

be neutralized because the person is still living in a dysfunctional home environment. Besides difficulties at the individual level, problems also occur at the relational level (e.g., marriage and/or family), and these issues also need to be assessed. Considering the marital relationship, and recognizing the limited scope of this chapter, an overview of assessment in marriage will be presented from three key perspectives: 1) Karney and Bradbury (1995) Vulnerability-Stress-Adaptation model of marriage, 2) Johnson model of Emotion Focused Therapy for Couples (EFT; Johnson & Whiffen, 2003; Johnson, 1996; Greenberg & Johnson, 1988), and 3) Gottman's (1999b) Sound Marital House theory. For further information on assessment in marriage, the reader is referred to the following sources: Gottman (1994), Bradbury and Fincham (1990), and O'Leary (1987).

## Vulnerability-Stress-Adaptation Model of Marriage

Based on 115 longitudinal studies, Karney and Bradbury (1995) present a model suggesting that there are three general factors that predict *marital quality* or *marital stability*. The first set of variables involves *adaptive processes*, i.e., how well couples communicate and employ problem-solving skills. The second factor is *stressful events* and refers to how well couples manage acute and chronic stressors like the birth of a child, illness, unemployment, and so forth. The third group of variables is *enduring vulnerabilities*, or stable demographic, historical, personality, or experiential factors that individuals bring to a marriage, e.g., attachment style, parental divorce, addictions, and so forth. Bradbury (1995) strongly emphasizes the importance of assessment in marital therapy and suggests a number of psychometrically sound measures that should be used in assessing the four fundamental domains of marriage.

In the first domain, marital quality and stability, marital quality needs to be assessed using measures in two key areas: 1) commitment and 2) marital satisfaction. Stanley and Markman's (1992) 60-item Commitment Inventory distinguishes between two types of marital commitment – personal dedication (i.e., intrinsic motivation to improved the relationship) and constraint commitment (i.e., remaining in the relationship due to social pressure). Several psychometrically strong measures exist to measure marital satisfaction. For example, the 32-item Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976) provides a total score as well as four subscale relational scores on satisfaction, cohesion, consensus, and affectional expression. The 15-item Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; 1959) is also commonly used to evaluate marital satisfaction.

Other scales of marital satisfaction focus, not on relationship qualities like the DAS, but on subjective global evaluations of one's marriages. These measures are typically much shorter and easier to administer and score than the DAS. Two examples are Norton's (1983) six-item Quality Marriage Index (QMI) and Fincham and Linfield's (1997) Positive and Negative Quality in Marriage Scale (PANQIMS). The latter instrument is a two-dimensional measure comprised of six items – three positive and three negative appraisals of one's marriage and spouse. Besides having the advantages of being better able to measure the single underlying dimension of marital satisfaction as well as the capacity to compare it across studies, the PANQIMS allows the measurement of four types of marital functioning: two traditional types, happy and distressed, plus two new and to-date largely unrecognized categories of ambivalent and indifferent. A second outcome measure, marital stability, refers to how close a couple may be to divorcing and can be measured with the

Weiss and Cerreto (1980) Marital Status Inventory (MSI). This 14-item instrument presents statements depicting different steps in the divorce process.

The second domain for assessment in the Karney and Bradbury (1995) model is adaptive processes. The first component for assessment here is the important area of presenting complaints. The Areas of Change Questionnaire (ACQ; Weiss, Hops, & Patterson, 1973) presents 34 areas in a marriage where change might be desired. Two scores are generated in each area: 1) a desired change score for one's partner, and 2) a perceived change score for oneself. The ACQ provides valuable information on the content and magnitude of problems spouses are experiencing, in addition to the degree that these complaints are being recognized by the spouse.

The second type of adaptive process that needs evaluation is marital interactions. Having identified specific areas of conflict, it is now of value to identify the interpersonal source of these tensions as well as any abilities each spouse may have for resolving them. The 64-item Marital Coping Inventory (MCI; Bowman, 1990) assesses spousal behavior on several dimensions including conflict, introspective self-blame, positive approach, self-interest, and avoidance. Another self-report measure of marital interaction is the Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ; Christensen, 1987). This scale asks spouses to rate the likelihood of 35 behaviors occurring when disagreements arise, as well as examines demand-withdraw cycles between partners.

More than assessing the marital relationship in terms of each individual's perception of the relationship, the main focus in evaluating marital interactions is on *observing* the dynamic interpersonal exchange. According to Margolin's (1983) interactional model of marital assessment, it is the marital relationship that is the “patient” – rather than either spouse. Predominantly from a research standpoint, observational measurement involves first videotaping and then coding the interaction of a couple as they discuss either a hypothetical conflict or an actual marital difficulty. (Although the videotaping and systematic observational scoring of couples may not be considered feasible to most clinicians, much valuable information can still be obtained by carefully observing interactions during session and/or by analyzing and discussing a particular marital problem with clients that was previously recorded at home.) One observational measurement technique, the Rapid Couples Interaction Scoring System (RCISS; Krokoff, Gottman, & Hass, 1989) allows the coding of the content of alternating speakers (e.g., agree, deny responsibility, mind-reading) and the nonverbal affect of both the speaker and listener (positive, neutral, negative). This data can provide valuable information about how positive and negative behaviors and emotions impact the quality of a couple's interactions.

Based on the observational assessment of marital satisfaction, Gottman (1993, 1994) has proposed a balance view of marriage. That is, it is the relative balance between positivity and negativity in couples' observed marital interactions that is the key factor in predicting whether couples are at risk for marital discord and instability. For example, in a four-year longitudinal study of couple types, Gottman (1993) used observed positive and negative behavior to predict which married relationships were most at risk for distress and potential divorce. Five types of couples were identified: stable or low-risk-for-divorce couples (validating, volatile, and conflict-avoiding) and unstable or high-risk-for-divorce couples (hostile and hostile-detached). It is of interest that research findings using more recently developed satisfaction measures to assess global marital functioning via positive and negative appraisals are consistent with Gottman's perspective about the centrality of positive and negative behavior in determining marital satisfaction and stability. For example, *dissatisfied marriages* on the Positive and Negative Quality in Mar-