“Happy Wife, Happy Life!” Is Marriage Really That Simple?

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Presenters:

Robyn Cenizal, Director, National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families
Sheila Weber, Executive Director, National Marriage Week USA
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Operator:

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Family’s Webinar, “Happy Wife, Happy Life!” Is Marriage Really that Simple? Today we have a great presentation for you, but before we get started, I just wanted to go over a few of the logistics with you.

First, please remember to turn on your computer speakers to hear the presentation. The platform does not allow participants to speak; however, you still can communicate with us. And please feel free to reach out with any questions or comments using the Q and A Pod, which is in the bottom right hand corner. Above that you can see the downloadable resources. This contains two documents that you may download by selecting the download files button and this will allow the documents to be downloaded onto your computer for you to reference later. Above that is the web links pod. These link to web links they will be referenced throughout the presentation. If you select one or all of the links and then select browse to button, a window or multiple windows will pop up that navigate directly to that link. So, the links of all of the resources are also available in the downloadable resources pod.

The last thing I wanted to talk to you about before we go over the agenda is that there are a couple of polls throughout the presentation. The polls will appear on your screen for about 15 to 30 seconds and then please select your answer. And then we will close the poll and discuss the results. Before we go over that agenda, we can actually start with the first poll, so let me go ahead and open that up for you guys.

And this is just to kind of get an idea of who is on the phone with us today. So please choose which option applies to you: I joined the webinar today as an individual interested in learning more about relationship skills, practitioner in the healthy marriage field, marriage family therapist, academic or educator, provider focused on human services, or other. And if you select other and you would like to tell us a little bit more about who you are, you can also enter that in the Q and A pod. And I’ll just leave that open for another five seconds. Okay, great. Well, it looks like we have about 30 percent who are in the academic or education field. About 20 percent that are practitioners in the healthy marriage field, 23 percent as an individual interested in learning more about relationship skills. So that’s everyone - we’re glad that you’re here.

And now I want to take a little time to just go over the agenda. Today we are going to do the introductions and logistics and we’ll hear a welcome and overview from the Resource Center. Then we’ll get to some key speakers from National Marriage Week USA. And they’ll go over the overview of their
organization and events. We'll learn about how to understand and how to recognize and strengthen skills necessary for a healthy relationship. Learn about free, research based resources available on the Resource Center website to strengthen relationships. And then at the end, we will have a discussion, of Q and A. And as you enter questions throughout the presentation, we are actually going to hold all of the questions until the end. But please feel free to send them to us at any point during the presentation and we will get to them at the end. So now let me just introduce our speakers and then we can get started.

So first we’re going to hear from Robyn Cenizal. And Robyn has been the Director of Family Strengthening with ICF since its inception in 2011. She has served as the Project Director for the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Family. In addition to ten years of federal level work in the family strengthening, healthy marriage, and responsible fatherhood field, she also has over 26 years of local government experience. She is a nationally certified family life educator and has authored numerous publications on promising practices associated with high risk, low resource, and culturally diverse populations.

Then we’re going to hear from two speakers from the National Marriage Week USA organization. The first is Sheila Weber is the Executive Director of National Marriage Week USA. She has over 25 years of experience as a public relations and communication executive. She helped launch National Marriage Week USA in 2010 and they did it to elevate marriage as a national benefit and to build a collaborative grassroots effort and public relations campaign to strengthen marriage. She was a President’s Scholar for her master’s degree in Management from NYU and has an Honors Degree in Journalism and Economics from American University. She and her husband are longtime residents of New York City and they have a son and daughter who are both married with children.

Our second presenter from National Marriage Week USA is Heather Grizzle and she is the Communications Director for National Marriage Week USA. She graduated cum laude with honors in Economics from Harvard University where her thesis included original research on giving and volunteering in the United States. Heather is a member of the Board of Salem Media Group, Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of Stewardship and a member of the Boards of Innovation for Poverty Action and Alpha USA. She and her husband Ben also live in New York City with their four children.

