

**Why Pre Marriage Education Holds the
Key for the Future
and is Cost Effective**

Howard J. Markman, Ph.D.

Department of Psychology

HMarkman@DU.EDU

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UNIVERSITY of
DENVER



Marriage Today

- In U.S.: Divorce rates stable at about 43-45% risk for first time marriages, Marriage rates slowly falling as cohabitation increasing
- In Israel: Divorce rates rising, 26-27% risk (2006-2011) (EU = 33%)

Social Costs of Marital Distress & Divorce

- Emotional and Physical Problems for both Adults and Children; School problems for kids
- Decreased work productivity
- Estimated costs in U.S. = \$112 Billion/Year
- Negative communication & mismanaged conflict are major roots of marital distress and divorce
- **Premarital Education** very effective at **teaching** communication and conflict management skills, increasing satisfaction and preventing divorce.

Benefits of a Stable & Healthy Marriage: For Adults

- Greater work productivity and financial security
- Fewer risks for mental health problems
- Better physical health (live longer!)
- More satisfying sex
- Happier and more friends

Benefits of a Stable & Healthy Marriage: For Children

- Fewer risks for mental health problems
- Better physical health
- Better school performance
- Less teen pregnancy & delinquency
- Do better in life!!

SPOUSES...do better at work,
...earn more money,
...feel happier in life.



Children growing up with two married parents
tend to do better...

...with friends,
...in school,
...emotionally.



Reasons for Divorce (FSP)

- Domestic Violence 13.5%
- Little or no marriage prep 15.4%
- Drug & Alcohol Abuse 39.2%
- Financial Problems 40.4%
- Married too young 42.9%
- Too much conflict 51.9 %
- Infidelity 57.7%
- Lack of commitment 76.9%

Major Response to concerns about marital distress and divorce

Couples Therapy for Distressed Couples

However most couples marry and divorce without seeking or receiving services based best practices in the couples therapy field

Another option is Pre Marriage Education

The Goal of PRE Marriage Education

- Increase the chances of couples having a happy, healthy, stable and successful relationship and marriage
- Mechanisms: Teaching couples skills and principles associated with a healthy relationship
- Couples may slow couples down to think and talk more about marriage
- Couples learn of options if they need help later on for parenting, children, marriage

PME vs. Couples Therapy

Couples therapy is delivered to individual couples, by licensed professional

PME is delivered to groups, by leader trained in that program and hence the reach of CRE is far greater

Psycho-educational, Preventative, Public Health Model

PME vs Couples Therapy

Couples therapy generally involves talking about personal issues and about the past

PME participants are told that this is a class, that they will not talk about personal issues except with their partner and will learn ground rule for talking without fighting and handling conflict

More appealing to men than therapy

PREP History

- PREP: Prevention and Relationship Education Program
- Founded by Howard Markman in late 1970s, early 1980s.
 - Early colleagues included Frank Floyd, Scott Stanley, and a number of others
 - Colleagues working on variations of the program over time = a list too long to mention here

PREP and I-PREP

- PREP began as a premarital, preventive intervention for couples with the goals of strengthening relationships before marriage and increasing healthy marriages over time and preventing marital distress and instability.
- Research-based, psycho-educational model
 - Empirically informed
 - Empirically tested
 - Regularly refined and updated based on new knowledge

PREP's 40 year Research Base





The Four **Danger** Signs

- Escalation
- Invalidation
- Negative Interpretations
- Withdrawal

Major Research Foundations of I-PREP


- All couples have conflict and disagreements over common issues:
- Money, Children, Household tasks, Sex, Religion
- Its not the issues that cause problems
- Its how the issues are handled!
- Fun, Support, & Commitment matter!

