



California State University, San Bernardino
CSUSB ScholarWorks

Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations

Office of Graduate Studies

6-2014

BRUISED BUT NOT BROKEN: HOW COPING STYLES, SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ARE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO HOW WELL PEOPLE DO AFTER DIVORCE

Tasha L. Brown Ms

Tasha Latrece Brown, tashabrown72@charter.net

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Brown, Tasha L. Ms, "BRUISED BUT NOT BROKEN: HOW COPING STYLES, SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ARE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO HOW WELL PEOPLE DO AFTER DIVORCE" (2014). *Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations*. Paper 84.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Graduate Studies at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

BRUISED BUT NOT BROKEN: HOW COPING STYLES, SPIRITUALITY
AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ARE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS
TO HOW WELL PEOPLE DO AFTER DIVORCE

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Tasha Latrece Brown

June 2014

BRUISED BUT NOT BROKEN: HOW COPING STYLES, SPIRITUALITY
AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ARE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS
TO HOW WELL PEOPLE DO AFTER DIVORCE

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Tasha Latrece Brown

June 2014

Approved by:

Dr. Janet Chang, Faculty Supervisor, Social Work
Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, M.S.W. Research Coordinator

© 2014 Tasha Latrece Brown

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to examine how coping styles, spirituality, and social support contributed to divorced persons' adjustment to life after divorce. The study used a qualitative research design with face-to-face interviews. A snowball sample was used in order to inquire divorced participants' experiences after divorce. Twelve participants were interviewed to obtain their individual experiences and discernment of divorce transition.

The study found that spirituality (e.g., attending church, Bible reading, prayers) was a major coping strategy used by most of the participants after divorce. The study also revealed that the support of family and friends was utilized as another critical coping strategy to help aid divorcees in their transition to post divorce life. In addition, the findings of the study suggested that divorced participants, particularly females, were quite resilient in overcoming financial hardship, single parenting, loneliness, and abandonment.

This study's results suggest that social workers need to be more knowledgeable about and equipped to provide adequate support and therapy to divorced persons' post-divorcé adjustment challenges. Another practice recommendation is that social workers should play a critical role in developing and facilitating a support group to help divorcees that are transitioning post-divorce. In addition, special attention should be paid to provide additional help and support services for men who suffer mental and emotional effects of divorce transition.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank several people who were influential in helping me complete this thesis. First, I would like to give honor and thanks to my lord and savior Jesus Christ. Second, I would like to thank all the participants in this study. Third, I would like to thank CSUSB research assistant Christi Bell whose patience and guidance were instrumental factors in me completing this thesis. You are the best! Thank you. Fourth I would like to give thanks to my co-worker's and colleague's thank you guys as well for your contributions and guidance. In addition to the support I received from my co-workers and colleague's I would also like to thank my friends Rebecca Irwin and Windy Curtis. First to my friend Rebecca Irwin thank you for your tenacity and support, your grace and optimistic attitude throughout the completion of this thesis was invaluable. Second to my good friend Windy Curtis thank you for your educational expertise, support and inspirational talks when I wanted to give up, you are truly remarkable.

In summary, I would like to give special recognition and acknowledgement to my daughter and best friend Rheyana Sibley who played a major role in me being able to obtain and complete my graduate degree. Please know your support and hard work didn't go unnoticed. You are an amazing young lady that I am very proud to have as a daughter. Thank you for all you have done and all you do I love you.

DEDICATION

I would first like to attribute this thesis to my family and three amazing children that any mother would be blessed to have. I want to thank my children, Rheyana, Brandon and Malia for your patience, understanding and tireless sacrifice for three long years, while I pursued my long-time dream of obtaining my Master degree in Social Work. Thank you and I love you guys very much. In addition to my three beautiful children I would also like to thank my family for all their love and support throughout my graduate education. I would first like to thank my sister LaTanya who always cheered me on and encouraged me when I wanted to give up. Thanks sis you're the best. I would also like to thank my brother Tyrone who was an instrumental factor in me applying and attending graduate school. Thank you for all your support through the hard times, you're amazing.

There isn't a time where I haven't had this amazing woman in my life or by my side. I would like to dedicate this thesis and everything I am and do or will ever be to my mother Dorothy Brown-Salery. Thank you mom for believing in me when I didn't believe in myself, I love you. In addition to my mother I had a wonderful father Jake Brown and grandmother Rosie Rosina Williams who instilled in me the meaning of persistence, courage, strength and the ability to never give up. My dad would often say to me "to stop playing games with your life". Well dad, I finally stop playing games with my life and now, I am the woman I am today because of your love and support. Although our time on earth was interrupted briefly I will never forget your love, kindness and guidance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Problem Statement	1
Purpose of the Study	6
Significance of the Project for Social Work	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	11
Resilience and Coping Mechanisms	17
Theories Guiding Conceptualization	20
Summary	22
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	
Introduction	23
Study Design	23
Sampling	24
Data Collection and Instruments	24
Procedures	25
Protection of Human Subjects	25
Data Analysis	26
Summary	26
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	
Introduction	28

Presentation of the Findings	28
Summary	41
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	
Introduction	42
Discussion	42
Limitations	46
Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research	47
Conclusions	49
APPENDIX A: POST-DIVORCE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	50
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT	54
APPENDIX C: DEBRIEFING STATEMENT	56
REFERENCES	58

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Demographics of the Participants	29
Table 2.	Finances.....	31
Table 3.	Divorce Variables	33
Table 4.	Psychological Effects	36
Table 5.	How Religion helped Transition Post-Divorce	40

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses five explanations why some people do well after divorce. First, this study explored how a person's psychological well-being is affected by divorce. Second, it examined how people cause self-harm and discord by internalizing their own responsibility for the failure in their marriage that caused their divorce. Third, it explains how this is a social work problem and discuss how therapeutic models such as strength based, empowerment and task centered approaches help the social worker/therapist be able detect at risk clients earlier that have a hard time adjusting and transitioning post-divorce. Fourth, it discusses coping mechanisms that can be used to help improve policies that are currently in place for divorced couples such as mandated family counseling and mediation. Finally, potential positive explanations that include resiliency, spirituality, family networking and support including extended family and friends and attachment theory, have been examined to offer plausible reasons why some people do well and adjust better after divorce.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study explored how a person's mental and physical health is affected by divorce. After a divorce, people often experience a downturn in how they look, their well-being, and their ability to manage

everyday tasks (Frazier & Cook, 1993). Those who have experienced divorce may find it more difficult to trust other people, feel negatively about themselves, worry more in general and about the possibility of being hurt by other people in the future, they may have lower self-assurance, and they may think a lot about what other people think of them (Leary et al., 1998, 2001). Those going through divorce often experience more negative feelings (Kam & Bond, 2008), such as anger and depression (Rhoda-Brown & Rudestam, 2011). Imagine the following situation: You catch your husband being unfaithful to you and you decide to end your marriage. You were aware that there were problems in your marriage, but now it must end. Getting a divorce may not seem like a bad thing for some couples, but you are very upset and start to think about how you will rebuild from this point forward. This happens more than people think: almost two million people in the United States end their marriages in divorce every year (Tejada-Vera & Sutton, 2010). Most people survive the change in marital status as well as life status without too much difficulty (Amato, 2010; Mancini, Bonanno, & Clark, 2011). However, there are some for whom people who do not survive the change well and their psychological health is damaged (Lucas, 2005); they also have a greater chance of becoming physically ill (Sbarra, Law, & Portley, 2011). Many times, people judge themselves harshly when they go through divorce; what did I do wrong? Did I gain too much weight, was I not pretty enough, and were our kids not disciplined? We never had enough money maybe it was my fault; I should

have had a job. That's it, it was my fault I should have been a better partner and wife/husband.

