

THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS' PROGRAM EXPERIENCE AND
RELATIONSHIP SELF-EFFICACY AND SATISFACTION FOLLOWING
COUPLES RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

by

KAITLYN LOPES

(Under the Direction of Ted G. Futris)

ABSTRACT

The current study explores the associations between participants' rating of their experience during a couples and relationship education program and their level of relationship self-efficacy and relationship quality two months after the program. On average, participants rated their program experience positively across six indicators, including facilitator quality, facilitator-participant relationship quality, co-facilitator relationship quality, facilitator co-regulation skills, group engagement, and participant engagement. Also, participants reported statistically significant improvements in relationship self-efficacy and quality. Participants' positive ratings on two indicators of program experience (i.e., facilitator-participant relationship quality and participant engagement) were significantly associated with higher relationship self-efficacy post-program; relationship quality was not influenced by program experience ratings. Minimal variations were found based on sex, marital status, and program format. These findings offer continued support for the potential benefits of couples relationship education.

INDEX WORDS: Couples Relationship Education, Relationship Self-Efficacy, Relationship Quality, Program Experience

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Couples relationship education (CRE) programs promote and sustain healthy, fulfilling relationships by providing couples with essential skills and strategies to navigate challenges, strengthen their connection, and build stronger, more resilient partnerships, ultimately contributing to relationship satisfaction and stability (Markman et al., 2022). Typically, CRE programs are implemented in group settings and use diverse methods of engagement such as discussions, activities, workbooks, and multimedia resources to teach these relationship-enhancing skills (Duncan et al., 2009). The format of CRE programs, whether delivered in-person or online, may influence the program experience and the effectiveness of the interventions (Markman et al., 2022). Facilitator alliance, the bond between facilitators and participants, is equally significant in the CRE program experience (Ketring et al., 2017; Totura Garr et al., 2023). However, despite the well-documented benefits of CRE programs, in general, the extent to which participants' perceptions of the facilitators and their program experience affect relationship outcomes following CRE remains unclear. The current study aims to explore these associations, with a particular focus on how participants' perceived facilitator and program experiences influence relationship self-efficacy and satisfaction following CRE.

Couples Relationship Education

CRE programs encompass a variety of interventions designed to help couples form and sustain healthy relationships. These programs typically incorporate structured curricula, interactive activities, and skill-building exercises to enhance key relational skills that facilitate positive communication and effective conflict management (Hawkins et al., 2008; Blanchard et

al., 2009). In addition, evidence-based approaches in CRE contribute to positive cognitive changes among participants, helping them to better understand each other's perspectives and to apply these relational skills in everyday interactions (Halford et al., 2013). In turn, these crucial skills help foster an environment conducive to deeper intimacy and acceptance (Stanley et al., 2002). When CRE programs foster positive interactions and reduce the frequency and intensity of negative interactions, couples report greater relationship satisfaction and are more likely to feel motivated to maintain their relationship (Rauer et al., 2014). This shift in mindset often leads partners to view their relationship as more valuable and of higher quality, thus reducing the risk of relationship dissolution (Markman et al., 2022). Higher levels of relationship satisfaction and commitment are positively associated with one's self-efficacy in romantic relationships (Riggio et al., 2013).

Therefore, an important aspect of CRE programs is fostering a sense of relationship self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to successfully apply relationship skills learned in the program to real-life situations in their romantic relationship (Weiser & Weigel, 2016). According to Bandura's (1977) self-learning theory, one's belief in their capabilities to execute and manage situations, or self-efficacy, can determine how they handle those situations. Applied to couple relationships, when individuals believe they can effectively manage relationship challenges and are more capable of being a good partner, they are more likely to engage in proactive behaviors that can improve the overall quality of the relationship (Riggio et al, 2011). Further, individuals with high relationship self-efficacy are generally more willing to engage in relationship maintenance behaviors and are more committed to their relationship overall, leading to sustained relationship satisfaction (Weiser & Weigel, 2016; Lopez et al., 2007). However, adults who witness poor relationship models growing up (e.g., high interparental conflict, divorce) are more

likely to report lower relationship efficacy, and in turn more conflict and lower satisfaction in their own romantic relationships (Cui et al., 2008). Examining the association between psychological well-being and relationship self-efficacy in college students, Weisskirch (2017) found that individuals with lower levels of relationship anxiety felt more in control of managing situations and conflict that arose within their romantic relationship. To date, research on the evaluation of CRE programs tends to focus more on behavioral changes as opposed to changes in perceived relationship self-efficacy; therefore, there is still limited CRE literature exploring relationship self-efficacy as an outcome. The current study aims to address this gap in the literature by examining how participants' levels of perceived relationship self-efficacy can be affected by participating in CRE programs.

Beyond one's level of self-efficacy, engagement with the program content is an important predictor of post-program relationship outcomes as well. Participants in CRE programs who are more engaged with the content often demonstrate a greater likelihood of applying skills learned, resulting in sustained improvements in relationship quality (Brown et al., 2012). To date, research examining how participant engagement is associated with relationship outcomes following CRE has mostly focused on dosage and attendance as indicators of participant engagement. For example, programs offering moderate levels of instructional time (e.g., between 9 and 19 hours) tend to produce significantly better outcomes than those with shorter durations (Hawkins et al., 2008) as well as programs with higher dosage (20+ hours; Hawkins et al., 2022), indicating that adequate exposure is crucial for meaningful impact. Also, participants who complete more (e.g., 80%) of the program tend to experience considerable improvements in relational outcomes compared to those who complete less, suggesting that commitment to the educational experience is essential for receiving the maximum benefits from these programs

(Brown et al., 2012; Busby et al., 2015). Further, the positive effects of attendance and program completion may vary based on sex as well as the type of relationship outcome examined (Carlson et al., 2023; Barton et al., 2024). More recently, research has begun to explore the influence of participants' *perceptions* of how involved their partner and the group were in the CRE program as well as perceived facilitator support on the effectiveness of CRE (Totura Garr et al., 2023). The current study aims to further advance how participants' perceptions of the facilitator and their program experience may contribute to relationship outcomes following CRE.

Perceived Facilitator and Program Experience

According to adult learning theory (Knowles, 1968), individuals learn best when they are intrinsically motivated and want to apply what they are learning to their lives, which fosters a deeper connection to the material and improves skill retention. Therefore, active involvement with the material and course overall not only enhances the learning experience but also builds participants' self-efficacy in applying what they are learning. Thus, for CRE programs to be effective, they require active involvement from participants, fostering a deeper sense of investment in their relationships (Totura Garr et al., 2023).

Program facilitators play a vital role in creating a positive educational experience that stimulates active involvement. For example, based on interviews conducted by Novak and colleagues (2019) with couples six-months after completing a CRE workshop, participants reported facilitator practices that made them more relatable (e.g., level of openness, ability to communicate on the same level with participants) and that helped couples apply the skills they were learning as being most useful in how the CRE experience impacted their couple relationship. Facilitator attributes such as warmth, empathy, and cultural competence help create a supportive environment that encourages participant engagement (Totura Garr et al., 2023).

Effective facilitators understand how to tailor discussions and incorporate feedback to meet participants' needs, making the material more applicable for diverse couples (Ketring et al., 2017). Evidence shows that when facilitators effectively incorporate personal experiences (e.g., use personal stories and examples) into the program content in a meaningful way, both male and female participants rate their experience in the program more positively (Higginbotham & Myler, 2010; Novak et al., 2019). Also, facilitators who actively incorporate participant feedback and adapt their teaching approach enhance the learning process and demonstrate their investment in the success of the participants (Bradford et al., 2012). By doing so, facilitators build a strong alliance that allows the participants to feel more confident and hopeful in the program's potential impact on their relationship (Ketring et al., 2017; Bradford et al., 2012). In fact, Bourgeois and colleagues (1990) found that therapeutic alliance in a marital counseling group program accounted for 3% of the variance in relationship outcomes (i.e., satisfaction, cohesion, affectional expression) and 10% of the variance in marital happiness particularly for men but not for women. Further, Owen and colleagues (2011) found that the working alliance between participants and leaders in a premarital education program accounted for 1.3-10.5% of the variance in relationship outcomes (i.e., relationship adjustment, positive communication, relationship confidence). Specifically, the facilitators' ability to foster collaborative and meaningful relationships with the participants was equally as important as the methods applied within the course (Owen et al., 2011).

Furthermore, how participants assess facilitator quality and their experience during the program may vary based on participants' sex. Research showing statistically significant differences between men and women's ratings of facilitators and their program experience tends to be mixed. For instance, one study found that while men and women did not differ in how they

felt they bonded with the facilitator and if the facilitator cared about their goals for the program, having a facilitator of the same gender was associated with a stronger facilitator alliance (Ketring et al., 2017). Also, Totura Garr and colleagues (2023) found that both men and women reported higher levels of active participation during a CRE program when they felt the facilitators were more supportive of the program and perceived greater group and partner involvement during the program. In contrast, following participation in a CRE program for step-couples, Higginbotham and Myler (2010) found that men, on average, rated facilitators more positively when they managed the class time more efficiently and drew upon experiences in helpful ways whereas women rated facilitators higher when they explained content more clearly. Further, women tend to initiate enrollment in CRE programs or couples therapy more than men, which can lead to men being more wary of the experience and therefore less engaged with the program (Halford et al., 2016).

Additionally, marital status may also impact participants' perceived program experience. Married couples tend to have a higher relationship commitment than couples who are unmarried but live together, increasing their engagement within the program (Brown et al., 2012). Also, prior to starting CRE, Adler-Baeder and colleagues (2010) found that while married men and women reported higher levels of relationship confidence compared to those who were unmarried, they did not differ in couple functioning (i.e., quality, happiness, adjustment, positive interactions). Further, they found that marital status was positively associated with change in relationship confidence for men only. Following a sample of unmarried and married couples who attended a stepfamily-focused CRE program, Higginbotham and Skogrand (2010) found that marital status did not affect participants' increased commitment to their relationship. Another study found that the association between facilitator alliance and post-program relationship

outcomes (i.e., quality, confidence, negative interactions) did not differ for married and unmarried couples (Ketring et al., 2017).

