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The long term effects of divorce on professional adult dancers

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THE LONG TERM EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON PROFESSIONAL ADULT DANCERS

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ABSTRACT

The Long Term Effects of Divorce on Professional Adult Dancers

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The most dramatic change in family life in contemporary society is the divorce rate (Amato, 2000), with numerous studies analyzing and examining divorce and its implications (Rao, 2002). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 50% of marriages are terminated (Bowles, 2005). In addition, Martin, Specter, Martin, and Martin (2003) reported that the United States has the highest remarriage rate in the world, and second marriages account for nearly half of all current marriages (Wallerstein, 2005). Children who experience divorce are subjected to more stressful life changes, such as relocation (Harris, 1995), economic decline (Hetherington, 1989; Nelson, 1993), a decrease in social support networks (Bouchard & Drapeau, 1991), and changes in the arrangements of childcare (Laird & Hamilton, 1995). This can deleteriously affect the environment where children are socialized and nurtured (Martin et al.), and produce multiple changes within the family system (Cox, 1997). The purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth analysis of divorce by comparing levels of depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and availability of resources between professional adult dancers who were children from

divorces considered "negative", divorces considered "positive/neutral", and professional adult dancers raised in two-parent households.

Overall, the results of this study indicated that dancers who were raised in divorced families reported more depression, more anxiety, lower levels of self-esteem, and less perceived availability of resources than those who were raised in intact families. Additionally, results indicated that those who were raised in neutral to positive divorced families reported less depression, less anxiety, higher levels of self-esteem, and more perceived availability of resources than those stemming from negatively divorced families. Those who were raised in neutral to positive divorced families reported higher levels of self-esteem than those from intact families. Implications for treatment and directions for future research are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Each year the increasing rate of divorce becomes more acceptable in society (Ham, 2004). Fustenberg (1994) refers to the last 125 years as the "divorce revolution" due to an escalation divorce rate of 900%. Divorces involving children account for more than half of all separations, resulting in more than one million children experiencing their parent's divorce annually (Kali, 2002). Also, Wallerstein (2005) cited the likelihood of children experiencing a divorce before entering their adult lives is 40%. With this rapid and increasing rate of divorce coupled with the high birth rate outside of marriage, 50% of all children will reside in a single-parent household, creating major transitions and transformations for American children (Pryor & Rogers, 2001). According to Wallerstein, this drastic change could be the direct result of a more societal acceptance of divorce and women increasing their economic independence for personal fulfillment. Young people are significantly affected by the failure of marriages and the changing dynamics of divorce (Ham; Martin et al., 2003), and these effects can be seen for many years (Zubernis, Cassidy, Gillham, Reivich, & Jaycox, 1999).

Purpose of Study

The studies that have been conducted investigating the effects of divorce on children and adults have focused on the average population. There are no studies that

investigate unique populations (e.g., entertainers). This investigation will provide an overview of divorce today and its ramifications on children and adults within the general population and will specifically investigate the effects of divorce on professional dancers. In so doing, it will be the first to evaluate the effects of divorce on professional dancers. The findings will be used to help identify possible areas of concern including the effects of depression, anxiety, and self-esteem for adult professional dancers who have gone through divorce as children.

Divorce was chosen due to my personal experience of two negative parental divorces and one negative separation that will eventually be categorized as a negative divorce. In addition to personally experiencing parental divorces, I have been a professional singer and dancer for 13 years. I became interested in studying the effects of divorce and began to notice the negative effects divorce had on my co-workers. By incorporating my own investigation with my personal experience and knowledge of divorce and dancers, this thesis will provide a template and a richer understanding of the effects of divorce on professional adult dancers compared to professional adult dancers from intact families. I will attempt to discover if differences exist (and if so, what those differences are) between three groups: those who experienced a negative divorce, those who experienced a neutral to positive divorce, and those who were raised in an intact family. Because the research on divorce to date focuses on the topics of depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and availability of resources, I chose to focus on these issues. Do dancers from divorced families have more depression, anxiety, self-esteem issues, and less availability of resources than dancers from intact families? These questions will be answered through this research study.

The Study of Divorce and its Ramifications

Due to the increasing frequency of divorces in our society, research is beginning to explore the ramifications of immediate and long-term consequences of divorce. Although Barbar and Eccles (1992) and Wallerstein and Kelly's (1980) studies reported favorable effects of divorce, the majority indicate unfavorable outcomes (Amato & Keith, 1991; Gately & Schwebel, 1991), linking numerous problems with children who experience a parental divorce (Peterson & Zill, 1986). Portes, Lehman, and Brown (1999) found that the stress of divorce has the potential to be overwhelming to both parents and children, and conflict, stress, and disruptions associated with divorce affect children in many different ways (Morris & West, 2001; Mullet & Stolberg, 2002; Short, 2002). Kot and Shoemaker (1999) implied a child's well-being is more affected by marital conflict than the parental divorce itself. Supporting Kot and Shoemaker, Guttman and Rosenberg (2003) offered further views of divorce, and identified a wide array of variables potentially influencing the individual and his/her future intimacy including conflict present in the home, the parental marital quality, and the parent-child relationship.

The effects of immediate and long-term effects of divorce on children vary. A parent's separation can produce depression, separation anxiety, poor school performance, and a multitude of behavioral problems (Bowles, 2005; Palosarri & Aro, 1994; Portes, Howell, Brown, Eichenberger, & Mas, 1991). Bowles also suggested learning disorders and increased levels of behavioral problems were correlated with the divorced parental absence, confusing discipline measures, and the lack of appropriate guidance through developmental and transitional stages in life. This, presented in Kurtz's (1994) study,

could be the result of less self-efficiency, lower levels of self-esteem, and poorer coping skills. He continued with the idea that difficulties in children from divorced families were linked to the loss of contact with a parent, fewer economic resources, and poor adjustment abilities of the parents.

An overall decline in well-being and interaction problems between offspring and parents was also reported in divorced families (Amato, 2000; Bowles, 2005). Hughes (2005), in examining divorce, noted that stress, conflict between parents, and lack of parental competence were also reported from children who experience their parent's divorce. These problems have a direct negative influence to the future of the child's education, resources, and socioeconomic status (Bowles).

Marquardt (2005) believed that the majority of divorces, amicable or not, created a myriad of negative effects. Although Amato (2000) indicated diversity in children's reactions to divorce, children from divorced families exhibited more psychological maladjustment problems including depression, spiritual suffering, depression, anxiety, and inner anger compared to children from intact families. In addition to Amato, Hughes (2005) and Seltzer (1994) proposed that frustration, feelings of stress, more social problems, and fear are also reported more with children from divorced families. Children from divorced parents score lower on academic achievement tests, have more social difficulties, display more conduct problems, and have poorer self-concepts than children who are raised with two parents (Amato; Hughes; Seltzer).

Many children spend only a few years in a single parent home before the family acquires a new parent (Seltzer, 1994). Although there are greater levels of happiness in remarried families due to marital satisfaction and reduced stress around finances, Cox

(1997) suggested increased behavioral problems are often seen during this time due to the new relationships, a change in parental authority, and changing dynamics of the family. This is especially evident when the stepfather is void of acceptance and warmth. In addition, Cox continued exploring the dynamics of divorce and further explained that the child's unhappiness is compounded if the prior divorce is still consumed with negative relationships. Research concerning children of divorce is beginning to examine the ramifications that divorce brings in our society (Bowles, 2005), with results showing that children of divorced parents report more behavioral, psychological, and educational problems compared to children from intact families (Bowles; Seltzer; Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review will consist of two major areas: the process of divorce and the characteristics of professional dancers. Because there is no published literature on the effects of divorce on professional dancers or any other entertainers, this review will discuss each of the components separately and then discuss how divorce may specifically affect adult professional dancers.

Process of Divorce

The process of divorce involves a number of behavioral, emotional, and physical characteristics occurring over a period of time. The most common characteristics reported by Wetzstein (2005) are listed below. Each will be discussed in greater detail in the section below.

The Ramifications of Divorce on Children

Children would rather have their parents stay together. However, when the announcement of a separation or divorce occurs, this creates a major shift in the child's world and increases the stress he/she experiences. It is often accompanied by sadness and is experienced as a crisis (Drapeau, Mireault, Cloutier, Champous, & Samson, 1993; Hingst, 1981; Plunkett & Kalter, 1984; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). One parent usually

departs the home, forcing a modification of the family unit, while making the separation more difficult for the child.

Divorce can be conceptualized as a process, often stressful, consisting of a series of multiple complications including changes in lifestyles, a constant state of redefining relationships and roles, and a change in living arrangements (Zubernis, Cassidy, Gillham, Reivich, & Jaycox, 1999). This state of change can continue for years. Kot and Shoemaker (1999) theorized that crucial factors play a contributing role to the child's reaction of the divorce including the functioning level of the parent, the couple's method and pattern of interaction, and the parent-child relationship.

As a result, children experience difficulties through the changes and multiple stressors arising from divorce (Hughes, 2005). Marquardt (2005) found children of divorce typically experience painful losses, moral confusion, spiritual suffering, strained or broken relationships, and higher rates of social problems. Compared to children from intact families, Freedom and Knupp (2003) identified an overrepresentation of children from divorced families in clinical and delinquent populations, reinforcing the idea that children from divorced families have a more difficult growing up experience. Therefore, there is a direct correlation between the amount of life stressors experienced by children from divorced families and their difficulties. Another aspect to recognize, according to Hughes, is the more times a child's parent divorces, the more difficulties the child reports. Children fare better when these risks are reduced.

Although Seltzer (1994) and Zubernis et al. (1999) indicated a diversity in the children's reactions to divorce, children who experience their parent's divorce usually suffer disadvantages associated with the separation that are not seen in children who grew

up in two-parent households. On average, Amato (2000) discovered that children from divorced families have a decline in well-being and have reported experiencing more problems overall than children from intact families. Children from divorced families are more prone to negative interpersonal phenomenon such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression than children from intact families (Hughes, 2005; Walker, 2005). This, as stated by Kot and Shoemaker (1999), could be the direct result of a breakdown of family functioning, defined as the ability of the family to verbally and physically interact and meet the emotional and physical needs of each individual and the family as a group.

A child's emotional security is also threatened by the separation of his/her parents, and this separation directly affects the environment where children are socialized and nurtured (Seltzer, 1994; Wallerstein, 2005). In addition, Wallerstein noted that children from divorced families tend to worry more about child abuse, sexual abuse, and parental kidnapping. Children are also concerned about their belongings being lost while traveling from one home to the next, and like chameleons, they quickly learn how to adapt and function in their parents' different worlds (Seltzer). Furthermore, Wallerstein continued and observed that a child's spirituality/religion is also compromised as children tend to receive mixed messages from their parents and, continuing a chameleon-like appearance, they often act like different people around each parent. Generally, children from divorced families learn to become sensitive about the moods of those in their surroundings, become a keeper of secrets to preserve the peace, and learn how to handle a parent's subsequent remarriage and/or divorce (Wallerstein).

Intense negative affect is frequently reported when the child is asked about his/her parent's divorce (Wallerstein & Lewis, 1997), which may demonstrate the psychological

maladjustment (i.e., depression, distress, unhappiness, and emotional problems), children may experience (Amato, 2000; Seltzer, 1994; Wallerstein, 2005). Other studies indicate that the prevalence of latent psychological disorders have the potential to emerge years after the divorce, and this is especially evident as the individual transitions into adulthood (Amato; Seltzer; Wallerstein & Lewis).

Morris and West (2001), in examining adjustment, noted that children from divorced families exhibit more symptoms of psychological maladjustment due to a multitude of factors. For example, Bowles (2005) found that children from divorced families exhibit more stress, depression, anxiety, and more social problems than children from intact families. Children from divorced parents may also have higher incidence levels of learning and behavioral disorders due to discipline, lack of parental involvement, and lack of guidance during the important developmental stages of life. Morris and West continued and purported that providing for a family may take precedence over family interaction. This could directly be responsible for the reported poorer interaction between a parent and a child from a divorced family.

Exploring their difficulties, children do want to change and avoid a negative divorce. As Wallerstein et al. (2000) describe relationships, "Despite their firsthand experience of seeing how marriages can fail, they (the individuals in the study) sincerely want lasting faithful relationships. They want to do things better than their parents" (p. 88). Learning the necessary tools of positively dealing with experiences and situation in life may benefit children who come from broken homes.

Negative Feelings

Jekielek's (1998) study hypothesized that martial dissolution is more of a gradual process than an eye-opening event. It often begins when the couple is living together, and it often ends a considerable amount of time after the conclusion of the legal divorce (Jekielek; Marquardt, 2005; Martin et al., 2003;). Negative feelings and their effects are typically evident prior to the separation being finalized. As a result, it is common for both parents and children to develop adjustment strategies during the stressful transition of ongoing marital disruption (Drapeau, Samson, & Saint-Jacquues, 1999). For children, as noted by Martin et al., the negative feelings (i.e., distrust, disappointment, confusion, sadness, depression etcetera.) are often carried into adulthood.

Depression

Zubernis et al. (1999) listed depression as one of the most common characteristics experienced by children of divorced families, and a significant higher level of depression is experienced by children from divorced families compared to children from intact families. Indicating internalized anger, a sense of loss, or perceptions concerning life events, depression can lower positive affect while engendering negative self-affect, creating and reinforcing a depressive state (Walters-Chapman, Price, & Serovich, 1995). Similarly, Oppawksy (1991) cautioned that children who experienced their parents divorce reported feelings of powerlessness, rejection, deprivation, and lack of attention/love.

In the case of parental influence, Forehand (1993) posited that children with depressed parents showed an increase impaired functioning, including both internalizing

and externalizing problems. Feelings of being deserted by the non-custodial parent and more self-critical were also addressed by Zubernis et al. (1999).

Not surprising, both Amato and Keith (1991) and Huntley, Phelps and Rehm (1987) suggested a higher incidence level of depression was reported by children who experienced a parental divorce than children who lost a parent through death. This could be the result of the divorce's negative aftermath characteristics. In other words, the results of the incidence are more powerful than the incidence itself.

