

Appendix A

Exploratory Study of Low-Income Couples' Decision Making Processes:

Research Design

February 4, 2021

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Appendix A

Exploration of Low-Income Couples' Decision-Making Processes Study Design

This Study Design Appendix is separated into four sections:

- A. Objectives and Overview
- B. Research Questions
- C. Research Activities
- D. Works Consulted

A. OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW OF THE LOW-INCOME COUPLES' DECISION MAKING PROJECT

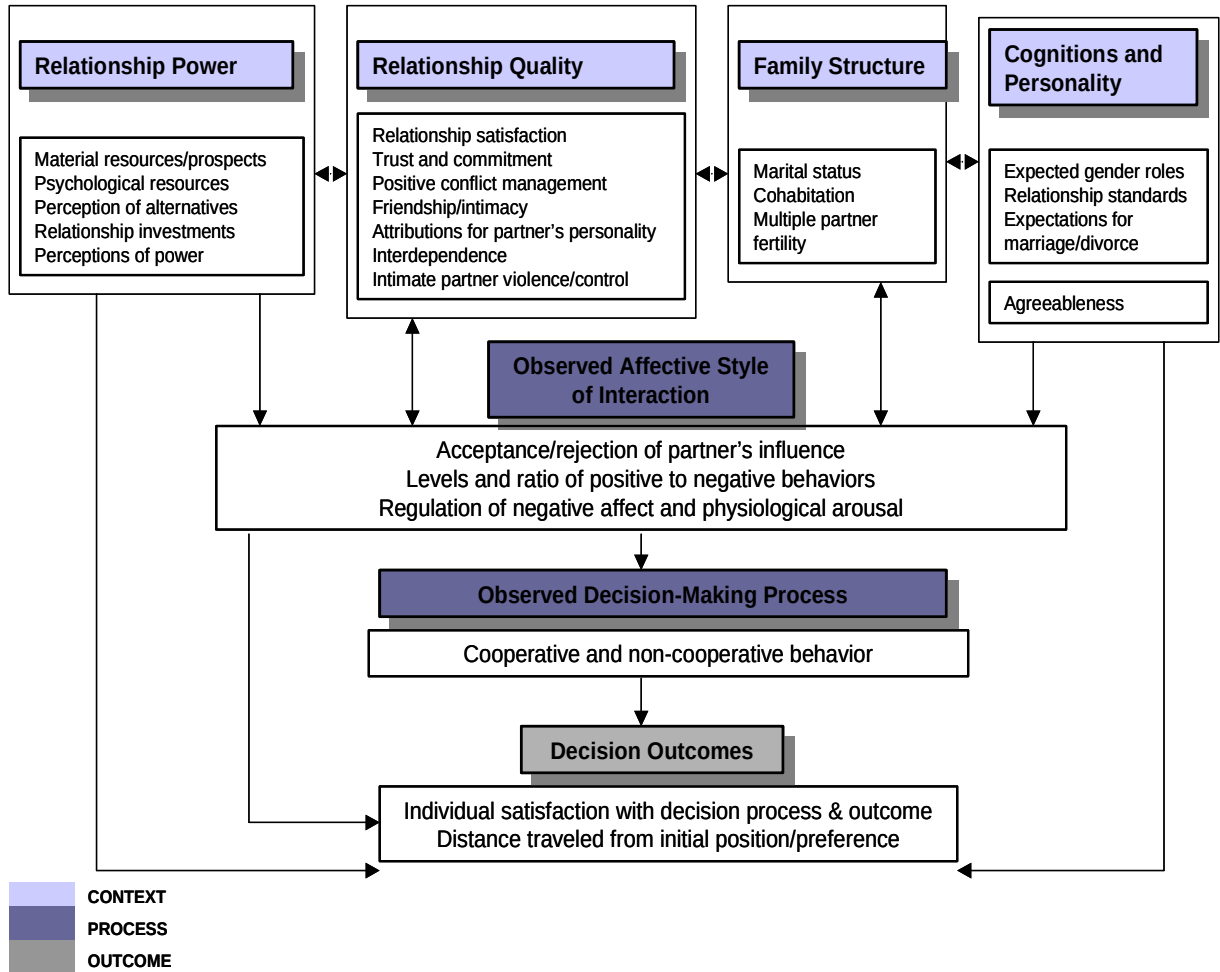
The Low-Income Couples' Decision-Making project will draw on cutting edge research methods to describe and analyze the decision-making processes of low-income couples.

