



Media Release

“TRUST”, “COMMUNICATION” AND “RESPECT” ARE TOP THREE QUALITIES FOR A HEALTHY MARRIAGE

FFL poll findings reveal that on hindsight, married couples in Singapore feel that marriage preparation programmes would benefit them, and it is important to attend such programmes

Singapore, 19 March 2016 – “Trust”, “Communication” and “Respect”: These are the most important qualities for a marriage to flourish, according to 1,200 respondents in Families for Life (FFL)’s annual marriage poll conducted early this year. It was shared that majority (65%) of respondents have not attended marriage preparation programmes before, but more than half (59%) think that it is important for couples to attend marriage preparation programmes before getting married. These findings are similar to that of last year’s poll, where 57% of respondents shared the same sentiments.

These poll findings were shared at Marriage Convention 2016, a two-day interactive seminar for soon-to-weds and married couples. Themed “My Love. Our Marriage.”, about 1,500 couples or 3,000 participants strengthened their marriage through insights shared by local and overseas marriage experts. *(Please refer to Annex A for details on the Convention.)*

The FFL Marriage Poll 2016 was conducted between January and February this year to gauge attitudes towards marriage. The poll also revealed that couples face different issues at the various points of their marriage. Similar to the poll findings in 2015, the top issues are “balancing family and work” (50.2%), “keeping the spark in the marriage alive” (46.1%) and “managing finances” (44.8%). When faced with challenging issues in their marriage, the majority (88.9%) was open to seek professional help such as marriage counselling. Some also turn to informal sources of help such as family, friends, community and faith based organisations. Majority (62%) also agreed that it is important for married couples to find ways to pick up tips to improve their marriage, such as attending marriage enrichment programmes. *(Please refer to Annex B for details on the poll findings.)*

Guest of Honour Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Social and Family Development said, “Marriage is between two people who are imperfect, and yet can be perfect together. We can and should make strengthening our marriage part of our regular routine, such as through taking regular walks with our spouse. My Ministry supports Singaporeans in building strong marriages. We work closely with community partners to provide PREP (which is the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme) to help soon-to-weds and newly-weds strengthen their marriage foundations.”

Mr Ching Wei Hong, FFL Council Chairman said, “The poll findings show that couples today are seeking more platforms and resources when it comes to strengthening their family life and relationships. At FFL, we hope to continue supporting couples with relevant and



engaging family programmes that are both enriching and useful. A marriage may not always be smooth sailing but we have control over our happiness. When we respect our partners, love them, even during the most trying of times, and work together for a mutually satisfying life, a happy marriage will certainly result. Acts of love, while simple, make a world of difference in a marriage.”

FFL is working with community partners under its FAMILY 365 programme to provide a range of marriage education programmes at workplaces and community. It has a wide range of articles and resources on marriage in its website. Other key FFL events to promote strong and resilient families are the Families for Life Celebrations, Parenting Congress, and monthly picnics.

##END##

About Families for Life

Families for Life’s vision is to build strong and resilient families because that makes for stronger communities and better individual well-being.

We Listen. We listen to the issues that Singaporean families are facing.

We Explore and Promote. We bring people and organisations together to create platforms for family bonding and to engage Singaporeans in conversations about families.

We Voice. We voice out concerns that people have on family issues and continue this conversation with our partners and the community.

The Council is chaired by Ching Wei Hong, who is the Chief Operating Officer of OCBC Bank.

Visit us at www.familiesforlife.sg.



ANNEX A

MARRIAGE CONVENTION 2016

- Marriage Convention comprises a series of weekend seminars to provide couples with useful tips to enrich their marriage.
- Themed “My Love. Our Marriage.”, the keynote speaker Dr Huang Wei-Jen and local marriage experts will share insights on how couples at different stages of marriage can strengthen their relationship.
- The breakout sessions cater to couples in varying stages of their marriage. Each session will empower couples with the relevant knowledge to deal with common situations that they may encounter in a specific phase of their marital journey.

