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**Adjustment to Separation and Divorce: Evaluation of a Community
Group Intervention Program**

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Thesis submitted by Dragica Vukalovich for the Degree of Master of Social Sciences in
the School of Psychology, James Cook University – Cairns Campus, Australia.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

October 2004

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.....
(Dragica Vukalovich)

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the effectiveness of a group intervention program offered by a community organization to people adjusting to separation and divorce. Adjustment outcomes were examined longitudinally using a pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention follow-up. The research sample comprised permanent and temporary residents of the Cairns region. Due to a high transient population, a high attrition rate was experienced post- and six-months post-intervention. Two studies were conducted. For study one, 29 participants were randomly assigned to the intervention or delayed intervention groups. Both groups participated in a six-week intervention program. The aim of this study was to investigate gender and group differences in adjustment to separation and divorce following group intervention. For study two, 15 participants were randomly assigned to the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group. The aim of this study was to use a clinically oriented applied investigation of psychological intervention to assess adjustment outcomes. The adjustment measures used to explore gender and group differences for both studies were Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale, Social Support Appraisal scale, Levenson's Locus of Control scale and Fisher's Divorce Adjustment scale. Relationship status, relationship number and decider of separation and divorce helped to determine additional group differences. The social context variables: emotional, psychological, social, financial adjustment, property division and satisfaction provided an opportunity to address other aspects of adjustment. Most participants indicated some adjustment differences following intervention with reduced adjustment gains six-months post-intervention. The results indicate some benefits of group intervention. Furthermore, implications for future group intervention programs, gender and group specific information for the enhancement of future programs are discussed.

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