

In 1973, Sister Josephine Stewart, a family counsellor at the Catholic Renewal Center in Fort Worth, Texas and a divorced friend, Jo Lamia, attended a Marriage Encounter weekend with the intention of developing a program for engaged couples. In the course of the weekend, Ms. Lamia adapted the Marriage Encounter process to face issues and concerns in her own life that had never been addressed. At the close of the weekend, Sister Josephine saw a profound change occur in her friend.

Sister Josephine and other professionals in grief resolution, counselling, psychology, education and spiritual renewal, adapted Ms. Lamia's writings to outline the process for the Beginning Experience weekend.

The copyrighted program was soon in motion throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Great Britain and Ireland. Today, certified teams of peer ministers present the program in communities in nine countries on three continents.