THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONALLY FOCUSED COUPLES THERAPY
ON MARITAL INTERACTION

by

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ABSTRACT

This study has addressed the continued debate regarding the effectiveness of "non-behavioral" marital psychotherapy. It provides empirical support for the effectiveness of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFCT), an "affective systemic" therapy model, by investigating changes of in-therapy interaction as a function of therapy. Specifically, the question under examination was: During EFCT, is the interaction of couples in the latter stages of the therapeutic experience significantly more positive than the interaction of couples in the beginning stages of the therapeutic experience?

The sample for this study consisted of 22 couples. A modification of the pretest-posttest control group design was used as the experimental design. The data consisted of audio recordings of the 22 participating couples' interaction during marital therapy sessions. Episodes marked by the presence of negative interactional patterns were chosen from the 2nd session of therapy and were compared to equivalent episodes from the 7th session. Two measures were used. The DAS, a self-report measure, was used to determine the level of marital distress experienced by the participating couples before and after treatment. And the SASB, an observer-rated coding system, was used for the analysis of the marital interaction. Cohen's Kappa, a coefficient of agreement for
nominal scales, was used to determine the interrater reliability between the SASB coders.

This study investigated eleven hypotheses regarding the effectiveness of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy in bringing about positive change in couples' behavior and interaction during the therapy session. Eight of the eleven hypotheses were supported by statistically significant findings. EFCT was demonstrated to be effective in bringing about significant positive change in the frequency of negative/disaffiliative behaviors, the frequency of autonomous positive/affiliative behaviors, the occurrence of negative sequences, and the occurrence of positive sequences. EFCT was also demonstrated to be effective in bringing about significant positive change in positive other-focused behaviors, positive self-focused behaviors, negative reciprocal sequences, and negative complimentary sequences. However EFCT was not demonstrated to be effective in bringing about significant positive change in positive controlling behaviors, negative controlling behaviors, and positive complimentary sequences. In conclusion, this study has found substantial support for the assertion that Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy does indeed help couples to positively change the nature of their interaction in therapy.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Marriage, or committed cohabitation, seems to offer possibilities for personal fulfillment which are not equaled by other relationships. Marriage and family life have been found to be the most personally satisfying features of life today, with marital satisfaction determining overall satisfaction to a high degree (Simon, Wilkerson, and Keller, 1982). Marriage provides an opportunity to fulfill the basic human need for intimacy, the need to be touched, comforted, and nurished (Feldman, 1979).

When the need for intimacy is thwarted, intense personal dissatisfaction and interpersonal tension can result. It has been suggested that a lack of intimacy and the subsequent marital distress is linked causally to personal depression and emotional illness (Menaghan, 1982. Waring, 1981) and to interpersonal conflict culminating in physical injury and even death. (Feldman, 1979).

Divorce is an alternative available to couples who find themselves unable or unwilling to work through the tensions which inevitably occur in marriage. This option is presently claimed in one out of every three marriages in Canada (Adams and Nagnur, Statistics Canada, 1981).
A second alternative available to couples is to attempt to bring about changes in the nature of the relationship so that each partner experiences greater satisfaction through interaction which promotes intimacy rather than conflict. It is this alternative which leads some couples to seek marital therapy. Indeed, it has been estimated that 50% of the people seeking psychotherapy do so primarily because of marital problems (Vincent, 1981).

There is continued debate regarding the effectiveness of marital psychotherapy. Some claim that marital therapy, regardless of form or theoretical basis, is effective 65% of the time (Gurman and Kniskern, 1978). While others claim that only the therapies based on behavioral theory and skill development have been empirically demonstrated to be effective, and that in general the effectiveness of marital therapy has rarely been demonstrated through empirical support (Hahlweg, Schindler, Revenstorf, and Brengelmann, 1984). However, in a recent study (Johnson and Greenberg, in press) empirical support was provided for the effectiveness of a non-behavioral "affective systemic" approach to couples therapy known as Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (Greenberg and Johnson, 1984). This present study serves as an elaboration of Johnson and Greenberg's (in press) research and will attempt to provide further empirical support for the effectiveness of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy by
investigating changes in in-therapy interaction as a function of therapy.

The question of how the effectiveness of marital therapy is best measured is highly relevant to this present study. Raush, Barry, Hertel, and Swain (1974) state simply that "studying what people say about themselves is no substitute for studying how they behave" (page 5). This comment calls into question the practice of using self-report measures as the sole basis for judging the effectiveness of any effort to change the manner in which people relate. Successful marital therapy changes one's attitude towards the other, one's beliefs about oneself, as well as one's customary ways of interaction with the other partner (Johnson, 1984). Self-report measures adequately address change in attitude and belief, but may be vulnerable to significant distortion when used as a measure of change in behavior or interaction. (Raush et al., 1974).

An alternative measure of the effectiveness of marital therapy is provided by the direct observation of the marital interaction by an independent party. Such a measure involves the application of a coding system in an attempt to measure an "observational" as opposed to "experiential" reality (Pinsof, 1981). The use of direct observation measures are best considered to be a complementary strategy for measuring change.

This study proposes to investigate the effectiveness of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (Greenburg and Johnson, 1984) using a measure based on the direct observation of couples' interaction. Johnson and Greenberg (in press) studied the effectiveness of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy through the use of self-report methods such as measures of goal attainment, marital adjustment, intimacy levels, and target complaint reduction; all of which demonstrated the power of this therapy model in bringing about significant changes in attitude and belief about the marital relationship. However, it has yet to be demonstrated that the couples who participated in this study made significant changes in the manner in which they behaved or interacted. The question this present study investigates is: Does Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy bring about actual positive change in the couple's interaction during the process of therapy? This is an important question in determining the value of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy, especially because the developers of this model claim its value lies in its ability to affect change in a couple's interactional sequences (Greenberg and Johnson, in press).

The hypotheses of this present study will predict the following differences in couples' interaction, when
interaction during the beginning stage of therapy is compared to interaction during the finishing stage of therapy. It is expected that the couples' interaction will demonstrate more positive behaviors and positive sequences during the finishing stage of therapy than during the beginning stage of therapy.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following review of the literature will present material relevant to the hypotheses of this study. This review will be divided into the following five sections: 1) Marital conflict; 2) The couple as a system; 3) Distressed vs. nondistressed couples interaction; 4) Patterns of interaction; and 5) Relating the findings of the review to the present study.

1) MARITAL CONFLICT

This section of the literature review will explore several key factors in the formation and continuation of marital conflict. The goal is to provide a broad context from which to consider the hypotheses of this study.

THE CORE ISSUES OF MARITAL CONFLICT

One way of conceptualizing marital conflict is to view it as the couples' response to, and attempt to resolve two distinct issues; the issue concerning closeness and distance, or intimacy, and the issue concerning dominance and submission, or power (Benjamin et al., in press). These issues are thought to be central factors in the formation of negative patterns of couples' interaction (Greenberg and Johnson, 1984). Interestingly, the issues of intimacy and
power are equally relevant to parent/child interaction and have been the subject of numerous studies of such interaction (Gottman, 1979). Therefore it is not surprising that Raush et al. (1974) suggest that, of all human relationships, marriage is most likely to raise the childhood issues of autonomy and intimacy to the forefront. Raush et al. (1974) also point out that these core issues are more likely to surface at times of high interpersonal defensiveness. Thus it is imperative that a successful couples' therapy deal with the issues of intimacy and power.

Waring (1981) defines intimacy as a composite of:

1) affection - the degree to which feelings of emotional closeness are expressed
2) expressiveness - the degree to which thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes, and feelings are communicated within the marriage
3) compatibility - the degree to which the couple is able to work and play together comfortably
4) sexuality - the degree to which sexual needs are communicated and fulfilled
5) conflict resolution - the ease with which differences of opinion are resolved
6) autonomy - the couple's degree of positive connectedness to family and friends
7) identity - each member's level of self-confidence and self-esteem.
As noted previously, Waring (1981) suggests that a failure to develop intimacy is a necessary factor in the formation of marital distress and the development of emotional illness. The centrality of one's need for intimacy in marriage is supported by Napier (1978) who suggests that the striving for affirmative intimacy and nurturance is a major goal in the family. Feldman (1979) states that "the wish for intimacy has its roots in the most fundamental need of the human organism - to be held, touched, comforted, and nourished." (page 70)

The issue of interpersonal "territorality", or the closeness/distance struggle, is said to be basic to all distressed couples, and is synonymous with the intimacy struggle (Gottman, 1979; Napier, 1978). Raush et al. (1974) support the idea that this problem of forming a union without losing individuality is central in the formation of marital conflict.

The second issue of significance in regards to marital conflict is the issue of power, or dominance and submission. Gottman (1979) notes that, despite the central role this issue has played in the research and theory development on marital interaction, the results of this research are ambiguous. He suggests that the concept of dominance has provided little insight in distinguishing between healthy and dysfunctional conflict.
However Gray-little and Burks (1983) suggest that power relations are an important factor in determining marital happiness, but that the issue is more complex than originally thought. One problem confronted by Gray-Little and Burks (1983) is the lack of a standard definition of power in the family. They raise the issue of whether power is best viewed as potential (as in the resources available for distribution or exchange) or as the actual control over outcome. They note that this distinction is important because "potential" can be measured as an individual quality but the measurement of "actual control over outcome" requires an interpersonal context. They also note that the latter definition of power as the actual control over outcome (or the capacity to produce intended effects) is emerging as prominent. It is this definition of power as an interpersonal feature which is used in the present study.

Given the centrality of the issues of intimacy and dominance to couples' interaction, it is important that any study into the possible effects of therapy on marital interaction include hypotheses which account for change on these two dimensions.

THE FEAR OF INTIMACY

A brief expansion on the theme of intimacy is necessary
in order to fully appreciate the impact that this issue can have on couple's interaction. As noted above, the need for intimacy is a core issue in couples' conflict. The manner in which this legitimate need leads to conflict can be better understood by examining the fear of intimacy which balances the need for intimacy.

Feldman (1979) suggests that the fear of intimacy stems from five unconscious conflicts, each of which leads to an avoidance of intimacy. These conflicts are as follows:

1) fear of merger - which leads to intense anxiety where intimacy becomes a threat to one's sense of self or one's identity

2) fear of exposure - because intimacy involves self-disclosure it is threatening to those who have low self-acceptance or self-esteem

3) fear of attack - which is based on a sense of vulnerability arising from developmental impairment

4) fear of abandonment - capsulized by the statement, "If I get too close I will be hurt again, as I have been when others left."

5) fear of one's own destructive impulses - where intimacy raises the fear that you will harm your loved one.

Whenever one of these fears are experienced, the partner experiencing them strongly resists the other partner's attempt
to establish intimacy. It makes sense that if one partner is responding to a felt need for intimacy while the other is responding to a fear of intimacy intense conflict may result.

Simon, Wilkerson, and Keller (1982) suggest that the couple which successfully deals with the closeness/distance dilemma could be compared to two porcupines sleeping together on a cold night where "the task of the porcupines to get close enough together to stay warm and far enough apart so that they don't stick each other." (page 127)

Feldman (1979) suggests that it is the balancing of the fears and the needs of intimacy which eventually lead to the establishment of interactional limits regarding the display of intimacy. These interactional limits, or rules, are the subject of therapeutic change efforts, and must be modified if the therapy is to succeed.

DEPRIVED NEEDS VS. INFANTIAL IMPULSES

How should one view the intrapersonal forces or motivation which lead to interpersonal conflict? Wile (1981) suggests that there are two basic belief systems which can guide a therapeutic effort. One view he refers to as the "traditional" belief, based on "depth analysis", which considers that an individual's primary concern in times of conflict is the desire to gratify infantial impulses. The
The therapeutic implication of this viewpoint is that people should be influenced to behave in ways which are less egocentric and more mature. The other belief system, which Wile (1981) suggests is both more accurate and more helpful, holds that an individual's motivation in situations of interpersonal conflict stem not from immaturity but from their desire to meet legitimate needs. This belief system is based on what he terms "ego analysis". The central proposition of this analysis is that it is peoples' sense of unentitlement to their feelings and needs which leads to relationship problems. It is this unentitlement which leads to a reluctance to express feelings or needs. And it is the suppression of these feelings and needs which lead to "derivative expressions" such as tantrums, whining, nagging, complaining, or anger (Wile, 1981). The therapy based on these premises encourages the expression of feelings and needs, and the receptive response of one's partner to these expressions.

DYSFUNCTIONAL VS. FUNCTIONAL CONFLICT

The following comparison provides the background for a more specific examination of the change which could be expected in couples' interaction following a successful therapeutic effort. In general, it could be hypothesized that before therapy a distressed couple's style of engaging in conflict will be dysfunctional, whereas following successful therapy this same couple will engage in conflict in a
functional manner. This hypothesis is premised by the assumption that conflictual interaction, of and by itself, is neither negative nor positive (Raush et al., 1974; Deutsch, 1969). It is not that they fight, but rather how they fight that matters.

DESTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

Feldman (1982) defines destructive marital conflict as conflict which causes injury and/or a decrease in trust, and which does not lead to constructive change in the couple's interaction. Deutsch (1969) defined conflict as destructive if "the participants in it are dissatisfied with the outcomes and all feel they have lost as a result." (page 10)

Destructive conflict is characterized by a tendency to escalate and blow out of proportion, becoming independent of the initial issues (Raush et al., 1974). In his discussion of dysfunctional conflict, Deutsch (1969) suggests that the process of escalation or expansion could take a number of forms. For example, the size of the conflict could expand, as could the number of issues, the number of motives, the number of precedents that are perceived to be at stake, the costs one is willing to bear in defense of one's position, and the intensity of negative attitudes. Deutsch (1969) also suggests that three interrelated processes lead to escalation: Competition, where one wins at the expense of the other;
misperception, involving "a bias toward perceiving one's own behavior toward the other as being more benevolent and more legitimate than the other's behavior toward oneself." (page 14); and commitment to one's position, which intensifies through a process of cognitive dissonance created by the difference between one's actions and one's commitment to his or her position where "the result of this pressure for self-consistency may lead to an unwitting involvement in and intensification of conflict as one's actions have to be justified to oneself and to others." (page 14) Raush et al. (1974) suggest that when the conflict involves "temporal" expansion, that is use of words such as "you never" or "you always", the real issue is not the ostensible one but rather evolves around the core issue of intimacy and autonomy.