Most individuals who have been through a divorce will or have experienced feelings of depression, abandonment, loneliness, grief and loss, betrayal and complete failure after a divorce. The extreme amount of what if's and maybe's a person plays over and over in their head can be extremely exhausting both mentally and physically.

This problem is important for social work practice because it allows the social worker to understand the affects of a divorce on an individual's mental health. By understanding the aftermath of a divorce the social worker can better apply different therapy models. The therapist will be better able to discern what therapeutic model to utilize, such as strengths based perspective, empowerment model and interventions. Empowerment can be important to a client coming out of a divorce because a little affirmation and support can be needed to get through a difficult transition or crisis such as with divorce; whereas another client may need task centered therapy, because their ex-spouse may have been responsible for all the finances in the marriage and they may need life skills support on writing checks and paying bills, or buying groceries. Another client experiencing post-divorce, who's always been a stay at home mom or dad may need help adjusting by finding their individual strengths are increasing their employment skills, such as going back to school or utilizing resources for learning a new trade, which in turn will increase

self-esteem and build empowerment within the client so that they can be able to take care of themselves after the marriage is over.

These perspectives, models and approaches can help the social worker determine, understand, and gauge their current situation as well as how people are going to act by giving social workers a framework to proceed with clients who have certain histories and adjustment problems with post-divorce issues. These specific techniques and approaches allow the social worker to intervene with clients so that they are able to complete tasks and achieve certain goals.

Psychosocial theory gives social workers a base for their practice; these theories stress both an acknowledgement and evaluation of the client, the client's living situation, and how they get or try to get the resources they need. Social workers must work with the client through assessments and interventions using theories from different disciplines including psychology, sociology as well as social work. The basic ideas of psychosocial theory include the following: social system theory, person-in-environment, feminist theory, empowerment, anti-oppression, strength-based perspective, task-focused social work, crisis intervention, and cognitive behavioral therapy.

Throughout this study empowerment, task centered approach, and strength based perspective have been examined, as it relates to divorce persons post-divorce. Social workers help divorcees with the psychological aspect and emotions to be able to adjust and transition through changes that

have occurred in their life by empowering them to live productive whole happy healthier lives without the detrimental affects that can often occur after divorce.

This study help improve policies that are currently in place for divorced couples such as mandated family counseling and mediation. This study assist clinical social workers to be able to navigate the judicial system while providing adequate support and therapy. These studies also help social workers develop a support group to help divorcees that are transitioning post-divorce. The clinical social workers assist the client in developing strategies to change behaviors and cope with the effects of divorce. These coping mechanisms assist the client through stages of grief and loss and help clients' transition post-divorce. This study assist and help clinicians and social workers understand the different treatment models and resources that are available to the client.

The consequences of divorce are both short and long-term for those who experience it, including the divorcees, their extended family and any children who might be involved. Divorce has been found to be one of the most traumatic experiences, and is found to have the most negative psychological effects of all life experiences (Amato, 2000). Much of the studies conducted on the outcomes of divorce consistently show that there are multiple negative outcomes for those who go through a divorce (Amato, 2010). Those who experience divorce experience poor physical and psychological health for many years after the end of their marriage which include guilt, depression,

distress, and intimacy issues (Afifi & Hamrick, 2006; Waite, Luo, & Lewin, 2009). Leary, Kock, and Hechenbleikner (2001) found that people who lose a significant intimate relationship, such as a marriage, might engage in more detrimental behaviors, including substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, or suicide attempts.

The detrimental effects of divorce are thoroughly supported in the literature which points to how important it is to understand methods to reduce the negative effects of divorce. Even though there are significant negative effects of divorce, it has been found that some people do not have negative experiences, but instead have more positive experiences. There are many different possible reasons for why some people have more positive post-divorce outcomes. Some of these potential explanations that will be further explored include resiliency, spirituality, and attachment theory.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine why some people do well after divorce and how different attachment styles can be a contributing factor. The purpose of this study examines family networking and support including extended family and friends. Second, the study examines the contributions that are offered by family subsystems and religiosity such as attending church, prayers, and Bible reading. Third, the Resiliency Model and its effects on divorcees will be explored. The Resiliency Model looks at the risks which impact the possible aftereffects experienced by people who have great

difficulties in life including divorce (Deater-Deckard & Dunn, 1999; Seery, et al., 2010). Additionally, the study examines attachment theory and how adult attachments styles can shape the way people deal with stressful events.

The method utilized in this study is qualitative. A snowball sample is used in order to measure divorce participants that have done well both mentally and physically post-divorce. A Likert scale and nominal questions is used to measure post-divorce transition.

Participants answer attachment style questions that include personality style questions which in turn will answer and measure what type of personality attachment style they have. These types of personality styles include secure, avoidant, anxious and ambivalent. The attachment style questions assess a person's attachment style is linked to the transitions of divorce, how people carry on, and how their mental health is impacted during a crisis. First these studies hypothesize experiencing divorce have lower levels of mental health than people who are married. The negative impact on mental health is greater with people who have an ambivalent attachment style than those who have secure and avoidant attachment styles. Second, those who have a secure attachment style as well as those who have avoidant attachment styles tend to go through divorce in more challenging and not as threatening ways as those who have an anxious-ambivalent attachment style, and they tend to endure better. Third, those who have a secure attachment style survive divorce by using strategies that focus on solving problems as well as relying on a support

system as opposed to those who have an avoidant and anxious-ambivalent attachment style. People with an avoidant attachment style tend to try to distance themselves from the problems or experiences than those who have a secure attachment style, and people with an anxious-ambivalent attachment tend to use strategies that are more emotion-focused. Fourth, the relationship between attachment style and mental health during a divorce will be mediated by a person's style of coping. A person's style of attachment is directly related to a person's style of coping, which is also related to a person's mental health.

Nominal questions include; (1) How long have you been married, (2) Why did you file for divorce or divorce your spouse. (3) are you depressed or have you been depressed. (4) Do you or have you had thoughts of suicide. These types of question allow the study to measure if persons have psychological damage because of divorce or how well someone is coping and adjusting post-divorce. The independent variable in this study is divorce and the dependent variable is how well a person does after divorce. The advantages of using qualitative instead of quantitative methods are because it measures the participants that have been successful post-divorce with a 100 percent participation rate. The sample methods allow someone who knows someone that has had a successful outcome post-divorce to complete the interview questions. The disadvantage of using quantitative research is that the instrument used is a random survey and it would not gauge the right

participants to participant in the study. There may not be enough divorced participants compared to participants that have never been married.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

The reason that this issue is important to study is because as divorce continues to increase, it will help social worker be equipped to handle the psychological emotion turmoil that often accompanies the aftermath of divorce. Social workers will be able to assess their clients mental and physically condition early enough so that they can refer them to the appropriate therapy session or support groups that are able to help them transition more successfully after divorce. There are not enough therapists that specialize in couples that experience all the emotional detriments that sometimes accompany divorce.

