Activating experience
Womanfriend breaks the news that she is going out with another man, and therefore wishes to break off her relationship with you.

Irrational Beliefs about the experience
"I really must be a worthless person."
"I'll never find another great woman like her."
"She doesn't want me; therefore no one could possibly want me."

and/or
"This is awful! "Everything happens to me!"
"That bitch! She shouldn't be that way."
"I can't stand the world being so unfair and lousy."

upsetting emotional consequences
DEPRESSION and/or

Disputing irrational ideas
"Where's the evidence that because this woman wishes to end our relationship, that I am a worthless person; or that I'll never be able to have a really good relationship with someone else; or even that I couldn't be happy alone?"

"Why is it awful that I'm not getting what I want?"
"Why shouldn't the world be full of injustices?"
"How does her rejecting me make me a bad person?"

Sadness: "Well, we did have a nice relationship, and I'm sorry to see it end—but it did have its problems and now I can go out and find a new friend."

or
Annoyance: "It's annoying that she was seeing someone but it isn't awful or intolerable."
**RECORD OF THOUGHTS INTERFERING WITH EFFECTIVENESS**

(A) **PROBLEM SITUATION:** Actual event leading to upsetting feeling and dysfunctional behavior:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNADAPTIVE REACTIONS</th>
<th>ADAPTIVE REACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(C) Upset Emotional Reaction to Situation</td>
<td>Rational Counter-Messages (to Replace Self-Defeating Thoughts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Defeating Behavior</td>
<td>(B) Self-Defeating Thoughts (Negative Self-Talk)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Look for *shoulds, awfulizing, total condemnation of yourself (or others)* because of poor behavior, *I can't stand it*, etc.
TABLE 1 Inappropriate and Appropriate Negative Emotions and Their Cognitive Correlates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inference Related to Personal Domain</th>
<th>Type of Belief</th>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Appropriateness of Emotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat or danger</td>
<td>Irrational</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Concern</td>
<td>Appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss (with implications for future): failure</td>
<td>Irrational</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking of personal rule (other or self); other threatens self; frustration</td>
<td>Irrational</td>
<td>Damning anger</td>
<td>Inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Nondamning anger</td>
<td>Appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking of own moral code</td>
<td>Irrational</td>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>Inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Remorse</td>
<td>Appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other betrays self (self nonden-</td>
<td>Irrational</td>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>Inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>serving)</td>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Disappointment</td>
<td>Appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat to desired exclusive rela-</td>
<td>Irrational</td>
<td>Morbid jealousy</td>
<td>Inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tionship</td>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Nonmorbid jealousy</td>
<td>Appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal weakness revealed publicly</td>
<td>Irrational</td>
<td>Shame</td>
<td>Inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Regret</td>
<td>Appropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. An inference is an interpretation, whether accurate or inaccurate, that goes beyond observable reality but that gives meaning to it. Personal domain refers to those tangible or intangible objects in which a person has an involvement (Beck, 1976). Rational-emotive theory distinguishes between ego and comfort aspects of the personal domain, although these aspects frequently interact.

TABLE 2 The Rational-Emotive Treatment Sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ask for a Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Define and Agree upon the Target Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Assess C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Assess A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Identify and Assess Any Secondary Emotional Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teach the B-C Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Assess Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Connect Irrational Beliefs and C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dispute Irrational Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Prepare Your Client to Deepen Conviction in Rational Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Encourage Your Client to Put New Learning into Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Check Homework Assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Facilitate the Working-through Process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. A = activating event; B = belief; C = emotional and behavioral consequences
UNDESIRABLE EVENT (Actual or Anticipated)

Long-held BELIEF SYSTEMS and EVALUATIONS (Both Rational and Irrational mixed together)

RATIONAL COMPONENTS Characterized by one or more of the following: reasonable, sensible, correct, well-grounded or based on evidence, defensible, logical, sound, compatible with reality, self-enhancing and likely to result in what you want in the long run

IRRATIONAL COMPONENTS Characterized by one or more of the following: unreasonable, not sensible, incorrect, groundless or not based on evidence, indefensible, illogical, unsound, incompatible with reality, untenable, implausible, absurd, self-defeating and not likely to result in what you want in the long run

Successful SEARCHING and PROBING can result in conscious VERBALIZATION of the relevant BELIEF SYSTEMS and EVALUATIONS

Beginning of therapeutic intervention: How did I upset myself?