Self-Esteem

Undoubtedly, divorce has the ability to easily alter self-esteem for each family member during this stressful life event (Goodman & Pickens, 2001). Rosenberg (1965, as cited in Byrne, 1996) defined self-esteem as the "extent to which a person is generally satisfied with his or her life, considers him- or herself worth, [and] holds a positive attitude toward him- or herself." (p. 141).

Research has indicated that parental divorce negatively impacts a child's self-esteem (Amato, 1993; Bynum & Durm, 1996; Clifford & Clark, 1995; Kurtz, 1994), and increases adjustment difficulties in children (Garmezy, 1994; Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Simons, 1996). Especially during stressful events, Amato (1993) described how easily a child's self-esteem is altered, and many other studies indicated how these negative consequences, due to a parental divorce, may result in long-term characteristics (Amato; Clifford & Clark; Kurdek & Berg, 1987; Wallerstein, 1987; Wyman, Cowen, Hightower, & Pedro-Carrol, 1985). Consequently, children from divorced parents report lower levels of self-esteem due to adjustment difficulties, lower

parental contact, and more depressive feelings (Amato; Fischer, 1999; Goodman & Pickens, 2001; Hughes, 2005; Kirk, 2002; & Short, 2002).

Garber (1991) believed self-esteem to be directly related to inter-parental conflict. The parent's constantly vying for the loyalty and approval of the child produces a triadic relationship. Westerman (1987) defines this as "a child is caught between parents who pull the child in opposite directions." The effects of self-esteem for the child during this dysfunctional relationship can be long-term as children attempt to please both parents. Children caught in the middle often feel guilt and sadness, and feel they are to blame for the family conflict (Goodman & Pickens, 2001).

Loneliness

Loneliness, presented by Jeynes (2001), is one of the key emotions and abiding legacies of a divorce, and it can be the result of a parent's frequent absence due to the parent working, dating, living in another household, etcetera. Jeynes also found that children from divorced families, as compared to their counterparts, were more likely to report being lonely and seek out companionship. He also noted that compared to children from two-parent households, more children from divorced families often seek an intense level of companionship as a method to alleviate the loneliness a child experiences.

Likewise, traveling between the two different worlds of each parent has the possibility to create loneliness and struggles within the child. Marquardt (2005) concluded that adults from divorced families, compared to adults from intact families, were seven times more likely to identify and agree with the statement "I was alone as a child." This could be due to the lack of another individual reaching out to the child when

his/her parents separate, potentially creating emotional distance between the child and his/her parents (Marquardt).

Coping Skills

Coping skills, noted as the most important factor of a child's adjustment by Portes et al. (1999), includes the techniques an individual uses for familial situations or experiences, and are a powerful predictor of a child's adjustment (Kot & Shoemaker, 1999). Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) definition of coping includes the "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (p. 141). In essence, as acknowledged by Lazarus and Folkman, coping skills is a process that includes how individuals react in certain situations. Strategies for coping skills between the child and the environment in this process of learning and behaving requires consideration and often a trial and error approach (Lazarus & Folkman).

Especially within the first few years after the separation, the child's coping skills are challenged (Kot & Shoemaker, 1999). Coping skills such as talking to a parent or a friend about his/her experience with the divorce and/or lessening the responsibilities of a child's involvement with the usual added household chores, care-taking of siblings, and stress and worry about the broken family's future will create more of a normalcy for the child. Divorce may leave the child experiencing anger, sadness, worry, doubt, and uncertainty of his/her future relationships, and the child may question the many memories of the once intact family (Hetherington, Bridges, & Insabella, 1998). Fogas et al. (1992) added how coping skills also affects a child's view of the divorce and their own changing role within the family. To assist in resolving self-blame, loss, and the fear of

abandonment, it is important that the child develops a belief that he/she does have control over part of their own world (Fogas et al.; Mullins, Siegel, & Hodges, 1985).

Role Models

Although some couples attempt to continue positive interaction, Cox (1997) noted that separated individuals are often distressed and preoccupied immediately following the divorce or separation (Cox,). As the newly single parents face the journey into a new life, Cox's research discovered a parent's interaction with their children is often nonsupportive, lacks communication, and is punitive. However, they continue to serve as role models of adult relationships for their children in the areas of communication, emotions, and resolution of problems. Arbuthnot and Gordon (1996) and Emery (1994) noted that parent/child relationships play a significant role in the child's social-emotional adjustment, and children turn to their parents during this time of conflict, precisely the time when the parent's are depleted of resources due to the demanding and difficult divorce. Unfortunately, according to Hines (1997), the occurrence of these disruptions is often the time when children most need consistent and warm parental support.

Family Secrets

Amato (2000) implied that secrets are epidemic in divorced families. Compared to adults from intact families, adults who experienced divorce as children were twice as likely to be the asked to keep important secrets, and many reported they felt the need to keep secrets even when not asked (Amato). The parents may appear vulnerable and insecure after the separation, and children learn how to adapt to their environment by keeping secrets or sensitive information from others. For example, after a separation, a parent may seem more distracted, less interested, and expose the children to deeper

emotional states. This can be viewed as a weakness to the children. As a method of protecting the parents, children have reported to keep secrets that could immediately spark anger or hurt include a parent's new love interest or financial difficulties. Children learn to keep their information hidden to prevent a parent being angered or an unwanted society label (Amato).

Anxiety

According to Wallerstein and Blakesless (1989), children who experience a parental divorce "consistently rehearse" the divorce's painful emotions and become "burdened by vivid memories of marital rupture, feelings of sadness, continuing resentment at parents, and a sense of deprivation" (p. 25). In addition, Wallerstein and Blakesless reported that anxiety can result from many situations.

Lack of Available Parent

Several types of risks contribute to a child's well-being and Amato (2000) and Hughes (2005) explored the results of non custodial parental contact. Deterioration and a decrease in the level of exchange or contact in the relationship between the noncustodial parent and children in divorces are common and often lead to a poorer relationship between a parent and a child (Dunne, 1994). This poorer relationship is associated with lack of time, attention, affection, and assistance that was once provided by the parent (Amato; Dunne). In the first year following the divorce, Waldman (1996) reported 40% of children from divorced homes will experience absent fathers which contribute to the maladjustment problems, specifically anxiety. Kot and Shoemaker (1999) reported that feeling of abandonment by the non-custodial parent has the potential to lead to separation anxiety.

Because parents model nearly all behaviors for their children, one of the explanations Bowles (2005) and Dunne (1994) offered was the absence of a role model. Amato (2000) and Hughes (2005) discovered a lack of emotional support is also reported to accompany the weakened bonds between a parent and a child. This deterioration of the relationship can be very harmful for the children as deprives the child of knowledge, resources, and skills of the non-custodial parent. In addition, Hughes suggested the quality of the parent-child relationship between a nonresidential parent and the child is more important than the quantity of time spent. Bowles proposed it is important for the child to develop a positive model for future relationships. A child benefits from a continued relationship with a parent, and children fare better when there is frequent contact with the nonresidential parent with minimum conflict, than frequent visits with conflict. Therefore, conflict is a determining factor in the post-divorce adjustment of the child (Hughes).

Thus, the post-divorce adjustment of a child depends on the quality and amount of contact with the separated parent, parenting skills, and psychological adjustment of the custodial parent (Amato, 2000). Amato suggested that a child's well-being is also affected by the frequency and intensity of conflict between the two parents following the divorce, economic hardship exposure to the children, and the amount of stressful events following the divorce.

Parental Deterioration

Often children from divorced families establish a strong relationship with one parent, inadvertently contributing to negative feelings towards the other. Parents can play an important role in developing these negative feelings by casting a shadow of negativity

on his/her past partner. The child might also feel as if he/she has to choose a side during this family conflict to either protect one parent and/or oneself. This can also be reinforced with an imbalance in the amount of time spent with one parent after the separation (Bowles, 2005).

If the child perceives parental rejection, Marquardt (2005) observed that the child will most likely feel isolated, become distant, and fear future rejections from the other parent or role models. Safety is a concern for the child. Being rejected by a parent is worrisome, and the child fears resembling a parent as a method of protecting him/herself. Only forty-four percent of adults who were children from divorced parents claimed to have felt safe as children as compared to 79% of those with married parents (Marquardt).

Addition of a Parent

Anderson and Greene (2005) reported a large percentage of parents, following a divorce, will seek and become involved in new relationships. In fact, Anderson, Greene, Walker, Malerba, Forgatch, and DeGarmo (2004) proposed that more than half of divorced parents have established a serious relationship within one year after filing divorce papers. With this new opportunity to establish another relationship, the adjustment of both parent and child are required. The likelihood of dramatic changing periods involve the time prior to the big event (i.e., courting and cohabitation). This is the time when the divorce parent, the romantic partner, and the children attempt to develop a relationship and form a new family system. With this courtship, children spend more time with the future stepparent, gradually changing the family unit (Montgomery, Anderson, Hetherington, & Clingempell, 1992).

Parental Psychological Adjustment

The parent's psychological adjustment is also an important factor and directly affects the adjustment of the child (Amato & Keith, 1991; Hughes, 2005; Kurtz & Derevensky, 1993; Zubernis et al., 1999). This adjustment has the ability to contribute heavily to the quality of the parent/child relationship (Amato, 2000). Parents with a better psychological adjustment reported better adjusted children than parents with poorer psychological adjustments (Burns & Dunlop, 2003). This could be the result of the child modeling his/her parent's behavior. If the parent successfully teaches the child effective problem-solving techniques, the child is more likely to model that behavior for his/her own present and future problems.

Burns and Dunlop (2003) posited that depression and sensitivity are two key characteristics modeled by parents. Depression of parents predicts depression of children. The sensitivity of a daughter is predicted by the mother's sensitivity, while the lack of father's sensitivity predicts the son's submissiveness. If the parent consistently shows deep-rooted emotions including excessive sadness, suicide or homicide ideation, and/or a loss of interest in life, the child will often take on those ideas (Richardson & McCabe, 2001).

Parental Skills

During divorce, Hetherington (1993) discovered that parents often struggle with their own problems, deal with depression, economic stress, have less energy for the role of parenting, and find it more difficult to find time to connect with their children. These factors can create more depression, deplete the energy supply of the parent, create irritability, and less time with a child. During this stressful situation Sheehan, Darlington,

Noller, and Feeney (2004) noted that parents often experience difficulty meeting the child's demands of encouragement, support, and empathy. In addition to experiencing lack of support from the other parent, disciplinary practices and parenting skills may also lack as a result of these stressors, negatively influencing the child's adjustment (Zubernis et al., 1999).

Not surprising, parenting skills and the parent-child relationship have proven to be strong influences on the adjustment of the children after a divorce (Amato, 2000; Hughes, 2005), and Hughes suggested that parenting practices are diminished following a divorce and could be a contributing factor to the child's problems. In the case of discipline, Zubernis et al. (1999) suggested that if a child has not forgiven a parent for the divorce, the child may be unwilling to abide by the parent's authority. However, child-rearing skills need to be consistent regardless of the state of the marriage, and Marquardt (2005) concluded that many children claim their parent's household rules were different following the divorce. Consistency is a vital factor when a stressful event occurs. Accordingly, parenting skills play a significant role in the adjustment of the children (Hughes).

Parent/Child Conflict

Compared to families from intact families, Hetherington (1993) reported a significant higher level of negativity between children and custodial mothers in divorced families. With this information, it is not unusual that Aseltine (1996) reported higher levels of depression are strongly associated with family conflict. Similarly, Kot and Shoemaker (1999) discovered a decrease of family functioning is the result of higher

levels of conflict within the family, which is also associated with high levels of depression.

After a divorce, Emery (1995) discovered a rapid decline in non-custodial father contact over time, worsening the father/child relationship. In this study, 33% of 12-16 year-old children from divorced families reported a poor relationship with their father. The figure increased with age. By 18 to22 years, 65% claimed to have a bad relationship with their father, compared to 25% of children from intact families.

Interparental Conflict

Most divorces reported high levels of conflict (Zubernis et al., 1999) and interparental conflict explains the conflict between the two parents before, during and after the divorce (Amato, 2000). This conflict creates additional stress for the parents and children. In turn, parents are less likely to use effective child-raising skills (Grych, 2002; Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982; Wallenstein & Kelly, 1980). Grych, Hetherington, Cox, and Cox, and Wallerstein and Kelly found that children from divorced families who experience divorce are generally exposed to more hostility, detrimental conflict resolution styles, and less positive interaction with their parents.

After the divorce, Zubernis et al. (1999) discovered that conflict often continues and worsens between the parents. Hetherington's (1993) research concluded a mere 20% of divorced families consist of cooperating parents. Hostility and interparental conflict are directly related to depression (Camara & Resnick, 1989; Portes, Howell, Brown, Eichenberg & Mas, 1992; Stolberg & Bush, 1985), and the amount of poorly resolved conflicts and hostility between parents is directly related to the amounts of distress the child experiences (De-Arth-Pendley & Cummings, 2002; Noller, Feeney, Peterson, &

Atkin, 2000; Zubernis et al., 1999). As a result, Burgoyne and Hames's (2002) study discovered that children exposed to high levels of conflict are more susceptible to depression and negative attitudes towards marriage.

In addition, it was reported by Rutter (1994) that the child's adjustment is affected more by the level of experienced conflict as opposed to the actual divorce. A study by Jaycox and Repetti (1993) found that the level of a child's adjustment is more influenced by the level of family conflict perceived by the child than the parent's reported martial conflict. Because of the likelihood of a child's presence during a parental argument, a child may develop an increased conflict perception, which directly affects the child's adjustment.

When subjected to a stressful home environment including witnessing and being pulled into a parental argument, Forehand (1993) and Portes et al. (1992) concluded that children experience emotional distress. A child's depression is directly correlated to the level of the child's involvement with interparental conflict (Johnston, Gonzalez, & Campbell, 1987). In fact, a high level of depression in children can be predicted by the child's amount of involvement in interparental conflict, level of aggression between parents, child/parent role reversal such as a child comforting a parent experiencing distress, and a child used as a messenger between parents (Johnston et al., 1987).

