

Couples Research & Therapy

NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the Couples Research & Therapy SIG – ABCT, Fall/Winter 2008

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Couples SIG Newsletter

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Couples and Wartime Deployment: A History and Recent Developments

Steven L. Sayers

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It is unfortunate that major advances in our understanding of the impact of war trauma on couples and families must occur in the aftermath of war. The first in-depth examination of the consequences of wartime trauma on the relationships of US soldiers came with the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study (NVVRS), which was initiated nearly 10 years after the end of the war (Kulka et al., 1988). The impact on couples and families of later conflicts received research attention much more quickly. Data were collected on families of the Gulf War (Taft, Schumm, Panuzio, & Proctor, 2008), Bosnian peacekeeping missions (McCarroll et al., 2003; Schumm et al., 1998), and the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts (Faber, Willerton, Clymer, MacDermid, & Weiss, 2008; Karney & Crown, 2007; Renshaw, Rodrigues, & Jones, 2008) in more and more expeditious fashion after the hostilities commencement. Our understanding of the impact of wartime deployment on couples and families is still relatively limited but it has expanded recently. In this article, I will provide a selective review of this literature, and discuss some of the unique characteristics of working in this area. Finally, I will describe some recent program developments in the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs in designed to address couple and family needs of veterans returning from wartime deployments.

What is known about military deployment, war trauma, and couples?

It is a popular misconception that military deployments are universally disastrous for couples and families. As we shall see, the primary challenges for these couples are related to pre-existing vulnerabilities as well as the occurrence of war-related psychological trauma experienced by the military service member.

Although deployments are stressful, few studies support that military deployment is generally responsible for poorer outcomes in the marriages of service members at a population level. A recent RAND study commissioned by the Department of Defense examined whether the cumulative deployment time of the early Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) cohorts had a negative impact

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ABCT SIG Preconference**Abstract**

Getting Past the Affair:
How to Help Couples
Heal After a Major
Betrayal

Presenter:

Kristina Coop Gordon
University of Tennessee

Research indicates that dealing with major betrayals in couples' relationships is one of the most difficult problems to address in conjoint therapy. This purpose of this pre-conference will be to, first, describe a model that helps therapists understand common reactions to major betrayals and provides a cognitive "road map" for navigating these difficult experiences with clients. Next, there will be an overview of research on this model and relevant research on forgiveness in couples. Finally, the latter half of the presentation will focus on outlining a treatment program based on this model that has been demonstrated to help couples recover and move on from major betrayals. I also plan to leave substantial time at the end of the presentation for discussion between SIG members about their experiences with couples dealing with these issues and thoughts on future directions for research and treatment.

ABCT SIG Preconference
6:00 – 8:00 PM on
Thursday, November 13th
in Europe 10 of the
conference hotel

Letter from the SIG Co-Presidents

Rebecca Cobb¹ & Ron Rogge²

¹*Simon Fraser University*

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"You can't stay in your corner of the Forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes." – Winnie the Pooh

Where are we going? We're going to Disney World!! We are looking forward to seeing you all soon at the ABCT conference in Orlando. Our SIG continues to offer a wide and interesting range of presentations, showcasing the most recent relationship research work from across the globe, so we're anticipating a stimulating and rewarding conference this year (and not just because it is being held in the middle of Disney World)!

We will kick off the conference with the **Couples SIG preconference event** at 6:00 – 8:00 PM on Thursday, November 13th in Europe 10 of the conference hotel. By popular request, this year's seminar will focus on treating infidelity. Dr. Kristina Coop-Gordon is a clinical psychologist, an Associate Professor of psychology and the Associate Director of Clinical Training at the University of Tennessee. Dr. Coop-Gordon will present clinical insights and quantitative findings from her collaborative project with Drs. Doug Snyder and Don Baucom examining the effectiveness of a new treatment approach to dealing with infidelity in marital therapy. This work represents an excellent blend of clinical application and methodological rigor, producing a set of findings that help to inform work with couples in a treatment setting and also help to clarify our understanding of infidelity at a more conceptual level.

Our **SIG Business Meeting** will be held from 10:30 am to 12:00 noon on Friday (Oceanic 4). We will hold elections for the office of treasurer at the meeting as our current treasurer, Lorelei Simpson, will be retiring from that office. (Thanks Lorelei! You totally ROCK!!) This position could be filled by a recent graduate or by a graduate student and is an excellent opportunity to become more involved in the operation of the SIG, and to get to know all the SIG members. Please start thinking about potential nominations. If you would like to be nominated for the position, please feel free to let Ron or Becky know. There will only be one office to fill, so we hope to make use of the remaining meeting time to get updates from various committees and to discuss additional SIG business. We will also be presenting the Robert L. Weiss Student Poster Award during the meeting – maybe this year we will even be able to give out the prizes before the posters have been presented at the conference! If you have announcements or agenda items for the meeting, please let Ron (rogge@psych.rochester.edu) or Becky (rcobb@sfu.ca) know.

