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IMPACT OF INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT ON ADJUSTMENT OF
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FAMILIES

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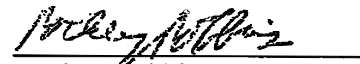
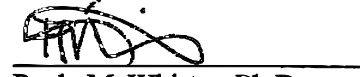
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IMPACT OF INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT ON ADJUSTMENT OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM DIVORCED AND INTACT
FAMILIES

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of parent's interparental conflict on the adjustment of African American college students. Studies in this area showed that conflict prior to and after divorce, age at time of divorce, and gender (males or females) significantly impacts adjustment in children. Most of the previous research in this area involved younger children and Caucasian Americans. Currently, there is a paucity of data examining the effect of divorce in a representative population of other ethnic groups. This research was important for three reasons. First, it examined the impact of interparental conflict on college students versus younger children. Second, it looked at several factors shown to impact adjustment of children of interparental conflict. Finally, it attempted to determine if the findings for Caucasians and younger children also generalize to African Americans. A convenience sample of (N=90) African American college students from intact and divorced homes participated in this study. Conflict was measured using the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale. Adjustment was measured using the College Adjustment Scale. The results showed that interparental conflict regardless, of family status (intact or divorced), significantly impacted adjustment in this sample of African American college students. The study further found that gender, age at the time of divorce, nor post divorce conflict impacted adjustment in this sample. Limitations of the study and implications for further research were also discussed.

Impact Of Interparental Conflict On Adjustment Of African American College Students From Divorced And Intact Families

Introduction

Divorces increased significantly over the past two decades with one in every two marriages ending in divorce (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1996; Turkat, 1995). A first marriage has a 45 percent chance of breaking up and a second marriage has an even greater chance (60 percent) of ending in divorce (Wallerstein, 2000). According to the National Center for Health Statistics [NCHS (2005)], the marriage rate for the year ending in December, 2005 was 7.5 per 1000 but the divorce rate was 3.6. Although there has been a small decline in the divorce rate over the past five years, the rate of divorce remains at least 50% of the rate of marriage and subject of divorce continues to be a source of study because of the large impact on families

The United States Census 2000 results on ethnic groups and divorce showed that of the total population, American Indians and Alaska Natives had the highest divorce rate: 11% for men, 14% for women. Asians Americans had the lowest percentage proportionally of separated or divorced (4% for men; 7% for women). African Americans and Caucasian American males varied slightly with 9% and 9.5%. However, there was a higher rate between African American women (12.8%) to Caucasian women (10.8%).

Nakonezny, Schull, and Rodgers (1995) noted that, the “no fault divorce law had a significant positive effect on the divorce rate across the 50 states – ensuring America’s place as the unrivaled leader in the worldwide divorce race,” (p.1) With no fault divorce

laws and changing attitudes about the “stigma” of divorce, it is much easier today for couples to simply exit troubled marriages.

While leaving an unhappy situation may be beneficial for some individuals, it can have devastating effects on the lives of others. Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1996) reported that in the 1980s people were under the illusion that divorce was time limited and viewed divorce as a transition that all members of the family would adjust to within a year or so. However, when the effects lasted beyond the typical two year period reported by Hetherington (1993), society was then faced with both long and short term problems for adults and children.

Hetherington (1993) also described the divorce process as an “extended chain of multiple transitions” (p. 49). The point at which individuals enter the divorce chain determines the evaluation of the effects of marital dissolution. Transition to divorce is influenced by a myriad of factors depending on the individual and, the circumstances, including moderating or protective factors, mediating factors, the perception and attitude of the individuals involved, and their economic and social support post divorce.

Moderating or protective factors tend to alleviate or lessen the impact of divorce. Tschann, Johnston, and Wallerstein (1989) found that greater personal resources before separation, such as higher SES for men and better psychological functioning for women, positively influenced later adjustment. The divorce rate has also been shown to be affected by such factors as education and socioeconomic status (Ivy, Newsome & Aroyewun, 2004; Fein, 2003) with lower socioeconomic and low education predicting greater risk of divorce and more divorce related adjustment problems. Other moderating

or protective factors might include employment, a supportive network of friends and family, support from a new partner and remarriage (Wang & Amato, 2000).

Mediating factors complicate or impede healthy transitioning in the divorce process. Mediating factors might include disruption of parent-child relationships, custody agreements that results in loss of contact with children , and relocation (Braver, Fabricius, & Ellman, 2003). Interparental conflict, lack of emotional support and change in socioeconomic status (Amato 2000; Braver & O'Connell, 1998) are well established mediating factors. Add to this variable, the psychological adjustment of the custodial parent, stressful life changes (parental remarriage, stepparents, stepsiblings (Amato, 1993; Morrison & Cherlin, 1995) and the lower involvement of non custodial fathers (Furstenberg, 1990), and it presents a picture of children of divorce living daily with tremendous stressors not ordinarily experienced by their peers. Finally, spouses who view marriage as a commitment for life also tend to experience more distress than those who initiate the divorce (Wang & Amato, 2000). Consequently, some individuals improve their adjustment gradually over time while others tend to experience long term difficulties.

Transitioning from divorce to a single life has different outcomes for different individuals and for various reasons. In recent years, studies in the area of divorce have increased and although findings depend on the variables studied (Demo & Acock, 1988), the results consistently show that children of divorce experience greater levels of behavioral, psychological, and emotional problems following divorce than their peers from homes in which the parents remained married (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith 1991; Ayoub, Deutsch, & Maraganore, 1999; Jekielek, 1998; Kline & Johnston 1991; Lee,

2001; McCabe, 1997; Zill, Morrison & Coiro, 1999). Research in the area of divorce shows that children's well being is also determined by a number of factors such as: gender, the age of the child at divorce, extent of interparental post-divorce conflict, quality of the parent-child relationship, and remarriage of one or both parent (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith 1991; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1996; Wallerstein, & Blakeslee, 2000;).

Amato (2001) also reported that despite the growth of school-based interventions, parenting classes, and divorce mediation, children continue to be significantly affected by divorce. Even children who lost parents through death tended to fare better than children of divorce (Amato & Keith, 1991). Ellis (2000) in a review of 30 years of research on divorce concluded that the "national experiment with divorce has been a failure for the children (p.33)."

Twenge (2000) reported that children's anxiety level has increased significantly over the years and one of the correlates involve the divorce rate in which the child may feel a loss of social connectedness and an increase in environmental danger. Negative outcomes are also seen in future relationships in which children of divorce tend to experience more problems in relationships than non divorced children (Amato & Booth, 2001) or to have more negative attitudes toward the family of origin (Amato, 1988). College age children were also less optimistic about future marriages. This was particularly prominent if parental conflict continued in the family of origin(Franklin, Janoff-Bulman & Roberts, 1990).

While there is an abundance of research on the impact of divorce on Caucasian American children and the numerous factors that mediate or moderate adjustment to

divorce, there is a paucity of data on the effect of divorce, particularly conflicted divorce, with other racial and ethnic groups. The 25-year study by Judith Wallerstein was highly notable in shedding light on the negative impact of divorce on children at various ages (Wallerstein, 1980; Wallerstein, 2000). However, the sample used was not representative of the United States or even the local population. The original sample was classified as middle-class socioeconomically and consisted of eighty-eight percent white, three percent African American, and nine percent interracial with one Asian and one Caucasian spouse (Wallerstein, 2000).

The intention of this study is to increase the body of literature on divorce by illuminating the experiences of African American children of divorce. Although the research in this area is limited, the study of the African American family adds a new and different cultural perspective into the divorce literature. The history of African American families in United States history has been severely influenced by slavery, racial discrimination, and cultural biases in every aspect of functioning. Although there are variations in cultural experiences even within the African American community in that not all African Americans come from the same cultural mind-set, have the same worldview, or same identity development, African Americans, as a group, have experienced similar cultural roots in the American culture (Morris, 2001).

Pinderhuges (2002) reported that the old joke that “African Americans are the only immigrants who were heavily recruited to come to this country, had escorts for the trip, and jobs waiting,” accurately describes the African American family’s initiation into the American society. Heavily influenced by the institution of slavery, unemployment after slavery, economic uncertainty, higher ratio of women to men and women to eligible

bachelors due to higher incarceration/institutionalization rate, African American families continue to struggle against influences not faced by other racial/ethnic groups (Pinderhuges, 2002).

To begin, the family in the majority American culture typically consisted of the nuclear unit of parents and the children. Other diverse family units were viewed as “deviant”. Whether it stems from the Afrocentric view that it originated in African traditions (Ivey, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 1993; Steward, J.C., 1996) or as a result of the conditions of slavery, African American family units in America are often considered “deviant” or dysfunctional because of the number of people typically involved in the life of the family, particularly the children. Gutman (1976) described the African American family as having a number of real and “fictive” (non blood related) kin. This implied that working with African American families of divorce involves more than the nuclear family of mother, father, and children. For African Americans, it may include the traditional nuclear family, extended family members and non-blood related members.

Since it is reasonable to assume that many rituals and traditions of groups are passed down through the generations, it is also conceivable that the experiences and conditions of slavery and of post Civil War conditions of African Americans have also become intergenerational. To study the African American family, one must go back in time to the impact of slavery and the pre and post civil war socioeconomic experiences of the family. During slavery, marriages and the concept of the African American “family unit” were not recognized or sanctioned (Wilson, 2002). In many instances, African American men were invisible except when considered out of control. African American women were often sexually exploited (Pinderhuges, 2002). The impact on relationships,

particularly (marriage) was that parents were separated from children, children from parents (Pinderhuges, 2002), and men were often not allowed to provide for or protect their families (Wilson, 2002). The concept of the family unit as it is understood today was non-existent during slavery and for some time afterward.

In post Civil War America, African American families found that they had exchanged one type of slavery for another. Instead of being bound by chains to a master for food, clothing, and shelter, African Americans found post Civil War racism and discriminative practices included limited opportunities for employment, housing and choice of potential mates (Barbarin, 2004; Sue & Sue, 2003; Wilson, 2002). With African Americans males disproportionately incarcerated and provided the lowest paying jobs with little chance for advancement resulting in males being poor potential mates for marriage. With the advent of welfare reform to help underprivileged Americans in poverty, African Americans families, who requested assistance, not only endured racial stereotypes of being lazy and irresponsible, they again experienced separation of the family due to welfare constraints in which women were encouraged to separate from husbands or fathers to leave homes in order to receive welfare support (Cahn, 1997). These practices not only placed undue stress on an already fragile family structure, it encouraged separation and divorce as a means of survival. Welfare reform laws of the past produced a historic trauma that is still impacting African American families today. (Cahn, 1997).

Despite the conditions of slavery and post Civil War life, African American couples did marry and many had long relationships (Barbarin, 2004; Gutman, 1976; Pinerhuges, 2002); there were children who were also reared in two parent, stable homes cared for

by parents. Ruggles (1994) found in a review of studies that African American families were similar to Caucasian American families in terms of the rate of two parent households and also in the rate of decline in two parent households between the years 1880 and 1980. Battle (1997) found that African American children from divorced single parent homes at lower SES scored significantly higher on standardized test measures than their counterparts from two-parent families. At higher SES level, no significant differences were found.

Fein (2003) found that not only does economic condition impact disruption of the marriage but the wife's economic prospect is also a factor. A woman was more likely to initiate a divorce if she has adequate financial support. Sweeney and Phillips (2004) found that educational attainment reduced the odds of marital disruption for African American women compared to Caucasian women.

After divorce, a primary source of stress in divorcing families is court litigation over custody of children and financial issues. According to Crosbie-Burnett and Lewis (1993), this source of stress is rare in African American families due to high court cost and a history of cultural bias toward African Americans by the judicial system.

Finally, although studies show differences between the races, the reasons for these differences have not been clarified. Barrett (2003), noted that true differences between the two racial groups, African Americans and Caucasian Americans, may be due more to temporal variables than to actual differences between the races. They found that African Americans tend to be more affected during the divorce phase compared to Caucasian Americans who expressed more depressive symptoms during the separation

phase. Regardless of the etiology of the differences, studies in this area clearly show the impact of divorce on families across racial lines.

