

Family Center Provides Counseling On Marriage

Ordinary people do not seek outside help with their marital difficulties until they find they can no longer cope with them. In meeting such needs, marital counseling has long been an integral part of the services offered by the Catholic Family Center.

In seeking marital counseling, a person need feel inadequate or that his marriage is a complete failure. Whether a person seems to be in a "hot" or "cold" situation or whether it seems to be the result of one or more difficulties which can be cured by seeking a deeper insight into the problems and a better understanding of oneself.

Meeting Difficulties

Marriage like any other relationship, is a partnership. It is a partnership which is based on mutual respect, understanding and love. The success of a marriage depends upon the persons involved and their ability to bring themselves to a point of adjustment in marriage. It is the responsibility of each person to make the marriage a successful one.

Conflicts and misunderstandings are just as inevitable in marriage as happiness itself. But these feelings and the problems encountered are not as important to themselves as the way they are met and the meaning that is attached to them.

The average individual, unless

seriously damaged has a capacity for change and growth within the limits of his natural endowments. For such persons marital counseling can be of real value. However, this service is much more effective when both the husband and wife seek such help. But when one or the other cannot accept it, the marital difficulties can sometimes be alleviated if at least one of the partners gains a greater understanding of himself and of the other partner.

Catholic Approach

In some, what is situations where a person is unable to accept a situation can be a measure of relief and peace.

Marital counseling is provided at the Catholic Family Center in a series of individual and group sessions. The sessions are held in a comfortable and confidential atmosphere. The sessions are held in a comfortable and confidential atmosphere. The sessions are held in a comfortable and confidential atmosphere.

It is evident in the care with which the Church prepares engaged couples for the rights and duties of married life. They are required to attend a series of instructions before marriage in order to understand the obligations of their future married state.

They are urged to attend Pre-Cana Conferences, in which the spiritual, mental and

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physical aspects of marriage are discussed. (Cana Conferences are available for married people in order to help them acquire a deeper insight into the experiences of their married life and to help them maintain their relationship at its highest level in addition to

these services, the parish priest always makes himself available for individual counseling in spiritual and moral matters.

The Church recognizes that in certain social and psychological areas, its efforts should be supplemented by professional

workers with specific training and skill in these areas. However, because the Church does have a definite attitude in regard to marriage, it is solicited that persons engaged in marital counseling approach those problems in accord with Catholic principles.

Foster Care Program For Children Offers Helping Hand In Family Crisis

If you are a parent perhaps sometime in the past you have known what it means to feel hard pressed to meet your family's needs. Maybe you have been so burdened that momentarily at least, you have wished that you could be spared the trouble of having the children around. They asked for things and you could not give them to them. They wanted you to talk and explain something when your mind was miles away worrying about a sick brother or an



paid bill. But you persisted. You listened to your children's whimpering. You smiled when your heart ached. You knew this was all part of the big job of being a parent and come what may, you were going to see it through. Why? Because you loved your children and that bond between you was more important than anything else.

Some Break Down

But some parents break down in a crisis. Where you persisted, they cannot. Reluctantly but gradually, they let their children down. Not necessarily because they want to, but more often because they are blinded by the overpowering grasp of their own worries, their troubles, perhaps their selfish desires.

When you are on the outside looking in on a family, you can afford to be judgmental and quickly condemn the parent who fails in his obligations and responsibilities. However, when you get to know such parents, and hear the painful details of how their family has disintegrated and their home has broken up, you cannot help but feel pangs of guilt for the part you and society as a whole have played in the tragedy. A helping hand along the way might have relieved the burdened parent before hope slipped away and he got so depressed as to not care anymore.

Social workers are able to get to know parents, those who have been successful, those who have failed. With the latter, weaknesses are recognized, faults are faced but above all, strengths that are there are built up slowly but surely. Problems are talked over and

plans for the future discussed. It is a real relief for parents to get their worries off their shoulders, so to speak, so they are not brooding over them, so they feel someone else is sharing the load.

Even when circumstances in a home necessitate placement of the children, social workers still focus much of their attention on the parents, aiding them in every way possible to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, as the saying goes, to regain their self-confidence and start with renewed energy and a brighter outlook to take over that not-to-be-minimized task of being a good father or mother.

Private Homes

Sometimes, as part of the plan of salvaging and rehabilitating a broken home, the children are placed under foster care, either in private homes or with a group, depending on their needs. The placement may be for two months, then again perhaps for two to five years. The length of time varies according to each individual situation. Although social workers maintain regular and frequent contacts with parents, work with children before, during and even after placement occupies no small



part of the service rendered to families.

For the youngsters, the separation from the family means suffering. No matter what the reason for placement is, to them it is pain. They are being torn away from familiar surroundings and their own parents. There are no real substitutes for these elsewhere in the world. Consequently, to facilitate the adjustment of children under foster care, social workers are put to the test of exercising fully the knowledge, training and skills which they have brought to their work.

With each child who is going into foster care, the social worker first makes it a point of getting acquainted and later of talking over the new place where he will be staying, not in an adult fashion, but perhaps as they are building blocks or playing house. The child needs to be relaxed and

he cannot absorb too much new information at once. Sometimes the worker will draw pictures of the foster home or maybe take the child there for a visit. The parents participate in the planning as much as possible and as a rule, endeavor to go with their child on the day he is transferred to the new home. Usually the child likes to take along a picture or two, or perhaps a battered, but much loved toy.

During the period that the child is in the foster home, the social worker serves as a link for him between those in his own home and those in the foster home. She is in a position to give encouraging reminders to the somewhat elusive or forgetful parent. She has to help arrange convenient visiting hours, so that the father and mother will feel free to go to see their child and at the same time, not infringe on the activities of the foster family.

Child Problems

Often, a foster parent will run up against both big and little problems in caring for a child. The social worker needs to talk these matters over fully so as to get a clear picture of the situation and to help the foster parent, perhaps by interpreting some of the reasons why the child is behaving as he is, in pointing out factors that have been overlooked, or again, in working out a new approach in disciplinary measures.

Then there is the child with the lost parents, the ones who have thrown up their hands to parenthood and no longer want any part of their offspring. These parents have to be explained and understood for what they are, so the child can continue on his own instead of blindly hoping against hope the rest of his life that some day the parents will have a change of heart. In these instances, the social worker becomes a rather important figure in the life of the child. She is the one to remember his birthday, to visit him frequently, and to listen to him talk about the everyday things that mean so much when growing up.

Always, the social worker has to look to the future, to what will be the permanent plan for each child's care. Happily for the majority, this means going home. Even after this takes place, the social worker continues her contact until she is certain that the child has satisfactorily readjusted to his own home again.

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