

Program Evaluation of the Strong Marriages Successful Ministries Program

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Program Evaluation of the Strong Marriages

Successful Ministries Program

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### Abstract

Studies on marital enrichment programs indicate the positive impact of psycho-educational programs on relationships. Often, church leaders and their spouses lead such programs for couples in their communities. However, few studies have assessed a program tailored to ministry couples that face unique relational stressors and can experience relational isolation related to pressure to maintain a positive personal image. This study examined clergy and seminary couple reactions to marital satisfaction, trustworthiness, and positive feelings toward spouse, before and after participation in the Strong Marriages Successful Ministries (SMSM) program. Measures employed included the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS), the Relational Ethics Scale (RES) and the Positive Feelings Questionnaire (PFQ). Results indicated significant increases in trustworthiness and positive feelings toward spouse following participation in the SMSM program. Significant increases in marital satisfaction were not demonstrated, likely due in part to a ceiling effect. Probable explanations for findings and implications for SMSM program are discussed.

### Program Evaluation of the Strong Marriages Successful Ministries Program

Marriage enrichment has flourished since its faith-based burgeoning in the early 1960s (Bowling, Hill, & Jencius, 2005). To date, several psycho-educational marriage enrichment programs with foundations in a variety of philosophies have emerged. Empirical research on some of the more prevalent marriage enrichment programs indicates significant associations between couple participation in marriage enrichment programs, increased marital satisfaction (Worthington, Buston, & Hammonds, 1989; Brock, & Joanning, 1983; Knutson & Olson, 2003), increased marital intimacy (Worthington et al., 1989) and prevention of negative marital outcomes (Markman, Renick, Floyd, Stanley, & Clements, 1993). Though, research on marital enrichment studies has been subject to criticism due to its time-limited nature (Stanley, 2001) couples around the world continue to engage in such seminars and report experiencing positive change in their relationships. However, little research has focused on assessing a program specifically aimed at enriching clergy and seminary marriages, a population which faces distinctive marital stressors. Further, research has negative outcomes in clergy marriages with marital dissatisfaction and emotional distance between partners (Thoburn & Balswick, 1994).

The intent of this study was to investigate the effects of the Strong Marriages Successful Ministries (SMSM) marital enrichment program, developed from Hargrave and Pfitzer's (2011) Restoration Therapy framework for evangelical Christian ministers or seminarians and their spouses. This evaluation was conducted for the purpose of giving feedback to the SMSM director regarding strengths and weakness of the program related to the target changes it seeks to facilitate in clergy marriages. Such objectives

included increasing marital satisfaction, increasing trustworthiness and increasing positive feelings between partners. Also, this evaluation is intended to be an initial launching point for directing future research on the SMSM program, which will evaluate larger samples of participants and examine longitudinal effects of the program as additional data is collected.

Marital enrichment programs involve teaching communication and relationship skills to married couples and couples preparing for marriage (Bowling et al., 2005). Many meet in small group formats within the communities of the participants. Two prominent examples of psycho-educational programs, which have been associated with increases in positive marital outcomes, are the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP; Schilling, Baucom, Burnett, Allen, & Ragland, 2003) and the Practical Application of Intimate Relationship Skills program (PAIRS; DeMaria & Hannah, 2003). This study addressed findings regarding these popular programs and mention additional programs, which provide added support for the benefits of psycho-educational marital enrichment. Also, this study explored the implications of such findings for the SMSM program, which seeks to provide marital enrichment for couples in ministry. Due to the extensive scope of marital enrichment research, the focus of this review is to address empirical findings on programs with formats akin to the SMSM program.

### **Review of Marital Enrichment Programs**

#### **The Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP)**

PREP is a primary prevention marital enhancement program created to instruct premarital couples in skills for managing communication in conflict before it arises (Renick, Blumberg, & Markman, 1992). PREP can be administered in groups of four to

eight couples over a period of six weekly sessions lasting up to two and a half hours each (Renick et al., 1992). In this format, each couple is assigned a communication consultant to aid their personal communication practice (Renick et al., 1992). PREP can also be administered during a weekend intensive training with 20 to 40 couples (Renick et al., 1992). General subjects covered in the 12 PREP lectures are communication skills, communication styles, expectations, hidden agendas, fun, problem solving, team building, spiritual values (optional), the physical relationship, and creating relational ground rules (Renick et al., 1992).

PREP is an Empirically Supported Treatment (EST) for marital enrichment, which has been shown to improve couple communication, problem solving, conflict resolution, sexual satisfaction, and level of marital commitment (Jakubowski, Milne, Brunner, & Miller, 2004; Hunt, Hof & DeMaria, 1998). One study on PREP outcomes indicated increases in marital satisfaction and likelihood of couples staying together after five years (Markman, Floyd, Stanley, & Storaasli, 1988). Research has also demonstrated decreases in negative communication and couple violence after participation in this program (Markman et al., 1993). An additional study found significant increases in marital satisfaction related to perceived improvement in experiences of partner affection and increased abilities to problem solve after program participation in a low-income sample (O'Halloran, Rizzolo, Phillips, & Wacker, 2009). Another study with African-American participants found more positive outcomes in PREP formats tailored to diverse populations (e.g. Culturally Sensitive-PREP and Prayer Focused PREP) than in traditional PREP formats (Beach, Hurt, Fincham, Franklin, McNair, & Stanley, 2011). The Prayer Focused PREP format was particularly efficacious for wives in this study

(Beach et al., 2011). These findings suggest that added gains that can be achieved via marital enrichment seminars adapted for the culture of specific communities. Overall, the PREP program has demonstrated empirical efficacy in providing marital enrichment for couples (Jakubowski et al., 2004).

### **Practical Application of Intimate Relationship Skills (PAIRS)**

PAIRS is a marital enrichment program founded by social worker Lori Gordon and her husband Rabbi Morris Gordon (DeMaria, 2003) which is typically taught to groups of 12 to 30 people, in a variety of formats, covering nine to 16 hours of teaching (“Frequently Asked Questions About PAIRS,” n.d.). This program is applicable to both single and couple psychoeducation at all levels of relationship (“Frequently Asked Questions About PAIRS,” n.d.) and focuses on increasing intimacy in couple relationships by providing behavioral, affective, and cognitive skills training to promote compassion, cohesiveness, love, and trustworthiness (DeMaria, 2003; Gordon & Durana, 1999). Quantitative and qualitative research conducted with distressed couples on the impact of PAIRS has demonstrated increases in marital satisfaction, affection, emotional well-being, cohesion, and self-esteem (DeMaria, 2003). Although several studies have determined support for the effectiveness of PAIRS, research on this program has yet to incorporate randomized clinical trials, which disqualifies PAIRS from consideration as an official EST (Jakubowski et al., 2004). Nevertheless, the PAIRS program has been extended to global communities and has customized programs for diverse participants including clergy although little research has been conducted on the effectiveness of the program in such settings (DeMaria & Hannah, 2003).

### **Other Programs**

Research on the efficacy of marital enrichment programs demonstrates further benefits of psycho-education in additional domains central to this study. A study on the Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment (ACME) program indicated a significant increase in intimacy among couples after participating in this marital enrichment program (Hickmon, Protinsky, & Singh, 1997). Another study on the SANCTUS faith-based psycho-educational program revealed significant enhancement in individual's perceptions of their interactions with their partners, the Divine, and themselves (Sager & Sager, 2005). Also, ESTs such as the Relationship Enhancement program, Couple Communication Program, and the Strategic Hope-Focused Enrichment program further validate the benefits of marriage enrichment psycho-educational programs for couples (Jakubowski et al., 2004).

