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DISSERTATION

**THE INFLUENCE OF DIVORCE AND OTHER FACTORS ON YOUNG-
ADULT RELATIONSHIPS**

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Doctorate Degree

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Fall 2001

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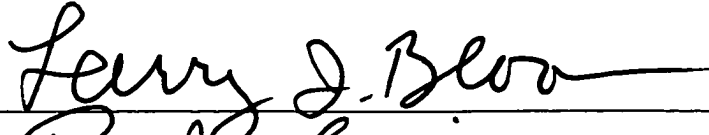
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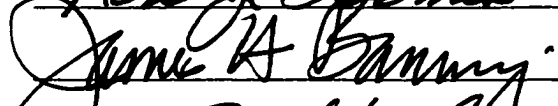
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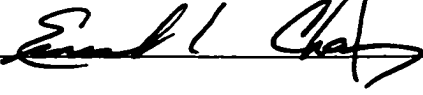
WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE DISSERTATION PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY HALLDIS M. KELLY ENTITLED THE INFLUENCE OF DIVORCE AND OTHER FACTORS ON YOUNG-ADULT RELATIONSHIPS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY.

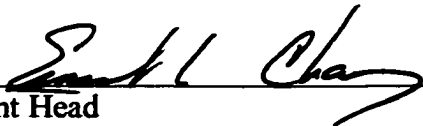
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

THE INFLUENCE OF DIVORCE AND OTHER FOO FACTORS ON YOUNG- ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

This study questions the proposition that children who experience their parents' divorce are predisposed to impairments in the formation of stable, long-lasting romantic unions in adulthood. The study investigates the contribution of family-of-origin (FOO) structure (divorced vs. intact FOO), FOO environmental characteristics (family rituals, positive family affect, family communication, family worries, family conflicts), and gender in predicting adult-children's relationship characteristics; very few divorce-related relationship studies have simultaneously considered these factors. Adult-children's relationship characteristics were assessed using measures of positive and negative relationship-communication strategies, relationship beliefs, and fear of intimacy. These factors have been associated empirically with the quality and stability of adult intimate relationships.

Hierarchical regression analyses were used to simultaneously consider whether FOO structure, FOO environment, and gender would be predictive of adult-children's relationship characteristics. Results indicate that qualities of the FOO environment, rather than its structure, predict positive and negative relationship-communication

strategies, relationship beliefs, and fear of intimacy in adult-children. Moreover, positive aspects of the FOO environment, rather than the presence or absence of negative FOO environmental characteristics, were most predictive of adult-children's relationship-communication, relationship beliefs, and fear of intimacy.

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The man who, being really on the Way, falls upon hard times in the world will not, as a consequence, turn to that friend who offers him refuge and comfort and encourages his old self to survive. Rather, he will seek out someone who will faithfully and inexorably help him to risk himself, so that he may endure the suffering and pass courageously through it, thus making of it a "raft that leads to the far shore." Only to the extent that man exposes himself over and over again to annihilation, can that which is indestructible arise within him.

Karlfried Graf von Durckheim

My thanks to Kaila, Missy, Larry, my advisor Ernie Chavez, my committee members, and the countless others who have constantly been there to help me get to that far shore despite my fears. I will never forget what you have given me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Research indicates that one of the most striking differences between divorced and intact-family adults involves intimate relationships. Individuals from divorced families are portrayed as having extreme difficulty developing and maintaining intimate relationships (Amato, 1996; Amato & Booth, 1997; Sanders, Halford & Behrens, 1999). Compared to their intact-family peers, Adult Children of Divorce's (ACOD) relationships have been described as less satisfying, less committed, and more likely to end in divorce (Wallerstein, 1987; Booth, Brinkerhoff & White, 1984; Kelly, 1981; Hetherington, 1972; Southworth & Schwartz, 1987; Tasker, 1992; Kulka & Weingarten, 1979; Hetherington & Parke, 1979). These relationship characteristics are troubling since they have important ramifications for ACOD as well as for their offspring; relationship problems and divorce increase the risk of emotional, physical, behavioral, social, and economic problems for both parents and children (Bloom, Asher & White, 1978; Bradbury & Fincham, 1990). The causes of ACOD's relationship problems are unknown although divorce-research has portrayed these difficulties as negative sequelae of parental divorce (Webster, Orbuch & House, 1995). The present study posits, however, that problems with previous studies may have led to over-estimations of the extent to which divorce shapes and influences ACOD's relationship characteristics.

The problematic relationship characteristics described above have invoked interest in the question of why an “intergenerational transmission of divorce” phenomena seems to occur from one generation of divorced families to the next. Indeed, research has consistently indicated that parents’ divorce impairs ACOD’s relationship and marital stability (i.e., risk of divorce) (Webster, Orbuch, & House, 1995) and predisposes them to early marriage, early and often single-parenthood, higher divorce rates (Bumpass & Sweet, 1972; Kobrin & Waite, 1984; Glenn & Kramer, 1987; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989, 1989a; Webster, Orbuch, & House, 1995), a more favorable attitude toward divorce (Greenberg & Nay 1982; Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990), an impaired ability to derive satisfaction from intimate relationships (Kulka & Weingarten, 1979). Despite describing and investigating these issues, the causal factors for these problems is still not understood (Webster, Orbuch, & House, 1995). This may be due, in part, to the methodology applied, and to the generalized measures of relationship characteristics that have been used in ACOD research (Gabardi & Rosen, 1991). These issues have impaired researchers’ ability to determine what, specifically, leads to the poor relationship outcomes seen in ACOD.

This study argues that although the last thirty years of divorce research chiefly indicates that Adult Children of Divorce (ACOD) are incapable of forming stable, long-lasting romantic relationships, and attributes these problems to parents’ divorce, these problems are more likely due to problematic family-of-origin (FOO) environmental characteristics. In support of this argument, theories that emphasize the importance of childhood

experiences on adult-children's overall well-being will be discussed. Research that shows how the child-caretaker (C-C) relationship, and other aspects of the FOO environment, are linked to adult-children's relationship characteristics will be presented. The present study will argue that because ACOD relationship-research has failed to include these factors into its studies, it may have overestimated the impact of parents' divorce on adult-children's relationship problems. The discussion will also address ACOD relationship-research's failure, thus far, to take important, empirically derived determinants of relationship functioning and longevity into account and how consideration of these variables would improve ACOD relationship research.

Problems with ACOD relationship research

A large body of research finds that Adult Children of Divorce (ACOD) have significant difficulties in their romantic relationships. ACOD relationships have been characterized as "impoverished", shorter-lived, less satisfying, less committed, and of poorer quality than those of intact-family adults (Booth, Brinkerhoff, & White, 1984; Kelly, 1981; Hetherington, 1972; Southworth & Schwartz, 1987; Tasker, 1992; Kulka & Weingarten, 1979; Hetherington & Parke, 1979). ACOD have been described as more likely to fear betrayal by present and future relationship partners (Wallerstein 1987, Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989) and more likely to engage in "heightened courtship activity" (Booth, Brinkerhoff, & White 1984), which includes the tendency to have sex earlier and with a greater number of partners (Hetherington, 1972; Wallerstein, 1985; Hogan & Kitagawa, 1985; Billingham, Sauer, & Pillion, 1989; Gabardi & Rosén, 1992); to give birth before

marriage (McLanahan & Bumpass, 1988; Tasker, 1992); to experience more conflict in their relationships (Kelly, 1996); to get married earlier (Tasker, 1992; Kulka & Weingarten, 1979; Hetherington & Parke, 1979); to have children sooner; to marry partners that do not meet their ideals; to report higher levels of dissatisfaction with their mates over time (Tasker, 1992; Kulka & Weingarten, 1979; Hetherington & Parke, 1979); to derive less satisfaction and to be less invested in their roles as marriage partners and parents (Kulka & Weingarten, 1979), and; to *get divorced earlier and more frequently* than those from intact families (Greenberg & Nay, 1982; Booth, Brinkerhoff, & White, 1984; Kelly, 1981; Hetherington, 1972; Southworth & Schwartz, 1987; Tasker, 1992; Glenn 1985; Bumpass, Martin, & Sweet, 1991; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989).

A significant problem with ACOD relationship-research involves methodology, which has typically involved between-group comparisons of subjects grouped solely by the presence or absence of their parents' divorce (Webster, Orbuch & House, 1995). This strategy neglects FOO factors that non-divorce research has linked to adult-children's relationship outcomes (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). Relationship research, for example, shows strong evidence of links between the FOO environment and adult-children's relationship characteristics (Conger, Cui, Bryant & Elder, 2000; Epstein & Erskine, 1983; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986; Collins & Read, 1990), suggesting that the FOO creates an environmental "tone" and learning environment in which the developing child establishes a unique personality, interactional skills, and an interpersonal style that is carried forth into adult relationships (Conger, 1991, p. 213-215). Accordingly, FOO characteristics, such as family communication and family interactions, are reported to

impact children's developmental outcomes and to have long-term consequences on their relationships (Amato & Booth, 1997; Barnes & Olson, 1985; Brofenbrenner, 1979; Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000; Cooper, Grotevant, & Condor, 1983; Feldman, Gowen, & Fischer, 1998; Feng, Giarrusso, Bengston, & Frye, 1999; Hayden, Schiller, Dickstein, Seifer, Sameroff, Miller, Keitner, & Rasmussen, 1998). Because ACOD research has neglected these important aspects of the FOO environment, it has left itself open to the risk of misattributing all problematic outcomes to parents' divorce.

ACOD research's grouping methodology has made it difficult to distinguish between divorce versus non-divorce related outcomes (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). For example, although research has found that divorced families are significantly more likely to be characterized by problematic FOO conditions that can negatively impact children's development, ACOD research has not been designed to allow researchers to investigate whether it is the divorce, or the greater level of exposure to these FOO environmental problems, that leads to poor outcomes in ACOD. Similarly, it has not considered whether pre-existing conditions (e.g., parent with mental health problems) accounted for the divorce, rather than having been the result of it (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). If this was the case, some problematic ACOD outcomes may actually be the result of childhood exposure to chronic, dysfunctional, non-divorce related conditions. Another problem involves the failure to consider differences in how individuals and families handle divorce; some child-of-divorce studies have indicated that a minority of families may manage to minimize children's exposure to problematic family conditions despite the divorce (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). Referred

to as the “functionally divorced¹,” they maintain economic and emotional stability, minimize children’s involvement in parents’ problems, and minimize or eliminate school and residential changes for children, yet there are no studies investigating whether individuals from functionally divorced families exhibit the same relationship problems as do ACOD in general (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). Finally, ACOD research fails to take positive factors into account to see how these may impact ACOD’s long-term outcomes. Resiliency research, for example, has shown that positive experiences can often mitigate, or override, the harmful effects of negative life-experiences. In doing so, it has underscored the need for ACOD studies to consider multiple factors, both positive and negative, in ACOD studies (Masten, 2001; Hartup, 1983). It seems obvious that a multi-factorial model considering groups of variables could, arguably, be a more realistic approach to the study of ACOD (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990; Mussen, Conger, Kagan & Huston, 1990; Hartup, 1989; Ganong & Coleman, 1987; Kurdek, 1981).

Psychology’s emphasis on childhood determinants of adult-children’s adjustment has not been applied to ACOD research

Although most psychological theories are grounded on the idea that perceptions, cognitions, and behaviors in one’s present are driven by factors or experiences in one’s past, this conceptual framework has not been fully applied to ACOD relationship research. The failure of ACOD research to adequately assess a variety of potentially

¹ Divorced families that minimize the problematic divorce-related conditions that are stressful and problematic for offspring

important, childhood family-of-origin (FOO) factors, stands in contrast to the field of psychology's historical emphasis on childhood determinants of adult functioning. Indeed, since Freud's introduction of psychoanalytic theory (Breuer & Freud, 1893-1895, p. 82; as cited in Monte, 1995, p. 56), psychology has placed a strong emphasis on the influence of childhood experiences as determinants of later functioning. Certainly, many psychological theories (Developmental, Attachment, Psychoanalytic) have rested on the notion that early life experiences exert varying degrees of influence on later life characteristics (Erikson, 1959, 1968; Bowlby, 1988; Freud, 1966; Monte, 1995). According to these theories, present day behaviors are influenced by our past in that our past experience has influenced how and what we perceive, what we believe, the skills we have acquired, and the behavioral repertoire we have available to us and choose to use (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985; Erikson, 1959; Bowlby, 1988; Bandura, 1986). Despite substantial empirical support, their findings have not been strongly incorporated into divorce-related research and it is not surprising that many researchers have cited the lack of a strong theoretical underpinning in the divorce-related research as one of the primary problems with the research done in this area to date (Grych & Fincham, 1990).

Constructivist, social-cognitive-learning, and attachment theories provide valuable concepts that can be used to elicit a better understanding of the divorce effects reported in the literature. These theories emphasize how childhood experiences can influence how we think about "self" and others, and lead to selective attention, perceptual biases, unquestioned beliefs, expectations, relationship skills and styles of relating in adulthood

(Arellano, 1993; Bowlby, 1982; Bandura, 1986; Mischel, 1986; Hergenhahn, 1994; Guidano & Liotti, 1983).

According to Constructivist theory a person's beliefs, expectations, perceptions and behaviors are affected by prior experience and subsequent interpretation (Gregory, 1972, 1980; Neisser, 1967). Interpretation leads to beliefs and beliefs influence attentive processes; perceptual biases result from selective attention and the tendency to interpret stimuli based on prior beliefs. Over time, we focus on that which supports our beliefs and disregard that which does not (Epstein, 1980; Horowitz, 1980, 1982; Janoff-Bulman, 1985, 1989). Our "constructions" of reality thus influence our reactions to it and, in this sense, behavior is driven, to some degree, by past events (Epstein, 1980; Horowitz, 1980, 1982; Janoff-Bulman, 1985, 1989; Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990, p. 3). Our adult relationships are affected, then, by the beliefs about self and others that we developed in our childhood FOO (Janoff-Bulman, 1989; Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990). Research finds that these core elements of "self" lead us to act somewhat predictably in our adult relationships (Bowlby, 1982, pp. 207-208; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985; Skolnick, 1986; Collins & Read, 1990).

Social-cognitive learning theory has similar propositions, conceptualizing behaviors (e.g., tendency to divorce) as the result of inherent characteristics, skills and beliefs developed from past experiences, and the influence of the social environment (Hergenhahn, 1994). In other words, the theory sees behavior as a product of inherent characteristics (P = Person factors), characteristics of the social environment (E), and the mutually reciprocal

interaction of P x E. Social-cognitive-learning theory emphasizes modeling and socialization in its explanation of human behavior, proposing that one learns from what they are exposed to in their social environments (Mischel, 1986, p. 305; Hergenhahn, 1994; Lewin, 1951, p. 8; Conger, 1991). From this perspective, the FOO is the primary social environment that affects what is learned in childhood and taken into adulthood (Andrews, Foster, Capaldi, & Hops, 2000). Social-cognitive-learning theory predicts that the behavioral and cognitive patterns learned in childhood are used in later adult relationships (Andrews, Foster, Capaldi, & Hops, 2000).

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1973, 1980, 1982) also defines the process of personality and social development but most strongly emphasizes how these relate to our relationship-attachments with others (Collins & Read, 1990). The theory posits that early experiences with primary caretakers profoundly impact the developing personality by strongly affecting one's view of self (e.g., self-efficacy, self-concept, self-esteem, self-worthiness) and the social world (e.g., view of others; how they will treat us; their motives) (Collins & Read, 1990). A child's level of "felt security" (trust) is determined by the extent to which early caretakers are physically present and emotionally responsive to the child's needs (Collins & Read, 1990). Based on children's perceptions of their caretaker's availability and emotional responsiveness, they develop a set of beliefs and expectations about whether others will be there for them when they are needed (Collins & Read, 1990) and whether they themselves are worthy of receiving care and attention from others (Collins & Read, 1990). This process generates a unique style of "attaching" to others that promotes continuity in our subsequent relationship interactions (Epstein &

Erskine, 1983; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986; Collins & Read, 1990). Thus, our early experiences with our primary caretakers have an enormous influence on us and therefore exert life-long effects on the quality of our relationships, particularly romantic ones (Epstein & Erskine, 1983; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986; Collins & Read, 1990).

Despite the theoretical emphasis on (a) early childhood experiences as determinants of functioning, (b) the role of the social environment in shaping adult characteristics, and (c) the influence of the past on future beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors, the last thirty years of ACOD relationship-research has largely ignored these aspects of childhood experience. It has neglected important dimensions of the social environment such as stress in the home and other pre and post-divorce family conditions.

Non-divorce research provides strong evidence of a link between FOO factors and child outcomes

Although ACOD research has largely neglected the impact of family-of-origin characteristics' on ACOD outcomes, a substantial body of research exists, from a variety of disciplines, that makes the link between family-of-origin characteristics and a variety of outcomes: child temperament, child behavior problems, competence, school failure, attachment styles, adolescent adjustment, social relationships, marital satisfaction, relationship stability, relationship violence, and even to medical conditions (Amato, 1996; Amato & Booth, 1997; Sanders, Halford & Behrens, 1999; Abidin, Jenkins, & McGaughey, 1992; Goldberg & Easterbrooks, 1984; Hannan & Luster, 1991; Jouriles,

Pfiffner & O'Leary, 1988; McFarlane, Bellissimo & Norman, 1995; O'Leary, 1988; O'Leary & Cascardi, 1998; Shaw & Emery, 1987; Sheeber & Johnson, 1992; Smilkstein, Helsper-Lucas, Ashworth, Montano, & Pagel, 1984; Stevenson-Hinde, 1990; Thompson, Merritt, Keith, Murphy, & Johndrow, 1993; Vickers, 1994; Waring & Patton, 1984; Cummings, 1995; Seifer, 1995; Belsky, 1981; Minuchin, 1985; Moran & Pederson, 1992). The fact that these studies come from a variety of disciplines, and that they all highlight the relationship between FOO and developmental outcomes is strongly indicative of the tremendous impact that families and their functioning have on children's and adult-children's outcomes (Hayden, Schiller, Dickstein, Seifer, Sameroff, Miller, Keitner, & Rasmussen, 1998).

The FOO is the most important developmental environment for the child, and the way it performs its duties and the environment it creates is a primary component of children's healthy adjustment (Belsky, 1981; Minuchin, 1985; Moran & Pederson, 1992; Hayden, Schiller, Dickstein, Seifer, Sameroff, Miller, Keitner, & Rasmussen, 1998). The family-of-origin determines the types of risks, norms, opportunities, and supports a child experiences (Belsky, 1981; Minuchin, 1985; Moran & Pederson, 1992; Hayden, Schiller, Dickstein, Seifer, Sameroff, Miller, Keitner, & Rasmussen, 1998) and therefore, strongly affects the strengths, preferences, skills, and even adjustment problems a child will develop (Brofenbrenner, 1979). Families impact children's self-image, self-esteem, and other core aspects of "self" and therefore, strongly impact children's social, emotional, and personality development (Belsky, 1981; Minuchin, 1985; Moran & Pederson, 1992; Hayden, Schiller, et. al., 1998). Because families influence the foundational structures of

children's personalities, they clearly play a life-long role in influencing the way adult-children respond to others (Belsky, 1981; Minuchin, 1985; Moran & Pederson, 1992; Hayden, Schiller, et. al., 1998). Since the FOO impacts children's development, and since problems in one stage of development lead to subsequent problems in successive stages of development, the problems experienced in the FOO will continue to resurface over the life-span (Hergenhahn, 1994; Erikson, 1968).

Impact of the child-caretaker relationship on adult-children's relationship characteristics

The most prolific area of research regarding the family-of-origin's influence on later outcomes comes from attachment theory. Attachment theory focuses on adult-children's relationships, paying particular attention to how one aspect of the FOO, the child-caretaker relationship, affects them. According to the theory, the child-caretaker (C-C) relationship is the vehicle, or link, between childhood experiences and those of adulthood. It posits that social, emotional, and personality development are strongly affected by experiences with primary caretakers (Collins & Read, 1990) and that beliefs and expectations about others and ourselves are largely derived from the qualities (emotional availability, responsiveness) found in this primary relationship (Bowlby, 1982, 1980, 1973).

The theory proposes that early child-caretaker interactions lead to "attachment systems" (Collins & Read, 1990, p. 645; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978) which involve beliefs about whether others will be there and respond when

needed, whether others can be trusted, and levels of comfort with others (Collins & Read, 1990; Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy, 1985). According to the theory, these create a characteristic “attachment style”, which involves a style of perceiving and relating to others that is carried forward from childhood; our feelings, attentive processes, and even our memory are affected by our style of attachment (Collins & Read, 1990). Thus, the parents’ relationship with their child has an enormous impact on all aspects of development and consequently, on their subsequent relationships with others. Indeed, our models of relationship are derived from the qualities of the child-caretaker relationship (Bowlby, 1973) and it is in this way that most of the important qualities found in our adult relationships have been linked to FOO events (Hartrup & Rubin, 1986; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Hinde & Stevenson-Hinde, 1986; Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Shaver, Hazan & Bradshaw, 1988).

