

**EFFECT OF GROUP THERAPY ON DYADIC  
ADJUSTMENT AMONG MALE  
PROBATIONERS AND  
THEIR WIVES**

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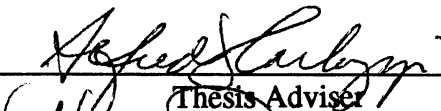
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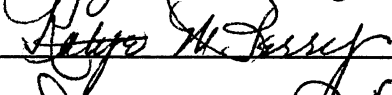
**Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
July, 1991**


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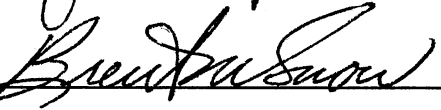
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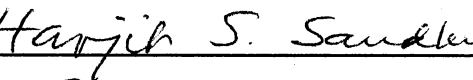
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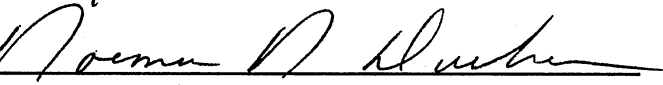
  
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express sincere appreciation to Dr. Al Carlozzi, Chairman of my doctoral committee, for his sense of ethics. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Katye Perry, Dr. Joe Pearl, Dr. Harjit S. Sandhu, and Dr. Brent Snow, for their encouragement and suggestions. Without Dr. Sandhu's endorsement, research within the Oklahoma Department of Corrections would have been most difficult. I also thank Dr. Judy Dobson for her unwavering support.

To the Probation and Parole Officers of the Stillwater District of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, I owe a great deal for helping me identify appropriate participants for this study. Special thanks go to Officer James Rich for vouching for me; his endorsement encouraged his clients to volunteer to participate.

To co-facilitators Theresa Johnson and Larry Vreedenberg and Jina Dagle and Ron Hall I offer a big thank you. Without them there could have been no treatment groups. They were wonderful.

To my parents, Caroline Killian and the late Byrle Killian, I extend gratitude for their always having confidence in me. To my husband Leslie I offer thanks for being as patient and supportive as he could be. To my children, Gentner, David, Jonathan, and Caroline, I wish to say that their encouragement has been a strengthening force for me. I am extremely thankful for each of you.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The families of inmates have traditionally been the forgotten victims of the penal system (Fishman, 1986a). As the spouse/parent is removed from society, he or she is also removed from his or her family. In 1764 Cesare Beccaria (Young, 1986) faulted the Italian penal system for punishing the families of prisoners by confiscating the property of men found guilty of crimes. Although confiscations as such are not made today, the financial hardship caused by the incarceration of a parent/spouse is a heavy burden to the family, beginning with providing funds for legal defense (Morris, 1964; Schneller, 1976; Swan, 1981).

In her landmark study of male inmates' families, Pauline Morris (1965) focused on the hardships endured by the wives and children of males incarcerated in Great Britain. Several other studies have also been made of the conditions experienced by male (Bloodgood, 1928; Fenton, 1959; Schneller, 1976; Swan, 1981) and female inmates' families (Zalba, 1964).

In 1987, the latest available statistics, there were 562,623 males incarcerated in the United States. This was an increase of 6.9% over the previous year. In Oklahoma there was a 10.2% rise during the same time period with male inmates totaling 8381 at the end of 1987. The number of male incarcerates per one hundred thousand population nationally is 238, while in Oklahoma it is 296. The proportion of male to female inmates

throughout the country is 95.6% to 4.4% (Jamieson & Flanagan, 1989). According to the latest available figures, the average annual cost to incarcerate one inmate in 1986 was \$22,195.58 nationally and \$18,095.21 in this state. In 1983, the national rate of recidivism stood at a staggering 62.5% for former inmates being rearrested within three years, with 46.8% being reconvicted and 41.4% reincarcerated within that time period (Jamieson & Flanagan, 1989).

When one of the small proportion of women enters the prison system, it is her extended family that often provides the primary caretaking for her children (Hairston & Lockett, 1987; Zalba, 1964). With the rapidly rising number of males incarcerated in this country an increasingly large number of wives and children are being affected. It is, therefore, the families of male inmates and former inmates upon which this study will focus.

In addition to the financial hardships endured by the families of male incarcerates, there are emotional hardships which are well-documented. These include: loneliness (Daniel & Barrett, 1981; Fishman, 1988a; Morris 1965; Shekar, 1985); problems with children (Lowenstein, 1986; Sack, 1977; Sack, Seidler, & Thomas, 1976); feelings of loss (Schwartz & Weintraub, 1974); and shame (Fishman, 1988b).

The crisis points that these families face include the times of arrest, incarceration, and release (Thompson, 1984). Weintraub (1976) adds the time of sentencing as another crisis the wives and families of inmates must face.

Research has shown that visiting by family and friends during incarceration decreases the recidivism rate for male parolees (Adams & Fisher, 1976; Hairston, 1988; Holt & Miller, 1972; Homer, 1979; Jorgensen, Hernandez, & Warren, 1986). It also

suggests that the lack of outside contact can lead to increased identification with the delinquent subculture, thus lowering the chance for staying out of prison (Wormworth, 1984).

The strong family ties that lower recidivism rates prompt the question, "Can family ties be strengthened by therapeutic intervention?" If so, lowered recidivism rates could prove to be of three-fold benefit: to the former inmates, to their families, and to society in general (Holt & Miller, 1972). Building more prisons seems inevitable unless innovative and aggressive programs are implemented to help decrease the rate of recidivism of former prison inmates, whether they have been released, paroled, or are out on probation.

A therapy group of inmates and their wives was described by Fenton (1959). Freedman and Rice (1977) experimented with what they termed one-partner couple therapy, working with the male incarcerate to improve his marriage. Conjugal visits and home furloughs were noted by Hopper (1962). Marsh (1983) reported teaching communication and child management skills to a group of inmates and their wives, and Showalter and Jones (1980) conducted marital workshops within the prison that focused on communication, stress management, and assertiveness. VanDuesen, Yarbrough and Cornelson (1985) reported short-term therapy with adults on probation and their families experienced some success. The literature revealed no research reported on couple's group therapy with men on probation and their wives.

The literature on marital therapy suggests that improved communication skills are indeed conducive to increased marital satisfaction (Beavers, 1985; Keeny & Seigel, 1986; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981; Satir, 1983). The ability to negotiate (Sprey, 1969)

and the balance of power (Enns, 1988) are seen as factors in success in coping with family conflict. Unrealistic beliefs (Epstein & Eidelson, 1981) and blaming (Fincham, 1985) are associated with lowered marital satisfaction.

Marital therapy methods to improve communication skills of couples include behavioral (Jacobson, 1985; Jacobson & Fouette, 1985; Snyder & Wills, 1989), cognitive restructuring (Huber & Milstein, 1985), Transactional Analysis (Greene, 1988), relationship enhancement (Ford & Dewitt, 1984; Greene, 1985-86; Guerney, 1977; Zimpfer, 1988), and family systems therapy (Beavers, 1985; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981; Satir, 1983). Moreover, couples' therapy groups have been shown to be effective in treating the married alcoholic (Davenport & Mathiasen, 1988; Harrison & Donnelly, 1987; O'Farrell & Cutter, 1984); relationship dysfunction (McCarrick, Manderscheid, Silbergeld, & McIntyre, 1982; Wilson, Bornstein, & Wilson, 1988); family of origin issues (Kaslow & Suarez, 1988); marital enrichment (Cleaver, 1987; Marrett, 1988); and couples' reeducation (Croake, 1987).

From the references cited above, it appears that a structured format for short-term couples' groups has been found effective in treating diverse populations. It would seem plausible, then, that a structured group could be an effective format for a couples' group for men on probation and their wives.

The theme-centered interactional (TCI) group is one such structured group that proceeds as follows. Each week the facilitators didactically present a topic and then encourage group discussion on the topic. The group's involvement provides a vehicle for learning and incorporating new information (Shaffer, 1989).

A general therapy group is unstructured by its very nature and may be more appropriate for long-term treatment of symptomology (Yalom, 1985). The unstructured format requires commitment to the process of therapy that men on probation may or may not be willing to make.

### Statement of the Problem

The male inmate population continues to increase at an alarming rate (Jamieson & Flanagan, 1989). However, few innovative approaches have been made to reduce recidivism.

Marital therapy for couples' groups have proven successful for treating a wide variety of problems. No one, however, has examined whether couples' groups of men on probation and their wives improve marital satisfaction or adjustment, and hence the strong family ties that lower the rate of recidivism. For this reason, this investigation will concentrate on the effectiveness of couples' groups on marital, or dyadic, adjustment of male probationers and their wives.

The specific question involved is: Can dyadic adjustment be enhanced in groups of male probationers and their wives? If so, can it be enhanced more effectively by a structured or unstructured group therapy format?

### Definition of Terms

#### Dyadic Adjustment:

Dyadic adjustment (Spanier, 1976) is one of the terms used to define the quality of marital satisfaction. Other terms used for this construct include: marital adjustment, which is defined as "accommodation of a husband and wife to each other at a given time"

(Locke & Wallace, 1959, p. 251); marital cohesiveness, defined as "emotional bonding" (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1979, p. 5); "healthy couples" (Beavers, 1985, p. 68), and functional and dysfunctional couples (Satir, 1983). Spanier, Lewis, and Cole (1975) enlarged the definition of Locke and Wallace to include couples who cohabit but are not legally married. Dyadic adjustment, then, is defined as "...a process of movement along a continuum from good to poor that may change at any given time according to the circumstances" (Spanier, Lewis, & Cole, 1975).

#### Husbands:

Husbands will be defined as former inmates who are presently serving what is called split-time. That is, they have served a portion of their sentences incarcerated and are currently serving the remainder of their sentences out of prison on probation. This term will also apply to men who may have received a sentence consisting only of probation. This group is also referred to as probationers.

#### Wives:

For the purposes of this study, wives will refer to those women who are either married legally to or are living as married with men on probation.

#### Probationers:

These men have served part of their sentences as incarcerated and part outside the correctional institutions on probation, or they have been sentenced only to probation. There are specific conditions of probation to which probationers must adhere in order to remain outside correctional institutions.

### Recidivism:

Recidivism is defined for this study as returning to prison during the three-year period following release for either breaking the conditions of probation or by being found guilty of a new crime and sentenced to reincarceration.

### Department of Corrections:

The Department of Corrections (DOC) is the agency that oversees all involvement of the government with those who have been found guilty of committing a crime. It is through the Research Division of the Department that permission was granted for this study.

### Structured Couples' Therapy Group:

The structured couples' group follows a planned agenda for each session. A theme-centered interactional couples' group (TCI) is one such format for imparting information to couples in a small group setting and then encouraging the participants to discuss the topics (Shaffer, 1989). For the purpose of this study, the structured group included eight sessions.

### Unstructured Couples' Therapy Group:

The unstructured couples' group for the purpose of this study consisted of eight sessions of unstructured interpersonal exchange. The facilitators encouraged self-disclosure, honesty, constructive feedback, and mutual respect.

### Significance of the Study

Research in the area of marital counseling for men on probation and their wives is important for four reasons: First, the alarming rise in the inmate population with its inherent cost to the taxpayers (Jamieson & Flanagan, 1989) is cause for seeking out innovative means of lowering the recidivism rate for probationers. Second, the hardships endured by the wives and children of inmates are a concern for those in the field of mental health (Daniel & Barrett, 1981; Jorgensen, Hernandez, & Warren, 1986; Shekar, 1985; Thompson, 1984; Weintraub, 1976). Third, the cost to the taxpayers for social services to these families may be ameliorated by the husbands' employment and supporting their families (Shekar, 1985). And fourth, determining whether a structured format is more effective than an unstructured format with this population may promote further research in this area.

### Assumptions and Limitations

It is an assumption of this investigation that male probationers have a desire to stay out of prison. It is further assumed that the wives of the probationers want their husbands to stay out of prison. In addition, it is assumed that the participants of this study will not read at the same rate or level. It is for this reason that the scales were read to each group as they answered the questions on the instruments.

This study is limited in several ways. First, the population was drawn from only one probation district of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. The members of the groups participated voluntarily after having been referred by their probation officers. Consequently, any resulting tendencies of change may be generalizable only to volunteer



participants, even though non-volunteer participants would not have been possible for this study. The small group format will naturally limit the generalizability of any data generated.

The instruments used are self-report and subjective in nature and may contain distortions from interpreting the questions. Dyadic adjustment is dynamic and may vary with external and internal circumstances. The scores are indicative of only the time that the instruments were completed.

The group co-facilitators were given the opportunity to choose whether they would prefer working in a structured or an unstructured format. This may prove to be a limitation over randomly assigning them to treatments.

### Research Questions

The following research questions, then, are posed: Can the dyadic adjustment of male probationers and their wives be enhanced by their participating in couples' therapy groups? Is a structured format more effective than an unstructured format in enhancing dyadic adjustment of probationers and their wives?

### Organization of the Study

This chapter contains an introduction to the topic under investigation, a statement of the problem, definition of terms, significance of the study, assumptions and limitations, and research questions. Chapter II presents a review of the literature, including previous research on the families of male inmates, recidivism, marital therapy, couples' therapy groups, couples' groups of inmates, dyadic satisfaction, and demographic data. The methodology used in conducting the investigation is discussed in Chapter III. An

integration of information gathered concerning the three groups is presented in Chapter

IV. A summary, conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This chapter includes a history of the research on the families of male inmates and probationers and the interventions that may apply to this population. The areas include: (a) families of male inmates, (b) the effect of family contacts on recidivism, (c) marital therapy, (d) couples' group therapy, (e) therapy groups of male inmates and their wives, (f) dyadic adjustment, and (g) demographic data.

#### Families of Male Inmates

The hardships experienced by the families of inmates have been studied infrequently, but there are some consistent findings in the literature. Five major studies will be reviewed first.

In 1928, the dire financial circumstances of the families of 210 families of inmates in Kentucky were reported (Bloodgood, 1928). These families contained 749 children. Following the incarcerations of their husbands or fathers, only about one-fifth of the mostly rural families received any financial aid from public or private sources. Consequently, approximately three-fourths of the wives sought employment. The study suggested that the state of Kentucky increase the five-to-fifteen-cent daily wages of

inmates with the stipulation that a portion be sent to each working inmate's family (Bloodgood, 1928).

