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The Intergenerational Effects of Parental Divorce on Young Adult Relationships

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THE INTERGENERATIONAL EFFECTS OF PARENTAL DIVORCE ON YOUNG ADULT

RELATIONSHIPS

By

Skyler William Roper

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Utah State University
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THE INTERGENERATIONAL EFFECTS OF PARENTAL DIVORCE ON YOUNG ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

Abstract

Due to the current high rates of divorce, many young adults have experienced the effects of parental divorce. Although a variety of research has investigated both the positive and negative implications of divorce for individuals, relatively little research has looked at the relationship effects of parental divorce. Yet divorce likely influences both parent-child relationships (especially with a non-custodial parent) and young adult romantic relationships. The purpose of this study was to explore more fully how parental divorce affects young adult relationships by investigating the relationship between divorce and parent-child relationship quality, perceived comfort within close relationships (i.e., attachment), romantic relationship satisfaction, and individual distress (depression, anxiety, and stress). Data analysis revealed that those who experience parental divorce are more likely to have lower parental regard, lower relationship satisfaction and they are 2.5 times more likely to experience relationship distress. It is hoped that the results of this study can help identify specific intervention points for clinicians who work with individuals, couples, and families where divorce has occurred.

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CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

Many individuals in society have an image of marriage that depicts a happy couple making a long-term relationship commitment to each other. Yet, the divorce rate continues to hover around 50% in the United States. According to Center for Disease Prevention Control and Prevention (2015), in 2008 the marriage rate was 7.1, and the divorce rate 3.5 per 1,000 people. More recently in 2011 the rate of marriage was 6.8 and the divorce rate was 3.6. Given that the data are not specific to whether these were first time-marriages, the findings should be taken tentatively. Furthermore, these figures do not take into account the non-marital committed relationships that dissolve. Nevertheless, the high rates of divorce raise questions regarding, the long- and short- term impacts of divorce. The ripple effects of divorce are often felt widely, not only within the couple, but within children, extended family, and friends. The stress that often accompanies divorce can yield negative effects (Jeynes, 2006; Lau, 2007; Undheim, 2005), but research has also identified the potential for positive effects of divorce, especially when the dissolved relationships were previously high in conflict (Amato & Booth, 1991).

Negative Effects of Divorce

Divorce is a life-changing event for both parents and children, and a substantial amount of research has focused on the negative impact that divorce has on the lives of children (Amato & Afifi, 2006). In general, research has illuminated a number of negative social and emotional consequences of divorce. For example, children from divorced families tend to have more anger issues and respond with hostility more often (Mack, 2001). Their family relationships are weaker in terms of closeness, distance and distress with their parents compared with children from intact families (Mack, 2001). However, more research is needed to understand how the divorce or variables associated with the influence of divorce on relationships.

In addition to the impact after divorce is finalized, children of divorce are also negatively affected by the behaviors and conditions leading up to the divorce, such as marital conflict, lack of commitment to the relationship and the physical separation (Jeynes, 2006; Trinder & Kellet (2008). The stress caused from these events may lead to other life stressors such as poorer performance in school, work and dealings with family members (Jeynes, 2006).

Parental conflict is one factor that has a significant effect on children (Kressel, 1988; Mack, 2001; Trinder & Kellet 2008; Wallerstein, & Lewis, 2007). Oppawsky (2000) found that parental conflict was positively related to the level of fear, sadness, shame, and hatred toward parents and negatively associated with the academic success of children. As parental conflict increased, the child's self-esteem went down. Feelings of hopelessness replaced feelings of being positive, and the self-respect they once had was diminished. The children in this study had the desire and determination to move away from their family as soon as possible or escape by some other means (Oppawsky, 2000).

In addition to parental conflict, disagreement around parenting can also have a negative effect on children from divorced families. Trinder and Kellet (2008) indicate that if one parent was suspecting the other parent of negative parenting styles, abuse, or neglect there were negative consequences for the child's overall wellbeing whether these suspicions were true or not.

Age. Developmentally, the timing of a divorce has different effects on children who experience parental divorce (Amato & Afifi 2006; Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009; Dillman, Purswell, Lindo, Jayne, & Fernando, 2011; En-Ling, 2014; Kelly & Emery 2003; Mustonen, Huurre, Kiviruusu, Haukkala, & Aro, 2011; Somody, & Hobbs, 2006; Undheim, 2005; Wallerstein, & Lewis, 2007). For example, Oppawsky, (2000) reported that adolescents are in a

different developmental stage than younger children. They begin to have more independence and desire to move out; whereas, younger children do not have the luxury of moving out but may accept the family dynamic more than the adolescent who has experienced more changes in the family (Oppawsky, 2000). A study in South Africa by Bojuwoye and Akpan, (2009) found that children who experienced their parents' divorce before the age of three were indifferent to their parents' divorce. These children did not know what it was like to have their parents together; some of the participants reported that they would have liked to have their non-custodial parent more involved in their lives. Those who were older had stronger feelings regarding the divorce, and they too expressed a desire to have a closer relationship with their non-custodial parent for both males and females. Additionally, Amato and Afifi (2006) found that younger children had a harder time and had lower quality of relationships with their parents than older children did.

Cultural. Cultural differences also have an influence on the impact of divorce on children (Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009; Cartwright, 2006; Christopoulos, 2001; Kim, & Tasker, 2013). For example, Lau (2007) found that most kids in China did not take parental divorce as personal as children from western countries. Children who had developed a positive relationship with both parents, especially the parent that they lived with, adjusted better than those who did not. However, if parental conflict was high, the adjustment was more difficult. In a South Korean study, Kim and Tasker (2013) found that there was a lot of shame associated with divorce, and the young people saw themselves as damaged and in need of repair. All of the participants had a negative view of the divorce, and there was a lot of family dishonor involved. They would often feel a sense of cognitive dissonance between taking care of their parents and respecting their parents on account of the negative societal views associated with divorce. The parental divorce influenced their self-view, the view of their family, friends, educational and career achievements,

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and their own intimate relationships. Thus, divorce had a significant negative effect on their lives.

Research has emphasized that the effects of divorce may not be able to be generalized across cultures (Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009; Cartwright, 2006; Christopoulos, 2001; Kim, & Tasker, 2013). When Bulgarian students were compared with students from the United States, researchers found that there were more harmful effects from divorce in Bulgaria than the United States (Christopoulos, 2001). One reason for this could be that Bulgarians have a more conservative view of marriage. The Bulgarian students in the study reported somatic symptoms, headaches, hot and cold flashes, depression, and suicidal ideation. The differences were significant, and the interpretation of the results was that the effects of divorce should not be generalized across all cultures (Christopoulos, 2001). This information underscores the incomplete nature of research findings, particularly from various cultures, and highlights the need for additional research.

Gender. Another consideration is gender differences and how parental divorce can negatively affect boys and girls (Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009; Fackrell, Poulsen, Busby, & Dollahite, 2011). Undheim (2005) found that when compared to girls, boys developed more agitated aggressive behavior following parental divorce. Both genders had significant levels of depression, the females in the study showing greater depression levels compared to males.

Positive Effects

Although many negative effects from parental divorce can be supported by research, there are also potential positive effects that can be taken from the parental divorce experience. There are obvious reasons why divorce may be a positive decision, such as, leaving an abusive relationship, infidelity, and severe addictions. However, there are also other positive outcomes

for some divorced families that are less noticeable such as, economic success, increased confidence, and learning how to become more independent (Amato & Booth, 1991) (Mack 2001). Amato and Booth (1991) also identified the potential for positive effects of divorce, especially when the dissolved relationships were previously high conflict. Divorce can lead to new opportunities which can have pros and cons. For these reasons, divorce should not be considered in just deficit terms (Arditti & Prouty, 1999). For example, a person may divorce because the spouse was abusive and was extremely controlling. Now that he or she is divorced, they have more safety and freedom to do what they want and create their own boundaries.

The parents' view and experience of the divorce can rub off on how the children view the experience. Cartwright (2006) found when interviewing young adults, a few of them viewed the divorce positively. Some of the participants felt that their parents were happier and that if the marriage had continued that they would not have been as happy. Another prominent theme was that one of their parents was difficult to be around and because of the divorce the children did not interact with that parent as much. Many of the participants felt that the experience of divorce allowed them to mature faster, become more independent and that they had learned from the experience.

Amato and Booth (1991) found that when individuals from divorced families were tested on psychological wellbeing, their scores were below the average of individuals from individuals who did not experience parental divorce. However, if the individual from a divorced family maintained a good relationship with the parents and there was low stress in the divorce, then there were no differences on average when measuring social and economic success such as school and jobs. They also discovered that when there was lower stress in a divorce, the adjustment after divorce was smoother and the differences between children who had

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experienced parental divorce and families who had not experienced divorce were not significant. These results are supported by Trinder and Keller (2008) who found that if the parents found a way to make the transition of divorce as smooth as possible then the children were able to cope better. They also found that in children who coped well, there was little difference between them and children with families still together.

Ironically, another positive of parental divorce is that may develop greater confidence. Mack (2001) found that adults who experienced parental divorce scored slightly higher on confidence levels than adults from intact families. Although the research is not clear, this could be that children who have experienced parental divorce have learned survival techniques or have a good model of confidence in one or both of their parents. Additionally, children who experience parental divorce may be afraid of being open in a relationship and rely on someone else, thus learning to be more self-reliant (Mack, 2001).

Divorce and Romantic Relationships

Regardless of the positive and negative implications, divorce represents a time of major adjustment for individuals, couples, and families, and there are a number of factors that influence outcomes. One outcome of particular interest is how relationship perceptions and experiences change for young adults who have witnessed the dissolution of their parents' relationship. Young adulthood is a time where many decisions are made regarding career, college, moving away from home, and romantic relationships (Broderick & Blewitt, 2015 pp. 439-452). This developmental time period is when the prefrontal context is becoming more fully developed (Pribram 1997), and there are many decisions that young adults are expected to make. Erickson also pointed out that in this stage the primary crisis is intimacy vs. isolation (1950/1963). How does parental divorce influence this developmental time of decisions particularly romantic relationships?

Although the empirical literature on the relationship impact of parental divorce is relatively small, a few studies have identified some important potential relationship consequences that I will summarize below.

A few studies have identified potential risk factors for those who experienced parental divorce as a child, including greater difficulty forming and maintaining close relationships (Mustonen, et al., 2011; Trinder & Kellet, 2008; Undheim, 2005). One longitudinal study of divorce in Finland identified some interesting gender differences, with findings indicating that girls who were 16 or younger at the time of the divorce had greater difficulty forming close relationships and had lower self-esteem (Mustonen et al., 2011). In the follow up survey 16 years later, the researchers found that those who had experienced parental divorce were more likely to be divorced or separated when compared to those from non-divorced families. Although the study suggests that relationship dissolution was more common in those who had experienced parental divorce, the research does not mention how participants' views about marriage might have changed.

