

# **SYSTEM FOR CODING INTERACTIONS IN DYADS (SCID):**

A CODING SYSTEM FOR  
COUPLES' PROBLEM DISCUSSIONS

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Please do not use the SCID without the authors' permission.

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## INTRODUCTION

### About the SCID

The purpose of the System for Coding Interactions in Dyads (SCID) is to behaviorally assess global aspects of affective and communicative functioning in marital dyads and non-married couples. The SCID assesses universal aspects of couple functioning and is applicable with a wide range of populations, and it has been used with a variety of samples, including violent, distressed, and maritally satisfied couples. The SCID is reliable across a variety of ethnic groups, including European-American, Hispanic-American, and African-American couples. Companion manuals exist for coding triadic family interactions, called the System for Coding Interactions and Family Functioning (SCIFF, Lindahl & Malik, 1996), and for coding parent-child interactions, called the System for Coding Interactions in Parent-Child Dyads (SCIPD; Lindahl, 1996).

The original studies for which the SCID was developed assessed couple functioning in the following manner. Partners filled out modified versions of the Marital Agendas Protocol (MAP; Notarius & Vanzetti, 1983), which asked couples to individually rate problem areas in their relationships and rank-order the top three problem areas. Based on these rank-orderings, couples were asked to choose a top problem area and discuss the problem on videotape for approximately 12-15 minutes. These videotaped interactions were coded with the SCID.

The SCID, which was originally modeled in large part upon the Interactional Dyadic Coding System (Julien, Markman, & Lindahl, 1989), assesses both theoretically and empirically derived aspects of couple functioning, such as communication skills and processes (e.g., Gottman, 1993; Markman, Renick, Floyd, Stanley, & Clements, 1993), as well as issues related to the balance of power, dominance, and aggression in relationships (e.g., Babcock, Waltz, Jacobson, & Gottman, 1993; Gray-Little & Burks, 1983; Huston, 1983).

Individual codes include Verbal Aggression, Coerciveness, Attempts to Control, Negativity & Conflict, Withdrawal, Dysphoric Affect, and Communication, Supportive Listening, and Positive Affect. Both partners are rated individually on these codes. The dyad is rated on the following codes: Negative Escalation, Cohesiveness, Pursuit/Withdrawal Pattern, Conflict Management Style, and Balance of Power. The first 12 of these codes are rated using a Likert-type scale of 1 (Very Low) to 5 (High). The last two of these codes, Conflict Management Style and Balance of Power, are categorical.

### Procedures for Coding

When undertaking observational procedures in research, one of the most important decisions facing researchers is deciding who will do the coding. We have found undergraduates students to be reliable coders in using this coding system. In order for undergraduates to be reliable, however, extensive training and supervision are necessary. In

our laboratory, training has involved the following. First, the manual is reviewed in detail to familiarize coders with the codes. Second, several tapes previously rated by the authors are reviewed, item by item, with the trainees. Third, as a group, trainees code two to three criterion tapes with one of the authors. Fourth, trainees are assigned two to three criterion tapes to code individually, and coding mistakes are discussed at the weekly coding meeting. Trainees are instructed to watch each tape *at least* three times. While in training, trainees are required to justify their ratings for each code. It is not unusual for coders in training to take over an hour to code one interaction. After coders achieve an adequate level of reliability, coders are assigned two to three tapes per week. Each tape takes an experienced coder between 35 and 45 minutes if all codes are used (each tape should be watched three times to obtain the best reliability). Once training is completed, weekly meetings are used to review disagreements and prevent observer drift.

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## SCID CODES: MARITAL DISCUSSION

Family # \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Coder \_\_\_\_\_

<b>1. Male: Verbal Aggression</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
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<b>2. Female: Verbal Aggression</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
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<b>3. Male: Coerciveness</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
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<b>4. Female: Coerciveness</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
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<b>5. Male: Attempts to Control</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
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<b>6. Female: Attempts to Control</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
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<b>7. Male: Negativity &amp; Conflict</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
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<b>8. Female: Negativity &amp; Conflict</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
<b>9. Male: Withdrawal</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
<b>10. Female: Withdrawal</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
<b>11. Male: Dysphoric Affect</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
<b>12. Female: Dysphoric Affect</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
<b>13. Male: PS Communication</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
<b>14. Female: PS Communication</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
<b>15. Male: Support</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High
<b>16. Female: Support</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High

<b>17. Male: Positive Affect</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High	
<b>18. Female: Positive Affect</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High	
<b>19. Negative Escalation</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High	
<b>20. Cohesiveness</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High	
<b>21. Pursuit/Withdrawal</b>	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Mod	4 Mod High	5 High	
<b>22. Conflict Mgmt Style</b>	1. Female P/ Male WD	2. Male P/ Female WD	3. Disengaged	4. High Conflict/ Hostile	5. High Conflict/ Expressive	6. Harmonious
<b>23. Balance of Power</b>	1.. Balanced	2. Male Dominant	3. Female Dominant	4. Conflictual Imbalance		

### INDIVIDUAL CODE: VERBAL AGGRESSION

This code assesses the degree to which partners exhibit hostile and aggressive remarks toward each other. Verbal aggression includes insults, put-downs, patronizing or blaming statements, and critical comments (directed at the partner or at the partner's relatives and friends) stated with tones of disgust, condescension, mockery, spite, cruelty, or significant, hurtful hostility. Examples of verbally aggressive statements include, "I don't care about your feelings," "Your problem is with your ego," "Your family cannot mind their own business," "My biggest concern is that you have no idea about how to spend money responsibly," "You act like an idiot half the time," "You are so overbearing,"

“If you’d been listening, you would have known,” “I hear you yelling at the kids, ineffectively, for the 100<sup>th</sup> time, I go ballistic,” “You wouldn’t know a feeling if it slapped you in the face,” “I can’t stand your whining all the time,” or, “Talking to you is a waste of breath.”

The aggressive and demeaning nature of these comments is of utmost importance - those blaming or critical statements that are simply expressive of anger without almost seeming like a slap in the face will be coded under Negativity and Conflict. In other words, verbally aggressive statements should have a jarring, forceful tone, rather than simply an angry tone. For example, if a partner says to the other, "You don't know how to listen," that can be stated in a frustrated and angry manner, without being aggressive. If the tone of this statement conveys the message that not being able to listen indicates that the person is defective or stupid, however, then it should be coded under Verbal Aggression. Name calling and swearing are indicative of verbal aggression. Threatening or controlling statements are NOT coded here, but should be included under the Coerciveness and Attempts to Influence and Control codes.