Also characteristic of dysfunctional conflict is the frequent use of threats, coercion, and deception (Raush et al., 1974). Deutsch (1969) notes that, in general, interaction during destructive conflict involves "a shift away from a strategy of persuasion and from the tactics of conciliation." (page 11) Furthermore, Gray-Little and Burks (1983) note that there is evidence in support of the hypothesis that the presence of coercive control is causal in the formation of marital dissatisfaction.
CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

Deutsch (1969) suggests that marital conflict is constructive if the participants are satisfied with the outcome and feel that they have gained something. Thus, one criterion for constructiveness is participant satisfaction, with the motto being "the greatest good for the greatest number." He also suggests that this process necessitates that the couple have a common view of the problem and a recognition of the joint benefit of solving it. Deutsch also notes that constructive conflict prevents stagnation in relationships and is the starting point of positive interpersonal change.

In regards to the flavor of the interaction, constructive conflict involves the use of friendly or cooperative efforts of persuasion which emphasize the use of reward rather than punishment (Gray-little and Burks (1983).

Given the above descriptions, initial support is found for the hypotheses which state a positive relationship between pre-therapy couples' interaction and adversive control techniques, as well as for those which state a positive relationship between post-therapy couples' interaction and positive control techniques.
2) THE COUPLE AS A SYSTEM

Many aspects of a couple's conflict are best understood by examining the interaction or the manner in which the couple relates, as opposed to examining the internal experience of the individual spouse. According to Wile (1981) the family systems theory as expounded upon by Don Jackson, John Weakland, Paul Watzlawick and others, provides some of the necessary concepts or tools with which to understand or categorize couples' interaction. The concepts of "communication", "rules", "feedback", and "circular causality" are particularly relevant to this present study and merit some further explanation.

COMMUNICATION

Gottman (1979) defines communication as "the relationship set up by the transmission of stimuli and the evocation of responses" (page 19) therefore "a behavior of one organism has communicative value in a social sense if it reduces uncertainty in the behavior of another organism." (page 31) This concept is relevant to many of the hypotheses of this study. As is quickly realized from the above definition, if an observer understands the communicative value of a statement the ability to predict the likely response is greatly enhanced. Thus the concepts of predictability and communication are related. In regards to couple's
interaction, many sequences of behavior can be predicted based upon an assessment of the health of the relationship. An interactional sequence in a dysfunctional relationship, for example, could be said to consist of at least two consecutive acts with the first act setting the stage for a predictable response in the second act. Indeed, the fact that the first act does evoke a predictable response allows it to be termed a "communication" in Gottman's (1979) sense of the term.

RULES

Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967) define a rule as a statement of the redundancies observed in a relationship. A rule, therefore, describes a relationship in terms of repetition, constraint, and patterns. Calibration refers to the process by which a couple establishes rules.

For example, Feldman (1979) describes the process of calibration regarding the role of intimacy in a relationship as a process of overt and covert communication of expectations, desires, needs, and fears; the result of which is the defining of "a range of acceptable deviation for a variety of interactional behavior." (page 70) As noted previously, Feldman (1979) considers rules to represent a compromise between the fears and wishes of the interacting individuals.
Negative feedback refers to the process which counteracts behaviors which deviate from the acceptable range of behaviors established through the calibration of rules (Feldman, 1979). This process is associated with the concept of homeostasis and the maintenance of stability in a relationship (Watzlawick et al., 1967). In dysfunctional relationships stability is not necessarily a positive experience. One distressed husband is quoted as saying that he felt "like a broken record reciting the same song. We had only completed a cycle, ending at the beginning. The problem occurs again tomorrow." (Bernal, 1982, page 294) In regards to the hypotheses of this present study, negative feedback could be seen to be the process which keeps dysfunctional couples behaving in unhealthy ways and which helps functional couples behave in healthy ways. The task which every successful couples therapy must tackle is the task of changing interaction which is tantamount to changing the rules of the couple's relationship, in effect challenging the process of negative feedback which inhibits change. Implicit in the hypotheses of this study is the assumption that Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy is successful in regards to this task.

CIRCULAR CAUSALITY

One of the basic tenents of the family systems theory is that it is the couple's interaction, as opposed to the psychopathology of one member, which is responsible for the
relationship problems (Wile, 1981). Therefore, family systems theory subscribes to "circular causality" rather than "linear causality" by suggesting that the problematic behavior of one spouse is best understood to be a response to the other as opposed to something which was "carried into" the relationship independent of the other (Gottman, 1979).

Circular causality involves a process of "continuing feedback" (Raush et al., 1974) where the behavior of each person both affects and is affected by the behavior of the other person (Watzlawick et al., 1967). In describing this concept, Margolin (1983) notes that any one behavior serves several functions: It reveals something about the actor; it serves as a reaction to the other's previous action; it is an action directed towards the other; and it commands a response in return. This description pays attention to the fact that a behavior, although providing relevant intrapsychic information, can easily be viewed as a part of a sequence of behaviors or interaction. It is this second aspect of a behavior which is relevant to the hypotheses of this present study. Revenstorf, Hahlweg, Schindler and Vogel (1984) point out that each member of a couple is a crucial part of the environment of the other member. It is the "stimuli" of one spouse which evokes the "response" of the other and vise versa. They are, in fact, mutually influencing each other.
Related to the concept of circular causality is the idea that communication sequences cannot be understood if behavior is viewed as "anonymous units in a frequency distribution" (Watzlawick, 1967, page 120) but rather it is the order and interrelationships which reveal the meaning or significance of communication. Therefore a thorough study of a couples' interaction must examine both the frequency and the sequence of behaviors.
3) DISTRESSED VS. NONDISTRESSED COUPLES INTERACTION

The following section of this literature review will provide a detailed description of the expected differences between the behavior of distressed or dysfunctional couples and the behavior of nondistressed or functional couples. Such a description is relevant to the hypotheses of this study.

If it can be determined that the couples under investigation behave in a distressed manner prior to therapy, and that following therapy these same couples behave in a manner typical of nondistressed couples, then there is basis to conclude that the therapy methods which were employed are effective. A crucial step in this study is the specific description of the difference between distressed and nondistressed couples' behavior, for this description will yield the hypotheses of the expected difference between the pre-therapy and post-therapy behavior of the couples under investigation.

This portion of the review will be broken into the following divisions to facilitate the presentation of the material:

A) THE DEFINITION OF DISTRESSED VS. NONDISTRESSED
B) VERBAL VS. NONVERBAL FACTORS
C) DIFFERENCES IN THE FREQUENCY OF BEHAVIOR
D) SEQUENTIAL ANALYSIS
E) DIFFERENCES IN RECIPROCITY
F) OTHER SEQUENTIAL DIFFERENCES
G) INTRAPERSONAL DIFFERENCES
A) THE DEFINITION OF DISTRESSED VS. NONDISTRESSED

Margolin (1983) claims that despite the common use of the dimension of "distressed vs. nondistressed" in the study of the marital relationship, there is no commonly shared methodology for the classification of couples as either distressed or nondistressed. In regards to the use of self-report measures, investigators have made independent decisions of how to establish cut-off scores. Almost all studies concerned with either the treatment of unhappy couples, or the comparison of such couples with satisfied couples make use of self-report measures of some description which assist the investigator in deciding how to separate the couples into two groups, distressed and nondistressed. Some brief descriptions of the manner in which previous investigators have defined their sample will provide a context for evaluating the methods used in this present study to obtain a sample of distressed couples. (Descriptive words such as distressed/nondistressed, dissatisfied/satisfied, and unhappy/happy will be used interchangeably.)

Gottman, Markman, and Notarius (1977) divide their sample into satisfied and dissatisfied couples on the basis of two criteria: 1) self-report, with dissatisfied couples having at least one member with a score below the cut-off point on the Lock-Wallace inventory; and 2) whether or not the couple is seeking counselling (i.e., they are presenting themselves
as dissatisfied) or alternatively whether they responded to an advertisement seeking happily married couples (i.e., they are presenting themselves as satisfied).

Margolin and Wampold (1981) define distressed couples as those who: 1) are seeking marital therapy; 2) have a total couples' score of less than 136 on a modified Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS); 3) have a mean couples score of less than 4 on the MAS 7 point self-report rating of marital satisfaction; and 4) have a rating of less than 4 on a 8 point scale rated by the therapist regarding marital adjustment. Nondistressed couples are defined as those who 1) are not seeking therapy; 2) have a total couples score of 136 or more on the MAS; and 3) have a mean score of 4 or more on the 7 point self-report MAS.

Koren, Carlton and Shaw (1980) divide their sample into distressed and nondistressed groups of couples on the basis of their score on the Marital Adjustment Test, with 100 as the cut-off score. All couples were recruited through advertisement.

Jacobson, Follette and Waggoner McDonald (1982) differentiate their sample on the basis of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) scores and on the basis of whether or not the couple seeks therapy. That is, distressed couples have significantly lower DAS scores than nondistressed
couples, and distressed couples also request marital therapy whereas nondistressed couples are recruited through a newspaper advertisement.

Gottman (1979) distinguishes between dissatisfied and satisfied couples on the basis of whether they apply for therapy (distressed) or whether they respond to an advertisement seeking happily married couples.

As can be seen from the above descriptions, the use of self-report measures is the most common method used for either obtaining a sample of dissatisfied couples for treatment or obtaining two comparison groups of dissatisfied versus satisfied couples for study.

B) VERBAL VS. NONVERBAL FACTORS

Watzlawick et al. (1967) provide some useful guidelines for the appreciation of the importance of nonverbal behavior. They refer to all nonverbal behavior as "analogic" communication which includes "posture, gesture, facial expression, voice inflection, the sequence, rhythm, and codence of the words themselves, and any other nonverbal manifestation of which the organism is capable, as well as the communicational clues unfailingly present in any context in which an interaction takes place." (page 62) The purpose of analogic communication is to complement the content aspects of
a communication by defining the nature of the relationship between the communicants. They suggest that nonverbal or analogic behavior is depended upon almost exclusively when one wishes to communicate about relationship issues.

When distinguishing couples on the basis of positive vs. negative behavior, nonverbal behavior is a better discriminator than verbal behavior (Gottman, 1979; Gottman et al., 1977; Schaap, 1983). Therefore, "greater descriptive information is thus obtained by teasing out nonverbal from verbal aspects of message exchange." (Gottman et al., 1977, page 469)

For example, as noted below in the discussion of the differences of the frequency of behaviors, it is the nonverbal indicators that lead to the discrimination of the behavior of distressed and nondistressed couples in several instances where verbal indicators alone were unable to make a differentiation.

Because of the centrality of nonverbal indicators in the differentiation of satisfied and dissatisfied couples it is essential that the tools used to determine whether a couples' interaction is distressed or nondistressed be complex enough to code nonverbal aspects of couples' communication.
C) DIFFERENCES IN THE FREQUENCY OF BEHAVIOR

Gottman (1979) hypothesized that nondistressed couples will be more positive and less negative than distressed couples. Margolin (1983) finds support for this claim in her research, as do Revenstorf et al. (1984). Gray-Little and Burks (1983) note that there is support both in theory and empirical investigation for the hypothesis that nondistressed couples have a higher rate of noncontingent positive behaviors than do distressed couples.

Similarly, Jacobson et al. (1982) find that distressed couples report their daily interaction as significantly less positive and more negative than do nondistressed couples. However, in examining the ratio of negative events to total events (which includes negative, positive, and neutral events) they find that, despite a significant difference between distressed and nondistressed couples, the ratio for distressed couples is still relatively low. They suggest this finding indicates that "these events are destructive because of their intensity and not necessarily because of their frequency of occurrence." (page 709)

Gottman (1979) concludes that "positiveness" is a dimension of fundamental value is assisting the examination of marital interaction.
The above findings suggest that hypotheses which state a direct relationship between the positiveness of a couple's interaction and the level of satisfaction are "barking up the right tree." As can be seen from an examination of the hypotheses of this study, the above relationship is inferred in almost all cases.

Davidson, Balswick and Halverson (1983) note a linear relationship between self-disclosure in a relationship and marital satisfaction. Waring and Chelune (1983) find that the level of self-disclosure in a relationship is a major factor in determining the degree of intimacy experienced by the couple. They suggest that self-disclosure can be classified into the expression of emotion; the expression of need; the expression of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and fantasy; and self-awareness. As noted previously, marital and personal satisfaction is substantially related to the intimacy experienced in the relationship. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that a successful couples therapy effort will increase self-disclosure between the spouses to a significant degree.

Gottman (1979) states that there is considerable evidence that suggests the ratio of agreement to disagreement is an effective discriminator between the interaction of distressed and nondistressed couples, with nondistressed couples having a higher ratio. He notes the findings from Riskin and Faunce
(1972) in support of this claim. However in his own
investigation, Gottman (1979) notes that he is unable to
discriminate nondistressed from distressed couples on the
basis of the frequency of disagreement until he considered the
accompanying affective component of the communication, which
did in fact discriminate successfully. Gottman (1979) finds
that distressed couples are significantly more likely to
disagree with negative affect than are nondistressed couples.
Therefore it is likely that couples will disagree with
negative affect more before successful therapy than after the
therapy.