Indeed, parenting styles and parents’ sensitivity to children have been shown to have important implications for children’s present and future well-being. Parental hostility, rejection, and neglect have been linked to children’s short and long-term adjustment. Studies have found that children who exhibited impaired social relationships and neurotic disorders were significantly more likely to have had parents who were hostile, rejecting, and neglectful (Anthony & Benedek, 1970; Heilbrun, Orr & Harrell, 1966; Martin, 1975; Rutter & Garmezy, 1983; Rutter & Giller, 1984; Weiner, 1970). Other studies have found that children whose parents failed to provide strong, unequivocal expressions of love had significantly more difficulty developing constructive, meaningful relationships with others, problems developing self-esteem, and problems developing a confident sense

of their own identity (Bell, Avery, Jenkins, Feld & Schoenrock, 1985; Kawash, Kerr, & Clewes, 1985; Martin, 1975; Rosenberg, 1965; Rutter, 1980). In contrast, well-adjusted children have most often been found to have had warm, loving, accepting and responsive parents (Bell & Bell, 1982; Slater and Calhoun, 1988). These studies indicate that impairments to social development are linked to the child-caretaker relationship and continue to resurface over the life-span.

In related research, Hazan and Shaver (1987) investigated whether there was a link between the child-caretaker relationship and adult-children's relationships. To do this, they developed a typology of three primary adult-relationship attachment styles, which they described as 'secure', 'avoidant', and 'anxious-ambivalent.' The primary issues underlying them involved the extent to which one is comfortable with closeness and intimacy 'close', the extent to which one believes others can be counted upon 'depend,' and; the extent to which one worries about being unloved or abandoned 'anxiety.' The research concluded that comfort with intimacy, belief in others, and abandonment concerns are associated with childhood experiences with primary caretakers because adults seem to use characteristic relationship-attachment styles that are linked to their experiences of their childhood caretaker's warmth and responsiveness (Hazan and Shaver, 1987; Skolnick, 1986; Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Shaver, Hazan & Bradshaw, 1988). They concluded that romantic love is a type of attachment that is very similar to child-caretaker attachments and therefore, there is great similarity between the two (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988).

C-C Relationship: affects view of self and other

The child-caretaker relationship influences adult-children's relationships because of the enormous influence it has on children's core aspects of "self" and views of "other" (a.k.a. worldviews) (Bowlby, 1982; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988). Worldviews, which involve core beliefs, develop from experiences we have had with our childhood caretakers' care-giving style (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). The core beliefs associated with our world-view exert powerful influences on our subsequent relationships in that they determine the characteristic type of attachment style we ultimately use in our adult relationships (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988).

Research based on this model provides concrete examples of how the child-caretaker relationship can affect adult-children's worldviews. For example, Collins & Read (1990) report that adults' perceptions of their caretaker's responsiveness predicted their adult beliefs about themselves and others, and also predicted their adult attachment styles (Collins & Read, 1990; Ainsworth et al., 1978; Egeland & Farber, 1984; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Subjects who recalled their mothers as warm and responsive exhibited greater self-esteem, expressiveness, comfort with closeness and intimacy, and tended to view other people more positively (Collins & Read, 1990); in contrast to subjects whose mothers were not warm and responsive, these subjects reported that others were more trustworthy, altruistic, independent, and more able to control the outcomes in their lives (Collins & Read, 1990). Those who remembered both parents as warm and accepting

tended to feel secure in themselves, to believe others could be depended on if needed (Collins & Read, 1990), and were significantly less likely than non-securely attached people to experience anxious feelings about abandonment or concerns about being unloved by their partners (Collins & Read, 1990).

In contrast, those who described their mothers as inconsistent, ambivalent, and/or cold scored lower on measures of self-worth and social confidence, had higher scores on anxiety, and had less faith in the idea that others could be depended upon (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Collins & Read, 1990). Similarly, those who recalled their fathers as cold and rejecting were more likely to have negative views of others, describing them as less trustworthy, less altruistic, less independent and less able to control the outcomes in their lives (Collins & Read, 1990). The researchers concluded that adult-children who felt their parents had been warm and responsive tended to have secure attachments whereas those with memories of cold or inconsistent parents displayed anxious attachment styles (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). These findings point to the important implications the caretaker-child bond has on the developing and adult-child's self-concept and view of the social world (Collins & Read, 1990).

Attachment styles also appear to influence perception. Hazan & Shaver, (1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988) found that securely attached adults have a greater likelihood of *feeling* accepted by others and a greater tendency to *believe* that people generally have good intentions toward them (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988). Collins & Read (1990) found that perceptions of self are more positive in securely attached individuals;

they tended to have a better self-image, substantially higher levels of self-worth, and greater social self-confidence (Collins & Read, 1990). They also found that perceptions of self are more negative in anxiously-attached adults; they were self-doubting, more negative about themselves, lacked assertiveness and a sense of self-efficacy, had a lower sense of self-worth, were lower in social self-confidence, and were more likely to feel misunderstood by others (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988). In general, they were more negative, mistrusting, and pessimistic about other people and human nature, characteristics which would assuredly color their relationships with others (Collins and Read, 1990).

C-C Relationship: influence on AC's partner choice and relationship quality

Given the significant impact that our attachment styles have on how we see ourselves and other people, it is not surprising that they have also been linked to the types of adult-relationship partners we choose. Sroufe and Fleeson (1986) have suggested that people look for relationships that echo or mirror primary bonds “since this helps them to maintain coherence and consistency within the self” (Collins & Read, 1990, p. 15; Swann & Read, 1981a, 1981b; Bowlby, 1973; Epstein, 1980; Swann, 1987). Collins and Read (1990, p. 15) have posited that attachment-styles play a significant role in love-partner choice because “parents teach us what relationships are like, what we are like as objects of care and affection, and what relationships between men and women are like.” Reasoning that “the opposite-sex parent, in particular, may serve as a model for what heterosexual relationships are like and also, for what a person should expect from a

romantic partner,” they proposed to find significant similarity between the care-giving mode of opposite sexed childhood caretakers and those of later partners (Collins & Read, 1990, p. 15).

Exploring the relationship between attachment style and partner choice, Collins & Read (study 3, 1990) found that for both men and women, descriptions of the opposite-sex parent predicted the attachment style of their partner while descriptions of the same-sex parent did not. Subjects who were more comfortable with closeness and more optimistic about others (qualities of secure attachments) tended to be with partners who shared these views. Men who described their mothers as cold or inconsistent (qualities of insecure attachments) were more likely to be dating women who were insecurely attached, anxious, and pessimistic about others’ being there for them when needed. Anxiously attached women were more likely than securely attached women to believe they would marry men who were afraid of abandonment (qualities of non-secure attachments). These findings confirm a cross-age continuity between child-caretaker attachments and characteristics of the partners we choose in adulthood. They also indicate that children with warm, responsive caretakers will be at an advantage in regard to their adult relationships, because they will be more likely to select partners with whom stable, long-lasting relationships are more possible. The continuity in attachments that we seek is particularly relevant when considered in light of the greater prevalence of dysfunctional conditions, including deterioration in parenting and more stress in the home, that occurs in divorced-family households. These conditions will be detailed later on in this literature review.

Our partners' attachment styles also have important implications for relationship functioning since attachment styles serve as organizing principles that direct a wide variety of relationship behaviors (Collins & Read, 1990). Clearly, a person who distrusts, fears abandonment, and lacks self-confidence is less likely to express his or her needs and thus, is more likely to have significant problems getting them met in a relationship (Dion & Dion, 1975; Dion & Dion, 1985). By contrast, secure men and women capable of trust in a partner and who believe others are dependable are more likely to express their needs and to have them met by their partners. The self-confidence, security, and general optimism of a "secure" attachment style promotes expressiveness, a quality that invokes communication and facilitates the development of intimacy in a relationship (Collins & Read, 1990). On the other hand, those who are anxious about abandonment and worry about being unloved are more prone to experience jealousy and to behave in ways that undermine intimacy; anxiety is negatively related to self esteem, independence, and self-assertiveness, factors which have significant consequences for relationship functioning and for the possibility of having one's needs met in a relationship (Dion & Dion, 1985; Collins & Read, 1990).

The influence of attachment styles on relationship behaviors was reported in a study that found securely attached people were more expressive with their partners, more comfortable with closeness, less likely to involve themselves in game-playing and obsessive behaviors, and were more likely to exhibit "a self-less quality" in their interactions with partners than individuals who did not have secure attachment styles

(Collins & Read, 1990, p. 14). In contrast, those with anxious attachment styles lacked assertiveness, a positive sense of their own self-efficacy, were more pessimistic about others, had greater anxiety about their relationships, and believed others were less altruistic, less self-efficacious and more difficult to understand. Accordingly, their relationship/love style was characterized by “obsessive-dependent” features (Collins & Read, 1990, p. 14). These findings indicate that both perceptions and behaviors are influenced by the pre-existing relationship-attachment style (and its characteristic beliefs), and these appear to be based upon experience with primary caretakers in the family-of-origin.

The influence of attachment styles on relationship quality was studied by Collins & Read (1990), who examined three important determinants of relationship quality: (1) Quality of communication, (2) Level of trust, and; (3) Overall level of relationship satisfaction. They reasoned that securely attached individuals would have better relationships because they would be more comfortable with closeness, feel more able to depend on others and be more willing to engage in behaviors that encouraged intimacy (e.g., self-disclosure) than would avoidantly or anxiously attached individuals (Collins & Read, 1990). In support of their expectations, they found that securely attached subjects were comfortable with closeness and more expressive and self-disclosing with their partners (Collins & Read, 1990). In contrast, those who were anxiously attached worried more about being unloved and abandoned, were less trusting of their partners, experienced more jealousy, and behaved in ways that reflected their lack of confidence in themselves and their relationships, factors which directly impacted the quality of their relationships (Collins &

Read, 1990). Along with previously done research, these findings support the hypothesis that attachment styles are predictive of relationship quality due to their influence on getting needs met in our relationships (Dion & Dion, 1975; Dion & Dion, 1985; Collins & Read, 1990). It seems that attachment styles translate into “styles of loving” and styles of loving, in turn, are good predictors of relationship attitudes and relationship quality (Collins & Read, 1990, p. 16; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1987; Hendrick, Hendrick, & Adler, 1988; Levy & Davis, 1988). As such, this research indicates that parent-child relationships are indirectly linked to later relationship outcomes.

The attachment style of one’s partner also has an affect on relationship quality, due to the attachment styles’ tendency to invoke particular relationship behaviors (Collins & Read, 1990). For example, female possessiveness, a quality of anxious-attachment, has been found to be strongly and negatively related to the level of relationship satisfaction reported by males; males involved with “possessive women” reported “very low” levels of relationship satisfaction while those involved with women who were “very low” on possessiveness reported “very high” levels of satisfaction (Davis & Oathout, 1987). Collins & Read (1990) found that women who were involved with securely-attached partners were much more positive about their relationships than women who were involved with non-securely attached males; they reported feeling closer and more satisfied with their partners, perceived less conflict in their relationships, were more positive about the communication in their relationships and with their partner’s level of self-disclosure, and they described their partners as more responsive. Collins and Read (1990) concluded that partner’s attachment style predicts relationship quality although the

manner in which it affects it is different for men and women. These findings support the hypothesis that individuals select and create their social environments in ways that confirm their working models of self and others and this in turn promotes continuity in their attachment patterns across the life-span (see also Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986). Once again we see that fundamental intimacy issues are linked to the child-caretaker relationship via the influence of this relationship on attachment styles.

The beliefs and worldviews associated with the attachment style create positive and/or negative perceptual biases since beliefs can cause selective attention, distort perception, and even color one's memory of events (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988). As such, the self-confidence in oneself and optimism about others associated with secure attachment styles would likely lead to more positive actual and/or perceived relationship experiences (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988). In contrast, the negative beliefs about self and others that are inherent characteristics of non-secure attachments would more likely lead to negative actual and/or perceived relationship experiences (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988). Thus, attachment styles could arguably affect relationship quality as well as relationship longevity since those who are happy in their relationships are less likely to end them.

Indeed, perceptions of relationships have been linked to attachment styles. Hazan & Shaver (1987), for example, found that secure and non-securely attached adults differed predictably in their *perceptions* -- or experiences -- of love. In this study secure lovers characterized their relationships as happy, trusting, and based on friendship; anxious

lovers described their relationships as emotionally unstable, characterized by compulsive preoccupations about their partner, and marked by jealousy and intense emotional highs and lows (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988). More support for the effects of attachment styles on perceptions comes from research discussed earlier; recall Collins & Read's (1990) findings that secure attachment styles were associated with positive beliefs of self and others whereas non-securely attached subjects were more negative and pessimistic about themselves and the world in general (Collins & Read, 1990). In general, then, attachment theory has provided strong evidence for links between FOO experiences and later relationship characteristics, seeing adult relationship characteristics as outgrowths of early child-caregiver interactions.

C-C Relationship: influence on AC's relationship skills and competencies

Some research has broadened attachment theory's perspective, and investigated whether caregivers influence children directly, via the C-C relationship (socialization), or indirectly, via children's observations of their caregiver's behaviors (observational learning). They have compared the effects of parents' socialization and children's observations of caregivers' relationships to see which of these processes accounted for adult-children's relationship characteristics. Both processes involve developing skills and patterning behaviors based on interactions with, and behaviors demonstrated by, parents (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). Socialization involves *direct* training that occurs within child-caregiver interactions, whereby effective parenting, such as child monitoring, consistent discipline, and provision of positive and negative contingencies,

are predicted to encourage the development of important life-skills (negative-affect regulation, conflict management skills) and a prosocial behavioral style in offspring (Conger & Simons, 1997; Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). Failures in adequate parenting (e.g., insufficient monitoring of children's behavior) are predicted to cultivate the development of an antisocial, or interpersonally problematic behavioral style, in offspring (Conger & Simons, 1997; Conger, Cui, Bryant, and Elder, 2000). Observation, on the other hand, is a process of *indirect* training where children learn skills and develop interpersonal styles based on *observations* of parents behaviors and family interactions, which are used as models for their own interpersonal relationships. In both processes, competent parent behaviors, such as good child-rearing strategies, encourage children to appropriately regulate negative affect, to effectively manage conflict, and leads them to develop interpersonal skills and competencies that foster success in the romantic relationships of their adulthood (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000).

This research has found that when parent-child interactions have involved relatively high levels of warmth and supportiveness and low levels of hostility and coercion, similar behaviors are found in offspring (Conger & Simons, 1997; Parke & Buriel, 1998). Studies have also reported that parents who practice positive parenting strategies tend to have children who exhibit prosocial behaviors and reduced hostility in their interactions with peers (Conger & Simons, 1997; Parke & Buriel, 1998); this type of interpersonal style, high in positive behaviors like warmth and supportiveness while low in negative behaviors such as hostility and coercion, is believed to be an indicator of interpersonal competence in peer and romantic relationships (Weiss & Heyman, 1997; Conger, Cui,

Bryant, & Elder, 2000). Although many studies have indicated that adult-children's interpersonal styles are influenced by the C-C relationship, others have proposed that other aspects of children's social environment (FOO) also influence the transmission of relationship behaviors via the process of observational learning (O'Leary & Cascardi, 1998; Sanders et al., 1999; Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). Studies related to these questions have provided useful information relating to adult-children's relationship outcomes.

Sanders et al., (1999), attempted to assess whether adult-children's relationship behaviors are the result of the C-C relationship or of their exposure to other FOO environmental conditions. This study proposed that divorced parents were likely to have had above average levels of pre-divorce conflict and negative affect in their relationship and hypothesized that these presumed, but unmeasured, characteristics would predict similar interactional styles in the romantic relationships of their adult children. As hypothesized, the researchers did find significant similarities between parents and adult-children's relationship behaviors, particularly in the relationships of females from divorced families. Unfortunately, having assumed, but not measured, these parent characteristics, the researchers were unable to determine whether one, or both of these processes, was accounting for their findings.

Two recent prospective studies on the intergenerational transmission of relationship behavior (aggression) in romantic relationships also tested socialization and modeling as they relate to adult-children's relationship behaviors (Capaldi & Clark, 1998; Simons,

Lin, & Gordon, 1998). Each found support for both socialization and observational learning, although socialization was more strongly predictive of later relationship characteristics suggesting that adult-children's later relationship behaviors seem to be most influenced by qualities within the parent-child relationship. It should be noted, however, that socialization and modeling effects changed when specific relationship behaviors were considered (Simons et al., 1998). For example, adolescents who had been physically punished by parents exhibited violent behaviors in later dating relationships, a result that suggests that both observation and socialization could be involved in this particular behavior. Their findings indicate that there may be differential pathway effects depending upon the types of outcomes assessed.

In one of the first prospective studies to link FOO characteristics with *specific* relationship skills, behaviors, and outcomes (Conger, Cui, et al., 2000), socialization and observation were again considered. In this study, researchers first simultaneously considered the association between parent socialization, observational learning, and sibling socialization's influences on subjects' later, adult affective behaviors toward their romantic partners to see whether behaviors of family-of-origin members toward subjects were linked to subjects' adult behaviors toward their romantic partners (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). When considered simultaneously, both nurturant—involved parenting (the parental socialization hypothesis) and parent marital affect (the observational learning hypothesis) were significantly related to adult-children's affect toward their partners (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). However, because the influence of parenting produced correlations twice the magnitude of those found for

parents' marital interactions (observational learning) (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000), the researchers concluded that parent's socialization of children is the primary pathway affecting adult-children's relationship characteristics (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). This study provides strong support for the link between the parent-child relationship in the FOO and offspring's adult-relationship characteristics finding that particular types of parenting behaviors seem to invoke the development of important relationship skills in offspring's adulthood.

Another important finding to come from the study was the link that was identified between the child-caretaker relationship and adult-children's relationship functioning and longevity (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). This research has provided the first prospective longitudinal evidence that family-of-origin interactional processes are related to the success of early adult romantic relationships vis a vis their impact on the development of relationship competencies and skills that adult-children use in their relationships (Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998; Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). The study found that child-caretaker relationships (parenting) affect adult-children's relationship quality by affecting the skills they bring to their relationships. These skills influence adult-children's behaviors toward their partners and, in turn, influence the quality of their relationships with them. Moreover, although the study found that parents' behaviors toward children were *the best* predictors of adult-children's relationship characteristics, other FOO characteristics also influenced outcomes. The study found that parenting practices, marital interactions, sibling behaviors toward target, and target behaviors toward sibling were all highly interrelated and all were significantly correlated

with target behavior to a romantic partner when considered separately (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). The strength of the correlations was also remarkably high, reflecting the fact that there are complex and reciprocal influences among FOO characteristics (Conger & Ge, 1999; Conger & Rueter, 1996; Harold & Conger, 1997; Rueter & Conger, 1998). As such, we could assume that a variety of FOO interactions do, albeit to a lesser degree, influence adult-children's relationship characteristics and competencies (Conger, Cui, Bryant, and Elder, 2000).

The research discussed identifies the child-caretaker relationship as one of the most impactful FOO characteristics to exert carry-over effects on adult-children's relationship characteristics. However, they also indicate that FOO characteristics are inter-related, and that problems in the child-caretaker relationship, for example, may show up in other aspects of the FOO environment.

Caretakers' indirect influence on adult-children's relationship characteristics

Some psychological theories (e.g., family-systems theory, environmental theory) view *the entire family-system*, and the interactions taking place within it, as determinants of later-life adult characteristics (Wicks-Nelson & Israel, 1991; Seifer, 1995; Cummings, 1995). These theories consider how family characteristics such as family communication, family worries, and family conflict impact children's developmental processes, skill development, and interpersonal styles. Engfer's "spill-over" hypothesis (1988; as cited in Fincham, Grych & Osborne, 1994, p. 137), for example, describes how a parents'

condition can affect family functioning² and the manner in which family functioning would go on to influence adult-children's outcomes. Engfer (1988) posits that parents' marital quality, for example, directly affects parents' affective relationships with children because problems in their marriage lead to a "spill-over" of negative affect from parents to children (Fincham, Grych & Osborne, 1994, p. 137). According to Engfer (1988), parents who frequently express hostility toward one another are also more likely to interact negatively with their children. Kerig, Cowan, & Cowan, (1993) found evidence of the spill-over of negative emotion from parents to children. In this study, both mothers and fathers who reported low levels of marital satisfaction were also more likely to respond negatively toward their children. These spill-over effects were also reciprocal, with offspring manifesting problematic characteristics in their reactions to, and interactions with, their parents. These findings suggest that parent-child relationships can become strained, and the family environment more stressed, as a consequence of spill-over effects.

The spill-over of negative emotion has also been found to extend to the functioning of the "family system" as a whole (Hayden, Schiller, Dickstein, Seifer, Sameroff, Miller, Keitner, & Rasmussen, 1998, p. 2). For example, marital satisfaction has been linked to *overall* levels of family-functioning (Akister & Stevenson-Hinde, 1991; Stevenson-Hinde & Akister, 1995) while marital quality has been linked with specific styles of parenting, parents' sensitivity toward their children, and to the family's general level of

² Models of family functioning propose that the adequacy of a child's caregiving environment is determined by the extent to which families are able to accomplish basic life tasks. These models imbed family interactions within specific domains of family functioning such as positive family affect, family communication, family conflict, family worries, family rituals (Tavitian et al., 1986)

functioning (Dickstein & Parke, 1988; Erel & Burman, 1995; Goldberg & Easterbrooks, 1984; Jouriles, Pfiffner, & O'Leary, 1988; Pettit & Bates, 1990; Pratt, Kerig, Cowan, & Cowan, 1992). Similarly, the level of intimacy in the parents' marital relationship has been found to correlate with the patterns of interaction found in the larger "family system" (Waring & Patton, 1984). These studies support the proposition that the caretaker's well-being is expressed in other areas of family life and in how the family, as a whole, functions.