Cui, Fincham, and Ddurtschi (2011) suggests that parental divorce influences the views of the romantic relationships of the offspring. Those from parental divorced families tend to not invest as much in their adult romantic relationships. Cui, Fincham, and Ddurtschi (2011) found that individuals who had experienced parental divorce were more likely to accept divorce/separation/termination as an option. They were also less committed to their romantic relationship and were more likely to see divorce as an option if their marriage is not working out (Cui et al., 2011).

Another consideration is the type of friends that children who have experienced parental divorce tend to gravitate toward. Those who experience parental divorce are more likely to seek

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out friends who have similar psychological stress (Jeynes, 2006) which can lead to poorer choices in romantic relationships. Finding romantic partners who have psychological stress can make relationships more difficult to maintain.

Although some research has shown that parental divorce and conflict can have a significant effect on romantic relationships, not all of the studies are clear on this topic. A study by Shulman, Scharf, Lumer and Maurer (2001) suggests that parental conflict and parental divorce did not have a significant effect on children's romantic relationships. These researchers found that young adults who had experienced parental divorce reported higher levels of friendship, enjoyment, intimacy and fewer problems in romantic relationships. This could be that those from higher conflict families want to get away from the family so they seek out romantic relationships (Shulman et al., 2001). Although they may have experienced painful memories from the past, they also recognize a greater need for change and have higher hopes for the future. On the other hand, if the young adult does not deal with or recognize possible trauma from their parents' divorce, it will likely surface later. Shulman et al., (2001) found that difficulty in remembering the divorce led to greater distrust in romantic relationships. Another study indicated that 82 percent of those who had experienced parental divorce had lower levels of trust toward their romantic partner and would not commit themselves to the relationship (Duran-Aydintug, 1997).

Fackrell and colleagues (2011) found that parental divorce is a major disruption for children. Those who experienced divorce were more likely to use negative communication patterns such as criticism and contempt, they were less religious and had difficulty with forming interpersonal relationships when compared to those from intact families. However, if those who experienced parental divorce came to terms with the experience, they were able to have

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satisfaction in their relationship and less negative communication. When both partners of a current relationship experienced parental divorce the outcome was less favorable, unless they came to terms with it. Regarding gender differences, if the female was able to come to terms with parental divorce this was able to produce a more favorable outcome for both partners and had a greater effect than if the male came to terms with parental divorce.

Other research suggests that there are both positive and negative consequences for young adults who experienced parental divorce. Mahl (2001) conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with 28 college students about their romantic relationships and their experiences with their parents' divorce. He classified participants into three groups: the modeler, the struggler, and the reconciler. The reconciler viewed their parents' divorce as positive, and they were more likely to look at it as a learning experience. They also viewed the outcomes that followed the divorce in a positive way, such as remarriage and other life changes that follow divorce. On the other hand, the modeler and the struggler viewed divorce as negative. They were more likely to report being confused by the multiple models of their parent's remarriages. Interestingly though, the reconciler also reported having more satisfying romantic relationships when compared to the other two groups (Mahl, 2001). The three groups shared some common characteristics. According to Mahl (2001), individuals who experienced parental divorce were more likely to be conscientious about their romantic relationships. Additionally, they would compare their romantic relationships with their parents' relationship. Mahl (2001) further explained that those who experienced parental divorce learned from the experience and then applied what they had learned by attempting to invest more in their romantic relationships (Mahl, 2001).

However, Mahl (2001) also discovered differences among the three groups. Compared to modelers and strugglers, reconcilers reported having more romantic relationships (Mahl, 2001).

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The reconciler was more likely to be satisfied in their romantic relationships but was hesitant about marriage. The struggler and modeler were more fearful about engaging in romantic relationships. The main two reasons of this fear were of making the same mistakes as their parents and worrying about rejection from potential romantic partners. This fear was more applicable to participants who reported less support from their parents after the divorce (Mahl, 2001).

Clearly, the limited research on romantic relationships of young adults who have experienced parental divorce is diverse and has varying results. For this reason, there is more research needed in order to gain a greater understanding of the impact that parent divorce may have on young adult relationships. Additionally, understanding how ones attachment style is influenced by parental divorce may shed light on the understanding of how a person's romantic relationship is affected by parental divorce.

Attachment Theory

In order to gain some understanding of how relationships are influenced by parental divorce, it may be helpful to review the role that attachment plays in the development of romantic relationships. Attachment theory was developed by John Bowlby, who suggested that a caregiver can be a secure place for their infant who can then explore the world around them (Bowlby, 1973, as cited in Seedall & Wampler, 2013). Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) studied the reactions of infants to the strange situation of their caregiver leaving them in a room and then coming back (as cited in Seedall & Wampler, 2013). Ainsworth and colleagues noticed that there were four types of behavior that the infants would use to cope with the caregiver leaving. These types (i.e., attachment styles) are secure, avoidant, ambivalent, or disorganized (Hesse, 2008). Most of the infants fell into one of these four types. The secure

infant would cry when the caregiver left but would then calm down. When the caregiver returned, the infant would be comforted in the caregivers' arms. The avoidant infant would cry and then look for a toy or an object to fixate on. When the caregiver returned the infant would keep playing with the object. The ambivalent infant would cry when the caregiver left and when the caregiver came back they would continue to cry and would have a hard time calming down. The disorganized type was a variation of the avoidant and anxious type.

Subsequent research has found that these attachment styles developed in childhood are fairly persistent and play out later in life in adult romantic relationships. When the infants who took part in the experiment conducted by Ainsworth et al. (1978) were looked at later in life, those infants who developed a secure attachment were associated with higher quality relationships as young adults (Roisman, Collins, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2005). Those who developed an anxious attachments style were more likely to escalate conflict and experience more distress post-arguments and had a negative view of conflict in a relationship (Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Kashy, 2005). Those who developed an avoidant attachment style were less responsive to their partner's needs (Shallcross, Howland, Bemis, Simpson, & Frazier, 2011).

Mahl (2001) found in his study that most participants reported that the divorce forced them to become more independent because their parents were more disengaged with them. Their attachment styles were influenced as a result of the stressful factors of the divorce and lack of support from their parents. However, the effects of the divorce were more positive when the child was able to have a relationship with one or both of their parents. These secure attachments lead to greater trust and satisfaction in romantic relationships (Mahl, 2001).

Crowell et al., (2009) found that those who experienced parental divorce were more likely to develop an insecure attachment style. Interestingly, men who experienced parental

divorce were more likely to develop a secure attachment style with their significant other. Women tended to have a more difficult time readjusting after parental divorce. Yet those who had a secure attachment were less affected by parental divorce.

Although some research has shown that parental divorce typically has a damaging effect on attachment (Crowell, Treboux, & Brockmeyer, 2009; Mahl, 2001) Washington, and Hans, (2013) found that those who had experienced parental divorce had similar attachment to those who had not experienced parental divorce. Additionally, if the participant who experienced parental divorce had an anxious attachment style they were more likely to develop a secure attachment if they had a positive relationship with the nonresidential parent. If parents were able to provide a stable pattern for visitation and reduce conflict among themselves, the child's attachment improved.

The different attachment styles show that there can be different levels of comfort within a romantic relationship. Interestingly, Brennan and Shaver (1993) did not identify a significant association between greater discomfort and parental divorce. However, the study's authors did acknowledge that a number of pre-divorce and post-divorce contextual factors not measured in their study may have contributed to this finding. In this light, more research is needed in this area. In my study, I intended to control for some of these factors (psychological stress, comfort in romantic relationships) by assessing the degree of parental conflict before divorce as well as perceptions of how parents handled the divorce with their children.

Divorce and Parent-Child Relationships

Another influence on how well the child forms relationships is the quality of their relationship with their own parents following divorce (Trinder & Kellet 2008). Generally in the event of a divorce, the relationship between the child and the parents is adversely affected

(Mack, 2001; Wallerstein, & Lewis, 2007). The damaged relationship is mainly a result of the level of conflict before or after the divorce (Amato, & Afifi, 2006; Cui et al., 2011). Another important consideration is the quality of the relationship with the custodial and noncustodial parent (Kalmijn 2013; Kressel, 1988; Schindler, & Coley, 2012; Shulman et al., 2001).

Parent-Child Relationship Quality

The results of Johnson, and Galambos (2014) study demonstrated a correlation between parent and offspring relationships. The parent-child relationship was able to predict the child's intimate relationship fifteen years later in life. For example, if parents had a healthy relationship with their children then their children would likely develop a healthy relationship with their romantic partner.

Research has also found that parent and child well-being is positively correlated with each other. In other words, if the parent adjusted well then the child was also more likely to adjust well. Conversely, if there is disruption and depression on the part of the parent or the child, then the relationship was more likely to have negative consequences and effect both parent and child (Trinder & Kellet 2008). Thus, how the parents adjust is highly correlated with the child's well-being.

According to Schindler, and Coley (2012) the way that parents adjusted influenced how the whole family adjusted. Fathers who were involved in the lives of their children were less likely to separate and were more likely to have a positive influence on their families. Involvement was defined as being present, interested and supportive in their family's lives. Parental divorce was more likely to lead to complex relationships between the father and mother and the parents relationship with their children. If the mother had high levels of emotionality they had a higher risk of affecting their children in a negative way (Schindler & Coley, 2012).

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Greater mother-child relationship predicted higher levels of separation and divorce. This may be that if a mother was too enmeshed with her offspring then she may have felt like she needed to protect them and pushed the father away. On the other hand, negative connections and the father's lack of wanting to take part in their child's life had adverse consequences as well.

The stability of parent-child relationships following divorce also affects the adjustment of children. Wallerstein and Lewis (2007) found that many parent-child relationships were not stable and that they varied from sibling to sibling. Father-child relationships were particularly unstable, as well as post-divorce relations with a former spouse. Most of the low-quality relationships were a result of stress and upheaval that were interrelated from the parents' divorce (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2007). The stress is further compounded by step parents who influence the biological parent and the parent-child relationship. Although having both biological parents remain involved in the children's life is desirable, the constant change of dynamics (marriages, stepfamilies, income, and geographic distance) makes having stable relationships with both biological parents difficult. For example, children may want to live with another parent once they reach the age where they can decide. Other family members may include step children who can add to the changing family dynamics (Wallerstein, & Lewis, 2007). However, if the quality of the parent-child relationship remains healthy, the outcomes can be positive for children who have experienced parental divorce.