With this being said, children are often intentionally and unintentionally exposed to parental conflict (Amato, 2000), and the amount of conflict experienced by those involved in the divorce is as traumatic as the divorce itself (Amato; Kirk, 2002). This conflict jeopardizes the child's well-being (Amato; Hughes, 2005; Kirk), while providing a negative template for conflict resolution by modeling inappropriate and ineffective

behaviors (Zubris et al., 1999). Zubruis et al. reported that children experience anxiety when placed in the middle of a parental argument. The child may feel as if his/her attachment to his/her parent could be jeopardized which could lead to being abandoned if the child expresses positive feelings concerning the other parent. Children are often used as mediators for their parents and feel as if the loyalties they have for their parents/role models are divided (Hingst, 1981; Oppawsky, 1989; Sandler et al., 1988; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Johnson, Gonzalez, and Campbell (1987) discovered that children often withdraw as a safe method of dealing with this anxiety and to prevent loyalty dilemmas. These passive and defensive coping skills can result in learned maladaptive coping styles (Portes, Haas, & Brown, 1991).

Cox (1997) established a baseline about parental disputes. An alarming amount of children from divorced families, as compared to children from intact families, experienced their parent's disputes firsthand. Most of these witnessed disputes ended with unresolved solutions, adding to the destructive pattern of their parent's separation. In lieu of this, Walker (2005) concluded that parents need to be reminded about the trauma of divorce on their children, and placing the children in the middle of a negative situation only increases the child's anxiety, frustration, and anger. Hughes (2005) and Walker noted that children need to be reminded that the divorce is not their fault, and parents need to realize the importance of how divorce can play a significant role in the adjustment of a child. Although is it distressing for children to experience marital disputes firsthand involving parenting issues, Cox's indicated that children who were exposed to marital discord may actually benefit if the disputes were effectively resolved with appropriate modeled adaptive problem-solving skills.

Adjustment

Kitson and Morgan (1990) defined adjustment as "being relatively free of signs and symptoms of physical or mental illness; being able to function adequately in the daily role responsibilities of home, family, work, and leisure; and having developed an independent identity that is not tied to the status of being married or to the ex-spouse" (p. 913). The definition of adjustment emphasizes the process of coping and evaluating on the basis of a person's behavior in certain situations (Garmezy, 1994; Garmezy & Rutter, 1983; Garbarino, 1982; Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Lengua, Wolchik & Braver, 1995; Simons, 1996). Adjustment, according to Walters-Chapman, Price, and Serovich (1995) also includes the ability to accept and meet revised home and leisure environments, as well as coping and strategizing with family stressors. It should be noted that ten percent of children from intact families have reported emotional, social, or psychological problems, while the figure for children from divorced families is twenty-five percent (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

Children are often in a state of confusion regarding why the divorce happened, who made the final decision to divorce, who to blame, and what occurs after the divorce is final (Portes, 1999). Adjustment difficulties often parallel the level of conflict within the familial unit. Garmezy's (1994) study indicated that difficulties in a child's adjustment are increased with the separation of his/her parents, and Zuberis et al. (1999) suggested that the level of conflict, not the event of the divorce, greatly impacts the child's adjustment. This reinforces the idea that conflict, more so than a family's marital status, is reported to be a stronger predictor of a child's adjustment (Kot & Shoemaker, 1999). Similarly, the consequences of the actual divorce are superseded by the behaviors

and attitudes of the individual's family (Jeynes, 2001). External factors such as the child's social support system, the child's age, and the functioning family level also play a significant role in the adjustment of the child (Portes).

In addition, as indicated by Hughes (2005), children have lower adjustment levels in high conflict intact or divorced families than children in families with minimum conflict. In other words, a child's well-being is lower during the time of heightened parental conflict. Hodges et al. (1991) suggested following a divorce, a child's adjustment is strongly related to the amount of positive interaction between the non-custodial parents.

Adjustment of adolescents is particularly important. For many adolescents, the parent/child relationship is strained, and the added stress of divorce may be more damaging as it may deprive adolescents of the important support source while exploring their independence. The nature of an adolescent is a gradual separation from his/her parent. During this time, parental support is important to ensure protection as they explore. If this support system is missing, the child may feel abandoned and insecure, turning to their peers for support and advice instead of their experienced parents (Zubernis et al., 1999).

Positive outcomes of adjustment can be increased senses of self-worth, responsibility, autonomy, and social responsiveness (Chase-Lansdale et al., 1995; Kot & Shoemaker, 1999; Sim & Vuchinich, 1996). As a result of this positive adjustment, the child/adult is more likely to experience a more positive opinion of future relationships along with an increase in self-control and self-worth result. In addition, positive adjustment reduces problems with mental health and delinquency in children and adults

who grew up in a divorced family (Kot & Showmaker). Optimal child development is more likely to be achieved through predictability, stability, and security for the child (Hodges et al., 1991).

Economic Hardships

Another risk mentioned is economic issues. Economic hardships explain the lowered standard of living experience as a result of the separation (Amato, 2000). In general, a single-parent family after a divorce reports less income than most two-parent households. Economic hardship while experiencing a divorce may lead children to abort schooling and seek employment, resulting in a lower wage-bracket and a lower occupational attainment that inevitably will most likely continue into adulthood (Seltzer, 1994). Portes (1999) further explained that income alone does not improve the well-being of the child, but disruptions within the family that are due to financial difficulties may create conflict. Less money and/or financial resources may lead to more disruptions and an increased amount of conflict between the parents and children (Hughes, 2005).

Academia

In addition to behavior difficulties, scholastic achievement is also negatively impacted, with research pointing to lower years of school completed, and a significant lower graduation rate (Furstenberg & Teither, 1994). Seltzer's (1994) study found that 29% of children from single parents dropped out of high school as compared to 13% of children who lived with both parents. Although the difference is only 16%, this figure clearly shows that twice as many children from divorced families drop out of high school compared to children from non-divorced parents (Frum, 1996; Pong & Ju, 2000; Seltzer).

In addition to academia problems, children of split parents also demonstrated poorer school attendance, less positive behavior towards teachers, lower average academic scores, and were less inclined to further their education (Frum, 1996; Ham, 2004; Roizblatt, Rivera, Fuchs, Ossandon, & Guelfand,1997).

McManus (1993) reported:

> Compared to an American child, a Japanese child is four times more likely to be reared by both parents, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The stability of Japanese families and the chaos of American families is a major reason that Japanese students are so much more successful in school than are American children—and a major reason for the success of the Japanese economy. (pp. 27-28)

In his research, Jeynes (1997) reported the parallel between the decline of education and the United State's divorce rate. He stated:

> There has been a great deal of public criticism of the public school system due largely to: (1) declining standardized test scores during the 1963-1980 period; (2) consistently poor performances on international comparison tests; and (3) soaring rates of juvenile crime in the schools. The tendency has often been for the public to blame the schools for these problems. And certainly, the schools deserve some portion of the blame. But the results of this study contribute some credence to the notion that the decreasing percentage of children coming from intact families exerts a downward pressure on the average academic achievement of American children. It is probably far more than coincidence that the U.S. divorce rate which has been in a slow decline during the 1948-

1962 period, rose sharply in 1963 and continue to rise sharply after that during almost exactly the same period as the standardized test score decline. (pp. 226-227)

Jeynes (1997) further explained in his research that "the further a family structure was from the intact two-part family, the more negative an impact that the family structure had on academic achievement" (pg. 225).

Seltzer (1994) concluded a parallel between behavior and academic success. Younger children are more susceptible to depression and anxiety, and often feel confused and anxious about the loyalties to their parents. This, in addition to delinquencies and other behavior problems, directly affects a child's academic success. Youth from divorced families leave home earlier and are three more times as likely to start their own families, clearly demonstrating the early gravitation and more emphasis towards independence than academia (Allison, 2004).

Increased Maturation

Kelly's (2003) research supported the fact that children from separated parents reported their youth was quickly lost during their parent's divorce, launching them into adulthood too early. This reoccurring theme involves a new and more stressful role in the family. Many children from divorced families, as outlined by Dunlop (2001) report being the mediator between their parents, trying to understand their parents' different lifestyles, beliefs, and values. More than half of children physically and emotionally protect their parents, compared to only one-third of adults from intact families (Dunlop). Also, one-third of children who experience divorce seek out only one or both parents for emotional support, whereas two-thirds of the adults from intact families sought comfort from

married parents. Many of the grown children from divorced families reach out to a sibling or friend, or attempt to problem-solve alone (Marquardt, 2005).

Furstenberg and Teither (1994) reported that adults from divorced families engage more frequently in nonmarital cohabitation, early sexual activity, and have more sexual partners compared to adults from intact families. In Gabardi and Rosen's study (1992), individuals from divorced families reported physical intimacy is a method used to the gain intimacy. In addition, the explanation for the reluctance of a long-term commitment is the fear of failure after witnessing the marital transition of their parents and being raised in a single-parent household. This study also suggested that adults who were raised in divorce families may attempt to prove they do not have the same relationship problems as their parents (i.e., escalating conflict and reduced communication), while manifesting fear and insecurity of repeating the same problems as their parents (Webster et al., 1995). This, as outlined in Webster et al.'s study, directly points to potential problematic patterns within the family, reinforcing the fact that individuals from divorced families are more likely to experience dissolution of their marriage compared to adults from intact families.

Intimacy

Children who experience a parental divorce "confront issues of love, commitment and marriage with anxiety, sometimes with great concern about betrayal, abandonment, and not being loved" (Wallerstein, 1981, p. 353). Having experienced the separation of their parental role models, children are more hesitant to become involved in intimate relationships and doubt if a relationship can be faithful and stable (Wallerstein & Blakeskee, 1989). However, as researched by Grych (2002), young adults who have

experienced a parental divorce typically accelerate into courtship patterns and show more relationship interest. Individuals from divorced families also are more likely to be involved in a casual or serious relationship and fear abandonment than those from two-parent homes (Hepworth & Ryder, 1984). One possible explanation for this behavior Hetherington (1993) noted was the child's method of dealing with insecurity about intimate relationships is plunging into a physically intimate relationship.

Unsuccessful Attempts of Reunification

Children who experience a divorce often feel responsibility for the ended parental union, and they also feel responsible for reuniting and mending the broken ties of their parents (Healy, Stewart & Copland, 1993; Kurdek & Berg, 1983). Drapeau et al. (1993) concluded that many children feel as if they have control over the situation and attempt to use strategic problem-solving techniques. However, these attempts usually fail and the child is left with anxiety and a feeling of powerlessness. This feeling of defeat can bleed into other areas of the child's life such as education, social, and goals (Drapeau et al.).

Emotional Stress

Regardless of the cause of divorce, Walker (2005) identified the difficulties of the situation increases with heighten state of emotions. The higher incidence of emotional distress can be the direct result of the lack of parental involvement and attention, academic distractions, or an increased amount of familial stress during the divorce (Marquardt, 2005; Walker). Kot and Shoemaker (1999) noted a divorced home flooded with stress and marital discord may add to the child's emotional problems, and a correlation exists between martial discord and a child's reaction to the degree and intensity of the divorce.

Children with separated parents are usually flexible in their adaptation techniques. Drapeau et al. (1999) examined a child's method of facing stress. When dealing with stressful events, they are usually able to pull from a variety of different strategies. In spite of the various methods of dealing with stress, Kurtz (1996) and Kurtz, Derevensky and Tarabulsky (1993) concluded that children from divorced parents use coping styles which are less flexible and more passionate than children in intact families,

Parenting styles and parental role modeling of aggression and anger also plays a significant factor in the well being of the child. Burns and Dunlop (1999) proposed that parents who maintained positive parent-child emotions lessened the impact of stressors in their child's life. Children who were more likely to use defense mechanisms such as blaming and denial were more vulnerable to stress due to a failure in learning self-regulation skills (Blechman, 1990; Gottman et al., 1997). Thus, according to Kot and Shoemaker (1999), adjustment is associated with parent/child relations, and the reduction of the child's emotional stress can be created by providing a harmonious home environment.

Guaranteed Outcome

As previously mentioned, the result of a divorce has the potential to be labeled a severe life stressor, potentially bringing about impairments and a lower level of well-being (Amato, 2000). However, Amato and Hughes (2005) concluded that being raised in two-parent household does not guarantee a better and more adjusted environment. While divorce has been linked with increased negative outcomes, many children who experience a parental divorce develop into law-abiding citizens, displaying no ill effects due to the separation of their parents (Amato; Kot & Shoemaker, 1999; Seltzer, 1994).

Hines (1997) reported that divorce "promotes growth for some adolescent and developmental vulnerabilities for others" (p. 375). Although divorce is associated with negative factors, the results of a divorce have the potential to create more fulfilling relationships, a more peaceful household, and "the opportunity for greater personal growth, individuation, and well-being" (Hetherington, & Stanley-Hagan, 1999, p. 130).

In the case of conflict, children report better adjustment levels in single-parent homes than two-parent homes with conflict (Amato, 2000). Many single-parent families function well and develop a structural lifestyle that includes a loving and nurturing environment, and many children from these environments become well-adjusted adults (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999). However, as a group, the results indicate that children from divorced families experience more problems that those from two-parent families (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan; Hughes, 2005).

The Ramifications of Divorce on Adults

Although adult children of divorced families often appear successful and well-adjusted, scars from their parent's breakup indicate the profound and disturbing effect of their childhood (Wetzstein, 1997). Laumann-Billings and Emergy (2000) studied divorce and noted that young adults who come from divorced families reported that their childhoods were negatively influenced by the break-up of their parents. Similarly, Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin, and Kiernan (1995) suggested some individuals never adjust or cope with the effects divorce had on their lives, and many young adults view life through their "filter of divorce" due to the negative aspects such as secrets, fear of safety, and a munificent amount of stress that followed their parent's separation. These feelings, as

well as grief, loss, and abandonment are often experienced and carried into their adulthood before the final acceptance of the separation (Laumann-Billings & Emergy; Wallerstein, 2005). This negative impact may manifest itself in other areas, specifically in their relationships with others (Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin, & Kiernan, 1995; Wester, Orbuch, Terri, & House, 1995).