1 - Very Low. The individual does not exhibit any verbal aggression throughout the interaction.

2 - Low. There are one or two times in the interaction when a partner makes verbally aggressive statements, such as put-downs, patronizing or blaming statements, and/or critical comments (directed at the partner or at the partner's relatives and friends). These statements may be subtle, but the insult, put-down, blaming statement, or critical comment has undertones of hostility, aggression, condescension, spite, etc. With regard to tone of voice, a rating of 2 should be given if the tone has a bit of a "bite" or "edge" to it, but it is not overtly attacking.

3 - Moderate. There are at least several instances in the interaction when a partner makes verbally aggressive statements, such as put-downs, patronizing or blaming statements, and/or critical comments (directed at the partner or at the partner's relatives and friends). These statements may be subtle, but the insult, put-down, blaming statement, or critical comment has undertones of hostility, aggression, condescension, spite, etc. As with a rating of 2, with regard to tone of voice, a rating of 3 should be given if the tone has a bit of a "bite" or "edge" to it, but is not overtly attacking. The difference between assigning a code of 2 or 3 is one of frequency, as noted above.

4 - Moderately High. In addition to or instead of several instances of subtle verbal aggression, at this level (4), the partner must exhibit 1-2 instances of put-downs, patronizing or blaming statements, and/or critical comments (directed at the partner or at the partner's relatives and friends) that are at least moderate in intensity. These insults, put-downs, blaming statements, or critical comments carry clear hostility, aggression, condescension, spite, etc.

5 - High. In addition to or instead of several instances of subtle verbal aggression, there are 3 or more instances in the interaction when the partner's verbally aggressive behavior is of moderate to high intensity. The tone of voice used is such that the comment may come across as attacking, disgusted, mocking, spiteful, exceptionally patronizing or condescending, and/or hostile (though a very aggressive and cruel statement may be made without any overt change in tone of voice). If a partner swears at the other, or if a partner is observed to call the other a name, the partner is given a rating of 5.

## INDIVIDUAL CODE: COERCIVENESS

This code is based on the **frequency** with which a partner makes threatening or manipulative statements to the other or uses a threatening tone or body language with the other. Coerciveness represents aversive, unpleasant, or shaming methods that a partner uses to gain the upper hand in the interaction or change the other's behavior. Statements that are not threatening or manipulative but that are more direct commands should be coded under Attempts to Control.

This code assesses the degree to which the a partner uses threatening statements, gestures, and tone of voice. Threatening statements can be overt or veiled and may include statements such as, "If you don't stop acting that way, I can't change," "If you're not willing to work on this, I won't, either," "I'm not going to change my mind until you stop nagging me," "I hate so much when you do that, I feel like leaving you," "With the way things are now, I don't see any hope for us," "You get so overbearing that I have to shut you out," "I cannot or will not tolerate (certain behaviors)," or, "Don't push me - You know what will happen."

In conjunction with threatening statements, threats can also take the form of a menacing, frightening tone, or a body posture that indicates intimidation, such as getting overly or uncomfortably close to the other (e.g., "invading their space"), making threatening gestures, such as pointing into someone's face, poking them in a threatening way, or gesturing such that it appears that the other partner might actually be struck, whether on purpose or not, by the movement.

Manipulation in this code is when one partner attempts to influence the other by using underhanded, insensitive, unfair, shrewd, devious, or calculating tactics. One of the hallmarks of manipulation is that the statement has the effect of putting the other partner in his or her place, so to speak, or making them feel stupid or small for doing something. However, these statements are not direct attacks or overtly aggressive and cruel insults, which is what makes them coercive rather than verbally aggressive. Examples include, "You know how sensitive I am, so don't you think it would be smart on your part to not say things like that," "If you're that concerned about money, then you go get another job!" "If I'm pouting, don't you think that has something to do with you?" "Because you nag me, that's why I do things to annoy you," or, "You have no right to complain about me, because I do the best I can, and you're never around to help."

## NOTE

Each tape should be watched a separate time in order to code this and the Attempts to Control codes alone, because coders need to count exactly how many times each of these types of statements occur. Frequency counts are based on an approximately 12-15 minute interaction. For researchers who conduct longer interactions, multiply the below frequency counts proportionately by length of total interaction (e.g., for a 20 minute interaction, multiply the frequencies by 1.5).

1 - Very Low. The partner does not make any coercive statements, use a threatening tone, or make threatening gestures in the interaction.

2 - Low. The partner makes 1 coercive statement, once uses a threatening tone, or once makes a threatening gesture in the interaction.

3 - Moderate. The partner twice is observed to make coercive statements, use a threatening tone, or make threatening gestures in the interaction.

4 - Moderately High. The partner 3 times is observed to make coercive statements, use a threatening tone, or make threatening gestures in the interaction.

5 - High. The partner 4 or more times is observed to make coercive statements, use a threatening tone, or make threatening gestures in the interaction.

## INDIVIDUAL CODE: ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL

This code is based on the **frequency** with which a partner makes direct, overt commands or demands (versus requests) that are meant to change the *thoughts, feelings, and actions* of the other. Whether or not the partner attempting to control the other succeeds in changing the other person is not part of this code; only the attempts are important to code here. This code is intended to capture behaviors that are exerted by one partner in an effort to control or domineer over the other, whereby the partner appears to be speaking from a position of entitlement and authority.

Controlling statements such as “You need to get over that,” “You can’t feel that way,” “Take my feelings into consideration,” or “You are wrong to feel that way” indicate attempts to control **feelings**. Statements such as, “The fact is that your mother is too involved in our lives, and you need to realize that,” “If you saw the stuff about this in the paper, you would know it’s wrong to say that,” “I know this is important to you, but what I’m talking about is more important,” “You have to accept facts,” “I think you have to admit that ...” or “You need to understand that,” indicate attempts to change **thoughts**. To change others’ **actions**, statements might include “I just think that your behavior really needs to be taken care of,” “You have to pay more attention to him,” or “You have to come home earlier.” *Should* statements (e.g., “You should be more careful when you are talking to me”) rarely will count as examples of control because they are not usually direct commands or demands. In particular, *should* statements given in the past tense are not attempts to control.