Overall, participant engagement and facilitator alliance can impact participants' program experience, influencing the effectiveness of the program on sustained relationship outcomes. Further, how participants perceive their experience in the program may vary based on couple characteristics, including sex and marital status. The current study aims to further contribute to the understanding of how participants' perceived program experience influences their relationship self-efficacy and satisfaction and whether these associations vary based on sex and marital status.

Program Format

The delivery mode of CRE programs may also shape participants' experiences and outcomes. Whether the CRE program is offered in-person or virtual can significantly affect how couples engage with the material and each other. Traditional in-person programs offer unique advantages through face-to-face interactions, allowing couples to engage in group discussions and hands-on activities. Interactive experiences allow couples to apply what they learn throughout the program, increasing the level of participant awareness regarding the material (Novak et al., 2019). These settings also facilitate immediate feedback and foster social support among participants. Many couples report that sharing their experiences with others facing similar challenges normalizes their issues and enhances their learning process (Markman et al., 2022). Further, group dynamics can create a positive social environment that encourages engagement and motivation, particularly when participants share common goals (Totura Garr et al., 2023). However, while these programs are effective, their reach can be limited due to the time

requirement to travel to the face-to-face classes along with the class time, reducing the number of couples who can benefit from them (Busby et al., 2015; Tseng et al., 2023).

In comparison, synchronous online programs utilize digital platforms to deliver educational content, increasing accessibility by giving participants the flexibility to engage from their own homes. Georgia and Doss (2013) found that couples were significantly more likely to seek online relationship programs and websites compared to in-person interventions or therapy. Online programs may also be particularly appealing to parents because it reduces the burden of childcare compared to in-person workshops and interventions (Roddy et al., 2019). However, to date, limited research could be found evaluating synchronous, online CRE programs; therefore, the following review summarizes findings from studies on asynchronous (e.g., self-paced) online programs that included facilitators who met conjointly (one-on-one) with couples during the course of the program. Having a facilitator or coach involved in self-paced online programming has been found to significantly increase participation rates as they have someone to support them and hold them accountable, emphasizing the importance of coaching and encouragement throughout the CRE program. (Rothman et al., 2019). For example, a study by Barton and colleagues (2024) disseminated an asynchronous, web-based CRE intervention with remote coaching, and they had coaches call the participants throughout the program in order to ensure the couples understood the material, gave them opportunities to practice and apply the skills learned from the program to their relationship, and encouraged couples for taking steps to strengthen their relationship. As a result, the findings indicate that both men and women improved significantly on their levels of communication conflict, partner support, and relationship instability (Barton et al., 2024). Further, Doss and colleagues (2016) found significant increases in relationship functioning for their self-paced program, suggesting that

online interventions can be effective in improving relationship outcomes when coaching is involved. Additionally, a study on a synchronous CRE program offered both in-person and online found that virtual participants praised the facilitators with several participants highlighting their ability to adapt and help the participants feel comfortable (Turner et al., 2022).

While participating in online CRE programs can lead to positive outcomes for couples, especially when their learning experience includes support from a trained facilitator or coach, the effectiveness of online programs can vary from that of in-person programs. In-person CRE programs allow for face-to-face interactions between participants which helps participants to see that they are not alone in the problems they are facing; however, in online programs, this benefit can be diminished (Markman et al., 2022). Further, Duncan and colleagues (2009) found that participants in traditional group interventions reported higher levels of relationship outcomes (i.e., relationship satisfaction, empathic communication) following the program compared to virtual participants; however, the differences were not statistically significant. Recently, Campbell and colleagues (2025) compared participants' relationship outcomes following in-person versus virtual CRE and found that participants reported a significant positive increase in couple relationship skills regardless of their workshop format. Similarly, Turner and colleagues (2022) found that while in-person participants showed greater gains on four of the five relationship outcomes studied (i.e., knowledge, disclosure, meeting needs, commitment) compared to virtual participants, both in-person and virtual participants experienced positive relationship gains as a result of the CRE program.

While some research suggests that both in-person and online programs can lead to similar outcomes in relationship outcomes, most of this research is based on asynchronous, self-directed online programs. Hence, with few exceptions (e.g., Campbell et al., 2025; Turner et al., 2022),

research evaluating synchronous, group-based CRE programs that are more consistent with in-person program implementation is limited. Therefore, the current study aims to fill this gap and contribute to the understanding of how program format (i.e., in-person versus synchronous online) influences participant relationship outcomes such as self-efficacy and satisfaction.

Current Study

The current study focuses on the CRE program, *ELEVATE: Taking your Relationship to the Next Level* (Futris et al., 2020), an evidence-based relationship education curriculum that aims to help couples form, improve, and sustain healthy relationships. *ELEVATE* combines practical skills with insights into the physiology of human interaction to improve the knowledge and abilities for fostering healthy relationships. The 12-hour program consists of lectures, discussions, and activities that encourage individuals to explore topics including prioritizing personal well-being, making intentional choices, and fostering deep awareness of their partner's needs. The curriculum is grounded in the *National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Model* (NERMEM; Futris & Adler-Baeder, 2013), a framework that distills decades of research on developing and maintaining positive and healthy couple relationships to seven core principles and skills. Specifically, the *ELEVATE* program encourages behaviors that enhance individual health and well-being (*Self-Care*) as well as attitudes and efforts that promote intentionality and prioritization of the relationship (*Choose*), intimate knowledge between partners (*Know*), other-oriented positivity (*Care*), a sense of couple solidarity and “we-ness” (*Share*), managing stress and conflict effectively (*Manage*), and a supportive network for the couple (*Connect*). See **Appendix A** for a description of each module.

Using data collected from couples who completed the *ELEVATE* program, the present study aimed to expand upon the recent literature on the effectiveness of CRE programs in

promoting positive relationship outcomes. Specifically, the current study examined the association between participants' program experience (e.g., level of engagement, facilitator quality, program satisfaction) and relationship outcomes (i.e., relationship self-efficacy, relationship satisfaction) and whether these associations varied based on program format (i.e., virtual vs. in-person). The aim of this study was to first (RQ1) investigate whether virtual workshop participants and in-person participants differed in how they rated their program experience. Next (RQ2), we examined whether virtual workshop participants reported similar relationship self-efficacy and satisfaction at T1 and T3 compared to in-person workshop participants. As well (RQ3), we examined whether participants' reports of relationship self-efficacy and satisfaction increased from pre- to post-program (RQ3a), and whether this change varied for those who participated in-person versus virtually (RQ3b). Following (RQ4), we analyzed the association between participants' ratings of their program experience and their relationship self-efficacy and satisfaction both prior to the program and following the program. Last (RQ5), we explored whether participants' ratings of their program experience predicted post-program relationship self-efficacy and satisfaction and whether this association varied by program format.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

Procedure

Data for the current study was collected as a part of a federally funded project (Futris et al., 2025) that implemented the *ELEVATE: Taking your Relationship to the Next Level* (Futris et al., 2020) program between June 2021 and June 2024 across the state of Georgia. This study was approved by the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board. Participants were recruited through community engagement, outreach, and marketing, including flyers, social media posts, advertisements at churches, etc. After expressing interest, participants completed an initial screening that assessed their eligibility to participate in the program. Individuals were eligible to participate in the *ELEVATE* program if they were over 18 years of age, in a committed, couple relationship, and both partners in the relationship agreed to participate. Upon enrollment, participants were informed that they would be asked to complete several surveys both before and after the program if they consented to participate in the research study. Completion of these surveys was not required to participate in the *ELEVATE* program.

The program consisted of 12 hours of instructional time by trained facilitators and was delivered either in-person or synchronously online in four (180 minute) or eight (90 minute) sessions across 4-8 weeks. For the online program, certain group and couple activities were adapted for more effective implementation in an online (Zoom) format while maintaining the integrity of the original curriculum content and learning objectives. A central focus of the current study is to assess whether variations based on program format exist in participants' assessment of their program experience and changes in relationship outcomes. As such, to ensure the program

was delivered consistently and as intended, both in-person and online sessions were recorded and randomly selected for fidelity coding in order to assess how closely facilitators implemented the program according to its original design. Trained fidelity coders independently observed a combined 50% ($n = 4$ modules) of the eight program modules with 25% ($n = 2$ modules) being rated by two coders. Overall, program adherence was estimated at above 93%, with excellent interrater reliability ($ICC = .683$; Cicchetti, 1994). Thus, no systematic differences were found between in-person and virtual content, ensuring that the quality of program remains consistent for all participants.

Data were collected from participants at three time points. Within four weeks before the first class (T1), participants were asked to complete their first survey that measured various indicators of relationship outcomes. Upon completion of the final class, participants were asked to fill out a brief post-program evaluation survey (T2) that measured their experience during the program and with their facilitators. Six weeks after the last class (T3), participants were asked to complete a follow-up survey with similar measures assessed at T1. All surveys were administered online, and respondents were compensated with an e-gift card for each survey they completed.

Sample

The study sample consists of 1,079 consenting couples ($n = 2,158$ individuals) who enrolled in the program. The analytic sample for this research study was reduced to 1,260 individuals who attended the program and completed all three surveys (see **Figure 1**). As summarized in **Table 1**, significant differences were found between the analytic sample ($n = 1,260$) and the excluded sample ($n = 898$) in regard to participants' sex, marital status, age, race/ethnicity, education level and income. Compared to the excluded sample, the final sample

had a higher proportion of females (45.9% vs. 55.3%, respectively; $X^2 = 19.21, p < .001$), participants who identify as White (40.1% vs. 50.4%, respectively, $X^2 = 22.28, p < .001$) as opposed to Black/African American (56.9% vs. 46.1%, respectively; $X^2 = 23.99, p < .001$), and participants who identify as Latinx (5.9% vs. 8.4%, respectively; $X^2 = 4.77, p < .05$). As well, the final sample was also, on average, older (38.95 years vs. 40.26 years, respectively; $X^2 = 6.75, p < .01$) and included a higher proportion of married individuals (62.8% vs. 72.6%, respectively; $X^2 = 23.54, p < .001$). The final sample also had a higher proportion of participants who earned a Bachelor's degree or higher (32.2% vs. 52.5%, respectively; $X^2 = 126.05, p < .001$) and who earned more than \$5,000 in the past 30 days (13.0% vs. 17.7%, respectively; $X^2 = 23.31, p < .01$). Regarding program participation, the majority (72.3%) of the final sample was enrolled in the program virtually, and 97.1% graduated from the program by completing at least seven out of the eight modules.

