



PROGRAM SUPPORT GUIDE

Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation

WARRIOR^{TO} SOUL MATE

SUPPORTED BY
PAIRS ESSENTIALS



VA
HEALTH
CARE

Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

W2SM
Warrior to Soul Mate

VA Mission

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.

VA has adopted Core Values and Characteristics that apply universally across the Department. The five Core Values define "who we are," our culture and how we care for Veterans, their families and other beneficiaries. The Values are Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence ("I CARE").

Integrity: Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

Commitment: Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

Advocacy: Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

Respect: Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

Excellence: Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

DISCLAIMER: The Warrior to Soul Mate (W2SM) Program guide is intended for VA sites choosing to use the PAIRS Essentials curriculum as a resource for relationship education. It does not suggest, imply or endorse PAIRS as the only, best or exclusive provider of such materials for the Veterans Health Administration. This is a Program Guide only and its existence does not imply or regulate in any way how VA facilities should conduct relationship education as a proactive, preventative medical treatment and/or education venture. In no way is this guide intended to be prescriptive of an official VA policy.

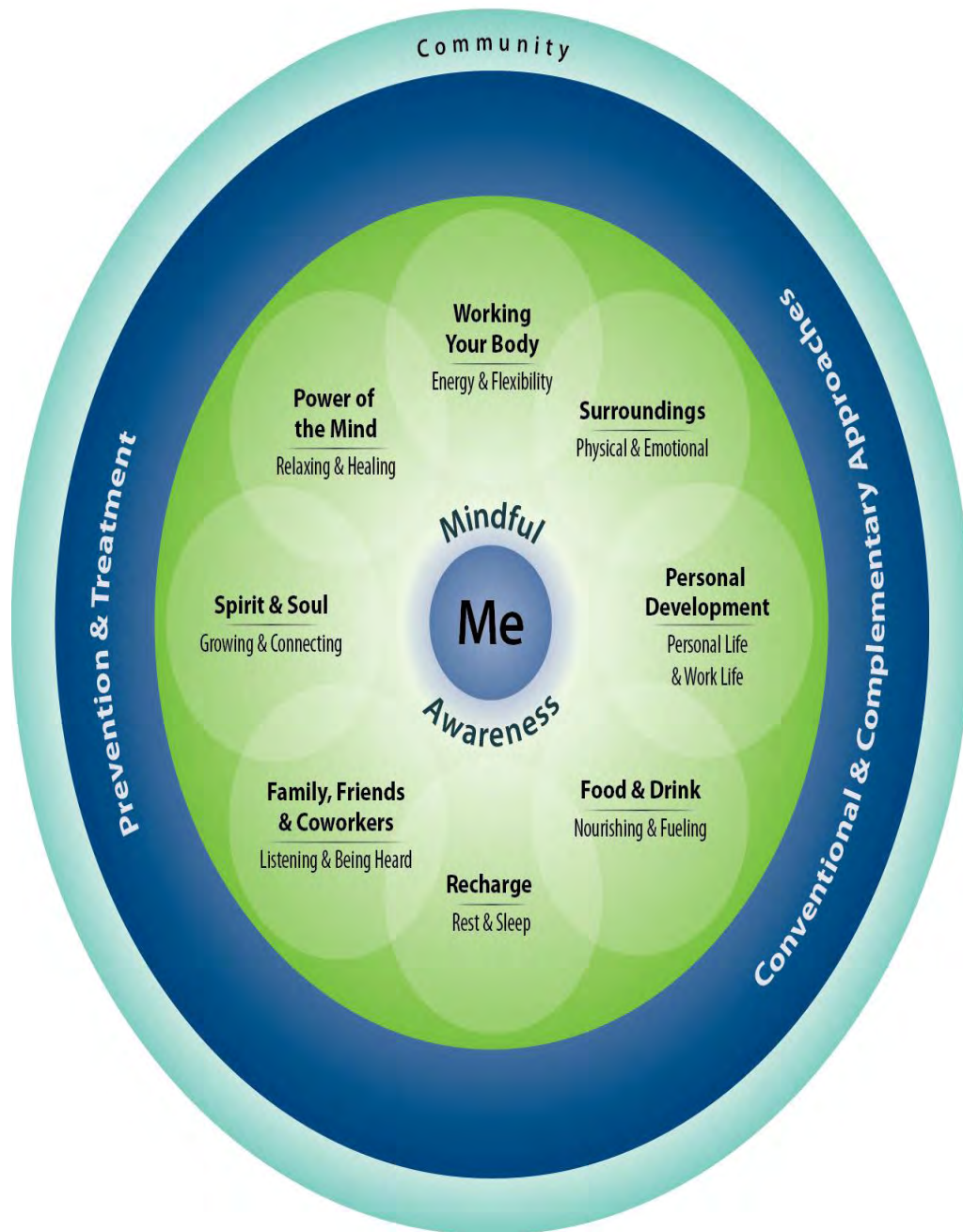
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Program Guide Contents

Welcome to the Warrior to Soul Mate (“W2SM”) Program support guide. This guide is designed to help VISNs, local medical centers, VET centers, and other VA facilities launch the W2SM program. You will find help to create a successful W2SM program and to develop specific opportunities to present the PAIRS Essentials curriculum to our Veterans and their significant others. Supporting documents for this program guide are provided in the Appendix.

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Promoting Health and Well-Being



The Warrior to Soul Mate Program (W2SM) supports the initiative of the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation. W2SM program seeks to assist Veterans and their significant others towards healthy relationships that promote and utilize the components of proactive health and well-being.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the Warrior to Soul Mate Program is to strengthen a Veteran's relationship with their significant others through the teaching of communication skills as presented in the PAIRS Essentials curriculum. The success of the W2SM program requires building a solid foundation. There are four key components to this foundation:

1. Support of VISN and Local Executive Leadership

The W2SM program nationally upholds the work and philosophy of the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation. The program supports local initiatives related to:

- Reintegration
- Stress-related and induced illnesses
- Homelessness
- Suicidal thinking or actions
- Depression, and other mental health issues
- Substance abuse and other addictive behaviors
- Domestic Violence, abuse and neglect

2. Collaboration with Mental Health and other VA professionals

- The W2SM program represents an excellent opportunity to further the initiative of VA Mental Health and Chaplaincy
- Developing a working partnership with mental health is essential to provide trained facilitators to maintain strong, consistent and vibrant programming
- Facilitators may also be recruited from other areas to include nursing, administration, learning resources, etc. (see page 20 for Qualities of an Effective Instructor)

3. Partnership with Veterans, Voluntary Service and other VA Stakeholders

- Veterans and their significant others who meet the guidelines for effective facilitators represent an excellent resource
- Veterans relate with Veterans and have proven to be excellent instructors and coaches!
- Voluntary service can provide Volunteers to help support the WtSM program as well as a resource to support other logistical needs
- Volunteer Service Organizations are great partners to share the opportunities and services the W2SM program provides our Veterans and to provide additional resources

4. Return of Investment

- Restoring Veteran relationships - The literature is clear that the fracturing of relationships has significant impact upon physical, emotional and spiritual health and can be a significant contribution to disease
- You may want to also consider the cost/return benefit - for example, the cost of one class or retreat versus the cost of one medical test, let alone treatment

History



Chief of Chaplain Services Ron Craddock, right, Chaplain Ed Waldrop, left, with PAIRS CEO Seth Eisenberg in Augusta, GA.

In late 2008 the Charlie Norwood VA Chief of Chaplain Services, Chaplain Ron Craddock, saw the growing need to help Veterans whose marriages were stressed by military service, including multiple deployments.

Chaplain Craddock explored many models for providing marriage enrichment education. He chose an evidence and outcomes-based model created by the nonprofit PAIRS Foundation. Chaplain Craddock, Chaplain Ed Waldrop, and Social Worker Helen Galen held their first PAIRS marriage enrichment workshop during the 2009 Valentine's Weekend.

In December 2009, the Charlie Norwood VA received a VA National Chaplain Center Best Practice Award for their provision of marriage enrichment education using the PAIRS model. Then in May 2011, Charlie Norwood VA was awarded the National Military Chaplains Association Distinguished Service Award (referencing the retreats) for all of VHA.

In April 2010, the VA Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation awarded the VA San Diego Healthcare System Chaplain Service a grant to pilot PAIRS programming on the west coast.

This program proved so successful that VA San Diego was asked to expand the program nationally a year later. That grant funded PAIRS retreats by VA San Diego, Balboa Naval Hospital, Loma Linda VA, Charlie Norwood VA, Manchester VA, Atlanta VA, Columbia VA, and Hampton VA. Indianapolis VA applied separately and was awarded funding through the same grant. Further San Diego, Indianapolis and Hampton coordinated PAIRS Level One Certification Trainings in August and September, 2011 resulting in an additional 250 plus persons being certified as instructors.

In September 2012, VA San Diego's collaboration with PAIRS Foundation was recognized with the Spirit of Planetree Award for the program's impact on strengthening relationships between family, friends and social supports as a central component of patient-centered care. Also that month, VHA promoted VA's national commitment to helping strengthen Veteran families in a feature article that appeared on all VA websites nationwide.

Full article at www.va.gov/health/NewsFeatures/20121018a.asp.

W2SM in Your VISN and Facility

The National Chaplain Center is currently working toward a plan for sustainment of the Warrior to Soul Mate program throughout VHA. The goal of this effort is gain support and funding at the VISN and local facility level. A plan strategic plan for sustainment will be presented during FY14. In the meantime, there are two important considerations:

1. Sustaining the work of the W2SM programs that currently exist:
 - Recruiting and training more facilitators
 - Increasing number of opportunities for W2SM retreats/workshops
 - Consider providing leadership for VISN wide expansion
 - Securing funding resources and expanding local budget to include the W2SM program
 - Collaborate with Voluntary Service for additional resources
 - Develop community partnerships
2. Establishing the W2SM program in facility and/or VISN
 - Present W2SM program to leadership
 - Secure funding and resources
 - Recruit and train facilitators to present the PAIRS curriculum
 - Implement W2SM program locally and/VISN wide

For more information and support in sustaining and implementing the W2SM program please contact the National Chaplain Center Liaison for the Warrior to Soul Mate Program:

Clyde Angel, DMin, BCC, LPC
NCC Liaison for the W2SM Program
clyde.angel@va.gov
Phone: (317) 988-4187

For more guidance in gaining support and authorization for the W2SM program, see page 8.



Hampton VA Chief of Chaplain Services Sue Cross, left, with PAIRS Trainer Lauren DelGando at PAIRS Training in Hampton, Virginia.

Gaining Support and Authorization

Perhaps you are a newly certified instructor and have already had initial support from your supervisor and organization. If so, you have achieved a major accomplishment. If not, it's helpful to consider how to gain that support.

Once you are clear on how your mission to provide PAIRS supports the VA mission and have written your mission statement, you are ready for the next step -- getting authorization from your boss.

How does your boss prefer to receive proposals? Verbal or written? Perhaps your supervisor or institution has a formal process in place for evaluating proposals?

Your presentation should be direct, clear, concise, specific, honest and demonstrate tangible, measurable benefits to the institution and VA's mission. Be aware of any key strategic initiatives within your VA at the time of your proposal and how your request compliments or otherwise impacts those initiatives. Ask yourself if you believe in and are passionate about what you are requesting. Are you ready to commit yourself to the task, including overcoming obstacles, roadblocks and other barriers? If not, do not ask.

Many have found PAIRS highly effective as a proactive, preventative health care intervention to strengthen relationships for Veterans. San Diego VA's recognition with the Spirit of Planetree Award is an example worth sharing. Significant research has found an association between stable, healthy relationships and reducing stress-related illnesses, suicides, depression, psychiatric illness, and homelessness. The fracturing of intimate relationships may result in financial distress, domestic abuse and neglect, and substance abuse as a coping mechanism to deal with the grief of relational discord.

You could further state that reducing current and future demand on a stressed healthcare system with thousands returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, means greater access for those who still need it. Some VA Medical Centers are considering encouraging Veterans awaiting mental health services to first participate in PAIRS, both as a cost-effective opportunity to provide prompt assistance to Veterans and help prepare them to get the greatest benefit from the mental health services they receive in the future.

You might quote from the letters of so many couples who express how PAIRS has saved their marriages. You can find sample quotes from couples at participant.pairs.com/thankyou.html. Video testimonials for Veteran program graduates are also available, as are feature stories, such as *American Veteran's* coverage of the program at the Charlie Norwood VA. You may also consider referencing research to show the expected longer-term outcomes. More information is available at evaluation.pairs.com.

If you wish to serve Active Duty, Guard and Reserves, it will be important to know how your institution is already working with those populations and what their goals are for doing so. Are

they hoping to provide a seamless transition to VA enrollment? Do they wish to earn the good will of the Department of Defense or members of the community? Knowing local priorities will help you demonstrate how your programming will support their goals.

Your own enthusiasm and commitment is vital. To be successful, you must be willing to do the work that it will take, but this must be directly linked with the mission of the organization and the priorities of your supervisor and institution as a component of coordinated care and service to Veterans.



*VA and DoD Chaplains in communication exercise
at PAIRS Level I Training in Hampton, Virginia.*

Who are natural allies within your institution? Social Work, Mental Health, Nursing? Key individuals or committees? Will they join you in making a presentation and add their names in support? Build alliances and network with those who share your vision and goals.

As you present your proposal, be realistic about how you plan to finance the program, how much time you are willing to give, and how much administrative, as in secretarial, support you expect to need. Presenting this in a well thought out plan will make it clear whether you can gain the support you need to accomplish your vision in the near-term or if you may need to revise your hopes, dreams and wishes to gain your desired outcomes in the future.

Do not hesitate to talk with others who have successfully gained support from their institutions. Call (877) PAIRS-4U x802 for referrals. They can be an invaluable resource as you create your plan. Ask for feedback and suggestions before you submit it.

If you receive a positive response from your supervisor, congratulations! If you receive a conditional "Yes," or a "No," identify barriers and if your boss is open to an alternative proposal.

If you feel led to make this happen for your Veterans, continue to believe in yourself and your vision, create a team that will help you stay inspired, positive, and engaged over the long haul, accept that there may be bumps in the road, but keep looking for those who will support your efforts in the belief that you will find a way to make it work.

Funding

Funding is essential to hosting a workshop, class or retreat. The amount of funds needed can vary significantly.

- With donated space, equipment, and instructors provided pro bono, classes can be held for the cost of materials and FTEE. Some sites have held retreats/workshops in local communities of faith, with the community of faith providing the meals and space, leaving the VA to only provide materials and leadership
- On the other hand, a retreat held in a resort, hotel, spa setting for 2-½ days from a Friday evening through late Sunday afternoon with the provision of meals, an on-site conference planner, rental of sound and video equipment, parking fees, and room rental can cost up to \$500 per person, plus FTEE

VA Mental Health and Chaplaincy will be releasing an evaluation report that provide data related to cost of conducting a W2SM program

Securing Funding

How to secure funding is a key issue. Future sustainment will depend primarily upon funding at the VISN and local facility level. Considerations to remember:

- VISN support
- Local facility budgets
- Outside funding, i.e., California, funds from the Prevention and Early intervention initiative have also been provided
- Voluntary Services and VSOs
- Grants

VA Centers are not allowed to directly solicit external funds. However, if there are organizations or corporations who wish to fund retreats or classes for Veterans and Active Duty personnel VA's might consider providing certified instructors. Of course, Voluntary Services can receive funds from those who would like to support VA programming.