Interparental Conflict

Typically, the divorce process involves transitioning from a biological two parent household to a separation of the parent's marital structure and disruption in several different areas of functioning. Specifically, children are clearly affected by the breakup of their parents and they typically experience changes in socioeconomic status, residential accommodations, social relationships as well as some degree of loss of one parent.

When this transition is exacerbated by constant court litigations, financial conflicts, loyalty issues, exposed to violence/abuse, and other issues between the parents, the well being of the child may be seriously diminished (Ellis, 2000). Roseby and Johnston, (1998) described the family environment of highly conflicted, chronically litigating divorcing parents as typically marked by parents' mutual distrust, fear, anger, and projection of blame on the other – the ex-partner. Kitzmann and Emery (1994) found that regardless of the settlement procedures (mediation and litigation); high conflict between parents was consistently associated with more behavioral problems in children.

Conflict can be described as occurring prior to divorce, after divorce, and varies in intensity (low, moderate, and high) and across several different areas or domains. Post separation conflict may be expressed covertly or overtly through on-going litigation, verbal and physical aggression, tactics of sabotage and deceit (Rand, 1997), and difficulty in communicating about the care of children 2-3 years after divorce (Johnston & Roseby, 1997). Johnson (1994) found that conflict can be categorized into different dimensions: *domain dimension* (financial support, property division, custody, child rearing, etc);

tactics dimension (how couples reach agreements, verbal reasoning, verbal aggression, physical coercion, physical aggression, attorney negation, mediation, litigation, judicial arbitration); *attitudinal dimension* (degree of negative emotional feelings or hostility). At any given time, a couple may be experiencing problems in one or more dimension (s) and may be perceived to be experiencing problems in one or another dimension by the spouse (Johnson, 1994).

A review of current studies indicate that there is a fairly high level of agreement on what constitutes a highly conflictual relationship between parents and clear evidence that it negatively impacts the well being of children. The specific outcome may vary depending on the variable studied but as Garrity and Baris (1994) reported, parental conflict does interrupt many of the critical tasks of psychological development in children. It changes the nature of the parent-child relationship, creates anxiety and distress, over stimulates and frightens children, weakens the parental protective capacity, and compromises identity formation. Most of all, it leaves children powerless to do anything about it.

The impact on children in conflictual marital disputes is well documented in the literature. Erath and Bierman (2006) conducted a study investigating the link between maternal perceptions of aggressive marital conflict with child-aggressive-disruptive behavior at home and school. The results showed that aggressive marital conflict was associated with harsh maternal punishment that accounted for 40% of the variance in the study linking aggressive marital conflict with child aggressive – disruptive behavior at home. They also found that the rate of conflict was associated with childrens' aggressive behaviors.

Analyzing the quotes and art from children, Oppawsky's (2000) study showed that parental discord caused increased crying, sadness, shame, anger, aggression, fear, academic problems and hostility toward the parents. Oppawsky (2000) also found that these reactions also appeared to be governed by the intensity of conflict between the parents.

The world of children experiencing conflict can be described as chaotic at best. To children struggling with the divorce itself, both the family structure (divorce) and family process (conflict) significantly affect the child's ability to adapt and adjust. (Hanson, 1999). Some studies showed that interparental conflict was negatively associated with both internalizing behaviors (depression, anxiety), externalizing behaviors (aggressiveness, delinquency) (Ellis, 2000; Kelly, 2000; Pemberton & Gerard 1998) and problems with peers (unliked, social withdrawal) (Vandewater and Lansford, (1998). Pemberton and Gerard (1998) also found that interparental conflict variables account for over 20% of the variance in youth behavior problems, and that hostile conflict styles are more strongly associated with problem behavior than the frequency of disagreement.

Studies in this area show that marital conflict and child adjustments are multidimensional. Ayoub, Deutsch and Maraganore (1999) described low levels of conflict parents as being mutually supportive, able to communicate with each other effectively, and able to get along as well as expected. Parents involved in "medium" levels of conflict are generally disrespectful, engage in name calling; insults in front of children, hostile toward each other (not premeditation/sadistic), and tend to put their children in the middle of the conflict. Finally, parents in high level conflict situations tend to engage in chronic and/or forceful domestic violence/parent-to-parent physical

abuse, involvement in police/child protective services, frequent hospital visits for injuries stemming from violence, murder, threats of suicide, extensive degradation of one parent by the other, and a rigid inability to discuss children and their well-being.

Research shows that children exposed to low levels of conflict tend to have a higher level of well being and adjustment than children from high conflict situations (Amato, 2001). Furthermore, when conflict tends to be high (violence), versus low (verbal conflict), children's level of maladjustment tends to reach significant clinical levels (Fantuzzo, Depaola, Lambert, Martino, Anderson, and Sutton , 1991).

Children in conflictual situations are further at risk if the conflict continues after divorce. When children are exposed to continuous conflictual family situations, their reaction can then further influence negative behaviors such as aggression, delinquency/antisocial behavior, internalization problems (distress, anxiety), and externalization problems (behavior misconduct) (Lee, 2001).

Grych (1990) emphasized that all marriages involve some discord and children may react to this, but the level of the conflict, intensity, and frequency may determine how well children adjust to divorce. Regardless of the level of conflict, children's adjustment is also significantly related to how well the parents adjust. Parental distress is closely associated with problems such as mood swings, depression, identity issues, vulnerability to common infection, and exacerbation of previous problems (O'Halloran & Carr 2000).

Although the cause of interparental conflict varies with individuals and circumstances, the data shows that if it is not resolved with the divorce it can lead to more problems for the child who is trying to come to grips with the loss of a parent in the house as well as other changes related to the divorce. One question raised by several

researchers is whether or not parents involved in a conflicted situation should divorce. Are children better off if parents divorce rather than continue in the conflictual relationship? As stated earlier, several researchers have found that children from high conflict homes have higher levels of well-being if parents divorce rather than if parents remained married. Conversely, children from low conflict homes have lower levels of well-being if parents divorce. (Amato and Keith, 1991; Amato, 2001; Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995; Jekielek, 1998; Morrison & Coiro, 1999).

This is a change from the view that children fare better when the parents stay together. One year after divorce, children of parents who had decreased conflict showed fewer behavioral problems than those with more interparental conflict indicating that staying together may not be best for these children (Amato & Keith, 1991). When parents divorce, children's level of distress decreases even in the face of loss of other resources (financial, social, noncustodial parents). The same is not necessarily true in situations of low levels of discord. When parents divorce after low levels of conflict, children do not welcome the divorce and may become confused and angry since there were few indications of the impending divorce (Amato and Keith, 1991). Regardless of the level of conflict, confusion, and emotional upheaval in the home, some children still want to remain in an intact family. Wallerstein (2000) reported that children in conflicted households often want the conflict to stop but the marriage to continue.

Ayoub, Deutsch, and Maraganore (1999) found that family risk factors that predict poor adult psychological functioning include witnessing marital violence, experiencing physical abuse, observing frequent verbal conflicts between parents and receiving low

parental caring. Parents at the time of transitioning to the divorce, themselves, are often too confused, angry or conflicted to offer an effective explanation to their child.

Finally, interparental conflict prior to or after divorce interferes with parenting skills and the parent-child relationship. When parental distress over the ending of the marriage is compounded by post-divorce conflicts, parenting becomes considerably more difficult and directly impacts the ability of children to manage the changes associated with the divorce itself. This situation becomes even more pronounced if the conflict lasts long after the divorce is over (Johnston, Kline, & Tschann, 1991). It is not surprising in this situation that the parent-child relationship tends to become strained or non-existent.

Studies show that interparental conflict is significantly correlated with less closeness between the parent and child, less warmth, and more problems with disciplining and maintaining control (Ensign, Scherman, & Clark, 1998; Johnson, Kline & Tschann, 1991; Wallerstein, 2000;). When conflicted couples part, they tend to lose all positive feeling toward each other and each view the other as the responsible and sometimes the, “bad” parent with the parent who feels abandoned or “wounded” perceiving him/herself as the “good” parent (Johnston & Roseby, 1997). When this happens, parents often lose the ability to parent effectively. According to Johnston and Roseby (1997), parents in high conflict marriages who are prone to being vulnerable to loss and abandonment, tend to cling to the child thus putting the child in the middle and creating ambivalence in the child.

Using longitudinal data from the National Survey of Children, Zill, Morrison, and Coiro, (1993) found that among 18-22 year olds from disrupted families, 65% had poor relationships with their fathers and 30% with their mothers. There was also a significant

effect of divorce on mother-child relationships in adulthood, but not in adolescence. Youths who experienced disruption before 6 years of age showed poorer relationships with their fathers than those who experienced disruption later in childhood.

Although there is less data on different cultural groups, similar results were also found in a study by Lopez, Melendez, and Rice (2000) who investigated the influence of parental marital status, and race (Caucasian, African, and Hispanic Americans) on college students' retrospective account of their early parent-child relationship and their current adult attachment relationships. The results showed that both the race/ethnicity and the parent's marital status significantly effected students' early attachment orientation. The extent to which the parent bond predicted adult orientation also varied with the family background and race/ethnicity.

Simon, Lin, Gordon, Conger, and Lorenz (1999) also found a link between parenting and internalizing and externalizing behaviors in children. They found that the quality of the mother's parenting and father's involvement in parenting tends to explain the association between divorce and boys' externalizing problems, whereas the quality of mother's parenting and post divorce conflict explain the relationship between divorce and girls' externalizing problems. Divorce tends to elevate a girl's risk for depression because it increases the chances that her mother will become depressed, which in turn reduced the quality of parenting. Boys with divorced parents tended to be more depressed than those from two-parent families regardless of the psychological adjustment, level of conflict, or quality of parenting manifested by their parents (Simon, et al, 1999). In another study with boys only and mother's parenting, Shaw, Winslow, and Flanagan (1999) found that while both European and African American mothers

experienced conflictual relationships with their spouses before separation. European American mothers exhibited higher levels of disrupted parenting after divorce while African American mothers exhibited more disruptive parenting before the divorce. Shaw et al (1999) pointed to the possibility of socioeconomic status also impacting the parent-child relationship since all of the participants in the study were from low income homes.

Johnston and Roseby (1997) indicated that there were also “types” of conflictual or “violent” relationships that affected the parent-child relationship. They described five different profiles of pre/post divorce conflictual relationships in families who were in litigation for custody of their children: (1) ongoing/episodic male battering, (2) female-initiated violence, (3) male-controlling interactive violence, (4) separation-engendered or post divorce trauma, and (5) psychotic and paranoid reactions.

Profile 1, ongoing/episodic male battering, involves unprovoked episodic or continuous battering by the male. Daughters seem more affected with younger daughters feeling unprotected and not able to separate from the mother. Older daughters are angrier and may either avoid, reject, or align with the mother against the father. Some daughters may become protective of the mother but may also feel resentment against the mother for allowing or tolerating the abuse.

In Profile 2, the female initiates the violence. She may also have a tendency to be unpredictable in parenting (discipline and nurturing), alternating between being loving, angry, and rejecting of the child. Both girls and boys are severely impacted with girls either resenting the mother or identifying with her in exhibiting the same pattern of explosive behaviors. Boys tend to be more passive aggressive alternating between being sad and withdrawn to engaging in power struggles with the mother. Younger

children need the nurturing of the mother and thus may find it more difficult to separate out of fear that doing so will lead to rejection by the mother.

In Profile 3, male-controlling interactive violence, either the male or female may initiate the violence but the male may exert control with physical aggression. The violence may start with verbal disagreement over a particular issue which may then escalate into a physical confrontation. Here, the child may display mixed reactions of open aggression or passive aggressiveness. In these families, the parents are poor role models for conflict resolution and anger management. In some cases, the girls may be more assertive, strong-willed, and demanding, while other girls may passively retreat or become covertly defiant. Younger boys may become more difficult to discipline and control. Older boys may have a tendency to rebel against authority, become belligerent and refuse to listen to either parent. With boys, fathers tend to engage in a peer-like versus parental relationship with their sons, especially with older boys.

