

**THE IMPACT OF RECENT PARENTAL DIVORCE  
ON YOUNG ADULT WOMEN**

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## ABSTRACT

Studies of divorced families show consistent effects of divorce on children in terms of behaviour, relationships with fathers, and later, marital success. Until recently, young adults whose parents had recently separated or divorced were ignored in the literature. In the present study, 92 young adult women from intact families and 50 young adult women whose parents had separated or divorced within the past three years responded to questionnaires about their relationships with their parents either prior to the divorce, or two to three years ago for the intact group, and at present. Twenty-seven women from separated/divorced families were also interviewed in a semi-structured format to better understand the respondents' phenomenological experience of their parents' separation/divorce. In addition, eight men from separated/divorced families were interviewed. In general, few effects of divorce were revealed in the quantitative findings. Specifically, daughters from separated/divorced families were less optimistic about future love relationships and marriages. Also, daughters from separated/divorced families had less frequent phone contact with their fathers than with their mothers. Using an evaluative Likert-type question, daughters from separated/divorced families reported less positive change in their relationships with their parents than did daughters from intact families over the past three years. This last effect was not replicated using the Quality of Relationship Inventory (QRI; Pierce, Sarason, Sarason, Solky, & Nagle, 1993). Daughters from both intact and separated/divorced families reported more anger,

less closeness and less positive change in quality of relationship with their fathers than with their mothers. In contrast to the quantitative results, the qualitative findings from the interviews revealed that the separation/divorce was a major event in these young peoples' lives. The qualitative results reinforced the quantitative findings that relationships with fathers are more problematic than those with mothers.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my parents, Patricia J. Haig and Graeme T. Haig.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
INTRODUCTION.....	1



<b>METHOD</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Subjects</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Measures</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Quality of Relationship Inventory (QRI)</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Demographic Questionnaire</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Semistructured Interview</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>Procedure</b> .....	<b>33</b>
 <b>QUANTITATIVE RESULTS</b> .....	 <b>37</b>
 <b>QUALITATIVE RESULTS</b> .....	 <b>56</b>
 <b>DISCUSSION</b> .....	 <b>86</b>
 <b>REFERENCES</b> .....	 <b>106</b>
<b>Appendix A Newspaper Advertisements and Poster</b> .....	<b>113</b>
<b>Appendix B Quality of Relationships Inventory</b> .....	<b>115</b>
<b>Appendix C Questionnaire</b> .....	<b>117</b>
<b>Appendix D Interview</b> .....	<b>127</b>
<b>Appendix E Informed Consent By Subjects To Participate In A Research         Project</b> .....	<b>129</b>
<b>Appendix F - Coding Manual</b> .....	<b>132</b>
<b>Appendix G Reliability Estimates</b> .....	<b>181</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Mother's and Father's Education .....	27
Table 2 Mother's and Father's Blisshen SES Rating on Occupations .....	28
Table 3 Summary Statistics for Number of Phone Calls, Letters, and Visits with Mothers and Fathers - Separated/Divorced Group .....	38
Table 4 Summary Statistics for Number of Phone Calls, Letters, and Visits with Mothers and Fathers - Intact Group.....	39
Table 5 Summary Statistics for Length of Phone Calls, Letters, and Visits with Mothers and Fathers in the Separated/Divorced Group.....	40
Table 6 Summary Statistics for Number of Phone Calls, Letters and Visits with Mothers and Fathers - Intact Group.....	41
Table 7 Means and Standard Deviations for Closeness to Mother and Father by Group .....	42
Table 8 Means and Standard Deviations of Conflict by Group .....	43
Table 9 Correlations between Conflict, Group and Closeness for Mothers and Fathers .....	44
Table 10 Means and Standard Deviations for Anger at Parent by Group .....	45
Table 11 Simultaneous Regression of Anger at Dad on Conflict and Group .....	46
Table 12 Correlations between Group and Anger, and Conflict and Anger, for Mothers and Fathers .....	46
Table 13 Means and Standard Deviations for QRI Change Scores for Mothers and Fathers by Group.....	48
Table 14 Bivariate Correlations between Group, Conflict, and Difference Scores for QRI Subscales, for Mother and Father .....	49
Table 15 Means and Standard Deviations for Change in Quality of Parent- Daughter Relationship (Likert) by Group.....	50
Table 16 Correlations between Group, Conflict, and Change in Quality of Relationship (Likert) for Mother and Father .....	51
Table 17 Bivariate Correlations between QRI subscales and Likert questions re: Change in Quality of Daughter - Parent Relationship.....	52
Table 18 Means and Standard Deviations for Optimism for Marriage by Group.....	53

Table 19 Correlations between Group, Conflict, and Optimism for Marriage ..... 54

Table 20 Means and Standard Deviations for Optimism about Love Relationships  
by Group..... 55

Table 21 Correlations between Group, Conflict, and Optimism about Love  
Relationships ..... 55

Table 22 Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes for Optimism about Love  
and Marriage, Anger at Mom and Dad for Daughters, by Anticipation of  
Divorce ..... 59

Table 23 Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes for Optimism about Love  
and Marriage, Anger at Mom and Dad for Sons, by Anticipation of  
Divorce ..... 78



## INTRODUCTION

Divorce has become common in North America. Half of all marriages in the United States now end in divorce (Peck & Manocherian, 1989). In Canada, the total divorce rate for the years 1976 to 1985 is slightly greater than thirty percent (Dumas & Peron, 1992). Canadian legislation introduced in 1985 made divorce easier to obtain, by reducing the minimum separation period from three or five years to one year.

Demographers wonder if the divorce rate may climb as high as 40% among newly married couples (Dumas & Peron, 1992). Thus, there is a large group of children for whom the traditional concept of the nuclear family no longer holds. In the past 20 years, research about the experience of young children of divorce has burgeoned (e.g., Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1985; Kelly, 1987; Wallerstein, 1991). Much of the research concentrates on the short term acute consequences of divorce for young children and adolescents but longitudinal research designs and papers stressing the long term view are increasingly evident (Hetherington, 1989; Kalter, 1987; Wallerstein & Corbin, 1989; Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993).

Age of the child at the time of divorce has been determined to be an important variable, with different developmental tasks being interrupted at different ages (Kalter & Rembar, 1981). For example, divorce very early in a toddler's life, up to age two and a half, is associated with separation-related difficulties by the time the child reaches the ages of seven to eleven (Kalter & Rembar, 1981). When the divorce occurs between the

ages of four to six, however, both boys and girls show difficulties with aggression upon reaching adolescence (Kalter & Rembar, 1981). A more recent study (Booth & Amato, 1994), has found that divorce is most damaging in terms of affective closeness and contact between fathers and their children when it occurs when the children are young.

Studies that look at the impact of parental divorce on adult children have only recently been published. There are two categories of studies of adult children. The first looks at the long term impact of coming from a divorced family compared to an intact family (e.g., Amato & Booth, 1991; Booth & Amato, 1994). In these studies the age of the child at the time of the divorce is generally not controlled. Results from these studies have been contradictory, with some studies finding significant deficits in functioning or well-being in adults from divorced families (e.g., Amato & Booth, 1991) whereas others find few if any differences between adult children from divorced and intact families (e.g., Barkley & Procidano, 1989).

The second group of studies look at adult children of divorce whose parents have divorced recently or are currently divorcing. There are only a handful of such studies (Cain, 1989; Cooney, 1994; Cooney and Kurz, 1996; Cooney, Smyer, Hagestad, & Klock, 1986; Hilliard, 1984; Kaufmann, 1988; Kozuch & Cooney, 1995). This dearth of research has occurred in spite of the fact that in the United States in 1981, 19% of divorces were of couples married more than 15 years (Cooney et. al, 1986). One of the reasons for the lack of research into adult responses to parents' divorce after long term marriages is the assumption on the part of many that there is no effect. In their theoretical articles, Kurdek (1981) and Longfellow (1979) have concluded that the

effects of divorce diminish with increased age of the child. Similarly, Barkley and Procidano (1989) concluded that parental divorce or separation did not have effects that persisted into adulthood. They tested college students with several self-report questionnaires measuring dependency, locus of control, assertiveness, social support and depression. However, their study may have cast too wide and shallow a net in the search for differences between the groups; they relied only on self-report measures and had a sample of only 19 in the divorced group. Other researchers imply that there is no impact by excluding young adults in their research (Kalter, 1987). Esman (1982) explicitly stated that the older adolescent is not likely to be affected by the changes that divorce brings.

Despite traditional beliefs that the effects of divorce are minimal or nonexistent for adult children, there is reason to believe that this is not so. The experience of divorce for a young adult occurs against a backdrop of multiple transitions (Cooney et al., 1986). The ages of 18-23 are generally ones of great change for the young adult. Among the university population, the transition to undergraduate classes and the new social milieu of university may be experienced as stressful in and of itself. According to Erikson (1968), late adolescence and young adulthood are times when the issues of identity and intimacy are most salient. Thus, their parents' divorce may complicate the task of identity and intimacy by raising questions and doubts less likely to be raised by young adults from intact families. Unlike younger children of divorce, young adults are trying to achieve a balance of separation from their parents along with a sense of adult interdependence (Kaufmann, 1988). They are trying to make decisions about long range

academic and career plans. It may be the first time they have lived away from the parental home.

Experts in divorce research are promoting the use of more process variables to study children, arguing that the dynamics of the family are more predictive of longer term adjustment than the static variables of intact versus divorced families (Garber, 1991; Lopez, 1991, Rossi & Rossi, 1990). That is, the event of the divorce itself may be secondary to the dysfunctional family patterns evident prior to the split. Conflict is one process variable that has been shown to have predictive value. Amato and Keith (1991) reported that their meta-analysis of children from divorced and intact families indicates that children from high conflict divorced families have higher levels of well-being than their counterparts from high conflict intact marriages.

Conflict may be less useful as a process variable with adult children whose parents have recently divorced. The length of their parents' marriage makes the circumstances for adult children of divorce different from their younger counterparts (Cain, 1989). Deckert and Langelier (1978) concluded that with their Canadian sample, long-term marriages ended after several years of deliberation. Hilliard (1984) agreed that there is likely to be a longer pre-separation period in long-term marriages. More recently, Amato, Loomis and Booth (1995) described patterns of "quiet disengagement" in low conflict divorcing spouses. Thus, it is possible to have a stable but unhappy marriage for many years prior to a divorce (Deckert & Langelier, 1978). Indeed, there is evidence that in long term marriages that end in divorce, parents may delay their divorce until their children are in college or university (Kaufmann, 1988).

Kozuch and Cooney (1995) agreed that it is a mistake to assume that all marriages that end up in divorce were necessarily highly conflictual. In their sample of young adults whose parents had recently divorced, 52.3% of parents were judged to have a low conflict marriage prior to their divorce. Indeed, Booth & Amato (1994) suggested that the static variable of divorce and the process variable of parental marital quality (which includes conflict) are largely independent of each other, and have their own effects on ensuing relationships. More recently, Amato, Loomis, and Booth (1995) found an interaction between conflict and marital status. When family conflict prior to the divorce was high, the children experienced better post-divorce adjustment. When family conflict prior to the divorce was low, the children experienced poorer adjustment than if the family had remained intact. Thus, it appears that when the divorce provides relief to a highly conflictual relationship, the effects are beneficial for the children. However, when the divorce takes place despite a lack of conflict, the effects are deleterious for children. Thus, for children whose parents divorce after long term marriages and whose divorce was a process of "quiet disengagement", there may be a significant proportion for whom conflict is a less salient variable.

A bitter pill for many adult children is the economic reality of divorce for their parents, particularly their mothers. Weitzman (1985) reported that the household income of single parent mothers declined 73% during the first year after the divorce. Thus, the issues of tuition fees and other expenses of education become an added stressor for young adults in university, as they realize that they can no longer count on help from their parents (Lopez, 1991).



Finally, Hilliard (1984) made the point that the experience of the adult child of divorce is mediated by the better development, relative to younger children, of a mature ego such that defense mechanisms like sublimation, suppression and altruism are used to deal with the trauma of divorce in a more sophisticated manner.

#### Post Divorce Contact

The divorce literature has documented the pattern of contact between young children and parents post-divorce. Most of the data comes from studies that examine the relationship of the children with the non-custodial parent. Furstenberg, Peterson, Nord and Zill (1983) stated very strongly that marital dissolution typically signals the end of contact between the child and the non-residential parent, or at least a change in the relationship such that parenting becomes ritualistic rather than substantive. Other authors do not make such bold statements. Wallerstein and Kelly (1982) argued that there is a range of relationships found between the child and visiting parent that are not predictable from the quality of relationship prior to the divorce. However, their data did demonstrate a decrease in contact between child and visiting parent over a five year period post-divorce. Further evidence was found in a study by Seltzer and Bianchi (1988), that children who were separated from one parent within the last year have more face to face contact with their parent than those children who have been separated from their parent for longer periods. More specifically, contact between fathers and children has been found to decrease as the time since the marital disruption increases (Bulcroft & Bulcroft, 1991; Seltzer, 1991). This effect was found to continue into young adulthood, as childhood divorce had a large, long-term negative impact (one standard deviation)

upon father and adult daughter contact in divorced families relative to intact families

Furstenberg et al. (1983) commented that the process of estrangement from the child seems to begin immediately upon marital dissolution. They analyzed the data from 1500 children in the United States surveyed in 1976. The children were followed up five years later in 1981, when they were 11-16 years of age. The results refer, therefore, only to children of that age group. Fathers represented 89% of the visiting, non-custodial parents. Only one in six children had weekly contact with their father. Another one in six children saw their father less than weekly but more than once per month. A further one sixth of the children saw their fathers once per month. The same ratio of children had their last contact with their fathers between one and five years previously. Finally, a full 35% of the fathers had no contact with their children at all.

According to a recent meta-analysis by Amato & Keith (1991), reduced paternal contact is a typical and significant effect of divorce for children. Contact is also reduced with non-custodial mothers, but to a lesser degree (Amato & Booth, 1991; Lawton, Silverstein & Bengston, 1994; Selzter & Bianchi, 1988). This pattern was also found in the Furstenberg et al. (1983) study. Approximately one third of the children had seen their mothers on a weekly basis. Nearly forty percent had contact with their mothers less than weekly but more than monthly. One in six children saw their mothers once per month. Seven percent of the children had their last contact with their mother one to five years previously, and seven percent had no contact at all with their mothers.

Beyond the issue of gender of the non-custodial parent, there are several factors that relate to the pattern of contact post-divorce. The most important factor is the quality

of relationship between the ex-spouses (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990).

Studies have shown that in divorced families with low parental conflict, fathers were more likely to see their children regularly and often (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Fathers who did not want contact with their children were more likely to have been in violent marital relationships (Greif, 1995). Indeed, in Dudley's (1991) study of fathers who saw their children infrequently, the former spouse was seen to be the major obstacle to more frequent contact by 41% of the sample.

The fathers' emotional adjustment to the divorce and loss of custody of their children also has an impact on contact with the children after the divorce. Some fathers find the visits with their children so painful that they avoid visits, and repeated short visits and separations increase the fathers' feelings of loss (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Other fathers find that as their relationship with their ex-spouse becomes less conflictual, their relationships with their children improve as well. In Kruk's (1991) study of father-child contact in Canadian and Scottish families after divorce, he found a strong inverse relationship between strong pre-divorce paternal involvement in childrearing and post-divorce contact between father and child. For fathers who were highly attached to their children before the divorce, being reduced to a visiting parent resulted in tremendous loss and grief, from which they defended themselves by disengagement. Conversely, fathers who were less involved prior to the divorce found ways to improve their relationships with their children through the role of the visiting parent and contact was maintained.

A number of demographic variables predict the contact between the non-

custodial parent and children post-divorce. Greater parental education predicts greater contact, for both intact and divorced families, across the lifespan (Cooney & Uhlenberg, 1990; Stephens, 1996). Furthermore, financial instability and lower socioeconomic status are associated with reduced contact between parents and children post-divorce (Furstenberg et al., 1983; Stephens, 1996).

Another factor that affects the post-divorce contact between father and child is remarriage (Seltzer & Bianchi, 1988; Stephens, 1996). For example, in the Furstenberg et al. (1983) study, when the father remarried, the percent of fathers who visited weekly was cut in half. If both parents remarried, only 11% of children saw their visiting father weekly, compared to 49% of the children when both parents remained unmarried. One of the reasons for the impact of remarriage on contact rates is that remarriage often results in a residential change, making visits more difficult. Close proximity does not guarantee regular contact, however, as 40% of the fathers in this study who were living within an hour of their children saw them less than once per month.

For adult children, the situation is different. The majority of studies done on the post-divorce contact between children and their parents has been done on children under the age of eighteen, often when court ordered custody is imposed on the divorced parents. After age eighteen custody orders do not exist, so less is known about the patterns of contact and the forces that increase or decrease contact. Some researchers suggest that once custody is no longer court ordered, contact between parent and child may reflect the quality of relationship and the choices made by the parent and child (Cooney et al., 1986; Cooney, 1994).

Indeed, there is some evidence to support the contention that as children of divorce become adults, their patterns of contact with their parents more closely reflect the way they feel about each other. Southworth and Schwarz (1987) studied the long-term impact of divorce on the post-divorce contact and relationship among female college students and their fathers. Their sample was composed of women aged 17-20, and included a comparison group of adult women and their fathers from intact families. Those from the divorced group had lived with their mothers since the divorce that occurred when they were between nine and 16 years of age. Southworth and Schwarz (1987) found that the post-divorce contact between father and daughter was strongly correlated to the daughter's perception of the father's love. That is, women who had infrequent contact with their fathers after the divorce also perceived them to be rejecting and inconsistent in their love. Similarly, Cooney (1994) found that feelings of intimacy were related to frequent contact among children and parents in divorced families, but that intimacy and contact were not related in intact families. This latter finding is concordant with Walker and Thompson's (1983) study of mothers and daughters in which marital status of the mother was not a variable.

Cooney and Uhlenberg (1990) studied the long-term impact of divorce on father-child relationships in divorced men between the ages of 50 and 79. They found that, as with younger children, adult children of divorce had much less contact with their fathers than adult children from intact families. Similarly, married fathers were two and a half times more likely to have an adult offspring live in their home than were divorced fathers. Contact with adult offspring who lived away from the father's home was defined

as visits, letters or phone calls. Whereas 90% of married fathers were in contact with at least one child on a weekly basis, only 50% of the divorced fathers could make the same claim. Limited contact was defined as yearly communication at the most in this study. Almost no married fathers reported such a situation whereas over one third of divorced men reported this level of contact with at least one of their children.

Thus, it is clear that for young children experiencing the divorce of their parents, and for adults whose parents divorced when they were children, the pattern of contact with the visiting parent (usually the father) is much less than for father-child dyads from intact families. Less is known about the patterns of contact for adults whose parents have recently divorced. Cooney et al. (1986) reported that among the 39 college students in their study, 28% of the 18 men decreased contact with their mother and 28% decreased contact with their father. The pattern of contact was different for the 21 women in the study. Fourteen percent reported decreased contact with their mother, but a full 38% reported decreased contact with their father. In addition, five and ten percent of the women had increased their contact with their mother and father, respectively, whereas none of the men increased contact with either parent.

In a more recent study of adult children whose parents had recently divorced, Cooney (1994) discovered that there was reduced contact with fathers for both daughters and sons. Approximately 15% of the adult children had less than monthly contact with their fathers. Similarly, less than 60% of adult children maintained weekly contact with their divorced fathers, whereas about 80% maintained weekly contact in intact families.

In sum, it is clear that for all ages, and regardless of the time since the divorce, the disruption of the family unit is predictive of significantly reduced contact between fathers and their children. With younger children, reduced contact with the visiting father begins immediately upon divorce, and continues to decrease as time goes by. Poor relationships with ex-spouses, less education, lower income, and remarriage reliably predict reduced contact. For adult children in divorced families, when custody is no longer an issue, evidence suggests that contact and the quality of parent-child relationships are positively related.

#### Child-parent relationship post-divorce

The evidence is clear that childhood divorce has a negative impact on parent-child relationships. These effects are long-term. For example, Aquilino (1994) found evidence that being the non-custodial parent has long-term negative implications for father-child relationships, even when the children become adults and were no longer bound by custody arrangements. Similarly, Amato and Booth (1996) noted that regardless of parents' marital status, marital unhappiness has negative effects on parent-child relationships later in life. This effect is followed by further erosion of the child-parent relationship if the parents divorce. In a related vein, compared to adults from intact families, adults whose parents divorced when they were children were twice as likely to say that someone is more like a mother to them than their biological mother, and 13 times more likely to say that someone is more like a father to them than their biological father (Webster & Herzog, 1995).

For young children, and adults whose parents divorced when they were children,

the variables of contact, emotional relationships with their parents, and custody are inherently confounded. However, custody is not a confounding variable among adult children whose parents divorced when they were adults. Hence, it is hypothetically easier to measure the impact of divorce on contact and emotional relationships between parents and their adult children. Adult children also play a much larger, more active role in defining their relationships than do young children.

Of the research done to date, the evidence is clear that the relationship between fathers and their children is less resilient than that of mothers and their children (Drill, 1987; Fine, Moreland, & Schwebel, 1983; Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993). Amato and Keith (1991) found, in a meta-analysis, that parental divorce was associated with poorer relationships with children for both parents, but that the effect size was larger for fathers (mean effect size =  $-.26$ ) than mothers (mean effect size =  $-.19$ ) for studies done in the U.S.A. However, the difference between the mean effect sizes was not significant. In a prospective study of divorce and parent-child relationships, Amato and Booth (1996) found that divorce had significant negative consequences for father-child affection, independent of marital quality, for fathers. That is, fathers from divorced families felt less affection for their children than fathers from intact families. The same effect did not hold for mothers' affection for their children. The authors suggested that these results can be explained because most fathers are non-custodial parents, thus the divorce dealt a further blow to their relationships with their children that the mothers did not sustain.

From the point of view of young adults, Drill (1987) measured the attitudes toward parents of respondents from both divorced and intact families. The age of the



child at the time of the divorce was not controlled. In the divorced sample, it was found that attitudes toward fathers who had been the noncustodial parent were more negative than attitudes toward mothers who had had custody. Conversely, attitudes toward the noncustodial mothers were not more negative than toward the small number of custodial fathers. Thus, attitudes toward mothers remained stable regardless of their former custodial status, but attitudes toward fathers suffered greatly in conjunction with former non-custodial status (Drill, 1987). Results consistent with this finding were reported in Aquilino (1994), although he urged caution in interpretation due to the small number of custodial fathers upon which studies were based.

The lack of resilience in the father-child relationship is also evident in intact families, or families prior to marital dissolution. For example, Drill (1987) also discovered that although adult children from divorced families showed a greater discrepancy, adult children from intact families had more negative attitudes about their fathers than about their mothers. There were no significant differences between adult children from intact and divorced families in their attitudes toward their mothers. Similarly, in a study of the experience of recent divorce among young adults, Kaufmann (1988) found that 70% of her sample considered themselves to be closer to their mothers than their fathers before the divorce.

There is a consistent finding in the literature that adult children of recent divorce experience negative emotions toward their parents (Cain, 1989; Cooney, 1994; Cooney et al., 1986; Kaufmann, 1988). Among studies that did not employ a comparison group of adult children from intact families, there was much evidence of anger experienced by

adult children toward their divorced parents. For example, Cain (1989) documented that a theme for the subjects in her study was rage toward their parents for having betrayed them. Most of the sample blamed the parent who initiated the break up. Similarly, Cooney et al. (1986) documented that anger was the most common reaction among their sample of young adults, with 67% feeling anger at the news of the divorce.

Gender differences have often been evident in adult children's experience of their parents' break up. For example, Booth and Amato (1994) found that childhood divorce did not affect the closeness shared between fathers and sons later in life. Conversely, childhood marital dissolution was associated with a large decrease in closeness between daughters and fathers later in life. This mirrors the findings of Cooney's (1994) study in which she found that divorce was associated with reduced father-child intimacy, but for daughters only.

In a related vein, Cooney et al. (1986) found that, after divorce, women were both more likely to feel angry than men, and to direct their anger toward one parent rather than both. The most fragile relationship was between the father and daughter, with damaged relationships post-divorce occurring in 43% of the sample, relative to 28% of the sons and fathers. Similarly, Kaufmann (1988) found that women college students expressed more anger toward each parent than men college students. In addition, women's anger tended to be more intense, especially with regard to their fathers. At least one third of the men, in contrast, reported that they never felt anger toward their mothers or their fathers.

In contrast to the more fragile relationships between daughters and fathers,

daughters and mothers have been found to have the most resilient relationship post-divorce (Booth & Amato, 1994; Cooney, 1994; Cooney et al., 1986; Kaufman, 1988; White, Brinkerhoff & Booth, 1985). According to Rossi and Rossi (1990), the mother-daughter dyad is the closest parent-child relationship within the intact family as well. Walker and Thompson (1983) speculated that perhaps most mother-daughter relationships have high levels of intimacy.

Another post-divorce complication for adult children is that their relationships with their parents often involve taking on roles formerly reserved for their parents. Whereas parents typically watch out for their children, adult children of divorce find that, for the first time, they are watching out for their parents (Beal & Hochman, 1991; Cain, 1989, Kaufman, 1988). For example, in the early years after the divorce, adult children often worry about their parents (Cain, 1989; Cooney et al., 1986; Kaufman, 1988). Furthermore, both Kaufman (1988) and Cooney et al. (1986) found that adult children worried about both parents, but were more concerned about their mothers.

In sum, childhood divorce has been shown to have a negative impact on parent-child relationships that extend into the adult years. The relationship between fathers and their children is less resilient than mothers and their children. This is also true, to a lesser extent, in intact families. Of the few studies done on young adults whose parents recently divorced, there is evidence that they feel great anger toward their parents, particularly daughters toward their fathers. Also, new roles may be taken on by the adult children after divorce, as they become caretakers of their parents, possibly for the first time.

### Optimism about Marriage

Erikson (1968) theorized that young adults must resolve the issue of intimacy versus isolation. It seems logical, therefore, that the experience of coming from a divorced home may have an effect on one's intimacy issues and may be reflected in attitudes about marriage. Indeed, there are several studies that have been done in recent years that measure young adults' attitudes about marriage as an institution (Amato, 1988; Carson & Pauly, 1990; Kinnaird & Gerrard, 1986; Kozuch & Cooney, 1995).

