



## Couple Relationship Education in the UK today

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### Background

- Formal CRE in UK started around time of 2<sup>nd</sup> World War (Relate and Marriage Care)
- Maces moved to US to set up ACME
- “Marriage enrichment” spread in US, and returned to UK in 70’s
- Piecemeal development – many small organisations





## Approach

- Web based survey + interviews
- Initial mailing to 300 individuals
- Full responses from 27 organisations
- Looked at:
  - details of the organisation
  - structure and content of the programme
  - evaluation of outcomes



## Who and What

- Three groups of providers:
  - Big players for who CRE is part of offering
  - Small dedicated organisations
  - Churches
- Four main formats:
  - Extended residential programmes
  - Non residential one-day programmes
  - Multi session programmes
  - “Couple to couple” – often with inventory



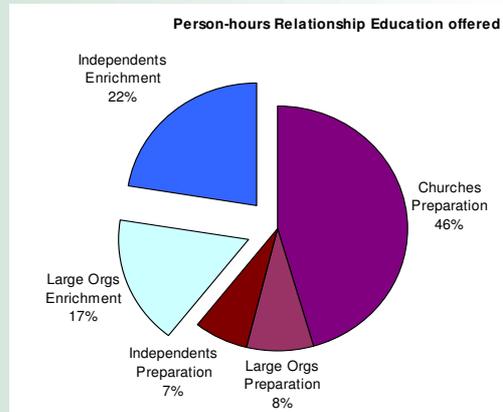


## How much?

Marriage Preparation		
Provider	People	Typical Duration
Independents	4,600	8 hours
Large Organisations	6,500	7 hours
Churches	125,000	2 hours
Balance	415,500	Nil

Marriage Enrichment		
Provider	People	Typical Duration
Independents	6,600	19 hours
Large Organisations	7,900	13 hours



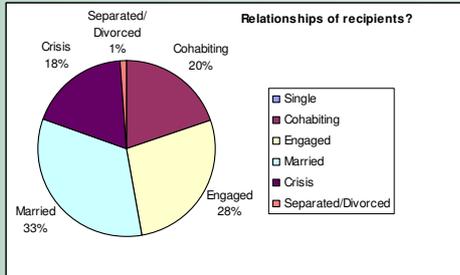
## Workforce

- Total (excluding clergy) around 5000
- Virtually all volunteer on part-time basis
- About 1500 trained in use of Inventories
- Most training focussed on course content and delivery
- Little formal qualification available

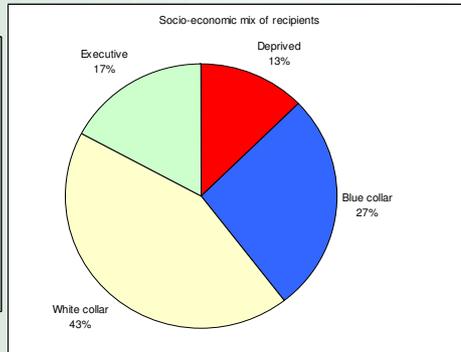




## Who is being reached?



[Figures exclude clergy based Marriage Preparation.]

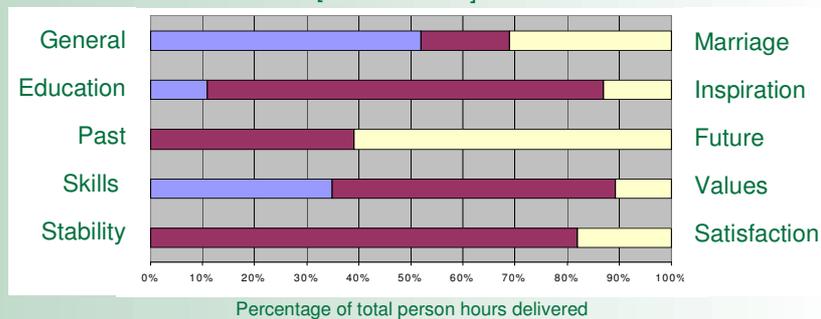


- Ethnic mix generally reflects population at large
- Wide spectrum of education – including programmes for prisoners
- Higher proportion of Christian couples attending certain programmes



## Balance of Content

[■ = balanced]





## Research vs Survey

Issue	Research	Survey
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context matters</li> <li>Impact 3-5 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60% is PME</li> <li>&lt;15000 people other CRE</li> <li>Encouraging pilots with pre-natal</li> </ul>
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 10 hrs, increasing benefit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bulk of PME &lt; 2 hrs</li> </ul>
Socio-economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bulk of research white middle class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>70% is to white/blue collar</li> <li>13% is to "marginalised"</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different stability vs satisfaction</li> <li>Pathway to relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>82% "balanced" content</li> <li>Nothing on pathways</li> </ul>
Skills vs Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Values and long term focus matter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority "skill" based</li> <li>30% specifically "marriage"</li> </ul>



## Access and Charging

- Attracting couples remains a key challenge
- Access points (Registrar, Health workers) key
- Specialist areas emerging (Prisons, Military)
- NCSN growing (but remember MR, NACFT, etc)
- 76% of couples pay for course - £10 to £100/head
- 11% funded purely by donation – balance a mixture
- Cost of provision heavily subsidised by volunteers





## Scaling up to “Normalise”

- Assumption: Normal = 50% of eligible population

Access	Current	Target	Scale up
Relationship Formation	11,100	300,000	27
Birth 1 <sup>st</sup> child	1,000	375,000	375
Life change	14,500	1,200,000	827
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,600</b>	<b>1,875,000</b>	<b>70</b>

### Workforce

- Currently ~ 5000
- Need ~15-25,000

Excludes the large number of individuals receiving “nominal” PME from their priest or clergy

- Propose a ten year programme



## Evaluation and measurement

- Only 25% of respondents had any form of evaluation
- 86% of those evaluating were “Happy sheets”
- Results are used to improve courses (but not shared)
- One or two courses, and the Inventories, are evaluated on an internationally comparable basis

## A standardised model or framework

- Impossible to measure “Outcomes”
- Need a framework to link education, behaviours and outcomes





## Some Key Issues

- Motivation and Professionalisation
  - “Messenger matters”
  - Volunteers motivated by experience
  - Need for quality and consistency
- Values base
  - CRE needs to teach values as well as skills
  - Current climate of mutual suspicion
  - Need language and approach to build understanding
- Parenting and Domestic Violence
  - Building “Safe” relationships
  - Sharing understanding and access
- Interface to SRE
  - Pathways into relationship matter – include in SRE?
- CRE for all
  - Broadening the access to marginalised
  - Avoiding stigmatising



## Questions for Plenary

- What was your reaction to the current situation?
- What are the main issues we (as Practitioners, or Research/Policy people) should address as a result?
- What are the key issues we would like others to address?





COUPLE RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION  
BUILDING A NATIONAL AGENDA



# Thank You

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COUPLE RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION  
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# Implementing a National Programme

Plenary discussion  
Chaired by Michael Trend





## Key areas for discussion:

- Theoretical Framework
- Public awareness
- Programme for expansion
- Organisation
- Funding