Gottman (1979, 1982) and Gottman et al. (1977) also
examine the difference between happy and unhappy couples in
regards to "mindreading", a behavior which they code through
the use of the Couple Interaction Scoring System. Mindreading
consists of statements which attribute feelings, attitudes,
opinions, or motives to the spouse; and also statements which
attribute past, present, or future behaviors solely to the
other person (Gottman, 1979). They find that there is no
difference in the frequency of mindreading statements in
satisfied or dissatisfied couples' interaction, but that there
is a difference in regards to the manner of affect with which
these statements are delivered. Whereas dissatisfied couples
tend to mindread with negative affect (a behavior which
functions as criticism) satisfied couples tend to mindread
with neutral affect (a behavior which functions as a sensitive
feeling probe). Therefore, there is reason to suggest that prior to therapy unhappy couples will tend to mindread with negative affect, but that following successful therapy these same couples will tend to mindread with neutral affect.

Gottman (1979) states that nondistressed couples are more supportive and less defensive in their interaction than are distressed couples. Gray-Little and Burks (1983) review the literature, as does Schaap (1984), with both finding support for Gottman's (1979) finding. Therefore it is reasonable to hypothesize that an effective couples therapy will increase supportive behavior and decrease defensive behavior in the couples' interaction.

Gray-Little and Burks (1983) review the literature dealing with the use of power as related to marital satisfaction and they note a general acknowledgement that the two variables are significantly related. They also note that the matter of which spouse is dominant in "relative control" (or the ratio of successful power statements to total power statements for the couple) has been hypothesized to be an important factor in differentiating satisfied from dissatisfied couples. Accordingly, happily married couples are less likely to be wife-dominant in "relative control" than unhappily married couples. Gray-Little and Burks (1983) state that a review of 15 test of the power/satisfaction relationship supports the hypothesis that wife-dominant
couples are less satisfied with their relationships than are egalitarian or husband-dominant couples.

However Gray-Little and Burks (1983) suggest that the couple's use of adversive control techniques may be a more powerful discriminating factor than whether or not the couple is wife-dominant, egalitarian, or husband-dominant. In their review of the use of adversive control techniques, they define coercion as "the control of behavior through manipulation of adversive stimuli whereas reward is the use of positive reinforcement to control behavior." (page 529) Vincent (1981) also notes the distinction between legitimate power, or "authority", which implies informed, voluntary compliance, and non-legitimate power which means the exertion of control over the other without consent. It is important to note that these definitions presuppose that the use of control techniques is inevitable in marital interactions, making the relevant concern the matter of whether these methods are based on coercion or reward.

Margolin (1983) notes that social learning explanations for marital distress have often focused on the frequency of the use of adversive control strategies, and that it is claimed that distressed spouses use such strategies more than nondistressed spouses. She also notes that the frequent use of these strategies has been hypothesized to be central in the formation of patterns of negative reciprocity. Deutsch's
writings (1969) support this position. He notes that in distressed interaction there is "an increasing reliance upon a strategy of power and upon the tactics of threat, coercion, and deception (and) ... a shift away from a strategy of persuasion and from the tactics of conciliation, minimizing differences, and enhancing mutual understanding and goodwill." (page 11)

Koren et al. (1980) examine the verbal behavior of couples during conflict in order to differentiate between distressed and nondistressed couples in their manner of dealing with conflict. This study categorizes the verbal behavior into three groups: "influence activity", "inquiry", and "responsiveness". Their results indicate that distressed couples are more likely than nondistressed couples to rely on criticism in attempting to influence the other's position. (Criticism is defined as a statement in which one spouse attempts to influence the other by blame or disparagement.)

Gray-Little and Burks (1983) review a longitudinal study (Markman, 1979) which examines the relationship between the use of negative control techniques and marital dissatisfaction. This study concludes that not only are negative control techniques symptomatic of dissatisfied relationships but such behavior has a major role in causing the dissatisfaction.
In light of the above findings on the relevance of the use of adverisive verses positive control techniques in determining the health of a relationship, it is appropriate to hypothesize that an effective couples therapy will impact a couple's interaction in this regard. Specifically, it is possible to hypothesize that prior to therapy a couple will rely more on adverisive control techniques whereas following successful therapy a couple will rely more on positive control techniques in their interaction.

The above findings concentrate on the differences between happy and unhappy couples based on an analysis of the frequency of certain behaviors, regardless of the interactional sequence which surrounds these behaviors. The following sections address the issue of sequence and its relevance to the hypotheses of this present study.

D) SEQUENTIAL ANALYSIS

Margolin and Wampold (1981) note that the vast majority of studies of family interaction have reported only frequencies or rates of behavior and that only a handful of researchers have used sequential analysis. Margolin (1983) agrees with Gottman's (1979) claim that an examination of the frequency of behavior of one spouse in the presence of the other is, by itself, inadequate if one is interested in identifying the relationship patterns of interaction. She
claims that sequential analysis is the tool for such a task. Sequential analysis "permits exploration of the extent to which one partner's response is affected by the preceding events emitted by the other person." (Margolin, 1983, page 109) It is this analysis which permits the investigation of reciprocity as a possible distinguishing feature between distressed and nondistressed couples.

An adaptation to this technique is called lagged sequential analysis in which "responses are considered in relation to antecedents more than one step back in time, irrespective of what happens in between." (Revenstorf et al., 1984, page 15) Gottman et al. (1977) describe lagged sequential analysis saying, "In this analysis, a behavior code is selected as the criterion and transition probabilities of all the other codes are calculated with respect to the criterion code as a function of lag from the criterion. Each behavior code of interest is then made the criterion. Confidence intervals are computed using statistics on the distribution of proportions about unconditional expected values." (page 469) The findings presented below make use of sequential analysis and thereby examine the sequence of behavior as well as the frequency of behavior in the effort to distinguish between distressed and nondistressed couples interaction.
E) RECIPROCITY DIFFERENCES

In social learning theory, reciprocity describes interaction which is equitable in the rate of reinforcement. This idea of equity is not what Gottman (1979) means by the term reciprocity, which he uses to describe the notion of contingency. He says, "the test for my use of the term reciprocity is that the conditional probability of the consequent code must be significantly greater than the unconditional probability of the consequent code." (page 218) Thus reciprocity properly refers to the process by which the preceding person's behavior has a direct influence on the behavior of the subsequent person's behavior, and that this effect leads to a response in kind; that is attack in response to attack, empathy in response to empathy, withdrawal in response to withdrawal, et cetera. Schaap (1984) suggests that reciprocity involves an immediate response to another's action as opposed to a lagged response.

Gottman et al. (1977) note that the term "reciprocity" is commonly used without the reference to contingent exchange and that this usage has led to the confusion of high base rates of behavior with the supposed presence of reciprocity. This problem has been particularly present in the examination of positive reciprocity, where several investigators have assumed its presence on the basis of frequency without an examination of contingency (Gottman et al., 1977)
Margolin and Wampold (1981) say, "reciprocity implies that if spouse X has given behavior A to spouse Y, there is a greater probability that spouse Y will at some later time give behavior A to spouse X than if the prior event had not occurred." (page 554)

Raush et al. (1974) note that reciprocation is a quality which potentially effects almost all types of communicative acts, be they cognitive, coercive, reconciliatory, et cetera. But they also note that reciprocity is never a foregone conclusion and that the option to break a cycle of reciprocation is always possible.

Gottman (1979) hypothesizes that the presence of negative reciprocity in the couples' interaction will distinguish distressed from nondistressed couples, with distressed couples having significantly more incidents of negative reciprocity in their interaction. He claims confirmation of this hypothesis in his analysis. However Gottman (1979) also investigates the possibility that the presence of positive reciprocity will likewise distinguish distressed from nondistressed couples' interaction, given that the interaction of nondistressed couples would logically display a higher level of positive reciprocity. But Gottman (1979) concludes that the presence of positive reciprocity is not a unique feature of happily
married couples but that all couples demonstrate positive reciprocity.

Margolin and Wampold (1981), as well as Jacobson et al. (1982), support these findings by noting that negative reciprocity is demonstrated by dissatisfied couples but not by satisfied couples to any significance. Margolin and Wampold (1981) also note that positive reciprocity is evident in the interaction of both types of couples, as do Gray-Little and Burks (1983).

Revenstorf et al. (1984) examine the reciprocation differences of distressed and nondistressed couples interaction also. They refer to negative reciprocity as "distancing" or the alternation of negative responses, and positive reciprocity as "attraction" or patterns of repeating alternating positive responses. They find that distressed couples engage in "distancing" more often and in much longer sequences than do nondistressed couples. They also find that both distressed and nondistressed couples engage in "attraction" sequences, although nondistressed couples do it longer.

In regards to the effects of successful marital therapy, Revenstorf et al. (1984) note that following effective therapy the treated couples' tendency to engage in "distancing" or
negative reciprocity also changes in the direction of nondistressed behavior.

The above findings support the hypothesis that successful therapy will impact the degree to which negative reciprocity is demonstrated in a couple's interaction. Specifically, it could be expected that distressed couples will demonstrate more negative reciprocity prior to successful therapy than they will following the therapy. Given the lack of evidence regarding the unique presence of positive reciprocity in happy relationships, any hypotheses which predict sequences involving positive reciprocity must be considered to be tentative and exploratory in nature.

F) OTHER SEQUENTIAL DIFFERENCES

Gottman (1979, 1982) suggests that any marital discussion can be divided into three separate stages; something which he discovered by simply dividing discussions into three equal parts and noting the frequency of different sequences of interaction within each part. This structure for examining interaction provides some interesting contrasts between happy and unhappy couples.

Gottman (1979, 1982) calls the first stage of a discussion the "agenda building" stage, the objective of which is for the partners to express their positions on the subject
of discussion. This stage is characterized by expressing feelings and mindreading. Gottman (1979, 1982) notes that it is possible to differentiate between happy and unhappy couples' interaction during this stage. Whereas satisfied couples commonly interact in a sequence involving neutral expressions of feeling interspersed with agreement (this sequence is dubbed "validation"), dissatisfied couples commonly interact in a sequence involving expressions of feeling about a problem by one spouse being responded to by an expression of feeling about a problem by the other spouse (this sequence is dubbed "cross-complaining"). Schaap (1984) notes that Gottman's findings in regards to the "validation" sequences have been replicated by other studies, however he notes that the findings in regard to the "cross-complaining" sequence have been challenged by subsequent studies.

However Revenstorf et al. (1984) support Gottman's (1979, 1982) findings in their examination of the differences between the patterns of interaction of happy and unhappy couples. A pattern referred to as "acceptance" (defined as a sequence of problem descriptions and positive responses in alternation) is comparable to "validation" and is noted to be more typical of nondistressed couples' interaction. A pattern referred to as "problem-escalation" (defined as a sequence of problem descriptions and negative responses in alternation) is comparable to "cross-complaining" and is noted to be more typical of distressed couples' interaction.
Gottman (1982) gives examples of these two types of sequences.

Cross-complaining:
Wife: I'm tired of spending all my time on the housework. You're not doing your share. (a complaint)
Husband: If you used your time efficiently you wouldn't be tired. (a counter-complaint)

Validation:
Wife: I'm tired of spending all my time on the housework. You're not doing your share. (a complaint)
Husband: I suppose you're right. If you used your time efficiently you wouldn't be tired. (a recognition of the validity of the other's position before making a counter point.) (Gottman, 1982, page 111)

Gottman (1979, 1982) refers to the second stage as the "arguing" stage, the goal of which is for the couple to argue for their points of view and understand the areas of disagreement. There are no sequential differences noted in the behavior of happy and unhappy couples during this stage.

Gottman (1979, 1982) refers to the third stage as the "negotiation" stage, the goal of which is compromise. This stage is characterized by problem solving, information exchange, agreement, communication talk, and summarizing the
other's or both points of view. During the interaction of this stage, the tendency for dissatisfied couples to reciprocate negative affect surfaced. Gottman (1982) notes that distressed couples tend to be characterized by "counter-proposal" sequences (where a proposal by one partner is met immediately by a proposal by the other partner) whereas satisfied couples tend to be characterized by "contracting" sequences (where a proposal by one partner is met first by some acceptance of this proposal).

Gottman's (1979, 1982) examination of the three stages of discussion provide support for the hypothesis that prior to treatment a distressed couple's interaction will contain relatively frequent incidents of "cross-complaining" and "counter-proposals". and that following effective therapy these same couples will interact with relatively frequent incidents of "validation" and "contracting".

C) INTRAPERSONAL DIFFERENCES

This section will examine the possible differences between distressed and nondistressed couples in regards to their intrapersonal experience of their interaction with their spouses. In particular, the hypothesis that distressed couples experience perceptual distortion to a significantly higher degree than nondistressed couples will be explored.
And it will be suggested that such a difference leads to specific differences in couples' interaction.

Feldman (1982) describes an intrapsychic state which leads to the perceptual distortion of one's relationships with significant others. He refers to this state as "narcissistic vulnerability", a state which promotes dysfunctional marital conflict by causing the spouses to be overly sensitive and overreactive, as well as leading spouses to experience distorted perceptions of the self and the other. This distortion leads to "overgeneralization of the spouse's negative behavior and to denial of one's own negative behavior." (page 418)

Deutsch (1969) suggests that perceptual distortion is one of several processes which leads to the escalation of conflict. However, he normalizes perceptual distortion, saying, "since most people are motivated to maintain a favorable view of themselves but are less strongly motivated to hold such a view of others, it is not surprising that there is a bias toward perceiving one's own behavior toward the other as being more benevolent and more legitimate that the other's behavior toward one self." (page 14)

Watzlawick et al. (1967) introduce the problem of perceptual distortion through the discussion of "punctuation"
difficulties which often arise in couples' conflict. Bernal (1982) says that "a punctuation of interaction implies a chunking of communicational units in such a way that cause and effect labels are introduced." (page 289) When one member of the couple punctuates a conflict situation on such a way that he conceives himself as reacting to, but not provoking the other's behavior, he holds the "unquestioned conviction that there is only one reality, the world as I see it, and that any view that differs from mine must be due to the other's irrationality or ill will." (Watzlawick et al., 1967, page 95)

Bernal (1982) claims that the tendency to punctuate interaction is related to the level of distress in a relationship. He states that distressed spouses attribute responsibility for troublesome interaction to their partners whereas nondistressed couples tend toward the acknowledgement of shared responsibility. The possibility that perceptual distortion is a dynamic which is more prevalent in distressed marriages is supported by a study quoted by Gottman (1979) which found that husbands in distressed marriages consistently distorted their wives' messages in a negative direction.

