

A PROCESS STUDY
OF
MARITAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

By

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This is a model building study which addresses itself to observing and investigating what transpires between two couples as they complete the process of resolving a marital conflict. Four therapy sessions where the couples successfully resolved a marital conflict and one therapy session where a resolution was attempted but was unsuccessful were selected for investigation. A task analysis was completed in which the moment-by-moment interactions of the couples were rigourously tracked to reveal the interactional patterns that distinguish couples who resolve marital conflicts from those who are not successful at resolving their conflicts. The interactional task analysis involved six strategies. The investigator's cognitive map of the resolution process was outlined. The task was defined as a pursue-distance conflict in which one partner was identified as an emotional pursuer and the other identified as an emotional withdrawer. The task environment, an emotionally focused therapy session, was specified. In the first rational analysis the investigator's model was presented. The transcripts of the resolution events were reviewed and repeated patterns were identified in the first empirical analysis. In the second rational analysis process indicators that would discriminate between the stages of resolution were chosen from four process measures. In the second empirical analysis two process measures (the SASB and the Experiencing scale) were used to identify the stages of resolution

and produce a final model of marital conflict resolution. The final model consists of four steps which the couples move through to reach resolution. These steps are; Escalation. De-escalation, Testing, and Mutual Openness. Escalation involves either an 'attack-defend', 'attack-withdraw', or 'attack-attack' pattern where the pursuer is blaming their partner and the other partner is either defending, withdrawing or attacking. Each partners focus is on representing their own position and both partners usually feel angry, frustrated or unheard. In De-escalation one partner openly discloses their experience or asks for what he or she needs. This usually involves an expression of vulnerability. The other partner responds with either 'affirming and understanding' or 'helping and protecting' behavior. With Testing there is an initial positive interaction in which the withdrawer responds to the pursuer's open expression of feelings or needs with 'helping and protecting', 'nurturing and comforting' or 'trusting and relying' behavior. The pursuer however suddenly switch to 'belittling and blaming', 'sulking and appeasing' or 'walling off and avoiding' behavior. The pursuer appears to be dealing with the issue of trust, they are not sure if they can trust their partners response to them as totally genuine and likely to occur again. Mutual Openness resembles De-escalation however it this stage both partners complete 'disclose/trust rely' or 'affirm/help protect' sequences. Both partners rather than just one complete a sequence in which they explore their part in the problem openly

while the other partner listens and affirms them. A failure to move from Escalation to De-escalation and the absence of 'affirming and understanding' communication behaviors distinguished the non-resolution event from the resolution events.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The present consensus in marital research literature is that couples' interactional processes during conflict are related to their degree of marital satisfaction (Billings, 1979; Gottman, Markman and Notarius, 1977; Koran, Carlton and Shaw, 1980). The ability to effectively resolve conflicts rather than allowing them to escalate and continue has been shown to be an essential aspect of maintaining marital satisfaction (Bircher and Webb, 1977; Raush, Barry, Hertel and Swain, 1974). Glick and Gross (1975) note that the process of resolving conflicts is linked to marital satisfaction through its influence on: decisions made by the couple about the nature of their relationship, gratification obtained through the discussion of the conflict itself, and the success of future attempts to resolve other conflicts. When dealing with marital distress, therapists tend to focus on the spouses' processes of interaction during conflict as a way of enhancing marital satisfaction (Glick and Gross, 1975). While it is helpful for therapists to understand the role of conflict resolution in marital satisfaction, it is also essential for therapists to understand the interactional processes' spouses engage in, in order to successfully resolve their conflicts. It is the process in psychotherapy, the tracking of what happens from moment to moment, focusing on how the behavior of one partner affects the other,

and how the couple arrives at a certain state, that is of interest to clinicians. Understanding the mechanisms of change or the process of change in therapy is as important as knowledge of the goals or outcome of therapy. Rice and Greenberg (1984) suggest that therapeutic success can be improved through greater understanding of ". . . productive client performance and the interventions that have facilitated them" (p. 8). In order to further the clinician's understanding of these change mechanisms on client performances Rice and Greenberg (1984) recommend studying not groups of people similar or some individual difference variables, ". . . but rather groups of episodes of therapeutic interactions in which clients are engaged in person/situation interactions which have important commonalities" (p. 10). They suggest that the episode of therapeutic interaction or 'event' to be studied should consist of an interactional sequence between the client and therapist. The criterion for the identification of an event is the presence of a 'marker' that indicates the client is involved in attempting to solve a particular problem by a particular process. It would be this 'marker' that differentiates the sequence from other in-therapy events.

The Problem

Glick and Gross (1975) in an evaluation of marital interaction and marital conflict research, outlined the need for the analysis of

couple's interactional processes under conditions where the couple's communicative behavior holds significance for their relationship and reflects the couple's own methods of coping with conflict. The problem to which this study addresses itself is: the observation and investigation what transpires between two spouses when they are in the process of resolving a marital conflict. Rather than testing a hypothesis, the aim of this study will be to build a model of interpersonal conflict resolution, based on an intensive analysis of four successful in-therapy resolutions of a marital conflict and one in-therapy event where the attempt at conflict resolution is unsuccessful. The moment-by-moment interactions of these events will be tracked rigorously in a search for interactional patterns that seem to distinguish couples who resolve marital conflicts from those who are not successful at resolving their conflicts. Task analysis, which has been defined as a method, ". . . designed to explore the moment-by-moment performance of clients engaged in resolving tasks, in order to identify the components of successful performances" (Greenberg, 1984, p. 67), is the method of analysis that will be used in this process study of conflict resolution. The steps involved in the task analysis method will be discussed in the methodology chapter. At this point, however, it is important to note, first, that the type of task to be analyzed is interactional in nature. It involves the communication behavior of two individuals that will, in turn, influence both the behavior of each other and the resolution of the

conflict. It is also important to note that this study is discovery-oriented. The objective is to build a model of conflict resolution and suggest hypotheses for further study rather than to prove certain hypotheses.

Definition of Terms

In order to arrive at a clearer picture of what the problem or therapeutic event to be studied will look like, it will be helpful to delineate what is meant by the terms conflict and resolution. Deutsch (1969) defines conflict as existing when ". . . incompatible activities occur" (p. 7). The incompatible actions may take place within one person, as in the case of an intrapersonal conflict or between two or more people, as in an interpersonal conflict. An incompatible action is one that interferes with, injures, or makes another action less effective. Deutsch (1969) also differentiates between constructive and destructive conflict. Destructive conflict is characterized by the tendency to escalate and the reliance on strategies of power, including threat, coercion, and deception. Constructive conflict, on the other hand, is characterized by concentration on the issue around which the conflict centers, and by the processes involved in creative thinking or mutual problem-solving. Another insightful definition of conflict is provided by Fink (1968). He defines social conflict as ". . . any situation or process in which two or more social entities are linked by at least one form of

antagonistic psychological relation or a least one form of antagonistic interaction" (p. 456). Fink's definition highlights the interactional nature of interpersonal conflict, and the elements of overt struggle and covert antagonism or opposition.

These definitions are still very broad and do not focus specifically on marital conflict which is our main focus. Raush et al. (1974) note that marriage involves adaptation and orientation to one's spouse and there are many areas in day-to-day living that produce conflict. However certain situations seem to touch basic underlying sources for interpersonal conflict. The issue of separateness and connectedness is seen by Raush et al. (1974) to be a core issue in marital conflict. Various terms such as intimacy vs. isolation, individuation vs. fusion and distance vs. closeness have been used by theorists to describe this essential theme or issue. Wile (1981) sees the struggle to deal with both the issue of closeness and separateness and the unfulfilled expectations that one's partner will compensate for one's own inadequacies, resulting in the adoption of one of three interactional patterns. The first of these, outlined by Wile, is 'mutual withdrawal', in which both partner's response to unfulfilled needs and expectations is to suppress their resentment and avoid engaging each other in any meaningful way. In the second pattern, 'mutual accusation', partners respond to disappointment by blaming and attacking each other. The interactions of the mutually accusing

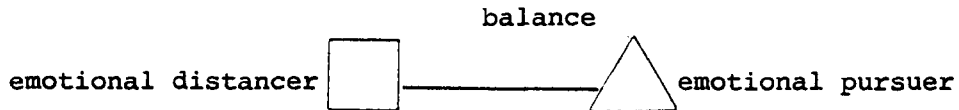
couple are characterized by escalating arguments. The third interactional pattern, 'pursue-withdraw', or 'pursue-distance' is the one that will be the focus for this study. Fogerty (1979) has described this interactional cycle as emotional pursuer-emotional distancer synchrony. This concept has been built upon by Guerin (1982) in his work on the stages of marital conflict. Guerin (1982) sees the emotional pursuer-emotional distancer pattern as fundamental to marital conflict and the attack-attack or withdraw-withdraw patterns as variations of the pursue-distance pattern. The set of sequential steps that partners move through in the development of a pursue-distance conflict have been outlined by Guerin (1982) in the following manner. When the partners are experiencing stress within their environment they tend to move either toward or away from one another in an attempt to restore their internal comfort. In response to stress the emotional pursuer will move toward the emotional distancer for emotional connection and reassurance. The distancer in response to stress and/or the pursuer's movement, will move away from the pursuer in order to re-establish their internal comfort. The pursuer in response to this movement away intensifies the movement toward the distancer and the distancer responds with increased distance. When the emotional pursuer tires of trying to connect without success, hurt and anger set in and the pursuer begins to withdraw. The distancer in response to the pursuer's reactive distancing may begin to approach the pursuer but is kept at a

distance by the pursuer's critical attack as a result of their hurt. The distancer, who also requires acceptance and reassurance, withdraws in response to the criticism and there begins to be a state of fixed distance between the spouses (See Figure 1.1). The task or problem that this study will explore is the couple's processes as they resolve a conflict characterized by the pursue-distance cycle.

Rice and Greenberg (1984) note that ". . . the primary difference between studying cognitive and affective problem solving is that in the latter the final outcome is less often defined and the correct solution is not generally known" (p. 139). This is certainly the case in interactional conflict resolution where resolution is not as easily defined as conflict. While the concept of conflict has received a lot of attention in marital theory and research, there is a large gap when it comes to the concept of resolution. Of the literature reviewed by the author the concept of resolution receives the most attention from Koran et al. (1980). In a study of the relationship between behavior, outcomes and distress in marital conflict, Koran et al. (1980) state that conflict outcomes can be evaluated from either the perspective of mutual satisfaction of the outcomes or a focus on the attainment of objective resolution. The state of resolution is not described however, and outcome satisfaction is measured through the summing of ratings that both spouses provided after completing each interaction task.

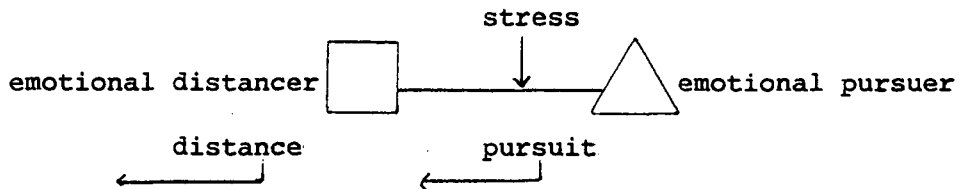
As conflict has been defined in terms of closeness and distance and the fifth stage in the pursue/distance cycle is characterized by

STEP I



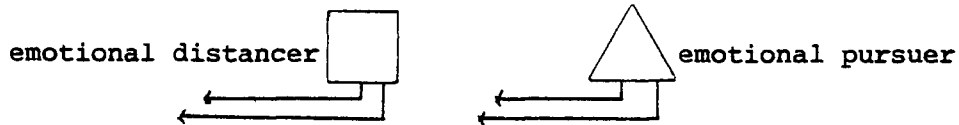
low stress - balance of operating styles

STEP II



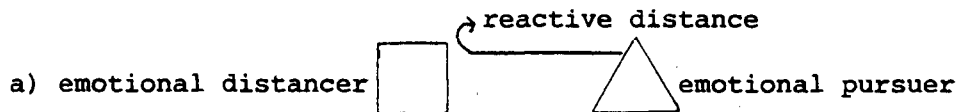
stress introduced - spouses react by moving to restore level of internal comfort

STEP III

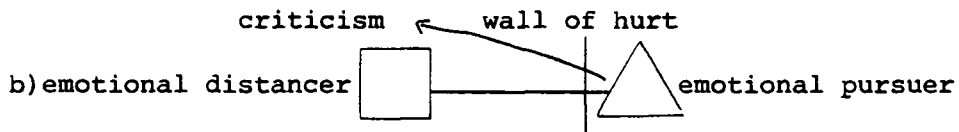


in response to distance emotional pursuer intensifies movement toward distancer - emotional distancer responds with increased distance

STEP IV

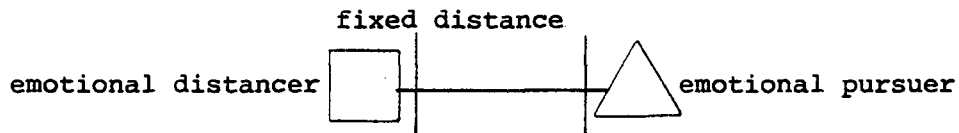


pursuer tires of trying to connect without success, begins to withdraw with anger



pursuer initiates process of reactive distancing - moves behind a wall of hurt and hurles criticisms at distancer

STEP V



the distancer in response to criticism again withdraws setting up a state of fixed distance between to spouses

FIGURE 1.1 DEVELOPMENT OF PURSUE-DISTANCE CONFLICT
adapted from Guerin's 'Stages of Marital Conflict'

both spouses maintaining a fixed distance behind walls of hurt, anger and criticism, it seems reasonable to suggest that resolution will involve a bridging of this distance and some form of connecting between the spouses. Resolution will involve a movement or shift in the partners' position in relation to each other. There may be a shift in terms of hierarchy or 'up-down' as well as a shift in distance. Rather than polarization and the coercive attempts to control mentioned by Deutsch (1969) there will be an increased acceptance of the other on the part of the spouse, and a sense of intimacy. In the case of resolution of a conflict in the pursue/distance cycle the author expects there will be a change or shift in the interactional patterns of both the pursuer and the distancer with the unmet needs of both partners being acknowledged and integrated into the relationship. Feldman (1982) in an article on dysfunctional marital conflict describes an example of marital conflict from his clinical experience that fits the pursue/distance interactional pattern. In this example a growing awareness on the part of each spouse of their needs and vulnerabilities, and an awareness and acceptance of their partner's needs leads to substantial reduction in their conflict behavior, a great increase ". . . in the degree of positive intimacy in the marriage . . . and an increase in their satisfaction with the relationship" (p. 426). The specific markers that will be used to indicate the beginning of the therapeutic event, the interactional conflict and its end, resolution, will be

given further attention in the discussion of methodology.

The context in which the 'event' or task of resolving the marital conflict occurs in is a marital therapy session involving both members of the couple. The therapeutic treatment approach used has been described by Greenberg and Johnson (1983, in press) and is known as emotionally focused therapy. This therapy approach is within the same tradition of Feldman (1982), Pinsof (1983), Satir (1973) and Wile (1981). The focus in this therapy is upon the expression of unmet needs and the interruption of patterns of rejection and distancing in couples. The emphasis is not on improving conflict resolution skills, and helping a couple compromise or strike a good bargain, but on acknowledging and expressing needs, emotions and personal meanings in order to foster personal intimacy. The acknowledgement of feelings, their experience and expression is expected to lead to new ways of viewing situations and new interactions (Greenberg and Safran, 1984). Once emotional responses have been accessed and expressed they are used to foster the implementation of more adaptive interacting patterns. Problems are not so much solved as integrated into the relationship. Specific operations in this approach include identifying negative interactional cycles, increasing the awareness of feelings and needs, and interpreting interacting sensitivities. Having outlined the question this study proposes, and defined the nature of the task or event to be studied, the literature relevant to the process of marital conflict resolution will be reviewed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Differences in Conflict Interaction Patterns in Distressed And Non-Distressed Couples

The research literature in marital conflict resolution has tended to focus on the differences in interactional patterns in distressed and non-distressed marriages rather than the actual processes that occur when couples resolve conflicts. Billings (1979) used two rating systems to code the communication behavior of non-distressed and distressed couples as they engaged in four predetermined conflict resolution situations. Significant differences in the communication behaviors of distressed and non-distressed couples were found. Distressed couples showed a significantly greater percentage of hostile submissive acts and smaller percentages of friendly dominant acts. A significantly greater percentage of rejecting and coercive attacking acts were found among distressed couples as well as a smaller percentage of cognitive acts than the non-distressed couples. Sequential analyses suggest, according to Billings (1979):

" . . . that distressed couples exhibited greater, whereas non-distressed couples exhibited lesser, reciprocity of negative acts than statistically expected. There was evidence that the two couple types may resolve the conflict situations in different ways and that among some distressed couples, the proportion of hostile communications escalates as the conflict continues" (p. 374).

These findings are supported by those of Margolin and Wampold (1981) in their sequential analysis of the interactional patterns of

distressed and non-distressed couples as they spent ten minutes resolving real life conflicts. After an initial conjoint interview, the couples, with the help of one of the members of the research team, chose two topics that were a source of conflict for them. Before leaving the room the experimenter instructed the couple to spend ten minutes discussing the topic in as constructive a manner as possible in order to negotiate a better understanding and resolution of each topic. Both the non-verbal and verbal behaviors of the couples were coded from videotaped recordings of the negotiation sessions.

In this study negative reciprocity and negative reactivity, or the likelihood of a negative response given a negative stimulus is greater than the unconditional probability of negative behaviors, were exhibited only by distressed couples. Positive reciprocity, or the likelihood of a positive response given a positive stimulus is greater than the unconditional probability of positive behaviors, was seen in both distressed and non-distressed couples. Non-distressed couples tended to exhibit higher rates of problem-solving, verbal and non-verbal positive and neutral behaviors than distressed couples.

Koran et al. (1980) presented distressed and non-distressed couples with conflict resolution tasks similar to those used by Billings (1979) and rated the inquiry, responsiveness, criticism, and solution proposal behaviors of the couples. The behaviors, responsiveness and criticism were found to discriminate between the two groups. Non-distressed couples were more likely than distressed

couples to be verbally responsive to each other's influence efforts. Distressed couples, on the other hand, were more likely to rely on criticism in attempting to influence each other's position. Instead of describing their issues in neutral terms the distressed couples tended to ". . . attract elements of blame so that the other spouse was made to appear at fault" (p. 464). The couples who were able to objectively resolve their conflict were likely to show responsiveness, explore possible solutions and minimize criticism. Distressed couples offered solution proposals at the same rate as non-distressed couples. However, non-distressed couples were more likely to reach agreements on the solutions proposed. In their discussion of these results Koran et al. (1980) suggest that the communication behaviors of the couples define not only the content level of their interactions but also the nature of the relationship that exists between the spouses. Both responsiveness and criticism

". . . appeared to carry relationship messages that had substantial consistency across the couples. Responsiveness conveyed positive feelings about the marriage and increased the likelihood of arriving at both resolutions and satisfactory outcomes. By the same token, criticism reflected a dissatisfactory marriage and decreased the likelihood of resolutions and satisfactory outcomes" (p. 467).

Koran et al. (1980) made another interesting observation about the couples who tended to resolve the conflict issues. While these couples were able to express their individual viewpoints even when they were not in agreement, ". . . they were careful to communicate explicitly or implicitly that the marital bond itself was not

jeopardized by this disagreement" (p. 467).

Revenstorff, Halweg, Schindler, and Vogel (1983) in a therapy outcome study compared the data collected from distressed and non-distressed couples' problem discussions both before and after they recieved therapy. In their work Revenstorff et al. (1983) identified four patterns of interaction that differentiated the interactions of distressed and non-distressed couples before and after therapy.

These are:

1. Distancing - characterized by an alternation of negative responses.
2. Problem escalation - an alternation of problem description and negative responses to this.
3. Acceptance - problem descriptions are alternated with positive responses.
4. Attraction - characterized by a pattern of repeated alternating responses.

It was found that certain interactional patterns tended to lead to problem escalation, while others led to problem defusion. The problem was likely to escalate when one partner stated the problem, the other partner responded negatively and the problem was restated. Problem escalation also occurred when alternating negative statements or 'distancing' was the characteristic interaction. The problem was likely to be defused or de-escalated when the problem statement was accepted or reinforced through a positive response to it. Before the

distressed couples received marital counselling, their interactions were more likely to be characterized by problem escalation and distancing than the interactions of the non-distressed couples. After treatment, the distressed couples responded with even less problem escalation than the non-distressed couples. With treatment, mutual attraction in the distressed couples lasts longer, starts at a higher level and reaches a higher maximum than seen in non-distressed couples. The patterns of distancing and problem acceptance in the distressed couples move in the direction of the non-distressed couples after treatment, but don't reach the same levels.

The extensive research completed by Gottman, Markman and Notarius (1977, 1979) supports the results of much of the work reviewed in this chapter. Gottman et al. (1979) have analyzed three components (content, affect and context) of messages in the communication acts of clinic and non-clinic couples as they attempt to resolve a salient marital issue. The studies completed have addressed themselves to the testing of a structural model of marital interaction. This model is based upon the following hypotheses:

1. Degree of structure - there is more patterning of structure in the interaction of distressed couples than in the interaction non-distressed couples.
2. Positiveness - non-distressed couples are more positive and less negative to one another than distressed couples. The differences should be greater for non-verbal than verbal behavior.

3. Reciprocity - the reciprocation of negative behavior will discriminate distressed from non-distressed couples with more reciprocity of negative behavior in distressed than in non-distressed couples.
4. Dominance - the interaction of distressed couples will show more asymmetry in predictability, with one partner more responsive than the other partner, than will the behavior of non-distressed couples (pp. 72-73).

In regard to these hypotheses, Gottman et al. (1979) found that non-verbal behavior differentiated distressed from non-distressed couples better than verbal behavior. Negative affect assessed non-verbally was the most consistent discriminator between the two groups. On an agreement-disagreement scale it was found that distressed couples were more likely to express agreement with accompanying negative non-verbal behaviors than the non-distressed couples. Dominance was reconceptualized as asymmetry in predictability in the behavior of husband and wife. With dominance redefined it was found that the wife is more emotionally responsive to the husband than vice versa in clinic couples, while this asymmetry was not seen in non-clinic couples. Gottman et al. (1979) found some other interactional patterns that discriminated distressed from non-distressed couples. One of these is the notion of summarizing self to total summary statements. The distressed couples' interactional patterns were more likely to be characterized by a summarization of

self rather than summarizing the spouses' position or both partners' positions. As well, non-clinic couples were likely to engage in a loop referred to as 'validation', where information or expression of feeling is responded to with agreement and neutral affect. In contrast to this, clinic couples tended to respond to information or feelings about a problem with an expression of their own feelings or new information. This loop is known as 'cross-complaining'. Mind reading occurs in both clinic and non-clinic couples, however clinic couples were more likely to mind read with negative affect, which is seen as blaming criticism and is refuted by the other spouse. Mind reading with neutral affect tended to be interpreted as a probe or question about feelings by the non-clinic group.

