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**Resilient Minds Family Therapy**

**COUPLES THERAPY**: *Gottman Explanation*

 I utilize the Gottman Method as the foundation for the work that I do with both marital and premarital couples. The Gottman Method is an approach to couples therapy that includes a thorough assessment (see below) of the couple’s relationship and integrates research-based interventions based on the Sound Relationship House Theory. The goals of Gottman Method Couples Therapy are to disarm conflicting verbal communication; increase intimacy, respect, and affection; remove barriers that create a feeling of stagnancy; and create a heightened sense of empathy and understanding within the context of the relationship. To help you productively manage conflicts, you will be given methods to manage “resolvable problems” and dialogue about “gridlocked” (or perpetual) issues.

Sound Relationship House Theory:

 1. Build Love Maps - How well do you know your partner’s inner psychological world, his or her history, worries, stresses, joys, and hopes?

2. Share Fondness and Admiration - The antidote for contempt, this level focuses on the amount of affection and respect within a relationship. (To strengthen fondness and admiration, express appreciation and respect.)

3. Turn Towards Instead of Away - State your needs, be aware of bids for connection and respond to (turn towards) them. The small moments of everyday life are actually the building blocks of relationship.

4. The Positive Perspective - The presence of a positive approach to problem-solving and the success of repair attempts.

5. Manage Conflict - We say “manage” conflict rather than “resolve” conflict, because relationship conflict is natural and has functional, positive aspects. Understand that there is a critical difference in handling perpetual problems and solvable problems. 6. Make Life Dreams Come True - Create an atmosphere that encourages each person to talk honestly about his or her hopes, values, convictions and aspirations. 7. Create Shared Meaning - Understand important visions, narratives, myths, and metaphors about your relationship.

8. Trust - This is the state that occurs when a person knows that his or her partner acts and thinks to maximize that person’s best interests and benefits, not just the partner’s own interests and benefits. In other words, this means, “my partner has my back and is there for me.”

9. Commitment - This means believing (and acting on the belief) that your relationship with this person is completely your lifelong journey, for better or for worse (meaning that if it gets worse you will both work to improve it). It implies cherishing your partner’s positive qualities and nurturing gratitude by comparing the partner favorably with real or imagined others, rather than trashing the partner by magnifying negative qualities, and nurturing resentment by comparing unfavorably with real or imagined others.

*The Gottman Method consists of five stages:*

1. Assessment – 3 sessions, further described below

2. Treatment – length of therapy will be determined by your specific needs and goals 3. Phasing Out of Therapy – meeting less frequently, in order for you to test out new relationship skills

4. Termination – summarize progress and define any work that remains

5. Outcome Evaluation – planned follow up sessions at 6, 12, 18 and 24 months; these sessions have been shown through research to significantly decrease the chances of relapse into previous, unhelpful patterns

**ASSESSMENT SESSIONS:** Three, in-depth assessment sessions are scheduled as follows:

1. Joint couple interview - 50 minutes in the first session we will talk about the history of your relationship, areas of concerns, and your goals for treatment. Between assessment session one and two, I send my couples the Gottman Relationship Checkup (GRC). This online clinical assessment tool consists of 337 questions about friendship, intimacy, how well you know your partner, how you manage emotions and conflict, how you share your values and goals, and what gives meaning to your lives. There are additional questions about parenting, housework, finances, trust, and individual areas of concern. The questionnaire is completely confidential, fully HIPAA compliant, and I will be the only person to see your individual responses. The cost for the online assessment tool is $39. More information can be found here: <https://gottmanconnect.com/checkup?utm_source=tgi&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ea>

2. Individual interviews - 50 minutes, each partner In the next session, I will meet with you individually to learn each of your personal histories and to give each of you an opportunity to share thoughts, feelings, and perceptions.

3. Treatment planning - 50 minutes In this final assessment session I follow-up with any remaining clinical questions. I will provide you with the couples version of your Gottman Relationship Checkup, and we will discuss your relationship strengths, and your areas of concern. I will also incorporate the results of your interviews into our discussion, and I will share with you my recommendations for treatment and work to define mutually agreed upon goals for your therapy.

### Who Can Benefit from the Gottman Method?

In his New York Times bestselling book *[The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work](https://www.gottman.com/product/the-seven-principles-for-making-marriage-work/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*, Dr. John Gottman writes, “Although you may feel your situation is unique, we have found that all marital conflicts fall into two categories: Either they can be resolved, or they are perpetual, which means they will be part of your lives forever, in some form or another.” Gottman says that 69% of marital conflicts are perpetual problems, and these are of particular focus in much of the work performed by Gottman-trained therapists.

The Gottman Method is designed to support couples across all economic, racial, sexual orientation, and cultural sectors. [Outcome research](http://www.prweb.com/releases/2017/06/prweb14400704.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) has shown Gottman Method Couples Therapy to be effective for treating same-sex relationships.

Some of the relationship issues that may be addressed in therapy include:

* Frequent conflict and arguments
* Poor communication
* Emotionally distanced couples on the verge of separation
* Specific problems such as sexual difficulties, infidelity, money, and parenting

Even couples with “normal” levels of conflict may benefit from the Gottman Method Couples Therapy. Gottman-trained therapists aim to help couples build stronger relationships overall and healthier ways to cope with issues as they arise in the future.

**RESOURCES:** Want to start improving your relationship right away? Check out these resources, offered by the Gottman Institute:

1. Podcast: Small Things Often - Successful long-term relationships are created through small words, small gestures, and small acts. Every Monday and Wednesday morning, we’ll talk you through research-based tips to help improve your relationships in five minutes or less. Small Things Often is an invitation to think small. It could make a big difference. Available on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

2. Email Newsletter: The Marriage Minute - An email newsletter that can improve your relationship with a digestible, biweekly dose of helpful tips and tricks. Over 40 years of research with thousands of couples has proven a simple fact: small things often can create big changes over time. It’s a free resource of tools, articles, videos, exercises, releases, and more, all founded on the Gottman’s research and clinical experience. You can sign up here: <https://www.gottman.com/marriage-minute/>

3. Phone App: Gottman Card Decks - This fun app offers helpful questions, statement, and ideas for improving your relationship. It includes 14 unique card decks, with more than 1,000 flash cards. Choose Love Maps to get to know your partner better, or Opportunity for great date-night ideas, or explore the Salsa decks to add some spice to your intimate life. Each of the decks is based on more than four decades of ongoing research, and supports at least one of the nine pillars of the Sound Relationship House.