

# Overview of Gottman Method Couples Therapy

## Addendum to Declaration/Statement of Practice & Procedure for Susan Harrington, LPC-S, LMFT-S

The Gottman Method of Couples Therapy is based on Dr. John Gottman's research that began in the 1970's and continues for 35+ years. The research has focused on what makes relationships succeed or fail. From this research, Drs. John and Julie Gottman have created a method of therapy that emphasizes a "nuts-and-bolts" approach to improving clients' relationships.

This method is designed to help teach specific tools to deepen friendship and intimacy in your relationship. To help you productively manage conflicts, you will be given methods to manage "resolvable problems" and dialogue about "gridlocked" (or perpetual) issues. We will also work together to help you appreciate your relationship's strengths and to gently navigate through its vulnerabilities.

*Gottman Method Couples Therapy consists of five parts:*

- Assessment
- Treatment
- "Phasing Out" of Therapy (Transition phase)
- Termination
- Outcome Evaluation

**Assessment phase.** Early in the assessment phase, you will be given some written materials to complete that will help us better understand your relationship. In the first sessions we will talk about the history of your relationship, areas of concern, and goals for treatment.

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. In the final session of assessment, I will share with you my recommendations for treatment and work to define mutually agreed upon goals for your therapy. The assessment phase does NOT include any time directly addressing/resolving any of your presenting concerns. It is very much like going to your medical doctor to address a physical concern. The doctor will run a variety of medical tests to make an accurate determination of the uniquely designed interventions to guide your recovery.

**Treatment phase.** Most of the work will involve sessions where you will be seen together as a couple. However, there may be times when individual sessions are recommended. I will also give you exercises to practice/use between sessions.

The length of therapy will be determined by your specific needs and goals. In the course of therapy, we will establish points at which to evaluate your satisfaction and progress. Also, I will encourage you to raise any questions or concerns that you have about therapy at any time.

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**Transition and Termination phases.** In the later stage of therapy, we will "phase out" or meet less frequently (e.g., monthly) in order for you to test out new relationship skills and to prepare for termination of the therapy. Although you may terminate therapy whenever you wish, it is most helpful to have at least one session together to summarize progress, define the work that remains, and say good-bye.

**Outcome-evaluation phase.** In the outcome-evaluation phase, as per the Gottman Method, four follow-up sessions are planned: one after six months, one after twelve months, one after eighteen months, and one after two years. These sessions have been shown through research to significantly decrease the chances of relapse into previous, unhelpful patterns. In addition, commitment to providing the best therapy possible requires ongoing evaluation of methods used and client progress. The purpose of these follow-up sessions then will be to fine-tune any of your relationship skills if needed, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the therapy received.

## Assessments and Fees

Fees for the assessment phase of your therapy are based on the number of hours needed to complete the three-step process. Generally, the assessment requires about 4 ½ hours in 3 to 4 virtual sessions, each partner's completion of written assessment material at home (about 1-2 hours each), and my scoring/evaluation/treatment planning time (about 2 hours). The final session includes sharing the results of your assessment and our discussion of uniquely designed set of interventions.

The components of the assessment are as follows:

Session #1	Intake Interview(s)	90 minutes
Session #2	Individual Interviews	45 minutes each (90 total)
Session #3	Treatment Planning	90 minutes

The remaining costs for and length and frequency of your treatment are dependent upon your joined investment in the services. Your joined effort in learning and using the following research-proven interventions in your daily life is directly related to the success and stability or failure of your relationship.

1. Gottman-Rapaport Intervention: Listening and Validation
2. The Art of Compromise & Problem-solving
3. Stopping the Four Horsemen and Replacing them with Their Antidotes
4. Dreams within Conflict
5. Gottman Repair Checklist
6. Guided Relaxation Exercise: a joined self-soothing tool
7. The Aftermath of a Fight or Regrettable Incident
8. Gottman Love Map Exercise
9. The Stress-Reducing Conversation
10. Building Rituals of Connection
11. Create Shared Purpose in the Couple Building a Life Together