This problem is important for social work practice because it allows the social worker to understand the affects of a divorce on an individual's mental health. By understanding the aftermath of a divorce the social worker can better apply different therapy models. The therapist will be better able to discern what therapeutic model to utilize; such as strengths based perspective, empowerment model and interventions. The clinical social worker can assist the client in developing strategies to change behaviors and cope with the affects of divorce. These coping mechanisms assist the client through stages of grief and loss and help client's transition post-divorce. This study

assist and help clinicians and social workers understand the different treatment models and resources that are available to the client.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A review of the professional literature support the relevance between attachment theories in secure individuals that deal better with crisis such as post-divorce. It discusses methods and statistics that have been researched and Psychological adjustments to post-divorce, and coping mechanisms.

Most studies examining divorce agree that a person's decline in well-being is related to the change in resources due to a loss of the economic benefit association with marriage, a lack of emotional support, as well as the stress that is often accompanied post-divorce. As recorded by Williams, K., and Dunne-Bryant, A. (2006, pp. 1178-1196) the effects of divorce on those who experience it are most profound for those people who have young children during the time of divorce. Consequently the article also ascertains that women without young children adjust and transition better after post-divorce because there is no continuum or attachments that are often time complicated with children. The everyday stressors related to providing for children (for a custodial parent) staying in contact with children (for a noncustodial parent) may seriously affect a person's ability to adapt to divorce. Even after the divorce the stress often impedes the parent that has full custody because they are used to parenting with another person as opposed to

parenting alone. The parent(s) face experience an increase in their amount of stress as they become used to the requirements of single parenting (William & Dunn-Bryant, 2006).

In congruence with the author Amato (2000), parents also have to help their child or children adapt to divorce. Children's behaviors can certainly contribute to more stress following marital divorce. According to the author, children of parents who have divorced or who have separated demonstrate more behavior issues, tend to have a lower level of social ability, and demonstrate more anger and aggression than those children whose parents are not divorced (Amato, 2000).

The methods that was used in this article was a face to face interview that was conducted using a stratified sampling with 13,008 participants ages 19 years and older who have stepchildren, couples who were either living together or people who had just been married and had a single divorce or separation. The limitations of this study were age distribution and thirty-four of the participants (0.67%) were excluded because they were over 80 years old at the time of the first interview. Some participants did not respond to all of the questions resulting in some missing data, however when all the data was measured the results were (a) depressive symptom's = 4,811; (b) alcohol abuse, n = 4,964; and (c) global happiness = 3,753 (Amato, 2000). Overall this article supports that the transition psychological well-being and post-divorce

can contribute to health factors that can lead to single parenting, alcohol usage and financial instability.

In agreement with the study done by Christensen and Peterson et al (2002), Boundary ambiguity can affect how well divorcees transition post-divorce. The article discusses how physically or emotionally handicapped persons are less likely to remain married than "healthier individuals". Furthermore, the article continues to explain how people that transition and adjust to divorce can be contingent upon their mental and physical health. A person that is in reasonably good health seems to adjust better than a person that has a lot of underlying health issues. The emotionally or physically handicapped person may depend on their former spouse to get them to and from doctors' appointments or to deal with the emotional affects that they physically cannot participate in activities that they once used to be able to do. Consequently, the healthier person may adjust better because they no longer have an invested interest in their significant other whom is reliant upon their emotional, physical and financial support (Christensen & Peterson et al., 2002).

Another type of boundary ambiguity that has been discussed in this article is how social support can hinder an individual's adjustment to divorce. A potential support source for mothers is an ex-spouse. There are several articles which state that single mothers are more likely to receive assistance from their ex-husband earlier in the divorce process. According to this article it is important to remember that sometimes social support can lead to greater

distress for the divorce person which can affect how a person adjust to their divorce. In context social support is very important rather its extended family members are an ex-spouse having boundaries can be very important in the transitioning of post-divorce.

In reference to the Davila and Bradbury (2001) article demonstrates that people who are in unhappy marriages that are stable demonstrate reduced marital satisfaction and greater levels of depression than spouses who are divorced. The study suggests that people in an unhappy marriages can be identified early and may be able to avoid divorce through therapeutic interventions (Davila & Bradbury, 2001).

Additionally this article also discusses how attachment styles can affect a parent child relationship, due to the divorced person projecting feelings of abandonment and loneliness on to their child caused by the betrayal of an ex-spouse. This happens in romantic relationships; attachment issues are in appropriately attributed to the romantic partner and therefore, the adult relationship follows similar functions as the childhood attachment relationship. This can mean depending on an individual personality type, they can become dependent on their spouse (Davila & Bradbury, 2001). Some spouse may be caught in cycles that are reliant upon constant validation from the needy insecure spouse, which can affect how well a person transition post-divorce. Moreover the article also discusses how this type of insecure attachment can

be emotional and physical draining to the relationship or marriage which in some instances justifies the significant persons reasons for divorce.

An unhappy marriage is a huge factor in how well a person can transition and adjust post-divorce, especially if they have a secure type personality. The method that was used in this article included 172 newlyweds in their first marriages. These couples were recruited from people who filed for marriage licenses in Los Angeles County. The results were that thoughts about divorce were not related to being in an unhappy marriage, however insecurity and unhealthy attachment issues were reasons persons reported they were in an unhappy marriage (Davila & Bradbury, 2001). This literature does support how a person's personality type can determine how they cope with individual stressors and crisis.

In line with an article by Shaver and Hazan (1993), there are several studies that posit that it is important to understand a person's functioning as an adult using attachment theory as a foundational perspective. This can also help practitioners more accurately anticipate the quality of close relationships between adults. There are several current studies which suggest that different attachment styles may have a significant impact on a person's well-being and ability to emotionally adapt to the situation (Shaver & Hazan, 1993).

An article by Ognibene and Collines (1998), examined the association between attachment style, one's perception of their social support, as well as the types of coping strategies that were used by the participants (N = 81). The

article further examines how coping styles are used in response to a number of different theoretical situations describing individual's achievements and the stressors which would be associated with those achievements. The results indicate that those with a secure attachment obtain more social support in response to stress. Those who have a more dismissing and fearful attachment style were significantly less likely to seek out social support, and were more likely to use distancing strategies in some situations. Finally the article reveals the relationship between secure attachment and the seeking of social support as coping strategies (Ognibene & Collins, 1998).

As stated in the Birnbaum, Orr, Mikulincer, and Florian (1997) article, there is a relationship between a person's style of attachment and how people react to divorce. The authors had a group of 120 participants going through divorce proceedings and a group of 108 married participants used as a control group. Each of the participants' style of attachment was identified as secure, avoidant, anxious or ambivalent. The Mental Health Inventory Birnbaum et al., (1997, pp. 643-654) was given to each participant, and the people in the divorced group answered questions that addressed their feelings about divorce as well as methods of coping with divorce. The participants in the divorced group had higher levels of distress than participants in the married group. This was true for those who had avoidant and anxious-ambivalent attachment styles, but not among participants who had a secure attachment styles. There were also statistically significant differences between the

attachment groups in how they felt about divorce and the coping methods they used. The researchers hypothesized that a person's feelings about divorce and their coping methods mediated the relationship between a person's style of attachment and their level of mental health during divorce. The article supports the study, that adult attachment style such as avoidant and anxious-ambivalent in divorce participants reported more distress and coping with crisis post-divorce than married participants.