Conceptual Model. Our conceptual model draws on three fields of research that have produced the most relevant work: economics, sociology, and psychology. Broadly, we are interested in three general aspects of the decision making process in couples: context, process, and outcome (Godwin and Scanzoni 1989). Although it seems reasonable that contextual factors would have their effect on outcomes through the decision-making process, prior research on contextual factors (such as control over resources) often looks only at the effect on decision outcomes, such as which partner's preferences will ultimately prevail. Process-oriented research, such as the influence of couple dynamics on relationship outcomes, on the other hand, often fails to take into account the potential influence of contextual factors and does not focus on decision outcomes. In this study, we will analyze and describe how all three of these aspects of decision making—context, process, and outcome, operate and work together.

- **Context.** As shown in Figure 1, we define *context* as the individual and couple-level factors that the couple brings with them into the decision-making interaction. This includes four general domains: relationship power, relationship quality, family structure, and expectations and individual differences.
- **Process.** The decision-making *process* is defined as the way individuals act with one another during decision making or a problem solving situation, e.g., the emotions they express, the extent to which they influence one another and how, and whether or not they choose to cooperate or compete with one another when faced with a problem or decision.

FIGURE 1

HYPOTHESIZED INFLUENCES AND OUTCOMES OF LOW-INCOME COUPLES' DECISION MAKING



- **Outcomes.** The third major aspect of decision making is the *outcome*—for example, the extent to which the couple moves toward consensus and each individual’s satisfaction with the process and outcome. Although our primary interest is the decision making process, it is necessary to include some measure of decision making outcomes to assess the influence of contextual and process factors.
- **Linkages among Context, Process, and Outcomes.** To help expand our understanding of decision making in low income couples, we will also explore the linkages among decision context, process, and outcome. In particular, we propose to explore whether contextual factors are moderated or mediated by aspects of the couple’s interaction process.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In keeping with the exploratory nature of this descriptive study, we will examine patterns of decision making and test multiple hypotheses suggested by the extant literature. We will explore the following primary research questions:

1. Are low-income individuals influenced by their partners?
2. Do the interactions and decision making processes of low-income couples show systematic patterns?
3. If partners generally influence one another, does the exercise of this influence differ under certain circumstances (e.g. marital status, level of relationship commitment, relationship power)?
4. What predicts the decision process, outcomes, and satisfaction with outcomes?

C. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The 40 low-income couples will be identified and recruited primarily through community-based organizations in a single site. Research activities will be focused in two areas: (a) a telephone interview; and (b) an in-home observation.

1. **Telephone Interview.** During the telephone interview, we will gather data on the contextual factors identified in the conceptual model including partners’ relative resources, relationship status, relationship quality, relationship standards and expectations, and individual differences. Table 1 contains a list of survey measure constructs, justifications, and sources; Appendix B contains the full survey instrument.

