



# Public perception of skills that enhances healthy relationship in marriage and habits that hinder healthy relationship: Implication for social work practice

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## ABSTRACT

There is an increasing rate of divorce in both developed and developing countries. This situation is often attributed to unhealthy relationship in most marriages. Marriage is a challenging relationship and sometimes, little time and effort is put into developing the relationship skills needed to maintain stable marriage and family. Developing marital and family stability is however not easily achieved as it requires commitment from both partners in the area of promoting healthy relationship skills and avoiding unhealthy relationship habits. This is a qualitative study that is based on fieldwork experience in marriage counseling. The study through In-depth Interview (IDI) explored the experience of 10 married couples who have been in a relationship for over 20 years. Findings reveal that skills such as communication skill, money management skill and the likes are the bedrock of a healthy relationship in marriage. Habits such as poor communication, infidelity, and inability to filter information gotten on social media mar healthy relationships. Social workers in both public and private family welfare agencies therefore need to be actively engaged in family counseling services. This is to promote family life education and healthy relationships that will lead to marital and family stability.

## Introduction

Globally, it is estimated that 45% of marriages will end in divorce (Ramm, Coleman, Glenn & Mansfield, 2010). Reasons for divorce are largely attributed to marital conflict. This is basically as a result of unhealthy relationship in most marriages. Apart from unhealthy relationship, many people marry the wrong person for the wrong reasons, while others enter the marriage institution with unrealistic expectation (Laver & Bradbury, 2017). Marriage is a very challenging relationship and often, little time and effort is put into developing the relationship skills needed to maintain a stable marriage and family (Obi-keguna, 2013). Marital and family stability is however not easily achieved as it requires commitment from both partners in the area of promoting healthy relationship (Lavner & Bradbury, 2017).

Healthy relationship in marriage is achieved through the development of skills. Skills such as communication skills, money management skills, social skills, sex-related skills and the likes are the bedrock of a healthy relationship in marriage (Laver & Bradbury, 2017; Williamson, Altman, Hsueh & Bradbury, 2016; Onwuasoanya, 2009). Research has also identified that being in a happy, satisfying marriage is one of the strongest factors across a range of cultures that determines life satisfaction for adults (Halford, 2011). Life satisfaction for adults in marriage is often achieved when each partner respects, trusts and strive towards managing conflict which is often inevitable in marriage. Obi-keguna (2013) explained that conflict in most relationship occurs when emotional maturity is lacking, and each partner wants to uphold personal views rather than consider views of the other partner. Also, conflict in marriage can also occurs when members of the family have different ideas or when people misunderstand themselves and

jumps to hasty conclusion. Marriage conflict are closely linked to so many things such as identity problem, gender roles, conflict in marital roles, betrayal of trust, inability to manage financial expectations, disrespect, extended family demands, infertility, unhealthy lifestyle. It has also been linked to immaturity on the part of the couple, inability on the part of the couple to settle for the list issues, faulty communication and influence of wrong models who do not even express or share the same feeling with the other persons that they are in a relationship with (Modo, 2009).

Relationship is the configuration of feeling and attitudes we have for another and the way these are expressed. Relationships do not just happen; they are created and recreated by the behaviour engaged in by participants in the interaction. Relationships are never static but always in the process of change because of what people do in the interaction. This though may be viewed as negligible in marriage, but failure to understand the importance of healthy relationship in marriage has led to marital instability, divorce, poor child development, increased depression and a host of other negative outcomes. In relationship, emotional maturity is necessary as this determines how the partners will treat each other (Obi-keguna, 2013). It therefore means that emotional openness is required in relationships which have to do with listening and being able to put the opinion of the other person into consideration during decision taking. Decision time can result in argument and disagreement. Research finding however shows that disagreement does not destroy relationships but rather failure to deal and tackle disagreements (Commerford & Hunter, 2019; Onwuasanya, 2009). A review of relevant studies revealed that relationship is always in the process of change because of what people do in the interaction process which can either result to

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conflict or promote healthy relationship (Lavner & Bradbury, 2017; Onwuasanya, 2009).