Date	19 & 20 March 2016 (Saturday & Sunday)	
Venue	Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre	
Theme	My Love. Our Marriage.	
No. of seminars	12 sessions (in 4 vernacular languages)	
	19 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 English sessions (9.30am, 2.30pm)• 1 Mandarin session (2.30pm)• 1 Tamil session (2.30pm)
	20 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 English sessions (9.30am, 2,30pm)• 1 Malay session (9.30am)• 1 Mandarin session (2.30pm)
Ticket Prices	\$12 per person/\$16 per couple	

For more details on Marriage Convention 2016, please visit:

<https://www.familiesforlife.sg/unite-at-an-event/Pages/Marriage-Convention-2016.aspx>

MC 2016 Programme Synopsis

19 March 2016 (Saturday)

9.30am – 12.30pm

- Keynote Session: **Journey to Love of a Lifetime** by Dr. Huang Wei-Jen
 - It is the deepest human yearning to have a soulmate, who will cherish us, touch the deepest part of our hearts, put us on high priority, and be there to support us in time of crisis. Yet marriage relationships in the modern world is complex and face unprecedented challenges. Through state of the art empirical research on what make or break intimate relationships, a special Asian perspective derived from integrating Eastern and Western clinical wisdom, and



years of experience specialising in treating Asian couples and families, Northwestern University's Dr. Love will explore with us the three crucial determinants that protect and strengthen our marriages. He will also share practical relationship enhancement skills as we journey towards building the Love of a Lifetime.

- English Session 1: **When Marriage Begins** by Boaz and Claire Nazar
 - A fun and interactive 3-hour talk with Q&A session, designed to be a roadmap for soon-to-weds for life after the wedding. Based on the internationally renowned, evidence-based marriage education program known as the Prevention and Relationship Education Program®, this talk focuses on key research findings on commitment, managing expectations and why fun is no laughing matter in marriage.

2.30pm – 5.30pm

- English Session 2: **When Real Love Begins** by Boaz and Claire Nazar
 - Now that you have said “I do”, what's next? Taking you through to the next level of deepening your love and increased responsibilities, this interactive 3-hour talk with Q&A session is based on the internationally renowned, evidence-based marriage education program known as the Prevention and Relationship Education Program®, focusing on deepening commitment to one another, managing expectations and how fun and forgiveness go together, like salt and pepper.
- Mandarin Session 1: **携手共创有情天** - 黄维仁博士
 - 拥有甜蜜幸福的婚姻很可能是现代人心中最梦寐以求的事。结婚时，我们心中都憧憬能与所爱的人白头偕老，共谱一支美丽的人生之曲。然而，在讲求效率，速成，充满焦虑的社会中，随着金钱、姻亲、育儿、家务分配、工作岗位上的生存竞争，以及“七年之痒”等等所带来的高度压力，现代婚姻正面临着空前的挑战。

此工作坊整合尖端婚姻实证研究之精华，从爱情深度心理与认知行为的角度，带领参加者探索原生家庭之“心理情结与深潜议题”如何影响夫妻之“沟通滤镜”与重大冲突；并经由体验性学习，教导我们如何借着“暂停”、“安全式对话”、“爱的存款”等等实用的技巧来化解冲突，增进夫妻之友情来守护婚姻与亲密，使两颗心能紧密相依，一起面对人生风浪，携手共创有情天。

- Tamil Session: **Effective Communication and Conflict Resolution** by Haja Navaz
 - This programme aims to encourage married couples to inculcate positive communication skills. Couples will also learn about the Do's and Don'ts of couple communication. The programme further aims to create awareness of the possible conflict triggers and share how to manage conflicts in a constructive way.



20 March 2016 (Sunday)

9.30am – 12.30pm

- English Session 3: **Chicken & Fish Agreements - Making Agreements to Manage Differences** by Dr. Edmund Wong and Chang Mun Lan
 - Every couple desires to have a happy and enriching marriage. In reality, unaddressed differences between them often result in strained marital relationship. Differences often arise from areas such as in the handling of in-laws relationships to balancing personal career advancement and meeting family needs, in parenting young children, from managing daily finances to building life-long marital relationships. In the workshop, each couple will receive a personal copy of the amazing Chicken and Fish Agreements book – filled with practical tips and real-life cases studies of everyday situations – to guide them in managing their differences, resolving conflicts, aligning to core family values, and, where necessary, apologising, accepting and practising “agree-to-disagree” principles. The couple will learn how to use this book and apply some of the agreements that are essential to keep their marriages strong. They will also learn how to manage their own emotions and direct their attention to resolve the real issue at hand.

- English Session 4: **Rekindle Love with Marriage Time** by T. Padmanathan and Sarojini Padmanathan
 - Couples in long time married relationship may tend to take each other for granted as most of their lifestyle routines and habits would have set in place. The aim of this session is to impart knowledge on the effective ways of continuing to build a strong marriage using the concept of marriage time. Effective use of communication channels, planning and carrying our activities together, understanding and speaking the appropriate love language are some areas that married couples could pay attention to in continuing to make their relationship stronger and more meaningful to cherish their lifetime together.