Important considerations when developing funding include:

- All funding must be consistent with VA regulations and the policies.
- Writing requests within the VA that meet the mission of the funding arm being approached is key.
- Finding a third party who wishes to serve as a funding site is yet another means to financial support.
- Some organizations, such as communities of faith, may believe so passionately about the value of the W2SM program and the PAIRS model that they are willing to provide meals, space or childcare as well as be solicitors of funds for the program, something the VA cannot do for itself.



Warrior to Soul Mate Weekend sponsored by Bay Pines VA in St. Petersburg, Florida.

- When submitting a formal grant request, ask the funding source how specific your proposal should be in terms of listing line items to be covered. Some may not require much more than a general program description and statement that any expenses related to the support of that program will be eligible for funding
- On the other hand, specifying such items as food and lodging, handbooks, audio visual purchase or rental, other electronic equipment, salary reimbursement or hiring staff, production costs, room rental, parking, contracts with PAIRS for Train the Trainer or couples retreats, Internship fees, travel, your target audience and if childcare will be covered may save many misunderstandings and questions if the grant is authorized
- It may be helpful to specify that funding will cover both participants and instructors, and to clarify which participants in the Train the Trainer program will be covered and which may need to pay for their own registration, food or other costs
- Finally, it's important to provide funding sources with a written report on programs shortly after completion. Thank you letters from program participants and a summary of outcome evaluations can be helpful to include.

Contracting vs. Purchase Card

Some components of the W2SM program can be provided through your local budget and secured through a purchase card transaction. These items may include PAIRS Essentials participant books, accreditation fees, and food/snacks. Follow local guidelines for use of purchase card and local approvals.

In some case you will need to utilize your local contracting office. If you are not familiar with the VA contracting process, find a good friend in financial services to guide you through the contracting process.

Suggestions and considerations when submitting contracts:

- Submit contract requests, i.e., Form 2237, early as it can take more than 90 days to establish a purchase order!
- If possible, get to know your contracting officer on a personal basis.
- Be patient ... contracting can be complex and extensive.
- You cannot use a "vendor" until that vendor has been "vendorized" (Each vendor must complete an application to be reviewed and authenticated by the VA. Once completed, usually within a week, it does not need to be repeated).
- Preference may be given to small businesses, Veteran owned businesses, women owned businesses, and non-profits.
- If you are wishing to secure a hotel, retreat center, convention planner, or other contracted services, you may need to request your contracting office to let a bid for similar providers (typically 90 days, check local times and considerations).
- Finally, you may be able to obligate funds into the next fiscal year by establishing a contract for services in this fiscal year which continues into the next. Be advised that obligating funds and securing a sole source provider are often difficult to negotiate.

NOTE: As of August 2012, significant questions regarding what funds may be spent, including food and lodging, have been clarified. See **APPENDIX**.

PAIRS Foundation is a Sole Source Provider

The PAIRS Foundation, Inc. is a sole-source provider of PAIRS Certification Training, PAIRS licensing, and PAIRS materials such as handbooks, wallet cards and supplemental teaching materials for PAIRS Essentials and other PAIRS programs. See **APPENDIX** for example of a Sole Source

Contract. Information you will need to submit to request materials or training from PAIRS includes:

The PAIRS Foundation, Inc.
 200 S. Park Road, Suite 455, Hollywood, Florida 33021
 Phone: (877) 724-7748 x802 • Fax: (954) 206-0281 • E-mail: info@pairs.com
 Federal Tax ID: 52-1327867 • DUNS: 839942422 • CCR: 3Z8H5

Publicity and Referral

As you prepare any publicity, always check with your Public Affairs Officer first. Also, realize you will have to have contracts, if need, in place before you can advertise.

Good publicity can be the lifeblood of your W2SM program.

- Target audience and size.
- How many couples you accept for an event should be determined prior to advertising, which should indicate that applications will be limited.
- As you determine how many couples to accept, consider the size of your meeting room, budget, number of instructors available, emotional maturity and intensity of the issues for the couples who will be coming, and the amount of program support you have.
- Clarify target audience - Veterans, Active Duty, Guard and Reserve.
- Screening considerations
- In a committed relationship for 6 months or longer
- No domestic violence in the past 6 months
- Authorization to contact both parties
- Others as determined by your local team
- Advertisement
- Tri-fold brochure (contact other facilities with existing programs for examples)
- VA electronic bulletin board
- Announcements at leadership meetings
- Announcements to community organizations supporting Veterans and Active Duty causes
- E-mail announcements with PDF brochure attachments to VA employees, OEF/OIF Network Coordinators, faith community clergy, DoD chaplains and Family Readiness Officer

Please note that you may wish to state on the brochure that this is an “application,” not a registration process. Those applying may be told they will need to complete a screening process once they apply

For retreats, brochures may also note that the weekend will be alcohol, drug and weapons free. Those applying are also advised they are expected to come on time and stay through the conclusion of the program.



Veteran talks about his experience in a Warrior to Soul Mate weekend. Graduates are vital to encouraging, creating safety and credibility for other Veterans.

Recruitment

- Reading and distributing letters from enthusiastic class or retreat participants is another effective way to gain support for and develop a referral network.
- Over time, you may develop a distribution list of key people to be notified of scheduled retreats or classes.
- Publicity is an important consideration to support recruitment before and after your program.
- PAIRS Foundation will provide a username/password for licensed instructors to freely post events on the national website, which typically receives 1000-2000 views daily, along with a brief bio and contract information for your program. For an example, see consumer.pairs.com.
- You may wish to consider making a video of the results of your program with actual interviews of couples you served. This can be a powerful promotional tool in the future for your geographic area, featuring your facility with your staff and the couples you served.
- In late April 2014 a video produced by the OPCC&CT will be available nationally.
- You can review existing videos from the links below and then contact your local or VISN media services or public affairs office. (www.augusta.va.gov/OEF_OIF_Marriage_Enrichment_Retreats.asp and www.sandiego.va.gov/publicaffairs/index.aspairs).



Chaplain Juliana Lesher, San Antonio VA Chief of Chaplain Services, with Chaplains Jim and Jo Kirkendall at San Antonio W2SM retreat.

Consult Process

An August 2013 memo from the Deputy Undersecretary's Office states that referrals to the PAIRS program should be through the consult process. The Veteran must go through their provider, who submits a consult to the office coordinating WtSM programming, often the Chaplain's office.

To determine the appropriate fit for individuals or couples is important, to find which venue will be most productive – individual consultation, a small class, larger group, or retreat. Issues you may wish to consider in a consult process are the following:

- Length of the current relationship.
- Desire to stay in a committed relationship.
- Active alcohol or drug abuse/addiction.
- Untreated or current domestic violence in which one partner seeks to establish power and control over the other through physical, emotional, psychological, financial, sexual, or other tactics.
- Mental health/emotional issues preventing focus and ability to process cognitive input or intense feelings.
- History of emotional triggers resulting in assaultive or aggressive behavior easily activated.

If there is a question of the suitability of an applicant, it is suggested that a multi-disciplinary team of at least three people review any screening tool and consider a face to face interview. Again the emphasis is to get the curriculum to the couple in the most appropriate setting. There may be situations in which it is felt that the couple is not ready for this experiential emotional work and would be best served by engaging in couple's or individual therapy first and then, as the therapist feels the couple or individual is ready, apply at a later time for a retreat.

Administrative Support



Like every great endeavor, conducting W2SM programs takes a team. A key component will be administrative support. Several options may be considered in establishing administrative support:

- Recruit a paid Program Support Assistant ("PSA")
- Recruit a Volunteer PSA
- Utilize current administrative support in your area or within your facility

Program Support Assistants should be familiar with the W2SM program and the PAIRS Essentials curriculum. Ideally, they have completed PAIRS Essentials training or participated in prior W2SM retreat/workshop/class in order to:

- Understand and model the values of the W2SM program and the PAIRS curriculum.
- Essential qualities include: reliable, well organized, quick learner, self-starter, proficient with relevant software applications, know the VA contracting system, and can competently use the VA process for ordering supplies.

Duties and responsibilities:

- Execute work orders for the completion of brochures, order handbooks and other supplies in a timely manner.
- Distribute marketing materials, coordinate publicity, work with the public.
- Create and maintain distribution lists of prospects and instructors.
- Execute 2237's as needed for lodging, food, room rentals, etc.
- Familiar with and assist when needed with room set-up, including audio, video and projection equipment when utilized.
- Receive and log applicant information, verify eligibility, answer questions by phone, e-mail, or in person at preview events.
- Track registrations against available slots.
- Send out welcome or declining letters.
- develop and maintain a waiting list.
- Coordinator concerns with program leader.
- Tabulating pre- and post-retreat feedback forms, evaluations, and compiling data, which may involve typing or scanning from the free text evaluations to be used in reports and for future publicity and evaluation of the program.

Certified Instructors

Utilization of the PAIRS Essentials curriculum in the W2SM program requires that individuals be certified. Two avenues currently exist for certification of VA employee, volunteers and Veterans:

- Certification workshops conducted by VA staff
Contact - Clyde Angel (clyde.angel@va.gov)
or Dick Millspaugh (dick.millspaugh@va.gov)
- Cost - \$500 per participant – includes PAIRS certification and training material
- Travel, lodging and per diem for instructors
- Other local cost associated with conducting the workshop
- Contact NCC Liaison for the W2SM program for further details
- Certification workshop conducted by PAIRS Foundation
(Contact PAIRS Foundation directly for costs and scheduling.)

Additional considerations related to certified instructors:

- Attention should be paid to the instructors invited to lead classes or retreats. The class or retreat will only be successful to the degree that effective, certified instructors are creating group safety and rapport with participants throughout the process of delivering the curriculum. See page 21 for qualities of effective instructors.
- The number of certified instructors needed to present a class or retreat will depend upon the experience of the instructors, the number of persons present and the level of distress in the relationships of the participants. In general consider one certified instructor for every 8 people plus at least one certified person to coordinate the overall event. As a rule of thumb there should always be at least two instructors present.
- A male and female instructor are asked to be on call during retreats. If they are called during the night, they should have record of each participant's mentor. Participants can be given the number of the desk or operator for the facility they are staying in to reach the operator on call. The desk person or operator would have the name and contact number of the person on call.
- Each participant will need a PAIRS Handbook and wallet cards which can be ordered from PAIRS Foundation at (877) 724-7748 ext 802 or with an instructor login to access pairsusa.com. Be sure to allow enough time (four to six weeks is recommended) to receive handbooks prior to the beginning of your session.

Lead Instructor Guidelines

Thank you for serving as a lead instructor for the Warrior to Soul Mate program. Below are guidelines which you may find helpful as you prepare to lead your team through a class or weekend.

GENERAL THOUGHTS

1. Remember that the PAIRS curriculum is excellent; trust the curriculum to speak for itself.
2. Encourage instructors to be transparent, using appropriate personal examples.
3. Caution instructors not to use long examples or illustrations that overpower the curriculum.
4. Help instructors focus on general themes throughout their teaching and to return to them often for emphasis. Those themes are:
 - a. The Relationship Road Map. General Question: Which side of the Relationship Road does this (making assumptions, dirty fighting, thinking that the other's love language is the same as ours, love knots, etc.) put us on?
 - b. Good Will and the Good Will Umbrella (Caring, Communication, Commitment and Change): Good will is our desire, intention and action to practice kindness toward others. Good will is to intend the best good for the other.
 - c. Empathy. "Empathy is our ability to identify with or experience the feelings, thoughts or attitudes of another person."
 - d. Compassion. "Compassion is the expression of our desire to alleviate suffering."
 - e. Bonding. Bonding is "our human need for the combination of emotional openness and physical closeness in intimate, adult relationship." (PAIRS Essentials Handbook, page 9.)
 - f. Working for the Relationship. PAIRS encourages couples to see each other as partners to work on relationship issues, not as enemies who need to be conquered. If one person loses, the relationship loses.
5. Safety. Do all that you can to create an environment of safety. Safety is built in increments. One dimension that increases safety is predictability. Have you helped couples and your instructors know what is expected? What will happen? When? Where? How? Why? Have you given couples and instructors enough lead time to be able to anticipate, adjust, and respond to what you are expecting of them? Have you put your expectations in writing?
6. Team Building. As lead instructor you will be building the presentation team. A balance of genders, ages, ethnicities, and disciplines is an important nonverbal affirmation that all participants are welcomed. Assigning teams of two to do the teaching of curriculum segments helps build the team and lets members know they are not alone in their presentation.
7. Modeling. As the lead instructor, you team members will naturally look to you to model what is the attitude and behavior of choice. Your willingness to serve in the lead position



Chaplain Dick Millspaugh, San Diego VA Health Care Chief of Chaplain Services and PAIRS Trainer, and wife, Carol Millspaugh, welcome participants to San Diego W2SM weekend.

already says a lot about your commitment to the PAIRS model, your desire to put in the extra work needed for great outcomes. You can add to this contribution by being aware that every interaction you have with your team will tend to be replicated by your team with your couples. Your hospitality and personal attention to your team, calling each person by name, listening and responding to their concerns, and your enthusiasm and belief in the PAIRS curriculum will help ensure your teams' positive attitude and behavior with couples.

8. Time. As lead instructor it is your responsibility to keep the meeting on time. Keeping to your prescribed schedule assures each instructor that they will have time for their presentation and provides participants with an assurance that someone is in control. Appoint a couple instructors to also serve as the time keepers, when they are not instructing. During their assignments, time keepers can stand at the back of the room and display a 4 X 6 card with "5", "3" and "1" to presenters to let them know how many minutes remain for their segment. Participants will also be looking for regular breaks, which should be indicated on their agenda. Keeping the retreat on time also means letting participants know at the meals that "We will be meeting in 10 minutes." Ask instructors to help get this word out regularly for all meals.
9. Rehearsal. Lead instructors should require instructors to meet prior to a retreat or class to rehearse. Walking through the presentations will help instructors gain confidence and work out bugs. If you are using a sound system, be sure to test that out at this time. Many of our Veterans have hearing issues and a sound system can be an invaluable asset. However, many of our Veterans suffer from PTSD and an unintended blast of feedback from a sound system can trigger flashbacks and cause a Veteran to need to leave the presentation.

Instructors should be encouraged to provide supportive feedback during the rehearsal to

each other, sharing other possible options, as long as no one person dominates the conversation. As lead instructor you need to catch what might be problematic during the rehearsal. For example, are the presenters turning to face the projection screen and not the audience? Are presenters making good eye contact? Are the presenters projecting their voice? Do the presenters have nervous habits that are distracting from their presentation? Are the presenters basically reading their presentation, without enthusiasm or excitement?

