1995

The impact of father-child relationships and interparental conflict on the intimacy levels of adult children from divorced and intact homes

Sheri Lynne Coulson

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THE IMPACT OF FATHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS AND
INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT ON THE INTIMACY
LEVELS OF ADULT CHILDREN FROM DIVORCED
AND INTACT HOMES

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Psychology

by
Sheri Lynne Coulson
June 1995
THE IMPACT OF FATHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT ON THE INTIMACY LEVELS OF ADULT CHILDREN FROM DIVORCED AND INTACT HOMES

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of California State University, San Bernardino

by Sheri Lynne Coulson

June 1995

Approved by:

Dr. Charles Hoffman, Chair, Psychology

Dr. Eugene Wong

Dr. Joanna Worthley

June 5, 1995
ABSTRACT

The study examined differences among young adult men and women (aged 18-40) from divorced and intact families in perceived sexual and emotional intimacy (N = 268). ANOVA analyses indicated that females perceived more sexual intimacy when compared with males. Regression analyses indicated that, for subjects from both divorced and intact families, interparental conflict and the father-child relationship during middle childhood were both significant predictors of emotional and sexual intimacy. In addition, gender was a significant predictor of sexual intimacy. Implications of these results are discussed in terms of young adults' development of intimate relationships.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Charles Hoffman, Dr. Eugene Wong and Dr. Joanna Worthley for their important contributions and support throughout this project. Without their guidance and encouragement, this project would not have been possible. I would also like to express my appreciation to, my friend, Jette Warka for her support and advice throughout this project. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my husband, Antony Coulson, for his careful readings of this thesis in its early inchoate form, for the illuminating editorial suggestions that I put to good use, and for his unwavering encouragement.
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INTRODUCTION

Divorce statistics for the past several decades show that as many as half of all children in the United States will experience a parental divorce and spend at least some time in a single-parent home (Bumpass and Rindfuss, 1979; Bumpass, 1990). Furthermore, up to 90% of these children will live in single parent homes headed by the mother (Hetherington, 1991). Among researchers studying divorce, there has been a heightened concern about potential adverse effects across many developmental domains. Divorce is seen as a disruption in family functioning and the literature suggests that children of divorce have an increased risk of negative behavioral, cognitive and emotional consequences (Furstenberg, Morgan & Allison, 1987).

Literature which reviews whether marital disruption increases children's vulnerability to developmental problems reveal consistent findings for boys (Biller, 1981; Hetherington, 1979; Shinn, 1978; Shaw, 1991). Academic competence is often found to be adversely affected (Biller, 1971; Biller, 1981; Blanchard & Biller, 1971; Radin, 1976) as are relations with peers and parents (Guidubaldi, Cleminshaw, Perry & McLoughlin, 1983; Shaw, 1991).

However, research assessing the effects of marital disruption on daughters has offered conflicting and often inconsistent data, as compared with sons. On one extreme are
those who conclude that daughters are only minimally affected by divorce (e.g. Biller, 1982; Guidubaldi & Perry, 1985; Levy-Shiff, 1982). On the other extreme are those who believe that daughters are indeed negatively affected by the divorce of parents (e.g. Hetherington, 1972; Hetherington & Parke, 1986; Kalter, 1977; Kalter et al., 1985; Wallerstein, 1985; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1990).

Studies which suggest that daughters are negatively affected by divorce differ from those that indicate daughters are only minimally affected. For example, studies which suggest daughters are only minimally affected have measured academic or behavioral competence (e.g. Guidubaldi et al., 1983; Forehand, Wierson, Thomas, Armistead & Kempton, 1990); while studies investigating socio-emotional development have indicated daughters are significantly affected by divorce (e.g. Hetherington, 1972; Wallerstein, 1985). Many studies have shown consistent findings when they have investigated outcomes related to heterosexual development in daughters (Gabardi & Rosen, 1991; Kinnaird & Gerrard, 1986; Southworth & Schwarz, 1987). Thus, the conclusions often depend on what developmental domain is being measured.

Previous research has also come to different conclusions because daughters were measured at various ages. While some studies have investigated daughters during early
childhood (e.g. Guidubaldi et al., 1983), others have investigated daughters during adolescence or adulthood (e.g. Jacobson & Ryder, 1969; Hetherington & Parke, 1979; Wallerstein, 1985). Conclusions are consistent when girls are measured later in their development. Hence, the vulnerability to adjustment problems following divorce may not emerge until heterosexual or intimacy issues become important developmentally. Therefore, before conclusions can be reached regarding daughters' vulnerability to divorce, both the domain and the age at which the daughter was assessed must be taken into account.

Although a number of studies have indicated that daughters' heterosexual development is negatively affected by the divorce of their parents, few studies have investigated what factors specifically lead to such a negative effect (e.g. Hetherington, 1972; Kalter et al., 1985; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1990). Previous literature reviews analyzing children's vulnerability to negative consequences have suggested interparental conflict, level of economic hardship and father absence as possible explanations. However, these perspectives have not been investigated as possible explanations for the increased risk in intimacy development. Since a meta-analysis by Amato and Keith (1991) found support for only interparental conflict and father absence explanations; these two explanations were
tested in the present study. Furthermore, since few studies have investigated sons' vulnerability to heterosexual adjustment problems following divorce, the present study also measured these variables in sons.

The Importance of the Father

Several theories of children's sex-role development have emphasized the important role fathers play in their offspring's growth. Social learning theories emphasize the role of the environment in shaping children's sex-role development. In particular, learning theorists suggest that parents and children practice modeling and reciprocal sex-role learning. For example, sons learn the appropriate sex-role behavior by modeling their father's behavior. In turn, fathers nurture their son's sex-role development by observing their son's imitations and rewarding masculine behaviors (Biller, 1974). Ultimately, the father-son interaction can facilitate the son's positive masculine self-image and bolster the son's confidence in heterosexual relationships (Biller, 1974). Furthermore, additional studies have indicated that sons with positive masculine self-images are more likely to have successful adjustment in marriage (Biller, 1974; Kagan & Moss, 1962).

Other theories have also suggested the importance of the father-child relationship and future heterosexual adjustment. Psychoanalytic theory stresses the importance of
the father during the phallic stage (Freud, 1952). For example, Leonard's (1966) extension Freud's psychoanalytic theory contends that the daughter must establish an affectionate relationship with her father in order to later be able to form a love relationship with a male her own age. If the daughter was paternally deprived, she may idealize her father and later, as an adolescent, seek a love object similar to this ideal, never being satisfied with the men she meets. Alternatively, she may maintain a very immature narcissistic attitude, so that she has the extreme need to receive the love she had from her father but lacks the capacity to give love. In this situation the daughter may seek a man who will "mother” her, or she may use her awareness of being attractive to men to fulfill her need for admiration and affection. Thus, an unavailable father is not able to guide his daughter through a normal Electra relationship. Ultimately, traces of the unresolved Electra complex may surface when the daughter struggles to establish love relationships with her male peers (Leonard, 1966).

In addition to theory, recent research looking at sex-role development in children have also emphasized the importance of the father (Block 1978, 1983; Huston, 1983; Lamb, 1977). In fact, many studies have suggested that the father is the key figure in children’s sex-role development (Fagot, 1978; Jacklin & Maccoby, 1983; Parke & Suomi, 1980).
These studies cite the fathers' differential treatment of boys and girls as facilitating masculinity in boys and femininity in girls. More specifically, Jacklin and Maccoby (1983) indicated that fathers are more likely to offer sex stereotypical toys to their infant daughters and sons. In addition, fathers have been found to play more gently and more expressively with their daughters than their sons (Parke & Suomi, 1980). Hence, through interacting with their fathers, daughters learn to behave more expressively while sons learn to behave more aggressively (Jacklin & Maccoby, 1983).

Since fathers vary their behavior as a function of the child's sex and fathers appear to play an especially significant role in encouraging their children's sex-role development, interacting with the father provides children with the basic experiences that are necessary to generalize to successful intimate heterosexual relationships. Thus, children who are paternally deprived may be at an increased risk of sex inappropriate behavior which may ultimately affect later heterosexual development.