Parental Current Romantic Relationship

In addition to the parent-child relationship it is important to understand the influence of the parents current romantic relationship and how this affects the child's romantic relationships. There is a strong correlation with the mother's current romantic relationship and the children's romantic relationship (Shulman et al., 2001). If the mother was in a healthy relationship, then the

children were more likely to feel greater friendship, enjoyment, intimacy and fewer problems in romantic relationships; than those whose mother was in an unhealthy romantic relationship. This could be that the mother was spending more time with their new romantic partner who modeled and allowed the children to find and explore romantic relationships (Shulman et al., 2001).

It is possible that the mother's current relationship plays such a large role in the child's romantic relationship because most children who come from a divorced family tend to live with their mothers after the divorce and build a stronger relationship with the mother--their residential parent. Kalmijn (2013) found that children who experienced parental divorce had a stronger relationship to their residential parent. They also had a stronger relationship when they lived with the parent longer before the divorce. Children who were older at the time of the divorce had higher regard toward their non-residential parent than children who experienced parental divorce at a younger age. This study also found that those who had experienced parental divorce in some cases had a closer relationship with their step parent than a biological parent. One common factor was the investment that the parent had with the child (Kalmijn, 2013). Although at first glance this may seem obvious, the parent who invests more in their children's well-being is also likely to have a positive relationship with their child.

Most of the articles have focused on how the parent relates to the child, but in Wallerstein and Lewis's research they found that the way in which the child relates to the parent or step parent may be the key to a smooth transition and healthy relationship. On the other hand, when the child needed extra patience the parent-child relationship was less healthy and the transition was difficult (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2007). Conflict, in general had negative consequences on parent child relationships.

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The Influence of Conflict on Parent-Child Relationships

Cui et al. (2011) found that the marriage quality of the parents before the divorce and the conflict around the divorce had a large impact on the children's romantic relationships. Parental conflict accounted for as much as 50 percent of the variance of the child's adjustment. (Cherlin, Furstenburg, Chase-Lansdale, Kiernan, Robins, Morrison, & Teitler, 1991 as cited in Cui et al., 2011).Those children who saw violence and arguing in their parents' relationship were more likely to accept divorce as an alternative to their marriages or romantic relationships. On the other hand, those who had experienced low conflict in their parents' marriage before the divorce had a more favorable view of marriage and did not see divorce as much of an option. They also reported greater satisfaction in their marriages. Thus, the level of conflict of the divorce and how a child reacts have a large influence on how they will experience their own marriages and relationships (Cui et al., 2011).

If there is high conflict in a divorce then there is a greater likelihood of poorer relationship quality between parents and children (Amato & Afifi, 2006). When children are caught in the middle of parental conflict before or after a divorce it leads to poorer relationship quality with both parents. Children suffered particularly in situations where there was continual conflict of choosing to side with one or the other parent (Amato & Afifi, 2006). This effect was worse for mother-daughter relationships when compared to any other relationship in the family (Amato & Afifi, 2006).

Kressel (1988) found that divorced fathers can make life harder on themselves when they focus on their own needs, instead of their children's needs. One example of this was when the father would create conflict by covertly encouraging the children to be disruptive to the other parent. Additionally, they made life harder on themselves by not having clear communication

with the custodial parent (Kressel, 1988). These behaviors did not foster parent-child relationships and made the overall adjustment more difficult.

In sum, the research on divorced parent-child relationships suggests that the more positive relationships the parent and child had the more smooth and stable the transition (Amato & Afifi, 2006; Cui et al., 2011; Kressel 1988; Schindler, & Coley, 2012; Shulman et al., 2001; Trinder & Kellet 2008; Wallerstein, & Lewis 2007). The more volatile the relationships the harder the transition was for everyone.

Intergenerational Quality of Relationships

Although the relationship that the parent has with the child is influential for romantic relationships, there are other factors that play into how the divorce and family of origin influence the quality of romantic relationships when the children reach adulthood (Dennison, Silverberg & Segrin 2014; Tianyi & Francesca 2007; Yoshida & Busby, 2012). Young adult romantic relationships are influenced by their caregivers' relationship (Madsen & Collins, 2011). Dennison and colleagues (2014) found that there is a link between intergenerational transmission and relationship quality, especially among females. The quality of the relationship the parents have are strongly correlated to the next generations' romantic relationship quality. Another study suggests that the current romantic relationship that the parent is in provides a stronger model than the family of origin (Tianyi &Francesca 2007). Additionally, conflict styles were similar in the family of origin and the offspring's romantic relationships (Dennison et al., 2014). Those who implemented a negative model from their family of origin had a less satisfied romantic partner in their romantic relationship.

Although the intergenerational transmission of relationship quality affects genders differently there are also cultural differences that need to be addressed. Yoshida and Busby

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(2012) found that relationship quality transmission can differ among cultural groups. Asians experience more family of origin influences than others tested (American, and Asian American). Males were more likely to be influenced by family of origin in the Asian culture when compared to the American culture where females; were more likely to be influenced by family of origin. Although there have been some quality studies on the intergenerational relationship quality more research is needed to understand how the quality of relationships are passed down to the next generation. Additionally, are there other cultural and gender differences or even other variables that need to be considered?

In sum, there are many ways that divorce can influence young adult relationships. With greater challenges the need for positive adjustment and interventions is needed. Although interesting, more research is needed to fully understand the interpersonal and intrapersonal consequences of divorce.

Intervention/Treatment/Therapy

As I have briefly summarized, research has identified some of the negative and positive effects of divorce that may place individuals who have experienced parental divorce at greater risk in their close relationships in adulthood. Some individuals and families who experience divorce seek out professional help to address some of the challenges and consequences they experience from divorce. It behooves therapists and family life education specialists to understand the factors that influence divorce adjustment and the ways in which these factors interact and influence each other. Because an individual's experience with parental divorce is unique and full of challenges, clinicians need to be aware of how they can offer the best service to clients. Whiteside (1998) pointed out that "clinical interventions need to be tailored to unique characteristics and resources of a given family" (p. 3). There is not one particular model that

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works with all children and parents who have experienced divorce. Furthermore, Whiteside (1998) suggests that one of the primary goals of families who are experiencing divorce would be for the parents to work together for the benefit of the children. Understanding that each family's case is different and that they need special considerations will assist therapists when working with parental divorce in families.

One consideration for therapists is the client's levels of optimism and pessimism. Optimism and pessimism play a large role in improvement as well as the impact of the divorce and the changes that follow (Mahl, 2001). Difficult changes can lead to children developing emotional, social, behavioral and academic problems. For this reason, therapists should seek to understand how the divorce has impacted the whole system and find out the client's level of pessimism and optimism.

Understanding the client's level of optimism and pessimism is desirable, and the therapist should also be aware of internal and external factors that effect the client's adjustment. One way that clinicians can help families is to assist the parents in developing an authoritative parenting style and having less conflict. By having a low conflict and authoritative non-custodial father, the boys will have a smoother transition. These parenting styles are ideal, but the reality is that divorce is not always a smooth transition. More research is needed in understanding how therapy can be helpful for all family members (Stanley-Hagan & Hetherington, 1999).

One of the purposes of this study includes investigating the impact of therapy on divorce adjustment and whether participation in therapy buffers against the negative consequences associated with parental divorce. There are some key components that may help the child adjust (Kelly & Emery, 2003). In the ideal situation a quality relationship with both parents is healthy. There is also greater difficulty with finances following a divorce. For this reason, there should

also be programs that offer financial aid because of the common situation of income decline following a divorce. For those who are working with individuals from divorced families it may help to involve other systems and sources of support for the family (Kelly & Emery, 2003). These supports could be schools, church, neighborhood programs, or extended family members. By helping the parents resolve their issues or at least contain them, the therapist will be helping the whole family system. Having parent training classes that are designed for post-divorce life is also beneficial. Teaching children to externalize rather than internalize has also proved beneficial as well as fostering resiliency (Kelly & Emery, 2003).

Furthermore, Kelly and Emery (2003) indicate that a majority of children who experience parental divorce do well in adjusting. Therapists should not view these clients as helpless but rather, find ways to empower them so that the clients do not fall into a self-fulfilling prophesy (Kelly & Emery, 2003). Additionally, how the parents respond to the divorce will greatly affect how the children will respond.

Parents who set aside their own problems and focus on helping their children can positively impact adjustment. The stress that comes about after the divorce is often more problematic for children than the stress of the actual divorce (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2007). Parallel parenting is the common form of parenting in divorced families. This happens when parents do not want a close relationship between themselves, but they work on raising the kids together. For example, one parent might be in charge of the medical appointments, while the other may be in charge of education (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2007).

Working with the parents to implement parallel parenting is beneficial; however, it can be difficult for the therapist to communicate this to both parents. The therapist needs to find a way to communicate to both parents who may not express an interest in working with the other. In a

review of *Working with parents makes therapy work* (2007), it is suggested that for children in treatment who have divorced parents, the use of email is one way for therapists to communicate with both parents.

Emery, Rowen, and Dinescu (2014) found that custody issues among most states allow both parents to have say in three major choices: religion, education, and healthcare (therapy is included within this one). In many cases, consent is required from both parents in order for children to participate in therapy. If this is the case, one parent could block access to treatment for his or her children by refusing to give consent. Therapists need to be aware of current state laws and regulations and make sure appropriate consent is obtained for treatment.

According to Morrison (2014), divorce can be a major life transition for children. One of the major protective factors is if parents are able to communicate openly with their children about what to expect following the divorce. Parents need to be aware of what the needs of their children are. They can process the child's feelings; letting them know of the expected changes.

Although some interventions cannot be generalized, Somody and Hobbs (2006) found one activity that may be helpful for children who are currently experiencing parental divorce. This intervention involves creating a book where they can write down or draw how they are feeling about all of the changes that are going on around them. Some of the kids in the research used a drawing of a heart that was divided into different emotions such as, anger, happiness, shame, and thoughts of confusion. Others created a list of things that they could control and things that they could not control.

Other therapies for children who are experiencing parental divorce focus on parent training. Dillman, Purswell, Lindo, Jayne, and Fernando (2011) found that divorced parents were more understanding and accepting of their children after receiving child-parent relationship

therapy. A family therapy approach designed for 3 to 10 year olds teaches parents play therapy skills that focus on the child's needs.

