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Self-report Differences Across Adolescent Family Structures: Stepfamilies Versus Intact Families

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SELF-REPORT DIFFERENCES ACROSS ADOLESCENT FAMILY STRUCTURES:
STEPFAMILIES VERSUS INTACT FAMILIES

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Graduate Studies
The University of Western Ontario
August, 1992

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Canada

ABSTRACT

Remarriage following a divorce involving children provides family researchers with a window into the process of family construction and the development of family characteristics. The lacʰ of information regarding normative stepfamily functioning and expected stepfamily traits, behaviours, thoughts, and feelings, may lead to unrealistic expectations and ambiguity regarding appropriate relationships within the new family, resulting in increased family stress. A literature review indicated that family system constructs, such as family cohesion, have demonstrated clinical and empirical utility in differentiating clinic-referred families and control families, and intact nuclear families and stepfamilies. Previous investigations of family self-report have failed to adequately distinguish well-functioning versus dysfunctional stepfamilies. The present investigation attempted to: (1) increase understanding of stepfamily versus nuclear family normative self-report; (2) predict stepfamily member self-report of family functioning in the first year of remarriage on the basis of contextual, individual, dyadic, and family characteristics and ideals at the time of family formation; and (3) examine the predictive utility of perceived versus actual family member discrepancy scores.

Members of 25 well-functioning, newly formed stepfamilies and 26 demographically similar first marriage

families with children between the ages of 12 to 16 were asked to rate family, dyadic, and individual functioning on standardized questionnaires. The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales, the Family Sense of Coherence Scales, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and the Parent Adolescent Communication Scale were completed by mother, father, and adolescent during two home visits over an 8 month period, with the first visit of stepfamilies occurring during the first year of family formation.

As predicted, all stepfamily members reported lower (but nonclinical) levels of family cohesion. Stepfamilies also indicated that they were less able to clarify problems as a family and to find meaning in the family unit. Marital relations did not differ in the two family types. Poorer communication between adolescents and their mothers and fathers was reported from both sides of the dyad in the stepfamilies. Eight months later scores changed little, with stepparent-adolescent communication remaining notably poorer than first marriage parent-adolescent communication, although the biological parent-adolescent relationship no longer differed significantly across groups. Contrary to previous investigations which did not distinguish clinical and nonclinical stepfamilies, stepfamily members did not report dissatisfaction with their lowered levels of cohesion, possibly indicating a realistic expectation of stepfamily normative functioning. Marital, parent-

iv

adolescent, and family level variables were found to relate
significantly. Concordance between family member report was
high in both groups, with predictable intermember
differences in mean scores. As predicted. mothers tended to
perceive and desire the most family cohesion, adolescents
the least. Family cohesion was not supplanted by a measure
of personal autonomy and appears to have incremental utility
in family study. Substantial prediction of reported family
cohesion was achieved by accounting for familial stressors,
dyadic relations within the family, and intermember
consensus. Perceptions of intrafamilial discrepancy were
also significant predictors. Discussion highlights the
importance of distinguishing the study of normative
stepfamily functioning from the study of other families.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix

SELF-REPORT DIFFERENCES ACROSS ADOLESCENT FAMILY STRUCTURES: STEPFAMILIES VERSUS INTACT FAMILIES

Introduction

The present research stems from an interest in perceptions of family functioning, specifically the development of family group characteristics as assessed by family members and stepfamily members. Remarriage following a divorce involving children provides family researchers with a window into the process of family construction and the development of family characteristics. Family systems theorists and therapists have proposed various developmental tasks that must be navigated for successful stepfamily adaptation. Many of these tasks focus on role behaviour and rule setting, family boundary definition, alliances, and affiliation (Roberts & Price, 1985). As specified below, it is hypothesized that successful completion of these tasks involves the navigation of stressful life events, intrafamilial communication, family cohesion, family sense of coherence, and family adaptability.

The empirical relation between these family system constructs and individual and dyadic characteristics is just beginning to be determined. The following literature review introduces the reader to self-report family methodology, to variables hypothesized to be important to family group functioning, and to the importance of studying stepfamilies

given current changes in marital demographics in our society. Defining and understanding the self-report of normative stepfamily functioning when compared to functioning in intact nuclear families was undertaken in the present study. The prediction of stepfamily self-report of family functioning from a knowledge of contextual, individual and dyadic characteristics and ideals early into family formation was explored. Reports from multiple family members were compared and contrasted. A review of family systems constructs and their measurement will precede the specific empirical predictions of stepfamily adjustment.