**Fathers, Middle Childhood and Development**

Though the role of the father is important at each developmental stage, children require different stimulation from their father at various ages. Middle childhood offers a unique opportunity for the father to interact with his
children before their heterosexual interests flourish. Additionally, middle childhood is the last age in which parents have more influence than peers over their children’s decisions and behaviors (Hartup, 1984). Thus, middle childhood may be the last opportunity for the father to facilitate the behaviors which his children will need for opposite-sex peer relationships.

Several studies have investigated the effects of paternal warmth and children's social and communicative skills. One such study by Russell and Russell (1989) suggested specific effects for daughters. The results indicated that daughters had different communication behaviors depending on whether they had fathers who exhibited high or low warmth. Daughters who had high warmth fathers were more likely to communicate feelings and were more confident when they disagreed with their fathers' opinion or request. In contrast, daughters who had low warmth fathers often communicated their feelings less and were not likely to disagree with their father during the interview. Thus, fathers exhibiting high warmth toward their daughter may facilitate their daughter’s expressiveness, emotional quality in social interactions and greater ability to interpret emotional states; all of which are necessary for successful intimate relationships.
In addition to developing the skills necessary for successful peer interaction, middle childhood is also a critical period for developing heterosexual interests and activities (Broderick & Rowe, 1968; Rubin, 1980). In a study by Broderick and Rowe (1968), a stage sequence was developed by questioning children in different grades about members of the opposite sex. Specific steps were established by assessing the percentage of positive responses from the children. The stages included moving from the global concept of "marrying someone someday" to the specific activity of dating. By age twelve, 84% of girls expected to get married and 71% admitted to having had a boyfriend in the past. Thus, Broderick and Rowe (1968) suggested that children in middle childhood not only begin entertaining the idea of opposite sex relationships, but single out certain members of the opposite sex as attractive and categorize them as boyfriend or girlfriend.

A review of the literature on children's friendships has also indicated that children, in later elementary school, experience "romantic" interests (Rubin, 1980). In his review of friendships, Rubin (1980) indicated that middle childhood paves the way for "full-fledged" heterosexual interest in adolescence. The review also suggests that although the cross-sex interaction involves teasing and other indirect references to attraction, young
children use these patterns to prepare themselves for the courtship process (Rubin, 1980). Therefore, the interaction between boys and girls in middle childhood facilitates the transition to the dating process.

During middle childhood, then, fathers may play a critical role in preparing children for the world of intimate opposite sex relationships. Since the father has been suggested to be a key figure in his children’s social and sex-role development, frequent contact and interaction may facilitate the exploration of heterosexual interests. Although father-daughter and father-son relationships are important in earlier stages of development, the offspring’s perception of their father’s acceptance during middle childhood may facilitate their confidence in new intimate relationships (Biller, 1974; Biller, 1984; Kagan & Moss, 1962). If the father-child relationship is perceived by the child to be rejecting, the child may feel inferior to their peers and experience a rough transition to the intimacy crisis (Erikson, 1968).

Divorce, Father-Absence and Intimacy Development

Several researchers have investigated heterosexual development in adult children of divorce. Though these studies typically compared subjects whose parents divorced to those whose families remained intact, they did not indicate differences between daughters and sons of divorce
(e.g. Booth, Brinkerhoof, & White, 1984; Hepworth, Ryder & Dryer, 1984; Nelson, Allison & Sundre, 1992). Additionally, many of these studies indicated that they were measuring intimacy development in relationships, but often focused solely on sexual involvement (e.g. Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Gabardi & Rosen, 1991). None-the-less, results from these studies suggest that subjects from divorced homes were adversely affected in issues relating to intimacy (Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Gabardi & Rosen, 1991; Tasker, 1991). For example, post-divorce subjects had more sexual partners, had accelerated relationships, desired more sexual involvement when in steady relationships, had lower relationship satisfaction, feared commitment, and had negative attitudes toward marriage (Booth, et al., 1984; Hepworth et al., 1984; Hillard, 1984; Kelly, 1981).

Early research investigating heterosexual development focused on females. One of the most extensive studies of the potential effects of parental divorce on daughters was conducted by Hetherington (1972). In a comprehensive study, Hetherington (1972) compared the heterosexual activity of 13-17 year old daughters from intact, divorced and widowed backgrounds. Results indicated that daughters from divorced homes, who had limited contact with their fathers, were more sexually active, sought more attention from males, and were precocious in seeking physical contact with males when
compared to girls from intact families. In contrast, girls from widowed homes manifested avoidance toward men, were less sexually active and were inhibited when communicating with males. Another study found that among eighth-grade African-American girls, those who came from father-absent divorced backgrounds had more knowledge about sex and were more precocious in dating behavior than girls who were from father-present backgrounds (Nelson & Vangen, 1971).

Studies of women who experienced a parental divorce in childhood show similar results. In a longitudinal study (Wallerstein, 1985), young women who had experienced a parental divorce were interviewed. Results indicated that a "significant minority" of the women exhibited relationship difficulties. Many of the women feared rejection from men, had difficulty making commitments and continually evidenced anxiety about being betrayed by men. Surprisingly, the majority of these young women attributed their difficulties to the divorce of their parents, particularly blaming the father for the marital break-up and subsequent hardships.

In a similar vein, studies focusing on older married women found conclusions similar to those of younger unmarried women. Jacobson and Ryder (1969) conducted interviews with women who were married and who had been in father-absent homes while they were growing up. The findings suggested those women who had come from father-absent homes
were more likely to complain of troubles achieving satisfactory sexual relationships with their husbands. Case studies of women from paternally absent homes have also illustrated difficulties in commitment and other interactions with men, particularly in sexual relationships (Leonard, 1966; Neubauer, 1960).

There has been a limited amount of research on the heterosexual development of men who experienced a parental divorce. Studies that have been conducted are dated and often utilized subjects from only one socio-economic background. For example, Pettigrew (1964) indicated that lower-class African-American males from father-absent backgrounds were more likely to have difficulties in their heterosexual relationships. Compared with father-present males, father-absent males were "more likely to be single or divorced." Another study which investigated college males indicated that father-absence was negatively related to marriage closeness (Winch, 1949). However, the reason for the father-absence was not controlled for. Thus, it is difficult to determine whether sons who have suffered the divorce of their parents are at an increased vulnerability for heterosexual adjustment problems.

In conclusion, the effects of divorce and subsequent father absence on young adults' heterosexual development has not been adequately examined (Booth et al. 1984; Gabardi &
Rosen, 1992; Kelly, 1980). Although some researchers have suggested that young adults are significantly affected by father absence, many of these studies have not sufficiently explored whether differences exist between men and women (Zaslow, 1989). Additionally, though some studies have claimed to investigate the beliefs and behaviors involving the development of intimacy, few have attempted to examine anything more than sexual involvement. Thus, future studies are not only needed to expand our understanding of how intimacy development is impacted by parental divorce and paternal absence, but also to examine the feelings individuals have about their romantic relationships (Zaslow, 1989). By examining feelings surrounding intimate relationships, developmentalists may be provided with a window into why sexual involvement is adversely affected by parental divorce.

Divorce, Interparental Conflict and Intimacy Development

Literature reviews suggest that there are several explanations for children's increased vulnerability to negative consequences after the divorce of their parents (Amato & Keith, 1991; Biller, 1971; Shaw, 1991; Shinn, 1978). Although one of the most frequently reported reasons for the increased risk is parental absence, the effect of interparental conflict has also been supported in the literature.
The importance of interparental conflict has been well documented as a viable explanation mediating children’s adjustment after divorce. Many studies have indicated that a high level of interparental conflict is associated with a decrease in academic, social and emotional competence (e.g. Amato, 1986; Ellison, 1983; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Slater & Haber, 1984). There is much speculation in the literature as to why interparental conflict has adverse effects. Amato and Keith (1991) suggested that interparental conflict increases stress on the child, which increases insecurity and unhappiness. Furthermore, Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1982) indicated that interparental conflict interferes with effective parenting. When the child’s mother and father are engaged in conflict, disciplinary actions are often thwarted. Finally, additional studies suggested that interparental conflict causes a deterioration in the parent-child relationship (Amato, 1986).

