

## **CERTIFICATION CONSULTATION POLICIES, TERMS, & CONDITIONS**

Dr. John Gottman and Dr. Julie Schwartz Gottman have created a therapy that emphasizes a “nuts and bolts” approach to improving relationships. The focus of your consultation will primarily be on these structures and methods designed by the Gottmans. Your Consultant may, however, make suggestions about other areas of study as appropriate, as some of the Gottman interventions may be altered or contraindicated in various comorbidities.

These Policies, Terms, and Conditions are subject to change without notice at the discretion of The Gottman Institute. By entering The Gottman Institute’s Certification Track, you are agreeing to the Policies, Terms, and Conditions in its current format. Updates to these Policies, Terms, and Conditions will be available via electronic media from time to time.

For the sake of clarity and in keeping with the Washington Administrative Codes, the definition of the role and functions of a Consultant and a Consultee (also referred to as Certification Track candidate) relationship are as follows:

### **The Consultant-Consultee Relationship**

- The Consultant provides requested education, information, knowledge, points of view, discussion, wisdom, and/or perspective on cases and/or issues presented by the Consultee. The Consultee sets their own agenda for consultation, using cases from their own practice. Neither The Gottman Institute nor the Consultant is a supervisor of the Consultee’s practice.
- The Consultant has no authority over the Consultee.
- The Consultant is not responsible for the decisions and/or acts of the Consultee, and therefore has no responsibility for the treatment provided by the Consultee.
- The Consultant bears no liability for the Consultee, who is free to follow suggestions, or not, based on their own professional judgment, in all cases.

- The Consultant shall not give specific advice or direction about what the Consultee should do with any specific client/situation.
- The Consultee, through receiving training from the Consultant and The Gottman Institute, is an “independently licensed” individual who provides psychological services to their own clients, and thus assumes complete responsibility for the care of said clients. The Consultee is not functioning as auxiliary staff for the Consultant or The Gottman Institute. The Consultee will provide this page of this packet for clients to read should they present said clients in consultation.
- The Consultee protects the confidentiality of their own clients, thus limiting the information shared to issue-focused consultation.
- The Consultee will maintain on The Gottman Institute file current copies of their annual licensure/certification and malpractice insurance coverage. A minimum of \$1 million each occurrence and \$3 million aggregate is required.
- The Consultee may identify to clients and/or colleagues their current consultation and training with The Gottman Institute, but such identification should not imply that the Consultant or The Gottman Institute is directing and/or responsible for the treatment any client is receiving from the Consultee.
- The Consultee will adhere to all aspects of the financial agreements with their Consultant and The Gottman Institute.

## **Policies**

While each of The Gottman Institute’s (TGI) Consultants has their own office policies that govern their practices, the following are policies that are specific to the Gottman Certification Track Program and the consultation process.

1. The following are consultation options, terms, and conditions.
  - a. A Consultant will be assigned after an application has been reviewed and The Gottman Institute has found that the applicant meets all of the requirements for entering the Certification Track. Once assigned, the Consultant will contact new Certification Track candidates to schedule the first meeting. The Gottman Institute encourages Consultants and

Consultees to meet over a HIPAA compliant web tool for video conferencing.

