



SMART Couples Florida Celebration

Better Together

February 10, 2023 6–9:15 p.m.

Online Virtual Event



6:00-6:50 p.m.

Know Thyself: Managing Stress & Trauma Successfully

Dr. Martie Gillen

Practical Solutions for Day-to-Day Survival

Marriage and Money

Dr. Jorge Ruiz-Menjivar

Manage Your Assets while Safeguarding Your Relationship

Dating Tips & Traps

Dr. Victor William Harris

Do's & Don'ts You'll Wish You Knew

7:00-7:50 p.m.

Positive Coparenting

Dr. Jeneé Duncan

Key Strategies that Work for Both Parents and Children

Emotional Intelligence in Marriage

Dr. Brian Visconti

Easy-to-Learn Skills to Help You Identify, Understand, and Harness Your Emotions

Preparation for Marriage

Dr. Kate Fogarty

Relationship Readiness: Guidance for Premarital Couples

8:00-8:15 p.m.

Announcements and Evaluations

8:15-9:05 p.m.

Keynote: Life-Changing Communication Skills

Dr. Tracy Irani

Description: Best Practices for Positive Interactions

Given rapid societal changes and the influence of social media platforms, relationship dynamics have changed, and “knowing what to say” has taken on a whole new meaning. What can we do to become more effective in our relationships and best position ourselves for positive interactions with those we love? We will discuss next generation tools and strategies that will enhance positive interactions, especially between couples and family members—interactions that are critical to relationship success.

About the Speakers

Dr. Martie Gillen is an Associate Professor in the department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences at the University of Florida. Dr. Gillen is a research affiliate of the Florida Institute for Child Welfare, a Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) Practitioner, Accredited Financial Counselor, and a Certified Family Life Educator. Dr. Gillen teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the area of trauma as well as personal finance. She was a foster parent for over 5 years and is an adoptive parent. She is also a Guardian ad Litem volunteer.



Dr. Jeneé Duncan is an Assistant Professor in the department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences at the University of Florida. Dr. Duncan teaches classes in contemporary family problems, policies, and theories and conducts research in three primary areas: 1) Couple and coparenting dynamics; 2) Sociocultural factors that impact families; and 3) Relationship education. Dr. Duncan has a particular interest in examining the unique experiences of diverse populations, particularly adolescent parents and ethnically and racially diverse families.

Dr. Jorge Ruiz-Menjivar is an Assistant Professor in the department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences at the University of Florida. Dr. Ruiz-Menjivar's teaches personal and family financial counseling and research methods courses at UF with a research emphasis on sociocultural factors (e.g., self-efficacy, financial knowledge and education, health status, community and support networks, climate variability, beliefs and norms) that influence individuals' financial decision-making and outcomes.





Dr. Brian Visconti is a recent doctoral graduate from the department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences at the University of Florida. He earned his M.A. in Experimental Psychology from Western Carolina University in 2013 where his work focused on basic emotions and developmental psychology. His current research looks at personality and adult long-term relationships with an emphasis on social and developmental psychology. He also works with Dr. Harris in studying social emotional abilities among couples and how these competencies impact their relationship quality.

Dr. Victor William Harris is an Associate Professor in the department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences at the University of Florida. Dr. Harris is the director of the SMART Couples Florida Project, SMART Couples Florida Marriage Celebration, and SMART Data Research Collective which engages faculty and students in collaborative relationship research. Dr. Harris teaches parenting, couple, family life education, human services, and other courses at UF with a research focus centered in developing healthy, stable, and satisfying close relationships through relationship education.



Dr. Kate Fogarty is an Associate Professor in the department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences at the University of Florida. She teaches courses on contemporary youth problems, theories, and promoting positive youth development. Her research areas of interest include youth development and family studies with a particular focus on positive development, mentor-mentee relationships, and life skills. She has a particular interest in knowledge and skill development that facilitate long-term happy relationships such as marriage.

Dr. Tracy Irani is Professor and Chair in the department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences at the University of Florida. Dr. Irani is nationally recognized in areas such as crisis and risk communication, public opinion issues and analysis. Her research has been published in over 100 peer reviewed publications and more than 150 presentations/conference proceedings. Much of her work focuses on examining influences on decision making and exploring the linkage between cognition, message framing, and behavior. She has carefully studied cognitive tendencies, in particular critical thinking and problem solving, and been able to demonstrate their relationship and influence on decision making behavior.