PRE Marriage Education Works

- Meta Analysis of 47 studies by Alan Hawkins and associates including Stanley et al (2006)
- Improve relationship quality
- Improve communication skills
- Improve ability to handle and resolve conflict
- Reduce risk of divorce (31% decrease in odds of divorce)
- 10% couples decide not to marry

PREP Outcome

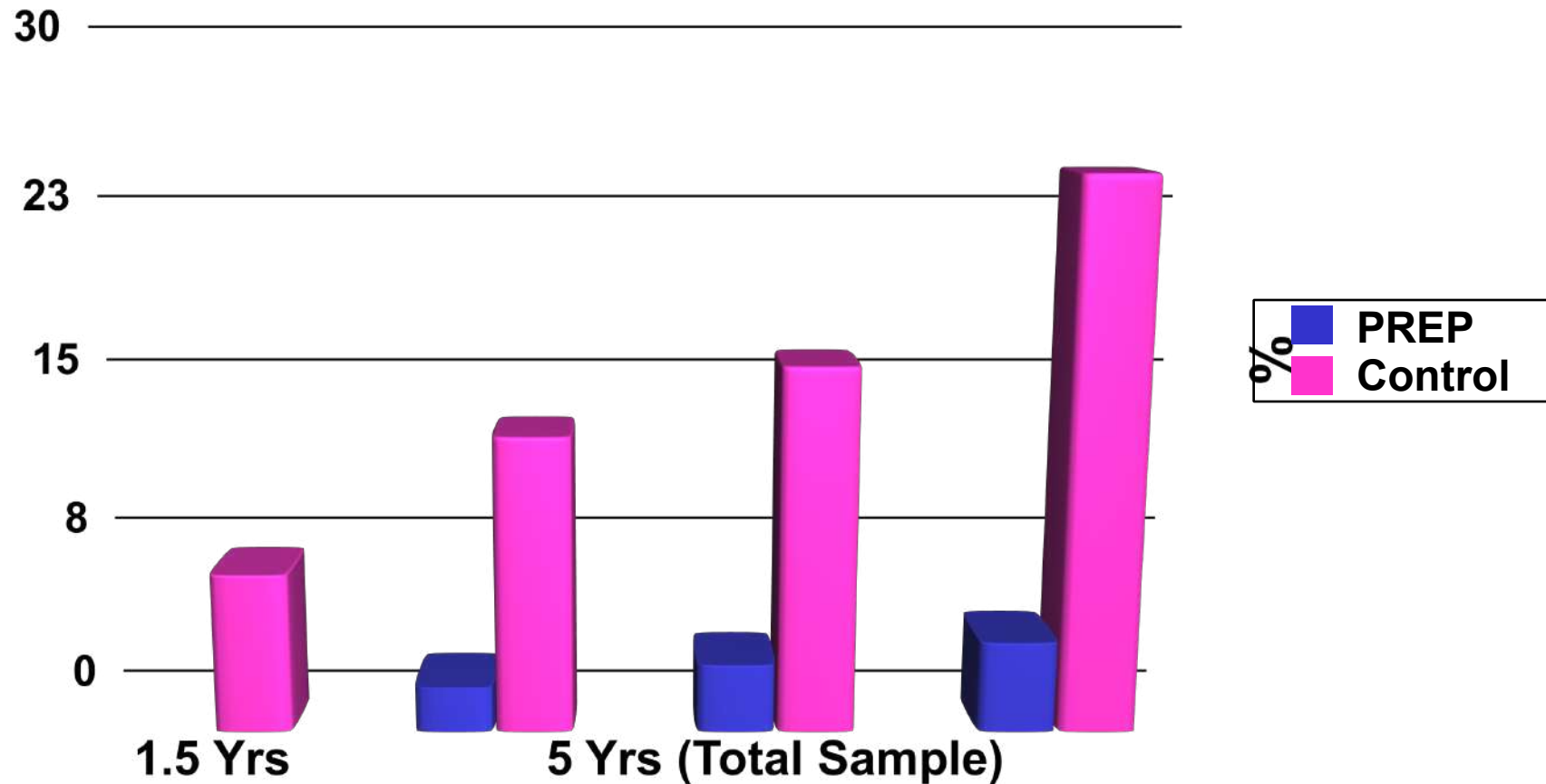
- Up to 5 year follow up:
- higher relationship quality
- lower rates of aggression
- Up to 13 years later:
- Couples who better relationships before marriage who took PREP had lower divorce risk than similar couples who had naturally occurring pre marital counseling