Phases of Marital Conflict

The major patterns that emerged from the series of observational studies completed by Gottman et al. (1979) suggest that the discussion of a marital issue can be divided into three phases. In the first phase the task is 'agenda building' and is characterized by the expansion of feelings about the problem. In this phase the interactions of the non-clinic couples were characterized by validation sequences, in contrast to the clinic couples, who tended to use cross-complaining sequences of interaction. The middle phase of the discussion, 'arguing', is characterized in both the clinic and non-clinic groups by disagreement. In this phase the interactions of

both groups looked very similar except in the area negative affect and summarization of self or other. Negative affect or sarcasm was often seen in the interactions of the clinic couples. When these couples did summarize, they tended to summarize their own position, rather than their spouse's position. Information exchange, agreement and communication talk characterized the final phase of the discussion, known as 'negotiation'. Here contracting sequences and summary statements of the other's position characterized the non-clinic couples, while counter-proposals were frequently seen in the couples' interactions. In summarizing these observations, Gottman et al. (1979) state:

"... clinic couples are most likely to engage in sequences in which complaint is met with cross-complaint, in which a proposed solution of a problem is met with a counter-proposal, and in which negative affect is met with negative affect. . . . Non-clinic couples on the other hand, are more likely than clinic couples to engage in sequences in which a complaint is first met with agreement, assent or validation, in which a proposed solution is met with accepting modification of one's own position and a contracting sequence, in which negative affect is not as likely to be met with negative affect" (p. 233).

Characteristics of Constructive and Destructive Conflict

The question of the influence of contextual variables, such as the couples' actions, the stage and state of their relationship, the situation and possible behavioral differences between the male and female partners, on the outcome of marital conflict was explored through an extensive study by Raush et al. (1974). In their work,

Raush et al. (1974) also attempted to discover the characteristics that differentiated between destructive and constructive conflict. In order to observe couples engaged in conflict situations, four improvisation scenes were developed. These scenes were designed to be quasi-experimental in that a conflict of interest was created through the separate instructions that were given to each partner. The couples were instructed to be themselves rather than play roles, so the situations were also quasi-naturalistic. Two of the scenes used issue-oriented conflicts, while the other two were designed to explore relationship-oriented conflicts. In the relationship-oriented conflicts the spouses were alternately asked to be 'distant' while the other spouse attempted to re-establish some closeness. Raush et al. (1974) found that the couples tended to either actively engage in the conflict issues in an attempt to resolve them or manage the conflict by avoiding dealing with any disagreement. Raush et al. (1974) differentiate between avoiding interpersonal conflict in relationships and dealing with interpersonal conflict by avoidance. The couples who coped with interpersonal conflict through avoidance tended to pile up denials, externalizations, and disqualifications. An avoidance technique that tended to push the discussion toward escalation was the ". . . manipulative use of extraneous, distracting and irrelevant remarks while maintaining a stance of rejecting the other" (p. 79). It was found that couples often colluded with another in avoiding interpersonal issues. A system seemed to develop where each partner

would support the externalizations and denials of the other partner.

Coping with conflict through engagement was seen to result in both constructive and destructive processes. The outcome of engagement tended to be destructive when the couple seemed to have a constricted repertoire of interactions and when interpersonal confrontation and commitment were seen as threatening. Destructive engagement was characterized by expansion of the issue or piling up diverse issues in order to overwhelm the partner. Couples who were constructively engaged in the conflict tended to "emphasize the process of interacting with one another rather than the specific outcome of their interchange" (Raush et al., 1974, p. 106). Humor and playfulness were exhibited without invalidating the seriousness of the issue, and there was an emphasis on exploration of self and other.

A factor analysis of the data gathered from independent assessments of the couples, and an analysis of the interviews and questionnaires suggested that the couples fell into two groups, with either discordant or harmonious relationships. It is interesting to note that the couples' style of managing conflict (avoidance or engagement) did not necessarily place them in the harmonious or discordant group. Raush et al. (1974) state that despite their initial prejudices, the coping mechanisms of avoidance or engagement seem tenable for stable marriages "given the context of continuing positive affection" (p. 106). However Raush et al. (1974) also state that when avoidance is a characteristic response to conflict,

interpersonal issues are never addressed and there can be no mutually satisfactory resolution.

A six category coding scheme was used by Raush et al. (1974) to rate the communication acts of the partners in the improvisational scenes. The coding scheme included the following categories:

1. Cognitive acts: neutral acts, suggestions and rational arguments.
2. Resolving acts: aimed at cooling the conflict or resolving the conflict issue.
3. Reconciling acts: acts aimed at reconciling the two partners emotionally.
4. Appealing acts: acts appealing to the other to grant one's wishes.
5. Rejecting acts: acts showing a cold or nasty rejection of the other's argument or person.
6. Coercive acts or personal attacks: acts aimed at forcing compliance by power plays, with induction, or disparagement of the other. (p. 115)

Raush et al. (1974) found some tendency toward reciprocity in these categories however, they did not find symmetrical reciprocity in all categories. Resolving and reconciling acts tended to be reciprocal, while rejection led more often to appeal and coercion than to reciprocal rejection. Issue-oriented conflict scenes produced higher levels of cognitive exchanges and lower levels of

rejection and coercion than did relationship-oriented conflicts. The extensive use of rejection and coercion was significantly associated with the inability to resolve the closeness-distance scenes.

The discordant couples tended to engage in much longer scenes than the harmonious couples. These scenes seemed to be used by the discordant partners to play out exaggerated power struggles. The wives in the discordant group responded to the issue-oriented scenes as though the different wishes of the partners touched directly on issues related to power and self-esteem. By the third scene, where the husband is instructed to isolate himself from his wife, the discordant husbands were far more coercive and less conciliatory than other husbands. The enactment scenes in the harmonious group were characterized by a lack of heated exchange and a high proportion of reconciling messages by husbands. While couples who both avoided and engaged in conflict fell into the harmonious group, all couples in this group avoided escalation of the conflict. The likelihood of reaching resolution was increased when couples kept the focus of the conflict to a specific issue. However, Raush et al. (1974) observed that some couples whose conflict management style was characterized by constructive engagement, moved beyond resolution of a specific issue. In these situations, there was a freedom from the "... reciprocal pull evoked by a partner's negatively toned message" (p. 209) and an element of creativity. The early stages of conflict resolution resemble the processes Deutsch (1969) describes as features

of creative thinking. The couple then move beyond specific resolution; toward practical planning, emotional reconciliation of the partners, reaffirmation and consolidation of the relationship through discussions of other activities and eventually to the topic of future coping with similar conflict issues.

It is particularly pertinent to this study to note that the issue of intimacy vs. isolation or distantiation was the "clearest dimension" (p. 104) that emerged from the study for Raush et al. (1974). They state that:

"... for some couples, the essentials of the conflict situations are the mutual recognition and awareness of one another. At the opposite extreme, for other couples the conflict situations are total win-lose confrontations and tests of individual identity in the assertion of power. For most couples the weight is balanced in one direction or the other but the balance can shift with the nature of the scene - with the issue it poses and with threat or support of the partner's actions" (p. 104)

Intrigued by the 'mirroring behaviors' of clinic couples, the tendency to meet complaint with cross-complaint, proposal with counter-proposal and negative affect with negative affect, Gottman et al. (1979) went on to explore the relationship between the perception and behavior of the couples. They suggest that the mirroring behavior resembles the 'vying for symmetry' (p. 233) seen in the territorial dispute relates to intimacy in that it is an attempt to increase interpersonal distance. As a result of investigating the couples' perceptions of their interactions, Gottman et al. (1979) found that couples who are dissatisfied with their

relationship and who mirror behaviors; maintain interpersonal distance through territorial disputes, do not develop a private message system and are not as effective as satisfied couples at reading their partner's non-verbal behavior. The last finding is supported by Kahn (1970), who found that dissatisfied husbands and wives are particularly prone to misinterpreting each other's non-verbal signals. Dissatisfied spouses are more inclined than satisfied spouses to attribute negative connotations to their spouse's attempts to communicate affection, happiness and playfulness. It is interesting to note that the findings of both Gottman et al. (1979) and Raush et al. (1974) lead them to the issue of intimacy and the ways in which interpersonal distance is maintained in unfulfilling relationships. It is clear that the ability to resolve issue of interpersonal distance or conflicts characterized by a pursue-withdraw cycle are important for marital satisfaction. While a substantial amount is already known about the different approaches distressed and non-distressed couples take toward interpersonal conflict, Raush et al. (1974) note that the approach taken can change and lead to different outcomes. It is the processes involved in shifting from a problem escalating track characterized by criticism to a problem solving track characterized by mutual acceptance of the partner's position that need to be observed on a moment by moment scale in order to understand the mechanisms of change and conflict resolution.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Task Analysis

The purpose of this study was one of model building, rather than hypothesis testing. Thus describing the method of investigation used in order to gather the observations the model will be based on, rather than stating hypotheses is appropriate here. This study built upon the work of Greenberg (1980, 1984) and Johnson (1980) in which the resolutions of intrapersonal conflicts were subject to a task analysis in order to build a model for intrapersonal conflict resolution. The theory of human problem solving developed by Newell and Simon (1970, 1972) had been drawn upon by Greenberg and Johnson. According to Newell and Simon (1970) there are a number of important elements that must be understood in order to perform a task analysis and predict task performance. A task analysis involves:

- an 'information processing system' - a person engaged in the process of solving a problem or completing a task
- the task and its goal or solution, which are defined by an objective outsider
- the external context or environment in which the task takes place, known as the task environment.

While Newell and Simon used task analysis to build models of problem solving behavior with cognitive tasks, Rice and Greenberg (1984) have shown that task analysis is a method well-suited to the

study of the processes involved in therapy where clients complete affective tasks. In a task analysis of therapeutic events it is the client's moment by moment process of completing a task that is under investigation. In this project the task is an interactional one of resolving a marital conflict and the external context or task environment is the set of therapeutic interventions. The analysis of an affective task results in the development of two possible types of models of change (Greenberg, 1984b). The first of these is the performance model which describes the actual behaviors involved in a successful task performance. The second model, the information processing model, describes the underlying psychological system that could be responsible for generating the successful performance.

The concepts, 'experiential states', and 'performance diagrams' are important in understanding how the moment by moment processes of therapeutic events are transformed into performance models. When solving an affective task a person's awareness and conceptualization of the problem represents his or her experiential state or frame of mind. This state is constantly changing as people accumulate new information and understanding as they work on the problem. Each experiential state represents a step in the process of problem solving. As the problem solver moves through the various experiential states required to solve the problem, their behavior can be charted to form the performance diagram. This diagram represents the sequences of the performances of the problem solver. It includes

each experiential state and forms the basis of a performance model. As the task in this study was an interactional one, the performance diagrams represent the interactional dynamics between the two problem solvers. The interactional positions of the participants in this model of interpersonal conflict resolution are analogous to the cognitive states that are graphed in a task analysis of a performance event involving an individual solving a cognitive problem. When two people are involved in a task performance their self organizations and subsequent communicative behaviors occur within the context of their interactions. It is assumed that the communicative behavior of each partner influences the internal processing and communicative behaviors of the other, as well as the performance outcome. The data used to create the performance diagram was taken from a transcript of what the problem solvers did and said as well as the relevant aspects of their non-verbal behavior, such as voice quality. The process of gathering and structuring the data for the performance diagrams and subsequent models involved a number of strategies. These strategies are outlined after the following description of the measures considered for use in this study.

Process Measures

A number of process measure were considered for use in identifying the engagement of the problem solvers in the affective task and the solution of the task. The basic unit for all ratings

was a statement by one member of the couple, where a statement is defined as a speaking turn in an interaction with their partner. The measurement instruments used to define the therapeutic event or task performance were: the Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB), the Experiencing Scale, the Client Voice Quality System, the Target Complaints measure and the Conflicts Resolution Box Scale.

Structural Analysis of Social Behavior

The SASB, which was designed by Benjamin (1974), is composed of a three-dimensional grid system on which dialogue is analyzed and coded. The communication behaviors of the spouses are coded on two of the three-dimensional grids. The two grids indicate whether the communication focuses on oneself or one's partner. The grids also have a horizontal axis which runs from disaffiliation to affiliation and a vertical axis running from maximal dependence to maximal independence. Each grid has 36 behavior categories that correspond to the dimensions defined by the grids and their axes. The SASB has been found to be a sound measuring device and appropriate for the analysis of therapeutic processes. Benjamin (1974) reports that "validity has been established by factor analysis, circumplex analysis, autocorrelation techniques and dimensional ratings." When using the instrument to analyze therapeutic processes Greenberg (1980) found an inter-rater reliability of .911 using Cohen's Kappa. Humphrey (1983) reports inter-rater reliabilities on SASB ranging from .61 to

.79 with a mean of .69 on independent ratings, using Cohen's Kappa. When four raters were asked to reach a consensus after discussion Humphrey obtained inter-rater reliabilities between .80 and .84 with a mean of .81.

Experiencing Scale

The Experiencing Scale (Klein, Mathiew, Gendlin & Kiesler, 1969) is a seven point scale that has been shown to be a highly reliable measure of client involvement or 'experiencing' in therapy. A low scale rating indicates superfical involvement and references to the self. Moving toward the middle of scale there is a progression toward descriptions of feelings and at high levels of the scale there is an exploration of feelings that may lead to problem-solving and new understanding of oneself. The sixth stage of the scale is characterized by a "synthesis of readily accessible, newly recognized, or more fully realized feelings and experiences to produce personally meaningful structures or to resolve issues" (Klein et al., 1969).

Client Voice Quality System

The Client Voice Quality System (CVQ, Rice, Koke, Greenberg, and Wagstaff, 1979) is comprised of four mutually exclusive voice patterns; focused, externalized, limited and emotional. Each of these is identified in terms of 6 features: 1) energy, 2) primary stresses, 3) regularity of stresses, 4) pace, 5) timbre, and 6) contours. It

has been shown that voice quality indicates the measure of involvement in the moment and that more focused voice was found in good therapy sessions than in poor therapy sessions (Rice and Wagstaff, 1967). Greenberg (1980) combined the ratings on focused and emotional voice into a 'good contact' category and the ratings on external and limited voice into a 'poor contact' category. In the 'good contact' category the speaker is lecturing at another (external) or speaking from a withdrawn position (limited). A rank order correlation or reliability between judges for the CVQ was found to be between .70 and .79 on the four categories (Rice and Wagstaff, 1967). Percentage agreement was .70 and Cohen's Kappa was .49 for the same study.

Coding Scheme for Interpersonal Conflict

The Coding Scheme for Interpersonal Conflict designed by Raush, Barry, Hertel and Swain (1974) indicates resolution of the conflict. With this coding scheme each statement or action of an individual is coded on both an action category and a phase category. The phase coding indicates the general position of the partners with respect to the flow of the conflict situation. The three phases are 'introductory', 'conflict' and 'resolution and post resolution'.

There are 36 action categories that may be classified as either cognitive, affiliative or coercive. Inter-rater reliability has been found to be between .70 and .77 depending upon the number of categories used in coding.

Couples Interaction Coding System

The Couples Interaction Coding System (CICS) developed by Gottman et al. (1979) is based on the idea that every message has several components, including:

- the content - the printed word or literal aspect of the message
- the affect - the nonverbal behaviors of the speaker during transmission of the message
- the context - the nonverbal behaviors of the listener.

Each thought unit of the transcribed videotape is coded on the eight summary codes of the CICS. These include; agreement, disagreement, communication talk, mind reading, proposing a solution, summarizing other, summarizing self, and problem information. The facial gestures, voice, and body position of both the speaker and listener are also coded as either negative, positive, or neutral for each thought unit. Generalizability studies done by Gottman et al. (1979) suggest that the CICS is a reliable coding system in the sense of generalizability across coders and sample lengths.

Relational Communication Control System

The Relational Communication Control system designed by Rogers and Farace (1975) is based on the assumption that all messages transmit two types of meaning, content and relational. The coding scheme focuses on the definitional nature of the interactor's relationship. Thus it measures the control dimension of ongoing

messages through which interactors reciprocally define their position relative to one another. A three digit code is used to categorize messages by speaker, grammatical form and response mode. Then the message codes are translated into one-up, one across, or one-down control directions. One-up (\uparrow) messages attempt to assert definitional rights; one-down (\downarrow) messages request or accept the others definition of the relationship. One across (\rightarrow) leveling messages minimize asserting or accepting definitions. As the focus of the coding system is relational and each message is considered to be both a response to what preceeded it and a stimulus for the message that follows, the control directions of the message are paired. These combined control directions form the minimal structure unit of the relationship and are called transacts. There are three basic types transacts or control patterns in relational communication. When the definition of the relationship offered by one interactant is accepted by the other the transact is complementary and the control directions are opposite ($\uparrow\downarrow$) or ($\downarrow\uparrow$). With symmetrical transacts the control directions are the same ($\uparrow\uparrow, \downarrow\downarrow, \rightarrow\rightarrow$); there is a similarity in the definition of the relationship and the communication behavior of one partner mirrors that of the other. In transitory transacts ($\uparrow\rightarrow, \downarrow\rightarrow, \rightarrow\uparrow, \rightarrow\downarrow$) the control directions are different but not opposite, with one of the interactants choosing a one across leveling movement. When the coding system was used in a study of interaction among 65 married couples, it yielded reliability levels ranging from 1.00 to

.68 across four discussion topics. The average reliability across all comparisons was .86 (Ericson and Rogers 1973).

Outcome Measures

Target Complaints Scale

The Target Complaints scale was used to access the couple's perspective on the completion of the task. This measure, designed by Battle, Imber, Hoer-Sarich, Stone, Nash and Frank (1966) consists of three 5-point scales on which each spouse is asked to rate the amount of change on three different complaints related to the core conflict in the relationship. In this study the scale was administered during an initial interview and at termination of therapy to identify movement toward resolution of the issue presented.

Conflict Resolution Box Scale

The Conflict Resolution Box Scale notes the degree to which the couple and the therapist feel the conflict issue has been resolved during the session. This seven point scale ranges from 'not at all resolved' in the first box to 'somewhat resolved' in the fourth box, to 'totally resolved' in the seventh box. This instrument has been shown to successfully discriminate between more or less resolved sessions in a study, comparing the effects of two chair and empathic reflections on conflict resolutions (Greenberg and Dompierre, 1981).

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier and Thompson 1982) measures the level of marital adjustment achieved by couples. The DAS has four interrelated dimensions; Dyadic Concensus, Dyadic Cohesion, Dyadic Satisfaction and Affectional Expression. The theoretical range of scores is from 0 to 151, with a score under 100 suggesting that the couple is experiencing distress. The DAS was administered to the couples in this study during an initial interview and at termination of therapy to measure change in marital adjustment.

Procedures

The seven strategies of a task analysis are:

1. Explication of the investigator's cognitive map (subjective and theory)
2. The description of the task (resolution of the pursue-distance conflict)
3. The specification of the task environment (emotionally focused therapy)
4. Demonstration of the potency of the processes under investigation (outcome studies)
5. The rational task analysis
6. The empirical task analysis
7. Model construction

The explication of the investigator's cognitive map appears in the

Results chapter of this study.

Selection of the Event

The performance studied here has been identified as the interactional task of resolving a marital conflict characterized by a pursue-distance cycle. The performance is an 'event' with a ,

" . . . sequence that has a beginning, an end, and a particular structure that gives it meaning as an island of behavior distinguishable from the surrounding behaviors in the ongoing psychotherapeutic process." (Greenberg 1984b p. 138)

The following process was used to select videotapes of five marital therapy sessions, four of which included a resolution event and a fifth in which there was an unsuccessful attempt at the resolution of a pursue-distance conflict. A 'marker' or client performance pattern signals the beginning of the event. In this task analysis the marker is a pursue-distance interaction. Each member of the couple was identified as either a pursuer or distancer, according to SASB ratings on an early segment of the conflictual interaction under study. Pursuers were those who initially engaged in the conflict with a higher proportion than their partners of behaviors in the 'attacking and rejecting', 'belittling and blaming', or 'watching and managing' clusters. Distancers initially showed higher proportions than their partners of 'walling off and avoiding', 'protesting and withdrawing', 'sulking and appeasing', or 'deferring and submitting' communication acts. The investigator listened to tapes of the therapy sessions, and reviewed the transcripts of these sessions to find the

pursue-distance interaction that occurred before 'disclosing and expressing' or 'affirming and understanding' communication acts. Subsequent interactions were tracked and coded until the occurrence of a resolution. Criteria for the occurrence of a resolution were:

- 1) a score of at least 3 on the Target Complaints measure at termination of therapy
- 2) a report by the spouses of level 4 or more on the Conflict Resolution Box Scale
- 3) a report by the therapist of level 4 or more on the Conflict Resolution Box Scale
- 4) global clinical judgement from three clinicians listening to the last ten minutes of the session and judging the degree resolution.

Task Environment

The third step, specification of the task environment, was given brief attention in the introduction of this study. The reader interested in a more detailed description of the task environment, emotionally focused couples therapy is referred to the works of Greenberg and Johnson (1983, in press). The fourth step, demonstration of the potency of the task environment and the process was accomplished by Johnson and Greenberg (in press).

Rational Analysis

The fifth step, rational task analysis, was accomplished by the investigator engaging in a "thought experiment", Greenberg (1984b). The investigator drew upon her experience, both personal and clinical, and the experiences of her colleagues in an attempt to envision a number of ways that the problem or task could be solved. In this thought experiment the possible performances of the couple were freely imagined for the purpose of extracting "the essential nature of resolution performances and the fundamental strategy underlying these performances" (Greenberg 1983, p. 141). The rational analysis makes explicit the assumptions that guide the investigator in his or her observations and provides a framework for understanding the actual client performances. According to Johnson (1980) any models developed through this thought experiment must meet certain requirements in order to be used in the next steps of the task analysis. The models must present a 'process' which can be applied to a variety of content problems. The models must communicate as clearly as possible the 'processes for doing' - the type of task, the way the two problem solvers interpret the task, the on-going interactional dynamics, and the thoughts and feelings of the problem solvers. It must also include the 'processes for deciding what to do next', - how the communication behavior of one spouse affects the other as they move from one state of experience to another, and how they attempt to solve the problem. The goal of the rational analysis is to provide a

comprehensive yet detailed model representing the investigator's best guess of the strategies involved in task completion. Once this has been done, the investigator's can move to the sixth step, the empirical task analysis. This step involves rigourously describing the actual moment by moment performance of the problem solvers as they complete the task.

Empirical Analysis

Each videotape was transcribed and each statement of the spouses was coded by two raters. The main goal here was the identification of patterns in the process of the task performance. The SASB , the Experiencing Scale, the Client Voice Quality System, the Coding Scheme for Interpersonal Conflict, the Couple's Interaction Coding system, and the Relational Communication Control System were considered as possible instruments for coding the transcripts and where non-verbal behavior is coded, the videotapes. The first rational analysis guided what we were measuring and determined which of the proposed measures were selected for the coding. Information obtained from these scales was used to identify and track each interactional position and experiential state the problem solvers moved through. The interactional positions formed the basis of the performance diagrams. These became a model of performance which provided a framework for constructing a model of the interactional positions and experiential states that generated the observed performance.

