**Persuasive Speech Outline**

Organizational Format: Problem – Solution

1. INTRODUCTION
   1. According to the U.S Census, nearly half of all marriages end in divorce.
      1. The National Survey of Family Growth which was conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that the probability that a woman’s first marriage will even reach the 10 year mark is only 64%. For males, the probability is 66%. **Show Figure 1.**
      2. They also report that the probability that a woman’s marriage would last at least 10 years was lower for those who cohabited before marriage (60%) than for those who did not cohabit before marriage (66%). **Show Figure 2.**
      3. Divorce rates are particularly high in couples that cohabitate prior to marriage
         1. According to research done by the University of Denver in 2009, 19% of couples who lived together prior to marriage had contemplated divorce,
         2. where as12% of couples who lived together after engagement contemplated divorce,
         3. and only 10% of couples who didn’t share space until after they were married contemplated divorce. **SHOW FIGURE 3**.
   2. Today I am going to talk about
      1. Problems with cohabitation
      2. Common myths surrounding cohabitation
      3. Solutions to a successful marriage
      4. And will persuade you to wait until marriage before deciding to live with your partner.

Transition: First, let me tell you why cohabitating leads to higher rates of divorce.

1. Problems with cohabitation prior to marriage
   1. According to the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, scholars have found a consistent pattern where couples who cohabit prior to engagement tend to demonstrate more negative short-term and long-term relational outcomes, higher levels of conflict and less commitment.
      1. Test the relationship vs. spend more time together
      2. Marital plans make a difference
   2. *Psychology Today* describes cohabitating couples that tend to “slide into marriage” by the term relationship inertia. Cohabitating couples tend to think it’s too hard or too costly to end the relationship.
      1. Give examples: shared dog, joint lease, joint checking accounts.

Transition: Despite statistics showing the positive correlation between cohabitation and divorce, couples, especially in western countries, are increasingly living together prior to marriage. Next, I’ll divulge several myths surrounding the perceived benefits of cohabitation.

1. According to **FIGURE 4** and a 2002 survey done by Gallup.com, there has been a steady increase in the number of American’s who live together before marriage. Pre-engaged couples often decide to live together for a number of reasons.
   1. An article from The New York Times titled “Should Couples Live Together Before Marriage?” describe that pre-marital cohabitation results from the thinking that
      1. Couples will have a “test drive” of the marriage – the problem with this is that the couple goes into the relationship thinking that if it doesn’t work out it can easily be ended rather than working at it to make it successful.
      2. They will get used to sharing space with their partner and have a more equal division of household labor.
      3. However, studies show that household labor is more equally distributed at first,
      4. but for those cohabiting couples who end up married, the majority of household work falls to the woman.
   2. Financial reasons are a factor.
      1. Cheaper to have one set of living expenses.
      2. However, the problem with this is that when it stops being convenient for one person, it is likely to come to an end.
      3. For example, loss of job, medical condition.
      4. Marriage is based on commitment and a spouse is more likely to support the other.

Transition: Now that I have discussed the problems with the biggest “supposed” benefits of cohabitating prior to marriage, I’ll offer some tips to creating successful marriage.

1. We can’t rely solely on refraining from pre-marital cohabitation to ensure a successful marriage.
   1. An article titled *Marriage Advice: Generosity helps build a happy marriage* from News-Sentinel.com describes the many ways a couple can be generous.
      1. Generosity is giving without expecting anything in return and should apply to forgiveness, compliments, respect, and romance.
   2. Communication is another important component of a marriage.
      1. Both partners need to be on the same page with regard to their relationship, finances, and other important aspects of life.

Transition: In conclusion…

1. Conclusion
   1. Cohabiting prior to engagement or marriage is a big decision that should not be taken lightly. And may be one of the most important decisions you will make as a couple.
   2. I’ve provided you with information on
      1. The problems with cohabitating
      2. Refuted the myths surround cohabitation
      3. And proposed several solutions to a successful marriage.
   3. Don’t let relationship inertia happen to you! Statistics show it is best to abstain from pre-marital cohabitation. But if you must, make sure that you and your partner have the same ideas for your marital plan prior to moving in together.

Sources:

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