

Responsibilities of various members of a wedding party

Participating in a wedding party is an honor. Couples invite many people to their weddings, and the select few asked to be in the party are typically those individuals with whom the couples share a strong and special bond.

The role of the wedding party is not merely symbolic. Though it's up to the happy couple to determine how involved they want their wedding party to be, individuals asked to be in the party should know that their acceptance of these roles carries with it a certain level of responsibility.

Maid of honor

The maid of honor may bear the most responsibility of any wedding party member. Maids of honor typically help with the planning of the wedding, offering advice and opinions on everything from the bride's gown to the bridesmaid dresses and anything else a couple might need help with. If the bride asks, the maid of honor may be asked to organize dress fittings and attend them as well.

A maid of honor typically plays an active, and



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often the lead, role in planning the bachelorette party. Come the day of the wedding, the maid of honor helps the bride prepare and may organize the bridesmaids to ensure everyone stays on schedule. A maid of honor typically toasts the happy couple during the reception as well.

Best man

Like the maid of honor, the best man has some extra responsibilities before the wedding and during the festivities. A best man may organize tux fittings, plan the bachelor party, help make arrangements if the groom requests help and be asked to hold the rings on the day of the ceremony. A best man toast is com-

mon during the reception, and some grooms ask their best men to distribute tips to vendors at the end of the night.

Bridesmaids

Bridesmaids often help the maid of honor plan the bachelorette party, and they also help to organize the bridal shower if the bride chooses to have one.

Bridesmaids can offer input on wedding planning, particularly if they're already married, though that is not necessarily required. Bridesmaids also can help relieve stress on the bride by being as agreeable as possible when scheduling dress fittings.

Groomsmen

Groomsmen help to plan the bachelor party and may be asked to provide some support prior to the ceremony. For example, on the day of the wedding, groomsmen may be asked to show guests, particularly elderly friends and family of the couple, to their seats.

Like their bridesmaid counterparts, groomsmen can be especially helpful by doing what's asked of them without resistance. Arriving on time to tuxedo fittings and offering insight when they think it might help are some simple ways groomsmen can pitch in.

Flower girl/ring bearer

Often reserved for children, the roles of flower girls and ring bearers only require some simple participation during the ceremony. Flower girls drop petals as

they precede down the aisle ahead of the wedding party, while the ring bearer carries the ring down the aisle. If these roles will be filled by especially young children, couples may choose to have them walk down the aisle together.

Parents of the couple

Parents of the bride and groom typically play supportive roles but may be asked to give speeches during the rehearsal dinner or the reception.

The father of the bride typically walks her down the aisle, while the mother will likely spend the day of the ceremony at the bride's side as they get ready.

Parents of the groom do not have any traditional responsibilities, though the groom and his mother customarily share a mother/son dance during the reception.

Couples need not feel compelled to assign bridal party members these duties if they don't feel comfortable doing so. However, sharing some of the responsibilities of wedding planning can help couples enjoy the process more and keep party members engaged.

How to tame wedding-related jitters

Nerves are to be expected when getting married. It is exciting to be engaged and realize you have met that special someone with whom you want to share the rest of your life. But anxiety may creep in as the big day draws closer.

A lot of planning goes into a wedding, and often the pressure that comes with trying to create the perfect day can overshadow feelings of love and excitement. That is when wedding jitters may crop up.

Couples must recognize they're not alone if they feel a little uneasy as their wedding day draws closer. However, there are ways you can address and tame jitters both before and during the wedding.

Step away from wedding-related tasks

Chances are you have spent months with the wedding on your brain. In fact, it likely has consumed your daily life.

Take a day or two to do something unrelated to the wedding, whether you're alone, with friends or with

your future spouse.

Attend a fun event, go out to dinner, queue up several movies for a night in, or take a small trip.

Keep wedding details out of the picture while you're enjoying yourself.

Forget about being perfect

Wedding jitters often stem from being nervous about everything going to plan.

You may put undue pressure on yourself to ensure everything is perfect. But perfection is impossible, and the sooner you accept that a thing or two will likely not work out, the less stressed you may feel.

You'll be surrounded by family and friends who will help you roll with the punches, whether that's a torn hemline or a missing buffet item.

Guests are here to celebrate you, not pass judgment.

Discuss large changes to come

Some couples feel jittery because they haven't spoken about all of the changes ahead. These can include relocation, merging of finances and whether or not children are in your

future, among other things.

Stress can be tamed if you take a break from wedding planning and discuss these important topics.

Learn relaxation techniques

Learning to relax is important when dealing with anxiety.

There are many different relaxation techniques to explore. Some include meditation, yoga, deep-tissue massage, exercise or immersing yourself in a peaceful spot outdoors.

Some people turn to reading or other hobbies to relax.

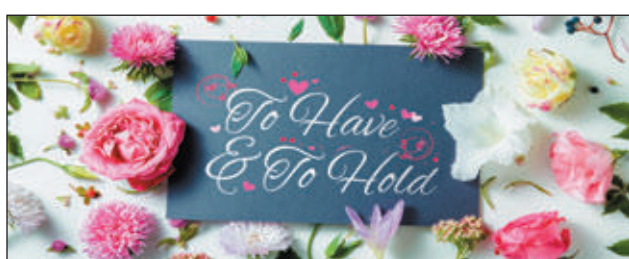
Do not look to alcohol or medication as an outlet to alleviate stress.

Talk to someone

If anxiety about the wedding is eating you up, consider speaking with a professional therapist or even a close friend or family member. Sometimes a new perspective is all you need to calm the jitters.

Nervousness when planning a wedding is understandable.

However, couples can take steps to tame jitters so they enjoy all that goes into tying the knot.