TABLE A.1

PROPOSED SURVEY MEASURES

Variable	Source/Adapted From	Justification
Relationship Power: Key Questions		
<i>Does greater relative relationship power (derived from material and psychological resources and perceptions of relationship alternatives) predict how individuals exert influence during low income couples' decision making?</i>		
<i>Does relationship power predict the likelihood of acceptance or rejection of partner influence?</i>		
<i>Are imbalances in relationship power associated with more negative interactions and physiological arousal?</i>		
Material Resources		Researchers applying an economic model to the study of decision have typically operationalized relationship power as the material resources each individual controls and brings to the relationship. Measures frequently include education and earnings from jobs and other assets. We propose using the same approach for this study and include the extent to which the couple share financial resources. These items are taken from other studies of low-income populations and have been adapted for use here.
Education	FF	
Employment and Earnings	TANF Survey	
Other Income	TANF Survey	
Assets	FF; NSFH	
Sharing Financial Resources	FF	
Psychological Resources		Another aspect of relationship power is considered to be the psychological resources that individuals bring to the relationship. In an economic framework, having more psychological resources means that a partner can demand more in bargaining situations. For this study, we plan to include measures of kin support, physical health, and mental health as measures. We rely primarily on established measures used in prior surveys.
Kin Support	FF	
Mental Health	DAQL; CES-D; NSFH; BSF	
Physical Health	NHIS; NBS	
Perceived Relationship Alternatives	NSFH; NCS	In economic models of decision making, bargaining power depends on the degree of well-being that each partner would expect to have if the marriage or relationship were terminated. We plan to include two sets of items to measure relationship alternatives. The first asks respondents how various areas of their life might be different if they were to separate from their partner. The second assesses individuals' perceptions of the possibility that they could get another partner.
Perceptions of Relationship Power	IPTS	An individual's perception of the power that he or she has in a relationship may be just as important as their control over material resources in determining willingness to engage in cooperative decision making. We plan to include a well-established series of items which ask respondents who has the most say in making various decisions.

Table A.1 (continued)

Variable	Source/Adapted From	Justification
Relationship Investments	Investment Subscale of Interdependence	Individuals who are more invested in their relationship have more to lose if the relationship ends. Those who are less involved have been found to perceive more control in the relationship. We plan to measure relationship investments using a single item which the respondent rates on a five point scale.
Relationship Quality: Key Research Questions		
<i>Do aspects of relationship quality predict positivity, cooperativeness, and satisfaction with couples' decision making processes?</i>		
<i>Does relationship quality moderate the individual's exercise of power based on control of resources or perceptions of relationship alternatives?</i>		
Commitment	Dedication Subscale	Couples who are satisfied with their relationships may be relatively less likely to invoke competitive strategies based on control of resources or perceptions of relationship alternatives. From an investment theory perspective, commitment enables couples to engage in more collaborative decision making that can produce mutually beneficial outcomes. We plan to measure commitment with three items previously used in the BSF survey.
Trust; Fidelity	DTS; BSF	The degree of trust a person has in his or her partner can be viewed as a mirror of the perceived commitment of the partner. When partners perceive their relationship exchanges as equitable, they are more likely to come to believe that their partners will not take unfair advantage of them. To measure trust, we propose three items. To examine the impact of fidelity on decision making processes and outcomes, we plan to ask respondents about both their own fidelity and the perceived fidelity of their partner, as in the BSF survey.
Happiness	BSF	The most widely measured relationship quality domain is a self-assessment of the degree of happiness a person receives from the romantic relationship or marriage. The measure we plan to use is an adaptation of a question, using a 7-point scale, that has been included in many surveys.
Conflict Management	SRHS; IRS; RDS	How couples manage conflict is highly related to couple decision making when partners disagree. To measure how conflict is managed rather than the amount or subject of the conflict, we plan to include 17 items to measure 11 different aspects of conflict management. These items will be used together to construct a single conflict management scale. The scale was adapted for use in BSF and was drawn from three sources.

Table A.1 (continued)

Variable	Source/Adapted From	Justification
Communication, Friendship, Supportiveness, and Intimacy	BSF; FF	The amount and ratio of positive to negative interaction is a fundamental aspect of relationship quality. To measure positive aspects of relationships we plan to include two items to collect information about communication and friendship, and one to assess supportiveness. To measure intimacy, we plan to include five questions that cover respect, knowledge of each other's lives, understanding, showing love and affection, and satisfaction with the couple's sexual relationship. These items have been used with low-income populations in both BSF and FF.
Family Structure: Key Questions		
<i>Does the nature of and satisfaction with the decision making process in low-income couples differ by family structure, such as marriage or cohabitation? Does it differ by the presence or absence of children from prior relationships?</i>		
Marital Status and Cohabitation	FF; BSF	Married couples may have greater commitment and investment in their relationship than couples who are unmarried and living together, and these differences could be associated with greater use of cooperative decision making strategies. We will ascertain current relationship status and living arrangement and will determine how long the partner has been together as a couple.
Multiple Partner Fertility	FF; BSF	The presence of children from former relationships, multiple partner fertility, is common among unwed parents and may alter the power dynamics and decision making patterns in such relationships. A greater number of children, especially many young children, can also place additional stress on the relationship and increase the potential for conflict. In addition to measuring the number of biological and nonbiological children living with the couple in the household, we will ask about the number and ages of each individual's biological children living outside the household.
Expectations, Personality, and Prior Relationship Experiences: Key Questions		
<i>To what extent do individuals' generalized expectations for relationships based on current beliefs, past history, or personality attributes affect their joint decision making processes and outcomes?</i>		
Gender Role Beliefs	NSFH	Perceptions of fairness and satisfaction with decision making outcomes is likely to be influenced by an individual's beliefs in who should make important decisions and how family labor should be divided. We plan to include six items that are relevant for unmarried cohabiting couples as well as married couples to measure gender role beliefs.
Generalized Relationship Expectations	MCLI	Individuals may have specific expectations for how individuals should be treated in a relationship, and the extent to which these expectations are met by their partner may influence their interaction patterns. We plan measure respondent expectations and how they compare to current experiences.