Editor's Note

This edition of the newsletter provides a great deal of information about what will occur at the Orlando ABCT conference. We have also featured an article by Dr. Sayers, inspired by the symposium he presented at ABCT last year, regarding the effects of military deployment on couples and families. Dr. Beach has also contributed a review of Dr. Johnson's book *Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love*.

We invite SIG members to send us ideas for article topics for future newsletters and to contact us if you would like to contribute an article or review to the next SIG newsletter.

~ Robin & Amy

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Website Update

We are pleased to post information about training and employment opportunities on the SIG website. Please forward pertinent information to one of the Website Managers.

Please visit the SIG website at <http://www.courses.rochester.edu/surveys/funk/ABCTcouples/index.html>

~ Janet, Soon-Hee & Amy

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SIG EXPOSITION & WELCOMING COCKTAIL PARTY

Friday, November 14th, 6:30-8:00pm

Southern Hemisphere 1 of the Convention Hotel

This year we will have 11 posters representing the Couples SIG at this event. Please come to socialize and to check out some of the newest research from many members of our SIG!

Couples and Wartime Deployment

From page 1

on marriages and increased the risk of marital dissolution compared to deployments prior to the beginning of these conflicts (Karney & Crown, 2007). The data do not support that the stress of these wartime deployments had a measurable impact on marital dissolution. Indeed, the study authors suggest that other risks—younger age of marriage and education level, combined with decisions to marry based on improved military-related benefits—might better explain the marital dissolution rates of these service members.

Military deployment and readjustment of the veteran in the post-deployment period necessitates change and adaptation (Segal, 2006) and thus involves stress to all family members. The existing research is mixed: It suggests that there are positive and negative effects to deployment, and most returning veterans and their family members function well over time. Survey studies indicate that 9% of married service members cite that the deployment leads to an improved relationship with their spouse, but about 15% cite missing important family events while deployed, and 11% report worsened marital relationships. (Newby, McCarroll et al., 2005) A study of family functioning following military deployments indicates that declines in family organization (e.g., regular family dinners), family cohesion (e.g., sense of togetherness) and nurturance (Kelley, 1994) can occur in the post-deployment period. Other studies suggest that the post-deployment period is associated with greater family cohesion (Kelley et al., 2001).

Wartime deployments, and the war trauma experienced by the service members, are more highly associated with difficulty for couples. Clinical writings suggest possible reasons why this may be the case: The deployment schedules during wartime are more unpredictable, there is greater fear of death of the service member, and service members deployed during wartime experience a higher level of aggression that must be rechanneled upon return home (Peebles-Kleiger & Kleiger, 1994). The research findings support that greater levels of war trauma, and resulting psychological symptoms, result in proportionally greater disruption in the functioning of the service member and his or her family. The results of the NVVRS (Kulka et al., 1988) and other studies (Cook, Riggs, Thompson, Coyne, & Sheikh, 2004; Riggs, Byrne, Weathers, & Litz, 1998; Solomon et al., 1992) indicated that higher levels of war-related trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptomatology

were associated with more marital problems, greater family violence, and greater child behavior problems than those without trauma. Indeed, the impact of war trauma on family adjustment in a predominantly married sample of Gulf War I service members was mediated through withdrawal/numbing and arousal/lack of control components of PTSD (Taft et al., 2008). Nevertheless, pre-deployment family violence has been shown to be a key predictor of post-deployment violence (Newby, Ursano et al., 2005). Therefore, it is highly important to consider that these pre-deployment factors may account for the effects that appear to be attributable to military deployments.

Compared to studies of Vietnam veterans, relatively few studies have examined this phenomenon among OEF-OIF veterans; nevertheless, the extant studies support the association between symptoms of war trauma and family problems. Our preliminary study (Sayers, Farrow, Ross, & Oslin, 2008, in press) found that among 86 OEF-OIF veterans with current partners, those with PTSD or depressive symptoms were more likely to have problems associated with the return to the family, and to report having a troubled marriage. In addition, among those with a current or former partner ($n=134$), OEF-OIF veterans with minor or major depression, or generalized anxiety disorder, were more than twice as likely to exhibit at least mild levels of relationship abuse.

Renshaw (Renshaw et al., 2008) reported that in a sample of national guard service members returned from Iraq ($N=45$), spouses' perceptions of their soldiers' symptoms were more highly related to their own psychological functioning and relationship satisfaction than to soldiers' self report of his or her own symptoms. Furthermore, the discrepancy between non-service member spouses' perceptions and soldiers' self report was associated with spouses' greater distress, suggesting that spouses' cognitions of their soldier-partner may play a significant role in explaining associations among wartime deployment and marital difficulties.