- i. Individual Consultation Option: TGI highly recommends a minimum of eight (8) Individual Consultation sessions prior to video review. The full fee will be charged for missed sessions unless the Consultant is notified at least 48 hours in advance.
    - ii. Group Consultation: Consultants are not required to offer Group Consultation. TGI highly recommends having a minimum of twelve (12) group sessions prior to video submission. In the event that Certification Track candidates miss a group consultation meeting, they will be required to pay for the missed session and privately schedule an individual make-up session with the Consultant. The fee for a make-up session is payable directly to the Consultant at the agreed upon rate. Out of respect for other members, please notify the Consultant at least 48 hours in advance in the case of cancellation.
    - iii. Combined Group and Individual Consultation: This format attempts to combine the best of group and individual consultation formats. Initially, a group format will be used and then individual sessions will be interspersed with group sessions to allow for individual attention to aid in progressing through the consultation process. The number of individual sessions may vary. TGI highly recommends a minimum of ten (10) sessions. This is a suggestion rather than a requirement. These can include both individual and group formats. Fees and the cancellation policy for group and individual consultations are the same as outlined above.
  - b. Additional Consultation Sessions: Many Consultees find that they need more than the recommended number of sessions in order to meet the requirements for Final Video Review. The same payment and scheduling structure with Consultants will apply for any additional sessions than the recommended minimum.
2. Video Review: In preparation for Final Video Review, Certification Track candidates are expected to provide videos to the Consultant for feedback and assessment throughout the consultation process. Review of final certification videos is included in the Certification Track fees that were paid at the time of application.
- a. Please note that at least two (2) different couples are required for video submission with no more than two (2) videos per couple. Three (3) videos of one couple for final video submission will not be accepted. You may be requested to resubmit intervention(s) if deemed necessary.

3. Though consultation and video review requires focus on couples work in sessions, the concentration of the consult will be primarily centered on the Gottman Method, rather than specific recommendations about the couples you discuss or video. In this way, establishing proficiency in the Gottman Method will more likely result in a keen grasp of the model.
4. Video recording of Certification Track candidates' couples for review requires that these clients each sign the Permission for Digitally Recording and Videotaping Therapy Sessions form and that the therapist signs a Therapist Release Attestation form. The Consultee is to maintain the Permission for Digitally Recording and Videotaping Therapy Sessions form in the couple's file and send the Therapist Release Attestation to their Consultant and to The Gottman Institute when sending the Final Video Review.
5. Consultees will have two years to complete consultation and submit videos for final review. The deadline to submit videos will be determined by the date of official enrollment into the program and will be clearly communicated via email.
6. When Consultee and Consultant have agreed on Certification Track candidates readiness for certification, Consultee will provide the 4 intervention video segments to The Gottman Institute for review. Consultees have three (3) opportunities to submit videos for review. In the event that the two (2) year program timeframe ellipses without Certification being granted, the Consultee will be required to retake Level 3 Training to remain in the program. Level 3 Training must be retaken within one (1) year of the original deadline. If a further year goes by (one (1) year after the original two (2)-year deadline for certification), Consultee must reapply and pay the entrance fee to the Certification Track. Any previously passed intervention segments will not count and all four (4) segments must be resubmitted in the case of reapplication. Those actively in the Certification Track may retake Level 3 once to remain in the program, for a total of up to four (4) years in the Certification Track.
  - a. Consultees have a total of three (3) submissions for video review regardless of the number of times Level 3 Training is taken.

- b. Video feedback and review are essential components of the training. It is the responsibility of the Consultee to obtain permission for video recording from clients and to provide those videos to the consultant for feedback. There are no exceptions for submitting videos for review. Videos must include the faces of the couple but do not require the Consultee's face to be in view.
  - c. In the event that any video segments must be resubmitted for additional reviews, please note that all submissions must be done prior to the two-year deadline. Otherwise, Consultees will need to retake Level 3 to submit the remaining reviews.
    - i. Along with the intervention video segments, please upload the 100 Gottman Method Clinical Hours Documentation form, Gottman Treatment Plan, Gottman Assessment (Options: Scoring Summary Sheet, the first page of the Relationship Checkup results, or Gottman Connect Enhanced Relationship Checkup Summary page), and Therapist Attestation Form for each couple to Box.com. Reference the Certification Track Resource Library for forms.
- 7. The Gottman Institute requires a complete and current record management of Certification Track candidates' licensure. The Gottman Institute requests that Consultees provide TGI with a current copy of professional licenses, business and home addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. For liability purposes, The Gottman Institute must have on file a current copy of malpractice insurance policy. Lapses in such policies will interrupt proceeding with the Certification process until the policy is reinstated and on file with The Gottman Institute.
- 8. The Gottman Institute Clinician Records Policy: As part of the certification process, we receive candid feedback from Consultants and Gottman Institute staff about candidates' progress. Consultees are entitled to receive copies of documents provided to TGI (such as copies of professional licenses and liability insurance) as well as documentation of the focus and subject matter covered for each consultation (obtainable from Consultants), but information from

candid evaluations of program progress and performance are confidential and not accessible by the clinician.

