

West Hollywood Couples Therapist Survey Warns: Loss of Emotional Intimacy Can Devastate Relationships Over the Holidays

New findings from 700+ couples reveal that fading emotional intimacy leads to conflict avoidance, one-sided power, and quiet disengagement.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- [Oliver Drakeford Therapy](#), a West Hollywood-based practice specializing in couples and family work, has released new data from the CARE & Intimacy Quiz For Couples, showing that loss of [emotional intimacy](#) is closely tied to withdrawal, avoidance, and long-term relationship dissatisfaction—patterns that often intensify during the holiday season.

The findings, drawn from more than 700 quiz responses collected over the past year, highlight how emotional disconnection rarely appears on its own. Instead, it tends to cluster with persistent communication problems, avoidance of difficult conversations, and a quiet giving up on the relationship.

“The data reveals that lower scores of emotional intimacy rarely exist in isolation—it is deeply intertwined with conflict, dysfunction, and power imbalance,” said Oliver Drakeford, LMFT, CGP, founder of Oliver Drakeford Therapy. “When couples score in the bottom third of emotional intimacy scores, the patterns cascading through their relationship are stark and consistent. What might look like ‘we’re just busy’ is often a sign that both partners feel unseen, unheard, and alone in the relationship.”

Because the holidays compress family expectations, money, travel, and extended-family contact into a short window, couples already running on low intimacy are especially vulnerable to feeling overwhelmed and disconnected.


Three Key Findings from the CARE & Intimacy Quiz For Couples

1. Couples Missing Three Key Dynamics Have 0% Chance of Thriving Intimacy

WHEN EMOTIONAL INTIMACY FADES

Data from 742 couples taking the CARE & Intimacy Quiz For Couples reveals the patterns that predict whether relationships thrive or struggle—and the warning signs that intimacy is in trouble.

[www.OliverDrakefordTherapy.com/intimacy-quiz-for-couples](#)





DESIRE TO HEAL

Emotional investment isn't just correlated with intimacy—it may be a prerequisite. Respondents who had disengaged from improving their relationship had a 0% chance of thriving and an average score 25 points below those still invested.

POWER DYNAMICS

Low-intimacy couples are 7x more likely to say decision-making feels one-sided—0% vs just 1% of high-intimacy couples. When one partner feels unheard in decisions, emotional closeness suffers.







COMMUNICATION

Couples who feel disconnected, unheard, and unable to discuss differences have a 0% rate of thriving intimacy—and 64% score in the lowest tier. When all three dynamics break down, so does the relationship.

CONFLICT AVOIDANCE

The strongest predictor of low intimacy? Avoidance. Couples in the lowest tier are 10x more likely to sidestep disagreements altogether—creating a feedback loop where silence breeds distance.





TOGETHERNESS

9% of couples who always spend free time apart scored in the lowest intimacy tier—but always being together isn't the answer either. “Always together” couples thrived at just 1%, compared to 56% for those with healthy balance.

[www.OliverDrakefordTherapy.com/intimacy-quiz-for-couples](#)

Loss of Emotional Intimacy Can Devastate Relationships

Couples who reported feeling emotionally disconnected, unheard, and unable to have intimate conversations had a 0% rate of scoring in the top emotional intimacy tier in this sample. Instead, 84% of these couples fell into the lowest intimacy tier. In the same group, 61% also said that decision-making felt one-sided, compared to just 9% of couples in the highest intimacy tier. The data suggest that when those three dynamics are missing, a relationship is far more likely to survive than thrive.

2. Giving Up Often Happens After the Damage Is Done

Among respondents who indicated they had largely stopped investing effort in their relationship, 0% of this group fell into the thriving intimacy category based on their quiz scores, and 80% were in the lowest tier. This pattern suggests that by the time one or both partners disengage, the erosion of emotional intimacy is already well advanced.



Oliver Drakeford LMFT, CGP - West Hollywood | Los Angeles

3. The Avoidance Trap: When Couples Stop Talking, They Stop Connecting

Among couples with low intimacy scores, 78% reported often avoiding discussions about disagreements. Only 1% said they had “no difficulty” discussing disagreements, compared with

22% of couples with higher intimacy scores. The data points to a feedback loop: as intimacy weakens, difficult conversations feel too risky; when those conversations are postponed or avoided, problems accumulate, and intimacy deteriorates further.

“

The data reveals that low affection rarely exists in isolation—it is deeply intertwined with conflict dysfunction and power imbalance”

Oliver Drakeford, LMFT, CGP

“The holiday season tends to magnify these patterns,” Drakeford added. “Under stress, many couples become more polite and less honest. They stop bringing up what hurts, and that politeness gradually freezes intimacy. The

couples who do best are not the ones without conflict—they are the ones who keep talking about the hard things in a way that protects connection.”

[New Holiday Program Helps](#) Couples Choose ‘Less Stuff, More Us’.

In response to these findings, Oliver Drakeford Therapy is offering a free “Surviving the Holidays” guide on its couples therapy website, along with a holiday-focused couples coaching series called

Closer Than Ever, designed for partners in West Hollywood and Greater Los Angeles who want to focus on restoring emotional closeness instead of exchanging more material gifts.

Closer Than Ever is a four-session emotional intimacy intensive that gives partners focused time to learn the skills needed to feel truly seen, heard, and understood. Instead of another gift, it offers a contained and meaningful experience for couples who want to invest in their relationship and create a deeper sense of connection during the holiday season.

The program is available to couples in West Hollywood and the wider Los Angeles area, with limited weekend availability for the 2025 holiday season. Both in-person sessions at the Santa Monica Boulevard office and secure online sessions are offered.

Oliver Drakeford
Oliver Drakeford Therapy
+1 262-509-0210

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