnesses; doing them unasked; and not proclaiming the fact when they are done." (Aristotle)

The basis of a good marriage is a good friendship. Dr. Fowers reminds us that according to Aristotle, there are three types of relationships that one can have in marriage (as well as friendships). The first is an Advantage Relationship, where the relationship is based on the mutual benefits that the partners can provide for each other. A Pleasure Relationship is one in which the partners offer one another pleasure rather than benefits. A serious disadvantage of these types of relationships, however, is that they are primarily self-serving in their focus on receiving benefits or pleasure. These types of relationships usually only last as long as there are mutual benefits or the experience of pleasure continues.

Dr. Fowers argues that modern day marriage has tended epitomize these two types of relationships. A third type of relationship, Character Relationships, focus on shared understanding for and commitment to what is worthwhile in life and seeking it, a mutual recognition of each partner's strengths, and the ability to work together as a team to realize the shared goals. While Character Relationships can be both beneficial and pleasurable, they go beyond these foci towards the shared goals as a couple. Interestingly, the experience of emotions such as happiness and contentment are really best conceived as by-products of the identification of shared couple goals and working together as a team to pursue them.

Happiness is a sort of action. (Aristotle)

So is "Marital Bliss" the goal of marriage? Or is it really the experience of a couple working together towards mutual goals? Beyond the Myth of Marital Happiness persuasively conveys the argument that while there is no one specific set of communication patterns, emotional experiences/expressions, or relationship-related thoughts that are associated with a healthy marriage, a common theme is the ability of the couple to work together towards a shared life. Thus, happiness comes about in

(Continued on next page)

BOOK REVIEW, CONT'D

the actions that the couple takes towards their mutual goals.

In these days of "empirically supported treatments," Fowers invites us to broaden our perspective on an underlying model of marital functioning that goes beyond satisfaction and stability. To do so, researchers need to consider ways of assessing aspects of strong and healthy marriages that do not necessarily rely solely on positive sentiment, good communication, and the ability to manage conflict. While these traditional indicators are very important aspects of healthy marriages, what is it that will help partners to persevere even when

feelings may be negative, communication is challenging, and conflict is present?

A weakness of this book as a self-help reference for couples is the loose translation of the virtues of marriage into everyday practice (for both couples in distress as well as the practicing mental health professional). A thorough development of the interventions associated with the perspective heralded in *Beyond the Myth of Marital Happiness* may have had to force Dr. Fowers beyond the scope of this book, but such an attempt would be welcomed by this reviewer.

This book at first glance may not seem to speak to a behaviorally-oriented audience as those

reading this newsletter. Nevertheless, *Beyond the Myth of Marital Happiness* does not ask us to lose our behavioral underpinnings, but rather, to try broadening them!

In closing, a final classical quote also gave me cause for thought:

***"Accordingly I conclude that the appropriate age for marriage is about the eighteenth year for girls and for men the thirty-seventh plus or minus."* (Aristotle)**

While one of the greatest thinkers, clearly, Aristotle may not be right about everything!

RATES OF MARITAL SUCCESS & FAILURE, CONT'D FROM PG. 5

marital failure. Risk models could provide the overall framework for an explanatory model of marital dysfunction, and also allow more tailored statements about individual risk of poor outcomes in marriage. A discussion of risk models is well beyond the scope of the current article, but turn to the following cursory list regarding risk models and related topics: predictors of marital instability (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Gottman, Coan, Carrere & Swanson,) methodological problems in prediction (Gottman, Carrere, Swanson, & Coan, 2000; Stanley, Bradbury, & Markman, 2000; Heyman & Smith Slep, 2001), and developmental models of risk (Bradbury, 1998; Sayers, Kohn, & Heavey, 1998).