Recent studies investigating the effects of interparental conflict on heterosexual development among adult children of divorce have also found adverse effects. For example, Gabardi & Rosen (1992) indicated that interparental conflict was a significant predictor of college students’ negative attitudes toward marriage and number of sexual partners. Additionally, Booth et al. (1984) suggested that those individuals who perceived a low quality
of intimacy also had experienced a high level of interparental conflict before their parents' divorce. However, neither of these studies measured the feelings surrounding the offspring's intimate relationship. Since outcome measures consisted of determining if the subjects were currently in a relationship or counting the number of sex partners, further studies are still needed to determine the extent to which interparental conflict impacts intimacy development.

**Summary and Critique**

In comparison to children who have not experienced father absence, significant interparental conflict or divorce, children who have undergone marital discord, marital disruption and subsequent paternal loss are at an increased risk for developing difficulties in their intimate relationships (e.g. Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Hetherington, 1972; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1990). Although several studies contribute to this presumption, there are many methodological concerns which complicate direct comparisons between the studies. One such issue is reported demographics. Some studies fail to report the length of time since divorce (Booth et al., 1984; Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Winch, 1949), family socioeconomic status (Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Hepworth, et al., 1984; Nelson et al., 1992), current age of the subjects (Hepworth et al. 1984; Booth et al.,
quality of the father-child relationship (Jennings, Salts & Smith, 1992) and age at which the child experienced the divorce of their parents (Ganong, Coleman & Brown, 1981). All of these factors may be important when assessing the impact of divorce on intimate relationships (Zaslow, 1989).

Even when information such as quality of the father-child relationship and interparental conflict were examined, standard reliable scales were not used. For example, Booth et al. (1984) investigated the effects of the father-child relationship and divorce on children's attempt to form courtship relationships. Although results indicated the importance of the post-divorce father-child relationship on children's success in courtship relationships, the only measures used to assess the father-child relationship were single-item indicators (e.g. "How close did you feel to your biological father before the divorce or separation?). Though the study indicated modest effects for the impact of the father-child relationship, it is unclear whether the results are reliable and valid.

Another problem associated with the research is the inadequate operationalization of intimacy. Although some researchers claim to be measuring intimacy, they seldom define intimacy (Booth et al., 1984; Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Hepworth et al., 1984). Frequently, dependent measures
consist of measuring sexual activity or questioning attitudes as a way of defining intimacy. More specifically, previous studies have defined intimacy by the number of sexual partners (Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Gabardi & Rosen; 1991), desired amount of sexual activity in steady relationships (Gabardi & Rosen, 1992), progress in the courtship process (Booth et al., 1984; Winch 1947) or attitudes toward marriage (Gabardi & Rosen, 1992). However, even when studies are measuring the progress of courtship, they do not define what is meant by progress (Booth et al., 1984). Thus future research should operationally define intimacy and distinguish between emotional intimacy (Booth et al., 1984; Hepworth et al., 1984; Gabardi & Rosen, 1992) and sexual intimacy (Gabardi & Rosen, 1992).

A final methodological problem affecting current research is that several of the studies failed to compare daughters with sons of divorce on heterosexual development (Zaslow, 1989). By excluding such comparisons, it is difficult to confirm whether heterosexual development is an area in which daughters are particularly vulnerable in following divorce. Although some of the more recent research does look at the differences between men and women, as noted earlier (Gabardi & Rosen, 1992), the studies lack operational definitions. Other studies (e.g. Booth et al., 1984) simply collapse sons and daughters of divorce into one
category when assessing the impact of divorce on courtship progress. Still other studies examine only one sex (Kalter et al., 1985; Warshak & Santrock, 1983), thereby making comparisons between males and females impossible.

Lastly, though some researchers have turned their attention to identifying factors that may buffer children against adverse effects of divorce (e.g. paternal visitation), there has been a paucity of research on pre-divorce factors. Empirical investigations generally utilize divorce as a single event without taking into account the previous history of relationships within the family. Although family relationships will change after divorce, pre-divorce parent-child relationships could be an important indicator of vulnerability after divorce. If children perceive a high quality relationship with the parents, especially the father, before the divorce, the effects of this relationship may buffer some of the adverse effects of divorce. A study by Fine, Moreland and Schwebel (1983) suggested that a perception of a good quality pre-divorce father-child relationship lessened the negative impact of divorce on post-divorce parent-child relationships. Furthermore, a study by Hoffman (1991) suggested that fathers' evaluation of their children's post-divorce adjustment was influenced by the fathers' perception of their children's pre-divorce adjustment. Thus, a high
quality pre-divorce parent-child relationship may not only be correlated with post-divorce relationships, but it may also buffer some of the adverse effects of divorce.

Objective of this Study

Research investigating the relationships between marital discord, the quality of the father-child relationship and divorce on young adults' perceived level of intimacy are sparse. Furthermore, studies specifically addressing current and past father-child relationships are few and far between. Finally, the operationalization of intimacy in the literature is equivocal at best. The need for further research which clarifies the relationship between the quality of the father-child relationship, marital discord, family structure (married/divorced) and perceived intimacy is apparent. Although previous research has shown significant relations between parental loss and subsequent intimacy development in the offspring, the task of further research is to delineate factors contributing to successful intimacy development for adult children.

The present study addressed the quality of the father-child relationship, as perceived by the child, in both their present relationships and their relationships during middle childhood. The present study also addressed the level of interparental conflict between parents, as the child was growing up. Finally, the present study assessed the amount
of perceived intimacy in their current romantic relationships. Perceived intimacy was assessed as the "experience of feeling close to another in a relationship which the individual expects will persist over time" (Schaefer & Olson, 1981).

Hypotheses

Past research indicates that fathers play a major role in raising their children, even after divorce. Previous findings on paternal involvement have suggested that sons' and daughter's perception of their acceptance by their fathers is important for healthy development. To test the relationship between father-child relationships and daughters' and sons' perceived level of intimacy, the following predictors were assessed using multiple regression analysis:

1. It is expected that there will be a significant positive relationship between the current father-child relationship and the subjects' level of perceived intimacy in their current romantic relationships. The current perceived closeness of the father-child relationship will account for a unique proportion of the variance in subjects' perceived level of intimacy.

2. It is expected that there will be a significant positive relationship between the father-child relationship during middle childhood and subjects' perceived level of intimacy.
Past father-child relationships will significantly predict subjects' perceived level of intimacy in their current romantic relationships.

Amato and Keith's (1991) meta analysis suggested moderate support for the theoretical perspective that interparental conflict explains children's vulnerability to parental divorce. Other studies have also provided support for the interparental conflict perspective. To test the relationship between interparental conflict and daughters' and sons' perceived intimacy level, the following prediction was assessed:

3. It is expected that there will be a negative relationship between interparental conflict and subjects' level of perceived intimacy in their current romantic relationships.

Studies that have compared adult children of divorce with adult children who were reared in intact homes suggest that adult children of divorce are more vulnerable to problems in adjustment. To assess the relationship between divorce and subjects' perceived level of intimacy, the following prediction was assessed:

4. There will be a difference between subjects from divorced and intact homes on perceived intimacy. Subjects from divorced homes will have lower mean scores of perceived intimacy when compared to subjects from intact homes.
Lastly, past research indicates that daughters' intimacy development is particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of divorce, especially during adolescence and adulthood. Wallerstein (1985) indicated the adult women from divorce homes were at a heightened risk for difficulties with men and heterosexual relationships. To test whether gender predicts perceived level of intimacy, the following prediction was assessed:

5. There will be a difference between daughters and sons on their perceived level of intimacy. It is expected that the mean perceived intimacy scores for daughters will be lower than the mean perceived intimacy scores for sons.
METHOD

Participants

Participants were 268 college students recruited through announcements in lower and upper division classes at a southwestern university. Potential subjects were asked for their help in completing a questionnaire which "examines various kinds of relationships which you have experienced throughout your life." They were informed that they would be asked to respond to questions related to their feelings about their parents' marriage, relationships with their father, and their most current romantic relationship. All subjects' participation was voluntary and anonymous. Subjects were given extra class credit for completed questionnaires.