And then last, but definitely not least, we have Akua Gyabaah. Akua is a Senior Training Specialist with ICF and serves as the Training and Technical Assistance and Website Content Lead for the National Resources Center. Miss Gyabaah has over 20 years of professional experience that includes expertise in data collection, management training, technical assistance all related to supporting diverse local state and federal agencies. She attended the University of Maryland where she obtained both of her degrees and is currently pursuing a degree in learning design and technology. So those are all the wonderful speakers you’re going to hear from and I will go ahead and hand it off to Robyn who is going to kick us off.

Robyn Cenizal:

Thanks Bryana, and welcome, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us this afternoon. I know that we’re all very busy and so the fact that you are willing to take time out of your day to join me and the
presenters that are on today’s webinar is really appreciated. So, let me give you just a quick overview on the Resource Center, for those of you who are not familiar.

The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families has a twofold responsibility. We’re funded by the Office of Family Assistance and our purpose is to serve as a national repository which is basically a clearinghouse. So we gather, develop and disseminate research that’s relevant, as well as tools and other resources on topics of interest related to healthy relationship education.

We also provide free training and technical assistance to agencies that are interested in integrating healthy marriage and relationship education into their human service delivery systems. We also have a lot of free resources and Akua is going to talk a little bit more about our website and some of the really cool stuff specific to today’s presentation. But just to give you some insight into all of the cool stuff that we do, we have the website that teaches the media gallery, webinars, and e-newsletters. And if you’re not already signed up for our e-newsletter, I hope that you will.

I was excited to see that we have a very diverse audience today. And I think that you’ll all find something that benefits you in whatever role that you’ve joined us. We also have a calendar of events which highlights different events that are going on around the country. We have a resource library with richly endowed resources and a virtual training center that has eight different courses and those courses, if completed and if you pass with an 80 percent accuracy on the quiz, you can use those for CEUs. So just some cool things to mention there. We have a monthly newsletter. We’re also on LinkedIn, so if you’re not connected with us, please do. And we’re also on Twitter, so I hope that you will follow us there.

So Happy Wife, Happy Life is really a comment kind of often made in jest related to marriage. But the reality is that marriage is a little bit complicated, right? So not everyone grew up in a home where healthy relationships were actually modeled. Sometimes there was too much fighting or, in other times, there were never any disagreements. So you never learned how to actually disagree appropriately in a healthy way.

And then not only that, even if you grew up in a house where healthy relationships were modeled, stress is serious, right? And so families often respond differently under stress. So we all know that we shouldn’t yell at our kids, but sometimes we yell at our kids. We know we shouldn’t yell at our spouse, but sometimes we do. So learning how to navigate those situations and to maintain under stress and cope and have those healthy relationships as it relates to marriage is really important.

And so we focus whenever we talk about healthy relationships, we know that it takes work. Happy, healthy marriages require commitment, not only to each other, but also a willingness to focus on effective use of these core skills. And when we talk about core skills, we’re talking about interpersonal skills like communication and conflict resolution. And these skills are just as important in couple relationships as they are in parent/child relationships, community relationships, work relationships and so forth, but also critical skills like parenting and financial literacy.

These skills can be strengthened and they can reduce stress and improve communication. Kids don’t come with instructions, we all know that. We also know that there are larger and larger numbers of blended families now which bring together different parenting styles, different spending styles. And all of these differences can create conflict. Learning how to manage that conflict and how to focus on the
importance of the relationship and let go of some of the little things is really critical to maintaining a healthy relationship and having a happy relationship.

So today’s webinar is really about helping you identify free resources, strengthening your relationship and the relationship with those around you. Whether those are people that you’re working with or extended family members. And so I’m going to turn you over to Sheila and she’s going to talk about National Marriage Week USA and then we’re going to circle back and you’re going to hear more about free resources from the Resource Center. And be sure to type in your questions as we go along and we will revisit them at the end of today’s presentation. Again, thank you for being here. Sheila?

