Marriage, Intimate Relationships and Families

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RON HAMMOND AND PAUL CHENEY, EDITED BY PROFESSOR BILL PELZ

Contents

Introduction

The textbook for this course was written by Ron Hammond and Paul Cheney and first published in 2016 with a CC-BY 4.0 license. I have edited the contents a little, but the overall organization has not been changed.

Bill Pelz, Professor of Social Science
Herkimer College / SUNY
May, 2018

PART I

MAIN BODY

1. Intimate Relationships and Families

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2. 1. Family Theories

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Explain the major assumptions of each of the theoretical perspectives.
- Compare and contrast the three major theoretical perspectives.
- Apply theory to issues of the family.

MAKING SENSE OF ABSTRACT THEORIES

Sociological theories are the core and underlying strength of the discipline. They guide researchers in their studies; they also guide practitioners in their intervention strategies. And they will provide you with a basic understanding of how to see the larger social picture in your own personal life. A **theory** *is a set of interrelated concepts used to describe, explain, and predict how society and its parts are related to each other*. Let's use binoculars as a metaphor to illustrate the usefulness of a theory. Binoculars serve to magnify, enlarge, clarify, and expand our view of the thing we are looking at. Unlike binoculars, you can't see or touch a theory, but it is a framework to help you "see" the world sociologically. Some things you want to look at need 20×80 strength binoculars while you might see other things better with 8×40 or 10×30 lenses. It's the same with society. Some things need the lens of Conflict Theory, while others need a Structural Functional or Symbolic Interactionist lens. Some social phenomena can be viewed using each of the three frameworks, although each will give you a slightly different view of the topic under investigation.

Theories are sets of interrelated concepts and ideas that have been scientifically tested and combined to magnify, enlarge, clarify, and expand our understanding of people, their behaviors, and their societies. Without theories, science would be a futile exercise in statistics. In the diagram below you can see the process by which a theory leads sociologists to perform a certain type of study with certain types of questions that can test the assumptions of the theory. Once the study is administered, the findings and generalizations can be considered to see if they support the theory. If they do, similar studies will be performed to repeat and fine-tune the process. If the findings and generalizations do not support the theory, the sociologist rethinks and revisits the assumptions s/he made.

Here's a real-life scientific example: In the 1960s two researchers named Cumming and Henry studied the processes of aging. They devised a theory on aging that had assumptions built into it. These were, simply put, that all elderly people realize the inevitability of death and begin to systematically disengage from their previous youthful roles while at the same time society prepares to disengage from them.[1] Cumming and Henry tested their theory on a large number of elderly persons. Findings and generalization consistently yielded a "no" in terms of support for this theory. For all intents and purposes this theory was abandoned and is only used in references such as these. Theories have to be supported by research and they also provide a framework for how specific research should be conducted.

Theories can be used to study society–millions of people in a state, country, or even at the world level. When theories are used at this level they are referred to as **macro theories**, *theories which best fit the study of massive numbers of people* (typically Conflict and Functional theories). When theories are used to study small groups or individuals, say a couple, family, or team, they are referred to as being **micro theories**, *theories which best fit the study of small groups and their members* (typically Symbolic Interactionism). In many cases, any of the three main theories can be applied at either the macro or micro levels.

Let's consider the three major theoretical perspectives one at a time.

CONFLICT THEORY

The Conflict Theory is a macro theory designed to study the larger social, global, and societal level of sociological phenomena. This theory was founded by Karl Marx. Marx was a witness to oppression perpetrated by society's elite members against the masses of poor. He had very little patience for the capitalistic ideals that undergirded these powerful acts of inhumane exploitation of the average person. Later Max Weber further developed this sociological theory and refined it to a more moderate position. Weber studied capitalism further but argued against Marx's outright rejection of it.

Conflict theory is especially useful in understanding: war, wealth and poverty, the "haves" and the "have-nots," revolutions, political strife, exploitation, divorce, ghettos, discrimination and prejudice, domestic violence, rape, child abuse, slavery, and more conflict-related social phenomena. **Conflict Theory** *claims that society is in a state of perpetual conflict and competition for limited resources*. Marx and Weber, were they alive today, would likely use Conflict Theory to study the unprecedented bail outs by the U.S. government which have proven to be a rich-to-rich wealth transfer or to help guide the explanation of private health care companies benefiting from illness and poverty.

Conflict Theory assumes that those who "have" perpetually try to increase their wealth at the expense and suffering of those who "have-not." It is a power struggle which is most often won by the wealthy elite and lost by the common person of common means. Those who "have" are those who possess power. **Power** *is the ability to get what one wants even in the presence of opposition.* When power is institutionalized, we call it authority. **Authority** *is institutionalized, legitimate power*. By **institutionalized** we mean *making something (for example a concept, a social role, particular values and norms, or modes of behavior) become embedded within an organization, social system, or society as an established custom or norm within that system.*[2]

By far the "haves," in Marx's terms, the **bourgeoisie** *or wealthy elite are the royal, political, and corporate leaders*, have the most power. The bourgeoisie are the Goliaths in society who often bully their wishes into outcomes. The “have-nots” or Marx’s **proletariat** *are the common working class, lower class, and poor members of society*. According to Marx (see diagram below) the Bourgeoisie and Proletariat cannot both have it their way and in order to offset the wealth and power of the Bourgeoisie the proletariat often rise up and revolt against their oppressors (The French, Bolshevik, United States, Mexican, and other revolutions are examples).

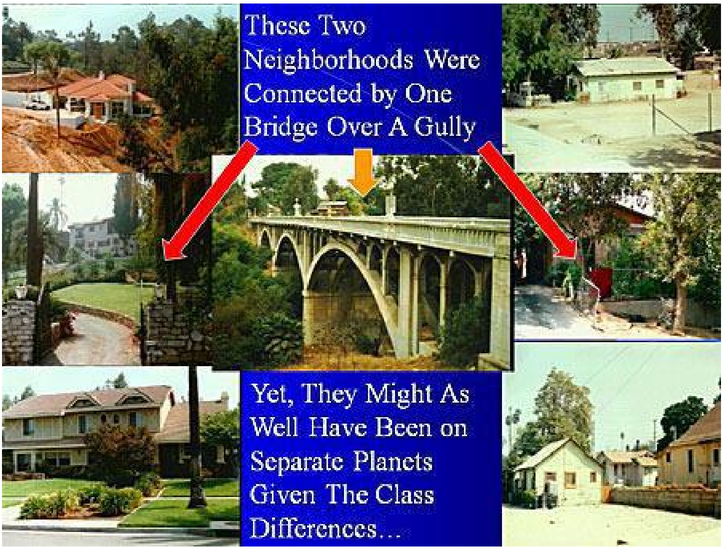


Figure 1. Photo Montage of Haves and Have Nots in a U.S. Neighborhood.[3]

Marx and Weber realized that societies have different social classes and a similar pattern of relatively few rich persons in comparison to the majority who are poor. The rich call the shots. Look below at the photographic montage in Figure 1 of homes in one U.S. neighborhood which were run down, poor, trashy, and worth very little. They were on the west side of a gully and frustrated many who lived on the east side who were forced to drive through these slums to reach their own mansions.

The Conflict Theory has been repeatedly tested against scientifically derived data and it repeatedly proves to have a wide application among many different levels of sociological study. That is not to say that all sociological phenomena are conflict-based. But, most Conflict theorists would argue that more often than not Conflict assumptions do apply.

STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM THEORY

The Functionalist Theory claims that society is in a state of balance and kept that way through the function of society's component parts. Society can be studied the same way the human body can be studied: by analyzing what specific systems are working or not working, diagnosing problems, and devising solutions to restore balance. Socialization, religious involvement, friendship, health care, economic recovery, peace, justice and injustice, population growth or decline, community, romantic relationships, marriage and divorce, and normal and abnormal family experiences are just a few of the evidences of functional processes in our society.

Functionalists would agree with Conflict Theorists that things break down in society and that unfair treatment of others is common. These break downs are called dysfunctions, which are breakdowns or disruptions in society and its parts that threaten social stability.

Enron's collapse, the ruination of 14,000 employees' retirement funds, the loss of millions in shareholder investments, and the serious doubt it left in the mind of U.S. investors about the stock market's credibility and reliability which lasted for nearly a decade are examples of dysfunctions in the economic sector of the economy. Functionalists also look at two types of functions, manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions are the apparent and intended functions of institutions in society while latent functions are the less apparent, unintended, and often unrecognized functions in social institutions and processes.

Back to Enron, the government's manifest function includes regulation of investment rules and laws in the stock market to ensure credibility and reliability. After the Enron collapse, every company offering stocks for trade underwent a government supervised audit of its accounting processes in order to restore the public trust. For the most part balance was restored in the stock market (to a certain degree at least). There are still many imbalances in the investment, mortgage, and banking sectors which have to be readjusted; but, that's the point-society readjusts and eventually recovers.

Does the government also provide latent or accidental functions to society? Yes. Take for example U.S. military bases. Of all the currently open U.S. military bases, all are economic boons for the local communities surrounding them. All provide jobs, taxes, tourism, retail, and government contract monies that would otherwise go somewhere else. When the discussion about closing military bases comes up in Washington DC, Senators and members of Congress go to work trying to keep their community's bases open.

As you can already tell, Functionalism is more positive and optimistic than Conflict Theory. Functionalists realize that just like the body, societies get "sick" or dysfunction. By studying society's parts and processes, Functionalists can better understand how society remains stable or adjust to destabilizing forces when unwanted change is threatened. According to this theory most societies find that healthy balance and maintain it; if they don't then they collapse as many have in the history of the world. **Equilibrium** *is the state of balance maintained by social processes that help society adjust and compensate for forces that might tilt it onto a path of destruction.* Thinking back to the Conflict example of the gully separating extremely wealthy and poor neighborhoods, look at the Habitat for Humanity picture in Figure 2. Functional Theorists would say that component parts of society respond to dysfunctions in ways that help to resolve problems. In this house the foundation was dug, poured, and dried within a week. From the foundation to this point was three working days. This house is now finished and lived in, thanks mostly to the Habitat non-profit process and the work of many volunteers. Lots of homeless people are a dysfunction for society; think about what would happen if half of society was homeless for example. So another part of society, the normative organization of Habitat for Humanity, steps in and makes adjustments; they buy lots, get donations and volunteers and build homes helping to bring society back into equilibrium.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM THEORY

Symbolic Interactionism *claims that society is composed of ever-present interactions among individuals who share symbols and their meanings*. This is a very useful theory for understanding other people, improving communication, and in understanding cross-cultural relations. Values, communication, witch-hunting, crisis management, fear from crime, fads, love, evil and sin, what's hot and what's not, alien abduction beliefs, "who I am," litigation, mate selection, arbitration, dating joys and woes, and both personal and national meanings and definitions can all be better understood using Symbolic Interactionism.

Once you realize that individuals are, by their social natures, very symbolic with one another, then you begin to understand how to persuade your friends and family, how to

understand others' points of view, and how to resolve misunderstandings. This theory is interested in meanings. Think about these three words, LOVE, LUST, and LARD. Each letter is a symbol. When combined in a specific order, each word can be defined. Because we memorize words and their meanings we know that there is a striking difference between LOVE and LUST. We also know that LARD has nothing to do with either of the other two terms. Contrast these word pairs hate versus hope, help versus hurt, advise versus abuse, and connect versus corrupt. These words, like many others carry immense meaning and when juxtaposed sound like the beginning of philosophical ideas.

Figure 2. Photo of a Habitat for Humanity Home.[4]

Symbolic Interactionism makes it possible for you to be a college student. It makes it so you understand your professors' expectations and know how to step up to them. Our daily interactions are filled with symbols and an ongoing process of interactions with other people based on the meanings of these symbols. Have you ever had anyone you've greeted actually answer your question of "How are you?" Most of us never have. It's a greeting, not a question in the U.S. culture and a Symbolic Interactionist would be interested in how it changed from a question to a greeting.

Symbolic Interactionism helps you to know what the expectations of your roles are and if you perceive yourself as doing a good job or not in meeting those expectations. The **Thomas Theorem** is often called the "definition of the situation." It says that *if people perceive or define something as being real, then it becomes real in its consequences*. An example of this is a woman who was diagnosed as HIV positive. She made her funeral plans, made sure her children would be cared for then prepared to die. Two-years later she was retested. It turned out her first test results were a false positive, yet she acted as though she had AIDS and was certainly going to die soon from it.

She changed how she saw her remaining days. In a hypothetical case, a famous athlete (you pick the sport) defines himself as invincible and too famous to be held legally accountable for his criminal behavior. He is subsequently found guilty for a crime. A hypothetical politician (you pick the party and level of governance) believes that his/her constituents will tolerate anything and so he/she engages in morally undesirable behavior. The point is that when we define our situation as being real, we act as though it is real (regardless of the objective facts in the matter).

One of the major realizations that comes with Symbolic Interactionism is that you begin to understand the other people in your life and come to know that they are neither right nor wrong, just of a different point of view. They define social symbols with varying meanings. To understand the other person's symbols and meanings is to approach a common ground. Listen to this statement by Rosa Parks (1913-2005), "All I was doing was trying to get home from work." In 1955 when she refused to give up her seat on the bus to a White person, it proved to be a spark for the Civil Rights Movement that involved the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. and many other notable leaders. It was Rosa Parks' simple and honest statement that made her act of defiance so meaningful. The lion's share of the nation was collectively tired and sick of the mistreatment of Blacks. Many Whites joined the protests while others quietly sympathized. After all that was written in the history books about it, a simple yet symbolic gesture by Rosa Parks started the healing process for the United States. Table 1 provides a quick reference for comparing the three major sociological perspectives.

THEORIES DEVELOPED FOR UNDERSTANDING THE FAMILY

Over the years researchers have found the necessity to develop theories of behavior that are specific to family settings. These theories have been developed by people with a variety of areas of emphasis, from family therapists to gerontologists to child development specialists. In this chapter we will briefly discuss six such theories: Family Systems, Family Developmental, Life Course, Social Exchange, Ecological, and Feminist.

FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY

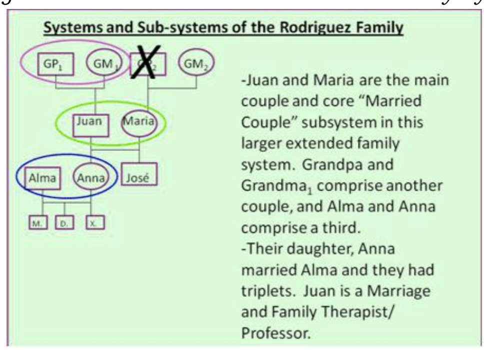
When understanding the family, the Family Systems Theory has proven to be very powerful. **Family Systems Theory** claims that *the family is understood best by conceptualizing it as a complex, dynamic, and changing collection of parts, subsystems and family members*. Much like a mechanic would interface with the computer system of a broken down car to diagnose which systems are broken (transmission, electric, fuel, etc.) to repair it, a therapist or researcher would interact with family members to diagnose how and where the systems of the family are in need of repair or intervention. Family Systems Theory comes under the Functional Theory umbrella and shares the functional approach of considering the dysfunctions and functions of complex groups and organizations. To fully understand what is meant by systems and subsystems look at Figure 3 which depicts Juan and Maria's extended family system.

Table 1. Comparing the Three Major Sociological Theories.5

Conflict	**Structural Functionalism**	**Symbolic Interactionism**
Macro	*Macro*	*Micro*
Inequality lies at the core	Uses biological model	Society is an ongoing
of society which leads to	(society is like a living	process of many social
conflict	organism)	interactions
Resources are limited	Society has interrelated	Interactions based on
Power is not evenly	parts	symbolic context in which
distributed	What are functions or	they occur
Competition is inevitable	dysfunctions of parts	Subjective perceptions are
(winners & losers)	Society finds balance and is	critical to how symbols are
Negotiations based on	stable	interpreted
influence, threats,	Equilibrium	Communications
promises, and consensus	Society adjusts to maintain	Meanings
Threats and coercion	balance	Roles
Any resource can be used	How are parts integrated	Self
as tool of power or	Manifest functions	Reality shaping in self and
exploitation	Latent functions and	with others
War is natural	dysfunctions	Social construction of reality
Haves and have nots		Thomas Theorem

Privileges are protected **by haves** **Order is challenged by** **have nots**		Definition of situation

Figure 3. Juan and Maria's Extended Family System.



Juan and Maria are a middle-aged couple. Juan is a professor who lives with his parents, his wife's widowed mother, his two children Anna and José, Anna's husband Alma and the 3-month old triplets Anna just delivered. Notice that Maria's father has passed away, so he has an X over his place in this diagram. Because Juan is financially established, he can support the large extended family. This represents a 4-generation complex family system. There are three couples living within this home, Juan and Maria, Grandpa and Grandma, and Alma and Anna. But there are various levels of strain felt by each couple.

Today multi-generational family systems are becoming more common, but are typically three generations where the married adult child and his or her spouse and children move back home. Juan and Maria raised their two children Anna and José with tremendous support from grandparents. Maria's mother was a college graduate and has been a big help to José who is a sophomore in college and a basketball team member. Juan's mother and father are the oldest family members and are becoming more dependent. Juan's mother requires some daily care from Maria. In fact, Maria has the most individual strain of any family member in this family system. Juan and Maria have each felt a strain on their marriage because of the strains that come from each subsystem and family member who depends upon them. They both have in-laws in the house, they both contribute to the care needs of the elderly family members, and they both try to support their son's basketball games and tournaments. But perhaps most stressful is that there are three brand new babies in the house (see Figure 4).

Those new babies have strained the entire family system, but extreme strain lands on Maria because Alma is a second year medical student and spends long hours in class and training. Anna is extremely overwhelmed by bottle-feedings, diapers, and other hands-on baby care demands. So, Maria is supporting both her daughter and three grandsons, but it's overwhelming.

Maria is the Matriarch of this family system. She simultaneously belongs to the following subsystems, Daughter-Mother; Daughter-in-law-Father & Mother-in-law; Spousal; Mother-Son; Mother-Daughter; Mother-in-law-Son-in-law; and Grandmother-grandchildren. A large number of subsystems in one's life does not automatically imply strain or stress. By looking at the family as a complex system with inter-locking and interdependent subsystems, solutions can be found among the members of the system and subsystems.

This brings up the issue of boundaries. **Boundaries** are *distinct emotional, psychological, or physical separateness between individuals, roles, and subsystems in the family.* Boundaries are crucial to healthy family functioning.

FAMILY DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY

Family Developmental Theory dates back to the 1930s and has been influenced by sociologists, demographers, and family and consumer scientists, as well as others. It is *used to explain patterns of change, the dynamic nature of families, and how change occurs within the family life cycle*. Family Developmental Theory was originally focused on stages of the family life cycle. According to Evelyn Duvall the stages are as follows. Stage 1: Married Couples without Children. Stage 2: Childbearing Families which starts at the birth of the first child and continues until the oldest child is 2½ years old. Stage 3: Families with Pre-School Children where the oldest child is 2½ -6 years old. Stage 4: Families with Schoolchildren where the oldest child is 6-13 years old. Stage 5: Families with Teenagers where the oldest child is 13-20 years old. Stage 6: Families as Launching Centers. This starts when the first child leaves home and continues until the last child leaves home. Stage 7: Middle-Age Parents which continues until retirement. Stage 8: Aging Families which continues until the death of one spouse.6

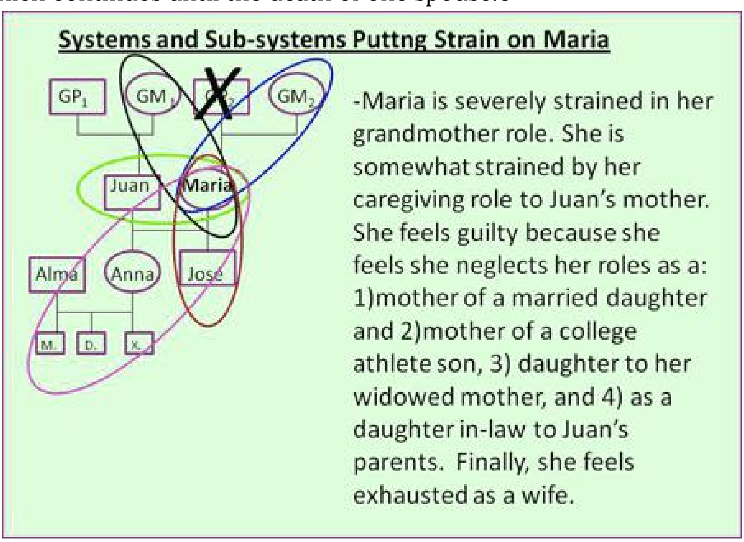


Figure 4. Extended Family System Strain on Maria.

Theorists found over time that many families did not fit this model. For example many children who had launched had returned to the family home, often with children of their own. Newer models of this theory focused more on the roles and relationships within the family. The theory still focuses on **developmental tasks** which are the *growth responsibilities that arise at certain stages in the life of the family*. To be successful, family members need to adapt to changing needs and demands and to attend to tasks that are necessary to ensure family survival.

The major assumptions of this theory include the importance of individual development but stress that the development of the group of interacting individuals is most important. Developmental processes are inevitable and important in understanding families. Growth from one stage to another is going to happen. Families and individuals change over a period of time–they progress through a series of similar developmental stages and face similar transition points and developmental tasks.

To understand the family we must consider the challenges they face in each stage, how well they resolve them, and how well they transition to the next stage. The success or difficulty of achieving the developmental tasks in each stage leads to readiness for the next stage. The major criticism of this theory is its lack of ability to account for different family forms, and gender, ethnic, and cultural differences. It isn't culturally relevant or sensitive to other life style choices (e.g., childless families).7

THE LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVE

The life course perspective is prominent within the fields of family sociology and aging. It is a lens with which to view the age-related transitions that are socially created and are recognized and shared by members of a society. It aids in our understanding of change among individuals and populations over time by looking at the interrelation between individual biography and historical social structures.8

The life course perspective is a theoretical framework that focuses on the timing of events that occur in an individual's lifetime. A life course view of marriage is of an ongoing career that occurs within the context of other life course events.[9] The essential elements of the life course perspective include five themes: 1.) multiple time clocks, 2.) social context of development, 3.) dynamic view of process and change, 4.) heterogeneity in structures and processes, and 5.) a multidisciplinary view.

The first element is a focus on multiple time clocks or events that impact the individual. These multiple time clocks include ontogenetic, or individual, time which is comprised of personal events, generational time which consists of family transitions or events, and historical time which refers to social events. It is crucial to recognize the importance of the interactions of these time frames, since for instance historical events will impact individual's life trajectories, such as the events of war or economic depression. Changes over historical time, such as the advent of no-fault divorce interact with generational time to increase the number of children whose parents divorce, which in turn interacts with individual time and may bring about a personal choice to divorce.

Second, the social context of development is also a focus of this perspective. One's location within the broader social structure, the social creation of meanings, cultural context and change, and the interplay of macro- and micro-levels of development play an important role in the life course perspective.

Third, the life course perspective has a dynamic view of process and change. It focuses on the dialectic of continuity and change in human development. Age, period, and cohort effects are linked by their interaction with one another link microlevel and macrolevel phenomena. This perspective allows the researcher to disentangle the effects of age, period, and cohort to obtain a more accurate picture of family dynamics. Age effects are an artifact of maturation of individuals while period effects influence the life courses of individuals across birth cohorts. Cohort effects cause a differentiation in life patterns of consecutive birth cohorts.[10]

The fourth theme of the life course perspective looks at heterogeneity in structures and processes. It acknowledges diversity across the range of patterns–increasing diversity over time with age at the cohort and individual level, and diversity over time with social change.

The fifth theme emphasizes the utility of multidisciplinary perspectives on development. Development is biological, psychological, and social and all of these perspectives must be considered when studying human development.[11]

The life course perspective is not merely a variation of developmental theories since the latter emphasizes a normative sequence of stages in one's life. The life course perspective acknowledges the variance in the possible sequence of events, as well as, the omission of some events, such as not having children. This perspective also acknowledges the effect of social and historical events on the individual's life course (e.g., war). Life course scholars also are aware of the intra-cohort differences that are influenced by these social and historical events. The life course perspective views marriage as the uniting of two separate life histories which have been influenced by social events of the past and will be influenced by social events of the future.[12]

SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

Social exchange theorists focusing on marital quality and stability have posited that individuals weigh the costs and benefits of mate selection and of remaining in a marriage. We look to this theory to explain why an individual might remain in a dissatisfied marriage. Barriers to change and attractiveness of alternatives are the main elements of social exchange theory when used to guide the investigation of divorce.[13]

There are several terms which are central to social exchange theory that must be defined prior to a discussion of the theory. **Outcomes** are those *rewards or costs which are received or incurred by actors from each other in an exchange relationship*. Outcomes can be positive (rewards) or negative (costs) and social exchange theory makes no assumption about whether an individual will view a particular outcome as positive or negative (e.g., some individuals view divorce as positive while others view it as a negative outcome). The theory only assumes that behavior is consistent with what individuals value in their lives. Rewards may be physical, social, or psychological. Costs can be viewed as negative or as forgone rewards. **Resources** are *possessions or behavioral capabilities (human capital) which have value to others and to oneself* (e.g., a husband's job and income have value to his wife). When one resource outweighs another resource then it may become a barrier (e.g., the wife's income may be a resource that enables her to leave the marriage, but her husband's income may be so great that it may be a barrier to leaving since she won't be able to enjoy the life to which she has become accustomed without his income).[14] **Barriers** are *the costs of making a choice*.[15] Several studies find when barriers are many and alternatives are few individuals may remain in dissatisfied marriages.[16]

Alternatives are *the variety of possible exchange relations available to individuals*. An individual's alternatives are those opportunities which produce outcomes which have value to the individual. These outcomes may be exchange relationships with other individuals. In the study of divorce, alternatives are to remain married or to divorce. There are costs and rewards associated with alternatives (e.g., the psychological cost of staying in a poor quality marriage, the cost of paying bills on one income associated with divorce) and social exchange theory implies that individuals attempt to weigh rewards and costs when making decisions about alternatives.[17]

Individuals are dependent on each other in an exchange relationship and the outcomes which are valued by the individuals are contingent on the exchanges made with the other. Exchanges can be one-sided (asymmetrical) or reciprocal.[18] An individual may give to another without receiving anything in return or may receive without giving. Individuals tend to influence each other by considering their partner's previous choices when making their own choices. Not only is a memory of past costs and rewards used in determining present exchanges, a forecast of future costs and rewards is considered also.[19] When an exchange relationship is imbalanced, *the individual who is less dependent will have the most power*, or the **power advantage**.[20] For instance, a woman who has no college education and lacks a stable job that provides her with a good income is more dependent on her husband, who earns the household income, than he is on her.

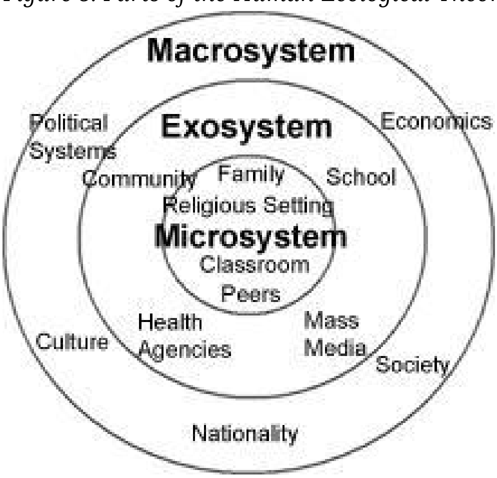
Exchange relations take place over time. They are not single transactions. For social exchange relationships to form and be ongoing, the value of the exchange to each of the individuals in the relationship must be greater than the perceived value of the potential alternatives. For example, as long as the value of the marital relationship is perceived to be greater than the perceived value of divorce, the individuals will remain in the marital relationship. However, in some cases individuals will remain in antagonistic relationships because the alternatives are perceived as even less desirable than the marital relationship (e.g., women in unsatisfying relationships with no education, no personal income, and many children to support) or because there is threat of punishment from the spouse (e.g., women in abusive relationships whose spouses threaten harm to them or their children if they leave). Social exchange theory acknowledges individuals do not always act rationally, but assumes those departures from rational behavior will follow predictable patterns.[21] This theory assumes that humans act rationally when deciding on an exchange; however, this is not always true.[22]

ECOLOGICAL THEORY

The major assumptions of Ecological Theory are that humans are interdependent with the environment; the whole system and its parts are interdependent and operate in relation to each other; a change in any part of the system affects the system as a whole and also the other parts of the system; all humans are interdependent with the resources of the world; the family is the foremost setting in which development occurs; the family interacts with more than one environment; interactions are regulated by the laws of nature and human-derived rules. Figure 5 shows the model with its systems. It is depicted as concentric circles with the person of interest in the center. Each larger circle is a system that is less directly connected to the individual in the center although it does have some influence over the person.

The **microsystem** is the *immediate social settings which an individual is involved in.* There is focus on face-to-face interactions. Family, school, work, church, and peer groups are typically within the microsystem. The **mesosystem** *links two microsystems together*, direct or indirectly. For example, a 10-year old child is at the center of the model so his family is one of his microsystems and his classroom at school is another microsystem; the interaction is these two is one of his mesosystems. An example of this interaction is a parent-teacher conference.[23]

Figure 5. Parts of the Human Ecological Theory Model.[24]



The **exosystem** are *settings in which the person does not actively participate but in which significant decisions are made affecting other individuals who do interact directly with the person.* Examples of a child's exosystem would be neighborhood/community structures or parents work environment. The **macrosystem** is *the "blueprints" for defining and organizing the institutional life of the society, including overarching patterns of culture, politics, economy, etc.* The **chronosystem** *encompasses change or consistency over time in the characteristics of the person and the environment in which the person lives* (e.g., changes in family structure, SES, place of residence and community, society, cultural, and historical changes).[25]

An example of how we might view a child of divorce with the Ecological Theory would be that his family configuration has changed (microsystem); one parent doesn't come to parent-teacher conferences anymore (mesosystem); his mom has to get a full time job and work more hours and be away from him for more hours per day (exosystem); society's views of divorce may make it easy or difficult for him to deal with the divorce (macrosystem); and his SES may have declined, his family structure has changed, his place of residence may have changed. An Ecological Theorist would start his research by investigating these areas of the child's life.

FEMINIST FAMILY THEORY

Feminist theory is a theoretical perspective that is couched primarily in Conflict Theory assumptions, but has added the dimension of sex or gender to the study of society. Feminist theorists *focus on the inequality of power between men and women in society and in family life*. The feminist perspective is about choice and about equally valuing the choices individuals make.[26] Feminist theories are a group of theories which focus on four important themes: recognition of women's oppression; an examination of what contributes to the maintenance of that oppression; a commitment to ending the unjust subordination; a futuristic vision of equality.[27]

Women's subordination appears in works of Plato, who believed that men were more virtuous by nature, and others who believed men had more intellectual and reasoning capabilities. Following the industrial revolution, the women's movement emerged in the 19th century. Elizabeth Cady

Stanton established the National Organization of Women (NOW). Susan B. Anthony was chosen to represent the **Suffragists** (*women who worked for the vote for women*) because of her less radical views. By the 1880s there was widespread support for obtaining the vote. Many believed women deserved the vote due to their maternal virtues while others believed women and men were equal in endowments. Women won the right to vote in 1920. In the 1960s there was a resurgence of the feminist movement which grew from the movement for the rights of African Americans. This wave of the feminist movement focused on equal pay for equal work, dissatisfaction and depression among American housewives, and power as central to the social construction of gender.[28]

The major assumptions of feminist theories are that women are oppressed; a focus on the centrality, normality, and importance of women's experience; gender is socially constructed; the analyses of gender should include the larger socio-cultural context; and the term "family" supports women's oppression because it contains class, cultural, and heterosexual biases.[29]

Liberal feminists believe gender should not be a barrier since men and women are endowed with the same rational and spiritual capacities. They are committed to social and legal reforms that will create equal opportunities for women, ending sex discrimination, and challenging sex stereotyping.[30] Social feminists believe women are oppressed by capitalism. Their focus is on redefining capitalism in relation to women's work. Radical feminist theories insist the oppression of women is fundamental. Radical feminists believe the current patriarchal system must be eliminated. Attention is directed towards issues of the body such as men's control over women's sexuality and reproduction, and men's use of rape and violence to violate women.[31]

The strengths of feminist theories are that they can be applied to a broad range of issues and they provide valuable critique of other theories and perspectives that lack a focus on gender and power. These theories are limited in that research and practice are often emotionally charged and there can be an overemphasis on gender and power.[32]

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3. 2. The Sociological Study Of The Family

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

Compare pre- and post-industrial family patterns.
Define family structure.
Define the functions of the family.
Relate group complexity to number of members.
Compare and contrast types of statuses.

In all societies, the family is the premier institution for socialization of children, intimate adult relationships, economic support and cooperation, and continuity of relationships along the life-course. Sociologists have functioned in a core role for describing, explaining, and predicting family-based social patterns for the United States and other countries. Sociologists help others to understand the larger social and personal level trends in families.

FAMILY STRUCTURES

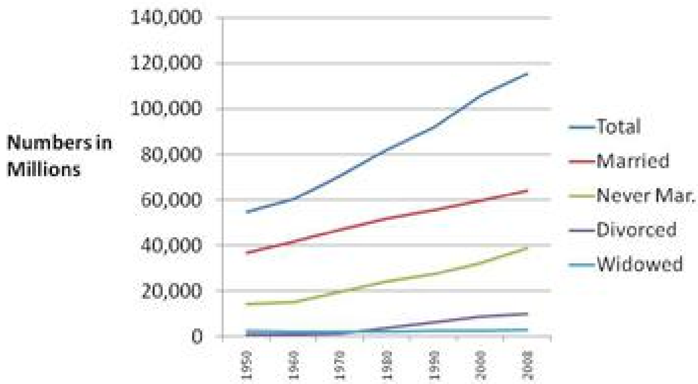
The family structures that were very common a century ago are not nearly as common today. In the U.S. around the year 1900, most families had three generations living in one home (e.g., children, parents, and uncles/aunts/grandparents) and most did manual labor. Today, very few families live with multiple generations. Most modern families fall into one of two types: nuclear or blended. The **nuclear family** is *a family group consisting of parents and their biological or adopted children.* This is the family type that is mostly preferred. One variation of this type is the **single-parent family** (*one parent and his or her biological or adopted children*), which can be created by unwed motherhood, divorce, or death of a spouse. The second most common family form is the **blended family**, which is *a family created by remarriage and includes at least one child from a prior relationship*. All of the cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and step relatives are considered **extended family** (*one's relatives beyond the nuclear and blended family level*).

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts annual surveys of the U.S. population and publishes them as the Current Population Surveys. Table 1 represents U.S. family types. You will notice that married families comprised over half (52%) of the family types in 2008. Single never marrieds are the second largest type and include opposite sex and same sex cohabiters.[1] Figure 1 shows the trend (1950-2008) in family types, clearly illustrating that married families have always been the most common form.

Table 1. U.S. Family Types, 2008. 2

Type	*Number*	*Percentage*
Married	123,671,000	52
Widowed	14,314,000	6
Divorced	23,346,000	10
Separated	5,183,000	2
Never Married-Single	71,479,000	30
Total Families 15 and over	237,993,000	100

Figure 1. United States Trends in Family Types (in Millions), 1950-2008.3



FAMILY FUNCTIONS

What are the functions of families? In studying the family, Functional Theorists have identified some common and nearly universal family functions. That means almost all families in all countries around the world have at least some of these functions in common.

Economic Support

By far, economic support is the most common function of today's families. When your parents let you raid their pantry, do your laundry at their house, or replenish your checking account, that's economic support. For another young adult, say in New Guinea, if she captures a wild animal and cooks it on an open fire and shares it with others, that's also economic support in a different cultural context. Some families cooperate in business-like relationships. In Quebec, Montreal there is an established pattern of Italian immigrants who help family and friends emigrate from Italy to Canada. They subsidize each other's travel costs, help each other find employment once in Canada, and even privately fund some mortgages for one another. Each participant is expected to support others in the same manner.

Emotional Support

Emotional relationships are also very common, but you must understand there is a tremendous amount of cultural diversity in how intimacy is experienced in various families around the world. **Intimacy** is *the social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical trust that is mutually shared between family members.* Family members share confidences, advice, trust, secrets, and ongoing mutual concern. Many family scientists believe that intimacy in family relationships functions as a strong buffer to the ongoing stresses experienced by family members outside of the home.

Socialization

Children are born humanoid and have the potential to be what we label as human, the ability to communicate, work cooperatively, and socialize each other. They will realize this potential if older family members or friends take the time to protect and nurture them into their cultural and societal roles. Today the family is the core of primary socialization. But many other societal institutions contribute to the process including schools, religion, workplace, and media. The family is where we learn the rules of our unique society.

From the first moments of life, children begin a process of socialization wherein parents, family, and friends transmit the culture of the mainstream society and the family to the newborn. They assist in the child's development of his or her own **social construction of reality**, which is *what people define as real because of their background assumptions and life experiences with others.* An average U.S. child's social construction of reality includes knowledge that he or she belongs, can depend on others to meet his needs, and has privileges and obligations that accompany membership in his family and community. In a typical set of social circumstances, children grow up through predictable life stages: infancy, preschool, school years, young adulthood, adulthood, middle adulthood, and finally later-life adulthood. Most will leave home as young adults, find a spouse or life partner in their mid-to-late 20s and work at a job for pay. To expect that of the average U.S. child is normal. But how about those who don't fit into these predictable patterns? Might their reality be shaped differently? Is their reality any less "real" than the populations we discussed earlier? Our social constructions of reality may overlap or have vast similarities, but no two people will have identical social realities because no two people will have identical life experiences.

Also when discussing the average U.S. child, it's safe to say that the most important socialization takes place early in life and in identifiable levels. Primary socialization typically begins at birth and moves forward until the beginning of the school years. **Primary socialization** includes *all the ways the newborn is molded into a social being capable of interacting in and meeting the expectations of society*. Most primary socialization is facilitated by family, friends, day care, and to a certain degree various forms of media. Children watch about three hours per day of TV (by the time the average child attends kindergarten he has watched about 5,000 hours of TV). They also play video games, surf the Internet, play with friends, and read.

Around age four to five pre-school and kindergarten are presented as expectations for children. Once they begin their schooling, they begin a different level of socialization. **Secondary socialization** *occurs in later childhood and adolescence when children go to school and come under the influence of non-family members*. This level runs concurrently with primary socialization. Children realize at school that they are judged for their performance now and are no longer accepted unconditionally. In fact, to obtain approval from teachers and school employees, a tremendous amount of conformity is required-this is in contrast to having been accepted at home for being "mommy's little man or woman."

As students, children have to learn to belong and cooperate in large groups. They learn a new culture that extends beyond their narrow family culture and that has complexities and challenges that require effort on their part. This creates stressors for the children. By the time of graduation from high school the average U.S. child has attended 15,000 hours of school away from home. They've also probably watched 15,000 hours of TV and spent

5-10,000 playing (video games, friends, Internet, text messaging, etc.).

Friends, classmates, and peers become increasingly important in the lives of children in their secondary educational stage of socialization. Most zero to five year olds yearn for affection and approval from their parents and family members. By the time of pre-teen years, the desire for family diminishes and the yearning now becomes for friends and peers. Parents often lament the loss of influence over their children once the teen years arrive. Studies show that parents preserve at least some of their influence over their children by influencing their children's peers. Parents who host parties, excursions, and get-togethers find that their relationship with their children's friends keeps them better connected to their children. They learn that they can persuade their children at times through the peers.

The third level of socialization includes college, work, marriage and significant relationships, and a variety of adult roles and adventures. **Adult socialization** *occurs as we assume adult roles such as wife/husband/employee/etc.* We adapt to new roles which meet our needs and wants throughout the adult life course. Freshmen in college, new recruits in the military, volunteers for Peace Corps, employees, missionaries, travelers, and others find themselves following the same game plan that lead to their success during their primary and secondary socialization years. This success help them to find out what's expected and strive to reach those expectations during their adult socializations.

Sexuality and Reproductive Control

The family has traditionally asserted control of sexuality and reproduction. A few centuries ago the father and mother even selected the spouses for many of their children (they still do in many countries). American parents want their adult children to select their own spouses. Older family members tend to encourage pregnancy and childbirth only in marriage or a long-term relationship. **Unwed mothers** are *mothers who are not legally married at the time of the child's birth.* Being unwed brings up concerns of economic, emotional, social, and other forms of support for the mother and child that may or may not be present from the father. When an unwed mother delivers the baby, it is often the older female family members who end up providing the functions of support for that child rather than the birth father. Table 3 shows unwed mother births in the U.S. in 2000 and 2006. Most of the over four million live births in 2006 were to *married* mothers. But about 1/10 of teen mothers and over 1/3 of all mothers were unwed.[4] From 2000 to 2006 teen births declined slightly while unwed births to older (non-teen) women increased. This trend of increasing unwed birth rates suggests that more and more families have less control by sanctioning childbirth within marriage.

Table 3. Percentage of All Births that were to Unwed Teens and Mothers of All Ages Years 2000 and 2006.5

Year	***Births to Unwed Teens***	***Births to All Unwed Mothers***
2000	11.8%	33.2%
2006	10.4%	35.8%

Status

With your friends, have you noticed that one or two tend to be informally in charge of the details? You might be the one who calls everyone and makes reservations or buys the tickets for the others. If so, you would have the informal status of "group organizer." **Status** is *a socially defined position*. There are three types of status considerations. **Ascribed status** is *present at birth and is said to be unchangeable* (race, sex, or class). **Achieved status** is *attained through one's choices and efforts* (college student, movie star, teacher, or athlete). **Master Status** is *a status which stands out above our other statuses and which distracts others from seeing who we really are* (to you, your father's master status is dad).

You were born into your racial, cultural-ethnic, religious and economic statuses. That shaped to some degree the way you grew up and were socialized. In modern societies achieved status is more important than ascribed status for most members of society. Although the degree of achievement one attains often depends heavily on the level of support families provide. While a status is the social position within a group, **role** is *how we enact that status.* For example, you as a student (status) need to attend class, study for exams, write papers, do homework, etc. Each status has many roles associated with it and each person has many statuses. You are probably a child, maybe a sibling, perhaps a spouse or parent, and likely an employee as well as a student. You have many roles to fulfill in your varied statuses.

Another consideration about groups and our roles in them is the fact that one single role can place a rather heavy burden on a person. **Role strain** is *the burden one feels due to the varied roles within any given status* and **role conflict** is *when the roles in one status come into conflict with the roles in another status.* For example, your role of studying for a midterm (status of student), your role of getting to work on time (status of employee), and your role of socializing (status of single person) conflict because you had planned to study for that midterm on Saturday afternoon, but then your boss calls and asks you to come in to work, and just as you're getting into your Hotdog-On-A-Stick uniform your friend stops by to ask you to go to the beach.

G**ROUPS**

The first and most important unit of measure in sociology is the **group**, which is *a set of two or more people who share a common identity, interact regularly, have shared expectations, and function in their mutually agreed upon roles*. Most people use the word "group" differently from the sociological use. They say group even if the cluster of people they are referring to don't even know each other (like six people standing at the same bus stop). Sociologists use **aggregate** to denote *a number of people in the same place at the same time.* So, people in the same movie theater, people at the same bus stop, and even people at a university football game are considered aggregates rather than groups. Sociologists also discuss categories. A **category** is *a number of people who share common characteristics.* Brown-eyed people, people who wear hats, and people who vote independent are categories-they don't necessarily share the same space, nor do they have shared expectations. In this text we mostly discuss trends and patterns in family groups and in large categories of family types.

Family groups are crucial to society and are what most of you will form in your own adult lives. Groups come in varying sizes. **Dyads** are *groups with two people* and **triads** are *groups with three people.* The number of people in a group plays an important structural role in the nature of the group's functioning. Dyads are the simplest groups because two people have only one relationship between them. Triads have four relationships (1-persons A and B, 2-persons A and C, 3-persons B and C, 4-persons A, B, and C). A group of four has ten relationships. Each additional person adds multiple new relationships. Think about how the interaction you share with your mother (or someone else) changes when your little sister (or someone else) is present. A newly married couple experiences great freedoms and opportunities to nurture their marital relationship. A triad forms when their first child is born. Then they experience a tremendous incursion upon their marital relationship from the child and the care demanded by the child. As Bill Cosby said in his book *Fatherhood*, "Children by their very nature are designed to ruin your marriage."6

As sociologists further study the nature of the group's relationships they realize that there are two broad types of groups: **primary groups**, which *tend to be small, informal, and intimate* (e.g., families, friends), and **secondary groups**, *which tend to be larger, more formal, and much less personal* (e.g., you and your doctor, this class). Typically with your primary groups, say with your family, you can be much more spontaneous and informal. On Friday night you can hang out wherever you want, change your plans as you want, and experience fun as much as you want. Contrast that to the relationship with this class. You have to come to class at the scheduled time and complete assignments and exams.

SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

The average person lives too narrow a life to get a clear and concise understanding of today's complex social world. Our daily lives are spent among friends and family, at work and at play, and watching TV and surfing the Internet. There is no way one person can grasp the big picture from their relatively isolated lives. There's just not enough time or capacity to be exposed to the complexities of a society of 310 million people. There are thousands of communities, millions of interpersonal interaction, billions of Internet information sources, and countless trends that transpire without many of us even knowing they exist. What can we do to make sense of it all?

Psychology gave us the understanding of self-esteem, economics gave us the understanding of supply and demand, and physics gave us the Einstein theory of E=MC2. The sociological imagination by Mills, gives us a framework for understanding our social world that far surpasses any common sense notion we might derive from our limited social experiences. C. Wright Mills (1916-1962), a contemporary sociologist, suggested that when we study the family we can gain valuable insight by approaching it at two core societal levels. He stated, "neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both."[7] Mills identified personal troubles and public issues as key principles for wrapping our minds around many of the hidden social processes that transpire in an almost invisible manner in today's societies. **Personal troubles** are *private problems experienced within the character of the individual and the range of their immediate relation to others.* Mills identified the fact that we function in our personal lives as actors who make choices about our friends, family, groups, work, school, and other issues within our control. We have a degree of influence in the outcome of matters within the personal level. A college student who parties four nights a week, who rarely attends class, and who never does his homework has a personal trouble that interferes with his odds of success in college. But, when 50% of all college students in the country never graduate we call it a public issue.

Public issues lie *beyond one's personal control and the range of one's inner life. These pertain to society's organization and processes.* To better understand larger social issues, let us define social facts. **Social facts** are *social processes rooted in society rather than in the individual.* Émile Durkheim (1858-1917, France) studied the science of social facts in an effort to identify social correlations and ultimately social laws designed to make sense of how modern societies worked given that they became increasingly diverse and complex.8

The national cost of a gallon of gas, the War in the Middle East, the repressed economy, the trend of having too few females in the 18-24 year old singles market, and the ever-increasing demand for plastic surgery are just a few of the social facts at play today. Social facts are typically outside of the control of average people. They occur in the complexities of modern society and impact us, but we rarely find a way to significantly impact them back. This is because, as Mills taught, we live much of our lives on the personal level and much of society happens at the larger social level. Without a knowledge of the larger social and personal levels of social experience, we live in what Mills called a **false social conscious**, which is *an ignorance of social facts and the larger social picture.*

A larger social issue is illustrated in the fact that nationwide, students come to college as freshmen ill-prepared to understand the rigors of college life. They haven't often been challenged enough in high school to make the necessary adjustments required to succeed as college students.

Nationwide, the average teenager text messages, surfs the Net, plays video or online games, hangs out at the mall, watches TV and movies, spends hours each day with friends, and works at least part-time. Where and when would he or she get experience focusing attention on college studies and the rigors of self-discipline required to transition into college?

In a survey conducted each year by the U.S. Census Bureau, findings suggest that in 2006 the U.S. had about an 84% high school graduation rate.[9] They also found that only 27% had a Bachelor's degree.[10] Given the numbers of freshman students enrolling in college, the percentage with a Bachelor's degree should be closer to 50%.

The majority of college first year students drop out, because nationwide we have a deficit in the preparation and readiness of Freshmen attending college and a real disconnect in their ability to connect to college in such a way that they feel they belong to it. In fact college dropouts are an example of both a larger social issue and a personal trouble. Thousands of studies and millions of dollars have been spent on how to increase a freshman student's odds of success in college (graduating with a 4-year degree). There are millions of dollars in grant monies awarded each year to help retain college students.

The real power of the sociological imagination is found in how you and I learn to distinguish between the personal and social levels in our own lives. Once we do that we can make personal choices that serve us the best given the larger social forces that we face. There are larger social trends that will be identified in this course. Some of them can teach you lessons to use in your own choices. Others simply provide a broad understanding of the context of the family in our complicated society.

In this textbook you will find larger social evidences of many current United States family trends. Some changes were initiated in the Industrial Revolution where husbands were called upon to leave the home and venture into the factory as breadwinners. Women became homemakers and many eventually ended up in the labor force as well. The trend of having fewer children and having fewer of them die in or immediately after birth is directly related to medical technology and the value of having smaller families in our current service-based economy. The trend of lowering our standards of what exactly a “clean house” means is an adjustment that arguably needed to be made; post-World War II marketing campaigns had convinced women that a spotless house equaled a good woman. Today, good women have varying levels of a clean house.

Of concern to many are the continuing high rates of divorce. By studying divorced people we can learn how to prevent divorce and enhance the quality and satisfaction of marriage. Simply studying something does not imply that you agree with it or support it for yourself or others. Learning about something makes us better able to understand and defend our own views and values.

As mentioned above, the Industrial Revolution changed societies and their families in an unprecedented way, such that Sociology as a discipline emerged as an answer to many of the new-found societal challenges. Societies had change in unprecedented ways and had formed a new collective of social complexities that the world had never witnessed before. The Industrial Revolution transformed society at every level. Look at Table 4 to see pre- and post-Industrial Revolution social patterns and how different they were.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, families lived on smaller farms and every able member of the family did work to support and sustain the family economy. Towns were small and very similar (homogamous) and families were large (more children=more workers). There was a lower standard of living and because of poor sanitation people died earlier. After the Industrial Revolution, farm work was replaced by factory work. Men left their homes and became breadwinners earning money to buy many of the goods that used to be made by hand at home (or bartered for by trading one’s own homemade goods with another’s). Women became the supervisors of homework. Much was still done by families to develop their own home goods while many women and children also went to the factories to work. Cities became larger and more diverse (heterogamous). Families became smaller (less farm work required fewer children). Eventually, standards of living increased and death rates declined.

Table 4. Pre-Industrial and Post-Industrial Revolution Social Patterns.[11]

Pre-Industrial Revolution	*Post-Industrial Revolution*
Farm/ Cottage	Factories
Family Work	Breadwinners /Homemakers
Small Towns	Large Cities
Large Families	Small Families
Homogenous Towns	Heterogamous Cities
Lower Standards of Living	Higher Standards of Living
People Died Younger	People Die Older

It is important to note the value of women's work before and after the Industrial Revolution. Hard work was the norm and still is today for most women. Homemaking included much unpaid work which is not as valued as paid work. These pre and post-industrial changes impacted all of Western civilization because the Industrial Revolution hit all of these countries about the same way, Western Europe, United States, Canada, and later Japan and Australia. The Industrial Revolution brought some rather severe social conditions which included deplorable city living conditions, crowding, crime, extensive poverty, inadequate water and sewage, early death, frequent accidents, extreme pressures on families, and high illness rates. Today, sociology continues to rise to the call of finding solutions and answers to complex social problems, especially in the family.

FAMILY RESEARCH

The American Sociological Association is the largest professional sociology organization in the world. There is a section of ASA members that focuses its studies specifically on the family. Here is an excerpt from their mission statement: Many of society's most pressing problems – teenage childbearing, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, domestic violence, child and elder abuse, divorce – are related to or rooted in the family. The Section on Family was founded to provide a home for sociologists who are interested in exploring these issues in greater depth.[12]

Many family sociologists also belong to the National Council on Family Relations.[13] Their mission statement reads as follows: The National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) provides an educational forum for family researchers, educators, and practitioners to share in the development and dissemination of knowledge about families and family relationships, establishes professional standards, and works to promote family well-being.[14] Research is important because if the results of a study are made public individuals can use the information to make better choices.

For example, studies have shown that the leading factor of divorce is not sex problems, failure to communicate, money mismanagement, or even in-law troubles. What is the leading cause of divorce? It is marrying too young. Specifically, if you marry at 17, 18, or 19 you are far more likely to divorce than if you wait to marry in your 20s. This was discovered and confirmed over decades of studying who divorced and which factors contributed more to divorce than others.