The questionnaire instructed participants to answer all of the items; however, subjects were told that they could skip questions which they found uncomfortable to answer.

To decrease the demographic variance of the subject pool, only heterosexual participants who came from intact or divorced families and who were between the ages of 18 and 40 were included in the study. If participants came from a divorced home, they must have experienced the parental divorce when they were between 5 and 18 years old.
Measures and Procedures

All participants completed a questionnaire which included a demographic assessment (see Appendix A) and questions related to divorce (e.g., custodial history, length of time since divorce and their age at the time of divorce). Subjects from divorced and intact families who met the demographic criteria were then randomly selected from the demographic information. See table 1 for a summary for the demographic information.

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ):

The adult PARQ is a 60-item retrospective self-report instrument (see Appendix B) designed to measure individuals' perceptions of parental acceptance and rejection when they, the respondents, were between 7 and 13 years old (Rohner, 1991). The adult PARQ was utilized to assess the respondents' perception of their fathers' treatment of them during middle childhood. The PARQ consists of four scales: 1) perceived parental warmth/affection (e.g. "My father made me feel wanted" and "My father went out of his way to hurt my feelings"); 2) perceived parental aggression/hostility (e.g. "My father ridiculed and made fun of me."); 3) perceived parental indifference/neglect (e.g. "My father ignored me as long as I did not disturb him"); 4) perceived parental undifferentiated rejection (e.g. "My father did not really love me"). Individuals
respond to each statement using a four-point Likert scale ranging from "almost always true" to "almost never true." A composite score for the PARQ, providing an overall acceptance-rejection profile, is obtained by summing the four scales after reverse scoring the warmth/affection scale score. The PARQ has a possible range of 60 to 240, with a midpoint of 150. Scores at or above 150 reveal that individuals experienced more rejection than acceptance at home.

Alpha coefficient for the adult PARQ was .98 (Rohner, 1991).

Parent Child Relationship Survey (PCRS):

The PCRS scale (Fine et al., 1983) is a 24-item self-report instrument (see Appendix C) designed to measure the respondent's perception of the quality of their current relationship with their father, including the psychological closeness and trust between the respondent and their father, the clarity with which the child understands the role their father plays in their life, the respondents' respect for their father, and the influence the father has on the respondents' life. The PCRS consists of four subscales: 1) Positive Affective, 2) Father Involvement, 3) Communication, and 4) Anger. Items include the following: "How much time do you feel you spend with your father?" "How easily do you accept the weaknesses in your father?" and "How much
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<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>32.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
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<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian-American</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subject’s Marital Status</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>76.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>45</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
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<td>.4</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
do you admire your father?" Individuals respond to statements on a seven-point Likert scale. A high composite score indicated a better relationship between the respondent and their father. The PCRS has a possible range of 24 to 168. Alpha coefficients for the PCRS was .92 (Fine et al., 1983).

**Conflict Properties Scale (CPS):**

The CPS is a 19-item self-report scale from the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (Grych, Seid & Fincham, 1992). The CPS is designed to measure the respondents' perception of conflict which occurred between their parents, the amount of hostility and aggression during conflict, and the parents' ability to resolve issues. The CPS consists of three subscales: 1) frequency (e.g. "I often saw my parents argue"); 2) intensity (e.g. "My parents broke and threw things during an argument"); 3) resolution (e.g. "When my parents had an argument, they usually worked it out"). The items were modified from the original CPS by changing the verb tense from present to past tense (see Appendix D). All other item wording on the CPS was retained. The choice of response was also modified to allow four responses, rather than three. The possible range of scores on these questions was from 19 to 72, with higher scores indicating lower levels of conflict.
Alpha coefficient for the revised conflict properties scale was .89.

**Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Inventory (PAIRS):**

The PAIRS (Schaefer & Olson, 1981) is a 36-item self-report instrument (see Appendix E) designed to measure closeness and sharing in a relationship that is expected to be long-term. The PAIRS consists of five scales: 1) Emotion Intimacy (e.g. "My partner can really understand my hurts and joys"); 2) Social Intimacy (e.g. "Having time together with friends is an important part of our shared activities"); 3) Sexual Intimacy (e.g. "Sexual expression is an essential part of our relationship"); Intellectual Intimacy (e.g. "My partner helps me clarify my thoughts"); 5) Recreational Intimacy (e.g. "We enjoy the out-doors together"). The PAIRS also contains a conventionality scale that is essentially a lie scale (e.g. "My partner has all the qualities I have ever wanted in a mate"). For the purposes of this study, only the emotional and sexual intimacy subscales were used in the analysis. However, subjects were asked to respond to all subscales for purposes of future analysis.

Individuals respond to PAIR items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The scored PAIR subscales are translated from
raw scores into a percentile, ranging from 0 to 96, with higher percentile scores indicating respondents realized more closeness. The conventionality scale is scored separately in order to assess how much the individual is attempting to create a good impression.

Alpha coefficients for the individual scales are .75 for emotional intimacy, .77 for sexual intimacy and .80 for the conventionality (social desirability) scale (Schaefer & Olson, 1981).

Statistical Analyses

The predictor variables for the present study were chosen a priori based upon evidence from research indicating the primary importance of parental marital status, current relationship with the father, gender, and interparental conflict in predicting intimacy development among respondents (Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Rutter, 1970; Wallerstein, 1985; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). In addition, the present study also examined the importance of paternal acceptance-rejection during middle childhood in predicting intimacy development.

Some researchers have indicated that there are many variables affecting children’s adjustment following parental divorce that need to be controlled for (e.g. Lopez, 1987). These variables include the number of years since the parental divorce, the socioeconomic status of the family,
and the age of the individual at the time of assessment. Although these variables were not considered primary variables in the present study, they were examined to determine their degree of association with the outcome variables. In addition, other variables (respondents' marital status, respondents' education level, respondents' current romantic relationship status and respondents' living arrangements with romantic partner) which could potentially affect emotional and sexual intimacy were also examined. None of the above variables correlated with emotional intimacy. The only variable that was significantly correlated with sexual intimacy was the respondents' education level ($r = .1329, p < .05$). Educational level was subsequently entered into a stepwise regression analysis to determine if it accounted for a significant amount of variance. The analysis indicated that educational level did account for a significant amount of variance in sexual intimacy ($R = .134, R^2 = .018, F(1, 259) = 4.703, p < .05$); therefore, subsequent regressions for sexual intimacy partialled out the variance accounted for by education before the predictor variables were entered.
RESULTS

Analysis of Variance

Separate 2 X 2 ANOVAs were performed to test the differences among subjects by parents' marital status (intact, divorced) and the subjects' gender (female, male) on perceived intimacy (emotional and sexual). For each of the ANOVAs a Barlett-Box F and Cochrans C were conducted to test for homogeneity of variance. For each ANOVA, the tests indicated that the assumptions were met.

The ANOVA for emotional intimacy did not reveal any significant main effect for parents' marital status, F(1, 261) = .07, p > .05. These results indicate that subjects from divorced families (M = 66.48, n = 132) did not significantly differ from those of intact families (M = 65.80, n = 133) in the amount of emotional intimacy they perceived in their romantic relationships.

Additionally, the ANOVA did not reveal any significant main effect for subjects' gender, F(1, 261) = .03, p > .05. These results suggest that females (M = 65.92, n = 133) did not significantly differ from males (M = 66.36, n = 132) in the amount of emotional intimacy they perceived in their romantic relationships. Finally, the interaction between parental marital status and gender was not significant, F(1, 261) = .37, p > .05.
The ANOVA for sexual intimacy revealed a significant main effect for gender $F(1, 257) = 6.94, p < .01$. These results suggest that females ($M = 73.56$, $n = 120$) perceived more sexual intimacy in their long-term relationships than men ($M = 67.17$, $n = 119$). The magnitude of this effect, however, was small ($\eta^2 = .026$). Gender accounted for less than 3 percent of the variance in predicting the respondent's perceived sexual intimacy.