Attempts to control also involve statements such as, “We are doing it my way this time,” “I am going to decide this one,” “We are not going to your mother’s for Christmas,” “We don’t need to buy it, and we’re not going to,” “I can’t agree with that, and I won’t,” “I won’t allow our children to do that,” or “You just can’t do that.” Often controlling, demanding statements will be made in the context of directing the discussion itself, at times by abruptly and rudely interrupting the other to say things such as “You can’t say that,” or “Don’t say always/never,” or “Look, we only have seven minutes here. We have to talk about something else.” Controlling statements are those that indicate that the person is basically saying, “I decide,” or, “I’m laying down the law on this one.”

Sometimes people will be observed to say things like, “Wait! Let me finish!” Most of the time, these statements are made when one person has cut off the other, and the partner is attempting to finish a thought or utterance. In these cases, though it is a directive statement, the purpose is not to control or command the other but to assert oneself. When a behavior is indicative of assertiveness rather than dominance or control, it should be coded under communication. Thus, the context of the behavior is important and when the behavior is made in an effort to defend oneself, then it is not “control.”

Any statements that are made with a threatening content should **not** be coded here, but will be coded under Coerciveness. Similarly, any hostile, cruel, or harsh criticisms, blaming statements, put-downs, or insults should be coded under Verbal Aggression.

## NOTE

Each tape should be watched a separate time in order to code this and the Coerciveness codes alone, because coders need to count exactly how many times each of these types of statements occur. Frequency counts are based on an approximately 12-15 minute interaction. For researchers who conduct longer interactions, multiply the below frequency counts proportionately by length of total interaction (e.g., for a 20 minute interaction, multiply by 1.5).

1 - Very Low. The partner makes no controlling statements in the interaction.

2 - Low. The partner makes 1 controlling statements.

3 - Moderate. The partner makes 2 controlling statements.

4 - Moderately High. The partner makes 3 controlling statements.

5 - High. The partner makes 4 or more controlling statements.

## INDIVIDUAL CODE: NEGATIVITY & CONFLICT

This code assesses the level of tension, frustration, irritation, and anger displayed by each partner. This code captures the negative *feeling and tone* of the interaction and thus incorporates how people behave and say things (behavioral cues) and conflictual, sarcastic, or defensive statements that are not aggressive or controlling. If the anger and tension exist without aggressiveness, etc., it should be coded under this code, Negativity and Conflict, as some statements may be critical or blaming without being verbally aggressive (e.g., “You never get home when you say you will!” “You never talk about your feelings,” “You don’t listen to me,” “You make me feel like my work isn’t important,” or “You don’t consider my feelings,” “Oh, sure, now it’s all my fault”). For blaming statements to be included in this code, they must not be aggressive or demeaning but rather angry.

Behavioral cues for negativity and conflict include tense, tight, and/or angry body posture and facial expressions (e.g., sitting up rigidly, tightly folding arms, rapidly bouncing legs, tapping fingers or hands, frowning, grimacing, glaring, or otherwise looking angry); tone of voice that is angry, cold, exasperated, clearly frustrated and/or annoyed, or speaking through clenched teeth or in a clipped manner, as if barely controlling impatience and frustration.

It may be difficult at first to distinguish between Verbal Aggression and the present code; it is important to remember that what is angry, tense, or frustrated in *emotional expression* is not necessarily aggressive *in content*. Thus, a highly conflictual and negative person may not be high at all on Verbal Aggression.

1 - Very Low. The partner is not observed to be negative or conflictual in behavior.

2 - Low. The partner is observed to be negative and/or conflictual in behavior a couple times, and instances of negativity/conflict are mild in intensity (e.g., the partner is observed to look tense, or tone of voice is mildly angry, tense, irritated, or frustrated; these behaviors are relatively short-lived and fleeting).

3 - Moderate. The partner is observed to be negative/conflictual in behavior on several occasions, most of which are mild in intensity, though one or more times appears to be moderate in intensity (e.g., the partner has an angry look on his/her face, speaks with some anger, frustration, or tension; it may appear somewhat difficult for the negative/conflictual partner to “shake off” the negativity).

4 - Moderately High. The partner is observed to be negative/conflictual in behavior on several to many occasions. Typically the negativity/conflict is of moderate to moderately high intensity (e.g., the partner has a somewhat angry look on his/her face, speaks with anger, frustration, or tension several times; the partner may appear angry or rather irritated on several occasions).

5 - High. The partner's negativity/conflict is pervasive throughout the interaction or characteristic of his/her communication with the other partner. Behaviors are of moderate to high intensity (e.g., the partner has a clearly angry look on his/her face, speaks with anger, frustration, irritation, or tension most of the time; the partner may appear defensive and angry

most of the time).

## INDIVIDUAL CODE: WITHDRAWAL

This code assesses the degree to which each member of the couple removes him/herself from the interaction or avoids the interaction or discussion, through three types of actions: body language, tone of voice, and attitude. A partner may evade the issue, or may seem to pull him/herself out of the discussion. A partner may seem to retreat into a shell, become detached, back off, or shut down, physically or emotionally (in other words, through body language, tone of voice, and/or attitude). In this code, tone of voice refers to when a person sounds flat, bored, disinterested, defeated, tired, or distracted when speaking. A withdrawn attitude is displayed more by what the partner says, for example, saying "I don't care, do whatever you want;" "Fine, let's just get this over with;" "I'm tired of talking about this," or "I'm finished, I have nothing else to say." A partner may also withdraw by avoiding eye contact, turning their body away, slouching in his/her chair, changing body position to create more distance, staring at the wall or the ceiling, crossing arms, fidgeting with hair, clothing, glasses, or nails, or by becoming indifferent, nonchalant, disinterested, or unresponsive. Note that denial that the problem exists or denial of personal responsibility are not included as part of withdrawal.

1 - Very Low. The partner is not withdrawn from the interaction/discussion. The partner remains actively engaged, interested, and involved throughout the course of the discussion (e.g., by speaking, listening, or leaning body forward). The partner does not disengage, retreat, shut down, or distance him/herself from the others or from the discussion.

2 - Low. The partner is minimally withdrawn from the interaction. The partner for the most part is involved, but there may be moments when he/she briefly disengages or shuts down during the discussion (e.g., he/she loses eye contact for a little while, looks away for a bit, or fidgets for a few moments). When a partner disengages, however, after a short time he/she resumes active involvement. In this code, this rating can be given if the partner is generally talkative and genuinely involved, but at times has a bit of disengagement in tone when speaking.