FAMILY CULTURE

Another key point in studying the family is to understand that all families share some cultural traits in common, but all also have their own family culture uniqueness. **Culture** is *the shared values, norms, symbols, language, objects, and way of life that is passed on from one generation to the next.*

Culture is what we learn from our parents, family, friends, peers, and schools. It is shared, not biologically determined. Most families in a society have similar family cultural traits. But, when a couple marries they learn that the success of their marriage is often based on how well they merge their unique family cultures into a new version of a culture that is their own.

Even though family cultures tend to be universal and desirable, we often judge other cultures as being good, bad, or evil, with our own culture typically being judged good. **Ethnocentrism** is *the tendency to judge others based on our own experiences.* In this perspective, our culture is right, while cultures which differ from our own are wrong. Another more valuable and helpful perspective about differing cultures is the perspective called **cultural relativism**, *the tendency to look for the cultural context in which differences in cultures occur.* If you've eaten a meal with your friend's family you have probably noticed a difference in subtle things like the food that is served and how it is prepared. You may have noticed that that family communicates in different ways from your own. You might also notice that their values of fun and relaxation also vary from your own. To dismiss your friend's family as being wrong because they aren't exactly like yours is being ethnocentric. Cultural relativists like all the ice-cream flavors, if you will. They respect and appreciate cultural differences even if only from the spectators' point of view.

O**PPORTUNITY**

In the U.S. and throughout the world there are rich and poor families. Your social class has a great deal to do with who you were born to or adopted by. Where you end up in your economic standing has a great deal to do with how you act, given your own set of life chances. As identified by Max Weber, **life chances** are *access to basic opportunities and resources in the marketplace.* Some of you are paying for college on your own and take the bus to school while others have a new car, the latest cell phone, and don't have to worry how much your books cost because your parents are footing the bill. Life chances can also be applied to the quality of your own marriage and family. If you came from a highly shaming family culture, then you are more likely to develop an addiction. If you came from a family where the parents divorced, then you are more likely to divorce. If you were born to a single mother you are more likely to become a single mother or father. These are known correlates but not causes. In other words you may be slightly disadvantaged because of the difficult family circumstances you were born in, but you are by no means doomed to repeat the patterns of your **family of origin** (*the family into which you were born*) in your **family of procreation** (*the family you create by marriage, child birth, adoption*).

Understanding life chances simply raises your awareness by demonstrating trends from the larger social picture that might well apply to you in your personal level.

D**EMOGRAPHY**

Finally, the U.S. family today has an important underpinning that influences the family in the larger social and personal levels. **Demography** is *the scientific study of population growth and change.*

Everything in society influences demography and demography conversely influences everything in society. After World War II, the United States began to recover from the long-term negative effects of the war. Families had been separated, relatives had died or were injured, and women who had gone to the factories then returned home at war's end. The year 1946 reflected the impact of that upheaval in its very atypical demographic statistics. Starting in 1946 people married younger, had more children per woman, divorced and remarried, and kept having one child after another. From 1946 to 1956 the birth rate rose and peaked, then began to decline again. By 1964 the national high birth rate was finally back to the level it was at before 1946. All those *children born from 1946-1964* were called the **Baby Boom Generation** (there are about 78 million of them alive today). Why was there such a change in family-related rates? The millions of deaths caused by the war, the long-term separation of family members from one another, and the deep shifts toward conservative values all contributed. The Baby Boom had landed and after the Baby Boom Generation was in place, it conversely affected personal and larger social levels of society in every conceivable way.

The Baby Boomers are most likely your parents or grandparents. Their societal influence on the family changed the U.S. forever. The earliest cohort of Baby Boomers (1946-51) has the world record for highest divorce rates. Collectively Baby Boomers are still divorcing more than their parents ever divorced. They had their own children and many of you belong to Generations X or Y (X born 1965-1984 and Y born 1985-present). There are many of you because there were many Baby Boomers. The demographic processes of this country include these Baby Boomers, their legacy, and their offspring. To understand the U.S. family, you must understand the Baby Boomers and underlying demographic forces.

The core of demographic studies has three component concerns: births, deaths, and migration. All of demography can be reduced to this very simple formula:

(Births-Deaths) +/- ((In-Migration)-(Out Migration)) = Population Change.

This part of the formula, (Births-Deaths) is called **natural increase**, which is *all births minus all deaths in a given population over a given time period.* The other part of the formula, ((In-Migration)-(Out Migration)) is called **net migration**, which is *all in-migration minus all out-migration in a given population over a given time period.* The Industrial Revolution set into motion a surge of births and a lowering of deaths which changed U.S. society and families forever.

1. Table UC1. Opposite Sex Unmarried Couples by Labor Force Status of Both Partners: 2008 retrieved 30 March 2009 from http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2008.html
2. Taken from Internet on 30 March 2009 from Table A1. Marital Status of People 15 Years and Over, by Age, Sex, Personal Earnings, Race, and Hispanic Origin/1, 2008
3. http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2008.html
4. Taken from Internet on 30 March 2009 from Table A1. Marital Status of People 15 Years and Over,

by Age, Sex, Personal Earnings, Race, and Hispanic Origin/1, 2008 http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2008.html
5. retrieved 30 March 2009 from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0077.pdf
6. Taken from Statistical Abstracts of the US on 30 March 2009 from Table 87. Births to Teenage Mothers and Unmarried Women and Births With Low Birth Weight-States and Island Areas: 2000 to 2006 http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0087.pdf
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9. Durkheim, E. (1982) The rules of the sociological method. (Steven Lukes, Ed.; Halls, W.D., translator) New York: Free Press.
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11. http:// www.factfinder.uscensus.gov; see table R1502 at http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GRTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-_box_head_nbr=R1502&-ds_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_&-redoLog=false&-format=US-30&-

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4. 3. Studying Relationships and Families

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Explain the steps in the research process.
- Define and identify dependent and independent variables.
- Explain sampling.
- Calculate the mean, median, and mode of data.
- Identify levels of measurement of variables.
- Analyze ethical concerns in research.

One of the most remarkable traits that August Comte mandated for Sociology was a core of scientific rigor. He proposed the concept of **positivism** which is *scientifically-based sociological research that uses scientific tools such as survey, sampling, objective measurement, and cultural and historical analysis to study and understand society*. Although the current definition of positivism expands far beyond Comte's original vision, sociological scientific methodology is used by government and industry researchers and across higher education and the private sector. Comte was originally interested in *why societies remain the same* (**social statics**) and *why societies change* (**social dynamics**). Most sociological research today falls within these broad categories. Sociologists strive for **objectivity** *which is the ability to study and observe without distortion or bias, especially personal bias*. Bias-free research is an ideal that, if not present, will open the door to extreme misinterpretation of research findings.

Sociology is both different from and similar to other scientific principles. It differs from chemistry, biology, and physics in that sociology does not manipulate the physical environment using established natural science theories and principles. It's similar to chemistry, biology, and physics in that statistical principles guide the discovery and confirmation of data findings. Yet sociology has no universally social laws that resemble gravity or the speed of light. This is because chemistry, biology, and physics have the luxury of studying phenomenon which are acted upon by laws of nature. Sociologists study people, groups, communities, and societies which are comprised of **agents** (*people who use their agency to make choices based on their varied motivations*).[1]

THE RESEARCH PROCESS[2]

Problem Recognition and Definition

Researchers start with a question such as "What do I want to know?"; "What is important for society to know?"; or "Why does this occur?" Unfortunately some questions cannot be answered, such as "How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?" Even though many would like to know the answer to this question, it cannot be empirically observed; that is we cannot perceive it through one of our fives senses (**empirical** *means we are able to perceive it through one of the five senses of sight, taste, touch, hearing, or smell*). After a researcher decides on what question she wants to answer she must state her goals and objectives. Does she want to determine if religious service attendance causes couples to have happier marriages? Or does she want to describe the characteristics of happy marriages. The first one is a causal study (what causes what) and the second is a descriptive study. The next step is to conduct a literature review to establish what is already known about the topic. Why reinvent the wheel? If someone has already done research on the characteristics of happy marriages, why do you need to do that? But maybe the person before you only studied certain characteristics and you have thought of more that might be important. Much research in sociology builds on existing research. The research question is usually stated as a hypothesis. A hypothesis is the researcher's educated belief about what she will find, such as "Those marriages that possess the most characteristics of happy marriages will be the happiest."

Creating the Research Design

There are many different types of studies that can be conducted. The most common type in sociology is survey research. But there are also interviews, observation, action research, polls, and experiments, as well as others. One determinant of the research design is whether the researcher wants to describe some social phenomenon or determine if one phenomenon causes another phenomenon. Descriptive studies answer the questions of who, what, where, and when. Causal studies are undertaken to determine how one variable affects another, how and why. Back to our marital happiness study, do we want to describe the characteristics of a happy marriage? Or do we want to determine if the presence of many of the characteristics causes a happier marriage? In other words, how does presence of characteristics influence happiness?

Sampling

Sometimes the entire **population**-*the group you are interested in researching*-can be studied. Often it is too large to study everyone. Think of a survey of all the students at College of the Canyons; that's over 20,000 people. Do we really need to survey all of them? Can we realistically survey all of them? If we choose our **sample**-*subset of the population*– carefully it will reflect the characteristics of the population and the way the sample answers the questions will be representative of everyone in the population.

Sampling methods are classified as either probability or nonprobability. In **probability samples**, *each member of the population has a known chance of being selected.* Probability methods include random sampling, systematic sampling, and stratified sampling. In **nonprobability sampling,** *members are selected from the population in some nonrandom manner*. These include convenience sampling, judgment sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling. You will learn about all of these sampling methods in your research methods class. We will discuss only random and convenience sampling here.

In **random sampling** *each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.* You need a list of everyone in your population to obtain a random sample. The easiest way to draw a random sample is to assign a number to each person in the population and then use a table of random numbers (you'll learn about this in your research methods class) to select the subset (sample). **Convenience sampling** *is used when you don't have a list of everyone in your population so you choose participants because they are convenient to you.*

Data Collection and Analysis

The next step is to collect your data by administering your survey, interviewing your subjects, or making observations. If you collect **quantitative data**-*data that is, or can be converted to, numbers*-you can enter it into a computer program, typically SPSS (you'll use this in your statistics class). If you collect **qualitative data**-*data that can't be converted to numbers*; *data that is about the quality of something*-you look for themes in the results.

Reporting the Results

The reason we do research is to expand the knowledge base and in order to do that we need to report our results. This is typically done via journals and conferences. Journal articles typically contain several sections: abstract, statement of the problem, methods used, results, discussion of the results, and references.

The analysis is the process through which large and complicated collections of scientific data are organized so that comparisons can be made and conclusions drawn. The study must show **validity**—*the study must actually test what you intended to test*. If you want to say one even is the cause of another, you will need to rule out other possibilities or explanations to show that your research is valid. For example if you want to prove that marijuana use leads to heroine use, you have to prove that there are no other contributing factors such as peer pressure or emotional or mental dysfunctions. The study must also demonstrate **reliability**—*the ability to repeat findings of a research study*. To demonstrate reliability we must demonstrate that the research process can be replicated with similar results.

SOCIOLOGISTS PERFORM SURVEY RESEARCH

Since by far the most common form of research in sociology is survey research, we are going to discuss how and when it is most useful. Sociologists study people who chose, decide, succeed, fail, harm others, harm themselves, and behave in rational and irrational ways. If you took an ounce of gasoline and placed a burning match upon it, the gas would have to burn. The gas has no choice just as the flame has no choice. But, if someone placed a burning match on your arm, or the arm of your classmate, you or they might respond in any number of ways. Most would find the experience to be painful. Some might enjoy it, others might retaliate with violence, and yet others might feel an emotional bond to the one who burned them. Sociologists must focus on the subjective definitions and perceptions that people place on their choices and motivations. In general **surveys** are *research instruments designed to obtain information from individuals who belong to a larger group, organization, or society*. The information gathered is used to describe, explain, and at times predict attitudes, behaviors, aspirations, and intended behaviors. Surveys are easily used to collect information about political views, social and religious opinions, demographic information, past or expected future behavior, and even marital happiness and characteristics such as communication style, level of commitment, and fidelity.

Polls are typically *surveys which collect opinions*, such as who one might vote for in an election, how one feels about the outcome of a controversial issue, or how one evaluates a public official or organization. Surveys can be administered *once* (**cross-sectional**). Or they can be administered at *two or more times* (**longitudinal**).

If you administer your survey and get a good **response rate**–*the percentage of people who complete your survey*–you can generalize your results to the entire population. **Generalizability** means that the *results from the sample can be assumed to apply to the population as though the population itself had been studied.*

Also important is the quality of the survey itself as a scientific instrument. **Valid survey questions** *are questions that are accurate* *and measure what they claim they'll measure*. For example let's say we wanted to know how students feel about a Lacrosse team at College of the Canyons. Which statement should we ask them about their agreement to? 1. "Every campus needs a Lacrosse team" or 2. "College of the Canyons would benefit from a Lacrosse team." The first asks about all campuses, not specifically this one. It's seeking an opinion about campuses and Lacrosse teams in general. The second asks specifically about this campus and is a valid measure of what we want to know. **Reliable questions** are *questions that are relatively free from bias errors which might taint the findings*. In other words, reliable survey questions are consistent and if I ask a similar group of people the same question I will get similar results.

Survey

There are 2 types of survey questions: **Open-ended questions** *are questions designed to get respondents to answer in their own words* (e.g., "What might be the benefits of having a Lacrosse team?"________________ . **Closed-ended questions** *are questions designed to get respondents to choose from a list of responses you provide to them* (e.g., "Are you married?" Yes or No.) **Likert scale questions** *are statements which respondents are asked to agree or disagree with.* They are the most common types of questions used in surveys (e.g., "How much do you agree that the president is doing a good job of running the country?" Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree). **Demographic questions** *are questions which provide the basic categorical information about respondents such as age, sex, race, educational level, marital status, etc.*

Levels of Measurement

Nominal level data *is data with no standard numerical values.* **This is often referred to as categorical data** (e.g., What is your favorite type of pet? __Reptile __Canine __Feline __Bird __Other). There is no numerical value associated with reptile that makes it more or less valuable than a canine or other type of pet. Other examples include sex, favorite color, or town you grew up in.

Ordinal level data *is categories with an order to them.* One category is more of something than another category. For example height measured as short, medium, and tall is ordinal because medium is more height than short and tall is more height than both short and medium.

Interval level data *is categories with an order, but we add standard numerical values with regular intervals.* If we measure height in feet and inches we have interval data. A height of 5 feet, 3 inches is 8 inches away from 5 feet, 11 inches. Each of those 8 inches has the same value, the intervals are identical. Five feet, 3 inches is one of the categories, but in this case the categories are numbers. The Fahrenheit temperature scale is an example of an interval scale. The difference between 68 degrees and 72 degree is the exact same four degrees as the difference between 101 degrees and 105 degrees.

Ratio level data *adds a real zero starting point for the numerical values*. We can create ratios with ratio level data. With ratio data we can say that someone who has two children has twice as many children as someone having only one child, and someone having four children has twice the children of someone who has just two children, and the person with four children has four times the number of children as the person with only one child. Ratio data is used to compare to other data. For example, the sex ratio is the number of males per 100 females in a society. In 2006, the sex ratio for Alaska, Rhode Island, and the U.S. was Alaska 107; Rhode Island 93.6, and U.S. 97.1.[3] We can say that Alaska had more males than females (107 males per 100 females) while Rhode Island had more females than males (93.6 males per 100 females). The U.S. overall has more females than males (97.1 males per 100 females).

Number of males and females, opinions about a Lacrosse team, marital happiness, height, and sex are variables. **Variables** *vary by respondent* (one is male, the next is female, the next is female, etc.). Sex is the variable and male or female are the **attributes**, *or the possible choices*. Everyone in your class is human, so humanness is not a variable—it doesn't vary. But almost everything else you can observe is a variable.

Two types of variables are dependent and independent variables. **Dependent variables** *change in response to the influence of independent variables; they depend upon the independent variables.* **Independent variables** *are variables that when manipulated will stimulate a change upon the dependent variables.* If I know the independent variable can I predict what the dependent variable will be? If I know that you possess many of the characteristics of happy marriages can I predict your level of happiness? Yes. That doesn't mean that everyone with many of the characteristics will be the happiest, but more often than not, they will be. So possession of characteristics is the independent variable and happiness is the dependent variable. How happy you are depends on how many of the characteristics you possess.

Is this a causal relationship or merely an association or correlation? A causal relationship is when one variable actually causes the other to occur, such as eating lots of Krispy Kreme donuts causes you to gain weight. That's pretty clear, but in sociology most relationships are not that clear. Do I know for certain that possession of many of the characteristics that are found in happy marriages causes a marriage to be happy? No. What if there is something else that is causing both happiness and possession of characteristics? Maybe it's religion or optimistic personality or something else. If this is true then this is an association or correlation. They go hand in hand, but one does not cause the other.

Quantitative Analysis

When basic statistics are performed on data, we call them measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode). Consider this list of numbers which represents the number of movies that nine students have seen in the last two weeks: 0, 1, 1, 1, 3, 4, 4, 5, 8.

The **mean** *is the arithmetic score of all the numbers divided by the total number of students* (i.e., 27:9=3). The **median** *is the exact mid-point value in the ordered list of scores* (e.g., 0, 1, 1, & 1 fall below and 4, 4, 5, & 8 fall above the number 3 thus 3 is the median). The **mode** *is the number which occurs most often* (e.g., 1 occurs the most, so the mode is 1). The **extreme values** or **outliers** are *the especially low or high number in the series* (e.g., 8). Notice that if you removed the 9th student's score and averaged only the remaining scores the mean would be 2.375. Extreme values can increase or decrease the mean. You will cover these basic and more interesting statistics in your statistics class.

ETHICS OF RESEARCH

Ethics *are standards of what is right and wrong* . They are a general agreement shared by researchers as to what is proper and improper in scientific research. Our culture and sociology have ethical standards that may be different from other disciplines or other cultures. Standards may arise from religious, political, or pragmatic sources. Standards differ over time, for example long ago we didn't have formal considerations about how to treat people who participate in scientific studies.

There are four major ethical issues that protect research subjects: 1.) Voluntary participation means that subjects must participate voluntarily, they must understand the risks of participating, and they must be able to withdraw from the study at any time. 2.) Researchers can do no harm to participants. This includes anything from killing someone to causing them undue stress. 3.) Every study must be confidential which means that the researcher can never divulge the participants' identities. Some studies are anonymous which means the researcher does not know the participants' identities. 4.) Deception cannot be used to get people to participate in research they would not want to participate in.

To be sure subjects know what they are getting into when they agree to participate in a study they sign an informed consent form which tells them the general purpose of the study, explains their right to withdraw, explains the confidentiality of the study, tells whether it is anonymous, explains the potential risks, and describes how to contact the researcher.

You can probably think of times when it would be necessary to deceive a subject or when you might need to cause just a little stress to investigate something. Of course there are exceptions, but we'll leave that to your research methods class.

FAMILY RESEARCH

One of the largest social surveys taken in the United States has been the General Social Surveys collected almost every year since 1972. It has provided 27 national samples with over 50,000 survey takers and thousands of variables as of 2008.[4] These large volumes of data and variables allow researchers to study the family at a scale that most could never attain if left to fund and collect the data for themselves.

In Great Britain the Family Resource Survey began in 1992 and has provided much needed insight into the needs and functioning of these families.[5] In China, a U.S. team of researchers performed a survey research study called the National Health and Nutrition Survey.[6] Numerous family and health data were collected for study. In Iraq, a medical family survey was conducted by the World Health Organization and Iraqi officials wherein over 9,000 households were surveyed.[7] The focus here was on the ravages that the ongoing war had taken on families and social networks.

Clinical observation studies typically take place in counseling, medical, residential treatment settings, or community centers. Perhaps two of the most prominent clinical researchers of the family have been Judith Wallerstein and John Gottman. Dr. Wallerstein studied children of divorce over the course of 25 years and has made a thorough study of the impacts that divorce has had on these children and their adult marriages and life experiences.8

Dr. Gottman studied couples in depth by videotaping them in clinically controlled apartments "love labs" where he observed their daily interaction patterns and carefully analyzed the footage of their interaction patterns. His research lead to the "Four Horsemen of Divorce" and the classification of four aspects of deeply troubled marriages: Defensiveness, Stonewalling, Criticism, and Contempt.9

Participant observations are much less common than surveys and clinical studies. They basically are studies where the researcher lives in, belongs to, or participates in the very social familial experience that is being studied.

The National Survey of Families and Households was collected in the early 1990s where 13,000+ families were interviewed in depth for survey information. This massive data set now exists in electronic form and can be analyzed by anyone seeking to look at specific research questions that pertain to many different aspects of the family experience in the U.S. at that time. *When a researcher analyzes existing data* it is called **secondary analysis**. This would apply to a research examining any of the above mentioned surveys, the U.S. Census, or even the Population Reference Bureau's world data.[10]

Finally, family members can be interviewed through in-depth qualitative interviews designed to capture the nuances of their experiences. This is what Dr. Judith Wallerstein did when she wrote the book, The Good Marriage (1995). She carefully interviewed 50 happily married couples that were considered by those around them to have a really good marriage. Her work was published in an era of family research that was flooded with studies about divorce and family dysfunction. The Good Marriage began a turn of events that made it more acceptable to study the positive functioning and side of family experiences in the U.S.

1. Google Anthony Giddens-human agency, January 18, 1938 British Sociologist.
2. http://www.statpac.com/research-papers/research-process.htm
3. http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GRTTable?_bm=y&-_box_head_nbr=R0102&-
4. ds_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_&-_lang=en&-format=US-30) 5 February, 2009.
5. see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Social_Survey retrieved 5 February, 2010
6. http://www.natcen.ac.uk/ for family research studies online.

7. retrieved 5 Feb., 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China_Health_and_Nutrition_Survey
8. see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_Family_Health_Survey
9. see research-based books: The Good Marriage (1995 HM); Second Chances: 1996 HM); Surviving the Breakup (1996 HC); and the Unexpected Legacy of Divorce (2000H)
10. see research-based books: The Relationship Cure (2002 TRP); Why Marriages Succeed or Fail (1995 FP); Seven Principles (2007 TRP); and Ten Lessons to Transform Your Marriage (2007 TRP).
11. www.prb.org

5. 4. Family Strengths

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Analyze family strengths and relate how they are fostered
- Recall threats to a strong family
- Recall proactive measures to combat family breakdown

The good news for fans of family relationships is that the family is here to stay. The family is by far the most enduring and central institution in society and has been throughout all human history. Family homogeneity is a thing of the past. Family diversity is the theme of the future. The formation, maintenance, and perpetuation of the family will continue as it has for thousands of years. It will adapt itself to changing technologies and economies. It will adapt itself to religious and political influences. And it will adapt itself to scientific discovery. Most importantly it will persist as long as humans persist.

World surveys of human values continue to document the selection of family issues as the most important value to people worldwide.[1] Billions continue on with their traditions of tribal, monogamous, polygamous, matriarchal, and patriarchal family forms. Lesbian and gay couples continue to carve their niche into the mainstream of the various societies in which they live. Poor families, average families, and wealthy families continue to perform the core family functions and create another generation of adult children who will likely do the same by socially reproducing the next generation of fathers and mothers, husbands and wives.

The General Social Surveys (GSS) are national surveys of U.S. persons and have been conducted from 1972 to the present.[2] When asked if a girl's or boy's chances for a happy family life were better than yours, about the same, or worse than yours, thousands of respondents (24,070) 19% reported girls had a better chance and 17% said boys had a better chance; 45% (girls) and 48% (boys) said about the same chance; and 36% (girls) and 35% (boys) said a worse chance.3

In the U.S. families are a source of satisfaction. When asked another question about how much satisfaction they get from their family life, 43% said a very great deal, 34% said a great deal, and 11% said quite a bit.[4] When asked in general how satisfied they were with their family 90% indicated satisfaction at some level.5

With all the challenges families face researchers have been very interested in what can be done to strengthen families. A wealth of research has been conducted investigating what strong families do to stay strong.

FOSTERING RITUALS, TRADITIONS, AND HOLIDAYS

Ever wonder why Grandma or Mom keeps asking you to attend the family picnic or reunion? What might they know that you don't know? Even though it feels annoying at times, when you do attend, why are you glad you did? Perhaps your Mom and Grandma know that family rituals, traditions, and holidays are the way to build a connection between generations, to create new memories, and to keep family traditions alive.

Scientists have found that reunions and celebrations tend to promote cohesion and adaptability in family systems while offering mutual support between nuclear and extended family members. Rituals are very important to the family. These can be as simple as eating three meals a day together, holding weekly movie parties, buying fresh doughnuts on Saturday morning or reading to small children at bedtime. Rituals when practiced come to be expected. The ritual of taking driver's education and obtaining a driver's license is a common experience. For many family members it marks a **rite of passage** or *an event that signifies the transition of a person from one stage in life to another* (e.g., non-driver to driver). When a new driver emerges among the teen children, a new taxi driver emerges as well. Siblings can transport family members around town and provide the entire family with much needed support. A first date, high school or college graduation, and even marriage are also rituals that serve as rites of passage. There are rituals that take place outside of the family institution which are also important.

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Religious rituals are found among the world's major religions. **Religion** is *a unified system of beliefs, rituals, and practices that typically involve a broader community of believers who share common definitions of the sacred and the profane*. Religions provide meaning to us about what is sacred and what is profane. According to Durkheim the **sacred** is *the supernatural, divine, awe inspiring, and spiritually significant aspects of our existence*, and the **profane** is *that which is part of the regular everyday life experience*. These definitions originated from Durkheim's studies of religion.[6] For you religion might be a personal definition of how you feel about your place in the universe. It may also reflect how you understand categories of people who share a common system of beliefs that differ from your own (Jews, Muslims, Christians, etc.).

Religion shapes the attitudes and values of individuals. Gallup polling corporation collected US religiosity data during 2008. **Religiosity** is *the measurable importance of religion to a person's life.* Religiosity can be measured by considering how active someone feels in her religion, how often she attends formal services, how much money she donates, how often she privately worships in her home, and other factors.

In January 2009 Gallup reported that after interviewing 350,000 U.S. individuals, there were some collective religiosity patterns which emerged. The ten most religious states were all in the South Eastern U.S. The ten least religious states were North Eastern (7), North Western (2), and Nevada in the West. They also reported that 65% of people in the U.S. said, "Yes, religion is an important part of their daily life."7

There are many religious holidays, but suffice it to say that religiously-based family rituals are often a source of strength to families which use them for tradition and family cohesion. Many families also have spiritual rituals independent of formal religion. There are family fasts, family prayers on behalf of others, family offerings made in hopes of receiving blessings, and family outings designed to get family members in touch with nature and the forces of peace and creation.

FAMILY HISTORY

One tradition utilized by many families is that of oral histories. All of us have an ancestral heritage. **Family history** is *the process of documenting and cataloging one's own ancestral heritage.* Millions of family members worldwide have begun personal family histories to pass down to their children and grandchildren.

On the Internet, genealogy and family history searches account for the second most common Internet search topics today.[8] Family history buffs can trace their ancestors back to the 1500s before records become sparse. After the 1500s, only European royalty have such records. There are a number of family history websites with *ancentry.com* being one of the largest and most comprehensive. Many who study and write down their family history share it with their children and grandchildren, creating bonds of unity that span the generations.

QUALITY FAMILY TIME

Another key strategy is spending quality time together as a family. Work, school, friends, recreation, and entertainment exact a tremendous toll on family cohesion and adaptability because it distracts them from taking time to simply be together. Family members need time together, not just doing electronic stuff, but being bored, doing chores, cleaning, and cooking together. When we get bored we get talkative and start opening up to one another. We then get an idea of what's going on in each other's life and become aware of the details that make us who we are. We know each other's hopes and fears, concerns, and aspirations. Conversation and interaction is needed to reinforce loyalties and affirmations of one another.

RESISTING FAMILY ENTROPY

All of the rituals, traditions, holidays, and spiritual approaches mentioned above are valuable because of the intimate bond that persists between family members. **Family system entropy** is *the process of decay within a nuclear family system that is facilitated by the diverse roles and demands placed on family members as they travel their life courses together.* Children are very close to their parents before their teen years. It is essential to connect with children and establish a strong bond before they hit age 13. Around the time of puberty, rational thinking processes mature, self-consciousness increases, and the importance of peer-acceptance increases. All this happens while teens prefer their friends over their family, especially over their parents. That is not to say that teens hate their parents, typically the opposite is true, they need their parents, but crave peer-acceptance and interaction.

Make sure to control your technology, don't let it control you. Remember that technology demands attention. While you use it, your attention is distracted from people. Experts have even found that driving while talking on the cell phone impairs your judgment because you are distracted mentally from the details of driving. The same is true for being distracted by TV, video games, texting, GPS, Blue Tooth, IPods, and computers. It is safe to assume that all our electronic gadgets are a distraction to us and they have the potential to undermine our relationships if not managed. Some families declare a techno-free day where all the electronic gadgets are turned off for 24 hours and family together time is shared.

RESISTING MARITAL ENTROPY

By far and with few exceptions, the marital bond is the core of a nuclear family system. Married couples are decidedly better off than singles in a number of key quality of life areas. Couples may not be aware of how much their quality of life is enhanced by being married. Awareness in this case hopefully will bring a strong commitment to resist **marital entropy** (couples have to work diligently against *the forces of decay and chaos that wear down a marital bond*). A family system functions much better when the married heads of the family have strength and unity in their marriage.

THREATS TO A STRONG FAMILY

Parenting and work stressors, financial burdens, health issues, long-term fatigue, extended-family issues, electronic distractions, over-complicated schedules, grudge holding, and entitlement issues all lead to breakdown in a family. Good communication skills are a strength, but if one spouse is overburdened with parenting or work stressors, is distracted by electronic gadgets, or the spouses rarely see each other because of complicated schedules good communication becomes a challenge. Health issues of one family member are a common threat to family security. These challenges often are accompanied by financial burdens. The more threats present, the more difficult it is to maintain a strong family.

FACTORS THAT HELP FAMILIES RESIST DECAY

Parental dating, romantic gestures, united (and written down) goals, practice of stress management techniques, having fun on a regular basis, and seeking professional help when needed are some proactive measures families can take to avoid the breakdown of their family.

Judith Wallerstein wrote about the ability strong married couples have to support and nurture one another and to manage the daily wear and tear on the marriage and family.[8] Rescuing one another is one of the duties and benefits that come with marriage. Today the husband may help her get through difficult times. In a few years she may reciprocate and support him. The key is to take the time, sacrifice the needed resources, and be your spouse's number one support, especially when the chips are down. Wallerstein (1995) also talked about using humor and having fun with and without the children. When a couple discovers one another, they establish a relationship filled with fun, romance, and togetherness. Once married and pursuing their goals, married life bears down so heavily at times that it becomes easy to forget those early attractions that prompted you to marry.

Finally, families can be the most fun, most meaningful, and most rewarding social groups we belong to in our lives. Many elderly rate their family relationships as being among the most satisfying aspects of their golden years. The family experience can be valued or endured, cherished or loathed, essential or distracting. Regardless of the circumstances we face in life, our efforts to build and enjoy the family as individuals, couples, and other family members will most likely be rewarding to us throughout our entire lives. If neglected, just the opposite could prove to be true.

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2. www.norc.org, General Social Surveys
3. retrieved 13 may, 2010 from http://www.norc.org/GSS+Website/Browse+GSS+Variables/Subject+Index/
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8. retrieved 18 May 2010 from http://www.google.com/trends
9. Judith Wallerstein & Sandra Blakeslee. The Good

Marriage. 1995. Warner Books

6. 5. Dating and Partner Selection

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Apply the filtering theory of mate selection
- Define propinquity
- Differentiate between homogamous and heterogamous characteristics
- Define exogamy
- Apply the Social Exchange Theory to mate selection

Sixty years ago if you were of marrying age, you'd most likely select someone based on how your parents felt about it, how healthy the person appeared to be, how good/moral their character appeared to be and how stable their economic resources appeared to be. Today we search for soul mates. Look around you in the classroom. How many potential mates are sitting there? In other words, how many single females or males are there in the same classroom? Now of those, how many would you be attracted to as a date and how many can you tell just by watching them that you'd probably never date? These are the types of questions and answers we consider when we study dating and mate selection.

Dating as we know it developed in the 20th century. It *is a practice in which people meet and participate in activities together in order to get to know each other*. Prior to dating, courting was common in the United States. Courting, which involved strong rules and customs, evolved into dating due to wide-spread use of the automobile after the Industrial Revolution. Automobiles enabled young people to have more freedom. After the Industrial Revolution, with the change from agriculture and farming to support families to factory work, love rather than necessity became the basis for marital relationships. Today, dating is more casual than ever, taking on many forms (couple, group, online, etc.)

In the United States there are millions of people between the ages of 18-24 (18-24 is considered prime dating and mate selection ages). The U.S. Statistical Abstracts estimates that 9.5% of the U.S. population or about 15,675,000 males and 15,037,000 females are in this age group[1]. Those numbers should be very similar after the 2010 Census data are analyzed which takes several years after collection. Does that mean that you could have 15 million potential mates out there somewhere? Yes, potential, yet no in realistic terms. You see, it would take more time than any mortal has in his life to ever interact with that many people. Besides dating and mate selection is not about volume it's about quality and intimacy in the relationship. When we see people we filter them as either being in or out of our pool of eligibles.

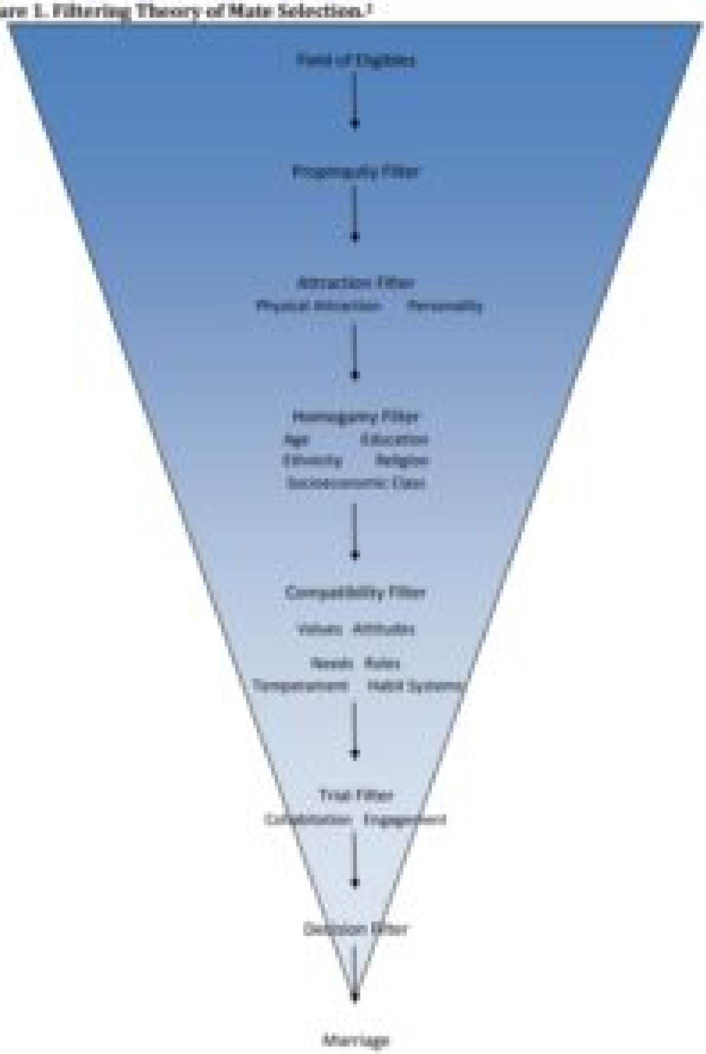
Filtering is *the process of identifying those we interact with as either being in or out of our pool of people we might consider to be a date or mate.* There are many filters we use. One is physical appearance. We might include some because of tattoos and piercing or exclude some for the exact same physical traits. We might include some because they know someone we know or exclude the same people because they are total strangers. Figure 1 shows the basic date and mate selection principles that play into our filtering processes (This inverted pyramid metaphorically represents a filter that a liquid might be poured through to refine it; e.g., coffee filter).

Propinquity is *the geographic closeness experienced by potential dates and mates.* It's the proximity you might experience by living in the same dorms or apartment buildings; going to the same university or college; working in the same place of employment; or belonging to the same religious group. Proximity means that you both breathe the same air in the same place at about the same time. Proximity is crucial because the more you see one another or interact directly or indirectly with one another, the more likely you see each other as mates.

Attraction and the evaluation of physical appearance is subjective and is defined differently for each individual. Truly, what one person finds as attractive is not what others find to be attractive. There are a few biological, psychological, and social-emotional aspects of appearance that tend to make an individual more attractive to more people. These include slightly above average desirable traits and symmetry in facial features.

Figure 1. Filtering Theory of Mate Selection.[2]

Figure 1. Filtering Theory of Mate Selection.[1]



According to the Centers for Disease Control[3] the average man in the United States is five feet ten inches tall and weighs about 177 pounds. The average woman is about five feet four inches tall and weighs about 144 pounds. Did you just compare yourself? Most of us tend to compare ourselves to averages or to others we know. That's how we come to define our personal level of attractiveness. This is important to understand that we subjectively judge ourselves as being more or less attractive; because we often limit our dating pool of eligibles to those we think are in our same category of beauty.

If you are six feet tall as a man or five feet eight inches as a woman, then you are slightly above average in height. For men, if they have manly facial features (strong chin and jaw and somewhat prominent brow), some upper body musculature, and a slim waist then they'd have more universally desirable traits. For women larger eyes, softer facial features and chin, fuller lips, and an hour-glass figure facilitate more universally desirable traits.

So, here is the million dollar question "What if I don't have these universally desirable traits? Am I excluded from the date and mate selection market?" No. There is a principle that has been found to be the most powerful predictor of how we make our dating and mating selection choices—homogamy.

Homogamy is *the tendency for dates, mates, and spouses to pair off with someone of similar attraction, background, interests, and needs.* This is typically true for most couples. They find and pair off with persons of similarity more than difference. Birds of a feather flock together, but you also have probably heard that opposites attract. Some couples seem to be a vast set of contradictions, but researchers tend to find patterns that indicate that homogamy in a relationship can be indirectly supportive of a long-term relationship quality because it facilitates less disagreements and disconnections of routines in the daily life of a couple. We filter homogamously and even to the point that we tend to marry someone like our parents. Here's why; people from similar economic classes, ethnicities, religions, political persuasions, and lifestyles tend to hang out with others like themselves. Our mates resemble our parents more because we resemble our parents and we tend to look for others like ourselves.

Heterogamy is *the dating or pairing of individuals with differences in traits.* All of us pair off with heterogamous and homogamous individuals with emphasis more on the latter than the former. Over time, after commitments are made, couples often develop more homogamy. Some develop similar mannerisms, finish each other's sentences, dress alike, develop mutually common hobbies and interests and parent together.

One of the most influential psychologists in the 1950-1960s was Abraham Maslow and his famous Pyramid of the Hierarchy of Needs[4]. Maslow's pyramid has been taught in high schools and colleges for decades. Maslow sheds light on how and why we pick the person we pick when choosing a date or mate by focusing on how they meet our needs as a date, mate, or spouse. Persons from dysfunctional homes where children were not nurtured nor supported through childhood would likely be attracted to someone who provides that unfulfilled nurturing need they still have. Persons from homes where they were nurtured, supported, and sustained in their individual growth and development would likely be attracted to someone who promises growth and support in intellectual, aesthetic, or self-actualization (becoming fully who our individual potential allows us to become) areas of life. It may sound selfish at first glance but we really do date and mate on the basis of what we get out of it (or how our needs are met).

THEORIES OF MATE SELECTION

The **Social Exchange Theory** and its rational choice formula clarify the selection process even further. We strive to *maximize rewards and minimize costs in our choices of a mate.*

Rewards – Costs = Choice

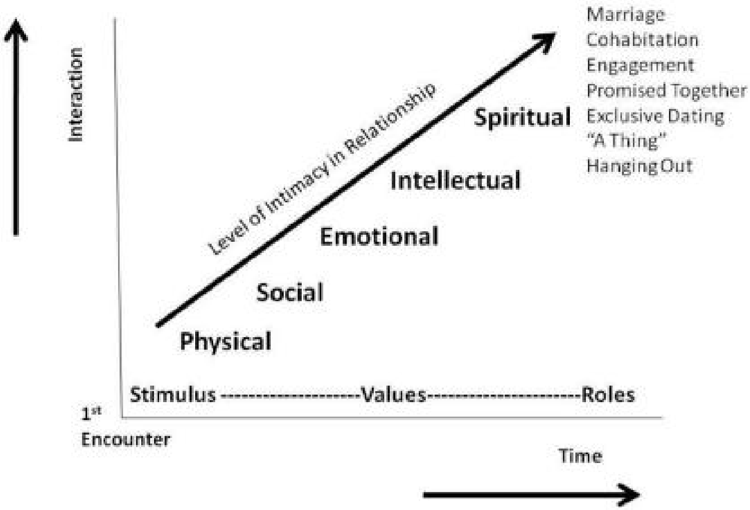
When we interact with potential dates and mates we run a mental balance sheet in our heads. She might think, "He's tall, confident, funny, and friends with my friends." As she talks a bit more she might say, "But, he chews tobacco, only wants to party, and just flirted with another woman while we were talking." The entire time we interact with potential dates and mates we evaluate them on their appearance, disposition, goals and aspirations, and other traits. This while simultaneously remembering how we rate and evaluate ourselves. Rarely do we seek out the best looking person at the party unless we define ourselves as an even match for him or her. More often we rank and rate ourselves compared to others and as we size up and evaluate potentials we define the overall exchange rationally or in an economic context where we try to maximize our rewards while minimizing our losses.

The overall evaluation of the deal also depends to a great extent on how well we feel matched on racial and ethnic traits, religious background, social economic class, and age similarities. The complexity of the date and mate selection process includes many obvious and some more subtle processes that you can understand for yourself. If you are single you can apply them to the date and mate selection processes you currently pursue.

Bernard Murstein wrote articles in the early 1970s where he tested his **Stimulus-Value-Role Theory** of marital choice[5]. To Murstein *the exchange is mutual and dependent upon the subjective attractions and the subjective assets and liabilities each individual brings to the relationship*. The **stimulus** is *the trait (usually physical) that draws your attention to the person*. After time is spent together dating or hanging out, **values** (*notions of what is desirable or undesirable*) are compared for compatibility and an evaluation of the maximization of rewards while minimization of costs is calculated. If after time and relational compatibility supports it, the pair may choose to take **roles** (*being a boyfriend, a wife, etc.*) which typically include exclusive dating, cohabitation, engagement, or marriage**.** Figure 2 shows how the Stimulus-Values-Role Theory might overlap with a couple's development of intimacy over increased time and increased interaction.

How do strangers transition from not even knowing one another to eventually cohabiting or marrying together? From the very first encounter, two strangers begin a process that either excludes one another as potential dates or mates or includes them and begins the process of establishing intimacy. **Intimacy** is *the mutual feeling of acceptance, trust, and connection to another person, even with the understanding of personal faults of the individual.* In other words, intimacy is the ability to become close to one another, to accept one another as is, and eventually to feel accepted by the other. Intimacy is not sexual intercourse, although sexual intercourse may be one of many expressions of intimacy. When two strangers meet they have a stimulus that alerts one or both to take notice of the other.

Figure 2: Depiction of Stimulus-Value-Role Theory with Intimacy and over Time & Interaction



Judith Wallerstein's[6] book discusses a story where one woman was on a date with a guy and overheard another man laughing like Santa Clause might laugh. She asked her date to introduce her and that began the relationship which would become her decades-long marriage to the Santa Clause laughing guy. Many people discuss some subtle connection that just felt safe, like a reunion with a long lost friend when they first met one another. In the **stimulus stage** some motivation at the physical, social, emotional, intellectual or spiritual level sparks interests and the interaction begins. Over time and with increased interaction, two people may make that journey of values comparisons and contrasts which inevitably includes or excludes the other. The more time and interaction that is accompanied by increased trust and acceptance of one's self and the other, the more the intimacy and probability of a long-term relationship.

Even though Figure 2 shows that a smooth line of increasing intimacy can occur, it does not always occur so smoothly or so predictably. As the couple reaches a place where a bond has developed they establish patterns of commitment and loyalty which initiates the roles listed in Figure 2. The list of roles is listed in increasing order of level of commitment yet does not indicate any kind of predictable stages the couple would be expected to pursue. In other words, some couples may take the relationship only as far as **exclusive dating** which is *the mutual agreement to exclude others from dating either individual in the relationship*. Another couple may eventually cohabit or marry.

It should be mentioned that what you'd look for in a date is often different from what you might look for in a spouse. Dates are temporary adventures where good looks, fun personality, entertainment capacity, and even your social status by being seen in public with him or her are considered important. Dates are short-term and can be singular events or a few events. Many college students who have dated more than once develop "A Thing" or a relationship noticed by the individuals and their friends as either beginning or having at least started, but not quite having a defined destination. These couples eventually hold a DTR. A **DTR** means *a moment where the two individuals "Define the Relationship" openly to determine if both want to include each other in a specific goal-directed destination (i.e., exclusive dating) or if it's better for everyone if the relationship ends.*

Have you ever experienced one of these? Many describe them as awkward. A DTR can be awkward because of what is at stake. DTRs can be extremely risky in terms of how much of one's self has to be involved and in terms of how vulnerable it makes each other feel. In the TV series The Office, Jim and Pam experience a number of DTRs that early on in the relationship ended with either or both of them wanting more closeness and commitment, but neither of them being capable of making it happen. The Office is fiction, but the relationships clearly reflect some of the human experience in an accurate way.

Notice that Jim and Pam were from the same part of the country, had very many social and cultural traits in common, and both met in a setting where they could see each other on a regular basis and have the opportunity to go through the Stimulus-Value-Role (SVR) process. Homogamy, propinquity, need matching, compatibility, and eventually commitment all applied in their story together. The cultural similarities of a couple cannot be emphasized enough in this discussion.

Many of those living in the United States share common mainstream cultural traits, regardless of ancestral heritage or ethnic background, date and mate selection occurs for nearly all members of society. Figure 3 shows a list of cultural and ethnic background traits that influence how the inclusion and exclusion decisions are made, depending on how similar or different each individual defines themselves to be in relation to the other. Many who teach relationship skills in cross-cultural or trans-racial relationships focus on the similarity principle.

The **similarity principle** states that *the more similar two people perceive themselves to be, the more likely their relationship will continue and succeed.* Notice the word, *perceive*, because actual similarities are not as critical as an individual's belief that there are common characteristics. Also, certain individuals value one background trait over others. They may be more willing to overlook or ignore differences in traits which are not as similar.

Figure 3: Cultural and Ethnic Background Traits

Language
Religion
Traditions & Holidays
Lifestyles and self-identification
Workplace skills
Educational aspirations and achievements
Age similarity
Physical appearance (skin color, facial features, & body shape and size)
Food preferences
Political leanings
Economic similarities
Common shared experiences (IE: Military background)
Family cultural similarities and compatibilities
Physical attractiveness similarities
Hobbies and interest similarities
Life goals similarities
Others…

In the Movie, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, the Greek-American woman who was the main character meets a strikingly handsome professional man from a different ethnic background. Much of the difficulty she had in including him as a mate was her perception that her cultural and family background was unattractive and could not be desirable to potential mates. He was deeply attracted to her family because it filled his need for family connection, tradition, and support. He learned the Greek culture and adopted her family as his surrogate family.

In real life, most don't make such profound concessions when choosing a mate. The relationship is less likely to develop if there are few or no common traits and more likely if there are more common traits, especially in the areas of commonality that the individuals define as being very important.

Dating often turns into exclusive or boyfriend-girlfriend type relationships. These relationships are crucial in the lives of young adults because they allow each other to gain experience in the daily routines of intimate relationships. They don't always develop into long-term relationships, but practicing in healthy relationships is far more valuable than the grieving from breaking up.

There are some rules that can be summarized about how we include dates or mates in our pool of eligibles. Figure 4 shows that rule #1 is exogamy. **Exogamy** is *the tendency to pair off with or marry someone outside of your own familial groups.*

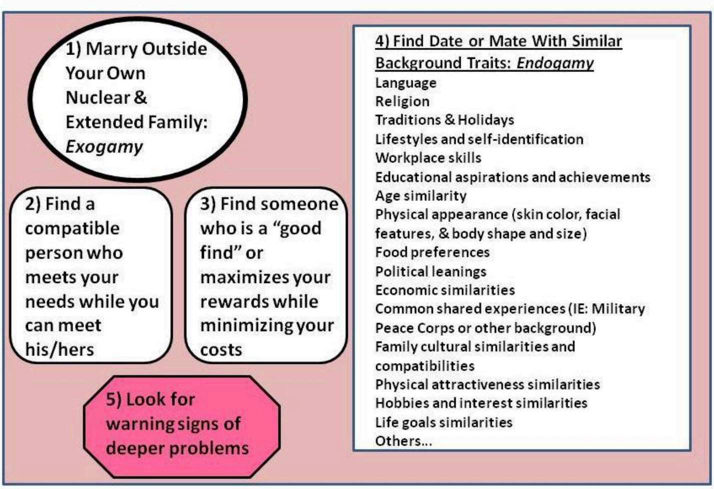
Rule #4 is to maximize homogamy and look for commonalities that will smooth out the daily adjustments of the relationship. It is doubtful you'd ever find a perfect match on all of these traits, but make sure you find a good match of complimentary personality traits and background characteristics.

Rule# 5 is very important. You must learn to discern trouble and danger in a date or mate. Intimate violence is the worst and most deadly violence especially for women. Their dates, mates, spouses, and life partners are more likely to cause them violent harm than will any other category of relationship in their lives. Figure 5 provides some criteria to identify as red flags, warning signs, or danger signs.

The risky and dangerous traits you might see in a potential date or mate can be early warning signals to raise red flags. In fairness, the presence of any one of these may just indicate a bad day. Some potential dates and mates are predatorial. That means they search for types of people they can manipulate and control and try to pair off with them. The presence of a few of these could raise your suspicions enough to become a savvy shopper, discriminating consumer, or even a detective of danger signs. Remember, that when dating and selecting a mate overcautious discernment is justified.

Most people never experience the extreme dangers of dating. For most it's more of an emotional risk than a safety risk. Many chose to marry and do so more often in the warmer months of the year than in the other months. When relationships form and engagements are made and agreed upon, an entire social experience is initiated where new social roles and networks begin to unfold. Engaged people announce their plans to family and friends and by so doing initiate a few processes within the social community of each fiancé. Announcements of the engagement begin the process of exclusion of others. All other potential suitors and dates are excluded from the pool of eligibles while exclusive monogamy begins in almost every aspect of the couple's lives. She often wears a ring that ranges from $2 to 10,000 dollars. That ring deters most because it symbolizes her agreement to marry her fiancé. The couple often formalizes their wedding plans in newspaper, mailed out invitations to the reception, and or online announcements. **In-laws** are *people you become related to by virtue of marrying into your fiancé's family network***.** It has been said that you get in-laws and out-laws when you marry. Not all in-laws will get along with the couple as well as might be wished.

Figure 4: Five Rules of Date and Mate Selection

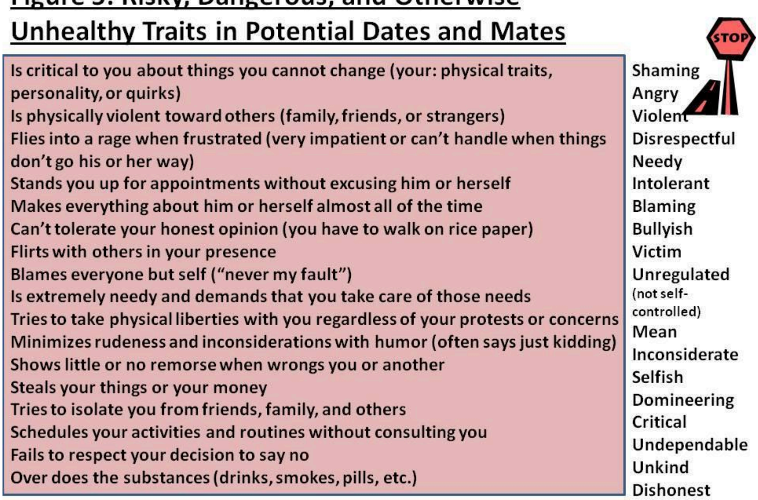


The creation of extended kin ties is crucial to a successful engagement. To some degree in-laws are expected to at least be compatible with the new family member (fiancé) and if possible in another degree to establish close relational bonds. Engagement also signifies to the couple the ultimate direction of their courtship. Marriage and the merging of social networks, belongings, monies, physical intimacy, rights, children, and many other things becomes the focus. Engagement provides the couple with opportunities to practice being married, in many different aspects of the relationship.