The ANOVA did not reveal a significant main effect for parents' marital status, $F(1, 257) = .30, p > .05$. These results indicate that respondents from divorced homes did not differ significantly, in perceived sexual intimacy, from those from intact homes. Lastly, the interaction between parental marital status and gender was not significant, $F(1, 257) = .11, p > .05$.

**Multiple Regression Analyses**

Two separate series of stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine which predictors (current father-child relationship, past father-child relationship, parents' marital status, interparental conflict and gender) were most associated with the respondents' perceived intimacy in their current romantic relationships. For each of the following multiple regressions, the data was screened to determine whether the criteria for the analysis were met. Histograms for each of
the variables were assessed to determine normality. All scales were within an acceptable range for meeting the assumption. Additional screening was conducted utilizing the residuals from each of the regression analyses. Residual outliers were identified and tested by Mahalanobis' distance, standardized residuals and Cook's distance to determine any influential cases. All residuals were within the normal range, thus all cases were included in the regression analyses. Finally, standardized residuals were plotted for normality. Again, all criteria for normality were met.

**Entire Sample**

Univariate correlations were run on the variables to assess the degree of relationship between the variables and the outcome measures. Univariate correlations were also run to assess the degree of relationship between the conventionality scale and the outcome measures (Table 2 provides a summary).

Stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine which predictors (current father-child relationship, past father-child relationship, parents' marital conflict, parental marital status and gender) were most associated with the perceived intimacy development (emotional and sexual) in the respondents' current romantic relationships. See table 3 for a summary of the following
Table 2

Predictor and Outcome Variable Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emotional Intimacy</th>
<th>Sexual Intimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PARQ</td>
<td>-.3384***</td>
<td>-.2429***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCSR</td>
<td>.2640***</td>
<td>.1135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>.2755***</td>
<td>.1317*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.0163</td>
<td>-.1626**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Marital Status</td>
<td>.0163</td>
<td>.0359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventionality Scale</td>
<td>.4455***</td>
<td>.8176***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001
results. As anticipated, the PARQ and CPS were both significant predictors of the amount of perceived emotional intimacy. On step one, PARQ accounted for 12.14% of the variance, $F(1, 235) = 32.45, p < .0001$ and on the second step, CPS accounted for an additional 1.50% of the variance, $F(2, 234) = 18.40, p < .0001$. The direction of these relationships indicate that respondents who perceived a higher level of acceptance from their father during middle childhood and who experienced lower levels of interparental conflict had higher levels of perceived emotional intimacy.

Respondents' perception of their fathers' acceptance during middle childhood and gender were also significant predictors of sexual intimacy. The PARQ and gender variables (entered on the first and second steps respectively in the analysis) were predictive of the adult children's sexual intimacy. The PARQ accounted for 6.19% of the variance, $F(1, 231) = 15.49, p = .0001$ and gender accounted for an additional 3.75% of the variance, $F(2, 230) = 9.75, p < .0001$. The direction of these relationships suggest that females and respondents who perceived greater acceptance from their father during middle childhood perceive more sexual intimacy in their current romantic relationships.
Table 3
Predictors of Emotional & Sexual Intimacy for Adult Children from Divorced and Intact Homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>$R^2$ increment</th>
<th>$F^a$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intimacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARQ</td>
<td>.348</td>
<td>-.345</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>32.34***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>.369</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>3.94*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Intimacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARQ</td>
<td>.284</td>
<td>-.249</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>15.49***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.344</td>
<td>-.194</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>9.75***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Only predictor variables obtaining significant $R^2$ increments for the criterion variable are included in the table.

$^a$The $F$ value listed indicated the statistical significance of the $R^2$ increment for that variable.

*p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001
Subjects from Divorced Families Only

Stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine which predictors (current father-child relationship, past father-child relationship, parents' marital conflict, and gender) were most predictive of perceived intimacy in the respondents from divorced families. Subjects from divorced families were analyzed separately to identify any factors surrounding the divorce that might significantly impact perceived intimacy in current romantic relationships. Table 4 provides a summary of the results.

Analyses indicated that PARQ and gender were both significant predictors of sexual intimacy in respondent's current romantic relationships. On the first step, PARQ accounted for 8.44% of the variance, \( F(1, 111) = 10.53, p < .001 \) and on the second step, gender accounted for an additional 3.68% of the variance, \( F(2, 110) = 4.53, p < .01 \). PARQ was also a significant predictor of emotional intimacy, accounting for 20.94% of the variance, \( F(1, 111) = 29.40, p < .0001 \). These results indicate that adult children of divorce who perceived more acceptance from their father during middle childhood had higher levels of perceived emotional and sexual intimacy in their own romantic relationships. Also, females from divorced homes perceived
### Table 4

**Predictors of Emotional & Sexual Intimacy for Adult Children from Divorced Homes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>$R^2$ increment</th>
<th>$F^a$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional Intimacy</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARQ</td>
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<td>-.458</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td>29.40***</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Intimacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARQ</td>
<td>.344</td>
<td>-.291</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>10.53***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.394</td>
<td>-.193</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>4.53*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Only predictor variables obtaining significant $R^2$ increments for the criterion variable are included in the table.

$^a$The $F$ value listed indicated the statistical significance of the $R^2$ increment for that variable.

*p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001
greater sexual intimacy when compared to men from divorced homes.

**Subjects from Intact Families Only**

Stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine which predictors (current father-child relationship, past father-child relationship, parents' marital conflict, and gender) were most predictive of perceived intimacy in the respondents from intact families. Subjects from intact families were analyzed separately to discern any particular aspects of intact marriages that might significantly impact perceived intimacy in subject's current romantic relationships. Table 5 provides a summary of the results.

Analyses indicated that CPS and gender were both significant predictors of perceived sexual intimacy. On the first step, CPS accounted for 6.29% of the variance, $F(1, 118) = 7.91, p < .01$, and on the second step, gender accounted for an additional 3.64% of the variance, $F(2, 117) = 6.45, p < .01$. CPS was also a significant predictor of emotional intimacy, accounting for 10.52% of the variance, $F(1, 122) = 14.34, p < .001$. The direction of these results indicate that respondents from intact families who experienced less interparental conflict perceived higher levels of emotional and sexual intimacy. Also, women
Table 5
Predictors of Emotional & Sexual Intimacy for Adult Children from Intact Homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>$R^2$ increment</th>
<th>$F^a$</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Intimacy</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>CPS</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>14.34***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Intimacy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>-.251</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>7.91*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.315</td>
<td>-.191</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>4.73*</td>
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</table>

Note. Only predictor variables obtaining significant $R^2$ increments for the criterion variable are included in the table.

$^a$The $F$ value listed indicated the statistical significance of the $R^2$ increment for that variable.

*p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001
perceived more sexual intimacy in their current relationships when compared to men from intact families.

**Female Sample (Daughters)**

Stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine which predictors (current father-child relationship, past father-child relationship, parents' marital conflict, and parental marital status) were most predictive of daughter's perceived intimacy. Female subjects were analyzed separately to discern if certain factors significantly impacted perceived intimacy in daughter's current romantic relationships. Table 6 provides a summary of the results.

Analyses indicated that CPS was the only significant predictor of the perceived emotional intimacy in their current romantic relationships, $F(1, 116) = 9.74, p < .01$, accounting for 7.74% of the variance. The direction of the relationship suggests that women who experienced more interparental conflict perceived lower levels of emotional intimacy in their current romantic relationships.

None of the variables were significant predictors of sexual intimacy for women.
Table 6

Predictors of Emotional & Sexual Intimacy for Women from Divorced and Intact Homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>R² increment</th>
<th>F²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intimacy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>.278</td>
<td>.278</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>9.74**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Only predictor variables obtaining significant R² increments for the criterion variable are included in the table.

°The F value listed indicated the statistical significance of the R² increment for that variable.

*p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001
Male Sample (Sons)

Stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine which predictors (current father-child relationship, past father-child relationship, parents' marital conflict, and parental marital status) were most predictive of son's perceived intimacy. Male subjects were analyzed separately to discover if certain factors significantly impact perceived intimacy in son's current romantic relationships. Table 7 provides a summary of the results.

