

Marriage Counseling

Linda Schaefer, LPC

The divorce rate remains very high in the United States. There are serious consequences of marital dissolution for both spouses. These include increased incidence of physical and emotional illness, decreased longevity, increased mortality from diseases, and increased rates of auto accidents. There is evidence of deleterious effects for children, as well, including depression, poor social competence, health problems and poor academic performance. For these reasons and more, to devote effort to divorce prevention, or simply making a marriage less conflictual, makes a great deal of sense.

Linda Schaefer specializes in couples work. She utilizes findings from the research on successful marriages and divorce prevention in her work with couples. Here's a sampling of what we know from some of the best researchers in the country:

Feeling unloved is the most commonly cited reason for wanting a divorce. To take each other for granted, failing to demonstrate love and affection, is a real mistake. Many couples become overly focused on the children; it is easy to see how this can happen, especially with young kids. The marital research shows that couples need to regularly spend time with one another, without the children present, in order to enjoy each other's company fully and have a chance to really communicate.

We also know that all couples have areas in which they disagree. These may be matters involving money management, child rearing practices, sexual intimacy or the in-laws, as examples. Sometimes continued discussion will produce a resolution. However, when couples continue to argue time and time again, without resolution, we begin to suspect that these issues reflect personality differences, and/or a difference in values. If so, couples are unable to resolve the issue, and it just keeps coming up over and over again. In situations like these, the couple may need to accept the fact they have the difference of opinion, stop blaming the other person because their view is different from ours, and find a way to compromise. This is very important, because the continual argument can do real harm to the marriage as the fighting becomes more and more destructive. At this point, individuals do not feel understood or respected. These feelings represent other commonly cited reasons for divorce. Finally, someone usually withdraws from the argument, or shuts down. This is usually the male.

Unfortunately, this only serves to increase the aggravation of the other spouse, right ladies?

Consider taking some time to consult with an expert on breaking these patterns. Folks who withdraw from the conflict can learn to do something else which is going to be far more useful. Spouses can also learn how to raise a complaint in a productive, rather than destructive manner.

We can get very aroused physiologically during a fight, with heightened blood pressure and heart rate. When this happens, we are not thinking clearly and logically. Couples can learn specific techniques to slow down a marital argument before it gets out of control. Learn how to monitor this and take a break from the discussion when necessary.

We know that marriages can change and we know what works! In fact, sometimes marriages can change even if one person in the marriage starts to do something different. Make an appointment for counseling, even if your spouse refuses to come with you. Your spouse may join you when you share some encouraging ideas from the sessions.

Linda is a Licensed Professional Counselor with fourteen years of experience in private practice. She sees clients by appointment; call 334-1122. Linda maintains day, evening and Saturday hours.