By and large, the results indicate that there are few differences between young adults who come from intact families and those whose parents divorced when they were children, on general measures of attitudes toward marriage. For example, Amato (1988) interviewed 2500 Australian adults between the ages of 18 and 34 about the advantages and disadvantages of marriage. He asked them how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements such as: "Marriage gives you 1) economic security 2) love, warmth and happiness..." (p. 455). Disadvantages of marriage were queried with items such as: " 1) You don't have much independence or personal freedom after you marry, or; 2) People take one another for granted after they marry..." (p. 455). There were no differences found between individuals from divorced or intact families on these measures. Other studies using similar measures have found few or no differences between the groups as well (Carson & Pauly, 1990; Ganong, Coleman, & Brown, 1981; Jones & Nelson, 1996; Kinnaird & Gerrard, 1986).

When the investigation is broadened to include related topics such as attitudes about divorce and cohabitation, the results are mixed. For example, Stone and Hutchinson (1992) found no difference between divorced and intact groups of undergraduate participants on attitudes toward divorce. However, Black and Sprenkle's (1991) study of college students from divorced and intact families discovered a group by sex interaction such that divorced group males were significantly more positive about divorce than divorced group females. No significant difference existed between males and females in the intact group. Similarly, Ganong, et al. (1981) found that adolescents between 15 and 17 whose family had divorced and reconstituted had more favourable attitudes toward divorce than those from single parent or intact family groups. The impact of gender, age at divorce, and time since the divorce may account for these mixed results.

Regarding attitudes about cohabitation, Kozuch and Cooney (1995) found a significant difference between young adults from divorced and intact families. People from divorced families were more likely than people from intact families to endorse the statement that "Living together before marriage makes a lot of sense"(p.23). This result is not supported by Amato's (1988) study in which respondents did not differ with regard to their attitudes about the advantages and disadvantages of living together. These attitudes were queried with items such as these: "There are no legal responsibilities when you are living together" and "While living together you can have a regular sex life without legal ties"(p.455). Whereas Kozuch and Cooney's (1995) question implies a relationship between living together and marriage, the questions in the Amato (1988)

study asked about the disadvantages and advantages of living together independent of marriage. In addition, Amato's (1988) study did not control for age of the child at the time of the divorce whereas Kozuch and Cooney's (1995) study focused exclusively on young adults whose parents divorced within the past 15 months. These differences may account for the disparate results.

Studies have found that young adults from divorced families, despite their backgrounds, are as eager to get married as those from intact families (Amato, 1988; Kinnaird & Gerrard, 1986; Kozuch & Cooney, 1995). However, evidence suggests that they may not be as optimistic about the success of their marriages. Tasker (1992) describes this result from qualitative interview data in which teenagers from divorced families say they want to marry, but are wary about marriage. Similarly, Long (1987) asked female respondents in a questionnaire to rate "my future marriage" on six scales: good-bad, successful-unsuccessful, wise-foolish, interesting-dull, honest-dishonest, and valuable-worthless. Daughters from divorced families showed less positive evaluations of their future marriages relative to daughters from intact families. Similarly, Kinnaird and Gerrard (1986) found that women from divorced families were more likely than women from intact families to answer yes to the question: "Do you ever think that you may be divorced at some time in the future?" (p. 762). Although dissenting evidence can be cited (eg., Guttman, 1989), generally, when the questions move from marriage as an institution to the narrower issue of one's own marriage, the differences between divorced and intact groups are more likely to show.

Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, and Roberts (1990) looked at the impact of parental

divorce on optimism. Respondents were 568 university students. Age at the time of divorce was not controlled. They found that students from divorced families were more likely to believe that they will have less successful marriages. Furthermore, the best predictor of marital optimism for those from divorced families was an assumption about the benevolence of other people. That is, if they were more likely to believe that other people were good and worthy, they also believed they would have good marriages. For students from intact families, the best predictor of marital optimism was the assumption of self-worth. In other words, if they were more likely to believe that they were good and worthy people, they also believed they would have good marriages. The authors suggested that this finding may reflect the greater realization on the part of students from divorced families that a marriage is a dyad, and that the other person in the marriage has a role in the success or failure of a marriage.

In a second study, Franklin et al. (1990) made a distinction between optimism about marriage and optimism about dating. They found that there was no difference in the respondents' optimism about the success of their future love relationships, but that students from divorced families were significantly less optimistic about the success of their future marriages.

In a more recent study, Carnelley & Janoff-Bulman (1992) further examined the distinction between optimism about love relationships and marriage. They found, like the earlier study, that sons and daughters from divorced families were less optimistic about their own marriage than children of intact families. The two groups did not differ in their optimism about love relationships. In addition, Carnelley and Janoff-Bulman (1992)

found that optimism about future love relationships was best predicted by students' own experiences in romantic relationships. Independent of the divorced or intact status of their families of origin, optimism about marriage was best predicted by students' perceptions of their parents overall quality of relationship with each other. That is, the better the relationship between the parents, the more optimistic the student was about his or her own future marriage.

In sum, there are few differences between young adults from divorced and intact families on general attitudes toward marriages. There are mixed results on attitudes toward divorce and cohabitation, such that in some studies but not others, young adults from divorced families have more positive attitudes toward divorce and cohabitation. One clear finding is that young adults from divorced families are less optimistic about their own future marriages, although no differences are found in optimism about love relationships. Perhaps young adults can be optimistic about their love relationships because they see them as qualitatively different from their parents' failed marriage. However, the consideration of the commitment of marriage may force young adults to think about the difficulties of marriage that they have experienced first hand, and face their anxiety about their own future marriages.

### The Present Study

In the present study the experience of divorce is examined from the point of view of young women, age 18-23, whose parents have separated or divorced within the last three years.

The following hypotheses are made:



1. It is hypothesized that contact between fathers and daughters post-divorce is less than contact between mothers and daughters (Amato & Keith, 1991; Furstenberg et al., 1983). It is predicted that this difference in contact between fathers and daughters and mothers and daughters will be negligible in the intact group.
2. It is hypothesized that daughters feel closer to their mothers than their fathers prior to the separation/divorce (Kaufmann, 1988). In the intact group, it is predicted that daughters feel closer to their mothers than their fathers for the comparable time period.
3. It is hypothesized that daughters are angrier with their fathers than their mothers post-divorce (Kaufman, 1988). For the intact group, it is predicted that there will be a negligible difference in the amount of anger daughters feel toward their mothers and fathers during the comparable time period.
4. It is hypothesized that the quality of the father-daughter relationship will deteriorate more post-separation/divorce than the mother-daughter relationship. The difference in the quality of the father-daughter relationship in the intact group over approximately the same period of time will be negligible (Booth & Amato, 1994; Cooney, 1994).
5. It is hypothesized that adult daughters from separated/divorced families will have less optimism about their own future marriages than the adult daughters from intact families (Carnelly & Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Franklin et al. 1990).
6. It is hypothesized that there will be a negligible difference in optimism about future love relationships between adult daughters from separated/divorced and intact families (Carnelly & Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Franklin et al., 1990).

The present study presents a unique contribution to the literature for several

reasons. First, many studies of the impact of divorce do not include a comparison group from intact families. The present study does include a comparison group. This provides for some understanding of the regular developmental processes of this age group, and allows a more accurate determination of the effects attributable to divorce. Second, this study focuses on the experience of young adult women, an age group that has been largely ignored until recent years. Third, the time since the separation or divorce was limited to three years, unlike many of the studies in the literature that use divorced samples.

In addition, the present study uses both quantitative and qualitative methods of data gathering. Whereas the quantitative methods can answer the research questions posed in terms of statistical significance, qualitative methods add dimensions of information that enrich and amplify the quantitative data.

## METHOD

### Subjects

One hundred and forty-two women and 13 men participated in this study. Ninety-two women came from intact families, and 50 women came from divorced families. The male participants were all from separated/divorced families. Of the 92 women from intact families, 56% (52) were recruited from the Introductory Psychology participant pool, for which they received credit toward their course; 12% (11) were solicited from other psychology courses at Simon Fraser University; and 31% (29) were solicited from psychology classes at Douglas College. Participants from classes at Douglas College and upper year psychology classes at SFU did so on a voluntary basis. Of the 50 women from separated/divorced families, 56% (28) of the women came from the Introductory Psychology participant pool; 6% (3) of the women were solicited from upper year psychology courses at Simon Fraser University; and 22% (11) of the women came from psychology courses at Douglas College. As well, newspaper advertisements were placed in eight newspapers (See Appendix A). One woman (2%) participated in response to an advertisement. Two advertisements were repeated, changing the ad to a lottery with one in ten chance of winning \$100 dollars for participation. Posters announcing the lottery were also placed at Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia, Douglas College, Vancouver Community College, and Canada Employment

Centres. Fourteen percent (7) of the female separated/divorced group participated in the study in response to the lottery advertisements.

The study was originally designed to include young adult males from separated/divorced and intact families. However, despite the recruiting efforts outlined above, only 13 men from separated/divorced families agreed to complete the questionnaire, and eight consented to be interviewed over the course of 15 months of data collection. Ten of the men came from the participant pool; one responded to a newspaper advertisement; and two were from Douglas College. Because so few men agreed to participate, no quantitative analyses were done using the data from the men. Instead, the men's interview data was included in the qualitative analysis.

The participants in this study ranged in age from 18 to 23. One respondent was interviewed two weeks after her 24th birthday. The mean age of all the participants was 19.6. Nearly half (46.1%) of the participants were in first year of university or college. Another thirty-six percent were in the second year of their studies. The remaining 18% were in third year and fourth year. Sixty-two percent of the sample was composed of Caucasian women. Asian women made up the next 25 percent of the sample. South Asian, Black, and Hispanic women constituted two percent, one percent, and one percent of the sample, respectively. Another nine percent of women indicated their ethnic status as "other".

The average length of marriage of the parents in the intact group was 23.7 years, with a range of 15 to thirty-five years. One set of parents married after their child was born. In the separated/divorced group, the average length of marriage of the

parents before the separation or divorce was 21.2 years, with a range of eight to 30 years. In total, four of the separated/divorced families had children before they married. Of the separated/divorced group, 27 women indicated that their parents were separated and 23 indicated that their parents were divorced. All participants were the biological children from their parents' marriage; adopted and step-children were not eligible to participate. Eighty-five percent of the participants were the first or second child in the family.

The sample was, for the most part, middle class and well-educated (Table 1). Eighty-four percent of the mothers of participants in both groups had completed high school, some post-secondary education, or completed their Bachelor's degrees. In the intact and separated/divorced groups, 10 and eight percent did not have a high school diploma, and four point four and eight percent had a Masters or post-graduate degree, respectively. There was a greater range in the fathers' level of education in both groups. Sixty-seven and 68% of fathers had completed high school, some post-secondary education, or a Bachelor's degree in the intact and separated/divorced groups. Fourteen percent of the fathers did not have a high school diploma, but on the other end of the distribution, 19% of the fathers had Masters or post-graduate degrees such as a Ph.D or an M.D. A t-test revealed there was no significant difference between the mean number of years of education for the mothers and fathers.

**Table 1****Mother's and Father's Education**

	Mother			Father		
	(n=91)	(n=50)	(n=141)	(n=90)	(n=50)	(n=140)
	Intact	Divorced	Total	Intact	Divorced	Total
Grade 7	5.5%	2.0%	4.2%	4.4%	8.0%	5.7%
Grade 10	4.4%	6.0%	4.9%	7.7%	10.0%	8.5%
High School	30.7%	16.0%	25.5%	21.1%	14.0%	18.5%
Some Post-Secondary	29.6%	36.0%	31.9%	23.3%	36.0%	27.8%
Bachelors Degree	25.2%	32.0%	27.6%	22.2%	18.0%	20.7%
Masters	4.4%	8.0%	5.6%	13.3%	12.0%	12.8%
Ph.D., L.L.B, M.D.	0%	0%	0%	7.7%	2.0%	5.7%

In order to examine differences among parental occupations a 2 X 2 (sex by group) ANOVA was done for the socioeconomic status (SES) rating determined by the Blishen scale of occupations in Canada (Blishen, Carroll, & Moore, 1987). Father's and mother's Blishen scores are displayed in Table 2. No significant group differences or sex by group interactions were found. Fathers had occupations with a significantly higher SES rating than the mothers ( $F(1, 99) = 9.56, p < .003$ ). Means and standard deviations are shown in Table 2. The mean SES rating for men was 51.43, corresponding to jobs such as managers and business service salesmen. The mean Blishen SES rating for women was 44.62, corresponding to jobs such as personnel clerks, sales occupations, and dental hygienists. As well, there were 19 women (21%) in the intact group who engaged in nonpaid work such as homemaking or volunteering, relative to nine women

(11%) in the separated/divorced group. Because the Blisshen scale (1987) rated only paid work, these jobs were not included in the analysis.

**Table 2**

**Mother's and Father's Blisshen SES Rating on Occupations**

	Mothers		Fathers	
	(n=71)	(n=40)	(n=86)	(n=43)
	Intact	Divorced	Intact	Divorced
Mean	42.74	47.96	50.88	52.54
Standard deviation	13.65	9.77	17.86	15.87

## **Measures**

### ***Quality of Relationship Inventory (QRI)***

The QRI is a 25 item Likert-type scale with four response possibilities: not at all, a little, quite a bit, and very much (See Appendix B). The QRI was designed to measure any interpersonal relationship (Pierce, Sarason, Sarason, Solky, & Nagle, 1993), and, among other relationships, has previously been used to analyze the relationships between adult children and their parents (Pierce, Sarason & Sarason, 1992).

The scale is broken down into three subscales assessing relationship-specific social support, conflict, and depth. Relationship-specific social support is measured by seven items such as: "To what extent could you count on this person for help with a problem?" and "To what extent can you count on this person to listen to you when you are angry at someone else?"

The QRI conflict scale measures a general index of relationship conflict, and deliberately avoids items such as conflict around childrearing or finances that are more specific to marital relationships. This relationship-specific conflict scale includes 12 items such as "How angry does this person make you feel?" and "How often do you have to work hard to avoid conflict with this person?"

The QRI depth scale measures the importance of the relationship in the respondents' lives. The six items used in this subscale include: "How significant is this relationship in your life?" and "How much do you depend on this person?"

Pierce et al. (1993) did a longitudinal study to determine the QRI's internal



consistency and its ability to predict personal adjustment. This was accomplished by testing 119 undergraduates and their parents at two times, twelve months apart. In the first wave, students completed three QRIs to assess their relationships with their mothers, fathers and their same sex best friends. They also completed other tests, including the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI: Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock, & Erlbaugh, 1961). The parents completed two QRIs assessing their relationship with their adult child and spouse, and a BDI. In the second wave, students again completed QRIs to measure their relationships with their parents. Parents completed a QRI pertaining to their relationship with their adult child, and a QRI for their relationship with their spouse. The results demonstrated that the QRI has adequate internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values for each subscale higher than .75. The single exception was the alpha of .60 for the mothers' perceptions of the depth of their relationship with their adult child.

In the same study, Pierce and his colleagues (1993) found support for considerable test-retest reliability (12 month) for the QRI. These reliability estimates ranged from .48 to .79, lending evidence to suggest that the QRI taps into some stable elements of family members' perceptions of their relationships.

Pierce and his colleagues (1993) have shown that the QRI has demonstrable construct validity. The adult children's scales measuring the maternal and paternal relationship each predicted depression as measured by the BDI. Specifically, adult children who reported a high degree of conflict and depth in their relationships with their mothers experienced more depressive symptoms than did other children. Conversely,

adult children who reported high levels of depth in their relationships with their fathers experienced lower levels of depression than other children (Pierce et al., 1993).

In the same study (Pierce et al., 1993), parents' perceptions of the quality of their relationships with their spouses predicted their general psychological adjustment.

Mothers who perceived high levels of spousal conflict reported greater depressive symptomatology. Fathers who perceived greater support from their spouses reported less depressive symptomatology.

In a second study Pierce et al. (1993) found evidence of convergent validity for the QRI in that adult children's and mothers' QRI scores predicted observers' ratings of the quality of their interaction. After both adult child and mother completed their QRIs assessing their relationship with the other participant, the father or spouse, and the same-sex best friend, they were asked to discuss one of ten common areas of conflict between mothers and their adult children. Their discussion was videotaped and rated according to the observers' subjective assessments of the degree of the adult child's sensitivity to his or her mother, the degree of sensitivity of the mother to her child, and the degree of dyadic cooperation. Both mothers' and children's QRI conflict scores were negatively correlated with the cooperation rating given to their interaction by raters. Similarly, both mothers' and children's QRI support scores were positively correlated with the ratings of their interaction as cooperative and sensitive to each other's needs. Evidence of discriminant validity was also provided because mothers' and children's QRI scales on other relationships (same sex best friend, father, or spouse) were not predictive of their social interaction. Furthermore, the support and depth subscales did

not predict the number of critical remarks (conflict) exchanged by the three family members in a third study (Pierce et al. 1993).

### ***Demographic Questionnaire***

The demographic questionnaire asked questions such as age, ethnic background, year in university, and parental level of education (See Appendix C). As well, this questionnaire asked about the marital status of the respondent's parents. Based on this question, the respondents were split into intact and separated/divorced groups. Intact families were those in which the parents were married and living in the home. Adult children could be living independently or in the family home. Separated/divorced families were those in which the mother and father separated, or separated and divorced within the past three years. The adult child could be living independently or with one parent. Respondents from both family groups were asked questions about the length of their parents' marriage, the conflict in their parents' (former) marriages, their optimism and expectations about their own love relationships and marriage, how close they felt to their parents, whether they felt anger toward their parents, and the extent to which the quality of relationship with each parent had changed.

Respondents from separated/divorced families answered three extra questions: length of time since the separation or divorce, their age at the time of the separation or divorce, and whether or not they had sought counselling regarding their parents' separation or divorce. As well, respondents were asked the extent to which their parents' break up was a pivotal event in their lives.

### ***Semistructured Interview***

Participants from separated/divorced families were asked approximately 20 questions about their experience of their parents' divorce (See Appendix D). The interviews allowed people to describe their experience in more detail and variety than the paper and pencil measures that force participants to choose the best approximation from the provided responses. Most of the questions were designed to expand on the paper and pencil questions asked in the questionnaire part of the study.

### ***Procedure***

The study was described as an exploration into adult children's relationships with their mothers and fathers in both intact families and families that have experienced a separation or divorce within the past three years. Respondents were informed that participation required completing a packet of questionnaires, and for some, an interview. They were told of their right to end their participation in the study at any time.

Participants met individually or in small groups of two to six to complete their packet of questionnaires. The packets contained two copies of the QRI. Participants were asked to complete one questionnaire for their mother and one questionnaire for their father, as their relationships existed at present. The demographic questionnaire, as described above, was then completed.

Participants from separated/divorced families were asked to complete three extra questions, as described above, that queried the experience of the divorce. Finally, all participants were asked to complete two more QRIs. Those from separated/divorced

families based their ratings on their recollection of their relationship with their mother and father as it existed one year prior to the separation or divorce. Those from intact families based their ratings on their recollection of their relationship with their mother and father as it existed two to three years ago.

Participants were solicited from the Psychology Department's Participant Pool, over the course of four, 16-week terms. The subject pool is made up of students in Introductory Psychology and Research Design classes. Students sign up to do the studies for which they meet the criteria. They receive up to four percent credit toward their class grade if they choose to participate in research studies outside of class time. Upper year psychology students were also approached to participate outside of class time on a volunteer basis. Shortly after, psychology students at Douglas College were canvassed for their voluntary participation. At Douglas College, a short explanation of the study was given to each class, and those who fit the criteria and wished to participate were given class time to fill out the questionnaire packet. At the end of the packet, those in the separated/divorced group indicated if they were interested in being interviewed by the researcher.

Because the intact women's cell was filled quickly, the second round of solicitation of upper year psychology students at Simon Fraser University was more complicated. Women from intact families constituted the largest group of participants in the psychology classes. Thus, if the smaller group of people who fit the remaining criteria were approached directly to participate, there was a possibility of inadvertently embarrassing people with a public announcement of their family's status. Hence,

everyone in the classes was asked to answer four questions on a piece of paper: their age group, gender, marital status of their parents, and whether they were interested in participating in the study. Those who met the criteria and wanted to participate were phoned back.

Response rates varied by the method of solicitation and the number of cells requiring participants. In five separate upper year psychology courses at Simon Fraser University, 365 students were approached to participate. Only 19 agreed to participate; a response rate of 5.2%. At Douglas College, where students were given time to complete the questionnaires within class time, the response rate increased. Eleven classes of approximately 25 students were canvassed. Ninety-four students agreed to participate; approximately 34% of the 275 students.

In the second round of soliciting participants from upper year psychology classes at Simon Fraser University, six classes were approached, with an enrolment of about 208 people. Twenty-four percent (50 out of 208) were interested in participating, although only 2.9 percent (6) fell within the separated/divorced or male intact groups that were required. In these classes, twenty-two percent of the students approached (45 out of 208) came from families in which their parents had separated/divorced more than three years ago. Only two percent of the students (4) had parents whose marriage had dissolved within the last three years. Thus, in upper year psychology courses at least, there was a very low base rate of young adults who met the criteria for the separated/divorced group. Statistics from the participant pool were unavailable.

Originally, every second participant from the separated/divorced group was given

the opportunity to schedule appointments for an audiotaped interview with the investigator. After six months of data collection, it was clear that the participation rate for men was much lower than for women. Thus, from that point forward, every male participant from a separated/divorced family was asked if he wanted to be interviewed. After nine months, the same policy was applied to female participants. In all, 26 women and eight men from separated/divorced families were interviewed. Full written informed consent was obtained prior to beginning each interview (See Appendix E). In addition, the original criteria that the separation or divorce must have occurred within the past three years was relaxed after three months of data collection to allow young adults whose parents separated or divorced within the last four years to participate in the study. In all, three female and three male participants fit the relaxed criterion.

## QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The first hypothesis stated that contact between fathers and daughters post-divorce would be less than contact between mothers and daughters post-divorce<sup>1</sup>. For the intact group, it was predicted that the difference in contact between fathers and daughters and mothers and daughters would be negligible. Contact was operationalized three different ways: by phone, letter and visits. Respondents were asked, "How much contact per week (phone, letter writing, or in person) do you have with your parents?" Respondents were asked to fill in the number of contacts per week for phone, letters and visits, as well as the length of contact, in number of minutes, pages, or number of hours, respectively (See Appendix C). As well, respondents were asked what their living arrangements were, and if they lived more than one hour away from their parents.

Fifty-four respondents did not live with their parents. A chi square analysis was done to determine the degree of association between the marital status of parents and the number of daughters living apart from their families. Thirty-one daughters (34%) from the intact group and 23 (46%) daughters from the separated/divorced group were living apart from their parents. The chi square was not significant.

The first hypothesis was tested by means of the Wilcoxon signed-ranks test, the nonparametric alternative to a t-test for related samples (Siegel & Castellan, 1988). Only

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<sup>1</sup> As the number of male participants in the study was small, the quantitative analysis includes only the data from the female participants.



those daughters who lived away from their parents were included in this analysis. Two sets of six Wilcoxon signed-ranks tests were performed. In the first set, frequency of phone calls, letters and visits with mother and father were compared for both groups. The medians, minimum and maximum values, and values at the first and third quartile are shown in Tables 3 and 4. Only one of these comparisons was significant. Specifically, daughters in the separated/divorced group phoned their mothers significantly more often than they phoned their fathers ( $z = 3.77, p < .0002$ ). Thus, the hypothesis was partially supported.

**Table 3**

**Summary Statistics for Number of Phone Calls, Letters, and Visits with Mothers and Fathers - Separated/Divorced Group**

Frequency of Contact*		Minimum	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	Maximum
Phone**	Mothers	.23	1.0	3.0	6.0	14.0
(N = 21)	Fathers	0	.29	.85	1.0	3.0
Letters	Mothers	0	0	0	12	52
(N = 19)	Fathers	0	0	0	2	156
Visits	Mothers	0	2	24	62	156
(N = 21)	Fathers	0	1.5	10	44	104

\*Frequencies were reported in number of phone calls per week, number of letters per year, and number of visits per year. \*\* $p < .0002$

**Table 4**

**Summary Statistics for Number of Phone Calls, Letters, and Visits with Mothers and Fathers - Intact Group**

Frequency of Contact*		Minimum	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	Maximum
Phone**	Mothers	.23	.69	1.04	2.0	7.02
(N = 29)	Fathers	0	.46	1.0	2.0	7.02
Letters	Mothers	0	0	2.0	12.0	60.0
(N = 28)	Fathers	0	0	0	3.0	30.0
Visits	Mothers	0	2.0	5.8	24.0	365.0
(N = 28)	Fathers	0	2.0	5.8	24.0	365.0

\*Frequencies were reported in number of phone calls per week, number of letters per year, and number of visits per year.

The second set of six Wilcoxon signed-ranks test compared length of phone calls, letters, and visits with mother and father for both groups. The medians, minimum and maximum values, and the first and third quartile values are shown in Table 5 and 6. Only one of these comparisons was significant. Specifically, daughters from intact families talked to their mothers on the phone longer than their fathers ( $z = -3.37$ ,  $p < .0008$ ). This finding did not support the hypothesis.

**Table 5**

**Summary Statistics for Length of Phone Calls, Letters, and Visits with Mothers  
and Fathers in the Separated/Divorced Group**

Length of Contact*		Minimum	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	Maximum
Phone (N = 21)	Mothers	5.0	10.0	15.0	30.0	60.0
	Fathers	2.0	8.5	10.0	15.0	90.0
Letters (N = 4)	Mothers	1.0	1.25	2.5	3.4	3.5
	Fathers	1.5	1.6	2.0	2.8	3.0
Visits (N = 18)	Mothers	.75	3.0	6.5	54.0	1440.0
	Fathers	1.0	2.8	6.5	210.0	480.0

\*Length of contact was reported as average numbers of minutes per phone call, pages per letter, and hours per visit.

Thus, in terms of frequency of phone contact, the hypothesis that daughters from the separated/divorced group have more contact with their mothers than their fathers after the divorce, was supported. Although there was no difference in the length of phone calls to mother and father in the separated/divorced group, there was in the intact group, with daughters talking longer to their mothers than their fathers. This did not support the hypothesis. No other differences in frequency or length of contact were found.

**Table 6**

**Summary Statistics for Number of Phone Calls, Letters and Visits with Mothers  
and Fathers - Intact Group**

Length of Contact*		Minimum	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	Maximum
(N = 28)**	Phone Mothers	5.0	10.6	20.0	28.8	60.0
	Fathers	2.0	6.3	10.0	15.0	40.0
(N = 11)	Letters Mothers	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.5	3.0
	Fathers	.5	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.5
(N = 25)	Visits Mothers	.5	48.0	72.0	108.0	1440.0
	Fathers	.25	8.0	48.0	96.0	1440.0

\*Length of contact was reported as average numbers of minutes per phone call, pages per letter, and hours per visit.

