

EVALUATING THE EFFICACY OF A GROUP COUNSELLING
INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR LATE LATENCY-AGED CHILDREN
OF PARENTAL DIVORCE

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	ii
List of Tables.....	v
List of Figures.....	vi
Abstract.....	vii
I. Introduction and Purpose of Study	1
II. Review of Selected Literature.....	8
Psychological/Behavioral Effects of Separation/Divorce on Children	8
Nursery School-Aged Children (3-5 years).....	12
School-Aged Children (Early Latency 6-8 Years Old)	14
Late Latency-Aged Children (9-12 Years Old).....	16
Reactions of Adolescents (13-18) to Divorce	20
Young Adults (18-22).....	24
Anxiety.....	26
Self-Esteem	28
Locus of Control.....	33
Group Counselling Intervention Programs for Children of Divorce.....	37
Components of an Effective Group Counselling Program for Children of Divorce	49
Hypotheses	50
III. Method.....	52
Subjects.....	52
Instrumentation.....	52

The Stait-Trait Anxiety Scale (STAIC).....	52
Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI)	53
The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale.....	54
The Draw-a-Family or Draw your-Family Test.....	54
Procedure.....	55
Treatment.....	56
Experimental Group.....	56
Session One	
Program Introduction.....	56
Session Two	
Communication Skills and Relaxation Training.....	57
Session Three	
Problem Solving and Stress Reduction.....	58
Session Four	
Assertive Behaviors.....	59
Session Five	
Families and Social Influences.....	60
Session Six	
Rights and Responsibilities and Group Closing.....	60
Control Group.....	61
IV. Results.....	62
Summary of Data Analysis.....	80

V. Discussion.....	81
Implications for Counsellors.....	85
Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research.....	88
References.....	90
Appendices.....	104

List of Tables

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Between Groups' t scores on the A-STATE (FORM C-1) and A-TRAIT (FORM C-1) and A-TRAIT (FORM C-2) OF THE STAIC.....	63
Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations and Between Groups Change Scores on the Total Subscale of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory.....	65
Table 3: Analysis of Experimental and Control Groups' Performance on Subscales of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory.....	66
Table 4: Means, Standard Deviations and Between Grups Change Scores on the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale.....	68
Table 5: Pre- and Post-test Compositions of the Draw-A-Family Test for Experimentals and Controls indicating Family Composition Code:.....	73
Table 6: Pre- and Post-test Compositions of the Draw-a-family Test for Experimental and Control Groups indicating Differential Size of Parents	77
Table 7: Pre- and Post-test Compositions of the Draw-a-Family Test for Experimental and Control Groups indicating Creativity/Constriction Dimension.....	79

List of Figures

- Figure 1: A comparison of pre- and post-test mean scores for experimental and control groups on the STAIC.....64
- Figure 2: A comparison of experimental and control group mean pre- and post-test scores across subscales of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory.....67
- Figure 3: A comparison of pre- and post-test mean scores for experimental and control groups on the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale.....69

Group Counselling Intervention

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Abstract

This study evaluates the efficacy of the "Caught in the Middle Program," a community-based, 6 week intervention for late latency-aged children (9-12 years old.) The program fosters a supportive group atmosphere to facilitate children sharing divorce-related feelings, clarify misconceptions and reduce anxiety and bolster self-esteem. Problem-solving, effective communication and anger management techniques to adequately equip children to meet with the challenges posed by parental divorce were included in the intervention program. Sixteen children of parental divorce were randomly assigned to an experimental and a control group. Experimental group scores did not improve significantly on measures of anxiety or self-esteem. The group intervention resulted in significant changes in experimental subjects' locus of control orientation.

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I. Introduction and Purpose of Study

In the 1950's Americans divorced at the rate of one in four or six marriages (Goode, 1956). Present indications are that one in three marriages in the United States end in divorce (Wegman, 1985). The 1985 statistics for the U.S. revealed there were 1,189,000 divorces, almost double that of twenty years ago. Similarly, the number of children involved in parental divorces has doubled in the same time span. There were 1,091,000 children under the age of eighteen involved in 1,158,000 divorces in 1983 (Wegman, 1985). Current trends suggest that 45 percent of American children born in 1977 will reside in a single parent household before they reach the age of majority (Hetherington, 1979; Wallerstein, 1980).

A shifting perception of marriage has been reflected in the escalation of divorce decrees granted in Canada since amendments were made to the 1968 Divorce Legislation. Divorces had risen in 1982 to 70,436 from an average of approximately 11,000 per year in the period between 1966 and 1968 (Statistics Canada Yearbook, 1983). While the number of Canadian children involved in divorce actions in 1973 was 42,400 which declined to 31,804 in 1985, substantial numbers of children remain involved in divorce litigation (Schlesinger 1977; Statistics Canada Yearbook, 1988).

Recently, the scientific press has become concerned with the effects of marital breakdown on children. Studies indicate that children are often

caught in the middle of marital discord (e.g. Gersick, 1979; Goldstein, Freud & Solnit, 1973; Stack, 1976). Numerous studies have attempted to address the causes of marital breakdown but fewer studies have looked at how it may affect the children.

When matrimony turns to acrimony, the adverse reactions of children have been linked to pre-divorce tension stemming from dysfunctional parental aggression and behaviors rather than to parental absence (McDermott, 1968; Rutter, 1971; Jacobson, 1978). Lack of stability and control, higher stress levels and negative modelling processes involved in marital disputes have been identified as additional factors potentially contributing to adjustment problems for children of divorce (Emery 1982).

Some studies have looked at both the short-and-long term effects of divorce on children (Coddington, 1972; Emery, 1982; Fine, Moreland & Schweibel, 1983; Goode, 1956; Kalter & Rembar, 1981; Kelly & Berg, 1975; Lamb, 1977; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Wynn & Brumberger, 1982). Other studies indicate that the number of children being seen for psychological/behavioral problems is growing (Felner, Stolberg & Cowan, 1975; Kalter, 1977). Children of parental divorce are characterized as being apathetic, rebellious, belligerent, demanding, complaining and lacking in autonomy (McDermott, 1970). Generalized feelings of anxiety, helplessness and lowered self-esteem are used to describe children of parental divorce (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978). Developmental stages of children at the time of their parents' divorce have also been studied.

Children's developmental stages seem related to the quality and the severity of their reactions to their parents' divorce (Kalter & Rembar, 1981; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Some researchers have studied the effects of divorce on nursery school-aged children (e.g. Mcdermott, 1970; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1979) and of school-aged children (e.g. Hammond, 1981; Isaacs & Levin, 1984; Kalter & Rembar, 1981; Kelly & Berg, 1978; McGrab, 1978). Other researchers have chosen to look at the effects of parental divorce occurring in young adulthood (Hetherington, 1973; Cooney, Smyer, Hagestad & Klock, 1986; Robson, 1987).

Separation/divorce of parents can be a particularly difficult and traumatic event for children in late latency (ages 9 through 12). Late latency children are already experiencing the trials and tribulations involved in the transition from childhood to young adult, a period described by Erikson (1959) as "socially a most decisive stage" (p. 157). When this transitory stage is further complicated by a disrupted home environment vis-à-vis their parents' divorce, these children are described as having feelings of: shock, anger, incredulity, a sense of powerlessness, strong desires for parental reconciliation and mixed loyalties with parents (Bonkowski, Beguette, Boomhower, 1984; Freeman, 1985; Robson, 1987; Wallerstein, 1985). Research investigating the effects of divorce upon late latency-aged children seems limited, as Wallerstein (1985) points out: "the child of late latency age has escaped the intensive psychological scrutiny with which his younger and older siblings have been regarded" (p. 256).

Failure to employ sound empirical methodology has impeded the evaluation in studies investigating the effects on children of separation/divorce. According to Wallerstein and Kelly (1980), these studies are deficient in that they fail to utilize appropriate statistical analysis, neglect to include harmonious families for comparison, and do not employ standardized research designs. Other problems suggested by the authors are the effects of treatment interviews and the use of dependent measures lacking in reliability and validity. McDermott (1968) noted that interpretational difficulties associated with extrapolating trends from studies examining how parental divorce impacts on children have been compounded by the subjective nature of researchers' and participants' opinions, statements and conclusions. Complicating the evaluation of studies of children's reactions to marital breakdown where father absence has been the focus, has been the fact that included as subjects are children whose fathers died, or left home before the children were born (Biller, 1981). Cited as additional difficulties in studies of children's post-divorce adjustment are: (1) the use of what has been termed "captive audiences" (i.e. clinical populations) (2) failure to check the number of parental divorces a child may have experienced (3) volunteer participants often being self-selected (4) inadequate attention paid to age and gender differences (5) and not examining the relationship between siblings, relatives and friends of children of divorce (Ellison, 1983; Emery, 1982; Kalter & Rembar, 1981; Kurdek, 1983; Kurdek et al 1981; Levitin, 1971; White & Mika, 1983).

Leading the field in studies on divorce related to children are the findings from a treatment program conducted by Wallerstein & Kelly (published from 1975 through 1985). Despite the impressive seven-year longitudinal basis, the study was not without methodological flaws. Granted, many couples react emotionally to marital breakdown, however these authors studied divorced parents that seemed to have major psychological disturbances. Unfortunately, these same disturbances could be reflected in some of their youngsters, thus potentially skewing any findings. Additional methodological problems included: lack of control families (either harmonious or discordant), no reliability measures for clinical ratings, and treatment effects compounding the dependent measures.

Coping with divorce is readily acknowledged as a highly stressful event for adults (Bloom, Asher & White, 1978). Divorced parents frequently find themselves on an emotional roller-coaster. Embroiled in resolving their own conflicts, parents can become emotionally unavailable and/or dependent upon their children. A role-reversal can result where the child becomes confidante, arbitrator, a source of surrogate spousal support and co-conspirator in collusion against the other parent. Regrettably, this transitory process can leave children in these families emotionally insecure. Additionally, children are left to resolve a broad range of problems by themselves (Kaslow & Schwartz, 1987). A potentially harmful scenario exists given that Solnit (1984) states that "divorce is one of the most complex and serious mental health crises faced by children in

the 1980s" (p. 107). Only 25 percent of children in a preliminary study as to whether children from divorced families benefitted from assistance outside the home indicated they had been helped (Bonkowski, Bequette & Boomhower, 1988). Professionals working in the schools sometimes become aware of certain behaviors in children which reflect the trauma of divorce. However, school counsellors may lack the necessary skills and knowledge to adequately deal with these concerns (Omizo & Omizo, 1987). The crisis posed by divorces and the inability to cope effectively was found by Felner, Stolberg & Cowan (1975) to be particularly pronounced for children in the primary grades. The researchers advocated implementing professional help to assist these children.

There have been a variety of recommendations for designing programs both school-based and in the community for children of parental divorce (e.g. Bowker, 1982; Cantor, 1977; Freeman, 1985; Green, 1978; Gwyn & Brantley, 1987; Hammond, 1979; Henderson, 1981; Hozman & Froiland, 1977; Kessler & Boswick, 1977; Magid, 1977; Pedro-Carrol & Cowan, 1985; Robson, 1987; Rossiter, 1988; Scherman, 1979; Sonneheim-Schneider and Baird, 1980; Tedder, Scherman & Wantz 1984; Wilkinson & Bleck, 1979). Evaluations of various programs have been complicated by methodological problems. Subjective interpretations rather than employing standardized objective measures and failure to utilize control groups for comparisons are common problems (Tedder, Scherman & Wantz, 1984).

The purpose of the present study was to examine a counselling intervention program designed to address the needs of late-latency aged children of parental divorce. Consideration was given to the effects of separation/divorce manifesting in generalized feelings of anxiety, helplessness and lowered self-esteem and therefore these effects were evaluated in the assessment.

II. Review of Selected Literature

The following review contains a survey of selected literature pertaining to the psychological effects on children, from pre-schoolers to adolescents and young adults whose parents have divorced. The present examination of the divorce literature proceeds from a discussion of the pre-school child through early- and late-latency concluding with literature about the adolescent and growing adult. Also included are sections reviewing literature relating to how the impact of divorce affects children's anxiety, self-esteem and sense of powerlessness. The final section reviews selected literature on group counselling intervention programs for children of divorce.

Psychological/Behavioral Effects of Separation/Divorce on Children

Several comprehensive reviews have assessed the effects of separation/divorce on children in both clinical and non-clinical settings (e.g. Hetherington, 1979; Kurdek & Siesky, 1980; Shamsie, 1985; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1979). Research details the potentially deleterious nature of separation/divorce on children. Clinical studies characterize the children of divorce as displaying a broad spectrum of psychiatric *sequelae* including: higher incidences of delinquency, antisocial behavior, neurotic symptoms, depression, conduct disorders and certain formed habits such

as irregular sleeping patterns (Brady, Bray & Zeeb, 1986; Kalter, 1977; McDermott, 1970; Morrison, 1978; Schaettle & Cantwell, 1980).

Increases in certain emotional disorders (e.g. runaways, suicidal and anti-social behavior) have been suggested as stemming from the growing number of children experiencing divorce (Shamsie, 1985). Children from broken homes being seen for psychological/behavioral problems constitute 50-80 percent of children in outpatient case loads (Felner, Stolberg & Cowan, 1975; Kalter, 1977; Schaettle & Cantwell, 1980). Family disruption has also been linked to 64 percent of suicide attempts amongst young people (Golombek, Martin, Stein & Karenblum, 1984).

Studies of children from divorced families from non-clinical settings describe the children as having increased feelings of anxiety, helplessness and lowered self-esteem compared to children from intact homes (Hetherington & Cox, 1978; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1979). Children from non-intact families were found to perform less well on a variety of academic, social competence and task-related behaviors (Guidubaldi & Perry, 1984). Divorce often disrupts children's perceptions of social reality representing a cognitive puzzle bringing dissonance and inconsistency to children's social and affective worlds. To deal with the loss and rearrange disrupted patterns can dictate that children be withdrawn from time spent on school work and in social interactions (Weiss, 1979). Typically, children from divorced families can become more dependent, disobedient, aggressive, whining, demanding and unaffectionate (McDermott, 1970). Effects of parental divorce are also manifested in the school setting where

children who have experienced their parents' divorce encounter school related problems including: poor attendance, poor academic performance, depression and disturbances in peer relations (Epstein, 1984).

However, other studies have reported that divorce was not perceived as an overly distressing experience by all children (Kurdek & Siesky, 1980; Walker, 1986).

Gender differences in the effects of separation/divorce on children have also been investigated. Males were found to experience more adjustment problems than females (Guidubaldi, 1983; Hetherington et al 1978; Moore & Hotch, 1982). A follow up report at the two year mark (Guidubaldi & Clemishaw, 1985) and at the six year mark (Hetherington, 1985) of the respective subjects showed that this gender difference has persisted. Males, but not females continued to show more adverse effects than their counterparts in intact families. Other researchers, however, have found that adolescent girls from divorced families manifested significantly more behavioral problems than their male counterparts (Kalter & Rembar, 1981; Schaettle & Cantwell, 1980).

In contrast, other studies have not found gender to be correlated significantly with divorce adjustment (Kalter, 1977; Kurdek, Blisk & Siesky, 1981).

