

Couple interview essay examples

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Sally and Mike Smith agreed to this interview. They came in to the office and sat on the couch together. It was noted that while in the waiting room, they were also seated together. The interviewees are a 28 year old married Caucasian couple. They dated for one year before getting married. Currently, do not have any children. The Counselor asked them on how they met and Mike responded to the question. Mike proceeded to describe that they had met at a picnic which was organized by a mutual friend. The counselor then asked both of them on what attracted them to their partners. They first looked at each other smiling and then Sally stated that Mike has sexy smile and a great sense of humor. “ He is caring and sensitive,” she added. Mike stated that he thought she was beautiful and has a great sense of humor as well. “ She is actually my best friend,” he added. Counselor then asked them if they had any physical problems. Sally mentioned that she has lost a significant amount of weight in the past three months. The counselor tried to inquire whether she was trying to lose weight or if there was a reason for the weight loss. Sally responded that she has had a loss of appetite since the loss of her grandmother 3 months ago. The counselor further asked if there was any other physical problem and Sally replied saying that she wears contact lenses due to being short-sighted. Mike on his part responded by saying that he has seasonal allergies. They both stated that they do not take any medications except for MVI’s when the counselor asked.

Background information

Sally stated that she is the oldest of three siblings and grew up in Nashville Tennessee. Her father was an alcoholic and left when she was ten years old. She has not seen him since then and her mother has been struggling to raise

her three children while working as a cashier at big chain grocery store. Due to financial constraints in the family, they had to move in with her maternal grandmother who lives in Raleigh, North Carolina. She recently passed away three months ago.

Mike mentioned that he is the youngest in a family of two children. He has one older brother and his parents have been together for 31 years. His dad was in the military and was called away for an assignment during most of his childhood. His mother was a housewife, stay at home mom. He is very close to his mom although they live in different states.

Counselor asked them about their work and social roles. Sally replied that she was an assistant teacher at an elementary school for the past 5 years. However, her position was terminated due to budgeting issues at the school where she has been working. The counselor asked her about her current employment if any and she stated that she is taking graduate classes and working part time as a substitute teacher. Mike on the other hand is an engineer working at RTP. He has been working there for 7 years.

Relational/Social

Mike responded abruptly that they have many friends that they go tailgating with at football games. Mike likes to grill out while Sally likes to garden. They both like to travel when time and finances permit. Their last vacation was last summer when they went to Canada for 10 days. The counselor asked if they did activities away from each other and if so what activities do they do away from each other? Sally stated that she goes for walks with friends and attends church functions. She also mentioned that she is in the choir of which she attends regularly. Mike on his part stated that has to work late

some evenings, but plays poker with some of his buddies. He also plays on the church softball team in the summer. He also likes playing guitar to when relaxing. The counselor further asked them if spending time with their friends causes any problems in their relationship. They both stated that it is not a problem as long as they communicate it in advance.

Roles

They both stated that their roles in the household are more traditional. Mike likes to vacuum and dust while Sally likes to do things outside with her hands such as gardening. She also does all the cooking. The counselor referred to Sally's response about her involvement in the church and then asked her how the aspect of spirituality has helped them cope up with the difficulties that they encounter in their relationship. Sally stated that she is on the prayer list at church. She also added that she prays and reads the bible on a daily basis. She also gets support from her bible study group and her friends in the choir.

Stress Levels

The counselor asked them to describe some of the stresses in life that affect their relationship. Sally stated that their stress levels are high because she is not bringing in the money like she used to. She also added that the loss of her full-time job has put a strain on them financially. Mike agreed with her that the loss of her job has put a lot of stress on them. They are hoping that when she gets out of graduate school in about 1 ½ years time, she will get a full time job.

Death and dying

The counselor asked them about their experiences with death and dying.

Sally described the loss of her grandmother who died unrepentantly from a heart attack to be very touching. Sally was very close to her as she helped in raising her since her father left at an early stage in her life. Mike reported that the only experience he had was when a close college friend died in a Motor vehicle accident.

Response to a loss

Sally appears sad with a flat affect. She has lost a significant amount of weight since her mom notified her about her grandmother's passing on. She states that she is still dealing with the loss and still dreams about the occurrence.

The counselor asked them to state their level of satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10. Mike stated a 4. He reported that they are not as intimate as they used to be and this frustrates him sometimes. Sally on her account, reported that she is busy with graduate school and that leaves her mentally drained therefore slipping sex back to the back burner.

Strengths in the relationship

The counselor asked them to state the strengths in their relationship and both of them stated that they are committed to each other. Mike has a good paying job which helps in meeting the financial obligations of the family. They have trust and support for each other emotionally. They have spiritual commitment to church and their faith in God.

Family disagreements

The counselor asked them if there are any present family disagreements.

Mike stated that there are disputes over the holidays over whose family they would visit first. Mike's family wants to invite them up for the Christmas holidays however; Sally does not want her mother to be alone for the first holiday after the death of her grandmother. The counselor mentioned that it is important to compromise over some issues that can be resolved as Gottman believes one should compromise and be tolerant of each other regardless of their different opinions.(Gottman, 2009) The other conflict in the family was when Mike would not co-sign for Sally's brother car loan. This made Sally's brother to dislike Mike.

“ How would you characterize your communication with your husband/wife?” the counselor asked. Sally stated that sometimes it is hard to communicate because he becomes defensive and walks away. He says that she will not communicate at times and clams up.

Counselor observed the boundaries to be appropriate between Sally and Mike. However there appears to be some enmeshment between Mike and his mother.

