Practical Communication Skills for Veteran Relationships

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Practical Application for Intimate Relationship Skills

PAIRS is an educational curriculum designed to be a relationship intervention program that teaches communication skills designed to increase emotional openness and physical closeness.

PAIRS programs teach the affective, behavioral, and cognitive skills needed to establish healthy intimate partnerships while at the same time recognizing and validating our individual differences.
INTERDISCIPLINARY EFFORT

Twenty-three professionals from Primary Care, Chaplain Service, Seamless Transition, Research, Polytrauma, Voluntary Service, SATS, Psychiatry, Education, and Social Work comprise a team dedicated to helping improve our veterans’ relationship skills.
The mission of PAIRS is to teach those attitudes, emotional understandings and behaviors that nurture and sustain healthy relationships and to make this knowledge broadly available on behalf of a safer, saner, more loving world.
MODULE TWO
CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

Emotional Stages of Development

The Emotional Jug and Dirty Fighting

Emptying the Emotional Jug

Fair Fight for Change
UNCONSCIOUS COMPETENCE
(I Know It and Do It - It is a Habit)

CONSCIOUS COMPETENCE
(I Am Learning)

CONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE
(I Know That I Don’t Know)

UNCONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE
(I Don’t Know What I Don’t Know)
Relationship Road Map I
The Logic of Emotion and Bonding

BIOLOGICALLY BASED NEEDS
Air – Food – Water – Shelter

BONDING
(Emotional Openness/Physical Closeness)

SYMPTOMS OF UNHAPPINESS
- Illness, Fatigue
- Depression
- Rigidity of Personality
- Constriction, Isolation
- Closed, Guarded, Wary
- Anti-Social Behavior
- Range of Addictions: Drugs, Alcohol, Food, Shopping, Work, Gambling, Internet

SIGNS OF HAPPINESS
- Health, Energy
- Well Being
- Flexibility
- Creativity
- Open, Sharing
- Personal Responsibility
- Capacity for Intimacy

DIS-EASE
DISTRESS
DISTRUST
UNHAPPINESS
PAIN
DANGER
FEAR/ANGER

EASE
EU-STRESS
TRUST
HAPPINESS
PLEASURE
DESIRE
LOVE

PLEASURE
PAIN
FEAR/ANGER

EASE
EU-STRESS
TRUST
HAPPINESS

PAIN
FEAR/ANGER

EASE
EU-STRESS
TRUST
HAPPINESS

PAIN
FEAR/ANGER
The Placater
or “People Pleaser”

The Blamer

The Computer

The Distracter
"I can speak on my own behalf…"

"Together we can bring our resources to solving whatever problems or challenges we face…"

"I can have empathy and show concern for how it is for the other…"
DAILY TEMPERATURE
READING
WITH APPRECIATION TO VIRGINIA SATIR

• Appreciations
• New Information
• Puzzles
• Concerns with Recommendations
• Wishes, Hopes, Dreams
PAIRS TALKING TIPS

I hope ...
I realize ...
I appreciate you for ...
I want ... (specific request)
I worry about ...
(Alternative: What this reminds me of from my past is ...)
I notice ... (behavior)
I assume this means ...
I think ...
I am frustrated by ...
I am hurt by ...
MAKING DEPOSITS IN THE LOVE BANK

- Positive Words
- Time Together
- Gifts and Presents
- Helping Out
- Affection and Touch
INFANT
“I want what I want when I want it!”

CHILD
Doesn’t say what’s wrong… acts it out in behavior and keeps you guessing.

ADOLESCENT
“Don’t tell me what to do!”

ADULT
Capacity for mutual concern and empathy. Desire for the relationship to win.
Has the capacity to demonstrate good will, is open to learning, growing, and has a willingness to change.

The healthy emotional adult will say: “I can ask for what I need and want, without controlling, manipulating or running from you; I can listen with empathy for how it is for you without assuming it’s always about me.”
Leaks Through DIRTY FIGHTING:

- Sarcasm
- Ridiculing
- Threatening
- Accusing
- Labeling
- Taunting
- Laughing At

"Blowing your Top"
"Popping Your Cork"

Leaks Through DIRTY FIGHTING:

- Assuming
- Sneering
- Contempt
- Ignoring
- Blaming
- Stonewalling
EMPTYPING THE EMOTIONAL JUG

What are you MAD about?
What else are you mad about?

What are you SAD about?
What else are you sad about?

What are you SCARED about?
What else are you scared about?

What are you GLAD about?
What else are you glad about?

• If you were mad about anything else, what would it be? Thank You!

• If you were sad about anything else, what would it be? Thank You!

• If you were scared about anything else, what would it be? Thank You!

• Is there anything else that you are glad about? Thank You!
What are some of the bad ways of fighting that only make things worse for everyone involved?
1. Invite partner.

2. Reflect on complaint.

3. State Complaint clearly (one specific behavior).

4. Partner repeats what you said (listening to understand, speaks with empathy).

5. Show Appreciation (for being heard accurately).

6. Ask for what you want specifically. "Will you do it?"

7. Partner repeats what you said (speaks with empathy).

8. Show Appreciation (for being heard accurately).

9. Partner responds "Yes," "No," or "Yes with conditions."

10. Continue process until you come to a solution.
TIME-OUT TIP

Say: “I need a TIME-OUT” and state the amount of time you need. (20 – 40 minutes).

