

***The State of California's Unions:
Marriage and Divorce in the Golden State***

Embargoed until:

October 31, 2008 – 12:01 a.m.

Commissioned by:

California Healthy Marriages Coalition



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FOREWARD

Forty years ago, California led the nation in becoming the first state to ease dissolution laws so that just one spouse could end a marriage, thus creating “no-fault” divorce. Intended to ease the burden on family courts by helping unhappy couples quickly end a seemingly unfixable relationship, the number of marriage break-ups surged, and in these forty years, millions of California’s children have found their families broken apart. **Currently, about 120,000 California couples get divorced every year.** (*Judicial Council of California*)

Divorce impacts the health, wealth and productivity of our great state. Worse, it has a lasting effect on California’s most precious commodity, our children. Over the last four decades, millions of California’s children have experienced the devastation of family breakdown. Research shows that children in a divorced home are significantly more likely to drop out of school, abuse alcohol and drugs, be involved in juvenile violence and crime, and be sexually and physically abused.

Sadly, the related social service impact on State and Federal governments of California’s broken families **conservatively costs taxpayers more than \$4.8 billion per year.** (*The Taxpayer Cost of Divorce and Unwed Childbearing, Institute for American Values*)

Divorce has wreaked unanticipated havoc on the Golden State ... on its families, its children and its institutions.

Fast forward four decades. California is attempting to lead the nation again ... **in measures that help couples create and sustain strong marriages and healthy families through Marriage Education.**

Marriage Education is a skills-based educational approach in which individuals or couples are taught research-based skills that have been shown to increase effective communication, success in resolving problems and conflicts with their spouse/partner, and skills that increase marital commitment and satisfaction.

In 2006, the nonprofit California Healthy Marriages Coalition (CHMC) was awarded the largest Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant ever given by the United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

Through the \$11.9 million dollar five-year grant, CHMC partners with a network of California faith- and community-based organizations to deliver Marriage Education and Relationship Skills classes to California’s diverse population.

CHMC commissioned *The State of California’s Unions: Marriage and Divorce in the Golden State* to (1) determine how California residents view marriage, divorce and Marriage Education; (2) gain understanding about residents’ marriage and relationships, past and present, including relationship quality and family support; and (3) examine findings by demographic variables including gender, age, income, ethnicity, political affiliation, and religious involvement.

The findings presented in this report provide many interesting and often surprising results. While there is a lot of work to do to turn around California’s divorce culture, it is clear that the majority of Californians believe in the benefits of marriage and want theirs to be a successful one—both for themselves and for their children. One of the surprising results of this survey is that about one-fifth of Californians have already experienced the benefits of Marriage Education and Relationship Skills Training classes.

This is good news for The State of California’s Unions. And, just as “Eureka” (“I have found it!”) became the motto of the ’49ers who struck it rich here more than a century and a half ago, we hope that as the word spreads about Marriage Education and Relationship Skills Training, California will be seen once again as the place where people can strike it rich through what we hope will soon become a mother lode of marriage-support resources available in our state.

Dennis Stoica, President
California Healthy Marriages Coalition

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

California Healthy Marriages Coalition commissioned *The State of California's Unions: Marriage and Divorce in the Golden State* to (1) determine how California residents view marriage, divorce and Marriage Education; (2) gain understanding about residents' marriage and relationships, past and present, including relationship quality and family support; and (3) examine findings by demographic variables including gender, age, income, ethnicity, political affiliation, and religious involvement.

The statewide telephone survey of 2,005 Californians aged 18 and older was conducted between January 4 and January 24, 2008. Residents were asked a comprehensive set of questions about their attitudes toward marriage and divorce, opinions on marriage and divorce policies, and past and present experiences with marriage, relationships and Marriage Education. The margin of error for the sample as a whole is ± 2.2 percent.¹ Key findings are presented below.

Key Findings

Californians' Views on Marriage and Divorce

- **Californians value marriage as an institution and hold traditional views regarding marriage and commitment.** More than eight-out-of-ten Californians (84 percent) believe couples who marry should make a lifelong commitment to one another, to be broken only under extreme circumstances. A total of 82 percent of Californians believe divorce is a serious national problem in the United States today and only 10 percent of all respondents believe marriage is “an old fashioned, outmoded institution.”
- **Californians believe strong marriages benefit children.** More than eight-out-of-ten Californians (84 percent) believe children should ideally be raised in a household with married parents and almost everyone (95 percent) agrees that fathers are as important as mothers for the proper development of children.
- **More than half of Californians who are not currently married believe marriage would increase their overall happiness and would improve outcomes for their current or future children.** Three-fourths of unmarried Californians (76 percent) would like to be married someday.
- **The majority of Californians believe that good marriages are built on hard work, not luck.** More than nine-out-of-ten Californians (97 percent) agree or strongly agree that most married couples have worked through good times and bad times together. When asked if they believed couples with strong marriages are “just luckier in love,” 58 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

¹ The margin of error is 2.2% at the .05 level. The margin of error is greater for some analyses, depending on how many respondents answered specific questions.

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- **Many Californians hold strict views and reasoning about divorce.** Respondents were asked if they agreed that married people should get a divorce if they: (a) could not get along; and, (b) if they no longer loved each other. More than half of all respondents reported that neither reason justified divorce (54 percent disagreed that the inability to get along was a reason for divorce, and 58 percent disagreed that falling out of love was a sufficient reason for divorce).

Marital Status and Relationship History

- **More than half (52 percent) of all adults in California are currently married.** Three-quarters of currently married Californians (75 percent) were married by a minister, clergy or priest, followed by 15 percent who were married by a justice of the peace.
- **Nearly half of all married couples in California (45 percent) have children under the age of 18 who live with them or visit regularly.**
- **Most Californians (59 percent) did not live together prior to getting married; however, there were important differences by age.** Generation X respondents, (between the ages 25 to 43), were more likely than Boomers (ages 44-62) and Builders (ages 63 and over) to report that they lived together prior to getting married. Younger respondents were also more likely to report that they believe cohabitation increases the chances for a good marriage.
- **Among those adults not married, more than one-third (35 percent) have a main romantic involvement and, of those couples, most are not living together.** Of the more than one-third of unmarried Californians who are involved in a serious relationship, 59 percent are not living with their partners.
- **Among those unmarried Californians involved in romantic relationships, 10 percent report being involved in a gay or lesbian partnership.**

Family History of Marriage and Divorce

- **More than nine-out-of-ten Californians (92 percent) reported that their biological parents were married. Of those marriages, one-fourth (24 percent) ended in divorce.**
- **Among Californians whose parents divorced, the majority (81 percent) reported that they were negatively affected to some degree by the divorce.**
- **Californians whose parents divorced were statistically more likely to report having had little involvement with their biological fathers while growing up, compared to respondents who had grown up with a married mother and father.** Less than one-third of respondents whose parents had divorced (32 percent) reported

their father being “very involved” in their upbringing, compared to 58 percent among respondents who had grown up with a married mother and father. Similarly, respondents with divorced parents were much more likely to report their fathers being “not at all involved”—21 percent compared to 4 percent among respondents who had a married mother and father.

Relationship Quality

- **A total of 87 percent of married Californians report that they are “extremely satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their relationship.** More than half of married Californians report that they frequently spend one-on-one time with their partner (53 percent) and more than three-fourths (76 percent) report that they have great conversations with their partners like good friends. More than eight-out-of-ten married Californians report that their partner frequently shows them love and affection.
- **The majority of Californians are highly committed to their marriage and want that relationship to thrive no matter what rough times they may encounter.** More than nine-out-of-ten Californians (91 percent) reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that their relationship was more important than almost anything else in their lives, and 96 percent said they wanted to stay with the marriage no matter what rough times they might encounter. When asked if they might not want to be with their current spouse in a few years, 90 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.
- **Although a small percentage of married Californians report suffering physical abuse in their relationships, 19 percent reported that their partner can be emotionally abusive when angry.** When asked if their spouse had ever become physically abusive, 87 percent reported “never.” When asked how often their partner had been emotionally or verbally abusive, 19 percent reported “sometimes” or “frequently.”
- **A total of 97 percent of married Californians expect to be married for life, and 93 percent said they would marry the same person if they had to do it all over again.** Two-thirds of married Californians have never considered their marriage at risk for divorce (67 percent), and more than three-quarters have never discussed the possibility with their spouse (77 percent).
- **Married couples reporting the greatest levels of satisfaction were also more likely to report the following:**
 - Higher levels of commitment to their partner;
 - More frequent dating;
 - The ability to talk as good friends; and,
 - Less frequent conflicts and negative interactions (including lower incidence of verbal and physical abuse).

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- **Lower-income respondents reported more difficulties in their marriages, including the incidence of violence and physical abuse, compared to other married respondents.** Nearly one-quarter of low-income respondents reported that physical violence or abuse was a “major factor” contributing to their divorce compared to 14 percent among middle income respondents and 12 percent among high-income respondents. Respondents living below median income were also more likely to report feeling trapped in their marriages. A total of 12 percent of low-income respondents reported that they felt trapped in their marriage, compared to 5 percent among other respondents.
 - **Less than half of Californians surveyed reported that they received “a lot of support” from their relatives, their faith community, their friends, or larger community in handling the challenges of marriage.** Californians receive the most support for their marriage from their own relatives, followed by their faith community.

Separation and Divorce

- **One-third of Californians (34 percent) have ever been divorced.**
- **Among those who have been divorced, 63 percent had children under the age of 18 living with them at the time.** More than two-thirds (69 percent) reported that the divorce negatively affected the children to some degree.
- **The two most common reasons for divorce are lack of commitment and lack of communication, followed by infidelity, too much arguing, and getting married too young.**
- **Looking back on their divorce, nearly two-thirds of Californians (63 percent) believe that they and/or their spouse could have worked harder to save the marriage.**

Marriage Education and Counseling

- **Just over one-third of currently married Californians (36 percent) participated in pre-marital preparation.**
- **Nearly nine out of ten respondents who had attended a pre-marital program (88 percent) found the experience helpful (“very helpful” or “somewhat helpful”) and 72 percent reported that the program strengthened their relationship.**
- **Most couples (88 percent) received pre-marital preparation from a church or faith-based organization.** Fewer than 10 percent had received pre-marital education from a counselor.

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- **A majority of respondents who are not married (65 percent) said they would attend pre-marital education classes if they were to get married and those programs were available at little or no cost.**
 - **When asked why they decided not to attend a pre-marital program, married respondents most frequently cited “no need.”** The second most frequently cited reason for not participating was lack of information about the existence and availability of such programs.
 - **One-in-five married adults surveyed (22 percent) reported that they had participated in some kind of relationship education program, not including pre-marital education.** Those who had not participated in a program were asked if they would ever consider attending a marriage enrichment workshop or a relationship skills class if it were available at little or no cost. Nearly half of those respondents indicated that they would be willing to consider such programs.
 - **Among married couples who attended relationship or Marriage Education classes, 95 percent found the classes somewhat helpful or very helpful and more than three-fourths (80 percent) reported that the experience strengthened their relationship.**
 - **The most common reason for not wanting to participate in relationship or Marriage Education programs was “no need” (64 percent) and “no interest” (39 percent).**
 - **The majority of Californians (58 percent) are not aware of any relationship, Marriage Education, or pre-marital preparation programs available in their communities.** When asked if relationship and Marriage Education programs were offered in their community, 17 percent reported “no” and 41 percent reported that they did not know.
 - **A total of 19 percent of married couples have attended one-on-one couple’s counseling.**
 - **Among those married couples who attended couple’s counseling, 87 percent found the counseling “somewhat helpful” or “very helpful” and 71 percent reported that the experience strengthened their relationship.**

Views on Social Support for Marriage

- **Californians receive the most support for their marriage from their own relatives, followed by their faith community.** Few report receiving this kind of support from their local community (14 percent).

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- **The majority of Californians believe faith-based organizations, followed by mental health centers and counselors, have the greatest responsibility to provide relationship and Marriage Education programs.**
 - **Nearly half of all Californians surveyed agreed that employers should sponsor relationship-strengthening programs for married couples, or offer benefits for employees to strengthen their marriage or relationship.**

Views on Public Policy Issues

- **Most Californians support public policies to improve relationships, strengthen marriages and reduce divorce.**
- **More than half of all Californians (58 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that state and local government should provide additional resources to help strengthen families by strengthening marriages.** When presented with options concerning specific government programs, more than eight-out-of-ten surveyed agreed that Marriage Education or counseling should be required prior to a divorce being granted.
- **The majority of Californians agree in support of teaching Relationship Skills to teenagers as part of their high school education, promoting and incentivizing couples to receive Marriage Preparation, and giving couples a last ditch opportunity to improve their relationship (through Marriage Education or couples counseling) before getting a divorce.**

INTRODUCTION

*What condition are California's marriages in and how did they get to that state?
Are Californians concerned about divorce and if so, what do they think should be done about it?
How do non-married residents view marriage and do they want it to be a part of their future?*

As an organization committed to improve the quality of marriages and reduce divorce in the Golden State, the California Healthy Marriages Coalition wanted to know Californians' answers to these question and more.

Our search of databases came up with very few results. We found marital status information through the Census. We found some survey results about opinions on marriage. But, there wasn't much out there. Even trying to find a central database of the annual numbers on divorces in California was a challenge. And no one seemed to know where the collective totals of marriage licenses are kept.

As a result, the California Healthy Marriages Coalition (CHMC) decided to commission *The State of California's Unions: Marriage and Divorce in the Golden State*.

CHMC is a coalition of coalitions that began its marriage-strengthening work in 2005 through a \$583,000 Compassion Capital Fund Targeted Capacity-Building Intermediary Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (HHS/ACF). In 2006, HHS/ACF awarded CHMC with the largest Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant (HMDG), receiving \$2.4 million per year for five years for consciousness-raising about Healthy Marriages skills and increasing access to these skills for couples and individuals around the state.

Through this funding, CHMC partners with a network of dozens of faith- and community-based organizations (FBCOs) throughout California. Each of CHMC's partnering organizations is a coalition consisting of many other organizations through which they deliver Marriage Education and Relationship Skills classes to couples and individuals.

CHMC is reaching California's diverse population by traversing the key demographic dimensions of geography, ethnic/cultural differences, and agency-type.

During the first two years of the HMDG project, CHMC and our partners throughout California have directly served 21,494 Californians in 223,348 hours of Marriage Education and Relationship Skills classes taught in English, Spanish, Korean, as well as a variety of other languages. In addition to this, numerous other classes are listed on CHMC's statewide clearinghouse at www.CaMarriage.com. As we build upon this base, CHMC envisions bringing these relationship skills into the mainstream of our culture so that all Californians are equipped to build happy and healthy families.

The State of California's Unions will help CHMC establish a baseline for its Marriage Education work and (1) determine how California residents view marriage, divorce and Marriage Education; (2) gain understanding on residents' marriage and relationship past and present, including relationship quality and family support; and (3) examine findings by demographic

variables including gender, age, income, ethnicity, political affiliation, and religious involvement.

The State of California's Unions is organized in the following sections:

- Californians' Views on Marriage and Divorce
- The Health of Marriage in California
- Separation and Divorce
- Marriage Education and Counseling
- Views on Social Support for Marriage
- Views on Public Policy Issues

At the end of the report, CHMC has listed recommendations to further strengthen California's unions, improve marriages and decrease divorce in the Golden State.

The health and quality of marriages affects us all! A healthy marriage improves our physical and emotional health, our pocketbook, our sex lives, and our children's well-being.

Unhealthy relationships and divorce negatively impact our schools, our communities, our businesses, our economy, our social services, our justice system and our children.

What can you do to help strengthen marriages and reduce divorce?

Special Thanks

The State of California's Unions: Marriage and Divorce in the Golden State is the published results of the statewide telephone survey of 2,005 Californians age 18 and older conducted by Interviewing Services of America between January 4 and January 24, 2008. The questionnaire was drafted and results analyzed by Gomez Research with consultation from Wilson Research Consulting. Special thanks to the following people and organizations for their input to the project: Scott Stanley, Norval Glenn, Theodora Ooms, Steven Nock, Benjamin Karney, Maggie Gallagher, David Blankenhorn, Diane Sollee, the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative and the National Fatherhood Initiative.

The survey instrument included questions adapted from other marriage studies, most notably the *Oklahoma Marriage Initiative Statewide Baseline Survey* (2001), the *Utah Baseline Statewide Survey on Marriage* (2003), and *With This Ring: A National Survey on Marriage in America* (2004). For a complete list of sources, please see **Appendix B**.

