



## HOW TO PROMOTE HEALTHY MARRIAGES

### 1. Establish a company policy to support healthy marriages and morality

Social science research shows that marriage is an important social good that benefits employers, employees and their children.<sup>1</sup> Most people value a happy marriage above satisfying work, large salaries or even good health.<sup>2</sup> Divorce disrupts workplace productivity and is harmful to the people who experience divorce, and to their children.<sup>3</sup> Most divorces involve marital infidelity, much of which arises from workplace affairs.<sup>4</sup>

Research shows that people can learn the skills necessary to build and maintain good marriages.<sup>5</sup> Even most bad marriages can become good if couples are willing to persevere.<sup>6</sup> Policies prohibiting a sexually charged workplace can have a significant impact on reducing opportunities for marital infidelity and other sexual relationships.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Maggie Gallagher, *Why Supporting Marriage Makes Business Sense* (Corporate Resource Council 2002); Linda J. Waite & Maggie Gallagher, *THE CASE FOR MARRIAGE: WHY MARRIED PEOPLE ARE HAPPIER, HEALTHIER AND BETTER OFF FINANCIALLY* 186, 203 (2000).

<sup>2</sup>Waite & Gallagher at 3, note 6.

<sup>3</sup>See *Why Promote Healthy Marriages?* annotated at [www.corporateresourcecouncil.org](http://www.corporateresourcecouncil.org), “Divorce and Single Parenthood.”

<sup>4</sup>Shirley P. Glass, Ph.D., *NOT “JUST FRIENDS”: PROTECT YOUR RELATIONSHIP FROM INFIDELITY AND HEAL THE TRAUMA OF BETRAYAL* 27-28 (2003) (“46 percent of unfaithful wives and 62 percent of unfaithful husbands in my clinical practice had an affair with someone whom they met through their work”).

<sup>5</sup>“We finally know what’s different about couples that stay happily married. . . .” [www.smartmarriages.com](http://www.smartmarriages.com) (referring to marriage education programs as “drivers education” for marriage); Scott M. Stanley, *Making a Case for Premarital Education*, 50 *Family Relations* 272, 277 (2001).

<sup>6</sup>Linda J. Waite, et al., *Does Divorce Make People Happy? Findings from a Study of Unhappy Marriages* at 12 (Institute for American Values 2002) (in a longitudinal study of unhappy spouses, 64 percent of unhappy spouses and 78 percent of very unhappy spouses who avoided divorce were happy with their marriages 5 years later; only 19 percent of unhappy spouses who divorced were happily married 5 years later) (available at [www.americanvalues.org](http://www.americanvalues.org)).

<sup>7</sup>See Jathan W. Janove, *Sexual Harassment and the Three Big Surprises*, 46 *HR Magazine* No. 11, 123, 128 (Nov. 2001) (recommending prohibition of any sexual conduct in workplace); Samuel J. Bresler, *Minimizing Workplace Sexual Harassment: A Preventive Strategy*, Society for Human Resource Management (“SHRM”) White Paper (March 1993) (recommending prohibition of physical conduct of a sexual nature, propositions or other sexual comments, sexual displays or

Employers should promote healthy marriages and sexual morality through company policies, employee benefits and employee assistance programs.

2. Establish travel policies that support healthy marriages and morality

Prohibit the use of hotel rooms or other secluded places for business meetings between 2 member of the opposite sex only. To the extent possible, prohibit business travel that involves 2 members of the opposite sex only.

As possible, allow employees who have been traveling for an extended period to take a day off upon their return to be with their families.

Permit an employee's spouse to travel with him or her, at company expense, when the cost savings of a Saturday night stay exceeds the cost of the spouse's travel.

3. Establish a policy of terminating any employee involved in sexual relations with another employee or in adultery.

Sexual affairs among co-workers lead to marital strife, decreased productivity, complaints of favoritism and even lawsuits over sexual harassment.<sup>8</sup> Employers spend millions of dollars defending or settling sexual harassment claims each year.<sup>9</sup> In addition, most divorces involve marital infidelity.<sup>10</sup> As many as 46 percent of married women and 62 percent of married men meet their affair partners at work.<sup>11</sup>

---

publications in the workplace).