The families of 588 inmates, including over 1200 children, were studied in Great Britain (Morris, 1965). The wives of these prisoners were youthful, with 50% of them under thirty years of age; 30% of them worked outside the home. When listing major problems, 41% of them reported finances as a major problem; 34% reported management of children; 32% reported loneliness and sexual frustration; and 23% reported fears of what would happen when their husbands were released. Twenty-nine percent mentioned some sort of nervous condition, and 20% of them reported physical ailments. Five percent were concerned with hostility, or stigmatization, from the community and 4% mentioned feelings of guilt or shame. Any problems of the children were often considered nuisances. The individual wife's personality was found to have the most impact on her family's adjustment to the enforced separation and worsening financial conditions: The more stable the wife's personality, the better the family adjusted to the separation.

In a study of 59 Australian families of inmates with 168 children, the financial burden was felt most severely, with medical expenses posing financial catastrophes (Anderson, 1965). Loneliness was the most often mentioned emotional complaint, and feelings of shame were expressed by nearly one-half of the respondents. The concept of role-disruption was found to be only marginal in contributing to whether the enforced separation was felt to be a crisis. The wife's previous experience, social activities, and lack of economic hardships appeared to contribute positively to the adjustment of the family of an incarcerated male.

The families of 93 inmates, which included a total of 236 children, in the Washington, D. C., area were studied to measure the degree to which the family is punished along with the inmate (Schneller, 1976). The wives of this study were an average of 30.6 years of age, with half of the wives being between 20 and 29. They had an average of a tenth-grade education, and 47 of them worked to support the family. The area of most difficulty reported by these wives was the sexual-emotional one. Even with Aid to Families with Dependent Children and the many wives who worked, the area of economic hardship was the next most difficult area. The wives also mentioned experiencing loneliness and embarrassment. For these reasons, Schneller (1976) concluded that the families of inmates are indeed punished along with the incarcerated male. Contrary to the findings of Morris and Anderson, Schneller concluded that couples who were happily married before incarceration suffered more than those not happily married.

In the study of 192 families of incarcerated males in Alabama and Tennessee (Swan, 1981) the total number of children was 432. Again the wives were young, with one-half of them under thirty years of age. Half of the wives listed financial problems as their most serious problem; 9.4% of them reported their children's lack of a father in the house; and 8.9% of them mentioned loneliness. Fifteen wives said they had no pressing problems and half of them said there were no problems with children. Swan concluded that while imprisonment of their fathers did not directly adversely affect the schoolwork of the children, the imprisonment was causing other hardships for the family.

Other studies that have addressed the plight of the families of inmates have added to the results of these extensive studies. Referring to these families as the invisible clients

in the social welfare system, Schwartz and Weintraub (1974) see imprisonment as the double crisis of demoralization and dismemberment for the families. The enforced separation of one of its members is obvious. The resulting demoralization causes grief-like symptoms in the families in general and the wives in particular. Symptoms of grieving, in addition of depression, were also found in the 21 subjects of the inquiry made by Daniel and Barrett (1981).

Feelings of shame were experienced by the 30 wives in Vermont that were interviewed by Fishman (1988b). While shame was felt more strongly by women whose husbands were incarcerated for the first time (Daniel and Barrett, 1981; Schneller, 1978; Schwartz and Weintraub, 1974), wives of higher socioeconomic offenders and sex offenders also felt shame (Fishman, 1988b).

The fear of stigmatization is worse than the actual stigmatization, or hostility and lack of respect (Fishman, 1988b; Morris, 1965). The community in which a family lives affects this feeling of potential stigmatization. In "crime familiar communities" (Fishman, 1988b, p. 176) the wives feel little stigmatization, since the arrest appears to be more crisis-provoking than community reaction. Living in prison towns, however, creates more opportunity for the wives to feel hostility.

The most common problems listed by the wives of 118 inmates in Israel included problems with children and emotional problems (Lowenstein, 1986). Daniel and Barrett (1981) asked their subjects what they most often missed concerning marital adjustment, the wives listed companionship, mutual understanding, fighting and making up, confidence, love, sharing the interest of children, and a good sexual relationship. The

subjects also mentioned needing information about their husbands, money or other material needs, and someone to talk to.

To the general problems of financial deprivation, loneliness, depression, and child care, Fishman (1988a) adds waiting, or the psychological adjustment to the prospective incarceration and absence. The 30 subjects interviewed saw deprivation as a result of the absence, not the criminal behavior. These women felt themselves to be somewhat imprisoned, confirming previous findings (Morris, 1965; Schneller, 1978; Swan, 1981), as they suffered from isolation, continuous financial pressures, boredom, and monotony.

As for the children specifically, a decline in the standard of school work and a deterioration in relationships with their peers and mothers was found in the sample in Israel (Lowenstein, 1986). In a study of the 73 children of 31 inmates in Oregon, more than one-half of the children showed a decline in the standard of their school work and deterioration in their relationships with their siblings. In addition, 12% of these children showed antisocial behavior (Sack, Seidler, & Thomas, 1976). Friedman and Esselstyn (1965) also found decline in school work, but their results showed a greater decline in the school work of girls than in boys whose fathers became incarcerated. Thompson (1984) states that the younger the child, the more likely long-term emotional damage will occur. In contrast, Moerk (1973) found no discernible difference between male children of low socioeconomic status and children whose fathers were incarcerated or who were separated by divorce.

In case studies of six families of incarcerated males, male children between the ages of 11 and 13 were seen to be the most vulnerable and the most severely affected by their fathers' imprisonment. Their antisocial behavior included stealing, truancy, running

away, breaking and entering, soiling and wetting, and fighting. The most troubled of these children were those whose parents' divorce was pending (Sack, 1977). Children often look forward to their fathers' release from prison as a magical solution to all their problems (Thompson, 1984).

Several crisis points have been noted surrounding the incarceration of husbands and fathers. These include arrest and arraignment, sentencing, initial incarceration, and pre- and post- release. It is during these times that the families must redefine themselves (Weintraub, 1976).

For coping with the initial crisis of the arrest and arraignment, it is suggested that the wives rationalize their husbands' behavior as they interpret the cause of the offence (Fishman, 1986a; Myers, 1983). They may blame external forces such as a scapegoat, the environment, or alcoholism. They may blame internal forces such as immaturity, character weakness, or mental illness. If neither of these satisfy the need to rationalize their husbands' behavior, the wives often blame themselves. These interpretations are often modified later after the wives have had time to come to grips with the reality of the situation (Fishman, 1986a).

It is their self-perceptions as traditional wives and mothers that reinforce inmates' wives determination to maintain wifely support (Fishman, 1986b). The more resources, both personal and financial, that these wives have, the better the family adjusts to the temporary single-parent household (Anderson, 1965; Lowenstein, 1986; Morris, 1965). Telephone contacts help the couples to maintain some intimacy, plan for the future, and share information about their lives. While these and home visits may not prepare the inmates for life outside, the couples derive satisfaction from them (Fishman, 1988a).



The literature includes numerous suggestions for helping the families of inmates. Giving information to the families is suggested most often (Daniel and Barrett, 1981; Fenton, 1959; Morris, 1965; Schneller, 1976; Schwartz, 1974; Swan, 1981; Weintraub, 1976). Other suggestions include: support group meetings (Daniel and Barrett, 1981; Weintraub, 1976); financial assistance (Bloodgood, 1928; Morris, 1965; Schneller, 1976; Schneller, 1975; Schwartz & Weintraub, 1974; Swan, 1981) and grief counseling (Schwartz & Weintraub, 1974).

In summary, the families of inmates suffer hardships along with their incarcerated family member. Those felt by the family include both financial and emotional hardships. Although numerous suggestions have been made by researchers, there is little proof that many innovative programs have been established to help these clients of the social welfare system (Schwartz & Weintraub, 1974).

### Recidivism

With the hardships experienced by inmates' families, it is important to look at ways that the rate of recidivism can be lowered. It is interesting that the group that is most affected by the incarceration is seen as a major, proven rehabilitative tool (Homer, 1979).

The high rate of recidivism, 41.4% reincarceration within three years (Jamieson & Flanagan, 1989), suggests that imprisonment itself does little to alter future criminal activity. It may even actually encourage and promote it (Hairston, 1988). In a study that taught prosocial attitudes and behavioral self-control to 50 inmates in Canada, it was found that if self-esteem increased while identification with the delinquent subculture of

the correctional institution increased, the chance for post-release success diminished (Wormworth, 1984).

There is a positive relationship between family ties during imprisonment and post-release success. The focus is not that family ties guarantee success; rather that absence of such ties increases the likelihood of post-release failure. The social support system of his family protects an individual inmate from a variety of stressful stimuli, provides reassurances of worth, and attests to the individual's competence in a social role (Hairston, 1988).

Communication with the family enables inmates to continue to identify with the world outside. The fewer visits from family and friends, the more "prisonized" (Jorgensen, Hernandez, & Warren, 1986, p. 48) the inmates become. In addition, fathers in prison react positively to having their children visit them (Sack et al., 1976). In a study of the effect of family visits on the rate of recidivism in California, only 2% of those inmates who had three or more visitors during the year prior to parole returned to prison within the year following their release. This contrasts with the 12% of those inmates who had no contact with family or friends. Seventy percent (70%) of those who were visited had no problems with parole as compared to 50% of those with no visitors (Holt & Miller, 1972).

Comparing parole successes of former inmates with settled lifestyles and those more exciting lifestyles, it was found that those with more settled lifestyles had greater parole success. This prompted the non-statistical conclusion that wives have little effect on their husbands' parole performance (Fishman, 1986b). This study did not, however, address whether the wives had visited their husbands in prison.

In summary, visits to inmates by family and friends serve to help the inmates remain less involved in the delinquent prison subculture. It has been suggested that an office of family relations be established at correctional institutions to encourage family contact to help prison families remain involved (Jorgensen et al., 1986).

### Marital Therapy

Marital therapy often focuses on improving communication skills. Beavers (1985) sees clarity in communication as reducing ambiguity between the marital dyad. It helps resolve issues of autonomy and control (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981) as well as issues of power and equality (Enns, 1988).

Communicating clearly is necessary in order to give and receive information accurately. Satir (1983) compares the functional communicator with the dysfunctional one: the functional communicator is willing to clarify and qualify what is heard and said; the dysfunctional communicator generalizes and operates from assumptions. Satir also makes note of the literal level and the metacommunicative level of communication. The content of the statement is on the literal level; what is said and nature of the relationship of the persons involved are both commented on at the metacommunication level. Training couples to be aware of both levels of communication helps them to be more functional in their communication. As they learn to clarify what messages are given and received, they can begin to achieve clear communication. Communication is the means of effecting therapeutic change in the cybernetic systems of couples' relationships (Keeney & Seigel, 1986).

The avoidance of conflict is more common than management of conflict in most couples (Sprey, 1969). The ability to bargain and exchange may be desirable for strengthening the relationships of couples, for Fincham (1985) found that distressed couples often blame each other for marital problems.

Sex role issues impact marital satisfaction as couples try to negotiate their relationships according to stereotypical psychological characteristics of both the male and female (Reibstein, 1988). Baucom and Aiken (1984) go so far as to assert that the wife's functioning can be seen as somewhat of a "barometer" (p. 43) for the marital relationship.

### Types of Therapies

The types of therapies that have been used to work with couples have consisted of basically behavioral or interpersonally-oriented interventions. In a study of prevention of marital distress in 21 couples, communication and problem-solving skills were taught and marital expectations were clarified in five sessions over a four month period. In a three-year follow-up, there was a significant group main effect seen in marital satisfaction as measured by the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS) (Locke & Wallace, 1959). This program was evaluated as a cost-effective means of achieving marital satisfaction (Markman, Floyd, Stanley, & Stoaasli, 1988).

Forty-three couples participated in a study that compared three behavioral interventions: a complete behavioral marital therapy (CO), behavioral exchange (BE), and communication/problem solving (CPT). In addition, there were 17 couples in the control, or waiting list, group. Immediately following the 12 sessions of marital therapy in one of the randomly assigned treatments, the couples in BE treatment showed a greater

improvement in their scores on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976). After six months, however, couples that had received the CO treatment showed greater stability in their improvement and in fact kept improving following treatment (Jacobson & Follette, 1985). In a one-year follow-up of these couples, none of those in the CO treatment had separated or divorced as some in the other treatments had done, and their scores on the DAS continued to prove stable or improved (Jacobson et al., 1985).

Seventy-nine couples participated in a study comparing Behavioral Marital Therapy (BMT) and Insight-oriented Marital Therapy (IOMT) with a control group, the Treatment on Demand (TOD) group. After 8 weeks of treatment, the improvement of couples' scores on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale increased significantly over the controls for both the BMT and the IOMT treatments. The two treatments appeared to be generally equivalent in effectiveness (Snyder & Wills, 1989).

Forty-five couples were tested in a study comparing problem-solving and experiential interventions with a control group. There were 15 couples in each treatment and also in the control group. The couples in treatment each met for 8 sessions. The problem-solving intervention taught the skills of communication and negotiation. The experiential group was more interactive in nature, with the therapists guiding the couples in assessing their own feelings within a systemic framework. Although couples scored higher than controls in both types of therapy, the couples in the experientially-focused treatment group scored significantly higher than the couples in the problem-solving treatment group on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Johnson & Greenberg, 1985).

In a study of the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring in creating a collaborative set, nine couples were randomly assigned to the treatment group and 8 couples to the waiting list. After 8 structured sessions using Rational Emotive Therapy (Ellis, 1964), those in the treatment group showed significant gains in scores on the Marital Adjustment Scale (Lock & Wallace, 1959).

In another study of cognitive functioning, specifically unrealistic beliefs, 47 couples already in marital therapy participated by filling out questionnaires. It was found that those high in unrealistic beliefs obtained lower scores on marital satisfaction than those with fewer unrealistic beliefs. They also rated the chance for improvement in therapy lower (Epstein & Eidelson, 1981).

In the Circumplex Model, a systemic framework for working with couples and families, it is suggested that gradual changes in relating are more long-lasting for couples than too rapid or too great changes (Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979). Any of the above treatments could be regarded from this vantage point. From marital therapy the natural progression is to explore the literature concerning couples' groups.

