RAPID COUPLES INTERACTION SCORING SYSTEM (R-CISS)  
(MAXIMALLY DISCRIMINATIVE SCALE)  

(CSMR VERSION)

This is an amended version of the Couples Interaction Scoring System that was originally developed in 1983 by John Gottman. The Center for the Study of Marital Roles (CSMR) appended this version in 1993.¹ The purpose of this version of the coding system is to speed up the process of describing how couples solve their marital problems. There are two reasons for this. First, we keep detecting the same patterns with the CISS, MICS, CSIS and IMCS. We need to move forward. Second, we need a more rapid system for large N studies and for clinical use in assessing marital functioning in therapy.

To accomplish this decrease in coding time, two modifications were made to the original CISS procedures. First, a larger coding unit is employed here — the turn, everything one person says before the other person starts speaking. Vocal listener backchannels (e.g., "mm hmm," "yeah") count as a turn. Nonverbal listener backchannels (e.g., listener facial expressions, listener head nods) do not count as a turn, but are coded as positive or negative listener behaviors.

The second modification the R-CISS employs what I call a "detection system" for coding rather than a categorical system.

¹ All changes and additions developed by the Center for the Study of Marital Roles are in bold print throughout the original text of the manual as written by John Gottman except changes in the checklist at the end of the manual.
In a categorical system the coder must decide which one of a set of codes is most appropriate for describing a particular unit of interaction. In a detection system the coder checks all codes that are relevant. The system of codes need not be mutually exclusive or exhaustive with a detection system. In the detection system the coder essentially fills out a questionnaire about each turn unit, checking all the items that apply. In the maximally discriminative scale version of R-CISS the number of codes has been reduced to seven negative speaker codes, four positive speaker codes and nine listener codes. We also have a code for other negative and other positive statements. In addition to the above mentioned codes, the CSMR version includes the following:

(a) a negative speaker code for premature closure of a verbal interaction between partners

(b) a negative speaker code to indicate that the speaker is crying during the turn

(c) a positive listening code to indicate that the listener is crying

A major purpose of the R-CISS is to rapidly generate the point graphs developed by Gottman, Markman and Notarius (1977) and Gottman (1979). These graphs provide for a visual scan of a conversation. They also are a diagnostic tool of a couple's conflict resolution skills, since specific shapes of the point graphs relate to specific interaction sequences with the CISS. The point graphs are also useful for within-couple time-
series analysis; for example, they can be used to detect asymmetry in emotional responsiveness within a couple. More recently, we have had success in creating a typology of marital interaction using the R-CISS speaker and listener point graphs.

How to Code

More recently we have begun using the R-CISS without transcripts of the tapes. We employ a computer-assisted video coding system developed by James Long. With this equipment we are able to obtain timing information automatically about the end and beginning of turns.

**CSMR is using the R-CISS with written transcripts of the tapes and coding sheets as developed from the work of John Gottman to code videotapes. CSMR has further amended the original version of the coding sheet. A verbatim transcript of the tapes is used for all couple interaction coding.**

Method of Coding

First, you will listen to the tape without reading the transcript. Watch this couple's style of interaction in terms of its positivity or negativity. It is also helpful to watch a non-conflict conversation if one exists or a segment of tape in which the interviewer is present (such as the period when the facilitator is in the room). This will help to establish a baseline for neutral affect and give the coder a better idea of how the couple is seated for later coding of the listener's gaze.
Second, listen to the tape and read along with the transcript, correcting any mistakes made during transcription. Each turn of the interaction is numbered on your transcript. After listening to the tape, decide if the general mood of the entire interaction is positive or negative. A new speaker turn begins at the first verbal response by the spouse. **Turns should be judged independently. Do not carry codes over from previous turns.** If there is a pause between turns, the listener remains a listener **until he/she speaks and begins his/her speaker turn.** When both are speaking simultaneously, neither is a listener. Now, listen to the first speaking turn. Ask yourself:

1. Is there something negative in it?
2. If yes, scan both speaker menus — Agenda Building and Maintenance and Repair. Check all the negative items that apply. When in doubt, check the item **description** and remember, positive and negative codes may co-exist within a turn.
3. If none of the codes apply, the turn may be unrelated to the codes we are interested in. In this case, such turns may be considered "noncoded" or "neutral." **Although the CSMR version of R-CISS has a code for noncodeable turns for ease in data entry, these turns are indicated by the term "neutral" written across the columns when actual coding is taking place.** Now ask yourself:

4. Is there something positive in the turn?
5. If yes, scan both speaker menus of positive items and check all the items that apply.

6. Now scan the listener menus for the same person in the second turn. In most turns you should be able to judge whether or not there were backchannels and facial movement, whether the facial expression was positive or negative and whether the listener was watching the speaker. In longer speaker turns, all of these codes, negative and positive, may occur. In a very short turn sometimes none should be used. More information for the use of listener code is given with their definitions.

The Three Menus

The first menu is called "agenda building" and it is a menu of positive or negative: (1) describing and defining the issues, and (2) responding to the partner's description and definition of the issues. Specific definitions of the items are in this manual.

The second menu is called "repair and maintenance of process," and it is a menu of positive or negative repairing and maintenance of the interaction in an emotional fashion.

The third menu has to do with the context of message reception, that is, the listener's behavior.