\*\*p < .0008

The second hypothesis was that daughters would feel closer to their mothers than fathers prior to the divorce. In the intact group, it was predicted that daughters would feel closer to their mothers than fathers for the comparable time period, that is, during the past two to three years. Closeness to parents was measured retrospectively, with the following 9-point Likert style questions: "Prior to the separation/divorce, how close were you to your mother (father)?" and for the intact group, "How close were you to your mother (father) two to three years ago?" This hypothesis was tested by a 2 X 2 Repeated Measures ANOVA. The independent between-groups variable was group

status (intact vs. separated or divorced). The within-subjects variable was parent (mother vs. father). Means and standard deviations are shown in Table 7. A significant within-subject effect of parent was found, such that daughters, regardless of their parents' marital status, were closer to their mothers than fathers ( $F(1,140) = 47.25, p < .0001$ ). The partial eta squared statistic was .252, indicating a large effect size. Neither the main effect for group nor the interaction between group and parent was significant. The hypothesis was supported.

**Table 7**

**Means and Standard Deviations for Closeness to Mother and Father by Group**

	CLOSE TO MOM		CLOSE TO DAD	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
INTACT (92)	6.33	1.78	4.99	2.07
SEP/DIV (50)	6.52	2.06	4.72	2.16

Because of the debate in the literature about the relative importance of conflict and group status in explaining divorce outcomes, the relationship between conflict and group status was examined. Conflict was measured by the 9-point Likert-type question, "In general, how frequently was there conflict in your parents' marriage before the separation and divorce?"; and for the intact group, "How frequently is there conflict in your parents' marriage?" Although the time frame in the conflict questions is not exactly the same, it was decided that the amount of conflict from three years ago to the present in the intact group was unlikely to be different enough to invalidate the comparison. The

point biserial correlation between group and conflict was  $r = .40$ ,  $p < .0001$ , indicating that they are significantly related, but not identical. An independent groups t-test was performed comparing perceived conflict in separated/divorced and intact families. See Table 8 for means and standard deviations. A significant difference between the means was found ( $t(140) = -5.23$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) such that daughters in the separated or divorced group perceived significantly more parental conflict than those in the intact group. The effect size, corrected for sample size (Hedges & Becker, 1986), was large, with  $d = -.913$ .

**Table 8**

**Means and Standard Deviations of Conflict by Group**

	MEAN	S.D.
INTACT (92)	4.98	2.06
SEP/DIV (50)	6.88	2.09

To further investigate the relationship between conflict, group status, and closeness to parents, two multiple regressions were done, with group and conflict entered simultaneously. When the dependent variables closeness to mom and closeness to dad were regressed on conflict and group, there was no linear relationship found between the variables. This test, as with all the post hoc tests, was subject to Bonferroni correction for familywise error. Each variable was defined as its own family.

Finally, the relationship between group and conflict was investigated again. Williams-Hotelling significance tests were performed on the correlations between the

variables conflict and closeness, and group and closeness, for both mothers and fathers, to determine if the correlations are significantly different from each other. See Table 9 for these correlations. The difference for both sets of correlations was nonsignificant.

**Table 9**

**Correlations between Conflict, Group and Closeness for Mothers and Fathers**

	Closeness	
	Father	Mother
Conflict	-.18	.03
Group	-.06	.05

The third hypothesis stated that daughters would be angrier at their fathers than mothers post-divorce. For the intact group, it was hypothesized that there would be a negligible difference in the amount of anger daughters felt toward their mothers and fathers. Anger was measured for both groups with the 9-point Likert-type question, "To what extent are you angry with your mother (father)?" This hypothesis was tested by a 2 X 2 Repeated Measures ANOVA. The independent between-groups variable was group status (intact vs. separated or divorced). The within-subjects variable was parent (mother vs. father). Means and standard deviations are shown in Table 10 below.

**Table 10****Means and Standard Deviations for Anger at Parent by Group**

	Angry at Mom		Angry at Dad	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
INTACT (92)	3.22	2.03	4.10	2.47
SEP/DIV (50)	3.36	2.64	5.2	2.68

There was a significant within-subjects effect for parents, such that all daughters, regardless of separated/divorced or intact status, were angrier at their fathers than mothers ( $F(1, 140) = 24.14, p < .0001$ ). The partial eta squared statistic was .147, indicating a moderate effect size. Both the main effect for group and the interaction between group status and parents were in the expected direction, but not significant. Thus, the hypothesis was partially supported.

To examine the possible relationship between group status, conflict and anger at parents, multiple regression analyses were done, with anger at mom and dad regressed on the independent variables group and conflict. Conflict and group were entered simultaneously into the regression. No linear relationship was found between the independent variables and anger at mother. However, there was a significant linear relationship found between the independent variables and anger at father ( $R^2 = .13, p < .0001$ ). The variable conflict, with group partialled out, was found to significantly increase the proportion of variance accounted for by the model. See Table 11 for the standardized regression coefficients (Beta) and the intercept.



**Table 11.****Simultaneous Regression of Anger at Dad on Conflict and Group**

	Anger at Dad (DV)	Beta
Group		.07
Conflict		.33*
Intercept	2.71	
R <sup>2</sup>	.13	

\*  $p < .0002$ 

To further investigate the relationship between conflict and group relative to the dependent variables anger at mother and father, Williams-Hotelling t-tests were done on the correlations. The correlations are shown in Table 12. It was found that the difference between correlations between group and anger at mom, and conflict and anger at mom, was nonsignificant. Similarly, the difference between correlations between group and anger at dad, and conflict and anger at dad, was nonsignificant.

**Table 12****Correlations between Group and Anger, and Conflict and Anger, for Mothers and Fathers**

	Anger at Mother	Anger at Father
Conflict	.11	.35
Group	.03	.20

The fourth hypothesis was that the quality of the father-daughter relationship

would deteriorate more than the mother-daughter relationship post-divorce. The difference in the quality of the father-daughter relationship in the intact group over approximately the same period of time was hypothesized to be negligible. Two measures of change in relationship quality were used to test this hypothesis, the QRI and Likert-type questions. Turning first to the results with the QRI, participants were asked to complete the QRI for the mother and father twice. In the separated/divorced group they filled it out describing both relationships at present and prior to the separation/divorce. In the intact group participants filled out the QRI describing relationships with both parents now, and two to three years ago. In these analyses the change scores for each subscale were used. Means and standard deviations are given in Table 13.

Three 2 X 2 Repeated Measures ANOVAS were conducted, one for each QRI subscale. The between groups variable was group status (intact vs. separated/divorced) and the within-group repeated variable was parent (mother vs. father). None of the main effects nor the interactions were significant. Although none of the interactions were significant, the means were in the predicted direction. That is, unlike mothers and fathers in the intact group and mothers in the separated/divorced group, fathers in the separated/divorced group experienced less reduction in conflict with their daughters after the divorce. Similarly, fathers from the separated/divorced group experienced a reduction in depth of relationship with their daughters unlike the other three groups that experienced increased depth. In terms of support, fathers experienced less positive change in their relationships with their daughters after divorce compared to the other

three groups.

**Table 13**

**Means and Standard Deviations for QRI Change Scores for Mothers and Fathers**

**by Group**

	Intact Group (N = 92)			
	Change (+/-) in Quality of Relationship with Mom		Change (+/-) in Quality of Relationship with Dad	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
	Support	.74	3.21	1.08
Conflict	-1.83	5.87	-1.54	6.35
Depth	.87	2.50	.74	3.38
	Separated or Divorced Group (N = 50)			
	Change (+/-) in Quality of Relationship with Mom		Change (+/-) in Quality of Relationship with Dad	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
	Support	1.12	3.60	.26
Conflict	-1.60	6.38	-.42	8.96
Depth	.72	3.57	-.38	4.43

In a further attempt to determine the relative effect of group and conflict on QRI scores, three multivariate regressions were done for mother and three multivariate regressions were done for father, with the independent variables conflict and group entered simultaneously. The criterion variables were difference scores between time

one and time two, for support, conflict and depth subscales, respectively. No linear relationship was found between conflict and group, and mother-daughter and father-daughter relationships as defined by the QRI support, conflict and depth subscales.

Finally, correlations between group status (divorced or intact) and the difference between time one and time two on the support, conflict and depth subscales of the QRI were done for both mother and father. Similarly, correlations between perceived parental conflict and the support, conflict and depth subscales of the QRI were done for mother and father. These correlations are shown in Table 14. Then, six Williams-Hotelling *t*-tests were done to test the differences between the QRI correlations with group status and the QRI correlations with conflict, for both mother and father. It is important to note that the conflict subscale in the QRI refers to reported conflict between parent and child whereas the independent variable conflict refers to the amount of perceived conflict in the parents' marriage. None of the differences between the six sets of correlations was significant.

**Table 14**

**Bivariate Correlations between Group, Conflict, and Difference Scores for QRI Subscales, for Mother and Father**

	QRI					
	Mother			Father		
	Support	Conflict	Depth	Support	Conflict	Depth
Group	.05	.02	-.02	-.09	.07	-.14
Conflict	-.06	-.01	-.10	.04	-.05	.02

Next, the change in quality of relationship with parents was analyzed using the Likert questions. In the intact group the question was, "To what extent has the quality of your relationship with your mother (father) changed in the past three years?" In the separated/divorced group, the question was, "To what extent has the quality of your relationship with your mother (father) changed since the separation/divorce?" Means and standard deviations for the Likert question are shown in Table 15.

**Table 15**

**Means and Standard Deviations for Change in Quality of Parent-Daughter**

**Relationship (Likert) by Group**

	Relationship with Mom (Likert)		Relationship with Dad (Likert)	
	Means	S.D.	Means(n)	S.D.
Intact (92)	6.4	1.94	5.6	1.99
Sep/Div (50)	6.1	1.77	5.0	2.20

A 2 X 2 Repeated Measures ANOVA with group (intact vs. separated/divorced) as the between variable and parent (mother vs. father) as the within variable was performed. The main effect for group was significant such that for both mothers and fathers, the separated/divorced group reported less positive change in relationship quality than the intact group ( $F(1, 140)=3.90, p < .05$ ). The partial eta squared statistic was .027, indicating a small effect size. There was also a significant main effect for parent. For both intact and separated/divorced groups, daughters reported more positive change in relationship quality with mothers than with fathers ( $F(1, 140)=15.45, p < .0001$ ). The

partial eta squared statistic was .099, indicating a modest effect size. The group by parent interaction was nonsignificant. Thus, when quality of relationship was measured with the Likert-type questions, there was limited support for the hypothesis.

To investigate the relationship between conflict and group for the Likert questions, two multiple regressions were performed, regressing change in quality of relationship (Likert) on the predictor variables conflict and group. No linear relationship was found between conflict and group, and change in quality of relationship with mother or father.

Finally, two Williams-Hotelling  $t$ -tests were done on the group and change in quality of relationship, and conflict and change in quality of relationship correlations for both parents. These correlations are shown in Table 16. Both differences between the correlations were found to be nonsignificant.

**Table 16**

**Correlations between Group, Conflict, and Change in Quality of Relationship (Likert) for Mother and Father**

	Quality of Relationship	
	Mother	Father
Group	-.09	-.15
Parental Conflict	-.05	-.15

Correlations between change scores for the QRI subscales and the Likert change in quality of relationship questions were determined. These correlations are

shown in Table 17.

**Table 17**

**Bivariate Correlations between QRI subscales and Likert questions re: Change in Quality of Daughter - Parent Relationship.**

	Mother				Father			
	Sup.	Con.	Depth	Likert	Sup.	Con.	Depth	Likert
Mom Support.	1.00	-.57*	.62*	.49*	.23	-.16	.11	.07
Mom Conflict		1.00	-.48*	-.50*	-.25	.16	-.16	.17
Mom Depth			1.00	.48*	.09	-.03	.11	-.05
Mom Likert				1.00	.04	.05	.03	.04
Dad Support					1.00	-.69*	.09	.44*
Dad Conflict						1.00	-.03	-.51*
Dad Depth							1.00	.47*
Dad Likert								1.00

\* $p < .0001$

As can be seen in Table 17 the correlations among the different measures for mothers (upper triangle) were significant. With the exception of the QRI depth scale, the correlations among the different measures for fathers (lower triangle) were also significant. All of the correlations across parents, e.g., QRI support mother with QRI support father, were insignificant. Thus in general, the results support the idea that

quality of relationship can be measured separately for mother and father. Furthermore, QRI and Likert measures were significantly correlated for each parent.

The fifth hypothesis was that daughters from the separated/divorced group would have less optimism about their own future marriage than daughters from intact families. Optimism about marriage was measured with two Likert-type questions with four response possibilities. The response to the first question, "How likely is it that you will get married?", was summed with the response to the second question, "How likely is it you will have a successful marriage?" Means and standard deviations are shown in Table 18.

**Table 18**

**Means and Standard Deviations for Optimism for Marriage by Group**

	Means	S.D.
Intact (N=91)	5.96	1.43
Separated/Divorced (N=49)	5.35	1.67

An independent samples t-test found a significant difference between the mean of the separated/divorced and intact group. The hypothesis was supported, as women from the separated/divorced group were less optimistic about their own marriage than women from the intact group,  $t(138)=2.31, p<.023$ . The effect size was  $d=.433$ , indicating a medium effect size.

In a further attempt to determine the relative effect of conflict and group, a multiple regression analysis was done, with the predictor variables conflict and group



entered simultaneously into the model, and optimism about marriage as the criterion variable. No significant relationship between conflict and group, and optimism about marriage, was found.

The Williams-Hotelling  $t$ -test was done on the two correlations: group and optimism about marriage, and conflict and optimism about marriage, that are shown in Table 19. There was no significant difference between the correlations.

**Table 19**

**Correlations between Group, Conflict, and Optimism for Marriage**

	Optimism Marriage
Group	-.19
Parental Conflict	-.19

Hypothesis number six predicted that there would be a negligible difference in optimism about future love relationships in the separated/divorced and intact groups. Optimism about love relationships was measured with two Likert-type questions with four response possibilities. The response to the first question, "How confident are you that you will have successful love relationships in the future?", was summed with the response to the second question, "In general, how optimistic do you feel about the success of your love relationships in the future?" Means and standard deviations are shown in Table 20. Contrary to the hypothesis, an independent samples  $t$ -test found a significant difference between the groups, such that women from the separated/divorced group were less optimistic about their future love relationships than women from intact

families  $t(139)=2.45, p<.016$ . The effect size was  $d=.427$ , indicating a medium effect size.

**Table 20**

**Means and Standard Deviations for Optimism about Love Relationships by Group**

	Means	S.D.
Intact (N=91)	5.82	1.62
Separated/Divorced (N=50)	5.1	1.79

In a post-hoc attempt to determine the relative effects of conflict and group on optimism about love relationships, a multiple regression analysis was done, with the predictor variables group and conflict entered into the model simultaneously. There was no significant linear relationship found between conflict and group, and optimism about love relationships.

The Williams-Hotelling  $t$ -test for the difference between the correlations between group and optimism about love relationships, and conflict and optimism about love relationships, was nonsignificant. See Table 21.

**Table 21**

**Correlations between Group, Conflict, and Optimism about Love Relationships**

	Optimism Relationships
Group	-.20
Conflict	-.16

## QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Thirty-five people (27 women, 8 men) were interviewed individually, using the semi-structured interview format outlined in Appendix D. Written permission was received prior to the interview to audiotape the interview. Interviews ranged in time from 20 minutes to two hours, averaging about 50 minutes. Interviewees were reminded that they had the right to conclude the interview at any time, or refuse to answer any questions.

### Coding the Interviews

The first draft of the coding manual was made by listening to 10 of the tapes. The first three responses for each question were coded. As well, any other codes which appeared to be necessary were added. For instance, for the question about the effect of the separation/divorce on school work the code "no" was included in the coding manual to account for those people whose school work was unaffected by the divorce, even though this response was not mentioned in any of the 10 tapes. When the initial coding manual was complete, the principal researcher coded all of the interviews. Additional codes were added to the list as they were encountered while listening to the rest of the tapes. When the principal researcher had coded all of the interviews, a second rater coded half of them to determine inter-rater reliability. Every other interview was coded. The initial interview to be re-coded was decided with the toss of a coin. When the second rater had coded half of the interviews, the codes were collapsed, to combine

similar codes. The principal researcher, her supervisor, and five graduate students in psychology collapsed the categories individually. The final coding manual is a combination of these results, and the principal researcher's understanding of the context in which the comments were made (See Appendix F).

To determine inter-rater reliabilities for each question of the interview, a statistic called Hamming's Distance, was computed. Hamming's Distance is a measure of disagreement between raters. Each rater rates the first three responses given by the interviewee. The answers that do not match between the raters are summed, and converted into a reliability statistic. This reliability statistic is a generalized intraclass correlation whose general form is  $r=1-d/d^*$ , where  $d$  is a measure of the amount of inter-rater disagreement, and  $d^*$  is a baseline measure of the amount of disagreement one would expect to find by chance if all the ratings were unrelated (R. Koopman, personal communication, April 18, 1997). In general, the reliabilities were quite high with only 6 out of 30 estimates below .7. The lowest reliability estimate was .407 for adult children's estimates of their fathers' financial status. Because the respondents were unsure of the answer to the question, their answers were vague and more difficult to code reliably. For each instance of disagreement, the principal researcher and the second coder listened to the audiotape again, discussed the discrepancy, and agreed upon new codes. See Appendix G for the reliability estimates for each question of the interview.

#### Anticipation of Divorce

The interview began by asking the participants if they had anticipated the divorce. Of the 27 women that were interviewed, 19 (70%) anticipated their parents'

divorce; four women (15%) did not anticipate the divorce, and four (15%) said they both anticipated and were shocked by the divorce. The participants gave a number of different reasons why they anticipated the divorce<sup>2</sup>. Their reasons included, because their parents fought (44.4%), had an obviously poor marriage (11.1%), or it was common knowledge in the family (11.1%). For those who did not anticipate the divorce, descriptions included having arrived home to find their father gone (7.4%), or that they were completely shocked (7.4%). Another 7.4% of the interviewees detailed surprise at the divorce because their parents never fought in front of them. Among those who both anticipated and were shocked, the most common response (14.8%) was similar to the following: "I knew things could have been better but I never thought they'd split." See Appendix F for the breakdown of responses in more detail.

Because whether the daughters had anticipated the divorce seemed an important qualitative difference, the two groups were compared on several of the quantitative variables that showed differences in the previous chapter, such as optimism about future relationships and marriage, and anger at mother and father. The means, standard deviations and effect sizes are shown in Table 22. After Bonferroni corrections for familywise error, only anger at mother was significant ( $t(21)=3.06, p<.006$ ). The effect sizes for anger at mother, anger at father and optimism about marriage were large. Interestingly, the daughters who anticipated the divorce were significantly more angry at their mothers than daughters who did not anticipate the divorce. Although not significant,

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise stated, percentages reflect the percent of interviewees and may add up to more than 100% because the first three responses of each interviewee were coded.

daughters who anticipated the divorce were also less angry at their fathers and less optimistic about future marriages and relationships.

**Table 22**

**Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes for Optimism about Love and Marriage, Anger at Mom and Dad for Daughters, by Anticipation of Divorce**

	Anticipated (N = 19)		Not Anticipated (N = 4)		d
	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.	
Optimism Love	4.68	1.89	5.00	2.71	.15
Optimism Marriage	4.58	1.84	6.25	.96	.93
Anger at Dad	4.26	2.73	7.75	2.50	1.25
Anger at Mom*	3.68	2.85	1.5	.58	-.79

\*  $p < .006$

**Reasons for Divorce**

Women were asked for their opinion of the reasons for the divorce, as they perceived it, from the point of view of their mother, father, and themselves. From the daughters' point of view, lack of common interests (19.2%), issues regarding children (11.5%), ending boredom and unhappiness (15.4%), and because father had an affair

(11.5%) were common responses. Other reasons put forth were straightforward blame of father (11.5%), communication problems (7.7%), and either parent doing something for himself or herself (7.7%).

Daughters perceived that their mothers saw the reasons for the divorce in ways that were similar to their own point of view. For example, mothers were reported to believe that lack of common interests (15.4%), issues regarding children (19.2%), communication problems (15.4%), and doing something for oneself (11.5%) were key reasons for the divorce. Mothers were also seen to believe that the father having an affair (11.5%), either spouse ending boredom and unhappiness (7.4%), and straightforward blame of the father (11.5%) were reasons for the divorce.

Fathers were perceived by daughters to have different understandings of the reasons for the divorce. From the daughters' point of view, fathers often did not know why the divorce had occurred (26.9%; although some of this response is the daughters not knowing what the fathers thought, mostly this answer reflects the daughters' perception that the father had no idea). Fathers were also perceived to be more blaming of their spouse than mothers for the divorce (19.2%), and were not seen to endorse either communication problems or doing something for oneself as a reason for the divorce. The following is a quotation taken from an interview that demonstrates some of the issues described above:

From my mom's point of view...well we're grown up now...so there's really no point to ...keep it together anymore...because if they really had nothing in common it really came out after we moved out...I don't know what my dad thought really...he's just clueless...he figured he was doing the best job he could ...raising the kids and bringing the bread home...And me...I don't know...she saw the light...It was pointless. Why should she be unhappy?(Respondent #36)

Quite a different situation was described in the following quotation:

As I see it...my dad's an alcoholic, my mom definitely isn't...dad was having an affair with his secretary so those are the two key reasons that I see...Dad doesn't see himself as an alcoholic...Dad blames mom...Dad thinks that Mom was this horrible person who drove him away and that we didn't love him anymore... Mom's whole life basically revolved around Dad and she was almost hitting 50 and decided it was time to have a life and so do things also. (Respondent # 236)

### Relationships with Parents

There were several questions in the interview that queried the relationship between child and parent before and after the separation or divorce. Clearly, prior to the divorce, the relationship between mothers and daughters was better than the relationship between fathers and daughters. For example, 66.6% and 55.5% of daughters indicated that their relationships with their mothers were positive or neutral, respectively. Examples of neutral responses are: "Not close but we got along", or "Not close but we did things together". In contrast, fewer daughters indicated positive (40.7%) and neutral (18.5%) responses regarding their relationships with their fathers than with their mothers. On the negative end of the spectrum, fully 92.5% of daughters endorsed negative responses about the father-daughter relationship, compared to 25.0% who endorsed negative responses regarding the mother-daughter relationship. Also, daughters complained about emotional, physical, or sexual abuse from their fathers (14.8%), but did not indicate it was an issue with their mothers. Finally, when there were positive comments made about the relationship between father and daughter, they tended to be more general than the comments made about the mother-daughter relationship. For example, the father-daughter relationship was described as "pretty



good" or "generally good" whereas the mother-daughter relationship was described with general comments as well as specifics such as "easy to talk to" or "very close".

When asked about their relationships with their parents after the separation or divorce, daughters talked about improved communication with both parents, although with greater frequency about their mothers (Mom 33.3%, Dad 18.5%). Eleven point one percent of the interviewees indicated general improvement in the relationship with both parents. Also, after divorce more effort was made in relationships, especially with mother-daughter relationships (11.1%), compared to father-daughter relationships (3.7%). Daughters specifically talked about becoming friends with their mothers (14.8%), but did not talk about becoming friends with their fathers. However, some daughters did talk about becoming closer to their fathers (7.4%). Eighteen point five percent of daughters gave neutral responses about their relationships with their mothers. An example from the interviews is, "...She's dependent on me but she's always there for me too." Regarding the relationship with their dads, 14.8% of daughters gave neutral responses, such as, "(We have a ) better relationship by email than it would be in person."

There are striking differences in the way daughters talked about the negative changes in their relationships with their mothers and fathers. Out of the 27 women interviewed, six made comments about negative changes in their relationships with their mothers, most often mixed in with positive comments. The following quotation is an example of such a mixed answer:

You realize how great a mom you had later in life...My relationship now with my mom, actually, in a way its a little bit worse because its like twenty years of

hating my dad and now its like well mom, you totally conditioned us to hate him...Now it is better because its more open, but its more open about things I'm upset about (Respondent #249).

Although a similar number of women (8) made comments about negative changes in their relationships with their fathers, their comments were usually made without the buffering effect of additional positive comments such as the following:

Yeah...its okay...I think he doesn't know what to say...so...we try to do activities together, like games or like going places ...cause he's not a talker...not at all. Its like pulling teeth getting him to talk. (Respondent # 36)

Furthermore, some women complained that their relationship was generally worse with their mothers (7.4% of the interviewees) and they spoke of more conflict with their mothers (11.1%), however, these negative comments paled when compared to what they said about the negative changes in their relationships with their fathers. Fully 22.2% of the interviewees indicated that daughters have no relationship with their fathers after the divorce, compared to 3.7% who said the same about the mothers. Also, 22.2% of the interviewees detailed poorer communication, or that they could not relate to him (11.1%), or that they lacked warm feelings for him (11.1%). None of these last three were even mentioned with regard to the mothers.

The following is a typical comment by a daughter about the way in which her relationship with her father changed:

We didn't have...a close relationship, but he would always help me with school and my marks and any problems I had...not necessarily personal problems, but with my achievements and everything like that...doing things...(Regarding current relationship) Well obviously I don't see him as much and when I do...I talk to him on the phone probably once every three weeks to a month and we don't have that much to say, just, you know, how are things going. ...and if I go over to see him, I just make him dinner, but we really don't talk about what's happened as

much as what's going on now and so its not that open. (Respondent # 28 )

In contrast, the following is a typical comment about the way in which a daughter's relationship with her mother has become closer:

We were pretty close...there's (sic) always subjects you never talk about ...like...sex....but...since the divorce we talk more on a friend and a confidante basis than we used to. Now its more like she's still my mom and she's still the one I always turn to but now ... we talk about other stuff that... stuff that you don't think you'll talk about with your mother. That's just...like I loved her but she was never someone I would confide everything into ...and now I see myself confiding more and more to her because I see that she's a mom but she's human too...you know, she goes through divorces, she does everything else and I guess I relate better to her now (Respondent # 78).

