













# *Connections*

## *Spring Newsletter 2011*

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*Dear BBH Certified Gottman Educators,*

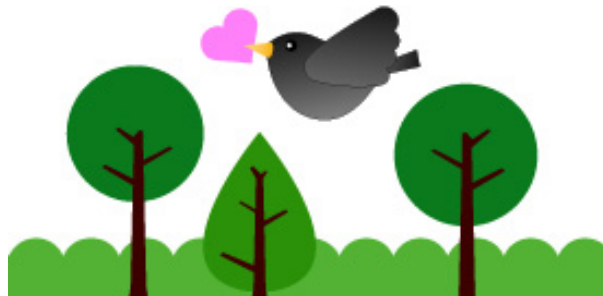
Happy Spring! I don't know about you, but I am eagerly awaiting warmer weather and sunnier days here in Seattle! Before you run out and try to take advantage of any sun that may be shining in your neck of the woods, take a moment to read about the latest BBH news and updates.

## *Welcome New CGEs!*

The BBH team held another successful Bringing Baby Home Certification Training at our headquarters in Seattle this past March. We've added another 30 CGEs to our BBH Family, bringing our numbers up to nearly 800 educators! I hope that all of our new educators enjoyed the training and are gearing up to use the knowledge that they gained with expectant couples and new parents in their communities.

## *Fostering a Healthy Transition to Parenthood: A Weekend Dedicated to Helping Expectant Couples Strengthen Family Relationships, June 11-12, 2011, Seattle, WA.*

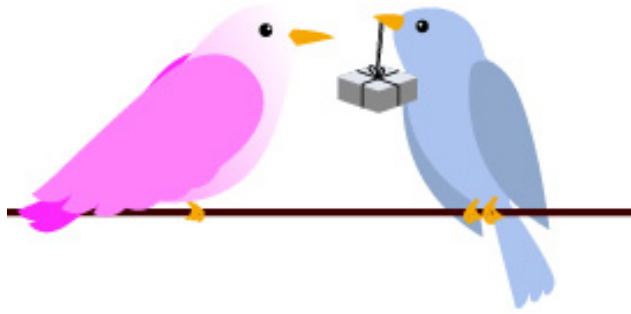
Registration is now open for this weekend-long event! See the BBH website for more information: <http://www.bbhonline.org/certified-gottman-educator/Upcoming-Talks-and-Events.aspx>. Please plan to join the **BBH team**, along with past BBH Director **Carolyn Pirak**, CGE and Postpartum Mood Disorder expert **Heidi Koss**, and renowned birth educator **Penny Simkin**, as we spend the weekend sharing knowledge and discussing ways to strengthen family relationships during the transition to parenthood. Continuing education units will be offered to Saturday workshop and Sunday breakfast participants... Reserve your space at both events today!



## *BBH is making national headlines!*

The Bringing Baby Home Program was featured in the Wall Street Journal's Life and Culture section on April 28<sup>th</sup>! Check out the online version of the article, which talks about what the transition to parenthood can spark between couples and strategies for overcoming challenges:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704099704576288954011675900.html?KEYWORDS=bringing+baby+home#articleTabs%3Darticle>.



### *Product and Service Updates!*

1. ***The Couples Toolkit is now available in Spanish.*** At long last, the BBH Couples Workbook and Card Deck Set are now available in Spanish! Please see the latest BBH product order form for details on how to order your Spanish materials today:  
<http://www.bbhonline.org/certified-gottman-educator/Order-BBH-Products.aspx>.
2. ***The BBH Support Group Series.*** As many of you know, the original BBH research tested the efficacy of the BBH Workshop plus a support group series to bolster family relationships during the transition to parenthood. Our research shows that couples who were offered the Workshop plus the support group fared best overall. In order to help you provide the best support possible to the couples that you work with, we have made the original BBH support group series content available for purchase by Certified Gottman Educators. Please see the latest [BBH product order form](#) for details on how to order your support group materials today.
3. ***Resources and Support Groups for Parents.*** For those of you who do not wish to offer support groups of your own to the couples that you work with, we've created a list of resources and support groups for parents to share with you. The document can be found on our website: [http://www.bbhonline.org/BBH/media/downloads/Parenting-Resources-and-Support-Groups\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.bbhonline.org/BBH/media/downloads/Parenting-Resources-and-Support-Groups_FINAL.pdf). Please feel free to share this document with your clients, or use it to make referrals to couples looking for extra support. If you know of a support group or resources in your area that is not currently listed, please let us know ([bbh.ct@bbhonline.org](mailto:bbh.ct@bbhonline.org)) and we'll add it to our list!
4. ***BBH "In the News".*** In order to help our CGEs get the word out and spread enthusiasm about the BBH Program, we've added a new "In the News" section to our website, which can be found here: <http://www.bbhonline.org/bringing-baby-home/BBH-in-the-News.aspx>. This new page of our website lists recent media segments that have mentioned or focused on BBH. For example, there is a link to a 45 minute radio interview that describes the legacy of Dr. Gottman's