As stated in the article by Berman (1988), the loss of a spouse seems to be a contributing factor in marital breakdown that seems to occur after divorce. The study also suggests that positive emotions for an ex-spouse after divorce can be very strong and are connected to an increase in the amount of anxiety experienced by the other person. The results of this article confer continued positive feelings, which can be characterized as attachments, may indirectly be caused by separation or divorce. This supports the study that marital separation can cause an ex-spouse to break down mentally and physically and the imperative services that more therapists and social workers need to provide for people who are transitioning from divorce.

Resilience and Coping Mechanisms

According to Frisby, Booth-Butterfield, Dillow, Martin, and Weber (2012) persons after divorce are resilient compared to other persons that suffer long term detrimental effects after divorce. Frisby et al. seek to explain how there are several positive outcomes that will support how some divorce persons are

more resilient and have a better divorce outcome than their counter parts. A 103 participants were used for this study this included 34 males and 66 females. The ages range from 20 to 58 years of age. The average number of years they were married was 9.91 and the average number of years they were divorced before they participated in the study was 1.05 years. All of the participants had children with the number of children ranging from one to six. The researchers used a snowball sampling technique was used and participants were contacted through several different methods including classes, support groups for divorce; Facebook, and mass emails. The requirement to participate was to have experienced divorce within the last two years. Open ended questions that were used in the sample include (“Describe the conversation where you perceived that the decision to divorce was final”).

As recorded by Harvey and Fine (2006), a persons present and future experiences can be affected by the way a person remembers and describes their divorce. This supports the study that resiliency is a state, of how an individual recall and shape their presents and future. Resiliency is how an individual decides to overcome or not over crisis in their life.

In agreement with the study done by Sbarra, Smith, and Mehl (2012) article an observational rating scale of self-compassion that is examined over a course of 9 months to predict the Emotional Recovery Following Marital Separation. This article is used to study divorcing adults by recording 4 min stream of consciousness in a laboratory setting about their marital separation.

This study implored judges to rate participants on self-compassion. The rating scale was used to determine whether increased levels of self-compassion would be predictive of better health and well-being. This rating scale was used at the initial visit rating the how often a person's emotions infiltrated their daily living at the beginning of the study. This study supports how forgiving and being compassion to an ex-spouse or partner can help improve your overall divorce person health and well-being. This article will be used to reference how divorce couples can utilize compassion, resiliency to help with divorce adjustment.

According to Krumrei, Mahoney, and Pargament (2011) the author examines how spirituality is used to cope with psychological adjustment and stress following post-divorce. The article further explains how 89 participants reported their feelings about spirituality as well as different religious coping strategies, both positive and negative during divorce. This article supports how important it is for the health professionals such as social workers and therapist to provide interventions such as educations and other direct services to persons that are in process of divorce transition.

As stated in the Krumrei, Mahoney, and Pargament (2009) article the authors discuss three spiritual responses that persons of divorce utilize to assist them with the psychological adjustments of divorce. The study includes methods used of a sample of 100 adults that includes 55% of females who were found using public divorce records. Most participants felt that their

divorce was a sacred loss/desecration. Seventy-eight percent of participants reported experiencing “spiritual struggles” and 88% of engaged in more helpful spiritual coping methods. More helpful spiritual coping was associated to higher levels of posttraumatic growth. This article supports how religion plays a huge role in the mental and physical well-being of persons experiencing divorce adjustment.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

“The ecological perspective builds on the traditional view that the central task of the social work profession is to maintain a focus on the environment and the individual person’s coping capacities” (Lesser & Pope, 2007, p. 21-30). “The view is transactional in nature improvement in an individuals’ coping and problem-solving skills, and an increase in an individual’s self-esteem and sense of competence” (Lesser & Pope, 2007, p. 21-30).

The ecological theory helps guide the study, because it explain individuals coping behaviors as it relate to their social environment; persons that experiences crisis such as in divorce may have a difficult time transitioning and adjusting in their individual environment. This can change their behaviors and how they interact in their environments such as withdrawing from family and friends, experiencing abandonment and depression where a person may have to seek mental health issues in their community to deal with their individual crisis.

The three perspectives that guide this research are empowerment, strength based perspective, and attachment theory. “A strength-based perspective is one that seeks to identify the factors that support the resilience of people and groups across the life span and to build on these personal and social assets to promote growth and change” (Lesser & Pope, 2007, p. 28). Social workers will work with clients that have a difficult time transition post-divorce because of financial hardship, the social worker will have to build on clients individual strengths such as obtaining financial employment that will allow the client to have financial independence and creating empowerment by building the clients’ self-esteem that they can take care of themselves financially.

Another perspective that is used to guide in this research is attachment theory. Attachment theory can help social workers better understand clients’ behaviors and capacities to develop relationships at work and in their personal or home lives. Bowlby, the father of attachment theory emphasized how important our past relationships in stressed the importance of past relationships in predicting a person’s ability to create future relationships with other people as well as their emotional and social development (Bowlby, 1979)

Spirituality involves a picture of human persons and their capacity to act, to know, to will to reflect and to meditate (Lesser & Pope, 2007, p. 229) this perspective support how people use spirituality as a coping mechanism to get through traumatic events and crisis in their lives. This can also be used to

explain how some divorcees are able to transition and move forward after divorce.

Summary

This chapter discusses how religion, coping styles and overall psychological well-being can impede in the healing process when couples transition post-divorce. This section offers statically research and data that have been examined and explored to support divorcees that have a hard time transitioning post-divorce. This section also examines social support that can help divorcees heal after divorcing their significant partners and or spouses. I will also add more literature research to sections of psychological aspects of divorce and religion.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter present the methods used in conducting research on divorce persons that transition well after divorce. Attention will be given to the study's design, sampling, the interview instrument, data collection, procedures, and protection of human subjects during the course of this study. This chapter concludes with an overview of issues pertaining to qualitative data analysis.

Study Design

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the experiences of divorce persons that transition after divorce. This study employed a qualitative design, consisting of face-to-face interviews with fifteen divorce participants in San Bernardino County. It is believed that conducting face-to-face interviews is the most practical means to effectively gain the perceptions of divorcees in this context. For such a study as this, face-to-face interviews allowed the interviewer to tailor the questions in such a way as to solicit the highest candidness of responses, as well as to achieve greater clarity from participants. However, due to time restraints and the extensiveness of the interview objectives, approximately only twelve participants were recruited for interviews, this study is not intended to be representative of all divorce couples in general.

Sampling

The sample for this study, as previously stated consisted of approximately fifteen divorcees these participants participated in a study on coping styles, spirituality and social support. The participants are recruited by using a snowball sample that will include divorce persons that have been divorced for less than five years that have transitioned and adjusted post-divorce. The divorce participants will refer other divorce participants that have transitioned post-divorce.

Data Collection and Instruments

Specifically, this study collects data by way of interviews with divorcees. The independent variable in this study is divorcees and the dependent variable is how well divorcees transition post-divorce. Participants are asked if they consented for the interview to be taped recorded. The interviewer will use an interview schedule comprised of approximately 24 questions (Appendix A). Open-ended questions are used to illicit the most comprehensive responses from participants.