DISPUTATION AND CHALLENGING of IRRATIONAL BELIEFS AND EVALUATIONS

REPLACEMENT of IRRATIONAL COMPONENTS with RATIONAL COMPONENTS

Fig. 5. Rational-emotive theory and therapy flowchart.
WHEN YOU'RE FEELING DOWN......
WAYS TO PICK YOURSELF UP

1. Use your down feelings as a warning-light indicating that some automatic
negative thoughts are playing in your head.
Zero in on those automatic negative thoughts and write them down. Don't
let them buzz around in your head; snare them on paper!

2. Read over the list of ten cognitive distortions (see below.) Learn precisely
how you are twisting things and blowing them out of proportion.

3. Substitute a more objective thought that puts the lie to the one which made
you look down on yourself. As you do this, you'll begin to feel better.
You'll be boosting your self-esteem, and your sense of worthlessness (and
depression) will start to dissipate.

10 COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

1. ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING: You see things in black-and-white categories.
If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total
failure.

2. OVERGENERALIZATION: You see a single negative event as a never-ending
pattern of defeat.

3. MENTAL FILTER: You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it
exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like
the drop of ink that discolors the entire beaker of water.

4. DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE: You reject positive experiences by insisting
they "don't count" for some reason or other. In this way you can maintain
a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences.

5. JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS: You make a negative interpretation even though
there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion.
   a. Mind reading. You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting neg-
      atively to you, and you don't bother to check this out.
   b. Fortune Teller Error. You anticipate that things will turn out badly,
      and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already-established fact.

6. MAGNIFICATION (CATASTROPHIZING) OR MINIMIZATION: You exaggerate the impor-
tance of things (such as your goof-up or someone else's achievement), or
you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable
qualities or the other person's imperfections). This is also called the
"binocular trick."

7. EMOTIONAL REASONING: You assume that your negative emotions necessarily
reflect the way things really are: "I feel it, therefore it must be true."

8. SHOULD STATEMENTS: You try to motivate yourself with shoulds and shouldn'ts,
as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to
do anything. "MUSTS" and "oughts" are also offenders. The emotional con-
sequence is guilt. When you direct should statements toward others, you
feel anger, frustration, and resentment. (see other side)
9. LABELING AND MISLABELING: This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: "I'm a loser." When someone else's behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to him: "He's a goddam louse." Mislabeling involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.

10. PERSONALIZATION: You see yourself as the cause of some negative external event which in fact you were not primarily responsible for.

**TRIPLE COLUMN TECHNIQUE**

The example below illustrates how—with just a pencil and paper—you can restructure the way you think about yourself when you have goofed up in some way. The aim is to substitute more objective rational thoughts for the illogical, harsh self-criticisms that automatically flood your mind when a negative event occurs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Automatic Thought</th>
<th>Cognitive Distortion</th>
<th>Rational Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(SELF-CRITICISM)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(SELF-DEFENSE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I never do anything right.</td>
<td>1. Overgeneralization</td>
<td>1. Nonsense! I do a lot of things right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I'm always late.</td>
<td>2. Overgeneralization</td>
<td>2. I'm not always late. That's ridiculous. Think of all the times I've been on time. If I'm late more often than I'd like, I'll work on this problem and develop a method for being more punctual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Everyone will look down on me.</td>
<td>3. Mind reading; overgeneralization. All-or-nothing thinking; fortune teller error</td>
<td>3. Someone may be disappointed that I'm late but it's not the end of the world. Maybe the meeting won't even start on time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. This shows what a jerk I am</td>
<td>4. Labeling</td>
<td>4. Come on, now, I'm not a &quot;jerk&quot; either. I may appear foolish if I come in late, but this doesn't make me a fool. Everyone is late sometimes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I'll make a fool of myself.</td>
<td>5. Labeling</td>
<td>5. Ditto. I'm not a &quot;fool&quot; either. I may appear foolish if I come in late, but this doesn't make me a fool. Everyone is late sometimes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy*, by David D. Burns, M.D. and *Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders*, by Aaron T. Beck, M.D.
1. **Do some "anti-awfulizing".** Obsessive fears are usually fed by irrational thinking that the feared outcome would be the most awful thing in the world—so bad that it must not be! It is most important to recognize this "awfulizing" or "catastrophizing"—and then to challenge your thoughts that your feared outcome is so awful that it violates natural law. Make it your goal to think in terms of possible misfortune rather than devastating tragedy lurking in your future.

