

## Understanding and Assessing Relationship Quality

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### Workshop Overview

- **History of assessing relationship outcomes**
- **Where assessment has progressed towards**
- **Common assessments**
- **The PRQC – quick, easy, reliable and free**
- **The PRQC – A worked example (scoring, interpretation, and possibilities)**
- **Final words**

## Relationship Outcomes

- **In the early years of relationship science (70s and early 80s) there was much interest in understanding two concepts: Love and relationship satisfaction**
- **Being in love is largely viewed as consisting of two components: Passionate and companionate love** (Berscheid & Hatfield, 1974, 1978; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989)
  - Passionate love: An intense emotional state and confusion of feelings such as tenderness, elation, pain, relief, altruism, jealousy, sexuality and elation
    - o *Passionate love scale - 14 item measure (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986)*
  - Companionate love: Less intense in emotion, but combines feelings of affection and deep attachment while maintaining a deep sense of care and concern for another
    - o *Companionate/Compassionate Love Scale – 15 item measure (Fehr & Sprecher, 2005)*

## Relationship Outcomes

- **Satisfaction has been defined in many ways, but the most common definition is: The extent to which our relationship meets or exceeds our needs and standards of what we expect out of a relationship**
- **Despite this definition, the measurement of satisfaction has been very diverse**
- **There are so many measures that it makes your head spin. Some of the most widely used are noted below:**
  - Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS, Spanier, 1976)
  - Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS, Hendrick, 1988)
  - Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (LWMAT, Locke & Wallace, 1959)
  - Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS, Schumm et al., 1983)
  - Relationship Satisfaction Semantic Differential Scale (Karney & Bradbury, 1997)
  - Quality of Marriage Index (QMI; Norton, 1983)
  - Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI, Funk & Rogge, 2007)
- **Recent review and evaluation studies** (Funk & Rogge, 2007; Graham et al., 2011) **suggest that the KMS and QMI appear to be good choices, though the CSI has been rigorously developed**

## Things to Think About...

- **Despite the review of measures and recommendations, one thing remains the same....**
- **A number of the measures of satisfaction conflate satisfaction with other related concepts such as adjustment, happiness, and quality so some measures confound what is being assessed** (Heyman, Sayers, & Bellack, 1994)
- **Some suggest that relationship adjustment, satisfaction, quality, and happiness are either the same construct or part of a higher order factor** (Cohen, 1985; Fincham & Bradbury, 1987)
- **Picking up on these issues, Fletcher, Simpson and Thomas (2000) noted that research into relationships often examined more than relationship satisfaction and that theories of relationships (e.g., Sternberg, 1986) proposed that there was more to relationships than satisfaction**

## Things to Think About...

- **Fletcher et al. (2000) proposed that when evaluating their relationships people have the capacity to:**
  - Evaluate their relationships across various related domains, and that the judgments people make can be consistent or vary across domains
  - Make an overall judgment that summarises how they feel about their relationship – an average of how they perceive the relationship across different domains
- **For example...**
  - An individual may love his or her partner passionately, be highly committed to the relationship, but not trust the partner and, thus, be dissatisfied
  - Conversely, another individual may be high on commitment and trust but feel disillusioned about the disappearance of passion in the relationship
  - The differing evaluations of the relationship, may in turn, influence global assessments about the relationship

## Multidimensional Assessments of Relationships

- **The issues raised by Fletcher et al. (2000), have been considered by some and resulted in relationship assessments that measure people's perceptions of their relationships across different domains. These assessments are administered to individuals and couples – there are some common and widely used assessments**
- **The RELATIONSHIP Evaluation Questionnaire (RELATE, Relate Institute, Brigham Young University): Designed to help guide individuals and partners to have meaningful discussions about various aspects of relationships**
  - 276 questions focused on the four major areas influencing marital satisfaction: personality/values, family and friend support, communication skills, and upbringing/background
  - Individuals and couples receive a report and personalised summary that includes:
    - o *Graphs illustrating how they and their partner rated themselves and each other in eight areas of personality, from sociability to self-esteem*
    - o *Comparisons of their attitudes toward roles, sex, children, religion, and more*
    - o *Insights on how their childhood experiences, from parental happiness to conflict resolution, have shaped their relationship style*
    - o *Identification of problem areas, from power issues to money issues and more*
    - o *Identification of their strengths as a couple*
    - o *Suggestions for improving their relationship and resources they can use to start productive discussions and move to the next step*