2. CALIFORNIANS' VIEWS ON MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

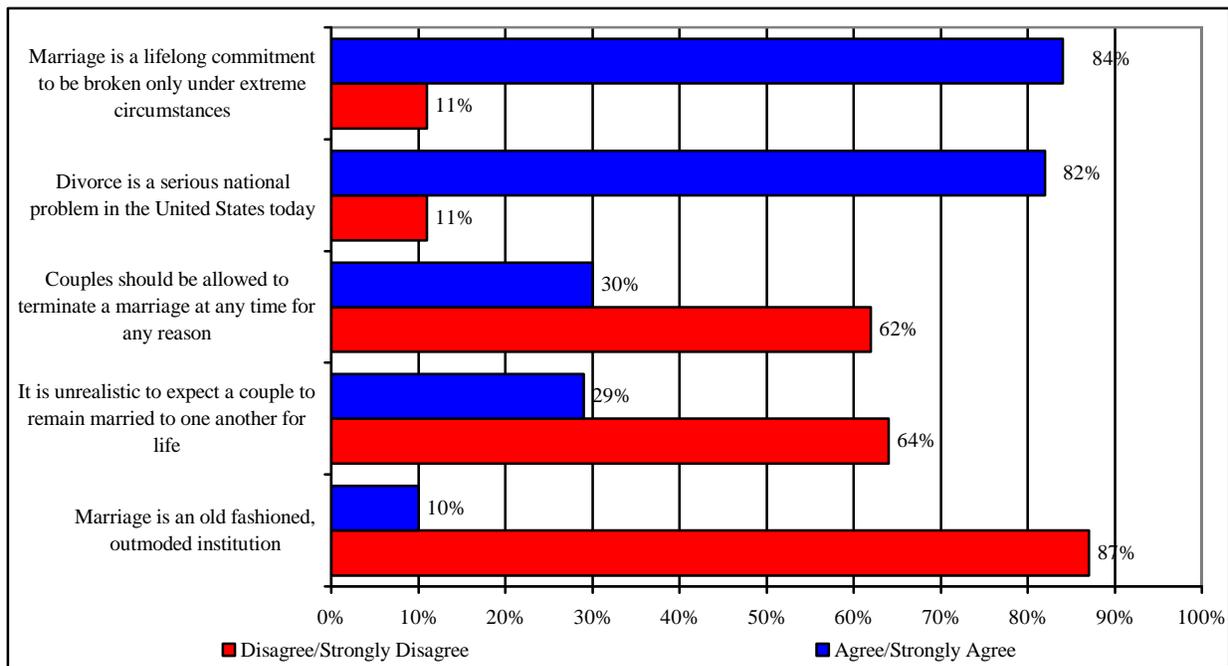
A key objective of the study was to determine how Californians view marriage as an institution, under what circumstances they support divorce, and how their actions may or may not be consistent with their beliefs. Respondents were presented with a series of statements about marriage, some positive and some negative, and were asked the extent to which they agreed with each statement.

Californians value marriage and hold traditional views regarding marriage and commitment.

Findings suggest that Californians value marriage and hold traditional views of marriage, including the belief that marriage is a lifetime commitment and is important for themselves and children.

Most Californians support divorce only under extreme circumstances. Fewer than one-third of Californians believe couples should be allowed to terminate a marriage at any time for any reason. Only 10 percent of all respondents agreed that “marriage is an old-fashioned, outmoded institution.” Results are presented in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Californians' Opinions on Marriage and Divorce, 2008

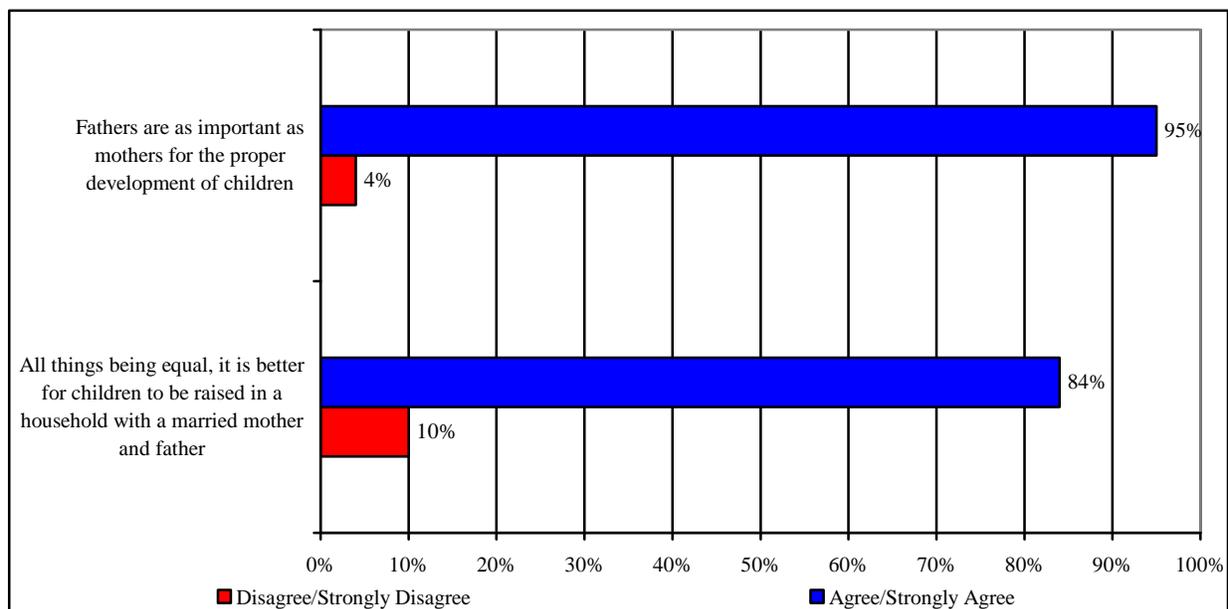


*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” The proportion of respondents who reported that they “neither agreed nor disagreed” with each statement is not presented. As a result, percentages do not total 100%.

Californians believe strong marriages benefit children.

In addition to general questions regarding their views of marriage, survey respondents were asked whether they thought it was better for children to be raised in a household with a married mother and father, and whether they believed fathers are as important as mothers in the raising of children. Results are presented in **Figure 2**. More than eight-out-of-ten Californians believe that children should ideally be raised in a household with married parents (84 percent) and 95 percent agreed that fathers are as important as mothers for the proper development of children.

Figure 2: Californians' Opinions Regarding the Importance of Marriage for Children, 2008



*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” The proportion of respondents who reported that they “neither agreed nor disagreed” with each statement is not presented. As a result, percentages do not total 100%.

More than half of Californians who are not currently married believe marriage would increase their overall happiness and would improve outcomes for their children.

Unmarried respondents were asked how their lives might be different if they were married. Specifically, respondents were asked to rate how marriage would affect their overall happiness, their children’s well-being, their sex life, their status as a couple, and their financial security. As seen in **Table 1**, more than half of unmarried Californians believe marriage would improve their lives in all these areas, with the exception of financial security. Respondents were divided over whether marriage would benefit them financially.

When asked if they would like to be married someday, three-quarters of unmarried Californians answered “yes” (76 percent). Only 14 percent said they were not interested in marriage and 9 percent said they were unsure.

**Table 1: Perceived Advantages of Marriage
Unmarried Adults in California, 2008**

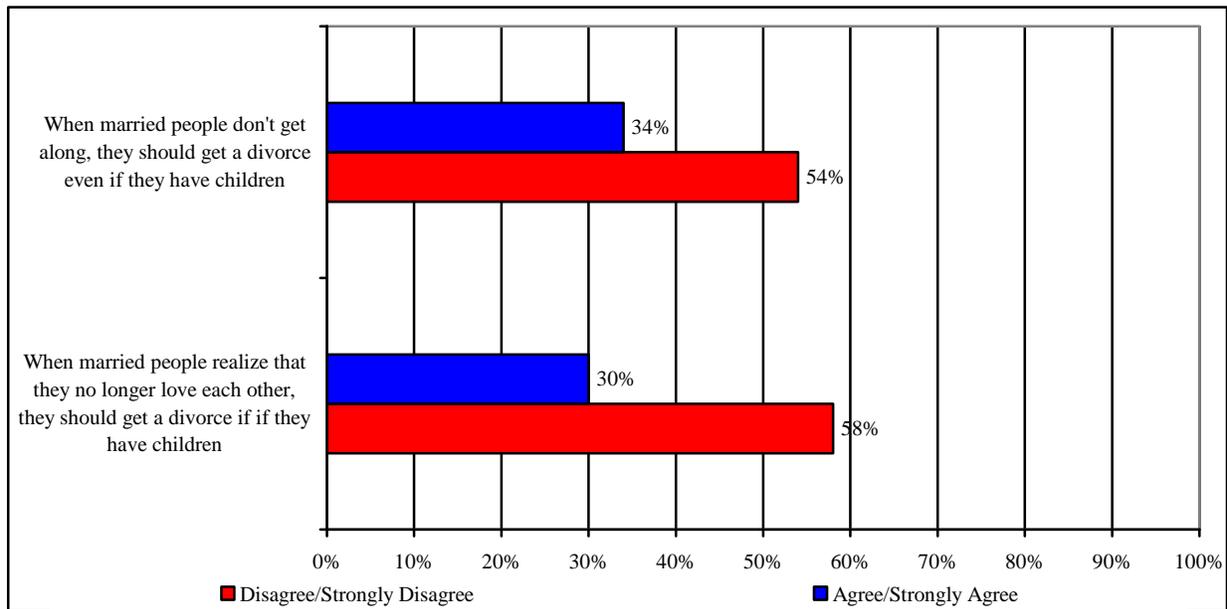
Statement	Better	The Same	Worse
If you were married, do you think your overall happiness would be ...	56%	35%	9%
Your children's well-being, either future children or current children?	55	40	5
Your sex life?	57	36	7
How others view you as a couple?	51	45	5
Your financial security?	45	45	10

*Base excludes respondents who answered "don't know/refused." Proportions may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Many Californians hold strict views and reasoning about divorce.

Respondents were asked if they agreed that married people should get a divorce if they: (a) could not get along; and, (b) if they no longer loved each other. Results are presented in **Figure 3**. More than half of all respondents reported that neither reason justified divorce (54 percent disagreed that the inability to get along was a reason for divorce, and 58 percent disagreed that falling out of love was a reason for divorce).

Figure 3: Californians' Views Regarding Reasons for Divorce, 2008

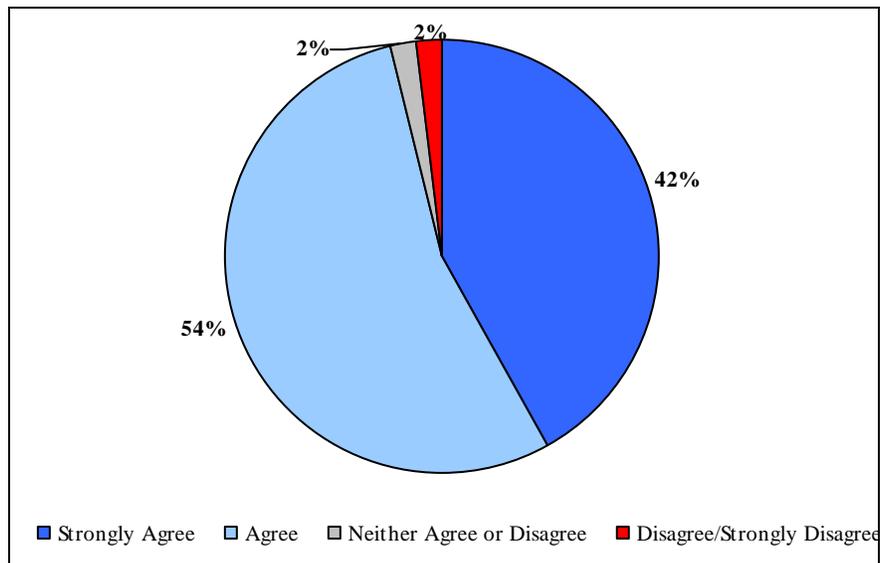


*Base excludes respondents who answered "don't know/refused." The proportion of respondents who reported that they "neither agreed nor disagreed" with each statement is not presented. As a result, percentages do not total 100%.

The majority of Californians believe that good marriages are built on hard work, not luck.

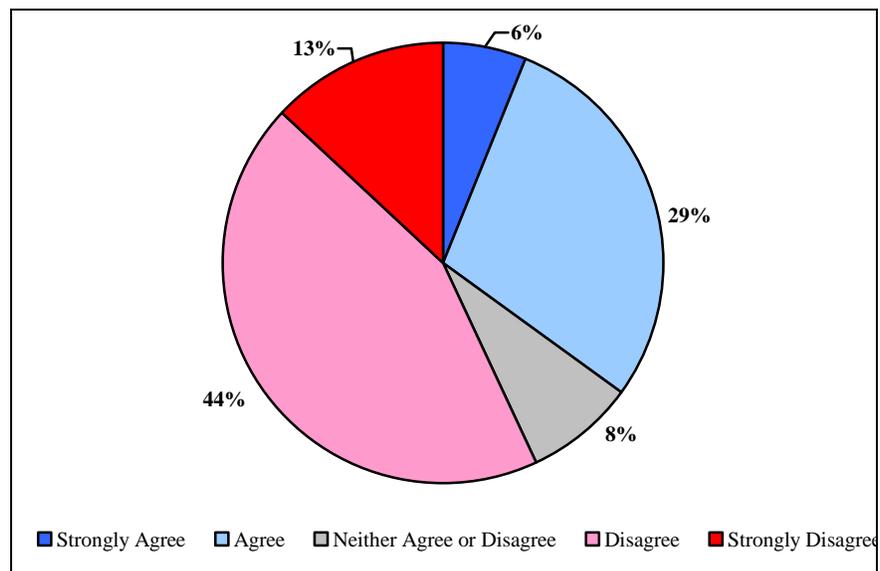
Respondents were presented with a series of statements regarding why marriages succeed or fail and were asked the extent to which they agreed with each statement. Results are presented in **Figures 4** and **5**. More than nine-out-of-ten Californians (96 percent) agree or strongly agree that most married couples have worked through good times and bad times together. When asked if they believed couples with strong marriages are “just luckier in love,” 58 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, as seen in **Figure 5**.

Figure 4: Proportion of Californians Who Believe Most Married Couples Have Worked Through Bad Times Together, 2008



*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

Figure 5: Proportion of Californians Who Believe Couples with Strong Marriages are “Just Luckier in Love,” 2008

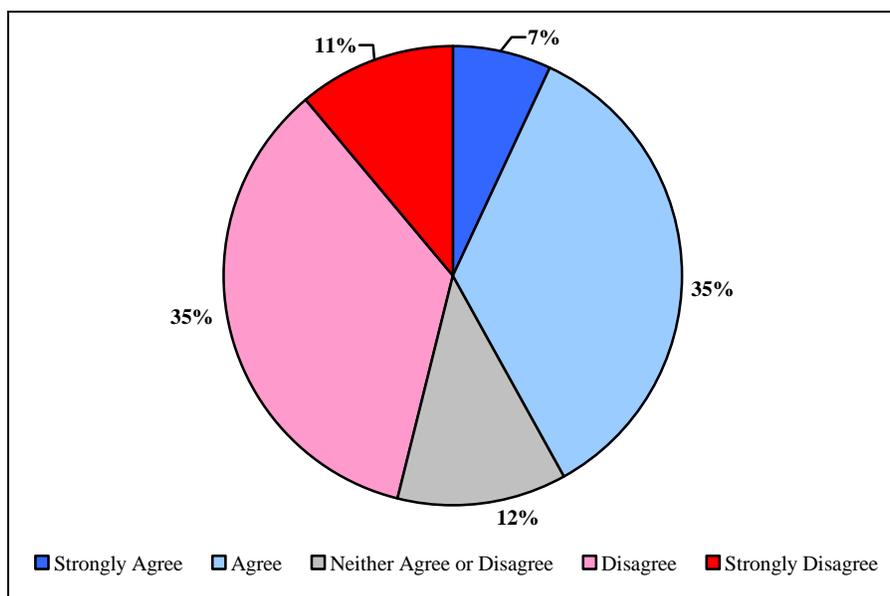


*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

Californians were split on whether or not living together prior to marriage improves the chances for a healthy marriage.

When asked if they believed living with a partner prior to marriage improves the chances of a good marriage, 42 percent of respondents agreed and 46 percent disagreed. Few respondents “strongly agreed” or “strongly disagreed,” indicating that most Californians do not have strong feelings about the impact of cohabitation on the eventual success of marriages. Results are presented in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6: Proportion of Californians Who Believe Cohabitation Leads to Healthy Marriages, 2008



*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

3. THE HEALTH OF MARRIAGE IN CALIFORNIA

While Californians value marriage for themselves and their children, findings suggest that for a variety of reasons, many marriages end in divorce. The following section presents a profile of marriage, divorce and relationship history among California residents, followed by data on couples’ relationship quality and the factors associated with stronger relationships.

3a. Marital Status and Relationship History

More than half of all adults in California are currently married.

The current marital status of California adults is presented in **Table 2**. A total of 52 percent of Californian adults are married and 14 percent are separated or divorced. Less than one-quarter of all Californian adults have never been married, 10 percent are widowed, and 1 percent are currently in a legal domestic partnership.

**Table 2: Current Marital Status
California Adults, 2008**

Marital Status	Percent
Married	52%
Never been married	22
Divorced	12
Widowed	10
Separated	2
Legal domestic partnership	1

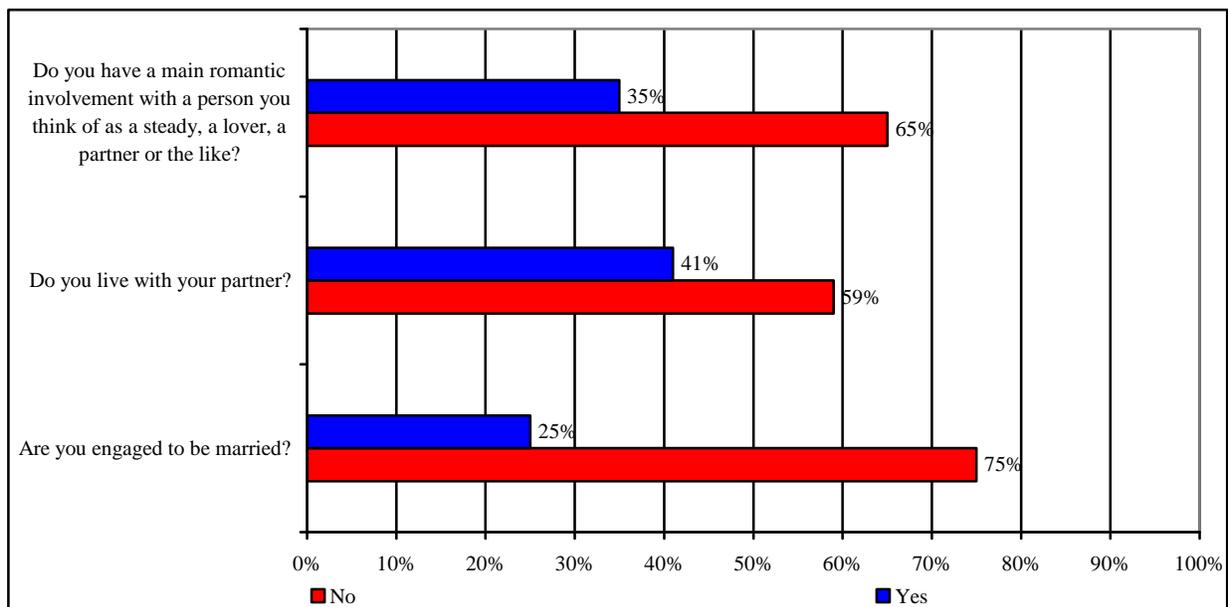
*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” Proportions may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Among those not married, more than one-third (35 percent) have a main romantic involvement and, of those, most are not cohabitating.