How the Menus Were Generated

Items for detection were generated in two ways. The five
major "first generation" marital interaction coding systems were studied and positive and negative items were selected. These coding systems were (1) the MICS (Hops, Wils, Patterson, & Weiss, 1971); (2) the IMCS (Ting-Toomey, 1982); (3) the MFICS (Olson, 1981); (4) the CSIC (Raush, Barry, Hertel, & Swain, 1974); and (5) the CISS (Gottman, Markman & Notarius, 1971). These items were then sorted according to the tasks of conflict resolution (the four menus). Definitions of the items in this manual were taken (and combined in some instances) from the original manuals from each system after redundancies were eliminated. Second, sequential patterns from the research literature were also included.

The summary names for these items appear on the checklist that follows. You will learn the precise meaning of each of these terms by reading this codebook. Once you learn what each code means, remember that speed in coding is one goal with this system. The checklist at the end of the codebook is designed to facilitate speed in coding. The checklist includes clarifications of the items not found in the following descriptions. Therefore, it is important to be familiar with the content in each section.

**Neutral**

If no positive or negative items are checked on any menu, the turn will be considered neutral. Don't be afraid of this neutral code. This is, in fact, a valid code and it may be
appropriate, especially in a couple finding it hard to discuss the chosen topic, as this coding system does not have codes for non-conflict interaction. If there is no noticeable affect (flat affect) and the statement doesn't make a contribution to the interaction in terms of other positive or negative items, then it is coded a neutral (for example, if they are discussing the furniture in the office). It is possible to have several speaker turns which receive no speaker codes. These turns do, however, receive listener codes so the coding sheet should never be blank.

If coding a section neutral because it does not deal with the issue at hand, then code all turns (including assents) neutral for the entire section.

Code "you know" as neutral if used as a filler, but if it is definitely a question, code (12).

THE ITEMS

The following definitions of items are taken from the code manuals from each system but they have been rewritten so that they can stand alone (outside of a particular system) and stand together with items from other systems. Also, many elements of code definitions within a coding system are designed to distinguish one code from others. These elements are necessary in a mutually exclusive and exhaustive coding system in which the coder has to decide between codes and pick one code or the code for a unit. In a detection system, these stringent elements of code definitions would only slow down the coding process. Thus, code definitions have been streamlined to speed up the coding.
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THE SCALES

I will summarize your coding into 8 scales. These are the number of times the following items were checked in a conversation:

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These 8 scales are one way the data from the R-CISS is summarized, and the scales are important for reliability assessment.
1. **Complain (MICS)**

A (1) is used to code statements in which a person bemoans the extent of his/her suffering without necessarily explicitly blaming the other for this suffering. (1) is distinguished from other codes in the following manner:

a. A statement must be delivered in a whining, hurt, or irritated tone of voice to be coded (1)

b. A (1) statement does not explicitly blame the other person for the suffering.

c. A (1) statement does not propose any solutions, although it may assume the form, "I wish I wasn't so miserable."

A (1) statement expresses feelings of **unfairness**, being frequently deprived, wronged, or inconvenienced either through the partner's action or non-action or because of external circumstances. Here are some examples of a (1):

1. "I never get to go anywhere." (whining voice)
2. "Well, if I didn't do it, it wouldn't get done."
   (bitter tone).

Sometimes, one person makes a remark that begins as a (1) in that the comment is self-oriented and then finishes his/her statements by laying the blame on the other:
"I always feel like I'm on a leash when I'm coming home from work because if I'm not there within 15 minutes, you're waiting for me at the door, ready to bawl me out." (irritated tone of voice)

This example should receive both (1) and (2).

Sarcastic statements require close attention from the coder for appropriate coding. Sarcastic statements which are clearly directed at the other person are coded put-down. Sometimes, however, the coder will encounter descriptions of a problem not clearly related to the spouse, such as dissatisfaction with the world at large. Examples of the latter type of (1) statements are:

1. "The kids ate the chocolate cake!" (irritated tone)
2. "I had to wait three hours in the doctor's office before I even got in to see him!" (bitter tone). (MICS)

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Criticize (MICS)

A hostile statement expressing unambiguous dislike or disapproval of a specific behavior in which the other engages is coded (2). A criticism is often delivered in a hostile or irritated tone of voice. A (2) statement is always concerned with a specific behavior which the speaker dislikes, and must be direct in the sense that (a) there is no question that the statement is critical, and (b) there is no question at whom the blame is directed. The speaker may indicate that he or she wants that behavior to change. Suggestions about past behavior which
should have been different will be coded (2). This suggestion may be delivered in a hostile or blaming manner.

To use the (2) code, the statement must refer to a clearly defined behavior; statement about generalized traits or broad attributes will be coded put-down.

Here are some examples of (2):

1. "You left dirty dishes all over the house AGAIN." (hostile tone).
2. You NEVER come home right after work."
3. "You wasted five dollars on that stupid record." (MICS)
4. "Why don't you ever pick up your dirty clothes?"

3. **Negative Relationship Issue Problem Talk (CISS)**

(3) is a statement delivered with negative affect which concerns a relationship problem that the couple is discussing. The statement may deal with the existence, nature, cause, effect, and/or implication of the problem. Examples: "We have a problem with the kids" (existence of problem); "Our financial situation is pretty bad because of your doctor bills" (nature of problem); "Maybe we have a problem with the children because I tell them to do one thing and you tell them to do another" (cause of problem); "If you continue to deny me attention it is bound to destroy our relationship" (implication or prediction about problem).

A speaker's opinion, attitude, evaluation, or thought process directly related to the problem would also be included in this type of (3) statement; for example, "The way I see it, we
should have made it clear to your parents how long we could stay with them before we went." A couple need not stay on the same problem throughout the conversation. As long as the statement fits one of the above subcategories, it should be coded (3).