### Couples' Therapy Groups

Group therapy offers an opportunity for clients to work through their social-interactional problems in a protected setting (Rose, 1977). It gives the couples a chance to learn and practice a wide variety of new behaviors that might not have been displayed in a counselor-client relationship. As clients respond to the constantly changing group demands, they experience peer reinforcement which is perhaps the most valuable input they can receive (Yalom, 1985). The therapists benefit as far as

diagnosing is concerned by actually experiencing the dynamics within the couples in the context of the group (Witaker & Keith, 1981).

Couples' therapy groups offer couples the unique opportunity to facilitate more adaptive interpersonal behavior between partners as the group offers both education and feedback. With the opportunity to make a commitment to themselves, their relationship, and the group, an opportunity for intrapsychic and interpersonal growth is afforded (Kaslow & Suarez, 1988).

In a review of the results of five couples' therapy groups, it was asserted that couples' group therapy appears to be as effective as individual or conjoint therapy (Marrett, 1988). Most of the studies were faulted for small numbers of subjects, but they were commended for the use of control groups for comparison. The five used either interactional or behavioral approaches.

Comparing group and conjoint behavioral marital therapy, Wilson, Bornstein, and Wilson (1988) found that both were effective. There were 15 couples randomly assigned to one of the two treatments or a waiting list. The group and also the couples in conjoint therapy met for 8 weekly ninety-minute sessions. They were evaluated by four measures pre- and post-treatment: the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI), Marital Happiness Scale (MHS), and the Marital Interaction Coding System (MICS). The Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) was administered post-treatment. Although both treatments were found to be effective, the group's scores were significantly higher on the Marital Interaction Coding System, an evaluative form used by observers (Wilson et al., 1988).

According to Yalom (1985), group therapy is a vehicle in which eleven therapeutic factors work to help individuals grow interpersonally and intrapersonally. They are: instillation of hope, universality, imparting of information, altruism, the corrective recapitulation of the primary family group, development of socializing techniques, imitative behavior, interpersonal learning, group cohesiveness, catharsis, and existential factors. With these processes taking place during the life of the group, it is plausible that the specific format of a therapy group makes no difference.

There will be two types of couples' therapy groups described. These are the structured and unstructured therapy groups.

### Structured Groups

Structured groups are designed to resolve particular developmental tasks. With specific goals, the group members' expectations of success are raised. The stigma often associated with seeking help is reduced because of the educational-experiential format of structured groups. There is a feeling of psychological safety for the group members because of the boundaries between leaders and participants (Rose, 1977).

A common form of structured couples' groups is the marital enrichment format. Describing a workshop to facilitate intimacy in married couples, L'Abate and Sloan (1984) assert that couples must learn to express the hurt behind the anger before they can grow as a couple. The topics presented in the one-day workshop are selfhood and differentiation, communication of emotions and negotiation of actions.

Fourteen couples participated in four groups for Relationship Enhancement (Greene, 1985-86). Neither the number nor the length of the sessions was given. Eighteen



couples on a waiting list served as controls. The couples were compared on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) and the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI). The conclusions were that while the treatment did enhance self-esteem, the advances in communication skills of the treatment groups over the control were not statistically significantly.

Testing whether videotaped instruction along with didactic teaching was superior to didactic teaching alone, Cleaver (1987) randomly assigned 22 couples to either the experimental group, which used the videotapes, or the control group, which did not see the videotapes. The groups met for three hours each week for three weeks and were tested pre, post, and follow-up treatment. In both groups three areas were taught: listening, speaking, and problem solving. Both groups experienced modeling, role playing, behavioral rehearsal, and using I-messages. At post-treatment there was no significant difference between the groups. At a two-month follow-up, the communicating skills of the group using the videotapes appeared to deteriorate less (Cleaver, 1987).

Marital enrichment groups possibly work best for couples who have relatively minor problems. According to Zimpfir (1988) marital enrichment is not sufficient for effective treatment of dysfunctional marriages.

Sixty couples participated in a study that compared a Couples' Communication Program (CCP), which was interactional in nature, a Communication Skills Workshop (CSW), which was more behavioral, and a waiting list (WL). A \$30.00 deposit made by the couples in the two treatment groups was returned on a proportional basis of how many sessions were attended. The waiting list group paid \$5.00 for the post-training

assessment. The CCP group met four times for three hours each time; the CSW group met six times for two hours each time. The groups were evaluated post treatment and follow-up with four instruments: The Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS); Area of Change inventory (AC); Marital Communication Inventory (MCI); and the Marital Interaction Coding Scale (MICS). The scores of the Couples' Communication Program were significantly better than the other treatment group and the controls in increasing positive nonverbal messages. Both training groups significantly reduced verbal negative messages. On the self-report measures there were no significant differences in the follow-up testing.

Four couples' therapy groups of four couples each in a medical setting were described by Contreras and Scheingold (1984). The groups met for eight sessions which lasted 90 minutes each and were co-facilitated by a male and female therapist. A genogram was used in the first session to introduce each couple to the group. Exercises included: active listening, checking out assumptions, analyzing conflict patterns, and expressing resentments and appreciations. The authors listed elements that contribute to the healing process as: learning communication skills, sharing successes and failures, observing modeling of co-therapists, homework, mobilizing of hope, exposing and disrupting marital "games" (Contreras & Scheingold, 1984, p. 294), and increasing empathic relationship with spouse. No measures were reported for the participants in this study.

A format for couples' therapy groups using Adlerian theory was described by Croake (1987). At the initial session the expectation was stated that each individual of the four couples was to complete a homework assignment each week. From then on the group

sessions focused on what activity each couple could plan, implement, and report each week for their dyad to have fun. In addition, each person reported each week how he or she (1) expressed affection and (2) had been encouraging to his or her spouse one time daily. These statements were checked out with the mate and the group. In this manner the couples were reeducated to be positive in their spousal interactions (Croake, 1987).

In a study of the efficacy of Transactional Analysis (TA) (Berne, 1961) in improving marital relations in the context of group therapy, Greene (1988) found that there is little empirical support for the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of TA. Greene suggests using the single-case study to evaluate the effects of Transactional Analysis or at least more methodologically sound research designs than he found in the seven studies of TA that he evaluated.

Although couples were not included in this study, the structured format used for a group of low-income women may prove pertinent to the study at hand. These groups described by Marciniak (1984) focused on increasing self-esteem and improving interpersonal relations, in addition to decision making, life planning, and stress management. From 6 to 12 women and two female facilitators met for 10 weeks, three hours each week. Transportation was provided by reimbursing those who owned cars for picking up other participants. Child care was also provided. While no statistical measures were used in this study, the author presented suggestions to those in public mental health agencies. Addressing therapy groups which include women, Brody (1985) asserts that by revealing themselves authentically to other women, female group therapists facilitate therapeutic progress and help the women participants to redefine themselves in a more positive direction.

### Unstructured Therapy Groups

Describing general therapy groups for couples in conflict, Kaslow (1981) suggested that time-limited groups can be psychoanalytically oriented. A group of five couples meet for 12 sessions of 90 minutes each. Female and male co-therapists facilitate the recreation of the primary family group for the participants to experience. By mirroring and reflecting the participants behaviors and emotions and confronting incongruities, the co-therapists promote individual growth within the group setting. The reality principle is experienced by the structure of the group with time and fee setting; the pleasure principle is experienced by the nurturing given by the group members and the therapists. Kaslow (1981) cautions therapists concerning the splitting of the therapy team that group members are certain to attempt as they recreate the dynamics of their primary family.

Five couples were studied in the context of the two brief psychotherapy group experiences they had in an effort to improve their control patterns (McCarrick, Manderscheid, Silbergeld, & McIntyre, 1982). The groups met for an unspecified length of time and focused on letting go their patterns of symmetry (competition) or complementarity (one-up/one-down) to become more flexible in their response control patterns. The log-linear analysis showed that the competitive responses moved toward more neutral ones after the treatment.

Projective identification is considered by Morrison (1986) a viable therapeutic tool for use in couples' therapy groups. Not only is the spouse available for the projections, so are the other group members, the group therapists, and the group-as-a-whole. As others enter the "dyadic drama" (p. 65), the focus on internal pairing is diminished as the

group-as-a-whole begins to develop its own power and instruments for change. This psychoanalytically-oriented focus regards the diffusion of the projections' containment as useful for strengthening the couples' relationships.

In a study of a therapy group of nine couples in which there were 10 alcoholics, drinking was seen by the participants as a genetic predisposition and was used as a defense by both spouses in couples. This group met three times weekly for 90 minutes each session. The average length of time couples participated in the ongoing group was 6.7 months (Davenport & Mathiasen, 1988). The presence of both spouses counteracts denial and permits access to defenses operating in the marital system. The sessions for this single-case study were taped and reviewed. Sixteen months after the formation of the group, all of the couples were interviewed and rated on a 4-point global rating scale which included: drinking behavior, job status, social functioning and family interaction. 50% of the alcoholics were employed and 60% of them were abstinent. Only one couple (11%) had achieved their desired level of social functioning, but 44% had more social life than before the group. Three couples (33%) reported improvement in marital relationships; two couples (22%) reported some improvement; three couples reported an unsatisfactory conflictual relationship; and one couple had separated.

In an article on metaphors used in couples' group therapy, Papp (1982) mentioned the common systemic relationship that includes over-adequacy and inadequacy. She added that the group serves as the theatrical setting in which the relationships of couples are seen in bold relief. An injunction against changing too quickly is often beneficial when working with couples' groups, according to Papp.

Kahn (1988) cautions couples' group therapists to include leader-to-couple interactions. She attributed the failure of a group she facilitated to develop cohesion to her lack of including this sort of interaction. The group of four couples met only six times once a month, so it may have been the lack of opportunity to become a group-as-a-whole that affected the group negatively (Kahn, 1988).

#### Couples' Therapy Groups for Inmates and Their Wives

Only three reports of couples' therapy groups for inmates and their wives were found in the literature. An experimental group was held at Soledad Prison in California in 1959 (Fenton, 1959). Five couples met for eight weeks. The male inmates had previously been in group counseling and participated in this project voluntarily. Topics discussed included: feelings about husbands' criminality; problems with children, anxiety over the incarceration, and fears about the future. Therapeutic achievement of developing insight on a deeper level was said to be found in some of the participants, although the results were not tested statistically.

An eight-week program to teach better communication and parenting skills was held in the Idaho State Correctional Institution (Marsh, 1983). This group included three couples and 10 children, ages 8 months to 12 years. An adjective checklist and was used by the couples to describe their children. The instructor evaluated the communication skills of the couples. In addition, behavioral observations of compliance behavior were made pre- and post-treatment in the homes of the wives and children. Communication skills were said to increase to the target level for each couple and child management skills to increase in two of the three families.

Marital workshops were held in Kansas for inmates having less than six months to serve on their sentences and their wives. Each of the 12 workshops reported lasted an entire weekend (Showalter & Jones, 1980). Topics discussed were: the changes each person had experienced since the incarceration, the need for assertiveness, communication of feelings and ideas, the need for relaxation, issues of concern, and resources that were available for the couples. A suggestion was made to implement this sort of workshop in correctional systems throughout the country.

A program that included only male inmates was called Parents in Prison. This was held in Tennessee, beginning in 1981 (Hairston & Lockett, 1987). The program consisted of four components: home study courses, structured classroom courses, a monthly special event/rap session, and special projects. At the writing over 400 inmate parents had participated in the program. Sixty-six percent reported they had shared the course materials with family members and other inmates. Over 90% reported that the courses had been beneficial to them.

Marital therapy in prison with one partner was described by Freedman and Rice (1977). The issues of loss, empathy, and control were explored both by individual inmates and in a group context. The benefit of having both a male and a female co-therapist was emphasized. Suggestions were made for preventive services to be made available in the community and also for divorce counseling, should it become necessary.

#### Dyadic Adjustment

The variable dyadic adjustment (Spanier, 1976) has been referred to in the literature as marital adjustment (Locke & Wallace, 1959), healthy marriages (Barry, 1970), marital

cohesion, (Olsen, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979), and marital satisfaction (Levinger, 1966). It is defined by Locke and Wallace (1959) as the accommodation of a husband and wife to each other at a given time. Barry (1970), discussing healthy marriages from an object relations view, defines them as those marriages in which the husband is secure enough in his own identity that he can be supportive of his wife's effort to find herself in her new role as a wife. Olson, Sprenkle and Russell (1979) define marital cohesion as the emotional bonding that couples have toward each other. Levinger (1966) sees marital satisfaction as the composite of numerous factors, some temporary and some permanent. He defines it with the context of the needs and capacities of each spouse, but that marital satisfaction is also affected by the environment.

The term dyadic adjustment is used for this study. Spanier (1976) defined it as a dynamic process that includes movement along a continuum from good to poor. It encompasses the events, circumstances and interactions that affect a couple's movement back and forth along the continuum. This definition was a synthesis of previous research which led to Spanier's development of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale to measure dyadic quality. From a pool of 300 items from previous instruments Spanier used a multidimensional approach to arrive at the subscales of troublesome differences, interpersonal tensions and personal anxiety, dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, and a consensus on matters of importance to dyadic functioning (Spanier, 1976).

The factors that contribute to what this study refers to as dyadic adjustment have been explored by researchers for decades. Homogamy, or like choosing like, has been suggested as contributing to dyadic adjustment. By choosing a mate that is similar in cultural and social variables such as race, age, religion, ethnic origin, and social class,



and also in personality variables, couples appear to have a better chance for dyadic satisfaction (Barry, 1970).

In their review of the literature on complementarity and similarity in couples, White and Hatcher (1984) concur basically with the homogamy theory, but add that need complementarity is a facet in marital adjustment. The needs of the couple may not necessarily be conscious ones, but they do play a part in mate selection and satisfaction, according to the reviewers.

Twenty couples took the California Personality Inventory and then took it again trying to answer as they thought their spouses would (Creamer & Campbell, 1988). The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) was used as the criterion measure. It appears that well-adjusted couples are more alike in their self-descriptors than are poorly-adjusted couples. There was no sex difference in the ability of spouses to predict their mate's responses on the CPI. There was a positive correlation between dyadic adjustment in the female subjects, but there was none in the male subjects.

Regarding locus of control as a contributing factor to dyadic adjustment, Smolen and Spiegel (1987) considered locus of control in conjunction with provocation by the spouse. They found that males who were high on external locus of control showed greater adjustment. The rationale for this was that the men considered their wives or environmental factors to be the problem for which they were able to employ their problem-solving skills.

