

Religion, other factors contribute to successful African-American marriages

April 3 2008

A new study in the journal *Family Relations* reveals that unity, religion, and communication are vital to the success of African-American marriages.

Researchers led by Loren D. Marks, PhD, of Louisiana State University, conducted 30 in depth interviews with happily married urban African American couples, who had been together an average of 26 years. . Such couples tended to be rare in their economically stressed communities. As opposed to offering opinions and thoughts, participants were asked to respond to questions by telling stories about their lived experiences. Interviews were digitally recorded and then analyzed line-by-line, identifying prominent, recurring themes and concepts in the interview data.

The reported challenges to marriage were much like those experienced by families more generally in the U.S., including making time for family, balancing the demands of work and family-related stress, and providing needed support to extended family. These challenges were often overcome by relying heavily on a committed spouse. Participants mentioned their spouses as a primary source of strength during difficult times. Most couples spoke of turning to God as well, often through prayer or faith. Communication, unity, and trust were other important strategies used by couples to resolve conflict— displaying “effective management” of differences.

Source: Wiley

Citation: Religion, other factors contribute to successful African-American marriages (2008, April 3) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2008-04-religion-factors-contribute-successful-african-american.html>

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