Follow-up reports of longitudinal studies conducted at two, six and even ten years post-divorce have suggested that some psychological effects of divorce are long lasting. For example, in a two year longitudinal study by Guidubaldi and Perry (1984) the researchers found that children from

divorced families continued to experience poorer mental health than intact family peers. Wallerstein (1985) reported findings after ten years of her longitudinal study that the effects of their parents' divorce continued to be a major influence on many children's lives.

Another study alluding to the potentially long-term effects of divorce was conducted by Mueller & Pope (1977). The researchers were interested in investigating a phenomenon they termed the intergenerational transmission of marital instability. Their findings indicate that children whose parents divorced often end their own marriage in divorce, and do so at a significantly higher rate than children coming from intact homes. The authors suggest a variety of factors which surface, that are possible explanations for this later phenomenon. They note that often the custodial parent experience personality changes after the divorce. In addition, they also point out that there are strains placed upon the family's well being by reductions in income and restrictions in social mobility. Also mentioned is the fact that the children can learn both overtly and covertly, attitudes about divorce that may be overly lenient and/or inappropriate. A final factor they highlight as worthy of consideration, are the effects of role-modelling. Here, it would be possible to readily become voluminous in attempting to detail the potential problems for boys living in mother-headed households. This can represent a situation in which they often lack an opportunity to regularly interact with their same-sex parent. Similarly, with daughters, there is the possibility of being exposed to behaviors and attitudes with regards to

members of the opposite sex; running the gamut from being openly hostile towards men to being preoccupied and promiscuous with them.

Nursery School-Aged Children (3-5 years)

Numerous researchers have investigated children's reaction to parental divorce from the perspective of its impact on childhood development. Some researchers have studied nursery school-aged children (e.g. McDermott, 1968; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1975).

One of the first studies dealing with the effects of parental divorce on nursery school-aged children was published by McDermott (1968). A total of 16 youngsters aged 3 to 5 were observed in a nursery school setting. Over half of the children had significant psychological difficulties while parents were from a normal non-patient population. Children's reactions were typified by McDermott as: (1) no change (2) sadness and anger (3) aggression and detachment and (4) pseudo-maturity which was most prominent among females. Objective teacher-based ratings were used in data collection rather than subjective parental observations. Based on the findings the researcher linked parent conflict in the home environment with dysfunctional child behavior. Rutter's (1971) notion that pre-divorce parental dysfunction and tension precipitate adverse reactions in children rather than the actual separation seem corroborated in McDermott's (1968) findings.

Another comprehensive study of psychological effects of parental divorce on pre-school children was conducted by Wallerstein and Kelly

(1975). The authors were interested in investigating how childhood developmental processes were impacted upon by divorce. Their subjects were 34 pre-schoolers divided into three age groups (1) youngest (2) middle, 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 years of age and (3) oldest, 5 to years of age. Problems for the youngest children included; enuresis, irritability, whining, crying, fearfulness, separation anxiety, sleep problems, confusion and temper tantrums.

Children labeled as the middle pre-school group were identified as being aggressive, irritable, whining and fearful following their parents' divorce. Responding to the departure of a parent these children displayed anxiety, bewilderment, fright, confusion and sadness. Children who anticipated the loss of one or both parents concocted elaborate fantasies in which their parents reconciled.

Another consistent finding amongst these children was the imposition of self-blame for their parents' marital failure. Some of these children carefully scrutinized their own behavior attempting to find antecedents intertwined with a parents' departure. Others responded affectively with feelings of helplessness, sensing forces outside their control responsible for the removal of a parent.

The oldest pre-school group reacted to parental divorce by exhibiting nervousness and aggression, displaying these behaviors in their restlessness, whining, moodiness, irritability, temper outbursts and separation anxiety related to the custodial parent. Other observations

included sadness over the loss of the father and a desire to restore familial harmony.

Hetherington, Cox & Cox (1979) conducted a study in which they looked at the play and social interaction of children following divorce. Children were observed at two months, one year and two years following divorce and were approximately four years old when the study commenced. Compared with children from intact homes, children from homes in which their parents divorced were less socially and cognitively mature. At the two year mark following their parents' divorce, the girls from non-intact homes seemed to be functioning socially, cognitively and emotionally at about par with their counterparts from intact homes. Whereas, the boys from non-intact homes at this time were more anxious and less happy than their male peers. Also noted was that when boys from divorced background selected a friend they chose either a younger male child or a girl. The researchers suggest that the effects of divorce are both broad and pervasive and endure over time. Since the study was limited to only a two-year follow-up the authors could not accurately state whether the effects might persist over time. They did point out that more research is needed to answer questions pertaining to factors which may serve to exacerbate and ameliorate the effects.

School-Aged Children (Early Latency 6-8 Years Old)

Researchers have also looked at divorce's impact on children who developmentally are in the latency stage (e.g. McGrub, 1978; Wallerstein & Kelly 1976). Reviewing the literature on children of divorce, McGrub

(1978) has stressed that anxiety and fears about family breakup amongst school-aged children may be observed in poor academic performance and peer relationships. In addition, she noted that the cognitive/social awareness of these children equips them with an ability to perceive the future ramifications associated with the family break-up. Also reported amongst school-aged children were increased anxiety, depression and feelings of helplessness (Hetherington & Cox, 1978).

In an effort to document children's reactions to separation and divorce across various age levels, Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) studied 57 children from divorced families between the ages of 7 and 10. The authors chose to classify those youngsters aged 9 to 10 as older latency. In another paper examining the psychological impact of divorce on children, those children 7 and 8 years old were categorized as early latency and studied as a separate group from 5-to-6 year old preschoolers (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1976).

Interviews of 26 early latency children whose parents had divorced (14 boys and 12 girls aged 7 and 8) were conducted by the researchers who reported "pervasive sadness" as the primary response of these children to family breakdown. Younger children were also observed as seeming more immobilized than their older counterparts when developing defense strategies. Common to all subjects was the painful experience which could be interpreted as childhood depression.

Amongst boys frightened by family disunity, crying was a recurrent phenomenon. An increased demand for toys and other material things

was seen as being connected to a sense of deprivation. Feelings of deprivation appeared to spill over into possessiveness in children, who had difficulty sharing with others both at home and school.

An intense sense of loss of the father was particularly pronounced amongst these younger boys. Children's mixed emotions were reflected on one hand by anger directed and vehemently expressed at the custodial mother for contributing to the disruptive situation. On the other hand it could be observed in their fear of antagonizing or provoking the wrath of their mother. Youngsters divided between their parting parents and thus loyalty conflicts were common. Unlike their younger counterparts children in this group did not suffer from feelings of responsibility for their parents' divorce, but did experience intense desires for parental reconciliation (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1976).

Late Latency-Aged Children (9-12 Years Old)

Children in late latency whose parents divorce have been detailed by researchers as exhibiting: intense anger, shock, a shaken sense of identity, fear of being alone or rejected, heightened activity and mixed loyalties regarding parents (Cantor, 1979; Bonkowski, Bequette & Boomhower, 1986; Freeman, 1985; Robson, 1987; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976, 1980).

For example, Freeman (1985) found that 9-12 year old children in her study typically felt shock, incredulity and anger. Younger children experience guilt, assuming their parents' breakup results from something they have done to their parents. In contrast, Freeman (1985) observed late

latency children responding to what they perceived parents had done to them. The non-custodial parent was regarded as the instigator of the divorce and therefore became the recipient of their scorn. However, since late latency-aged children are concerned about the emotional well-being of their parents (Bonkowski, Bequette & Boomhower, 1984) they experienced divided loyalties between their parents. For many of these late latency children who allied themselves with one parent, they experienced loneliness and fear of rejection from the other parent (Barne & Brassard, 1982).

The most comprehensive reviews of late-latency children were conducted by Wallerstein & Kelly, (1976, 1980). Their first investigation of later latency involved 31 children (ages 9 and 10) who were observed by the researchers. The most prevalent observation was that these children were quite capable of cognitively appraising the ramifications and reality of family break-up. The outstanding characteristics noted amongst these children were conflicting feelings and fears and intense efforts made to achieve and ensure stability in their lives. Children in later latency coped with their underlying feelings of loneliness, loss, rejection and helplessness through denial, avoidance and withdrawal. The authors' term for this defense strategy was "psychological layering" which they defined as the ability of the child to cope intellectually at one level while suffering emotionally at another. This finding is in accord with the research of Kurdek Blisk & Siesky (1981). Common amongst this age group were concerns about their parents' behavior. For these youngsters,

their newly disrupted families often precipitated feelings of shame with underlying implications of concern about parental rejection. Frequently falsehoods became compensatory responses. These youngsters also became engrossed in creative and intriguing diversions which Kelly & Wallerstein (1976) viewed as attempts to reconstitute the disrupted family.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) observed that "the single feeling that most clearly distinguished the later latency group from all the younger children was anger" (p. 260). The authors describe anger in this group of youngsters as quite distinct from the anger experienced by younger children being both "well organized and clearly object-directed" (p. 260). This clearly and directly articulated anger was usually directed at the parent whom they perceived as the divorce perpetrator. Anger became so intense for these youngsters that sometimes it could obfuscate all other emotions. Coupled with this intense anger were outrage and moral indignation directed at admonishing the parent whose current conduct they disapproved. The various forms of expression of anger ranged from temper outbursts to nuisance behaviors and attitude shifts. Purposefully calculated activities were intended to inculcate these youngsters' disdain for their parents. In households where fathers had maintained a hard disciplinary posture, their absence provided for the unbridled expression of various impulses. This was not seen in all children; some children responded in the opposite manner, becoming compliant and passive.

Sometimes these youngster experienced fears of abandonment that almost became phobic. Latency-aged children were also described by

Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) as having a shaken sense of identity. The authors postulated that since this sense of identity is linked to the family structure and these youngsters developmentally are dependent on parental figures, disruptions might manifest in new delinquent behaviors. The authors also pointed out that late latency-aged children have a need for inclusion in family decisions based on mutuality and reciprocal support. However, as Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) observed for the late latency-aged children whose parents divorced, a peripheral role in family decisions coupled with a parent's departure could result in feelings of loneliness, mixed loyalties and a sense of betrayal. The authors also detailed somatic symptoms such as: headaches, stomachaches and chronic asthma which reflected these youngsters' emotional turmoil. In the school setting these children's ability to concentrate diminished as did their overall performance ability. Interactions with peers also changed, with overt displays of aggression and anger directed at school-mates increasing.

The relationship between parents and their children suffered from the disruption of the divorce and became altered. According to Wallerstein (1980) the formation of a strong connection with one parent was formed in 25 percent of the children. She reported this parent-child bond was encouraged by the grieving and rejected parent. This single parent bonding was suggested as being more common amongst late latency children which Wallerstein (1980) interpreted as these youngsters' coping mechanisms to sublimate conflicts and anxieties.

Reactions of Adolescents (13-18) to Divorce

Several researchers have chosen to examine the impact of divorce upon adolescents (e.g. Hetherington, 1972; Kalter, Riemer, Trickman and Woo Chen, 1985; Kurdek & Siesky, 1980; Reinhard, 1977; Kelly & Wallerstein, 1974).

For example, Hetherington (1972) found that adolescent girls who experienced father loss through divorce tended to change in their reaction to males. Her research links father absence in early childhood development and later adolescent heterosexual behavior. This section on the reactions of adolescents to their parents' divorce is included as a reference to the potentially enduring long-term effects of divorce in children.

Kelly and Wallerstein (1974) studied a small sample of 21 young people aged 13 years and over to examine the reactions of adolescents to family breakdown. The researchers utilized a descriptive interview format in which these teenagers revealed feelings of loss, betrayal and anger. Common were loyalty conflicts which forced these adolescents to react by withdrawal and distancing themselves. The authors perceived these adolescents as paving the way towards the adoption of realistic future life goals based on these teenagers' ability to form sound, healthy appraisals of their parents' behavior. Unlike other age groups, adolescents felt no onus of responsibility for their parents' actions. These adolescents had in common with other age groups emotional/behavioral problems which manifested themselves in: (1) retarded adolescent independence (2)

displays of regressive and depressive behavior typical of younger children and (3) pseudo-adolescent behavior particularly pronounced in precocious heterosexual activity.

In another study of adolescents, 18 boys and 26 girls whose parents were divorced less than 3 years were assessed to determine the overall impact on this age group (Reinhard, 1977). The assessment was based on questionnaires which consisted of 99 items with 10 subscales designed to examine: (1) news of divorce, (2) loss of parent, (3) acceptance of parents, (4) changes in family relationships, (5) school performance, (6) peer relationships, (7) behavioral reaction, (8) emotional responses, (9) general reaction, and (10) post-divorce conflict.

Results showed no significant questionnaire response effects for either sex. Upon closer analysis certain items did portray trends indicating a "more realistic and mature perception of parents" (1977, p. 23).

Respondents' answers also indicated an awareness of personal responsibility and independence from parents. Both Kelly & Wallerstein's (1974) and Kurdek & Siesky's (1980) findings suggested that adolescents can make adequate psychological adjustments aided by peer support and by severing emotional dependency upon parents. Reinhard's (1977) findings seem in accord with these researchers.

However, Reinhard's (1977) methodology limited to questionnaires versus Kelly & Wallerstein's (1974) employment of interviews and observations may have contributed to the lack of negative or problem behaviors in his teenage subjects. Also confounding Reinhard's (1977)

results may have been the relative homogeneity of a selected, middle-class group of teenagers who were from divorced families. In comparison, Kelly & Wallerstein (1974) studied a population of adolescents from a varied socioeconomic stratum whose parents had psychological difficulties which had brought them to a mental health clinic.

Hetherington (1972) investigated the effects of father absence in adolescent girls. She compared girls from separated/divorced single parent families with the daughters of single parent widows. Utilized in this assessment were objective data, behavioral ratings, psychological test protocols as well as observations and interviews. An increased difficulty in adolescent heterosexual behavior was the central finding, suggesting that father-absence in the family presents specific developmental sex differences. Adolescent females' reactions to father absence surfaced in increased difficulty with appropriate heterosexual interaction. Unlike daughters whose father loss was due to death, those whose father loss was due to divorce demonstrated more proximity-seeking and smiling during interviews with males. Another distinction Hetherington (1972) found was that daughters whose mothers were divorced as opposed to widowed indicated "earlier and more dating and sexual intercourse" (p. 324).

Observations during interviews with males detailed adolescent females from divorced families manipulating clothes, hair, lips and other objects as well as nail biting and finger-pulling. Hetherington (1972) interpreted these as evidence of anxiety, insecurity and helplessness which

she postulated are intensified in adolescents from divorced families by a lowered sense of self-esteem

Kalter, Riemer, Trickman and Wop Chen (1985) conducted three studies investigating the implications of parental divorce for female development. In the first study the researchers looked at self-concept and academic achievement amongst elementary school-aged girls whose parents were divorced. The second study examined the self-concept and general behaviors of adolescent girls from families of marital breakdown. In a third study a sample of college women with divorced parents were assessed on their attitudes towards masculinity/femininity and their self-reported dating behavior. The researchers' findings indicated that in what they described as "selected areas of self-esteem" (p. 543) the daughters of divorced parents when compared to peers from intact families appeared less positively developed.