Even years after a divorce, adult children of divorce have reported to harbor ill-will feelings, ongoing concerns, and negative memories about the divorce of their parents. Many believe their friends who were raised in intact families have happier lives. In addition, Laumann-Billings and Emergy (2000) suggested that adults from divorced families claim their lives are still affected by the divorce they experienced as a child, and the event still causes turmoil and struggles. Seventy-five percent of adults believe they would be different people if their parents would not have divorced (Laumann-Billings & Emergy).

Estrangement and Uncoupling

In Jekielek's (1998) study, he concluded that those who decide to marry often develop a multitude of positive marital expectations before the final commitment. During the course of their marriage, conflict is inevitable, and those who experience estrangement and uncoupling have typically reported this progression to be painful. Marquardt (2005) reported the gradual process of uncoupling, or the beginning feeling of estrangement, is often the result of an increase in relationship dissatisfaction. Spouses may seek advice from friends, avoid the problem areas, or attempt relationship negotiation (Jekielek). When the "D-word" is finally spoken, the couple is often

overcome with relief, accompanied by fear, betrayal, grief, and anger (Marquardt), and might lead to emotional and behavioral problems in children (Jekielek).

However, Lopata (1994) felt that the loss of a spouse through divorce or death, noted as one of the most stressful events occurring in families, also includes the addition of the single parent role. Companionship, intimacy, income, role of spouse, and social network changes are a few more of the losses accompanied with divorce, as indicated in Lopata's study. With the addition of children in the equation, as well as the added responsibility of running the household, these losses are only compounded (Hill & Hilton, 1999).

Depression is often experienced with this new single-parent primary role provider (Hanson, Heims, Julian, & Sussman, 1995; Perlin, 1989). Numerous changes occur as the new single parent losses roles and gains more responsibility. The divorce itself is merely just one event that leads to a continuing list of negative situations and problems, including loss of income and support of daily activities and parenting. These factors contribute to depression (Perlin).

Socioeconomic Status

Impact on education is a significant result of divorce, and compared to adults from intact families, Amato (2000) indicated that adults who were raised from divorced parents are less likely to continue with education. Those who are from divorced families have a higher high school drop-out rate, are less active in seeking a college education, are more susceptible to unemployment rates, and have less financial resources (Burns & Dunlop, 1998). As continued by Burns and Dunlop, this can lead to a lower job status, less income, and decreased likelihood to advance in their occupation. In general, adults

who were raised in a divorced family have a lower socioeconomic status than those who were raised in an intact family (Amato; Burns & Dunlop).

Gender Differences

Comparing the sexes, Seltzer (1994) discovered women from divorced families were more likely to report depression, a lower socioeconomic status, and raising their children in a single-parent household. Men also suffer negative consequences, and Seltzer indicated that men from divorced parents were more likely to act out delinquently and engage in early alcohol and drug use. This study also indicated men experiencing a parental divorce were more susceptible to depression and more likely to grade lower in academic scoring.

Both sexes reported engaging in premature sexual behavior at a younger age than those from intact families. The main difference between the sex's reaction to the divorce is women's negative effects tend to be internal while men's effects tend to be external (Seltzer, 1994).

Depression

A response that is common to divorce-related losses, Raymond (2001) contended that depression is one of the more common characteristics reported by adults who have experience a separation/divorce. Depression was prevalent in both sexes who reported poor health, low social support and integration, younger age, low locus of control, unsatisfied roles, economic strain, and negative exchanges in his/her social network are factors associated with depression (Hill & Hilton, 1999). More specifically, mothers reported more depression than fathers. In Vines's (1998) research, divorced mother's reported their depression was associated with responsibility and task overload, work

stress, economic pressure, and health and family problems (Compass & Williams, 1990; Lorenz, Simons, & Chao, 1996). The results of these pressures often manifest in anxiety, depression, and guilt (Compass & Williams; Lorenz et al.; Vines).

In divorced fathers, alcohol use and financial strain were factors associated with depression. Also included in Raymond's (2001) study are low education, more housework responsibilities, more alcohol consumption, and greater religiosity.

Hostility

Emery (1994) and Wolchik and Fenaughty (1996) discovered anger, conflict, and hurt are often the results of a volatile divorce process. A normal part of the separation process, hostility towards the separated partner can be a useful buffer zone against immobilizing depression (Johnston & Campbell, 1988), especially with those classified their divorce as a personal failure (Fox, 1983). Healthy post-divorce adjustment is indicated by preoccupation and hostility. Those who reported making a healthy adjustment were those who were low in preoccupation and low hostility levels (Johnston & Campbell).

Adult Relationships

Parental modeling may be a significant factor in a child's behavior. Bowles (2005) concluded that as children from divorce families mature and enter their own intimate relationships, this population may experience significant problems within the relationship and psychological well-being. Regardless of their parent's divorce, adults who were exposed to poor parental models as children may have difficulty forming satisfying, stable, and intimate relationships (Seltzer, 1994). In addition, Bowles posited that adults who grew up in conflict-ridden homes are more accepting of relationship

conflict. They are also more apprehensive about marriage due to their recollection of painful moments during and after the divorce as well as the moments they witnessed their parent's turmoil (Bowles; Hayashi, 1998). Dunne (1994) suggested that if the adult does decide to marry, he/she is more likely to report that his/her marriage is in trouble and have a more lenient attitude towards divorce than those who come from two-parent families.

Love

Parental divorce has a great impact on the adult's ability to love and receive love within a committed relationship (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004). Specifically, adults who experience a continued parental conflict report more caution and a decline in their intimacy involving romantic relationships (Burgoyne & Hames, 2002; Ensign, Scherman, & Clark, 1998; Hayashi, 1998). The idea of love for adults who experience a parental divorce can be tainted by witnessing the behavior of their parents in conflict, associating love with physical and emotional abuse. The reasons for this development of love may be linked to a lower sense of well-being, as well as a lower perceived overall quality of life (Amato, 2000). Mahl (2001) suggested many claim the reason for their own personal turmoil is due to having personally experienced their parent's problems in their marriage. These characteristics, according to Hayashi and Seltzer (1994) may not be immediately evident and can appear during adulthood when attempting to form an intimate relationship.

Children and adults from divorced families reportedly exhibit more emotions, including deeper levels of passion in their relationships (Bowles, 2005; Hughes, 2005). This type of love can be developed and molded by anxiety, resentment, and/or the fear of

abandonment or loss. Research by Bowles and Hughes found that divorced families with young adults have a tendency to be susceptible to this passionate love, and they carry this passionate love into their casual relationships.

Trust

Although the loss of a partner, a relationship, children, and home are typical losses in a divorce, a less obvious and one of the most devastating losses is trust (Hughes, 2005). According to Amato (2000), the betrayal of a broken marriage, often associated with loss, grief, and mourning, can dissolve trust. Amato continued and reported that the once created harmony between two individuals is often dissolved, leaving a change in the dynamics of the union. One parent often changes, and the other either cannot or is unwilling to adapt to this new change, creating a drifting or shift from the once steadfast love they had. Trust issues are often involved in this shift of the relationship (Hughes).

In terms of relationships, trusting future partners may be contaminated by children who view their parent's divorce as a trust that was breached. This leads to more caution and less security in their relationships (Amato, 2000; Hughes, 2005).

Commitment

Commitment is another area highly affected by experiencing a dissolved marriage. Hughes (2005) concluded that children can view their parent's neglect of commitment in numerous ways: lack of promise keeping, lack of sacrifices, minimal investments in the relationship, and unavailability. This directly affects young adults. Many are more resistant to enter into a committed relationship, are more interested in short-term relationships, lack desire for relationships with long-term possibilities, and express a fear of repeating their parent's mistakes (Hughes).

Intimacy

Pursuing intimate relationships is often problematic for adults from divorced families (Bowles, 2005; Zubernis et al., 1999). Bowles concluded that dating trouble, the establishment of intimate relationships, and lacking positive feelings towards one's sexuality are all disturbances directed related to divorce. Children from divorced families, compared to children from intact families, reported more difficulty trusting other, directly affecting the establishment of intimacy (Zubernis et al.). Bowles and Wallerstein (2005) both concluded that adults who experienced parental divorce during their childhood reported a higher probability of premarital sexual intercourse, more sexual promiscuity, and less optimism towards their own relationships achieving success. Amato (2000) and Bowles reported higher levels of instability, more conflict with a partner, and less desire for affection, with adults from divorced families as compared to their counterparts. Additionally, adults from divorced families are more likely to cohabitate with their partners, report less happiness, satisfaction, and trust in their current relationships (Amato; Bailey, 2006). The lower levels of satisfaction can bleed into other areas of life including family and friends, demonstrating the evidence of a marital dissolution and its effects on children and adults (Bowles; Dunlop, & Burns, 2001).

Health

Health also plays a significant factor in the negative effects of divorce. Compared to adults from intact families, adults from divorced families reported poorer physical health, including less exercise in their daily routine and were more likely to report consuming a less healthy diet (Mahl, 2001). In addition, compared to adults from intact families, adults from divorced families reported lower levels of happiness. Amato (2000)

suggested there is a direct link to regular exercise, a healthy diet, and happiness. Thus, it is not surprising that the reported level of health and the overall level of happiness was highest with adults who were raised in a two-parent household and lowest in adults who were raised in a divorced home (Amato).

Stress and Stressful Events

Stressful events such as financial difficulties, deaths, problems with their children, differences in vocational directions often initiate the uncoupling process (Jekielek, 1998). This, in turn, increases the behavioral, emotional, and health outcomes for those involved. Duration and severity of the stressful event are varied from individual to individual and depend on a variety of factors (Jekielek).

Individuals who believed in the lifelong marital commitment reported elevated distress levels following the divorce (Jekielek, 1998). These individuals may have experienced greater adjustment problems due to moral contradiction or a contradiction of their personal ideas. Martin et al. (2003) indicated that better adjusted individuals were those who initiated the divorce or those who were less heavily invested in the marriage. Also, those who were able to solve their problems amicably and successfully reported to function better and have the possibility of providing positive long-term consequences than those who reported a lack of effective problem-solving techniques (Jekielek; Martin et al.; Marquardt, 2005). In addition, individuals who experienced other factors such as physical, sexual, and emotional abuse reported functioning better after the divorce (Jekielek).

Generational Divorce

Burns and Dunlop (2003) reported the assumptions of generational divorces. The next generation is significantly influenced by the modeling of parental marriage, and adults who experience a parental divorce, compared to adults who were raised by two parents, are twice as likely to experience a divorce firsthand (Bowles, 2005). Further, the rate of divorce increases threefold if both members of the union stem from a divorced family. This could be the result of modeled attitudes and beliefs of those from divorced families. Compared to adults from intact families, adults from divorced families are less satisfied and content with their lives (Amato & Booth, 1991) and more likely to convey the impression of acceptability of marital dissolution (Amato, 2000; Bowles; Burgoyne, 2002; Dunne, 1994; Richardson & McCabe, 2001; Seltzer, 1994). Hines (1997) concluded that adults experiencing divorce as children are more likely to see themselves being single or raising their children alone in the future. They also have a higher likelihood to leave home/school earlier, engage in sexual activity sooner, exhibit depressive symptoms, use drugs, smoke, drink (Pryor & Rodgers, 2001), and have more of a tumultuous relationship with their parents (Booth & Amato, 1994).

Overall, the evaluation of divorce among adult children of divorce is more pessimistic (Amato, 2000; Bowles, 2005). Evidence strongly indicates both negative and positive attitudes towards divorce are carried on through generations, creating a cyclical pattern (Bowles; Burns & Dunlop, 2003; Wallerstein, 2005). This cyclical pattern of attitudes and divorce patterns begins with just one divorce and acts like a cascade, threatening to affect generation after generation. Instead of attempting resolution, a child

from a divorced family will more likely believe the problems cannot be solved and a divorce is the best solution (Dunne, 1994).

Clinical Implications

In order stay on course developmentally and assist in dealing with family conflicts, six tasks need to be completed. Kot and Shoemaker (1999) include the following:

> The first task is acknowledging the marital disruption. Second, the child needs to regain a sense of direction and freedom to pursue everyday activities. Dealing with loss and feeling of rejection is the third task. Next, the child must forgive the parents for separating the family. Fifth, the child needs to accept the permanence of divorce and relinquish the desire for restoration of the pre-divorce family. Finally, is the task of feeling comfortable and confident in his or her own relationships. (p. 176)

In summary, the current research trends suggests the lack of contact with a parent, stress, economic difficulties, the adjustment and competence of the parents, and conflict between the parents do contribute to the well-being of the children. The reason is fairly predictable and simple. Children who experience negative characteristics (i.e., depression, anxiety, low self-esteem) during their parent's divorce most often bring that destructive baggage into their adult lives, using their past experiences as a model for present relationships (Kot & Shoemaker, 1999). Painful memories and feelings of helplessness continue into adulthood. It is a reminder that difficulties due to parental conflict do not necessarily dissipate with time. Maladjusted as children will often become

maladjusted adults. This is significant in designing child and parental divorce interventions (Hughes, 2005).

Adults are also affected by the loss of a relationship and loss of income and social status, as well as the added responsibility of running the household, raising the children, and being the provider of the family. Depression is often the result of this drastic life change for both children and adults (Hill & Hilton, 1999).

Dance and Professional Dancers

The next section will describe dance and professional dancers. Stresses effecting dancers will be discussed.

Dance has proven to be a method of powerful communication, one that allows for the exploration of self-knowledge and self-esteem. Not only is the body an icon of beauty, it is also a vehicle used as a method of expressing emotions, memories, sensations, and awareness within the body. Dancers often move past the mimic stage of learning to create a personal artistic and unique movement. This, in turn, can build a universal body of understanding between the dancer and the audience (Arkin, 1994).

