

The Stress before the “I Do”

The sound of wedding bells, Champaign bottles popping, horns of decorated cars, romantic love songs, and cheers of family and friends are some of the signs that the wedding season is here. While growing up, most girls have mentally planned what they want their wedding day to be like over and over again. All dressed in white, dazzling flowers and decorations, smiling guests, and above all saying “I Do” to the perfect man is what every bride-to-be dreams of experiencing on her big day.

Setting the date is usually a time of enthusiasm where the bride-to-be shares the thrill and delight of finding the “right one” with family and friends. Despite the happy moments, the pre-wedding period can be a very stressful time for the bride-to-be. Wedding preparations are filled with the tension of having a perfect night that represents the new beginning that the couple dreams of. Perfectionism regarding the wedding plan is a very common stressor on the bride-to-be. The irony of being anxious and worried about what is expected to be the happiest moments is what most woman struggle with.

The disproportional anxiety over the wedding details may be a sign of deeper concerns that the bride-to-be may be facing. Wedding preparations involves meeting new members that will eventually become family. Introducing new people in a family and making room to being a part of a new family is a challenging task. A bride-to-be’s in laws will naturally have family dynamics, finances, cultures, and values that are different from the family she grew up in. As a result, adjusting and accepting to be a new member of the family may cause tension and pressure for the bride-to-be.

Saying “I Do” is a symbol of letting go of the identity of being single. Once married, an individual is no longer as free, but rather sacrifices a significant portion of their freedom to be present for their spouse. Knowing this, marriage alters a bride’s relationship with her father, mother, siblings, and friends. A bride-to-be is then forced to grieve and acknowledge the changes and separations that may occur within what were considered to be her closest and most cherished relationships.

Wedding vows are the bride and groom's promise of dedication and obligation to each other, for the purpose of sharing a prosperous life. Brides-to-be often are worried about becoming a "wife", along with what kind of marriage they will end up having. Some people have grown up with parents that had a far from ideal marriage. Coming from a broken home or a family environment filled with fear, violence, shame and neglect can induce the fear of possibly getting stuck or mimicking a similar marriage.

Brides-to-be may also worry about future plans regarding their marriage. They may start becoming anxious about issues such as how many kids they want and when, managing finances and expenses, and making room for spending time with family and friends. It is very important for brides-to-be not to fall into the illusion that these conflicts will all fall into place. On the other hand, it is important for couples to discuss the big questions before the wedding in order to decrease the tension and possible risk of future marital conflict.

Almost every girl's dream of feeling like a princess on her wedding day is, ironically, often accompanied with sleep problems, irritability, physical aches, and uncontrollable worry about saying "I do". Learning to accept that simple imperfections are normal can help the bride-to-be manage between her expectations and the reality she is in. Brides-to-be should dedicate time to work together with their fiancées by listening to each other and leaning on one another. Even though the wedding may seem like the most joyous event in the couple's life, yet working together against all odds can help ensure that their big day is only the beginning of all the blissful moments that they can share later on.

Remy Elias
Psychologist
www.nawfalclinics.com