

Marriage Counseling: A Pre & Past marriage Notion

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Abstract: *With the development of industrialization and urbanization, institution of marriage has also changed. People are busier which is also giving rise to many new conflicts in a marriage tie. To tackle these problems a new concept came into existence known as marriage counseling. Marriage counseling aims at providing couples counseling needed to make their marriage tie strong and improve relations. It is done by an unbiased counselor. He focuses on resolving conflict, identify strong points of relationship between two persons and try to mitigate their differences. Skills such as healthy communication, respect for partner and solving out differences are among many skills a couple acquired while going through marriage counseling. Marriage counseling may require more than one counseling session. Concept of pre marriage counseling is also developed. Pre marriage counseling tracks whether person who are going to marry are on same track or not. This article discusses in detail meaning of marriage, counseling and marriage counseling. It further discusses qualities which must be there in a counselor, how counseling can help and concept of pre marriage counseling.*

Keywords: *Marriage, Counselor, Marriage Counseling, Couples*

I. Introduction:

Marriage is the union of two persons. Traditional marriage's concept was totally different from what we have today. Marriage was considered a divine concept earlier, which was breakable only by the procedure given in the religious texts. It was considered natural as well as sacred union. Indian concept of marriage was so different. In Hinduism marriage once was marriage for seven births which means it was unbreakable. There was no concept of divorce in traditional Hinduism. Taking marriage issues outside the house was also considered bad and an attack on the reputation of family which means even if one was not happy in marriage tie, he/she will have to continue marriage. Earlier it was considered commitment. Many marriage lasts for only a month or a day nowadays. Divorce rate is so high and it is affecting marriage institution as a whole. Hence, the need for marriage counseling has

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increased. Marriage counseling is very useful for mitigating conflicts in a marriage³. Mostly counselor are client centered, dedicated to provide a safe space⁴ no matter what a couple are (whether they are straight, gay, old-young, mixed race or of any other combination). There are many problems which we do not want to discuss with our family and friends or if we do also there opinion is not always unbiased. In such situations it is better to see a counselor. Concept of pre marriage is also come into picture. Pre marriage counseling decreases chances of divorce as it teaches couples how to deal with problems which may arise between us in future. It develops in them healthy communication techniques and teaches principles through which they may build a strong foundation for a successful marriage, some of which includes positive attitudes towards each other, respecting opinion of your partner and appreciating them.

Concept of Counseling:

Counseling is a therapy program adopted to give guidance to a person to deal with psychological and/or relationship issues. There is a basic difference between advice and counseling. Advice can be seek from anyone and it is usually given without intention to further assist person seeking such advice, on the contrary counseling is seeking guidance from someone who has expertise and capabilities. Counseling may require more than one session. In other words counseling provides a space where people/couples can discuss their difficulties and counselor gives her opinion to solve those difficulties. Counseling is very important because a counselor always has an unbiased opinion, she will try to solve your problem and most importantly she will not accuse you of anything which means she will give you emotional strength. There are many problems which we do not want to discuss with our family and friends or if we do also there opinion is not always unbiased. In such situations it is better to see a counselor⁵. Other than relationship issues and family problems, a counselor can also guide you if you're facing depression, sleeplessness, weight loss, etc. Sometimes doctors may not be able to find any physical reason behind such disease and a counselor can help you in discovering psychological side of it. A counselor tries to make you understand roots of a problem rather than imposing his viewpoints. While approaching a counselor following things should be considered by a person:

1. A counselor needs not to be a psychologist or doctor. Anyone who have gone through training, certified and qualified in counseling can be a counselor⁶.
2. While undergoing counseling if you feel that her style is not suitable for you or her methods are not benefiting you, you will be at liberty to leave.
3. A counselor must be unbiased person; she must have good listening skills and must be sensitive.

³ Wake Counseling & Mediation. n.d. *The Importance Of Marriage Counseling*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.wakecounseling.com/therapy-blog/2017/1/27/the-importance-of-marriage-counseling>> [Accessed 3 June 2020].

⁴ TheFreeDictionary.com. n.d. *Marriage Counseling*. [online] Available at: <<https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Marriage+Counseling>> [Accessed 3 June 2020].

⁵ Healthyplace.com. n.d. *What Is Marriage Counseling? Who's It For? And How Does Marriage Counseling Work? | Healthyplace*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.healthyplace.com/relationships/therapy/what-is-marriage-counseling-whos-it-for-and-how-does-marriage-counseling-work>> [Accessed 3 June 2020].

⁶ Verywell Mind. n.d. *How To Know If You Need Marriage Counseling*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.verywellmind.com/does-marriage-counseling-work-2300428>> [Accessed 3 June 2020].

4. A counselor must provide space for persons to discuss anything and everything they want.
5. He is duty bound to maintain confidentiality.
6. If you think that your problem cannot be solved by counseling, you may adopt cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for more satisfying and better results.