Table A.1 (continued)

Variable	Source/Adapted From	Justification
Expectations for Marriage or Divorce	BSF; Oklahoma Survey	It is likely that decision making would be affected by an expectation for major change, such as marriage or divorce. We plan to include two items to assess expectations that they will marry their partner someday (if not already married). Couples already married will be asked whether they anticipate separating in the near future.
Marital/Cohabitation History	FF; NSFH	An individual's relationship history may influence his/her expectations and perceptions of their current partner's behavior. In addition to asking the status of the current relationship, we plan to ask whether the respondent has lived with anyone else, whether they have ever been married to someone beside the current partner (and if yes, how many times), and whether they have ever been divorced.
Personality: Agreeableness Scale	IPIP	The personality trait most strongly associated with conflict management and relationship quality is agreeableness. We hypothesize that an individual's agreeableness is also associated with couple decision making processes and outcomes. Individuals who are more agreeable are motivated to maintain positive relationships with others which may moderate the type of strategies used in decision making interactions. We plan to use 10 items from the Big Five Scale marker.

BSF: Building Strong Families Survey

CES-D: Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (Ross et al. 1983)

NCS: National Couples Survey

DAQL: Detroit Area Quality of Life Survey

Dedication Subscale: Stanley, Markman and Whitton 2002

DTS: Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere and Huston 1980)

FF: Fragile Families Survey

IPIP: International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg, 1999)

Investment Subscale of Interdependence Model: Sanderson and Kurdek 1993)

IRS: Interpersonal Relationship Scale (Guerney 1977)

ITPS: Intergenerational Panel Telephone Survey

MCLI: Marital Comparison Level Index (Sabatelli 1984)

NBS: National Beneficiary Survey

NHIS: National Health Interview Survey

NSFH: National Survey of Families and Households

SRHS: Sound Relationship House Scale; Gottman (2004)

RDS: Relationship Dynamics Scale (Stanley and Markman 1997).

2. In-Home Observation. Observing couples interact will allow us to directly assess decision processes and outcomes. A team of trained observers from RRI will gather data from couples at the in-home visit using multiple data collection modalities. A volunteer with childcare experience will accompany the data collection team to the home to minimize distractions and allow the couple to complete the observations tasks in privacy. Written informed consent for the observational component, including physiological measurement (discussed below), will be obtained at the start of the visit. Below we detail the tasks to be performed by couples during the in-home observations—in the order they would be performed.