Further, because of the disproportionate number of participants in the final sample who participated virtually ($n = 911$) versus in-person ($n = 349$), additional analyses were conducted comparing both groups across the demographic characteristics. These analyses are presented in **Table 2**. Compared to in-person participants, virtual participants were, on average, younger, and a higher proportion of virtual participants were married, earned a Bachelor's degree or higher, and stay at home parents or homemakers.

Measures

Program experience. The participants' overall assessment of their and their partner's involvement, interest, and investment as well as the quality of their facilitators was assessed on six different subscales consisting of a total of 31 items. For each item, participants rated their level of agreement on a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). A description

of each subscale is provided below. See **Tables B1-B6** in **Appendix B** for a summary of participants' responses on each of the subscales and their respective items.

Facilitator quality. Five items adapted from the Teacher Behavior Checklist (Buskist et al., 2002) were used to assess the participants' view of their facilitators' knowledge and expertise (e.g., "explained the course material clearly," "effectively encouraged class participation"). A mean score was computed so that a higher score indicated a higher level of facilitator quality ($\alpha = .92$).

Facilitator-participant relationship quality. Five items adapted from the Working Alliance Inventory-S (original by Horvath & Greenberg, 1989; short-version by Tracey & Kokotovic, 1989) were used to assess participants' views on their relationship with the facilitators (e.g., "liked the facilitator(s)," "felt accepted by the facilitator(s)"). A mean score was computed so that a higher score indicated a higher level of facilitator-participant relationship quality ($\alpha = .94$).

Co-facilitator relationship quality. Five items were developed by the study authors (Adler-Baeder et al., 2023) to assess the participants' views on the quality of the relationship between co-facilitators (e.g., "communicated well with each other," "made a good team"). A mean score was computed so that a higher score indicated a higher level of co-facilitator relationship quality ($\alpha = .94$).

Facilitator co-regulation skills. Five items were developed by the study authors (Adler-Baeder et al., 2023) to assess the participants' views on their facilitators' ability to manage the emotional dynamics of the class (e.g., "encouraged us to notice how we were feeling," "provided verbal praise and positive feedback that made us feel comfortable"). A mean score was

computed so that a higher score indicated a higher level of facilitator co-regulation skills ($\alpha = .89$).

Group engagement. Five items were adapted from the Planned Behavior & Implementation Questionnaire (PBIQ; Totura et al., 2008) to assess the participants' view of the overall level of engagement in the program by the entire class (e.g., “seemed interested in what was being taught,” “took an active part in discussions”). A mean score was computed so that a higher score indicated a higher level of group engagement ($\alpha = .89$).

Individual and partner engagement. Six items were adapted from the PBIQ (Totura et al., 2008) to assess the engagement levels of both the participant and the participant's partner during the class (e.g., “felt comfortable sharing experiences with the group,” “actively engaged in group discussion and activities”). A mean score was computed so that a higher score indicated a higher level of individual and partner engagement ($\alpha = .90$).

Relationship self-efficacy. Nine items were adapted from the Self Efficacy in Romantic Relationships Scale (SERR; Riggio et al., 2011) to assess participants' belief in their ability to effectively manage different aspects in their romantic relationship. Participants rated their responses for each item (e.g., “If I can't do something successfully in my romantic relationship the first time, I keep trying until I can.”) on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Never True; 7 = Always True). A mean score was computed so that a higher score indicated a higher level of relationship self-efficacy (T1: $\alpha = .85$; T3: $\alpha = .85$). See **Tables B7.1 and B7.2** in **Appendix B** for a summary of participants' responses.

Relationship quality. Three items were adapted from the Couple Quality scale (Norton, 1983) to assess participants' overall quality, happiness, and fulfillment within their romantic relationship. Participants rated their level of agreement (1 = Very Strongly Disagree; 7 = Very

Strongly Agree) with each item (e.g., “Our relationship is strong.”). A mean score was computed so that a higher score indicated a higher level of relationship quality (T1: $\alpha = .95$; T3: $\alpha = .97$).

See **Tables B8.1 and B8.2** in **Appendix B** for a summary of participants’ responses.

Analytic Plan

One-way ANOVAs were analyzed to examine participant’s ratings of their program experience (RQ1) and their relationship outcomes (RQ2) by format. Next, a repeated-measures ANOVA was used to determine whether participants reported statistically significant improvements from T1 to T3 in relationship self-efficacy and relationship quality (RQ3a) and whether these changes differed between in-person and virtual participants (RQ3b). Bivariate correlations were analyzed to test the association between participants’ rating of their program experience and changes in relationship self-efficacy and satisfaction following the program (RQ4).

Last, two sets of hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the association between participants’ ratings of their program experience at T2 and each relationship outcome at T3, and whether these associations varied by program format (RQ5). Prior to conducting these analyses, the six independent variables were centered and standardized. To center the variables, the mean of each variable was subtracted from each value of the variable, rescaling the variable. To standardize the variables, they were converted to a z-score, setting the mean to 0 and the variance to 1. This makes the intercept more interpretable and reduces multicollinearity in interaction effects.

Each hierarchical multiple regression included four blocks of variables, with relationship self-efficacy and relationship quality, respectively, as the dependent variable. The first block included sex (0 = female, 1 = male), marital status (0 = unmarried, 1 = married), and program

format (0 = in-person, 1 = virtual) as the predictors. For sex, six participants who identified as “Other” were excluded from the analyses because the small sample size limited statistical power, reducing the ability to detect significant differences or associations. In block two, the dependent variable, relationship self-efficacy and relationship quality, at T1 was added to control for the baseline levels of the relationship outcome and better assess how other predictors influence changes over time for each dependent variable. Next, the six independent variables reflecting participants’ ratings of the facilitator and their program experience reported at T2 were added in block three. Last, the interaction between program format and each independent variable was added in block four to examine whether program format moderated the association between program experience and the relationship outcomes at T3. All analyses were conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 28).

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics show that participants' reports on the relationship outcomes prior to participating in the program as well as their ratings of their program experience were, on average, positive. Statistically significant differences across the variables were found based on sex and marital status. These analyses are presented in **Tables C2 and C3** in **Appendix C** and summarized below.

Before participating in the program (T1), participants, on average, rated their relationship self-efficacy at a moderate level ($M = 4.87$; $SD = 1.10$) and their relationship quality as moderately high ($M = 5.42$; $SD = 1.34$). On average, males reported higher relationship quality at T1 compared to females ($M = 5.54$ vs. 5.32 , respectively; $F = 8.63$, $p = <.01$), but there was not a significant difference between males ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.14$) and females ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.07$) on their relationship self-efficacy at T1. Further, on average, unmarried participants reported higher relationship self-efficacy at T1 compared to married participants ($M = 5.10$ vs. 4.78 , respectively; $F = 20.79$, $p = <.001$), but unmarried ($M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.29$) and married ($M = 5.41$, $SD = 1.36$) participants did not differ significantly on their relationship quality at T1.

At the conclusion of the program (T2), participants' ratings of their program experience, on average, were moderately to extremely high with slightly higher ratings on facilitator quality ($M = 4.65$, $SD = .52$), facilitator-participant relationship quality ($M = 4.63$, $SD = .54$), co-facilitator relationship quality ($M = 4.66$, $SD = .53$), and facilitator co-regulation skills ($M = 4.55$, $SD = .56$) compared to group engagement ($M = 4.35$, $SD = .58$), and individual and partner engagement ($M = 4.13$, $SD = .68$). Female participants, on average, rated both facilitator-

participant relationship quality ($M = 4.66$ vs. 4.60 , respectively; $F = 3.91$, $p = <.05$) and co-facilitator relationship quality ($M = 4.70$ vs. 4.62 , respectively; $F = 7.06$, $p = <.01$) significantly higher than males. Additionally, unmarried participants rated group engagement ($M = 4.41$ vs. 4.33 , respectively; $F = 4.32$, $p = <.05$) significantly higher than married participants. However, the differences, despite being significant, were relatively small as, on average, participants from both formats rated their program experiences fairly high.

One-way ANOVAs were conducted to examine the differences between in-person and virtual workshop participants on program experience (RQ1) and relationship outcomes (RQ2). These findings are summarized in **Table 3**. Regarding program experience, in-person participants rated facilitator-participant relationship quality ($F = 14.98$, $p < .001$) and facilitator co-regulation skills ($F = 6.91$, $p < .01$) significantly higher than virtual participants. Also, in-person participants reported significantly higher group engagement ($F = 19.30$, $p < .001$) and participant engagement ($F = 24.49$, $p < .001$) compared to virtual participants. Regarding relationship outcomes, no significant differences were found between in-person and virtual program participants' reports of relationship self-efficacy at T1 ($F = .21$, $p = .65$) or T3 ($F = .70$, $p = .40$). However, participants in the virtual workshop reported, on average, significantly higher relationship quality at both T1 ($F = 7.99$, $p < .01$) and T3 ($F = 4.32$, $p < .05$).

Next, a repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to examine the changes in relationship self-efficacy and quality from T1 to T3 (RQ3a) and whether this change varied for those who participated in-person versus virtually (RQ3b).. These results are summarized in **Table 4**. On average, participants reported improvements in both relationship outcomes, albeit the main effect of time was only statistically significant at the $p > .05$ level for relationship quality ($F = 13.73$, $p < .001$) and approached statistical significance for relationship self-efficacy ($F = 3.51$, $p = 0.06$).