For therapists working with adult children of divorce there are many approaches they can use to assist the adult children (Sumner, 2013). If the divorce was recent then the therapist may need to explore the loss and assist clients in creating a new definition of family. Encouraging the parents to remain active in the child's life can be a protective factor (Sumner, 2013). Premarital counseling can also be beneficial (Sumner, 2013). Sumner (2013) suggested that the first guideline for working with adult children who have experienced divorce is to explore the definition of marriage and intimate relationships. Next therapist can gauge beliefs about divorce in general and partner commitment beliefs. Furthermore the therapist can explore relationship history, patterns of relationships, the development of conflict management and communication skills, how to identify relationship needs, and the strengths learned from the divorce experience (Murray & Kardatzke, 2009). Even though there may be common trends, it is important that therapists not have preconceived notions of those who experience parental divorce. Encouraging healthy models, counselors can ask clients to identify early warning signs that the marriage is heading in the wrong direction providing resources (Murray& Kardatzke, 2009).

In sum, therapists need to be aware of the clients unique experience regarding their parents' divorce (Whiteside, 1998), assist the parents in their wellbeing (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2007), encourage an authoritative parenting style for the parents (Stanley-Hagan & Hetherington 1999), implement parallel parenting (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2007), teach parents to be open to what their children are experiencing with parental divorce (Dillman et al., 2011), assist the children who are experiencing the divorce in externalizing the negativity associated with the

divorce (Kelly & Emery, 2003), teach clients about what they have control over and what they do not have control over (Somody & Hobbs, 2006), and instill hope (Kelly & Emery, 2003).

Although some useful information has been found on adjustment and intervention, more research is needed to understand how to assist struggling families. These families have many challenges to deal with and need support to overcome the obstacles of divorce. Therapy has proven to be useful, but a clinician can be more effective if they understand more about how to help these struggling families.

Purpose of This Study

In sum, although some valuable research has shed light on the potential relationship consequences of experiencing parental divorce, more work is needed to understand the interplay of factors influencing the outcomes for children of divorce. As indicated in the review of the literature, research on the factors discussed above (effects of divorce, divorce and romantic relationships, divorce and parent-child relationships, and divorce adjustment and intervention) has given us valuable information regarding the effects of divorce, but these variables have mostly been researched in isolation. One purpose of the present study was to investigate not only whether experiencing parental divorce as a child makes a difference in each of these factors, but also facilitate an understanding of the relationship between these factors. In addition, the study explored whether participation in therapy buffers against the potential adverse relationship experiences associated with experiencing parental divorce.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed:

1. Do those who experienced parental divorce demonstrate a different comfort level with intimacy (i.e., attachment) in adult relationships than those who did not?

2. For those in a current relationship, does couple satisfaction differ in those who experienced a parental divorce from those who did not?

3. Does the quality of parent-child relationships differ in those who experienced parental divorce from those who did not?

4. Are those who experienced parental divorce at risk for greater feelings of depression, anxiety, or distress?

The study utilized data collected previously by the researcher in order to answer the research questions. IRB approval was given before the data was collected.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Design and Sample

To answer these questions, a correlational design was used in order to understand more about the intrapersonal and interpersonal effects of childhood divorce in young adults and those factors that are related to more positive adjustment following parental divorce. The only inclusion criteria for participants were that they were between the ages of 18 and 26 and had access to the internet to complete the assessments.

Procedures

Several methods were used to recruit participants. A Facebook account was created for this particular study, and individuals were contacted via Facebook and encouraged to participate. Craigslist was used to recruit in cities throughout the United States, as well as flyers being distributed at two geographically distinct universities (e.g., Utah State University, Michigan State University). Snowball sampling was used. All participants were encouraged to send study information to their associates on Facebook as well as recruiting three more participants at their university (if applicable) and three more participants attending a different university. Those who were interested in participating received a link to the survey which was administered by Qualtrics, a secure online site for hosting assessments. A total of 341 participants participated.

Sample characteristics. A total of 520 individuals participated in the study. However, there were 179 participants who did not complete the assessment or who were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria to participate in the study. This left a total of 341 participating individuals blind to the research questions. Participants came from 42 U.S. States. A large majority of the sample was female (81.3%). The sample was primarily European-American (84.2%) and the mean age was 22.4 (SD=2.34). The majority of the participants identified as

heterosexual (88.6%), and two-thirds (67%) claimed to be in a committed relationship (serious dating, cohabiting, engaged, or married). Those in a relationship had been together an average of 3.13 years (SD=2.32). 28.4%

A total of 87 participants had experienced parental divorce at some point in their life. A large majority were European-American (80.2%), and roughly three fourths (72.9%) were in a committed relationship (serious dating, cohabitating, engaged, or married). Participants who experienced parental divorce were primarily female (82.8%). When analyzing the age at which divorce occurred an established cutoff was used between the ages of birth to 11 and from 12 to 25. The data from the sample shows that a little over half experienced parental divorce from birth to 11 (57.5%). Of the 87 participants who experienced parental divorce, only 15 (17%) were men.

Measures

All participants (regardless of whether they experienced parental divorce) completed general demographics questions (See Appendix A) and several measures related to the variables of interest (attachment in close relationships, relationship satisfaction, parent-child relationships, emotional distress, and therapy experience). A measure of attachment was selected to assess participants' comfort in romantic relationships (Experiences in Close Relationships scale; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Furthermore, depression, anxiety, and stress was measured by the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS21; Ng, Trauer, Dodd, Callaly, Campbell, & Berk, 2007). Current parent-child relationships were measured by the Parent Adult-Child Relationship Questionnaire (Peisah, Brodaty, Luscombe, Kruk, & Anstey, 1999). If the participants were in a current relationship, they also completed the Couples Satisfaction Index (Funk & Rogge, 2007). In addition to general demographics, the assessment packet asked participants whether they

experienced parental divorce. If so, a variety of questions were asked to understand some of the contextual factors of the divorce. All of the measures will be reviewed below.

The Experience in Close Relationship Scale (ECRS) (Appendix B) is a 36 item self-rapport Likert scale with 1 being disagree strongly to 7= strongly agree. The measure focuses on the avoidance and anxiety in close relationships, with four possible outcomes: secure, fearful, preoccupied and dismissive. Low scores of anxiety and avoidance would produce a secure result, high scores of anxiety and low score of avoidance would produce a preoccupied score, high scores of avoidance and low score of anxiety would produce a dismissive result, lastly high scores of avoidance and anxiety would produce a fearful result. When compared with previous measures of attachment, the ECRS had a positive correlation with the previous measures. However, previous measures did not distinguish fearful and secure attachment styles. The ECRS is relatively shorter when compared to other measures of attachment and had a high content validity when compared to the previous measures (Brennan et al,. 1998). Additionally, when compared to other previously established measures of attachment the ECR was significantly correlated at the $p<0.001$ (two tailed) level.

If participants were in a current relationship, they also completed the Couples Satisfaction Index (Appendix C) (Funk & Rogge, 2007). The Couples Satisfaction Index is designed to measure the level of satisfaction an individual has in their relationship. The CSI had a greater content validity when compared to other measures of relationship satisfaction such as the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, the Marital Adjustment Test and Quality of Marriage Index. The researchers used item response theory in order to get a more reliable and valid test for couple satisfaction. When compared to other measures, the Couple Satisfaction Index also had lower levels of measurement error.

Depression, anxiety, and stress were measured by the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (See Appendix D) (DASS21; Ng et al., 2007). The DASS21 is a 21 item self-report measure assess for depression, anxiety and stress. Furthermore, the DASS21 is significantly correlated with other tests such as the Mental Health Questionnaire (MHQ 14) subscale, Clinical Global Impression (CGI) scales, and Health of the Nation Outcome Scales (HoNOS). Correlation between the MHQ 14 and the DASS 21 was significant when $p < 0.0001$ with the correlation being .75 at intake and .77 on discharge. Correlation between the CGI and the DASS 21 was significantly different when $p = 0.05$. HoNOS score were correlated with the DASS 21 scores $r = 31$, $p < 0.001$. The DASS had an overall higher correlation with the other measures of depression, anxiety, and stress is considered reliable and valid.

Current parent-child relationship quality was measured by the Parent Adult-Child Relationship Questionnaire (See Appendix E) (Peisah et al., 1999). The Parent Adult-Child Relationship Questionnaire is designed to measure the relationship among adult children and their parents. The test contains 26 items (13 for mothers and 13 for fathers) and was found to be reliable and valid. Peisah et al., (1999) tested their measure with a sample of 302 and another test which had a sample of 100. They found that the tests were reliable and valid between both groups and other lengthier tests. Cronbach's alpha for mother regard (how close are you to your mother) was .87 and responsibility (how reliant on you is your father) was .82 for the father regard was .86 and responsibility was .74. All correlations were highly significant at $p < 0.001$ level. The researchers also found interrater reliability at a $p < 0.001$ with 95 percent confidence intervals.

In order to analyze the effects of therapy, a number of questions were developed to assess whether they engaged in therapy, the therapy modality (individual, family, etc.), their

perceptions of it, and how it could have been improved. Participants were also asked if their parents were divorced and the nature of the divorce (Appendix F).

Analytic Strategy

Multiple logistic regressions were used to answer the following research questions: (1) Did those who experienced parental divorce demonstrate a different comfort level with intimacy (i.e., attachment) in adult relationships than those who did not? (2) For those in a current relationship, did couple satisfaction differ in those who experienced a parental divorce from those who did not? (3) Did the quality of parent-child relationships differ in those who experienced parental divorce from those who did not? (4) Were those who experienced parental divorce at risk for greater feelings of depression, anxiety, or distress? A logistic regression analysis was used to facilitate an understanding of whether there indeed were group differences and what factors may predict divorce in each of the variables of interest for those who experienced divorce and those who did not.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

Rational for Analysis

Logistical regression was used for the analysis of the study. Logistic regression fit well with the study because the criterion variable (divorce) is dichotomous, which is necessary in order to run a logistic regression. All of the variables of interest (attachment, couple satisfaction, parent- child relationships, depression, anxiety and stress) were measured on a continuous scale and fit well as predictor variables. Additionally, we were not just comparing the differences between the predictor variables, but the strength of predictability of each variable. We wanted to find determine which of the variables of interest had the greatest predictability of a divorce.

Question 1. Do those who experienced parental divorce demonstrate a different comfort level with intimacy (i.e., attachment) in adult relationships than those who did not? The results of the logistical regression are presented in Table 1. In terms of attachment, there were no significant findings, suggesting that attachment style does not predict if divorce happened or not. Participants who experienced parental divorce did not demonstrate a different level of comfort (attachment) with intimacy than those who did not experience parental divorce (see Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis for Attachment Style (N=341).