Profile 4, involves separation-engendered or post divorce trauma, which represents uncharacteristic violence typically marked by stressful issues related to separation or other post divorce events (e.g., custody litigation and disputes over money and access to children that occur in the aftermath of the final decree). According to Johnston and Roseby (1997), the partner who feels abandoned is the one who becomes violent; this can be either the man or the woman. The other partner, the victim, may be shocked by this uncharacteristic behavior. Each partner in the violence forms a new image of the other which makes the post divorce process difficult for them and for their children. Both boys and girls who have witnessed separation violence are noticeably inhibited and constricted, and often have symptoms typical of posttraumatic stress. In addition to

nightmares, regressive behaviors, and somatic symptoms, some children may also become fearful and avoid the violent parent (Johnston & Roseby, 1997).

Finally, in Profile 5, psychotic and paranoid reactions, the men and women believe that the former spouse intends to harm or exploit them. They perceive the ex-spouse as a persecutory figure who is planning attacks and other acts of trickery against them which make their retaliatory attacks justified. Whether drug induced, or from psychosis, these individuals maintain a sense of righteousness and believe that they must protect themselves from the perceived assaults of the ex-spouse. The ensuing violence may be moderate or severe often causing the victim (spouse) to become frightened from the unpredictability of the attacks. The psychological profiles and behaviors of the victims in these relationships typically suggest the battered spouse syndrome. Johnston and Roseby (1997) reported that although there were very few children in this category to make generalizations, they did observe that children of this profile tended to exhibit psychotic like behaviors similar to the parent and if psychologically separated, they tended to appear acutely or chronically traumatized. Parents in conflicted divorce, particularly those in the profiles above, have tremendous difficulty managing their own lives and can in fact do more harm to their children than provide the nurturance and support needed during the divorce process.

Pre-divorce Conflict. Not all high-discord marriages end in divorce and not all divorces are preceded by overt conflict (Amato, 2006). Amato found that most couples tend to have less discord just prior to divorce. He reported that divorce is usually preceded by a period of mutual disengagement, with little positive affect but little overt hostility between the parents (Amato, 2006). Other researchers found that post divorce

conflict did occur or followed conflict in the marriage prior to the divorce and was therefore a continuing source of adjustment demands for the child. In the studies of children of high conflict divorce, Ayoub et al (1999) found that a history of domestic violence between parents was reported in 64.8% of the cases. Nearly half the cases (47.8%) reported violence as the reason for the divorce or separation. In their study of interparental violence types, Johnston and Roseby (1997) found that on average, 26% reported that they had never been violent; 10% reported incidents of low violence (threw or smashed objects, and pushed, grabbed, or shoved the other spouse); 23% reported incidents of moderate violence (slapped, kicked, bit, or hit the other); and 41% of the couples admitted to incidents of high violence (beating up the other and threats for actual use of a weapon). These figures indicated that 74% of separating or divorcing couples in the study reported a history of violence in their relationships.

Kelly (2000) also reported that high intensity fighting was associated with more insecure attachments and anxiety in infants and toddlers. In older children and adolescents, the severity of the conflict had the largest and most consistent impact on adjustment, with intense conflict leading to more externalizing (disobedience, aggression, delinquency) and internalizing (depression, anxiety, poor self-esteem) symptoms in both boys and girls compared with children who experienced low intensity conflict. The frequency of conflict was also linked to more negative effect. Additionally, overly hostile conflict styles (physical and verbal affect and behaviors such as slapping, screaming, contempt, derision) were more strongly associated with externalizing and internalizing behaviors in children than either covert conflict styles or frequency of conflict. Factors that tended to buffer the negative impact of interparental conflict

included good parent-child relationship, support of siblings, and for adolescents, having good self-esteem, peer support, and parental warmth (Kelly 2000).

Children who remained in these environments also had a tendency to have more adjustment problems than those whose parents divorce (Amato, Loomis, & Booth , 1995; Jekielek, 1998). Using mother-child data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), Morrison & Coiro (1999) found that in conflicted marriages that did not break up, high levels of marital conflict were associated with even greater increases in children's behavior problems.

Post-Divorce Conflict. For a number of years, studies in the area of divorce focused on the divorce process alone but found through further research that while traumatic to children, the divorce process itself may not be the sole reason for the fact that some children tend to have significant psychological and behavior problems long after the divorce is finalized (Forehand, Neighbor, Devine & Armstead, 1990). The parents of these children tend to engage in conflictual situations and litigation more than others for a variety of reasons such as: parenting skills, transition time (home to home), time sharing, visit details (drop off and pickup), disparaging talk, and loyalty binds (Garrity & Baris 1994). Koel, Clark, Straus, Whitney and Hauser (1994) found that divorcing couples tended to litigate more frequently over support issues than visitation and custody issues and that these may be related to interparental conflict resulting from psychological difficulties.

The post divorce impact on children of interparental conflict varies with a number of factors including the extent of the conflict prior to divorce and how well parents are able to resolve their differences and engage in effective parenting post divorce. When this

fails to materialize, children have to learn to adapt to both the break up of the home and conflict between their parents. The effect of divorce and interparental conflict can significantly impact children years after the divorce is finalized (Forehand, Neighbors, Devine, and Armstead, 1994).

Long, Slater, Forehand, and Fauber, (1988) compared three groups of young adolescent participants on several measures of adjustment in the school setting. The three groups of participants included: (a) a group from recently divorced families involving high levels of interparental conflict prior to parental separation and after the divorce had been reported, (b) a group from recently divorced families in which high levels of interparental conflict prior to parental separation but low levels after the divorce had been reported, and (c) a comparison group from intact families. Their finding showed that the adolescents from the first group (high conflict prior to and after divorce) were found to be functioning at a lower level than those from the other two groups, indicating clearly that not only does conflict after divorce influence children's well being but the level also plays a significant role in the severity of the impact. Kelly's (2000) study with adolescents showed that although hostility between parents tended to diminish significantly after divorce, 3 years later, 8% to 12.5% remain in very high conflict.

Parents who continue to engage in post-divorce conflict and frequent litigation after the divorce tend to eventually involve the children. Children caught in the middle of the divorce conflict are often asked to choose sides, and react negatively toward the other parent. Older children and boys seem particularly vulnerable to being used in the conflict (Johnston, Kline, & Tschann, 1991). An extreme version of this is Parental Alienation

Syndrome (PAS). The term coined by Richard Gardner describes a deliberate “brainwashing or programming” of the child by one parent (Alienating Parent) against the other parent (Target Parent) (Gardner, 2001). In these cases, children join with the alienating parent to vilify the other parent. Typically, the vilification is not warranted and in some cases, the Target Parent was caring and loving to the child. In PAS, the child is coached to be an active player in denigrating the parent. In addition to the denigration of the Target Parent, other symptoms characterize PAS and may include: weak, absurd, or frivolous rationalizations for the deprecation, a lack of ambivalence, the appearance of independent thinking by the child, strong support of the Alienating Parent, and extending this vilification to family and friends so that they may do the same. PAS cases may range from mild with a few symptoms to all of the symptoms in severe cases. Parental Alienation may also manifest itself in various ways such as:

1. The Divorce Related Malicious Mother Syndrome (DRMMS) (Turkat, 1995) - mothers persistently engage in malicious attacks on the divorcing husband beyond manipulating the children. It may involve burning down the ex-spouse's house, maliciously lying to the children, malicious lying to others, denying telephone calls or participation in extra-curricular activities (giving wrong dates/times), excessive litigation (4 or more), denying regular visitation, calling the ex's job to report criminal behavior, telling the child to apply for school lunches to show how destitute the father has left them, or engaging their teenagers to make telephone calls to the ex-spouse.

2. The Medea Complex (Gordon, 1998) – mothers involve daughters in alienating the father. The mother “programs” the daughter to be narcissistically

bound to her. It may cross generations and typically results in women picking men they devalue, provoking men to behave as they believe their fathers did or distorting the picture of a man to fit the image programmed by the mother.

3. The Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy (Rand, 1997) – parents fulfill their needs vicariously by presenting their child as ill and needs their protection. The mother may take the child to the doctor and expose him/her to all sorts of painful examinations. This is intended to show that the child needs the parent who is engaging in this behavior.

Johnston and Roseby (1997) offered a different explanation for the alienation process. They termed the alienation as building “unholy alliances” (p.202), and proposed that they are formed out of developmental difficulties in the separation-individuation process experienced by children in their early years. Regardless of the etiology, they did agree that parental conflict and vilification of one parent by another leads to intense anxiety, insecure attachments, and prevents these children from developing a healthy sense of self and relationships with others. Wallerstein and Corbin (1989) reported that the brainwashing is more common for mothers than fathers because of the close bond between the child and the mother. The fact that mothers tend to gain custody in the majority of cases is also a significant factor which frequently leave the father as the target of the vilification.

The studies in this area consistently show that aggression and frequent conflict between the parents compounds the problems these children experiences and negatively impacts the child’s adjustment to an already traumatic situation (Johnston, Kline & Tschann, 1991; Radovanovic, 1990). Radovanovic (1990) also found that more frequent

verbal and physical aggression between parents, particularly that which was reported by mothers, was associated with more child behavior problems, less academic competence and overall lower self-esteem among children.

When the conflict persists long after the divorce, researchers have found that children tend to experience more psychological and/or behavioral problems and for a longer period of time. (Amato & Keith 1991; Ayoub , Deutsch, & Maraganore, 1999).

Wallerstein (1991) found that children continue to experience the negative effects of divorce past the 1-2 years ‘crisis’ period. Jekielek (1998) also found that the effect of parental conflict has a consistent and negative effect on increasing factors such as child anxiety and depression up to four years following marital disruption and increases with the amount of parental conflict. In some cases, the affect of exposure to interparental conflict may last up to 10 years following divorce (Ayoub et al,1999).

In some children, the effects of marital discord was evident 12 to 22 years later in the areas of poor relationships with parents, high levels of problem behavior, and an increased likelihood of dropping out of school and receiving psychological assistance compared to children from intact families (Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993). Zill et al (1993) found that nearly one-fourth of the youths in the study had, in fact, received psychological help.

Age

Current research clearly shows that the impact of interparental conflict does to an extent depend on the age of the child. Ayoub et al (1999) found that younger children tend to exhibit more regressive behaviors while older children tend to become engaged in parental marital discord, form alliances with one parent or the other (Ayoub et al , 1999;

Johnston , Kline & Tschann, 1991; Lampel, 1996) and in many cases show more signs of distress (Fiddler & Saunders, 1987).

Younger children fear abandonment from the parent who did not leave and older children experience anxieties, acting out behavior and reverting to previous younger age behaviors (Dowling & Gorell-Barnes, 1999). Pagani, Boulerice, Tremblay and Vitary (1997) found that older children still exhibited anxious, hyperactive, and oppositional behavior during later childhood, even though the divorce occurred at a younger age. Pagani et al (1997) also postulated that children experiencing early childhood disruption (before age 6) may have more difficulties due to an interruption in the attachment process, being the center of an already complicated marital situation, encountering more economic hardships or problems related to genetic/environment characteristics of particular children. In the latter, children already predisposed to behavior or emotional problems may be more at risk for adjustment problems during post-divorce interparental conflict. In a review of adolescent functioning, Forehand (1994) found that adolescents of divorced parents experienced significantly more problems than those from intact homes and that interparental conflict was related to both externalizing and internalizing problems, cognitive competence, and social competence. Forehand, Neighbor, Devine and Armstead (1994) postulated that adolescent behaviors could be related to experiencing two stressors: divorce and interparental conflict.

In an extensive review of published material on the subject of divorce, Johnson and Roseby (1997) outlined different stages of adjustment in children to their parents divorce. According to Johnson and Roseby (1997), when infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are exposed to chronic conflict, their anxieties tend to become more

apparent as they are transitioned back and forth from one parent's home to the others. Their problems may include a range of behaviors such as crankiness, irritability, clinging to one parent, and physical resistance to the other parent. There may be a period of defiance for which the parent cannot soothe; regression where the child may have difficulty sleeping alone at night; waking with nightmares, toileting difficulties, or wanting a bottle that had been previously given up. When they are outside the home, these children may become volatile or controlling with other children (Johnson & Roseby, 1997).