Only one statistically significant interaction effect was found for relationship self-efficacy, but none for relationship quality. Specifically, a statistically significant three-way interaction effect between time, marital status, and format was found ($F = 5.24, p = 0.02, \eta^2_p = 0.004$). As illustrated in **Figure 2**, on average, married participants reported lower relationship self-efficacy at T1 compared to unmarried participants. However, while there was no statistically significant difference between virtual and in-person, married participants, on average, unmarried, in-person participants reported slightly lower relationship self-efficacy compared to unmarried, virtual participants. Also, among married participants, those in the virtual program reported greater positive change in relationship self-efficacy from T1 to T3 compared to in-person participants. On the other hand, among unmarried participants, those in the in-person program reported greater positive change in relationship self-efficacy from T1 to T3 compared to virtual participants.

Next, bivariate correlations were examined (RQ4), and, as shown in **Table 5**, significant associations were found between relationship outcomes at T1 and program experience at T2. Analyses found that higher levels of relationship self-efficacy and quality at T1 were significantly associated with higher ratings of program experience. Further, analyses revealed that higher ratings of program experience at T2 were significantly associated with higher relationship self-efficacy and quality at T3. Specifically, when participants rated the facilitators more positively, they were more likely to also report higher relationship self-efficacy and quality at T3. Additionally, when participants rated group, individual, and partner engagement higher, they also reported higher relationship self-efficacy and quality at T3. These statistically significant positive associations between T1 outcomes and program experience as well as

program experience and T3 outcomes were also found for both men and women (see **Table C3** in **Appendix C**).

Last, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to further examine the associations between program experience and both relationship outcomes at T3, and whether these associations varied by format (RQ5). The results of the hierarchical regression analysis with relationship self-efficacy at T3 as the dependent variable are presented in **Table 6**. The results for the first model with sex, marital status, and format as the dependent variables were statistically significant ($F = 2.96, p = .03, R^2 = .01$). Marital status was significantly associated with relationship self-efficacy at T3 ($b = -0.19, t = -2.86, p < .01$). The second model ($F = 229.13, p < .001, R^2 = .43$) added relationship self-efficacy at T1 ($b = 0.66, t = 30.02, p < .001$) and marital status was no longer significantly associated with relationship self-efficacy at T3. The third model ($F = 96.72, p < .001, R^2 = .44$), which added program experience variables at T2, found that when controlling for sex, marital status, format, and relationship self-efficacy at T1, facilitator-participant relationship quality ($b = 0.08, t = 2.00, p < .05$) and participant engagement ($b = 0.09, t = 2.79, p < .01$) were significantly related to relationship self-efficacy at T3. The fourth and final model ($F = 60.33, p < .001, R^2 = .45$) added interaction effects between the program experience variables and program format. However, there were no significant interaction effects found with program format ($\Delta R^2 = .00$), indicating that the association between program experience and relationship self-efficacy at T3 was consistent for both in-person and virtual participants.

The results of the hierarchical regression analysis with relationship quality at T3 as the dependent variable are presented in **Table 7**. The results showed that the first model approached statistical significance ($F = 2.45, p = .06, R^2 = .01$). Program format was significantly associated

with relationship quality at T3 ($b = 0.13, t = 2.00, p < .05$). The second model ($F = 201.04, p < .001, R^2 = .40$) added relationship quality at T1 ($b = 0.64, t = 28.14, p < .001$) and program format was no longer significantly associated with relationship quality at T3. The third model ($F = 83.71, p < .001, R^2 = .41$) added program experience variables at T2 but found no program experience variables to be a significant predictor of relationship quality at T3. The fourth and final model ($F = 52.77, p < .001, R^2 = .41$) which included the interaction effects between the program experience variables and program format also revealed no significant associations ($\Delta R^2 = .00$)

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The current study aimed to examine how relationship self-efficacy and relationship quality following participation in the CRE program *ELEVATE* were associated with how participants' rated their experience in the program. As well, the current study explored whether these associations varied for those who participated in the in-person versus the virtual workshops. Overall, the analyses demonstrated that the participants' relationship self-efficacy and quality scores improved between T1 and T3, and participant engagement and facilitator-participant relationship quality predicted relationship self-efficacy at T3. Relationship quality at T3 was not associated with any of the six indicators of program experience. Further, these associations did not vary based on program format.

Our analyses revealed that participants reported an increase in relationship self-efficacy from T1 to T3. This finding aligns with prior research that demonstrates CRE programs are effective in fostering positive relationship changes (Hawkins et al., 2008; Blanchard et al., 2009). Applying Bandura's (1997) self-learning theory, when participants believe they are more capable of managing conflict and challenges, they are more likely to be proactive about handling situations when they arise (Cui et al., 2008). Therefore, the reported improvements also support the idea that structured interventions provide individuals with tools to apply to their daily lives that can facilitate positive relationship outcomes (Halford et al., 2013). Additionally, this finding was also consistent across sex, marital status, and program format, as all groups, on average, reported an increase in relationship self-efficacy at T3.

However, a three-way interaction was detected such that change in relationship self-efficacy from T1 to T3 did vary based on marital status and program format. Unmarried participants reported higher relationship self-efficacy at both T1 and T3 compared to married participants. Yet, unmarried, in-person participants reported lower relationship self-efficacy at T1 compared to unmarried virtual participants, but unmarried in-person participants reported similar levels of relationship self-efficacy to unmarried virtual participants at T3. Further, married participants reported similar levels of relationship self-efficacy at T1, but virtual married participants reported the greatest change in relationship self-efficacy from T1 to T3 compared to in-person married participants. Prior research reports that unmarried participants attend CRE programs to gain trust and to build skills, whereas married participants may use CRE programs to get their relationship back on track by enhancing their functioning (Adler-Baeder et al., 2010). The findings of the current study suggest a possible similar pattern with married participants feeling somewhat less efficacious in their relationship skills at the start of the program, leading to a greater increase after learning new tools they could apply to enhance their relationship. In comparison, unmarried participants may be reinforcing skills they believe they already possess, leading them to report less of an increase in their relationship self-efficacy following completion of a CRE program. According to Bandura's (1977) self-learning theory, self-efficacy is a driving force to change behaviors in one's relationship, and behavior change can lead to increased relationship quality and satisfaction. Therefore, these findings are promising as they expand upon previous findings that participating in CRE programs can have sustained positive relationship outcomes as, on average, participants reported fairly high relationship self-efficacy scores at T3 regardless of marital status and program format.

Additionally, our analyses revealed that participants reported an increase in relationship quality from T1 to T3. This finding aligns with prior research that CRE programs foster strong, fulfilling relationships through skill-building, leading to an increase in relationship satisfaction (Markman et al., 2022). Further, couples report higher relationship satisfaction and greater motivation to support their relationship when CRE programs foster positive interactions and decrease the frequency of negative ones (Rauer et al., 2014). Additionally, this finding was also consistent across sex, marital status and program format differences as all groups, on average, reported an increase in relationship quality at T3. However, virtual participants reported statistically significantly higher relationship quality at both T1 and T3 compared to in-person participants. This may be due to greater likelihood of couples seeking online relationship programs compared to in-person (Georgia & Doss, 2013). Further, couples who participate online may feel a lower perceived need for the program, whereas in-person participants may feel the face-to-face interactions to be of greater value in improving their overall relationship quality.

As well, the current study is unique as we examined participants' ratings of their program experience. The ANOVA results revealed that, on average, participants rated their program experience highly across all six indicators with facilitator quality and facilitator-participants relationship quality being two of the highest rated indicators. According to Knowles's (1968) adult learning theory, participants' positive rating of their experience in the program may serve as motivation to apply the skills learned to strengthening their relationships (Totura Garr et al., 2023). Further, only a few significant differences were found in participants rating of their program experience based on marital status and sex. For example, unmarried participants tended to report, on average, higher group engagement compared to married participants. According to adult learning theory, being in a learning environment where you believe class members are

interested in and actively participating in discussions and activities can motivate learning new skills and tools. As well, females tended to rate the facilitator-participant relationship quality higher compared to males. Prior research suggests that participants tend to have higher facilitator alliance scores with facilitators of the same gender (Ketring et al., 2017). Because the majority of in-person and virtual facilitators in the current study were female, it is possible that this may have contributed to females higher ratings of their relationship quality with the facilitators.

Comparisons between in-person and virtual participants revealed statistically significant differences on four of the six indicators of program experience. In-person participants rated facilitator-participant relationship quality, facilitator co-regulation skills, group engagement, and participants engagement statistically significantly higher than virtual participants. Prior research suggests that in-person interventions facilitate greater connection through face-to-face interaction compared to virtual programs (Markman et al., 2022). Therefore, in-person participants may have felt more connected to their facilitators due to their increased exposure to one another through face-to-face interactions, providing them with more of an opportunity to connect with one another. There were also significant differences between in-person and virtual participants on both group engagement and participant engagement. These findings are consistent with previous research that in-person programs increasing engagement with the group and course material through face-to-face interactions and interactive experiences (Novak et al., 2019). Further, in-person participants may have been more engaged with the content as they felt a greater need for the program compared to those who chose to participate virtually as participant engagement with the course content can be affected by the participant's perceived need for the program. Therefore, participants who engaged with the content at a higher level may have felt a greater need for the program, in turn increasing the positive outcomes (Brown et al., 2012).

Additionally, regression analyses revealed that program experience was found to be somewhat predictive of post-program relationship self-efficacy, but not relationship quality. Specifically, program engagement and facilitator-participant relationship quality were the only predictors of higher relationship self-efficacy at T3. These findings are consistent with previous research on the importance of a strong facilitator alliance in helping participants develop more confidence in the program and their relationship (Ketring et al., 2017). In-person participants rated both facilitator-participant relationship quality and program engagement higher than virtual participants. In-person participants may have found it easier to engage with both the content and connect with the facilitators without the barrier of technology. These findings are consistent with prior research that connection with the facilitator and engagement with the course material can lead to positive, sustained relationship outcomes (Totura Garr et al., 2023; Novak et al., 2019). Furthermore, no significant interaction effects were found between program format and program experience, suggesting that the association between engagement and relationship outcomes was consistent across both in-person and virtual workshops. Participants in both groups, on average, reported higher levels of relationship self-efficacy and quality at T3. This finding is particularly important as it shows that both formats can provide positive, lasting relationship outcomes for participants, thus helping to fill an important gap in the literature on the benefits of online versus in-person CRE programs.