#### **The Necessity for a Clergy-Tailored Marital Enrichment Program**

Although psycho-educational couple enrichment programs have been implemented in a variety of populations and have been clergy led in some cases (Schilling et al., 2003), these programs have not been tailored toward the marriages of church leaders. One study found that ministers tend to primarily cope with stressors intrapersonally and that their spouses provide the main source of their interpersonal support (McMinn, Lish, Trice, Root, Gilbert, & Yap, 2005). This may be related to the detachment of pastors from others as a result of pressure to ensure unwavering appearances (McMinn et al., 2005). Thus, the strength of the marital relationship is even more important for clergy and clergy spouse well-being because of the common lack of additional interpersonal support they receive (McMinn et al., 2005). Therefore, it is not surprising that Thoburn and Whitman (2004) found marital dissatisfaction and emotional

distance in minister marriages were significantly related to acts of marital infidelity. Moreover, because church leaders face unique stressors, which pose potential negative consequences for their marriages (e.g. boundary intrusions), they may be at an increased risk for marital infidelity particularly if these leaders have marital adjustment and trust issues (Thoburn & Balswick, 1994). Due to the exceptional challenges church leaders face and the centrality of the minister's couple relationship to his or her well-being, it was proposed that such couples would be able to benefit from participating in a marital enrichment program customized to their distinct circumstances.

### **Restoration Therapy Foundations and Theory**

The Restoration Therapy (RT) model is an integrative marital therapy approach developed out of the Contextual Family Therapy theoretical framework (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986; Hargrave, 2000; Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2003; Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2011). Contextual Family Therapy emphasizes the understanding of self through relationships with others as impacted by facts, internalizations that lead to personality development, systemic power organization, and the promotion of balance in relationships (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986; Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2003).

RT hinges on the idea that dysfunction in relationships stems from pain, which results from early experiences of violations of love and trust in relationships (Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2011). Violations of love result in negative perceptions of identity leading to maladaptive patterns of coping by shaming and blaming oneself or others (Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2011). Violations of trust result in feelings of compromised safety, which can motivate individuals to cope with controlling or chaotic behaviors (Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2011). To complement the RT model Hargrave and Pfitzer (2011) have developed two

cycle's, namely, the Pain Cycle (p. 180), and Peace Cycle (p. 185), which couples can use as concrete tools to help diagram and demystify their recurring reactive interaction patterns (Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2011). The Pain Cycle maps the couple's central maladaptive affective and behavioral coping interaction pattern while the Peace Cycle charts the couple's truths related to their identity and safety, mapping how individuals can act more adaptively out of their truths (Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2011).

Based on Hargrave and Pfitzer's (2011) RT model and Hargrave and Stoever's (2011) work, Sharon Hargrave (2011) developed a small group leader's guide, as well as a detailed guide for SMSM group leaders specifically tailoring the material for ministry and seminary couples. These resources are central to the SMSM program. In the SMSM groups, clergy and seminary couples learn their distinctive cyclical interaction patterns in the Pain Cycle and Peace Cycle, receive communication skills training, and learn how to navigate additional stressors unique to the ministry profession. This program provides couples a four-step method of conflict resolution (Hargrave, 2011) and tools for working through pain and operating out truth from an interpersonal and biblical perspective. In addition, the SMSM program provides guidance on boundaries, personality differences, spiritual gifts, and a couple's goals and vision. The SMSM program was developed specifically for the challenges that individuals and couples face in ministry including conflict resolution, boundary issues, burn out, isolation and the spirituality of the couple (McMinn et al., 2005). The program takes place in a group format with four couples and two leaders. SMSM provides couple training as well as a community for ministers and spouses to be open about issues they face with other similar individuals.

This study evaluated the effectiveness of the SMSM program by analyzing marital satisfaction, trustworthiness, and the level of positive affect toward spouse before and after participation in the eight-week program. We hypothesized that: (1) There would be an increase in marital satisfaction among individuals after attending the SMSM program; (2) There would be an increase in positive affect individuals feel toward their spouse after the program; (3) There would be an increase in trustworthiness individuals experience toward their spouse after the program.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Sharon Hargrave, the director of the SMSM program, requested this evaluation in order to determine the impact of the SMSM program on participants. Participants were volunteer couples recruited from Fuller Theological Seminary alumni and graduate students and their spouses. Among these couples, one or both spouses were alumni of Fuller Theological Seminary or enrolled in either the school of theology, psychology, or intercultural studies. Participants attended the SMSM program groups during the Fall, Spring, or Winter quarters of 2010-2011. Approximately 29 couples, with a total of 58 individual participants were recruited with equal numbers of male and female participants ranging in age from approximately 23-62 years old. Of these couples five were excluded from the study due to non-married or engaged status, which resulted in missing data. Four married participants were also excluded due to missing data. The final sample consisted of 44 evangelical Christian individuals ranging in age from 23-62 years old ( $M = 32.39$ ,  $SD = 6.95$ ) of the following approximate ethnicity percentages: White (64%), Black

(0%), Asian (30%), Latino/a (2%) and Other (5%).

### **Measures**

**Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS).** The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Busby, Christensen, Crane & Larson, 1995) is a 14-item questionnaire with three subscales, Consensus, Satisfaction, and Cohesion that assesses conflict resolution strategies in couples. The Consensus subscale measures decision making, values, and affection on a six point Likert Scale ranging from five (“Always Agree”) to zero (“Always Disagree”). The Satisfaction subscale measures stability and conflict on a Likert Scale ranging from zero (“All The Time”) to five (“Never”). The Cohesion subscale measures couple activities and discussion. Question 11, “Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together” contributes to the measurement of activities and ranges on a five point Likert-like scale from four (“Everyday”) to zero (“Never”). The remainder of the questions in the Consensus subscale are scored on a six point Likert scale ranging from zero (“Never”) to five (“More Often”). The maximum possible score is total score on the RDAS is 69, and the maximum score on the Satisfaction subscale, which is of specific interest to this study is 20, where higher scores indicate better dyadic adjustment.

The RDAS has its origins in the 32-item, four subscale, Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976) which was revised into the RDAS in order eradicate homogenous items from within the scale (Busby et al., 1995). Specifically, this revision was motivated by validity concerns identified within the Affectional Expression and Dyadic Satisfaction subscales of the DAS (Sharpley & Cross, 1982; Busby, et al., 1995). As a result, it was recommended that the DAS only be used as a global measurement of marital satisfaction rather than its specific subscales being utilized until the scale was acknowledged in a

hierarchical fashion in 1990 (Sabourin, Lussier, Laplante, & Wright). In itself, the DAS indicated adequate reliability and construct validity in comparison with the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (MAT;  $r = .66, p < .01$ ) in both clinical and non-clinical participants except for the problematic subscales previously described (Crane, Allgood, Larson, & Griffin, 1990; Busby et al., 1995).

However, following the revision of the DAS, the RDAS indicated adequate construct validity when compared to the MAT ( $r = .68, p < .01$ ) and the original DAS ( $r = .97, p < .01$ ), signifying adequate correlations with both of these measures using only a fraction of the items employed by the DAS (Busby et al., 1995). Equivalent criterion related validity to the DAS was also demonstrated by the RDAS in that it adequately identified 87 percent of participants as either distressed or non-distressed with subscale discriminate coefficients of .34 (Consensus), .35 (Satisfaction), .32 (Cohesion; Busby et al., 1995). Internal consistency (i.e., Consensus,  $\alpha = .81$ ; Satisfaction;  $\alpha = .85$ , Cohesion  $\alpha = .80$ ; Total RDAS  $\alpha = .90$ ) and Guttman split-half reliability (i.e., Consensus = .88; Satisfaction = .88, Cohesion = .79) were also good to excellent for subscales and the overall RDAS measure (.94; Busby et al., 1995). Given that the RDAS is a multidimensional scale with valid and reliable subscales for measuring more specific constructs that can stand alone, the Satisfaction subscale of this measure will be used to determine marital satisfaction (Busby et al., 1995). It is noteworthy that the developers of this scale reported that the mean Satisfaction subscale score was 15.7 ( $SD = 2.20$ ) and the mean overall score for the RDAS was 52.3 ( $SD = 6.60$ ) for non-distressed couples (Busby et al., 1995). These statistics can be used as a reference point in determining the initial marital satisfaction of couples in our sample.