Analyses suggested PARQ was a significant predictor of men's perceived emotional and sexual intimacy. PARQ accounted for 18.68% of the variance for emotional intimacy, $F(1, 117) = 26.88$, $p < .0001$ and 12.57% of the variance for sexual intimacy, $F(1, 115) = 16.54$, $p < .001$. The direction of this relationship indicates that men who perceived more acceptance from their father during middle childhood perceive more emotional and sexual intimacy in their current romantic relationships. No other predictors significantly predicted emotional or sexual intimacy.
Table 7

Predictors of Emotional & Sexual Intimacy for Men from Divorced and Intact Homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>$R^2$ increment</th>
<th>$F^a$</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intimacy</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARQ</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>-.432</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>26.88***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Intimacy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARQ</td>
<td>.355</td>
<td>-.355</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>16.54***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Only predictor variables obtaining significant $R^2$ increments for the criterion variable are included in the table.

$^a$The $F$ value listed indicated the statistical significance of the $R^2$ increment for that variable.

*p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001
DISCUSSION

The overall findings of this study support the theoretical explanations that father absence and interparental conflict as possible reasons for increased vulnerability to problems related to adult intimacy (Amato & Keith, 1991; Shaw, 1991). Results of the regression analyses showed that the main factors influencing emotional and sexual intimacy were interparental conflict and the father-child relationship during middle childhood. These findings are consistent with the data from other studies, which suggest that fathers facilitate their children’s learning of sex appropriate behaviors for successful heterosexual relationships (Parke & Suomi, 1980; Russell & Russell, 1989). Furthermore, these findings are compatible with research suggesting that middle childhood offers a unique opportunity for fathers to have an influence on his children’s decisions and behaviors; both of which impact future interpersonal relationships (Hartup, 1984).

The present study also supports previous findings which have indicated that parents’ level of conflict significantly impacts children, whether from married or divorced homes (Biller, 1971; Booth, et al., 1984; Emery, 1982; Farber et al., 1985; Gabardi & Rosen, 1992). As other studies have indicated, the amount of conflict that occurred during a marriage may be a more important issue than if a divorce
occurred (Emery, 1982). It should be noted that parents’ marital status was not significant for any of the analyses in the present study. Therefore, parents’ marital status may not have long-term effects on the perceived emotional and sexual intimacy of adult children, but the levels of interparental conflict and the quality of the father-child relationship may. This seems likely, given that divorce is an isolated event, but the combative and/or negative relationship between parents and the quality of the relationship between the father and child may have a more lasting impact.

Surprisingly, this study did not support the previous findings that women’s intimacy is more significantly affected by interparental conflict and poor father-child relationships than men’s. Instead, the present findings suggest the opposite. These findings not only suggest that men may be significantly affected by interparental conflict and father absence, but that they may actually be more impacted than women. Thus, to accurately determine if one gender is more vulnerable to heterosexual difficulties than another, it will be important to compare men and women in future studies (Zaslow, 1989).

The results of the present study did not, however, support the hypothesis that the present father-child relationship significantly impacts intimacy development. One
possible explanation for these findings is that the present father-child relationship may be important until the prior father-child relationship is considered (Hoffman & Ledford, in press). Another possible reason is that the father is no longer influential over his adult children's intimacy development. It may be that the children have learned all that they can from their father when they were younger and that it is too late for the father to further teach his children (Hartup, 1984). Therefore, future research that investigates father-child relationships may only have to assess the father-child relationship once. Further analysis may not only lead to insignificance but redundancy.

Daughters vs. Sons

The results showed that women had greater sexual intimacy in their long-term relationships than men. These results indicate that, in general, women were more satisfied with sharing affection and sexual activity than men. These gender differences may well be related to sex role stereotypes regarding sexual experience. For example, in our culture, women are expected to experience sexually intimate feelings if they are to be sexually involved. Men, on the other hand, receive positive reinforcement for substantiating many sexual experiences. These social norms may differentially affect the sexual intimacy of men and women. Additionally, the social pressures women experience
regarding appropriate sexual behavior may have lead women to respond in a socially desirable way on the questionnaire.

The results did not indicate that women significantly differed from men in the amount of emotional intimacy they perceived in their current romantic relationships. These findings suggest that women and men generally experience similar amounts of closeness in their relationships. These results are inconsistent with the notion that women experience greater degrees of intimacy than men (Lamanna & Riedmann, 1991; Rubin, 1983). Although it is difficult to speculate as to why there were no differences, it may be useful in catalyzing future inquiry. Given this disclaimer, one speculative interpretation of the insignificant gender differences is that the emotional intimacy scale did not adequately assess emotional intimacy. Given that there were only six items, it may be that the scale was not sensitive enough to discriminate between the intimate feelings men and women experience in their relationships. A second speculative interpretation of these findings is that men are increasingly being allowed to express their emotional feelings in intimate relationships (more popularly termed "the sensitive 90's guy"). As society's acceptance for men's expressiveness continues, the gender gap may deteriorate.
Returning to the findings, it is apparent that men and women's intimacy is influenced by different factors. For women, interparental conflict significantly impacted emotional intimacy. Women who experienced higher levels of parental conflict perceived lower levels of emotional intimacy. For men, the father-son relationship during middle childhood was a significant factor predicting both emotional and sexual intimacy. Sons who had experienced higher levels of paternal acceptance perceived higher levels of sexual and emotional intimacy. Thus, it seems as though men and women are differentially sensitive to what impacts their sexual and emotional intimacy. Though not performed on the present data, a relevant test of this speculation would compare female and male siblings who report differing levels of parental conflict backgrounds and father acceptance.

Adult Children from Intact vs. Divorced Homes

The results indicated that respondents from divorced families did not differ in the level of perceived sexual or emotional intimacy when compared to respondents from intact families. These results are consistent with the research indicating that parental divorce does not have a significant effect on intimacy development (Kalter et al., 1985; Nelson, Allison & Sundre, 1992). Other research, however, suggests that subjects from divorced homes are adversely affected in issues relating to intimacy (Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Gabardi
Perhaps the discordance in these findings is due to the disparity in the operationalization of intimacy. For example, research which has suggested that subjects are adversely affected by divorce had counted the number of previous sex partners, while those that did not indicate negative effects have measured dating satisfaction. Additionally, these results also support the notion that parental marital status is not the most important factor impacting subjects from divorced and intact families. Some studies have suggested that the quality of the father-child relationship and the level of interparental conflict are more significant factors affecting children’s vulnerability to heterosexual problems (Booth et al., 1984; Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Hetherington, 1971). Therefore, the present study examined subjects from divorced and intact families separately to discern what factors are important to each of these groups.

Separate analyses of subjects from divorced and intact homes revealed that different factors influenced adult children’s perceived intimacy levels. For adult children of divorce, the father-child relationship during middle childhood was a significant predictor of perceived sexual and emotional intimacy. Those subjects that perceived greater acceptance from their fathers perceived greater
sexual and emotional intimacy in their current romantic relationships. The results, however, did not indicate that interparental conflict was a significant predictor of perceived intimacy for adult children of divorce. Both of these findings are compatible with the research which suggests that the relationship with the father may be a more important factor than interparental conflict in determining children’s adjustment to divorce (Forehand et al., 1990). Although these studies examined social and academic competence, this explanation may also be a means of understanding the current research. Therefore, when interparental conflict is high and there is an accepting father-child relationship, the effects of interparental conflict may be minimal on sexual and emotional intimacy.

For adult children from intact homes, interparental conflict was the most significant predictor of perceived sexual and emotional intimacy. Those subjects who perceived a higher level of interparental conflict also perceived a lower level of sexual and emotional intimacy. These results are also consistent with prior research suggesting that interparental conflict negatively affects heterosexual development regardless of prior family structure (Booth et al., 1984; Gabardi & Rosen, 1992). Therefore, one might suggest that even though the parents have not divorced, the parental model of a successful relationship may still be
tarnished if there is a high level of conflict. As a result, subjects may have lower expectations of emotional and sexual satisfaction in relationships and therefore seek and achieve lower levels of intimacy in their own relationships.

