

Can We Improve Job Readiness Among TANF Customers through Relationship Skill-Building?

John Pugliese, Ph.D.
Dixie State University

County of Riverside Department of Public Social Service
Research, Analysis, and Decision Support

Patty Howell, Ed.M., A.G.C.
Healthy Relationships California



Background

- The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) partnered with Healthy Relationships California (HRC) to conduct a study aimed at increasing customers' communication and relationship skill-building.
- Lack of 'soft-skills' for TANF customers is often cited as a barrier to employment.
- Relationship and Marriage Education (RME) includes many of the skills necessary for success in work-related contexts; such as
 - Communication
 - Problem-solving
 - Handling conflict
 - Coping with stress

Why focus on relationship skill-building?

- Poor relationships at home can have an impact on stress levels at work.
- The inability to develop and maintain healthy relationships at work is tied to
 - job stress
 - psychological distress at work
 - poor physical and mental health
- High stress can lead to
 - poor job performance
 - high absenteeism
 - Increased likelihood of changing jobs frequently (i.e., turnover)

Marriage/Relationship Outcomes and Health

- Extensive literature on the link between marriage and well-being:
 - Mental health and physical health benefits to marriage.
 - Effects are largely dependent upon the quality of the marriage.
 - Unhappy marriage significantly increases chances of illness or death.
 - Divorce also associated with negative effects on children's health.

Relationship Outcomes and Poverty

- 40% of families on TANF are divorced or separated single-parent households.
- Divorce increases likelihood a family will become economically distressed;
 - single-parent families constitute >73% of the lowest income quintile.
- 75% of women who apply for welfare do so because of a disrupted marriage or disrupted relationship with live-in male outside of marriage.
- Divorce diminishes potential of every member of household to accumulate wealth. Income decline is intergenerational.

Prior Research

- *Meta-Analyses on efficacy of RME programs (8 studies)*
 - Evidence that RME programs work to reduce strife, improve communication, increase parenting skills, increase stability and enhance marital happiness.
 - Follow up assessments found evidence of limited diminished effects over time.

- *The Supporting Healthy Marriage Evaluation (OPRE & MDRC, 2012)*
- Small but statistically significant positive effects on the quality of couples' marital relationships.
 - Results included positive communication skills.
- Slightly lower levels of individual psychological distress than their counterparts in the control group.
- No effect on whether couples were still married at 12 months.

- *The Building Strong Families Project (OPRE & Mathematica, 2012)*
 - After three years, no effect on the quality of couples' relationships and did not make couples more likely to stay together or get married.
 - BSF did not improve couples' ability to manage their conflicts.
 - BSF had no effect on the family stability or economic well-being of children.
 - i.e. income, receiving TANF/Food Stamps, and covering expenses.

Who is Healthy Relationships California?

- Nation's leading RME organization
- Work in CA funded by grant from HHS/ACF
- 16 curricula for youth and adults
- Served 150,000 participants in RME classes in past 7 years.



**healthy
relationships**
international
A Division of Healthy Relationships California

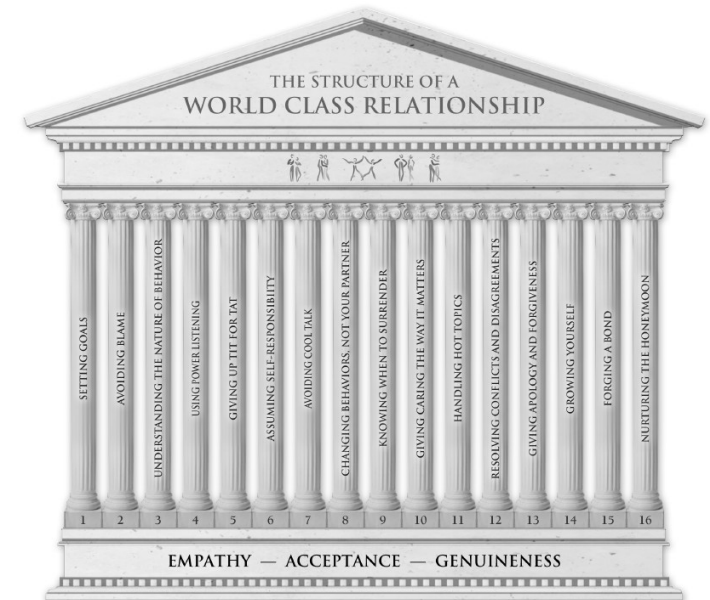
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- Around the U.S.
- Around the world