Another study (Nelson Goff, Crow, Reisbig, & Hamilton, 2007) examined the

impact of trauma symptoms in returned OEF-OIF service members on their relationship satisfaction. The soldiers in this small sample ($N=45$) had few symptoms of PTSD relative to the general population, however. Other symptoms, such as sexual problems and sleep disturbances, were found to predict relatively lower relationship satisfaction in the veterans.

Qualitative studies have also been used to identify the types of difficulties and the dynamics that couples are challenged with during the post-deployment period. Nelson Goff and colleagues (Nelson Goff et al., 2006) used qualitative methods to identify couple and family problems among a mixed sample of military and non-military individuals who experienced a trauma and their family members. They found the most common issues concerned lower levels of communication due to avoidance, decreased cohesion as a couple, and a decreased sense of understanding. Interestingly, some participants also cited increases in communication, cohesion and understanding as resulting from working through adaptation to the stress of the trauma. In a recent qualitative study of Iraq veterans, Faber and colleagues (Faber et al., 2008) noted that "ambiguous presence" (i.e., physical presence of the soldier combined with psychological absence) is an important dynamic that military service members and their family members deal with upon return. In addition, they struggle with re-establishing roles and routines in their family as a major task in reintegration.

New developments. The literature on couples and wartime deployment is relatively young, with limited established theoretical frameworks guiding the efforts. One of the earliest frameworks was articulated by Peebles-Kleiger and Kleiger (1994) with respect to military families and Operation Desert Storm (Gulf War I). The authors distinguished wartime deployment as a "catastrophic" (vs. "normative") family stressor (McCubbin & Figley, 1983), with corresponding lack of predictability, anticipation of trauma, and difficult (and sometimes rapid) reentry to civilian life in the post-deployment period. Their framework lays out important notions

developed from clinical writings about stages of deployment, reunion and the processes of the service member reintegrating into the life of the couple and his or her social environment. Their paper provides a good primer for a broad understanding of the experience of military couples.

Nelson Goff (Nelson Goff & Smith, 2005) proposed the Couples Adaptation to Traumatic Stress (CATS) Model, which tests the idea that trauma symptoms from experienced by a spouse are “communicable” and may “infect” their partner. Thus, the partner experiences symptoms that mimic those of the primary trauma victim (see also Dirkzwager, Bramsen, Adèr, & van der Ploeg, 2005; C. R. Figley, 1983; C. R. Figley, 1995). The CATS model is multifactorial and relational, and includes a number of important contextual (e.g., support) and pre-disposing factors (e.g., age, prior trauma) of each spouse. In line with the CATS model, a great deal of evidence suggests that a spouse’s trauma symptoms have an impact on their partner and the relationship. At this point, however, the actual mechanisms of transmission and mimicking of symptoms have not been identified. In addition, there is no provision in the CATS model for the impact of the service member’s absence due to deployment and the reintegration tasks required of the couple in the post-deployment period.

My colleagues and I have recently introduced the concept of “complicated family reintegration” (Sayers et al., 2008, in press). This construct accounts for the reintegration tasks challenging spouses in the post-deployment period as well as how symptoms may interfere with these processes. For example, spouses who remain behind during a deployment take over many family and parental roles that the service member may have filled, and the return of the service member after the deployment often requires a renegotiation of these roles. In addition, the resumption of emotional and physical intimacy among spouses, and closeness with one’s children requires all family members to exhibit patience and understanding in the weeks and months after reunion. Also, the wartime deployment

itself often raises many new problems, including financial and employment issues, and marital infidelity. These challenges place high demands on spouses’ communication skills and often require a good deal of assistance from others. Symptoms secondary to wartime trauma have been shown to have an impact on the relationship, and we proposed that the interruption of successful resolution of reintegration tasks is the mechanism of this impact. In essence, symptoms related to war trauma interrupt the service member’s successful return to their roles as spouses and parents.

In our preliminary study discussed briefly above (Sayers et al., 2008, in press), we demonstrated a link between symptoms related to war trauma and specific family role-related problems of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans with partners. Diagnoses of both major depression and PTSD were associated with feeling “like a guest in one’s own home.” A diagnosis of PTSD also was associated with reporting that one’s children did not act warmly or were afraid of the veteran. Specific types of symptoms responsible for these associations appear to be psychomotor symptoms, avoidance and emotional numbing. New research is currently underway to examine how symptoms related to war-trauma may have an impact on problems in veterans regaining their roles in the family.

