



Acumen on Marital Counselling

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Abstract

This paper dwelled on marital counselling and its techniques. People face many challenges and one of it is on marriage. Marriage is an integral aspect of life which requires a lot of assistance by a professional counsellor. This article therefore elucidate concept of counselling, marriage as a concept, forms of marriage, types of marriage, purpose of marriage, marital counselling, stages of marital counselling, general counselling to couples, techniques of counselling and goals of marital counselling.

Keywords: Counselling, Marriage, Marital counselling, Techniques.

1. Introduction

Counselling is the assistance offered by a professional counsellor to a client(s) in order to remediate or prevent problems. According Oluwatimilehin (2021) counselling is a set of procedures used in assisting individuals to solve problems that arise in various aspects of lives or to assist them in maximizing their overall maximum development so that they can be more useful to the society in which they live. Counselling psychology addresses the emotional, social, work, school and physical health concerns people may have at different stages of their lives, focusing on typical life stresses and more severe issues with which people may struggle as individuals and as part of families, groups and organisations (Ewumi, 2024). There are different aspects of counselling, one of these is marital counselling. Marital counselling can be said to be assistance required to get married, when married, and also to maintain marriage.

Marriage can be said to be the union between a matured male and a female to become husband and wife to procreate and to meet the satisfaction of security and an enduring affection and companionship. Oniye (2016) perceived marriage to be a sacred and permanent contract which is assumed to be enacted when two people a man and a woman decide on their own accord and in the presence of at least two witnesses to exchange the formal consent to live a life of vocation of love sharing for each other for the purpose of promoting their mutual growth and welfare as partners in their journey together through life. To lead a healthy life in marriage, it is important for the spouses to be guided, advised and assisted towards getting married and also when in marriage especially in a developing nation like Nigeria.

2. Concept of Marriage

Marriage is an institution encouraged by all human organisations and religions as it even serves as criteria for getting a job or holding some positions in religious houses or work setting. Gazal (2013) and Oniye (2016) submitted that marriage is a common institution to all human societies supported by the major religions of the day i.e. Islam, Christianity and Africa traditional religion. Ifelunni and Egbochuku (2019) posits that marriage as a sacred and permanent contract which is assumed to be entered when two people (usually a man and a woman) decide of their own accord and in the presence of at least two witnesses to exchange the formal consent to live a life of a vacation of love and sharing for each, for the purpose of promoting their mutual growth and welfare as persons, in their journey together through life. Ifelunni and Egbochuku (2019) defined marriage as the union of a man and a woman who have agreed to come together to build a family for the satisfaction of psychological, physiological and social needs of man. These three aspects of marriage are geared towards the sexual survival and emotional instincts which form integrated part of nature and indeed their organisms and it takes many forms.

3. Forms of Marriage

There are different types of marriage between a man and a woman practiced in the world, these include:

1. Monogamy: This is a marriage in which an individual has only one spouse at a time. It is often referred to as one man and one woman relationship.
2. Polygamy: This is a marriage in which a person has more than one spouse at a time.
3. Polygyny: A marital relationship in which an individual has more than one wife at a time.
4. Polyandry: A marital relationship in which an individual has more than one husband at a time.
5. Endogamy: The practice of marrying within a particular group to which one belongs. For

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- example, marrying from the same tribe or religion.
6. Exogamy: The practice of marrying within a particular group to which one belongs. For example, interethnic or interreligious.
 7. Homogamy: This is the selection of mates with similarities like the individual in terms of age, race, and ethnic background, level of education, social status and religious affiliation.
 8. Heterogamy: This is the selection of mates without similarities like the individual in terms of age, race, and ethnic background, level of education, social status and religious affiliation.

4. Types of Marriage

The most common types of marriage include:

1. Traditional Marriage: This is the oldest type of marriage also called law and customary marriage. It involves a man publicly stating that he and his wife have given their daughter to be married by a particular man. As the name implies, various cultural groups have their customs and requirements.
2. Islamic Marriage (Nikkah): This form of marriage is conducted in line with Islamic injunctions. It emphasizes fulfillment of conditions such as proposal and acceptance, parental consent, marriage gift called dower giving to the bride by the groom and publicity which requires at least two matured male Muslims as witnesses during the wedding, hosting a marriage feast known as walimatunnikkah (optional).
3. Church Marriage: This takes place in a church and a minister of the gospel presides accompanied by other ministers.
4. Court marriage: It is a marriage solemnized in a recognized court of law. A certificate is given to the couple after fulfilling all the court's requirements. In Nigeria, the court normally place notice of 21 working days for anyone having genuine reason why the marriage should not be consummated.
5. Commuter Marriage: In this case, the couples are legally married but not living under the same roof. The partners see each other to interact on weekends, month ends or during holidays due to distance in where they are working.