HRC Pilot Project with Riverside DPSS

- **World Class Relationships™**
 - 16 hour skills course
 - Teaches 16 research-based “Pillars of WCR”



THE 16 PILLARS, UNDERGIRD BY THE THREE CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH THAT SUPPORT A WORLD CLASS RELATIONSHIP

What is Relationship and Marriage Education (RME)?

- Taught in classroom settings
- Typically, 15-30 people
 - up to several hundred+
- Skills-based curricula
 - Focus on interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills

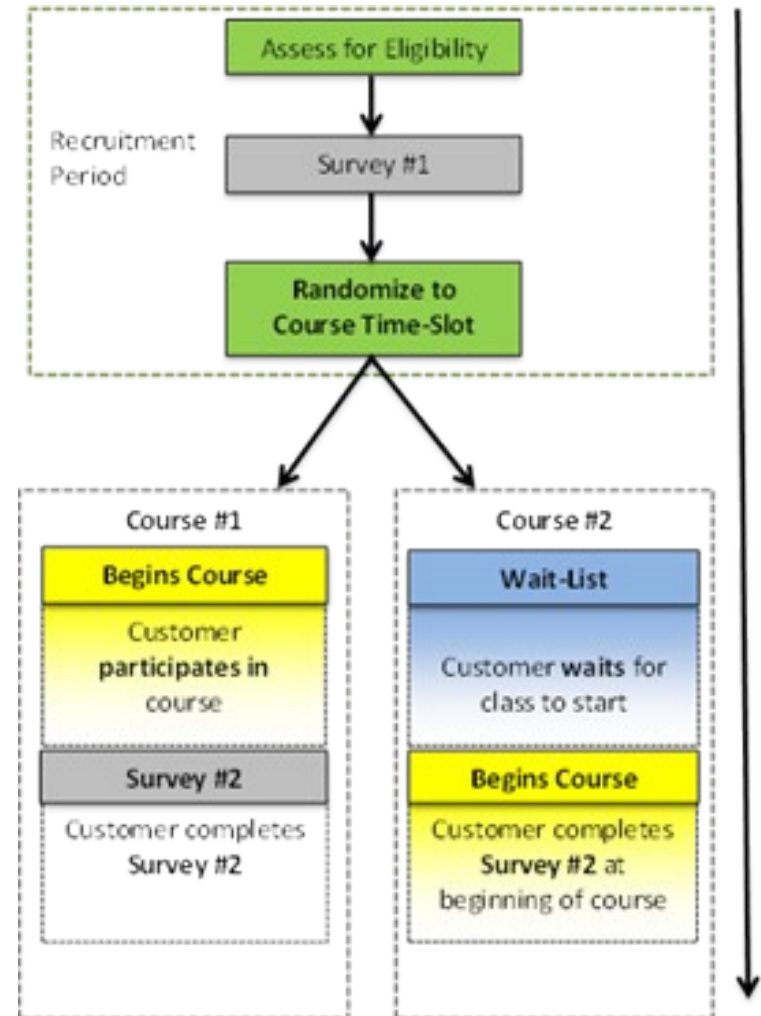


Research Questions

- Was the course effective in improving customer relationship satisfaction pre-to-post?
- Was the course effective in improving customer perceived efficacy in using course skills pre-to-post?
- Was there a statistically significant change in the types of relationship behaviors reported by customers on pre-to-post assessments?
- Do customers perceive a greater ability to improve their employment relationships?
- Do customers perceive an improved ability to handle the difficulties of job search?
- Are course participants more likely to
 - participate in Welfare-to-Work activities?
 - exit aid?
 - obtain employment?

