The Development and Evaluation of an Educational Therapeutic Group Procedure to Assist Preadolescent Children to Process Parental Divorce

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THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF AN EDUCATIONAL THERAPEUTIC GROUP PROCEDURE TO ASSIST PREADOLESCENT CHILDREN TO PROCESS PARENTAL DIVORCE

by

Donna K. Prins

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Counseling and Personnel

Western Michigan University
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The purpose of this study was to develop and evaluate an educational therapeutic group procedure to assist preadolescent children to understand and assimilate the process of parental divorce.

The group procedure is a short term therapeutic approach which focused on general problems experienced by children processing parental divorce. A restructured format was developed, and the entire procedure was designed to occur in a small group setting.

The major goal of the study, developing the group procedure Things Have Changed At My House, was accomplished. The complete text of the procedure is contained in the appendix of the dissertation.

Both process and product evaluation methods were used to evaluate Things Have Changed At My House. Results of the process evaluation indicated a high degree of acceptance by pre-adolescent children who experienced the group in a field setting. Teachers observing Things Have Changed At My House also endorsed the procedure for the sample studied.

Product evaluation focused on results obtained in a posttest only design using the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale as the dependent variable. No significant differences were noted in global
self-concept scores between experiments and control groups. One of
6 sub scales, Behavior, was significant at $p<.05$.

Recommendations were directed towards the need for further research
pertaining to the unique needs of preadolescent children processing
parental divorce, and to the continued development and field testing of
Things Have Changed At My House.
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Donna K. Prins
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1982, in the United States, 1,108,000 children under the age of 18 joined the growing ranks of their peers known as children of divorce. The divorce rate in this country has continued in an upward trend since 1867, the first year for which divorce statistics were available (National Center for Health Statistics, 1985).

It is projected that over one-third of the married people who are currently between the ages of 25 and 35 will divorce (Allers, 1982). An analysis of data collected from states participating in the Divorce Registration Area (DRA) indicated that 55 percent of all divorces involved minor children. While the number of children under 18 years of age involved in each divorce has been dropping due to smaller family size, the number and rate per one thousand children has been rising, averaging one million minor children each year during the past decade (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1982).

Divorce and annulment actions reached an all-time high in 1981, with 1,213,000 actions legally processed. The impact of divorce on the family unit has resulted in changes in family life and structure. The millions of children involved are greatly affected by the divorce experience due primarily to the resultant changes in parent-child relationships, and the extent to which a divorce crisis interferences with, or impacts negatively with its development. As Byrum-Gaw (1981) states:
It is generally acknowledged that our self concept develops as a result of interaction with "significant others," typically our parents or those people who cared for us in our formative years. The formation of our self concept was greatly influenced by the messages our parents sent us about ourselves. Once again, the importance of communication is underlined. "Every word, facial expression, gesture, or action on the part of the parent gives the child some message about his worth." In simplistic terms, we can view our 'significant others' communication to us as molding our self concept and our self concept as molding our present communication. (pp. 32-33)

Kelly and Wallerstein (1976) emphasized that even temporary stressful life experiences (such as divorce) can have significant negative impact on the developmental process of self concept formation.

It is important that parents and helping professionals dealing with minor children be sensitive to the ways in which the stress of a family crisis (such as divorce) can disrupt, even if temporarily, children's ability to maintain equilibrium of self. Parents and professionals need to be cognizant of the fact that divorce involves loss for children. The most significant loss experienced by children of divorce is the loss of a parent. The extent of additional losses depends on the individual circumstances surrounding the entire divorce process. Many children are unprepared to deal mentally or emotionally with the impact of the losses sustained from divorce for the following reasons: (1) they are not responsible for the divorce; (2) their developmental stage of personal adjustment is often inadequate to process the excessive stress; (3) they usually have no input regarding the decision to divorce; and (4) they are not informed by their parents about the family situation beforehand.
When individuals experience loss for which there is little or no preparation, crisis states are intensified and the stress incurred from trying to cope with the situation is elevated to excessive levels. In order to integrate an experience into one's ongoing life structure, one attempts to logically order the events from beginning to end. If the sequence of events leading to the divorce are unclear or unknown, the integration process is difficult, with much denial being engaged in by the individual. The result in many cases is that the child becomes anxious and questions anything and everything, including theirself and their own being (Barman, 1976).

Children who are afforded communication and information regarding their family situation (impending divorce through finalization of divorce), by parents and/or significant others, can experience a reduction in both anxiety and frustration levels (Axtell and Axtell, 1979; Gardner, 1977; Grollman, 1975). If the anxiety and frustration levels are not addressed and resolved, then negative impact on self can occur. Manifestations of this negative impact may be expressed in many ways including withdrawal, aggression, and psychosomatic illnesses (Salk, 1978).

The dramatic increase in the rate of divorce involving minor children in the last decade, and the potential for reducing separation anxiety and effects of loss, form the backdrop for the present study. While much attention has been devoted to the plight of the single mother, and more recently to the travails of the single father, professionals actively addressing the dilemma of children of divorce in a systematic manner have been a reality only in the past decade.
Ann Soderman (1983), Extension Specialist with the Department of Family on Child Ecology, Michigan State University, indicated divorce is one of the most serious and complex mental health crises facing children of the 1980s. Evidence suggests that the impact of divorce and the resulting period of adjustment can be both painful and damaging to children (Wallerstein, 1980).

Counseling groups, designed especially to help children through the transition from two parents to one, have recently been given a priority status in schools, the court system, mental health facilities, and in private practices. Children from divorced families pose a complex predicament in regard to crises intervention strategies, as well as preventative program development. There is no common pattern of events when families come apart; hence, the children and families involved will, at different times, be at different points of innumerable sequences (Damon, 1979). While it is recognized that each divorce situation needs to be dealt with in an individual manner, the phenomenal increase in the divorce rate has produced millions of children requiring attention; thus a group or program approach to meet their need is mandated.

The development of group or program materials that would be useful toward meeting the needs of preadolescent children processing parental divorce is inadequate to meet the current demand. In almost every instance, materials and programs addressing the divorce issue have been directed toward an older audience. Pamphlets, films, books, and therapy treatment programs are readily obtainable for use with adults. But
materials and treatment programs designed especially for use with preadolescent children are sparse. The lack of published materials appropriate to meet the particular needs of preadolescent children regarding parental divorce served as the catalyst for the development of an educational therapeutic group procedure entitled Things Have Changed At My House (Prins, 1985). This group procedure is aimed at meeting the affective needs of preadolescent children.

Children of the middle years processing parental divorce may experience intense unmet affective needs, reflected in feelings of sadness and intense desire to have parents reunited. These children can be very angry, but do not confront their parents directly in regard to the source of their anger. They frequently express their anger through behavioral/emotional responses such as crying, whining, mood swings, health complaints, poor academic progress, and fears. Additionally, these children feel a sense of being unable to control important events in their lives. If the divorce occurred earlier in their developmental sequence, these children will need to process it all over again, because of the changes in their cognitive and emotional processing level.

Wallerstein & Kelly found that an important milestone in development occurs when children are about eight or nine years of age. These children become more sophisticated in their ability to understand complex reality and to handle their unhappiness, feelings of loss, and the helplessness that preoccupies them most of the time. They are more able to verbalize their thoughts and feelings; not to their parents necessarily, but to someone else who will listen. They tend to move toward establishing blame in one parent and intense loyalty toward the other one who is perceived as more virtuous. (Soderman, 1984, pp. 14-15)
Children in the preadolescent years are prone to misconceptions regarding parental divorce, due in part to lack of proper information. They need reliable information about what is happening in their lives, presented in a manner which enhances their level of development. Additionally, they need assistance in trying to construct a workable concept of what the changes in their lives mean to them and their family members.

The purpose of this study is the development and evaluation of an educational therapeutic group procedure aimed at meeting the needs of preadolescent children processing parental divorce. The group procedure will act as a vehicle to disseminate information regarding divorce, while providing skill training in behavioral and emotional responses to ongoing changes in life situations, i.e., divorce.

Statement of the Problem

The investigation was concerned with the development and evaluation of an educational therapeutic group procedure entitled *Things Have Changed At My House* (THCAMH). This group procedure was designed to assist children to understand and assimilate parental divorce through dissemination of information, self-understanding, and group discussions in regard to intra and interpersonal relationships as they relate either directly or indirectly to the divorce process.

The objectives for this study include increasing knowledge and understanding of the self concept development of children by introducing, discussing, and interpreting relevant research, theoretical and clinical
works. Of particular interest was the relationship between the development of the self concept and the importance of maintaining an ongoing personal interaction between child and parents. This knowledge and understanding was considered crucial in order to realize a second objective which involved investigating what impact parental divorce, which ultimately dictates a change in the relationship between child and parents, has on the child's ability to maintain self.

From this point of reference, a third objective involved the development of an educational therapeutic group procedure. This procedure was designed to minimize the negative impact on the child's self concept, believed to be associated with the resulting changes in the relationship between child and parents incurred from parental divorce.

The fourth and final objective involved in this study was evaluative in nature. The effectiveness of the educational therapeutic group procedure entitled Things Have Changed At My House was evaluated in relationship to: (1) the children's participation in the procedure; and, as a result of that participation, (2) the group's impact on the self concept level.

Importance of Study

Divorce has the potential for creating great disturbance within the lives of all individuals involved. Especially vulnerable are the children. There are many factors to be considered when exploring the potential impact that the divorce process has on children. Age, sex, developmental stage, environmental influences, existing relationship
quality, degree of marital discord, availability of parent contact, economic status, mental and emotional adjustment prior to the divorce are some of the significant factors (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1976; Salk, 1978). Whatever factor or combination of factors is considered, it is apparent that the divorce process demands adjustments on many fronts from all those who participate. Conceivably there are as many reasons for divorce as there are individuals seeking it. But whatever the individual profiles reveal regarding the reasons for divorce, and the resulting configurational patterns of needed adjustment to divorce, the children need assistance to deal with the immediate crisis generated by it, as well as potential future problems associated with the process. When considering the far-reaching effects that the divorce process can have in the lives of children, a time line depicting the continuum of emotional distress and resulting adjustment problems can be illuminating for those experiencing it.

The divorce process can create distress and adjustment problems for children six months to one year prior to the actual legal dissolution of a marriage and continue for six months to one year after. Additionally, if the parent(s) begin dating or remarry, the stressful period is elongated by an additional six months to a year (Daman, 1979). When superimposed on a continuum representative of a child's school career, this period could conceivably engulf the entire early primary, upper elementary, junior high, high school experience, or a combination of these. Divorce-engendered stress may compromise children's receptivity to learning, their willingness to venture into new materials,
their ability to concentrate, and their overall attitude toward self and others (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1976).

A caveat regarding assisting children with the process of divorce would be: engaging in educational therapeutic time by addressing the individual factors either singularly or in combination without discernment of what constitutes the core of problems, a topographical relief may result while the core problem continues to create inner turmoil. Therefore, in order to address the adjustment reactions of children experiencing the dissolution process of divorce, it is necessary to ascertain what creates the greatest distress or negative impact.

In an attempt to determine what was at the core of the children's distress regarding divorce, the divorce process was examined. This examination revealed that divorce is the severing of relationships resulting in physical/emotional separation from individuals one had formed attachment to, and had become interdependent upon for physical and psychological survival. An effort to identify specific aspects of this dissolution process, which could represent the core stressor in the lives of children, led to an analysis of the formation of the relationship between child and parents.

The analysis began with the infant child forming an attachment bond with their primary care-giving parents and followed a sequential pattern of development. The developmental process revealed the simultaneous development of the biological organism and the psychological being (self) of the individual. The process relied heavily, and at times exclusively, upon the interactional level between child and
parents. From this analysis a pattern of intimate inter-relational dependency emerged, which indicates that the greatest stressor experienced by children of divorce is fear of being separated from their physical/psychological life-support system, namely their parents.

The educational therapeutic group procedure is a short-term instructional approach designed to assist children to understand the process of divorce and changing family relationship structure(s). It also teaches children problem solving skills which can be used to resolve current or future problems related to intra or inter personal relationship development and maintenance.

The group procedure focused on general problems experienced by preadolescent children processing parental divorce. A relatively prestructured outline was used, and the entire procedure occurred in a group setting. The setting provided a medium for preadolescent children through which they could share and compare their experiences in a non-threatening, nonjudgmental environment. Children were encouraged through the group process to identify and express their feelings and needs to significant others. The development and evaluation of a divorce education program will make a significant contribution to the field by exploring ways in which to minimize the adverse effects of the separation reaction experienced by children involved in the divorce process, while at the same time enhancing their self concept development.

Definition of Terms

Terminology employed in this study was defined in accordance with its specific use and/or application.
**Self Concept**

Self concept of a child was defined in this study as being the internalization of the child's impressions, perceptions, and understanding which he/she then uses to formulate functional responses to the world, constituting a sense of personal identity (Gordon, 1969).

**Self Concept Level**

Self concept level of children was defined in the evaluation section of the study by scores participants obtained on the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale (1969) (PHCSCS).

**Educational Therapeutic Group Procedure**

The educational therapeutic group procedure was a short-term socio-process group approach that provided information and promoted skill development in children regarding adjustment to the divorce process.

**Treatment**

The treatment was defined for purposes of the study as the educational therapeutic group procedure entitled *Things Have Changed At My House* (THCAMH).

**Limitations**

When conducting research, there are limitations that must be acknowledged. The limitations noted in the pursuit of research involved
with this study are reflective of considerations and/or requirements that had to be dealt with in field research involving young children in public school settings.

The school administration officials in charge of the school system where the study was conducted had many concerns in regard to using new material, previously untested, in an experimental fashion with school children. A system ban against the introduction and usage of new program materials with school children did not exist. However, individual building administration personnel exercised autonomy within the school system in regard to accepting or rejecting new programs to be introduced and utilized in their respective educational units. Therefore, school participation in this study was determined by individual elementary school principals. Out of ten potential elementary schools where the study could have been conducted, two elementary school principals accepted the proposal.

While the two building principals were receptive to the introduction of the group procedure and the necessary post-test evaluation component, they would not allow intact classes to be disrupted or divided to provide for random sampling. Therefore, out of ten classrooms representing grades four, five and six contained in the two elementary schools, five full classrooms were assigned to the treatment group receiving the group procedure, and five classrooms were assigned to the control group, which did not receive the group procedure.

The availability of elementary guidance personnel to conduct the group procedure and administer the testing created scheduling limitations.
Additionally, the pre-existing school calendar, which dictates vacation periods, inservice workshops and other scheduled events, ultimately limited the number of weeks of children's participation to 6. This time limitation resulted in a reduction of the number of group procedure sessions from the desired 14 sessions down to 6 sessions. One follow-up evaluation session, consisting of the administration of the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale to all children participating in the study, was granted.

Although a pre-test and a post-test format had been requested, the school administration declined the format as originally presented, allowing only a post-test procedure. An explanation rendered by the administration indicated concerns about the use of time and student participation already allocated for testing purposes within the school system. Additionally, due to the psychological nature of evaluating self concept, the school administration was reluctant to additional testing. Out of a number of proposed screening devices available to measure children's self concept, the Piers-Harris Self Concept Scale was ultimately used because it purported to test self concept, and was acceptable to school administration personnel.

In the school system used to conduct this study, the elementary guidance program was exclusively crises and treatment oriented. Because of this factor, the group procedure was administered in an isolated manner not as part of an ongoing preventative program. This situation, coupled with the reduction in group procedure sessions time allotment (previously described), created a climate which was considered less
than desirable for positive change to occur in the self concept levels of the children who participated in this study.

Organization of Content

In Chapter II an introduction, discussion and interpretation of relevant literature reflecting research, theoretical, and clinical studies in the areas of: attachment formation, development of self concept, separation reaction, dissipation of conflict through communication, group procedure models, and the rationale for use of an educational therapeutic group procedure are presented. The procedure and methodology, including the development of the educational therapeutic group procedure, subject matter of the procedure, treatment conditions, population and sample, research hypothesis, instrumentation, administration of the instrument, and statistical procedure are presented in Chapter III. In Chapter IV, the statistical results of the evaluative section of the study are presented. The final chapter, Chapter V, contains the summary, retrospective conclusions, problems encountered in the study, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Divorce, a phenomenon which has gained national recognition in the past decade, is a nondiscriminatory entity allowing all petitioners entry into its burgeoning ranks, be they young/old, rich/poor, male/female, black/white, religious/atheistic. Divorce has an equalizing quality about it, accomplished by the imposition of a decree of separation, a severing of personal attachments, regardless of individual likeness, differences, or backgrounds.

Webster's dictionary defines the word "divorce" as the legal dissolution of a marriage contract. This definition leads one to believe that divorce is a singular event marking the end to a legally recognized relationship between two individuals, namely marriage. Just as marriage exceeds its legal definition, so does divorce. For the purposes of this study, divorce is considered a process of dissolution, not a singular event. The inception of the dissolution process involved in divorce can occur at any point along the relationship continuum. Conceivably within a brief period of time following the legal union of two individuals, known as marriage, the dissolving action can begin to erode away the relationship. The process may proceed swiftly with major issues demanding immediate resolution, or
may meander slowly, insidiously eroding away. To a child, the divorce process could encompass their lifetime.

While children do not actively petition for involvement in divorce, they are included by their very association with adults who seek the divorce state. As with adults, they receive the same decree of severing personal attachments through separation. This generates a number of predictable crises for children, including major social and emotional trauma. Trauma occurs when personal attachments, especially to primary care givers, mother and father, are severed and/or disturbed. This severance or disruption of attachment can result in negative impact on the child's self concept (Dlugokinski, 1977).

**Attachment Formation**

Self concept is the core of a person's actions, feelings, and beliefs. It is not a category or a quality, but describes a perception of self. A perception which has its inception from the moment of birth (Byrum-Gaw, 1981).

The infant enters the world of the family in a total state of dependency, relying exclusively on the desire and ability of the primary care givers, mother and father, to administer to the biological as well as the psychological needs presented. The giving of care by the parent care givers and the acceptance of care by the dependent child, while recognized as necessary, is capable and ultimately successful only when an affectional bond between care giver and child has been developed. This affectional bond was referred to as attachment by Bowlby (1958).
Ainsworth stated, "An attachment is an affectional tie that one person forms to another specific person, binding them together in space and enduring over time," (Caldwell & Ricciuti, 1973, p. 1). Attachment is not a loose, intermitting association with another, but discriminating and specific. While it is true that a person can form attachments with more than one human being, the person does not make attachments to many in the true sense of the word.

While biological maturation of the individual child provides the necessary conditions for the development of the physical organism, it is not sufficient in and of itself to insure survival. Attachment formation is crucial to the healthy growth, development and survivability of the human being. When attachment is not made between caretakers and the child, symptoms of the "failure to thrive syndrome" may be evident as early as one month of age. These symptoms include: inferior weight gain, poor muscle tone, weak cry, excessive sleep, and in the advancing stages a profound state of apathy is noted where the children eventually lose interest even in food. A high mortality rate has been associated with this syndrome through the first two years of life (Kaplan & Sadock, 1983).

In order to understand the origins, time line, and developmental process of the attachment formation, Ainsworth (1967) distinguished five phases involved in the process. The five phases are as follows:

1. Undiscriminating phase, hypothesized rather than observed;
2. Differential responsiveness at close range, characterized by discrimination of the mother from others by differential crying, smiling and vocalization; behavior noted as early as nine weeks of age;
3. Differential responsiveness at a distance, behavior noted between 20 to 24 weeks of age; additionally staring at strangers indicating recognition of difference is noted;

4. Initiation on child's part in making sustaining and renewing contact and interaction by following, approaching, active greeting, and active contact behaviors;

5. Sharp increase in intensity of stranger anxiety with marked clinging to attachment figures under condition of perceived threat; this phase most notably is observed in the last quarter of the first year of life. (Caldwell & Ricciuti, 1973, pp. 11-12)

Attachment is viewed as schematic, developing through transactions with significant persons in the environment. Each stage is built upon the previous stage in a hierarchy of development and represents a refinement upon the attachment processes characteristic of the earlier, less developed state.

Schaffer & Emerson (1964) observed that nearly all babies who became attached to their mothers also became attached to some other familiar figure, namely the father. Actual attachments to others, i.e. the father, came about in the same time frame as did the attachment to the mother, within the third quarter of the first year.

Development of Self Concept

The child's view of himself is not simply a mirror image of the external events which surround him in early life. From the very beginning it includes his own organism as it senses, feels, learns, and assigns meaning to these external stimuli. The child learns who he is from what happens to him, from the language that surrounds him, from the opportunities to deal with objects and events in his immediate work, and from his own responses to the welter of stimuli. His self concept represents his unique organization of his biological make-up, the evaluations made of him by significant adults, and his own learning from trial manipulation and feedback from his world. (Gordon, 1969, p. 376)
The foundational platform of the self concept/personal identity/perception of self is believed to be based upon: initially, the attachment formation between primary care givers, mother and father; secondly, the development of a successful communicational system between self and significant others; and, ultimately, the acknowledgement of the existence of self.