Implications and Future Directions

These results have implications for future CRE programming and research aimed at promoting and sustaining healthy, fulfilling relationships. Through teaching couples important relationship skills and strategies to navigate challenges and strengthen their connection, couples learn to build stronger, more resilient partnerships. The findings from the current study reinforce

that CRE may positively influence one's belief in their capabilities to handle relationship challenges and conflict as well as their overall relationship quality. The findings also emphasize the importance of creating a welcoming and engaging program experience, as participants who felt more engaged and trusted their facilitators reported positive relationship outcomes following the program.

Moreover, for both in-person and virtual workshops, the results suggest that participant engagement and facilitator-participant relationship quality are key factors in program success. Therefore, virtual programs should be mindful to create opportunities for participants to engage with the content, the facilitators, and other participants. By creating a space for discussion, participants will potentially be more engaged and create deeper connections with the facilitators. In-person programs should continue to leverage face-to-face interactions to strengthen trust with the facilitators and participant engagement. Therefore, future research is needed to further explore strategies to enhance participant and group engagement in CRE, build trust with the facilitators, and ensure that the facilitators are adequately trained and prepared to create meaningful connections with the participants.

Limitations

Despite these positive results, there are still some limitations in the current study. First, there was a high rate of attrition in the current study with 42% of the original sample excluded from the final analyses because only participants who completed all three surveys were included in the final analyses. This may introduce bias as individuals who dropped out of the class or failed to complete all three surveys may differ from those who remained in the final sample. For example, those who did not complete all three surveys may have had different experiences or attitudes that could influence the study's findings. The participants who completed all three

surveys may have had a more positive experience with the program overall, which could potentially limit the variability in relationship outcomes. Further, the analytic sample differed from the excluded sample as it had a statistically significantly higher level of females, married participants, and White participants. As a result, the final sample may not be fully representative of the broader population, limiting the generalizability of the results.

Next, 72% of the analytic sample included individuals who participated in the program virtually. Despite the results from this study suggesting positive outcomes for both in-person and virtual program participants, the smaller in-person sample size might have reduced the statistical power of the analyses to detect statistically significant differences between the two groups. Further, there were a few demographic differences between participants in the virtual and in-person programs (e.g., virtual participants were more likely to be younger, more highly educated, and married) and virtual participants tended to report higher relationship quality prior to the program. These differences might have influenced their program experience and contributed to how efficacious they felt about their relationship skills before and following the program. Thus, caution is warranted in the interpretation and generalizability of these findings, and future research is needed with more equivalent samples to compare.

Further, response bias, or social desirability bias, during survey completion may also be a limitation in the current study as participants may have presented their experience and relationship in a more positive light than its reality. This tendency may lead to higher reports of relationship satisfaction and lower reports of conflicts. Since the surveys were self-reported, participants may have felt pressure, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to provide answers that align with perceived expectations or their idealized view of their relationship rather than their current experiences. Therefore, the data may not fully capture the challenges present in

participants' relationships, diminishing the effects of the program on their relationship outcomes because if they already report higher scores at the start, there is not much more room for improvement in these aspects of their relationships.

Next, 91% of the analytic sample identified as heterosexual and six participants who identified as "Other" for sex were removed from the final analyses. Therefore, the generalizability of the results to non-heterosexual and gender nonconforming individuals remains limited due to the small sample size of these individuals. Future research should prioritize making these programs accessible to diverse populations, allowing for the findings to be more generalizable and applicable to the general public.

Lastly, although the data were collected from dyadic couples, the analyses were conducted at an individual level. As a result, potential important relationship dynamics within the couple dyad, such as how one partner's experiences and behaviors might have affected the other partner, were not accounted for in the analyses. Future research is needed to better understand whether and how participants' program experiences vary within dyads and the influence of that shared experience on relationship outcomes.

Conclusion

The current study explored how CRE may influence participants' relationship outcomes and whether one's program experience and format affected this association. Our results are a promising preliminary suggestion that relationship self-efficacy and quality are strongly associated with one's program experience. This study provides continued support for the importance and potential benefits of CRE, and its positive influence on sustained relationship outcomes.