Evaluation Design

- *Randomized Wait-list Control Design*
 - Type of randomized controlled trial (RCT)
 - Allows all customers to participate in the program.
- Three regional offices were participated in evaluation.
- Course was offered to:
 - Current Welfare-to-Work customers
 - Over the age of 18
 - Not currently experiencing domestic violence.



Participants

- Total of 284 participants recruited
 - 111 assigned to control condition
 - 173 to the experimental condition.
- Demographics
 - 76% female
 - 51% Hispanic
 - Average age of 30 years old
 - 62% never been married
 - 89% U.S. born,
 - 77% had a high school diploma
 - 93% were English speakers
 - 91% of the participants' partners did not attend the course.
- No statistical differences between the experimental and control conditions.

Demographics	Control		Exper.		Total		Miss
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Sex							9
Male	22	20%	43	25%	65	23%	
Female	88	80%	128	75%	216	77%	
Ethnicity							86
White	25	30%	34	28%	59	29%	
Black	20	23%	12	10%	32	15%	
Hispanic	37	44%	70	58%	107	52%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	3%	1	1%	2	1%	
Other	0	0%	4	3%	4	3%	
Marital Status							38
Never Married	58	60%	95	60%	153	60%	
Married	26	27%	40	25%	66	26%	
Separated	6	6.5%	9	6%	15	6%	
Divorced	6	6.5%	12	9%	18	8%	
Birth Country							9
US	97	88%	157	91%	254	90%	
Mexico	8	8%	9	5%	17	6%	
Other	5	4%	5	4%	10	4%	
Education Level							123
High School	51	80%	79	76%	130	78%	
GED	7	10%	15	15%	22	13%	
2 year degree	3	5%	3	3%	6	4%	
4 year degree	2	3%	5	5%	7	4%	
Advanced Degree	1	2%	1	1%	2	1%	
Language							9
English	104	95%	160	94%	264	94%	
Spanish	6	5%	11	6%	17	6%	
Partner Attending							59
No	84	93%	126	89%	210	90%	
Yes	6	7%	15	11%	21	10%	

Completion Rates

- Post-surveys were collected from 87 experimental group participants, and 42 control group participants (highlighted in yellow).
 - Completion rate (44%)
 - No show rate (40%)
 - Drop out Rate (15%)
 - Post-Test Completion Rate (47%)
- No statistical differences between the experimental and control conditions on demographics.

No Post-Test	No Show	Partial	Complete	Total
Control	45	10	14	69
Experimental	50	11	20	81
Total	95	21	34	150
Post-Test				
Control	13	6	23	42
Experimental	5	18	69	92
Total	18	24	92	134

Measures

- *Emotional Control /Domestic Violence Avoidance* (14 items):
 - *I yell and scream at my partner.*
 - *I physically hurt my partner such as hit, push, grab or shove.*
- *Relationship Efficacy* (4 items)
 - *I have confidence that I can handle the day-to-day challenges of my relationship with my partner.*
 - *I am confident I can use positive communication and problem-solving skills with my partner.*
- *Communication Skills* (15 items)
 - *Use disrespectful tone or voice*
 - *Act loving and affectionate toward partner*
- *Relationship Satisfaction* (1 item)

- *Work Efficacy*(4 items)
 - *Cooperate with co-workers*
 - *Achieve goals that will be assigned*
- *Job Search Efficacy* (5 items)
 - *Take new opportunities in the job market*
 - *Overcome encountered difficulties*

