

Dr. Ron Neff, Ph.D.

Quick Professional Summary

Dr. Neff offers insights from 20 years of work on the frontlines of the broken hearted. With thousands of confused and pain-ridden clients... In large Mental Health agencies...In research at Major Universities... In Private Practice...With two decades of Students...And currently in the highest pain zone he's found yet: Family Courts...Where he designs pain-stopping programs for couples, ex-couples, and their children.

Education

University of Iowa. Go Hawkeyes! **B.A.** Special Honors with Distinction, **M.A.** With Honors, and **Ph.D.** Highest Honors. Doctoral Major: Sociology, with an emphasis in Social Psychology (which is basically the study of relationships.)

Doctoral Thesis: "On Romance - And Why It Doesn't Last."

Shortened Professional History (some highlights)

Current:

Private practice. Author, Speaker, Marriage/Relationship Counselor, Therapist, Part-Time Professor, Research Director, Family Court Consultant, Mediator, Mediation Trainer, Mental health Consultant/trainer/speaker... (Grief, Panic attacks, Agoraphobia, chronic 'generalized' anxiety -- and how to put it behind you or your clients QUICKLY.)

Past:

Parent Education Programs Coordinator, Superior Court of Arizona, Maricopa County (Phoenix and its suburbs). Overseeing 12 agencies (50 some locations)- all providing Parent Education Programs (classes for divorcing, previously divorced, and never married parents.) **(This court manages to serve over 40,000 clients a year. They'd love to make it less!)**

Conciliator and Conciliation Supervisor (Crisis Marriage Counseling)

When one person wants a divorce and the other doesn't, the other can file for this service. It serves many purposes. We may or may not be able to help save your marriage, but it's worth a try! And, if not, it matters HOW it ends. Especially when there are children. Family Court Department, Superior Court of Arizona, Phoenix.

(There's a good chance this is also available where you live - check with your judge or other court staff!)

Curriculum Author, "Parental Conflict Resolution." Unique Program. (Funded by grant from U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1999-2002.)

Goal: Turn around parents who come back to court over and over in their custody battles - to the extreme detriment of their children! (These are the really "dug-in" cases.)

Contrary to all predictions, after over a thousand cases we find that most of these parents (who come in nearly as hostile toward the court as they are toward the other parent) strongly approve of this class.

Even in 6 and 12-month follow-ups.

There are no winners in family court wars. Keep it up, and the children will turn against you both.) Yes, we do share our curriculum with other courts. Just ask.

Curriculum Author, PARACHUTES: Support Groups For Children In Transition.

(Program under development for children of divorce and other family transitions.)

Given the high divorce rate in our society, one might think that these kids are not much troubled ...Exactly the opposite! The more insecure other parts of their world (like yours) have become, the more they depend on their family. **(The most fundamental emotional need of a child is to feel secure.)**

Family Counseling Practice, Phoenix and Scottsdale, 1989-2002.

(Marriage and relationship counseling, grief/losswork, and anxiety relief, especially panic attacks and agoraphobia.)

Faculty Associate, Scottsdale College, 1988-2002. (My students keep me in touch...and on my toes)

Therapist, Southwest Behavioral Health Services. Phoenix, 1992-1996.

(Fulltime position...large agency...For four and one half years, I took most of the broken hearts, grief, and other acute anxiety cases.)

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Faculty and Research Associate, Arizona State University, 1988-1990.

Director, All Hearts: The Affordable Dating Service. 1991-1993.

Project Director and Principal Investigator, "The Life Activities Inventory As a DUI Countermeasure." (Research project funded by The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (NIAAA) 1985-1989.)

What is the leading cause of nighttime, fatal, one-car vehicle crashes among drunk-driving males? A recently ended love relationship!

Associate Professor and Research Associate, 1985-1988, Mississippi State University.

Family Background

Grew up on a farm in Iowa. Parents had nine children - and did it well. At their recently celebrated 50th anniversary, each child was eager to say something about Sam and Helen. I put it this way, "Dad bragged on every kid, every day... And none of Mom's children has ever done anything wrong. Just ask her."

Divorced. Married once, with two fine boys to show for it. "The best boys wherever they go." That's what I tell 'em. Enjoy an excellent parenting relationship with the boy's mother, who is remarried. She's a sweetheart to everyone who deserves it. (We talk that way in Iowa.)

Without going into inappropriate specifics, my family life has also included more than one love relationship with someone who had been severely abused along the way. By parent(s) and/or adult lovers. Their pain has made a permanent impression on me. I'm here to help stop as much of that as possible.

Writing

Books: *Everyday Family Life* (Minneapolis: Burgess), *Incest As Child Abuse: Research And Applications* (NY: Praeger), *Unreachings: Poetry To Heal The Heart* (Phoenix: HPO Publishing.) Articles in *Society* magazine, *Family Court Review*, *Family Relations*, *Adolescence*, *The Sociological Forum*, *Heuristics*, *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, *Studies In Symbolic Interaction*, and *Traffic Safety Evaluation Research Review*. Dozens of papers presented at professional meetings, grant reports for funded research, and untold programs, handbooks, and we-can-do-it-now materials (such as "Forever Ours: A Handbook for Divorcing and Never-Married Parents." "In Our Hands: A Program for Never-Married Parents." "Domestic Violence: Impact on Families and Children (audio cassette)." And "Parachutes: A Program for Children of Divorce.") Two recent book-length manuscripts currently under publisher review (and intended for the general public): *Loving Well*. And: *Goodbye, My Love: How to Mend A Broken Heart*. (Send e-mail if you think my literary agent should get a move on! He'll get a kick out of it.)

Voluntary Relationship Work

Educational and group therapy programs developed for Parents Without Partners, International (world's largest single parent organization.) Including series on: divorce recovery, building new relationships, romantic love, love that lasts, the single parent-child relationship, male and female sexual response: the biological side, male and female sexual response: the psychological side, overcoming dysfunctional family patterns, enhancing self-esteem, and remarriage. (For this work, I received the Grand Canyon Regional Council's 1991 Award for Outstanding Service.)

Teaching

Twenty years of college and university teaching in marriage and family and human sexuality. Highly rewarding teaching I should add! Students care about these subjects. They want to keep talking about the material during breaks, and after classes. And I learn as much from them as they do from me. That's why I still teach. One of the things I've learned is that, under their sociable smiles, most students today are part of the walking wounded. Most of my students at Scottsdale College have divorced parents. **(The divorce rate in this county currently runs at 74%!)** Scottsdale is high rent. The young people in these classes have all their material needs met. But, although they still love their parents, they are openly unhappy about their parents divorcing. And they no longer assume that love conquers all. They want to know **how** to make it last. Then there are the older students. They often stay after class just to say "I wish I'd known

what you teach before..." Telling me that what we just covered is exactly what happened to them. And that these young kids should pay more attention. Well, they **are** pretty attentive, as I noted above. But the older students are even more so. And they've been down the road. I respect that - and learn a great deal from their trials.

Have a learning experience of your own? E-mail it.

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