References

- Bradbury, T. N. (1998). *The developmental course of marital dysfunction*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Davis, J. A., & Smith, T. W. (1994). *General social surveys, 1972-1994 Cumulative codebook*. Chicago: National Opinion Research Center.
- Glenn, N. D. (1998). The course of marital success and failure in five American 10-year marriage cohorts. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60, 569-576.
- Gottman, J. M. (1994). *What predicts divorce?* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Gottman, J. M., Carrere, S., Swanson, C., & Coan, J. A. (2000). Reply to "From basic research to interventions." *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62, 265-273.
- Gottman, J. M., Coan, J. A., Carrere, S., & Swanson, C. (1998). Predicting marital happiness and stability from newlywed interactions. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60, 5-22.
- Heyman, R. E., & Smith Slep, A. M. (2001). The hazards of predicting divorce without crossvalidation. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 63, 473-479.
- Karney, B. R., Bradbury, T. N. (1995). The longitudinal course of marital quality and stability: A review of theory, method, and research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118, 3-34.
- Kurdek, L. A. (1998). The nature and predictors of the trajectory of change in marital quality over the first 4 years of marriage for first-married husbands and wives. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 12, 494-510.
- Martin, T. C., & Bumpass, L. L. (1989). Recent trends in marital disruption. *Demography*, 26, 37-51.
- Sayers, S. L., Kohn, C. S., & Heavey, C. (1998). Prevention of marital dysfunction: Behavioral approaches and beyond. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 18, 713-744.
- Stanley, S. M., Bradbury, T. N., & Markman, H. J. (2000). Structural flaws in the bridge from basic research on marriage to interventions for couples. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62, 256-264.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2001) *National Vital Statistics Report*, (Volume 49, Number 6). Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics System.
- White, L. K. (1990). Determinants of divorce: A review of research in the eighties. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52, 904-912.

What's In Press Kick-Off!

Understanding infidelity: Correlates in a national random sample. Atkins, D. C., Baucom, D. H., & Jacobson, N. S. Journal of Family Psychology

Infidelity is a common phenomenon in marriages but is poorly understood. The current study examined variables related to extramarital sex using data from the 1991-1996 General Social Surveys. Predictor variables were entered into a logistic regression using presence of extramarital sex as the dependent variable. Results demonstrated that divorce, education, age when first married, and two "opportunity" variables—respondent's income and work status, significantly impacted the likelihood of having engaged in infidelity. Also, there were three significant interactions related to infidelity: (a) between age and gender; (b) between marital satisfaction and religious behavior; and (c) between past divorce and educational degree. Implications of these findings and directions for future research are discussed.

Antecedents and consequences of negative marital stressors. Cano, A., Christian-Herman, J., O'Leary, K.D., & Avery-Leaf, S. Journal of Marital and Family Therapy.

Many couples seeking therapy report the occurrence of severe, negative marital stressors (e.g., infidelity, threats of marital dissolution). In addition, existing research has demonstrated that these marital stressors precipitate Major Depressive Episodes and psychological symptoms. The

current longitudinal study examines the antecedents and consequences of negative marital stressors in order to help clinicians and researchers develop interventions that might prevent these stressors and their outcomes. Forty-one women completed a semi-structured interview and measures of marital discord and depressive symptoms within one month after experiencing a marital stressor (baseline) and at a 16-month follow-up. The results indicate that baseline marital discord contributes to the occurrence of additional marital stressors during the follow-up period. While baseline depressive symptoms do not predict additional marital stressors, depressive symptoms along with marital discord predict future depressive symptoms. Finally, baseline marital discord and additional marital stressors contribute to future marital dissolution. Clinical and research implications are discussed.

A comparative analysis of Integrative Couple Therapy and Cognitive-Behavioral Couple Therapy. Chapman, A., and Dehle, C. Cognitive and Behavioral Practice.