In all three studies comparisons were drawn between females whose parents divorce and those whose parents' marriages remained intact. Findings from the first study based on the responses of elementary school-aged children whose parents divorced when they were pre-schoolers, characterized them as less content socially and physically compared to peers. In the second study based on adolescent girls who experienced parental divorce, they were described as being more rebellious and delinquent compared to peers. The findings from the third study portrayed these college women from non-intact families as having a negative image of their femininity when compared to peers. Additional

findings suggest that the younger the female child's age the greater her susceptibility to divorce-related conflict which can affect the developmental integration of sexual feelings, into self-concept. The authors concluded that based on their findings for college women who hold negative views on relations between men and women coupled with an uneasiness towards marriage does not "bode well for future mature relationships" (p. 544).

Young Adults (18-22)

Recently there has been interest in investigating the developmental reactions of young adults to their parents' divorce or remarriage.

For example, one study examined the developmental impact of parental divorce in a population of college students (Cooney, Singer, Gunhild, Hagestad, and Klock 1986). The study was comprised of 18 males and 21 female students whose parents had been divorced less than three years. Findings revealed that initially young women found parental divorce more stressful than their male counterparts. These women also experienced a disintegrating father-daughter relationship, often allying themselves with their mothers. Statistically, 62% of the women and 50% of the men reported shifts in their interaction with parents. Males and females alike were concerned about their mothers' ability to adjust to a new single life-style. A noteworthy finding was that while two-thirds of these college students were angry at one or both parents they were still concerned about their parents' future well-being. The authors felt these

findings were particularly significant since custody decisions would no longer be a factor in parent-child relationships in this age group.

In summary, literature pertaining to the psychological effects of divorce in children has signified that there are observable sex differences dependent upon the age of the child and the time elapsed following divorce. Common amongst children regardless of age were feelings of powerlessness and fear of abandonment coupled with a sense of loss and sorrow. Findings also indicated that children experienced anger and guilt assuming some responsibility for the parental separation (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Common feelings for pre-school boys and girls reacting to father-loss were regression and sadness. Although pre-school girls reaction seemed more intense and was accompanied by "pseudo-maturity" (McDermott, 1968; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1975). Preschoolers were also described as dependent, disobedient, aggressive, whining and unaffectionate (Hetherington et al. 1978, 1979a; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980).

For pre-school boys these behaviors were most prevalent in their relationship with their mothers. Generally, pre-school boys seemed to be more negatively affected by parental divorce than their female counterparts. Two years following divorce boys were still demonstrating immature play, lack of imagination and ineffectual and negative social behavior at school.

Early latency (7 to 8 years old) boys also appeared more traumatized than their female counterparts. Reactions to father-loss differed between genders. Boys cried and clearly demonstrated being emotionally upset over father absence whereas, girls held steadfast to the notion their fathers' absence was temporary. Desires to spend time with their fathers and reacting angrily to disciplinary actions of their mothers was more prevalent for boys of this age. Both sexes suffered in school performance.

Young adult females initially felt more stress from their parents' divorce than young adult males. While both sexes were concerned about their mothers' abilities to survive the break-up, females tended to form a stronger bond with their mothers than males. Anger at both parents was common for males and females, at the same time these young adults were still concerned about the future well-being of both parents.

Anxiety

The presenting trauma that can potentially result from separation/divorce can leave parents experiencing varying levels of anxiety which their children may synchronously experience (Hetherington, Cox & Cox 1976). Anxiety that results from parental separation/divorce can manifest in all stages of childhood development and may endure over time (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1984, 1985 a,b). Coddington (1984) in developing a life stress event scale for children found divorce to be the third highest stressful event in their lives. Death either of a parent or sibling were the only events regarded as more stressful. Divorce has also been found to be a highly stressful event in the

lives of adolescents (Basch & Kersch, 1986). While death is obviously a traumatizing event for people close to the deceased, death is readily acknowledged through formal ceremonies, funerals and periods of mourning. After a period of time, people can adjust emotionally and behaviorally to their loss and relish fond memories. Unfortunately, no similar period of grieving is recognized as being necessary for those experiencing a loss through divorce. Children experiencing anxiety over their parents' divorce and grieving the loss of a departed parent may find little understanding and comfort among relatives and friends. Instilling additional anxiety in children are non-custodial parents' visitations. For unlike the parent lost through death and set to rest, those parents lost through divorce continually can come back (Kaslow & Schwartz, 1987).

Brown, Clayton & Horns (1986) investigated the anxiety levels of children living in intact, single parent and blended families. The researchers examined the anxiety levels of 909 children from grades 2 through 12. The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (cited in Brown et al., 1986) was used to assess the anxiety levels of children living in different family structures. Results from analysis of variance procedures indicated that no significant differences existed in State and Trait anxiety levels of children living in the 3 distinct family types. Findings from a study by Nunn, Parish & Worthing (1981) contradict these results. Nunn et al. studied the anxiety levels of 566 children living in different family structures. Results of children's responses on the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory indicated children in intact families were less anxious than those living in either a

single parent or blended family. Brown et al. (1986) postulated several factors to account for this discrepancy. First, the researchers noted that the majority of children in their study were from middle-to-upper middle class. Therefore, children in their study were not experiencing the same financial stresses as children living in lowered standards reduced by their parents' divorce. Secondly, the authors speculated that with the escalation of divorce and remarriage more children may feel less unique and therefore freer to discuss feelings with peers and relatives. A third possible contributing factor discussed was Brown et al.'s failure to differentiate whether single or blended families resulted from death or divorce.

Self-Esteem

Studies have indicated that children of divorce may suffer from diminished self-concepts (Hodges, Buchsbaum & Tierney, 1983; Parrish & Wigle, 1985; Rozendal, 1983). This diminished self-concept which is synonymous with self-esteem may stem from the self-inflicted guilt and blame experienced by children of divorce. Other factors fueling this lowered self-esteem may be their insecurity and fear of abandonment by one or both parents (Wallerstein & Bundy, 1984).

Raschke & Raschke (1978) investigated the relation between family structure, family conflict and children's self-concepts. The researchers compared children from intact families with children from single parent- and reconstituted families. Findings based on data collected from 289 third, sixth and eighth grade children indicated that regardless of family

structure, parent-parent and parent-child conflict was related to low self-esteem. The authors postulated that these findings add credence to the proposition that conflict in the family or unhappiness of a parent adversely affects the child's self-concept.

Fiske (1987) also investigated children's adjustment in divorced families. Her research examined the relationship among outcome, process and contextual variables. She designated the outcome variables as: children's adjustment at home and school. The contextual variables were described as: socioeconomic (income, education and occupation) psychosocial (gender role, preference, locus of control, and attitude about marital status); child characteristics (age, sex, numbers); and divorce specifications (months separated, who initiated the separation, custody arrangement and time children spent with their father). Fiske outlined the process variables as being: parental negotiation style, (cooperative or competitive) when making decisions about care of children at time of separation, frequency of discussion now, co-parental support, co-parental conflict, agreement between parents about parenting, satisfaction with parenting and court litigation plans.

In her study 51 women with at least one child between the ages of 3 and 15, who had been separated between 1 and 26 months participated in structured interviews.

Findings indicated that many factors were seen as contributing to children's better adjustment at home and school. In describing their children's better adjustment the mothers felt it reflected upon: their own

sense that outside forces were not dictating their lives, they had improved job profiles and greater co-parental cooperation. These divorced mothers saw the need for paternal involvement in parenting including: greater communication between parents, reciprocal support in co-parenting, mutual decision making regarding the welfare of the children, pride in parenting and foregoing any additional plans for court actions.

Also indicated in the findings were that for children showing a poorer adjustment at home, was related to mothers denying fathers their parental role. It appeared that the majority of children in this study had both parents still participating in their lives and the role of the father was very important to them.

Amato (1986) investigated sex and age differences and the association between levels of marital conflict and self-esteem amongst children from intact and non-intact families.

In this study 132 children aged 8-9 years and 142 adolescents aged 15-16 years were randomly selected from private and public schools from the state of Victoria, Australia. Method of assessment consisted of both a children's and a parent's interview schedule comprised of 165 and 155 questions respectively. Qualitative, open-ended interviews from parents and children were then rated by independent coders.

The researcher hypothesized that conflict between parents would be negatively associated with children's self-esteem. In addition, that conflict in the marriage would negatively effect the self-esteem of boys more so than girls, and younger children more so than adolescents. He also

hypothesized that the quality of the parent-child interaction would be negatively associated with conflict in the marriage. Furthermore, that the effects on children's self-esteem would be more negative in poor relationship with both parents compared to a good relationship with one or both parents.

Contrary to his hypothesis, while findings indicated that there was a strong negative association between marital conflict and self-esteem it appeared among the young girls. However, this negative association did not appear for young boys and was only weakly apparent among adolescents. Findings also indicated that marital conflict was negatively associated with children's relationships with their fathers for all groups except primary school boys. Thus, the hypothesis that marital conflict would be associated with a poor relationship between parent and child was not supported among the young boys. Although when a quality relationship existed with both parents this was reflected in higher self-esteem among primary school boys. Differences emerged for young girls where poor quality relationships with both parents was associated with marital conflict. Other distinctions were evident between adolescent males and females and their relationships with parents. While marital conflict was negatively associated for both males and females in their father relations, it was positively related for males in mother relations, but no association existed among females.

The final hypothesis that children's self-esteem would negatively correlate with marital conflict when children had a poor relationship with

both parents compared to a good relation with one or both parents also yielded age and gender differences. Findings indicated that for young boys and adolescent girls there was no significant correlation between marital conflict and self-esteem regardless of the quality of their relations with parents. For adolescent males there was a significant relationship between self-esteem and marital conflict, but only when a poor relationship with both parents exists. It was among primary school girls that the most noteworthy findings surfaced. When a poor relationship with both parents existed there was a significant, negative correlation between marital conflict and self-esteem. Paradoxically, conflict still negatively related to self-esteem even when a good relationship with both parents existed. However, when these young girls had a good relationship with only one parent their self-esteem did not correlate with conflict at a significant level.

These findings are in direct opposition to Rutter's (1971) supposition that young boys are more susceptible to psychological problems than their female counterparts. Amato (1986) speculated that these discrepancies may be attributable to the fact that his sample was randomly selected from the general population while previous studies relied on clinical populations. He also noted that these findings may reflect the fact that self-esteem was the dependent variable.

Furthermore, he speculated that the atypical result of marital conflict being negatively associated with self-esteem among young girls might reflect a gender difference in the expression of unhappiness. Amato

postulates these findings might reflect boys' ability to externalize through overt acting-out versus girls tendency to internalize covert unhappiness.

Locus of Control

Children confronted with parental divorce can experience an overwhelming sense of powerlessness. Contrary to most children's hopes, wishes and actions, the likelihood of reconstructing their family unit is doubtful. Typically, parents are readjusting their own behaviors and emotions which their children have limited control over. Adding to children's sense of vulnerability are lengthy adversarial court battles and custody disputes. In general the maelstrom of confusion posed by divorce may leave children with the perception that they have little control over what is happening in their lives (Cantrell, 1986). Immobilized by the inability to make decisions or cope with the current predicaments in their lives may exacerbate their growing sense of powerlessness. Research conducted by Lefcourt (1976) appears to be in accord with this, his findings were that children of divorce tend to possess an external locus of control orientation.

The parent-child relationship as a determinant of internality/externality has been reviewed by Gilmor (1978), who examined locus of control mediation of child behavior. In studies of elementary school children, external locus of control was associated with critical, neglectful and ignoring parents. Those youngsters with internal locus of control had parents described as warm, supportive, sharing, strict yet egalitarian. For those children who endorsed internal items on locus of

control scales, both self-report and observational measures of parent-child interactions were indicative of more positive child-rearing practices (Gilmor, 1978).

The parent-child interaction seems related to a continuum of internality (Stephens & Delys, 1973). Children who have relatively high external locus of control scores tend to have mothers who: strive for perfection, are driven and success-oriented. When parents divorce, their children can experience instability and negative parenting. Therefore, these children may select external items on locus of control scales.

The effects of father absence on locus of control scores was investigated by Duke and Lancaster (1976). The researchers administered the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale (Nowicki-Strickland, 1973) to elementary school-aged children, and the Preschool and Primary form (PPNSIE) (Nowicki & Duke, 1974) to 6- and 8- year olds. Comparisons were made between the Locus of Control Scores of 30 males ages 6 to 12 years from father-absent homes and the I-E scores of 21 males from two-parent families. Results indicated that boys from father-absent homes tended to be more external than those from two-parent homes. The authors postulated that children from father-absent homes will have experienced a massive dose of "fate" and "uncontrollable complex forces" (Duke & Lancaster, 1976, p. 335).

Based on studies over a four year period, Kurdek and Siesky (1980) and Kurdek, Blisk and Siesky (1971) found that positive adjustment to

divorce of children ages 8 to 17 years was related to their internal control loci as measured by the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale.

Parish and Nunn (1983) investigating locus of control as a function of family type and age at onset of father absence, had 644 undergraduate students complete the Rotter Internality-Externality Scale (cited in Nunn & Parish 1983) and provide information on their family background. The students were asked whether they came from intact families or had lost a father through death or divorce. The authors were also interested in examining at what age father loss had occurred which they divided into three age categories: 0-6 years, 7-13 years and 14-21 years.

In a previous study, Parish and Copeland (1980) found that males who experienced father loss through death exhibited higher scores on Rotter's Internality-Externality Scale than males from divorced families or females whose father-loss were either through death or divorce.

Parish and Nunn's (1983) results indicate that youth who developmentally come from the first two age categories (0-6 and 7-13 years) and experienced father-loss through divorce were significantly more externally oriented than youth from intact homes. This significant difference in external orientation was not apparent when youth from the third category (14-21 years) whose father-loss resulted from divorce were compared with peers from intact homes.

The researchers postulated that the lower the level of maturity, the greater the vulnerability to potential disruptions presented by divorce.

They speculated that this age related vulnerability should be reflected in younger youths' locus of control orientation.

In summary, research indicates that children seem to mirror the anxiety experienced by their divorced parents. Anxiety seems to be experienced by all children regardless of their developmental stage and may endure over time (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1984, 1985 a,b). Divorce is only surpassed by death of a parent or sibling on a life stress event scale for children (Coddington, 1984). Discrepancies exist in the literature as to whether children living in single parent or blended families experience more anxiety than those children living in intact families. One study found that children living in intact families were less anxious compared to children in single parent and blended families (Parish & Worthing, 1983). Another study attributed its lack of similar findings to improved socioeconomic factors alleviating the transition in family structure (Brown, Clayton & Horns, 1986).

Children may feel responsible for their parents' divorce. Self-blame coupled with insecurity and fear of abandonment may contribute to a sense of lowered self-esteem. Conflict, whether between or with parents, seems related to children's lowered self-esteem. Contributing to children's better adjustment at home and school is an improved self-image of the custodial parents. A positive co-parenting relationship seems reflected in children's increased self-esteem. Another study found marital conflict to have the strongest effect upon the self-esteem of elementary school girls. Even when a good relationship existed with both parents

these girls still experienced low self-esteem. Only by allying themselves with one parent allowed for a positive shift in these young girls' self-esteem (Amato, 1986).

