

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Higher divorce rate among parents of multiples? What you can do to preserve couplehood in the face of parenthood

Englewood, New Jersey – In light of the announcement that reality television personalities Jon and Kate Gosslin have filed for divorce, much attention has been paid in recent weeks to the tension and demands of parenting multiples. Particularly comments, like Gosslin's, who claimed, "Parents of multiples have triple the divorce rate."

Though the Gosslins, parents of twins plus sextuplets, have played out their marital issues on their TLC program, experts agree that while it is true parents of multiples face additional challenges, much can be done to be proactive about a healthy partnership.

Dr. Naomi Greenblatt, a board certified psychiatrist and mother of triplets plus two "singletons," acknowledges that the demands that are placed on parents of multiples is greater than on those with single birth children. "Just bringing home one baby is daunting," she said. "The financial costs, emotional concerns and time constraints parents of multiples are faced with puts them at an increased risk for conflict."

One of the ways couples can ensure keeping their marriage strong, advises Dr. Greenblatt, is to anticipate the strains in advance and to have a plan for how the couple approaches them.

In her practice, Dr. Greenblatt very often finds that couples focus too much attention on childbirth education and not enough on what to do when the babies come home. "They need to acknowledge their lives are going to change," she explained. "I want to see expecting parents entering into parenting with expectations that are consistent with the realities of what parenting multiples are."

The biggest stress that parents of multiples face is medical complications from one or all babies being born prematurely and the financial hardships of supporting multiple babies. Such constraints can be difficult for each parent as an individual, as well as the couple as a whole and their relationship with one another.

Important to any good relationship, Dr. Greenblatt advises, is finding time to nurture the individual – an approach that might seem intuitive but most parents of multiples find difficult to justify or prioritize. Even relaxing for only twenty minutes a day in a way that is unique to the individual can be beneficial and is equally important to the long subscribed thinking of "date night".

For women, Dr. Greenblatt recommends a warm bath, listening to music, taking a leisurely walk, speaking with a girlfriend on the phone or simply quiet time to themselves. Men, Dr. Greenblatt finds, enjoy sports and competition which can increase their adrenaline rush but she also recommends going out to dinner with an old friend

which can help reconnect an individual with their own identity rather than just having their newfound identity as a parent.

When working with patients who are overwhelmed – whether parenting multiples or singletons – Dr. Greenblatt uses modern technology as an analogy to good mental health. Asking patients what happens when they forget to charge their cell phone and the inability to use their technology effectively the following day, she added, “And yet we don’t think of ourselves that way...we don’t realize that we essentially need to plug ourselves in every now and then.”

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