Predictor	Divorce			
	B	SE B	β	P
Father Regard	-.142**	.037	.868	.000
Mother Regard	-.104**	.031	.901	.001
Avoidance Attachment	.000	.008	1.000	.952
Anxiety Attachment	.000	.007	1.000	.959
Relationship	.254	.312	1.289	.415
Depression	.002	.020	1.002	.914
Anxiety	.003	.024	1.003	.910
Stress	.013	.024	1.013	.593
Constant	.642	.923	1.899	.487

* Significant at < .01; ** Significant at ≤ .001

Question 2. For those in a current relationship, does couple satisfaction differ in those who experienced a parental divorce from those who did not? In the study there were 220 participants in a romantic relationship. A logistic regression was run to understand if couple satisfaction is a predictor variable of parental divorce (see Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis for Relationship Satisfaction (N=220).

| | | Divorce | | |
Predictor	B	SE B	β	P
Couple Satisfaction	-.026*	.009	.974	.004
Constant	.815	.576	2.259	.157

* Significant at < .01

In terms of couple satisfaction, there was a significant finding. As shown in Table 2 by the B value, those who experienced parental divorce were more likely to exhibit lower couple satisfaction compared with those who did not. This means that lower couple satisfaction was a significant predictor of experiencing parental divorce. Furthermore, when using the established cutoff for relationship distress, we administered another logistic regression analysis to understand if distress was a predicting variable for those who experienced parental divorce compared to those who did not (see Table 3).

Table 3. Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis for Relationship Distress (N=220).

Predictor	Divorce			
	B	SE B	β	P
Distress	.924*	.334	2.519	.006
Constant	-1.047**	.171	.351	.000

* Significant at < .01; ** Significant at ≤ .001

The results of this analysis were significant. Those who experience parental divorce were 2.5 times more likely to experience distress in their romantic relationships compared to those who had not experience parental divorce (as shown in Table 3).

Question 3: Does the quality of parent-child relationships differ in those who experienced parental divorce from those who did not (See table 4)?

Table 4. Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis for Parent-Child Relationships (N=341).

| | Divorce | | | |
Predictor	B	SE B	β	P
Father Regard	-.142**	.037	.868	.000
Mother Regard	-.104**	.031	.901	.001
Avoidance Attachment	.000	.008	1.000	.952
Anxiety Attachment	.000	.007	1.000	.959
Relationship	.254	.312	1.289	.415
Depression	.002	.020	1.002	.914
Anxiety	.003	.024	1.003	.910
Stress	.013	.024	1.013	.593
Constant	.642	.923	1.899	.487

* Significant at < .01; ** Significant at ≤ .001

In terms of parental relationships, there was a significant finding. Those who experienced parental divorce were more likely to have lower parental regard (see Table 4). The results of the analysis suggest that experiencing parental divorce puts one at greater risk for low parental regard compared to those who did not experience parental divorce. This was the strongest predictor variable that was found.

Question 4: Are those who experienced parental divorce at risk for greater feelings of depression, anxiety, or distress (see table 5)?

Table 5. Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis for Depression, Anxiety, or Distress (N=341).

Predictor	Divorce			
	B	SE B	β	P
Father Regard	-.142**	.037	.868	.000
Mother Regard	-.104**	.031	.901	.001
Avoidance Attachment	.000	.008	1.000	.952
Anxiety Attachment	.000	.007	1.000	.959
Relationship	.254	.312	1.289	.415
Depression	.002	.020	1.002	.914
Anxiety	.003	.024	1.003	.910
Stress	.013	.024	1.013	.593
Constant	.642	.923	1.899	.487

* Significant at < .01; ** Significant at ≤ .001

In terms of depression, anxiety and stress, there were no significant findings (see table 5). Depression, anxiety and stress did not predict if there was a divorce and there was no difference between those who experienced divorce and those who did not. In summary, none of the significant findings are related to individual variables, only relational variables.

Other Findings

Age. When comparing those who experienced divorce before the age of twelve with those who experienced divorce after the age of twelve, there were no differences in terms of attachment, couple satisfaction, parental regard and depression, anxiety and stress.

Gender. In the present study we looked at gender differences in terms of attachment, couple satisfaction, parental regard and depression, anxiety and stress. When analyzing the gender differences, there were no significant difference between males and females.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to examine how parental divorce influences young adult romantic relationships. The study specifically examined if attachment, relationship satisfaction, parental regard and depression, anxiety and stress predicted if a parental divorce had occurred. Each variable will be reviewed below.

Attachment. In terms of attachment style, there were no significant findings. This means that parental divorce did not influence one's attachment type (secure, avoidant, anxious or insecure). This runs counter to previous research done by Crowell, Treboux, and Brockmeyer (2009) and Mahl, (2001) who all found that parental divorce does influence attachment style. However, research done by Washington, and Hans (2013) and Brennan and Shaver (1993) had similar results to this study. This gap in the research shows that there is still a need for more research to be done to understand what other factors influence attachment and the development of attachment styles. There may be other variables associated with divorce and attachment that influence one's attachment style.

Couple satisfaction. In terms of couple satisfaction, there was a significant finding. Those who experienced parental divorce were more likely to be less satisfied in their romantic relationship. Additionally, when creating a cutoff for couple distress, based on the CSI, those who experience parental divorce were also 2.5 times more likely to be experiencing clinically significant distress in their romantic relationship. This is consistent with research indicating that individuals who come from divorced homes are at greater risk of divorce and relationship dissolution (Cui, Fincham, & Durtschi, 2011; Trinder & Kellet, 2008).

Additionally, previous research indicates there is a strong correlation with parental romantic relationships and the child's romantic relationship (Cui, Fincham, & Durtschi, 2011;

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Johnson, & Galambos, 2014; Trinder & Kellet, 2008). On the other hand, other studies suggest there is not a correlation between parental romantic relationships and the child's romantic relationships and that those from divorced homes are not at greater risk for relationship dissolution compared to those who did not experience parental divorce (Shulman et al., 2001). However, even though Shulman and colleagues (2001) indicated that there is no significant correlation, they did point out that those who experience parental divorce have a lower trust level in relationships (Shulman et al., 2001). If the parent of those who experienced parental divorce implemented unhealthy relationship practices that lead to a divorce and relationship dissolution, these unhealthy relationship practices are more likely to be passed on to the next generation and lead to relationship dissolution. Thus relationship quality of parent and child is strongly correlated and likely to be present in both of the generation's romantic relationships.

Parent-child relationships. In terms of parent child relationships, the present study found that there is a significant relationship between parental divorce and the regard children have for their parents. Those who experienced parental divorce were more likely to have lower parental regard. This finding provides support for previous research. Generally, in the event of a divorce, the relationship between the child and the parents is adversely affected (Mack, 2001; Wallerstein, & Lewis, 2007). It is unknown exactly why this damage to the parent child relationship occurs; however, one explanation may be that the damaged relationship is mainly a result of the level of trauma the child experiences before or after the divorce (Amato, & Afifi, 2006; Cui et al., 2011). This lack of parental regard and quality of relationship between parent and offspring has additional negative implications. For example, Tinder and Kellet (2008) found that if parent child relationships are negatively affected, then the child's romantic relationships are also negatively effected. Similarly, Johnson, and Galambos (2014) found that the parent child

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relationship quality was strongly correlated to the adult child's romantic relationship. In the case of this study, the strongest predictor variable found was that those who experience parental divorce have significantly lower regard for both parents. Relationship quality is passed down from one generation to the next.

Depression, anxiety and stress. In terms of depression, anxiety and stress, there were no significant findings, suggesting that there was no difference in the emotional well-being of young adults between those who experience divorce and those who did not. This finding runs counter to previous research indicating that those who experience parental divorce are more likely to experience depression, anxiety and stress (Jeynes, 2006; Lau, 2007; Undheim, 2005). However, Amato and Booth (1991) found there is no difference in levels of depression and anxiety between those who experience divorce and those who did not. Amato and Booth (1991) asserted that the depression, anxiety and stress have a stronger relationship with parental conflict and level of intensity of the divorce. There may be other variables that have a more robust influence on one's level of depression anxiety and stress.

Age. When comparing age differences, previous research has found that if parental divorce happened before the age of twelve there were more negative consequences than if the divorce was after the age of twelve (En-Ling, 2014; Oppawsky, 2000). When comparing those who experienced divorce before the age of twelve with those who experienced divorce after the age of twelve, there were no differences in terms of attachment, couple satisfaction, parental regard, and depression, anxiety and stress. This is surprising due to previous findings from a number of studies that found there is a difference (Amato & Afifi 2006; Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009; Dillman, Purswell, Lindo, Jayne, & Fernando, 2011; Kelly & Emery 2003; Mustonen, Huurre, Kiviruusu, Haukkala, & Aro, 2011; Somody, & Hobbs, 2006; Undheim, 2005;

Wallerstein, & Lewis, 2007). However, the differences may be in other areas other than attachment, couple satisfaction, parental regard, and depression, anxiety and stress. Additionally, after creating two age groups the sample size decreased to 50 in the group that experienced parental divorce before the age of 12. The group that experienced divorce after the age of 12 decreased to 37. These smaller sample sizes make it more difficult to generalize the findings of this study. The sample size was further reduced when accounting for gender differences.

Gender. There has been some previous research that has identified gender differences between males and females (Bojuwoye, & Akpan, 2009; Fackrell, Poulsen, Busby, & Dollahite, 2011; Undheim, 2005). In the present study, we looked at gender differences in terms of attachment, couple satisfaction, parental regard and depression, anxiety and stress. When analyzing the gender differences, there were no significant difference between males and females, which is contrary to previous findings that there are gender differences. However, the data from this study should be taken tentatively because of the small sample size of males who experienced divorce (n=15). The main findings from the study are more robust. What6 was found is that those who experience parental divorce experience lower parental regard, they experience less satisfaction in their romantic relationships, and they are 2.5 times more likely to experience distress in their relationships. These findings suggest that those who experience parental divorce are at greater risk for romantic relationship dissatisfaction and dissolution.

It is possible that the variables in this study that are significantly associated with divorce (lower parental regard, lower satisfaction in relationships and greater relationship distress) may have a strong influence on one another. How the variables interact may shed more light on the effects of parental divorce. For example, having a lower parental regard could lead to dissatisfaction and distress in romantic relationships. On the other hand, having lower couple

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satisfaction and distress in romantic relationships may lead to more resentment toward parents. This idea of the parental regard and relationship satisfaction being systemically connected is supported by previous research (Johnson & Galambos, 2014). Johnson, and Galambos (2014) found that the quality of the parent child relationship predicted intimate relationships fifteen years later. If parents had a strong relationship with their children, their children would develop a stronger relationship with their romantic partner. The lack of regard toward parents is likely to spillover into other relationships and may contribute to relational distress and dissolution. Mental health practitioners need to be able to assess these relationships and understand the link between parent child relationships and romantic relationships.

