

PREPARE/ENRICH Group Program Ranked First in Comprehensive Content & High in Instruction Process

Geniel Childs (2009)

In a comprehensive review of eight Marriage Preparation Education Programs (MPEP) by Geniel Childs (2009), the PREPARE/ENRICH Group Program ranked first in Content with a score of 92% and the Instruction Process score was 90%.

The overall **Content Score** of 92% was based on four criteria: theory and research (97%), context (82%), practice (96%), and premarital predictors (88%). The overall **Instruction Process** score of 90% was based on two criteria and the scores for those two areas for Teaching Plans was 88% and for Presentation was 92%.

Descriptive Analysis of Strengths of PREPARE/ENRICH Group Program

(The remainder of this article is Quoted directly from the Thesis.)

The theoretical underpinnings of the PREPARE/ENRICH program (2008) are based on assumptions that quality marital relationships can be predicted from premarital relationship factors (Olson & Olson-Sigg, 1999). The preventive approach of this program focuses on identifying factors related to marital success, assessing couples on those factors, giving couples feedback and exercises designed to help them deal with problem areas, and to provide couples with skill-building exercises that focus on communication and conflict resolution.

This program covers six couple goals and exercises during 3-6 sessions. The goals and core exercises of the program are to explore strength and growth areas, strengthen communication skills, identify and manage major stressors, resolve conflicts using the PREPARE/ENRICH 10 step model, develop a more balanced relationship using the PREPARE/ENRICH couple and family maps, and understand personality differences and maximize teamwork.

Childs, G. (2008). *Marriage preparation marriage education programs: An evaluation of essential elements of quality*. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University.

Professional counselors, clergy, or lay couples may be trained to be facilitators of the PREPARE/ENRICH program. The couple begins the program by taking a relationship assessment inventory. The couple receives an exercise workbook that includes feedback from the assessment and instruction on the exercises. The instructor receives a computerized report assessing the strengths and growth areas in 12 different relationship categories.

Content. This program has a very strong theory and research foundation and presents this information clearly for practitioners and participants in written materials as well as on their web site. The program builds on established teaching and intervention practices and also adds a new approach of designing program content to focus on the needs unique to the participating couple. The content of the program addresses the majority of the premarital predictors of marital quality and stability, however; it is somewhat weak in addressing contextual influences on relationships.

Instructional Process. The flexible design of the program allows personalization of content for specific couple needs. Support materials are attractive and engaging. Direction is given for most learning activities, but not all are explained in detail or demonstrated on the DVDs, and the goals and outcomes for these activities may not be clear to leaders or participants. There is a relationship assessment for this program and it is integral to the design of the content and presentation of the program. The overall presentation of this program is very attractive, however; there is limited diversity in the range of racial or ethnic portrayal in the support materials.

Implementation Process. General information for using the program is clearly outlined, however; no information is given as to limitation of audiences the program would most likely benefit, or concerning potential implementation problems. No information is given concerning marketing or budgeting issues in the written material provided. Some discussion of recruiting participants is given in the research references on the program web site, but this is imbedded in other information and may be difficult for practitioners to readily access.

Program training is conducted in a 1-day workshop. Professional counselors have the option of completing program training through a self-training manual and video presentation. The training and support for program leaders is an exceptional strength of this program.

PREPARE/ENRICH Group Program

- Contact** Life Innovations P.O. Box 190 Minneapolis, MN 55440 800-331-1661
www.prepare-enrich.com
- Program** This program focuses on identifying factors related to marital success,
Focus assessing couples on those factors, giving couples personalized
and feedback and exercises designed to help them deal with problem
Format areas, and provide couples with skills-building exercises that focus on communication and conflict resolution.
Presented in 3-6 one hour sessions by trained professional, clergy, or lay couple facilitators.
- Available** Resource guide, sample facilitator report, sample couple's report,
Materials couples workbook, two training DVDs, facilitator's manual on CD.
Author(s) David H. Olson, Peter J. Larson