If you are not sure if the turn is negative problem description, and the turn is clearly not a neutral, code toward the positive (12) or (13) rather than the negative (3). A good question to ask yourself when deciding if a turn is a negative problem description (3): "Is the speaker not moving toward resolution of the problem (eg. only blaming the other person)." However, it is not necessary that every speaker turn be coded a (12), (13) or (3).

The tone of the interaction may be negative but it is apparent that the speaker wants to continue the current stream of conversation. There must be no intention to stop the conversation. There may not be enough evidence to consider the turn a complaint or criticism, but this does not necessarily mean that the turn is not a negative problem description (3).

Interruptions with negative affect that are used to interrupt the flow of the conversation or get the partner's attention are coded (3). For example, if a person uses his or her spouse's name in such a way as to interfere with the spouse's train of thought or speech.

Although you will usually code problem talk as either a (3), a (12) or a (13), it is possible to have more than one problem talk code in a single turn if that turn is exceptionally long.
AGENDA BUILDING
NEGATIVE RESPONSE TO PARTNER'S VIEWS

4. **Yes-But** (CISS)

(4) is a statement of qualified agreement or apology which can be explicit or implicit. Examples, "I'm sorry I made you mad, but I really felt that I had to make my point"; "OK, you're right. However, that situation will never arise." This statement need not have negative affect. In fact, some very good examples of yes-but statements are said jokingly. Sometimes yes-but statements get cut into two turns and actually look like an assent followed in the next turn by a disagreement. When this happens, the first turn that begins the "yeah-but" statement is coded a (14). The second section of the statement is coded a (4). For example the following interaction would be coded:

H: "I really wanted to take a couple of weeks off this summer." (12)

W: "Uh-huh...". (14)

H: "Get away for a while." (12)

W: "But, that would drain our savings account." (4)

A direct disagreement would not be coded (4). Depending on the affect, it would belong in one of the problem description codes if it concerned a relationship issue problem since we have no disagreement code in this system. **There should be some acknowledgment that what the other person has said is at least partially true.**
5. **Defensive (protect self)** (CSIC, MICS)

Statements that deny any responsibility for blame or statements that cast blame onto someone or something else with the intent of making the other realize "it's not my fault" or "I've no control over it."

When the question arises concerning the responsibility for a past or present problem, a person may explicitly deny that he/she is responsible for that situation: if so, code (5). For example:

1. "You didn't clean the cat box." "Well, I never said I would." (5)
2. "You never pick up my clothes at the cleaners." "Yes, I do." (5)

The question of responsibility will usually be raised in a preceding response from the other partner. Any statement in which one person suggests that neither partner is responsible for a particular problem will not be coded (5). (This is a departure from the MICS). Also, any statement in which a person denies a connection between his behavior and a situation which has been defined as a problem by the other partner is coded (5). Note that (5) refers only to past or present problems. **A (5) may be in response to a criticism (2) presented by the spouse in the previous turn. Do not code (5) if a person is merely specifying. This code does not include "you have the wrong story" type of statements.**

**Response to Negative Mindreading.** A mindreading statement is one that attributes feelings, motives, attitudes, or actions
to one's partner. Examples are: "You are tense in that situation." "You never took out the garbage." "You don't care about our living standard." A negative mindreading statement is one delivered with some negative affect, such as whining, or irritation, or sarcasm, and so on. Whether the mindreading is delivered with positive or negative affect makes a great deal of difference. Usually mindreading with positive or neutral affect acts as if they were probes about feelings. Couples don't usually say "How did you feel yesterday at my mother's house?" Instead they mindread: "You were tense at my mother's house." If this is said with neutral or positive affect, the listener will usually agree and elaborate. If it is said with negative affect, the listener will usually disagree and elaborate. This type of response to a negative mindreading is coded Defensive (5). A good cue to look for is the use of "always" and "never," as in "You never care about my feelings," or "You always think only of yourself."
6. **Put Down** (MICS)

A (6) is a comment that function, in the coder's judgment, is to demean or embarrass the other. Basically, there are four types of unkind statements, as such statements may be either direct or indirect (ambiguous) and specific or nonspecific. The primary requirement for a (6) is that, in the coder's judgment, the speaker's intent is to hurt, demean, or embarrass the other.

In general, any demeaning statement using derogatory adjectives will be coded (6), as will any demeaning statement which refers to broad traits of generalized attributes. A **put-down is an attack on a spouse's self or identity** (whereas criticisms (2) are attacks on the individual's behavior with regard to the issue at hand). Swearing at a person in a hostile way is coded (6). Any proposal for change made in an irritated or bitter tone of voice is to be coded (6).

(6) is the most "intuitive" category in the MICS system, but one which is coded with reliability. A coder achieves this reliability in difficult cases by using himself/herself as an "insult detector"; as s/he listens to an ambiguous statement, s/he asks herself or himself, "if that statement were directed toward me, would I personally feel insulted, embarrassed or put down?" and "would other coders view it as such?" If so, the
A direct comparison with one partner taking the superior position is coded a (6). For example, "I do this and you don't." Endearment such as "dear" or "honey" that are obviously used with a negative or sarcastic tone should be coded (6). If the endearment is positive or ambiguous (you're not sure if it is positive or negative), then code it a (22).

7. **Escalate Negative Affect** (CISS-Sequential)

(7) Can occur in two ways: by escalating one's own negative affect (for example, raising one's voice and getting more angry) or by reciprocating the partner's negative affect with one's own negative affect. The use of this code requires that the coder look for a sequence in the couple's interaction. Look for a continuance of, or shift in, behavior. Some change in verbal tone or body language that indicates the present state is different from the previous state.