Evaluating a marital enrichment program with 43 couples who had attended one of the workshops, it was found that couples who clarified their roles within their relationship were more satisfied. In addition, males seemed to benefit more from the

program than their female counterparts. The evaluators reported that the program possibly works best at linking couples with professional counselors (Moxley, Eggeman, & Schumm, 1986).

In a review and critique of the literature concerning power and satisfaction in marriage, wife-dominated marriages were found to be more unhappy than egalitarian or husband-dominant traditional marriages (Grey-Little & Burks, 1983). Although support statements are seen as techniques of control that are cumulative in nature, they are less damaging to relationships than coercive techniques. It appears to be the factor of role-congruency that makes egalitarian or husband-dominant couples that accounts for the high degree of satisfaction found in these couples (Grey-Little & Burks, 1983).

In his study of 49 cohabiting couples and 43 married couples, Yelsma (1986) asserts that people can no longer be identified exclusively by one label, either married or cohabiting. This conclusion resulted from the large number of cohabiting couples (49%) who had formerly been married to another person and, conversely, the large number of married couples (41%) who had previously cohabited with someone else. Emotional maturity was found to be most important in marital adjustment. In addition, younger married couples appeared more satisfied than either younger cohabiting couples or older married or cohabiting couples.

#### Demographic Data

Demographic data will be used in conjunction with the measure of dyadic adjustment in this study. In a study of 600 couples, Levinger (1966) found that educational status was linked to the nature of spouses' goals, satisfaction, and problem admission. The

higher the educational level, the more likely they were to report relationship problems.

Levinger also suggested that poorer people often spend their energy for getting food and shelter, which may account for their relatively less reporting of relationship problems.

In a study of 278 couples, Silverman and Urbaniak (1983) used demographic data to compare couples in a marital enrichment program to the general population. This was in an effort to aid counselors in deciding whether to recommend a marital enrichment program as a part of their treatment plan. Age, education, income level, number of children, physical health, occupation, religious practice, and accessibility of extended family members were used in the descriptive part of the study.

Using a sample of older couples, 83 from rural and 98 from urban Kansas, the following demographic data were used to augment the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMMS): age, length of marriage, education, number of children in the home, religious practice, and employment of spouses. This study addressed factors associated with thoughts of marital separation and used locus of control and social alienation. Religiosity was found to be associated with higher marital satisfaction, but it also appeared to keep relationships intact in spite of greater levels of unhappiness (Bugaighis, Schumm, Jurich, & Bollman, 1985-86).

Glenn and Weaver (1978) found that the following variables correlated with marital happiness: age, age at marriage, occupation, education, income, church attendance, wife's employment, and children in the home. The strongest correlations were found for young children in the home and being middle-aged for women; both of these correlations were negative.

In a study of the perceived causes of marital breakdown, the following demographic variables were given as contributing to divorce or separation in 335 Australian men and women: socio-economic status, age at marriage, religion, length of marriage, and number of children (Burns, 1984). A similar study in the United States with a sample of 275 males and 336 females in Wisconsin also identified factors that contributed to marital dissatisfaction. These included sex, age, length of marriage, years of education, and number of children (Cleek & Pearson, 1985).

### Summary

In comparison to the research that has been done concerning marital therapy and couples' group therapy, there has been very little research done concerning group therapy with inmates and their wives. There has been no research reported on therapy groups of male probationers and their wives. By the use of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) and demographic data, the treatment and control groups can be tested to see whether dyadic adjustment can be enhanced by group therapy. Research in this area is warranted because of the impact incarceration has on the families of inmates and on society.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### Introduction

This chapter contains the description of the methods and procedures that were utilized in this study. The procedures for random assignment of referred subjects to treatments is described. Instruments used for the study are described and procedures used for collecting information are presented. The chapter concludes with the description of the research design and the means by which the information was integrated and analyzed.

#### Participants

Twenty-two probationers and their wives were referred for this study for which permission was granted by the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (see Appendix A) and the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix B). Twenty-two of the probationers and 18 of the wives were interviewed by this researcher to assess their being appropriate for the study. Of the fifteen couples who initially agreed to participate in this study, eight couples actually participated the sessions and thereby comprised the sample for this investigation. They were referred by the Probation and Parole Officers of the Stillwater District of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (DOC). The husbands were serving a portion of their sentences on probation, after

having served a portion in a correctional institution, or they were serving sentences which consisted of only probation. The wives were married to the probationers or living as married with them. The number of couples originally selected was determined by using Yalom's (1985) suggestion that therapy groups range from six to eight in number. Two of the groups had six members and one group had four members. The data gathered do not suggest how typical these participants were of the population of male probationers and their wives.

### Instrumentation

Three instruments were used in this study: The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), a personal data questionnaire, and an evaluation form. In addition, progress notes by the co-facilitators were used to monitor both group and individual progress. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was selected to measure the dependent variable of marital, or dyadic, adjustment.

#### Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) was used to measure marital adjustment as the dependent variable in this study (see Appendix C). The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was developed by pooling items that had been previously used in assessing marital adjustment, including items from the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke & Wallace, 1959), a widely-used scale to measure marital adjustment.

Spanier developed this measure to conceptually distinguish dyadic adjustment from other concepts such as marital happiness, success, or satisfaction, for example. He wanted an instrument that would operationalize his view of maladjustment and include

all criteria important to adjustment. In addition, he wanted one that would be appropriate to study all marital and dyadic relationships. A pool of 300 items was submitted to a panel of three judges for the purpose of validating the content of the relevancy of the items to marital adjustment as conceptualized and defined by Spanier. Using the responses from a sample of 218 white, married persons and 400 divorced persons in Pennsylvania, the results were factor analyzed. This resulted in a 32-item scale which yields an overall measure of marital adjustment. Factors in the scale include: dyadic satisfaction, cohesion, consensus, and affectional expression. Spanier includes a single item that also appears to indicate the marital commitment of spouses.

The DAS is a questionnaire that takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. The scores are derived from a Likert-like scale with values ranging from 0 (Always disagree) to 5 (Always agree). A theoretical range of total summed scores is from 1-151 for each spouse with higher scores indicating a higher level of adjustment. For this study both the individual scores of each spouse and combined scores for each couple were calculated.

Reliability of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. Reliability was established for each factored subscale and for the total score using Cronbach's Coefficient (Spanier, 1976). Alpha was found to be .96 for the total scale and ranged from 173 to 194 on the four subscales in Spanier's study of 218 married persons located in four corporations in Centre County, Pennsylvania. He avoided the university community for this sample to lower the chance of including response sets that might be present in subjects who were sophisticated test takers. Sharpley and Cross (1982) report a replication of Spanier's reliability coefficient of .96 in a study of 95 unrelated married persons (58 females and

37 males). The mean score on the DAS for the Sharpley and Cross sample was 108.5 which was close to the mean score of 101.5 reported by Spanier.

Validity of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. Content validity of the DAS was evaluated by three judges as to the relevancy of the items, consistency to the definition of adjustment, and careful fixed choice wording. Criterion validity was established by comparing the difference between the divorced sample and the married sample (Spanier, 1976). Spanier reports the total mean scores for these two groups differed significantly ( $p < .001$ ). Construct validity was established by correlating the items on the DAS with the Locke-Wallace Marriage Adjustment Scale (Locke and Wallace, 1959). The correlation was .86 for the married sample and .88 for the divorced sample. Further evidence was found for the construct of marital adjustment by factor analysis of the 32-item scale which resulted in the four factors of marital adjustment: dyadic satisfaction, cohesion, consensus, and affectional expression.

#### Personal Data Questionnaire

The items on this questionnaire were compiled and developed by the researcher from demographic questionnaires used with inmates families (Morris, 1965; Schneller, 1976; Swan, 1981) or with couples (Bugaghis et al, 1985-86; Burns, 1984; Cleek & Pearson, 1985; Glenn & Weaver, 1978; Levinger, 1966; and Silverman & Urbaniak, 1983). The questionnaire was used to describe both treatment groups and the control group (see Appendix D). The data include demographic information such as age, occupation, size of city in which the participant is living, educational level, previous marriages and number of children by those marriages, length of present marriage or



living arrangement, number and ages of children living in the home, and approximate total monthly income. It also includes age at first arrest, total number of arrests, total number of convictions, total number of incarcerations with the length of each sentence, and the nature of convictions. It further asks the participants to note any family members who have been incarcerated and their relation to subject, the length and dates of the last separation from one's spouse due to incarceration, and length of time since release from prison. In addition, there are four items that are arranged in a Likert-like scale that include: the extent to which alcohol and/or drugs have affected the marriage in the past; to what extent they affect it at the time of filling out the questionnaire; how important religious beliefs are to the participant; and to what degree the participant is active in the practice of his or her religious beliefs.

This questionnaire takes a maximum of ten minutes to complete.

#### Evaluation Form

This brief form was used to give the participants an opportunity to evaluate their experience in the program and to make suggestions for any future such programs (see Appendix F).

#### Procedures

The data for this study were gathered in the summer of 1990. After the participants were referred by their probation officers and interviewed by this researcher, 15 couples were randomly assigned five each to one of the two treatment groups or to the control group. They were assigned in alternating order as the probationers were first interviewed. At the first meeting of each treatment group a consent form was signed by each

participant, after which each couple chose their pseudonyms (see Appendix E). The Dyadic Adjustment Scale and personal data questionnaire were then administered by this researcher to the couples who showed up, three couples in Treatment 1 and two couples in Treatment 2. The instruments were administered to those in the control group before the treatment groups met. The DAS was administered again, along with the evaluation form, to the treatment group participants at the final meeting of each group. The DAS was administered to the control group following the last meeting of the therapy groups. Progress notes for each participant, as well as for the group as a whole, were kept by the co-facilitators for each session of the treatment groups.

The participants consisted of eight couples who were referred by the Probation and Parole Officers of the Stillwater District of the Department of Corrections. After agreeing to participate voluntarily and being interviewed by the researcher, they were randomly assigned to one of three groups: a theme-centered interactional group (Shaffer, 1989), a general marital therapy group (Yalom, 1985), or a control group. The participants of the control group were offered a group experience to be held at the close of the eight weeks. None of the couples accepted this offer.

Both of the treatment groups had co-facilitators, a male and a female. The four co-facilitators consisted of three doctoral students in counseling psychology and one Licensed Professional Counselor who had comparable experience in both marital and group therapy. The co-facilitators had training sessions with this researcher to familiarize them with the population with whom they would be working (Stratton, 1987). They were also given the opportunity to choose whether their team would prefer to work in an unstructured or a structured format. The co-facilitators were not informed as to the

nature of the instruments that would be administered nor as to the nature of the research questions.

The groups met for eight weeks, one-and-one-half hours each week in classrooms rented from a local church. A baby-sitter was provided on the premises for each session. A stipend of \$50.00 per couple to cover the expense of attending the sessions, along with a certificate of completion, was given to each couple that completed one of the eight-week treatment groups. Each participant of the control group received \$2.50 for each set of instruments he or she completed.

The structured group (Treatment 1) used the theme-centered instructional (TCI) group format (Shaffer, 1986). Each week a topic was presented by the co-facilitators, after which a group discussion followed. The topics presented included: family patterns as seen in the genogram (Kerr & Bowen, 1988); understanding the parent, adult, and child within each person as conceptualized in the Transactional Analysis model (Berne, 1961; Greene, 1988); effective communication skills (Evans, Hearn, Uhlemann, & Ivey, 1989); parenting skills (Ginott, 1965; Gordon, 1970); problem-solving skills (Glasser, 1965); assertiveness and handling anger effectively (Drum & Knott, 1977); and encouraging your spouse and having fun (Croake, 1987) (see Appendix G).

The unstructured group (Treatment 2) used the general marital therapy group format. It relied on the group members to generate their own topics concerning their marital, or dyadic, relationships. The co-therapists facilitated group interactions and modeled giving positive feedback, using I-messages, confronting, negotiating, and showing mutual respect (Yalom, 1985).

The question of what kind of intervention might be more effective in enhancing dyadic adjustment was addressed with two differing forms of intervention: a theme-centered interactional group (T1) and the general therapy group (T2). These were compared to a control group. After the eight weeks of therapy for the two treatment groups, all three groups were again administered the DAS. The two treatment groups were then also administered an Evaluation form.

Closed and time-limited couples' therapy groups are reported to be more stable than open and not time-limited groups and to offer members the chance to develop trusting relationships with each other (Kaslow & Suarez, 1988). The eight-week length of the proposed meetings has been established in the literature as sufficient for short-term interventions (Contreras & Scheingold, 1984; Johnson & Greenberg, 1985; Wilson et al., 1988). In addition, the probation officer who was of most assistance suggested that any longer a commitment might deter the referred probationers from volunteering for the study. Male and female co-facilitators were used to model effective parenting and a solid positive partnership (Kaslow & Suarez, 1988).

Permission for this project was granted by the Research Division of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.

## Research Design

The design of this study was a Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design (Gay, 1981).

		8 Weeks		
T1	R	X	O	X
T2	R	X	O	X
Control	R	X		X

Figure 1. Pre-test Post-test Control Group Design

There was random assignment to a treatment group (T1 or T2) or a control group. All three groups were tested before and after the treatment. This design controls for threats to internal validity (history, maturation, testing instrumentation, regression, selection, and mortality, and selection interactions). It controls for the threat to external validity of multiple treatment interference, but there may be a possible interaction between the pretest and the treatment which may make the results generalizable only to pretested groups (Gay, 1981).

The use of both the individual and the couple scores were used to assess the perception of dyadic adjustment. Results of this study can perhaps suggest a means of intervention with probationers and their wives that may increase dyadic adjustment.

### Analysis

A combination of data was used to determine any change in the dyadic adjustment in the two treatment groups and the control group. The criterion was dyadic adjustment as measured by both the individual and the summed scores of each husband and wife on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) and as described by the co-facilitators of the two treatment groups. The analysis was a combination of quantitative and qualitative data due to the small number of participants in couples' therapy groups (Contreras & Scheingold, 1984; Croake, 1987; Davenport & Matheson, 1988; Greene, 1988; Kahn, 1988; Kaslow, 1981; Marciniak, 1984; Papp, 1982).