Furthermore the format for the questions are constructed in such a way so as to compel participants to reflect on past experiences before answering, rather than a random sequence of questions, which without rational order might suppress the most accurate of responses from those interviewed. Finally, the instrument is designed with the task of acquiring the highest quality of responses and honesty.

Procedures

On establishing a sample eligibility list, the interviewer invites those individuals to participate and offer them a Barnes and Noble gift card as compensation for their time. Approximately 15 individuals are interviewed for the purpose of this study. Interviews with participants occur at a rate of approximately two per weeks over a five week period. The interviews consist of eighteen questions that last approximately 45 minutes and are held at a secure location that is convenient for both the researcher and the participant. Following the interviews, participants are asked if they may be contacted at a later time, should additional information become necessary. Once the interviews are completed, data analysis and synthesis of the material will take approximately two weeks.

Protection of Human Subjects

As the objectives of this study were dependent on the direct questioning of currently divorcees, every conceivable effort is taken to protect anonymity and confidentiality of participants. At no time during the course of the interview or any other time is a participant's name connected with the data provided? A number between one and ten will be assigned to each participant to match the interviewer's notes to the respective interview. Therefore no association will be made as to the interviewee's identity are the data recorded from the interview. These precautions serve to secure the anonymity of study participants. The

results of the interview questions are stored and secured in a lock box at the researchers' home.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for his study is conducted using qualitative analysis techniques. First, data from audio-taped and/or hand-written recorded face-to-face interviews is transcribed verbatim and a coding method is developed for organizing the data by specific themes. As part of the analysis a preliminary phase of coding is used to identify categories and assign codes to the categories. A journal will be used to record the definition of each code and to document the designation of codes in the data. Next, a second phase of coding is developed to identify possible relationships, as well as similarities and differences that may exist within the data set. These procedures facilitate synthesis of the data into a form more easily read for the purpose of this study. In addition, the researcher is to take careful aim to avoid allowing his own biases to interfere with the analysis of the data. Finally, frequency distribution and measures of central tendency (mean) used will describe the characteristics of the sample, as suitable.

Summary

This chapter serves to present the methodology employed by divorce persons who do well after divorce. Issues pertaining to the composition of this study are discussed, including; study design, sampling, data collection

procedures, and a detailed explanation of the interview guide. This chapter also discusses issues pertaining to human rights, including confidentiality, and concludes with an overview of issues pertaining to qualitative data analysis

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the composition of the sample as well as the different divorce variables that contribute to how well people do after divorce. The data has been compiled into five tables that include demographics, finances, divorce variables and psychological effects of divorce. It also contains Common themes of how well people do after divorce, and the participants' responses to those common themes. The study's variables of interest include psychological affects and their social support system. Another variable that was included in this brief study was the level of spirituality each participant held, this appeared to be a correlating factor that supported the overall health and well-being of persons that do well after divorce.

Presentation of the Findings

The sample was comprised of predominately eight female participants and four males. The dominant ethnicity of the sample was six African American participants. The average age of each participant was 43.58 years old ($M = 43.58$, $SD = 6.68$) with the range of ages spanning 23 years. Educational levels of the sample were as follows: Four of the participants had at least a high school diploma and four participants reported having some

college. One hundred percent of the sample all identified themselves as being spiritual on some level (See Table 1).

Table 1. Demographics of the Participants

<i>Variables</i>		
Age		
Range		23 years
Mean		43.58 years
Median		42.5 years
Mode		42
Standard Deviation		6.68
	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	4	33.33%
Female	8	66.67%
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	2	16.67%
African American	6	50.00%
Hispanic	2	16.67%
Other (Persian Bi-racial)	2	16.67%
Education		
High School	1	8.33%
Associates	4	33.33%
Bachelors	2	16.67%
Masters	1	8.33%
Some College	4	33.33%
Spirituality		
Yes	12	100.00%
No	0	0.00%

Income was another sample that participants identified as a factor that was utilized in the transitioning of divorce. Five participants earned between \$40,001 and \$60,000 per year. Half of the participants (50.00%) noted that after divorce they were able to divide their assets evenly, while four participants stated they had lost most of their assets to their ex-spouse in the divorce. One of the participants stated “assets were divided evenly” (Participant #6, personal interview, June 2014). Furthermore, nine of the participants remarked they had bad financial situations after the divorce, yet two of the participants observed they had an improved financial situation after the divorce. In fact one of the participants stated, “I struggled living pay check to pay check” (Participant #3, personal interview, June 2014). Whereas another participant reported their financial situation improved after divorce stating “better, I received more money” (Participant #6, personal interview, June 2014). Seven of the participants filed bankruptcy after the divorce, while five participants did not have to file for bankruptcy after the divorce (See Table 2).

Table 2. Finances

	N	Percentages
Income		
\$0-\$20,000	1	8.33%
20,001 - 40,000	4	33.33%
40,001 - 60,000	5	41.67%
60,001+	2	16.67%
Division of Assets		
Evenly	6	50.00%
Majority to Other	4	33.33%
Majority to Participant	1	8.33%
None	1	8.33%
Financial situation after divorce		
Bad	9	75.00%
Lost everything	1	8.33%
Better	2	16.67%
Bankruptcy		
Yes	7	58.33%
No	5	41.67%

Conversely divorce variables that include the number of times married, length of the marriages, who initiated the divorce and reasons for the divorce were all important factors in establishing the participants invested emotional connection with an ex-spouse. Eight of the participants notated this was their first marriage, with the lowest number of years that participants were married was 1 1/2 years with the longest marriage being twenty-six years. The mean

number of years married was eleven. Most of the participants were married for eight years. In terms of who initiated the divorce, seven participants remarked they had initiated the divorce, and in four cases it was the other spouse who initiated the divorce. According to five participants, irreconcilable differences were the motivating reason for the divorce. As stated by one participant “money was the reason for divorce he wanted to spend his money on cars, used, new, old etc., he didn’t want to put his money together”(Participant #2, personal interview, June 2014). On the other hand, five other participants reported they had divorced because of infidelity. One participant stated “He started dating many different women both at his work and online” (Participant #4, personal interview, August 2014). Other reasons given for divorce were financial and family issues. To further emphasize this point one participant stated, “she didn’t want to work and her family was always in our business” (Participant #8, personal interview, June 2014). In addition to divorce variables, participants also reported retaining or losing custody of a child or children were also important factors, in determining how well a person did or didn’t do after divorce. Four of the participants declared that they are the custodial parent of their children, while another four claimed that they are non-custodial parents. None of the participants were awarded joint custody, except one of the participants was awarded physical custody. While three participants noted custody was not an issue (See Table 3).