Examples of escalating negative affect:

(a) Louder voice

(b) Belligerence

(c) Hostile or angry interaction beginning with a statement such as "and another thing"

(d) Long drawn out speeches by one partner in which the individual appears to get increasingly agitated, wound-up or upset.
21. **Other Negative**

This category has been added to include various types of negative statements which would otherwise not be coded in this system. It may be used alone or with any of the other codes. Before using the (21) code however, you should ask yourself, "is the turn not clearly defined using just the other codes?", and "does the use of the extra code clarify the image of the speaker." This code would include such things as sadness, heavy sighing or speaking with tension or embarrassment. In addition a (21) is used for negative body movements. For example: jaw clenching, pounding of fist, finger pointing or physically pulling body back from spouse.

23. **Closure**

If partner attempts early closure to a particular topic of discussion code a (23). A clear attempt must be made by the speaker to change the subject in mid-conversation. Affect can be either positive or negative. Often the speaker will appear uncomfortable or angry with the present topic and is attempting to avoid further confrontation or discomfort. For example, speaker may say, "well, I'm done with this topic" or "that takes care of that." This is not to be confused with an "aside" or a minor interruption of conversational flow without an attempt to change the subject. For example, closure is not in effect if a person coughs and his or her spouse responds by asking if s/he is alright. It is important to note that an attempt at closure may
or may not be accepted by the other spouse.

24. Crying

The person is obviously crying during his or her speaking turn. Crying may be either angry or sad. Although you may not always be able to see the individual crying, watch for other signs such as wiping of eyes, shaking voice, etc.

If the person starts crying, code both listening (25) and speaker (24) until it is obvious that s/he has stopped crying.
AGENDA BUILDING

POSITIVE PRESENTATION OF OWN VIEWS

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12. Neutral or Positive Problem Description (MICS)

Any statement describing the present problem is coded (12). A (12) may assume any of the following forms:

a. A statement recognizing the existence of a problem. 
   ("I think we have a problem with the kids.")

b. A statement describing the nature of a problem. 
   ("The kids have no discipline; they run wildly around the house doing whatever they want.")

c. A statement speculating about the causes of the problem. 
   ("Maybe it's because I tell them to do one thing and you tell them to do the exact opposite.")

d. A statement discussing the effects of the problem on the relationship 
   (They're so noisy that we can't even have a decent conversation.")

e. A statement concerning the implications of the problem for the future. 
   ("If things go on like this, we'll both end up in the madhouse.")

The speaker's opinion or attitude about the problem would also be coded (12).

A (12) statement usually refers to a behavior or situation that one or both partners does not like, but in order to be coded (12), a statement must be made in a neutral or positive tone of voice. A statement is coded (12) whether it is specific or
vague, as long as it refers to a recognizable problem.

A turn is coded (12) when there is a genuine openness for
negotiation about the problem and/or its solution. In addition,
general statements such as "What do you want to say, dear" are
included in a (12) if it pertains to the problem of discussion.

Code "you know" as neutral if used as a filler, but if it is
definitely a question, code (12).

Although you will usually code problem talk as either a (3),
a (12) or a (13), it is possible to have more than one problem
talk code in a single turn if that turn is exceptionally long.

13. Task-Oriented Information (IMCS)

Issue-oriented, factual statements concerning either the
past, present or future, are coded (13). For example: "I did the
dishes last night." "I just talked to your mother on the
telephone." these statements must tie into the problem
conversation, and this code will not be used for statements made
to avoid discussing the problem. Factual or specific statements
must be positive in nature. A specific incident that is discussed
negatively should not be coded a (13). For example:

"You never do the dishes right. Like last night you
washed the dishes and forgot to put the catch in the
sink again."

"Yesterday when you talked to my mother on the phone
you were such a bitch."

When a couple refers to the facilitation, (i.e. "What did
you put on money?" code (13).

Although you will usually code problem talk as either a (3), a (12) or a (13), it is possible to have more than one problem talk code in a single turn if that turn is exceptionally long.
14. **Assent** (MICS) (CISS)

Often a listener will emit brief verbal responses (such as "Yeah", "Mm-hmm", "I see", "I know", "Right", "Oh"), while the other person is speaking. The function of these responses is to acknowledge that the speaker's comments are being listened to rather than to indicate explicit agreement with the content of the speaker's comments. This type of response is coded an assent (14). **Be cautious of "Mmmm" and only code (14) when it is definitely an assent (speaker nods also, etc.).** If the verbal response, such as "Yeah," is an agreement to a question concerning the couple's problem, it falls into the "opinions about the problem" category and should be coded (12) or (13) (positive problem description) in addition to a (14). Another type of behavior arbitrarily defined as (14) is the case in which a listener echoes or repeats short portions of the other person's statements in a neutral tone of voice. **A statement is not coded a (14) if spouse is mimicking in a sarcastic manner. If this is the case, the turn is coded a (6).**

Laughter **within a speaking turn that is** in response to what the spouse said is coded (14), as well as coded (15) Humor/Laugh. **See the section on Humor/Laugh for further details.**
15. **Humor/Laugh (MICS)**

Any statement that is clearly intended to be humorous and is primarily lighthearted in tone will be coded (15). A (15) is almost always accompanied by laughter from the person making the statement and will often evoke laughter from the other. For any statement with overtones of sarcasm, consider (6). Examples of (15) are:

a. Outright jokes of the "one-liner" variety.

b. Statements which propose a clearly facetious solution to a problem.

c. Statements which emphasize the humorous aspects of a situation or problem.

d. Statements which present lighthearted criticism of the other in such a manner that it is lightly received e.g., "Oh, you silly duck!"

