

## **MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND RELATIONSHIPS CHECKLIST**

### **WELL BEFORE GETTING MARRIED:**

#### **Discuss the following with your prospective spouse:**

- Your goals and dreams
- Where you would like to live
- Whether you would like to have children
- How you would raise children
- Consider the financial implications of getting married, e.g., taxes, job benefits

#### **If one of you has substantially more assets than the other, and/or if it is not the first marriage for either of you:**

- Consider a prenuptial agreement (be aware that suggesting a prenuptial agreement can create an atmosphere of mistrust, especially for a first marriage)

#### **If you decide to have a prenuptial agreement:**

- Each party should be represented by a separate attorney
- Specify how assets will be handled in the event that one of you dies and the other remarries

### **AFTER GETTING MARRIED:**

#### **Regularly:**

- Make sure you make time to talk and listen to each other
- Make sure you have some time alone

### **RELATIONSHIPS**

#### **A good relationship probably needs several positive experiences for every negative one:**

- Learn to listen
- Think " we," not " me "
- Work as a team
- Learn to negotiate

**If your spouse/partner stays at home to take care of the kids:**

- Regularly express your appreciation for the job he/she does

**Before getting into a romantic relationship:**

**Make sure you both share:**

- Similar basic values and beliefs (parenting, religion)
- Desire to have or not have children
- Determine if you are genuinely fond of that person

**If you're already in a romantic relationship:**

- Use a nickname for your partner
- Avoid criticizing or blaming your partner
- Divide household and parenting responsibilities as equally as possible

**Regularly:**

- Spend some satisfying time together
- Make a date at least once a week for just the two of you to do something that's fun
- Have physical interaction
- Express interest in the things your partner is doing and is interested in
- Praise the things your partner does, especially things you would like him/her to do regularly
- Express your affection for your partner often, especially when he/she is behaving in a manner you find attractive

**If conflicts arise:**

- Agree on a time to talk, then take turns talking
- Stick to current issues, not the past
- Control yourself, not your partner
- If it gets too emotional and/or intense, separate and come together after you've both cooled down
- Don't use shame or blame

**DIVORCE**

**If you're divorced and have a child:**

- Avoid saying derogatory things about your ex - spouse in front of your child - it hurts the child to hear bad things about a parent
- Don't use your child as a weapon against your ex - spouse

- Continue to provide discipline (don't let up because of the divorce) - your child may need the security of discipline even more because of the insecurity of divorce

**After your child returns from a visit with the other parent:**

- Avoid asking too many questions about the other parent
- Try to spend some extra time with your child

**When your ex - spouse has custody of your child:**

- Try hard to remember special occasions, e.g., birthdays, holidays, school plays

**Regularly:**

- Reassure your child that he/she didn't cause the divorce

**If a parent has left:**

- Reassure your child that you won't leave him/her, that just because the other parent left doesn't mean that you will leave
- Try to provide your child with good role models to follow