

## **Relationship Issues**

### **For initial minutes**

1. So how can I help you today?
2. How long have you been struggling with these issues?
3. What have you done to try to solve these problems so far?
4. What do you think is the solution?
5. What is your earliest recollection of when you first struggled with this problem?
6. How much longer are you going to struggle with these problems?
7. How much more of your life are you going to waste being bogged down with these issues?

### **Open Ended Questions**

8. How does that make you feel?
9. What do you think would help this?
10. Why do you think you do that?
11. Why do you think that is?
12. How are you doing?
13. What do you think?
14. What do you want to change?
15. What can you do to change?
16. Do you want to change?

## Relationship Problems

1. What happened that made you go from being happy to being lonely/unhappy?
2. What issues in the relationship have driven you to get counseling help?
  - Which of them is the most important? let's start with that.
  - Do you think the problems in the relationship are more to do with things inside or things outside the relationship?
  - Can you identify what the problem area in your relationship is? E.g communication, financial stress, sexual, in-law problems, work stress, difference in opinion, abuse....
  - How do you feel about that particular issue and why?
  - When did this issue/ problem start?
  - What were the events that triggered the issue?
  - What did you do about them?
  - What happened then?
  - How did you feel about what happened?
3. Which behavior of your partner bothers you more?
  - What do you do during those times?
  - How does it affect the relationship?
  - How does that make you feel?
  - Do you think you can do something to make it better?
4. Do you feel that your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ is deteriorating?
  - What makes you say that?
  - Do you observe any signs which indicate it?

- Explain how this problem developed after you first saw the warning signs?
- How does the problem typically make you feel?
- What makes the problem better?
- How does it affect the relationship?

5. What would it take to make you feel happier more contented and satisfied?

6. What is the one change you are willing to make to improve things?

7. What do you notice about other relationship that is like or unlike your own?

- How does that make you feel?
- What would you like to change about them?
- What parts of your life do you have good feelings about?
- What aspects do you think contributes to it?
- How would that help you in other areas of your life?

8. How could you tell if you were depressed or unhappy in your relationship?

- What do you think is the reason for it?
- What have you done about it?

9. What are a couple of things that you appreciate about your relationship and why do these things seem significant?

- What are some of the positive things about your relationship?
- Have you conveyed your appreciation for these things to \_\_\_\_\_?
- If not, what stops you from doing it?
- What should you do to express it?
- How would \_\_\_\_\_ respond to your expression?
- How would you feel about it?

10. What other things would you want to change now, and why?

- Will that help your relationship in some way?
- How will it affect the relationship in the long run?
- How would you feel about it?

11. How do you feel about the relationship?

12. Are you willing to invest in it?

13. Are you willing to change yourself in some areas to improve the relationship?

14. How significant is the relationship for you?

15. Do you derive satisfaction from it?

### **Work related**

16. How does your work affect your relationship with your family?

- Do you feel that you carry work/work related issues home?
- Do you feel that you are too involved in your work?

17. Is your work in regular competition with your marriage and family life?

- How does it affect you?
- How does it affect your family members?

18. Do you feel you would rather be at work or out with friends than with your spouse?

- What makes you feel that way?
- What aspect of the relationship do you think contributes to it?
- Do you think it will change?
- What can you do about it?
- What can your spouse do about it?

- Will it change how you feel?
- What do you think should change?
- Will you be able to get back to the former ways of relating to your spouse?

### **Family/ friends Related**

19. Did you experience any tension in your family of origin?

- What were they?
- How would you describe the relationship between the family members?
- Do tensions in your families of origin affect your relationship?
- If so, in what way?

20. When your children have problems, do you feel closer or further apart as a couple?

21. What according to you is the reason?

22. Do your social commitments or other friendships place many demands on you sometimes making it difficult to find time for your marriage?

- Does it affect your marriage?
- How does it affect?
- What makes you feel like this?

23. What is it that you want to avoid with your spouse?

- How does it affect you children?

24. Do you feel caught in the middle of your parents and your spouse?

- How would you feel about it?

## **Losing feelings/ falling out of love**

25. Have you lost feelings for your partner?

- What makes you say that?
- How was your relationship initially?
- How has the relationship changed?
- How does it make you feel?
- Would you describe any specific event that made you realize the loss of feelings for your partner?
- What do you feel when you look at your partner?
- Do you remember the earlier times when you were in love with your partner?
- How does it make you feel?
- What would you like to do about it?
- How do you see the relationship a month/year(s) from now?
- What makes you say that?
- How will it affect you?

26. Have you lost feelings for anyone or anything else?

- Has this happened before?
- How long did it last?

27. Do you and your mate avoid each other?

- What possible reason might there be for your partner to be distant from you?

- Do you think it is reasonable for him/her to do so?
- What makes you say that?
- How do you feel about it?
- What do you do when it happens?
- How does it help the situation?
- What can be done about it? By whom?
- How will it change the situation?
- Will you be happy about it?