Many disciplines currently hold claim to providing a unique perspective on the family. Anthropologists, sociologists, social workers, developmental and clinical psychologists, and psychiatrists each provide their own perspective into the family and its workings. Across each discipline any number of target elements can and have been selected for study, for example: marital, parent-child, and extended kin relations, divorce, remarriage, small group processes, family interaction, family psychopathology and family therapy (see for example the decade review issue of the Journal of Marriage & the Family, November 1990, 52). Social scientists bring to this burgeoning field of scientific endeavour several skills that may help advance our understanding of the family. Most notable are an appreciation of the principles of measurement, with the

concomitant concern for reliability and validity in all
assessment, and the keen awareness of the need for
research/statistical designs that minimize the many threats
to validity inherent in complex multivariate study.

The theoretical and methodological hurdles that have
challenged psychologists interested in marital and family
research include: lack of a unifying theory of family
functioning, overreliance on unstandardized self-report
methodology, theory focused on family systems
(conceptualizing the unique properties of the group) that
remains largely grounded on measurement of the individual,
and a large researcher-practitioner gap (Esses & Campbell,
1984; Ganong & Coleman, 1986). There is an indication that
the field has generated many more hypotheses than it is
willing to test, with family studies that were basically
atheoretical continuing to constitute a major portion of
published work as of 15 years ago (Hodgson & Lewis, 1979).
A more solid theoretical foundation could be established in
the family field by clarifying already existing propositions
from an empirical perspective, determining methodological
constraints, and emphasizing the definitional
operationalizations of existing constructs and their
interrelationships with other constructs.

Moreover, the majority of work has generated norms for
the intact two-parent nuclear family, a socialization unit
that fails to describe a large minority of current North

American families. Recently, divorce and single parenting
have received considerable attention in the developmental
and health literature, however remarriage and step-relations
have been adequately targeted in the literature only within
the last ten years. Children of the next generation will be
reared in families of many diverse forms, including single
parent homes, single custodial parent/"weekend" noncustodial
parent, plus any number of variations of stepfamilies,
foster families, and adoptive homes. Indeed the "incomplete
institution" view of stepfamilies highlights the lack of
available norms of behaviour following divorce and
remarriage (Cherlin, 1981).

The Prevalence of Stepfamilies

For a family model to be fully applicable in our
society it must address the reconstituted family.
Statistics Canada (Canada Year Book 1990) reports that the
no-fault divorce act passed in the mid 1980's has made
divorce more readily attainable, and 78,160 Canadians ended
their marriage in 1986. Some American estimates indicate
that if current trends persist almost half of the marriages
begun in the mid 1970's are likely to end in divorce
(Cherlin, 1981), although the most recent data indicates
that American, Canadian, and British divorce rates appear to
have stabilized or are in decline (Norton & Moorman, 1987).
The magnitude of the number of children learning to live

with a new parent is evident from these 1985 StatsCan statistics: 184,096 marriages in Canada, and 61,980 divorces (approximately one third compared to a ratio of 482/1000 in the U.S. and 426/1000 in England). A little over half of these divorces (31,904) involved children. In general, Canadian estimates indicate that 75% of divorced individuals will remarry, usually within 3-5 years of their divorce. In Canada in 1985, 19% of marriages of men were remarriages, and 17% of marriages of women were remarriages. Some 32,000 women obtained custody of children and 6,000 men obtained custody of children. In the U.S. it is currently estimated that approximately 17% of households with children under age 18 are stepfamilies; and of all children under age 18, approximately 13% reside in stepfamily homes.

It is important to note that one divorce has the potential of creating two new stepfamilies (Conolly, 1983). Generally the divorce rate in second marriages is slightly higher than the divorce rate of first marriages, over one million women in the U.S. re-divorced (divorced from a remarriage) in 1985. Re-divorce is far more likely to occur within the first 5 years of remarriage, another factor contributing to the predicted rise in the number of new stepfamilies in the next decade. The evidence is still equivocal on whether children heighten the risk of re-divorce in remarriage (White, 1990).