9. After certification, ongoing Certification Track candidates and Certified Gottman Therapist records, including any confidential feedback received about the Consultee, remain confidential and not accessible to the Consultee. The files TGI maintains pertaining to the certification process and Certified Gottman Therapists are the property of The Gottman Institute. The content of these files remains confidential within The Gottman Institute.
10. Certification Track candidates may choose to terminate training at any point. The Gottman Institute may terminate training on the basis of the applicant failing to perform according to Gottman standards. Fees paid will not be refunded upon termination by either party
11. Completion of consultation does not guarantee Certification. Upon completion of all requirements, Certification Track candidate mastery and proficiency will be determined by a Senior Certified Gottman Consultant/Reviewer. Consultee may be requested to re-submit any combination of the video segments at which time feedback will be provided to the Consultant regarding strengths and/or recommendations for improved proficiency in the Gottman Method. Once approved, candidates will receive a certificate specifying they are a Certified Gottman Therapist. Upon receiving Certification, candidates may advertise themselves with the Certified Gottman Therapist designation.
12. In addition to the above-listed policies, the Certification will not be granted/given if all tuition and fees are unpaid.

### **Ethical Practices**

As the Certification Track candidates begin their consultation in the Gottman Method, TGI wishes to establish the standards of ethical practice that guide Washington State mental health professionals, and thus, Consultees in the Certification Track of The Gottman Institute. They are as follows:

1. That mental health professionals/Consultees provide clients with written information about their qualifications, treatment philosophy and methods, and service policies.
2. That mental health professionals/Consultees keep a written record of services provided, and that clients have the privilege to read that record and request changes in that record should they so wish
3. That the therapeutic relationship be maintained with appropriate respect and boundaries as described in the American Psychological Association standards regardless of the professional discipline in which the mental health professional/Consultee has been trained and licensed.
4. That all mental health professionals/Consultees comply with relevant local, state, and federal laws pertaining to their practice.
5. That the mental health professionals/Consultees secures written permission for videotaping of sessions to be submitted to The Gottman Institute for review as required for certification.
6. That all information discussed and disclosed in the course of the therapy, from whatever source, be held confidential, save the exceptions to confidentiality as outlined below:
  - a. If the client (or dependent child), is in immediate danger to themselves or becomes mentally ill and unable to take care of their basic needs, the law demands that the therapist acts to protect the life of the client and/or dependent child. This may require notification of family or other appropriate persons, including the County Designated Mental Health Professional, who will decide if involuntary hospitalization is necessary.
  - b. If the client threatens harm to another person, and there is a possibility of injury or death, the law demands that the mental health professional acts to protect the lives of potential victims. This may require various appropriate interventions, including informing the police and the potential victims.
  - c. If the client reports their behavior or action against a child, elder, or other dependent adult which is considered abuse, including physical violence, neglect, and/ or sexual molestation, or if the client reports such acts by another, the law mandates

that the mental health professional/Consultee must make a report of suspected abuse to the legal authorities.

- d. If clients are involved in legal action where they place their psychological condition before the court, the clients forfeits their right to confidentiality in matters before the court. In such cases, the mental health professional will attempt to discuss the situation with you in order to clarify and seek alternatives.
- e. If the mental health professional/Consultee becomes aware that an identifiable individual is being unknowingly exposed to HIV infection, the mental health professional will discuss the case with the local health officer or an authorized representative to determine what actions should be taken to protect the public health identifying information about the HIV-infected individual or their partners will be released consistent with state law, rules, and regulations.
- f. The mental health professional/Consultee may disclose protected health care information if audited or investigated by a local, state or federal regulatory board or agency.
- g. Any exceptions as deemed legal in the state where the mental health professional/Consultee practices.

## **Terms and Conditions**

By entering The Gottman Institute's Certification Track, Certification Track candidates agree to the following terms and conditions that are specific to The Gottman Institute's Certification Track and the consultation process.