Information was gathered from some couples in a process known as Interpersonal Process Recall (Elliot 1979) and this also contributed to the empirical task analysis. In the IPR's the couples reviewed a tape of the therapy session within a few days of its occurrence. They were asked to recall what they were thinking and experiencing during the session and the impact that the dynamics of the situation had on their internal processing. The spouses were encouraged to become aware of and explore any images, memories, or thoughts they had during the task performance. In this way, the investigator gained not only a picture of the external behavior of the problem solvers but also an impression of the problem solvers internal processes.

Model Construction

The seventh stage, construction of the models involved a comparison of the models generated through the rational task analyses and the empirical task analyses. The thought experiment is compared with the actual performances to arrive at a performance model. The empirical analysis will either corroborate or expand the original rational model or disconfirm it and suggest other possibilities.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Theoretical Framework

Explication of Map and Theory

The fifth step of the task analysis, having defined the task and the task environment is to complete a rational analysis of possible resolution performances to provide a framework for understanding the performance that is to be studied. In this step the investigators draw upon their review of the literature, clinical knowledge, and personal experience to answer the question, 'How could I solve this problem?'. Greenberg (1984) describes this process as a " ... kind of thought experiment, (Husserl 1939/1973) in which possible performances are varied freely in the imagination to extract the essential nature of resolution and the fundamental strategy underlying these performances" (p. 141). In engaging in this thought experiment I have an image of myself as the director of an imaginary play. The scene is created by the integration of what I've read, my theory of change and experiences. I then move the actors around the stage having them play out scenarios of resolution until I feel they are acting out the essential aspects of experience, or universal experiences that the audience will relate to. The stage has been set in part through the delineation of the sequential steps the partners appear to go through in the development of a pursue-distance conflict. This has been included in the introduction (See Chapter I).

The stage can be further set by considering the theory behind emotionally focused couples therapy (Greenberg & Johnson 1983). In the 'pursue-distance' or 'attack-withdraw' conflict the interactions are complementary. The individuals are organized in such a way that their behavior whether it is attack or withdraw is the dominant aspect of their individual organization. This organization is "...simultaneously maintained and supported by 1) The negative interactional cycle, ie. couple system functioning and by 2) Some individual processes being more dominant in focal awareness, ie. Individual subsystem functioning " (p. 10). Thus both the current interaction between the two partners and the current experiential processes within the individuals play a part in maintaining the conflict. Change, then involves both a change in each partner's view of themselves and a change in their context, i.e. their communication with each other. The partners must experience 1) themselves and 2) each other differently and 3) they must shift their position in relation to each other. The pursuer needs to stop blaming or criticizing and the withdrawer needs to make contact with the pursuer in a non-rejecting ways. This is a circular rather than linear process, that can be initiated by the behavior of either the pursuer or the withdrawer. In order to describe this process though we have chosen to begin the sequence with the pursuer's behavior as it is often most effective clinically to soften the pursuer's blaming behavior before encouraging the withdrawer to make contact with the

pursuer.

The process of experiencing oneself or one's partner differently is brought about by reframing the negative interactional cycle in terms of the underlying emotional experiences of each partner. When the underlying fears or anxieties are expressed by the pursuer, rather than anger the other partner perceives their spouse in a new way. When the withdrawer is confronted with their partners' vulnerabilities, rather than their anger they are less threatened and are able to respond with compassion rather than further distancing. Pursuers when they are confronted by their partners' feelings, needs and wants perceive them not as rejecting and feel more needed by their partners' requests. Greenberg and Johnson (1983) state that the "... expression of fear and vulnerability, besides evoking compassion, also communicates analogically that, 'this is not an attack' and often represents a major change in position in the interaction by that person, especially if their prior position was either blaming or withdrawing " (p. 13). The expression of emotional experiences such as fear, vulnerability, sadness or pain rather than anger or resentment both brings new aspects of the self into focal awareness and represents major changes in one's position in an interaction.

Greenberg and Johnson (1983) outline five major changes or steps that couples appear to move through as the complimentary pursue-distance organization is altered. These are:

1. An individual preceives him or herself differently by bringing into focus awareness experiences not previously dominant in this persons view of self; for example, 'I see and accept my vulnerability.'
2. The spouse on witnessing the partners new affective expressions preceives the partner in a new way: for example, 'I see your need for caring and contact rather than hostility.'
3. The individuals personal reorganization leads to different behavior in the interaction with the spouses; for example, 'I now ask you for reassurance from a position of vulnerability.'
4. The spouse's new perceptions of the partner lead to different responses; for example, 'I comfort you rather than withdraw.'
5. As a function of their partners new behaviors, the individuals come to see themselves in a new way, for example, 'Since I can fulfill your needs I see myself as valuable and necessary to you.'

Subjective Data

A rational task analysis focuses not only on the "process for doing" but also on the "process for deciding what to do next" (Johnson 1980, p. 45). Thus we are drawn to questions like; what goes on inside pursuers when they are able to take a self-focus and assume responsibility for their state rather than placing responsibility outside themselves by blaming, or what happens inside the withdrawer when they feel safe enough to initiate contact and express either caring or their own fears and needs. In a task analysis the investigator makes explicit his or her cognitive map, drawing on the subjective experience as well as knowledge of the phenomena (Greenberg 1984). In order to come closer to understanding the process of resolution I began to scrutinize my own interactions with my husband.

I also asked my husband and another colleague to write about their experiences and perceptions as she and her partner move from a problem escalation pattern of relating to a problem solving interaction. My colleague notes that a conflict between her and her spouse usually begins with both of them rationally asserting their differing opinions and positions without receiving acknowledgement from the other. My husband outlines our problem escalation pattern in the following way.

In a disagreement both of us tend to concentrate on asserting our own separate positions. We emphasize our own sense of justice, ie. 'I am right, s/he's wrong'. Then sensing that our own position is not being heard or understood our frustration increases as does our determination to communicate our position. This occurs simultaneously, both of us clearly not listening to the others viewpoint, rather concentrating on our own issues. When I do respond to her position it is from my own perception of what her position is, usually an inaccurate one. This increases her feeling of being misunderstood or uncared for because I clearly was not listening. We find ourselves arguing about two separate issues, unaware and not being heard. This can continue in an ever increasing and exhausting spiral.

My colleague describes a sequence in which she and spouse move from problem escalation to resolution. As she and her spouse discuss an incident they get further and further entrenched in defending their positions and move to general accusations that go beyond the immediate situation. My colleague becomes silent, reflects on their discussion and then becomes teary. She talks to her partner about; how threatened she was in the incident, her need for his support, and her

hurt at not receiving it. My colleague's partner now responds by comforting her and validating her point of view. In this incident my colleague brings into focal awareness her vulnerability. Her partner perceiving her differently is able to respond to her by validating and comforting her rather than counter-attacking or withdrawing.

For the most part the problem escalation patterns of my spouse and I involve me playing the role of the pursuer and my spouse taking the role of the withdrawer. Through reviewing the times when I have been able to stop blaming my spouse and express my underlying feelings it seems there are a number of things that happen that allow or encourage me to take a self-focus and express my vulnerability.

1. At times a memory, a visual picture or listening to the tone of my voice clues me into the fact that I am blaming and that I will not get what I want by making angry demands. I then try to change my tone of voice and be open about what I want or need rather than complain about what he is not doing for me.
2. Just as becoming aware of my voice tone can help me realize that I am blaming and it is counter-productive certain facial expressions and mannerisms of my partner can clue me in to when he's feeling blamed. Sometimes when I am angry my husband will try to placate me. When he does this he takes on an almost hangdog expression, hunching his shoulders a bit and lowering his head. This used to make me more angry but now it triggers my awareness that I am making it difficult for him to give me the contact I want. I now perceive my partner differently, rather than seeing him as somehow weak or at fault I see him as genuinely needing my support.

My spouse seems to have at least two ways to stop me in my tracks when I am blaming and initiate a change in our interaction

cycle.

1. A number of times my spouse has broken the attack-withdraw cycle by commenting on what's happening between us and how he feels. He usually says something like, 'I feel I can't win now', or 'Anything I say will be wrong ', or 'I don't have all the answers to this'. This triggers in me the awareness that I am expecting him to take full responsibility for what's going on and that isn't fair. I also experience him differently, rather than experiencing the abandonment I feel when he withdraws I see him as trying to relate and solve the problem. This helps me to let go of my anger and become vulnerable.

2. When my spouse of his own accord initiates an expression of caring for me or expresses how much he would like to do this but that he feels I have put a barrier between him and me, it is hard for me to remain angry or critical. As I see his willingness to respond to me I am able to openly express my needs.

In trying to understand the dynamics of the interactional cycle from the withdrawer's position I asked my husband about a time when he expressed a desire to care for me and comfort me when I was still angry. He said,

'I wasn't feeling guilty. I could see that it was your problem, you had made yourself miserable, so I had some caring for you. I knew you were upset at me but I wasn't worried about that because I knew I wasn't guilty. I tried to break the cycle because I didn't want a lousy weekend but I wasn't trying to win. I felt I was right, but I didn't need to either win or give in. I didn't feel a need to win.'

Another time my spouse expressed caring for me after I had been critical, retreated in anger and then tried to openly express my anxiety without blaming him. When asked about this interaction he said,

I thought you were upset at me for talking about G.'s inadequacies. I know you don't like that. I didn't want you to create a barrier. I wanted to soften you, to have you not look at my own inadequacies but let you know I loved you and hoped you could be more receptive to me. I also saw you were trying.'

Through the process of this investigation the investigator has noticed some changes in the process she and her spouse move through in resolving their conflicts. The changes can be illustrated in the following example. On a recent Saturday I helped my husband out with some work he needed done. As I worked he spontaneously expressed his appreciation for me by giving me a hug, telling me how wonderful I was and how much he appreciated my help. He said that on Sunday he would be sure to treat me well, starting with breakfast in bed and going from there. This was unexpected and at that moment I felt special and appreciated. Sunday morning came and went without breakfast in bed. When I asked my spouse about what he had planned for the day he said he had to study. If this had happened a year ago I would have been furious but not said anything at the time. Instead I would have been cold and distant all day and felt that my husband really didn't care for me. Eventually this would have led to a fight with me accusing my spouse of not loving me. Now I didn't say much but went away to try to sort out my own feelings and expectations. I could see that my husband hadn't had much time to himself and was tired. This was why he hadn't followed through on his plans. I knew that he wasn't being hostile toward me but was

quiet and a bit distant because of his own needs. I was still angry but rather than feeling rejected I was merely feeling forgotten and disappointed. I wasn't sure what to do with these feelings but finally decided to confront my spouse. I went to him and reminded him of what he said on Saturday. I told him I was angry and said, 'If you didn't mean what you said I wish you wouldn't have said it.' At this point I was angry and my comments were hostile. A long silence followed during which I considered leaving the room, but didn't probably because I was curious about what my spouse was thinking and what his response would be. Finally he quietly said, 'I am sorry', and I glared at him. He continued to talk explaining that he had been tired and self-absorbed. He hadn't really been thinking about me that morning. I remember feeling the tension beginning to leave my face. I felt my anger and disappointment begin to subside. When he said, 'I really did appreciate you yesterday and the feelings I had toward you were genuine, but I guess I was in a different state this morning', I wanted to go over to him and feel his arms around me and say it was okay that was all I needed to hear. Instead he moved a few feet closer to me. I laughed and said he could move closer, I wouldn't eat him. Then I reached out and hugged him. My spouse talked about feeling bad that the day hadn't started well, he wanted to salvage what was left of it. I said it was okay and we went on to make plans for the day.

In reviewing this incident I asked my spouse for his perceptions. He said that while he did feel that I was blaming him when I initially confronted him, he saw that I was hurt as well as angry. I looked unhappy to him. In the silence that followed my confrontation he said that he was feeling in a bind. He had not followed through on his plans and felt that if he did anything now to show me his appreciation it would be to fulfill his obligation and to placate my anger. He thought I probably wouldn't accept this and so he was in a no-win situation. He found himself wishing we could start over again. Apologizing involved the risk of starting the argument over again, however he finally did this and tried to explain the bind he was in. My husband was surprised that I listened to him rather than 'jumping on' what he said. When he saw me listening he felt he could show some caring toward me without it being merely a fulfillment of his obligation to me. He moved closer to me because he sensed I was listening to him rather than attacking him. He didn't want to move too close to me though because he wasn't quite sure how I would react. When I laughed and hugged him he felt that I had given up my hold on my anger, he now felt that we could talk about how to change the situation.

There are a number of ways that we handled the situation differently than we would have a few years ago.

1. While I was angry at not receiving what I had expected on Sunday I didn't automatically interpret my husband's distance as a rejection of me.

2. I was hostile when I confronted my spouse but I tried to focus on my own feelings of anger and disappointment, rather than presenting him with a tirade of accusations. I stated my position and waited to hear what he had to say.

3. While I was angry and hostile my spouse was somehow able to see my underlying hurt and respond to this. My spouse felt blamed but he didn't withdraw or defend himself.

4. Instead of withdrawing or defending himself my husband validated my position. He said, 'You're right, I didn't follow through this morning'. He then openly expressed his dilemma hoping I would listen to him.

5. My spouses validation of my position helped me to be able to listen to him and to accept what he said about really wanting to have done something nice for me as a genuine statement rather than an excuse.

6. We were able to come to a satisfactory resolution and experience closeness within about ten minutes. Before this could have easily taken hours.

In summary, the investigator's theory and experience seem to be in agreement with Greenberg and Johnson's theory (in press) and indicate that bringing denied aspects of the self, one's fears, anxieties, or vulnerabilities into focal awareness and expressing these rather than criticism, allows the partner to see the spouse in a new way. If these new aspects of self are responded to and validated by the partner this seems to create the right climate for a shift from problem escalation to problem solving. A validation of the previously denied aspects of self by oneself and one's partner may result in both partners feeling accepted and safer in the relationship. It may then be possible to begin to negotiate the pragmatic aspects of resolving the troubling issue.

The process of resolution outlined in this thought experiment bears some resemblance to the communication training developed by Guerney (1977), but there are also some important differences. Guerney's communication training involves teaching couples four basic sets of skills. These are:

1. Expressive communication skills - expressing emotions, thoughts, or desires without generating hostility or defensiveness in the other.
2. Empathic responding skills - conveying acceptance of the other.
3. Mode switching skills - moving from expressive communication to empathic responding at appropriate times.
4. Facilitator skills - helping the others use the above skills effectively.

While the process outlined in the thought experiment does involve the use of good communication skills these are not taught and emerge more as a result of change rather than as facilitators of change. It is the partners' different experience of themselves and each other through bringing into focal awareness emotional experiences such as fear, vulnerability and sadness rather than 'talking about' feelings that facilitates conflict resolution. The withdrawer actually seeing the previously blaming partner as vulnerable becomes more accessible and responsive. This in turn elicits a new perception of the withdrawer in the pursuer's eyes

and results in improved communication and problem solving.

First Rational Analysis

The first rational analysis, which is based on the preceding explication of the investigator's theory, personal map and subjective data is outlined in the following diagram (See Figure 4.1). The sequence begins with the pursuer blaming his or her partner who feels criticized and either withdraws contact or defends him/herself. In either case the pursuer does not experience the emotional comfort and closeness being sought. A shift in the interaction occurs when there is a change in the dominant aspect of the pursuer's individual organization which allows the pursuer to stop blaming and express an underlying fear or vulnerability. The withdrawer now seeing the partner as vulnerable rather than angry feels less threatened and makes contact either by accepting the partners statement or disclosing feelings. The pursuer then seeing the partner as accessible asks for reassurance or states personal needs. The withdrawer in turn sees the partners need rather than anger and feels compassion rather than pressure. The withdrawer feels closer to the partner and responds to the partners need with reassurance or acceptance. This reassurance is accepted by the pursuer, who now sees the partner as capable of responding to his or her need. The pursuer, feeling closer to his or her partner, expresses appreciation

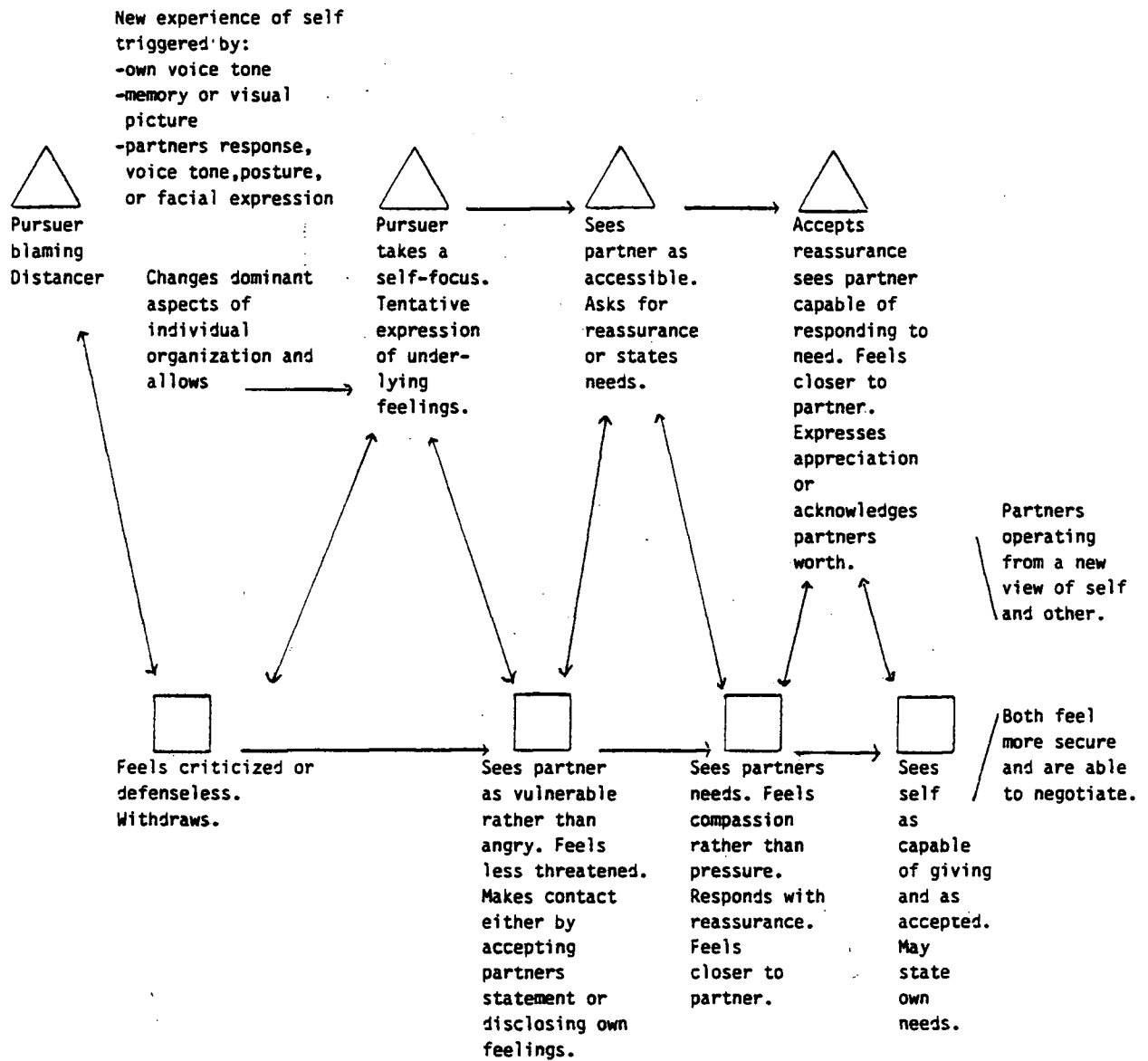


FIGURE 4.1 FIRST RATIONAL MODEL OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION PERFORMANCE

or acknowledges the partner. The withdrawer now experiences acceptance and may state his or her own needs. At this point both partners are now operating from a new view of themselves and the other. There is an increase in their sense of acceptance and safety in their relationship. The partners are able to negotiate with each other.

First Empirical Analysis

Procedure

The first empirical analysis involved the investigator reviewing the transcripts of the performance events and writing a brief comment that she felt captured the process of each of the partners statements. The investigator initially came up with thirty different types of interactional positions or state descriptions. These thirty categories were collapsed into twenty categories with the assistance of another clinician familiar with the model (See Table 4.1). Each category was then assigned an abbreviation and a colour code. The statements from each transcript were represented graphically on long sheets of paper (See Figure 4.2 for a prototype). A total of five resolution events were graphed in this way along with one non-resolution event.

Model

Inspection and comparison of the four diagrams of the resolution events suggested five stages in the resolution performance. These

TABLE 4.1

First Empirical Analysis

Twenty Categories Describing the Process
of the Interactional Statements

Categories	Abbreviation
1) Expressing Acceptance	A
2) Blaming	BL
3) Trust Issue-rejecting	B-TI
4) Challenging	CH
5) Clarifying	CL
6) Making Contact	C
7) De-escalating- by focus on self	D-FS
8) Defending or Distancing	D
9) Accepts Responsibility for Part in Cycle	ARC
10) Personal Problem Solving	PPS
11) Reconciling, Responding Reassuring	R
12) Reconciling-conditional	R-C
13) Reconciling-tentative	R-T
14) Softening-becoming vulnerable	S
15) Solution Proposal	SP
16) Stating Need, Want, Feeling	S/N/W/F
17) Stating Position	S/P
18) Subtask	ST
19) One-up	↑
20) One-down	↓

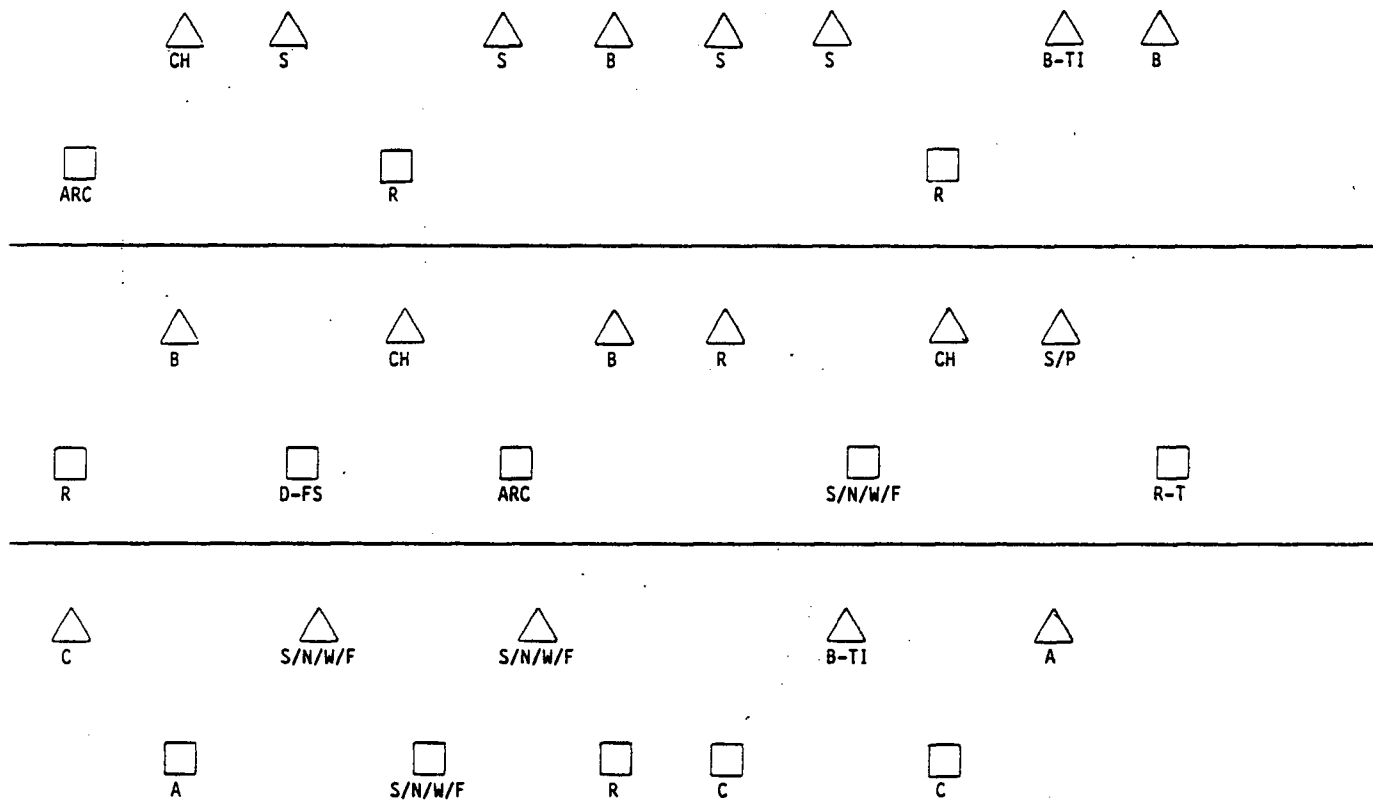


FIGURE 4.2 FIRST EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS - PROTOTYPE OF THE TASK PERFORMERS
INTERACTIONAL POSITIONS - Triangles represent the
female partner. Squares represent the male partner.
The diagram reads left to right. See Table 4.1 for
a key to the abbreviations describing the interactional
positions.

stages were called; escalation, de-escalation, establishing trust, mutual openness and resolution. Each stage had a number of micro-steps or essential interactional positions.

