

# Should I Get Discernment Counseling Before Divorce?

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Are you considering a divorce, but still have some lingering doubts? Maybe your spouse has already made up her or his mind, and even hired a divorce lawyer. Or, maybe one of you has already moved out of the marital home, and perhaps have even started dating someone new. If either you or your spouse is not a hundred percent sure that it's time to let your marriage go forever, then discernment counseling for couples offers a good way to help you get some perspective, before you move ahead to divorce.

When facing the idea of divorcing, people tend to see their options as limited to hiring a divorce attorney or signing up for couples therapy. The third alternative, discernment counseling, is a newer form of pre-divorce counseling that focuses on helping people get the clarity they need, in order to move forward confidently in a direction, perhaps toward divorce, or to couples counseling, or to some other plan they hadn't previously considered.

## What is Discernment Counseling?

Discernment Counseling is a research-validated therapeutic treatment designed to help couples who are considering divorce achieve a clearer understanding of the present situation in their relationship, the factors that have contributed to it, and the likely outcome of staying on their current course.

This is a type of marital counseling is centered on helping individuals determine whether they want to move ahead with divorce or with couples counseling to work toward reconciliation or explore some other option(s).

The Discernment Counseling intermediate therapeutic process usually can be expected to consist of 1 to 5 sessions with a licensed couples therapist. Unlike couples therapy, the majority of time in Discernment Counseling is one-on-one with the counselor, instead of mostly having both spouses present.

## **Is Discernment Counseling the Same as Couples Therapy?**

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Discernment Counseling is different than Couples Therapy. The latter aims to help save and rebuild the relationship, whereas divorce counseling to achieve discernment is aimed at helping people figure out if their marriage is a relationship that they really want to save.

Often, one partner is considering divorce while the other wants to save the marriage. In such situations, Couples Therapy is frequently unsuccessful, because that form of re-bonding treatment is designed to help couples repair or rebuild their relationship, which is often not an effort that the partner leaning toward divorce finds useful at that point, or is even willing to engage in.

These are the cases in which Discernment Counseling can be especially helpful for people in gaining the clarity they need in order to make the right decision for their futures, whether together or apart.

## **Who Can Benefit From Discernment Counseling?**

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Discernment Counseling for couples is appropriate when one or both partners are experiencing some uncertainty about the decision to divorce. This form of therapeutic counseling can be especially helpful for couples in which one person is more interested in divorce and the other prefers to try to save the relationship.

The therapy can help both parties move forward to make a more self-aware and informed choice and with greater certainty that they're making the best long-term decision for themselves.

This form of divorce counseling is not recommended for couples in which both parties are either fully committed to divorce or to reconciliation, or in which violence or coercion is a factor.

## **What Are the Key Benefits of Discernment Counseling?**

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Moving forward after a divorce, potentially to new relationships and even a new marriage is more likely to lead to success when individuals understand what led to their divorce. Without the benefit of this critical knowledge, people are at higher risk of divorce in their next marriage as well.

In order to make adjustments to their behaviors and decision-making processes, Discernment Counseling can help enable people to identify and discontinue repeating the same patterns of mistakes that can lead to divorce.

- Discover things about their own role in their relationship that they hadn't considered.
- Acquire insights into personality traits and behavioral patterns that can be modified, to help a person be more successful as a partner in future relationships.
- Resolve uncertainties that lead to anxiety about making a life-altering choice, so that individuals can go forward with the confidence either to finalize their divorce or to commit to working on saving their marriage.
- Potential greater mutual understanding and compassion, and reduction of the amount of blame and resentment that so often shape the dynamics in divorces.
- Potential reduction of the emotional and financial costs of divorce as well as the time loss.

### **Next steps for couples after completing Discernment Counseling:**

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On completion of Discernment Counseling, couples typically go forward pursuing one of these three directions:

- Continuing with a divorce.
- Postponing plans or proceedings for divorce and commit to 6 months of couples therapy, in an effort to save and improve their relationship.
- Continuing as they were prior to entering counseling, deliberating on options to pursue.
- Can Discernment Counseling Start After Filing for Divorce?

Couples can start Discernment Counseling anytime-either prior to, or during the legal process of a divorce. However, there is potential for issues to come up during the discovery portion of a divorce case that can cause Discernment Counseling to somewhat more complicated.

Therefore, it is recommended that couples already in the legal process of divorce consider pausing the legal divorce process, to allow themselves the necessary time to make the most of their efforts to discern the complexities of their relationship issues and come more fully to terms with their decision, before committing to go through with a divorce.

### **Conclusion**

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When people are considering leaving their marriage, there is often ambivalence about what to do. Taking advantage of the opportunity to receive Discernment Counseling can help them achieve a greater degree of clarity on the history and current state of their relationship, and stronger confidence that they are pursuing the right course for their future.

The Discernment Counseling success rate reflects the efficacy of this advanced form of divorce counseling, in helping individuals understand how their relationships have developed into their current condition. Further, the treatment can help many people learn

how to avoid repeating certain patterns of mistakes that have contributed to the decline of the marriage, and make themselves better prepared for success in their future relationships.

### **Why Choose The Law Office of David Pedrazas, PLLC?**

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In the past 20 years, Attorney David Pedrazas has helped many people in Utah get through the difficult process of divorce and move beyond it to happier times. Due to his excellence of legal performance and caring, over the years David has become one of Salt Lake City's most highly acclaimed divorce attorneys.

For an abundance of helpful information on divorce in Utah, or to schedule an attorney consultation, contact The Law Office of David Pedrazas, PLLC