Sheila Weber

Yes, next slide, thanks. Yes, thank you guys. This is Sheila, Heather and I are so pleased to - just thankful for Bryana and Robyn and Akua for letting us be a part of this very important webinar. And we want to share with everybody a really wonderful opportunity. I think everyone in this call can take advantage of National Marriage Week USA. Let’s go to the next slide.

And so I just want to encourage anyone who’s listening, whether you’re an educator or a practitioner or a counselor, this is a great opportunity we all have to join forces once a year in a campaign. And you see that we have four ways that we are effective, which is we’re a movement, a national clearinghouse, a campaign and a source of help. And so let me just explain a bit.

We want to increase marriage education across America. So, we’re a movement to increase those classes and events and all the many ways that there are groups around the country who are already doing such good work. We actually want to mobilize more communities, whether it’s groups of faith or local non-profits, to just increase marriage education and relationship education.

Secondly, we are the only online national calendar where every marriage event in the United States can be posted. It’s free, it’s really easy. And we’d love to see 10,000 events all across the nation all year long put in this one national calendar where people can plug in their state and find something that’s happening near them and, of course, publicize what you are also providing. So it’s both a place for people to put their information and also to find resources. I think about if you have a niece who’s struggling and she lives in Kansas, you can go plug in the State of Kansas and find something that might be helpful to one of your family members or your friends.

And then third, we’re a campaign. So we do get media coverage and we’ve had a very good amount over the last ten years of national TV and national radio, commentaries, important magazine articles. We want to promote the benefits of marriage and especially share the research of how it reduces poverty and benefits children. We want to put out the message that marriage is worth it and how you can have a more successful relationship.

We’re going to talk later about the things you can do, but I wanted to just point out that everybody who’s listening can be a part of that campaign and can use this campaign time to advance your own work. And we will talk about that a few slides later where we’re going to share how you can use Marriage Week to advance your own work.

And then lastly, we’re a source of help. So, when people go to nationalmarriageweekUSA.org, if they’re struggling, they can find resources - if they’re in an emergency, a personal emergency for themselves or
for somebody else. But also, there’s a toolkit and resources that somebody can use to teach a class to their local YMCA or bring a video series or a church can- sort of home group or a Sunday school class.

So all of those resources are there. We do not create our own curriculum, but we are thrilled to be the rising tide that floats all boats. Of all the marriage curricula that exists, we want to make sure it is on our site as a resource for everyone. And I think we can - well, I’ll just say one more thing before we move to the next slide. I like to use the analogy of Earth Day. Earth Day started way back in the 1970s on a very small scale and today there are 2 billion acts of green in more than 200 countries around the world.

So we think that marriage can become a movement of these instances where people are being supported and encouraged, whether it’s just a one night Friday night special Valentine’s Day dance with an encouraging talk, or something that’s much more instructive and dynamic - you know, a 10 week, 12 week class. So I just wanted to leave you with a vision for a campaign where everyone can be a part of it. Next slide.

Oh, I think we have a poll question here and we would love to have your response. Have you or any other group in your town ever celebrated National Marriage Week? So if you have any awareness of that, either for yourself or others, we’d love to know. Okay, so that’s really helpful information that we’re getting there. So I’m glad to know that about 72 percent of you have an opportunity to try this out for the first time. Next slide.

Heather Grizzle

This is Heather Grizzle. I’m so glad to be joining all of you today. One of the most important features, as Sheila mentioned earlier, on our website is our national calendar. So it’s the only national clearinghouse for any and all marriage events, classes, resources. You can put in anything that you’re doing locally that others are able to access and then it will go on our calendar. So that, as Sheila mentioned, if you have a niece or a nephew or a friend or anyone in a different community that may be looking for resources for their own marriage, you can direct them to that calendar. So that’s how we try to be the rising tide that lifts all boats in terms of whatever the platform or whatever the event type, whatever the organization running it, we try to make as many resources available to people across the country as possible.