- a. Pre-task Procedures.** We will begin the home visit by administering the Relationship Research Institute’s (RRI’s) Oral History Interview. This interview is not meant to provide data for the analysis, but rather to lay the foundation for the observation of partners’ interaction. The aim is for the interviewer to get to know and develop rapport with the couple. This allows the couple to interact more naturally in the presence of the interviewer and provides valuable information for the interviewer on how to work with the couple. At the end of the Oral History Interview, we will separate the couple and ask each of them to rate their preferences for a hypothetical set of behavioral choices. These ratings will later be used to analyze the couple’s degree of interdependence, that is the extent to which Partner A’s behavior is dependent on Partner B’s behavior. Lastly, the individuals will be asked to complete a short survey with more sensitive questions. The female partner will be asked some questions on domestic violence and the male partner will be asked about fatherhood—both members of the couple will receive questions on substance abuse.
- b. Interaction Task 1: Paper Tower Exercise.** This task gauges the couple’s ability to work collaboratively on a creative challenge. Unlike a discussion activity, it involves action rather than just talking to one another. Unlike the conflict discussion task described below, this task provides an opportunity for positive as well as negative affect to be expressed. The exercise requires that the couple construct a free-standing tower. RRI staff will use Mini Digital Video cameras to record the interaction task. The recordings will be coded later for positivity and negativity of partners’ behavior by trained coders using the Specific Affect Coding System (SPAFF). The system is used to index specific affects expressed during the couple’s problem discussion. The system draws on facial expression (based on Ekman and Friesen’s Facial Action Coding System), vocal tone, and speech content to characterize the emotions displayed. Behaviors may be coded as positive, negative or neutral—with neutral representing the absence of positive or negative affect. SPAFF treats the stream of behavior as continuous, rather than segmenting it into time blocks or turns at speech. In this way, every second is coded and a code may be given at any time. The code best describing the affect of a spouse is indicated on a computerized dial until a change in behavior occurs such that another code better reflects the partner’s affective state. The reliability of SPAFF coding will be based on the second-by-second concordance of observers throughout the interaction period. (When more than one code appears during a one-second period, reliability will be based on the code

indicated for the longer period of time, even if the difference between codes is measured in milliseconds.) We will follow procedures used in Carstensen, Gottman, and Levenson (1995), where Cohen's kappa was used to calculate reliability for the entire coding system. The overall mean kappa in that study was 0.64.

- c. **Interaction Task 2: Economic Decision/Revealed Differences Exercise.** This task provides clear measures of preferences and outcomes, permitting a quantitative assessment of the relative influence of each partner in a decision outcome. The couple begins by imagining that the family has won a lottery. Each individual then indicates separately how she or he would prefer to spend that money by completing a form. After completing the forms, the couple engages in a joint discussion about how they will spend the money. At the end of the discussion, the couple completes another form together, indicating the outcome of their decision about how to allocate the winnings. Following the task, each partner separately rates their satisfaction with the process and joint decisions. Comparing each partner's preferred allocations with the joint outcome provides a measure of relative decision making power and distance traveled from the initial preferences.
- d. **Interaction Task 3: Interpersonal Conflict Exercise.** Prior to the conflict discussion, RRI staff ask each partner to complete a "problem inventory" (used by Gottman and colleagues in prior research) to identify major conflict areas in the couple's relationship. Following the completion of the problem inventory, a trained RRI staff member uses the results to conduct a "play-by-play" interview to set up the discussion. The play-by-play interview helps to define a conflict that is real, current, and concrete, and one that both partners feel comfortable discussing; it also is an opportunity for the interviewer to clarify the objectives of the task. As with the paper tower exercise, the interaction will be recorded and later coded using the SPAFF system to code affective quality and behavior during the conflict discussion.
- e. **Psycho-Physiological Measurement.** Prior to the conflict discussion, research assistants will connect psycho-physiological recording devices to both the male and female participants. The partners are then given 15 minutes to discuss the area of conflict and attempt to come to a decision. The discussion is videotaped and psycho-physiological indicators of heart rate, skin conductance, vagal tone (calculated from EKG), and ear pulse transit time are taken throughout. These measures provide a comprehensive assessment of each partner's autonomic reactivity during the conflict/decision making task. Data obtained from psycho-physiological measurement provide us with specific information about each partner's ability to regulate both physiology and activation of the fight or flight system. Following the task, partners rate their satisfaction with the interaction they just experienced and the decision outcome, if a decision was reached.