It is important to note that the performance steps in resolving a conflict are cyclical rather than linear. Thus while the stages of resolution and the interactional positions can be organized into a five step table it is important to remember that the couple doesn't move straight through the process in five easy steps. Instead the couple often moves through a few steps and then loops back to an escalatory interaction pattern. If the partners can successfully de-escalate again they will then re-enter the resolution process and move through a few more steps. These steps are therefore considered to be components of competence, ie. they have to be attained for the resolution process to move forward to the next step. The five components of competence shown in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.3 are discussed below.

Escalation

As the issues are explored in therapy the original interactional patterns appear to be transformed into blame/defend patterns with the emotional pursuers blaming and the emotional withdrawers defending. The task begins with the partners in an escalatory interactional cycle. One of the partners is blaming the other, or demanding something from them in a hostile manner. The other partner responds to the blame or demand with either a

TABLE 4.2

First Empirical Analysis

STAGES OF RESOLUTION COMPONENTS OF COMPETANCE	INTERACTIONAL POSITIONS MICRO-STEPS
ESCALATION	A. Blaming, Accusing B. Defending, Avoiding, Appeasing, Counter-complaining
DE-ESCALATION	A. or B. Taking Responsibility For Self Owning A Part In Cycle Accepting
ESTABLISHING TRUST	
DISCLOSE/RESPOND	A. Stating Need, Want, or Feeling B. Responding, Accepting Attempting To Contact
PASSING THE TEST	A. Deflecting, Blaming, Defending B. Responding, Accepting
MUTUAL OPENNESS	A. & B. Stating Need, Want, or Feeling Showing Vulnerability Understanding, Acceptance, Contact Vice Versa
RESOLUTION	A. & B. Solution Proposal, Personal Problem Solving, Reconciling, Agreeing Accepting
	A.= Pursuer B.= Withdrawer

ESCALATION DE-ESCALATION ESTABLISHING TRUST MUTUAL OPENNESS RESOLUTION

DISCLOSE/RESPOND TESTING

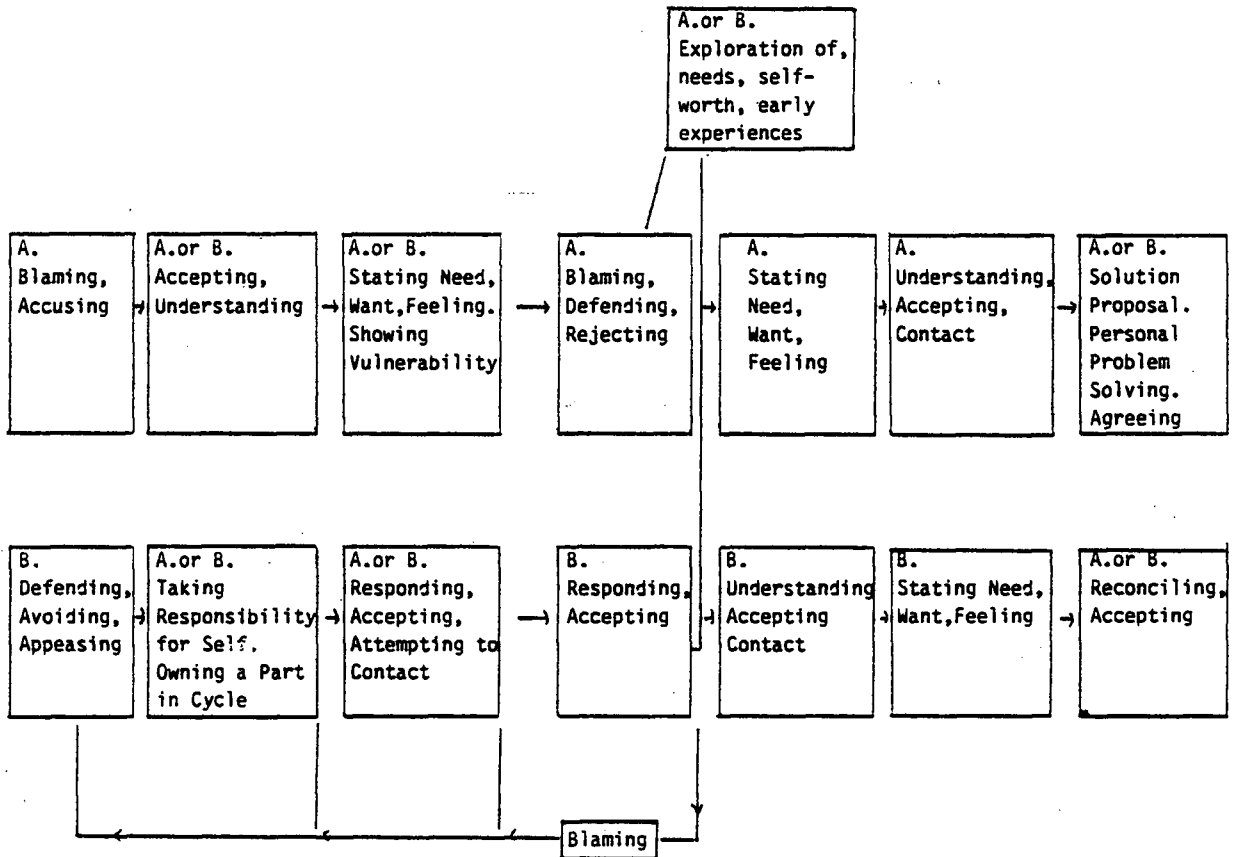


FIGURE 4.3 FIRST EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS
Micro and Macro Steps of the Resolution Performance

statement of defense, appeasement or counter-attack. The first partners respond with another blaming or demanding statement or a counter-complaint. The interchange might go something like -

K.-'We didn't spend anytime together this week because he wasn't interested enough to remember that we had agreed to do that.'

T.-'I forgot, I forgot we had that agreement on top of the other things we were doing.'

K.-'Well even given that, you did remember the other things.'

In this interaction K., the pursuer, blames T. by ascribing to T. the full responsibility for them not spending time together. She accuses T. of not being interested enough in her to spend time with her. T. tries to defend himself by offering the excuse, 'I forgot'. Rather than accepting this K. offers a counter-complaint by accusing T. of being able to remember other things. Once again K. is implying that T. is not interested in her.

De-escalation

The second stage, beginning De-escalation, is entered when either of the partners switch from blaming or defending statements to acknowledging or taking responsibility for their part in present or past negative interaction cycles. The defending or appeasing statements made by the withdrawers seem to only exacerbate the pursuing partners, resulting in the pursuers repeating their message louder and with more force. On the other hand, when the withdrawers own their part in the cycle it seems to have the opposite effect.

The following two statements are examples of withdrawers taking responsibility for their part in the cycle

R. - 'I feel defensive when she's angry. I feel defensive....'

M. - 'I guess maybe eventually feeling helpless will develop into real frustration and maybe I'll retreat.'

This kind of statement seems to either communicate to the pursuers that they are being heard or allow the pursuers a glimpse of another side of their partner. When the pursuers take responsibility for their part in the cycle they often do so by acknowledging their angry feelings or behavior. For example:

K. - 'That's why I get so pissed off when he closes off.'

Therapist - 'It's like he's deserted you just like all the other people who've disappointed you.'

K. - 'Right and that's where the hurt goes into anger.'

or

D. - 'I know that there's times where I have gone over-board and held back and stuff because I wanted to punish her. I admit that.'

If the other partner responds to statements like these with either blaming or defending statements the movement is back to escalation. However, if the statements are accepted de-escalation begins.

Trust

The micro-step in which one of the partners owns their part in the cycle can be bypassed and the couples can move to the third stage, Trust, if the therapist blocks the pursuers blaming

statements and pushes them to either ask directly for what they need, or focus on their hurt rather than their anger. For the pursuers to express their needs in a way that the withdrawers do not feel criticized or pressured the pursuers affect must change from hostile or demanding to vulnerable. At this point the pursuers voice becomes softer, the focus of their statements is themselves and their experience rather than their partner. The pursuers may also cry. For example, the therapist encourages the pursuer to be vulnerable by saying with a soft but urgent voice,

Th.-'Tell him about that feeling you told him about last week. How you would like to be able to talk to him and have him listen to you.'

The pursuer cries softly and then says,

M.-'I need you to listen to me and let me know I am important to you.'

Thus the Trust stage can be entered through de-escalation by one of the partners owning their part in the cycle or through the therapists blocking the blame/defend cycle and pushing the pursuers to state their needs. In either case there is a period of testing where the pursuers disclose their feelings, needs, or position and the withdrawers respond with acceptance or attempts to reassure or contact the pursuers. It is as if the pursuers decide to expose a bit of themselves and tentatively put out a need to see whether the withdrawers will remain distant or will respond to their need. When the withdrawers attempt to respond to the pursuers, the pursuers

often do not respond in kind but deflect the withdrawers initial response. This is done either by; changing the topic, complaining about times in the past where their partner hasn't responded, and minimizing or focusing on negative aspects of their partners response. In one performance event the pursuer tearfully tells her husband how hurt she was by a critical comment he made to her. The partner begins to reassure his wife that while he had made a critical comment to her he wasn't rejecting her. The pursuer then moves away from his attempt to reassure her and escalates again by saying,

M.-'Now you're gonna say you weren't rejecting me, just rejecting what I did, but I don't need that kind of rejection for what I do or anything.'

Issues of trust and the pursuers need for acceptance often surface at this point. The pursuing partners appear to be testing the withdrawers to see if their responses are genuine and if they can rely on the withdrawer to respond to them at other times. If the withdrawers respond to the pursuers deflecting behavior by reverting to defending or appeasing strategies the partners move back to escalatory interactions. If the movement is to continue forward at this point it is important for the withdrawers to continue to meet the pursuers testing behavior with congruent non-escalatory statements. These statements are often simple and short with a focus on the present dynamics. At times these statements are reassuring in nature conveying an accepting presence. For example, R.-'I don't want to be a threat to you.' The congruent statements can also be

assertions or non-hostile challenges. In one event the withdrawer challenges his wives deflecting behavior with the statement-

T.-'It seems like you don't really trust the way I am now, or was in those few moments. You don't even trust what was going on here because it doesn't meet your conditions.' (said in a non-hostile manner with an expressive, involved voice conveying a sense of discovery)

Mutual Openness

Whether the withdrawers establish contact by; reassuring, or asserting themselves the movement to the fourth stage, Mutual Openness, occurs when the pursuers accept rather than deflect the withdrawers response. This usually results in the pursuers expressing deeper fears or needs. It is important that the pursuers continue to express their desires or fears in a vulnerable rather than hostile manner. It is also important that the withdrawers hear these statements as genuine needs rather than complaints. If they are heard as complaints or criticisms, even if they aren't intended as such, the withdrawer defends and the movement is back to escalation. To continue with mutual openness which leads to intimacy, the withdrawers must acknowledge the pursuers position and needs as valid. An example of such an interaction is-

M.-'I need to feel accepted and to feel respected for my judgement without it having to be confirmed by you as the final arbitrator.'

R.-'Unconditional acceptance have I ever given you that? When I grew up acceptance was always tied performance and behavior. I can see what you want and what you want is like a very accepting love, undoubtedly that is much more important than achieving. I'll have to struggle to keep things in perspective.'

When the pursuers receive the withdrawers validation the withdrawers often move to an expression of their needs and fears. If the pursuers feel heard and validated by the withdrawers they are likely to accept the withdrawers needs and desires. For example-

G.-'I'd like you to take my feelings into consideration....I'd like you to care about my needs.'

M.-'I do care about your needs.'

Once again it is important that the pursuers hear the withdrawers needs or fears as a vulnerable expression of a deep feeling rather than a demand or criticism. If the expression of need is seen as a demand or if it is made before the pursuers feels validated by the withdrawers, the pursuers are likely to counter the withdrawers statement with a complaint or demand. This leads once again to escalation. If the expression of needs and fears is met with acceptance and reassurance the partners move to the final stage, Resolution.

Resolution

Resolution is characterized by solution proposals, problem solving and agreement. The solution proposals tend to focus more on the integration of underlying feelings and needs rather than specific

behavioral changes like, ' I'll clean the bathroom if you play with the kids.' Much of the problem solving is personal problem solving, in which one of the partners accepts a new aspect of themselves or realizes a new option they have in the interaction. In one couple the pursuer realizes that rather than feeling enraged when her partner doesn't respond to her in the way she expected she can feel disappointed. She concludes she will not die if she does not get what she wants. Her partner concludes in a dramatic way that when he feels pressured into talking about something he's fearful about he can simply say he's fearful and doesn't want to talk. The resolution process concludes with agreement. Sometimes the partners affirm each other or the relationship, commenting on the changes in the relationship or their feelings toward each other.

Subtasks

While all of the resolution performances include the five stages discussed above, some of them include additional subtasks. In the subtask the therapist and one of the partners are usually engaged while the other partner listens. The subtasks are often entered into after a sequence in which one of the partners has become vulnerable and the other of the partners is unable to respond in an accepting way, or the acceptance offered is rejected by the ones who have become vulnerable. The subtasks tend to focus on what blocks one of the partners from responding to the other, or accepting a positive

response. This may involve an exploration of either partners source of self-worth, relevant experiences in their family of origin, or simply what they need in order to respond to their partner. When successful, the subtasks lead to de-escalation and mutual openness. This occurs either by the pursuers accepting the withdrawers responses, which have become less tentative, or by the pursuer responding to the withdrawers open expression of needs during or after the subtask.

The stages of resolution the investigator expects to find when the performance events are coded have now been outlined and we can turn our attention to the expected process indicators of the stages.

Second Rational Analysis

Having outlined the above stages of the resolution performances the coding scales presented in the second chapter were reviewed to determine which codes would possibly indicate and discriminate between the various stages. The five stages plus the specifications of the process indicators of these stages formed the second rational model to guide further empirical investigation. The process indicators selected as being possibly helpful in discriminating the processes thought to be important were chosen from the following measures; the Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB), the Relational Communication Control system (RCC), the Client Voice Quality system (CVQ), the Experiencing Scale (EXP), and the Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR). These process indicators are shown in Tables 4.3 to 4.7.

TABLE 4.3

Second Rational Model

Process Indicators Of Stages

A.= Pursuer
B.= Withdrawer

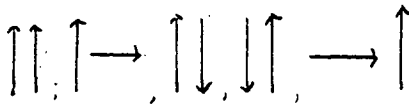
Escalation

Micro-steps - A. Blaming, Accusing
B. Defending, Avoiding, Appeasing

SASB

A. Subcluster Belittling & Blaming 133-136
B. Subclusters Sulking & Appeasing 233-236
Defering & Submitting 247-237
Protesting & Withdrawing 222-232

RCC



CVQ

A. & B. External

EXP

A. low 2 or 3
B. low 2 or 3

IPR

Comments

A. - I felt frustrated, he/she seemed so distant and detached.

B. - I was feeling attacked. I was always trying to find some sort of defense yet it never held up.

TABLE 4.4

Second Rational Model

Process Indicators of Stages

De-escalation

Micro-steps - A. or B. Taking Responsibility For Self
Owning Part In Cycle
A. or B. Accepting, Understanding

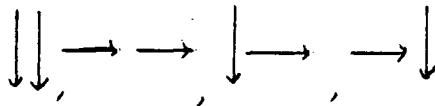
SASB

A. or B. Subcluster -Disclosing & Expressing 213-216
A. or B. 115 carefully fairly consider
116 friendly listen

RAUSH

• 20 Accept blame or responsibility

RCC



CVQ

A. & B. Focused

EXP

A. & B. 3-4

IPR

Comments

A. or B. - The presence of a third party made me careful of how I said things. I was less confrontational and more focused on my own feelings.

A. or B. - I was hearing his/her feelings without anger attached and I think I could relate better to that.

TABLE 4.5

Second Rational Model

Process Indicators of Stages

Establishing Trust - Disclose/Respond
Testing

Micro-steps -

Disclose/Respond A. Statement of Need, Want, Feeling
Showing Vulnerability
B. Responding, Acceptance
Attempting to Contact

Testing A. Blocking, Blaming, Defending
B. Responding, Accepting

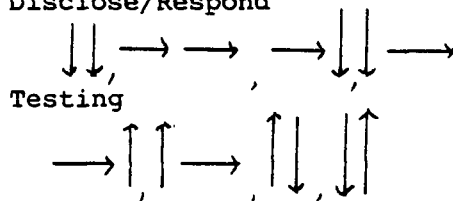
SASB

Disclose/Respond A. Disclosing & Expressing 213-216
243 ask, trust, count on
B. Affirming & Understanding 113-116

Testing A. 121 angry, dismiss, reject
134 delude, divert, mislead
137 intrude, block, restrict
B. same as in disclose/respond or
217 assert on own

RCC

Disclose/Respond



CVQ

Focused

TABLE 4.5 (cont.)

EXP

Disclose/Respond A. 4 - 5
B. 4 - 5

TESTING A. 2 - 3
B. 4 - 5

IPR

Comments

Disclose/Respond

- A. - I felt s/he was really listening and that made it easier for me to say things I hadn't said before.
- B. - I could see that s/he was being honest and it made it a lot easier for me to understand.
 - I could see that he/she was having difficulty and my cold heart warmed up a little.

Testing

- A. - It was hard for me to talk about what I needed.
I think I was recalling incidents when my needs weren't met.
- B. - I had an uncomfortable feeling of being pushed away, of not being able to participate.

TABLE 4.6

Second Rational Model

Process Indicators of Stages

Mutual Openness

Micro-steps - A. Statement of Need, Want, Feeling
B. Understanding, Acceptance
Contact
Vice Versa

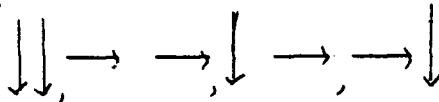
SASB

A. Disclosing & Expressing 213-316
Trusting & Relying 243-246
B. Affirming & Understanding 113-116
Nurturing & Comforting 112-142
Vice Versa

RAUSH

A. 4: Appeal-31, 33, 35, 37, 40
B. 3: Interpersonal Reconciliation-19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28

RCC



CVQ

Focused

EXP

A. 4 - 6
B. 4 - 6

TABLE 4.6 (cont.)

IPR
Comments

- A. & B. - I saw that my partner was willing to let their guard down, and I too felt less defensive, a rapport was beginning to happen between us.
- I began to understand what my partner was reacting to and I felt I could understand more of their motivation behind specific things.
 - Suddenly I was aware of the reasons behind what he/she was doing and that made it more tolerable.

TABLE 4.7

Second Rational Model

Process Indicators of Stages

Resolution

Micro-steps - A. or B. Solution Proposal, Personal Problem
Solving, Reconciling, Agreeing, Accepting

SASB

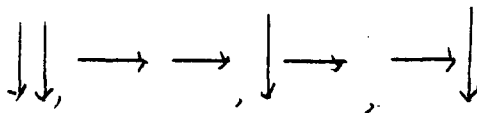
- A. or B. 214 clearly express
- 241 follow, maintain contact
- 242 accept caretaking
- 243 ask, trust, count on
- 244 accept reason
- 245 take in, learn from

- 113 confirm OK as is
- 142 provide for, nurture
- 143 protect, back up
- 148 specify what's best

RAUSH

A. or B. 2: Resolution of conflict-13,15,23,26,27,29

RCC



CVQ

Focused

EXP

- A. 4 - 6
- B. 4 - 6

TABLE 4.7 (cont.)

IPR
Comments

A. or B. - The air was clear.

- I had a good feeling about our relationship and our potential.
- We were more aware of each others needs.

Second Empirical Analysis

Procedure

Process Measures

A review of the coding systems and the process indicators outlined in the second rational analysis resulted in the selection of the SASB scale and the Experiencing Scale for the coding in this study. The SASB scale was the one that most closely resembled the twenty categories developed in the first empirical analysis to capture the underlying process of the partners' interactional statements. It was felt that the Experiencing Scale could help distinguish between the De-escalation and Mutual Openness stages. Data gathered through the use of the other scales would only be redundant at this stage.

In the coding the basic unit of analysis was a client statement. With the SASB system two trained coders worked independantly for the initial rating of the statements. The statements that the coders did not reach agreement upon were rated by a third trained coder. Inter-rater reliability between the first two coders was calculated using Cohen's Kappa. An inter-rater reliability of .68 was obtained on the independant ratings. Discussion of the ratings resulted in an inter-rater reliability of .91.

Once all the statements were coded this data was used to form

the performance diagrams (see Figures 4.7 to 4.11).