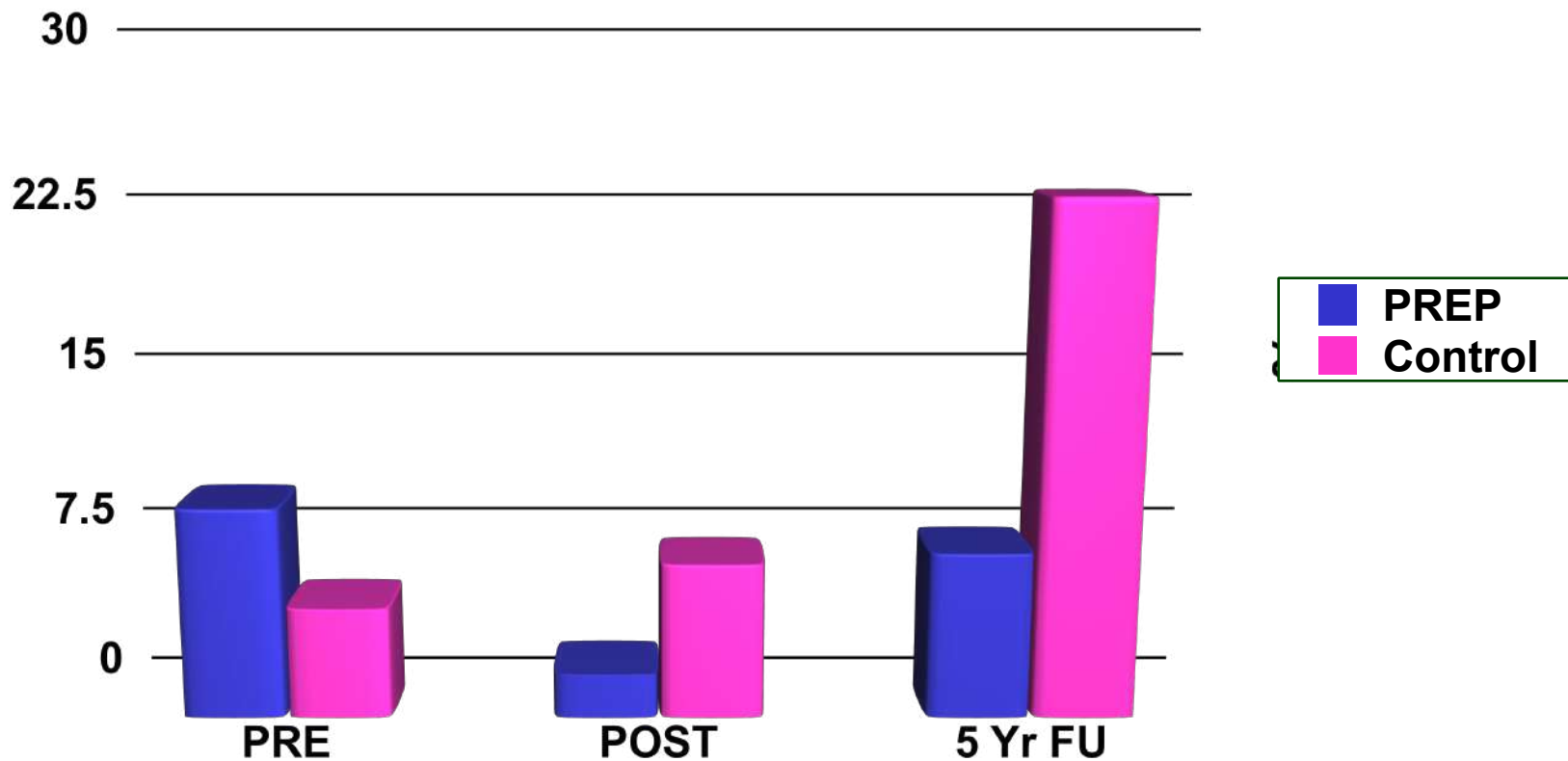
EPL (PREP) Outcome Study of Pre Marital Education in Germany

- Subjects: PREP: N = 77 CG: N = 32
- Age: 28 Years Average
- Dating: 4 Years Average

Germany Study: Percent Divorced



Germany Study: Non-Verbal Negative Communication



GERMAN PREP AND CONTROL COUPLES DIVORCE OUTCOMES (11 YRS)



ePREP







Scott R. Braithwaite

Brigham Young University

Frank Fincham

Florida State University

ePREP Treatment Effects

Variable	ePREP Improved
<i>Dedication</i>	
<i>Alternatives Monitoring</i>	
<i>Relationship Satisfaction</i>	
<i>Communication Patterns</i>	
<i>Physical Assault</i>	
<i>Psychological Aggression</i>	
<i>Depression</i>	
<i>Anxiety</i>	

