

Divorce Will Affect the Emotional Development of a Child

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Abstract

Couples can decide to divorce; in most cases, children typically feel intense loyalty to their parents. Since divorce is now normalized, most teams must do what is best for them. Divorce has no biases. It is for all genders, ages, and races. Also, everyone will feel something during the divorce process. However, most parents are not thinking about how their decision to get a divorce is problematic for most children because it will affect the emotional development of the child. In a complex situation, children of divorce need support from both parents, someone who will listen to their emotions, and most children are looking for guidance. However, there is no way for a child to obtain these personal needs because the parents are no longer together. It discovered that children of divorce have higher rates of emotional instability, academic problems, social conflicts, and cognitive disadvantages than children from a continuously married parent. Some may say that a child will be excellent with parents who are co-parenting or in a single household, but it is not the same in this research which will address how divorce will affect a child's emotional development.

Keywords: Divorce, emotional development, child

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Divorce was not recognized by common or canon law in England before 1857, which meant that individuals seeking a divorce had to obtain a specialized Act of Parliament, a costly option available only to those with substantial financial resources. By 1850, divorce had become gendered, with men having the final say due to their more excellent representation in the workforce and access to wealth. Consequently, the state imposed significant financial pressures on single individuals, promoting remarriage. David Smith notes that the Royal Commission proposed making marriage a civil matter and creating a divorce court. This court would allow a husband to file for divorce on the grounds of adultery, even if he was not innocent. The Commissioners believed they were following the teachings of the church and the Reformation. However, a "Divorce Bill" got drafted due to the perceived unfairness of the proposed divorce laws. The bill was met with controversy and was withdrawn and reintroduced several times with modifications. Finally, in June of 1857, the bill became law" (Smith, 2000, pp.71-72.). Sheela Kennedy and Steven Ruggles assert that divorce is a widely recognized concept. The age-standardized divorce rate surged to "40%" among the standard population between 1980 and 2008. Individuals over 35 have experienced a twofold increase in divorce over the last two decades. Additionally, through indirect methods, it is estimated that 44% of marriages will inevitably end in divorce" (Kennedy & Ruggles, 2014, p.588).

Divorce can have a profound impact on how children perceive the situation. The child's age, gender, and stress history can all significantly affect their reaction. It is not uncommon for children to devise strategies to reunite their parents. Furthermore, the relationship quality between children and their parents can substantially impact a young adult's sense of gender identity. Divorce can have a significant effect on both marital satisfaction and the behavior of

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When a marriage ends in divorce, all individuals connected to the divorce had a determination and articulation of certain factors attributing to that relationship, which were expressed differently by everyone. However, due to their innocence and immaturity, children are socially, cognitively, physically, and emotionally to this type of crisis unable to process stressful events as adults are. Their reactions and role in these situations will seem confusing, and most children need assistance articulating their emotions accurately (p.1201).

Behavior can range from subtle to explosive. Deshpande and Pandey researched to study the psychological impact of the Children's Apperception Test, and 20 children got picked by Deshpande and Pandey from a population divided into two different groups. Group A was children with both parents, and Group B was children with divorced parents. It was hypothesized that children with separated parents are more likely to engage in harmful coping mechanisms,

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In Similarities, Pauline Jordan is a clinical psychologist helping children and adolescents adjust to life after their parents' separation or divorce. Clinicians have noticed recurring emotions, thoughts, and concerns during therapy sessions with these young clients. Some of the main themes that have emerged include feeling ashamed of being different from their peers, struggling with what to tell their friends and teachers, feeling frustrated by the inconvenience of moving between two homes, and feeling like an adult before their time, taking on much responsibility for their wellbeing and their parents' emotional stability, which can sometimes lead them to hide their feelings to protect their parents (Jordan, 2016). It is crucial to recognize that children must be fully equipped to handle the weight of specific responsibilities, especially when faced with the added stress of divorce. It is a reality that parents cannot ignore. Jordan interviewed Adam to learn more about his view of himself and his world, pressing worries or concerns, and particular interests, since he is a child of divorcees. In this session, the therapist obtained information about Adam's academic and social functioning within the school setting via a phone conversation with his teacher, who also completed a behavioral checklist about Adam due to his parents' divorce. Jordan observed that Adam demonstrated an "impaired ability to self-regulate affective experience, and he quickly became flooded by solid emotions that resulted in behavioral dysregulation" (Jordan, 2016, p.434). He yelled, cried, and lashed out when anxious, frustrated, or angry. However, he became giddy when joyful, jumping and flapping his hands. During these dysregulation times, Adam acted like a much younger child and appeared odd. At the time of the intake interview, he displayed resistance and limited ability to label feelings in

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himself or others. Adam could not explain his emotions because he needed support from his parents when it came to him trying to learn how to be expressive, which he lacked from getting emotional support from his parents. Therefore, the therapists clarified to the parents that supporting their child's psychological development was crucial, no matter the circumstances. They stressed that effective parenting should extend beyond the home. Adam's father must step up and ensure his parenting is consistent, even when Adam is with his mother, to improve his psychological being. The therapist also cautioned that if Adam's aggressive outbursts persist, they could become ingrained in his self-identity and affect his other relationships. (Jordan, 2016). The therapists saw that Adam was incapable of processing his emotions without the help of his parents, which was impacting his school performance and social skills.