Gottman (1979) sheds some light on the expected impact of perceptual distortion on couples' interaction. He examines the communication of satisfied and dissatisfied couples on a particular experimental task and discovers that there is no
difference in the couples' desire regarding their communication. That is, both satisfied and dissatisfied couples want to send messages that would be received positively by their spouses. However there is a difference found in the impact of these messages, for Gottman finds that only the messages of the satisfied couples are perceived to be positive by the receiving spouses. This leads Gottman to support the suggestion that in distressed relationships there is often a process of perceptual distortion which leads to positive messages by one spouse being received negatively by the other spouse. Markman (1984) and Schaap (1984) both note that Gottman's (1979) findings have been replicated by subsequent studies.

Given the above suggestions regarding the prevalence and impact of perceptual distortion in distressed relationships, it is possible to hypothesize that prior to therapy dissatisfied spouses will demonstrate a significantly higher tendency to respond to positive communication in a negative manner than they will following effective therapy.
4) PATTERNS OF INTERACTION

A) OPENING COMMENTS

The search for pattern has been said to be the basis of all scientific investigation, for the discovery of pattern always has significance (Watzlawick et al., 1967). Numerous patterns have been described above in the discussion of reciprocity and other sequences which differentiate distressed from nondistressed couples. The following section will continue this theme by examining three distinct couples' patterns which, because of their significance to the model of marital therapy under investigation (Greenberg and Johnson, in press) warrant special consideration.

In way of introduction, consider the following points. Raush et al. (1974) suggest that couples develop a style of engaging in conflict which is relatively consistent over time and which is established very early in the history of a relationship. Margolin (1983) suggests that over time, through a process of mutual influence, a couple engages in characteristic and recurrent sequences which are observable and countable. Watzlawick et al. (1974) suggest that the concepts of redundancy, constraint, and pattern can be used interchangably. It is this style, sequence, or pattern which is of interest here.
Gottman (1979, 1982) hypothesizes that the degree of patterning in a relationship is related to the level of functioning, and that poorly functioning relationships have a high degree of patterning in their interaction. He states, "There is more patterning and structure in the interaction of distressed couples than in the interaction of nondistressed couples" with structure being "constraint determined by the reduction of uncertainty in temporal patterns." (page 290)

However, Wile (1981) suggests that the presence of patterns in a relationship does not necessarily indicate psychopathology, but rather these patterns are to be expected in all relationships. Gray-Little and Burks (1983) concur with Wile, saying that there is only tentative support for Gottman's (1979) hypothesis.

Bernal (1982) agrees with both Gottman (1979) and Wile (1981) by suggesting that although patterning is evident in both distressed and nondistressed couples, nondistressed couples demonstrate more flexibility and ability to exchange roles over different issues.

Wile (1981) suggests that behind each partner's motivation for participating in these patterns are underlying and unexpressed needs and feelings. These needs and feelings will be explored further in the descriptions below. Wile (1981) notes that all of these patterns almost inevitably lead
to alienation. Whereas Feldman (1979) notes that marital interaction involving repetitive cycles of conflict can be a major cause of physical violence in marriage, and often are of central concern of couples desiring marital therapy.

B) MUTUAL WITHDRAWAL

i) BEHAVIORAL DESCRIPTION

Wile (1981) contributes significantly to our understanding of the pattern of mutual withdrawal. Typical behavior of a couple characterized by such a pattern might be watching T.V. together, without verbal communication, instead of resolving an outstanding conflict, and will almost certainly involve a narrow range of interaction which will look and feel boring (Raush et al., 1974; Wile, 1981). Conflictual communication may be limited to hints or allusions which are likely to be bypassed by the other (Wile, 1981). This has been described as "a dull, lonely, and profoundly deprived state." (Wile, 1981, page 150) This pattern could be described as a "symmetrical" interaction (Watzlawick et al., 1967) because of the mirroring of behavior, each partner equally supporting the state of withdrawal. This pattern is an example of one type of negative reciprocity, with each spouse responding in kind to the other's withdrawal.
ii) EXPLANATIONS

Wile (1981) suggests that a fear of conflict leads to this untenable couples' state which is considered by the couple to be a safer alternative to active communication which is experienced as even more punishing and certainly more unmanageable. Wile describes this state as a "paired bind" where either the alternative of interaction or withdrawal lead to undesirable consequences for both partners.

Raush et al. (1974) suggest that a relationship pattern based on the avoidance of conflict is likely to be related to each partners' "schemata" (defined as "a structure for organizing experience ... which influence the individual's actual and fantasied interpersonal interactions." page 42,43) which links confrontation with extreme anxiety and leads to the denial or distortion of conflictual situations.

Interestingly, mutual withdrawers can sometimes flip into a mutually accusing manner of relating, something which they are attempting to avoid at all costs, which simply reinforces their fears of open expression of feelings (Wile, 1981).
C) MUTUAL ACCUSATION

i) BEHAVIORAL DESCRIPTION

The mutual accusation pattern has been referred to as the attack/attack, blame/blame, or blame/defend pattern also (Bernal, 1982). This couples' pattern closely aligns with previous descriptions of escalating conflict, adversive control strategies, and cross-complaining, and is noted for the difficulty experienced when a couple attempts to exit from it (Deutsch, 1969). Mutual accusation also involves negative reciprocity.

This pattern could also be described as "symmetrical" because of the mirroring of behavior and the equal partnership in the continuation of conflict, a trait which in the case of mutual accusation leads easily to escalation (Watzlawick et al., 1967).

ii) EXPLANATIONS

In considering this couples' pattern, Wile (1981) states, "These are disputes that, whatever their original cause, have developed a dynamic of their own. Each partner responds to the attacks of the other by attacking in return. These individuals get very little from the interaction. They feel increasingly provoked, frustrated, and misunderstood. However, they are unable to stop. They feel too stung or
outraged by what their partner is saying to do anything other than defend or counterattack." (page 168) Thus the sense of feeling misunderstood and unacknowledged, or not having a chance to really make one's point, prevents the partners from exiting from this pattern (Wile, 1981)

Feldman (1982) contributes to the understanding of mutual accusation by discussing the concept of "narcissistic vulnerability" which he describes as an internal state which promotes conflict by increasing one's tendency to be overly sensitive and overreactive. This in turn leads to "intense hostility, a strong need for revenge, and extreme lack of empathy toward the offender." (page 419)

Feldman (1972) suggests that escalating cycles of attack and counterattack fit into a larger context of the couples' effort to establish a balance between autonomy and intimacy. Accordingly, Feldman suggests that it is the fear of intimacy which leads to mutual accusation, a pattern which in effect acts as a tool for the homeostatic tendencies of the couples' system.

D) PURSUE / WITHDRAW
i) BEHAVIORAL DESCRIPTION

In a discussion of reciprocity, Raush et al. (1974) note that the pursue/withdraw pattern is one noteworthy exception
to a general rule. They suggest that reciprocity applies for cognitive acts, conciliatory acts, coercive or attacking acts, but not for acts of rejection. Acts of rejection are said to elicit either emotional appeals or coercive tactics (Raush et al., 1974) and such a combination of responses typifies the pursue/withdraw pattern.

A description of this pattern is provided by Napier (1978) who notes the role that anxiety plays in each partners' response to the other. He says, "The efforts of the two individuals to reduce their anxieties make matters worse. The abandoned partner clasps tightly at his or her mate for security, thereby contributing to the other partner's anxiety. The imprisoned mate then retreats further which increases the abandoned spouse's panic, inducing further clasping." (page 5)

Watzlawick et al. (1967) would classify this type of relationship as based on "complementary" interaction, which is characterized by a maximizing of difference. They say, "It is important to emphasize the interlocking nature of the relationship, in which dissimilar but fitted behaviors evoke each other. One partner does not impose a complementary relationship on the other, but rather each behaves in a manner which presupposes, while at the same time providing reasons for, the behavior of the other; their definitions of the relationship fit." (page 69) This description perfectly captures the circular nature of the pursue/withdraw pattern.
ii) EXPLANATIONS

Wile (1981) suggests that the pursuer can be motivated by either anger or desire for contact. Wile (1981) also examines the effects of suppressing feelings. He suggests that, regardless of a person's intentions, feelings are always expressed. One may express them directly or in an effort to suppress them one will express them indirectly or the form of "derivative expressions". He suggests that suppressed anger leads to derivative expressions such as tantrums, whining, nagging, or complaining; and that suppressed feelings of dependency lead to expressions such as insistant demands for affection or nonverbal pleading. A logical, although ironic, extention of these two suggestions is that the negative effect the pursuer has upon the withdrawer is greatly increased by the pursuer's very effort to suppress his feelings.

Wile (1981) uses the term "interacting sensitivities" to describe the circular and mutually reinforcing roles involved in this pattern. In agreement with Napier (1978) and Watzlawick et al. (1967), Wile notes that, "the sore spot, raw nerve, or special vulnerabilty of one inflames, stimulates, or intensifies that of the other." (page 124) As with the other patterns, Wile (1981) points out that this circumstance places the couple in a "paired bond", with each partner being in a untenable position; if they do their thing (that is, pursue or
withdraw) things get worse, and if they resist their impulse they end up expressing distorted or exaggerated emotions.

Napier (1978) examines the intrapsychic elements which influence each partners' behavior in the pursue/withdraw pattern. He suggests that the pursuer is striving for a sense of closeness and support, of "oneness". With little anxiety regarding the loss of individual identity, the pursuer emphasizes "we" or "us" experiences, and is threatened by any sense of interpersonal distance. Alternatively, Napier (1978) suggests the withdrawer is striving for autonomy and individual freedom. Without a secure sense of personal boundaries, any perceived infringements or demands for contact are extremely threatening to the withdrawer. Napier (1978) comments on the irony of each partner's position saying, "The most distressing fact is that these anxious postures are in response to one another; the chief source of danger in life seems to be the person each is closest to - their mate." (page 6)

Napier (1978), perhaps in response to the extreme nature of each partner's position, points out that the pursue/withdraw pattern can be experienced along a range of intensity. The partners can feel anywhere from slightly annoyed to suicidal.
CONCLUSION

These three patterns of couples' interaction (mutual withdrawal, mutual accusation, and pursue/withdraw), although present in all relationships to some degree (Wile, 1981), are particularly characteristic of distressed relationships. Greenberg and Johnson (in press) refer to these three patterns as "negative interaction cycles" and suggest that effective marital therapy will promote change in the observable presence of these patterns in couples' interaction.

Given the above descriptions it is reasonable to hypothesize that prior to therapy distressed couples will demonstrate patterns of mutual accusation, mutual withdrawal, and pursue/withdraw to a significantly greater degree than they will following successful therapy.
The purpose of this present study is to examine the effectiveness of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy in bringing about positive changes in couples' interaction during the course of these couples' actual experience in therapy. Specifically, the question under examination is: Is the interaction of couples in the latter stages of the therapeutic experience significantly more positive than the interaction of couples in the beginning stages of the therapeutic experience?

In the generation of the hypotheses of this present study it was necessary to rely on findings which examine a question which is different from, but closely related to the question of this study. A number of studies examine the difference in the interaction of distressed verses nondistressed couples. However there are no available studies known to this author which specifically examine the change in the interaction of originally distressed couples during the actual experience of therapy. Therefore the expected differences in interaction during earlier verses latter stages of successful therapeutic experience must be inferred from what is known about the difference between distressed and nondistressed couples interaction. There are no previous studies which attempt to validate this inference. However it is logistically valid to suggest that positive changes in couples' interaction during a successful therapeutic experience will be in the same vein as
the differences between distressed and nondistressed couples' interaction, especially if these same couples report themselves as significantly less distressed following therapy as compared to prior to therapy. (Johnson and Greenberg, in press, found that the couples in this present study do indeed report themselves as significantly less distressed following therapy as compared to prior to therapy.)

Nonetheless, a brief summary of the empirical investigations reported in the above literature review may provide the reader with information from which to judge the strength of the relationship between the findings of previous studies and the hypotheses of this present study. This summary will categorize findings according to the type of empirical investigation involved. Accompanying each finding is a reference to a corresponding category of behavior or interaction which is investigated in the hypotheses of this present study.
SUMMARY OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND CORRESPONDING HYPOTHESES

A) Findings based on the observation and analysis of couples interaction during the discussion of relationship issues which were generated by the couple, as opposed to by the experimenter.

Investigators: Gottman (1979); Gottman, Markman, and Notarius (1977)

Findings:

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<th>Focus of Hypothesis:</th>
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<td>- Negative disaffiliative behaviors</td>
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<td>- Negative controlling behaviors</td>
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<td>- Positive self and other focused behaviors</td>
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<td>- Negative escalating sequences and negative reciprocal sequences</td>
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<td>- Negative escalating sequences and negative reciprocal sequences</td>
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- Nonverbal behavior is a better discriminator than verbal behavior when distinguishing couples on the basis of positive vs. negative behavior.

- Distressed couples are significantly more likely to disagree with negative affect than are nondistressed couples.

- Distressed couples tend to mindread with negative affect whereas nondistressed couples tend to mindread with neutral affect.

- Nondistressed couples are more supportive and less defensive in their interaction than are distressed couples.

- Distressed couples have more incidents of negative reciprocity in their interaction but that there is no significant difference regarding the incidents of positive reciprocity.

- Distressed couples are more likely to engage in cross-complaining and counter-proposal sequences whereas nondistressed couples are more likely to engage in validation and contracting sequences.
Investigators: Margolin and Wampold (1981)

Findings:
- Negative reciprocity is demonstrated by dissatisfied couples but not by satisfied couples to any significance.
- Positive reciprocity is evident in the interaction of both types of couples.