There are vast studies on healthy relationship in marriage as well as factors that destroy healthy relationship (Lavner & Bradbury, 2017; Williamson et al., 2016; Remm, Coleman, Glenn & Manfil, 2012; Walford, 2011; Onwuasanya, 2009; Sweeper & Harford, 2006). Majority of these studies were done in the field of psychology with little or no attention given to the need for social workers to be professionally involved in providing intervention skills in relationship. This paper through in-depth interview with men and women married for a period of 20 years sought to understand skills that promote healthy relationship and habits that mar the development of healthy relationship. It seeks further to disuse these skills in line with the knowledge and value of the social work practice. This is with the view to provide new knowledge on potential ways to promote family life education and promote the practice of social work. To address this therefore, the following was explored in the course of the study. (i) What are the skills that promote healthy relationship? (ii) What are the habits that mar healthy relationship? (iii) What is the implication for social work practice?

### Literature Review

Relationship breakdown is associated with detrimental impacts on both the individuals in a relationship and also the children who experience this event (Coleman & Glenn, 2009). Relationship breakdown have been found in studies to have negative consequences on family and child development (Markham & Rhoades, 2012; Halford, Markman, & Stanley, 2008). Also, Markman & Rhoades, (2012) noted that children with separated parents and those whose parents experience high levels of relationship conflicts due to family breakdown perform worse on outcomes ranging from infant development to adolescent social adjustment. These impacts are not declining given the increasing prevalence of couple relationship breakdown in the society (Gruber, 2004; Sigle-Rushton et al., 2005). Family breakdown can result to divorce or separation with sudden decision to place children in alternative childcare system. Alternative care system has been found to provide children in need of care and protection with a safe haven pending their unification back to their family of origin (Nnama-Okechukwu, Anazonwu, & Okoye, 2018). There is however concerns with the process leading to children going into alternative care system especially during family breakdown due to the long-term impact on both child and family well-being.

The well-being of every family is based on healthy relationship between the husband and wife which is seen to also impact in the healthy development of children in the family. For every healthy marriage relationship, there is need for the partners to have a very good understanding of the need of the other person with children inclusive. The well-being of children raised by single parents has long been a subject of concern as such children are on average at greater risk of living in poverty and experiencing health, academic, and behavioral problems than children growing up with married biological parents (Amato, 2005; Brown, 2004; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). This risk thus calls for the need for relationship education and social work intervention in the interest of married persons.

Healthy relationship through relationship education has been identified as the key to family well-being and effective relationship in marriage (Lavner & Bradbury, 2017; Commerford & Hunter, 2016; Igbo, Awopetu & Ekoja, 2014). According to Marka and Rhoades (2012), relationship education is efforts or programs that provide education, skills and principles that help individuals (a person not in a relationship or a person without his or her partner) and couples (both partners participating) increase their chances of having healthy and stable relationships (*p.* 169). Thus, relationship education programs have been found to be generally successful in the short term in improving the two

most commonly tested outcomes: couples' communication and couples' relationship satisfaction (Markman & Rhoades, 2012; Wadsworth & Markman, 2012). There are other factors that also increase relationship satisfaction and healthy relationships skills in marriage. For instance, relationship that is built on trust, effective communication and love improves healthy relationship. This factor according to studies promotes healthy relationship and family well-being (Ramm, Coleman, Glenn & Mansfield, 2010).

On the other hand, relationship that is built is built on distrust, poor communication and suspicion inhibit healthy relationship and family stability (Modo, 2009). Furthermore, literatures revealed that there are many factors associated with unhealthy relationship. For instance, Sweeper and Halford, (2006), noted that almost all people who separate report substantial initial difficulties in adjustment. While most separated people report that their psychological adjustment improves over time, a proportion of separated individuals show chronic adjustment problems (Amato & Booth, 1996). Other challenges and adjustment problems such as challenges of financial hardship and effective co-parenting after separation have been reported in literature (Thomas & Sawhill, 2005). Moreover, there is clear and compelling evidence that divorce and marital distress is harmful to children (Amato, 2000; Halford, Howard, & Stanley, 2008). It is necessary that married people develop healthy relationship that will not only promote their marriage but also promote children development (Okoye, 2016). Children raised by married people in a healthy relationship have been found to promote child well-being.

