
How Couples Developmental Diagnosis Helps You!

What Do You Do When Your Clients Aren't Telling You What You Need to Know?



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Think Developmentally

Intervene Incisively



What Developmental Theory Solves

The Developmental Model theory enables you to view couples' struggles as part of the struggle for psychological growth and wholeness – not as pathology or illness

This is not a pathology model. It is a model that brings HOPE to your clients.



Developmental Model Gives You A Way to Lead



You have the insight and ability to see the couple where they are, to uncover why they are stuck....and to lead them to what they can become.

Here Is What We Will Cover Today



Why Differentiation Matters in Couples Relationships

Setting Up an Incisive Diagnostic Exercise

Video Demonstration and Discussion

Description of 6 Diagnostic Criteria

Demo: How to Use your Assessment to Build Connection

An Effective Couples Therapist is

- Decisive and Incisive
- Sustains Positive Momentum
- Able to Avoid Repeating Negative Cycles
- Creates Alignment with each Partner
- Focuses Attention on High Leverage Areas
- Targets Issues and Goals that will have High Impact

What is Differentiation?

Differentiation is the active, ongoing process in which a person defines himself or herself, their own thoughts, feelings, wishes and desires.



Doing this is difficult because it takes internal self-awareness.



Expressing desires openly carries the risk of seeing differences, facing conflict and disrupting attachment.



Differentiation also evolves when a partner is able to listen and learn from the other's wishes and desires. This requires tolerating anxiety and being able to hold two realities: "mine" and "yours."



The Paper Exercise is a projective exercise designed to elicit information quickly about six major areas of a couple's interaction.

The exercise itself lasts only five minutes.

You will use the remainder of the session to process the exercise and give feedback.

The Paper Exercise can be used either...



Diagnostically

OR
AS



Intervention

Directions Given To The Couple

1

“This piece of paper represents something important **to you.**”
(looking in the eyes of one member of the couple).



2

“And this piece of paper represents something important **to you**” *(looking directly in the eyes of the other member of the couple).*

3

“Take a minute and think about what it represents to you. Then I would like you to hold this paper between you, and you will have up to five minutes to decide who gets the paper without ripping or tearing it. You can do it verbally or nonverbally. You can do it any way you like, and you will have up to five minutes to decide who gets the paper without ripping or tearing it.”
(and it’s not your kids or your relationship)

*Directions for the Paper Exercise
(Adapted from Susan Campbell, The Couples Journey)*

Video goes here
Discuss the directions
Then Show the Exercise

Let's Review

When You Finish The Exercise

- ✓ Stop and check on how each of them is feeling.
- ✓ Ask how characteristic they think this is of what goes on at home.
 - ✓ *A lot of couples say this is extremely characteristic.*
 - ✓ *Some couples will say it's not characteristic at all, yet what they've demonstrated in front of you is what you've seen them do in all of your sessions with them, so to you it will look very familiar.*
- ✓ Then, give them feedback based on where you first saw the exercise breakdown.

Categories For Assessment



Do the partners self define?



How do they manage boundaries? Are their boundaries rigid or overly permeable?



Do they show awareness that the other is separate from themselves?



How do they manage conflict? Is it avoided, escalated or acknowledged and handled?



Do they have the capacity to move the conflict forward (negotiate)?



Is each partner able to give and/or receive?

A Typical Pattern For Conflict Avoidant Couples

There is minimal or no active self-definition. If one partner defines, the other often merges with the first partner's self-definition.

Boundaries are merged.

They show minimal capacity to explore what the other chose.



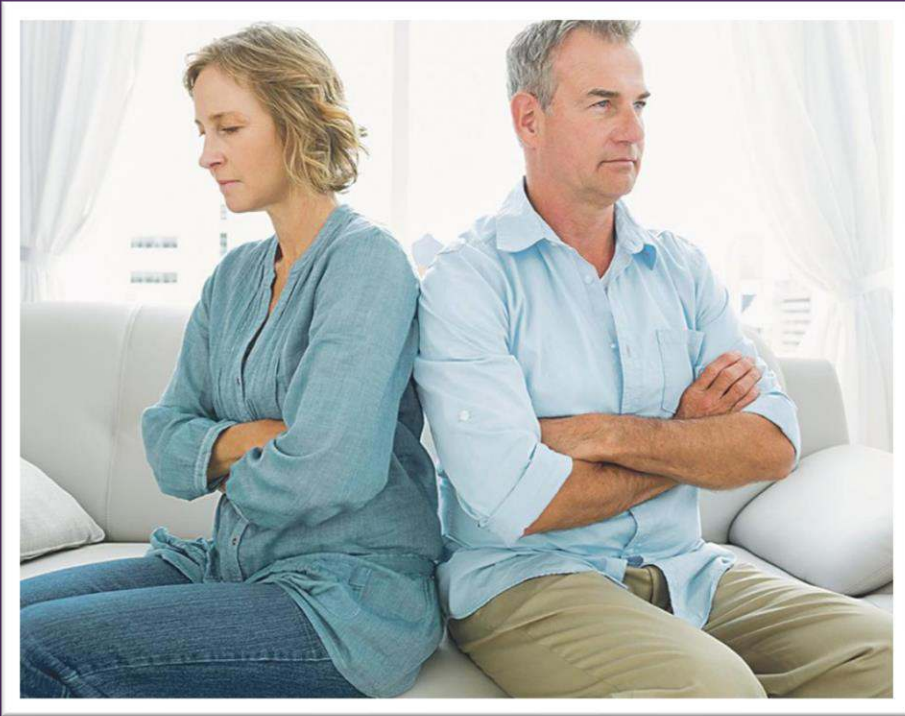
Conflict is avoided and minimized.

Negotiation is minimal. One usually gives in to the other one.

Giving is quick to avoid discomfort.

2 Main Types of Conflict Avoiding Couples

TENSION RIDDLED



- Very sensitive, internalize issues, hypersensitive to criticism
- Deflect important topics
- May not talk to each other for weeks at a time
- A key word: **RESENTMENT**

2nd Type of Conflict Avoiding Couple

THE FRIENDLY TYPE



- Very pleasant, likeable
- Very dependable people
- Overly optimistic
- Individual identity gets lost



A Typical Pattern Of Hostile-Fighting Couples

There is no self-definition.

The interactions escalate over time.

Rigid Boundaries-strongly defended. Other is viewed as enemy.



Conflict is overt and escalated.

There is no negotiation.

There is no giving or receiving

Paper Exercise Example of a Hostile-Fighting Couple

Tara: I want it.

Brian: No, I want it.

Tara: Well I really want it.

Brian: It's fundamentally more important to me than it is to you.

Tara: Then I'm taking it.

Brian: That pisses me off. You don't care one bit about me.

Tara: Well, you better take care of yourself. I did. I guess we just see things differently.

What Differentiated Partners Do

- Recognize that differences are inevitable
- Stay in tension until conflicts are resolved.
- Demonstrate curiosity about each other's emotions



- Maintain connection while resolving conflicts
- Realize individual and couple dreams
- Repair relationship ruptures.

For more information about



Training in the Developmental Model of
Couples Therapy

Please visit us at

www.couplesinstitute.com/developmentalmodel

Training will be open from only September 13 through
September 22