

PREPARE ENRICH

• *building strong marriages* •

Understanding Agreement, Disagreement, Indecision & Special Focus Items

PREPARE/ENRICH is a series of statements about individuals and relationships, each person uses the following scale to indicate how much they agree or disagree with each statement.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

A Couple's response to each item is compared and classified into one of the following four categories for each Relationship Category.

- **Positive Couple Agreement** – partners agree with one another in a healthy direction
- **Disagreement** – partners disagree with one another by two or more points on the five-point scale
- **Indecision** – one or both partners are undecided as indicated by a number three response, and the other partner is within one point of this either way.
- **Special Focus** – partners agree it is an area of concern

Special Focus* should be considered the opposite of **Positive Couple Agreement. In other words, when both partners disagree with a positively worded statement or agree with a negatively worded statement, the item will be scored as a **Special Focus** item. An example of a positive item is: “*I can express my true feelings to my partner.*” If both partners answer “disagree” to this item they are saying that this is an issue for them as a couple. An example of a negative item is: “*My partner does not listen to me.*” If both partners respond “agree” to this item they are saying that the item is an issue for them as a couple.

When listing the items and responses, each statement has a (+) or (-) sign in front of it.

- Positive items (+) indicate healthy or positive statements about couple relationships
- Negative items (-) indicate unhealthy or negative statements about couple relationships

How are the four types of items determined?

The Table below describes in detail how the Response Choices are compared and calculated to determine the type of score for each item.

Type of Item	Definition	Scoring
Positive Couple Agreement	Couple agrees that the item is a positive aspect of their relationship.	Couple responses are identical or within one point of each other (ex 4-4, 4-5) as they both agree with positive items or both disagree with negative items.
Disagreement	Couple disagrees with each other on the item.	Couple responses differ by two or more points. (1-3, 2-5)
Indecision	Couple is undecided or has not made a clear decision on the item.	One or both of the partners are undecided (response of 3) and partners response is within one point (ex 3-3, 2-3 or 3-4).
Special Focus	Couple agrees that the item is a problem in their relationship.	Couple responses are identical or within one point of each other and they disagree with positive items or agree with negative items. (4-4, 1-1 or 1-2)

Review the Facilitator's Report before meeting with the couple:

Before meeting with the couple, one useful step is to identify which categories and specific items you might want to discuss with them.

How do I use the four types of items in counseling with a couple?

- **Identifying Couple Strengths:** By looking at the *Positive Couple Agreement* (PCA) items, you will be able to identify specific items that the couple agrees are a positive aspect of their relationship.
 - Always try to balance your feedback by sharing some PCA items along with growth areas
- **Prioritizing issues for the couple to discuss:** By looking at the *Special Focus*, *Disagreement* and *Indecision* items, you will identify issues that the couple needs to discuss and perhaps resolve. Prioritize your feedback based on the following format:
 - Begin with *Special Focus* items because both people agree that the issues are a problem for them.
 - Next, move to *Disagreement* items because they disagree by 2 or more points and need to resolve the issue.
 - Finally, move to *Indecision* items because the couple may not have talked about the issue or one or both partners are undecided about the issue.

Understanding Agreement, Disagreement,
Indecision & Special Focus items.

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