Most engagements end in marriage. But, some end in a breaking up event where the marriage is cancelled. Sometimes couples realize that they were not as compatible as they originally thought themselves to be. Sometimes, they are geographically separated by various circumstances and find that their commitment did not withstand the test of time and space. Other times in-laws and extended family incompatibilities work against the marriage. And finally sometimes, people just fall out of love or lose interest.

For those who are searching for a spouse the market is an uneven playing field. The United States has what social scientists call a marriage squeeze. **A marriage squeeze** is *a demographic imbalance in the number of males to females among those considered to be of marrying ages*. There is also a phenomenon called the marriage gradient. The **marriage gradient** is *the tendency for women to marry a man slightly older and slightly taller while men tend to marry a woman slightly more attractive.*

Figure 5: Risky, Dangerous, and Otherwise Unhealthy Traits in Potential Dates and Mates



Based on the U.S. Census there are about 15,675,000 males and

15,037,000 females aged 18 to 24. That boils down to 638,000 extra males in the marriage market 18 to 24 years old. Since women tend to want to marry a man slightly older the marriage market is squeezed because there are too few females for all the available males.

China and India have tremendous problems with their marriage squeeze issues. Because of sex-selection abortion, cultural preferences for males, female infanticide, and cultural definitions as female children being a burden rather than a source of joy and rejoicing they are missing tens of millions of females in these populations. For example, in 2001 India had 35 million extra men nationwide.[7] In 2003 China was reported to also have about 35 million extra men.8

1. http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0010.pdf
2. Adapted from DeGenova, M.K., Stinnett, N. & Stinnet N. (2011). *Intimate relationships, marriages, and families* (8th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
3. www.CDC.gov
4. A theory of human motivation. (1943). *Psychological Review* 50(4), 370-96.
5. Physical attractiveness and marital choice. (1972). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 22(1), 8-12; *Who will marry whom? Theories and research in marital choice*. (1976). New York; Springer.
6. *The Good Marriage*. (1995).
7. http://www.prb.org/Articles/2001/2001CensusResultsMixedforIndiasWomenandGirls.aspx
8. http://www.prb.org/Reports/2003/ShortageofGirlsinChina.aspx

7. 6. Sex and Gender

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

Differentiate between sex and gender.

Compare and contrast the biological characteristics of males and females.

Define gender socialization.

Define gender roles.

Differentiate between the “types” of husbands.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEX AND GENDER?

By far, sex and gender has been one of the most socially significant social factors in the history of the world and the United States. **Sex** is *one’s biological classification as male or female and is set into motion at the moment the sperm fertilizes the egg.* Sex can be precisely defined at the genetic level with XX being female and XY being male. Believe it or not, there are very few sex differences based on biological factors. Even though male and female are said to be opposite sexes, biologically there is no opposite sex. Look at table 1 below to see sex differences. For the sake of argument, ignore the reproductive differences and you basically see taller, stronger, and faster males. The real difference is the reproductive body parts, their function, and corresponding hormones. The average U.S. woman has about two children in her lifetime. She also experiences a monthly period. Other than that and a few more related issues listed in Table 1, reproductive roles are a minor difference in the overall daily lives women, yet so very much importance has been placed on these differences throughout history.

We have much more in common than differences. In table 2 you see a vast list of similarities common to both men and women. Every major system of the human body functions in very similar ways to the point that health guidelines, disease prevention and maintenance, and even organ transplants are very similar and guided under a large umbrella of shared guidelines. True, there are medical specialists in treating men and women, but again the similarities outweigh the differences. Today you probably ate breakfast, took a shower, walked in the sunlight, sweated, slept, used the bathroom, was exposed to germs and pathogens, grew more hair and finger nails, exerted your muscles to the point that they became stronger, and felt and managed stress. So did every man and woman you know and in very similar ways.

Answer this question, which sex has Estrogen, Follicle Stimulating Hormone, Luteinizing Hormone, Prolactin, mammary glands, nipples, and even Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (at times)? Yes, you probably guessed correctly. Both males and females have all these hormones, plus many others including testosterone.

Table 1. Known Biological Sex Differences.1

Female	Male
Reproductive Traits	
Vagina	Penis
Uterus	Testicles
Ovaries	Scrotum
Breast development	Breast dormant
Cyclical hormones	
Other	
Shorter	Taller
Less Aggressive	More aggressive
Runs a bit slower	Runs a bit faster
Less upper body strength	More upper body strength
Life span about 7 years longer in developed countries	Life span about 3 years shorter worldwide

Table 2. Known Biological Sex Similarities.

Digestive System
Respiratory System
Circulatory System
Lymphatic System
Urinary System
Musculoskeletal System
Nervous System
Endocrine System
Sensory System-5
Immune System
Integumentary System- Skin, Hair, and Nails

Excretory System

Not only are males and females very similar, but science has shown that we truly are more female than male in biological terms. So, why the big debate of the battle of the sexes? Perhaps it's because of the impact of **gender** (*the cultural definition of what it means to be a man or a woman*). Gender is culturally-based and varies in a thousand subtle ways across the many diverse cultures of the world. Gender has been shaped by political, religious, philosophical, language, tradition and other cultural forces for many years. **Gender roles** are also *socially and culturally-based and are that set of norms that are attached to a specific gender*. **Gender identity** is *our personal internal sense of our own maleness or femaleness.* Every society has a slightly different view of what it means to be male/masculine and female/feminine. Masculine traits are those we associate with being male, such as aggressiveness, directness, independence, objectiveness, and leadership. Feminine traits are being talkative, submissive, nurturing, emotional, and illogical. **Androgyny** is *when a person shares both masculine and feminine traits.* They fit their behaviour to the situation; so an androgynous person might cry at a wedding or funeral, but can also change the tire on a car.

To this day, in most countries of the world women are still oppressed and denied access to opportunities more than men and boys. This can be seen through many diverse historical documents. When reading these documents, the most common theme of how women were historically oppressed in the world's societies is the omission of women as being legally, biologically, economically, and even spiritually on par with men. The second most common theme is the assumption that women were somehow broken versions of men.2

Biology has disproven the belief that women are broken versions of men. In fact, the 23rd chromosome looks like XX in females and XY in males and the Y looks more like an X with a missing leg than a Y. Ironically, science has shown that males are broken or variant versions of females and the more X traits males have the better their health and longevity.

DEBUNKING MYTHS ABOUT WOMEN

In Table 1 you saw how females carry the lion's share of the biological reproduction of the human race. Since history assumed that women were impaired because of their reproductive roles (men were not), societies have defined much of these reproductive traits as hindrances to activities.

Professor Hammond found an old home health guide at an antique store in Ohio. He was fascinated that in 1898 the country's best physicians had very inaccurate information and knowledge about the human body and how it worked.[3] Interestingly, pregnancy was considered "normal" within most circumstances while menstruation was seen as a type of disease process that had to be treated (back then and today most physicians were men). On pages 892-909 it refers to menstrual problems as being "unnatural" and that they are normal only if "painless" and thus the patient should be treated rather than the "disease." Indeed from a male scientific perspective in 1898, females and their natural reproductive cycles were problematic.

But, to the author, females were more fragile and vulnerable and should be treated more carefully than males especially during puberty. Patton states, "The fact is that the girl has a much greater physical and a more intense mental development to accomplish than the boy…" As for public education, he states that "The boy can do it; the girl can—sometimes…" He attributes most of the female sexual and reproductive problems to public school which is a by-product of "women's rights, so called."

He'd probably be stunned to see modern medicine's discoveries today. In our day, women are not defined as being inferior in comparison to men. But, in 1898, a physician (source of authority and scientific knowledge) had no reservations about stating the cultural norm in print, that women were considered broken in contrast to men.

Gender Socialization is *the shaping of individual behavior and* *perceptions in such a way that the individual conforms to the socially prescribed expectations for males and females*. One has to wonder what might have been different if all women were born into societies that valued their uniqueness and similarities in comparison to men. How much further might civilizations have progressed? It is wise to avoid the exclusion of any category of people—based on biological or other traits—from full participation in the development of knowledge and progress in society. In the history of the world, such wisdom has been ignored far too often.

GENDER ROLES AS A SOCIAL FORCE

One can better understand the historical oppression of women by considering three social factors throughout the world's history religion, tradition, and labor-based economic supply and demand. In almost all of the world's major religions (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and many others) very clear distinctions have been made about **gender roles** are *socialized expectations of what is normal, desirable, acceptable, and conforming for males and females in specific jobs or positions in groups and organizations over the life course.* These gender roles have very specific meanings for the daily lives and activities of males and females who live under the religious cultures in nations throughout history and even in our day. The Book of Leviticus in the Judeao-Christian Old Testament has many biological rituals based specifically on womens' hygiene. A close friend of mine performed her Master's thesis in Ancient Near East Studies on the reproductive hygiene rituals described in the book of Leviticus.[4] In brief, she found no modern-day scientific support for these religious rituals on female's health nor on their reproduction. Her conclusion was that these were religious codes of conduct, not biologically-based scientifically beneficial codes.

Many ancient writings in religions refer to the flaws of females, their reproductive disadvantages, their temperament, and the rules that should govern them in the religious community. Many current religious doctrines have transformed as society's values of gender equality have emerged.

The point is that throughout history, religions were a dominant social force in many nations and the religious doctrines, like the cultural values, often placed women in a subjugated role to men and a number of different levels.

The second social force is tradition. Traditions can be and have been very harsh toward women. Table 3 shows a scale of the outcomes of oppression toward women that have and currently do exist somewhere in the world. Even though the average woman out lives the average man by three years worldwide and seven years in developed countries, there are still a few countries where cultural and social oppression literally translates into shorter life expectancies for women (Niger, Zambia, Botswana and Namibia have lower death rates for women while Kenya, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, and Micronesia have a tie between men and women's life expectancy—this even though in developing nations the average woman outlives the average man by three years.).

Some cultural traditions are so harsh that females are biologically trumped by males by withholding nutrition, abandoning wife and daughters, abuse, neglect, violence, refugee status, diseases, and complications of childbirth unsupported by the government. If you study this online looking at the Population Reference Bureau's many links and reports, you will find a worldwide concerted effort to persuade government, religious, and cultural leaders to shift their focus and efforts to nurture and protect females.[5] Progress has already been made to some degree, but much change is still warranted because life, health and well-being are at stake for billions of women worldwide.

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Table 3. Outcomes of 10 Forms of Oppression of Women.6

Death from cultural and social oppression (Various Countries)

Sexual and other forms of slavery (Western Africa and Thailand)

Maternal deaths (Sub-Sahara Africa and developing nations)

Female Genital Mutilation (Mid- Africa about 120 million victims)

Rape and sexual abuse (South Africa and United States are worst countries)

Wage disparity (worldwide)

No/low education for females (various degrees in most countries of the world)

Denial of access to jobs and careers (many developing nations)

Mandatory covering of females' bodies head to toe (Traditional countries, Muslim)

Public demeaning of women (still practiced, public and private)

One of the most repugnant traditions in our world has been and still is the sale of children and women into sexual and other forms of slavery. Countless civilizations that are still influential in our modern thought and tradition have sold girls and women the same way one might sell a horse or cow. It's estimated by a variety of organizations and sources that about one million women are currently forced into the sex slavery industry (boys are also sold and bought into slavery). India, Western Africa, and Thailand are some of the most notorious regions for this atrocity.[7] Governments fail at two levels in the sexual slavery trade First, they allow it to occur as in the case of Thailand where it's a major draw of male tourists and Second, they fail to police sexual slavery which is criminal and often connected to organized crime. The consequences to these girls and women are harsh at every level of human existence and are often connected to the spread of HIV and other communicable diseases.

Although pregnancy is not a disease it carries with it many health risks when governments fail to provide resources to expecting mothers before, during, and after delivery of their baby. **Maternal Death** is *the death of a pregnant woman resulting from pregnancy, delivery, or recovery complications*. Maternal deaths number in the hundreds of thousands and are estimated by the United Nations to be around ½ million per year worldwide.[8] Typically very little medical attention is required to prevent infection, mediate complications, and assist in complications to mothers. To answer this problem one must approach it at the larger social level with government, health care systems, economy, family, and other institutional efforts. The Population Reference Bureau puts a woman's risk of dying from maternal causes at 1 in 92 worldwide with it being as low as 1 in 6,000 in developed countries and as high as 1 in 22 for the least developed regions of the world.[9] The PRB reports "little improvement in maternal Mortality in developing countries.

Female Genital Mutilation is *the traditional cutting, circumcision, and removal of most or all external genitalia of women for the end result of closing off some or part of the vagina until such time that the woman is married and cut open*. In some traditions, there are religious underpinnings. In others, there are customs and rituals that have been passed down. In no way does the main body of any world religion condone or mandate this practice—many countries where this takes place are predominantly Muslim—yet local traditions have corrupted the purer form of the religion and its beliefs and female genital mutilation predates Islam.[11] An analogy can be drawn from the Taliban, which was extreme in comparison to most Muslims worldwide and which literally practiced homicide toward its females to enforce conformity. It should also be explained that there are no medical therapeutic benefits from female genital mutilation. Quite the contrary, there are many adverse medical consequences that result from it including pain, difficulty in childbirth, illness, and even death.

Many human rights groups, the United Nations, scientists, advocates, the United States, the World Health Organization, and other organizations have made aggressive efforts to influence the cessation of this practice worldwide. But, progress has come very slowly. Part of the problem is that women often perform the ritual and carry on the tradition as it was perpetrated upon them. In other words, many cases have women preparing the next generation for it and at times performing it on them.

The mandatory covering of females' bodies head to toe has been opposed by some and applauded by others. Christians, Hindus, and many other religious groups have the practice of covering or veiling in their histories. As fundamentalist Muslim nations and cultures have returned to their much more traditional way of life,

hijab which is *the Arabic word that means to cover or veil* has become more common. Often hijab means modest and private in the day-to-day interpretations of the practice. For some countries it is a personal choice, while for others it becomes a crime not to comply. The former Taliban, punished such a crime with death (they also punished formal schooling of females and the use of makeup by death).

Many women's rights groups have brought public attention to this trend, not so much because the mandated covering of females is that oppressive, but because the veiling and covering is symbolic of the religious, traditional, and labor-forced patterns of oppression that have caused so many problems for women and continue to do so today.

Professor Ron Hammond interviewed a retired OBGYN nurse who served as a training nurse for a mission in Saudi Arabia on a volunteer basis. She taught other local nurses from her 30 years of experience. Each and every day she was guarded by machine gun toting security forces everywhere she went. She was asked to cover and veil and did so. Ron asked her how she felt about that, given that her U.S. culture was so relaxed on this issue.

> "I wanted to teach those women and knew that they would benefit from my experience. I just had to do what I was told by the authorities," she said.
>
> "What would have happened if you had tried to leave the compound without your veil?" Ron asked.
>
> "I suspect, I would have been arrested and shot." She chuckles. "Not shot, perhaps, but if I did not comply, my training efforts would have been stopped and I would have been sent home."
>
> "So, you complied because of your desire to train the nurses?"
>
> "That and the mothers and babies." She answered.[12]

The public demeaning of women has been acceptable throughout various cultures because publicly demeaning members of society who are privately devalued and or considered flawed fits the reality of most day-to-day interactions. **Misogyny** is *the physical or verbal abuse and mistreatment of women*. Verbal misogyny is unacceptable in public in most Western Nations today. With the ever present technology found in cell phones, video cameras, and security devices a person's private and public misogynistic language could easily be recorded and posted for millions to see on any number of websites.

Perhaps, this fear of being found out as a woman-hater is not the ideal motivation for creating cultural values of respect and even admiration of women and men. As was mentioned above, most of the world historical leaders assumed that women were not as valuable as men and it has been a few decades since changes have begun. Yet, an even more sinister assumption has and does persist today that women were the totality of their reproductive role, or Sex=Gender (Biology=Culture). If this were true then women would ultimately just be breeders of the species, rather than valued human beings they are throughout the world today.

R**APE**

Rape is not the same as sex. Rape is violence, motivated by men with power, anger, selfish, and sadistic issues. Rape is dangerous and destructive and more likely to happen in the United States than in most other countries of the world. There are 195 countries in the world today. The U.S. typically is among the worst five percent in terms of rape (yes, that means 95% of the world's countries are safer for women than the U.S.). Consecutive studies performed by the United Nations Surveys on crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems confirm that South Africa is the most dangerous, crime-ridden nation on the planet in all crimes including rape.[13]

The world's histories with very few exceptions have recorded the pattern of sexually abusing boys, girls, and women. Slavery, conquest of war, kidnapping, assault, and other circumstances are the context of these violent practices. Online there is a Website at www.rainn.org which is a tremendous resources for knowledge and information especially about rape, assault, incest and issues relating to the United States. The United Nations reported that, "Women aged 15-44 are more at risk from rape and domestic violence than from cancer, motor accidents, war and malaria," according to World Bank data.[14] The UN calls for a criminal Justice System response and for increased prioritization and awareness. Anything might help since almost every country of the world is struggling to prevent sexual violence and rape against its females.

O**PPORTUNITIES**

Wage disparity between males and females is both traditional and labor-based economic supply and demand. Statistics show past and current discrepancies in lower pay for women. Diane White made a 1997 presentation to the United Nations General Assembly stated that "Today the wage disparity gap cost American women $250,000 over the course of their lives."[15] Indeed evidence supports her claim that women are paid less in comparison to men and their cumulated losses add up to staggering figures. The U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2008 that U.S. women earn 77 cents for every U.S. man's $1.[16] They also reported that in some places like Washington DC and in certain fields (like computers and mathematical) women earn as much as 98 cents per a man's $1. At the worldwide level "As employees, women are still seeking equal pay with men. Closing the gap between women's and men's pay continues to be a major challenge in most parts of the world."[17] The report also discussed the fact that about 60 countries have begun to keep statistics on informal (unpaid) work by women. Needless to say even though measuring paid and unpaid work of women is not as accurate as needed for world considerations, "Women contribute to development not only through remunerated work but also through a great deal of unremunerated work."[18]

Why the lower wages for women? The traditional definition of the reproductive roles of women as being broken, diseased, or flawed is part of the answer of wage disparity. The idea that reproductive roles interfere with the continuity of the workplace and the idea that women cannot be depended on plays heavily into the maltreatment of women. The argument can be made that traditional and economic factors have lead to the existing patterns of paying women less for their same education, experience, and efforts compared to men.

Efforts to provide formal education to females worldwide have escalated over the last few decades. The 2002 Kids Count International Data Sheet estimated rates as low as 11 percent of females in primary school in Somalia.[19] A 1993 World Bank report made it very clear that females throughout the world were being neglected in receiving their formal educations when compared to males.[20] In 1998 another example is found in efforts specific to Africa via the Forum of African Women Educationalists which focuses on governmental policies and practices for female education across the continent.[21] Literally hundreds of studies have since focused on other regions around and below the equator where education levels for females are much lower.

In 1999 it was reported by UNICEF that 1 billion people would never learn to read as children with 130 million school aged children (73 million girls) without access to basic education.[22] Another UNICEF 2008 report clearly identifies the importance of educating girls who grow up to be mothers because of the tremendous odds that those educated mothers will ensure that their children are also formally educated.[23] In its statistical tables it shows that Somalia is now up to 22 percent for boys and girls in primary schools, yet in most countries females are still less likely to be educated.[24] The main point from UNICEF and many other formal reports is that higher formal education for females is associated with life, health, protection from crime and sexual exploitation, and countless other benefits, especially to females in the poorer regions of the world. In the United States most females and males attend some form of formal education. After high school, many go to college. Even though the U.S. numbers of 18 to 24 year old men are higher than women,[25] women are more likely to attend college based on percentages (57%).[26]

A projection from the National Center for Education Statistics projects a continuing trend up and through the year 2016 where about 58% of U.S. college students will be female.[27] By 2016 about 60% of graduated students will be females.[28] These numbers reflect a strong and concerted push toward equality of opportunity for females in formal education that does date back over a century. The challenge is to avoid defining progress for U.S. females in public and private education as having been made at the expense of males. That's much too simplistic.

They also reflect a change in the culture of breadwinning and the adult roles of males. Males and/or females who don't pursue a college degree will make less money than those who did. To make sense of this trend, many males have been identified as having a prolonged adolescence (even into their 30's); video game playing mentality; and a live with your parents indefinitely strategy until their shot at the labor force has passed them by. Others have pointed out the higher rates of learning disabilities in K-12, the relatively low percentage of K-5 teachers who are males, and the higher rate of male dropouts. Still others blame attention deficit and hyperactivity as part of the problem. Here is a truism about education in the U.S.

> ***Higher education=higher pay=higher social prestige=higher income=higher quality of life.***

Many countries of the world have neutralized the traditional, religious, and labor-force based biases against women and have moved to a merit-based system. Even in the U.S., there have been "men's wages, then women and children's wages (1/10th to 12/3rd of a man's). In a sense, any hard working, talented person can pursue and obtain a high-end job, including women. Communism broke some of these barriers early on in the 20th century, but the relatively low wages afforded those pursuing these careers somewhat offset the advances women could have made. In the U.S. progress has come more slowly. Physicians are some of the brightest and best paid specialists in the world. Salaries tend to begin in the $100,000 range and can easily reach $500,000 depending on the specialty.[29] Prior to 1970 most physicians were white and male, but things are slowly changing. Table 4 shows the trends between 1970 and 2006.

Year	*Male*	*Female*
1970	92.40	7.60
1980	88.40	11.60
1990	83.10	16.90
2000	76.30	24.00
2002	74.80	25.20
2003	74.20	25.80
2006	72.20	27.80

Table 4. Percentage of Physicians who are Male and Female.[30]

The upward trend shows a concerted effort to provide equal opportunity for females and males. Engineers have also seen a concerted effort to facilitate females into the profession. The Society of Women Engineers is a non-profit organization which helps support and recognize women as engineers.31 Figure 1

shows how computer-based careers are seeing striking gains in some areas for women who will be hired competitively based on merit. The same cannot be said for doctoral level employment in the more prestigious fields. Figure 2 shows 2005 estimates from the U.S. National Science Foundation. The first six fields are the highest paying fields to work in while social and psychological sciences are among the least paying. Women clearly dominate Psychology and nearly tie in social sciences and biology. True, at the doctoral level pay is higher than at the masters and bachelors levels, but the difference in engineering and psychology is remarkable at every level of education.[32]

RESEARCH ON GENDER

An early pioneer is an anthropologist named, Margaret Mead (1901-1978). Dr. Mead earned her Ph.D. under the direction of some of the best anthropologists of her day. But, she was a woman in a mostly male-dominated academic field. She is an example of someone who successfully challenged the sexist and misogynistic notions established in academics at the time.

Mead's work entitled, Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (1935) became a major seminal work in the women's liberation movement and thereby in the redefinition of women in many Western Societies. Her observations of gender in three tribes Arapesh, Mundugamor, and Tchambuli created a national discussion which lead many to reconsider the established Sex=Gender assumption. In these tribes she found the following. In the Arapesh both men and women displayed what we typically call feminine traits sensitivity, cooperation, and low levels of aggression. In the Mundugamor both men and women were insensitive, uncooperative, and very aggressive. These were typical masculine traits at the time. In contrast to most societies the Tchambuli women were aggressive, rational, and capable and were also socially dominant while the men were passive, assuming artistic and leisure roles.

Figure 1. Women in High Tech Jobs.[33]

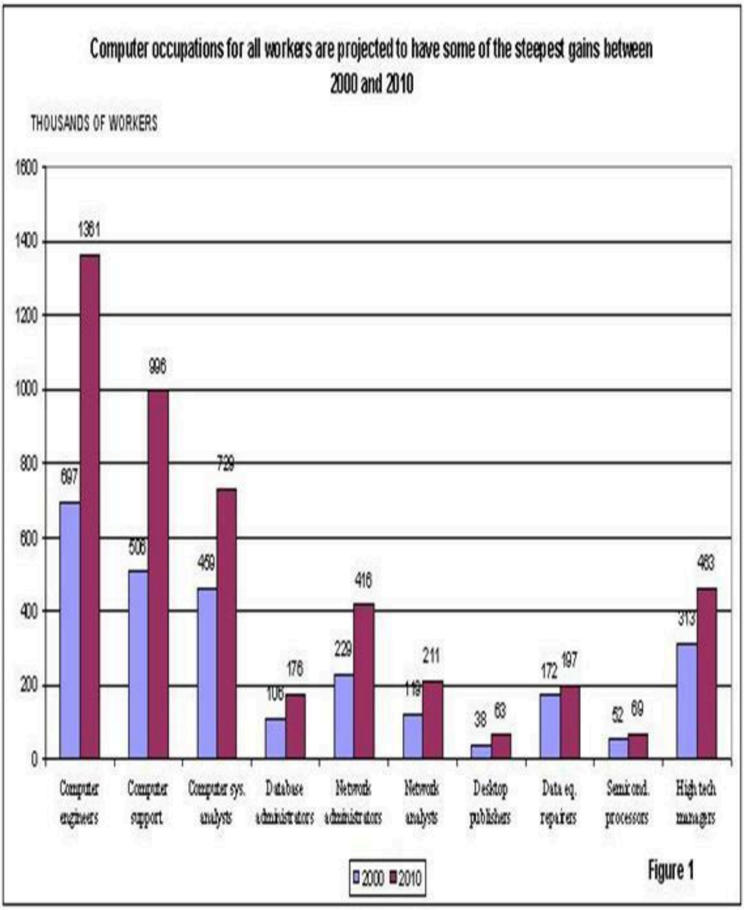
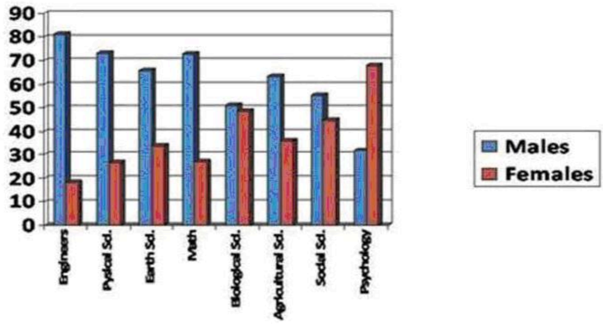


Figure 2. United States Doctorates Conferred By Characteristics of Recipients, 2005.[34]



Why then, Mead argued, if our reproductive roles determined our cultural and social opportunities were the gender definitions varied and unique among less civilized peoples? Were we not less civilized ourselves at one point in history and have we not progressed on a similar path the tribal people take? Could it be that tradition (culture) was the stronger social force rather than biology?

Mead's work and her public influence helped to establish the belief that biology is only a part of the Sex and Gender question (albeit an important part). Mead established that Sex≠Gender. But, even with the harshest criticism launched against her works, her critics supported and even inadvertently reinforced the idea that biology shapes but cultures are more salient in how women and men are treated by those with power.

Misogyny is easier to perpetrate if one assumes the weakness, biological frailty, and perhaps even diminished capacity that women were claimed to have had. Andrew Clay Silverstein (AKA Andrew Dice Clay) was a nationally successful comedian who also played in a movie and TV show (although he recently appeared on *Celebrity Apprentice*). His career ended abruptly because of his harsh sexist themes which were being performed in an age of clarity and understanding about gender values. Mr. Clay failed to recognize the social change which surrounded him. We often overlook the change and the continuing problems ourselves.

Professional and volunteer organizations have made concerted efforts to raise awareness of the English language and its demeaning language toward females. English as a derivative of German has many linguistic biases against women, non-whites, poor, and non-royalty. Raising awareness and discussing the assumptions within English or any other language has been part of the social transformation toward cultural and biological fairness and equality. If we understand how the words we use influence the culture we live in and how the value of that culture influence the way we treat one another, then we begin to see the importance of language on the quality of life.

The quality of life for women is of importance at many different levels in the world. As you've read through this chapter, you've probably noticed that much is yet to be accomplished worldwide. The United States has seen much progress. But, other nations continually rank the "world's best nation for women." Many European countries far outrank the U.S. for quality of Women's lives. In Fact, in 2008 the U.S. ranked number 27th.[35]

The Global Gender Gap Index was developed to measure the quality of life for women between countries. It measures the gap between males and females in objective statistics that focus on equality. There are four pillars in the index economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment, and health and survival using 14 indicators from each countries national statistics. From 1998-2006, there was a reported net improvement for all countries.[36]

When one considers the day-to-day lives of women in these national statistics, and perhaps more importantly in their personal lives, the concept of what women do as their contribution to the function of society becomes important. **Instrumental tasks** are *goal directed activities which link the family to the surrounding society, geared toward obtaining resources.* This includes economic work, breadwinning, and other resource-based efforts. **Expressive tasks** are *tasks that pertain to the creation and maintenance of a set of positive, supportive, emotional relationships within the family unit.* This includes relationships, nurturing, and social connections needed in the family and society. Today, women do both and typically do them well.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution both males and females combined their local economic efforts in homemaking. Most of these efforts were cottage industry-type where families used their children's labor to make products they needed from soap, thread, fabric, butter, and many other products.

When the factory model of production emerged in Western civilizations, the breadwinner and homemaker became more distinct. **Breadwinner** is *a parent or spouse who earns wages outside of the home and uses them to support the family.* **Homemaker** is *typically a woman who occupies her life with mothering, housekeeping, and being a wife while depending heavily on the breadwinner.*

WHAT ABOUT MEN?

In the past two decades a social movement referred to as The Men's Movement has emerged. **The Men's Movement** is *a broad effort across societies and the world to improve the quality of life and family-related rights of men.* Since the Industrial Revolution, men have been emotionally exiled from their families and close relationships. They have become the human piece of the factory machinery (or computer technology in our day) that forced them to disconnect from their most intimate relationships and to become money-acquisition units rather than emotionally powerful pillars of their families.

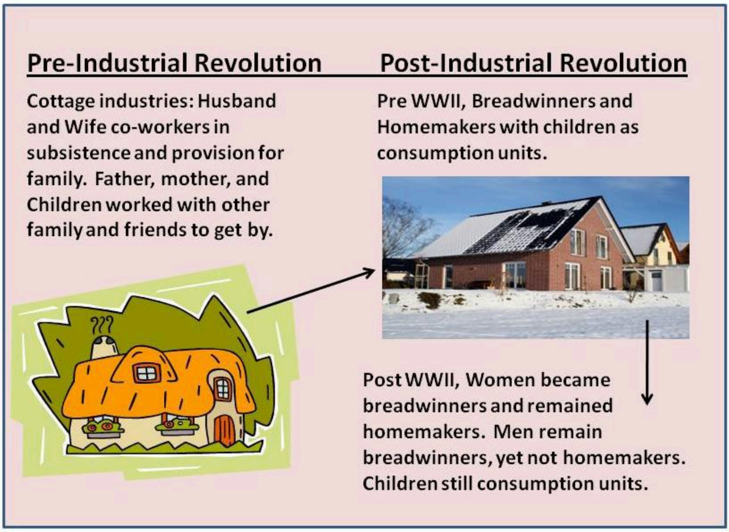
Many in this line of thought attribute higher suicide rates, death rates, accident rates, substance abuse problems, and other challenges in the lives of modern men directly to the broad social process of post-industrial breadwinning. Not only did the Industrial Revolution's changes hurt men, but the current masculine role is viewed by many as being oppressive to men, women, and children. Today a man is more likely to kill or be killed, to abuse, and to oppress others. Some of the issues of concern for those in the Men's Movement include life and health challenges, emotional isolation, post-divorce/separation father's rights, false sexual or physical abuse allegations, early education challenges for boys, declining college attendance, protection from domestic abuse, man-hating or bashing, lack of support for fatherhood, and paternal rights and abortion.

The list of concerns displays the quality of life issues mixed in with specific legal and civil rights concerns. Men's Movement sympathizers would most likely promote or support equality of rights for men and women. They are aware of the **Male supremacy model**, where *males erroneously believe that men are superior in all aspects of life and that should excel in everything they do*. They also concern themselves with the **Sexual objectification of women**, where *men learn to view women as objects of sexual consumption rather than as a whole person*. **Male bashing** is *the verbal abuse and use of pejorative and derogatory language about men.*

These and other concerns are not being aggressively supported throughout the world as are the women's rights and suffrage efforts discussed above. Most of the Men's Movement efforts are in Western Societies, India, and a handful of others.

Figure 3 shows the transition in family gender roles over the course of the Industrial Revolution through to Post World War II. Families in Pre-Industrial Europe and the U.S. were subsistence-based; meaning they spent much of their daily lives working to prepare food and other goods on a year-round basis. Men, women, children, and other family and friends succeeded because they all contributed to the collective good of the family economy.

Figure 3. The Western Family Pre- Post, and Post-WWII, especially for the United States.



The Industrial Revolution created the roles of breadwinners and homemakers. After the Industrial Revolution was in full swing, women continued their subsistence work and remained homemakers while men continued in their breadwinning roles. After World War II, there was a social structural change where women began assuming the breadwinner role and became more and more common among the ranks of paid employees, especially beginning in 1960s-1980s. They had managed to remain homemakers, but men had not moved into the homemaking role to the same degree that women had moved into the breadwinning role. This creates a strong level of burden and expectation for U.S. women who find themselves continuing to work outside the home for pay and inside the home for their informal domestic roles.

Men often find a closer bond to their wife, children, and other family members when they engage in domestic homemaking roles. Mundane family work is the activity that facilitates ongoing attachments and bonds among those who participate in it together.

Many couples today already share homemaking roles, just out of practical and functional need. They often find the co-homemaking/ breadwinning role to be defined in a few typical styles. First, is the tourist husband style. The **tourist husband** is *a visitor to the homemaking role who contributes the occasional assistance to his wife as a courtesy—much like a tourist might offer occasional assistance to their host*. He often believes himself to be very generous since it is hers and not his role. Second, is the **assistant homemaker** where *the husband looks to his wife for direction and for instruction on how to "help" her out in her homemaking role*. Like one of the children, housework and homemaking task are the mother/ wife's job and he helps if called upon.

Finally, there is the **co-homemaker husband** *who never "helps" his wife with homemaking task, but assumes that she and he equally share their breadwinning and homemaking responsibilities*. The Co-homemaker husband is most likely to bond with his children, understand the daily joys and sorrows of all his individual family members, and feel a strong connection to his home and family (something Men's Movement advocates lament having lost).

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countries-top-places-for-women-to-live/1; page 27

8. 7. Sexuality

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Define sexual scripts
- Define sexual socialization
- Understand the importance of Sexuality
- Know the different sexual identities

Just a note to begin this chapter: sexuality is controversial. Even though it underlies many advertisement themes, is shown independent of any emotional or physical consequences in many TV and Big screen productions, and is commonly participated in outside of marriage, we are raised not to talk about it much. Many of us are even taught that religions are very strict on how sex is exclusively for married people, yet very few of us had the luxury of having our own parents teach us about it.

For some religious believers, it brings family shame to have sex outside of marriage. For others, the fear of God's retribution shapes their very thinking about what sex is and how we should participate in it. Sociologists strive to maintain awareness of this while simultaneously preserving objectivity.

This chapter has two main goals: First, this chapter will hopefully help you to understand your own sexuality, body, and experiences. Second, this chapter will arm you with the understanding of the critical information you need to know about sexuality and sexual intercourse so that you can protect yourself and possibly others. Education is the most useful tool for protection.

A script is what actors read or study and what guides their behavior in a certain role. A script is a blueprint for what we "should do" in our roles. **Sexual scripts** are *blueprints and guidelines for what we define as our role in sexual expression, sexual orientation, sexual behaviors, sexual desires, and the sexual component of our* *self-definition*. All of us are sexual beings, yet none of us is exactly identical to another in our sexual definitions and script expectations. Having said that, keep in mind that we are not just born with sexual scripts in place; they are learned. **Sexual socialization** is *the process by which we learn how, when, where, with whom, why, and with which motivations we are sexual beings.*

We are all born with drives, which are biological needs that demand our attention and behavioral responses to them. The most powerful drives are circulation, breathing, voiding our urine and other waste, eating, drinking, sleeping, and sexual involvement. Sexual drives are biological urges to participate in sexual activity and in certain sexual roles.

Sexual scripts, once learned, will shape how that drive is answered. Sexuality is learned via culture and socialization. There are as many unique sexual scripts as there are people, yet some of these scripts have common themes and can be viewed as a collective pattern or trend in the larger social level.

Many of us learn our sexual scripts in a passive way. In other words, we don't learn from experience, but from a synthesis of concepts, images, ideals, and sometimes misconceptions. For example, the commonly held belief that men and women are two different creatures, perhaps even from different planets, was a very successful fad in recent years that led an entire generation to believe that men might be from "Mars" while women might be from "Venus."1

Today more and more people living in the U.S. have less religious values and more diverse experiences with sexuality. Further much of the younger generations' focus on sex is on the orgasm. An **orgasm** is *the sexual climax that accompanies sexual intercourse and includes muscle tightening in the genital area, electrical sensations radiating from the genitals, and a surge of a variety of pleasure-producing hormones throughout the body.*

Many cultures have records of sexual expression and some even have records of sexual pleasure maximization.2

Some traditional sexual scripts that have been studied include a number of problematic assumptions. Some of these assumptions include but are not limited to: the man must be in charge, the woman must not enjoy (or let on that she enjoys) the sexual experience, the man is a performer whose skills are proven effective upon arrival of his partner's orgasm, men are sexual while women are not, women can't talk about it and turn to men for sexual interests and direction, and finally sex always leads to a female orgasm (her orgasm being proof of his sexual capacity). Numerous studies have shown that most of these traditional scripts are not realistic, healthy, conducive to open communication, nor negotiation of sexual needs and desires for couples. In sum, rather, these traditional notions can be an undermining influence in a couple's intimacy. More contemporary scripts include these simple ideas:

> Both partners need to learn to take ownership of the couple's sexual experiences.
>
> Both partners need to learn to communicate openly and honestly about their feelings.
>
> Both partners need to learn to meet one another's desires, needs, and wishes while making sure that their own needs are being met.

Genital Development

Many people think of male versus female reproductive and sexual body parts in terms of opposites. In sexual matters, men and women are very much alike from a physiological and biological point of view. We are even alike in our fetal development with our genitals developing from identical tissues, regardless of being male or female. Have you ever wondered why a pregnant woman can't get an accurate ultrasound until the second month to determine the fetus's sex being male or female? In part, technicians want to give the fetus enough time to develop genitals that coincide with the particular sex of the baby. More importantly, the fetus has identical genitals until about the 5th-6th week. That means it would require a DNA test to distinguish which sex the fetus is up until that point.

Sexually, males and females start with identical genital buds that usually form into the male or female reproductive organs. Figure 1 briefly discusses the development of male and female sexual parts from very similar genital pelvic tissues. Please note that sexual development is a natural yet extremely complex process that yields a mostly predictable outcome among newborns. That means most females are born with nearly identical sexual parts. Likewise most males are born with nearly identical parts.

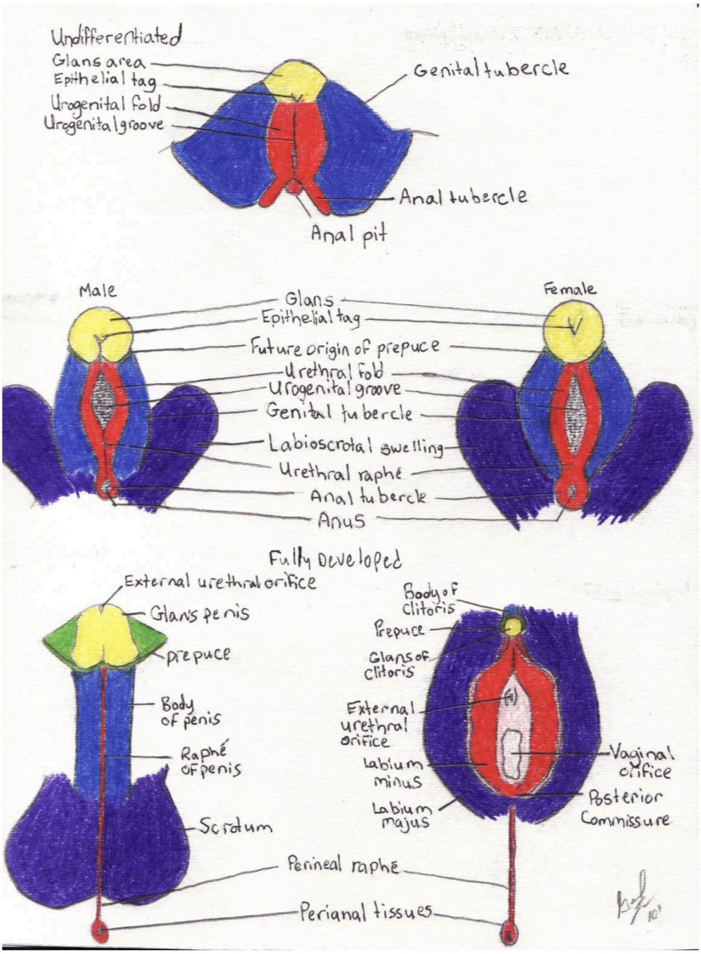
Figure 1. Similar Sexual Development in the Male and Female Fetus.

Fetus	Newborn Male	Newborn Female*
1) Glans area	Glans Penis	Clitoral Glans
2) Urethral fold	Urethral Meatus	Urethral Meatus
3) Urethral groove & *Lateral Buttress*	Shaft of Penis	Labia minora and majora
4) Anal tubercle	Anus and sphincter	Anus and sphincter

*Not all fetal sexual development occurs uniformly. Though not discussed here in great detail there are 5 common sexual development variations that occur: Turner's Syndrome; Klinefelter's Syndrome; Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome; Fetally Androgenized Females; and DHT-deficient Males.

With an XY male genetic configuration, the glans area will develop into the penis. The urethral fold will form the urethral meatus or opening in the penis. The urethral groove and lateral buttress will fold onto itself and fuse into the shaft of the penis with the urethra connecting the bladder to the urethral meatus or opening of the penis. The anal tubercle will form into the anus and external sphincter. The male glands (prostate, cowper's, and seminal vesicles) develop in another process as do the testicles, which develop inside the abdomen then drop into the scrotum. Figure 2 shows an artist's depiction of the tissues that biologists would use to identify the developing genitals of males and females.

Figure 2. How Male and Female Reproductive Parts Generate from the Identical Fetal Tissues.[3]



For the XX female genetic configuration, the glans becomes the clitoral glans; the urethral fold becomes the urethral meatus; the urethral groove and lateral buttress become the labia minora and majora (labia means lips); and the anal tubercle becomes the anus and external sphincter. The vagina, cervix, ovaries, and uterus form from other tissues. Interestingly, ovaries develop inside the abdomen. These basic fetal tissues differentiate because of the X or Y. In adult sexual partners these sexual parts function in very similar ways even though their placement and structure differ.

There are some variations when the actual physical sexual development does not follow expected patterns. Hermaphroditism is found among those variations and is reported in two forms. First, **true hermaphroditism is *an extremely rare condition wherein both reproductive organs of both males and females are in one person's body and functioning to some degree or another* (this includes, *penis*, *testicles*, *prostate gland*, *vagina*, *uterus*, *and ovaries*). Second, pseudo–hermaphroditism (false or near Hermaphroditism) is a rare condition wherein some of both reproductive organs for males or females are present in one person's body, but neither male nor female organs are completely present and/or fully functioning.**

As is mentioned in Figure 2, not all fetal sexual development occurs uniformly. Though not discussed here in great detail, there are five common sexual development variations reported among newborns: Turner's syndrome, Klinefelter's Syndrome; Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome; Fetally Androgenized Females; and DHT-deficient Males. In most cases of fetal development, sexual development is predictable and follows the above mentioned pattern of originating from nearly identical tissues.

The Importance of Sexuality

Sexuality is important to us because it represents an activity that is a rite of passage into adulthood, because it is very pleasurable, and because it reinforces our roles and aspirations as males and females. Yet sexuality is truly a passive part of our daily lives. Samuel and Cynthia Janus published The Janus Report on Sexual Behavior in 1993.[4] They studied a scientific sample of 2,765 men and women and reported some general trends in U.S. sexual practices and patterns. They found that age-based estimates indicate a great deal of similarity in sexual frequency between age groups with 2-3 sexual encounters per week.

Sex is a minor (yet important) part of our daily time allocation.

People with a sexual partner available have sex about 3 times per week, taking about 25 minutes per experience. That means about 75 minutes per week or 3,900 minutes per year is spent having sex. Divide 3,900 by 60 minutes, and it equals about 65 hours per year having sex. At first glance that sounds like a great deal of time allocation, but keep in mind that in comparison, most of us spend most of our lives doing nonsexual things.

Consider these estimates: if the average person sleeps about eight hours in a 24 hour period, works 8.5 hours, eats 1.5 hours, commutes .5 hour, watches TV for three hours, and spends about 2.5 hours for miscellaneous activities, then compared to routine non-sexual activities, sexual intercourse comprises a relatively small portion of our time (see Table 1).

Relatively speaking sexual intercourse is a passive part of the average person's life accounting for only 65 yearly hours of involvement per year. Many people refrain from regular sexual intercourse until their twenties and are less likely to participate in it if they are not married than are married people. These estimations don't take into account those with no sexual partner and those who abstain from sexual intercourse. The average would be much lower if those categories of people were averaged into the equation.

Table 1. Daily and Yearly Hours Spent in Various Activities for An Average Person.

Activities	*Daily* Hours=24	*Yearly* Hours=8,760
Sleep	8.0	2,920.0
Work	8.5	3,102.5
Television viewing	3.0	1,095.0
Eating	1.5	547.5
Commuting	0.5	182.5
Miscellaneous	2.32	846.8
Sexual Intercourse	0.18 hours *(average 11 minutes/day)*	65.0

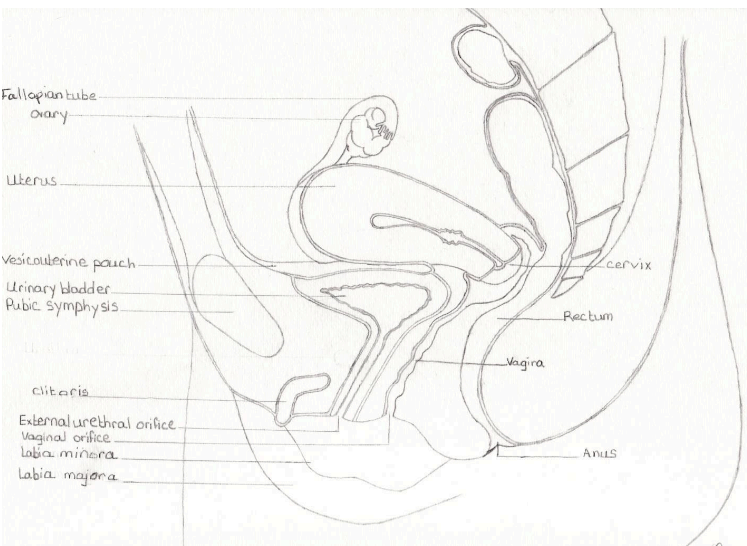
Sexual Anatomy

To understand our own bodies and also understand enough about sexuality to teach our children, we must understand the basics of female and male anatomy. Figure 3 shows an artist's depiction of a cross section of female reproductive and sexual anatomy. The clitoris is extremely sensitive and is protected by the clitoral hood (not shown here). It sits above the vagina. In females, urine exits the body at the external urethral orifice (also called meatus). The vaginal orifice simply means the opening to the vagina itself. The labia are in two places, closer to the vaginal orifice (labia minora) and further away from the vaginal orifice (labia majora).

The urinary bladder sits behind the pubic bone and during urination travels an inch or two out of the body via the external urethral orifice. In the back and top of the vagina sits the cervix. The cervix is simply the window into the uterus. It is round, muscular and thick and has a small opening in it. The cervix is the bottom portion of the uterus (the uterus is where a fetus or baby would grow and develop during pregnancy).

The uterus leans forward toward the pubic bone. Inside the uterus on the left and the right sides are two small openings where the fallopian tube connects the ovaries to the uterus. There are two ovaries that have thousands of eggs in them at birth. A woman may release as many as 450 eggs during her reproductive years. After an egg is released from the ovary (ovulation), the fallopian tube carries the egg from the ovary down to the uterus. When pregnancy occurs it is often because sperm met the egg in the fallopian tube and fertilized it. Later, if the fertilized egg travels down the fallopian tube and implants into the uterus, then conception has taken place.

Figure 3. Female Reproductive and Sexual Anatomy, Cross-sectional View.4



The vagina is approximately three inches long and is made of tissues that are epithelial and mucosal. This means that when blood flow increases to the pelvis the vagina produces a lubricant in the form of moisture. The vagina is not hollow in the sense that a tube is round and hollow. The vagina is relatively flat and has potential space rather than constantly open space. The vagina has a band of pelvic floor muscles that surround it. One set of muscles is called the puboccocceygeus muscle (PC muscle) which is located approximately 1 inch inside the vagina and which also plays a role in sexual pleasure for both partners.

To truly understand how these parts function during sexual intercourse, we need to consider a research-based paradigm developed by Masters and Johnson years ago which they called the sexual response cycle.[5] The **sexual response cycle** is *a model that explains how most people experience three phases when they engage in sexual intercourse: excitement, plateau, and then orgasm.*

Masters and Johnson are quick to point out that each individual has a unique and varied sexual response so much so that no two sexual encounters would be expected to be perfectly identical between the same people. Nevertheless, these three phases are very common among most people.

As sexual intercourse begins both males and females pass through three phases.

Excitement phase is *when blood flows to the pelvis bringing, more lymphatic fluid and*

plasma to the region. Because of hormonal and psychological stimuli there is generally swelling in the sexual parts. While this is happening, the **plateau phase** begins which is *when more hormones are released, moisture increases, heart rate increases, intensity of sensory perception increases (touch, smell, sight, hearing, and taste)*. In the **orgasm phase** an *electrical build up of energy is released that is associated with a rhythmic contraction of the pelvic floor muscles, the urinary and anal sphincters, and of various glands for males*. This is called an orgasm. After the orgasm finishes, resolution eventually allows the sexual parts to return to pre-excitement conditions. These are almost identical in every way between males and females, except that there are differing sexual parts for each.

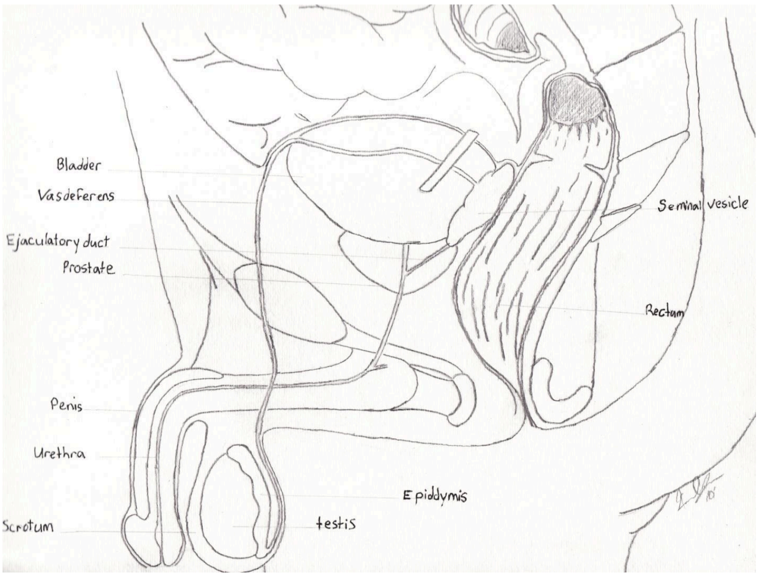
Thus, a sexual response in a typical female would typically follow a pattern similar to this one. In the excitement phase, blood and lymphatic fluids increase swelling inside the vagina. Hormones are secreted which lead to a mild uterine contractions which raise the uterus away from the pubic bone. The labia swell and the clitoris becomes hard. The vaginal tissues secrete moisture and the vagina itself lengthens and expands slightly inward.

The plateau phase begins as excitement continues. This causes the labia to become fully swollen, the clitoris to recede under the clitoral hood, and the uterus to become fully elevated (the hormone is called Oxytocin). The vagina is fully lengthened into the body, and, just before orgasm, lubrication ceases. During orgasm, the pelvis of the female experiences a series of contractions which occur every 8/10ths of second and can number anywhere from 1-20 or more in the sequence. The contractions include anal and urinary sphincter contractions, the smooth muscles in the inward portion of the vagina contraction, the puboccocceygeus muscle contraction, the uterine contractions which cause the uterus and cervix to dip down into the vagina, and general muscles contractions in the body.

Further, an electrical sensation surges from the clitoris radiating throughout the body and stimulates the pleasure centers of the brain and a release of the hormone called Oxytocin. When the orgasm ends, the body eventually returns to its pre-excitement state. In general, females have more capacity to experience more contractions over a longer period of time than do males. Females have been found to have much more capacity for sexual intercourse than males. This means females can have more sexual intercourse, more often, and with more orgasms than can the average male.