f. Video Recall Procedure. The video recall procedure occurs after completion of the conflict discussion. Each partner simultaneously views a play-back recording of their interaction and separately uses a rating dial to provide a continuous self-report of how they felt from moment to moment during the interaction. Each individual then repeats the exercise, this time rating how they believe their partner was feeling at each moment during the interaction. To compare against SPAFF codes, the rating dial data obtained from each partner are averaged into 10-second periods to compute four indices: (a) total positive affect; (b) total negative affect; (c) negative affect reciprocity at lag one—the number of negative periods for which the other partner rated the next 10-second period as negative; and (d) de-escalation—the number of negative periods for which the other partner rated the next 10-second period as neutral. An important purpose of these data is to gain an understanding of each partner’s emotional payoff, which can be used to capture cooperative versus competitive decision making strategies. To measure whether couples are collaborating with each other as opposed to playing a “zero sum” game, we will develop a matrix that summarizes the relationship of one partner’s payoffs to the other partner’s payoffs over the entire interaction. If the plot of his by her payoffs over the interaction has negative slope and is significantly greater than zero, the interaction is deemed to be competitive (zero-sum). If the slope is significantly positive for the payoffs over time, the interaction is cooperative.

Detailed observation protocols and instruments are presented in Appendix C.

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Appendix D

Exploratory Study of Low-Income Couples' Decision Making Processes:

60-Day Federal Register Announcement

February 4, 2021

Please see .pdf of 60-Day Federal Register Notice.

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Appendix E

Exploratory Study of Low-Income Couples' Decision Making Processes:

Informed Consent Form

February 4, 2021

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RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

COUPLES COMMUNICATION STUDY

TITLE: Couples' Communication Study

PROTOCOL NO: None

SPONSOR: Administration for Children & Families:
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Researcher's Statement

We are asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to participate in the study or not. Please read the consent form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When we have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called 'informed consent'. We will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to learn more about how couples make important decisions. Your participation will be important in helping the Department of Health and Human Services improve its programs and services.

PROCEDURES

There are two phases to this study. In phase one, you and your partner were asked to participate in individual and confidential telephone interviews. Both you and your partner gave verbal consent in this screening. Now, as part of phase 2, you are being asked to participate in an interview and some activities in your home.

You will be asked to review and sign this consent form. This consent form review will take place as the first step of the home visit. The next step is an initial interview, where you and your partner will talk about your relationship and then privately complete a brief set of questionnaires. An example of some of the more sensitive questions is: How many times in the past year have you had five or more alcoholic drinks in one day?

You may also be asked to participate in some or all of the following activities: 1) building a paper tower together, 2) deciding how to spend hypothetical lottery winnings, and 3) having a discussion about a disagreement. The discussion will include a research interviewer assisting you and your partner to identify some areas that you are having difficulty with in your relationship, with the aim of selecting one for a discussion. Once this area has been identified, the interviewer will leave you and your partner in private to spend 15-minutes discussing these areas of your relationship.

If you are asked to participate in the first and third activities identified above, your activity will be videotaped. Your confidentiality will be protected. No names or personal identifiers will be used to label your videotape. All videotapes and questionnaires will be labeled with subject identification numbers.

Do you agree to be videotaped? Please initial and date your response below:

_____ Yes

_____ No

If selected for the third activity, we will also collect physiological information during the discussion, which will involve the application of painless electrodes to you and your partner, which will provide information about your heart rate. You will also be connected to another painless device that will monitor the amount of sweat you may produce over the 15-minute period.

This entire home visit will take approximately 2 1/2 to 3 hours to complete.

NEW FINDINGS

If significant new findings develop during the course of your participation in this study, or study design plans are altered that might change your decision to be in this study, the researchers will provide this information to you. You may be asked to sign a new consent form if this occurs.

RISKS

Some emotional discomfort may result from working through an area of disagreement toward resolution. Some participants have reported some irritation to their skin from the adhesive used to apply the electrodes to collect physiological information. Although every step will be taken to protect your confidentiality, there is a risk of the loss of confidentiality.

You may also experience some emotional discomfort when being asked to talk about your relationship. This may occur through questionnaires that you and your partner will complete independently.

POTENTIAL FOR BENEFIT

Many people like the opportunity to talk about their relationship and find this experience interesting and enjoyable. However, we cannot be sure that there will be any benefit to you.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You and your partner will each be paid \$10 per person to participate in the structured interview and \$40 per person to participate in the home visit. If both you and your partner participate, you will receive a total of \$100 as a couple for completing both the telephone interview and the home visit. No other payment or compensation will be provided to you for your participation in this study.

