
Marriage Counseling When Divorce Has Been Considered

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Marriage counseling is an attempt to help a couple resolve any number of types of problems they may be having in their marriage, and to empower them to go forward and have a more successful relationship. No matter what combination of problems, couples seek counseling to get a better understanding of what has gone wrong in their marriage.

Throughout a marriage it is common for resentment due to unresolved issues to build up to such an extent that one or both partners may feel hopeless enough to consider divorce as an option. Frequently, by the time a married couple decides to seek professional help; they have so much resentment built up to such a high level that their issues are much more difficult to resolve, if not impossible. This does not mean that the marriage can not be restored. Although one or both partners may think that seeking counseling is an admission of failure, counseling can help a couple rebuild or restore their relationship.

Even though marriage counseling is usually conducted with both partners present, there are times when a more motivated partner may greatly benefit from individual sessions in regards to the marital relationship or any personal issues affecting their relationship. Counseling usually lasts a short period of time, until the problems are resolving or the couple feel empowered enough to handle any remaining issues on their own.

No one goes into a marriage thinking their marriage may end in divorce. However, because almost half of all marriages do end in divorce, there is an increased need for couples to seek marriage counseling. Although many couples enter counseling as a last-ditch effort to save a troubled relationship, marriage counseling can be seen as a proactive way to improve or enhance something worth preserving. Many couples struggle for years before they make the decision to go to a marriage counselor in an effort to "save" their marriage.

Couples do not have to wait to pursue counseling until they think the only way out is divorce. In most cases marriage counselors can be very effective earlier in the marriage or when the couple first notices some problems. The main exception to the potential effectiveness of marriage counseling occurs when there is severe domestic violence; or even mild domestic violence in which the offending partner or partners will not seek help for violence issues.

In most other situations, the earlier couples seek marriage counseling the better. The longer the couple waits and the greater the marital conflict; the harder it is to resolve marital issues. However, if a couple has struggled for years, it is not too late to get counseling in which the partners may renew their energies and mutual goals, refocus their attention, as well as adding a whole new perspective to their relationship.

Frequently marriage counseling can and often does help couples open the lines of communication. How many times do marriage partners say, "We just can't communicate"? Couples often look to marriage counseling when they can no longer communicate with each other and are so frustrated that they no longer know what to do. It is well accepted that communication is a key to healthy and happy relationships. Marriage counseling often includes the learning of communication and conflict resolution skills, as well as increased understanding of family dynamics.

Marriage counselors are trained in family dynamics; psychoanalysis; and know how to identify client's needs, interests, and problems. They also have training that allows them to help clients work through the problems and come to mutually beneficial compromises and solutions. Equipped with therapeutic skills the counselor is able to identify underlying problems of which the couple may not

have been aware or were not able to confront on their own. Even a very highly functioning person may have difficulties in a marital relationship. A skilled marriage counselor will not do or say anything to trigger a client to feel guilty or blame themselves or their partner for their problems. They will teach clients to work through problems, forgive for the past, and get over negative feelings.

Marriage counseling is worth the time and effort. Couples who are having marital difficulties that they have been unable to resolve on your own and would like to renew and repair their relationship are well advised to try marriage counseling. If a couple is heading toward a possible divorce and have not tried counseling, they will never know for sure whether they could have preserved their marriage unless they make the effort. Even if the couple eventually decides to divorce they will most likely have benefited by the work they have done, the insights they have had, and the skills they have learned during marriage counseling. These benefits can help them in the decoupling process that takes place during and after a separation or divorce.

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