Through a communication system which develops between care givers and child during the attachment period, basic needs are addressed and provided for. Additionally, the child forms impressions, perceptions, understandings, and functional responses to the world around him/her. The child is formulating a sense of personal identity.

Erick Fromm (1970) defines identity as "the experience which permits a person to say legitimately 'I' - 'I' as an organizing active center of the structure of all my actual or potential activities," (p. 82). Fromm identified five intrinsic human needs that, he believes, must be met if a person is to continue to grow and develop:

He needs relatedness, a deep feeling of unity with himself and others. He needs transcendence, a sense of rising above the animal in him and becoming genuinely creative. He needs rootedness and identity, through which he feels he belongs and can accept his personal uniqueness accordingly. And, finally, he needs a frame of orientation, a reference point for establishing and maintaining a meaningful and stable perception of himself and his world. To fulfill these needs, a person must have a kind early environment and a beneficent society in which his progress can continue. (Cited in Kaplan & Sadock, 1981, p. 165)

Personal identity is a sense of feeling of being, continuously, the same person. The perception of a central core that gives continuity to one's life begins with the basic family unit; mother, father, and

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siblings; and continues to be nurtured through the interactional constructs of this unit; extends to secondary family members, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins; and with optimal development bridges, eventually to society in general.

This attachment or bond that evolves between the care givers (parents) and child that spawns the personal concept of self is the most forceful of emotional systems known to man. Weiss stated that "no other system can override it, and that system can override any other. It constitutes survival and is very deeply established" (Kohn, 1979, p. 41). A question that arises is, what effect does the severing or disturbance of the attachment bond have on the developing person?

Separation Reaction

It is well known that adverse effects may result if a child is separated from his/her mother once the child is old enough to be attached and before the child is mature enough to sustain attachment unimpaired despite a period of absence (Bowlby, 1952; Ainsworth, 1962; Yarrow, 1964).

Although the adverse effects of separation are varied from one child to another, recurring and implicit in all is a disturbance in attachment. This disturbance will be evident in either attachments previously established or disruption of the attachment-formation process, resulting in difficulty to form future attachments or adverse effects on the quality of future attachments. There are many factors that have a bearing on the degree of disturbance which may follow separation. Ainsworth (1962), and Ainsworth & Bowlby (1953) included: maturational/
developmental state of child at separation; length of separation; whether separation occurred in familiar or unfamiliar surroundings; availability of mother surrogate; type and degree of child-mother attachment that preceded the separation; if reunion occurs, the interactional characteristics of mother and child.

The literature documentation regarding the attachment formation and separation reaction as related to mother and child relationship is abundant, while the same topics, attachment formation and separation reaction as related to father and child relationship, are not as thoroughly documented. A statement contained in the preface of a book by Lamb (1976) regarding the "imbalanced focus" of attention on the mother's influence stands to redirect our attention to the need for understanding that fathers, like mothers, have both direct and indirect influences on the emotional and intellectual development of their offspring.

This statement takes on added importance when the following comparison is made between the responses to separation from mother based on research by Robertson & Bowlby (1952), Bowlby (1953; 1960) and the psychological tasks of the child adjusting to divorce according to Wallerstein (1983). Because a parallel emerges even though in the case of divorce it is usually the father from whom children are separated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Robertson/Bowlby</th>
<th>Wallerstein</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Phase:</strong> Protest</td>
<td><strong>Task I:</strong> Acknowledging the Reality of the Marital Rupture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child is acutely distressed at having lost his mother. Attachment behaviors are activated: crying, calling, and searching if</td>
<td>Child has terrifying fantasies of parental abandonment and disaster which tend to block acknowledgement</td>
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Robertson/Bowlby (Cont'd)

free to do so. Child's anger is evident in response to mother if she visits. Child is ambivalent, both seeking close contact with mother and pushing away from her.

Second Phase: Despair
Child's behavior suggests increasing hopelessness. Child becomes inactive and withdrawn, crying tends to be monotonous, muted, and intermittent. He is seemingly in a state of deep mourning. The ambivalence of protest - Phase I - can still be reactivated by mother reappearance.

Third Phase: Detachment
Child settles in - appears to be back to normal. He accepts care from others and may seem sociable. However, when mother appears, his behavior shows a profound change has taken place in the relationship with her. The child no longer seeks interaction, proximity, and contact with her. In all stages both anger and hatred are conspicuous.

The child's response to continuing separation in not unlike the responses of an adult who mourns of an adult who mourns the loss of a loved one. The mourning will cease only when detachment is complete and reorganization of behavior toward another attachment is completed (pp. 131-420).

Wallerstein (Cont'd)

of the marital rupture. Additionally, the child's fears of being overwhelmed by intense feelings of sorrow, anger, rejection and yearning further block acknowledgement. The child has a powerful need to deny, to defer, and to avoid terrifying thoughts and feelings.

Task II: Disengaging
The child needs to find, establish and maintain some measure of psychological distance and separation from adults. In order to achieve this, the child needs actively and very painfully to disengage from parental distress and conflict.

Task III: Resolution of Loss
The child must overcome his sense of rejection, humiliation, of unlovability, and powerlessness which the one parent's departure often engenders.

Task IV: Resolving Anger/Self-Blame
The anger the child has toward his parents is likely to be intense and sometimes long-lasting. With understanding of the events that prompted the divorce, the cooling of anger can begin, along with the task of forgiveness.

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Task V: Accepting
It is clear that the fantasy of marriage restoration yields to reality only very gradually, perhaps only when the child finally makes and consolidates a clear psychological separation between self and parent during adolescent years.

Task VI: Achieving Realistic Hope Regarding Relationships
For the child to successfully accomplish the completion of this task requires success in the completion of all the previously stated five tasks (pp. 232-238).

Current statistical data generated by divorce shows that mothers are given custody of the children in 90% of all divorce cases. This information, coupled with the comparison of the research by Robertson/Bowlby and Wallerstein, indicates that children experience a separation reaction whether they are separated from their mothers or their fathers. This is an important point to consider when evaluating children's adjustment reactions to the dissolution process known as divorce. To the extent that the dissolution process of divorce has an erosional effect on the attachment between child and parents, it is conceivable that separation anxiety occurs in a proportional manner. The greater the erosion of the attachment, the greater the separation anxiety. Separation anxiety can manifest itself in a wide range of disturbances, such as faltering academic achievement, behavioral problems, nightmares, changed eating habits, bed wetting, depression, headaches, and other psychosomatic reactions (Salk, 1978).
In addition to separation reaction anxiety, father absence creates a void within the family structure which can disadvantage children in their personal adjustment and life skill development (Biller, 1968; Reuter & Biller, 1973). Children living with father absence during their early and formative years are in actuality experiencing a deprivation of the very essence of the male and masculine counter balance to the female, feministic forces of their mother. Instead of a concentrically balanced scheme of growth and development which could assist the individual toward a positive orientated sense of self described previously by Fromm, the research available indicates that the growth and development of father absent children tends to be eccentric, showing signs of irregularity in personal and social conduct (Biller, 1973; Heilbrun, 1974; Kayton & Biller, 1971).

Prominent among research studies are findings that reveal children of father absence have trouble achieving a secure sense of identity and difficulty discerning their role in society. Often this confusion creates a behavior response pattern ranging from inability to react to over reaction, often defying social conventions. The outcome for boys is often either antisocial behavior, or the adoption of very feminine traits and attitudes; and for girls, chronic difficulties in their relationships with members of the opposite sex.

Pioneer delinquency researchers Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck (1950) indicated that: "A significant number of boys who grow up in homes where there is no father appear unable to learn appropriate ways to handle their aggressions. They tend to 'act out' their hostile feelings,
apparently without much concern for the consequences" (p. 305). However, a more prevalent explanation given by investigators is that the male child growing up in the predominant environmental and societal context of the mother is experiencing terror of being enveloped by her. The researchers conclude that the exaggerated toughness, aggressiveness, and delinquency generated by these children is a manifestation of their continuing search for masculine identity. These children, when in doubt as to how to realize their masculine identity, gravitate to the strongest forms of behavior, exhibiting overt expression of aggression. They perform hostile acts toward society as an affirmation of their manly status (Biller, 1968; 1973).

In contrast to the hyper-masculine behavior of some young males experiencing an identity crisis, others appear to identify with the female role model. Developing a feminist behavior response repertoire. These males show increased levels of fears and tensions, while their skill in establishing or maintaining relationships with their peers is generally decreased. Significant dependent behavior levels were noted in research studies toward female figures, especially mothers and teachers.

A longitudinal study entitled The Most Significant Minority: One Parent Children in the Schools, co-sponsored by the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, a division of the C. F. Kettering Foundation, (1980) found that "as a group, in both elementary and high school, one-parent children show lower achievement and present more discipline problems than their two-parent peers. They are absent more often, late
to school more often, and may show more health problems" (p. 1).
Statistics compiled involving 18,000 students revealed that children from single-parent homes, versus two-parent homes, moved twice as often when in elementary school and three times as often in secondary school. Disciplinary referrals for children of one-parent homes, versus two-parent homes, are about the same in number. However, the percentages of children from one-parent homes being suspended and/or expelled is double that of their two-parent peers; indicating discipline referral was for more serious offenses.

Additionally, a two year study involving 699 randomly chosen first, third, and fifth graders in 38 states conducted by John Guidubaldi (1983), Kent State professor of early childhood education, and funded by Kent State, the William T. Grant Foundation and the National Association of School Psychologists, indicates that divorce has profound adverse effects upon children's behavior and achievement in school. According to the study, "children from divorced families are much more likely than their peers from 'intact' families to score lower on IQ, reading and spelling tests, get lower grades and to be rated less favorably by teachers and peers" (p. 5). While it is recognized that children from two-parent homes experience adjustment and behavioral problems, children from single-parent homes clearly are at greater risk levels.

Evidence of the more subtle ramifications of father absence have been revealed through numerous studies conducted involving the analysis of the cognitive skills of college males from responses given on college
entrance examinations. Historically, females score higher on the verbal sections of this type of screening device than males do. Males, in turn, score higher on the mathematics section. Data collected indicated, however, that males whose fathers had been absent for an extended length of time during their earliest years scored in a typically feminine pattern, that is, higher on the verbal subscales. In contrast, the scores of those males whose fathers were at home more nearly fitted the male norm. Moreover, the longer the father had been absent, or the younger the child at the time of his absence, the stronger the tendency for the student to score in a feminine pattern. The findings of this type of research indicates that the effects of father absence can create a measurable impact in areas such as cognitive style for male offspring. A possible explanation of this fact is that young males identify with their fathers they emulate not only attitudes, values, roles, gestures, and emotional reactions, but also in problem-solving strategies, thinking processes, and vocabulary as well. This matching of the child's to the adult's intellectual behavior serves the fostering of like cognitive development and style (Carlsmith, 1964; Barclay & Cusumano, 1967; Lynn, 1969).

Unlike the inductive process of interacting practiced by her brother in regard to the male modeling of the father, the female engages in a deductive process with her father. A girl's feminine development is greatly influenced by how the father differentiates his "masculine" role from her "feminine" role and what type of behavior he considers appropriate for his daughter (Mussen & Rutherford, 1963). Through an interactional process, behaviors are delineated as male or female; with
the father functioning, not only as the male model, but also as the extinguisher of the male traits for and in the female child. A point-counterpoint growth and development occurs, utilizing a deductive or subtracting ideology to differentiate the maleness of the father from the femaleness of the daughter. This is seen as an attempt to insure the separate and exclusive functioning of the two biological psychological entities of the species. When the father is not available to engage in this process with his daughter, she is likely to experience problems in both her sex-role and personality development. Girls so deprived exhibit interpersonal and heterosexual relationship problems that span the continuum from shyness and discomfort around males and anxiety about sex to promiscuousness and inappropriately assertive behaviors with male peers and adults. Luckey (1960) and Fisher (1973) both report consistent data indicating that the daughters perceived relationship or lack of relationship with their fathers had a direct impact on their marital status and adjustment. Women who reported dissatisfaction and sexual functioning difficulties within the structure of marriage, also reported that they had experienced father absence or poor infrequent interaction with their fathers.

Whether male or female, the most pervasive fact reoccurring throughout the literature, paternal deprivation makes the individual more vulnerable to difficulties in sexual development. Bene’ (1965), West (1959), Kaye (1967), Gundlach and Riess (1968), and Thompson (1973) indicate that inappropriate and/or inadequate fathering is a major factor in the development of homosexuality in females, as well as males.
In general, available research indicates a similarity in negative father-child relationship among female and male homosexuals.

**Dissipation of Conflict Through Communication**

Whatever criteria one wishes to utilize in an evaluative manner regarding the impact of divorce on children, it is obvious that children who are attempting to cope with the dissolution process of divorce need assistance to evaluate the state of change they find themselves living with. They desperately need information about their family situation as it relates to the ongoing divorce process in order to evaluate and formulate their personal response. Without this processing assistance, they experience crisis after crisis for which they find themselves unprepared to deal, both mentally and emotionally, resulting in anxiety-driver ego regressions which reinforce their vulnerability (Wallerstein, 1983).

Parents who are dealing with their own adjustment to the separation/divorce often simply do not have the emotional resources to provide their children with the direction and support they need during this process. When the family unit is in the process of dissolution/disintegration, the communication process is usually dissolving/disintegrating also. At a time when individual children need to know what is happening and what to expect from tomorrow in order to retain their concept of self and their relationship to the world, the most significant communicating persons to them, the parents, are seemingly incapable of meaningful communication or are unaware of the child's need for communication.
The child, so deprived of information about the significant others (parents), self, and environment, suffers negative impact on self-concept development and maintenance (Kaplan & Pokorney, 1971).

The inevitable shifts and changes in relationships and life style that children, as well as adults, experience after a divorce demand attention, explanation, and understanding if separation reactions are to be minimized and positive self-concept levels are to be maintained and/or enhanced. Children and adults both need to shift gears while they are divorcing one life style and beginning anew. These dramatic shifts may bring a mixture of both relief and new pressures. While children may not be able to logically verbalize either the reliefs or the stressors, they experience them irregardless. Their ability and capacity to cope and integrate those reliefs and stressors indicative of life-style changes determines the level to which they will be able to maintain personal integrity and personal identity.

Dlugokinski (1977) has outlined a developmental approach to coping with divorce that contains three stages: (1) Orientation: during which the changes brought about by divorce are not personally integrated into the life style of the individual, thus remain blocked until the individual is ready to deal with them; (2) Integration: during this state the individual begins to work through his new status and position resulting in the person asking, "Who am I?". While a new identity and sense of direction are being formulated, an increase in feelings of anxiety and insecurity is realized. Desire and recognition of the need for assistance to cope is often obvious during this state, if not by
the particular individual, at least to observers; and (3) Consolidation: in this stage the individual moves toward a more effective functional life pattern, has more realistic coping skills developed and once again enters the mainstream of society.

It is during the second state of Dlugokinski's developmental approach, Integration, that children would most benefit from outside educational/therapeutic interventions. Professionals engaged in the helping professions and/or educational professions can provide a secure, consistent communicational base for children during times of family crisis, such as divorce. By providing adequate, non-prejudicial information concerning changing family patterns, a significant level of communication will remain intact, and the child can continue to ascertain where he/she is in relationship to their own life's continuum.

Program Selection

Research into the possible program models available to facilitate the needed assistance to children involved in the process of change incurred from separation and divorce revealed the Family Counseling Model (Sotir, 1967; Ferber, 1972), the Educational Approach Model (Drickers, 1974; Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1975; Sotir, 1972), and the Self Help Model (Collins & Pancoast, 1976; Gortner, 1977). Additional programs investigated which were designed to assist preadolescent children with interpersonal and intrapersonal growth and development included: Developing Understanding of Self and Others (DUSO), (Dinkmeyer, 1970) and the Human Development Program (Magic Circle), (Bessell & Palomares, 1969).
While the basic concept of the educational therapeutic group procedure is Socio-Process Group orientated (Betz, Wilbur & Wilbur, 1981), it can also lend itself to an educational format depending on the setting, availability of professional personnel, group structure and one's philosophy of what constitutes personal growth and development in the mental health and educational spheres.

The rationale for using an educational/therapeutic approach to work with children at a time of significant personal life change (such as separation and divorce) is based on the following:

1. Children are familiar with the educational format and processes involved.
2. The fact that millions of school-aged children are involved in the divorce process and the educational setting, in most instances, is the most constant point of reference for these children, increases the potential for providing ongoing assistance to them.
3. The cost of providing assistance is minimized; a point of importance when considering that research indicates the custodial parent is usually working with a greatly reduced economic base.
4. Divorce invokes changes for which the children are usually not developmentally, either from a mental or emotional perspective, prepared to process. The educational therapeutic group procedure offers children information and skill development/practice which increases their ability to cope with immediate crises, as well as future life problems.
5. The educational therapeutic group procedure can be utilized in a singular approach or in conjunction with other approaches such as counseling or self-help interventions.

Ginnot (1961; 1965) indicates that preaching philosophical concepts to children rarely results in a true learning experience for them. However, illustrating concepts by using examples of children in situations common to their own experiences provides a means of proving such concepts. Through the participant's empathy with the characters and understanding of the situations in the stories contained in Things Have Changed At My House (Prins, 1985), it is believed that children will be participating in a true learning experience for them.

To this end, the educational therapeutic group procedure entitled Things Have Changed At My House was developed to assist children of divorce in the following ways: (1) understanding the process of divorce; (2) communicating one's feelings and needs to significant others; (3) developing problem-solving skills to deal with current problems as well as future ones; (4) assisting them to develop coping skills with which to deal with separation anxiety and its resulting anxiety state; (5) understanding they are experiencing a realignment/restructuring in their lives; and (6) evaluating the changes that occur in life and what these changes mean to people.

Summary

The need for therapeutic, educational services for children experiencing the divorce process cannot be overstated. The nature of the
crisis, associated with such family unit separation and its ensuing changes, requires resources that exceed most of the developmental responses that the child has acquired in such a brief lifetime. An effective program can assist the child to adjust to the changes involved and additionally serve to prevent long-standing individual and relationship problems, thus averting the perpetuation of such problems throughout the continuance of life.

Although assistance to children experiencing the divorce process has grown over the past few years, the need for programs and materials has not yet been adequately met. The intervention group procedure identified and developed in this study represents an attempt to further meet this need.
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE AND METHOD

The present study involved the development and evaluation of an educational therapeutic group procedure addressing the affective, emotional needs of preadolescent aged children experiencing parental divorce.

Development of the Educational Therapeutic Group Procedure Entitled: Things Have Changed At My House

There are millions of American children who have experienced the impact of divorce on their personal life structure(s). Many of these individuals are struggling with resultant emotional difficulties which, to a greater or lesser degree, reduce their functioning levels from an intra personal perspective, as well as an inter personal perspective. Phenomenologists would explain that these individuals are experiencing emotional distress because they are attempting to process and event of reality, i.e. divorce, within the confines of their own subjective perception of the event(s) (Battle, 1984). Rogers (1959) postulated that every individual is the center of his changing world of experience. Experiences, therefore, according to Rogers, must be viewed only in terms of their relevance to the individual.

Snygg & Combs (1959) indicated that the phenomenal field (self perception) is continually changing and it is this fluidity which makes change in behavior possible. Fluidity, which permits individuals to
adjust to or accommodate environmental demands, enables them to gratify specific needs. Capacity for change also makes possible the process of learning, reasoning, remembering, forgetting, and creating.

In an attempt to address the reality of divorce in a manner that would have a positive impact on the personal perceptual field of preadolescent children experiencing parental divorce, an educational therapeutic group procedure entitled Things Have Changed At My House (THCAMH) was developed.

The magnitude of issues raised via the divorce process makes the effort of addressing the subject in an all encompassing, exhaustive manner one of an impossible nature. Therefore, the 14 themes chosen to be represented in this group procedure reflect a subjective selection of recurring issues expressed in the literature and during therapeutic counseling sessions by preadolescent children experiencing parental divorce. Divorce, when considered as a process of dissolution, conceivably spans a continuum from the point that the relationship begins to rupture and erode, through the ensuing separation reaction, to a point of acceptance and personal life realignment. When selecting the issues and developing the subject matter to be contained in the group procedure, and attempt was made to align recurring divorce issues, depicting the process continuum from beginning of the relationship dissolution to point of personal life realignment.

The subject matter, stories and activities contained in THCAMH is somewhat different from the usual stories and activities utilized with children. The stories used are basically stories of conflicts in

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experiences, followed by activities designed to assist the children to move towards the resolution of these conflicts and the personal management of these experiences in an emotionally healthy fashion. The group procedure provides a vehicle through which children are encouraged to identify their experiences, express their experiences, and explore ways to accept them.

