6.2 Assignment Discussion: Instructions for

Intervening with Couples

**Getting Started**

Even if you do not plan to practice directly with families as a social worker, your clients will inevitably be impacted by their past and present family dynamics. In this activity, you will watch Dr. John Gottman’s four-part lecture about relationships and couples therapy. You will then discuss with your classmates how a counselor may effectively help the couple.



**Resources**

* Textbook: *The social work practicum: A guide and workbook for students*
* Videos: Making Relationships Work, Parts 1–4



**Background Information**

A family or couples counselor has a challenging job. She or he strives to recognize and validate individual perspectives without valuing one perspective more than another or alienating any individuals. A family or couples counselor must also identify strengths and opportunities for people involved in difficult, intense conflict. Faith-based strategies can be particularly effective and beneficial for some families struggling with conflict.



**Instructions**

1. Watch Dr. John Gottman’s four-part lecture about relationships and couples therapy, located at:
   1. [Making Relationships Work, Part 1](https://youtu.be/LLXX8wzvT7c)-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLXX8wzvT7c>

* 1. [Making Relationships Work, Part 2](https://youtu.be/-gFldZtVIqQ)-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-gFldZtVIqQ>

* 1. [Making Relationships Work, Part 3](https://youtu.be/sJ7RHLBdqGM)-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJ7RHLBdqGM>

* 1. [Making Relationships Work, Part 4](https://youtu.be/9aSpl_ZjmcY)-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aSpl_ZjmcY>

1. Navigate to the threaded discussion and respond to the following questions:
   1. How does Dr. Gottman’s lecture help you understand what is going on for couples, and how a social worker might be able to help them? Specify two concepts from Dr. Gottman’s lecture and discuss how you would apply them to a case.
   2. Thinking about the planned change process described by Garthwait in the course text, how might you approach assessment and treatment planning for a couple with Gottman’s ideas in mind? Be specific, by using an example and refer to specific aspects of the planned change process in your response.
   3. If you were intervening with a couple, how would you establish and maintain professional boundaries compared to working with an individual? Identify at least two specific professional boundaries you may need that seem most relevant to couples therapy and describe how you would establish and maintain them. What interactions in working with couples might test those boundaries? How might Gottman’s approach help with approaching boundaries with couples?
   4. Considering Gottman’s model, how would you approach measuring success in your work with couples? How would you monitor their progress toward success? What information could you use during treatment to inform your practice or change strategies?
2. Your initial post is due by the end of the fourth day of the workshop.