Contrary to popular belief, divorce is not always a negative experience. According to Amato, Kane, and James, a good divorce can benefit a child's growth and development—this type of divorce results in both adults and children being emotionally stable post-divorce. In a good divorce, the family stays intact, and parents continue to provide for their children's emotional, financial, and physical needs. The fundamental idea is that divorced spouses should work together as partners to create a cooperative and healthy environment for their children to grow in, which allows for the continuation of familial bonds with their children (Amato, Kane, & James, 2011). A positive divorce involves both parties seeking healing and striving to become the best versions of themselves, while a harmful divorce is simply a separation. A good divorce indeed promotes co-parenting, which was associated with greater father-child visitation. (Amato et al., 2011). In most states, divorce education classes for parents are encouraged by courts to varying degrees. These classes aim to educate divorcing couples on the benefits of having two

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involved parents, practicing cooperative co-parenting, and reducing children's exposure to interparental conflict for their well-being. Divorce education is a program that aims to help parents have a positive divorce experience, like mediation. Studies show that most parents find these classes helpful, with many reporting improvements in communication, cooperation, and a decrease in conflict. Additionally, parents who have participated in these programs report better child adjustment than those who have not (Amato et al., 2011). Basically, not all children with divorced parents experience long-term problems. Additionally, Amato's research delved into how people's beliefs about children from divorced families influence how they process information about them. According to previous studies, people tend to pay more attention to, think about, and remember information that aligns with their preconceived notions rather than information that contradicts them, which indicates that people tend to process data about children of divorce in a way that reinforces their hostile expectations. For instance, "if a child from a divorced family is not well-liked by their peers, onlookers may interpret this as proof of the harmful effects of divorce" (Amato,1991, p.59). Also, People often judge divorce negatively, leading to unfair assumptions about the struggles of children whose parents have separated. For example, if a child fails a class, a teacher may incorrectly blame the divorce for the poor performance. These assumptions are baseless and harmful. When discussing the behavior of children of divorce, it is worth noting that negative traits from children, such as being poorly behaved, disruptive, aggressive, rebellious, and prone to delinquency, were mentioned more often than positive ones. It is also essential to recognize that social traits were primarily negative, with common responses including shyness, loneliness, difficulty forming relationships with the opposite sex, and a higher likelihood of divorce later in life. Overall, the answers had a negative tone, "with 61% of descriptions being negative, 31% positive, and 8% neutral. These findings suggest that while

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some positive traits are associated with children of divorce, negative aspects are more commonly thought of” (Amato, 1991p.64). A self-fulfilling prophecy may negatively affect children from divorced families, which means that "teachers, school principals, counselors, psychologists, social workers, and parents may expect these children to have more problems than others" (Amato, 1991, p.68). As a result, they may treat them in ways that worsen or create these problems. For example, teachers may give children of divorce fewer chances to show their competence, reward them less often for good behavior, or punish them more frequently. The potential for a self-fulfilling prophecy concern anyone working with children from divorced families. Previous studies have suggested positive post-divorce family relationships can benefit children, but our findings contradict this. According to Jordan, children of divorced parents are at a higher risk of emotional, behavioral, social, and academic problems than children of continuously married parents. Moreover, children from high-conflict households may not develop the necessary social skills such as compromise and negotiation (Jordan, 2011).

In conclusion, caring for a child as two parents is already hard enough, so imagine trying to help a child develop independently, which is mind-blowing to me. Children can grow up with a single parent. Still, it is always better to have two healthy parents than just one because you will get the best of both worlds. It is understandable that once the relationship causes more harm than good, then separation could be the best solution for the parents but not the child because Children of divorce have higher rates of emotional instability, academic problems, social conflicts, and cognitive disadvantages than those children from a continuously married parent. The best way to prevent children from being emotionally harmed is to work together as a team and always remember that most decisions will impact the child and everyone, so being mindful is

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beneficial when making such a big decision as getting a divorce. When Jordan interviewed Adam, it was evident that a child will emotionally feel secure and can articulate their emotions better when both parents are physically and emotionally available because children need someone to listen to and validate their feelings. As divorce rates continue to rise, many children face the difficult task of choosing between their parents. This can lead to feelings of self-doubt, anxiety, and conflict between family members. Children need to enjoy their childhood without feeling stuck between two difficult situations. Taking a divorce class could help reduce the divorce rate by educating couples on improving their relationship and avoiding common pitfalls. By learning new skills and strategies, couples can work towards a happier, more fulfilling marriage that benefits everyone involved.

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