Ramm, Coleman, Glenn and Mansfield (2010), in their research on relationship difficulty and help seeking behavior, used secondary analysis of an existing data set. They identified several factors that contribute to difficulty in relationship as well as factors that enhances healthy relationships. The main factors that contributes to difficulty in relationships are transition to parenthood and the challenges of raising children; finance; health and well-being; the influences of in-laws, family and friends; and infidelity. Two key underlying issues that contribute to difficult relationships are unequal balance of control in a relationship and poor communication. An increase in emotional distance between couples was sometimes the consequence of relationship difficulties. The most frequently reported factors or skills that promote healthy relationship is being in a relationship with the right person, putting work into a relationship, communicating well, and having trust in a partner.

Furthermore, Ramm et al. (2010) also aver that most valued aspects in a relationship were closeness, independence, having children, and support. Feeling close to a partner involved understanding a partner and being understood, sharing a sense of humor and laughing together, and having a friendship with a partner. Having independence from a partner is what most people appreciate in a relationship. Independence allowed people to maintain personal friendships, spend time away from their partner and further their own interests. It also included respecting a partner's individuality. Most people believed that their relationships had been strengthened by good communication, living through and sharing difficult life events, spending time together, having compatible personalities, and learning about and understanding their partner.

Onwuasonaya (2009), in a study on 'family counseling and marital stability among literate couples in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra state', found that communication skill enhances marital stability. Understanding communication needs of the other person in a relationship can help people understand the reason for entering or not entering into relationship with others. This is because interpersonal communication encourages effective communication which subsequently brings stability in a home. Money management skills also bring about healthy relationship and family stability (Onwuasonaya, 2009). Lack of adequate planning and

budgeting of family money has been found to contribute to unhealthy relationship resulting to misunderstanding and even quarrels among couples (Makinde, 2004). This is supported by the Family Centred Practice (FCP)

The Family Centred Practice (FCP) is based on handling the major difficulties encountered by contemporary families of which the individual is a member. FCP is a way of thinking about human being, in relation to their intimate and larger environment, translated into approaches to helping (Briar-Lawson, 2016). In other words, in a family centred practice, the family is the center of the field of action and the unit of interest. This does not mean that the individual is not important, rather it means that humans (individuals) are heard and understood in the context of the intimate and powerful human system to which they belong (i.e. the family). In family centred practice, the social worker is concerned with the person in the environment (Cleary, 2017). The professional social worker who is involved in family centred practice is required to take on a variety of roles too. Playing various roles such as counselor, enabler, mediator and the likes will help social worker provide support services such as family life education, parenting skills education, home visit etc. While playing such roles, the social worker is expected to adhere to the values of the social work practice. The ability to demonstrate competence in working with other systems that have influence on the marriage relationship is also necessary. For social workers engaged in marriage counseling through family welfare services, it is important to adhere to the knowledge, skills and values of the social work profession for visibility. Engagement in family welfare services can promote the need for family life education through constant counseling during interview sessions. Though social work in Nigeria is still a relatively young profession, efforts by various group toward making the profession visible is encouraging (Okoye, 2013)

## Method

### Study design

The study made use of qualitative research design. The design was considered appropriate because it gave the researcher the opportunity of observing the study participants in their natural environment. It was also considered appropriate due to its flexibility in data collection during marriage counseling sessions. Furthermore, the design offered the researcher the opportunity of observing small study participants over a period of time. This engagement promoted sharing of lived experience and provided social support networking opportunities for the study participants.

### Study area

The study area was Nsukka in Enugu state of Nigeria. Nsukka LGA has an area of 1,810 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 309,633 as at the 2006 census (National Population Commission, 2006). The researcher selected the study population based on field work experience on marriage counseling with couples. The study populations are married person who are living together with their partners and aged 45 years old and above. These categories of couples participated in the study after the researcher obtained permission from them having been engaged with them as a marriage counselor for some time. Those who indicated interest were recruited into the study while those that were not willing to participate in the study were excluded from the study.

### Sample size and sampling procedure

A total of 10 married persons (5 males and 5 females) were selected for the study. This number was considered appropriate by the researcher who was interested in understanding lived experiences through studying a small number of research participants through extensive and

prolonged engagement. The reason was to explore patterns in marriage relationships and develop meanings based on personal expression of study participants. The sampling process produced six married persons (3 males and 3 females) who were selected through purposive and snowball sampling method. This was to enable the researcher to interact with those who are best suited for the research. Persons who have been married for over 20 years were selected to take part in the study. This is because the researchers felt these categories of married people were knowledgeable with the research topic since they have spent some good number of years in their marriage relationship. The purpose of the study and criteria to participate in the study was explained before participants were recruited for the study. Four married people (2 females and 2 male) were also accidental selected based on personal interaction with them during marriage counseling sessions. The reason for this was to triangulate their views with the six married persons who were selected through purposive and snowball sampling method.