In addition to perceived changes in the relationships with parents, participants were also asked if they thought their parents had changed since the divorce. Daughters agreed that both mothers (14.8%) and fathers (14.8%) were doing new things. They also reported that both parents were calmer (Mom 7.4%, Dad 11.1%). Other positive changes were not the same for mothers and fathers. Whereas 18.5% of interviewees indicated that mothers were stronger, none of the fathers were perceived in that way. Similarly, 25.9% of the interviewees pointed to increased independence of the mothers, but only 7.4% of the interviewees expressed the same for the fathers. This may be because fathers were more independent from the beginning. Mothers were described as more carefree (11.1%), but none of the fathers were spoken of in this way. In terms of negative changes in the parents, daughters perceived that both mothers (11.1%) and fathers (14.8%) had more dysphoric emotions such as being hurt, cynical or hardened. The largest difference in the way daughters described their mothers and fathers was in the "no change/don't know" variable. Twenty-two point two percent of the interviewees

signified that daughters didn't know if their father had changed because they hadn't seen much of them. Only 3.7% of those interviewed experienced the same distance with their mothers. Finally, 7.4% of the daughters described fathers as losing a part of themselves, and another 7.4% characterized fathers as experiencing negative personality changes. None of the daughters described mothers in these ways. Thus, from the daughters' point of view, the father-daughter relationship started out in second place and deteriorated with the divorce.

When asked if they were angry at their mother or father, the majority of the women answered yes in both cases. The reasons for anger at fathers were many and varied. Of the total number of interviewees, 30.8% denied anger at father, but fully 92.2% acknowledged it. One respondent said she was both angry and not angry at her father. Five women listed more than one reason that they were angry with their father. Specific reasons daughters gave for anger at fathers included: for drinking (11.5%), for leaving (7.7%), for ignoring my needs (11.5%), for his behaviour (7.7%), for his character (7.7%), for his behaviour toward mom (7.7%), for arguing (11.5%), and because he's (still) not happy (7.7%). Regarding mothers, of the total number of interviewees, 44.4% denied anger, although 70.3% expressed anger. Some of the reasons were the same complaints leveled at fathers, such as anger because of her character (11.1%) or anger because of her behaviour with Dad (7.4%). The most common reason for being angry with mothers was for not moving on (18.5%). Another reason for anger unique to mothers was the complaint that mothers interfered in the daughters' relationships with their fathers (7.7%). Anger was the emotion that described

the feelings of most of the women best. However, 10 women said that other feelings described their experience better. Of these 10 women, 20% of the women said that they felt relief or gladness. Another 20% explained that they felt upset. Indifference or confusion was endorsed by a further 20%.

Given these results about mother-daughter and father-daughter relationships, it is not surprising that 40.7% of daughters expressed loyalty to their mothers first, without it being an issue. Another 18.5% of interviewees reported loyalty to mother over father with some discomfort (18.5%). In contrast, only 3.7% of the interviewees detailed a first loyalty to father, and even that loyalty was strained with discomfort. Thirty-three percent of daughters reported that they straddled the fence between the two parents, saying they were equally loyal to both. Eleven point one percent described being trapped in the middle between the parents, as the following quotation documents:

Sometimes...it is (loyalty is an issue for me) because if I stick up for my mom then my dad will get really upset. But then I see both sides...obviously I do. And, if I talk to my mom about my dad then she'll get upset because she keeps saying well he's the one who left you know, you shouldn't be sticking up for him...but I see...his predicament, and I see Mom's, so its...hard because I feel torn between the two. Its not like I'm taking sides, I'm just trying to understand." (Respondent # 28)

Closely connected to loyalty in the minds of many of the women was responsibility. The question asked was, "Do you feel a sense of responsibility towards your parents?" One third (33.3%) of the daughters indicated that they did not feel responsible for their parents. However, responsibility to both parents was reported in 7.4% of the daughters. Most of the time, however, daughters made clear what specific areas for which they felt responsible. For example, 14.8% of the interviewees outlined

feeling emotionally responsible to the mothers, whereas another 11.1% detailed feeling responsible to their mother because of all she had done for them. Finally, 7.4% of the interviewees indicated that daughters felt responsible to their mothers for helping with household tasks. An additional 14.8% of interviewees said that they felt responsibility for one parent but not the other.

In a related vein, daughters were asked in what way they helped their parents, if at all. Fifty percent of daughters said that they do not help their fathers at all, compared to 15.4% who indicated they do not help their mothers. It appears that a typical way for daughters to help their parents is through emotional support, although mothers are helped more frequently in this way (53.4%) than fathers (26.9%). Another way to help is by doing household tasks. Seven point five percent and 26.9% of daughters said that they helped their father and mother in this way, respectively. Almost a third of the interviewees (32%) detailed that the way they helped their parents had not changed since the divorce. However, another third (32%) of the interviewees indicated that daughters help both parents more now. Although 16% of daughters indicated that they were likely to help their mothers more now, none of them indicated that they were likely to help their fathers more now.

#### Perceptions of Family and Future Relationships

Given the strong feelings evidenced in the interviews, it is not surprising that for some their sense of family had changed. The next question, "Has your sense of who and what your family is, and what it means to you, changed since the divorce?", provided a myriad of answers. Fourteen point eight percent of daughters indicated that

the family felt more united through loss, whereas another 14.8% talked about the boundaries in their families changing so that they were looser, extended, more open, or "missing the glue". Daughters complained (11.1%) that they had lost the traditional family, and spoke about valuing their families more (11.1%). Finally, another 11.1% of interviewees indicated that the meaning of family had changed for the daughters because they no longer considered their father as part of the family. One woman spoke poignantly about realizing that her family was not as she had perceived it:

Maybe the nuclear family isn't all its cracked up to be because I lived in that and my family was miserable and we're a lot happier with it being different...it makes me look at relationships in maybe a more critical view...I can see more clearly for what it is...because what I might have thought it was...it ended up not being that...what I thought my family was ended up not being the truth. (Respondent #245)

Another woman talked about losing the nuclear family and what it meant to her:

I don't have the typical nuclear family anymore. Ya, the sense that I have a family at home has changed...the sense that I have my family together, the way it should be, the way I was so used to having it ...was a big big change...I'm more used to it now but...I used to sort of think...I don't have a family anymore...I don't have mom and dad living at home anymore...you always think that your mom and dad are never going to break up ever...its kind of an adjustment." (Respondent #78)

It may be that this change in the meaning of family for many of the women, echoes a similar change in the daughters' expectations for love relationships and marriage. When asked, "Has your parents' separation or divorce changed your expectations for your own future love relationships ", 44.4% of women said no. However, 14.8% acknowledged a general negativity toward relationships, as well as a mistrust of men (7.4%), and a belief that relationships don't last (7.4%). Women

delineated lessons they had learned that had changed their expectations, such as relationships are hard work (7.4%). Interviewees (18.5%) spoke of idiosyncratic lessons, such as learning from the parents' mistakes, and seeing love and marriage through a religious framework. Some women made no distinction between love relationships and marriage, such as the woman in the following quotation, who spoke of the way in which her expectations had changed:

I guess its made me a lot more bitter...in a way it scares me to get married...but I just know that I'd be more cautious in my future relationships...hold myself back...take it slow...Now I don't want to marry anyone for a long time. I want to make sure that I'm set as a person and that he's set as a person and we'll have our own lives and we'll be our own people so that when we're together we're not just two halves of one whole, but that we're two wholes together making our own unit...it sounds like a cliché but... I want to be sure...its really scary to know that things go in cycles...(Respondent #101)

With regard to marriage, the changes in expectations were clearer. First, the proportion of interviewees denying a change in expectation was half of that for love relationships (22.2%). This, in contrast to the quantitative data, indicates optimism about love relationships was less affected than optimism about marriage. Sixty-two point nine percent of women indicated that their expectations about marriage had changed for the worse. Another 11.1% said that they were not going to get married, and 11.1% feared that their own marriage would be doomed. In addition, 11.1% of the women stated that the possibility of divorce was more present in their minds, and that 11.1% of the interviewees felt anxious and cautious about marriage. Seven point four percent of women stated a mistrust of marriage. In terms of lessons learned, 14.8% of women cautioned to marry only when you are sure. Another 11.1% learned not to marry until



they were older. See Appendix F for examples of other answers to this question. One woman's quotation epitomizes the negative valence marriage took on for some of the participants:

I don't want one (a marriage)...for some reason I think as soon as I get married it will be over. It seems as long as you don't get married and stay living together you remain independent...you don't get hurt...you don't get that merging as one so then somehow when the separation happens it wouldn't be as bad...I'm pretty skeptical about the whole lifetime relationship thing...to me it seems...as much as I want it it seems so unattainable. (Respondent #215)

Another woman spoke of her new realization of the role of chance in finding a lifelong mate:

You can't expect anything... its more by chance...you can't make it happen... you can try to find the right person but you're not going to ...you're not going to run into them... you have no way of knowing... you can't meet someone and go well you're gonna be there for me you're not going to leave...you're not gonna treat me terribly...you don't know. (Respondent #226)

#### Perceptions of Self and Other

Perhaps part of this anxiety is connected to how the women have become aware that relationships and marriage require the cooperation of two people, not just the good intentions and best efforts of one. Thus, how they view people, and how they define human nature becomes important. The women in this interview were asked, "...What have you learned about human nature as a result of the divorce?" Of all the women who responded, 10.7% made positive, 78.5% made neutral, and 57.1% made negative comments. The positive comments were items like, "I tend to give people the benefit of the doubt," or, "People are generally nice." Of the neutral comments, 17.9% of the women said that it depended on the people or circumstances. Another 14.3% talked

about how relationships need work to succeed. However, 32% of the interviewees gave unique neutral responses. Examples of these idiosyncratic answers included: "I go by stereotypes", and, "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger". The most common of the negative responses was that everyone can be mean (14.3%). Another response endorsed by 10.7% of the interviewees was that anything can happen (this was meant in the sense that everything is unpredictable and therefore scary). Another common response was that people are untrustworthy and undependable (10.7%). Finally, one cluster of interviewees detailed people's negative character traits (7.1%) such as selfish or bitter. One particularly pithy comment about human nature was, "...you can't depend on people for anything. The biggest lesson (about my parents' divorce) is don't be dependent" (Respondent #244).

The women's concept of themselves also changed. Changes to self-concept were the most common responses to the question, "In what other ways has your parents' separation/divorce changed you?" Out of the total number of interviewees, 44.4% detailed positive changes, 44.4% spoke of neutral changes, and 33.3% acknowledged negative changes in themselves. Among the positive responses, the most commonly endorsed answer was greater independence (22.2%), although increased hardiness was also a popular response (11.1%). Finally, 7.4% of the interviewees included the comment that the women had increased emotional fluency. Another positive comment, repeated 11.1% of the women, was that women's friendships had improved. Of the neutral comments, 25.9% outlined an accelerated maturation process, where the women were forced to grow up faster than they would have if their

parents had stayed together. Another neutral cluster of comments centered on realizations that women had made about themselves (14.8%), such as "I'd rather be by myself than divorce" or "I realized I need both parents to back me up". Of the negative changes in self-concept, one of the common ones was feeling greater negativity toward people and things (14.8%). Seven point four percent of women acknowledged that they had difficulty trusting people. Finally, 7.4% of women commented on their lack of relationship with their fathers. For example, one woman said:

I get really sensitive sometimes...when I see a...man and his daughter... its upsetting, or when you're at a wedding and you see the bride dancing with her father...I wonder in the future if my dad is going to be around...I have no idea... (Respondent #115).

In addition to questions about how they thought they had changed, participants were asked to reflect on their most difficult transitions since their parents' separation or divorce. When asked, "What has been the most difficult transition since your parents' separation/divorce?", the women responded with very personal stories. This question provided such a wide variety of answers that they were hard to collapse into more general categories. Fully 37% of the women gave responses unique to their own situation. For example, answers ranged from, "I've become head of the household" to "my mother's new lifestyle; more partying". Despite the large number of unique responses, there were patterns. For instance, 18.5% of women stated that moving out of the family home was the most difficult transition. The following is a typical quotation regarding the issue:

Moving out of my house, that family house where all of us lived together...It was the house where I'd grown up with, you know, the whole family was together and

all of a sudden we had to ...go our separate ways... we weren't a whole family anymore...(Respondent # 206).

Seven point four percent of women spoke of the loss of the family as a whole unit.

Another type of difficult transition that was mentioned by 7.4% of women was watching their mothers' pain. Others had difficulty coping with their mothers' new partner (7.4%).

Another 11.1% of interviewees dealt with the difficult transition of poverty. Finally, 11.1% of women talked about their lack of relationship with their fathers.

Amidst the pain evident in the interviews, there was also discussion of positive results of the separation or divorce. In response to the question, "Has anything improved in your life since the separation/divorce?", 29.6% of the women detailed improvements in relationships with mothers, 14.8% in relationships with fathers, and 7.4% in relationships with both parents. Women stated clearly that their relationships with their parents were better because they were no longer triangulated with them (11.1%).

Twenty-two point two percent of interviewees said that something about themselves had improved, such as feeling more self-confident or more independent. In general terms, improvement was found because there was less conflict (14.8%) and because they were happier (7.4%).

### Practical Issues

Because so many families end up in dire financial circumstances after the breakup of the parents' marriage, a question about financial status was included in the interview. Interviewees were asked, "Since the separation/divorce, has the financial status of your family changed? How has it changed for your mother? How has it changed for your father? Has this had a direct impact on you?" Of the 26 responses to

this question, 46.2% recorded that mothers had less money. Women stated in 26.9% of responses that their mothers had more money, and in 19.2% that their mothers' financial status had not changed. Seven point seven percent of the responses recorded that the daughters did not know. For the fathers, daughters perceived in 40.7% of responses that their financial status had not changed. In 29.6% of the responses, women perceived that their fathers had less money, and in 14.8% that their fathers had more money. Fourteen point eight percent of the responses recorded that the daughters did not know. As for the financial impact on the women themselves, it was clear that parents did their utmost to provide for their children, as in almost half of the responses (46.2%), women said their financial status was unchanged. However, 34.9% of responses indicated that they had less money, and 7.7% showed they had more money. Eleven point five percent of the responses were missing data or a don't know answer.

It was argued that one of the possible indicators of trauma would be the interviewees' ability to cope with their school work after their parents' separation or divorce. Thus, they were asked, "Has the separation/divorce affected your schoolwork?" Twenty-six women (50%) stated that the separation or divorce did not affect their school work. Another seven women (26.9%) talked about the negative effect their parents' split had on their school work. One woman answered in the positive without elaborating, and two women (7.7%) said that their grades were better. A mixed result was the outcome for three women (11.5%). An example of a mixed result was the answer, "I study harder because I am afraid about security".

Overall, the women who were interviewed took the opportunity to share with the

researcher the sense they made out of this upsetting period in their lives. Although the majority of women anticipated the divorce, it remained a difficult transition in their lives. They perceived many different reasons for the divorce. Common themes in the interviews were the intimacy the women experienced with their mothers, and the more distant relationship they had with their fathers. In some cases, the deterioration of the relationship with fathers became so severe that there was little or no contact and warmth. Anger was a common feeling for the women, and it was directed at both parents, but more vehemently at the fathers.

Given their relationships with their parents, it was not surprising that daughters tended to be more loyal to their mothers, although the issues of responsibility and giving aid to their parents were less clear cut. Certainly, the meaning of family was changed for most of the women, and this may also have changed their sense of what the future would bring in their own love relationships and marriages. Women tended to be much more negative about marriages than love relationships. Indeed, the interviewees were generally more cautious and tentative about human nature. As well as their concept of others, their self-concept changed as a result of the separation and divorce, in both positive and negative ways. The most difficult transition for the women who were interviewed was often answered in unique ways that were hard to make generalizations about. However, despite the difficulties inherent in the divorce process, most of the women indicated that something, usually a relationship, had improved in their life since the divorce.

### Interviews with Sons

Eight men also participated in the semi-structured, audiotaped interview. Their data are considered to be pilot qualitative data due to the small number of men. Unlike the women's data, the men's data will be presented in absolute numbers. These numbers may sum to more than eight because the first three answers were coded for each question.

Of the eight men who were interviewed, half were surprised by their parents' break up, three were not surprised, and one both anticipated it and was shocked. Out of the 12 responses given, six documented surprise, five detailed anticipation, and one noted both anticipation of the divorce and shock when it happened. Compared to the female sample, this is a larger proportion of respondents who were surprised by their parents' divorce. Thus, a chi square analysis was done to investigate the association between gender and anticipation. The chi square analysis demonstrated that gender and anticipation were associated, as women were more likely to anticipate their parents' divorce than the men ( $X^2 (1, N = 30) = 4.34, p < .0435^3$ ). Although the number of men is too small to draw any firm conclusions, it supports the notion that sons were less aware than daughters of the problems in their parents' marriage prior to the break up.

Like the women who were interviewed, the sons were divided into two groups based on whether or not they anticipated their parents' divorce, and compared with the quantitative variables optimism about love relationships, optimism about marriage, and

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<sup>3</sup> This p value is exact, and is based on the fact that only one set of marginal values is fixed (son/daughter).

anger at mother and father. The means, standard deviations, and effect sizes are shown in Table 23. Although none of the comparisons was significant, the effect sizes for anger at mom and anger at dad were medium, whereas the effect sizes for optimism about love relationships and marriage were large. Interestingly, sons were angrier at their mothers when the separation/divorce was not anticipated, and angrier at their fathers when the separation/divorce was anticipated. This is the opposite finding from the daughters, who were angrier at their mothers when the separation/divorce was anticipated, and angrier at their fathers when the separation/divorce was not anticipated, although the sample size is so small that the comparison is highly speculative.

The sons saw similar reasons to the daughters for the end of their parents' marriage. The sons perceived that mothers believed that lack of common interests were to blame (3), as well as a way to end boredom and unhappiness (2). For the fathers, sons perceived that they, too, saw lack of common interests as a reason for the split (2), as well as a way to end boredom and unhappiness (2). Sons perceived as daughters did, that fathers blamed the mothers (2), but unlike the daughters, sons also blamed the mothers (2). Finally, just as the daughters suggested, some sons believed that fathers didn't know why the divorce had happened (2).

Just as daughters had better relationships with their mothers before the separation, so did the sons who were interviewed. Whereas nine positive responses were made about their relationships with their mothers before the separation or divorce, only three positive comments were made about their relationships with their fathers prior



**Table 23**

**Means, Standard Deviations, and Effect Sizes for Optimism about Love and Marriage, Anger at Mom and Dad for Sons, by Anticipation of Divorce**

	Anticipated (N = 3)		Not Anticipated (N = 4)		d
	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.	
Optimism Love	5.0	1.0	6.5	1.9	.79
Optimism Marriage	5.0	1.73	7.0	1.15	.85
Anger at Dad	7.7	1.53	6.25	2.21	-.62
Anger at Mom	2.0	1.0	2.75	1.71	.43

to the separation or divorce. The most common positive response about mothers was that "she was easy to talk to" (3), whereas the most common positive response about fathers was that the relationship was "pretty good" or "generally good" (2). On the negative end of the spectrum, eight negative responses were given about the sons' relationship with the father before the separation or divorce, but only four negative responses were given about the mother. The three most common negative responses

about fathers were: he was not close/distant (2), we couldn't talk/no heart to hearts (2), and he was rarely around/always working/uninvolved in my life (2). The negative comments about the sons' relationships with their mothers listed lots of conflict (1), a poor relationship (1), and lack of relationship with mom (2). The male respondents had six neutral responses about mom compared to three about dad. Examples include: not talking about feelings with mothers, and not feeling close but doing activities with the fathers. Also, the male respondents had two ambivalent responses about their fathers.

After the divorce, the pattern is similar. Compared to eight positive responses about the sons' relationship with their mothers there were six positive comments about the sons' relationships with their fathers. On the other end of the scale, the eight sons came up with 11 negative comments about their relationships with their fathers after the divorce compared to three negative comments about their relationships with mothers. The most common comment about the sons' relationships with their mothers was that the communication between son and mother had improved (4). The most common comment about sons' relationships with their fathers after the divorce was that the relationship got worse (5). See Appendix F for other specific responses.

When asked how their mother and father had changed, like the daughters, the sons commented on their mothers' new independence (2) and that they do new things for themselves (2). One young man, in clarifying the question, made a poignant statement that illustrated his confusion. He said, "(you mean) from whenever she was Mom to whatever she is now?" (Respondent #216) The most common response about how the father had changed was "no change", or "I don't know, I haven't seen him" (3),

again pointing out the deteriorating relationship between children and fathers.

The men answered the question about anger at their parents similarly to the women. Like the daughters, they were angry at their mothers for not moving on (2 responses). Unlike the daughters, the sons blamed their mothers (2), whereas none of the women blamed their mother for the separation or divorce. With regard to their fathers, there was no pattern evident in the men's answers, other than that three out of 10 responses were that they were not angry at their fathers. Out of the seven responses that documented their anger, one son, whose father had very recently left the family said:

I've been nothing but angry with my dad... I can't even express the anger I felt for my dad...I feel so much anger that ...there've been times that I just can't even handle it...when I've gotten huge pounding headaches in the back of my head and I have to sit down and that's just from thinking about it...like...out of nowhere... I was working and I got mad at my dad just thinking about it ...I got the worst headache...ya I feel nothing but anger for my Dad (Respondent #203).

With regard to loyalty, five of the 10 responses given by the sons indicated that they were loyal to their mothers, but with discomfort. This is in contrast to the female respondents who were far more likely to be comfortable with being loyal to their mother first (40.7%).

For some, loyalty is related to responsibility. The sons' answers were not very clustered except that two out of nine responses indicated that they felt responsible to their mom emotionally, similar to the daughters' responses. Perhaps this responsibility is played out in the ways that they helped their parents. Sons, like daughters, help their father by supporting them emotionally (3), although in two out of eight responses, sons

acknowledged not helping their fathers at all. In helping their mothers, sons talked about giving her advice or feedback (3), supporting her emotionally (3), and helping around the house(2). Sons also reported that they helped their mother more now (4) or they helped both parents more now (2).

When asked, "Has your sense of who and what your family is and what it means to you changed since the divorce?", the responses of the men showed no real clusters. However, sons indicated in two of the 11 responses that their sense of family had changed because they had lost the traditional family.

With regard to expectations about love relationships and marriage, sons endorsed many of the same answers as did the daughters, although there were no real clusters in their responses. Men indicated that their expectations had not changed about love relationships or marriage in three of eight, and three of nine responses, respectively. Like the daughters however, two responses indicated their cautiousness and anxiety about marriage as a result of their parents' divorce.

Regarding human nature, none of the comments from the men were positive, unlike the women. Rather, four comments were neutral, such as people are motivated by self-interest (2), and idiosyncratic comments such as "people keep on trying in static situations", or "conflict is normal". Like the daughters, the sons agreed that everyone can be mean (3). Also, two responses detailed negative character traits such as pettiness.

In terms of self-concept, the men endorsed similar responses to the women. For example, men stated in two responses that they had become more independent. Three

responses detailed the realizations they had come to, such as, "It changed my point of view on everything, " to "(I) realized you can't have everything you want." Sons spoke of an increased awareness of chance in their lives (2). Like the daughters, sons indicated that they found it hard to trust people (2).

Like the women who answered these questions, the men found one of the most difficult transitions since the divorce to be the loss of their family (3). Also like the women, two male respondents identified the lack of relationship with their father as the most difficult transition. The following quotation is one of their answers:

I guess it was the breaking point realizing I never had a relationship with my father and that I don't have a close family...and that's one of the hardest things...realizing that you don't have family...its like a wake up call that my family is not there anymore...and its been hard...that family I always thought that someday I'd have...that's never going to happen...like I always thought I'd develop a close relationship with my Dad and everything would be fine and we'd have this perfect family and now I can never think like that because its over (Respondent #131).

Finally, sons were able to identify things that had improved since the separation or divorce. Out of 12 responses, nine indicated that something had improved, and three denied any improvement at all. Like the daughters, sons identified that some of their relationships had reaped the benefits of the separation or divorce. Sons spoke of better relationships with their fathers (2), and better relationships with their mothers (2). Unlike the daughters, sons remarked how relationships with siblings had improved (2).

Sons' perception of financial status after the divorce did not always match the daughters' perceptions. For example, sons were more likely to see that their fathers had less money (5 responses) and that their mothers' financial status had not changed (5).

Recall that this pattern was reversed among the women who answered this question. In terms of their own financial status, sons said in seven responses that their financial situation had not changed. One answer detailed less money.

It was considered possible in the period during and after the divorce that children's school work might be affected. Indeed, all the sons but one who were interviewed, agreed that it did affect their school work. There were two clusters of answers. Men stated in two responses that their grades were improved, and in three responses stated that it had a negative effect.

Overall, the results from the interviews with the men were very similar to the the results from the women. Sons had better relationships with their mothers before the divorce and this continued after the divorce. Sons also spoke of deteriorating or absent relationships with their fathers. Like the women, the men were angry with their parents. Despite being angry, they felt responsible to their mothers emotionally, and they helped both parents with emotional support. Like the women, men made comments about being cautious and anxious about marriage, as their parents' divorce affected their optimism about their own future marriages. Similar to the women, the men made neutral or negative comments about human nature, and expressed that everyone can be mean. This may be connected to their changed self-concept, in which some of the men commented that they found it hard to trust people. Although the men mourned the loss of their family, they recognized that some of their relationships had improved since the separation or divorce.

There were some differences in the way the men answered the questions

compared to the women. One such difference is seeing more of the father's point of view. For example, some of the sons, in this sample, blamed their mothers for the divorce as they did their fathers, whereas none of the daughters blamed their mothers. Similarly, sons were more likely to see that their fathers had suffered financially and that their mothers had not. Again, this is a pattern distinct from the women in the study. Sons were also loyal to their mothers, but often felt uncomfortable about it, in contrast to the majority of daughters whose first loyalty was to their mothers without discomfort. It may be that, as sons, despite being closer to their mothers, they are better able to put themselves in their fathers' position.

The most striking difference between the two groups was their willingness to be interviewed. For many of the women, the interview was an opportunity to tell the story of their family which, although difficult at times, was an experience they took advantage of for themselves. For the men, however, it was clear that being interviewed about their parents' divorce was something to be avoided. This was most clearly demonstrated by the researcher's inability to attract enough men from the separated/divorced group for the study, although the expected frequency of sons and daughters from separated/divorced families in the population sampled, was the same. Of those who did fill out the questionnaire, several indicated to the researcher that an interview would be too difficult for them. Two of the eight men who were interviewed stated clearly that they were being interviewed only because it was a quick way to get credit for their psychology courses. They were clearly anxious about the interview. It seems likely that for many of the men, they had talked to no one about their parents' divorce, so the

thought of talking to a stranger was overwhelming. The other six men who were interviewed appeared to be qualitatively different from the men who refused. What they had in common was the coping mechanism of talking to others as a way of working things out; a way of coping more common among women.