3 - Moderate. There are several occasions or one or two blocks of time when the partner seems somewhat withdrawn in at least one of the three ways mentioned above (e.g., body language, tone, or attitude), but this is clearly less than half the time. The partner waxes and wanes in terms of level of participation in the discussion, appearing at times to be engaged and fully involved in the discussion and at other times appears to retreat or disengage, depending on level of interest, emotional investment, or energy for the discussion. At times, the partner may appear overwhelmed by the discussion and may fade somewhat for a short time in terms of involvement. That is, the partner is for the most part an active listener and/or active speaker, but when withdrawn, appears as if he/she may be listening but is not or is unable to be otherwise involved.

4 - Moderately High. For about half the time, the partner is withdrawn in at least one of the three ways mentioned above (either in body language, tone, or attitude).

5 - High. For more than half the time, the partner is withdrawn in at least two of the three ways mentioned above (body language, tone, or attitude). At this level, the withdrawal is clearly

related to some tension in the interaction. Any time a partner leaves the room or abruptly ends the discussion, this rating should be given.

## INDIVIDUAL CODE: DYSPHORIC AFFECT

This code is primarily an affect or emotional/behavioral code, though at times individuals may be observed to make statements of sadness. It assesses the overall quantity of sadness, sorrow, anguish, grief, pain, regret, hopelessness, disappointment, despair, discouragement, and remorse displayed by each partner.

These emotions primarily will be displayed through tone of voice and facial expression, often in conjunction with statements such as, "I feel terrible about this," "I'm so sorry," "I can't figure out what to do about this," "I think you're right, it really is all my fault," "or "I feel so sad." Facial expressions include tearfulness, sad frowns, or pained expressions, looks of disappointment, or or looking as if the individual is crying or about to cry. Body gestures observed *in conjunction with* other expressions of dysphoric affect (in order not to confuse them with other codes, such as Withdrawal), may include slumped shoulders, downcast head or eyes, wringing hands, wiping tears, or putting one's head in one's hands.

1 - Very Low. The partner does not exhibit any indications of sadness, sorrow, anguish, grief, pain, regret, hopelessness, disappointment, despair, discouragement, and remorse.

2 - Low. The partner appears to be minimally dysphoric; that is, the partner is observed once to appear sad, sorrowful, anguished, grieved, pained, hopeless, disappointed, despairing, discouraged, and/or regretful or remorseful, and this isolated moment of dysphoric affect is mild in intensity, and this feeling appears to be fleeting.

3 - Moderate. There are a few instances in which the partner appears to be mildly sad, sorrowful, anguished, grieved, pained, and/or regretful or remorseful. Again, these instances are relatively fleeting.

4 - Moderately High. There are several occasions, though for less than half of the interaction overall, when a partner appears to be somewhat sad, sorrowful, anguished, grieved, pained, and/or regretful or remorseful. The feelings of mild dysphoric affect may be somewhat difficult for the partner to "shake off."

5 - High. For half to more than half of the interaction, the partner is observed to be sad, sorrowful, anguished, grieved, pained, and/or regretful or remorseful. Most of these behaviors and/or statements are obvious and of moderate to high intensity. The partner may be observed on one or more occasions to cry openly.

## INDIVIDUAL CODE: PROBLEM SOLVING COMMUNICATION

This code assesses the degree to which partners are able to discuss their own feelings and opinions (e.g., self-disclose) in a constructive manner, and the extent to which partner behaviors facilitate or promote the problem solving discussion. Higher scores will be obtained by partners who are not just actively and constructively engaged in the problem solving discussion, but also whose communication enhances depth or intimacy in the conversation. In rating this code, *it is necessary to focus on the partner's behavior only when he/she is speaking.*

Problem solving communication is characterized by the partner openly expressing feelings and thoughts about the other partner, self, or issues being discussed in a constructive manner. That is, the partner's statements remain respectful, non-threatening, and non-judgmental, even when discussing negative feelings or expressing disagreement. For example, though blaming statements are most likely to be coded under Verbal Aggression or Negativity and Conflict, it is possible that a partner could discuss another partner's role in situations without being aggressive, demeaning, or angry. In these cases, where for example one partner might say to another, "You know, I think we both have responsibility here. I don't talk to you enough about our plans, but you don't seem interested in making plans with me, either," partners are presenting their perspectives without judgment or blame (and hence are communicating appropriately).

Additional characteristics of good communication include the following: expressing feelings, opinions, and thoughts in a clear, direct, and understandable manner; summarizing mutual opinions or decisions; and taking the perspective of the other partner by paraphrasing the other's opinion or asking the other for more information. Disagreements can be coded here as positive communication if they are said without negative affect and further the discussion in some way or explain the partner's perspective. Elements of good communication that facilitate problem solving include identifying the problem and/or different parts of the problem to focus the discussion, generating solutions to resolve the problem in a non-judgmental way, and discussing and agreeing to compromises. Questions that are of a problem-solving nature would also be relevant (e.g., What can I do?).

Some elements of poor problem solving communication include denial of the problem or personal responsibility for the problem, blocking progress in the discussion by repeatedly making a point, changing the subject, refusing to entertain partner's suggestions for solutions, and avoiding stating preferences, ideas, or personal feelings about the matter. Other behaviors, such as defensiveness or condescension are to be coded under Negativity and Conflict and Verbal Aggression.

Behavioral examples of communication include good eye contact, body posture oriented toward the other partner (e.g., the partner's head, shoulders, and hips are facing the other partner), and expressive tone of voice (e.g., varies rhythm and intonation of voice, is not monotone).

1 - Very Low. The partner either communicates very little, denies the problem or blocks progress in the discussion, or otherwise has poor communication skills. Very rarely does the partner have his/her body oriented toward the other partner, have a relaxed body, or expressive voice. Only rarely does the partner verbally express his/her thoughts, feelings, opinions, and/or ideas, or rarely does so in a very in-depth or constructive manner. The partner may at times wander from topic to topic or may derail communication about the topic at hand. The partner exhibits no behaviors indicative of compromising.

2 - Low. The partner exhibits some constructive problem solving communication skills. The partner on occasion expresses his/her thoughts, feelings, opinions, and/or ideas in a constructive, non-judgmental manner. Although some self-disclosure occurs, it may be relatively superficial and does not appear to significantly promote problem solving. In general, the partner's communication is characterized by some good and some weak communication skills, though the communication is not particularly efficient for promoting problem solving. The partner's communication may be limited by some inability to respond appropriately in the face of the other's negative feelings or lack of involvement in the discussion. Partner has difficulty maintaining conversation for the topic at hand. There are times when the partner has his/her body oriented toward the other partner or has an expressive voice. The partner may exhibit few behaviors indicative of compromising.