Figure 1

Study Sample Tree

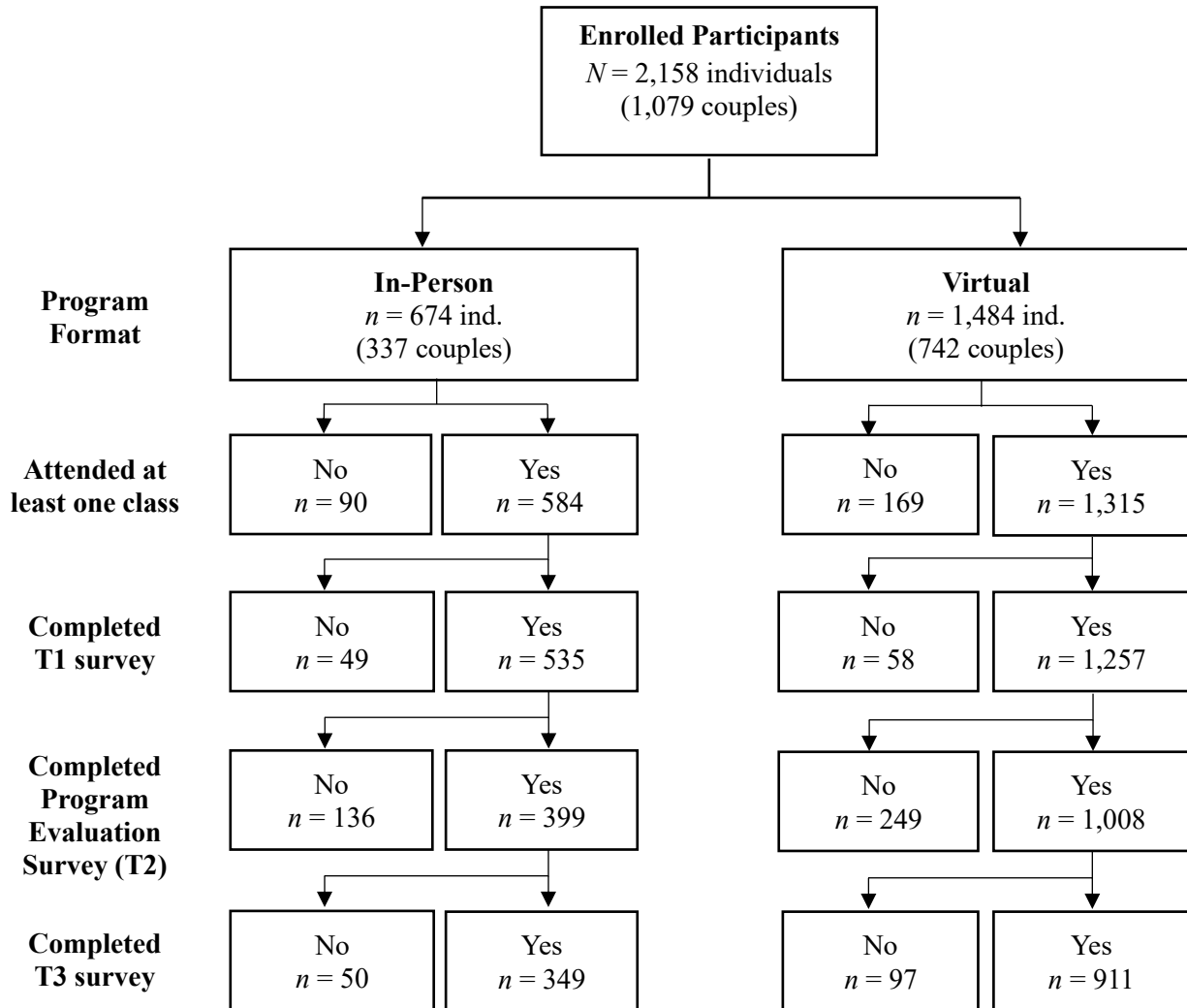


Figure 2

Change in Relationship Self-Efficacy from T1 to T3

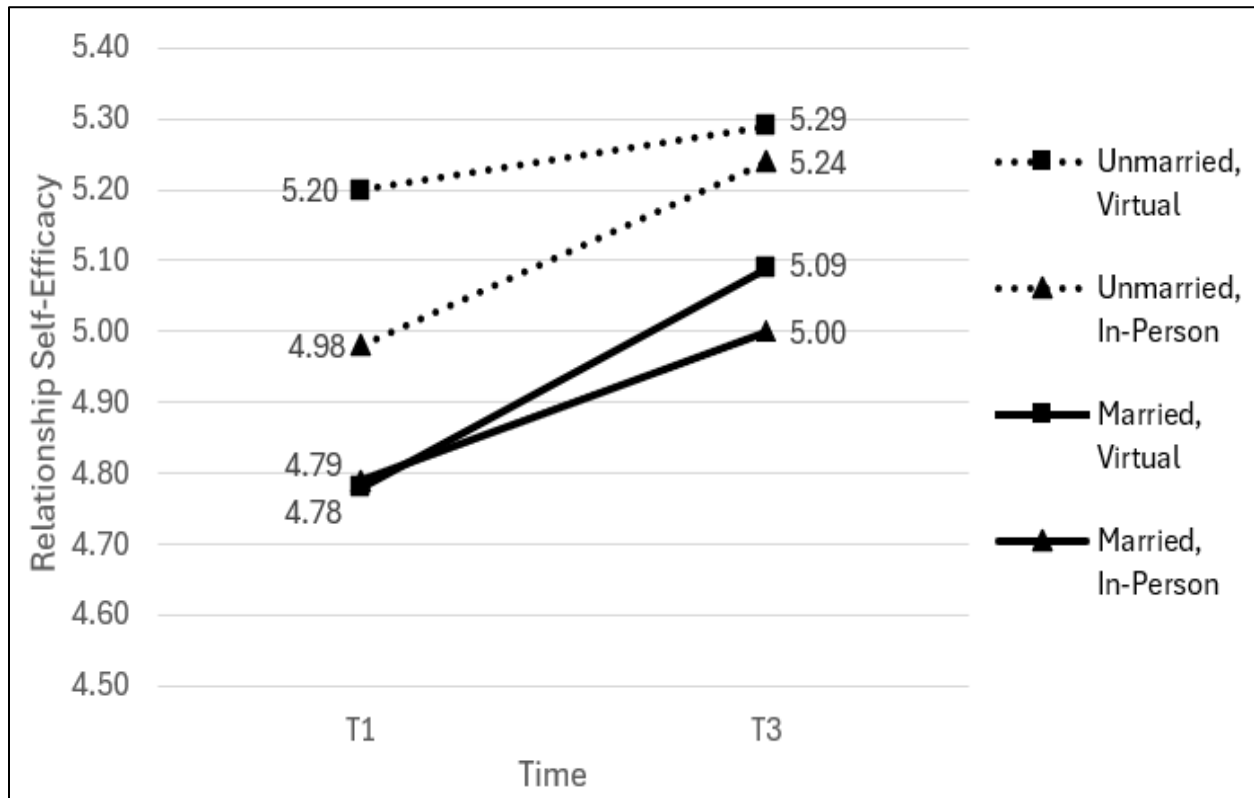


Table 1*Sample Demographics Comparing Final versus Excluded Sample*

	Excluded Sample (n = 898)	Final Sample (n = 1,260)	X²-value / F Ratio
Sex: % Female	45.9	55.3	19.21***
Sexual Orientation:			
% Straight/Heterosexual	90.2	90.7	7.82
Marital Status: % Married	62.8	72.6	23.54***
Age: M (SD)	38.95 (11.41)	40.26 (11.51)	6.75**
Race: %			
White	40.1	50.4	22.28***
Black/African American	56.9	46.1	23.99***
Other Racial Identity	7.5	9.1	1.88
Ethnicity: % Latinx	5.9	8.4	4.77*
Education: %			126.05***
No degree or diploma earned	5.1	1.6	
GED	9.3	3.7	
High school diploma	14.6	8.0	
Vocational/technical certification	7.3	7.0	
Some college, but no degree	21.3	16.6	
Associate's degree	10.1	10.7	
Bachelor's degree	19.1	29.3	
Master's degree or advanced degree	13.1	23.2	
Employment Status: %			
Full-time employment	65.9	63.9	0.97
Part time/temporary/seasonal/hours vary	9.4	10.9	1.27
Not employed	13.7	11.6	2.21
Stay at home parent or homemaker	8.2	10.2	2.50
Income (Past 30 Day): %			23.31**
No earnings	12.0	12.4	
\$1-\$499	7.1	4.1	
\$500-\$1,000	8.5	8.1	
\$1,001-\$2,000	16.8	13.4	
\$2,001-\$3,000	18.7	16.9	
\$3,001-\$4000	14.8	16.4	
\$4,001-\$5000	9.2	11.0	
More than \$5000	13.0	17.7	
Program Format: % Virtual	63.8	72.3	17.61***
Program Participation: %			
Attended at least one class	71.3	100.0	411.16***
Graduated	43.2	97.1	807.04***

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 2*Sample Demographics by Program Format*

	In-Person (n = 349)	Virtual (n = 911)	X²-value / F Ratio
Sex: % Female	54.7	55.5	0.23
Sexual Orientation:			
% Straight/Heterosexual	90.0	90.9	5.76
Marital Status: % Married	67.9	74.4	5.38*
Age: M (SD)	41.68 (12.70)	39.71 (10.98)	7.48**
Race: %			
White	49.1	50.9	0.33
Black/African American	46.3	46.0	0.01
Other Racial Identity	8.0	9.5	0.71
Ethnicity: % Latinx	7.4	8.8	0.59
Education: %			19.20**
No degree or diploma earned	1.7	1.5	
GED	3.7	3.6	
High school diploma	8.6	7.7	
Vocational/technical certification	9.2	6.2	
Some college, but no degree	21.5	14.7	
Associate's degree	7.2	12.0	
Bachelor's degree	28.7	29.5	
Master's degree or advanced degree	19.5	24.7	
Employment Status: %			
Full-time employment	65.6	63.2	0.65
Part time/temporary/seasonal/hours vary	10.3	11.1	0.16
Not employed	14.3	10.5	3.51
Stay at home parent or homemaker	7.2	11.3	4.77*
Income (Past 30 Day): %			12.88
No earnings	10.6	13.1	
\$1-\$499	3.2	4.5	
\$500-\$1,000	6.9	8.6	
\$1,001-\$2,000	14.3	13.0	
\$2,001-\$3,000	22.1	15.0	
\$3,001-\$4000	16.9	16.2	
\$4,001-\$5000	10.9	11.0	
More than \$5000	15.2	18.6	
Program Participation: %			
Attended at least one class	100.0	100.0	0.00
Graduated	95.7	97.7	3.61

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 3*Analysis of Variance: Study Variables by Program Format*

Variable	Program Format		F Ratio
	In-Person M (SD)	Virtual M (SD)	
Relationship Self-Efficacy (T1)	4.85 (1.10)	4.88 (1.10)	0.21
Relationship Self-Efficacy (T3)	5.08 (1.13)	5.14 (1.08)	0.70
Relationship Quality (T1)	5.24 (1.42)	5.48 (1.30)	7.99**
Relationship Quality (T3)	5.65 (1.38)	5.82 (1.28)	4.32*
Facilitator Quality	4.63 (0.58)	4.66 (0.49)	0.71
Facilitator-Participant Rel. Quality	4.72 (0.46)	4.59 (0.56)	14.98***
Co-Facilitator Relationship Quality	4.71 (0.47)	4.65 (0.54)	3.46
Facilitator Co-Regulation Skills	4.62 (0.53)	4.52 (0.58)	6.91**
Group Engagement	4.47 (0.56)	4.31 (0.58)	19.30***
Participant Engagement	4.28 (0.63)	4.07 (0.69)	24.49***

Note. $n = 348$ in-person and $n = 906$ virtual; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 4*Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Within Subject Effects*

Variable	Relationship Self-Efficacy				Relationship Quality			
	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2_p	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2_p
Time	1215	45.85	<.001	0.036	1217	65.38	<.001	0.051
Time x Sex	1215	0.15	0.70	0.000	1217	1.29	0.26	0.001
Time x Marital Status	1215	1.76	0.19	0.001	1217	1.21	0.27	0.001
Time x Format	1215	0.57	0.45	0.000	1217	0.03	0.87	0.000
Time x Sex x Marital Status	1215	0.38	0.54	0.000	1217	0.001	0.98	0.000
Time x Sex x Format	1215	2.65	0.10	0.002	1217	0.13	0.72	0.000
Time x Marital Status x Format	1215	5.24	0.02	0.004	1217	0.34	0.56	0.000
Time x Sex x Marital Status x Format	1215	1.27	0.26	0.001	1217	0.002	0.97	0.000

Table 5*Correlation for Study Variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Relationship Self-Efficacy (T1)	-								
2. Relationship Self-Efficacy (T3)	.656***	-							
3. Relationship Quality (T1)	.487***	.405***	-						
4. Relationship Quality (T3)	.392***	.521***	.634***	-					
5. Facilitator Quality	.174***	.165***	.083**	.130***	-				
6. Facilitator-Participant Relationship Quality	.170***	.194***	.107***	.146***	.704***	-			
7. Co-Facilitator Relationship Quality	.148***	.158***	.046	.089**	.737***	.793***	-		
8. Facilitator Co-Regulation Skills	.156***	.157***	.073**	.134***	.729***	.784***	.766***	-	
9. Group Engagement	.208***	.214***	.072*	.126***	.560***	.529***	.562***	.615***	-
10. Participant Engagement	.209***	.236***	.162***	.177***	.503***	.550***	.510***	.589***	.693***

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 6*Regression Analysis for Relationship Self-Efficacy at T3*

Predictor Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Sex	.00	.06	.00	-.01	.04	-.00	-.00	.04	-.00	-.00	.04	-.00
Marital Status	-.19**	.07	-.08	.02	.05	.01	.01	.05	.00	.01	.05	.00
Format	.07	.06	.03	.04	.05	.02	.09	.05	.04	.08	.05	.04
RE (T1)				.66***	.02	.066	.63***	.02	.63	.63***	.02	.063
FACQ							-.02	.04	-.02	.02	.05	.02
FPRQ							.08*	.04	.08	.08	.09	.07
CFRQ							.00	.04	.00	.04	.08	.03
FCRS							-.07	.04	-.07	-.13	.08	-.13
GENG							.04	.03	.04	.05	.07	.05
PENG							.09**	.03	.09	.09	.07	.09
FACQ x Format										-.07	.07	-.06
FPRQ x Format										.01	.10	.01
CFRQ x Format										-.03	.10	-.03
FCRS x Format										.08	.10	.07
GENG x Format										-.00	.08	-.01
PENG x Format										-.00	.08	-.00
R ²		.01			.43			.44			.45	
R ² change		.01			.42			.01			.00	

Note. FACQ = Facilitator Quality, FPRQ = Facilitator-Participant Relationship Quality, CFRQ = Co-Facilitator Relationship Quality, FCRS = Facilitator Co-Regulation Skills, GENG = Group Engagement, PENG = Participant Engagement. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 7*Regression Analysis for Relationship Quality at T3*

Predictor Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Sex	.11	.06	.05	.00	.05	.00	.01	.05	.00	.00	.05	.00
Marital Status	-.03	.07	-.01	.02	.05	.01	.02	.05	.01	.03	.05	.01
Format	.13*	.06	.06	.03	.05	.01	.06	.05	.03	.06	.05	.03
RQ (T1)				.64***	.02	.63	.62***	.02	.62	.62***	.02	.62
FACQ							.03	.04	.03	-.01	.06	-.01
FPRQ							.03	.04	.03	.17	.09	.17
CFRQ							-.06	.04	-.06	-.06	.09	-.06
FCRS							.05	.04	.05	-.04	.09	-.04
GENG							.04	.03	.04	.05	.07	.05
PENG							.03	.03	.03	-.03	.07	-.03
FACQ x Format										.08	.07	.06
FPRQ x Format										-.19	.10	-.17
CFRQ x Format										-.01	.10	-.01
FCRS x Format										.12	.10	.10
GENG x Format										-.02	.08	-.01
PENG x Format										.07	.08	.06
R ²		.01			.40			.41			.41	
R ² change		.01			.39			.01			.00	