## DISCUSSION

Most of the studies in the literature document decreased contact between fathers and daughters after divorce (Amato & Booth, 1991, Furstenberg et al., 1993). When compared to contact patterns with mothers, the pattern is clear that fathers and daughters are in touch less often than mothers and daughters (Amato & Booth, 1991; Lawton, Silverstein & Bengston, 1994; Selzter & Bianchi, 1988). Recent evidence (Cooney, 1994) suggests that patterns of contact after age 18, when custody is no longer an issue, are related to how separated/divorced parents and their children feel about each other. Unlike intact families, feelings of intimacy were related to frequent contact in the divorced group in Cooney's (1994) study.

Indeed, for phone contact, the pattern in this study matches the pattern found in other studies. Daughters in the separated/divorced group had significantly less phone contact with their fathers than their mothers. As expected, this pattern was not repeated in the intact group, where the difference in contact with mothers and fathers was nonsignificant. In terms of length of phone call, the situation was reversed. There was no difference in length of phone call to mothers and fathers in the separated/divorced group, but a significant difference in the intact group, with fathers having shorter conversations with their daughters than mothers did. Upon reflection, this difference makes sense when one considers the stereotypical call home, in which the daughter talks briefly with the father, then is passed on to the mother for a more in-depth

conversation.

In terms of letter writing and visits, there was no difference in the number of letters written, visits made, or the length of the letters or visits to mothers and fathers in either group. It appears that, for this sample at least, letters are not the primary form of communication within families. Fully half of the respondents who lived away from their parents did not write letters to either their mother or their father. Also, there was a wide range in the pattern of visits, from 41 respondents visiting their mother or father three times or less per year, to 24 respondents who visited once per week or more.

Perhaps visits do not reflect reduced contact between daughters and fathers because they do not necessarily reflect intimacy as well as phone calls. When young adults live away from their parents, especially when they live more than an hour away, visits may take on a formal aspect, such that every trip to town must include a visit to one's parents, whether they live together or not. In separated/divorced families, it is possible that coming to town and visiting one parent but not the other is tantamount to rejection. Thus, visits are doled out evenly to prevent inflicting pain.

Overall, mothers are the recipients of more frequent communication with their daughters than fathers. In contrast to letters, the phone was used by all but four respondents to communicate with parents. Thus, it is the means of communication that best reflects the intimacy or closeness in the mother-daughter relationship when compared to the father-daughter relationship. The fact that there is a difference between the patterns of contact by phone between the separated/divorced and intact group lends support to Cooney's (1994) proposal that contact and intimacy are connected for

divorced families in a way that does not hold for intact families.

Beyond the issue of contact, when daughters were asked to evaluate the change in the quality of their relationship with their parents over time, using the Likert question, their relationships with fathers consistently came up wanting. Regardless of group, daughters reported a more positive change in relationships with mothers than with fathers. As well, in the separated/divorced group, relationships with mothers and fathers were judged to be of poorer quality than their equivalent in the intact group.

As well as judging the quality of relationship to be poorer overall, closeness and anger were specific differences identified by daughters in their relationships with mothers and fathers. As documented in the literature (Booth & Amato, 1994; Cooney, 1994; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Walker & Thompson, 1983), it was hypothesized that daughters would be closer to their mothers before the divorce (or two to three years ago for the intact group). This hypothesis was supported. Regardless of group status, daughters were closer to their mothers than their fathers. This was echoed in the qualitative data, where many of the daughters talked about being very close to their mothers. The references to the fathers tended to be more vague, if they were positive. Daughters made more comments about distance in the relationship, or "getting along OK but not being close", about their fathers than their mothers.

Anger was a distinctive feature in the relationships of many daughters with their fathers. It was hypothesized that daughters from separated/divorced families would be angry at their fathers after the divorce but that daughters from intact families would not be angry during the comparable time period. Sadly, this was not true; even daughters

from intact families are angry at their fathers. This is alarming evidence of the poor relationships between fathers and their young adult daughters even without the trauma of family dissolution, and indicates the importance of including intact comparison groups when studying the effects of divorce. It also demonstrates why, if the relationships are bruised to begin with, the father-daughter relationship is widely agreed to be the most vulnerable in the event of divorce (Amato & Keith, 1991) Again, this finding was echoed in the qualitative data. Women identified many more reasons to be angry with their fathers than their mothers, and the intensity of their anger was stronger. Perhaps a process of polarization had taken place such that after the divorce, former alliances and roles in the family were made firmer and immutable.

Another possible explanation for the results takes into account the fact of daughters' greater intimacy with their mothers prior to the separation or divorce. It is possible that expressed anger at mothers was more threatening to the daughters because there was more to lose in the relationship. By comparison, it may have been easier to express anger at their fathers because there was less of a relationship to begin with. Thus, a regressive process may have taken place where the daughters' primary relationship was protected at the expense of their relationships with their fathers.

Gender differences are speculative only in the qualitative data, but the eight sons interviewed seemed better able than the daughters to see their father's point of view, although they remained angry with them. As well, they were closer to their mothers, but did not talk about intimacy with their mothers the way the daughters did.

Thus, fathers and their children are the big losers in families today, even before

the trauma of divorce adds fuel to the fire. Independent of separated/divorced or intact status, daughters were angrier, less close, and judged the quality of relationship with their fathers to have changed for the worse more than with their mothers. When separated/divorced and intact status was added to the analysis, poorer quality of relationship with parents for the separated/divorced group compared to the intact group was found, although the effects were not strong enough to produce a group by parent interaction. This may be because the father-daughter relationship was so poor to begin with that it changed less than expected with the separation or divorce. Gender analyses demonstrated similar problems with lower quality and anger in relationships with their fathers for the young adult men in the intact group. I can only speculate whether sons from the separated/divorced group, like their sisters, would be angrier than their intact group counterparts at their fathers.

Although the Likert measurement of quality of relationship consistently measured poorer quality of relationship between fathers and children, the QRI failed to pick up any differences between groups. It is a puzzle why this should be so when the Likert questions and the subscales for the QRI were all significantly correlated. One possible explanation for the discrepancy in the results is that that the QRI was completed twice, and a difference score computed, whereas the Likert questions were completed only once. Another possible explanation may be in the fact that the QRI measured emotions and behaviour. In contrast, the Likert questions may have produced results because the questions were more evaluative of the relationships. The Likert questions may have tapped into the meaning of the separation or divorce for the adult child. In other words,

for adult children of divorce, the specific perception of their feelings and behaviour may not have changed significantly as a result of the separation or divorce, but the meaning they attach to their parents' split may have affected their evaluation of their relationships with their parents.

Certainly the area in which divorce had a quantifiably measurable impact was optimism regarding love and marriage. It was anticipated that there would be no effect on love relationships because there had been none in the Franklin, Janoff-Bulman & Roberts (1990) study that was partially replicated in the present study. However, there was a clear effect of young adults from the separated/divorced group being more pessimistic about love relationships than their counterparts from intact families. Indeed, this was a medium effect size. What explains the difference in the present study? The Franklin et al. (1990) study did not control for length of time since the divorce, whereas the present study included only participants whose parents had recently separated or divorced. For the participants of the current study, the events of the separation or divorce were fresh in their experience and had not diminished over the passing of several years.

As well, for young adults whose parents break up, the divorce comes at a time when they are developing their own understanding of intimacy (Erikson, 1968). Thus, it may be that their parents' unsuccessful relationship is incorporated into their own struggle to work out intimacy for themselves. The timing of the divorce may complicate each young adult's developmental task of learning about intimacy for him or herself, because of the negative experience (for most) of their parents' divorce. This result was

echoed in the qualitative data with many men and women feeling tentative and cautious about love relationships in the future.

Divorce also had a strong effect on optimism about marriage, with women from separated/divorced families expressing less optimism about their own marriages than women from intact families. This result was anticipated, and replicated the results in the earlier Franklin et. al (1990) study. Few people in the separated/divorced group were able to assert that their parents' divorce had no effect on their own expectations for their marriage. This lack of optimism also was obvious in the interviews, as women and men wondered aloud if they would divorce, or spoke of their new realization that divorce was a possible occurrence in their own lives.

In the interviews, a pattern was evident that was not clear in the quantitative data. People were more negative about marriage than they were about love relationships. This parallels the finding in Franklin et al. (1990), that participants from both intact and divorced groups did not differ in the trust they held toward a dating partner. However, participants from separated/divorced families believed they would be less trusting than their intact family counterparts when it came to trusting a future spouse. Similarly, participants interviewed in the present study made a distinction between love relationships and marriage. There was a pattern of fear of commitment to marriage. Perhaps the assumed permanence of marriage or the respondents' understanding that marriages are more difficult to dissolve than love relationships, produced this result.

Perhaps respondents were pessimistic toward love relationships and marriage

because of their understanding, learned painfully through watching their parents, that being a good person, and holding up one end of the relationship was not enough. The interviewees were very aware that love relationships and marriages required the shared goal and hard work of two people. Often, respondents described how one parent wanted the marriage dissolved and the other did not.

Lack of optimism about love relationships and marriage may be related to interviewee's beliefs about human nature. In the interviews, respondents related how everyone can be mean and nasty and that people turn into individuals that they no longer recognized. In many cases, daughters and sons were shocked by the way their parent (usually their father) had changed at the time of the divorce. Some adult children saw it philosophically and spoke of the way that everyone changes. Others found the change threatening, and talked about not being able to depend on people or that people make no sense. It seemed that the divorce caused respondents to question human nature, although I can only speculate if the separated/divorced group would have more negative views than the intact group.

Finally, Franklin et al. (1990) found that participants from the divorced group reported less trust of a future spouse than their counterparts in the intact group. Although this was not tested in the present study, several comments in the interviews suggest that it may be a robust finding. In several questions, interviewees offered their views that they were less trustful of people, more inclined to believe that people were hiding their true feelings, and more cynical about motivation.

Despite the impact of divorce on optimism about love relationships and marriage,



there were relatively few effects of divorce overall. One explanation of this lack of effects lies in the fact that there are so many other influences on the outcome variables. First, it is clear that fathers have difficulty in relationships with their children independent of marital status. This was an effect that occurred with the variables closeness, anger and change in quality of relationship. Relationships between fathers and children were poor to begin with, thus it is not surprising that the effect of divorce was attenuated.

Also, unlike younger children whose parents divorce, young adult children have more and better developed coping mechanisms. They have access to stronger egos, better defense mechanisms, and other relationships which can sustain them. This is different from young children of divorce for whom the family is their primary context. Also, younger children are more dependent economically and can less well imagine surviving on their own. It is upon the basis of these facts that researchers have tended to ignore young adults in divorce research in the past.

Clearly, conflict was a significant variable in the separated/divorced group's experience of their parents' divorce. It was clear from the interviews that most of the separated/divorced group anticipated their parents' divorce because of open conflict. This was a surprise, because long term marriages that end in divorce have been characterized in the literature as more likely to be lacking in conflict, and described as experiencing a process of "slow disengagement" (Amato, Loomis & Booth, 1995). Indeed, in Kozuch and Cooney's (1995) study of young adults whose parents had recently divorced, 52.3% of parents were judged to have a low conflict marriage prior to their divorce. It is unclear why the present sample reported greater conflict. In the

significant multiple regression in which anger at dad was regressed on conflict and group status, the significant variable was conflict, not marital status of parents. That would seem to indicate that conflict was more important, yet in the face to face interviews, it appeared to be both conflict and the divorce itself that were troubling to people. Transitions that were described as the most difficult often involved the loss of sense of family in some way, or the loss of the family home, both of which are transitions that come from marital dissolution, not conflict.

The fact that the qualitative and quantitative data did not always yield the same answers is both an advantage and a disadvantage. Whereas matching data add validity to tested hypotheses, complementary or different findings point to variability that needs to be investigated. Quantitative data have an obvious benefit in that they are more easily compared to other studies. Quantitative analysis is also a more accepted means of measuring effects because significance testing gives us greater assurance that the findings are not due to chance. Quantitative data are also preferred because standardized tests with proven reliability and validity can be used, and it is usually quicker to collect quantitative data than qualitative data. Standardized tests and paper and pencil measures are also a disadvantage, however, because there are fewer opportunities to receive answers to questions that you do not expect. When a question gives five response options, the respondent must choose from the answers presented, even if they do not include the answer the respondent would like to give.

The weakness of quantitative data is the strength of qualitative data. Respondents are encouraged to use their own voice instead of being urged to choose

from options that may not be appropriate. Qualitative data allow the researcher to form tentative hypotheses, and to discover effects of which the researcher may have been unaware because the specific question was not asked. For example, in the present research, four out of eight men interviewed were shocked by their parents' divorce. This was a much higher percentage than in the women. Although highly speculative, these data suggest that the issue of anticipation may be particularly salient for young adult men.

Qualitative data also allow for better analysis of individual differences. For example, although the majority of men and women was angry at their parents, and this was evident from the quantitative data, several described their feelings differently. That adult children also feel relief, regret, frustration, and indifference, is valuable information, gleaned from the qualitative data.

The qualitative data can also point to possible explanations for quantitative results. The best example of this in the current study is the anger that daughters felt toward their fathers. The quantitative data also illustrated that daughters were closer to mothers than to fathers before the divorce. The qualitative interview data, by asking about the reasons for the daughters' anger, suggested some possible explanations that coincide with and expand upon the quantitative results. One of the explanations may have been that daughters were angrier at their fathers because of pre-existing alliances with their mothers. Certainly the relationships with mothers prior to the separation or divorce were more frequently described in terms of intimacy, whereas the relationships with fathers were described in more distant terms. Similarly, the interview responses

regarding anger toward fathers suggested that the daughters' points of view were more similar to mothers and more discrepant with fathers. For example, some of the daughters explained that they were angry because they knew that if their fathers did not change, their parents would split. Others were angry because of the father's character, because of his behaviour toward the mother, or because of his behaviour more generally. Still others were angry because it was their father who physically left the relationship. All of these responses have either the explicit or implicit assumption of blame directed at the father. This supports the idea that daughters were already allied with their mothers in the family dynamic as the marriage started to disintegrate. Thus, they found it easier to see the separation or divorce more from their mother's than their father's points of view.

Although there were significant quantitative effects of divorce outlined in this study, particularly in the realm of optimism about love relationships and marriage, it may be that quantitative measures were less able to measure the subtle, perhaps long term, effects of divorce than the qualitative data were able to capture. Clearly, the divorce of their parents was an important life event for many of the participants, yet this was not well described by the quantitative data. Perhaps the strength of qualitative data lies in their ability to describe phenomenological experience. The interviews better described the experience of the divorce for these young adults, and tell us that, for most, this was a distressing series of events that may not have changed behaviour appreciably, but loom large in the respondents' own life stories. The interviews allowed a window into the process of integration of the divorce experience for the young adults: how they were

beginning to make sense of it while working out their own sense of intimacy and identity. Perhaps this was also why the Likert questions about quality of relationship produced results when the QRI did not. The Likert questions came closer to asking the respondents to tell their subjective experience, whereas the QRI required answers from the respondents' point of view, without the evaluative component.

Regardless of the kind of data collected, one of the most striking things about this study was that young adult men from the separated/divorced group, for the most part, did not participate. The study was originally designed to look at gender differences between sons and daughters. However, this was not possible because sons from separated/divorced families would not participate. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the young men did not want to participate in the study because it made them feel too vulnerable. Several women participants passed on the reactions of their male classmates who knew of the study. Apparently, the young men were shocked that they would talk about their family divorce, especially to a female researcher who was a stranger. Five of the men who did the questionnaire refused to do the interview and some were explicit that the interview would be too emotionally painful for them. The impression given was that it was likely that these young men had spoken to no one about the separation or divorce of their parents, so the thought of talking to a stranger was overwhelming. They may also have been afraid that they would become emotional in the interview and cry. Whereas the women took the opportunity to talk about their family, the men defended against their felt vulnerability and refused to do the study. Gabardi and Rosen (1992) found a similar difference in expressiveness in their study of

college students. They found that women whose parents had split within the past year were more expressive than men whose parents had split within the last five years.

This may be the key to future research. Clinical lore tells us that it is people's access to sadness and their ability to mourn losses that determine their level of healthy adaptation. If people face their traumas, mourn their losses, and integrate them with the rest of their life experience, they are better able to face future crises than those who have avoided the feelings associated with the trauma (Herman, 1992). This may be what is happening with the young adult men. They may carry a larger burden of unacknowledged grief because they refuse to talk about it. It was clear from the interviews that many of the participants' fathers were islands in their own families; they had great difficulty connecting, or talking meaningfully, with other family members. Many of the interviewees described their fathers as not knowing how to have an intimate relationship with them. It is frightening to speculate that the same process may be happening with young adult men of the present generation; sons may be following in their fathers' footsteps by being uncommunicative about emotional issues.

Another issue that may differentiate the men is that half of those interviewed (4) did not anticipate their parents' divorce. In comparison, only four out of 27 women did not anticipate their parents' divorce. As mentioned earlier, this is a statistically significant difference. The men may not be representative of the larger population, as those who chose to be interviewed were clearly more open than their counterparts. It is possible that those who did not anticipate the separation or divorce were less likely to consent to an interview, artificially reducing the percentage of men who were surprised by their

parents' break up. However, if the men who were interviewed were in any way representative, it also supports the possibility that young adult men are, in general, more surprised by their parents' divorce. We know that men are generally less focused on relationships (Chodorow, 1978; Stern, 1989) so this would be a logical outcome. This is important because the qualitative data demonstrate that those who were surprised were also more angry at their parents, in particular their fathers. This matches the qualitative observations of Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) who tell us that children who were unaware of their parents' marital unhappiness prior to the divorce had more intense and negative reactions than those who were aware of their parent's unhappiness because of conflict. In low conflict families the conflict was usually not overt, but underground within the family system. For these children, the net loss was greater because the environment prior to the divorce was not one of chronic conflict. This finding was echoed in Amato, Loomis and Booth, (1995), in which children from high conflict families had higher well-being if their parents divorced whereas children from low conflict families had lower well-being if their parents divorced.

These results may be better explained with reference to a sociological study, done by Wheaton (1990) in which it was found that major life transitions were not difficult and even beneficial, if the period prior to the transition was very stressful. However, if the period prior to the transition was not very stressful, then the transition itself was hard on psychological well-being. These observations may extrapolate to the present study, as young adult men who were surprised by their parents' divorce were forced to call into question all that they thought they knew to be true about their family.

Thus, the possibility remains that young adult men are a population that access their feelings of grief and sadness less easily, yet are more likely to be traumatized by the surprise of their parents' divorce. They may be a population in need of attention.

Given the results of this study, what are the clinical issues highlighted by the data? The most obvious is the poor relationships between fathers and their children, especially between fathers and daughters. This is not a revelation in the clinical community, but these data serve as a reminder to those working with families just how tenuous some relationships between fathers and children really are. Clinicians working with families need to encourage the development of stronger relationships and better communication between fathers and their children. As well, young adult men need to be encouraged to talk more about emotional issues. Again, this is not new information, but many people hold that gender patterns are changing as a result of the influence of the women's and men's movements. However, the fact that young adult men from separated/divorced families would not participate in the study because they did not want to talk about painful issues underlines the idea that old patterns may not be changing as quickly as many had hoped. Sons appear to be coping emotionally in the way that their fathers do, by isolating themselves from people and emotional issues that are painful to them. If young adult men do not learn how to face emotional issues, they will be saddled with heavy emotional burdens. If they continue to cope as their fathers did, they too may become islands in their own families and have poor relationships with their own children.

Another key finding that has clinical significance is that although the effects of parental divorce are less dramatic for young adults than for young children, it remains a



very significant event. In particular, the qualitative data demonstrate the confusion and anger that parental divorce brings, even for young adults. Although large effects in behaviour were not evident, the interviews demonstrated clearly that divorce was an important event in participants' life stories. Also clear is that young adults still depend on their parents emotionally, and that parents must not assume that the partial autonomy of young adulthood equals emotional independence.

Finally, there remains a risk factor for divorce in children of divorce. We know that adult children of divorce are more likely to divorce than adult children of intact families (Amato, 1996; Kulka & Weingarten, 1979). There is also evidence that children of divorce have poorer general well-being (Amato & Keith, 1991), and that adult children of divorce have poorer well-being if the parental relationship was characterized by low conflict prior to the divorce (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995). There are many hypothesized reasons for an increased risk of divorce in children of divorce, including lower socioeconomic status, higher rates of cohabitation before marriage, increased participation of wives in the paid work force, and more liberal attitudes toward divorce (Amato, 1996). However, in a longitudinal study, Amato (1996) has argued that learning problematic dyadic behaviours by watching an unsuccessful marriage contributes most to increased rates of offspring divorce. Children of divorce are not as good at intimate relationships, especially if the divorce occurred before they were twelve. In the present study we have found that parental divorce is related to reduced optimism about both love relationships and marriage. It is important not to exaggerate the importance of this effect, but at the same time we must realize that this medium effect size may be

clinically significant. It is unclear what effect reduced optimism about love and marriage may have on young adults' future love relationships and marriage, but it could contribute to an increased risk of marital dissolution. As Zill et al. (1993) have indicated, the risk that cholesterol poses for heart disease is relatively small in terms of numbers, yet millions of people have changed their diet as a result. The damage that parental divorce does to offspring relationships needs to be given the same attention.

Clearly, the present research points to the need to study the experience of young adult men whose parents have separated/divorced. Their refusal to do the questionnaire and interview suggests a strong need to avoid an emotionally difficult topic. It was clear from the few men who did the questionnaires but refused to do the interviews, that the face-to-face interview format was far too threatening. Perhaps telephone interviews would produce better results. Another option would be to send out questionnaires with open-ended questions over the internet, or have computer-assisted interviews where the participant tells his story to the computer rather than a person. Locke and Gilbert (1995) recently discovered that computer-assisted interviews were experienced more positively among their university sample than questionnaires or face-to-face interviews. The authors postulated that computer formats were experienced by students as more private, and therefore, nonthreatening formats for assessment. The obvious disadvantage of the internet and computer-assisted interviews is the inability to probe answers that are unclear. However, that problem is a minor one when the alternative is no data from young adult men.

Researchers continue to try to tease out the differences and similarities in the

effects of family process variables such as conflict, and the effects of the divorce experience itself. There may be a qualitative difference in the experience of young adults whose parents' marriage was characterized by high conflict, compared to those whose parents' marriage was characterized by low conflict (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995). The present study does not support the evidence and theorizing in the literature that long-term marriages that end in divorce have a higher percentage of less conflictual marriages than short-term marriages that end in divorce. Nevertheless, the few people in the study who were shocked by their parents' divorce were angrier at their fathers, and the interview data suggest that they may have had more issues with trust. This will need to be investigated further.

Finally, as with all developmental areas of research, longitudinal and prospective studies are needed to determine the answers to the effect of divorce with greater certainty. Studies that look at the style of conflict, the degree to which the children anticipated the divorce, and its effect on the sons and daughters are needed.

In conclusion, the present study is one of very few studies to do quantitative and qualitative research on the young adult population. Despite the modest quantitative effects, the present study has shed some light on the phenomenological experience and the meaning that recent parental separation or divorce has for young adult women. It points to the need to study young adult men from recently separated/divorced families, as their participation in this study was conspicuously absent, perhaps because it was too emotionally difficult. Finally, the present study confirms that the father-daughter relationship is the most vulnerable to the effects of separation or divorce, but it also

points to the deficits in the relationship prior to marital dissolution.

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**Appendix A****Newspaper Advertisements and Poster**

**Wanted: 18 -23 year olds whose parents have separated or divorced in the past three years for a research study. Short questionnaire and interview. For more information call Angela at 255-2688.**

**One in 10 chance of winning \$100! Wanted: 18 - 23 year olds whose parents have separated or divorced in the past three years for a research study. Short questionnaire and interview. For more information call Angela at 255-0688.**

# 1 IN 10 CHANCE OF WINNING \$100

IF YOU ARE:

- 18 - 23

- YOUR PARENTS SEPARATED OR DIVORCED IN  
THE PAST THREE YEARS

YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN MY

STUDY, AND ENTER TO WIN \$100

SHORT SURVEY AND INTERVIEW

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL ANGELA AT

255 - 0688

## Appendix B

### Quality of Relationships Inventory

Please use the scale below to answer the following questions regarding your relationship with your mother/father : 1) as it exists presently 2) as it existed one year prior to your parents' separation/divorce 3) as it existed two to three years ago.

1	2	3	4
Not at all	A little	Quite a bit	Very much

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. To what extent could you turn to this person for advice about problems?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. How often do you need to work hard to avoid conflict with this person?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. To what extent could you count on this person for help with a problem?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. How upset does this person sometimes make you feel?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. To what extent can you count on this person to give you honest feedback, even if you might not want to hear it? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. How much does this person make you feel guilty?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. How much do you have to "give in" in this relationship?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. To what extent can you count on this person to help you if a family member very close to you died?              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. How much does this person want you to change?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. How positive a role does this person play in your life?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 11. How significant is this relationship in your life?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. How close will your relationship be with this person in 10 years?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. How much would you miss this person if the two of you could not see each other or talk for a month?                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. How critical of you is this person?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. If you wanted to go out and do something this evening, how confident are you that this person would be willing to do something with you? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. How responsible do you feel for this person's well-being?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. How much do you depend on this person?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. To what extent can you count on this person to listen to you when you are very angry with someone else?                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. How much would you like this person to change?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. How angry does this person make you feel?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. How much do you argue with this person?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. To what extent can you really count on this person to distract you from your worries when you feel under stress?                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. How often does this person make you feel angry?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. How often does this person try to control or influence your life?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25. How much more do you give than you get from this relationship?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**Appendix C****Questionnaire # \_\_\_\_\_**

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Ethnicity: White \_\_\_\_\_ East Asian \_\_\_\_\_ South Asian \_\_\_\_\_  
First Nations \_\_\_\_\_ Black \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of credit hours completed (including transfer credits) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Mother's occupation \_\_\_\_\_
6. Mother's highest level of education
  - a) Grade 6 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Grade 10 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) High school graduation \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Some post-secondary \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) Bachelor's degree \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) Master's degree \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) Post graduate degree (Ph.D., M.D., lawyer etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Father's occupation \_\_\_\_\_
8. Father's highest level of education
  - a) Grade 6 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Grade 10 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) High school graduation \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Some post-secondary \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) Bachelor's degree \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) Master's degree \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) Post graduate degree (Ph.D., M.D., lawyer etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Your ordinal position in the family with which you grew up (1st child, 2nd child, 3rd...)  
\_\_\_\_\_



10. What is your current living arrangement?

Mother's and father's home \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's home \_\_\_\_\_

Father's home \_\_\_\_\_

Apartment with friend \_\_\_\_\_

Apartment with spouse/partner \_\_\_\_\_

University housing \_\_\_\_\_

Living alone \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

11. How much contact per week (phone, letter writing or in person) do you have with your parents?

PLEASE CHOOSE ONE OPTION BELOW. EITHER PUT AN X IN A BOX OR GIVE A SPECIFIC NUMBER OF TIMES.