**Positive Feelings Questionnaire (PFQ).** The revised Positive Feelings Questionnaire (PFQ; O’Leary, Fincham, & Turkewitz, 1983) is a 17-item, questionnaire that specifically assesses a spouse’s positive feelings of love for their spouse related to physical proximity and acts of affection (e.g., kissing or touch) between partners. Participant ratings on this measure are made on a seven-point Likert-like scale ranging from one (“Extremely Negative”) to seven (“Extremely Positive”). The highest score possible on this measure is 119, with higher scores indicating more positive feelings toward one’s spouse. This scale has good internal consistency ( $\alpha = .85$ ), meets homogeneity criterion ( $> .05$ ) and has significant item discrepancy ( $p < .01$ ; O’Leary et al., 1983). With regard to validity, the PFQ was well correlated with other widely accepted measurements such as the MAT ( $r = .70, p < .001$ ), Navran Communication Scale ( $r = .40, p < .001$ ) and the Beck Depression Inventory ( $r = .16, p < .05$ ; O’Leary et al., 1983). Thus, the PFQ will be used to determine levels of positive affect between spouses.

**Relational Ethics Scale (RES).** The Relational Ethics Scale is a 24-item, six subscale, self-report measurement, which assesses an individual’s sense of fairness in both intergenerational and partner relationships and has demonstrated validity of use with both single and married participants (Hargrave & Bomba, 1993). The RES uses a five-point Likert-like scale ranging from five (“Strongly Agree”) to one (“Strongly Disagree”) (Hargrave, Jennings, & Anderson, 1991). Scoring this measure involved reverse scoring negative items, so that higher scores indicated greater trustworthiness. The highest possible score on this measure was 120. The revised RES total ( $\alpha = .93$ ), vertical cluster items ( $\alpha = .91$ ) and horizontal cluster items ( $\alpha = .94$ ) all have excellent reliability

(Hargrave et al., 1991) and the RES has demonstrated discriminant and predictive validity in distressed and non-distressed couples.

Moderate correlations between most of the vertical scales of the RES and the Personal Authority in the Family System (PAFS; Bray, Williamson, & Malone, 1984) questionnaire's intergenerational subscales were demonstrated (Hargrave et al., 1991). Since the focus of this study is the use of the Horizontal Trust and Justice subscale (HTJ) of the RES to identify individual's sense of trustworthiness here we will elaborate on correlations specific to the HTJ scale. Significant correlations have been demonstrated between the HTJ subscale and the PAFS Spousal Intimacy ( $r = .94$ ), Spousal Fusion/Individuation ( $r = .54$ ), Nuclear Family Triangulation ( $r = .72$ ) and Intergenerational Fusion/Individuation ( $r = .36$ ) subscales. Also noteworthy for the purposes of this study was the significant correlation between the HTJ subscale of the RES, the DAS Total scale ( $r = .92$ ) and all DAS subscales including: Dyadic Consensus ( $r = .62$ ), Dyadic Satisfaction ( $r = .85$ ), Dyadic Cohesion ( $r = .85$ ) and Affectional Expression. ( $r = .88$ ). The RES is also a significant predictor of marital satisfaction (Grames, Miller, Robinson, Higgins, & Hinton, 2008). The HTJ subscale was used to determine sense of trustworthiness and justice in the couple relationship.

### **Design**

This study used a pre-experimental pre-test/post-test design to evaluate our hypothesis. We employed a one-tailed paired samples t-test to assess for changes in mean marital satisfaction, trustworthiness, and positive affect scores following participation in the SMSM program.

### **Procedures**

The SMSM program was conducted in small groups in the homes of the facilitators of SMSM over the course of the Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters of the 2010-2011 school year at Fuller Theological Seminary. Each group proceeded for a total of eight-weeks with approximately three groups conducted each quarter. Participants were recruited from the SMSM groups on a voluntary basis for this study and efforts to protect confidentiality were taken by having individuals fill out forms privately and asking participants not to provide identifying information. Assessments were collected and coded to protect participant's confidentiality. The facilitator sent an email (Appendix C) to possible participants inviting them to consider participating in the study. Attached to this e-mail was an informed consent letter from the researcher (Appendix D) describing the study and what participating in the study would require from each potential participant. If the possible participant decided to enter the research project, he or she was directed to read and sign the informed consent page (Appendix D) and turn it in along with the other completed materials, including an informed consent waiver to be contacted by researchers for follow-up data collection (Appendix E).

Those who were willing to be participants were administered a Demographic Profile (Appendix F), RDAS (Appendix G), PFQ (Appendix H) and the RES (Appendix I). It took participants approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete the assessments. These measures were repeated at the end of the eight-week programs. Those not consenting to participate were invited to have snacks in another room. For the purposes of this study, data collection from the SMSM program was conducted over a period of 10 months with nine small groups.

## **Results**

A one-tailed, paired samples t-test (see *Figure 1*) indicated that overall participants in the SMSM program demonstrated an increase from pre-program self-report ( $M = 25.23, SD = 4.35$ ) to post-program report ( $M = 26.34, SD = 3.50$ ) in their sense of trust and justice in their married relationships. This change was statistically significant,  $t(44) = -3.09, p = .002$ , supporting our initial hypothesis that participants would experience an increase in trustworthiness toward spouse following participation in the SMSM program. Additionally, a statistically significant increase in participant reports of positive feelings toward partner from pre-program report ( $M = 103.07, SD = 14.38$ ) to post-program report ( $M = 106.77, SD = 9.75$ ) was observed,  $t(44) = -3.29, p = .001$ .

The paired samples t-test also indicated that participants demonstrated a non-significant increase in marital satisfaction from before taking the SMSM program ( $M = 15.66, SD = 2.21$ ) to after participating in the program ( $M = 15.82, SD = 1.70$ ) on the Satisfaction subscale, which is a sufficient indicator on its own of marital satisfaction because of the RDAS's unique multidimensional test construction. Given that this increase in marital satisfaction,  $t(44) = -0.64, p = 0.26$ , one-tailed,  $d = 0.08, r = 0.04$ , was not statistically significant enough to reject the null hypothesis and rule out the possibility that this difference could be attributed to chance, this variable's effect size was examined using Cohen's  $d$  to determine if an effect of program was indicated for marital satisfaction. According to Cohen's (1998) standard a small effect size was indicated for marital satisfaction. It is noteworthy that in running our analysis in SPSS, the SPSS program only provides the significance level of two-tailed tests. Our model consisted of a one-tailed test; for this reason, the significance level of each comparison was divided in half. Out of curiosity we also examined the total RDAS score for statistical significance

from pre-program participation ( $M = 50.89$ ,  $SD = 6.05$ ) to post-program participation ( $M = 51.18$ ,  $SD = 5.33$ ), however results were statistically insignificant  $t(44) = -.63$ ,  $p = 0.27$ , one-tailed,  $d = .51$ ,  $r = .03$ , with a small effect size.

