Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Discussing Issues Prior to Getting Married

Most of us give considerable thought before making important decisions, spending time investigating the options and likely consequences. When it comes to marriage however, far too many couples blindly rush in, believing that the love they feel will conquer anything.



Although there is no denying the significance of love, the decision to marry is one of the most important decisions you'll ever make. Mutual reflection and discussion of issues and choices you'll face together is an important step in understanding each other's needs and building a solid, lifelong partnership.

Some differences are normal and healthy and merely require a willingness to occasionally compromise. However, if your opinions differ greatly on major issues such as children or lifestyle, reflect whether your relationship can survive the sacrifices involved for one or both of you. Here are some of the issues to discuss:

Life Plans

- Children. How many? When?
- Parenting issues such as discipline, schooling and child care.
- Lifestyle preferences including urban or rural living, apartment or house etc.
- Individual career plans. Might they include relocation?
- Financial objectives and budgeting style.

Values and Priorities

- Religious or spiritual beliefs.
- The values you live by.
- Sexual needs.
- Importance you place on career.
- The value attached to financial success.
- Importance of your families in your lives.
- Priority placed on community involvement.
- Social priorities.

Recreational Needs

- Hobbies and leisure activities.
- Priority given to recreational needs.
- Time spent with individual friends.
- Time spent as a couple.
- Vacation preferences.
- Desire for new experiences.

Emotional Style

- The need for time alone.

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- The need for 'togetherness'.
- Extrovert or introvert?
- Calm or excitable?
- Communication style.
- Leader or follower?
- Conflict resolution preferences.
- The need to share emotions.
- Sense of humor.
- Tolerance for change.
- Ability to compromise.

Discussing important issues before getting married can save you a lot of hassle and headache in the future. If you don’t know how to start a conversation or feel uncomfortable talking about certain topics with your partner, contact a counselor or professional for assistance. Beginning your marriage with a steady foundation will ensure the two of you make a lasting, lifetime commitment.