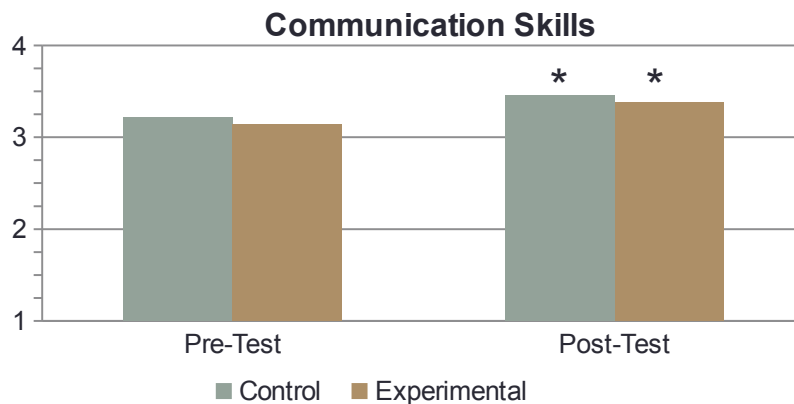
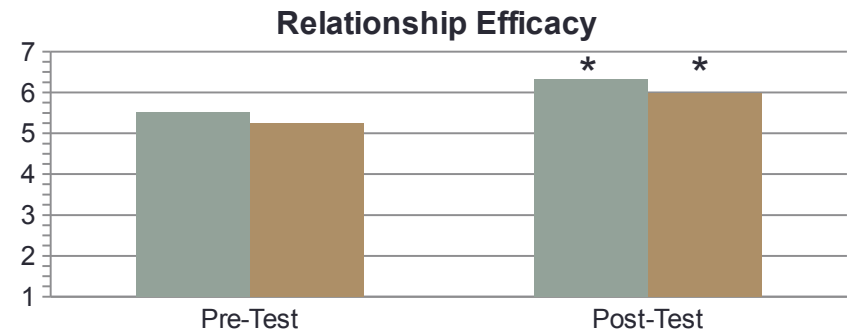
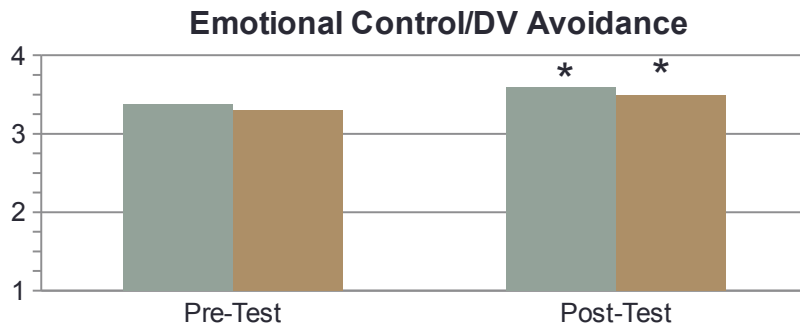
Pre-Survey Comparisons

Measure	Control		Experimental		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Emotional Control/DV Avoidance	3.38	0.46	3.30	0.44	3.35	0.45
Relationship Efficacy	5.51	1.24	5.25	1.14	5.36	1.19
Communication Skills	3.22	0.68	3.14	0.57	3.18	0.61
Relationship Satisfaction	5.34	1.65	5.06	1.67	5.18	1.66
Work Efficacy	4.66	0.47	4.60	0.53	4.63	0.50
Job Search Efficacy	4.19	0.70	4.11	0.67	4.14	0.68

No statistical differences between the experimental and control conditions on pre-survey items were found.