Children experiencing parental divorce are often described as feeling powerless. Powerlessness for these children has been reflected in measures indicating external locus of control orientation. Findings from two studies of school-aged boys from homes where their fathers departed indicated these youngsters were more external than counterparts from intact homes. Another study found that for school-aged children and adolescents who were adjusting positively to family breakdown they were internally controlled.

Group Counselling Intervention Programs for Children of Divorce

Educators, psychologists and counsellors have been concerned with the impact of divorce on children. As was earlier alluded to, attempts have been made to structure appropriate group programs to deal with the growing needs presented by children of divorce (e.g. Bonhowski, Bequette & Boomhower, 1988; Bowker, 1982; Gwynn & Brantley, 1987; Pedro-Carroll & Cowan, 1985; Stolberg & Garrison, 1985; Wilkinson & Bleck, 1977).

For example, Wilkinson & Bleck (1977) developed one of the first school-based intervention programs for children of parental divorce. A total of eight, forty-five minute sessions were offered to six elementary grade students. Objectives of the program were: (1) to help the children clarify their own feelings about their parents' divorce and to understand and appreciate that other children had similar feelings, (2) to gain a greater

awareness of the process of divorce, and (3) to become equipped with appropriate coping strategies. To facilitate rapport-building members participated in get-acquainted exercises, negotiated group rules and dealt with the nature of confidentiality. Members also explored feeling words and were encouraged to share their pleasant and unpleasant feelings about their parents' divorce. Strategies for coping with divorce-related problems were developed while incorporating puppet play and construction of collages which served as metaphoric, non-threatening means of pursuing issues relevant to divorce.

A poll of 32 children who had participated in the Children's Divorce Group (CDG) indicated that 80 percent believed they had learned something about other people's feelings, 75 percent felt participating in the group influenced their readjustment to their newly structured lives and 90 percent said they would again participate in a similar program. While these accolades seem impressive they are potentially biased, being the subjective appraisals of the participants. Further impeding the evaluation of the program was failure to use a control group for comparison.

Another school-based group was developed by Bowker (1982) in which two groups of same-sex fifth graders met weekly for a year to discuss issues and feelings surrounding family break-up. Group members were assigned the task of creating a sound filmstrip about separation/divorce's impact on children. Group participants were responsible for both the scripting and musical accompaniments as well as the technical aspects for the story entitled "Being in Between." Production was intended to serve

as a vehicle to empower these children by building on their accomplishments. It was hoped that both the individual and group sense of achievement would bolster these youngsters' self-esteem.

Evaluation of this program was strictly based on the researchers' subjective appraisals. Implementation of standardized psychometric measures and a comparative control group were lacking in this study.

Bonkowski, Bequette and Boomhower (1984) developed a community-based group design to help children adjust to their parents' divorce. Latency-age children (7-11 years old) numbering eight participated in an eight week program designed to mitigate the effects of divorce. Members met weekly in hour-and-a-half long sessions and assisted by three counsellors explored feelings and issues percolating from the divorce process. Each session had a specific theme pertinent to latency-aged children's adjustment to parental divorce. Activities such as painting *décapage*, costumed role-playing and the use of puppets provided opportunities for member-to-member and member-to-leader interactions while exploring divorce related issues.

Consensus from group leaders, children who participated and their parents was that the program was beneficial. Group leaders believed participants' self-esteem increased as shown by their "increased optimism about the future and openness in self-expression" (p. 135). Written evaluations from parents seemed in accord with the group leaders. Observed by approximately 80 percent of the parents was a new openness when it came to discussing divorce related issues. While 20 percent of the

parents saw no change, none were negative about the program. Verbal responses from the children, solicited in the final session indicated they enjoyed participating in the program.

The authors admitted the method of evaluation in their study was qualitative, being based on the leaders' observations, assessments of parents and verbal feedback from the children. As in other studies, another methodological deficit in this study was failure to use a control group.

A primary prevention program was recently developed for children of divorce (Stolberg & Cullen, 1983; Stolberg, Cullen & Garrison, 1982). Entitled the Divorce Adjustment Program (DAP), it was comprised of two main groups: (1) the Children's Support Group (CSG) for 7 to 13 year old children of divorce which encouraged support, effective communication, anger management and relaxation strategies, and (2) the Single Parents Support Group (SPSG) which encouraged support and provided a forum for members to participate in discussions on single parenting. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the program was conducted by Stolberg and Garrison (1985). The researchers assigned 82 mother-child pairs, (where the mothers had been separated 33 months or less) to one of four conditions. The four conditions were (a) the Children's Support Group (CSG) alone, (b) the CSG and the Single Parents' Support Group (SPSG), (c) the SPSG alone, or (d) a no-treatment control group.

Findings based on outcome comparisons at the completion of the program and 5 months later indicated most improved adjustment for

children in the CSG alone condition and for parents in the SPSSG alone condition. Comparable improvements were not found for the combined condition. Speculating on the ineffectiveness of the combined intervention group, the researchers suggested this impracticability could be attributable to group demographic characteristics. Mothers in the combined condition (CSG/SPSSG) had been separated the longest, had lower status jobs and indicated their former spouses interacted less often with their children.

Methodologically this study had two major drawbacks. While a no-treatment control group was employed and standardized psychometric instruments were incorporated into the assessment, there was a failure to randomly assign subjects to groups and self-report instruments were used (e.g. Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS), Fisher, 1978; Life Experience Survey (LES), Sarason, Johnson & Siegel, 1978); as well as a questionnaire generated by one of the researchers (e.g. Single Parenting Questionnaire (SPQ), Stolberg & Ullman, 1985). Given these limitations, the researchers concede the "effectiveness of this program may have been difficult to evaluate" (p. 121).

Borrowing from the Divorce Adjustment Program (DAP; Stolberg & Cullen, 1983; Stolberg, Cullen & Garrison, 1982) a modified school-based prevention program was developed (Pedro-Carroll & Cown, 1985). The children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP) revised the Children's Support Group (CSG; Stolberg et al., 1982, 1983) adding two components: (a) a forum was established sooner to explore the affective and experiential

nature of divorce; (b) the cognitive features of CSGs skill-building were augmented with role-plays, audio-visual material and talks focussing on emotional experiences linked to divorce. Another change was reducing to three from five sessions designated for anger management. Based on the ineffectiveness of DAP's combined intervention (CSG/SPSG), the CODIP only offered a children's group. A total of 75 children from grades 4 to 6 ranging in age from 9 to 12 years were randomly assigned to experimental (41 children) and control groups (34 children). A supportive environment was fostered in the 10 week program to help latency-age children to clarify, communicate and work through salient feelings about their parents' divorce. Also explored were anger management skills.

Evaluation of CODIP's effectiveness was based on the ratings of teachers, parents, group leaders and the children. Teachers found children from the experimental group less introverted, more sociable with other students, more co-operative and having fewer learning problems. Parents and group leaders noted the children seemed to decrease in their personal incriminations about divorce and feelings of inadequacy. While the children reported decreases in post-program anxiety, they did not perceive significant difference in their competency and self-esteem. Addressing the program's failure to produce changes in the participant's perceived competency and self-esteem, the researchers postulated that a 10 week program did not allow adequate time to change these relatively stable dimensions.

Limiting the evaluation of the CODIP study were ratings based on judgements of teachers, group leaders, parents and children who, as the researchers noted had "a direct stake in the program" (p. 610). Another limitation was the implementation of non-standardized psychometric instruments (e.g. the Children's Attitude and Self-Perception Scale and the Parent Evaluation Form) which were developed by the researchers specifically for this study. Acknowledged by the researchers was that the "program's credibility base can be strengthened by using outcome measures that go beyond the judgements of the people who it touches directly" (p. 610).

An eight week educational support group for late latency children (9-11 years old) was evaluated by Gwynn and Brantley (1984). A pretest/posttest design was employed in which 60 children (30 boys, 30 girls) were randomly assigned to experimental or control groups. Children in the experimental group were made aware of concepts associated with divorce, encouraged to express their feelings and were exposed to adaptive skills to resolve conflicts with parents and siblings. Hypothesized by the researchers was that participation in the experimental group would lead to decreased depression, anxiety and negative feelings about divorce and to being more informed regarding divorce.

Findings based on measures from pretest-posttest comparisons indicated significant changes made in the experimental group which were consistent with the results of Pedro-Carroll & Cowan's (1985) and Stolberg & Garrison's (1985) studies.

Impeding the evaluation of Gwynn and Brantley's (1984) study was utilizing two instruments constructed by the researchers specifically for their study (e.g. the Children's Divorce Information Scale and the Children's Divorce Affective Scale). This same methodological problem was common to both Pedro-Carrol and Cowan's (1985) and Stolberg and Garrison's (1985) studies. Another limitation in their study, discussed by the researchers was that "results could be accounted for by attention received by the experimental group rather than by the group intervention" (p. 163). Noted by the researchers was "a better test for the intervention would include an attention control group" (p. 163).

In the research literature for counselling children of family separation and divorce, there are a number of specific intervention programs (e.g. Cantor, 1977; Green, 1978; Kessler & Bostwick, 1977; Magid, 1977; Scherman, 1979; Sonnshein-Schneider & Baird, 1980; Wilkinson & Bleck, 1977). In many instances, the counselling programs developed are outlined session by session and serve as potential models.

Hozman & Froiland (1977) developed a program incorporating the five stages people go through when dealing with the loss of a loved one as identified by Kubler-Ross (1969). Kessler & Bostwick (1977) designed workshops for children of divorce detailed to address values, communication skills and assertion training. There have been practical approaches structured for elementary schools which incorporate puppets, filmstrips and feelings exploration exercises (Wilkinson & Bleck, 1977). Some groups have been orchestrated as support groups facilitated by a

counsellor (Cantor, 1977; Hammond, 1979). Henderson (1981) responding to single parents' concerns over societal stereotyping of children from "broken homes" in the schools, designed a school guidance program. In this program, both the parents and children separately attended counselling sessions. Another approach involved having the children write and perform a play for their single parents in which they acted out scenarios currently significant in their lives (Cantor, 1979). Other programs (Green, 1978; Gerber, 1982; Keats, 1979) encourage utilizing multi-modal or broad-spectrum divorce groups which involve the children in an exploration of various facets of their lives post-divorce. Green's (1978) multi-modal approach involved a design employing seven modes and their interrelation and interaction. Green designated HELPING as an acronym in order to serve as a compass to delineate children's concerns and specific strategies to address these. Green breaks the acronym down into its seven modes starting with: health and how it may be affected by the children's emotional and perceptual experiences (H), experience the joy of expressing feelings in a nonjudgmental environment (E), become more aware of the learning process (L), understand the process of establishing and maintaining positive interpersonal relationships (P), cultivate mental images helpful in leading positive, happy lives (I), examine fundamental values, attitudes and beliefs (N), develop and practice new behaviors (G) (p. 33-34).

Findings based on these various programs have been predominantly positive. However, with the exception of one study

(Hammond, 1979), the majority have been based upon the subjective appraisal of the children, their parents and teachers. Hammond's study, while employing objective instruments, has been criticized by Tedder, Schermann & Wantz (1987) for failing to incorporate any intervention either individually or for the group. In their own study, the authors evaluated the efficacy of a support group for children of divorced parents, provided in their school setting. Their results were based on the objective ratings of parents and teachers. Parents' ratings were essentially positive whereas teachers observed no change. The researchers speculated that these findings might reflect that parents have a greater opportunity for observation and interaction than the teachers. They recommend that future research might reflect that parents have a greater opportunity for observation and interaction than the teachers. They recommended that future research might employ objective assessment through independent observers. Additional drawbacks of this study were the pre-test, post-test non-randomized design and failure to employ a control group.

In Canada there is a paucity of literature evaluating the efficacy of group counselling for children from divorce. A notable exception is a research project conducted by the Family Service Association of Metro Toronto entitled "Children in Families Experiencing Separation and Divorce: An Investigation of a Planned Brief Intervention" (Freeman, 1985). The research from this study indicated that the children assigned to the experimental group showed greater gains than the control group with respect to the program goals of acceptance and adaptation. Also, these

children displayed an ability to function in more areas than their counterparts in the control group. There was concern expressed regarding the "decided lack of adequate instrumentation" (p. 140). The researchers employed standardized measurements (for example, Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventories and Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children) and perceived these psychometric devices as geared towards a psychopathological perspective. The one instrument considered an indicator of attitudes towards parental divorce that the study used was the Children's Attitude and Self-perception Inventory (CASPI) (Berg, 1979). However, this instrument was criticized for being "insensitive to the changes that were identified by the parent, the children or the social worker" (p. 140). The researchers recommend that "instruments are required which take into account life events and potential mediating variables such as social supports, resources, parenting patterns, the level of spousal conflict, parental adjustment and parent/child contact" (p. 140).

Valid considerations regarding instrumentation are raised in Freeman's (1985) study yet standardized measures continue to be the yardsticks for evaluating the effectiveness of counselling groups for children of divorce. This trend can be seen in recent studies (for example, Anderson, Kinney & Gerber utilized the Classroom Behavior Rating Form (CBRF), 1984; Omizo & Omizo used the Dimensions of Self-Concept (DOSC) Form E and the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale (1987); Pedro-Carrol & Cowen employed Harter's (1982) 28 item Perceived Competence Scale and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children

(STAIC, 1985) and Stolberg & Garrison employed the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale (PH) and the Child Behaviors Checklist (CBCL) (1985).

In Summary, numerous group counselling interventions have been devised for children affected by parental divorce. Most span six to ten weeks and are comprised of between 6 to 8 members. Typically incorporated into program format are feelings exploration exercises, anger management, coping skills, effective communication and relaxation training. Reliance upon subjective appraisals of researchers, group leaders, parents and children participating in the programs is commonly found in assessments. Evaluations are further weakened in several of these programs through failure to include a control group.

Group counselling can be regarded as a helping process in which members can identify goals of change. It also provides the setting in which necessary skills can be developed to fulfill those goals, and to practice these skills (Ohlsen, 1988). Of paramount significance to a group structure for children is the tenet that "what children learn is learned in groups and that learning (or unlearning) might therefore best be effected in groups" (Keats, 1974, p. 98). Another researcher (Sonstegard, 1968) regards group counselling for children as an arena in which the child's learning can be redirected by reexamining misdirected goals. Further substantiating the dynamics of group counselling are the writings of Cohn, Coombs, Gibian & Sniffen (1963) who describe group counselling as a

dynamic interpersonal process through which individuals with the normal range of adjustment work within a peer group and with a professionally trained counsellor exploring

problems and feelings in an attempt to modify attitudes so that they are better able to deal with developmental problems (pp. 355-356.)

Hammond (1979) in a study investigating self-concept, academic achievement and attitudes of children of divorce found the children were desirous of some counselling intervention. She noted that 86% of the children of divorce in her study found the assistance of school personnel beneficial when "asking children to talk about how they feel and by giving children books to read about divorce" (p. 60). A large percentage of the children (82%) indicated that it would be beneficial for counsellors to speak with their parents. Hammond advocates that counsellors or psychologists develop counselling groups for children of divorce with the purpose of "sharing feelings, concern, and support" (p. 61).