Clearly many children will have to cope with changes in family membership during the next decade. Indeed future trends in childbearing and cohabitation may render structural family taxonomies overwhelmingly complex for psychologists interested in the effects of family structure on development (Filinson, 1986).

Before proceeding with a theoretical analysis of factors affecting the functioning of this large number of stepfamilies, a brief review of family research and methodology is necessary. The following review also highlights measurement issues.

The Study of Stepfamilies: The Deficit Approach

Given the fundamental role of the nuclear family in the evolution of our society, recent changes in family stability and composition threaten the historical sanctity bestowed upon the intact nuclear unit. Not surprisingly, the inevitable contrasts between nuclear and nonnuclear families have in large part focused on the assumed inferiority of nontraditional families. The majority of early research appeared to adhere to a deficit-comparison approach, assuming that the intact two parent biological family structure is the primary socialization environment against which all others must be proven. It is beyond the scope of the present dissertation to examine this issue from a social-historical, anthropological, or ecclesiastical point

of view. Within the social sciences, this deficit approach
has most notably dominated the investigation of the effects
of single parenthood, divorce, and remarriage on child
development (Ganong & Coleman, 1986). Changes in family
form initially led scientists and practitioners to search
for the adverse effects that would necessarily (it was
assumed) arise from a "broken home". A large empirical and
clinical literature has begun to detail the correlates
(antecedents, processes, and consequences) of marital
breakdown, single parenthood, alternate living arrangements
(e.g., communal life), foster placements, adoptive homes,
and blended families (e.g., Macklin, 1980).

The exclusive search for the negative correlates of
nonnuclear family composition is questioned here on the
basis of its utility to family members, family therapists,
and other social agencies. Gately and Schwebel (1991), in
analyzing children's adjustment to parental divorce, noted
the likelihood of negative outcome but indicated that due to
a lack of research focus on positive outcomes, the
literature may be skewed.

Implications from the divorce outcome literature. The
comparison of divorced-single parent families and first
marriage intact families has received considerable attention
in the literature. The divorced family literature provides
a useful context to the present discussion. Amato and Keith
(1991a, 1991b) have just completed a meta-analysis of this

literature, looking at child outcome and outcome later in
life (adults who experienced family breakup as children).
Many of the conclusions reached by their review of the
literature on divorce outcome versus first marriage outcome
have implications for a stepfamily versus first marriage
comparison. The comparative utility of the divorce
literature can be conceptualized in several ways: (1) the
divorced family becomes the stepfamily and therefore causal
relations exist; (2) the constructs of interest overlap;
(3) research design issues are similar in both literatures;
(4) operationalization or measurement issues are similar;
and (5) the effect sizes of the group differences are likely
comparable.

A look at the conclusions made by Amato and Keith will
help clarify the latter point. At first glance, they offer
a sobering conclusion to any young researcher interested in
structural family effects: the median effect size of the 92
studies reviewed (sampling some 13,000 children) was .14 of
a standard deviation. That is, divorced children, on
average, consistently had poorer outcomes on a variety of
measures of well-being, but only to a very small degree
overall.

The meagre literature distinctly focusing on
stepfamilies has failed to reliably demonstrate observable
results regarding socialization outcome. For example,
Ganong and Coleman (1984), in a qualitative review of 38 of

these studies, concluded that while a deficit approach was prevalent in the literature, few detrimental trends in child development were empirically validated solely on the basis of stepfamily versus nuclear family membership. When these equivocal findings are quantified, an overall trend towards a small average negative outcome is evident. Amato and Keith (1991b), in their review, did a sub-analysis of the studies that included stepfamilies. An effect size of .17 between children in stepfamilies and children in first marriage families was calculated[1]. That is, on various outcome measures indicative of healthy and adaptive functioning, stepchildren on average over all studies scored less than two tenths of a standard deviation below intact family children.