(15) is also coded for each separate occurrence of a laugh during a speaking turn. It must be a positive affect laugh or smile (cannot be a mocking or sarcastic laugh). Laughter at one's own joke or statement receives the code Humor/Laugh, whereas laughter at a spouse's statement or joke (while during a speaking turn) receives both Assent and Humor/Laugh.

**Using Humor (CISC)**

Used for: acts in a humorous tone whose function, as
perceived by the other, is to temper the conflict.

Examples:

1. "You're a stinker! That's a footnote by the way."
2. "Well, I never knew him (Shakespeare), but I enjoy his plays."
3. "I'm going to trade you in."

22. Other Positive

This code should be used when something very positive is going on between partners. This could be a warmth or understanding which is being verbally communicated but which is not clearly defined by the existing codes in the system. For example, a compliment or comment that is supportive of a behavior. An example of verbal support would be "You're doing better at your share of the housework and I appreciate that." As with the Other Negative code, you should be able to justify the use of Other Positive. It's use must give a better translation of the speech into codes - (e.g., affection, playful teasing). Pet names or endearments that are used with an affectionate tone and positive non-verbal facial or body movements (e.g., hugs, pats, kisses) are coded (22). A turn may have just a (22) if an endearment is used but no other relevant material is in the turn ("well, hon...."). If the endearment is sarcastic, then code as a (3). The positive affect or activity must take place during the turn and not carry over from a previous turn. For example, if a husband puts his arm around his wife and leaves it there
throughout the tape, you would code a (22) only during the turn when he initially puts his arm around her.
R-CISS LISTENER CODES

There are two listener menus, one positive and one negative, containing essentially the same codes. During most speaker turns, either the positive or negative version of each listener code is used. During long speaker turns when there is a change in the listener's reaction to the speaker, both the positive and negative forms can occur and both should be checked. During very short speaker turns, as with assents, it is usually impossible to code the listener except perhaps for gaze. When both spouses are speaking at the same time, there is no listener and no codes should be used. In couples using very short speaker turns, it is necessary to pay attention and not code facial movement and expressions which accompany one's speech as being listener behavior. There is some overlap between all of the listener code categories and they should be used in the same way that the speaker codes are used. Rather than trying to decide what the listener has done, you should ask yourself whether or not there were backchannels, facial movement, eye contact and responsive facial movement, and whether the facial expression was positive or negative and then check the appropriate boxes on the coding sheet.

Codes (8) and (16) **Backchannels**

Backchannels communicate an interest in what the speaker is saying. They may include a nod or tilt of the head, leaning toward the speaker, a smile or a frown. Backchannels are like a
mirror to the speaker and their absence is like talking to a blank wall. Backchannels may also include gestures of the arms and hands. Note that it is the absence of backchannels rather than those which convey disagreement that receive Code Number 8. **If a listener turn is not an overlap or noncoded, you must have either an (8) or a (16). If you code an (8) you must have a (9) or a (10) or both.**

**Codes (9) and (17) Facial Movement**

Any type of facial movement receives Code Number 17. This includes smiles and other responsive types of movement as well as nervous types of movement such as biting lips. Head movement and blinking are not coded 17. The total absence of facial movement is not as rare as it might seem. Facial movement due to gum chewing, cigarette smoking or a previously defined, personal tic, is not coded 17.

**Codes (11) and (18) Facial Expression**

This is one listener code which is not necessarily used on each turn. There should be no doubt in the coder's mind that the listener's expression is either negative or positive for these codes to be used. Neutral facial expression, as defined for each listener after watching the entire tape, does not receive a facial expression code.

**If the listener is laughing and/or smiling, the turn should be coded an (18).**
Codes (10) and (19) **Listener Gaze Pattern**

To use this code the coder first needs to establish when the couple is looking at each other and when they are looking off to the side. The can vary from tape to tape. Code (19) is used when the listener is watching the speaker most of the time and (10), when s/he is looking around the room or in his/her lap. The wooden face stare either at the spouse, one's lap or the opposite wall receives Code Number (10). If you have a codeable listener turn, you must have either a (10) or a (19).

If one person gets up during the tape and walks out of the picture (to throw something away, look at facilitation sheets, etc.), code the listener as (10) instead of (19).

Code (20) **Responsive Facial and Body Movement**

Responsive facial movement, as opposed to facial movement or backchannels, is used only when the non-verbal listener response could have been verbal speaker response. The coder should be able to express the facial movement in works before using this code. Examples include the smile that says, "I like you idea," the perplexed look that says, "I don't understand what you mean," or the raised eyebrows that say, "Wow!" or "You're kidding". Sometimes the responsive facial movement is in response to what the speaker is doing rather than what he or she is saying. This type of facial movement also receives Code Number 20. Included in code (20) are responsive body movements as well as facial movements. For example: when a husband or wife sticks his/her tongue out at his/her spouse.
Code (25) **Crying while Listening**

The listener may or may not be engaged in the interaction, but is crying during his or her listening turn. See code (24) for more details on how to judge this code.

If the person starts crying, code both listening (25) and speaker (24) until it is obvious that s/he has stopped crying.
Reliability

Reliability is checked on 25% randomly selected tapes. The checker has to code the entire tape. The checker should first view the entire tape and proceed using the same rules as the coder but using a transcript with previously numbered turns.