Our vision and hope is to have a marriage event or resource in every single community in America so that for couples who want to protect their marriage, who want to have a firm foundation for their relationship and who may need help or maybe just want to strengthen their relationship even further. They can find resources and activities on our site.

Let’s do one more poll. Is there an organization in your community that serves marriages that National Marriage Week should know about? Like to hear who and where - that’s part of what we do, we go through and find national organizations and put in their local events on our calendar so that they can be featured on our calendar. And so, if there are things in your community that we may not know about or may not be on the calendar, then we’d love to put those on our calendar.

Robyn Cenizal

And I would say those of you who are listening, you can keep in touch with us by going to our website and recording your email with us, just registering. And then you will hear from us and we’ll be in touch with you.
Heather Grizzle

It looks like we’re getting a few responses, as Sheila mentioned. If there is - even after this call and after this poll closes, if there are resources that we should know about, and I’m seeing the responses here to the poll. One person said not during National Marriage Week, but other times throughout the year. Just to clarify, the week of National Marriage Week, which is always February 7th through 14th every year, is what we use to sort of be that campaign that Sheila mentioned, the Earth Day equivalent to really highlight marriage and the importance of marriage at a time when people are already focused on love and relationships because of Valentine’s Day.

But the calendar is functional all year around. So we have events throughout the year from organizations all over the country that are designed to support marriages. So even if it’s not during National Marriage Week, don’t worry about it; we’d still love to have whatever is happening in your community be featured on that calendar so people can access it.

So I know that many of you on this call today are focused on young people and youth and ensuring their emotional health. And we know that marriage is a key part of that, that children and youth do much better if their parents are married. It’s more likely for them to thrive. So we just wanted to remind everyone of the connection. According to the Institute for Family Studies, children thrive when their parents are married. And if the marriage is healthy, children are more likely to be stable, to have more attention and less likely to be in poverty.

Youth model their parents when developing their own relationships. So we can obviously see the ways that a strong marriage for the parents is going to get future strong relationships. We recognize that marriage is not easy and we don’t treat it lightly, but we do believe, and our tagline is “marriage is worth it.” That even when it is hard, and we’ve all had those times in our own marriages, even when it is hard it is worth fighting for. It’s worth working on. And that our society as a whole, not to mention individual youth and families would be better off if the marriage rate was higher, the divorce rate was lower.

Only 22 percent of Millennials are married. And what we know is that if anyone follows the success sequence, is what it’s called, which is getting at least a high school degree, working fulltime and marrying before they have children, in that order, they’re more likely to not be impoverished, to not be in poverty and to have better financial success. So this is important not only for the emotional health of youth and children, but also for their financial success and future health as well. I’ll turn it back over to Sheila who will talk about what you can do to support National Marriage Week and marriages throughout the country.

Sheila Weber

Yes, I would love to see everybody listening to this call take advantage of National Marriage Week to benefit your work. For example, you might already host marriage events and reach out to community. But even if you’re an educator or a counselor, you could write a commentary about your specialty or a particular issue that you want to speak to and you can present it to your local media or even an online journal, because it’s National Marriage Week. It’s not too late even though we’re a couple days away from the start.

So you could put it out there tomorrow or the next day saying it is National Marriage Week and we’d love to see if you could put this commentary out. That’s something that I want people to have a vision
for. So obviously we say, the first thing we call people to start a marriage class or host a one-time event. It could be at the local library, the YMCA, certainly churches are a very natural place to provide classes. And then to be creative. I want to just mention one really fun thing.

One group in Ohio a few years ago but up a huge display in the center of a big shopping mall. And it said “National Marriage Week; free marriage counseling.” And they had organized a group of people to man the booth each of seven days and then they’d organize local therapists who would provide a free session of an interface, maybe it was just that one day and then another therapist would take another day. And so people were walking through and sort of spontaneously getting some help that they might not have reached out for. And then, of course, it was a win-win because some of the family counselors got some business and clients out of it. Meanwhile, they were helping people. So I thought that was a really creative thing to do, to reach out to your community.