Counselor asked what their goals/joint mission in there relationship.

They stated that they wanted to buy a house and Sally wants to finish school on time. They are hoping to start a family in three years. They would like to open up a private school some day. They would also like to take some time and travel together.

Counselor asked them to describe as a couple how they handle conflicts.

She stated that Mike sometimes get angry especially when he has a bad day at work. He will therefore come home and be short and snappy. She tells him to go work out until he is able to calm down and put it in a different light. He usually calms down and they are able to sit down and talk it out. He states that she does express herself much and feels like he needs to pull it out of her. He states that it may be due to the loss of her grandmother.

Counselor then requested them to write on a piece of paper on a scale of 1-10 how they rate their satisfaction in marriage in general. Sally wrote down 7 and while Mark wrote 6.

Conclusion

Counselor thanked them for the interview and stated that he would like to do a georama during their next session if they want to continue. Counselor believes that there are grief and depression issues going on with Sally. Mikes enmeshment with his mother needs to be further evaluated. The counselor suggested that communication style using Virginia Satir's Communication Stances need to be further evaluated for the couples to have a successful marriage.

References

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Appendix

Questionnaires

1. How long have you been together before getting married?
2. What is your age and how long have you been married?
3. What initially attracted you to your partner?
4. Do you have any physical problems (Health Issues)?
5. Do you take any medications?
6. Sally, are you trying to lose weight or is there any reason for the weight loss?
7. What is your historical background? (Socially or career-wise)
8. What social activities do you do together?
9. Which social activities do you individually?
10. Does spending time with your friends cause any problem in your relationship?
11. In what ways does your spirituality help you cope with the difficulties you encounter in the course of your relationship?
12. Describe some of the stresses in your lives that affect your relationship?
13. What has your experiences been with death and dying.

14. On a scale of 1 to 10 how satisfied are you with your sex life? (Please tick one)
15. What are the strengths in the relationship?
16. Have you had any disagreements in your relationship?
17. How would you characterize your communication with your spouse?
18. What are your goals/joint missions in your relationship?
19. As a couple, how do you handle conflicts?

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW

A. Introduction

Sally and Mike Smith are both 28 years old white married couple who have been together for 4 years. They dated for one year prior to getting married. They have no children.

1. How did you meet?

Mutual friend introduced us at a picnic.

2. What attracted you to your partner initially?

Mike: she is beautiful and has a good sense of humor. She is smart as well.

Sally: he has sexy eyes and a great sense of humor as well. He also has a caring attitude.

3. What do you do for a living (career wise)?

Sally: I was an assistant teacher at an elementary school for the past 5 years but my position was terminated this year because the school had budgeting issues.

4. Tell me about what you're doing now?

Sally: I am taking classes at Graduate school and working part-time as a

substitute teacher.

B. Relational/Social

1. What do you do for fun?

Sally/Mike: We have many friends that we tailgate at football games. Mike likes to cook-out and Sally enjoys gardening. We also like to travel as time and finances permit. Recently, we went to Quebec Canada for 10 days.

C. Spiritual

We are both Christians and actively involved in their church.

D. Stress/Levels

Sally: Our stress levels are high because I am not bringing in the money as I used to before my job was terminated. The loss of my full time job has put a lot of strain on us. Mike: Actually the loss of her job has put a lot of strain on us financially. We however believe that she gets out of graduate school she will be back to work full time. this will be probably ½ year from now.

E. Mike, what are you doing now?

Mike: I am an engineer at Research Triangle Park. I have been working here for about 7 years now.

F. Are there any physical Problems?

Mike/Sally: Yes there are some physical problems that we often encounter. They include: Mike's Seasonal Allergies and Sally's loss of weight

G. Social History

What is your social history?

Sally: I am the oldest of three siblings. My father was an alcoholic who left the family when I was 10years old. I have not seen him since then. My mother who was working as a cashier at a big chain grocery store then

struggled to raise the three children. Due to finances the family had to move in with her maternal grandmother who recently past away 3 months ago.

Mike: I am the youngest in a family of two children. My parents have been together for 31 years. My dad was in the military and traveled a lot while my mom was a stay at home housewife who took care of the house. I am very close to my mom although we live in different states.

H. Response to Crisis/Loss

Mike: Sally appears sad with a flat affect. She lost a significant amount of weight since her mom called to tell her that her grandmother passed away.

I. Death and Dying

Mike: Sally recently loss her grandmother. She died unexpectedly of a heart attack. Sally was close to her since she helped raised her.

J. Strengths

Sally: Mike has a good paying job as a supervisor.

Sally/Mike: Both of us have spiritual commitment to church and strong faith in God. We support each other emotionally.

K. Coping Strategies

Sally: Mike has created a budget account to help with finances. He also helps with the cooking during the week while she is in classes. I attend aerobics at the gym to deal with stress. Mike plays sports such as basketball on different leagues to reduce stress.

L. History of Mental Illness

Sally: My mom suffers from depression. She was diagnosed a year ago.

Mike: I do not have any history of mental illness in our family.

M. Weaknesses

Mike: We are not as intimate as we used to be since Sally started back to school and the death of her grandmother. This makes me get frustrated at times.

Sally: I am busy with graduate school and that sometimes it leaves me mentally drained. There are no sign of homicidal/suicidal thoughts.

N. Family Disagreements

Mike/Sally: There are disputes over the holidays over whose family they will attend first.

Mike's family wants to invite us up for the holidays over Christmas however; I do not want my mom to be alone since it will be our first Christmas with their mom/grandmother.

My younger brother does not like Mike because he would not co-sign on a car loan for him.