The purpose of the paper is to provide behaviorally and cognitive-behaviorally oriented couples' therapists with a comparison of Integrative Behavioral Couples Therapy (IBCT; Christensen & Jacobson, 1996) and Cognitive Behavioral Marital Therapy (CBMT; Baucom & Epstein, 1990) that highlights similarities and differences between these two therapeutic

approaches to treating marital discord. Both approaches derive from traditional behavioral marital therapy (BMT) but have emphasized emotional and cognitive factors more so than BMT. IBCT's contextual, or radical behavioral, viewpoint has translated to interventions that aim to establish a dyadic context supporting acceptance, empathy, and understanding through both acceptance and behavior change strategies. Rooted in social cognitive theory, CBMT also aims to increase acceptance, empathy, and understanding, but does so primarily through change-based interventions that target dysfunctional cognitive, behavioral, and affective responses and processes. It is our contention that understanding the relationship between the underlying theories and practices of these empirically supported approaches may improve their effective dissemination and use within the practice community.

Associations between anxiety and marital adjustment. Dehle, C. & Weiss, R. L. (in press). Journal of Psychology.

Cognitive-behavioral theories of marital functioning and contextual models of close relationships highlight the importance of proximal affect states, like anxiety, in couple functioning. Despite these assertions, research examining the role of state anxiety is noticeably absent from the literature on intimate relationships. The current study examines state anxiety and marital

(Continued on the next page)

What's In Press, Continued

adjustment in a sample of 45 couples. Hierarchical regression analyses indicate that husbands' time-1 anxiety is predictive of both their own and their wives' subsequent reports of marital adjustment. Wives' time-1 anxiety was not predictive of either their own or their husbands' subsequent reports of marital adjustment. Discussion focuses on the role of husband anxiety in marital adjustment, and implications for further study of the contextual model of close relationships.

Forgiveness in marriage: The role of relationship quality, attributions and empathy. Fincham, F.D., Paleari, G & Regalia, C. Personal Relationships.

Italian husbands (n=79) and wives (n=92) from long term marriages provided data on the role of marital quality, and affective reactions and attributions for partner transgressions in promoting forgiveness. Structural equation modeling revealed that, as hypothesized, positive marital quality was predictive of more benign attributions that, in turn, facilitated forgiveness both directly, and indirectly via affective reactions and emotional empathy. Unexpectedly, marital quality did not account for unique variance in forgiveness. Compared to husbands, wives' responsibility attributions were more predictive of forgiveness whereas empathy was a better predictor of forgiveness in husbands than in wives. The findings are discussed in terms of their implications for the burgeoning therapeutic literature on forgiveness.

Change in Relationship Knowledge Representations.

Pietromonaco, P., R., Laurenceau, J-P., & Feldman Barrett, L. In A. L. Vangelisti, H. T. Reis, and M. A. Fitzpatrick (Eds.), Stability and change in relationships. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Few relationship theorists have delineated the process of change in relationship knowledge, but most would agree that the ability to change contributes to the quality and longevity of a relationship. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the processes that might underlie change in representations of relationship knowledge. We draw from various literatures to develop a series of proposals for how relationship representations might shift and change over time. The social-cognitive literature provided information about change in other kinds of knowledge representations (e.g., the self, attitudes, stereotypes), whereas the literatures on close relationships and marital intervention approaches provided information about change specifically in relationship knowledge. In particular, theory and research on marital interventions (e.g., cognitive-behavioral) that explicitly seek to change couples' beliefs, expectations, and goals about their relationship provided clues to the process of change. Taken together, the core idea is that change in relationship knowledge is a dynamic process that is closely tied to immediate and enduring life contexts.

Marital cognitions and depression in the context of marital discord. Sayers, S. L., Kohn, C. S., Fresco, D. M., Bellack, A. S., & Sarwer, D. B. Cognitive Therapy and Research.

A prepublication version is available at: http://www.marriagewise.org/articles/sayers_CTR.pdf

The cognitions of 63 couples were examined to explicate the link between marital conflict and depression. Following a laboratory-based marital problem solving discussion, spouses listed cognitions about these discussions and thoughts about the future of their relationship. Cognitions also were assessed using the Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire and Marital Attitude Survey. Self-reported assessments of mood were obtained before and after the problem solving discussion. Depressed wives exhibited significantly more self-blame and hopeless thoughts than nondepressed wives. Self-blame, partner-blame, and hopelessness in reference to the problem solving discussions were associated with spouses' mood states after a problem solving discussion, albeit in different ways. The results support the importance of hopelessness and blame in understanding the link between marital discord and depression.

