

GOTTSMAN METHOD – MARITAL ASSESSMENT AND THERAPY STRATEGIES PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE) STUDY GUIDE



Prepare with structure. Pass with confidence



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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. Which of the following is an example of a repair attempt in Gottman therapy?**
 - A. An apology after a heated exchange
 - B. Blaming the partner
 - C. Storming out of the room
 - D. Re-reading the previous text messages
- 2. Which sequence best describes implementing validation in a session?**
 - A. Giving direct advice immediately.
 - B. Reflective listening, paraphrase, empathy.
 - C. Dominating the conversation with questions.
 - D. Ignoring emotional content.
- 3. What constitutes a repair attempt and why are they critical in Gottman therapy?**
 - A. A repair attempt is a plan to separate; critical because it reduces conflict.
 - B. A repair attempt is any action or comment that de-escalates tension after a negative exchange, e.g., apology, humor, opinion shift; critical because frequent repairs predict stability and prevent dissolution.
 - C. A repair attempt is delaying the conversation; critical because it helps avoid conflict.
 - D. A repair attempt is a formal contract to stay together; critical because it reduces conflict.
- 4. How does Gottman theory address mismatches in sexual desire?**
 - A. Encourage open dialogue about needs, schedule time for intimacy, reduce pressure, and incorporate affection rituals to rebuild closeness.
 - B. End the relationship
 - C. Ignore needs
 - D. Dismiss the concerns
- 5. What is a myth about marital therapy models?**
 - A. Active-listening models are highly effective.
 - B. Therapy should address emotional aspects beyond communication.
 - C. Therapy is always quick and simple.
 - D. There is no evidence-based approach in couples therapy.

- 6. Distinguish gridlock from solvable problems in Gottman terms and provide an example.**
- A. Differing Core Religious Values
 - B. Where To Spend Vacation
 - C. How To Split Chores
 - D. What TV Show To Watch
- 7. What is the recommended course of action when domestic violence is present in a couple seeking Gottman-informed therapy?**
- A. Do not conduct couple's therapy; assess risk; implement safety planning; provide individual sessions; refer to appropriate resources as needed
 - B. Assess risk; implement safety planning; provide individual sessions; refer to appropriate resources as needed; do not conduct couple's therapy
 - C. Proceed with couple's therapy after a safety check if both partners consent
 - D. Ignore safety concerns if there is a safety plan in place
- 8. In the Gottman framework, rituals around sex initiation/refusal are designed to enhance...**
- A. Clarity and comfort around sexual intimacy.
 - B. Control over partner's choices.
 - C. Secrecy about sexual preferences.
 - D. Fragmented communication.
- 9. What is the first step in Gottman's individual sessions for marital assessment?**
- A. Determine financial status
 - B. Identify personality disorders
 - C. Assess compatibility with in-laws
 - D. Assess commitment to marriage
- 10. What does the Emotional Bank Account Model represent?**
- A. It illustrates how turning toward each other in small ways builds emotional reserves in a relationship.
 - B. It describes financial budgeting methods for the household.
 - C. It measures weekly conflict frequency.
 - D. It explains how to avoid discussing emotions.

Answers

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1. A
2. B
3. B
4. A
5. A
6. C
7. B
8. A
9. D
10. A

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Explanations

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1. Which of the following is an example of a repair attempt in Gottman therapy?

- A. An apology after a heated exchange**
- B. Blaming the partner
- C. Storming out of the room
- D. Re-reading the previous text messages

In Gottman therapy, a repair attempt is any moment when one partner tries to de-escalate tension and bring the interaction back to a more constructive path after a rupture. An apology after a heated exchange fits this perfectly because it acknowledges hurt, takes responsibility, and signals willingness to repair the relationship and continue the conversation with more care. The other options don't serve as repairs: blaming the partner escalates negativity, storming out withdraws and disrupts repair, and re-reading previous text messages isn't inherently aimed at healing the moment and can keep the cycle going. So, the apology is the clear example of a repair attempt.

2. Which sequence best describes implementing validation in a session?

- A. Giving direct advice immediately.
- B. Reflective listening, paraphrase, empathy.**
- C. Dominating the conversation with questions.
- D. Ignoring emotional content.