Vulnerabilities in the parent are likely to disrupt the infant's and young child's separation-individuation process long before the marital separation occurs. According to Johnston and Roseby (1997), the fragile primary parent's (typically the mother) responses to the infant or young child are likely to be determined by how that parent feels at any given moment, rather than by the child's needs and experiences. Since this is typically the mother as the custodial parent (Ellis, 2000; Simoneau, 2003), the child is caught in a situation where he/she has to try and predict when needs can be met ; as a result, the child may become confused. Johnson and Roseby (1997) noted that the child lacks a foundation upon which to build an inner repertoire for coping. Instead, the child internalizes and maintains a "split representation" (p. 82) of the good mother and the bad mother, who comes and goes in ways that seem "frighteningly random" (p.82) to the child. Consequently, for these children, it's difficult enough to try and cope with the split up of both parents, they then have to try and find ways of coping with an inconsistent and psychologically fragile parent who is not able to provide comfort to herself and even less to her children.

As young children move from being a toddler into the preschool years, they are confronted with new developmental concerns that focus on gender and sexuality. Children at this age switch from a preoccupation of trying to separate and individuate to issues of separating and becoming a “gendered” person of a boy or girl. Johnson and Roseby (1997) found that in high-conflict families, the normal rivalry with the opposite “gendered” parents is further compounded by the conflict between the parents and attempts by each to undermine the other. The parents may at times become anxious as the child continues to grow and separate and may respond to these “normal” changes with feeling they are being betrayed by the child. They may also respond by becoming anxious, withholding, or punitive toward the child. Caught in the middle, these children become frightened of normal maturational changes because of the responses they elicit from the parents. These children then began to show the signs of distress they are experiencing.

Because little girls have a closer bond with the mother, they appear, on the surface, less effected and concerned with the issues of gender and sexuality. In reality, they are trying to avoid the same “consequences” as the boys. Johnson and Roseby (1997) also noted that some girls in a high conflict situation may develop a rebellious rivalry with the mothers and become highly oppositional or reject both their own and their mother’s femininity. In either case, both boys and girls at this age are caught in a highly awkward position and may find it difficult to extricate themselves from it or to develop those coping responses necessary to manage the divorce and conflict between the parents (Johnson & Roseby 1997).

Risks to young adolescents in high-conflict families center around several themes that sums up the strains and distortions from earlier stages. These tasks include separating from a primary parent; forming a positive and stable sense of self; affirming one's gender and sexuality; feeling capable, autonomous, and trusting in work and play with peers; and establishing an internal sense of right and wrong. The adolescent at this point is already experiencing an emotionally tumultuous time. When this is exacerbated by conflicting parents who are themselves involved in their own cycle of rage and depression (Johnson & Roseby, 1997), it results in both adolescents and parents being dangerously out of control.

In a study of families in child custody litigation, Fiddler and Saunders (1987) found that boys showed more signs of maladjustment after the breakup than girls and older children also showed more disturbances than younger children. They suggested that perhaps older children had more awareness of what was going on, had a longer memory of the events in the marriage and longer term separation and consequences of the separation (4 years versus 2) which included economic problems, unavailability of the other parent, and distress from the separation from parents.

Children at certain ages were also drawn into the parental conflict and formed alliances with one of the two parents. Buehler, Krishnakumar, Stone, Anthony, and Lampel (1996) found that 41% of 24 consecutively referred latency age children were aligned with one parent in a divorce. Aligned children had a tendency to prefer the more emotionally expressive, problem solving, and outgoing parents. On the other hand, aligned children while more confident than nonaligned, were less skilled at conceptualizing complex problems than were nonaligned children.

Conversely, as conflict becomes more intense, some children denounce and reject their parents (Oppawsky 2000). Younger children were forced to stay in the home with the hated parents while older children, in an effort to break away, often ended up in inappropriate and dangerous situations in order to find a more appropriate role model. Teens often experimented with drugs, girls became pregnant, or many simply run away from the turmoil.

Gender

The issue of gender differences in children's responses to their parents divorce has been studied extensively and the results are mixed. Some findings show that boys and girls respond differently to divorce and conflict while others show no difference. Allison & Furstenberg (1989) reported that where differences were found (teacher's report of problem behaviors, child's report of dissatisfaction and child's report of distress), girls tend to do worse. Gender differences also varied with the particular variables studies. Some studies show that boys tend to have more externalizing behavior problems (aggression, acting out) than girls while girls tends to have more internalizing problems (depression, anxiety) and relationship difficulties than boys (McCabe, 1997).

Amato (1988) investigated the association between levels of marital conflict and self-esteem in two groups of children, 8-12 and 15-16. He found that parental conflict was negatively associated with self-esteem for younger girls (primary school) but not boys. For adolescents, there was a weak but significant negative associations between marital conflict and self-esteem for both boys and girls. There was a weak association for adolescents. Conflict negatively affected the parent-child relationship for all groups except younger girls and a negative association in father-child relationship was found for

all groups except primary school boys. Amato's (1988) study showed that not only does marital conflict affect the children but it affects girls and boys differently.

In a longitudinal study with boys from age 2 to 5, Ingoldsby, Shaw, Owens and Winslow (1999) found that children exposed to interparental conflict were more likely to have concurrent and later behavior problems. Cumming (1994) also found that coping efficacy was consistently associated with adjustment problems for boys but not at all for girls. Boys' appraisals of marital conflict were actually better predictors of their adjustment than were the mother's appraisals but again this was not the case for girls (Cummings, 1994).

While girls appear to have fewer problems than boys initially, this changes later to what has been termed a "sleeper effect", where adjustment difficulties from the divorce appear much later in development (Ellis, 2000; Wallerstein & Blakelee, 1996). Girls may appear fine during the initial phase of the divorce but years later, during a crucial time in life for making decisions and engaging in relationships, they express a number of problems without an apparent cause. This sleeper effect may manifest itself in behaviors such as engaging in negative or abuse relationships, having children too soon, or choosing lifestyles that could be harmful or dangerous in the long run.

Adjustment

While there are a number of studies that show that some children of divorce are more resilient, adjust to new circumstances, and move on to have productive lives (Johnson & Roseby, 1997; Wallerstein, Lewis & Blakelee, 2000). The majority of studies still show children of divorce have more adjustment problems in various areas than their peers from two parent families (Amato, 2001). Studies in the past focused primarily on the divorce

process itself. Recent studies show that the divorce alone does account for why some children fare well post divorce and others continue to have problems long after the divorce is finalized (Amato & Keith, 1991). Studies show that other factors also impact adjustment to divorce including but not limited to: age, gender, parent-child relationship, (Amato & Keith, 1991; Hetherington, Bridges, & Insabella, 1998 ; McLanahan, 1999), psychological adjustment of parents (Ellis, 2000), temperament of the child (Garrity & Baris, 1994) remarriage of one or both parents, education/economic conditions (Nievar & Luster, 2003), and interparental conflict. Interparental conflict, the focus of this study, has been consistently shown to have detrimental effects on children (Borine, Handl, Brown, & Searight, 1991; Ellis, 2000; Garrity & Baris, 1994; Johnston, Kline, & Tschann, 1991; Roseby & Johnson, 1998).

Theoretical explanation of adjustment and coping to divorce focused primarily on salient characteristics of the child and the interaction of the risk and protective factors that influence their well-being. In a cross-sectional and longitudinal study of stress, coping, and psychological symptoms in children of divorce, Sandler and West (1994) found that coping “style” was a major factor in determining whether events and symptoms in the child’s experience were mediating or moderating factors in coping with divorce. Avoidance Coping to some extent mediated the relationship between negative events and symptoms while Active Coping (problem and emotion focused) tended to moderate the relationship between negative events and conduct problems in children of divorce. Garrity and Baris (1994) found that children’s coping ability to high conflict divorce is determined largely by both their internal and external resources. Their reactions can range from emotional disengagement to behavioral problems to profound

depression. Older children with more out-going personalities may disengage from their parents and find support from their peer group, their school, or a trusted adult. While younger and shyer children may be more trapped in their situation and experience anxiety and distress.

Garrity and Baris (1994) also found that the temperament of the child also impact adjustment. Children with easy going, mellow temperaments tend to be more resilient in the face of divorce stressors (Garrity & Baris 1994; Hetherington, Stanley-Hagan & Anderson, 1989; and Lengua, Wolchik, Sandler, & West (2000). These children tend to have better social skills, and adults typically like and respond to them (Garrity & Baris, 1994).

Gately and Schwebel (1991) in their review of the literature reported that a Challenge Model of adjustment is more appropriate than a pathogenic one which views the child of divorce as always having an unfavorable outcome. Their findings indicate that the child's ability to adapt to the divorce is dependent/determined by the challenges they face and moderating factors such as personal characteristics of the child and the level of coping resources they have available. In some cases, , the children's appraisal of the situation is also a determinant in adjustment to the conflicting family situation (Terry, 1994, & Kerig, 1998).

Several studies focused primarily on the link between marital conflict, child's perceptions of the conflict and child maladjustment. These studies showed that the impact to the child is primarily determined by the perception and appraisal of the conflict (Grych & Fincham, 1990; Grych, 1998) which is influenced by contextual, cognitive, and developmental factors (Grych & Fincham, 1990). Children's representation of

interparental aggression, their parents, and themselves are also influenced by witnessing violence in the home (Grych, Wachsmuth-Schlaefel, & Klockow, 2002). Grych (1998) used an audiotape of conflictual interactions to examine the cognitive and emotional responses of 60, 7-12 years old children. The results showed that both boys and girls showed more distress with intense anger with girls becoming more distressed as the intensity increased. Girls also viewed high intensity conflict as more threatening than boys although both experienced more negative expectation of coping efficacy. This indicated that although boys and girls perceived the threat differently, both still perceived themselves as less competent to deal effectively with the hostility.

The content of the conflict was also perceived differently by children of different ages. While younger children paid less attention to the content, older children appeared more sensitive to non-child related conflicts than those that were child-related. Younger children responded more negatively to the level of conflict. Finally, Grych (1998) reported that the intensity of interparental conflict also influenced children's attribution about the cause of the problems. He found that fathers were blamed more when the conflict was more hostile because regardless of who initiated the aggression, fathers tended to become more verbally and physically aggressive and therefore, were blamed more for escalating the conflict.

One of the main limitations in most of the divorce literature is the exclusion of ethnic minority samples or cultural considerations; limiting the degree the results can be generalized to non-white, low income or other diverse groups. A notable example is that the literature tends to overlook the resilience of African American families and those variables that strengthens the family despite economic and social road blocks such as the

role of religion and the extended family network in lessening the negative impact of divorce.

One study by Gonzales, Pitts, Hill, and Roosa (2000) did find that although there were cultural differences in parenting practices, interparental conflict was still negatively associated with perceptions of parental acceptance which was related to children's reports of depression and conduct problems.

In summary, the rate of divorce has declined over the years and while some children tend to fare well, a large number continue to have problems after the divorce is finalized. Risk and protective factors determine the severity of the impact and how well children will adjust. One factor that continues to be strongly linked with child adjustment to divorce is interparental conflict. Conflictual family situations are associated with emotional and psychological problems in children of divorce. The present study will examine the impact of divorce and interparental conflict.

College students were chosen for three reasons: many may have experienced divorce at an early age and can demonstrate more effectively the long term effects of divorce; they may be able to articulate better their reactions to divorce and subsequent interparental conflicts following the divorce; and there is easier access to the demographics of this population than younger children.

Just as conflict affects the lives of younger children in academic environment (Amato, 2001), it is also reasonable to assume that it may affect young adults (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001), particularly those in a college environment. Amato (2006) in a review of a 20-year longitudinal study found that young adults of divorce complete fewer years of education, have weaker ties with parents, experience more conflict in their

own marriages, are more likely to experience divorce, report less happiness with life and more symptoms of psychological distress.

Research also shows that despite the large number of college entrants, there are a surprisingly large number of students who do not complete college and the reasons for the high attrition rate vary from social (parental attachment/separation, social adjustment, external factors) to Personal-Emotional (emotional adjustment, coping style) factors (Franklin, Janoff-Bulman & Roberts, 1990; Holmbeck & Wandrei, 1993; Martin, Swartz-Kulstad, & Madson, 1999). This was particularly true with African Americans whose enrollment rate in the past twenty years has increased significantly but graduation rates at 41% still lag behind those of their Caucasian counterparts at 61% (The Education Trust, 2003).