Understanding the relationship between religiosity and marriage: An investigation of the immediate and longitudinal effect of religiosity on newlywed couples. Sullivan, K.T. Journal of Family Psychology.

The association between religiosity and marital outcome has been repeatedly demonstrated. However, a complete understanding of this relationship is hindered by theoretical and methodological limitations. The purpose of the current study was **(Continued on the next page)** to test three explanatory models by assessing two samples of newlywed couples. Findings

indicate that religiosity is associated with attitudes toward divorce, commitment, and help-seeking attitudes cross-sectionally. Longitudinal effects, however, are most consistent with a moderating model, wherein religiosity has a positive impact

on husbands, and wives' marital satisfaction for couples with less neurotic husbands, and a negative impact for couples with more neurotic husbands. Overall, the impact of religiosity is weak over the first four years of marriage.

Theoretical propositions are offered to guide future research in delineating the types of marriages that may be most affected by religiosity.

Notes From Natalie and Debbie

The Graduate Student Co-Presidents' Column
35th Annual AABT Conference – Couples' Happenings and So Much MORE!
November 15-18, 2000 - Philadelphia

Hello SIGers!! Are you ready to see Philadelphia? It's ready for you...no matter what your pleasure is! Of course, *most* of your pleasure will be the conference, but in case you need a break...

Sites you might want to catch:

Independence Hall and Liberty Bell

Address: Chestnut St. & 5th to 6th (7 blocks East of the hotel)

Hours: 9 AM – 5 PM

Cost: Free (Includes a MUST-SEE informative tour of Independence Hall)

Betsy Ross's House

Address: 239 Arch Street (9 blocks west on Market then 1-2 blocks north)

Hours: 10 AM to 5 PM Cost: Free

Franklin Institute Science Museum

Address: 20th St. and Benjamin Franklin Parkway (15 blocks N.W. of the hotel)

Hours: 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Cost: \$9.50-\$15.00

(Tribute to Benjamin Franklin's work; large museum with hands-on exhibits)

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Address: 26th St. and Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Hours: 10 AM to 5 PM

Cost: \$7

(10 Acres and 200 galleries of artwork; also the filming site for your favorite Rocky/Sylvester Stallone scene)

Philadelphia Zoo

Address: 34th St. and Girard Avenue

Hours: 9:30 AM to 5 PM

Cost: \$10.95 (America's 1st zoo; specializes in unusual breeds of animals)

Options with a variety of choices to satisfy your palate:

Penn's Landing

Address: Delaware River from Market St. to Lombard (East 12 blocks)

Historic park commemorating William Penn's landing site has several restaurants along the waterfront.

Reading Terminal Market

Address: 11th St. and Arch St. (within blocks of the hotel!)

Contains a variety of eateries; everything from Amish sticky buns to gourmet take-out Italian.

Must try foods in Philly: Cheesie steaks, soft pretzels, water ices, and tasty kakes.

Regardless of your interests, information about the attractions and eating options is also at the following web sites:

www.philadelphia.citysearch.com (everything from weather to sports events; includes a "weekend planner" search and listings of the top restaurants and entertainment spots.)

www.gophila.com (information about **tour options** and a lot of other info about Philly)

www.philadelphia.travelape.com (gives a rating and info about cost and times for sites)

www.frommers.com/detinations/philadelphia/ (gives more in depth info and directions)

www.independencepark.org (great information about the historic sites) **But back to the conference...**