And then secondly, we did, we were asking everyone to post your event all year long on the National Marriage calendar. And then three, to use our toolkit. Now the toolkit is very rich with all kinds of ideas. For example, we have a sample press release that you can fill in the blanks and send it to your local media and you fill in the blanks with your event information. We have a newspaper ad. It’s easy to put it in a Penny Saver and then you just tag in your event information.

It’s a way to get people’s attention about the issues surrounding marriage today. And we also have recorded a PSA. You could ask your radio station to play it because they do have some obligations to provide public service announcements. Or we have a script. I know there was a woman in New Hampshire that read her own PSA from this script and she got it all over the New Hampshire radio stations.

We have resources for churches also if any of you are connected to faith communities. So there’s a big section for that because the church is a very natural place for educating people in relationships. So we have church bulletin inserts and sermon ideas. And the curricula, a lot of the curricula that we provide, some is perfectly suited for a secular perspective and some is well suited for a church community. So those are ways you can take advantage of National Marriage Week. And I would love to see other people placing commentaries on behalf of marriage and other people getting local radio and local newspaper coverage because it is National Marriage Week, but we can elevate what you’re doing. So that is sort of the summary of everything we have. I think I can hand it back over to Akua to tell you more about the Resource Center.

**Akua Gyabaah**

Thank you, Sheila. All right, so we’re going to talk about the resources that are specifically targeted to individuals, couples and families. And again, these are free resources that you can find on the Resource Center’s website. So, what you’re looking at here is the landing page of our website. And the circle is around strengthening your relationship because that’s the area that we’re going to be focusing on. And that’s actually the area where you can find the resources that are specific to individuals, couples and families.

So, we work with both providers of safety net services, as well as providing targeted resources. So actually, we worked our menu so that our strengthening your relationship section would be right up front. So that when you look at our website, it’s easy to navigate to. So, once you get into that section,
what you’re going to see is that we have actually gone by topic area. So the different topic areas are communication, conflict management, family crisis, parenting, and financial management and then we have a special collection called healthy dating leads to healthy marriages.

So essentially what we’re doing here in this section is we’re highlighting the elements of a healthy relationship, how to build one, how to maintain one and also resources around each specific topic area. So, for example, let’s take financial management. So if you were to click on that particular area, what you will notice with this and all of the areas is that we really take a holistic approach to each topic. And the way that we’re doing that is that we are looking at diverse resources to help the user advance their understanding on how to apply the information.

So not only are we providing an overview of the topics, so what is financial management, what does that mean to a relationship? We’re talking about that. And then we also include a link to curated library resources specific to this topic. So if you were to click on the resource library, you would be sent to only resources for this topic area, so you don’t have to search around looking for what applies to this topic. And then we also have any applicable external resources. So we’ve linked to Smart Money, we’ve linked to resources from the federal government, any other things that might help with budgeting external to our site. And then we also link to a virtual training center and provide course recommendations that will help you, again, further your understanding on that particular topic and how to strengthen the relationship in that particular area.

All right, so part of our strengthening your relationships theory or section is that we have a special collection that I mentioned earlier and it’s called healthy dating leads to healthy marriage. And the purpose of this section is really to focus on healthy dating behaviors that will ultimately feed into a healthy marriage relationship. And so we provide things and then we actually drill them down by specific topics. So for parents, for service providers, for teens. So then you can take a deeper dive depending on which particular group you fit in to learn about how you can practice healthy dating so that your relationship, your marriage relationship, will be more likely to be healthy as well.

In addition to the sections, we also have multi-media resources. And we’re really proud of our relationship 101 series which essentially, again, focuses on common relationship dilemmas and this is in the form of a podcast. So the first one is Navigating Finances. We understand that finances can have a really great impact on the relationship, whether positively or negatively. So in the navigating finances, we talk about the common dilemmas that a couple may encounter around finances.

