

## **Assignment 3**

Marli Cristiane da Silva

MA Marriage and Family Therapy – Pre-Marital Counseling

**Instructor: Mrs. Michelle Park**

Premarital Strategy

Having a premarital strategy is important in helping couples build a strong foundation for their marriage by identifying and addressing important topics such as finances, parenting, communication, and personal growth.

It is important to note that premarital counseling may not be recommended in certain situations, such as when one or both partners are unwilling to participate, ongoing physical or emotional abuse, active addiction or substance abuse, or severe mental health conditions. In such cases, addressing and resolving these issues may be necessary before proceeding with premarital counseling (AAFMT, 2023).

Regarding the termination policy, according to the American Psychological Association, it is essential for premarital counseling providers to have a clear and defined termination policy. This policy should include information on handling any outstanding payments, providing referrals to other resources, and ensuring that the couple's privacy and confidentiality are maintained throughout the process. The policy should also outline any follow-up or aftercare that the counselor will provide to the couple after the termination of counseling. The termination policy for premarital counseling should be designed to ensure that the couple can end the counseling process in a healthy and respectful manner, with the necessary support and resources in place to

continue their journey toward a successful marriage, as per the guidelines provided by American Psychological Association (APA, 2023).

As a premarital counselor, I aim to provide high-quality service to all couples regardless of their configurations. However, in some instances, some couple configurations or issues may fall outside of my expertise or comfort level. For example, if a couple is in a polyamorous relationship or one partner is not comfortable with the other's gender identity, I may refer them to a more suitable counselor. If a couple is experiencing ongoing physical or emotional abuse, I will recommend that they seek professional help before entering premarital counseling. My goal is always to provide the best service possible, and I will be transparent about any limitations or concerns to ensure couples receive the support and guidance they need.

Regarding sexual purity, as a premarital counselor, I will respect my clients' diverse beliefs and values and not impose my personal beliefs on them. However, it is essential to note that during premarital counseling, sexual purity may be discussed as part of the couple's preparation for marriage. This topic can include but is not limited to, discussing the couple's expectations, boundaries, and agreements regarding sexual intimacy before marriage. The goal is to help the couple have open and honest conversations about these important topics and make informed decisions that align with their personal beliefs and values. It will propose to them to assign an agreement of no sexual contact before the marriage for a limited time.

As a premarital counselor, I believe in treating all individuals with respect and equality and addressing the couple's unique dynamic and beliefs about hierarchy and equalitarian structure in their relationship. During counseling, I will facilitate open and honest discussions about the couple's expectations, roles, and responsibilities and encourage mutual respect, open

communication, and understanding of each other's needs and wants; by using Jesus Christ's teachings as a foundation, to help them build a strong foundation for their marriage.

### Premarital Strategy

I - Number of sessions: 12 sessions with 50 minutes will be offered each. The sessions will be weekly, in a day and hour that can attend by the couple and the counselor.

II – Content of each session:

**1 – Day one:** The process and the importance of premarital counseling will be explained. It will describe the process's dynamic: which session will be a theme and homework. The homework must be done for the next session. There will be an initial time at the beginning of the following session to discuss the homework from the last session. The necessity of signing an agreement will also be approached, which has the following orientations: description of the counseling process, counseling fees, cancellation policy, confidentiality, and premature termination policy. By signing the agreement, the couple declares that participating in premarital counseling therapy is a free decision for both.

1.1 – Identification: In premarital counseling, identifying each partner is important to uncover any unspoken information. This includes basic information such as name, age, country of origin, religion, education, current and previous jobs, and general information about political parties. The family background will also be explored, including the number of siblings, family structure, roles of parents, and any known familial diseases. The relationship with both partners' parents, siblings, and other family members will also be discussed, as well as the relationship between the couple and their respective families.

1.2 – Homework: Describe in at least 06 lines what marriage means for you. Try to be realistic and authentic with what you believe.

**2 – Day second:** The main topic will be myths about marriage. *Marriage* is a complex and nuanced institution that is influenced by a vast field of aspects. To have a healthy and fulfilling marriage is essential to be aware of and critically evaluate common myths and misconceptions.

Some myths to work with:

- The believe that both expect the same things from the marriage.
- Unspoken rules and Unconscious roles.
- The belief that good things will get better and bad things will disappear.
- My spouse will make me whole.