2. **Accept the fact that life has no guarantees.** You surely wish that someone could guarantee that what you fear will absolutely not come to pass, but life doesn't work that way. It is the little child in us who grandiosely commands that the world run on our terms. It is the natural order that many bad things happen to most of us—loneliness, accidents, sickness, and (inevitably) death. And they don't always get distributed evenly among people or over time. If we're demanding that this not be so, we're refusing to accept adult reality. If you want to overcome your crippling fears, you had better become more able to accept (though hardly like) that reality. If misfortune comes, it comes.

3. **Don't minimize your ability to cope with very bad things.** Ask yourself "What is the worst that could possibly happen?" to you in this area you fear. Even if the worst came to pass, could you stand it and cope with it to some degree? When we are feeling most fearful, we tend to underestimate our adult ability to cope with misfortune. By planning how you would cope with the thing you fear most, you can stop viewing it as something you'd be totally helpless to deal with.

4. **Be realistic about the probability of your worst fears coming true.** While life doesn't come with guarantees, it's loaded with probabilities of differing values. We usually exaggerate the probability or likelihood of some feared outcome when we are anxious about its occurring. We actually increase our anxiety by making the outcome seem almost inevitable when it really isn't. By gathering evidence about the actual probability of the thing you fear coming to pass, the probability of its occurring is much lower than you originally thought.

5. **Realize that you have nothing to lose by not worrying.** Reassure yourself that you do not need to continue worrying: it
doesn't magically avert what you fear. (That's just superstition.) And worrying is a poor mode of problem-solving, too. You can do problem-solving about how to cope with your situation in "thinking sessions" that are brief and constructive. Anxiety and obsessing actually interfere with your ability to think clearly about a problem.

6. **Deliberately "stop" your obsessive cycle.** When you are stuck in your obsessing, deliberately tell yourself "Stop!" You can say it out loud in a forceful manner, or you can scream it in your head. You can even visualize a big red stop sign in your mind's eye. If your obsessive thoughts still keep distracting you, place a loose rubber band around your wrist and snap it every time you find yourself at dysfunctional levels of obsessing.

7. **Give yourself instructions to do something other than obsess.** Whisk yourself out of your obsessive state with activities that are readily available to you. Some ideas for distracting and relaxing yourself are:

   - Take some deep breaths—breathing *slowly* and exhaling fully.
   - Vividly imagine a delightful scene which you've already experienced or one where you'd like to go (e.g., a beautiful, sandy beach or a fresh spring scene). Use all of your senses to imagine it.
   - Do progressive relaxation exercises that you learned from a trainer, book or tape. (*Learning to Relax* is an excellent audio-cassette available from the Institute for Rational-Emotive Therapy.)
   - Do something athletic.
   - Move furniture.
   - Have sex (masturbation is fine).
   - Listen to favorite music. Try using earphones to get really absorbed.
   - Talk to someone about a topic, and try to get very involved in your conversation.
   - Watch a favorite T.V. program or go out to a movie.

A refreshing break can provide relief in the short run, but use good rational thinking to really free yourself from your obsession. Many good books are available that expand on rational-emotive techniques for dealing with anxiety. For a start, try Albert Ellis' and Irving Becker's book, *A Guide to Personal Happiness*. 

III-34
SOME METHODS FOR MANAGING ANGER

COGNITIVE (THINKING):
1. Realize that you create your own anger.
2. Dispute your demands and unreasonable expectations about how others must act.
3. Judge behaviors, not people.
4. Consider all the reasons why someone may be acting badly.
5. Give up the idea that it is unhealthy to live without expressing much anger.
6. Accept yourself, even if you get angry much more than you wish. Pledge to work on it, but don't condemn yourself.

EMOTIVE:
1. Acknowledge your angry feelings.
2. Try to empathize with others' feelings—especially people you're angry with.
3. Practice giving unconditional acceptance to people (especially loved ones) you feel angry at.
4. Use rational-emotive imagery to become familiar with more appropriate feelings.