And then we also have one that is called Honeymoon’s Over. We all know, in the beginning we may have what we call our representative. So as that representative becomes more real, what are we doing, how are we navigating the common dilemmas that come up when we sort of start to let our guards down in the relationship. And then we also have a video series called Dating in Real Life or Dating IRL. And these offer dating tips for youth and young adults. Again, because we want them to start to practice those healthy relationship behaviors and to understand what those behaviors should be so that they can lead into more healthy long-term relationships.

All right we have a poll now. So let’s go ahead and look at it. And this is actually addressing the methods that bring the largest audiences to the National Resource Center. So how do you think most people get to us? Is it by direct link, external referrals, and a keyword search? Go ahead and vote. All right. So it looks like the majority of you selected keyword search. So ding, ding - you win a prize. Actually, that is
the most common way that people reach us. 39 percent of our traffic comes via keyword search. So that means that we’re really intentional in terms of our design to make sure that we have the keywords that would be applicable for someone who’s searching for our website.

And that’s something that we continuously work closely with our technology team to make sure that we’re optimizing those search terms. And then secondly, by direct traffic. So webinar, we attend several events where we provide people with our direct link so that they can come in and see our free resources. And then lastly, other sources such as being referred through a federal client, et cetera.

And then let’s talk about why people actually visit our website. So for the most part, people visit because they want evidence-based practices for integrating healthy marriage and relationship education. So, everything that is on our website we do, we vet not only on our level, but also at the client level. So that we’re very intentional that the resources that we have are evidence-based or evidence-informed. And then also 58 percent want general information on healthy marriages, relationship education.

So a lot of that is who we’re talking about today, our individuals, our couples, our families. They want to know “how can I strengthen our relationship?” And then 39 percent, training and technical assistance. So a lot of our work is in this area. We hold what we call integration institutes where we’re targeting service providers. And our goal there is to help them to integrate healthy relationship education into their normal service provision. We do that by actually going state to state. And I believe as of this year that we would have visited every single state. So that is something that we really work towards this project.

Also partnership development, so collaboration is something that we really work towards and we actually help our stakeholders and people that visit our website, as well as go to participate in our integration institute, on partnership development. Leveraging the resources of other organizations in their area all towards the goal of serving their customers. And then 28 percent program and implementation and then other. So this is why you are usually visiting our website.

So how do individuals, couples, how do you all, how does anyone connect with us? So first it’s our website. Of course, the web link here, healthymarriageandfamilies.org. We also have a help desk number, which is listed here. And individuals, couples, service providers can call and ask us for assistance and free resources. They can call and ask a question. There are also available by email, by mail. And then also our drop in, as I mentioned earlier, we are on social media. So we are on Twitter and LinkedIn. We may expand to other platforms, but currently we Tweet and post on a daily basis. So please do follow us on social media. And then I’m going to go ahead and pass it on to Robyn for questions and answers. Thank you.

Robyn Cenizal:

Thank you so much - thanks, Akua. And thanks Sheila and Heather as well. So we heard Sheila and Heather talk about Healthy Marriage Week, USA and identifying. And please take advantage of identifying and participating in local resources, including workshops in your area. So that’s an important opportunity to strengthen relationship skills. And as Akua mentioned, we at the Resource Center offer lots of free web-based resources to help with developing and strengthening healthy relationship skills,
whether they’re skills for yourself, skills for your family members or for skills for the families that you actually work with in your communities.

And just a reminder, these resources can help highlight healthy versus unhealthy behaviors, but are not designed to fix relationships that are unhealthy. The family crisis section of our Strengthen Your Relationship section does offer info on agencies that can help if you’re actually in a crisis. But we definitely encourage that you seek out help and not stay in an unhealthy relationship thinking that accessing some of these resources can help with that. Unhealthy is unhealthy.