research, how we know what we do about the masters and disasters of relationships, and what couples experience during the transition to parenthood and how the Bringing Baby Home Program can help. As you know, the BBH team is committed to encouraging couples around the country and beyond to participate in BBH; thus, we try our best to participate in media opportunities that give us the chance to highlight BBH as much as possible. We will plan to update this page regularly as new media segments that may be of interest to our CGEs are conducted. Make sure to check it out!



5. ***RRI/BBH Promotional Video.*** To help the general public better understand what it is that the Relationship Research Institute does and how the Bringing Baby Home Program was formed, we recently created a promotional video that is now available on the RRI website: [www.rrinstitute.org](http://www.rrinstitute.org). The video is about 6 minutes long and can be used by CGEs to help educate the public and potential clients about the value of our research and programming. The video contains footage from an actual BBH Workshop, facilitated by CGEs Allison White and Diana Bharucha. It includes several testimonials from Workshop participants about the value of the Workshop content and how they've begun to use it in their own lives. CGEs can feel free to link the video to their own websites and use it to promote their own BBH-related activities.
  
6. ***New CGE Mentorship/Training Opportunities.*** Based on CGE feedback, we have begun to offer personalized mentorship and training opportunities for CGEs who would like additional assistance with learning how to facilitate the BBH Workshop. More information about personalized training opportunities, which include the chance to observe one of our Training Specialists conduct a live BBH Workshop, is available on the BBH website: <http://www.bbhonline.org/certified-gottman-educator/BBH-Mentorship---Training-Opportunities.aspx>. CGEs who would like to take advantage of these new mentorship and training opportunities through July 2011 will also receive 10% off a single BBH product order!

### *BBH Research Update!*

I have recently returned from an insightful trip to Montreal, Quebec, where I attended the Society for Research in Child Development's biennial meeting. I had the pleasure of participating in a symposium on the socialization of self-regulation that highlighted family-level processes linked to children's emotional responding. I will be sharing some of the results I presented on the role of validation in prompting optimal emotional responding at the June 11<sup>th</sup> workshop noted above. While in Montreal, I had the fortune of presenting along with Dr. Alyson Shapiro, who conducted the original BBH research with Dr. Gottman in 1999-2005. Alyson presented some new BBH research on our original study cohort relating to emotion-coaching. See the summary of Alyson's presentation (on page 10), which shows how parents who attended the BBH workshop and support group series were more coaching of their two-year olds' emotions.

### *BBH in Australia!*

Australian CGEs Nerina Tringham, Alex Scagliola, and Ros Lloyd have been offering the BBH Workshop to new parents in Australia since 2010. See the article (on page 7) that describes how their workshops have been going over the last year. Thanks, Nerina, Alex, and Ros, for the lovely picture and updates! Good luck with the rest of your workshops this year!

### *Decisions, decisions, decisions! How best to offer BBH?*

CGE Helen Nolan has kindly written a brief article (on page 8) describing her recent experiences with trying to figure out the best time/days/format in which to offer BBH workshop content. Check it out to see what she's learned about her past BBH class participants' preferences for when to hold the series.



### *Upcoming BBH Training Opportunities.*

Do you know someone who is interested in becoming a Bringing Baby Home Certified Gottman Educator? If so, tell them to check out our website to learn about upcoming training opportunities: <http://www.bbhonline.org/certified-gottman-educator/bringing-baby-home-training.aspx>. Certification Trainings are currently scheduled for May 19-21 in Sacramento, California; June 23-25 in Newport Beach, California; and August 8-10 in Brookfield, Wisconsin! Remember, we also offer onsite training opportunities for large groups or organizations at any location: <http://www.bbhonline.org/certified-gottman-educator/Onsite-Trainings.aspx>.

## *Reminder...*

Certified Gottman Educators who have been trained to facilitate the BBH Workshop and use the content with their own clients need to be re-certified annually in order to maintain their CGE status. If you have not sent in your re-certification fee, please do so today! Remember, maintaining your CGE status allows you to use the BBH CGE title, order BBH products and services, and list your name and workshop locations/dates/details on our website.

