

## Premarital Counselling

Is there important stuff you need to talk about together before getting married? So much focus these days seems to go on the wedding with planning for the dress, the cake, the guest list, the honeymoon ... but in reality it is the rest of your lives together that you should be planning and preparing for. Premarital counselling is used to help couples prepare for marriage, as you attend a number of counselling sessions together to discuss your future life as well as develop relationship skills.

Research suggests that pre-marital counselling can improve your chances of making your marriage last by about 30% ([source](#)) and with divorce rates as high as they are, this is certainly something to consider. While it is more normal for couples who are religious or seeking a religious ceremony to be offered premarital counselling, every couple can be helped to pick up on the potential problems in the relationship before they become serious pitfalls.

When you enter into a relationship with someone, each person brings their own values, opinions and expectations, and once you get past that initial phase of loving everything about each other, those differences will start to surface, and that is where counselling can help you to move to the next step.

So what kind of topics do you typically discuss in premarital counselling? Some areas include:

- Why are we getting married? What are our life goals together?
- How much do we know about important areas of each other's history?
- How will we form an extended family and blend both families of origin together?
- How are we going to handle everyday concerns like housework and leisure time?
- How will we handle finances and budgeting?
- Do we want children, when and how many? What is our parenting philosophy?
- How will we build a mutually satisfying sex life? What if one of us wants sex and the other person doesn't?
- How will we handle conflict, and are we willing to work on our communication skills?
- How do we both feel about extra-marital affairs or sex outside of the relationship? Where are our boundaries as a couple?

The list is not exhaustive, but you get the general idea I hope, and there is a lot to be gained from talking about some difficult topics with an objective person in the room. It is also a good time to find out how much you really know about each other, everything from small details such as blood type to secret hopes and dreams. Premarital counselling may reveal some surprises, but it's better to find those out before you walk down the aisle, and hopefully you will be going forward together with a new sense of closeness and commitment.