

Factors Preventing Gridlock in Chilean Couples Relationships Based on the Discourse of Couples Therapists and Highly Adjusted Couples

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Abstract

The term gridlock describes the occurrence of rigid patterns in couples' conflict. This study aimed to describe strategies of conflict resolution and gridlock prevention from the perspectives of couples and couple therapists. Participants were couple therapists and highly adjusted couples scored by the dyadic adjustment scale (DAS), distributed according to traditional and non-traditional position in life and duration of relationships. Conflict gridlock scenarios were used to create video stimulus that were presented to participants. A qualitative methodology was used to analyse couples' and therapists' commentaries on the scenarios. Results showed differences in preventing conflict gridlock among sub-groups of couples. Long-term traditional couples focused on loyalty to a common project and value sacrificing to a higher good; long-term non-traditional couples prioritised caring and validating the bond in the relationship. Short-term traditional couples focused on mutual love and the relief of hurt while short-term non-traditional couples supported the value of equity.

Keywords

Author Keywords: Conflict; Couples; Gridlock; Intimacy; Relationship; Therapy

KeyWords Plus: MARITAL CONFLICT; LOVE; MARRIAGES; DIVISION; SATISFACTION; LABOR