Our initial hypotheses correctly predicted increases in trustworthiness and positive feelings toward spouse and were statistically supported. Statistically significant support was not demonstrated for our prediction that an increase in marital satisfaction would be observed following participation in the SMSM program.

### **Discussion**

This study hypothesized that after engaging in the SMSM program participants would experience increased marital satisfaction, positive feelings toward spouse, and a sense of trustworthiness toward their partner. Results of our analysis indicated a significant increase in positive feelings toward spouse and in participant sense of trustworthiness of partner at the conclusion of participation in the SMSM program.

Contrary to our expectations, a significant increase in marital satisfaction was not indicated. Based on the small effect size (one-tailed,  $d = .08$ ,  $r = .04$ ) for marital satisfaction, we speculate that our non-significant result for this variable may be due in part to our small sample size and limited statistical power to detect a potential change. For this reason, it is recommended that future studies include a larger sample size. It is also recommended that future research on this program be conducted with a more powerful statistical analysis (e.g., Hierarchical Linear Modeling, MANOVA or Multiple Canonical Correlation). Such analyses were not employed in this study due to limited statistical resources. Our plan for future research on the SMSM program entails doubling

our sample size and seeking further statistical consultation regarding more powerful statistical analysis models.

It is also important to note that this was a non-clinical sample, which reported high levels of marital satisfaction before ( $M = 15.66$ ,  $SD = 2.21$ ), and after ( $M = 15.82$ ,  $SD = 1.70$ ) participating in the program, where the average non-distressed person has a mean Satisfaction subscale score of 15.70 ( $SD = 2.2$ ). Therefore, an insignificant increase in marital satisfaction is likely due to a ceiling effect, and does not imply a decrease in overall satisfaction or a lack of satisfaction in such couples that are already generally satisfied. Future inquiries might include a comparison group of identifiably distressed couples to better distinguish relative increases in satisfaction in couples that have a globally negative sense of satisfaction upon beginning the program. This would be consistent with findings of increased marital satisfaction in distressed couples following participation in the PAIRS program (DeMaria, 2003).

The increase in positive feelings toward spouse is consistent with studies on the PREP program which have indicated increases in sexual satisfaction and level of marital commitment (Jakubowski et al., 2004; Hunt et al., 1998), given that, the PFQ directly measures intimate physical connection between partners and has been significantly correlated with spouses levels of marital commitment (O'Leary et al., 1983).

Based on these findings, practical suggestions for the enhancement of the SMSM programs can be identified. The results of this study indicate that this program resulted in increases in trustworthiness and increased positive feelings toward partners. Therefore the SMSM program is successful in increasing positive dynamics related to partner trustworthiness and positive feelings toward spouse. In contrast, placing increased

emphases on activities correlated with improving areas of marital satisfaction measured by the RDAS Satisfaction subscale used in this study, namely, one's sense of dyadic stability and one's perception of the amount of conflict in one's relationship, may help increase the program's positive influence on participant sense of marital satisfaction. Such activities may include additional behavioral and cognitive coping techniques to assist couples in navigating arguments before they begin or escalate to the point of creating a chaotic and unstable environment.

Note that a sense of dyadic stability likely takes time to establish when one has experienced historical pain in relationships. We predict that repeated experiences of trustworthiness, as increased after taking this program, might produce an improved sense of stability in relationships over time. It is also possible that increased interpersonal conflict between spouses could be triggered by the nature of the SMSM program, which encourages processing past pain and facing raw primary emotions. These considerations should be addressed in future follow-up evaluations of participants in the SMSM program. We predict that adequate time to practice conflict resolution skills taught in the program and greater time to process pain associated with feelings identified in the program may lead to increased marital satisfaction related to participant's sense of stability and conflict.

Beyond the scope of this study future research on the efficacy of the SMSM programs should consider several additional factors correlated with marital enrichment. Specifically, analyses of communication, problem solving, conflict resolution skills (Jakubowski et al., 2004; Hunt et al., 1998) outcomes should be addressed since these are goals of the SMSM program which instructs participants in a four step communication

process for resolving conflict.

### **Conclusion and Future Directions**

The findings of this paper are positive indicators of the need for the continued development of the SMSM program, which stands alone as the only known primary prevention couple enrichment program tailored for evangelical Christians pastors and seminary couples supported by empirical research. Areas in which future research can build upon the findings of this study are looking at the effectiveness of this program with ministers and seminarians in specific minority groups as the program is now being taught in six different languages and four major minority groups. The measures used in this study would need to be culturally and linguistically contextualized in order to examine the variables of trustworthiness, marital satisfaction, and positive feelings toward spouse with populations speaking languages other than English.

In addition, longitudinal study investigating if couples are able to continue to apply the communication skills and knowledge learned in the program is necessary in order to determine the long-term effectiveness of the program. Steps were taken during this study taken to obtain consent to follow up with participants in future follow-up studies.

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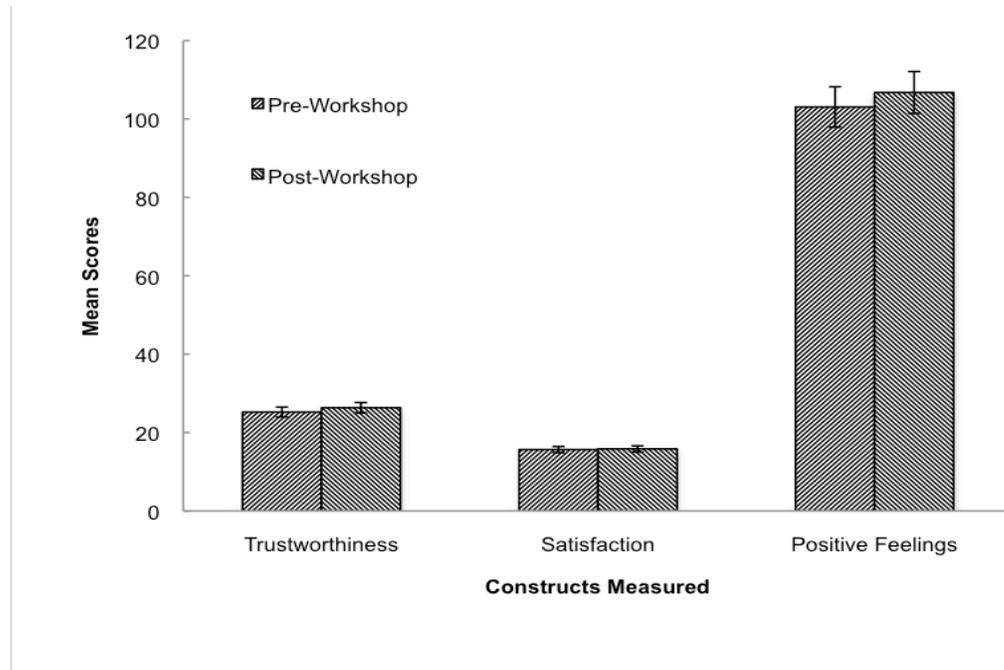
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*Figure 1.* Mean participant scores on target constructs. This figure illustrates the differences in mean scores before and after participation in the SMSM program.

Abstract for *Dissertation Abstracts International*

Studies on marital enrichment programs have identified the positive impact of psycho-educational programs on relationships. However, few studies have assessed a program tailored to clergy spouses who face unique relational stressors. This study examined clergy couple reactions to marital satisfaction, trustworthiness and positive feelings toward spouse, before and after participation in the Strong Marriages Successful Ministries (SMSM) program, using the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS), the Relational Ethics Scale (RES) and the Positive Feelings Questionnaire (PFQ). Results indicated significant increases in trustworthiness and positive feelings toward spouse following participation in the SMSM program. Significant increases in marital satisfaction were not demonstrated. Probable explanations for findings and implications for SMSM program are discussed.