- English 5: **From Stalemate to Soulmate** by Dr. Huang Wei-Jen
 - Marriage relationships offer the best chance for us to meet deepest human needs for love and happiness, yet as couples approaching midlife after years of giving priority to career, childrearing, and fulfilling other obligations, many couples have difficulty keeping their hearts close. To resolve the stalemate from accumulation of frustrations and rekindle the passion in marriage, we much learn from depth psychology of love, attachment research as well as cognitive behavioral strategies to heal the emotional wounds beneath unresolved anger and the hardened hearts. Through didactic teaching, experiential exercises and video demonstration participants in this workshop will have opportunity to develop insights into how family of origin issues and interlocking core vulnerability trigger escalating conflict, how to develop emotional safety through empathy, effective communication and love rituals which are essential for us to live in love and transform from stalemate into soulmate.

- Malay Session: **My Love Is Not On Paper** by Mohamed Khair B Mohamed Noor and Suriati Abdullah
 - How do you remain madly in love with your spouse even after years of marriage? This question is relevant not only for those who have been married for decades.



It is also applicable to those who have just embarked on the marriage journey as well as those who are about to enter the world of marriage. That question is the thrust of the session for this year's Marriage Convention "Cinta Ku Bukan Di Atas Kertas" or "My Love Is Not On Paper." Yes, love is not on paper but lies in the hearts, minds and actions of lovers. Cinta Ku Bukan Di Atas Kertas* will therefore expose participants to content and activities that will help to accomplish the following in their marriages:

1. Rejuvenate love in their hearts to strengthen their vows in marriage
 2. Beautify their language of love to fall for each other all the time
 3. Colour their love in marriage with enriching activities
- Participants will find useful tips for the heart, mind and hands to work together in unison to fall in love again and again with their respective spouses.

2.30pm – 5.30pm

- English Session 6: **Getting Mars and Venus Down to Earth - Understanding Men & Women's Real Needs** by Simon Sim
 - Family life issues such as maintaining work-life balance, parenting challenges with growing adolescents and increasing financial needs can take a toll on couples who have been married for years. The relationship between husbands and wives may be further strained as they neglect each other's needs while choosing to focus more on their children, careers and hobbies. To strengthen spousal relationships, it is important to know that men differ largely from women, as do husbands and wives. This programme will shed light on the difference between men and women, and participants will glean insights from ideas highlighted by John Gray, the author of "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus". Knowing what these basic needs are will enable each participant to better understand each gender's expectations. This knowledge will also help participants to communicate more effectively to their spouses, loved ones and people at their workplace.
- English Session 7: **Decoding Relationship DNA and Secrets of Love** by Dr. Huang Wei-Jen
 - Love relationships offer the best chance for us to meet the deepest emotional needs, yet the modern marriages are incredibly complex and facing tremendous amount of stressors such as finance, in-law, child-rearing, division of labor, high pressure work setting as well as the threat of extra-marital affairs. This workshop is designed to help participants understand the anatomy of love, develop insights into family of origin and attachment issues, as well as how gender, personality and external factors contribute to struggles in marriages. Practical, step by step conflict management skills and relationship enhancement tools will be provided to help couples deepen intimacy and keep the flame of love burning.
- Mandarin Session 2: **Chicken & Fish Agreements - Making Agreements to Manage Differences** by Chan Hon Shek and Lai Fung Ling
 - Every couple desires to have a happy and enriching marriage. In reality, unaddressed differences between them often result in strained marital relationship. Differences often arise from areas such as in the handling of in-



laws relationships to balancing personal career advancement and meeting family needs, in parenting young children, from managing daily finances to building life-long marital relationships. In the workshop, each couple will receive a personal copy of the amazing Chicken and Fish Agreements book – filled with practical tips and real-life cases studies of everyday situations – to guide them in managing their differences, resolving conflicts, aligning to core family values, and, where necessary, apologising, accepting and practising “agree-to-disagree” principles. The couple will learn how to use this book and apply some of the agreements that are essential to keep their marriages strong. They will also learn how to manage their own emotions and direct their attention to resolve the real issue at hand.