The person's interactional position represented by each statement in the task performance is presented on the graph. Statements made by the female partner are represented by triangles, those made by the male partner are represented by squares. The symbol \sim between the figures indicate a break in the dialogue, due either to the escalation sequence being taken from an earlier section of the session or the partners having been involving in a tangent or subtask. Each node on the graph represents a different SASB behavior. As the partners adopted new SASB behaviors new nodes were generated towards the right of the page. As the partners returned to a previously expressed SASB behavior a node was drawn below the node of the same category and a vertical line added to connect them. Thus the diagram is linearly ordered by time of generation of behaviors, with time running to the right and down. Each triangle or square has a number that appears to the left side of it. This number is the statement number and its main purpose is to help locate the statement on the transcript. When there are two numbers to the left of the triangle or square, one over the other, ie, 28/32 this indicates that statements 28 to 32 were made by the same partner without interruption from the other partner and the statements fall into the same SASB cluster. This collapses the graph and makes it a bit more manageable. The 'Self' and 'Other' grids of the SASB were used to code each of the statements. Each grid has a horizontal axis which

runs from disaffiliation to affiliation and a vertical axis running from maximal dependance to maximal independence. Thus behaviors coded on the right side of the grid are friendly while those coded on the left side are unfriendly. Behaviors coded on the top half of the grid encourage or take autonomy and those coded on the bottom half are controlling or submissive. The axes divide each grid into four quadrants which are numbered 1 to 4. The quadrants on the 'Other' grid are; (I) Encourage Friendly Autonomy, (II) Invoke Hostile Autonomy, (III) Hostile Power, (IV) Friendly Influence. On the 'Self' grid the quadrants are; (I) Enjoy Friendly Autonomy, (II) Take Hostile Autonomy, (III) Hostile Comply, (IV) Friendly Accept. The quadrants are divided into eight 'tracks', and these 'tracks' have been organized into clusters that have descriptive labels such as, 'Affirming and Understanding', or 'Belittling or Blaming'. The letters and numbers at the bottom of the graph below the triangles and squares represent the SASB cluster code given to each statement. The letter 'S' has been used when the statement has been coded on the 'Self' grid. The letter 'O' indicates the statement has been coded on the 'Other' grid. The number indicates which of the eight clusters the statement falls in (See Figure 4.4).

The number directly under the triangles and squares in the De-escalation and Mutual Openness stages indicates the level of experiencing that the statement was rated on the Experiencing Scale.

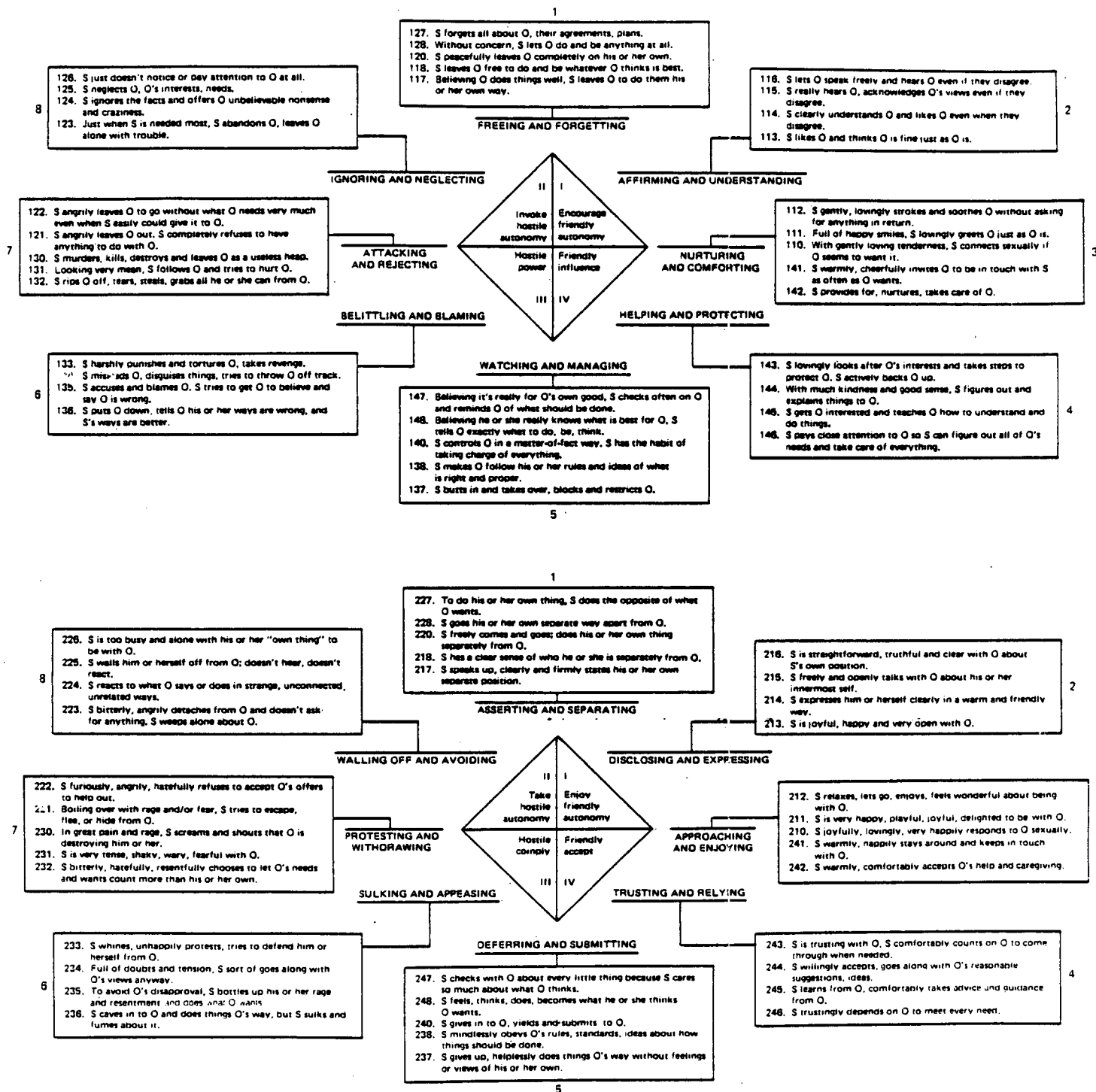


FIGURE 4.4 STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

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Outcome Measures

The couples completed the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and the Target Complaints Scale in an initial interview and at termination of therapy. The Conflict Resolution Box Scale was completed by the couple and the therapist at the end of each session. See Table 4.8 for these scores.

Differentiated Descriptions Of Performance Diagrams

A comparison of the performance diagrams of the task events revealed four discriminable stages; Escalation, De-escalation, Testing, and Mutual Openness that occur in the successful and partially successful resolution performances. Each diagram is presented along with a description of the content and process of each event.

Resolution Event 1

This event is taken from the fifth of eight therapy sessions with this couple. The couple are attempting to restore their relationship after a brief extra-marital affair on the wife's part. D., the male partner complains that he can not be sure of his wife's love for him and her commitment to the relationship. His wife, M. feels frustrated because she sees herself as offering D. all the reassurance she can and feels D. won't accept what she offers. See Figure 4.5.

TABLE 4.8

Second Empirical Analysis

Scores on Outcome Measures

	DAS Change Score		Conflict Resolution Box Score			Target Complaints Score	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Therapist	Male	Female
Resolution Event 1	49	36	5	5	5	5	5
Resolution Event 2	15	9	6	4	6	5	5
Resolution Event 3	16	10	4	5	4	3	4
Resolution Event 4	18	5	5	6	5	5	5
Non-Resolution Event	0	0	5	1	4	3	3

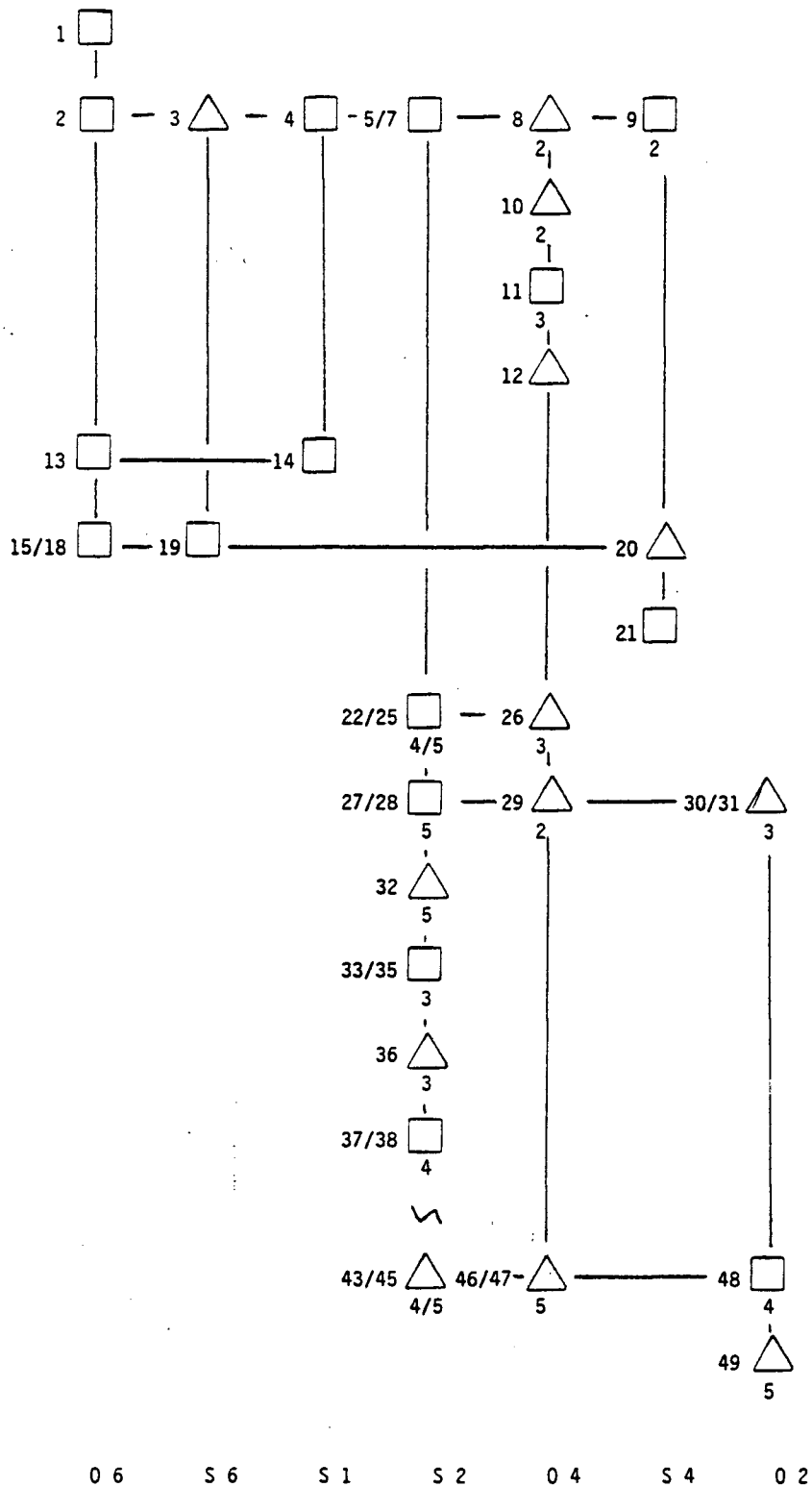
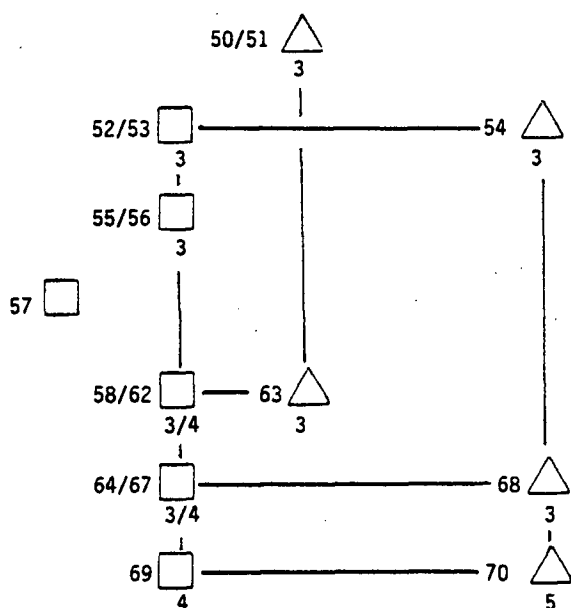


FIGURE 4.5 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - RESOLUTION EVENT 1
(continued on next page)



0 6 S 6 S 1 S 2 0 4 S 4 0 2

SASB CODES

- 0 2 - Affirming and Understanding
- 0 4 - Helping and Protecting
- 0 6 - Belittling and Blaming
- S 1 - Asserting and Separating
- S 2 - Disclosing and Expressing
- S 4 - Trusting and Relying
- S 6 - Sulking and Appeasing

FIGURE 4.5 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - RESOLUTION EVENT 1

Escalation - statements 1-4

The escalation pattern of this couple is slightly different than the other couples in that their interactions lean more toward an 'attack-attack' pattern than 'attack-withdraw'. The withdrawer is as likely to blame and counter-complain as she is to defend or appease. This couple is also different from the others in that the pursuer is the male partner rather than the female partner.

The escalation graphed here begins just after D. says he does see what M. does for him and he finds it acceptable. M. blames D. by complaining that D. was just saying he didn't feel they had a romantic love. D. follows with a counter-complaint and reminds M. of the times she says she doesn't feel anything for him. M. defends herself by saying that was some time ago.

De-escalation - statements 5-11

The therapist intervenes by focusing on D. and suggesting that it is hard for him to trust again. D. openly discloses his experience and the therapist suggests that while M. needs to come back into the relationship and let D. know she wants him D. also needs to accept M. back into the relationship. D. talks about his difficulty with this. M.'s response to D. is coded as 'sensibly analyzes situations involving other person' (144). M. notes that many of their problems are probably due to misinterpretations of the others intentions. M. then gives an example of when she phones D. to

visit with him and get some information. M. feels she is attempting to be with D. and he thinks she just wants something from him. D. agrees with her and M. suggests that perhaps D. is just too wary of her. D. now constructively analyzes the example M. gave and talks of the change in their communication styles since they've been married. D.'s tone suggests that he is frustrated but he is not overtly blaming M.

In this stage D.'s statements are rated at level 3 on the Experiencing Scale, which indicates a reactive emotionally involved focus on external events. M.'s statements are rated at level 2, indicating personal involvement with intellectual or behavioral self descriptions.

Testing - statements 13-20

M. tries to explain why she responds to D. the way she does on the phone, her tone is friendly so the statement is coded 'sensibly analyse' (144) rather than 'protests, tries to account for self' (233). D. launches into a blame, an assert and then a string of blames. He tells M. that she not only cuts him off on the phone but at other times as well, and that she can not treat him as a client. D. sees M.'s way of dealing with him as communicating a basic contempt for him. D. also says that he feels M. thinks he's not worthy of consideration.

Mutual Openness - statements 21-70

M. very softly asks if she hasn't changed in the past few months and D. agrees she has. M.'s soft question seems to defuse D.'s hostility. The therapist then helps D. to focus on his own experience, pointing out that he may have had doubts about how he handled M.'s affair and that this reinforces his anxiety. D. agrees and elaborates on his experience. He is no longer blaming but speaking openly about his own feelings and reactions. He talks about how he interpretes M.'s responses to him as confirmations of his feeling that she doesn't love him. M. softly says, 'I never say that', it's no longer a defend but a reassurance. D. accepts M.'s statement and again reflects on his experience. M. validates D.'s experience as logical and talks about the pattern of relating they've built up. M. then affirms D. by saying that she didn't know how he felt but she can now understand it. D. and M. continue to talk openly about their experiences with each other, alternately 'disclosing/trusting and relying', and 'affirming/helping and protecting'. At times there is a tone of frustration particularly in D.'s voice. However there is also an earnest attempt to communicate one's experience and understand the experience of the other as they talk about how they've related in the last few months.

Both D. and M. move to a deeper level of experiencing in this stage. There are no level 4 or 5 statements in De-escalation while the level of experiencing in Mutual Openness ranges from 2 to 5.

Level five statements indicate that the couple are talking about their problems in personal terms. Their feelings and personal experiences are being included and explored rather than described.

Resolution Event 2

This couple initially presented their conflict in terms of communication and intimacy problems. In the first therapy session the couple quickly identified their negative interaction cycle and redefined their conflict as part of a pursue-distance cycle. K. the female partner desired closeness with T., her spouse but was afraid her needs would not be met. In her attempt to avoid the risk of being vulnerable K. would approach T. with hostile demands. T. would respond to what he perceived as K.'s anger. by withdrawing or defending himself. This resolution event occurs in the sixth of eight therapy sessions. See Figure 4.6.

Escalation - statements 1-3

The escalatory pattern of this couple is a bit different than that seen in the other couples. The pursuer, K. still blames and accuses the withdrawer, T. However by the sixth session the withdrawers responses in escalation are more in the realm of deferring and submitting instead of defending, appeasing or counter-complaining. T.'s responses to K. are also neutral rather than negative in tone. In the escalation sequence charted here K. is

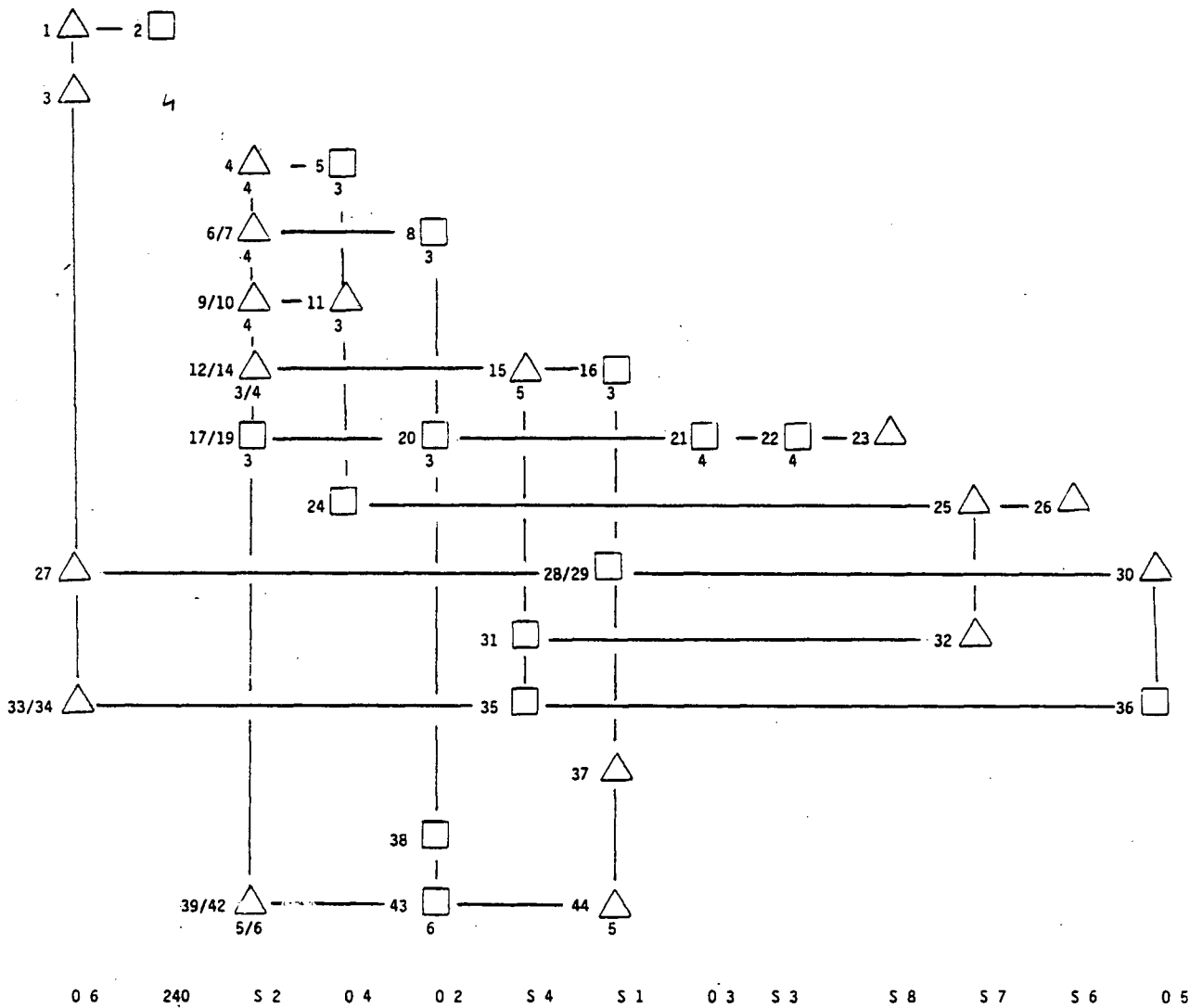
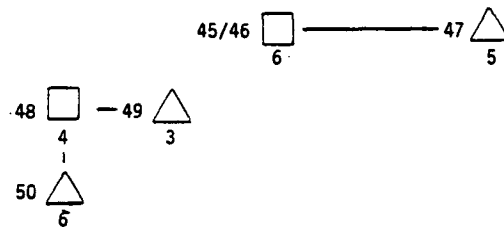


FIGURE 4.6 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - RESOLUTION EVENT 2
(continued on next page)



0 6 240 S 2 0 4 0 2 S 4 S 1 0 3 S 3 S 8 S 7 S 6 0 5

SASB CODES

- 0 6 - Belittling and Blaming
- 240 - Yields Submits Gives In To Person
- S 2 - Disclosing and Expressing
- 0 4 - Helping and Protecting
- 0 2 - Affirming and Understanding
- S 4 - Trusting and Relying
- S 1 - Asserting and Separating
- 0 3 - Nurturing and Comforting
- S 3 - Approaching and Enjoying
- S 8 - Walling Off and Avoiding
- S 7 - Protesting and Withdrawing
- S 6 - Sulking and Appeasing
- 0 5 - Watching and Managing

FIGURE 4.6 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - RESOLUTION EVENT 2

talking about how she got angry at T. on the weekend. She accuses T. of defending himself on the weekend even though she felt she hadn't been being critical of him. T.'s response is simply to say, 'Yeah', and it is coded as a neutral on the affiliative dimension ie., 'yeild, submit give in to person' (240). This is consistent with K.'s complaints about T., that he gives in to her but it doesn't mean anything. T.'s response appears only to aggravate K. further and she goes on to accuse T. of being irrelevant on the weekend.

De-escalation - statements 4-21

In this sequence and the testing sequence there is a merging of the content and the process in that T. and K. are talking about their pattern of relating and enacting the process at the same time. K. and the therapist are talking about K.'s fear that if she is vulnerable, T. won't accept her need and will withdraw from her. K. acknowledges and owns her part in their negative interaction cycle by admitting that when she feels T. has withdrawn from her, her hurt goes into anger and she won't talk to T. for a few days. K. then becomes emotional and cries as she talks about how she feels invalidated as a person when she doesn't get what she needs. K. has openly disclosed to T. and T. responds with the complementary behavior, 'affirming and understanding'. With a soft voice T. attempts to understand and empathize with K. K. in turn elaborates upon her experience. She speaks about it being easier to get angry

with T. and say she doesn't need him, rather than risk being vulnerable with him. At the therapists prompting K. asks T. for his response to her now and moves to a level 5 on the Experiencing Scale as she does this. T. starts by saying, 'My turn' this is coded as a, friendly 'assert' (217), but is really more of an indication that he is wanting to participate. T. talks about how comfortable he feels with K. now, and then affirms K. by saying that she was vulnerable a few moments ago and that was okay with him. T. says he wants to be with K., he feels close to her and willing to share.