### Summary

The participants in this study consisted of volunteer subjects who were referred by Probation Officers with the Department of Corrections. The participants were interviewed by this researcher and then randomly assigned to one of two treatments or the control group. After they signed a consent form and prior to treatment, the participants of both treatment groups were administered two instruments: the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) and the personal data questionnaire. The DAS and an evaluation form were administered following treatment. The control group was administered the DAS and the personal data questionnaire prior to the beginning of the treatment groups and the DAS again eight weeks later. Progress notes were kept by the co-facilitators each session for each participant as well as for the group. An integration of information was made to qualitatively describe the subjects and assess the dyadic adjustment of the couples.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

Assessing both treatment groups and the control group necessitated integrating information from three sources: the personal data questionnaire, the progress notes that were kept on each individual and each treatment group by the co-facilitators, and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976). The integrated information is presented in this section by treatment groups, with participants being identified by the pseudonyms they selected to use when filling out all instruments.

#### Treatment Group 1

Treatment Group 1 was the structured group, and it followed the guidelines of the theme-centered interactional group, or TCI (Shaffer, 1978). The co-facilitators followed a prepared outline that suggested a workshop or classroom environment. The participants reported that they liked this format because they could say they were "going to a class" if anyone inquired as to their whereabouts. The co-facilitators were asked to refer to their group as a "relationship workshop" periodically to help differentiate its format from the unstructured format. After a topic was presented at each session by the co-facilitators, the group discussed the topic, including role-playing parts if appropriate. They were then given a homework assignment. After the first session, each succeeding session began with a discussion of the homework assignment. Experiences of the group

members were often shared. The topics covered included in order: making a genogram, the parent, adult and child roles in relationships, communication skills, encouraging your spouse and having fun, parenting skills, problem-solving skills, and assertiveness and handling anger. The co-facilitators reported that the participants "quickly established a working relationship in which humor was spontaneously used by several members of the group".

This group consisted of three couples. Their ages ranged from 25 to 43. They reported having semi-skilled jobs that included: welder, house painter, cement finisher, nurse aid, cashier, and Licensed Practical Nurse. They all reported living in cities that were in the 20,000 to 49,999 population range. Their reported educational levels ranged from 9 to 13 years. Two of the six group members reported having been married three times previously and three members reported having been married once before. Four reported having had children by a former marriage. Two of the men had previously been incarcerated, but the other one had been sentenced to only probation. Of those who had been incarcerated, the earliest age of arrest was reported to have been at 17 years of age. One these men reported that he could not remember exactly how many times he had actually been arrested, but that it was surely over twenty times; the other man reported that he had been arrested twenty times. One of them had two relatives who had also been incarcerated. One of the wives reported having been arrested before, but none of the wives reported having been convicted or sentenced. The participants reported the extent to which alcohol or drugs had affected their relationship in the past from none to too much and the extext to which it affected their relationship now from none to some. The importance of religion was rated by these participants as being from not important to



very important. Their reported activity in the practice of their religious beliefs ranged from not active to somewhat active (see Table I).

### Jeff and Mrs. Jeff

Jeff and Mrs. Jeff, the pseudonyms of their choice, were the most quiet of the three couples, according to the progress notes of the co-facilitators. Jeff was 43 and Mrs. Jeff was 35; both of them had been married one time previously. Jeff had a son by a previous marriage, but he reported not getting to see him very often. They had an eleven-year-old son in the home. Mrs. Jeff rated the extent to which alcohol or drugs had affected their relationship in the past as a lot and at the time of the study some. Jeff rated the extent to which alcohol or drugs had affected their relationship in the past as some and currently as hardly. Religion was rated by them both as very important. Mrs. Jeff reported that she was mildly active in the practice of her religious beliefs; Jeff reported that he was somewhat active.

Jeff sometimes gave the faint odor of liquor, but he never did appear intoxicated. He and Mrs. Jeff were often late for the sessions, but they always apologized profusely, blaming first one calamity and then another for their tardiness. It appeared to the co-facilitators that theirs was a relationship of parent and child with Jeff in the parent role and Mrs. Jeff in a more passive child-like role. Whenever writing or reading was required, however, the roles were reversed and Mrs. Jeff demonstrated considerable care-taking behaviors toward her husband.

In the first session Jeff disclosed that many of his family members had died violent deaths and Mrs. Jeff disclosed that her mother had married her husband's brother.

TABLE I  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR STRUCTURED GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Participants	Age	Occupation	Town Population	Level of Education	Number of Previous Marriages	Number of Children by Previous Marriages	Length of Present Relationship	Number of Children in this Home	Monthly Family Income
<u>Couple A:</u>									
Mrs. Jeff	35	Cook	20,000-49,999	10	1	0	16 years	1	\$ 1300
Jeff	43	Concrete Finisher	20,000-49,999	9	1	1	16 years	1	1300
<u>Couple B:</u>									
Sara Jones	39	Licensed Practical Nurse	20,000-49,999	13	3	1	1 1/2 years	0	600
Ichabod Jones	42	Welder	20,000-49,999	12	3	1	1 1/2 years	0	600
<u>Couple C:</u>									
Mrs. T	26	Cashier	20,000-49,999	12	1	1	2 years	2	900
Mr. T	25	Nurse's Aid	20,000-49,999	12	0	0	2 years	2	900

TABLE I (Continued)

Participants	Age at First Arrest	Number of Arrests	Number of Convictions	Number of Incarcerations	Year/Length of Sentence/Conviction	Length of Last Separation Due to Incarceration	Incarcerated Family Members	Extent Relationship Affected by Chemical Use: Before/Now	Importance of Religion/How Active
<u>Couple A:</u>									
Mrs. Jeff	----	----	----	----	----	10 months	none	alot/some	very important/mildly active
Jeff	17	20	2	2	1987-10 years felony/ 1988-10 years felony	10 months	brother nephew	some/hardly	very important/mildly active
<u>Couple B:</u>									
Sara Jones	33	2	0	0	----	8 months	none	alot/alot	somewhat important/not active
Ichabod Jones	18	20+	2	2	1983-1 year unlawful delivery/1988-1 year unlawful delivery	1 year	none	too much/some	not important/ not active
<u>Couple C:</u>									
Mrs. T	----	----	----	----	----	----	none	none/none	very important/ not active
Mr. T	25	1	1	0	1990-1 year probation/ assault and battery	----	sister	none/none	very important/ not active

In the second session Jeff reported that he wanted to work on learning how to express his emotions, having only recently become aware of how he, in his words, "keeps things bottled up".

He became more verbal in the third session which focused on communication skills, and she became more quiet. In the fourth session, during which encouraging your spouse and having fun was the topic, Mrs. Jeff revealed a "depth and insight" not seen previously in the group and Jeff was much less verbal.

In the fifth session both of them were animated during the discussion of parenting skills.

They arrived later than usual for the sixth session and there was alcohol on Jeff's breath. Mrs. Jeff was the most quiet she had been and Jeff continually looked to the co-facilitators for approval of his comments.

Mrs. Jeff was quiet also during the seventh session, but Jeff presented as well groomed for the first time and was actively interested in the concept of assertiveness versus aggression in handling anger.

They did not appear for the eighth session, but they did manage to get to the meeting place later that evening and procured a signed and dated statement from the sexton stating that they indeed were there. They received their stipend and certificates for completing the program after they mailed their completed instruments to the researcher.

Their scores on the DAS suggested an improvement in their dyadic adjustment. Mrs. Jeff's scores went from 104 on the pretest to 119 on the posttest, showing an increment of +15. Jeff's scores went from 94 to 122 for the same testing periods,

resulting in an increment of +28. The couple's combined score, then, rose from 198 to 241, an increment of +43 (see Table II).

**TABLE II**  
**STRUCTURED GROUP PARTICIPANTS PRETEST TO POSTTEST**  
**CHANGE AS MEASURED BY THE DYADIC**  
**ADJUSTMENT SCALE**

	Pretest	Posttest	Increment
<b><u>Couple A:</u></b>			
Mrs. Jeff	104	119	+15
Jeff	94	122	+28
Combined Score	198	241	+43
<b><u>Couple B:</u></b>			
Sara Jones	70	99	+29
Ichabod Jones	83	112	+29
Combined Score	153	211	+58
<b><u>Couple C:</u></b>			
Mrs. T	124	121	-3
Mr. T	117	107	-10
Combined Score	241	228	-13

Mrs. Jeff was the only participant to express the opinion that she wished the workshop had focused more on the dyadic relationship itself rather than on relationships in general. Jeff reported that there was not anything he would change except to add a smoke break for the participants. Jeff evaluated the workshop as extremely beneficial and Mrs. Jeff rated it as of some benefit.

### Ichabod and Sara Jones

Ichabod and Sara Jones were really the "heart and soul" of the group, according to the co-facilitators. He was 43 and she 35 and by conversation they were estimated to both be the most intelligent couple of the group. He was a welder and she a was Licensed Practical Nurse; they had been married for a year-and-a-half. Each had a child by a former marriage, but both children were reported to be "grown". Their combined monthly income at the time of the group meetings was reported to be \$600.00. Ichabod could not remember exactly how many times he had been arrested, but it was surely over twenty times. He had been incarcerated two times with his last release being over a year before the study began. Sara reported having been arrested twice with no convictions. On the Likert-like scale for the extent to which alcohol or drugs had affected their relationship Sara reported that it had affected the relationship a lot in the past and a lot currently. Ichabod reported that it had affected their relationship too much in the past and some at the time of the study. Religion was professed by somewhat important by Sara and not important to Ichabod. The level of activity in the practice of their religious beliefs was reported by both of them as not active. At the interview with the researcher, Sara exclaimed that they "had to do something" or their marriage was "doomed".

Both Sara and Ichabod were rather quiet during the first session. Both began their genograms, but they were not willing to share what work they had done. At the close of the session, however, Ichabod offered as somewhat of an afterthought that he "had not seen any of his brothers or sisters for seventeen years".

At the second session both of them readily identified the roles played by the co-facilitators depicting the parent, adult, and child roles. Sara admitted that working on her genogram had been "too painful" for her to complete the homework assignment. Ichabod disclosed that after his father's funeral when family members were arguing over his possessions, Ichabod had burned the possessions out in the yard, something he still believed was the right thing to have done.

It was in the third session that Sara told the group that it was only at the group meetings that she and Ichabod could "let down and playfully communicate". At this session they both participated enthusiastically, practicing communication skills "adroitly and with a certain amount of perception", according to the co-facilitators.

Both of them appeared subdued at the beginning of the fourth session and the co-facilitators wondered whether they had come to the session "in the aftermath of an argument". As the session progressed both of them opened up and participated, although not as cordially toward each other as in previous sessions. It was at this point that the co-facilitators concurred that "Ichabod appeared to dominate Sara and to lead the couple's relationship". Sara interacted more openly with the other group members as the session progressed, but Ichabod did not make any attempts to curtail her interactions.

In session five this couple appeared to the co-facilitators to be "in sync" with each other. Both revealed strong emotions where their respective children are concerned, as the topic revolved around parenting skills.

The couple was late for session six; they had had car trouble and had left a message at the church office that they needed a ride to the meeting. They both went right to work upon arrival and contributed to the exercise on problem-solving skills. They apologized to the co-facilitators for their tardiness, and they accepted positive reinforcement for their having found transportation to the meeting.

The couple was absent at the seventh session, with no call to the church office. It was learned later that week that Ichabod had gone into cardiac arrest the day before the meeting and that he had had bypass surgery the same day. The researcher delivered their certificates of completion and their stipend to them, since their absence was unavoidable.

On the DAS Sara's pretest score was 70 and her posttest score was 99, showing an increment of +29. Ichabod's scores were 83 and 112, respectively, revealing an increment of +29. Their combined scores were 153 on the pretest and 211 on the posttest, indicating an increment of +58. Theirs were the lowest pretest scores of the three couples, but their relationship had been admittedly in turmoil. Ichabod evaluated the experience as being very beneficial and Sara evaluated it as being extremely beneficial. Both offered the criticism that it had not lasted long enough. Sara told the researcher, and Ichabod nodded in agreement, that they had been able to relate to the co-facilitators and that they had enjoyed "getting to know" them.



Mr. and Mrs. T.

Mr. and Mrs. T. were the youngest participants in the group; he was 25 and she was 26. He was employed as a nurse aid and she as a cashier. In their home was her six-year-old son by a former marriage and their six-month-old son. Both children were brought to all sessions except the one during which they attended a birthday party. The couples' combined salaries brought \$900.00 per month to the household. They had been married for two years at the time of the study and he had recently been sentenced to two-years of probation for an undisclosed infraction. They both rated the extent to which alcohol or drugs had affected their relationship in the past and currently as none. Religion to them both was rated as very important and the level of activity in the practice of their religious beliefs was reported as not active for both of them.

At the first session, Mr. T. volunteered to put his genogram on the chalk board and was "quite open with disclosing family problems", according to the progress notes of the co-facilitators. Mrs. T. did not disclose much about her family, but she did assist Mr. T. with his genogram and discussion.

During the second session discussion of the roles of the parent, adult and child used in communicating, it became apparent to the facilitators that neither Mr. T. nor Mrs. T. "were able to grasp the differentiations of the several roles". It did appear, however, that "Mr. T. assumed the child role and Mrs. T. the parent-role". Mrs. T. proudly explained that there "had been no divorces" in her family, seeming to overlook her own divorce.

Session three revealed that Mrs. T. was more comfortable discussing behaviors and events than emotions, while Mr. T. participated "energetically but usually slightly out of context".

It was during the topic of encouraging your spouse and having fun in the fourth session that Mr. T. revealed to the group that he was very sensitive to ridicule. Mrs. T. during the same discussion displayed a subtle air of superiority toward her husband by "making fun of him at a level that she appeared to think that he would not understand", according to the co-facilitators. The couple both agreed that they did not do much together. They could "not think of any way except sex", which had been made the exception for the assignment, for just the two of them to have fun.

At session five Mrs. T. was "much less jovial and rather quiet", but Mr. T. participated eagerly again "very concretely and with little insight".

Session six found Mr. T. volunteering to role-play the group's newly learned problem-solving approach (Glasser, 1961). While he did it with enthusiasm and considerable coaching from the other group members, he did also with a manner that was "slightly tangential", in the co-facilitators' words, and not really on task. Mrs. T. corrected Mr. T. and tried to lead him in this role-play.