New interventions for couples affected by war related trauma are under development. Most notably, Monson and colleagues at the VA’s National Center for PTSD in Boston (Monson, Schnurr, Stevens, & Guthrie, 2004) have developed a behavioral couples therapy for spouses with PTSD and their partners. The intervention provides education to the couple regarding PTSD and relationships, communication training for emotion expression and problem solving, cognitive intervention to help the couple make sense of the trauma, and guidance in navigating the difficulties associated with the trauma within the relationship. Large-scale evaluation of the intervention is underway with NIH and Department of Defense funding.

Deployment-related couples and family research is a complex, multi-outcome endeavor. The military deployment cycle, naturally, is an important factor in deployment research. We currently know little about the important time frames for reunion and reintegration phenomena in the post-deployment period, although clinical descriptions (Peebles-Kleiger & Kleiger, 1994), and new qualitative studies (MacDermid, 2006), provide some guidance. Study design and data collection are complicated by the fact service members go through a number of different transitions during the post-deployment period. These include experiencing changes in geography (i.e., return to the continental US from the war theatre), occupation (i.e., return to civilian jobs if separating from the service), bureaucratic/medical systems (i.e., from Department of Defense medical care to VA care or employer-based insurance), and social contexts (i.e., from a military unit to a neighborhood or city). Recruitment, tracking, and professional collaboration challenges abound due to these transitions. Knowledge and assessment of spouses' pre-deployment characteristics that might influence them in the post-deployment period are a particularly thorny problem. This is because access to service members and their families requires a significant commitment to developing collaborations with military command structures in order to access service members at this important point.

Another research challenge stems from the array of outcomes that are relevant in this population. Individual outcomes might include depressive disorders, PTSD and other anxiety disorders, and substance abuse problems. Relationship and family outcomes might include satisfaction, relationship aggression and violence, as well as child outcomes. Therefore, narrowing the focus of a project is not a simple task.

Clinical and programmatic initiatives within the DOD, VA and elsewhere. Despite the challenges discussed above, it is important to mention the new resources being devoted to improve the research and clinical systems for the benefit of military and veteran families. At

least two public hearings this year of the US Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs have addressed the needs of family members of veterans (hearings on March 11, 2008 and July 23, 2008, <http://veterans.senate.gov/public/>). In part because of these hearings and public interest, legislation was recently made into law that clarifies and widens the role that families can have in services within the VA. S. 2162, Veterans' Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act of 2008, was signed by the President on October 10, 2008. Prior to this bill, the letter of the law allowed the involvement of family members only under specific conditions, such as the veteran having verified "service connected" injuries or disabilities that were the focus of treatment. Although in practice many VA Medical Centers conducted quite a bit of family and couple-focused treatment, the previous law hindered widespread development and dissemination of empirically supported couples-based interventions.

In addition, the creation of the federally supported Center for Deployment Psychology, David Riggs, Ph.D., Executive Director, signaled new support for helping veterans with post-deployment adjustment (<http://www.deploymentpsych.org/>). The center has a prominent role in training military and civilian behavioral health providers in post-deployment mental health issues throughout the US, focusing in part on the needs of families of veterans. Other clinical initiatives within the VA are focused on reaching veterans and their family members through direct outreach to Reserve or National Guard units returning from Iraq or Afghanistan. Indeed, nearly every VA Medical Center has staff dedicated to performing this outreach and smoothing the transition of their family members to VA care.

There have been a number of special announcements for research programs applicable to family issues for recently returning military service members or veterans, although it remains to be seen how couple or family focused research fare in these new programs. The Defense Centers of Excellence web site provides a useful starting place for searching for deployment related funding opportunities in

NIH, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.
(<http://www.dcoe.health.mil/research.aspx>).

I look forward to hearing about the work of Couples SIG members with veterans, their spouses, and other family members.

The assertions presented here do not necessarily represent the views of the Philadelphia VA Medical Center or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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SIG Treasurer Position Opening

The treasurer serves a two-year term. The duties consist of tracking the expenditures and disbursements of the SIG, tracking the changes in membership, opening and maintaining the checking account for the SIG (which is typically held as a joint account with the name of the treasurer and the SIG on it), preparing a treasurer's report for each newsletter, communicating and perhaps planning with other SIG officers regarding conference and other expenditures, and recruiting new members to the SIG. The time commitment is not large, however, more availability to communicate and plan with the other officers is needed in the weeks prior to the newsletter and during the period of planning for the SIG's conference events. Ability to work with Excel is a plus. Also, the chance to get to know the other SIG officers is a benefit of the position. I enjoy our SIG, so it is worth it.

If interested please let Ron (rogge@psych.rochester.edu) or Becky (rcobb@sfu.ca) know, or express interest at SIG business meeting at ABCT, 10:30 am to 12:00 noon on Friday, November 14th in Oceanic 4.