BEHAVIORAL:
1. Practice assertiveness so you can stand up for yourself without being hostile to others. (Especially use "I" statements and criticize behaviors rather than people).
2. Rehearse talking sense to yourself in preparation for the times when you'll be angry.
3. Use prepared coping self-statements when angry.
4. Use distraction and other methods to control angry outbursts that can sour your relationships. (For example, count to 20, do deep breathing, relaxation, meditation, thought-stopping, physical activity, etc.)
5. Sometimes choose not to express your resentments to others (even assertively).
6. Deliberately try acting lovingly or chummily when you don't feel that way. (You may succeed in changing how others are acting—you may even start to think and feel more loving.)
7. Reward yourself for acting less angrily. Or penalize (but not condemn) yourself for outbursts.
8. Work out written behavioral contracts with significant others in which you mutually pledge to eliminate one kind of hostile interaction.
9. Ask friends or loved ones to praise your self-control and give you additional ideas to manage anger.
10. Use humor to defuse situations, but try to avoid hostile sarcasm ("anger with a smile").
11. Identify and copy people who seem to manage anger well.
12. Read helpful books or listen to tapes about reducing anger.
13. Lower your voice (both the one you use to speak to others and the one in your head.)
14. Write some reminders to yourself on index cards to keep at home or in your office or car.
ANGER-REDUCING RATIONAL BELIEFS

While it is preferable to be treated fairly, kindly and considerately, there is no law of the universe that says I *must* be.

People who act unfairly, inconsiderately, or unkindly may deserve to be penalized, but never to be totally condemned as rotten no-goodniks who deserve to be eternally damned.

Anger does not help in the long run; it is only temporarily effective at best.

Anger toward others frequently prevents me from getting what I want.

While it is undesirable to fail to get what I want, it is seldom awful or intolerable.

I can cope successfully with unfair people even though I strongly wish they would act better.

I wish others would treat me fairly—but they never have to.

I do not *need* other people to act well—I only prefer it.

People act the way they do because that’s the way they act—tough!

I can live and be happy—though not as happy—with my significant other’s fallibility.

My supervisor is fallible and will not always act fairly or competently. Tough—that’s the way fallible human beings work!

I *can* put up with this negative and hostile person, though it would be better if he/she acted better.
SUICIDE PREVENTION AGREEMENT

I, the undersigned, agree that I will not hurt or kill myself.

I. If I feel suicidal or have suicidal thoughts, I will do the following:

A. Complete an RET homework sheet and work at disputing and changing my irrational thinking, especially those thoughts that make me depressed, anxious, or suicidal.

B. Do something physical (e.g., go for a walk, exercise, etc.)
   My physical activities will be (specify):

C. Call a friend or someone with whom I can speak, such as (list names and phone number(s)):

D. Do something I usually enjoy even though I might not currently enjoy it (specify):

E. Get out of the house / apartment.

II. If I'm still feeling suicidal, instead of doing anything harmful I will do the following:

A. Call my therapist's office for an appointment for an extra session.
   or
B. Call a suicide hotline (list phone no.):
   or
C. Go to the emergency room of the nearest hospital;
   or
D. Dial 911.

Signed: ____________________________________________

Client

Therapist

Date: ____________________________________________
RATIONAL-EMOTIVE THERAPY

Given a client the student will be able to:

1. Identify the ABC's for the client's problem situation.
2. Identify the underlying belief related to the problem.
3. Communicate clearly to the client the ABC's related to the presenting problem.
4. Demonstrate a variety of disputation strategies including:
   a. challenging the "shoulds."
   b. challenging the "awfulizing."
   c. exaggerating the "shoulds" and "catastrophes."
5. Clearly assist the client in outlining alternative strategies which could result in new B's and C's.
RATIONAL EMOTIVE THERAPY - RET

This approach was developed by Ellis. He considers nearly all humans have two goals:

1. To stay alive.
2. To feel relatively happy and free of pain.

Rationality consists of thinking in ways which contribute to the attainment of the chosen goals of survival and happiness whereas irrationality consists of thinking in ways which block or interfere with their attainment.

Rational Emotive Counselling is heavily cognitive in orientation and is based on the following assumptions:

1. Humans tend to cause or create their feelings by the way they think (and vice versa). When these feelings or emotions are disordered, they can be changed by examining, disputing and reconstructing the thinking that underlies them.

2. Peoples' philosophies or beliefs about their experiences have a much more profound effect on their emotions and behaviour than do the experiences themselves. Therefore, effective psychotherapy is aimed at helping clients change their irrational beliefs.

3. People frequently create their disturbances by their own expectations of what "should" happen or how others "should" behave toward them. When these unreasonable demands are surrendered, behaviour changes for the good.

4. Disturbed people attribute negative motives, reasons, and causes to others and to outside events. When they change their attributions, they frequently feel better and act better.