Historically, male dancers lost respect with society's fascination of ballerinas, and men were viewed as clumsy and heavy on stage. Masculinity was questioned, as evidenced by Gautier when he wrote: "...strength is the only grace permissible to men" (Priddin, 1952, p. 41). Thus, dance became more feminized with this new attitude towards men, and male dancers quickly become associated with effeminacy, directly curtailing the participation of men in dance (Crawford, 1994).

Modern dance has attempted to change the male dancers' image by celebrating masculinity and male participation in dance. Viewing dance as a sport and not an effeminate style of movement has allowed for the recognition of athletes in the performing arts, making an important connection between sport and dance while educating the public on the athleticism of dance (Crawford, 1994).

However, society continues to reflect the views of sports being a masculine activity and dance as a feminine one. This viewpoint contributes to the separation of the sexes. Chapman (1974) noted that exploration, self-discovery, creativity, and self-expression are less acceptable to men and in sports programs which often values playing and winning the sport rather than experiencing creative movement. As a result, women gravitate towards controlled and refined movement activities, such as dance, whereas "the male role was defined as vigorous, strong and essentially nonartistic" (Kraus, Hilsendager, & Dixon, 1991, p. 397).

Conditioning children at a young age may play a significant role in the reinforced attitude. Boys are usually directed and encouraged towards sport activities, while dance is encouraged for girls. Thus, boys are generally excluded from dance education, and maintaining the feminine image of dance is reinforced, resulting in a female-dominated profession (Crawford, 1994).

From an early age, girls are more gravitated towards seeking dance class than boys. Adair (1992) and Shapiro (1998) indicated that girls outnumber boys by 40 to 1 in dance class, and regardless of the athleticism, society still tends to classify the profession as feminine. Although women outnumber men in the dance field, most men often obtain dominant positions within the profession. Women usually hold the worker or performer

position, while the men fulfill the roles of managers and choreographers. Yet, this male dominance has not led to an increase of male dancers in the profession (Crawford, 1994).

This trend of women outnumbering men continues in the professional dance world (Crawford, 1994). For example, Donn Arden's *Jubilee!* employs both men and women, but men only account for 30% of the performers. The majority of the performers from the *Ribbon of Life* show are women as well. Many Las Vegas shows only employ female dancers, including *Crazy Girls*, *La Femme*, and *Fantasy*.

Stresses of Dance

The body of a dancer, especially in Las Vegas, is often his/her ticket to a performance occupation. Many shows hire and require a lean physic, and dancers are hired for their external beauty as well as their dance technique. In many contracts, the weight of the performers is a looming stressor. If the body of the dancer varies, then action is usually taken. For example, a woman dancer who gains weight is often given a weight notice. If the dancer does not loose the added weight, she is put on probation and taken out of the show. If she cannot loose the weight in the allotted time, her contract is terminated. As a result, her body becomes a battleground and not the once fertile wellspring.

The same rules apply for men. The desired showboy appears strong, healthy, and physically fit. As a professional showboy, I naturally have a thin build and I was asked by my employer to gain more weight. Personally, it was difficult put on weight while doing 12 fast-paced shows weekly in addition to weight lifting as a method to add muscle. Because I have a fast metabolism rate, my caloric intake was astounding. I know I was not the only one who had difficulties with weight.

Overall, dancers are required to be constantly aware of their weight, although their bodies are in a constant state of change. This can produce an even greater awareness of the need to conform to the show's desired look. Because the body of a dancer is usually required to appear in top physical condition, physique variations of this desired appearance can cause a munificent amount of anxiety and depression for the performer, possibility altering the individual's self-esteem. In addition, if the body lacks the desired looks for the employer, then other venues of employment need to be considered, causing more stress for the performer and the desire plan of the artist.

If the performer is forced to consider other avenues of employment, continuing education such as college might be an option. However, adjusting to the schedule for education and financial difficulties might play a significant role in determining whether or not the individual pursues the education. In some situations, the individual might have to consider borrowing money from a bank or accepting financial assistance from his/her parents. Thus, inclusion of these stressors, in addition to stemming from an unstable environment, can result in a devastating effect on the performer's perception of his/her world.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to understand and analyze the ramifications of divorce, specifically in terms of depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and availability of resources on professional adult dancers in Las Vegas shows. Reflecting the performer's preferences and experiences growing up in an intact or divorced family, this study compared adults who were children from divorces considered "neutral" to "positive", adults who were children from divorces considered "negative", and adults who were raised in two-parent households. Divorces considered "neutral" to "positive" were defined as an amicable relationship between parents, minimal outward displays of anger, fair custody arrangement, and lack of child's involvement in parental disputes. Divorces considered "negative" were defined as tumultuous relationship between parents, excessive/regular outward displays of anger, unfair custody arrangement, and parental disputes involving the child. Those who were from intact families reported never separated or divorced parents.

Each participant was a professional dancer who had been specifically hired for his or her talents. Many individuals audition for Las Vegas shows, and only a few of the most talented are admitted. Because of this competitiveness, the level of the performers taking the survey were those selected few who successfully auditioned and were contracted professional dancers.

Data Collection

Participants

The data for the study was collected from a convenience sample of 112 adult professional dancers. Participants who were included in this study were currently under a Las Vegas show contract and required to read and understand the information on the questionnaire. Individuals participated on a voluntary basis.

Professional adult dancers from the production shows of *Ribbon of Life*, *Mamma Mia!*, and *Jubilee!* were given surveys consisting of a 59-item Likert-type survey addressing the variables of depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and availability to resources. A copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix II. Based on their perception of their parents' marital status, participants classified themselves into one of three categories (intact families, neutral to positive divorce, and negative divorce), analyzed and compared against each other on the aforementioned variables. Inasmuch as this study uses a convenience sample of those choosing to participate, equal sample sizes among the three study groups could not be guaranteed. Therefore, data was post-stratified by randomly selecting participant responses to ensure equal sample sizes in the three groups.

More women than men were included in the survey. The reason for the difference in number between men and women is due to a significantly larger proportion of females compared to men who are professional dancers. Because the production shows are predominantly women, more women filled out the questionnaire.

A recruitment flyer was strategically placed backstage where there was access to the dancers. A week later, the researcher attended *Mamma Mia!* and *Jubilee!* in-between shows to elicit participation and give explanations and background information on the

purpose of the study. A brief announcement was given in a provided warm-up room at each show which explained the research project. The researcher also answered the participant's questions. Prior to voluntarily filling out the questionnaire, participants were asked to read and sign the informed consent that described the content and nature of the study. Confidentiality was ensured and participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. They chose either a private setting or small groups to complete the questionnaire.

Before the dress rehearsal of *Ribbon of Life*, a brief explanation of the research project was given, and the participants had the opportunity to ask any questions. Dancers who were interested in participating in this project were given an informed consent and questionnaire in a manila envelope. The participants were aware of the confidentiality of the research and the importance of signing the informed consent. If the researcher received a questionnaire without the informed consent form signed, the questionnaire became invalid.

To assure confidentiality, participants were encouraged not to include identifying information on the questionnaire. The results were placed back in a provided manila envelope, sealed, and submitted to the researcher. The researcher was in possession of the results the entire duration of the data collection process and present throughout the process for all three production shows. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality before and after completion of the questionnaire.

Setting

The completion of the survey instruments was conducted at each show in either a warm-up room or at a dress rehearsal. A group format was used in conducting the surveys.

Jubilee!: Jubilee! is a $50 million dollar production show located at Bally's Hotel and Casino. With over 100 dancers, 70% of the performers are female. *Jubilee!* plays original music, has seven acts, and includes more than 1,000 glittering costumes designed by Bob Mackie and Pete Menefee. This topless show, seating 1,040, is half the size of a football field and 15 stories tall from the bottom of the orchestra pit to the roof. It consists of six small elevators and two revolving elevators and has been a successful Las Vegas production for over two decades.

Biannually, *Jubilee!* holds auditions at six different cities in the U.S.: New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Las Angeles, San Diego, Orlando, and Las Vegas. This ensures that *Jubilee!* continues to produce high-quality shows.

Ribbon of Life: The Golden Rainbow organization was formed twenty years ago with the mission to provide housing and financial assistance to men, women, children and families living with HIV/AIDS in Southern Nevada, as well as educating the community on the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS. Golden Rainbow also supports HIV/AIDS-related education, and is a recognized Nevada non-profit organization. It has been serving the Las Vegas community for 19 years. In that time, the outfit has grown from a loose association to a fully recognized non-profit organization.

The *Ribbon of Life* show, staged as a fundraiser for Las Vegas-based HIV/AIDS charity Golden Rainbow, is the largest production show of the year in Las Vegas. This

90-minute show has earned its reputation as one of the biggest productions in Las Vegas, with casts typically reaching more than 250 strong, and nearly every show on the Las Vegas strip participates in this annual event. Money is collected through advertisements, ticket sales, raffles, and a silent auction. Each year produces new records in terms of attendance, performance, and money raised bringing in more than $225,000 during a weekend with the help of superstars like Charo, Rick Springfield, Sheena Easton and Clint Holmes.

Mamma Mia!: Mamma Mia! is a Las Vegas production show held at Mandalay Bay Hotel and Casino. The Mandalay Bay theater holds over 1,700 seats and the performance is 2 ½ hours in length. This musical has been running for more than three years with over 1,300 performances, and consists of fifteen male and fifteen female performers. Twenty-two songs based on the music of Abba are weaved into a story about a single mother and her soon-to-be wed daughter living and working on a mythical Greek Island.

Instruments

In order to investigate the characteristics of the long term effects of divorce on professional adult dancers for depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and availability of resources, a number of standarized or documented measures were used. These measures were selected based on a number of considerations that have not been evaluated before in professional dancers. Guiding the research questions are those pertaining to the effects their past has on their current lives. The measures are as follows:

Demographic Information Form: Participants completed a demographic information form including the following information: 1) Age; 2) Gender; 3) Nationality;

4) Parental divorce; 5) Age of parental divorce; 6) Number of siblings.; 7) Highest level of completed education; 8) Grade point average ; 9) Highest level of mother and father's education; and 10) Where the paricipant is currently dancing (See Appendix I).

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES): One of the most widely used measures for global self-esteem is the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1965). It is a combination of 10 items that measure the individual's overall feelings of self-acceptance and self-worth (See Appendix II). Rosenberg reported that the "scale is internally reliable and unidimentional and appears to have face validity" (1965, p. 30). Typically, test-retest correlations are in the range of .82 to .88. Demonstrating excellent validity and reliability, this brief scale has been shown to be effective across a variety of different scale groups and ages (Francis & Wilcox, 1995; Wylie, 1989).

This scale has a Coefficient of Reproductibility of 92 percent and a Coefficient of Scalability of 72 percent. Silber and Tippett (1965) were reported to have found two week test-retest reliability of 85%.

Participants are presented with four response categories: strongly agree agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Five of the items are phrased positively and five are phrased negatively in order to reduce acquiescent responses. For questions 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7, the scaling is zero for "strongly disagree," one equates an "agree," two is a "disagree," and three is used for a "strongly agree." For the rest of the questions (3, 5, 8, 9, and 10), the answers are reversed. (Rosenberg, 1965).

Burns Depression Checklist: To measure depression, the Burns Depression Checklist will be used (See Appendix II). It is a highly accurate and reliable instrument consisting of 14 items. A list of feelings are listed after each question, and only one check

is allowed for each question. The questionnaire is then rated according to the sum of the answers. The highest score for the complete questionnaire is 100, indicating high symptoms of depression. The lowest score, 0, indicates no symptoms of depression (Burns, 1989).

The answers are scored on a four point scale. Zero indicates a "not at all," one is "somewhat", two is "moderately", and three is "a lot." The scoring results are as follows: 0-4 Minimal or no depression; 5-10 Borderline depression; 11-20 Mild depression; 21-30 Moderate depression; 31-45 Severe depression.

Burns Anxiety Inventory (BAI): Measuring anxiety, the Burns Anxiety Inventory is a popular and well-researched instrument that has excellent reliability and internal consistency (See Appendix II). Thirty-three symptoms of anxiety are measured and placed in three categories: anxious feelings, anxious thoughts, and somatic manifestations of anxiety. Participants use a scale to record the severity of each symptom. The options are not at all (0), somewhat (1), moderately (2), and a lot (3). Their scores are then added to create a total score, ranging from 0-99. The score represents the level of anxiety the individual reported. The higher the score, the higher level of anxiey the individual is experiencing. Interpretations of the scale include minimal or no anxiety (0-4), borderline anxiety (5-10), mild anxiety (11-20), moderate anxiety (31-50), and extreme anxiety or panic (51-99) (Burns, 1989).

With a test-retest correlation of 0.53 ($p < .0001$) in a group of 211 outpatients studied over a 12-week period, the BAI is a moderately stable measure (Burns, 1989).

Availability of Resources: For financial and emotional availability of resources, participants will respond to the following items by answering according to a four point

scale of "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree", and "strongly disagree." The statements are as follows: 1) I felt as if resources were available for my college; 2) I presently have resources for college; 3) I would have difficulty asking one or both of my parents for money to continue my education; 4) In the past, I had emotional support from my parents for college; 5) In the past, I had emotional support from my parents when I was growing up; 6) In the past, my parents attended my athletic, dance or other school events; 7) Presently, I have emotional support from my parents (See Appendix II).

Procedure

Each professional adult dancer volunteered his/her time to complete the questionnaires, and the research participants were given a concise description of the study. A graduate student administered the questionnaire. After the examiner explained the confidentiality concerning the subject's responses, the participants were given a consent form. This form explicitly explains the procedures, risks, benefit and rights of all participants. Participants signed the informed consent prior to participation in the study.

The numbers on the questionnaire correlating to the participant's name remain confidential. Participants were assigned a code number to protect against identification and direct contact with the participants was limited to only one researcher. Every assurance was made to protect the identity of the participants. All testing data on the respective participants was maintained as hard copies located in several binders. The questionniares and consent forms were retained in these binders. Data was stored in a locked cabinet at UNLV and participant information was be coded and all personal identifiers removed.

