



Prepare Enrich Newsletter – Spring 2009

Highlights

**Regional Prepare Enrich events - 80 delegates attend
Couple check up in Marriage Week National Launch
5th National Relationship Education Conference**

Regional Prepare Enrich events – Working for Marriage

Two events were held in January, the Southern event in Wimbledon and the Northern event in Sheffield. This year the input was widened and included a number of speakers. The first was Dave Percival reflecting on “Marriage today”. Dave is the creator of the 2-in-2-1 marriage website - the largest dedicated to marriage in the world. Alister and Christine Mort who run Intimate Life Ministries then provided insight into “Relationship Dynamics”. The third strand was an update on Prepare/Enrich activity and research led by John Deagle. Feedback from the sessions has been good, with different attendees appreciating the range of contributions. The presentations are available by request, and a summary of each of the sessions is below.

Marriage today – Dave Percival

Dave set out a picture of Marriage over the last decade, highlighting the shift from a focus on marriage to relationships, the concentration on children, and the professionalisation of childcare. Against this background it is encouraging that:

- 85% of people still aspire to marriage
- 65% of marriages still last a lifetime
- The divorce rates have not altered in the last 20 years, despite the widely held view that marriage is becoming less ‘successful’
- The key issues are that marriage rates are reducing, and that unmarried families have a high breakdown rate

Relationship dynamics – Alister and Christine Mort

Alister and Christine highlighted that relationships are the answer to aloneness. Within relationships it’s possible to address unproductive behaviours, faulty thinking, and resultant painful feelings. On the positive side, there are enormous benefits to recognising and meeting relational and intimacy needs, through healthy thinking and behaviours.

Prepare/Enrich update – John Deagle

This section looked at the 2008 survey of marital strengths carried out by Prepare/Enrich in the US. This identified the main discriminating factors between happy and unhappy couples and therefore highlights areas for couples to work on.

(see http://www.prepare-enrich.com/files/2008_National_Survey.pdf)

Prepare Enrich have also summarised recent research on cohabitation, which is much more prevalent in the UK than in the US, and identified major flaw lines in commitment and decision making.

(see <http://www.prepare-enrich.com/files/Research/overviewcohab.pdf>)

Finally the Couple Checkup was introduced (see below).

Couple Checkup

This fully online version of the inventories has now been launched and was made available at reduced price during Marriage Week.

Feedback from couples has been very good, and the checkup is a good option for attracting couples who may not access the traditional routes through churches and other support agencies.

- **Straightforward – ‘..it took a few minutes to set up and about 15 minutes to complete’**
- **Timely – ‘..we plan to do a course later, but this helped us when attending a course would be difficult’**
- **Helpful guidelines and very encouraging**
- **‘At a time of significant change it helped us sit down and discuss in a more focused way**
- **Action points – ‘..to find time for the things we enjoy doing, I’m going to join a choir again’**
- **‘It is useful to have the opportunity to discuss the report’**
- **‘We’d recommend it as a useful process, very flexible and a good use of time’**

You can find it at www.couple-checkup.co.uk

5th National Relationship Education Conference

This gathering brought together by the Relationships Foundation and 2-in-2-1 looked at the available research evidence on couple relationship education. It also provided the results of a survey of current activity and made practical proposals for building effective support. There is clearly much to be done on the research and delivery fronts, but a significant impact over the next decade could be made by achievable growth from our existing resource base. Information about the conference should be available shortly on the Relationships Foundation website below.

A copy of the recent pamphlet produced by the Relationships Foundation – ‘When Relationships Go Right/When Relationships Go Wrong’ - proving an update on the cost of relationship breakdown, and what can be done about it, is available from www.relationshipsfoundation.org

Relationship MOT at Lee Abbey

The next events at Lee Abbey, for both married and engaged couples, are on March 6-8 and December 4-6 2009. See the Prepare Enrich web site for more information.

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