5. Disturbed and unhappy people tend to rate themselves (rather than their performance) and frequently to rate themselves negatively. When they are taught to give up the self rating, their disturbance dramatically decreases.

6. Finally, when people are taught to give up their masturbatory ideals and their irrational beliefs, they return to more satisfying lives.

Process of Counselling

The counsellor's job is to help rid themselves of illogical, irrational ideas and replace them with logical, rational ideas.

Step 1. Process begins by showing the client they are irrational and illogical. Insight No. 1 occurs when the client recognizes that their present disturbance has antecedents, but that those antecedents causes are their own irrational beliefs and attitudes, not some past or present event.
Step 2. - Insight 2 involves convincing the client that they maintain their disturbance by reindoctrinating themselves with the same irrational ideas.

Step 3. - Clients are lead to the full acknowledgement that the only way to rid themselves of their disturbances is to challenge their belief systems and arrive at a new rational belief system.

Step 4. - Develop a philosophy of life that avoids additional irrational ideas.

Ellis has developed an ABC theory of Emotional Disturbance.

A - Activating experience.
B - Belief about (or interpretation of) A.
C - Upsetting emotional consequences.

If two further steps follow the system regains balance.

D - Disputing of irrational ideas.
E - New emotional consequence or effect.

Goals of Counselling

1) Responsibility - Assuming responsibility for their own lives.
2) Tolerance of Others - Clients who are functioning well can allow others to do wrong.
3) Acceptance of Self - Emotionally stable people are able to accept the reality of who they are.
4) Openness - People who are emotionally healthy are open to change.
5) Commitment - People who are not disturbed and have a tendency toward self-fulfilment are also interested in people and things.
6) Acceptance of Chance - Mature people deal with uncertainty and chance with calmness.
Rational Emotive Therapy Homework Sheet

Instructions: Please print. Be brief and legible. Answer question C first, then answer the other questions.

A. ACTIVATING EVENT you recently experienced about which you became upset or disturbed.
   (Eg. "I went for a job interview." "My mate screamed at me".)

B. Irrational BELIEF or idea you had about this Activating Event. (Eg. "It would be catastrophic if I were rejected for the job; I would be pretty worthless as a person" "I can't stand my mate's screaming; she is horrible for screaming at me").

C. CONSEQUENCES of your irrational BELIEF about the Activating Event listed in Question A. State here the one most disturbing emotion, behaviour, or CONSEQUENCE you experience recently. (Eg. "I was anxious". "I was hostile". "I had stomach pains").

D. DISPUTING, questioning, or challenging you can use to change your irrational BELIEF. (Eg. "Why would it be catastrophic and how would I become a worthless person if I were rejected for the job"? "Why can't I stand my mate's screaming and why is she horrible for screaming at me"?)

E. Cognitive EFFECT or answer you obtained from DISPUTING your irrational BELIEF. (Eg. "It would not be catastrophic, but merely unfortunate, if I were rejected for the job; my giving a poor interview would not make me a worthless person". "Although I'll never like my mate's screaming, I can stand it; he or she is not horrible but merely a fallible person for screaming").

F. Behavioural EFFECT or result of your DISPUTING your irrational BELIEF. (Eg. "I felt less anxious". "I felt less hostile to my mate". "My stomach pains vanished"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Consequences R1 - Behaviour (full mind)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>Emotions (Cognit)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Consequences R2 - Behaviour (full mind) |

**Help client discover R2 - link**

- You are feeling yourself because of what - when you think of yourself
- What would you rather be doing - goal setting
- What would happen next time - (trigger) happening

**Interventions**

- What do you want to feel more of?
- What do you want to feel less of?
- What happens when you feel this way?
STRESS
THERMOMETER

10
Very very strong
9
Pretty strong
8
Medium
7
Pretty weak
6
5
4
Pretty weak
3
2
Nothing happening
1

[Diagram showing a thermometer scale with levels labeled as 'Very very strong', 'Pretty strong', 'Medium', 'Pretty weak', 'Nothing happening']
Directions: Write down your positive (+) and negative (-) characteristic
RELATIONSHIP BELIEF INVENTORY
(Roy J. Eidelson and Norman Epstein, 1981)

The statements below describe ways in which a person might feel about a relationship with another person. Please mark the space next to each statement according to how strongly you believe that it is true or false for you. Please mark every one. Write in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0 to stand for the following answers.