Existing studies show that college students experience problems with academics, psychological distress, and intense feelings towards one or both parents in conflicted divorce (Laumann-Billings, 2000; Franklin, Janoff-Bulman & Robbers, 1990). Although some findings show that these students display resilience in the face of parental divorce, many of them report experiencing a significant amount of distress years after the divorce that was associated with changing residences, loss of contact with fathers, psychological symptoms, and interparental conflict. (Laumann-Billings & Emery, 2000). From her 25 year study, Wallerstein (2000) found that regardless of whether they came from a conflicted home or not, young adult children of divorce had difficulties in forming and maintaining other social relationships, had concerns of violence in their relationships, divorce, and concerned about divorce for their children. These children also had difficulty with managing change in their lives.

Amato (2006) reported that during the last few decades, youth have become more reliant on parents for economic support, practical assistance, and guidance. When the parent-child relationship is strained due to divorce, it makes for a very complicated and distress time for the child trying to manage the relationship with parents while also trying to maintain satisfactory grades in college.

Questions

The first question is will family status, interparental conflict prior to divorce, and gender be predictive of college adjustment for African American college students in this sample? The second question is will post divorce interparental conflict, age at the time of divorce or gender be predictive of college adjustment for African American college students in this sample?

Variables

Family Status. Family status will be defined by belonging to one of two groups: Intact (parents married), or divorced (parents divorced before participant left home or by 18 years old).

Conflict . Conflict is operationally defined as Pre-divorce and Post-divorce conflict. Research shows that conflict after divorce is often preceded by conflict during the marriage and before the divorce process began. Conflict is measured by scores on the CPIC Conflict Properties subscale that reflect the degree or extent of perceived conflict.

Age. Age will be defined in terms of age at which parents divorced: 3-18. Garrity and Baris (1994) reported that children under five tend to hurt the most initially but look better years later. They retain fewer memories and are able to integrate into another family system with less distress. Children between the ages of five and twelve, tend to

openly grieve, have fantasies of parents reuniting, and respond to the world and others with more hostility. Both academic and peer relationships suffer more in this group. Adolescents tend to hurt more but show it less. They tend to be more concerned with their own gender issues and other relationships, and feel less like committing because of the parental relationship. Because of the tendency for children younger than three to lack an accurate memory of the divorce, participants whose parents divorced before age three will be omitted (Crawley and Eacott, 2006) .

Gender. Male or female. Gender differences in divorce cases are frequently reported in the literature and may vary with a number of different factors such as age, custodial parent, or remarriage of the custodial parent (Amato and Keith, 1991; Amato, 2001).

Method

Participants

The sample was comprised of 90 African American college students. Students were volunteers and selected based on availability from five local Southwestern college and university campuses. A total of 400 research packets were distributed, of which 109 (27%) were completed and returned. Nineteen sets were excluded due to errors in completing the instruments or meeting the criteria of the study. Several students wrote responses to items in areas other than where they were intended such as in the margins, or provided the responses verbally to the researcher when prompted but did not record the responses on the forms. These responses were then transferred to the appropriate area of the forms or scales and scored. Ninety packets (83%) of the 109 were complete and used in the study.

A number of participants did not meet the criteria for this study because they were neither raised in an intact or divorced household but had lived with other relatives or friends of the family. Forty one (10%) reported being raised in a single parent never married household. Two students were adopted with one being raised with a Caucasian family. The majority of those students reported knowing their parents but having very little contact with the father, particularly after the father remarried and had other children. Several students reported that their mothers married later in their childhood or engaged in multiple marriages. Students who did not meet the criteria reported being unconcerned about the absent parent but appeared distressed when discussing that parent. Still another group included families in which the biological parents were never married but lived together for many years with varying degrees of relationship issues.

The final sample (Table 1) consisted of 27 (30%) males and 63 (70%) females. Of the 90 participants, 34 (38%) were from families in which the parents did not divorce (Intact Group) and 56 (62%) were from homes in which the parents did divorce (Divorced Group). The current mean age of students in the overall sample was 22. The mean age of children at the time of parents' divorce was 8.48.

Participants were included in the divorced group if the parents were divorced when they were age three to eighteen and they were reared in the custody of mothers. The research in this area shows that mothers more than fathers tend to gain custody of the children after a divorce (Simoneax, 2003). Students whose parents divorced before age three were excluded because of limited recall of material younger than 2.4 (Crawley & Eacott, 2006). The divorced group consisted of 15 (27%) males and 41 (73%) females with a mean age at the time of divorce of 8.48 and a current mean age of 22. The intact group consisted of 12 males (35%) and 22 females (65%) with a current mean age of 23.

Instruments

Demographic. The questionnaire asked participants to respond to questions related to age, gender, race/ethnic background, parents' marital status, conflict in an intact home prior to the divorce and after the divorce.

Interparental Conflict. Interparental conflict was measured by the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC) (Grych, Seid, Fincham, 1992). The scale was designed to assess children's perceptions of several aspects of overt interparental conflict and includes three 6-item subscales measuring frequency, intensity, and resolution that can be combined to form a single, comprehensive assessment of interparental conflict.

CPIC items are scored 0,1, or 2. Students responded to each item using a 3 –point Likert-type scale ranging from Sort of True = 1, True =2, to False =0. The items measuring resolution were reverse scored (False =2, True =0, Sort of True = 1), so that a high score on this subscale indicated negative aspects of interparental conflict. Because of the reverse scoring, the measuring of conflict resolution was labeled unresolved conflict. Several items were reverse keyed. The subscales also were combined into 3 scales: Conflict Properties (Frequency, Intensity, Resolution), Threat (Threat, Coping Efficacy) and Self-Blame (Content, Self-Blame). Since this study was concerned only with interparental conflict and children’s adjustment, only the Conflict Properties scores were used. The Conflict Properties scores were derived from three subscales: Frequency (6 items), Intensity (7 items), and Resolution (6 items). Scores from these items were summed to create the Conflict Properties score. With 29 total items and a 0, 1, or 2 response, the total possible score or range on this subscale is 58.

Internal consistency (coefficient alpha) was evaluated at both the scale and subscale level in two samples, and test-retest reliability was evaluated for the 3 superordinate scales. Previous research found internal consistency of the CPIC to range from .78 to .90 for the combined scale (Grych et al., 1992). Internal consistency reliability in the current sample was .80. Evidence for the validity of the scale was found in significant correlations with parental reports of marital conflict and significant associations with children's reports of their reactions to specific episodes of conflict. The range of scores for both conflict prior to divorce and post divorce in this sample of African American college students was .38. The mean and standard deviations were provided on Table 4. Inter-correlations of CAS subscales for this study are provided on Table 2.

The published psychometric properties of the measure were based on use with predominantly white, middle class American children from the ages of 9-12. However, the measure also has also been used with older and younger children and is currently being used outside of the United States as well.

Participants assigned to the Intact group were asked to complete the CPIC once to examine interparental conflict while growing up in an intact home. Those assigned to the Divorced group completed the scale twice for a Prior To and Post divorce score.

Adjustment. College adjustment was measured using the College Adjustment Scale (CAS). The CAS is a 108-item screening inventory developed to provide a rapid method of screening college counseling clients for common developmental and psychological problems (Anton and Reed, 1991). CAS items were based on a 4-point Likert-type response scale that assessed college adjustment across nine scales derived from factor analysis : (1). Anxiety (AN) – a measure of clinical anxiety, focusing on common affective cognitive, and physiological symptoms; (2). Depression (DP) – a measure of clinical depression, focusing on common affective, cognitive, and physiological symptoms; (3) Suicidal Ideation (SI) – a measure of the extent of recent ideation reflecting suicide, including thoughts of suicide, hopelessness, and resignation; (4) Substance Abuse (SA) – a measure of the extent of disruption in interpersonal, social, academic, and vocational functioning as a result of substance use and abuse; (5) Self-Esteem Problems (SE) – a measure of global self-esteem which taps negative self-evaluations and dissatisfaction with personal achievement; (6) Interpersonal Problems (IP) – a measure of the extent of problems in relating to others in the campus environment; (7) Family Problems (FP) – a measure of difficulties experienced in

relationships with family members; (8) Academic Problems (AP) – a measure of the extent of problems related to academic performance; and (9) Career Problems (CP) – a measure of the extent of problems related to career choice.

The CAS was standardized through a sample of 1,146 college and university students throughout the United States. The ethnic group composition consisted of 75% White, 9% Black, 6% Hispanic, and 10% other ethnic groups. Ages of the participants ranged from 17 through 65 years, with a mean of 21.5 years and a standard deviation of 4.95 years. The sample was divided into 38% males and 61% females. Additionally, 25% of the samples were freshman, 18% were sophomores, 31% were juniors, 22% were seniors, and 2% were graduate students. The remaining 2% of the sample did not identify their college classification. Internal reliability coefficients for the nine scales ranged from .80 to .92. Six separate studies have supported the convergent and discriminate validity of the CAS [(Turner, Valtierra, Talken, Miller, and DeAnda (1996) from Anton and Reed (1991)]. Reliability for the current study was computed to be .80

The CAS was also reported to have been reviewed for gender and ethnic bias and possible offensiveness to particular religious beliefs. It was examined by a multicultural panel of psychologists who suggested that 14 items had potential bias and those items were rewritten prior to refinement of the existing nine scales. (Pinkney, 1992).

All participants in the study completed the 108-item CAS. Participants scored each item as either False, Not At All True (F), Slightly True (S), Mainly True (M), or Very True (V). A cover sheet with carbon backing prevented participants from scoring each subscale in a particular manner. Items on the CAS were simply listed from one to 108 and scored individually. Scores were obtained for each subscale and summed across

subscales for a total scale score. Higher scores reflect poorer developmental and/or psychological adjustment or difficulty in adjustment in specific areas. Conversely, lower scale scores reflect higher levels or functions or adjustment in these areas.

Procedure.

Following approval of the research protocol by the Institution Review Board, participants were contacted, screened, briefed on the purpose of the research, and asked to participate in a study on divorce in African American families. They were then asked to read the informed consent form. An example of this form is found at Appendix B. They were also briefed on the importance of the research and the value to this body of literature. Participants were then asked to complete a packet of forms depending on group assigned. Individuals who met the criteria for the Intact group were asked to complete the questionnaire, Prior To portion of the CPIC scale, and CAS. Those who qualified for the Divorced group were asked to complete the questionnaire, Prior To portion of the CPIC, Post portion of the CPIC, and the CAS. This order also prevented influence from the CAS to the CPIC. Specifically, this prevented students from trying to create a favorable impression of their families from their responses on the adjustment scale. Settings for the study included primarily classrooms with some handed out to students at campus student union buildings. Other research packets were given to students, teachers, and friends of college students who completed and returned them in pre-addressed and stamped envelopes. Students completed all forms within 40 minutes and only research packets in which all forms were completed were used in the analysis. The CPIC and CAS were then scored by the researcher according to procedures in the

manual or instruction package. Results were entered into the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (12.0).

Results

The data for this study was analyzed using the SPSS. Descriptive statistics were computed to provide information on all variables and on the background of the sample in this study (see Tables 1 & 3). There were no missing data and although the sample size was small, all of the assumptions for Multiple Regression Analysis were met.

First, A Principle Component analysis was conducted on the nine subscales of the College Adjustment Scale. The aim was to possibly reduce the nine variables into a smaller group of factors or variables with which the total amount of variability could be assessed. Prior to performing PCA, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix (Table 3) revealed the presence of coefficients of .3 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value was .84 which exceeds the recommended value of .6. The Barlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance, which supported the factorability of the correlation matrix (Pallant, 2003). The PCA analysis of the nine scales revealed the presence of one component with an eigenvalue exceeding 1.0, explaining 47.63 of the variance. An inspection of the Scree plot (Cattell, 1966) revealed a clear between the first and second component. The results of the PCA supported the use of the CAS as a global measure of college adjustment which was also consistent with previous research on the CAS (Anton and Reed, 1991). To address the question of this study, the sum of subscale scores was used as the criterion measure to assess adjustment problems in this sample of African American college students.