Unmarried respondents were asked if they were involved in a romantic relationship. Those involved in a relationship were asked if they were living with their partner and whether they were engaged to be married. Results are presented in **Figure 7**.

Of the more than one-third of Californians who are involved in a serious relationship, 59 percent are not living with their partners. A total of 25 percent of non-married adults currently in relationships are engaged to be married. Of those unmarried Californians involved in romantic relationships, 10 percent are involved in a gay or lesbian partnership.

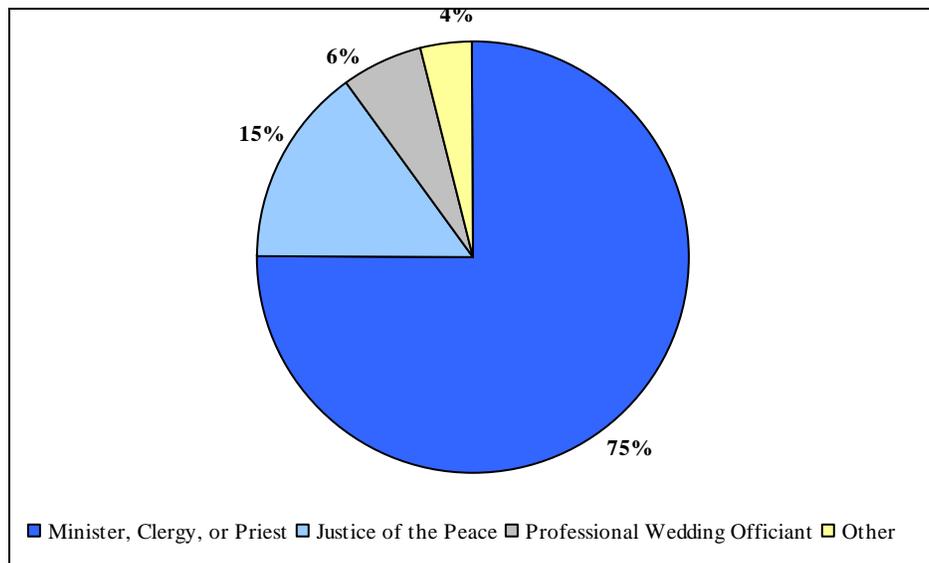
**Figure 7: Current Relationship Status
Unmarried Adults in California, 2008**



*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

Married respondents were also asked who officiated at their wedding. As seen in **Figure 8**, three-quarters of all married Californians (75 percent) were married by a minister, clergy or priest, followed by 15 percent who were married by a justice of the peace.

**Figure 8: Type of Marriage Ceremony
Married Adults in California, 2008**



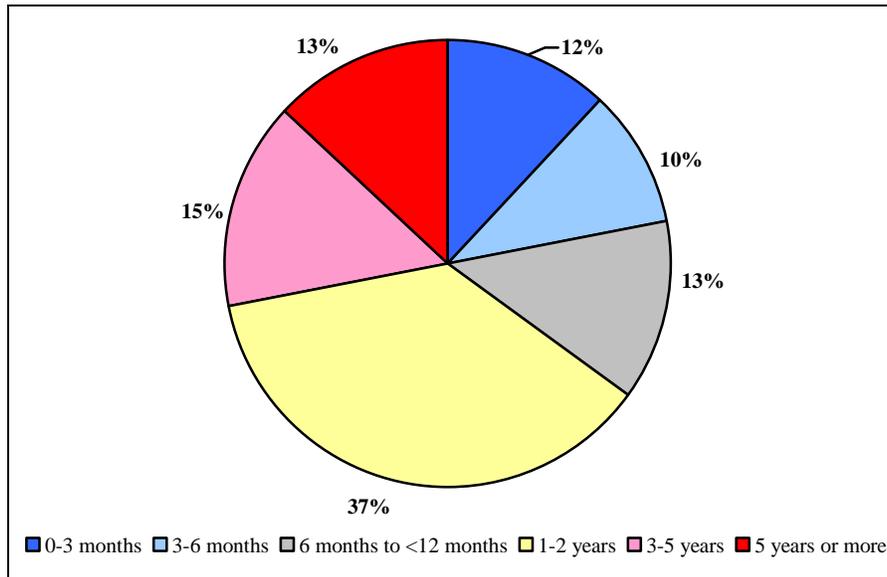
*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

The majority of married Californians did not live together prior to getting married.

The study examined patterns of cohabitation prior to marriage, as well as how long couples had lived together before getting married. Results are presented in **Figures 9** and **10**.

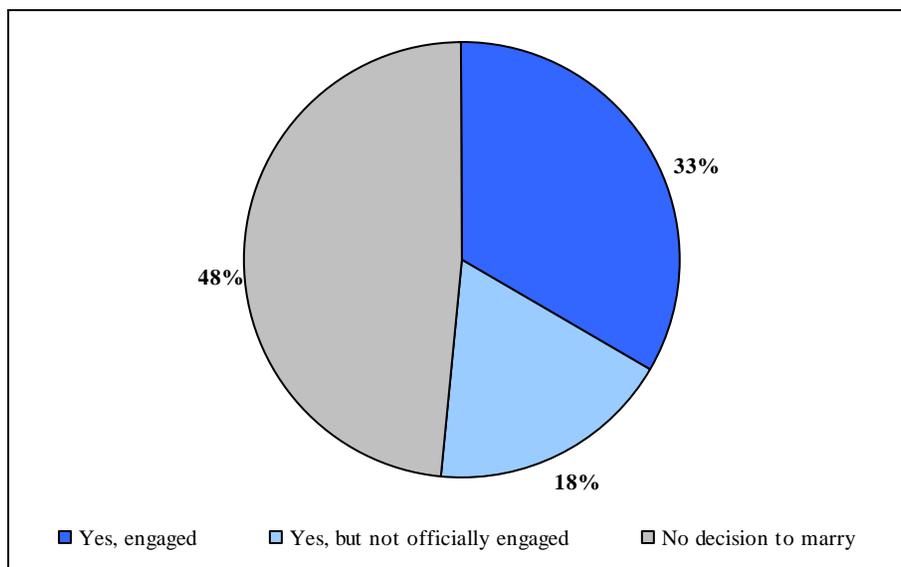
The majority of married Californians (59 percent) did not live together prior to getting married and those who did, lived together for less than two years. Approximately half of the couples who lived together prior to marriage (51 percent) did so with the intent to marry, and one-third (33 percent) were officially engaged.

**Figure 9: Length of Time Lived Together Prior to Marriage
Married Adults in California, 2008**



*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

**Figure 10: Intent to Marry When Started Living Together
Married Adults in California, 2008**



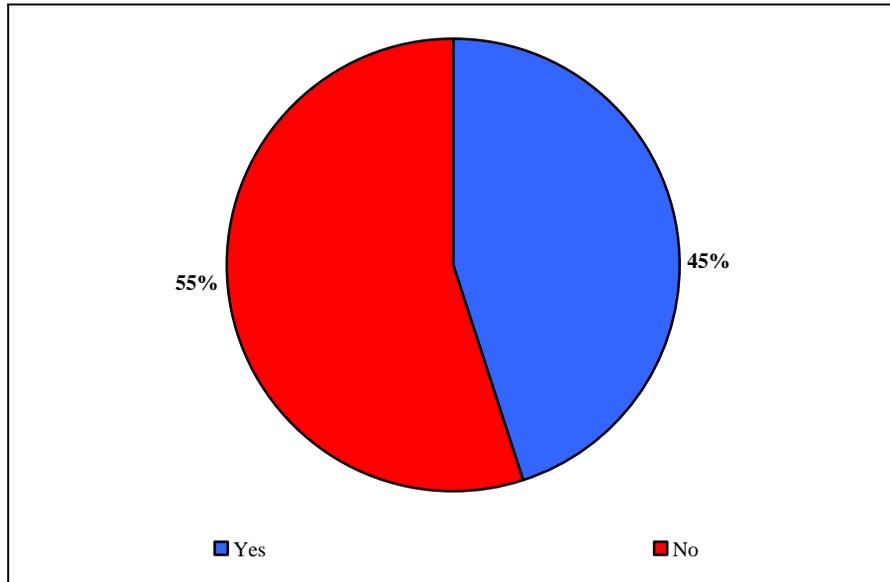
*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

Nearly half of all married couples in California (45 percent) have children under the age of 18 who live with them or visit regularly.

To gain a better understanding for family composition, married couples were asked if they had children under the age of 18, including adopted children. Nearly half of all married couples in California (45 percent) have children under the age of 18 who live with them or visit regularly (45 percent). More than three-fourths of those families (78 percent) do not include children from

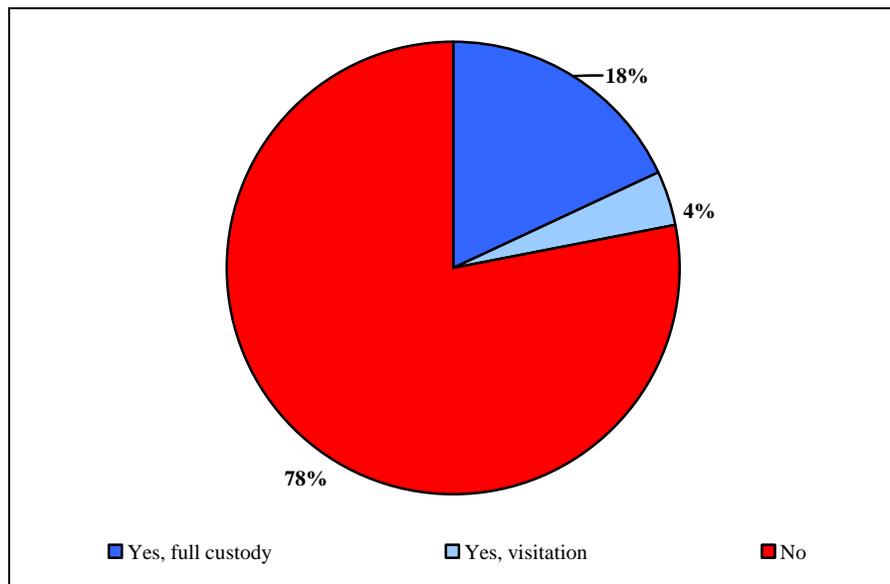
a previous marriage or relationship. A total of 18 percent of respondents with children from a previous marriage or relationship have full custody of those children, and 4 percent have regular visitation. Results are presented in **Figures 11** and **12**.

**Figure 11: Presence of Children in the Household
Married Adults in California, 2008**



*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

**Figure 12: Step Family Composition Among
Married Adults in California with Children from Prior Relationship, 2008**



*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

3b. Family History of Marriage and Divorce

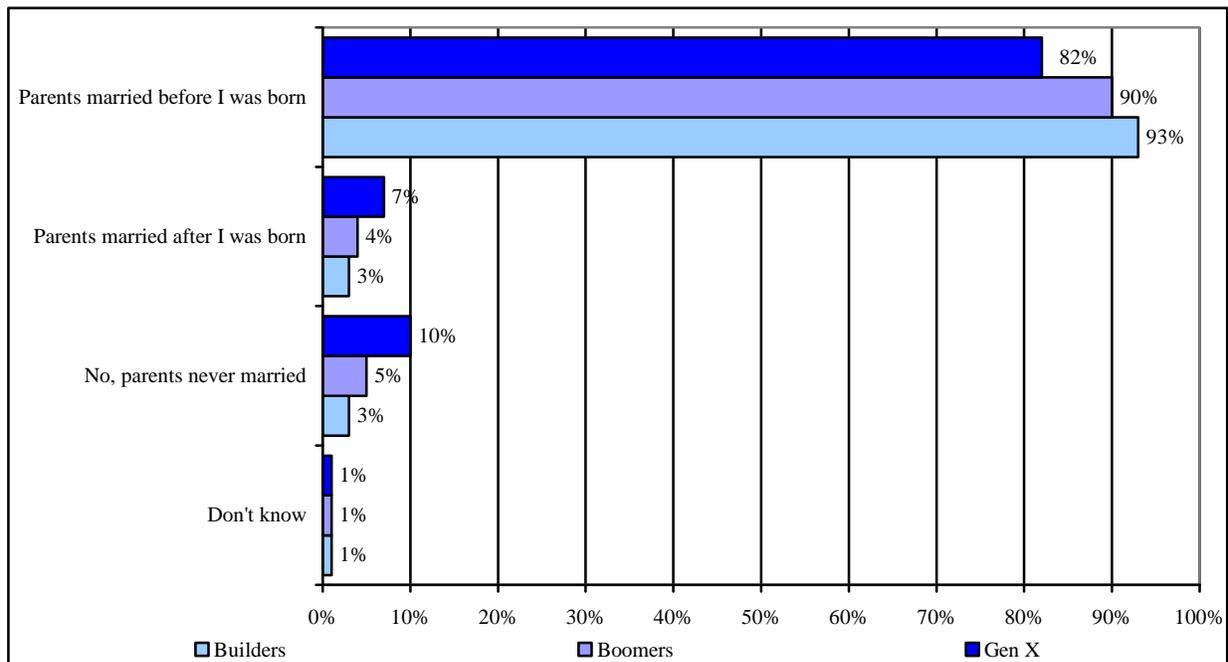
More than nine-out-of-ten California residents reported that their biological parents were married (92 percent).

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their family history of marriage and divorce, including whether their biological parents were married and the level of involvement they had with their biological father while growing up. Overall, 87 percent of respondents reported that their biological parents had married one another prior to having children and another 5 percent reported that their parents were married after they were born.

Younger respondents, born between 1965 and 1983, were statistically less likely than previous generations to report that their parents were married prior to having children. Younger respondents were also more likely to report that their parents never married.

Figure 13 shows differences by age. Respondents were broken down into four categories: Builders (ages 63 and over); Boomers (ages 44-62) Generation X (ages 25 to 43); and Generation Y (ages 18-24). (Due to the small sample of Generation Y respondents, less than 7 percent of all Californians interviewed, comparisons were limited to respondents 25 years of age or older.) A total of 82 percent of Generation X respondents reported that their parents married before they were born, compared to 90 percent among the Boomer generation and 93 percent among the Builder generation. A total of 10 percent of Generation X respondents reported that their parents never married compared to 5 percent among Boomers and 3 percent among Builders.

**Figure 13: Marital Status of Family of Origin by Age
California Adults, 2008**



Among those Californians whose parents married, one-quarter (24 percent) reported that their parents' marriage ended in divorce. Of those whose parents divorced, 76 percent of respondents reported that they were under age 18 at the time their parents divorced and half were under the age of 10.

Among Californians whose parents divorced, the majority (81 percent) were negatively affected by the divorce to some degree.

Respondents whose parents had divorced were asked if the divorce negatively affected them. Results are presented in **Table 3**. Among Californians whose parents divorced, the majority (81 percent) reported that they were negatively affected by the divorce to some degree.

**Table 3: Impact of Parents Divorce
California Adults, 2008**

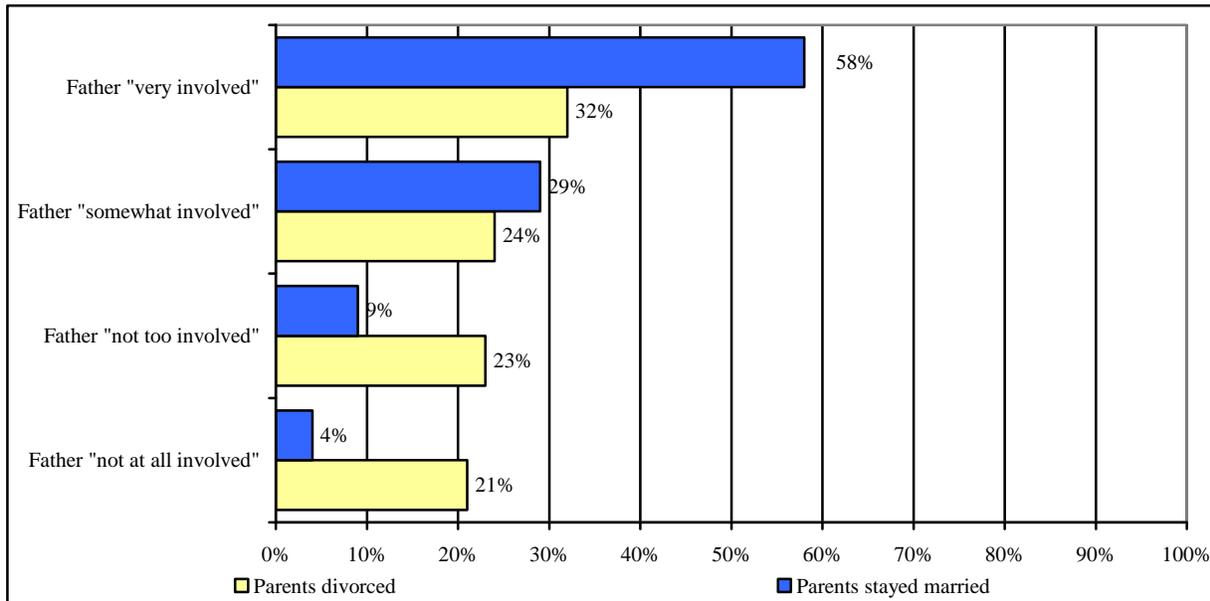
	Not at all	A little	To some extent	To a great extent
To what extent did your parents' divorce negatively affect you?	19%	22%	26%	32%

*Base excludes respondents who answered "don't know/refused." Proportions do not add to 100% due to rounding.