5: I strongly believe that the statement is true
4: I believe that the statement is true
3: I believe that the statement is probably true, or more true than false
2: I believe that the statement is probably false, or more false than true
1: I believe that the statement is false
0: I strongly believe that the statement is false

1. If your partner expresses disagreement with your ideas, she/he probably does not think highly of you.

2. I do not expect my partner to sense all my moods.

3. Damages done early in a relationship probably cannot be reversed.

4. I get upset if I think I have not completely satisfied my partner sexually.

5. Men and women have the same basic emotional needs.

6. I cannot accept it when my partner disagrees with me.

7. If I have to tell my partner that something is important to me, it does not mean that she/he is insensitive to me.

8. My partner does not seem capable of behaving other than she/he does now.

9. If I'm not in the mood for sex when my partner is, I don't get upset about it.

10. Misunderstandings between partners generally are due to inborn differences in psychological makeups of men and women.

11. I take it as a personal insult when my partner disagrees with an important idea of mine.

12. I get very upset if my partner does not recognize how I am feeling and I have to tell him/her.

13. A partner can learn to become more responsive to his/her partner's needs.
14. A good sexual partner can get himself/herself aroused for sex whenever necessary.

15. Men and women probably will never understand the opposite sex very well.

16. I like it when my partner presents views different from mine.

17. People who have a close relationship can sense each other's needs as if they could read each other's minds.

18. Just because my partner has acted in ways that upset me does not mean that she/he will do so in the future.

19. If I cannot perform well sexually whenever my partner is in the mood, I would consider that I have a problem.

20. Men and women need the same basic things out of a relationship.

21. I get very upset when my partner and I cannot see things the same way.

22. It is important to me for my partner to anticipate my needs by sensing changes in my moods.

23. A partner who hurts you badly once probably will hurt you again.

24. I can feel OK about my lovemaking even if my partner does not achieve orgasm.

25. Biological differences between men and women are not major causes of couples' problems.

26. I cannot tolerate it when my partner argues with me.

27. A partner should know what you are thinking or feeling without you having to tell.

28. If my partner wants to change, I believe that she/he can do it.

29. If my sexual partner does not get satisfied completely, it does not mean that I have failed.

30. One of the major causes of marital problems is that men and women have different emotional needs.

31. When my partner and I disagree, I feel like our relationship is falling apart.

32. People who love each other know exactly what each other's thoughts are without a word ever being said.

33. If you don't like the way a relationship is going, you can make it better.

34. Some difficulties in my sexual performance do not mean personal failure to me.
35. You can't really understand someone of the opposite sex.

36. I do not doubt my partner's feelings for me when we argue.

37. If you have to ask your partner for something, it shows that she/he was not "tuned into" your needs.

38. I do not expect my partner to be able to change.

39. When I do not seem to be performing well sexually, I get upset.

40. Men and women will always be mysteries to each other.
**TABLE 3**

**RBI Scoring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Positive Items a</th>
<th>Negative Items b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement is Destructive (D)</td>
<td>1, 6, 11, 21, 26, 31</td>
<td>16, 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindreading is Expected (M)</td>
<td>12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37</td>
<td>2, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners Cannot Change (C)</td>
<td>3, 8, 23, 38</td>
<td>13, 18, 28, 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Perfectionism (S)</td>
<td>4, 14, 19, 39</td>
<td>9, 24, 29, 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sexes are Different (MF)</td>
<td>10, 15, 30, 35, 40</td>
<td>5, 20, 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Positively keyed items scored same as subject's response. A response of "5" is scored as "5", a response of "4" is scored as "4", etc.

b Scoring on negatively keyed items must be reversed. See the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject's response</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add scores for appropriate items to determine subscale scores.
Handout 4

RELATIONSHIP BELIEFS INVENTORY (RBI)

The RBI is a 40-item self-report scale developed to assess irrational beliefs about marital relationships. The RBI consists of five 8-item subscales determined a priori: (1) Disagreement is Destructive, (2) Mindreading is Expected, (3) Partners Cannot Change, (4) Sexual Perfectionism, and (5) The Sexes are Different. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the five RBI scales ranged from .72 to .81. All five scales are significantly correlated with marital adjustment scores. Two of the five scales have been successful in differentiating between distressed and nondistressed couples: (1) Disagreement is Destructive and (2) Partners Cannot Change.