MOTHER

Phone

Daily

Number of times/week \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times/month \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times/year \_\_\_\_\_

Less than once/year

Never

Average length of phone call \_\_\_\_\_ Number of minutes

Letters

Daily

Number of times/week \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times/month \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times/year \_\_\_\_\_

Less than once/year

Never

Average length of letter \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages

Visits

Daily

Number of times/week \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times/month \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times/year \_\_\_\_\_

Less than once/year

Never

**CHOOSE ONE BELOW AND FILL IN THE NUMBER.**

Average length of visit \_\_\_\_\_ Number of minutes  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of hours  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of days

**FATHER**

Phone  
 Daily   
 Number of times/week \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of times/month \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of times/year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Less than once/year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Never

Average length of phone call \_\_\_\_\_ Number of minutes

Letters  
 Daily   
 Number of times/week \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of times/month \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of times/year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Less than once/year

Average length of letter \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages

Visits  
 Daily   
 Number of times/week \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of times/week \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of times/month \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of times/year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Less than once/year   
 Never

**CHOOSE ONE BELOW AND FILL IN THE NUMBER.**

Average length of visit \_\_\_\_\_ Number of minutes  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of hours  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of days

12. Do you live more than one hour away from:

Your mother? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Your father? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

BELOW ARE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS. PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST INDICATES YOUR ANSWER.

13. How confident are you that you will have successful love relationships in the future?

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Very	Extremely

14. Do you want to get married in the future?

Yes  No  Uncertain

15. How likely is it that you will get married? PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST INDICATES YOUR ANSWER.

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Very	Extremely

16. How likely is it that you will have a successful marriage?

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Very	Extremely

17. How likely is it that you will get divorced sometime in your life?

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Very	Extremely

18. In general, how optimistic do you feel about the success of your love relationships in the future?

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Very	Extremely

19. What is the marital status of your parents?

Married \_\_\_\_\_

Separated \_\_\_\_\_

Divorced \_\_\_\_\_

IF YOUR PARENTS ARE SEPARATED/DIVORCED, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING PINK PAGES.

IF YOUR PARENTS ARE MARRIED, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING GREEN PAGES.

(THIS PAGE IS GREEN FOR MARRIED)

20. What were your living arrangements two to three years ago?

Mother's and father's home \_\_\_\_\_

Apartment with a friend \_\_\_\_\_

Apartment with a spouse/partner \_\_\_\_\_

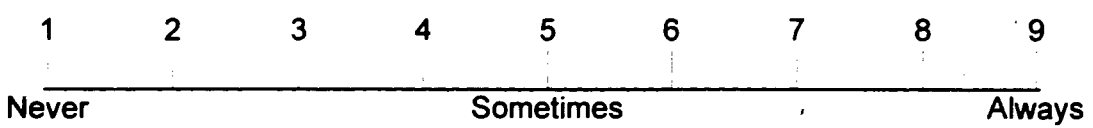
University housing \_\_\_\_\_

Living alone \_\_\_\_\_

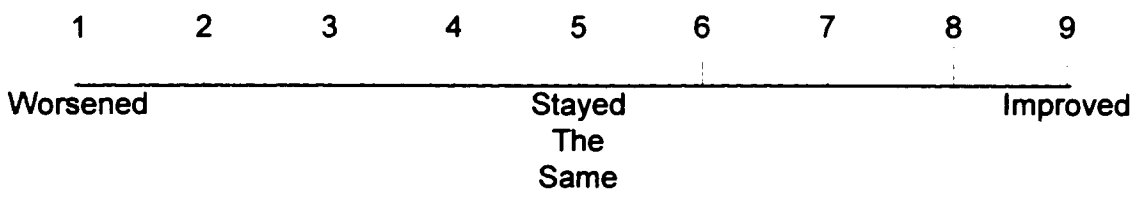
Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

21. How long have your parents been married? \_\_\_\_\_ years

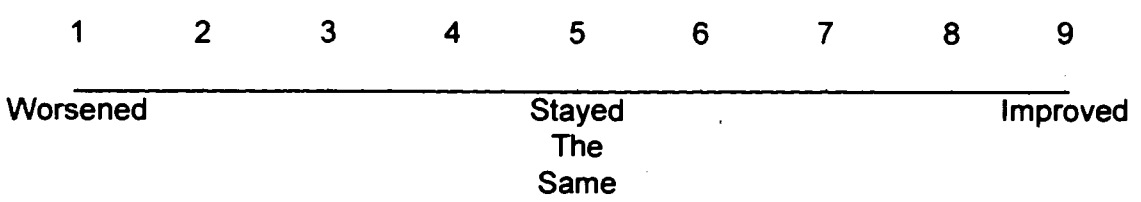
22. How frequently is there conflict in your parents' marriage? PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST INDICATES YOUR ANSWER.



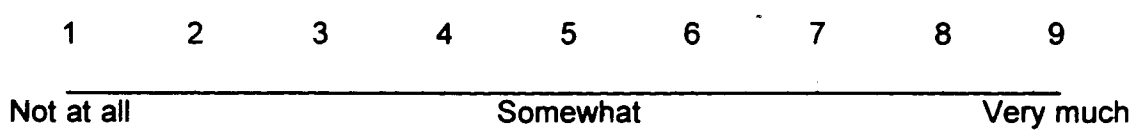
23. To what extent has the quality of your relationship with your mother changed in the past two to three years?



24. To what extent has the quality of your relationship with your father changed in the past two to three years?



25. How close were you to your mother two to three years ago?



26. How close are you to your mother presently?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all			Somewhat			Very much		

27. How close were you to your father two to three years ago?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all			Somewhat			Very much		

28. How close are you to your father presently?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all			Somewhat			Very much		

29. To what extent are you angry with your mother?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all			Somewhat			Very much		

30. To what extent are you angry with your father?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all			Somewhat			Very much		

PLEASE HAND IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND GET THE NEXT QUESTIONNAIRE FROM THE RESEARCHER.

(THIS PAGE IS PINK FOR DIVORCED)

31. How long has it been since your parents separated/divorced?

\_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months

32. How old were you when they separated/divorced?

\_\_\_\_\_ years old

33. How long were your parents married before they separated or divorced?

\_\_\_\_\_ years

34. What were your living arrangements just before your parents divorced or separated?

Mother's and father's home \_\_\_\_\_

Apartment with friend \_\_\_\_\_

Apartment with a spouse/partner \_\_\_\_\_

University housing \_\_\_\_\_

Living alone \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

FOR THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW, IF THERE WAS MORE THAN ONE SEPARATION, PLEASE CONSIDER THE MOST RECENT ONE.

35. In general, how frequently was there conflict in your parents' marriage before the separation or divorce? PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST INDICATES YOUR ANSWER.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9

Never

Sometimes

Always

36. To what extent has the quality of your relationship with your mother changed since the separation/divorce?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9

Worsened

Stayed the Same

Improved

37. To what extent has the quality of your relationship with your father changed since the separation/divorce?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9

Worsened

Stayed the Same

Improved

38. Prior to the separation/divorce, how close were you to your mother?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all				Somewhat			Very much	

39. How close are you to your mother presently?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all				Somewhat			Very much	

40. Prior to the separation/divorce, how close were you to your father?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all				Somewhat			Very much	

41. How close are you to your father presently?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all				Somewhat			Very much	

42. To what extent are you angry with your mother?

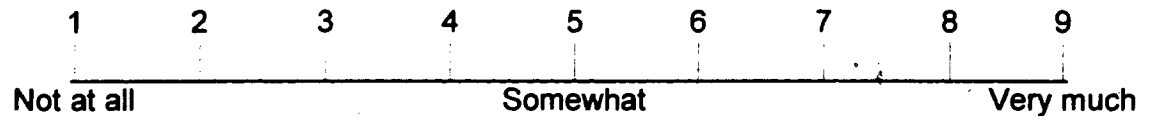
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all				Somewhat			Very much	

43. To what extent are you angry with your father?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all				Somewhat			Very much	



44. To what extent has your parents' separation/divorce been a pivotal event in your life?



45. Have you sought counselling or other professional help with regard to your parents' separation/divorce? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU. PLEASE HAND IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND GET THE NEXT QUESTIONNAIRE FROM THE RESEARCHER.

**Appendix D****INTERVIEW**

1. Did you anticipate your parents' separation/divorce or were you surprised?
2. What are the reasons for the separation/divorce as you see it? How do you think your mother sees it? How do you think your father sees it?
3. Since the separation/divorce, has the financial status of your family changed? How has it changed for your mother? How has it changed for your father? Has this had a direct impact on you?
4. Has the separation/divorce affected your schoolwork?
5. Has anything improved in your life since the separation/divorce?
6. What was your relationship with your mother like before the separation/divorce?
7. What is your relationship with your mother like since the separation/divorce?
8. In your opinion, has your mother changed?
9. What was your relationship with your father like before the separation/divorce?
10. What is your relationship with your father like since the separation/divorce?
11. In your opinion, has your father changed?
12. Do you worry about your parents?
13. Do you feel a sense of responsibility toward your parents?
14. In what way do you help your parents, if at all? What do you help your mother with? What do you help your father with? Has this changed since the divorce?

15. Is loyalty to one or both parents an issue for you? (If necessary) Do you hold allegiances with both parents or one over the other?

16. Are you now, or was there ever a time since the divorce, that you felt angry with one or both of your parents? Why?

If not angry, what emotion or emotions describes how you feel or felt?

17. What has been the most difficult transition for you since the separation/divorce?

18. Has your sense of who and what your family is and what it means to you changed since the separation/divorce?

19. What have you learned about human nature as a result of the separation/divorce? (If necessary) Are people basically good or are they naturally mean and unkind?

20. Has your parents' separation/divorce changed your expectations for your own future love relationships? Has your parents' separation/divorce changed your expectations for your own future marriage?

21. Are there any other ways that your parents' separation/divorce changed you?

22. Do you have anything to add?

**Appendix E**  
**INFORMED CONSENT BY SUBJECTS TO PARTICIPATE**  
**IN A RESEARCH PROJECT**

The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the benefits involved. Your signature on this form will signify that that you have received the document described below regarding this project, that you received adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in this project.

I have been asked by Angela Haig of the Psychology Department of Simon Fraser University to participate in a research project, and I have read the procedures specified in the document entitled:

The impact of recent parental divorce on young adults.

I understand the procedures to be used in this project.

I understand that the interview will be audiotaped.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this project at any time.

I understand that my anonymity and confidentiality will be protected. This will be done by identifying questionnaires and tapes by a code number only. The principal researcher alone will be able to match the names to the code numbers, and this matched list will be kept in a separate, locked filing cabinet.

I also understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the project with the chief researcher named above, or with her supervisor, Dr. Meredith Kimball, or with the Chair of the Psychology Department, Simon Fraser University, Dr. Chris Webster.

I may obtain a summary of the results of this study by leaving my address with Angela Haig, who will mail me a copy upon its completion.

I agree to participate by completing several paper and pencil measures and by being interviewed as described in the document referred to above, during the period:

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/19 to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/19 at \_\_\_\_\_  
(day)(mo.) (day)(mo.)

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE OF WITNESS \_\_\_\_\_

**SFU RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE  
SUBJECT FEEDBACK FORM**

Completion of this form is optional, and is not a requirement of participation in the project. However, if you have served as a subject in a project and would care to comment on the procedures involved, you may complete the following form and send it to the Chair, University Research Ethics Review Committee. All information received will be treated in a strictly confidential manner.

Name of Principal

Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of

Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you sign an Informed Consent Form before participating in the project? \_\_\_\_\_

Were you given a copy of the Consent Form? \_\_\_\_\_

Were there significant deviations from the originally stated procedures? \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to comment on my involvement in the above project which took place:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)                      (Place)                                      (Time)

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Completion of this section is optional*

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

This form should be sent to the Chair, University Ethics Review Committee, c/o Vice-President, Research, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., V5A 1S6.

## INFORMATION SHEET

### THE IMPACT OF RECENT PARENTAL DIVORCE ON YOUNG ADULTS

This study will examine the relationships between adult children and their mothers and fathers.

Your voluntary participation in this project entails signing a consent form, thus signifying your agreement to completing several paper and pencil measures. Upon completion of the questionnaires some respondents will be invited to be interviewed about their relationships with their parents in the past, and how they may have changed over time. The interview will take approximately one hour. You have the right to not answer any question or discontinue participation at any time during the study. The interview will be audiotaped, for experimental purposes.

The tapes will be heard by one person (the co-researcher) other than the interviewer. The tapes will not be identifiable by name or other personally identifying information; rather, each tape will carry a code number. The principal researcher alone will be able to match the names to the code numbers, and this matched list will be kept in a separate, locked filing cabinet. At the end of the project the tapes will be erased. These procedures are to ensure that all information remains anonymous and confidential.

In order to be eligible to participate in this study you must come from either: A family in which your biological parents are married, or a family in which your biological parents were separated or divorced within the last three years.

I welcome any comments that you may have with respect to any aspect of your participation in this study. Thank you for your interest and participation in this project.

Angela Haig, M.A.  
Psychology Department

## Appendix F - Coding Manual

### DID YOU ANTICIPATE YOUR PARENT'S SEPARATION OR DIVORCE, OR WERE YOU SURPRISED?

#### 1. NOT ANTICIPATED

- a) NOT ANTICIPATED - Dad was gone (Female participants 2, Male participants 1<sup>1</sup>)
  - i) No, I came home and dad was gone
  - ii) No, one night he just didn't come home
- b) NOT ANTICIPATED - Shocked (2, 2)
  - i) No, it was a complete shock
  - ii) No, I was very surprised. They kept it from us until we were old enough
- c) NOT ANTICIPATED - They never fought (0, 3)
  - i) No, they never fought/ they got along
  - ii) No. They never fought in front of us/ Yes I was surprised. They never fought in front of us so we thought everything was OK.

#### 2. ANTICIPATED

- a) YES (1, 0)
- b) YES, BECAUSE THEY QUARRELED/ YES BECAUSE THEY FOUGHT (12, 0)
- c) ANTICIPATED -Common knowledge (3, 4)
  - i) They talked about it a few times before they got divorced
  - ii) Yes, they had planned to separate before/ they had separated before
  - iii) Yes, she had been saying she'd leave for years
  - iv) Yes, we were told they planned to separate one year before he left
- d) ANTICIPATED -Because poor marriage (3, 0)
  - i) Yes, I was waiting for it to happen, a lot of little things had changed
  - ii) Yes they were miserable
  - iii) They stopped talking
  - iv) It was a convenience
- e) ANTICIPATED -Other (3, 1)
  - i) Yes because I learned my father had a second family
  - ii) Yes, father didn't live at home/ Dad chose to live in Hong Kong

most of the time

- iii) Mom was seeing someone else
- iv) Dad is an alcoholic

**3. BOTH (4, 1)**

- i) Both
- ii) Both. I knew things could have been better but I didn't think they'd split / knew there were problems but I thought they'd work them out
- iii) Both, the last year I anticipated it, but I still couldn't "get my head around it"

<sup>1</sup> Counts refer to the number of participants who gave the response. Participants gave up to three responses per interview question. Female participants numbered 27. Male participants numbered eight.



**WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THE SEPARATION/ DIVORCE AS YOU SEE IT?  
HOW DOES YOUR MOTHER SEE IT? HOW DOES YOUR FATHER SEE IT?**

- a) **CONFLICT** (Female participants - Mom 2 , Dad 1, Self 3)  
(Male participants - Mom 0, Dad 1, Self 1)
- i) They were constantly fighting/They fought all the time/ Didn't get along
  - ii) Mom couldn't stand to live with him anymore
  - iii) They had different ideas about how to deal with conflict
- b) **LACK OF COMMON INTERESTS** (Mom 4, Dad 3, Self 5)  
(Mom 3, Dad 2, Self 3)
- i) They had no common interests/conflicts of personal interests
  - ii) Little incompatibilities built up over a long period of time
  - iii) Father wasn't my mother's type
  - iv) They grew apart
  - v) They had nothing in common once the kids moved out.
  - vi) Mother wasn't my father's type
  - vii) They lived two separate lives
  - viii) Living apart so long
- c) **COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS** (Mom 3, Dad 0, Self 2)  
(Mom 0, Dad 0, Self 0)
- i) Lack of communication / communication problems
  - ii) My mother wasn't allowed to talk about their problems
- d) **LACK OF LOVE** (Mom 0, Dad 1, Self 1)  
(Mom 2, Dad 0, Self 1)
- i) They fell out of love
  - ii) My mom realized she had never loved my dad
  - iii) My dad didn't love my mom anymore
- e) **LACK OF SUPPORT** (Mom 1, Dad 0, Self 0)  
(Mom 1, Dad 1, Self 0)
- i) My mother wanted more support for her decisions
  - ii) Lack of support
- f) **WORK ISSUES** (Mom 2, Dad 1, Self 2)  
(Mom 0, Dad 0, Self 0)
- i) Preoccupied with work
  - ii) Mother's career was more successful than father's career.
  - iii) Father didn't like mother's business obligations

**g) FINANCIAL ISSUES (Mom 1, Dad 2, Self 3)**  
**(Mom 0, Dad 0, Self 0)**

- i) There were major financial stressors/ Too much stress for the marriage to hold
- ii) No consensus about financial situation
- iii) Dad thought mom used him for his money

**h) ISSUES ABOUT CHILDREN (Mom 5, Dad 3, Self 3)**  
**(Mom 1, Dad 0, Self 0)**

- i) They had different opinions about how to raise their kids
- ii) I (daughter) didn't get along with my father
- iii) Daughter's fault (unspecified)
- iv) My mom chose her children over my dad
- v) Father brought other children to Canada.

**i) TO END BOREDOM OR UNHAPPINESS (Mom 2, Dad 3, Self 4)**  
**(Mom 2, Dad 2, Self 1)**

- i) Father was bored and stuck in a rut/He was tired of it and couldn't do it anymore
- ii) Father was unhappy
- iii) Father had a mid-life crisis.
- iv) Father grew out of it
- v) Father needed to escape / needed to get out
- vi) An opportunity for both of them to be happy
- vii) The divorce was pain relief
- viii) Mother was unhappy
- ix) Mother saw the light; why should she be unhappy?

**j) MOTHER AFFAIR (Mom 1, Dad 1, Self 1)**  
**(Mom 0, Dad 0, Self 0)**

- i) Mother had an affair
- ii) Mom met someone she wanted to have a relationship with

**k) FATHER AFFAIR (Mom 3, Dad 1, Self 3)**  
**(Mom 1, Dad 0, Self 1)**

- i) Father had an affair/affairs
- ii) Father wanted to marry his girlfriend

**l) DOING SOMETHING FOR SELF (Mom 3, Dad 0, Self 2)**  
**(Mom 1, Dad 1, Self 1)**

- i) Mother is doing something for herself/Having a life of her own/Mother took responsibility for her own actions and happiness/ Chance to get on with life
- ii) Father is doing something for himself
- iii) A change in her life she should have done long ago.

- m) **BLAME FATHER** (Mom 3, Dad 1, Self 3)  
(Mom 1, Dad 0, Self 0)
- i) It was Dad's fault. He pushed her away.
  - ii) Mom blamed Dad for her unhappiness
  - iii) Father turned into an extremely selfish ogre
  - iv) Father didn't hold up his end of the bargain
  - v) Father was inconsiderate, selfish, ignorant and verbally abusive
  - vi) Father was very demanding
  - vii) Father was unassertive
- n) **BLAME MOTHER** (Mom 1, Dad 5, Self 0)  
(Mom 0, Dad 2, Self 2)
- i) My mother's autocratic, totalitarian style
  - ii) Mom was a nag
  - iii) Mom was a pushover; too soft
  - iv) Father said my mother was dominating and aggressive
  - v) Blames mother for driving him away
  - vi) Dad blames Mom for leaving
  - vii) Mom thinks its her fault; something wrong with her.
  - viii) Mom didn't do enough work around the house
  - ix) Mother's fault (unspecified)
- o) **ABUSE** (Mom 1, Dad 1, Self 1)  
(Mom 0, Dad 0, Self 0)
- i) Father was physically abusive
  - ii) My father sexually abused the kids in our family
- p) **ALCOHOLISM** (Mom 1, Dad 1, Self 1)  
(Mom 1, Dad 0, Self 1)
- i) Father/Mother is an alcoholic/ They were both alcoholics
  - ii) Dad is an alcoholic so Mom was concerned for her well-being
- q) **DEPRESSION** (Mom 0, Dad 1, Self 2)  
(Mom 0, Dad 0, Self 0)
- i) Mother became very depressed
  - ii) Dad withdrew and got depressed
- r) **DON'T KNOW WHY** (Mom 1, Dad 7, Self 0)  
(Mom 1, Dad 2, Self 0)
- i) Father doesn't know why he is doing it.
  - ii) Father thought he was doing the best he could
  - iii) My father doesn't see a reason/He doesn't understand why
  - iv) Mom doesn't know why
  - v) I don't know

s) OTHER REASONS (Mom 1, Dad 2, Self 0)  
(Mom 0, Dad 2, Self 0)

- i) Mother transgressed traditional role
- ii) Mother wanted to immigrate to Canada; father didn't
- iii) That we didn't care about him
- iv) He felt the household was not his domain
- v) Father didn't want it to happen.

**SINCE THE SEPARATION/DIVORCE, HAS THE FINANCIAL STATUS OF YOUR FAMILY CHANGED? HOW HAS IT CHANGED FOR YOUR MOTHER? HOW HAS IT CHANGED FOR YOUR FATHER? HAS THIS HAD A DIRECT IMPACT ON YOU?**

**1. NO CHANGE** (Mom 5, Dad 11, Self 12)  
(Mom 5, Dad 3, Self 6)

a)NO

**2. CHANGE**

a)CHANGE - LESS MONEY (Mom 12, Dad 8, Self 9)  
(Mom 2, Dad 5, Self 3)

- i)Yes because less money
- ii)Yes because my father is not giving me money
- iii)At first, much less money. Its better now.
- iv)Yes because my father lost his job at the same time.

b)CHANGE - MORE MONEY (Mom 7, Dad 4, Self 2)  
(Mom 1, Dad 0, Self 0)

- i)Yes because more money
- ii)Yes because he is earning his own money now

DON'T KNOW/ NOT ASKED (Mom 2, Dad 4, Self 3)  
(Mom 1, Dad 0, Self 0)

**HAS THE SEPARATION/ DIVORCE AFFECTED YOUR SCHOOLWORK?****1. NOT AFFECTED a)NOT AFFECTED (13, 1)**

- i)No (unspecified)
- ii)No because it wasn't a surprise
- iii)No, I was able to separate it from my family

**2. AFFECTED**

a)YES (UNSPECIFIED) (1, 1)

b)AFFECTED - Positive (2,2)

- i)Yes because grades are better

c)AFFECTED - Negative (7,3)

- i)Yes because grades are worse
- ii)Yes, because I couldn't concentrate / kept thinking about them (it)
- iii)Yes because I made less effort being at home to study
- iv)Yes, at first I did worse (unspecified)
- v)Yes at first I did worse because I was concerned about my mother's welfare
- vi)At first I did worse, then I recovered.

d)AFFECTED - Positive and negative (3, 0)

- i)Both, at first I did worse, then I did better
- ii)Yes, I study harder because I'm afraid about security/ I study harder because if something happens to my mom I have to be able to make a living

e)OTHER (0,1)

- i)I did poorly in French because my mother is French.