Studies adopting a family environmental perspective have found a variety of important family environmental conditions, such as parent's psychological/emotional stability, quality of the marital relationship, parenting style, and stress in the home, that influence offspring's short and long-term functioning (Hayden, Schiller, Dickstein, Seifer, Sameroff, Miller, Keitner, & Rasmussen, 1998). Indeed, the level of sensitivity parents express toward their children and the types of parenting styles they use have correlated with subjects' ratings of their FOO's functioning (Pettit & Bates, 1990). McFarlane, Bellissimo, and Norman, (1995) found that parenting behaviors varied by levels of family functioning; parents who exhibited a controlling parental style tended to have low-functioning families whereas higher-functioning families tended to have parents who exhibited significantly greater levels of teaching and positive social themes when involved with their children. In other studies, parents' marital satisfaction has been linked to the type of parenting styles used, with maritally dissatisfied parents being characterized as less sensitive to their children (Erel & Burman, 1995; Pratt, Kerig, Cowan & Cowan, 1992). In the context of earlier discussions linking parenting styles to

children's healthy adjustment (Baumrind, 1971), and to adult-children's relationship attachment styles, characteristics, and behaviors (e.g., trust, jealousy), these findings underscore the influence that parents' emotional states can have on FOO characteristics and the potential for these to subsequently affect adult-children's relationship characteristics.

Another caretaker condition which appears to extend to the FOO environment is marital conflict. Marital conflict between parents affects their responsiveness to their children, and their acceptance or rejection of them (Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994). Marital conflict impairs the consistency and quality of parenting (Fauber, Forehand, Thomas & Wierson, 1990; Jouriles, Pfiffner, & O'Leary, 1988) and increases the likelihood that parents will use problematic forms of discipline, such as guilt and anxiety induction (Fauber et al., 1990). Marital conflict has also been linked to internalizing and externalizing problems in children (Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994), lower levels of overall well-being in children, and has been found to have disrupting effects on their social development (Roff, Sells & Golden, 1972). All of these have been linked to adjustment problems and negative short and long-term outcomes in offspring (Fauber, Forehand, Thomas & Wierson, 1990; Jouriles, Pfiffner, & O'Leary, 1988). These are concrete examples of the ways parents can affect their children indirectly, via the influence they have on a number of aspects of family life (Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994). These findings also highlight the inter-relationships that exist among FOO factors.

In another study that looked at how FOO environmental factors were linked to adult-offspring relationship outcomes, the authors found that adult-children's relationship behaviors were influenced by FOO characteristics; FOO characteristics were predictive of co-habitation, relationship quality, and subjects' affect toward their partners (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). Those from low functioning families were most likely to be cohabitating with their partners and, those in cohabitational living arrangements were less satisfied in their relationships, less competent in their relationship behaviors, and tended to have come from families in which parents were less educated, less nurturant, less involved with their children, less likely to express warmth and support to their children, and more hostile in their marital interactions. Similarly, their siblings had been less warm, less supportive, and more hostile in their behaviors toward subjects (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). In sum, the study found that subjects' social backgrounds were reflected in the negative association found between cohabitation and subjects' affect toward their partners and by the negative association between cohabitation and relationship quality (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000).

The Providence Family Longitudinal Study (PFS) also notes the need for increased attention on FOO issues in explaining intergenerational transmission of behavior (as cited in Hayden, Schiller, et al., 1998, p. 6). Although this study examines the intergenerational transmission of psychopathology, its relevance is that it also strongly emphasizes the FOO environment and "the adequacy of the care-giving context" to explain intergenerationally transmitted developmental outcomes (Hayden, Schiller, Dickstein, Seifer, Sameroff, Miller, Keitner, & Rasmussen, 1998, p. 6). The researchers sought to describe

children's developmental outcomes based on characteristics of their parents and the family environment created by them and to see whether it was useful to use a more detailed level of analysis of family functioning rather than relying on global measures of family characteristics. Their findings supported the use of assessing a variety of family functioning variables in that this method provides richer data and better information than the traditionally used, global measures of family-functioning assessment (Hayden, Schiller, Dickstein, Seifer, Sameroff, Miller, Keitner, & Rasmussen, 1998). The study encourages the development and use of a "family risk" score, which would involve assessment of the family's functioning, that could be used to predict children's short and long-term outcomes (Hayden, Schiller, etc., 1998, p. 15). These findings support the argument that the family environment is a primary link to adult-children's developmental outcomes, and a more detailed analysis of the family environment is needed in research.

The spill-over effect discussed earlier could be applied to a variety of family of origin characteristics (e.g., family stress, family communication) (Caspi and Elder, 1988). Indeed, in a study of college students researchers studied family structure (i.e., divorced or intact) by levels of conflict in the family-of-origin environment (Slater & Calhoun, 1988). They found that those from low-conflict intact or divorced homes reported better social functioning, higher self esteem and better self-monitoring skills (Slater & Calhoun, 1988). Given this, they concluded that overall, family structure and family conflict are *interacting* variables which are associated with long-term social adjustment (Slater & Calhoun, 1988). While interesting in and of themselves, the results are also intriguing

since they indicate that family conflict is unlikely to be the sole cause of differences in social functioning found among college students.

It is not surprising then that a number of prominent divorce researchers have started to underscore the importance of simultaneously looking at *a variety* of family-related variables in relation to divorce outcomes (Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994; Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). Fincham, Grych, & Osborne (1994) suggest that theories about the effects of parents' conflict on adult-children should involve identification of specific aspects of the FOO's functioning that are impacted by it, since problems in one domain of functioning typically affect other aspects of family life as well. For these reasons, they recommend that researchers switch from a uni-factor to a multifactor causation model, since this will provide a greater depth of understanding of how parents' conflicts affect their children's well-being (Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994). Citing Rutter's Isle of Wight (Rutter, 1979) and inner London studies as clear demonstrations of the interactive effects of stressors on children, they state that a number of factors, over and above marital conflict, as well as interactions among them, are also likely to exert important influences on offspring's developmental outcomes (Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994, p. 133).

Hayden et al. (1998, p. 2) conceptualizes the "family" as a "system" composed of other "subsystems." According to this model, events that transpire in one family subsystem (e.g., parent dyad) go on to influence other family subsystems (e.g. parent-child). For example, financial stress between parents leads to increased irritability, less tolerance

with children, and, in turn, leads to sibling quarrels which further provoke already overtaxed parents; family worries and conflicts can escalate when families have poor communication and lack positive emotional connections. These subsystem interactions, and the interactional effects between subsystems, are seen as affecting the functioning of the family as a whole (Hayden, Schiller, et al., 1998). Because functioning in one subgroup relates to other areas of the family's functioning, family researchers emphasize the importance of a multi-factorial research approach that examines *a variety* of dimensions of family functioning (Cromwell & Peterson, 1983; Vosler, Green, & Kolevzon, 1987; Watson, Henggeler, & Borduin, 1985; Hayden, Schiller, Dickstein, Seifer, Sameroff, Miller, Keitner, & Rasmussen, 1998).

Although the studies cited above provide important information about the mechanisms that may be involved in the intergenerational transmission of relationship behaviors, they are also limited by their lack of attention to FOO factors that may promote successful relationship behaviors; the absence of aggression, violence, conflict, and negativity does not indicate that a person is proficient in the types of behaviors that lead to relationship success. The present study suggests that research should take positive aspects of the family-of-origin experience into account since it is the "packages" of stressful and positive experiences that ultimately influence adult-children's adjustment (Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994, p. 133). The idea that positive aspects of family life may offset problematic experiences has been supported by studies like that of Jenkins and Smith's (1990), who found that a good relationship with an adult outside the family was associated with better child adjustment when children were exposed to marital discord.

As such, it is not surprising that a number of researchers have indicated that research is “at its best” when a variety of FOO characteristics are incorporated into research designs (Hayden, et al., 1998, p. 2; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Sameroff, 1983; Sameroff & Seifer, 1983).

COD research contributes to our understanding of ACOD issues

Although child-of-divorce studies have considered the role of FOO characteristics on measured outcomes, ACOD relationship-research has not. This may be due to the limitations imposed by a variety of complications in this field of study. These complications have limited access to research subjects and to the entire spectrum of divorced-family conditions. For example, since divorce did not become a common occurrence until the early 1970s, the majority of divorce research has focused on child outcomes. Access to large enough samples of *older* subjects has involved waiting for the divorced-family cohort to mature. Social and legal issues have also affected research efforts; since courts have tended, historically, to grant custody primarily to mothers, researchers have found it difficult to assess a variety of post-divorce living situations (e.g., single-parent-father families). Finally, given the variety of post-divorce family structures that children may encounter, variations in children’s developmental stages at the time of the divorce, and other such issues, researchers have found it difficult to incorporate all of the relevant factors into their research designs. In studies involving adult-children of divorce, where less research has been feasible, these problems are most evident.

Findings from children-of-divorce (COD) studies have helped to inform our understanding of divorce-related issues, and called attention to some of the problems in adult-children of divorce (ACOD) relationship research. For example, now that a substantial body of child-related research exists, we can see that divorce is not a one-time event but, rather, involves a complicated series of family transitions and a variety of problematic stressors, all of which influence the circumstances of children's lives and the course of their development (Barber & Eccles, 1992; Block, Block, & Gjerde, 1986; DeEmery & Forehand, 1992; Demo & Acock, 1988; Emery & Forehand, 1992; as cited in Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994). Thus, the long-term effects of parents' divorce should differ depending upon the types of divorced-family conditions they experienced and the length of time they were exposed to them. Since ACOD relationship research has largely neglected FOO conditions, it has missed the variety of divorce-related outcomes than can occur in ACOD and missed other explanatory factors that may account for the problematic relationship outcomes seen in ACOD.

To explore this more fully, let us consider research, much of it involving children, that has more fully considered the circumstances of divorced families. These studies have found that, in general, divorced-family environments are subject to greater amounts of problematic conditions in areas that could exert significant effects on adult-children's relationship outcomes.

Divorced FOO characteristics

Research has found that the years following a divorce seem to have detrimental effects on the custodial parent's ability to function and on the well being of children in their care (Hetherington, 1984; Hetherington & Camara, 1984). Clearly, there are innumerable legal, financial, emotional, psychological, and pragmatic issues that arise: changes in residence, neighborhoods, and schools; increases in stress; personal changes and adjustments; visitation and custody issues, changes in parents' availability and emotional support; parents dating; family-reorganizations (step-family), and the increasingly common "serial parents" to whom children must adjust; divorced parents are increasingly more likely to live with/remarry more than once after their divorce (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1979; Barber & Eccles, 1992; Block, Block, & Gjerde, 1986; Emery & Forehand, 1992; as cited in Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994; Wallerstein, 1985, 1985b). Since the first two years following the divorce involve the most significant number of pragmatic, physical, and emotional problems, as well as the most significant declines in family functioning, they have been characterized as the most stressful for parents and children (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington 1990). However, research shows that divorce-related stressors continue to surface for many post-divorce years. These stressful, divorce-related experiences take energy and focus away from the normal developmental tasks of childhood and adolescence, and raise the question of whether divorced families differ from married families in their ability to meet children's developmental needs.

Indeed, a variety of family-life issues are affected by divorce-related stressors. In comparison to intact-families, divorced families have been found to have greater levels of conflict in the home, reductions in time, attention, and nurturing by parents' of children, increases in residential and school changes, decreases in extended-family contact, diminishments in emotional and physical contact between parents and children, and increased problematic changes in parents' affective states (Ahrons & Rodgers, 1987; Cherline, 1992; Furstenberg, & Teitler, 1994; Garfinkel & McLanahan, 1986; Wallerstein, 1985, 1985b). Many have indicated that the chronic strain experienced by divorced custodial parents impairs their functioning and thus diminishes the well-being of children in their care (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990; Furstenberg & Cherlin, 1991; Webster, Orbuch, & House, 1995).

Child-of-divorce studies have also heightened our awareness of what the divorce process entails. In contrast to the secular view that families change *after* a divorce has occurred, a growing body of research is finding that families change considerably even prior to divorce. In one study, the effects of deteriorating marriages were causing problematic conditions within families as much as 11 years before some divorces, highlighting the fact that children's exposure to problematic family conditions do not simply follow, and typically pre-date, the divorce (Block et al., 1986; Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990; Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994). Since "divorce typically follows an agonizing and lengthy decision-making process that has lasted for years" (Ahrons, 1995; Barber & Eccles, 1992; Block, Block, & Gjerde, 1986; Demo & Acock, 1988; Emery & Forehand, 1992; as cited in Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994), much of what we have considered to be post-divorce

circumstances may in fact be chronic, dysfunctional pre-divorce conditions that began years before the divorce.

Economic Hardship

A significant area of difficulty for post-divorce families involves economic stress and instability. Economic decline and hardship frequently follows divorce for single mothers and their children and is viewed as a particularly important factor leading to reductions in offspring well-being (Webster, Orbuch, & House, 1995). Economic hardship negatively impacts all aspects of family functioning, including parent-child interactions and the overall family environment (Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992). Parents struggling with inadequate financial resources experience increased stress and pressure, and have been found to be more distractible, irritable, and less involved in recreational activities with their children (Hayden, Schiller, Dickstein, Seifer, Sameroff, Miller, Keitner, & Rasmussen, 1998). Financial conditions and stressors have been linked to problems in family functioning and to environmental conditions that have detrimental effects on children's development (Hayden, et al., 1998). Higher socio-economic status (SES) families, for example, have less risk of family and marital discord (Beiderman, Milberger, Faraone, Kiely, Guite, Mick, Ablon, Warburton & Reed, 1995; Shaw & Emery, 1987; Vickers, 1994; Vosler, Green & Kolevzon, 1987; Hayden, Schiller, Dickstein, Seifer, Sameroff, Miller, Keitner, & Rasmussen, 1998) whereas parents' sensitivity to children, parents marital satisfaction, and a variety of other family

functioning characteristics have been found to be significantly lower in lower SES families (Epstein, Bishop, & Levin, 1978; Hayden et al., 1998).

Economic difficulties take a toll on family relationships, and have been associated with increased conflict and reductions in supportive behaviors between spouses, and with inattentive and inconsistent parenting toward children (Belle, 1990; McLoyd, 1998). Economic difficulties create environmental conditions that could be precursors to developmental impairments and problems in subsequent functioning if we consider that parent hostility, rejection, and/or neglect are more frequently seen in the histories of children who have impaired social relationships, neuroses, and other psychophysiological disturbances (Anthony & Benedek, 1970; Heilbrun, Orr & Harrell, 1966; Rutter & Garnezy, 1983; Rutter & Giller, 1984). Low SES and poverty have been associated with increases in threatening and uncontrollable life events, noxious life conditions, and poor educational outcomes (Belle, 1990; McLoyd, 1998; Wilkinson, 1996; Kawachi & Kennedy, 1999). Given the financial burdens endured by many post-divorce mothers, and the potential for these financial stressors to impair their parenting, it is likely that a majority of divorced-family offspring will be at risk for impairments in social development that increase vulnerability to relationship problems in adulthood.

Divorced parents

In general, there is much agreement on the fact that single-parents are stressed and there are volumes of literature documenting the fact that employed single parents are

overburdened (Amato, 1993; McLanahan & Adams, 1987; Weiss, 1979). Custodial mothers and custodial fathers report problems coping with the various divorce-related stressors and exhibit “diminished parenting” in the first few years following the divorce (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). The stress experienced by single parents is likely to have negative consequences for their children since children’s post-divorce relationship with parents has been found to affect their adjustment. Research shows that custodial mothers and custodial fathers who are sensitive and authoritative tend to have children who function best (Hetherington & Hagan, 1986; Santrock & Warshak, 1986; Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). It also shows that children who continue to have close post-divorce relationships with both their parents are better adjusted (Camara & Resnick, 1988; Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990) than those who have maintained a good post-divorce relationship with only one or neither parent. When children continue to experience close post-divorce relationships with both parents, they are less likely to experience emotional maladjustment, peer relationship problems, and low self-esteem (Camara & Resnick, 1988; Camara & Resnick, 1991; Hess & Camara, 1979; Hetherington et al, 1982; Peterson & Zill, 1986). Unfortunately, research indicates that this is not typically the case.

Custodial mothers:

For most newly divorced mothers, the post-divorce period is a difficult time during which they must deal with a variety of “considerable stressors” (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990, p. 121; Hetherington and Camara, 1984). Depression, low self-

esteem, conflict with ex-husbands, and financial worries leave custodial mothers extremely preoccupied and psychologically unavailable to their children (Emery, Hetherington, & DiLalla, 1984; Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). Studies report that custodial mothers tend to be irritable, ill-tempered, and caustic with their children and tend to respond punitively to misbehavior (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1982; Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990; Emery et al., 1984). They have been found to be less nurturant to their children, less sensitive to their needs, and less supportive of their efforts to cope with the day-to-day challenges of school, peer relations, homework, and family life (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). Their psychological and emotional unavailability is often magnified by the need to take on employment or to increase the number of hours they work (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990), demands that leave them physically unavailable to their children and can further reduce the quality of their parenting work (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). Indeed many have concluded that post-divorce children are often left with an “altered” or “diminished” parent in the aftermath of divorce (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990, p. 12, 121; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Child-discipline is particularly difficult, according to custodial mothers (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1982). Custodial mothers often exhibit inconsistent, harsh, and punitive parenting practices that often translate into coercive cycles with their children; custodial mothers typically react to children’s behavior problems by increasing inconsistent, punitive actions toward their children who, in turn, intensify their misbehavior (Patterson, 1982; Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990;

Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). This becomes even more aversive to mothers who, in turn, feel increasingly depressed, helpless, incompetent, and angry, reactions which create further deterioration in parenting practices and increase escalation of behavior problems in children (Anderson, Lytton, & Romney, 1986; Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990; Hetherington, 1979). What evolves is an escalating cycle of misbehavior, harsh parental discipline, and withdrawal from the child (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). These disciplinary problems can create additional problems since “parents who are inconsistent in their parenting practices, sometimes disciplining antisocial behavior and sometimes not, are more likely to have children with conduct problems” (Patterson, Reid & Dishion, 1992; Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000, p. 233).

The way these problems can affect children’s development is of concern, since parents’ interpersonal behaviors toward their children are believed to serve as a models, and thus, as direct training, for children’s interpersonal relationship characteristics (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). Other ramifications involve the way these can impair the child-caretaker relationship, since problems and stressors can impair custodial mothers’ well-being, and certainly, their children’s perceptions of their caretaker’s sensitivity and responsiveness to their needs. Indeed, research has found that the emotional adjustment of post-divorce children and their mothers is related to the quality of the post-divorce, mother-child interactions (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). Moreover, many studies have shown that children who do not have strong, unambiguous expressions of parents’ love will have significantly more difficulty developing constructive, meaningful

relationship with others, self-esteem problems, and problems with a confident sense of their own identity (Bell et al., 1985; Kawash, Kerr, & Clewes, 1985; Martin, 1975; Rutter, 1980; Conger, 1991). It follows then that research has found custodial mothers' well-being to influence children's adjustment; children's improvement in functioning coincides with improvements in their mother's overall condition and ability to parent (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1982; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Divorced Fathers

Father's post-divorce contact with children (level of involvement, consistency in visitation) has been related to the level of trust and fear of intimacy experienced by them in their adult relationships (Webster, Orbuch, & House, 1995). However, father's post-divorce contact with children has been relatively low. Furstenberg, Nord, Peterson & Zill (1983), for example, reported that only 17% of children saw their father an average of once per week and 35% hadn't seen their father in the previous 5 years. Although visitation is often higher than this in the immediate aftermath of divorce (Furstenberg, Nord, Peterson & Zill, 1983; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1982), it is often dramatically curtailed over time (Furstenberg, 1988; Furstenberg, Morgan, & Allison, 1987; Furstenberg & Spanier, 1984). For many fathers, the brevity and repeated separations accompanying visitation were so painful that they exacerbated the feelings of loss and led fathers to delay and avoid visitation with their children (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). Indeed, non-custodial fathers' emotional adjustment to the divorce affects their

level of visitation and involvement with their post-divorce children (Hetherington et al., 1982; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Parent Conflict

During the last 10 years, researchers have become increasingly likely to suggest that the parent conflict that often precedes and follows divorce may be one of the primary contributors to the adjustment problems seen in divorced-family offspring (Grych & Fincham 1990; Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994; Amato 1993). Indeed, numerous studies have found that two parent families are significantly less likely to engage in parent conflict and marital discord than are other types of family structures (Beiderman, Milberger, Faraone, Kiely, Guite, Mick, Ablon, Warburton, & Reed, 1995; Shaw & Emery, 1987; Vickers, 1994; Vosler, Green & Kolevzon, 1987). In contrast to the widely held view that conflict between parents ends when parents get divorced, research shows that parent conflict can intensify after the marriage is dissolved (Johnston & Campbell, 1988; Emery, 1988; Baris & Garrity, 1997). Studies have shown that approximately 25% of divorced couples continue to engage in moderate to high levels of conflict for years after their divorce, disturbing since children of all ages respond to inter-adult anger by becoming distressed (Johnston & Campbell, 1988; Emery, 1988; Baris & Garrity, 1997). Moreover, children's observations of parent conflict influence how they will problem-solve and react to conflict in their adulthood (Baris & Garrity, 1997). For example, Baris & Garrity (1997) found that boys tend to respond to parent conflicts with increased aggressiveness in their peer relationships and, later, in their adult-relationships

with spouses (Baris & Garrity, 1997). Girls, on the other hand, tend to respond to their parents' conflict by becoming anxious, withdrawn, and less effective problem-solvers during childhood, and have been found to be more likely to become victims of domestic violence in their adult marriages (Katz & Gottman, 1993; Jaffe, Wolfe, & Wilson, 1990).