So let’s talk about some questions. So we heard the question when does Marriage Week begin? And that is February 7th through 14th, as we heard earlier. And then here is another - it looks like a comment. So, I’m going to share it with everyone, “There’s never a bad time to learn about something new, but oh how I wish this webinar would have been at least a month ago. I would have loved to get something together for this. Be sure to post.” Maybe have Sheila or Heather mention that they can do stuff year around and talk about how they did on the dry run about just making an effort to start conversations during Marriage Week is a good idea. So Sheila, why don’t you talk a little bit about Marriage Week as a starting point versus everyone thinking it actually has to happen during that time?

Sheila Weber:

Yes - you’re not too late. Marriage Week is a time to get people’s attention and we often say you know, it’s fine to kind of formulate a plan this week. And you can form a committee and perfectly fine if you have something going on in April to just put it on our national calendar. And we are just two days away, it starts this Friday. So there’s still a little bit of time, if anybody wants to grab our press release and just send it to some of your local newspapers or radio or TV stations and plug in your information. You certainly, it really doesn’t take that much time and it’s under our toolkit at nationalmarriageweekUSA.org.

Robyn Cenizal:

Maybe some examples of like proclamations and things can be done?

Sheila Weber:

Yes, we also have a sample proclamation that your mayor can put forth or your governor if you have those connections. We do have that language under the toolkit. And you know, so actually we have a few days and it runs from next Friday to Friday, so it would be plenty of time to get the attention of somebody locally, which is easier than to get via national attention. So it’s really not too late. Yeah, you would have to grab some of our toolkit information and use some of the pro forma things we’ve already put out, the sample press release and the PSA.

But I would encourage people to go ahead after the call and look at nationalmarriageweekUSA.org and then click toolkit and see if there’s something. But no matter what, please put your event on the national calendar. That way you’ll be recorded and especially if people click into your state, they’ll find the organization. Even if they missed your date, they will know who you are. They’ll find you as an organization.

Robyn Cenizal:
I think that’s particularly important for the healthy marriage, responsible fatherhood grantees that are around the country. But I’m also curious, do you have any other restrictions in terms of who can post on your calendar?

Sheila Weber:

Just, you know, it’s mostly marriage class related, but certainly relationship education is highly valued. And we would not turn anybody away that wants to have classes on parenting. It certainly - that all relates to who we are. And we care about children and their welfare. So that would be just fine.

Robyn Cenizal:

Awesome, thank you. And Akua, so you talked about the types of folks who come to the Resource Center looking for information, the types of information that they’re looking for. In terms of the strengthening your relationship section, what seems to be the greatest area of interest so far?

Akua Gyabaah:

In terms of strengthening their relationships, communication would be the area of most interest. So people who are visiting looking for resources on communicating better with their partners is where we see the most movement.

Robyn Cenizal:

Thank you. And I know you mentioned there’s a virtual training center and that is highlighting each of those sections. So if communication is the area of most interest, what does the virtual training center have to offer on communication?

Akua Gyabaah:

Sure, I’ll tell you right now. In the communication section, we actually have a course called core healthy marriage and relationship skills, communication. So it’s one of the four courses in the four healthy marriage and relationship skills series. And this course is essentially meant to use an inside approach for users to better understand healthy communication at a personal level and so ultimately to help them interact with others. So this is great for communicating in personal relationships, but in communication overall as well.

Robyn Cenizal:

Awesome. In addition to the communication course that’s in the virtual training center, there is a full blown relationship, education course. Is that open to everyone?

Akua Gyabaah:

Absolutely. The courses are open to anyone that would like to access them.

Robyn Cenizal:

And what about CEUs, are they available for the courses?

Akua Gyabaah:
Yes, we do have CEUs. So depending on your organization requirements, we do have CEUs that we can provide. You do get a certificate at the end of a course that you can present to your organization showing that you completed the course.