The male anatomy is presented in Figure 4. The male has a penis which is comprised of 3 spongy-like tissue columns that engorges with blood during excitement. A cross-section of the penis shows two outer columns and one column on the underneath side. The average male penis is just that—average. About 4-6 inches reported by Masters and Johnson. Since the vagina is 3 inches in length and has very sensitive regions near the outside of the vagina and not so sensitive regions deeper inside, the average male can satisfy the average female in heterosexual intercourse. Urine passes from the urinary bladder and exits at the external urethral orifice at the tip of the penis. The penis is attached inside the body to the pubic bone.

Figure 4. Male Reproductive and Sexual Anatomy, Cross-sectional View.6



There are two testicles inside a pouch called the scrotum. One testicle sits higher than the other. On the back of the testicle is a storage compartment where mature sperm end up before ejaculation. This is called the epididymis. There is a muscle called the dartos muscle (not shown) which elevates and lowers the testicle based on temperature and sexual pleasure. Sperm grow best at about 91 degrees Fahrenheit and most males are at about 98 degrees, so the dartos will raise and lower the testicles if in colder or warmer temperatures.

The testicles produce about 125-250,000,000 sperm every 3-4 days. More importantly, the testicles produce the sex-drive hormone called Testosterone. In males and females, higher levels of testosterone typically mean a higher sex drive (another similarity). The vas deferens will eventually carry the sperm from the epididymis out of the body during the orgasm. The prostate gland swells during excitement and fills with prostatic fluid. The seminal vesicle located above the prostate gland also swells and produces a fluid filled with natural sugars.

For males, in the excitement phase, blood and lymphatic fluids increase swelling inside the prostate, seminal vesicle, testicle, scrotum, and the penis. Hormones are secreted which lead to a higher volume of blood flowing into the spongy tissue columns of the penis than flow out. The penis erects this way (sometimes the penis will leak fluid and/or sperm before the orgasm, regularly referred to as "pre-cum"). The scrotum and dartos muscle draw both testicles up toward the pubic bone pressing the epididymis upward. As stimulation continues the swelling and fluid production continues to increase.

The plateau continues until just before the orgasm. When orgasm begins for males the penis is most erect. Males reach a point of no return in their orgasms (females do not). The ejaculation of sperm and fluids will continue in males, regardless of continued or interrupted stimulation. Females would experience an interruption of the orgasm when stimulation is interrupted. For males, the orgasm also includes a series of contractions which occur every 8/10ths of second and can number anywhere from 1-10. Most males will have 5-6.

The contraction includes: anal and urinary sphincter contractions; prostate and seminal vesicle contractions, dartos and scrotum contractions, pelvic floor muscle contractions; penile contractions; and a rhythmic sequence of these in such a way that the ejaculate is expelled from the body out through the penis. The sperm are released from the epididymis and travel through the vas deferens up and around the bladder then through the ejaculatory duct (where it picks up prostate and seminal fluids) and finally out of the penis. An electrical sensation surges from the prostate gland throughout the body and stimulates the pleasure centers of the brain and a release of the hormone called Oxytocin. For males and females Oxytocin brings a feeling of emotional connection.

After an orgasm, males may continue to experience an erection, but will have to wait a while for the central nervous system to reset before they can ejaculate or orgasm again. Most males wait less time when younger and more time when older. For males an ejaculation during orgasm would be expected, but sometimes ejaculations happen with or without orgasms, and orgasms may happen without ejaculations.

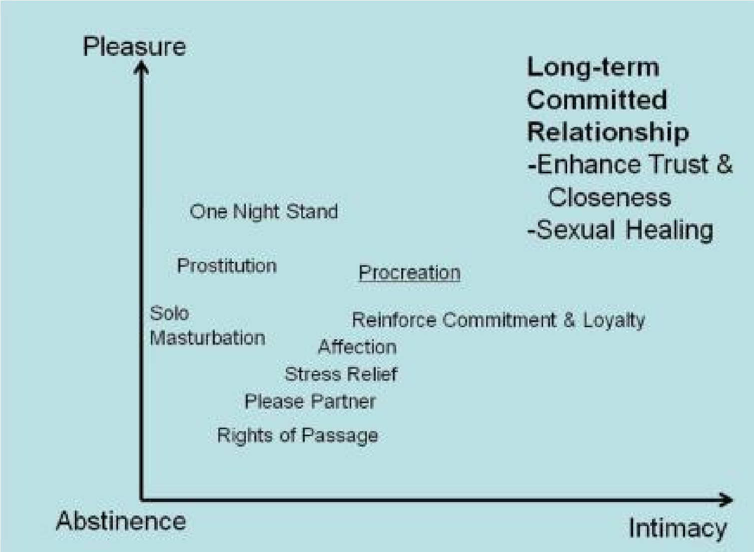
The Sexual Experience

Even though the physiological component of sexuality is common between males and females, the male and female sex drives are NOT identical. Studies consistently show that sexual desire for women is more sensitive to the context (meaningful or intimate connection) and the social and cultural environment (quality of relationships, stresses of the day, etc.). Generally speaking most men seek more sex than most women throughout most of the life span. Also, most men are more easily aroused by visual stimulation than are most women.

The Janus Report reported that 65% of men have an orgasm every time during love-making while females reported a much lower 15% every time. About 46% of women report "often" having an orgasm during love-making, compared to only 28% of men.[7] These sex drive differences also emerged in self -reported masturbation frequencies. About 55% of men and 38% of women masturbate on a daily-monthly basis.8

Numerous studies show that men and women enjoy sex most in a meaningful relationship, typically long-term committed ones. These studies indicate that the pleasure is more meaningful and enjoyable in long-term committed relationships. Figure 5 shows a pleasure and intimacy continuum for both sexes. Those who abstain from all sexual activity are in the lower left corner with no intimacy and no pleasure. Those who solo masturbate (by themselves) derive pleasure without intimacy. Those who purchase prostitution services derive pleasure, yet have very little intimacy. Finally, those who have one-time sexual encounters in a "one-night stand" also derive pleasure with little intimacy over time.

Figure 5. Pleasure and Intimacy Continuum for Both Males and Females.



For married or cohabiting couples, sexual intercourse includes both pleasure and intimacy. Newlyweds typically have their honeymoon night, and sex becomes a rite of passage that marks the beginning of their full emersion into the marital relationship. In time husbands and wives have sex for many of the other reasons listed in Figure 5. Sometimes one spouse has sex to meet the needs or wants of their partners. At other times sex is a healthy and fun stress relief. Sometimes sex is a convenient way to be affectionate as a giver and a receiver. In relationships, sexual intercourse has many functions including reinforcing commitment and loyalty with one another. To give and receive is pleasurable and bonding during sexual intercourse.

Some couples seeking parenthood will have sex to pleasure themselves while getting pregnant. Many report enhancements of intimacy with less focus on pleasure at moments such as these. Others get distracted because sex becomes goal-oriented rather than simply expressive while trying to make a baby. For long-term relationships that have endured challenges such as hardship, betrayals, offenses, anger, arguments and ultimately forgiveness, sexual intercourse takes on a profoundness of its own. Those who have short-term relationships miss out on the intimacy payoff that sex provides to those in long-term relationships. Sex becomes a unique way of enhancing trust and closeness while sometimes providing sexual healing to wounded egos and feelings.

Extramarital affairs are *intimate relationships with a person other than one's spouse that may be sexual or nonsexual.* Most U.S. extramarital affairs are sexual and non-consented to by one's spouse. In spite of a variety of estimates on how many married people were ever unfaithful to their spouse, all scientific studies have found that men were more likely than women to have an extramarital affair and that most men and women do NOT ever have an affair.

Marital infidelity has been and continues to be disapproved of by the general public. Many in the U.S. who disapprove of affairs, simultaneously understand the frailties of the human experience and sympathize to some degree with those who make this "mistake." Such was found to be true with politicians, movie and TV stars, and sports celebrities (you can pick any one from the online list available on the Internet when you search "celebrity affairs"). Affairs don't always lead to marital or relational dissolution, but in most cases it is better if the offending spouse or partner confesses the infidelity rather than simply gets caught.

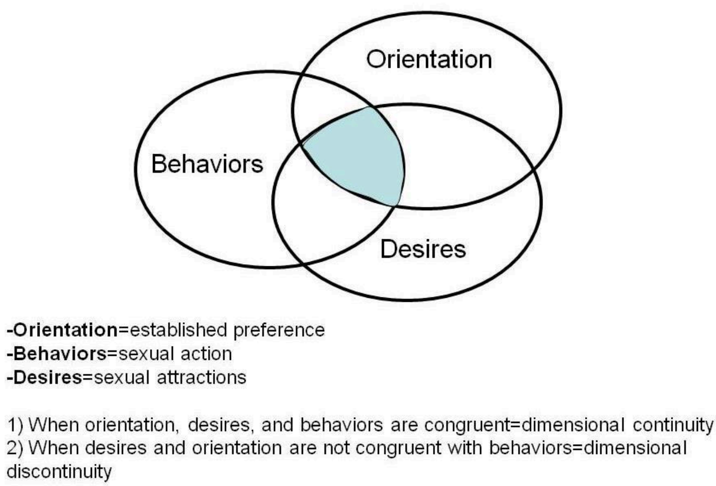
Sexual Identity

Human beings are socialized into their adult roles and learn their sexual identities along with their gender roles, work roles, and family roles. **Sexual orientation** is *the sexual preference one has for their partner: male, female, both, or neither.* There are a few common sexual orientations that can be seen at the societal and personal level. **Heterosexuality** is *the sexual attraction between a male and a female.* **Homosexuality** is *a sexual attraction between a male to another male or a female to another female.* **Bisexuality** is *a sexual attraction to both male and female sexual partners.*

There is a difference in these three dimensions of sexuality: sexual orientation, sexual desire, and sexual behaviors. **Sexual desire** is *the attractions we have for sexual partners and* *experience that exist independent of our behaviors.* **Sexual behaviors** are our actual *sexual actions and interactions.* It is important to note that orientations, desires, and behaviors are not always the same thing. They do overlap at times. For example, a heterosexual male may have had a homosexual experience in the past, or not. He may at times desire males and females regardless of his actual sexual activities. A lesbian female may have had a short-term heterosexual relationship, yet define herself as a lesbian.

When considering the congruence of these three concepts it is helpful to use visual aids. Figure 6 below shows how sexual orientation, desires, and behaviors are at times congruent, meaning they correspond directly with each other; or incongruent, meaning they do NOT correspond together with each other. These three dimensions of our sexuality are surprisingly incongruent among adults in the U.S. society.

Figure 6 Sexual Orientation, Desires, and Behaviors: A Venn Diagram.



Edward O. Laumann *et al.* wrote the largest sociological study of U.S. sexuality ever published.[9] In this book he wrote about the prevalence of self-identified sexual orientations. Laumann and the other researchers surveyed about 3,400 respondents. By far, most members of U.S. society are heterosexual. Laumann avoided the use of the words "heterosexual" or "homosexual." He found that 7.1% of males and 3.8% of females have had sex with a partner of the same sex.[10]

Laumann also reported that over 96% of males and 98% of females identified themselves as heterosexual. Only two percent of males and 0.9% of females identified themselves as homosexual, while 0.8% of males and 0.5% of females reported bisexuality. The Janus Report also reported their findings on sexual behaviors and sexual orientation. Their sample reported 22% of men and 17% of women said yes to the question, "Have you had a homosexual experience?"[11]

Janus also reported that 91% of men and 95% of women claimed to be heterosexual; four percent of men and two percent of women claimed to be homosexual; and five percent of men and three percent of women claimed to be bisexual.[12] Heterosexuality is by far the most common identification in studies where respondents are asked to identify their sexual orientation.[13] Yet, heterosexuals may have had a variety of sexual experiences in a variety of context and still consider themselves to be heterosexual in spite of dimensional discontinuity or continuity. Generally speaking Janus and Laumann found that the U.S. is a very sexual nation. They reported that very few men and women reported never having had vaginal sexual intercourse (less than five percent). They reported that men typically have sex sooner than women and that most had sex by age 20. Janus specifically reported that only nine percent of men and 17% of women had NO sexual experience before marriage.[14]

Sexuality and Politics

Sexual orientation, desires, and behaviors have become extremely politicized. The largest sexual political action committee is the Human Rights Campaign, which emerged in the 1980s as a Gay Community Rights organization. LGBT and LGBTQ have replaced Gay Community as the collective acronym. LGBT stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (occasionally Queer is added by some interest groups). The Human Rights Campaign has become the central political action organization for LGBTQ interest groups.[15]

Marriage between same-sex couples became an emotionally charged political issue during the California Proposition 8 referendum and constitutional amendment that Passed November 2008. Because it passed, the California Section 7.5 of the Declaration of Rights to the State Constitution now reads, "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California." This set a strong national precedence against rights to same-sex couples to have legally recognized marriage on par with heterosexual married couples. Estimates are that over $80 million was spent on this proposition alone on both the for and against efforts.[16]

The Prop 8 initiative originated from a political action committee called ProtectMarriage.com. It self-describes as a "…broad-based coalition of California families, community leaders, religious leaders, pro-family organizations and individuals…to restore the definition of marriage as between a man and a woman."[17]

Interestingly most in the U.S. would never oppose an individual's choice or orientation when it comes to sexuality. This and other conservative interest groups like it have formed to advocate for conservative legislation and policies in the U.S. and abroad. None, on either side of sexual rights, assumes that this oppositional battle for rights, laws, and policies has ended. Many see the stakes as being higher than ever in the current sexual politics scene.

1. Grey, J.(1993). *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus: Practical Guide for Improving Communication and Getting What You Want in Your Relationships*, HarperCollins.
2. see Kama Sutra

3. © 2010 Samuel Jones All Rights Reserved
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8. Janus Report, Page 86, Table 3.28
9. Janus Report, Page 77, Table 3.21
10. 1994, The Social Organization of Sexuality U. of Chicago Press ISBN 0-226-46957-3
11. 1994, The Social Organization of Sexuality U. of Chicago Press ISBN 0-226-46957-3
12. 1994, The Social Organization of Sexuality U. of Chicago Press ISBN 0-226-46957-3, page 69 Table 3.14
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16. http://www.hrc.org/
17. Wiki http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prop_8
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9. 8. Couples: Married or Not

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Define and identify marrieds, nonmarrieds, and cohabitors
- Identify pros and cons of each group
- Explain the legal aspects of marraige
- Compare benefits for marrieds and nonmarrieds

A couple is simply a pair of people who identify themselves in terms of belonging together, trusting one another, and having a unique relationship, separate from all others. A "We" is close to the same thing, yet it focuses on the relationship as an entity in itself. A "We," as shown in Figure 1, is a married couple but can also include cohabiters or other intimate non-married couple arrangements. This is a relationship that is not intimately connected to any other relationships at the same profound level as they are connected to one another.

Here is a metaphor, a "We" is much like a vehicle (relationship) that two people purchased together. Both have to put in maintenance. Both have to care for it and treat it in such a way that it runs for a long time. Sometimes, spouses or partners attack the other in such a way that the other is harmed or damaged in their trust. A "We" is the social and emotional boundary a couple establishes when they decide to become a couple. This boundary includes only the two partners. It purposefully excludes the children, extended family, co-workers, and friends. Most couples who establish a strong marital bond have successfully distinguished themselves as a "We" and partially disengaged from the existing relationships of child, grandchild, best friends, etc. That is not to say that you cut your parents, relatives, and other friends off. You just have to establish a new exclusive intimacy that only includes you and your spouse.1

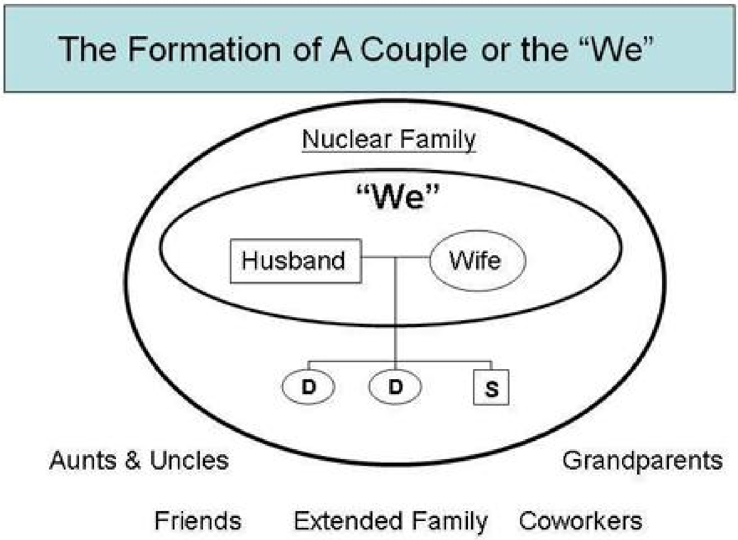


Figure 1. The "We" as it Relates to a Married Couple

This also means making certain things into **spouse-only issues** which are *the decisions, advice, and discussion that are held exclusively between partners and intentionally* NOT *between other family and friends.* This might include types of birth control, how to run a budget, sexual techniques and practices, who might be at fault in an argument, etc. If a couple marries in their late 20's, then they have a life-long history of intimate help-seeking and advice-giving relationships with others. These may continue as long as the help-seeking behavior doesn't violate the intimate agreements of confidentiality for each spouse or partner. It is crucial to form the "We" so that married couples avoid the damaging intrusions of family and friends into their new marriage.

Marriage is *a legal union between a man and a woman as recognized by most of the United States.* Internationally, and in certain U.S. political regions, a man and another man or a woman and another woman can be legally recognized as a married couple. What are typical marriage structures? The U.S. and world-wide culturally preferred marriage type today is monogamy. **Monogamy** is *the marriage form permitting only one spouse at a time.* Almost all who have married in the U.S. have done so monogamously since the original colonies in the 1600s. Monogamy implies a 1:1 relationship and is typically desired both by married couples and by opposite and same-sex cohabiters.

Cohabitation is *the heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual moving in together of two partners without going through the formalities of legal marriage.* Although similar in form and function, cohabitating couples live differently in many significant day-to-day aspects when compared to married couples. Also, many cohabiting couples eventually choose to marry, but their risk of divorce is higher than among couples that never cohabited. Cohabitation will be discussed more below, but it has been increasingly popular over the last 30 years.

Polygamy is *a marriage form permitting more than one spouse at the same time.* **Polygyny** is *marriage form permitting more than one wife at the same time* and is the most common form of polygamy in the world's history. Polygyny is still common and legal in many African, Middle-Eastern, Muslim, and Indian nations. It was a deep part of China's history and prior to World War II it was common for a Chinese man to have multiple wives and many children.

Polyandry is *a marriage form permitting more than one husband at the same time.* This is historically and currently rare, and, if or when it was practiced, it often includes the marriage of one wife to a set of brothers with all husbands having sexual access to the wife. Polyandry was found among some Pacific Island cultures and among the pre-Taliban Afghanis.

What if a person marries, divorces, marries, divorces, etc.? **Serial Monogamy** or **Serial Polygamy** is *the process of establishing intimate marriage or cohabiting relationships that eventually dissolve and are followed by another intimate marriage or cohabiting relationship, that eventually dissolve, etc. in a series.* Thus polygamists have simultaneous multiple spouses while serial monogamists or serial polygamists have multiple spouses in a sequence of relationships. Millions of U.S. adults will experience serial marriages and divorces. Many marry then divorce, yet still want to be married again. Many others who suffered through their parents' unhealthy marriages and divorces also want to marry, knowing firsthand how risky that might be.

LEGALITY OF MARRIAGE

States have power when it comes to allowing marriage. The power held by states to legalize the economic, social, spiritual, emotional, or physical union or disunion of a man and a woman is not only traditional, but also enduring in U.S. history. Centuries ago, fathers, clan or kinship leaders, religious leaders, and community members had the rights to marry, which are now claimed by the state or nation. True, states don't get involved in the spiritual or physical union, they just license it or legalize it the same way they license drivers or certify the legal sale of property. Almost every year, there are about two legally sanctioned state marriages in the U.S. for every one legally sanctioned state divorce decree.

In Figure 3 below you can see just how many legal marriages were granted per divorce for the years 1960-2005. These numbers are presented as a ratio (number of marriages/number of divorces per year). In 1960 there were almost four marriages per divorce. As the rate of divorce increased we see that there were about two marriages per one divorce. Notice that since the late 1990s the ratio is increasing slightly because divorces are down.

For decades newscasters and educators have warned that one in two marriages "end in divorce." Sounds frightening, doesn't it? Is it true? Not really, since divorce never reached the actual 50% mark. Based on surveys of exactly how many people have ever been divorced in their lifetimes, most will tell you it is closer to 43% in the U.S.'s worst divorce rates ever (1980s).2

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts annual surveys of the U.S. population and publishes them as the Current Population Surveys. Table 1 represents U.S. family types as of October 1, 2008. You will notice that marrieds comprised the largest number of family types in 2008. Single never-marrieds are the second largest type and include roughly 6.8 million cohabiters.

Look at Figure 4 to see the U.S. graphical trend of actual numbers in millions of family types. It shows that the single largest type of family in the U.S. has always been marrieds then never-marrieds. The divorced category overtook the widowed category in the 1970s and has been higher ever since. Why are the trends upward? Simple: these are numbers and not rates nor percentages. The population has grown and therefore the population size has been steadily increasing.

Figure 3. United States Ratio of Marriages per Divorces 1960-2005.3

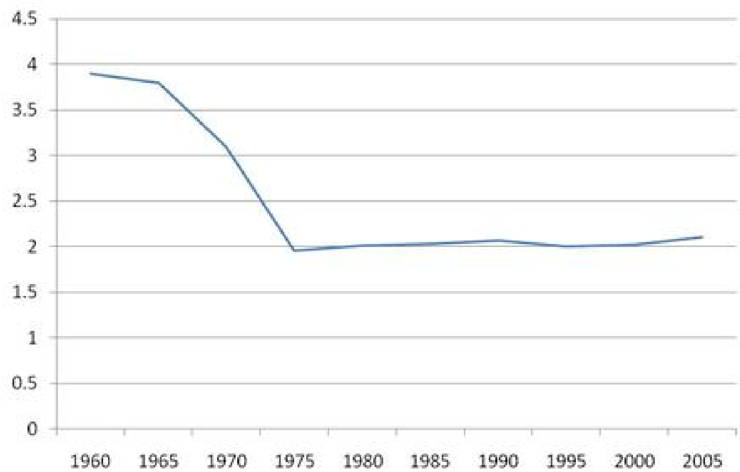


Table 1. U.S. Family Types, 2008.4

Types	Numbers	Percentage
Married	123,671,000	52
Widowed	14,314,000	6
Divorced	23,346,000	10
Separated	5,183,000	2
Never Married-Single	71,479,000	30
Total Families 15 and over	237,993,000	100

Robert and Jeanette Lauer are a husband-wife team who study commitment and endurance of married couples. They have identified 29 factors among couples who had been together for 15 years or more. They found that both husbands and wives reported as their number 1 and 2 factors that "My spouse is my best friend" and "I like my spouse as a person."[5] The Lauers also studied the levels of commitment couples had to their marriage. The couples reported that they were in fact committed to and supportive of not only their own marriage, but to marriage as an institution.

Irreconcilable differences are common to marriage and the basic strategy to deal with them is to negotiate as much as is possible, accept the irresolvable differences, and finally live happily with them. Keeping a positive outlook on your marriage is essential. As was mentioned above, as long as a couple is married they are technically at risk of divorce. However not all divorce risks are created equally. Newly married couples 1-10 years have a great deal of adjustment to work through, especially during the first 36 months. They have new boundaries and relationships to establish.

They have to get to know one another and negotiate agreements about the who, what, why, and how of their day-to-day lives together. The longer they stay together, the lower their risks of divorce.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, two young people may marry at 18 without parental consent in 49 states.[6] In Mississippi individuals have to be at least 21 years old to marry without their parent's permission. Individuals who marry in their teens (even 17, 18, & 19) have much higher rates of marital dissolution. Some argue that this might be because the individual continues to change up until about age 25-26 when they are fully psychologically mature. Try to remember who you thought was attractive your senior year in high school. Would you still find them attractive today? Some who marry in their teens actually outgrow one another, including their loss of attraction that stems from their changed tastes. When marital data is collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, it often shows that those marrying in their teen years have the highest rates of having ever been divorced.

As is mentioned above, most unwed mothers end up marrying the biological father of their baby. These marriages often end in divorce more than marriages for non-pregnant newlyweds. The existence of children at the time of the wedding is often associated with higher divorce rates. Family Scientists have borrowed from the physics literature a concept called **entropy** which is roughly defined as *the principle that matter tends to decay and reduce, toward its simplest parts*. For example a new car, if parked in a field and ignored, would eventually decay and rot. A planted garden, if left unmaintained, would be overrun with weeds, pests, and yield low if any crop.

Marital Entropy is *the principle that if a marriage does not receive preventative maintenance and upgrades it will move towards decay and break down.* Couples who take ownership of their marriage and who realize that marriage is not a state of constant bliss (nothing really is) and that it often requires much work, will experience more stability and strength when they nurture their marriage. These couples care for their marriage, acknowledging the propensity relationships have to decay if unattended.

Many individuals struggle to completely surrender their single status. They mentally remain on the marriage market in case someone better than their current spouse comes along. Norval Glenn (1991) argued that many individuals see marriage as a temporary state while they keep an eye open for someone better. More honest vows would be *as long as we both shall love* or *as long as no one better comes along* (page 268). Glenn gets at the core of the cultural values associated with risks of divorcing.7

In Figure 5 you can see the median duration of marriage for people 15 and older by sex and age. This data is exclusively for those who ended up divorcing. Even those who do divorce can expect a median of about eight years for both men and women. The average couple could expect to stay married quite a long time.

A positive outlook for your marriage as a rewarding and enjoyable relationship is a realistic outlook. Some couples worry about being labeled naïve if they express the joys and rewards their marriage brings to their lives. Be hopeful and positive on the quality and duration of your marriage because the odds are still in your favor. You've probably seen commercials where online matchmaking Websites strut their success in matching people to one another. There have been a few criticisms of online marital enhancement services, but millions have used them. Along with DVD's, CDs, self-help books, and seminars there are many outlets for marital enhancement available to couples who seek them. Very few know that there is now a Website that offers support to marrieds who want to be proactive and preventative in their relationship.8

Doing your homework cannot be emphasized enough in the mate selection process. The old adage, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" truly does apply to mate selection. Taking your time, understanding yourself, waiting until you are 20-something or older, and finding a good friend in your spouse can make all the difference in the marital experience you have. Keep in mind that very few people marry someone they meet as strangers. Most of us end up marrying someone they find through their social networks such as work, campus, dorms, frats and sororities, friends of friends, and other relationship-based connections.

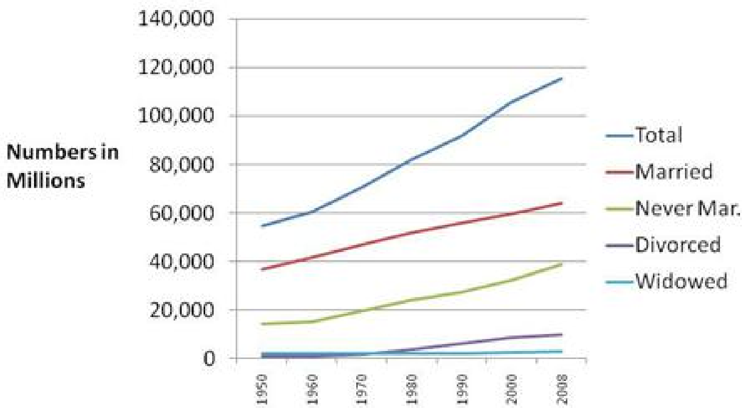
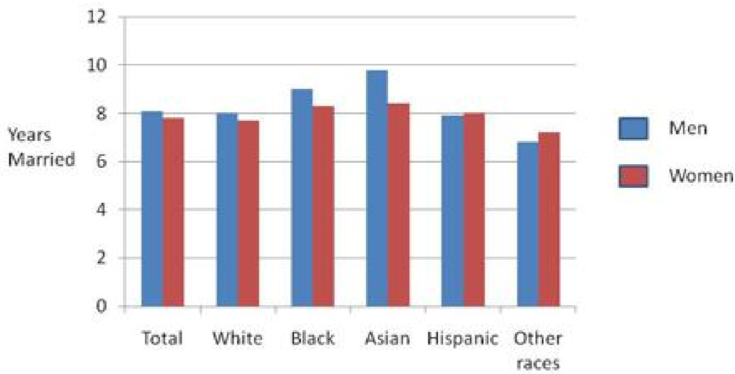


Figure 4. United States 1950-2000 Numbers of Family Types (in Millions).9

There also continues to be a trend of delaying first marriage until later in life. In 2005, the U.S. median age at marriage was about 27 years for men (Washington DC was 29.9 years and Utah was 24.6) and 25.5 for women (Washington DC was 29.8 years and 22.1 for Utah).[10]

Marriage is very popular among U.S. adults, in part because it does offer many rewards that unmarried people don't enjoy. A sociologist named Linda Waite co-wrote a book with Maggie Gallagher called *The Case For Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially* (2001, Doubleday). As its title implies, this book summarizes basic trends that have been found among married people for decades. Marriage has become socially controversial in part because of the intense political efforts to legalize marriage for same-sex couples. Regardless of your moral position on the issue of same-sex marriage, you can see the political quest for it as an indicator of just how rewarding it is to be legally a "married couple."

Figure 5. United States Median Duration of Marriages for Divorced People 15 Years and Over by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 2004



There are numerous studies and books on the benefits of marriage to married individuals. Table 2 lists ten categories of these known benefits for you to consider.

Table 2. Ten Benefits of Being Married in Contrast to Being Single.

Better physical and emotional health

More wealth and income

Positive social status

More and safer sex

Life-long continuity of intimate relationships

Safer circumstances for children

Longer life expectancy

Lower odds of being crime victims

Enhanced legal and insurance rights and benefits (tax, medical, and inheritance)

Higher self-reported happiness

Cohabitation

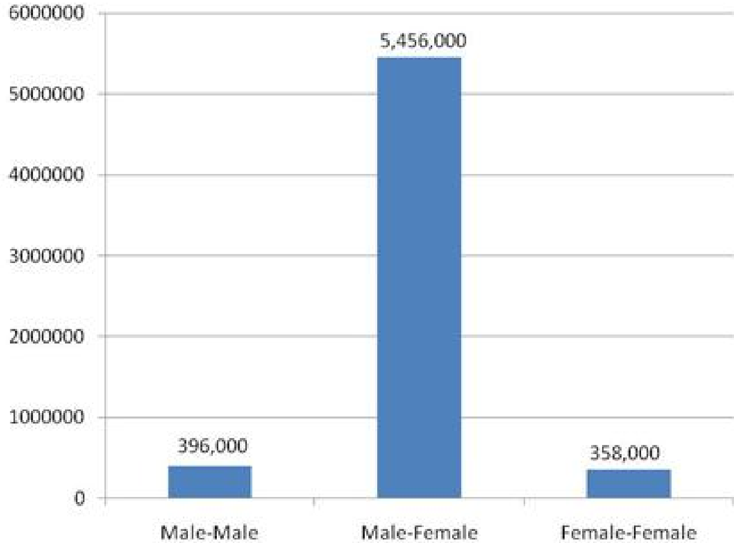
Cohabitation has been studied extensively for the last three decades, especially in contrast between cohabiting and married couples. Clear findings consistently show that cohabiting and marriage are two different creatures. Those who cohabit have less clarity on the intention and direction of the relationship than do marrieds. Further people who cohabit, then later marry, are more likely to divorce than those who never cohabited. In 2010 the U.S. Center for Disease Control reported that cohabitation is very common in our day:

"Among both men and women aged 15-44 who had ever cohabited and or married, the largest proportion cohabited before their first marriage. Approximately 28% of men and women cohabited before their first marriage, whereas 23% of women and 18% of men married without ever cohabiting. About 15% of men and women had only cohabited (without ever marrying), and less than seven percent of men and women first cohabited after their first marriages ended."[11]

This report also stated that some of the cohabitation relationships dissolved while others transitioned to marriage. Less educated cohabiters cohabited longer while college-graduated cohabiters transitioned to marriage more.

There are a number of different ways of measuring cohabitation. The U.S. Census Bureau reported about 6,209,000 U.S. Unmarried-Partner households in 2007. Since a household in this case contains at least two persons we can derive 6,209,000 x 2= 12,418,000 unmarried adults sharing households. These data were extrapolated from the American Community Survey, and the types of unmarried-partner households are identified in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Number of Unmarried-Partner Households in the United States, 2007.[12]



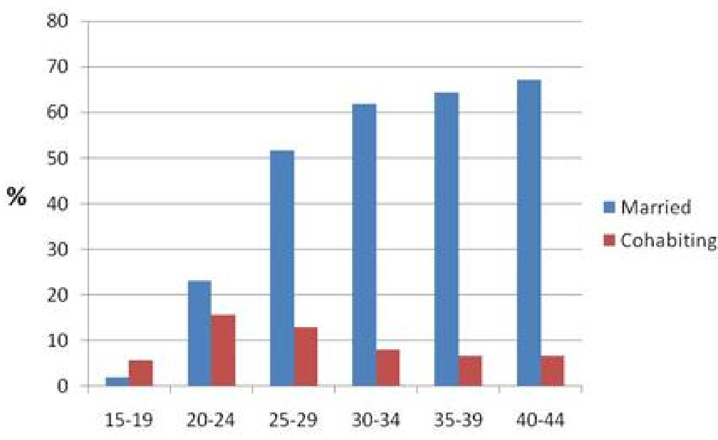
Although this survey did not identify sexual orientation, many find these to be good indicators of heterosexual partner pairs (about 5.456 million) and homosexual partners (about 754,000). Keep in mind that there are millions of gays, lesbians, and heterosexuals who do not have a partner living in the same household. David Popenoe reported on attitudes about cohabitation and said that most teenagers report that living together before marrying is a good idea and that 50% of U.S. women ages 19-44 had cohabited at some point in their lives. He also compared U.S. couples to couples in other Western nations and found that in the U.S. about 7.6% of all couples cohabited, much lower than most other countries in Western Europe.[13]

Not all cohabitation experiences are the same. There are people who cohabit more than once. **Serial cohabiters** are *persons who have a series of cohabiting relationships over the course of time.* These persons tend to be poorer and less educated in the U.S. When or if these persons ever marry, their divorce risks are over two times higher than those who never cohabited in a series.[14]

A recent study on U.S. cohabitation and marriage was published online by the National Center for Health Statistics using Wave 6 data.[15] They surveyed 15-44 year old singles in 2002 and assessed their relationship patterns. They found that only nine percent were currently cohabiting and that less than 30% were likely to still be cohabiting after five years together (compared to 78% of marrieds still together after five years). Part of this is because many of the cohabiters eventually married while some ended the relationship. In fact, among first-time cohabiters, 65% eventually married. This report also stated that 28% had cohabited before their first marriage.

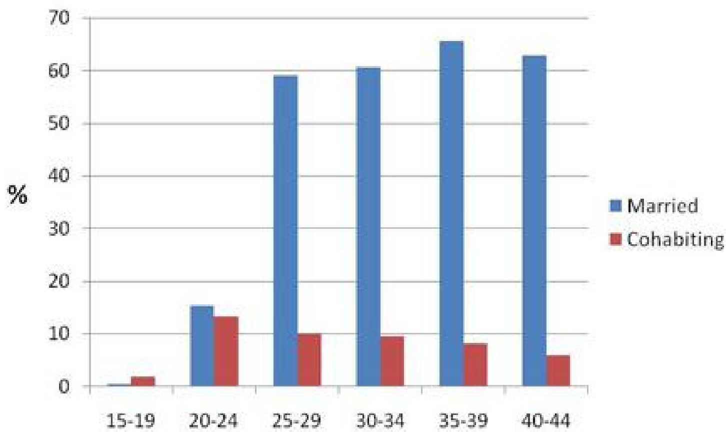
Based on data presented in this report, you can see in Figures 7 (women) and 8 (men) patterns of marriage and cohabitation among those who were in either of these relationships (does not include singles). You quickly begin to see patterns of higher marriage and lower cohabitation across the age categories. The older people were much more likely to be married than the younger ones. You can also see that cohabitation was more common among younger groups. This again confirms the belief among younger people in the U.S. that cohabitation is normal or expected.

Figure 7. Percentage of Women 15-44 who were in a Union: Married or Cohabiting by Specific Age Categories.



Those cohabiters who get pregnant often have two choices: marry or break up. Breaking up is often more common than marrying.[16] Another recent study reported on lower commitment levels among cohabiting couples, and that the less religious were more likely to cohabit than marry.[17] Lichter and Qian (2008) reported that cohabiting couples' intentions to marry plays into their relationship outcome. In other words, if they move in together thinking they will marry someday, it may lead to a longer relationship as long as both have the same intention and neither changes their mind.

Figure 8. Percentage of Men 15-44 who were in a Union: Married or Cohabiting by Specific Age Categories.



Finally, there are known benefits to being married and in a long-term relationship rather than being single, divorced, or cohabiting. Table 3 shows health benefits from the cohabitation and marriage study of the National Survey of Family Growth. Better mental and physical health with better medical insurance coverage prove to be crucial qualities for marrieds. As far as children are concerned, having better care and better adult outcomes are crucial factors.

Table 3. Health Benefits Known to be an Advantage among Married Persons in the U.S.[18]

Generally better mental and physical health outcomes

Longer lives

Higher rates of health insurance coverage
Lower prevalence of cardiovascular disease
Better health and well-being of children
Children born to unmarried mothers are at greater risk for poverty, teen childbearing, poor school achievement, and marital disruption in adulthood than children born to married mothers

There are also known financial benefits when comparing marrieds to non-marrieds. More wealth accumulation, higher assets, and higher monthly income are consistent among marrieds. Figure 9 shows the annual earnings of married individuals compared to single men and single women. The first thing you notice is that marrieds have consistently higher annual incomes. In 2007 specifically, marrieds had $28,231 more income than single men and $42,293 more than single women. The difference is even more pronounced if both incomes are taken into consideration for dual income marrieds (i.e., in 2007 dual income couples had $86,435 which is $42,077 higher than single men and $56,139 more than single women).

Figure 9. Annual Income from 1990-2007 in 2007 Constant Dollars Comparing Marrieds to Single Men and Single Women.[19]

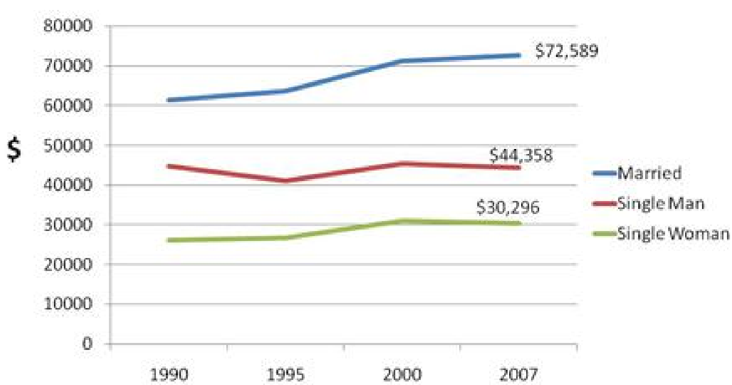


Table 4 summarizes the known benefits to marrieds over non-marrieds that have been established through numerous studies over the last three decades. Married people are safer and less prone to get into trouble than others. There is a buffering effect that accompanies having a life-long devoted spouse who helps deflect stress and hardships on a daily basis. Thus some of the health benefits of longer life, less suicide, more stable health coverage, and less illness and addiction. Also, marrieds have more social support, more continuity in long-term relationships, and especially more closeness for men in intimate family relationships. Husbands are less likely to abuse and be violent toward their wives than are boyfriends and partners. Married people have clear life-long goals and tend to buy homes, invest, and plan for retirement more than others. The government and military recognize spouses and reward them with tax breaks, benefits, and other sources of coverage and support more than others. In later life, many elderly report that their family relationships are very supportive and important to them. Studies show that the elderly enjoy their human investment in their children and grandchildren that yields emotional and social rewards throughout their golden years.

Table 4. Known Benefits Enjoyed by Married Couples in Comparison to Non-Married Persons.

Less likely to become victims of crime

Less likely to commit crimes

Less addiction

Fewer accidents (especially among men)

Less suicide

Better stress management because spouse is a buffer to life's stresses

More social and emotional support (less loneliness)

More intimate connections to family members

Long-term continuity in family relationships of children, in-laws, grandchildren, etc.

Lower risk of domestic violence for women

Longer life expectancies

More and better self-rated sex

More emotional and financial security (for both spouses)

Less uncertainty about direction of life and goals

More cost effective to live in married versus single circumstances

Tax deductions

More military benefits

More accumulated belongings and investments

More medical benefits

More legal rights

1. see Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee (1995) The Good Marriage ISBN 0-446-67248-3; Warner Pub
2. see U.S. Census for tables at http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/marr-div/2004detailed_tables.html
3. Taken from Statistical Abstracts of the United States on 27 March 2009 from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2008/2008edition.html; Table 77, Section 2.
4. Taken from the Internet on 30 March 2009 from Table A1. Marital Status of People 15 Years and Over, by Age, Sex, Personal Earnings, Race, and Hispanic Origin/1, 2008 http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2008.html and see Table UC1. Opposite Sex Unmarried Couples by Labor Force Status of Both Partners: 2008 retrieved 30 March 2009
5. from http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2008.html

6. see ‘Til Death Do Us Part: How Couples Stay Together. 1986 by Robert Lauer and also Google Lauer and Lauer and Kerr various years
7. see http://www.ncsl.org/
8. See “The Recent Trend in Marital Success in the United States” by Norval D. Glenn Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 53, No. 2 (May, 1991), pp. 261-270
9. http://marriage.eharmony.com/).
10. Taken from United States Census Bureau on 30 March 2009 from Table MS-1. Marital Status of the Population 15 Years Old and Over, by Sex and Race: 1950 to Present http://www.census.gov/
11. Taken from the Internet on 2 April, 2009 from R1204. Median Age at First Marriage for Men: 2005 and R1205. Median Age at First Marriage for Women: 2005
12. Retrieved 18 March 2010 from Marriage and Cohabitation in the United States: A Statistical Portrait Based on Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_028.pdf, Tables 13 and 14.
13. Retrieved 17 March, 2010 from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0063.pdf Table 63. Unmarried-Partner Households by Region and Sex of Partners: 2007.
14. Popenoe, D. (2009) Cohabitation, Marriage, and Child Wellbeing: A Cross-National Perspective, Social Sci. and Public Policy, Vol 46:429-436
15. see Lichter, D.T. and Qian, Z. 2008, Nov. Vol 70 4, pages 861-878; J. of Marriage and Family
16. retrieved 23 March 2010 at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_028.pdf

17. see Lichter, D.T. and Qian, Z. 2008, Nov. Vol. 70, 4, 863.
18. Stanley, S. M. et al, 2004 J. of Family Issues, Vol. 25, No. 4 496-519, “Maybe I Do Interpersonal Commitment and Premarital or Nonmarital Cohabitation”
19. Marriage and Cohabtitation in the United States: A Statistical Portrait Based on Cycle 6(2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth Retrieved 23 March 2010 www.cdc.gov. page 12
20. Retrieved 23 March 2010 www.census.gov

10. 9. Families and Aging

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Define gerontology
- Define life course
- Compare and contrast the major theories in the field of aging
- Recall the stages of dying and grief
- Differentiate grandparenting styles

GERONTOLOGY

The United States of America is inhabited by many diverse people, including distinguishable generations of society's members based on age. **Gerontology** is *the scientific study of the processes and phenomena of aging and growing old.* Depending on the definition of being elderly, the government typically sets 65 to be the elderly years, the American Association of Retired Persons finds 50 to be the eligible age of membership, and many elderly define their 70's or 80's as the time they begin to feel elderly. Gerontology is multi-disciplinary with medical and biological scientists, social scientists, and even financial and economic scientists all studying the processes of aging from their disciplines point of view.

Social gerontology is *the sociological subfield of gerontology which focuses on the social aspects of aging.* Sociology focuses on the broad understanding of the elderly experience, their health, their emotional and social wellness, and their quality of life just to mention a few. Family Gerontology is the subfield that focuses on the family experiences of elderly persons. As of 2008, 12.7% of the U.S. population was 65 years and older.[1] It is projected to grow to 20% by the year 2050.2

Figure 1 illustrates the growth in the proportion of the elderly to the non-elderly from 2000 and projecting to 2050. Figure 2 compares the younger elderly (65-84) to the oldest old (85 years and older) population which is expected to more than double between 2010 and 2050. This means that in general more people are living longer. In fact there are more Centenarians than ever before. A **centenarian** is *a living person who has had her 100th birthday*. U.S. Census counts indicated about 37,000 centenarians in 1990 and about 50,000 in 2000.3

In many societies the elderly are revered (especially in Asian societies). **Filial piety** is *the value, respect, and reverence of one's elderly which is often accompanied by caregiving and support of the elderly*. Grandparents and even great-grandparents are valued and included in the home of the mother, father, and their children. These families are enriched by three and sometimes four generations of family members supporting the socialization of the younger members of the family. In Western countries, the elderly and their extended family are considered co-equals and mutually independent until circumstances necessitate assistance from children and other family members.

Figure 1. Estimated Percentage of U.S. Population that will be Elderly 65+, and Non-elderly, 2000-2050.4

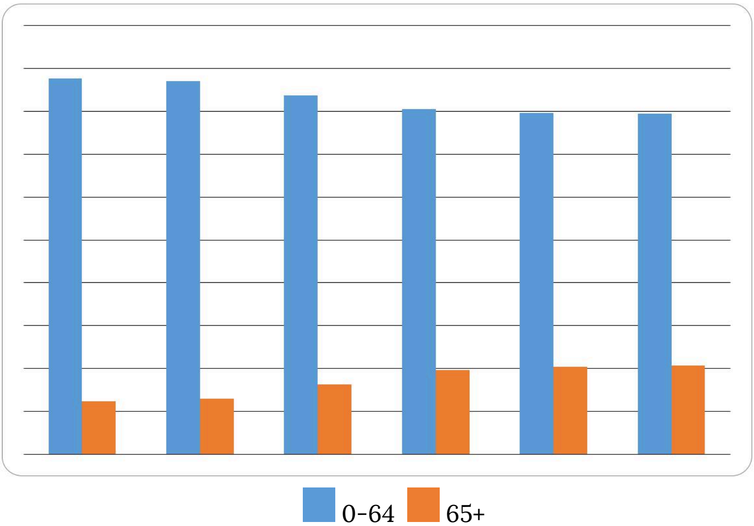
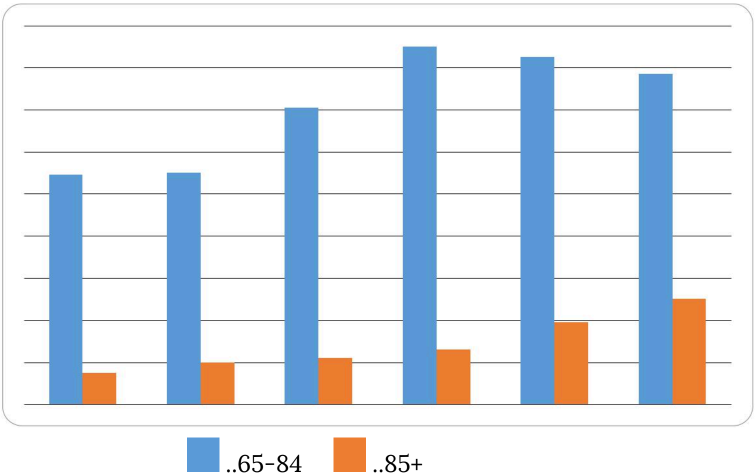


Figure 2. Estimated Percentage of U.S. Population that will be 65-84, and 85+, 2000-20505



UNDERSTANDING THE GENERATIONS OF LIFE

Life course is *an ideal sequence of events and positions the average person is expected to experience as he/she matures and moves through life*. Dependence and independence levels change over the life course. From birth to the pre-teen years, children's levels of dependence are relatively high and adults' levels of dependence are relatively low. Newborns have little ability to nurture others, but as they are socialized and grow into their later-teen roles things change. By young adulthood, independence is a prime value in the U.S. which leads many to move out on their own and gain their own experiences. A young adult's ability to nurture is moderate, but often dormant since most pursue avenues of preparation for their adult lives rather than immediately beginning their own families. Married and cohabiting couples are much more independent and capable of nurturing and remain so throughout the grand-parenting years. As the life course progresses into later life, the oldest elderly begin to lose their independence as their health declines to the point that their resources lag behind the daily demands placed upon them. **Senescence** is *the social, emotional, biological, intellectual, and spiritual processes associated with aging*.[6]

For many in our modern societies, aging is feared, vilified, and surgically and cosmetically repaired. We do not like being "off our game" and senescence is viewed as a weakness. Yet many elderly find their lives very satisfying and they tend to report higher levels of self-esteem than do younger members of society. Because we tend to value youth, youthful appearance, and youthful-centered entertainment, biases appear in the U.S. **Ageism** is *the prejudice and discrimination against a person based on his/her chronological age.*

Ageism is a unique form of bias. One may be prejudiced against another racial, ethnic, or religious group while never being at risk of becoming a member of that group but ageist people are aging right now and will be until the day they die—they are essentially biased against their own future status.

THEORIES ABOUT AGING

There are several social theories that help to understand the experiences of the elderly. In the 1960s Cumming and Henry developed **Disengagement Theory** which *claims that as elderly people realize the inevitability of death they begin to systematically disengage from their previous youthful roles while society simultaneously prepares the pre-elderly and elderly to disengage from their roles*. This was the first formal aging theory that fell short of credibility because the scientific data did not support its assumptions.7

Activity Theory (1970s) claims that the elderly benefit from high levels of activities, especially meaningful activities that help to replace lost life roles after retirement. The key to success in later life is staying active and by doing so resist the social pressures that limit an older person's world.8

Continuity Theory claims that *older adults maintain patterns in their later years which they had in their younger years*. The elderly adapt to the many changes which accompany aging using a variety of effective personal strategies they developed earlier in their life. For example, those who participated in outdoor activities in their younger years tend to continue to do so as older adults—although they tend to accommodate their health and fitness limitations as they deem appropriate.9

To really understand the elderly today, you have to understand the larger social changes that have transpired over the last century. In 1900, elderly people in the U.S. held a more cherished place in the hearts of younger family members. Most homes were intergenerational with grandparents, parents, and children all living in the same home and more often with kin on the wife's side being the social connection around which three generations would live.[10]

In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that there were 105.5 million households in the country.[11] Only 3.7% or nearly four million households were multigenerational. It probably feels normal to you to not have older relatives live in your home. In years past, elderly family members were considered a valuable asset with their wisdom and support of their children and grandchildren while today with a greater focus on independence, elderly family members are not as valued.

Modernization Theory claims that *industrialization and modernization have lowered the power and influence which the elderly once had which has lead to much exclusion of the elderly from community roles*. Even though this theory is not well established and is somewhat controversial, it has made a place in science for understanding how large-scale social forces have impacted the individual and collective lives of the elderly. In modern societies the economy has grown to a state that has created new levels of prosperity for most; new technologies have outpaced the ability of the elderly to understand and use them; and the elderly are living much longer and are not essential to the economic survival of the family as was the case for millennia. Modernization can help us to understand why the elderly have become stigmatized and devalued over the last century.

WHAT DO THE GENERATIONS LOOK LIKE?

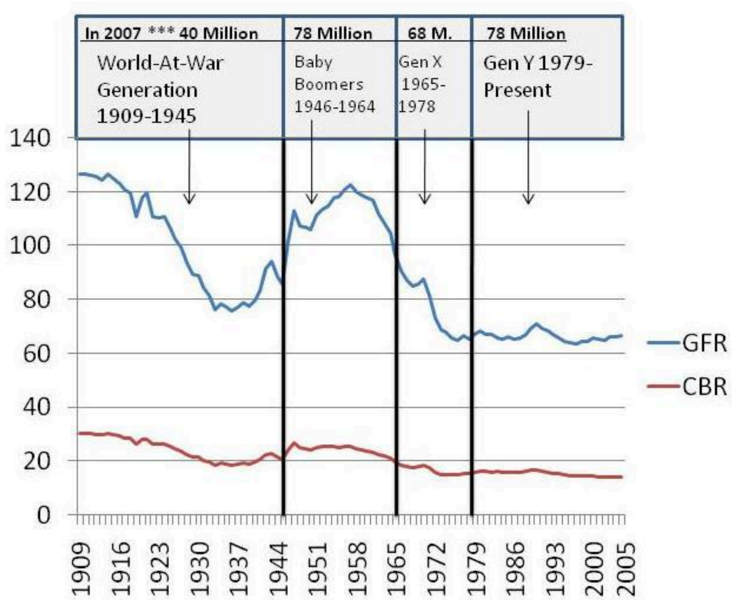
Who makes up the generations of our day? Figure 3 shows birth rates for each of the four most recent generations in the U.S. Notice the red and blue lines (blue is the top line and red is the bottom line). The red line represents the **Crude Birth Rate (CBR)** *which is the number of births per 1,000 population in a given year.* The

Blue line represents the **General Fertility Rate (GFR)** which is *the number of live births per 1,000 women aged 15-44*. Both the CBR and GFR show a pattern of birth rates that were relatively high when the World-At-War Generation was first being born. Birth rates declined with the Great Depression until 1946 (the commencement of the Baby Boom). The Baby Boom represented a surge in birth rates from 1946 to 1964 and declined to pre-Boom rates in 1965. Generation X or "Gen X" represents the children of the Baby Boomers which spilled into Generation Y or the "Millennials."