The design format of the educational therapeutic group procedure involves three phases: (1) problem identification consisting of an introduction to the topic through a brief stimulus story; (2) group discussion consisting of discussing the topic with focus on comparing and applying the materials to one's personal life experiences; and (3) skill training consisting of a major concentration on analyzing appropriate behavioral responses, during which time specific behavioral skills are identified, demonstrated and practiced. This basic format follows the Socio-Process Group format described by Betz (1977). Additionally, this procedure relies on the experientially oriented learning model utilized in the Developing Understanding of Self and Others (DUSO) program. This model, as described by Dinkmeyer (1970), postulates that the:

Content of the learning experience is the response of the child to the activities. The child is provided with activities which stimulate emotional involvement. The leader works with the child's perceptions and feelings which are stimulated by the activities. The child is encouraged to discover the relationships between his/her feelings, intellect and behavior. (p. 12)

The educational therapeutic group procedure is a short term instructional approach that provides information and skill development
to children regarding the divorce process. It consists of structured experiences to improve a child's selfconcept functioning level as it applies to modifying behaviors which could otherwise result in negative emotions, attitudes and personal life adjustment. Individuals are provided with opportunities to share and compare their personal experiences with others in a nonthreatening, nonjudgmental educational therapeutic setting. As expounded upon in the Magic Circle program (Bessell & Palomares, 1960), an atmosphere of acceptance is of vital importance throughout the sessions. As the children participate through group interaction in activities related to specific goals, they are encouraged to share their experiences genuinely and to learn to listen, observe, and interact with others.

Although this educational therapeutic group procedure is not circular in approach, as in the Magic Circle, it does reflect similar broad spectrum goals for children. These goals are:

Giving children the opportunity to become constructively involved in developing their own personal effectiveness, self-confidence, and an understanding of the causes and effects in interpersonal relationships. (p. i)

Subject Matter

The group procedure entitled Things Have Changed At My House is comprised of 14 units. These units cluster around 4 areas requiring personal emotional adjustment on the part of preadolescent children processing parental divorce. The 4 areas requiring personal emotional adjustment are:
1. Relationship Conflict;

2. Coping with Crises, Changes or Losses in Life;

3. Defining Life Roles and Relationships; and


The complete text of THCAMH is presented in Appendix A. A summary of the various areas and units are presented below.

Area I. Relationship Conflict

Within this first area, attention is focused on the importance of the communication process as it relates to understanding and maintaining personal relationships. Expansion of the communication focus includes a discussion of disagreements which occur between people, and the need to learn effective ways to cope or accept disagreements and/or disappointments in daily life.

Additionally, children are made aware of the concept of behavioral responsibility. It is made clear to children that they are not responsible for their parents' behaviors, only their own. Controlling one's self is a full-time job, requiring thought, planning, effort, and communication with self and others.

Units included in Area I are: Unit I, Things Have Changed At My House; Unit II, The House Inside My House; and Unit V, Time and No Time.

Area II. Coping with Crises, Changes or Losses in Life

Major life crises, changes, or losses may evoke feeling states that the individual child does not recognize or understand. These
feeling states have the potential for reducing functioning levels, or contributing to socially unacceptable behavior patterns. Such feeling states are identified and explored in this unit. Additionally, the concept of learning to cope more effectively with situations which are beyond an individual's control are discussed. Children are introduced to problem-solving strategies which can be applied to immediate problems, as well as those which might arise in the future.

Specific Units emphasizing Area II concepts are: Unit 3, Missing; Unit 4, Two Eggs and Bacon; Unit 6, Heads or Tails; Unit 7, The Tour; and Unit 9, Saving for a Rainy Day.

Area III. Defining Life Roles and Relationships

When major life changes occur, an accompanying condition known as displacement can also occur. Children can be helped in dealing with displacement by being encouraged to become better acquainted with themselves. This area emphasizes the uniqueness of all people, their strengths and weaknesses.

Children are guided to become more aware of the relationship between their wants, needs, and desires, and the wants, needs, and desires of other people. Communication is again stressed as an effective way to deal with interpersonal relationship conflicts.

Specific Units emphasizing Area III are: Unit 8, All Dressed Up; Unit 10, Counting; Unit 11, Say Hello; and Unit 12, The Visitor.
Area IV. Personal Ownership/Responsibility/Acceptance

Change involves gains as well as losses in an individual's life structure. Both of these entities are investigated in Area IV. The children are encouraged to evaluate their ongoing life situations in regard to gains, as well as losses.

Ownership of feelings, along with the reality of personal decision making are discussed. Children are helped to understand that they actually are capable of changing their personal emotional state of being, because it belongs to them.

Specific Units emphasizing Area IV are: Unit 13, How Long Does it Take to Feel Better; Unit 14, So Tell Me, What Did You Gain.

These are the major themes emphasized throughout THCAMH. The four areas requiring emotional adjustment by preadolescent children processing parental divorce were formulated from the survey of literature regarding the normal growth and development of children, the divorce process, and the reactions of children to parental divorce. Although the specific subject matter deals with processing the many ramifications involved in the divorce process, the over-all aim of this group procedure is preventative in nature. Therefore, the global goals and objectives of the group should be considered as an attempt to strengthen children's self concept.

Evaluation of THCAMH

A post-test only design with a control group was used to evaluate the impact of the divorce adjustment group. The group sessions were
conducted within general education classroom settings in two elementary schools. One elementary school counselor conducted the sessions, and classroom teachers accompanied their children through the entirety of each session.

The following format was used with the experimental group: (1) six weekly sessions, each lasting 45 minutes, were conducted; (2) full classroom group compliments were maintained (20-30 participants); (3) each grade level represented, i.e. 4th, 5th, 6th, was treated independently with no blending of grade levels taking place; and (4) post testing using the Piers-Harris Scale was administered to full classroom group compliments (20-30 participants), in the familiar surrounding of each group's respective classroom.

Time did not permit utilization of the THCAMH in its entire 14 unit structure; therefore, the 6 units used exclusively were as follows: Unit 1, Things Have Have Changed At My House; Unit 2, The House Inside My House; Unit 3, Missing; Unit 6, Heads or Tails; Unit 12, The Visitor; Unit 13, How Long Does it Take to Feel Better. These units were selected for inclusion due to the fact that the information, goals, objectives, and guided activities contained in them are believed to be representative of the four areas which require emotional adjustment on the part of pre-adolescent children processing parental divorce.

Sample Selected

Subjects for this study were 197 elementary school children enrolled in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade classrooms in the Grand Haven Public
School System, located in Grand Haven, Michigan. The school system is composed of ten elementary schools (kindergarten through sixth grade) with a population of 2,441. The junior high school (seventh through ninth grade) has a population of 1,203. There are 1,244 high school students.

Children participated in this study by classroom membership. Out of 10 potential classrooms available to participate in the study, 5 representative classrooms were chosen for inclusion in the treatment group, leaving 5 classrooms to serve as the control group. Boys, as well as girls, were represented in both treatment and control groups in nearly equal proportions, with 51% of the participants being males, 49% being females. Children who have experienced divorce in their family, as well as children from intact (non-divorced) family structures, were represented in both treatment and control groups. In the treatment group, 36% of the children were from divorced backgrounds. Among the children who participated in the control group, 46% were from divorced backgrounds. Children from divorced backgrounds will be referred to, from this point forward, as divorce status children.

Permission for conducting the study was granted by the Superintendent of Schools, building principals, and the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade teachers. The in-class instruction began in October of 1983 and continued through December of 1983.

Research Hypothesis

This evaluation was conducted to ascertain the relationship between participation in the educational therapeutic group procedure and divorce
status children's self concept levels. Following are the hypotheses developed for this study.

**Hypothesis**

There will be a significant difference in self concept scores between the divorce status children receiving THCAMH and the divorce status children not receiving the group treatment. In addition to the main hypothesis, 6 sub hypotheses were also tested.

**Sub Hypothesis 1:** There is a significant difference between the divorce status children in the experimental and control groups in admitting or denying problem behavior.

**Sub Hypothesis 2:** There is a significant difference between the divorce status children in the experimental and control groups in their self-assessment of academic and intellectual tasks.

**Sub Hypothesis 3:** There is a significant difference between the divorce status children in the experimental and control groups in attitudes regarding their physical characteristics, leadership qualities, and ability to express ideas.

**Sub Hypothesis 4:** There is a significant difference between the divorce status children in the experimental and control groups in their level of emotional disturbance and depressed mood.

**Sub Hypothesis 5:** There is a significant difference between the divorce status children in the experimental and control groups in their evaluation of popularity with peers.
Sub Hypothesis 6: There is a significant difference between the divorce status children in the experimental and control groups in their self-assessment of personal happiness and satisfaction with life.

Research Analysis

This section contains descriptions of the instrumentation and statistical procedure used in the product evaluation of THCAMH. A process analysis of the group procedure was also conducted to assist in evaluating the group experience and children's receptivity to it.

Instrumentation

Self concept levels of children were measured in the evaluation component of this study by scores they obtained on the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale (1969), or the PHCSCS, as indicated in the definition of terms.

The PHCSCS consists of 80 items which reflect the concerns that children have about themselves. The Seventh Mental Measurements Year Book (Bentler & Buros, 1972) indicates:

The scale was standardized on 1,183 children in grades 4-12 of one Pennsylvania school district. There appears to be no consistent sex or grade differences in means. The internal consistency of the scale ranges from .71 to .77. Correlates with similar instruments are in the mid-sixties, and the scale possesses teacher and peer validity coefficients on the order of .40. (p. 124)

The scale has been judged as having sufficient validity and reliability to be used for research purposes. According to the manual, a cluster analysis of the PHCSCS yielded six sub-scales which have been
identified as: (1) Behavior; (2) Intellectual, and School Status; (3) Physical Appearance and Attributes; (4) Anxiety; (5) Popularity; and (6) Happiness and Satisfaction. Sub-scale scores, as well as a total score, were calculated for experimental and control groups.

Administration of the Instrument

All children participating in the study (experimental and control subjects) were administered the PHCSCS as a post test. The administration of the test was conducted by a certified elementary school counselor. The administration of the test took place in the familiar setting of the subjects' classrooms, and was group administered to the entire group in one setting.

The answers for all 80 items on the PHCSCS were recorded by each subject on optical scanning sheets for ease in scoring and computer data storage. Additional information regarding sex, grade placement, research group placement (control, experimental) and divorce status was also indicated on the optical scanning sheets, numerically restated 81-84 respectively. Data from the optical scanning sheets was stored and processed through the DEC system - 10 computer at Western Michigan University. The statistical program entitled STATPACK was utilized to analyze the data.

Statistical Procedure

A t-test was computed to determine differences, between the mean score on the PHCSCS (constituting the dependent variable) of the divorce
status children in the experimental group receiving the educational therapeutic group procedure (constituting the independent variable) and the mean score on the PHCSCS (constituting the dependent variable) of the divorce status children in the control group not receiving the educational therapeutic group procedure (constituting the independent variable). Additionally, t-tests were computed on all cluster subscales as well.

Process Analysis of THCAMH

To evaluate the children's reaction to the group procedure, THCAMH, a personal interview with the school counselor who facilitated the procedure was conducted. The decision to analyze the process in this manner was reached because of the ages of the children involved in the study; the interview is reported in Chapter IV.

Summary

The aim of this chapter was to present the development of the educational therapeutic group procedure entitled Things Have Changed At My House, a description of the subject matter areas contained therein, and the conditions under which it was conducted. In this chapter the sample being studied, instrumentation, procedures used in the collection of data, and techniques in analyzing the data were described. The theoretical hypothesis, as well as sub-hypotheses, was also stated in this chapter, which provided the basis for determining the effectiveness of the group treatment, THCAMH.

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CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The aim of this study was to develop a group experience and to investigate whether participation in that experience would significantly alter the self concept level of children. The group procedure was designed to assist preadolescent children to understand and assimilate parental divorce through the dissemination of information, self-understanding, and group discussions in regard to intra and interpersonal relationship as they relate either directly or indirectly to the divorce process.

The subjects of the study were 4th, 5th, and 6th grade children in 10 heterogeneous classrooms. Five classes received the socio process group procedure, and 5 classrooms served as the control group. Of the 197 preadolescent children involved in the study, 99 received the intervention, and 98 served as the control group. All 197 children completed the post test evaluation component of the study. The Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale was used as the dependent variable in the evaluation component of the study.

Hypotheses

The main hypothesis of the study was concerned with differences between two groups of preadolescent children in their self concept level
as measured by the PHCSCS. The hypothesis predicted that the two groups of preadolescent children would differ in their self concept level and that, by participating in THCAMH, the self concept level of the divorce status children in the experimental treatment group would be significantly altered. Sub Hypotheses 1 through 6 were concerned with finding a difference between the self concept level of divorce status children in the experimental group and the divorce status children in the control group, as measured by the PHCSCS sub scale clusters.

To analyze the data, testable null hypotheses were developed from the research hypotheses explicated in the previous chapter.

**Main Hypothesis**

$$H_0:$$ There will be no significant difference in the self concept scores between the divorce status children receiving THCAMH and divorce status children not receiving the group treatment.

To analyze the data for this hypothesis, a t-test, was used to determine the difference between the means of the groups on the PHCSCS. A $p=.05$ level of significance for a two-tailed test was established as determining significance for the results obtained.

As evidenced in Table 1, the null hypothesis was rejected if there was a significant difference between the two group's means and the probability of error occurrence was $p=.05$ or less.

The findings for the Hypothesis indicated that there was no significant difference ($p=>.05$) in the mean self concept scores between the
Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Test of Significance of Total Scores on the PHCSCS for Divorce Status Experimental and Control Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental Divorce Status</th>
<th>Control Divorce Status</th>
<th>Test of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(n = 36)</td>
<td>(n = 46)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.47</td>
<td>42.24</td>
<td>7.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p = > .05

The difference between the experimental and control groups means, the null hypothesis was retained.

Sub Hypotheses 1 through 6

The PHCSCS provides "cluster scales" to aid in additional interpretation. These cluster scales were developed using factor analyses, and include most, but not all, of the 80 items of the total scale. The 6 cluster scales include: Behavior, a 16 item cluster which indicates whether children admit or deny problematic behaviors; Intellectual and School Status, 17 items which reflect children's self-assessment in regard to intellectual and academic tasks; Physical Appearance and Attributes, 13 items which concern children's attitudes about their physical characteristics, as well as attributes such as leadership and
ability to express ideas; Anxiety, a 14-item cluster which reflects
general emotional disturbance, and depressed mood; Popularity, a cluster
including 12 items which reflect children's evaluation of their popular-
ity with peers; Happiness and Satisfaction, 10 items which tap feelings
indicative of being a reasonably happy person who is easy to get along
with, in addition to being generally satisfied with life.

Inherent in the use of these scales is the assumption
that self concept is not a unitary dimension. Children
are not characterized simply by an overall level of
self concept, but may view themselves quite differently
across different areas (Piers, 1984, p. 38).

To analyze the data for the sub hypotheses 1 through 6, t tests were
used to determine the difference between the means on each of the 6 sub
scales clusters. Data from this study of the 6 clusters is presented
in Table 2. Following are the testable null forms of the 6 cluster
hypotheses.

Null Sub Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference between the divorce status
children in the experimental and control groups in admitting or denying
problem behavior.

H02: There is no significant difference between the divorce status
children in the experimental and control groups in their self-assessment
of academic and intellectual tasks.

H03: There is no significant difference between the divorce status
children in the experimental and control groups in attitudes regarding
their physical characteristics, leadership qualities, and ability to
express ideas.
$H_04$: There is no significant difference between the divorce status children in the experimental and control groups in their level of emotional disturbance and depressed mood.

$H_05$: There is no significant difference between the divorce status children in the experimental and control groups in their evaluation of popularity with peers.

$H_06$: There is no significant difference between the divorce status children in the experimental and control groups in their self-assessment of personal happiness and satisfaction with life.

A comparison of divorce status children in the experimental and control groups and 6 sub scale cluster scores revealed the following findings. The p value for factor 1, admitting or denying problem behavior, was .007, and was significant at the .05 level. The p value for factor 2, self assessment of academic and intellectual tasks, was .540; not significant at the .05 level. The p value for factor 3, attitude about physical characteristics, leadership abilities, and expression of ideas, was .085; not significant at the .05 level. The p value for factor 4, anxiety level as reflected by general emotional disturbance and depressed mood, was .117; not significant at the .05 level. The p value for factor 5, evaluation of their popularity with peers, was .086; not significant at the .05 level. The p value for factor 6, self assessment of personal happiness and general satisfaction with life, was .362; not significant at the .05 level.

The findings for the 6 sub hypotheses reveal that only Sub Hypothesis 1, comparing divorce status children in the experimental and control
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Experimental Group Divorce Status</th>
<th>Control Group Divorce Status</th>
<th>Test of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Behavior</td>
<td>9.58</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>10.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Intellectual and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Status</td>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>7.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Physical Appearance</td>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>5.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Anxiety</td>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>9.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Popularity</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>7.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Happiness and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
groups on factor 1, admitting or denying problem behavior, was significant, p<.05. All other sub hypotheses numbered 2 through 6 were not found to be significant at the .05 level.

Process Analysis of Things Have Changed At My House

In order to analyze the group procedure process, an interview was conducted with the school counselor who facilitated the procedure. The counselor analyzed the process in relationship to appropriateness of content, interest in listening, interest demonstrated through sharing, and observable change of attitudes. During the interview the following information was related.

The school counselor believes that the content of the stimulus stories was very relevant to the preadolescent children who participated. The counselor made this discernment from observing the attention of the children during the story presentations, and the level of interaction noted during the follow-up discussion periods. The counselor reported that the children retrieved the information contained in the stimulus stories readily, then proceeded to express personal experiences which paralleled the material being presented.

During the initial group procedure sessions, it was observed that children revealed many ongoing problems dealing with intra and interpersonal relationships. Problems were evidenced by many of them, sharing that they did not know what to do when parents were fighting. They stated that they did not know how, nor with whom, to discuss their questions or fears. Additionally, they expressed guilt for family
problems. However, as the group procedure sessions continued, the focus of their verbalization centered on how they felt during a variety of intra and inter personal relationship situations, and how they had used their new-found problem-solving strategies to figure out what to do to help themselves. The counselor observed that the children's verbalization and posturing over the course of the group procedure session changed from those indicative of being out of control and powerless, to one of purposeful pursuit of information and understandings that they could utilize in their own family situation. Children actually reported that they had tried out some of the "things" they had been learning and had been able to tell members of the family how the problems their family was experiencing made them feel. Interest was generated and maintained throughout each of the 6 group procedure sessions. The counselor related that it was difficult to terminate some of the sessions on time (within 45 minutes) due to the desire, and/or need, of the children to discuss the topic being presented. It was noted that the children in the experimental group required very little preparation time to shift from academic endeavors to the group sessions each week. They appeared eager to begin and required little direction as to the procedural process.

The counselor reported a feeling of frustration due to the fact that the procedure had just nicely gotten underway when the six-week period of time designated for its usage was over. The counselor definitely recommended that all 14 units should be utilized. Additionally, recommendations included an introductory period of one to two
sessions provided for the purpose of preparing students for the group procedure format, material content, and as a period of time for the children to become acquainted with the group facilitator. Likewise, that an additional session be added at the end of the 14-unit procedure to allow children time to evaluate what they had gleaned from the sessions.

While classroom settings were acceptable, it was felt by the counselor that the structured classroom setting promoted a controlled mode of thinking, versus the blended cognitive/affective mode desired for the implementation of the educational therapeutic group procedure. Therefore, an alternative, comfortable atmosphere is suggested for use, if available; or possibly rearranging the classroom setting in such a manner as to enhance group cohesiveness and group processing.

The teachers who participated in the group procedure by accompanying their children indicated that they felt they had acquired knowledge and understanding both from the materials presented and the children's participation in the group procedure. They expressed a desire for the group procedure to be presented in the full group procedure format of 14 units. One elementary teacher related to the counselor facilitator that they felt the material presented had great meaning for them from many perspectives. The teacher indicated their own parents had divorced when they were a preadolescent child; their own first marriage had ended in divorce when their own children were preadolescents; and they currently teach in the upper elementary grades of a school which has a 50 percent divorce rate among the student population. This teacher
personally encouraged the school principal to request that the group procedure be presented in its entirety.

The counselor believed the group procedure was well received by students and professional staff alike.

Summary

It was the purpose of this chapter to present findings of the study. A t test was used to analyze the data for the study hypothesis, as well as the sub hypotheses 1 through 6. The hypothesis tested was rejected, since the findings for it were not in line with the assumptions. No difference was found between the self concept scores of children who participated in the educational therapeutic group procedure and children who did not participate in the educational group procedure. Sub Hypothesis 1 was retained, since the findings for this hypothesis showed that significant differences exist between the experimental and control groups in admitting or denying problem behavior. All other sub hypotheses, 2 through 6, were rejected; since the statistical data analyzed were not significant at the .05 level.