Table 3. Divorce Variables

	N	Percentages
Number of times married		
1	8	66.67%
2	3	25.00%
3	1	8.33%
Length of years married		
1.5	1	8.33%
3.5	1	8.33%
7	2	16.67%
8	4	33.33%
12	1	8.33%
13	1	8.33%
17	1	8.33%
26	1	8.33%
Initiated the divorce		
Participant	7	58.33%
Other	4	33.33%
Both	1	8.33%
Reasons for divorce		
Irreconcilable Differences	5	41.66%
Infidelity	5	41.66%
Financial Issues	1	8.33%
Family	1	8.33%
Type Of Custody		
Custodial	4	33.33%
Non-custodial	4	33.33%
Joint	0	0.00%
Physical	1	8.33%
N/A	3	25.00%

Moreover, participants also identified with the emotional and physical side effects of divorce, as a result of those emotions the participants had the option to choose as many activities as possible to describe their emotional and physical state during their divorce transition. Ten participants reported that after the divorce they felt “Exhausted”. Seven participants reported that they were “Depressed” as the next most common response; followed by five participants reported they were angry. When Participants were asked how long they experienced these emotions. Three out of the twelve participants reported that these emotions lasted one year. According to one participant she stated “I still feel bitter from time to time out of anger for my children”(Participant #1, personal interview, August 2014). Two additional participants reported their emotional status lasted for two to three years. Additionally another participant stated “I cried and felt hurt for two years after the divorce was over” (Participant #2, personal interview, June 2014).

Participants were then asked what kinds of coping strategies they used to cope with divorce. Four of the participants reported exercise, attending church and drinking were what they felt helped them deal with their divorce. One participant was quoted as saying, “I started dating right away, and partying” (Participant #11, personal interview, June 2014). Two participants reported that they spent time journaling, and they went on dates, and even gambled. To further endorse this statement, were used as coping tools to help with divorce. To further endorse this statement one participant stated “I worked

gambled and dated a lot (Participant #11, personal interview, June 2014). While another participant stated "I dated a lot of men and became more involved with my children and their activities (Participant #7, personal interview, June 2014).

Another question participants were asked, was regarding the level of communication they maintained with their ex-spouse. Four participants reported that they had very little communication between their ex-husbands or ex-wives. One participant stated "there is very little communication between me and my ex; I only talk with him if it involves our children" (Participant #4, personal interview, June 2014). Three participants reported, they were at best cordial with their ex. One participant states "we always try to remain amicable for our children" (Participant #5, personal interview, June 2014). In contrast two participants who reported their communication with their ex-spouse is argumentative. In fact one participant states "I am still angry at my ex-spouse for choosing another woman over me and our children" (Participant #6, personal interview, June 2014). Participants were asked what support systems were utilized to help divorce transition. Nine participants reported that the strong ties to friends and family were what helped them to transition into being single after divorce. In fact to validate this point one participant stated "I talk to my mom and my close friends" (Participant #9, Personal interview, June 2014). Three other participants reported work was used to help with divorce transition. One participant stated "I worked a lot of

hours and coach my son football team” (Participants #11, personal interview, June 2014) (See Table 4).

Table 4. Psychological Effects

	N	Percentage
Mental/Emotional/Physical State		
Depressed	7	58.33%
Distraught	2	16.67%
Drained	4	33.33%
Exhausted	10	83.33%
Regretful	1	8.33%
Hopeless	1	8.33%
Angry	5	41.67%
Disappointed	1	8.33%
Overwhelmed	1	8.33%
Disturbed	1	8.33%
Shocked	1	8.33%
Stressed	1	8.33%
Hurt	1	8.33%
Antidepressant	1	8.33%
Length of Emotion		
6 months	2	16.67%
1 year	3	25.00%
1.5 year	1	8.33%
2 years	2	16.67%
2.5 years	1	8.33%
3 years	2	16.67%

	N	Percentage
Coping Strategies		
Journaling	2	16.67%
Exercise	4	33.33%
Music	1	8.33%
Church	4	33.33%
Dating	2	16.67%
Drinking	4	33.33%
Gambling	2	16.67%
Coaching	1	8.33%
Sexual Promiscuity	1	8.33%
Time with children	1	8.33%
Friends	1	8.33%
Family	1	8.33%
Didn't Deal with it	1	8.33%
Communication Skills with ex-spouse		
none	1	8.33%
Short	4	33.33%
Ok	1	8.33%
Argumentative	2	16.67%
Minimal	1	8.33%
Cordial	3	25.00%
Support System Used to transition		
Friends	9	75.00%
Family	9	75.00%
Religion	6	50.00%
work	3	25.00%
Coworkers	1	8.33%
Journaling	1	8.33%
Drinking	1	8.33%

As clearly defined in the sample results, all of the participants identified themselves as being spiritual on some level. Therefore it was significant to examine which religious/spiritual activities helped them the most after divorce. Participants were allowed to list any and all activities that were spiritual in nature. Six participants reported that after the divorce they read the bible, to help them cope with the extreme emotions they experienced after readings to help them with emotions they experience after their divorce. One participant stated "I often prayed to ask god to guide me" (Participant #6, personal interview, June 2014). The next most common response was in the area of church and prayers. Four participants report that attending church and prayers helped. One participant stated, "I attended church and read my bible every day." (Participant #7, personal interview, June 2014). However two participants reported that having forgiveness in their heart helped them t heal. To further emphasize this point one participant said "I ask god for guidance and forgiveness and to help me move on" (Participant #6, personal interview, June 2014). The lowest response given by participants in this study was in the area of spiritual awakening.

Following this question participants were then asked how the experience of divorce changed their faith or belief in the sanctity of marriage. The majority of participants reported no changes. The next most common response was concerning trust and communication. Three participants

reported that trust and communication changed their faith and believe in the sanctity and commitment of marriage.

Next a person's self-worth was evaluated. Two participants reported that their self-worth affected their belief in the sanctity and the commitment of marriage.

On a final note, all twelve participants were asked if they would remarry why or why not. The majority of the participants reported that they would indeed remarry again. One participant said "I believe will meet my soul mate in the future" (Participant #2, personal interview, June 2014). Followed by two other participants that report they would not get remarried. In fact, one participant stated, "No, he would not get remarried because "marriage is too emotionally and financially hard." (Participant #11, personal interview, June 2014).Conversely, there were two participants who stated "They did not want to be alone" (Participant #7, personal interview, June 2014. Personal issues and remaining independent had the fewest responses given as reasons study participants would not remarry.

Table 5. How Religion helped Transition Post-Divorce

	N	Percentages
Religion		
Church	4	33.33%
Bible	6	50.00%
Forgiveness	2	16.67%
Prayer	4	33.33%
Left Church	1	8.33%
Meditation/Reflection	1	8.33%
Spiritual Awakening	2	16.67%
Family/Friends	2	16.67%
Changed Faith or Belief in Sanctity of Marriage/Commitment		
Shared goals/values important	1	8.33%
Trust and communication	3	25.00%
Appreciate what you have	1	8.33%
No change	5	41.66%
Stronger Faith	1	8.33%
Self-Worth	2	16.67%
Would you marry again		
Yes	10	83.33%
No	2	16.67%
Yes - why		
Likes marriage	3	25.00%
Believe in future	4	33.33%
Don't like to be alone	2	16.67%
Personal work/healing	1	8.33%
No - why		
Independence	1	8.33%
Personal Issues	1	8.33%

Summary

In conclusion this chapter discussed the description and the findings of the sample, as well as the different divorce variables that contribute to how well people do after divorce. The data has been compiled into five tables, which included demographics, finances, divorce variables and the psychological effects of divorce and social support system. Another interest was focused on the spiritual variables, to determine the specific factors that support the overall health and well-being of persons that do well after divorce.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the results of the current study. It will also discuss the significant findings, limitations, and implications for social work practices and policy.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how certain people are more resilient after divorce. The main focus of this study is to show how spirituality, social support, and coping styles are contributing factors to how well people do after divorce. The participants in this study shared their individual view point and their experience through the divorce transition when partaking in the interview process. The premise was to show that coping strategies, social support and spirituality improved the resiliency of people going through divorce.