The couple does reach levels 4 and 5 on the Experiencing Scale in De-escalation, however there is only one level 5 statement rather than an interactional sequence in which both partners reach level 5 or above.

Testing - statements 22-38

T. again says that he would like to be there for K., who at this point makes a non-verbal gesture. The therapist asks what her gesture means and K. says, 'My skepticism'. In focusing on her skepticism K. walls off T.'s open response to her. This statement is coded as, 'walling off and avoiding' and is negative in tone. T. however stays positive and friendly by agreeing with K. and saying, 'Yeah I saw wariness'. K.'s response is again negative. She says, 'I've done that before and you withdrew, I don't want to give you a second chance'. The therapist confronts K. by asking her if she has

really shown T. her vulnerability in the last while. K. moves to 'sulking and appeasing' and then to 'belittling and blaming' . T. openly disagrees with K. twice, his statements are still friendly though. K. tries to refute T.'s statements and to get him to admit he's wrong. The therapist intervenes at this point and reminds K. that earlier they heard T. say that he would like K. to give him a chance to be there for her. T. agrees with the therapist. This can be seen both as a restatement of his request that K. give him a chance and of his desire to respond to K. K.'s response is negative once again, and it is coded as, 'refuses persons caregiving' (222). K. then moves back to blaming T. T. responds by saying, 'Put your weapon down'. This is presumably in reference to earlier discussion about K. defending herself against being hurt by others by keeping them away with a weapon of hostility. T. is challenging K. by reminding her that she's put a barrier between them and is protecting herself in a way she doesn't need to. The therapist then intervenes suggesting that when T. doesn't see K.'s weapon he will feel safe and respond to K. rather than defending himself. T. again challenges K. in a friendly way by pointing out that K. doesn't trust T.'s response to her because it doesn't meet her conditions. K. disagrees with T. by saying she wasn't asking him for anything. The statement is coded as an assertion, but it is friendly. T. responds to K. by softly saying, 'No, we were just being together'.

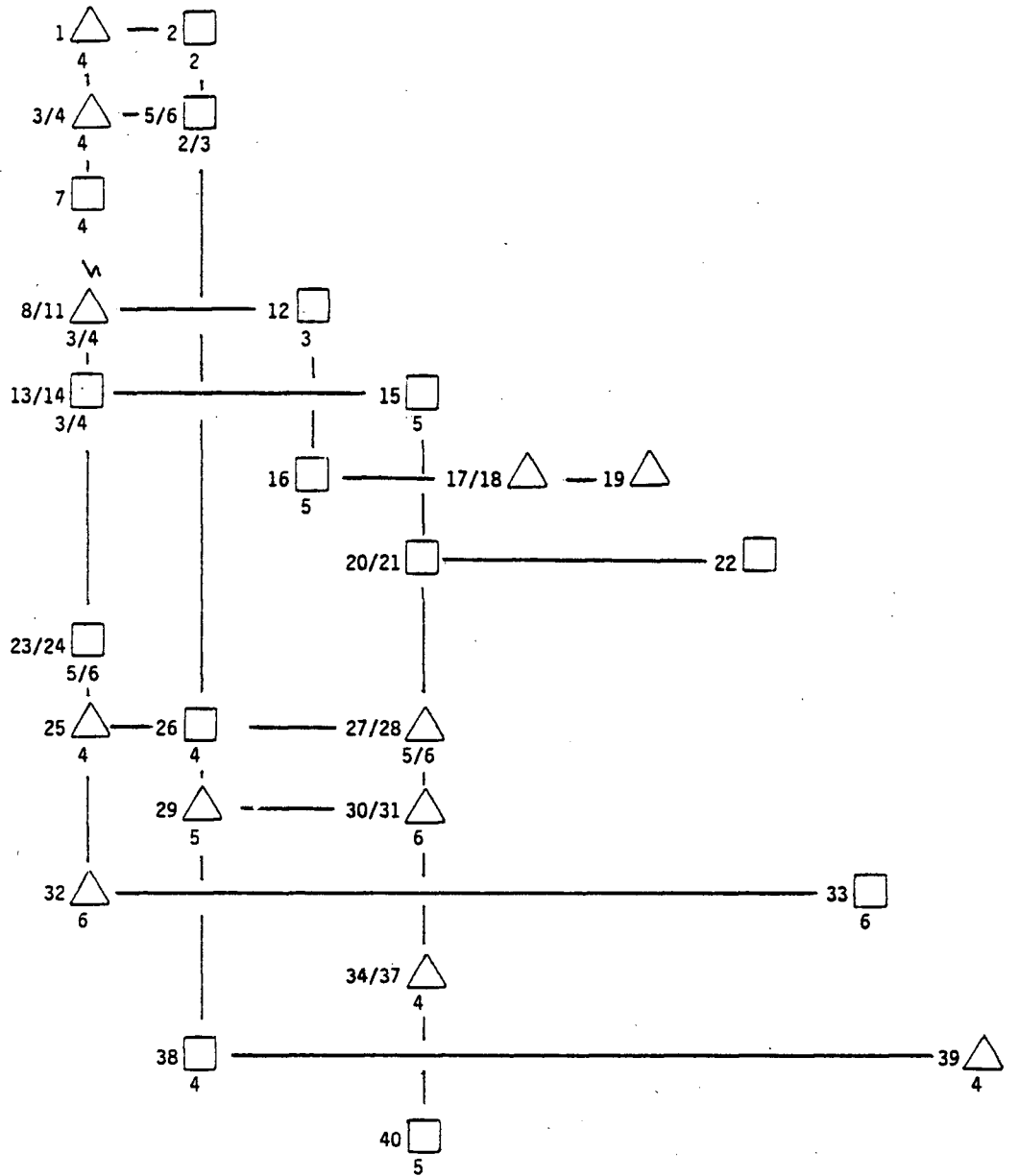
Mutual Openness - statements 39-50

The therapist now encourages K. to focus on her own experience by suggesting that it would be difficult for K. to allow T. to respond to her, she would have to put her weapon down. This initiates a series of open disclosures on K.'s part where she admits it would be difficult to put her weapon down. K. is tearful as she concludes she has needed the weapon in the past. K.'s statements are rated at levels 5 and 6 on the Experiencing Scale. T. then makes a long statement in which he is quite emotional and empathizes with K. This statement is rated at level 6, a level that indicates a synthesis of feelings to resolve problems. On the SASB T.'s statement is double-coded as, 'affirming and understanding' and 'watching and managing', on the friendly side, as T. says he would like K. to give her weapon up. K. appears to react to the controlling aspect of T.'s statement rather than the affirming aspect as she asserts her need for her weapon in the past. Her statement is however friendly and is at a level 5 of experiencing. T. agrees with K. and affirms her again saying that K. is perfect the way she is. The therapist then suggests T. and K. may want to comfort each other. K. says she doesn't need to be comforted. Once again this is coded as an assertion, but on the friendly side. T. openly discloses his feeling that while he may have been melodramatic he was still being genuine. K. says it was a good show and her response is coded as, 'helping and protecting'. Thus the 'disclose/trust rely - affirm/help protect'

sequence is mutual. The withdrawers disclosure and the pursuers response is briefer here than in the mutual openness sequences of the other couples, but is still significant. The session concludes with K. commenting on the fact that she and T. have a lot of potential. K.'s statement is coded at level 6 on the Experiencing Scale. This couple moves through two sequences in which K. 'discloses' and T. 'affirms' in De-escalation, however these statements occur at levels 3 and 4. When the disclose/affirm sequences occur in Mutual Openness they are at levels 5 and 6.

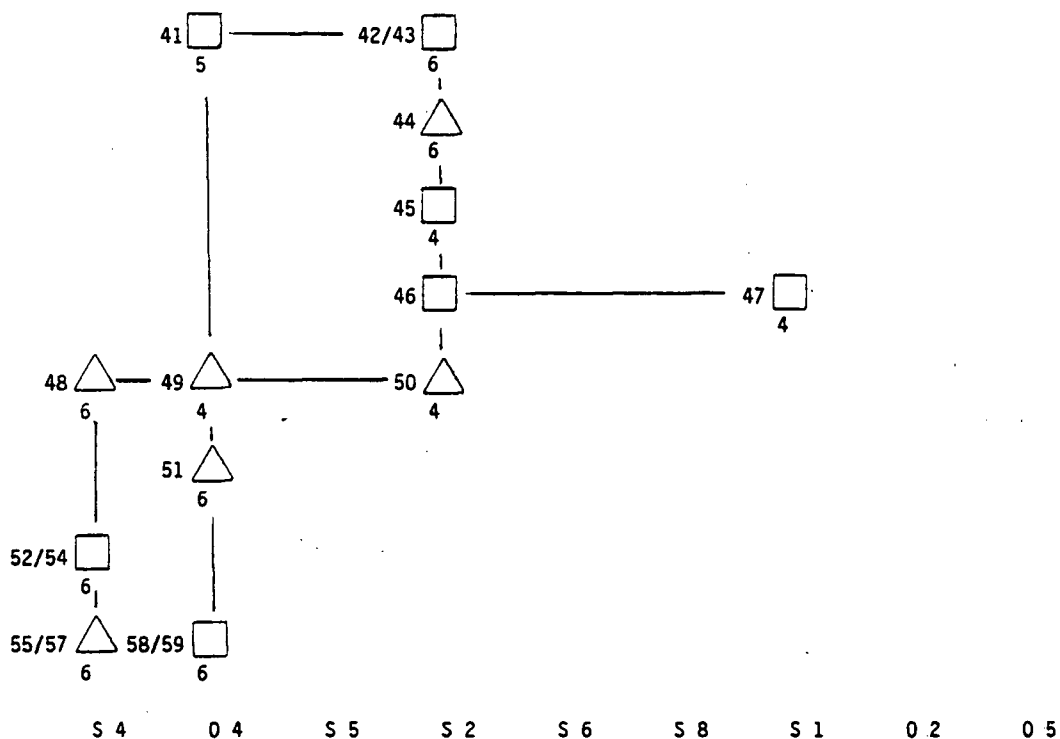
Resolution Event 3

This couple like the couple in resolution event 2 reported that their conflict involved problems with communication and spending meaningful time together. Unlike the previous couple though they appear to have difficulty talking about deep feelings and patterns in their relationship. The resolution event is taken from the last of eight sessions. The couple also completed an Interpersonal Process Recall procedure to elicit their perceptions of what was occurring at points in the interaction. This session itself was highly structured. The interactions in the first seven sessions have not moved much beyond escalation, now the therapist has been instructed how to structure the session so she can lead the couple beyond this point. As a result there is no escalation in this session, although there is plenty of it in the first seven sessions. M., the female



S 4 0 4 S 5 S 2 S 6 S 8 S 1 0 2 0 5

FIGURE 4.7 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - RESOLUTION EVENT 3
(continued on next page)



SASB CODES

- S 4 - Trusting and Relying
- 0 4 - Helping and Protecting
- S 5 - Deferring and Submitting
- S 2 - Disclosing and Expressing
- S 6 - Sulking and Appeasing
- S 8 - Walling Off and Avoiding
- S 1 - Asserting and Separating
- 0 2 - Affirming and Understanding
- 0 5 - Watching and Managing

FIGURE 4.7 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - RESOLUTION EVENT 3

partner, has been identified as the pursuer and G., the male partner is the withdrawer. See Figure 4.7.

De-escalation - statements 1-16

The therapist asks M. to tell G. that she needs G. to listen to her and let her know that she is important to him. M. cries as she does this. G.'s first response is to note that M. has very red eyes. He then says that he doesn't understand why what M. needs is important, but she is very important to him and he's willing to do what M. wants. In the Interpersonal Process Recall G. says that M.'s crying, stammering and hesitation were unusual and had quite an impact on him. He could see that M. was vulnerable and he says it created a softening within him. 'My normally cold heart warmed up a little bit.' G. said that the softening helped him to realize how important M. was to him and that it was time something was done about it. In the IPR, M. says she had never heard G. say she was important to him and this had an impact on her. M. felt G. was more willing to work with her as part of a team.

The couple's statements range from level 2 to 5 on the Experiencing Scale. Once again though an interactional sequence does not occur at level 5. The two level 5 statements occur at the end of De-escalation as G. talks about not knowing how to give M. what she needs, but being willing to try.

Testing - statements 17-20

When the therapist asks M. how she feels when she hears G. desire to respond to her, M. says she's 'all ready to fall back into the old routine', then she says she knows what she's thinking but she's not supposed to say it. These are coded as, 'walling off and avoiding', and it appears as if M. is having difficulty trusting or accepting G.'s response.

Mutual Openness - statements 21-50

The therapist switches the focus and asks G. how M. can help him learn to get close to her. G. talks about his doubt that he can give M. what she needs. G. and the therapist go on to explore what happens when G. feels pushed away from M. Eventually G. is able to tell M. about what he needs from her. M. accepts this and states that she does care about G. and his needs. In the IPR, G. states that at this point he was feeling safe, and that M. wasn't 'pouncing' on him. M. felt that they were working at building more trust in each other and at being closer together. In the IPR, M. says she felt accepted at this point. M. felt that G. wasn't judging how much she cared for him by her performance as a wife, but they were simply listening to one another talk. In the session M. talks about feeling less tense when G. is open to her, but she is worried about falling back into their old pattern. G. affirms and supports M. when he says it's a good time for both of them to not fall back into the old

pattern. G. and M. talk a bit more about the difference in relating that they are experiencing now. At the end G. says he has one last request and it is to be treated like an equal by M. M. agrees to do this saying she may need help knowing when she is not doing this. G. agrees to help M. This couple like the others moves to a deeper level of experiencing in Mutual Openness. Their statements range levels 4 to 6 with most of them being at levels 5 and 6.

Resolution Event 4

The DAS scores of this couple indicate that they were much less distressed and functioning at a much higher level than the other couples in this study. This resolution event occurs in the seventh of eight sessions with this couple. In this session M., the female partner takes on the pursuing role and R., the male partner is more withdrawn. The session begins with a discussion of an incident on the weekend in which M. was hurt by R.'s criticism of what she was wearing. Personal autonomy and acceptance of individual goals are issues for this couple. The weekend incident reflects a pattern for this couple in which R.'s need for control results in M. feeling that R. is always the final arbiter of her decisions. See Figure 4.8.

Escalation - statements 1-4

In this escalation sequence M. and R. are arguing over whether

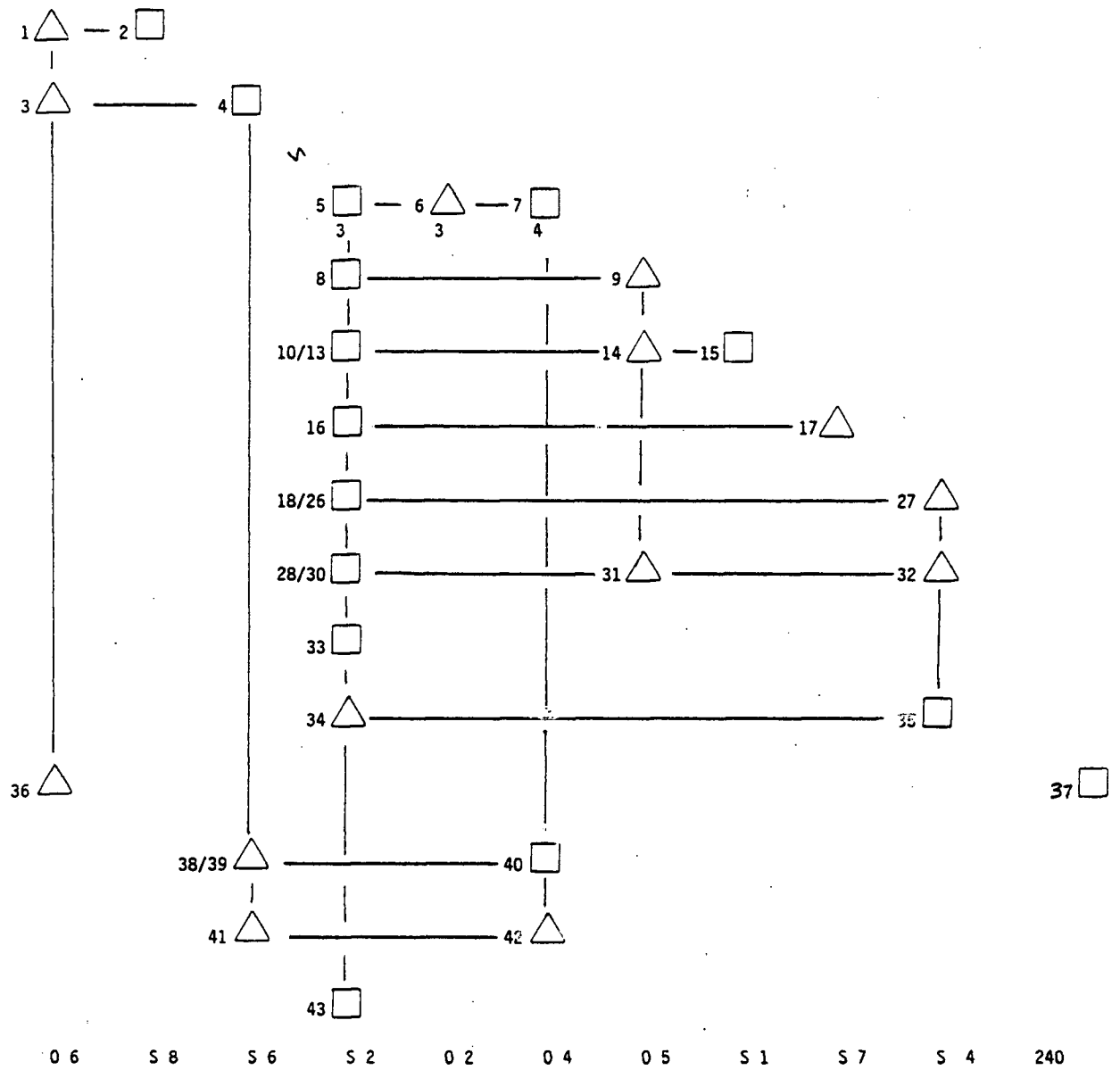
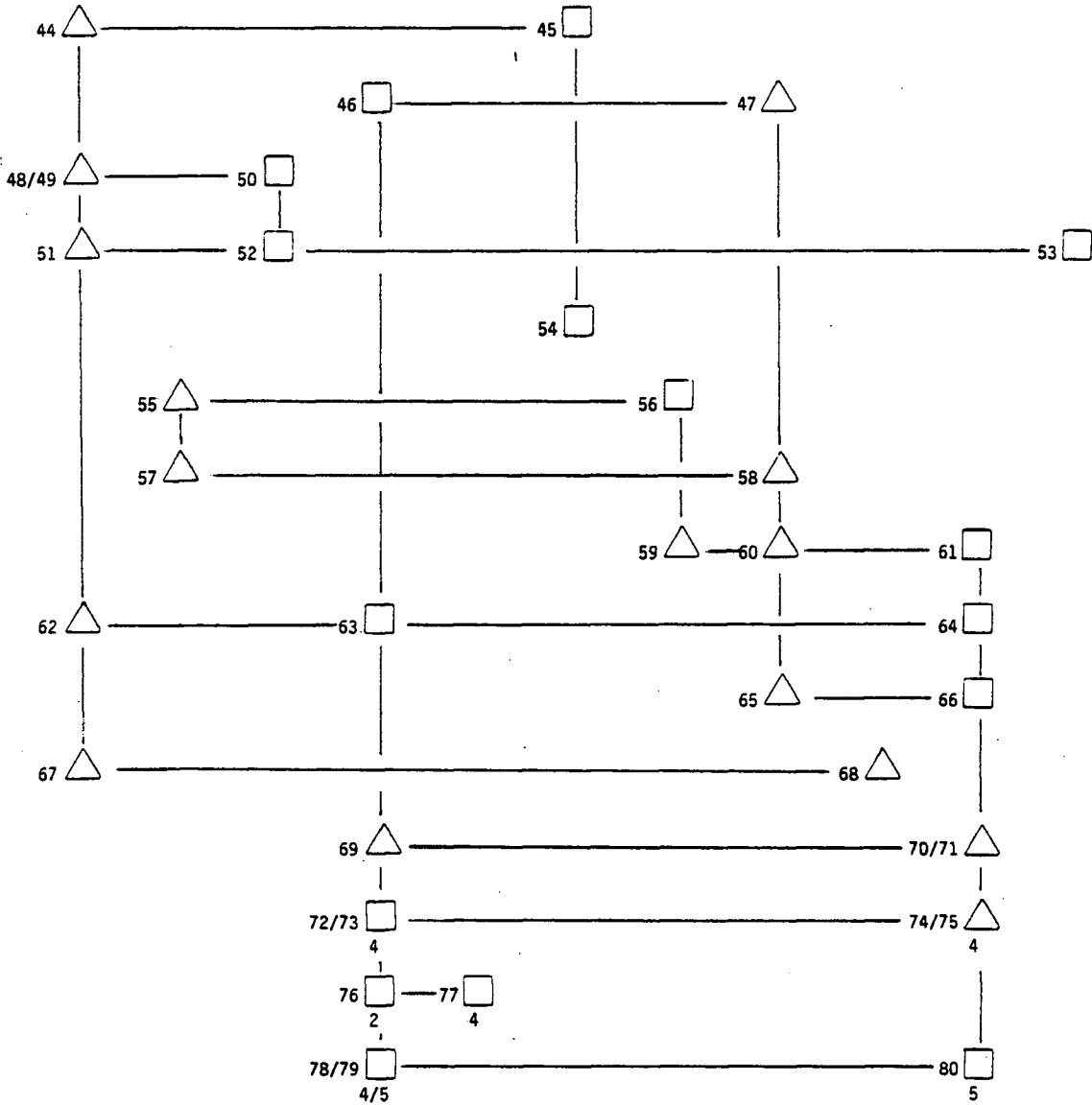
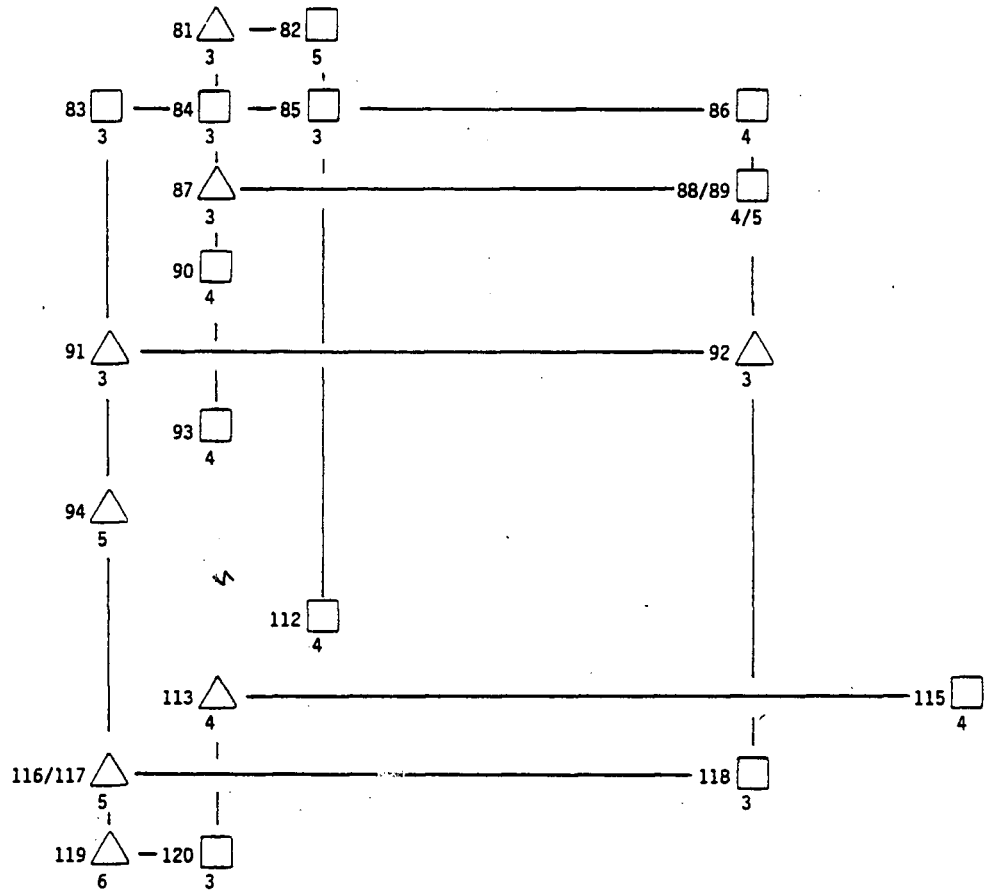