In Chapter V a summary of the findings, discussion of the findings, and recommendations for further research are found.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to develop an educational therapeutic group procedure aimed at meeting the affective needs of preadolescent children processing parental divorce. It was also the aim of this study to evaluate the impact that participation in the educational therapeutic group procedure had on divorce status children's self concept level.

Summary

During the past decade, the phenomenal increase in divorce has created a situation in which literally millions of minor children find themselves residing in one-parent households. Due to the involvement of a large segment of the population and, at this point in time, a historical perspective regarding some of the known ramifications that this situation creates, society is becoming aware of the fact that these children require attention and assistance in processing parental divorce.

The study investigated the divorce process by examining what constitutes the greatest stressor for children experiencing the divorce process, and what can be done to minimize the negative impact of divorce on children's self concept. This investigation revolved around the child-parent relationship, the consequences of severing the relationship
bond between child and parent, and means to dissipate the resulting separation anxiety reaction children may experience.

It became very clear through the literature review that there is no question that many of the children who experience the divorce of their parents also experience negative emotional impact as well. The divorce process, which involves the severing of relationship bonds between the child and at least one of the parents, interrupts the ongoing interactional constructs through which the child formulates a sense of personal identity. It is important to understanding this interactional construct because it constitutes the greatest influence in shaping the lives of young children. The young child, being in a total state of dependency upon the parents for its very survival, physically as well as emotionally, accepts the standards of the parents quite literally, and tends to maintain these standards in spite of conflicting information from outside sources. Obviously, if the standard at one point in time included a two-parent team approach with interaction and directional input from both parents serving to sustain the survival of the child is changed, as in the case of parental divorce, which dictates the interactional construct is reduced by 50 percent, or one parent's involvement; the resulting circumstances can create great cognitive and emotional dissonance within the child.

According to phenomenologist Carl Rogers (1959), the individual behaves in accordance with the essence of the level of self concept which has been achieved at any age level, accepting experiences that align; or rejecting, denying, or destroying those that are inconsistent with
Parental divorce creates inconsistencies which the child must resolve. Due to the inadequate emotional, mental development of many of the children at the time of the parental divorce, the child usually does not possess the internal resources to resolve the inner turmoil or conflicts which they experience. What results is often identified as poor adjustment on the child's part. The adjustment problem is indicative of an inability on the unsophisticated child's part to deal constructively with the breach in standards, originally established and practiced by the parents, which has created inconsistency within the life structure.

The needs of these children are not explicitly known, due to the lack of formalized research concerning the subject at present; and complications arising from the very unique, individualized configurational pattern of needs which result from this very personal life experience. Studies which have been conducted regarding the impact of divorce on children indicate that children of divorce are at a higher risk level than their two-parent (intact family) peers in relationship to psychological distress and educational problems. While the professional community is becoming aware of the fact that these children are in need of assistance, there exists a void in programs and materials with which helping professionals can assist children to understand and assimilate generalized needs and the basic reality of parental divorce, which ultimately could reduce the negative impact of divorce on children's self concept. While changes in self concept can and do occur, they require proper interventive procedures.
An educational therapeutic group procedure format was chosen by this researcher to assist children to assimilate and understand parental divorce because, as Betz, Wilbur & Wilbur (1981) indicated the group experience resembles a client's society more closely than the individual client/therapist relationship does, therefore transferability of insights and understandings are more readily accomplished through a group experience (pp. 31-37). This researcher has noted that children express feelings of being isolated, singular, and different from their peers because they are not aware that many of their peers are experiencing similar life crises. Therefore, the group procedure serves the purpose of dissipating the children's misconception that they alone are experiencing parental divorce.

The decision to utilize children's personal experiences for the stimulus stories and discussion components of the educational therapeutic group procedure was based on comments by Ginott (1961, 1965). Ginott indicated that the illustration of concepts using examples of children in situations common to their own experiences provides the most effective true learning experience for them. The fact that beliefs, feelings, moods, and emotional responses are all capable of being educated, guided, and developed (Niles Community Schools, 1977) indicated that children of divorce could be assisted in the resolution of emotional conflicts through a concerted effort of blending the cognitive and affective issues into one educational therapeutic group procedure.

The educational therapeutic group procedure developed in this study capitalizes on problem solving and communication. By focusing on...
problem solving, children are being assisted to develop their ability to cope; which is in direct opposition to rationalizing failure; projecting one's own shortcomings onto others, or trying to escape from the problem. The group procedure provides children with materials which stimulate the identification and understanding of problems, examination of alternative methods of dealing with the problems, and the means to evaluate and select alternatives with which to address immediate problems, as well as future ones. Communication is considered to be the cornerstone upon which the group procedure foundation is based. The children are encouraged throughout the procedure to engage in genuine dialogue. Through an interactional communication process with significant others, children are assisted to understand, grasp the meaning of what is being said, and to respond appropriately to stimuli.

Discussion

The basic premise of this study is that, in general, all divorce status children need assistance to understand and assimilate parental divorce. By providing children with information, understanding, and problem-solving skills with which to process their changing life structure(s), the resulting negative impact on self concept, associated with the divorce process, can be minimized. This premise is based on the literature reviewed in addition to the theoretical considerations of the application of the fluidity of the phenomenal field to positive self concept development.

Longitudinal studies conducted in the past decade by Kelly and Wallerstein regarding the impact of parental divorce on children has
served as the most compelling evidence that children need assistance to understand and assimilate parental divorce. Divorce reactions of children can include numerous configural manifestations of disturbance and distress, including faltering academic progress, behavioral problems, nightmares, bed wetting, and psychosomatic reactions. Children may engage in attempts to reunite their parents through pleas, threats, tantrums, or depressive symptoms. Frequently caught between the ongoing struggles of the parents, children may experience feelings of being torn between the parents, leading to feelings of anxiety and guilt. It often takes children longer to adjust to the divorce than the parents; partly because the decision is not theirs, they experience a feeling of being out of control, and because they are usually at a more formative stage when the impact may affect developmental patterns. Additionally, these children are often lacking in information and the emotional support of their parents; because their parents, who are trying to deal with their own divorce adjustment, simply do not have the emotional resources to provide them with explanations or the support they require.

In general, all children experiencing divorce face a number of problems that challenge even the most adaptive and healthy of them.

The subjects of the study were 4th, 5th, and 6th graders in 10 heterogeneous classrooms. Five classrooms served as the experimental treatment group, while five classrooms served as the experimental treatment group consisted of 99 children, 36% of whom had experienced divorce within their family unit. The control group contained 98 children, with a 46% divorce rate. A total of 197 children participated.
in the study, with 82 of these children classified as divorce status, due to the evidence of parental divorce in their family background.

The experimental group received six weeks of treatment consisting of Units #1, 2, 3, 6, 12, and 13 of THCAMH. Each treatment session lasted for 45 minutes, and was conducted within the familiar setting of the respective classroom participating in the treatment. The control group did not receive treatment. The group procedure, THCAMH, facilitated by the same elementary school counselor in all five experimental treatment classrooms. This same individual administered the PHCSCS to all 10 classrooms participating in the study. The Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale was administered in a post test only design.

The Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale, sub titled The Way I Feel About Myself is an 80-item instrument utilized to measure self concept levels of the children sampled in this study. Children are asked to indicate whether the individual 80 items apply to them, using a dichotomous "yes" or "no" response format. Items on the scale are scored either positively or negatively in direction, reflecting a self-evaluation dimensional profile. A high score on the scale suggests a positive self-evaluation, whereas a low score suggests a negative self-evaluation. As such, the total score range could span from 0 to 80. In describing the child's total score, nine levels of descriptions are used. These cut-off points are spaced at 5 point intervals, as shown in Table 3.
### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Than 70</td>
<td>Very much above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-70</td>
<td>Much above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-65</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>Slightly above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-55</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>Slightly below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>Much below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30</td>
<td>Very much below average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total score for an individual child is indicative of the sum of all the single item responses the child endorsed that are in the direction of positive self concept. This summary score yields a general dimensional measure of self concept, or overall global measure of the child's positive self-evaluation.

The Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale Manual indicated that children's concept of self is considered more fluid than adults. When analyzing test data, extremely high scores might reflect high self esteem, or an attempt to avoid revealing true feelings about self. It is reasoned that since children are not cognizant of any benefits that
might accrue as a result of presenting an unfavorable picture of themselves, that low scores on the PHCSCS reflect truly low self concept.

The 80 individual items which comprise the PHCSCS posses dimensional properties which lend themselves to multidimensional factor analysis. The multidimensional aspects of this self-reporting screening instrument are referred to as cluster scales. Through extensive factor analysis of this 80-item self-reporting instrument, 66 of 80 items were determined to assess significant areas of strengths or weaknesses in relation to self concept. Interestingly, while children conceivably could amass identical total global scores on the PHCSCS, they could exhibit very different cluster sub scale patterns. Since self concept is not believed to be a unitary dimension, but a cumulative construct spanning and incorporating many different areas, the reporting of test data for this study utilized both the unitary dimensional aspect of the total score and the multidimensional cluster scale.

Seven hypotheses were tested in the evaluation of THCAMH. The first hypothesis dealt with the difference in overall self concept scores on the PHCSCS of divorce status children who participated in THCAMH and divorce status children who did not. The 1st through the 6th sub hypotheses examined the difference between divorce status children in the experimental group and divorce status children in the control group on 6 cluster sub scale scores on the PHCSCS.

A t-test was computed to analyze the difference between the mean score on the PHCSCS (constituting the dependent variable) of the experimental group receiving the educational therapeutic group procedure
(constituting the independent variable) and the mean score on the PHCSCS (constituting the dependent variable) of the control group not receiving the educational therapeutic group procedure (constituting the independent variable). T-tests were also computed to analyze the difference between the mean scores on the 6 cluster sub scales of the experimental group and the mean scores on the 6 cluster sub scales of the control group.

Conclusions drawn from the findings for the main hypothesis are as follows. Significant differences between the experimental group and control group in relationship to global/total self-concept scores on the PHCSCS were not supported by the results of the statistical data. This researcher believes that three factors influenced this finding. First, the entity referred to as global self concept is such an intricately faceted amalgamation of all the personal life experiences of an individual, that an approach such as THCAMH, used in an isolated and singular manner, can not offset nor supercede all of the other variables inherent in an individual's life structure, which ultimately register impaction on the self concept. Secondly, the limited utilization of the group procedure units, 6 of the 14 units, did not provide adequate exposure, given the nature of global self concept development. In addition, measuring global self concept needs a more sophisticated, sensitive instrument than that which was used in this study.

Children in the experimental treatment group admitted to experiencing more problem behaviors than the children in the control group. It is believed that the manner in which children in the experimental group responded to the test items was reflective of their participation...
in THCAMH. These children had been assisted in identifying, discussing, and accepting their feelings. They were then encouraged to communicate their feelings to significant others. These children realized, from their participation (as well as others' participation) in the group procedure, that most people have problems of one kind or another in their lives and that they were not strange or abnormal if they were experiencing a problem.

Results for this hypothesis show that the educational therapeutic group procedure entitled Things Have Changed At My House reduces participant's inability to acknowledge their problem behavior, increases their ability to more accurately assess their problems with behavior, and express their behavior problems to significant others.

Findings for sub hypotheses 2 through 6 indicated that statistical significance at the .05 level did not exist. This researcher believes this occurred for the following reasons. First, the intervention was too brief to have an impact on these factors. Second, the intervention THCAMH did not concentrate on, nor focus attention on, many of these factor components of self concept.

Process analysis data obtained from the school counselor interview support the conclusion that THCAMH did make a significant difference in the self concept of children who participated in the experimental treatment. This evidence developed over the course of 6 weeks, with children gaining in their identity, discuss, and acknowledge their feelings. The counselor reported that, with each session of the procedure, the children's level of verbal responsiveness increased to a point that it was difficult
to draw some sessions to an end. Children also grew in their confidence to pursue and use problem-solving strategies to deal more effectively with ongoing life situations, indicated by children reporting that they had used some of the skills being presented to communicate with other family members. The counselor also noted that some of the children's powerless, victim postures changed to purposeful pursuit of information in an attempt to restore a measure of control over their lives, i.e. children wanting to know what to do when parents were fighting.

Retrospective Conclusions

This investigator believes that in order to move forward with the positive development of self-esteem, one must first be able to ascertain where one is on the continuum. The educational therapeutic group procedure assisted some of the participants in the experimental group to assess where they were presently functioning and enabled them to express themselves honestly. As Arthur W. Combs states:

We know what a person believes about himself is crucial to his growth and development. We also know that a person learns this self concept from the way he is treated by significant people in his life. The student takes his self concept with him wherever he goes. (Niles Community Schools, 1977, p. 12)

The process of affective growth can be guided toward emotional health. Beliefs, feelings, moods, and emotional responses are all capable of being educated, guided and developed. It was the aim of the study, along with the development of the educational therapeutic group procedure, to facilitate an "opening" for children to investigate their feelings, understand self and others, and progress in themselves.
The utilization of the educational therapeutic group procedure *Things Have Changed At My House* provided the children who participated in the experimental group with the opportunity to address the subject of divorce, a subject that has been closeted from the school domain to a large extent. Reasons for not approaching the subject within the school domain run the gamut from: (a) It does not have a place in the educational arena since it is a private family matter, to (b) The presentation of material regarding divorce might be construed as projecting and/or teaching value. This researcher believes that children are not segmentable entities capable of leaving a major segment of themselves, their emotions, at home when they go to school. They arrive at the school doors "intact" so to speak. They bring the good with the bad, the happy with the sad, some problems as well as some answers, needs as well as resources. THCAMH was an effort to bridge the cognitive and affective gap that exists in the education of children from divorce backgrounds.

Problems Encountered in This Research

Divorce constitutes a multi-faceted, mega-dimensional complex when examined on an individual, per-capita basis. The configurational patterns which are generated by the personal idiosyncratically oriented problems associated with the divorce process, which can originate prior to, during, and after the fact, constituted such a magnitude, that this research, by necessity, addressed a limited number of concerns affecting preadolescent children's self concept development and maintenance of self.
Due to the uniqueness of the THCAMH, there were no definitive guidelines or standards upon which to determine or compare what subject matter should be included in the group procedure. Although much research has been conducted regarding adult issues involved in the divorce process, resulting in programs, procedures, and materials being developed; matching extensive research regarding preadolescent children processing divorce has not been abundant. Therefore, the subject matter and methods included in the developed THCAMH were selected subjectively, and reflect the natural bias of the subjective determination.

The selection of the schools where the research was conducted was based on the acceptance of the research group procedure by building principals and the availability of counseling personnel to act as group facilitators. The school system administration would not allow for randomization of children into experimental and control groups. Classroom teachers were ultimately given the decision as to whether or not they would allot sufficient educational time to implement the procedure in their classrooms, or opt to have their children receive the post test design only of the control group.

The scheduling limitations of working around other special programs, holidays and vacation periods provided too abbreviated a time interval to present the procedure in its full 14-unit capacity. Ultimately, only 6 units were presented. This time constraint created an inadequate utilization of the procedure from which to ascertain conclusive results of any nature or magnitude. The effects that the THCAMH had on children's self concept development and intra, inter personal relationship conflict resolution could be measured more accurately over a longer time interval.
Testing of the experimental and control groups was entered into by school administration with trepidation, due to the psychoanalytical nature of data being sought. Many of the tests that could have been used to evaluate self concept and anxiety levels were considered inappropriate for "blanket" or group testing. The Piers-Harris children's Self Concept Scale was selected because it purported to measure self concept and anxiety levels, and was recognized as being applicable to full classroom, group screening. A pre-test, post test format request was rejected by the school administration due to extensive testing already scheduled as part of internal system evaluation. While a post-test format was acceptable, it is felt that this limited the children's individual personal growth data which would have been illuminating to this research effort.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study should be replicated with certain provisos being observed. The educational therapeutic group procedure entitled *Things Have Changed At My House* should be conducted over a longer period of time, with utilization of the materials and activities to the maximum level of representation contained in the procedure. Research efforts should include random sampling of subjects included in both the experimental treatment group and control group. A pre/post-test format should be administered in order to ascertain individual growth and development, as well as differences between the groups involved. Although the PHCSCS purported to assess the self concept level of children, it is felt that
this screening device is not sensitive enough to the issues being addressed in the study, namely anxiety factors. Additional screening devices addressing problem-solving ability should be used in conjunction with those used to evaluate anxiety factors.

Settings other than public schools where future research could be conducted would include: residential treatment centers, outpatient clinical treatment centers, and private psychological counseling practices. These diversified settings would be appropriate especially if they dealt primarily with children experiencing problems in conjunction with family instability, separation and/or divorce.

This group procedure could be utilized with parents and for children prior to divorce to acquaint the participants with a number of issues regarding the divorce process, primarily as they relate to preadolescent children. Additionally, the procedure could be used as a companion to other strategies assisting family members after divorce finalization. It is believed that the materials and activities contained in the procedure would be of value in assisting family members to adjust to the reality of that situation, along with finding their place in the restructured family unit.

Additional research regarding the unique problems faced by preadolescent children processing parental divorce is needed in order to address the issues involved in a more comprehensive manner. This type of research would certainly be helpful in the development of procedures and materials needed by children, parents, and helping professionals. Conceivably, all of these people share a common concern in regard to
the divorce process; that being resolution of intra, interpersonal relationship conflict before, during, and after divorce.
APPENDIX A

THINGS HAVE CHANGED AT MY HOUSE
An Educational Therapeutic Group Procedure
Focusing on Divorce
The divorce education program entitled "Things Have Changed at My House" is an attempt to reduce the separation reaction of children experiencing the process of divorce, while enhancing their self concept. To accomplish these goals the program consists of the dissemination of information about the divorce process and the teaching of problem solving skills to deal with immediate crises, as well as future problems involved with family change.

The stimulus stories are reasonable facsimiles of the accounts of children's actual experiences shared during individual counseling sessions with this author over the past fifteen years. Although there have been innumerable accounts rendered, only the most reoccurring themes are represented in these stories.

Noted during individual counseling session with children was the impression that the children perceive they alone, singularly, are experiencing the dissolution process of divorce. Due to the intimate struggle involved and the personal realignment in their lives, their feelings of isolation and singularity reflect a certain amount of truth. Children need assistance to understand that while divorce is a uniquely personal experience, it is also a process which possesses some elements of uniformity in nature for all individuals involved.

In order to assist children to recognize the uniformity, it is helpful to provide them with a continuum, if you will, representative
of a beginning, middle, and possible resolutinal point. By providing
them with information regarding the divorce process and problem solving
techniques, their ability to take a personal bearing in relation to
their own experiences is enhanced, allowing them the opportunity to
plot their position on their own life continuum.

The materials presented here are guides to be used to assist
individual children to understand and assimilate parental divorce.
Additionally, the materials are offered to adults in an attempt to
sensitize and educate them to the child's perspective in regard to the
process of divorce and changing family patterns.
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UNIT 1

THINGS HAVE CHANGED AT MY HOUSE

This is hard to talk about. But I just need to tell somebody. You see, I think something is wrong at my house.

I guess first I'd better tell you how it used to be. Then I'll tell you know it is now. There are differences. The differences are what seem strange.

Four of us live at my house: my mom, my dad, my sister, and I. We all go to work every day. My parents work downtown in offices, and my sister and I do our work at school. We used to come home and tell each other what had happened during the day. We talked a lot while we ate our dinner.

When we had finished dinner and cleaned up the kitchen, our whole family would sometimes do fun things together. We would watch TV, play games, or go shopping. I remember how we used to plan our Sunday afternoons. Sometimes I would get so excited I could hardly wait for Sunday to come.

But I'm getting a little ahead of myself. I already used the "remember." You see, we aren't planning Sunday afternoons together any more.

Everyone still leaves for work in the morning. Everyone comes home from work. But instead of lots of talking at the dinner table, it is quiet, with no smiles. My parents don't ask about our day at school
any more. They seem to save their talking until my sister and I are in bed. Sometimes they talk softly, and other times they are too loud. We all seem to be living in slow motion--waiting. But I don't know what we are waiting for. It seems as if my family is fading away.

Therapeutic Focus: Don't Just Worry, Do Something

1. You are a member of a group--your family. If you feel something is happening to your family group, ask your mother, father, or another family member what is wrong. Tell one of them that you are worried.

2. Family members need to know that they are important to each other. Let other members in your family know that you count on their help, love, and understanding.

3. Life never remains the same. One day you are nine years old, and then you have a birthday and turn ten. Everything changes, and very often these changes allow us to grow and develop.

4. When you notice a change in your family, it does not necessarily mean that you need to worry. It may simply mean there is a change. A family goes through changes to grow and develop, just as you do.

Background for Understanding

Children's lives do not involve as many focal points as adults'. This selection shows the family unit as the child's primary focal point and the school as secondary. Although not mentioned in the story, the child's friends or social life would be tertiary.
As a primary focal point, the family unit is of significant concern to the child. Children are vulnerably dependent upon the family unit, trusting the functioning ability of the adults in their lives. They watch and listen acutely for clues and information that relate to their security within the unit.