Divorce can have both short and long-term consequences for the people going through a divorce. Divorcing a significant other whom you thought was a lifelong partner can be a disappointing, heartbreaking and traumatic experience for both partners involved. Those experiencing divorce show reduced levels of physical and psychological well-being for a long time after the divorce. Symptoms can include including guilt, depression, distress,

and intimacy issues. While these affects may seem grave, some people are able to have positive outcomes after divorce due to several factors such as spirituality. Participants reported utilizing spirituality as a coping strategy to help in their divorce transition. Six participants reported that after the divorce they used bible readings to help them with emotions they experienced after their divorce. Four participants reported the use of church based support groups, prayer and worship to facilitate the transition process after divorce.

According to the sample studied all of these identifiers are contributing factors to how well people adjust after divorce. According to Krumrei, Mahoney, and Pargament (2009) 74% of participants perceived their divorce as sacred loss/desecration, 78% went through spiritual struggles, and 88% used positive spiritual coping methods. Those who used positive spiritual coping methods had greater levels of posttraumatic growth. This article supports the study that religion plays a huge contributing factor in the adjustment and transition of post-divorce couples and their mental and physical well-being.

In addition, another identified coping mechanism was the utilization of social support. Nine participants reported that the support of family and friends was utilized as a coping strategy in becoming more resilient throughout the divorce process. According to Frisby, Booth-Butterfield, Dillow, Martin, and Weber (2012), resiliency is how an individual decides to overcome or not overcome a crisis in their life depending on their social support system. This

article supports the study that the outcome of divorce is a state of mind and being that can shape or alter your present or future experiences related to divorce depending on the level of resiliency that is nurtured by the individual's social support system.

The study found a significant correlation between resiliency and gender. When discussing the differences between genders women tended to utilize spirituality and social support as a coping skill much more often than men. Contrary, male participants appeared to participate in sexual promiscuity, drinking, and gambling as coping strategies to aid in their divorce transition.

The findings according to this study showed that because female participants were able to utilize their family support system, friends, and religious affiliations they were able to vent emotional frustrations and resentments. The female participants were able to become victors instead of victims overcoming astronomical circumstances of financial hardship, single parenting, loneliness and abandonment.

More specifically the study found that minority females appear to culturally utilize family support, friends and religion as coping strategies to successfully transition from their divorce. African American, Hispanic and Asian women culturally are very close to their families. For this study it appears that rather than seek medical advice or counseling services the female minorities in this sample study utilized their family support, friends and religious cohesiveness as coping strategies to help with the divorce transition,

whereas two Caucasian participants identify themselves as more individualist; these participants utilized medical attention and counseling rather than social support.

Finance in divorce is another significant area that affects the transitioning of divorce. According to the evidence collected in this sample study it appears that people with a higher income tend to adjust better after divorce. The majority of participants in this sample study regardless of gender reported an income of \$40,000 to \$60,000. These individuals regarded themselves as having an easier divorce transition. Whereas, participants that had an income ratio below \$20,000 to \$40,000 had a more difficult time recovering financially.

The psychological effect of divorce is another significant factor that affects divorce transition. According to data collected in this sample study seven participants reported that they became depressed and five other participants in this study identified Anger after having gone through a divorce. This study examined a direct correlation to attachment style and divorce transition. According to an article by Birnbaum, Orr, Mikulincer, and Florian (1997) those who had avoidant and anxious-ambivalent attachment styles were found to have more positive and negative adjustments to divorce, but this was not true among participants who had a secure attachment style. It appears for this sample study that more than half of the participants

interviewed identified themselves as having more of secure attachment style due to how well they transitioned after divorce.

Limitations

There were quite a few limitations that were encountered while completing this study due to the use of snowball sampling. The first limitation that was encountered was during the interview process. Only twelve people were interviewed instead of my original sample size of 12-15. Due to the small sample size, the study could not be a true valid representation of the overall population of people that transition after divorce, therefore lacking generalizability.

Another limitation that was found during this study was the length and amount of time the participants were divorced. The original sample sizes of participants were people who were divorce within five years. As a result this proved to be more challenging than originally expected due to how the sample size was collected.

A further, limitation observed in this study was participants were allowed to list as many activities that helped them cope in the transitioning of divorce. However if the study had listed activities that they could choose from, the findings would have been more specific.

An additional limitation that I found in this study was examining attachment theory. Unfortunately due to the sample size and time constraints I

was unable to get enough data to examine the correlation between divorce transition and attachment theory.

Lastly, the study lacked gender diversity. The majority of the participants were female. Eight participants were female and four were male. Therefore there was an unequal representation of the population. The conclusive evidence might have appeared different if there was an equal male to female ratio.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

The body of literature supports that those who experience divorce are more likely to have negative psychological and physical health outcomes (Amato, 2010). Those who experience divorce have lower levels of physical and psychological health for years after including guilt, depression, distress, and intimacy issues (Afifi & Hamrick, 2006; Waite, Luo, & Lewin, 2009). Leary, Kock and Hechenbleikner (2001) found that people who experienced divorce were more likely to engage in more serious behaviors including substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, or suicide attempts, these negative effects caused by divorce emphasizes how important it is to bring awareness to social workers, clinicians and therapist about the importance of the side effects of divorce and the type of coping mechanisms that were found to promote resiliency. In addition social workers need to be able to provide direct services to clients that are dealing with the psychological effects before during and after divorce.

Recommendations for social work practices should include support groups within the community that intertwine educational topics on divorce adjustment, grief and loss and resiliency. Mandatory counseling and therapy sessions for persons of divorce to attend after the dissolution of their marriage, followed by a one year divorce assessment after care to help and support divorce persons in their transition after divorce. The sessions should include but not limited to individual sessions together as well as family sessions followed by assessments at six month and a year. This would help decrease the psychological effects and physical health problems caused by divorce adjustment. (Lucas, 2005), Lastly social workers should also incorporate more gender based support groups especially male participants due to the fact support groups or any direct service would be beneficial to men who often times don't communicate their feelings or lack the social support that women receive during divorce transition. This would alleviate more men who have destructive behavioral patterns that result in self sabotage, be able to communicate more effectively and voice their emotional feelings in regards to divorcing a significant other. Social worker will be able to provide coping strategies and skills that include communication techniques and role plays of those techniques that will allow more men to express their feelings effectively without the use of self-sabotaging behaviors that affects their overall health and well-being.

In an effort to bring awareness to the social worker community and mental health field social worker should understand that clients need education on not only the grief and loss process of divorce but resiliency and positive coping maintenance should also be incorporated and utilize as an overall goal attainment in the recovery and divorce adjustment process.