[www.relateinstitute.com](http://www.relateinstitute.com)

## Multidimensional Assessments of Relationships

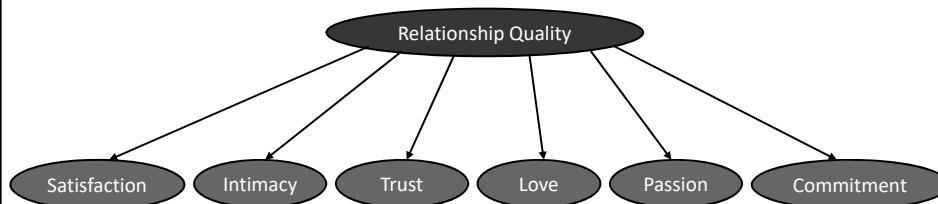
- **PREPARE/ENRICH (Blaine & Olson, 1986, 1989) is a customised couple assessment completed online that identifies a couple's strength and growth areas**
  - Widely used in premarital counselling and premarital education
  - Also used for marriage counselling, marriage enrichment, and dating couples considering engagement.
  - Based on a couple's assessment results, a trained facilitator provides 4-8 feedback sessions in which the facilitator helps the couple discuss and understand their results as they are taught proven relationship skills
- **PREPARE/ENRICH assessment entails:**
  - 30-45 minutes to complete
  - 12 Relationship Scales: Communication, conflict resolution, roles, sexuality, finances, spiritual beliefs and more
  - 5 SCOPE Personality Scales
  - 4 Couple and Family Scales -- based on the Circumplex Model
  - 4 Relationship Dynamic Scales
  - 30 Customised Scales

<http://www.prepare-enrich.com.au/> OR <http://www.prepare-enrich.com/>

## Multidimensional Assessments of Relationships

- **Despite the comprehensive nature of these assessments, inherent challenges exist:**
  - They are lengthy to administer
  - They take time to interpret
  - Some require specialist training
  - They incur costs for administration and report preparation
- **However, there does exist a multidimensional assessment of relationships that is brief, reliable, free and has a solid theoretical and empirical basis**
- **The Perceived Relationship Quality Components (PRQC, Fletcher et al., 2000) is an 18 item measure of relationship quality**
  - Items are rated on a 7 point scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*)
  - It takes 5 minutes to complete
  - Can be administered to individuals and couples
  - Easy to score and interpret
  - Since its publication, it has been used in over 340 studies on romantic relationships

## The Perceived Relationship Quality Components Questionnaire (PRQC)



## The PRQC

- **The PRQC assesses six domains (each with three items) commonly linked to relationships functioning:**
  - Trust: Positive expectations about another's motives with respect to oneself (Boon & Holmes, 1991)
  - Intimacy: A dyadic process involving self-disclosure and partner responsiveness (Reis & Shaver, 1988)
  - Passion: Intense emotional state associated with romance, physical attraction, and sexual intimacy (Sternberg, 1986)
  - Commitment: Desire or intent to continue the relationship (Adams & Jones, 1997)
  - Love: Deep attachment and care for another (Berscheid & Hatfield, 1974; Rubin, 1973)
  - Satisfaction: The fulfillment of needs (often beyond a pre-determined standard, Rusbult et al., 2001).