In the story *Things Have Changed At My House*, the child perceives a change in the functioning of the family unit, and the change has set off the child's natural security alarm. Very often this occurs within a family about to begin a separation or divorce process, although this does not have to be the case.

Adults in a divorce process frequently do not give children information about what is happening to the family. There are several reasons for this: they are uncertain themselves what is going to happen; they think the children don't know anything is wrong; they are so wrapped up in their own troubles they haven't given thought to the children's worries; they don't know how to begin the discussion. Whatever the reason, the adults need to be spurred into reality and become aware that changes in the family are upsetting the children.

It would be well to remind children that changes in family behavior do not necessarily mean there will be a divorce. There may be a variety of upsets in the family routine, changes that do not affect the child's security. Children also need to understand that change is not synonymous with bad. The key is finding out—getting information about the situation.
Therapeutic Objectives

The story and activities should help students understand the following ideas:

1. As part of a family unit, children should ask questions they might have concerning the family.
2. Communication between people is very important.
3. Changes are always occurring in life; and through them we are able to grow, learn, and develop.
4. Changes that take place within a family unit are not necessarily causes for children's worry.

Questions for Discussion

After children have read the story, discuss the questions below:

1. What does it mean to communicate with others?
2. How did the family unit communicate at the beginning of the story?
3. What changed in the family?
4. What could the child have done about what he or she noticed?
5. What could the whole family have done about the changes that were occurring?
6. Why is it important for people to communicate with each other? (You may want to list some answers to questions 5 and 6 on the board.)
7. What can happen when people stop communicating with each other?
Suggested Activities

Have children make posters showing ways people communicate with each other. Children may want to cut out magazine pictures to illustrate communication forms such as conversations, telephone, newspapers, TV, radio, report cards, letters, and physical gestures such as hugs or handshakes. You may want to use the same idea to make a bulletin board display.

Set aside a block of time (30 to 60 minutes) during which everyone agrees not to communicate with each other. Prepare the children by explaining the project as an experiment that will be followed by discussion of how the noncommunication time made them feel, and why.

Help children become more aware of change with a discussion of the common changes that occur in a person's life. You may want to relate the human cycle to other cycles, using charts that show seasons, the transition of a caterpillar to a moth, and similar changes. You may also want to invite an elderly person to talk to the children about changes that had significant effect upon his or her lifetime. Be sure you select someone with a positive view towards life that will provide the children with both reassurance and encouragement in facing changes.

Have children make a time chart that shows changes in their own lives. They will want to include such significant happenings as learning to walk, getting a new brother or sister, starting school, and similar events.
Identify family and community helpers with whom to communicate. Make a list of the Community Resources in your area which contains appropriate personnel who could assist children and/or adult family members with on-going family problems. If possible, provide each participant with a copy of this material to take home.
UNIT 2

THE HOUSE INSIDE MY HOUSE

When I was eight, I got a dollhouse for my birthday. I love that dollhouse. I keep it in my bedroom, where I can look at it and play with it when I want to.

My dollhouse has an upstairs and a downstairs. I have a lot of things to put in it—even people. I have a mother, a father, kids, a dog, and a cat. Sometimes I pretend that my dollhouse family is my own family. I can put them any place in the house and make them do what I want them to do. And I can keep them from fighting.

My mom and dad fight. They argue—and sometimes they even hit each other. Before I had my dollhouse, I would cry and feel sick to my stomach when my mom and dad started fighting. But now I just go up to my room and play with my house. I put mom in the kitchen getting dinner. I put Dad upstairs working in his room. I put the kids in the living room watching TV. Then I put everyone in the dining room to eat supper and talk with each other.

Sometimes I put my whole dollhouse family to bed. I turn out my bedroom lights and pretend we have all gone to sleep—safe. No more yelling or fighting. I sit in the dark and wish I could send my mom and dad to their room. That's what they do to me when I fight with my brother or sisters.
In my dollhouse I don't allow fighting. I wish my mom and dad wouldn't allow fighting in their house either.

**Therapeutic Focus: Controlling Yourself Is A Big Job**

1. You have the full time job of controlling yourself, or being the best you that you know how to be—and that's a hard job. It takes thought, planning, and lots of work.

2. All people, even moms and dads, have the job of controlling themselves. Even when people are doing their best, there are still times when they argue and disagree with others.

3. **You cannot control others, just yourself.** But when you are doing a good job of controlling yourself, it helps you and everyone around you.

4. When others around you are out of control, **do not stay around them.** It will only upset you, too. Here are some things you can do:
   a. Go to your room and play, read, or listen to music;
   b. Go outside and play with your friends;
   c. Take a bike ride;
   d. Visit a neighbor, friend, or relative.

**Background for Understanding**

Arguing, yelling, and sometimes physical abuse can be prevalent in a home where parents are on the verge of divorce. Children from these types of situations desperately need to learn to cope in an environment.
of extreme behavior, both to reduce their own anxieties and prevent them from repeating the process in their adult years.

In the story *The House Inside My House*, the child is experiencing discomfort, fear, and anxiety because of the parents' fighting. The parental discord threatens the nurturance on which the child depends, as well as their security. The child desires the parents to stop fighting and return to their normal function of providing nurturance and security.

When conflicts are not resolved, children respond in various ways. They begin to wonder what they can do to ease the conflict, or if they themselves have caused it. Many children will actively engage in refereeing the battles, only to find themselves powerless to authorize a decision. Thus, they feel they have let the family down. Other children will stay on the periphery, observing. As with the child who is refereeing, the observer will also feel powerless to stop the frightening behavior of the parents. Still other children will retreat from the scene and hide, only to feel threatened and anxious about their parents' conflict.

There are some ways that children can be assisted in their anxious situations. They need to be assured that they are not the cause of the conflict, or responsible for it in any way. They also need to understand that they can not control their parents' behavior, only their own. They can also take positive steps towards relieving their anxiety by leaving the arena of conflict and engaging in activities they enjoy.

It should, perhaps, be pointed out to children that anger is not
necessarily bad; nor do arguments between parents lead to divorce. To occasionally argue, or be angry with someone, is quite normal. Disagreements can, in fact, help people reevaluate their thinking or reexamine their behavior. Life simply cannot be free of discord.

**Therapeutic Objectives**

Help children understand the following concepts:

1. Children are not responsible for the fighting of parents any more than they are responsible for classmates fighting on the playground.
2. Children are not expected to stop their parents' fighting or to control their behavior in any way.
3. Children can learn to control their own behavior and be the best persons they know how to be.
4. When there is conflict, children will feel better if they move away from it and do something they enjoy.

**Comprehension Questions**

After children have read the story, test their understanding with the questions below:

1. What was happening at the child's house?
2. How did the child feel when the parents were fighting?
3. How did the child feel when they played with their dollhouse?
4. What did the child wish when they put the family to bed?
5. Why did the child say they would not allow in their house?
Questions for Discussion

1. What does the word "control" mean?

2. Why did the child in the story want to control their family? Could they?

3. What did the child do to control themself?

4. What does it mean to own something? What did the child in the story own?

5. What are some of the things that belong only to you? (Encourage children to think of such things as their bodies, feelings, and thoughts.)

6. Can you control things that belong to others?

7. In what ways do we learn to control ourselves so that we can live together in a family, or at school?

8. What kind of changes do you think we might see in the world if people learned to control themselves better?

Suggested Activities

Have students think of specific activities they can do if their parents are fighting. Stress that these things should be activities they enjoy and will help take their mind off the conflict. Have them divide the list into two parts as shown in the outline below:
If I can go outside, I will . . .
(1)
(2)
(3)
If I have to stay inside, I will . . .
(1)
(2)
(3)
Do the worksheet, "My Full-time Job."

**Extended Activities**

Discuss:  Playground Conflict -
          Classroom Conflict -
          World Conflict -
          How are these conflicts alike?
          How do people settle conflicts?
          Can one person make a difference?

Help children realize that, if each person controls his/her self, the conflict is reduced by at least one.
The underlined clues below will help you find the letters for the spaces and discover your fulltime job.

**7 a.m.** Trying hard not to be crabby
The 7 a.m. letter comes early in the alphabet and three times in the clue above.

**8 a.m.** Helpful at home
The 8 a.m. letter is second in the clue above.

**9 a.m.** Willing to work at school
The 9 a.m. letter is the first vowel in this clue.

**10 a.m.** Kind to others
Count to three in the clue to find the 10 o'clock letter.

**11 a.m.** Following rules at home and school
The 11 o'clock letter follows all the others in the clue's first word.

**Noon** Not hitting or throwing things when I'm mad
The letter at noon is in the middle of the clue's last word.

**1 p.m.** Being neat, not sloppy
The 1 o'clock letter is also first in the clue.

**2 p.m.** Not saying hurtful things about others
The 2 o'clock letter is a vowel used once in the clue.

**3 p.m.** Caring about more people than just myself
The 3 o'clock letter is a consonant that sounds differently in the second word than in the fifth.

**4 p.m.** Trying to cooperate at home and at school
The 4 p.m. letter is a consonant used four times in the clue.

**5 p.m.** Doing the best job I can on my homework
The 5 o'clock letter is a vowel found in the second, third, and ninth word in the clue.

**6 p.m.** Being respectful to teachers and parents
Multiplying 6x4 will help you find the 6 p.m. letter's place in the above clue.

**7 p.m.** Not fighting with my family
The 7 p.m. letter is 16th and 20th in the clue.

**8 p.m.** Being polite
The last letter is also last in the clue.

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UNIT 3

MISSING

My mother is missing. One day she went shopping and didn't come back. We didn't call the police. There was no mystery, because my mother phoned us and said she wasn't coming back home. She told my father not to try to find her. She said he should get a divorce. My mother had run away.

I never thought about running away from home. Some of my friends talked about running away when they were unhappy. They said they had too many chores to do, or they were in trouble at school. My friend Scott really did try to run away once because he felt no one loved him anymore.

I wonder why my mother ran away from home? Maybe she talked about it with her friends. She must have had reasons. But it couldn't have been because nobody loved her. I have always loved her.

I miss my mother. She has been gone a long time now, and Dad says she lives in a different state. When a car drives into our driveway, I always hope it is my mother coming home. When it isn't her, I feel bad. It's like not getting what you want for Christmas, only a lot worse.

I know my mom lives far away, but I still look for her wherever I am. I hope I will see her in a store, or in a car, or even on a TV show. I wonder if I will ever see her again. Part of me feels missing, too.
Therapeutic Focus: Try to Understand

1. All people, both children and adults, have worries, fears, and problems.

2. People find different ways to solve their problems:
   a. Some try to figure out their problems by themselves;
   b. Some ask other people to help them solve their problems;
   c. Some people become scared and try to run away from their problems.

3. Running away is not a good way to solve problems.

4. If one of your parents is missing, remember that parents can make mistakes trying to solve problems. It won't help to blame them or yourself.

5. Any child who loses a parent feels very sad and keeps hoping the parent will come back. But it is good to try and remember that there are still other people in your life who love you.

Background for Understanding

In this moving story Missing, there are two basic experiences with which to deal. One is the child's sense of loss. Another is the method of problem-solving, at both the child and adult levels.

The missing parent, according to the child, has run away from home. Since children associate their experiences to other experiences in their lives, much as adults do; the child looks to their friends' behavior
to find a reference point. The child recalls the reasons friends had for running away and wonders if his/her mother was experiencing some of these same fears, doubts, and troubles. As happens in many cases, the "runaway" adult had apparently camouflaged the problems that led to their extreme action.

The simplistic life pattern of children leave them with few reference points which might give explanation for parents' inability to cope with the demanding rigors of their more complicated life patterns. Children tend to believe their parents are omniscient and omnipotent, an attitude that assures them of their parents' protective ability. They have not yet looked at their parents as people with needs, worries, and fears similar to their own.

Adults, on the other hand, meet their life crises in three basic ways. It is true that some face problems with omniscient and omnipotent qualities. When they flounder, they pick themselves up, expend more energy, and either succeed or fail. But whatever the outcome, they continue to march along. Other adults experiencing a crisis will seek assistance to help them process the problem and reach a solution. The third type of adult experiencing a crisis tends to panic and finds a way to escape the unresolved problem.

Children need to understand the ways of approaching problems in order to put life's experiences into proper perspective. In this case, it is vital that the child understands that the fight did not occur because of the parents' lack of love; but because of their inability to
solve the problem in a better way. It is the mother's mistake, not the child's.

Even with proper perspective, however, the child feels an overwhelming sense of loss. This feeling is, of course, normal. One half of their nurturing, protecting coalition is missing. The behavior of searching for and expecting the parent to return is also very natural. However, the possibility that the parent might never return must also be dealt with.

A feeling of loss can be countered by reminding a child what he or she still possesses—the love of the remaining parent, family, and friends. While the positive is accentuated, the child's hope that the parent will return should not be eliminated. The child will maintain that hope as long as it serves the purpose of emotional survival and will relinquish it only when he or she has resolved that the parent is not returning. This usually is a slow process, dependent on factors such as the child's age, sex of the child and parent, and the ability of others to reestablish a sense of security and well-being.

**Therapeutic Objectives**

The story and related activities should help children in the following ways:

1. Children will be able to identify with feelings of loneliness, sadness, and longing that come with the loss of a parent.
2. Children will realize that adults have worries, fears, and problems that they try to solve in different ways.

3. Children will understand that problems can't be solved by running away.

4. Children will know that adults do not always do the right thing.

5. Children will be introduced to a problem-solving methodology.

Questions for Discussion

1. What happened to the child's parent?
2. Who should have done something about the parent's problem?
3. How did the child feel about the mother being gone?
4. What could the child do about the mother being gone?

Suggested Activities

Reproduce the sheet "Learning to Solve Problems" for the child. Discuss each step of the method with the children. To apply the procedure, give the children a problem to solve, perhaps using this story or another one in the book. Ask each child to give a possible solution to the problem. Then ask each of them again which solution they think might work best for them if the problem were theirs.
Learning To Solve Problems

1. What is the problem?
   Sometimes it's hard knowing just what troubles you. Think carefully.
   Sometimes problems are mixed together. Choose just one problem to work
   on at one time.

2. In what ways could the problem be solved?
   Think of some possibilities. Take some guesses. Write them down. This
   may be hard at first. If you have no ideas, begin by asking someone;
   maybe an adult you like. Write down the person's idea. Ask someone else.
   Write down that idea. Read a book about someone with a similar problem.
   What did the book suggest? Write down those ideas. How do you have more
   ideas of your own? Write them down too.

3. Look at all the possibilities you have listed.
   Choose one you think might work for you. Then test it.
   Try it out.

4. How did it work?
   Did it turn out to be a good solution to the problem? If not, could you
   change it so that it could be a good solution? If so, try it again with
   the change. If you don't think it is working, go back to your list. Try
   and test another possibility just as you did this one. If you keep trying
   solutions and thinking carefully about them, you will find ones that work
   for you.

   problem → thinking, reading, acting → solution
I used to wake up in the morning to the smell of breakfast. My mom always fixed two eggs, bacon, toast, and coffee for my dad. She only fixed toast and coffee for herself. She said eggs and bacon would make her fat. I like cereal for breakfast. Besides, you don't get prizes in egg boxes.

But I don't wake up smelling eggs and bacon now. That's because Mom and Dad are separated, and Dad doesn't live here anymore.

For a long time I worried how he was, where he lived, and who would take care of him. I wondered about him at funny times—like right in the middle of math class, or during reading time. Even when I watched cartoons on TV, something made me worry about him.

Last week my teacher called my mom to school. She told my mom I was daydreaming and not doing my work very well. She asked my mom if I ever got to see my dad and spend some time with him.

I don't know how my teacher knew I was worried about Dad. I didn't tell her. I think she guessed. I didn't tell my mom either. I thought it would make her more unhappy. But it didn't. She called my dad and they talked about me and my schoolwork and how my teacher had asked about visiting him.

Last Saturday, my dad came to our house and picked me up. I spent the whole weekend with him. At first I felt a little funny. We drove up in front of a small white house and Dad said, "Well, this
is home." We took my stuff inside, and I was surprised to see that his new home looked a lot like ours.

Saturday night Dad and I went out for hamburgers. Then we went to a movie. When we got back he fixed me a bed on the couch. I was really tired and went right to sleep.

When I woke up Sunday morning I smelled eggs, bacon, toast, and coffee cooking. My dad said he was sorry he didn't have any cereal in the house for me. But I didn't care. I felt so good to know where he lived. And I really felt good when he slid two eggs and bacon onto my plate. Now I know my dad can take care of himself.

Therapeutic Focus: Worry is a Robber

1. Worry is a robber. Worry robs people of their time and happiness.
2. Worry does not solve problems. Use your worry time for finding ways to solve the problem that is bothering you. Ask your parent, teacher, or counselor to help you.
3. You will feel much better if you talk about your worries with someone who can help you.
4. Your parents are grown-up people. They can take care of themselves, just as they take care of you. They have had many years to practice taking care of themselves and solving problems.
5. Part of growing up is learning to take care of yourself and doing the many duties that are part of everyday life. These
duties are not divided into man's work or woman's work. They are duties that belong to everyone.

**Background for Understanding**

Even though they may tell you otherwise, children know they can not do everything for themselves. For this reason, they wonder about the parents' ability to care for themselves; especially when a parent is absent from the home.

The child in this selection is especially worried about the father's ability to take care of himself. They describe their worry, and the teacher also notes their daydreaming during the school day. Both document the pervasiveness of the child's anxiety state.

The worry and stress experienced by the child in the story are typical of many children involved in a divorce situation, especially during the first six to twelve months. Often it is due to two common contributing factors; the lack of information about the missing parent, as well as the lack of contact with him or her.

Another reason for the child's concern about the father's ability to take care of himself is related to the stereotyping found in the family structure. If a child observes only the mother preparing meals, doing laundry and cleaning; the child concludes that the father does not know how to do these things. Likewise, if the child sees only the father paying the bills, mowing the lawn, working outside of the home; he or she concludes that the mother cannot take care of these things. There is little evidence for the child that the delineation of duties
and chores is by habit and choice, and not a matter of inability to perform.

Many fears of children can be allayed by teaching non-sex bias and individual self-sufficiency in every-day living patterns and routines. Children will benefit from understanding that all people within a family, male or female, need the opportunity to practice the many duties and chores involved in running a family.

**Therapeutic Objectives**

1. Children will understand that worry creates fears and unhappiness and will not solve problems.
2. Children will know that they can discuss their problems with their parents or teachers and that communicating to the right, helping adults can bring solutions.
3. Children will know that both mothers and fathers are capable of taking care of themselves, and that children can also do many things for themselves.

**Comprehension Questions**

Ask the students the following questions to make sure they understood the story:

1. What was the child doing during the school day?
2. Why was the child worrying?
3. Who were the people who helped the child?
4. Why did the child feel better at the end of the story?
Suggested Activities

Have the children make lists for each of the appropriate headings:

a. Things my father does for the family;
b. Things my mother does for the family;
c. Things my sister(s) does for the family;
d. Things my brother(s) does for the family;
e. Things I do for the family.

Go over the children's list, and then ask them to imagine that the family changed in some way. Who could take care of the things that the missing family member did? Repeat the process using another family member as the missing one.

After the children have looked at all the things family members do, have them make a list of chores they themselves have not done, but perhaps could master. Have them discuss how they might learn to do these things. Encourage them to practice some new skills, and then tell the group how they did with them.

Have children make a collage with newspaper and magazine photos showing different family members doing different jobs around the house. Stress that they should look for photos that show men and women, boys and girls, doing a variety of jobs; not just stereotyped ones. Have them title their collage "Running a Home is Everyone's Job."

Worry is a robber. How do you feel when you worry? Sad? Bad? So worry robs us of our happiness.
Discuss with the children how people secure their homes against a robber. Bring in different types of locks to examine with the children. You can develop an analogy by comparing their private body house to the house their family lives in. Discuss how they can secure their private body house against the robber known as worry--and prevent their happiness from being stolen. They can use mental locks to keep the robber of worry out. Their mental locks might include anything that keeps their mind off their worry, such as: a math lock, reading lock, play lock, friend locks, TV lock, or the visiting grandparents' house lock, etc.

Do the Worksheet "Running a home is . . . ."
Running A Home Is _____________________*

If you fill in the spaces of the puzzle below, you'll also finish the sentence, "Running a home is ..........." Answers to the puzzle can be found among the words listed below.