### Data collection

Data for this study was collected in 2017 by the researcher who is a social worker and a marriage counselor by virtue of her training in social work practice. Furthermore, the researcher who over the years have conducted marriage counseling with a good number of married persons has in recent times developed flair for providing family life education to intending couples and also married persons to promote healthy relationships in marriage. Such engagement provided quality opportunity of meeting married persons, interacting with them and learning skills that promote healthy relationships in marriage. The couples were encouraged to share their experiences based on a semi-structured interview guide that capture lived experiences. The interviewees were asked to give consent so that information generated during the interview can be shared with young persons who are either in courtship or in their early years of marriage relationship. One-on-one and group interview was conducted with study participants on different occasion.

### Data analysis

Data analysis started as early as data was collected in order to make it flexible to include views of each participant. The researcher transcribed the audio tape the same day by linking audio-record interview with field notes. A verbatim translation of the transcript from Igbo into English language was done by the researcher

## Results

### Socio-demographic characteristic of study participants

A total of ten participants (five females and five males) were involved in the study with age ranging from 42- 63 years. Majority of the participants were civil servants with just a few who noted that they are petty traders. All the study participants were married and still living with their partners. The number of children for the study participants ranged from 2-7. All the study participants had first degree in various fields.

### Infidelity as a habit that mars healthy relationship

Majority of the study participants identified infidelity as a habit that mars healthy relationships in marriage. A participant noted: *"the rate at which couples cheat is quite alarming and is one of the reasons marriages hit the rock"*. It is common to hear people say that infidelity is a deal breaker for them when it comes to relationship.

A male participant noted that he had a rough marriage that made him keep away from the opposite sex. According to the participant: *"I got married at the age of 38 years and it was a happy union between me, my wife and relations. Things turned sour after 20 years and no child and being the first son,*

*my parents were worried, my wife stated dating younger men, but she couldn't conceive. We are no longer staying together. I have another wife now".*

A female participant during the interview stated that she married a man 17 years older than herself which to her was unacceptable but there was just nothing she could do as at that time. According to the participant, she mistakenly started indulging in some kind of unhealthy relationship as she dates younger men to make up for the gap in age during the early stage of the marriage. A male participant said that he controlled his wife when he was much younger as it's a taboo for a married woman to have sex outside her marriage. According to Ugo (not real name), *"I know my background and where I was coming from, so that I don't even want such thing in my own family"*. David (not real name) stated that he is free to have affair with women but his wife cannot due to traditional belief system that prevents married women from having affairs with other men. Felix (not real name) said that he promised himself to be faithful to his wife, so infidelity is not an issue for him. Patricia (not real name) said she made a promise to remain faithful to her husband. Majority of the participants noted that though they made some mistake at the early stage of their marriage. They have been able to make amend and moved on with their lives.

### **Effective communication as skill for healthy relationship**

Some skills that came repeatedly during the interview with the study participants are effective communication, money management skill, interpersonal skills with regards to admitting one's fault and learning to request for forgiveness. As pointed out by majority of the study participants, the inability to open up and ask for forgiveness for the sins of the past and turn on a new leaf is one skill that keeps the marriage relationship afloat. Few of the participants noted that the ability to learn to say sorry and display humility was a skill that promotes health relationship for them. A female participant who all through the period of the interview displayed so much maturity in terms of response to questions and use of case studies in her marriage for illustration explained: *"My husband has a bad temper, but he has never beaten me for one single day in this marriage simply because when he is talking, I keep quit and will keep apologizing even when I know that he is wrong, and I am right"*.

Being able to communicate effectively was identified by the study participants as a veritable skill that promotes healthy relationship. For some, effective communication can be by finding time at the end of the day to talk about events of the day. For other study participants, it can be in form of calling the attention of their partners to some wrongdoing and demanding for apology. Still for other study participants, effective communication can come during the family devotional time either early in the morning or late at evening before bedtime. Such times provide the family ample opportunity to reflect and talk about things that concerns their relationship taking clues from their religious foundation and devotional book guide.