There has been very little research that looks at the length of time couples maintain negative interactional patterns *before* deciding to divorce, but researchers are concerned that most children of divorce have had long histories of exposure to substantial levels of parent conflict prior to the actual divorce (Baris & Garrity, 1997). This is concerning since children's exposure to parent conflict often leads to behavior problems, emotional problems, and dysfunctional interpersonal relationships in children (Cummings & Davies, 1994). Parents conflict also leads to shame, self-blame, fear, self-derogatory cognitions, and a diminished sense of safety in children (Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994; Grych and Fincham, 1993; Grych & Fincham, 1990). Since greater levels of conflict seem to occur in divorcing families, children's exposure to parents' conflict may account for the tendency of divorced-family offspring to score lower on indicators of well-being than their intact-family counterparts (Amato 1993).

Children's models of relationship are greatly affected by their observations of how their parents treat one another (Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994). When parents use control, domination, and intimidation to resolve their conflicts, they are likely to have children who use similar measures when involved in conflict with their peers (Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994). Moreover, researchers have found that parents who tend toward

aggression when arguing with a spouse may also tend to become aggressive when arguing with their children (Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994). Indeed, consistent correlations have been found between spouse abuse and child abuse (Wolfe, 1985). Baris & Garrity (1997) report that there is “considerable evidence” that marital conflict affects parents by leading to depression, substance abuse, inter-spousal aggression, and even child abuse (Baris & Garrity, 1997). According to these authors, “the co-occurrence of multiple stressors can create a highly negative environment for the growth and development of children” (Baris & Garrity, 1997, p. 619).

The post-divorce relationship between parents also has ramifications for offspring’s adjustment (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). When post-divorce interparental conflict is low, non-custodial fathers are far more likely to see their children regularly and frequently and their children have been described as the most well-adjusted (Hetherington et al., 1982; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1982; Camara & Resnick, 1988). Interestingly, when post-divorce interparental conflict is reduced, a good number of fathers have experienced improvements in their relationship with their offspring (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). This makes sense, given that parent conflict is upsetting to children and repeated exposure to it is stressful to them (Cummings, Ballard, El-Sheikh & Lake, 1991; Cummings, Vogel, Cummings, & El-sheikh, 1989; Cummings, Zahn-Waxler, & Radke-Yarrow, 1981).

Marital conflict is a stressor that will lead to adjustment problems in offspring when it is combined with other stressors (Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994). Marital conflict

between parents has been associated with parents' acceptance or rejection of offspring, and with their tendency to respond negatively toward their children and, in turn, correlates with internalizing and externalizing problems in children (Fauber, Forehand, Thomas & Wierson, 1990; Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994). Marital conflict has been found to have disrupting effects on children's social development and it has been identified as a harmful agent which jeopardizes children's healthy adjustment (Baris & Garrity, 1997; Roff, Sells & Golden, 1972). It has also been found to affect young-adults. In a study of college students from divorced and intact families, researchers compared subjects on FOO conflict occurring during childhood or prior to their parents' divorce (Slater & Calhoun, 1988). They anticipated that individuals from intact and low-conflict homes would report better social functioning, operationalized as having more social support, less social anxiety, higher self-esteem, better self-monitoring skills, and more positive dating experiences (Slater & Calhoun, 1988). They found that family structure and family conflict are interacting variables, and both are associated with long-term social adjustment (Slater & Calhoun, 1988). The fact that divorced families have been found to experience higher levels of parent conflict than intact families makes these issues cause for concern.

Parent satisfaction

Non-intact family structures have been linked to lower levels of satisfaction in parents. Hayden et al., (1998,), for example, found that unmarried mothers were significantly less satisfied with their boyfriends than married mothers were with their husbands. In

comparison to married mothers, the researchers found that both independent raters as well as unmarried mothers (single and coupled) themselves reported less healthy family functioning (on all six dimensions of McMaster's model) within unmarried-mother households (Hayden et al., 1998). Although no significant differences were found between married and unmarried fathers, the researchers note that "very few of the estranged or unwed fathers participated in this study" (Hayden et al., 1998, p. 12). Parents' satisfaction permeates into the parent-child relationship in that it colors parenting practices, tolerance with children, levels of stress in the home, and a variety of other aspects of family life that in one way or another affects their relationship with their children. As such, we would expect this FOO factor to indirectly affect adult-children's relationship characteristics, particularly due to its influence on the parent-child relationship.

Functionally-divorced families

An interesting issue is raised by the findings of Wallerstein & Kelly (1975). In comparing a sample of divorced and intact-family adolescents, the researchers found a bimodal distribution in outcomes in which a small subset of divorced-family adolescents were highly accelerated both academically and socially whereas the majority of those studied exhibited problematic characteristics which included uncharacteristic failing grades, anger, and depression. In another study (Camara & Resnick, 1988), the researchers identified a subset of divorced-family children who were better adjusted than the majority of divorced-family children in their study, and found that their parents had

structured and formalized their communication and maintained a cooperative co-parenting relationship despite high levels of conflict in their own relationship (“functionally divorced”). They concluded that these parental conditions had thereby promoted positive outcomes in their children’s adjustment. These findings indicate that when family conditions remain non-problematic, children’s adjustment may remain unimpaired by their parents divorce.

Indeed, Block, Block & Gjerde, (1988), had some unexpected findings when they reassessed data in their longitudinal study. Although they originally found that children whose parents had divorced by their 11th birthday were less well adjusted than those whose parents had remained married, and attributed these findings to parents’ divorce, they came to a different conclusion once they re-assessed their findings taking pre-divorce information into account; examination of pre-divorce data revealed that these same children had been distressed as much as four years before their parents’ divorce, a period during which their families were still intact (Block, Block & Gjerde, 1988). Consequently, the researchers concluded that the pre-divorce family environment contributed more to children’s adjustment problems than did family structure.

In another longitudinal study (Cherlin, Furstenberg, Chase-Lansdale, Kiernan, Robins, Morrison & Teitler, 1991) similar conclusions were reached. In this study, authors reported that both British and American boys displayed poorer adjustment after their parents’ divorce than did intact-family boys (Cherlin et al., 1991). However, when researchers re-analyzed the data, including predivorce levels of functioning and marital

conflict in the re-analysis, this effect disappeared. As such, the researchers proposed that predivorce functioning may be more important than the parents' separation in regard to understanding children's adjustment after divorce (also see Block, Block, & Morrison, 1981). Accordingly, these studies have found that low levels of interparental conflict and regular, frequent visitation of children by fathers, led to significantly higher levels of overall adjustment in children (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1982; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Camara & Resnick, 1988).

These findings indicate that there may be a smaller percentage of divorced-families that do not experience the problematic family-environmental conditions that appear to be linked to the typical divorced-family experience. They also suggest that positive childhood experiences may mitigate the effects of negative childhood experiences as they relate to children's developmental outcomes. As such, they point to the importance of considering a number of FOO characteristics, over and above parents' divorce, when doing research on divorced-family samples. Other studies have offered support for this proposition but the suggestions have not yet been fully integrated into ACOD studies (Hetherington, Cox & Cox., 1982; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Camara & Resnick, 1988).

Summary of Divorced-family Characteristics

The research discussed indicates that the majority of divorced families are more often subject to detrimental conditions that lead parents to deal with their children in ways that

could impair their healthy adjustment (Wicks-Nelson & Israel, 1991). Divorce related stressors often extend to the development of problematic conditions in the overall family environment that can be manifested in the family's day-to-day functioning. These problematic FOO conditions may begin years before the divorce, raising serious concerns about the length of time that COD are exposed to dysfunctional conditions that increase their risk of short and long-term problems (Block et al., 1986). Given this, it makes sense to question whether ACOD problems are due to parents' divorce or to the problematic FOO conditions that occur more frequently in divorced families. Indeed, experts have stated that it is not necessarily the family structure, but rather, the way in which the family is able to function that determines the outcomes in those from divorced families (Emery, Hetherington, & DiLalla, 1984). Others have suggested that divorces that are followed by only a minimal loss in resources or only minor levels of stress will be unlikely to result in decreased well-being for children (Amato, 1993). Still others have hypothesized that if stress decreases or resources increase after a divorce, children may even benefit from the divorce (Amato, 1993).

A relatively unexplored area of ACOD research involves "functionally divorced" families, families that prioritize children's needs to the degree that they avoid exposure to problematic divorce-related experiences. Research has offered some preliminary evidence that when children's exposure to negative divorce-related events is minimized, children avoid the developmental adjustment problems that have been associated with the divorced-family experience. The standard methodology employed in ACOD-research has made it impossible to discern whether outcomes differ in individuals from

“functionally divorced” families, suggesting that prior studies may have overestimated the extent to which adjustment problems were in fact attributable to parents’ divorce.

Another interesting and unexplored topic involves the question of whether parents divorce due to problems that arise *after* their marriage, or, if those who divorce are actually encumbered by pre-existing issues that predispose them to divorce. Some have argued that many of the problems attributed to divorce often antedate the separation and may even antedate the marriage (Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994). Indeed Furstenberg et al., (1994) writes that “the contribution of negative divorce-related occurrences may not contribute as potently to children’s later life problems as was previously inferred from research that did not adequately consider *pre-separation* family conditions” (Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994, p. 187). No ACOD relationship-studies have taken these possibilities into account when comparing outcomes in divorced and non-divorced family subjects.

In light of these issues, we argue that family environment may be more important than family structure in explaining the association between parents’ divorce and problematic ACOD outcomes (Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994). Indeed, previously mentioned studies indicate that the quality of the family of origin environment may have long-lasting effects regardless of whether or not parents separate (Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994). This is not to say, however, that divorce may have long-lasting effects on children if it is accompanied by significant decreases in family resources or by substantial increases in stress (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). Indeed, “If divorce lowers children’s access to resources and increases the level of stress, its effect will be negative if

divorce does not lower access to resources or increase stress, then its effects will be neutral or positive” (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990, p. 120).

Although recent research has begun to address some of the problems with past studies, the current approach remains problematic. Methodology still neglects the problems related to grouping subjects by family structure even though there is a greater prevalence of family-environmental problems in divorced families; this strategy is biased, leads to inaccurate comparisons, and encourages the possibility of inaccurately attributing problems to divorce rather than to other more relevant factors. Secondly, it continues to neglect the possibility that divorced-families may have been predisposed to divorce due to pre-existing conditions that made it more likely for them to have marital/family problems (e.g., mental health issues). Research has also failed to consider the influence that positive family of origin experiences can have in mitigating the harmful effects of problematic childhood experiences. A more appropriate strategy for investigating ACOD issues involves using a multivariate, rather than uni-variate approach; this would allow us to take a more realistic look at various positive and negative factors influencing outcomes and if these differ in how they affect those from intact and divorced-family structures.

Specific factors related to relationship success have not been incorporated into ACOD research

A number of researchers have proposed that it is premarital characteristics rather than post-marriage difficulties that lead to marital problems and divorce (Christensen, 1998;

Parke, 1998; Bradbury, Cohan, & Karney, 1998; Tallman, Burke, & Gecas, 1998). Relationship skills such as problem solving, affect regulation, conflict management, and communication, for example, are personal characteristics taken into relationships that exert significant influence on the quality of romantic unions over time (Bryant & Conger, 2002; as cited in Conger, Cui, et al., 2000; Feldman, Gowen & Fischer, 1998; Furman & Flanagan, 1997; O'Leary, 1988; Parke, 1998; Sanders, Halford & Behrens, 1999). These personal characteristics ultimately have a tremendous impact on the success or failure of one's romantic relationships due to their role in determining the interactional strategies one will use in their intimate relationships (Bradbury, Cohan, & Karney, 1998; Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). Interestingly, these characteristics appear to be acquired in childhood, since they are strongly linked to adult-children's family-of-origin experiences (Bryant & Conger, 2002; as cited in Conger, Cui, et al., 2000; Feldman et al., 1998; Furman & Flanagan, 1997; O'Leary, 1988; Parke, 1998; Sanders et al., 1999). Indeed, in the first prospective longitudinal study of its kind, Conger, et al., (2000) provided evidence that FOO interactional processes are related to the success of adult romantic relationships vis a vis the behavioral competencies and skills acquired in childhood and taken forth into adult romantic relationships. What has been learned from relationship research seems relevant to the analysis of the relationship problems seen in those from divorced families, since present day relationship characteristics do appear to be linked to childhood experiences.

The research reviewed highlights the fact that there are only a few studies that look at specific family-of-origin characteristics as they relate to specific interpersonal skills that

have been linked to successful adult romantic relationships (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). The findings of these studies suggest there is value in increasing levels of specificity in research that attempts to connect FOO experiences to adult-children's relationship characteristics. For example, one prospective, longitudinal study found that specific FOO interactional characteristics were predictive of subjects' levels of happiness and relationship problems in adulthood (Feldman, Gowen & Fisher, 1998). Another found a positive relationship between FOO characteristics and adult marital quality (Amato & Booth, 1997). And a third study (Feng, Giarrusso, Bengston, & Frye, 1999) found that subjects' adult level of marital quality was related to the marital quality they perceived to have existed between their parents (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). Although these studies increased attention to FOO characteristics, they did not assess the specific relationship competencies that could have explained the connection they found between FOO and later relationship characteristics across generations, and have suggested that future studies would benefit from including this level of analysis in studies (Conger, et al., 2000).

ACOD *relationship*-research has been notably remiss in regard to the types of relationship-outcome measures it has used. ACOD relationship studies have relied on global measures of relationship characteristics. Therefore, in spite of reporting extreme difficulties in ACOD relationships, they have not provided information regarding what, specifically, could be leading to the intergenerational transmission of divorce and other relationship problems they describe (Conger, Cui, Bryant & Elder, 2000). Is it a lack of relationship-communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, loss of trust in the idea

that relationships can last, or exposure to chronic, dysfunctional parent behaviors during childhood that lead to adult-children's relationship difficulties? Relationship research, on the other hand, has provided evidence of specific characteristics that could be causing the ACOD relationship problems reported in the literature, as well as having identified some specific childhood experiences that could cause them (Birchler, Weiss, Vincent, 1975; Gottman, Markman, & Notarius, 1977; Markman & Notarius, 1987). ACOD relationship-researchers have not implemented these findings in ACOD relationship research.

Although relationship researchers' have varied slightly, in regard to the factors they have emphasized as determinants of relationship outcomes, they have tended to show substantial overlap regarding the factors they have identified as important in determining relationship failure or success. These factors appear to fall into two general categories: (1) Relationship communication, and; (2) Cognitions and beliefs driving relationship behaviors (Arellano & Markman, 1995).

Relationship Communication

According to Arellano & Markman (1995), some of the most important factors involved in relationship failure or success have to do with the way couples communicate, particularly when the issues involved invoke negative affect. Couple's communication has received a great deal of research attention, and has been particularly useful in helping us to understand why some relationships succeed while others fail (Arellano & Markman, 1995). Studies have consistently found that communication differs between happy versus

unhappy, and distressed versus non-distressed, couples (Arellano & Markman, 1995). Communication plays a key role in determining relationship quality (satisfaction, happiness) (Simpson, Rholes, Nelligan, 1992; Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Arellano, 1993; Arellano & Markman, 1995) due to the fact that it influences other relationship characteristics such as the ability to work through problems or to get one's needs met (Arellano & Markman, 1995). This, in turn, influences the stability of a relationship and thus determines whether it will remain stable enough to exist over time (Arellano, 1993; Arellano & Markman, 1995; Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Saver, 1987; Simpson, Rholes, Nelligan, 1992).

Arellano & Markman (1995) indicate that happy couples differ from unhappy couples in regard to the positive and negative communication strategies they use (Birchler, Weiss, Vincent, 1975; Gottman, 1979; Gottman, Markman & Notarius, 1977; Markman & Notarius, 1987). In general, happy/non-distressed couples use facilitative communication strategies such as paraphrasing, clarifying, elaborating, requesting/providing more information when needed (Wegener, Revenstorf, Hahlweg, & Schindler, 1979; as found in Schapp, 1984 and cited in Arellano & Markman, 1995; Markman, 1979, 1981, 1984). Unhappy/distressed couples, on the other hand, generally use negative communication strategies that involve more negativity and negative escalation of problems, and they engage in behaviors that tend to escalate conflicts (Arellano & Markman, 1995; Gottman, 1979; Jacobson & Moore, 1981; Margolin & Wampold, 1981; Markman, 1979, 1981, 1984; Schapp, 1984). These defining characteristics become even more prominent during conflictual, or affectively charged, discussions (Arellano & Markman, 1995;

Birchler, Weiss, Vincent, 1975; Gottman, 1979; Gottman, Markman & Notarius, 1977; Markman & Notarius, 1987). It follows, then, that negative communication strategies have been linked to marital distress as well as to future marital discord in pre-married couples (Markman, 1979, 1981, 1984; Julien, Markman, & Lindahl, 1989).

The negative interactional style of “problem” (distressed, unhappy, dissatisfied) couples is characterized by the tendency to pursue and escalate conflict, ineffective conflict management skills, less editing out of negative reactions to partners, more negativity when interacting with partners, and the tendency to escalate conflicts during disagreements (Arellano & Markman, 1995). Problem couples are also less likely to engage in the positive communication strategies that satisfied couples engage in frequently. They are less likely to use leveling³, to display love and affection, to validate their partners, to take “time outs” when further discussion of contentious issues has become futile. The interactional style of “problem” couples is also marked by lower levels of comfort with emotional expression, less likelihood of asking for feedback from partners, and less likelihood of focusing discussions on only select issues when trying to resolve problems with partners (Arellano & Markman, 1995). This style has therefore been described as a precursor of relationship distress, since it is ineffective, tends to invoke conflictual relations (Arellano & Markman, 1995), and has been found to be predictive of marital problems and future marital friction in longitudinal studies (Julien, et al., 1989; Arellano & Markman, 1995; Markman, 1979, 1981, 1984; Arellano & Markman, 1995). These findings have lead researchers to conclude that it is not the

³ Telling partner what one is feeling through clear, constructive discussion

quantity of problems but rather, the ability to communicate and deal with them, that distinguishes distressed from non-distressed couples (Arellano & Markman, 1995).

Some researchers suspect that the negativity and conflict escalation tendencies that have been found in distressed-couple communication are due to deficiencies in conflict-management skills and lack of competence in communication (Arellano & Markman, 1995; Markman & Kraft, 1989). Since these skills and competencies have been linked to marital problems, researchers suspect that problems with the effective management and communication of negative emotional issues is a major component of marital distress (Arellano & Markman, 1995). For example, when negative communication strategies are used in a conflictual discussion, problems will escalate while the likelihood of resolving them will diminish (Arellano, 1993). In contrast, when positive communication strategies are used to deal with their problems, it becomes more likely that they will be moved forward toward resolution (Arellano, 1993). Indeed, research that has looked at the relationship between communication, conflict resolution, and relationship satisfaction has found that negative communication strategies (e.g., negative escalation, withdrawal) are related with lower levels of relationship satisfaction while the use of positive strategies (e.g., support, validation, feedback) is related with greater levels of relationship satisfaction (Arellano, 1993). This relationship between interactional styles and relationship "health" has caused researchers to conclude that communication characteristics and interactional skills are some of the best predictors of relationship longevity and success (Arellano, 1993; Arellano & Markman, 1995; Julien, Markman, & Lindahl, 1989).

The interactional style one uses in relationship is composed of a number of factors. These factors determine how we will act in our relationships with others. Our communication with our partner, our interactional style in relationships, is driven by cognitive factors, skills, and motivation. What is expressed to others is affected by beliefs, perceptions, values, expectations; conflict resolution skills and competency articulating what one is feeling, and; motivation, which determines if the issue, or the relationship, is important enough to merit one's effort toward maintaining it (Arellano & Markman, 1995). These attributes direct whether we will have a tendency to withdraw from or to pursue disagreements, our level of comfort with contentious discussions, and our ability to identify and articulate what we are feeling (Arellano & Markman, 1995). Thus, there are a number of factors that go into what is known as an "interactional style," and many of these factors have been identified as important determinants of the overall health and stability of relationships. For example, a couple's inability to effectively handle negative emotional experiences has been identified as one of the primary causes of marital distress (Markman & Kraft, 1989). Negative communication and conflict escalation behaviors have also been found to be predictive of future marital problems in premarital couples (Julien et al., 1989).

Indeed, using a measure designed to specifically assess the communication and conflict management skills discussed herein, Arellano & Markman (1995) found that all measured communication and conflict management skills were significantly correlated with general level of satisfaction in couples (Arellano & Markman, 1995). For example,

negative strategies (negative escalation, withdrawal) were negatively correlated with overall satisfaction in the relationship. Positive communication and conflict management skills were negatively related to couples ratings of the intensity of their relationship problems whereas negative communication and poor conflict management skills were positively related to their ratings of problem intensity in their relationships. Arellano & Markman (1995) also assessed “relationship efficacy,” which involved the degree to which couples felt confident in their ability to resolve their conflicts. As predicted, positive conflict management strategies were associated with higher levels of relationship efficacy while negative strategies were associated with lower levels of relationship efficacy.

These studies indicate that relationship communication behaviors are a useful venue by which to assess whether there is a likelihood that one can maintain relationships that remain stable and viable over time. This research suggests that cognitive factors and beliefs play a role in the communication strategies one will use, and therefore, may also warrant some consideration in studies aimed to assess whether one will be likely to have stable, long lasting relationships (Arellano, 1993). And indeed, there has been increased attention in recent years to the role of beliefs and cognitions in influencing relationship outcomes (Arellano & Markman, 1995; Baucom, Epstein, Sayers, & Sher, 1989). Therefore, we will proceed to some research that has more pointedly looked at the role that cognitive factors may have in influencing the quality and stability of relationships.