1. __ ____________
2. __ ____________
3. __ __
4. __ ____________
5. __ __
6. __ ____________
7. __ ____________
8. __ ____________
9. __ ____________
10. __ ____________
11. __ ____________
12. __ ____________

broken garden
lawn cook
jobs bills
help sweep
set clothes
clean trash
vacuum wash
dust dry

1. A happy family learns to ____ each other.
2. Running a ____ cleaner is a job most anyone can do.
3. A good way to help at mealtime is to ____ the table.
4. A good job for children is carrying out the ____.
5. Both boys and girls need to learn to wash and ____ dishes.
6. Everyone who needs to eat needs to learn how to ____.
7. The whole family can help keep the house ____.
8. Some mothers are very good at fixing things that get ____.
9. As they grow up, children need to learn to ____ and care for their clothes.
10. In many families both mothers and fathers have ____.
11. Everyone in the family should put away their own ____.
12. Parents usually need to work in order to pay ____.
My mom has a lot of times. She has breakfast time at eight o'clock, lunchtime at noon, and suppertime around six o'clock. She has bedtime for me and my dog. I have to be in bed by eight o'clock. My dog lies on the floor beside my bed, so I guess he has a bedtime too.

We have always had times at our house. I don't mind. I know what is happening that way. I can count on it. Mom says it's good for kids and grownups to know how, when, and where things are going to be done.

I didn't think that the times at our house would ever change. But then my dad got a new job driving trucks. He didn't always get home for bedtime. Sometimes he didn't get home at all.

One night I heard my mom say she couldn't go on living a no-time way of life. She wanted to know, how, when, and where things were going to happen, so she could take care of them. I heard my dad say he couldn't help it, and that he loved his job driving trucks.

Well, my mom and I still have our times to count on. But my dad has no times. He lives by himself now. Sometimes he calls and says he will come and take me with him. My mom asks, "What time will you pick him up?"

He tells her a time and she helps me get ready. I get so excited I can hardly wait for my dad. Sometimes he comes, and sometimes he doesn't.
It makes me mad when my dad doesn't come when he says he will. His way of keeping time is the reason we aren't a family anymore. Mom and I can't count on my dad's time. It's like no time at all.

Therapeutic Focus: Life Will Not Always Go Your Way

1. The more you live, work, and play with other people, the more you will understand that people do not always share the same ideas about how things should be done.

2. Being angry and blaming people for mistakes will not make you feel better. All people, including you, will make mistakes in their lives. A better idea is to learn from your mistakes so that you will not make them again.

3. If you have the feeling, "I want what I want, when I want it.," you are going to have many disappointments. You cannot order things to happen in your life the way you would order things from a catalog. You simply will not get your way all the time.

Background for Understanding

Very often divorce occurs because of differences that seem, at least to the partners, irreconcilable. In this story the parents are unable to cope with each other's conception of time and schedules. The child takes the mother's point of view and finds the father's habits disappointing.

The first is directly related to the divorce process--that of blame. In this case, the child is angry and blaming the father. But children may blame either or both parents, and even themselves for the divorce.

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There are many lessons that can be derived from this simple story. Children need to be assured that they are definitely not the cause. Additionally, they need to know that in many divorces one parent is usually not the sole cause. Above all, children need to know that blame will not solve the problem. It will not bring parents back together. It will not make anyone feel better. As long as children are blaming, they will find it difficult to be happy again.

Another lesson to be learned from the story is broader in scope—the art of accepting differences in people. The child's father thinks differently than the mother. The fact that the child agrees or prefers the thinking of the mother doesn't make the father a bad person. Children can learn to adapt that reasoning to relationships in the family, at school, or with friends. Someone who does not agree with them about something is not necessarily a bad person.

Still another idea that can be derived from the story is that life holds disappointments, and everyone finds them upsetting. In this case, the father did not come to pick up the child as planned. And it was normal for the child to feel bad and even angry. But growing up means finding ways to cope or accept the disappointments that life will continually hand out, and to go on from there. The sooner children learn to look for some sort of solution to the problem or disappointment, the better life will be for them.

**Therapeutic Objectives**

1. Children will understand that blaming one parent, both parents, or themselves for the divorce will not help the situation.
2. Children will understand that there are many complicated reasons for divorce, but they are not one of them.

3. Children will understand that someone who disagrees with their way of thinking is not necessarily bad.

4. Children will understand that if they find ways to cope with disappointments, their lives will be happier.

**Questions for Discussion**

After children have read *Time and No Time*, discuss the following questions to help them understand the story:

1. What did the child's mother always need to know about her family's life?
2. What did the child think about the mother's feelings concerning time?
3. Why did the father have trouble keeping time?
4. How did the child feel about the father's way of keeping time?
5. What is good about keeping time?
6. What could go wrong with keeping time?
7. What could the father have done when he couldn't keep a time?
8. What could the mother and child have done to deal better with the father's timekeeping?
9. When our plans don't turn out the way we think they should, what can we do with the plan?
**Suggested Activities**

A. Understanding others:

Divide the group into three sections. Ask the first to make a list of reasons why football is a better sport than soccer or jogging. Ask the second to list reasons why soccer is a better sport than football or jogging. Ask the third to list why jogging is a better sport than football or soccer. (Football, soccer and jogging are simply examples. (Any three choices of activity may be used.)

When the lists are made, ask the sections to exchange them. Each section should read the lists and discuss them among themselves. Ask them to place a check by reasons they think are good ones. When the activity is completed, ask each section how many checks they have made. Chances are that each will find at least one reason they think is good. Point out that there are many ways to look at an idea, and more than one way can be a good way. Ask them if they have changed any of their own ideas about these sports after they have considered other people's points of view. Stress that trying to understand other people's thinking is helpful in accepting differences.
B. Disappointments and solutions:

Read each of the paragraphs below, as well as possible solutions. Ask children to decide if each solution is good or bad. You may also want to ask them to suggest other good solutions.

1. Our family planned to leave Saturday for a trip to Disney Land. Yesterday my little brother became very sick. Now he is in the hospital, and my mom and dad say we will have to wait a whole year for the trip. They told me they can't get a vacation from work just any time, and also that they need the trip money to pay my brother's doctor and hospital bills.
   a. I am not going to talk to my mom and dad for a long time. I will make them sorry we aren't taking the trip.
   b. I will refuse to go on the trip next year. I'll ask to stay with Grandma and that will make my mom and dad feel bad.
   c. I'm going to smash some of my brother's toys. It's his fault we aren't going anyway.
   d. I'm going to ask my mom and dad if we can go to the park near here when my brother gets well. We can make the trip in one weekend when my parents don't have to work anyway. I'll save some money so it won't cost so much.
e. I'll get some friends, and we'll make up a Disney show. Then when my brother comes home we'll put it on just for him. Then he won't feel so bad that we couldn't go to Disney Land.

2. Tim and I are good friends. We were going on a special hike Saturday. But I found out that you have to be ten to go on the hike. Tim is ten, but I'm still nine. Now I can't go.

   a. If Tim goes on the hike, I'll tell him we can't be friends anymore.
   b. If something "accidentally" happens to Tim's bike, he won't be able to go on the hike either.
   c. If I cry a lot and make a fuss, my mom and dad will talk the group into letting me go anyway.
   d. I might ask Grandpa if he will take me fishing that day.
   e. I'll let Tim use my neat hiking pack. He'll be happy, and I think it will make me feel good, too.
   f. I haven't played with Jeff in a long time. I'll ask him if he can think of something fun to do on Saturday.

C. Blaming others:

Have children do the activity, "Whose Fault, Anyway?".

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Whose Fault, Anyway?

Use the code below to find the answer.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccc}
A & B & C & D & E & F & G & H & I \\
\text{○} & \text{□} & \text{●} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{○} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} \\
J & K & L & M & N & O & P & Q & R \\
\text{●} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{○} & \text{○} & \oplus & \times & \text{□} \\
S & T & U & V & W & X & Y & Z \\
\text{□} & \text{□} & \text{○} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} \\
\end{array}
\]

**ANSWER**

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccc}
\text{□} & \text{●} & \text{○} & \text{□} & \text{●} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} \\
\text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} \\
\text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} & \text{□} \\
\end{array}
\]

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UNIT 6

HEADS OR TAILS?

My dad and I always flipped coins when we had something to decide. It seemed so simple. Heads we decided one way, and tails the other. It was a good way to make a choice.

I go so I carried a special quarter with me all the time. I called it my lucky quarter, and I never spent it. I seemed like it usually turned up heads whenever I flipped for something. So if I really wanted something to turn out a certain way, I just called heads to get the choice I wanted.

Now I have a choice to make, and I don't think my lucky quarter will work. I think I will lose if it comes up heads. I think I will lose if it comes up tails. You see, my parents are getting a divorce, and I have to choose to live with one of them.

A man from court came to see me at school last week. I was scared. He told me his name and said he wanted to talk to me about my mom and dad's divorce. He said it had to be decided if I was going to live with my mom or with my dad.

The court man asked me what things I liked to do with my mom, and what I liked to do with my dad. Well, I do a lot of things with my mom and dad, but he said he didn't want me to talk about the things we all did together. He wanted to hear about the things I do with each one separately. So I tried to tell him, but there weren't as many things to talk about.
Then the court man told me again that we had to decide if I should live with my mom or my dad. When I heard the word "decide", I felt for my lucky quarter. There it was, safe and warm in my jeans pocket. I thought, "Heads you win, tails you lose." But not this time. This wasn't simple or easy. Suddenly I was afraid my lucky quarter wasn't going to work.

Then I heard him ask me, "Whose side are you on?"

"Whose side? I'm not on a side." I thought about the time I tossed my coin on the deck behind our house. It landed between two boards and stood straight up. It couldn't make a choice for me. Now I feel like my quarter when it was caught between the deck boards. I'm caught, and I can't decide.

Therapeutic Focus: Making Decisions is Not Always Simple

1. Big decisions are not made with the flip of a coin. It is too risky, because everything depends on chance, or luck. Decisions about important things in life need to be thought about long and hard. Would you choose the kind of new bike you wanted with the flip of a coin? Of course not, you would look over all the bikes, think about them carefully, and then decide which one was best for you.

2. Living with one parent does not mean you love that parent more than the other. It means you are living with one parent most of the time but loving both parents all of the time.
3. Your mother will always be your mother, and your father will always be your father, no matter where they are living. Distance does not change the fact that they are your parents.

4. No one can take away your love for your parent. It belongs to you forever.

Background for Understanding

Children often learn techniques of dealing with life situations which are unreliable and have perhaps been responsible for creating the adage "childlike." The use of a coin to make decisions is surely childlike in a life crisis situation.

The child in this selection has come to one of life's rude awakenings--that there are no simple answers, especially where human beings and their relationships are concerned. The child perceives the double bind, losing even if they win. To them, choosing to live with one parent, no matter what the reason, means they are is rejecting the other parent. They know they love both parents but will be allowed to live with only one.

The child needs to understand that living with one parent does not mean that he does not love the other. It simply means they live with one parent and loves two. Children in a divorce situation need to hear again and again that parents remain parents, no matter what. Neither distance or time will ever change the fact that their fathers
will always be their fathers, just as their mothers will remain their
mothers. A child in this stressful situation can also be assured that
nothing or no one can take away his or her love for a parent. It
belongs to a child forever.

**Therapeutic Objectives**

1. Children will know that living with one parent does not mean
   they love the other parent less.
2. Children will know that to them their mother will always be
   their mother, and their father will always be their father.
   Distance does not take that from them.
3. Children will know that there are different types of living
   arrangements which will allow them to see both parents.
4. Children will understand that all decisions cannot be made
   simply.

**Questions for Discussion**

Use the following questions to help children understand the story
more completely.

1. What kind of choices had the child always used their lucky coin
   for in the past?
2. Why didn't the coin work for choosing the parent with whom
   the child would live?
3. How do you tell the difference between simple choices and difficult one?

4. What process should a person go through to make a difficult choice?

5. What feelings do you think the child in the story was experiencing? How do you think you would have felt in the same situation?

Suggested Activities

Have children make a list of choices they make from day to day at home, in school, or with friends. Write some of the easy choices on the board, along with some of the more difficult ones. Help children to see that some of the choices could be made with a flip of a coin, while others call for problem-solving. For example:

(1) You and a friend can't decide whether to ride bikes or play basketball.

(2) You and two friends want to ride bikes. However, only two of you have bikes.

Ask children why it would be difficult to solve a problem such as number two with a flip of a coin. How would they decide what to do?

Explore different patterns of child custody with children. For example, a child might live with one parent and visit the other on weekends, holidays, and vacation. Or, a child can live with each parent six months at a time. Stress that no matter which parent the
child lives with, the other parent remains a parent. Have the children discuss these patterns and decide which one they think is best.

Have the children make lists of the people they love, but do not live with. Ask them to explain how they continue to love these people if they do not live with them. Help them to understand that they can love people from afar, and that there are ways to express love from afar. Help them think of ways they could express love to an absent parent. Include such things as letter writing, phone calls, and sending cards and drawings.

Have children do the sheet "Problem Solving is Helpful."
Problem-Solving Is Helpful

1. If you become a problem-solver, you won’t be helpless. Cross out the letters that spell “helpless” and find out what you will be. Write your answer in the spaces below.
H S E T L P O N E S G S

2. When problems come, some people are sad and do nothing. Cross out the letters that make up “do nothing” to find out what people can do.
D C O H N A O M T G H E I T H I N G G S

3. A good problem solver will not go through life uncertain and undecided. Cross out the letters in “undecided” to find out what he or she will be able to do.
U N N A D K E E C C H O D E I C E D S

4. Cross out the letters in “uncertain” to find something you need to solve problems.
U I N N C F E R A T M A I T I N O N

5. You can’t always solve a problem yourself. Cross out the letters that spell “yourself” to find out what you need from others.
Y A O D O U R S I S C E E L F

6. Some people go through life just wondering why things never turn out right. Cross out the letters in “wondering” to find out what is always happening to people who try to find good solutions to problems.
W G O R N O D W E I R N I N G G

7. Cross out letters that spell “drift” to find what you are able to do to your life as you learn to solve problems.
D D R I I R F E T C T

8. Cross out the letters in “guesses” to find what you have when you solve problems.
G S U O E L S U S T E I S O N S

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UNIT 7

THE TOUR

A long time ago I had my tonsils out at the hospital. Before I had the operation, the doctor said I should take a tour of the hospital. He said I wouldn't be so afraid that way. Well, I wasn't so sure I even wanted to go and see the place. But Mom and Dad said they would take the tour with me. So it was all planned.

Our doctor met us in a big room that looked like a living room. Then we went down long halls and looked at a room that was very clean and shiny. The doctor said this was the operating room. I asked him why there were so many lights. In a funny voice he said, "all the better to see you!"

That made me think of Little Red Riding Hood, and I told the doctor he sounded like a wolf. Everyone laughed—even me!

Next, the doctor took us to the room where I would be staying. We met a nurse who said she would help me if I needed anything, even pop or ice cream. It sounded better all the time.

The day I went to get my tonsils out, I was still a little scared, but not as scared as before the tour. I don't even remember the doctor taking them out. I remember having a sore throat and the nurse bringing me ice cream.

I'm telling you all of this because I am so scared again. No one has said anything about a tour this time. I'm not going to the hospital,
I'm going to court. My mom and dad are getting a divorce, and we all have to go to court.

Court. I think that's the place a judge works and decides if people who break the law should go to jail. I haven't broken the law, and I don't think getting a divorce means breaking the law. But I don't know.

My mom has a lawyer to help her figure out this divorce thing. The lawyer says that Mom will have to tell her side of things to the judge in court. She seems scared, and I feel scared, too. I wish we could have a tour of the court. Maybe we'd meet some nice people and wouldn't have to worry so much about what's going to happen.

Therapeutic Focus: What's Divorce All About, Anyway?

1. Marriage is a legal contract between two adults. Before they marry, they must get a marriage license, which is written permission from the state. If married people want to end the marriage, they must get a divorce. This is permission from the state to end the marriage, and it can only be given through the court system. So people who get a divorce have not broken the law or done something bad. They have to go to court to end their legal marriage contract.

2. People often need lawyers to help them in a divorce. There are many things to decide, like where the children will live and how the money will be divided.

3. Often people are not happy with each other when they are getting a divorce. Lawyers help by being a kind of referee. The lawyers
often do most of the talking in the courtroom so the people getting a divorce do not argue with each other.

4. The judge listens to the lawyers talk about all the things that need to be decided in a divorce. The judge will usually talk and listen to the children. He or she wants to know what they are thinking and how they are feeling about things. After listening to everyone, the judge decides who the children will live with, who will pay for the support of the children, and how things will be divided.

5. The judge does not send people to jail who are getting a divorce, because they are not breaking the law. They are not bad people, either. They just do not want to be married to each other any longer.

6. If you have other questions about divorce, you should ask your parents, or other adults. They can probably answer your questions. Your library may also have books that will help you.

Background for Understanding

Fear of the unknown applies to many life situations and experiences. In "The Tour" the child was fearful of having their tonsils removed at the hospital. When the doctor took the family on a tour of the hospital facilities and explained the "tonsil experience", the child's fear was reduced. The child recognized the value of that tour, wishing again that a comparable tour would reduce their fear of the court experience.
For many children, going to court represents a negative experience they have seen on television. They have watched courtroom scenes where a judge sends people to prison because they have broken the law. When children hear that their family is going to court over a divorce, they visualize someone breaking the law and being sent to jail. They are also dealing with many overwhelming questions:

a. What is a divorce;
b. What do lawyers do;
c. What does a judge do;
d. What will happen to members of the family during and after the court appearance?

It is not always possible to literally take a physical tour of every place we might have to go. However, we can afford children as much information as possible about an experience in which they might be asked to participate. We can offer them a mental tour by explaining terms, occupations, activities, and possible outcomes to certain life experiences, such as divorce and its related court procedure.

**Therapeutic Objectives**

The story and activities should help students in the following ways:

1. Children will know that when people lack information about things they often experience fears about them.
2. Children will understand that marriage is a legal contract that necessitates legal procedures to end.
3. Children will know that people seeking a divorce have not broken a law, nor have they committed a crime.

4. Children will be introduced to the terms and professional titles involved in the legal process known as divorce.

Questions for Discussion

Discuss the following questions with students to be sure they have fully understood the story:

1. Why was the child frightened at the beginning of the story?
2. Why did the hospital tour make the child feel better?
3. Why do you think getting information about something that might be happening to you makes it easier to go through?
4. Why was the child worried about going to court?

Suggested Activities

Help children understand some of the more common terms and professional titles involved in the divorce procedure, such as judge, lawyer, contract, marriage, divorce, alimony, and custody. Reinforce their understanding of these terms by having them do the crossword puzzle, "What is a Divorce?".

 Invite a local lawyer, judge, or legal aid officer to talk with the children about their job as it concerns divorce. Select someone who is representative of a caring, helping adult.

 Call the nearest court office and arrange a tour of the facility.
What's a Divorce, Anyway?

**ACROSS**

3. In court, the judge ___ to the man and woman getting a divorce.
5. A legal union of a man and woman is called a ___.
9. When a judge makes a decision, it brings the matter to a legal ___.
10. ___ are rules all of us must live by.
12. A legal end of a marriage is called a ___.
14. The ___ has to make decisions about many things in a divorce case.
15. The girl in the story wished she could have a ___ of the courtroom.
16. Getting a divorce is not a ___.
17. ___ means taking care of someone.

**DOWN**

1. A person who helps others with legal problems is a ___.
2. People who get a divorce are not ___.
3. Marriage and divorce are ___ matters.
4. A lawyer ___ to the judge about the person he or she is helping.
6. Lawyers act like ___ for people who are getting a divorce and having trouble talking together.
7. Getting information about a subject often helps us get rid of our ___ about it.
8. A ___ is an agreement between people.
11. ___ is an allowance of money made to a wife from her husband's paycheck, or to a husband from a wife's paycheck, after a divorce.
13. A place where legal decisions are made is called a ___.
14. People who get a divorce are not sent to ___.

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UNIT 8

ALL DRESSED UP

I love Halloween. I love to get all dressed up and pretend to be someone I am not. One year I was a fairy princess, like ones in my storybooks. Another year I dressed up like a yellow bird, with wings and everything. I always tried to keep my dress-up plans a secret. But usually my friends could tell right away who was inside.

I don't think I'll get dressed up for Halloween this year. I guess I'm too old for that. My dad calls me his grown-up girl. He started doing that after my mom left us to live with another family. Now it's just my dad, my little sister, and I.

My dad says I'm the woman of the house. I try to do the things I remember my mom doing. I clean and wash dishes. I look after my sister and get her off to school. But I feel funny. I don't like pretending I'm a grown-up mother.

Sometimes it seems like I'm dressed up for Halloween all the time. And I'm sick of it. I know I'm not grown-up because people say to my day, "How are your little girls?" They know I'm not the woman of the house.

I wish we had a mother who could really be the woman of the house. Then I could go back to just being me. Maybe I'd even get dressed up for Halloween. I could be a ballet dancer, or maybe a bus driver and take people all over town.
Therapeutic Focus: You Are You!

1. When a family loses or gains members, it often takes time for everyone to find their right place again.

2. Get to know yourself. What do you like? What do you dislike? What makes you happy - or sad?

3. Remember there is only one you in the whole world. No one can take your place. And you can not take anyone else's place!

4. If your parent treats you like someone else (probably the parent who is no longer at home), talk to him or her about it. Tell your parent that this bothers you. Say you just want to be you. Very likely your parent didn't understand this troubled you.