Treasurer's Update

Dear SIGers,

It's getting to be that time of year again – the ABCT conference approaches and it's time to support our SIG. Dues are \$20 for professional members and \$5 for students, post-docs, and retired members. To become or remain an active member in the SIG, you should plan to pay your dues sometime this fall, either by mail to the address below or at the conference. Checks should be made out to Lorelei Simpson, with "ABCT Couples SIG" in the memo line. The current SIG balance is \$1063.85. We are using our current funds for exciting SIG events at the conference including our guest speaker and the SIG cocktail hour. Please remember to contribute so that we can keep it up!

Our membership continues to be strong – we have 154 members: 74 professionals and 79 students. Since the last newsletter we've gained 6 new members, and will hopefully have even more join at the conference. Please encourage your students, post-docs, and colleagues to become part of, or renew their membership in, our active and exciting SIG!

Finally, if you're not already on it, remember to join the SIG listserv at www.coupllessig.net

See you in Orlando!

Lorelei Simpson, Ph.D.
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BOOK REVIEW

Steven R. H. Beach
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Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love

Sue Johnson

Published 2006 by Guilford. (436 pp.)

This book will be a delightful read for most readers of the Couples SIG newsletter. In fact, the smartest move might be to quit reading my review and go now to get your own copy of the book to read.

I am neither an EFT marital therapist nor an attachment theorist, but I do not see how I could have enjoyed Sue Johnson's book any more than I did. "Hold Me Tight" provides a wonderful walk through EFT at just the level of detail that is likely to be helpful to couples, and also to marital therapists trained in approaches other than EFT. Because the couple descriptions are nuanced and their interactions are provided in extended detail, interspersed with descriptions of the goals of therapy, it is possible to read the book as a story about couples you are getting to know and care about. At the same time, Sue Johnson provides a wonderful running commentary on scientific underpinnings as well as a broader social commentary. The mix allows many opportunities to gain new insights, draw connections between techniques used in EFT and those used in other approaches to marital therapy, appreciate new questions to ask, and identify new tactics for working with distressed couples. It may be that you will find some new approaches that will work for you. As a bonus, the book is also very entertaining. I think it will be a favorite both with those looking for stimulation in their clinical work, or ways to refine their clinical approach, as well as those looking for new research directions. It will also be useful for students and those learning about marital therapy.

The first three chapters of "Hold Me Tight" provide a brief introduction to adult attachment, and provide advance organizers for the rest of the book. Because the presentation is for a general audience, it can be helpful in thinking about ways to present these ideas in a direct, concrete manner to clients. I would not advise skipping this section, even if you think you already know all about adult attachment. You will probably find the material engaging and helpful in anchoring the rest of the book. At the same time, if you find that the first three chapters are not that exciting for you, do not stop reading there. Remember that the real fun begins with the second section of the book.

The second section of the book provides a detailed look at seven key conversations, with each chapter focused on one of the basic, necessary, conversations in couple therapy. In addition, the second section of the book provides a very nice illustration of the "sequence" of conversations and why they might need to be approached in a particular order.

Conversation 1 is focused on recognizing patterns in couple conversations and, perhaps more importantly, helping couples recognize their own patterns. This will be familiar ground for behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, and integrative marital therapists. At the same time, in Conversation 1, the patterns are described in language that can be readily used in marital therapy and the dialogues illustrate therapeutic techniques that can also be readily utilized. The “Demon Dialogues” are nicely characterized and easy to visualize. In addition, they are presented in a manner that may make it easier for couples to see them as an “external” threat, thereby setting the stage for the second conversation.

Conversation 2 is focused on recognizing and admitting vulnerabilities. I particularly appreciated the way that recognition of vulnerabilities and exploration of vulnerabilities was described. The importance of staying with the emotional experience during the exploration process, despite potential impulses and thoughts to the contrary, was very nicely presented. Likewise, the importance of sharing the experience with a loved one, despite potential impulses to avoid, was very nicely articulated. For therapists trained in dealing with anxiety disorders there will, once again, be many interesting opportunities to compare tactics.

Conversation 3 is about putting patterns and vulnerabilities together to make sense of a particular, concrete interaction that pulled the couple into their usual pattern. This allows the couple to work together to imagine a different, safer and more connected way, of responding to the problematic pattern that has dominated their interactions.

Conversation 4, which bears the title of the book “Hold me Tight,” describes the conversation in which couples look closely at the fears that have kept them from feeling safe together. The couple is prompted to identify the things they need to ask for so that they can begin to feel close, connected, and ready to engage each other in interactions that are high on Accessibility, Responsiveness, and Engagement (A.R.E).