Beliefs and Cognitions

Relationship research has also found that one's beliefs about relationships do influence adult-relationship characteristics (Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990). Research has found that pre-marital couples engage in beliefs and belief-driven behaviors that are predictive of their later levels of happiness or dissatisfaction with their relationships, and, with their later levels of marital satisfaction and success (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). These findings have been taken to suggest that cognitions and beliefs which predict pre-marital relationship characteristics may be the same as those which predict the positive or negative characteristics found in one's later marriage (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). They also suggest that the cognitions and beliefs one brings to the early stage of a relationship are also likely to affect how the relationship develops over time (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000).

Clearly, cognitive-behavioral therapists have been emphasizing the importance of understanding how cognitions, behavior, affect, and their interplay influence relationship functioning over time (Baucom, Epstein, Rankin & Burnett, 1996). Research has echoed these sentiments, increasing its focus on the role of cognitions as key agents in relationship distress (Baucom, Epstein, et al., 1996; Eidelson & Epstein, 1982) and, increasingly, by attempting to identify specific beliefs that diminish relationship satisfaction and inhibit relationship-partners' ability to work collaboratively (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). Consequently, there have been numerous studies which have investigated the role of a broad array of relationship beliefs and their effects on relationships

(Bradbury & Fincham, 1987; Dryden, 1981; Eidelson & Epstein, 1982; Ellis & Harper, 1975; Epstein, 1982; Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990; Stuart, 1980).

Indeed, the powerful influence of relationship beliefs, and the problems that can arise from them has been discussed for some time (Satir, 1967). Satir (1967) proposed that when people held beliefs such as “disagreements are threats to secure loving relationships” “disagreements represent a lack of love” and “disagreements are a sign of imminent divorce” they would be likely to manifest problems in their relationships and would be more inclined to use coercion or avoidance as strategies to “resolve” their conflicts. Epstein & Eidelson (1981) provided support for these propositions by finding that negative relationship beliefs correlated with measures of marital maladjustment; Raush, Barry, Hertel & Swain (1974) found the belief “partners who truly care about and know one another should be able to sense needs without overt communication” led to disappointment, misperception, escalation of conflict, reduced efforts at communicating clearly with one’s partner and subsequently led to feelings of dissatisfaction since partners failed to respond as desired (as cited in Eidelson & Epstein, 1982, p. 715). Hurvitz (1970) reports that the belief “intimate partners cannot change” often leads to a sense of hopelessness about one’s relationship problems, decreasing the possibility for problems to be resolved (as cited in Eidelson & Epstein, 1982, p. 715).

Negative beliefs and the expectations associated with them have been found to increase the likelihood of relationship dissatisfaction, to decrease one’s commitment to their relationship, and to predispose partners to make fewer attempts to resolve relationship

problems (Doherty, 1981). The belief “men and women have dramatically different personalities and relationship needs,” invoked stereotyped perceptions and diminished sensitivity to the unique characteristics of one’s partner (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982, p. 716). Moreover, by attributing problems to the intractable personal characteristics of one’s partner, subjects tended to blame partners, became less hopeful that their relationship problems could be resolved, and increased their “helplessness” responses during problematic encounters (Doherty, 1981, p. 716). Since inappropriate, “problem” beliefs have been found to be strong contributors in relationship/marital difficulties, they are seen as key agents in the initiation and maintenance of relationship distress (Doherty, 1981; Baucom & Epstein, 1990).

Franklin et al., (1990) conducted a study to see whether adult-children who had “lost” a parent as a result of a divorce may have developed beliefs that would interfere with their intimate relationships. They reasoned that children who had “lost” a parent as a result of a divorce may have lost some of their ability to depend on and trust others, would have less faith in intimate partners, and in the idea that their own intimate relationships would succeed (Franklin, et al., 1990). College-aged students were studied since researchers felt that age-group would be likely, developmentally, to be contending with relationship and intimacy issues (Erikson, 1968). They also reasoned that their earlier exposure to their parents’ divorce would be most likely to be reactivated during this time in their lives, because of the developmental appropriateness of dealing with intimacy issues in one’s college-aged years. Theorizing that the parents’ relationship is a primary source of influence on children’s assumptions about the goodness of others and of the world in

general, and that people operate on the basis of their unquestioned assumptions, they expected parents' divorce to impact adult-children's fundamental beliefs and core assumptions about personal vulnerability, the kindness of others, self-worth, and how fortune is "distributed" (e.g., justice, randomness) (Janoff-Bulman, 1989; Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990, p.3). And, given that they conceptualized parents' divorce as a stressful and traumatic event for children, they proposed that it would be likely to shatter adult-children's core assumptions about relationships (Janoff-Bulman, 1989; Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990).

In accordance with their reasoning, they assessed whether parents' divorce had affected ACOD's basic assumptions about themselves, the world, the benevolence of people, their views of interpersonal relationships, their optimism regarding their ability to develop and maintain successful intimate and marital relationships, and their interpersonal trust (Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990). Although divorced-family (DF) and intact-family (IF) groups did not view other people differently or trust them less, there were significant differences between them when it came to narrower, more specific beliefs about interpersonal relationships. Specifically, DF participants were less optimistic about their relationships and about the likelihood of success in their future marriages, and were more aware that the success of their future marriage was not entirely within their control, since its success would also be contingent on their partners' behaviors in addition to their own. In contrast, IF participants believed that the success of their future marriages would be contingent on themselves, and would last as long as they themselves were "good" or "worthy." These findings suggest that parents' divorce affects relationship beliefs and

behaviors. However, since the study grouped subjects by family structure alone, it is impossible to determine whether these differences are due to parents' divorce, or instead, to other aspects of the family environment that are more often associated with divorced-households.

In sum, relationship research indicates that one's relationship-communication strategies and relationship beliefs play a primary role in relationship functioning and longevity. Specific types of communication and particular beliefs can make a difference in whether our relationships are satisfying to us, or whether they are sources of stress (Arellano & Markman's (1995). By assessing specific, rather than global, relationship characteristics, researchers can become more aware of the specific avenues by which adult-children are predisposed to relationship problems or relationship success.

Purpose and rationale of the study

Intimate relationships are important contributors to personal well-being and their importance is reflected by the extraordinary number of life-dimensions that are affected by them. Romantic relationships encourage well-being (House, Landis & Umberson, 1988; Simon & Marcussen, 1999; Weiss & Heyman, 1997; Wickrama, Lorenz, Conger, & Elder, 1997) and problems maintaining them have been related to physical, psychological, and emotional distress (House, Landis & Umberson, 1988; Simon & Marcussen, 1999; Weiss & Heyman, 1997; Wickrama, Lorenz, Conger, & Elder, 1997). The ability to establish and maintain close relationships is considered central to

development, and the inability to do so is viewed as a failure in the completion of a primary developmental task of young adulthood (Berscheid, 1999; Feldman, Gowen & Fisher, 1998). Relationship problems affect not only the individuals involved but also, members of their families. Marital anguish, for example, has been found to have extremely harmful effects on the physical and emotional welfare of couples and their children (Bloom, Asher, & White, 1978; Bradbury & Fincham, 1990) and has been found to be the most common reason for seeking psychological help in the United States (Veroff, Kulka, & Douvan, 1981). Accordingly, there has been a great deal of interest in finding the reasons for relationship stability, instability, and divorce (Arellano, 1993). In light of the intergenerational transmission of divorce and relationship instability that reportedly occurs in ACOD, the importance of increasing our understanding of why this occurs is underscored.

The goal of this study is to understand whether it is dysfunctional factors in the FOO environment, rather than the divorce itself, that impairs adult-children's ability to maintain satisfying long-term relationships. Does parents' divorce influence later relationship characteristics and behaviors (e.g. satisfaction, conflict management strategies)? Do *all* divorces increase the likelihood of divorce for those from divorced families? The study extends previous work by looking more closely at what may be contributing to the problems divorced-family individuals reportedly have in maintaining satisfying unions with their romantic partners. It is hoped that this research will provide information that can lead to better education and prevention and increased efficacy in psychological treatment.

This study assumes that there is variation in how individuals and families deal with divorce. It also investigates whether positive FOO experiences may mitigate or override negative FOO experiences (Ganong & Coleman, 1987; Kurdek, 1981; Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). The study makes use of a multi-factorial research model that considers “groups” of variables, believing this is superior to a single-factor causation approach (Chase-Lansdale & Hetherington, 1990). This methodology is expected to increase the accuracy of the divorced vs. intact-family comparisons by facilitating a greater level of exploration regarding within-group variations of FOO environmental conditions. A primary hypothesis of the study is that family-of-origin characteristics (e.g., family communication, family rituals, family worries) are more predictive of adult-children’s relationship characteristics than family structure.

Family structure, family environmental characteristics, and *specific*, empirically derived determinants of relationship functioning will be assessed. The age of participants will be limited to subjects at least 21 years of age, a stage when intimacy issues are prominent and, by which subjects will have had experience with the more mature level of relationships associated with this developmental period (Erikson, 1968; Franklin, Janoff-Bulman & Roberts, 1990). Gender will also be included for control purposes, since previous research has shown it can influence relationship communication strategies (Arellano, 1993). Relationship communication, relationship beliefs, and fear of intimacy will be used as relationship outcome measures; each of these is believed to have

important implications on the quality and longevity of intimate relationship (Arellano & Markman, 1995; Epstein & Eidelson, 1981; Descutner & Thelen, 1991).

Chapter II

Method

This was a quasi-experimental study using a sample of convenience. A stepwise hierarchical regression was used to consider whether FOO functioning characteristics (IVs) are more predictive of present-day relationship communication characteristics (DVs), the relationship belief that “partners cannot change” (DV) and fear of intimacy (DV) than FOO structure (IV). Gender (IV) was included because of its potential effects on the variables studied (Arellano & Markman, 1995). The study considered (1) whether relationship communication, relationship beliefs, and fear of intimacy are predicted by family structure, FOO functioning-characteristics, and/or gender, and; (2) whether specific FOO characteristics are related to particular adult-relationship-communication styles, relationship beliefs, and fear of intimacy. Regressions and Pearson correlations were run to determine the relationships among all variables.

Independent variables

There were a total of seven independent variables in this study. The first, FOO structure, determined whether participants were from divorced or intact families-of-origin. Five independent variables involved FOO functioning characteristics (family rituals, positive family

affect, family communication, family worries, and family conflicts), and were assessed using the Family Functioning Scale (Tavitian, Lubiner, Green, Grebstein, & Velicer, 1987). Participants responded to the measure as it applied to their family-of-origin's functioning. The last independent variable was gender.

Dependent variables

The dependent variables involved the following: (a) relationship communication strategies, (b) the belief that “partners cannot change”, and (c) fear of intimacy. Six relationship communication strategies were assessed using the Managing Affect Differences Scale (MADS) (Arellano & Markman, 1995), and are as follows: Leveling, Emotional Expressivity, Validation, Editing, Negative Escalation, Withdrawal, Happiness and Satisfaction. These factors have been empirically found to be predictive of relationship functioning and longevity and have been shown empirically to differentiate between satisfied and dissatisfied couples. Couples who employ greater levels of positive communication characteristics (Leveling, Emotional Expressivity, Validation, and Editing) and refrain from using negative communication characteristics (Negative Escalation, Withdrawal) are more likely to be satisfied and to have relationships that last over time. The “belief that partners cannot change” was assessed using the Relationship Beliefs Inventory (RBI) (Epstein & Eidelson, 1981). The Fear of Intimacy Scale (Descutner & Thelen, 1991) was used to evaluate current fear of intimacy.

Statistical Processes:

A stepwise hierarchical regression procedure was used to assess whether family-of-origin structure, family-of-origin functioning, and/or gender were predictive of present day relationship characteristics. Stepwise hierarchical regression uses participants' actual scores rather than grouping subjects by divorced versus intact family background thus, it minimizes the loss of important information that has occurred in prior ACOD studies. Regression also considers independent variables simultaneously, allowing one to determine the strength of each independent variable's contribution to measured outcomes. Power was set at .80 (reasonable), and the effect size we hoped to detect was .10 (medium according to Cohen, 1980).

Participants

The sample was comprised of 209 students who were 21 years or older, non-adopted, and exclusively heterosexual. There were 71 males [34%] and 138 (66%) females who ranged from 21 to 54 years of age ($M = 23.53$). The sample was predominantly Caucasian (86.1%), with 4.3% Hispanic/Latino, 3.3% Asian American, 1.4% Asian, 2.4% African American, and 2.4% who identified as "Other." The relationship status of the sample was as follows: 77.5% single, 8.6% engaged, 7.2% married/living together, 1.4% separated, 3.3% divorced, 1.4% "other," and .5% for whom this datum was "missing." The majority of the sample was Christian/Catholic (60.4%), with the remaining participants indicating the following religious orientations: 5.7% Protestant, 2.9% Jewish, 17.7% Other, and 12.9% Agnostic. The strength of participants' religious beliefs were as follows: 43.5 % moderate, 33.5% low, 22.0% very strong, and 1% "other."

In regard to the educational levels of participants' biological parents, subjects reported that 50.2% of participants' biological mothers had completed high school, 23.4% had BAs, 17.7% had MAs, 2.9% had PhDs or professional training, 2.4% had completed only elementary school, 2.9% did not know, with .5% for whom the datum was "missing." Participants biological fathers were described as: 33.5% high school education, 23.4% MAs, 23.0% BAs, 11.5% PhD or professional school, 5.7% "don't know", 1.4% elementary school only, with 1.5% whose answer was "missing." Parents' employment was also assessed and participants reported that biological mothers' were involved in the following areas of employment: 28.2% "professional", 26.8% skilled, 26.3% unemployed, 12.4% managerial/sales, 4.8% unskilled, 1.4% "don't know", and .5% did not respond. Biological fathers' employment was reported as follows: 51.2% "professional", 26.3% skilled, 14.4% managerial/sales, 3.3% unskilled, 3.3% "don't know", 1.0% unemployed, and .5% did not respond. In general then, the parents in the sample could be described as primarily middle-class.

In regard to family structure (divorced vs intact FOO) the sample consisted of 143 (68.4%) participants (45 males and 98 females) from intact families-of-origin. Sixty-six (31.6%; 26 males and 40 females) were from divorced families-of-origin. Mean age at the time of parents' divorce was 9.8 years old. Following the divorce, 67.1% lived with their biological mothers "most of the time", 14.5% lived mostly with their biological fathers, 6.6% spent equal time living with both their mothers and fathers, and 11.8% reported some "other" living arrangement following their parents' divorce. The mean number of "serious" relationships reported was 2.5 and "the average length of time your relationships have lasted" was one year.

The representativeness of the subjects (and, thus, the external validity of the study) is limited. Since all of the participants were college students, and ACOD are significantly less likely to attend college, the divorced-family sample is likely to be composed of some of the most high functioning ACOD. Although this sample is more homogeneous than a general population sample, which could have resulted in less score variability and a restricted range in the variables being correlated, this was assessed and did not seem to occur in this sample of college students (McNemar, 1962).

Measures

Demographic Questionnaire: Requested information about subjects' demographic characteristics.

Family Functioning Scale (FFS): (Tavitian, M.L., Lubiner, J. L., Green, L., Grebstein, L.C., & Velicer, F., 1987). The FFS is a 40 item instrument, based on an eclectic, integrative view of family functioning, designed to measure five important dimensions of family functioning (described in Lubiner, 1989; see Appendix X for detailed description of subscales): (1) Positive Family Affect; (2) Family Communication (COM); (3) Family Conflicts; (4) Family Worries (WOR); and (5) Family Rituals/supports (RIT). Respondents rate items on a seven-point Likert-type scale, designed to rate the frequency of the events in question, with anchor points ranging from "Never" to "Always" with "Sometimes" at the midpoint. Internal consistency: measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranged from 0.75 to 0.85 (Bozicas, 1986). Scale intercorrelations ranged from a high of 0.57 (COM with RIT) to - 0.02 (WOR with RIT). The

average scale intercorrelation was 0.29 (Bozicas, 1986). Social desirability bias was reduced by eliminating items which correlated with the Social Desirability sub-scale from the Jackson Personality Research Form (Jackson, 1976).

Managing Affect and Differences Scale (MADS; Arellano, 1990; Arellano & Markman, 1995):

The instrument originated from relationship research, which consistently pointed to differences between the communication strategies used by happy versus unhappy couples (Arellano & Markman, 1995; Markman, 1979, 1981, 1984). The MADS is a self-report measure that assesses cognitively mediated relationship communication and conflict management skills (Arellano & Markman, 1995, p. 321). Research participants responded to the MADS as it pertained to the communication in their most recent intimate relationship lasting longer than 4 months. Respondents answered on a Likert scale that ranged from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.”

The subscales of the MADS (described in Appendix X) involve (1) Leveling (2) Emotional expressivity (3) Validation (4) Editing: (5) Negative escalation (6) Withdrawal, and; (7) Relationship Happiness and Satisfaction. These subscales show which relationship-communication skills are well-developed and which ones are weak (e.g., the individual is good at telling partner how they feel about specific issues but not that skilled at validating partner’s point of view) thus indicating whether the relationship strategies used promote or weaken relationships

Internal consistency reliabilities were determined by Cronbach’s alphas with Leveling (.84), Emotional expressivity (.87), Validation (.84), Editing (.68), Negative escalation (.76),

Withdrawal (.67), and Relationship Happiness and Satisfaction (.89). These alphas demonstrate the measure has good internal consistency, reliability, and validity (Arellano, 1993; Arellano, 1990). Discriminative Validity: Using MANOVA, the measure produced significant differences between dissatisfied couples and satisfied couples, indicating that on all subscales, the measure discriminates successfully between dissatisfied and satisfied couples. Concurrent validity: Correlations between the MADS, the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959), and the CTS indicated that the MADS has excellent concurrent validity when compared with other renowned self-report measures.

Although there are many self-report measures which assess couples' communication and conflict management strategies, many of them focus on global communication rather than on specific skills. For example, the Marital Agendas Protocol (MAP) looks more at distressed couples' perceptions of problem areas rather than assessing what distressed couples may actually be doing in the first place that leads to conflict areas being more problematic and to lowered confidence in the ability to resolve their problems. The Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) assesses three specific modes of handling conflict but, while it targets very specific conflict management strategies, its measurement of constructive verbal conflict management is vague and problematic. Because the MADS focuses on specific conflict management skills it may better differentiate between constructive and destructive strategies.

Relationship Belief Inventory (RBI; Epstein & Eidelson, 1981): The measure is grounded in research which has indicated that cognitive components are involved in relationship distress; research suggests that holding certain beliefs about relationships may diminish interpersonal

satisfaction and impair partners' collaborative efforts for mutual change (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). These beliefs about intimate relationships may adversely affect relationship quality (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). Epstein & Eidelson (1981), for example, found that specific relationship beliefs were associated with measures of relationship maladjustment.

The "belief that partners cannot change" is considered dysfunctional because it represents a "terminal hypothesis (Hurvitz, 1970; Eidelson & Epstein, 1982, p. 715) in which there is no hope for amelioration of relationship problems. An individual with such low efficacy expectations is likely to experience diminished satisfaction with a relationship, feel less committed to it, and make fewer active attempts to constructively resolve conflicts" (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982, p. 715). Responses are of the Likert type, with respondents rating their responses from 5 (I strongly believe that the statement is true) to 0 (I strongly believe that the statement is false). A higher score suggests a more negative, problematic relationship belief which can contribute to relationship distress.

Items were generated from marital therapists and the clinical literature, and involve beliefs about intimate relationships that seem to cause the most marital difficulty. Scale validation involved a sample of 100 couples, who completed the MAS, the Irrational Beliefs Test (IBT; Jones, 1968), and the Therapy Goals and Expectations Questionnaire (Epstein & Eidelson, 1981) – an instrument which includes 3 measures of relationship distress which have been associated with dysfunctional relationship beliefs. Reliability/Internal consistency: the Chronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient for the "belief partners cannot change" is .76. Convergent validity was difficult to establish due to the absence of any other validated measures of relationship beliefs.

Correlations were therefore run between the RBI and the IBT, which measures Ellis's (1962) irrational beliefs about self and, therefore, couldn't be expected to be as highly related to the RBI scales as might another measure of relationship beliefs. Convergent validity was indicated by the significant and positive correlations between the RBI and the IBT (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982) and it is reported that the RBI has good construct validity and reliability (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). The "belief that partners cannot change" scale was significantly positively correlated with the IBT, which measures irrational beliefs about self. The r for "partners cannot change" scale was .14 ($p < .05$). Construct validity: Significantly negatively correlated with MAS (Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale), with a correlation at $-.38^*$ ($p < .05$). In two clinical samples, the "belief that partners cannot change" scale was significantly negatively correlated with rated likelihood of treatment success, desire to maintain the relationship, and interest in conjoint therapy (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982).

Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS; Descutner & Thelen, 1991): Descutner & Thelen (1991) define fear of intimacy as "the inhibited capacity, because of anxiety, to exchange thoughts and feelings of personal significance" (Fisher & Corcoran, 1994, p. 214). The FIS is a 35-item instrument designed to measure fear of intimacy, or one's level of comfort in sharing difficult personal information with one's relationship partner. The FIS is grounded upon the concept that "intimacy exists only with the communication of personal information about which one has strong feelings and with high regard for the intimate other" (Descutner & Thelen, 1991, p. 2). The FIS is described as a useful research tool as well as a good evaluative device for measuring treatment outcomes when problems with intimacy are the focus of the treatment. Respondents answer

questions on a Likert scale 1 (Not at all characteristic of me) to 5 (Extremely characteristic of me).