2.2 – Homework: Write a text about the myths of the marriage; highlight at least three which you have and how you plan to work with them in your marriage life.

**3 - Day third:** In that day and in the following days, some everyday matters will be explored since these matters have great importance in the couple's life. The topics will be discussed with the couple through questions to be answered and evaluated. Some questions will be dispensed in this exercise as an example.

3.1 - The third day's theme will be how you see your partner and marriage as a relationship in lifespan.

- What do you enjoy most about your mate? What do you value about your relationship?
- Do you see your partner as a spouse? What makes you agree to matrimony?
- What do marriage and responsibility mean to you?
- How will you incorporate your partner in assembling important or personal decisions?

3.1 – Homework –. What are your ideas about the division of household chores? Who does what?

**4– Day fourth** – Expression of love.

4.1 - The couple will take a test about the language of love according to the Five Love Languages program. The result will be explicated.

4.2 - Homework: how was your impression of your partner's love language? Do you read to listen to this language? In your opinion, what is a more straightforward and complex task in this language?

**5- Day fifth:** The theme will be finances.

- How will you handle your money and family finances (combined or separately)?
- How do you feel about savings and investing money? What is your connection with money?
- What are your feelings about having or working in deficit?
- How do you feel about spending money? How compatible are your spending habits?

5.1 - Homework: What are your agreements about giving money for charity, offers in Church, and tithes?

**6 – Day sixth:** Religion and beliefs.

- How do you feel about faith? How significant are your spiritual beliefs to you?
- How will you rehearse your belief or spirituality in your marriage?
- 6.1 – Homework: Write at least two pages about your relationship with God and how it will make a difference in your marriage.

**7 – Day seventh:** Children into the marriage:

- Are you on the same page about kids? How many children do you want to have?
- If it is impossible to have your own children, what do you plan to do?
- What are your expectations for your partner about: raising children? How will you grow or educate your kids?

- 7.1: Homework: Will you raise your children in your spiritual practice? Why yes or will not? Write about it at least two pages.

## **8 – Eighth day: Intimacy**

- Define intimacy in your own words; What kind of intimacy do you think is essential to develop in your marriage?
- How meaningful is a "sexual relationship" in our life context?
- How important is emotional and spiritual intimacy in our life context?

8.1: Homework: Where and how do you see yourself living and creating intimacy in your marriage life?

## **9 – Day ninth: Deal with problems:**

- How do you deal with disagreements that cannot be fixed? Cite three of them.
- Do you agree with your partner's lifestyle preferences (health, diet, use of substances, sleeping routines, workouts, recreations, and professional drive/achievement)?
- What do disloyalty and infidelity mean to you?
- It will discuss trouble solutions tactics such as *Practicing synergistic brainstorming*, *Timeout in case of strong talking* and [Listening With Purpose](#), “Ten Steps For Resolving Conflict” (Prepare/Enrich toll) among others.

9.1– Homework: What are your arrangement breakers? What do you expect from your partner?

## **10 – Day Tenth: Career and marriage**

- How will you prioritize your career, your family, and your marriage? WHO will do WHAT at home? Do you have to talk about it?
- How do you think you could handle your partner getting fired and having difficulty getting a new job?

- 10.1 - Homework: What do you think if your spouse asks you to stay home to study for a few months or years?

**11 – Eleventh day:** Relationship outside of the marriage:

- What are your expectations or limits around connections outside of the matrimony, such as fellowships or co-workers?
- How will you preserve your individuality within the marriage? What is your expectation for the amount of time spent together? How do you plan to spend time both together and separately during your free time?
- Define yourself related to jealousy. What does be jealous mean to you?

11.1 – Homework: How do you wish to interact with your mates as a married couple?

**12 – Day twelfth – Last commitments:**

- What support do you expect from your marriage partner? (Personal, financial, and emotional).
- Evaluation of the process and last thoughts. What was important, what let you down, and what let you feel confident during the premarital counseling process?
- Talk about follow-up.

References:

1 - American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from <https://aamft.org/>

2 - American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *American Psychological Association (APA)*. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from <https://www.apa.org/>

3 - *Discover your love language® - the 5 love languages®*. Discover Your Love Language® The 5 Love Languages®. (n.d.). Retrieved February 15, 2023, from <https://5lovelanguages.com>.