## HAS ANYTHING IMPROVED IN YOUR LIFE SINCE THE SEPARATION/DIVORCE?

### 1. NO IMPROVEMENT

a) NO (3, 3)

### 2. IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONSHIPS

a) YES, MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY FATHER (4, 2)

b) YES, MY RELATIONSHIP WITH BOTH PARENTS HAS IMPROVED (2, 0)

c) IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONSHIPS - With siblings (0, 2)

i) Yes, my relationship with my sister

ii) Yes, brought me closer to my brother

d) IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONSHIPS - With mom (8, 2)

i) Yes my relationship with my mother/ I'm closer to my mom

ii) I don't fight with my mother as much

e) IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONSHIPS - No triangulation (3, 0)

i) Yes, I'm no longer stuck between my parents

ii) A separate relationship with each parent is more comfortable/better

### 3. I HAVE IMPROVED

a) YES, MY SELF-CONFIDENCE HAS IMPROVED (1, 0)

b) YES, I LEARNED I HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF (1, 0)

c) YES, I'M MORE DIRECT (1, 0)

d) YES, I'M MORE INDEPENDENT (1, 0)

e) YES, I'M MORE AWARE OF MY OWN RELATIONSHIPS (0, 1)

f) I HAVE IMPROVED - Clearer re: values (2, 0)

i) I'm clearer about what is important to me

ii) I'm more focussed

### 4. IMPROVEMENT IN GENERAL

a) ALMOST EVERY ASPECT OF MY LIFE HAS IMPROVED (1, 0)

b) YES, I HAVE MORE FREEDOM (1, 0)

c) YES MY SOCIAL LIFE (1, 0)

**d)IMPROVEMENT IN GENERAL - Happy (2, 0)**

**i)We are happier**

**ii)I'm happier.**

**e)IMPROVEMENT IN GENERAL - Less conflict (4, 0)**

**i)Yes, because less conflict**

**ii)Yes, the tension in the house has lifted**

**iii)We are no longer living in fear**



**WHAT WAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR MOM LIKE BEFORE THE SEPARATION/ DIVORCE?**

**1. POSITIVE**

- a) WONDERFUL/ EXCELLENT/ VERY GOOD/ SHE WAS EVERYTHING TO ME (3, 2)
- b) VERY CLOSE (3, 1)
- c) EASY TO TALK TO / TALK ABOUT ANYTHING (2, 3)
- d) PRETTY CLOSE/ CLOSE BUT NOT ON A PERSONAL LEVEL (2, 1)
- e) POSITIVE - Pretty good (4, 2)
  - i) Generally good/ pretty good
  - ii) Pretty good. She was very nurturant
- f) POSITIVE - Friends (3, 0)
  - i) We were more like friends
  - ii) One of my best friends
- g) POSITIVE - OTHER (1, 0)
  - i) Non-judgmental
  - ii) I respected my mom

**2. NEUTRAL**

- a) SOME CONFLICT (6, 2)
- b) WE DIDN'T TALK ABOUT FEELINGS/ DIDN'T TALK TO HER ABOUT PERSONAL STUFF (3, 2)
- c) NEUTRAL - Activities (3, 0)
  - i) We'd do things together/ do stuff together
  - ii) We hung out.
- d) NEUTRAL - Average (1, 1)
  - i) Not really close/ not close but we got along
  - ii) Average
- e) NEUTRAL - Other (2, 1)
  - i) I was her advisor; she was fragile
  - ii) She disciplined me
  - iii) Some distance in teenage years

**3. AMBIVALENT (5, 0)**

- i) She'll do anything (for you). She's so nice you take advantage
- ii) Pretty close but she was intrusive
- iii) Very close, but we argued because of Dad's drinking
- iv) Good but she was irritating / aggravating

**4. NEGATIVE**

a) LOTS OF CONFLICT/ ROCKY (2, 0)

b) NEGATIVE - Poor relationship (1, 1)

- i) Very poor/ bad
- ii) Not too good

c) NEGATIVE - Lack of relationship (0, 2)

- i) I avoided my mom
- ii) I didn't want a relationship with my mom at first

d) NEGATIVE - OTHER (4, 1)

- i) She made me angry
- ii) Didn't trust her so wouldn't go to her with problems
- iii) I hated her (didn't like her) because she couldn't walk away from an argument
- iv) In my culture there are many things you are not allowed to do- so I couldn't talk to my mother about what I do
- v) She was depressed

**WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR MOTHER LIKE SINCE THE SEPARATION/ DIVORCE?**

**1. POSITIVE**

- a) MUCH LESS CONFLICT ( 1, 0)
- b) WE ARE CLOSER (1, 0)
- c) SHE RESPECTS MY OPINIONS / CHOICES MORE NOW (2, 0)
- d) POSITIVE - Improved (3, 2)
  - i) Its improved a bit / Getting better now
  - ii) Its gotten stronger
  - iii) Its improved lately.
  - iv) Its better. She never gets mad at me
  - v) The relationship has matured.
- e) POSITIVE - Improved communication (1, 4)
  - i) We are more open/ we can talk about anything
  - ii) Now we talk about more personal things
  - iii) She talks to me about more topics/she's more open/she talks to me more
  - iv) I talk to her a lot
  - v) Now we are much more direct with each other
  - vi) I make it clear I want a relationship
- f) POSITIVE - Friends (4, 0)
  - i) She's more of a friend now, a confidante
  - ii) She's my best friend
- g) POSITIVE - Trust (2, 0)
  - i) She trusts me
  - ii) She's the only person in the world I can trust 100%
- h) POSITIVE - More to share (2, 1)
  - i) We have more to share (more in common)
  - ii) We do more now
- i) POSITIVE - More effort (3, 0)
  - i) I make more of an effort now/We make more of an effort now
  - ii) She concentrates more on our relationship.

- j) POSITIVE - Freer to fight (1, 1)
  - i) Our relationship is more relaxed. We are freer to have conflict
  - ii) We are a little closer but now I can say no to her. We fight
- k) POSITIVE - Other (2, 0)
  - i) She's very supportive, generous
  - ii) Now I have an independent relationship with each parent

## **2. NEUTRAL**

- a) ITS THE SAME (5, 2)
- b) NEUTRAL - Emotional dependence (2, 0)
  - i) She leans on me emotionally
  - ii) She's dependent on me but she's always there for me too

## **3. AMBIVALENT** (2, 0)

- i) Its matured but because she is closer I've given up some autonomy
- ii) Improved, but she's stubborn and questions my love for her
- iii) A little closer but we don't talk about personal stuff

## **4. NEGATIVE**

- a) THERE IS MORE CONFLICT (3, 0)
- b) NEGATIVE - Worse (2, 0)
  - i) Its worse now (unspecified)
  - ii) Its worse, but improving
  - iii) She is out of the country so we are less close
  - iv) Its worse now because I realized she conditioned us to hate my father
- c) NEGATIVE - Lack of relationship (1, 1)
  - i) I want nothing to do with her / I wanted nothing to do with her
  - ii) I avoid her, distance myself / I avoided her
- d) NEGATIVE - Problems with Mom's behaviour (1, 2)
  - i) She tries to guilt me out
  - ii) She tries to overcompensate to get our love
  - iii) She is hesitant; afraid of being rejected
- e) NEGATIVE - Role reversal (2, 0)
  - i) I feel burdened by her problems
  - ii) Now the roles are reversed and I look after her

**f)NEGATIVE - Feelings (2, 0)**

- i)I pity her
- ii)I feel anger toward her
- iii)I feel betrayed
- iv)I feel resentment toward her/ I resent her
- v)Its bitter

**g)NEGATIVE - Other (1, 0)**

- i) We can't talk about Dad

**WHAT WAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR DAD LIKE BEFORE THE SEPARATION/ DIVORCE?****1. POSITIVE**

- a) POSITIVE - Very good relationship (2, 0)
  - i) Wonderful/excellent/very good/really good
  - ii) He was everything to me
- b) POSITIVE - Close (3, 0)
  - i) Very close
  - ii) Pretty close
- c) POSITIVE - Idealization (1, 1)
  - i) I idolized him.
  - ii) I couldn't imagine him doing something wrong/ I idolized him
- d) POSITIVE - Good relationship (4, 2)
  - i) Generally good/pretty well/ Good
  - ii) It was good. I was Daddy's little girl
  - iii) It was good. He was there for me
  - iv) Pretty good. We had good quality conversations
  - v) Pretty good
- e) POSITIVE - Other (1, 0)
  - i) I wanted to do well for him.
  - ii) It was peaceful.

**2. NEUTRAL**

- a) NEUTRAL - Activities (4, 2)
  - i) We did stuff together
  - ii) Not close but we did things together
- b) NEUTRAL - Other (1, 1)
  - i) Like a coach and athlete
  - ii) I talked to him when I needed money.
  - iii) I had to initiate contact.
  - iv) We got along OK; I stayed out of his way

**3. AMBIVALENT (0, 2)**

- i) It was a love/hate relationship. He was great when sober; abusive when drinking
- ii) Close but conflictual

**4. NEGATIVE**

a) NOT CLOSE/DISTANT (3, 2)

b) COULDN'T TALK/ WE DIDN'T TALK ABOUT PERSONAL STUFF/ NO HEART TO HEARTS (4, 2)

c) RARELY AROUND/ALWAYS WORKING/UNINVOLVED IN MY LIFE (2, 2)

d) NEGATIVE - Lack of warmth (0, 1)

- i) Not affectionate
- ii) He was strong cold iron dad.

e) NEGATIVE - Dislike (5, 0)

- i) Didn't like him
- ii) We hated each other.
- iii) I wished he would die soon
- iv) I chose not to be around him.
- v) Not very good: we don't click

f) NEGATIVE - Conflict (3, 0)

- i) Very poor/always fighting/turbulent
- ii) Some conflict
- iii) We fought. He was very autocratic

g) NEGATIVE - Abuse (4, 0)

- i) Mentally/emotionally abusive
- ii) I was afraid of his possible violence
- iii) Physically abusive/ Very bad. Sometimes he hit me
- iv) Verbally abusive

h) NEGATIVE - Others (4, 1)

- i) He tried to change me
- ii) Caught between my mom and my dad
- iii) He started to drink a lot
- iv) It was hard around the time of the separation.

## WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR DAD LIKE SINCE THE SEPARATION/ DIVORCE?

### 1. POSITIVE

- a) POSITIVE - Improved (3, 1)  
 i) Improved relationship (unspecified)  
 ii) Its pretty good.  
 iii) Improved, because not around each other all the time/see each other less
- b) POSITIVE - Improved communication (5, 2)  
 i) I talk with him more  
 ii) We communicate a lot better.  
 iii) Its better. We talk less now but he's a better listener  
 iv) Its better. I opened myself up to him and told him who I really am.  
 v) He's more honest
- c) POSITIVE - Closer (2, 0)  
 i) We're closer.  
 ii) I'm more in touch with dad  
 iii) Its much better. I've gotten to know him
- d) POSITIVE - Make more effort (1, 1)  
 i) Better, we make more of an effort  
 ii) He works harder at the relationship
- e) POSITIVE - Spoils me (2, 0)  
 i) He spoils me now; his way of making up for not being there/ he spoils me now  
 ii) He tries to make up for the things he did wrong.
- f) POSITIVE - Less conflict (3, 0)  
 i) Fewer arguments  
 ii) Better, we no longer fight
- g) POSITIVE - Viewed differently (2, 0)  
 i) Now he sees me as an adult  
 ii) He treats me more as an individual
- h) POSITIVE - No triangulation (2, 0)  
 i) Now I have an independent relationship with each parent  
 ii) Better. Now I can tell my dad my side because I'm not in the middle between mom and dad anymore.
- i) POSITIVE - Other (2, 1)  
 i) I rely on him more  
 ii) I'm more patient; I treat him better  
 iii) Its better. We don't talk about mom



iv)He's more affectionate

j)POSITIVE - View dad differently (1, 1)

i)I know him as a person now, less as a dad

ii)Now I see him as a different person; he's fallible.

## **2.NEUTRAL**

a)NEUTRAL - Other (4,1)

i)I avoid talking about the split

ii)Better relationship by email than it would be in person

iii)Now he's sober on Sunday nights when I phone him

iv)Its the same

## **3. NEGATIVE**

a)NOT AS CLOSE AS WE USED TO BE (0, 1)

b)THERE IS MORE CONFLICT (1, 0)

c)I FEEL MORE PRESSURE TO PLEASE HIM / DO WELL FOR HIM (1, 0)

d)I FEEL/FELT ABANDONED (1, 0)

e)NEGATIVE - Little or no relationship (6, 1)

i)I haven't seen him since/not much contact. We lead separate lives

ii)We don't have a relationship.

iii)I don't see him as often.

iv)I don't want anything to do with him / I keep communication to a minimum.

less v)There's not much contact. He has to work out some issues and drink before I'm willing to develop a relationship with him

f)NEGATIVE - Worse (0, 5)

i)It was really bad for the first year

ii)Its gone down. I'm all he's got left so I look out for him at a cost to myself

iii)At first it was worse. He drank more

iv)A lot worse

g)NEGATIVE - Less or poorer communication (6, 0)

i)Not as solid. Now we talk about nothing - small talk/ we can't talk openly

ii)I can't talk to him

iii)At first we were closer but now we don't talk at all

iv)He doesn't know what to say/ he has trouble expressing himself

v)Dad has trouble expressing his emotions

vi)He still lays guilt trips on me

**h)NEGATIVE - Anger (0, 2)**

i)I'm very angry

ii)I'm angry with him because he is manipulative with me

iii)I really resented him

**i)NEGATIVE - Can't relate (3, 0)**

i)I can't relate to him

ii)I'm uncomfortable with him.

iii)I don't know who he is anymore

**j)NEGATIVE - Sorrow (1, 1)**

i)I feel sorry for him

ii)I feel sad for him

**k)NEGATIVE - Lack of warm feelings (3, 0)**

i)I don't care about him anymore.

ii)I have no patience for him.

iii)I don't approve of or respect him

**l)NEGATIVE - Other (2, 1)**

i)I don't want to please him anymore

ii)We had physical fights

iii)He tries too hard to make us closer

iv)He's more manipulative with me.

## IN YOUR OPINION HAS YOUR MOTHER/FATHER CHANGED?

### 1. POSITIVE CHANGE

- a) YES, HAPPIER (Female participant - Mom 8, Dad 3)  
(Male participant - Mom 1, Dad 0)
- b) YES, MORE LAID BACK/CALMER/LESS STRESSED  
(Mom 2, Dad 3)  
(Mom 0, Dad 1)
- c) YES, A LOT STRONGER (Mom 5, Dad 0)  
(Mom 1, Dad 0)
- d) YES, GROWN UP/MATURED (Mom 0, Dad 1)  
(Mom 0, Dad 1)
- e) POSITIVE CHANGE - Open (Mom 1, Dad 0)  
(Mom 0, Dad 0)
- i) She is more open.  
ii) Yes, more open-minded
- f) POSITIVE CHANGE - Sure of self (Mom 2, 1)  
(Mom 1, Dad 0)
- i) S/he knows better what s/he wants  
ii) Yes, she is much more self-confident/ sure of herself
- g) POSITIVE CHANGE - Independent (Mom 7, Dad 2)  
(Mom 2, Dad 0)
- i) Yes, more independent/ less dependent  
ii) Yes, starting to take responsibility for herself / looking out for herself
- h) POSITIVE CHANGE - Carefree (Mom 3, Dad 0)  
(Mom 1, Dad 0)
- i) Yes, more carefree/ unrestrained  
ii) Yes, she's a carpe diem person  
iii) Yes, takes more risks
- i) POSITIVE CHANGE - Doing new things (Mom 4, Dad 4)  
(Mom 2, Dad 0)
- i) Yes, s/he is exploring things for her(him)self/ experiencing new things/doing what s/he wants to do  
ii) Yes, does more things for pleasure

iii) Starting to live his/her life

j) POSITIVE CHANGE - Greater role in our lives (Mom 0, Dad 2)  
(Mom 0, Dad 1)

i) Yes, taken on a greater role in our lives/ more responsibility

ii) He's trying. He realizes we want a relationship

k) POSITIVE CHANGE - Other (Mom 5, Dad 2)  
(Mom 2, Dad 2)

i) She doesn't nag as much

ii) Yes, now he is wonderful

iii) Yes, he's more supportive now

iv) Yes, he has gained some perspective and now can see mom's position

v) She's loosened her grip on us

vi) He's more aware of himself and how he treats others.

vii) Yes, she is very active

viii) She is more outgoing

ix) More friends

x) She's been forced to accept that she can't control us anymore

## 2. AMBIVALENT CHANGE (Mom 0, Dad 2) (Mom 0, Dad 1)

i) Yes, his behaviour toward me has changed, but his character hasn't

ii) Yes, changed more in my eyes than in reality

## 3. NEGATIVE CHANGE

a) YES, HE IS DRINKING MORE (Mom 0, Dad 1)  
(Mom 0, Dad 0)

b) NEGATIVE CHANGE - Not as happy (Mom 1, Dad 1)  
(Mom 1, Dad 0)

i) Yes, not as happy

ii) She has more worries.

c) NEGATIVE CHANGE - Negative personality or behaviour (Mom 0, Dad 2)  
(Mom 0, Dad 1)

i) Yes, surprised by awful behaviour/new parts of personality/ done awful things

ii) Yes, he's become extremely selfish

d) NEGATIVE CHANGE - Abandoned or lost part of self (Mom 0, Dad 2)  
(Mom 0, Dad 0)

i) He's abandoned his Spanish culture

ii) He's adopting others' ideals instead of what's closest to his heart.

e)NEGATIVE CHANGE - Dysphoric emotions (Mom 3, Dad 4)  
(Mom 0, Dad 0)

- i)Yes, bitter now, hardened
- ii)Yes, he's more cynical
- iii)Yes, at first she was happy energetic and optimistic but now she is more negative and angry
- iv)Yes he is hurt
- v)Yes, now she is stubborn

f)NEGATIVE CHANGE - Other (Mom 3, Dad 1)  
(Mom 1, Dad 0)

- i)She is more lost; drifting
- ii)He feels he is less because he couldn't support us financially
- iii)He's gotten worse (unspecified)
- iv)He feels he is less because of the divorce
- v)Yes, she has lost her independence and is clingy
- vi)She would suffer for others.
- vii)Yes, does much more for herself, much less for us

NO/ DON'T KNOW (Mom 1, Dad 6)  
(Mom 1, Dad 3)

- i)No
- ii)Don't know, I haven't seen him/ don't know I rarely see him

## **DO YOU WORRY ABOUT YOUR PARENTS?**

### **1. NO WORRY (4, 0)**

a)NO

### **2. WORRY ABOUT BOTH**

a)WORRY ABOUT BOTH - Emotional Issues (1, 0)

i)I worry because both are lonely

ii)Yes, I worry about emotional breakdown

b)WORRY ABOUT BOTH -Aging (1, 2)

i)Yes because they grow older

ii)Yes, I worry about their health

iii)The frailty is creeping in.

### **1. WORRY ABOUT MOM**

a)YES, I WORRY ABOUT MY MOM (0,1)

b)WORRY ABOUT MOM - Re: mother's physical and emotional health (9, 2)

i)I worry about emotional breakdown for my mom/I worry that my mom will have an emotional breakdown

ii)I'm worried about my mom. She is depressed and suicidal

iii)My mom is always upset

iv)I worry about my mom's negative moods / her depression

v)Yes, I worry if she is happy

vi)I worry because my mom is lonely

vii)I worried when they broke up because she didn't eat for two weeks

viii)I worry because I've hurt my mom

ix)Because of her health problems/ her physical health

x)I worry about mom's physical and emotional health and well-being

c)WORRY ABOUT MOM- Worry re: Mom's work/finances (3, 2)

i)Yes, I worry because she works too hard

ii)My mom has so much on her plate.

iii)Yes, I worry because my mom can't get work

iv)I worry about my mom's financial situation

v)Its difficult to deal with the younger children

vi)I'm worried that I'll be stuck with my mom (supporting her) for the rest of my life

d)WORRY ABOUT MOM - Concern re: Mom's future (4, 0)

- i)I worry about my mom's future, financial and otherwise
- ii)My mom will chose to be alone for the rest of her life
- iii)I worry about mom when I leave home
- iv)I worry that my mom won't get a life for herself

e)WORRY ABOUT MOM - Other (2, 2)

- i)I worry because my mom's husband is sick.
- ii)I worry because I don't like my mom's boyfriend
- iii)Yes, I worry that people will take advantage of her
- iv)Yes, I worry if she is doing what she wants to do, or what she thinks is

right

#### 4.WORRY ABOUT DAD

a)WORRY ABOUT DAD - General concern (1, 1)

- i)I worry about my dad because he is not doing well.
- ii)I worry because my dad's situation is not good

b)WORRY ABOUT DAD - Concern re: dad's emotional health (5, 2)

- i)I worry that my dad gets depressed
- ii)I worry because my dad is unhappy
- iii)I worry because my dad holds all his feelings in
- iv)He's extremely vulnerable
- v)I worry because my dad is lonely.
- vi)I worry that my dad will be an old old man who is alone
- vii)My dad hopes for a reconciliation that will never happen

c)WORRY ABOUT DAD - Concern re: drinking (1, 1)

- i)I worry dad will drink too much and become a recluse
- ii)He'll drink himself to death

d)WORRY ABOUT DAD - Concern re: hurt hid feelings (1, 0)

- i)I worry about hurting my dad's feelings/ I worry because I hurt my dad

e)WORRY ABOUT DAD - Concern re: Dad won't change (2, 0)

- i)I worry that my dad will stay the same / not change

f)WORRY ABOUT DAD - Other (5,1)

- i)I worry about my dad because he has changed so much
- ii)I worry about my dad because he's so far away
- iii)He's wrecking his life.
- iv)Yes, I worry because my dad has never done domestic chores before
- v)Yes, I worry that my dad will be in a motorcycle accident
- vi)I worry that my dad will become violent with my mom
- vii)My dad is poor

**DO YOU FEEL A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS YOUR PARENTS?**

**1. NOT RESPONSIBLE (9, 1)**

- i) No
- ii) No, my dad knows what he wants and he doesn't need help
- iii) No for my dad because he hasn't given me much

**2. RESPONSIBLE**

a) YES, I FEEL THE NEED TO BECOME FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT SOON  
(1, 1)

b) RESPONSIBLE - To both parents (2, 1)

- i) Yes, I look out for both of them
- ii) Yes, if I could take all their pain and put it on myself I would
- iii) Because I initiated the separation, I am responsible for how they are

now

iv) Yes, in my culture, once you reach a certain age, you are responsible for your parents

c) RESPONSIBLE - Meet parents' expectations (1, 0)

- i) Yes, much of their happiness comes from me
- ii) To be the most neutral for the both of them
- iii) I want to live up to her expectations

d) RESPONSIBLE - Other (2, 2)

i) I feel responsible for considering who they are and what they believe.

- ii) Yes, my dad needs someone to look out for him
- iii) Yes, I plan to move back to Hong Kong to live with her
- iv) My mom goes out and drinks now

e) RESPONSIBLE - Responsible for Mom (emotionally) (4, 2)

- i) I feel emotionally responsible to my mom
- ii) Yes, because I am her best friend and she is lonely
- iii) Yes, because I help mom through this emotionally
- iv) Yes, I'll phone her and invite her out because I don't want her sitting around and being miserable

f) RESPONSIBLE - Responsible to Mom (grateful) (3, 0)

- i) I feel responsible toward my mom because she has given me so much
- ii) Yes, because my mom has given me so much I want to give her something back
- iii) Yes, I feel responsible for my mom because she has looked after me for so long



g)RESPONSIBLE - Responsible to Mom ( help) (2, 0)

i)I'm responsible to my mom in helping her run the household.

ii)I always feel a responsibility toward my mom. If something needs doing, its my place to do it

h)RESPONSIBLE - Responsible to Dad (grateful) (1, 1)

i)I feel indebted to my dad for all the things he has done for me.

ii)For my dad because he's given far too much to me.

i)RESPONSIBLE - Distance (1, 0)

i)Yes, but we are separated by distance

ii)Yes, but my dad and I are separated by distance

### 3.SPLIT RESPONSIBILITY (4, 1)

i)No for dad, yes for mom (unspec.)

ii)No for mom, yes for dad (unspec.)

iii)Yes for my mom, but I feel obligation, not responsibility, for my dad

iv)Yes and no; I'm ambivalent

7

J.

**IN WHAT WAY DO YOU HELP YOUR PARENTS? WHAT DO YOU HELP YOUR FATHER WITH?****1. NO HELP (13, 2)**

- i) No
- ii) No, he doesn't ask for help because we are girls

**2. HELP**

a) YES (UNSPECIFIED) (1, 0)

b) YES, I HELP HIM WITH HOUSEWORK (2, 1)

c) HELP - Emotional support (7, 3)

- i) Emotional support
- ii) I encourage him to move on
- iii) Emotional support, but it's not my choice
- iv) Yes, I talk to him more because he has no one to talk to
- v) Tried to help him with his drinking
- vi) Yes, by letting him know I want communication links; a relationship
- vii) I help him feel successful as a father / give him something to be proud

of

d) HELP - With business (2, 1)

- i) Help him with his work
- ii) I help him with his business

e) HELP - Other (3, 1)

- i) My dad needs all my help
- ii) Yes, I helped him realize what he is doing
- iii) I help my father write the journal of his travels
- iv) By being independent

**IN WHAT WAY DO YOU HELP YOUR PARENTS? WHAT DO YOU HELP YOUR MOTHER WITH?**

**1. NO HELP**

a) I DON'T HELP MY MOM (4, 0)

**2. HELP**

a) HELP BY GIVING HER FEEDBACK FOR DECISION-MAKING/ ADVICE (2, 3)

b) BY BEING INDEPENDENT (1, 0)

c) HELP - Emotional support (14, 4)  
 i) I help through emotional support  
 ii) I encourage her to move on  
 iii) Tried to help her with her drinking  
 iv) By giving her something to feel proud of

d) HELP - Household tasks (7, 2)  
 i) I help with housework / running the household/chores  
 ii) I help her move stuff

e) HELP - With other family members (2, 0)  
 i) I help look after my sisters/ I help raising my sister  
 ii) Help my mom support my grandma

f) HELP - Working on our relationship (1, 1)  
 i) I help by indicating I want a relationship  
 ii) I help by making more of an effort; I call her

g) HELP - Other (4, 1)  
 i) Financial support  
 ii) I moved back home  
 iii) I help her with everything  
 iv) I read English letters for her

**HAS THIS CHANGED SINCE THE DIVORCE?****1.NO CHANGE**

a)NO (8, 0)

**2.CHANGE**

a)CHANGE - Help dad less (1, 1)

i)Yes, I helped him before but not now

ii)I help my dad less and my mother more

b)CHANGE - Help mom less (2, 0)

i)I don't help my mom now, but I help my dad more

ii)I don't help mom now but I help dad the same

c)CHANGE - Help mom more (4, 4)

i)Yes, I help my mom more now

ii)I give my mom more advice, as a friend would

d)CHANGE - Help both more now (8, 2)

i)Yes, I help more now

ii)Yes, I didn't help before

e)CHANGE - Other (3, 1)

i)Yes, I have to initiate contact

ii)Yes, I don't lie to her anymore

iii)Now she asks for help with things I used to do automatically

iv)He talks longer now

v)Now I help dad out of obligation

**IS LOYALTY TO ONE OR BOTH PARENTS AN ISSUE FOR YOU? (IF NECESSARY) DO YOU HOLD ALLEGIANCES WITH BOTH PARENTS OR ONE PARENT OVER THE OTHER?**

**1. LOYAL TO DAD**

- a) LOYAL TO DAD - With discomfort (1, 1)
- i) I feel guilty but I'm more loyal to my dad than my mom
  - ii) I shouldn't have unequal loyalty, but I'm more loyal to my dad
  - iii) Try to appear equally loyal, but greater loyalty to father

**2. LOYAL TO MOM**

- a) LOYAL TO MOM (11, 5)
- i) Not an issue, first loyalty is to my mother
  - ii) Its not an issue. I'm loyal to my mom first because she's got no one else
  - iii) I'm very loyal to my mother
  - iv) I try to protect my mom more than my dad
  - v) For specific issues between them (parents) I side with my mom.
  - vi) I try to stay out of it and not take sides but I see my mom's point of view more
- b) LOYAL TO MOM - With discomfort (5, 1)
- i) I feel guilty because I'm closer to my mom than my dad / I don't like to admit it but I'm more loyal to my mom
  - ii) I'm always loyal to my mom but sometimes I feel torn
  - iii) I'm more loyal to my mom but I feel sad for my dad
  - iv) Try to appear equally loyal, but greater loyalty to mother

**3. TRAPPED IN THE MIDDLE** (3, 0)

- i) I feel torn and each wants my full loyalty / I'm trapped in the middle always
- ii) Going out with my dad is betrayal of my mom
- iii) I'd feel guilty everytime I saw him

**4. LOYAL TO BOTH** (9, 1)

- i) I try to be equally loyal / I don't take sides / I'm equally loyal to both
- ii) I feel loyalty to both of them when they bad mouth each other
- iii) My mom thinks I favour my dad but I think I'm being fair
- iv) We don't favour, we spend equal amounts of time although we prefer time with mother
- v) I feel loyal to both of them but my mother wants all the loyalty

**5.OTHER**

(3, 2)

i)Its not equal, but its improving

ii)I'm confused about how loyal I am to my dad

iii)If worst came to worst I'd still be there for my father; there's still that tie

iv)I'm frustated with my brother for being loyal to my dad.