FIGURE 4.8 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - RESOLUTION EVENT 4
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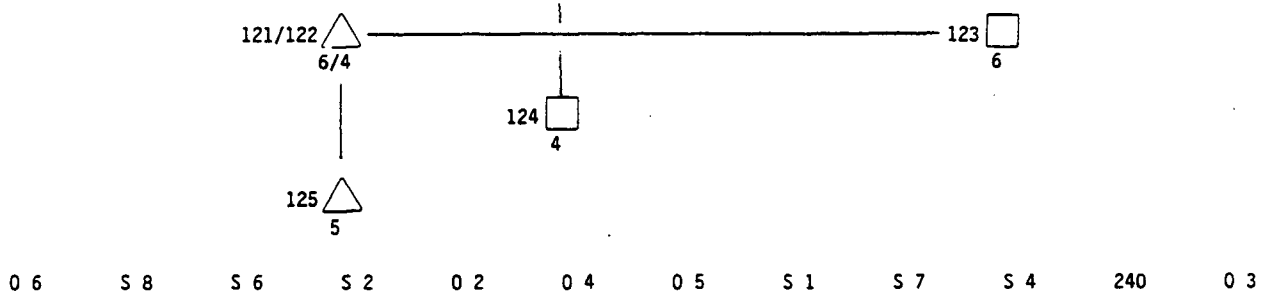
0 6 S 8 S 6 S 2 0 2 0 4 0 5 S 1 S 7 S 4 240 0 3

FIGURE 4.8 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - RESOLUTION EVENT 4
(continued on next page)



0 6 S 8 S 6 S 2 0.2 0 4 0 5 S 1 S 7 S 4 240 0 3

FIGURE 4.8 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - RESOLUTION EVENT 4
(continued on next page)



SASB CODES

- 0 6 - Belittling and Blaming
- S 8 - Walling Off and Avoiding
- S 6 - Sulking and Appeasing
- S 2 - Disclosing and Expressing
- 0 2 - Affirming and Understanding
- 0 4 - Helping and Protecting
- 0 5 - Watching and Managing
- S 1 - Asserting and Separating
- S 7 - Protesting and Withdrawing
- S 4 - Trusting and Relying
- 240 - Yields Submits Gives In To Person
- 0 3 - Nurturing and Comforting

FIGURE 4.8 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - RESOLUTION EVENT 4

or not R. respects M.'s opinion. The therapist points out that they are enacting their conflict pattern in which M. reacts to R.'s comments with anger and then R. tries to explain his way out of the situation. M. then blames R. again by saying, 'He backs off now and does a lot of explaining, but in the actual situation he doesn't'. R.'s response, 'I don't back off hun?', is coded as, 'even though suspicious and distrustful of person goes along with person's ideas' (234), and falls into the hostile comply quadrant.

De-escalation - statements 5-7

The therapist has asked R. to relate his experience of the incident they are discussing. R. begins to openly disclose and then hesitates. The therapist comments that it may seem dangerous and R. agrees it is. At this point M. tells R. that he can say what he feels, indicating that she is receptive to what he has to say. R. goes on to talk about his perception of M. on the weekend. The couple's statements are rated at levels 3 and 4 on the Experiencing Scale.

Interesting Phenomenon - statement 8-35

This sequence falls into a unique category that is not seen in any of the other resolution events. It can not be included as part of the de-escalation sequence as the statements are not entirely affiliative. The therapist again asks R. to describe what was

happening for him during the incident on the weekend. At first R. continues to describe his perceptions of M. but then he moves to what he was experiencing as he saw her. As he talks he focuses on how the incident conjured up the experience of being rejected as a child and his subsequent attempts to compensate for feelings of inadequacy. R. moves from explaining his position to an exploration of his feelings and experiences. At first M.'s comments are short protests or disagreements with R.'s description of the weekend incident. However at the end M. acknowledges that she wasn't aware of what R. was feeling. M. seems more open to R. at this time, she is accepting his experience rather than trying to prove him wrong. This sequence is not testing because in the beginning M. is merely refuting R.'s position rather than actually being wary about his intentions. In the IPR, R. notes that as he began to talk about the criticism and rejection he experienced as a child, he felt M. was listening and was more accepting than before. M. says she was listening because R. was talking about something she hadn't heard before. M. notes that she could now understand where R. was coming from.

'Before I had this feeling that there was an extraordinary amount of hostility directed towards me out of proportion with what I perceived. Also R. was allowing himself to express feelings and to be vulnerable which was a change because its not often we will relate that way, so it had the effect of making me really listen and really try to understand'

Testing - statements 36-67

M. flips back to blaming suddenly when she says with a sharp voice that she's never noticed before that R. put a great deal of emphasis on her opinion. The therapist asks M. how she feels now about R. and his desire for feedback from her. M. says she feels guardedly good. The fact that she qualifies her good feeling suggests that she is wary of R.'s intentions and that a testing sequence is begining. The therapist notes that M. doesn't quite trust what R. says and they go on to discuss why M. is feeling guarded. In this sequence M. alternates between blaming, appeasing, avoiding and asserting statements. The asserting statements unlike the others are on the friendly side, but M. is still telling R. that his need to let her know how he feels about how she looks is not acceptable to her. M. maintains her position that she does not want to hear about R.'s opinion if it is critical. R. for the most part maintains a positive response to M.'s criticisms. In his positive responses R. alternates between, 'helping and protecting', 'watching and managing', 'disclosing and expressing', and 'trusting and relying'. He appears to be listening to M. and trying to negotiate a means by which he can accomodate both his own needs and those of M. R. defends himself twice when M. is accusing him and once when M. is asserting her position R. tries to insist that M. does things his way. These statements are coded on the non-affiliative side of the

SASB The fact that this couple is less distressed than the other couples may explain why R.'s negative responses are tolerated and the sequence doesn't lead back to escalation. Near the end of the sequence R. admits that he hasn't really understood M.'s position before. He says that now he understands he hopes he will be able to respond differently to her, and that she will be able to accept his opinions. Once again he appears to be attempting to negotiate a different way of relating. M. has difficulty accepting this and challenges R. on whether he really will respond differently to her and accept her opinions.

M. Takes A Self-Focus - statements 68-71

M. takes a self-focus on her own and admits that she really isn't trusting R. because she has been hurt before and now it's just hard for her to say okay to him. This is unique in that all the other pursuers only come to this point through the prompting of the therapist. This also may be due to the fact that this couple is at higher functioning level than the other couples. At this point M. says that what she needs from R. is an unconditional acceptance. She requests that rather than demands it and there is no element of blame here.

Mutual Openness - statements 72-94, 112-120

R. responds to M. by acknowledging the importance of what M.

asked for and stating that he really wants to offer M. what she needs. The therapist encourages R. to let M. know what what he would like from her. R. asks for support and an understanding of those things he wants to achieve. M. states that she does understand R. and recognizes what he needs. R. agrees that M. is very supportive of him. The therapist and the couple go off on a tangent and then the therapist asks R. if he wants to say anything in closing. R. says softly that he doesn't want to be a threat to M. and M. responds by saying she's sure he doesn't mean to. The partners go on to talk about how they feel about each other now. At this point both R. and M. have stated their needs and acknowledged and accepted the needs of the other, thus the Mutual Openness stage is complete.

Both R. and M. reach levels 5 and 6 on the the Experiencing Scale in Mutual Openness, while they only reached level 4 in De-escalation. Once again there are interactional sequences at levels 5 and 6 in Mutual Openness and not in De-escalation. In each of the resolution events there are greater proportions of experiencing levels 5 and 6 in Mutual Openness than in De-escalation. See Figure 4.10 for a comparison of the differing proportions of higher and lower levels of experiencing across the resolution events in De-escalation and Mutual Openness.

At the beginning of the session the therapist reconstructs the weekend incident in great detail, focusing particularly on M.'s experience. M.'s comments are mostly blames and accusations with

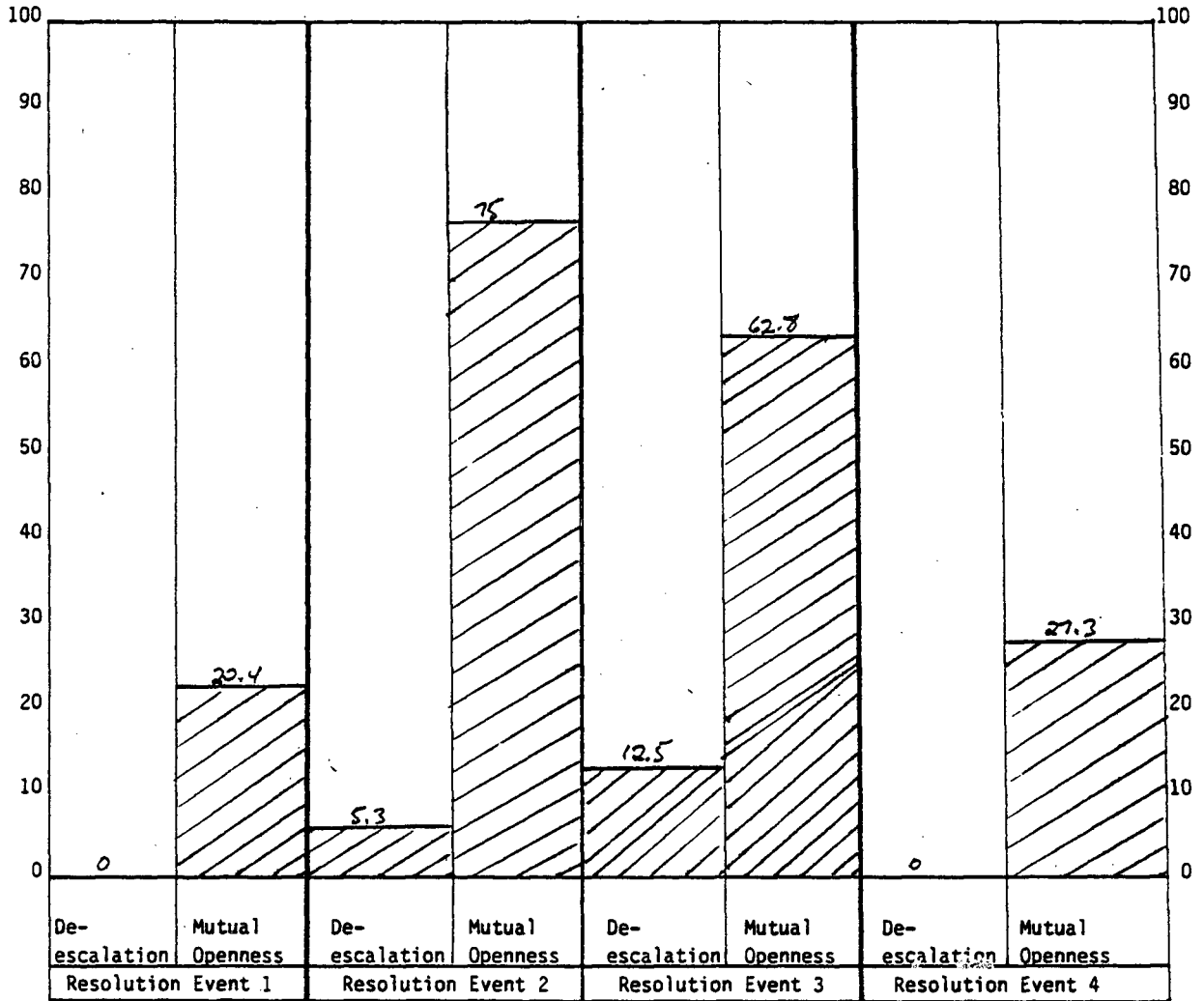


FIGURE 4.9 Histogram Comparing Proportions of Experiencing at Levels Five and Above in the De-escalation and Mutual Openness Stages

the occasional softening and expression of hurt rather than anger. In the IPR, R. notes that at this time he saw M.'s hurt whereas on the weekend he had seen only M.'s anger. R. also states that the therapists attention to the details of the weekend incident and her recognition that M.'s feelings were valid demonstrated to him that he was in a supportive environment. This allowed him to feel safe in the session and to express vulnerability. In the IPR, M. states that at the end of the session she felt much better. She felt that she had been heard, that there was a change in their awareness and that a similar incident would not be as likely to occur in the future. M. also did not have the same feeling of apprehension associated with the incident that she had at the beginning of the session. Both note that they experienced an easy open rapport as they left the session, 'the air was clear'.

Non-Resolution Event 1

This diagram represents a non-resolution event. The couple initially defined their conflict as a difference in approaches to dealing with their disabled daughter, and much of the discussion in this session focuses on this issue. The event is taken from the fourth of eight sessions. In this couple D., the female partner has been identified as the pursuer, while J. is the withdrawer. Their escalation style leans toward an 'attack-attack' rather than an

'attack-withdraw' pattern, with J. blaming his partner as well as defending himself. While some of the couple's responses to each other are positive they never get to De-escalation. Most noticeable in this graph is the absence of any 'affirming and understanding' statements. While D. openly discloses to J., J. either withdraws, avoids, blames, appeases, or watches and manages. While the 'watching and managing' statements are on the affiliative side of the SASB they are also in the quadrants that indicate controlling behavior. The absence of any 'affirming and understanding' responses and the controlling aspects of J.'s responses may account for this couple never reaching De-escalation. See Figure 4.10.

At one point the therapist really pushes D. to tell J. what she needs from him. At first D. insists J. knows what she needs. Eventually D. says that what J. is doing now is fine, but then D. goes on to complain about what J. hasn't done in the past. While D. does sometimes disclose her feelings to J. she often focuses on the difficulty she has had accepting her child's disability. At one point J. stops defending himself and admits he often has difficulty supporting D. J. often doesn't know what D. needs so he leaves her alone even though he knows it is not always the right thing to do. This leads to a sequence in which both D. and J. openly disclose. However in D.'s disclosure she again focuses on her relationship with her daughter, her mother, and her friends rather than her relationship with J. J. talks about how he often doesn't know how D.

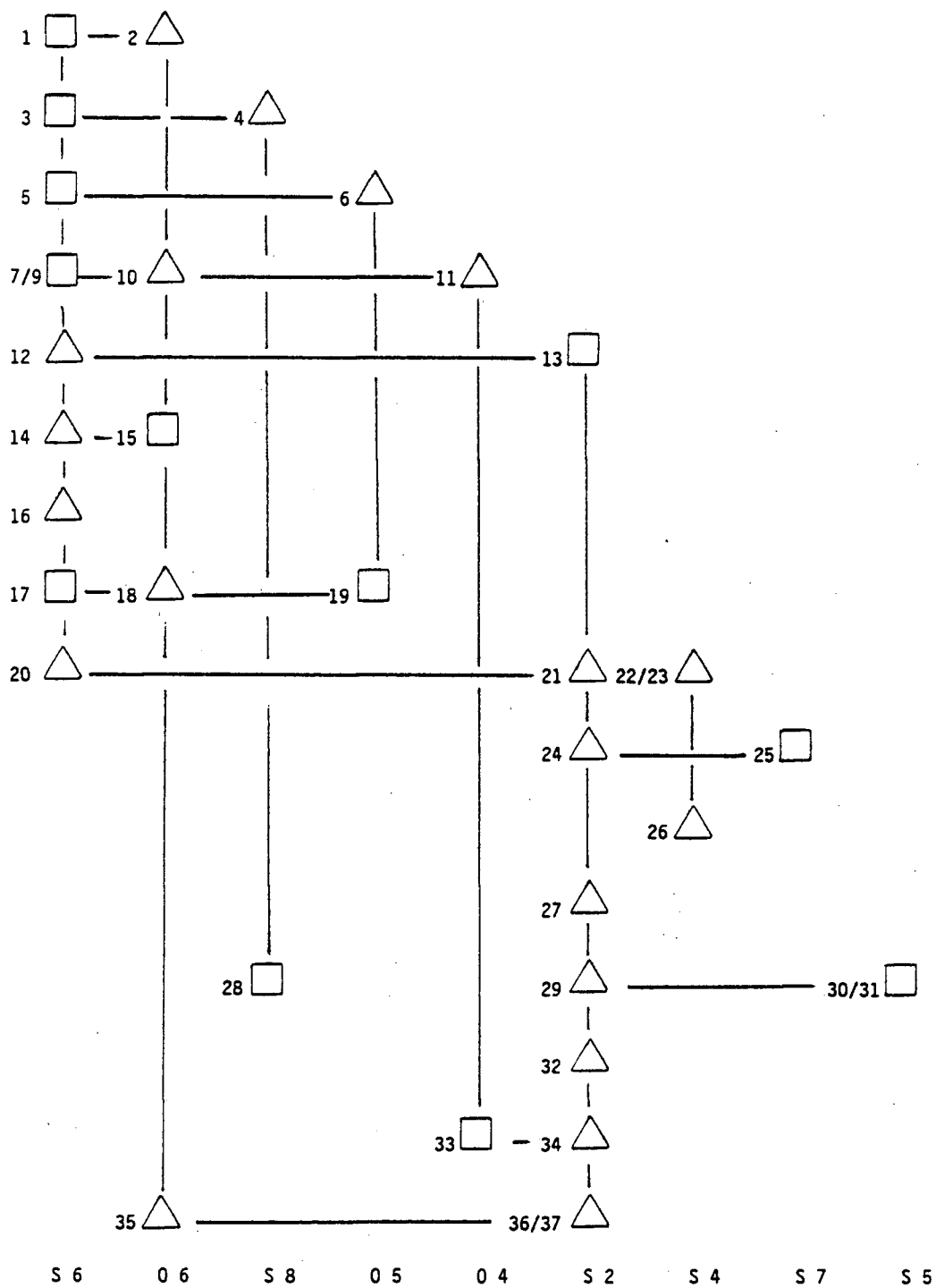


FIGURE 4.10 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - NON-RESOLUTION EVENT
(continued on next page)

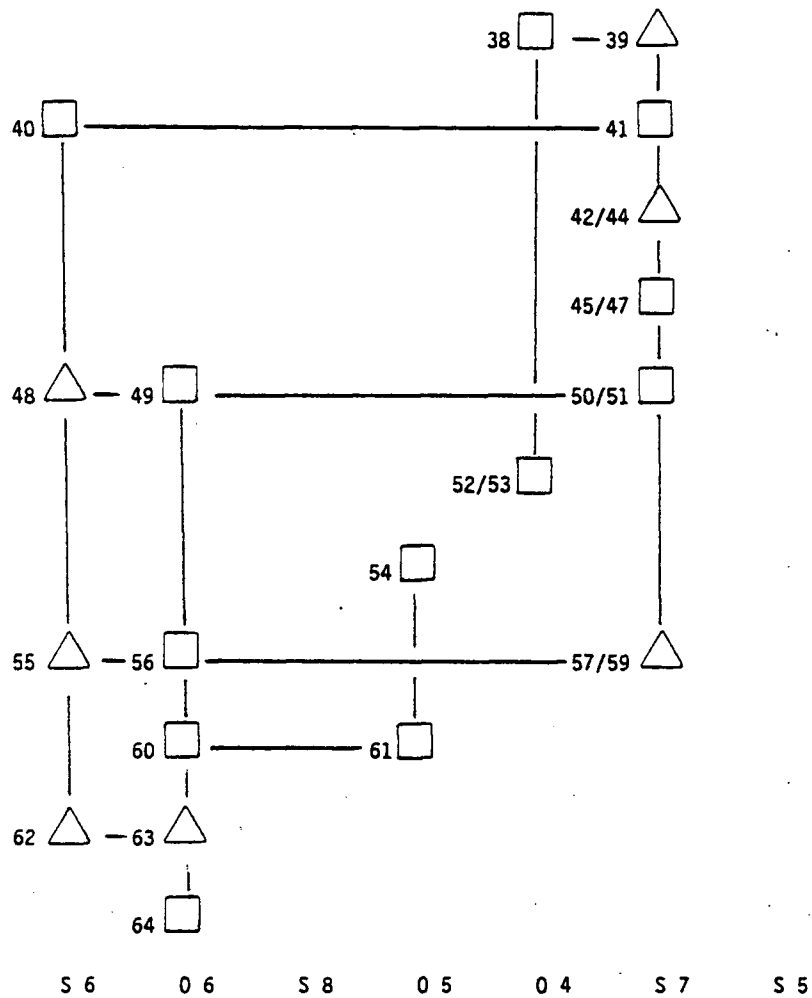
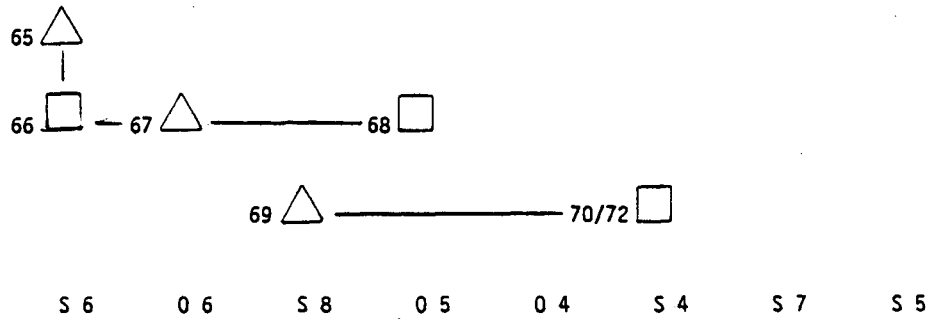


FIGURE 4.10 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - NON-RESOLUTION EVENT
(continued on next page)



SASB CODES

- S 6 - Sulking and Appeasing
- O 6 - Belittling and Blaming
- S 8 - Walling Off and Avoiding
- O 5 - Watching and Managing
- O 4 - Helping and Protecting
- S 2 - Disclosing and Expressing
- S 4 - Trusting and Relying
- S 7 - Protesting and Withdrawing

FIGURE 4.10 PERFORMANCE DIAGRAM - NON-RESOLUTION EVENT

is feeling or how upset she is. D. responds by defending herself and saying J. initially reacted when she talked about her feelings about her daughter so she doesn't talk about it anymore. J. blames D. and the two continue alternately disclosing, blaming and defending.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Interactional Model

A comparison of the rational analysis and the performance events has resulted in the construction of a four step interactional model of marital conflict resolution. The four steps and their process indicators are outlined in Figure 5.1.. The rational analyses, empirical models and information obtained through the Interpersonal Process Recalls all contributed to the following outline of the characteristics of the four stages.