Limitations and Conclusions

Although attempts were made in this study to eliminate many of the difficulties encountered in prior research, it is important to identify some potential limitations to these findings. First, the respondents from divorced and intact families studied here did not constitute random samples, and it is impossible to know what biases, if any, may have resulted as a consequence. To counterbalance this potential obstacle, every attempt to use similar methods of sampling in both divorced and intact groups was used. In addition, to minimize confounding variables, respondents were screened to meet certain demographic criteria. Although the resulting sample was predominately college educated and Caucasian, both groups examined here were demographically similar to those evaluated by Gabardi and Rosen (1992) and Booth et al. (1984).

It is also important to note that the present study used retrospective self-reports for the assessment of the father-child relationship during middle childhood and interparental conflict. Other studies have suggested the
limitations to this type of evaluation citing that the perception of past relationships is influenced by the perception of present relationships (Hoffman & Ledford, in press). Although it is unclear just how much influence present perceptions influenced subjects' self-reports of the past, the present study did not have the capacity to assess the father-child relationship and interparental conflict longitudinally. Thus, the present findings should be regarded with caution and future research should assess these factors longitudinally.

With regard to the regression analysis, another limitation of this study derives from the constraints of the sample size. Although every attempt was made to collect a large sample, the minimum of 200 subjects needed for each multiple regression was not obtained (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). Therefore, the results of this study may be questionable with regards to adequacy of power.

In summary, the present study was designed to assess what factors are developmentally important to establishing intimate relationships during young adulthood. Research has suggested that father absence, interparental conflict, parental marital status and gender can influence the establishment and maintenance of intimate relationships. Instead of divorce, it may be the amount of conflict in the marriage and the father-child relationship that are the most
salient factors affecting the relationships of young adults. In addition, other factors, such as prior sexual abuse and mother-child relationships, not investigated in the present study, may also be significant. Thus, further research is necessary to understand the diversity among children from divorced and intact families and to examine the additional factors that contribute to optimal intimacy development no matter what a child's family constellation.
APPENDIX A

Demographic Information

Informed Consent

In the current study, the research is interested in examining your thoughts and experiences in various relationships during different periods in your life. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of types of experiences and feelings people gain from different relationships in their lives. If you decide to participate in the study, your involvement should not take more than 40 minutes of your time.

You will be given a multiple-choice questionnaire that asks you to think back to your relationship with your father when you were between 7-13 years old, your current relationship with your father, the relationship between your natural mother and father and your most current romantic relationship.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you will be free to refuse any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. You will not be penalized in any way if you decide to stop. This questionnaire will be assigned an identification number to insure your anonymity. Your identity will not be revealed to anyone.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

Sheri Coulson  Charles Hoffman, Ph.D.
Psychology Department  Psychology Department
Office: TO-16  Office: PS 219
Phone: (909) 880-5446  Phone: (909) 880-5570

Please read the following paragraph, and, if you agree to participate, please sign below.

I understand that any information about me obtained from this research will be kept strictly confidential. I verify that I have read and understand the above information concerning the nature of this investigation and acknowledge that my participation is completely voluntary.

Signature ___________________________  Date ______________

*** Please detach this sheet from the questionnaire and return the questionnaire and this sheet to the Peer Advising Center at TO-22.
Please answer the following questions:

1. What is your gender? _____ Female (01) _____ Male (02)

2. What is your age? ______________

3. What is your marital status? ______________

4. Are you living with someone with whom you are romantically involved? _____ yes (01) _____ no (02)

5. What is your race/ethnicity? ______________________

6. What is your sexual orientation? _____ heterosexual (01) _____ homosexual (02) _____ bisexual (03) _____ other (04)

7. What is your current class standing?
   _____ freshman (01) _____ senior (04)
   _____ sophomore (02) _____ graduate (05)
   _____ junior (03) _____ other (06)

8. What is/was your father’s occupation? ______________________

9. What is/was your mother’s occupation? ______________________

10. What was the highest level of school your father completed?
    _____ graduate degree (01)
     _____ BA/BS degree (02)
     _____ completed a least 1 year of college (03)
     _____ high school (04)
     _____ completed school up to the 10th or 11th grade (05)
     _____ completed junior high (06)
     _____ completed less than seven years of school (07)

11. What was the highest level of school your mother completed?
    _____ graduate degree (01)
     _____ BA/BS degree (02)
     _____ completed a least 1 year of college (03)
     _____ high school (04)
     _____ completed school up to the 10th or 11th grade (05)
     _____ completed junior high (06)
     _____ completed less than seven years of school (07)
12. What is your natural parents' current marital status?
   _____ married (01)
   _____ divorced (02)
   _____ other (03) please specify_______

If your parents are divorced, please answer the following questions. If they are not divorced, please go to question 16.

13. How old were you when your parents divorced? ______

14. What was the legal custody arrangement after your parents divorced?
   _____ joint custody (01)
   _____ mother had sole custody (02)
   _____ father had sole custody (03)
   _____ other (04) (specify)_____

15. If your mother or father had sole custody, approximately how far away from the non-custodial parent did you live?
   ________

16. Are you currently involved in a romantic relationship that you expect will be long term?
   __ yes (01) __ no (02) If not, approximately how long ago was your last romantic relationship? _______
APPENDIX B

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ)

The following questions contain a number of statements describing the way different fathers act toward their children. Read each statement and mark the answer by placing an "X" on the line that best describes the way your father treated you when you were about 7-13 years old. Work quickly; give your first impression and move on to the next item. Do not dwell on any item.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRUE OF MY FATHER</th>
<th>NOT TRUE OF MY FATHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost True</td>
<td>Almost True</td>
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<tr>
<td>Always True</td>
<td>Sometimes True</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sometimes True</td>
<td>Rarely True</td>
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<td>Rarely True</td>
<td>Never True</td>
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</table>

My Father:

1. Said nice things about me.
   
   TRUE   NOT TRUE
   ______  ______

2. Nagged or scolded me when I was bad.
   
   TRUE   NOT TRUE
   ______  ______

3. Totally ignored me.
   
   TRUE   NOT TRUE
   ______  ______

4. Did not really love me.
   
   TRUE   NOT TRUE
   ______  ______

5. Was willing to discuss general daily routines with me, and to listen to what I had to say.
   
   TRUE   NOT TRUE
   ______  ______

6. Complained about to me others when I did not listen to him.
   
   TRUE   NOT TRUE
   ______  ______

7. Took an active interest in me.
   
   TRUE   NOT TRUE
   ______  ______
8. Encouraged me to bring my friends home, and tried to make things pleasant for them.

9. Ridiculed and made fun of me.

10. Ignored me as long as I did not do anything to disturb him.

11. Yelled at me when he was angry.

12. Made it easy for me to confide in him.

13. Treated me harshly.

14. Enjoyed having me around him.

15. Made me feel proud I did well.

16. Hit me, even when I did not deserve it.

17. Forgot things he was supposed to do for me.

18. Viewed me as a burden.

19. Praised me to others.
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<td>20. Punished me when he severely was angry.</td>
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<td>21. Made sure I had the right amount of food to eat.</td>
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<td>22. Talked to me in a warm and affectionate way.</td>
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<td>23. Was critically impatient with me.</td>
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<td>24. Was too busy to answer to my questions.</td>
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<td>25. Seemed to resent me.</td>
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<td>26. Praised me when I deserved it.</td>
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<td>27. Was irritable and antagonistic toward me.</td>
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<td>28. Was concerned who my friends were.</td>
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<td>29. Was genuinely interested in my affairs.</td>
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<td>30. Said many unkind things to me.</td>
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<td>31. Ignored me when I asked him for help.</td>
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<td>32. Was unsympathetic to me when I was having trouble.</td>
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<td>33. Made me feel _____ wanted and needed.</td>
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<td>34. Told me that _____ I got on his nerves.</td>
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<td>35. Paid a lot of _____ attention to me.</td>
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<td>36. Told me how _____ proud he was of me when I was good.</td>
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<td>37. Went out of _____ his way to hurt my feelings.</td>
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<td>38. Forgot _____ important events I thought he should remember.</td>
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<td>39. Made me feel _____ I was not loved any more if I misbehaved.</td>
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<td>40. Made me feel _____ what I did was important.</td>
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<td>41. Frightened or threatened me when I did something wrong.</td>
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<td>42. Liked to spend time with me.</td>
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<td>43. Tried to help me when I was scared or upset.</td>
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<td>44. Shamed me in front of my playmates when I misbehaved.</td>
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<td>45. Avoided my company.</td>
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46. Complained about me.