The FIS was validated in several stages, including sample populations composed of males and females in introductory psychology classes. The mean age for that sample was 19.1 years of age, and the mean score was 78.75 (SD = 21.82), with no significant differences between males and females. The FIS has good construct validity, correlating positively with the UCLA Loneliness Scale and negatively with the Jourard Self-Disclosure Questionnaire, the Miller Social Intimacy Scale and the Need for Cognition Scale (Fisher & Corcoran, 1994, p. 214). Reliability: The FIS has excellent internal consistency, with an alpha of .93. It also has excellent stability, with a one-month test-retest correlation of .89. Norms: 175 male and 285 female intro to psychology students. Mean age is 19.1.

Procedures

Two recruitment procedures were used to draw this sample. In Method 1, the researcher placed a description of the study (including dates, times, locations, and what is involved in participation) on a table where students needing to fulfill their Introduction to Psychology course requirements go to find a study in which to participate. Participants later reported to a designated classroom at a large mid-western university where they were given a numbered research packet containing a (1) Consent to Participate in Research, (2) Resource List, (3) Demographics questionnaire, (4) Family Functioning Scale, (5) Managing Affect and Differences Scale, (6) Relationship Beliefs Inventory, and (7) Fear of Intimacy scale. The FFS, MADS, RBI, and FIS had been consolidated

into a research questionnaire in which the names of the measures had been omitted to prevent students from becoming aware of what, specifically, was being assessed in the study. For the purpose of confidentiality, participants were seated such that there was an empty seat on all sides of them.

The room administrator (RA) provided a brief description of what their participation would entail, informed them that their responses would be confidential, and disclosed that they could choose to terminate their participation at any time. Participants were asked to read, sign, and return the Consent to Participate in Research Form to the RA. The RA described the purpose of the Resource List and asked that participants keep and use it should they experience any distress due to their participation in the study. Participants then completed the research questionnaires. When finished, they re-inserted them into their pre-numbered research-packet, sealed it, and then dropped it into a box at the front of the room. As they exited the room, participants signed-in (to receive credit for their participation) and were given a Debriefing Statement.

The second recruitment method (Method 2) involved recruiting students from non-randomly selected undergraduate psychology classes at the same large mid-western University. After receiving permission from the course instructor, a member of the research team visited the classroom to announce the study. Students were informed of what participation would entail and were offered extra-credit for their participation. An alternative extra-credit project was offered for those not choosing to participate in the study. A member of the research team distributed pre-numbered research packets (including the same forms as were described in Method 1) to those interested. Participants completed the questionnaires at home, returning them to their

classroom in pre-numbered sealed packets the following week. On collection day, participants dropped their sealed packets into a box outside the doors at the end of the class period. Participants then signed-in (to receive credit) and were given a copy of the Debriefing Statement.

There were no statistically-significant differences between the Method 1 and Method 2 sample populations so both were combined to form the sample used for this study. The sample was tested to ensure that the assumptions of population normality and homogeneity of variance were met.

Chapter III

Results

The primary hypothesis of the study was that characteristics of the family-of-origin's functioning (family rituals, family communication, positive family affect, family worries, and conflict) would be more predictive than FOO structure (divorced vs intact) of participants' positive (leveling, emotional expressivity, validation, editing) and negative (negative escalation, withdrawal) present-day relationship communication characteristics, present-day levels of relationship happiness and satisfaction, the present-day relationship belief that partners cannot change, and present-day fear of intimacy. More specifically, the study expected to find that higher levels of positive family-of-origin functioning characteristics would be predictive of the use of more positive and less negative present-day relationship communication strategies. Similarly, higher levels of negative family-of-origin functioning characteristics were expected to be predictive of greater levels of negative and lower levels of positive present-day relationship communication strategies. Relationship happiness and satisfaction was expected to be significantly related to present day relationship communication strategies, the belief that partners cannot change and fear of intimacy; positive relationship features (greater levels of positive communication, lower levels of negative communication, less belief that partners cannot change and

lower levels of fear of intimacy) were expected to be associated with higher levels of relationship happiness and satisfaction. The converse was also expected. Family-of-origin functioning characteristics were also expected to be predictive of the relationship belief that partners cannot change and of fear of intimacy with less functional family-of-origin characteristics (higher in negative characteristics, lower in positive characteristics) leading to more problematic present-day relationship characteristics (higher belief that partners cannot change, more fear of intimacy).

Family structure, Family-of-origin functioning, and gender (IVs)

Correlations indicate that family-of-origin structure (i.e., 1 = divorced or 2 = intact) was significantly and positively related to family rituals; divorced family-of-origin status was associated with lower levels of involvement in family rituals than intact family-of-origin status. In regard to the family-of-origin functioning characteristics, family rituals was positively related to family structure, positive family affect, and family communication indicating that family-rituals were reported as higher in intact families-of-origin and higher in families-of-origin that were characterized as having had higher levels of positive family affect and family communication. Family rituals showed a significant negative association with family conflicts, indicating that when family rituals were high, family conflict was low. Positive family-of-origin affect was associated with higher levels of family-of-origin rituals and family-of-origin communication. Positive family-of-origin affect was negatively related to family-of-origin worries and family-of-origin conflicts indicating that in families-of-origin that had higher levels of positive affect, there were lower levels of family worries and family conflicts. In regard to the family of

origin, family communication was positively related to family rituals and positive family affect indicating that families with higher engagement in family rituals were more likely to have been described as having higher levels of positive family affect. Family communication was negatively related to family conflicts indicating that higher levels of family-of-origin communication were associated with lower levels of family conflict. A positive relationship was found between family communication and gender (1 = male, 2 = female), indicating that males rated their family-of-origin's level of communication lower than did females. Family-of-origin worries were negatively related to positive family affect indicating that families with higher levels of worries were lower in positive family affect. Family worries were positively related with family conflict, indicating that families with greater levels of worries were also higher in levels of conflict. The level of Family worries reported by participants differed by gender, with females reporting higher levels of family-of-origin worries than did males. Family-of-origin conflicts were negatively related to family rituals, positive family affect, and family communication indicating that families-of-origin who were characterized by higher levels of conflict were described as being less involved with family rituals, lower in positive family affect, and lower in family communication. Higher levels of family-of-origin conflict were related to higher levels of family worries. Gender was related to family-of-origin communication and family-of-origin worries, with females being more likely to report higher levels of family communication and family worries.

Relationship communication, happiness and satisfaction, beliefs, and fear of intimacy (DVs)

(1) Leveling was positively related to emotional expressivity, validation, editing. Leveling was negatively associated with negative escalation and withdrawal. Leveling was positively associated with relationship happiness and satisfaction. Leveling was negatively associated with the belief that partners cannot change and with fear of intimacy. (2) Emotional expressivity was positively associated with leveling, validation, editing. Emotional expressivity was negatively associated with negative escalation and withdrawal. Emotional expressivity was positively associated with relationship happiness and satisfaction. Emotional expressivity was negatively associated with the belief that partners cannot change and with fear of intimacy. (3) Validation was positively associated with leveling, emotional expressivity, editing. Validation was negatively associated with negative escalation, withdrawal. Validation was positively associated with relationship happiness and satisfaction. Validation was negatively associated with the belief that partners cannot change and with fear of intimacy. (4) Editing was positively associated with leveling, emotional expressivity, validation. Editing was negatively associated with negative escalation and withdrawal. Editing was positively associated with relationship happiness and satisfaction. Editing was negatively related to the belief that partners cannot change and with fear of intimacy. (5) Negative Escalation was negatively related to leveling, emotional expressivity, validation, and editing. Negative escalation was positively related to withdrawal. Negative escalation was negatively related to relationship happiness and satisfaction. Negative escalation was positively related to the belief that partners cannot change and with fear of intimacy. (6) Withdrawal was negatively

related to leveling, emotional expressivity, validation, editing. Withdrawal was positively related to negative escalation. Withdrawal was negatively related to relationship happiness and satisfaction. Withdrawal was positively related to the belief that partners cannot change and with fear of intimacy. (7) Relationship happiness and satisfaction was positively related to leveling, emotional expressivity, validation, and editing. Relationship happiness and satisfaction was negatively related to negative escalation, withdrawal. Relationship happiness and satisfaction was negatively related to the belief that partners cannot change and with the fear of intimacy. (8) Belief that partners cannot change was negatively related to leveling, emotional expressivity, validation, editing. It was positively associated with negative escalation and withdrawal. Belief that partners cannot change was negatively related to relationship happiness and satisfaction and positively related to fear of intimacy. (9) Fear of intimacy was negatively associated with leveling, emotional expressivity, validation, and editing. It was positively associated with negative escalation and withdrawal. Fear of intimacy was negatively related to relationship happiness and satisfaction. Fear of intimacy was positively related to the belief that partners cannot change.

FOO structure, FOO functioning, and gender as related to relationship communication, relationship happiness and satisfaction, relationship beliefs, and fear of intimacy

Correlations between independent and dependent variables were as follows:

(1) Divorced vs intact family-of-origin structure: No significant correlations were found

between family structure and the dependent variables (relationship communication, relationship happiness and satisfaction, relationship beliefs, and fear of intimacy).

- (2) In regard to the relationship between family-of-origin characteristics and present day relationship communication, relationship happiness and satisfaction, relationship beliefs, and fear of intimacy, the following was found: (1) Family rituals were positively and significantly correlated with positive relationship communication characteristics: leveling, emotional expressivity, validation, and editing. Family rituals were negatively associated with negative communication strategies (withdrawal, negative escalation). Family rituals were positively related to present day relationship happiness and satisfaction. Family rituals were negatively associated with the belief that partners cannot change and with fear of intimacy. (2) Positive family affect was positively related to leveling, emotional expressivity, validation, and editing. Positive family affect was negatively related to withdrawal, and negative escalation. Positive family affect was positively related to relationship happiness and satisfaction. Positive family affect was negatively related to the belief that partners cannot change and fear of intimacy. (3) Family communication was positively related to leveling, emotional expressivity, validation, and editing. Family communication was negatively related to withdrawal and negative escalation. Family communication was positively related to relationship happiness and satisfaction. Family communication was negatively related to the belief that partner's cannot change and fear of intimacy. (4) Family worries was not significantly correlated with any of the present-day relationship communication strategies, relationship happiness and satisfaction, relationship beliefs, nor to fear of intimacy; mention this

is conceptualized kind of like enmeshment versus engaged and so a middle score is good while extremes on either end are not. Note that it's not what we might normally conceive of when thinking of this scale based on its name – i.e. we would think of it as a negative akin to family conflicts. (5) Family conflicts were positively related with withdrawal, negative escalation, and fear of intimacy. In other words, when family-of-origin was described as having had higher levels of family conflict, participants reported using higher levels of withdrawal and negative escalation in their present day relationships. Moreover, higher levels of family-of-origin conflicts were associated with higher levels of fear of intimacy.

- (3) Gender: A positive correlation was found between gender and emotional expressivity, with females reporting higher levels of emotional expressivity than males. A positive correlation was found between gender and relationship happiness and satisfaction. Females reported higher levels of relationship happiness and satisfaction than males. A negative association was found between gender and the belief that partners cannot change and fear of intimacy. This indicates that females tended to report lower levels of the belief that partners cannot change than males and that fear of intimacy was associated more with males than females.

Pearson correlations were used to test the hypothesis that the communication and conflict management variables assessed with the MADS would be correlated with participants relationship satisfaction. As seen in Tables 5 and 6, results show that all reported communication and conflict management skills were significantly correlated with general level of relationship satisfaction. Consistent with expectations, positive

communication and conflict strategies such as leveling, emotional expressivity, validation, and editing were positively correlated with relationship happiness and satisfaction. Similarly, negative strategies such as negative escalation and withdrawal were negatively correlated with overall happiness and satisfaction.

Multiple Hierarchical Stepwise Regression Results:

In the present study, family-of-origin structure (divorced vs intact), family-of-origin functioning characteristics (family rituals, positive family affect, family communication, family conflicts, and family worries), and gender (male, female) were used as independent variables. Independent variables were entered into a forward stepwise hierarchical regression to determine whether family-of-origin structure, family-of-origin functioning characteristics, and/or gender were predictive of present day relationship communication strategies, relationship happiness and satisfaction, the relationship belief that partners cannot change, and fear of intimacy. The stepwise hierarchical regression method minimizes the loss of pertinent information that can occur when a priori grouping strategies are used (e.g. grouping people by family-structure). The method uses participants' individual scores on present day characteristics and then statistically determines which independent variables are statistically significant predictors of these present-day characteristics. The overall results of the present study supported its hypotheses.

Positive (Facilitative) relationship-communication strategies:

In regard to positive, facilitative present-day relationship communication strategies the following was found: (1) Leveling was associated with family communication ($p = .000$, $\text{std'd B} = .426$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .171$) and family worries ($p = .016$, $\text{standardized B} = .158$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .192$). (2) Emotional Expressivity as associated with family communication ($\text{std'd B} = .236$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .090$) and family rituals ($p = .009$, $\text{stand'd B} = .193$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .118$). (3) Validation was associated with family communication ($\text{std'd B} = .244$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .099$) and family rituals ($p = .005$, $\text{stand'd B} = .207$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .131$). (4) Editing was associated with family communication ($\text{std'd B} = .213$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .080$) and family rituals ($p = .004$, $\text{stand'd B} = .212$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .115$).

Negative relationship-communication strategies:

In regard to negative relationship-communication strategies the following was found: (5) Negative Escalation was negatively associated with family rituals ($p = .006$, $\text{stand'd B} = -.176$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .026$). (6) Withdrawal was negatively associated with positive family affect ($p = .000$, $\text{Stand'd B} = -.251$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .058$).

Other relationship characteristics:

In regard to other present-day relationship characteristics the following was found: (7) Relationship happiness and satisfaction was associated with family communication ($p = .000$, $\text{stand'd B} = .263$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .064$). (8) Belief that partners cannot change was negatively associated with family rituals ($p = .000$, $\text{stand'd B} = -.258$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .101$) and family communication ($p = .042$, $\text{stand'd B} = -.156$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .116$). (9) Fear of Intimacy was negatively associated with Family Communication ($\text{std'd B} = -.234$, $\text{adjR}^2 = .121$),

Family Rituals (std'd B = -.219, adjR2 = .154) and Gender (males = 1, females = 2; stand'd B = -.149, adjR2 = .171).

These results were fairly consistent with the hypothesized relationships. First, in regard to the present-day relationship characteristics it was found that family-of-origin functioning was more predictive than family-of-origin structure. In other words, when family-of-origin functioning characteristics were taken into consideration, family-of-origin structure was not predictive of any of the dependent variables (i.e., present-day relationship communication, relationship beliefs, or fear of intimacy). As hypothesized, positive family-of-origin functioning characteristics (family rituals, positive family affect, and family communication) were associated with higher levels of positive present-day relationship communication strategies. More specifically, present-day levels of Leveling were significantly influenced by Family communication and Family worries. Although Family worries could be seen as a negative family-of-origin characteristic, recall that it measures family members' engagement or disengagement with one another and moderate scores are optimum, rather than a negative feature of the FOO environment. Emotional expressivity was significantly related to family communication and family rituals, with higher levels of family-of-origin communication and family rituals being associated with higher levels of emotional expressivity in present day relationships. Validation, another positive relationship communication strategy was significantly correlated with family communication and family rituals. Similarly, Editing was significantly associated with family communication and family rituals indicating that participants whose families-of-origin were characterized by higher levels and communication and who engaged in

higher levels of family rituals were significantly more likely to use editing (a positive relationship communication strategy) in their present-day relationships with their partners.

Negative present day relationship communication strategies were also associated with family-of-origin functioning, with Negative Escalation negatively associated with Family Rituals while Withdrawal was negatively associated with Positive Family Affect. In other words, higher levels of Negative Escalation correlated with lower levels of Family Rituals. Greater tendencies to use withdrawal in relationships was associated with lower levels of Positive Family Affect in the family of origin. Interestingly, it was variability in the positive features of the FOO environment that lead to differential outcomes in negative present-day relationship communication strategies; negative family-of-origin characteristics were not predictive of present-day negative relationship communication strategies.

Relationship happiness and satisfaction was positively and significantly related to family communication. Participants who reported higher levels of relationship happiness and satisfaction described their family-of-origin as having higher levels of communication. The belief that partners cannot change was negatively related to family rituals and family communication. Participants who reported less engagement in family rituals and lower levels of family communication in their families-of-origin were more likely to report higher levels of the belief that partners cannot change. Fear of intimacy was negatively related to family communication, family rituals, and gender indicating that participants

who reported lower levels of family-of-origin communication, less engagement in family-of-origin rituals, and who were male were more likely to fear intimacy.

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

There is a commonly held view that parents' divorce is highly traumatic, stressful, and predictive of problems in divorced-family offspring. This view has been used to account for the relationship problems reported in ACOD research. The results of the present study raise questions, however, about the theory that parents' divorce is the precipitant to the relationship problems reported in ACOD research.

The primary hypothesis of this study is that characteristics of the FOO environment are more predictive than parents' divorce, of adult-children's relationship characteristics. Family structure (FS), Gender (G), and five aspects of the FOO environment [Family Rituals (FR), Positive Family Affect (+FA), Family Communication (FC), Family Worries (FW), and Family Conflicts (FCf)] were assessed. Adult-children's relationship characteristics were assessed using: Leveling (L), Emotional Expressivity (EE), Validation (V), Editing (E), Negative Escalation (NE), Withdrawal (W), Relationship Happiness and Satisfaction (RHS), the Belief that Partner's Cannot Change (BPCC), and the Fear of Intimacy Scale (FI). These relationship characteristics have been found to distinguish between satisfied and dissatisfied couples, between relationships that remain

viable and those that end, and have been identified as strong predictors of relationship health and longevity. Appendix A provides a detailed description of all measures used.

Consistent with the hypothesis of this study, parents' divorce was not at all predictive of ACODs relationship communication strategies, level of happiness and satisfaction in relationship, belief that partners cannot change, and fear of intimacy. The family-of-origin environmental characteristics, however, were highly predictive of the types of communication, levels of satisfaction, belief that partners cannot change, and fear of intimacy in adults from divorced and non-divorced families alike. Indeed, when the biased strategy of drawing comparisons between subjects who had been grouped by family-structure alone was eliminated, and comparisons were made based on having experienced identical FOO conditions, a very different picture emerged from that painted by previous studies. This method indicated that specific childhood experiences in the FOO environment predicted specific types of A-C's relationship characteristics; FOO conditions were able to predict whether one used functional or dysfunctional communication strategies, whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied in their relationships, and whether they held functional or dysfunctional cognitions and fears about intimate relationships. These findings are important since it is these very characteristics that predict whether or not a relationship will continue over time. Because it was the FOO environment, rather than the experience of parents' divorce, that predicted these relationship characteristics, the results of this study suggest that previous research may have reached inaccurate conclusions about the effects of divorce on A-C's relationship characteristics. Based on the present findings, we suggest that it is the FOO

environmental conditions, not parents' divorce, that leads to adult-children's relationship characteristics and outcomes. Clearly, the present findings offer strong support for the idea that previous research may have over-estimated the effect that parents' divorce has on ACOD's relationship characteristics. Indeed, the over-representation of problematic FOO experiences in divorced-households, and the failure of past research to take this into account when drawing comparisons, is likely to have led researchers to inaccurate conclusions. The following will discuss more specifically how FOO environmental conditions predicted A-C's relationship characteristics.

Adult-children's use of Positive Relationship Communication Strategies

The types of communication used in relationships can be categorized as functional/dysfunctional, facilitative/non-facilitative, health promoting/health impairing. In other words, some forms of communication help couples move problems forward, toward resolution, whereas others escalate problems and the likelihood of relationship termination. In this study, positive relationship-communication strategies were quantified as: Leveling (L), Emotional Expressivity (EE), Validation (V), and Editing (E). These strategies have been found to lead to stable, well-functioning, long-lasting relationships.

The research found that FOO characteristics, not parents' divorce, predicted adult-children's (A-C) use of positive relationship-communication strategies. The use of clear, constructive discussion and openness about feelings (L) in A-C's present-day relationships was predicted by the type of communication (FC) and level of empathic

connection (FW) among A-C's FOO members. Those who reported that FOO members had used clear, constructive communication (FC) and had been empathic with, and concerned for one another (FW), tended to use clear, constructive communication (L) in their present-day relationships. Adult-children's level of comfort with emotional expression, use of praise, expressions of comfort toward their partners (EE), expressions of value in their partners' perspective, use of attentive listening and paraphrasing (V), and tendency to control their reactions, to listen to the entire message before responding, and editing-out of defensive responses (E), were predicted by their FOO's communication (FC) and time spent together (FR). A-C who were most inclined to use facilitative relationship-communication strategies described their FOO as open, emotionally expressive, and flexible, and described FOO members as good communicators, good listeners, and effective problem-solvers. They also reported that family members had spent time in mutually shared activities (e.g., eating at least one meal a day together) that reinforced a sense of family identity (FR).