Robyn Cenizal:

So that seems to kind of wrap up the questions that we have on the table right now. I’ll allow a few more minutes if anyone wants to type in any questions. But in the interim, I wanted to kind of revisit our presenters and see if anyone had additional comments that they’d like to make. So I’ll start with you, Sheila, is there anyone, having heard kind of the rest of the presentation, anything else you’d like to add?

Sheila Weber:

Sure. Just if you would, anybody listening would like some gentle reminders to give yourself a little more time for next year, please go to nationalmarriageweekUSA.org and click register. And we do not overwhelm anybody with emails. There’s a few general reminders in the fall and then right after the holidays. It’s just ideas of things you can do. So if you’d like to be reminded well in advance of next year, please register your email. That really would help us stay in touch with you.

Robyn Cenizal:

Awesome.

Sheila Weber:

We also have a Facebook page and we have Twitter. The handle is @marriageweek.

Robyn Cenizal:

Heather, did you want to add anything else?

Heather Grizzle:

No, but thank you so much for having us to this meeting, to hear feedback. But thank you so much for having us. And I hope that everyone on the call can get involved with National Marriage Week and post events on the calendar so we can help more couples.

Robyn Cenizal:

Sounds good. And how about you, Akua, any final thoughts?

Akua Gyabaah:

Sure, thanks Robyn. So what I’d like to add is, as I mentioned we are on both Twitter and LinkedIn. We also have a monthly newsletter. If you are interested in any or all of those, please let us know. We’ll be happy to add you to our list. And also we post anything that’s new regarding content to our social media, so that’d be a great place to start. Thanks.

Robyn Cenizal:
Awesome. And so I would just like to remind everyone that although primarily we talk a lot about this from the perspective of working with social service providers and encouraging them to promote healthy marriage in their communities, we are all family. We are all part of a family, whether we happen to be married or have relatives who are married. And I would encourage us to take advantage of this opportunity to talk about National Marriage Week from a perspective of our own families. And what might we do as a partner in a relationship or a family members who have folks in our family who are married, what can we do to promote healthy marriages and what can we do to encourage and support those who are trying to have healthy marriages?

You know, it’s interesting when we work as service providers that we are in a position, and I know this from being a certified family life educator myself, that we’re in a position to often tell people kind of from the front of the room what they could do better or different in order to improve their relationship. But sometimes, honestly, we went crazy about - all the families that don't say anything. And so I would encourage us all to think about what can we do to strengthen our own relationships and what do we do to encourage healthy relationships in those family members around us and not miss this opportunity.

Valentine’s Day is coming up. Let’s think broader than just the happy hearts and so forth and think about what can we do to actually improve those relationships. Because here’s the reality, folks. At the end of the day, healthy relationships in the adults strengthen relationships for the children and we also set them up for a strong, positive trajectory. And that, at the end of the day, is kind of the point is that if we do better, they do better. And so it’s up to all of us to do better.

And so I hope that you’ll take advantage of the resources that you heard about today. Pull down those web links that are here. Take a look at the downloadable resources that Bryana has provided for you. And just take advantage of this opportunity to step back and say what can I do to do better in my own relationships and to strengthen the relationships around me. And with that, I’m going to turn you back over to Brianna who is going to take care of our survey questions.

Operator:

Yeah, I want to thank you all, again, for joining and thank you to all of the speakers who shared all the information they did today. Again, as Robyn just mentioned, please before we close the webinar, feel free to download the files from the downloadable resources and browse directly to those links. I know Sheila and Heather had mentioned the toolkit and the calendar which are both on there. And just as we close out, again, thank you for attending. When we close out the webinar, a survey will pop up in a separate window and when that window opens up, if you can just spend not even a minute answering a couple quick questions about the webinar, if you want to leave any feedback or comments.

And then once you complete those couple questions, you receive their certificate of completion for this webinar. So if you just do those couple steps then at the end you will get that certificate that Akua and Robyn had mentioned. And thank you again for your participation and we hope you all have a great day. Also, if you have any questions as we close out, again, our contact information is on this last slide here.