

## ***Conflict and Relationships***

Communication, like relationships, is bidirectional. When conflicts arise, it is probably unlikely that the problems can be solely attributed to one person or the other. More than likely, conflicts in relationships are not just about how your client relates to his or her partner but also about how the partner relates to your client. At times, when you have access to only one part of the relationship, you may find yourself helping a person learn how to react to unhealthy behavior in a healthy manner. For example, if a husband seeks counseling because his wife demonstrates manipulative behaviors, such as lying, sabotaging the family's finances, or arguing when confronted, your task may be to help your client, the husband, learn how to respond to these behaviors in a way that helps stop and reverse the mental and emotional damage sustained thus far. You may be charged with the task of helping him learn how to establish boundaries with his emotions and finances to ensure that he can remain "safe" should he choose to stay in the marriage. A client like this may also benefit from learning how to avoid internalizing feelings of inadequacy or guilt that his wife may be attempting to project on to him as a means of ongoing manipulation and control.