Conversation 5 is about forgiveness. Alternatively, one might say that the conversation is about using an increasingly safe, connected relationship as a foundation for exploring the problematic past, creating an expanded, mutual understanding of that past, and then letting go of historical hurts that are creating roadblocks in the relationship. Most marital therapists will agree that forgiveness is necessary for every relationship – but, as suggested in conversation 5, forgiveness and reconciliation may be a good bit more likely when a foundation of trust and connectedness already have been established.

Conversation 6 focuses on sex and touch, with a heavy emphasis on non-demand, pleasurable activities that would fit well with standard introductions to sex therapy. Again, there are interesting opportunities to think about how to combine this approach with sex therapy approaches and imagine the fruitful combination that might emerge.

Conversation 7 introduces the serious and important topic of “keeping your love alive.” That is, conversation 7 prompts couples and therapists to think about the way that relationships continue to change and grow over time. Again, this is a conversation that will be of interest to any marital therapist who recognizes that the biggest challenge for marital therapy is not the initial change – it is the maintenance of successful change.

The final section of the book discusses the way in which safe, connected relationships may heal individuals. This section also provides more detail regarding the concept of “healthy dependence.” It is in the section that the importance of marital relationships for family and community is introduced and elaborated.

Throughout the book, Sue Johnson uses lively and engaging examples to illustrate and illuminate the steps couples take in rebuilding relationships. The couples in the book are believable at the same time that they represent identifiable “types.” This makes their stories all the more compelling and helps engage the reader in their emotional ups and downs. The result is a book that I am confident will be useful and interesting for all marital therapists. I highly recommend it to the SIG membership.

For more information about EFT and "Hold Me Tight" go to www.holdmetight.net

Letter from the Student Co-Presidents

William Aldridge II¹ & Rebecca Brock²

¹University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

²University of Iowa

We hope that you are as excited as we are about the upcoming ABCT convention in Orlando! As you finish polishing your presentations and start packing your bags (and your Mickey Mouse ears), we want to highlight a number of key Couples SIG-related events that will be happening at this year's convention.

First, can you imagine a better way to kick off a Saturday night in Orlando than unwinding with friends and colleagues for a casual cocktail and social conversation? We didn't think so! So we'll be having the **2008 Couples SIG Cocktail Party** on Saturday evening from 6:30-8pm (following the ABCT Presidential Address) in room "Asia 2." Come join your fellow Couples SIG members for pre-dinner drinks and conversation. This year, we decided to focus the event on pre-dinner activities, which will allow SIG friends and colleagues to form their own dinner parties and plans. Come ready to re-connect and have a good time!

For SIG students, the night doesn't end there... We are excited to announce, for the first time ever, the **Couples SIG After-Dinner Student Cocktail Hour** (we're still working on the name of this

event...so let us know if you have any good suggestions). We've been hearing fellow students clamor for an event like this for years, so we thought we'd finally make it happen. Following your dinner activities Saturday night, make your way over to Big River Grille & Brewing Works on Disney's Boardwalk, just a short walk from the convention hotel. We're planning to start gathering around 9pm and go "until..." This venue has both inside and outside seating, and we're likely to start near the bar at least until the dinner crowds clear out.

Finally, to bring the 2008 convention to a rousing close, the second ever **Couples SIG student symposium** will be held Sunday morning from 10:45am-12:15pm in room "Australia 3." The title of this year's

COUPLES SIG AFTER-DINNER STUDENT COCKTAILS

Saturday, November 15th, **9:00pm-until...**

Big River Grille & Brewing Works located on the Waterfront at Disney's Boardwalk



student symposium is *Moving Beyond the Couple: The Impact of Relationship Quality on Individual, Parenting, and Work Outcomes*. We'll feature several Couple SIG student member presentations at this event, which will focus on how we are expanding the outcome focus of our field beyond the success of the relationship dyad itself. Please make plans to attend this unique student symposium and help this tradition continue!

As a reminder to student Couples SIG members, make sure that you have subscribed to the **Couple SIG student listserv**, which is one of the main channels for Couples SIG student news and event updates. If you are not subscribed and would like to join, just send an email to Becca at rebecca-brock@uiowa.edu or Will at will_aldrige@unc.edu.

See you in Orlando!

HOT OFF THE PRESS

In Press and Recently Published Literature

Barry, R. A., Bunde, M., Brock, R. L., & Lawrence, E. (in press). Validity and utility of a multidimensional model of received support in intimate relationships. *Journal of Family Psychology*.

Barry, R. A., Kochanska, G., & Philibert, R. A. (in press). G x E interaction in the organization of attachment: Mothers' responsiveness as a moderator of children's genotypes. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*.

Baucom, B., Eldridge, K., Jones, J., Sevier, M., Clements, M., Markman, H., Stanley, S., Sayers, S., Sher, T., & Christensen, A. (in press). Relative contributions of relationship distress and depression to communication patterns in couples. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*.