Information concerning mental health counseling was available for the participants who were troubled after filling out the questionnaire. It is provided at a professional community counseling center on a sliding scale to all who participate in the study. If at any time a particpant wished to withdraw from the study, the informed consent explained that this was an option.

The participant's packet included a short collection of questions concerning demographic information, depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and availability to resources. The participants were given instructions for completing the questions from the graduate student who administered the questionnaires. The questionnaires were a combination of a few different surveys, and took the participants approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Methods of Data Analysis

All of the questions on the questionnaire could be answered by responding yes or no, utilizing a 4-point Likert scale, or by a numeric value. The collection of data and coding were completed less than 8 weeks from the time surveying began, and comparisons were conducted shortly thereafter.

Research Questions

This study evaluated the effects of divorce on professional dancers. It was hypothesized that professional dancers who come from divorced families suffer more from depression, anxiety, lower self-esteem, and have less availability to resources than professional dancers from intact families.

This research sought to identify the long term effects of divorce on professional adult dancers. Specifically, the research focused on answering two questions:

1. Are professional adult dancers from divorced families more depressed, anxious, have lower self-esteem, and have a perceived lower availability of resources than professional adult dancers from intact families?
2. Are professional adult dancers from neutral to positive divorced families different from professional adult dancers from negative divorced families?

Analysis

To test for possible mean differences between professional adult dancers who come from intact families, professional adult dancers who come from neutral to positive divorced families, and professional adult dancers who come from negative divorce families, MANOVAs were used. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is a generalization of analysis of variance that allows the researcher to analyze more than one dependent variable while simultaneously comparing different groups and several variables. In cases where the MANOVA yielded significant differences, post-hoc comparisons were conducted. When the data did not conform to the assumptions for MANOVA, nonparametric tests, specifically the Kruskal-Wallis and the Mann-Whitney U test were used.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Demographics

The sample used for this study consisted of 112 professional adult dancers who were contracted in a Las Vegas production. The total sample size of 147 consisted of performers from *Ribbon of Life*, represented by dancers from *Follies Bergiere*, *Show in the Sky*, *Fasionistas*, *Mystere*, *Erocktica*, *American Superstars*, *Splash*, *Ka*, *Headlights and Tailpipes*, *Sirens of TI*, *A New Day*, *Magic of Rick Thomas*, *and Fantasy*. The other two production shows included *Jubilee!* and *Mamma Mia!*.

Data were collected and participants were grouped according to their parental marital status: negative divorce, neutral to positive divorce, or intact family. Owing to unequal sample sizes among the three parental marital status categories, the lowest number of responses in a category, professional dancers from negative divorced families, was chosen to be the determining sample size for the data analysis. A random selection of 37 out of 65 from the category of professional dancers who were raised in intact families, and 38 out of 42 from professional dancers who were raised in neutral to positive divorced families was then chosen. Thus, the categories became more equal: 37 from negatively divorced families (hereafter denoted as "ND"), 38 from neutral to positive divorced families (hereafter denoted as "NPD"), and 37 from intact families (hereafter denoted as "IF").

Sixty-nine women (61.6%) and 43 men (38.4%) voluntarily participated in this study (Table 1). This female-heavy representation was anticipated because the majority of performers working in Las Vegas productions are female.

Table 1
Gender of Participants (N = 112)

	IF (n = 37)	NPD (n = 38)	ND (n = 37)	Overall (n = 112)
Male	15	14	14	43
Female	22	24	23	69

The range of performer's ages varied from 19 to 40. The dancer's overall mean age was 28.97 (SD = 5.81). Within the three groups, the mean age of the participants was similar for the ID, NPD, and the ND groups. The IF group reported a mean age of 28.30 (SD = 5.21), while the mean ages for the NPD and the ND groups were 30.03 (SD = 6.48) and 28.57 (SD = 5.64).

Fifty-eight percent of the participants identified themselves as White/Caucasian. Hispanics represented 8.9% of the participants, and the 33.1% of the participants were other ethnic minority groups (i.e., African-American, Italian, Black/White, Asian, Cuban, Native American, Pilipino, Pacific Islander, Romanian, Hawaiian, Swedish, English, Australian, French, Russian, Korean, Spanish, and Polish).

Table 2 displays the college grade point average and education level comparisons. The majority of the performers (93.7%) reported high school completion. Nearly two-

thirds (63.4 %) had either a college degree or completed some college. Participants who experienced a negative parental divorce were less likely to complete a four year college degree (5) than the NPD (17) and the IF (16) groups.

Table 2
College Education

	IF (n = 37)	NPD (n = 38)	ND (n = 37)	Overall (n = 112)
Less than high school	3	1	3	7
High School Diploma	10	13	11	34
Some College	8	6	17	31
Four Year College	16	17	5	38
Advanced Degree	0	1	1	2
Grade Point Average	3.53	3.49	3.51	3.51

The performer's parental marital status reported is spread evenly amongst the three groups in Table 3.

Table 3
Parental Marital Status across Shows

	IF (n = 37)	NPD (n = 38)	ND (n = 37)	Overall (N = 112)
Jubilee!	11	10	13	34
Ribbon of Life	23	25	18	66
Mamma Mia!	3	3	6	12
Total	37	38	37	112

Table 4 categorizes the participants in their parental marital status group and includes their mean scores of depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and availability of resources.

Table 4
Mean and Standard Deviation of Depression, Anxiety, Self-Esteem, and Availability of Resources (N = 112)

	IF		NPD		ND	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Depression	19.88	5.12	23.50	5.68	31.51	7.64
Anxiety	44.20	11.04	50.05	11.81	65.43	14.33
Self Esteem	16.23	4.41	14.82	3.88	19.08	4.38
Resources	7.60	2.33	8.44	2.82	10.89	3.69

The comparisons of the four variables using a nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis and Mann Whitney U post hoc analysis to compare reported mean rank levels are displayed in Table 5. These tests were chosen to discover the similarities and differences that exist between the mean rank scores of the levels of availability of resources and the directionality of the categories of anxiety and depression. Significant differences were found for the levels of reported depression, anxiety, and availability of resources ($p <$ .001).

Table 5
Mean Rank of Depression, Anxiety, Self-Esteem, and Availability of Resources using Kruskal-Wallis and Mann Whitney U (N = 112)

	IF	NPD	ND	Kruskal-Wallis		Mann Whitney U	
	(n = 37)	(n = 38)	(n = 37)	Statistic	Sig.	Comparison	Sig.
Depression	34.70	51.92	83.00	42.192	$p < .001$*	IF v. NPD	$p = .008$*
						NPD v. ND	$p < .001$*
						IF v. ND	$p < .001$*
Anxiety	37.61	49.26	78.82	37.196	$p < .001$*	IF v. NPD	$p = .035$
						NPD v. ND	$p < .001$*
						IF v. ND	$p < .001$*
Self Esteem	53.70	43.37	72.78	15.932	$p < .001$*	IF v. NPD	$p = .161$
						NPD v. ND	$p < .001$*
						IF v. ND	$p = .011$*
Resources	45.05	51.50	73.08	17.216	$p < .001$*	IF v. NPD	$p = .235$
						NPD v. ND	$p = .003$*
						IF v. ND	$p < .001$*

* = *significant at* $p \leq .018$

Instrument Interpretation

Burns Depression Checklist

For the Burns Depression Checklist, the direction of these questions was consistently negative, indicating a lower satisfaction score was correlated to higher levels of depression. Fourteen of the original 25 questions were chosen to simplify the questionnaire. The reason was to create a questionnaire that would require a maximum of 15 minutes to complete, and eliminating nine of these questions would provide sufficient data to determine depression as well as creating a shorter and less time-consuming questionnaire. This reduction of the Burns Depression Checklist would also reduce the possibility of incomplete questionnaires by lessening the required amount of time to complete it. After eliminating a few items, the Cronbach's alpha remained satisfactory, α = .8986.

Burns Anxiety Inventory

Similar to the questions pertaining to depression, anxiety questions stemming from the Burns Anxiety Inventory (BAI) were also governed by a negative direction. The scores (not at all, moderately, somewhat, and a lot) were rated by the participant. The more negative the feeling, the more negative the score. The Cronbach's alpha level for this test was .9356.

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale

Half of the self-esteem items were reverse-scored as a method to prevent automatic responses. Five of the questions were positively phrased and five were negatively phrased. The scores of the negatively phrased items were scored in reverse. Once the items were properly reverse-scored, the Cronbach's α= .8568.

Availability of Resources Questions

The items on this scale were not part of an already existing scale, but rather were generated by the research. The scoring was indicated by numbers: strongly agree (1), agree (2), disagree (3), and strongly disagree (4) (see Appendix 4). The lower the score, the more perceived availability of resources reported.

All of the questions measuring availability of resources were phrased positively and reliability was significantly increased after eliminating two items: Question 2 - If you wanted to go to college now, are there resources available for you?, and question 3 - Would you have difficulty asking one or both of your parents for money to continue your education?" Initially, the Cronbach's α= .7445. After running a factor analysis (Principal Components with a Varimax rotation), the two items mentioned above loaded on a separate factor (.303 and .069). Because these two items did not load strongly on the other factor, they were eliminated from the scale, resulting in an increased α of .8626.

Hypothesis Testing

Multivariate analyses were performed in order to simultaneously test hypotheses related to the four scales listed. Data were first tested for normality; unfortunately, data were sufficiently skewed that the assumption of normality could not be met (Shapiro-Wilk statistic, all $p < .05$). Therefore data were rank-transformed prior to analysis. A nonparametric multivariate analysis of variance was used to test for differences in the participant's ratings of: 1) depression; 2) anxiety; 3) self-esteem; and 4) availability of resources. It should be noted that both nonparametric and parametric MANOVA yielded

similar results; however, results of the nonparametric analysis are provided owing to the violation of normality assumptions necessary to appropriately interpret parametric results.

In addition to using MANOVA and nonparametric procedures, post hoc analyses were calculated using a Bonferroni adjustment to protect against Type I errors. Three comparisons were run for each dependent variable. Therefore, the new $p \leq .018$. Finally, once differences were discovered, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine where the differences were between the mean ranks of each scale.

Evaluation of Study Hypotheses/Main Analyses

Hypothesis One

Compared to professional adult dancers who were raised in intact families, professional adult dancers from divorced families will report less depression, anxiety, have higher self-esteem, and have more availability of resources.

Hypothesis Two

Compared to professional adult dancers who were raised in negative divorced families, professional adult dancers from neutral to positive divorced families will report less depression, anxiety, have higher self-esteem, and have more availability of resources.

Differences in the Four Variables

Depression

Dancers from intact families showed a mean score of 19.88 on the depression scale (see Table 4). They were between the scores on the Burns Depression Checklist ($p < .001$). However, we had to conduct post hoc analyses to find where the differences

were. This data is depicted in Table 5. Results indicated that hypothesis one was supported: the intact group had significantly lower scores on the instrument than either of the divorced groups ($p < .001$).

Hypothesis two posited that dancers from the ND group would report significantly higher levels of depression than dancers from the positive to neutral divorced families. Again, hypothesis two was supported. Dancers in the ND group scored a mean of 31.51 on the scale, which was significantly different at the $p < .001$ level than the NPD group (M = 23.50) (see Tables 4 and 5).

Anxiety

In the case of anxiety, hypothesis one was partially supported. Dancers from the IF group scored a mean of 44.20 (see Table 4). The NPD (M = 50.05) and the ND (M = 65.43) group scored significantly higher in levels of anxiety. Thus, differences exist between the three groups ($p < .001$). Specifically, differences exist between the IF and ND groups ($p < .001$), and significant differences do not exist between the IF and the NPD groups ($p = .035$).

Hypothesis two posited that dancers from the ND group would report significantly higher levels of anxiety than dancers from the NPD group. Similar to depression and availability of resources, hypothesis two was supported. Dancers in the ND group scored a mean of 65.43 on the scale, which was significantly different at the $p < .001$ level than the NPD group, who scored a mean of 50.05 (see Tables 4 and 5).

Self-Esteem

In the case of self-esteem, the results did not fully support hypothesis one (see Table 5). The Kruskal-Wallis test indicated there was a difference in mean scores

between the three family groups ($p < .001$). Specifically, there were in fact differences between IF and ND participants ($p = .011$, $M_{IF} = 16.23$, $M_{NPD} = 14.82$). However, there were no significant differences between IF and NPD participants ($M_{ND} = 19.08$) ($p = .161$). Therefore, this hypothesis was partially supported.

Dancers in the NPD group scored a mean of 14.82 on the scale, which was significantly different at the $p < .001$ level than the ND group, who scored a mean of 19.08. Because there were significant differences between the NPD and the ND groups, hypothesis two was fully supported.

Availability of Resources

Similar to anxiety and self-esteem, hypothesis one was partially supported by the results of availability of resources. Dancers from the IF group scored a mean of 7.60 on the availability of resources scale (see Table 4). The mean of the NPD group was 8.44 and dancers from ND scored 10.89. Although there were differences between the IF and the NPD groups ($p < .001$), there were no significant differences between the IF and the ND groups ($p = .235$).

Hypothesis two posited that dancers from the ND group would report lower levels of perceived availability of resources than dancers from the NPD group. Because of the significant differences between the ND and the NPD group, hypothesis two was supported. Scoring a mean of 10.89 on the scale, the ND group's was significantly different at the $p = .003$ level than the NPD group ($M = 8.44$).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study was to examine and compare the characteristics of depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and availability of resources with professional adult dancers from intact families, professional adult dancers from neutral to positive divorced families, and professional adult dancers from negative divorced families. It was hypothesized that the dancers from intact families would report less depression, less anxiety, higher levels of self-esteem, and more perceived availability of resources than dancers from divorced families. Further, compared to those who experienced a negative divorce as children, it was hypothesized that dancers whose experienced their parent's divorce as neutral to positive would follow the same pattern as dancers from intact families. In most cases, the hypotheses were confirmed.