There are only two kinds of reliability checking I do on the R-CISS. The first is a positive/negative check. The confusion matrix then has only positive, negative or not checked columns. The unit is the turn. See Bakeman and Gottman (1986) for a discussion of confusion matrices. For the second kind of reliability checking, the unit is the entire tape, and I want you to count the total score for each scale of the R-CISS for the tape. I will then compute an intraclass correlation coefficient across all the tapes of the study.

During the first year, reliability for the CSMR version of R-CISS was checked on 11% of randomly selected tapes. During the remainder of the study, reliability was checked on every tenth tape. This decision was the result of high reliability and low coder decay during the first year. The checker uses the same rules and procedures as the coder, but uses a transcript previously corrected by the coder. Reliabilities are computed for combined speaker and listener codes as well as just speaker codes. In contrast to Gottman's procedure, CSMR computes interrater agreement code by code on a random sample of matching turns using the kappa statistic.
APPENDIX I

A NOTE TO TRANSCRIBERS:

A precise transcription of the tape is essential to the coders who will be working with it. Consistency on the part of the transcribers as a group can avoid the very unreliable practice of coders trying to decide which codes go with which parts of a split-up sentence or drawing arrows all over a transcript to piece statements back together.

As a transcriber you need to know that the coding system being used at this time, codes "speaker turns." It is therefore important to separate these turns as they occur. This is easy enough to do when the listener lets the speaker finish before responding. Unfortunately, this is not always the case so we need a few basic rules.

Acquiescence

"Uh-huh" or "Oh" (and various other grunts) tend to occur while the other person is speaking as well as afterwards. Take, for example, the husband giving a short monologue and the wife acknowledging with several "uh-huh's" while he is speaking. Even if the husband never stops speaking, each "uh-huh" entitles the wife to a speaker turn and the husband turn ends at this interruption. His new turn starts where the old one left off. Going over and over a section to try to hear one or two words is usually unproductive. If you are fairly sure of the word, type it in or just use (??). This is easy for coders to change. It
is much harder to make new turns throughout a long paragraph because the transcriber did not hear the listener say "uh-huh" or "oh, yeah" four or five times. Please listen carefully because these acknowledgments are important.

Lines within a turn should be double spaced and four spaces left between turns. A line at the very bottom of a page often gets lost on the copy machine, so try to leave at least an inch at the bottom.
APPENDIX II

R-CISS TRAINING

The materials you will be using for R-CISS training include this manual, the R-CISS practice video tape, and blank coding forms.

A suggested approach to training is to have the coders review the manual thoroughly, paying special attention to the sections; "How to Code," "Neutral," and "THE ITEMS." The section titled "THE ITEMS" gives you definitions for all the speaker and listener codes.

It is important for the Coders to remember that this is an impressionistic system, and as such the parameters for the codes will be defined by their own interpretation of the definitions. The Coders have been chosen because of their sensitivity as "cultural informants." As such, they will be able to reach a level of confidence in their own powers of observation by increasing their sensitivity to the information being supplied by the couple.

Coding in R-CISS requires the ability to look at a number of cues, and then turn the information into a code. They will be looking at information such as the voice, facial expression, content, and other less direct input (i.e. the "put-down code)
FACIAL EXPRESSION

Facial expression is one of the visual cues you may use to identify codes. The Listener codes (11) and (18) generalize facial expression into Negative and Positive categories. These can also be used for the Speaker codes as well. The following is a list of facial expressions to note:

Negative Facial Expressions
Anger - eyebrows furrowed together, eyes narrowed, lips pressed tight or narrowed, upper lip red not visible, jaw clenching
Disgust/Contempt - nose crinkled, outer edge of lips raised, one or both corners of lips pulled in.
Defensive - possible surprised or Mock surprise expression (eyebrows raised, eyes opened wide)
Sadness - corners of mouth turned down, chin pushed up, lip trembling

Positive Facial Expressions
Humor - smile (corners of mouth pulled up), eyes smiling (lower lid of eye moves up, crow's feet at corners of eyes), laugh
Affection - soft look to face, or imitating partners facial expression (empathy, tilting head to side)
Interest - eyebrows raised, alert expression
VOICE

The voice plays an important role in many of the codes. It differentiates Negative Relationship Issue Problem Talk, from Neutral, or Positive Problem Description. It also provides clues to identifying codes like Yes-But, and Defensive. In many instances the voice plays a more important role, than the facial expression in identifying a code. Look for this in the Humor/Laugh category. Listen for any underlying sarcasm or contempt in the voice.

Below are a list of voice cues to look for.

Negative Codes

Complain - whining, hurt, or irritated tone of voice. Whining has a high pitched, somewhat nasal quality.

Negative Relationship Issue Problem Talk - any negative tone of voice, such as anger or sadness, contempt.

Anger - Many variations, but listen for either increase in volume, or sharp, biting quality to words.

Sadness - Low volume of voice, and slowness in speech.

Contempt - A certain quality of coldness to voice and works. Sarcasm or mockery.

Yes-But - Listen for a rise at the end of the statement. It will sound as if they haven't finished their thought.

Defensive - There is often a high pitch to this code, with a whining quality. This is not a requirement for defensive. Defensive is more often content, rather than
voice.

Put Down - Listen for the qualities described under Anger and Contempt in detecting put downs. Use these along with the content, when the statement isn't as obvious as a direct cut or insult.

Positive Codes
Neutral or Positive Problem Description - Listen for neutral tone of voice, or positive qualities such as warmth, softness, an increase in positive energy, humor.