ALTERNATIVES

Couples may choose not to participate in this study. There is no obligation to participate.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION/WITHDRAWAL

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or you may leave the study at any time. However, you will only receive payment if you complete an interview.

It is possible that the study may be stopped by the study doctor or the sponsor at any time without your consent for the following reasons:

- if it is in your best interest;
- you do not later consent to any future changes that may be made in the study plan;
- or for any other reason.

If at any time you want to stop taking part in this study, tell one of the investigators listed above or the researchers here with you today.

OTHER INFORMATION

All efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential, however, we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. We are obligated by law to report suspected or alleged child abuse or neglect.

Information about a Certificate of Confidentiality for this Research

Mathematica Policy Research and the Relationship Research Institute have received a Certificate of Confidentiality from the government which will help protect the privacy of research subjects. The certificate protects against the involuntary release of information about subjects collected during the course of this research. The researchers involved in this study cannot be forced to disclose any information collected in this study in any legal proceedings. However, the subject may choose to voluntarily disclose the protected information and this certificate does not prohibit such voluntary disclosure. The researchers will voluntarily disclose protected information because they are obligated by law to report suspected or alleged child abuse or neglect. Furthermore, the parties listed in the Confidentiality/Authorization section of this consent form may review our records under limited circumstances and this certificate does not prohibit such disclosure.

Mathematica Policy Research Inc. will conduct the telephone surveys as well as assist with analyzing the data collected by RRI. Other organizations, such as the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis.

In order to evaluate the results of this study, your records now and in the future will need to be available to researchers associated with this research project. All videotapes, like other records, will be reviewed by members of our research team. The videotapes will be retained in a locked room accessible only to our research team at the Relationship Research Institute or at Mathematica Policy Research. All videotapes and other records will be kept until December 31, 2050. If you choose, you can arrange to watch the videotapes and delete any portions. Your personal identity will not be revealed in any publication of results of the study. You will complete a separate release form indicating the different ways in which you permit the videotapes to be used. Video data will only be released for use outside our laboratory if you and your partner give your permission in the release forms you fill out.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Dan Yoshimoto, Ph.D. at 206-973-3455, John Gottman, Ph.D. at 206-832-0300, or Robin Dion at 202 484 5262 for any of the following reasons:

- if you have any questions about your participation in this study,
- if at any time you feel you have had a research-related problem or
- if you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact:

Public/Private Ventures (PPV)
2000 Market Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 557-4446

PPV is a group of people who perform independent reviews of research. PPV will not be able to answer some study-specific questions, such as questions about appointment times. However, you may contact PPV if the research staff cannot be reached or if you wish to talk to someone other than the research staff.

Do not sign this form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers to all of your questions.

COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

No compensation (financial or otherwise), or free medical care is planned to be provided in the event of injury (physical or otherwise) or death resulting from participation in this study.

You do not waive any legal rights by your participation in this study.

SOURCE OF FUNDING

Funding for this study is provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

If you agree to be in this study, you will receive a signed and dated copy of this consent form for your records.

PARTICIPANT'S AUTHORIZATION

I have read the information in this consent form (or it has been read to me). The study described above has been explained to me. I voluntarily consent to participate in this activity. I have had an opportunity to ask questions. If I have questions later on about the research, I can ask one of the investigators listed above. I have been informed about other options available to me, including no further participation. By signing this consent form, I have not given up any of my legal rights.

I authorize the use and disclosure of my information to the parties listed in the Other Information section of this consent for the purposes described above.

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE

PARTICIPANT'S PRINTED NAME

DATE

Person Conducting Informed Consent
Discussion Signature

Person Conducting Informed Consent
Discussion Printed Name

Date

RELEASE FORM
Relationship Discussion (of an area of disagreement)

We as participants in the Couples' Communication Project supervised by Dr. John Gottman, knowing that no names will ever be associated with the materials presented, give our informed consent for excerpts of taped materials to be used in the following ways:

1. My own personal use.

Excerpts of *audio taped* conversations.