Beach, S. R. H., Fincham, F. D., Hurt, T., McNair, L. M., & Stanley, S. M. (2008). Prayer and marital intervention: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 27, 641-669.

Beach, S. R. H., Fincham, F. D., Hurt, T., McNair, L. M., & Stanley, S. M. (2008). Prayer and marital intervention: Toward an open empirically grounded dialogue. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 27, 693-710.

Cano, A., Barterian, J., & Heller, J. (2008). Empathic and nonempathic interaction in chronic pain couples. *Clinical Journal of Pain*, 24, 678-684.

Chatav, Y., & Whisman, M. A. (in press). Partner schemas and relationship functioning: A States of Mind analysis. *Behavior Therapy*.

Cohan C.L., Cole, S., & Schoen, R. (in press). Divorce following the September 11 terrorist attacks. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*.

Cui, M., Fincham, F. D., & Pasley, B. K. (2008). Young adult romantic relationships: The role of parents' marital problems and relationship efficacy. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

Davila, J., Stroud, C. B., & Starr, L. R. (2008). Depression in couples and families. To appear in I. Gotlib & C. Hammen (Eds.), *Handbook of Depression*, 2nd Ed. NY: Guilford Press.

Doss, B. D., Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (In Press). The effect of the transition to parenthood on relationship quality: An eight-year prospective study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Doss, B. D., Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (2008). Marital therapy, retreats, and books: The who, what, when, and why of relationship help-seeking. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 34, 527-538.

Doss, B. D., Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., Markman, H. J., & Johnson, C. A. (In Press) Differential use of premarital education in first and second marriages. *Journal of Family Psychology*.

Fincham, F.D., Beach, S.R.H., Lambert, N., Stillman, T., Braithwaite, S.R. (2008). Spiritual behaviors and relationship satisfaction: A critical analysis of the role of prayer. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 27, 362-388.

Fincham, F.D., Cui, M., Braithwaite, S.R., & Pasley, K. (2008). Attitudes towards intimate partner violence in dating relationships. *Psychological Assessment*, 20, 260-269

Gordon, K. C., Dixon, L., Hughes, F. M., & Willett, J. (in press). Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy. In J. Bray & M. Stanton (Eds.), *The Blackwell handbook of Family Psychology*. Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishing.

Gordon, K. C., Hughes, F. M., Tomcik, N. D., Dixon, L. J., & Litzinger, S. (in press). Widening spheres of impact: The role of forgiveness in individual, marital, and family functioning. *Journal of Family Psychology*.

Goubert, L., Vervoort, T., Cano, A., & Crombez, G. (in press). Catastrophizing about their children's pain is related to higher parent-child congruency in pain ratings: an experimental investigation. *European Journal of Pain*.

Gunther, M. L., Beach, S. R. H., Yanasak, N. E., & Miller, L. S. (In Press). Deciphering spousal intentions: A pilot fMRI study of couple communication. *Journal of Personal and Social Relationships*.

Herrington, R. L., Mitchell, A. E., Castellani, A. M., Joseph, J. I., Snyder, D. K., & Gleaves, D. H. (in press). Assessing disharmony and disaffection in intimate relationships: Revision of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory factor scales. *Psychological Assessment*.

Kochanska, G., Barry, R. A., Stellern, S. A., O'Bleness, J. J. (in press). Early attachment organization moderates the parent-child mutually coercive pathway to children's antisocial conduct. *Child Development*.

Kochanska, G., Philibert, R. A., & Barry, R. A. (in press). Interplay of genes and relationships in the development of self-regulation: Attachment organization moderates the effect of 5-HTTLPR status. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*.

Kochanska, G., Barry, R. A., Aksan, N., & Boldt, L. J. (2008). A developmental model of maternal and child contributions to disruptive conduct: The first six years. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 11, 1220-1227.

Knutson, J. F., Lawrence, E., Taber, S. M., Bank, L., & DeGarmo, D. S. (in press). Assessing children's exposure to intimate partner violence. *Child Clinical and Family Psychology Review*.

Lawrence, E., Barry, R.A., Brock, R.L., & Langer, A. (in press). Assessment of marital satisfaction. To be published in H. Reis & S. Sprecher (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of human relationships*. CA: Sage.

Lawrence, E., Brock, R.L., Barry, R.A., Langer, A., & Bunde, M. (in press). Assessing relationship quality: Development of an interview and implications for couple assessment and intervention. To be published in F. Columbus (Ed.), *Psychology of relationships*. NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

Lawrence, E., Langer, A., & Yoon, J. (forthcoming, 2009). Intimate partner violence. To be published in K. Bjorkqvist & K. Osterman (Eds.), *Research on aggression and conflict resolution*. Peter Lang Printing House.

