

Recommendations on Delivering Shorter Versions The Within Our Reach™ Curriculum from PREP™

Purpose of memo: WOR is a comprehensive 32-Hour program. If you would like to teach WOR, but have a shorter time frame, you will have to cut content. Here we have provided our recommendations (at this time) for what to cover and what to cut.

Introduction

As you may know, we at PREP have been very busy these past five years devising and revising new curricula for meeting the needs of various types of participants. *Within Our Reach™* is our newest hybrid of a curriculum that is built for working with couples (*Within My Reach™* is built for working with individuals). PREP, our flagship curriculum, continues to be refined and updated as well.

Within Our Reach (WOR) has become very popular. It differs from PREP in two fundamental ways. First, it includes a great deal more group activities for the couples—all designed to foster the teaching of the content. Second, it includes many new themes in the content, such as relaxation training (to help in emotion management), emotional support, community connections, family history exploration and sharing, and personality testing and sharing. While there is a lot of overlapping content between PREP and WOR, WOR is organized differently.

While WOR has been very well received, there is a challenge associated with using it for the typical provider of marriage/relationship education. In its basic formulation, it is long. The reason for this is that WOR was built, first and foremost, for use in a large federal study of marriage education delivered to low income couples (Supporting Healthy

Marriage, or SHM). The presumption in SHM has been that program sites will have longer term, ongoing contact with couples than is often otherwise the case in our field. SHM guidelines were to field a curriculum that covered a wide range of topics, including things like stress management and how stress affects couples, community connection, and so forth, of around 30 to 36 hours duration. As currently conceived, WOR is, off the rack, 32 hours. Additional modules are coming, as well, including money management basics.

We realize that most settings delivering marriage education services do not have 32 hours of contact time with the couples they are serving. Hence, people trained in WOR have a dilemma. How to work 32 hours of great (we're biased) content into 16 hours, or even 24. If you have been trained in WOR, and sampled the units, you may understand how hard it seems to cut some of these units out because they all seem important. We all, however, live in the real world where you have only so much window of time with the couples you work with, and that means hard choices have to be made. So, while it can (at least to us) feel very hard to cut out something that seems as important as family background sharing (between partners) or ideas about how to build strong community connections, it's just not possible for everyone who likes WOR to deliver all of WOR.

What we have done in this document is to prioritize which of the units to give and which to leave out for shorter time frames.

WOR and Flagship PREP

Some of you may only have 12 hours of contact time with couples, and may have less reason to be using a more activity driven model like WOR. If that sounds like you, we recommend you use PREP rather than WOR since PREP is designed to be a 12 hour program. If you are trained in PREP or WOR, you are able to teach PREP. If you are trained in WOR, you would need to purchase the leader materials for PREP and study them. Your training in WOR would have covered virtually everything you will see in PREP—albeit in different order, flow, and style. Conceptually, PREP will make sense to you if you have been trained in WOR. You will, however, need to study the differences before you teach PREP.

What's Right for Your Setting and Clients?

The table below contains our recommendations at this time. We have given a lot of thought to this, but that does not mean that our recommendations are just right for your situation.

Here is an example. Our new unit on Personal RoadMapping is a (seems to us) powerful way to help people think about, and then share with their partner, how their history growing up has shaped them and their dynamics in the relationship. We love this new unit, and couples have responded very well to it. However, when time does not allow everything to be covered, it is one of the units that we would see as less primary. However, you could be working in a setting wherein family history was a very strong, important dynamics for most of your clients. That would not, therefore, be a unit you'd want to cut in your work. Whether that meant you were doing a 18 hour curriculum *or* you would cut

something in our recommended 16 hour version to make room for that unit, is up to you.

Watch Out for Stress and Relaxation

Our core stress management unit includes training in relaxation techniques. If you are using a shorter format of WOR that does not include the Stress and Relaxation unit, you should note that in your manual. Many of the practice times make use of the relaxation strategies taught in this unit. So, if you are not teaching the stress management unit, you'll want to be aware of that so you are not mentioning those concepts in your manual. Another option, if you do not teach the stress management unit, is to suggest something simple to participants like taking a couple deep breaths to relax before talking about more sensitive topics using skills. Hence, you'd not be teaching the whole unit but you would still be offering a valuable skill.

One Change We Know is Coming Very Soon

In version 2.0 of WOR, we have planned to remove session 8 on invalidation and withdrawal, and fold a brief discussion of those Communication Danger Signs into the lesson on Escalation and Time Out (more like Flagship PREP, but keeping some of the new content there on things that make emotional regulation more difficult (depression, alcohol, etc.)). The reworking of units 8 and 5 are underway now, and once done, we will be happy to provide the new unit to WOR instructors for your immediate use. (We would otherwise have trouble justifying leaving invalidation and withdrawal out of our high priority recommendations.)

See the next page for our recommendations.

Our Recommendations By Unit for Within Our Reach™

| 32 Hour Program | 24 Hour Program | 16 Hour Program |
|--|--|--|
| Session 1: Welcome to Within Our Reach | Welcome to Within Our Reach | Welcome to Within Our Reach |
| Session 2: Let's Have Fun | Let's Have Fun | Let's Have Fun |
| Session 3: Speaker Listener Technique | Speaker Listener Technique | Speaker Listener Technique |
| Session 4: Stress & Relaxation | Stress & Relaxation | |
| Session 5: Escalation & Time Out | Escalation & Time Out | Escalation & Time Out |
| Session 6: We've Got Issues: Issues & Events | We've Got Issues: Issues & Events | We've Got Issues: Issues & Events |
| Session 7: By My Side: Supporting Each Other | By My Side: Supporting Each Other | |
| Session 8: Invalidation & Withdrawal | Invalidation & Withdrawal | |
| Session 9: Seeing & Believing: Negative Interpretations | Seeing & Believing: Negative Interpretations | Seeing & Believing: Negative Interpretations |
| Session 10: You, Me, & Us: Expectations | You, Me, & Us: Expectations | You, Me, & Us: Expectations |
| Session 11: Personal Road Mapping | | |
| Session 12: Commitment Matters | Commitment Matters | Commitment Matters |
| Session 13: Making Love | | |
| Session 14: Connecting with Community | Connecting with Community | |
| Session 15: Future Decisions | | |
| Session 16: Celebration | | |