MC 2016 Speakers’ Profile

MC 2016 Speakers	Profiles
<p>Dr. Huang Wei-Jen (Keynote speaker)</p>	<p>Dr. Huang Wei-Jen is a clinical psychologist and a faculty member at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. He is internationally-renowned for his work on couples’ therapy, relationship education, and multicultural issues.</p> <p>Dr. Huang was the 2004 United Nation International Family Conference Keynote Speaker, the 2014 Rotary International Assembly Keynote Speaker, and recently invited to serve as a Plenary Speaker for the 2016 American Psychological Association Annual Convention. He is the recipient of the 2013 AACC Diversity Award, and the 2015 Northwestern University Distinguished Service Award. He was recognized as a national leader and invited to meet President George W. Bush at the White House.</p> <p>He has trained over 20,000 Asian mental health professionals and paraprofessionals to serve over 100,000 Asian families in Asia, Europe and North America with his highly acclaimed “Journey to Intimacy: Emotional Intelligence and Personal Growth” Relationship Enhancement Program. His articles on blog.sina.com.cn/doctoroflove have attracted over 3 million viewers. His training activities can be found at Dr-Wei-Jen-Huang-Asian-Outreach-Activities.</p> <p>Generations of Northwestern students have been raving about Dr. Huang’s insightful and heartwarming lectures, affectionately referring to him as “Dr. Love.”</p>
<p>Mr Boaz and Mrs Claire Nazar (FFL Council Member)</p>	<p>Boaz & Claire Nazar are lawyers and have been married for 20 years. They have two wonderful children, Hosanna (18 years) and Elijah-John (12 years).</p> <p>Boaz and Claire have been marriage educators for the past 16 years. They currently facilitate a 12-hour intensive marital communication skills training entitled the Prevention and Relationship Education Programme (PREP®), a widely recognised programme based on the research conducted by the University of Denver.</p>



	<p>Armed with a ready supply of humorous and at times poignant anecdotes gleaned from both their legal practice and marriage education experiences, Boaz and Claire have a passion to see couples make it to the finish line and fulfill their marriage vows, "till death us do part".</p>
<p>Mr Haja Navaz</p>	<p>Haja Navaz is the Director for Sparkz Consultants Pte Ltd., a Training and Consultant Company. He variously serves as Advisor, Consultant, Trainer, Counsellor and Mediator for his company as well as other various organizations.</p> <p>As an ACTA certified trainer, Haja is conducting training and facilitation for various institutions and organisations including Singapore Civil Service College. He is recognised as a Facilitator for Family Life Education by MSF and has been involved in counselling and coaching married and marrying couples over the last 10 years. He has been conducting Marriage Preparatory Courses under Singapore Kadayanallur Muslim League, a non-profit organisation, where he has been a member and volunteer over 10 years</p> <p>Haja is also a professional Counsellor & Mediator and an Allied Member of Singapore Association for Counselling. He has been an active contributor to the society and aspire to be part of the society's positive change and progress.</p>
<p>Mr T. Padmanathan and Mrs Sarojini Padmanathan (FFL Council Member)</p>	<p>Mr. T. Padmanathan is passionate about the well-being of children and parents in the community. He was the keynote speaker at the inaugural Conference for Indian Fathers held by the Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA) in September 2012. Currently, he works with the First Defense Services as Work Control Manager.</p> <p>Mrs. V. Sarojini is a popular parenting facilitator and trainer. She is passionate about educating parents on healthy parenting skills and maintaining a happy marriage. She is currently the Director of Professional Board Administration and Director of Cell Therapy Facility at the Health Sciences Authority. She previously served as Chief Operating Officer on secondment at SINDA from 2010 to 2015 and holds a Master of Business Administration Degree with specialisation in Training and Development. She has completed the Parenting Facilitator Programme (accredited by former MCYS) and obtained the Diploma in Family Life Education, conferred by the Lee Community College.</p> <p>Mr. T. Padmanathan and Mrs. V. Sarojini, who were the Marriage Convention speakers for the last four years, are happily married with three grown up daughters.</p>
<p>Dr. Edmund Wong and Mdm Chang Mun Lan</p>	<p>Edmund is currently serving as the Senior Director of TOUCH Family Services, an award-winning non-profit organization, Edmund seeks to strengthen marriages and families by equipping and enriching individuals to stand up to the challenges of today's fast-paced society. He is passionate about helping people build healthy and strong relationships with their loved ones. He is a Family Life Ambassador with Ministry of Social</p>