*Appendix A*

## Human Subjects Review Committee Approval Letter

**CONFIDENTIAL**

September 7, 2010

HSRC#: a2/10.129

Terry Hargrave, PhD  
180 N. Oakland Ave.  
Pasadena, CA 91101

Dear Dr. Hargrave:

This letter is to inform you that the Office of the Human Subjects Review Committee at the Fuller Graduate School of Psychology has reviewed your research proposal:

**Program Evaluation of Strong Marriages/Successful Ministries Psychoeducational Workshop for Couples**

Your resubmission was eligible for the Expedited Review process in which one member of the committee reviewed and approved your project. You have now been granted approval to move ahead in your research. Your project approval is good for exactly one year from the date on this letter.

It is your responsibility to submit an update on your project including data collection status, expected duration of continued collection, and other important information if your project will continue to analyze this data beyond the one-year approval. In case the project will conclude by the expiration date, please submit a final report. Please save this correspondence for future reference. Please inform the committee in writing if any substantial changes are made in your research protocol that would affect the treatment of subjects in your research.

Sincerely,

Marta Cenac- Mehedinti  
HSRC Manager  
Fuller Theological Seminary

cc: Valerie Johnson, Susan Marion

**Human Subjects Review Committee***Graduate School of Psychology**Fuller Theological Seminary*Approval Date: **September 7, 2010**Expiration Date: **September 7, 2011**HSRC Approval: **MCM**

## Human Subjects Review Committee Approval Letter

**CONFIDENTIAL**

September 28, 2011

HSRC#: u6/11.136

Terry Hargrave, PhD  
180 N. Oakland Ave.  
Pasadena, CA 91101

Dear Dr. Hargrave:

This letter is to inform you that the Office of the Human Subjects Review Committee at the Fuller Graduate School of Psychology has reviewed your research proposal:

**Program Evaluation of Strong Marriages/Successful Ministries Psychoeducational Workshop for Couples****-Continuing Review-**

The proposal was submitted for a continuing review and it was determined that it meets the ethical standards and the criteria for granting an extension given the fact that no additional risks are involved. However, a lapse in your continual approval has been noted but this office understands that all research activities ceased during this time.

The proposal is hereby approved for extension. Your project approval is good for exactly one year from the date on the approval stamp, below. It is your responsibility to submit an update on your project including data collection status, expected duration of continued collection, and other important information if your project will continue to collect and analyze data beyond the one-year approval. If the project will be completed within one-year, please submit the final report.

If there are any changes that would impact the treatment of human subjects in your research, please inform the committee in writing immediately.

Sincerely,

Marta Cenac- Mehedinti  
HSRC Manager  
Fuller Theological Seminary

cc: Valerie Johnson

**Human Subjects Review Committee***Graduate School of Psychology**Fuller Theological Seminary*Approval Date: **September 26, 2011**Expiration Date: **September 28, 2012**HSRC Manager Initials: **MCM**

*Appendix B*

## Submission For Publication

This study will be submitted as an article for publication consideration to the Journal of Christianity and Psychology. The publication submission process will proceed following the final approval of this dissertation.

## Letter of Submission

Valerie M. Johnson  
Travis Research Institute  
Graduate School of Psychology  
Fuller Theological Seminary  
180 North Oakland Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91101

June, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to submit my article “Program Evaluation of the Strong Marriages Successful Ministries Program” for publication in the Journal of Christianity and Psychology. This article encompasses my study on the effects of the Strong Marriages Successful Ministries (SMSM) program, developed by Sharon Hargrave, M.F.T., Director of Boone Center For the Family at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California.

The SMSM enrichment program provides psychoeducation for ministry couples, which are students or alumni at Fuller Theological Seminary, and is now being provided at numerous faith-based educational institutions. Dr. Terry Hargrave, Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy and Dr. Seong-Hyeon Kim, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary coauthored this article, which emerged out of my dissertation project. The SMSM program is based in Dr. Hargrave’s Restoration Therapy model.

This year I presented this study in a poster session at the Christian Association of Psychological Services (CAPS) annual conference, with Sharon Hargrave, M.F.T. and Judith Hong, M.F.T. in Portland, Oregon. I am confident that my findings will be of interest to readers of the Journal of Psychology and Christianity because of the program’s integrative (i.e., Christianity and psychological theory) emphasis and minister target population. Thank you for taking the time to consider publishing this article. Please feel free to contact me with regard to this submission.

Sincerely,

Valerie Johnson, M.A.  
Clinical Psychology  
Doctoral Candidate  
709 Locust St., Apt. 5  
Pasadena, CA 91101  
[valeriejohnson@fuller.edu](mailto:valeriejohnson@fuller.edu)  
(512) 762-8269

*Appendix C*

## E-mail to Potential Participants

Greetings from the Strong Marriages/Successful Ministries Program. Dr. Terry Hargrave a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary and his student researcher, Valerie Johnson, are conducting research on the Strong Marriages/Successful Ministries Program to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and would like to invite you to participate.

Attached you will find a letter describing the study and what it would involve from you if you were to decide to participate. If you are willing to participate please bring the consent form attached to this e-mail to the first day of the program signed. The forms you will be asked to fill out are described in the attachment to this e-mail. Filling out the forms should only take about 15-20 minutes. Those who choose not to participate in the study will be invited to have refreshments in another room as participants fill out the forms.

If you have any questions about this opportunity please contact Terry Hargrave via the information provided on the consent form attached to this e-mail. Of course, your participation is always voluntary and you can decide not to participate at any time. Please see the attachment for more information.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this opportunity.

Sharon Hargrave

*Appendix D*

## Initial Informed Consent

Dear Participant,

My name is Terry Hargrave, and I am a professor of marital and family therapy at Fuller Theological Seminary Graduate School of Psychology. I am conducting research with my supervised student Valerie Johnson on evaluating the Strong Marriages/Successful Ministries program. This study seeks to understand more about the impact of the curriculum taught in the Strong Marriages/Successful Ministries program on couples. The study will analyze marital satisfaction, feelings toward spouses, family of origin influences, and what is learned in the program.

As part of this study, I would like your input. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to do three things. First you will be asked to sign this form consenting to participate in this study and turn it in on your first day of the program. Second you will be asked to fill out a Demographic Profile. Finally you will be asked to complete a battery of assessments that will include the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Positive Feelings Questionnaire and the Relational Ethics Scale before and after completing the Strong Marriages/Successful Ministries program. All of these inventories will be used in the analysis.

All of your answers will be confidential. None of the information will identify you by name. All records you provide will further be kept in a locked file cabinet in my office at Fuller Theological Seminary. After the study is complete, the records will be maintained in this secured cabinet for a period of seven years at which time they will be

destroyed by shredding. Please do not put your name anywhere on the questionnaires or inventories. We anticipate the entire process will take you 20-30 minutes to complete.

You have complete freedom to take part or not take part in this study. You may change your mind about taking part in this study at any time. You may also choose not to answer any of the questions asked. If you would like a copy of the results, I can provide them to you when the study is complete. Simply contact me at the e-mail below and I will be happy to provide you with the results.

(MORE INFORMATION AND SIGNATURE ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE)

#### Benefits

Participation in this study will help researchers analyze the program used in the Strong Marriages/Successful Ministries program. There are no direct benefits to you for taking part in this study.

#### Risks

This study can potentially cause some emotional stress because personal questions will be asked. There are no other known risks involved in this study. If you have any questions about this research project or experience any emotional stress due to completing the inventories, please call me at (626) 584-5347 or e-mail me at [thargrave@fuller.edu](mailto:thargrave@fuller.edu). If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, please direct them to Marta Cenac, the IRB Manager at the Human Subjects Review Office at (626) 584-5544.