These Terms and Conditions are subject to change without notice at the discretion of The Gottman Institute. By signing this disclosure form, Certification Track candidates are agreeing to the Terms and Conditions in its current format. Updates to these Terms and Conditions will be available via electronic media from time to time and are available upon request.

- Certification Track candidate has a master's or doctoral degree in a mental health field.

- Certification Track candidates are licensed or certified as a mental health professional in your field of study in the state, province or country in which you practice.
- Certification Track candidates carry professional liability insurance with a minimum amount of coverage of 1M/3M.
- Certification Track candidates have not been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony.
- Certification Track candidates have never had any licensing board or professional ethics body require you to surrender your license or been found guilty of a violation of ethics code, professional misconduct, unprofessional conduct, incompetence or negligence in any state, province or country.
- Certification Track candidates do not have any complaints, charges, or investigations pending against you by any licensing board or professional ethics body for violation of ethics codes, professional misconduct, unprofessional conduct, incompetence or negligence in any state, province or country.
- Certification Track candidates have never had any insurance company or Lloyd's decline, cancel, refuse to renew or accept only on special terms any professional liability insurance.
- Certification Track candidates have never had a professional liability claim or suit against you.
- Certification track candidates are not aware of any circumstances which may result in any professional liability claim or suit being made against you.
- Certification Track candidates are not engaged in any sexual misconduct with any of your current or former patients or any current or former patient's spouse or any person with a direct relationship to the patient or former patient.
- Certification Track candidates will notify The Gottman Institute in writing within 30 days if any of the above answers or information change
- Certification Track candidates have added the following statement to the disclosure statement you give your clients:

*"While I have taken training in the Gottman Method Couples Therapy, I want you to know that I (or my agency, if applicable)*

*am completely independent in providing you with clinical services and I alone am fully responsible for those services. The Gottman Institute or its agents have no responsibility for the services you receive.”*

## **Consultant Transfer**

The Certification Track’s model is founded on a Consultant-Consultee working relationship. Consultants, who are senior Certified Gottman Therapists, guide Consultees through the program and provide feedback on intervention videos.

The Gottman Institute does our best to match a Consultant and Consultee together, but we know that a match may not be the best fit. One (1) transfer is granted for a Consultee with approval by their current Consultant.

1. Consultee will notify their Consultant that they are initiating a transfer. The Consultant will need to complete the section titled “Consultant Approval.” This should be done before contacting The Gottman Institute
  - a. All outstanding consultation hours must be paid in full
  - b. Consultee must provide a reason for initiating the transfer. Consultees should discuss their reasoning with their Consultant either over the phone or in a virtual meeting
  - c. Consultant will upload any notes, the number of sessions attended, documents, etc. to Consultee’s Box.com folder
  - d. Consultants will have the opportunity to discuss the transfer with the newly selected Consultant
2. Consultees will review currently available Consultants on our website here: <https://www.gottman.com/gottman-speakers/>. We recommend setting up a phone call or virtual meeting with the potential Consultants to select the best fit
3. Consultee will complete the form and return it to The Gottman Institute at [training@gottman.com](mailto:training@gottman.com)

Any subsequent Consultant Transfer requests must be reviewed and approved by the Clinical Director.

## **Terminating Training and Consultation**

The Gottman Institute reserves the right to terminate participation in further training and the consultation process for the following reasons:

- If the Consultee fails to maintain their license or certification to practice independently
- If the Consultee fails to maintain professional liability insurance with a minimum amount of coverage of 1M/3M
- If a Disciplinary Board acts against the Consultee in any complaint (including non-Gottman Institute clients)
- If The Gottman Institute receives a serious complaint that the Institute determines to have merit
- If The Gottman Institute has reasonable evidence to believe that the Consultee is abusing alcohol and/or other drugs
- If a judgment is made against a Consultee in a court of law for any misdemeanor or felony
- If The Gottman Institute has reason to believe that the Consultee's functioning is impaired by physical, emotional, mental or other reasons
- If The Gottman Institute has reasonable evidence to believe that the Consultee has committed a breach of the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct
- If the Consultee fails to fully pay agreed-upon financial commitments to The Gottman Institute
- If The Gottman Institute has reason to believe that a Consultee has failed to exercise that degree of skill, care, and learning expected of a reasonably prudent provider of the same specialty under the same or similar circumstances
- If The Gottman Institute has reason to believe that a Consultee's public presentation is inconsistent with the mission, goals, and/or ideals of The Gottman Institute or in any way damages our name and reputation
- If the Consultee fails to meet the Terms and Conditions for The Gottman Institute Certification Track and consultation process

