

MARITAL FIRST RESPONDERS

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The Doherty Relationship Institute

www.maritalfirstresponders.com

Overview

A one-day training for “natural confidants” to become more confident and effective in supporting the marriages of people who open up to them about relationship problems.

The training includes knowledge about marital relationships, helping skills specifically for relationship issues, having good boundaries and make referrals when appropriate.

It’s not counseling. It’s mainly for one-to-one relationships. And it’s intended for use when there is already a relationship of trust.

Settings taught: churches, military, YMCA, drug treatment program.

Initial research shows that it’s effective in increasing knowledge and skills.

Research on Confiding

- **Lots of studies show that most people turn first to a friend or family member when they have problems in their marriage/long term committed relationship. These confidants can help or hinder.**
- **Our research: 73% of American adults have been a marital confidant, and 63% in the past year.**

Reference: Lind Seal, K., Doherty, W. J., & Harris, S. M. (2016). Confiding about problems in marriage and long-term committed relationships: A national study. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 42, 438-450.

Research, cont.

People confide about a wide range of problems, from small to large.

- **Growing apart (68%)**
- **Not enough attention (63%)**
- **Money (60%)**
- **Not able to talk together (60%)**
- **Spouse/partner's personal habits (59%)**
- **Considering divorce (58%)**
- **Infidelity (51%)**

Research, cont.

What confidants do that is most helpful, according to confiders.

- **They listen**
- **They give emotional support**
- **They offer a helpful perspective**
- **They help the person understand their own contributions to the problem**
- **And they help the person see where their partner was coming from.**

Research, cont.

But it can be a tricky thing to be a confidant

- **Confidants often feel stressed and worry if they are responding well.**

Here are the main mistakes they make, according to confiders:

- **They give too much advice, much of it useless**
- **They talk too much about their own problems**
- **They are too critical of the spouse or partner**
- **They suggest a breakup of the relationship**
- **And they come across judgmental or critical.**

Marital First Responders Training

Six training hours: one-day, 9-4, or Friday night plus Saturday morning.

Curriculum:

- **Assessment: hard versus soft problems, is divorce on the table?**
- **Research based knowledge on marital relationships**
- **Common mistakes: Mr. Fixit, Side Taker, Talker, Smarty Pants, Wimp, others. Participants self-assess most common mistake.**
- **Learning and practicing L.E.A.P. skills (Listen, Empathize, Affirm, offer Perspective)**
- **C.A.R. skills (Challenge, Advise, suggest Resources)**
- **Keeping good boundaries**

More Information

Website with general information: www.maritalfirstresponders.com

Information on getting trained to offer workshops:
support@dohertyrelationshipinstitute.com