

Living Together/Cohabitation

The number of unmarried partners living together is skyrocketing -- it grew 72% between 1990 and 2000. Just a generation or two ago, it was scandalous for an unmarried man and woman to live together. Today, most couples who marry live together first -- "shacking up" has gone mainstream. But that change happened so quickly, it's no wonder things are inconsistent. Some couples find living together is easy. Others find themselves attacked by angry family members, excluded from faith communities, baffled by how to introduce each other, and discriminated against because they're not married. In some places and situations, unmarried partners can share a health insurance policy and get certain legal protections ; in other situations, they're considered legal strangers with no rights, even if they've lived together for decades.

At the Alternatives to Marriage Project, we generally talk about "cohabitation" to include same-sex and different-sex partners, those who plan to marry someday, those who don't have the option, and those who'd rather walk off a cliff than down the aisle. But this Hot Topics section focuses primarily on different-sex couples, which is what most people think of when they hear about cohabitators. Of course many of the items here are relevant to all kinds of relationships. Those in same-sex relationships will also find relevant information in the GLBT section and those of the "walk off a cliff, not down the aisle" persuasion might also enjoy our Marriagefree section.

In the Cohabitation section, check out:

Cohabitation FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions about living together unmarried -- and our answers.

Ten Ways To Improve Your Chances for a Good Marriage After Cohabitation

Many couples live together because they want to be sure the relationship is working before they say "I do." This list provides our best advice for those cohabitators who want to head to the altar someday.

More relationship resources

If you liked our own Ten Tips, you'll love these additional resources, support groups and related organizations.

Legal and Financial Issues

Whether you're living with one partner or many, whether your partnership is same-sex or different-sex, one day you'll have

questions. We help you find answers.

Common Law Marriage

There's a widespread myth that living together for seven years makes you married. That's not true! Get the facts here!

Cohabitation Books & Links

Our huge, always growing collection of the best stuff out there on cohabitation. Send us your additions!

Statistics

Looking for good, hard numbers about cohabitation and marriage for an article, report, or project? We've got the most up-to-date information.

The Experts on Cohabitation

Our collection of quotes on a variety of topics from the many sociologists, psychologists, demographers, and other experts whose work supports the perspective of the Alternatives to Marriage Project.

Marriage Boycott

Information about the movement of straight couples refusing to marry until gay couples have equal marriage rights.