Expected Findings

It was expected that there would be significant reported levels of depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and perceived availability of resources between the three groups of dancers. More specifically, it was expected that individuals who were raised with both parents would have lower reported levels of depression, lower levels of anxiety, higher levels of self-esteem, and more perceived availability of resources overall. Between the two divorce groups of participants, it was expected that those who were raised in

negatively divorced families would report more depression and anxiety, lower self-esteem, and less availability of resources than those who were raised in neutral to positive divorced families. It underlines the strength of those variables that did emerge as highly significant. The findings thus highlight the importance of divorce and the effects it has on children.

Differences in the Four Variables

Depression

Results of this study confirm the hypothesis that dancers who experienced divorce as children, regardless of whether that divorce was positive or negative, demonstrated higher levels of depression than dancers from intact families. These findings make sense, given the body of literature on the processes of divorce on children. Freedman and Knupp (2003) suggested that the effects of the marital process can have a devastating effect on the adjustment of the children, and children from divorced families reported more depression than children from non-divorced families. Specifically, less parental involvement and affection towards children are more prevalent in hostile and depressed parents (Rutter, 1990), adding to the already tumultuous environment and contributing to depressive moods of those involved (Fischer, 1999; Smith, 1990).

This research also found that dancers from intact families had lower levels of depression than those who reported their parent's divorce was positive, who in turn, had lower levels of depression than those who reported their parent's divorce was negative. This research is not surprising, given that parents who are more maladjusted transfer this in some way to their children (Rutter, 1990). According to Fischer (1999), parents who

are experiencing a separation or a divorce are more likely to report depression, irritability, anxiety, health problems, impulsive behavior, and identity disruptions compared to parents in an intact marriage. These psychological and physical problems, in turn, directly affect parenting skills and disciplinary methods (Hetherington, 1993; Simons, 1996; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999), which contribute to the children's depressive feelings (Fischer; Smith, 1990).

The results of this study clearly demonstrate that special attention needs to be paid to this specific population. The experience of a divorce creates maladjustment and in some cases, more symptoms of depression (Zubernis et al., 1999). Then, as the dancer becomes an adult, the experience in the professional world can contribute to the individual's depressive state. Hence, the dancer is hit two-fold with depression; one from the home environment and one from the professional world.

Depression can be the result of many challenges the performer must face. One particular challenge is the presentation of a perfect image. Although the performer may be experiencing a double dosage of life's challenges, the dancer must still present a perfect image, an image that is demanded by both the audience and the producer. Regardless of the dancer's depression, the show must continue and the presentation must be pristine. The dancer is aware of this pressure of perfection, and does his/her best to mask the internal and external troubles.

Another aspect of possible depression stems from auditioning. Most performers are subjected to numerous auditions, and with my experience, a performer will land approximately 1 out of every 3 or 4 auditions. This, however, is generally for those who are successful and have already been in professional shows. Many other performers,

especially neophyte dancers, audition multiple times and do not have similar success rates. Job uncertainty and constant competition with other performers for a position can create much stress and possible depression. If the performer continues to audition unsuccessfully, then he/she is more apt to feel more depressed than a performer who is landing performance gigs regularly. Given this information, the performer is subjected to a higher amount of stress and possible depression before landing a contract.

Anxiety

With anxiety, hypothesis one was confirmed; adults who experienced a parental divorce reported more anxiety than those who were raised in an intact families. Current research also confirms this result. Fischer (1999), Lopata (1994), and Smith (1990) reported that children who experience a divorce often experience less contact with noncustodial parents. This, in turn, inadvertently allows for insecure attachments to be formed. With these dysfunctional relationships, anxiety is often of the result. The child questions his/her ability to love and the value of a committed relationship, as well as questioning his/her ability to engage in a relationship (Lopata). These feelings, including anxiety, often follows them into adulthood (Fischer), manifesting in other areas of their life.

In addition, results of my study concluded that those who experienced a negative divorce reported higher levels of anxiety than those from a neutral to positive divorce. Research also suggested a correlation between maladjustment levels and levels of heightened divorce trauma. Ingersoll (1989) reported the experience of major positive and negative life transitions create stress for adolescents. Social and emotional adjustments are necessary when adolescents experience transitional life events. Divorce

has a tendency to worsen these crucial adjustment periods, creating doubt, depression, shame, and anxiety for the child. The more these needs are not met, the more adjustment problems the individual often experiences. Therefore, it is not surprising that individuals from negatively divorced parents reported more anxiety than those from neutral to positive divorced families. Wallerstein (1981) concluded that children who experience a parental divorce "confront issues of love, commitment and marriage with anxiety, sometimes with great concern about betrayal, abandonment, and not being loved" (p. 353).

In the professional world, performers experience a munificent amount of anxiety, often overwhelming, as a result of their childhood experience and vying for a position as a professional dancer. Anxiety is at the forefront of many performers when subjected to auditions, and constant auditioning for a position in the professional dance world is necessary if a job wants to be obtained. Auditioning is a time of uncertainty, and the producer is often seeking a specific type of dancer (i.e., height, weight, long legs, youthful look, wholesome or street appearance, acrobat, large breasts, etcetera). If the dancer does not fit the mold the producer's desired plan, the dancer is not hired and seemingly rejected. The reasons for not being hired are generally unknown, leaving the dancer uncertain and more conscientious of his/her shortcomings or lack of abilities while directly reinforcing the anxiety associated with dancing and auditioning.

In addition to the anxiety of fitting the mold of the producer, the dancer must be able to quickly learn and perform the taught choreography at an audition. The dancer must appear confident and worthy of filling the open position. During this time, the dancer often contemplates ideas such as learning and performing the choreography

quickly and correctly, and wondering if the producer is currently making decisions. The performer is also comparing him/herself to the other performers auditioning.

Another aspect that pertains to anxiety is the performer's consistent upkeep and concern about fitting the desired look/plan. This often requires careful attention to physique, skin, diet, health, and overall appearance As a professional dancer, fine tuning skills such as dance classes and body maintenance are a few of the issues the performer must experience regularly. Dance classes, providing a venue of new choreography, can be a useful tool for auditioning purposes by quickly learning and performing new choreography as well as fine tuning the existing talents such as kicks, leaps, balance, and strength. In this case, anxiety can be used as a motivating tool for the performer.

Once the dancer acquires a job, feelings of anxiety continue throughout the contract. First of all, the dancer must learn the choreographed numbers and execute them well. The performer was hired for his/her talent in dance and expected to perform accordingly. Usually, the performer is given an allotted amount of time to learn the choreographed numbers. During this time, the dancer is usually on probation, and if the dancer cannot learn the choreography quickly enough or does not fit the desired mold of the producer, the dancer is released from the contract. Consequently, the dancer is anxious about learning, retaining, and executing the choreography as well as potentially being fired as a result of learning too slowly or a being a misfit of the desired plan.

During the opening night of the performance or personal opening night of the performer, the dancer often wonders if he/she is going to execute the choreography correctly. The dancer also wonders if job security is a factor in this first performance. It is difficult enough performing a new choreographed number(s) and multiplied when having

to perform it in front of a merciless audience and a producer with high expectations and a quick and sometimes professionally-fatal decision. The security of the performer's contract is often questioned.

In addition, anxiety can manifest itself within the production. Contracts or shows usually consist of many levels of dancers including chorus dancers, semi-principles, and principles. Competition between the dancers to attain the highly desired positions such as the principle spot exists. Thus, the dancer is subjected to yet another stressor as he/she attempts to more towards the desired spot.

With this information, the performer quickly learns to form the required mold of each contract. As well as suddenly changing or altering the previous mask to accommodate either the new show's requirements and/or altering their lifestyle to either fit the mold or be socially accepted with this new group of performers and producers, the performer sometimes fails to recognize the genuine self. The real person slowly alters into the desired mold to create a more employable self, while sometimes unsuccessfully recognizing the strengths and previous abilities of the old self. Therefore, it is not surprising the performer either falls short of recognizing who he/she is or is too busy altering masks to identify the real person, failing to identify with the maskless person. Constant changing or altering molds as well as struggling to identify with the old self can create anxiety.

In terms of moving for employment, changing jobs regularly is often required for dancers. Depending on the show, contracts can range in duration from one day to a year or more, possibly requiring the performer to move frequently for work. This can create

anxiety for the performer as he/she acquires new contracts in different cities or countries to continue performing. Consequently, many facets of anxiety occur for the performer.

Self-Esteem

Based on previous research, participants who experienced a parental divorce would report lower levels of self-esteem than those from two-parent families. In addition, those from amicably divorced parents would report higher levels of self-esteem than those who experienced a negative divorce.

The study fully supported hypothesis one and corroborated with past research. Adults who experienced a parental divorce reported lower levels of self-esteem than those from two-parent homes. Ingersoll (1989) reported a lack of interaction between a parent and an adolescent or an indifferent parent can decrease the self-esteem of an adolescent. He also suggested that the ability of an adolescent to cope and adjust to stressful events is reflected in the adolescent's self-esteem; the higher the adolescent's self-esteem, the better ability of coping and adjusting during stressful events. Also supported by research is the fact that self-esteem of a child is negatively impacted by a parental divorce (Amato, 1993; Bynum & Durm, 1996; Clifford & Clark, 1995; Kurtz, 1994).

Although both of the hypotheses were supported, an interesting discovery with self-esteem was between those who were raised in two-parent homes and those who stemmed from neutral to positive divorced families. Those who were raised in neutral to positive divorced families reported higher levels of self-esteem than those who were raised in intact families, possibly indicating the power of conflict resolution. Amato (2000) suggested that although the life stressor of a divorce can potentially develop

impairments and contribute to a lower level of well-being, being raised in an intact families does not guarantee a better adjusted individual (Amato; Hughes, 2005). Many children who experience a parental divorce do not display the negative characteristics often paired with the result of a divorce (Amato; Kot & Shoemaker, 1999; Seltzer, 1994) and live peaceful and fulfilling relationship-enriched lives (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999).

Another reason for this difference in self-esteem may be research on conflict. Amato (2000) reported the adjustment levels in single-parent homes are better than two-parent homes with conflict. In addition, Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan (1999) discussed that many well-adjusted adults stem from nurturing and loving single-parent family homes. Thus, the results of this study's self-esteem indicated that overall, participants from intact families scored higher on levels of self-esteem. However, the reported levels of participant's self-esteem from dancers who experienced neutral to positive divorces were higher than dancers who were raised with two parents. Although this was an interesting discovery, it was not uncommon or surprising.

Relating this information to a performer, the self-esteem of the performer is often dictated according to his/her childhood. As an adult, the level of self-esteem is then generally adjusted according to the success of his/her chosen profession. For example, according to my study, dancers from negatively divorced homes reported lower self-esteem than those from intact families. In addition to suffering from self-esteem issues and attempting to become a professional dancer, the level of self-esteem can be altered and lowered due to unsuccessful attempts at landing a professional contract. After continually being rejected and inadvertently given the message of not being good enough,

the low level of self-esteem can potentially alter other areas such as social, education, and attainment of goals.

Self-esteem also has the ability to negatively impact one's career. As mentioned previously, the performer must audition to be hired as an entertainer. This audition process requires a certain level of self-esteem. A producer is going to hire confident dancers, not dancers who appear to suffer from depression, frustration, anxiety, disappointment, etcetera. Not only does the audience member want to be entertained by quality entertainers, the producer wants to select dancers with talent and confident enough to learn and execute the choreography well. Hence, if the dancer noticeably suffers from esteem issues, the likelihood of dancing professionally will most likely be minimized.

Availability of Resources

Few, if any, journal articles reported the perceived availability of resources reported by an adult from a divorced family. This is the first research of its kind to test the perceived availability of resources by professional adult dancers.

Based on the results of this study, hypothesis one regarding availability of resources was supported by the data. Those from intact families reported higher levels of availability of resources than those from divorced families. Although research has not been done on this particular area of divorce, the results parallel the reports of depression and anxiety.

In addition, hypothesis two was also supported, stating that individuals who experienced a neutral to positive divorce would report higher levels of availability of resources than those from negatively divorced families. Again, research was slim and the

findings parallel the results of depression and anxiety. The hypothesis was derived from personal experience and listening to other performers who had experienced a parental divorce.

In some cases, the dancer grew up in the arts and chose not to pursue other venues such as sports, part-time employment, travel, or other professions. Sometimes the individual was labeled the dancer and chose not to stray from this identity. Other times, the performer kept negative factors away from the family unit by placing him/herself in the spotlight, deterring possible fights or subjects that would result in a situation involving conflict. The performer quickly learned to entertain the family as a method to prevent more stress and emotional upheaval from encompassing the unit, providing a method to either keep the family intact and/or diverting the attention away from problematic areas. If everyone is focused on the dancer and the entertaining, whether at the home or on stage, then it would appear that the unit has less of a tendency to act on the negatively surfaced emotions (i.e., frustration, sadness, anger, disappointment) and less conflict between family members would ensue.

Therefore, it was often a natural decision to pursue the art of entertaining as a method of providing a living. However, if the dancer desires to purse a different area of employment that requires additional education, would the performer have availability to funds to assist in alleviating the pressure of financial strain? Education is increasingly becoming necessary for employment. Dancers who performed professionally, with my experience, spent most of their earnings either during their contract or hiatus between contracts. Money for college was not necessarily considered. Consequently, the

availability of financial resources can potentially be a deciding factor for acquiring a higher education.

As mentioned previously, auditioning, accepting the formed mold, and stemming from a potentially conflicted home environment can produce stress and maladjustment difficulties for the performer. This, in addition to feeling pressure to divert attention away from family conflict, can deleteriously affect the performer's self-esteem and overall well-being.

Implications

This study is the first of kind to pioneer the opinions of professional adult dancers who are contracted in a Las Vegas production with their experiences of divorce or non-divorce milieus. The population was large, representative, and conveniently sampled. Furthermore, it distinguishes three separate categories (professional dancers from intact families, professional dancers from neutral to positive divorced families, and professional dancers from negatively divorced families) and measures and compares their responses to depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and perceived availability of resources. It also demonstrates the importance displaying differences by doing analyses across and within these three groups.

