Making the Case for Premarital Education

ABSTRACT
This article advances the argument that engaging in broadly applied premarital education efforts can reduce marital distress and divorce. Because of the complexity of design issues and difficulties inherent in outcome studies, researchers will reasonably continue to debate the effectiveness of premarital education regimens. Furthermore, there is a great deal more to be discovered that will guide prevention efforts in ways that will improve the effectiveness of those efforts in the future. Using a combination of rational argument and empirical findings, 4 key benefits of premarital education are discussed: (a) it can slow couples down to foster deliberation, (b) it sends a message that marriage matters, (c) it can help couples learn of options if they need help later, and (d) there is evidence that providing some couples with some types of premarital training, for example, the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP), can lower their risks for subsequent marital distress or termination.