It is interesting to note that there is no universally agreed upon definition of generations other than the Baby Boomers. The World-At-War Generation is slowly disappearing from the U.S. population landscape. On 18th of June, 2008 the last living Veteran of World War I was honored by the White House and Congress. Frank W. Buckles fought in WWI and was held prisoner in Manila during World War II.[11] The U.S. Veterans Bureau reported that there were 2,911,900 WWII veterans as of 30 September 2007 with about 900 WWII veterans passing away each day. They also reported that 39.1% of all U.S. veterans were aged 65 and older.[12]

The majority of the elderly today are women. If you consider the elderly as being divided into three life stages you can discern just how the elderly are comprised comparing males to females. The Young-old are 65-74 years; the Middle-old are 75-84 years; and the Old-old are 85+ years. In 2005 there were more females in all three age groups. This is because women, in most countries of the world, have a higher life expectancy than men. **Life expectancy** is *the average numbers of years a person born today may expect to live.*

Figure 3. United States General Fertility Rates (GFR), Crude Birth Rates (CBR) from 1909 to 2005 with Generation Markers for Baby Boomers; and Generations X, and Y.[13]



The U.S. Life expectancy today is about 80 years for females and 75 years for males. Worldwide it is 70 years for females and 66 years for males.[14] Life expectancies have increased dramatically over the last 50 years in the Western nations of Canada, United States, Australia, Japan, and Western Europe.

The **sex ratio** is *the number of males per 100 females in a population.* Table 1 shows selected sex ratios as of the 2000 census. A ratio of 105 means that there were 105 males aged 15-24 in the U.S. for every 100 females in that group. This didn't change much from 1990 when the ratio was 104.3. As you can see in the 85+ group there were only 40.7 males for every 100 females. This is up from 38.6 in 1990.

Table 1. Sex Ratio for U.S. Selected Age Groups and Total, 2000.[15]

Group	Sex Ratio
US total	96.3
15-24	105.1
55-64	92.2
85+	40.7

The Baby Boomers represent 78.2 million U.S. citizens as of July 2005.[16] This large cohort of society is moving en masse into the ranks of the elderly.

A **cohort** is *a group of people who share a statistical or demographic trait.*1 The Baby Boomers are the largest birth cohort. Nearly 8,000 Baby Boomers turned 60 each day in 2006. The U.S. Census estimates that 57.8 million Baby Boomers will be retired in 2030. One issue for gerontologists is the financial strain the Baby Boomers will place on the rest of society once they are retired. Most speculate that Baby Boomers will not receive the same benefits from the Social Security Administration that their parents and grandparents enjoyed.

The children of the Baby Boomers are called Generation X or the "Baby Bust" because they were born in post-boom low fertility rate years. They were different from their parents. They grew up with the computer age and came to computer technology much like an immigrant comes to a new country. This cohort grew up in an economic state of greater posterity than did previous generations.

Generation Y or Millennials are also called the "Internet Generation or Screenagers" because they grew up with TV, video games, cell phones, and PDAs. Each generation is culturally distinct compared to the previous ones even though much still remains in common. There is a good chance that the children of Generation Y parents will be better skilled than their parents with a technology that has not yet been invented. Such has been the case comparing the last three generations.

In Tables 2 and 3 you see increasing life expectancies in the U.S. and the world. Being born in the U.S. affords the average member of society a longer life. North American children are born with higher life expectancies than other children around the world.

Table 2. United States Life Expectancies.[17]

Year	Total	Male	Female
1970	70.8	67.1	74.7
1980	73.7	70.0	77.4
1990	75.4	71.8	78.8
2000	77.0	74.3	79.7
2010	78.5	75.6	81.4
2015	79.2	76.2	82.2

Table 3. 2007 World and Regional Life Expectancies.[18]

Region	Total	Male	Female
World	68	66	70
Africa	53	52	54
North America	78	70	81
Latin America	73	70	76
Asia	68	67	70
Europe	75	71	79
Oceania	75	73	78

Over the past half-century, both the worldwide drop in fertility and concurrent rise in life expectancy have led to the gradual aging of the world's population. Table 4 gives projected percentages of persons over 65 for selected regions of the world while figure 4 displays a map of the world illustrating the percentage of older members of each country's population in 2008. Most of Africa, with its high fertility rate and young life expectancies, has less than five percent of its population aged 65 and older. A good portion of Europe has 15% or greater older population. The U.S. is at 10-14%. Since 1950, the share of persons ages 65 and older has risen from five to seven percent worldwide. As the map shows, Europe and Japan have led the way, with North America, Australia, and New Zealand close behind. However, older persons are now more than five percent of the inhabitants in many developing countries and by 2050 are expected to be 19% of Latin America's population and 18% of Asia's. Notice that the developing countries have the lowest percentages of over 65 populations. This is due to continued high fertility rates (births) and high mortality rates (deaths).

DYING

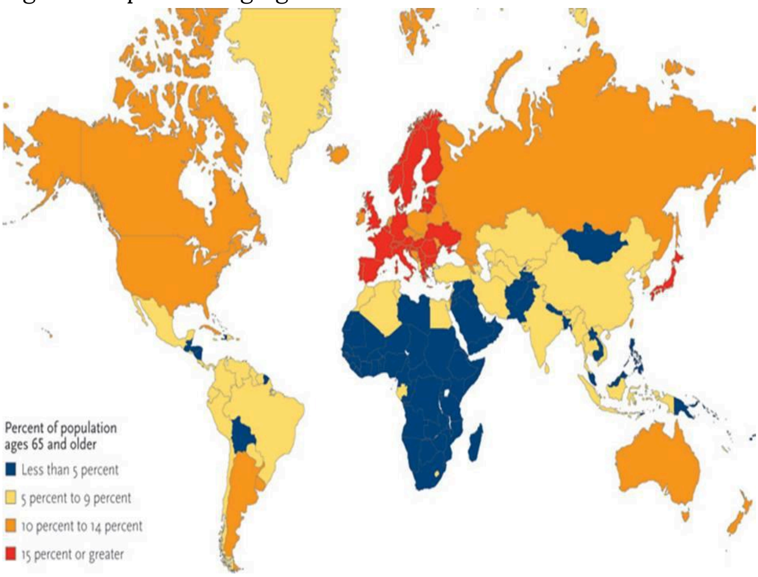
Elderly women outlive elderly men. **Widowhood** *occurs when one's spouse dies*. **Widows** are *surviving wives* and **widowers** are *surviving husbands*. One sub-discipline of gerontology is thanatology. **Thanatology** is *the scientific study of death and dying*. Thanatology informs those who provide support and counsel to the dying.

How we define death, both our own and the death of others is very much influenced by the cultural definition of death we incorporated into our own values while growing up. It's very common for young college students to have lost a great aunt/uncle, great grandparent, or even a grand parent. It's not so common to have lost a parent, sibling, or child. **Grief** is *the feeling of loss we experience after a death, disappointment, or tragedy*. When people experience grief they are said to be in bereavement. **Bereavement** is *the circumstances and conditions that accompany grief*.

Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross has published work on the stages of grief as it relates to death. She found that people who are dying or those who have loved ones dying go through a series of stages in the grieving process. The first stage is **denial**, *a sense that it didn't happen*. The second stage is **anger**. Grievers ask "Why me?" or state that they hate God for what has happened. **Bargaining** is the third stage. Grievers say they will be better people if they are healed. **Depression** is *a sense that all is lost or why even try*.

The last stage is **acceptance**. This is the stage where grievers have processed the loss and are ready to move on.[19] Everyone grieves and we all grieve in our own ways. Most people experience all the stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, but there exists some variability in how individuals cycle through Kübler-Ross' stages.

Figure 4.Population Aging Worldwide.[20]



ROLES

The study of aging would not be complete without focusing on family relationships and roles. Of the over 40 million elderly in the U.S., about 6 million still work for pay. About 7 million take adult education courses. About 21 million are married and about 13 million are widowed. Only about 1.4 million live in nursing homes. About 32 million own their homes. In the 65 plus age group there are only 73 men per 100 women.[21]

Just how the future of elderly family relationships will be in coming decades is very difficult to predict. Many elderly live alone (regardless of any wishes to the contrary). The U.S. Census Bureau reported that among those 65+ there were about 3.5 million elderly single men with no spouse or partner and over 10 million elderly women with no spouse or partner.[22] Although many single older people might enjoy an intimate relationship with a partner or spouse, the rewards and costs are different for men and women in these age ranges. Combining retirement incomes and sharing living expenses might be appealing to both men and women but elderly women are faced with a biological truth that makes the possibility of another long-term intimate relationship less appealing—that is that men die younger than women. To marry a 65 year old man is to take on a potential caregiver role which may place the women in a stressful, very demanding, and perhaps overwhelming role. Some women have already been through something like this with a first, now deceased, husband. Many divorcees and never marrieds have found their life patterns to be established and difficult if not impossible to change. Thus, many elderly remain single and have friendships and intimacies without the long-term commitments that come with cohabiting or marrying.

Table 4. Worldwide Percent of Persons Ages 65 and Older[23]

	2007	2025	2050
World	7	10	16
Industrialized countries	16	21	26
Developing countries	6	9	15
Europe	16	21	28
North America	12	18	21
Oceania	10	15	19
Latin America & Caribbean	6	10	19
Asia	6	10	18
Africa	3	4	7

What do trends for the unmarried in later life suggest to us? Quite simply more divorced and separated elderly are predicted. There are higher proportions of divorced and separated elderly now than in the past. This trend is not the same for widowhood.

There is only a slight increase in widowhood compared to a dramatic increase in being divorced or separated. Another trend is the increasing numbers of those in the pre-elderly stages of life (ages 30-64). Among them we see increased rates of divorcing and remaining single. The Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, turn 65 starting in 2011 and continuing until 2029. This cohort has the highest documented divorce rates of any age-related cohort ever studied in the United States.[24]

The number of elderly will nearly double by the time all the Baby Boomers reach 65 years in 2029. This leads to the conclusion that when the Baby Boomers reach age 65, the prevalence of divorced elderly will rise to an even higher level because of the sheer volume of divorced Baby Boomers who will also, for whatever reason, remain divorced into their later years.

Not all retirement years are created equally. Income comparisons of married versus divorced elderly males and females show that the highest median income levels are for married males. Married females have the lowest income level in part because this generation of elderly had a relatively high rate of traditional homemakers who have fewer Social Security retirement benefits than their husbands.

Quality of life differences were investigated in the National Longitudinal Surveys-Mature Women data set. Elderly divorced and widowed women were more likely to still be in the labour force than married ones. Married women had the lowest levels of reported unhappiness and rarely enjoying life. Feeling sad was similar among all categories.

GRANDPARENTING

The role of grandparent is a socially acceptable one in the U.S. It is admired by others, bragged about by grandparents, and more often than not, appreciated by grandchildren. Grandparents are given social approval by peers and society in general for being in that role. Grandparents also can be as actively or inactively involved as they desire. There are varying types of grandparental involvement and Ron Hammond has developed a few types. Most U.S. grandparents live in another household from their grandchildren, but economic uncertainties and demographic changes with lower birth rates may contribute to the U.S. returning to three or four generational households.[25]

The **Disneyland Grandparent** is *one who entertains and distracts their grandchildren from the mundane aspects of their daily lives at home*. These grandparents provide a certain entertainment option that is missing from their not-yet established parents. Grandchildren come to have high expectations of indulgence when spending time with these grandparents.

The **Assistant Parent Grandparent** is the *one who takes the grandchildren to school functions, practices, and doctors appointments or waits for their grandchildren to come to their house after school and before the parents return home from work*. Because the parents are typically both employed, these grandparents sometimes become an integral part of their grandchild's daily life and have an ongoing supportive role in the grandchild's busy schedule. Many young dual-employed couples could not afford the cost of formal daycare and many grandparents feel rewarded by the meaningful contribution they make in this role.

The **Parental Substitute Grandparent** is *the one who lives in the home with the grandchild (or the grandchild lives in the grandparent's home)*. These grandparents have a great deal of stress that often reminds them of the original parental stresses they faced when they were raising their own children. Parental Substitute Grandparents often express fatigue and feeling overburdened. Raising grandchildren is not what most grandparents anticipated to happen in their later lives. Grandparents in the U.S. often have direct daily interaction with their grandchildren. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates over 6 million grandparents have their grandchildren living in their home.[26] This type of grandparent is common when unwed teen mothers keep their babies, when an adult child is divorced or widowed, or when a child or son/daughter-in-law becomes disabled.

Finally there is the **Distant Relative Grandparent**. These grandparents *visit at times and live at a geographic or emotional distance from their grandchildren*. They typically can't, or will not, have a close relationship with the grandchildren. Telephones and the Internet allow these grandparents to consult with the parents and be intermittently involved in the lives of their children and grandchildren. But many grandchildren experiencing this type of grandparenting often report a disconnect to these grandparents.

Grandparents can have a positive and nurturing impact on their grandchildren or they can have a shameful and negative one. Some grandparents work diligently to reinforce the value of each individual grandchild, often trying not to repeat the same mistakes they made when raising their own children. These grandparents find ways to show and express their love and support of the grandchild.

ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse is *the mistreatment of, violence against, and otherwise harmful manipulation of elderly persons*. It includes **physical**, *the willful infliction of pain or injury* (such as beating, choking, burning, inappropriate medication, tying up or locking up, or sexual assault); **psychological**, *threats, intimidation, and verbal abuse*; **financial or material**, *taking financial advantage, misuse of elder's money* (such as theft, deception, diverting income, or mismanagement of funds); **violations of rights** such as *not permitting the elder to exercise her rights* (such as the right to vote or the right to due process); **neglect**, a failure to provide food, shelter, clothing, or medical and dental care (this is the most common form of abuse, especially for single older people); and **self-abuse and self-neglect**. Marlene Lee (2009) reported that elderly abuse is too common.[27] She also found that non-family persons accounted for more than half of all elderly abuse. When family members verbally abused it was more likely to be perpetrated by a spouse, however financial and physical abuse was more likely to be at the hands of a child.

Most states sponsor programs that intervene when elder abuse or neglect is suspected. Several programs have been developed to assist older adults who do not wish to leave their neighborhoods and companions to move in with children. Home-bound elders may benefit from the attention of **gatekeepers**, *service people such as letter carriers or neighbors who keep an eye on them and can intervene when they suspect a problem.*

Elders are abused by strangers, medical professionals, paid caregivers, family members, and themselves. Studies report that from 1.5 to 4% of older people are victims of abuse in a given year. Women make up 60-76% of abuse victims, depending on the type of abuse, and those over 80 are at an increased risk of abuse. Researchers estimate that only about one-sixth of incidents are reported. Elder mistreatment includes any knowing, intentional, or neglectful act that harms or causes risk of harm to a vulnerable adult. Up to 90% of cases are committed by family members, most commonly men. All 50 states have domestic abuse reporting procedures such as toll free hotlines. **Adult Protective Services (APS)** is *the state or county agency that investigates elder abuse.*

Every 83 minutes an elderly American commits suicide. One in every five suicides in the U.S. is of a person over 65. White males over 85 are the most at risk. About three-quarters of men choose a gun. Women are more likely to try to overdose and are often found before it is too late. Suicide, at any age, is more common in males; female actually attempt it more often, but males are more successful at it, and older people are more successful than younger people. Depression and suicide can be prompted by chronic illness and pain, multiple losses (spouse, friends, children), social isolation, and alcoholism (which can be caused by the previous three). Some elderly couples engage in double suicide for fear of being left by each other, and some spouses will kill their mate and then themselves. As the baby boomers become old, experts expect to see even higher rates of suicide.

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11. 10. Family Resources and Economics

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Apply Structural functionalism to the management of family resources.
- Define terminology related to poverty
- Surmise the outcomes of not having health insurance.
- Create a budget.

A STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALIST LOOK AT FAMILY RESOURCES

Since earliest human record, the family has been a group of persons committed to meeting one another's economic needs. This is a vital function of the modern family. As newborns enter the family, they are fed and clothed, and are protected and nurtured into childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. When they leave home they continue to receive economic support, typically even into the college experience. Many adults receive financial help from family even after they graduate college, marry, and enter the workplace.

Functionalists would say that the family serves many functions for a society. Among them are replacing members of society by giving birth to and socializing children, regulating sexual activity, supporting family members economically, providing a place for society's members to feel loved and secure, and providing a sense of social status in society.1

In one study of 1,727 parents of college students it was reported that "college students' finances were of extreme or great concern to nearly half the parents." Other findings reported by parents indicated that cell phones were the preferred method of communication.2

Parents not only continue to provide economic support, they also provide social and emotional support to their college-aged children. Many have noted that among college students today, "adulthood" may not be the best word to describe them. They continue to be dependent upon their parents at some level into their late 20's. Perhaps "young adulthood" or in some cases "extended adolescence" is more accurately descriptive. In the U.S. colleges and universities are the gateways to financial security and opportunity; the higher the education the higher the income.

In 2008 over half the U.S. population had some college experience with 38 percent graduating at some level.[3] In 2007 income levels by education showed a clear pattern of more money earned by those who have more education.[4] About 45% of the U.S. population does not attend a college or university and some drop out of high school. This is a dual-edged issue. On one side poor people get lower quality K-12 education than middle and upper class people; thus, they have financial hardships that prevents their access to the gateway to financial security. However their lower financial and educational status undermines healthy and self-promoting lifestyles. Poorer people are more likely to be victimized by crime, commit crime, be hungry, cohabit and/or divorce, or be abused. Children raised in poorer families are of great concern.

POVERTY

Childhood today does not require children to contribute much back to the family economy for most families. In U.S. society, with all the privileges and economic affluence, there are still members of families, communities, and racial categories who go without, go hungry, and haven't the slightest notion of ever going to college. A recent study pointed out the current trends in childhood rates of poverty.[5] Using U.S. Census data this study indicated that in 2008, 19% of persons below the poverty level were children. New Hampshire was the lowest at 8.6% of children living below poverty while Arizona was the highest at 26.2% of their children living below the poverty line. In the U.S. children ages 0-17 comprised 73 million or 25% of the population, yet 41% live in poverty or near poverty.[6] Children of color have a higher likelihood of living in poverty. Wight and Chau (2009) also reported that 27% of White children, 61% of Black children, 31% of Asian children, 57% of American Indian children, and 62% of Hispanic children live in poverty. Poverty in the U.S. is layered across racial categories, in other words, poverty is disproportionally racialized.

The U.S. has an official definition of being poor or being in poverty. The **poverty line** is *the official measure of those whose incomes are less than three times a lower cost food budget.* This definition has been the U.S.'s official poverty definition since the 1930s with only a few adjustments. **Near poverty** is when *one earns up to 25% above the poverty line.* In Table 1 you can see the U.S. Health and Human Services 2009 poverty guidelines with estimates of near poverty levels. Most who qualify as living below poverty also qualify for state and federal welfare which typically includes health care benefits, food assistance, housing and utility assistance, and some cash aid.

#of People in Family	Poverty Line	Near Poverty-125% of Poverty Line
1	$10,830	$13,536
2	$14,570	$18,211
3	$18,310	$22,886
4	$22,050	$27,561
5	$25,790	$32,236
6	$29,530	$36,911
7	$33,270	$41,586
8	$37,010	$46,261

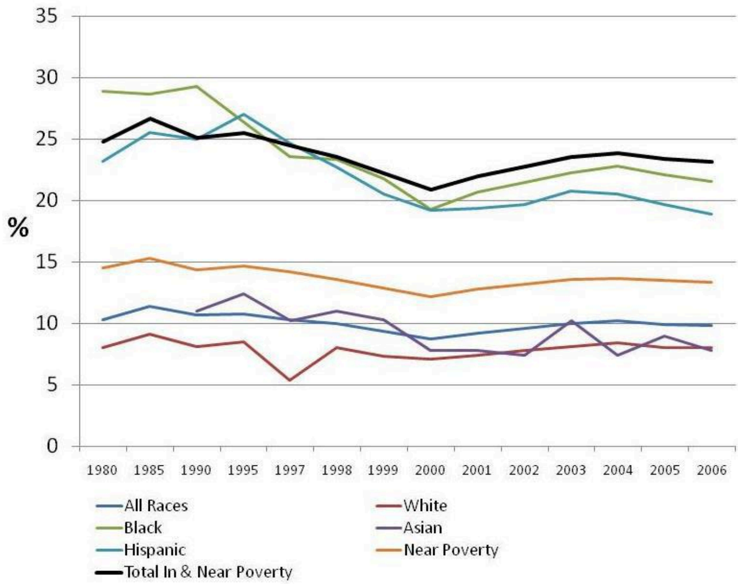
Table 1. U.S. Poverty Guidelines (2009) with Near Poverty Estimates.7

Those near poverty may or may not qualify depending upon current state and federal regulations. **Absolute poverty** is *the level of poverty where individuals and families cannot sustain food, shelter, warmth, and safety needs.*

U.S. Census data indicate that people have various levels of poverty by racial grouping. In Figure 1 you can see the poverty and near poverty rates for various racial groups in the Unites States from 1980 to 2006. The thick black line represents the sum of the percent in poverty and near poverty for each year. The ranges suggest about 25% or just below 1 in 4 being in or near poverty for the U.S. Whites (the red line, the lowest line) have the lowest *rate* of persons in poverty but make up the largest *number* of persons in poverty because Whites represent about 75% of the U.S. population. Asians are slightly higher than Whites.

The blue line which runs just about even with the Asian line represents the percent in poverty for all races combined. It's much lower than the high rates of poverty for Blacks and Hispanics because Whites are such a large portion of the population, that it pulls the overall average downward for all races.

Figure 1. Poverty and Near Poverty (125 Percent of the Poverty Line) for U.S. by Race and Hispanic for 1980 to 2006.8



HEALTH CARE AND INSURANCE

Another measure of economic well-being is health care coverage (see Table 2). The U.S. Census Bureau reported that in 2007 about 15.3% or over 45 million in the U.S. had no health care coverage.[9] Health care coverage is a major economic resource. Again White and Asian categories are in the higher strata on this resource. They have the lowest uninsured rates. Hispanics have the highest level of not being insured. Since nearly 60% of insurance is provided by employers, it makes sense that young adults (18-34 year olds) would be less likely to have insurance because they are still getting their formal educations and establishing their careers.

What about the nearly 11% of children overall without insurance or the nearly 18% of children in poverty without it? This is difficult to justify in today's modern society. Every wealthy country to which the U.S. compares itself (Western Europe, Australia, Japan, etc.) offers health insurance as a right to all, not just a privilege to the wealthier people in the higher strata. The lower the income one has, the higher the risk of being uninsured. About 1 in 4 who work part-time or do not work at all have no insurance, while only 17% of full-time workers went without. The 2010 Federal Health Care Reform legislation established the first federal attempt to make health care coverage a right rather than a privilege. This monumental change will unfold over the next few years and time will tell how effective it is in equaling access to health care.

Table 2. U.S. Percent of Uninsured by Selected Characteristics 2007.[10]

Category	% Uninsured
Race	
White	14.3%
Black	19.5%
Asian	16.8%
Hispanic	32.1%
Age	
< 6 years old	10.5%
6-11 years old	10.3%
12-17 years old	12.0%
<18 years old	19.0%
18-24 years old	28.1%
25-34 years old	25.7%
35-44 years old	18.3%
45-64 years old	14.0%
65+ years old	1.9%
Income Level of Family	
<$25,000 per year income	24.5%
$25-49,999 per year income	21.1%
$50-74,999 per year income	14.5%
$75,000+ per year income	7.8%
Parent's Work Status	
Worked Full-time	17.0%
Worked Part-time	23.4%
Did Not Work	25.4%

INCOME AND WEALTH

Figure 2 shows a comparison of income for single and dual-earner married households and also for single males and females. The data are presented in constant 2006 U.S. dollars which simply means they are adjusted for cost of living changes for each year. The first thing you see is that dual-earner marrieds (both husband and wife work in labor force) by far had the highest income levels every year from 1990 until 2006. Sole-earner married (husband only in labor force) comes in next followed closely by single males. Single females reported the lowest income.

Figure 2. A Comparison of U.S. Personal Income by Marital Status (includes dual versus sole breadwinner homes) in Constant 2006 U.S. Dollars.[11]

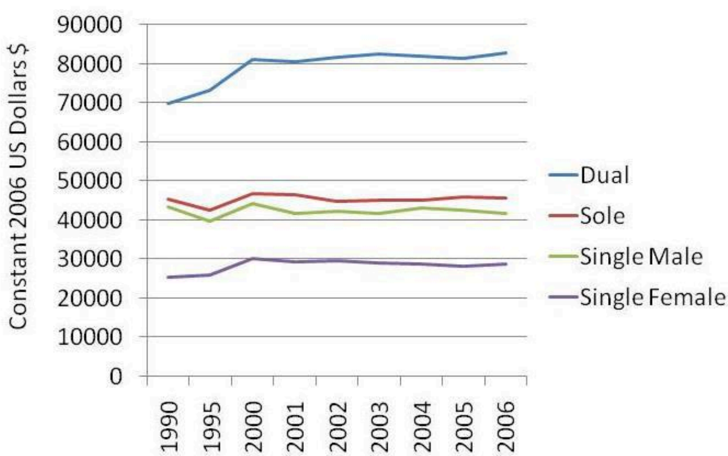
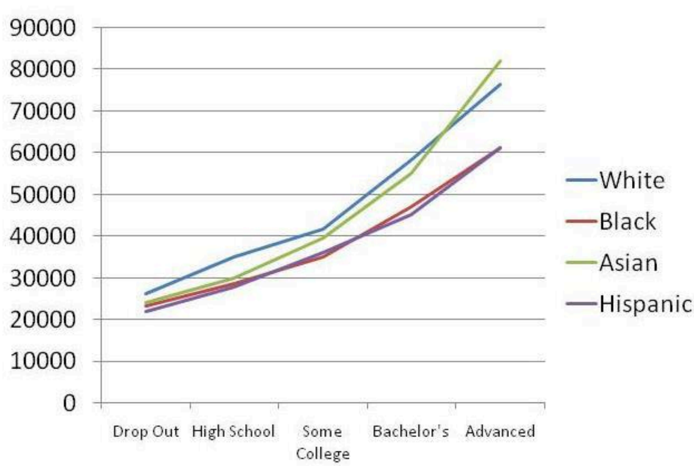


Figure 3 shows stratification in the U.S. by educational level. Keep in mind that the higher the education, the higher the annual income. This is typically true year after year. Income levels are higher for Whites and Asians followed by Blacks and Hispanics, but the layers are clearly visible by education level.

Not all economic disadvantage results from our choices. In the U.S. non-Whites, non-Asians, and non-males are more likely to be found in the lower layers. Figure 4 portrays what the layering of society might look like if the U.S. population were divided into three groups; the top 10% wealthy-elite, the next 20% upper-class, and the remaining 70% middle and lower classes. The top 10% owns the lion's share of all the wealth available to be owned in the U.S. They own as much as 100 times the average U.S. person's wealth. For a relative few, they make more in a year than most of us make in a lifetime. Theirs is the life of high levels of property, power, and prestige. The next 20% upper-class holds the high ranking jobs, they run for elected office, and they hold CEO-level positions in major corporations. These types of jobs pay more, require more education, require more abstract thought, and allow for more self-directed autonomy in their daily activities. The largest category includes the remainder of us. We fall into some layer of upper-middle class, middle class, working class, labor class, and poor.

Figure 3. A Comparison of the U.S. Personal Income of Full-Time Workers by Education Level 2007.[12]



HOME OWNERSHIP

For those who can in our current economic conditions, buying a home is the one major investment for most U.S. families. Even when interest rates are low, the cost of a home is extremely expensive. If you purchased a $100,000 home at eight percent interest for 30 years, your payment would be $733.76, and you would pay $100,000 for the home and another $164,154 in mortgage interest. That totals $264,154 for a $100,000 home. If the home does not appreciate in value, this is a terrible investment.

There are strategies that can be used to minimize the overall cost of purchasing a home. You can save money and put a large down payment on the home. This will lower the initial cost of the amount financed. You can make an extra 1/12th of a house payment toward the principle of the loan every month. By the end of the year, you would have made a 13th payment to lower the overall balance of the loan (principle). Another strategy is to have a 15 year loan instead of a 30 year loan. In the loan above, that would mean making a monthly payment of $955.65 instead of $733.76. How might that benefit you? First, you'd pay off the loan in 15 not 30 years and second, you'd save $91,626 in mortgage interest. One of the major U.S. financial problems has been the financing of established worth of the home into a second mortgage or home equity loan. **Home equity** is *the value in the home that is higher than the amount still owed on the home loan.* Debt can be detrimental to a family economy.

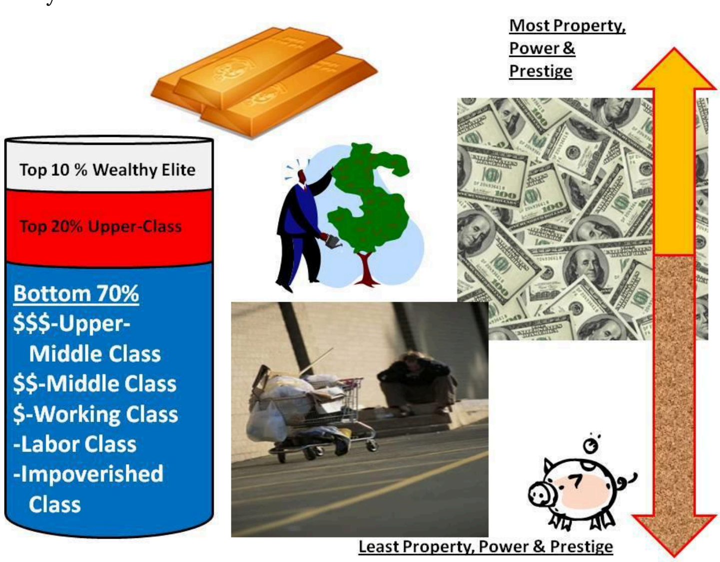


Figure 4. Portrayal of United States' Economic Layering.[12]

The average credit card balance for a family with at least one credit card is $16,007. This is important because the U.S. has become a nation with liberal debt and debt incurring policies.[13] Woolsey and Schulz also reported that there were over ½ billion credit cards in circulation in the U.S. contributing to a total consumer debt of $2.46 trillion. Eight percent of U.S. college students are reported to have credit with an average amount owed of $2,200. They are also estimated to have accrued $20,000 in student loan debt. To illustrate, think about tearing a $100 bill into small pieces. This would bother most people because the money is wasted and can't be reused.

Why do we spend $100 on a purchase for something we don't need and might never use and not even flinch, yet get bent out of shape over a $100 dollar bill being torn? The dollar bill is tangible and touchable. The credit card purchases are blips on electronic screens or numbers on paper receipts. It's funny money to many of us. We are heavily marketed to go into debt. Think of all the credit card offers your family receives in the mail. The debt is there for the taking without one caution to the consumer. Very few of the companies that loan money ever warn consumers about the problems of getting into too much debt. Why would they if you can have what you want immediately and pay it back over the next 5-10 years with massive interest payments? Their ideal customer would run up a large balance of debt and make a minimum payment each month, thereby bringing in the most profits to the company, but the wise consumer uses debt to his or her advantage.

Credit cards are not necessarily a bad thing. They facilitate travel and small transactions for the family; however, credit card balances or unpaid debt can be very burdensome to a budget. The *rules of three* guides good credit use. The first rule is to save three months' worth of income and keep it in the bank. That means save enough to meet all your fixed debts (rent, mortgage, car, medical, insurance, etc.) so that you can keep your family afloat if you suffer a job loss or crisis.

The second rule is to have only one credit card with no bonus or rewards program. Keep a zero balance on it. Set your credit limit to what it might cost to pay three weeks worth of bills (including your rent, mortgage, and car payments). If you have a lower limit on it you can more readily control your spending. Don't ever use your credit card for long-term debt. It should be a tool for short-term financial matters.

The third rule is whenever there is a consumer item you really want (TV, Cell Phone, Handheld, etc.) wait three full days before you buy it. If it's on sale and you think you will miss a good buy if you wait, remember that it will go on sale again. If you haven't planned for it, saved for it, and budgeted for it, then a three day cooling off period may help you prevent unwanted and unneeded debt. Keep in mind that if we are marketed to with an approach of "hurry, sale ends soon," then most likely the marketing has triggered the use of our emotional decision-making processes (limbic part of brain) and we might rush out and buy feeling like we are actually being responsible purchasing agents; even if we never really needed or wanted what the sale is selling.

Most couples don't have a monthly budget. It makes it very difficult to manage a family's finances without one. There are numerous free budgets online and if you are familiar with Microsoft Excel, it works very nicely for a budget. The two main things about a monthly budget are to be able to know how much money you currently have and where you are spending it.

BUDGETING

To develop a budget, make a list of all your **fixed expenses** which are *monthly expenses that are set and do not depend upon your consumer choices.* These typically include rent, mortgage payments, car payments, and insurance payments to name a few. Now make a list of other things you spend your money on that relate to household matters. These fall under the definition of **variable expenses** which are *expenses that can change from month-to-month based on needs and wants and which are not fixed expenses*. These typically include food, gasoline and car maintenance, pay-per-view, groceries, clothing, etc.

Step 1 in budgeting is to record your income. Step 2 is to record everything you spend for an entire month. Table 3 has hypothetical numbers placed in it to demonstrate how the budget works. It budgets $1,091 dollars per month. This would be the amount you spent in the first month in each of your own categories. In the second month, you deduct what you spent from each of these categories.

Notice that three of these budget categories broke even. They are also the three fixed expenses. Notice also that three others had left-over monies. The "Fun" category was overspent by $40.00, which could be filled with leftovers from the other categories. When a category is overspent you should decide if it requires more allocation (for example increase Fun to $90.00 per month) or control spending to keep it under the limit. This hypothetical month had $128.00 left over and it could be saved or rolled into the next month in case unexpected expenses show up.

Fundamentally, a budget tracks where you spend your money, how much you currently have, and how to strategize savings for future plans. Wise college students learn to budget sooner rather than later so that as their family size increases, so does their skills in budgeting.

The hedonistic treadmill emerged as a concept in recent self-help books of financial matters. **Hedonism** is *the pursuit of pleasure as the main goal of one's life with pleasure being the core value of daily life.* Many in the U.S. have fallen into the trap of seeing pleasure as the best goal and a purchase as the best way to acquire that pleasure. Thus, they get on a treadmill of purchasing which cannot provide long-lasting pleasure in most cases, and requires new and more varied purchases to renew that short-term pleasure over and over. The hedonistic treadmill would not be a major problem if one were very wealthy; but, for average middle class person, the marketing pressures to buy, the patterns of seeing a purchase as a path to happiness, and the availability of easy to obtain credit make it very difficult to get off the treadmill. This pattern can be very destructive financially and can undermine the family system as a whole. Figure

5 shows a list of financial best practices that can be very useful to follow for stability and security in the family.

It surprises some people to hear that debt can be a good thing. It can be if debt is used wisely. Credit cards are a necessity for most and can be useful in building a strong credit score. To control credit card use is simple. Spend with it very conservatively, pay your balance off every month, never spend up to your limit, and make sure others can't use your card. How well you use and manage your credit card now will influence how well you qualify for car and home loans later in your life.

Table 3. Your First Month's Budget.

Month _________________ All Incoming Monies $____________

Rent/ Mortgage	CarPayment/ BusPass	InsurancePayments	Cell Phone	Food	U
$250.00	$125.00	$76.00	$75.00	$275.00	$
-$250	-$125.00	-$76.00	-$49.50	-$10.00	-
				-$25.00	
				-$17.00	
				-$38.00	
				-$14.00	
				-$12.00	
				-$45.00	
				-$15.00	
				-$20.00	
				-$ 9.00	
				-$25.00	
Monthly spending = − $250.00	Monthly spending = − $125.00	Monthly spending = − $76.00	Monthly spending = − $49.50	Monthly spending = − $230.00	M s = $
Leftover = $.00	Leftover = $.00	Leftover = $.00	Leftover = $25.50	Leftover = $45.00	L =

Mortgages are an example of good debt provided your loan is not beyond your means. Homeowners have economic advantages that renters do not have. Mortgage interest can be deducted from taxes. Having a mortgage and paying your monthly payments on time is an effective way to build your credit score.

Guarding your credit score is crucial for your family's financial security. In the 1950's two researchers began a scoring system designed to provide a standardized credit score for everyone in the U.S. The **FICO Score** is *the most common credit scoring system in the world* and is named after Bill Fair and Earl Isaac—Fair Isaac Corporation score or FICO. Your credit score is comprised of your payment history, how your credit capacity compares to your usage (not too many unpaid balances), how long you've had credit, which types of credit you've had, and finally how many times your credit was checked.[14] There are many studies that demonstrate that misusing credit negatively impacts college students' overall lives and experiences.[15]

Figure 5. Strategies and Rules for Sound Family Financial Practices

Strategies and Rules for Family Finance

1) Beware of materialism (avoid the hedonistic treadmill)
2) Use debt wisely (Carefully controlled credit card use and secured loans for cars or mortgages)
3) Guard your credit score (FICO)
4) Have a 5, 10, 15, and 20 year financial plan
5) Don't buy in a hurry (Rules of Three)
6) Save for emergencies (3 months)
7) Don't play the "extra money" game (money is real, plastic, checks, cash, or electronic)
8) Save, invest, and purchase (buy low and sell high-401k)
9) Become well versed in your guilt, shame, fear issues about money (Most resemble issues about sex, love, punishment, & food)
10) Put your investments in hard to reach places (CD's, funds, bonds, etc.)
11) Never fall for the something for nothing con game (something always cost at least something)
12) Get expert help when uncertain (investor, banker, etc)
13) Treat your money with dignity and respect and it will respond in kind

THE FINANCIAL PLAN

Every family needs a 5, 10, 15, and 20 year financial plan. For the most part such a plan focusses on long-term goals while giving you guidelines to follow in the short-term. Answer these simple questions: “What do we need/want to pay for in 5, 10, 15, and 20 years and how do we need to prepare now to accomplish those dreams?” Owning a home, planning for retirement, putting kids through college, life insurance coverage, starting a business, traveling the world, being debt free, and other goals might emerge in the planning process. Once you have these goals typed out for the next two decades you can fit most of your budgeting, saving, and spending activities into them. Remember that the “Rules of Three” suggest not buying in a hurry, and that makes even more sense when you think about the nature of each purchase as it fits into the long-term plan.

Most people don’t save. In fact many spend more than they earn and have a balance on their credit cards each month but saving for three months may make the difference between staying afloat and going under if you lose a job, get sick, or have an unexpected crisis that cost too much money for a regular monthly income. Start small with $5-10 per week. Put the money in a savings account that is hard to get to. In other words, consider putting your savings in a credit union or bank separate from the one where you keep your checking account so that you have to go out of the way to get to your savings. If you save $10 per week for a year you have $520.00 saved in just one year. In five years you would have saved $2,600.00. No matter what, don’t take out your savings unless it is truely an emergency. Keep it there, let it build up and take it out when nothing else can be done to pay an expense. Use your monthly budget to estimate how much a three-month savings would need to be.

If you are middle class, you can increase your family’s net worth by following a few basic principles. First invest low and sell high. Second, consider real estate investments. Third, become a full-on, unabashed cheapskate. Don’t ever pay full price for anything. Don’t ever sell below the market value. Fourth, don’t ever try to do the expert stuff by yourself. It is very easy to get an advisor, read a book, attend a seminar, or get professionals on your team.

Some of us sabotage our own efforts at saving, why?

Entitlement *is a feeling of wanting something for nothing, of being justified in having one's wants met, and or a feeling of being excluded from the same rules that bind most of the members of society.* You may benefit from knowing that the concept of "sense of entitlement" is often associated with addictive behaviors and unhealthy relationship patterns. Entitled people have difficulty discerning the difference between "what I want" and "what I need" when it comes to money. A flat screen TV is owed to them if they want it because they are special and their needs should be met regardless of the finances involved to acquire them. Entitled people feel that it is their right to have what they want. Many of us have feelings of entitlement in some areas of our lives. But when, or if, our pursuit of the things we want interferes with our financial security, moral and ethical propriety, or social responsibilities, this entitlement can become pathological.

In the U.S. especially many people feel entitled when it comes to consumer goods. They feel obligated to buy things that truly fall under the category of wants rather than needs. Many, who lack enough resources will overspend in the process of acquiring things they sometimes feel buyer's remorse over. It is a painful lesson to learn when debt suddenly becomes overbearing. A good policy is to never finance a pizza. Pizzas, movie rentals, new clothes, and other small ticket items add up way too fast and it is unwise to make many small purchases that land you with a pile of debt. Not having family financial guidelines leaves one with no guidance, little direction, and a vulnerability to financial insecurity in the very aggressive market-place-based society that ours has come to be.

When we mispend or manage our finances poorly or in destructive ways we often have legitimate needs but are trying to meet them in the wrong way. Some people shop when they feel lonely. They might also spend money for cruises or fun, but soon find that being with other people is not always the cure for loneliness and that happiness is a choice only they can make for themselves. Others spend to make up to themselves (or their own children) for neglectful, abusive, and traumatic childhood circumstances. Money in this case is used both to medicate the problem (with a cure that doesn't work) and to reinforce their shameful feelings of worthlessness. So if they mispend and mismanage their money, they simultaneously create problems that prove what they've felt all along–they are not worthy of happiness or success.

There are those who put a tremendous amount of energy into looking good, appearing to be wealthy or privileged, or being more sophisticated than they truly are. Some people have a millionaire's taste and a janitor's income. The medicating phenomenon in money mismanagement is similar in many ways to the medicating phenomenon in drug and alcohol abuse. People who hurt try to distract themselves from it by getting a short-term high from their money or spending. They go to Vegas, buy something new, take friends and family out for dinner, and engage in other costly activities that keep them from feeling whatever pain that hurts them.

THE ELDERLY

Today's elderly have a reputation for being conservative in their spending and in saving. Yet more and more elderly are mismanaging their money. USA Today online reported that "From 1991 to 2007, the rate of personal bankruptcy filings among those ages 65 or older jumped by 150%, according to AARP, which will release the new research from the Consumer Bankruptcy Project. The most startling rise occurred among those ages 75 to 84, whose rate soared 433%."[16]

Reasons for this trend include medical bills, wanting things they can't afford, maintaining a higher status, being taken advantage of by predatory lenders, and inflation that makes the spending power of their retirements less powerful. Predators tend to take advantage of the elderly, but others fall prey to them also.

The most common theme is the quick cash, something-for-nothing, rare opportunity approach that makes you feel pressure to act now or you might miss the payoff. By far the most notable U.S. con man was Bernie Madoff who conned millions from the country's elite class who invested with him in order to get a huge and quick payoff on their money.

Confidence scams tend to *exploit our greed, vanity, and ignorance as they promise quick profits, low risks, and certain outcomes.* Confidence scams are as old as time and rarely ever produce the desired outcome for the investor. They are fundamentally unsecured loans with huge risks and will cost millions of dollars this year to naïve investors. There never has and never will be a something for nothing miracle investment.

THE HOUSEHOLD

There is often a debate between spouses and partners about what is a *need* and what is a *want*. A **need** is *something important to our health and well-being*. A **want** is *something we'd like to have.* The trick of being united in your budget and spending choices is to work together, communicate about needs and wants, and to yield to one another's wants at times. Unfortunately there is no universal standard of a true need versus a true want. It depends on each individual family member.

What about household and workplace tasks? When one considers the day-to-day lives of women in today's marketplace, and perhaps more importantly in their personal lives, the concept of what women do as their contribution to the functioning of families and of society becomes important. **Instrumental tasks** are *the goal-directed activities which link the family to the surrounding society, geared toward obtaining resources.* This includes economic work, breadwinning, and other resource-based efforts. **Expressive tasks** pertain to *the creation and maintenance of a set of positive, supportive, emotional relationships within the family unit.* This includes relationships, nurturing, and social connections needed in the family and society. Today, women typically do both types of tasks while men still focus more on instrumental tasks.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution both males and females combined their economic efforts in homemaking. Most of these efforts were cottage industry-type where families used their family's labor to make products they needed such as soap, thread, fabric, and butter. When the factory model of production emerged in Western Civilization, the breadwinner and homemaker roles became more distinct from each other. A **breadwinner** is *a person who earns wages outside of the home and uses them to support the family.* A **homemaker** is *a person, typically a woman, who occupies her life with mothering, housekeeping, and being a wife while depending heavily on the breadwinner.* Since World War II more and more women have become breadwinners or co-breadwinners. Not as many men have made the move into the homemaking role.

If we look at the changes in family functions (functionalism) overtime, we see that in prior to the Industrial Revolution there were many more functions of a family. All education, including religious, took place within the family when they lived too far from a town and the family was the center of economic activity (producing goods needed for the family). Today we send our children to school and religious education classes and we buy our clothes, soap, and food at a store.

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12. 11. Parenting

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Define parenting.
- Explain the process of socialization.
- Apply behaviorism to parenting.

FUNCTIONS OF PARENTS

"No matter what happens in this life or the next, I will always be his mother."

I heard this from a 56-year-old mother who lost her son to a drunk driving-related accident. Her feeling was that once a person becomes a parent, they are parents for life. **Parenting** is *the process of nurturing, caring for, socializing, and preparing one's children for their eventual adult roles.* Parenting is a universal family experience that spans across the history of the human family and across every culture in the world.

Newborns are not born knowing all the nuances of proper behavior, how to meet expectations, and everything else needed to become a member of society. A newborn, while interacting with family and friends, typically acquires their needed socialization by the time they reach young adulthood.

Parents serve many functions that play a crucial role in a society's endurance and success at many levels. Parents function as caregivers to the children in their families, thereby providing the next generation of adults. They typically protect, feed, and provide personal care for their children from birth through adulthood.

Parents function as agents of socialization for their children. **Socialization** is *the process by which people learn characteristics of their group's norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors.* From the first moments of life, children begin a process of socialization wherein parents, family, and friends establish an infant's **social**

construction of reality which is *what people define as real because of their background assumptions and life experiences with others.* An average U.S. child's social construction of reality includes knowledge that he or she belongs, can depend on others to meet their needs, and has privileges and obligations that accompany membership in their family and community.

For the average U.S. child, it is safe to say that the most important socialization takes place early in life. Primary socialization typically begins at birth and moves forward until the beginning of the school years. **Primary socialization** includes *all the ways the newborn is molded into a social being, capable of interacting in and meeting the expectations of society.* Most primary socialization is facilitated by the family, friends, school, and various forms of media.

Parents function as teachers from birth to grave. They teach hygiene skills, manners, exercise, work ethic, entertainment, sleep, eating patterns, study skills, dating, marriage, parenting skills, etc. Parents usually teach their children at every age and mentor them through examples and actions into successful roles of their own.

Parents function as the guardians of their children's lives. They select schools, medical care, teams, daycare, and a myriad of other services for their children. The law considers the parents to be simultaneously accountable for the nature of their parenting efforts and legally entitled to rights and privileges that support and protect them. Parents are not at liberty to treat their children beyond the bounds of state and local laws, but within those laws they have tremendous freedoms to parent according to their conscience and values.

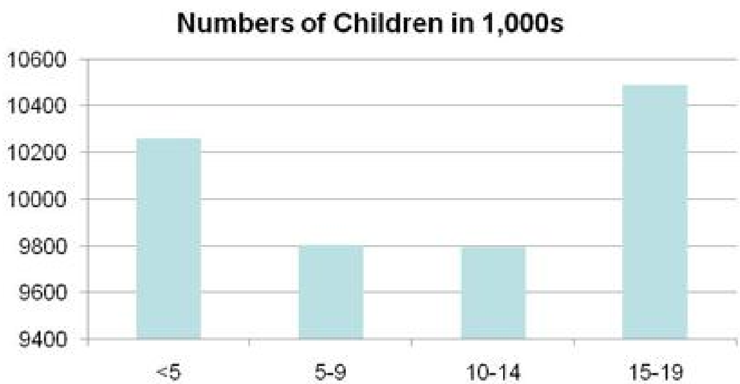
Parents function as mediators between their children and the community at large. They act as the adult decision-maker in many matters for their children. They also act in defense of their children if misbehaviors are an issue in the community, schools, and other organizations. They act in the role of advocacy to ensure the best opportunities for their child.

Over the last few decades, nearly four million live births were recorded in the United States per year. About 40% of those are first births to a mother. About 60% of all births in the U.S. are to mothers ages 15-29.1

One of the more recent trends in the U.S. over the last three decades has been the increasing proportion of births to unmarried women, which is about 40% of all U.S. births. Nearly two out of three of those unmarried births are to White mothers.2

The U.S. has over 40 million children ages 0-19. Figure 1 shows the age groups with numbers in each group. The preschool ages of 0-5 have 10,258,000 children with slightly more boys than girls (about 105 boys per 100 girls are born every year). The 5-9 year olds only have 9,806,000 children which represent kindergarten through 4th grades. The 10-14 age group, pre to early teens, has 9,792,000. And finally the 15-19 age group has 10,487,000 children in it. These numbers reflect birth trends that transpired years before.

Figure 1. Numbers of U.S. Children in Various Age Groups, 2008.3



Most women and men in the U.S. become parents at some point in their adult lives. This might include being a parent to a birth child, adopted child, step child, or unrelated child that the adults raise as their own. All of these parents who care for children parent according to their parenting paradigm. **Parenting paradigms** are *conceptual patterns or ideas that provide the basis of parents' strategy in the parenting role.* These paradigms can be habitual, based on how the parent was parented (or not parented) as a child. They can also be formal, being derived from self-help books or formal education. These paradigms also tend to come from how parents define their roles, what they are trying to accomplish in the long run, and how effectively they perform their parenting role.

CHILDHOOD DEPENDENCE

The goal of parents from a developmental perspective is ideally to raise independent, capable, and self-directed adults who can succeed in their own familial and non-familial roles in society. Generally speaking a child's independence is very low until adolescence. Teens exert their independence in a process called individuation. **Individuation** is *the process of separating oneself, one's identity, and one's dependence on others, especially on parents*. Children begin separating from parents in their second year, and gradual efforts at independence are visible as children master certain self-care processes during childhood. Table 1 shows the levels of independence and a child's own ability to nurture others over certain stages of the life course.

Table 1. Children's Independence and Their Ability to Nurture Others Over Certain Life Course Stages

Stage	Independence Level	Ability to Nurture Others
Newborn	None	None
1-5	Very Low	Very Little
6-12	Functional	Low
13-18	Moderate	Moderate
19-24	Increasingly higher	Increasingly higher
Parenthood	High	High

Parenting between birth and age 18 requires a solid understanding of how a child develops and matures through childhood and into their young adult roles. Psychologists have studied child development for years. Jean Piaget (pronounced pee-ah-jay), Sigmund Freud, Eric Erickson, John B. Watson, George Herbert Mead, Charles Cooley, and others have developed theories that guide crucial research on children and how they develop. Since we can't cover them in detail, let's discuss a few core ideas that can guide parents and their efforts.

Newborns to 5-year-olds have little to no independence. In other words, left alone in the wilderness, most could not survive. In a home with an adult caregiver, most 0-5 year olds can learn to take care of some of their own needs. They desire independence but do not yet have the thinking, muscle movement, or growth in place for it. Most have little to offer in terms of real nurturing, yet many develop nurturance in their play activities.

The children in the 6-12 year old group are growing physically and developing emotionally and intellectually. They become functional in their independence and, if called upon, can assist parents and others with various tasks. They develop the ability to provide the care-giving of younger children, but they lack the reasoning skills required for the adult level of nurturing.

In the 13-18-year-old group, abstract reasoning skills begin, and children grow into complex reasoning, synthesis of related ideas, and emotional complexity. For most teens they could survive without an adult caregiver, but it would be difficult. They can typically nurture others to some degree. Generally speaking, due to hormonal fluctuations, their emotional nature is volatile and extreme in terms of highs and lows.

Reading some of the details of these three age categories, you begin to see that the same parenting strategies would not work very well for each of the groups of ages discussed above. On top of that, individual children vary even within the same family on which parenting approach is most effective.