## *Culture of Appreciation!*

- ✚ Thanks to Val McKinley for coming all the way to Seattle this month to visit with BBH staff and tell us about the work she's doing in Scottsdale, Arizona! Val has been working on a great product called the "Commitment Cube", which is a nifty box that contains lots of cool items geared toward strengthening couples' relationships. This would be a great gift for newlyweds, as well as new parents. If you'd like to learn more about the Commitment Cube or ask Val about her work, check out her website: [www.PrioritizeRelationships.com](http://www.PrioritizeRelationships.com)
- ✚ Thanks to Barbara Stern, CGE and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, for visiting the BBH office in April and telling us about your plans for bringing BBH to more families in California!
- ✚ Thanks to Joni Parthemer, BBH Director of Education, for coordinating yet another wonderful Certification Training!
- ✚ Thanks to BBH Certification Training Specialists, Lynee Brown, Beth Goss, Julia Laibson, Jennyfer Raden, and Lisa Tankersley, for the excellent job you've all done with the Spring 2011 CT. Kudos and thanks for all of your hard work and talent as educators!
- ✚ Thanks to Julie Blackburn, a new BBH Training Specialist, who came to Seattle all the way from Australia to help out with the Spring 2011 CT! Thanks for all of your help, Julie! Good luck with your work in Australia!
- ✚ Thanks to new CGE Caleb Furr for the fabulous job you've done finalizing the Spanish translation of the BBH Couples Toolkit!

Please stay in touch with BBH via our website, [www.bbhonline.org](http://www.bbhonline.org). Please also be sure to find BBH on FaceBook and Twitter! Thanks very much for your continued support of the Relationship Research Institute's Bringing Baby Home Program.



Best regards,  
Renay Bradley and the BBH Team

## *Bringing Baby Home in Sydney Australia*

Centacare Broken Bay Catholic Family Services, which is based in the northern area of Sydney, Australia, has been offering the Bringing Baby Home Program since August 2010. Thus far, 15 families have benefited from the program and plans are underway to increase that number throughout 2011. To date, the program has primarily been run either on two consecutive Saturdays or a full Saturday/Sunday weekend program. The couples who participated had already given birth to their babies prior to the workshops, so mums, dads and babies all attended, which creates a flurry of activity and noise that is delightful. Based on our understanding of these couples' stages, we provided child care during the workshops to help with the babies and enable the couples to concentrate on the program content.



*Above: CGEs Ros Lloyd (far left in black shirt) and Alex Scagliola (bottom right kneeling) with one of their BBH Workshops in Australia.*

### ***A Few Golden Moments***

One father commented that the irony of his situation dawned on him halfway through the first day of the BBH Workshop...He realised that he had been using the excuse that he was too busy to attend the program, but that it was attending the workshop that made him realise that he had not been giving enough time to his relationship (which is what the workshop is all about!). Another participant noted that we often attend all kinds of professional development workshops for our careers, but often balk at attending a course about developing and strengthening the most important relationship in our lives. If only more couples

could recognise the importance of designated time to strengthen our intimate relationships with our partners and children!

Centacare Broken Bay would love to see the BBH Program completed by all first time parents in Australia, as it is invaluable for preparing couples for the transition to parenthood and ultimately the well-being of their children.



Ros Lloyd  
Co-ordinator Family Relationship Education  
Centacare Broken Bay  
Certified Gottman Educator



*Choosing the Best Way to Offer the BBH Workshop Content*  
*By: Helen Nolan, CGE*

Many Certified Gottman Educators may wonder what is the most appropriate way to offer the workshop content to new parents and expectant couples...Over one Saturday-Sunday weekend? On two consecutive Saturdays? Two consecutive weekdays? With this question comes along the decision about what level/scope of content to offer...The full BBH workshop with all 12-hours of content? The smaller BBH “sections” offered only once? Something in the middle, like the BBH “series”, which link together a few sections at a time? Many couples may have preferences about what works best for them. Below I’m sharing my experiences with offering the BBH content in a variety of ways, along with results from a brief survey that I conducted with my class participants to pose these same questions to them.

I have offered BBH “seminars” for several years that were originally two sessions of 4-hours each, but are now are two sessions of 2-hours each. I have offered the BBH seminars at various times, including two consecutive Saturdays or Sundays and two sessions separated by more than a week. During these sessions, some of

the couples expressed interest in my offering the course at other times. At this point, I decided to survey my past class participants about their time preferences for my BBH seminars. I sent the survey request out to 24 past participants and received 8 responses. I asked them each to choose their preferred/best three times from a given list of time options. I set up the survey using Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)), which offers a free basic survey plan that is fairly easy to use. The survey respondents were given nine choices of dates/times and were asked to vote for their top three choices.