10. Debriefing. As lead instructor you are responsible to call the instructors together after every major segment to do a debriefing. What went well? What could have gone better? What adjustments do we need to make mid-stream?
11. Safeguard All. Be aware that one person or couple may tend to dominate the conversations or questions. You may handle this in several ways. In your general introduction of ground rules, when you state that no one will be forced to speak, you can also add that instructors will, on the other hand, try to assure that there is space for everyone who wishes to speak. If during the class or retreat you become aware of one person tending to dominate the conversation, you may redirect them, by stating, "Before we hear Bob's comment I want to make sure that those of you who need a little more time to formulate your comments or questions have that time. (Pause). Now that you have had a moment do you have a question or comment." Or, "I want to take Bob's question or comment in a moment, but before I do, who has not spoken yet and would like to make a comment or ask a question." Or, make up your own statement and just be prepared to use it as it is very common for some people to be more comfortable speaking in public and some people may have more of a need to speak more often.
12. Use Your Mentor. Encourage couples to use their mentors, and if they don't feel like their mentor is a good fit for them, encourage them to seek out another mentor.
13. Avoid Gendered Comments. It is tempting to generalize about men do this or women do that. Work hard to avoid these generalizations as there is a wide variety of characteristics among any gender. Generalizing can leave people feeling left out, strange or like something must be wrong with them.
14. Avoid Advancing Your Own Agenda. We often have strong feelings about certain aspects of our lives whether it is religion, politics, sexual orientation, child raising practices or who is the best team. Remember that you have the privilege of being a certified instructor. People will often give your opinion extra weight. Therefore it is not appropriate to use this privilege to promote your point of view on personal matters. The sole purpose of your being a W2SM instructor is to be a W2SM instructor. Honor the PAIRS curriculum and maintain the fidelity of the program.
15. Have Fun. Remember to enjoy your work. Have fun. What you are doing is a blessing for many. Thank you!

Qualities of an Effective Instructor

Overall the WtSM facilitator should be personable, have life experience, and be trustworthy, responsible, and caring.

The instructor should be someone who does not read the material off the printed page or PowerPoint in class; a person who has a sense of humor, healthy self-esteem, charisma, energy, enthusiasm, and life wisdom.



Chaplain Clyde Angel, center, National Chaplain Center Liaison for the W2SM Program and PAIRS Trainer, with VISN 11 trainees at Indianapolis PAIRS Level I Training.

The qualities listed below have been found to be common characteristics of effective W2SM instructors.

- Personal warmth, optimism, authenticity, poise, and maturity
- Speaks clearly with appropriate pacing and expression, and is easily understood
- Emotionally stable and comfortable with emotional intensity
- Appropriate professional appearance and grooming
- Relevant and appropriate self-disclosure
- Avoids wordiness, professional jargon, terminology
- Ability to maintain a safe educational environment, including appropriate boundaries
- Use of appropriate humor
- At ease with groups and establishing group rapport
- Works cooperatively with staff and team members
- Authentically models curriculum tools and values
- Avoids inappropriate comments or offensive behavior
- Knowledge of the curriculum and its intended purpose
- Provides clear and accurate direction
- Stays within boundaries and topics of each class
- Effectively teaches existing curriculum content as it is written
- Covers all required material and exercises within time allowed
- Knowledge, understanding, and adherence to Ethical Practices
- Asks for help when needed
- Appropriately evaluates and reads participant responses
- Fully prepared for each class with clear, organized presentations
- Handles transitions effectively
- Understands and respects the vulnerabilities of class participants
- Identifies and recommends improvements based on group feedback
- Receives positive evaluations from class participants

Mentors on Site

During the retreat or class, be sure to make a point of meeting your couples early in the event, introduce yourself, warmly welcome them, and let them know you are available to them during the entire retreat. Let them also know that they can ask any of the mentors for help, that's OK. You may have some feel prior to the retreat as to how distressed the couple is, but your personal introduction is another time to get a sense for their level of comfort with each other. This is important to know as it may indicate how much support you may need to provide during the event.



Tampa VA Chaplain Barbara Nollie, center, mentoring couple through communication exercise.

The Distressed Couples

A key leadership and mentoring function is to be scanning couples to determine those who are experiencing distress. You will note this almost immediately when they come. Are they holding hands, or do they seem to keep distant from each other? Do they smile at each other in a natural, warm way, or are do smiles seemed forced? Do they give each other warm eye contact or is eye contact with a challenge or event hostile? Do they volunteer cheerfully to help each other, or is each partner on their own? Do they laugh together, or are there remarks that seem to be loaded with indirect or direct hostility. When they sit together, do they touch, hold hands, seem to enjoy being with each other or do they turn away from each other and seem to avoid physical contact? Do they engage in light and spontaneous conversation, or do they speak little and mostly about the necessities? When they eat, do they sit together, is there tension or a free flow of talking? Do they tend to engage more with other couples or equally between themselves and others?

As the workshop proceeds, notice how couples either move toward or away from each other. For the most part couples will tend to use the exercises to open up emotionally and move toward each other. For distressed couples the opening may bring issues and feelings to the surface that are uncomfortable. A key place to watch for how distressed a couple may be is during Talking Tips. Be very observant during this exercise and be ready to gently intervene.

One way to think about intervening is to remember the acronym ACORRN (p23).

A Attend to. Assess the couples in the room. Watch for tears with some sign of distress – body language which seems defensive. Tears can be a clear sign of engagement, tenderness, bonding, so be aware to read other signs. Look for couples who are not talking at all, who seem to be stuck. Are they not in the leveling position?

C Contact. If you believe a couple is in distress, approach them to make contact. Kneel or sit beside them. Listen briefly if they continue talking, to help you continue to assess if they are experiencing distress.



Participants will often show signs of connection or distance.

O Observe. Make an observation in a direct, neutral, non judgmental way. “This seems to be hard for you.” “It looks like you are finding some pain in this exercise.”

R Response. Wait for response from one or both of the partners. If only one responds, judge if you should ask the other, “And how is it going for you?”

R Redirect. Often distressed couples fall out of the template when using a PAIRS tool and get caught in old habits of communication, finding it difficult to follow the tool’s step by step pattern. It may be helpful to encourage them to start the tool over again, but this time with your help and your guidance. “It seems that this became more difficult when you got off track on the process here, would you be willing to start over with my help?”

N Navigate through the steps one at a time, helping the couple stay on track. And begin the process again, i.e., Assess – did this help? If yes, congratulate the couple and ask them to share appreciations. If not, maintain contact, decide if some form of follow up may be of interest to the couple.



Mentors help couples stay on track through experiential work.

Mentor Guidelines

The following are suggested guidelines for you as you serve as a mentor to the couples who will be attending the marriage enrichment retreat. You will be assigned several couples to mentor during the entire retreat.

1. Be a welcoming presence for your couples.
2. Ask what each person prefers to be called. Learn each person's name and call them by name.
3. While being available to the couples, be respectful of boundaries and their privacy. While being friendly, your job is not to intrude upon their space, not to push yourself upon them, not to seek out personal information. At the most basic level, your job is to be available, to be a good listener, to observe to see if there are ways you can unobtrusively offer help.
4. As you gain a couple's trust, be alert for signals or invitations to be of help and respond by first asking if what you believe is being asked is truly the case.
5. Be alert as to how you can be helpful to any couple or mentor. You are not required to only help those couples you have been assigned to. Some couples may naturally ask you questions or drift to seeking your help. Then it is appropriate to be helpful.



Mentor couples help create safety and model program values.

6. Don't be territorial. If someone else is able to be helpful to a couple that you have been assigned, that will give you more time to be helpful to someone else.
7. Do not hesitate to call on another instructor (mentor) to assist you in working with a couple's emergency. Don't try to deal with tough issues alone.
8. Make sure you have the after hours contact info on the other mentors/instructors available to call on them if needed.
9. You will be asked to sign your couples' "graduation" certificate. You may list an office phone number here if you wish.
10. Do not provide personal contact information. Though you may grow close to couples in a brief weekend, it is not appropriate to use this venue to develop personal friendships. You are serving in a privileged position as a leader/mentor that is not to be used for developing personal friendships.

PAIRS Foundation's rigorous ethical standards are founded on the recognition that every action of program leadership can have a significant impact on class participants. It's important to regularly review the Ethical Standards for the PAIRS Provider and ensure that anyone class members perceive as a program representative knows and adheres to those requirements.

Date and Time

Selecting a date, time and place sometimes are hand in glove. Selecting a date and time to give your contracting agent will limit those places that are available to bid for your preferred calendar. On the other hand, hoping that your contracting agent will be able to gain a competitive bid from one of your favorite sites will limit the dates available for you to choose from. It will be important to work with your contracting agent early and often around these issues. (*See contracting on page 11.*)

Meeting Room or Site

You will need a meeting room if you are conducting classes or a site with a meeting room if you are conducting retreats. The room should be large enough to accommodate chairs in theater style, with space for participants to move and have some privacy to do the exercises. Setting chairs in pairs with some space between each will help create a sense of respect and intimacy. You will need room and ceiling height enough for a video projector and screen. In addition you will want to have space, ideally just outside the meeting room, for welcome, registration and resource information.

There are many options for finding meeting space. Your VA hospital, VA clinic or Vet Center may have availability depending upon the time of your meeting. Veterans Service Organizations (VSO's) such as American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and Disabled American Veterans frequently have space available for programs. Communities of faith are also natural partners that may welcome your class or retreat. Local libraries, colleges, civic centers, Red Cross, or other non-profit organizations may provide other options. Some may require a fee and others may offer meeting space free of charge.

Finding space for a retreat, which may go 1 ½, 2 or 2 ½ days, may require more preparation. Some states have retreat centers which offer a low cost option compared to hotels or resorts and spas. However some hotels and resorts or spas do offer government rates and the privacy of being in a gracious setting is often deeply appreciated by couples.

Some retreat coordinators find it helpful to use a convention planner to find the best hotel or resort and spa for given specifications and dates. This can be done at no direct cost to you as the hotel or resort will pay the convention planner a percentage of the gross cost. The convention planner can often negotiate special concessions. If you plan several retreats at the same hotel, your convention planner may be able to negotiate additional concessions. If you decide you would like to work with a convention planner, you should start early as you will probably have to ask your Network Logistics Office to get a bid for a planner.



Evaluation Tools

Evaluation of each W2SM program provided through the VA can make future programming even more successful. It also will assist in maintain the fidelity of the PAIRS curriculum.

Suggestions:

- It's helpful for instructors to debrief after each class to consider what went well and opportunities for improvement, and to review feedback provided by participants in their end-of-class evaluations
- The PAIRS model has been extensively researched and is an evidence and outcomes-based educational intervention. PAIRS Relationship Education Impact Reports, September 2011, provide findings from a five-year, federally-sponsored research and demonstration project. See evaluation.pairs.com for more information (see PAIRS Instructors training manual)
- Contact VA facilities who are currently conducting W2SM program

The Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation and the VA Mental Health and Chaplaincy program are conducting a national evaluation of the W2SM program. That report is anticipated for release in FY 2014.

Welcoming/Declining Letters

Once a couple has passed your consult process, they should receive a welcome letter thanking them for their application and detailing confirmation of their acceptance for the retreat. The letter should contain information on the location and time of the retreat, attire, and what people should bring. It is good to restate that the weekend is alcohol, drug and firearms free. Note should be made as to whether childcare is provided, and if so, at whose expense. *See page 26 for an example of a welcome letter.*

From time to time you may need to write a letter declining a couple's attendance at a retreat because of active domestic abuse or neglect, active alcohol or drug addiction, or significant mental health issues. Such letters need to be clearly written to avoid any confusion or legal consequences. Always the intent should be to find a way to get the couple the curriculum experience. If they are not suited for a retreat or large group setting, can you work with them in a small group of couples or one-on-one? The emphasis should be on working with the couple to get them the curriculum experience. *See page APPENDIX for an example of a letter of declination.*

Schedules and Formats

A schedule of your presentation is essential in conducting a class or retreat. A schedule allows assignments of instructors to specific content to be covered, provides a guide by which time can be maintained, and is helpful to hotels or retreat centers in planning breaks and meals in a retreat setting.

PAIRS Essentials may be presented in various formats including a 1½-day, 2-day, or 2 ½ -day retreat to include all the content in one setting; a 60-90 minutes per session schedule over six to ten weeks; or three hours per session over three weeks. Some have successfully delivered the program into an intensive day and a half seminar, leaving less time for reflection and absorption of the materials during the program itself. *See APPENDIX for sample schedules and formats.*



Training participants learn Daily Temperature Reading exercise at PAIRS Level I Certification Training in Hampton, Virginia.

Documentation

VA requires documentation of enrolled Veterans attendance in retreats and classes in the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS). This will require recording the Veteran's name and his or her social security number last four digits in order to ensure accurate completion of the patient record. Of course this is secure information and needs to be treated as such. It is highly preferred that this information be secured during your application/registration process with any sensitive data being secured within your VA facility, following standard security procedures.



Case Manager privately interviews Veteran to document records.

If you wish to retain records of attendees and their contact information, you must keep all personal identification information secure! Check with your Information Security Officer to verify you plan for securing such information is consistent with VA policy. VA employees are specifically directed to follow the provisions in VA handbook 6500, Appendix D, issued September 20, 2012. ***A copy of that is provided in the APPENDIX.***

If for any reason you require the capability to store, transport, and utilize VA sensitive information outside protected environments, as defined by VA Directive and Handbook 6500, off-site including off site locations, it must be secured at all times, including transfer to be secured on site. All such procedures for obtaining, storing, transporting and utilizing sensitive information must be approved and authorized as per your facility's policy. Please contact you Information Security Offer for guidance on obtaining the required approval.

The PAIRS Foundation's Instructor Licensing Agreement requires a Participant Agreement (Informed Consent) and end of course evaluation be provided from each participant in PAIRS programs as part of the organization's commitment to continuous quality management. Participants in VA programs may voluntarily provide their name and contact information to PAIRS Foundation on these forms or only the last four of their social security number, although PAIRS reacquires that the informed consent itself must be signed. Paperwork should be send to the PAIRS Foundation by mail or fax within three business days of program conclusion.

Equipment/Supplies

A packet of materials might be compiled as follows: each participant will need a PAIRS Essential handbook and wallet cards. In addition to that, a brief agenda will be helpful to participants listing basic presentations, breaks and meal times. You do not need to hand out an extensive agenda like that which instructors might receive. You will probably need to adapt the time line as you go along and a detailed agenda will only be confusing to participants.

A post retreat evaluation form and a free text evaluation form may also be included in the packet. It will be helpful, as well, to include contact information regarding the services your facility provides, including counseling referral services in your organization and the community.

At the registration table you may wish to hand out pre-retreat feedback forms and consent forms to be completed. You should have ground rules forms for those who have not returned them, if you sent them out ahead of time. Encourage couples not to sit together when filling out the pre-retreat feedback forms so they do not compare answers.

The packets to be given out at registration might include:

1. Handbook and Wallet Cards
2. Brief Agenda
3. Post-retreat feedback form (*page 42*)
4. Free Text evaluation forms
5. W2SM brochure
6. 3x5 cards for mentors to collect contact info
7. List of services your organization provides (or organization brochure)
8. Counseling referral list

In addition, at registration you may ask participants to complete and turn in:

1. Pre-retreat feedback form (*page 40*)
2. Consent form (*page 38*)
3. Ground Rules form (found in the handbook)
4. 3x5 cards to enter SSN
5. Pens

Depending upon your setting and location you may need additional supplies:

1. Sound system – Supplies and hand held microphones for larger groups
2. Projection Screen to show PowerPoint
3. Video Projector
4. Laptop computer with W2SM PowerPoint
5. Larger Pointer
6. PAIRS Posters
7. White boards or easels with newsprint, free standing

8. Dry erase and/or markers
9. Extension Cords, power strip
10. Duct Tape to secure cord(s)
11. 3x5 cards
12. Bell or chime to signal starting times
13. Batteries
14. Extra Bulb for Projector
15. Pens

Conclusion

Creating a W2SM program is an exciting venture rewarded by a couple's experiencing an increase in the quality of their relationships.