Focus of Hypothesis:
- Negative escalating sequences and negative reciprocal sequences

B) Findings based on the observation and analysis of couples' interaction during the discussion of relationship issues generated by the experimenter, as opposed to by the couple.

Investigators: Waring and Chelune (1983)

Findings:
- The level of self-disclosure in a relationship is a major factor in determining the degree of intimacy experienced by the couple.

Focus of Hypothesis:
- Positive self-focused behaviors

Investigators: Raush, Barry, Hertel, and Swain (1974)

Findings:
- Destructive conflict is characterized by a tendency to escalate and blow out of proportion, becoming independent of the initial issues.
- The use of threats, coercion, and deception is characteristic of dysfunctional conflict.
- Reciprocity is never a foregone conclusion and that the option to break a cycle of reciprocation is always possible.
- The interactional pattern of mutual withdrawal as involving a narrow range of interaction which will look and feel boring.

Focus of Hypothesis:
- Negative behaviors; negative escalating sequences
- Negative controlling behaviors
- Change is possible
- Negative reciprocal sequences
Reciprocity applies for cognitive acts, conciliatory acts, coercive or attacking acts, but not for acts of rejection. Acts of rejection elicit either emotional appeals or coercive tactics and such a combination of responses typifies the pursue/withdraw pattern.

C) Findings based on a combination of A and B:

Investigator: Bernal (1982)

Findings:

- The tendency to punctuate interaction is related to the level of distress in a relationship.

- Distressed spouses attribute responsibility for troublesome interaction to their partners whereas nondistressed couples tend toward the acknowledgment of shared responsibility.

- Although patterning is evident in both distressed and nondistressed couples, nondistressed couples demonstrate more flexibility and ability to exchange roles over different issues.


Findings:

- Nondistressed couples will be more positive and less negative than distressed couples.

- Distressed couples engage in negative reciprocity more often and in much longer sequences than do nondistressed couples.

- Both distressed and nondistressed couples engage in positive reciprocity although nondistressed couples do it longer.
- Gottman's (1979) findings regarding validation and cross-complaining are supported. - Positive sequences; negative reciprocal sequences


Findings:
- Distressed couples are more likely than nondistressed couples to rely on criticism in attempting to influence the other's position. - Negative controlling behaviors

D) Findings based on questionnaire or self-report regarding interaction in the the natural setting:

Investigators: Davidson, Balswick and Halverson (1983)

Findings:
- There is a positive and a linear relationship between self-disclosure in a relationship and marital satisfaction. - Positive self-focused behaviors

Investigators: Jacobson, Follette, and Waggoner McDonald (1982)

Findings:
- Distressed couples report their daily interaction as significantly less positive and more negative than do nondistressed couples. - Negative disaffiliative behaviors
- Negative reciprocity is demonstrated by dissatisfied couples but not by satisfied couples to any significance. - Negative reciprocal sequences
E) Findings based on questionnaire or self-report regarding interaction in the laboratory setting:

Investigator: Gottman (1979)

Findings: Focus of Hypothesis:

- In distressed couples there is often a process of perceptual distortion which leads to positive messages by one spouse being received negatively by the other spouse.

Investigator: Markman (1979)

Findings: Focus of hypothesis:

- Not only are negative control techniques symptomatic of dissatisfied relationships but such behavior has a major role in causing the dissatisfaction.

SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The above review of the literature supports several hypotheses regarding changes in couples' behavior and interaction which would result from an effective couples therapy experience.

Specifically, it could be hypothesized that if Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy is effective the following contrasts between couples at the beginning of therapy and couples at the end of therapy will be observed. Couples' behavior in the beginning stages of therapy will be more negative, more defensive, and more blaming and negatively controlling than couples' behavior at the end of therapy.
Also, couples' behavior at the end of therapy will be more friendly, more supportive, more self-disclosing, and involving more positive efforts to influence the other than couples' behavior at the beginning of therapy. Likewise, couples' interaction in the beginning stages of therapy will involve more negative reciprocity (e.g., mutual withdrawal, mutual accusation), more negative complimentarity (e.g., blame/defend or pursue/withdraw interaction), and more unfriendly sequences than couples' interaction at the end of therapy. Also, couples interaction at the end of therapy will involve more positive complimentary sequences (e.g., self-disclosure followed by support and acceptance) and more friendly sequences than couple's interaction at the beginning of therapy. If these contrasts in couples' behavior and interaction can be verified, there will be grounds to claim that Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy is indeed an effective way to bring about positive changes in couples' relationships.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This chapter consists of a description of the sample, the design, and the measures relevant to this study.

A) A DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

The sample for this study consisted of 22 couples, all of whom participated in an earlier study by Johnson and Greenberg (in press, a & b). One intervention used in Johnson and Greenberg's study was experiential in nature, and is typified by the approach developed by Greenberg and Johnson (in press) and is referred to as Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy.

Johnson and Greenberg's (in press) study involved couples who were recruited from a newspaper article (which invited couples to participate in a marital therapy research project) and randomly assigned to one of two treatment groups or a control group. All the couples fell within the distressed range (i.e. less than 100) on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976). The 22 couples in this study consist of 11 couples chosen from the Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy group and 11 couples chosen from the control group. The remaining 4 couples from each group (each group originally consisted of 15 couples) were not available due to the unsystematic loss of data (i.e., the unavailability of some of the needed video or audio recordings of the sessions). In his
review of studies comparing the interaction of distressed and nondistressed couples, Schaap (1984) notes that the average number of couples per treatment group is 10 to 15. Therefore the number of couples used in this study is within the range of most other similar studies.

Johnson and Greenberg (in press) note that the Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy group and the control group in their study were tested regarding the possibility of differences on eight demographic variables (number of years together, family income, level of occupation of both spouses, age of both spouses, and level of education of both spouses), a measure of emotional style, and pre-measures of marital adjustment and intimacy. They found no significant differences between the treatment group and the control group on these variables.

B) A DESCRIPTION OF THE DESIGN

This study uses an experimental design which is a modification of the Pretest-posttest Control Group design (Campbell and Stanley, 1963). The Pretest-posttest Control Group design advocated by Campbell and Stanley (1963) could be represented as follows:
where $R = \text{Randomly assigned}$

$0 = \text{Observation}$

$X = \text{Treatment}$

The design of this study could be represented as follows:

$$
\begin{array}{c c c}
R & 0 & X & 0 \\
1 & & & 2 \\
R & 0 & & 0 \\
1 & & & 2 \\
\end{array}
$$

Thus the modification of the Pretest-posttest Control Group design in the present study involves using the single measure on the control group (taken at time 2) for two distinct purposes. First this measure serves as a pretest and can be used to determine the equivalency of the treatment and control groups prior to treatment. The use of this measure as a pretest is justifiable because it has been tentatively determined by Johnson and Greenberg (in press) that there is no significant change in the control group between times 1 and 2. Johnson and Greenberg (in press) have reported that, according to the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), there was no significant difference in the control group between times 1 and 2. Secondly, this measure serves as a posttest and can be used in tests of significance regarding the differences between the treatment and the control groups.

All of the data for this study were gathered by Johnson and Greenberg (in press) and consists of audio recordings of
the 22 participating couples' interaction during marital therapy sessions. In this study, the pretest on the treatment group were measures of couples' interaction during the second of eight marital therapy sessions. The posttest on the treatment group were measures of the couples' interaction during the seventh session. The analysis of the control group is based on the couples' interaction during the second of eight therapy sessions they participated in following a waiting period of eight weeks. The second and seventh sessions are preferred for the pretest and posttest as opposed to the first and eighth sessions because interaction during the first and last session often focuses on the introduction to and summary of the sessions, as opposed to the discussion of marital issues. The second and seventh sessions were therefore considered as the best sessions for obtaining a sample of the couples' conflictual interaction patterns.

C) A DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURES

This study uses two measures, one of which is a self-report measure used for the determination of the level of marital distress experienced by the participating couples before and after treatment; the second measure involves the coding of the marital interaction for the comparison of the interaction before and after therapy.
THE DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE

The dyadic adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) is a self-report measure designed to assess the level of satisfaction, cohesion, affection and consensus in the relationship. This scale was developed because of the reported lack of validity and reliability, lack of clear conceptualization, and lack of applicability to common-law relationships which rendered previous marital adjustment scales inadequate (Spanier, 1976). Accordingly, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) has demonstrated validity and reliability, and through continued testing shows itself to be appropriate for the assessment of dyadic adjustment, including that of common-law relationships (Spanier, 1976, 1982; Spanier and Filsinger, 1983).

Spanier and Filsinger (1983) note that the theoretical range of the DAS is 0 to 151. They also suggest that the score of 114.8 (s.d. of 17.8) represents the mean for all married couples. However they are unprepared to provide a cutoff point below which couples can be considered to be distressed; likewise they are unprepared to provide the mean score for distressed couples. This is due to an insufficient number of studies which have used the DAS on currently distressed couples (Spanier and Filsinger, 1983). However, Burger and Jacobson (1979) suggest that a couple is distressed when one partner has a DAS score under 100. Spanier and Filsinger (1983) comment on the cutoff point of 100, noting
that this criterion must be considered arbitrary until further confirmation.

The DAS will be used in this present study to determine the level of marital distress of the participating couples before therapy and following therapy. The DAS will also be used to determine that there was no significant change in the control group's marital adjustment over the eight week waiting period.

THE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

The Structural Analysis of Social Behavior or SASB (Benjamin, Foster, Roberto, and Estroff, 1984) is an observational tool which is specifically designed to analyse interpersonal behaviors and their relationship to interactional sequences.

SASB allows for the analysis of marital interaction along two dimensions, affiliation and interdependence. Benjamin's (1984) use of the concept of interdependence focuses on aspects of interaction which involve varying degrees of influence and compliance. Benjamin (1984) also draws heavily upon concepts of dependence ("the quality or state of being influenced by or subject to another") and power ("the possession of control, authority, or influence over others") in her application of the dimension of interdependence.
SASB consists of three diamond shaped surfaces which can be distinguished by their FOCUS. (See appendix 1. Benjamin, 1979.) The first surface codes behavior which involves action towards another person, and thus focuses on the OTHER. The second surface codes behavior which involves reaction to another person, and thus focuses on SELF. The third surface codes behavior which involves introjected action toward the self, without the other's involvement.

The first two surfaces are relevant to this present study because of their concern with interpersonal behavior. The third surface, intrapsychic in nature, is not relevant to this study and will not be described further.

The first surface, focus on OTHER represents action; whereas the second surface, focus on SELF, represents reaction. However, it is suggested that "one type of focus should not be regarded as more primary, important, or responsible than the other" (Benjamin et al., 1984, page 10), a perspective which adheres to circular causality.

Each surface contains two axes. The horizontal axes of the surface represents affiliation. Points to the right of center describe behaviors with varying degrees of friendliness. Points to the left describe behaviors with varying degrees of unfriendliness. The vertical axes of the
surface represents interdependence (which involves varying degrees of influence and compliance). Points above center describe behaviors with varying degrees of encouraging (other focused) or expressing (self focused) independence. Whereas, points below center describe behaviors with varying degrees of encouraging or expressing dependence.

With the behavior at the poles of the axes reflecting pure degrees of affiliation or interdependence, the points in between the poles represent behavior which consists of varying degrees of both affiliation and interdependence.

The concepts of intimacy and power are said to be of central importance in assessing a marital relationship (Raush et al., 1974; Greenberg and Johnson, in press). The dimensions of intimacy and power are also of central importance to the hypotheses of this study. As can be seen from the above descriptions of affiliation and interdependence, SASB is particularly well suited to the task of analysing interactions involving intimacy and power. Thus SASB was judged to be very appropriate to the purpose of this present study.

There are three levels of complexity with which SASB can code marital interaction. The full version of SASB divides each surface into 36 parts and therefore permits subtle distinctions to be made regarding the coding of behaviors.
The cluster version of SASB (see appendix 2. Benjamin, 1984.) divides each surface into 8 sections, each containing 4 or 5 points representing behaviors of similar nature regarding the core dimensions of affiliation and interdependence. The quadrant version of SASB divides each surface into four sections as delineated by the intersecting axes, allowing for the discrimination of behaviors as being plus or minus degrees of affiliation and interdependence. Gottman (1979) points out that a coding system must strike a fine balance between having too fine a discrimination and too large a coding category. Accordingly, Benjamin et al. (1984) recommend the intermediate or cluster version of SASB for interactional coding, which allows the coder to capture the gist of an interaction without getting lost in the minute details. However, an examination of the hypotheses of the present study reveals that the quadrant version of SASB (which allows for the discrimination of behaviors as being plus or minus degrees of affiliation and interdependence) is well suited to the needs of the present study.

Benjamin et al. (1984) measure SASB's interrater reliability using Cohen (1968) weighted Kappa. They report the findings of three separate studies with Kappas ranging between .45 and .85. They also note the findings of Humphrey (1983) who found reliability ranging from .61 to .79 with a mean of .69 using Cohen's (1968) weighted Kappa.
TRAINING OF SASB CODERS

Benjamin et al. (1984) recommend the following criteria be considered in the selection of coders:

1) The coders should be graduate students or advanced undergraduate students in clinical or counselling psychology, social work, or a related discipline, if not experienced clinicians.
2) Coders should have had research experience or, minimally, course work in research methods.
3) Coders should have some clinical interviewing experience, preferably in both individual and family therapy.
4) Coders should show some evidence of being interpersonally sensitive and cognitively complex.

All of the above criteria were met by the three coders used in this study. Two of the coders have utilized the SASB coding scheme on a previous couples therapy research project. All 3 coders received direction from a senior clinician regarding the application of SASB for the present study.

SASB CODING PROCEDURE

Benjamin et al. (1984) recommend that the SASB coders utilize audio or video recordings of the interaction being investigated, accompanied by verbatim transcripts. This
procedure is necessitated by the fact that SASB coding requires discriminations that are not possible in "real time." Both of these aids to the coders are utilized in this present study. All SASB coding was based on audio recordings and verbatim transcripts of the couples' interaction.