In the meta-analysis, it was clear that effect sizes varied across the outcome variables of interest and across methodological issues. Amato and Keith (1991b) divided child outcome into several domains of well-being: school

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[1] Assuming this effect size was most commonly represented by the standard unit "d", the difference between mean outcome scores in remarried children and mean outcome scores in first marriage children divided by the standard deviation, .17 is a small effect. For example, with two groups of 25 children, the chance of rejecting the null hypothesis at a two tailed type I error rate of .05 would be less than 10%. If we increase the sample to 100 children per cell the power is still just over 20%. Assuming that a negative outcome was predicted for divorced/stepchildren, the one tailed test with 25 children in each group increases the power to approximately 15%, whereas with 100 children power is approximately 35%. With an effect size of .17, almost 90% of the combined area of the two distributions is overlapped (Cohen, 1988).

achievement, conduct, psychological adjustment, self-
concept, social adjustment, and parent-child relations.
They reported a higher mean effect size for parent-child
relations than for some of the other individual outcome
assessments. Effect size on these various factors
interacted with issues such as age of the subjects, sample
size, and sample type. It is also noteworthy that family
structure studies published in more recent years appeared to
find fewer negative outcomes, and this difference was not
accounted for solely by increasing sophistication in
research designs. This generation may see a reduction in
the negative outcome and the stigma of divorce and
remarriage.

Judith Wallerstein has eloquently described the
potential negative individual outcomes of divorce and
remarriage through in-depth interviews she has carried out
over many years (e.g., Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). Her
recommendations however are based on primarily clinical
populations and have received some critical commentary
(Hetherington & Furstenberg, 1989). Mavis Hetherington
(1991) is currently attempting to investigate the
possibility that the majority of individuals affected by
divorce and remarriage do not suffer long term negative
consequences when compared to control groups. The Amato and
Keith (1991b) and Ganong and Coleman (1984) reviews point

toward more focused research questions that would help clarify this complex multivariate issue.

Utilizing the gains made in the divorce literature, it is proposed here that the deficit model makes the questionable assumption that the quality of relationships in both the family and larger social environment will be consistently inferior in nonnuclear families, and will thereby affect individual fitness. This is thought to occur via various stressors including economic hardship, stigma in the community, parental unavailability, and less positive relations within the stepfamily. Amato and Keith (1991b) found some support for each of these factors, but focused on family conflict as possibly accounting for more variance in outcome. The connection between stepfamily relations and individual fitness may be the same as the correlation between intuct family relations and individual fitness. In other words a poor parent-child relationship is likely to affect the well being of all involved, regardless of family structure (Belsky, 1990). Divorce and remarriage may then place children at risk by increasing the likelihood of poor parent-child relations.

Why do many stepfamilies and their children do well? What protects the natural parent-child relations during divorce and promotes a positive stepparent-stepchild relationship? Are there unique stressors that they have mastered? Are these within or outside the family? The

small effect sizes and small amount of variance accounted for by a global deficit model may indicate that the process of socialization may not differ in consistent ways in first marriage families and stepfamilies.

The outcome variables that are most directly linked to family break-up and reformation should be investigated more systematically. It may be the case that factors at the family group functioning level (referred to as family systems variables) are most consistently distinct across family structure. Socialization research focuses on the attainment of individual adaptive behaviours and characteristics. Relationship properties, interactive behaviours and group functioning characteristics may account for more of the variability across divorced and intact family structures. This would indicate that a focus on relationship process and outcome variables may lead to a more stringent test of the hypothesis that intact families differ from other family forms. Empirically, environmental contextual differences across family types can be controlled for, and the intrafamilial relations more closely examined. Unfortunately developing a language to describe family level constructs is difficult, and as reviewed below, measurement of these factors is even more laborious.

Focusing the deficit approach: Familization. To begin the assessment of the family relationship variables of interest, a conceptualization of family process is required.

A basic proposal of the systems viewpoint is that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. One assumption therefore is that the use of some combination of individual measures will by definition have difficulty tapping the properties unique to the group. It is proposed here that in order to determine maximum domains of variability across family structures, the process of familization will afford us heuristic value. "Familization refers to those processes by which family members, reactively and proactively, develop a universe of meaning relevant to the family as a group, to various alignments of family members, and to themselves as members of that family. A distinguishing feature of the concept of familization is that it is bound by the context of interpersonal relationships in the family within which it occurs.... Consensual validation is viewed as the fundamental process underlying the more general process of familization." (Holland, 1970; p.418).