Keep in mind to:

- Take the process one step at a time
- Begin with what is easiest and right before you
- Keep the 10,000 foot view in mind
- Ask for help
- Helping couples rediscover their care and concern for each other is more than enough reward for the work at hand.

For additional support or to address other questions, please reach out to:

- **Chaplain Clyde Angel**
National Chaplain Center Liaison for the Warrior to Soul Mate Program
Phone: 317-988-4187 Email: clyde.angel@va.gov
- **Chaplain Dick Millspaugh – San Diego, CA**
Chief, Chaplain Services - VA San Diego Healthcare System
Phone: 858-552-7599 Email: dick.millspaugh@va.gov
- **Chaplain Ron Craddock – Augusta, GA**
Chief of Chaplain Services - Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center
Phone: 706-733-0188 Ext: 6114 Email: ronald.craddock@va.gov
- **Chaplain Juliana Leshner - San Antonio, TX**
Chief of Chaplain Services - South Texas Veterans Health Care System
Phone: 210-617-5300, ext. 15439 Email: Juliana.Leshner@va.gov
- **Chaplain Sue Cross – Hampton, VA**
Chief, Chaplain Services - Hampton VA Medical Center
Phone: 757-722-9961 Ext 3601 Email: susan.cross@va.gov

VA Mission

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.



PROGRAM SUPPORT APPENDIX

Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation

WARRIOR^{TO} SOUL MATE

SUPPORTED BY
PAIRS ESSENTIALS



VA
HEALTH
CARE

Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

W2SM
Warrior to Soul Mate

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Appendix Contents

Welcome to the Warrior to Soul Mate (“W2SM”) Program Support Guide Appendix. The documents contained in this Appendix, together with the actual Program Support Guide, are designed to help VISNs, local medical centers, VET centers, and other VA facilities launch the W2SM program. You will find help to create a successful W2SM program and to develop specific opportunities to present the PAIRS Essentials curriculum to our Veterans and their significant others.

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Sample Mentor Letter: Introduction

Prior to the retreat or class, consider assigning each mentor to a given number of couples, say four, to have contact with each couple prior to the event. Contact might be through a brief, initial e-mail. For example,

DATE

Dear (First Names),

I am excited that you are planning to attend our Warrior to Soul Mate program at (Location) on (Dates). Congratulations on being accepted. I am excited because I have taken the same class and have seen what a difference it made in my life and relationships.

I am also excited because I will be serving as your mentor during this time. You can think of me as a guide, a resource, a “go-to” person for questions or concerns. I am committed to making this the best possible experience for you. For general questions regarding the program time, place, what to bring you may contact (NAME, Contact information). And for questions regarding what we will do once we get there, or concerns about your participation, contact me by e-mail or phone.

I will be in touch again prior to the retreat. Please do me a favor and just hit “reply” to send me this same e-mail to let me know you received it. If you have any questions, concerns or requests at this time, please feel free to include them.

I look forward to meeting you soon.

Sincerely,

Mentor Name
Mentor E-mail Address
Mentor Phone Number

Sample Mentor Letter: Confirmation

Below is sample second e-mail that could be sent one to two weeks prior to the program.

DATE

Dear (First Names),

Time is fast approaching for our Warrior to Soul Mate program at (Location) on (DATE and TIME). I am delighted that we will soon have the chance to meet. As one who has been through the program, I am excited that you will have the opportunity to use this very effective material from the PAIRS Foundation to explore and enrich your relationship. If you'd like to preview some of the skills and concepts you'll learn in the program, visit the PAIRS website (www.pairs.com)

I also know from my experience that it is not unusual for some people to have some mixed feelings about coming. It takes courage to be committed to building a stronger relationship.

Couples come for lots of reasons: some participate to explore if marriage is right for them, some are newly married and want to give themselves the best chance of sustaining love and happiness, some feel very good about their relationship and want to make it better, others feel their relationship has had to take a back seat to jobs and kids and want to renew the old spark, others are seriously considering separating or have separated, feeling that they have tried everything, but want to see if there is one more option to save their relationship, and some come as a gift to their partner because their partner has asked them to come.

Whatever your reason, I look forward to meeting you and would like to begin our getting to know each other by asking you to consider the following questions:

1. What do you hope to get out of this time together?
2. What, if any, concerns do you have about coming to this event?
3. What barriers might get in the way of your participation? For example, work schedule, child care, transportation issues, health concerns, anything else?
4. What couples enrichment or communication courses have you attended previously, if any? What was that like for you?
5. How can I be helpful to you?

I look forward to receiving your response and seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

Mentor Name

Mentor E-mail Address

Mentor Phone Number

Sample Welcome Letter: Retreat Format

Letter accepting applicants into Warrior to Soul Mate retreat. Modify for alternative formats.

DATE

Dear (First Names),

Congratulations on registering for the Warrior to Soul Mate program at (Location) on (Dates). During this program, you will have the opportunity to strengthen your relationship, understand each other's needs more deeply, and discover resources you didn't know you had.

The program will be led by experts in the field of communication who have been trained and certified by PAIRS Foundation to teach PAIRS Essentials, the curriculum that supports the Warrior to Soul Mate program. The skills you'll learn have helped thousands of couples discover new depths of caring for each other. You can learn more about the program online at www.pairs.com.

Each couple is expected to participate in the full program. NO ONE will be forced to speak before a group, though you will be asked to briefly introduce yourself. NO ONE will be asked to share personal information you do not wish to share. Your privacy will be honored at all times.

Please check into the hotel between XX:XX and XX:XX on (Date). Check in at the front desk and get your room key and directions to the room where you will be staying. Also ask for directions to the room where the Warrior to Soul Mate registration will be. Come to the program registration desk after checking into your room so we can give you the schedule and other materials.

Check in for the Retreat is from XX:XX to XX:XX. Dinner is at TIME, with the program following. The Retreat will end at XX:XX on (Day). Your room, meals, and parking, as well as the entire workshop, are provided free to you as a couple by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (or SPONSORING AGENCY). We would like to publicly express our gratitude for all persons who have made it possible to offer you a free weekend to focus on strengthening your relationship. Any incidental costs you chose to make will be yours to pay.

If you need your own pillow from home or if you have a particular food/snack you would like to have over the weekend, bring those. We want you to be as comfortable and rested as possible. Bring your cameras, too, if you wish. However, please understand no personal cameras are allowed within the teaching environment. Because the focus of the weekend is to enhance your relationship as a couple, childcare is not provided. This is your own time as a couple. This is also an alcohol and weapons free weekend.

We have entitled this program, "From Warrior to Soul Mate" because we recognize that military service calls for a special sacrifice for both members of a couple. Each has to make significant adjustments to a new way of life, often living apart from each other, taking on new responsibilities, discovering new strengths, facing unknown difficulties. Coming back together can be a challenge because both of you have changed. We are excited to offer this weekend as a way of saying thank you for the sacrifices you have each made.

One important request: Because you registered early, you are assured a place in this weekend. Once we reach our maximum attendance, others will be placed on a waiting list. We want you to come. We also know from experience that it takes courage to be committing time to build on your relationship, which can be scary for some people. Please don't let that stop you. The weekend is a safe, relaxed, fun way to explore new possibilities for your relationship.

If something arises and you are not able to come, please call us at PHONE NUMBER, or call me on my cell phone at PHONE NUMBER, to let me know. That can allow another couple to participate. Couples who have registered but do not show or leave early without my authorization may be charged hotel lodging expenses directly by the hotel.

We look forward to meeting you personally on (Date), are grateful for your service and sacrifices, and appreciate the opportunity to share this program with you.

Sincerely yours,

Signature
Name
Title

Sample Declining Letter

Letter referring applicants to alternative program or services.

DATE

Dear (First Names),

Thank you for your interest and application to the Warrior to Soul Mate program.

After reviewing your application, the review team has determined that a more appropriate setting to gain this information would be for you and your partner to participate in:

(Provide details of alternative program or services).

Please call Chaplain _____ at PHONE NUMBER so we can assist you.

Again, thank you for your interest in our program.

Sincerely yours,

Signature
Name
Title



PAIRS Essentials Retreats

Overview

The Mission of PAIRS

The Mission of The PAIRS Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is to create a safer, saner, more loving world.

PAIRS Foundation has been an industry leader in relationship-skills education for more than a quarter century. PAIRS offers innovative, evidence-based programs for creating and sustaining relationships. PAIRS education provides tools that become lasting resources to foster love, happiness, pleasure and fulfillment. *PAIRS Essentials*, the Foundation's 9-hour flagship program, is designed to create positive, enduring shifts in the quality and resilience of marriages, families and other intimate relationships.

PAIRS Essentials focuses on practical, usable skills that help couples and singles:

- o Connect heart to heart
- o Experience the transformative power of empathy, mutual respect and compassion
- o Express, listen to and understand emotions
- o Create a shared environment of emotional openness and honesty
- o Reveal hidden expectations to avoid assumptions and misunderstandings
- o Resolve conflict constructively, and
- o Bond through emotional openness and physical closeness.

Independent research has shown that *PAIRS Essentials* results in:

- o Restored, renewed, revitalized relationships
- o Higher levels of relationship satisfaction
- o Reduced symptoms of distress and anxiety
- o Greater commitment to a shared vision of healthy relationships, and
- o Increased resilience built on improved quality of marriages, families and relationships.

A Transformative Learning Model

PAIRS training is focused on:

- o Experiential learning
- o Transforming couples' and singles' understanding of keys to healthy relationships, and
- o Exploring and experiencing emotional, empathic communication in depth as foundational for wellbeing.

The Program's Format—Experiential Learning

PAIRS Essentials is delivered in a group setting, with a PAIRS Instructor, often over a Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday, or in several class sessions. PAIRS Instructors are skilled, perceptive, effective, certified facilitators from various disciplines. They have been trained and certified by PAIRS Foundation to deliver *PAIRS Essentials* workshops. Since 1984, PAIRS programs have been successfully delivered throughout the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Australia and the Middle East.

PAIRS Essentials is conducted with respect for the lived expertise of the participants. The general format is straightforward: the PAIRS Instructor introduces an evolving body of principles, tenets, and "tools" developed by PAIRS Foundation and invites dialogue with participants (usually 30-60), who offer their unique contributions. Often many participants identify with the contributions of one.

New Possibilities for Relationships

As the *PAIRS Essentials* Retreat proceeds, participants internalize their experiential learning. New perspectives emerge through a process of thoughtful inquiry and reflection. A deliberate sequence of experiential exercises provides safety for vulnerability, personal growth, and self-discovery and gradually expands the participants' ability to confide and listen with empathy, resulting in new ways and new perspectives from which to relate. Dialogue develops into thoughtful inquiries and discovery of "ways of being" that may have been unconscious. Those "ways of being" are highlighted for their potential to limit confiding, connection, understanding and empathy, which are the foundations for healing and growth within intimate relationships. Participants are guided to integrate new skills with "conscious competence." New possibilities for closeness, problem-solving, and love emerge. Throughout the process, participants are encouraged to recognize that they can choose behaviors that greatly determine the joy, pleasure and happiness they experience in relationships, a recognition woven within each aspect of the workshop.

I. Arrival and Welcome:

Participants should plan to arrive at Retreat site at least an hour before the start of the program to check-in at hotel (for those staying overnight), receive name tags, materials, schedule and sign-in.

II. Group Dinner:

Dinner with other retreat participants offers an opportunity to begin new friendships and share common experiences.

III. Orientation and Introductions:

Staff introductions followed by a program overview, informed consents, research description, and ground rules, as well as tips and ideas to get the most value from the weekend. Participants are invited to share their name, where they are from, what they'd like to get out of the weekend, and answer the question: "Something you might not suspect about me is ..."

The weekend schedule is reviewed and there is an opportunity to ask questions.

IV. A New Paradigm for Relationships:

Through an introduction to *Levels of Learning*, *Stages of Relationship*, *Three Hopes/Three Fears*, and *The Relationship Roadmap*, the stage is set to rapidly begin to engage with the process, concepts and exercises.

The Evening Session closes with an invitation for the group to share insights, discoveries and ask questions.

Ground Rules

1. Respect Each Other's Privacy
2. Sharing with Others is Voluntary
3. Speak Only for Yourself
4. Check With Your Partner First Before Sharing Personal Relationship Issues
5. Safety, Learning, and Fun through Community
6. Be Respectful of Others – Turn Off Cell Phones
7. Be Present

**PAIRS Essentials Retreat
Key Concepts, Tools and Exercises:**

Levels of Learning

Stages of Relationship

Three Hopes and Three Fears

Relationship Roadmap

Stress Styles of Communication

Leveling Style

Daily Temperature Reading

Invitation Rule

Empathic Listening

Good Talking, Good Listening

Talking Tips

Logic of Love and Emotions

Caring Behaviors/The Love Bank

The Emotional Jug

Emptying the Emotional Jug

Dirty Fighting

Emotional Stages of Development

Fair Fight for Change

Fight Style Profile and Evaluation

Rules for Coaches,

Scoring a Fair Fight

Relationship Agreements

Powergram

Decision-Making Worksheet

Love Knots

Emotional Allergies

Letting Go of Grudges

PAIRS Essentials Tool Box

Saturday

I. Breakfast:

Participants are invited to enjoy breakfast with other group members an hour before the program begins.

II. Group Daily Temperature Reading:

The morning session begins with a group Daily Temperature Reading, offering a chance to share: Appreciation, New Information, Puzzles, Concerns with Recommendations, and Wishes, Hopes, Dreams.

III. The Relationship Roadmap:

PAIRS Relationship Roadmap is fully unveiled as a new paradigm for understanding relationships. The conversation begins with an exploration of the root causes of pain and pleasure, considering symptoms and signs of happiness and unhappiness and their connection to the deprivation or fulfillment of biologically-based needs, including the human need for bonding.

In this session, the group explores communication *Stress Styles*, defensive behaviors and positions that cause relational distance. Positive attributes of *Stress Styles* are also considered. A role-playing exercise offers a chance for participants to connect with other group members before returning to their partner to explore the *Leveling Style*, which promotes clarity and understanding.

IV. Confiding is the Heart of Intimacy:

The group considers how we regularly care for, or neglect, relationships as the foundation of our lives. *PAIRS Daily Temperature Reading* is reviewed as a process for confiding. Intentionality is a key theme throughout: a focus on the value of inviting versus inflicting, the impact of *Empathic Listening* as opposed to defensiveness, filters or interjections that frequently discourage or limit emotional openness.

Qualities of *Good Talking and Good Listening* offers a backdrop to introduce *PAIRS Talking Tips* as a tool for *Confiding a Concern* and embracing the value of listening with empathy. Participants practice *Talking Tips* with their partners to refine clear communication and listening skills.

V. The Logic of Love and Emotions:

Understanding the *Logic of Love and Emotions* includes considering early messages about feelings.