There appears to be a strong intergenerational transmission of relationship quality. Children who experience parental divorce are likely to model their parents' relationship attitudes and behaviors. A pattern of low quality relationships can be transferred to the next generation, making it difficult to break the cycle of low relationship quality. For example, those who experience parental divorce are at greater risk for following their parent's unhealthy relationship. Those who experience parental divorce may be unaware that they are repeating their parent's example or expectations of the characteristics of an unhealthy romantic relationship. Understanding this relationship can offer mental health practitioners an advantage when working with couples in which one or both partners experienced parental divorce.

Clinical Implications

Mental health practitioners working with individuals who have experienced parental divorce need to be aware that this population is more likely to exhibit lower parental regard and may be holding resentment toward their parents. Furthermore, they may be less satisfied in their romantic relationships and more likely to experience clinically significant relationship distress.

By being aware of a possible issue of resentment and lower couple satisfaction, clinicians can be prepared to address these issues in therapy.

Some risk factors that mental health practitioners should look for include the intensity of the divorce, level of family conflict before and/or after the divorce, parental involvement and closeness, the client's beliefs about expectations surrounding a relationship (Dillman et al., 2011; Kelly & Emery, 2003; Mahl, 2001; Morrison, 2014; Stanley-Hagan & Hetherington 1999; Wallerstein & Lewis, 2007,Whiteside, 1998). Clinicians can ask, "How did your parents navigate their divorce?" "How did parental divorce effect your expectations around a romantic relationship?" These questions can assist therapists in gauging divorce impact and where to start in therapy. The clinicians need to consider how parental divorce affected the client on an individual and relational level.

The result of the study indicates that clinicians have two important areas to focus on when working with those who experience parental divorce. The first is individual health, and the second is relational health. Finally, having a coherent model when working with those who have experienced parental divorce can offer clinicians structure and guidance when working with this population. Emotional Focused Therapy (EFT) may be a good fit when working with these individuals because it addresses individual attachment needs as well as relational needs.

Parental Regard

Brann, Rittenour, and Myers (2007) found that when adult children felt betrayed by their parents' past actions, there was greater resentment toward them. However, if the child was able to forgive the parent, the relationship could be mended. Commitment, trust and relationship satisfaction were strengthened between parent and offspring (Brann et al., 2007). Assisting clients to forgive is one way to lower resentment and provide clients a way to strengthen their

relationships. Forgiveness is important for many clients so that healing can take place and a positive relationship with their significant other can be strengthened.

The idea that those who experience parental divorce need to learn to forgive is not a novel idea. Nousse, Enright and Klatt (2012) asserted that those who experience divorce may have experienced trauma and betrayal, and may be holding resentment toward their parents. They prepared an intervention using bibliotherapy. The book they choose was, *Forgiveness Is a Choice: The Step-by-Step Process of Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope* and compared its results of another group using bibliotherapy. The book they used was, *Difficult Conversations: How to Talk About What Matters Most*. Although there were no significant differences between the groups, within the forgiveness group the researchers found that the forgiveness intervention participants scored higher on forgiveness, relationships with parents improved, and the participants had lower anxiety levels (Nousse et al., 2012).

On the other hand, although forgiveness can provide freedom from resentment and provide healing for relationships, there are times when forgiveness can be problematic such as in abusive relationships (Lamb 2002). Tsang and Sanford (2002) explained that abusers can dismiss their own harmful behavior and can enable an unhealthy relationship. Therefore therapists need to determine how forgiveness is to be implemented with each client or if at all. Sometimes relationships are better left alone than to reinforce a negative dynamic.

Still, forgiveness has been found to have many positive effects. Maio, Thomas, Fincham and Carnelley (2008) found that when there was forgiveness between parent and offspring, there were higher levels of conscientiousness, emotional stability and agreeableness in the relationship (Maio, et al., 2008). Forgiveness has also been shown to be a positive factor in relationship satisfaction and life adjustments (Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2006).

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Relationship Satisfaction/Distress

Forgiveness can provide an antidote for lower parental regard, relationship distress and relationship satisfaction that those who experience parental divorce tend to exhibit. If they can learn to be more forgiving with their parents, they will be more likely to forgive their significant other and not harbor feelings of resentment. However, the answer may not be as simple as forgiveness especially with the trauma that those who experience parental divorce have felt.

Priest (2015) found that those who experience relationship distress were likely raised in an environment where there was violence/abuse among caregivers. Priest's (2015) research focused on using a Bowenian perspective. He claimed that it may be beneficial to explore the trauma in the treatment of relationships distress. Part of his approach was to track the inflexible cycles of the intergenerational romantic relationship so that the client could be aware of the patterns involved in their family of origin. Priest (2015) reported that this may also benefit clients who experience relationship distress by providing them with an understanding of where the unhealthy dynamic originated from. Clients who experience relationship distress can also use emotional regulation to increase differentiation and separate from the negative interactions. There are however clients who have experienced severe trauma that can benefit from a structured technique.

Clements (2014) found that in cases of severe trauma and relationship distress, guided imagery with music (GIM) can be beneficial. A focus of the technique is to have the client and therapist focus on a goal topic for the session while using music to facilitate a mindfulness exercise. Goals could include exploring personal insight, growth and guidance for significant life issues and events. The last five minutes are to assist the client in returning to an alert state and

summarizing what was learned (Clements, 2014). The process took time and assisted the client in moving past the trauma. Helping the client move past the trauma can lead to greater stability in the relationship. The relational distress and lower relational satisfaction can be addressed by using the lens of EFT.

Clinical Models: Emotional Focused Therapy

In terms of a therapeutic modality for clients who experience parental divorce, EFT seems to be a good fit. EFT has been shown to decrease relationship distress and increase relationship satisfaction (Burgess Moser, Johnson, Dalgleish, Lafontaine, Wiebe, & Tasca, 2016; Dalgleish, Johnson, Burgess Moser, Lafontaine, Wiebe, & Tasca, 2015; Dalgleish, Johnson, Burgess Moser, Wiebe, and Tasca, 2015; Halchuk, Makinen, & Johnson, 2010; Wittenborn, Culpepper, & Liu, 2012). It is a unique approach that focuses on the attachment needs of the individual as well as relational needs of a couple or family. Those who experience parental divorce may have been exposed to trauma that can create attachment injuries. Parental divorce is more complicated if one considers the negative models that those who experience parental divorce observe in their parents. This could be the reason why children of divorce experience greater relational distress. However, other models may be beneficial in working with those who experience parental divorce such as Bowenian, with its intergenerational focus.

According to Dalgleish and colleagues (2015) some important steps in EFT include creating the safe space, finding the underlying attachment needs, developing a safe emotional connection between partners, and assisting the partners to meet each others attachment needs. Partners that have a fear of intimacy or abandonment benefit greatly from EFT which promotes greater emotional connection. Clients who experienced parental divorce most likely did not see parents who had strong emotional connections. EFT can greatly benefit these clients by showing

them how they can safely connect to their romantic partner and their parents (Dalgleish et al., 2015). Applying EFT techniques can also be helpful in lessoning the effects of depression and relationship distress (Wittenborn et al., 2012). For these reasons, EFT is a viable option for therapists working with clients who have experienced parental divorce.

Furthermore, Dalgleish and colleagues (2015) found EFT to benefit couples who reported lower relationship satisfaction. They also found if one partner presented with an anxious attachment style, then they were more likely to be distressed in the relationship (Dalgleish et al., 2015). For distressed couples, being vulnerable may be difficult because of the fear of abandonment.

Fear of abandonment can make it difficult to experience relationship satisfaction. Dalgleish and colleagues (2015) found that utilizing the blamer softener effect can be beneficial for the clients who are struggling with emotional connection. The blamer softener effect is manifest when one or both partners are able to express their needs in a calm nature (Dalgleish et al., 2015). Partners who were able to utilize the blamer softener effect had greater likelihood of couple satisfaction. Partners who exhibited attachment avoidance had greater difficulty having relationship satisfaction. Those who were able to express their attachment needs found a stronger connection with their romantic partner (Dalgleish et al., 2015).

Burgess and colleagues (2016) found that couples in distresses reported increased relationship satisfaction and decreased attachment anxiety and avoidance as a result of EFT. However, couples who did not apply the blamer softener technique did not report significant changes in couple satisfaction. Those who have an anxious attachment style may take longer to reach blamer softener results. Couples in the study reported being less likely to avoid emotional closeness after therapy.

Halchuk and colleagues (2010) looked at couples who had been treated using EFT and saw where they were at three years after therapy. According to their findings, there were no significant differences in terms of when they left therapy and where they were in terms of the relationship (Halchuk et al., 2010). However, there was a slight decrease in couple satisfaction. There were no significant differences from partners who resolved issues and those who did not resolve their issues in therapy. The long terms effects of EFT appear to be beneficial (Halchuk et al., 2010). However, more research is needed to understand the long term effects of EFT or other factors involved in relationship satisfaction.

Forgiveness Intervention

Mental health practitioners working with individuals who have experienced parental divorce need to be aware that this population is more likely to exhibit lower parental regard and may be holding resentment toward their parents. Furthermore, they may be less satisfied in their romantic relationships and more likely to experience distress. By being aware of a possible issue of resentment and lower couple satisfaction, clinicians can be prepared to address these issues in therapy.

Brann, Rittenour, and Myers (2007) found that when adult children felt betrayed by there parents past actions there was greater resentment toward them. However, if the child was able to forgive the parent, the relationship could be mended. Commitment, trust and relationship satisfaction were strengthened between parent and offspring (Brann et al., 2007). Assisting clients to forgive is one way to lower resentment and provide clients a way to strengthen their relationships. Forgiveness is important for many clients so that healing can take place and a positive relationship with their significant other can be strengthened.

Forgiveness has been found to have many positive effects. Maio, Thomas, Fincham and Carnelley (2008) found that when there was forgiveness between parent and offspring, there were higher levels of conscientiousness, emotional stability and agreeableness in the relationship (Maio, et al., 2008). Forgiveness has also been shown to be a positive factor in relationship satisfaction and life adjustments (Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2006). Forgiveness can provide an antidote for lower parental regard, relationship distress and relationship satisfaction that those who experience parental divorce tend to exhibit. If they can learn to be more forgiving with their parents, they may be more likely to forgive their significant other and not harbor feelings of resentment.