Once children attain the age of young adulthood, leave home, and/or completely individuate, they enter a role of being independent while perpetually dependent to some degree. Young adults in this generation continue to depend heavily on their parents for advice, resources, money, food, and other forms of support. Their independence would most accurately be described as increasingly higher as they prepare for their own adult roles.

Their ability to nurture emotionally, and in other ways, is increasingly higher as well.

Once children become parents, they enter the roles of mother and father and join the ranks of tens of billions of parents who've lived before them and fundamentally attempted to do about the same things for their children. Young parents often see their own parents as a tremendous resource of experience and knowledge. Studies show that young parents adjust better when they have access to support from friends and family. Simply put, they benefit a great deal from having a listening ear and someone to share words of parental wisdom. These adults are independent and can nurture, especially with support.

FINDING THE BALANCE BETWEEN CONTROL AND FREEDOM

With all of this variety and diversity of development and growth, how can parents plan for and properly perform their parenting roles? The answer is to find a handful of parenting paradigms and approaches that will work with children. There are a few core approaches that originate from the classical and contemporary parenting scientists. Figure 2 shows one useful model created from many research studies using a number of parenting paradigms. This model leads to an ideal outcome of having raised children who are independent co-adults.

Many families have a tradition of just surviving the traumas, addictions, heartaches, and tragedies that preceded them in their upbringing. The base of this model presents the two strategies of first, urging individuation and second, avoiding enmeshment with your children. Individuated children can distinguish between the consequences of their own behaviors and consequences of others.

An individuated child develops his or her own taste in music, food, politics, etc. This child sees their family as one among many social groups they belong to (albeit one of the more significant ones). An example would be an individuated child fully realizing that the a drug-addicted brother has made his own choices and must live with them and that brother's behavior may be embarrassing at times, but does not reflect the nature of the rest of the family members.

Individuated children have also developed enough independence to strike out on their own and assume their own adult roles.

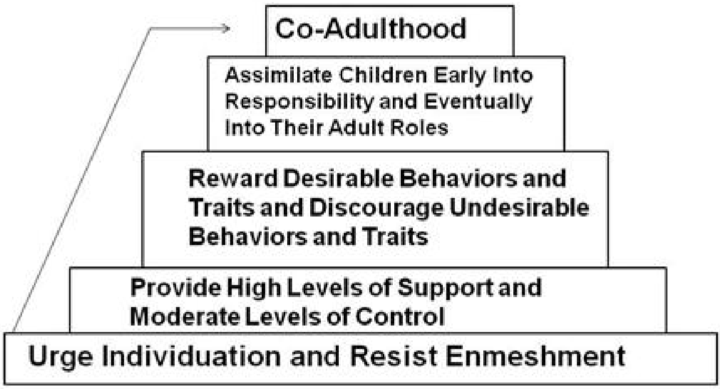


Figure 2. An Ideal Parenting Approach for the First 20 Years of Life.

It is very wise to avoid relationship patterns of enmeshment. **Enmeshment** between parents and children *occurs when they weave their identities so tightly around one another that it renders them both incapable of functioning independently.* Many parents create this pattern in their relationship when they assume that their child is an extension of themselves. Enmeshed parent-child relationships often have very weak boundaries and unhealthy interdependence that lingers into adulthood. Think of spaghetti noodles over-boiled to the point that they form one large gooey mass of paste. They would be considered enmeshed or entangled with one another.

Parents who allow their children to make most of their own choices give their children opportunities for growth and development which contribute to high individuation and low enmeshment. Examples might include "Which t-shirt do you want to wear for school today?" "What would you like to drink with your dinner?" Or, "let's sit down together and set some guidelines for how to be safe on a date." Children of all ages respond well to parental attempts to promote independence, individuation, and self-sufficiency. They may not understand it while young, but parents who allow the individuality of their children to develop and who avoid seeing and treating their children as simply extensions of themselves, empower their children to move out on their own and accept adult roles.

Many studies have focused on how much support and how much control children should be given by their parents. Generally speaking, parents with high levels of support for children and their interests will find the most favorable outcomes. If parents want their children to grow up healthy, accomplish individual goals, become a contributing member of society and avoid delinquency, then supporting those children in as many ways as possible is a good idea.

However support alone is not enough; children need guidance and control. They need their parents to set healthy limits and enforce consequences when these limits are exceeded. They need parents involved in their lives enough to be very specific about limitations and rules. They need parents to be in charge. There is a generational effect that relates to this support and control approach.

Figure 4 shows another issue related to high support and moderate control-caring for the next generation. Many parents grew up under circumstances limited by emotional, financial, or unmet social needs. Where abuse and addiction were involved they too often grew up as caregivers rather than dependent children. When this happens, the children grow into adulthood with childhood deficiencies.5

Thus as adults these individuals enter the ranks of parenthood looking to have their childhood needs be met by their children. This can create a parenting legacy where the children, grandchildren, and even great grandchildren are nurturers and caregivers to their parents, grandparents, and even great grandparents (look at the red arrows in Figure 4). Even if a parent was not raised in a highly supportive and moderately controlling home and even if he or she has unmet childhood needs, the essential task at hand is to provide for and nurture their own children and grandchildren (see blue arrows in Figure 5).

The challenge is to break the chain of counter-caregiving. Parents who seek professional counseling often learn that unmet childhood needs are like water, long-passed under the bridge, which cannot ever truly be recaptured; however, their approach to filling their children's needs and supporting and controlling in a healthy manner can actually provide some healing for the parent and ultimately reverse the unhealthy pattern or tradition.

Figure 4. The Healthy Way to Nurture Down the Generational Lines: Fill the Cups of Your Children and Their Children.

BEHAVIOURISM AND THE COGNITIVE MODEL

The next level in the model presented in Figure 2 is called behaviorism. **Behaviorism** is *a theory of learning that simply states that children will repeat behaviors that they perceive to bring a desired reward while ceasing behaviors that they perceive bring punishments.* All of us tend to maximize our rewards while minimizing our punishments. The behaviorism approach to parenting is a powerful paradigm when it comes to raising smaller children. Reasoning skills are not advanced in preschoolers. A preschooler may understand the dangers of busy streets and traffic risks, but when one tells a small child not to play near one, they typically cannot process all the nuances of the dangers that might occur.

A 4-year-old will learn better from a parent who makes him come in for 10 minutes of time out if he forgets and goes near the street again. He may say that his ball rolled into the street and he simply retrieved it. Ten minutes to a small child may feel like hours; therefore this can be a strong punishment to a child who wants to play. It can be argued that an angry swat on the behind is also going to be perceived as a punishment. This is true; however numerous studies consistently indicate that non-spanking approaches to disciplining a child can be very effective. A 2008 ABC News poll found that about 65% of Americans approve of parents spanking children, but only 26% approve of spanking in the schools.6

Many parents are very aware that the state authorities will hold them accountable if they do not protect their children from danger. They also know that other various social actors frown upon spanking. Thus spanking has gone underground for many parents (generally taking place behind closed doors).

Spankings are common and are often used when parental frustration leads the parent to lash out. Behaviorism is for many parents a guiding strategy that focuses the parent's attention on effective parental intervention efforts that work well and often work quickly. The key in using this approach is to know your child well enough to know what he or she defines as a reward or a punishment. Some children are sensitive to parental criticism and will respond well to a disappointed look or tone of voice. Other children respond better to giving or withdrawing privileges (Xbox, Cell phone, TV, or play time with friends). Once you get an idea of where your child stands on rewards and punishments, then you can selectively use that as a reward or punishment.

The behaviorism formula is relatively simple once you've identified your particular child's rewards and punishments. If you want a child to learn a new habit or improve on a skill, motivate her with a reward. For example, if she puts her own clean laundry away for a week, you'll let her pick out her next outfit at the store (then really let her pick it out no matter what you think about it). You can also add unexpected rewards. For example, you notice that your son is playing well with his little sister and you come in and praise them both with a treat for playing well together. This rewards desirable behaviors in unexpected ways and can be a powerful reinforcer for desired behaviors.

You can also withhold rewards when misbehavior occurs. For example a child who gets an hour of video game time after his chores and homework are finished might lose his hour on a day where he forgot to do his homework. Likewise grounding may be applied for other behaviors and consequences.

The core of the most effective rewarding and punishing system is to connect the reward or punishment to the natural consequence of the behavior. In other words when a teen stays out past their curfew, grounding them from their friends is the natural consequence. It helps to logically punish the behavior to the desired outcome. If you want a child to behave in a public setting, reward the child while they are behaving, reinforcing the desired behavior. Many well-meaning parents wait until the child is frustrated and misbehaving then break out the treats. When they do this, they are rewarding misbehavior with treats.

Table 2. Examples of Rewards and Punishments for Children.

Possible Rewards	Possible Punishments
Verbal approval	Verbal disapproval
Verbal praise	Verbal reprimands
Sweets	Time out (in chair, bedroom, corner)
Playtime, friend time	Groundings (friends, toys, driving, etc.)
Special time with parents	Chores
Access to toys	No access to toys
Money/allowance	Suspend allowance, Small monetary fines
Permission	Denial of opportunities
Driving, Outings with friends	Withdrawal of privileges

One of the findings about behaviorism is that it works best for younger children and should be complimented with a logical or thinking-based approached called the cognitive model as the children get older. The **cognitive model of parenting** is *an approach that applies reason and clarification to the child in a persuasive effort to get them to understand why they should behave a certain way.* After age seven children develop more reasoning skills. Children younger than that will try to understand but tend to benefit more from short statements and behavioral rewards and punishments. Teenagers and young adults have developed abstract reasoning skills. They can think and reason complex matters and therefore can carry on conversation and present their case while understanding their parents' case.

The cognitive model is a relief for many parents who complain that behaviorism feels too much like a bribe or extortion (because the parents are using that paradigm to get desired results). An answer to this concern is that when someone bribes or extorts another, they are typically doing it for selfish reasons. When parents use rewards and punishments with smaller children, the desired outcome is typically supportive of the child and the child's development and growth. It's not a bribe to help someone be a better or more mature person.

Finally, remember that children (and adults) tend to do what rewards them while avoiding what punishes them. If they typically speed to work without getting caught they continue to speed. If they did get caught and accumulated points against their license, say with the threat of loosing it if they got one more ticket, then slowing down to avoid the punishment becomes more appealing. We tend to avoid repeating behaviors that punish us in undesirable ways.

Behaviorism and cognitive approaches fail with some children, especially when their emotions override their reason and their judgment. Teenagers have very emotional decision-making processes that often require tremendous patience from parents. Even when a child's behaviors and thinking are irrational and based more on emotional approaches, these paradigms still work better than none at all or better than simply spanking or grounding.

The next step in the model shown in Figure 2 is to assimilate children early into responsibility and eventually into their adult roles. Parents often don't want to let their children suffer. But, they eventually learn that a child's failures are not a bad thing. It can be a powerful learning experience for a child to fail when trying out for a team, a play, or a job. Their mistakes inform their ability to learn and improve according to their strengths and weaknesses. There are a few parenting types that support children learning from their own efforts and a few others that are more interference in that processes.

TYPES OF PARENTING

Rescue parents *are constantly interfering with their children's activities.* They continuously help with homework (or do it for the child), seek special favors for their children from teachers and/or coaches, rush in before the child can fail to extract the child from the risk of failing, or make sure the child never has to face any consequences for his or her actions. Rescue parents undermine their child's self-worth by removing their child from any risk of failure in the pursuit of successes. This makes the child feel incapable of doing things on his/her own. Rescue parents raise children who are dependent, non-individuated, and often enmeshed.

Dominating Parents *over control and coerce their children.* They typically demand compliance and are harsh and overly strict in their punishments. They continuously force their children to dress and act as the parent's desire. They force their children's choices of friends, hobbies, and interests. They also use humiliation and shame to make the child comply. These dominating parents make the children prisoners of their control and dependent upon the parent or someone who eventually replaces the parent (such as a dominating spouse).

Mentoring Parents *tend to negotiate and share control with their children.* They typically let the small things be decided by the child (clothing, class schedules, and hobbies). They also tend to set guidelines and negotiate with their children on how to proceed on various important matters (minimum age to date, when and what type of cell phone to acquire, and when to get a driver's license). They often give the child choices. For example a parent might say, "I can't afford to get you a car of your own, but if you don't mind too much driving the old family van, I'll share the insurance expenses with you." Or for a younger child, the parent might say, "You can wear your t-shirt or tank top, but you can't go shirtless to the park because the sun might harm your skin."

Figure 5 shows a photomontage of parents and children. As you look at the photos of parents and their children, think about how they represent the myriad opportunities for children to take on and accept responsibilities. Parents find that even early in the pre-school years, children can take on small chores and tasks around the house. If doing chores is defined as positive and rewarding, children can learn to work side by side with their parents in house and yard work. Such skills are invaluable in our day. Employers struggle to find teens and young adults who have experience working and fulfilling assigned tasks adequately.

Generally speaking when parents and children work together on mundane tasks, there is a much higher likelihood of establishing a bond and an emotional connection than if family members are just watching TV or playing on the computer. Much research has shown that, with most women being in the labor force, men and children have more opportunities than ever before to perform house and yard work. Doing work together as parents and children can be a very bonding and growing experience for both.

Figure 5. Photo Montage of Parents and Children.

Parents trying to raise their children to be responsible co-adults may need to know what being a co-adult child means. **Co-adulthood** is *the status children attain when they are independent, capable of fulfilling responsibilities and roles, and confident in their own identities as emerging adults*. The opposite of co-adulthood is simply adult dependent children, many of whom are enmeshed with their parents and other family members.

A co-adult is independent, but that does not imply that she or he is no longer in need of support and guidance. Just the opposite is true. Many studies of college-aged young adults show a continuing reliance on their parents clear until their mid to late twenties. Psychologists will tell you that their studies suggest that the U.S. young adult has a fully mature brain around the mid to late twenties.

Parents are not the only ones who socialize another family member. Studies have shown that children socialize parents as well. Parents go through dramatic changes in anticipation of, and accommodation to, a newborn. Newborns come with round the clock needs. Sure, parents buy the bottles, diapers, toys, etc. However the baby sets the standards for how they like to be fed and when. The baby sets the sleep patterns (especially in the first six months). The baby conditions the parents to hold them, play with them, and interact with them on their own terms.

Sure, parents socialize the baby at the same time, but the baby, with very little conscious efforts, sets the rules of much of the caregiving game because he or she cries when unhappy or needs are unmet and smiles and giggles when things turn out as they want them to be. Thus the parents are rewarded by giggles and smiles while being punished by crying and tears. It becomes easy to acknowledge that parents who want to provide the best care for their children are indeed socialized by each child to meet that child's needs in a certain way.

When the child socializes the parent it is not planned at first. It is just their way of surviving. When the parent socializes the child much of the parent's own upbringing, own understandings about what a parent is "supposed to do," and what the experts are saying comes into play. This is why it is so important for parents to carefully consider how they socialize the child's sense of self-worth.

SELF–WORTH V. SHAME

Self-worth is *the feeling of acceptance a child has about his or her own strengths and weaknesses, desirable and undesirable traits, and value as an individual.* To sociologists, self-esteem or the high or low appraisal is not as important today as it was thought to have been 20 years ago. There is innate value in being unique and an individual. Parents are in a prime position to teach their children to see a balance in how they value themselves.

One of the most demeaning messages sent to children from their parents is a message of shame. **Shame** is *a feeling of being worthless, bad, broken, or flawed at an irreparable level.* Some parents raise their children in the same shame-based manner that their parents used on them. Shaming children will never yield the positive outcomes parents want in their children. Shame is at the core of addiction, be it alcohol or drugs, TV or gambling, eating or shopping. Addiction is a natural expectation for people who define themselves as permanently broken or flawed. Recovery programs focus specifically on how to help the addicts accept themselves in a broken state (like most non-shamed people already do). Shame is not the same as guilt. **Guilt** is *a feeling of remorse for doing something wrong or not having done what one should have done.* Guilt may be healthy; shame rarely is. Shame used to be used as an emotional tool devised to control and sometimes break the will of a child so that he or she would conform to the parent's will. Many of those Baby Boomers use shame today on their children and grandchildren. Shaming a child teaches them to accept their permanently broken status and give up hope on finding the joy of their own uniqueness and talents. Parents don't have to use shame, even if their parents did it to them. Parents are the significant others of their children. **Significant others** are *those other people whose evaluation of the individual are important and regularly considered during interactions.* Parents are in a prime position to teach healthy self-worth or toxic shame and worthlessness. Especially for their pre-school children, parents teach their children how to see value in themselves and to see balance in how they find out what they are good at in life.

Parents avoiding shame teach their children how to learn from failures and mistakes. They teach them how to be patient and work hard at their goals. When the outcome goes in an undesirable way these parents console their child and reinforce that child's uniqueness and value as an individual. These parents teach their children not to draw hasty conclusions too early in life. When the children have tried and tested their talents and limits enough and launch out on their own, they can take not only a positive evaluation of themselves into their adult roles, but also a process of balancing their strengths and weaknesses in the big picture of their lives.

The process leading up to a healthy self-worth is easy to grasp. Look at Figure 6 to see a metaphor on how we measure our self-worth by weighing our ideal expectations against our real or actual performance. The key to understanding self-concept is to understand that balanced self-concept works the same way as balanced weights. The same can be said of those who try to balance too high of an "ideal" expectation in a role because they're most likely to perform less than expected in their "actual" performance in this role. Again, balance between "ideal" and "actual" is crucial. In this example imagine that you are looking at the self-concept formed by a young female college graduate. She has been accepted into a prestigious corporate internship role and has actually been labeled the "Intern."

If this young professional woman was raised to be fair to herself and others in seeing the balance of her worth in terms of reasonable "shoulds" and "oughts," she will be more accurate in learning from her successes and failures rather than simply chalking them up as more evidence of her core worthlessness (rocks in the apple juice). The goal is to help children learn to set reasonable goals and see one's efforts as objectively as possible. As parents your definition of self-worth will shine on your children in direct and indirect ways. They will see how you keep the balance or don't. Make a concerted effort to value your children. Express that value to them often (some suggest that you should express it daily). Make a concerted effort to console them in their grief when they feel they might have let themselves or others down. Then teach them how to see their worth in terms of being good at some things (like most) and not so good at others (like most).

1. http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0091.pdf, Table 91 Women Who Had a Child Last Year By Age: 1990 to 2008
2. http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0085.pdf Table 85 Births to unmarried Women by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Age of Mother: 1990 to 2006
3. Retrieved 9 March 2010 (www.census.gov)
4. see Abraham Maslow's Pyramid of Hierarchy of Needs
5. http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/dailynews/spanking_poll021108.html

13. 12. Communication, Stress and Conflict

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Define types of arguments
- Distinguish between needs and wants
- Relate how to improve communication
- Apply the Leukemia of Arguments metaphor
- Define marital entropy
- Define mood and affect
- Analyze how power is maintained

“You did.” “No, I didn’t

."

"Yes, you did."

"No, if you remember it w

as you.”

“Humm, you may be right.”

“I told y

ouso!” “No, you didn’t.” “Yes, I did…”

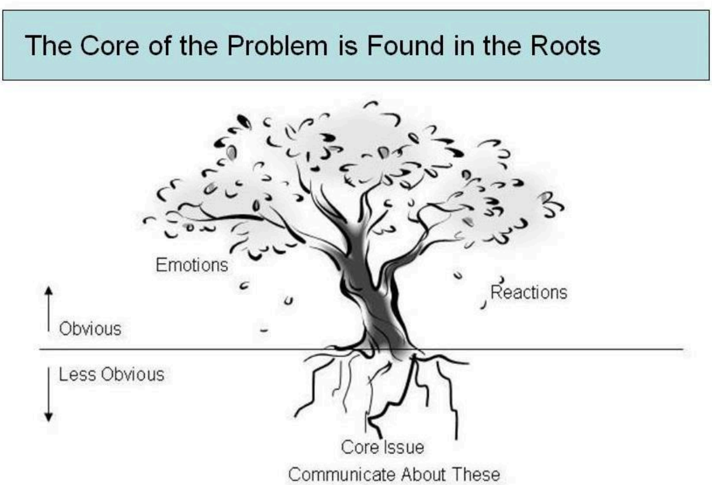
ARGUMENTS

So often arguments focus on who was right, which facts were involved, and ultimately who is to blame. These types of arguments are annoying both to have and to overhear. These are called **non-directional arguments**, because *the underlying issue is not being dealt with in the argument itself*. Non-directional arguments happen for many reasons, but rarely help resolve an issue. Arguing is a quandary for many people because they believe that arguing is a weakness, sign of trouble, or even a sin. Marriage and family researchers have established for years that it is not the argument that is the problem; it is how the argument transpires that matters.

Directional arguments *have a goal or a purpose and usually approach the issue that led to the argument in the first place.* It isn't always obvious how to argue in such a way that it accomplishes something useful. Markman et al. (2001) have established a training program for how to help couples fight for their marriages.[1] Likewise, John Gottman (2002) published a relationship book that focuses on strategies for healthy arguments (among other strategies).[2] The core of a healthy argument is to get to the root of the problem in such a way that both parties can be content with the outcomes. Easier said than done? Learning to argue is not rocket science. Have you ever heard the phrase "beat around the bush?" In Figure 1 the bush is the argument. The real source of the argument comes from the roots or core issue. So often when we argue about who was right and who is to blame, or when we become emotional and react to what the other says, we waste time beating around the bush rather than getting to the real issue.

The root cause is often less obvious because we don't always know exactly what is bugging us. We simply get frustrated or concerned and start talking. If emotions and pride set in, the argument becomes non-directional and burdensome.

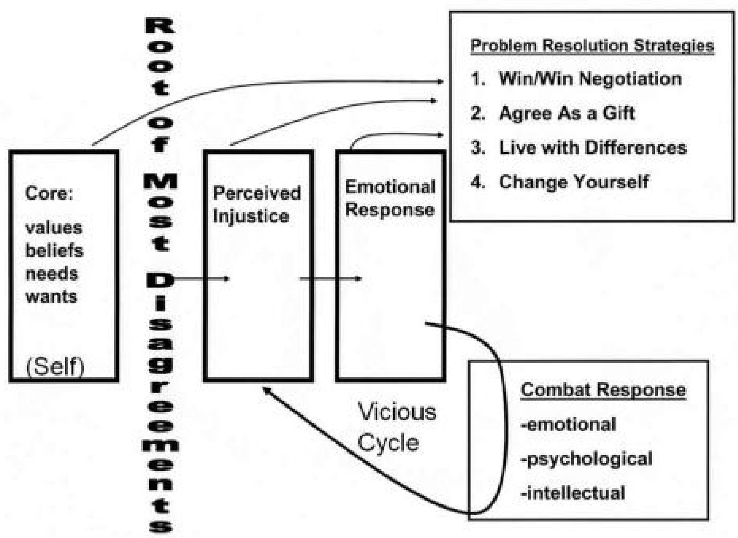
Figure 1. Getting to the Core of the Problem: The Roots.



The diagram in Figure 2 shows the same principle found in Figure 1. In Figure 2 the core of the problem lies on the left side of the "root of most disagreements" and these core issues are common for most people. Our **values** are *what we define as important, desirable, and of merit*. Our **beliefs** are *what we define as real and accept as truths in our lives*. **Needs** are *those things that are necessary to our existence* and **wants** are *those things we would like to have*. Our values, beliefs, needs, and wants are typically where most core issues originate.

Let's walk through the model with a case study. A young couple married and were saving to eventually make a down payment on a home. She worked in the loan department of a bank and he worked in construction. One Friday afternoon she came home from work. She had a difficult day at work and was especially tired and stressed. She opened the door to their apartment, carrying a box of paperwork in her arms. Not knowing her husband had taken off his muddy work boots, she tripped and almost fell. She sat her box down and looked down only to find that her best work shoes had mud on them and were now scratched. She slipped them off thinking she would have to come back later and clean them up. On the way to the bedroom she tipped over a half-eaten bowl of cereal that dampened her sock and messed up the carpet. She made it to the bedroom and dropped the box on the floor. She took off her socks and put them on the bathroom sink. She then noticed her husband's muddy pants draped over the toilet. She suddenly realized that within less than one minute, she now had to clean, her muddy shoes, her sticky socks, the wet carpet, and the toilet. Just then her husband returned from the mailbox and said "Honey, I'm home."

Figure 2. How to Have a Healthy Argument: The Win-Win Model.



Her husband had arrived 30 minutes earlier excited about a pay raise he'd received that day. He had showered, started eating a bowl of cereal, and darted out to get the mail. When he walked in the door she slammed the bedroom door and locked it. "Honey are you in there?" he asked knocking on the door. "Leave me alone!" she yelled through the door while crying. "Honey what's the matter; are you okay?"

"I'm fine!"

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do something wrong?” “No, I did when I marr ied a pig!”

“A pig?”

“Yes, you live like a pig!”

“Well, well whose mother is always meddling in our marriage?”

“What?” She gasped. “Then whose uncle is in prison for life!”

“That’s it.” He stomped out of the apartment and drove off.

This is a non-directional, beating around the bush, and hurtful argument. You can see what happened to them using the diagram in Figure 2. Somewhere between the muddy boots and the toilet, she felt a perceived injustice. She felt like her husband did not respect her need to keep a clean apartment. Her emotional response was anger. It happens to us all, but in this case it wasn’t controlled very well and she took the low-road in this diagram which is the combat response. When she slammed the door and called him a pig, she was attacking him, emotionally, psychologically, and or intellectually. By doing this she inadvertently gave him a perceived injustice. He also has values and most likely felt that his need to be respected by his wife was not met. He perceived an injustice of maltreatment, felt hurt, then also took the low road and retaliated with an attack on her mother. Had this argument continued, the vicious cycle of beating around the bush or perpetually providing each partner with a perceived injustice, emotional response, and combat opportunity may have continued. Notice that the core issues were never dealt with in their communication. Never in this exchange did either of them get to their needs, wants, values, or beliefs. She came from a home where her mother was an immaculate homemaker, stay-at-home mother, and artist. She and her mother prided themselves on the cleanliness and order of their homes. She married a young man whose mother cleaned up after him. He could count on one hand the number of times he cleaned his room while growing up. They chose each other! On top of that she was stressed and tired and he was jubilant from the good week at work and pay raise. Neither is to blame. Arguments happen to everyone and unhealthy ones will be the pattern unless they do something about it. They both had to modify their behaviors so that they could get to the core issues and support one another. To do that, they'd have to take the high road.

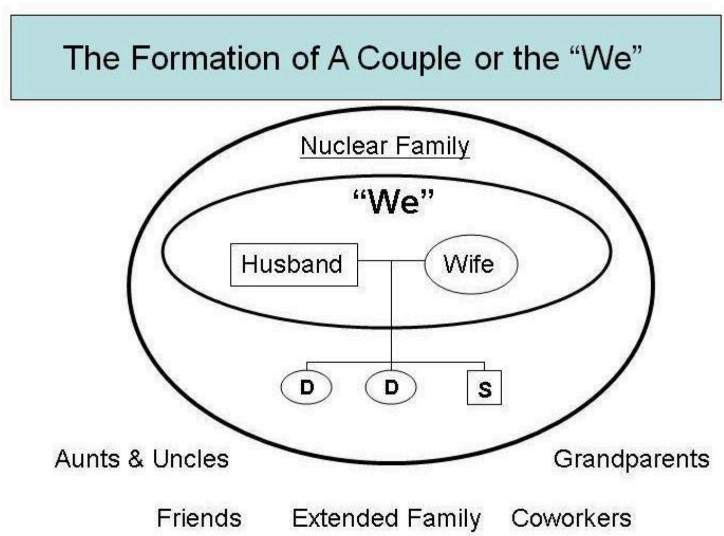
IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

The high road in this model offers problem resolution strategies which have been around the counseling and communications literature for many years. They've been researched and discussed in numerous self-help and consulting books over the last two decades. They work well and offer techniques which facilitate a healthy argument and outcome. The first strategy is to negotiate a win-win solution. The goal is that everyone can find a way to work out an argument or disagreement so that the other person feels like he or she came out with his or her needs addressed and met as well. Think about it, if you always win then your partner always loses. That would make her or him a loser and who wants to be married to a loser? Figure 3 shows the diagram of how a couple forms an entity called the "We."

A **couple** is simply *a pair of people who identify themselves in terms of belonging together, trusting one another, and having a* *unique relationship, separate from all others*. A "We" is close to the same thing, yet it focuses on the relationship as an entity in itself. A "We" as shown in this diagram is a married couple but can include cohabiters, or other intimate non-married couple arrangements. This is a relationship that is not intimately connected to any other relationships as profoundly as they are connected to one another. A "We" is much like a vehicle that two people purchase together. Both have to put in maintenance. Both have to care for it and treat it in such a way that it runs for a long time. Sometimes, spouses or partners attack the other in such a way that the other is harmed or damaged in their trust. A "We" is the social and emotional boundary a couple establishes when they decide to become a couple. This boundary includes only the husband and wife. It purposefully excludes the children, extended family, co-workers, and friends.

When one spouse is made to feel like the loser, then it's like getting upset and scratching the car's paint or stabbing a tire with a screwdriver. How long can a car last if one inflicts damage in this way? The key is to remember that together you have formed a social bond that can only be as strong as its weakest part. Many non-directional arguments weaken one or both partners and can lead to an eventual abandonment of the relationship since this undermines the emotional connection and bond.

Figure 3. How the Couple Forms a "We"



Knowing a strategy to create a win-win situation makes it much more likely to happen. Think about what you might need if you were the couple in the story above. What might she desire? Perhaps she'd like for him not to make messes for her. What might he desire? Perhaps he'd like for her to refrain from calling him farm animal names. So, later, after both have cooled down they may decide to talk about what happened and forgive one another. Then, they might try to answer this key question, each taking a turn to listen to the other, "What was really at the core of your concern?"

"Well, I've talked to you for nearly two years about how hard it is for me to feel love for you when I pick up after you and clean up your messes," She might say.

"Well, I've heard you and your family members call people names when they are not present, and I need for you to refrain from calling me names like that," He might say.

Then they can answer this healthy, pro-couple, and mutually nurturing question, "What can we agree upon to help us meet each other's needs better so we can avoid arguments like this in the future?" What might be your suggestion to them in answer to that question? Keeping in mind that it is very difficult for humans to change their *natures*. It is much easier for humans to change *one very specific unwanted behavior*. Knowing that, you could urge them to consider working together as a team with a reward at the end of a designated period of time. They might agree that she will not call him any farm animal names for 90 days. He in turn will make sure that his muddy boots are not in her path for 90 days. If they both live up to their end of the bargain, they might reward themselves with a weekend away together. This would not only be a win-win, but it would be realistically attainable for a young couple. It also avoids damaging the "We" while supporting it in the long run because it deals with their root core issues.

Now, some of you may feel frustrated that she didn't negotiate a completely mess-free home. I'd argue that it's much easier to change when the individual himself is motivated to make the change, not his spouse and working on one specific behavior is much more likely to produce lasting change. It's also a fact that we choose who we marry or pair off with and they are who they are. In most relationships it's unfair to say to a spouse or partner that "I love you just the way you are, so let's get married." Then later turn around and say. "I loved you the way I thought you were, but could you please change that to what I now think I want you to be?"

If we don't want to change we won't. It also gets more difficult to change the older we get. Most of us don't want to change ourselves, especially in dramatic ways. If for whatever reason you decide to change a behavior, keep in mind these three levels of recognizing where you may be on the path to change. Let's say you wanted to stop getting angry while driving your car on the freeway. So, you set a goal to go one month without using profanities while driving. Sure enough after a long day and busy afternoon rush hour you slip up and let the words fly. This is the first level of personal behavior change, when you catch yourself after the fact. In other words, you did it again and realized it too late.

But, you don't give up on your goal. Next week after a long day and in the middle of a jam up of stopped traffic you start with the profanities but catch yourself mid-sentence and control your language. The second level of change is catching yourself in the middle of the act of the behavior you are trying to change. The third level is when you finally recognize which triggers set off this pattern of profanity for you. You realize that you curse more after stressful days at work and during traffic jams that slow your speed while traveling to the day care to pick up your child.

At the third level you can prepare how you will manage the stressors and thus prevent another slip up. Perhaps you might put the radio on to easy listening, decide that being late back home is acceptable even if it costs a few more dollars for day care, and or put in a self-help tape to listen to during the delay. Either way, we can change our own behaviors if we are persistent and patient. But, rarely can we change the behaviors of others.

The second option under Figure 2, Problem Resolution Strategies is to Agree as a Gift. This is to be done only on very unique circumstances. Agreeing as a gift means that you are willing to give in on something of importance at your root level. Let's use the example of a couple who were building their own home. They were exhausted and burned out. One day during a normal morning start to the day. He mentioned that in the day's schedule he wanted to go down to the brick yard and pick out the brick. He'd assumed that brick would be the best way to go. She brought up the point that she had already mentioned using stone instead of brick to him months before and had already picked out three types she really liked. They ended up in a heated argument. The next day he expressed his sorrow for assuming that she would just go with him on the brick idea. He then offered her this olive leaf, "I'll support whatever stone you think is best for the outside of our new home." She was surprised and asked him why he'd give in like that. "You spend more time at home with the children. You grew up in a home faced with stone, and to me, I just was trying to be efficient about getting this home built and it really didn't matter for me as much as it does for you."

They both then talked about how tired and worn out they had become and how dangerous building a home can be to a marital relationship. In this case, he offered to agree as a gift. It wasn't a negotiation for future authority to decide on a home trait. It was an unattached gift. It's important not to give in all the time; a one-sided relationship is not satisfying for either person in the long run. Martyrs always give in and find themselves unhappy with the direction of the relationship. The "We" is strong because of many negotiations which ensure that both parties can have their core issues addressed while meeting the needs of the other. If you sense the issue is more important to your partner than it is to you, give in.

Problem Resolution Strategy three is to simply learn to live with differences in a relationship. Most couples do have irreconcilable differences in their marriage or relationship. Most couples realize that each is an individual and each has uniqueness that they bring to the "We" which makes it what it is in terms of richness and viability. Some people think that their partner should change because their happiness may depend upon it. Many studies suggest that individuals are as happy as they choose to be, regardless of the changing that does or does not transpire in their relationship. Happiness is a conscious choice and exists when the individual persists in feeling happy even in difficult circumstances.3

Finally, Problem Resolution Strategy four is to simply change yourself. If you came from a home where a clean home reflected upon your self-worth, where a clean home meant a happy home, and where a clean home meant that you and your mother were close, and then you married a guy who never did housework, why should he have to change? He might over the years learn to share the housework responsibilities, but in the reality of things it might be easier to redefine the meaning of a clean home to yourself than to ask another individual to be something else in an attempt to accommodate your current tastes.

The model in Figure 2 is a useful way of understanding where arguments come from and how they might be best managed in such a way that the "We" is ultimately nurtured because the root issues are addressed by one another. One last suggestion in having a healthy argument, remember that not all issues are created equally.

Some arguments originate from a disease level in one of the partner's personality—the **Leukemia of arguments**. *They stem from an underlying medical condition that requires professional intervention.* Many personality disorders might lead a couple to professional counseling and can undermine the "We" if not treated professionally. Just like Leukemia, if professional help is not sought, the relationship will suffer and might die.

Then there are the day-to-day arguments that are very common during the first three years. How to squeeze the tooth paste tube, how to cook an omelet, and how to drive to a destination are common issues of these arguments, especially among newlyweds. These arguments can be useful in the sense that they give the couple practice in having healthy arguments. Peaceful resolution of these minor arguments are a training ground for resolving major arguments.

Practice is important because major arguments threaten the very life of the relationship if unchecked. These occur when the very core values, beliefs, needs, and wants of a spouse are at stake. For example, the belief that marital sexuality should be exclusive to the couple is a deeply held belief that most couples respect. But when an extramarital affair does occur, the "We" has been damaged and it takes a tremendous amount of concerted effort to repair trust.

When arguing, first focus on the issues at hand and how to create a win-win outcome.

Second, don't let others into the boundaries of your "We." An argument should be between the partners, not the aunts, uncles, parents, children, or friends. Third, let professionals give you some training on how to argue in healthier ways. There is no need to reinvent the wheel when thousands of studies have been published on relationships. Self-help books and seminars can be very useful. And fourth, treat your relationship the same way you'd treat a nice car. Care for it, perform preventative maintenance, and avoid the tendency to ignore it, neglect it, or damage it.

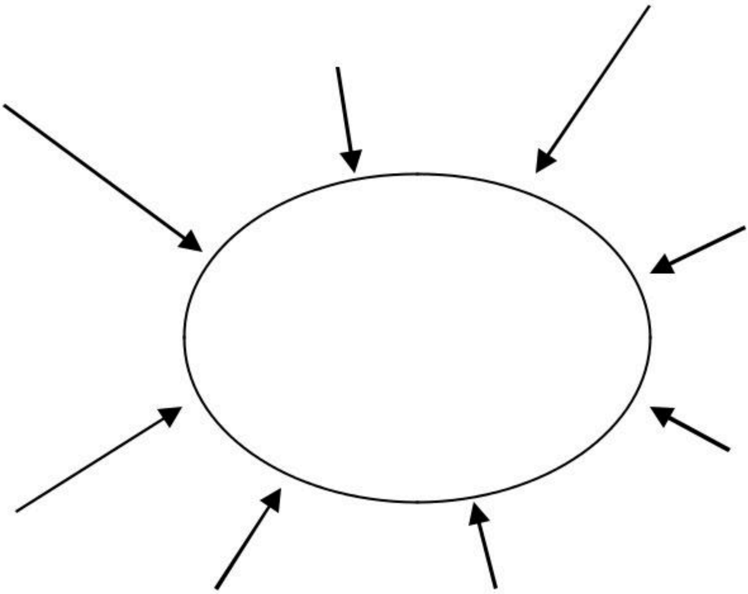
Family Scientists have borrowed from the physics literature a concept called entropy which is roughly defined as the principle that matter tends to decay and reduce toward its simplest parts. For example, a new car if parked in a field and ignored would eventually decay and rot. A planted garden if left unmaintained would be overrun with weeds, pests, and yield low if any crop. **Marital Entropy** is *the principle that if a marriage does not receive preventive maintenance and upgrades it will move towards decay and break down.*

Couples who realize that marriage is not constant bliss and that it often requires much work experience more stability and strength than those who do not nurture their marriage. Those who treat their marriage like a nice car and become committed to preventing breakdowns rather than waiting to repair them reap the benefits. These couples read and study experts like Gottman, Cherlin, Markman, Popenoe, and others who have focused their research on how to care for the marriage, acknowledging the propensity relationships have to decay if unattended.

There are some basic principles that apply to communication with others. It is very important to know what you feel, and say what you mean to say. It sounds simple but people are not always connected to their inner issues. Our issues lie deep within us. Often we just see the tip of them like we might only see the tip of an ice berg. Some of us are strangers to them while others are very aware of what the issues are. When an argument arises, you might ask yourself these self-awareness questions. How did it happen, what lead up to it, and what was at stake for you? This helps many to get to the underlying issue.

Not only is it difficult for some of us to know what our issues are, but many of us have had relationships end painfully or with hurt feelings. These past hurts may inhibit open communication in current relationships. Figure 4 shows some of the painful arrows that threaten communication and trust. Some of us grow up feeling shamed and worthless. This sometimes makes us feel extremely sensitive to how others evaluate us and can make it very difficult for us to want to open up and show others what we believe are our flaws.

Figure 4. Inhibitions to Open Communication and Trust.



NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Another crucial part of communication is the ability to communicate at the non-verbal level. Both non-verbal and verbal communication is essential for truly understanding one another. **Non-verbal communication** includes *touch, gestures, facial expression, eye contact, distance, and overall body positioning*. Touch is an essential part of the human experience. For the most part, women are very clear on which types of touch they give and receive. Women have cultural permission to be more affectionate with one another in the

U.S. Men typically refrain from touching other men in heterosexual contexts (except in sports). Men touch women more than other men. Interestingly, comparing male to female newborns, most males enjoy their mothers' physical closeness while the females enjoy the social interactions. Men have difficulties in distinguishing the varieties of touch and their intended purposes.

Gestures vary between cultures. You've heard the phrase "talking with your hands." This is common in various parts of the U.S. among hearing individuals. Hands are moved in conjunction with words to emphasize and illustrate the point being shared. Deaf persons also communicate with a common form of non-verbal language called American Sign Language. Many parents teach ASL to their smaller children because toddlers can learn signs long before they can verbally articulate words. Gestures reinforce verbal messages and can be very useful in understanding a person's intended message.

Eye contact is an extremely important aspect of communication. Making eye contact is difficult for some because the eyes truly do tell on the state of one's emotions. The most common form of faking eye contact is the eye brow or forehead stare. Men are especially guilty of this because they are trying to communicate and as Deborah Tannen pointed out also trying not to be vulnerable.4

The average person in main stream U.S. society needs about 30-36 inches of space between him or her and another person. Strangers keep this distance where possible. Intimates close the gap to the point where they are very close side-by-side, touching at the hip, legs, etc. When people argue they often increase the distance. When people are being formally introduced to another they often maintain it. We not only want about three feet distance between us and others, we also want people to stay about that far away from our desk, doors, and even vehicles. This is in part why elevators are so uncomfortable; they don't easily give us our three feet of space.

Closing that distance with a stranger can be viewed as an act of aggression.

Finally, body positioning can be very insightful to a person's disposition. You've probably already heard about the body positions that close other people out. There is the folding of the arms across the chest, the crossing of one's legs, and the turning oneself around offering the back rather than the front to another person.

Therapists use verbals and non-verbals to assess both mood and affect. **Mood** is *one's state of emotional being* and is typically detected by the words and patterns of speaking a person uses. **Affect** is *one's emotion or current feeling* and is judged by a person's non-verbal messages.

AVOIDING COMMUNICATION

All of us have vulnerabilities in our lives. We tend to cover them up and hide them for fear of them being exposed. Interestingly, when we find that when we get to know someone we really care about and they accept our vulnerabilities, it is a sign of love that often supports a decision to pair off together. Some people don't ever want to experience conflict.

Conflict avoidant people *tend to work extra hard to avoid conflict with others and often sacrifice the needed attention to issues that is required for a relationship to last.* Conflict avoidant people rarely complain and some live like this forever while others experience a buildup of feelings and are very unhappy.

Each of us has painful experiences that are difficult to deal with. Sometimes we suppress them and bury them in the back of our mind. Sometimes we deny they even occurred. Sometimes we take these issues from our past and lay them onto our current relationships or project them onto our current partner. In all cases, the root core issue is difficult to access, yet still plays an important role in our daily interactions. Fear is very destructive to relationships. Fear is like a loud speaker of an emotion that can drown out reason and other emotions that pertain to our relationships. It is easy to respond to and often hard to understand.

Fear is like a super hot pepper. Our other emotions are more subtle like a grape. It is very difficult to taste a grape while simultaneously chewing on a hot pepper. Fears come from past hurts and pains. Rarely do they guide us in rationally effective ways. It's estimated that 90% of what we fear never happens. If the ten percent does occur most of us can turn to others for support and get through it. Fear can shut open communication completely off and if we can manage our fears they will not manage us.

There are gender differences in how we communicate. Figure 5 shows a comparison of a psychologist's and a sociologist's take on gender differences in communication. Gray puts our genetic biological traits which stem from XX or XY at the core of why we talk and converse the way we do. He claims that we are built from the molecule up to be a predictable type of communicator. Many in his field criticize his conclusions and especially his claim that men and women may be a different species from one another.

Tannen talks about how we are socialized or raised by those around us. To her it's about what we learn to expect from ourselves in the role of males or females that shapes how we communicate. The research she presents allows us to see how men are raised aware of their place in society. They are constantly aware that someone around them is bigger, stronger, faster, richer, etc. They know their place and work hard not to have someone of higher status put them down. Tannen claims that this approach to relationships—avoiding being put down and being very aware of status issues —is why many men refrain from opening up in conversation. Opening up puts them at risk of being put down.

To Tannen, women are raised in the context of relationships. They spend much of their lives reinforcing and strengthening relationships with friends and family. They are aware that informal rules guide their relationships and they put a great deal of effort into how to maintain good relationships so that they don't find themselves socially isolated from others. This is why women tend to maintain more relationships than men and why men and women struggle to connect. Women approach the conversation with an effort to connect and maintain the relationship while men approach it trying to gain status or not be put at risk.

The real value of any gender self-help communication book is not that it identifies what all women or all men will say—that never happens because there is no generalized pattern of communication that all men or women fit into. The ultimate value of self-help gender communication books is to expand your understanding enough to see that your spouse or friend may simply be different from you and not wrong, mean, or uncooperative.

John Gray Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus (2004) vs. Deborah Tannen You just don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation (2001)

Figure 5. Comparison of Two Gender Communication Self-Help Paradigms.

	Gray-Psychologist	Tannen-Sociologist
Men	One-sided brain users who hunt Strong emotional people who solve problems alone	Raised to compete and be independent Status seekers who protect themselves from being put down
Women	Two-sided brain users who nuture Feeling people who solve problems with others (in groups)	Raised to connect to others while minimizing differences Seek consensus while avoiding appearance of being superior

POWER

When two people communicate they share a certain degree of power during the conversation. The Conflict Theory tells us that power is more often than not distributed unevenly. When we carry on conversations we sometimes find ourselves having more or less power in the conversation. The **principle of least interest** simply states that *the partner who is least interested has the most power*. In other words if you really want the relationship to work more than the other person, you have less power. If the other person wants the relationship to work more than you do, then you have more power. When relationships form, power changes hands from time to time depending on the nuances of the day-to-day interactions of the couple. Typically, women assume more responsibility for relationship maintenance in heterosexual couple's interactions.

1. Fighting for Your Marriage: Positive Steps for Preventing Divorce and Preserving a Lasting Love by Howard J. Markman, Scott M. Stanley, Susan L. Blumberg
2. The Relationship Cure: A 5 Step Guide to Strengthening Your Marriage, Family, and Friendships by John Gottman.
3. Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor E. Frankl
4. You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation by Deborah Tannen

14. 13. Family Functionality and Crisis

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Define crisis
- Define life stressor
- Differentiate between the types of abuse
- Differentiate normative and acute stressors

FAMILY FUNCTIONS AND DYSFUNCTIONS

Families are functional at some levels and simultaneously dysfunctional at others. No two families are exactly alike, and very few families experience blissful ideal family experiences. **Family functions** are *the tasks and goals that support and sustain the family.* **Dysfunctions** are *failures in the family to accomplish these tasks and goals.* Functions are intended; dysfunctions are typically unintended. For example, family members do not intend to establish poor communication patterns, invisible sexual boundaries (incest), or economic hardships. The basic family functions which are intended include economic cooperation, control of sexuality, socializing children, identity and social status, and social and emotional need fulfillment. *Families that meet family members' needs well* are referred to as **high resource families. Low resource families** might meet some needs well and other needs poorly or not meet many of the needs. Resources can include an inherent resiliency, money, extended family, strong friend network, or strong religious community.

Family dysfunctions can be handed down from generation to generation, with few family members aware that something is wrong in the family system. A **dysfunction** is a breakdown or disruption in the family (the individuals or the family as a whole) which threatens its stability. Drug or alcohol abuse, pregnancy, or loss of a job are some common dysfunctions. A pregnancy can be planned or unplanned; in either case it is a dysfunction since it causes a disruption in the family.

FAMILY STRESSORS

There are a variety of crises events that families must deal with over the life course. A **crisis** is *a dramatic emotional or circumstantial upheaval in a person's or family's life course.*[1] The life course of the family refers to the culturally defined sequence of stages in human life, rather than to precise periods of years or to biological development and is measured in relation to their time together, presence of children, ages, and work experiences. In **young families** *the adults tend to be in their 20s and 30s; they have young children, are establishing their careers and buying assets, and have less than a decade together.* These families have many stressors that accompany the process of establishing their family. **Normative stressors** are *expected life events and processes that bring stress by virtue of their nature.* Having a baby, getting a new job, and buying a home are all normative stressors at this stage of the life course.

Many married couples experience a noticeable decline in marital satisfaction which accompanies the birth of their first child. Judith Wallerstein is quoted as having said, "Each couple must embrace the daunting roles of parents and absorb the impact of her majesty the baby's dramatic entrance while protecting the couples' own privacy."[2] Many researchers have established a decline in marital satisfaction after the birth of a child, especially the first child. The better the couple are as friends, the less the impact the first child has on their marriage. To transition to the role of parents, it was found that couples who planned to have the baby and who work closely and in a mutually supportive manner make the best adjustments.2

Middle families *are in their 30s to 50s, their children are teens or young adults, they are in mid-career, and are financially established with a home and cars.* Middle families launch children into college, military, and jobs while maintaining steady earnings. They typically have some retirement investments and are paying off mortgages and other loans. As they age into their 50s they find that some of their married children return home for a short season because of marital or financial hardships. Parents begin to witness the death of their own parents and siblings and are much more aware of their pending move into the ranks of the elderly. These families have fewer normative stressors than younger families.

Elderly families have more freedoms from childrearing than the younger families have. They *are 60 plus and are often grandparents, have their homes paid off, and are looking forward to retirement*. Their grandchildren graduate college and become parents in their own right. They have experienced the passing of their grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, and sometimes siblings. They also have begun to face the sober realities of their biological health declines. These families have far fewer normative stressors than younger families.

Acute stressors *are typically unexpected, sudden, and demand tremendous resources to cope with them.* Bankruptcies, illnesses, crime victimization, loss, and natural hazards are just a few of the acute stressors that could impact a family. Wallerstein and Blakesly (1995) also reported that happily married couples had “confronted and mastered the inevitable crises of life, maintaining the strength of the bond in the face of adversity.”

LIFE STRESSORS

In the 1970s, two psychiatrists named Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe developed a scale that measured life stressors that could have impacted an individual or his or her family over the last three years.[3] For families in the young family stage, getting married, having a baby, buying a home, or having a parent die ranked as the most stressful events. For middle and older families, having your spouse die, divorce or separating, moving, and getting married were among the most stressful events. In this paradigm one of these events can be coped with fairly well if the family members can gather enough resources to meet the challenge. Two or more acute stressors can pile up into your normative stressors and overwhelm you to the point of illness.

How families respond to stressors makes a huge difference in their quality of life. Researchers have established that stress can strengthen you or destroy you, depending on how you cope with stressors as individuals or families. When a series of normal and less significant stressors accumulate, it can have the same effect as a major acute stressor. If both happen together, stress can pile up. **Stressor pile up** *occurs when stressful events accumulate in such a manner that resolution has not happened with existing stressors before new stressors are added.* Stressor pile up can be detrimental if adequate resources are not obtained to meet the demands of the stressors.[4] This generation of families does not share the same conservative financial tendencies as did the generation of our grandparents. In the U.S. many desire to have what they desire now, even if debt has to be incurred to get it. **Now-time gratification** (also called present time) is *the individual perspective that seeks immediate satisfaction of their needs, wants, and desires.* **Delayed gratification** is *the ability to invest time and effort now in hopes of a payoff down the road.* Delayed gratification is very common among college students who are willing to put in 4-6 years of higher education for the promise of a life-long career of better earnings and life experiences.

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Family abuse is *the physical, sexual, or emotional maltreatment or harm of another family member.* Abuse is perpetrated by powerful people on less powerful people. You may have heard that there is a chain of abuse passed from parent to child to grandchild. Some estimates are that 1 in 3 sexually abused children grow up to be abusers. Many abuse survivors are meticulous about marrying non-abusers and about over-protecting their children from potential abusers.

CHILDABUSE

Sexual abuse is one form of child abuse. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry reported that 80,000 cases of child sexual abuse are reported each year in the U.S. with many more cases unreported.[5] Symptoms of sexual abuse in children include the following: avoiding or showing an unusual interest in things of a sexual nature, problems sleeping or having nightmares, signs of depression or becoming withdrawn from friends or family, seductive behavior, talking about their bodies as dirty, being concerned that there is something wrong with their genitals, refusing to go to school, delinquent behaviors, conduct problems, being secretive, being unusually aggressive, exhibiting suicidal behavior, and illustrating sexual molestation in drawings, games, or fantasies.

Recent U.S. data indicate that there were 3,300,000 alleged cases of child abuse and neglect in 2010.[6] It was reported that 78% were neglected, eight percent suffered emotional abuse, nine percent suffered sexual abuse, and 18% suffered physical abuse. They also reported that girls (9.7 per 1,000 children) were slightly more abused than boys (8.7 per 1,000 children).