Experimental Analyses

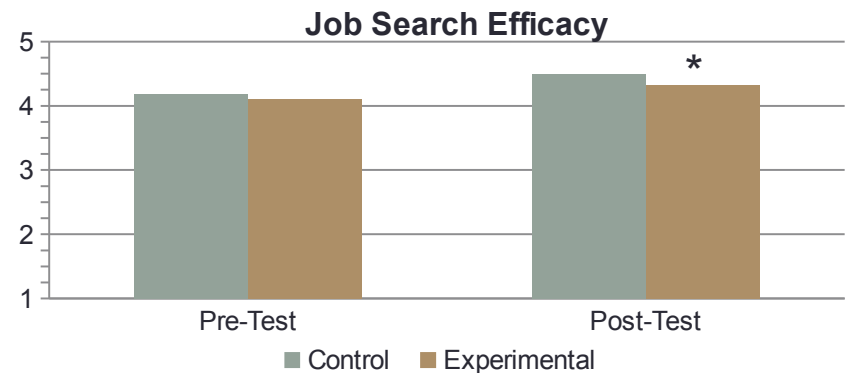
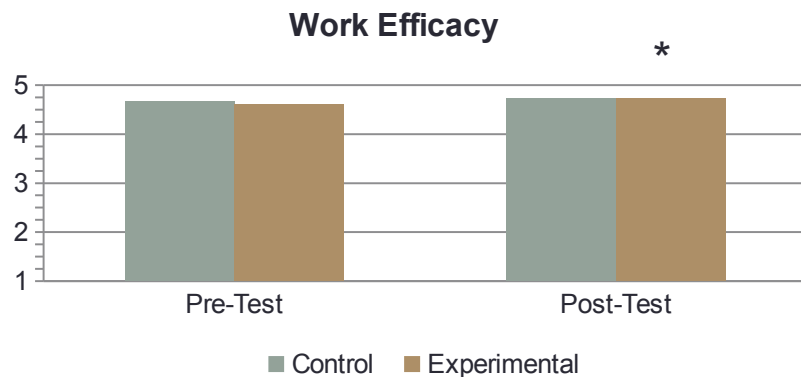
* Within group pre-to-post difference



- No statistically significant increase in Relationship Satisfaction was observed for the experimental group.
- No statistical difference in the pre-to-post change *between* groups.

