

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

We Want Kids/We Don't Want Kids

The decision to have children or not is deeply emotional and the conversation about it can be filled with a variety of feelings from elation to fear of shame and regret. While either decision is perfectly fine it may not always feel that way. Many couples discuss this decision early in a relationship as shared family values are part of a good foundation for a healthy relationship, but with time things may change and that can be quite challenging.

There are many reasons to have or not have children, but all of them are difficult to talk about, from financial limitations, not feeling prepared to be responsible for another human being, or career ambitions. Yet it's important to have the conversation. Sometimes these roadblocks aren't the things that keep you from having children, but fear of change is natural and normal and before you embark on possibly the biggest change any person or couple can take on it's important to be prepared.

The financial aspect is certainly an important consideration. Not only deciding if you are financially prepared to take care of a child at this very moment in time, but what are your contingency plans if someone loses their job. Also you may want to consider how you are going to plan for the child's future (i.e. college savings, will, or trust). These things are necessary to consider, but most couples will probably always feel a little twinge of uneasiness when looking at their finances and preparing to have a child. Be prepared to acknowledge that this may not be the time to have a child as well. If you feel your finances aren't stable enough, make a plan for what you want to accomplish so you feel prepared enough for a child.

You may not feel as prepared as you want to be to take care of a child or you may simply not want the responsibility of a child at all. These are both good reasons to talk about what brings up these different feelings and how that plays into your choice to have children or not. There is no obligation to have children and if you don't want to give up the things in your life to take care of a child, you shouldn't and you should not feel bad about it. This is a personal decision.

It can be most challenging when two individuals in a relationship don't necessarily share the same view point. Be prepared to talk with your partner about what it is that you value in the life you have and the life you envision for yourself. What are the things you both want and how can you align those goals and values? Maybe it doesn't have to be having children, but by finding ways give back to youth based organizations.

When thinking about your goals and values it's important to think about yourself, yes when you're thinking about having children you can be selfish. What do you want from your life and how do children play into the vision? They should enhance your life and your relationship. If they feel like a burden to your life and relationship talk with your partner about that and determine if the joys will out weight the burdens.

Many couples say they joys always outweigh the burdens, but then again having children is not something that every couple does. While it may seem that way because every commercial, TV show, and image of a family has children, that doesn't mean that has to be your family.

All of these topics are important to cover, but they are by no means all the issues that may arise in working through the decision to have children or not. If you and your partner are struggling to work through these together it may be important to get some assistance. Your EAP is here to provide you support together or on your own to process through the struggles you're finding.

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