The transcripts were reviewed prior to the coding for the purpose of determining the unitization of the interaction. A unit consists of separated speeches by the participants, with a new unit representing a floor switch. Units may be broken into elements, with each element being a complete and separate thought. Benjamin et al. (1984) note that the purpose of elementizing is to ensure that coders are focusing on the same part of a speech, given that long units of speech may communicate several thoughts or messages to the other party.

Coders will analyze the interaction independently, without the knowledge of the coding decisions of other coders. (An exception to the "independence" of the coding is that the coder to first code an episode will determine the focus for subsequent coders. In this way, coders may concentrate on the more important dimensions of affiliation and interdependence.) Also the coders are blind to the hypotheses of the study and to any information regarding the status of the session being coded (i.e., whether it is from the control group or the treatment group; whether it is before or after treatment).
The following guidelines for SASB coding were practiced:

1) First, coders listen to the portion of tape to be analysed in order to get the "feel" of the session, then they code the transcript and then if necessary they listen to the tape again to be sure that their coding really reflects the interaction on the tape. The previewing of the tape is recommended by both Benjamin et al. (1984) and Gottman (1979).

2) The actual order of decision making is: a) decide who is speaking to whom (a decision made during the transcribing of the episode prior to coding.); b) decide what the FOCUS of the communication is (a decision made by the first coder); c) decide which QUADRANT, plus or minus affiliation and interdependence, the communication falls into; d) decide which CLUSTER the communication belongs to; and e) decide which track within the cluster the communication represents.

3) Contextual cues such as tone of voice and the context known by the preceding units are to be taken into account.

THE DEFINITION OF AN EPISODE

Benjamin et al. (1984) suggest that, due to the time consuming and microscopic nature of SASB coding, a relatively brief segment of interaction (i.e., approximately 20 minutes) be chosen for analysis. They note that the process of choosing a relevant segment or episode is a difficult but essential task facing the users of SASB.
This present study involves the choosing of two relevant episodes of each of the couples participating in the experimental group (one episode from the 2nd session and one episode from the 7th session), and one relevant episode of each of the couples participating in the control group (from the 2nd session). The following guidelines are applied in the choosing of the interactional episodes:

1) The first 20 minutes of the session will be bypassed due to the introductory nature of this portion of a therapy session. The episode will be searched for following this period.

2) The episode will be immediately proceeded by a statement by the therapist, whereby he or she is pursuing one or both partners' primary feelings or needs in regards to the couple's negative interaction or core issues. (This intervention is a central therapeutic intervention of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy.)

3) The beginning of each episode will be determined by the presence of a MARKER (Rice and Greenberg, 1984). The marker is a performance pattern during which the couple is interacting in a negative interactional pattern (either a negative complimentary or negative reciprocal sequence).

4) Each episode will contain an interspersion of therapist interventions among the couple's interaction.
The following potential problems in defining an episode were dealt with as described below:

1) If a marker was not present in the section of tape following the 20 minute introduction, the section of tape during the 20 minute introduction was reviewed for a beginning MARKER.

2) If a negative complimentary or reciprocal sequence was not present in the couple's interaction, the occurrence of a negative controlling behavior by one spouse replaced the sequence as the necessary feature of the MARKER.

3) If there was more than one marker present in the session, then the couple's most hostile, or strongest negative performance pattern marked the beginning of the episode.

4) If there were several markers of equal level of hostility, then the one which contains the longest negative interactional pattern marked the beginning of the episode.

The length of each episode was determined in the same manner. All episodes were 20 minutes in length, starting from the beginning of the marker. In the event that the session finished prior to the 20 minute point from the marker, the episode consisted of that portion of the session between the marker and the end of the session.
PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING INTERRATER RELIABILITY

The following procedures were implemented to ensure adequate interrater reliability:
1) Cohen's (1960) Kappa, a coefficient of agreement for nominal scales, was used to determine interrater reliability.
2) As necessary for the use of Cohen's Kappa, the judges coded independently.
3) The interrater reliability determined the level of agreement between the three coders according to the following method. Initially, 12% of the data was coded by all three coders and was used for trial checks in interrater reliability. This data was excluded from the reported results of the interrater reliability. Of the remaining data, coder A coded 69%, coder B coded 45%, and coder C coded 28%. Coders A and B overlapped on 14% of the data; coders A and C overlapped on 17% of the data; and coders B and C overlapped on 10% of the data. Cohen's (1960) Kappa was used to determine the interrater reliability on all overlapping material; for coder A versus coder B, coder A versus coder C, and coder B versus coder C. In total, 41% of the data was tested for interrater reliability.

4) retraining sessions in SASB coding techniques were provided to maintain the level of reliability and to counter any tendency of the coders to "drift".
STATISTICS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF INTERACTION DIFFERENCES

As can be seen from an examination of the hypotheses of this study, it was the relative proportion of behaviors or sequences rather than the absolute number of behaviors or sequences which was of interest here in regards to the differences between the 2nd and 7th therapy sessions of the participating couples. Accordingly, the methods of statistical analysis used in this study were the t test for correlated means of proportions and the t test for uncorrelated means of proportions. The t test for correlated means of proportions were used to compare the 2nd sessions of the experimental group to the 7th sessions of the experimental group. The t test for uncorrelated means of proportions were used to compare the 2nd sessions of the control group to the 2nd and 7th sessions of the experimental group.

If it is determined that there is no significant difference between the 2nd sessions of the control group and the 2nd sessions of the experimental group it can be assumed that the groups are equivalent. If the groups are assumed to be equivalent then it will be appropriate to test for significant difference between the 2nd sessions of the control group and the 7th sessions of the experimental group. If the groups cannot be assumed to be equivalent, due to a significant difference between the 2nd sessions of the control group and the 2nd sessions of the experimental group, then it
will only be appropriate to test for significant difference between the 2nd sessions of the experimental group and the 7th sessions of the experimental group.

Given that the hypotheses are based on both theory and clinical experience, a one-tailed test of significance is possible and desirable.

The appropriate use of the t test involves the assumption that the variable under examination is normally distributed in the population from which the samples are drawn. An examination of the distribution of this study's variables may reveal a departure from normality which indicates an abnormal distribution in the population from which the samples are drawn. If this occurs, it will be necessary to transform the data from proportions to degrees using the Arc Sine transformation (Ferguson, 1981). The subsequent t tests will be performed using the transformed data.
HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were tested by this study:

HYPOTHESIS 1:
There will be a greater proportion of negative/disaffiliative behaviors in the 2nd sessions of the control group and the experimental group than there will be in the 7th sessions of the experimental group. (SASB: quadrant 2 or 3, either focus)

Related hypothesis:
There will be a greater proportion of negative controlling behaviors in the 2nd sessions of the control group and the experimental group than there will be in the 7th sessions of the experimental group. (SASB: quadrant 3, other focused)

HYPOTHESIS 2:
There will be a greater proportion of autonomous positive/affiliative behaviors in the 7th sessions of the experimental group than there will be in the 2nd sessions of the control group and the experimental group. (SASB: quadrant 1, either focus)

Related hypotheses:
a) There will be a greater proportion of positive other-focused behaviors in the 7th sessions of the experimental group than there will be in the 2nd sessions of the control group and the experimental group. (SASB: quadrant 1, other focused)

b) There will be a greater proportion of positive self-focused behaviors in the 7th sessions of the experimental group than there will be in the 2nd sessions of the control group and the experimental group. (SASB: quadrant 1, self focused)

c) There will be a greater proportion of positive controlling behaviors in the 7th sessions of the experimental group than there will be in the 2nd sessions of the control group and the experimental group. (SASB: quadrant 4, other focused)

HYPOTHESIS 3:
There will be a greater proportion of negative/escalatory sequences in the 2nd sessions of the control group and the experimental group than there will be in the 7th sessions of the experimental group. (SASB: two consecutive interactions from quadrant 2 or 3, either focus)

Related hypotheses:
a) there will be a greater proportion of negative complimentary sequences in the 2nd sessions of the control group and the experimental group than there will be in the 7th sessions of the experimental group. (SASB: two consecutive
interactions from the same quadrant, either 2 or 3, but with different focuses)

b) There will be a greater proportion of negative reciprocal sequences in the 2nd sessions of the control group and the experimental group than there will be in the 7th sessions of the experimental group. (SASB: two consecutive interactions from the same quadrant, either 2 or 3, with the same focus)

HYPOTHESIS 4:
There will be a greater proportion of positive sequences in the 7th sessions of the experimental group than there will be in the 2nd sessions of the control group and the experimental group. (SASB: two consecutive interactions from either quadrant 1 or 4, either focus)

Related hypothesis:
There will be a greater proportion of positive complimentary sequences in the 7th sessions of the experimental group than there will be in the 2nd sessions of the control group and the experimental group. (SASB: two consecutive interactions from the same quadrant, either 1 or 4, but with different focus)
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The following chapter details the results of data collection and of the tests of significance which were used to test the hypotheses put forth in the previous chapter. The results of the examination of interrater reliability are also detailed. Implications of the distribution of the original scores is also clarified.

INTERRATER RELIABILITY

The following procedures were implemented to ensure adequate interrater reliability:

1) Cohen's (1960) Kappa, a coefficient of agreement for nominal scales, was used to determine interrater reliability. (Cohen's kappa is a stringent measure of interrater reliability which removes the effect of agreement by chance.)

2) As necessary for the use of Cohen's Kappa, the judges coded independently.

3) Initially, 12% of the data was coded by all three coders and was used for trial checks in interrater reliability. Coders were trained to a kappa of .50 during these trial checks. This data has been excluded from the reported results of the interrater reliability.

The Kappa (Cohen, 1960) for the combined ratings of all three coders was .52; (the kappa between coders A and B was .57, between coders A and C was .48, and between coders B
These kappas are acceptable according to two sources. First, Fleiss (1981) characterizes kappa of .40 to .60 as fair, .60 to .75 as good, and over .75 as excellent. And second, the kappas for this study are on the low side of the range of kappas reported by Benjamin et al. (1984) who reports kappas for 3 separate studies ranging from .45 to .85. Benjamin used Cohen's weighted kappa (Cohen, 1968) in her studies which contrasts with Cohen's original kappa in that it makes provision for scaled disagreement or partial credit. The weighted kappa was not appropriate for the present study because the interrater reliability was calculated for agreement at the SASB quadrant level of complexity, therefore even disagreement by one category was significant.

THE ASSUMPTION OF NORMALITY

As noted in the previous chapter, the appropriate use of the t test involves the assumption that the variable under examination is normally distributed in the population from which the samples are drawn. An examination of the distribution of this study's eleven variables (six variables were frequencies of behavior, five variables were frequencies of interaction) revealed a systematic departure from normality in the five "interaction" variables, and relatively normal distribution in the six "behavior" variables. The departure from normality in the "interaction" variables could be logically deduced to reflect an abnormal distribution in regards to these variables in the population from which the
samples are drawn. Therefore, it was necessary to transform the "interaction" variables' data from proportions to degrees using the Arc Sine transformation (Ferguson, 1981). The subsequent t tests performed on the "interaction" variables used the transformed data. The t tests performed on the "behavior" variables used data in the form of proportions.

THE TESTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Tests of significance were performed on six types of behavior and five types of interaction, with each category corresponding to one of the eleven hypotheses put forth by this study. As dictated by the previous chapter, the analysis proceeded in the following manner.

COMPARISON OF THE 2ND SESSIONS OF THE CONTROL GROUP TO THE 2ND SESSIONS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

The scores from the 2nd sessions of the experimental group were compared to the scores from the 2nd sessions of the control group using the t test for uncorrelated means (two-tailed test). There was no significant difference between the 2nd sessions of the experimental group and the 2nd sessions of the control group in regards to any of the 11 hypotheses put forward by this study. Therefore it is possible to assume that the treatment group and the control group were equivalent at the pretest in the following variables: negative behaviors, negative controlling behaviors, autonomous positive behaviors, positive other-focused behaviors, positive self-focused behaviors, positive controlling behaviors, negative sequences,
negative complimentary sequences, negative reciprocal sequences, positive sequences, and positive complimentary sequences. Means, standard deviations, and t values from the pretest are summarized in table I and table II.
TABLE I: t TEST PRETEST MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t VALUES FOR EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS' BEHAVIOR (two-tailed, alpha = .05)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEHAVIOR</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>&quot; .20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.15</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGATIVE CONTROLLING</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEHAVIORS</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>&quot; .20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUTONOMOUS POSITIVE</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEHAVIORS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>&quot; .20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>0.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>POSITIVE BEHAVIORS</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOCUSED ON OTHERS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>&quot; .20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
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<td>POSITIVE BEHAVIORS</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOCUSED ON SELF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>&quot; .10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>0.47</td>
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<td>BEHAVIORS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>&quot; .20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where  \( \bar{X} = \text{Mean} \)
\( S = \text{Standard deviation} \)
\( t = t \text{ value observed} \)
\( P = \text{Level of significance} \)
TABLE II: \( t \) TEST PRETEST MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND \( t \) VALUES FOR EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS' INTERACTION (two-tailed, \( \alpha = .05 \))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEQUENCE</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>( S )</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>( P )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEGATIVE SEQUENCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>&quot; .10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEGATIVE COMPLIMENTARY SEQUENCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>&quot; .20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEGATIVE RECIPROCAL SEQUENCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>&quot; .20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSITIVE SEQUENCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>&quot; .20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSITIVE COMPLIMENTARY SEQUENCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>&quot; .20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where \( \bar{X} = \text{Mean} \)

\( S = \text{Standard deviation} \)

\( t = t \text{ value observed} \)

\( P = \text{Level of significance} \)
COMPARISON OF THE 2ND SESSIONS OF THE CONTROL GROUP TO THE 7TH SESSIONS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

As demonstrated above, there was no significant difference between the 2nd sessions of the control group and the 2nd sessions of the experimental group. Therefore, the comparison of differences between the 2nd sessions of the control group and the 7th sessions of the experimental group was justified. The comparison was made using the t test for uncorrelated means (one-tailed test). This statistical analysis demonstrated that there was a significant difference in the expected direction between the 2nd sessions of the control group and the 7th sessions of the experimental group in all of the 4 major hypotheses put forward in this study, and in 4 of the 7 related hypotheses.