Excerpts of *videotaped* conversations.

Initials

Initials

2. The personal use of my partner.

Excerpts of audio taped conversations.

Excerpts of videotaped conversations.

Initials

Initials

3. Scientific articles and books.

Excerpts of audio taped conversations.

Excerpts of videotaped conversations.

Initials

Initials

4. Lectures and presentations for professional audiences.

Excerpts of audio taped conversations.

Excerpts of videotaped conversations.

Initials

Initials

5. Lectures and presentations in classrooms.

Excerpts of audio taped conversations.

Excerpts of videotaped conversations.

Initials

Initials

6. Radio or television presentations.

Excerpts of audio taped conversations.

Excerpts of videotaped conversations.

Initials

Initials

7. All of the above initialed items.

Print Name

Signature

Appendix F

Exploratory Study of Low-Income Couples' Decision Making Processes:

Consent to Contact Form

February 4, 2021

U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Planning, Research and
Evaluation
370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW, 7th Floor
West
Washington, DC 20447

Voice: (202) 401-5760

Project Officer: Seth Chamberlain

What is the Couples' Communication Study?

The Couples' Communication Study is a research project to learn more about how couples make important decisions.

If you are eligible for this study and choose to participate, you and your partner can receive up to \$100. The study components involve a 20-minute telephone interview in which we would ask you and your partner to each answer some questions about yourself and your relationship (\$20); and a home visit with the two of you that would take about 2 1/2 hours (\$80). Eligibility for this study requires that both you and your partner/spouse agree to participate.

The information on this form is strictly confidential and will not affect your eligibility for government assistance

1. Are you currently 18 years of age or older?

NO

2. Are you currently in a romantic relationship and living with

3. Have you been in this relationship for at least 3 months?

NO

4. Are you living with any children under age 18 that are yours

5. Are you able to be interviewed in English?

NO

questions above,
please fill-in the
information below
and a
representative
from the program
will contact you
with more
information.

YES

your partner?

YES NO

YES

or your partner's?

YES NO

YES

I, _____, give permission for a representative from the Couples' Communication Study to contact me
(PRINT FULL NAME)
concerning this program.

SIGNATURE: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION:

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: (____) _____

CELL #: (____) _____

BEST TIMES TO CONTACT ME: _____

Referring Agency: _____ Date: _____

COUPLES' COMMUNICATION STUDY

WHAT IS THIS STUDY ABOUT?

The Couples' Communication Study is a research project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) and the Relationship Research Institute (RRI). The study is being done to learn more about how couples make important decisions. Your participation will be important in helping the Department of Health and Human Services improve its programs and services.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME IF I DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE?

If you participate in this study, we will ask you and your partner to each answer some questions about yourself and your relationship in a 20 minute telephone interview. You and your partner will be asked the questions separately. Based on your answers, we may then ask you and your partner to take part in a home visit in which researchers would come to your home to talk with you about your relationship, fill out some questionnaires, and participate in some activities together. Some of these activities will be videotaped, and some physiological information will be recorded, such as your heart rate. This home visit will take about 2 1/2 hours.

YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE KEPT PRIVATE AND STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Everything you tell the research team will be kept private. Only the researchers will be able to see information you give them and nothing will ever be said about you as an individual. Your name will not be listed in any reports published as part of this study. Instead, information about you will be combined with information about everybody else in the study. In rare circumstances, information may be released, if required by law.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY

Your participation in the program and the study is strictly voluntary. Refusing to participate will not affect any benefits you currently receive or could receive in the future. You may quit participating at any time with no risks or costs.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND RISKS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY?

There are no known risks of participating in this study, except that you may feel uncomfortable answering some questions in the interviews. You can refuse to answer such questions if you wish, and it will not affect your participation in the study. Your answers could help in providing services in the future to other couples like you, who receive services.

WILL I BE COMPENSATED FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY?

If you and your partner/spouse choose to take part in this study and are eligible to complete all components, you will receive a total of \$100. The components include a short telephone interview with each of you (\$20) and an in-person visit with you both together (\$80). Eligibility for this study requires that both you and your partner/spouse agree to participate.