Thank you for your time and consideration toward completing this project. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Terry Hargrave, Ph.D.

Professor of Marital and Family Therapy

Fuller Theological Seminary

Graduate School of Psychology

Consent (Please complete with your name and signature.)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ consent to participating in the study evaluating the Strong Marriages/Successful Ministries program at Fuller Theological Seminary Graduate School of Psychology. I am 18 years of age or older. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at anytime. I know that I will not lose any of my benefits that I would otherwise receive by withdrawing early. I also understand that all of the answers I provide to Terry Hargrave will be kept confidential. I know that I have the right to see the results prior to their being published.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

*Appendix E*

## Follow-Up Informed Consent

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the program evaluation study on the Strong Marriages/Successful Ministries workshop. As we continue our research which seeks to understand more about the impact of the curriculum taught in the Strong Marriages/Successful Ministries workshop on couples, we would like to invite you to participate in follow-up studies related to the impact of the workshop overtime. By signing this consent form you are acknowledging that you agree to be contacted by SMSM researchers and you are giving permission for these researchers to contact the Fuller Theological Seminary alumni office to access your current contact information (e.g., phone number and address).

Sincerely,

Terry Hargrave, Ph.D.  
 Professor of Marital and Family Therapy  
 Fuller Theological Seminary  
 Graduate School of Psychology  
 Email: thargrave@fuller.edu  
 Phone: 626-584-5347  
 Fax: 626-584-9630.  
 180 N. Oakland Avenue,  
 Pasadena, CA 91101

**Consent** (Please complete with your name and signature.)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ consent for researchers on the Strong Marriages/Successful Ministries project to contact the Fuller Theological Seminary alumni office to access my current contact information (e.g., phone number and address) for follow-up purposes. I am 18 years of age or older. I understand that I may withdraw my consent at anytime.

---

Signature

---

Date

*Appendix F*

Demographic Profile

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Years Married \_\_\_\_\_

Previously Married (Please Circle One):    Yes            No

Number of Children \_\_\_\_\_

Race/Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Work Status (Please Circle All That Apply):

Full-Time    Part Time    Student    Volunteer (includes unpaid positions)

*Appendix G*

Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

	<u>Always Agree</u>	<u>Almost Always Agree</u>	<u>Occasionally Agree</u>	<u>Frequently Disagree</u>	<u>Almost Always Disagree</u>	<u>Always Disagree</u>
1. Religious matters						
2. Demonstrations of affection						
3. Making major decisions						
4. Sex relations						
5. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)						
6. Career Decisions						

	<u>All the time</u>	<u>Most of the time</u>	<u>More often than not</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
7. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?						
8. How often do you and your partner quarrel?						
9. Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?						
10. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?						

	<u>Every Day</u>	<u>Almost Every Day</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?					

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Less than once a month</u>	<u>Once or twice a month</u>	<u>Once or twice a week</u>	<u>Once a day</u>	<u>More often</u>
12. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas						
13. Work together on a project						
14. Calmly discuss something						

*Appendix H*

Assessment of Feelings Toward Partner

O’Leary, K.D., Turkewitz, H. & Fincham, F. (1983). Assessment of positive feelings toward spouse. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 51, 949-951.

Below is a list of 17 questions about various feelings between married people. Answer each one of them in terms of how you generally feel about your spouse taking into account the last few months. The rating you choose should reflect how you actually feel, not how you think you should feel.

---

Example: How do you feel about you spouse’s honesty?

Extremely Negative	Quite Negative	Slightly Negative	Neutral	Slightly Positive	Quite Positive	Extremely Positive
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

If you have generally been feeling extremely good or positive about the level of your spouse’s honesty in the past few months, then rate it as “7”, “extremely positive”.

Or if the level of your spouse’s honesty is something that you have generally had no feelings about either good or bad, you should rate it as “4”, “neutral”.

Or if you have generally been feeling extremely bad or negative about the level of your spouse’s honesty in the past few months, then rate it as a “1”, “extremely negative”.

Note that there are also ratings “quite” and “slightly” for less extreme feelings.

---

Now, please answer each question by choosing the best number to show how you have generally been feeling in the past few months. Choose only one number for each question.

Extremely Negative	Quite Negative	Slightly Negative	Neutral	Slightly Positive	Quite Positive	Extremely Positive
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1. How do you feel about your spouse as a friend?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. How do you feel about the future of your marital relationship?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- 3. How do you feel about having married your spouse? .....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 4. How do you feel about your spouse’s ability to put you  
in a good mood so that you can laugh and smile?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 5. How do you feel about your spouse’s ability to handle stress?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 6. How do you feel about the degree to which  
your spouse understands you? .....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 7. How do you feel about you spouse’s honesty?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 8. How do you feel about the degree to which you  
can trust your spouse?.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Extremely Negative	Quite Negative	Slightly Negative	Neutral	Slightly Positive	Quite Positive	Extremely Positive
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The following 9 items (items 9-17) are in the form of statements rather than questions.

However, please complete them in the same manner, remembering to base your response on how you generally feel about your spouse, taking into account the last few months.

- 9. Touching my spouse makes me feel .....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 10. Being alone with my spouse makes me feel.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 11. Having sexual relations with my spouse makes me feel.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 12. Talking and communicating with my spouse makes me feel.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 13. My spouse’s encouragement of my individual  
growth makes me feel.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 14. My spouse’s physical appearance makes me feel.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 15. Seeking physical comfort from my spouse makes me feel.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 16. Kissing my spouse makes me feel.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 17. Sitting or lying close to my spouse makes me feel .....1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*Appendix I*

## Relational Ethics Scale

Copyright c 1989, Terry D. Hargrave, Ph.D.

Sex: \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_ Female

Age \_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_ Black \_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_ White \_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_ Native Amer.

Marital Status: \_\_\_ Married \_\_\_ Never-Married \_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_ Widowed \_\_\_ Remarried

Are You Adopted? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No Birth Order: I am the \_\_\_ of \_\_\_ total children.

Directions: This scale is designed to measure some of the emotions that:

-existed in the family in which you were raised.

-currently exist in one of your other relationships.

Since each person and family is unique, there are no right or wrong answers. Just try to respond as honestly as you can. Please respond to every statement.

Rate statements 1-12 as they apply to the family and parent(s) with whom you spent most of your childhood.

In reading the following statements, apply them to yourself and your family and then circle the rating that best fits.

5 = STRONGLY AGREE with the statement.4 = AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT.3 = NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE with the statement.2 = DISAGREE with the statement.1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE with the statement.

- |                                                                                 |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I could trust my family to seek my best interests.                           | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Individuals in my family were blamed for problems that were not their fault. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. Pleasing one of my parents often meant displeasing the other.                | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. I received the love and affection from my family I deserved.                 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. No matter what happened, I always stood by my family.                        | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. At times, it seemed one or both of my parents disliked me.                   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. Love and warmth were given equally to all family members.                    | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. At times, I was used by my family unfairly.                                  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

## Relational Ethics Scale, Page 2

- |                                                                                        |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. I felt my life was dominated by my parents' desires.                                | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. Individuals in my family were willing to give of themselves to benefit the family. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. I continue to seek closer relationships with my family.                            | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. I often felt deserted by my family.                                                | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Please respond to statements 13-24 as they apply to one relationship in your life.

-If you are MARRIED, rate the statements as they apply to your relationship with your spouse.

-If you are WIDOWED, rate the statements as you recall they applied to your relationship with your spouse.