The 7th sessions were significantly different in the expected direction from the 2nd sessions on negative behaviors ($t = 1.88 \text{ pc } .05$), autonomous positive behaviors ($t = 2.03 \text{ pc } .05$), positive other-focused behaviors ($t = 1.77 \text{ pc } .05$), positive self-focused behaviors ($t = 1.88 \text{ pc } .05$), negative sequences ($t = 2.15 \text{ pc } .05$), negative complimentary sequences ($t = 2.85 \text{ pc } .05$), negative reciprocal sequences ($t = 1.91 \text{ pc } .05$), and positive sequences ($t = 2.26 \text{ pc } .05$).

The 7th sessions were not significantly different from the 2nd sessions on negative controlling behaviors ($t = \text{...}$
1.69 pc.05), positive controlling behaviors (t = 1.17 pc .05), and positive complimentary sequences (t = .93 pc .05)

Means, standard deviations, and t values from the posttest are summarized in table III and table IV.
TABLE III: t TEST POSTTEST MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t VALUES FOR EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS' BEHAVIOR (two-tailed, alpha = .05)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEHAVIOR</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEGATIVE CONTROLLING BEHAVIORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AUTONOMOUS POSITIVE BEHAVIORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSITIVE BEHAVIORS FOCUSED ON OTHER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSITIVE BEHAVIORS FOCUSED ON SELF</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>POSITIVE CONTROLLING BEHAVIORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Control Group:</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group:</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where \( \bar{X} \) = Mean  
S = Standard deviation  
t = t value observed  
P = Level of significance
**TABLE IV: t TEST POSTTEST MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t VALUES FOR EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS' INTERACTION (two-tailed, alpha = .05)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEQUENCE</th>
<th>Control Group:</th>
<th>Experimental Group:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEGATIVE SEQUENCES</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NEGATIVE COMPLIMENTARY SEQUENCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NEGATIVE RECIPROCAL SEQUENCES</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSITIVE SEQUENCES</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>POSITIVE COMPLIMENTARY SEQUENCES</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where  
\( \bar{X} \) = Mean  
S = Standard deviation  
t = t value observed  
P = Level of significance
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The following chapter discusses the findings of this study in the context of the purpose of the study as described in chapters 1 and 2. Issues related to the generalizability of the findings of this study are also discussed.

This study has addressed the continued debate regarding the effectiveness of "non-behavioral" marital psychotherapy. Hahlweg et al. (1984) claim that only the therapies based on behavioral theory and skill development have been empirically demonstrated to be effective. However, in a recent study (Johnson and Greenberg, in press) empirical support was provided for the effectiveness of a non-behavioral "affective systemic" approach to couples therapy known as Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFCT, Greenberg and Johnson, 1984). This present study serves as an elaboration of Johnson and Greenberg's (in press) research and has attempted to provide further empirical support for the effectiveness of EFCT by investigating changes in in-therapy interaction as a function of therapy.

This study investigated the effectiveness of EFCT using a measure based on the direct observation of couples' interaction (i.e., SASB by Benjamin et. al., 1984). Johnson and Greenberg (in press) studied the effectiveness of EFCT
through the use of self-report methods such as measures of goal attainment, marital adjustment, intimacy levels, and target complaint reduction; all of which demonstrated the power of this therapy model in bringing about significant changes in attitude and belief about the marital relationship. However, it had yet to be demonstrated that the couples who participated in this study made significant changes in the manner in which they behaved or interacted. The purpose of this present study was to examine the effectiveness of EFCT in bringing about positive changes in couples' interaction during the course of these couples' actual experience in therapy. Specifically, the question under examination was: Is the interaction of couples in the latter stages of the therapeutic experience significantly more positive than the interaction of couples in the beginning stages of the therapeutic experience? This was an important question in determining the value of EFCT, especially because the developers of this model claim its value lies in its ability to affect change in a couple's interactional sequences (Greenberg and Johnson, in press).

If it can be determined that the couples under investigation behave in a distressed manner in the early stages of therapy, and that in the latter therapy these same couples behave in a manner typical of nondistressed couples, then there is basis to conclude that the therapy methods which were employed are effective. A crucial step in this study was the specific description of the difference between distressed
and nondistressed couples' behavior, for this description yielded the hypotheses of the expected difference between the pre-therapy and post-therapy behavior of the couples under investigation.

A listing of the hypotheses of this study will provide a useful structure for the discussion of results in the context provided by previous findings as related to the purpose of this study.

HYPOTHESIS 1:
There will be a greater proportion of negative/disaffiliative behaviors in the 2nd sessions of the control group than there will be in the 7th sessions of the experimental group.

This major hypothesis has substantial support in the literature. Jacobson et al. (1982) report that distressed couples report their daily interaction as significantly less positive and more negative than do nondistressed couples. Gottman (1979), Margolin (1983), Revenstorf et al. (1984), and Gray-Little and Burks (1983) all report findings which add to the validity of an hypothesis which states that distressed couples' behavior will be significantly more negative or disaffiliative than the behavior of nondistressed couples. Accordingly, it could be expected that effective couples therapy would result in a similar contrast between couples'
behavior during the beginning of therapy and couples' behavior during the last stages of therapy.

The findings of the present study reveal that the behavior of couples during the 2nd session of EFCT is significantly more negative and disaffiliative than the behavior of couples during the 7th session of EFCT. Therefore, in regards to the general flavor of couples' behavior as revealed by the frequency of negative behavior, it is valid to conclude that EFCT does indeed result in desirable and positive changes.

HYPOTHESIS 1A:
There will be a greater proportion of negative controlling behaviors in the 2nd sessions of the control group than there will be in the 7th sessions of the experimental group.

Negative controlling behavior has been described as involving the control of behavior through the manipulation of adverse stimuli (Gray-Little and Burks, 1983), the exertion of control over the other without consent (Vincent, 1981), a reliance upon the tactics of threat, coercion, and deception (Deutsch, 1969), and an attempt to influence the other by blame or disparagement (Koren et al, 1980).

Several investigators have contrasted distressed couples with nondistressed couples in regards to their use of negative
controlling behaviors. Gray-Little and Burks (1983) review the literature dealing with the use of power as related to marital satisfaction. They conclude that the couple's use of adverse control techniques is a powerful discriminator between distressed and nondistressed couples, with distressed couples demonstrating significantly more adverse control techniques than nondistressed couples. Margolin (1983), Koren (1980), and Markman (1979) all concur with Gray-Little and Burks' conclusion.

These findings on the relevance of the use of adverse control techniques in determining the health of a relationship support the hypothesis that an effective couples therapy will impact a couple's interaction in this regard. Specifically, it is possible to hypothesize that 2nd session couples will demonstrate significantly more adverse control techniques than 7th session couples.

The findings of this present study reveal no significant difference regarding the occurrence of adverse controlling behaviors in the 2nd session as contrasted to the 7th session of EFCT. This lack of significance contrasts the findings of Hypothesis 1, which explores the occurrence of all categories of negative behavior (not just controlling behaviors) and which does reveal a significant difference.
Two comments may assist in the interpretation of this finding.

First, The t value observed for this variable was 1.69. The t value required at a .05 level of significance is 1.72. Approximate calculations indicate that a t value of 1.69 is significant at less than or equal to a .054 level of significance. (Precise calculations would yield a lower level of significance.)

Second, a t test for correlated means performed between the 2nd session of the experimental group and the 7th session of the experimental group did demonstrate a significant difference (t = 1.96 pc .05) with couples demonstrating significantly more negative controlling behaviors in the 2nd session than in the 7th session.

Given the contradictory nature of this finding, as well as the solid support in the literature for the likelihood that effective therapy will significantly diminish negative controlling behaviors, further exploration in regards to this specific hypothesis would be warranted and valuable.
HYPOTHESIS 2:

There will be a greater proportion of autonomous positive/affiliative behaviors in the 7th sessions of the experimental group than there will be in the 2nd sessions of the control group.

This major hypothesis examines the differences in the frequency of autonomous positive/affiliative behaviors when couples in the latter stage of therapy are compared to couples in the beginning stages of therapy. Benjamin et al. (1984) defines autonomous positive/affiliative behaviors as those behaviors which are characterized by friendly assertions, disclosures, or expressions as well as friendly affirmations, encouragement, or support.

Numerous investigators (Gottman, 1979; Margolin, 1983; Revenstorf et al., 1984; Gottman, Markman and Notarius, 1977; Hahweg et al., 1984; Gray-Little and Burks, 1983) have found support for the hypothesis that non-distressed couples' behavior has significantly more autonomous positive/affiliative behaviors than distressed couples' behavior.

This study supports the assertion that EFCT is able to elicit significantly more autonomous positive/affiliative behaviors from couples in the latter stages of therapy as compared to couples in the early stage of therapy. This finding again suggests that EFCT is an effective couples therapy.
HYPOTHESIS 2A:
There will be a greater proportion of positive other-focused behaviors in the 7th sessions of the experimental group than there will be in the 2nd sessions of the control group.

This hypothesis narrows in on a specific category of the autonomous positive/affiliative behavior examined in hypothesis 2, namely the supportive, affirming, and empathic behaviors that one spouse displays towards the other. Gottman (1979), Gray-Little and Burks (1983), and Schaap (1984) all report findings which support the hypothesis that non-distressed couples are more supportive in their interaction than distressed couples. Therefore it is reasonable to suggest that an effective couples therapy will increase supportive behavior in the couples' interaction.

This study found that couples' behavior in the 7th session of therapy was significantly more supportive, affirming, and empathic than couples' behavior in the 2nd session of therapy. Once again this study supports the conclusion that EFCT is effective in bringing about desirable and positive change in couples' behavior.
HYPOTHESIS 2B:

There will be a greater proportion of positive self-focused behaviors in the 7th sessions of the experimental group than there will be in the 2nd sessions of the control group.

This hypothesis narrows in on another distinct category of the autonomous positive/affiliative behavior examined in hypothesis 2, namely positive assertion, disclosures, and expressions that one spouse makes towards the other. Davidson, Balswick and Halverson (1983) note a linear relationship between self-disclosure in a relationship and marital satisfaction. Waring and Chelune (1983) find that the level of self-disclosure in a relationship is a major factor in determining the degree of intimacy experienced by the couple. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that a successful couples therapy effort will increase self-disclosure between the spouses to a significant degree.

This study found a significant increase in positive assertions, disclosures, or expressions in comparing 7th session behavior to 2nd session behaviors. Once again, support is found for the conclusion that EFCT has been demonstrated to be an effective mode of couples therapy.

HYPOTHESIS 2C:

There will be a greater proportion of positive controlling behaviors in the 7th sessions of the experimental group than there will be in the 2nd sessions of the control group.
As with hypothesis 1A, this hypothesis explores the relationship between successful couples therapy and the nature of the controlling behaviors demonstrated by the couple in early as compared to latter therapy experiences. Specifically, it is hypothesized that there will be more positive controlling behaviors demonstrated near the end of therapy than near the beginning of therapy.

Positive controlling behavior has been described as involving the use of positive reinforcement to control behavior (Gray-Little and Burks, 1983), the exertion of control over the other with the other's informed, voluntary compliance (Vincent, 1981), and a reliance upon a strategy of persuasion and the tactics of conciliation, minimizing differences, and enhancing mutual understanding and goodwill (Deutsch, 1969).

Several investigators have contrasted nondistressed couples with distressed couples in regards to their use of positive controlling behaviors. Gray-Little and Burks (1983) review the literature dealing with the use of power as related to marital satisfaction. They conclude that the couple's use of positive control techniques is a powerful discriminator between distressed and nondistressed couples, with nondistressed couples demonstrating significantly more positive control techniques than distressed couples. Margolin
(1983), Koren (1980), and Markman (1979) all concur with Gray-Little and Burks' conclusion.

These findings on the relevance of the use of positive control in determining the health of a relationship support the hypothesis that an effective couples therapy will impact a couple's interaction in this regard. Specifically, it is possible to hypothesize that 7th session couples will demonstrate significantly more positive control techniques than 2nd session couples.

The findings of this present study reveal no significant difference regarding the occurrence of positive controlling behaviors in the 7th session as contrasted to the 2nd session of EFCT. Therefore an examination of this present hypothesis yields no evidence in support of the assertion that EFCT effectively impacts the manner in which one attempts to control the behavior of one's spouse.

HYPOTHESIS 3:
There will be a greater proportion of negative/escalatory sequences in the 2nd sessions of the control group than there will be in the 7th sessions of the experimental group.

This major hypothesis examines sequential interaction, not the frequency of individual behaviors. It has been suggested that communication sequences cannot be understood if
behavior is viewed as "anonymous units in a frequency distribution" (Watzlawick, 1967, page 120) but rather it is the order and interrelationships which reveal the meaning or significance of communication. Therefore a thorough study of couples' interaction must examine both the frequency and the sequence of behaviors.

Margolin and Wampold (1981) note that the vast majority of studies of family interaction have reported only frequencies or rates of behavior and that only a handful of researchers have used sequential analysis. Margolin (1983) agrees with Gottman's (1979) claim that an examination of the frequency of behavior of one spouse in the presence of the other is, by itself, inadequate if one is interested in identifying the relationship patterns of interaction. She claims that sequential analysis is the tool for such a task. Sequential analysis "permits exploration of the extent to which one partner's response is affected by the preceding events emitted by the other person." (Margolin, 1983, page 109).

