

If you're living with and sleeping with your partner but are not married, that's called cohabitation. Many people think everyone is moving in together without a wedding ring. But is that true?

Statistics

In The United States Census 9% of people 18-24 live with an unmarried partner, compared to 7% that are married. There are more young people living together than married, but just because more people are doing it does not make it the best choice.

When you are dating your relationship focuses on whether this is the person you want to spend the rest of your life with. When you get married, the focus changes to balancing life together as a couple. You are learning to weather storms, support each other, and have fun together. From finances to children to careers, challenges come, and you can face them together as a united couple.

When you decide to live together, you're taking the dating things and the marriage things and smashing them together.

Attachment Theory

Children in families that are married do better in almost every area of life. Attachment theory says, "When I am in emotional need will you be there for me?" That ring on your finger is one huge way of saying, "I'll be there for you." And kids need that even more than adults do.

The Institute for Family Studies says children with cohabiting parents are more likely to experience the breakup of their families, live in poverty, suffer abuse, and have negative psychological and educational outcomes.

Single Parenting Verses Cohabitation

It truly is better to be a single parent than to live together. About half of the adults are single, and that is OKAY! Single parents can make awesome choices for their children. This may be a tough pill to swallow, but the world is full of people who will use you. Moving in with a "guy who breaks his promises to take care of you" after a "guy who is after only one thing" is not your best life and it is harmful to children.

Remember attachment theory? It is much worse for your child to experience parents who live together than to be in a stable single-parent home. The way each parent thinks about and treats each other, and their own selves directly impacts the way each child thinks about and treats their own selves. Their self-esteem, how well they do in school, and eventually who they are negatively affected by cohabitating parents.

Conclusion

A marriage certificate is not just a piece of paper, it's a completely different way of thinking about yourself, your partner, and your entire family.

Whatever you decide, consider all the information. You have the power to create a better life for yourself and your children.