Was it okay to be angry, scared, worried, or sad?

Participants consider the impact of early decisions about emotional expression, and the impact on bonding, as the concept of *The Emotional Jug* is introduced.

The conversation about emotions explores behaviors that may interfere with the ability to experience feelings such as love, pleasure, desire, tenderness, and relief, including ways of dealing with those emotions that may be helpful in some areas of life, such as work, while damaging in others, such as marriage/family.

Emptying the Emotional Jug is introduced as a tool for beginning to uncover and release pent-up emotions and improving the capacity to listen with empathy as a valuable gift to intimate relationships.

VI. Lunch and Afternoon Break:

Participants are invited to enjoy lunch with other group members before an extended afternoon break to relax, connect, and share new learnings and insights.

VII. Filling the Love Bank:

The group reconvenes to consider the concepts of *Caring Behaviors* and *The Love Bank*, as a means of regularly nurturing those relationships that are most important in our lives. Participants are exposed to the idea that it is necessary to openly communicate what behaviors and expressions make us feel cared about and loved. Emphasis is given to recognizing that those behaviors and expressions change as circumstances change over a lifetime. Time is provided to make a list of six to 10 specific behaviors from a significant other that leave each participant feeling valued, cared for, and loved.

The day closes with an invitation for the group to share insights, discoveries and ask questions before a short break followed by dinner with the group.

I. Breakfast:

Participants are invited to enjoy breakfast with other group members an hour before the program begins.

II. Group Daily Temperature Reading:

The morning session begins with a group Daily Temperature Reading, offering a chance to share: Appreciation, New Information, Puzzles, Concerns with Recommendations, and Wishes, Hopes, Dreams.

III. Emotional Stages of Development:

In this session, the group explores the impact that emotional attitudes have on our ability to navigate differences that are a natural part of close relationships. In examining these *Emotional Stages of Development*, participants begin to recognize their own contribution to ongoing conflict and consider a range of new possible behaviors that may lead to greater closeness and relationship satisfaction.

IV. Dirty Fighting that Fuels Conflict:

Dirty Fighting Styles, or actions that make things worse, are identified as the group prepare for constructive conflict techniques. The conversation about ways that people fuel conflict brings added awareness to actions that sabotage relationships.

The group continues to examine their own behaviors and recognize that behaviors learned earlier in life may no longer be useful or productive.

V. Fighting for the Relationship:

The Fair Fight for Change is introduced. Participants experience a new model for conflict resolution as they begin to see themselves and their significant others as being on the same side of an issue and not against each other. Discussion examines aspects of a "Fight" that would be considered fair or unfair. The coaching process is introduced as a means for support.

Group practice ensues with all participants having an opportunity to be in the role of "fair fighter" as well as coach. Lessons are integrated through recognition of mutual concerns, styles and strategies. Fair Fight practices are scored and *Relationship Agreements* are introduced.

VI. Lunch Break:

Participants are invited to enjoy lunch with other group members. For those staying in the hotel, an opportunity is provided to check-out.

VII. You, Me or We:

The Powergram is introduced as a tool for considering how decisions are made. A *Decision-Making Worksheet* offers the opportunity to reflect on areas of autonomy, influence, and mutual decision-making.

VIII. Uncovering Hidden Expectations:

Love Knots, or hidden assumptions and expectations that appear to be true but are not, are examined. The group explores the impact and price that is paid when we operate with these hidden assumptions and is offered an opportunity to untangle these love knots, making way for greater understanding, compassion and support for participants and within relationships.

IX. Discovering Emotional Triggers:

A comparison is drawn between physical allergies and strong emotional reactions based on past experiences. This type of reaction is identified as an *Emotional Allergy*. The group examines the tendency of one person's emotional allergy to trigger an emotional allergy in one's partner. Discussion focuses on identifying what may be hidden from awareness. Participants are helped to see that they are often holding people in current relationships responsible for unfinished emotional work in past relationships. Exercises and role plays illustrate the emotional allergy loop and transform it to a loop of vulnerability and empathy.

X. Letting Go of Grudges:

Through guided letter writing and/or empathic sharing regarding the full range of emotions, participants learn that letting go of grudges is truly a gift that we can give to ourselves.

XI. PAIRS Essentials Tool Box:

The retreat draws to a close with a review of the PAIRS Essentials Tool-Box, 30/60 Day Preventive Maintenance Plans, and an opportunity for each participant to share insights, new discoveries, and wishes, hopes, dreams as they celebrate new possibilities for life and love.

Alternate Formats

While the original *PAIRS Essentials* curriculum was designed for delivery over three to six sequential weekly sessions, it can be delivered in various formats to best meet the needs of program participants and provider organizations. *PAIRS Essentials* has been delivered effectively through weekend retreats, ten-week seminars, and many other alternate formats.

For participants experiencing high levels of relationship distress, research has shown particular value to delivering *PAIRS Essentials* over a single weekend in order to retain the highest percentage of participants through course completion and provide an immediate “dosage” of PAIRS that has been shown to significantly reduce symptoms of distress, anxiety and the potential for family fragmentation.¹

For classes including participants with traumatic brain injuries (TBI) or experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress (PTSD), it is especially important to follow a format that provides ample time to explain, demonstrate, practice, and process each of the exercises. The weekend format that briefly introduces the curriculum on a Friday evening and then allows for a relaxed pace and ample breaks on Saturday and Sunday has been consistently helpful for the far majority of course participants. For those classes, beyond consideration of curriculum pacing and breaks, it’s also important to start each day late enough to allow participants who are taking certain medications for sleep and/or anxiety to have a chance to ease into the program without having to wake up too early or feel rushed, which has the potential to be a source of added stress.

Programs offered as part of ongoing in-patient or drop-in treatment and rehabilitation programs that are primarily directed to singles can be effectively delivered over 10 one-hour sessions. When time allows for sessions to be expanded to 75 or 90 minutes, it’s helpful to allow additional time for demonstration, practice, and processing.

With all formats, questions regularly come up about participants who want to join a program that has already begun, either arriving late for a weekend program or missing one or more of the initial classes in a multi-session format. While the ultimate decision about admitting participants should be made by the course instructor, participants who don’t have the benefit of understanding the foundation of the program (i.e. relationship roadmap, levels of learning, hope/dreams, stress styles of communication) are disadvantaged and often less likely to fully embrace the value of the exercises. Nevertheless, there may be situations in which an individual or couple is not likely to participate later if they are invited when they are ready, despite the stage of the class, either because of scheduling or, quite often, because of levels of relationship distress that may leave them highly vulnerable to separation or divorce. It’s helpful to keep in mind that each session has value in and of itself, but that value is exponentially greater for those who have also had a chance to consider the program’s essential building blocks. In such situations, some instructors have arranged for a trained facilitator to personally review missed content with participants in a private meeting before integrating them into a class in progress.

1 Paul Peluso, Ph.D., “Engagement” in *Relationship Education Impact Reports*, PAIRS Foundation for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, September 2011.

Alternate Format: Ten One-Hour Sessions

PAIRS Essentials®

10 One-Hour Sessions

Session I: Introduction/Stress Styles	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
Introduction to PAIRS Essentials	Levels of Learning, Stages of Relationship, Hopes/Fears, Relationship Road Map, Tool Box Concept	10:00 AM	10:30 AM	0:30
Communication Stress Styles ⇨ Leveling/Congruent	Demonstrate & Practice Styles, Including Postures with Group Practice Leading to Leveling Style	10:30 AM	10:55 AM	0:25
Session Wrap-Up	Questions/Answers, Practice Suggestions, Additional Reading	10:55 AM	11:00 AM	0:05
Session II: Daily Temperature Reading	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
Daily Temperature Reading through Puzzles	Introduce DTR, Demonstrate Daily Temperature Reading and Group Practice through Puzzles (Pause After Puzzles)	10:00 AM	10:55 AM	0:55
Session Wrap-Up	Questions/Answers, Practice Suggestions, Additional Reading	10:55 AM	11:00 AM	0:05
Session III: DTR/Talking Tips/Love Bank	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
PAIRS Talking Tips for Confiding about Complaint	Introduce Empathic Shared Meaning, Demo Talking Tips, Participants Practice	10:00 AM	10:40 AM	0:40
Wishes, Hopes and Dreams	After Participants Have Each Practiced Talking Tips, End with Sharing of Wishes, Hopes and Dreams to Conclude DTR	10:40 AM	10:50 AM	0:10
Love Bank Account	Introduce Love Bank Account Concept, Identify Ways of Showing Love (Worksheet for Homework)	10:50 AM	10:55 AM	0:05
Session Wrap-Up	Questions/Answers, Practice Suggestions, Additional Reading	10:55 AM	11:00 AM	0:05
Session IV: Emotional Jug	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
Emotional Stages of Development	Infant, Child, Adolescent, Adult; Intentional Adult Stage Needed Dealing Constructively with Conflict	10:00 AM	10:05 AM	0:05
Emotional Jug ⇨ Dirty Fighting	Introduce Concept of Jug to Dirty Fighting as Signs of Leading to Group Discussion (Worksheet for Homework)	10:05 AM	10:15 AM	0:10
Emptying the Emotional Jug	Demonstrate Emptying the Jug, Participant Exercise with Issues Not About Listener	10:15 AM	10:55 AM	0:40
Session Wrap-Up	Questions/Answers, Practice Suggestions, Additional Reading	10:55 AM	11:00 AM	0:05
Session V: Constructive Conflict Resolution	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
Overview of Constructive Conflict Resolution	Introduce FFC Profile, Evaluation and Checklist, Demonstration, Review Style and Results	10:00 AM	10:55 AM	0:55
Session Wrap-Up	Questions/Answers, Practice Suggestions, Additional Reading	10:55 AM	11:00 AM	0:05
Session VI: Love Knots - Surfacing Hidden Assumptions	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
Love Knots ⇨ Untangling Love Knots	Introduce Love Knot Examples, Participants Identify, Use Talking Tips to Untangle	10:00 AM	10:55 AM	0:55
Session Wrap-Up	Questions/Answers, Practice Suggestions, Additional Reading	10:55 AM	11:00 AM	0:05
Session VII: Powergame	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
Powergame	Introduce Powergame as Tool for Avoiding Power Struggles, Participants Make Personal List of Decision-Making Areas	10:00 AM	10:55 AM	0:55
Session Wrap-Up	Questions/Answers, Practice Suggestions, Additional Reading	10:55 AM	11:00 AM	0:05
Session VIII: Emotional Allergies	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
Emotional Allergies	Introduce Emotional Allergies, Participants Identify Allergies	10:00 AM	10:15 AM	0:15
Transforming the Loop	Participants Practice Taking Tips to Untangle Emotional Allergy	10:15 AM	10:55 AM	0:40
Session Wrap-Up	Questions/Answers, Practice Suggestions, Additional Reading	10:55 AM	11:00 AM	0:05
Session IX: Course Review	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
Review Key Tools and Concepts	Review Key Curriculum Concepts and Tools - Allow Time after Each for Limited Discussion of Applicability	10:00 AM	10:45 AM	0:45
Session Wrap-Up	Final Questions/Answers, Practice Suggestions, Additional Reading	10:45 AM	11:00 AM	0:15
Session X: Graduation	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
Celebrate Course Completion/Graduation	All Participants Completing at least 8 Sessions Receive Certificate and Optional Gift	10:00 AM	10:50 AM	0:50
Closing Meditation	Closing Meditation (Virginia Satir)	10:50 AM	11:00 AM	0:10

PAIRS Essentials®					
Session One: The Heart of Intimacy		NOTES	Start	End	Time
ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST SIGN-IN ON PAIRS OFFICIAL ROSTER					
SUPPLIES NEEDED: OFFICIAL ROSTERS, INTAKE PAPERWORK, NAME TAGS, PARTICIPANT HANDBOOKS, WORKSHEETS, WALLET CARDS, POWERPOINT PROJECTOR AND COMPUTER, POSTERS (OPTIONAL), PENS, BOXED TISSUE					
Introduction to PAIRS Essentials	Levels of Learning, Stages of Relationship, Hopes/Fears, Relationship Road Map, Tool Box Concept	2:00 PM	2:30 PM	0:30	
Communication Stress Styles ⇨ Leveling/Congruent	Demonstrate & Practice Styles, Including Postures, Leading to Leveling Style	2:30 PM	2:55 PM	0:25	
Daily Temperature Reading through Puzzles	Introduce, Demonstrate, Couples Exercise through Puzzles (Pause After Puzzles)	2:55 PM	3:30 PM	0:35	
Break	Participants May Take Break After Completing Puzzles: Return on Time	3:30 PM	3:40 PM	0:10	
PAIRS Talking Tips for Confiding about Complaint	Introduce Empathic Shared Meaning, Demo Talking Tips, Couples Practice (non "nuclear" issue)	3:40 PM	4:20 PM	0:40	
Wishes, Hopes and Dreams	After Couples Have Each Practiced Talking Tips, End with Sharing of Wishes, Hopes and Dreams	4:20 PM	4:30 PM	0:10	
Love Bank Account	Introduce Love Bank Account Concept, Identify Ways of Showing Love, Begin Worksheets	4:30 PM	4:45 PM	0:15	
Q&A, Review ⇨ PAIRS Practices	Daily DTRS; Complete and Share Love Bank Worksheets; Make Deposits; Survey/Love Notes Reminders.	4:45 PM	5:00 PM	0:15	
HANDOUTS	Participant Handbooks, DTR/TT Wallet Cards, Love Bank Worksheets, Whitelist pairs@pairs.com.	TOTAL MODULE			3:00
Session Two: Constructive Conflict		NOTES	Start	End	Time
ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST SIGN-IN ON PAIRS OFFICIAL ROSTER					
SUPPLIES NEEDED: OFFICIAL ROSTERS, NAME TAGS, PARTICIPANT HANDBOOKS (LOANERS), WORKSHEETS, WALLET CARDS, POWERPOINT PROJECTOR AND COMPUTER, POSTERS (OPTIONAL), PENS, BOXED TISSUE					
Welcome & Review PAIRS Practices	Check in on PAIRS Practices: Highlight Successes	2:00 PM	2:10 PM	0:10	
Emotional Stages of Development	Infant, Child, Adolescent, Adult; Intentional Adult Stage Needed Dealing with Conflict	2:10 PM	2:15 PM	0:05	
Emotional Jug ⇨ Dirty Fighting	Introduce Concept of Jug to Dirty Fighting as Signs of Leaking to Group Discussion	2:15 PM	2:40 PM	0:25	
Emptying the Emotional Jug	Demonstrate Emptying the Jug, Couple Exercise with Issues Not About Listener	2:40 PM	3:20 PM	0:40	
Break	Participants May Take Break After Completing Emptying the Jug: Return on Time	3:20 PM	3:30 PM	0:10	
Fight Styles & Results ⇨ Fair Fight for Change	Introduce FFFC, Brief Demonstration, Review Style and Results, Exercise in Groups of Four	3:30 PM	4:45 PM	1:15	
Q&A, Review ⇨ PAIRS Practices	Daily DTRS, Continue Love Bank Deposits, Practice Emptying the Jug or Use FFFC Process	4:45 PM	5:00 PM	0:15	
HANDOUTS	Emotional Jug Wallet Cards, FFFC Agreement Worksheets	TOTAL MODULE			3:00
Session Three: Emotional Literacy		NOTES	Start	End	Time
ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST SIGN-IN ON PAIRS OFFICIAL ROSTER					
SUPPLIES NEEDED: OFFICIAL ROSTERS, NAME TAGS, PARTICIPANT HANDBOOKS (LOANERS), WORKSHEETS, WALLET CARDS, POWERPOINT PROJECTOR AND COMPUTER, POSTERS (OPTIONAL), PENS, BOXED TISSUE					
Welcome & Review PAIRS Practices	Check in on PAIRS Practices: Highlight Successes	2:00 PM	2:10 PM	0:10	
Love Knots ⇨ Untangling Love Knots	Introduce Love Knot Examples, Participants Identify, Use Talking Tips to Untangle	2:10 PM	2:50 PM	0:40	
Powergram	Introduce Powergram as Tool for Avoiding Power Struggles, Complete Worksheet, Couples Review	2:50 PM	3:30 PM	0:40	
Break	Participants May Take Break After Completing Powergram: Return on Time	3:30 PM	3:40 PM	0:10	
Emotional Allergies	Introduce Emotional Allergies, Couples Identify Allergies	3:40 PM	4:00 PM	0:20	
Transforming the Loop	Demonstrate Emotional Allergy with Volunteer Couple Leading to Transforming the Loop	4:00 PM	4:30 PM	0:30	
Q&A, Review ⇨ PAIRS Practices	Continue DTRS, Love Bank Deposits, and Develop Preventative Maintenance Plan	4:30 PM	5:00 PM	0:30	
HANDOUTS	Powergram Worksheets, Research Letter, Invitation to Graduation	TOTAL MODULE			3:00