It is proposed here that, by definition, familization will differ in intact nuclear families and stepfamilies. The addition of a new member alters the alignment of family members and places an unknown entity into the long-standing shared universe of meaning that existed prior to family reconstitution. Holland's theoretical treatise proposes a complex framework for the development of the universe of meaning. He proposes an interdependent relation between familization and socialization, with affective and cognitive

interpersonal, consensual, learning experiences leading to
our concept of self, other, family, and universe.
Socialization emphasizes the attainment of an adaptive
cultural niche, and like familization is both a property of
the individual and the group (Holland, 1970). Familization
and socialization are theoretically correlated factors, we
can not argue that the constructs of self-concept and self-
adjustment are orthogonal to family-concept and family-
adjustment.

Theoretically, according to Holland's proposal,
consensual validation is the key to the development of
shared group concepts. The process of family members'
sharing and confirming their beliefs with each other is
viewed as essential to the formation of a common
understanding between family members. It therefore provides
a heuristic label for the process of family reconstitution
or blending. Familization is submitted to the reader as a
convenient term to describe the process of family formation,
no attempt to operationalize Holland's complex theory is
proposed. The present investigation has chosen to study the
process of stepfamily formation by examining the relation
between perceived individual, dyadic, and family traits
across stepparents and their new spouses and children.
Perceptions of family functioning would be expected to
differ across intact and remarriage families, as would
family consensus; the goal is to map these differences. The

family group characteristics chosen to examine familization
centre on three variables theoretically important to family
formation: family cohesion, family adaptability and family
sense of coherence.

Family Adaptability and Family Cohesion

Two important concepts repeatedly arise in the
clinician's discussion of stepfamily adjustment: boundaries
and roles. "Boundary is defined as those elements that
contribute to a sense of group identity which differentiate
the member of one group from another ... roles refer to both
the actual and the expected behaviour in reciprocal
relations between members of a family" (Roberts & Price,
1985, p. 2-3). Stepfamilies are more complex than intact
nuclear families, with ill-defined boundaries: who is in the
family? and ill-defined roles: what are the expectations in
the family? (Peek, Bell, Waldren, & Sorell, 1988). Roberts
and Price (1985) summarize their family systems analysis of
the remarriage process with this distinction: "Functional
remarried families are viewed as systems that develop
patterns of interaction that confirm family cohesion,
adequate role functions and goal consensus. In contrast,
dysfunctional remarried families are described as
inflexible, lacking a sense of family cohesion, adequate
role functions, and goal consensus." (p. 1). This thinking
follows Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell's (1979) conclusion

that two theoretically essential constructs in all family functioning are cohesion (which includes family boundaries) and adaptation (which includes role relationships).

Family cohesion is defined as "the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another" (Olson, Russell & Sprenkle, 1983, p. 70). The primary interest is in assessing the extent to which family members are separated from or connected to the family. The concepts that comprised this dimension were originally set out as: emotional bonding, family boundaries, coalitions, time, space, friends, decision-making, interests, and recreation (Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen, & Wilson, 1982). Olson et al. (1979) reviewed numerous conceptual and operational definitions relating to the two ends of this dimension, including: separateness versus connectedness, disengagement versus enmeshment, apartness versus togetherness, centrifugal force versus centripetal force, pseudo-hostility versus pseudo-mutuality.

Family adaptability is defined as "the ability of a marital or family system to change its power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress" (Olson et al., 1983, p. 70). Family power (assertiveness, control, discipline), negotiation styles, and roles and rules are all of interest in this dimension.

Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell (1979) developed the Circumplex model of marital and family functioning after their conceptual clustering of concepts from the family literature revealed two recurring themes in discussions of family behaviour: cohesion and adaptability. In their circumplex, cohesion and adaptability were proposed to define two independent aspects of family functioning placed on a circular grid. Families functioning at the extremes on either variable were thought to be at risk for dysfunction. These two major constructs and the viability of the circumplex model have undergone several revisions aided by theoretical critiques (e.g., Beavers & Voeller, 1983) and empirical investigation. Olson (1986) reports over 300 research projects are studying the model from theoretical and clinical perspectives. While the inclusion of these two variables in the assessment of family functioning appears to be essential, they are not likely exhaustive (Bloom, 1985).