The choices were:

- ✚ 1 Tuesday, 4–8pm
- ✚ 2 consecutive Tuesdays from 7–9pm
- ✚ 2 consecutive Sundays from 4–6pm
- ✚ 1 Sunday from 12:30–4:30pm
- ✚ 1 Thursday from 6–10pm
- ✚ 2 consecutive from Thursdays 5–7pm
- ✚ 2 consecutive Saturdays from 12:30–2:30pm
- ✚ 1 Saturday from 3–7pm
- ✚ 1 Friday from 5:30–8:30 pm
- ✚ Other?

I also provided a box for comments.

The Sunday single-session class from 12:30–4:30pm was the most popular receiving 7 votes. A close tie of 5 votes followed for the single-session Saturday class from 3–7pm and two consecutive Saturdays from 12:30–2:30pm. One comment stated that the material is better absorbed if there is a week between classes.

Based on these responses, I decided to test the timing out by offering one session on a Sunday from 12:30–4:30pm for a month, and another single session on Saturday at the same time another month. I am still trying this out, but I am very interested to see if the new timing helps recruitment. Now that I know about the ease and convenience of using Survey Monkey, my new class participants will be asked to take the same survey so that I can build up my “sample size” over time and draw more solid conclusions regarding the most preferred time and days to offer the BBH sections.

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## Teaching Parents How to Coach Children's Emotions:

### Examining a Transition to Parenthood Intervention and Later Emotion-Coaching

The transition to parenthood is a time of stressful adjustment for most couples (Cowan & Cowan, 1988). Relationship difficulties are problematic, not only for the couple, but also for the developing child, as marital discord is associated with impaired parenting, co-parenting, and negative child outcomes, including emotion dysregulation (Cummings, & Davies, 2002). Parent coaching of children's emotions has been of particular interest within prevention/intervention contexts due to links between emotion-coaching and children's abilities to physiologically self-soothe and regulate emotions (Gottman et al., 1997). The goal of the present research was to test the efficacy of the "Bringing Baby Home" psycho-educational preventative intervention to promote parent emotion-coaching with children at age two.

A randomized clinical trial was used in which 184 couples were randomly assigned to a workshop group, workshop plus support group, or control group. The Bringing Baby Home Program (BBH) includes a two-day psycho-educational workshop and associated support group series. BBH is designed to: a) promote a positive transition to parenthood in terms of the couple's marital relationship, b) promote father involvement, and c) promote quality parenting and emotional communication towards children. This multi-level approach is relevant for promoting positive parenting since research indicates that parent-parent relations, father involvement, and parenting are intrinsically inter-related (see Erel & Burman, 1995; Parke and Brott, 1999).

BBH workshops include a section on how parents can coach children's emotions and be in tune with children's emotional needs. Support groups were designed to bolster workshop concepts. Workshops and support groups were administered in a hospital setting by hospital personnel. Workshops were given during either the third trimester of pregnancy or shortly after birth, and support groups started a couple months after the baby's birth.

When children were approximately 2.5 years-old, mothers and father were administered the Meta Emotion Interview (Gottman et al., 1997), which asks each parent a series of open-ended questions about their feelings and responses toward children's emotions. Interviews were coded for parent coaching of children's sadness, anger, and fear. Emotion-coaching consisted of items, for example, that tapped the degree to which parents taught children strategies to sooth emotions and talked about situations that give rise to emotion.

Parents who participated in both the BBH workshop and support groups program were more coaching of their child's anger than controls ( $F(2, 177) = 3.71, p = .026$ ; see Figure 1); fathers in particular did significantly more coaching of their child's sadness than controls ( $t(62) = 1.10, p = .049$ ; see Figure 2). Overall (within all groups), mothers were more coaching of children's emotions than fathers, and both parents were more coaching of children's fear than of their anger and sadness.

Results indicate that parents can be encouraged to be emotion-coaching via parent education. Results also suggest that the support groups were successful in augmenting workshop material and helping strengthen concepts parents were exposed to during workshops. Implications for interventions targeting parent emotion

socialization will be discussed with regard to aspects of processes that may be most malleable and open to change/growth within intervention.

Figure 1. Differences in Coaching of Children's Anger and Sadness