Californians whose parents divorced were statistically more likely to report that they had little involvement with their biological fathers while growing up, compared to respondents who had grown-up with a married mother and father.

Respondents were asked to rate their fathers' involvement during childhood. As seen in **Figure 14**, less than one-third of respondents whose parents had divorced (32 percent) reported that their father was "very involved" in their upbringing, compared to 58 percent among respondents who had grown up with a married mother and father. Similarly, respondents with divorced parents were much more likely to report that their fathers were "not at all involved" (21 percent compared to 4 percent among respondents who had a married mother and father).

**Figure 14: Level of Involvement of Biological Father While Growing Up
By Marital Status of Family of Origin, California Adults, 2008**



*Base excludes respondents who answered "don't know/refused."

3c. Relationship Quality

Married respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the quality of their relationships, including the amount of one-on-one time they spend together, their ability to talk as friends, and how often they express affection or love. In addition, respondents were asked questions regarding their commitment to the marriage and whether they had ever seriously considered divorce. Respondents were presented with positive and negative descriptions of relationships and were asked to what extent they agreed that the statement described their own relationship.

A total of 87 percent of married Californians reported they are "extremely satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their relationship.

As seen in **Table 4**, 48 percent of all married Californians reported they are "extremely satisfied" with their relationship, and an additional third (39 percent) report that they are "very satisfied." Only 1 percent reported they were dissatisfied in their marriage and another 1 percent reported they were extremely dissatisfied in their marriage.

**Table 4: Overall Satisfaction with Current Marriage
Married Adults in California, 2008**

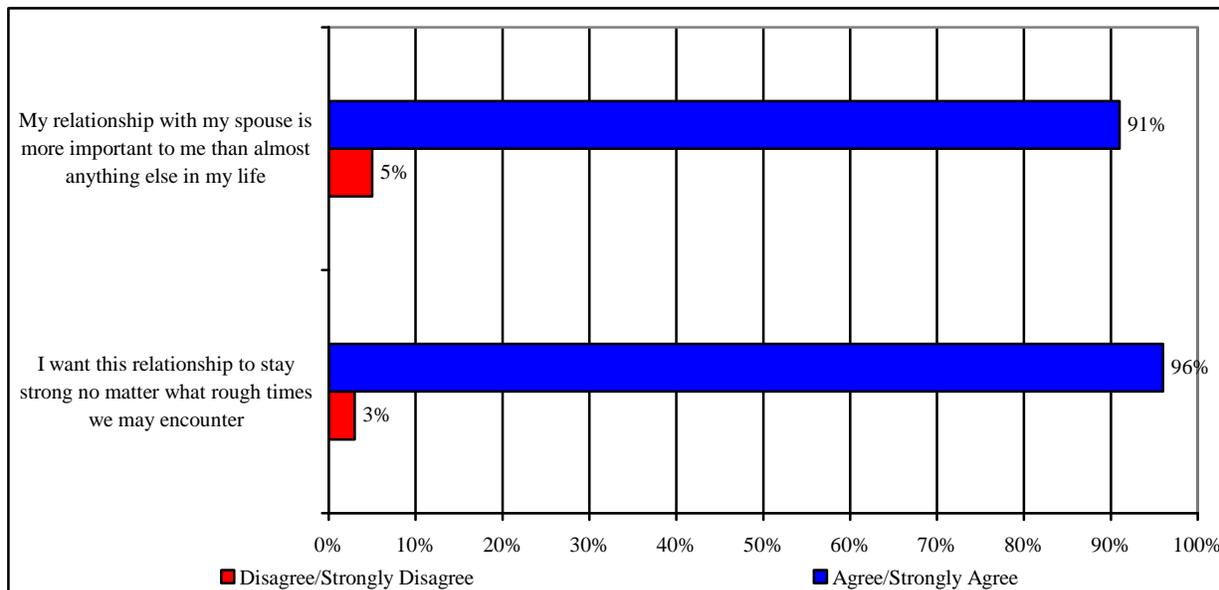
	Extremely satisfied	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
All in all, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	48%	39%	9%	2%	1%	--	1%

*Base excludes respondents who answered "don't know/refused."

The majority of married Californians are highly committed to their current relationship and want that relationship to thrive no matter what rough times they may encounter.

More than nine-out-of-ten married Californians (91 percent) report that they agree or strongly agree that their relationship is more important than almost anything else in their lives, and 96 percent said they wanted to stay with the relationship no matter what rough times they might encounter. Results are presented in **Figure 15**.

**Figure 15: Positive Indicators Regarding Commitment to Current Marriage
Married Adults in California, 2008**



*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” The proportion of respondents who reported that they “neither agreed nor disagreed” with each statement is not presented. As a result, percentages do not total 100%.

As seen in **Table 5**, more than half of married Californians report that they frequently spend one-on-one time with their partner (53 percent), and more than three-fourths (76 percent) report that they have great conversations with their partners like good friends. More than eight-out-of-ten Californians report that their partner frequently shows them love and affection.

**Table 5: Frequency of Positive Interactions with Partner
Married Adults in California, 2008**

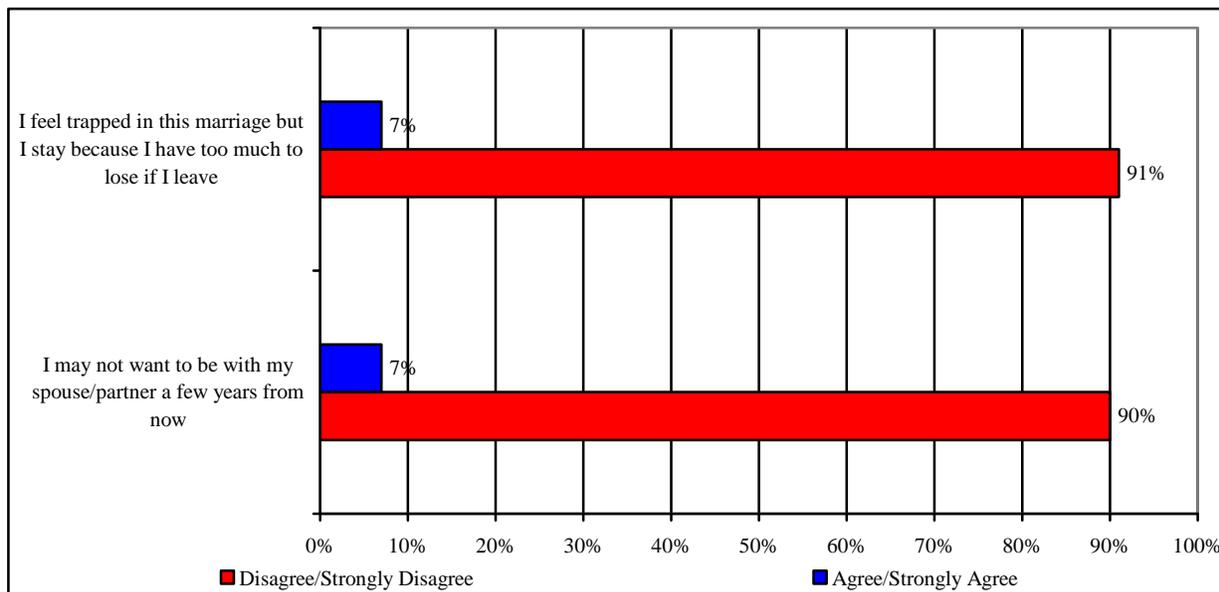
Statement	Frequently
How often does your partner express affection or love for you?	83%
We regularly have great conversations where we just talk as good friends.	76%
How often do you and your spouse/partner intentionally spend one-on-one time with one another, in other words, date each other?	53%

*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

When asked if they may not want to be with their current spouse in a few years, nine-out-of-ten disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

A total of 91 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they felt trapped in their current relationship and 90 percent disagreed that they may not want to be with their partner in a few years. See **Figure 16**.

**Figure 16: Negative Indicators Regarding Commitment to Current Marriage
Married Adults in California, 2008**



*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” The proportion of respondents who reported that they “neither agreed nor disagreed” with each statement is not presented. As a result, percentages do not total 100%.

Although a small percentage of Californians report suffering physical abuse in their marriages, 19 percent reported that their partner can be emotionally or verbally abusive when angry.

Physical and verbal abuse are important indicators of poor relationship quality. When asked if their spouse had ever gotten physically abusive, 87 percent of married Californians surveyed reported “never.” When asked how often their partner had been emotionally or verbally abusive, 19 percent reported “sometimes” or “frequently.” Results are presented in **Table 6**.

**Table 6: Frequency of Negative Interactions with Partner
Married Adults in California, 2008**

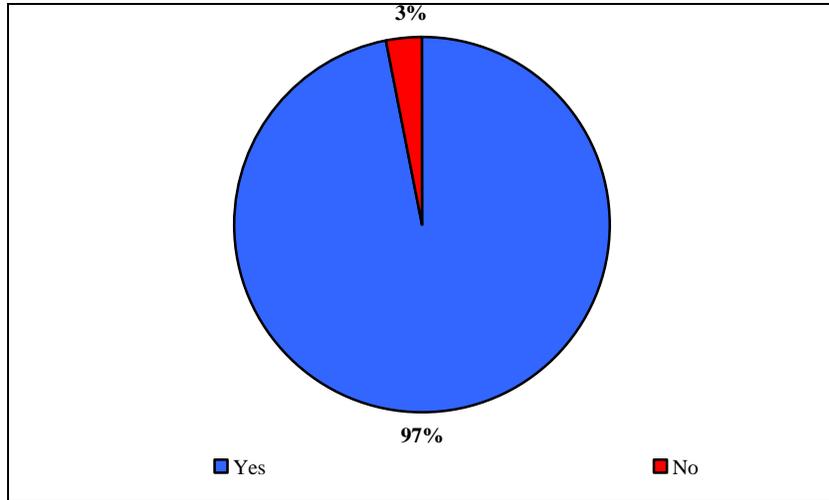
Statement	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Frequently
How often has your partner gotten physically abusive with you when he/she is angry?	87%	9%	4%	1%
How often has your partner emotionally or verbally abusive with you when he or she is angry?	56	25	16	3

*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” Proportions may not add to 100% due to rounding.

A total of 97 percent of married Californians expect to be married for life, and 93 percent said they would marry the same person if they had to do it all over again.

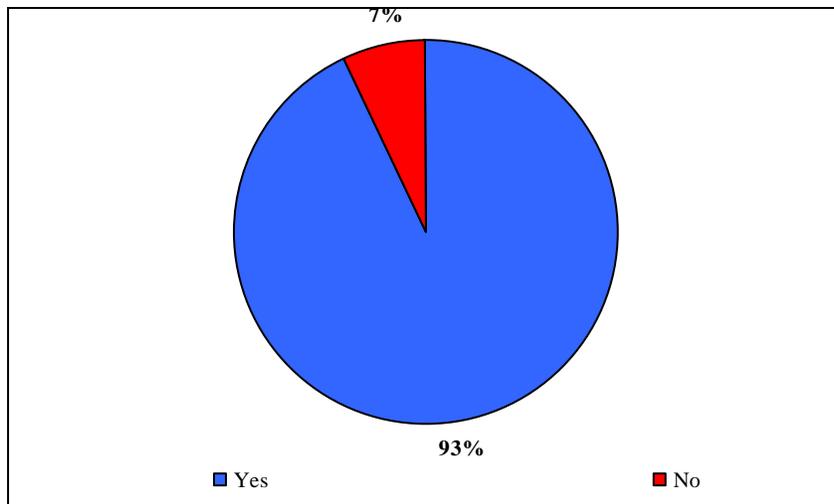
In addition to questions measuring marriage quality, married respondents were asked if they expected to be married for life and if they ever thought their marriage might be at risk for divorce. Results are presented in **Figures 17** and **18**.

**Figure 17: “Do You Expect to be Married for Life?”
Married Adults in California, 2008**



*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

**Figure 18: “Would You Marry the Same Person Again?”
Married Adults in California, 2008**



*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

Two-thirds of married Californians (67 percent) have never considered that their marriage might be at risk for divorce, and three-fourths have never discussed the possibility with their spouse, as seen in Table 7. Most of those who have considered the possibility of divorce have not considered it within the last three years and only 2 percent report that are currently contemplating divorce. Only 9 percent of currently married couples have ever been separated, legally or otherwise.

Table 7: Divorce Risk of Currently Married Married Adults in California, 2008

Statement	Never	Yes, but not in last 3 yrs	Yes, within last 3 yrs	Yes, within last year	Yes, currently
Have you ever thought your marriage might be at risk for divorce?	67%	19%	9%	3%	2%
Have you and your spouse ever discussed the idea of divorce?	77	11	5	4	2

*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” Proportions may not add to 100% due to rounding.

3d. Characteristics of Stronger Relationships

Differences between married respondents reporting high satisfaction in their relationship versus those reporting dissatisfaction were examined to identify those characteristics common to healthy relationships. Married couples reporting the greatest levels of satisfaction were also more likely to report the following:²

- Higher levels of commitment to their partner;
- More frequent dating;
- The ability to talk as good friends; and,
- Less frequent conflicts (including lower incidence of verbal and physical abuse).

² Questions examined included: Q61 “I want this relationship to stay strong no matter what rough times we may encounter.” Q66 “How often do you and your spouse/partner intentionally spend one-on-one time with one another?” Q63 “We regularly have great conversations where we just talk as good friends.” Q65a “How often has your partner gotten emotionally or verbally abusive with you when he/she is angry?” and Q65 “How often has you partner gotten physically abusive with you when he/she is angry?” Differences between respondents who reported that they were “extremely satisfied” with their relationship and other respondents were significant at the .05 level.

4. SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

While the majority of married Californians reported satisfaction in their marriages, this statistic alone does not sufficiently measure the health of California’s marriages. To understand the overall health of California’s marriages, we must also look at the incidence of divorce.

One-third of Californians surveyed (34 percent) reported that they had been divorced; of those, most have been divorced only once.

Lack of commitment and lack of communication are the most common reasons for divorce among Californians.

Respondents who had been divorced were read a list of commonly given reasons for divorce and were asked if each was a major factor, minor factor, or not at all a factor in their divorce (referring to their first divorce, if more than one). Results are presented in **Table 8**. Lack of commitment and lack of communication were most frequently cited by respondents as a “major” factor for their divorce, followed by infidelity, too much conflict and arguing, and getting married too young.

**Table 8: Reasons for Divorce
Divorced Adults in California, 2008**

Tell me whether or not each factor was a contributor to your divorce...	Major Factor	Minor Factor	Not a Factor
Lack of commitment?	55%	24%	21%
Lack of communication?	54	29	18
Infidelity?	42	13	45
Too much conflict/arguing?	39	30	31
Getting married too young?	38	19	42
Unrealistic expectations?	33	29	38
Alcohol/drug abuse?	26	9	64
Little or no helpful pre-marital preparation?	27	25	48
Financial problems?	20	27	53
Violence/physical abuse?	17	12	71
Lack of support from family?	17	22	60
Issues related to children?	18	20	62
Religious differences between partners?	11	16	72

*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” Proportions may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Looking back on their divorce, nearly two-thirds of Californians believe that they and/or their spouse could have worked harder to save the marriage.

Respondents were asked if they, their spouse, or both partners could have worked harder to save the marriage. Results are presented in **Table 9**. A total of 63 percent of all divorced respondents believe that one or both partners could have worked harder to preserve the marriage; 37 percent said they had both worked hard enough.

**Table 9: Could Have Worked Harder to Save Marriage
Divorced Adults in California, 2008**

Statement	Yes, I could have worked harder	Yes, my spouse could have worked harder	Yes, we both could have worked harder	No, we worked hard enough
Do you think that you or your spouse could have worked harder to save your marriage?	13%	19%	31%	37%

*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

Among those Californians who had divorced, 63 percent had children under the age of 18 living with them at the time the divorce took place. **More than two-thirds (69 percent) reported that the divorce had negatively affected the children.**

5. MARRIAGE EDUCATION AND COUNSELING

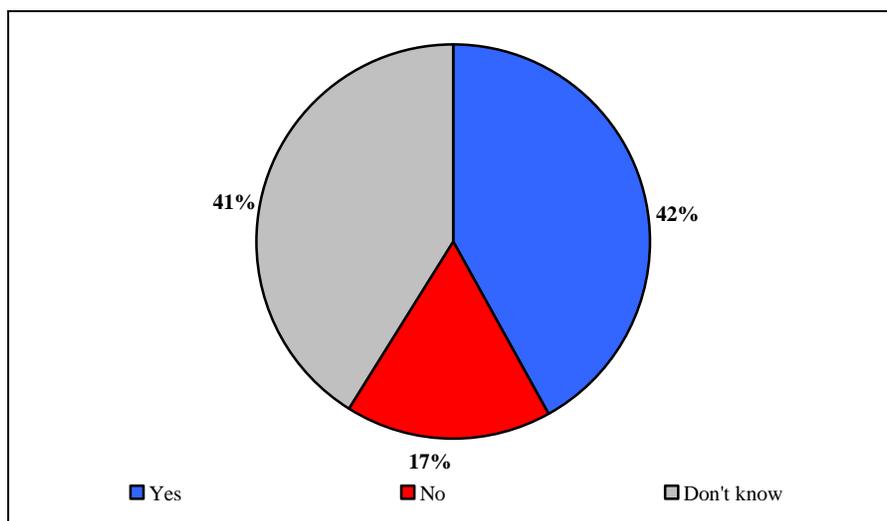
Strategies for strengthening marriages and increasing the probability of success are classes in Marriage Preparation, Relationship Skills Training, and Marriage Education as well as one-on-one couple’s counseling. The study addressed how Californians view these programs, their experience with marriage and relationship enrichment programs, and how helpful they found these programs in strengthening their relationships.