3 - Moderate. The partner exhibits constructive communication skills for about half the time and is moderately self-disclosive and engaged in the problem solving process, so that on at least one occasion, the partner's self disclosure appears to significantly further the problem solving discussion. The partner about half the time has his/her body oriented toward the other partner or has an expressive voice. No more than twice is a partner observed to minimally deny personal responsibility or block progress in the discussion. Though the partner stays on topic, he or she appears to have difficulty generating appropriate solutions and may on occasion seem willing to compromise.

4 - Moderately High. The partner generally exhibits constructive problem solving communication skills. For most of the discussion, the partner verbally expresses his/her thoughts, feelings, opinions, and/or ideas in a constructive and non-judgmental manner and discloses feelings and opinions relatively honestly and openly. For most of the time, the partner has his/her body oriented toward the other partner or has an expressive voice. No more than once is a partner observed to minimally deny personal responsibility or block progress in the discussion. The partner generally appears willing to compromise.

5 - High. Throughout the interaction, the partner's communication skills are constructive and non-judgmental, in addition to being honest expressions of oneself (and promoting greater depth or intimacy of discussion). The partner consistently verbally expresses his/her thoughts, feelings, opinions, and/or ideas in a constructive or positive manner and is often self-disclosive. The partner appears to be cooperative, able to compromise, and generally facilitative of the problem solving discussion. For almost all of the discussion, the partner has his/her body oriented toward the other partner and uses an expressive voice. The partner does not deny personal responsibility or block progress in the discussion. The partner exhibits behaviors

indicative of compromising (this may not always be relevant to the discussion).

## INDIVIDUAL CODE: SUPPORT

This code assesses the degree to which the partner is supportive of and attuned to the other partner. Supportive and attuned partners listen carefully to the other, are sensitive to the emotions and concerns of the other, and validate and attempt to understand the other partner's perspective.

Listening attentively to the other partner is characterized by nodding while the other person is talking, clearly looking at them while they speak, not becoming distracted while they speak, not interrupting, asking questions to enhance understanding of the other's perspective, and waiting to speak.

Being attuned to a partner is being able to "read" the other's verbal and/or non-verbal signals of emotion. Whether the other partner's emotions are positive or negative, the effectively attuned partner will be able to tailor his or her comments, behavior, and emotional expression to fit the other's emotional needs (e.g., responding positively or neutrally to the other partner's negative statements or negative affect). A partner who is not well attuned to his/her mate can be identified when there is a mismatch between the other partner's needs and the target partner's behavior. In other words, the target partner may seem oblivious to or unaware of the other's needs. For example, a partner may continue to criticize angrily, even when the other partner appears to be feeling overwhelmed or very distressed. Alternatively, even in the face of the other partner clearly becoming upset and needing some connection, the target partner may still not respond or respond without honesty or openness.

1 - Very Low. The partner does not appear to be supportive or validating of the other partner. The partner may interrupt frequently, rarely look at the other, appear distracted, and does not ask questions to enhance understanding, even if it appears necessary. When the other partner appears to express emotion, either positively or negatively, the target partner does not respond with sensitivity or acknowledgment, and may be non-responsive.

2 - Low. The partner exhibits variable attunement and support; less than half the time does the partner appear attuned to or supportive of the other partner's emotions or needs. Less than half the time does the partner acknowledge, validate, or attempt to understand what the other is saying. The partner may interrupt several times, infrequently look at the other, appear distracted, and rarely ask questions to enhance understanding, even if it appears necessary.

3 - Moderate. The partner expresses a moderate amount of attunement and sensitivity to the other partner's emotions or needs. About half the time, the partner acknowledges, validates, or attempts to understand what the other is saying or provides supportive statements. About half the time, the partner waits for his/her turn to talk, asks questions to enhance understanding, nods while the other is speaking, and looks at the other when he/she is talking.

4 - Moderately High. The partner generally is attuned and sensitive to the other partner's emotions or needs. More than half the time, the partner acknowledges, validates, or attempts to understand what the other is saying or provides supportive statements. More than half the time, the partner waits for his/her turn to talk, asks questions to enhance understanding, nods while the other is speaking, and looks at the other when he/she is talking.

5 - High. The partner virtually always is attuned and sensitive to the other partner's emotions or needs. Most if not all of the time, the partner acknowledges, validates, or attempts to understand what the other is saying or provides supportive statement. Most of the time, the partner waits for his/her turn to talk, asks questions to enhance understanding, nods while the other is speaking, and looks at the other when he/she is talking.

## INDIVIDUAL CODE: POSITIVE AFFECT

The positive qualities of the partner's tone of voice, facial expression, and body language are assessed. Positive affect may be expressed through behaviors such as affection, laughter, smiling, or making jokes. A positive tone of voice can be happy, cheerful, or satisfied. Positive facial expressions include smiles and looking relaxed and happy. Positive body language can include being relaxed, holding the other's hand, touching on the leg or shoulder, etc., and other touches, unless they do not appear to be playful.

1 - Very Low. The partner expresses very little positive affect. On rare occasion, the partner may be observed to have a positive tone of voice, facial expression, and/or body language. However, the partner's affective tone in general is negative or flat.

2 - Low. The partner infrequently (clearly less than half the time) may be observed to have a positive tone of voice, facial expression, and/or body language. Though the partner's affective tone is flat or negative most of the time, there are a few clear instances in which the partner becomes more positive, and may smile or appear happy, relaxed or cheerful.

3 - Moderate. The partner's affective tone is mixed; the partner displays both positive and negative or flat affect. About half the time, the partner is positive, and may smile, laugh, make jokes, touch the other partner, or sound happy, satisfied, or cheerful.

4 - Moderately High. The partner's affective tone is generally positive; clearly more than half the time, the partner is positive and may smile, laugh, make jokes, touch the other partner in a playful manner, or sound happy, satisfied, or cheerful. The positive affect demonstrated by the partner, in order to achieve a code of 4, should be of at least moderate intensity (for example, smiling broadly or laughing heartily on at least one occasion).