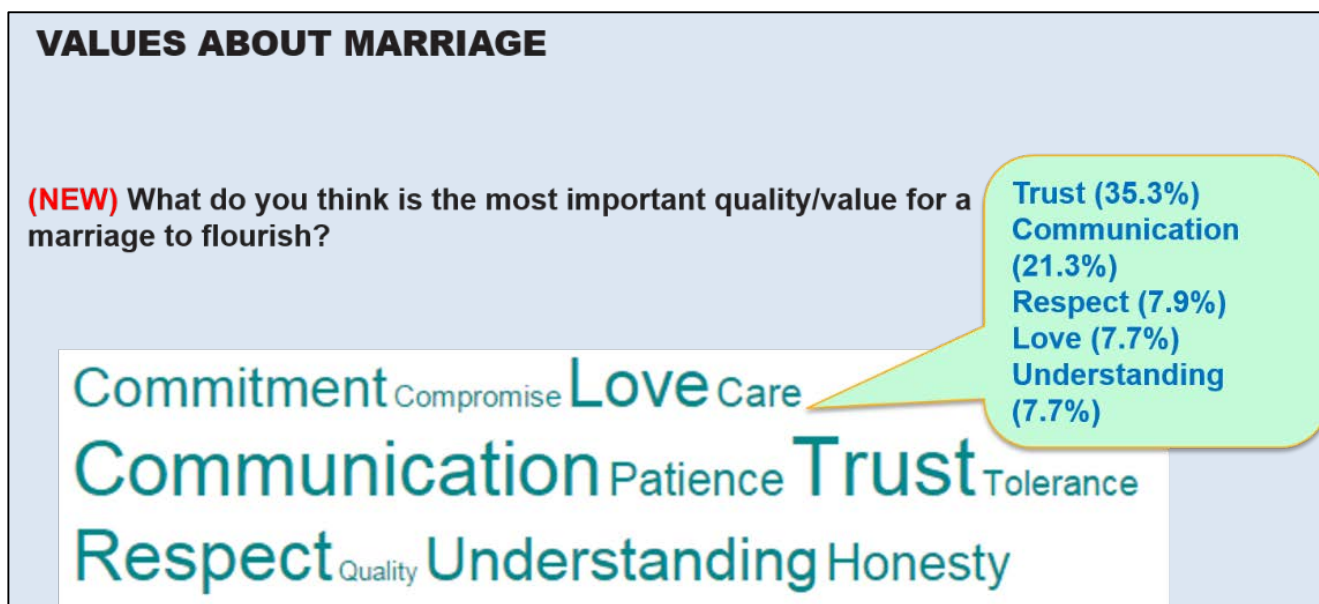
	<p>and Family Development (MSF). Edmund received his Doctorate Degree Ph.D in Computing Science, 1987, from Imperial College of Science and Technology, UK. He was also a Community Mediator with Ministry of Law from 1998 till 2006.</p> <p>Edmund and his wife, Mun Lan, a lawyer by training, have been married for 29 years. They have two grown up children. They work closely as a couple, and are passionate about building strong and resilient marriages and families. The couple has been conducting Marriage Preparation Programme since 2002, a TOUCH programme supported by MSF. Edmund and Mun Lan are both Certified Behavioural Coaches and have spoken on topics ranging from parenting to marriage enrichment.</p>
<p>Mohamed Khair B Mohamed Noor and Suriati Abdullah</p>	<p>Mohamed Khair and Suriati are a husband-and-wife team who share a passion for helping couples build a lifetime of happiness. Together, they run SuChi Success Initiatives Pte Ltd, a training and development company which helps others learn effectively to achieve success. In 1998, Mohamed Khair was appointed by MUIS to lead a team to develop a marriage preparatory course. In 2006, Mohamed Khair and Suriati developed a new marriage preparation program called Kasih Sejati which has helped thousands of marrying Muslims prepare better for their marriages. Happily married for more than 25 years and proud parents to a teenage son, Mohamed Khair and Suriati are able to reach out to couples from all walks of life with their down-to-earth examples and personal anecdotes.</p>
<p>Mr Simon Sim</p>	<p>Sim Khee Wang, also commonly known as Simon Sim, is one of the most highly sought after solemnizers in Singapore. Apart from being a solemnizer, he is currently a freelance Family Life Coach who has enthralled thousands with his brand of “edutainment” – providing humorous yet honest insights about life, love, marriage and parenting. He is also the author of the books “The Family CEO” 1 & 2. Happily married, Simon is a work-life advocate whose experience includes over 30 years in HR field as a practitioner, trainer and lecturer. He hopes to use his friendly and humorous approach to educate, prepare and empower many of the soon-to-weds the most important chapter of their lives - Marriage.</p>
<p>Chan Hon Shek and Lai Fung Ling</p>	<p>Mr Chan Hon Shek and Ms Lai Fung Ling are senior counsellors as well as instructors for the Marriage Preparation Programme with TOUCH Community Services. They conduct regular Parent Education Workshops at various Primary and Secondary Schools in Singapore and equip parents to build healthy and strong relationships with their children of different age groups and profiles. They have also conducted seminars on marriage, family life education and counselling in Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Malaysia and Singapore. Currently, they are regular guests on a counselling programme at a Singapore radio station. They have a pair of grown-up twin daughters who are actively involved in community services.</p>