How Can Marriage counseling help? Marriage counseling is a very effective way to save a marriage breakdown and to resolve conflicts. There are a number of benefits of going to a counselor. Following are a few benefits which marriage counseling offers:

1. Friend and family are not always unbiased. Marriage counseling provides a unbiased counselor who helps you in identifying reasons of conflict, understands you intention and try to solve issue arises because of them by adopting conflict solving methods or advise you to make some changes in relationship patterns.
2. It provides couples a space to discuss issues faced by them, their expectation and it offers them an opportunity to come together to solve their conflict.
3. Couples often want to improve their relationship and mitigate conflicts. But they may not have any idea, how can they achieve this. That's when a counselor comes in picture, along with providing couples a free space he also acts as a mediator to solve their conflict and build a healthy relationship.
4. Our expectations are always higher than the reality. It happens in marriage also and eventually leads to conflicts. Marriage counseling helps you to differentiate between expectation and reality. It gives you a realistic picture of who your partner is and how you can still be happy with her/him rather than crying for your unrealistic expectations.
5. Marriage counselor helps couples to see their relationship in an objective manner. It teaches them skills to avoid conflict (asks them avoiding blaming each other), improve their behavior with each other and appreciating your partner.
6. Marriage counselor must ensure that no additional burden in form of physical labor, psychological labor or economic harm should be inflicted on her clients.
7. It teaches couples principles of effective communication and encourages them to open about their feeling to their partner.
8. It focuses not only on the things because of which conflicts are arising between a couple and also strong points of their relationship (strength).
9. Along with acquiring couples with skills, communication methods, it also teaches them to be more accountable to each other.

Pre marriage counseling:

Relationships are not limited only to two persons. They affect their families, their friends, persons they know and their self as well. It is usually seen that people are usually not ready to take measures in a relationship tension and when things goes beyond a limit they usually take decision out of anger, frustration or just to get rid of the problems instead of mitigating problems⁷. A new concept is developed to lessen these risk that counseling before marriage or pre marriage counseling in other words. Pre marriage counseling decreases chances of divorce as it teaches couples how to deal with problems which may arise between us in future. It develops in them healthy communication techniques and teaches principles through which they may build a strong foundation for a successful marriage, some of which includes positive attitudes towards each other, respecting opinion of your partner and appreciating them. It teaches couples to open up about each and everything including their expectations. It helps to develop a strong emotional connection between them before marriage which is achieved by working on conflict resolution, and making them aware about the fields which are vulnerable for them. Basically, pre marriage counseling work as a tracker to ensure that both persons are on the same track. It helps couples to share their dreams in marriage and expectations to each other which may include anything like how many children they wish to have, honeymoon destination, future plans, etc. Pre marriage counseling also gives space to couples to discuss their former relationships so they may not have any impact on their marriage. In Christianity pre marriage counseling is compulsory. Premarital counseling is a type of therapy that helps couples prepare for marriage⁸. Premarital counseling can help ensure that you and your partner have a strong, healthy relationship — giving you a better chance for a stable and satisfying marriage. This kind of counseling can also help you identify weaknesses that could become problems during marriage. But it is not limited to Christian in today's globalized world. People are realizing gradually value of it and its popularity has increased in every religion⁹. According to Christianity, it is compulsory for the couples who are going to marry to attend a three day program where they are being taught values enshrined in scriptures such as duties of husband and wife as well as parents. Keeping aside religious beliefs there is utmost need for pre marriage counseling in today's world. Marriage may not be always as happy as we expect it to be. No matter what the form of marriage i.e. whether it is love marriage, arrange marriage or any other form. Pre marriage counseling helps people to accept each other opinion, guide them to appreciate their partner and develop conflict solving skills in them.

⁷ Mayoclinic.org. 2020. *Premarital Counseling - Mayo Clinic*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/premarital-counseling/about/pac-20394892>> [Accessed 3 June 2020].

⁸ Research, F., Education, L., Reviews, M., Money, C., Education, K. and Patwardhan, R., 2020. *All You Need To Know About Pre-Marital Counselling*. [online] femina.in. Available at: <<https://www.femina.in/brides/planning-and-advice/know-all-about-pre-marital-counselling-103670.html>> [Accessed 3 June 2020].

⁹ The Times of India. n.d. *Pre-Marital Counselling, A Must - Times Of India*. [online] Available at: <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/relationships/love-sex/Pre-marital-counselling-a-must/articleshow/10426074.cms>> [Accessed 3 June 2020].

II. Conclusion:

With the change in notion of marriage, break of institution of family and development of scope of marriage to same sex, different ethnic groups, different religions and age differences, disputes in a marriage tie also have risen. A number of new issues are coming before couples and divorce rate is also increasing. We cannot deny the importance and role played by the marriage counseling and counselors. A number of methods are adopted by them to safeguard marriage and mitigate differences of their clients. Counselors are unbiased, they provide their clients a safe space, facilitate them as a sort of mediator, introduce their client with realistic image of his/her partner rather than trying to satisfy their unrealistic expectations. They work to save a marriage tie in an objective manner. As stated above marriage is not only about two persons, it affects all those who are connected to those two persons. To ensure whether opinion matches, they may be able to satisfy each other expectation, concept of pre marriage counseling is also there. We can conclude by saying that although couples may be sometimes unwilling to go to a counselor but their role in solving marital dispute, providing counseling and guidance cannot be denied.

References

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