Cantor (1977) states that group counselling for children of separation/divorce with a trained leader can "provide ongoing support and immediate crisis intervention to avert later serious personality disorders" (p. 187). During group sessions, the child can be provided with the opportunity to share experiences and information, express fears, anxieties and possibly guilt and above all, to realize that they are not alone with the emotions that they have experienced.

Components of an Effective Group Counselling Program for Children of Divorce

In designing an effective counselling program for children of divorce, Tedder, Scherman & Wantz (1987) saw the need to address three main areas which were illuminated by Wallerstein & Kelly (1975). These

included (a) feeling--both understanding and coping with feelings, (b) cognitions--understanding what happened and why, and (c) problem-solving--deciding what to do and when. In the intervention program that was developed for the Family Service Association of Metro Toronto, the purposes were seen as fourfold. First, an effort was made to alleviate the emotional burden of the divorcing parents who were unable to contend with their children's needs. Secondly, to provide a topical intervention for the children serving to potentially alter their attitudes and perceptions of separation and divorce, thus, also potentially instigating a preventative function. The third purpose was to help establish a repertoire of coping skills for all members of single-parent families. Lastly, to alleviate the severity of the separating and divorcing experience for the children (Freeman, 1985).

The purpose of this current study was to determine the efficacy of a counselling program designed to help late latency children confront and cope with the problems they face when their parents separate and/or divorce. The major thrust of this program was to teach and improve children's communication skills, relaxation strategies and problem-solving procedures. Also incorporated into the structural format were components seen as essential to adequately address the needs of children (9-12 years old) and how divorce impacts upon them.

Hypotheses

1. The mean post-test, Strait-Trait Anxiety Scale Intervention scores for the experimental group will be significantly lower than the mean post-test scores for the control group.
2. The mean post test, Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory scores for the experimental group will be significantly higher than the mean post-test scores for the control group.
3. The mean post-test Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scores for the experimental group will be significantly lower than the mean post-test scores for the control group.
4. There will be a significant difference in the way the two groups of children characterize their families' relationships as displayed in their final drawings by: inclusion of family members, size of father and mother and in the creativity and constriction displayed.

III. Method

Subjects

Participants for this study were children 9-to-12 years of age whose parents have divorced. The children were from the Greater Victoria area appeared to be from the middle income socio-economic strata, and appeared to be average to superior in intelligence. The socio-economic status and intelligence of the children were obtained from their parents during an initial intake interview. Appendices A-D provide a summary of demographic variables of the children participating. Two other criteria used to select subjects for this study were that no more than two years had elapsed since their parents' divorce and that they had not participated in any counselling, divorce related or otherwise. (See Appendix E.)

Instrumentation

The State-Trait Anxiety Scale (STAIC). The STAIC was developed by C.D. Spielberger, C.D. Edwards, J. Montuani, and R. Lashene in 1970. The instrument consists of two separate one-page self-report scales. The form to measure state anxiety STAIC FORMC-1 consists of 20 items each beginning with the phrase "I feel." The child places a check mark beside the ending word or phrase that best describes how he/she feels at that particular moment. The form to measure trait anxiety STAIC FORMC-2, consists of 20 statements which describe how children feel in general. The child is to indicate if he/she feels this way hardly ever, sometimes, or

often. Both scales are scored in the same manner. Items are assigned values of 1, 2, or 3 with one indicating the absence of anxiety and 3 indicating the presence of anxiety. The values are summed to determine the child's score. Procedures are outlined in the test manual for calculating scores when three or more items are omitted. Scores range from 20 to 60. Higher scores indicate higher levels of anxiety.

Reliability information for the STAIC was based on a sample of elementary school children in Florida. Cronbach's alpha was computed to determine internal consistency of the instrument. The alpha for the STATE ANXIETY scale was .82 for males and .87 for females (Spielberger et al 1973).

Concurrent validity of the Trait ANXIETY scale was established by its correlation with two widely used measures of trait anxiety in children with a sample of 75 children--the Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale ($r = .75$) and the General Anxiety Scale for Children ($r = .63$). Construct validity for the State Anxiety Scale was based on a sample of more than 900 fourth, fifth and sixth grade students. Detailed data is presented in the STAIC Preliminary Manual (Spielberger et al, 1973).

Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI). Self-esteem was assessed by means of the Coopersmith SEI (Coopersmith, 1976). This scale measures evaluative attitudes toward the self in several domains. The questionnaire contains 58 statements and subjects respond by checking either "like me" or "unlike me." The 58 items include items that may be scored separately to assess the individual's self-esteem related to: general

self, social self-peers, home-parents, school-academic, and a lie scale. The lie scale is scored separately from the other self-esteem items, and a higher score indicates low defensive lie reactions. Higher scores on the remaining self-esteem items indicate greater self-esteem. Test-retest reliability is reported as .88 over five weeks and .70 over three years (Coopersmith, 1976, p. 10).

The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale. Generalized locus of control for children was assessed using the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control (Nowicki, Strickland, 1969). The scale consists of 40 items that describe "reinforcement situations across interpersonal and motivational areas such as affiliation, achievement and dependency." Test-retest administered at three grade levels and sampled six weeks apart were reasonably high. These ranged from .63 for the third grade, .66 for the seventh grade and .71 for the tenth grade, respectively. Three comparisons investigating the construct validity of the Nowicki-Strickland Scale were significant. The relation to the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility were significant correlating at .51 for seventh graders. Secondly, the correlation with the Bailer-Cromwell Scale was also significant at .41. Lastly, correlations between the Rotter and Nowicki-Strickland adult scales was significant at .38.

The Draw-a-Family or Draw your-Family Test. Several authors have advocated the efficacy of the Draw-Your-Family Test as an instrument to assess children's adaptation to divorce (Hammer, 1958; Hulse, 1952, 1956; Isaacs & Lewin, 1984; Rezinikoff & Rezinikoff, 1958).

Numerous researchers suggest that "family drawings reveal a child's attitudes towards other members of his family and his perception of his own role within the family. Family relations are expressed by the relative size and placement of the figures on the drawings and by the omissions, substitutions and exaggerations of the figures or parts of them" (Koppitz, 1968, p. 134). (For instructions see Appendix F.)

Procedure

This study included children whose parents have divorced. Letters of information and consent forms were distributed through Divorce Lifeline, Victoria, B.C. to parents who requested their children participate in the study. (See Appendix G.)

Following the return of the parent consent forms, the sixteen subjects were randomly assigned to an experimental ($n = 7$) or a control ($n = 9$) group. Test used to evaluate the efficacy of the counselling program were administered before and after each intervention program. The tests used in this study included:

1. The Strait-Trait Anxiety Scale
2. Coopersmith Inventory
3. Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale
4. The Draw-a-Family Test

In total, six counselling sessions were held at Divorce Lifeline. Those participants assigned to the experimental group participated in a counselling intervention based on the "Caught in the Middle Program." The remaining subjects were assigned to the control group. Upon

completion of the study, the parents were informed as to the efficacy of the "Caught in the Middle Program" and those members from the control group were given the option of membership in another six week session should it be deemed beneficial.

Treatment

Experimental Group. Children in the experimental group met once a week for six consecutive weeks. Each session lasted approximately 1.25 hours. The session was led by two trained counsellors (male and female). The chief group goals were (a) to clarify the children's feelings towards their parents' divorce; (b) to add to the children's awareness that they are not alone, that there are other children in similar situations who are experiencing similar feelings; (c) to help children perceive their current situation realistically; (d) to equip children with coping skills in order to deal with their feelings associated with divorce; (3) to build and enhance the children's self-esteem.

The following are brief summaries of the six group sessions. The activities are modifications of suggestions from the "Caught in the Middle Program" (Achtem & Hett, 1988).

Session One: Program Introduction. Members became acquainted with one another. Informal discussions were initiated by the group leaders focusing on the purpose of the group meetings. Concepts discussed included (a) establishing a trust level, (b) recognizing the personal courage it has taken to come, (c) developing a safe environment in which to share personal feelings and concerns, (d) ground rules as a

necessary part of establishing a well-functioning group. Children usually participated in four activities during this first session. The first activity was the DOT-A-THOUGHT; the purpose of which was to: develop group bonding, to get to know one another, and to have fun. The second activity was group guidelines. Here the purposes were: to establish a recognized working format for conducting group meetings, to establish a feeling of safety and personal control while sharing experiences surrounding family break-up issues, to stage the framework for cohesive group interaction. The third activity was vignette number one: I'M TO BLAME. The purposes of this activity were: to develop an awareness of divorce-related issues among group members, to encourage expression of feelings surrounding family breakup, and to dispel any feelings that children are to blame for their parents' divorce. The final activity was a closings appreciations, the purposes of which were: to begin building self-esteem, to practice saying and thinking positive things, and to end the group on a positive note.

Session Two: Communication Skills and Relaxation Training. During this session children were encouraged to develop appropriate listening skills, to participate in group support and discussion and to develop relaxation skills. To facilitate these the children participated in five activities. The first activity was a Check IN in which the children could share any thoughts or feelings they had become aware of since the last session. The second activity was known as Warm-up Telephone Line in which the emphasis was on developing good listening skills. The third

activity was known as Role Play Good vs. Poor Listening Skills in which children gained an appreciation for good listening skills and realized that it takes effort. The fourth activity was known as How Does Stress and Anxiety Affect Us. The purpose of this activity was to have the children become aware of how they experience stress and anxiety. The final activity was known as Reducing Stress in Children Through Relaxation and taught the children a progressive muscle relaxation technique developed by Dr. Edmund Jacobson.

Session Three: Problem Solving and Stress Reduction. In this session, children were helped in exploring typical divorce related problems and were exposed to a problem-solving model. In addition, they were encouraged to develop an awareness of the benefits of muscle relaxation. This session was comprised of a total of six activities; the first one being a check-in activity and the last a closure. The second activity was known as the Question Formation Chart. In this session group members were encouraged to develop an awareness and discuss separation and divorce related issues. Also, participants were encouraged to develop an awareness of the benefits of deep muscle relaxation. The third activity was called Introduction to Problem Solving Techniques. In this exercise, group members were exposed to the concept of brainstorming for problem solving and encouraged to implement it in practical situations. The fourth activity consisted of a vignette permitting children to employ the problem solving model to a "simulated but non-

threatening, family scene." Activity number five was a muscle relaxation exercise employing the instructions detailed in session number two.

Session Four: Assertive Behaviors: The 1-2-3 Formula. Group members were encouraged to discriminate between assertive and aggressive behaviors. In additions, the children were encouraged to "own" their feelings by employing "I" statements. This session consisted of six activities; again the first one being a check-in. Activity number two was another relaxation training exercise. The third activity was known as Assertive versus Aggressive Behavior (hand pressure exercises). In this activity group members were paired up and told to place their palms together. One partner then attempted to push the other's hands backwards while the other tried to resist without being "pushy." This procedure was repeated with partners exchanging positions. In the final run of this exercise, both partners were instructed to neither push nor resist but to follow each other around with their hands. A discussion followed in which members talked about lack of control/power, the reciprocal nature of pushing someone and finally that equal postures allow the freedom to relate to one another. The fourth activity incorporated "I" messages. Group members were taught to distinguish between assertive "I" messages and blaming "You" messages. The fifth activity was a problem solving exercise with a vignette. Group members viewed a vignette related to communication skills. They were then encouraged to discuss the vignette and work through the problem-solving model. The final activity of this session was designated appreciation.

Group members were to recall an uncomfortable feeling they had at the onset of the session and to relate how they feel they have changed.

Session Five: Families and Social Influences. In this session, group members were made aware of the different kinds of families. Again, there were six activities; the first one being a check-in activity, the second being a relaxation exercise and the fifth activity being a closure exercise. Activity three explored family constellations and exposed the group members to the varied forms families may take. The fourth activity was called a Public Interview in which invited guests openly discussed their parents' divorce and answer questions posed by the group.

Session Six: Rights and Responsibilities and Group Closing. This session was intended as a forum in which group members discussed their responsibilities towards themselves and their families. The first activity was once again a check-in. The second activity was called Responsibilities, in which cards (printed with parent and child responsibilities) were shared with the group and they determined who should own the responsibility. A discussion followed addressing the fact that in a happily functioning family, all members are aware of and deal with their responsibilities. The third activity was known as Rights in which members receive a worksheet entitled Every Child's Bill of Rights. The sixteen rights were then reviewed by the group for their meaning and intent. The fourth activity was an evaluation in which group members were asked to give constructive feedback on the parts of the program they found the most and least helpful.

The fifth activity was a final closure. The group members were encouraged to tie up any loose ends and to then state one positive thing about themselves and one positive thing about the group they would pass to other interested children.

Control Group. The control group was co-led by a male and female. Members participated in six non-directive sessions which did not directly involve divorce issues. The control group was used to mitigate for the possibility of a placebo effect, i.e., that attention alone might be an intervening variable. Throughout the six sessions the children participated in a variety of fun-filled activities. (For further details of the sessions see Appendix H.)

IV. Results

Results of this study are presented in the order of hypotheses tested. T-tests were used to determine differences between post-test scores for the experimental group and the control group.

Hypothesis 1 states that the mean post-test, State-Trait Anxiety Scale Intervention scores for the experimental group will be significantly lower than the mean post-test scores for the control group. There were no significant differences found between groups on either subtest of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (see Table 1).

Hypothesis 2 states that the mean post-test, Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory Scores for the experimental group will be significantly lower than the mean post-test scores for the control group.

There were no significant differences found between groups on any of the subscales of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (see Tables 2, 3, Figure 2).

Hypothesis 3 states that the mean post-test Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scores for the experimental group will be significantly lower than the mean post-test scores for the control group. Significant differences were found between the experimental group and the control group as measured by the Nowicki Strickland Locus of Control Scale ($m = 20.28$ and 13.71) $t(14) = 2.54$, $p < .05$. (See Table 4, Figure 3).