Validation in a session means acknowledging the other person's feelings and perspective as real and understandable, even if you see things differently. The best sequence to implement this is reflective listening, then paraphrase, then show empathy. Reflective listening signals you're truly listening by echoing back the speaker's content and emotion. Paraphrasing confirms you've understood the gist, which reduces misinterpretation and builds trust. Expressing empathy takes it further by naming and validating the emotional experience, helping the partner feel heard and respected and less defensive. Together, these steps create safety that invites open sharing and healthier problem solving. Giving direct advice right away skips the emotional part and can feel like you're rushing to fix rather than understand, which undermines validation. Dominating the conversation with questions can come off as interrogation and can push the speaker to guard their feelings. Ignoring emotional content clashes with validation entirely, since it dismisses what the partner is feeling. This sequence best aligns with Gottman validation practices by recognizing emotion and experience, paving the way for constructive dialogue.

3. What constitutes a repair attempt and why are they critical in Gottman therapy?

- A. A repair attempt is a plan to separate; critical because it reduces conflict.
- B. A repair attempt is any action or comment that de-escalates tension after a negative exchange, e.g., apology, humor, opinion shift; critical because frequent repairs predict stability and prevent dissolution.**
- C. A repair attempt is delaying the conversation; critical because it helps avoid conflict.
- D. A repair attempt is a formal contract to stay together; critical because it reduces conflict.

In Gottman therapy, a repair attempt is any action or comment that de-escalates tension after a negative exchange. It can be an apology, a moment of humor, softening how you express a disagreement, taking responsibility, or a shift in perspective that helps both partners feel heard. These moves are crucial because frequent, effective repairs predict relationship stability and reduce the likelihood of dissolution. When conflicts heat up, the ability to repair the moment keeps the interaction from spiraling into contempt or withdrawal and helps couples stay connected even when they disagree. The other options miss the core idea: planning to separate, delaying the conversation, or a formal contract to stay together are not the same as the spontaneous, relational moves that cool tension and re-engage partners in a constructive way.

4. How does Gottman theory address mismatches in sexual desire?

- A. Encourage open dialogue about needs, schedule time for intimacy, reduce pressure, and incorporate affection rituals to rebuild closeness.**
- B. End the relationship
- C. Ignore needs
- D. Dismiss the concerns

In Gottman theory, mismatches in sexual desire are addressed by strengthening the emotional bond through open, nonjudgmental communication and proactive closeness-building. The best approach is to invite each partner to share needs and concerns, set aside time for intimacy so it becomes a shared priority rather than a pressure-filled surprise, ease the sense of pressure around sex, and reinforce connection with affectionate rituals. This aligns with Gottman's emphasis on turning toward each other, making repair attempts, and sustaining positive interactions to keep the relationship emotionally safe. By fostering dialogue about needs, creating predictable moments for connection, reducing performance pressure, and nurturing closeness through small affectionate acts, couples can negotiate differences in desire more effectively and maintain intimacy. Options that involve ending the relationship, ignoring needs, or dismissing concerns miss this collaborative, repair-oriented path and overlook the importance of maintaining emotional connectivity as a foundation for physical intimacy.

5. What is a myth about marital therapy models?

- A. Active-listening models are highly effective.
- B. Therapy should address emotional aspects beyond communication.
- C. Therapy is always quick and simple.
- D. There is no evidence-based approach in couples therapy.

Believing that active-listening models are highly effective on their own is a misconception about marital therapy. Active listening is a valuable tool that can foster empathy and safety, but lasting change usually requires more than a single technique. Effective couples work blends communication skills with deeper emotional processing, attachment needs, and changes in interaction patterns. Therapists drawing on evidence-based approaches integrate these elements so that couples not only talk more constructively but also connect emotionally, repair hurts, and alter unhealthy dynamics. So, treating active-listening as a stand-alone, highly effective model overlooks how most successful therapies actually operate.

6. Distinguish gridlock from solvable problems in Gottman terms and provide an example.

- A. Differing Core Religious Values
- B. Where To Spend Vacation
- C. How To Split Chores
- D. What TV Show To Watch

In Gottman terms, a solvable problem is a specific, negotiable issue that you can work through with practical problem-solving and communication, while gridlock is a perpetual conflict tied to each partner's deeper dreams or life goals, creating a stalemate that isn't easily resolved by simple bargaining. How to split chores fits as a solvable problem because it's a concrete task you can negotiate: decide who does what, when, and how, and adjust the plan as needed. It's not about fundamental life goals, just about logistics that can be rearranged until both feel treated fairly. Differing core religious values illustrate gridlock, since they reflect fundamental beliefs that shape long-term meaning and direction in life. Where to spend vacation can also reveal a dream or value conflict, potentially becoming gridlocked if both want incompatible experiences. What TV show to watch is a minor preference and typically resolves quickly with a simple compromise or rotation.