5a. Awareness and Availability of Local Programs

The majority of Californians surveyed (58 percent) were not aware of any relationship skills, Marriage Education, or marriage preparation programs available in their communities.

When asked if relationship and Marriage Education programs were offered in their community, 17 percent reported “no” and 41 percent reported “don’t know.” Results are presented in **Figure 19.**

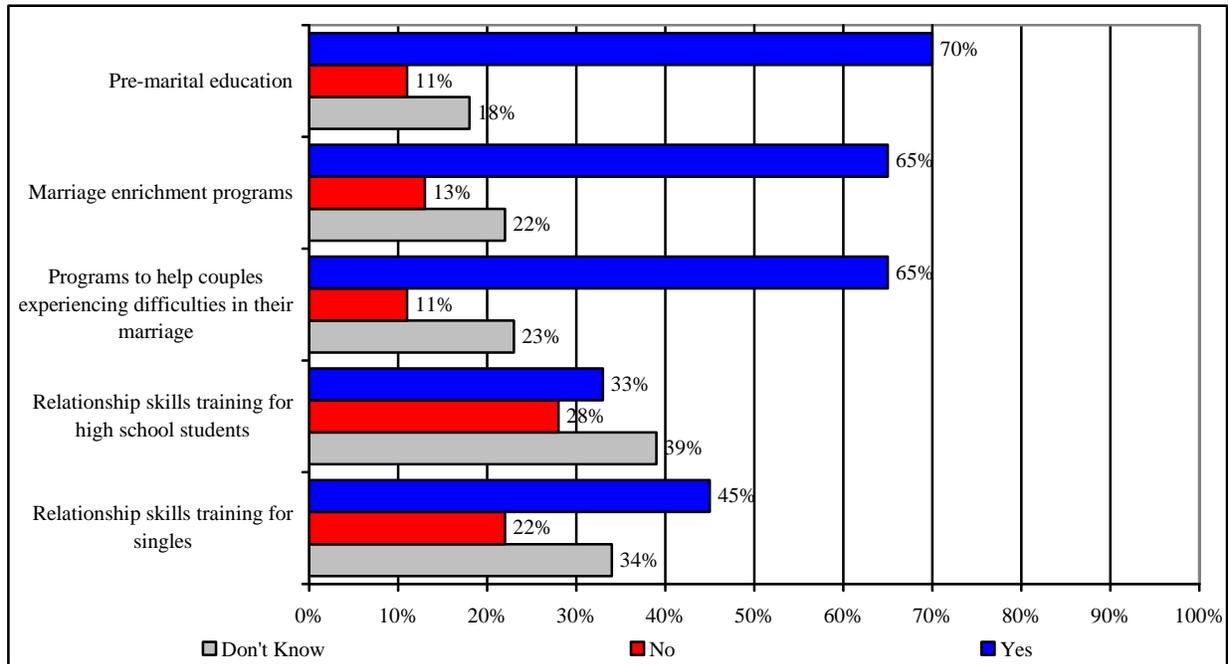
**Figure 19: “Are relationship and marriage education programs offered in your community?”
California Adults, 2008**



*Base includes all respondents.

Respondents were asked if their local church or house of worship provides relationship skills programs for couples, singles, and youth. Results are presented in **Figure 20**. **A total of 70 percent of respondents affiliated with a religious organization reported that their place of worship provided pre-marital education and 65 percent reported that marriage enrichment programs were provided. Fewer than half of all respondents surveyed reported that programs were available for high school students or singles.**

**Figure 20: “Does your local church or house of worship provide the following programs?”
California Adults, 2008**



* 15% of respondents asked this question were not associated with a church or house of worship and were not included in the percentage base. Proportions may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Respondents were then asked if they thought their church or place of worship should provide additional marriage enrichment and relationship skills programs. Results are presented in **Table 10**.

In five different areas of marriage and relationship programming, more than two-thirds of Californians surveyed reported that their local church or religious organization should expand what is currently being offered, particularly for couples experiencing difficulties in their marriages and for singles.

**Table 10: Demand for Additional Relationship and Marriage Education Programs Offered Through Local Church or Place of Worship
California Adults, 2008**

Do you think that your local church or religious organization should do more in each of the following areas:	Yes	No
Programs to help couples who are experiencing difficulties in their marriage?	78%	22%
Relationship skills training for singles?	74	26
Relationship skills training for high school students?	71	29
Marriage enrichment programs?	70	30
Pre-marital education?	70	30

*This question was asked only of respondents who answered “yes” or “no” to the previous question: “Does your local church or house of worship provide any of the following marriage-related programs?”

5b. Experience with Marriage and Relationship Programs in General

To understand the impact of Relationship Skills Training, Marriage Preparation and Marriage Education, respondents were asked a series of questions about their personal experience with such programs.

One-in-five married Californians (22 percent) reported that they had ever participated in a relationship education program, not including pre-marital education. Those who had not participated in a program were asked if they would ever consider attending a marriage enrichment workshop or a relationship skills class if it were available at little or no cost. Half of those respondents indicated that they would be willing to consider such programs.

Respondents who reported that they would not be interested were asked why not. **The most common reason for not wanting to participate in relationship or Marriage Education programs was “no need” (64 percent) and “no interest” (39 percent), indicating that many Californians are not convinced that they would personally benefit from such programs.**

Those respondents who were not married were asked if they would attend pre-marital education classes if those programs were available at little or no cost. Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) said they would attend such classes if they were to get married.

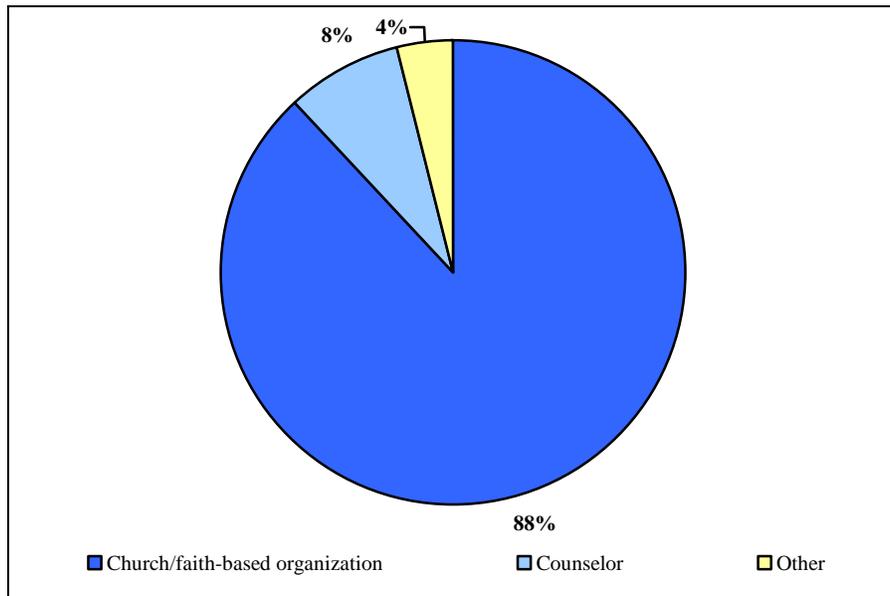
5c. Experience with Pre-Marital Education

Californians strongly support pre-marital education; however, a significantly smaller proportion has actually participated in these programs.

A total of 87 percent of Californians surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that all couples considering marriage should be encouraged to get pre-marital education. When married couples were asked if they had personally attended a pre-marital program, nearly two-thirds (65 percent) reported that they had not participated in any kind of pre-marital preparation.

Among couples who had attended a pre-marital program, 88 percent received pre-marital preparation from a church or faith-based organization. Fewer than 10 percent had received pre-marital education from a counselor. Results are presented in Figure 21.

**Figure 21: Providers of Pre-Marital Education
Married Adults in California, 2008**



*Base excludes respondents who answered "don't know/refused."

Respondents who had received pre-marital preparation were asked to rate how helpful the program had been. Results are presented in **Tables 11 and 12. Nearly nine-out-of-ten respondents who had attended a pre-marital program (88 percent) found the experience helpful (“very helpful” or “somewhat helpful”) and 72 percent reported that the class had strengthened their relationship.**

**Table 11: Helpfulness of Pre-Marital Education
Married Adults in California, 2008**

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not too helpful	Not at all helpful
Looking back, how helpful was the information you received in the marriage preparation?	52%	36%	8%	3%

*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” Proportions may not add to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 12: Extent to Which Pre-marital Preparation Strengthened Relationship
Married Adults in California, 2008**

	To a great extent	To some extent	A little	Not at all
To what extent did the pre-marital preparation strengthen your relationship?	35%	37%	19%	10%

*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” Proportions may not add to 100% due to rounding.

When asked why they decided not to attend, married respondents most frequently cited “no need,” indicating that many Californians do not recognize the benefit of such programs for their own marriage. The second most frequently cited reason for not participating was a lack of information about the existence and availability of such programs, as presented in **Table 13.**

**Table 13: Reasons for Not Participating in Pre-Marital Education
Married Adults in California, 2008**

What was the reason you decided not to [have pre-marital preparation]?	Percent
No need	42%
Wasn’t offered in area	18
Didn’t know it existed	17
Too expensive	1
Not a religious person	1
I wasn’t interested	4
My spouse/partner wasn’t interested	3
Neither I nor my spouse/partner were interested	3
Other	10

*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” Data are based on a multi-response question. Responses do not total 100% since each respondent can provide more than one answer.

5d. Experience with Marriage Education and Relationship Skills Training

Married respondents were asked if they had attended workshops or classes with other couples designed to teach relationship skills, not including counseling. **A total of 22 percent of married respondents reported that they had participated in a marriage skills program with their current partner.**

Respondents who had participated in these programs were asked why they decided to attend and how helpful they found the experience. **The most common reason for pursuing Marriage Education was to improve the quality of the marriage or relationship, as seen in Table 14.**

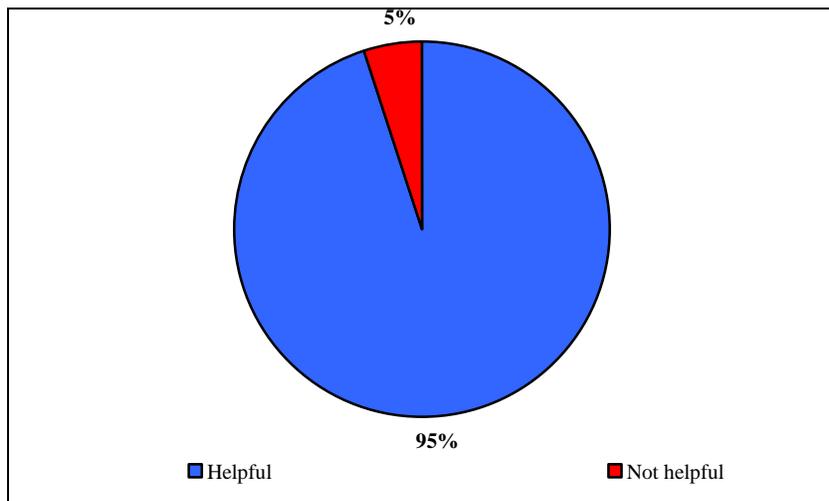
**Table 14: Reasons for Participating in Marriage Education or Relationship Skills Classes
Married Adults in California, 2008**

What was the reason you went [to a marriage/relationship program]?	Percent
To improve my relationship with my partner	36%
To help make my marriage stronger	14
To learn how to work through relationship issues	7
To prepare for marriage	5
To learn how to improve my relationships with my children/ family	5
To cope with a problem in my marriage	4
Required to by job/church	3
Part of a church program	5
To be with friends	4
Other	15

*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” Data are based on a multi-response question. Responses do not total 100% since each respondent can provide more than one answer.

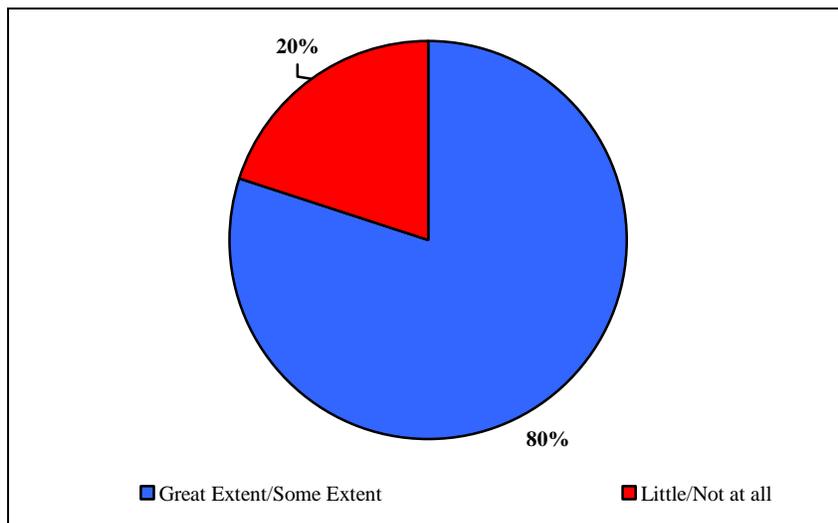
Among those couples who attended Marriage Education, 62 percent found the programs very helpful and 33 percent found them somewhat helpful. When asked the extent to which the training strengthened their relationship, more than one-third reported that the experience strengthened the relationship to a great extent (36 percent) and another 44 percent reported that the program strengthened the relationship to some extent. Results are presented in Figures 22 and 23.

**Figure 22: Helpfulness of Marriage Education or Relationship Skills Training
Married Adults in California, 2008**



*Base excludes respondents who answered "don't know/refused."

**Figure 23: Extent to Which Marriage Education or Relationship Skills Training
Strengthened Marriage
Married Adults in California, 2008**



*Base excludes respondents who answered "don't know/refused."

The most frequently cited reason for not participating in a marriage or relationship skills program was a perceived lack of need, as seen in **Table 15**.

Table 15: Reasons for Not Participating in Marriage Education or Relationship Skills Classes Married Adults in California, 2008

What was the reason you decided not to attend (a marriage/relationship program)?	Percent
No need	54%
Wasn't offered in area	9
Didn't know it existed	13
Too expensive	1
I wasn't interested	7
My spouse/partner wasn't interested	4
Neither I nor my spouse/partner were interested	2
Other	9

*Base excludes respondents who answered "don't know/refused." Data are based on a multi-response question. Responses do not total 100% since each respondent can provide more than one answer.

5e. Experience with Marriage and Relationship Counseling

Married couples were also asked if they had ever participated in relationship counseling or therapy, also referred to as "couple's counseling." A total of 19 percent of married respondents reported that they had gone to one-on-one couple's counseling. Of those, 61 percent received the counseling from a professional counselor or therapist, and 21 percent from a priest, minister or religious leader. The other 18 percent of respondents received counseling from an individual who was both a counselor and religious leader.

When asked why they pursued couple's counseling, respondents most frequently cited a need to address a specific problem in their marriage or a desire to improve their relationship, as seen in **Table 16**. Respondents who were interested in addressing a specific problem in their marriage were more likely to attend counseling than Marriage Education classes or workshops.

Table 16: Reasons for Participating in Couple's Counseling Married Adults in California, 2008

What was the reason you went to marriage/relationship counseling?	Percent
To cope with a problem in my marriage	27%
To improve my relationship with my partner	26
To learn how to work through relationship issues	14
To help make my marriage stronger	12
To learn how to improve my relationships with my children/family	7
To prepare for marriage	6
To cope with a divorce and/or learn about co-parenting	1
Other	8

*Base excludes respondents who answered "don't know/refused." Data are based on a multi-response question. Responses do not total 100% since each respondent can provide more than one answer.

Among those couples who attended couple’s counseling, 87 percent found the programs “somewhat helpful” or “very helpful” and 72 percent reported that the experience strengthened their relationship. Results are presented in Tables 17 and 18.

**Table 17: Helpfulness of Couple’s Counseling
Married Adults in California, 2008**

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not too helpful	Not at all helpful
How helpful did you find counseling?	51%	36%	6%	7%

*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

**Table 18: Extent to Which Couple’s Counseling Strengthened Relationship
Married Adults in California, 2008**

	To a great extent	To some extent	A little	Not at all
To what extent did the counseling strengthen your relationship?	35%	37%	16%	12%

*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

Married respondents who decided not to attend couple’s counseling were asked why not. Results are presented in Table 19. More than three-fourths (78 percent) of respondents reported that they had no perceived need for marriage or relationship counseling.