Experimental Analyses

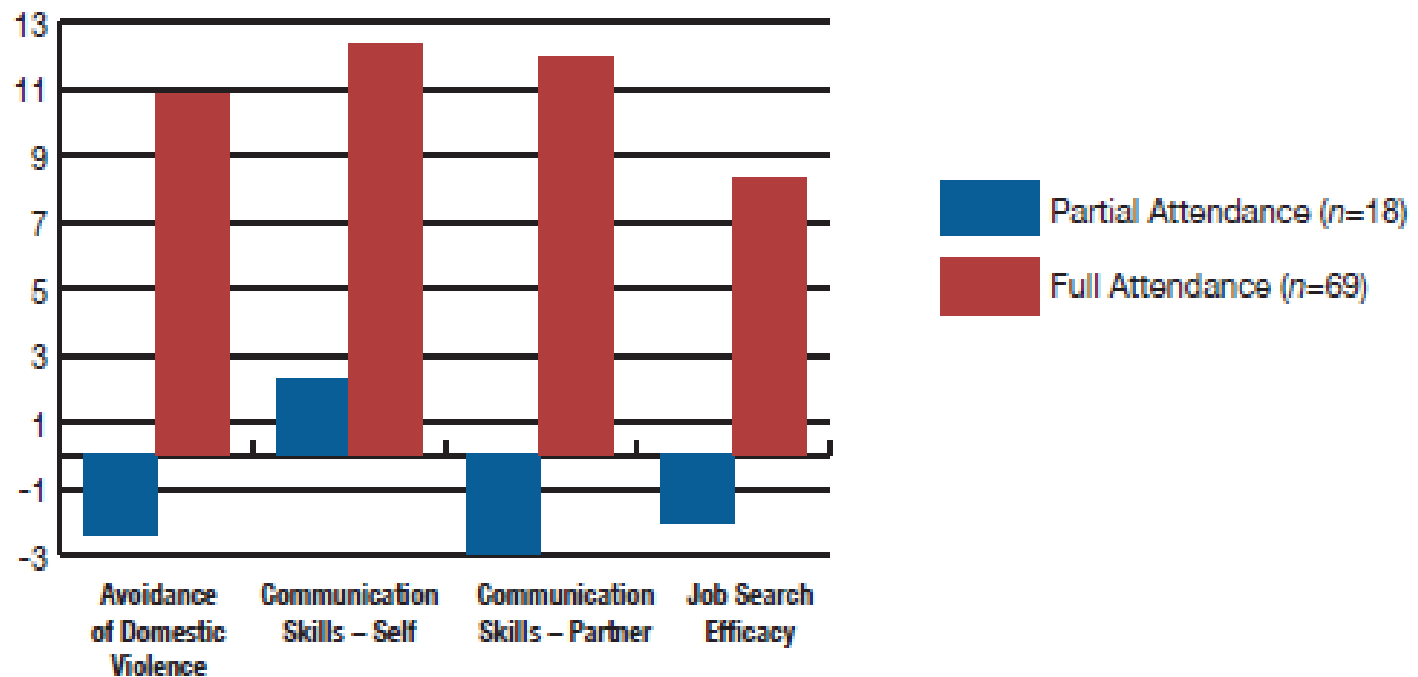
* Within group pre-to-post difference



- The control group did not exhibit a statistically significant increase from pre-to-post on Work Efficacy and Job Search Efficacy.
- No statistical difference in the pre-to-post change *between* groups.

Partial vs. Completers

Figure 2. Comparison of TANF Recipients' Improvement by Course Attendance



Long Term Outcomes

- To assess the impact of the class we collected the following information 30 and 60 days from participation:
 - **Program Status:** Point-in-time measure of whether the customer was active, off aide due to employment, sanctioned, or in non-compliance.
 - **Employment:** Point-in-time measure of whether the customer was employed.
 - **Participation Hours:** Aggregate measure of the number of hours in job-related activities 30 and 60 days post-participation.
- Two approaches were used:
 - **No-Show Control** – Compares participants who attended the course with those who were enrolled but did not show for the course.
 -
 - **Matched-Case Control** – Compares participants who attended the course with a statistically matched sample of customers from the same office who were not signed up for the course.

No-Show Control

30-Day Outcomes		No-Shows	Completers	
CW Program Status	Active	40.73%	88.71%	*
	Off Aide due to Employment	2.42%	0.81%	
WTW Program Status	Sanctioned	0.36%	0.36%	
	Non-Compliance	0.36%	1.42%	
Active and Employed		6.45%	7.26%	
Participation Hours (30 days)		51.70	85.77	*

60-Day Outcomes		No-Shows	Completers	
CW Program Status	Active	37.90%	80.29%	*
	Off Aide due to Employment	3.63%	0.81%	
WTW Program Status	Sanctioned	0.68%	0.36%	
	Non-Compliance	0.68%	2.03%	
Active and Employed		8.06%	11.29%	
Participation Hours (60 days)		73.35	139.04	*

* Statistically significant difference

Matched-Case Control

30-Day Outcomes		Matched	Treatment
CW Program Status	Active	85.76%	83.05%
	Off Aide due to Employment	2.37%	2.37%
WTW Program Status	Sanctioned	0.36%	0.36%
	Non-Compliance	0.36%	1.36%
Active and Employed		21.02%	10.85%
Participation Hours (30 days)		63.07	71.45

*

60-Day Outcomes		Matched	Treatment
CW Program Status	Active	85.76%	77.63%
	Off Aide due to Employment	2.37%	3.39%
WTW Program Status	Sanctioned	0.69%	0.36%
	Non-Compliance	0.68%	2.03%
Active and Employed		18.98%	8.81%
Participation Hours (60 days)		101.5	112.5

*

* *Statistically significant difference*

Recap of Results

- *Experimental Group*: Increase from pre-test to post-test for all survey measures except for relationship satisfaction.
- *Control Group*: Increase from pre-test to post-test for all survey measures except for the work and job search efficacy.
- **No statistically significant differences between the control and experimental groups with regard to their relationships or job-related beliefs on the post-survey.**
- **No statistically significant difference between course participants and matched-case control customers in regard to 30 & 60 outcomes.**
- Counter-intuitive result: Matched cases more likely to be on aid *and* employed.