Note. FACQ = Facilitator Quality, FPRQ = Facilitator-Participant Relationship Quality, CFRQ = Co-Facilitator Relationship Quality, FCRS = Facilitator Co-Regulation Skills, GENG = Group Engagement, PENG = Participant Engagement. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

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APPENDIX A

ELEVATE Curriculum Overview

Module	Goals/Objectives
Module 1: Introduction <i>Taking your relationship to the next level</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish clear goals and expectations for what each partner hopes to come away with from this program.• Understand how relationship emotions, thoughts, and behaviors influence, and are influenced by, the body's physiological response system.• Identify the core principles of healthy couple relationships that an individual can apply to regulate positive emotional, cognitive and behavioral practices.
Module 2: Empower Yourself <i>Empower your relationship through caring for self</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the reciprocal nature of health and wellness: Our relational health affects our physical and mental health, but also cultivating individual wellness and health supports the health of the couple relationship.• Identify strategies for creating a healthier physical living style, nurturing individual psychological well-being, and promoting sexual health.• Aspire to engage in behaviors that strengthen relationships by promoting individual physical, social/emotional, spiritual, and sexual health.
Module 3: Lay the Foundation <i>Intentionally commit effort to lay the foundation for a lasting relationship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand that healthy relationships require sustained effort over time.• Identify choices and strategies that lay a strong foundation for a safe, stable, and satisfying relationship.• Aspire to engage in behaviors that reinforce dedication and commitment to maintaining a healthy relationship.
Module 4: Enlighten <i>Share intimate information with your partner to enlighten each other about your relationship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the importance of shared intimate knowledge.• Identify what individuals and couples need to learn about themselves and each other and what they each bring to the relationship.• Identify relationship-building activities and resources to help couples develop shared intimate knowledge.• Learn strategies to set financial goals and effectively manage finances.
Module 5: Value <i>Value and respect the positive aspects of your partner and your relationship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand how showing kindness, understanding, respect, and caring can help them create and maintain stable, healthy relationships.• Understand the importance of focusing on positive partner characteristics.• Identify relationship-building activities and resources to help individuals and couples demonstrate care in their relationships.

Module	Goals/Objectives
<p>Module 6: Attach <i>Cultivate and maintain friendship with your partner</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the value of developing and maintaining a close friendship as a part of a healthy relationship. • Develop an ability to provide understanding and create opportunities to foster a shared sense of couple identity. • Identify strategies to create meaningful couple time that fosters friendship.
<p>Module 7: Tame <i>Identify strategies to manage differences in healthy and safe ways</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that differences between partners and conflict are normative aspects of all healthy couple relationships. • Identify strategies for regulating emotions and managing stress and conflict. • Aspire to engage in behaviors that promote positive communication and conflict management practices.
<p>Module 8: Engage <i>Strengthen connections to social support, community ties, and sources of meaning.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the benefits of engaging social support and building community ties on sustaining healthy relationships and marriages. • Identify sources of personal and community resources (e.g., family, friends, and faith groups) and shared meaning (e.g., rituals, spirituality, values) that support healthy couple relationships. • Explore relationship-building activities and resources to become better connected with their support systems.

Appendix B

Measures

Table B1. Facilitator Quality

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your facilitator(s) and the program.	n	Mean (SD)	Level of Likelihood (%)				
			Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither/Mixed (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
The facilitator(s) explained the course material clearly.	1258	4.06 (0.62)	7 (0.6)	4 (0.3)	33 (2.6)	401 (31.9)	813 (64.6)
The facilitator(s) effectively encouraged class participation.	1259	4.67 (0.61)	5 (0.4)	12 (1.0)	25 (2.0)	315 (25.0)	902 (71.6)
The facilitator(s) managed classroom comments and behavior appropriately.	1256	4.68 (0.57)	4 (0.3)	7 (0.6)	26 (2.1)	308 (24.5)	911 (72.5)
The facilitator(s) managed the class time well.	1256	4.63 (0.64)	5 (0.4)	11 (0.9)	43 (3.4)	331 (26.4)	866 (68.9)
The facilitator(s) shared appropriate examples and experiences to help us understand the course material.	1259	4.67 (0.57)	4 (0.3)	3 (0.2)	29 (2.3)	336 (26.7)	887 (70.5)

Table B2. Participant Relationship Quality

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your facilitator(s) and the program.	n	Mean (SD)	Level of Likelihood (%)				
			Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither/Mixed (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I liked the facilitator(s).	1256	4.66 (0.56)	2 (0.2)	3 (0.2)	38 (3.0)	334 (26.6)	879 (70.0)
I trusted the facilitator(s).	1256	4.60 (0.62)	2 (0.2)	5 (0.4)	67 (5.3)	343 (27.3)	839 (66.8)
I felt accepted by the facilitator(s).	1256	4.67 (0.57)	3 (0.2)	2 (0.2)	37 (2.9)	326 (26.0)	888 (70.7)
The facilitator(s) cared about me as a person.	1256	4.53 (0.69)	3 (0.2)	5 (0.4)	108 (8.6)	348 (27.7)	792 (63.1)
I felt respected by the facilitator(s).	1255	4.68 (0.54)	2 (0.2)	3 (0.2)	27 (2.2)	327 (26.1)	896 (71.4)

Table B3. Co-Facilitator Relationship Quality

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your facilitator(s) and the program.	n	Mean (SD)	Level of Likelihood (%)				
			Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither/Mixed (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
The facilitators communicated well with each other.	1257	4.61 (0.63)	4 (0.3)	8 (0.6)	48 (3.8)	352 (28.0)	845 (67.2)
The facilitators respected each other.	1255	4.71 (0.54)	4 (0.3)	1 (0.1)	27 (2.2)	290 (23.1)	933 (74.3)
The facilitators' teaching styles worked well together.	1255	4.60 (0.63)	2 (0.2)	9 (0.7)	55 (4.4)	357 (28.4)	832 (66.3)
The facilitators got along well with each other.	1253	4.72 (0.51)	2 (0.2)	2 (0.2)	17 (1.4)	307 (24.5)	925 (73.8)
The facilitators made a good team.	1257	4.68 (0.58)	3 (0.2)	5 (0.4)	38 (3.0)	301 (23.9)	910 (72.4)

Table B4. Facilitator-Participant Co-Regulation Skills

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your facilitator(s) and the program.	n	Mean (SD)	Level of Likelihood (%)				
			Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither/Mixed (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
The facilitators provided verbal praise and positive feedback that made us feel comfortable.	1256	4.68 (0.54)	5 (0.4)	3 (0.2)	10 (0.8)	353 (28.1)	885 (70.5)
The facilitators noticed when we needed a break or were not engaged and needed to move on to the next topic.	1256	4.36 (0.84)	5 (0.4)	41 (3.3)	148 (11.8)	364 (29.0)	698 (55.6)
The facilitators encouraged us to notice how we were feeling.	1256	4.64 (0.57)	3 (0.2)	4 (0.3)	26 (2.1)	373 (29.7)	850 (67.7)
The facilitators reassured or encouraged us if anyone felt uncomfortable or upset.	1252	4.46 (0.74)	5 (0.4)	6 (0.5)	135 (10.8)	367 (29.3)	739 (59.0)
The facilitators were sensitive to our feelings and made sure we were comfortable while engaging in discussions.	1255	4.60 (0.61)	5 (0.4)	2 (0.2)	48 (3.8)	374 (29.8)	826 (65.8)

Table B5. Group Engagement

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your facilitator(s) and the program.	n	Mean (SD)	Level of Likelihood (%)				
			Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither/Mixed (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Class members seemed interested in what was being taught.	1255	4.43 (0.63)	1 (0.1)	6 (0.5)	68 (5.4)	562 (44.8)	618 (49.2)
Class members seemed interested in the activities.	1255	4.43 (0.62)	1 (0.1)	5 (0.4)	67 (5.3)	562 (44.8)	620 (49.4)
Class members took an active part in discussions.	1251	4.47 (0.63)	1 (0.1)	9 (0.7)	62 (5.0)	502 (40.1)	677 (54.1)
Class members asked a lot of questions.	1255	3.94 (0.94)	6 (0.5)	90 (7.2)	289 (23.0)	453 (36.1)	417 (33.2)
Class members actively participated in the class activities.	1256	4.47 (0.63)	1 (0.1)	7 (0.6)	62 (4.9)	515 (41.0)	671 (53.4)

Table B6. Individual and Partner Engagement

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	n	Mean (SD)	Level of Likelihood (%)				
			Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither/Mixed (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I felt connected to other participants in the class.	1257	3.83 (0.97)	24 (1.9)	88 (7.0)	305 (24.3)	495 (39.4)	345 (27.4)
I felt comfortable sharing experiences with the group.	1256	4.24 (0.76)	6 (0.5)	31 (2.5)	118 (9.4)	602 (47.9)	499 (39.7)
I was actively engaged in group discussion and activities.	1257	4.33 (0.68)	2 (0.2)	11 (0.9)	103 (8.2)	589 (46.9)	552 (43.9)
My partner felt connected to other participants in the class.	1254	3.92 (0.93)	16 (1.3)	79 (6.3)	270 (21.5)	518 (41.3)	371 (29.6)
My partner felt comfortable sharing experiences with the group.	1256	4.17 (0.81)	8 (0.6)	40 (3.2)	158 (12.6)	572 (45.5)	478 (38.1)
My partner was actively engaged in group discussion and activities.	1257	4.28 (0.77)	9 (0.7)	28 (2.2)	105 (8.4)	579 (46.1)	536 (42.6)

Table B7.1 Relationship Self-Efficacy (T1)

