

The impact of parental divorce on the marital attitudes and intimacy of adults and children of divorce.

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Abstract: Exposure to **parental divorce** has multiple relational and attitudinal effects. This study examined the relationship between the age at which **parental divorce** occurs and adult children's **attitudes** towards marriage and levels of intimacy. The literature suggested that offspring who experience **parental divorce** in early adulthood might be particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of **parental divorce**, as they are undergoing a critical stage of psychosocial development in which the conflict between intimacy and isolation must be resolved. This study proposed that individuals who experience **parental divorce** in early adulthood would develop more negative **attitudes** towards marriage and experience lower levels of intimacy than adults who experience **parental divorce** in childhood. Erik Erikson's theory of young adulthood was applied as a theoretical framework to better understand how **marital attitudes** and the developmental task of establishing and maintaining intimate romantic relationships may be disrupted when **parental divorce** is experienced in young adulthood. The aforementioned areas were investigated by analyzing surveys comprised of a demographic questionnaire, the **Marital Attitude Scale**, and the Miller Social Intimacy Scale. The surveys were administered online to 101 individuals who experienced **parental divorce** at age 18 years old or older and 166 individuals who experienced **parental divorce** below the age of 18. The hypotheses were then examined with t-tests for independent samples and reexamined using two one-way analysis of variance tests (ANOVA) with Erikson's Developmental Model of age classification as the independent variable. The results suggested that the majority of participants had positive **attitudes** towards marriage and high levels of intimacy. There was no significant difference in the **marital attitudes** or levels of intimacy between individuals who experienced **parental divorce** when they were under 18 years of age and those individuals who experienced **parental divorce** when they 18 years old or older. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2012 APA, all rights reserved)

Subjects: *Divorce; *Intimacy; *Marital Separation; *Parental Attitudes

Classification: General Psychology (2100)

Population: Human (10)

Age Group: Adulthood (18 yrs & older) (300)

Methodology: Empirical Study; Quantitative Study

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