

How to Have a Happy Relationship

Research shows that the average couple waits six years too long to get help. This comes as no surprise, since more than 50 percent of California marriages end in divorce.

The reality is, even couples that have very difficult relationships can learn how to have great marriages. Frequently, couples simply lack the skills they need to make each other feel safe, understood, and stimulated.

In successful marriages, secure couples give each other a daily feed of admiration, love, and affection. They do not overwhelm each other, even when they fight. Successful couples know how to soothe and calm partners when tensions are high and excite their partners to keep passion and love alive.

They create safety and closeness with their partners by showing respect and consideration for each other. They look to each other first before others and are careful not to embarrass their partners in public.

Whether your relationship is in crisis or you'd like to make your good relationship great, a qualified marriage and family therapist can help.

Most health insurance policies cover the service of MFTs so long as the services are "medically necessary." This typically includes coverage for face-to-face sessions for a diagnosable mental health problem. Such coverage may be limited. Please contact your health insurance company for detailed information about the coverage available to you and your family.



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KEEPING LOVE ALIVE:

How to Save Your Relationship



Brought to you by the
California Association of
Marriage and Family Therapists



COMMON PROBLEMS IN RELATIONSHIPS THAT YOU CAN SOLVE:

Remember, this is about love and respect. It's why you married each other. Recognizing you need help is a sign of strength and commitment.

Marital problems are often signals that couples need to build new skills—not separate or divorce—to create a satisfying relationship. These signals include:

- Arguing and conflict—Even couples who fight a lot can have highly successful marriages. These couples have learned how to relax their partner and regulate a conflict when it threatens to get out of control.
- Avoidance—Couples avoid each other when they feel threatened, afraid, angry, or confused about their relationship. An objective therapist can help navigate reality and the path to intimacy.
- Lack of passion or sex—A sex life that isn't mutually satisfying can indicate other underlying intimacy issues or relationship problems. Some couples are close friends, but need to learn how to turn up the passion for great sex.
- Poor communication—About parenting, money, values, and more. Couples can learn how to move past criticizing, contempt, resentful accommodation, or the silent treatment to get more of what they want from their partners.

It takes energy, a positive attitude, tolerance, and persistence to maintain a healthy, happy relationships. But the rewards are worth it. Couples therapy can help you build the kind of life you want together.

WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

- **Seek help early.** The average couple lives in distress far too long. Couples usually hope there is a way to make things better but fear a therapist will recommend separation. Remember—the right therapist will understand your goal to save your relationship. It's your decision to make as a couple. Look for a therapist who is pro-relationship.
- **Be Mindful.** Couples who avoid saying their critical thoughts on touchy topics are happiest.
- **Focus on the positive.** Successful couples make at least five times as many positive statements to and about each other as negative comments.
- **Diffuse the disagreement.** Happy couples know how to repair a situation or exit an argument before things get out of control. Use humor, make a caring remark, change the topic, or take a 20 minute break when things get heated.
- **Find the right therapist.** Seek someone who specializes in couples work, sees at least five couples per week, and who both of you feel comfortable with. Use short telephone interviews to shop for a good fit with potential therapists. Ask fees, if they accept your health insurance, and if they work with difficult relationships.

OFFERING EXTRA SUPPORT About Marriage and Family Therapists

Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) are relationship experts. They work with individuals, couples, families, children, adolescents, and the elderly, providing support and perspective as patients struggle with life's challenges.

Licensed by the State of California, MFTs are psychotherapists who are uniquely trained and credentialed to assess, diagnose, and treat a wide range of issues so individuals achieve more adequate, satisfying and productive relationships and social adjustment.

The California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT) is an independent statewide non-profit organization made up of over 29,000 mental health professionals. CAMFT is dedicated to advancing marriage and family therapy as a healing art, science, and mental health profession. In fact, CAMFT sponsors TherapistFinder.com™ so Californians can gain access to qualified local experts who can help.



Seeking a Marriage and Family Therapist or other mental health professional to assist with life's difficulties is a sign of courage and a step in the right direction. Always ask about a therapist's special areas of expertise (e.g. grief counseling, children's issues, relationship counseling) before you engage in therapy to ensure it's the right fit for you.

TherapistFinder™ is a California-wide interactive, online directory that is user-friendly and searchable by name, location, and area of expertise. It's your introduction to one or more qualified psychotherapists who hold a California license.

