

# Couples therapy intake questions

## RELATIONSHIP HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

History is a great place to start with a couple. Have them share the background of where they met, how long they have been together, their living situation, and previous relationship experiences. It provides important information for you as the therapist and gives the couple an easier on-ramp to start discussing the relationship.

- Where and when did you meet?
- What qualities did you see in each other that caused you to start a relationship?
- How long have you been together?
- Have you ever broken up or had periods of separation?
- What is your current living situation?
- What major milestones or shared events have shaped your relationship to this point?
- What were relationships like for each of you growing up and how do you think that influences your current relationship?

## MOTIVATIONS FOR THERAPY

Once some of the background has been established, it is helpful to explore the couple's core motivation for therapy. Ask questions about their reasons for coming to therapy to deepen your understanding of the clients and start framing the direction of the treatment plan.

- What caused you two to reach out for therapy?
- What are the biggest challenges in your relationship that you would like to work on?
- What are some strengths in your relationships that will serve you in therapy?
- How do each of you feel about reaching out for therapy and starting to work on the relationship?
- What do you think will help you to get where you want to be in your relationship?

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## COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT PATTERNS

The next stage of intake questions focuses on the couple's day-to-day dynamics. Thoughtful questions can reveal more specifics about the strengths and weaknesses of the relationship, particularly in areas like conflict and communication.

- How do you communicate with one another on a typical day?
- What are the most common topics of conflict in your relationship?
- What happens in your communication when conflict arises?
- How do you typically try to deal with or resolve conflict? How effective are those approaches?
- Are you able to receive influence and input from one another?
- How well does each of you feel understood and believe you understand your partner?

## INTIMACY AND RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS

After identifying communication patterns, it is equally important to understand the couple's emotional and physical connection.

- Do you feel like a team?
- How would you describe the physical intimacy in your relationship?
- When you feel disconnected from your partner, how do you typically respond? Do you move toward them, away from them, or against them?
- How well are you able to be emotionally present for one another? How do you know when you're being supported?
- When you share something important, how well do you feel valued and understood?

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## FUTURE RELATIONSHIP GOALS

The final section of questions in the intake appointment relates to understanding what the couple hopes for when they look ahead. It can be informative and motivating for the couple to finish by reviewing their aspirations for the future.

- What do you dream about for the future of your lives together?
- Are there core values that you share and want to build upon?
- If you finished therapy and felt happy about the results, what would be different about your relationship?
- What do you think would happen for your relationship in the future if you worked through the current challenges?