Humor/Laugh - There should be an underlying tone of affection to the humor code. Anything with negative overtones, such as sarcasm, or contempt should be looked at carefully.
APPENDIX III

In this version of R-CISS there are three turns which do not have a numbered code on the codesheet. These are neutral, inaudible, and overlap. Inaudible turns are those in which video-coders cannot determine what the speaker is saying. In this case, and in the case of neutral turns (as discussed previously), the word "inaudible" or "neutral" is written across the speaker columns. An overlap occurs when both partners are speaking simultaneously (when one partner should be listening) during the listening turn. If there is an overlap, the word "overlap" is written across the listening columns.

In data entry, these three turns receive the following numbered codes:

- Inaudible (28)
- Neutral (29)
- Overlap (30).
AGENDA BUILDING - Problem Description
Speaker's viewpoint

CODE #

(12) - Positive Problem Description
- Affect is positive or
- Describes aspects of problem in a positive way
  1. existence, nature, cause, effect, implication
- Opinions about the problem
- Openness for negotiation about problem and/or solution
- A general statement such as "What do you want to say, dear."

(13) - Task-Oriented Information
- Affect is or positive
- Statements are factual and must relate to the issue.
  For example: "Let's talk about last night when you did the dishes"
- Can refer to situations in the past, present, or future, but must be specific
- Can occur in conjunction with response codes (04,05,14)

RESPONSE TO PARTNER'S PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

(14) - Assent (agreement)
- Affect is or positive
- Agreement with partner's perspective
- Encouragement of partner to continue speaking
- Acknowledgement of partner's feelings
- May be a brief verbal agreement (such as "yeah" or "Mm-hmm") and is coded (14), or the response may add to the partner's perspective and is coded (12)+(14) or (13)+(14)

REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE - Positive Emotional Affects

(15) - Humor/Laughter
- Affect is positive, deadpan, or mock-negative
- Jokes, affectionate teasing
- Laughter with warmth and/or affection
- Facetious or extreme solutions to problems
- Humorous aspects of the problem or situation
Other Positive Affects

a. Warmth, affection, playfulness, silliness, empathy
b. Pet names used with affectionate tone. If tone is clearly negative, code a (06)
c. Supportive (empathetic) comments/affects
d. Compliment or comment that is supportive of a behavior
e. Catch-all for positive non-verbal facial or body movement (hugs, pats, kisses, etc)
f. The positive affect or activity must take place during the turn and not be a carry over from a previous turn
AGENDA BUILDING - Problem Description  Speaker's viewpoint

CODE #

(01) - Complain
   a. Tone of voice: whining, hurt, irritated
   b. An indirect, generalized expression of suffering
   c. No solutions proposed
   d. Some indication that the speaker feels that the situation is unfair and/or they feel imposed upon (by other, a situation or something else)

(02) - Criticize
   a. Must be a statement that is strong, obvious and direct (not implied or subtle) that focuses on change (agenda building, instead of insulting the person)
   b. Focus is on a behavior, not the person: a direct expression of dislike/disapproval of partner's behavior
   c. Tone of voice: hostile, irritated, superior
   d. Often a solution is dictated rather than negotiated
      1. "You'd better pick up your clothes and walk the dog"
      2. Has an "or else" quality to it
   e. Often, the phrase "You never... or You always..." begins the sentence. Look for code (06) as well.

(03) - Negative Problem Description - Negative Relationship Issue
   Problem Talk
   a. Tone of voice: angry, contemptuous, sad, whining, etc.
   b. Describes aspects of the problem in a negative way
      1. existence, nature, cause, effect, implication
      2. this is a critical factor when coding a (03)
   c. Negative content in the speaker's turn (can only use if there is a turn)
   d. If you aren't sure and the turn is clearly not a complaint, code toward the positive (12 or 13) rather than the negative (03)
   e. Tone may be negative, but apparent that speaker wants to continue the current stream of conversation. There must be not intention to stop the conversation
      1. May not be enough evidence to consider the turn a complaint, criticism, etc.
      2. Negative interruptions - for example when a partner uses his/her spouse's name as a means of interrupting the flow of conversation
   f. Negative verbal responses to partner's turn such as "Oh Please" and "Ah, come on."
   g. Speaker is not attempting to move toward resolution
RESPONSE TO PARTNER'S PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

CODE #

(04) - Yes-But
a. There must be some acknowledgement (even a small amount) that what the other person has said was heard and that what s/he has said is at least partially true.
   b. Can be either implicit or explicit
   c. Tone of voice and affect can be positive or negative. Often, the voice tone is whining or frustrated
   d. A statement of qualified agreement or apology
   e. Must be in response to the partner's views
   f. Is an indirect disagreement
   g. Often presented as an agreement followed by the words: "but," "however," "yet"
   h. May also include a problem description code. Look for: (03), (12) and/or (13); also look for (05)

(05) - Defensive
a. Must have clear emphasis or evidence of denial of guilt or of blame
   b. Tone of voice and affect can be positive or negative. Often the voice tone is whining or frustrated
   c. A statement that denies responsibility for blame
   d. Self-protective/other people's opinions used as support
   e. Conveys: "It's not my fault," "It's out of my control"
   f. May be in response to a criticism (02)
   g. Do not code (05) if person is merely specifying