Escalation

The patterns seen in the five behavior graphs suggest that escalation can be defined as a sequence involving both partners where three or more statements are coded on the non-affiliative side or neutral points of the SASB scale. In the performance events we saw three variations on the escalation pattern. The first variation, 'attack-defend' is the most common. Here one partner 'belittles and blames' the other, who either 'sulks and appeases' or 'defers and submits' in response. The attacking partner responds to the defend with another blame. In the 'attack-withdraw' pattern the blame is responded to with, 'ignoring and neglecting', 'walling off and avoiding', or 'protesting and withdrawing' behavior. In the third variation, 'attack-attack' one partner responds to being blamed by

ESCALATION Micro-Steps	DE-ESCALATION Micro-Steps	TESTING Micro-Steps	MUTUAL OPENNESS Micro-Steps
A. Blaming, Accusing	A. or B. Disclosing, Trusting	A. Blocking, Blaming, Defending	A. and B. Disclosing, Trusting
B. Defending, Avoiding Appeasing	A. or B. Affirming, Helping	B. Responding, Accepting, Challenging	A. and B. Affirming, Helping
SASB	SASB	SASB	SASB
A.	A. or B.	A.	A. and B.
Belittling & Blaming 133-136	Disclosing & Expressing 213-216	Belittling & Blaming 133-136	Disclosing & Expressing 213-216
B. Walling Off & Avoiding 223-226	Trusting & Relying 243-246	137 Intrudes, Blocks Restricts	Trusting & Relying 243-246
Protesting & Withdrawing 222-232	Affirming & Understanding 113-116	Walling Off & Avoiding 223-226	Affirming & Understanding 113-116
Sulking & Appeasing 233-236	Helping & Protecting 143-146	Protesting & Withdrawing 222-226	Helping & Protecting 143-146
240 Yields, Submit	Nurturing & Comforting 112-142	Sulking & Appeasing 233-236	Nurturing & Comforting 112-142
		B.	
		Affirming & Understanding 113-116	
		Helping & Protecting	
		148 Tells Person What To Do	
		217 Asserts	
		Disclosing & Expressing 213-216	
A. = Pursuer			
B. = Withdrawer			

FIGURE 5.1 PERFORMANCE MODEL

blaming in turn. While some couples favoured one escalatory pattern, others tended to alternate between 'attack-defend', 'attack-withdraw' or 'attack-attack'. Information generated from the rational analysis and a content analysis of the performance events suggests that the partners focus in escalation is on representing their own position. The pursuer is often covertly or overtly complaining about something the withdrawer is or isn't doing. The withdrawer often feels criticized and inadequate. They are either quick to defend themselves against their partners attacks or are wary of saying anything for fear they will only be discounted. Both partners are usually feeling angry, frustrated and unheard.

De-escalation

In the performance models de-escalation occurs as a sequence in which one partner either openly discloses their experience, or asks for what he or she needs. The other partner responds with 'affirming and understanding' or 'helping and protecting' behavior. Most of the disclosures or requests occurred through the prompting of the therapist. In two of the couples the disclosure or request was accompanied by tears and the withdrawer saw that the angry attacking partner had become vulnerable. As Greenberg and Johnson (1983) suggest one partner brings into focal awareness experiences not previously dominant, ie. 'I see and accept my vulnerability'. The other spouse perceives the partner in a new way and this allows

him or her to respond to the partners new behavior, the request for reassurance from a position of vulnerability. In two couples the disclosure is not accompanied by tears and there is no mention of this partner being perceived as vulnerable. While these partners are not tearful they are taking a risk and expressing their underlying feelings and fears, and their partners do respond to them by offering reassurance and an indication that they are willing to listen to their experience. In rating the De-escalation and Mutual Openness Stages on the Experiencing Scale it was found that the interactions in De-escalation occurred at a lower level of experiencing than those in Mutual Openness. This finding is given further attention in the discussion of Mutual Openness.

In the rational analysis the investigator felt that De-escalation would be entered when one of the partners switched from blaming or defending statements to acknowledging or taking responsibility for their part in the negative interaction cycle. While the investigator still thinks that this occurs in two of the four resolution events at the beginning of the De-escalation sequence this phenomenon does not appear on the problem behavior graphs. The two incidents of taking responsibility are rated on the SASB as 'disclosing and expressing' and 'helping and protecting'. The phenomenon, taking responsibility, does not appear on the problem behavior graphs because the SASB does not have a category that would indicate such a behavior. There is a category for 'deferring and

submitting' behaviors, but this does not fit because it implies a placating or yielding stance that is not congruent with simply accepting responsibility. In accepting responsibility for their part in the negative interaction cycle the partner may be acknowledging that there is some validity to their spouses complaints but this stems from a new awareness of self and is not done in an attempt to placate or appease their spouse. Accepting responsibility involves an open disclosure of one's experience however the SASB category 'disclosing and expressing' is too broad to discriminate between accepting responsibility and the expression of one's feelings, needs or wants. If the investigator was to design a category for accepting responsibility it would involve taking a self focus and would be both affiliative and freeing in nature. It would be characterized by a statement of one's part in an interaction cycle, such as, 'I see I get defensive when you are angry and I try harder to explain my behavior yet this doesn't help because then you don't feel heard'. Or 'I guess I am angry now and all I am doing is pushing you further away, I don't want to do that'. Thus taking responsibility involves a metacomment on the partners process and maybe a way of signaling this is different, it's not an attack or a defense.

Testing

The testing sequence follows on the heels of De-escalation.

Initially there is a positive interaction in which the withdrawer responds to the pursuer's open expression of feelings or needs with, 'helping and protecting', 'nurturing and comforting', or 'trusting and relying' behavior. The withdrawers continue to validate their partners or their positions. Rather than this leading to further disclosure on the pursuers' parts, the pursuers suddenly switch to 'belittling and blaming', 'sulking and appeasing' or 'walling off and avoiding' behavior. Both the SASB codes and the content of the resolution confirm the investigators hunch that the pursuer is dealing with the issue of trust. The pursuers' having exposed a bit of themselves, having tentatively put out a need and having their partners respond to them, are not sure if they can trust their partners' responses as totally genuine and likely to occur consistently. At this time the pursuers speak of their own 'wariness' or 'guardedness', or complain about times in the past where they have been vulnerable and then been rejected by their partner. If the withdrawers defend or counter-attack at this point the couples moves back to escalation. However if the withdrawers maintain a congruent non-escalatory stance either expressing continued acceptance or non-hostile challenges, the resolution process continues. Thus it is the withdrawers maintenance of a congruent non-escalatory stance that distinguishes Testing from Escalation.

Mutual Openness

As the SASB process indicators for Mutual Openness and De-escalation are very similar the Experiencing Scale was used to differentiate De-escalation from Mutual Openness. In De-escalation one partner openly discloses his or her experience or expresses a need while the other partner responds with 'affirming and understanding' or 'helping and protecting' behavior. With Mutual Openness though, the process involves both partners taking turns disclosing their experience and affirming the other. Ratings on the Experiencing Scale indicate that the discussion in Mutual Openness occurs on a deeper level than it does in De-escalation. Most of the dialogue in De-escalation occurs at levels 2 to 4. The discussion ranges from an interested focus on external events to associative descriptions of personal feelings and experiences. In two of the resolution events one of the partners reaches level 5, an exploratory focus on feelings and personal experiences around problems. However the other partner never responds at level 5, thus an interactional sequence at this deeper level never develops in De-escalation. In Mutual Openness the couples not only reach a higher level of experiencing than they reach in De-escalation, the couples, with the exception of Resolution Event 1, also maintain experiencing levels of 5 and 6 over interactional sequences. As well, in each resolution event there is a greater proportion of statements at experiencing levels 5 and 6 than there is in De-escalation. Thus De-escalation

and Mutual Openness can be distinguished from each other in the following ways:

- both partners complete a 'disclose/trust,rely' and 'affirm/help,protect' sequence in Mutual Openness whereas in De-escalation one partner 'discloses' or 'trust/relies' and the other partner 'affirms' or 'help/protects'
- all the couples reach a higher level of experiencing in Mutual Openness than they do in De-escalation
- interactional sequences occur at experiencing levels 5 and 6 in Mutual Openness. When a level 5 of experiencing occurs in De-escalation only one partner is expressing at this level
- De-escalation is characterized by an interaction in which one partner discloses and the other listens and responds in a non-escalatory fashion. In Mutual Openness both partners explore their part in the problem openly while the other partner listens and affirms them. Both partners are feeling safe enough to explore the problem in terms of their underlying feelings and experiences rather than their reactions to the problem or their partner.

While Mutual Openness begins with the therapist helping one partner, usually the pursuer, to focus on their own inner experience, doubts, fears or needs, in Resolution Event 4 there is a unique transition between Testing and Mutual Openness. In this higher functioning couple the pursuer takes a self focus on her own without being prompted by the therapist. The pursuer admits that she's having difficulty trusting her spouse, but then asks for what she needs from him. The pursuer then quickly flips into blaming as she notices her partner looking at his watch. Having been vulnerable she is particularly sensitive to his response to her. The therapist then refocuses the session, and prompts the pursuer to risk

vulnerability again and tell her partner what she needs. The pursuer does this and Mutual Openness begins.

In Resolution Events 1 and 2 testing ends with the withdrawer responding to the pursuer's blaming in a really soft and reassuring manner. It may be this soft reassurance along with the therapist encouraging the pursuer to focus on their own experience that facilitates the pursuer letting down their guard and risking openness again.

Before concluding the discussion of the Mutual Openness stage it is important to note that while the partners may express frustration and some negativity in Mutual Openness there is also an earnest attempt to communicate one's experience and understand the experience of the other.

A fifth step, Resolution, was proposed in the rational analysis. This step was thought to be characterized by solution proposals, personal problem solving and agreement. It is difficult to pinpoint this on the problem behavior graphs. This may be due to a number of factors. First the SASB doesn't have categories for solution proposal and problem solving. Categories that would come closest to coding these behaviors are used as process indicators for De-escalation and Mutual Openness. A careful review of the content of the performance events however indicates that the couples tend to conclude their discussions with statements that convey understanding and support for the other. Confirmation of the importance of the

relationship occurs rather than proposals for concrete solutions or negotiations about how their interactions will be different in the future. In the performance events there is an emotional reconciliation of the partners and a reaffirmation of the relationship but little practical planning or discussion of future coping with similar conflict issues. Two possibilities exist. Mutual Openness may in fact be the resolution. Nothing more may be needed at this time than the intimacy that occurs as the partners are both open with each other. Or because the focus in this therapy is not on explicit problem solving but rather the underlying emotional dynamics negotiation and problem solving may occur after the session as the couple possibly drive home together and discuss the event.

Relationship of Results to Other Research

Although no other couples have been studied in the actual process of resolving in session conflict some literature comparing distressed and non-distressed couples presents results similar to those found in this task analysis. Koran (1980) found that couples who were able to resolve their conflict were likely to show responsiveness and minimize criticism. Distressed couples, on the other hand, were more likely to rely on criticism in attempts to influence the other's position. The performance diagrams show that in the resolution performances blaming behavior must be

abandoned if the couple is to enter De-escalation. Also there is little if any blaming behavior once the couple reaches the Mutual Openness stage. By contrast blaming occurs throughout the non-resolution event. As well, responsiveness in the form of affirmation and validation of the partners position never occurs in the non-resolution event. When the withdrawer does respond positively to the pursuer in the non-resolution event his or her responses tend to fall in the controlling rather than freeing quadrants of the SASB. These results are also consistent with the Revenstorff et al. (1983) findings that problem escalation occurs when one partner's statement of the problem is responded to negatively by the other partner. Problem de-escalation occurs when the problem statement is accepted or reinforced through a positive response. Gottman et al (1977) who studied sequences in distressed and non-distressed couples found 'validation' loops in the conflict behavior of non-clinic couples and 'cross-complaining' loops in the conflict behavior of clinic couples. In a 'validation' loop complaints, information or expressions of feelings are responded to with agreement or validation. Non-clinic couples tend to use a 'validation' loop as a way of bringing problems up for discussion or exploring issues. Clinic couples, on the other hand, tend to respond to information or feelings about a problem or complaints with an expression of their own feelings in the form of a 'cross-complaint'. The patterns found in the task analysis clearly show that in the

De-escalation and Mutual Openness stages affirmation and validation of the other's position is a crucial step in the resolution of a conflict. If an expression of need or statement of feeling is responded to with a statement of the other partner's position before affirmation or validation occurs escalation is likely to continue.

The process and outcome of this study, the task analysis and the performance model differ in a number of ways from studies of marital conflict that have been completed to date. As has been mentioned, this is the first study in which couples interactions have been rigorously tracked as they resolved personal conflicts in actual therapy sessions. While other studies have identified phases of marital conflict and interaction patterns that differentiate distressed from non-distressed couples, this study is unique in it that outlines consistent, reoccurring performance patterns or stages that couples move through in resolving their conflicts. The phenomena of testing, outlined in the performance model, is a discovery of this study and an important addition to our clinical knowledge of the process of resolving a pursue-distance conflict.

Considerations for Further Research

This study has taken a discovery oriented approach to the development of an initial model of marital conflict resolution. This model now needs to be tested and refined. Some questions remain unanswered. Can taking responsibility for one's part in a negative

interaction cycle be shown to consistently result in De-escalation? What other possible behaviors lead to De-escalation? Is there a Resolution stage separate and apart from Mutual Openness, or is Mutual Openness all that is needed to produce resolution? How do the partners themselves distinguish between criticism and the open expression of feelings accompanied by a frustrated voice tone? Further process research with more extensive use of Interpersonal Process Recall may lead to answers to some of these questions. In addition further tracking of the effects on outcome of the processes in the model to see how long the effects of an in-session resolution last as well as what impact this makes on general marital satisfaction and final therapy outcome will help illuminate the process-outcome link.

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APPENDICES

I STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

II THE EXPERIENCING SCALE

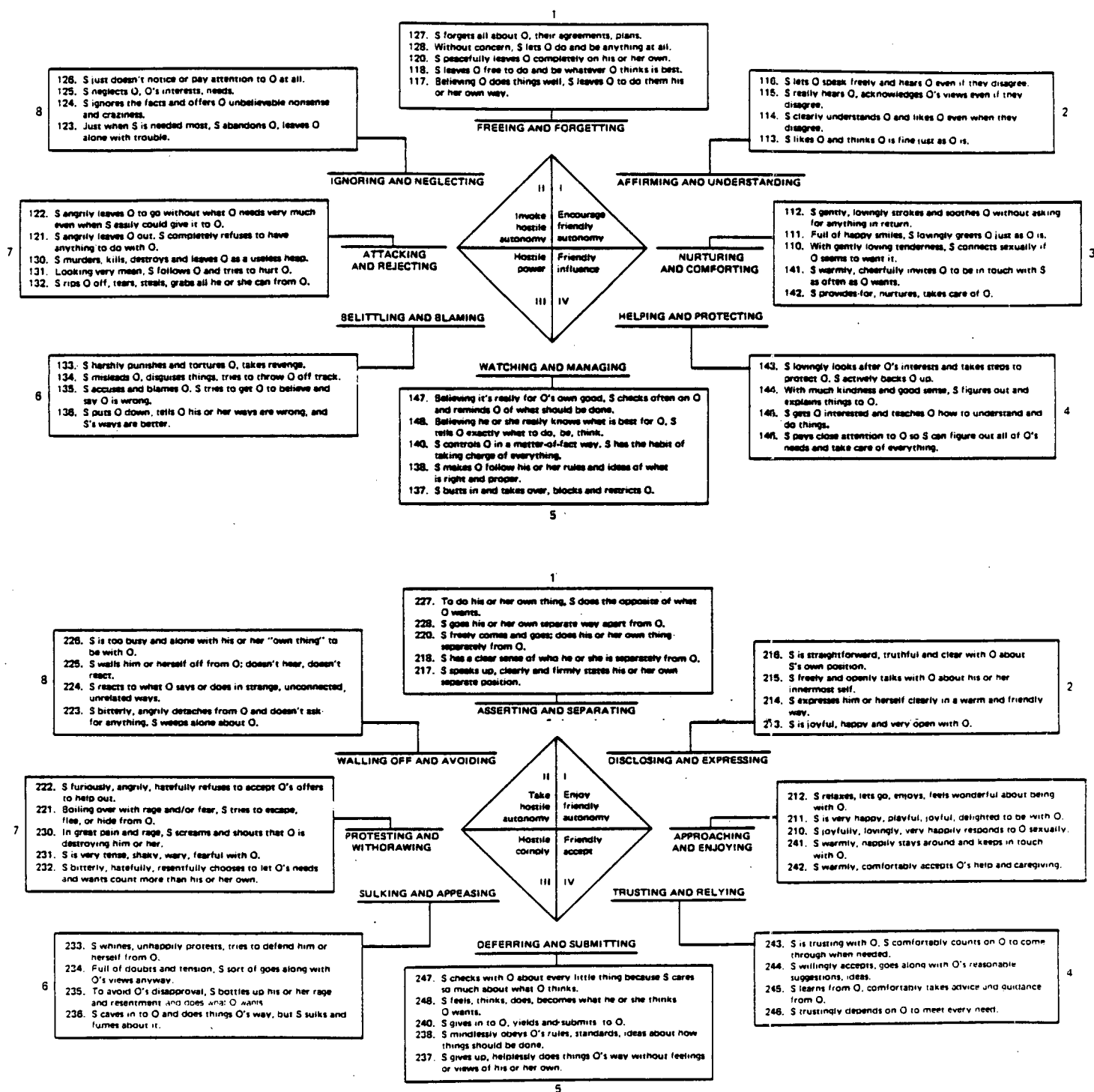
III COUPLES INTERACTION SCORING SYSTEM

IV TARGET COMPLAINTS SCALE

V CONFLICTS RESOLUTION BOX SCALE

VI CLIENT VOICE QUALITY SYSTEM

I STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR



II EXPERIENCING SCALE

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Treatment</u>
1	External events; refusal to participate	Impersonal, detached
2	External events; behavioral or intellectual self-description	Interested, personal, self-participation
3	Personal reactions to external events; limited self-descriptions; behavioral descriptions of feelings	Reactive, emotionally involved
4	Descriptions of feelings and personal experiences	Self-descriptive; associative
5	Problems or propositions about feelings and personal experiences	Exploratory, elaborative, hypothetical
6	Synthesis of readily accessible feelings and experiences to resolve personally significant issues	Feelings vividly expressed, integrative, conclusive or affirmative
7	Full, easy presentation of experiencing; all elements confidently integrated	Expansive, illuminating, confident, buoyant

III COUPLES INTERACTION SCORING SYSTEM

VERBAL CONTENT CODES

AGREEMENT (AG)

1. Direct Agreement
2. Acceptance of Responsibility
3. Acceptance of Modification
4. Compliance
5. Assent

DISAGREEMENT (DG)

1. Direct Disagreement
2. Yes - But
3. Disagreement with Rational Supplied
4. Command
5. Non-Compliance

COMMUNICATION TALK (CT)

1. Back on Beam #1
2. Back on Beam #2
3. Metacommunication
4. Clarification Request

MINDREADING (MR)

1. Mindreading Feelings
2. Mindreading Behaviors

PROBLEM SOLVING AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE (PS)

1. Specific Plan
2. Non Specific Plan
3. Relationship Information
4. Non-Relationship Opinion, Feeling or Attitude

SUMMARIZING OTHER (SO)

1. Summarizing Other
2. Summarizing Both

SUMMARIZING SELF (SS)

COUPLES INTERACTION SCORING SYSTEM continued

VERBAL CONTENT CODES

EXPRESSING FEELINGS ABOUT A PROBLEM (PF)

1. Generalized Problem Talk
2. Relationship Issue Problem Talk

NON-VERBAL CONTENT AND AFFECT CODES

<u>Non-Verbal</u>	<u>Cues</u>	
<u>Channel</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
Face	Smile Empathic Expression Head Nod	Frown Fearful Expression Cry Smirk Angry Expression Disgust Glare
Voice	Caring Warm Soft Tender Relieved Empathic Concerned Affectionate Loving	Satisfied Buoyant Bubbly Cheerful Chuckling Happy Joyful Laughter Cold Tense Scared Impatient Hard Clipped Staccato Whinnying
		Blaming Sarcastic Angry Furious Blaring Hurt Depressed Accusing Mocking Laughter
Body	Touching Distance reduction Open arms Attention Relaxation Forward Lean	Arms akimbo Neck or hand tension Rude gestures Hands thrown up, disgust Pointing, Jabbing, Slicing Inattention

IV TARGET COMPLAINTS SCALE

We are interested in how much the following issues in your relationship have changed since you started to program. Please circle the words describe your position.

(a) _____

worse.....same.....slightly better....somewhat better....a lot better

(b) _____

worse.....same.....slightly better....somewhat better....a lot better

(c) _____

worse.....same.....slightly better....somewhat better....a lot better

Not at all resolved

VI CLIENT VOICE QUALITY SYSTEM

The Four Vocal Patterns

Aspects	Focused	Externalizing	Limited	Emotional
Production of accents	Achieved with loudness and/or drawl more than pitch rise	Achieved with pitch more than loudness or drawl	Usual balance for English	Not applicable
Accentuation	Irregular	Extremely regular	Usual pattern for English	Usually irregular
Regularity of pace	Uneven; usually slowed but may be speeded patches	Even pace	Neither markedly even nor uneven	Usually uneven
Terminal contours	Ragged and unexpected	Highly expected in relation to the structure of what is said	Direction about as usual, but energy tends to peter out, yielding a breathy quality	Unexpected
Perceived energy	Moderate to high; voice may be soft but on platform	Moderate to high; may be a bit above platform but adequate push	Voice not resting not own platform; inadequate push	Not applicable
Disruption of speech pattern	No	No	No	Yes