**Table 19: Reasons for Not Participating in Couple’s Counseling
Married Adults in California, 2008**

What was the reason you decided not to seek marriage or relationship counseling?	Percent
No need	78%
Didn’t know it existed	4
Wasn’t offered in area	3
I wasn’t interested	3
Neither I nor my spouse/partner were interested	2
My spouse/partner wasn’t interested	2
Other	6

*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” Data are based on a multi-response question. Responses do not total 100% since each respondent can provide more than one answer.

While the majority of married couples who have participated in Marriage Education and counseling found the experiences helpful in strengthening their relationships, Californians gave Marriage Education the higher marks. **A total of 94 percent of married Californians who took Marriage Education classes found the programs helpful, compared with 87 percent who found counseling helpful, a statistically significant difference.**

6. VIEWS ON SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR MARRIAGE

6a. Support in Maintaining a Healthy Marriage

Respondents were asked about the level of support they received from their family, friends, and community in handling the challenges of marriage. Results are presented in **Table 20**. Californians receive the most support for their marriage from their own relatives, followed by their faith community. Few report receiving this kind of support from their local community (14 percent).

**Table 20: Support for Keeping Marriage Healthy in Good Times and Hard Times
Married Adults in California, 2008**

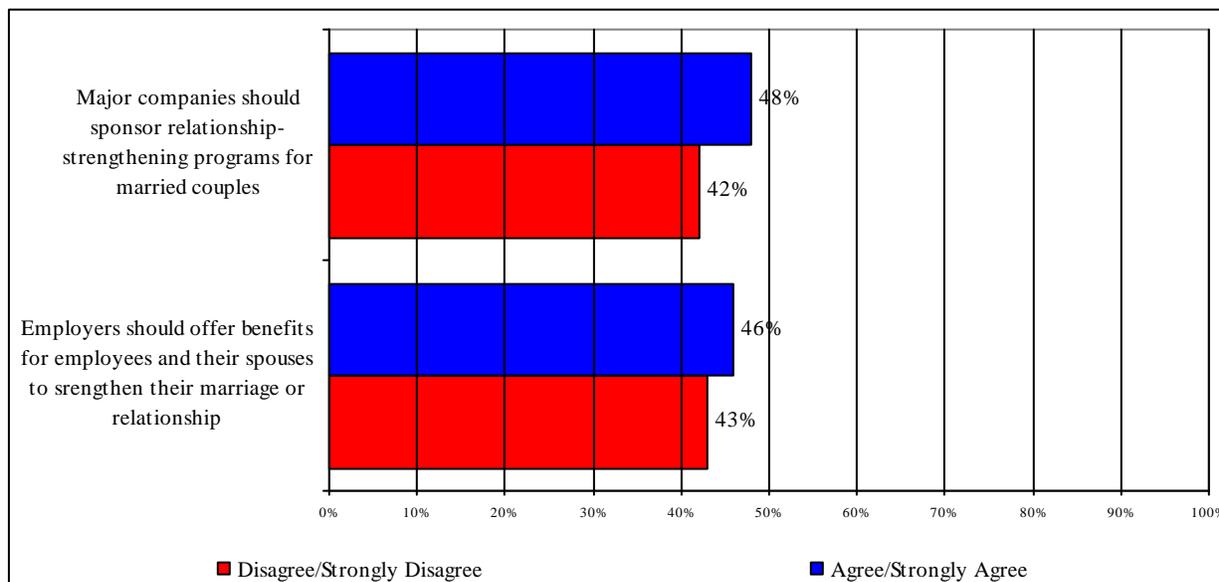
How much support do you feel from ...	A lot of support	Some support	Little or no support
Your own relatives?	47%	26%	28%
Your faith community?*	44	19	31
Your spouse's relatives?	41	27	32
Your friends?	41	29	30
Your local community?	14	22	64

*7 percent of respondents asked the question reported that they had no faith community. Base excludes respondents who answered "don't know/refused." Proportions may not total 100% due to rounding.

6b. Support in Providing Marriage Education

Respondents were asked questions about the role of employers in supporting family relationships. Results are presented in **Figure 24**. **Nearly half of all Californians surveyed agreed that employers should sponsor relationship-strengthening programs for married couples or offer benefits for employees to strengthen their marriage or relationship.**

**Figure 24: Proportion of Californians Who Agree or Strongly Agree
With Proposed Employer Programs to Strengthen Marriage, 2008**



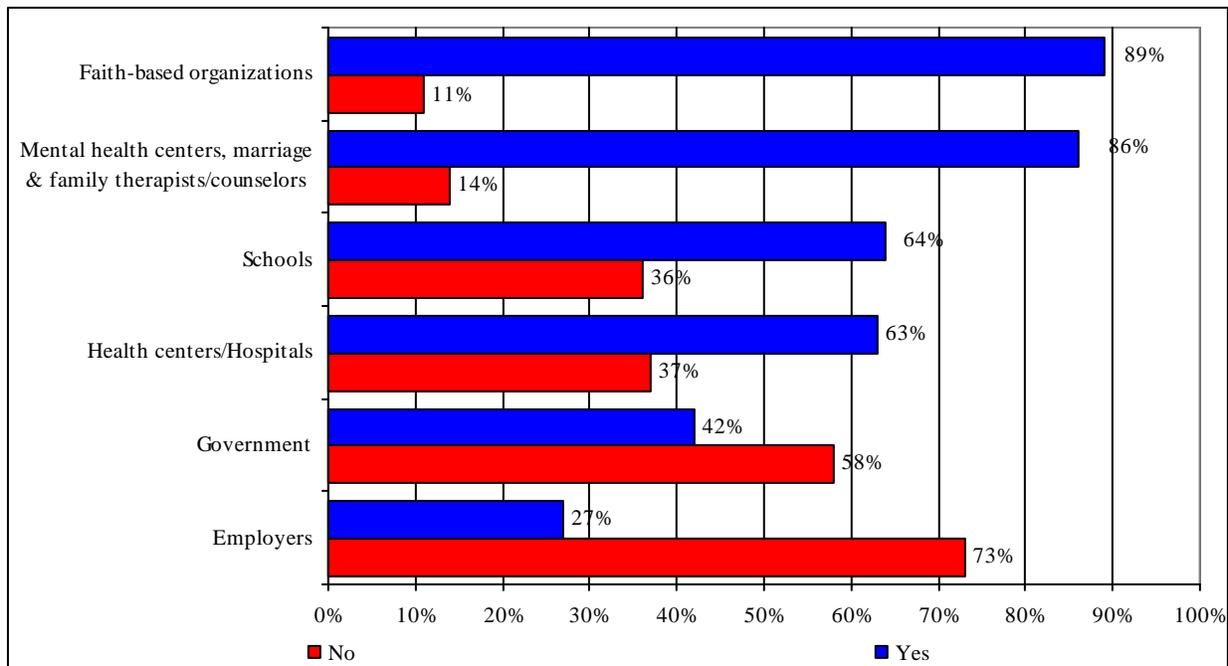
*Base excludes respondents who answered "don't know/refused." The proportion of respondents who reported that they "neither agreed nor disagreed" with each statement is not presented. As a result, percentages do not total 100%.

Nearly three-fourths (64 percent) of working Californians reported that their employer was flexible and supportive of their family’s needs.

7. VIEWS ON PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Respondents were asked which types of social institutions they believe have a responsibility to offer relationship skills and Marriage Education programs. **Close to 90 percent of Californians see faith-based organizations as well as mental health centers/ and counselors as having a responsibility to provide relationship and Marriage Education programs. Schools and health centers/hospitals are viewed by almost two-thirds of Californians as also having responsibility to provide these relationship-support services. See Figure 25.**

Figure 25: Which Organizations have a Responsibility to Provide Relationship and Marriage Education California Adults, 2008

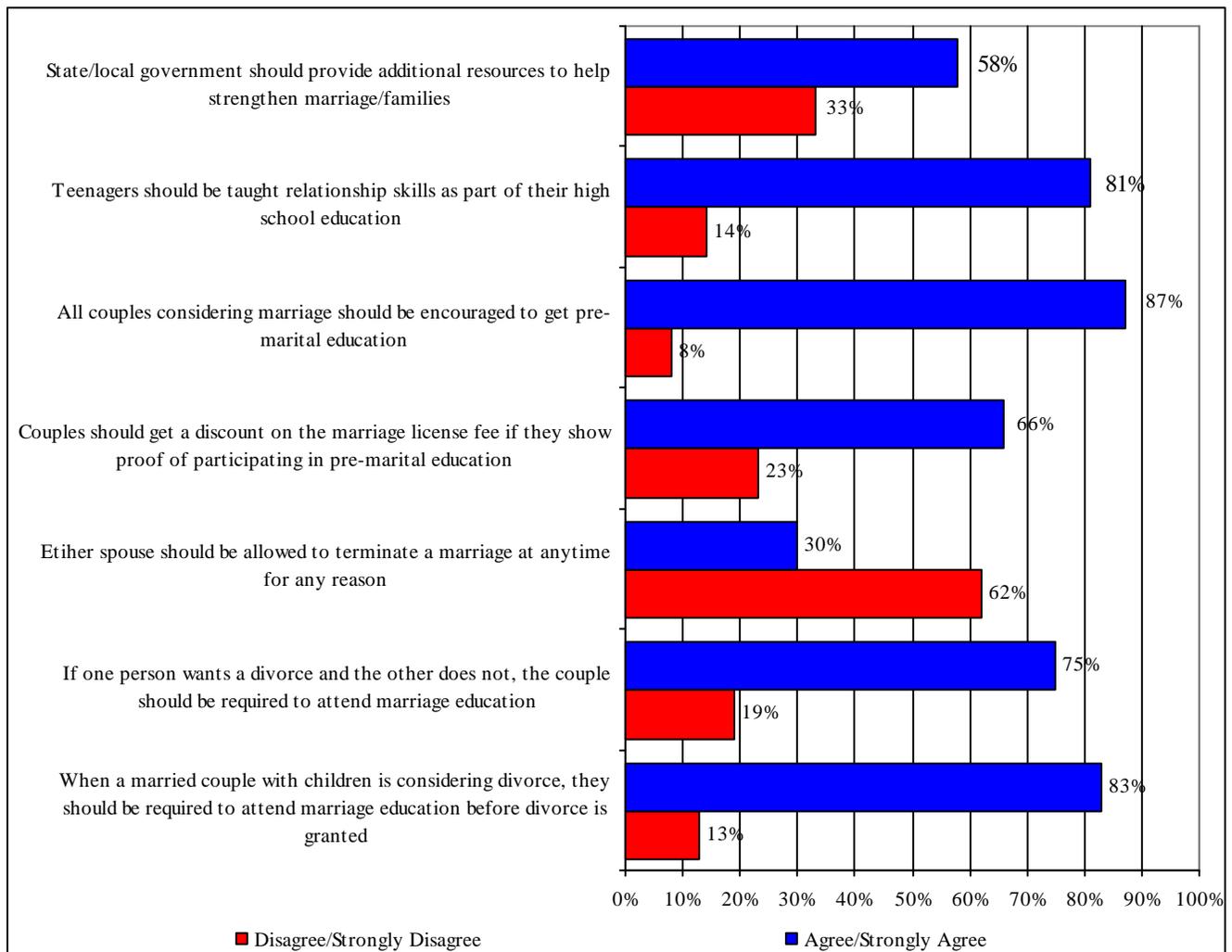


*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.”

Most Californians support public policies to improve relationships, strengthen marriages and reduce divorce.

More than half of all Californians (58 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that state and local government should provide additional resources to help strengthen families by strengthening marriages. When presented with options concerning specific government-supported programs, **more than eight-out-of-ten Californians surveyed agreed that Marriage Education or counseling should be required prior to a divorce being granted and that high schools should provide relationship skills education.** The majority of Californians agree in their support of teaching Relationship Skills to teenagers as part of their high school education, promoting and incentivizing couples to receive Marriage Preparation, and giving couples a last-ditch opportunity to improve their relationship (through Marriage Education or couples counseling) before getting a divorce. Complete results are presented in **Figure 26.**

Figure 26: Proportion of Californians Who Agree or Strongly Agree With Proposed Public Policies to Strengthen Marriage, 2008



*Base excludes respondents who answered “don’t know/refused.” The proportion of respondents who reported that they “neither agreed nor disagreed” with each statement is not presented. As a result, percentages do not total 100%.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results from *The State of California's Unions* show great prospects for a future with stronger and healthier marriages, fewer divorces, and more stable families for children to be raised in.

Why?

The vast majority of Californians affirm traditional values related to marriage (such as marriage being a “lifelong commitment”) and family (belief that it is better for a child to be raised “with a married mother and father” and that “fathers are as important as mothers”).

For currently married Californians, an astounding 87 percent rate their relationship as “extremely” or “very” satisfying. More than nine-in-ten respondents rank their marital relationship as a top priority, expect to be married for life, and would marry the same person again.

A surprisingly high 22 percent of married Californians have attended a Marriage Education program, and most (95 percent) found it helpful and most (79 percent) stated that the program strengthened their marriage to “some” or “great” extent.

The State of California's Unions reveals that Californians hold a high value for marriage and believe it's an institution worth protecting with stricter dissolution laws, increased availability of relationship education, and greater social support.

This is all good news.

But *The State of California's Unions* raises several disturbing issues related to the future of marriage and divorce in the Golden State.

While Californians want a strong marriage and want it to last a lifetime, the survey results show they're not sure how to get there. Alarming, more than one-third of Californians (35 percent) think couples with strong marriages are “just luckier in love.”

For those that were not “lucky” and have gotten divorced, almost two-thirds (63 percent) admitted that they could have worked harder to try to save the marriage. This indicates that the current divorce process does not have enough speed bumps to slow down the dissolution process, or that Californians are not aware of what they could do that would actually help them improve their relationship.

The majority of Californians surveyed (58 percent) were not aware of any relationship, Marriage Education, or marriage preparation programs available in their communities. Without knowing about where or how to find a program, or understanding the value of these programs, couples lose out on the benefits of Marriage Education in their relationship. Clearly, one of the most important challenges is to help Californians understand more about the value of Relationship Skills Training and Marriage Education and to increase access to these programs throughout the state.

Based on the findings in *The State of California's Unions*, we recommend the following strategies to further strengthen the Golden State's marriage and relationships:

Recommendation 1: Increase public awareness about the benefits of Relationship Skills Training, Marriage Preparation, Marriage Education and couples counseling. One-in-five married Californians (22 percent) have attended Marriage Education, more than one-third of married couples have received Premarital Preparation, and one-fifth of couples (19 percent) have participated in couples' counseling. For those who have not taken part in any of the relationship strengthening efforts, when asked why they decided not to participate in marriage and relationship programs, respondents most frequently cited "no need" or "lack of interest," indicating that many Californians do not recognize the benefit of such programs.

Recommendation 2: Increase awareness of existing Relationship Skills Training, Marriage Preparation and Marriage Education programs available in local communities. More than half of all Californians surveyed (58 percent) were unaware of any relationship, Marriage Education, or marriage preparation programs available in their local communities.

Recommendation 3: Expand the number and scope of Relationship Skills Training, Marriage Preparation and Marriage Education programs offered through community organizations, particularly faith-based institutions and counseling centers. When asked if relationship and Marriage Education programs were offered in their community, 17 percent reported "no" and 41 percent reported "don't know." Furthermore, Californians believe faith-based organizations, followed by mental health centers and counselors have the greatest responsibility to provide relationship and Marriage Education programs. Among those Californians who have participated in such programs, the majority received such services through a religious organization. More than two-thirds of Californians surveyed reported that their local church or religious organization should offer more marriage and relationship skills programs.

Recommendation 4: Reach out to lower-income communities by providing affordable opportunities to participate in Relationship Skills Training, Marriage Preparation and Marriage Education. Lower-income respondents reported more difficulties in their marriages, including the incidence of violence and physical abuse, in comparison with other respondents. Respondents living below median income were also more likely to report feeling trapped in their marriages. Although few Californians cited cost as the primary reason they had not participated in relationship skills and Marriage Education programs, half of those who had never participated in such programs said they would do so if programs were available at little or no cost. Lower-income respondents were also more interested than other groups in employer- and business-sponsored programs to help pay for Marriage Education.

Recommendation 5: Target promotions and marketing of Relationship Skills Training, Marriage Preparation and Marriage Education to Generation X couples and individuals. More than three-fourths of Generation X respondents (76 percent) reported that they would attend pre-marital education classes if it were made available at little or not cost, compared to 47 percent among Builders and 66 percent among Boomers. Two-thirds of Generation X respondents (67 percent) would consider a Marriage Education program, compared to 23 percent among Builders and 50 percent among Boomers. Younger respondents were also more likely

than older ones to believe that employers, government, and major companies have a responsibility to offer relationship and Marriage Education programs.

Recommendation 6: Teach Relationship Skills to teenagers as a part of their high school education. More than eight-out-of-ten Californians (81 percent) agree or strongly agree that teenagers should be taught relationship skills as part of their high school curriculum.

Recommendation 7: Incentivize couples to participate in Marriage Preparation prior to the wedding. A total of 87 percent of Californians agree or strongly agree that all couples considering marriage should be encouraged to get pre-marital education. In addition, two-thirds of Californians believe couples should get a discount on the marriage license fee if they show proof of participating in pre-marital education.

Recommendation 8: Require couples seeking a divorce to attend Marriage Education and/or couples counseling. When presented with specific government-supported options, more than eight-out-of-ten Californians surveyed agreed that Marriage Education or counseling should be required prior to a divorce being granted. Moreover, three-fourths of Californians believe that if one person in a marriage wants a divorce and the other does not, the couple should be required to attend Marriage Education.