How to curate your reception playlist

After a formal wedding ceremony, complete with processions and "I dos," comes the part of a wedding that enables the happy couple to brush off the last vestiges of jitters and celebrate. A wedding reception marks the culmination of months or even years of planning. Oftentimes a hundred guests or more gather to dine, dance and toast to the prosperity of the newlyweds.

Certain components of a reception will prove more memorable than others. Food is one such element. The other component that tends to make a lasting impression is the music, which means couples curating reception playlists should do so with care and consideration.

Deejays and live bands can help couples choose music that fits the mood. But couples also can consider these tips when curating their reception playlists.

• Calculate your needs. Couples may wonder just how many songs they need for a standard reception. Unless you're working with extra-long songs, like "Paradise by the Dashboard Light" or "Bohemian Rhapsody," most songs are around three minutes long. That means for a four-hour reception you'll need roughly 80 songs. However, plan for moments such as speeches/toasts and other breaks.

• Pair songs with key elements. Traditional weddings have certain mini-events within the receptions. Music enhances these moments. Jot down ideas for the following components:

- Couples' entrance
- First dance (wedding song)
- Mother/son, father/daughter dances
- Cake cutting song
- Garter/bouquet toss songs
- Spotlight dance
- Any other special element

• Select calm dinner music. After a day rushing around, most guests are looking forward to sitting down, conversing and, of course, eating. Cocktail hour and dinner music should be at a low volume and not too fast-paced. It certainly shouldn't drown out conversation. Musician Peter Lee Johnson performs violin covers of popular Top 40 songs, and his music may be an option when choosing songs to accompany food service. Postmodern Jukebox is a group of musicians who take modern songs and give them a bygone flair. Their tunes also can be fitting.

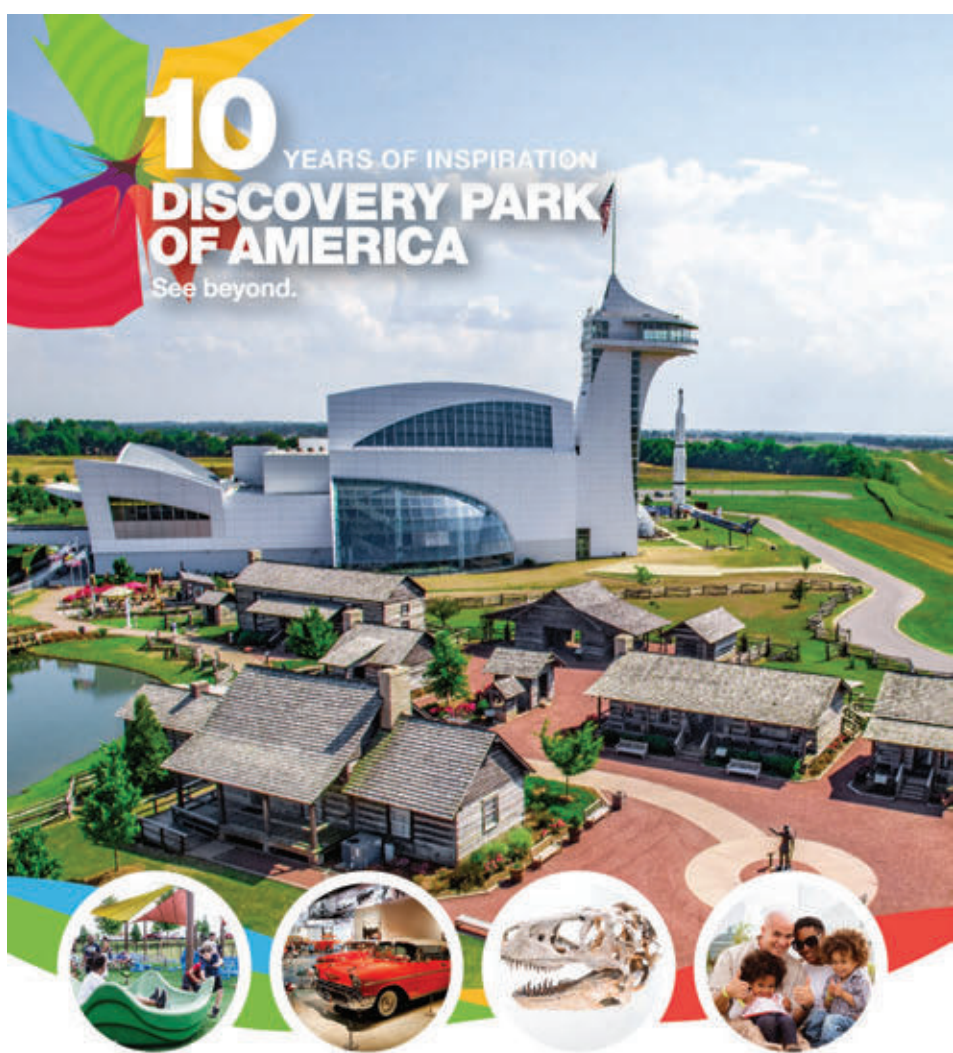
• Tie the music to the theme. Weddings that fol-

low a specific theme, such as a beach wedding, can be enhanced by music that coordinates to that theme. Think steel drum bands, Hawaiian stylings or even Beach Boys surfing songs.

• Be mindful of older guests. Some seniors may appreciate modern music, but they also may want to hear songs from the era when they were growing up. Pepper the song list with options across various decades to keep as many people on the dance floor as possible.

• Select a classic first dance song. Some couples opt to go trendy when selecting their wedding songs. However, certain songs have withstood the test of time. Such options include "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You," "Here and Now," "Stand by Me," "Amazed," or "Just the Way You Are."

These tips can help any couples put together a wedding reception playlist that will help to create a memorable celebration.



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