-If you are DIVORCED OR SINGLE, rate the statements as they apply to your closest relationship excluding parents or children.

In reading the following statements, apply them to yourself and the appropriate relationship and then circle the rating that best fits.

5 = STRONGLY AGREE with the statement.

4 = AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT.

3 = NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE with the statement.

2 = DISAGREE with the statement.

1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE with the statement.

- |                                                                                       |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. I try to meet the emotional needs of this person.                                 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 14. I do not trust this individual to look out for my best interests.                 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 15. When I feel hurt, I say or do hurtful things to this person.                      | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 16. This person stands beside me in times of trouble or joy.                          | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 17. Before I make important decisions, I ask for the opinions of this person.         | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18. There is unequal contribution to the relationship between me and this individual. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19. When I feel angry, I tend to take it out on this person.                          | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20. We are equal partners in this relationship.                                       | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 21. We give of ourselves to benefit one another.                                      | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 22. I take advantage of this individual.                                              | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 23. I am taken for granted or used unfairly in this relationship.                     | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 24. This person listens to me and values my thoughts.                                 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

*Appendix J*

## Curriculum Vitae

**Valerie Johnson, M.A.**


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 Address: 1023 Benjamin Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Phone: (512) 762-8269

Email: valeriejohnson@fuller.edu

**EDUCATION****Psy.D.** (Anticipated)  
September 2014**Fuller Theological Seminary**  
Pasadena, CA  
Major: Clinical Psychology  
Specialization: Family Studies  
Dissertation Defended: July 9, 2012  
King Clinical Research Fellowship**M.A.**  
September 2010**Fuller Theological Seminary**  
Pasadena, CA  
Major: Clinical Psychology  
Specialization: Family Studies**B.S.**  
June 2008**Southwestern Assemblies of God University**  
Waxahachie, TX  
Major: Psychology, Magna Cum Laude  
Minor: Marriage and Family Therapy  
Minority Scholarship  
North Texas Regional Scholarship**CLINICAL EXPERIENCE****APA-Accredited Internship**  
July 2013 through June 2014**Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services**  
Grand Rapids, MI  
2000 supervised hours anticipatedInpatient/Outpatient Neuropsychological Rotation

Psychological Consultation Center, Supervisor Mark DeVries, Ph.D.

- Provided neuropsychological evaluations with a focus on early detection of dementia in adults and older adults. Also provided neuropsychological evaluations of adults with history of brain injury and other medical and neurological disorders.

- Provided psychological consultation for multi-disciplinary teams of psychiatrists, nurses, and case managers treating adults often presenting with co-occurring medical conditions in an inpatient psychiatric hospital setting.
- Rotation duration: Two days per week for six months

#### Inpatient Child and Adolescent Rotation

Psychological Consultation Center, Supervisor Brant VanOrman, Psy.D.

- Provided brief inpatient psychodiagnostic cognitive, achievement, and personality assessment and psychological consultation for multi-disciplinary teams of psychiatrists, nurses, case managers, chaplains, and activity therapists treating high-risk children and adolescents in an inpatient psychiatric hospital setting.
- Co-facilitated weekly psychoeducational coping skills group on the inpatient unit. Skills education included topics such as anxiety reduction, increasing self-esteem, anger management, and behavior activation for depression.
- Rotation duration: Two days per week for six months.

#### Outpatient Therapy Rotation

Southwest Clinic, Supervisor Ryan Jaarsma, Psy.D.

- Provided individual, couple and family therapy to diverse patients ages four to 65. Treated psychological disorders including but not limited to depression, anxiety, post-traumatic-stress, hyperactivity, oppositional defiance, inattention, bereavement, personality disorders, chronic pain and adjustment disorders.
- Engaged in consultation, treatment collaboration, and patient advocacy with primary care physicians, psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, speech pathologists, educators, parole officers, and child protective services.
- Co-facilitated a social skills group for middle school students with autism spectrum disorders.
- Participated in weekly Blue Cross Blue Shield case consultation meetings.
- Rotation duration: Two days per week for one year.

#### Community Outreach Rotation

Seniors Program, United Methodist Community House, Supervisor Sera Gruska, Ph.D.

- Facilitated a weekly therapeutic reminiscence art program in an underserved community focused on stimulating memory and cognitive functioning.
- Participants were predominately African-American older adults many of whom presented with dementia, medical concerns, intellectual disabilities and physical impairment.
- Coordinated an onsite memory-screening day with feedback sent to primary care physicians.
- Collaborated with students in local nursing program on interdisciplinary activities such as holistic health fair.
- Served as a psychological consultant for program staff.
- Rotation duration: One day per week for one year.

Additional Internship Activities

- Participated in weekly didactic seminars and formal agency trainings.
- Reviewed psychotherapy video during group and individual supervision and presented formal case presentations.
- Participated in providing free community dementia screening for National Memory Screening Day at Calvin College using the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA).

**Clerkship/Externship**

2011-2012

**Children's Hospital Los Angeles**

Los Angeles, CA

660+ supervised hours

Pediatric Neuropsychological/Neurodevelopmental Assessment

Clinical Trials Unit, Supervisor Anita Hamilton, Ph. D., ABPP-CN

- Provided neuropsychological and neurodevelopmental assessment to a diverse pediatric inpatient and outpatient population presenting with co-occurring medical concerns including Optic Nerve Hypoplasia (ONH), Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome, Bone Marrow Transplant, Focal Brain Lesion, Perinatal White Matter, Liver Transplant, and HIV.
- Received specialized training in neurodevelopmental evaluation, interviewing, administration, scoring, and integrative report writing with medically compromised children ages zero to five years old.
- Participated in weekly brain cutting and didactic seminars on topics including: neuroimaging, multi-ethnic assessment, neuroanatomy, ethics in neuropsychology, technology and neuropsychology, etc.

**Additional Clinical Experience**

2011-2012

**Persona Neurobehavior Group**

South Pasadena, CA

330+ supervised hours

Registered Psychological Assistant

Supervisor Tyson Chung, Ph.D.

- Provided individual psychotherapy for children, adolescents, adults, and families with supervision and training in biofeedback, neurofeedback, and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT).
- Patient concerns included but were not limited to: anxiety, depression, academic, worker's compensation, physical impairment, developmental disability, insecure attachment, grief, ADHD, self-mutilation, and sexual abuse.
- Completed comprehensive medical record and legal deposition reviews for worker's compensation clients with complex medical histories.
- Provided neuropsychological and psycho-diagnostic assessment, including scoring, interpretation and report writing.
- Provided consultation services for referring physicians, case managers, and other relevant sources of service providers.
- Provided feedback sessions for clients, families, and referring professionals

**Therapy Practicum**  
2010-2011

**Azusa Pacific University Counseling Center**  
Azusa, CA  
539+ supervised hours

College Psychotherapist

Supervisor Joel Sagawa, Ph.D.

- Provided brief, crisis and long-term individual psychotherapy to a diverse college student population using psycho-education, integrative, cognitive-behavioral and interpersonal treatment interventions.
- Co-facilitated a support group for adult children of divorced and difficult families.
- Conducted outreach seminars on eating disorders, body-image, social networking, crisis intervention for campus staff and couple communication.
- Engaged in monthly consultation and support meetings with a director of a large campus residential community.
- Participated in weekly didactic seminars on case presentation, multi-ethnic concerns, sexual diversity, sexual abuse, gender concerns and group supervision.
- Addressed concerns including depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, adjustment disorders, eating disorders, substance abuse, relational problems, identity, sexual identity, and psychospiritual concerns.
- Reviewed video and audio recording of sessions with supervisor.