So, PREP is Evidence-Based & Tested:
Here is another example from
US ARMY



“The Screaming Eagles”

- Home of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

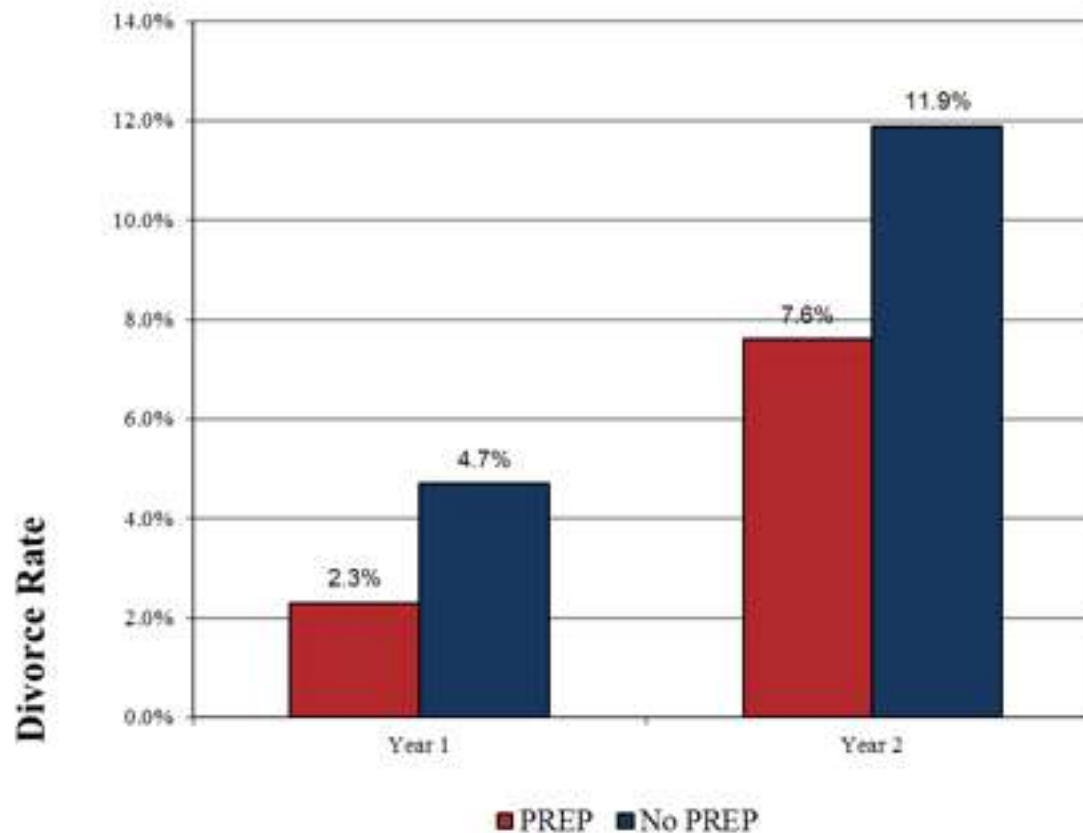




DEPLOYMENT
COMBAT
PTSD



Divorce Rate Data from Military PREP Study:



Conclusions: Marital Quality Matters



- Marital quality
 - Highly related to PTSD and stress regarding deployment
 - May be improved by marriage education

Government needs to fund Pre-marital education programs

- Singapore: All couples planning marriage can take PREP supported by Family ministry
- Over 5000 couples have participated in two hour version of PREP
- In US, \$75,000,000 each year invested in marriage education, with a focus on premarital education to strengthen relationships and prevent divorce

Cost Effectiveness of Pre Marriage Education

- In Utah, invest \$20 in Pre Marital Education (Alan Hawkins)
- Will return savings of \$16,000,000 in divorce costs over a 10 year period
- Assuming 25,000 marriages/year and 10% decrease in divorce
- Invest \$1.00 will save \$80.00



HOPE

- That the Israeli Government will decide that research-based Pre Marriage Education (e.g., using PREP/IPREP) is a cost effect investment that will decrease the rising divorce rate and increase the health and well-being of couples and families in Israel.

Thank You for Listening!