Please indicate how true the following statements are for you.	n	Mean (SD)	Level of Likelihood (%)						
			Never True (1)	Almost Never True (2)	Rarely True (3)	Neutral (4)	Sometimes True (5)	Usually True (6)	Always True (7)
Failure in my romantic relationship only makes me want to try harder.	1255	4.80 (1.60)	69 (5.5)	60 (4.8)	95 (7.6)	252 (20.1)	303 (24.1)	307 (24.5)	169 (13.5)
When I make plans in my romantic relationship, I am certain I can make them work.	1253	5.32 (1.25)	14 (1.1)	26 (2.1)	59 (4.7)	180 (14.4)	321 (25.6)	469 (37.4)	184 (14.7)
I have difficulty focusing on important issues in my romantic relationship.*	1255	4.69 (1.62)	212 (16.9)	254 (20.2)	214 (17.1)	190 (15.1)	290 (23.1)	80 (6.4)	15 (1.2)
If I can't do something successfully in my romantic relationship the first time, I keep trying until I can.	1254	5.21 (1.30)	21 (1.7)	21 (1.7)	73 (5.8)	218 (17.4)	331 (26.4)	407 (32.5)	183 (14.6)
I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems that come up in my romantic relationship.*	1255	4.53 (1.77)	236 (18.8)	211 (16.8)	191 (15.2)	155 (12.4)	299 (23.8)	127 (10.1)	36 (2.9)
I find it difficult to put effort into maintaining success in my romantic relationship.*	1253	4.84 (1.75)	286 (22.8)	273 (21.8)	167 (13.3)	151 (12.1)	262 (20.9)	83 (6.6)	31 (2.5)
I feel insecure about my ability to be a good romantic partner.*	1255	4.62 (1.91)	294 (23.4)	226 (18.0)	158 (12.6)	118 (9.4)	266 (21.2)	133 (10.6)	60 (4.8)
One of my problems is that I cannot come up with the energy to make my romantic relationship more successful.*	1251	4.81 (1.80)	309 (24.7)	240 (19.2)	163 (13.0)	139 (11.1)	269 (21.5)	100 (8.0)	31 (2.5)
Having a successful romantic relationship is very difficult for me.*	1248	5.00 (1.73)	312 (25.0)	298 (23.9)	164 (13.1)	175 (14.0)	190 (15.2)	73 (5.8)	36 (2.9)

Note. *Item was reverse coded for analyses.

Table B7.2 Relationship Self-Efficacy (T3)

Please indicate how true the following statements are for you.	n	Mean (SD)	Level of Likelihood (%)						
			Never True (1)	Almost Never True (2)	Rarely True (3)	Neutral (4)	Sometimes True (5)	Usually True (6)	Always True (7)
Failure in my romantic relationship only makes me want to try harder.	1229	4.86 (1.63)	77 (6.3)	43 (3.5)	97 (7.9)	242 (19.7)	253 (20.6)	338 (27.5)	179 (14.6)
When I make plans in my romantic relationship, I am certain I can make them work.	1230	5.48 (1.23)	13 (1.1)	21 (1.7)	55 (4.5)	137 (11.1)	273 (22.2)	517 (42.0)	214 (17.4)
I have difficulty focusing on important issues in my romantic relationship.*	1226	4.96 (1.61)	260 (21.2)	270 (22.0)	248 (20.2)	151 (12.3)	223 (18.2)	53 (4.3)	21 (1.7)
If I can't do something successfully in my romantic relationship the first time, I keep trying until I can.	1226	5.34 (1.32)	21 (1.7)	23 (1.9)	60 (4.9)	178 (14.5)	294 (24.0)	431 (35.2)	219 (17.9)
I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems that come up in my romantic relationship.*	1224	4.94 (1.73)	305 (24.9)	256 (20.9)	181 (14.8)	159 (13.0)	223 (18.2)	64 (5.2)	36 (2.9)
I find it difficult to put effort into maintaining success in my romantic relationship.*	1227	5.10 (1.71)	343 (28.0)	269 (21.9)	189 (15.4)	139 (11.3)	190 (15.5)	70 (5.7)	27 (2.2)
I feel insecure about my ability to be a good romantic partner.*	1228	5.07 (1.79)	380 (30.9)	240 (19.5)	161 (13.1)	121 (9.9)	215 (17.5)	82 (6.7)	29 (2.4)
One of my problems is that I cannot come up with the energy to make my romantic relationship more successful.*	1227	5.07 (1.74)	348 (28.4)	266 (21.7)	172 (14.0)	133 (10.8)	202 (16.5)	80 (6.5)	26 (2.1)
Having a successful romantic relationship is very difficult for me.*	1217	5.28 (1.68)	379 (31.1)	299 (24.6)	168 (13.8)	145 (11.9)	135 (11.1)	63 (5.2)	28 (2.3)

Note. *Item was reverse coded for analyses.

Table B8.1 Couple Relationship Quality (T1)

	n	Mean (SD)	Level of Likelihood (%)						
			Very Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (2)	Disagree (3)	Mixed (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Very Strongly Agree (7)
Think about how you feel about your current relationship. Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following:									
We have a good relationship.	1259	5.42 (1.37)	20 (1.6)	27 (2.1)	46 (3.7)	189 (15.0)	344 (27.3)	290 (23.0)	343 (27.2)
Our relationship is strong.	1256	5.41 (1.38)	18 (1.4)	25 (2.0)	47 (3.7)	224 (17.8)	310 (24.7)	282 (22.5)	350 (27.9)
My relationship makes me happy.	1255	5.41 (1.45)	26 (2.1)	28 (2.2)	38 (3.0)	244 (19.4)	278 (22.2)	257 (20.5)	384 (30.6)

Table B8.2 Couple Relationship Quality (T3)

	n	Mean (SD)	Level of Likelihood (%)						
			Very Strongly Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (2)	Disagree (3)	Mixed (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)	Very Strongly Agree (7)
Think about how you feel about your current relationship. Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following:									
We have a good relationship.	1233	5.80 (1.32)	16 (1.3)	17 (1.4)	27 (2.2)	125 (10.1)	268 (21.7)	283 (23.0)	497 (40.3)
Our relationship is strong.	1228	5.78 (1.34)	16 (1.3)	21 (1.7)	34 (2.8)	123 (10.0)	255 (20.8)	288 (23.5)	491 (40.0)
My relationship makes me happy.	1231	5.76 (1.38)	23 (1.9)	14 (1.1)	29 (2.4)	146 (11.9)	263 (21.4)	239 (19.4)	517 (42.0)

Appendix C
Supplementary Tables

Table C1

Analysis of Variance: Study Variables by Sex

Variable	Sex		F Ratio
	Male M (SD)	Female M (SD)	
Relationship Self-Efficacy (T1)	4.87 (1.14)	4.87 (1.07)	0.01
Relationship Self-Efficacy (T3)	5.11 (1.08)	5.13 (1.10)	0.06
Relationship Quality (T1)	5.54 (1.34)	5.32 (1.33)	8.63**
Relationship Quality (T3)	5.84 (1.30)	5.72 (1.31)	2.62
Facilitator Quality	4.62 (0.54)	4.67 (0.50)	2.55
Facilitator-Participant Rel. Quality	4.60 (0.54)	4.66 (0.53)	3.91*
Co-Facilitator Relationship Quality	4.62 (0.54)	4.70 (0.52)	7.06**
Facilitator Co-Regulation Skills	4.54 (0.55)	4.56 (0.58)	0.26
Group Engagement	4.33 (0.57)	4.37 (0.60)	1.05
Participant Engagement	4.14 (0.62)	4.12 (0.72)	0.19

Note. $n = 558$ males and $n = 696$ females; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table C2*Analysis of Variance: Study Variables by Marital Status*

Variable	Marital Status		F Ratio
	Unmarried M (SD)	Married M (SD)	
Relationship Self-Efficacy (T1)	5.10 (1.00)	4.78 (1.13)	20.79***
Relationship Self-Efficacy (T3)	5.27 (1.02)	5.07 (1.12)	7.95**
Relationship Quality (T1)	5.44 (1.29)	5.41 (1.36)	0.19
Relationship Quality (T3)	5.80 (1.28)	5.77 (1.32)	0.08
Facilitator Quality	4.65 (0.49)	4.65 (0.53)	0.01
Facilitator-Participant Rel. Quality	4.64 (0.52)	4.63 (0.53)	0.16
Co-Facilitator Relationship Quality	4.69 (0.50)	4.65 (0.53)	1.27
Facilitator Co-Regulation Skills	4.58 (0.53)	4.54 (0.57)	0.84
Group Engagement	4.41 (0.57)	4.33 (0.59)	4.32*
Participant Engagement	4.12 (0.73)	4.14 (0.66)	0.12

Note. $n = 341$ unmarried and $n = 909$ married; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table C3*Correlation for Study Variables by Sex*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Relationship Self-Efficacy (T1)	-	.650***	.474***	.408***	.221***	.190***	.179***	.201***	.278***	.253***
2. Relationship Self-Efficacy (T3)	.661***	-	.385***	.466***	.212***	.230***	.186***	.197***	.278***	.278***
3. Relationship Quality (T1)	.502***	.424***	-	.596***	.164***	.116**	.079	.117**	.101*	.179***
4. Relationship Quality (T3)	.379***	.566***	.662***	-	.177***	.177***	.132**	.167***	.126**	.153***
5. Facilitator Quality	.131***	.124**	.019	.094*	-	.734***	.765***	.745***	.522***	.476***
6. Facilitator-Participant Relationship Quality	.154***	.165***	.109**	.126***	.676***	-	.816***	.809***	.544***	.553***
7. Co-Facilitator Relationship Quality	.122**	.135***	.030	.061	.710***	.772***	-	.810***	.557***	.510***
8. Facilitator Co-Regulation Skills	.121**	.126**	.043	.111**	.718***	.765***	.735***	-	.600***	.605***
9. Group Engagement	.152***	.165***	.055	.128***	.592***	.516***	.565***	.626***	-	.711***
10. Participant Engagement	.178***	.207***	.150***	.193***	.529***	.552***	.517***	.580***	.683***	-

Note. Males ($n = 558$) above the diagonal, females ($n = 696$) below the diagonal. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$