5. This is a hard time for everyone in your family. Help each other as much as you can. It will help make things better.

Background for Understanding

Adults and children can become confused during a major realignment in the family structure, such as that created by divorce. Adults are usually in a state of mental and emotional depletion, barely able to administer to their own needs, much less to those of their children. The family is left with one major role unfilled, and as the sifting and settling process takes place, there is a realignment of roles, duties, and expectations.
As a child takes on certain duties once held by the parent who is now absent, it becomes all too easy for the remaining parent to tell a son that he is the man of the family, or the daughter that she is the woman of the house. Parents may think they are complimenting a child. Another reason for this behavior is their attempt to maneuver the child into more adult roles to ease their own stress. They do not realize that for most children this is distressing and overburdening.

Children may get so confused by their new roles that they begin to lose sight of who they really are. They try to fill the new needs of the family. At the same time their own needs to grow, learn, and develop normally are not being met. Assigning the child the "absent parent role," therefore, creates a breeding ground for frustration and hostility.

Children need to know that their family is in a state of change. They need to discuss the changes with their parents and/or other family members. Family duties, chores, and obligations should be shared as much as possible. Children should be directed to pitch in and help when they see something that needs to be done, and not because they are pretending to take another person's place. As a member of a family unit, they should be encouraged to help make the family better, stronger, and happier.

**Therapeutic Objectives**

The story and activities should help students in the following ways:
1. Children will understand that when a family member leaves, it takes time for everyone to adjust and take over the duties of the missing member.

2. Children will understand the concept of personal identity and know it is important to be themselves.

3. Children will know that when asked to do some of an absent person's chores, it does not mean they are expected to take the absent parent's place.

Questions for Discussion

Help children understand the story by discussing the following questions:

1. How did the child feel at the beginning of the story when they got dressed up?

2. What was the child doing when they dressed up?

3. What does it mean to pretend?

4. What did the child's father call them? What did he mean by that?

5. What did the child think their father meant by "woman of the house?" How did it make the child feel?

6. Do you think the father really believed the child should take the mother's place?

7. What do you think the child should have done about their feelings?

8. Do you think it is okay to pretend sometimes? Do you think there are times when it is not a good idea?
Suggested Activities

Help children to understand that there is only one human being like them in the entire world— that they are unique and special. Have them make thumbprints and compare them with their group members. You may want to make a bulletin board display using the thumbprints, photos, and other identifying symbols, such as the outline of their hands. Use a title on your display, "There's no one quite like me," to help them remember that it is important for each of them to be themselves.

Let children role play the story, "All Dressed Up." Have them create an ending for the story in which the girl talks to her father and tells him she is uncomfortable being called "the woman of the house." Allow them time to practice this part and work with appropriate ways of telling the parent about these feelings.

Have children do the worksheet, "Things I Know About Myself."
THINGS I KNOW ABOUT MYSELF

Read the statements below and mark T (true) or F (false) in the space provided. Try to be very honest about yourself. There are no right or wrong answers. These statements are only to help you think about yourself and get to know yourself better.

1. I enjoy being with people. □
2. I enjoy working with others. □
3. I really like to read. □
4. I play at least one sport. □
5. I like art activities. □
6. I try to help at home. □
7. I need help with my chores. □
8. I would like to have a pet. □
9. I enjoy being outdoors. □
10. I like getting dressed up. □
11. I enjoy listening to music. □
12. I think money is important. □
13. I enjoy eating. □
14. I am a happy person. □
15. I follow others. □
16. I try to be careful □
17. I like to take "dares." □
18. I spend my money quickly. □
19. I love to talk to people. □
20. I take good care of my room. □
21. I enjoy being with adults. □
22. I feel sad much of the time. □
23. I get mad often. □

I like being by myself. □
I prefer working by myself. □
I like doing math. □
I watch sports. □
I like watching TV. □
I like helping others. □
I never ask for help. □
I don't like animals. □
I like to travel. □
I think about things a lot. □
I would like to play a musical instrument. □
I work very hard when I have things to do. □
I like to exercise. □
I eat too much. □
I am shy. □
I lead others. □
People usually like me. □
I like to save my money. □
I am very quiet. □
I am messy. □
I feel loved. □
People hurt my feelings a lot. □

After thinking about yourself and answering the questions above, write a short paragraph describing the person you are.
UNIT 9

SAVING FOR A RAINY DAY

When I was really little my grandma and grandpa gave me a bank shaped like a ship. They gave me money to put in the bank each time I had a birthday and sometimes when they just stopped by to visit. They said I should save the money for a rainy day.

Once I asked my mom what it meant to save for a rainy day. She said you should save money so that if you got into some kind of trouble you would have it to help yourself. So I always kept my birthday money in my bank--and even some of my job money. But I really wasn't saving for a rainy day. I was saving for neat things I wanted to buy.

Once my mom and dad put their money in a bank too. I would go downtown with my dad on Saturday mornings. He would put some of his paycheck in the bank and take the rest back home. Then my mom and dad would pay the bills, buy groceries, get gas for the car, and buy other things we needed.

That was before my father left. Now he is gone, and we don't go to the bank anymore. We don't have much money. I don't even know how we get the things we need. Mom and I take the bus wherever we go because she sold the car. She said we needed the money from the car and that we couldn't pay for gas anyway.

We have a desk place in the kitchen where Mom sits to figure out things and to pay the bills. Yesterday Mom sat at her desk and worked
on bill problems. She said she wished she had enough money to pay all
the bills. Then we wouldn't have to worry about anything. She had a
scared look on her face.

On the way home I thought about my ship. I thought how my grandma
and grandpa always told me to save for a rainy day. I decided that a
rainy day was really a worry day. And I was worried--about the bills
and about my mom.

When I got home I put my ship on the floor. Then I took one of my
boots, closed my eyes tight, and smashed the ship. Money flew all
over. I put the money in a bowl, and today I am going to give it to my
mom. She can pay some more bills and maybe she won't be afraid anymore.

But I'm still worried. I wonder if it will be enough. And my
ship is gone now. What will we do if another rainy, worry day comes?

Therapeutic Focus: You Can Help --

1. You can help your family with money matters.
   . Try not to lose things -- like sweaters, shoes,
     boots, books or coats.
   . Try not to waste things -- like food, hot water,
     electricity, or heat.
   . Try not to destory things -- like furniture,
     windows, plants, or clothing.

When you lose, waste, or destory things, it costs your family
money to replace them.
2. Mothers and fathers feel badly when they do not have enough money to buy you what you want. To help them, think before you ask for things. Is it really important? Don't tease and beg if they tell you they do not have money to buy it.

3. If you are old enough to mow lawns, babysit, take care of others' pets, or deliver newspapers; try saving some of your money for things you really need. Helping to buy your school clothes or supplies would be a great help to your parent or parents.

4. If your family is really in need, talk to your teacher, counselor, minister, or principal. There are groups of people who can help your family.

Background for Understanding

The child in Saving for a Rainy Day is making a financial comparison before and after their parents' divorce. Before the divorce, the father's paycheck was cashed and needed things were obtained. After the divorce, bills continued to arrive, but the money supply was inadequate to cover them. The child noted the mother's distress by monitoring her facial expressions and verbalizations. This distress was transferred to the child.

At various stages of growth and development in a child's life, the importance of money can range from something of toylike value, to a necessary commodity for everyday life, to a long range and abstract accumulation needed for a college education. Since children have few
means to make a substantial impact on a family's financial situation, the issue of financial security needs to be addressed in different ways, depending on age, development, and individual needs. Children can be encouraged to take an active part in contributing to their own, as well as their family's financial need. Such action will not only make their lives more comfortable, but contribute to their self-importance, self-reliance, and perhaps even to their eventual career choice.

The child in this selection gave the mother the ultimate contribution, the ship of money they had saved "forever." Still, they wondered, "What about tomorrow?" And that provides a perfect lead to help children begin to develop plans and regard for their future economic, educational, and social needs.

If adults are to help equip children with knowledge and skills to pursue independent, productive lives; then attention must be given to their economic resourcefulness. What can they do throughout their lives to help themselves as well as others? Children can learn that there is always something they can do to relieve their feelings of inadequacy and anxiety in relation to economic security. Just turning off a light could save a family money. By helping children realize they can assist with the family finances in at least one way every day, their anxiety will be relieved and they will find satisfaction in their contribution to the family's well-being.
Therapeutic Objectives

1. Children will understand there are ways in which they can help their family and themselves with money matters.
2. Children will become aware of organizations which assist people with problems.

Questions for Discussion

Help children understand Saving for a Rainy Day by discussing the following questions:

1. What did the grandparents give the child? Why?
2. Where did the mother and child get the money they needed? How could the child have found out where the money came from?
3. How did the mother feel when she worked on the bills?
4. What did the child do to help their mother?
5. What else could the child do to help their mother?
6. How did the child feel after breaking their bank?

Suggested Activities

Have children make a list of things a family needs which cost money. Ask the children to rank these in order of importance. Discuss ways they could help cut down on costs. Be sure they consider ways such as turning off lights; reading, rather than watching TV; wearing a sweater, rather than turning up the heat; popping popcorn, rather than buying potato chips; and drinking water and milk, instead of pop.
Discuss with children the places and organizations where families can get financial aid. Look in the phone book with them to see what agencies are available in your area.

This would be a prime opportunity to discuss all forms of public and private agencies and the various and sundry types of assistance available to people of their community, state, nation and world. By discussing the many different needs and problems people experience in the world—and where they get assistance for these needs and problems—the child would be better able to put their own needs and problems into perspective.

Help children make a bulletin board display of jobs they could do to earn money. Have them draw or cut out picture of children washing cars, delivering papers, raking yards, etc. Career investigation and awareness is a natural tie in at this time.
When I was little, I didn't like going to bed. When my mom and dad would make me go to bed, I wouldn't go to sleep. But they made me stay there anyway, so I began to count things. I counted the animals on my bedroom wallpaper, or the toys piled in the corner.

Sometimes I still count things when I can't sleep. It seems like I get to about fifty or sixty. Usually, though, I don't remember how long I counted. I just wake up and it's morning. I guess I count right into my sleep.

I always liked counting things, until lately. Now I'm tired of it. Well, I'm not really tired of counting marbles, or animals, or money. I'm tired of counting the dads my mom brings home.

After my mom and dad got divorced, my dad left home. That was a long time ago. I know my dad won't ever come back, but I thought my mom would be like my friend's mom. She got him a new dad. He said his mom dated a couple of men and then married one of them. Now he has his mom and a new dad.

My mom started dating quite awhile ago. Every time she had a date, I wondered if he would be my new dad. I would just begin to think that this man would be my new dad, when my mom would being to date someone else.
My friend said his mom dated three men before she got married again. Well, I thought after three my mom would get married too. But no. The man she went to dinner with last Saturday was number four.

I'm tired of counting. How many men will my mom date anyhow? I wish I could just go to sleep and wake up to find Mom had picked out a new dad.

Therapeutic Focus: Finding a Best Friend Takes Time

1. We know a lot of people, and some of them we call friends. Grown-ups want friends just the same as you do, to talk to, laugh with, and go places with. After a divorce, your parents may date just to meet and be with new friends. They may not want to marry again, at least not for a long time.

2. It takes a long time for new friends to become best friends. In fact, many of our friends never become best friends. A best friend is someone we especially enjoy spending time with, and someone who makes us feel happy, safe, and comfortable. Best friends usually like to do many of the same things. They know each other very well.

3. Finding a person to marry is like finding a very special best friend. People need to be very careful and take their time in choosing such an important person.

4. If your parent wants to marry again, don't try to hurry him or her. And don't try to choose that person for your parent. Could anyone else choose your best friend. Of course not. Only your parent can decide who to marry.
Background for Understanding

While some children become threatened by a parent's dating, there are other children who miss the parent that has left the home through the divorce process so fiercely that they want a replacement for this parent at all costs. For these children any adult of the right gender becomes a potential parent. They live, eat, and sleep with their fantasies of a new parent. For some, it becomes an all-consuming desire.

The desire in such a child is heightened when and if the remaining parent begins dating. The child watches with great anticipation every time the parent brings a friend to the home. At first, every friend becomes a potential parent. Then, as the dating process continues and involves more people, the child is on a roller coaster of emotions, ranging from expectations, to a sudden sense of loss, to an overwhelming sense of frustration.

Children need to realize that parents are people, and like all people, want to have friends. Children need to understand that their parents need other adults to talk to, laugh with, and go places with. At the same time, children need reminding that not all people become best friends, a relationship comparable to that of marriage partners. Some friends remain casual friends; while others never really become friends at all.

Children whose parents are dating need to understand that dating is the parent's personal search for a meaningful relationship. The
search cannot be a group effort. Neither can it be rushed into, or controlled by the wishes of others. Children simply have to wait for the parents to make their own choices.

Children can be helped with their anxiety and impatience by comparing the parent's relationship to the children's own best friendships. Certainly the child will agree that he or she would not enjoy their parent picking out their friends, or being pushed into friendships selected by their parents. Children can understand that choosing a friend is a very personal thing. And they can extend their thinking and understand that only the parent can make the decisions on when and whom to marry. Everyone else, including the child, must respect, honor and wait for that time.

**Therapeutic Objectives**

1. Children will know that the selection of a marriage partner is a process similar to that of selecting a best friendship.
2. Children will know that personal commitments are important and are not to be entered into without thought and planning.
3. Children will understand that only their parent can choose a marriage partner.

**Questions for Discussion**

Discuss the following questions with children:

1. What did the child in the story want most?
2. Why was the child upset?
3. Why do you think the mother may have been dating several men and not just one?

4. Do you think the child should talk about their feelings with their mother? Why, or why not?

5. What kind of parent do you think the child wants or needs?

6. How do you get to know another person well?

7. Why does choosing a marriage partner take time and careful thought?

**Suggested Activities**

Have students write a paragraph to answer the question, "What is a best friend?". After they have finished the paragraph, ask them to write another paragraph explaining the ways they think being married is like being friends for a lifetime.

Ask children to think about adults they know that are the same gender as their missing parent. Which ones do they enjoy? Would it be possible for them to spend some time with one or more of these people?

Have children look up the meaning of commitment. Discuss the definition with them to be sure they fully understand it. Ask them to make a list of commitments people make, such as friendships, pet ownership, or playing on a sports team. Discuss what it requires to make a commitment. Make sure they understand that commitments take time, effort, thought, and a desire to continue even in troubled times. Emphasize that people should not enter into personal commitments with the idea that if they don't like it they can get out.
UNIT 11

SAY HELLO

Today is a bad day. When I got home from school, no one was home. My dad and stepmother were picking up her kids at the bus station. Those kids are going to live at our house.

I got my milk and sandwich and looked around the kitchen. There are only four chairs at the table. Where will we all sit? There aren't enough chairs! I always sit in a special place so I can look out the window and see my dog. Who's going to sit there now?

I went to my room to change my clothes so I could go out and play. I like my room. My things are just where I want them. But then I thought about my stepmom's kids. Where will they sleep? There are two girls and a boy. All three of them can't stay in our extra bedroom. Will that boy have to move into my room? I don't want anybody in my room.

I went out to play with Thumper. That's my dog. I got him when he was a puppy. He's mine, and I take good care of him. He and I play in my fort in the woods out back of our house. Usually I don't let anyone in my fort. Just Thumper.

I was in my fort when my dad and stepmother came home with the kids. They got out of the car and Thumper wagged his tail and went right up to the boy. The boy started petting Thumper.

My dad said, "Well, say hello."

I don't feel like saying hello. Today is a bad day.
Therapeutic Focus: Family Life Means Sharing

1. Have you ever had a friend sleep overnight? Did you have a good time sharing your things with your friend? Having other children join your family means sharing. It means sharing the rooms in the house, sharing toys, pets, games, time, and feelings.

2. It is not always easy to share things. But unless you live your life away from all other people, you will need to learn to share with others.

3. Sharing something does not mean you lose it. It only means you are willing to let other people use something with you.

4. Being a member of a family means living with others and sharing many things.

5. Remember, if you can learn to share your things with others, others will be willing to share their things with you.

Background for Understanding

Children thrive on consistencies. Consistencies in their lives relieve their fear of the unknown and directly increase their sense of security. On their own, children will look for and establish patterns or routines of behavior and existence. When any of these major routines are disrupted, as in the losses that occur through the process of divorce, they cast about, reconnoiter, and many times attach new meaning to the people and things around them, clinging to that which is at hand.
and available to them. The process may make them highly possessive of things, places, people, and pets.

In *Say Hello*, the child has established an intense level of ownership. The child experiences comfort in their routine after school, their place at the table, the arrangement of their bedroom, the privacy of their fort, and the sole comradeship with their dog. They realize a major change is at hand with the arrival of additional children, and is apprehensive as to the changes it will make in ownership. They wander through their territory trying out possible solutions, and realizing they have no power to establish rights to anything.

The parents in this selection, like many others, have neglected to take time to discuss the approaching changes as a family unit. It was their duty to take the organizational lead, pointing out a plan for a new living pattern. Most importantly, it was their duty to reassure the child of their place, their special rights and ownership, thus reducing the fear of being displaced. The child in the story, as well as the incoming children, needed a great deal of attention to undergo the transitional adjustment period of blending families.

Children need to understand that although changes occur which necessitate sharing, they are not reduced as people. They are as cherished and loved when they are one of many children as when they are only one. They need to be assured that since there is only one of them in existence, no one can take their place as a person. Life may bring changes to the supper table and other areas of like, but every child remains a special and unique person.
**Therapeutic Objectives**

1. Children will know that family units may change from time to time, both in numbers and members.
2. Children will recognize various family units, from one-adult-member families to blended family units with stepparents, stepbrothers, and stepsisters.
3. Children will know that each family member holds their own special place in the family.

**Questions for Discussion**

Discuss the following questions with children:

1. Who were the family members at the beginning of the story?
2. Was the family unit going to change? How?
3. What was the child worrying about? Why?
4. How could the parents have helped the child with their worries?
5. How could the child have helped themselves?
6. What did the child have to look forward to with their step-brother and stepsisters?

**Suggested Activities**

Families are put together in many different ways. Help children explore some of these units, making a list of possible combinations, such as one adult and one child to a father, a stepmother, the child
and the stepmother's children. Choose several of the combinations and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each. Be sure to emphasize, however, that all are workable units.

Discuss sharing with children. Help them understand that being a member of a family means sharing. Have the children make posters or collages of the things they share with other people in their family, at school, in their community, and in the world.

Have children think of ways that families change and the reasons for these changes, stressing that divorce is not always the cause of change in a family. Using one or more of the examples given, ask children if the change might effect individual family members? In what ways?
UNIT 12

THE VISITOR

Today I am packing for a weekend visit with my mom. I put my pajamas on the bottom of my suitcase. On the top of them, I put some clean jeans, a sweater, socks, underwear, a library book, my toothbrush, and some toothpaste. Then I zip it all up. I guess I have everything.

I have packed my suitcase for weekend visits like this for three years now—ever since my mom and dad got a divorce. I live with my dad, and my mom lives in an apartment about thirty miles from here. I'm supposed to go to my mom's apartment every other weekend.

I like visiting my mom. But this year lots of things have happened and I have not had as many visits. Like last winter, when I got the flu and was throwing up and couldn't go to visit. I really wanted to see my mom, but she didn't come over to our house to visit me. That's because my mom and dad just don't get along if they see each other. Sometimes I think it's funny that I can get along with both of them, but we all can't get along together.

Another time, I missed a visit with my mom because my baseball team had a special All-Star game on Saturday. When I called my mom to tell her about the game, she didn't say anything for awhile. I thought the phone wasn't working. Then she said she would miss me.

I wanted to play that game more than anything. But after I found out I would miss my visit with mom, I didn't know if it was worth it.
Oh, I played and the game was fun. But it was like I traded my visit for baseball, and I hate feeling like that.

It seems like the older I get, the more trading I do. Sometimes my friends ask me to sleep overnight on the weekends, or my scout troop goes camping. If it's my weekend to visit my mom, it's hard to decide what to do. Once I tried to change my visiting weekend so I wouldn't miss a friend's birthday party or seeing my mom. But then I found out both my mom and dad already had other plans, so I didn't ask. Sometimes it seems like I am always missing one thing or another.

Therapeutic Focus: Learn To Make Changes --And Choices--

1. Think about all the changes that are always taking place in your life. Perhaps you have moved to a new house or had an older brother or sister go away to college. Some changes happen to you, and other changes you make happen. It is very important that people know that they can make changes in their day to day life when it is necessary.

2. Visiting plans made at the beginning of a divorce often need to be changed as you grow older. If you think your visiting plans are not working well, talk over your feelings with your parent or parents.

3. Your mom and dad want you to live a happy, active life. They think it is great when you are in activities, belong to clubs, or are asked to sleep overnight at a friend's house. But parents are not mind readers. They don't know your plans or needs if you don't
tell them. When it is possible, your parents will do their best to help you with your plans. But remember, you have to let them know your plans and give them enough time to help you.