### **Children as bedrock to healthy relationship in marriage**

Many people are married because they want to have children and when they don't achieve their aim, infidelity, separation and divorce becomes imminent for the impatient ones. A study participant noted: *"The issue of infertility could come from either the man or the woman, but we live in a society where women are judge for the inability to conceive"*. It gets frustrating and most women who could no longer bear the pressure may decide to opt out. The ability to have children in any marital relationship was a factor that most study participants identified as healthy to any relationship. Most study participants were of the opinion that once a child or children are not forthcoming in any marriage, tension and unnecessary problem will start sprouting which to them is the genesis of unhealthy relationship in marriage. Hyacinth (not real name) who is the oldest among those interviewed said he was married

for 20 years without a child. *"It was a nightmare for us, and we were just having problems sometimes you cannot even explain the source of the so-called problem"*. He married a second wife and was blessed with four children. Amara (not real name) on her part said she was without a child for 16 years but was blessed with a son at their 17<sup>th</sup> years of marriage.

Patricia (not real name) said she and her husband agreed on the number of children to have. According to her, after 3 years of marriage they got what they bargained for. Ugo (not real name) said he was from a polygamous home, so he wanted only 3 children. Alanepuoji (not real name) said he has only 2 sons and he is happy with the number. David (not real name) has 6 daughters and they all are happily married. Chioma (not real name) said she isa mother of 4 boys and she is very happy with her sons. Felix (not real name) said he lost most of his children; out of seven births only 3 survived to adulthood. For these married people who have gone through some challenge periods in their marriage relationship, having children that they can call their own is so rewarding and healthy for them. Despite the early challenges in terms of not having children as and when due, many of the participants feel a sense of satisfaction even at the late arrival of children to their marriage. The study participant who were accidental selected and those that were selected through the snowball sampling method attest to the fact that having children in any marriage relationship is healthy for the survival of the relationship.

### **Management of finances**

Aside Infidelity, some participants noted that money management was a major problem that mars relationship in marriage. Some of the response gathered during interview was on the positive side in terms of their relationship with their partners as par money management. Majority of those interviewed believed that money management and lack of money are reasons many homes have been broken. One of the interviewees explained: *"Some gold diggers get married expecting too much from their partner and when they are not getting what they need, divorce happens"*. For instance, a male interviewee notes that money has not really been a problem between him and his wife because he tries the much he can to provide for the family. He stated that he budgets and give his wife money for feeding monthly. He pays for DSTV once a year and cares for other extended family members but now he is retired, he tries to maintain his standard even though not too easy. Another male participant said that he gives his wife feeding and house maintenance allowance monthly and noted that he is satisfied with the wife for being prudent with her spending and the house expenses. A male interviewee explained: *"I give my wife money when its available but when I don't have, my wife manages to feed the children"*.

A female interviewee said that she has developed long time understanding with her husband on issues concerning family upkeep. According to the female participant: *"My husband knows when I have money and when I don't have...I also know when he has money and when he doesn't have so we support each other"*. Another female interviewee Chioma (not real name) said: *"My husband is in charge of the family expenditures, but I support when the need arises, I think men should live up to their responsibility. We have serious problems with money management. Yes, we do"*. Another female interviewee explained that as a businesswoman, she does the needful in terms of providing for the basic needs of the family. Majority of the female interviewees noted that they manage the family finance as agreed with her husband. Both male and female interviewees believed money management is a big problem for couple in relationship especially when each try to handle demands and needs without consulting the other. The study participants during the interview session shared different views on money matters, while the male participants were of the view that money management especially for a woman that

is prudent helps in building a healthy relationship. Some of the female participants felt that relationship works better when both partners are straightforward and committed in running the home. A female participant noted: *"If the man earns higher and better than the woman, he should contribute more. There is need for that understanding so that one person will not feel cheated."*

#### **Social media and relationships**

It was noted during the interview by both male and female participants that though social media is good and can help build healthy relationship, it can also mar health relationship if appropriate measures are not applied on time. A female participant noted: *"I caution myself on social media, I see my friends and sibling there who are wealthy and outgoing... I know that my husband cannot afford some of those things I see on my siblings and friends. I sometime feel bad, but I quickly dismiss such feeling"*.