Families for Life Online Marriage Poll

- 1,265 took part in the poll from 18 Jan to 2 Feb 2016.
- The majority (81.4%) is between the ages of 25-44 years old.

IEWS ON MARRIAGE





ISSUES AFFECTING MARRIAGE

2016 Marriage Poll

Overall, the top 3 challenges respondents face:

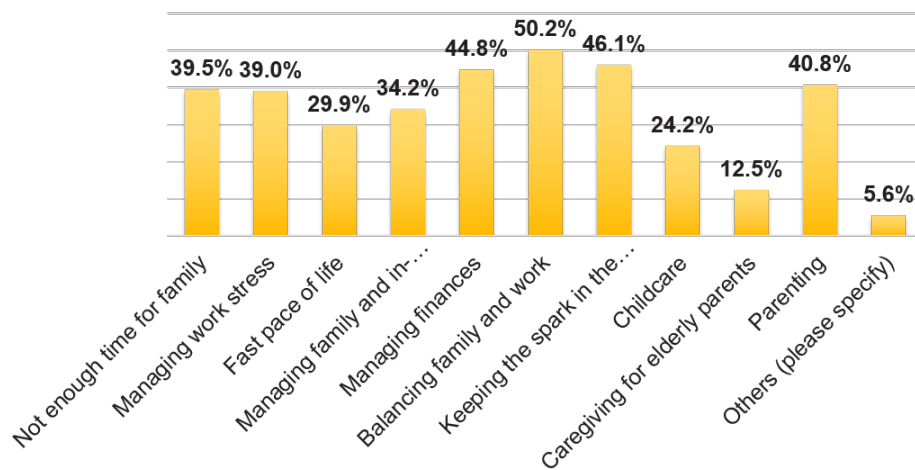
1. Balancing family and work (50.2%)
2. Keeping the spark in the marriage alive (46.1%)
3. Managing finances (44.8%)

2015 Marriage Poll

Top 3 issues:

1. Managing finances (52%)
2. Keeping the spark in the marriage alive (51%)
3. Balancing family and work (48%)

What are some challenging family or personal issues you face which affects your marriage?
You may select more than one option.





ISSUES FACED BY COUPLES ACROSS DIFFERENT YEARS OF MARRIAGE

2016 Marriage Poll
 98% of respondents agreed that married couples at different life stages have different issues/needs.

2015 Marriage Poll
 98% of respondents agree that married couples at different life stages have different issues/needs.

Years of Marriage	1	2	3
Less than 5 years	Balancing family & work	Managing work stress	Managing finances
5-9 years	Balancing family & work/ Keeping the spark in the marriage alive	Managing finances	Parenting
10-14 years	Balancing family & work	Parenting	Keeping the spark in the marriage alive
15-19 years	Balancing family & work	Managing finances	Parenting
More than 20 years	Keeping the spark in the marriage alive	Balancing family & work	Managing finances



VIEWS ON MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAMMES

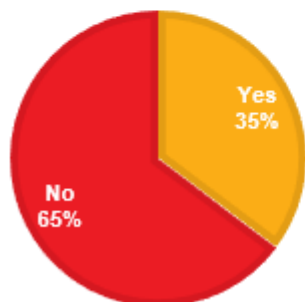
2016 Marriage Poll

While the majority (65%) of respondents have not attended marriage preparation programmes, more than half (59%) think it is important for couples to attend marriage preparation programmes before getting married.