35th Annual AABT Conference

<u><i>Date and Time</i></u>	<u><i>Event Type</i></u>	<u><i>Event Title</i></u>	<u><i>Room Number</i></u>
<i>THURSDAY, NOV 15th</i>			
12 noon – 3:00pm	Couples SIG Special Event	Analyzing Diary Data from Couples	Mariott 302/303
1:00pm – 6:00pm	Institute-6*	Anger and Intimate Partner Assault	TBA
<i>FRIDAY, NOV 16th</i>			
10:00am – 11:30am	Meeting	Couples' SIG Meeting	406
10:15am – 11:45am	Symposium-9	Overcoming Resistance in Cognitive Therapy (Partial Couples Focus)	Grand Ballroom H
10:30am – 12:00pm	Panel Discussion 4	Dialectical Behavior Therapy Adapted for the Treatment of Partner Violent Men	Grand Ballroom D
12:00pm – 1:30pm	Symposium-14	Partner-Violent Men: Predicting and Understanding Response to Treatment	Grand Ballroom B
12:00pm – 1:30pm	Symposium-16	Conceptualization and Treatment of Infidelity	Grand Ballroom K/L
1:30pm – 4:30pm	Workshop-8*	Cognitive-Behavioral Techniques With Families	Grand Ballroom J
<i>6:30pm – 8:30pm</i>	<i>SIG Cocktail Hour</i>	<i>Cocktail Hour and Poster Exposition</i>	<i>Grand Ballroom</i>
<i>SATURDAY, NOV 17th</i>			
9:00am – 10:30am	Panel Discussion-15	Approaches to Defining and Measuring "Treatment as Usual"	Grand Ballroom K
10:15am – 11:15am	Poster Session-8	Couples; Families; Parenting; Sexual Issues	Franklin Hall
10:15am – 11:45am	Symposium-32	The Developing Cognitive Therapist (Partial Couples Focus)	Grand Ballroom F
10:30am – 12:30pm	Master Clinician Seminar-5*	Assessment and Treatment of Sexual Dysfunction	304/305/306
11:45am – 12:45pm	Symposium-37	Information Processing in Couples: Couple Functioning and Treatment Implications	Grand Ballroom D
1:30pm – 4:30pm	Workshop-17*	Behavioral Couple s Therapy for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse	Grand Ballroom I

35th Annual AABT Conference, Continued

<u>Date and Time</u>	<u>Event Type</u>	<u>Event Title</u>	<u>Room Number</u>
1:30pm – 4:30pm	Workshop-21*	Family-Focused Treatment of Adult & Adolescent Bipolar Disorder	414/415
2:30pm – 4:00pm	Symposium-46	Treating Couples in Context: The Many Faces of Couple Interventions	Grand Ballroom F
5:00pm – 6:00pm	AABT Presidential Address		
SUNDAY, NOV 19th			
9:00am – 10:30am	Symposium-56	The Effects of Marital Therapy: Posttreatment Results of a Dual-Site Clinical Trial	Grand Ballroom F
9:00am – 12:00pm	Workshop-23*	Family Interventions in Schizophrenia	407/408/409
CANCELLED	Workshop-25*	Brief Couple Therapy: Helping Partners Help Themselves	414/415
10:45am – 12:15pm	Symposium-62	The Role of Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Interventions in Defining a Comprehensive Approach to Promoting Marital Health	Grand Ballroom G

* = *Requires Fee and Registration*

Get ready for a great time in Philly!

Deb and Natalie

TREASURER'S NOTE

Erika Lawrence, Ph.D.

Hello all! Here is an update on the AABT Couples SIG Treasury and upcoming dues collection. Currently, we have \$1275 in our account, and much of that will go toward paying conference-related fees next month. Dues for this year, and any dues owed for previous years, can be paid at the AABT Couples SIG meeting in PA. Dues are \$5 for students and \$20 for non-students. You may pay by cash or check, payable either to me or to the "AABT Couples SIG." If you will not be attending the conference, or you are wondering how much you owe, please feel free to contact me at: erika-lawrence@uiowa.edu.

Also, I'm trying to update the membership directory, so if any of your contact information has changed in the last year or two, please send me your new information. After the conference, my goal is for us to have a current membership list on the website, listserv and membership directory.

Looking forward to seeing you all at AABT!

...END OF NEWSLETTER ...