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations and Between Groups' t scores on the A-STATE (FORM C-1) and A-TRAIT (FORM C-2) of the STAIC

			Posttreatment		
		M	SD	t	p
FORM					
C-1	Experimental (n = 7)	30.14	5.37		
				.072	.793
STATE	Control (n = 9)	30.78	4.15		
ANXIETY					
FORM					
C-2	Experimental (n = 7)	39.71	5.87		
				.190	.669
TRAIT	Control (n = 9)	38.11	8.18		
ANXIETY					

STATE-TRAIT ANXIETY SCALE

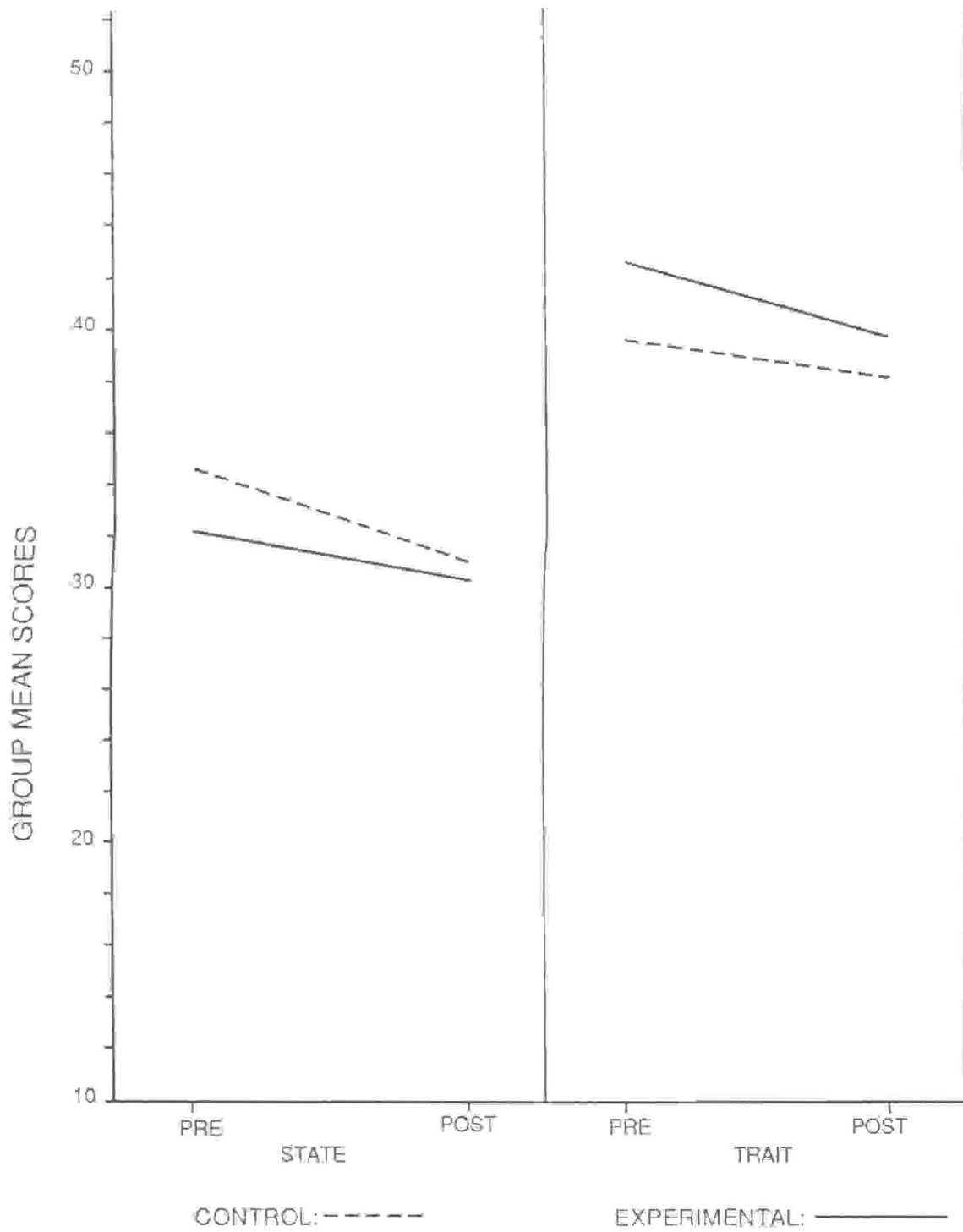


FIGURE 1: A comparison of pre- and post-test mean scores for experimental and control groups on the STAI.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations and Between Groups Change Scores on the Total Subscale of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

	x	Posttreatment		
		SD	t	p
Experimental (n = 7)	62.57	3.48		
			.002	.965
Control (n = 9)	62.00	2.49		

Table 3

Analysis of Experimental and Control Groups' Performance on Subscales of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

	Experimental				Control			
	x	SD	t	p	x	SD	t	p
General Pre	15.29	3.45	.09	.930	15.78	7.71	-1.89	.096
General Post	15.14	5.24			18.33	6.16		
Social Pre	5.29	1.89	-.17	.869	5.56	2.46	-.36	.729
Social Post	5.43	1.81			5.78	1.92		
Home Pre	5.14	2.48	.00	1.000	5.00	2.60	-1.03	.332
Home Post	5.14	2.67			5.67	2.12		
School Pre	4.57	1.81	.55	.604	4.11	2.67	-1.15	.282
School Post	4.29	2.56			4.44	2.60		
Total Pre	60.57	15.57	.13	.902	60.89	29.35	-1.43	.192
Total Post	62.57	22.42			62.00	24.39		

COOPERSMITH SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY

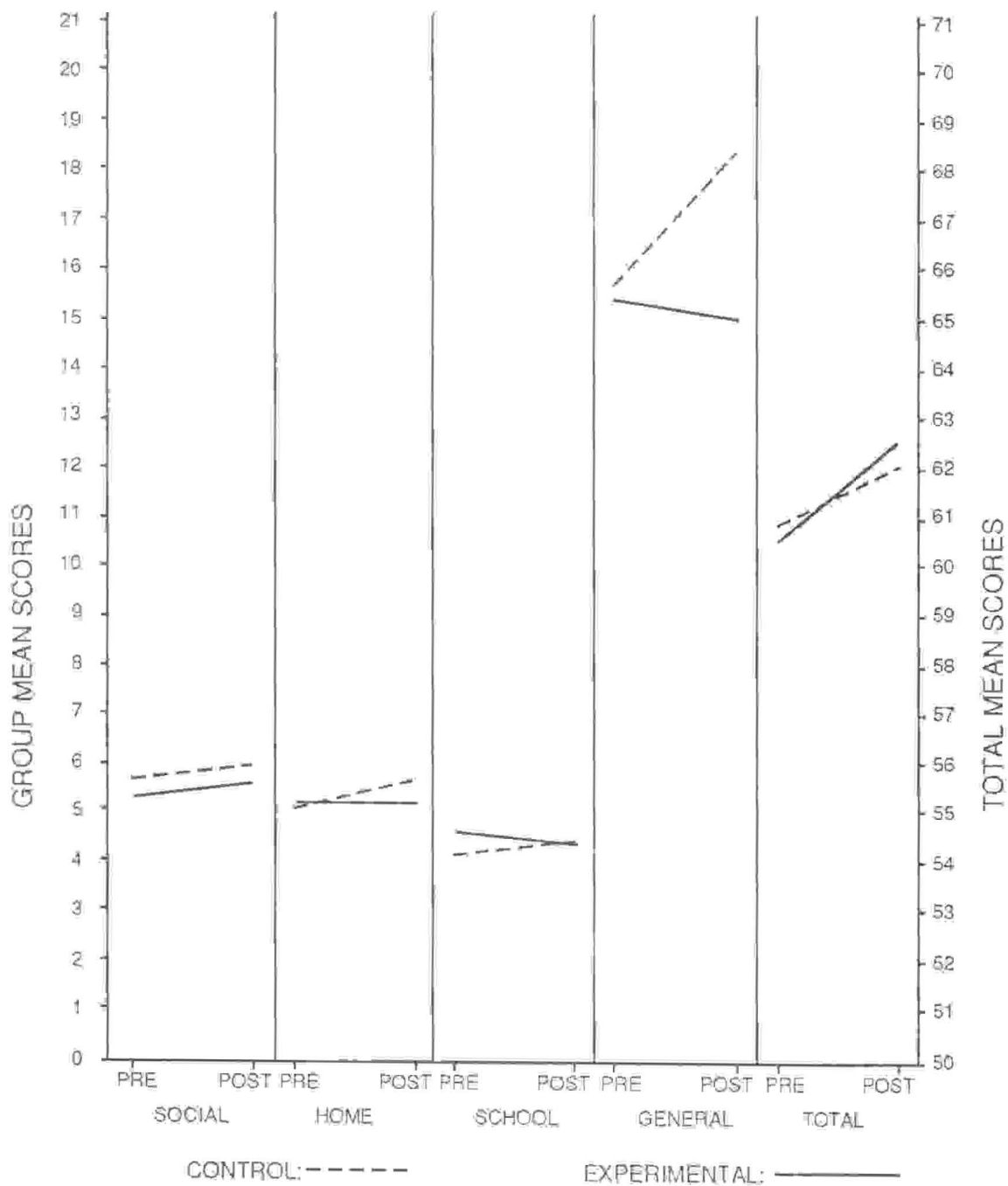


FIGURE 2. A comparison of experimental and control group mean pre- and post-test scores across subscales of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations and Between Groups Change Scores on the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale

	x	Posttreatment		
		SD	t	p
Experimental (n = 7)	20.28	6.28	2.43	.05
Control (n = 9)	13.71	4.27		

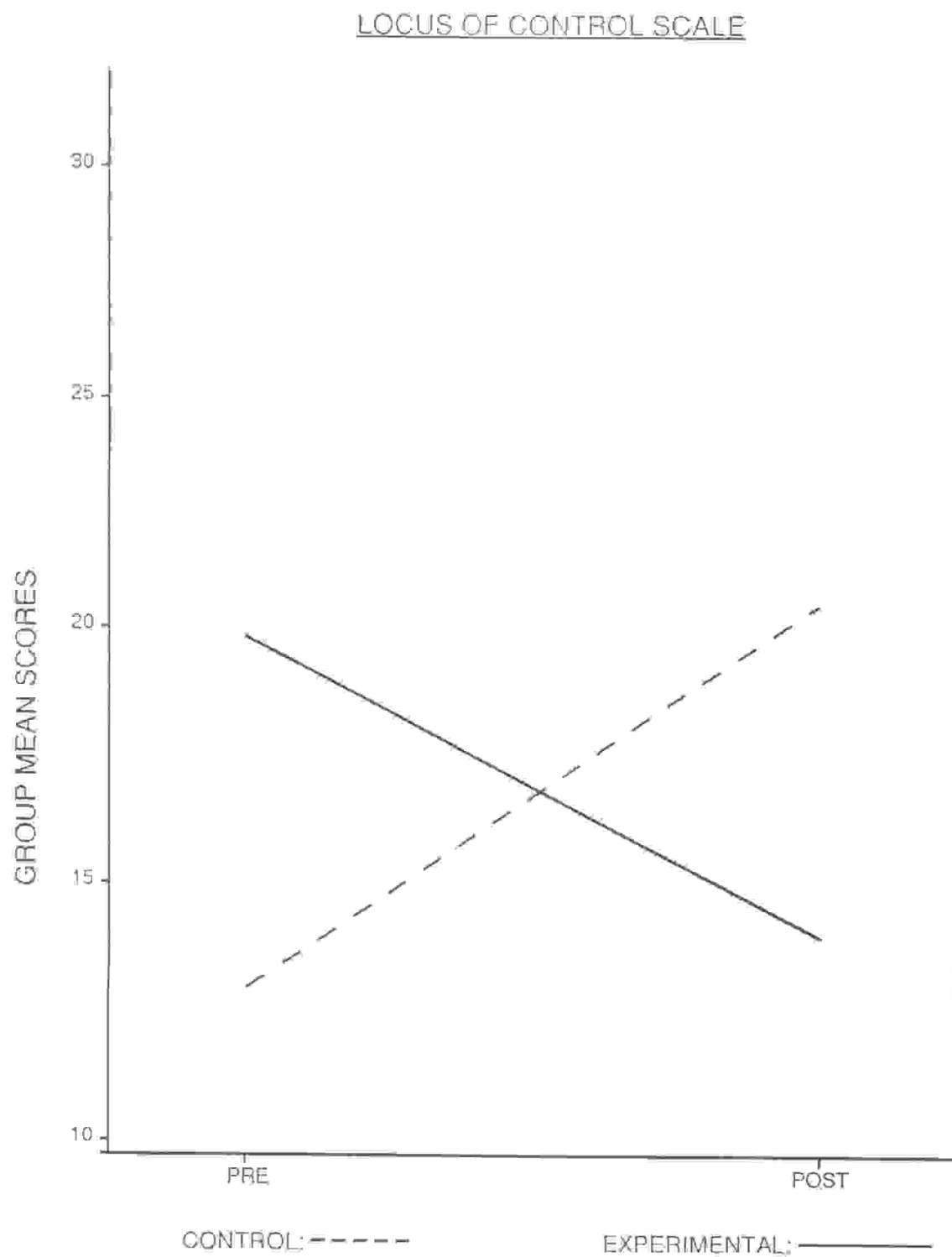


FIGURE 3. A comparison of pre- and post-test mean scores for experimental and control groups on the Nowicki Strickland Locus of Control Scale

The final hypothesis stated that there would be a significant relationship difference in the way the two groups of children characterize their families' relationships as displayed in their final drawings by: inclusion of family members, size of father and mother and in the creativity and constriction displayed (when compared to the final drawings of the control group).

All of the pre-and-post-test drawings of the experimental and control group were independently assessed by an art therapist who remained uninformed as to the composition of each group.

When requested to draw a composition of their family, children of divorce in mother-headed households frequently tend to portray their fathers as smaller than their mothers. In later portrayals children tend to omit their fathers from their family compositions which seems to convey their perception that their fathers are becoming peripheral in their lives. As well as omitting their fathers, children tend to make new inclusions in their family drawings which appears to be an expression of desire for a reconstituted nuclear family. In addition, children's family portraits, with time, show a shift in a drop in creativity and an increase in constriction. However, children participating in intervention programs designed to address the needs of children of divorce do not show this shift in the creativity/constriction dimension in their family drawings (Isaacs & Levin, 1984).

Considering these factors, the art therapist utilized the following criteria:

1. Family Composition. This was simply a measure of who the child included or excluded from the family drawing. If a parent was excluded from the drawing they were counted as missing. "Added" figures were people included in the family drawing who were not part of the nuclear family.
2. Size of Individual Figures: It was assumed that the relative size of fathers and mothers would reflect a power dimension. To calculate any difference in their respective sizes, figures were measured in centimetres from top to bottom. Any figures that were less than .5 cm different in height were considered equal size.
3. Change in the Creativity/Constriction Dimension included the following:
 1. Change in degree of detail (i.e. full human figures versus stick figures; details in clothing or other parts of the drawing versus much less detail).
 2. Change in differentiation between the sexes.
 3. Change in the integrity of body parts in the individual figures (i.e. part figures versus whole figures; missing body parts versus more complete figures. (The above measurements were adapted from a study by Isaacs & Levin, 1984).

In the experimental group 71% of subjects included their fathers in both pre-test and post-test family drawings. One male subject excluded a step-father in his pre-test drawing but included the step-father in his post-

test family drawing. Another male subject excluded his father in both of his pre-and-post-test family compositions.

In terms of additions beyond the nuclear family, 43% of the children in the experimental group added someone to their post-test family drawing. One male subject added his step-mother and step-brother to his post-test family composition. Another two male subjects added their mothers' boyfriends, and in one case the boyfriend's two sons. Two other subjects who included their mothers' boyfriends in their pre-test drawings excluded the boyfriends in their post-test family compositions.

In the control group, fathers were included in 100% of the children's pre-and-post-test drawings. One male subject who excluded his mother in his pre-test added her to his post-test family composition.

Inclusions in control subjects drawings beyond the nuclear family indicated 22% of the children added someone. One female subject included her step-father and step-brother in both her pre-and-post-test drawings. Another female respondent added two step-sisters to her post-test family drawing. (See Table 5.)