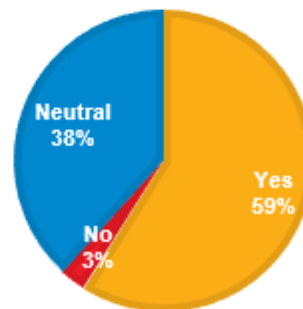
2015 Marriage Poll

While most respondents (65%) did not attend marriage preparation programmes before getting married, most of them (57%) agreed that it is important for couples to attend marriage preparation programmes before getting married.

Have you attended marriage preparation courses?



Do you think it is important for couples to attend marriage preparation programmes before getting married?





VIEWS ON MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMES

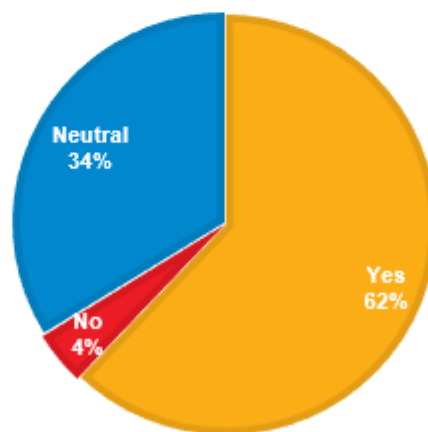
2016 Marriage Poll

Most (62%) of the respondents agree it is important for couples to continue marriage enrichment even after marriage.

2015 Marriage Poll

Majority of the respondents (73%) felt that it is important for married couples to continue to pick up tips to improve their marriage.

Do you think that it is important for married couples to continue to attend marriage enrichment programmes or find ways to pick up tips to improve their marriage, even after they get married?



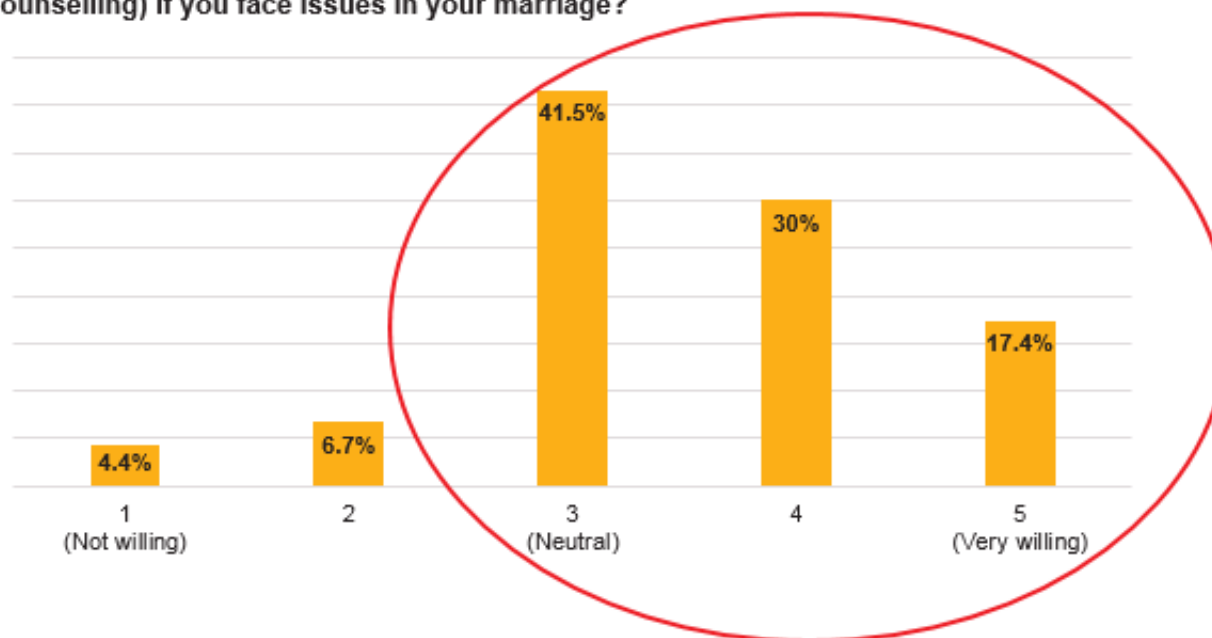


ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR MARITAL ISSUES

2016 Marriage Poll

- The majority (88.9%) were open to seeking professional help.

(NEW) On a scale of 1 to 5, how willing are you to seek professional help (e.g. marriage counselling) if you face issues in your marriage?