**Therapy Practicum**  
2009-2010

**Hathaway Sycamores Child and Family Services**  
Pasadena, CA  
670+ supervised hours

School-Based Psychotherapist

Longfellow Elementary School, Supervisor Timothy Blatt, L.M.F.T.

- Provided family and individual psychotherapy for low-income, multi-ethnic elementary school students in a public school setting.
- Conducted comprehensive intake assessments with children and families.
- Received training and experience in Department of Mental Health (DMH) paperwork.
- Acquired training in Professional Assault Crisis Training (Pro ACT).
- Treated concerns including ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, adjustment disorders, depression, anxiety, academic concerns, suicidal ideation, and child abuse trauma.
- Employed treatment interventions including cognitive/behavioral therapy, psycho-education, family systems intervention, and play therapy.

**Live Team Training**  
2008-2009

**Fuller Graduate School of Psychology**  
Pasadena, CA  
60+ supervised hours with a client actor

Beginning Psychotherapy Training

Supervisors George Horton, M.A. and Stephen Simpson, Ph.D.

- Received weekly group supervision and didactic training in Rogerian Client-Centered Therapy
- Weekly trainings included role-play with individual adult client actors, peer and supervisor live observation through two-way mirror, and individual video recording review with supervision.
- Addressed concerns including relational concerns, sexuality, and psychospirituality

**Senior Undergraduate Practicum Donaldson Wellness Center**

2007-2008

Waxahachie, TX

100+ supervised hours

Undergraduate Psychotherapist

Supervisor Kathrine Donaldson, Psy.D.

- Co-facilitated child social skills group.
- Co-facilitated women's support group.
- Provided supervised Rogerian therapy for an adolescent client.

**TEACHING & OUTREACH EXPERIENCE**

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**Therapeutic Reminiscent Art: Remembering the Past Through Art.** *United Methodist Community House Senior's Program.* Weekly class, July 2013 through June 2014.

**National Memory Screening Day: Free Community Dementia Screening using the MOCA.** *Calvin College.* November 19, 2013.

**Mastering the Mental Status Examination.** *Hathaway Sycamores Child and Family Services.* April 2013.

**Developmental Assessment With Children Ages 0-5 Years Old.** *Children's Hospital Los Angeles.* October 2012.

**Couples Communication Workshop: Identifying Your Pain and Peace Cycles.** *Azusa Pacific University.* Fall 2010 and Spring 2011.

**Solution-Focused Therapy.** *Fuller Theological Seminary.* Winter 2011.

**Wisdom in Social Networking: How to Truly 'Friend' Facebook.** *Azusa Pacific University.* Winter 2010.

**Positive Body-Esteem.** *Azusa Pacific University.* Spring 2011.

**Eating Disorders.** *Azusa Pacific University.* Fall 2012 and Winter 2010.

**Marital Therapy.** Teaching Assistant. *Fuller Theological Seminary.* Spring 2010, Spring 2011 and Spring 2012.

**Legal and Ethical Issues in Marriage and Family Therapy.** Teaching Assistant. *Fuller Theological Seminary.* Fall 2010 and Fall 2011.

**Step-Parenting Workshop.** *Fuller Theological Seminary.* Spring 2011.

**Parenting Skills For Adoptive Parents.** *Fuller Theological Seminary.* Winter 2011.

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE & PRESENTATIONS**

**Research Fellow/Research Assistant**  
2010-2013

**Boone Center for the Family**  
Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA  
**Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Psychology**  
Pasadena, CA

### Research Coordinator

Supervisors: Terry Hargrave, Ph.D. & Sharon Hargrave, L.M.F.T.

- Coordinated marital enrichment program outcome research data collection
- Coordinated data collection from groups facilitated in universities across the U.S.
- Created archival database spanning three years.
- Participated in conference presentations.

**Vision Impairment Projects**  
Fall 2011-Spring 2012

**Children's Hospital Los Angeles,**  
**Clinical Trials Unit**  
Los Angeles, CA

### Research Assistant

- Conducted brain tracing of corpus callosums from MRIs of children with optic nerve hypoplasia.
- Participated in grant writing for organizational funding.
- Participated in a multi-disciplinary project development team.
- Proposed funding for developing developmental assessment norms for visually impaired children ages zero to seven years, 11 months using the Battelle Developmental Inventory, Second Edition.

**Doctoral Dissertation:** *Program Evaluation of the Strong Marriages Successful Ministries Marital Enrichment Program.* Defended July, 2012. Fuller Theological Seminary. Committee: Terry Hargrave, Ph.D. & Seong-Hyeon Kim, Ph.D.

**Johnson, V. M., Hargrave, S. & Cho, J.** April, 2013. *Introduction to the strong marriages successful ministries psychoeducational program and its cultural applications.*

Poster presented at the at the annual Christian Association of Psychological Services (CAPS) Conference themed Cross-Cultural Care and Counsel in Portland, OR.

**Johnson, V. M.** 2008. *Parenting styles and sexual addiction in evangelical college students: A pilot study*. Poster presented at the Christian Counselors of Texas Annual Conference, Dallas, TX.

### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

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Christian Association of Psychological Services (Member)

PSI CHI National Honor Society (Member)

### **ASSESSMENTS USED**

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**Intellectual/Achievement Assessments:** Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Woodcock Johnson Tests of Cognition and Achievement, Wechsler Test of Pre-morbid Functioning, Wide Range Achievement Test

**Tests of Executive Functioning:** Deli-Kaplan Executive Function System, Stroop, Trail Making Test, Color Trails, Wisconsin Card Sort, Continuous Performance Test, Verbal Fluency Test, Integrated Visual and Auditory Continuous Performance Test, Frontal Systems Behavioral Scale (FrSBe): Family Rating Form

**Validity Assessments:** Test of Memory and Malinger, Rey Fifteen-Item Test and Dot Counting Test

**Memory Assessments:** Repeatable Battery for the Assessment of Neuropsychological Status, Wechsler Memory Scale, California Verbal Learning Test, California Verbal Learning Test-Children's Version, Wechsler Memory Scale-Fourth Edition

**Developmental Assessments:** Battle Developmental Inventory, Second Edition, Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development, Third Edition, NEPSY-II, Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration

**Other Neuropsychological Assessments:** Boston Naming Test, NAB Naming Test, Mini Mental Status Exam, Grooved Pegboard Test, Hand Dynamometer/Grip Strength Test, Finger Tapper Test, FAS Test

**Personality Assessment Measures:** Personality Assessment Inventory, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory

**Projective Assessments:** Rotter Incomplete Sentences Blanks, Thematic Apperception Test, Rorschach

**Symptom Report Measures:** Beck Depression and Anxiety Inventories, Geriatric Depression Scale, Adaptive Behavior Assessment System-Second Edition, Behavioral Observation Screening Child Evaluation, Behavioral Assessment System for Children Report Forms, Connors Report Forms, Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Functioning-Parent Form, Children's Depression Inventory

### **PROFESISONAL REFERENCES**

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**Brant VanOrman, Psy.D.**

Internship Training Director/Inpatient Supervisor  
Psychological Consultation Center  
Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services  
300 68<sup>th</sup> St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49501  
(866) 852-4001

**Ryan Jaarsma, Psy.D.**

Internship Outpatient Supervisor/SWC Manager  
Pine Rest Southwest Clinic (SWC)  
4211 Parkway Place, Suite 100  
Grandville, MI 49418  
(616) 222-3700

**Mark DeVries, Ph.D.**

Internship Neuropsychology Outpatient/Inpatient Rotation Supervisor  
Psychological Consultation Center  
Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services  
300 68<sup>th</sup> St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49501  
(866) 852-4001