Discussion

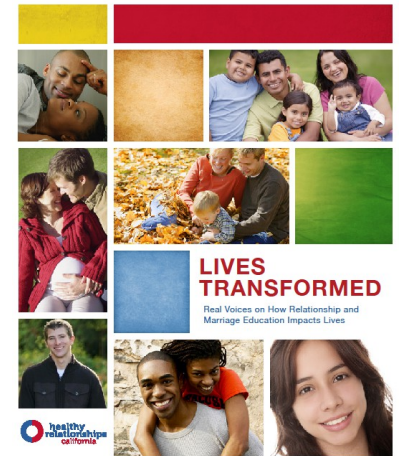
- Results are somewhat consistent with large-scale evaluations.
- Why did we not find differences between the control group and experimental group?
 - Important to remember that the control group was *not* a no-treatment control group.
 - 'Standard of care' comparison
- What constitutes standard of care?
 - Job Readiness Activities / Work Experience / Counseling / Education
- Healthy relationships brought about that the degree of change as our standard activities.

Discussion

- The material may not have been properly geared toward work-related communication.
- The course was compressed to meet time demands
 - May have been too short for customers to practice the skills taught and internalize the material.
 - Longer exposure time to the material may have produced more pronounced changes in the experimental group.
- Important for participants to attend the full 16 hour course to receive the maximum benefit of World Class Relationships for
 - job search efficacy
 - communication skills
 - avoidance of domestic violence.

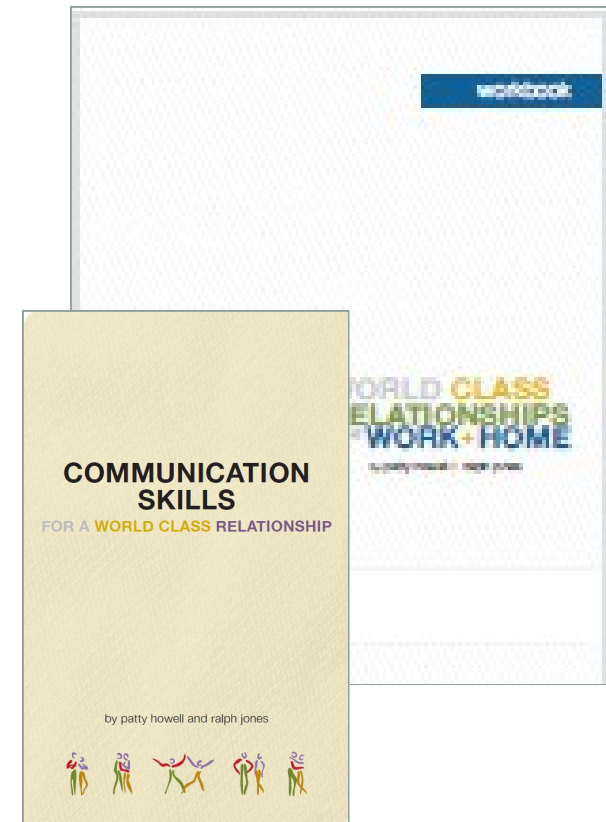
Impact of WCR on TANF Participants

- Lots of enthusiastic testimonials!
 - **From Customers** (See Touchcards)
 - **From Counselors:**
 - “Now I know why I’ve been divorced 4 times!”
 - “Let me teach a class, please!”
 - “If DPSS/GAIN would only teach one class, this should be it. I have never seen a class impact every participant in such a positive way. If it isn’t taught first in the curriculum, the rest of the tools we give (to our customers) will not matter.”



World Class Relationships for Work+Home™

- **WCR curriculum developed for TANF customers**
- Based on feedback from Pilot Project
- Soft skills including:
 - communication skills (listening/non-blameful confrontation)
 - problems-solving skills
 - developing confidence and self-efficacy
 - being able to create successful relationships in their job search, in their workplace, and in their home life

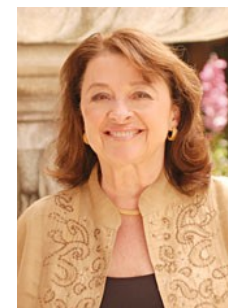


For more information, contact:

John Pugliese
Dixie State University
pugliese@dixie.edu



Patty Howell, President
Healthy Relationships California
Patty@RelationshipsCA.org



Thank you!
