

## **Important Information About Couple Therapy**

### **Your relationship is our client.**

Of course each of you is a unique individual. But our focus will be on the ways in which you interact, what works and what doesn't work well between the two of you, and what might work better for both of you. We are interested in encouraging teamwork that includes integrity for both partners and healthy communication between the two of you.

### **Our focus is on what can work better from here forward.**

Talking about the past may be important in understanding and healing some of what is difficult now, but our main orientation is on how to move ahead together in a different and more constructive way. We look at patterns and influences, and work together with clients to determine new options.

### **Win-Win Model**

When one person wins a battle at the other's expense, both people lose because the relationship loses. The only effective resolutions to problems are ones that both people can feel good about and that both are willing to act on with integrity.

### **We cannot make or break your relationship.**

That is for you to do. We can teach skills, make observations, share ideas, ask questions that we hope will be helpful, offer support, and provide a place for sharing and for trying new things. You will decide how open to be in our sessions, how much to try suggested ideas and techniques, and ultimately whether or not you want to stay together

### **Skills and styles can be learned and un-learned**

Sometimes small tweaks in listening or speaking or other interactions make a big difference in a relationship. Even lifelong patterns are not in your chromosomes, are not "you," though they may feel that way. When even one person makes a change, it tends to change the relationship pattern. The more you practice, the easier and more comfortable these new changes become.

### **We cannot know what ultimately is right or possible for your relationship.**

We may share opinions about what might make things better or worse, or easier or harder for you to be together or healthier. We will offer assistance in pattern changes that might improve things. But we would not presume to predict what will or should happen between the two of you in the future.

### **We are not detectives.**

When disagreements arise about historical events, we will not try to determine who is right or wrong. We were not present at those events and cannot judge the facts from your current arguments. What we can do is help a couple figure out how to get closure on those incidents and move on into something better, if they are ready and willing to do that.

### **We cannot read your minds.**

It is always your choice about how much or little you share with us. At the same time, we cannot know what you do not tell us. In general, the more specific and informative you can be with us about your situation, patterns and concerns, the more we can be of assistance to you.