Conclusions

As stated in previous findings people who have positive coping skills, religion and a social support system that includes family members, friends, writing in your journal, talking to a co-worker, attending church or reading your bible, appear to transition better after divorce. The above mentioned types of support strategies are instrumental in the healing process that aid the divorcee cope and transition better with the detriments of divorce. Divorce Persons who utilize a social support system appear to have a higher success rate that include overall better health and resiliency. In addition to having a social support system most participants reported that having a religious affiliation also was another factor that was utilize in their divorce transition. Furthermore the participants in this study also reported that finances along with social support and religion were all contributing factors that helped them do well after divorce.

APPENDIX A
POST-DIVORCE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Post-Divorce Interview Questions

Demographics

1. What is your gender: M/F
2. What is your ethnicity?
 1. Caucasian
 2. African American
 3. Asian
 4. Hispanic
 5. Other _____
3. What is your highest level of education completed?
 1. High School Diploma/GED
 2. Associate Degree
 3. Bachelors Degree
 4. Masters Degree
 5. Some College
 6. Other _____
4. What is your age? _____
5. What is your annual household income:
 1. \$0-\$20,000
 2. \$20,001-\$40,000
 3. \$40,001-\$60,000
 4. \$60,001+
6. What type of custody were you awarded?
 1. Custodial
 2. Non-Custodial Parent
 3. Joint Custody
 4. Physical Custody
 5. N/A

Psychological Affects of Divorce

1. How many times have you been married? _____
2. How long was your most recent marriage? _____
3. Who initiated the divorce proceedings? _____
4. What were the reasons for divorce? _____
5. How would you define your mental, emotional and physical state during the divorce process? _____ex: depressed, exhausted, relieved or hopeless, etc...
6. How long did you experience these feelings? _____ex: weeks, months or years.

Coping with divorce

1. What were some of the coping strategies you used to cope with divorce?
2. Presently how is your communication skills with your ex-spouse?
3. What type of support system did you utilize to help you transition through your divorce?

Finances after divorce

1. How would you describe your financial situation after divorce?
2. How were the marital assets divided?
3. Did the divorce leave you financially bankrupt?

Spirituality

1. Do you have a religious preference?
 - a. If yes proceed to answer questions 2-3
 - lb. f no skip questions 2-3
2. How did you use your religious preference to help you transition post-divorce?
3. How has this experience with divorce changed your faith or belief in the sanctity of marriage and are commitment?
4. Will you marry again? Yes_____ No _____ If so why or why not.

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate the experiences of persons after divorce. This study will be conducted by Tasha Brown, a grad student in the Masters of Social Work program at California State University, San Bernardino, under the supervision of Dr. Janet Chang, professor of social work. This study has been approved by the Social Work Subcommittee of Institutional Review Board, California State University San Bernardino.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine how well divorce persons transition after divorce. The objective is to uncover the correlation of spirituality, family support and individual coping styles as to a plausible reason why some people do well and adjust after divorce.

Description: This study will focus on collecting qualitative data from divorcees. These participants will be asked to participate in a study on emotional experience, spirituality and coping strategies. Qualified participants are those who have been married and divorced, within 5 years and are willing to participate.

Participation: Participate in this study is voluntary; you will be asked questions regarding your divorce. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits. At any time the interview becomes too much, you can refuse participation.

Confidentiality or Anonymity: Participation is anonymous and each participant will sign an X on the informed consent, indicating their willingness to participate. The duration of this interview will take no longer than 45 minutes to complete.

Risk: There are no foreseeable risks to participate who participate in this interview.

Benefits: The benefit of completing this interview will assist social workers, as well as clinical social workers to be able to navigate through the judicial system while providing adequate support and therapy.

Contact: If you have any questions or concerns regarding this research project, please contact Dr. Janet Chang (909) 537-5184

Results: The results of this study may be found in the thesis section of the library at California State University, San Bernardino after the research has been completed.

Signature: Please mark an "x", do not put your name.

Mark _____ Date: _____

(By placing an "x", I agree to participate in this study)

APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Debriefing

The study you have just completed was designed to research people that transition well after divorce. Divorce is pervasive in American society, and the evidence that divorce undermines adult health and well-being is no less than overwhelming. The questions were intended to understand how some people are able to do well and adjust to stressful events such as divorce.

Thank you for participating and taking the time to complete my face to face interview. If you have any questions or become uncomfortable or stress due to the interview, please feel free to contact Dr. Janet Chang at California State University San Bernardino, Social Work Department at (909) 537-5184. The results of the study may be found in the thesis section of the library at California State University, San Bernardino in the fall of 2014.

REFERENCES

- Amato, P. R. (2000). The consequences of divorce for adults and children. *Journal of Marriage & Family, 62*(4), 1269-1287. Retrieved from EBSCO host.
- Amato, P. R., Dorius, C., & Lamb, M. E. (2010). Fathers, children and divorce. *The role of the father in child development, 177-200.*
- Berman, W. (1988). The role of attachment in the post-divorce experience. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*(3), 496-503. Retrieved from EBSCO host.
- Birnbaum, G., Orr, I., Mikulincer, M., & Florian, V. (1997). When marriage breaks up-does attachment styles contribute to coping and mental health. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 14*(5), 643-654. Retrieved from EBSCO host
- Bonanno, G. A., Westphal, M., & Mancini, A. D. (2011). Resilience to loss and potential trauma. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 7*, 511-535.
- Frisby, B., Booth-Butterfield, M., Dillow, M., Martin, M., & Weber, K. (2012). Face and resilience in divorce: the impact on emotions, stress and post-divorce relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 29*(6), 715-735. Retrieved from EBSCO host.
- Joanne, D., & Bradbury, T. (2001). Attachment Insecurity and the distinction between unhappy spouses who do and do not divorce. *Journal of Family Psychology, 15*(3), 371-393. Retrieved from EBSCO host.
- Krumrei, E., Mahoney, A., & Pargament, K. (2011). Spiritual stress and coping model of divorce: a longitudinal study. *Journal of Family Psychology, 25*(6), 973-985. Retrieved from EBSCO host.
- Krumrei, E., Mahoney, A., & Pargament, K. (2009). Divorce and the divine: The role of spirituality in adjustment to divorce. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 71*, 373-383. Retrieved from EBSCO host.
- Lesser, J., & Pope, D. (2011). *An integrating framework for human behavior theory and social work practice. Human behavior social environment theory and practice.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Munoz-Eguileta, A. (2007). Irrational beliefs as predictors of emotional adjustment after divorce. *Journal of Relational-Emotive & Cognitive Behavior Therapy, 25*(1). Retrieved from EBSCO host.

- Ognibene, T., & Collins, N. (1998). Adult attachment styles, perceived social support and coping strategies. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15(3), 323-345. Retrieved from EBSCO host.
- Peterson, Donna J.; Christensen, Donna Hendrickson. (2002). *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 37(3/4), 19-41. Retrieved from EBSCO host.
- Sbarra, D. A., Smith, H. L., & Mehl, M. R. (2012). When leaving your ex, love yourself observational ratings of self-compassion predict the course of emotional recovery following marital separation. *Psychological Science*, 23(3), 261-269. Retrieved from EBSCO host.
- Sprecher, S., Felmlee, D., Metts, S., Fehr, B., & Vanni, D. (1998). Factors associated with distress following the breakup of a close relationship. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15(6), 791-809.
- Williams, K., & Dunne-Bryant, A. (2006). Divorce and adult psychological well-being: Clarifying the role of gender and child age. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68, 1178-1196. Retrieved from EBSCO host.