Post-test drawings by the experimental group indicated that 29% had drawn their fathers taller. This represented a distinct shift, for these same subjects had portrayed their fathers smaller than their mothers in their pre-test drawings.

Table 5

Pre- and post-test Compositions of the Draw-A-Family Test for
Experimentals and Controls indicating Family Composition

Code:

D	Dad	S	Step-
M	Mom	H	Half
S	Sister	BF	Boyfriend
B	Brother		

UNID. denotes family member not named

UNIDX unidentified figure crossed out

Family member names on second line denote PETS

(?) Denotes rater uncertainty about identity of family member

Vertical column on right specifies family member contained in picture that is not contained in other picture by same subject.

NC No Change in Family Composition

NC? Judgement of No Change based on interpretation. Verify identity of family member

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>FAMILY MEMBERS</u>	<u>CODE</u>
Male #1		
pre	Sharon (S-M?) D Sister Me Brother	
post	Sharon D Me B (Jon) S (Erin) S-B (Adrian) dog (Shadow) cat (Rusty)	+S-B
Male #2		
pre	Me Mark M Adam	(?) +Mark
post	Me John M Adam	+John

Male #3			
pre	M Brother Me		
post	Me M Boyfriend Brad Troy Brother		+B F +Brad +Troy
Female #1			
pre	M Me D Ian Lara		
post	Teabag Eclipse Maude Harold		+Ian
Female #2			
pre	D (Michel) M (Diane) Me		
post	D M Me Willow (hamster)		NC
Female #3			
pre	Me M Ryan D		
post	UNID. D M Ryan Me	?	NC?
Male #4			
pre	D (Bill) M (Elisabeth) Stu S S (Melanie) Ben Ben		
post	3 fish 1 cat 1 dog Bill Elisabeth Tina Me Melanie 5 gerbils, dog cat 3 fish	?	+Stu
Male # 5			
pre	Me Ang Shan D M Ricky Shawn Sunshine		
post	Me Shawn D M Ricky cat		+Ang +Shan
Male # 6			
pre	D M S me		
post	D M Me Kali		NC
Female # 4			
pre	D M Me M		
post	M D UNIDX UNIDX Me S		+ Kali +S NC?

Female # 5		
pre	D H-B S M S-D	
	cat dog rabbit cat	+HB
post	D M S-D S B	
	cat dog rabbit chicken(s)	+B NC?
Male # 7		
pre	Me Yvonne Yvette D	
post	Me Yvonne Yvette D M	+ M
Female # 6		
pre	M Me D	
	cat dog fish	
post	M Me D	
	cat dog fish	NC
Male # 8		
pre	Me D M Jenny S-M	
post	Me D M Jenny S-M	NC
Female # 7		
pre	M D Danny Me	
post	M D Danny Me	NC
Female # 8		
pre	B D M Me	
post	B D M Me	NC

Children in the control group also portrayed their fathers as taller in their post-test drawings. However, while 33% portrayed their fathers taller, 44% drew their fathers as diminished in size compared to their pre-test drawings in which their fathers were shown as equal in size to their mothers. One control group subject who portrayed his father smaller than his mother in his pre-test drawing, drew his parents of equal size in his post-test composition. (See Table 6)

In 43% of experimental subjects' drawings a shift in the creativity/construction dimension was found in the direction of an increase in creativity in their post-test drawings. A shift in the direction of increase creativity was also found in 33% of the control groups' post-test drawings. (See Table 7.)

Post-test family drawings for both experimental and control groups included the father (experimental = 77%, control = 100%) and represented him as larger than the mother (experimental = 29%, control = 33%). These findings seemed indicative of reintegrating the father in a perceived paternal role. In terms of creativity, both the experimental (43%) and control (33%) groups final family compositions portrayed gender differences in terms of hair-styles, modes of dress and three-dimensionality of figures. Issacs & Levin (1984) speculate that inclusion of these creative elements represents an ability to adjust to the disrupted family.

Table 6

Pre- and Post-test Compositions of the Draw-a-Family Test for
Experimental and Control Groups indicating Differential Size of Parents

CODE:

? Indicates some degree of uncertainty as to whether parental member
is correctly identified

GF Girlfriend

BF Boyfriend

T Taller

-T Not Taller

Size in Centimetres

<u>EXPERIMENTAL</u> <u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>DAD</u>	<u>MOM</u>	<u>STEP</u> <u>DAD</u>	<u>STEP</u> <u>MOM</u>	<u>GF</u>	<u>BF</u>	<u>DIF. OF < 0.5</u> <u>cm = same</u>
male #1							
pre	8.0			8.3			?
post	9.6			9.9			?
male #2							
pre	4.6?	5.5					?
post	18.9?	17.9					?
male #3							
pre		5.0					
post		7.9				7.4	
female #1							
pre	11.5	12.0					Father -T
post	13.1	12.2					Father T
female #2							
pre	4.5	4.9					same
post	8.0	7.8					same

female #3							
pre	6.5	6.2					same
post	1.6	1.4					same
male #4							
pre	7.5	5.2					Father T
post	10.2	8.7					Father T
<u>CONTROL</u>			<u>STEP</u>	<u>STEP</u>			<u>DIE, OE < 0.5</u>
<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>DAD</u>	<u>MOM</u>	<u>DAD</u>	<u>MOM</u>	<u>GF</u>	<u>BF</u>	<u>cm = same</u>
male #1							
pre	9.4	10.0					Father -T
post	10.5	10.6					same
male #2							
pre	4.6	4.0					Father T
post	5.2	6.5					Father -T
female #1							
pre	10.2	10.4					same
post	9.4	8.9					Father T
female #2							
pre	3.2	3.5	3.0				same
post	4.1	3.0	2.6				Father T
male #3							
pre	9.6						
post	12.5	10.6					Father T
female #3							
pre	2.5	3.7					Father T
post	5.7	6.8					Father T
male #4							
pre	2.9	2.4		2.5			Father T
post	3.0	2.3		2.6			same
female #4							
pre	11.3	11.2					same
post	11.9	12.7					Father -T
female #5							
pre	1.7	2.1					same
post	1.6	2.2					Father -T

Table 7

Pre- and Post-test Compositions of the Draw-A-Family Test for Experimental and Control Groups indicating Creativity/Constriction Dimension

CODE:

+ Indicates picture exhibits more creativity (and hence less constriction) than its counterpart by the same subject.

NC Indicates no clearly identifiable change in this dimension.

EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS		CONTROL SUBJECTS	
Male #1 pre post	-	Male #1 pre post	+
Male #2 pre post	+	Male #2 pre post	+
Male #3 pre post	+	Female #1 pre post	+
Female #1 pre post	Female #2 -	pre post	NC
Female #2 pre post	Male #3 NC	pre post	+
Female #3 pre post	Female #3 +	pre post	+
Male #4 pre post	+	Male #4 pre post	NC
		Female #4 pre post	+
		Female #5 pre post	NC

Summary of Data Analysis

Four hypotheses were tested to evaluate the efficacy of a group counselling intervention for children of parental divorce. The results may be summarized as follows:

1. The experimental group made no significant changes in terms of their post-test mean scores on the STATE and TRAIT ANXIETY forms of the STAIC compared to the control group. Significant changes were evident between the pre- and post-test group mean scores of the STATE ANXIETY SCALE, FORM C-1 for the control group.
2. There were no significant differences between groups on any of the five subscales (General, Social, Home, School, Total) of the CSEI for the experimental or control groups.
3. There were significant changes found on post-test locus of control scores for the experimental group when compared to the post-test scores for the control group. Experimental subjects post-treatment scores indicated they endorsed items more internally compared to control subjects.
4. There were positive observable shifts in the family drawings of both the experimental and control groups across all three dimensions indicating an adjustment in their experience of divorce.

V. Discussion

This study tested the hypotheses that children who participated in an experimental group counselling program would show less anxiety, greater self-esteem, be more internally oriented and be better adjusted to the experience of divorce than children in the control group. Analysis of the results did not provide support for all of the hypotheses.

Experimental subjects showed no significant changes on either of the sub-scales of the STAIC. Reasons for the program's ineffectiveness at alleviating experimental group participants' anxiety may have stemmed from the direct intervention format encouraging feelings' exploration and expression. These findings are in accord with a study by Wallerstein, MacKinnon, Resnikoff & Springer (1987) in which the researchers noted that anxiety was heightened with the expression of divorce-related feelings. Another study found that identification and expression of feelings was particularly difficult for latency-aged children who invest a great deal of energy in elaborate defenses against feelings (Bowker, 1982).

Results from control group members' post-test scores on the A-STATE scale of the STAIC (Spielberger, 1973) indicated they experienced less transitory anxiety than prior to participating in the control group. Differences between the control and experimental groups' transitory anxiety may have reflected the fact that control group members were not required to partake in affect expression. Children experiencing their families' break-up may feel that no other children are dealing with the

same feelings as themselves and therefore may feel unique. Control group members interacting in fun-filled activities with peers may have felt less anxious about their "delusion of uniqueness" (Sullivan, 1947; cited in Anderson, Kinney & Gerler Jr., 1983). However, for both experimental and control group subjects there were no significant changes in trait anxiety which may be attributed to long-term anxiety being a more stable dimension than can effectively be ameliorated in 6 weeks of counselling intervention.

Positive self-esteem changes were not found on any of the subscales of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. Pedro-Carrol & Cowen (1985) found a similar lack of positive change among experimental participants in a counselling intervention program and postulated that "a 10-week intervention focusing specifically on divorce-related issues is not sufficiently powerful to produce change on relatively stable dimensions such as perceived competency and self-esteem" (p. 609). A trend towards improved self-esteem across the general and total subscales of the CSI seemed apparent when comparing control group post mean scores with the experimental group (see Figure 2). Shifts towards improved self-esteem for control group subjects may be traced to the rapport that grew with peers and the attention received from the co-leaders without the threat of feelings exploration. This suggests that any activity, be it play or counsellor's intervention, can result in an improvement of self-esteem.

Locus of control scores indicated higher internality for participants in the experimental group. Thus experimental group members thought there was a contingency relationship between their cognitions and actions. Children in the experimental group possessing an internal locus of control orientation should be better equipped to make life adjustments. Similar results were found by Omizo & Omizo (1987) in which post measures on the Nowicki Strickland Locus of Control Scale indicated a significant change in their counselling intervention group compared to control subjects.

According to Issaac & Levin's (1978) study, children in the first year of parental separation were similar to children from intact families in a tendency to draw their fathers larger than or equal in size to their mothers. However, at the two year mark children experiencing parental separation drew their fathers smaller than their mothers or excluded them from their drawings. Additionally, the researchers found that by the end of the second year of separation their study population showed less creativity and an increase in constriction in their family drawings. However, a drop in creativity was not evident in population receiving a preventive family therapy orientation.

A total of 71% of the experimental subjects included their fathers in their post-intervention drawings. Fathers were also drawn as being taller than mothers by 29% of the experimental subjects, representing a shift from being portrayed smaller than mothers in the children's initial drawings. These drawings suggest that in the children's minds there may

be a change in perception of the family from being a single parent one in which the mother is all-powerful, to one in which the father comes from the periphery into a co-parenting role. Additions beyond the nuclear family were seen in 43% of the children in the experimental group. For one group member his father's girlfriend and her son were added to his final drawing. Another boy added his mother's boyfriend and his two sons. Both instances might be viewed as attempts to perceive the family as a reconstituted family unit. Three other experimental group members included mothers' boyfriends as well as their mothers and fathers in their initial drawings, but deleted the boyfriends in their final drawings. There are two possible explanations for this: (1) the mothers were no longer in a relationship with these individuals, or (2) the children were attempting to perceive their family as harmonious again without an intruder. A shift towards increased creativity was seen in 43% of the experimental groups' post drawings suggesting that the group intervention program may have brought about changes in the experimental subjects' sense of well-being and positive adjustment to the experience of divorce.

Pre-and-post-test drawings from the control group indicated all the members included their fathers in both drawings. However, in their post-test drawings, 44% of the control subjects portrayed their fathers as being diminished in size compared to their mothers. This suggests that children in the control group may be perceiving the family as being headed by a single parent, namely the mother, who now is regarded as powerful. Furthermore, in their post drawings 29% of the experimental group

portrayed their fathers as larger than their mothers. This may reflect a shift towards a perception of the father as a co-parent, rather than an omnipotent figure, or one pushed into the periphery of their lives.

Increases in the creativity dimension were seen in both the experimental and control groups post-test drawings. However, more experimental subjects showed an increase in creativity in their family compositions than did the control subjects. This suggests that the group counselling intervention may have benefitted the experimental subjects in their sense of well-being and adjustment to their parents' divorce. This finding appears consistent with Isaacs and Levin's study (1984) in which the researchers noted a drop in creativity and an increase in constriction in the family drawings of children of divorce, two years post-separation. The authors suggest that this shift towards constriction in children's family compositions may reflect their sense of a permanent loss. However, the researchers did not find a similar shift in the drawings of children of divorce who participated in interventions which alleviated their divorce-related problems.

Implications for Counsellors

The findings from the present investigation have possible significance for counsellors interested in structuring group counselling intervention programs for children of parental divorce, particularly late-latency aged children. Generally, it appears that late-latency aged children may initially experience heightened anxiety in an intervention program format that dictates an immediate and direct expression and exploration of

divorce-related feelings. This suggests that counsellors might include intervention strategies that allow for increased anxiety and the utilization of the anxiety as a means of venting anger or other anxiety related feelings. Intervention should definitely include support type strategies.

Furthermore, in light of the present results it appears that participating in a group counselling intervention for children experiencing parental divorce can change children's locus of control towards an internal orientation. It may be that participating in an intervention program that exposes children to effective communication skills and relaxation techniques as well as providing a forum for discussing their feelings may empower these children. Therefore, future researchers intent on structuring an effective group counselling intervention program for late latency aged children of parental divorce might incorporate the following aspects:

1. Given that late latency aged children may be resistant to affective expression, particularly of divorce-related issues it may be beneficial to allow an initial period to permit sufficient rapport to develop among group members and with the group leaders. Therapists can facilitate this process by allowing children to maintain their "safety zones" until adequate trust is established. This will allow the children to feel comfortable about opening up and sharing personal experiences with others. Also, there are alternatives to directly probing the children regarding their personal feelings about their parents' divorce. Alternative approaches could permit several

sessions be allocated to metaphoric exploration of divorce-related feelings. This could be accomplished through reading stories about children's experience of their parents' divorce, video presentations about family break-up and/or relating stories of animals separated from one parent. Once the topic of feelings related to parental separation has been broached in a non-threatening manner it may be possible to encourage personal disclosures from the children in future sessions.

2. While it is acknowledged that feelings exploration, effective communication skills, relaxation techniques and attempts to better understand the dynamics of divorce may be effectively structured in a beneficial group intervention for children of parental divorce, it is important to hold uppermost that they are still children. Therefore, it seems imperative to also include fun-filled activities in the sessions. By incorporating fun-filled activities the bonding process may be enhanced between group members and with leaders.
3. Finally, it is important to remember that children's self-esteem appears to negatively correlate with parent-parent and parent-child conflict. Ideally then parents should be encouraged to participate in group counselling intervention for their children. The opportunity to hear first-hand how their own children feel about their family break-up as well as actively partaking in role-plays in effective communication and the expression of emotions may serve to alleviate a great deal of turmoil in their children's lives.

Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research

The small number of subjects participating in this study restricts generalizability; future researchers may attempt to accommodate this shortcoming by including more subjects in their sample. Changes in anxiety and self-esteem were not detected by two psychometric instruments; the State-Trait Anxiety Scale and the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory respectively. Other studies have found standardized psychometric instruments relatively insensitive to stable dimensions when assessing group intervention for children of parental divorce (e.g. Pedro-Carrol & Cowen, 1985; Freeman, 1985; Stolberg & Garrison, 1982). Future researchers employing standardized psychometric measures to assess the efficacy of group counselling interventions for children of parental divorce may find longitudinal administration of psychometric instruments more effective. For children participating in group interventions designed to ameliorate the effects of parental divorce, changes in relatively stable dimensions such as chronic anxiety and self-esteem may be imperceptible after only six to eight weeks. However, follow-up assessments conducted at six months and one year post-treatment may allow adequate time for children to process and integrate the knowledge, skills and strategies of an effective intervention program to assist children adjusting to the experience of divorce.

It should be noted that the participation of the experimenter in the structuring and facilitation of the control and experimental group might have produced some affect in both groups. A strong desire on the part of

the facilitator of a play group or counselling group can produce positive results. To measure the Rosenthal and Hawthorne effects a second control group in which no intervention or support is offered can provide a clearer idea of how a play or counselling intervention can affect change in behavior.

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Appendix A

Presenting Concerns As Identified by Parents during initial intake interview for Experimental Group (n = 7)

Concern	Number of Subjects Experiencing Concern
1. Trouble Sleeping	2
2. Weight gain or loss	
3. Anger Outbursts	2
4. Withdrawal from friends	1
5. Alcohol consumption	
6. Drug Abuse	
7. Getting in trouble	
8. Crying Spells	3
9. Sexual Concerns	1
10. Nightmares	1
11. Headaches, Stomachaches etc.	2
12. Disciplinary problems/rebellion	1
13. Jealousy (e.g. with parents)	1
14. Special fears (e.g. of the dark, being alone)	
15. Thoughts of suicide	
16. Depression or moodiness	1
17. School problems	1
18. Running away	

Appendix B

Presenting Concerns as Identified by Parents during initial Intake Interview for Control Group (n = 9)

Concern	Number of Subjects Experiencing Concern
1. Trouble Sleeping	1
2. Weight gain or loss	1
3. Anger Outbursts	3
4. Withdrawal from friends	1
5. Alcohol consumption	
6. Drug Abuse	1
7. Getting in trouble	1
8. Crying Spells	2
9. Sexual Concerns	1
10. Nightmares	1
11. Headaches, Stomachaches etc.	3
12. Disciplinary problems/rebellion	1
13. Jealousy (e.g. with parents)	1
14. Special fears (e.g. of the dark, being alone)	1
15. Thoughts of suicide	1
16. Depression or moodiness	
17. School problems	
18. Running away	

subject	custody	number brothers	number sisters	birth order	residence of absent parent	frequency of visits	feelings about divorce	positive aspects of divorce	negative aspects of divorce
1. male	father	1 biological 1 step-brother	1 biological	first born	locally (Victoria)	alternate weekends	confusion	both parents still love him	adapting to rules in two different households
2. female	mother	1 step-brother	0	first born	out of province (Toronto)	special holidays 2-3 times annually	disapproval	calmer household	misses father
3. male	mother	1 biological	0	first born	in the province (Port Alberni)	rarely	angry	quieter household no fighting	misses father
4. male	mother	1 biological	0	first born	out of province (Toronto)	never	sad	calmer household	misses father
5. female	mother	1 biological	1 biological	first born	out of country	never	angry sad	no more fighting	misses father
6. male	joint	0	2 biological	second born	both live locally (Victoria)	50% time spent with each parent	disapproval	calmer household	"grumpy" parents
7. female	joint	0	0	first born	locally (Victoria)	50% time spent with each parent	disapproval	calmer household	sad parents

subject	custody	number brothers	number sisters	birth order	residence of absent parent	frequency of visits	feelings about divorce	positive aspects of divorce	negative aspects of divorce
1. male	joint	0	1 biological	first born	both reside locally (Victoria)	50% of time spent w/ both parents	unhappy	closer to school	having to move
2. female	father	0	1 biological	first born	locally (Victoria)	3 times during week alternate weekends	betrayed sad angry	less fighting	having two homes
3. female	mother	0	0	first born	locally (Victoria)	infrequent	sad angry	less fighting	parents sad
4. female	mother	1 step-brother	1 biological	first born	locally (Victoria)	infrequent	confused	less fighting	misses father
5. male	mother	1 biological	3 biological	5th born (last)	provincially	once a month	unhappy	less fighting	misses father
6. female	mother	1 biological	0	first born	locally (Victoria)	once a week	unhappy	less fighting	misses father
7. male	father	0	2 biological	3rd born (last)	out of province (Calgary)	never	mad	doesn't have to choose between	misses mother
8. female	mother	1 biological	0	2nd born (last)	out of province (Calgary)	3-4 times a year	confused alienated	no more fighting	misses mother
9. male	mother	0	1	first born	out of province (Calgary)	3-4 times a year	angry sad	no more fighting	misses mother

Appendix E

DIVORCE LIFELINE
CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE
INFORMATION SHEET

*All information on this is strictly confidential
to be used for Divorce Lifeline purposes only.

(A) GENERAL*Office Use Only*

Your Name _____ Interview Date _____

Level of Education: Group Placement Date _____

Self: HS grad. ___ HS+ ___ Group Counsellor _____

College grad ___ Grad/Prof. ___ Counsellor's Comments: _____

(Ex) Spouse: HS grad. ___ HS+ ___ _____

College Grad ___ Grad/Prof. ___ _____

Income:

Your current earned annual gross salary _____

Annual income from interest, dividends, real estate, other investment

Assets:

Please estimate total assets:

Less than \$10,000 ___ \$10-15,000 ___ \$15-20,000 ___ \$20-25,000 ___

\$25-30,000 ___ \$30-50,000 ___ \$50-75,000 ___ \$75-100,000 ___ Over \$100,000 ___

Are any of the children exceptional (mentally/physically/emotionally
handicapped? Gifted? Talented?) _____

Is your child below, average, or above average intelligence? _____

Do you live in a: City ___ Suburb ___ Rural area _____

Do you live in: Marital home ___ Apartment _____

Different house than marital home _____

Different community than former spouse _____

Child's Name _____

Address _____

Place of Employment _____

Relationship to Child _____ Child's age _____ Grade _____

(Home) Phone _____ (Work) Phone _____

(B) COUNSELLING

Has your son/daughter had counselling before? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, with whom? _____

Are you currently, or have you been, in counselling? Yes _____ No _____

Group or individual counselling? _____

(C) MARITAL/RELATIONSHIP STATUS AND FAMILY

Married: 1st _____ 2nd _____ Third _____ Are you and the child's parent currently married? _____ No. of years? _____ Are you and the child's

parent living separate and apart? _____ How long have you lived separate and apart? _____ Do you have a Separation Agreement? _____ Has a divorce

been filed? _____ Are you and the child's parent divorced? _____ How long? _____

Have you remarried? _____ Has the other parent remarried? _____

How is custody arranged? _____

How is visitation arranged? _____

(D) MEDICAL

Does your son/daughter have any medical or health problems? _____

Is he/she taking any medications? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what? _____

(E) SPECIAL CONCERNS

Please check any of the following which you believe to be a problem for your son or daughter:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trouble Sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Nightmares |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weight Gain or Loss | <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches, Stomach Aches, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anger Outburst | <input type="checkbox"/> Discipline, Rebellion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal from Friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Jealousy (e.g. with Parents) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Fears (e.g. Dark, being alone) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug Abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughts of Suicide |

Getting in Trouble Depression or Moodiness Crying Spells School Problems Sexual Concerns Running Away (or wanting to)

Other Behavioral and/or Emotional Problems _____

Stresses and concerns for the parent directly affect the child. If we know of any major areas of difficulty that you are having, we are better equipped to help your son or daughter. Please check any of the following which may pertain to you.

 Depression Drinking or Drug Use Anger or Temper Control Medical Problems Sleeping Problems Eating Difficulties Problems in Social Relationships Suicidal Thoughts

Other _____

Describe your child's relationship with you. _____

Describe your child's relationship with his/her other parent. _____

Your thoughts on your child's perceptions and beliefs about the causes of the divorce. _____

Special Concerns: _____

(F) OTHER

I heard about Divorce Lifeline from _____

Are you currently or have you in the past been involved in one of Divorce Lifeline's programs? Yes _____ No _____

Which Program?

1. Small Group Counselling _____

 (Leader's Name)

2. Individual Counselling _____

 (Counsellor's Name)

3. Parents' Program _____

 (Leader's Name)

 (Parent's Signature)

Appendix F

Instructions for the Draw your Family Test

I would like you to draw a picture of your family. Please feel free to use as much of the page as you wish. Also, the boxes of crayons are there for your use, so please feel free to use whichever colours you choose. When you have completed your drawing I would appreciate it if you would label all the individual members that you have shown. Please take your time and remember that there are no right or wrong drawings, and that no one is going to be judged on their artistic abilities.

Appendix G

Wednesday, March 22, 1989

Dear Parents:

Re: Research Project for 9-12 Year Olds
Caught in the Middle Program

The purpose of this letter is to outline what would be involved for your child should he or she be enrolled in the April Caught in the Middle program at Divorce Lifeline. As well, as session by session outline of the program format and goal statements is enclosed.

The intent of the research project is to determine the effectiveness of a counselling program for pre-adolescent children who are working through their parent's separation or divorce. Children who agree to participate in the study will be assigned to one of two groups: a directed counselling group or a non-directed counselling group. Each group will be run for six sessions from 4:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. beginning either on Tuesday, April 18 or Wednesday April 19. By assigning children to one of the two groups and having them complete three questionnaires prior to beginning the group, and upon the groups' conclusion, an opportunity will be provided to study their personal growth throughout the program period. With this information the effectiveness of the program can then be determined.

If you agree to have your child enter this Caught in the Middle research project it will be necessary for you to sign the consent form provided and return it to Divorce Lifeline offices before the commencement of the program. Once the consent forms are received it will then be necessary for each child to have a screening/information interview with the counsellor.

The purpose of this approximately hour long interview is:

- to explain to each child what the aims and objectives of the program are;
- to explain what activities will be used in the group (i.e. video, storybooks, discussion, artwork, etc.);
- to give each child an opportunity to ask any questions; and
- to complete the three questionnaires. (sample questions are enclosed)

If there are any questions you have about this research program please do not hesitate to give me a call at my home or work number.

Yours truly,

Chris Rose, MA Candidate
Department of Psychological Foundations
Tel Number: 388-6047 (h)
721-7822 (w)

Enclosures

CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Pre-Adolescent Research Project Parental Consent Form

I _____, hereby agree to have my child become part of this study. The investigation and my child's part in it have been defined and fully explained to me by the researcher and I understand the explanation.

I understand that complete confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study and that my involvement and the involvement of any member of my family is completely voluntary and that we may decide to withdraw at any time.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H

Program Outline for Control Group

Day One:

Personal introductions were facilitated by pairing group members and having them discuss common likes and dislikes. Towards the end of the session members regrouped and introduced their new friend to the larger group.

Day Two:

The duration of the session was spent viewing a current comedy video entitled "Harry and the Hendersons."

Day Three:

Participants spent the entire session drawing a large group mural on a sheet of newsprint roll. Children drew whatever they choose to, no themes were mentioned. At the end of the session children were informed that the following session would be designated "pet day." All members would have an opportunity to talk about their favorite pets with the group.

Day Four:

The entire session was spent allowing each child to share with the group about their favorite pet.

Day Five:

The session was spent watching another video entitled "Adventures in Babysitting." At the end of the session, members were informed that the final session would be a party.

Day Six:

The session was spent enjoying soft drinks and pizza provided by the counsellors. At the end of the session the counsellors and group members had an opportunity to say good-bye to one another.

Appendix I

Children's Responses to the Program

The experimental subjects who participated in the Caught In the Middle group intervention appeared quite resistant to discuss personal feelings during the first four counselling sessions. The counsellors identified a range of feelings typically experienced by late latency-aged children of divorce. When asked if any group members experienced similar feelings, the children would gaze out the window, look up at the ceiling or become disruptive, tossing stuffed toys at one another. One child responded with "I don't know what you're talking about, I don't have any of those feelings." This was echoed by the other group members. It was only during the final two sessions that members began to share divorce-related feelings. In both sessions the female participants initiated the expression of their feelings. Male subjects shared as well in these last sessions, but only after all the female members had shared. Detailed and articulate descriptions of feelings of anger, sadness, confusion and betrayal were given by most of the children. For example, one boy, whose mother had left the family unannounced to initiate a new relationship and had not maintained contact with her family, stated that he became so angry that he had gone on a rampage destroying articles left behind by the mother. At the same time he talked about being so confused and saddened with this loss that he would hide in the closet and sob uncontrollably. A female participant shared how she had become a

communication conduit between her battling parents. She talked about how saddened her mother was with her father's departure and was cognizant of her mother's devastated condition and so she would not pass along embittered messages relayed by her father. She also stated that she had told her father that she did not want to hear any more of his vengeful remarks directed at her mother, but felt she was not being heard. From the majority of the subjects' stories it seemed apparent that they were very concerned about their parents' emotional well-being, but often to the deficit of their own. A dichotomy was evident in terms of how the girls and boys managed their anger. The girls talked about being very despondent and passive. For example, one female subject stated that when she became angry "I go to my room and listen to music or go visit a friend and go for a long walk." The males on the other hand shared that they became aggressive and destructive when angry. One male subject stated that "I go and hit the dog or pick a fight with my younger brother." Another male participant said that when he became angry about his parents' divorce "I go to my room and punch my pillow."

After participating in the relaxation exercises the participants felt the technique would be beneficial to use in the future. In regards to the relaxation training one male subject stated "I think this is something I can use in the future when I get really uptight." The assertiveness training also appeared to be something that the members felt would be helpful. A female subject responded to the assertiveness exercise by stating, "I think this might work for me so that I can be better understood and heard."

Children in the control group shared their experiences as well. For example a female respondent stated "I'm feeling more relaxed and happy." Her remark was echoed by the majority of the participants. During the final session when everyone was saying their goodbyes all the children asked if there were to be any more programs like the one they had just completed, as they would enjoy participating again. Also they asked if the co-counsellors would be leading these future groups because they would like to have them as group counsellors again. It may be that for the control subjects coming together with other children who shared in common that their parents no longer lived together, coupled with enjoying a series of fun-filled activities may have made them feel more relaxed and happy. Despite the fact that the co-leaders did not actively counsel the control subjects or deal with any divorce-related issues it seemed that a rapport and trust developed. Control subjects' desire to have the co-leaders be their future co-leaders might be attributable to the fact that the two adults were listening to them, appeared genuinely interested in their lives and were willing to pay attention to them.

VITA

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Date of Birth: 19/01/52

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