In session seven the couple seemed to be in "closer harmony". He elaborated about some problems that his sister was having, but she attended to the topic and was able to give examples of times that she had been assertive.

At the final session, they were eager for the social hour that had been planned. Both of them completed the DAS and then received their certificates of completion and their stipend.

Their scores on the DAS suggested a slight decrease in their dyadic adjustment. Mrs. T.'s pretest score was 124 and her posttest score was 121, revealing a decrease of -3. His scores for the same evaluation times were 117 and 107, indicating a change of -10. The couple's combined scores were 241 before the treatment group and 228 afterward, demonstrating a decrease of -13. The co-facilitators wondered "whether the sessions had been the first time they had really looked at their relationship". Whether this had anything to do with the lowered scores on the self-report instruments is not known. The couple did report that they had been reluctant to join the group only to find themselves "looking forward to the weekly meetings". Both of them evaluated the "class" as being extremely beneficial and Mrs. T. stated that she thought that they had had some "very good teachers", suggesting that the group fulfilled some social need for the couple.

#### Treatment Group 2

This group was unstructured in that the participants were responsible for the topics to be discussed at the meetings. This group ended up with only two couples in it, with attendance not being perfect for either couple.

The couples' ages ranged from 20 to 22 years old. They reported their occupations as student, housewife, house painter, and clerk. Both couples reported living in cities that were in the 20,000 to 49,999 size range, and their levels of education ranged from 11 to 15 years. None of the participants had been married before, and only one couple reported having a child in the home. Their stated incomes ranged from \$800.00 to \$1200.00 per month. Both men had been incarcerated before, with the number of arrests ranging from 1 to 6, and the number of incarcerations ranging from 1 to 2. Neither

woman had been arrested or incarcerated. All participants rated the extent to which alcohol or drugs had affected their relationship in the past as being none and at the time of the study as ranging from none to some. Religion was reported as being from very important to extremely important and the level of activity in the practice of their religious beliefs was reported as ranging from mildly active to very active (see Table III).

#### Tarron and Kourtney Miller

Tarron and Kourtney Miller were 22 and 21 years old, respectively. He listed his occupation as "student" and she listed hers as "housewife", but their monthly income was reported to be \$1200.00. They had been married for two years, and Tarron had been incarcerated for a period two years prior to the study. They had an eight-month-old son who was brought to only one session. Both of them reported that alcohol or drugs had not affected their relationship in the past or at the time of the study. Both reported that religion was very important to them, and the level of activity in the practice of their religious beliefs was reported as somewhat active for both of them. This couple attended all but one session, and Kourtney called before that session to say that Tarron had a final examination the next day for which he was studying.

At the first session Tarron was relatively quiet as the co-facilitators asked the participants about their expectations for the group. Kourtney expressed the hope that the sessions would have a religious focus since the meetings were being held in a church.

TABLE III  
 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR UNSTRUCTURED GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Participants	Age	Occupation	Town Population	Level of Education	Number of Previous Marriages	Number of Children by Previous Marriages	Length of Present Relationship	Number of Children in this Home	Monthly Family Income
<u>Couple D:</u>									
Kourtney Miller	21	Housewife	20,000-49,999	14	0	0	1 year	1	\$ 1200
Tarron Miller	22	Student	20,000-49,999	14	0	0	1 year	1	1200
<u>Couple E:</u>									
Ann King	20	Clerk	20,000-49,999	15	0	0	2 years	0	800
Stephen King	21	House Painter	20,000-49,999	11	0	0	2 years	0	800

TABLE III (Continued)

Participants	Age at First Arrest	Number of Arrests	Number of Convictions	Number of Incarcerations	Year/Length of Sentence/Conviction	Length of Last Separation Due to Incarceration	Incarcerated Family Members	Extent Relationship Affected by Chemical Use: Before/Now	Importance of Religion/How Active
<u>Couple D:</u>									
Kourtney Miller	---	---	---	---	---	---	none	none/none	very important/somewhat active
Tarron Miller	20	1	2	1	1988-4 months larceny	n/a	none	none/none	very important/somewhat active
<u>Couple E:</u>									
Ann King	19	1	0	0	---	---	none	none/some	very important/mildly active
Stephen King	18	6	1	2	1987-5 in, 5 out burglary	7 months	father	none/none	extremely important/mildly active

In the second session the group focused on two topics: how group members reacted to conflicts in their relationship and how they saw themselves as separate from their families of origin. Tarron appeared confused concerning the topic of relationship conflicts. He remained silent during that discussion and also during the discussion of individuation from families. Kourtney admitted that she tried to avoid conflict in her and Tarron's relationship. She also reported feeling strong ties to her family of origin and seeing herself as still seeking her parents' approval. She disclosed that she wanted for Tarron to be "head of the household".

After missing session three while Tarron studied, the couple was alone with the co-facilitators for session four. During this session the couple displayed much "honest, flowing communication", according to the co-facilitators, about differences in beliefs and behaviors. Tarron admitted that Kourtney was right in stating that he was hanging on to his past friends and behaviors of "drinking and partying". The co-facilitators noted that Tarron was "much more expressive of his emotions" than he had been before and wondered if the therapy-like environment was a safe place for expressing feelings. Kourtney expressed appreciation for Tarron's statements of his feelings.

At session five the Millers were alone by the co-facilitators again and this time it truly had the "feel of marital therapy" to the co-facilitators. Kourtney stated that she thought that "Tarron should just know" what she needed without her having to tell him all of the time. The couple responded to coaching by the co-facilitators concerning using I-messages, stating one's needs, and engaging in active listening. Role play ensued and the couple left with the suggestion that they practice their new skills at home during the week.

During session six the Millers again had the undivided attention of the co-facilitators as the other couple completed their vacation out of state. The couple engaged in trying to get the other one to see his or her perspective. Role-playing was used as a technique to try to allow each spouse to experience what the other one was feeling. Kourtney could not "see the reasoning" behind Tarron's continuing his thrill-seeking behaviors; Tarron could not see why Kourtney was making such an ordeal out of his "wanting to spend time with his friends". Through the role play some frustrations on the part of both Tarron and Kourtney were made apparent. The message Kourtney appeared to be giving Tarron was that she really needed to know that she "was important" to Tarron, according to the co-facilitators.

At session seven the couple's communication skills appeared to be "more effective with each other", according to the co-facilitators, since each could state his or her needs and wishes to the other without becoming defensive. Some individuation was seen on the part of Kourtney as she appeared to not be relying on Tarron as much to "make her happy".

During the final session the couple shared the opinion that they had felt much more comfortable in sharing their feelings when they had been the only couple present. They reported that it had felt to them like counseling, although neither of them had ever been to a counselor before. They responded favorably to the list of available counselors and therapists in the area that one of the co-facilitators had compiled and handed out. It appeared to the co-facilitators that both Tarron and Kourtney were more open with the other couple at this session and that they felt that if both couples been there for each



session, "the building rapport would have allowed them to be as open as they were when they were the only couple".

At the last session this couple was administered the DAS and the evaluation form. They were given their certificates for completion of seven sessions, and they were given a prorated stipend.

On the DAS Kourtney had scored 110 on her pretest and 115 on her posttest, revealing an increment of +5. Tarron had scored 108 and 132, respectively, demonstrating an increment of +24. Their scores as a couple increased from 218 to 247, revealing an increment of +29. While both of them showed improvement in their reported dyadic adjustment, Tarron's was slightly greater than Kourtney's. Both of them evaluated the project as extremely beneficial and neither of them made suggestions for improvement. Tarron did mention that the part he liked least was the co-facilitators "asking the group members what they wanted to do with their group time" (see Table IV).

#### Steven and Ann King

Steven and Ann had been living together for two years at the time of the study. He was a 21 year old house painter and she was a 20 year old clerk. She was also a part-time college student with 15 years of education as compared to his 11 years. Their combined monthly income was reported to be \$800.00 and they did not have any children. Steven had had two incarcerations, the most recent ending the year before this study took place. Ann reported never having been arrested. Both reported that alcohol or drugs had not affected their relationship in the past nor did it at the time of the study.

Steven reported religion as being extremely important and Ann reported it as very important. Both Steven and Ann reported that they were mildly active in the practice of their religious beliefs.

TABLE IV  
UNSTRUCTURED GROUP PARTICIPANTS PRETEST TO POSTTEST  
CHANGE AS MEASURED BY THE DYADIC  
ADJUSTMENT SCALE

	Pretest	Posttest	Increment
<u>Couple D:</u>			
Kourtney Miller	110	115	+5
Tarron Miller	108	132	+24
Combined Score	218	247	+29
<u>Couple E:</u>			
Ann King	82	95	+13
Steven King	95	99	+4
Combined Score	177	194	+17

At the first session both Steven and Ann participated on a "superficial level", according to the co-facilitators. She appeared very quiet and he appeared to simply "go with the flow", in a co-facilitator's words.

During the second session when the topic of behavior in relationship conflicts came up, Steven became more vocal and "expressed his feelings very well". He stated that he was experiencing "some confusion" concerning which direction his and Ann's relationship would be going. It did not appear to the co-facilitators that he demonstrated as much commitment to the relationship as Ann did. As they tried to guess what need the other was expressing in a role-play situation, Ann was more able to interpret Steven's wishes than he was able to interpret hers.

For the third session this couple met alone with the co-facilitators. Steven revealed the information that he was also involved with another woman. Ann acknowledged the relationship was not what she would like. The arrangement appeared to the co-facilitators to be one that was "maintained by all three members of the relationship", and that it appeared that "neither Ann nor Steven was willing to move to change the triangle". The couple was confronted on their tendency to speak for each other. From this intervention some good work resulted as the couple practiced listening and then asking what the other person meant instead of assuming to know what the other person meant. The couple admitted assuming what the other person meant had caused them some trouble in the past.

At the fourth session Ann came briefly to the meeting to say that Steven had to work and that they would be on vacation in Colorado for the next two weeks. Their next appearance was at the seventh session, and they both appeared more relaxed than they

had before. Ann reported that the meeting she had with her biological father was a "disaster", although she had not shared her plans for any meeting with the group before. Both reported that other than that they had had a nice change of pace. Steven reported that they had clarified their feelings about their relationship as a couple and that they had been able to make some tentative plans for the future. They did not share what these plans were.

At the eighth session Steven and Ann both stated that they preferred the session when they were alone with the co-facilitators. They reported slight interest in continuing some sort of counseling in the future and accepted the referral list of available counselors in the area.

They were administered the DAS again at this session and were given an evaluation form to complete. They were also given a prorated stipend and certificates noting how many sessions they had attended. On the DAS Ann had scored 82 on the pretest and 95 on the posttest, revealing an increment of +13. For the same testing times Steven had scored 95 and 99, respectively, demonstrating an increment of +4. Their combined score rose from 177 to 194, an increment of +17. While both showed some improvement in their reported dyadic adjustment, Ann showed more than Steven did. They both reported the project to be very beneficial to them and they both suggested that more "one-on-one time" with the co-facilitators would improve the group.

#### Control Group

The control group consisted of three couples whose ages ranged 24 to 36 years. Their occupations were listed as pumper, carpenter, "self-employed", cashier, and two

housewives. They all reported to live in cities that ranged in population from 3,000 to 9,999, and their educational levels ranged from 10 to 12 years. They reported from "none" to "two" previous marriages, with "none" to "five" children by former marriages. Two couples reported having children in the home and two of the women were pregnant at the time the demographic information was gathered. Family monthly incomes reported ranged from \$800.00 to \$2200.00. The men had been incarcerated from 2 to four times; one of the women had been arrested two times and convicted once, but she was never incarcerated. The reported extent to which alcohol or drugs had affected their relationship in the past ranged from none to some. All participants reported that it did not affect their relationship at the time of the study. Religion was rated by this group as being from not important to extremely important. The level of activity in the practice of their religious beliefs ranged from not active to very active (see Table V).

#### Tom and Joan Duley

Tom and Joan had been married for seven months at the time they agreed to be a part of the group whose only responsibility would be to complete the questionnaires. Tom was suspicious about how the information was to be used, but he appeared to be satisfied with the assured anonymity. Both Tom and Joan had twelfth grade educations. He reported that he made \$2200.00 each month as an oil field "pumper", and she reported that she was a housewife. He reported having five children by a former marriage, but none of them were living with him and Joan at the time. The couple was awaiting the birth of Joan's first child at the first testing and by the second testing the baby had been born. Tom was arrested for the first time when he was nineteen years old;

TABLE V  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOR CONTROL GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Participants	Age	Occupation	Town Population	Level of Education	Number of Previous Marriages	Number of Children by Previous Marriages	Length of Present Relationship	Number of Children in this Home	Monthly Family Income
<u>Couple F:</u>									
Joan Duley	28	Housewife	3,000-9,999	12	0	0	7 1/2 months	0	\$ 2200
Tom Duley	36	Plumber	3,000-9,999	12	1	5	7 1/2 months	0	2200
<u>Couple G:</u>									
Samantha Jones	26	Housewife	3,000-9,999	10	2	3	9 months	3	800
John Jones	28	Self-employed	3,000-9,999	12	1	1	9 months	3	800
<u>Couple H:</u>									
Samatha Douglas	27	Cashier	3,000-9,999	11	0	0	1 1/2 years	1	800
Don Douglas	24	Carpenter	3,000-9,999	12	0	0	1 1/2 years	1	800

TABLE V (Continued)

Participants	Age at First Arrest	Number of Arrests	Number of Convictions	Number of Incarcerations	Year/Length of Sentence/Conviction	Length of Last Separation Due to Incarceration	Incarcerated Family Members	Extent Relationship Affected by Chemical Use: Before/Now	Importance of Religion/How Active
<u>Couple E:</u>									
Joan Duley	----	----	----	----	----	----	none	some/none	extremely important/very active
Tom Duley	19	8	6	4	1973-1 year possession of marijuana/1979-4 months felony DUI	n/a	father	some/none	extremely important/somewhat active
<u>Couple G:</u>									
Samantha Jones	----	----	----	----	----	----	none	none/none	very important/somewhat active
John Jones	21	2	2	2	1983-15 years arson/1985-3 years escape	5 years	brother	none/none	somewhat important/not active
<u>Couple H:</u>									
Samatha Douglas	20	2	1	0	----	----	none	some/none	not important/not active
Don Douglas	17	2	2	2	1982-3 years suspended grand larceny/1983-15 years arson	no spouse then	2 brothers grandfather	some/none	mildly important/mildly active

he had been arrested 8 times, convicted 6 times, and incarcerated 4 times. Both of them reported the extent to which alcohol or drugs had affected their relationship in the past as some and at the time of the study as none. Religion was reported by both of them to be extremely important. Joan reported the level of her activity in the practice of her religious beliefs as very active, while Tom reported that he was somewhat active.