5. Purpose of Marriage

Marriage is basically for procreation of children and companionship, other functions of marriage include:

1. To keep the family's name. Couples without male child(ren) are sometimes not regarded especially in the African setting.
2. To conform to religious norms as stated clearly in the holy Quran and bible.
3. To satisfy sexual gratification of the Id.

4. For economic or social status. Some people get married just to the opposite sex because of their family wealth, success or prospects.
5. Parental and societal pressure. Most parents pressurise their female children above 25 years and males above 30 years to get married.

Marriage as a partnership contract without an escape clause. This statement indicates that marriage is lifelong agreement between spouses. Oluwatimilehin (2021) opined that marriage is one of the three basic life decisions that one has to make. Hence, the need for marital counselling.

6. Marital Counselling

Marital counselling has been described by Oniye (2016) as the organised application of techniques or interventions which are designed to modify for the better maladjustment or maladaptive nature of human relationship of married partners. According to Akinade (2013) marital counselling is that counselling that deals with problem of selecting a marriage partner and solving problems of married life. It may involve premarital counselling and post marital counselling (divorce counselling). Harper and Harper in Gazal (2013) posited that marriage counselling is concerned with the interpersonal relationship between spouses who have problems in maintaining a satisfactory marriage.

7. Stages of Marital Counselling

Marital counselling can be categorised into two stages: premarital and marital phases.

Premarital phase is the assistance rendered to prospective spouses before they get married. The essence of premarital counselling is to prevent biological complications e.g. blood groups, genotype and some other inheritable diseases. Oniye (2016) stated that this is crucial if the offspring are to be prevented from inheriting the debilitating diseases of their parents. Premarital counselling informs potential spouses of their rights and responsibilities with regard to sexual fulfillment. It is an opportunity to learn basic social and religious injunctions with regards to marital obligations.

The second phase is marital counselling phase. Marital counselling phase is the assistance rendered by a professional counsellor to help couples maintain the services offered at premarital stage for better interaction of the couples. It is the structured use of techniques and other counselling interventions to continually help couples develop required skills to get better adjusted in marriage. The reason for this is that premarital counselling is helpful but not as effective until the reality of marriage sets in.

8. General Counselling to Couples

Oluwatimilehin (2021) explicate counselling tips for couples which include:

1. Be ready to seek clarification: Spouses should not assume their partners know what they are saying. Be very sure, and when you are not sure be simple and humble enough to ask him or her to explain further or repeat what he has said.
2. Be ready to acknowledge faults: You will do well in your communication if you recognise your mistakes. Apology strengthens lines of communication in a home.
3. Share a close relationship: The current economic situation affects some homes as husband and wife may be working in different locations which affect their communication. Couples must find time to be together as closeness increase level of communication which will certainly enhance peace.
4. Understanding each other's temperament: Ability to know each other will help to have good communication in the home. Knowing your wife or husband will help one to know how to talk, what to say and where to say

9. Techniques of Marital Counselling

Marital counselling is a professional relationship that exists between prospective spouse(s) or spouse(s) and a professional counsellor in order to help the spouse(s) acquire necessary skills needed in marriage. However there are some counselling techniques employable for marital counselling. These include:

1. Interpretation: It is a tool that can be used to help couples understand the way they are behaving or reacting to people or situation in marriage.
2. Modelling: The use of modelling technique in counselling is meant to teach couples how to behave in their marriage under certain situations and even in setting goal.
3. Assertiveness training: Assertiveness training is use to help couples demand their rights in a polite way without offending the partner. A spouse may find it difficult to speak up even when over oppressed.
4. Cognitive restructuring: Albert Ellis posited that people get into challenges due to their irrational thinking. Therefore, cognitive restructuring can be used to change irrational beliefs capable of harming the couples' marriage.
5. Clarification: This technique can be used by

the counsellor to clear areas of confusion or conflict existing among couples.

10. Goals and Purpose of Marital Counselling

Gazal (2013) and Oniye (2016) enumerated the followings as purposes of counselling couples:

1. To jettison tension and deject it from growing.
2. To help spouses appreciate worth and dignity and uniqueness of the individual as well as appreciating each other more respectably.
3. To prevent marriage from getting to be managed and also to being damaged.
4. To help spouses not to develop conflicts on issues so that they can spotlight on important things.
5. To maintain peace and harmony among spouses.
6. To help prospective couples be aware of consequences of premarital sex.

11. Conclusion

Counselling is a necessary tool in one's life especially married persons. Good marital counselling reduces the chance of marital problem. If individuals intending to marry or married are being counseled well, the chances of experiencing growth in marriage will be high.

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