**Answers** to some questions - <http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/questions.shtml>

### **The relationship with your partner**

28. Do you and your mate share clearly defined and compelling values, priorities and ideals?

- Do you and your mate consciously work to help each other live up to the clearly defined values, priorities and ideals?
- Do you believe that you and your mate are qualified to help each other fulfill the purpose of your lives?

29. Do you help you spouse with household chores that are not specifically yours to do?

- How does he/she react to it?
- What effect does it have on the relationship?
- Would you like to change some aspect of it?

- What would they be?
- What effect will they have on you?
- Would it help the relationship?

30. When you have an argument does it feel like you are competing to see who has more power or who wins?

- How will it end?
- What feelings does it bring?
- How do you feel about this issue?
- Why do you think it occurs?
- What contributes to it?
- What have you done to change it?
- What can you/your spouse do about it?
- Are you willing to do it?
- How would it help the situation?

31. Does your mate sometimes give in rather than just tell you what he/she is thinking and risk continuing an argument?

- How does that make you feel?
- How does it affect the relationship?
- Do you feel there are underlying issues that have not been resolved?
- How do you feel about your spouse?

32. Does your mate make an effort to respect and understand your needs and opinions?

- What does he/she do?

33. Are you appreciated in your relationship?

34.How/ what do you feel when you look at your mate?

35.What emotional or other needs do you feel are not being met by your partner?

36.What do you get out of your relationship with your partner?

37.What is your contribution to the relationship?

### **Communication**

38.Do you feel like you and your mate speak completely different languages?

- Do you feel that you understand each other reasonably?
- Do you feel that something is missing from your relationship?
- What is it?

39.What can make you marriage better?

- Are you willing to take the effort?

40.Do you feel that your mate does not understand you?

41.Are you good at expressing your love to your mate?

42.Does your mate express love to you?

43.How would that make you feel?

44.What do you expect from your mate?

45.What did you do today to show your mate how much you loved them?

46.How would you rate the communication between you and your spouse?

47.Do you feel that you/ your spouse should share more with each other?

48.What can you do about it?

49.Do you spend considerable time with each other?

50.Do you share about the events of the day with each other?

- 51. Do you think you know your partner enough?
- 52. What can you do to make it better?
- 53. Do you share your intimate feelings and thoughts with each other?
- 54. If no, why?

### **Infidelity / Cheating**

- 55. Do you think your partner is cheating on you?
- 56. What makes you say that?
- 57. What has changed that you feel you are being cheated on?
- 58. What do you think you need in order for your partner to rebuild your trust?
- 59. Do you know what emotional or other needs were being fulfilled by the other person for your partner?
- 60. What can you do to fulfill those needs?
- 61. Do you fantasize about having an affair?
- 62. How easy or difficult is it for you to trust?
- 63. Will you be able to trust other people in your life?
- 64. How has your partner acted since then? (since the cheating has happened)
- 65. How is he/she responding to your lack of trust?
- 66. Why do you think you can't forgive him/her and move on from this infidelity?
- 67. Other than trust, what do you feel is lacking from the relationship and you wish was different?
- 68. What happens in your relationship that you end up being hurt?
- 69. Do you think you contribute to it in some way?

70.What is your role in it?

71.What can you do to change it?

72.How will it change the situation?

## **Break Ups**

73.Do you really want to end the relationship?

- What is driving you to make this decision?
- How long have you been feeling this way?
- What has triggered it?
- Was there any underlying tension that led to it?
- What is the main problem that is causing this?

74. How different will your world be without him/her?

- What would you miss about him/her?
- What would you not miss about him/her?
- What aspects of your life will it affect?

75.What can you do to make it better?

- Would it involve staying in the relationship?
- Are you willing to do it?
- How will that make you feel?
- Do you think it is a good decision in the long run?

76. What can you do to prevent the break up/ fix the relationship?

- Are you willing to do it?
- How can your partner contribute to it?
- How will that make you feel?

77. What can you do to be happy again?

78. What went wrong?

- Why do you think that happened?
- What are your options now?

79. What activity can you engage in that will keep you happy and distracted?

80. How would it affect the other relationships in your life?

81. What have you learnt from this experience?

82. What will you do with what you have learnt?

### **Parent Relationships**

83. Did you have a good relationship with your parents?

84. Tell me about your relationship with your parents?

85. What problems did/ do you face most with your parents?

86. What was your childhood like?

87. Do you feel you were happy as a child?

88. How involved do you feel your parents were in your life?

89. What would you want to communicate your parent?

90. How much time do you spend with parents?

91. Has it always been strained/ fun?

92. How safe did you feel growing up with your parents?

93. How dependent were you of your parents?

94. What was it like to grow up in your home?

95. How much of a united front did your parents pose?

96. How different was the parenting between them? Did they give you contradicting instructions?

97. What would you like to change in the relationship now?

98. Is there something you can do to help make it better?

99. How does your childhood experience affect you as an adult?

100. How does it influence the relationships you have?

101. What can you do about it?