To address the first question regarding the predictive relationship between family status, pre-divorce conflict, and gender, a Standard Multiple Regression analysis with simultaneous loading was conducted. The predictor variables included family status, pre-divorce conflict, and gender (Table 5). Pre-divorce conflict (Conflict Prior) scores were derived from the CPIC describing Conflict Properties participants experienced growing up in an intact home or prior to the parent's divorce. The range of CPIC scores was 38 with the lowest score equal to 0 and the highest score equal to 38. The median score was 11.00 and the mean score was 13.79. These results suggest interparental conflict as reported by these participants was relatively low for this sample, since the total possible score was 58 and the mean for this sample was only 13.79, well below even the midpoint of the scale. The model of this study not significant indicating that the variables selected did not significantly predict adjustment in this sample of African American college students. The Adjusted R Square was .038 indicating that only 3.8 percent of the variance in adjustment to divorce was accounted for by the model in this study. The results showed that only prior conflict was significant in this analysis. This indicated that regardless of family status (intact or divorce), or gender, conflict that occurred in the homes while growing up or before divorce significantly impacted college adjustment in this sample, although the impact accounted for a small percentage of the variance. The non-significant results for gender and family status indicated that family status and gender did not predict adjustment in this sample of African American college students.

To examine the second question regarding the relationship between gender, age, and post divorce conflict, a second Standard Multiple Regression analysis with simultaneous

loading was conducted (Table 6) using only participants in the divorced category ($n = 56$). Age was operationally defined as age at the time of divorce and participants were included in the study if the age at divorce ranged from 3-18. Post Divorce scores were derived from the CPIC describing Conflict Properties participants experienced after the parent's divorce was finalized. The Adjusted R Square was .005 indicating that less than one percent of the variance was accounted for by the predictor variables in this model. None of the predictor variables were significant indicating that age at the time of divorce, post divorce conflict, and gender did not significantly impact adjustment in this sample of African American college students.

Discussion

This study examined the impact of interparental conflict on the adjustment of African American college students. The impetus for the study was two fold: increase the body of information in the literature on the impact of interparental conflict on children's adjustment; and increase knowledge about divorce and its' impact with African Americans. The results showed that interparental conflict that occurred while growing up significantly impacted adjustment in this sample of African American college students. These results were unaffected by family status (i.e., divorced). It also showed that neither gender, nor age at time of divorce, significantly predicted or influenced adjustment in this sample.

These findings were similar to other research on the impact of interparental conflict on children's adjustment (Ensign, Scherman, & Clark, 1998; Wallerstein, 2000; Kline & Johnston 1991; Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993; Hetherington, 2006; Kelly, 2000; Pemberton & Gerard, 1998; Ellis, 2000; Vandewater & Lansford, 1998). Hetherington

(2006) called the problem experienced by children of discordant parents as being a “spillover effect” (p. 205) in which the entire family system is eroded because of destructive couple conflict in the home, leading to increased risk of widespread social and emotional distress. Amato (2006) pointed out that homes start with low discord then build to more discordant relationships prior to divorce. As parents are preparing to separate, conflict tends to increase as does other psychological and behavioral changes both in the parents and children. For children whose parents do not divorce, conflict may continue in the home until the child becomes an adult and leaves.

Although these results supported the hypothesis that conflict does impacts adjustment, a finding similar to those found in studies with primarily Caucasian American participants, there may be different mechanisms at work such as specific cultural and environmental factors that could contribute to the results. These include: societal limitation on employment; housing and other services as a result of overt or covert discriminatory practices; socioeconomic factors; lower levels of education for minorities compared to members of the majority culture which places additional constraints on jobs and housing (Census 2000); and the role of extended family network as either mediating or moderating factors in the conflicted home.

Another factor that is becoming increasingly prominent in the African American culture but rarely addressed in divorce literature is interracial marriages which according to Census 2000 have led to fewer exclusive African American marriages. The interracial couple may be faced with the objection and disapproval from one or both races as well as other forms of discrimination (Solsberry, 1994). In this situation, extended family members of African Americans could turn against the couple which increases the conflict

among family members. If conflict also includes the history of the struggle and racism experienced by one member of the couple by the ancestors of the other member of the couple, (Mosley-Howard & Evans 2000) , ordinary family conflict could escalate to include racial conflict . Add to this, other differences in cultural backgrounds such as, language, religious and child rearing practices and interracial couples may face stressors not ordinarily experienced by other couples in conflict. These factors may further exacerbate the conflictual situation which, in turn, could lead to more conflict for the child, particularly, if the couple stays together.

Post divorce conflict, age at the time of divorce, and gender did not significantly predict adjustment problems in this sample of African American college students. These findings were not consistent with past research for primarily Caucasian Americans and younger samples. Amato's (2006) 20-year review of divorce research found that while some children fare better following conflicted divorce, unless the conflict subsides and other protective factors are present, then children tend to continue to experience high levels of adjustment problems. Similar findings were also noted by Johnston, Kline, and Tschann (1991), Gardner (2001) and Johnston and Roseby (1997). Other research has demonstrated that post divorce conflict can last for years after the initial divorce process is complete (Forehand, Neighbors, Devine, & Armstead, 1994; Kelly, 2000) and can have significant psychological and developmental impact on children. Barrett (2003) found that separation and divorce effected African Americans and Caucasians differently in that separation may be viewed only as a cooling off period to African Americans not a final decision. When divorce is imminent, African Americans may then begin to experience

more stress which may elevate the marital conflict and negatively impact the well being of children.

There are a number of possible explanations for the lack of significance for post divorce conflict in this study with African American college students. First, the sample size with the obvious low number of participants in the divorced group (56) could have contributed to these results. Second, the results could be related to the collective nature of African American families. Gohm, Oishi, Darlington and Diener (1998) found that in countries rated high in collectivism, the impact of conflicted divorce was reduced. Collectivism was defined by Gohm et al (1998) as cultures that encourage interdependence, stress the importance of obligations to others rather than self-interest, and encourage harmony with others rather than autonomy. It is highly likely that the extended family members of divorcing mothers in African American families provide both emotional and financial support thus possibly moderating the negative effects of conflicted divorce in children. Children in this culture may have more than the biological parents to assist in child rearing and providing support for the family (Wilson, 1989). Although having interference from a close kinship network may cause problems (Tucker, Mitchell-Kernan, 1995), it may also serve as a protective factor when it provides relief from the disruption in the home caused by interparental conflict. Additionally, emotional and financial support from the extended family may lessen the impact of a conflicted divorce and increase resiliency in the child. The influence of extended families was not studied in this research and needs to be addressed when studying family issues, particularly divorce in African Americans families.

Third, conflict levels of parents after divorce as indicated by Post Divorce conflict scores of the CPIC in this sample tended to be lower than those prior to divorce.

Children of divorce, tend to spend less time with fathers after divorce (Amato, 2006) which means less contact, less conflict between parents and less impact on students' adjustment. Another factor in this study was time since divorce. Since some students experienced their parents' divorce when they were very young, had a longer time since divorce, and less conflict between parents, the impact on adjustment may be negligible in college students.

Fourth, students' recollection of parental conflict may have colored the true state of their parent's marital condition (Amato, 2006). The average age at time of divorce was 8.48 while the current age was 22 which means that children were reporting on their parent's marital conflicts and relationships years after the divorce was finalized.

The results of this study also showed that gender differences did not significantly impact adjustment in this sample of African American college students. This was not consistent with the literature which showed that the effects of divorce and interparental conflict tended to be different for males and females. Girls tend to experience more internalizing problems (depression, anxiety) and boys tend to experience more externalizing problems (acting out, aggression) (Amato, 2006; Hetherington, 2006). These results may be due to the smaller sample size for males compared to females in this study or to some real differences mediated either by the culture or current age of the African American college student participants. Gender differences in regards to divorce adjustment have not previously been studied with African Americans, thus additional research is warranted in this area.

Finally, the results showed that age at the time of divorce did not significantly impact adjustment in this African American college student sample. This was not consistent with results of other studies that found that younger children tend to fare worse emotionally and have more disruption in educational attainment while older children seems less affected educationally (Amato, 2006) but may become involved in the conflict. The average age at divorce (8.48) may also suggest that the child was old enough to recognize and possibly understand the conflict versus pre-school age children (Johnson & Roseby, 1997) but was also not old enough to become involved in the conflict (Ayoub, Deutsch, & Maraganore, 1999) thereby, creating less confusion and trauma when divorce actually occurred.

The results of this study showed that other perhaps more culturally specific variables may have accounted for some of the findings in this study: historic trauma; remarriage and race of remarried partners; household income after divorce; nature of gender/parental roles; and extended family influence. First, a history of slavery (Gutman, 1976), discriminative practices and the intergenerational impact continues to impede healthy functioning between African American parents today (Cahn, 1997) but did create a shared bond with members of the same group. This may function as a moderating effect in the child's sense of connectedness with other more stable members of the group.. Secondly, the remarriage of parents could function as a mediating or protective factor depending on the new spouse, his/her psychological functioning, concern for the child, as well as the race/ethnic group of the new spouse which would add a new variable to the situation. Third, divorce does not necessarily mean families in conflict move to a lower socioeconomic condition, particularly if the custodial spouse (usually the mother)

has a higher education and employment potential. Extended family financial and emotional support may further enhance the functioning of the single parent. Fourth, research shows that children who maintain a healthy parent-child relationship in conflictual families tend to have better adjustment than those in which the relationship is strained or the bond is broken. In African American families, the family may include both biological and non-biological members with which the child could establish a good relationship and lessen the impact of parents in conflict. Future studies might also include children from non traditional homes such as those in which parents stayed together most of the child's life but never married. Parental conflict and separation may impact these children in ways similar to those of divorced parents.

A question raised by this study is whether or not African American couples experience the same degree of conflict as white couples, given the relatively low levels of conflict reported by this sample. No representative norms exist for this or for the CPIC, so future research needs to examine this further. One possible explanation for the failure to find stronger relations between conflict and adjustment in this study may be the relatively low rates of conflict reported by this sample. The nature and level of results and the best way to measure conflict for African Americans are questions raised for future research. Along the same lines, there are questions about the measurement of adjustment for African Americans and if existing measures including the CAS are adequate for capturing the unique experiences and perspectives that are relevant for understanding adjustment for African Americans. Thus, many questions are raised by this research that remains to be explored. Certainly, caution should be exercised when

considering these issues for African Americans and the existing research may not be applicable for many African Americans or other culturally diverse groups.

Limitations and Implication for Future Research

One of the main limitations of this study was the shortage of participants in all categories (males, females, intact, divorced, low-high conflict). Canvassing a larger population and more effort in primarily African American organizations, over a longer period of time may result in more students willing to participate in this kind of research. Some students who declined to participate were apprehensive about how the data was to be used, whether or not they could be identified in the study, and disclosing personal information even under strict Institutional Review Board requirements of briefing on confidentiality by an individual of the same racial/ethnic group.

Secondly, a major limitation is related to adults' disclosure of childhood events. Amato (2006) reported that children are "primed" (p.179) to recall aversive events from childhood. If children tend to remember more aversive events and to possibly inflate what happened, then the data is not as valid as evaluating an event at the time it occurs. A more reliable method of evaluating events recalled from childhood is needed.

Third, future studies should also examine other factors related to adjustment of African Americans students at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) compared to historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Mannan, Charleston and Saghafi (1986) suggested that even when racial issues are controlled for, African Americans students' lack of social integration may impact completion rates in this population. With more organizations and social groups on PWIs today, other variables such as a supportive network of the family family, and spirituality also need to be included as predictors of

college adjustment when studying African American college students. A final limitation was that income level or socioeconomic status was not examined. The historical impact of poverty in this country and a crippling welfare system may have significantly impacted the family status in African American households.

Given the problems with culturally sensitive and relevant assessment tools as well as other variables and perceptual factors for African Americans, a qualitative design might serve to access more in-depth and rich information regarding interparental conflict in this population. This approach will also allow greater comfort to African Americans in telling their stories rather than answering abstract questionnaires for unknown researchers. Future research should take the findings of this study along with these methodological limitations into consideration in an effort to improve the understanding of the impact of divorce and interparental conflict upon adjustment for African American children of divorce. These findings and limitations may also be useful to consider when studying other cultural and age groups.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that regardless of whether parents stayed together or divorced, the presence of interparental conflict impacts the adjustment of African American college students. These effects were found to exist on average of about 13.5 years post divorce, indicating indirectly that the effects of interparental conflict have long term negative impact for these students. In general, these results were similar to previous research with other mostly White and younger aged samples (Amato, 2006) indicating that interparental conflict plays a significant role in the adjustment of children.

