

POINTS TO MAKE *When Discussing Scenarios*

Possible Benefits of Marriage

- Marriage often brings: companionship, long-term friendship, increased health and happiness, comfort and care over the long haul.
- Getting married often makes economic sense. Two can live more cheaply than one. Married people often work harder, earn more and save more.
- Once a couple gets married, friends and family members tend to be more willing to offer support and assistance when it's needed.
- Marriage brings numerous legal rights and obligations, for example:
 - As married parents, both of you automatically have full legal parental rights as well as the obligation to support your children, even if the marriage ends in divorce.
 - Community property is owned equally by both spouses.
 - You can file taxes separately or jointly.
 - You can often get coverage on your spouse's insurance plan for you and your children.
 - Your spouse can give consent for medical treatments for you and your children.
 - You have a right to inherit your spouse's property even without a will.

What Makes Getting Married More Complicated

Children from Former Relationships Having a child from a former relationship often strains a new marriage in several ways. There is increased financial strain because the child needs support. The permanent involvement of the other parent in the couple's life can lead to relationship conflict.

Common Issues Married couples tend to fight about: money, children, sex, use of time and division of tasks, infidelity. It's important to communicate your expectations about these issues before getting married and to make a joint plan for managing these issues in your marriage.

Tougher Problems Sometimes individuals have problems with drugs, alcohol, mental health issues, serious anger and violence problems, and so on. When issues like this exist, outside help is really important. These are also red flags that say, "Stop, and consider whether getting married right now (or at all) is a good idea."

POINTS TO MAKE *When Discussing Scenarios Continued*

Some Things to Work out Before Getting Married

Why get married? Discuss your reasons for getting married, what makes a good husband, what makes a good wife, what makes a good marriage, and what is most important to you in a marriage.

Expectations Discuss what you expect from one another – how you will communicate, how you will solve problems, how you will manage household tasks, and so on.

Children Discuss if you want children, how many, how close together, what role you think a mother plays, what role you think a father plays, how you will divide child-raising tasks, how you will discipline your child, and how you think children might change your relationship.

How will you manage money? Discuss your attitudes about money: decide whether to keep your money separate or together, work out a budget, decide how you will keep track of and pay bills, make a plan to save, talk about donations to charity, and make a plan to put your affairs in order (insurance, wills, etc.).

Lifestyle Discuss how you want to live as a couple, where you'd like to live, what you want to do socially, and what is important to you about work, home, family connections, and individual time.

Future Goals Discuss the long-term goals you have individually and as a couple. Identify specific steps each of you will take to progress toward these goals.

Religion and Values Discuss morals and values important to you; the role of religion (if any) in your relationship; differences the two of you have, and how you will deal with them.