

The Gender Difference in Meaning of Intimacy Among Hong Kong Couples

Funded by
Faculty Research Grant,
Hong Kong Baptist University



Purpose

- 🎯 Explore **gender difference in perception of intimacy** in marital relationship
- 🎯 Review the **Emotionally Focused Marriage Enrichment Group** practice

Methods

5 Focus Groups for 27 Males

5 Focus Groups for 29 Females

Age 27-65 | Length of marriage 1/2-30 year(s)

Key Findings



Intellectual Intimacy



- ♥ Similar **education** or **family backgrounds** have **similar communication styles**
- ♥ **Open communication** can help show mutual acceptance
- ♥ When it comes to disagreement, **quarrels are better than silence** while **respect** and **patience** can help
- ♥ **Forgiveness** and **understanding** are essential for **reconciliation**

♥ Express through **practical actions**, but may lead to **misunderstandings** and then collisions

♥ **Hide opinions** sometimes to attract attention, may lead to conflicts

Emotional Intimacy



- ♥ Feel free or relaxed to **share inner feelings**
- ♥ Express **deep care** after **listening** to show support
- ♥ Show **empathy** to stand by partners' side
- ♥ With **deep trust and understanding**

♥ Prefer **material support** or **action-oriented caring** instead of verbal ones

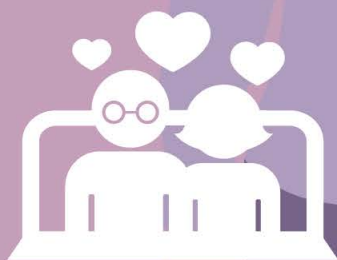
♥ Prefer **caring** or **romantic words**
♥ **Working wives** emphasize **privacy**

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Sexual Intimacy



- ♥♥ A **basic need**, high-quality sexual relationship is crucial
- ♥♥ Need **love** and **effective** communication

- ♥♥ Prefer **higher frequency** with **expectations**
- ♥♥ Show care by **suppressing sexual desire**
- ♥♥ Sometimes **ignore wives' needs**
- ♥♥ Think females usually **overemphasize emotional intimacy**

- ♥♥ Prefer **being touched** and **feel connected**
- ♥♥ Need to **feel loved**
- ♥♥ Believe **satisfying the husband is a wife's responsibility**

Social Intimacy



- ♥♥ **Mutual friends** can **ease couple conflict** and allow **more time together** as well as **common topics**
- ♥♥ Couples who were **classmates or colleagues** are **more united**
- ♥♥ Relationship with **partner's family**
 - ♥♥ **Conflicts between mothers- and daughters-in-law** arise if a husband shows too much care to his wife

Recreational Intimacy



- ♥♥ Share **common interests**
 - ♥♥ Develop **different hobbies** with mutual **respect** and **support**
 - ♥♥ Learn **partner's hobbies**
 - ♥♥ Engage **new experience and cooperation** brings **freshness**
- ♥♥ Pursue a **common dream** brings the feeling of **mutual dependence**