## **Harassment Policies and Procedures**

### **General Prohibition of Harassment/Discrimination**

Harassment and/or discrimination of any kind is not tolerated by The Gottman Institute.

The Gottman Institute is committed to providing a professional environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. Each Consultant, Consultee and workshop participant of The Gottman Institute is expected to be sensitive to and respectful of others with whom you communicate while involved with The Gottman Institute. We prohibit all forms of harassment or discrimination based on race, age, religion, color, creed, sex, national origin, physical, sensory or mental disability, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, political ideology, ancestry, or any other classification protected by law.

Discrimination means different and unfair treatment of an individual because of his or her race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability or protected group status as defined by law. Harassment is behavior perceived by the recipient as unwelcome, demeaning or offensive conduct directed at another workshop participant, Consultee, Consultant or representative of The Gottman Institute, and can include such things as threats, demands, and requests for sexual favors, teasing, abuse, taunts, insults, heckling, or other similar action. It includes conduct that may not be unlawful but has been determined to be inappropriate in our workplace, our workshops and by the licensing boards in every state.

If at any time Consultees believe they are the subject of harassment or discrimination in violation of this policy, or if they believe or become aware of such conduct being directed to a workshop participant, Consultee, Consultant or representative of The Gottman Institute, they must immediately notify the Clinical Director or another senior representative of The Gottman Institute. If they feel uncomfortable discussing this matter with the Clinical Director, then the complaint procedures provide other avenues for complaint.

The Gottman Institute strongly urges all incidents of potential harassment, discrimination or other inappropriate behavior to be reported as soon as possible. We strive for a respectful, pleasant, and productive professional environment at The Gottman Institute, but we cannot ensure such an environment unless these issues are brought to our attention.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Discrimination of any kind, based on any classification protected by law, within The Gottman Institute is unacceptable conduct that should not be condoned by any member of our management, any employee, contractor, customer, Consultee, Consultant, workshop participant, vendor, client or representative of The Gottman Institute. This includes conduct in any seminar that is sponsored by or associated with The Gottman Institute.

Sexual harassment is an unacceptable form of discrimination. Sexual harassment does not mean occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Rather, it refers to deliberate, repeated unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other behavior that has the purpose or effect of interfering with an applicant's or employee's job placement, performance or advancement, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Even conduct that is intended to be "innocent" may still constitute sexual harassment under this policy if the recipient of that conduct reasonably perceives it to be otherwise.

If at any time you believe you are the subject of harassment or discrimination in violation of this policy, or if you believe or become aware of such conduct being directed to another workshop participant, Consultee, Consultant or representative of The Gottman Institute, you must immediately notify the Clinical Director or otherwise follow the complaint procedure. If you feel uncomfortable discussing this matter with the Clinical Director, then the complaint procedures provide other avenues for complaint.

### **Illustrative Examples**

Examples of the types of conduct that are likely to violate this policy when unwelcome or uninvited include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Unwelcome, deliberate or repeated unsolicited verbal comments, jokes, epithets, slurs, or stories that are based on an individual's membership in a protected group;
- Sexually suggestive touching, such as rubbing or massaging someone's neck or shoulders, stroking someone's hair, or brushing against another's body;
- Grabbing, groping, kissing, fondling;
- Questions about a person's sex life or experiences;
- Sexually-oriented or explicit remarks, including written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding a person's sex life, body, sexual activities, deficiencies or prowess;
- Threats affecting status if sexual favors are not provided;
- Sexual assault;