Move to separate spaces; no parting words or gestures; no drugs or alcohol.

Do something physical; play a game with the kids; think about something positive - a pleasant time spent with the children, a hobby you enjoy.

Person who called Time-Out returns to partner at the time previously stated. Offer some expression of good will. (“Thanks for your cooperation, I needed that.”)

Return to issues.

Some sign of affection at conclusion of the discussion.
Love Knots are commonly held beliefs that seem to be true. However, they are not true because they are not based on logical, realistic thinking. Love Knots can be very harmful to relationships.
LOVE KNOT #1:
You would know ...

LOVE KNOT
If you really loved me, you would know what I want, and you would do it. Since you don’t, you obviously don’t care.

UNTANGLED
I cannot assume that you know what I want and need. I will ask for what I want and not expect you to know.
If I let myself get close to you, I will need you. If I am too dependent and need (love) you too much, I will not be able to survive without you. I will become weak.

I can enjoy being close to you yet still survive on my own if I need to. As an adult, I am not helpless. I can make a new life for myself if I have to. Meanwhile, the pleasures of intimacy are among life’s most fulfilling gifts.
The Love Knot I want to work on is...

My assumption has been...

I think I have this belief because...

What I needed in my past was...

The price I have paid in my life for having this knot is...

The price you have paid for my knot is...

What I can do for myself to untangle this knot is...

What you can do to help me is...

I realize...

I hope...
WHO DECIDES DECISION MAKING

Let’s Talk

Negotiable means...

Non-Negotiable means...
My Decision

Your Decision

My Decision with Your Input

Your Decision with My Input

My Decision with Your Input

Your Decision with My Input

**“OUR” Decision Need to Agree**

(Mine/Ours/Yours)

Needs to be able to be discussed
Suppose that when you were a child every time there was a holiday, your father got drunk. Each holiday, you would hope that things would be different, but they never were. You remember starting out the day excited about the event, but each time your dad would come home drunk, you would feel angry, hurt, and disappointed.

Now today, it is a special holiday and your husband/wife is about to pour a drink and you go into a fit of rage...
My Allergy: Raising your voice in anger.

My Feelings: Fear, Hurt, Anger

My Belief: Anyone who yells at me does not love me.

My Behavior: I give you the silent treatment for yelling.

Your Allergy (TRIGGER) Silent Treatment.

Your Feelings Hurt, Anger, Fear

Your Belief: Anyone who stops speaking to me, does not respect me, will leave me.

Your Behavior: I raise my voice again and you continue not to speak to me.
An emotional allergy that I have is...

I believe I have this allergy because...

When I have this allergy, the behavior you see from me is...

The feelings I have include frustration because...

The feelings I have include hurt because...

The feelings I have include worry because...

I want my new behavior to be...

I would appreciate your help by...

I hope this will help us by...

I realize...

The PAIRS ESSENTIALS

Start Here
Vulnerability:

Allowing another person to see the parts of you that are scared, hurt, sad, and lonely, etc.

Taking a risk to share your deepest thoughts and feelings with another person even when you are not sure how they will react.

Empathy:

Imagining what it feels like to be in another person’s shoes

Imagining what that person thinks and feels.
# PAIRS ESSENTIALS TOOL KIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem or feeling</th>
<th>Tool Tip to use</th>
<th>To do for yourself</th>
<th>To do with your partner</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of growing distance</td>
<td>DAILY TEMPERATURE READING</td>
<td>Speak up for the relationship.</td>
<td>DTR will strengthen both partners’ intimacy and develop the habit of confiding.</td>
<td>Set aside time daily. Give hugs and thanks!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting more pleasure in your relationship</td>
<td>GOOD WILL UMBRELLA</td>
<td>Find empathy and compassion for your partner.</td>
<td>Listen, listen, and listen to understand.</td>
<td>Use this often!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When using any of the tools</td>
<td>INVITATION RULE</td>
<td>Clarify which tool to use.</td>
<td>Invite your partner to participate.</td>
<td>Use this first!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming emotionally upset</td>
<td>SHARED MEANING</td>
<td>Make notes to yourself about your feelings.</td>
<td>Listen to, understand, and ask your partner “Is there more?”</td>
<td>Encourage full expression. Say, “Thank you for telling me!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious of partner's motives and feelings</td>
<td>MIND READING (CHECK OUT PUZZLES)</td>
<td>Think about what you are assuming about partner.</td>
<td>Partner affirms or clarifies.</td>
<td>Listen to partner’s feedback and clarification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting to resolve problems under stress</td>
<td>TIME OUT</td>
<td>Stop all talking immediately. State how much time you would like.</td>
<td>Do not continue to think badly of partner. Do not use drugs/alcohol.</td>
<td>Resume talking to discuss and resolve the problems.</td>
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Training Opportunities

April 23-26, 2012 – Wooded Glen, Henryville, Indiana

Local Workshop based on interest

Communication Workshops for Veterans
QUESTIONS