Clinicians need to be aware of the potential risk of those who experience parental divorce and their likelihood of harboring resentment toward their parents. When clinicians are able to assist those who have experienced parental divorce in the forgiveness process they help the clients to let go of the resentment that can keep them from finding the satisfaction in their romantic relationships. Nevertheless, forgiveness may not be appropriate for all clients who harbor resentment toward their parents. Therapists should work with clients to determine the appropriateness of including forgiveness in treatment. Although these findings can be beneficial for clinicians, more research is needed to understand why there is lower parental regard, lower relationship satisfaction and couple distress for those who experience parental divorce.

Limitations and Direction for Future Research

This study offered insight to the intergenerational effects of parental divorce. However, the study has many limitations that need to be considered. The quantitative analysis used for the study is a small snapshot of how divorce affected the participants' relationship at the time that participants completed the study. There are other factors that relate to relationship satisfaction,

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and as research has shown, the event of a divorce is only one variable amidst the wide gamut of the participants' experience that may contribute to the success or failure of a romantic relationship. Other variables include parental conflict, attachment styles, relationship to parents and social support. All of these variables and most likely other variables interact with each other and the relationship satisfaction of those who experienced divorce and those who have not.

Along with the wide range of the human experience and everything that contributes to relationships. The present study also had an overabundance of females (81%), Latter Day Saints (LDS) (43%), Caucasians (84%) and heterosexuals (89%). Future research needs to incorporate a larger sample and find ways of recruiting more males with a variety of different beliefs and racial and ethnic populations being represented.

Future research could be directed at understanding the findings of this study, such as, why those who experience divorce have such a low parental regard, less satisfied in their relationships and experience relationship distress. A qualitative design could be used to better understand this interaction. Researchers could assess if participants who have experienced divorce have lower parental regard, couple satisfaction, and clinically significant relationship distress. If participants do not report exhibiting these outcomes, researchers could ask questions to find out why. This may help identify some protective factors and risk factors for experiencing parental divorce.

Conclusion

In conclusion, parental divorce is a common occurrence that has both positive and negative effects. There are risk and protective factors associated with experiencing parental divorce. Attachment, parent-child relationships, relationship satisfaction and depression anxiety and stress were examined in relation to parental divorce. The main findings of the present study

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are that those who experience divorce have a greater likelihood of having lower parental regard, lower relationship satisfaction and greater relationship distress. There is a powerful link between the parent and child romantic relationships. Mental health practitioners can benefit by understanding this link between parent and offspring. Therapist can use EFT to assist clients who have experienced parental divorce to have greater relationship satisfaction and lower relationship distress. Future research should examine the findings of this study and or recruit a larger more diverse sample size.

Appendix A

General Demographics

What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Other (please specify) _____

How old are you?

☐ _____

How many children do you have?

☐ Please specify number: _____

What is your racial or ethnic origin?

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian or Pacific Islander

☐ African-American/Black

☐ Caucasian/ White

☐ Mexican-American/Hispanic

☐ Biracial /Multiracial (please specify) _____

☐ Other (specify) _____

In what state do you currently reside?

What is your sexual orientation?

☐ Heterosexual

☐ Gay/Lesbian

☐ Bisexual

☐ Other (Please specify) _____

What is your current relationship status?

☐ Not in a serious relationship - Casual Dating Only

☐ In a serious dating relationship

☐ Living together

☐ Engaged to be married

☐ Married, first marriage

☐ Married, later marriage (Please specify widowed or divorced) _____

☐ Widowed

Please indicate the highest level of education completed.

☐ Elementary / Middle School

☐ High School or equivalent

☐ Vocational/Technical School (2 year)

☐ Some College

☐ College Graduate (4 year)

☐ Master's Degree (MS)

☐ Doctoral Degree (PhD)

☐ Professional Degree (MD, JD, etc.)

☐ Other (Please specify:) _____

How long have you been in this current relationship? (Please specify years or months).

☐ _____

Please indicate your current household income in U.S. dollars

☐ Under $10,000

☐ $10,000 - $19,999

☐ $20,000 - $29,999

☐ $30,000 - $39,999

☐ $40,000 - $49,999

☐ $50,000 - $74,999

☐ $75,000 - $99,999

☐ $100,000 - $150,000

☐ Over $150,000

What is your employment status? Please write your occupation in the space provided.

☐ Employed full-time

☐ Employed part-time

☐ Unemployed

☐ Homemaker

☐ Retired

☐ Student

What is your religious preference? (Please write "None" if not religious)

Have you ever attended therapy?

☐ No

☐ Yes (please specify the reason, type (individual, family, couple), and for how long)

———————————————

Appendix B

The Experience in Close Relationship Scale

The following statements concern how you generally feel in close relationships (e.g., with

romantic partners, close friends, or family members). Respond to each statement by indicating

how much you agree or disagree with it.

I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral / Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

I worry about being rejected or abandoned

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral / Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

I am very comfortable being close to other people.

☐   Disagree Strongly

- ☐ Disagree

- ☐ Disagree Slightly

- ☐ Neutral/ Mixed

- ☐ Agree Slightly

- ☐ Agree

- ☐ Agree Strongly

I worry a lot about my relationships.

- ☐ Disagree Strongly

- ☐ Disagree

- ☐ Disagree Slightly

- ☐ Neutral/ Mixed

- ☐ Agree Slightly

- ☐ Agree

- ☐ Agree Strongly

Just when someone starts to get close to me I find myself pulling away.

- ☐ Disagree Strongly

- ☐ Disagree

- ☐ Disagree Slightly

- ☐ Neutral/ Mixed

- ☐ Agree Slightly

- ☐ Agree

- ☐ Agree Strongly

I worry that others won't care about me as much as I care about them.

- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Slightly
- ☐ Neutral/ Mixed
- ☐ Agree Slightly
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Agree Strongly

I get uncomfortable when someone wants to be very close to me.

- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Disagree Slightly
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral/ Mixed
- ☐ Agree Slightly
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Agree Strongly

I worry a fair amount about losing my close relationship partners.

- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Slightly
- ☐ Neutral/ Mixed
- ☐ Agree Slightly
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Agree Strongly

I don't feel comfortable opening up to others.

☐ Disagree Strongly

☐ Disagree

☐ Disagree Slightly

☐ Neutral/ Mixed

☐ Agree Slightly

☐ Agree

☐ Agree Strongly

I often wish that close relationships partners' feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for them.

☐ Disagree Strongly

☐ Disagree

☐ Disagree Slightly

☐ Neutral/ Mixed

☐ Agree Slightly

☐ Agree

☐ Agree Strongly

I want to get close to others, but I keep pulling back.

☐ Disagree Strongly

☐ Disagree

☐ Disagree Slightly

☐ Neutral/ Mixed

☐ Agree Slightly

☐ Agree

☐ Agree Strongly

I want to get very close to others, and this sometimes scares them away.

☐ Disagree Strongly

☐ Disagree

☐ Disagree Slightly

☐ Neutral/ Mixed

☐ Agree Slightly

☐ Agree

☐ Agree Strongly

I am nervous when another person gets too close to me.

☐ Disagree Strongly

☐ Disagree

☐ Disagree Slightly

☐ Neutral/ Mixed

☐ Agree Slightly

☐ Agree

☐ Agree Strongly

I worry about being alone.

☐ Disagree Strongly

☐ Disagree

☐ Disagree Slightly

☐ Neutral/ Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with others.

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral/ Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral/ Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

I try to avoid getting too close to others.

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐ Neutral/ Mixed

☐ Agree Slightly

☐ Agree

☐ Agree Strongly

I need a lot of reassurance that close relationship partners really care about me.

☐ Disagree Strongly

☐ Disagree

☐ Disagree Slightly

☐ Neutral/ Mixed

☐ Agree Slightly

☐ Agree

☐ Agree Strongly

I find it relatively easy to get close to others.

☐ Disagree Strongly

☐ Disagree

☐ Disagree Slightly

☐ Neutral/ Mixed

☐ Agree Slightly

☐ Agree

☐ Agree Strongly

Sometimes I feel that I try to force others to show more feelings, more commitment to our

relationship than they otherwise would.

☐ Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral/ Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on close relationship partners.

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral/ Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

I do not often worry about being abandoned.

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral/ Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

I prefer not to be too close to others.

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral/ Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

If I can't get a relationship partner to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral/ Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

I tell my close relationship partners just about everything.

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral/ Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

I find that my partners don't want to get as close as I would like.

☐ Disagree Strongly

☐ Disagree

☐ Disagree Slightly

☐ Neutral/ Mixed

☐ Agree Slightly

☐ Agree

☐ Agree Strongly

I usually discuss my problems and concerns with close others.

☐ Disagree Strongly

☐ Disagree

☐ Disagree Slightly

☐ Neutral/ Mixed

☐ Agree Slightly

☐ Agree

☐ Agree Strongly

When I don't have close others around, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.

☐ Disagree Strongly

☐ Disagree

☐ Disagree Slightly

☐ Neutral/ Mixed

☐ Agree Slightly

☐ Agree

☐	Agree Strongly

I feel comfortable depending on others.

☐	Disagree Strongly

☐	Disagree

☐	Disagree Slightly

☐	Neutral/ Mixed

☐	Agree Slightly

☐	Agree

☐	Agree Strongly

I get frustrated when my close relationship partners are not around me as much as I would like.

☐	Disagree Strongly

☐	Disagree

☐	Disagree Slightly

☐	Neutral/ Mixed

☐	Agree Slightly

☐	Agree

☐	Agree Strongly

I don't mind asking close others for comfort, advice, or help.

☐	Disagree Strongly

☐	Disagree

☐	Disagree Slightly

☐	Neutral/ Mixed

☐	Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

I get frustrated if relationship partners are not available when I need them.

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral/ Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

It helps to turn to close others in times of need.

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral/ Mixed

☐   Agree Slightly

☐   Agree

☐   Agree Strongly

When other people disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself.

☐   Disagree Strongly

☐   Disagree

☐   Disagree Slightly

☐   Neutral/ Mixed

- [ ] Agree Slightly

- [ ] Agree

- [ ] Agree Strongly

I turn to close relationship partners for many things, including comfort and reassurance.

- [ ] Disagree Strongly

- [ ] Disagree

- [ ] Disagree Slightly

- [ ] Neutral/ Mixed

- [ ] Agree Slightly

- [ ] Agree

- [ ] Agree Strongly

I resent it when my relationship partners spend time away from me.

- [ ] Disagree Strongly

- [ ] Disagree

- [ ] Disagree Slightly

- [ ] Neutral/ Mixed

- [ ] Agree Slightly

- [ ] Agree

- [ ] Agree Strongly

Appendix C

Couple Satisfaction Index

Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

☐ Extremely Unhappy

☐ Fairly Unhappy

☐ A Little Unhappy

☐ Happy

☐ Very Happy

☐ Extremely Happy

☐ Perfect

In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?

