



MARRIAGE & MILITARY LIFE

MARINE & FAMILY PROGRAMS COUNSELING CENTER
858.577.6585

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The chances of success in marriage are statistically higher among couples who participate in marriage preparation and enrichment programs.

Such programs, designed for partners preparing for marriage and those who are already married, help couples examine their strengths and weaknesses in critical areas of married life.

Studies show that couples who enroll in marriage preparation and enrichment programs decrease their chances of divorce and increase their chances of marital happiness.

For more information about such programs, speak with your chaplain or visit your Family Service Center.



The questions provided in this pamphlet are designed to help you evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your relationship. They are offered as a self-examination guide, both for couples who are preparing for marriage and for those who are already married.

Experience has shown that the following areas are critical to a successful marital relationship:

Communication
Conflict Resolution
Finances
Sexuality
Children
Religion
Family and Friends
Miscellaneous

Each partner is to complete a questionnaire separately and circle those questions to which you would answer “No” or “Uncertain.” When you have some “quality time” together, discuss the questions, particularly those which you circled. This discussion is the most important part of this marriage preparation/enrichment process.

There is no “score” associated with this questionnaire. However, couples are encouraged to seek assistance from chaplains, counselors or civilian clergy, particularly if a number of differences surface in the course of their discussion.

It is hoped that this questionnaire will stimulate your thinking and discussion enhancing your commitment to “love and cherish one another in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, all the days of your lives.”

QUESTIONNAIRE

To be completed by Groom/Husband and Bride/Wife.

COMMUNICATION		Effective communication is one of the most important factors of a successful marriage. When a couple can honestly discuss their feelings, including their past disappointments, present concerns and future hopes, then their chances for a happy married life together are significantly enhanced.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have you and your partner discussed your feelings about continuing or leaving military service? Do each of you agree about the importance of writing and communicating regularly during extended periods of separation? Have you discussed your expectations regarding your respective home responsibilities (e.g., paying bills, cooking, cleaning, etc.)? If you are discouraged or sad, does your partner offer you encouragement and support? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are you satisfied with how you communicate with each other? Does your partner acknowledge special occasions (e.g., birthdays) in special ways (e.g., cards, gifts, etc.)? Is your partner receptive to talk with you about something which is on your mind? Are you comfortable in asking your partner for what you want? Are you happy with the way decisions are made in your relationship? 	
CONFLICT RESOLUTION		Marital problems are generally compounded when couples attempt to resolve them by using ineffective techniques (e.g., screaming, physical abuse, threats, name-calling, silent treatments, etc.). The ability to negotiate and resolve conflicts through constructive dialogues marked by mutual respect is a skill worth developing
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are you generally satisfied with the outcome of your disagreement? Does your partner indicate when he/she is upset with you? Do you tell your partner when you are upset with him/her? Are you able to avoid arguments over petty matters? Does your partner refrain from bringing up your past mistakes? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Is your partner able to control his/her temper? Do you handle conflicts in constructive ways (e.g., avoid yelling, hitting, etc.)? Do you avoid criticizing one another in public? Would you and your partner seek counseling if problems developed which threatened your marriage? 	
FINANCES		One of the principal reasons for marital discord among military couples involves finances. Conflicts can arise over how a couple manages their income. In order to avoid serious problems involving finances, couples are urged to adhere to a budget which reflects their mutually agreed upon priorities.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have you and your partner discussed financial planning (i.e. budgeting)? Are you in agreement about who is responsible for paying bills? Do you know how much money your partner makes? Do you trust your partner with your money (e.g., check book, credit card(s), etc.)? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are you in agreement about whether both partners should work? Have you discussed the types and amount of insurance to carry (e.g., life, car, home, etc.)? Have you discussed savings and investments? 	

SEXUALITY		Love can be expressed in a very fulfilling and beautiful way through sexuality. While couples can experience a deep sense of intimacy from physical expressions of love, sexuality can also be a source of frustration and anxiety. An honest sharing of one's feelings about sex can enhance a couple's appreciation of this most private and intimate of human acts.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are you satisfied with the degree and ways your partner shows you affection? Are you comfortable in talking with each other about sex? Are you confident your partner is a faithful spouse? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel that your feelings of love for one another are greater than your physical attraction for one another? Are you comfortable with the way your partner relates to members of the opposite sex (e.g., at social gatherings)? 	
CHILDREN		The number and timing of children is a critical issue in marriage. Couples need to discuss their feelings about family planning and their respective responsibilities in regards to raising children.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have you discussed the size of family you would like to have? Do you agree about when you would like to have children? Are you in agreement about methods of family planning? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have you discussed how to raise and discipline children? Do you have similar views on human life issues (e.g., abortion, adoption)? 	
RELIGION		Individual and shared religious views can have a major impact upon marriage and family life. Studies show that shared religious practice contributes to greater marital happiness and reduces the chances of divorce. A couple's spirituality affects not only their own lives, but the lives of their children and those around them.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are you in agreement about the role religion plays in your relationship (e.g., attending worship)? Are you in agreement about the religious upbringing of your children? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are you satisfied with your partner's attitude toward your religious beliefs and practices? 	
FAMILY & FRIENDS		Our relationship with our families and friends changes in some ways once we are married. While husbands and wives need to be best friends, they also need good friends and family members to support them throughout their married lives.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are your family and friends supportive of your relationship? Are you comfortable with your partner's family's involvement in your relationship? Are you comfortable with the degree of your partner's involvement with his/her family? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel comfortable with most of your partner's friends? Are you comfortable with the degree of your partner's involvement with his/her friends? Are you willing to discuss any emotional hurts which you may have experienced in your life (e.g., sexual abuse, alcoholic parent(s), broken relationships, etc.)? 	
MISCELLANEOUS		Questions in this area address leisure time, public behavior, personal habits, and household concerns. While we continually change and develop throughout our lives, it is unrealistic to expect major changes to occur in one's partner after going through a marriage ceremony. Certain addictions may require professional help if they are to be addressed (e.g., drug addiction, spouse abuse, alcoholism).
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Do you generally agree about how to spend your free time? Are you pleased with your partner's behavior in public? Are you comfortable with your partner's habits (e.g., drinking, smoking, etc.)? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are you in agreement with how neat and clean your home ordinarily should be kept? Are you in agreement about the presence of pets around the house? 	