## The PRQC

Please read each of the following items carefully and, using the rating scale, rate your current partner and relationship (ranging from 1 = not at all to 7 = extremely). Please circle your response.

	not at all		extremely	
1. How satisfied are you with your relationship?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
2. How committed are you to your relationship?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
3. How intimate is your relationship?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
4. How much do you trust your partner?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
5. How passionate is your relationship?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
6. How much do you love your partner?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
7. How content are you with your relationship?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
8. How dedicated are you to your relationship?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
9. How close is your relationship?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
10. How much can you count on your partner?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
11. How lustful is your relationship?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
12. How much do you adore your partner?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
13. How happy are you with your relationship?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
14. How devoted are you to your relationship?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
15. How connected are you to your partner?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
16. How dependable is your partner?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
17. How sexually intense is your relationship?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7
18. How much do you cherish your partner?	1	2	3	4 5 6 7

## The PRQC – Item Composition

1	Satisfaction	How satisfied are you with your relationship?
2	Commitment	How committed are you to your relationship?
3	Intimacy	How intimate is your relationship?
4	Trust	How much do you trust your partner?
5	Passion	How passionate is your relationship?
6	Love	How much do you love your partner?
7	Satisfaction	How content are you with your relationship?
8	Commitment	How dedicated are you to your relationship?
9	Intimacy	How close is your relationship?
10	Trust	How much can you count on your partner?
11	Passion	How lustful is your relationship?
12	Love	How much do you adore your partner?
13	Satisfaction	How happy are you with your relationship?
14	Commitment	How devoted are you to your relationship?
15	Intimacy	How connected are you to your partner?
16	Trust	How dependable is your partner?
17	Passion	How sexually intense is your relationship?
18	Love	How much do you cherish your partner?

## The PRQC – Scoring

- **An average is computed for each of the six domains of the PRQC**
  - (1) The *Satisfaction* score is computed by averaging items 1, 7 and 13. Higher scores reflect greater relationship satisfaction
  - (2) The *Commitment* score is computed by averaging items 2, 8, and 14. Higher scores reflect greater commitment
  - (3) The *Intimacy* score is computed by averaging items 3, 9, and 15. Higher scores reflect greater intimacy
  - (4) The *Trust* score is computed by averaging items 4, 10 and 16. Higher scores reflect greater levels of trust
  - (5) The *Passion* score is computed by averaging items 5, 11 and 17. Higher scores reflect greater levels of passion
  - (6) The *Love* score is computed by averaging items 6, 12 and 18. Higher scores reflect greater levels of love
- **An overall relationship quality score can be computed by averaging across all 18 items in the measure**

## The PRQC - A Worked Example

Please read each of the following items carefully and, using the rating scale, rate your current partner and relationship (ranging from 1 = not at all to 7 = extremely). Please circle your response.

	not at all			extremely			
1. How satisfied are you with your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. How committed are you to your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. How intimate is your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. How much do you trust your partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. How passionate is your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. How much do you love your partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. How content are you with your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. How dedicated are you to your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. How close is your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. How much can you count on your partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. How lustful is your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. How much do you adore your partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. How happy are you with your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. How devoted are you to your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. How connected are you to your partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. How dependable is your partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. How sexually intense is your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. How much do you cherish your partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## The PRQC – Scoring

Satisfaction (items 1, 7, 13)	4	3	4	3.7
Commitment (items 2, 8, 14)	5	5	6	5.3
Intimacy (items 3, 9, 15)	2	3	4	3.0
Trust (items 4, 10, 16)	3	3	2	2.7
Passion (items 5, 11, 17)	2	1	2	1.7
Love (items 6, 12, 18)	6	5	5	5.3
<b>Overall Relationship Quality (Items 1 – 18)</b>				<b>3.6</b>