5 - High. The partner's affective tone is positive most of the time; the partner generally displays positive affect and expresses warmth or caring toward the other partner. The partner is observed to smile, laugh, make jokes, touch the other partner in a playful manner, or sound happy, cheerful, or satisfied. Again, the positive affect should be of at least moderate to high intensity (for example, the partner may make or respond to a joke and clearly find it very funny; a genuine, happy smile may appear on the partner's face on a couple of occasions or more during the interaction).

## COUPLE CODE: NEGATIVE ESCALATION

This code assesses how often negative behaviors of one partner are responded to with negative behaviors from the other partner, and so on, such that negative behaviors constitute an escalating cycle. Couples that have escalation of negative behavior tend to reciprocate each other's negative statements, rising tone of voice, tension, and distress. In a negative escalating cycle, partners match each other's complains, put-downs, and insults. In other words, for negative escalation to take place, as soon as one partner (Partner A) acts in a very negative manner, the very next behavior or reaction on the part of the other partner (Partner B) should also be negative. In order for negative escalation to be rated, the very next response on the part of Partner A must also be negative. In other words, a complete negative escalation cycle is the following: A-B-A. This means that if Partner A is highly negative with Partner B, but Partner B's immediate response is not negative (e.g., the other may be passive, withdrawn, neutral, calming, or positive), then a high rating should not be given on this code. Similarly, if Partner A is negative, and Partner B is negative, but Partner A's very next response is either passive, withdrawn, neutral, calming, or positive, there is no negative escalation cycle. To be rated very high on negative escalation, the couple needs to give the impression of triggering each other's negative behaviors, in other words "pushing each other's buttons."

**Note: It is very important for this code to write down every time you see a full escalation cycle, and note the intensity of the negativity, in order to make the most accurate rating. Without careful attention, this code will not be rated effectively.**

1 - Very Low. There is no escalation of conflict. When one partner exhibits negativity or conflictual behavior, the other partner's immediate response is not negative (or if it is negative, the third behavior is not negative). Instead, the other partner's immediate response (or the third response) is a neutral or positive behavior (which can be a neutral or positive statement, made with a neutral or positive tone of voice).

2 - Low. There is little reciprocity in the negativity that is expressed. Once or twice, the partners may be observed to immediately respond to negative statements, rising tones of voice, or increases in tension or distress, with similarly negative statements, rises in tone of voice, or increases in tension or distress, in an A-B-A fashion (see above). However, the reciprocity of negativity is subtle or of mild intensity and does not appear to be related to significant conflict in the couple.

3 - Moderate. There is some reciprocity in the negativity expressed between the members of the couple, but this occurs clearly less than half the time. That is, a few times the partners may be observed to immediately respond to a negative statement, rising tone of voice, or increase in tension or distress, with a similarly negative statement, rise in tone of voice, or increase in tension or distress, in an A-B-A fashion (see above). The reciprocity of negativity may be subtle or obvious and is of mild to moderate intensity. The escalation of negativity appears to be related to some conflict in the couple.

4 - Moderately High. There is clear reciprocity in the negativity expressed by the couple in an A-B-A fashion (see above); it is noticeable, obvious, and of moderate intensity. Several times the partners are observed to immediately respond to a negative statement, rising tone of voice, or increase in tension or distress, with a similarly negative statement, rise in tone of voice, or increase in tension or distress. The escalation of negativity appears to be related to a fair amount of conflict in the couple.

5 - High. There is significant reciprocity in the negativity during the discussion, in an A-B-A fashion (see above); it is noticeable, obvious, and of moderate to high intensity. Frequently, the partners are observed to immediately respond to a negative statement, rising tone of voice, or increase in tension or distress, with a similarly negative statement, rise in tone of voice, or increase in tension or distress. The escalation of negativity is related to significant conflict in the couple.

## COUPLE CODE: COHESIVENESS

Cohesiveness represents the sense of unity, closeness, and teamwork within a couple. A highly cohesive couple is clearly a team, where even if the conversation is difficult, the intimate connection between the partners is never broken, and partners always appear to be working toward a common goal. Partners will either appear to be comfortable and close, or the interaction will be marked by interpersonal distance, stiffness, awkwardness, and/or a lack of closeness and teamwork. In low cohesiveness couples, partners will often appear disengaged from one another.

1 - Very Low. In this code, the partners appear disengaged from one another and do not appear to function as a team; interpersonal distance, aloofness, awkwardness, or stiffness may characterize the relationship. Little warmth or closeness is seen in most of the interaction. This rating may be given if the interaction is stilted and extremely awkward, as if the partners are strangers to one another.

2 - Low. For the most part, the couple appears fragmented, rather than cohesive. There are moments of teamwork; however, these moments are infrequent and do not characterize the interaction.

3 - Moderate. For this code, there must be observable moments of closeness and teamwork. However, there are times when the couple appears fragmented or stiff, rather than cohesive. Moments of tension, distance and awkwardness may be observed. The main difference between a code of 2 and a code of 3 is that for a couple to achieve a code of 2, it should appear that the couple is basically fragmented but has moments of cohesion. For a 3, it should appear that the couple basically appears to function as a unified system, but the depth of the closeness and unity is sometimes difficult to ascertain.

4 - Moderately High. Partners appear to be relatively close with each other. There is a sense of underlying connection in the couple, even when struggling with difficult issues. Difficult moments never reach a level that would be labeled fragmented. The interaction may not always be smooth, but the spirit of teamwork and unity between the partners is relatively consistent.

5 - High. The couple clearly functions as a team, and the strength of the connection between them is obvious. The interaction is likely to run very smoothly. They appear to be comfortable and close with each other and clearly are working toward a common goal. This rating should be given if the above are true, with the understanding that the interaction may not be always positive, given the difficult nature of the task.

## COUPLE CODE: PURSUIT/WITHDRAWAL PATTERN

In the pursuit/withdrawal pattern of communication, one partner presses the other partner to discuss an issue and requests change through a variety of behaviors that can include demands, nagging statements, and complaints (pursuit). While one partner is pursuing the other to communicate, the other partner attempts to avoid discussing the problem by withdrawing -- changing the topic to something more neutral, denying the problem, avoiding eye contact, folding arms across one's chest, getting distracted by extraneous stimuli (e.g., looking at the carpet, fiddling with hair, nails, wallet, or purse), mumbling responses, sliding down in a chair, becoming silent, leaving the room, and/or refusing to discuss the matter further. Pursuit/withdrawal is related to couple interactions wherein one partner actively seeks to discuss a charged topic and the withdrawing partner shuts down, either by neutralizing the content so as to neutralize affect, or by refusing to or being unable to engage in the discussion.