☐ All the time

☐ Most of the time

☐ More often than not

☐ Occasionally

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

Our relationship is strong.

☐ Not at all true

☐ A little True

☐ Somewhat True

☐ Mostly True

☐   Almost Completely True

☐   Completely True

My relationship with my partner makes me happy.

☐   Not at all true

☐   A little True

☐   Somewhat True

☐   Mostly True

☐   Almost Completely True

☐   Completely True

I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner.

☐   Not at all true

☐   A little True

☐   Somewhat True

☐   Mostly True

☐   Almost Completely True

☐   Completely True

I really feel like part of a team with my partner.

☐   Not at all true

☐   A little True

☐   Somewhat True

☐   Mostly True

☐   Almost Completely True

☐ Completely True

How rewarding is your relationship with your partner.

☐ Not at all

☐ A little

☐ Somewhat

☐ Mostly

☐ Almost Completely

☐ Completely

How well does your partner meet your needs?

☐ Not at all

☐ A little

☐ Somewhat

☐ Mostly

☐ Almost Completely

☐ Completely

To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?

☐ Not at all

☐ A little

☐ Somewhat

☐ Mostly

☐ Almost Completely

☐ Completely

In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

☐   Not at all

☐   A little

☐   Somewhat

☐   Mostly

☐   Almost Completely

☐   Completely

For each of the following items, select the answer that best describes how you feel about your

relationship. Base your response on your first impressions and immediate feelings about them.

☐   Interesting

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐   Boring

☐   Bad

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐   Good

☐   Full

☐

☐

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐ Empty

- ☐ Sturdy

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐ Fragile

- ☐ Discouraging

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐ Hopeful

- ☐ Enjoyable

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐ Miserable

DASS Measure

Please read each statement and select the answer that indicates how much the statement applied to you OVER THE PAST WEEK. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement.

I found it hard to wind down

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I was aware of dryness of my mouth

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I experienced breathing difficulty (e.g., excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I tended to over-react to situations.

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I experienced trembling (e.g., in the hands)

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I felt that I had nothing to look forward to

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I found myself getting agitated

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I found it difficult to relax

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I felt down-hearted and blue

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I felt I was close to panic

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I felt I wasn't worth much as a person

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I felt that I was rather touchy

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (e.g., sense of heart rate

increase, heart missing a beat)

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I felt scared without any good reason

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

I felt that life was meaningless

☐   Did not apply to me at all

☐   Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

☐   Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of the time

☐   Applied to me very much, or most of the time

Parent Adult-Child Relationship Questionnaire

Please read the following statements and decide how much you agree with them regarding your

current relationship with your mother.

I look forward to seeing my mother.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐   Moderately true

☐   Very True

I feel responsive for my mother's happiness.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐   Moderately true

☐   Very True

I feel that I should take care of my mother because she has suffered so much in her life.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐   Moderately true

☐   Very True

My mother is my best friend.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

My mother's difficulty in making decisions has been a burden on me.

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

My mother shows her appreciation of me.

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

I am the only one my mother can rely on.

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

My mother thinks I am good in a crisis so she calls on me all the time.

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

I respect my mother's opinion.

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

I feel that I have to protect my mother.

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

My mother relies on me too much

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

I am glad to be able to repay my mother for all the love and care she gave me as a child.

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

I feel like I parent my mother.

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐   Very True

If you felt that the previous questions about your relationship with your mother did not apply,

please briefly explain why.

Please read the following statements and decide how much you agree with them regarding your

current relationship with your father.

If I don't do things my father's way he will nag me.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐   Moderately true

☐   Very True

I respect my father's opinion.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐   Moderately true

☐   Very True

Something will happen to my father if I don't take care of him.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐   Moderately true

☐   Very True

I feel that my father tries to manipulate me.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

I look forward to seeing my father.

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

I feel responsible for my father's happiness.

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

My father tries to dominate me.

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

I feel that my father makes too many demands on me.

☐ Not true at all

☐ Somewhat true

☐ Moderately true

☐ Very True

I know I can rely on my father to help me if I need him.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐   Moderately true

☐   Very True

If I don't see my father for a week I feel guilty.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐   Moderately true

☐   Very True

I don't discuss much with my father because I'm afraid of being criticized.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐   Moderately true

☐   Very True

I don't mind putting myself out for my father.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐   Moderately true

☐   Very True

My father thinks I'm good in a crisis so he calls on me all the time.

☐   Not true at all

☐   Somewhat true

☐   Moderately true

☐ Very True

If you felt that the previous questions about your relationship with your father did not apply,

please briefly explain why.

Other questions

Have you experienced the divorce of your parents? For this and the following questions, divorce

is defined here as the ending of your parents' relationship, and your parents are the two people

you considered your mom and dad.

☐ Yes

☐ No

How old were you when your parents divorced?

Briefly describe the reason(s) why your parents divorced.

How much of a surprise was your parents' divorce to you?

☐ Not at all

☐ A little bit

☐ Somewhat

☐ Quite a bit

☐ Extremely

How distressing was your parents' divorce to you?

☐ Not at all

☐ A little bit

☐ Somewhat

☐ Quite a bit

☐ Extremely

How much did you see your father after the divorce?

☐ Almost Never

☐   Yearly

☐   A few times a year

☐   Monthly

☐   A few times a month

☐   Weekly

☐   A few times a week

☐   Almost Daily

Did how much you saw your father change over time?

☐   Yes (please briefly explain) _____

☐   No

How much did you see your mother after the divorce?

☐   Almost Never

☐   Yearly

☐   A few times a year

☐   Monthly

☐   A few times a month

☐   Weekly

☐   A few times a week

☐   Almost Daily

Did how much you saw your mother change over time?

☐   Yes (please briefly explain) _____

☐   No

On a scale of 0-10, how much does your parents' divorce still affects your life?

☐   0 Not at all

☐   1

☐   2

☐   3

☐   4

☐   5

☐   6

☐   7

☐   8

☐   9

☐   10 A great deal

Did you ever receive therapy for issues relating to your parents' divorce?

☐   Yes (please specify type of therapy: individual/family) and who was involved

_____

☐   No

How long ago did you receive therapy for issues relating to your parents' divorce?

Approximately how many sessions did you attend that focused on issues related to your parents'

divorce?

How useful was therapy for you?

☐   Not at all

☐   A little bit

☐   Somewhat

☐   Quite a bit

☐   Extremely

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    satisfaction: A cross-cultural study. *Journal of Family Issues 33*(2) 202–222

Curriculum Vitae

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EDUCATION
University of Nevada, Las Vegas   Las Vegas, Nevada
Masters of Science, Marriage and Family Therapy   December 2016
Thesis: *The Intergenerational effects of Parental Divorce*
on Romantic Relationships

Utah State University   Logan, Utah
Bachelor of Science, Psychology   May 2013
B.S. in Psychology/Family Consumer and Human Development

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE
Center for Individual, Couple, and Family Counseling   Las Vegas, Nevada
Student Therapist   May 2015- May 2016
- Provide quality therapy to clients
- Schedule appointments
- Collaborate with fellow students
- Develop treatment plans

Pathways Therapy   Henderson, Nevada
Student Therapist   May 2016- Present
- Provide quality therapy to clients
- Schedule appointments
- Collaborate with fellow employees and supervisors
- Develop treatment plans

Desert Rose Counseling   Las Vegas, Nevada
Student Therapist   Aug 2016- Present
- Provide quality therapy to clients
- Schedule appointments
- Collaborate with fellow employees and supervisors
- Develop treatment plans

RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

Chrysalis   Sandy/Logan, UT
Support Staff   May 2011-August 2013

- Worked with individuals with physical or psychological disorders.
- Learned to express empathy and understanding for special needs and co-worker
- Implemented behavior plans to improve the individual's ability to make correct choices

and decrease undesirable behaviors
- Communicated with other staff members and house manager on how to implement individual behavior plans as well as report observations of unusual behavior
- Trained in CPR, soar restraints, human rights, abuse, neglect, sexual harassment and defensive driving

Research

Thesis: Las Vegas, Nevada
                                                                        2014-Present
- **-** I conducted a thesis under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Fife and Dr. Ryan Seedall. The title of my thesis is *The Intergenerational effects of Parental Divorce on Romantic Relationships*.
- My main research area of interest is primarily in understanding how relationships can be strengthened. I have enjoyed learning about John Gottman's findings. It is my hope that I can effectively learn how to conduct and apply research to assist couples and families who may be struggling with relationship issues.

Research at Utah State   Logan, Utah
                                                                        2011-2014
- Conducted my own URCO funded research project on how divorce affects adolescent and young adult relationships. Under the supervision of Dr. Ryan Seedall, I wrote the research proposal, literature review, recruiting, and data collection. Latter we presented a poster at the Utah Council of Family Relations, in Provo Utah.
- Coding for Dr. Seedall, watching recordings of couples in a therapy session, coding the couples' communication with each other, and answering questions on the Likert scale.
- For approximately 8 weeks I would observe a pigeon and how it responded to schedules of reinforcement. The purpose of this research was to see how they responded to a novel stimulus after extinction was in affect.

Research at Snow College   Ephriam, Utah
                                                                        2009-2011
- Texting and Anxiety at Snow College: I helped develop a survey that measured anxiety and phone use among attending college students.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Sexual Assault Prevention   Ephraim, UT
                                                                        2010-2011
- Taught sexual assault prevention to college-aged women.
- Answered questions about sexual assault prevention and addressed concerns

Assisted In Blood Drive   Ponca City, OK
                                                                        2009
- Dressed up in a costume and stood by the road and advertised for people to donate blood.

Psychological Statistics Tutor   Logan, UT
                                                                        2012 – 2013
  - Mentored students in understanding information under stressful circumstances.
  - Help motivate students to understand basic statistical concepts and tests.
  - Grade assignments

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION INVOLVEMENT

Delta Kappa Zetta
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

Psychology Club: I was the in the presidency for the psychology club. Through out the two years I was involved we set up school dances, recruit members to join, did research on texting and its correlation with anxiety. In addition, I became an assistant instructor for a sexual assault prevention class to increase self-awareness among college-aged women. I also had the opportunity to attend a Rocky Mountain conference in the spring of 2011. This included presentations of research as well as lectures from well-known researches in the field.

Ecclesiastical Service: Spent two years in Oklahoma and Texas. I looked for opportunities to serve others and I was introduced to many different cultures and ways of life. I learned to respect other people's views while holding on to my own.

REFERENCES

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