



LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND COUNSELING

CPSY 590: Pragmatic Experiential Therapy for Couples (PET-C)

SUMMER 2007

Time & Day: August 3 & 4, 2007, 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Instructors: Brent Atkinson, Ph.D.
Teresa McDowell, Ed.D. (Instructor of record)
Contact Information: teresamc@lclark.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION: CPSY 590: SPECIAL TOPICS: PET-C

Marriage researchers have recently identified precisely what intimate partners must do in order to have successful relationships. But even when they know what to do, partners often find that they are unable to do these things. Provocative new neurological research suggests that old habits may persist because they are woven into the fabric of internal states, which are automatically activated in daily living, often without conscious awareness. This course will introduce Pragmatic/Experiential Therapy for Couples (PET-C), a step-by-step approach which helps intimate partners learn to identify internal states which perpetuate distress, “re-wire” these states for more flexibility, and activate alternates states which support attitudes and behaviors necessary for relationship success.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students in this course will develop an introductory knowledge of working with couples from a PET-C approach. Through lecture, skill-building exercises, and viewing videotaped segments of therapy sessions, participants will learn how to

- Short-circuit internal states that sabotage each partner’s ability to think and act in ways that are necessary for relationship success
- Stimulate internal states that naturally lead to intimacy and connection
- Help each partner develop the motivation and ability to do this on his or her own

ASSIGNMENTS

Readings

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and to synthesize and apply them in class. Demonstration that reading assignments have been completed is worth 10 points.

Reaction paper

Students will complete one 2-3 page reaction paper on working with couples and reactions to the readings on PET-C. This assignment does not require any disclosure of personal information,

unless you feel you want to. It will not be shared with the other class members. The paper is worth 20 points.

Final paper

Students will complete a 4-6 page final paper. A case example will be provided and students will be asked to discuss case conceptualization and develop a treatment plan. Students are expected to use theoretical literature and research on and related to PET-C in support of their ideas and opinions. At least 5 peer-reviewed articles or book chapters should be cited. Instructions for completing the final paper will be provided in class.

The final paper should be double spaced, 12 pt font, and in APA format. The paper should be submitted via e-mail (teresamc@lclark.edu) by **August 15, 2007**. Late papers will receive lower grades.

Content	30 points
Clarity and organization of ideas	10 points
Use of pertinent literature	20 points
Writing and referencing according to APA style	10 points
Total =	70 points

GRADING

A = 93-100	B = 83-87	C = 73-77
A- = 90-92	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72
B+ = 88-89	C+ = 78-79	

TEXTS

Students are expected to read all articles and book chapters listed in the course schedule. It is highly recommended that optional readings be completed, as well.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY/SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

Lewis & Clark College adheres to a nondiscriminatory policy with respect to employment, enrollment, and program. The College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap or disability, sexual orientation, or marital status and has a firm commitment to promote the letter and spirit of all equal opportunity and civil rights laws.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability and/or you have emergency medical information to share, please contact the instructors via e-mail as soon as possible.

DAY 1 SCHEDULE

Morning Session (9 a.m. – 12 p.m.)

Topics:

Empirical and Theoretical Foundations of PET-C

An introduction to the advances from Neurobiology and the Science of Intimate Relationships that inform PET-C)

Overview of Pragmatic/Experiential Therapy for Couples & Introduction to Phase I

An overview of PET-C and illustration of the early part of Phase I in which the therapist helps partners shift from defensive to receptive states, then communicate about gridlocked issues in ways that lead to resolution.

Lunch Break (12 p.m. – 1 p.m.)

Afternoon Session (1 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

Topics:

Getting Each Partner On Board

Participants will learn how to help each partner shift from defensive to receptive state, then gets each partner “on board” with the idea that the single most effective thing s/he can do to get more respect and/or cooperation from his/her partner is more fully develop the ability to respond effectively when offended.

Partners Release Each Other from the Role of Relationship Villain.

Participants will learn to

- challenge each client’s beliefs about his/her partner that fuel resentment
- help each partner become motivated to look for alternative explanations for his/her partner’s disturbing attitude and actions.
- help each partner become motivated to explicitly release his/her partner from the role of villain

DAY 2 SCHEDULE

Morning Session (9 a.m. – 12 p.m.)

Topics:

Introduction to PET-C Phase II and exploration of the process of retrospective reviewing/prospective planning

Participants will

- receive an overview of Phase II in which each partner receives personalized tutoring the development of new emotional habits.
- Learn how to help each partner become aware of specific emotional habits in need of change, and develop a clear picture new habits needed.

Helping Partners Practice New Habits During Therapy Sessions

Participants learn how to use “the coaster method” and breakout meetings with individual partners to help partners practice new habits during therapy sessions.

Lunch Break (12 p.m. – 1 p.m.)

Afternoon Session (1 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

Topics:

Daily Practices for Rewiring Automatic Reactions

Participants learn how to use digital audio recordings to help partners engage in repetitive practices between sessions which rewire their brains for more flexibility.

Phase III: Accessing the Intimacy States

Participants learn how to

- shift the focus from resolving conflict to increasing intimacy
- help each partner gain full access to the brain circuits that naturally produce intimacy (playfulness, sexual interest, tenderness and the longing for emotional connection)

Readings: Choose three of the following. The rest are optional.

Atkinson, B. (2005). Introduction: New answers to old questions. *Emotional intelligence in couples therapy: Advances from neurobiology and the science of intimate relationships*. NY: W.W Norton.

Atkinson, B (1999). The emotional imperative. *Psychotherapy Networker*, July/August, 22-33.

- Atkinson, B. (2002). Brain to Brain. *Psychotherapy Networker*, September/October, 39-46.
- Atkinson, B. (2005) The prerequisites for relationship success. *Emotional intelligence in couples therapy: Advances from neurobiology and the science of intimate relationships*. NY: W.W Norton.
- Atkinson, B. (2005) An overview of pragmatic/experiential therapy for couples. *Emotional intelligence in couples therapy: Advances from neurobiology and the science of intimate relationships*. NY: W.W Norton.
- Atkinson, B. (2005) PET-C assessment. *Emotional intelligence in couples therapy: Advances from neurobiology and the science of intimate relationships*. NY: W.W Norton.
- Atkinson, B., Atkinson, L., Kutz., P, Lata, J., Wittmann Lata, K., Szekely, J., & Weiss, P. (2005). Rewiring neural states in couples therapy: Advances from affective neuroscience. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 24(3), 3-16.