The first time she completed the Dyadic Adjustment Scale Joan scored 131 and the second time she scored 120, revealing a decrease of -11. Tom scored 116 and 117 for the same testing periods, revealing an increment of +1. Their combined scores, then, demonstrated a decrease of -10. Although Tom's scores remained nearly the same for both testing periods, Joan's had declined eleven points. She had also had a baby before the second testing. The couple received a small stipend for filling out the questionnaires (see Table VI).

#### John and Samantha Jones

John and Samantha were not legally married at the time of the study and Samantha expressed a concern to the researcher that perhaps she was not appropriate for the purpose of the study. Assured that she was appropriate, she completed the instruments. John was 28 and he listed his occupation as self-employed; Samantha was 26 and she reported that she was a housewife. Their monthly income was reported to be \$800.00. He had been married once previously and had one child by that marriage; she reported having been married twice before and had three children from those marriages. These three children lived with John and Samantha at the time of the study. John had been arrested twice and incarcerated twice, having been released from prison most recently



TABLE VI  
 CONTROL GROUP PARTICIPANTS PRETEST TO POSTTEST  
 CHANGE AS MEASURED BY THE DYADIC  
 ADJUSTMENT SCALE

	Pretest	Posttest	Increment
<u>Couple F:</u>			
Joan Duley	131	120	-11
Tom Duley	116	117	+1
Combined Score	247	237	-10
<u>Couple G:</u>			
Samantha Jones	98	119	+21
John Jones	116	130	+14
Combined Score	214	249	+35
<u>Couple H:</u>			
Samantha Douglas	65	111	+46
Don Douglas	60	102	+42
Combined Score	125	213	+88

two years prior to the study. Samantha reported not ever having been arrested. Both reported that the extent to which alcohol or drugs had affected their relationship both in the past and at the time of the study was none. Religion was reported by Samantha as very important and by John as somewhat important. Samantha reported that she was somewhat active in the practice of her religious beliefs and John reported that he was not active.

On the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Samantha first scored 98 and eight weeks later 119, demonstrating an increment of +21. For the same testing dates John scored 116 and 130, an increment of +14. Their summed scores rose from 214 to 249, an increment of +36. In the intervening eight weeks Samantha had had some "female problems", according to John, and she had been hospitalized for over two weeks. John reported that he had "spent a lot of time at the hospital" with Samantha. This couple also received a small stipend for their cooperation in completing the instruments.

#### Don and Samantha Douglas

Don and Sam, as she will be referred to avoid confusion, were 24 and 27, respectively. He was a carpenter and she was a cashier. He had a twelfth grade education and she had an eleventh grade one. Neither of them reported having been married before, but she reported having a six-year-old son who lived with the couple. Sam was estimated to be in the second trimester of her pregnancy at the time of the first testing, at which time the couple did not speak to each other except to decide on a surname for their pseudonyms. Their reported combined monthly income was \$800.00. Don reported two arrests, two convictions, and two incarcerations, with his most recent

release having been nearly two years prior to the study. Sam reported two arrests and one conviction, but no incarcerations. Both reported that alcohol or drugs had affected their relationship some in the past and none at the time of the study. Sam reported that religion was not important to her and that she was not active. Don reported that religion was mildly important to him and that he was mildly active.

On the first administration of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Sam scored 65 and on the second she scored 111, revealing an increment of +46. Don scored 60 and 102, respectively, an increment of +42. Their summed scores rose from 125 to 213, an increment of +88. No intervening events were revealed to this researcher that might help explain this dramatic increase in both of their scores. They, too, received a small stipend for their cooperation in the study.

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the possibility of intervening to enhance the dyadic adjustment of probationers and their wives. It appears that while there was a trend toward improvement in dyadic adjustment for the couples who participated in the treatment groups, there was also a trend toward improvement for the couples who served as controls.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the question of the possibility of increasing dyadic adjustment in couples participating in groups consisting of men on probation and their wives. Another purpose of this study was as to address the question of whether a structured format would be more effective than an unstructured one in increasing dyadic adjustment in groups of probationers and their wives.

Compared to the research that has been done concerning marital and couples' group therapy, there has been a dearth of research done concerning group therapy with inmates and their wives. No research has been reported on therapy groups of male probationers and their wives. Research in this area is warranted because of the impact of incarceration on the families of inmates as well as on society.

Twenty-two men on probation who were married or living as married were referred by their probation officers for this study. All of the probationers and eighteen of their wives were interviewed by this researcher to determine whether they would be appropriate for the group format. Fifteen couples were interviewed and found to be appropriate referrals and all of them agreed to participate in the study. Of that number eight couples actually did participate in the study. The couples were randomly assigned

to one of two treatment groups or to the control group. They were assigned in alternating order as the probationers were first interviewed. The treatments consisted of a structured group format or an unstructured group format.

Three doctoral students in Counseling Psychology and one Licensed Professional Counselor served as co-facilitators for the treatment groups with one female and one male serving in each group. Both pairs of co-facilitators were instructed concerning the population with whom they would be working and given guidelines concerning the type of intervention they would be making. Neither pair of co-facilitators knew what treatment the other group would be receiving or what the research questions were.

After consent forms were signed by the participants, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) and a personal data questionnaire were administered at the first session of each treatment group by this researcher before the co-facilitators joined the group. These instruments were also administered to the control group before the treatment groups began. At the close of the eighth session of each treatment group this researcher administered the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) again, along with an evaluation form, to both groups. The control group was then administered only the DAS. The co-facilitators kept progress notes on the group process as well as for each individual for both of the treatment groups.

The research questions for this study included:

Can dyadic adjustment of male probationers and their wives be enhanced by their participating in a couples' therapy group?

Is a structured format more effective than an unstructured format in enhancing dyadic adjustment of male probationers and their wives?

Information was gathered by means of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, the personal data questionnaire, the evaluation form, and the progress notes that were kept by the co-facilitators for both the group and the individuals in each group.

In relation, then, to the research question concerning the possibility of dyadic adjustment of probationers and their wives being enhanced by their participating in couple's therapy groups, it appears that while a trend is suggested toward improvement, the improvement is no greater than for probationers and their wives who do not participate in such groups.

As to the question of which format, a structured or unstructured group, would appear to be more effective in enhancing dyadic adjustment, it appears that neither format is more effective than the other in enhancing dyadic adjustment.

Within the participants there appeared to be a certain amount of variability in the amount of energy they invested into their respective treatment groups. The structured group did not appear to feel as much responsibility for the life of the group as did those in the unstructured group, since the co-facilitators served as teachers as a part of their duties. They did, however, have perfect attendance with the exception of the absences of one couple that followed bypass surgery for that particular probationer.

The participants of the unstructured group, by the very nature of that format, were responsible for the topics that were discussed. One male participant did mention that he liked least being asked what he "wanted to do" with the group time. The high degree of suspicion with which many of the probationers reacted to the initial interview by this researcher may account for this reluctance to disclose what one might wish to discuss as an issue pertinent to a couples' group.

The beginning of any type of therapy group elicits a certain amount of apprehension in the participants (Yalom, 1985). The apprehension in the two treatment groups appeared to this researcher to be heightened to a guardedness in many of the participants. Their lives had been intruded upon by the courts and they may have feared incriminating themselves by their open participation. This guarded quality disappeared by the second session of the structured group and by the third session of the unstructured group, according to the two sets of co-facilitators, as the participants may have come to realize that there was no catch, or expected payback, to the group. More than half of those probationers originally interviewed asked this researcher what the catch was for the participants. They appeared to this researcher to have a difficult time realizing that they only had to participate for eight sessions to receive the stipend.

Less is known about the dynamics of the control group participants, except that they demonstrated the greatest improvement in dyadic adjustment. One couple had their first child between the first and second administration of the DAS. The second couple reported that the wife's medical problems necessitated the probationers taking care of her during part of the eight intervening weeks. The third couple, who showed the biggest improvement in dyadic adjustment, had not yet had their child at the time of the second administration of the DAS. They both appeared disgruntled to this researcher at the first administration of the DAS, but they did not verbalize any concerns on that occasion. Since the DAS is a self-report instrument and therefore measures only how the participant is feeling at the time he or she completes the instrument, by even the next day their original scores might not have been the low 60 and 65 that they were.

## Conclusions

Tentative conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study. It appears that all three groups demonstrated a tendency to show increased dyadic adjustment from the pretest to the posttest, although one couple in a treatment group showed a decrease in dyadic adjustment as reported by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. With the incentive of a monetary stipend and a certificate of completion offered to both treatment groups, it may be noted that those couples in the structured group had better overall attendance than those in the unstructured group. This may reflect the time needed for an unstructured group to reach the stage of cohesion (Yalom 1985), although cohesion was reported to be observed in the structured group by the co-facilitators by the third session.

The structured format relieved the participants of the pressure to discuss their own issues, as may be seen in the comment made by one participant in the unstructured group. He reported that he liked least "being asked what he wanted to do" with the group's time. One of the co-facilitators of the unstructured group noted that a "directive posture was more effective" for her in facilitating that group. Both of the groups appeared to be evaluated by the participants as being beneficial to the participants. The co-facilitators of the structured group reported that it was "as enjoyable for them as it appeared to be for the participants". The co-facilitators of the unstructured group commented that their experience was "enlightening as well as pleasurable".

The dramatic improvement in the scores for dyadic adjustment in two of the couples in the control group remains somewhat perplexing, although some intervening events may explain the increase. One couple experienced an illness on the part of the wife with



resultant care given by the husband, and the other couple appeared disgruntled when they were administered the pretest instruments. The scores of the third couple in the control group remained virtually unchanged.

As difficult as it was to recruit volunteers for this study due to the suspicion demonstrated by many of the probationers originally interviewed, the good attendance by the several couples was somewhat surprising, as well as gratifying, to this researcher.

### Recommendations for Further Research

Based upon this study the following recommendations are made:

1. With so little research reported on couples' therapy groups and no research reported on couples' groups consisting of male probationers and their wives, future studies may need to replicate the treatments with other couples whose male partner is a probationer.
2. With the reluctance of male probationers to participate in couples' groups, consideration might be given for replicating this study with inmates and their spouses before release in an effort to promote successful re-integration back into society.
3. Consideration might be given to replicate this study with couples who are not within the jurisdiction of departments of corrections in order to make a comparison between the two populations.

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## APPENDIXES

**APPENDIX A**

**CONSENT FROM OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT  
OF CORRECTIONS**

MEMORANDUM

April 1, 1990

TO: Gary D. Maynard

FROM: Bill Chown, Administrator, Planning and Research *cc*

THRU: Justin Jones, Deputy Director, Probation and Parole  
Gary Parsons, Associate Director *JW 4-4-90*

SUBJ: Research request from Carol Ann Drummond, graduate student at Oklahoma State University

RECEIVED

APR 04 1990

DIRECTOR

4-3-90

In accordance with OP-091501, I have reviewed the attached letter and provide the following information.

## 1. Soundness of research design and methodology:

This research is concerned with determining whether marital group therapy has any effect on couples where one of the spouses is on probation. The proposal submitted contains an indepth discussion of the theoretical and practical implications and a detailed description of the methodology. It appears that Ms. Drummond has put a lot of time and thought into the design of her research project.

## 2. Duplication of other projects:

No other projects of this nature have been proposed at this time.

## 3. Relevance of proposal to department goals and objectives:

This project could identify whether marital therapy could be a useful treatment for offenders on probation.

## 4. Assistance required from the department:

Little assistance will be needed from Planning and Research staff, but assistance will be needed from the staff at the Probation and Parole District Office in Stillwater to help identify potential subjects.

## 5. Impact on offenders:

Participation in the study may help the subjects deal with issues, such as incarceration, in their relationships.

I recommend approving this project and request that a copy of the final paper be placed in the Planning and Research library.

BC/rs

4-5-90  
Approved  
G Maynard

**APPENDIX B**

**APPROVAL FROM RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY**



**OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH**

Proposal Title: Group Therapy with Former Inmates and Their Wives: Can Dyadic Satisfaction be Enhanced

Principal Investigator: Alfred F. Carlozzi/Carol Ann Drummond

Date: April 5, 1990 IRB # ED-90-028

-----  
This application has been reviewed by the IRB and

Processed as: Exempt [ ] Expedite [ ] Full Board Review [X]

Renewal or Continuation [ ]

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s):

Approved [ ]

Deferred for Revision [ ]

Approved with Provision [X]

Disapproved [ ]

Approval status subject to review by full Institutional Review Board at next meeting, 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month.

-----  
Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reason for Deferral or Disapproval:

The following changes must be made before full approval of this application can be granted:

The consent form must contain statements regarding:

1. Time length of weekly meetings.
2. Subjects will be answering questions about family relationships and feelings.
3. Subjects will be reimbursed \$50.00.
4. Demographic information will be requested and the reason for the request.
5. Any self-reporting of child abuse and/or violent behavior will be reported.

It is suggested that you reduce the size of the consent (not content) to one page in length.

Please submit the changes to Terry Maciula, 005 Life Sciences East.

Signature:  Date: April 13, 1990  
Chair of Institutional Review Board

**APPENDIX C**

**DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE**





	All the Time	Most of the Time	More Often Than Not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
22. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Every Day	Almost Every Day	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
23. Do you kiss your mate?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
24. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

	Never	Less Than Once a Month	Once or Twice a Month	Once or Twice a Week	Once a Day	More Often
25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
26. Laugh together	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
27. Calmly discuss something	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
28. Work together on a project	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check yes or no).

	Yes	No	
29.	_____	_____	Being too tired for sex.
30.	_____	_____	Not showing love.

31. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy", represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

. . . . .

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Extremely <u>Un</u> happy	Fairly <u>Un</u> happy	A Little <u>Un</u> happy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect
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32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship?