A male participant noted that time spent on social media takes away quality time to spend with children and other family members. This issue, according to this participant, needs to be looked into especially for younger generation: *"I mean our children, Infact I can see big problem in the future with the way our children are going with this social media thing especially this Instagram, there is so many fake lifestyles there and this is affecting marriages and relationships"*.

The study participants were divided on the impact of social media on relationship. While the male participants tend to outline the negative effect of social media on most marriages, the female participants noted that some aspect of the media is educative and enriching. For instance, a female participant noted that some of the things that have helped her marriage was learnt on social media. According to this female participant: *"I read a lot and I have learnt a lot too from social media"*. Another female participant said: *"You must trust your partner and respect your marriage vows, social media or no social media, we must learn good things and discard the bad ones"*.

The need for proper education was identified as necessary for intending couples and as one of the female participant noted: *"We can always use our own examples to shape the future for our children and others. We can share our experiences with just small intending partners in our local churches and social organization, but we can only reach a wider audience if we share on social media. So why run away from social media?"*

A male participant was so concerned with the negative effect of social media that he noted: *"We need to understand that we have our own culture as regards to marriage, why are we not promoting it? We focus more on this western culture forgetting that it is causing most problem in our marriage. The white man has not solved his own relationship problem so they cannot solve ours"*.

#### **Discussion**

Findings from the present study showed that while effective communication is a very important skill to healthy relationship in marriage, poor communication breeds suspicious and builds a wall of barrier. Once the communication gap becomes too wide, partners may begin to live in separate worlds of their own despite living under the same roof, the marriage may not survive it and divorce or conflict is likely to occur. When conflicts are not addressed on time in any relationship, it can escalate and thus lead to divorce or separation. Marital conflict and divorce have also shown to be associated with negative child outcomes including lower academic success (Frico, Muller, & Frankm, 2007), poorer psychological well-being (Sun & Li, 2002), and increased depression and anxiety (Strochschein, 2005). Given these negative outcomes of marital conflict and divorce, the need for proper education and awareness on the skills that promote healthy relationship and those that hinders healthy relationship is important to enable

couples have healthy marriage and improve communication. This has implication for social work practice.

The findings from this study showed that marriage and relationships have no specific style but is dependent on individual's decision. Decision on how to manage money and take care of basic needs can either promote healthy relationship or mar healthy relationship. This agrees with the findings of Okoye (2017) who explained that many family problems originate from insufficient financial resources, while others may originate from misunderstanding about what things money should be spent on. For instance, most Nigerian families live below the international recommended standard of \$1 (N350) per day and as a result find it difficult to have the basic three meals per day. These can lead to unnecessary tension in marriage relationship

A major finding from the present study further revealed that technological advancement through social media have both advantage and disadvantage as noted by the study participants. This was the opinion of older married persons (study participants) who felt that younger couples want to model their marriage to look like what they see in the movies oblivious of the fact that they live in a different environment. They are distracted by too many things and the various social networks and modern media. Some people hop from Facebook to WhatsApp, Instagram Badoo, BBM and all other network that expose them to too many alternatives and they begin to compare their spouse to some of the people they come across on these platforms.

This study further found that relationship is built on trust and effective communication. Most couples suffer from identity problems, conflict in marital role and immaturity in handling issues. It was also discovered that proper education on the rudiment of marriage to younger generation on how to build and maintain healthy relationships is required to make our society a better place. The finding is supported by studies that maintained that strengthening healthy marriage promotes happiness and communication (Lavner & Bradbury, 2017; Williamson et al., 2016; Onwuasanya, 2009). Social workers can therefore through family life education provide opportunity for couples to share their experiences on what promotes healthy relationship as well as what mars healthy relationships. This will provide learning and help to support families in distress. Family life education is an educational programme designed to strengthen individual and family life (Eneh, Nnama-Okechukwu, Uzuegbu, & Okoye, 2017).

#### **Conclusion**

Relationships do not just happen; they are created and recreated by the behaviour engaged in by participants in the interaction. Relationships are never static but always in the process of change because of what people do in the interaction. This though may be viewed as negligible in marriage, but failure to understand the importance of healthy relationship in marriage has led to marital instability, divorce, poor child development, increased depression and a host of other negative outcomes. Achieving healthy relationship is therefore important for family stability and child development. Social workers through counseling can help couples understand skills that promote healthy relationship and skills that hinder relationship through family life education and teaching of healthy tips on communication.

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