- Offensive communication such as sexually explicit internet sites, calendars, photographs, cartoons, posters, graffiti, documents (including letters, poems, etc) or drawings which have the effect of creating a hostile and offensive environment;
- Sexually suggestive leering or staring;
- Implicit or explicit unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or repeated unwelcome expressions of sexual interest;
- Sexually explicit or suggestive e-mail or voice mail messages; and/or
- Any other harassing conduct or behavior deemed inappropriate by The Gottman Institute management

These are only some examples of inappropriate conduct. For such behavior to qualify as unlawful discrimination and/or harassment, it must be sufficiently severe or pervasive as to unreasonably interfere with terms, conditions, or privileges and create a hostile environment.

Please understand, however, that even though a behavior may not qualify as discrimination and/or harassment under the law, we may still treat the conduct as inappropriate behavior and discipline the individual(s) involved. Each complaint will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, as set forth below under Grievance procedure.

## Retaliation

The Gottman Institute prohibits any type of retaliatory action against a workshop participant, Consultee, Consultant or representative of The Gottman Institute who files a harassment or discrimination complaint, or assists in a complaint investigation.

We expect workshop participants, Consultees, Consultants or representatives of The Gottman Institute to immediately report any concerns about retaliation to us. However, if it is determined after investigation that the complaint was made up of false charges or that a Consultee, Consultant or representative of The Gottman Institute has provided false information, disciplinary action will be taken against the employee who led the complaint or provided false information.

## **Grievance Procedure**

The Gottman Institute is dedicated to ensuring that the Policies, Terms, & Conditions are upheld and that harassment and discrimination do not occur in The Gottman Institute. We are committed to a prompt and effective resolution of any complaint. No workshop participant, Consultee, Consultant or representative of The Gottman Institute will be penalized for registering a good-faith complaint, participating in the investigation of a complaint, or opposing harassing or discriminatory behavior prohibited by this policy.

If you feel you have been subjected to wrongful harassment, or discrimination, or grievances otherwise covered by the Certification Track Policies, Terms, & Conditions, you are expected and required to follow the following procedure:

### **Informal Resolution**

In many instances, the problem may be caused by a lack of awareness. We therefore encourage you to initially raise the problem respectfully with the person who has offended you before you bring a formal complaint. If, however, you believe it would be inappropriate to discuss the matter with that person, the person does not respond as desired, or you are uncomfortable discussing the issue with that person, then you may always bypass the person and discuss it directly with the Clinical Director or Professional Development Director.

### **Complaint**

If informal resolution does not occur or the problem persists, then you should report the matter to the Clinical Director. In addition, we encourage any employee who observes inappropriate harassment, or discrimination, or another form of grievance to immediately report what he or she has observed to the Professional Development department or the Clinical Director. All reports or complaints will be investigated and kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with our need to investigate the complaint and address the situation. Different circumstances will produce different responses and levels of investigation. If it is determined that a violation of this policy has

occurred, then the offending party will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, program termination.

All Consultees and Consultants are able to request an in-person, virtual meeting with The Gottman Institute. An initial review of the grievance will be made by the Program Manager. If needed, the Director of Program Development, Clinical Director, Chief Executive Office, and/or Chief Operating Officer may be called on to attend and participate in a second meeting. Upon the completion of said meeting(s), a decision will be made on next steps.

#### Applicable Topics

- Harassment
- Improper and/or Inappropriate Manner of Communicating
- Video Review Results - 3rd Submission
- Feeling discomfort or unsafe with an aspect of the Certification Track or Consultation

#### Not Applicable Topics\*

- Video Review Results - 1st and 2nd Submission
- Transferring Consultants

\*For these grievance requests, please contact either your Consultant or [training@gottman.com](mailto:training@gottman.com) for next steps.

This complaint procedure is the sole vehicle for a workshop participant, Consultee, Consultant or representative of The Gottman Institute to bring a grievance, harassment, or discrimination complaint.

Failure to use the complaint procedure may bar you from bringing a claim for harassment, discrimination, grievance, or retaliation against The Gottman Institute.