- \_\_\_\_\_ I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see what it does.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

**APPENDIX D**

**PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE**

## PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE

Code name \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Size of town where now living: Check only one.

Under 3000 \_\_\_\_\_

20,000 to 49,999 \_\_\_\_\_

3,000 to 9,000 \_\_\_\_\_

50,000 to 99,999 \_\_\_\_\_

10,000 to 19,999 \_\_\_\_\_

Over 100,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Highest grade of education \_\_\_\_\_

How many previous marriages have you had? \_\_\_\_\_

How many children do you have by previous marriages? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been with the person you are presently married to or living  
with? \_\_\_\_\_

How many children are presently living your home? \_\_\_\_\_

Please check whether boy or girl and give their ages:

	Boy	Girl	Age		Boy	Girl	Age
1.	_____	_____	_____	5.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	6.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	7.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	8.	_____	_____	_____

Approximate current total monthly income of household, including any government  
assistance \_\_\_\_\_

How old were you when you were first arrested? \_\_\_\_\_

How many times have you been arrested? \_\_\_\_\_



How many times have you been convicted? \_\_\_\_\_

How many times have you been incarcerated? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the date and length of sentence and the nature of the conviction:

	Year	Length of Sentence	Conviction
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____

Do you have family members who have also been incarcerated?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please list their relationship to you:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

How long was your last separation from your spouse due to incarceration? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the date of your release from prison? \_\_\_\_\_

To what extent have alcohol and/or drugs affected your marriage in the past? Check only

one:

None \_\_\_\_\_ Hardly \_\_\_\_\_ Some \_\_\_\_\_ A lot \_\_\_\_\_ Too much \_\_\_\_\_

To what extent do alcohol/drugs affect your marriage now?

None \_\_\_\_\_ Hardly \_\_\_\_\_ Some \_\_\_\_\_ A lot \_\_\_\_\_ Too much \_\_\_\_\_

How important are your religious beliefs in your life?

Not Important \_\_\_\_\_ Mildly Important \_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat Important \_\_\_\_\_

Very Important \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely Important \_\_\_\_\_

How active are you in the practice of your religious beliefs?

Not Active \_\_\_\_\_ Mildly Active \_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat Active \_\_\_\_\_

Very Active \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely Active \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX E**

**CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS**

## RELATIONSHIP ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in a Relationship Enhancement Program for people on probation with the Department of Corrections, along with their spouses, as part of the relationship research being done by Alfred F. Carlozzi, Ed.D., and Carol Ann Drummond, M.S. This will include participating in a group to which my spouse and I have been randomly assigned and answering questions about family relationships and feelings. The group will meet for one and one-half hours once a week for eight weeks. In addition, I will be supplying demographic information which will aid the researchers in their interpretation of the data from this project. I understand that what I say will be held in confidence unless the group leaders suspect child abuse or violent behavior, and then they have a legal duty to report it. I also understand that this research project may help me in my relationships with other people, but that it may also be uncomfortable for me from time to time should I decide to reveal my emotions.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project director. Although there will be no cost to me for participation, I do understand that my spouse and I may collect our monetary reimbursement of \$50.00 only upon completion of the entire eight-week program.

I may contact Carol Ann Drummond, M. S., at (405) 744-6036 should I wish further information about the research. I may also contact Terry Maciula, University Research Services, 001 Life Sciences East, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, or telephone her at (405) 744-5700.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Subject)

Witness \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject before requesting the subject to sign it.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Project Director or his authorized representative)

**APPENDIX F**

**EVALUATION FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS**

**EVALUATION OF RELATIONSHIP ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM**

How beneficial was this experience?

None\_\_\_\_\_ Very Little\_\_\_\_\_ Some\_\_\_\_\_ Very\_\_\_\_\_ Extremely\_\_\_\_\_

What did you like best?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What did you like least?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you recommend this type of program for other probationers and their spouses?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

Please use the space below to make any suggestions that could improve this program.

Thank you.

**APPENDIX G**

**STRUCTURED GROUP OUTLINE**

This is the outline of the sessions included in the structured group. The basic format of the sessions is that of a theme-centered interactional group (Shaffer, 1989).

### Session 1: Introduction and Constructing a Genogram

Activities	Objectives
1. Introduce selves and structure of sessions. Emphasize need for commitment and beginning on time. Homework will be a part of the program. Frame as workshop. Cover confidentiality.	1. Familiarize participants with what lies ahead for them.
2. Each member introduce self to group. First name only is acceptable. Allow questions or or comments, if any.	2. Give members a way to begin to know each other.
3. Show mechanics of genogram. (Nichols & Everett, 1986). Using chalk board for weekly instruction may be effective.	3. Create awareness in each member of his/her inter-generational roles.
a. Pass out paper and pens.	
b. Walk them through basics.	
c. Pass out outline. Ask them to add:	
(1). Vertical bars on any incarcerates.	
(2). Second outside line on alcoholics or drug abusers.	
(3). Straight parallel lines for intensity.	
(4). Zigzag lines for strife/tension.	
(5). Ask for any suggestions they have.	
d. Continue working on them as time allows. Then ask if any one has noticed anything he or she would like to share; e.g., patterns, special dates.	
4. Homework assignment: Think about roles one plays in the intergenerational map. Keep adding to genogram. Ask relatives for more information.	

Reference: (Kerr and Bowen, 1988)



## Session 2: Transactional Analysis' Parent, Adult, &amp; Child

Activities	Objectives
1. Check up on homework assignment: Did anyone learn anything from this experience?	1. Follow up on what is assigned. This will be done each week, for consistency.
2. Didactic presentation of Parent, Adult and Child as defined by Transactional Analysis (Berne, 1961).	2. Create awareness of roles played in everyday communication, in addition to roles within greater intergenerational scheme.
a. Explain each role and give examples. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1). <u>Parent</u> scolds, blames, and threatens: "It's your fault!" "Why did you?"</li> <li>(2). <u>Child</u> demands and is impulsive: "I want it now!" Thinks of only his or her own immediate wishes; e.g., shoplifting. <u>Child's</u> positive side is the ability to play.</li> <li>(3). <u>Adult</u> realistically respects others: "What can we do to solve this problem?" "I get angry when....happens." Avoids accusatory statement.</li> </ul>	
b. Check to make sure all understand concepts. Co-therapists role play for members to identify.	
c. Ask members to attempt others, then Adult, the most effective.	3. Allow members to practice new skill.
d. Awareness is the key. Stress choosing roles.	
3. Group discussion on P/A/C/. How can one get another person to level with him/her (Satir, 1983), thus staying in the Adult and taking care of own needs.	4. Facilitate group awareness of possibility of not playing games in conversation. Leveling possible.
4. Homework assignment: Take notice of the roles (PAC) used by others and selves during the week.	

References: Berne (1961); Satir (1983); Nichols & Everett (1986)

## Session 3: Communication Skills

Activities	Objectives
1. Review homework. Could members identify PAC voices in selves and others?	1. Carry through on what has been assigned.
2. Didactic presentation of communication skills and model each.	2. Educate members about factors to enhance leveling communication.
a. <u>Active listening</u> . Pay attention to what is being said and how it is being said. Does the body language match the words?	
b. <u>Clarifying</u> . "Do you mean..." "Are you saying...."	
c. <u>Identifying emotion expressed</u> . Correctly identifying emotion in others can improve communication.	
d. <u>I-messages</u> . Speaking for "I" reduces blame-laden statements. "I get angry when..." "I have a problem with..."	
e. <u>Mindreading does not pay off</u> . Do not assume other's wishes; check it out.	
3. Co-facilitators model; members give feedback. (Use anger, sadness, and jealousy at least).	3. Enable members to identify process of effective communication.
4. Members practice skills in groups of threes. Actor, responder, and observer. Observer gives feedback. No spouses in same triad. (Spend at least 10 minutes in each role). Or...two talk and group observes and comments.	4. Allow members to practice skills.
5. Group discussion of new skills. How it feels, questions, etc.	5. Get group to discuss awkwardness/difficulties in trying new skill.
6. Homework assignment: Speak for "I" only. Stay in the Adult. Employ positive communication. Practice makes them feel natural.	6. Carry-over skills into home and work.

Reference: Evans, Hearn, Uhlemann, & Ivy (1989)

## Session 4: Encouraging Your Spouse and Having Fun

Activities	Objectives
1. Homework check. What skills were they able to use.	1. Follow-through on what has been assigned.
2. Didactic presentation.	
a. Ask group what makes them feel encouraged.	2. Allow group to verbalize emotions.
b. <u>Define encouragement</u> as an action or statement by one spouse that results in the other feeling better about him/herself or their relationship (Croake, 1987).	
c. Ask group how they like non-sexual affection to be expressed by their spouse.	3. Encourage members to be specific about their needs for affection.
d. <u>Define affection</u> as the expressing of caring.	
3. Ask each couple to spend a few minutes to think of some non-sexual activity for them to have fun during the next week. Ask group to share and then to brainstorm ways to have non-sexual fun as a couple. Couples then plan one activity for only them as a couple: explicitly when, where, and how (Croake, 1987).	4. Free-up group to think of activities to allow time for fun in their lives.
4. Homework assignment: (1) Encourage spouse and (2) show spouse affection one time daily. (3) Do one fun couple activity during week.	5. Carry group activities over into daily lives.

Reference: Croake (1987)

## Session 5: Parenting Skills

Activities	Objectives
1. Homework check. From now on, check on <u>activity</u> , <u>encouragement</u> (and whether spouse found it encouraging) and <u>affection</u> (and whether it felt like affection to spouse) (Croake, 1987).	1. These activities will be weekly from now on. As couple reports on their week, with the spouse's reactions, the group may give feedback of support, their reactions, or questions.
2. Didactic presentation. Use chalkboard. <u>See handout</u> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Listen and watch for emotion in child.</li> <li>b. Be fair and consistent.</li> <li>c. Be age-and-act-specific in handling problems.</li> <li>d. Time-out procedures. Be specific in setting time.</li> <li>e. Positively reinforce desired behaviors and ignore undesired ones. (This may merit discussion).</li> <li>f. Encourage children.</li> <li>g. Parents as models: be as you want your child to be.</li> <li>h. Encourage children to resolve own disputes.</li> <li>i. Spend some quality time daily with child.</li> <li>j. Listen when your child talks.</li> </ul>	2. Educate members concerning basic parenting skills.
3. Group discussion about what it was like for them as children, how have they followed their parents' modeling. Review and pass out handout.	3. Remind members of what it is like to be a child.
4. Homework assignment: Practice parenting skills. Encourage and show spouse affection daily; one fun activity weekly.	4. Encourage positive family interactions.

References: Ginott (1956); Gordon (1970)

### SOME TIPS FOR GOOD PARENTING

1. Listen and watch for which emotion your child is demonstrating. Hurt may be mistaken for anger.
2. Be fair and consistent. If the child is not allowed to jump on the furniture today, don't allow it tomorrow.
3. Be age and act specific. A young child who pulls the cat's tail is not as accountable as an older child who does. Pulling the cat's tail is not as offensive as hitting little brother.
4. Time-out procedures remove the child from his or her social activities. Make the time in "time-out" appropriate to the child's age and the offense. Example: 10 minutes is a long time for a two-year-old. Set a timer or watch the clock.
5. Positively reinforce desired behaviors with smiles, pats, or kind words and ignore undesired behaviors. Ignoring takes practice and self-discipline on the part of parents.
6. Encourage your child by having confidence in him or her.
7. Be as you want your child to be; you are his or her pattern for a human being.
8. Teach, encourage, and allow your child to resolve his or her own disputes.
9. Spend some quality time each day with your child.
10. Listen when your child talks to you and treat your child with respect.

## Session 6: Problem-Solving Skills

Activities	Objectives
1. Homework check on activity, affection, encouragement, plus parenting and PAC.	1. Follow-up on commitment. Reinforce if needed.
2. Didactic presentation of Reality Therapy method (Glasser, 1965).	2. Give members a concrete problem-solving method.
a. Define problem.	
b. What attempts have been made to solve?	
c. What are other possible solutions?	
d. What are you willing to try?	
e. Make a commitment.	
f. Try a solution.	
g. Evaluate outcome.	
h. Try another possible solution, if necessary.	
3. Leaders model solving a problem; e.g., problem with someone at work.	3. Allow members to learn vicariously.
4. Ask group to work together to solve hypothetical problem; e.g., they all live in the same neighborhood. Houses are being robbed. There is no one but these couples to correct this situation.	4. Allow members to experience a problem-solving group effort.
5. Group discussion on what it was like to work as a group to solve a problem.	5. Process feelings and actions of self and group.
6. Homework assignment: Spouse activity and employ problem-solving skills at least once during week.	6. Enable members to solve problems constructively at home.

Reference: Glasser (1965)

## STEPS FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

(adapted from Glasser, 1965)

1. Define the problem in specific terms.
2. What attempts have been made in the past to solve this problem?
3. What are other possible solutions to this problem?
4. What are you willing to try?
5. Make a commitment to try one possible solution.
6. Try the chosen solution.
7. Evaluate the outcome.
8. Try another solution, if necessary.

## Session 7: Assertiveness Training and Handling Anger Effectively

Activities	Objectives
1. Check homework assignments.	1. Follow-through.
2. Didactic presentation on how to get your needs met effectively (Drum & Knott, 1977).	2. Assertiveness training.
a. State own needs and feelings nondefensively. "I feel that I deserve a raise."	
b. Appropriate eye contact and posture. Stand erect and maintain natural eye-contact.	
c. Use I-messages. Avoid blame or listing of grievances.	
d. Be goal directed. Stay with topic and have a plan.	
3. What if you get angry?	3. Employ assertiveness in anger-provoking situations.
a. Act assertively and calmly. "I am feeling angry. . ."	
b. Be specific. ". . .when I hear others get raises. What do I need to do in order to get one?"	
c. Avoid escalation. If the other person gets angry, avoid overreacting.	
4. Co-facilitators model being assertive in at least two situations.	4. Allow members to see and hear assertiveness.
5. Divide groups into threes. The observer coaches and gives feedback. (Allow at least 10 minutes per role).	5. Allow members to practice and experience being assertive.
6. Group discussion about how it felt.	6. Add affect to cognition.
7. Homework assignment: Spouse work. Practice being assertive at least one time this week.	7. Carry-over skills into life situations.

Reference: Drum & Knott (1977)