

# Couples Therapy for Domestic Violence: Finding Safe Solutions

Sandra M. Stith, Eric E. McCollum, Karen H. Rosen

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Up to 65% of couples who seek therapy for marital problems have had at least one prior violent episode. Unfortunately, therapists often miss this critical information because they do not effectively assess for it. This book presents a safety-focused approach to assessment and treatment of couples who choose to remain together after one or both partners have been violent. Treatment options for intimate partner violence have evolved alongside the growing awareness and broader definitions of domestic violence. Since 1997 the authors have conducted Domestic Violence Focused Couples Treatment (DVFCT), collected data, and refined their program. The authors outline their assessment and screening process and share case illustrations to demonstrate when conjoint treatment can be a safe and viable option. Readers get an overview of the 18session course of DVFCT and tips for adapting it for multi-couple groups or for a single couple. The major tenets of solution-focused therapy, such as underscoring even the smallest of successes, are emphasized throughout, as are the following special features: -safety planning -mindfulness techniques for anger awareness and reduction -negotiated time-out procedures -drug and alcohol use modules -psychoeducational tools and materials on violence Therapists will learn how to assess intimate partner violence and help couples eliminate all forms of violence and begin on a positive path toward their vision of a healthy relationship.



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