Therapists who work with dancers from divorced families who have high levels of depression and anxiety, low self-esteem, and low perceived availability of resources should explore the possible sources of the variables. As previously stated, depression and anxiety can stem from the past divorce and present issues dealing with parents. In addition, the pressure of maintaining a physically fit physique and little job security can cause depression and anxiety in many performers.

Along with the technical and physical demands of dance, aesthetic requirements concerning body image far surpass the body's functional requirements. (Cala et al., 1983). The dance environment regularly succumbs to the cultural pressures concerning weight and body image, forcing the dancers to conform to the stereotypical and predetermined expectations by those who hire dancers and those who watch their performances (Hausenblaus & Carron, 1999). This adds to the performer's struggles to meet the unrealistic and often perfectionistic standards of others, as well as pressures from socioeconomic and the inherent dance profession itself (Bruch, 1973; 1978), According to Hamilton, Brooks-Gunn, and Warren (1986) and Pierce, Daleng, and McGowan (1993), those who do not meet the ideal body image composition are quickly deselected from participation in the profession of a show.

I have personally noticed performers who have learned the ability to successfully hide behind masks on and off stage. When the dancer is on stage, the appearance is paramount. Regardless of what physical or emotional pain exits, the producer and the audience want to see a perfect image (i.e., make-up, hair, costume, attitude, physique). The audience is not paying to see the performer's emotional state or the result of a leg injury. Unfortunately, this idea of perfection can create a template for the performer's daily life. It is easier for a performer to hide behind a well-decorated pristine mask than to face physical and emotional ailments. As a result, the performer often glides through life repressing emotions and physical pain to continually compete for a position as a professional entertainer.

Strengths of the Study

A strength of this study includes the characteristics of those who experience divorce when growing up such as depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and availability of resources are now being made more public, allowing for a deeper understanding and a less shameful method of dealing with problems. I was personally shamed for my feelings when my parents divorced. I was also ostracized from my peers propelling me into a spiraled depression. I felt alone and afraid, very similar to the experiences of other individuals who experience a divorce. This was one of the primary motivating factors for my research and writing this thesis. Literature for divorce is increasing as more families separate, creating deeper insight into this devastating and often permanently formed mold of understanding self and the environment. Society is increasingly becoming aware of the negative characteristics divorce has on children, and this study, as well as other important literature, will be useful to a multitude of professionals and parents.

Limitations

External validity refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can be generalized to other populations (Heppner, Kivlinghan, & Wampold, 1999). The sample of performers was not randomly selected, and the use of a convenience sampling as a method of data collection provides a threat to the external validity of this study. In other words, a homogeneous randomly selected sample is preferred over a heterogeneous nonrandom sample. Differences among the performers could have influenced the reported data. Thus, it is unknown whether differences in depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and availability of resources exist between dancers who volunteered their participation versus dancers who chose not to participate in the study.

The reasons for choosing a convenience sample to collect data were due to time and convenience for the performers. Although it was preferred, randomly selecting dancers to participate in this study would have been inconvenient and very time consuming. In addition, the number of completed responses would have been considerably less. Therefore, it was easiest for both the researcher and the performers to use a convenience method of sampling.

To ensure a fairly brief questionnaire for the dancers, 14 of the 25 questions were randomly selected from the Burns Depression Checklist. Because of the random selection, the depression results would have remained similar, providing a good indicator of depression with dancers. A shorter questionnaire is more attractive to dancers who have limited time to complete the survey.

Another limitation which could have influenced the results of this was study was allowing the participants to use a group method to fill out the questionnaire. Conformity is a powerful tool and often dictates one's response. As a result of conformity, the performer's responses could have been influenced as not to appear or be labeled depressed or different as his/her fellow performer.

Recommendations for Treatment

Based on the results of this study, clinicians are encouraged to carefully evaluate the behavior of dancers in therapy. Dancers, at a very early stage, learn to present themselves well. It may appear pristine, with a methodical vernacular and a well managed appearance, but the truth may be hiding behind the well positioned mask.

A strong recommendation for treatment of this population is the process of joining. In lieu of therapy, the therapist must consider special techniques for professional

dancers. The therapist must be aware of the possible mask-like front, the same front that has kept the dancer employed, accepted, and employable. Because this front is required professionally, the dancer has a tendency to continue with this front or mask in his/her personal life.

Joining with the dancer and establishing a trusting relationship is encouraged and facilitates a connection between the therapist and the dancer. The first few sessions may be a testing trail for the therapist, with every aspect of the dancer appearing immaculately clean and glossy. It may take a few sessions for the real dancer to feel confident enough to expose him/herself and remove the mask. Because this mask is required and demanded professionally, the joining process which includes the removal of the mask may possibly be difficult process.

The performer must feel as if the therapist is genuine and interested in providing the appropriate guidance while being an effective listener. Because performers have a tendency to tell small pieces of information concerning their lives to different people, it is important for the dancer to have a solid foundation of trust for the therapist in order to pursue or continue therapy.

Equal importance to joining and trust, the performer must feel safe and be assured of confidentiality. This is exceptionally important as the performer may fear losing their job or being ostracized by other performers. Casts are sometimes small and gossip travels quickly. Those who are weak are viciously preyed upon, while those who are strong are sized up and examined for faults. Thus, because counseling may appear to be for the weak or those who are unable to manage their lives, confidentiality is crucial.

This information can provide useful tools for therapy. A few specific questions the therapist may want to consider are: Is self-blame involved? What is behind the mask? What is the performer afraid of? What would happen if the mask was taken off? Who is the real person behind the mask? Is self-medication involved to avoid dealing with issues?

Recommendations for Future Research

In consideration of the listed limitations, future research may choose to consider a replication of this study on a different sample such as sexual orientation and explore variables of professional homosexual performers compared to professional heterosexual performers of divorced parents. Future research is needed to determine which specific variables contribute to the performer's depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem and if these variables are affected by sexual orientation and acceptance.

The data were only collected from professional adult dancers. It would be interesting to conduct a study using a control group to compare the results of professional adult dancers and non-dancers. Additional information could be obtained from other adult sources such as teachers, business men and women, casino workers, etcetera. Future studies including multiple sources of data to account for gender and age could also be used.

More research also needs to be conducted in terms of the performer's personal marital status and number of children. Research could determine if this is a habitual pattern within the family and how this vicious and damaging pattern could be broken, possibly preventing their children from creating similar disastrous decisions.

Another area of investigation may include the methods of survival for the dancer during the divorce. Future research is necessary to determine whether sibling relationships were significant in the experience of a divorce. Did siblings rally together and make decisions? Was one sibling more affected than the other sibling? Were the depression, anxiety, and self-esteem issues significantly different in siblings? Why? Future research may also consider factors such as relationships with other family members to determine if additional emotional help and security were provided during this time of upheaval and change.

Personal Note

I chose to light the stage in this area due to my personal experience as a professional dancer and my perceived need of therapy for this special population. It was not an easy road of employment, but I had the opportunity to meet a diverse group of individuals and learned from many talented and passionate dance teachers.

Although I was lucky to be consistently employed during my 13 year employment and travel to 97 countries as well as performing in every state in the U.S. excluding Rhode Island, I was still subjected to a variety of stresses and emotional experiences. I have saturated myself in the performance world for many years, and overall, I understand this population is truly different from other groups. It is my desire that this thesis can provide other therapists useful and insightful tools for managing dancers in therapy. I am proud of my work and will continue to serve this population as a past dancer and present therapist.

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APPENDIX I

INFORMED CONSENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC SHEETS

Informed Consent

Purpose of the Study
You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the long term effects of divorce on adult dancers who are from divorced families.

Participants
You are invited to participate in this study because you are a professional dancer currently under contract in a Las Vegas Production.

Procedures
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do fill out a brief questionnaire concerning self-esteem, availability of resources, depression, anxiety, and parental conflict.

Benefits of Participation
There *may* be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. You may gain insight into the long term effects that divorces may have on professional dancers. By helping with this study, you will also be adding to the general body of literature in this area. Additionally, you will receive, if interested, counseling services through the Community Counseling Center.

Risks of Participation
This study may have minimal to moderate risks. Minimal risks may include feeling bored, tired, or anxious when completing the surveys. To reduce these risks: 1) you may take breaks as necessary; 2) debriefing will be provided after each assessment to help you process any of the information; or 3) you may stop filling out the questionnaire at any time. All survey information will be kept strictly confidential and secured in a locked file cabinet at UNLV and only the investigators will have access to the data. No identifying information will be on any of the surveys.

Cost /Compensation
There *will not* be financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will take 10-15 *minutes* of your time. You *will not* be compensated for your time. *The University of Nevada, Las Vegas may not provide compensation or free medical care for an unanticipated injury sustained as a result of participating in this research study.*

Contact Information
If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Dr. Patricia Markos at 895-3185. For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact **the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 702-895-2794.**

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Confidentiality
All information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for at least 1 year after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be shredded.

Participant Consent:
I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

_____
Participant Name (Please Print)

Demographics

1. How old were you on your last birthday? ____

2. With which gender do you associate? Male____ Female____

3. Nationality_____

4. Did your parents marry each other? Yes____ No____

5. IF YES TO #4, are your parents now divorced? Yes____ No____

6. IF YES TO #5, please CHOOSE ONE statement below that best characterizes your parents' divorce.

_____ Negative Divorce (bad relationship between parents, excessive/regular o outward displays of anger, unfair custody arrangements, and parental disputes involving you or your siblings).

_____ Neutral to Positive Divorce (good relationship between parents, minimal outward displays of anger, fair custody arrangement, and lack of your involvement in parental disputes).

7. IF YES TO #5, how old were you when your parents divorced? _____

8. How many siblings do you have? _____ How many of these are step siblings? ____

9. Your highest completed level of education _____

10. Grade Point Average from most recent educational experience _____

11. Highest completed level of your mother's education _____

12. Highest completed level of your father's education _____

13. Where do you dance (show) _____

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE

		STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
	FINANCIAL				
1.	I felt as if I had resources were available for my college education.	SA	A	D	SD
2.	I presently have resources for college.	SA	A	D	SD
3.	I would have difficulty asking one or both of my parents for money to continue my education.	SA	A	D	SD
	EMOTIONAL				
4.	In the past, I had emotional support from my parents for college.	SA	A	D	SD
5.	In the past, I had emotional support from my parents when I was growing up.	SA	A	D	SD
6.	In the past, my parents attended my athletic, dance or other school events.	SA	A	D	SD
7.	Presently, I have emotional support from my parents.	SA	A	D	SD

		NOT AT ALL	SOMEWHAT	MODERATELY	A LOT
	ANXIOUS FEELINGS				
1.	Anxiety, nervousness, worry or fear				
2.	Feeling that things around you are strange, unreal or foggy				
3.	Feeling detached from all or part of your body				
4.	Sudden, unexpected panic spells				
5.	Apprehension of a sense of impending doom				
6.	Feeling tense, stressed, "uptight" or on edge				
	ANXIOUS THOUGHTS				
7.	Difficulty concentrating				
8.	Frightening fantasies or daydreams				

		NOT AT ALL	SOMEWHAT	MODERATELY	A LOT
9.	Fears of cracking up or going crazy				
10.	Feeling that you're on the verge of losing control				
11.	Fears of fainting or passing out				
12.	Fears of physical illness or heart attack or dying				
13.	Fears of being alone, isolated or abandoned				
14.	Concerns about looking foolish of inadequate in front of others				
15.	Fears of criticism or disapproval				
16.	Fears that something terrible is about to happen				

		NOT AT ALL	SOMEWHAT	MODERATELY	A LOT
	PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS				
17.	Skipping or racing or pounding of the heart				
18.	Pain, pressure or tightness in the chest				
19.	Tingling or numbness in the toes or fingers				
20.	Butterflies or discomfort in the stomach				
21.	Constipation or diarrhea				
22.	Restlessness or jumpiness, trembling or shaking				
23.	Tight tense muscles				
24.	Sweating but not brought on by the heat				
25.	Feeling dizzy, light-headed or off balance				
26.	Choking, lump in throat of smothering sensations or difficulty breathing				

		NOT AT ALL	SOMEWHAT	MODERATELY	A LOT
27.	Headaches or pains in neck or back				
28.	Feeling fired, weak or easily exhausted				

		NOT AT ALL	SOMEWHAT	MODERATELY	A LOT
29.	Have you been feeling blue or down in the dumps?				
30.	Have you been feeling that the future is bleak and hopeless, that things will never change? Have you been feeling that your problems will never change or that your problems will never be solved?				
31.	Have you been feeling inadequate of worthless?				
32.	Have you been blaming yourself for your weaknesses, shortcomings or mistakes?				
33.	Have you been struggling with making decisions?				
34.	Have you been feeling resentful and angry a good deal of the time?				

Burns Depression Checklist (Continued)

		NOT AT ALL	SOMEWHAT	MODERATELY	A LOT
35.	Have you lost interest in your career, hobbies or daily activities?				
36.	Have you needed to push yourself hard to do things? Have you been procrastinating?				
37.	Have you been feeling negative about your appearance?				
38.	Have you lost your appetite or conversely, have you been overeating or binging?				
39.	Have you had difficulty falling asleep and sleeping soundly? Or conversely, have you been excessively tired and sleeping too much?				

		NOT AT ALL	SOMEWHAT	MODERATELY	A LOT
40.	Have you lost interest in sex? Are people whom you once found attractive no longer appealing to you?				
41.	Have you been excessively worried about your health or preoccupied with your aches and pains?				
42.	Have you thought that life is not worth living and that you would rather be dead? Have you been having suicidal fantasies or impulses or making suicide plans?				

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale

		STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D	SD
2.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
3.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
6.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D	SD
7.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D	SD
9.	I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD

10.	At times I think I am no good at all.	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**

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