Appendix A: Methodology

METHODOLOGY

The findings presented in this report are based on telephone interviews conducted in English and Spanish with a random sample of 2,005 California adults. The margin of error for the sample as a whole is ± 2.2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level, although the margin of error was greater for some analyses, depending on how many respondents shared a particular characteristic or answered a specific question. Telephone numbers were generated using random-digit-dialing (RDD). Telephone prefixes for the State of California were identified and the remaining four digits were randomly generated. All respondents were 18 years or older. Interviews were conducted between January 4 and January 24, 2008 using a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) system by which interviewers read questions from a computer screen and typed respondents' answers directly into a database.

Statistical tests were conducted for all comparative analyses to identify whether observed differences among groups or categories were statistically significant.³ Due to the large sample size, weights were not applied to the data.

³ A statistically significant difference means that the difference among groups is not by chance, and that a real difference exists among groups.

Appendix B: Sources

SOURCES

The State of California's Unions: Marriage and Divorce in the Golden State used or adapted many questions from the following surveys and reports:

Relationships and Marriage: A Study of Northwest Arkansas Residents. Center for Relationship Enrichment at John Browns University. (2007)

Oklahoma Marriage Initiative Mini-Survey. Oklahoma Marriage Initiative. (2006)

With This Ring...A National Survey on Marriage in America. National Fatherhood Initiative. (2004)

Family Formation in Florida: 2003 Baseline Survey of Attitudes, Beliefs, and Demographics Relating to Marriage and Family Formation. Karney, Wilson-Garvin, Thomas. (2003)

Marriage in Utah: 2003 Baseline Statewide Survey on Marriage and Divorce. Schramm, Marshall, Harris, George. (2003)

Marriage in Oklahoma: 2001 Baseline Statewide Survey on Marriage and Divorce. Johnson, Stanley, et al. (2001)

Minnesotans' Attitudes about Marriage and Divorce. Hawkins, Nock, et al. (2000)

Marriage in the 90s: A Nationwide Random Phone Survey. Stanley, Markman. (1997)

Washington Marriage Report: A Statewide Look at the Attitudes and Behaviors Shaping the Institution of Marriage in Washington. Families Northwest (formerly Washington Family Council). (1997)

General Social Survey National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

Marital Instability Index. Booth, Johnson, and Edwards. (1983)

Survey of TANF Clients. Oklahoma Department of Human Services.

State Treatment Needs Assessment Project. Center for Substance Abuse Treatment of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association.

The Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study. Princeton University's Center for Research on Child Wellbeing and the Center for Health and Wellbeing and Columbia University's Social Indicators Survey Center and the National Center for Children and Family.

Appendix C: Questionnaire

The State of California's Unions: Marriage and Divorce in the Golden State

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is _____. I am calling on behalf of Interviewing Services of America and Gomez Research. We are conducting a research study on the topic of marriage and family relationships in California. I would like to get your opinions.

- 01 willing to continue
- 02 refusal
- 03 call back <at specific time>
- 04 call back <no specific time>
- 05 no answer
- 06 busy
- 07 answering machine
- 08 disconnected number
- 09 language barrier (not Spanish)
- 10 language barrier (Spanish)
- 11 business number
- 13 fax machine

SCREENER QUESTIONS

1. Are you 18 or older?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No (Go to 1a)

1 a. Is there someone who is over the age of 18 living in your home and who is available to talk now?

- 1 Yes (Go back to introduction with new respondent)
- 2 No (If an adult who lives here is not currently present, enter yes to go back to introduction and arrange a call-back)

1 b. (GENDER BY OBSERVATION-- DON'T READ)

- 1 male
- 2 female

ATTITUDES ABOUT MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

(Ask of Everyone)

2. I am going to read some statements about marriage and divorce. Please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with each one. Here is the first statement: Divorce is a serious national problem in the United States today. Do you:

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

2a. All things being equal, it is better for children to be raised in a household that has a married mother and father.

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

3. State and local government should provide additional resources to help strengthen families by strengthening marriages.

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

3a. Fathers are as important as mothers for the proper development of children.

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

4. All couples considering marriage should be encouraged to get premarital education or marriage preparation before they marry.

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

4a. Couples should get a discount on the marriage license fee if they show proof of participating in at least eight hours of premarital education before they marry.

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

4b. Couples who marry should make a lifelong commitment to one another to be broken only under extreme circumstances.

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

5. Couples who have a strong marriage are just luckier in love than those couples who don't have a strong marriage. Do you:

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

6. Most happily married couples have worked hard through the good times and bad times together. Do you:

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

6a. Either spouse should be allowed to terminate a marriage at any time for any reason.

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

7. People who live together before they are married are likely to improve their chances for a good marriage. Do you:

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

7a. Given how long people are living these days, it is unrealistic to expect a couple to remain married to one another for life.

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

8. Marriage is too risky because of the high chances of divorce these days. Do you:

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

9. Marriage is an old fashioned, outmoded institution.

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

10. When married people realize that they no longer love each other, they should get a divorce even if they have children. Do you:

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

11. When married people do not get along, they should get a divorce, even if they have children.

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

11a. When a married couple with children is considering a divorce, they should be required to attend marriage education classes or couple's counseling to give one last try to work things out before the divorce is granted. [IF CLARIFICATION IS NEEDED, DEFINE MARRIAGE COUNSELING OR THERAPY AS: "marriage counseling or therapy in an effort to save the marriage."]

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

11b. If one person in a marriage wants a divorce and the other person does not, the couple should be required to attend marriage education classes or couple's counseling to try and work through their issues before the divorce is granted.

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

11c. Teenagers should be taught relationship skills as part of their high school education.

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

FAMILY HISTORY OF MARRIAGE/DIVORCE

(Ask of everyone)

Now I am going to ask you some questions about your own relationships and family history.

12. Did your two biological parents marry one another?

- 01 Yes, before I was born (**skip to Q14**)
- 02 Yes, after I was born (**skip to Q14**)
- 03 No, never married (**skip to Q17**)
- 88 Don't Know (**skip to Q14**)
- 99 Refused (**skip to Q14**)

14. Did your parents divorce?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No (**skip to Q17**)
- 99 Refused (**Skip to Q17**)

15. How old were you when your parents got divorced?

RANGE: 1-80 YEARS (Round DOWN)

- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

16. To what extent did your parents' divorce negatively affect you?

- 01 Not at all
- 02 A little
- 03 To some extent
- 04 To a great extent
- 88 Don't Know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

17. How would you describe the level of involvement your biological father had with you when you were growing up.

- 01 Very involved
- 02 Somewhat involved
- 03 Not too involved
- 04 Not at all involved
- 99 Refused

RELATIONSHIP HISTORY

(Ask of everyone)

18. Are you currently married, widowed, divorced, separated or have you never been married?

- 01 Married (**skip to Q31**)
- 02 Widowed
- 03 Divorced
- 04 Separated (**skip to Q31**)
- 05 Never been married
- 06 Legal Domestic Partnership (**skip to Q31**)
- 99 Refused (Terminate)

18a. Would you like to be married someday? (If married before and currently divorced or widowed, Q18=code 02, 03, ask: Would you like to get married again someday?)

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 88 Don't Know
- 99 Refused

19. Do you have a main romantic involvement with a person who you think of as a steady, a lover, a partner, or the like?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No (**skip to Q24**)
- 99 Refused (**skip to Q24**)

19a. Is your partner male or female? (Code as gay or heterosexual based on gender of respondent, answer to 1b)

- 01 Heterosexual
- 02 Gay/Lesbian (**go to Q20, then to Q24**)
- 99 Refused (**no skip, just continue**)

20. Do you live with your partner?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 99 Refused

21. Are you engaged to be married?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 99 Refused

Questions for all respondents who are not married or separated. Exclude gay respondents in a domestic partnership.

(Q18 does not = 1 or 6 or 4)

24. For each of the following areas, please tell me how you think your life might be different if you got married. For example, if you were married, do you think that your financial security would be:

- 01 Better
- 02 The same
- 03 Worse
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

26. Your sex life?

- 01 Better
- 02 The same
- 03 Worse
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

27. Your children's wellbeing, either future children or current children?

- 01 Better
- 02 The same
- 03 Worse
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

28. How others view you as a couple?

- 01 Better
- 02 The same
- 03 Worse
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

30. How about your overall happiness?

- 01 Better
- 02 The same
- 03 Worse
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

**Questions for respondents who are in relationships (gay or straight) OR are married
(Q18 =1, 6, 4 OR Q19=1)**

31. How long have you been with your spouse/partner? (in years) This includes time dating your spouse/partner before marriage.

0 = LESS THAN 1 YEAR

RANGE: 1-85 YEARS (Round DOWN)

- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

32. Do you and your current spouse or partner have children under the age of 18 who live with you or who visit regularly, including adopted children? **(If couple does not live together, Q20=2 or 99, then skip to Q45)**

- 01 Yes
- 02 No **(Skip to Q36 if married or separated; skip to Q45 if in a relationship)**
- 03 Doesn't apply (married, separated, or in a domestic partnership, but don't live together) **skip to Q36**
- 99 Refused **(Skip to Q36 if married, separated; skip to Q45 if in a relationship)**

33. Of the children under the age of 18 who live with you, are any from a previous marriage or relationship?

- 01 Yes, we have full custody
- 02 Yes, we have regular visitation
- 03 No
- 99 Refused

(Questions for married/separated respondents only Q18=1 or Q18 = 4; Otherwise Skip to Q45)

36. How long have you and your current spouse been married, in years?

0 = LESS THAN 1 YEAR

RANGE: 1-85 YEARS (Round DOWN)

88 Don't know

99 Refused

37. Who officiated the wedding of you and your current spouse?

01 Minister, Clergy, Priest

02 Justice of the Peace

03 Professional Wedding Officiant

04 Other (specify) _____

88 Don't know

99 Refused

38. Did you and your current spouse live together before you got married?

01 Yes

02 No (**skip to Q39**)

99 Refused

38a. How long did you two live together?

01 0-3 months

02 3-6 months

03 6-12 months

04 1-2 years

05 3-5 years

06 5 or more years

88 Don't know (don't read)

99 Refused (don't read)

38b. Had you and your spouse-to-be decided to marry when you started living together? [If respondent answers "Yes" ask, "Were you officially engaged?"]

01 Yes, we were engaged

02 Yes, we made the decision to marry but we were not officially engaged

02 No, we had neither decided to marry nor were we officially engaged

99 Refused

39. How old were you when you married your current spouse?

RANGE: 1-100 YEARS OLD

888 Don't know

999 Refused

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

(Asked only of married respondents Q18=1 and separated respondents Q18=4) If separated, ask in past tense

40. Some couples feel pretty much on their own to handle the challenges of marriage, and other people feel a good deal of support from others for their relationship. Thinking about your current marriage how much support do (did) you feel from YOUR OWN relatives for keeping your marriage healthy in good times and hard times? (YOUR OWN relatives = parents, brothers, sisters, etc.)

- 01 No or little support
- 02 Some support
- 03 A lot of support
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

41. How much support do (did) you feel from your SPOUSE'S relatives for keeping your marriage healthy in good times and hard times?

(SPOUSE'S relatives = your in-laws)

- 01 No or little support
- 02 Some support
- 03 A lot of support
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

42. How much support do (did) you feel from your FRIENDS for keeping your marriage healthy in good times and hard times?

- 01 No or little support (if no friends = no support)
- 02 Some support
- 03 A lot of support
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

43. How much support do (did) you feel from your FAITH COMMUNITY for keeping your marriage healthy in good times and hard times?

- 01 No or little support
- 02 Some support
- 03 A lot of support
- 04 Do not have a faith community/NA
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

44. How much support do (did) you feel from your LOCAL COMMUNITY for keeping your marriage healthy in good times and hard times?

- 01 No or little support
- 02 Some support
- 03 A lot of support
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

DIVORCE

**(Ask screener question of everyone, except those who were never married Q18=5
If answer to Q18 = 3, backfill and make Q45 = 1)**

45. Have you ever been divorced?

01 yes

02 no (**skip to Q54 if Q18=1, skip to Q59 if Q19=1 or Q18=6, otherwise skip to Q68**)

88 don't know (**skip to Q54 if Q18=1, skip to Q59 if Q19=1 or Q18=6, otherwise skip to Q68**)

99 refused (**skip to Q54 if Q18=1, skip to Q59 if Q19=1 or Q18=6, otherwise skip to Q68**)

Questions for respondents who have been divorced

Ask if Q45 = 1 or Q18 = 3

46. How many times have you been divorced?

RANGE: 1-99 Times

88 Don't know

99 Refused

47. About how many years were you married before you divorced?

RANGE: 1-85 YEARS, ROUND DOWN

88 Don't know

99 Refused

48. How old were you when you married your first spouse? [88 = don't know, 99 = refused]

49. There are many reasons why marriages fail. I'm going to read a list of possible reasons. Looking back at your (first) divorce, tell me whether or not each factor was a MAJOR contributor to your divorce. For each one, you can say "Major Factor, Minor Factor, or Not at All." (code: 1-3) ROTATE STEMS

01 Getting married too young

02 Little or no helpful pre-marital preparation

03 Financial problems or economic hardship

04 Religious differences between partners

05 Violence/physical abuse

06 Infidelity or extra-marital affairs

07 Too much conflict and arguing

08 Lack of commitment by one or both persons to make it work

09 Lack of support from family members

10 Alcohol/drug abuse

11 Lack of communication

12 Unrealistic expectations

13 Issues related to children

51. Looking back at your (first) divorce, do you think that you or your spouse could have worked harder to save your marriage?

01 Yes, I could have worked harder

02 Yes, my spouse could have worked harder

03 Yes, we both could have worked harder

04 No, we worked hard enough.

88 Don't know

99 Refused

51c. Did you and your former spouse have any children under the age of 18 living with you when the (first) divorce took place, either biological or adopted children?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

51d. **[If answered Yes to Q51c, ask:]** To what extent do you think the divorce negatively affected the children?

- 01 To a great extent
- 02 To some extent
- 03 A little
- 04 Not at all
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

53. Did you and your former spouse have premarital education or marriage preparation, such as educational classes, a workshop, or counseling before your marriage?

- 01 yes
- 02 no
- 88 don't know
- 99 refused

RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

(Ask only of respondents who are married Q18=1)

54. Sometimes couples experience problems in their marriage and may have thoughts of ending their marriage. Have you ever thought your marriage might be at risk for divorce? (READ OPTIONS)

- 01 never
- 02 yes, but not within the last 3 years
- 03 yes, within the last 3 years
- 04 yes, within the last year
- 05 yes, currently
- 88 don't know (Don't Read)
- 99 refused (Don't Read)

55. Have you and your spouse ever discussed the idea of divorce?

- 01 never
- 02 yes, but not within the last 3 years
- 03 yes, within the last 3 years
- 04 yes, within the last year
- 05 yes, currently
- 88 don't know (Don't Read)
- 99 refused (Don't Read)

56. Have you and your spouse ever separated from one another, legally or otherwise?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No (Skip to **Q58**)
- 88 don't know (Skip to **Q58**)
- 99 refused (Skip to **Q58**)

(Ask only of respondents who are married Q18=1 or separated Q18=4)

57. How many months were you (have you been) separated?

[RANGE 0 to 99. Less than one month = 0]

888=Don't Know

999= Refused

57a. How many years were you married before you separated? [88 = Don't know; 99 = Refused; Less than one year =00]

58. Would you marry the same person if you had it to do all over again?

01 Yes

02 No

88 Don't know

99 Refused

58a. Do (did) you expect to be married for life?

01 Yes

02 No

88 Don't know

99 Refused

(Ask of respondents who are married or in a relationship Q18=1 OR Q18=6 OR Q19=1)

59. Please answer each of the following questions by indicating how strongly you agree or disagree with the idea expressed. My relationship with my spouse/partner is more important to me than almost anything else in my life. Do you...

01 strongly agree

02 agree

03 neither agree nor disagree

04 disagree

05 strongly disagree

88 don't know

99 refused

60. I may not want to be with my spouse/partner a few years from now. Do you...

01 strongly agree

02 agree

03 neither agree nor disagree

04 disagree

05 strongly disagree

88 don't know

99 refused

61. I want this relationship to stay strong no matter what rough times we may encounter.

01 strongly agree

02 agree

03 neither agree nor disagree

04 disagree

05 strongly disagree

88 don't know

99 refused

-
62. I feel trapped in this marriage/relationship but I stay because I have too much to lose if I leave.
- 01 Strongly agree
 - 02 Agree
 - 03 Neither agree nor disagree
 - 04 Disagree
 - 05 Strongly disagree
 - 88 Don't know
 - 99 Refused
63. We regularly have great conversations where we just talk as good friends.
- 01 Never
 - 02 Almost never
 - 03 Sometimes
 - 04 Frequently
 - 88 Don't know
 - 99 Refused
64. Now I'd like you to tell me how often you and your spouse/partner experience each of the following situations. How often does your partner express affection or love for you?
- 01 Never
 - 02 Almost never
 - 03 Sometimes
 - 04 Frequently
 - 88 Don't know
 - 99 Refused
65. How often has your partner gotten physically abusive with you when he/she is angry?
- 01 Never
 - 02 Almost never
 - 03 Sometimes
 - 04 Frequently
 - 88 Don't know
 - 99 Refused
- 65a. How often has your partner gotten emotionally or verbally abusive with you when he/she is angry?
- 01 Never
 - 02 Almost never
 - 03 Sometimes
 - 04 Frequently
 - 88 Don't know
 - 99 Refused
66. How often do you and your spouse/partner intentionally spend one-on-one time with one another, in other words, date each other?
- 01 Never
 - 02 Almost never
 - 03 Sometimes
 - 04 Frequently
 - 88 Don't know
 - 99 Refused

67. All in all, how satisfied are you with your relationship? Are you...

- 01 Extremely satisfied
- 02 Very satisfied
- 03 Somewhat satisfied
- 04 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 05 Somewhat dissatisfied
- 06 Very dissatisfied
- 07 Extremely dissatisfied
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

ATTITUDES ON MARRIAGE PROGRAMS

(Ask of everyone)

68. Some couples attend relationship or marriage education programs, such as workshops or classes with other couples designed to teach relationship skills. Have you ever participated in any kind of relationship or marriage education program, NOT including pre-marital education?

