

WHO AM I?

WHO ARE YOU?

**Twinet Parmer, Ph.D.,
LPC, LLMFT, CST**

Professor, Counselor Education
Central Michigan University
parme1t@cmich.edu
989-774-3776

Healthy Marriages and African American
Male/Female Relationships:
What You Need to Know About Intimacy
and Marital Satisfaction

PURPOSE

- Define intimacy as a multifaceted component in relationships.
- Describe intimacy as a factor in sustaining marriages.
- Discuss sexuality as a component of intimacy in marriages.
- Describe barriers that prevent the incorporation of sexuality intimacy into marriage programs.
- Describe several approaches for trainers to incorporate sexuality intimacy into marriage programs.

KEY TERMS

- African American
- Marriages
- Relationships
- Intimacy
- Sex
- Sexuality

OVERVIEW

- Universal human need to be in intimate or close relationships with other individuals.
- Marriage is one of the ways the universal need in intimate relationships is met.

Overview

Little information about African American male/female relationships relative to how the many facets of intimacy contribute to sustaining marriages.

Overview

- Healthy marriage is often considered to be the ultimate and the most satisfying of all human relationships.
- Healthy marriages that meet the intimacy needs of the dyad are important predictors of psychological well-being, and may lead to greater marital satisfaction.

TERMINOLOGY

INTIMACY

- Associate with the word SEX.
- Words often used interchangeably.
- SEX is only one facet of intimacy.

INTIMACY

- Defined
 - Intimacy is a multifaceted process involving the presentation of the whole person (wholeness) in a close personal relationship with self and others.

INTIMACY

- Two Levels of Intimacy
 - With Self
 - With Another

Intimacy-Level One

With Self

- A process involving “that state in which a person is aware of the inmost character of his or her self—those most fundamental, essential, and private parts... (Carr,2001, 1988, p. 6).
- Before intimate with another must know “SELF”, the “I”, or the “ME”.

Intimacy-Level One

With Self

- Understanding self important because must be emotionally capable to present self in order to be intimate.
- Mutual satisfaction as this self is reflected back to us and reinforced as we interact with others.