## The PRQC – Interpreting Scoring

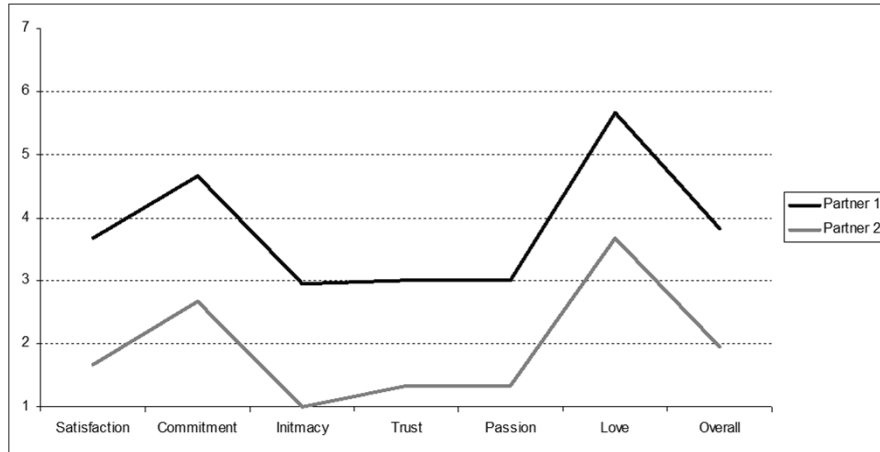
- The PRQC is largely used for research, thus, it does not provide any clinical cutoffs or benchmarks
- However, given the reliability and validity of the measure, the scores can be interpreted with confidence in terms of how an individual or couple are fairing in terms of their quality
- A way of thinking about scores is:
  - 1 to 3: low or poor relationship quality
  - 4 to 5: moderate relationship quality
  - 6 to 7: high relationship quality
    - o *Scores of 4 are essentially the mid-point of the scale*
- In various studies using the PRQC in non-distressed samples, it is not uncommon to have participants report average PRQC scores in the ranges of 5 and 6+

## The PRQC – Interpreting Scoring

- The PRQC, like other multidimensional assessments, comes into its own when it is used to compare the scores within couples
- That is, how does one person assess their relationship quality compared to their partner?
  - Are both partners low?
  - Are both partners high?
  - Are there differences in the profile of scores when looking at the domains of the PRQC for one partner relative to the other?
- Another way to think of interpreting scores is changes over time. This would require the repeated administration of the measure to clients
  - Could scores tell a practitioner and clients something about how therapy is progressing over time?

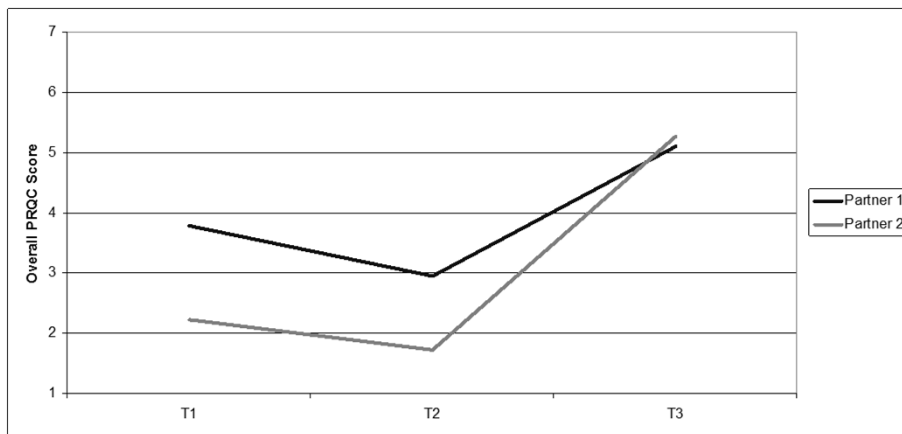
## The PRQC – Interpreting Scoring

- Comparing partner scores across the domains of the PRQC and overall



## The PRQC – Interpreting Scoring

- Comparing partners on overall PRQC scores over time



## Final Thoughts & Questions to Consider

- Can PRQC scores provide an opportunity to create a dialogue with the client(s) or amongst partners when unsure how to make sense or talk about their relationship issues?
- Measures such as the PRQC can help cut through some of the challenges faced by counsellors and therapists when trying to identify relationship issues
  - **Clients can:**
    - o *Balk at discussing some issues*
    - o *Change or alter the topic of the discussion*
    - o *Cannot describe their issues using a clear narrative*
  - **Therapists need:**
    - *to get a sense of the relationship difficulties – identifying areas of work*
    - *To get a sense if counselling/therapy is working*