Verbal examples of withdrawal include statements such as, "I don't see any point in discussing this issue any further," "I don't want to talk about it," "I don't see how that is relevant," and "Why do you have to bring this up again?"

- 1 - Very Low. When one partner brings up an issue or attempts to discuss a topic, the other is not seen to avoid the topic.
- 2 - Low. When one partner brings up an issue or attempts to discuss a topic, the other partner, on one or two occasions, is seen to make attempts to avoid the topic by changing the topic, withdrawing, denying elements of the problem, becoming silent, or being slow to respond. However, the withdrawing partner is fairly readily re-engaged by the pursuing partner, who never reaches the point of nagging or making serious complaints. Instead, there may be a bit of cajoling or a repetition of a request in order to engage the other partner.
- 3 - Moderate. When one partner brings up an issue or attempts to discuss a topic, the other is seen on several occasions to make efforts to avoid the issue or topic. Pursuit behaviors may include some mild nagging statements, demands, or complaints. Withdrawal behaviors may include some statements indicative of efforts to change the topic, some denial, avoiding eye contact, folding arms across one's chest, getting distracted by extraneous stimuli (e.g., looking at the carpet, wall, or ceiling, fiddling with hair, nails, wallet, or purse), mumbling responses, being slow to respond, or becoming silent.
- 4 - Moderately High. When one partner brings up an issue or attempts to discuss a topic, the other partner around half the time makes efforts to avoid the issue or topic. Pursuit behaviors may include some moderately negative nagging statements, demands, or complaints. Withdrawal behaviors include the occurrence of the following behaviors: changing the topic, denying the problem, avoiding eye contact, folding arms across one's chest, getting distracted by extraneous stimuli (e.g., looking at the carpet, wall, or ceiling, fiddling with hair, nails, wallet, or purse), mumbling responses, becoming silent and tense, leaving the room, and/or refusing to discuss the matter further.

5 - High. When one partner brings up an issue or attempts to discuss a topic, the other is seen more than half of the time to make efforts to avoid the issue or topic. Pursuit behaviors may include some moderately to highly negative nagging statements, demands, or complaints. Withdrawal behaviors may include changing the topic, denying the problem, avoidance of eye contact, folding arms across one's chest, getting distracted by extraneous stimuli (e.g., looking at the carpet, fiddling with hair, nails, wallet, or purse), mumbling responses, becoming silent, leaving the room, and/or stubbornly refusing to discuss the matter further. The pursuit and withdrawal roles are clear, obvious, and easy to identify. The pursuit/withdrawal pattern should be fairly pervasive throughout the discussion. There is a fair amount of underlying tension in the interaction. **(The primary difference between a code of 4 and 5 is the amount of time the partner withdraws: less than half the time for a code of 4 versus more than half the time for a code of 5. Also note the difference in intensity of pursuit behaviors.)**

## COUPLE CODE: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLE

This code assesses the different styles with which couples relate to each other. Couples are assigned to only one of the following six categories. Some couples will demonstrate the "pursuit/withdrawal" pattern, as described above, such that when one partner attempts to engage the other, the other partner will try to avoid the interaction in some way. Other couples will not demonstrate this pursuit-withdrawal pattern, but rather, they will both be actively involved in the discussion. These couples may either be highly conflictual and potentially destructive or engaged in an harmonious or constructive manner. Other couples will be less engaged with each other, where both partners appear disengaged, apathetic, disinterested, passive, or distant from one another. There are six categories in which to rate couples: Female Pursuit/Male Withdrawal; Male Pursuit/Female Withdrawal; Disengaged; High Conflict - Hostile; High Conflict - Expressive; and Harmonious.

### 1. FEMALE PURSUIT/MALE WITHDRAWAL

In this type of couple, the female partner presses her partner to discuss an issue and requests change, at times through demands, nagging statements, and complaints, as the male partner attempts to avoid discussing the problem by withdrawing, changing the topic, becoming silent, leaving the room, and/or refusing to discuss the matter further. Behaviorally, it is possible to see the female partner attempting to move closer to the male, raise her voice, try to make eye contact, and perhaps attempt to reach out physically to the male (e.g., pat him on the leg or arm). The male is likely to show signs of withdrawal including emotionally shutting down, denying the problem, avoiding eye contact, folding his arms across his chest, getting distracted by extraneous stimuli (e.g., looking at the carpet, fiddling with his hair, nails, or wallet), or mumbling his responses. If the couple is rated as Female Pursuit/Male Withdrawal, their score on the Pursuit/Withdrawal Pattern code should be at least a 3.

### 2. MALE PURSUIT/FEMALE WITHDRAWAL

In this type of couple, the male partner presses his partner to discuss an issue and requests change, at times through demands, nagging statements, and complaints, as the female partner attempts to avoid discussing the problem by withdrawing, changing the topic, becoming silent, leaving the room, and/or refusing to discuss the matter further. Behaviorally, it is possible to see the male partner attempting to move closer to the female, raise his voice, try to make eye contact, and perhaps attempt to reach out physically to the female (e.g., pat her on the leg or arm). The female is likely to show signs of withdrawal including emotionally shutting down, denying the problem, avoiding eye contact, folding her arms across her chest, getting distracted by extraneous stimuli (e.g., looking at the carpet, fiddling with her hair, nails, or purse), or mumbling her responses. If the couple is rated as Male Pursuit/Female Withdrawal, their score on the Pursuit/Withdrawal Pattern code should be at least a 3.

### 3. DISENGAGED

In this type of couple, both partners appear to be somewhat passive, disinterested, detached, withdrawn, or avoidant. There is likely to be tension in these couples, and it is likely that they will be observed dealing with the tension in a rather uncomfortable or awkward way, rather than making efforts to engage each other and really work through the problem. This type of couple tends to have a somewhat low rate of interaction, in which there may be several moments of silence. There is clearly distance between the partners but not a great deal of overt hostility and conflict. In behavioral terms, these couples will tend to have little eye contact, orient their bodies away from each other, cross their arms, fidget, or appear distracted.