<sup>8</sup>Shirley P. Glass, Ph.D., NOT "JUST FRIENDS"; SHRM Press Release, *Cupid's Arrows Sometimes Compete with Work Objectives* (Jan. 28, 1998) (1998 Workplace Romance Survey of past 5 years: 28% of romances resulted in complaints of favoritism; 24% resulted in sexual harassment claims; 24% resulted in reduced productivity by those involved in romance; 16% resulted in decreased morale of coworkers; 11% resulted in reduced productivity of coworkers), available at [www.shrm.org/press/releases/default.asp?page=980128-3.htm](http://www.shrm.org/press/releases/default.asp?page=980128-3.htm).

<sup>9</sup>Karyn-Siobhan Robinson, *Cybersex Invades the Workplace* at 5, HR News (Feb. 9, 2001) ("The misunderstanding of sexual compulsivity in the sexually charged culture and workplace is costing companies billions . . . . Every scandal, toppling of an executive, act of workplace violence and most workplace lawsuits are directly attributable to sex at work") (quoting Tim Salladay); *Angry Workers*, Treasury & Risk Management at 47 (Sept. 2001) ("Three out of five companies will be sued this year for wrongful job termination and 60% will be sued for sexual harassment"); see also HR Comply Newsletter Abstracts, *Jude Decides Major Punitive Damages Issue in Favor of EEOC in Biggest Sex Harassment Suit Since Landmark Mitsubishi Case* (Feb. 19, 2003) (discussing *EEOC v. Dial Corp.*, N. D. Ill. No. 99 C 3356).

<sup>10</sup>Psychiatrist Frank Pittman, III, M.D., Speech at Smart Marriages Conference, Crystal City, VA (July 13, 2002) (has counseled 10,000 couples, over a thousand of which have divorced; only 12 of the divorces did not involve infidelity).

<sup>11</sup>See *supra* note 4.

Employers benefit substantially from avoiding litigation as well as from any reduction in the incidence of divorce and marital strife among its employees. Therefore, employers should discourage sexual relationships among co-workers, as well as any adulterous relationship. Company policy should prohibit any sexual behavior in the workplace, including but not limited to physical touching, off-color jokes, sexual innuendos or erotic pictures, and should discipline offenders.<sup>12</sup> Sexual relationships among co-workers and adultery should be grounds for immediate termination.<sup>13</sup>

4. Include marriage education in new employee orientation and annual training

Proven pre-marital education programs significantly reduce divorce rates. Five years after going through a Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP), only 3% of the couples had divorced;<sup>14</sup> only 3.1% of couples who went through a Marriage Savers program over a 10-year period have divorced.<sup>15</sup> Numerous marriage counseling and crisis intervention programs likewise reduce divorce.<sup>16</sup>

The pamphlet, *Why Marriage Matters*, provides 21 conclusions from current social science research, including information about domestic violence, domestic partnerships, marriage and divorce.<sup>17</sup>

5. Include information about sexual promiscuity and STD's in new employee orientation and annual training

Multiple sex partners bring a significant likelihood of contracting an incurable sexually transmitted disease. As of 1999, the CDC estimated that over *65 million* Americans have an incurable sexually transmitted disease.<sup>18</sup> Fifteen million Americans become infected with one or more sexually transmitted diseases each year, half of whom contract lifelong infections.<sup>19</sup> In 1994 the costs of treating the major sexually transmitted diseases was estimated at \$17 billion.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>See *supra* note 7, SHRM White Paper.

<sup>13</sup>See Janov, *supra* note 7, at 128 (knowing boundaries may prevent employees from violating them).

<sup>14</sup>Scott M. Stanley, "Making a Case for Premarital Education," *Family Relations*, 50: 272-280, p. 277 (2001) (compared to 16 percent with no premarital education), [www.prepinc.com/store2/docs/making\\_a\\_case.pdf](http://www.prepinc.com/store2/docs/making_a_case.pdf).

<sup>15</sup>Catherine Latimer and Michael J. McManus, "How to Give Marriage Insurance to Premarital Couples," pp. 1, 4-5, [www.marriagesavers.com/Marriage%20Insurance.htm](http://www.marriagesavers.com/Marriage%20Insurance.htm).

<sup>16</sup>See resources at [www.smartmarriages.com](http://www.smartmarriages.com).