47. Respected my point of view, and encouraged me to express it.

48. Compared me unfavorably to other children no matter what I did.

49. Took me into consideration when he made plans.

50. Let me do things I thought were important, even if it was inconvenient for him.

51. Compared me unfavorably with other children when I misbehaved.

52. Left my care to someone else (e.g. a neighbor or relative).

53. Let me know I was not wanted.

54. Was interested in the things I did.

55. Tried to make me feel better when I was hurt or sick.
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<td>56. Told me how ashamed he was when I misbehaved.</td>
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<td>57. Let me know he loved me.</td>
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<td>58. Treated me gently and with kindness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>59. Made me feel ashamed or guilty when I misbehaved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>60. Tried to make me happy.</td>
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APPENDIX C

Parent-Child Relationship Survey (PCRS)

The following items contain questions about your current relationship with your father. Read each statement and circle the number that corresponds to your attitudes toward your father. Work quickly; give your first impression and move on to the next item. Do not dwell on any item.

1. How much time do you feel you spend with your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Almost none a great deal

2. How well do you feel you have been able to maintain a steady relationship with your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all extremely

3. How much do you trust your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a great deal

4. How confident are you that your father would not ridicule or make fun of you if you were to talk about a problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all extremely

5. How confident are you that your father would help you when you have a problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all extremely

6. How close do you feel to your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
very distant very close

7. How comfortable would you be approaching your father about a romantic problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all extremely
8. How comfortable would you be talking to your father about a problem at school?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all extremely

9. How confused are you about the exact role your father is to have in your life?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a great deal

10. How accurately do you feel you understand your father's feelings, thoughts, and behavior?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a great deal

11. How easily do you accept the weaknesses in your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all extremely

12. To what extent do you think of your father as an adult with a life of his own, as opposed to thinking of him only as your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
think of as see as an adult with only a father a life of his own

13. How often do you get angry at your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Almost never quite often

14. In general, how much do you resent your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a great deal

15. How well do you communicate with your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all extremely

16. How well does your father understand your needs, feelings, and behavior?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all extremely
17. How well does your father listen to you?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all extremely

18. How much do you care for your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a great deal

19. When you are away from home, how much do you typically miss your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a great deal

20. How much do you respect your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a great deal

21. How much do you value your father’s opinion?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a great deal

22. How much do you admire your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a great deal

23. How much would you like to be like your father?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a great deal

24. How much would you be satisfied with your father’s life style as your own?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all extremely
APPENDIX D

Conflict Properties Scale (CPS)

The following items contain questions regarding conflict in your natural parents' marriage. Read each statement and circle the answer that best describes what typically happened between your parents while you were growing up. If your parents are divorced, think about your parents' relationship before the divorce. If your parents are still married, think about your parents' relationship when you were living with them. Circle the number that corresponds best with your view. Work quickly; give your first impression and move on to the next item. Do not dwell on any item.

1. I never saw my parents arguing or disagreeing.

   1 2 3 4
   strongly somewhat somewhat strongly
   agree agree disagree disagree

2. When my parents had an argument, they usually worked it out.

   1 2 3 4
   strongly somewhat somewhat strongly
   agree agree disagree disagree

3. My parents got really angry when they argued.

   1 2 3 4
   strongly somewhat somewhat strongly
   agree agree disagree disagree

4. They may not have thought I knew, but my parents argued or disagreed a lot.

   1 2 3 4
   strongly somewhat somewhat strongly
   agree agree disagree disagree

5. Even after my parents stopped arguing, they stayed mad at each other.

   1 2 3 4
   strongly somewhat somewhat strongly
   agree agree disagree disagree
6. When my parents had a disagreement, they discussed it quietly.

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<td>agree</td>
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7. My parents were often mean to each other, even when I was around.

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8. I often saw my parents arguing.

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<td>agree</td>
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9. When my parents disagreed about something, they usually came up with a solution.

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10. When my parents had an argument, they said mean things to each other.

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11. My parents hardly ever argued.

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12. When my parents argued, they usually made up right away.

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13. When my parents had an argument, they yelled a lot.

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14. My parents often nagged and complained about each other around the house.

1 2 3 4
strongly somewhat somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

15. My parents hardly ever yelled when they had a disagreement.

1 2 3 4
strongly somewhat somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

16. My parents broke and throw things during an argument.

1 2 3 4
strongly somewhat somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

17. After my parents stopped arguing, they were friendly to each other.

1 2 3 4
strongly somewhat somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

18. My parents pushed and shoved each other during an argument.

1 2 3 4
strongly somewhat somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

19. My parents acted mean after they had an argument.

1 2 3 4
strongly somewhat somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree
APPENDIX E

Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Inventory (PAIRS)

The following questions contain a number of statements describing feelings that might take place in a romantic relationship that is expected to be long-term. Think about your most current or current romantic relationship. Read each statement carefully and think how well it describes your view of the relationship. Circle the number that corresponds best with your view. Work quickly; give your first impression and move on to the next item. Do not dwell on any items.

1. My partner listens to me when I need someone to talk to.

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2. We enjoy spending time with other couples.

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3. I am satisfied with our sex life.

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4. My partner helps me clarify my thoughts.

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5. We enjoy the same recreational activities.

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<td>agree</td>
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6. My partner has all the qualities I’ve ever wanted in a mate.

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7. I can state my feelings without him/her getting defensive.

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8. We usually "keep to ourselves."

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9. I feel our sexual activity is just routine.

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10. When it comes to having a serious discussion it seems that we have little in common.

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12. There are times when I do not feel a great deal of love and affection for my partner.

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13. I often feel distant from my partner.

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14. We have very few friends in common.

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15. I am able to tell my partner when I want sexual intercourse.

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16. I feel "put down" in a serious conversation with my partner.

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17. We like playing together.

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18. Every new thing that I have learned about my partner has pleased me.

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19. My partner can really understand my hurts and joys.

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20. Having time together with friends is an important part of our shared activities.

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21. I "hold back" my sexual interest because my partner makes me feel uncomfortable.

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22. I feel it is useless to discuss some things with my partner.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

23. We enjoy the out-doors together.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

24. My partner and I understand each other completely.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

25. I feel neglected at times by my partner.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

26. Many of my partner's closest friends are also my closest friends.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

27. Sexual expression is an essential part of our relationship.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

28. My partner frequently tries to change my ideas.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

29. We seldom find time to do fun things together.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly
agree agree disagree disagree
30. I don’t think anyone could possibly be happier than my partner and I when we are with one another.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly agree agree disagree disagree

31. I sometimes feel lonely when we’re together.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly agree agree disagree disagree

32. My partner disapproves of some of my friends.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly agree agree disagree disagree

33. My partner seems disinterested in sex.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly agree agree disagree disagree

34. We have an endless number of things to talk about.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly agree agree disagree disagree

35. I think that we share some of the same interests.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly agree agree disagree disagree

36. I have some needs that are not being met by my relationship.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly somewhat neutral somewhat strongly agree agree disagree disagree
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

1. If you have any comments or concerns you would like to express regarding any portion of this questionnaire, please feel free to use this page to let me know.

2. The results of this study are anticipated to be completed during the spring of 1995 and may be obtained by contacting Sheri Coulson or Chuck Hoffman through the Department of Psychology at California State University, San Bernardino. The phone number to the department is (909) 880-5570.

3. If any of the questions or issues raised made you feel uncomfortable, please feel free to contact me or you may contact the Counseling Center at the Health Center at California State University, San Bernardino (909) 880-5040 or the Community Counseling Center at (909) 880-5569.
REFERENCES