### 4. HIGH CONFLICT - HOSTILE

In this type of couple, both partners appear to be negative, tense, and unhappy. In these highly negative couples, both partners tend to exhibit anger, frustration, tension, and general negativity. They may also make antagonistic, complaining, hostile, and/or critical statements toward each other. There is likely to be overt tension in the interaction. Behaviorally, partners may appear to do one or more of the following: raise their voices, sometimes sharply, with each other, clench their fists or become rigid or tense in body language or position, grip or pound on the arms of the chair, or speak with tension, or coldness in their voices (as if they are speaking to each other through clenched teeth).

### 5. HIGH CONFLICT - EXPRESSIVE

In this type of couple, both partners may be observed to raise their voices and exhibit stubbornness, volatility, and/or quick-temperedness. These interactions between partners are not hostile; rather these couples seem to be those whose style is to argue, fight, or spar with each other, without being overly antagonistic or mean-spirited with one another. The high level of conflict in these couples tends to be a way for each of the partners to "let off steam," reduce tension, and express themselves. These partners tend to end interactions on a positive note. In contrast to high conflict - hostile couples, who seem clearly unhappy, distressed, or tense, even at the end of the interaction, the high conflict - expressive couples appear to maintain a strong connection and respect for one another.

### 6. HARMONIOUS

In this type of couple, discussions proceed smoothly and calmly, without significant tension or conflict. Partners do not appear to get overly angry or frustrated. If they do not appear to understand each other, they ask for clarification in an appropriate manner. If they disagree, they do so respectfully. There is clearly a strong connection between partners that is not disrupted by disagreement or discussion of problems. Behaviorally, partners may appear to do one or more of the following: sit close to each other, touch each other (e.g., hold hands or pat each other on the leg or arm), maintain frequent eye contact, smile or otherwise demonstrate affection with one another, remain attentive while listening to the other partner, maintain a steady tone of voice, and/or maintain relaxed or comfortable body positions.

## **COUPLE CODE: BALANCE OF POWER**

This code assesses the distribution of power within the couple. In other words, one person may seem to be dominant or to have more control over the interaction. Alternatively, it may appear that neither partner dominates the other and power is shared, or it may seem that each member of the couples attempts to be dominant though neither succeeds. Dominance can be expressed in any of the following ways: dominating the conversation, having the final say in decisions that are made, “lecturing” the partner, steering the direction of the discussion and the choice of the topic discussed. The dominant or more powerful partner may be deferred to, perceived as more knowledgeable, and given more respect by the other partner (though this may not always be the case). The opinions, ideas, and feelings of the dominant partner appear to be more important and carry more weight than the opinions, ideas, and feelings of the non-dominant partner. In addition, the partner who is least powerful is the one who asks for change, whereas the partner in power resists change and instead maintains the “status quo.”

### **1. BALANCED**

To rate a couple as balanced, there must be no evidence of either person as having more dominance or more power over the other in the interaction. The opinions, ideas, and feelings of both partners seem equally respected and attended to. There is a great deal of reciprocity or give-and-take in the interaction, such that both partners appear to have equal voices in the matters discussed. Or, though one partner may end up doing most of the talking, both partner’s appear to have equal weight in making decisions. If the topic that is discussed appears to be more important to one person, this is mutually decided and agreed upon. Both partners’ opinions are equally weighted, even if the focus may be one partner more than the other.

### **2. MALE DOMINANT**

In this code, the male is clearly the more powerful and dominant member of the dyad. The other partner is at times ignored, not listened to, and/or not respected. She may be passive while he is assertive. For example, he may tell her what to do or demand change and she acquiesces. It is clear that her opinions, thoughts, and feelings carry somewhat less weight in the discussion. The male partner directs the flow and topic of the conversation and has the last say many decisions that are made. The female partner may make repeated requests for change (in the family, the male partner, or the issue at hand), but it appears clear from the male’s behavior that he is not going to change or that he is not going to help the female make changes that she wants (e.g., the female will ask the male to change, but the male responds by saying something like, “Ok, that’s a good point, but it won’t happen, because x, y, or z...”).

### 3. FEMALE DOMINANT

In this code, the female is clearly the more powerful and dominant member of the dyad. The other partner is at times ignored, not listened to, and/or not respected. He may be passive while she is assertive. For example, she may tell him what to do or demand change and he acquiesces. It is clear that his opinions, thoughts, and feelings carry somewhat less weight in the discussion. The female partner clearly directs the flow and topic of the conversation, and has the last say many decisions that are made. The male partner may make repeated requests for change (in the family, the female partner, or the issue at hand), but it appears clear from the female's behavior that she is not going to change or that she is not going to help the male make changes that he wants (e.g., the male will ask the female to change, but the female responds by saying something like, "Ok, that's a good point, but it won't happen, because x, y, or z...").

### 4. CONFLICTUAL IMBALANCE

In this code, both partners appear to be making efforts to gain control in the interaction. Both partners are vying for power. Partners may repeatedly make self-focused statements, insist on discussing issues they have particular concerns with, or may make efforts to get his or her own way or to have the last say in decisions. Neither partner is flexible or willing to compromise. There seems to be a "stand-off" between the partners.

## Appendix

## Interrater Reliability Data for the Individual SCID Codes\*

<u>Individual Codes</u>	<u>Pearson Correlation Coefficients</u>	
Male Verbal Aggression	.91	
Male Negativity and Conflict		.82
Male Withdrawal	.82	
Male Coerciveness/Control	.84	
Male Communication		.81
Male Emotional Support/Attunement	.81	
Male Positive Affect	.87	
Female Verbal Aggression	.83	
Female Negativity and Conflict	.80	
Female Withdrawal	.72	
Female Coerciveness/Control	.78	
Female Communication	.79	
Female Emotional Support/Attunement	.70	
Female Positive Affect	.85	
<u>Couple Codes</u>		
Negative Escalation	.80	
Cohesiveness		.84
Pursuit/Withdrawal Pattern	.70	
<u>Categorical Couple Codes</u>		
Style of Interaction	.80	
Balance of Power	.71	
<u>Alpha Coefficient</u>		
<u>Summary Codes</u>		
Male Negative Communication <sup>1</sup>	.88	
Male Positive Communication <sup>2</sup>	.87	
Female Negative Communication <sup>1</sup>	.85	
Female Positive Communication <sup>2</sup>	.87	

\*Calculations are based on a sample of 50 couples.

<sup>1</sup>Negative Communication summary code = Verbal Aggression, Negativity/Conflict, & Coerciveness/Control

<sup>2</sup>Positive Communication summary code = Communication, Emotional Support/Attunement, & Positive Affect