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2011

Strategies for Achieving Attunement and Relational Responsibility in Same-Sex Couple Relationships

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Recommended Citation

Jonathan, Naveen, "Strategies for Achieving Attunement and Relational Responsibility in Same-Sex Couple Relationships" (2011). *Marriage and Family Therapy Faculty Presentations*. Paper 8.
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Strategies for Achieving Attunement and Relational Responsibility in Same-Sex Couple Relationships

Attunement

- Process that enables individuals to recognize and be present with each other.
- A desire to understand and respond to the partner's needs/interests.
- Assist partners to first address the willingness and interest of each partner in recognizing the feelings and implicit messages of the other.

Relationship Check-Ins

- Assist couples in evaluating their own processes for relational check-ins.
- Check to see if this process is left to one person.
- It is important to encourage both partners to be involved in this process.
- Assist couples to identify times for check-in and emphasize the priority of this process in their relationships.

Conflict-Management Methods

- Watch if conflict emerges as couples become more attuned to one another.
- Reassure couple that conflict is normal and healthy response.
- Explore with the couple guidelines for handling conflict that would help them move towards solutions.

Negotiating Decisions

- Ask couples how division of labor and relationship maintenance activities were decided.
- Were both partners' voices heard in this process?
- Encourage couple to develop decision-making processes that actively involve both partners in the relationship.

Acknowledging Power Issues

- Discuss partners' feelings of unfairness and acknowledgement, gratitude, and efforts towards reciprocity in order to help couples experience emotional closeness.
- Ask both partners to talk about their perceived inequalities in a respectful manner.

- Emphasize to couples that power issues that remain invisible and unaddressed may drain the relationship of its vitality.