PAIRS Essentials®				
Four 2-1/2 Hour Sessions				
Session One: The Heart of Intimacy	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST SIGN-IN ON PAIRS OFFICIAL ROSTER				
SUPPLIES NEEDED: OFFICIAL ROSTERS, INTAKE PAPERWORK, NAME TAGS, PARTICIPANT HANDBOOKS, WORKSHEETS, WALLET CARDS, POWERPOINT PROJECTOR AND COMPUTER, POSTERS (OPTIONAL), PENS, BOXED TISSUE				
Introduction to PAIRS Essentials	Levels of Learning, Stages of Relationship, Hopes/Fears, Relationship Road Map, Tool Box Concept.	10:00 AM	10:30 AM	0:30
Communication Stress Styles → Leveling/Congruent	Demonstrate & Practice Styles, Including Postures, Leading to Leveling Style.	10:30 AM	10:55 AM	0:25
Daily Temperature Reading (Skip Concerns)	Introduce, Demonstrate, Couples Exercise (Skip Concerns until next week).	10:55 AM	11:30 AM	0:35
Break	Participants May Take Break After Completing DTR: Return on Time.	11:30 AM	11:45 AM	0:15
Process Daily Temperature Reading	Invite Couples to Share about Exercise and Ask Questions.	11:45 AM	11:55 AM	0:10
Love Bank Account	Introduce Love Bank Account Concept, Identify Ways of Showing Love, Begin Worksheets.	11:55 AM	12:15 PM	0:20
Q&A, Review → PAIRS Practices	Daily DTRS; Complete and Share Love Bank Worksheets; Make Deposits; Survey/Love Notes Reminders.	12:15 PM	12:30 PM	0:15
HANDOUTS	Participant Handbooks, DTR/TT Wallet Cards, Love Bank Worksheets, Whitelist info@pairs.com.	TOTAL MODULE		2:30
Session Two: Confiding = Emotional Jug	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST SIGN-IN ON PAIRS OFFICIAL ROSTER				
SUPPLIES NEEDED: OFFICIAL ROSTERS, INTAKE PAPERWORK, NAME TAGS, PARTICIPANT HANDBOOKS, WORKSHEETS, WALLET CARDS, POWERPOINT PROJECTOR AND COMPUTER, POSTERS (OPTIONAL), PENS, BOXED TISSUE				
Welcome & Review PAIRS Practices	In Group DTR, Check in on PAIRS Practices: Highlight Successes.	10:00 AM	10:30 AM	0:30
PAIRS Talking Tips for Confiding about Complaint	Introduce Empathic Shared Meaning, Demo Talking Tips, Couples Practice (non "nuclear" issue).	10:30 AM	11:15 AM	0:45
Break	Participants May Take Break After Completing Talking Tips: Return on Time.	11:15 AM	11:25 AM	0:10
Process Talking Tips	Invite Couples to Share about Exercise and Ask Questions.	11:25 AM	11:35 AM	0:10
Emotional Stages of Development	Infant, Child, Adolescent, Adult; Intentional Adult Stage Needed Dealing with Conflict.	11:35 AM	11:45 AM	0:10
Emotional Jug → Dirty Fighting	Introduce Concept of Jug to Dirty Fighting as Signs of Leaking; Couples Share Dirty Fighting Worksheets.	11:45 AM	12:15 PM	0:30
Q&A, Review → PAIRS Practices	Daily DTRS; Make and Notice Love Bank Deposits; Love Notes Reminders.	12:15 PM	12:30 PM	0:15
HANDOUTS	Fair Fight/Dirty Fighting, Emotional Jug Wallet Cards.	TOTAL MODULE		2:30
Session Three: Constructive Conflict	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST SIGN-IN ON PAIRS OFFICIAL ROSTER				
SUPPLIES NEEDED: OFFICIAL ROSTERS, NAME TAGS, PARTICIPANT HANDBOOKS (LOANERS), WORKSHEETS, WALLET CARDS, POWERPOINT PROJECTOR AND COMPUTER, POSTERS (OPTIONAL), PENS, BOXED TISSUE				
Welcome & Review PAIRS Practices	In Group DTR, Check in on PAIRS Practices: Highlight Successes.	10:00 AM	10:20 AM	0:20
Emptying the Emotional Jug	Review Emotional Jug and then Demonstrate Emptying the Jug.	10:20 AM	10:40 AM	0:20
Emptying the Emotional Jug Exercise	Couples Each Practice as Speaker and Listener with Issues Not About Listener (SPACE FOR PRIVACY).	10:40 AM	11:15 AM	0:35
Break	Participants May Take Break After Completing Emptying the Jug: Return on Time.	11:15 AM	11:25 AM	0:10
Process Emptying the Emotional Jug	Invite Couples to Share about Exercise and Ask Questions.	11:25 AM	11:35 AM	0:10
Fight Styles & Results → Fair Fight for Change	Introduce FFFC, Brief Demonstration, Review Time-Out, Style/Results, Checklist, Role of Coaches, Agreements.	11:35 AM	12:05 PM	0:30
Powergram (SEQUENCE CHANGE)	Introduce Powergram as Tool for Avoiding Power Struggles, Introduce Worksheet as PAIRS Practice Activity.	12:05 PM	12:15 PM	0:10
Q&A, Review → PAIRS Practices	Daily DTRS, Continue Love Bank Deposits, Practice Emptying the Jug or Use FFFC Process.	12:05 PM	12:20 PM	0:15
HANDOUTS	Fair Fight/Dirty Fighting and Emotional Jug Wallet Cards, FFFC Agreement Worksheets.	TOTAL MODULE		2:30
Session Four: Emotional Literacy	CURRICULUM CONTENT	Start	End	Time
ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST SIGN-IN ON PAIRS OFFICIAL ROSTER				
SUPPLIES NEEDED: OFFICIAL ROSTERS, NAME TAGS, PARTICIPANT HANDBOOKS (LOANERS), WORKSHEETS, WALLET CARDS, POWERPOINT PROJECTOR AND COMPUTER, POSTERS (OPTIONAL), PENS, BOXED TISSUE				
Welcome & Review PAIRS Practices	In Group DTR, Check in on PAIRS Practices: Highlight Successes.	10:00 AM	10:05 AM	0:05
Couples Practice Fair Fight for Change	In Groups of Four, Couples Practice FFFC with Coaches.	10:05 AM	10:35 AM	0:30
Process Fair Fight for Change	Invite Couples to Share about Exercise and Ask Questions.	10:35 AM	10:40 AM	0:05
Love Knots → Untangling Love Knots	Introduce Love Knot Examples, Participants Identify, Use Talking Tips to Untangle.	10:40 AM	11:05 AM	0:25
Break	Participants May Take Brief Break After Completing Untangling Love Knots Return on Time.	11:05 AM	11:15 AM	0:10
Emotional Allergies	Introduce Emotional Allergies, Couples Identify Allergies.	11:15 AM	11:25 AM	0:10
Transforming the Loop	Demonstrate Emotional Allergy with Volunteer Couple Leading to Transforming the Loop.	11:25 AM	11:55 AM	0:30
PAIRS Tool Kit	Review Tool Kit to Bring All PAIRS Essentials Tools Together, Answer Questions.	11:55 AM	12:30 PM	0:35
HANDOUTS	Fair Fight/Dirty Fighting, Love Knots, Emotional Allergy Wallet Cards, Research Letter, Graduation.	TOTAL MODULE		2:30

PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT

INFORMED CONSENT

PAIRS is an educational program. It is not intended as therapy or treatment, or to replace therapy or treatment. The PAIRS seminars include a selection of educational, illuminating and often humorous experiences. At times, some highly charged emotional experiences may occur. The material presented in PAIRS may involve such emotions as anger, sadness, or desire. These experiences are included because it is part of the stated goals of PAIRS to expand options for understanding, pleasure and intimacy so that participants may develop their range of emotions in order to increase emotional and physical intimacy with their partner. It is always the action of each individual to choose to participate in any of the exercises offered, or to choose not to participate.

The PAIRS Foundation, Inc., our officers, directors, employees, agents, contractors and/or service providers exercise no control over the actions of individual Providers in individual courses taught in whole or in part using materials provided by PAIRS Foundation. PAIRS Foundation assumes no liability for the actions of individual Providers. The Provider(s) recognizes his/her individual liability made upon him/her/their by any participant. The manner in which the course materials are presented, and the way in which the emotions and responses elicited from participants are handled, are at the sole discretion of the individual instructor and the participant, and in no way reflect upon PAIRS and its teachings.

As a participant, I acknowledge that my experience in PAIRS, in whole or in part, may engender new perceptions and a range of emotions that at times may include uncomfortable emotions. I understand that the exercises are designed to expand perceptions and to facilitate the development of a range of emotions including pleasure, joy, love, pain, fear and anger in behalf of an enhanced capacity for empathy and mutual understanding. At times, I may experience uncomfortable, as well as pleasurable, feelings. I voluntarily choose to participate in this program, and I agree to hold the PAIRS Foundation and the Provider(s) of the PAIRS programs in which I participate harmless against any claims related to my experience in the PAIRS program. I understand that the instructor may audio or video tape class lectures, which may be submitted to PAIRS Foundation for quality and/or research purposes. Such audio or video tapes will not identify participants in any way.

I clearly understand that it is always my choice as to whether to participate in the experiences offered.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I understand that PAIRS is a private and personal experience for each participant. As such, I agree to respect the confidentiality of all participants and their remarks and actions, and I agree to keep all such information private and confidential. I am also aware that PAIRS is protected by copyright, and cannot be reproduced, copied, stored electronically or otherwise duplicated or distributed without the express written permission of PAIRS Foundation. I agree not to violate this copyright.

DECLARATION AND PROMISE (AGREEMENT)

I declare that I have read and understood all of the information on this information form; that all of my responses are accurate and true to the best of my knowledge; and that I have read and understand the Informed Consent and Confidentiality Agreement and agree to abide by the terms of both.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY AND PROVIDE ALL REQUESTED INFORMATION:

Signature	Date	Class City/State	PAIRS Instructor
Last Name	First Name	Middle	Title
Email Address	Daytime Phone	Evening Phone	
Street Address	City, State	ZIP Code	

Please complete and return to your PAIRS Instructor before first class.
 PAIRS Foundation, 200 S. Park Road, Suite 465, Hollywood, Florida 33021
 Toll-Free: (877) PAIRS-4U Email: info@pairs.com Fax: (954) 308-0081



PAIRS Essentials Pre-Retreat Questionnaire

DATE _____ Your Code _____ [Pick a 4 number/letter code you can remember. Avoid a code such as "AB12", which someone else might choose. You will need the same code you choose today for the end of the retreat.]

1. How many years have you been married (or in a committed relationships) with your significant other: _____ years

2. Please circle each that applies:

I am a Military member, (AD/Guard/Reserve), Veteran, Significant other

I am a _____ Male/ Female

3. Please circle all of the following reasons you decided to attend this retreat:

To heal a wounded relationship

To enhance an already strong relationship

To "find" a new normal with my relationship

To learn to communicate more effectively with my significant other

To work with other couples struggling with similar relationship issues

To learn healthier ways to manage my anger and/or my significant other's anger

My significant other wanted us to attend

Other _____

4. Use these statements to say how you felt just prior to registering for the retreat. You will be asked similar questions after most of the retreat Sunday.

4a. My relationship faces communication difficulties

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

4b. I have trouble controlling my anger

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

4c. My significant other has trouble controlling his/her anger

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

5. I have an excellent relationship with my significant other? (circle one)

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

6. Please rate the following statements from just before signing up for the retreat. You will answer similar questions toward the end of this retreat.

6a. I am happy with my relationship.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

6b. I feel loved and valued by my significant other.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

6c. I have the skills to effectively communicate my needs and feeling to my significant other.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

6d. My significant other has the skills to effectively communicate his/her needs and feelings to me.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

6e. I have the skills to effectively communicate with my significant other when trying to solve a problem or resolve an issue.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

Pre-Retreat Questionnaire

6f. My significant other has the skills to effectively communicate with me when trying to solve a problem or resolve an issue.

1	-	2	-	3	-	4	-	5
strongly disagree		disagree		uncertain		agree		strongly agree

6g. I have the knowledge and ability to manage my anger.

1	-	2	-	3	-	4	-	5
strongly disagree		disagree		uncertain		agree		strongly agree

6h. My significant other has the knowledge and ability to manage his/her anger.

1	-	2	-	3	-	4	-	5
strongly disagree		disagree		uncertain		agree		strongly agree

6i. My significant other and I will be able to "reclaim" and strengthen our relationship.

1	-	2	-	3	-	4	-	5
strongly disagree		disagree		uncertain		agree		strongly agree

Please use the space below to provide any additional information you'd like the program instructor(s) to know about you and/or your relationship.

PAIRS Essentials Post-Retreat Questionnaire

Your Code _____ [Your Unique 4 number code]

PAIRS Essentials Post-Retreat Questionnaire: Please answer all questions from the way you feel after having been in this retreat. Your answers will be compared to how you answered before the retreat.

1. The subject matter experts leading this PAIRS Essentials Retreat:

- a) Did not meet my expectations for this retreat
- b) Met my expectations for this retreat
- c) Exceeded my expectations for this retreat

2. Please rate the following statements:

The material presented has addressed key relationship issues I am facing.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

This Marriage Enrichment Retreat helped me open up to my significant other (or my significant other open up to me) more about our issues.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

I am happy with my relationship.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

I feel loved and valued by my significant other.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

I have the skills to effectively communicate my needs and feeling to my significant other.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

My significant other has the skills to effectively communicate his/her needs and feelings to me.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

Please rate the following statements:

I have the skills to effectively communicate with my significant other when trying to solve a problem or resolve an issue.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

My significant other has the skills to effectively communicate with me when trying to solve a problem or resolve an issue.