Adult-children's use of Problematic Relationship Communication Strategies

Negative relationship-communication strategies inhibit problem resolution and their use is predictive of relationship instability and termination. In this study, problematic relationship-communication involved Negative Escalation (NE) and Withdrawal (W). Use of these problematic communication strategies was predicted by characteristics of respondents' FOO rather than the presence or absence of their parents' divorce.

The tendency to use conflict-escalating communication strategies, such as using one negative message followed by another and so on (NE), was predicted by participants' descriptions of their FOO's involvement in activities that reinforced a sense of family identity and involved time spent together (FR). When A-C's families had not reinforced a sense of belonging to the larger family unit and had spent little/no time together, A-C were significantly more likely to use NE in their present-day interactions with partners. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, but may suggest that time spent in mutually shared family activities reinforces a sense of belonging to something larger than oneself (i.e., the family), and expands one's awareness beyond purely personal needs. Those who have been reinforced in seeing themselves as part of a larger system may be more motivated to make efforts to maintain the stability of the unit even when personal needs make this difficult. Correlations between NE and other FOO characteristics provide some insight. Correlations indicate that A-C's tendency to use negative escalation (NE) is related to problematic communication (FC) and higher levels of conflict (FCf) in families of origin. Indeed, the correlations between FR, FC, and FCf were significant (Table 7). These findings suggest that effective communication in the FOO provides children with observational learning experiences of effective communication (FC) as well as practice implementing functional communication strategies via mutually shared family activities (FR).

Withdrawal (W), which involves the tendency to physically and emotionally withdraw from discussions for fear of conflict, was also predicted by A-C's descriptions of FOO characteristics. Low levels of positive family affect (+FA) predicted a tendency for A-C

to use Withdrawal in their present-day relationships. When the degree to which family members had offered one another support and recognition was low (+FA), A-C were much more likely to physically and emotionally withdraw from their present-day partners due to their fear of conflict (W). Since the +FA scale is based on the idea that families are the foundation for self-perceptions, self-esteem, and valuing of the self, low scores on this scale would indicate that the FOO environment had been rife with conditions that would negatively impact children's sense of self and level of self esteem. Consequently, the insecurity about oneself, one's views, and one's worthiness may lead to insecurity in relationships, particularly with cherished objects (i.e. a relationship partner). These problematic personal characteristics could be expected to lead to greater levels of fear and anxiety when issues lead to disagreements with partners. Moreover, since +FA is significantly related to FC, we would expect that FOOs that had been low in +FA were also low on functional communication in the home, causing further impairments in their offspring's ability to know how to communicate in a functional way when involved in disagreements. Low self-esteem in combination with a lack of effective communication strategies are suspected to play some role in A-C's dysfunctional strategy of physically and emotionally withdrawing from partners during disagreements.

An interesting finding related to the use of negative communication strategies occurred in the findings. Despite the study's interest in positive FOO experiences as mitigating agents of negative childhood experiences, we did expect that negative FOO characteristics would be predictive of A-C's use of problematic communication strategies in their adult-relationships. However, the results of the study indicate that only positive

aspects of the FOO environment (FR, +FA) were predictive of A-C's use of problematic relationship communication strategies (NE, W); other than one minor finding, negative FOO characteristics (FW, FC) did not predict participants' use of problematic communication in present-day relationships. This strongly supports the argument for assessing positive childhood experiences, in addition to negative ones, in research on A-C's outcomes.

Adult-Children's Relationship Cognitions

The belief that Partners Cannot Change (PCC) is considered dysfunctional because individuals holding this belief are likely to feel less commitment to their relationships and to feel more hopeless about their ability to constructively resolve relationship conflicts and problems. In this study, individuals holding this belief could be predicted by characteristics of their FOO. Those who endorsed this belief described their FOO as under-involved in mutually shared activities (FR) and ineffective in their communication (FC). When families-of-origin were uninvolved in mutually shared activities and were described as having lacked effective listening, speaking, negotiation, and problem-solving skills, and had not communicated with one another in an open, flexible manner, their A-C were much more likely to feel hopeless about their present-day relationship-partners' ability to change problematic, personal characteristics. These findings suggest that time spent observing and practicing good communication strategies with FOO members provides children with practice asserting their needs, and positive experiences of problem resolution. This likely leads to hopefulness about people's ability to change

and optimism about the possibility that relationship problems can be solved, and these characteristics are ultimately carried into adulthood.

The inhibited capacity to exchange thoughts and feelings of personal significance with relationship partners has been described as a measure of fear of intimacy. The Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS) used in this study is grounded on the idea that intimacy exists only when partners are able to share personal information about which they have strong feelings with their partners. When fear of intimacy is low, individuals are more inclined to share information with their partners, even when this is difficult and could be viewed as a threat to the relationship. Participants' fear of intimacy could be predicted by FOO characteristics. When families-of-origin were described as having lacked good intra-family communication (FC) and under-involved in time spent together (FR), their A-C were far more likely to fear intimacy than peers from families that communicated effectively and spent time together. The lack of effective communication and time spent together in the FOO may lead to greater levels of emotional disconnection between family-of-origin members and to a less secure, more anxious attachment style in adulthood. A-C who are more anxiously attached may find it more threatening to exchange difficult feelings and thoughts with their partners. Participants' gender (G) was slightly predictive of A-C's fear of intimacy, with males reporting more fear of intimacy than females in the study. The effect size for gender was extremely small, however, adding very little to the predictive capacity of FC and FR. The minimal effect-size of gender on only one variable (FI) suggests that relationship communication, the belief that

partners cannot change, and fear of intimacy are not strongly affected by gender and are more directly linked to characteristics of the FOO environment.

Relationship Happiness and Satisfaction

It seemed useful to assess whether relationship-communication and cognitions were related to subjects' happiness and satisfaction in their adult relationships, since those happy in their relationships are less likely to leave them. The study assessed whether facilitative forms of communication and functional relationship cognitions were related to greater levels of relationship satisfaction. And, similarly, if problematic communication strategies and cognitions were linked to less satisfaction and happiness in one's relationships. Consistent with expectations, the study found that all relationship communication strategies and cognitions were significantly related to A-C's happiness and satisfaction (RHS) in present-day relationships. Moreover, the direction of the relationships was consistent with expectations with positive strategies leading to higher levels of satisfaction, and problematic strategies linked with lower levels of satisfaction in A-C's relationships.

The use of facilitative communication strategies (L, EE, V, E) and lack of dysfunctional relationship cognitions (PCC, FI) were all related to higher levels of happiness and satisfaction (Table 8). Negative communication strategies (NE, W), dysfunctional beliefs (PCC) and fear of intimacy (FI) were also significant and negatively related to present day levels of happiness and satisfaction in relationship (RHS) (Table 8). Those who

reported the use of negative, conflict escalating forms of communication (NE), a tendency to withdraw from relationship conflict (W), who endorsed the belief that partner's cannot change (PCC), and who feared intimacy (FI) were unlikely to feel happy and satisfied in their relationships. These findings agree with previous research that links facilitative communication and lack of dysfunctional beliefs to satisfaction in relationships.

Another important link found in this study involved the relationship between FOO characteristics and A-C's relationship satisfaction. The types of communication used in the FOO were predictive of A-C's present day happiness in their relationships, with those who characterized their FOO as openly communicative, good at listening and problem-solving, and flexible (FC) being more likely to be satisfied and happy (RHS) in their present day relationships.

Gender

Gender, which was not a primary focus of the study, had relatively little effect; it was only marginally predictive of fear of intimacy (FI), and only when combined with other, more potent, predictor variables.

General Discussion

This study attempted to improve on past research by improving the manner in which divorced and intact-family subjects are compared, and by exploring the potential reasons for the ACOD relationship problems reported in prior studies. The research grounded

itself in theory and relevant research from related areas of study that had not yet been applied to ACOD relationship studies. In doing so, it addressed some of the limitations in previous research, it provided some interesting and potentially fruitful areas warranting further investigation, and it provided initial support for the idea of taking positive FOO characteristics into account in addition to the negative factors that have been the focus of ACOD research. It also provided some initial support for the idea that FOO characteristics may be more directly linked than parents' divorce, to the ACOD relationship problems reported in prior studies. It has also provided some reasons why past studies may have been somewhat misguided in attributing ACOD relationship-problems to parents' divorce alone. It is hoped that the results of this study provide some insight to parents, treatment providers, researchers, and policy-makers regarding immediate interventions and directions for future research.

In general, it was the positive features of the family-of-origin environment that were most predictive of adult-children's relationship characteristics. Involvement in mutually shared family activities, the quality of family communication, and, to a lesser degree, the positive emotional climate in the FOO environment were the best predictors of the types of communication strategies A-C used in their relationships. For the most part, negative aspects of the FOO environment (family conflict, family worries) did not predict adult-children's relationship characteristics whereas the amount of "health" in the FOO was highly predictive of the positive and negative relationship characteristics of adult-children; the better the communication, involvement, and affective tone, the better were A-C's relationship characteristics which, in turn, are predictive of relationship outcomes.

These findings contrast with the present focus of ACOD research, which has tended to focus on the impact of negative experiences on ACOD outcomes. They are consistent with resiliency theory, which proposes that positive experiences may be more influential than negative ones, on human outcomes. These findings suggest that ACOD research may gain valuable insights by changing its approach to one that includes a diverse set of predictor variables into its studies.

Although the present study was not designed to provide definitive answers regarding the path by which families-of-origin affect A-C's relationship characteristics, the results are consistent with its theoretical underpinnings (e.g., life-span development, social-cognitive-learning). These theories argue that the early social environment affects children's social, emotional, personality, and skill development in ways that carry-over across the life-span. They predict that when families-of-origin are characterized by positive communication, functional relationship skills, and other functional characteristics, children will be better adjusted and learn the skills necessary to succeed in their relationships in later life. The few prospective longitudinal studies that have been done support the notion that the direction of influence moves from the family of origin, to the individual's relationship characteristics, to relationship outcomes. Consistent with this view, A-C who described their families-of-origin in positive terms tended to make greater use of facilitative forms of communication, less use of negative forms of communication, and were less inclined to hold dysfunctional beliefs about their relationships. These characteristics lead to more stable, satisfying relationships in adulthood.

The highly significant influence of FC and FR on adult-children's relationship quality may be explained by the fact that the observation of, and practice with, good communication strategies in the FOO not only exposes children to positive learning experiences, but also gives them a secure, healthy place to practice these skills with trusted individuals. And that parents' proficiency in communication helps children to learn, practice, revise, and thus develop, constructive communication strategies of their own. Moreover, good FC invokes an atmosphere in which children feel safe expressing themselves with important others who do not abandon them in spite of the problems and conflicts that occur. The fact that adult-children from communicative families that spent time together predicted the use of more positive and less negative forms of communication, more functional beliefs about their relationship partners, and less fear of intimacy is consistent with this model of relationship communication and skill development, and the implementation of these in adulthood.

In support of the hypotheses of this study, divorced FOO structures were significantly related with lower levels of communication, less time spent together, and lower levels of positive family affect. These FOO characteristics were related to less functional communication strategies and relationship cognitions, factors that increase to likelihood of relationship instability and distress. In light of previous research, we would expect that participants endorsing these strategies and cognitions would be less likely to have relationships that survive over time. These findings underscore the possibility that

previous studies may have mis-attributed problems to parents' divorce due to the overrepresentation of family problems in divorced-families.

These findings suggest there are important links between the FOO environment and A-C's relationship communication strategies, relationship beliefs, fear of intimacy, and relationship quality. Family communication (FC) and family rituals (FC) were the strongest predictors across all outcomes measured, indicating that verbal and non-verbal expressiveness, use of effective listening and speaking skills, use of negotiation and open, flexible problem-solving strategies, time spent together, a sense of family identity, and rules and consistency regarding family-members' behavior and roles, have a strong relationship with the use of facilitative communication strategies in A-C's relationships. Moreover, that this appears to be the case regardless of whether one comes from a divorced or intact family of origin. Unfortunately, the direction of influence between FOO characteristics and A-C's relationship outcomes remains unclear, suggesting that prospective, longitudinal studies be used to more adequately explore these important connections.

Implications of the research:

The findings of this study suggest that FOO environmental conditions may impact A-C's relationship quality and characteristics more strongly than parents' divorce. And that positive FOO conditions may be more significant to A-C's outcomes than negative ones. These findings have practical implications. For therapists working with families, these

findings suggest that it may be as important to help families maintain positive aspects of the FOO environment as it is to work on reducing negative conditions within the family home. Moreover, that children's well-being is affected not so much by the *structure*, but by the *environment*, of the family. The importance of family communication and time spent together could be reinforced, with therapists helping families to understand the importance of these factors, as well as ways to augment them in the family. Educating parents about the specific issues that lead to problematic outcomes in offspring can help them to create or maintain conditions which support, rather than impair, their children's well being.

In work with A-C of divorce, these findings point to specific FOO conditions that may need to be explored to help them deal with present day issues, whether they be general (e.g. overall functioning) or specific (e.g. relationship problems). In regard to relationship problems, the findings suggest some specific factors that may be impairing A-C's relationship satisfaction and their ability to maintain high-functioning, stable, long-lasting unions. For example, are they prone to communicate in ways that support, or impair, their relationships? Are there dysfunctional beliefs they hold that lead them to undermine the success of their relationships? Most important, perhaps, is the hope these findings offer to the millions of divorced-family adults who may have believed that "something" about their parents' divorce made them incapable of having the long-lasting, fulfilling relationships they desire. These findings indicate that divorced-family adults are not simply predestined to experience non-functioning relationships and divorce. The findings offer potential explanations of specific issues, such as problem communication

styles and dysfunctional beliefs, that may be impairing relationship functioning, as well as possible causal factors that lead to their development. In this way, the findings provide some insight and direction regarding interventions in overcoming one's problematic relationship characteristics. Finally, the results of this study offer directions for future research, and for social policies that focus on the real issues underlying the problems that have previously been attributed to parents' divorce.

External Validity Limitations

The sample characteristics are not representative of the general ACOD population. ACOD are significantly less likely to pursue higher education for a variety of reasons which include, but are not limited to, a lack of family and financial support as well as the tendency to marry and become parents at younger ages. Since ACODs in this study were students pursuing post-baccalaureate degrees, they were uncharacteristic of ACODs in general. Moreover, they may be some of the highest functioning ACODs, receiving uncharacteristic levels of support and, perhaps, having received this prior to, as well as after, their parents' divorce. Indeed, despite a statistically appropriate range of scores, there were few in the sample who reported significantly high scores on measured variables whereas there may have been a greater number of extreme scores, indicating higher levels of dysfunction, in a more general sample.

Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of this study involves the reliance on self-report measures alone. Some have noted that humans are not necessarily good observers of their own circumstances and behaviors and therefore, may be inaccurate in their responses on self-report measures. This problem, if it existed in this study, may have been compounded by the fact that this was a retrospective study, and subjects' recollections may have been colored by the passage of time. Another limitation of the study involved issues related to the age of participants. Since research participants were fairly young, the length of their relationships was fairly brief (1 yr. on average). A better sample would involve participants with a history of lengthier relationships, since the first two years of a relationship have been described as a "honeymoon" stage, a stage that may be influenced by an overwhelming sense of positivity about the relationship and during which issues may not cause conflict but could, over time, as issues become more difficult to ignore. Also, it should be noted that the measures of FOO characteristics did not include extreme behaviors and, therefore, their predictive capacity may be different than what would be achieved using measures of higher FOO dysfunction. For example, the FOO Conflict (FCf) scale assessed general conflict, not violence or physical aggression in the home. More extreme forms of conflict could easily lead to different outcomes than those found in this study.

Many of these limitations could be overcome using a longitudinal research design, a larger, generalized population sample, and multi-method (e.g., observation, multi-respondent) assessment measures. These would allow for a number of relevant issues to be taken into account. In regard to the direction of influence, a longitudinal study would

allow us to begin to assess directionality of influence. For example, the study could assess relationship communication strategies at various points in time to see if relationship characteristics are *taken into* relationships, rather than being *induced by* the condition of the relationship. In other words, do participants report using problematic relationship communication characteristics and dysfunctional beliefs prior to the initiation of relationships or after particular experiences that have occurred in them? Do they initially use facilitative strategies that seem to deteriorate as the relationship persists over time? By extending the time of the study, other factors, such as the honeymoon effect, could be controlled for thus minimizing the effects of this confound. Multi-respondent, multi-method assessment would also allow us to distinguish between what actually exists, versus subjects' perceptions of what exists. This would help us learn how FOO experiences influence not only subjects behaviors, but also, the perceptual distortions that may occur as a function of particular FOO experiences. Finally, a generalized sample would allow comparisons between the "typical" divorced-family person and those from potentially higher functioning divorced-families, allowing us to consider whether there are other conditions that may lead to particular outcomes. A larger sample would allow more FOO variables to be assessed (e.g., age at the time of divorce, number of family re-organizations experienced), and a variety of between-group comparisons that could not be undertaken in this study due to the limited sample size. Clearly, what has been learned from prior research is that divorce is not a one-point in time event, it is a process. And, the process can involve substantial variation in conditions and experiences that have the potential to exert significant impact on A-C's outcomes.

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APPENDIX A

FOO Subscales

Family Functioning Scale (FFS).

- (1) **Family Rituals**: This assesses time spent together and the degree to which family members celebrate important events (holidays, milestones). Family rituals serve as “a symbolic form of communication” (Wolin & Bennett, 1984, p. 401; as cited in Lubiner, 1989, p. 53) which clarify and reinforce a sense of family identity. Rituals are activities in which family members participate repeatedly and within which they follow rules and behave in characteristic roles. Rituals are particularly helpful for adolescents who are attempting to individuate; family rituals facilitate the transition from dependent child to independent adult (Quinn, Newfield, & Protinsky, 1985; Lubiner, 1989). Sample items, “we pay attention to traditions in my family,” “our family celebrates special events,” “family members eat at least one meal a day together”. (Norm = 5.73).
- (2) **Positive Family Affect**: concerns the overall emotional climate of the family and the degree to which the members offer one another support and recognition (based on the idea that families “imprint” the individual with a sense of self and are the foundation for self-perceptions, self-esteem, and valuing of the self. The scale measures one of the essential family tasks, which is providing its members with a sense of worthiness and self-respect (esteem, valuing of self, self-perceptions, sense of worthiness, self-respect). Sample items: “People in my family listen when I speak,” “I feel respected by my family,” “my family accepts me as I am,” “family members praise one another for their accomplishments.” (Norm = 5.932)
- (3) **Family Communication**: Concerned with verbal and nonverbal expressions of emotion and it includes the exchange of neutral (non-affective) information. Based on the idea that communication is essential to good marital and family relationships and that effective listening and speaking skills help family members to negotiate issues and to solve problems in an open and flexible manner. Communication with parents has been linked to a positive self-esteem in adolescents (Demo, Small & Savin-Williams, 1987; Lubiner, 1989, p. 49). Inadequate family communication has been linked to lower self-esteem, increased dissatisfaction, and increased conflict among family members (see FFS, p. 50). Sample items: “I let family members know when I’m upset,” “when I have questions about sex I ask family members for info,” “family members use words to express their affection for one another.” (Norm = 4.259)
- (4) **Family Worries**: A measure of both involvement among family members and of the individual’s habitual coping strategies. The scale assesses the degree to which family members empathize with, and are concerned for, one another and the degree to which the level of involvement produces problematic behaviors like sleep disturbances. A

Family Functioning Scale (continued)

low score indicates that family members are disconnected from one another emotionally. A high score indicates that members are over-involved with each other and do not have adequate interpersonal boundaries. Sample items: "when someone in my family is angry, I feel worried," "I worry what my family thinks of me," "it's hard for me to forget painful events that have happened in my family." (Norm = 3.893)

- (5) Family Conflicts: measures the degree of hostility within the family including expressions of verbal and non-verbal anger and criticism; includes items relevant to family structure indicating there's a relationship between sense of structure and rules within family and the lack of conflict. Research has found the degree of antagonism within family's is related to the overall level of functioning of the members. Families in which members can differentiate successfully and communicate effectively have less conflict; when family structure is flexible enough to accommodate individuation of adolescents, they are able to separate with less strife; antagonism between parents can lead to emotional and behavioral disturbances in children; conflict between parents can be associated with disturbances in subsystem boundaries and role expectations which are also damaging to the mental health of the family members; to the extent that conflict within family is symptomatic of pathology, scale can be considered a measure of general functioning. (Norm = 3.893).

Relationship Communication: Managing Affect and Differences Subscales

- (1) Leveling: Telling partner what one is feeling through clear, constructive discussion.
- (2) Emotional Expressivity: Degree of comfort with emotional expression, includes praising or comforting one's partner.
- (3) Validation: Expressing value in partner's perspective through things such as attentive listening, and paraphrasing.
- (4) Editing: Controlling one's reactions to partner's message. Includes: listening to entire message before responding; saying things positively rather than complaining, nagging, or insulting; editing out responses of defense or one's own desires or needs while the other is expressing hers/his.
- (5) Negative Escalation: Involves a pattern of a negative message followed by another and then another and so on.
- (6) Withdrawal: Physically or emotionally withdrawing from discussions for fear of conflict.

Relationship Communication Subscales: Managing Affect and Differences Scale
(continued)

- (7) **Relationship Happiness and Satisfaction:** Involves one's level of happiness and satisfaction in the current, or most recent, relationship lasting longer than four months.

Belief that partners cannot change: This is considered a dysfunctional relationship belief because those holding it tend to have no hope for amelioration of relationship problems. "An individual with such low efficacy expectations is likely to experience diminished satisfaction with a relationship, feel less committed to it, and make fewer active attempts to constructively resolve conflicts" (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982, p. 715).