Figure 1 shows child abuse data from 2000 to 2007 for males, females and total. The number of substantiated cases declined between 2006 and 2007, but this drop still represents hundreds of thousands of cases. The actual number of cases may be two or three times that high since many cases go unreported. Figure 2 shows the specific types of abuse that have occurred. These, too, are declining, yet consistent, in their relationship to one another. Neglect cases are by far the most common with over ½ million each year. Medical neglect is the least common abuse. Other national studies of child abuse report similar findings.7

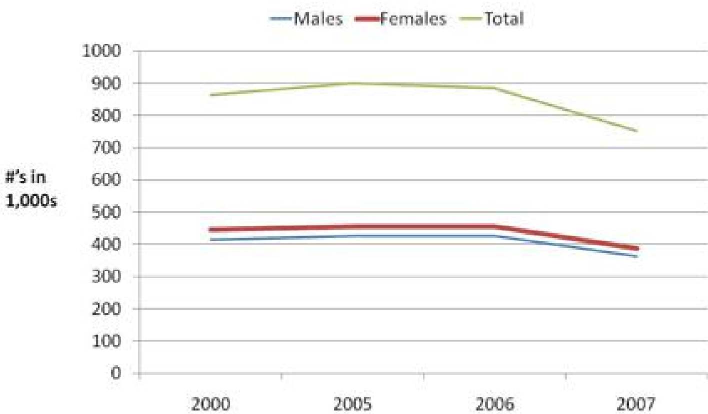


Figure 1. Numbers of U.S. Child Abuse Cases Substantiated, 2000-2007.8

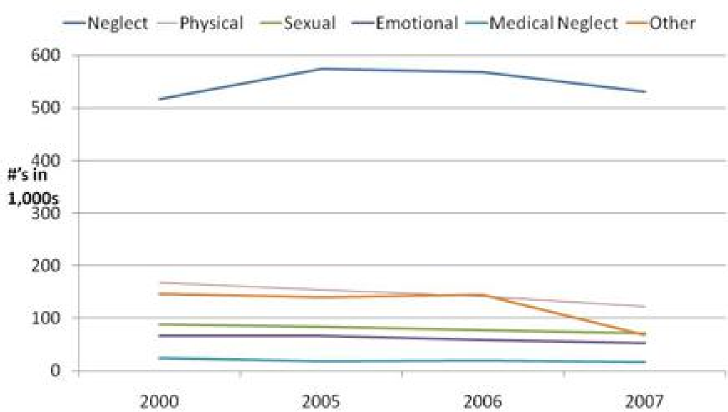
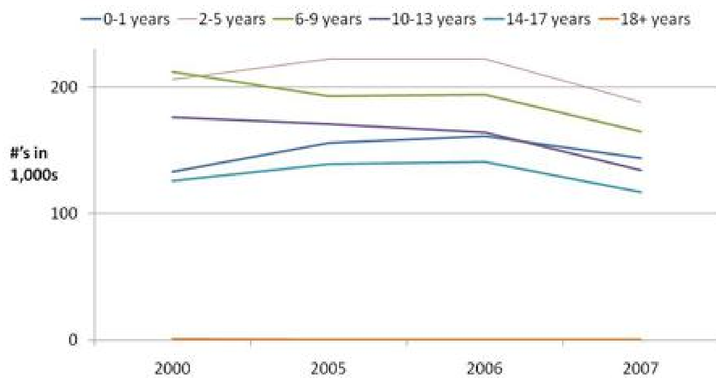


Figure 2. Numbers of U.S. Child Abuse Cases Substantiated between 2000-2007.9

The U.S. now has a national Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) which is designed to gather more accurate data on child maltreatment.[10] Figure 3 shows the numbers of child abuse victims by their ages. The highest numbers of abuse cases were found among the two- to five-year olds with rates declining as children age. One website reported that 12% of high school girls and five percent of high school boys had been sexually abused.[11]

Over half of the reports of child maltreatment came from professionals (57%). This report stated that in 2007 about 1,760 children died, mostly from neglect. In 2010, an estimated 1,560 children died from maltreatment in the United States.[12]

Figure 3. Numbers of U.S. Child Abuse Cases Substantiated, 2000-2007.[13]



SPOUSALABUSE

Abuse may also be perpetrated by adults against adults in families. When violence occurs between adult spouses or partners, it is often called intimate partner violence or IPV. The CDC provides a useful definition. "…**intimate partner violence** (IPV) is defined as *actual or threatened physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or stalking abuse by an intimate partner*. An **intimate partner** can be *a current or former spouse or non-marital partner, such as a boyfriend, girlfriend, or dating partner*…."[14] The guidelines from the CDC focus on frequency of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) tracks this type of crime. In 2007 there were 186,560 crimes perpetrated by spouses and 79,860 perpetrated by ex-spouses.[15] These included 153,790 assaults by spouses and another 63,650 assaults by ex-spouses. These also included 20,670 rapes and sexual assaults by spouses and another 6,200 by ex-spouses. Quite disheartening was the report that almost 60% of victims did NOT report their crime to police. The BJS estimates for 2008 state that about 22% of murders in 2002 were family murders. Of the nearly 500,000 men and women in state prisons for a violent crime in 1997, 15% were there for a violent crime against a family member. Intimate partners were responsible for three percent of all violence against males and 23% of all violence against females in 2008. Family violence accounted for 11% of all reported and unreported violence between 1998 and 2002.[16]

Another BJS report for the year 2008 showed how many cases of family violence were perpetrated on males and females and who the perpetrator was (see Figure 4). Females were over five times more likely to be attacked by their intimate partner than were males. They were also about twice as likely to be attacked by a relative as males. Males were more likely to be attacked by a friend or acquaintance. The Rape Abuse and Incest National Network reported that three percent of men had been victims of attempted rape or rape in their lifetimes and about 1 in every 10 rape victims is male.[17]

Figure 4. Numbers of Violent Crimes against Males and Females, 2008.[18]

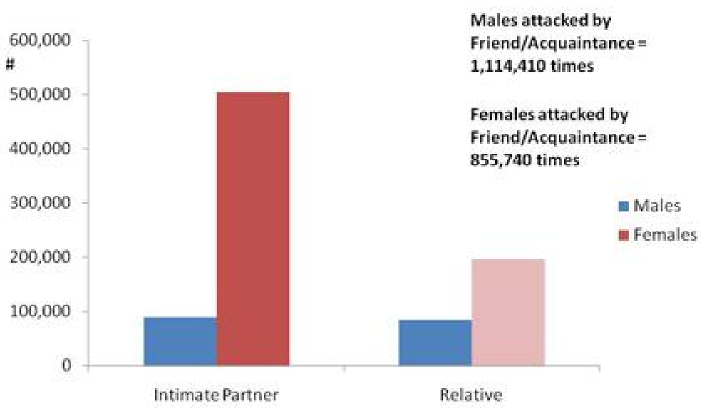
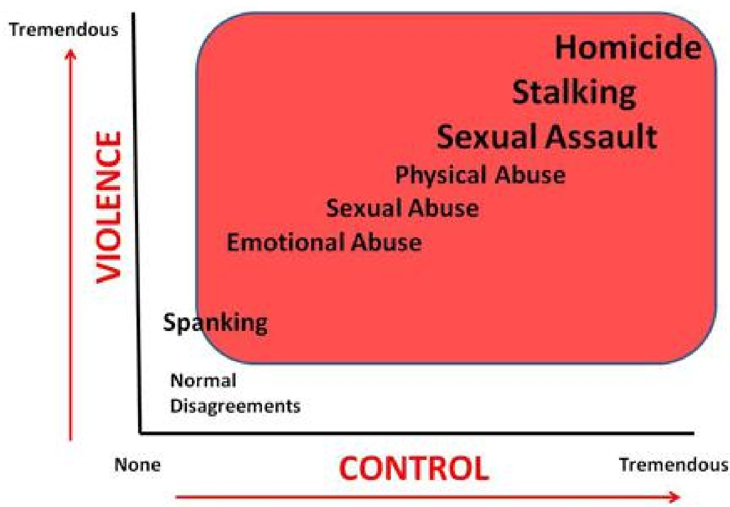


Figure 5 presents family maltreatment on a continuum of violence and control. In families, normal disagreements occur. These are typically not at the degree of violence or control that authorities would become involved. Many parents have spanked their children.

A spanking can be a simple swat used rarely and with low levels of violence and control; this would not concern authorities. However some parents use spanking at high levels of violence and control. They may emotionally, physically, and or sexually abuse their children in the name of spanking. All abuse is emotional or has emotional underpinnings because in families we are emotionally connected to each other and we all filter experience through our emotions.

Figure 5. Family Maltreatment Considering Degree of Violence and Conflict.



The sexual assault, stalking, and homicide categories of maltreatment are typically considered to be between adults and other adults, but parents do injure children to the point of death. Family violence is common and mostly perpetrated by males on others, but males are also victims of family violence. Even though violent crime has been declining since 1994, males are far more likely to be victimized than females (except in sexual violence). In less common circumstances, women perpetrate violence on men.[19] There are networks of shelters for men abused by women and or by other men. The easiest way for a man to get help is to call 911.

Spousal/intimate partner abuse is particularly important to those who try to intervene in family violence. One study using a sample of 16,000 adults in the U.S. reported that 25% of women and 7.5% of men had been assaulted by their spouse, cohabiting partner, or date; these data yield estimates of over two million intimate partner assaults per year in the U.S.[20] Scientists at the CDC estimate that there were over $8 billion in medical costs for spousal violence in 1995 and eight million lost work days.[21]

Intimate partner violence used to be called domestic violence. It can be physical, emotional, sexual, threats of violence, or stalking. **Stalking** is *when someone harasses or threatens another repeatedly; even knowing their pursuit is unwanted.* Various studies indicate that intimate partner violence is more common among the poor, unemployed, younger parents, and substance abusing partners.[22]

CDC's goal is to prevent Intimate partner violence before it begins.[23]

It is very important to understand how violence and abuse transpire in intimate relationships. A 2006 study identified the nature of control and violence between the two people involved. Four types of relationships emerged based on violence and control. The main person is violent. His or her controlling behavior and partner's violent and controlling behavior determines what type the relationship is. The first type is when the *individual is violent and controlling, but the partner is not*; this is called **intimate terrorism.** The next type is called **violent resistance**; this is *when the individual is violent but not controlling and the partner is the violent and controlling one.* In **situational couple violence,** *the individual is violent, but not controlling and the partner is neither violent nor controlling*. In **mutual violent control**, *the individual and the partner are both violent and controlling.*[24]

In the 1970s, new models emerged which helped professionals understand and intervene in abusive situations. These models focused on the cyclical nature of abuse.[25] That means abusers typically cycle in and out of violence with their intimate partners. For example, after the relationship becomes established abusers go through a stage of tension and frustration buildup. These times are filled with perceived offenses by the perpetrator who begins to define

him/herself as being victimized. Eventually the perpetrator attacks and releases this pent-up anger and hostility. Shortly thereafter, the perpetrator feels remorse and apologizes to the victim.

Sometimes there is a phase of calm that lasts until the perpetrator recycles back into the tension and frustration build up stage again, repeating the violent cycle over and over.[26] Why some women and men stay with their abuser is difficult to explain, but is a major component of successful efforts to intervene. Some have learned that this is part of an intimate relationship-to suffer and forgive. Others stay because they see no economic possibilities if they did leave. Others stay to minimize the relationship break up and the impact the harm of that breakup may cause to their children. Communities have responded to this ongoing problem in multiple ways and at multiple levels. Coordinated efforts have been designed to get police, medical personnel, courts, and other social agencies working in the same direction for the best outcomes. The most common model used today to intervene in domestic violence is called the Duluth Model.

The Duluth Model came in the 1980s from Duluth, Minnesota where an experiment was attempted that united 11 community agencies to reduce violence against women.[27] This model claims that it is the community that controls abusers (not the spouse), that there are differing types of abuse and each must be responded to in appropriate ways, that socio-economic and historical factors of persons involved must be considered, and that intervention must include perpetrators and victims.[28]

Critics of the Duluth model point out the absence of counseling and therapeutic efforts. Other critics argue that it is the court and legal avenues that ultimately protect the victims. Intervention models often include Duluth and cognitive behavioral therapy plus community intervention strategies. One study found that when considering the most common intervention models, there was really no strong indication that one might be better than the other.[29] One website is designed to encourage abused people to leave the relationship.[30]

ELDERABUSE

There is also a concern about the large numbers of elderly abused by younger family members. **Family elder abuse** is *the maltreatment of older family members in emotional, sexual, physical, financial, neglect, and other ways, especially where trust was expected and violated.*[31] Cooper and others (2008) estimated that 1 in 4 elderly persons may be at risk for abuse in Western Nations.[32]

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) estimates that $2.6 billion dollars is lost each year from younger persons abusing the finances of the elderly.[33] The National Center on Elder Abuse reports that care facilities also work diligently to prevent sexual, emotional, physical, and other forms of abuse by employees and family members. This Center estimates about two million elderly who've been abused, even though it admits that there is no uniform system in place to track the abuses.[34]

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15. 14. Divorce

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Define divorce
- Analyze divorce trends
- Define marital entropy
- Apply Social Exchange Theory to divorce choices
- Explain Levinger's Model of Rational Choice for Divorce
- Recall actions that minimize the risk of divorce

D**EFINITIONS**

In the United States, **marriage** is *the legal union of a man and a woman*. Outside of the U.S., most societies define marriage between a man and a woman or between a man and women (for example, polygamy among a variety of religious and tribal cultures throughout the world).

Same-sex marriage is *the legal union of two people of the same sex*. Since 2001 when the Netherlands granted same-sex marriage rights to its citizens, about six other Western nations have granted same-sex marriage rights. Many countries refuse to give same-sex marriage rights to its citizens. Notice that in modern societies, the state government claims the authority to grant marriage rights. This has not always been true for Western societies. A few centuries ago, tribal or clan leaders, a father, or elderly members of small groups could grant marriages.

To legally marry in the United States today, one simply goes to the local county or state office and applies for a state marriage license. The state also claims authority in granting divorce rights to couples. **Divorce** is *the legal dissolution of a previously granted marriage***.**

Most marriages still endure, and the odds are that divorce won't happen to most marriages.

It is a myth that one in two marriages eventually ends in divorce. There are a few myths about U.S. divorce trends that will be dispelled in this chapter. You might have heard the myth of the Seven-Year Itch where divorce happens prior to or shortly after the 7^{th} year. Current government estimates indicate that about 75% of couples make their ten-year anniversary in their first marriage.[1] The myths are false, but divorce does happen more today than it did 50 years ago and more people today are currently divorced than were currently divorced 50 years ago.

We'll discuss these trends in divorce rates below, but first we must define cohort. **A Cohort** is *a group of people who share some demographic characteristic, typically a year such as their birth year or marriage year.* **The Baby Boom** is *a cohort of those born between 1946 and 1964 and represented a never before nor never repeated high period of birth rates that yielded about 70 million living Baby Boomers today.*

There are few different rates for measuring divorce. The most common **divorce rate** used by the U.S. Census Bureau is *the number of divorces/1,000 population.* Another **divorce rate** is *the number of divorces/1,000 married women.* The divorce rate that most hear about is the **predictive divorce rate** which is *the percent of people who had married in a given year who will divorce at some point before death.* The National Center for Health Statistics reported that in 2001, 43% of marriages break up within the first 15 years of marriage.[2] That was the highest official scientifically-based divorce risks estimate ever reported. So for example of those who married in the year 2001, about 43% are predicted to divorce at some point before their 15^{th} anniversary. It is estimated that close to half of them will divorce before one of them dies.

Figure 1 shows the United States marriage and divorce rates/ 1,000 population from 1900 to 2006. Notice that divorce rates have always been much lower than marriage rates in the U.S. Also notice that marriage and divorce rates moved in very similar directions over the last century. A slight rise is visible after both WWI and WWII ended (1919 and 1946). A slight decline is visible during the

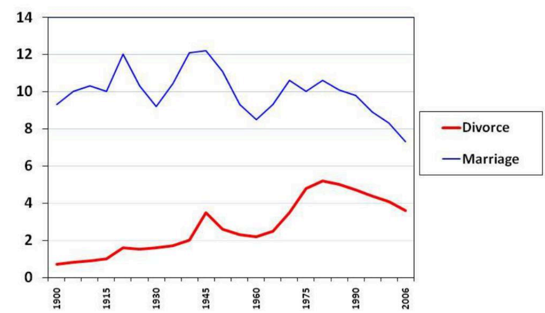
Depression (1930s) and turbulent 1960s. Most importantly notice that both marriage and divorce rates have been declining in the 1990s and 2000s. Younger people today are *waiting to marry until their late twenties* (**delayed marriage**) while cohabiting has increased in the U.S.

Figure 1 also shows the trends in ratio of divorces to marriages for the U.S. In 1900 there was 1 divorce per 13 marriages that year or 1:13; in 1930, 1:6; in 1950, 1:4; in 1970, 1:3; 1980, 1:2; 1990, 1:2; and 2006, 1:2. Today, that means that every year there are two state-sanctioned legal marriages with only one state-sanctioned legal dissolution of a marriage. For the last 12 months ending in December 2008 there was a marriage rate of 7.1 marriages for every 1,000 population and a divorce rate of 3.5 divorces for every 1,000 population. That translates to over 2.1 million marriages and about 1 million divorces in 2008.

Figure 2 shows a more detailed description of U.S. divorce rates since 1940 and some of the factors that contributed to them. As you already noticed in Figure 1, divorce rates were relatively low prior to 1940. But, in the 1940s WWII was ongoing and divorce rates moved upward with a spike in 1946. Keep in mind that 1946 was the United States' most unusual year for family-related rates. Divorce rates, marriage rates, birth rates, and remarriage rates surged during this year while couples married at their lowest median age in U.S. history.

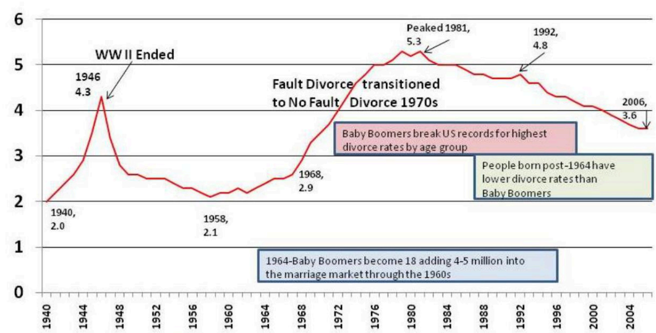
After 1946, divorce rates fell to steady low levels and remained there until the 1960s when they slowly began to rise. The Baby Boomers directly and indirectly influenced the rise of divorce rates. In 1964 the first among the Baby Boomers became 18 and entered the prime marriage market years. For the next two decades Baby Boomers added about four million men and women to the marriage market each year. Thus, Baby Boomers raised the numbers of married people and thereby the numbers at risk of divorcing.

Figure 1: United States Marriage and Divorce Rates per 1,000 Population 1900-2006*



*Retrieved from www.census.gov 9 September 2009 various tables and Editions of Statistical Abstracts

Figure 2: United States Divorce Rates per 1,000 Population 1940-2006*



*Retrieved from www.census.gov 9 September 2009 various tables and Editions Of Statistical Abstracts

Directly, Baby Boomers contributed to the divorce rate. Baby Boomers and those immediately preceding them (born 1936-1945) have very high rates of divorce. Table 1 shows that the experience of ever having divorced is not directly related to age. In other words, the oldest members of society have not divorced the most. In fact, it is the Baby Boomers and Pre-Baby Boomers who divorced the most followed by the oldest and then the younger cohorts. The ↑ symbol in Table 1 signifies the highest *ever* divorced rates. This is in the 50-59 year old cohort (these are Baby Boomers born 1946-1955). The highest *currently* divorced rates also found among the women and men of the 50-59 cohort. The Baby Boomers 1946-1955 still hold the highest divorce rates by any cohort in U.S. history. Their unprecedented high divorce rates raised the overall divorce rates for the entire nation.

Table 1:Percent Ever Divorced *and Percent Currently Divorced in 2004 by Age Groups US: Boomers Ages 40-59 in 2004 (Highest Values represented by ↑)

Ages:	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-49 Boomers	50-59 Boomers	60-69 Pre-Boomers	70+	Total
Males Ever Div.	0.1%	0.8%	5.1%	13.1%	20.7%	30.3%	**37.5%↑**	34.1%	20.6%	20.7%
Males Currently Div.	0.1%	0.7%	3.2%	6.6%	10.9%	14.7%	**16.2%↑**	13.0%	6.2%	9.3%
Females Ever Div.	0.2%	2.5%	7.0%	17.1%	25.6%	33.9%	**40.7%↑**	32.3%	17.8%	22.9%
Females Currently Div.	0.1%	1.7%	4.1%	9.1%	11.7%	16.4%	**19.4%↑**	15.0%	7.2%	10.9%

* Data retrieved 16 September, 2009 from www.Census.gov Number Timing and Duration of Marriages and Divorces 2004 released in 2007: Table 3: Marital History for People 15 Years and Over by Age and Sex: 2004

When scientists and government researchers predict the risk you might have of divorcing they use the experiences of currently married people who have and have not divorced– therein lies part of the complication of deriving an "odds or risks of divorce" that we can have confidence in enough to offer advice to the soon-to-be-married . The U.S. has had its worst divorcing cohort ever and some of them will likely divorce again before their death. The trend among younger marrieds is to remain married longer and divorce less, but what if they collectively have an increase in their marital dissolution experiences? What if all of a sudden, millions of currently married couples flock to the courthouse to file for divorce?

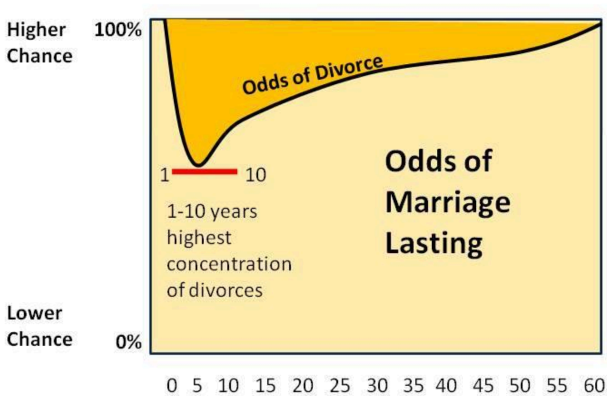
First, that scenario isn't likely to happen because today's married couples tend to remain married. Second, and this is more important, the national risk of divorce is different from your personal risk of divorce in one crucial factor—you have a great deal of influence in your own marriage quality and outcome. You and your spouse have much control over your marital experience, how you enhance it, how you protect it from stressors that can undermine it, and finally how you maintain it.

Family scientists refer to **marital entropy** as *the principle based on the belief that if a marriage does not receive preventative maintenance and upgrades it will move towards decay and break down***.** Hearing an evening news report on national divorce trends has much less impact on your marriage than a relaxing weekend away together to recharge your romance and commitment which is a marital maintenance strategy designed to combat marital entropy. A proactive and assertive approach to your marital quality is far more influential than most other factors leading to divorce.

The longer a couple is married the lower their odds of divorce. Figure 3 shows a visual depiction of how the odds of divorce decline over time. The first three years of marriage require many adjustments for newlyweds. Of special mention is the process of transitioning into a cohesive couple relationship with negotiated financial, sexual, social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual rules of engagement. Most couples have many of these negotiations in place by years 7-10. Since longevity of a marriage is often associated with the arrival of children, accumulation of wealth, establishment of acceptable social status (being married is still highly regarded as a status), and the buffering of many of life's daily stressors the average couple finds it difficult and too costly to divorce, even though some features of the marriage are less than desirable.

THEORIES OF DIVORCE

Figure 3:Estimated Odds of Marriage Lasting Based on Number of Years Married*



*Estimated odds from data and tables Retrieved from www.census.gov 15 September 2009 various tables and Editions Of Statistical Abstracts and Vital Statistics Reports Vol 43 No 9 and Advance Reports of Final Divorce Statistics

Using Social Exchange Theory as a basis for understanding why couples stay married or divorce, you begin to see that spouses consider the cost-to-benefit ratio; they look at rewards minus punishments, and they weigh the pros and cons in their decisions.

Social Exchange Theory claims that *society is composed of ever present interactions among individuals who attempt to maximize rewards while minimizing costs*. Assumptions in this theory are similar to Conflict Theory assumptions yet have their interactionist underpinnings. Basically, human beings are rational creatures capable of making sound choices when the pros and cons of the choice are understood. This theory uses a formula to measure the choice making processes (REWARDS-COSTS) = OUTCOMES. This can be translated to *what I get out of it* minus *what I lose by doing it* equals *my decision*. In 1979 Levinger and Moles published their model wherein they discussed *the rational choices made by spouses who were considering divorcing or remaining married*. It's been referred to as **Levinger's Model**. Levinger's Model is Attractions-

Barriers +/- Alternative Attractions = My Decision to Stay Married or Divorce. Table 2 below shows an example of how Levinger's Model clarifies the choices people might make and their perceived rewards and costs.

Table 2: Levinger's Model of Rational Choice in Divorce*

(Attractions - **Magnets=rewards that stem from being married.**	**Barriers) +/-** **Walls=punishments or losses you'd face if you divorced. You'd have to climb over these walls if you divorced.**	**Alternative Attractions** **Lures Away From Your Marriage=something attractive that you could obtain if you were unmarried.**
Positive Social Status	Loss of Positive status and new negative status-stigma of being "divorced"	Liberated status with freedom to explore relationships with others
Wealth Accumulation	Division of wealth (at least by half)	Opportunity to be disentangled with family costs
Co-parenting	Co-parenting with ex-spouse, never truly free from this role	Share custody alleviating some degree of burden of parenting
Sex	Much less availability and predictability of sexual partner	Possibility of new sexual partner
Health Support and Stress Buffer	Loss of health support and additional stress from divorce process.	Different types of stressors and relief from pre-divorce stresses
Stay Married Formula **↑ attractions**	**↑ barriers**	**↓ Lures**
Divorce Formula **↓attractions**	**↓barriers**	**↑ Lures**

(* Levinger, G. and Moles, O. C. "Divorce and Separation: Context, Causes, and Consequences" 1979, Basic Books).

In Table 2 you see that **Levinger's Attractions** are simply *the magnets that draw you to the marriage or rewards that stem from being married.* These are the payoffs that come from being married and include positive social status, wealth accumulation, co-parenting, sexual intercourse, health support and stress buffer that marriage typically brings to each spouse, as well as others. Each individual defines his or her own attractions. **Levinger's Barriers** are simply *the costs or punishments that might be incurred if a married person chose to divorce.* These might include losing all the attractions and magnets, changing to a negative status, suffering a division of wealth, co-parenting at a distance and without same-household convenience, experiencing a change/decline in sexual frequency and predictability, losing the health and stress buffer that married couples enjoy (even unhappily married couples experience some measure of this buffer), and others. Each individual defines his or her own barriers.

Levinger's Alternative Attractions are basically *lures or something appealing that now-married spouses might find rewarding if they divorce.* These might include liberation and the freedom that comes from being single (albeit divorced) and newly available on the market, a financial disentanglement from ex-spouse and at times child care (especially common view held among men who often share custody but pay less in the end for their children), alleviation of parenting when children are with other parent, freedom from unwanted sexual demands and or possibility of new sexual partner or partners, the abandonment of overbearing stressors from marriage, as well as others. Of course each individual defines his or her own alternative attractions.

The last two rows in Table 2 show how you can use a formula to understand the propensity a couple has to divorcing or staying married. In the Stay Married formula, the attractions and barriers are high while the lures are low. Translated into Social Exchange thinking– there are many rewards in the marriage, with many barriers that would prove more punishing if a spouse wanted to divorce. At the same time there are few lures that might draw a spouse away from their marriage.

The divorce formula is also revealing. Attractions are low, barriers are low, and lures are high. In other words, there are few rewards from being married, low barriers or low perceived punishments from divorcing, with high lures to draw a spouse away from the marriage. One would expect satisfied couples to have the "stay married" formula while dissatisfied couples would have the "divorce formula." By the way, the formula is only descriptive and not predictive (it cannot tell you what an individual couple might do). Some with the divorce formula in place remain married for years. A few with the stay married formula become dissatisfied and begin focusing on lures.

One Social Exchange principle that clarifies the rational processes experienced by couples is called the concept of equity. **Equity** is *a sense that the interactions are fair to us and fair to others* *involved by the consequences of our choices.* For example, why is it that women who work 40 hours a week and have a husband who also works 40 hours a week do not perform the same number of weekly hours of housework and childcare? Scientists have surveyed many couples to find the answer. Most often it boils down to a sense of fairness or equity. She defines it as her role to do housework and childcare, while he doesn't; because they tend to fight when she does try to get him to perform housework and because she may think he's incompetent, they live with an inequitable arrangement as though it were equitable.

WHAT PREDICTS DIVORCE IN THE U.S.?

Years of research on divorce has yielded a few common themes of what puts a couple at more or less risk of divorce. Everyone is at risk of divorcing, but the presence of divorce risks does not determine the certain outcome of divorce for everyone. There is a geography factor of U.S. divorce. Divorce rates tend to be lower in the North East and Higher in the West. Nevada typically has the highest of all state divorce rates, but is often excluded from comparison because of the "Vegas marriage" or "Vegas divorce" effect.

Simply enduring the difficult times of marriage is associated with remaining married. Most of the factors that contribute to divorce lie to a great extent within the realm of influence and choice had by the individual. For example, waiting until at least your 20th birthday to marry lowers divorce risks tremendously. In fact the best ages to marry are 25-29 (interestingly, the U.S. median age at marriage for men and women falls within this age group). Being younger than 19 years old at your first marriage is extremely risky. Why?

Basically the explanation is that most younger couples are disadvantaged economically, socially, and emotionally, and their circumstances have accompanying hardships that would not be present had they waited to age 25 (for example, had they graduated college first and prepared themselves for the labor force and for the emotional complexity of marriage). Many scientific studies indicate that there is a refining process of social and intellectual capacities that is not reached until around age 26 and those who marry young exchange their prime years of self-discovery for marriage. Another major individual choice-related factor is marrying because of an unplanned pregnancy. Most babies born in the U.S. are born to a married couple. But, today about 40% are born to single mothers of all ages. Even though many of these single mothers marry the baby's father, numerous studies have indicated that they have a higher likelihood of their marriage ending in divorce.

Many individuals struggle to completely surrender their single status. They mentally remain on the marriage market in case "someone better than their current spouse comes along." Norval Glenn argued that many individuals see marriage as a temporary state while they keep an eye open for someone better. "More honest vows would often be "as long as we both shall love" or "as long as no one better comes along." Glenn gets at the core of the cultural values associated with risks of divorcing.[4] These values have changed over time. As more people wanted to divorce, divorce laws became more lax and as the laws loosened, more people were able to divorce.

Robert and Jeanette Lauer are a husband-wife team who studied commitment and endurance of married couples. They identified 29 factors among couples who had been together for 15 years or more. They found that both husbands and wives reported as their number one and two factors that their spouse was their best friend and that they liked their spouse as a person.[5] The Lauers also studied the levels of commitment couples had to their marriage. The couples reported that they were in fact committed to and supportive of, not only their own marriage, but marriage as an institution. Irreconcilable differences are common to marriage, and the basic strategy to deal with them is to negotiate as much as is possible, accept the irresolvable differences, and finally live happily with them.

COMBATING DIVORCE

A positive outlook for your marriage as a rewarding and enjoyable relationship is a realistic outlook. Some couples worry about being labeled naïve if they express the joys and rewards their marriage brings to their lives. Be hopeful and positive on the quality and duration of your marriage, because the odds are still in your favor. You've probably seen commercials where online matchmaking websites strut their success in matching people to one another. There are websites, along with DVDs, CDs, self-help books, and seminars for marital enhancement available to couples who seek them.6

Doomed, soaring divorce rates, spousal violence, husbands killing wives, decline of marriage, and other gloomy headlines are very common on electronic, TV, and print news stories. The media functions to disseminate information and its primary goal is to make money by selling advertising. The media never has claimed to be scientific in their stories.

They don't really try to represent the entire society with every story. In fact, media is more accurately described as biased by the extremes, based on the nature of stories that are presented to us the viewers. Many media critics have made the argument for years that the news and other media use fear as a theme for most stories, so that we will consume them. Most in the U.S. choose marriage and most who are divorced will eventually marry again. True, marriage is not bliss, but it is a preferred lifestyle by most U.S. adults. From the Social Exchange perspective, assuming that people maximize their rewards while minimizing their losses, marriage is widely defined as desirable and rewarding. There are strategies individuals can use to minimize the risks of divorce (personal level actions). Table 3 lists ten of these actions.

Table 3. Ten Actions to Minimize the Risk of Divorce.

Wait until at least 20 years old to marry, 25 is better.

Avoid premarital pregnancy and don't marry just because of a pregnancy.

Become proactive in maintaining your marriage (books, seminars, counseling).

Understand risks of cohabitation (cohabitation ≠ divorce).

Once married, leave the marriage market; don't keep an eye open for something better.

Learn to compromise with each other. Work around those irreconcilable differences.

Keep a positive outlook and look beyond today.

Take your time in selecting a mate. Don't rush into marriage.

Take the media with a grain of salt. Don't assume your marriage will be like the headlines.

Focus on the positive benefits of being married and don't dwell on the negatives.

Decades of studies have indicated that those who ever have cohabited have a higher likelihood of divorce. Cohabitation has been studied especially in contrast between cohabiting and married couples. Clear findings consistently show that cohabiting and marriage are two different creatures.[7] Those who cohabit tend to establish patterns of relationships that later inhibit marital duration. However, most agree this is due to individuals bringing their unmarried and cohabiting ideologies into their marriages. In other words, while people live together, but are not married, they might form the foundation of their relationship with idea that they can leave at any time, and sometimes these thoughts then translate into the marriage.

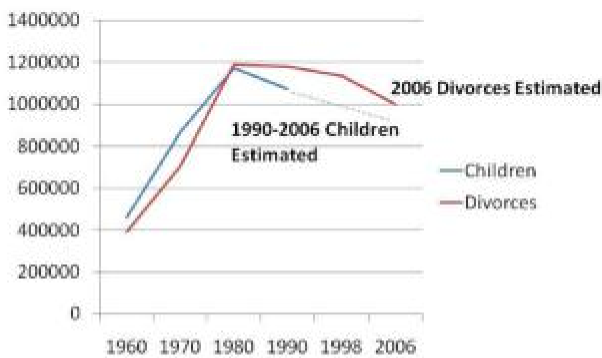
Cohabitation is more common in the U.S. today than ever before. Cohabiters are considered to be unique from those who marry in a variety of ways, yet the similarities between married and cohabiting spouses suggests that their lifestyles overlap. In both lifestyles, relationships are formed and often ended. Cohabiters have more than twice the risks of their relationship ending than do marrieds.8

CHILDREN AND DIVORCE

Andrew Cherlin discussed the uniqueness of cohabiting versus married couples. In sum, cohabiters often feel financially ill-equipped to marry, have lower expectations of relationship satisfaction than do marrieds, and often expect a shorter relational duration

than marrieds. Cherlin's main thesis is the stability for children when adult intimate relationships end and his concern is well grounded in the statistics of divorce. Figure 7 (there is no figure 4, 5, or 6) shows that millions of U.S. children have experienced their parents divorces since 1960 with nearly one million children experiencing their parents' divorce each year.

Figure 7: United States Estimates of Numbers of Children Involved in Parents' Divorce and Number of Divorces 1960-2006*



*Retrieved from www.census.gov 9 September 2009 various tables and Editions Of Statistical Abstracts and Vital Statistics Reports Vol 43 No 9

Let's think for a minute about what is best for children in terms of their parents remaining married or divorcing. Every home should provide a safe, loving, and nurturing environment where basic needs are met and where children are nurtured into the greatness of their potential. Sounds ideal, right? But, that's not the real-world experience of most children. Familial stresses and hardships are the norm. Being a child of divorced parents does not imply that you are in some way worse off than children whose parents remain married.

Divorce is a blessing/positive life change for many children and their parents. In fact, some children of divorce are very happily married in their own adult relationships because of their sensitive searching for a safe and compatible partner and because they don't want their children to suffer as they themselves did. At the same time, having a parent who divorced probably increases the odds of divorce for most children. Judith Wallerstein has followed a clinical sample of children of divorce for nearly four decades. Her conclusions match those of other researchers—children whose parents divorce are impacted throughout their lives in a variety of ways. The same could be said of children whose parents remained married and raised them in a caustic home environment.

Whenever a couple divorces (or separates for cohabiters) children experience changes in the stability of their lives at many levels. Some of these children have been through divorce more than once. When their parents divorce, children assume blame for it and believe that they should try to get their parents back together (Like Walt Disney's The Parent Trap movie). In reality, the children typically don't influence their parents' choices to divorce directly and children are certainly part of the equation, but rarely the sole cause of divorce. On top of that divorce brings change which is stressful by its very nature. Children worry about being abandoned. They have had their core attachment to their parents violated. They become disillusioned with authority as they try to balance the way things ought to be with the way things actually are. They become aware of ex-spouse tensions and realize that they themselves are the subject of some of these tensions.

Researchers agree that it is better for children to be forewarned of the coming divorce. Parents should make it clear to children that they are not the cause of divorce, that both parents still love them and will always be their parents. They should show them that even though divorce is difficult they can work together to get through it. Children should never be the messenger or go between or in any other way assume the burdens associated with the dissolved marriage. Table 4 presents some core guidelines for divorcing parents. These are strategies that have been found to be present in strong divorced families. Much research is conducted on what's working for these families. Unfortunately, many of these strategies can't possibly work for ex-spouses who have much animosity toward each other.

They are still harboring hurt feelings and can't get past them right now-some never get pass them. Spouses who find themselves at the point of divorce would benefit, and the children would also benefit, from pre-divorce counseling. This is counseling to help them have a good divorce, not counseling to help them reconcile.

Table 4. Core Guidelines for Divorcing Parents.

Respect each other, get along, and come to terms with the nuances of co-parenting.

Set up and maintain predictable routines, especially with regard to the sharing of custody.

Get professional help for children when needed.

Ensure the safety and well-being of the children.

Help children remember the good times before the marriage started to go sour.

Ex-spouses should agree on discipline and be consistent in applying it.

Encourage the children to have a strong relationship with ex-in-laws.

Get your own professional help and avoid having the children be caregivers for the parents.

Create new rituals.

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2004 Detailed Tables-Number, Timing and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2004; Table 2 Percent Reaching Stated Anniversary, By Marriage Cohort and Sex, and Sex for first and Second Marriages, Retrieved 9 Sept 2009 from www.census.gov
2. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/01news/firstmarr.htm

3. Glenn, N. D. (1991). The recent trend in marital success in the United States. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53(2), 261-270.
4. Lauer, R. (1986). *'Til death do us part: How couples stay together*; Google Lauer and Lauer and Kerr various years
5. http://marriage.eharmony.com/
6. see studies by Lawrence Ganong and Marilyn Coleman.
7. Cherlin, A. J. (2008). Multiple partnerships and children's wellbeing. *Austrian Institute of Family Studies*, 89, 33-36.

16. 15. Remarriage and Stepfamilies

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following:

- Define stepfamily, remarriage, enmeshed and other terminology related to remarriage and stepfamilies.
- Discuss the complexity of stepfamilies.
- Recall strategies for successful stepfamilies.
- Discuss dating after divorce.

In December 2008, there were just over two million marriages and one million divorces in the U.S.[1] There are many society-wide trends that undergird these marriage and divorce statistics. First, there is an 86% probability for women and 81% for men that they will marry by age 40;[2] second, about 48.8% of women and 50% of men had cohabited to some degree in the past;[3] third, only about 27% of women and 33% of men married have never cohabited or been married before-this means they married for the first time with no cohabitation history;[4] fourth, 38.5% of all U.S. births are to unwed mothers;[5] fifth, there is a pattern of marrying, divorcing, and remarrying and even divorcing a second time;[6] and sixth, a 2001 study found that 70% of currently married couples had the husband and wife both being in their first marriage-this means 30% were in a second, third, or greater marriage.7

Thus, most people in the U.S. will marry, some for the first time, some who've been married or cohabiting, and some who've parented a baby out of wedlock. Many of those married persons will divorce at a future date. Many of those divorced persons will remarry (half to three-fourths). Some of those remarried persons will divorce (a second divorce). Some of those second divorced persons will remarry, etc. The U.S. is drawn to marriage, yet does not always get it right the first time. This simple statistically-based principle, "your current marriage has the best odds of NOT ending in divorce and becoming a source of joy and strength for you" is worth remembering. Those odds of success are highest in the first marriage, second highest in the second marriage, and so on.

GETTING BACK INTO THE DATING MARKET

Some couples do divorce then remarry each other, but this is rare. Remarriage after divorce is much more likely to occur if the divorcees are in their 20s. The odds of remarriage decline in the 30s, 40s, 50s, etc. Remarriage typically occurs sooner for the man than the woman. When a newly divorced woman or man finds themselves on the market, they often feel inept. Many express concern in lacking the courting skills required to meet someone new or initiate new relationships. For the most part, they are right. They, like most married people mentally leave the marriage-courting market and avail themselves to the business of being married and parents. Their sudden reentry into the dating scene is typically unexpected and intimidating. Men tend to move more quickly into the dating arena, seeking for social and emotional connection from their new-found friends. Women are typically more socially and emotionally connected while married, so after the divorce they tend to have more friends and more ongoing family relationships.

A study of elderly divorced men and women contrasted their current state in terms of financial and social-emotional well being. By far, men were better off financially and women were better off in social and emotional areas of their lives.[8] This tends to be true in most cases for young and old alike. Men rarely get custody of the children after divorce. If his ex-wife is awarded an average child support and alimony, he still experiences an increase in his standard of living after divorce and he has the freedom from child rearing (which is not very healthy for the children).

For example, let's say he earned $48,000 per year and had three children. That would mean that $48,000 divided by five family members equals a pre-divorce standard of living of $9,600 per family member. Let's say she was awarded a hefty $12,000 per year in child support and alimony. Because she now has the children their standard of living drops to $3,000 per year per family member. His post-divorce standard of living skyrockets to $36,000 for himself. If he does the honorable thing and pays his financial obligations, then his ex-wife qualifies for welfare and he can live with relative financial freedom. That pattern, even though the details vary, is extremely common among today's divorcees-she has the children and poverty and he has the freedom and finances.

This, in part, explains why he is more likely to start dating sooner than her, and eventually why he remarries sooner than her. When formerly married individuals enter the dating and marriage market they experience similar fears and anxieties that never married daters feel. But, there is a significant difference in what they bring to the marriage market place. Each has a history of a long-term sexual, social, emotional, and co-existing relationship. Add to that the issues that contributed to the marital breakup, and you are looking at a complex dating experience with divorcees experiencing the date while carrying a vast store of positive and negative memories and experiences into the date. One might expect that remarriage courtships would take longer than never married courtships from first date to marriage. The opposite has been found to be true. Most remarries court for less time before they remarried. It is believed that they are more aware of themselves, of how intimate relationships work, and of what they need at the moment than never marrieds. It's even more complicated than that.

When someone is on the marriage market they do look for homogamous mates (persons of similar tastes and backgrounds). They also look for those they are compatible with and for those who survive the filtering process (elimination of undesirables from the marriage pool). But, remarriers filter with a specific and unique filter in comparison to never marrieds. They look for someone who is not the same person they just divorced. They especially try to find someone who they perceive will do for them what their ex could not or would not do. Like all persons on the marriage market, remarriers look to maximize their rewards while minimizing their losses or costs (Social Exchange Theory). Figure 5 shows a diagram of some of these rewards and costs, which remarriers would typically consider while on the market. Notice on the top of the diagram that men tend to have more rewards when they come to the marriage market than do women. Add to that the absence of children and you can see, in part, why men remarry sooner than women.

The "rewards" lists some of the desirable traits sought out by men and women alike. Some of these are emphasized more by potential mates than others. Financial security is a major draw for potential mates. Adequacy, comfort, and luxury are examples of desirable levels of financial security. For decades Sociologists have taught the principle of relative deprivation. **Relative deprivation** is *the perception of advantage or disadvantage that comes from our own personal experiences in comparison to others***.** This means, we compare our current circumstances to the circumstances of others based on our past experiences. When divorced with three children, a single mother may find a potential mate attractive if he can simply relieve some of her financial burden. If divorced with three children and middle class, a single mother may find a potential mate attractive if he can maintain the middle class status. Finally, a wealthy divorcee may seek someone to provide luxury.

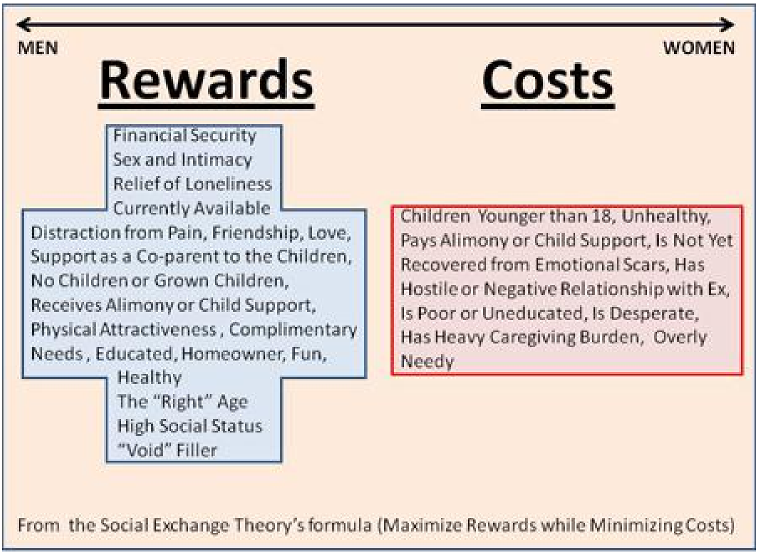


Figure 5. The Rewards and Costs Considered by Men and Women in the Remarriage Marketplace.

In understanding expectations on finances or any other desirable trait in a remarriage partner, it is crucial to consider the issue of "perceived advantage or disadvantage." Not only do remarrieds (and everyone else) consider their current rewards in contrast to past experiences, but they do so subjectively. In other words, emotions play into the formula, which modify the maximize rewards and minimize costs decision-making process. Also, some may ignore money altogether if they feel a stronger need for companionship or trustworthiness. Married couples have sex about three times per week. After divorce it drops dramatically for both ex-spouses. Sex and the intimacy that often comes with it motivate both men and women to seek out another mate. Loneliness is a big issue for divorcees. Men quickly find dating partners and are capable of attaining intimacy through dating. Women have the company of children and other family and friends that were in place before the divorce. But, those relationships may not fulfill the social and emotional needs that can be found in a spouse or intimate partner.

As simple as it may sound, if a desirable partner is available, then he or she is more appealing. Someone not in a deep relationship or engaged is immediately available for interaction and potential relationship building. Many seek another partner to distract them from their divorce pain and grief. There is nothing innately wrong about this. Healthy dating and associations can be part of the healing process. But marrying too soon, during the still-in-recovery state of mind, can be detrimental because once the injured partner heals, they may discover that they were not a good match after all. Divorce risks are higher in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th marriages than they are in first marriages. You've probably heard about "rebound relationships or marriages." Marrying on the rebound is considered to be premature and unwise.

Friendship and love are essential needs all people have. Adjusting to the absences of friendship and love, even if your children are with you, is a difficult task for many. Adults often need adult friendship and love. For single mothers with custody (and the few single fathers who have custody), seeking out a co-parent who can live in the home with the family is a major reward. The single parent wants the children to have two parents influencing them and will often seek a mother or a father for the kids. For younger and older singles, children are an issue. Some younger divorcees don't want to marry a single parent while others do. Typically, the presence of children in the divorced woman's care will lower the odds of her remarriage.

Children over the age of 18 are not as strong a deterrent as are the younger ones. The stepfather or stepmother only commits to be a consultant to an adult stepchild rather than a day-to-day caregiver. If a single mother receives alimony or child support, the financial burden that might come with the remarriage are perceived as being lighter. Often a man must balance the financial costs as well as the social and emotional costs associated with marrying a single mother.

Physical attractiveness is important to many who remarry. It may weigh into the formula for some more than others. Divorced men, like never married men, consider physical attractiveness when choosing another mate. It is weighed, though in comparison to the other attributes which are important, given their past marital problems and issues. When we marry it helps to have complimentary needs. In other words, if she needs to be cared for and he needs to take care of someone, their needs complement one another. Not all needs are complimentary, and no one can fulfill all of their spouse's needs all the time. This is true in all relationships. In remarriages, the spouses use the concept of equity in assessing their rewards. **Equity** is *the overall sense of getting a good deal (or a bad one) when considering all the perceived rewards and costs of a relationship.*

To an outsider, a couple may appear to be experiencing an imbalance in give and take. Fortunately, a relationship only has to feel fair to the individual spouses. A remarried woman, who wanted her ex to spend more time with the children, may find it more valuable when her current husband does so and may weigh that as being more important than other contributions. Equity is subjective and changes as new needs arise or new circumstances emerge that families have to accommodate. Being educated, especially college educated means more income and more desirable traits in a potential mate. College graduates have developed a sense of delayed gratification, have less traditional (and more diverse) family role expectations, and have many other resources to bring to the relationship in comparison to high school graduates. Owning a home as opposed to renting an apartment is an important reward.

A home provides privacy, income benefits, and a clear boundary, which can all serve to aid the development of the remarriage and new family system. Finding a healthy mate is also subjectively defined. In the later years, elderly women almost always have to consider the current and near future health of a potential mate. Younger people consider health as well, but not with the same intensity as older daters who have to take into account future caregiving issues. The "right age" for a person to find a new mate is the one that works best for him or her, given their current needs. Sometimes twenty-something mothers will marry thirtysomething fathers for stability and continuity. Other times a younger spouse may be more appealing for a variety of reasons. Some seek out the wealthy, famous, popular, or well-known as a new mate and these desires drive their filters. Finally, some simply have a void where the lost marriage or intimate relationship once resided. They may seek to find someone quickly if they perceive that the presence of a spouse or partner will fill that void.

When considering costs, keep in mind that women typically leave a marriage with more costs or losses which on the singles scene inhibit her finding a new mate with the same ease as do divorced men. She often has custody. Younger children cost money, need supervision and nurturing, and tire their mother such that she has less energy to be a companion and friend. There is no difference in divorced men and women in terms of health issues. But, divorce is considered to be an extreme stressor.[11] Divorced persons most likely suffer health declines from the stresses that came with the divorce. But some may have long-term or chronic health issues that, when considered in the overall formula, are costs and not rewards.

Single mothers often report high levels of stress, fatigue, and having people around, but still feeling lonely. Over time this may lead to health issues. If a single mother (or father) must pay court-ordered payments each month, then this is a financial cost or loss. Men are much more likely to be ordered to pay child support or alimony. To a potential wife this goes in the loss category. Many divorcees carry unresolved issues for years at the emotional, psychological, spiritual, and even intellectual levels. When the divorce has not settled in at all of these levels, they often have unresolved issues and may have some emotional scars.[12]

Ex-partners can sometimes be dangerous to their ex and his/her new partner. Annoying phone calls, arguments, mean or threatening letters, property damage, and even threats of harm are launched from ex-spouses to new wives or husbands. In most cases, these are not criminal in nature. Children are sometimes used as battering rams against the ex. They are mistreated, misinformed, or neglected in an attempt to seek vengeance.

Entering a new relationship where entanglements from the ex are not present is more rewarding. Poor and uneducated men and women offer less financial and intellectual input to a new marriage. This may not matter to some, but single mothers often place this as a high priority. If a potential mate has many children, cares for a dependent family member or friend, or has a severely ill child she or he may appear to be very unappealing.

Caregiving is common, but it is rarely desired by potential mates. Most caregiving is given by women. Few would willingly take on a caregiving role out of altruistic intentions. Some may take it on if other rewards appeared to compensate creating an overall sense of equity. A desperate or overly needy person enters the relationship with a disadvantage in terms of leverage for negotiating with another spouse. Being needy or desperate may increase the odds of ending up with an insensitive or abusive partner or spouse.

Another issue common to finding a mate is the one of propinquity (sharing geographic closeness and meeting in the same geographic area). The Internet has change the issue of propinquity by allowing people to interact electronically through social and dating sites that help in the filtering process. These sites can eliminate unwanted dates and yield a more desirable pool of potential mates (at least that's what they promise).

One 2009 ranking reported that Match.com and eHarmony had 20 million subscribers; Yahoo Personals had 9 million, and chemistry.com and Perfectmatch.com each had 4 million.[13] In fact, online dating is projected to increase between 2007-2012 with revenues topping $1.9 billion by 2012.[14]

Sautter et al. (2010) reported that Internet dating is more common among computer-savvy and already socially networked daters.[15] Chih-Chien *et al.* (2010) also reported three categories of online daters based on their motivations. First were the **adventurers** who *thrive in the anonymity provided by the Internet which shields them from elimination through traditional* *social norms.* Adventurers seek communication, curiosity, and even emotional support as they seek to meet new people.