NO/ I DON'T KNOW, I CAN'T ANSWER THAT (1, 0)

**ARE YOU NOW, OR WAS THERE EVER A TIME SINCE THE SEPARATION/  
DIVORCE THAT YOU FELT ANGRY WITH ONE OR BOTH OF YOUR PARENTS?  
WHY?**

**1. ANGRY AT DAD**

a) YES, BECAUSE IF HE DIDN'T CHANGE I KNEW THEY'D SPLIT / FOR NOT CHANGING (4, 0)

b) YES, BECAUSE HE IS DRINKING SO MUCH/ FOR HIS DRINKING (3, 0)

c) ANGRY AT DAD - For leaving (2, 1)

i) Yes, because he left

ii) Yes, because I expected the three of us to be together

iii) Yes, for leaving this mess for us to clean up

d) ANGRY AT DAD - For ignoring me and my needs (3, 0)

i) Yes, for having no contact with me

ii) Because he had a girlfriend so he ignored me

iii) Yes, for travelling to Europe with his girlfriend when my brother and I were scraping rent together

e) ANGRY AT DAD - For his behaviour (2, 0)

i) Through the whole thing because of the way he has handled the situation

ii) Yes, for not taking responsibility for his behaviour and his choices

iii) Yes, I don't like him or what he is doing

f) ANGRY AT DAD - Because of his character (2, 1)

i) Yes, because he is really selfish

ii) Yes because he is so oblivious

iii) He is controlling

iv) Yes, I was angry at my father's manipulateness toward me

g) ANGRY AT DAD - Inadequate as a father (0, 1)

i) He didn't know how to be a father

ii) Yes because I feel more grown up than my father

h) ANGRY AT DAD - For behaviour toward mom (2, 0)

i) Yes, for hurting my mom

ii) For his put-downs of my mother

iii) For not supporting my mother in parenting issues.

iv) Not giving mom her fair share

i) **ANGRY AT DAD - For arguing (3, 3)**

i) Yes, for arguing all the time

ii) Yes, we bicker all the time

j) **ANGRY AT DAD - Because he's not happy (2, 0)**

i) Now because he's still not happy

ii) Yes, because he complains to us

k) **ANGRY AT DAD - Other (1, 1)**

i) Yes, because of all the change

ii) I'm so angry I can't even describe it

iii) Yes, because he said he didn't leave sooner because he said he didn't want my brother and I to suffer

iv) Yes, for ruining my exam

v) I want to help myself from being such a prick to him

vi) Angry at myself, sister and dad for not dealing with the problem earlier.

**2. NOT ANGRY AT DAD (8, 3)**

i) No, it's better to split if problems are too big

ii) No, I'm not angry

iii) Yes, I was angry at first but not now



**ARE YOU NOW, OR WAS THERE EVER A TIME THAT YOU FELT ANGRY WITH ONE OR BOTH OF YOUR PARENTS? WHY?**

**1. ANGRY AT MOM**

- a) YES, FOR TAKING OFF / RUNNING AWAY (1, 0)
- b) YES, FOR HAVING AN AFFAIR (1, 0)
- c) ANGRY AT MOM - Because of her character (3, 0)
  - i) Yes, because my mom is so overpowering/ overbearing
  - ii) Yes, because of her lack of motivation to do things for herself
  - iii) Yes, she was so angry and bitter she was hard to live with
- d) ANGRY AT MOM - For not moving on (5, 2)
  - i) Yes, for not getting on with the divorce / not just getting a divorce
  - ii) Yes, because mom can't let it go / she's dragging it out
  - iii) For not snapping out of it
  - iv) Yes, for not leaving my father sooner
  - v) Yes, for not getting rid of my dad right away
- e) ANGRY AT MOM - For behaviour with dad (2, 1)
  - i) Yes, for leading my father on all this time
  - ii) Yes, because dad tried hard and she rebuffed him
  - iii) Yes, for arguing all the time
  - iv) Yes, because my mom can only yell at my dad, not talk
- f) ANGRY AT MOM - Interference with child's relationship with father (2, 0)
  - i) Yes, because she was angry about my relationship with my dad
  - ii) Yes, for turning us against our father when we were growing up
- g) ANGRY AT MOM - Because its her fault (1, 2)
  - i) I blame her/ It was her fault
  - ii) Yes, because mom's nagging drove dad away
- h) ANGRY AT MOM - Child was blamed (1, 1)
  - i) Blaming me for the separation
  - ii) I was blamed for the divorce
- i) ANGRY AT MOM - Other (3, 2)
  - i) Yes (unspecified)
  - ii) Yes, for not supporting my sister enough
  - iii) Yes, for burdening me with details of court or her psychiatrist

- iv) For allowing my dad to act as if its still his home
- v) Yes, because I expected the three of us to be together

**2. NOT ANGRY WITH MOM (12, )**

- i) No, its better to split if problems are too big
- ii) No (unspecified)
- iii) No, I have no right to be angry for her wanting to be happy

**IF NOT ANGRY, WHAT EMOTION OR EMOTIONS DESCRIBES HOW YOU FEEL OR FELT?**

**1. NEGATIVE EMOTIONS**

- a) REGRET (1<sup>3</sup>, 0)
- b) DISAPPOINTED (2, 0)
- c) I WAS FRUSTRATED THAT MY MOM COULDN'T SNAP OUT OF IT (1, 0)
- d) NEGATIVE EMOTIONS - Upset (2, 0)
  - i) Very upset
  - ii) I was upset; future family events would be changed (eg. weddings)

**2. NEUTRAL EMOTIONS (2, 0)**

- i) Indifferent
- ii) Confused / didn't understand

**3. POSITIVE EMOTIONS (2, 0)**

- i) Relief
- ii) I was glad; I was sick of the fighting

**4. OTHER (2, 1)**

- i) Realized that relationships don't have to be ugly and full of conflict
- ii) Angry at myself sister and my dad for not dealing with the problem earlier
- iii) I was angry at my dad but even angrier at his girlfriend

<sup>3</sup> Only 10 female participants and one male participant answered this question.

**WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST DIFFICULT TRANSITION FOR YOU SINCE THE SEPARATION/ DIVORCE?**

**1. RELATIONSHIP TO FAMILY**

- a) "PERFECT FAMILY" MYTH SHATTERED (1, 0)
- b) RELATIONSHIP TO FAMILY - Loss of family (2, 3)
  - i) I don't have two parents anymore / the concept of having a mom and a dad together / the whole family together
  - ii) Realizing I don't have a family
  - iii) Having to cope without both parents
- c) RELATIONSHIP TO FAMILY - Caught between parents (1, 1)
  - i) Being in the middle of arguments between my parents
  - ii) Christmas and holidays; where do I spend them?
- d) RELATIONSHIP TO FAMILY - Moving out (5, 0)
  - i) Moving out of the family home
  - ii) Leaving the family home
  - iii) Moving away

**2. RELATIONSHIP WITH MOM**

- a) RELATIONSHIP WITH MOM - Watching mother's pain (1, 0)
  - i) Watching my mother struggle.
  - ii) Seeing my mother so lonely / alone
  - iii) Seeing my mother so upset at first
- b) RELATIONSHIP WITH MOM - Emotional support for Mom (2, 1)
  - i) Still supporting my mother emotionally
  - ii) Becoming stronger for my mom.
  - iii) Moving in with my mother
- c) RELATIONSHIP WITH MOM - Mom's new partner (2, 1)
  - i) My mother's remarriage/ Mom seeing another guy
  - ii) Conflict with my mom's boyfriend.
- d) RELATIONSHIP WITH MOM - Moving away (2, 0)
  - i) Moving away from my mother
  - ii) My mother moved out of town
- e) RELATIONSHIP WITH MOM - Other (0, 2)
  - i) Communicating with my mother
  - ii) Missing my mom look after me; her nurturance.

**3.RELATIONSHIP WITH DAD****a)RELATIONSHIP WITH DAD - Lack of relationship (4, 2)**

- i)Realizing I never had a relationship with my father
- ii)My father left the city; abandoned me
- iii)Dad not being interested in what I'm doing
- iv)Not seeing my father everyday / not having a relationship with my dad

**b)RELATIONSHIP WITH DAD - Other (3, 0)**

- i)Dealing with dad as an individual
- ii)Living with my dad alone
- iii)Dealing with my dad as an alcoholic
- iv)Realizing I care about my dad and not being able to connect with him and feeling guilty about that

**3.POVERTY (3, 0)**

- i)Dealing with having less money/being so poor
- ii)Seeing my father so poor

**4.OTHER (10, 0)**

- i)I've become head of the household
- ii)Seeing sibling hurt
- iii)Doing day to day stuff for myself
- iv)My whole life changed.
- v)The different kind of parenting that each has provided
- vi)My mother's new lifestyle; more partying
- vii)Extended family occasions because of the tension between relatives
- viii)Thinking that my parents' divorce means that there is no hope for my marriage; I'm doomed
- ix)My parents went from being openly affectionate to hating each other

**HAS YOUR SENSE OF WHO AND WHAT YOUR FAMILY IS AND WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU CHANGED SINCE THE DIVORCE?**

**1. SENSE OF FAMILY HAS CHANGED**

a) YES, I DON'T TAKE FAMILY FOR GRANTED / YOU HAVE TO WORK AT IT (2, 1)

b) YES. I HAD THE DELUSION THAT WE WERE THE PERFECT FAMILY; OBVIOUSLY THAT WAS WRONG (1, 1)

c) SENSE OF FAMILY HAS CHANGED - United through loss (4, 1)

i) Yes, now I believe more strongly that one relies on family/ If anything happened they'd be there for me

ii) Its drawn everyone closer

iii) We are more united through loss

d) SENSE OF FAMILY HAS CHANGED - Changed boundary for family (4, 1)

i) My family is not such a closed system anymore.

ii) We've become segmented as a family; we don't work together as a whole / we are more separate now; looser

iii) Yes, my sense of family has extended to include other relatives

iv) Yes, my family is a mess; we are missing the glue

e) SENSE OF FAMILY HAS CHANGED - Loss of traditional family (3, 2)

i) Yes, my friends are my family

ii) I don't have the nuclear family anymore

iii) The structure has changed. We went from a traditional family to three roommates sharing a house

iv) My idea of family is different; I talk about mom or dad now, not family

v) The nuclear family isn't so great

f) SENSE OF FAMILY HAS CHANGED - Increased valuing of family (3, 1)

i) Yes, my family means more to me now than it ever did

ii) I appreciate my family more

g) SENSE OF FAMILY HAS CHANGED - Family size decreased (2, 0)

i) Yes, my sense of family has shrunk to mom, dad, and me

ii) Yes, I don't pretend to like my extended family anymore

h) SENSE OF FAMILY HAS CHANGED - Improved relationship with mom (2, 0)

i) Yes, I realized that my mom is the most important person in my life

ii) Yes, my family (my mom and I ) are closer now, so a better family

i) **SENSE OF FAMILY HAS CHANGED - Lack of relationship with dad (3, 0)**

i) I don't consider my dad to be family/ my dad is no longer part of the family

ii) Yes the family is still the 6 of us, but I have no respect for my father

iii) My father is around for financial support

j) **SENSE OF FAMILY HAS CHANGED - Other (6, 3)**

i) Yes, family is more than mom, dad and two kids; its a lot of intangibles

ii) Yes, my sister was cheated of real family time

iii) Yes, the meaning of past events changes

iv) I still believe a perfect family is possible

v) I feel pride in my parents for being good financial and emotional providers

vi) Yes, family means that you work together, not that parents provide for you

vii) I can be myself with family

viii) I don't have a family. I'm not close with them.

ix) I'm in the middle of two families.

**2. NO CHANGE (6, 1)**

i) No change

**WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT HUMAN NATURE AS A RESULT OF THE DIVORCE? (IF NECESSARY) ARE PEOPLE BASICALLY GOOD OR ARE THEY NATURALLY MEAN AND UNKIND?**

**1. POSITIVE (3, 0)**

- i) People are good. They just show it in different ways. Some people hide it.
- ii) People are naturally good, but communication is important
- iii) People are generally nice
- iv) I give people the benefit of the doubt

**2. NEUTRAL**

a) EVERYBODY CHANGES (2, 0)

b) NEUTRAL - Depends on the people (5, 1)

- i) Everyone is different / everyone has differences / depends on the people
- ii) It depends on the circumstances

c) NEUTRAL - Self-interest (1, 2)

- i) People generally look out for their own self-interest
- ii) It's human nature to do what you want
- iii) People follow what their instincts tell them

d) NEUTRAL - Relationships require work (4, 0)

- i) We need to work at relationships
- ii) People need to talk and share feelings

e) NEUTRAL - Human nature is learned (1, 0)

- i) Human nature is learned and can be unlearned
- ii) We are creatures of habit

f) NEUTRAL - Others (9, 2)

- i) Conflict is normal
- ii) I go by stereotypes
- iii) People naturally try to keep their family together
- iv) People are resilient
- v) If a relationship doesn't work don't force it
- vi) You've just got to get over it
- vii) People keep on trying in static situations
- viii) What doesn't kill you makes you stronger
- ix) There are lots of things to bring people together but less to keep them together
- x) Some people are just lost and that can't be changed



- xi) One decision can hurt so many people
- xii) Parents have flaws and they don't always know what they're doing

## **2.NEGATIVE**

- a) **NEGATIVE**- Anything can happen (3, 0)
  - i) Anything can happen / you can't expect anything; its more by chance; you don't know what'll happen/Things happen
  - ii) People are unpredictable and they make no sense
- b) **NEGATIVE** - Everyone can be mean (4, 3)
  - i) Everyone can be mean / nasty / ugly / evil
  - ii) People's bad sides emerge in crises
  - iii) People can be unkind to those they love; transform into someone you don't want to know
  - iv) People always seem ready to attack
- c) **NEGATIVE** - People are untrustworthy (3, 0)
  - i) Everything comes down to being able to trust people / hard to trust people
  - ii) I'm skeptical of people and their true feelings
  - iii) It comes down to trust
- d) **NEGATIVE** - People are undependable (3, 0)
  - i) You can't depend on people, so don't become dependent
  - ii) You can't depend on someone entirely or you'll get stung
  - iii) The only person you can really count on is yourself
- e) **NEGATIVE** - People don't care (1, 0)
  - i) People don't care as much as you thought
  - ii) Unless it directly affects people, its not important to them
- f) **NEGATIVE** - Negative character traits (2, 2)
  - i) People are selfish
  - ii) Its not as perfect as it seems
  - iii) People are petty
  - iv) Everyone is bitter

## HAS YOUR PARENTS' SEPARATION/ DIVORCE CHANGED YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUR OWN FUTURE LOVE RELATIONSHIPS?

### 1. NEGATIVE CHANGES IN EXPECTATIONS

- a)NEGATIVE CHANGES IN EXPECTATIONS - Lack of trust in men (2, 0)  
 i)Yes, I don't trust men as much  
 ii)Yes, I have no faith in men
- b)NEGATIVE CHANGES IN EXPECTATIONS - Relationships don't last (2, 0)  
 i)Yes, relationships won't last long because something changes over which you have no control  
 ii)Yes, love doesn't last; marriage makes it last longer
- c)NEGATIVE CHANGES IN EXPECTATIONS - Negativity (4, 0)  
 i)Yes, I'm more critical of relationships now; I question them more  
 ii)Yes, I'm more pessimistic; my relationships end up the same as my growing up (ie. parents' relationship)  
 iii)Yes, I'm bitter  
 iv)Yes, I'm more cautious and skeptical now/ I'm more cautious
- d)NEGATIVE CHANGES IN EXPECTATIONS - Expect divorce (1, 1)  
 i)The possibility of divorce (for myself) is more believable now  
 ii)Yes, my family is cursed (everyone gets divorced)
- e)NEGATIVE CHANGES IN EXPECTATIONS - Other (3, 0)  
 i)I lash out at boyfriends if they remind me of my dad  
 ii)You have to be independent and look after yourself or you're going to get screwed  
 iii)I don't want to be like my parents

### 2. LESSONS LEARNED

- a)LESSONS LEARNED - Relationships are hard work (2, 1)  
 i)Yes, realized how hard / complicated relationships are  
 ii)Yes, I realized how hard you have to work at relationships  
 iii)I take it a lot more seriously than other people do  
 iv)Yes, work on it and work it out or end it  
 v)I never realized how hard it would be to find someone
- b)LESSONS LEARNED - Living together is an option (1, 1)  
 i)Yes, its OK to live with someone  
 ii)As long as you live together you remain independent and you don't get that "merging as one". When separation happens it isn't as bad

c) LESSONS LEARNED - Question beliefs (1, 1)

- i) Yes, I wonder about the existence of true love
- ii) Yes, now I question staying faithful
- iii) I don't believe in romantic love

d) LESSONS LEARNED - Other (5, 1)

- i) Yes, I'll learn from my parents' mistakes
- ii) Yes, now I see love and marriage through a religious framework
- iii) Yes, you really have to find someone that is compatible
- iv) Yes, I'm sure in myself but not sure in others.
- v) I won't settle for less than absolute open communication

**3. NO CHANGE IN EXPECTATION**

- i) No change in expectation (12, 3)

## HAS YOUR PARENTS' SEPARATION/ DIVORCE CHANGED YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUR OWN FUTURE MARRIAGE?

### 1.NO CHANGE IN EXPECTATION

a)NO CHANGE (6, 3)

b)NO CHANGE, I NEVER WANTED TO GET MARRIED (1, 0)

### 2.NEGATIVE CHANGE

a)I DON'T TRUST MEN AS MUCH / I HAVE NO FAITH IN MEN (1, 0)

b)YOU HAVE TO BE INDEPENDENT AND LOOK AFTER YOURSELF OR YOU GET SCREWED / I DON'T WANT TO BE DEPENDENT (2, 0)

c)NEGATIVE CHANGE - Mistrust of marriage (2, 0)

i)I have a mistrust of marriage. Can you really be with someone for the rest of your life? / I have a mistrust of marriage and lifetime commitment

ii)I'm skeptical now /I'm skeptical re: lifetime relationship

d)NEGATIVE CHANGE - No marriage (3, 1)

i)Yes, don't get married / I don't want to get married now / husband and kids may not be ideal for me / Marriage? No way!

ii)The extra commitment ties you together. Its not worth it.

e)NEGATIVE CHANGE - My marriage doomed (3, 1)

i)Yes, my family is cursed (everyone gets divorced) / yes, there is no hope for my marriage; I'm doomed

ii)Yes, as soon as I get married, my relationship will be over

iii)Yes, relationships won't last long because something changes over which you have no control

f)NEGATIVE CHANGE - Possibility of divorce (3, 1)

i)I worry about my own future marriage; will we separate or divorce?

ii)I don't know if my marriage will be successful but I'll try my best to make it that way / the possibility of my own divorce is more believable now / I'm hoping when I get married I won't divorce but I don't know

iii)Yes, I'm more pessimistic; my relationships end up the same as my growing up (ie. parents' relationship)

g)NEGATIVE CHANGE - Caution and anxiety (3, 2)

i)Yes, I'm more cautious

ii)I'm scared to get married

iii)Yes. I'm sure in myself but not sure in others.

iv)How will I know I've found the "one" to marry?

### **3. LESSONS LEARNED**

a) YES, I'M GOING TO LIVE WITH THE PERSON BEFORE I MARRY  
(1, 0)

b) I WANT TO GET MARRIED WHEN I'M OLDER / NOT YOUNG / NOT FOR A LONG TIME (3, 0)

b) YES, I'LL LEARN FROM MY PARENTS' MISTAKES (1, 0)

d) LESSONS LEARNED - Question fidelity (1, 0)

i) Can affairs make your marriage more fruitful because you appreciate your spouse more?

ii) Yes now I question staying faithful

e) LESSONS LEARNED - Relationships are hard work (2, 1)

i) Yes, I realize how hard/ complicated relationships are

ii) Yes, I realize how hard you have to work at relationships

iii) I take it a lot more seriously than other people do.

iv) Yes, work at it and work it out or end it

v) I never realized how hard it would be to find someone

f) LESSONS LEARNED - Marry when sure (4, 0)

i) Yes, get married for the right reasons

ii) Yes, it makes me see that you have to be really sure before you get married

g) LESSONS LEARNED - Other (4, 0)

i) Yes, now I see love and marriage through a religious framework

ii) Women have more choice about marriage now

iii) I won't settle for less than absolute open communication

iv) I don't believe in romantic love

v) Divorce is not an option

vi) People have a greater commitment in marriage

## ARE THERE ANY OTHER WAYS THAT YOUR PARENTS' SEPARATION/ DIVORCE CHANGED YOU?

### 1. POSITIVE CHANGES IN SELF

- a) POSITIVE CHANGES IN SELF - Emotional fluency (2, 0)
  - i) Yes, I'm more open about my feelings / I'm more honest about my feelings
  - ii) Aware of my own feelings
  - iii) Yes, it's made me very emotional
  - iv) More faith in intuitions
- b) POSITIVE CHANGES IN SELF - Open-minded (1, 0)
  - i) Yes, I'm more open-minded
  - ii) Yes, I look at things from several perspectives
- c) POSITIVE CHANGES IN SELF - Hardiness (3, 0)
  - i) Yes, I'm stronger
  - ii) More resilient
  - iii) More resourceful
  - iv) Yes, I'm tougher
- d) POSITIVE CHANGES IN SELF - Independent (6, 2)
  - i) Yes, I'm more independent
  - ii) I realized how independent you have to be.

### 2. POSITIVE CHANGES

- a) POSITIVE CHANGES - Friends (3, 0)
  - i) I appreciate my friends more
  - ii) Yes, my relationships with friends have opened up; they understand me
- b) POSITIVE CHANGES - Other (1, 2)
  - i) I quit drinking
  - ii) I have a new appreciation for my father.
  - iii) Yes, I'm more outgoing
  - iv) I'm more maternal to my siblings

### 3. NEUTRAL CHANGES IN SELF

- a) NEUTRAL CHANGES IN SELF - Realizations (4, 3)
  - i) It changed my point of view on everything
  - ii) Realized you can't have everything that you want
  - iii) Yes, I realized I'd rather be by myself than divorce
  - iv) Yes, I believe do what you want because you have to live with the consequences
  - v) Yes, I realized I need both parents to back me up
  - vi) Yes, I try to do the right thing but I don't always

- vii) Do what you want to do
- viii) Yes, I learned that money isn't everything; love is very important

- b) NEUTRAL CHANGES IN SELF - Awareness of chance (1, 2)
  - i) Yes, I realized anything could happen / anything can happen
  - ii) Yes, I try to take things as they come

- c) NEUTRAL CHANGES IN SELF - Accelerated maturation (7, 0)
  - i) Yes, I grew up fast/er / forced to grow up
  - ii) More responsible
  - iii) Yes I've grown. It opened up my eyes to the way things really are

#### **4. NEGATIVE CHANGES IN SELF**

- a) YES, I HAVE A TRUST ISSUE. IS THE PERSONA THE REAL PERSON? / MORE CAUTIOUS. I'M NOT AS TRUSTING AS BEFORE / I KEEP MY GUARD UP / MORE CRITICAL OF PEOPLE'S MOTIVES; I TAKE NOTHING AT FACE VALUE (2, 2)

- b) NEGATIVE CHANGES IN SELF - Negativity (4, 0)
  - i) Yes, I've become more critical of things / I see the faults in everybody now
  - ii) Yes, I'm more bitter toward men
  - iii) Yes, the changes in my mother have indirectly hurt me; I'm more negative

- c) NEGATIVE CHANGES IN SELF - Lack of relationship with father (2, 0)
  - i) Sensitive/sad about loss of father
  - ii) Yes, I realized I don't have much of a relationship with my father

- d) NEGATIVE CHANGES IN SELF - Other (1, 2)
  - i) Yes, I'm more vulnerable about the future; it was a wake up call
  - ii) I started using drugs/ I started partying and drinking a lot.
  - iii) I hate arguing
  - iv) Self-conscious

- NO/ DON'T KNOW (4, 1)

**Appendix G****Reliability Estimates**

1. Did you anticipate your parents' separation/divorce or were you surprised?  
Reliability  $r = .819$
2. What are the reasons for the separation/divorce as you see it?  
 $r = .899$   
How do you think your mother sees it?  
 $r = .878$   
How do you think your father sees it?  
 $r = .912$
3. Since the separation/divorce, has the financial status of your family changed? How has  
it changed for your mother?  
 $r = .807$   
How has it changed for your father?  
 $r = .407$   
Has this had a direct impact on you?  
 $r = .660$
4. Has the separation/divorce affected your schoolwork?  
 $r = .918$
5. Has anything improved in your life since the separation/divorce?  
 $r = .866$
6. What was your relationship with your mother like before the separation/divorce?  
 $r = .776$
7. What is your relationship with your mother like since the separation/divorce?  
 $r = .803$
8. In your opinion, has your mother changed?  
 $r = .673$
9. What was your relationship with your father like before the separation/divorce?  
 $r = .739$



10. What is your relationship with your father like since the separation/divorce?  
 $r = .740$
11. In your opinion, has your father changed?  
 $r = .858$
12. Do you worry about your parents?  
 $r = .951$
13. Do you feel a sense of responsibility toward your parents?  
 $r = .905$
14. In what way do you help your parents, if at all? What do you help your mother with?  
 $r = 1.0$   
What do you help your father with?  
 $r = .846$   
Has this changed since the divorce?  
 $r = .780$
15. Is loyalty to one or both parents an issue for you? (If necessary) Do you hold allegiances with both parents or one over the other?  
 $r = .887$
16. Are you now, or was there ever a time since the divorce, that you felt angry with one or both of your parents? Why?  
Why angry at mom  $r = .849$   
Why angry at dad  $r = .865$   
If not angry, what emotion or emotions describes how you feel or felt?  
 $r = .581$
17. What has been the most difficult transition for you since the separation/divorce?  
 $r = .969$
18. Has your sense of who and what your family is and what it means to you changed since the separation/divorce?  
 $r = .910$
19. What have you learned about human nature as a result of the separation/divorce? (If necessary) Are people basically good or are they naturally mean and unkind?  
 $r = .826$

20. Has your parents' separation/divorce changed your expectations for your own future love relationships?

$r = .923$

Has your parents' separation/divorce changed your expectations for your own future marriage?

$r = .689$

21. Are there any other ways that your parents' separation/divorce changed you?

$r = .827$