On the other hand, this study did not find support for the impact on adjustment of post-divorce interparental conflict in this sample. This finding was not expected and was not consistent with past research with other mostly Caucasian middle class samples where the presence of conflict was common and did impacts adjustment (Amato, 2006). Several potential explanations for these different results was discussed above related to different family processes. Finally, neither age nor gender affected the relationship between parental conflict and adjustment. These findings were also not consistent with previous research. Together these results argue that African American families may experience and respond differently to the divorce process in such a way as to limit the impact of post-divorce conflict and the impact of gender and age. Clearly these findings highlight a need for additional research with African American families regarding divorce as well as raise the question of how other culturally different groups may respond in unique ways to divorce and conflict.

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APPENDIX A

TABLES

Table 1

Sample Demographics

Source	Overall	Divorced	Intact
Mean Current Age	22	22 (n=56)	23(n=34)
Mean Age at Divorce	—	8.5 (n= 56)	—
Gender			
Males	27	15	12
Females	63	41	22

Table 2

Intercorrelations of Sub-Scales of College Adjustment Scale for African AmericanStudents

Scales	AP	AN	IP	DP	CP	SI	SA	SE	FP
1. AP	---								
2. AN	.25*	---							
3. IP	.47**	.23*	---						
4. DP	.68**	.37**	.72**	---					
5. CP	.53	.28**	.44**	.49**	---				
6. SI	.25*	.23*	.54**	.57**	.35**	---			
7. SA	.35**	.18	.47**	.53**	.36**	.49**	---		
8. SE	.30**	.15	.44**	.44**	.33**	.39**	.25*	---	
9. FP	.41**	.19	.51**	.46**	.40**	.38**	.47**	.39	---

Note: *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3

Principal Components Analysis of Nine Subscales of the College Adjustment Scale

Scales	Component 1
1. Academic Problems	.70
2. Anxiety	.42
3. Interpersonal Problems	.81
4. Depression	.87
5. Career Problems	.68
6. Suicidal Ideations	.69
7. Substance Abuse	.67
8. Self Esteem	.59
9. Family Problems	.69
Eigenvalue	4.3
% Total Variance	47.6

Table 4

Mean and Standard Deviation of CAS, Conflict Prior, and Conflict Post Scores as a Function of Gender and Marital Status

Source	CAS		Conflict Prior		Conflict Post	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
CAS Male	165.8	46.1	13.6	8.8	10.5	10.9
CAS Female	163.6	36.3	16.0	10.9	15.0	11.1
CAS Intact	160.9	13.1	13.1	10.0	—	—
CAS Divorced	166.3	44.0	15.2	10.4	13.8	11.1

Note. CAS = College Adjustment Scale. Conflict Prior = Scores for conflict prior to divorce or conflict in an intact home. Conflict Post = Scores for conflict after the divorce is completed.

Table 5

Standard Regression Analysis of Gender, Family Status, Prior Conflict Predicting
College Adjustment

Variable	B	SE	β	Sig
Gender	-4.833	19.986	-.057	.589
Conprop	.984	8.923	.260	.016
Family Status	2.421	8.499	.300	.776

Note. Model Adjusted R Squared = .038 . Gender = Male or Female. ConProp =
 Conflict Prior to Divorce. Family Status = Intact or Divorced.

Table 6

Standard Regression Analysis of Age at Divorce, Gender, Post Conflict Predicting
College Adjustment

Variable	B	SE	β	Sig
Gender	-16.763	13.580	-.170	.222
Age	-.765	1.300	-.080	.559
ConPost	.880	.540	.222	.109

Note. Model Adjusted R Squared = .013. Gender = Male or Female. Age = Age at Time of Divorce. ConPost = Conflict Post Divorce.

APPENDIX B

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY APPROVAL LETTERS AND INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

03/14/2005 MON 16:21 FAX

002/

*The University of Oklahoma*

OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

March 2, 2005

Ms. Linda J. Alford
Educational Psychology
ECH 321
CAMPUS MAIL

RE: Exempt from IRB Review**IRB Number: FY2005-142****Title: Impact of Conflicted Divorce on Adjustment of African American College Students**

Dear Ms. Alford:

The Institutional Review Board considers that this research is exempt in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46, Sub-part 101 (b), Category:

2. *Research using cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, and educational achievement tests, or surveys, interviews, or observations of public behavior, unless human subjects are identifiable, and disclosure of responses could put them at risk of liability, or damage to their reputations or financial standing.*

as revised November 13, 2001. This approval is granted for the following study sites:

- University of Oklahoma
- Oklahoma State University
- University of Central Oklahoma
- Langston University
- Rose State College

Further review of this study by the IRB is not required unless the protocol changes with regards to the use of human subjects. In that case, the study must be resubmitted immediately to the Board. Please inform the IRB when this research is completed.

If you have any questions related to this research or the IRB, you may telephone the IRB staff at 405.325.8110 or visit our web site out irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Laurette Taylor".

E. Laurette Taylor, Ph.D.

Chair

Institutional Review Board – Norman Campus (FWA #00003191)

FY2005-142

cc: Dr. Avraham Scherman, Educational Psychology

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA-NORMAN CAMPUS

Hi Students

My name is Linda J. Alford and I am a graduate student in the Counseling Psychology program. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled [The Impact of Conflicted Divorce on Adjustment of African American College Students]. I am conducting this project under the supervision of Dr Terry Pace, Professor in the Educational Psychology Department. This document defines the terms and conditions for consenting to participate in this study.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY: This study has been reviewed and approved by the OU Institution Review Board (IRB). It should only take about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire and 20-30 minutes to complete the research instruments. The focus of my study is the family and divorce. There is a significant amount of research on how divorce affects the family and factors in the divorce process itself that may have more impact on families than just couples divorcing. My research will look at the pre and post divorce process and variables that may impact family members even after the divorce is finalized. This study will also seek to determine if age and gender influence adjustment in children of conflicted divorce...

You may be included if you meet one of two criteria: you are African American, 18 -25 years old, your parents experienced a conflicted divorce (conflict over financial, custody, other divorce issues during and after the divorce process was completed), and you were raised in the custody of your mother; or you were raised in an intact home in which your parents did not divorce.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: The potential risk of this study is that it may resurface feelings relating to your experience with your parent's divorce. If this happens, you may discontinue immediately and if further assistance is needed, you may contact the OU Counseling Clinic at 325-2914. The Counseling Clinic is located at 2709 Lawrence Avenue, Norman, OK 73019 and is managed by licensed psychologists who supervise masters and doctoral students in community counseling and counseling psychology, respectively. The clinic operates on a sliding scale (ability to pay) fee schedule and is opened Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.; Tuesday from 10:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.; and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. The potential benefit of the study is the acquisition of information that adds to the current knowledge base about the effects of conflicted divorce on children and areas for future research. It will also provide participants with knowledge of their reaction to their parents' divorce and subsequent adjustment issues. Feedback may also encourage those having difficulties to seek assistance.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION: Participation is voluntary and you may discontinue at any time during the study. You may also choose to participate in a drawing for a \$100 Wal-Mart Gift Card. You are eligible for the drawing if you complete the required instruments. Those who do not meet the criteria for the study or start then discontinue participation will not be eligible for the drawing. Again, as with the study, participation in the drawing is voluntary and no identifying information is required.

CONFIDENTIALITY: To ensure confidentiality, names will not be required on any instrument or scale in this study. No identifying information will be maintained and no further contact will be made with participants.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY: If you have questions, you may contact me at 741-0929 (lalford@ou.edu) or my faculty sponsor, Dr Pace at 325-5974. (tpace@ou.edu). For inquiries about rights as a research participant, contact the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

PARTICIPANT ASSURANCE: I have read and understand the terms and conditions of this study and I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research study. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Signature

Date

3005 Robin Road
Midwest City, OK 73110
November 12, 2004

Dr. Terry Britton
Executive Vice President
Rose State College
6420 S.E. 15th
Midwest City, OK 73110

Dr Britton,

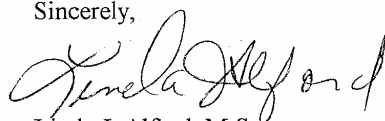
I am a doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at the University of Oklahoma (OU). This letter is to request that I be allowed to collect data at Rose State College (RSC) following approval of the research by the OU Institutional Review Board (IRB). Data collection is expected to begin immediately following approval and will continue for approximately one month or until the number of participants required for the study is reached. The total number of participants expected is two hundred. However, to reach this number, other universities in the local area will also be included as data collection sites.

Supervision for my dissertation is provided by my committee chair, Dr Avraham (Avi) Scherman, Professor of Educational Psychology. Dr Scherman can be reached at 405-325-5974 or by email at ascherman@ou.edu. Dr. Scherman has also reviewed and approved this letter.

My study will examine the impact of parent's conflicted divorce on the adjustment of African American college students. Studies also show that conflict prior to and after divorce significantly impact adjustment in children of all ages. Most of the research in this area involves younger children and Caucasian Americans. There is a paucity of data examining the effect of divorce in a representative population of other ethnic groups and young adults. This research is important for two reasons: it examines the impact of conflicted divorce on college student of a different ethnic group and it looks at several factors shown to impact adjustment in children of interparental conflict.

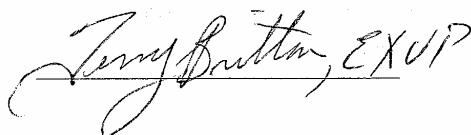
If you have further questions, you may contact me at 741-0929 (ebonylin@aol.com)

Sincerely,



Linda J. Alford, M.S.
Doctoral Candidate, University of Oklahoma

Permission to collect data at RSC under the conditions above is approved (X) or disapproved ().



11/23/04
Date

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA-NORMAN CAMPUS

For Use at Rose State College

Hi Students

My name is Linda J. Alford and I am a graduate student in the University of Oklahoma (OU) Counseling Psychology program. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled [The Impact of Conflicted Divorce on Adjustment of African American College Students]. I am conducting this project under the supervision of Dr Terry Pace, Professor in the Educational Psychology Department. This document defines the terms and conditions for consenting to participate in this study.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY: This study has been reviewed and approved by the OU Institution Review Board (IRB). It should only take about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire and 20-30 minutes to complete the research instruments. The focus of my study is the family and divorce. There is a significant amount of research on how divorce affects the family and factors in the divorce process itself that may have more impact on families than just couples divorcing. My research will look at the pre and post divorce process and variables that may impact family members even after the divorce is finalized. This study will also seek to determine if age and gender influence adjustment in children of conflicted divorce...

You may be included if you meet one of two criteria: you are African American, 18 -25 years old, your parents experienced a conflicted divorce (conflict over financial, custody, other divorce issues during and after the divorce process was completed), and you were raised in the custody of your mother; or you were raised in an intact home in which your parents did not divorce.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: The potential risk of this study is that it may resurface feelings relating to your experience with your parent's divorce. If this happens, you may discontinue immediately and if further counseling assistance is needed, you may contact Dr. Joanne McMillen, at 405-733-7373. Counseling services are free of charge to eligible, currently enrolled students. The potential benefit of this study is the acquisition of information that adds to the current knowledge base about the effects of conflicted divorce on children and areas for future research. It will also provide participants with knowledge of their reaction to their parents' divorce and subsequent adjustment issues. Feedback may also encourage those having difficulties to seek assistance.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION: Participation is voluntary and you may discontinue at any time during the study. You may also choose to participate in a drawing for a \$100 Wal-Mart Gift Card. You are eligible for the drawing if you complete the required instruments. Those who do not meet the criteria for the study or start then discontinue participation will not be eligible for the drawing. Again, as with the study, participation in the drawing is voluntary and no identifying information is required.

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PARTICIPANT ASSURANCE: I have read and understand the terms and conditions of this study and I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research study. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Signature

Date

Langston University
Institutional Review Board
Human Subjects Review

Date February 15, 2005

IRB # 29

Proposal Title: "Impact of Conflicted Divorce on Adjustment of African American College Students."