Means and Standard Deviations for the five RBI Scales are presented in Table 2 for clinical and nonclinical couples (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). The maximum scale score is 40; minimum is 0. Higher scores indicate greater adherence to a particular dysfunctional belief.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Clinical (N = 96)</th>
<th>NonClinical (N = 104)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot Change</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind reading</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Perfectionism</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexes Different</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IRRATIONAL BELIEFS ASSOCIATED WITH SEPARATION

1) Those associated with depression, low self-esteem and inferiority.

1. 'I must not be rejected by you, for if you do reject me there is something radically wrong with me, and if that is so, I am quite an inadequate person, most probably not worthy of winning any good person's love in the future.'

2. 'I would, if I were truly attractive and competent, be able to win the love of practically any person whom I really wanted; and since I have lost the love of my beloved, I am unattractive and incompetent.'

3. 'I need him (or her) right now to feel happy.'

4. 'Because my relationship failed, I am a failure.'

5. 'There will never be another like him (or her). And I must have someone like that!'

6. "Other people will reject me because I have divorced. I will lose my family and friends and I couldn't stand that.'

ii) Those associated with anger.

1. 'I really am an excellent person, and you do not appreciate and favor me as you should! You're mean and nasty for rejecting me, and I will get even with you if it's the last thing that I do!'

2. 'After all I did for him (or her) all of these years, he or she owes me. I deserve more from life!'

3. 'He (or she) should have treated me fairer and better. He (or she) is a horrible, no good person.'

4. 'All men (women) are alike, totally untrustworthy, selfish, and not worth worrying about.'

5. 'When someone whom I love and who loves me dies or is otherwise taken away from me it is totally unfair and cruel. There is no one else in the world who can make up for the kind of relationship I had with this person. I cannot be happy at all and I might as well kill myself.'

MORE EFFECTIVE BELIEFS ASSOCIATED WITH SEPARATION

1. While you might prefer your old relationship to have continued you do not need it to feel happy again.

2. While your beloved may have been a fine partner, there are other partners with whom to have a good relationship.
3. The person whose love was lost had his or her own reasons for rejecting the relationship and these reasons may have little to do with the way you acted.

4. While this relationship may have failed, the people in the relationship are hardly failures.

5. While it is possible that some people will judge a divorcee harshly and perhaps, be nasty and rejecting, it is certainly possible to put up with this unpleasantness without having to like it.
RATIONAL-EMOTIVE COUPLES THERAPY

Example 1

A1  wife's Activating Events (eg., husband harshly criticizes her).
iB1 wife's irrational Beliefs (eg., "He's being unfair! He must not unfairly criticize me like that!").
iC1 wife's inappropriate emotional and behavioral Consequences (eg., hurt, anger, withdrawal).

A2  husband's Activating Events: wife's emotions and behaviors (eg., wife displays anger and withdrawal).
iB2 husband's irrational Beliefs (eg., "Too bad I criticized her, but her anger and withdrawal are silly. She shouldn't act so childishly!").
iC2 husband's inappropriate emotional and behavioral Consequences (eg., anger and further criticism of his wife).

A3  wife's Activating Events (eg., observation of how angry and increasingly critical her husband is).
iB3 wife's irrational beliefs (eg., "My anger at him is only natural and now he unfairly fails to see that and is more critical of me than ever. How horrible of him to be so doubly unfair!").
iC3 wife's inappropriate emotional and behavioral Consequences (eg., increased rage, depression, and withdrawal).

Example 2

A1  Activating Event: Husband is tired after work and expresses disinterest in having sex with his wife.
iB1 irrational Beliefs: Wife expects and demands that they have sex more frequently. She concludes, "He is either not interested in me or he is having an affair. That is terrible!"
iC1 inappropriate Consequences: Wife gets angry and tells her husband that he is "not a man".

A2  Activating Events: Husband observes his wife's anger and hears her say he is "not a man".
iB2 irrational Belief: Husband demands that his wife be more understanding. "She must be nicer! I can't take her criticism!"
iC2 inappropriate Consequences: Husband feels angry and hurt and withdraws.

A3  Activating Events: Wife observes her husband's anger and withdrawals.
iB3 irrational Belief: Wife interprets her husband's withdrawal as rejection and believes, "He is unfairly rejecting me when he is actually at fault! What a worm he is!"
iC3 inappropriate Consequences: Wife gets angry and screams, "You really are no good! Sexually and otherwise!"

(and the disturbed interaction spirals downward)