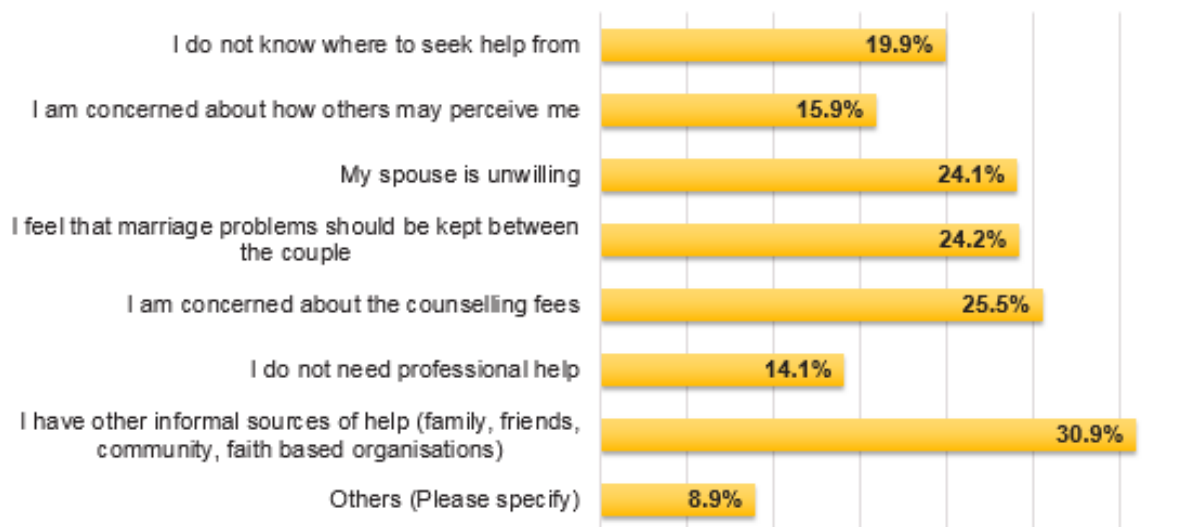


2016 Marriage Poll

Top 4 reasons respondents do not seek professional help:

- Most respondents (30.9%) have other informal sources of help for their marital issues.
- Counselling fees (25.5%) are a key consideration for most.
- 24.2% feel marriage problems should be kept between the couple.
- 24.1% state that their spouses are unwilling.

(NEW) What is/are the reason(s) for not seeking professional help? You can choose more than one option.





FAMILIES FOR LIFE MARRIAGE POLL 2016 #MYLOVEOURMARRIAGE

TOP 3 QUALITIES FOR A MARRIAGE TO FLOURISH

TRUST 
COMMUNICATION 
RESPECT 

TOP 3 ISSUES FACED BY COUPLES



65%

HAVE NOT ATTENDED
MARRIAGE PREPARATION
PROGRAMMES BEFORE.



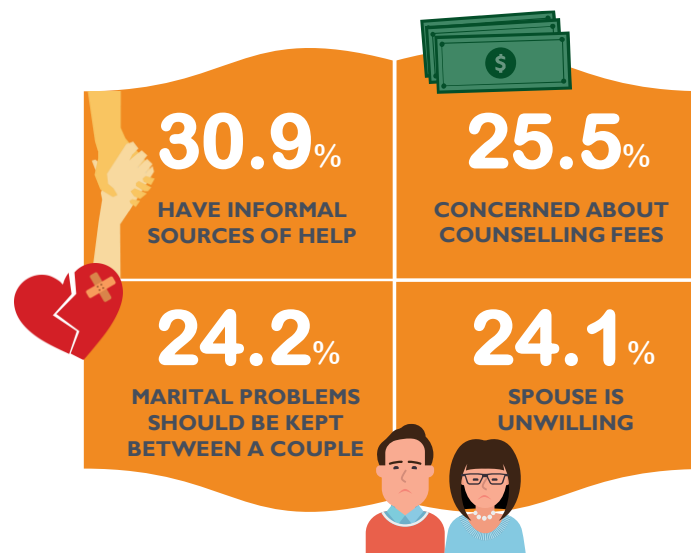
BUT

59%

THINK IT IS
IMPORTANT TO
ATTEND THESE
PROGRAMMES.

TOP 4 REASONS FOR NOT SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR MARITAL PROBLEMS

88.9% WERE OPEN TO SEEKING
PROFESSIONAL HELP.



62%

AGREE THAT IT IS
IMPORTANT FOR
COUPLES TO
**CONTINUE MARRIAGE
ENRICHMENT** EVEN AFTER
MARRIAGE.