Principal Investigator(s): Ms. Linda Alford

Reviewed and Processed on February 1, 2005

IRB Decision Rendered: Approved
 (Approval or Disapproval)

All approvals must be subject to review by a full Institutional Review Board at the next meeting as well as subject to the monitoring process of the Board at any time during the approval period.

Approval status period valid for data collection is one calendar year. A request for continuation of a research project beyond the one-year time must be submitted to the Board in writing prior to the one-year expiration date.

Any changes or modifications to the approved project must also be submitted for approval.

Comments:

Consent form must identify the contact person from the Langston IRB. Name to be included is Dr. Yvonne Montgomery, Chair, Langston IRB. Please forward revised consent form prior to data collection.

Modifications or Terms and Conditions for Approval:

Reason(s) for Disapproval: _____

Signature

Yvonne Montgomery
 Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date 2-15-05

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA-NORMAN CAMPUS

For Use at Langston University

Hi Students

My name is Linda J. Alford and I am a graduate student in the University of Oklahoma Counseling Psychology program. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled [The Impact of Conflicted Divorce on Adjustment of African American College Students]. I am conducting this project under the supervision of Dr Terry Pace, Professor in the Educational Psychology Department. This document defines the terms and conditions for consenting to participate in this study.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY: This study has been reviewed and approved by the OU Institution Review Board (IRB). It should only take about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire and 20-30 minutes to complete the research instruments. The focus of my study is the family and divorce. There is a significant amount of research on how divorce affects the family and factors in the divorce process itself that may have more impact on families than just couples divorcing. My research will look at the pre and post divorce process and variables that may impact family members even after the divorce is finalized. This study will also seek to determine if age and gender influence adjustment in children of conflicted divorce.

You may be included if you meet one of two criteria: you are African American, 18 -25 years old, your parents experienced a conflicted divorce (conflict over financial, custody, other divorce issues during and after the divorce process was completed), and you were raised in the custody of your mother; or you were raised in an intact home in which your parents did not divorce.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: The potential risk of this study is that it may resurface feelings relating to your experience with your parent's divorce. If this happens, you may discontinue immediately and if further assistance is needed, you may contact the Langston Counseling Clinic at 466-3400. The Counseling Clinic is located on the main campus in front of the Student Union building. The clinic is managed by qualified counselor. There is no fee for Langston students and it operates on an appointment and walk-in basis. Clinic hours are from 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. If assistance is needed on the weekend or other off days, you may contact campus security office who will contact appropriate personnel. The potential benefit of the study is the acquisition of information that adds to the current knowledge base about the effects of conflicted divorce on children and areas for future research. It will also provide participants with knowledge of their reaction to their parents' divorce and subsequent adjustment issues. Feedback may also encourage those having difficulties to seek assistance.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION: Participation is voluntary and you may discontinue at any time during the study. You may also choose to participate in a drawing for a \$100 Wal-Mart Gift Card. You are eligible for the drawing if you complete the required instruments. Those who do not meet the criteria for the study or start then discontinue participation will not be eligible for the drawing. Again, as with the study, participation in the drawing is voluntary and no identifying information is required.

CONFIDENTIALITY: To ensure confidentiality, names will not be required on any instrument or scale in this study. No identifying information will be maintained and no further contact will be made with participants.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY: If you have questions, you may contact me at 741-0929 (lalford@ou.edu) or my faculty sponsor, Dr Terry Pace 325-5974. (tpace2ou.edu). For inquiries about rights as a research participant, contact the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Institutional Review Board at 405-325-8110 (irb@ou.edu) and Langston University Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr Yvonne Montgomery at 466- 3242 or ykmontgomery@lunet.edu.

PARTICIPANT ASSURANCE: I have read and understand the terms and conditions of this study and I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research study. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Signature

Date



*Dr. Joe C. Jackson College
of Graduate Studies & Research
Office of the Dean*

January 27, 2005

Ms. Linda J. Alford, M.S.
3005 Robin Road
Midwest City, OK 73110

Re: Application for IRB Review of Human Subjects Research

Dear Ms. Alford:

The Jackson College of Graduate Studies and Research is pleased to inform you of the approval of your application for review of human subjects research by the UCO Institutional Review Board on the research proposal *"Impact of Conflicted Divorce on Adjustment of African American College Students"*, with the following proviso/contingency:

The Consent Form included in your IRB materials is specific to the University of Oklahoma and not to the University of Central Oklahoma. It will be necessary to have a draft of a consent form specific to the University of Central Oklahoma. It is especially important that the "Risks and Benefits" section of the Consent Form specific to the University of Central Oklahoma advising volunteers how, when and where they might seek further counseling assistance must be included.

You must get your date, time and method of recruiting of volunteer students approved by this office.

If the JCGS&R can be of any further assistance in your pursuit of research, please do not hesitate to contact us.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,

Dr. John M. Garic
Associate Dean
Jackson College of Graduate Studies and Research

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA-NORMAN CAMPUS

For Use at University of Central Oklahoma

Hi Students

My name is Linda J. Alford and I am a graduate student in the University of Oklahoma (OU) Counseling Psychology program. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled [The Impact of Conflicted Divorce on Adjustment of African American College Students]. I am conducting this project under the supervision of Dr Terry Pace, Professor in the Educational Psychology Department. This document defines the terms and conditions for consenting to participate in this study.

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RISKS AND BENEFITS: The potential risk of this study is that it may resurface feelings relating to your experience with your parent's divorce. If this happens, you may discontinue immediately and if further assistance is needed, you may contact the Student Counseling Center. The UCO Student Counseling Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am – 5:00 pm on the fourth floor of the University Center, Room 402. For more information, you may call 974-2215. The clinic is managed by qualified counselors. Eligible, currently enrolled UCO students may receive services free of charge. The potential benefit of the study is the acquisition of information that adds to the current knowledge base about the effects of conflicted divorce on children and areas for future research. It will also provide participants with knowledge of their reaction to their parents' divorce and subsequent adjustment issues. Feedback may also encourage those having difficulties to seek assistance.

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Signature

Date

O K L A H O M A S T A T E U N I V E R S I T Y



Office of University Research Compliance
415 Whitehurst
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-1020
405-744-1676
Fax: 405-744-4335

January 3, 2005

Ms. Linda Alford
3005 Robin Road
Midwest City, OK 73110

Dear Ms. Alford:

The Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board has received and reviewed the information on your study "Impact of Conflicted Divorce on Adjustment of African American College Students". Based on the review and approval of your study by the OU IRB, the OSU IRB supports the planned data collection at OSU.

You are responsible to the OU IRB, which has official oversight over this study. Please direct any questions concerning subjects' rights to the OU IRB office.

Sincerely,


Sue C. Jacobs
Chair, OSU Institutional Review Board

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA-NORMAN CAMPUS

For Use at Oklahoma State University

Hi Students

My name is Linda J. Alford and I am a graduate student in the University of Oklahoma (OU) Counseling Psychology program. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled [The Impact of Conflicted Divorce on Adjustment of African American College Students]. I am conducting this project under the supervision of Dr Terry Pace, Professor in the Educational Psychology Department. This document defines the terms and conditions for consenting to participate in this study.

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RISKS AND BENEFITS: The potential risk of this study is that it may resurface feelings relating to your experience with your parent's divorce. If this happens, you may discontinue immediately and if further assistance is needed, you may contact the Student Counseling Center. The Student Counseling Service is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am – 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm in 002 Student Health Center (405-744-7007) and 316 Student Union (405-744-5472).

If you have an emergency after hours, you may contact the OSU Police Department at 405-744-6523 or Stillwater Medical Center 405-372-1480. The clinic is managed by qualified counselors and OSU students may receive up to 12 counseling sessions per fiscal year with sessions 1- 4 free of charge. The potential benefit of the study is the acquisition of information that adds to the current knowledge base about the effects of conflicted divorce on children and areas for future research. It will also provide participants with knowledge of their reaction to their parents' divorce and subsequent adjustment issues. Feedback may also encourage those having difficulties to seek assistance.

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PARTICIPANT ASSURANCE: I have read and understand the terms and conditions of this study and I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research study. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

COPY OF DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

Date_____

ID#_____ (Participant Number – No Names)

PLEASE FILL IN THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

We hope you will respond to “each” question. However, you do not need to respond to any question you choose not to answer. At a minimum, please complete asterisk items for research analysis.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- *1. Current Age_____
- *2. Gender_____
- 3. Place of Birth_____
- 4. Race/ethnic group_____
- 5. What is your state of residence? _____
- 6. Are you a U.S. Citizen? _____ If not, what is your country of origin_____
- 7. What is your primary language_____?
- 8. Are you a freshman_____, sophomore_____, Junior_____, Senior_____?
- 9. What is your expected date of graduation? _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

- 1. Have you in the past or are you currently experiencing psychological or behavioral problems for which you received or are receiving treatment
YES_____ NO_____
- 2. Have you in the past or are you currently experiencing problems with legal or illegal substances (alcohol, other drugs). YES_____ NO_____

3. Have you in the past or are you currently experiencing legal problems related to criminal activity YES _____ NO _____

MARITAL INFORMATION (You)

1. Are you currently married? Yes _____ No _____
2. If married, how long have you been married? _____
3. If divorced, how long? _____
4. How many times have you been married? _____

MARITAL/DIVORCE INFORMATION (PARENTS). Please complete each item unless some information is too sensitive. In that case, leave blank.

1. How long were your parents married? _____
- *2. How old were you when your parent's divorced? _____
4. Describe your parent's pre-divorce relationship using the following scale?
(Choose One). **If parents did not divorce, give relationship as intact family.**

_____ Low Conflict – parents mutually supportive, able to communicate with each other effectively, able to get along as well as expected.

_____ Medium Conflict – parents generally disrespectful, name calling, insults in front of children, hostile toward each other (not remediation/sadistic), children put in middle.

_____ High Conflict – chronic and/or forceful domestic violence or parent-to-parent physical abuse, police/child protective services involved, hospital visits for injuries stemming from violence, murder, threats of suicide, extensive duration of one parent by the other, and rigid inability to discuss children and their well-being.

5. Describe your parent's relationship after divorce using the following scale?
(Choose One)

_____ Low Conflict – parents mutually supportive, able to communicate with each other effectively, able to get along as well as expected.

_____ Medium Conflict – parents generally disrespectful, name calling, insults in front of children, hostile toward each other (not remediation/sadistic), children put in middle.

High Conflict – chronic and/or forceful domestic violence or parent-to-parent physical abuse, police/child protective services involved, hospital visits for injuries stemming from violence, murder, threats of suicide, extensive duration of one parent by the other, and rigid inability to discuss children and their well-being.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX D

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT SCALE INFORMATION

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT SCALE

Scale May be Obtained from - John H. Grych, Ph.D

Department of Psychology - Marquette University

P.O. Box 1881 -- Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881

The CPIC was designed to assess children's perceptions of several aspects of overt interparental conflict and includes three 6-item subscales measuring frequency, intensity, and resolution that can be combined to form a single, comprehensive assessment of interparental conflict. The published psychometric properties of the measure are based on use with predominantly white, middle class American children from the ages of 9-12. However, the measure also has been used with older and younger children and is currently being used outside of the United States as well.

Sample Items

1. T ST F I never see my parents arguing or disagreeing.
2. T ST F I feel caught in the middle when my parents argue.
3. T ST F My parents have broken or thrown things during an argument.

APPENDIX E

COLLEGE ADJUSTMENT SCALE INFORMATION

COLLEGE ADJUSTMENT SCALE

Scale May be Obtained from Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.

Distribution Center 16130 N. Florida Ave Luiz, FL 33549

College adjustment was measured using the College Adjustment Scale (CAS). The CAS is a 108-item screening inventory developed to provide a rapid method of screening college counseling clients for common developmental and psychological problems (Anton & Reed, 1991). CAS items are based on a 4-point Likert-type response scale that assesses college adjustment across nine scales derived from factor analysis : Anxiety, Depression , Suicidal Ideation , Substance Abuse, Self-Esteem Problems, Interpersonal Problems, Family Problems, Academic Problems, Interpersonal Problems.

Sample Items

F S M V = False, Slightly True, Mainly True, Very True

1. I feel good about myself
2. I avoid talking to my parents
3. I can no longer cope with life
4. I never find the time to study
5. I spend too much money on drugs or alcohol.