1		2		3		4		5
strongly disagree	-	disagree	-	uncertain	-	agree	-	strongly agree

Post-Retreat Questionnaire

I have the knowledge and ability to manage my anger.					
1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	disagree	uncertain	agree	strongly agree	
My significant other has the knowledge and ability to manage his/her anger.					
1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	disagree	uncertain	agree	strongly agree	
My significant other and I will be able to "reclaim" and strengthen our relationship.					
1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	disagree	uncertain	agree	strongly agree	
3. Following this retreat experience I would categorize our relationship as:					
1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	disagree	uncertain	agree	strongly agree	
I [would/would not] (circle one) recommend this retreat to other couples.					
Why or Why Not?					
What was the highlight of this weekend's retreat for you?					
What can we do to make this an even better experience for other couples?					

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: **AUG 23 2012**

From: Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N)

Subj: Marriage and Relationship Health Training

To: Veterans Health Administration Facility Directors

Thru: Network Directors (10N 1-23)

1. This memorandum provides guidance to Veterans Health Administration facilities who received Fiscal Year 2012 grant funding through the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation to pilot Marriage and Relationship Health Training (often referred to as a Warrior to Soul Mate Program) for Veterans and other eligible individuals. The memorandum specifically addresses when lodging, snacks and meals may be provided to Veterans and eligible individuals.

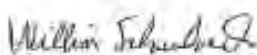
2. The Under Secretary for Health's Information Letter, IL 10-2010-013, dated August 30, 2010, provides guidance on the expanded authority for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide mental health and other services to members of a Veteran's immediate family, the legal guardian of a Veteran, or the individual in whose household the Veteran certifies an intention to live ("eligible individuals"). IL 10-2010-013 further states a list of services that can be provided including consultation; professional counseling; marriage and family counseling; training; and mental health services as are necessary in connection with that treatment.

3. Enrolled Veterans and eligible individuals identified in IL 10-2010-13 can participate in VA Marriage and Relationship Health Training.

4. The Marriage and Relationship Health Training is designed to teach Veterans better communication skills, constructive conflict resolution, bonding and emotional literacy. The curriculum is often based on the Practical Application of Intimate Relationships Skills Foundation model. Veterans will be referred to the program via a Computerized Patient Record System consult, and a Veteran's participation in the Marriage and Relationship Health training will be documented in the health record by the VA training instructor.

5. Marriage and Relationship Health Training is usually conducted within a closed environment at a location where overnight accommodations are available (e.g., a hotel). If so, participants will be strongly encouraged to remain at the location for the duration of the training in order to receive the most benefit from the training.

In these circumstances, lodging, snacks, and meals for Veterans and eligible individuals who participate in this training are considered a necessary part of the medical care being provided at the training and may be provided to them at VA expense.



William Schoenhard, FACHE

Sample Sole Source Contract

The VISN 11 Network Contracting Activity (NCA) hereby gives notice of intent to award a sole source contract to The PAIRS Foundation, Inc. 200 S. Park Road, Suite 455, Hollywood, Florida 33021 USA to provide curriculum and training for the Practical Application for Intimate Relationship Skills (PAIRS) Professional “Train the Trainer” workshops to be facilitated by the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center, Department of Veterans Affairs, VISN 11.

The NCA intends to negotiate with only one source under authority of FAR 6.302-1; only one responsible source and no other supplies or services will satisfy agency requirements. This seminar is specifically designed to certify up to 49 chaplains, social workers and clinical psychologists from VA Medical Centers within VISN 11 and across the nation to certify in performing PAIRS counseling/communication techniques with veterans and family members to include spouses. This is a specialized and evidence based training course that focuses three fourths of its curriculum on “emotional literacy” and improving communication skills of returning combat veterans/spouses suffering with marriage issues related to combat stress. The training specifically includes levels of learning, stages of relationships, hopes and fears in relationships, relationship road maps, communication stress styles, leveling/congruent, daily temperature reading of relationship, good talking and good listening skills, fulfilling ones emotional relational needs, caring behaviors, essentials in relationships, emotional stages of development, emotional needs, fair fighting for change, tips for time-out, fight style evaluation, fight results profile, guide for coaches, fair fight checklist (scorecard), relationship agreement, love knots with worksheets, untangling love knots, powergram, decision-making worksheet, emotional allergy negative infinity loop, emotional allergy worksheet, confiding an emotional allergy, and finally transforming the loop with a final course evaluation. Each participant will receive certification credentials by PAIRS along with an instructor’s guidebook/handbook. At the conclusion of this four-day seminar each certified participant will be able to conduct PAIRS training/counseling and marriage enrichment retreats for veterans and/or active duty personnel and spouses as well as family members utilizing PAIRS curriculum and handouts. Each certified participant will have a superior understanding and skill set to provide intense emotional literacy communication not available to them prior to this training by this vendor. There is no other evidence-based source that offers this intense “emotional literacy-filled and effective communication skills” program. More than 75 percent of the materials used focuses on intense emotional literacy and communication skills taught during this workshop. The PAIRS train the trainer program is unique in that it is NOT “faith-based” and therefore not geared toward any one faith group which makes it a distinctive choice for the VA since we are required to be diverse in our training materials so as not to exclude any one Christian or non-Christian group of veterans. Furthermore this curriculum is a continuation PAIRS training for VA Chaplains that have received the base certifications required to attend.

Please do not request a copy of a solicitation. This notice is neither a request for competitive proposals, nor is it a solicitation of offers. Any response to this notice must demonstrate clear and convincing evidence that competition would be advantageous to the Government and any capability statement provided must address services listed above.

Written communication received will be considered solely for the purpose of determining whether to conduct a competitive procurement. If no affirmative written response is received on or before July 10, 2012, the contract will be awarded without further notice. No telephone inquiries will be accepted. Inquiries will only be accepted via e-mail at elijah.erwin@va.gov. A determination by the Government to not compete this requirement based on responses to this notice is solely within the discretion of the Government.

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date:
From:
Subj: Authorization to Transport VA Sensitive Information Outside of VA Protected
Environments
To: Medical Center Director, (00)
Thru: Service Chief ()
CIO (ITS) ()
ISO (ITS) ()

1. In order to accomplish my duties, I require the capability to store, transport, and utilize VA sensitive information outside protected environments, as defined by VA Directive and Handbook 6500. VA information refers to all information, either electronic or paper-based. My personal information follows:

Requestor's Name: _____

Title: _____

Business Address: _____

Phone number: _____

2. Justification for the removal of VA sensitive information outside of protected environments(include where and how information will be used):
3. The sensitive information, as defined in VA Handbook and Directive 6500, I intend to store, transport and utilize includes (check all that apply):
 - ☐ Individually identifiable medical, benefits or personnel information
 - ☐ Information that can be withheld under the Freedom of Information Act
 - ☐ Financial information
 - ☐ Research information
 - ☐ Investigatory information
 - ☐ Commercial information
 - ☐ Quality assurance information
 - ☐ Law enforcement information
 - ☐ Information that is confidential or privileged in litigation
 - ☐ Information that could adversely affect the national interest or conduct of federal programs
 - ☐ Other: _____

4. The timeframe I will store, transport and utilize VA sensitive information outside protected environments is:

- ☐ 30 days
☐ 180 days
☐ One Year (Maximum – must be reviewed annually)
☐ Other: _____

5. I acknowledge that the above statements are accurate and are in compliance with VA Directive and Handbook 6500, Managing Information Security Risk: VA Information Security Program.

6. I acknowledge this document requires renewal upon expiration of the approval timeframe requested above.

Requestor's Signature

Date

Required Concurrence and Approval

Supervisor's Name

Concur / Do Not Concur

Supervisor's Signature

Date

Concur / Do Not Concur

Service Chief

Date

Concur / Do Not Concur

(ITS) ()
Facility Information Security Officer

Date

Concur / Do Not Concur

()
Facility Chief Information Officer

Date

Approved / Disapproved

()

Director

Date

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NATIONAL RULES OF BEHAVIOR

I understand, accept, and agree to the following terms and conditions that apply to my access to, and use of, information, including VA sensitive information, or information systems of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

1. GENERAL RULES OF BEHAVIOR

a. I understand that an essential aspect of my job is to take personal responsibility for the secure use of VA systems and the VA data that it contains or that may be accessed through it, as well as the security and protection of VA information in any form (e.g., digital, paper).

b. I understand that when I use any government information system, I have NO expectation of privacy in any records that I create or in my activities while accessing or using such information system.

c. I understand that authorized VA personnel may review my conduct or actions concerning VA information and information systems, and take appropriate action. Authorized VA personnel include my supervisory chain of command as well as VA system administrators and ISOs. Appropriate action may include monitoring, recording, copying, inspecting, restricting access, blocking, tracking, and disclosing information to authorized OIG, VA, and law enforcement personnel.

d. I understand that the following actions are prohibited: unauthorized access, unauthorized uploading, unauthorized downloading, unauthorized changing, unauthorized circumventing, or unauthorized deleting of information on VA systems, modifying VA systems, unauthorized denying or granting access to VA systems, using VA resources for unauthorized use on VA systems, or otherwise misusing VA systems or resources. I also understand that attempting to engage in any of these unauthorized actions is also prohibited.

e. I understand that such unauthorized attempts or acts may result in disciplinary or other adverse action, as well as criminal or civil penalties. Depending on the severity of the violation, disciplinary or adverse action consequences may include: suspension of access privileges, reprimand, suspension from work, demotion, or removal. Theft, conversion, or unauthorized disposal or destruction of Federal property or information may also result in criminal sanctions.

f. I understand that I have a responsibility to report suspected or identified information security incidents (security and privacy) to my VA supervisor, ISO and PO, immediately upon suspicion.

g. I understand that I have a duty to report information about actual or possible criminal violations involving VA programs, operations, facilities, contracts or information systems to my VA supervisor, local CIO and ISO, any management official or directly to the OIG, including reporting to the OIG Hotline. I also understand that I have a duty to immediately report to the OIG any possible criminal matters involving felonies, including crimes involving information systems.

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h. I understand that the VA National ROB do not and should not be relied upon to create any other right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law, by a party to litigation with the U.S. Government.

i. I understand that the VA National ROB do not supersede any policies of VA facilities and other agency components that provide higher levels of protection to VA's information or information systems. The VA National ROB provide the minimal rules with which individual users must comply.

j. I understand that if I refuse to sign this VA National ROB as required by VA policy, I will be denied access to VA information systems or VA sensitive information. Any refusal to sign the VA National ROB may have an adverse impact on my employment with the Department.

2. SPECIFIC RULES OF BEHAVIOR

a. Basic

(1) I will follow established VA information security and privacy policies and procedures.

(2) I will comply with any directions from my supervisors, VA system administrators, and ISOs concerning my access to, and use of, VA information and information systems or matters covered by these ROB.

(3) I understand that I may need to sign a non-VA entity's ROB to obtain access to their system in order to conduct VA business. While using their system, I must comply with their ROB. However, I must also comply with VA's National ROB whenever I am accessing VA information systems or VA sensitive information.

(4) I may be required to acknowledge or sign additional specific or unique ROB in order to access or use specific VA systems. I understand that those specific ROB may include, but are not limited to, restrictions or prohibitions on limited personal use, special requirements for access or use of the data in that system, special requirements for the devices used to access that specific system, or special restrictions on interconnections between that system and other IT resources or systems.

b. Data Protection

(1) I will safeguard electronic VA sensitive information at work and remotely. I understand that all VA owned mobile devices must be encrypted using FIPS 140-2, *Security Requirements for Cryptographic Modules*, validated encryption (or its successor) unless encryption is not technically possible, as determined and approved by my local ISO, CIO and the DAS for OIS. This includes laptops, thumb drives, and other removable storage devices and storage media (e.g., CDs, Digital Video Discs (DVD)).

(2) I understand that per VA Directive 6609, *Mailing of Sensitive Personal Information*, the following types of information are excluded from the encryption requirement when mailed

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according to the requirements outlined in the directive:

(a) Information containing the SPI of a single individual to:

1. That person (e.g., the Veteran's, beneficiary's, dependent's, or employee's own information) or to that person's legal representative (e.g., guardian, attorney-in-fact, attorney, or Veteran Service Organization). Such information may be mailed to an entity, not otherwise the subject of an exception, with the express written consent of the individual. Such information may be mailed via U.S. Postal Service regular mail unless tracked delivery service is requested and paid for by the recipient;

2. A business partner such as a health plan or insurance company, after reviewing potential risk;

3. A court, adjudicative body, parties in litigation, or to persons or entities in the course of a judicial or administrative proceeding; and

4. Congress, law enforcement agencies, and other governmental entities.

(b) Information containing SPI of one or more individuals to a person or entity that does not have the capability to decrypt information that is encrypted by VA, when sent according to VA Directive 6609.

(3) I understand that I must have approval from my supervisor to use, process, store, or transmit electronic VA sensitive information remotely (outside of VA owned or managed facilities (e.g., medical centers, community based outpatient clinics (CBOC), regional offices)).

(4) If approved to use, process, store, or transmit electronic VA sensitive information remotely, I must ensure any device I utilize is encrypted using FIPS 140-2 (or its successor) validated encryption. Information systems must use VA's approved configuration and security control requirements. The local CIO and ISO must review and approve (in writing) the mechanisms used to transport and store the VA sensitive data before it can be removed from the VA facility.

(5) I will ensure that all printouts of VA sensitive information that I work with, as part of my official duties, are physically secured when not in use (e.g., locked cabinet, locked door).

(6) I acknowledge that particular care should be taken to protect SPI aggregated in lists, databases, or logbooks, and will include only the minimum necessary SPI to perform a legitimate business function.

(7) I recognize that access to certain databases, regional-, or national-level data such as data warehouses or registries containing patient or benefit information, and data from other Federal agencies such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid or the Social Security Administration, has the potential to cause great risk to VA, its customers and employees due to the number and/or sensitivity of the records being accessed. I will act accordingly to ensure the confidentiality and security of these data commensurate with this increased potential risk.

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(8) If I have been approved by my supervisor to take printouts of VA sensitive information home or to another remote location outside of a VA facility, or if I have been provided the ability to print VA sensitive information from a remote location to a location outside of a VA facility, I must ensure that the printouts are destroyed to meet VA disposal requirements when they are no longer needed and in accordance with all relevant records retention requirements. Two secure options that can be used are to utilize a shredder that meets VA and NIST's requirements or return the printouts to a VA facility for appropriate destruction.

(9) When in an uncontrolled environment (e.g., public access work area, airport, or hotel), I will protect against disclosure of VA sensitive information which could occur by eavesdropping, overhearing, or overlooking (shoulder surfing) from unauthorized persons. I will also follow a clear desk policy that requires me to remove VA sensitive information from view when not in use (e.g., on desks, printers, fax machines, etc.). I will also secure mobile and portable computing devices (e.g., laptops, USB thumb drives, PDA).