Fear of Intimacy Scale: This measure conceptualizes the fear of intimacy as "the inhibited capacity, because of anxiety, to exchange thoughts and feelings of personal significance" (Fisher & Corcoran, 1994, p. 214). The scale is designed to measure fear of intimacy, or one's level of comfort in sharing difficult personal information with one's relationship partner. It is grounded upon the concept that "intimacy exists only with the communication of personal information about which one has strong feelings and with high regard for the intimate other" (Descutner & Thelen, 1991, p. 21).

APPENDIX B

Item Content

Family Functioning Scale (FFS): 1 = Never; 2 = Almost never; 3 = Rarely; 4 = Sometimes; 5 = Frequently; 6 = Almost Always; 7 = Always.

Rituals

Birthdays are important events in my family
Our family spends holidays together
We pay attention to traditions in my family
Our family celebrates special events, such as anniversaries and graduations
Family members eat at least one meal a day together
Family reunions are important to us
We are interested in the history of our family
We are friendly with other families

Positive Family Affect

People in my family do not care enough about what I need
My family accepts me as I am
People in my family listen when I speak
I feel respected by my family
My family sees me as a hopeless case
I feel loved by my family
People in my family are not interested in what I do
I feel like a stranger in my own house

Family Communication

When I have questions about personal relationships, I talk with family members
I let my family know when I am sad
I let family members know when I am upset
In my family, we talk about what is right and wrong with regard to sex
In my family, we talk about the physical changes that go along with growing up
I tell people in my family when I am angry with them
I let my family know when I feel afraid
People in my family discuss their problems with me

Family Worries

When someone in my family is angry, I feel worried
I worry when I disagree with the opinions of other family members
When things are not going well in my family, I feel sick
The mood of one family member can spread to everyone in the house
It is hard for me to forget painful events that have happened in my family
I have trouble sleeping when I think about family problems
When things are not going well in my family it affects my appetite
It is important to know the mood of certain family members

Family Functioning Scale (continued)

Family Conflicts

- The children in my family fight with each other
- People in my family have to be reminded when they are asked to do something
- Members of my family argue about money
- People in my family hit each other
- People in my family yell at each other
- People in my family use my things without asking
- Family members are critical of each other's eating habits
- When things are going wrong in my family, someone gets blamed

Managing Affect and Differences Scale (MADS): 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.

Leveling

- 1 When I feel hurt by something my partner has done, I tell him/her
- 7 I help my partner understand me by saying how I feel
- 13 I tell my partner when I am angry with him/her
- 61 When I feel disappointed in my partner, I talk with him/her about it
- 21 When my partner asks what I feel or think about a specific issue, I try to be as specific and clear as I possibly can
- 31 When my partner has done something that bothers me, I tell him/her the specific behavior he/she has done, when and under what context the behavior occurred, and how the behavior makes me feel.
- 41 Rather than beating around the bush, I say exactly what I feel or think about a particular issue
- 53 My partner tells me exactly what he/she feels or thinks about an issue
- 70 When my partner feels upset by something I have done, he/she tells me
- 77 When I am bothered by my partner's behavior I not only tell him/her, but I offer some constructive and specific alternatives
- 80 When my partner is bothered by my behavior, he/she not only tells me, but he/she offers some constructive and specific alternatives.

Emotional Expressivity

- 8 When I feel proud, I tell my partner.
- 23 When I feel disappointed, I talk with my partner about it.
- 25 When I feel proud of my partner, I tell him/her.
- 58 My partner tells me when he/she is proud of me.
- 65 My partner tells me when he/she is happy.
- 71 My partner tells me when he/she is disappointed.

Emotional Expressivity (continued)

- 75 When I feel happy, I tell my partner about it.
- 78 My partner tells me when he/she is pleased.
- 81 My partner tells me when he/she is proud.
- 86 When I am pleased with my partner, I tell him/her.

Validation

- 2 When I feel hurt from something my partner has done, I talk with him/her about it.
- 3 I listen to what my partner has to say.
- 4 My partner offers me emotional support.
- 5 Knowing how my partner feels is important to me.
- 6 My partner allows me to finish what I am saying before he/she responds.
- 10 My partner listens to what I have to say.
- 22 When my partner gives me feedback about an issue, I listen not only for what he/she thinks about the problem, but I listen for how he/she feels about it as well.
- 26 I verbally communicate to my partner that I understand and value his/her position about an issue.
- 29 I listen to my partner's whole message before I form a response to it.
- 42 I try to show interest in my partner's activities.
- 44 When my partner tells me about his/her day, I give him/her my undivided attention.
- 54 When we discuss issues, we allow each other to finish his/her message before we respond.
- 57 My partner verbally communicates that he/she understands me.
- 58 My partner tells me when he/she is proud of me.
- 66 I give my partner emotional support.
- 67 My partner tries to understand my complaints.
- 72 When my partner has a complaint, I usually try to understand his/her position.

Editing

- 32 I try to express sincere appreciation for my partner instead of making complaints about what he/she does
- 34 Even though I may have had a bad day, I try to be positive when interacting with my partner
- 36 If I am tired and my partner asks me to do something, I usually tell him/her that I am tired, but I don't mind doing the favor
- 39 Rather than react negatively to my partner, I try to phrase things positively.
- 40 When I have had a bad day, I usually tell my partner, so if I respond negatively to him/her, I don't intend it
- 47 I try to focus on the positive side of situations of which my partner and I are involved.

Editing (continued)

- 49 When my partner has attempted to help me with something and is unsuccessful, I express my appreciation despite his/her success.
- 52 When I find myself thinking only of me, I try to re-focus and think about my partner's point of view.
- 82 I feel my partner tries to express sincere appreciation instead of making complaints about what I do.
- 90 Even though my partner has had a bad day, he/she tries to be positive when interacting with me.
- 93 Even if my partner is tired, he/she will not mind doing me a favor.
- 95 When my partner has had a bad day, he/she usually tells me so that if he/she is negative, it is not intended
- 98 My partner tries to focus on the positive side of situations of which my partner and I are involved.
- 104 Rather than reacting negatively, my partner tries to phrase things positively.

Negative Escalation

- 11 When we argue, our negative feelings rise quickly.
- 19 We are unable to get out of heated arguments successfully.
- 38 When we argue, my negative feelings rise quickly.
- 46 When we argue, I lose my temper easily.
- 55 When we argue, my partner's negative feelings rise quickly.
- 102 When we argue, my partner loses his/her temper easily.

Withdrawal

- 17 When discussing issues, my partner usually remains silent
- 28 When problems arise, my partner often leaves the room in order to avoid a confrontation.
- 92 When discussing issues, I usually withdraw for fear of conflict.
- 94 When discussing issues, I usually remain silent because I do not want to get into a fight.
- 97 When problems arise, I often will leave the room so we do not get into a fight.
- 101 When discussing issues, my partner usually withdraws for fear of conflict.

Relationship Happiness and Satisfaction

How happy is your relationship?

Do you ever wish you had not been in this relationship?

How satisfied are you with your relationship?

I think about what it would be like to be with someone other than my partner

Relationship Happiness and Satisfaction (continued)

- How satisfied are you with the fun you have with your partner?
- How satisfied are you with the time you spend alone as a couple?
- Have you ever received couples counseling?
- Have you ever wanted to break up?
- Do you think about breaking up?

Relationship Beliefs Inventory (RBI): Belief that Partners Cannot Change: 0 = I strongly believe the statement is false; 1 = I believe that the statement is false; 2 = I believe that the statement is probably false, or more false than true; 3 = I believe that the statement is probably true, or more true than false; 4 = I believe that the statement is true; 5 = I strongly believe that the statement is true. R = Reverse Scored.

1. Damages done early in a relationship probably cannot be reversed
2. My partner does not seem capable of behaving other than s/he does now.
3. A partner can learn to become more responsive to his/her partner's needs (R).
4. Just because my partner has acted in ways that upset me does not mean that he/she will do so in the future (R).
5. A partner who hurts you badly once probably will hurt you again.
6. If my partner wants to change, I believe that s/he can do it.
7. If you don't like the way a relationship is going, you can make it better (R).
8. I do not expect my partner to be able to change.

Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS): In each statement O refers to the person who is in the close relationship with you. 1 = Not at all characteristic of me; 2 = Slightly characteristic of me; 3 = Moderately characteristic of me; 4 = Very characteristic of me; 5 = Extremely characteristic of me. R = Reverse Scored.

1. I would feel uncomfortable telling O about things in the past that I have felt ashamed of.
2. I would feel uneasy talking with O about something that has hurt me deeply.
3. I would feel comfortable expressing my true feelings to O. (R).
4. If O were upset I would sometimes be afraid of showing that I care
5. I might be afraid to confide my innermost feelings to O.
6. I would feel at ease telling O that I care about him/her. (R).
7. I would have a feeling of complete togetherness with O. (R).
8. I would be comfortable discussing significant problems with O. (R).
9. A part of me would be afraid to make a long-term commitment to O.
10. I would feel comfortable telling my experiences, even sad ones, to O. (R).
11. I would probably feel nervous showing O strong feelings of affection.
12. I would find it difficult being open with O about my personal thoughts.

Fear of Intimacy Scale (continued)

13. I would feel uneasy with O depending on me for emotional support.
14. I would not be afraid to share with O what I dislike about myself. (R).
15. I would be afraid to take the risk of being hurt in order to establish a closer relationship with O.
16. I would feel comfortable keeping very personal information to myself.
17. I would not be nervous about being spontaneous with O. (R).
18. I would feel comfortable telling O things that I do not tell other people. (R).
19. I would feel comfortable trusting O with my deepest thoughts and feelings. (R).
20. I would sometimes feel uneasy if O told me about very personal matters.
21. I would be comfortable revealing to O what I feel are my shortcomings and handicaps. (R).
22. I would be comfortable with having a close emotional tie between us. (R).
23. I would be afraid of sharing my private thoughts with O.
24. I would be afraid that I might not always feel close to O.
25. I would be comfortable telling O what my needs are. (R).
26. I would be afraid that O would be more invested in the relationship than I would be.
27. I would feel comfortable about having open and honest communication with O. (R).
28. I would sometimes feel uncomfortable listening to O's personal problems.
29. I would feel at ease to completely be myself around O. (R).
30. I would feel relaxed being together and talking about our personal goals. (R).

Part B: Respond to the following statements as they apply to your past relationships.

31. I have shied away from opportunities to be close to someone.
32. I have held back my feelings in previous relationships.
33. There are people who think that I am afraid to get close to them.
34. There are people who think that I am not an easy person to get to know.
35. I have done things in *previous* relationships to keep me from developing closeness.

APPENDIX C

Table 1

Relationship Communication Strategies by FOO Structure

	N	Males Mean	SD	N	Females Mean	SD
Leveling						
Intact	42	3.56	.62	89	3.86	.58
ACOD	26	3.90	.71	38	3.68	.62
EmoEx						
Intact	42	3.85	.57	89	4.20	.60
ACOD	26	4.08	.61	38	3.96	.67
Validatn						
Intact	42	3.75	.53	89	4.04	.55
ACOD	26	3.96	.56	38	3.85	.51
Editing						
Intact	42	3.55	.46	89	3.72	.56
ACOD	26	3.75	.59	38	3.49	.56
NegEsc						
Intact	42	3.07	.64	89	2.78	.86
ACOD	26	2.57	.74	38	3.01	.89
Withdr						
Intact	42	2.64	.61	89	2.27	.75
ACOD	26	2.22	.84	38	2.46	.66

Note. EmoEx = Emotional Expressivity, Validatn = Validation, NegEsc = Negative Escalation, Withdr = Withdrawal.

Table 2

Relationship Happiness and Satisfaction by FOO Structure

	N	Males Mean	SD	N	Females Mean	SD
HapSat						
Intact	42	26.57	6.07	88	30.73	6.06
ACOD	26	29.85	5.63	39	27.77	7.73

Note: HapSat = Relationship Happiness and Satisfaction

Table 3

Relationship Cognitions by FOO Structure

	Males			Females		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
CantChg						
Intact	41	16.66	4.93	85	13.74	5.60
ACOD	25	15.48	5.92	38	15.42	5.60
Fintim						
Intact	41	83.44	20.39	86	68.80	25.22
ACOD	23	76.57	24.78	37	73.51	23.51

Note: CantChg = Belief that Partner's Cannot Change, Fintim = Fear of Intimacy.

Table 4

FOO functioning characteristics by FOO Structure and Gender

	N	Males Mean	SD	N	Females Mean	SD
Rituals						
Intact	44	5.28	.80	97	5.42	.98
ACOD	26	4.94	1.18	40	4.90	1.18
+FamAf						
Intact	44	5.00	.63	97	5.08	.52
ACOD	26	5.01	.50	40	4.87	.75
Comm						
Intact	44	3.62	1.14	97	4.26	1.14
ACOD	26	3.81	1.10	40	3.89	1.29
Worry						
Intact	44	3.33	.83	97	3.68	1.08
ACOD	26	3.46	.74	40	3.80	.98
Conflict						
Intact	44	3.07	.75	97	3.07	.86
ACOD	26	3.03	.74	40	3.40	.98

Note. +FamAf = Positive Family Affect, Comm = Family Communication, Worry = Family Worries, Conflict = Family Conflicts.

Table 5

Correlations between Relationship Communication and FOO Structure, FOO Functioning, and Participants' Gender

	FOO Structure		FOO Functioning			Gender	
MADS subscales	Struct	Ritual	+Famaff	Comm	Worries	Conflict	Gender
Leveling	-.001	.223*	.145*	.418*	.137	-.006	.094
EmotionalExp	.060	.281*	.221*	.308*	.021	-.081	.147*
Valididation	.040	.298*	.205*	.321*	.027	-.126	.131
Editing	.059	.291*	.127	.292*	.033	-.056	.019
NegativeEscal	.026	-.176*	-.110	-.163*	.100	.172*	-.017
Withdrawal	.016	-.143*	-.251*	-.231*	.111	.152*	-.101
Happiness/Sat	.057	.200*	.130	.263*	.062	-.048	.145*

* $p < .05$.

Note. Struc = FOO Structure, Ritual = Rituals, +Famaff = Positive Family Affect, Comm = Family Communication; EmotionalExp = Emotional Expressivity, NegativeEscal = Negative Escalation, Happiness/Sat = Happiness and Satisfaction.

Table 6

Correlations between Cognitive Relationship Factors and FOO Structure, FOO Functioning, and Participants' Gender

	FOO Structure		Family of Origin Functioning				Gender
Cognitive factors	Struct	Ritual	+Famaf	Comm	Worries	Conflict	Gender
Belief partners cannot change	-.064	-.325*	-.198*	-.266*	-.010	.092	-.167*
Fear of intimacy	-.022	-.325*	-.215*	-.354*	.002	.186*	-.210*

*p<.05.

Note. Struct = FOO Structure, +Famaf = Positive Family Affect, Comm = Family Communication.

Table 7

Pearson's correlations of Family-of-Origin Structure, Family-of-origin Functioning, and Participants' Gender (N = 207-209)

	Struct	Ritual	+Famaf	Comm	Worries	Conflict	Gender
Struct N	1.000 209	.211* 207	.104 207	.078 207	-.046 207	-.104 207	.078 209
Ritual N		1.000 207	.486* 207	.403* 207	-.072 207	-.353* 207	.054 207
+Famaf N			1.000 207	.498* 207	-.341* 207	-.519* 207	.006 207
Comm N				1.000 207	-.408 207	-.199* 207	.184* 207
Worries N					1.000 207	.443* 207	.160* 207
Conflict N						1.000 207	.060 207
Gender N							1.000 209

*p<.05.

Note. Struct = FOO Structure, Ritual = FOO Rituals, +Famaff = Positive FOO Affect, Commun = FOO Communication, Worries = FOO Worries, Conflict = FOO Conflict, Gender = Participant's gender.

Table 8

Pearson's correlations of participants' present-day relationship communication by participants' present-day relationship communication

Subscales	<u>Communication</u>					<u>Cognitions</u>			
	Level	EmEx	Valid	Edit	NegEs	Withdr	HapSa	Belief	FearIn
Level	1.000	.738*	.728*	.670*	-.256*	-.455*	.316*	-.300	-.578*
N	195	195	195	195	195	195	194	188	179
EmEx	.738*	1.000	.775*	.727*	-.303*	-.480*	.417*	-.440*	-.625*
N	195	195	195	195	195	195	194	188	179
Valid	.728*	.775*	1.000	.852*	-.545*	-.534*	.537*	-.473*	-.618*
N	195	195	195	195	195	195	194	188	179
Edit	.670*	.727*	.852*	1.000	-.557*	-.444*	.510*	-.409*	-.489*
N	195	195	195	195	195	195	194	188	179
NegEs	-.256*	-.303*	-.545*	-.557*	1.000	.443*	-.420*	.271*	.358*
N	195	195	195	195	195	195	194	188	179
Withdr	-.455*	-.480*	-.534*	-.444*	.443*	1.000	-.281*	.308*	.458*
N	195	195	195	195	195	195	194	188	179
HapSa	.316*	.417*	.537*	.510*	-.420*	-.281*	1.000	-.304*	-.434*
N	194	194	194	194	194	194	195	188	180
Belief	-.300*	-.440*	-.473*	-.409*	.271*	.308*	-.304*	1.000	.386*
N	188	188	188	188	188	188	188	189	176
FearIn	-.578*	-.625*	-.618*	-.489*	.358*	.458*	-.434*	.386*	1.000
N	179	179	179	179	179	179	180	176	187

* $p < .05$.

Note. Levelg = Leveling, Emo Ex = Emotional Expressivity, Valid = Validation, Editing = Editing, Neg Esc = Negative Escalation, Withdr = Withdrawal, Hap Sat = Happiness and Satisfaction, Belief = Belief that partners cannot change, Fear Int = Fear of intimacy.

Table 9

Summary of Stepwise Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables predicting Relationship Communication Strategies, Relationship Happiness and Satisfaction, the Belief that Partners Cannot Change, and Fear of Intimacy (N = 209)

Leveling	B	SE B	β	R^2 chg
Step 1				
FOO Comm	.216	.034	.418	.175
Step 2				
FOO Comm	.220	.034	.426	
FOO Worries	.100	.041	.158	.025

Note. $R^2 = .175$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .200$ for Step 2 ($p_s < .05$). N = 193. B = unstandardized beta coefficient; β = standardized beta coefficient

Emotional Exp	B	SE B	β	R^2 chg
Step 1				
Fam Comm	.161	.036	.308	.095
Step 2				
Fam Comm	.124	.038	.236	
Fam Ritual	.120	.045	.193	.032

Note. $R^2 = .095$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .127$ for Step 2 ($p_s < .05$). N = 193. B = unstandardized beta coefficient; β = standardized beta coefficient

Table 10

Validation	B	SE B	β	R^2 chg
Step 1				
Fam Comm	.148	.032	.321	.103
Step 2				
Fam Comm	.113	.033	.244	.037
Fam Rituals	.113	.040	.207	

Note. $R^2 = .103$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .140$ for Step 2 ($p_s < .05$). N = 193. B = unstandardized beta coefficient; β = standardized beta coefficient

Editing	B	SE B	β	R^2 chg
Step 1				
Fam Comm	.135	.032	.292	.085
Step 2				
Fam Comm	9.885E-02	.034	.213	.039
Fam Rituals	.117	.040	.212	

Note. $R^2 = .085$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .124$ for Step 2 ($p_s < .05$). N = 193. B = unstandardized beta coefficient; β = standardized beta coefficient

Table 11

Negative Escalation B	SE B	β	R^2_{chg}
Step 1			
Fam rituals	-.144	.058	-.176 .031

Note. $R^2 = .031$ for Step 1 ($p < .05$). N = 193. B = unstandardized beta coefficient; β = standardized beta coefficient

Withdrawal	B	SE B	β	R^2_{chg}
Step 1				
Pos FamAffect	-.308	.086	-.251	.063

Note. $R^2 = .063$ for Step 1 ($p < .05$). N = 193. B = unstandardized beta coefficient; β = standardized beta coefficient

Rel Hap-Satis	B	SE B	β	R^2_{chg}
Step 1				
Fam Comm	1.440	.382	.263	.069

Note. $R^2 = .069$ for Step 1 ($p < .05$). Rel Hap-Satis = Relationship happiness and satisfaction. N = 192. B = unstandardized beta coefficient; β = standardized beta coefficient

Table 12

Belief Partners	B	SE B	β	R^2 chg
Step 1				
Fam Rituals	-1.813	.388	-.325	.105
Step 2				
Fam Rituals	-1.441	.426	-.258	
Fam Comm	-.719	.352	-.156	.020

Note. $R^2 = .105$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .125$ for Step 2 ($p_s < .05$). Belief Partners = Belief that partners cannot change. N = 187. B = unstandardized beta coefficient; β = standardized beta coefficient

Fear Intimacy	B	SE B	β	R^2 chg
Step 1				
Fam Comm	-7.209	1.403	-.354	.126
Step 2				
Fam Comm	-5.388	1.513	-.265	
Fam Rituals	-5.124	1.775	-.215	.038
Step 3				
Fam Comm	-4.770	1.525	-.234	
Fam Rituals	-5.217	1.758	-.219	
Gender	-7.646	3.506	-.149	.021

Note. $R^2 = .126$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .164$ for Step 2; $\Delta R^2 = .185$ for Step 3 ($p_s < .05$). N = 186. B = unstandardized beta coefficient; β = standardized beta coefficient