- 01 Yes (**go to Q72**)
- 02 No
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

69. [**If answer to Q68= 02, 88, or 99 ask**] Would you ever consider attending a marriage enrichment workshop or a relationship skills class if they were available to you at little or no cost?

- 01 Yes (**skip to Q71**)
- 02 No
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

70. Why not? (Multiple Responses OK. Record first mention)

- 01 No need for it
- 02 No interest in it
- 03 Isn't offered in my area
- 06 Other (specify) _____
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

71. [**If married already, married but separated, in a domestic partnership, or in a gay relationship answer to Q18 = 1,4, 6, or Q19a=2, skip to Q72**] If you were to get married (again), would you attend premarital education classes if they were made available to you at little or no cost?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

72. As far as you know, are relationship and marriage education programs, including marriage preparation courses, offered in your community?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

73. Which of the following should have a responsibility to offer relationship and marriage education programs? (ROTATE STEMS. YES/NO PUNCH FOR EACH. 88=DON'T KNOW; 99=REFUSED)

- 01 Schools
- 02 Faith-based organizations (includes churches, houses of worship)
- 03 Health centers and hospitals
- 04 Mental health centers, marriage & family therapists, and counselors
- 05 Employers
- 06 Government

75. To the best of your knowledge, does your local church or house of worship provide any of the following marriage-related programs: (Yes=01, No=02, 88 =Don't know, 99=Refused. **If respondent answers: "Don't belong to a church or house of worship" code as 03 and Skip to Logic before Q78)**

- a. Pre-marital education or marriage preparation?
- b. Marriage enrichment programs; classes or retreats to strengthen already healthy marriages?
- c. Programs to help couples who are experiencing difficulties in their marriage?
- d. Relationship skills training for high school students?
- e. Relationship skills training for singles?

76. Do you think that your local church or religious organization should do more in each of the following areas: (Yes=01, No=02, 88 =Don't know, 99=Refused)

- a. Pre-marital education or marriage preparation?
- b. Marriage enrichment programs; classes or retreats to strengthen already healthy marriages?
- c. Programs to help couples who are experiencing difficulties in their marriage?
- d. Relationship skills training for high school students?
- e. Relationship skills training for singles?

(Ask of Married Respondents Q18=1 or Separated Respondents Only Q18=4)

78. Did you and your current spouse have pre-marital preparation, such as educational classes, a workshop, or counseling?

- 01 Yes (**skip to Q80**)
- 02 No
- 88 Don't know (**skip to Q83**)
- 99 Refused (**skip to Q83**)

79. What was the reason you decided not to? (**Skip to Q83**) (Multiple Responses OK. Record first mention)

- 01 No need
- 02 Didn't know it existed
- 03 Wasn't offered in area
- 04 Too expensive
- 05 Not a religious person
- 06 I wasn't interested
- 07 My spouse/partner wasn't interested
- 08 Neither I nor my spouse/partner were interested
- 09 Other (specify) _____
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

80. Who did you receive marriage preparation from?

- 01 A church or faith-based program
- 02 A counselor
- 03 Other (specify) _____
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

81. Looking back, how helpful was the information you received in the marriage preparation?

- 01 Very helpful
- 02 Somewhat helpful
- 03 Not too helpful
- 04 Not at all helpful
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

82. To what extent did the premarital preparation strengthen your relationship?

- 01 To a great extent
- 02 To some extent
- 03 A little
- 04 Not at all
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

(Ask of Married Respondents, Separated Respondents, and Respondents currently in a relationship, gay or straight, Q18=1 OR Q18=4 OR Q18=6 OR Q19=1)

83. Have you and your current partner ever participated in any kind of relationship or marriage education program where you attended workshops or classes with other couples that are designed to teach relationship skills to strengthen your relationship, not including counseling?

- 01 Yes (**skip to Q85**)
- 02 No
- 88 Don't know (**skip to Q88**)
- 99 Refused (**skip to Q88**)

84. What was the reason you decided not to? [**After asking, skip to Q88**] (Multiple Responses OK. Record first mention)

- 01 No need
- 02 Didn't know it existed
- 03 Wasn't offered in area
- 04 Too expensive
- 05 Not a religious person
- 06 I wasn't interested
- 07 My spouse/partner wasn't interested
- 08 Neither I nor my spouse/partner were interested
- 09 Other (specify) _____
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

85. What was the reason or reasons you went? (DO NOT READ. RECORD FIRST MENTION, PROBE: ANYTHING ELSE?) [IF RESPONDENT ATTENDED MULTIPLE PROGRAMS, ASK ABOUT MOST RECENT]

- 01 To improve my relationship with my partner
- 02 To learn how to work through relationship issues
- 03 To prepare for marriage
- 04 To help make my marriage stronger
- 05 To cope with a problem in my marriage
- 06 To cope with a divorce and/or learn about co-parenting
- 07 To learn how to improve my relationships with my children and other family members
- 09 Other (specify)_____
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

86. How helpful was the information you received in the program?

- 01 Very helpful
- 02 Somewhat helpful
- 03 Not too helpful
- 04 Not at all helpful
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

87. To what extent did the workshop or class strengthen your relationship?

- 01 To a great extent
- 02 To some extent
- 03 A little
- 04 Not at all
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

88. Have you and your current partner ever gone for relationship counseling or therapy where you met one-on-one or as a couple with a professional such as a counselor, minister, or priest, to discuss your personal relationship problems?

- 01 Yes (go to Q88a)
- 02 No
- 88 Don't know (**skip to Q94**)
- 99 Refused **skip to Q94**)

If "Yes" to Q88, ask Q88a then skip to Q90.

88a. What type of person did you receive this relationship counseling or therapy from?

- 01 a professional counselor or therapist
- 02 a priest or minister
- 03 both
- 04 other
- 88 don't know
- 99 refused

89. What was the reason you decided not to? [**After asking, skip to Q94**] (Multiple Responses OK. Record first mention)

- 01 No need
- 02 Didn't know it existed
- 03 Wasn't offered in area
- 04 Too expensive
- 05 I wasn't interested
- 06 My spouse/partner wasn't interested
- 07 Neither I nor my spouse/partner were interested
- 08 Other (specify) _____
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

90. What was the reason or reasons you went? (DO NOT READ. RECORD FIRST RESPONSE. PROBE, "Anything else") [IF RESPONDENT ATTENDED MULTIPLE PROGRAMS, ASK ABOUT MOST RECENT]

- 01 To improve my relationship with my partner
- 02 To learn how to work through relationship issues
- 03 To prepare for marriage
- 04 To help make my marriage stronger
- 05 To cope with a problem in my marriage
- 06 To cope with a divorce and/or learn about co-parenting
- 07 To learn how to improve my relationships with my children and other family members
- 09 Other (specify) _____
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

91. How helpful did you find it?

- 01 Very helpful
- 02 Somewhat helpful
- 03 Not too helpful
- 04 Not at all helpful
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

92. To what extent did the counseling strengthen your relationship?

- 01 To a great extent
- 02 To some extent
- 03 A little
- 04 Not at all
- 88 Don't know
- 99 Refused

LEVEL OF SUPPORT FROM EMPLOYER

(Ask of Everyone)

93. **CUT** I am going to read some statements about the role of employers in supporting family relationships. Are you currently employed?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 99 Refused

94. I am going to read some statements about the role of employers in supporting family relationships. Please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements. Businesses and employers should offer benefits for employees and their spouses to strengthen their marriage relationship. Do you:

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

95. Major companies should sponsor relationship-strengthening programs for married couples. Do you:

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

EVERYONE ASKED

98. My employer is flexible and supportive when it comes to my family's needs. Do you:

- 01 Strongly Agree
- 02 Agree
- 03 Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 04 Disagree
- 05 Strongly Disagree
- 06 Not Currently Employed
- 88 Undecided/Don't know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

OTHER EXPERIENCES (DEMOGRAPHICS)

(Ask of everyone, except where noted)

I'd like to ask you a few final questions for research purposes only. Your answers are confidential.

99. What year were you born? _____ (99= Refused)

100. As of last week, what was your work status? Were you...

- 01 Working full-time
- 02 Working part-time
- 03 Unemployed/ looking for work
- 06 Not working at this time/and not looking for work
- 07 Retired
- 88 DON'T KNOW
- 99 REFUSED

101. **[If married, separated, or in relationship Q18=1, 4, 6 OR Q19=1) ask:]** As of last week, what was your spouse's/partner's work status?

- 01 Working full-time
- 02 Working part-time
- 03 Unemployed/ looking for work
- 06 Not working at this time/and not looking for work
- 07 Retired
- 88 DON'T KNOW
- 99 REFUSED

102. What is the highest level of school you have completed? (DON'T READ)

- 01 Grades 1-8
- 02 Grades 9-11
- 03 High School Graduate/ GED
- 04 Some College/Vocational Training
- 05 College Graduate
- 06 Post Graduate/Professional School
- 99 Don't Know/Refused

103. **[If married, separated, or in relationship Q18=1, 4, 6 OR Q19=1) ask:]** What is the highest level of school completed by your spouse or partner?

- 01 Grades 1-8
- 02 Grades 9-11
- 03 High School Graduate/ GED
- 04 Some College/Vocational Training
- 05 College Graduate
- 06 Post Graduate/Professional School
- 99 Don't Know/Refused

104. Would you please tell me what ethnic group you most identify with?

- 01 Hispanic/Latino
- 02 Black/African American
- 03 Chinese
- 04 Korean
- 05 Vietnamese
- 06 Japanese
- 04 Pacific Islander
- 05 Caucasian
- 06 Native American
- 07 Other (Specify) _____
- 99 Don't Know/Refused (DON'T READ)

105. **[If married, separated, or in a relationship Q18=1, 4, 6 or Q19=1]** What is the ethnic background of your partner or spouse?

- 01 Hispanic/Latino
- 02 Black/African American
- 03 Chinese
- 04 Korean
- 05 Vietnamese
- 06 Japanese
- 04 Pacific Islander
- 05 Caucasian
- 06 Native American
- 07 Other (Specify) _____
- 99 Don't Know/Refused (DON'T READ)

105a. What is your first language? (Don't read)

- 01 English
- 02 Spanish
- 03 Chinese
- 04 Tagalog
- 05 Vietnamese
- 06 Korean
- 07 Armenian
- 08 Japanese
- 09 Persian
- 10 European language (German, French, Russian, etc.)
- 11 Other (Specify) _____
- 99 Don't Know/Refused (DON'T READ)

105b. **[If married, separated, or in relationship Q18=1, 4, 6 OR Q19=1) ask:]** What is the first language of your partner or spouse? (Don't read)

- 01 English
- 02 Spanish
- 03 Chinese
- 04 Tagalog
- 05 Vietnamese
- 06 Korean
- 07 Armenian
- 08 Japanese
- 09 Persian
- 10 European language (German, French, Russian, etc.)
- 11 Other (Specify) _____
- 99 Don't Know/Refused (DON'T READ)

105c. Were you born in the United States?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 99 Don't Know/Refused

105d. Were your biological parents born in the United States?

- 01 Yes, both parents
- 02 Yes, one parent
- 03 No, neither parent
- 99 Don't Know/Refused

105e. How many of your biological grandparents were born in the United States? [Range 0-4. 99 = Don't Know/Refused]

105f. **[If married, separated, or in relationship Q18=1, 4, 6 OR Q19=1) ask:]** Was your spouse or partner born in the United States?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 99 Don't Know/Refused

105g. **[If married, separated, or in relationship Q18=1, 4, 6 OR Q19=1) ask:]** Were the biological parents of your spouse or partner born in the United States?

- 01 Yes, both parents
- 02 Yes, one parent
- 03 No, neither parent
- 99 Don't Know/Refused

106. I am going to read some categories of household income. Please stop me when I reach the category of your total 2007 annual household income, before taxes:

- 1 Less than \$15,000
- 2 More than \$15,000 but less than \$30,000
- 3 More than \$30,000 but less than \$50,000
- 4 More than \$50,000 but less than \$75,000
- 5 More than \$75,000 but less than \$100,000
- 6 More than \$100,000 but less than \$150,000
- 7 More than \$150,000 but less than \$200,000
- 8 Over \$200,000
- 9 Refused (DON'T READ)

107. Since you turned 18, have you ever received, or are you currently receiving, financial assistance from the government, not including college grants, college loans, or Social Security benefits? (If respondent answers "yes," probe, is that currently or in the past?)

- 01 Yes, currently
- 02 Yes, in the past
- 03 No, not ever
- 88 Don't Know
- 99 REFUSED

108. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as:

- 01 Very Liberal
- 02 Liberal
- 03 Moderate--Middle of the Road
- 04 Conservative
- 05 Very Conservative
- 88 Don't Know
- 99 Refused

108a. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, a Libertarian, an Independent, or something else?

- 01 Republican
- 02 Democrat
- 03 Libertarian
- 04 Independent
- 88 Don't Know
- 99 Refused

109. Do you consider yourself to be:

- 01 Heterosexual
- 02 Gay or Lesbian
- 04 Bisexual
- 05 Other (DON'T READ)
- 88 Don't Know (DON'T READ)
- 99 Refused (DON'T READ)

110. Have you ever lived with a person you were romantically involved with, but not married to?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 88 Don't Know
- 99 Refused

111. Which of the following choices most closely describes your religious preference?

- 01 Catholic
- 02 Protestant
- 03 Orthodox
- 04 Mormon
- 05 Jewish
- 06 Muslim
- 07 Hindu
- 08 Buddhist
- 09 Other religious preference [SPECIFY]
- 10 No religious preference
- 88 unsure/don't know
- 99 refused

111a. **[If answer to Q111= 02 Protestant, ask:]** What is your denomination or religious affiliation?

- African Methodist Episcopal
- Apostolic Assembly
- Assemblies of God
- Baptist (American)
- Baptist (Conservative)
- Baptist (General)
- Baptist (Southern)
- Baptist (other)
- Brethren
- Calvary Chapel
- Charismatic
- Christian Church/ Church of Christ
- Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA)
- Church of God
- Church of God in Christ
- Covenant (Evangelical Covenant)
- Disciples of Christ
- Episcopal/Anglican
- Evangelical Free
- Foursquare
- Free Methodist
- Fundamentalist/Bible Churches
- Holiness
- Independent
- Lutheran (ELCA)
- Lutheran (Missouri)
- Lutheran (Wisconsin)
- Lutheran (other)
- Mennonite
- Methodist (United Methodist)
- Nazarene

Non Denominational/Interdenominational
Pentecostal
Presbyterian
Quaker/Friends
Reformed
Salvation Army
Seventh Day Adventist
Unitarian-Universalist
United Church of Christ
Unity
Vineyard
Wesleyan
Other [Specify]
88 Don't Know
99 Refused

112. **[If married, separated, or in a relationship Q18=1, 4, 6 or Q19=1]** Do you and your spouse/partner share the same, similar, or different religious preferences?

- 01 The same
- 02 Similar
- 03 Different
- 88 Don't Know
- 99 REFUSED

113. Aside from funerals and weddings, how often do you attend religious services? Would you say...

- 01 never, or almost never
- 02 occasionally, but less than once per month
- 03 one to three times per month
- 04 one or more times per week
- 88 Don't Know
- 99 REFUSED

114. **[If married, separated, or in a relationship Q18=1, 4, 6 or Q19=1]** When you attend a religious service, how often does your spouse or partner attend the same service?

Would you say:

- 01 All the time
- 02 Some of the time
- 03 Rarely
- 04 Never
- 88 Don't Know
- 99 REFUSED

115. All things considered, how religious would you say you are?

- 01 Very religious
- 02 Somewhat religious
- 03 Not too religious
- 04 Not at all religious
- 88 Don't Know
- 99 REFUSED

116. [If married, separated, or in a relationship Q18=1, 4, 6 or Q19=1] How religious is your spouse/partner?

- 01 Very religious
- 02 Somewhat religious
- 03 Not too religious
- 04 Not at all religious
- 88 Don't Know
- 99 REFUSED

117. Note Language (English, Spanish)

118. In what county do you live? (list to be included, 58 possible counties. 99 = "don't know/refused")

119. What is your zip code ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

That concludes our survey. Thank you very much for your time.

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ABOUT CALIFORNIA HEALTHY MARRIAGES COALITION

The California Healthy Marriages Coalition (CHMC) is a pioneering non-profit organization that works throughout California to improve the well-being of children by strengthening the relationship of parents through Marriage Education and Relationship Skills classes.

In 2006, CHMC received a five-year, \$11.9 Million grant from Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (HHS/ACF), the largest grant ever awarded by HHS/ACF in support of Healthy Marriages.

Through this funding, CHMC partners with a network of 23 faith- and community-based organizations (FBCOs) throughout California. Each of CHMC's funded partner organizations is a coalition consisting of many other FBCOs through which they deliver Marriage Education and Relationship Skills classes, enabling CHMC to reach California's diverse population by traversing the key demographic dimensions of geography, ethnic/cultural differences, and agency-type FBCOs.

As a result of these efforts, CHMC expects to see a decline in the marriage/divorce ratio, a reduction in child abuse, domestic violence, poverty, criminal behavior, and an improvement in physical, emotional, and mental health.

Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant: 90FE0104. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.