Mitchell, A. E., Castellani, A. M., Sheffield, R. L., Joseph, J. I., Doss, B. D., & Snyder, D. K. (2008). Predictors of intimacy in couples' discussions of relationship injuries: An observational study. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22, 21-29.

Owen, J., Rhoades, G. K., Fincham, F. & Stanley, S. M., (in press). The Schwartz Outcome Scale: Factor invariance across ethnicities. *Journal of Brief Therapy*.

Owen, J., Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., & Fincham, F. (in press). "Hooking up" among college students: Demographic and psychosocial correlates. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*.

Rahbar, K. P., Doss, B. D., & Perez, M. (In Press). Body image and disordered eating in romantic relationships. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*.

Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (in press). Couples' reasons for cohabitation: Associations with individual well-being and relationship quality. *Journal of Family Issues*.

Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (in press). The pre-engagement cohabitation effect: A replication and extension of previous findings. *Journal of Family Psychology*.

Snyder, D. K., Heyman, R. E., & Haynes, S. N. (2008). Assessing couple distress. In J. Hunsley & E. Mash (Eds.), *A guide to assessments that work* (pp. 439-463). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Snyder, D. K., & Mitchell, A. E. (2008). Affective reconstructive couple therapy: A pluralistic, developmental approach. In A. S. Gurman (Ed.), *Clinical handbook of couple therapy* (4th ed.) (pp. 353-382). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Stroud, C. B., & Davila, J. (2008). Pubertal timing and depressive symptoms in early adolescents: The roles of romantic competence and romantic experiences. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 37, 953-966.

Stuart, G. L., O'Farrell, T. J., & Temple, J. R. (in press). Review of the association between treatment for substance misuse and reductions in intimate partner violence. *Substance Use and Misuse*.

Sullivan, K. T., & Karney, B. R. (2008). Incorporating religious practice in marital interventions: To pray or not to pray? *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 27, 670-676.

Temple, J. R., Stuart, G. L., & O'Farrell, T. J. (in press). Prevention of intimate partner violence in substance using populations. *Substance Use and Misuse*.

Whisman, M. A., Beach, S. R. H., & Snyder, D. K. (in press). Is marital discord taxonic and can taxonic status be assessed reliably? Results from a national, representative sample of married couples. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*.

Whisman, M. A., & Chatav, Y. (in press). Social consequences of borderline personality disorder features in a population-based survey: Marital distress, marital violence, and marital disruption. *Journal of Personality Disorders*.

Whisman, M. A., Snyder, D. K., & Beach, S. R. H. (in press). Screening for marital and relationship discord. *Journal of Family Psychology*.

Whitton, S. W., Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (in press). Effects of parental divorce on marital commitment and confidence. *Journal of Family Psychology*.

Whitton, S. W., Stanley, S. M., Markman, H. J., & Baucom, B. R. (in press). Women's weekly relationship functioning and depressive symptoms. *Personal Relationships*.

BROWSE A LIST OF COUPLES-RELATED EVENTS

at 2008 ABCT conference on the SIG Website
Type or Paste this link into your web browser:

<http://www.courses.rochester.edu/surveys/funk/ABCTcouples/presentations.htm>

KUDOS!

to the following SIGers...

Annamarie Cano edited a special issue on couples with pain in the *Clinical Journal of Pain* (Volume 24, Issue 8, October 2008).

Kim Halford is the recipient of the Australian Psychological Society (APS) President's Award for Service to the profession and discipline of psychology in Australia. Dr. Halford also had the honor of presenting an invited address at the 2008 APS conference entitled "Enhancing couple relationships to advance human well being: what psychology has to offer" describing his work that led to the President's award.

Ayna Johansen, an upcoming Ph.D. (December, 2008) in Cano lab and has secured a Psychologist position with Blue Cross in Oslo (Norway).

The Department of Psychology at the University of Iowa voted to grant tenure to **Erika Lawrence**.

Michelle Leonard earned her Ph.D. (Cano lab at Wayne State University) in August 2008 and began a tenure-track assistant professor job at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Greg Stuart, who has been at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University for over 10 years, has recently relocated to Knoxville. He has joined the clinical psychology faculty at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. His new contact information is:

University of Tennessee-Knoxville
Department of Psychology
310C Austin Peay Bldg.
Knoxville, TN 37996-0900; Office: (865) 974-3358, Fax: (865) 974-3330,
gstuart@utk.edu

Sarah Whitton and her husband had twin boys, Cole and Aidan, on July 8th.

COUPLES RESEARCH & THERAPY SIG COCKTAIL PARTY

At ABCT, Saturday, November 15th
6:30-8:00pm

Room Asia 2 of the Convention Hotel
Drinks and light fare available!