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Remarriage

It's tougher the 2nd

By Karen Hermes Smith
staff writer

In contemplating remarriage, special consideration should be given to the problems that come with it.

"It's a lot more complicated than the first time around," especially if children are involved, said Gerry Maynard of Family and Children Services of Oakland who has conducted several workshops on remarriage.

National statistics analyzed in 1976 indicate that 44 percent of remarriages wind up in divorce court, compared to 38 percent of first-time marriages, Maynard said. And most of the remarriages that falter are those with children from a prior union, he said.

Part of the problem is that the responsibility for children is split among five sources when a marriage breaks up and both partners remarry — the natural parents, two new spouses and the court.

The parent who is not granted custody of the children frequently feels deprived, which complicates his relationship with his own children as well as those in his new marriage.

THERE'S NO traditional way to handle the problems that arise, since divorce and remarriage are only a generation or two old, Maynard said.

The non-profit Family and Children Services has offices in Berkley, Clarkston, Ferndale, Pontiac, Southfield and Walled Lake. Maynard is director of family and individual counseling.

Remarried himself, he has conducted workshops for the Detroit area chapter of Family Service Association of America, Detroit School District's adult education program and Channel 62.

Before remarrying, divorced persons should give themselves a couple years to objectively look at what they contributed to the breakup (with or without a professional's help) and deal with the loneliness, anger and financial aspects that follow divorce, Maynard said.

"When you've done that, you have a pretty good shot at making it the second time around," he said.

Of the two individuals involved in a divorce, the "dumpee" generally takes a harder look at himself and his contribution to the marriage's failure than

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