Several authors report findings on the sequential analysis of couples' interaction. The hypothesis that there will be more negative sequences (without attention to reciprocity or complimentarity) in the early stages of effective therapy than in the latter stages of therapy has
been supported by several examinations of distressed verses non-distressed couples interaction.

Gottman (1979, 1982) and Gottman, Markman, and Notarius (1977) discover significantly more negative sequences which they label "cross-complaining" and "counter-proposals" in the interaction of distressed couples. Revenstorf et al. (1984), Hahlweg et al. (1984), and Jacobson et al. (1982) support Gottman's findings.

This study's sequential analysis of couples' interaction during therapy demonstrates that the 2nd session interaction is significantly more negative than the 7th session interaction. Therefore support for EFCT's effectiveness in bringing about a positive change in couples' interaction is provided by this study.
HYPOTHESIS 3A

There will be a greater proportion of negative complimentary sequences in the 2nd sessions of the control group than there will be in the 7th sessions of the experimental group.

This hypothesis explores a more specific type of interaction which can be found within the more encompassing Hypothesis 3. A complimentary sequence is a sequence which is characterized by a maximizing of difference. Watzlawick et al. (1967) discuss complimentary interaction saying, "it is important to emphasize the interlocking nature of the relationship, in which dissimilar but fitted behaviors evoke each other." (page 69) Benjamin's SASB (Benjamin et al., 1984) describes a negative complimentary interaction as an interaction involving "belittling and blaming" behaviors combined with "sulking and appeasing" behaviors, or "attacking and rejecting" combined with "protesting and withdrawing", or "ignoring and neglecting" combined with "wallowing off and avoiding". Global negative patterns such as the Blame-defend pattern or the Pursue-withdraw pattern (Wile, 1981) are also complimentary in nature. Greenberg and Johnson (in press) refer to patterns such as this, as well as those described in Hypothesis 3B, as "negative interaction cycles" and they assert that EFCT promotes change in the observable presence of these patterns in couples' interaction.

Greenberg and Johnson's (in press) assertion regarding the effectiveness of EFCT in significantly reducing "negative
interaction cycles" is supported by this study's analysis of negative complimentary sequences. There were significantly more negative complimentary sequences in couples' 2nd session interaction than there were in couples' 7th session interaction. This finding suggests that EFCT is indeed an effective mode of couples therapy.

HYPOTHESIS 3B:
There will be a greater proportion of negative reciprocal sequences in the 2nd sessions of the control group than there will be in the 7th sessions of the experimental group.

This hypothesis explores another category of negative interaction. Negative reciprocal sequences involve the mirroring of behavior and have been referred to as "symmetrical" interaction (Watzlawick et al., 1967). Wile (1981) describes negative reciprocal sequences as involving mutual withdrawal or mutual accusation (Blame-blame or attack-attack patterns). According to Benjamin et al., negative reciprocal sequences would involve two consecutive acts of hostile compliance (e.g., sulking and appeasing), or hostile power (e.g., belittling and blaming), or invoking hostile autonomy (e.g., ignoring and neglecting), or assuming hostile autonomy (e.g., walling off and avoiding).

Many investigators (Raush et al, 1974; Gottman, 1979; Gottman et al., 1977; Margolin and Wampold, 1981; Revenstorf et al., 1984; Jacobson et al., 1982.) have concluded that
distressed couples' interaction contains more negative reciprocity than that of nondistressed couples. In regards to the effects of successful marital therapy, Revenstorf et al. (1984) find that following effective therapy the treated couples' tendency to engage in negative reciprocity changes in the direction of nondistressed behavior.

This study's analysis of negative reciprocal sequences revealed a significant difference between 2nd session interaction and 7th session interaction. Again, these findings support EFCT's claim to effectiveness in positively changing couples' interaction.

HYPOTHESIS 4:
There will be a greater proportion of positive sequences in the 7th sessions of the experimental group than there will be in the 2nd sessions of the control group.

This major hypothesis explores a sequence which is independent from hypothesis 3, although these two hypotheses share a theoretical and logistical foundation.

As with hypothesis 3, sequential analysis as opposed to the frequency of individual units of behavior, is paramount to this exploration. Gottman (1979,1982) and Gottman et al.(1977) identify positive sequences which they label as "validation" and "contracting". Their investigation of these sequences support the conclusion that nondistressed couples's interaction demonstrates significantly more positive sequences.
than the interaction of distressed couples. Revenstorff et al. (1982), Hahlweg et al. (1984), and Jacobson et al. (1982) support Gottman's findings.

This study's sequential analysis of couples' interaction during therapy demonstrated that the 7th session interaction had significantly more positive sequences than the 2nd session interaction. These results support the claim that EFCT is effective in bringing about positive change in couples' interaction.

HYPOTHESIS 4A
There will be a greater proportion of positive complimentary sequences in the 7th sessions of the experimental group than there will be in the 2nd sessions of the control group.

This hypothesis explores a more specific type of interaction which can be found within the more encompassing Hypothesis 4. Watzlawick (1967) describes complimentary interaction as interaction which involves a maximizing of differences, the fitting together of dissimilar but mutually reinforcing behaviors. Benjamin's SASB (Benjamin et al., 1984) describes a positive complimentary interaction as an interaction involving "helping and protecting" behaviors combined with "trusting and relying" behaviors, or "nurturing and comforting" combined with "approaching and enjoying", or "affirming and understanding" combined with "disclosing and expressing".
The findings of this present study reveal no significant difference between the occurrence of positive complimentary sequences in the 7th session and the 2nd session of couples participating in EFCT. This result contradicts the results of the more encompassing examination of hypothesis 4 (an examination of positive sequences without attention to reciprocity or complimentarity).

This contradiction raises some questions which could be addressed by future research.

First, is there a recognizable difference between couples' interaction which yields positive sequences in general and couples' interaction which yields the more specific positive complimentary sequences?

Second, is the lack of significant difference in the occurrence of complimentary positive sequences indicative of a limitation in the effectiveness of EFCT or is it an indication of the lack of difference between distressed and nondistressed couples' interaction? This question addresses the possibility that EFCT may well be an effective mode of therapy, and that effective therapy in general is unable to result in a significant change in positive complimentary sequences. (Although there is little discussion of positive complimentary sequences in the literature, several investigators (Gottman, 1979; Margolin and Wampold, 1981) conclude that there is no significant difference between distressed and nondistressed couples' interaction in the
occurrence of positive reciprocity, which is another specific category of positive interaction."

Third, why is there a significant difference between distressed and nondistressed couples in the occurrence of positive interaction in general (without regard to reciprocity and complimentarity) but not a significant difference in the occurrence of positive reciprocity and positive complimentarity?
CONCLUSION

This study investigated 11 hypotheses (4 major hypotheses and 7 minor hypotheses) regarding Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy and its effectiveness in bringing about positive change in couples' behavior and interaction during the therapy session.

The four primary hypotheses of this study have been supported by significant findings. EFCT has been demonstrated to be effective in bringing about significant positive change in the frequency of negative/disaffiliative behaviors, the frequency of autonomous positive/affiliative behaviors, the occurrence of negative sequences (without attention to reciprocity or complementarity), and the occurrence of positive sequences (without attention to reciprocity or complementarity).

Of the 7 secondary hypotheses, 4 have been supported by significant findings. EFCT has been demonstrated to be effective in bringing about significant positive change in positive other-focused behaviors, positive self-focused behaviors, negative reciprocal sequences, and negative complimentary sequences.

3 secondary hypotheses of this study have not been supported by significant findings. In these cases, EFCT has
not been demonstrated to be effective in bringing about significant positive change in positive controlling behaviors, negative controlling behaviors, and positive complimentary sequences.

It has however been demonstrated that couples in the 2nd session of therapy demonstrated a tendency towards negative, defensive, and blaming behaviors, as well as towards interaction involving mutual accusation, mutual withdrawal, and the escalation of destructive conflict. Whereas in the 7th session of therapy, the couples demonstrated a tendency towards positive, supportive, and self-disclosing behaviors, as well as towards interaction involving a mutual sense of goodwill towards the other.

In conclusion, this study has found substantial support for Greenberg and Johnson's (1984) assertion that Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy does indeed help couples to positively change the nature of their relationships. This assertion had previously been demonstrated through couples' self-reports of positive changes in their relationships (Greenberg and Johnson, 1984). However, prior to this study there was no evidence that couples actually behaved and interacted more positively following therapy. It was the direct observation and analysis of couples' actual interaction during therapy which yielded the results of this present study. Therefore, it can be asserted that following Emotionally Focused Couples
Therapy couples not only report positive changes in attitudes and beliefs about their relationships, but couples actually interact more positively.

THE GENERALIZABILITY OF THE FINDINGS

Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy has been demonstrated to be generally effective in bringing about positive change in couples' behavior and interaction during the therapy session. Indeed the purpose of this study is limited to an examination of couples' behavior and interaction as they relate to each other during the actual therapy session. No attempt has been made to generalize changes the couple may make in their manner of relating during therapy to conclusions about changes the couples may make in their manner of relating outside of the therapy session in the home environment. Indeed, to the best knowledge of this author, there have been no reported attempts to make such a generalization.

However, there have been a number of previous attempts to generalize what is known about the differences between distressed and nondistressed couples' interaction from observations in the laboratory setting to what could be said about the differences in the home environment. The findings of this present study have suggested that the differences between distressed and nondistressed couple's interaction parallel the positive changes couples make during effective
therapy. It is logical to also suggest that some direction could be provided for future attempts to generalize in-therapy changes to in-the-home changes by reviewing previous attempts to generalize the differences between distressed and nondistressed interaction in the laboratory to the differences in the home environment.

Researchers have identified several factors which are salient to an examination of the difference between couples' interaction in the laboratory and their interaction in the home.

First, the nature of the subject matter or the experimental task around which the couple organizes their interaction is an important variable in determining the couple's behavior.

Gottman et al. (1977) note that many investigators have made the error of assuming that there is no inferential leap from describing couples' interaction on a structured task to knowing how couples would resolve a real marital issue. They suggest that research which involves marital interaction around an existing salient marital issue will more closely resemble interaction in the home.

Similarly, Schaap (1984) reports that when couples discuss their own problems, as they see them, their discussion
is highly animated and focused, contrasting other discussion tasks which are less relevant.

These observations suggest that couples' interaction during therapy sessions, where they are being encouraged to interact about central relationship issues will closely approximate interaction in the home.

Second, the physical setting is another important variable in determining the couple's behavior. Gottman (1979) and Riskin and Faunce (1972) both call attention to the possibility that the investigator's relatively unfamiliar and public setting will affect couples' interaction, creating a tendency towards more polite and friendly interaction.

Third, having a time limit on the discussion also influences the nature of couples' interaction. Schaap (1984) notes that there is evidence that the length of the task influences interaction, with the interaction becoming increasingly neutral as the time is decreased. According to Schaap most examinations of distressed versus nondistressed couple's interaction employ interactional tasks of 10 to 15 minutes. In contrast, it might be expected that couples have increased freedom to interact as they would naturally when engaged in an hour long therapy session.
Fourth, the actual presence of the investigator has been suggested to be an influencing factor in determining the nature of a couple's interaction in the laboratory setting (Margolin and Wampold, 1981). In marital therapy sessions the presence of the therapist (who by definition intervenes in order to promote change) is an inevitable factor in effecting interaction.

Gottman (1979) examines the difference between laboratory and In-home interaction for both distressed and nondistressed couples. Prior to his examination he makes the following comment:

There is currently no research addressed to the important question of the generalizability of marital interaction across settings... However in our laboratory we have often been thanked by couples who found the laboratory assessment procedures therapeutic, even though the procedures were not designed as therapy. This observation would lead to the formulation of a hypothesis... that interactions in the laboratory are likely to be more positive than similar interactions at home, without the presence of strangers. The presence of strangers in a relatively public and unfamiliar setting such as the laboratory should, logically, have the effect of increasing politeness (and) decreasing negative interaction. (page 237-238)

In a ground breaking experiment, involving a comparison of recorded public interaction in the lab and recorded private interaction in the home, Gottman (1979) examined both distressed and nondistressed couples' interaction in order to determine the effect of the setting on the interaction, and to determine whether there was a different effect given the level
A subsequent analysis of the data led Gottman to two conclusions. First, the interaction of both distressed and nondistressed couples is significantly more negative at home than in the laboratory. And second, it is easier to discriminate distressed from nondistressed couples when at home compared to when in the laboratory, which suggests that "the differences between these two groups obtained in the laboratory may underestimate these differences at home." (page 245)

An extrapolation of the above factors and findings about couples' interaction in the lab verses in the home can lead to some tentative statements about expected differences between couples' interaction during marital therapy and couple's interaction at home.

Because marital therapy encourages discussion of salient marital issues as opposed to structured subjects, and because couples in therapy have less time restraints as compared to couples in a structured experimental setting, it might be expected that the differences between in-therapy and in-home interaction will be less than the differences between in-lab and in-home interaction.

However, because couples in both therapy or laboratory settings are exposed to a strange environment and the active
presence of strangers (therapists and experimenters), it might be expected that the differences between in-therapy and in-home interaction will be in the same direction as the differences between in-lab and in-home interaction.

Accordingly, it is reasonable to hypothesize that couples' interaction during the marital therapy session will be characterized by more negative and less positive behavior and interaction than the same couples' interaction in the home.

Also, Gottman's (1979) finding that the differences between distressed and nondistressed interaction in the laboratory may underestimate these same differences in the home supports another tentative hypothesis. Namely, the positive changes demonstrated by couples during a successful therapeutic experience, or specifically the difference between 2nd session and 7th session interaction, may underestimate the positive change or the difference in the in-home interaction of couples following successful therapy.

Therefore it is reasonable to suggest the positive changes in behavior and interaction which couples seem to experience through their participation in Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (Greenberg and Johnson, 1984) underestimates the satisfying changes the couples experience in their relationships in the privacy of their homes. Indeed, this
possibility strengthens the assertion that Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy offers a valuable alternative to couples seeking to enrich their relationships.
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