Managing and Preventing Extreme Post-Wedding Blues

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Coping With Post Nuptial Depression

A couple’s wedding is usually happiest time of their relationship. Anticipation for the ‘big day’ builds as they prepare to make the biggest commitment of their lives in front of all their loved ones.

But the aftermath of a wedding is not always the happiest of times for a bride or groom. Instead of enjoying newlywed bliss, some people feel the opposite and instead go through emotions of anger, depression, stress or frustration.

What Is Post Nuptial Depression?

One in ten women is thought to suffer with depression in their first year of marriage, and in the US it is estimated that 10% of newlywed couples seek counselling. But why?

The months or years prior to a wedding are typically filled with excitement, planning and saving money — the wedding is the couple's main focus. In addition, they are thrown into the spotlight and are the centre of attention in the lead up to the wedding and on the wedding day.

But after all that planning and anticipation, the ceremony and reception come and go in just one day, and many brides and grooms then find it difficult to adjust to their new lives. With the excitement over, many couples feel a void in their lives that was once filled by planning and preparations.

Some couples find it hard to adjust to everyday married life and miss the pre-wedding attention that they had from their family and friends. They may feel like they have nothing look forward to or talk about now.

And with weddings becoming more expensive, some couples find themselves in serious amounts of debt afterwards, which can cause stress and strain between newlyweds who have to struggle with their financial difficulties together. This may drive them apart or lead them to isolating behaviours.

Many couples haven't thought much about their lives after the ceremony, and may be overwhelmed afterwards with feelings of remorse, regret or worry. They may look back on their vows and feel like they have made a mistake, and feel trapped.

Others believed that their lives would change and they would feel different after getting married, and become depressed when this doesn't happen.

Physical changes can take a toll, too. Many brides and grooms adhere to strict diets to ensure they look their best on their wedding day. After the ceremony they may feel like they no longer need to continue their diets. The resulting weight gain can lead to low self-esteem and they may become more isolated and depressed. Unhealthy habits can also increase tiredness and put a strain on the person’s body.

What to Do

There are a few things you can do to avoid or manage post nuptial depression:

- **Take time to not focus on the wedding:** This doesn't mean you shouldn't enjoy planning or be excited by the build-up, but be sure to pay attention to other things in life too. If you haven't neglected everything else in life in the months before the wedding, it will be easier to go back to everyday life.
- **View the wedding as a milestone, not an end goal:** Remember that you're not getting married to have a wedding, but to mark the beginning of the rest of your life with your spouse. Think and plan for your life together beyond the wedding day.
- **Do not be afraid to admit your feelings of depression:** Newlyweds can feel guilty about feeling depressed after their wedding. Talking through your thoughts and feelings with a loved one or even a mental health professional can improve your mood and help you understand the cause of your emotions, leading you to find ways to tackle the root problem.
- **Regularly spend time with your spouse and socialize with others:** Continuing dates with your partner or maintaining a social life can help deal with everyday life after the wedding. Planning time to spend with your significant other and showing the love and affection you still hold for each other as newlyweds can improve your mood and decrease feelings of guilt or regret that you may have felt after the ceremony. Likewise maintaining strong friendships and social circles can help settle you into everyday life, spending time with other married couples who can also talk to you about their post nuptial experiences may help you be more at ease.