(06) - Put Down (Contempt)
a. Voice tone and affect can be positive or negative. Often, voice tone is superior and/or angry, hostile
   b. Often, expressions can include smiling, sneering (action units 10 and/or 14)
   c. A statement that's function is to demean or embarrass
   d. Name calling
   e. Swearing at the partner
   f. Any proposal for change made in an irritated or bitter tone
   g. Mimicking voice or manner of partner with contempt
   h. Sarcasm
   i. A direct comparison with one partner taking a superior position. For example: "I do this and you don't"
      j. Statements can be implicit or explicit
   k. An attack on the person's self or identity (whereas criticisms are attacks on the individual's behavior with regard to the issue at hand)
   l. Endearments such as "dear" and "honey" that are obviously used with a negative tone (such as sarcasm).
      If the endearment is ambiguous or positive then code 22
(07) - **Escalate Negative Affect**
   a. Requires coder to look for a sequence in the exchange. Look for continuance of or shift in behavior
   b. Some change in verbal tone or body language that indicates the present state is different from the previous state
   c. Escalation of one's own affect
      1. Louder voice
      2. Angry statements which begin with "And another thing..." or "and then..."
      3. Code (06) often used in conjunction with (07)
      4. Belligerence
   d. Reciprocation of partner's negative affect
      1. Often in the form of defensiveness, Code (05)+(07)
      2. Louder voice
      3. Mimicking voice or manner of partner, Code (06)+(07)

(21) - **Other Negative**
   a. Other negative statements which do not fit in Codes (06) and/or (07)
   b. Sadness while speaking
   c. Sighing
   d. Speaking with tension or embarrassment
   e. Catch-all for other negative body movement (jaw clenching, pounding of fist, finger pointing, physically pulling body back, etc)
   f. Negative "Uh-hmm" type statements

(23) - **Closure**
   a. Person attempts to prematurely close and/or end a particular theme or form of discussion
   b. A clear attempt to change the subject in mid-conversation
   c. Often can include statements such as "Let's go on to something else," or "I'm finished with this"
   d. Affect can be either positive or negative
   e. This is not to be confused with an aside which indicates a minor interruption of conversational flow. (For example: a person coughs and the spouse asks if s/he is alright, but discussion is not permanently interrupted)
   f. An attempt at closure may or may not be accepted by the partner

(24) - **Crying**
   a. Individual is obviously crying during his or her speaking turn
LISTENER CODES - NEGATIVE/UNRESPONSIVE AFFECTS
Code #'s (08), (09), (10), (11)

CODE #

(08) - No Backchannels are Present
a. Head movement is turned away and unmoving
b. Body movement is rigid
c. Facial expression
   1. Can be blank or fixed
   2. No eye contact
   3. Unresponsive
d. Conveys that listener is not engaged
e. If you have an (08) you must have a (09) or a (10) or both a (09) and a (10)

(09) - No Facial Movement
a. Facial expression
   1. Can be blank or fixed
   2. Unresponsive
b. No facial movement in response to speaker
c. Conveys that listener is not engaged

(10) - Lack of Eye Contact
a. Contact is fast in changing, unsteady (as if tense of uncomfortable)
b. No eye contact is made
c. Listener may be engaged or not engaged

(11) - Facial Expression is Negative in Nature
a. Tense, angry, superior, threatening, sad expression
b. Think of it being involved with the speaker vs. stone-walling
c. Conveys that listener is engaged
LISTENER CODES - POSITIVE/RESPONSIVE AFFECTS
Code #'s (16) (17) (18) (19) (20) (25)

CODE #

(16) - Backchannels are Present
  a. Head movement
     1. nodding, shaking, tilting, stiffening of neck
  b. Body movement
     1. shrugging, waving or arms or hands, leaning forward
  c. Facial expressions
     1. smiles, frowns, grimaces, lifting of eyebrows, etc.
  d. If facial expression occurs, (17) is checked also

(17) - Facial Movement
  a. Facial Expression
     1. smiles, frowns, grimaces, lifting of eyebrows, etc.
  b. Facial movement in response to speaker
     1. jaw clenching or jutting, chin lift or tuck, lip
        biting or licking, nostril flair, nose twitch, chewing
        on inside of cheek
  c. If facial movement occurs, (16) is checked also

(18) - Facial Expression is Positive in Nature
  a. Smile or positive interest is genuine
  b. Negative expression is an empathetic response

(19) - Eye Contact with Speaker
  a. Contact is steady, slow in changing

(20) - Responsive Facial or Body Movement
  a. Non-verbal equivalent to words
  b. Raised eyebrows = "Wow!" or surprise
  c. Frown = "I don't understand" or questioning
  d. Widening eyes + brow life = "Oh no!" or concern
  e. Tilt of head + wince = "He didn't" or skepticism
  f. Raising upper lip = "Yuck!" or disgust
  g. Sneer + squint = "You jerk" or contempt
  h. Include body movements as well as facial movements

(25) - Crying while Listening
  a. Person may or may not be engaged in the interaction.
GENERAL CONVENTIONS

Non-Verbal Turns (such as "mm hmmm" can be coded in three different ways:
1. Affirmation or agreement (14)
2. (write in for the turn)
3. Negative Affect-definite negative tone (21)

Neutral Turns
1. If you are uncertain as to whether a turn is or a specific code, lean toward neutral
2. If a turn is unrelated to any of the codes you are looking for, then code a neutral
3. If there is no noticeable affect (flat affect) and the statement doesn't make a contribution to the interaction then code neutral
4. If the couple is not discussing a particular issue or problem, code a neutral. For example, the couple is simply talking about what they did during the day or when the facilitator is coming back

Judging Turns
Turns should be independently judged. Do not carry codes over from previous turns.

Overlap
If there is overlap for more than half of the turn, then code the entire turn as an overlap. If the overlap is half or less of the listening turn then code it as though the listener was listening for the entire turn.