(10) I will use VA approved encryption to encrypt any e-mail, including attachments to the e-mail that contains VA sensitive information before sending the e-mail. I will not send any e-mail that contains VA sensitive information in an unencrypted form. I will not encrypt e-mail that does not include VA sensitive information or any e-mail excluded from the encryption requirement under para. b(2).

(11) I will not auto-forward e-mail messages to addresses outside the VA network.

(12) I will take reasonable steps to ensure fax transmissions are sent to the appropriate destination, including double checking the fax number, confirming delivery of the fax, using a fax cover sheet with the required notification message included and only transmitting individually identifiable information via fax when no other reasonable means exist and when someone is at the machine to receive the transmission or the receiving machine is in a secured location.

(13) I will protect VA sensitive information from unauthorized disclosure, use, modification, or destruction, including using encryption products approved and provided by VA to protect sensitive data. I will only provide access to sensitive information to those who have a need-to-know for their professional duties, including only posting sensitive information to web-based collaboration tools restricted to those who have a need-to-know and when proper safeguards are in place for sensitive information. For questions regarding need-to-know and safeguards, I will obtain guidance from my VA supervisor, local CIO, and/or ISO before providing any access.

(14) When using wireless connections for VA business I will only use VA authorized wireless connections and will not transmit VA sensitive information via wireless technologies unless the connection uses FIPS 140-2 (or its successor) validated encryption.

(15) I will properly dispose of VA sensitive information, either in hardcopy, softcopy, or electronic format, in accordance with VA policy and procedures.

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VA
HEALTH
CARE
in the 21st Century
EXCELLENCE

(16) I will never swap or surrender VA hard drives or other storage devices to anyone other than an authorized OIT employee.

c. Logical Access Controls

(1) I will follow established procedures for requesting access to any VA computer system and for notification to the VA supervisor, local CIO, and/or ISO when the access is no longer needed.

(2) I will only utilize passwords that meet the VA minimum requirements defined in control **IA-5: Authenticator Management** in VA Handbook 6500, Appendix F, including using compliant passwords for authorized web-based collaboration tools that may not enforce such requirements.

(3) I will protect my verify codes and passwords from unauthorized use and disclosure. I will not divulge a personal username, password, access code, verify code, or other access requirement to anyone.

(4) I will not store my passwords or verify codes in any file on any IT system, unless that file has been encrypted using FIPS 140-2 (or its successor) validated encryption and I am the only person who can decrypt the file. I will not hardcode credentials into scripts or programs.

(5) I will use elevated privileges (e.g., Administrator accounts), if provided for the performance of my official duties, only when such privileges are needed to carry out specifically assigned tasks which require elevated access. When performing general user responsibilities, I will use my individual user account.

d. Remote Access/Teleworking

(1) I understand that remote access is allowed from other Federal Government computers and systems to VA information systems, subject to the terms of VA and the host Federal agency's policies.

(2) I agree that I will directly connect to the VA network whenever possible. If a direct connection to the VA network is not possible, then I will use VA-approved remote access software and services. I will use VA-provided IT equipment for remote access when possible.

(3) I agree that I will not have both a VA network connection and any non-VA network connection (including a modem or phone line or wireless network card, etc.) physically connected to any computer at the same time unless the dual connection is explicitly authorized in writing by my VA supervisor, local CIO, and ISO.

(4) I am responsible for the security of VA property and information, regardless of my work location. VA security policies are the same and will be enforced at the same rigorous level when I telework as when I am in the office. I will keep government furnished equipment (GFE) and VA information safe, secure, and separated from my personal property and information.

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(5) I will ensure that VA sensitive information, in any format, and devices, systems and/or software that contain such information or that I use to access VA sensitive information or information systems are adequately secured in remote locations (e.g., at home and during travel) and agree to periodic VA inspections of the devices, systems or software from which I conduct access from remote locations. I agree that if I work from a remote location, pursuant to an approved telework agreement with VA sensitive information, authorized OIT personnel may periodically inspect the remote location for compliance with required security requirements.

(6) I will protect information about remote access mechanisms from unauthorized use and disclosure.

(7) I will notify my VA supervisor, local CIO and ISO prior to any international travel with a mobile device (laptop, PDA) so that appropriate actions can be taken prior to my departure and upon my return, including potentially issuing a specifically configured device for international travel and/or inspecting the device or reimaging the hard drive upon return.

(8) I will exercise a higher level of awareness in protecting mobile devices when traveling internationally as laws and individual rights vary by country and threats against Federal employee devices may be heightened.

e. Non-VA Owned Systems

(1) I agree that I will not allow VA sensitive information to reside on non-VA systems or devices unless specifically designated and approved in writing in advance by my VA supervisor, local CIO, and ISO. I agree that I will not access, transmit, or store remotely any VA sensitive information that is not encrypted using VA approved encryption.

(2) I will only use VA approved solutions for connecting non-VA owned systems to VA's network.

(3) I will obtain my local CIO's approval prior to connecting any non-VA equipment to VA's network at a VA facility. This includes directly connecting to a network port or utilizing remote access capabilities within the VA facility.

f. System Security Controls

(1) I will not attempt to override, circumvent, or disable operational, technical, or management security controls unless expressly directed to do so in writing by authorized VA staff. I will not attempt to alter the security configuration of government equipment unless authorized.

(2) I will only use virus protection software, anti-spyware, and firewall/intrusion detection software authorized by VA on VA equipment.

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(3) I will not disable or degrade software programs used by VA that install security software updates to VA computer equipment, to computer equipment used to connect to VA information systems, or to create, store or use VA information.

(4) I agree to have issued GFE scanned and serviced by VA authorized personnel. This may require me to return it promptly to a VA facility upon demand.

(5) I will permit only those authorized by OIT to perform maintenance on IT components, including installation or removal of hardware or software.

g. System Access

(1) I will use only VA approved devices, systems, software, services, and data which I am authorized to use, including complying with any software licensing or copyright restrictions.

(2) I will only use VA approved collaboration technologies for conducting VA business.

(3) I will not download software from the Internet, or other public available sources, offered as free trials, shareware, or other unlicensed software to a VA owned system.

(4) I will not host, set up, administer, or operate any type of Internet server or wireless access point on any VA network unless explicitly authorized in writing by my local CIO and approved by my ISO. I will ensure that all such activity is in compliance with Federal and VA policies.

(5) I will not attempt to probe computer systems to exploit system controls or to obtain unauthorized access to VA sensitive data.

(6) I will only use my access to VA computer systems and/or records for officially authorized and assigned duties. The use must not violate any VA policy regarding jurisdiction, restrictions, limitations or areas of responsibility.

(7) I will use my access under VA Directive 6001, *Limited Personal Use of Government Office Equipment Including Information Technology*, understanding that this Directive does not pertain to accessing VA applications or records. I will not engage in any activity that is prohibited by the Directive.

(8) I will prevent unauthorized access by another user by ensuring that I log off or lock any VA computer or console before walking away or initiate a comparable application feature that will keep others from accessing the information and resources available in my computing session.

h. Miscellaneous

(1) I will complete mandatory periodic security and privacy awareness training within designated timeframes, and complete any additional role-based security training required, based on my roles and responsibilities.

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(2) I will take precautions as directed by communications from my ISO and local OIT staff to protect my computer from emerging threats.

(3) I understand that while logged into authorized Web-based collaboration tools I am a representative of VA and I will abide by the ROB and all other policies and procedures related to these tools.

(4) I will protect government property from theft, loss, destruction, or misuse. I will follow VA policies and procedures for handling Federal Government IT equipment and will sign for items provided to me for my exclusive use and return them when no longer required for VA activities.

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ACCEPTANCE

a. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of these Rules of Behavior.

b. I understand, accept and agree to comply with all terms and conditions of these Rules of Behavior.

Print or type your full name

Signature

Date

Office Phone

Position Title

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Ethical Standards for PAIRS Providers

These standards of professionalism aim to assure the high quality and safety of PAIRS classes. We, as a community of providers, collaborate to create an efficient and effective experience for couples, singles, and youth regarding learning the dynamics of intimacy. PAIRS maintains this set of ethical guidelines for self-monitoring by providers to assure the consistent quality and reputation of PAIRS as a leading relationship education, prevention, and intervention program.

1. Introduction & Definitions

1.1. The following are based on ethical guidelines of the American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association and the National Association of Social Work.

1.2. The word 'Provider' as used in this document is to include all Licensed PAIRS Instructors, Leaders, Teachers, Trainers, and Trained Professionals, as well as their assistants and employees who are engaged in promoting, providing and researching PAIRS Programs.

1.3. PAIRS ethical standards are representative of the professions from which PAIRS Providers generally come. Each PAIRS Provider is a priori bound by the ethical standards of his or her own profession. PAIRS sets a minimum standard of conduct for its Providers as those standards generally established by professional boards in the helping professions.

1.4. A Provider is in a significant position of power by virtue of his or her role as someone who has expertise and teaches about intimate relationship skills. Participants often place their trust in the Provider and tend to look to the Provider to set professional guidelines regarding appropriate behavior. Therefore, maintaining professional standards of behavior at all times is expected when interacting with participants.

1.5 A PAIRS Provider creates a "safe haven" for exploration and learning. A Provider assures participants that the PAIRS learning environment is a safe place to explore intimacy and skill development and that the Provider is a safe and reliable guide through the process.

1.6. Ethical practice begins with the recognition that all of our actions, even seemingly insignificant ones, have a potential for harmful impact on participants. Shouldering that responsibility is a complex task that requires vigilance and ongoing dialogue. Providers are sensitive to prevailing community standards and to the possible impact of their public behavior upon the reputation of this program. Any questions about appropriate ethical behavior should be expressed directly from the Provider to your Program Manager and PAIRS Foundation.

2. Obligations of a PAIRS Provider

A PAIRS Provider will:

- 2.1. Provide a service of education about intimate relationships to a clientele of adults in a group setting or in a clinic setting, or to minors in a group setting with written permission of the minors' legal guardians, or as part of an educational program taught through an accredited public or private school.
- 2.2. Have, and maintain, the qualifications stipulated in the PAIRS Licensing Agreement
- 2.3. Provide a clear description of what a participant may expect in the way of services, fees and schedules by representing services and products fairly and accurately, avoiding guaranteed results or exaggerated claims of success. A Provider is guided by a primary obligation to aid participants in developing informed judgments, opinions and choices.
- 2.4. Unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the participant, keep information regarding a participant confidential. Keep within the bounds of the PAIRS group any information gained within the group. Keep confidential any information an individual PAIRS participant discloses to the Provider that has not been shared by the participant publicly in the class or workshop. Confidentiality must be taught, modeled and maintained in order to insure privacy and emotional safety for participants.
- 2.5 Unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the participant, use all records gathered in conjunction with class participation only for the purposes intended within the context of the PAIRS program.
- 2.6. Obtain a written Informed Consent from each class participant, acknowledging his or her understanding of expected course content and voluntary participation and provide originals or copies of consent forms to PAIRS Foundation on a timely basis. Protect against pressuring or coercing a participant to participate in any exercise deemed unsuitable by the participant. PAIRS invites—it does not inflict.
- 2.7. Adhere, in teaching PAIRS programs, to the substance and content of the material contained in the PAIRS curricula and training manuals as published and periodically updated by PAIRS Foundation. Do not add material or change the sequencing of curricula content without advance written permission of PAIRS Foundation.
- 2.8 Conform to accepted standards for human research when collecting research information regarding participants in PAIRS Programs.
- 2.9 Seek appropriate help outside of the PAIRS program classroom to resolve personal/relationship difficulties that might interfere with his or her ability to maintain the professional role as a Provider. Use professional judgment and discretion for assessing whether, at such times, the Provider can effectively carry out his/her responsibilities to participants and assistants. Professionals are required to refer patients/clients/students to other resources should they judge themselves incapable of meeting professional standards in the execution of their professional responsibilities.

3. Restrictions Upon PAIRS Providers

A PAIRS Provider will not:

3.1. Misrepresent qualifications, training or experience. Credentials must be explained to each class so that an atmosphere of professionalism is at the core of the PAIRS group.

3.2. Claim that the PAIRS course, seminar or workshop will save or end a marriage or other intimate relationships.

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3.3. Misrepresent PAIRS classes, courses and workshops as group therapy in order to seek third party reimbursement. Providers will represent the PAIRS curricula as educational programs that teach knowledge and skills for enhancing relationships. Exception: PAIRS tools and concepts may be used explicitly (identifying them as PAIRS tools) by Providers, who are otherwise licensed behavioral health professionals or clergy, in their practice of counseling, therapy or pastoral care.

3.4. Advise a couple to separate, divorce or reunite. Each participant takes full responsibility to apply the learning contained within the course to his or her relationship and to make judicious, autonomous decisions based on the same. Decisions about relationships are solely in the hands of each participant.

3.5. Teach any part of the course while under the influence of alcohol or any other mind-altering drugs that would impair delivery of the PAIRS material.

3.6. Release mailing lists of PAIRS participants, or use such lists for any purposes not exclusively related to PAIRS, without the express permission of each participant.

3.7. Be involved in any interaction of a romantic, dating, or sexual nature with a participant.

3.8. Engage in dual relationships with participants unless there is a prior committed relationship that clearly preceded the start of the course. A participant can be a therapy or pastoral care client; however, the Provider is obligated to define their relationship by their therapeutic or pastoral care contract. Extra caution needs to be taken when considering a provider's family members being participants in a PAIRS course, workshop or program.

3.9 Engage in non-professional meetings with participants outside of scheduled class times other than appropriate social outings open to the entire class.

3.10 Engage in dual relationships with assistants helping to promote, teach or research PAIRS, or accept as an assistant in PAIRS anyone who is currently a client/patient or involved in other professional relationships that make the Assistant vulnerable to the power inherent with the Provider's role in the existing relationship.

3.11. Use relationships with participants for the personal satisfaction of needs for otherwise unmet needs for attention, friendship, understanding, or resolution his or her own relational or personal difficulties.

3.12. Engage in inappropriate sharing of personal information with participants beyond what is authentic and useful for directly modeling techniques of constructive and effective confiding,

complaining and problem solving in relationships or for constructive use of PAIRS techniques.

3.13. Initiate or conduct a PAIRS course, workshop or seminar if the Provider's ability to uphold the goals of this program is threatened or the learning of the participants is jeopardized.

3.13. Engage in conduct that would discredit PAIRS or the professionalism of PAIRS Providers.

4. Guidance for PAIRS Providers

4.1 Providers contact your Program Manager and PAIRS Foundation for further guidance on ethical choices in their own conduct of PAIRS activities.

4.2 Providers consult with the ethical guidelines of their own profession to assist in guiding their ethical choices in their conduct of PAIRS activities.

4.3 Providers contact your Program Manager and PAIRS Foundation when they are concerned that an ethical violation may have occurred either in their own choices or in the choices of other PAIRS Providers.

5. Attestation

I hereby certify that I have fully read and reviewed the preceding Ethical Standards for Providers of PAIRS Programs and agree that so long as I maintain my licensing and affiliation with PAIRS, or identify myself as being or having been affiliated with PAIRS, I shall be bound by the obligations, restrictions and guidelines contained herein.

SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME	DATE

Please return this signed page to the PAIRS Foundation by:

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 ATTN: Licensing
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 Suite 455
 Hollywood, FL 33021
 Email: info@pairs.com
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VA Mission

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.