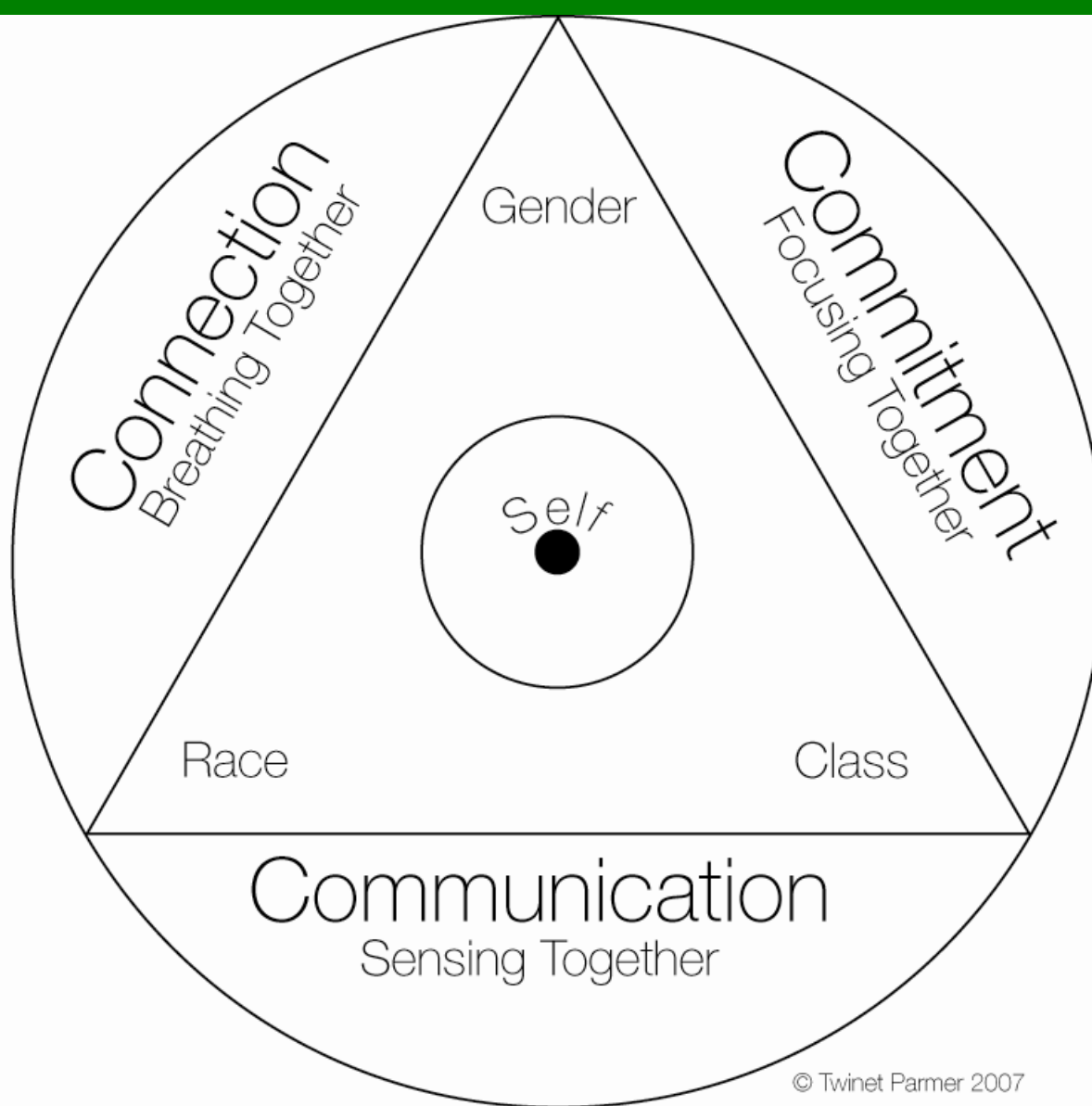


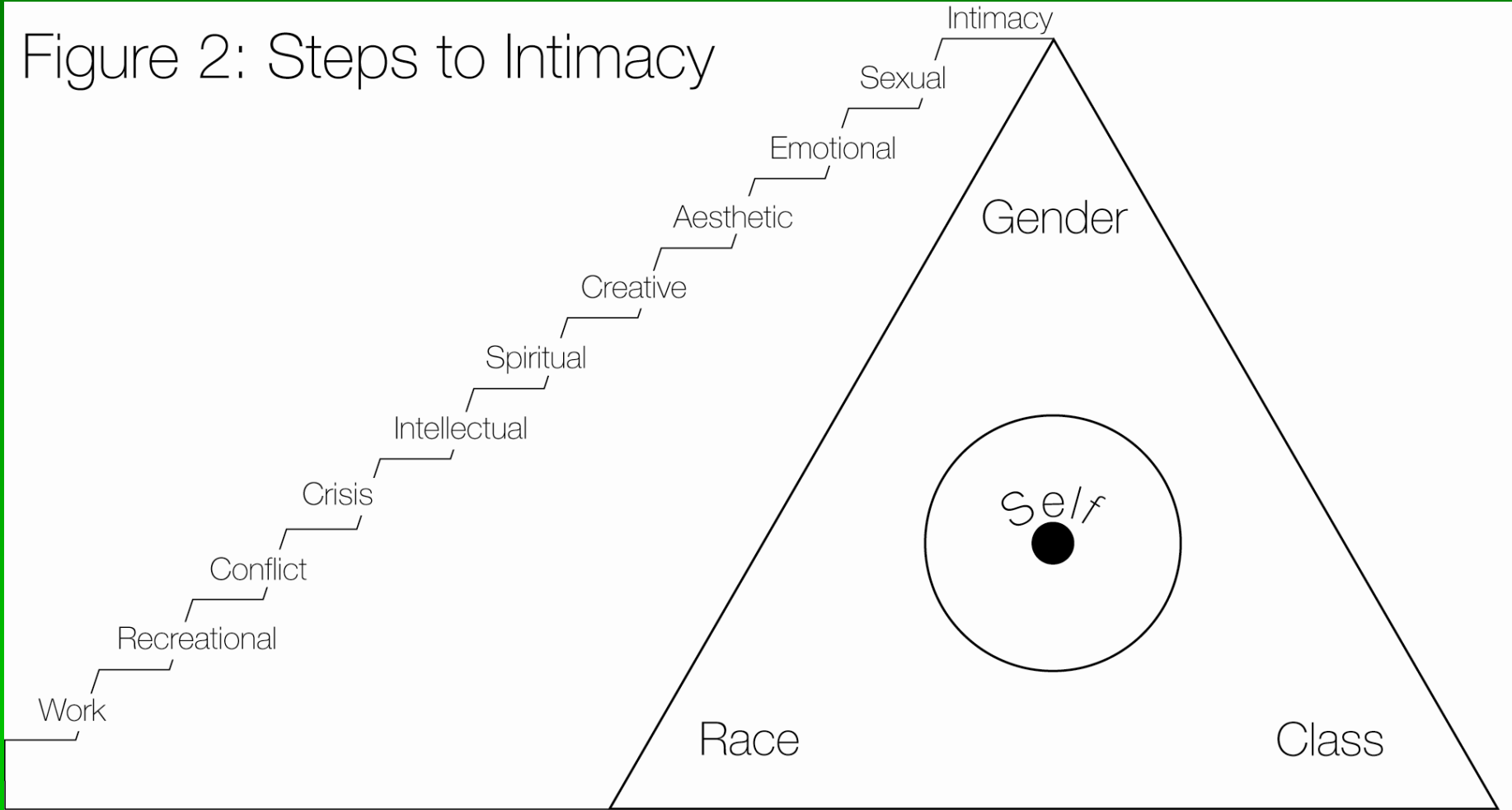
Figure 1: Experiencing Intimacy

Intimacy-Level Two

With Another

- A process where share the most inner, personal, deep intrinsic parts of ourselves with those innermost parts of another... the degree of mutual need-satisfaction with the relationship... close personal relations characterized by warm friendship, private or closely personal” (Carr, 1988, p. 7).

Figure 2: Steps to Intimacy



Content adapted from: Clinebell, A.J. and Clinebell, C.H. (1970). *The Intimate Marriage*. New York: Harper & Row.

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Sex in Marriage

Importance

- Marriage is the only relationship where sex is socially sanctioned in western society.
- Yet, there is very little integration of marriage and sexuality in tandem in research and practice.
- Although treated rather independently, studies have shown that marital sexuality has been the most neglected topic in the sex and marriage research.

Sex in Marriage

Importance

- If there are problems in the marriage they are likely to manifest in the areas of sex (the withdrawal of sex).
- Society more open about sexual problems/functioning (media, medications, Bob Dole)

Sex in Marriage

Importance

- McCarthy () “when sex in marriage is good, it is a 15 percent to 20 percent factor in a positive marital bond”.
- “And, when sex is problematic, it is 50 percent to 75 percent negative factor, draining the marriage of intimacy” (p. 140).

Lack of Integration

In marriage research and practice can be observed due to:

- Discomfort with the topic.
- Unsure of what to address.
- Little understanding of normal behavior.
- Little education and training.
- Focus on the marriage without sex.
- Lack of trainers.
- Little factual information African American sexuality.

Training for the Trainers

- History of African Americans relationships
- African Americans relationships in context
- Intimacy models Fig. 1 and 2

Training for the Trainers

- Define sexual related terms
- Sex
- Sexuality
- Sexual being
- Human sexuality
- Sexuality education
- Sexuality counseling
- Sexuality therapy

Training for the Trainers

PLISSIT MODEL

- P-Permission
- LI-Limited Information
- SS-Specific Suggestions
- IT-Intensive Therapy

References

- Please see handout.

Thank You

Parmer, T. (2007, June 19-21). *Healthy marriages and African American male/female relationships: What you need to know about intimacy and marital satisfaction*. Paper presented at the meeting of the meeting of the African American Healthy Marriage Initiative, Healthy People, Healthy Families: Connecting Marriage Research to Practice Conference, University of North Carolina , Chapel Hill, NC.