Escapers to a virtual world were the second category. **Escapers** *find the real world too harsh and relax in the relatively anxiety-free cyber world.* Third and finally were the **Romantics** *who sincerely seek for love, friendship, and sex.* Sex is not the major motivation, but is a common motivation for some Internet daters.[16]

COMPLEXITIES OF STEPFAMILIES

Remarriage is *the legal union of a man and woman that follows the dissolution of a previous marriage for one or both spouses.* **Stepfamilies** are *formed when children from another marriage or relationship are brought into a family through a new marriage.* Stepfamilies can form in any of the following ways, a wife or husband was married before, a wife or husband cohabited before, a wife or husband was a single parent before and a child from that previous relationship becomes a step-son or step-daughter. Step-children can be of any age. *When a former emotionally or legally significant relationship existed for a current spouse it creates* a **bi-nuclear family,** or a family with two core adult relationships formed around the original adults who are no longer together (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 shows the relationship between Husband 1 (H1) and Wife 1 (W1) who were married for 3 years then divorced. They had a daughter together, Marie. Husband 1 then met Wife 2 (W2) who was a widow. They married. This made Wife 2 a step-mother to Marie then Husband 1 and Wife 2 had twins-a son (Sam) and daughter (Lisa) together. Husband 1 and Wife 2 now have a bi-nuclear family with a nucleus from the second marriage and one from Husband 1 and Wife 1's first marriage. They form a stepfamily subsystem that includes Wife's 1 & 2 and Husband's 1 & 2 (even though Husband 2 is deceased, his position as Wife 2's first husband is part of the complexity of the stepfamily 1 subsystem.

Wife 1 and her daughter Marie had a single parent subsystem for nearly a decade. The complexity of this system included Marie visiting her dad and step-mom and receiving child support payments from Husband 1. For the most part this relationship was functional and not very negative. When Marie turned 10, Wife 1 remarried to a divorced man, Husband 3. Husband 3's former wife (W3) left him and wanted neither custody nor alimony. Wife 1 and Husband 3 formed stepfamily subsystem 2 which included Marie and Husband 1 to the extent that visitation and child support were concerned. Husband 3 and Wife 1 struggled financially for the first 3 years of their marriage, because of the loss of assets that came from Husband 1 and Wife 3's divorce.

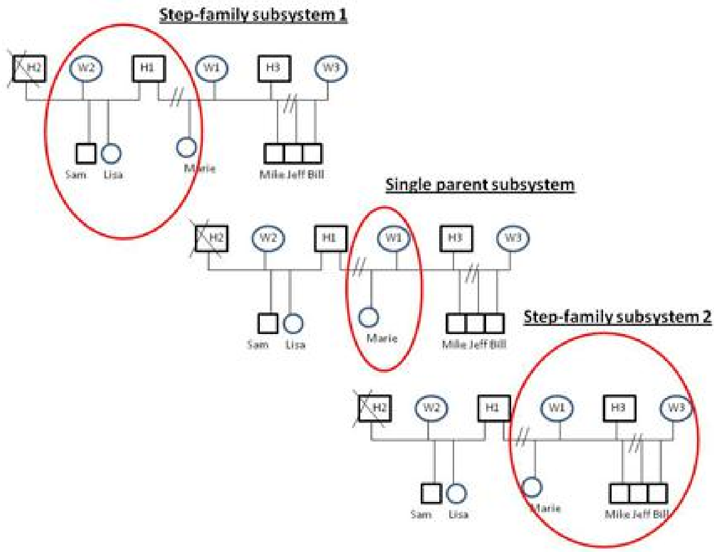
Within one year of their marriage, Wife 1 and Husband 3 developed deeply rooted financial issues with the ex-husband. Husband 3 was angry at Husband 1 and it placed emotional strain on Wife 1 and Husband 3's relationship. Husband 1 refused to pay child support because he was certain that the money he gave for Marie was being spent on Mike, Jeff, and Bill. Husband 1 demanded receipts from Wife 1 and Husband 3. Of course this was not court ordered and was extremely impractical. It gave Husband 1 too much influence in Wife 1 and Husband 3's marriage. Then Husband 1's parents wanted to see Marie and Husband 3 refused them as retaliation for the financial mess. Lawsuits were threatened. Things only got worse after that. Welcome to the world of the bi-nuclear family complexity. Stepfamilies are perhaps the most complicated family systems in existence.

In February 2008, the Census Bureau gave a report of the living arrangements of children in the U.S.[18]. The highlights of the report read: In 2004, 73.2 million children under age 18 lived in American households. The majority of these children (70%) lived with two parents. Most (87%) of the children who lived with two parents lived with their biological mother and father. Twenty-six percent of all children (19.3 million) lived with one parent. The majority (88%) of these children lived with their mother.

Based on these survey results, 5.5 million children (7.6%) were living with at least one step-parent in 2005. The same figure was only 6.9% in 1996 and seven percent in 2001. By racial category the

2004 data broke down to eight percent of White, six percent of Black, 2.5% of Asian, and seven percent of Hispanic children.[19] The same report showed that fathers were twice as likely to live with a step-child as was a mother.[20]

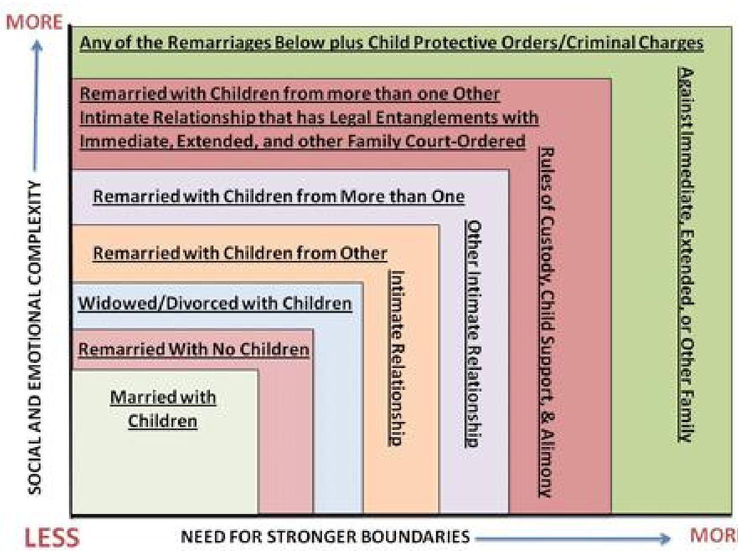
Figure 1. Diagram of Stepfamilies and Other Family Subsystems.[21]



When relationships have crossed more than one social arrangement over time (such as more than one marriage, cohabitation, or common-law arrangement), the social and emotional complexity of the family systems increases as does the need for stronger boundary maintenance. Figure 2 shows a diagram of the types of relationships and the demands of complexity and boundaries associated with them. A married couple with children have relatively low levels of social and emotional complexity in contrast to all the other categories presented here. Good boundaries are healthy in families. The phrase, "Good fences make great neighbors" testifies to the need and benefit from healthy boundaries. In the nuclear family, good boundaries are like good fences to protect the immediate family and to keep out all others as deemed appropriate.

In a nuclear family there must be healthy sexual boundaries (only between the spouse or partners), healthy parenting boundaries (the parents care for, nurture, and provide structure to the dependent children), healthy financial boundaries (the parents raise the children teaching them to work and become more independent over time), healthy emotional boundaries (family member respect the privacy of the parents and children and protect all from intrusions of other family and friends), healthy social boundaries (friends and family have their place which is not as intimate as the closeness experienced by immediate family members), healthy physical boundaries (immediate family members have their own rooms, bathroom access, locks on doors and windows, and private space), and healthy safety boundaries (where the family is guarded by the older immediate family members from outside threats and harm).

Figure 2. Diagram of Stepfamilies and Other Family Subsystems with Comparisons for Social and Emotional Complexity and Need for Stronger Boundaries.



Remarried couples (regardless of prior marriage or cohabitation) who have no children also have much less complexity because the ex-spouse or partners can be out of sight and mind. They have no visitation disputes, child support, nor holiday complexities that come with remarried couples who do have children. While there may be alimony issues these are not as intricately connected since there is no co-parental vagueness that comes with joint custody or non-custodial conditions.

Widowed and divorced persons find that there are more boundary issues, especially if they become dependent on others for financial and social/emotional support. With dependence come vague boundaries. When children are involved for the single parent, other adult family and non-family members often step in to provide support and nurturance. This typically is not of concern when an intact couple heads the family and works together to maintain healthy boundaries. In some ways, adults stepping in to help children often step in to help the single parents in various ways.

Remarried couples with children from other relationships are more complex in comparison. The ex-spouse gets co-parental influence that can easily spill into the marriage boundary if not properly guarded. Remember the ex's who were disputing in Figure 1 because the father didn't want his child support to go to her new step-children? This is a common problem for the remarried couple. They share their money in a combined family fund. Her earnings and his earnings go into the same pot of money as does child support. Partitioning out the ex's child support in such a way that the step-siblings are separated as belonging to "them and not us" can be very divisive.

Remarried schedules have to be broad and flexible. When a birthday comes up, the remarried couple may celebrate it then the ex-spouse and their family may celebrate it. Things do not always work out as planned, so both parties have to bend and flex as needed. Remarried couples with children from more than one intimate relationship experience all of the above plus added complexity and boundary demands. If Bill and Sue have a 14 year-old from Sue's first marriage, a 10 year-old from her second marriage, and a 4 year-old from their marriage, plus a 17 year old from his cohabitation, and a 14 year old from his first marriage, then the complexities and need for stronger boundaries is even more intense.

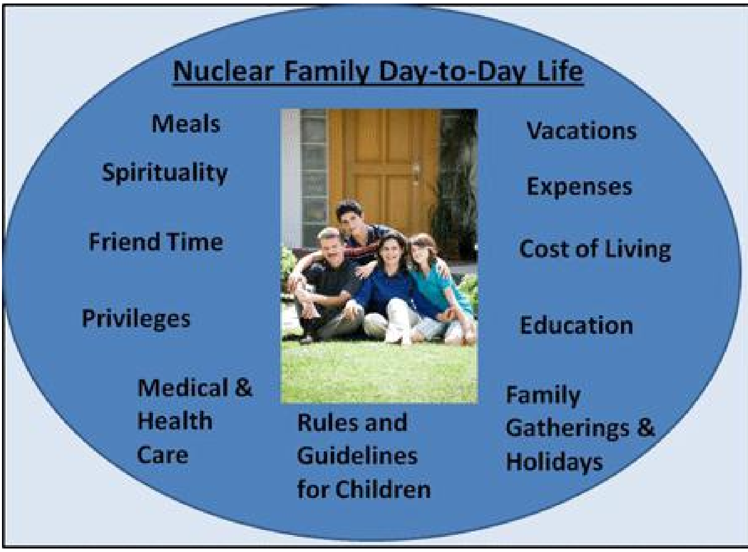
With a remarried couple who have children from more than one other relationship that has legal entanglements with immediate, extended, and other family court-ordered rules of custody, visitation, and alimony, then things become scrutinizable. For example, if the court orders visitation every other weekend then records and details have to be kept showing the best faith effort of both parties to comply-it is after all, a court ordered process with legal ramification to all involved. In a perfect world people would always abide by the orders of the court. They would always make financial payments on time and visitations would always go as prescribed. Perfection is not reasonable in terms of expectations.

If you take any of the marriages below and add to that the issue of criminal charges or child protective orders, then the complexity and need for stronger boundaries can become extreme. Children have to be protected from criminals and once protective orders are issued, non-complying family members can be charged with crimes themselves. Under such extreme circumstances, visitation can be ordered under supervision such as a neutral third party supervisor. The stakes become intense because of the power the state has to hold the family accountable.

Figure 3 shows the family day-to-day activities and patterns experienced by a typical nuclear family. Nuclear families typically have complete control through the parents over the day-to-day patterns and activities. Parents, in cooperation with their children, set up meal times, vacations, and all the other arrangements and plans mentioned in the diagram. They rarely have input from other family members that would diffuse the control or cause a disruption in these activities and patterns. It is a very simple form of family in terms of planning and day-to-day family events.

Now, imagine the worst case scenario mentioned in Figure 2 where there was a remarried family with criminal and or legal issues pertaining to family members. The complexity of the day-to-day goings on would increase dramatically because the control is diffused between sets of parents (step-and their biological parent spouses). In other words, day-to-day interactions get fuzzy in every area because parental authority is spread over two sets of parents.

Figure 3. Diagram of Typical



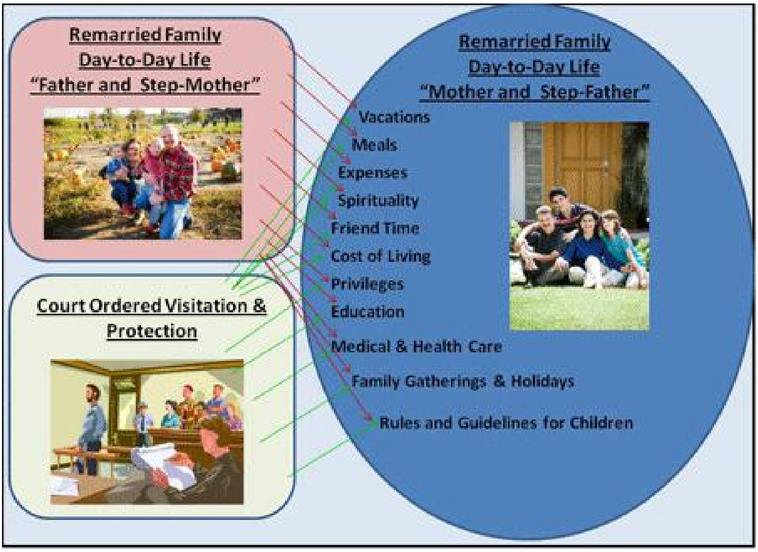
Day-to-Day Life, Activities, and Patterns Experienced by a Typical U.S. Nuclear Family.

Figure 4 shows how complex the day-to-day activities of the family can become. The red arrows represent areas of day-to-day interaction that may be interfered with or confused by having two sets of parents in authority. For example, when step-father and biological mother allow the child to get a cell phone when she is only 11, but the step-mother and biological father feel that she is still too young and not mature enough to handle the responsibilities that come with having a cell phone. The more the parental authority is diffused, the less the parental continuity the child will have. If parents who have divorced and remarried other spouses don't concur, then the child may suffer by not receiving the healthy limitations needed for their circumstances. The red arrows show

how the court-ordered criminal or legal issues can interfere. Imagine also that a court has ordered protection or visitation rules that must be supervised and must be documented for children to visit a parent. Each ruling that may interfere has the potential to throw any family out of its "groove" or day-to-day routines.

As you may already know, the bonds of affection become strained in all types of families. It is very difficult in remarried families where unhealed hurts and boundary complexities persist. A model emerged in the late 1970s which identified family functioning on two intersecting dimensions: first, **family cohesion** is *the degree to which family members have emotionally bonded to one another*, the second is **family adaptability,** which is *the degree to which a family can adjust to changes in family member's roles and relationships*[22]. The quality of communication comes into play for each family because communication either facilitates or inhibits cohesion and adaptability. The Circumflex Model is by far one of the most powerful family models ever developed for diagnosing, studying, and treating modern families. Healthy families tend to be average in regards to cohesion, adaptability, and quality communication. Olson defined a number of extremes that occur in families and there are a number of intervention strategies that therapists utilize to mediate these extremes during family therapy.

Figure 4. Diagram of Typical Day-to-Day Life, Activities, and Patterns Experienced by a Remarried U.S. Family where Criminal and/or Legal Issues are in Involved.



In Olson's model, families could be either disengaged or enmeshed. **Disengaged** means *the family is too chaotic (very loose rules and weak patterns of associating, or there is little family leadership) or rigid (very strict and structured patterns of associating, or there is too strict leadership)***.** The family could also be too enmeshed. **Enmeshed** means *the family members are overly entangled or over involved in the personal affairs of one another to the point that the changes experienced by one family member are experienced by other if not all family members.* Enmeshment is an indication of weak interpersonal boundaries. Enmeshed people lean on others for their own identity-meaning their sense of self is based on being a sister, brother, parent, or friend rather than an individual. When we lean too heavily on family and friends for our own identity we often let their actions or behaviors determine our own. They make decisions we follow because it feels like the right thing to do. We simply have a difficult time saying no because we depend too much on the decisions of others in lieu of our own decision making processes.

Remarried families find themselves making very difficult adjustments that transpire uniquely in the remarried or stepfamily circumstances. The merging of previous family systems into a new system does NOT occur with the ease TV viewers found among the characters playing in the Brady Bunch Series. So, what might be the goals of a remarried couple as they form stepfamilies? Most likely the same goals shared by any first married couple, meet the needs of the spouses, children, and pets, have a secure home which functions as a safe haven from the stresses and trials of the outside world, enjoy life together with people closest to you, acquire and own assets that will ensure financial stability over the long-term, and raising dependent children into their adult roles in a successful manner, to mention a few.

STRATEGIES FOR STEPFAMILIES

What are strategies that are known to work in these stepfamilies? One core strategy is to recognize and deal with the events that brought all the stepfamily members together the way they did. Step-children and remarried parents likely have some grief that lingers from the divorce or death of another spouse or parent. Too many stepfamilies are emotionally battle-worn in a way that makes them want to disregard this grief and get the new families moving forward. Of course this is ill-advised. There are numerous studies, self-help books, and even Websites designed to help the remarried couple deal with the grief and transitions.[23]

Eventually addressing grief, loss, and heartache is the best approach. Feeling grief for a loss does not undermine the current family system. In fact, if it's within the current stepfamily that the healing takes place, it can often strengthen the newly formed family as the sense of cohesion grows.

Many stepmothers over expect what they can do for their new stepchildren and family. They try and try not to be the "evil stepmother." Some of the best/worst villains in stories are stepmothers, Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, Snow White, and others. Stepmothers are notorious for not treating the stepchildren with the same affection and loyalty as they do their own children. Some argue that stepmothers are doomed by virtue of the stereotypes and family disadvantages. The antidote for this is for new stepmothers to enter their role with a few strategies. First, be realistic in your hopes and dreams. It is not uncommon for stepchildren to grow to love their stepmothers, but typically not as much as they love their own biological mother. So, perhaps expecting to have a good friendship where love may emerge after years of working at the relationship is a better approach.

Second, go slow. Resist the temptation to want to hurry things up and get them resolved so that they will be taken care of and out of the way. Healing, developing cohesion, and building flexibility and adaptation takes time if it is to become permanent.

Third, set short-term goals that are more easily attained. For example, you might set a goal to go on at least one family outing per month over the next two years as opposed to wanting to hold a family reunion were strong bonds are expected as though you'd all be close family members forever.

Fourth, learn and know your own limits as a wife and mother/stepmother. The Superman and Superwoman mythology makes for great movies and comic book stories, but they are not real. Your limitations can be used as a healthy boundary for what you are capable and willing to do as a mother and stepmother. For example, you may find that you can't help all the children with their homework (especially if there are many of them). Sometimes older children can be convinced to help the younger ones. Again, this has the potential to establish support patterns that reach across family and stepfamily systems.

Fifth, treat all the children with the same healthy standard of care. Children need to feel safe and protected. They want to feel loved and sometimes it is enough to let them know that you are sincerely interested in their well-being. Love may follow your care giving efforts in due time. All children want to have a confidant, someone to share their worries with, or a source of unconditional acceptance. Let children give input and search for consensus in matters of choice such as which restaurant to dine at or which vacation spot to visit. Finally, children need and though they may not know it, want boundaries. Show them you care by setting healthy limits, rules, and restrictions that both spouses agree upon and can uphold together.

It is important for stepparents to avoid getting caught up in the structure of their family. In other words, it is not the fact that you are a combination of his, hers, theirs, or whatever. It's much more important to focus on how the family systems functions, ensuring that the criteria mentioned above are in place and working well. It also means that when adjustments are needed that the system allows for adaptation and accommodation. If the family is functional, adaptable, and increasingly cohesive then it has a solid base of resistance to acute and normative stressors.

One lesson learned by public educators that can be applied to stepfamilies is transparency. When assigning chores, make the process coming to those assignments clear to all. This means they'd better be fair to all. When it comes to discipline do the same and make sure the discipline is fair and predictable. When or if biased processes are discovered, correct them openly for all children to see.

William J. Doherty published a book on family rituals in 1999.[24] In it he framed family rituals as "intentional" efforts designed to build and connect the family members into a more cohesive group. He urged the smaller daily rituals that slowly but surely reinforce the strengthening cohesion. In the formative months and years of the stepfamily, rituals play an important role in building family cohesion. This is why it is important to travel together, eat out, celebrate birthdays and holidays, and spend time exploring activities and events that work well for most of the family. For some, family reunions become a hit and are continued for as long as they continue to be desirable. Over time, if certain family members miss a reunion or decide to no longer attend, then it's totally acceptable to hold them for those who desire to be a part of the tradition.

It is common to have unresolved issues from past marriages and family systems which inhibit current efforts to maintain stepfamily cohesion. In this case, if an adult son or daughter and their family disaffiliate, it is wise to continue gathering. It is a myth that a stepfamily (or any family) can only be as happy as the least happy member. The weakest link in the family chain should not set the tone for the entire family system's bond and friendship. Make such matters the focus of family discussion while together. Allow members to express their honest feelings. Make sure and share your own in return. There is a really good chance that some will like most gatherings while a few may dislike them.

Bobby McFerrin sang a song that can also provide a theme for stepfamily formation "Don't Worry, Be Happy" (1988). At times, stepparents feel compelled to work out the finest degree of family troubles in stepfamilies and may become overly occupied in this regard. Perhaps, they sense the vulnerability the stepfamily faces from the complexity involved. Most family members enjoy rewarding and positive interactions. Be careful to keep the "happy" in the process of building the family system.

Couples who unite in both verbal and written forms of expression often find themselves leading the family in a more united manner. Consider starting each New Year with a family plan. Include in it five goals for the family that can be met by December 31st. Also include one word that might be the buzzword for these goals. For example, in a family that enjoys meals and food, they might set goals to eat five dinners out of seven together each week, eat out once per month, have a sharing time during the meal where a family member shares a best or worst for the day, have friends over for dinner at least once per month, and finally, eat out at a very unusual restaurant while on the family vacation. The buzzword might simply be "dinner," "chow time," or "table." It would be a word that is central to the goals of the family.

SEXUAL BOUNDARIES

One other adjustment needs to be mentioned. Stepfamilies need strong boundaries. When the stepsiblings are young, sexual exploration or interactions may occur. It is both negligent and criminal to ignore these or fail to intervene. When a child has been sexually molested, he or she may be reactive. **Sexual reactivity** is *a* *propensity among children to act in sexual ways as a result of having been sexually abused.* They learn sexual ways from the abuse yet may or may not know that these sexual ways are inappropriate. Many sexually abused children will act out with children younger than themselves. Some may act out regardless of age difference or even role differences, meaning they may act out with adults or other children. Stepfamilies must intervene and do whatever is required to mediate sexual reactivity.

Local clinics and mental health providers may prove to be a valuable resource. If a crime is unreported, it may well need to be. This is the problem inherent to family sexual abuses-secrets. Stepfamilies must have clear sexual boundaries, especially since the biological factor or blood relative factor is not present, meaning the common resistance to sexual activity among blood-related family members is not there among nonblood-related stepsiblings. Focus on privacy, modesty, dignity, respect for self and others, and have very candid private and family discussions that bring secrets into the open and take the mystery out of sex.

Stepfamilies can be, and typically are, happy families. But, rarely does that happiness arrive without concerted efforts to make it a happy family. Strength comes in the persistent struggle against the forces of complexity, ambiguity, and missing family history. Even though couples give an amazing effort to create a functional stepfamily system, many stepchildren leave home with unresolved issues with either the parent or stepparent. If this happens to you, then so what? In the long-term it is the husband and wife who will spend their entire lives together, not the parents and children. If children are younger than 18 and living with a parent and step-parent, then do your best to meet their needs. Invite them to take joint responsibility for their happiness and the family's cohesion. Facilitate entertainment, positive memories, and rituals. If at the end of the day, your 18 year-old child or stepchild leaves home with issues of having been raised in a stepfamily, then accept your best effort, be happy as a couple, and move forward with your lives together.

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PART II

COURSE INFORMATION & SYLLABUS DOCUMENTS

This section contains general course information

17. Course Learning Activities

Course Learning Activities:

The course is organized into Learning Modules. The 5 numbered modules each contain an Internet Resources assignment, and 3 topic discussion forums, and a Reflective Blog assessment activity.

1. Internet Resources Assignments: Each module includes a Internet Resource review and a discussion forum. These assignments are designed to introduce you to some of the psychological resources available on the web. You must locate a relevant and authentic resource, write a brief, original summary/analysis paper which includes a link to the resource website, then lead a discussion about it. Before submitting your review to the class for discussion, you must submit it to the dropbox, which will detect, and help you avoid, plagiarism. After editing your essay (as needed to meet the originality requirements) you resubmit it to the dropbox for my evaluation and to the website forum for class discussion. This assignment requires that you lead the discussion on your own resource and also participate in the discussions of a few Internet resources reviewed by other students which you select.

2. Student-led Discussions: In every module you will find 3 Student-led Discussion forums. Each forum covers one topic. This is the way you cover the content of the textbook. For each topic forum you must ask one original "critical thinking" question. Other students will respond to your questions, and you will then reply back to those students. In addition you leading your own discussion thread, you are required to answer two questions from each topic posed by another student. You are encouraged to keep up these "virtual discussions" as long as they are productive. The idea here is for each student to lead one discussion with the other students about some important and/or controversial issue introduced in each topic, and participate in additional discussions for each topic. A large percentage of your final grade is determined by your participation in these discussions. I will grade these discussions, but I will not be a participant. If a discussion you are leading gets off track, it is your responsibility to refocus it. You are responsible for maintaining the quality of the discussion threads you lead. Every posting to a discussion should add substantive new information to that discussion.

3. Reflective Blogs: In each module your appreciation for and understanding of the important content issues and concepts will be assessed by means of a reflective blog. You are asked to write about the 4 most important things that you learned in each module, and how you think the knowledge you are gaining from the module will impact your values, attitudes, beliefs and behavior. After you submit your blog, you are required to respond tho the blogs submitted by 5 of your classmates.

Talk with the Professor:

In each module there is a "Talk with the Professor" area. In this area I may ask discussion questions about issues which I feel haven't been fully explored in the Student Led discussion area. Also, in this area you may ask me questions, which I will respond to. Most often, I expect these questions (mine and yours) will be related to the discussions or the textbook – but no relevant topic is "off-limits." You should check this area each time you log on and participate in these discussion threads.

Extra Credit / Make-up Work / Incomplete Grades:

The major requirement in this course is to discuss, with other students, the contents of each chapter in the text. There is no substitute for this requirement, and I do not permit "extra credit" or "alternative credit" assignments. Also, there is no way to "go back" after a module has ended and "make-up" missed discussion activity, because there are no other students left to learn from your posts and discuss the content with you Finally, an incomplete in the course is not appropriate, as there is no way to complete the course once it has ended and all of the other students are gone.

18. Two Cardinal Rules

The Two Cardinal Rules of discussions:

A "Cardinal Rule" is a rule that is so important that, if you break it, there are **dire** (…evil in great degree; dreadful; dismal; horrible; terrible) **consequences**.

If you do not follow the instructions on this page you will probably not pass this course!

When you are participating in a discussion, each response you post will have two fields that you must complete correctly in order to get credit for your response: the **Message field** and the **Subject** field.

- No matter how terrific your message is, if your Post Title isn't acceptable, your post will not meet the criteria for full credit.
- I suggest that you write your message test first, then write the Subject.

Here are the 2 Cardinal Rules:

1. **Cardinal Rule #1: Your *Message* must teach us something new and relevant about the issue.** The purpose of a discussion post is to provide new information about issue being discussed.

   Ask yourself these questions before you submit your discussion post:

   1. Is your message **accurate**?
   2. Is it **relevant** to the issue under discussion?
   3. Have you **taught us anything new**?
   4. Is your information **properly cited and/or documented**?

2. Cardinal Rule #2: Your *Subject* must be a complete sentence that summarizes the main point of your post. You are required to create a **Subject** for your discussion posts that conveys the main point of your message. It is **not enough** to use just a "keyword" or "key phrase" as your subject – you must create a short sentence (a complete sentence with subject – verb – predicate – which summarizes the main point you are making in your message. Note: you **must not use** the Subject that is automatically created for you – you must replace it with a complete sentence that you create.

The goal here is to state the main point of your message in your Subject. Remember – you can't just mention the topic you are commenting on, you must summarize your main point in a sentence. This requirement is intended to accomplish 2 goals:

- It requires the author to think about and clearly state the main point of his/her message. To do this, the author must have a clear understanding of the material, and this aids in learning and memory.
- It provides the reader with advance information which is helpful in organizing and learning the content of the message. The reader should be able to determine the essence of your message just by reading your Subject.

Important notes:

1. It is OK to sometimes respond with non-informative messages. In fact, sometimes it is a good idea to thank someone for their assistance or simply let them know that you agree with what they have said. Non-academic messages such as these can add valuable **social presence** to the course, and help to create a sense of collegiality. However, messages that add **teaching presence** (knowledge) to the course count the most when I evaluate your participation in the discussion.
2. If you copy/paste or closely paraphrase information from

websites or other sources, you **must** use quotes and provide the citation. The most valuable messages are written in your own words. The quality of your discussion post is determined by the original content, not by content from other sources.

Most Important Note: You are participating in the discussion for the benefit of yourself and the other students – not for the benefit of the instructor.

- It does little or no good to submit posts very late in the module. It is likely that no one will even read your last minute posts, and for that reason they do not add to the teaching / learning value of the discussion.
- Low quality posts pretty much just waste your colleagues time. Do them a favor by not submitting low quality posts.

19. How Your Course Grade is Determined

How you are evaluated: There are 35 graded activities in this course:

Category Name	Course Value	
Chapter Discussions	60%	1
Internet Assignments	20%	5
Blogs	20%	5 Reflec

Course Final Grade Scale: Here are the cutoffs for final course grades

A+ = 97, A = 94, A- = 90

B+ = 87, B = 84, B- = 80

C+ = 77, C = 74, C- = 70

D+ = 67, D = 64, D- = 60

F = 0-59

Grade Book: Online courses have special features that allow you to see your progress 24/7. Access to your grades and rubric feedback is through the "My Grades" link.

20. My Expectations of your commitment to this class.

My Expectations

- This course is offered online in three different formats: full-term, summer session, and mini-semester. The amount of content is the same regardless of the length of the term, and my expectations for your commitment of time and quality is also the same.
- The biggest difference between online courses and classroom courses is that Internet study is student-centered rather than teacher centered. This means that you – the student – are responsible for your own learning and success. If you are highly motivated, log on and participate at least 6 times in each module, and produce high quality work – you will be successful. However, if you log on sporadically, participate minimally, or submit poor quality work – you will not. Online higher education is aimed at independent learners. If you require the structure of a classroom, then online courses will not suit you.
- In this course, we read and discuss the entire text! If you do not read the text in advance of the discussions, your lack of knowledge will be obvious to me and to the other students. It is not uncommon in these courses for students to provide strong, public criticism of other students who "waste their time" with ill-informed posts.

- I expect the successful student to spend an **average** of about ***120-150 total hours*** on this course. Although that may seem like a lot – remember this: A traditional classroom-based course is designed to require 45 hours of “seat time” plus 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class. It adds up to around 150 total hours.

Do you have a plan if you have a technical problem? If your computer crashes, or if your Internet connection fails – these events do not excuse you from your course responsibilities.You can access this online course from any computer that has an Internet connection. I suggest that you make a plan now for events such as these. If you ever have a technical problem connecting to your course, submitting work to your course, or any other course-related issue, call the Open SUNY Student HelpDesk at (844) 673-6786. If the problem is with the Learning Management System or Open SUNY infrastructure, you will be granted a time extension for submitting assignments affected by the problem. However, if you do not report the problem to the Open SUNY HelpDesk, no time extension will be granted.

Final note: You are responsible for keeping up with the requirements of this course. If you logon regularly, submit your assignments and discussion posts in a timely fashion, and follow the rules I have posted, it is very likely you will succeed. However, I will not withdraw you from this course. If you decide not to finish for any reason, you must contact the Registrar’s Office and officially withdraw yourself. If you just stop participating, you will receive the final course grade of “F”.

21. How this course works!

What is "Heutagogy"?

The foundation of my educational philosophy (and therefore the basis of my instructional design decisions for this course) is "Heutagogy". Simply stated, it means that adults learn best when they have a lot of control over what they learn and how they learn it. In addition, heutagogy asserts that the assessment of adult learning should focus on what the learner believes she/he has learned and on the various ways that learning has impacted, or will impact her/his values, ideals, and behavior. (See this link for an excellent synopsis of heutagogy: http://www.nssa.us/journals/2007-28-1/2007-28-1-04.htm. Additional resources relevant to the theoretical basis of heutagogy are available at

http://www.technoheutagogy.com .)

The learning objectives implicit in the heutagogical approach are different than those of traditional pedagogy and contemporary andragogy. I have designed this course to create a learner directed learning environment that will expose each student to the generally accepted concepts, ideas, research methods and research findings which comprise the discipline of Psychology. In addition, the design of this course will provide the opportunity for each student to identify and explore the discipline-specific topics and ideas from the textbook and from the World Wide Web that she/he finds most important and relevant.

Your role in the course...

All assignments in this course are designed to permit you as much flexibility as possible in determining the style and content of your participation. As long as you comply with the course rules and policies, you can expect to be successful.

For each chapter of the text, each student:
· selects a topic from each chapter that she/he wants to focus on
· asks a discussion question – requiring critical thinking skills to answer – from each chapter
· facilitates the ensuing discussion.
· Selects a minimum of two additional student-led discussion threads to engage in

For each learning module, each student:
· searches for and selects a discipline and content-relevant website to review
· submits the review to the class for discussion
· facilitates the ensuing discussion
· selects a minimum of two additional

website reviews to discuss

I recognize that not all students have the same interests and motivations for taking this course. Hence, there are no content-specific learning goals that I have set. In contrast, each student decides which specific content topics to focus on and discuss. A desired outcome of this learner-directed learning environment is that each student will increase her/his capability to identify discipline-salient issues that are personally interesting and relevant and then orchestrate learning activities that result in cognitive growth and behavioral change.

In short – each learner sets her/his own learning objectives. This is the essence of a heutagogical design.

My role in the course…

The written assignments and discussion posts that you submit in this class are not for my benefit – they are for the benefit of you and the other students in the class. All of the course rules, policies, and requirements are designed to maximize the teaching / learning value of your coursework.

My role in the course begins with the instructional design process – to create a sequence of learning activities that:

1. **engages each learner in a meaningful way with the course content and the other**

learners in the class.

2. **requires each learner to also be a teacher – to add quality learning opportunities for the other students to benefit from.**
3. **allows maximum freedom for self-direction – so that each learner has the responsibility to forge her/his own learning path.**

The extent to which I am successful in achieving these three goals is the measure of my success in this course.

22. Course Objectives

Common Course Objectives:

This course is designed to:

1. Introduce students to the concepts, theories, and research which define this discipline of Sociology.
2. Provide an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical and interpretive analysis.

Assessment of Common Course Objectives:

- Objective 1 is assessed via the discussion forums.
- Objective 2 is assessed via a separate exam in the first module.

Heutagogical Course Objectives specific to Prof Pelz' online sections of this course:

This section of the course is designed to:

- 3. Develop proficiency in critical thinking and self-determined learning.
- 4. Develop the students' capability for connecting discipline content to personal values and behavior.

Assessment of Heutagogical Course Objectives:

- Objective 3 is assessed via the textbook chapter discussions and website reviews and discussions.
- Objective 4 is assessed via the Knowledge Audit Reflective Blogs

PART III

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS AND GRADING RUBRICS

Hints on how to succeed in this course!

The grades you earn on each assignment are up to you. The documents below spell out in detail the requirements you must meet in order to earn an “A” grade. These “hints” give you a preview of those requirements:

- The course consists of 5 **learning modules**.
  - Be aware of the start and end date of the discussion forums and the due date for the assessments.
  - Submit your initial posts within the first 3 days that the module starts. For full credit submit your initial posts on the module start day.
  - Participate in each of the discussion forums on at least 10 different days during the module
  - For full credit, submit your Reflective Blog on the first day of the Knowledge Audit window – early and late posts do not earn full credit.
  - I will accept some assignments late, but there is a late penalty built into the grading rubrics:
  - Discussion forum posts that are submitted after the forum has ended are not graded – n**o exceptions!**

Frequently asked Questions:

Question 1: How will I be graded?

Answer: I use a grading rubric to provide feedback on every assignment. These rubrics are printed in the documents in this folder. Once your assignment is graded the scored rubric is available in the “My Grades” area. I suggest that you review each of your scored rubrics so that you are aware of any problems and do not make the same mistakes again.

Question 2: Why is there a "post on 10 different days" requirement for full credit on the discussion forums?

Answer: I have learned over my 20 years of teaching online that the discussion forum is the primary learning activity. To make an online discussion as meaningful as a face-to-face discussion, it is necessary to have the same back-and-forth interaction. This can only be done if you give the other participants a chance to respond before you get back to them with your reply. It is also for this reason that you will only get credit for a maximum of 3 posts to a discussion forum during any 24 hour period. For your posts to have maximum teaching value, you need to spread them out over the entire length of the module.

Question 3: Why doesn't my course grade change each day that my discussion posts are graded?

Answer:

- Your course grade will not reflect your discussion forum grades until the discussions have ended.
- I will attempt to grade your discussion posts every day, so your grade on a discussion forum will improve each time you submit an acceptable discussion post.
- You can see your current and past discussion forum grades by clicking on the "My Grades" link in the sidebar on the left.
- Review your discussion forum rubrics frequently and you will always know how you are doing, and how much more work is needed to attain the grade you want.
- I will enter your forum grades into the grade book when the discussions have ended.
- When I enter your forum grades into the grade book, then your course grade will change.

23. Internet Resources: Reviews and Discussions

The purpose of this assignment is for each student to locate an Internet resource that contains valid information relevant to the issues that will be discussed in the module, write an original review and analysis essay about the content of the resource, and then lead a class discussion on the issue.

Overview: Begin this assignment by looking over the textbook chapters assigned for the current module and selecting a topic that interests you. Then use Google – or the Internet search engine of your choice – to find a "good" resource dealing with that issue. Finally, write a review of the resource and submit it for grading (to the drop box) and discussion (to the discussion forum. (By "good" I mean one that seems to you to provide unbiased information on the issue). After you submit the review to the dropbox (and, if needed, revise and resubmit) post it in the discussion forum for class discussion.

Detailed Instructions for the Internet Resource assignment:

Submit one Internet Resource Review for each Module. You will receive 2 grades for this assignment: The written review (50%) and your participation in the discussion forum (50%).

1. Using the Internet search engine of your choice (for example, Google), locate an article, a YouTube video, a Ted Talk, a MERLOT learning object etc. on a topic introduced in the assigned textbook chapters for the current module.
2. Write a review of the resource article. Include: 1) an overview of the main point(s), 2) the most important thing you learned from the resource, and 3) your overall opinion of the resource.
3. To earn full credit, your review must contain a minimum of 750 original words.*
4. Submit your review to the drop box for an Originality Analysis.
5. Revise and resubmit your review if needed.
6. Your website review is graded within the drop box using the rubric (see below). You can see my feedback by accessing the graded rubric.

7. Paste your final review into the Discussion Forum for class discussion. To receive full credit, you must submit your review for discussion on the first day that the module is active.
8. Discuss your review – and at least 2 others – in the Discussion Forum.
9. Your grade on this discussion forum depends upon the quantity and quality of your posts.
10. Study the grading rubrics below carefully so that you are aware of how your work will be graded.

***Definition of "Original Words":**

The assignment dropbox analyzes your assignment and highlights plagiarized or "essentially the same" passages that already exists on the Internet. This "similar content" – EVEN IF YOU DID NOT COPY IT FROM THE WEB / EVEN IF YOU MADE IT UP YOURSELF – does not count as your "original words."

Correct all of these issues before you submit your review to the class for discussion.

After you have submitted your review to the discussion forum:

1. Facilitate the discussion of your website review in the same manner as the student led chapter discussions. When other students respond to your posting, respond back to them. Your job is to facilitate a discussion which explores the issues you have presented in your review and relates them to the textbook.
2. Read and discuss the Reviews submitted by at least 2 other students. Be an active participant in these threads. You may participate in as many review discussions as you want to – but the minimum is 2.
3. I will evaluate a maximum of 3 discussion posts submitted to the same discussion forum during any 24 hour period. For example, if you submit 3 discussion posts to the same Internet Resource forum between noon and 1:00 pm, you should wait until 1:00 pm the following day to submit your next post. **This rule is designed to give other students a chance to respond to your posts, so that you can then**

reply back to them. This also means that if you wait until the last day and submit lots of posts, I will only evaluate the first 3 you submit.

You will earn an A+ (100%) grade on the Internet Resource discussion forum if you:

- Submit your review to the Discussion Forum on the module start date.
- Submit 10 acceptable reply posts (Posts that comply with both of the Cardinal Rules.)
- Participate in the forum on 10 different days while the forum is active.
- Remember that you won't get credit for more than 3 posts submitted during any 24 hour period.

The Internet Resource Review Grading Rubric:

Rubric

The Internet Resource Discussion Forum Grading Rubric:

Rubric

24. Textbook Discussion Forums

Instructions for participating in a Textbook Chapter Discussion Forum:

In each of the modules, chapter content is discussed in forums using a student-led roundtable format. On the first day a module opens you are to submit one discussion question for each chapter included in the module. Then, in each chapter discussion forum, you facilitate the conversation started by your questions. In addition to facilitating your conversation thread, you are required to participate in several other conversations of your choice. These roundtable discussions provide you with the opportunity to pursue in depth the issues and topics you find most relevant and most interesting. Through your selection of questions to ask and questions to answer, you are able to take control of and customize your learning path through the content of this course.

Suggestions for earning an "A+" on your discussion forums:

1. In each chapter forum, click on the **Create Thread button** to submit your discussion question. This is the topic you will be "teaching" in the chapter. Post each of your discussion questions – 1 per chapter – on the

first day that the module is open.

2. Post your discussion question as a complete sentence. For example: **Why do psychologists do research?**
3. You will not receive credit for a question unless: 1.) it is **different from those already posted** and 2.) **requires critical thinking and thoughtful analysis** to answer. Don't submit questions that can be answered by simply looking the answer up in the textbook.
4. **Reply** to at least two discussion questions in each chapter forum that were posted by other students. Use the **Reply button** at the bottom of the post you are responding to. You get to select which questions you respond to – and in this way have a great deal of control over which issues you want to focus on in the chapter.
5. Start replying to others early in the module, so you can be an active participant in these discussion threads and interact frequently with the other participants.
6. The quality of each reply is evaluated. Your reply will be accepted only if it complies with the **Two Cardinal Rules**.

    1. **Cardinal Rule 1**: Your post message must introduce new and relevant information about the issue under discussion. It must "teach" us something relevant.
    2. **Cardinal Rule 2**: The subject of your post must be a complete sentence (subject – verb – predicate) which summarizes the

main point of your message.

   1. If your subject starts with "**Re:**" it will not be accepted.
   2. If your subject is just key words, and isn't a complete sentence, it will not be accepted.

7. **Facilitate the discussion of your chapter question** by responding right away to each student who posts in your discussion thread. You can ask follow-up questions, probe for additional examples or details, etc. Your job is to fully explore the topic you have asked about. You are the teacher and the discussion leader for this topic.
8. Continue to lead your discussion thread and participate in the other threads you have selected throughout the entire length of the module. You receive credit for each day you participate in the forum – up to 10 days. To earn full credit, participate in each forum on 10 different days.
9. Document your factual material by citing the source. Include all non-original content in quotes. **Failure to properly acknowledge non-original content is plagiarism, and will be considered a violation of the college policy on academic integrity.** The penalty for plagiarism will follow the policies established by the college and published in the student handbook.
10. Only your own, original content is evaluated. Any content you copy from another source is not graded. **If you paste content into your**

post, make sure you put quotes around it and cite the source.

11. I attempt to evaluate your discussion posts every day. You should check your progress in each forum often, as described in the document titled "How to see your forum grade and my private post feedback" located in the Course Information area.
12. All posts are subject to my approval. If I feel that a post is offensive, I will delete it and no credit will be given. If you ask an unacceptable question, I will delete it and you will not receive any credit for that post. Likewise, if your reply to another student is unacceptable, I will delete it and no credit will be awarded.
13. You may submit as many posts to each discussion forum as you wish, but **only high quality posts that satisfy the 2 Cardinal Rules will contribute to your forum grade.**
14. I will evaluate a maximum of 3 discussion posts submitted to the same discussion forum during any 24 hour period. For example, if you submit 3 discussion posts to the same Internet Resource forum between noon and 1:00 pm, you should wait until 1:00 pm the following day to submit your next post. This rule is designed to give other students a chance to respond to your posts, so that you can then reply back to them. This also means that if you wait until the last day and submit lots of posts, I will only evaluate the first 3 you submit.

You will earn an A+ (100%) grade on the Chapter discussion forum if you:

1. Submit an acceptable discussion question to the Discussion Forum on the first day that the module is active.
2. Submit 10 acceptable reply posts (Posts that comply with both of the Cardinal Rules.)
3. Participate in the forum on 10 different days while the module is active.
4. Remember that you won't get credit for more than 3 posts submitted during any 24 hour period.

Your forum participation be evaluated based upon this rubric:

Rubric

25. Reflective Blogs

The Reflective Blog assignment is treated as an exam. You will receive 2 grades: The blog itself (50%) and the blog discussion forum (50%).

The purpose of the blog is for you to reflect about – write about – and discuss the new knowledge you and your fellow students actually learned in the module readings and discussions, and how your thoughts, feelings, and actions will be impacted by this new learning.

Detailed instructions:

1. Reflect upon (think about) the issues that you read about in the chapters and the issues you discussed in the chapter and website discussion forums.
2. Select the 4 topics you feel were the most valuable to you in the module.
3. List these topics, numbered from 1 (most valuable) to 4 (least valuable).
4. For each topic:
    1. Provide an overview of the topic and what you learned about it, and
    2. Describe how what you learned will impact the way you think, feel, and behave in the future.
5. The minimum blog requirement is 1000 original words: about 250 words per topic.
6. Submit your blog in two places: the drop box for my evaluation, and the Discussion Forum

for classmate reactions.

7. You must submit your blog before you can see the blogs posted by other students.
8. To earn full credit submit your Reflective Blog on the first day of the Knowledge Audit window – after the discussions have all ended. This is important so that other students will have sufficient time to respond. **There is a penalty for submitting early or late.**
9. After you post your blog, reply to 5 other blogs during the 3-day Knowledge Audit window.
10. To earn full credit for thissss activity, you need to submit your blog and 5 acceptable replies:
    1. Submit your blog as a New Post
    2. Reply to 5 other blogs – the minimum acceptable length of each reply is 200 words.
    3. There is no requirement that you reply to those who comment on your blog – but you may if you wish. However, your blog discussion grade is based only on the 6 required posts.

Reflective Blog Grading Rubric:

Blog Assignment Rubric

Reflective Blog Discussion Forum Grading Rubric:

Blog Forum Rubric

26. A Brief Overview of Discussion Forum Grading

This brief overview is provided as a reminder of how you can earn good grades on the forums. Refer to the remaining documents in this folder for detailed instructions.

The following guidelines apply to each textbook and Internet Resource discussion forum in the course. (The Reflective Blog forums have different guidelines.)

- Your initial post should be submitted within 3 days of the module start date.
  - Use the "Create Thread" link for your initial post. This starts the conversation you will facilitate.
  - Just submit one of these "Create Thread" posts for each forum.
  - In the textbook chapter discussion forums, your initial post is is a discussion question that you will lead the conversation on.
  - In the Internet Resource discussion forum, your initial post is a review you have written and which you will lead the conversation on.
- After you submit your initial post, you must return to the discussion forum often and:
  - respond to at least 2 other students' initial posts
  - reply to students who have responded to your initial post.
  - The more acceptable replies you submit – up to 10 – the better your forum grade will be.
- You are to continue your participation in the discussion forum until you have attained the grades you want. If your goal is to earn an "A+" on a forum, here are the requirements:

    - Submit your initial post within 3 days of the module start date.
    - submit at least 10 reply posts
    - post on at least 10 different days.
    - The more days you participate on – up to 10 – the better your forum grade will be.
    - posts submitted after a forum has ended are not evaluated – no exceptions!
- The maximum number of posts to a forum that you will receive credit for in any 24 hour period is 3.
    - This means that if you submit 4 or more posts to the same forum during any 24 hour period you will only get credit for 3 of them.
    - Waiting until the last day or 2 to submit a lot of posts will not help you succeed.
- A discussion post that violates either of the 2 Cardinal Rules is not acceptable and will not earn any credit towards your forum grade.
    - Cardinal Rule #1: Your post must teach us something relevant and accurate about the topic under discussion.
    - Cardinal Rule #2: Your post title must be a complete sentence which summarizes the main point of your post message.

Discussion forums are the main learning activity in this course. If you don't do well on the discussion forums, you will not do well in the course. And, just like in a face-to-face discussion, it is the back-and-forth interaction that makes the discussion worthwhile. An online discussion can be just as meaningful as a face-to-face discussion if you engage in this back-and-forth exchange. The intent of the discussion forum guidelines above is to facilitate meaningful, interactive,discussions.

PART IV

THE MODULAR ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

There are 5 learning modules, all having the same organization.

27. Course Schedule - Fall 2018

Marriage and the Family – Discussion and Assignment Due Dates

I suggest that you print this page and keep it next to your computer for frequent reference.

The course opens several days before the first official day of class so that you can "poke around" and become familiar with the Course Information documents, Course Calander, and general layout of the course. If you are new to online learning – or the Generals Online learning management system – you should complete the Open SUNY Student Orientation as soon as possible. The link to the Student Orientation is on the Generals Online Home Page as well as your personal Generals Online Home Page.

Module	Text Chapters
1	1 2 3
2	4 5 6
3	7 8 9 10
4	11 12 13 14
5	15 16 17 18
Culminating Activity	
Course Grades Submitted: 12/17 – 9:00 AM	

Notes:

1. **It is essential to the pedagogy of this course that all students proceed through the learning activities according to this schedule.**
2. **Initial Posts: Submit 1 discussion question for each chapter and your Internet Resource Review on the first day for full credit.**
   1. **Discussion posts submitted before the start date will be deleted.**
   2. **Discussion posts submitted after the end date are welcome but will not be graded.**
3. **Submit your Reflective Blog on the first day of the Blog Window for full credit. Do not submit your Reflective Blog early.**
4. **Important "Rules to Remember"**

1. **Cardinal Rule #1: Every post to a discussion forum must teach us something new and relevant.**
2. **Cardinal Rule #2: The subject of your post must be a full sentence that summarizes the main point of your message.**
3. **For full credit, post to each forum on at least 10 different days and submit a minimum of 10 acceptable reply posts to each forum.**
4. **Spread your discussion posts out over the entire module, and don't submit more than 3 posts to any forum on the same day.**

No course activity is required on the following days: 10/8, 10/9, 11/21-11/25

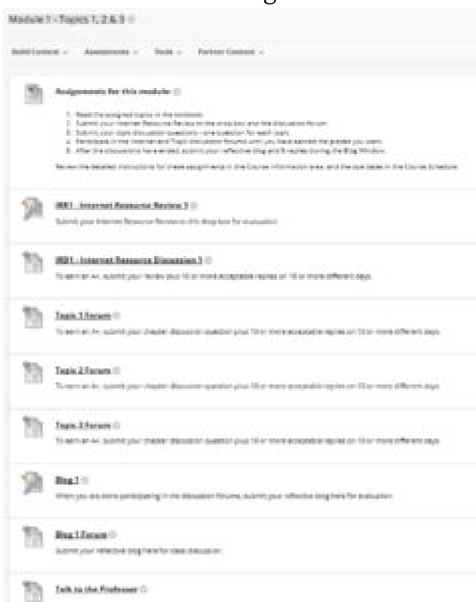
28. The Textbook is online.

https://www.canyons.edu/Offices/DistanceLearning/OER/Documents/Sociology%20103%20-%20Final%20Book.pdf

29. The Module Menu

30. Module 1 thru Module 5

All 5 modules have this organization.



31. Culminating Activity Module

This module contains a link to my “Rate Your Professors” page.

Rate your Professor

This is an optional, ungraded activity. I appreciate the time and effort you will put in completing this activity.

Although you have to register to rate me, your submission is anonymous.

Instructions:

1. Click the link below.
2. When the website opens, enter PELZ in the “Search for a professor…” field
3. Click on “Herkimer County Community College”
4. Click on the “P” square, then on “Pelz”
5. Click on “Rate this professor”

CLICK HERE to rate William Pelz