7. What is the recommended course of action when domestic violence is present in a couple seeking Gottman-informed therapy?

- A. Do not conduct couple's therapy; assess risk; implement safety planning; provide individual sessions; refer to appropriate resources as needed
- B. Assess risk; implement safety planning; provide individual sessions; refer to appropriate resources as needed; do not conduct couple's therapy**
- C. Proceed with couple's therapy after a safety check if both partners consent
- D. Ignore safety concerns if there is a safety plan in place

When violence is present, safety takes precedence over how therapy is structured. In Gottman-informed work, you don't proceed with joint couple's therapy while domestic violence is ongoing because shared sessions can heighten danger and reinforce coercive dynamics. The most appropriate path starts with assessing risk to understand how dangerous the situation is and whether immediate safety is at stake. After assessing risk, implement safety planning to reduce harm and identify concrete steps for staying safe. This is followed by providing individual sessions to each partner, which helps address personal trauma, accountability, boundaries, and safety without the risks that come with a joint session. Referrals to appropriate resources—such as domestic violence services, shelters, legal aid, or specialized counseling for abusers or survivors—are made as needed. Only after safety is clearly established and both partners are non-coercively engaged would a move toward joint work be considered.

8. In the Gottman framework, rituals around sex initiation/refusal are designed to enhance...

- A. Clarity and comfort around sexual intimacy.**
- B. Control over partner's choices.
- C. Secrecy about sexual preferences.
- D. Fragmented communication.

Rituals around sex initiation and refusal are meant to create clarity and comfort around sexual intimacy. By having a clear, respectful way to bring up sex or pause it, partners can express desires, boundaries, and needs without feeling pressured or ambushed. This kind of structured communication supports mutual consent, attunement, and trust, which are core to sustaining closeness in the relationship. When both partners know how to initiate or decline in a considerate manner, it reduces confusion, anxiety, and potential conflict, making sexual intimacy more enjoyable and stable. This focus on open, voluntary communication contrasts with patterns that seek control, secrecy, or fragmentation. Trying to control a partner's choices undermines trust; secrecy around preferences erodes safety and openness; and fragmented communication tends to leave important needs unmet and resentments to build.

9. What is the first step in Gottman's individual sessions for marital assessment?

- A. Determine financial status
- B. Identify personality disorders
- C. Assess compatibility with in-laws
- D. Assess commitment to marriage**

The main idea here is that readiness and willingness to invest in the relationship comes first. In Gottman's approach to individual sessions for marital assessment, the therapist begins by assessing each partner's commitment to the marriage. This matters because commitment signals motivation to engage in therapy, tolerate difficult conversations, and work on change. If a partner isn't truly committed, the chances of constructive progress drop, and the plan for assessment and intervention needs to be adjusted accordingly. Establishing commitment also helps the therapist gauge how to frame goals, determine the appropriate next steps, and decide how best to proceed with joint or separate work. Other issues like financial status, personality concerns, or in-law dynamics may be explored later, but they're not the foundational step that sets the therapy in motion.

10. What does the Emotional Bank Account Model represent?

- A. It illustrates how turning toward each other in small ways builds emotional reserves in a relationship.**
- B. It describes financial budgeting methods for the household.
- C. It measures weekly conflict frequency.
- D. It explains how to avoid discussing emotions.

The Emotional Bank Account captures how the everyday tone of our interactions builds emotional reserves in a relationship. Small, positive actions—turning toward each other with warmth, listening, validating feelings, showing appreciation, and following through on commitments—act as deposits that strengthen trust and closeness. When these deposits outpace negative interactions (withdrawals like sarcasm, criticism, neglect, or hostility), the relationship maintains a healthy balance and can weather conflicts more easily. Conversely, frequent withdrawals without enough deposits deplete the emotional balance, making partners more defensive and less able to repair after disagreements. This model isn't about budgeting money, measuring how often you argue, or avoiding emotions; it's about how consistent, everyday kindness and attention build a safety net you can rely on during tough times.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://gottmanmaritalassmttherapystrats.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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