<sup>17</sup>Available at Institute for American Values, (212) 246-3942, or [www.americanvalues.org](http://www.americanvalues.org).

<sup>18</sup>CDC, *Tracking the Hidden Epidemics: Trends in STDs in the United States, 2000* at 1, available at [www.cdc.gov/nchstp/dstd/Stats\\_Trends/Trends2000.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/dstd/Stats_Trends/Trends2000.pdf) (April 6, 2001).

<sup>19</sup>CDC, *supra* note 18 at 1.

<sup>20</sup>CDC, *supra* note 18 at 5.

Condoms provide no protection against the most common, incurable sexually transmitted diseases, herpes, and human papilloma virus, which may have no symptoms.<sup>21</sup> Condoms also have a significant failure rate for pregnancy and other sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>22</sup> The only truly safe sex is in a monogamous, lifelong marriage.

Sexual promiscuity before marriage may have an impact on the marriage itself. The more sexual partners a person has prior to marriage, the more likely he or she is to be unfaithful.<sup>23</sup>

## 6. Limit employee benefits to employees, their spouses and dependent children

Offering benefits to unmarried couples encourages employees to cohabit rather than marry, communicates that employers consider cohabitation as equal to marriage, undermines the message that marriage is the most socially responsible context for raising children,<sup>24</sup> and increases the likelihood of single motherhood.<sup>25</sup>

## 7. Offer employee assistance programs that support healthy marriages

- a. Pre-marital counseling/education
- b. Marriage seminars

---

<sup>21</sup>CDC, *supra* note 18 at 4, 18, 20 (herpes and HPV incurable; may have no symptoms); *Scientific Evidence on Condom Effectiveness for Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention* at ii, Summary Report prepared by National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health, Dept. of Health & Human Services (July 20, 2001) (no clinical proof of effectiveness of condoms to reduce transmission of HPV, genital herpes, syphilis or chancroid), available at [www.niaid.nih.gov/dmid/stds/condomreport.pdf](http://www.niaid.nih.gov/dmid/stds/condomreport.pdf).

<sup>22</sup>The cause of condom failure for pregnancy is unsettled, i.e., whether condoms are mis-used or whether they are defective. But pregnancy may result as much as 14 percent of the time that condoms are used. American Life League, *Birth Control: The Flawed Condom*, available at [www.all.org/issues/se04.htm](http://www.all.org/issues/se04.htm); *Scientific Evidence*, *supra* note 21 (STDs).

<sup>23</sup>Scott Stanley, Ph.D., “Research You Can Use,” workshop at Smart Marriages Conference, Crystal City, VA (July 13, 2002); *see also* David Popenoe & Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, *Should We Live Together? What Young Adults Need to Know about Cohabitation before Marriage* at 2 (“multiple cohabiting is a strong predictor of the failure of future relationships”), available at <http://marriage.rutgers.edu/swlt2.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup>Gallagher, *supra* note 1, at 8.

<sup>25</sup>Gallagher, *supra* note 1, at 8 (*citing* Haishan Fu, *et. al.*, *Contraceptive Failure Rates: New Estimates from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth*, 31 *Family Planning Perspectives* No. 2, 56 & Table 3 (1999); Amara Bachu, *Trends in Marital Status of U.S. Women at First Birth: 1930 to 1994*, Population Division Working Paper Number 20, p. 3, Table 1, Figure 1 U.S. Bureau of the Census (March 1998)).

- c. Marital counseling
  - d. Crisis counseling
  - e. Interpersonal communication training
  - f. Financial/budget training—live within means
8. Offer incentives for pre-marital counseling
- One incentive would be to pay employees for their time invested in counseling.
9. Give increasingly valuable awards for wedding anniversaries of 5, 10, 15 years, etc.
- a. 5 years: dinner at a 5-star restaurant
  - b. 10 years: dinner at a 5-star restaurant and one night at a 5-star hotel
  - c. 15 years: all-expense paid weekend at a 5-star hotel/resort within driving distance
  - d. 20 years: all-expense paid weekend at U.S. resort of choice
  - e. 25, 30 years, etc.: all-expense paid week at resort of choice (limit of X dollars)

For further information visit our web site at [www.corporateresourcecouncil.org](http://www.corporateresourcecouncil.org), or contact us at (480) 444-0030.