4. You will never be able to do all the things you would like to do, nor can you be in two places at once. You have to make choices. Everyone has to make them, even moms and dads.

5. Ask your parents to be part of some of your activities. Give them time to plan ahead. But remember that they have to make choices, too, and perhaps they won't be able to be with you. Don't make them feel bad if they can't be in two places at once!

Background for Understanding

Children of divorced parents often face conflicts similar to the child in The Visitor. The foremost one is created by a rigid visitation schedule that has not been revamped to meet the child's changing life pattern. The child is struggling with a plan that originated three years before; undoubtedly a time when he was much less involved with school and social activities. Since then, the visitation plans have obviously not been evaluated to accommodate his needs.

There is no doubt that the child in The Visitor loves their mother deeply and wants to be with her. On the other hand, they quite naturally want to participate in activities and organizations with their friends. As long as the activities do not occur during the scheduled visitation with their mother, everything remains within the child's comfort zone.
But when a conflict of schedules occurs, a choice or "trade" must be made. At this point, the child's discomfort from conflict and guilt arises. The child has to make choices without the benefit of parental help and guidance. The child feels alone with their plight, and the choices take a toll on their inner peace. The disturbing feeling the child experiences when he makes a trade is his way of explaining the unresolved conflict.

The parents in this selection evidently have a personal conflict that has not yet been resolved. Because of this, the child must shoulder the responsibility for making changes in the visitation arrangements, an overwhelming task. A third party is greatly needed to spur the parents into action and change the outgrown visitation schedule.

In some divorce situations, the parents monitor the changing social pattern and/or needs of their children and respond accordingly, rearranging visitation patterns to enhance the developing lifestyle of the children. If the parents seem incapable of this, a third party, such as personnel in the helping professions, should discuss a child's changing social needs with the parents and encourage them to assist their children with appropriate planning. Children should be encouraged to discuss their plans, wants and needs with their parents, either together or separately. They should be urged to let their parents know if there is a conflict, so that alternative plans can be made.

Children struggle silently at times, fearing to disturb the status quo. This inner unrest can produce feelings of anxiety and hostility. Children need to be told that their parents are not mindreaders—
they often need to be made aware of their children's worries and thoughts. Most parents want their children to live happy, active lives. Generally, they will try to accommodate the child's needs when they are advised of them.

Therapeutic Objectives

1. Children will understand that as they grow, they will need to make changes in their daily lives.
2. Children will understand that making choices is a part of life and not something to feel badly about.
3. Children will understand they need to communicate their choices so that changes can be made when necessary.

Questions for Discussion

Discuss the following questions with children to be sure they understand the story:

1. Why was the child packing some of their belongings?
2. How did the child feel about visiting their mother?
3. Why were there times when the child did not go to visit?
4. What changed in the child's life and made it harder for them to keep their visiting times?
5. How did the child feel when they traded their visiting time for some other activity?
6. Could the child and their parents work out a better or different plan? How?
Suggested Activities

Making choices is an important part of life that many people do not enjoy to the extent they could. Help students explore the concept of choices and choice-making to help them see that they have a good deal of control over their lives as they grow and become adults.

A. With children discuss the concept of unlimited versus limited choices. Ask them to look up the terms "limited" and "unlimited", and be sure they understand the definitions. After students have discussed the terms, ask them to think of examples that would involve limited choice-making. Some of the examples might include colors of their clothes, places to visit, animals to keep as pets, seasons to enjoy, or kinds of weather to experience. Help them make some generalizations from their ideas. For example, things that involve nature are limited. Choices that involve other people are also limited; since others' wishes and needs must be considered. After children have discussed limited choices, ask them to think of examples of unlimited choices. Some of these might include things to collect, books to read or write, music to compose or listen to, or art to create or enjoy. Help children see that it is in creativity that people can come closest to unlimited choice-making.
B. Have children discuss the choices a person makes in a single day. Ask them to guess how many choices a person might make in a day. If a human being could actually keep track of the number of choices, they could probably find that it would range from hundreds to thousands, depending on the individual and their level of activity and involvements.

C. Ask students to list some of the choices they make in one day, beginning with the time they wake up to the time they go to bed. Be sure they include such choices as whether they brush their teeth, what they decide to eat for breakfast, or whether they wear a jacket.

D. Ask children to make a plan or schedule for a day, a week, a month, and/or a year to help give them some perspective about time. Help them block out a school day schedule. Talk about what activities or plans involve other people and what ones involve only themselves. How do other people affect our plans and choices? Does it depend on the type of people they are?
UNIT 13

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FEEL BETTER

When I was learning to ride my two-wheeler, the bike and I used to fall right over. Usually I would get a cut or scrape. My mom would put some cream on it, and sometimes a bandage. In a couple of days, sometimes a week, I couldn't find the cut anymore.

The same thing happened when I started roller skating. I would fall, get up, and hurt some place. Sure enough, I would have a bump, bruise, or scrape somewhere on my arms or legs. But I knew what to do by then. I would wash it, cream it, and bandage it. Then it would go away in a few days. That's what you did for little hurts.

Once I was playing on the climber at school. That's one of those big pole things on the playground. Well, I fell off the top and broke my arm. This time I had to go to the doctor. He took pictures and put a cast on it. That really hurt, and it took a couple of months before I could use my arm again.

Now I'm wondering about another kind of hurt. It's not my arms or legs that hurt this time. It's kind of like my head and heart and stomach. It came when my parents told me they were getting a divorce.

I just don't feel good. I don't feel like eating or playing or anything. I sit, walk, go to sleep, get up, go to school, come home, and start the whole thing over again. I can't figure it out. You
can't put cream or a bandage or even a cast inside, and that's where I feel bad. What I want to know is, how long does it take to feel better when your parents get divorced?

Therapeutic Focus: Feeling Better Takes Time

Imagine you are traveling down a road with many stop signs on it. Each time you make a stop, it seems to take time and energy to get started again. Sometimes it seems as if you will never reach the place you wanted to go.

Feeling better again after a divorce has happened in your family is a lot like a stop and go trip. Almost everyone has certain kinds of feelings that seem to slow them down on their trip to feeling better.

1. The first stop sign is denial, or not wanting to believe your parents are getting divorced. How long are you going to stay at this stop? It's up to you!

2. The second sign is one you will know right away. You are mad at everything. While you are stopped by anger, nothing seems to go right. Does that sound like a good place to spend your time?

3. You really show off at the third stop sign. You try everything you know to get your own way. You think, "Maybe if I'm bad, my parents will get together to make me behave." But it doesn't work.

4. The next sign says depression. It means that you feel very sad and lonely. You think you cannot go on with your trip to feeling better.
5. If you stop traveling, do you ever reach the place you wanted to go? Of course not. It's the same way if you want to feel better. You have to push on to the last sign which says acceptance. It means you are willing to say, "Yes, my parents got a divorce. I don't like it, but it's a fact I have to face."

How long does it take to feel better? The trip depends on you and how long you stop and stay at each of the signs. When you finally pass the last sign, you will not be thinking about divorce all the time. You will be thinking more about the things you want to do. You will want to join your friends again and have fun. You will be able to say, "Yes, I really am feeling better!"

Background for Understanding

Most children experience some type of physical pain or discomfort in their lives, from scraped knees to having their appendix removed. They can tell you about their physical injuries and discuss what was done to care for them. They also can identify many safety measures to protect themselves and others from physical harm and injury.

There is a definite discrepancy in children's physical awareness and what they know about their emotional selves. Most children have experienced many emotional discomforts in their lives, yet lack the knowledge to identify the emotional states in a way they would physical problems. Their learning experiences with feelings are not stored in the child's memory bank as a preventative measure for future reference, largely because of the lack of labels and descriptive meanings.
Children need to become familiar with their emotional selves. They need to be able to identify and discuss the many emotional states that most human beings experience. Knowing proper labels and vocabulary would assist the child in storing information as well as providing him or her with the expressive ability to share the emotions in a more acceptable manner.

In the same way we make children aware of physical dangers and the prevention of accidents, it would be beneficial to instruct them in emotional dangers. From this frame of reference they could better learn the negative impact on people's lives from such actions as name-calling, excluding others from games, and making fun of others.

As children grow we almost continuously instruct them in good health habits. But children also need to receive instruction in good mental health habits. They can learn about good feelings and how a person can increase these feelings. They can learn to identify and discuss the feelings they are experiencing. They can better cope with different life situations and emotions. As time goes on they will begin to understand the effect emotions and feelings have on people's lives.

If children's educations included guidance in good mental health practices, the child in the story would have been able to answer the question, how long does it take to feel better after your parents get a divorce? He or she would have known that emotional impacts such as this affect different people differently and the amount of time will vary from person to person. The child would have also learned to have
a repertoire of activities from which to draw in order to reduce negative emotions, increase positive emotions, and once again live a happy, functioning life.

Therapeutic Objectives

1. Children will know that emotional hurts take time to heal.
2. Children will recognize emotional feelings and become more familiar with their emotional selves.
3. Children will learn that other children whose parents have divorced have shared the same feelings.
4. Children will realize ways to increase pleasant emotional states and reduce unpleasant ones.

Questions for Discussion

Read the selection with students and discuss the following questions:

1. What were some of the physical hurts the child had experienced?
2. How had the child's physical hurts been taken care of?
3. How long did most of the child's physical hurts take to feel better?
4. What kind of hurt was the child having trouble recovering from?
5. What caused the child to feel so badly?
6. What did the child want to know?
7. How would you answer the child's question?
Suggested Activities

Have students find various pictures of children in different emotional states. As a class discuss the pictures and identify the emotions.

Discuss with children the many physical experiences created by emotions. For example, when they are happy they feel good all over; when they are angry their muscles are tight and tense; when they are worried their stomach may seem somewhat upset. Help them understand that emotions have an important effect on physical health.

Let children draw pictures illustrating their own version of what creates a particular feeling for them, such as going to a carnival. Encourage them to use colors that make them feel happy, sad, angry, or generally seem to depict their feelings the best.

Discuss with children how thought patterns can change feelings. Talk about ways this can be done. For example, reading, playing, and working can take our minds off of negative feelings and make us feel better. Have children write down a feeling they would like to change. Then have them list several ways they could divert their thinking to other things, such as visiting an older relative or friend when they themselves feel lonely. Ask students to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

Have students do the worksheet "Getting In Touch With Feelings."

Ask children to keep a diary of their feelings, using the spirit master worksheet. Run enough copies so that each child has enough for
at least two weeks. Encourage children to not only describe their daily activities, but to emphasize their feelings and emotions. You may want to read some selections from famous diaries available at your school or public library. When the project is complete, allow children to design and make covers for their diaries.
Getting In Touch With Feelings

Find the feelings hidden in the word search.

trust    jealous
sad      anxious
happy    confused
hurt     angry
lonely    shy
frightened rejected
sorry    worried
eager     bored
regret    calm
love     successful
afraid    nervous
thankful    loving
friendly    hopeful
surprised    relaxed
needed    pressured
left out afraid
scared    proud
important

One word is used twice. It tells how people feel when they don't know what is happening.

What is the word? ____________
After my mom and dad got divorced, all I could think about was the things I missed. I missed the fun things our family used to do together. I missed the extra quarters my dad used to give me—just for no reason at all. And I missed having my dad living with us. I felt so bad that I cried a lot. People began to ask why I looked so sad all the time. I felt bad and sad inside, and I just wanted to scream at them to leave me alone. But instead I didn't say anything.

One day my teacher said she wanted me to meet someone. She took me down the hall to a room beside the gym. I knew that the school counselor worked there. My teacher said the counselor was waiting for me. What was I going to say? I didn't even like talking to people!

The next thing I knew I was sitting down and the counselor was talking to me. She said she had a very special job. She talked to boys and girls about things that bothered them and tried to help them feel better. How did she know I didn't feel so good?

Pretty soon she told me she knew about my mom and dad's divorce. She said, "I bet that makes you feel bad, doesn't it?"

Before I knew it I said, "Yes." I couldn't believe I had said that. She asked me what made me feel the worst, and I told her it was the missing. I felt bad because I missed all the things we did together. The divorce had changed everything. My mom and dad had both remarried.
I told her all about the things that were different, because she asked me.

Then she asked me another question. She asked me to tell her about the things I had gained. I didn't know what she meant, and I didn't say anything. So she started to talk. "Have you ever thought about the fact that you have a mother and father who still love you, plus a stepmother and stepfather who also care about you? How many people does that make?"

I thought real fast and said, "Four."

Then she asked me about brothers and sisters. I told her I had one brother and two stepsisters. She asked me how many people that made? I answered, "Three."

We went on and on like this. She even asked me if I got more birthday and Christmas presents now. I never thought about it before, but I did get more presents last year. I began to feel better.

The counselor told me not to think so much about what I had lost because of the divorce. She wanted me to think about all the people and things I had gained. I never thought about it that way before. I began to feel better right away.

The counselor wants to talk to me again next week. She said we will make a list of all the things I have gained. I am going to think about that so I'll be ready.

Talking to that counselor wasn't so bad. I must have been smiling, because she said she liked my smile. I didn't even know it was there.
Therapeutic Focus: Changes Don't Have To Be Bad

1. Divorce is not a game where people win or lose. Divorce is a change in your family unit. The word change means to make different or replace one thing with another.

2. To gain means to get something more. If one or both of your parents decide to remarry after a divorce, you are gaining people who care about you. You may gain a stepmother, a stepfather, stepbrother(s), or stepsister(s). Whomever you gain, give them a chance to show you they care about you.

3. When people have a big change in their life, they sometimes need help to understand what it means. It helps them to talk about these changes. There are many people you can talk to about the changes in your life. Some of them are your mother, your father, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, and counselors.

4. When you count things you have lost, you usually feel bad inside. When you count things you have gained, you usually feel good inside. Try counting the things you have gained and see if you feel better.
There are practically as many methods of raising children as there are parents (or as many methods as there are professionals with child-rearing ideas). However, one method of training children about danger is shared by many; that negative things can result from a person's action. If a child runs into the road, the child may be killed is only one of a multitude of examples of this type. Most, of course, are needed warnings about the many dangers in life.

Awareness of danger is not the only aspect of child-rearing that involves the repetition of negatives. We threaten children with losses, if their behavior is not what it should be. In danger the ultimate loss is loss of life. But in everyday living we often use the loss of privileges, allowances, or belongings to encourage better behavior. Children learn that selfishness leads to a loss of friends, and a loss of friends to a loss of happiness.

Is it any wonder, then, that children, as well as adults, find it difficult to count the positives in their lives? In the story, "So Tell Me, What Did You Gain?", the child had absorbed all the losses created by his parents' divorce. The child had been conditioned to assess and evaluate losses in their life quite successfully. Would their trauma have been as prolonged if equal stress and conditioning had been given to assisting the child to assess and evaluate gains in their life?

In our society we seem to readily accept gains and move to our next conquest. Many people do not contemplate and value positives.
They dwell over losses, trouble, or negatives of any type. For example, if a family member is ill, most other members experience concern and anxiety and direct their attention toward the ill person. But, it the same member is well, he or she is often taken for granted with less display of attention or emotion being directed toward them.

Children need to have consciousness-raising instruction concerning positives in life. They need to have directed practice in assessing and evaluating gains they make every day. Even the simplest gains, such as someone smiling and saying hello, is worth consideration.

There are times when life's negatives seem to far outweigh the positives; so there is little chance, it seems, that accentuating the positive will misshape a child's perspective of life. In fact, it may even help eliminate some of the negatives. It's worth a try. After all, what is there to lose?

**Therapeutic Objectives**

1. Children will know that discussing their problems with someone such as a teacher or counselor can help relieve their stress and reduce their worries.
2. Children will learn how to evaluate their lives, recognizing both losses and gains.

**Questions for Discussion**

Discussing the following questions will help children better understand the story:
1. How was the child feeling at the beginning of the story?
2. How do you think the teacher and counselor knew about the child's feelings? Describe some of the ways that help you know that a person is feeling unhappy inside.
3. Why did the teacher want the child to see the counselor?
4. What other people might have been able to help this child with a problem.
5. The counselor asked the child what had been gained. What does the word "gain" mean?
6. What were some of the things the child had gained?
7. Why do you think the counselor wanted the child to think about gains instead of losses?

Suggested Activities

Assist the children to identify and make the longest list they can brainstorm concerning the things that happen to them in a regular day that would be considered positive; i.e. someone saying Hello, playing with a friend, getting their school work completed....

Have the children think about the unpleasant experience that has happened to them in the past, such as moving away from friends, having a pet die, or going to the hospital with a broken arm. Then ask them to think about what they possibly gained from that experience. Have them discuss their gains with the rest of the group.

How can feelings, especially ones like fear, worry, or anger, be changed to more positive ones? Have the children make a list of good
ways to help make ourselves feel better, such as playing, reading, talking with a friend, making something, etc. Discuss the fact that people often find harmful ways of feeling better, such as overeating or using alcohol or drugs that always lead to more problems, fears, and worries.
APPENDIX B

THE PIERS-HARRIS CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPT SCALE
(The Way I Feel About Myself)

by

Ellen V. Piers, Ph.D.

and

Dale B. Harris, Ph.D.

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These consist of pages:

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APPENDIX C

Sample Optical Scanning Sheet

Utilized to record
individual student's answers
on the
Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale
APPENDIX D

Professional Resume of School Counselor
PROFESSIONAL GOAL: To interact with students on an individual and group basis in a positive manner conducive to promoting people striving to develop their full potential. To utilize my organizational and communication skills to enhance program development.

EDUCATION: M. A., Counseling and Personnel Western Michigan University Kalamazoo, Michigan August, 1979

B. S. in Education Teaching Emotionally Impaired Central Michigan University Mt. Pleasant, Michigan May, 1973

ADDITIONAL TRAINING: .Job Information and Seeking Training (JIST) - Facilitator Training
.Life Career Development System - Facilitator Training
.M.O.I.S. - Application and Technical Training
.Communication Within the Organization
.Attended and participated in numerous related seminars and professional conferences.

EXPERIENCE: Muskegon Public Schools 10/84 - present Vanderlaan Alternative Center Muskegon, Michigan

Teacher-Emotionally Impaired/Learning Disabled
*High school E.I./L.D. students in a self-contained alternative high school environment. Taught all subjects for regular high school credit.

Grand Haven/Fruitport Community Education Grand Haven, Michigan Summer, 1984

Teacher - Summer Reading Program
*Supportive enrichment reading skills for elementary students during summer vacation. Responsible for Computer/Games section.

Teacher-Job Club Program 9/81 - 12/82
*Revamped and instructed operational intensive employment skills classes for unemployed adults. Active in implementation of job search component.
Grand Haven Public Schools  9/83 - 12/83
Grand Haven, Michigan
  Elementary Counselor
  *Individual and group counseling with elementary students, consultation with parents and teachers, preventative guidance units in classroom setting.

Career Life Planning Services  9/80 - 12/83
Grand Haven, Michigan
  Co-owner/Career Counselor
  *Private agency offering individual and group career counseling, career testing, resume service, workshops on related subjects. Contracted for outside services. Also responsible for small business aspects of operation.

Contracted Services:

  *Employability Skills Training Manual, Ottawa County Interagency Collaborative Council (Summer, 1981)
  *Cooper Air Tools Employee Seminars, Employee Assistance Program - OAR, Inc.
  *Career Segment - CETA, Turning Point Program, Center for Women In Transition (1980 - 1982)
  *Inservice Training, Ocena County Resource Center

Hope College  1/83 - 5/83
Education Department  1/81 - 5/81
Holland, Michigan
  College Coordinator
  *Responsible for coordination and supervision of Special Education student teachers on-site in individual placement settings. Involved in group seminars.

Muskegon Community College
Muskegon, Michigan
  Instructor - Life Career Development Seminar - Summer, 1981
  Career Planning & Placement Center - 10/80 - 6/81
  Career Clinic - 9/80 - 1/81
  Instructor - Career Development - Winter, 1979

Center for Women in Transition
Grand Haven/Holland, Michigan
  Transitional Counselor
  *Personal counseling caseload for women in any present or pending transitional situation. Facilitated support groups.
Fruitport Community Schools  
Fruitport Middle School  
Fruitport, Michigan  
Teacher - Emotionally Impaired  
*Developed and implemented School Adjustment Program for 6-8th graders demonstrating social/emotional problems hampering school performance. Established life competency skills system, and active in development of pilot program for district-wide implementation of career education.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:
- Peach Plains P.T.C. - President 1984 - 1985
- Project Charlie Facilitator 1984 - 1985
- Time Management - Tri-Cities A.A.U.W. April, 1984
- Coping Skills For A Changing World May, 1982
- Christ Community Singles Group April, 1982
- St. John's Lutheran Unemployment Seminar February, 1982
- Resume' Writing Workshops - Loutit Library October, 1980

CREDENTIALS: Credentials, including references, are available upon request.


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