

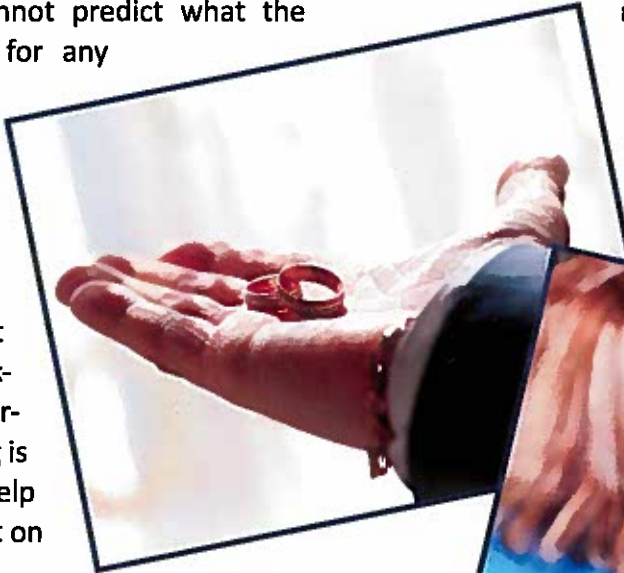
BUILDING A STRONG, SATISFYING MARRIAGE

Seeking out premarital counseling to get on the right track

Many couples approach their wedding day with their thoughts and energy focused on choosing a wedding venue, selecting flowers, deciding on food and music. All too often couples spend little or no time on important discussions about such topics such as what the expectations are of their relationship, how they will resolve differences, or how they will handle financial decisions.

While we cannot predict what the future holds for any

married couple as they embark on their journey together, we do know that actively seeking out premarital counseling is one way to help them start out on the right track.

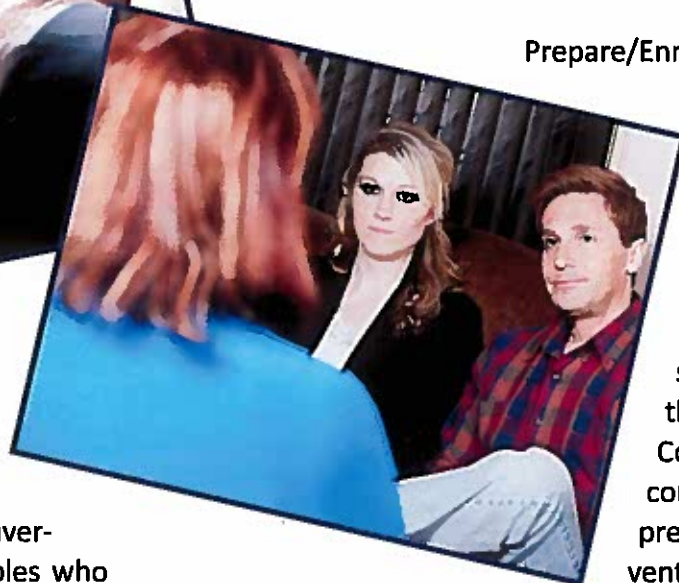


Research evidence increasingly supports this conclusion. In a survey of over 3,300 adults, researchers found that couples who participated in premarital counseling reported, on average, a 30 percent stronger marriage than couples who did not participate in premarital counseling (Stanley and Colleagues, 2006). Relationship researcher Jason S. Carroll, an associate professor in the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University, observed, "After participating in these programs, couples reported or were observed to be better at resolving problems using effective communication styles, and on average, they reported higher levels of relationship quality." This proved true even for couples who didn't believe their relationship needed a major overhaul. Happy couples who participated in premarital counseling experienced immediate improvement in communication and conflict resolution skills.

Research also indicates that the positive effects of premarital counseling are not short-lived. One comprehensive study of 1,235 couples found that 92 percent

reported that premarital counseling helped during their first year of marriage. In a follow up four years later, 80 percent of these couples still reported that premarital counseling had helped them in their marriage (Carroll & Doherty, 2003).

JSSA embraces this research and offers premarital and newly married couples a specialized counseling program – Prepare/Enrich – to help strengthen marriages. Built on a solid research foundation, this program is considered to be the leading relationship and skill-building assessment tool available today. It has empowered and energized more than three million couples worldwide.



Prepare/Enrich helps couples increase their awareness of relationship strengths and growth areas and provides them with skills to improve their relationship. Couples start by completing a comprehensive online inventory, customized

to meet their individual needs. This inventory assesses the couple's relationship on constructs shown to be important for healthy relationships such as communication, conflict resolution, and financial management. The second phase consists of five feedback and training sessions with a JSSA clinician who has been certified as a Prepare/Enrich facilitator. The facilitator guides the couple through the results of the assessment, highlighting relationship strengths and using those strengths and skill-building exercises to grow areas that are not yet strengths. This process encourages heart-to-heart conversations that are key to both partners understanding each other and developing a deeper, healthier and stronger relationship.

A marriage is one of the most important relationships

that any two people will ever have. Taking the time to participate in premarital counseling is a good investment for couples who are serious about preparing for a lifelong commitment and creating a strong, enduring and satisfying marriage.

ABOUT JSSA

JSSA has been helping people across the Washington metropolitan area meet emotional, social, and physical challenges for more than 120 years. A nonsectarian provider, we serve people of all religious backgrounds, races and ethnicities, helping the youngest child to the most fragile senior, from individuals to entire families. Our wide range of counseling, educational, employment, in-home support, hospice and nursing care and social services assist nearly 37,000 people per year.

- Scott Kreeger, LCSW-C
 Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA)
 Child and Family Services

SPECIAL NOTE

In the July/August edition of Inside Fallsgrove we ran a JSSA article, "For College-bound High School Seniors, Leaving Home in Fall May Spark Stress." The author's name was unintentionally omitted, but we would like to acknowledge Debbie Goldstein, LCSW-C, Clinical Director, Child and Family Department) for her contribution.

**ENVIRONMENTAL TIPS!
 Green Halloween Decorations**

Chances are, you already have Halloween decorations from all the past Halloweens you've celebrated. And if you don't, buy as many natural products as possible such as beeswax candles instead of paraffin, recyclable/compostable decorations, and if possible, design your own decorations! Dig into your recycling bin – the possibilities are endless! For fresh pumpkins, try to buy organic and/or locally grown. Also, make sure to use as much as the pumpkin as possible – bake some pumpkin pie or prepare a soup with fresh pumpkin and roast the seeds for a nice seasonal treat!

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JSSA has been helping people across the Washington metropolitan area meet emotional, social and physical challenges for more than 120 years.

- Individual, couples, group and family counseling
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- Social skills therapy groups, clubs and camps for children, teens and adults
- The Center for Autism through the Lifespan
- Pre-marital, marital, and divorce counseling
- Employment and career
- Parent training and education
- Senior services
- Hospice care

Learn more and view our current programs: visit www.jssa.org



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