The two variables of interest to David Olson and his colleagues hold much potential for stepfamily researchers interested in the process of familization. Reconstituted families must cope with a new member who has his or her own expectations and rules. Leadership status may change. A first born fourteen year old girl may go from sharing the job as head of the household to being a middle child with an older stepsister and new mother. Many new families are not prepared for the lack of role clarity that occurs during

family blending; time and patience are required to settle in to a new family. Ideally, these role expectations between family members (including nonresidential members) would be discussed. Clinicians stress the importance of flexibility and patience during the early stages of family formation, hence the importance of family adaptability. New family members will require time to develop emotional ties, depending on their age and perception of the new relations.

Some clinicians argue that adolescent stepchildren place a particular burden on the development of family cohesion, due to their natural focus on separation and individuation. Myths regarding cohesiveness may intrude on adaptation, for example the myth of instant love between new parent-new child (Messinger, 1976; Walker & Messinger, 1979). Divided loyalties can arise: Is affection for a stepparent betrayal to a biological parent? Finally, the kinship system can be confusing, including blood, step, in-law, and former in-law relationships. The relation between differing custodial arrangements (e.g., time spent living with a household) and psychological family membership boundaries needs to be mapped (Sorenson & Goldman, 1990).

Olson's model was chosen here for two reasons. First, the intuitive appeal of the processes of cohesion and adaptability to family formation and functioning across all family types and specifically stepfamilies. Second, the existence of a solid research base that included a

psychometrically sound self-report measure, some work relating the proposed constructs to other family constructs, exploratory research with stepfamilies on the constructs of interest, and the existence of logical research questions that should hopefully enhance both the understanding of stepfamily functioning and the development of the construct validity of cohesion and adaptability.

One integral component of Olson's model is the juxtaposition of actual family functioning with desired family functioning. While optimal levels of cohesion and adaptability are proposed, Olson et al. (1983) note that different cultural groups may not idealize the same goals. For example some cultural groups in our society appear to emphasize family continuity and consensus while lessening the value of individual differentiation. Olson et al. (1983) propose that these families will function adequately as long as all members share similar expectations regarding adaptability and cohesion, and are satisfied with family attitudes on these dimensions.

Measurement and validation of family cohesion and adaptability. The primary tool used to assess the circumplex model thus far is a questionnaire designed to assess each family member's perception of family adaptability and cohesiveness. The most recent update of this assessment device, the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales III (FACES III; Olson, Portner, & Lavee,

1985), is a 20-item questionnaire using a five-point scale assessing frequency of occurrence on the item in question. The test construction procedure ensured good face and content validity, and control for the response bias of social desirability. FACES III provides rapid (20 items) self-report data on two dimensions. For example a Cohesion scale item is "Family members like to spend free time with each other"; an Adaptability scale item is "Parents and children discuss punishment together" (see Appendix B).

In order to address the issue of varying cultural norms and expectations, two versions of FACES III are administered to each family member: real and ideal. Olson et al. (1985) utilize the real-ideal discrepancy on FACES III as a measure of satisfaction with the family system. Given this hypothesis, data collection should involve all family members (over age 12), and some method of score comparison is needed. Olson et al. (1985) propose the use of mean scores as an estimate of average family functioning and the use of discrepancy scores between family members to reveal individual member differences. They note that correlations between family members on self-report instruments is typically .40. They report (from a large sample) FACES III correlations ranging from a low of .13 between mothers and adolescents on the adaptability scale to a high of .46 between husband and wife on the cohesion scale. Clearly the assessment of family member perception of cohesion and

adaptability is enhanced by contrasting multiple family members (using various relational measures).

The circumplex model and the FACES measure have evolved over time on the basis of empirical and theoretical work. The present investigation made hypotheses based on the most recent data available, namely the FACES III measure utilizing a linear statistical model. Previous investigators have primarily utilized FACES I and II, and have often analyzed their data using curvilinear models. During the course of the present investigation, changes to the model and its measurement were proposed (Olson, 1991). A more substantive review of these developments can be found in Appendix A, only a synopsis will be provided here.

To summarize briefly, the concurrent and discriminant validity of earlier versions of the FACES measure had provided mixed results. When correlated with other self-report measures of functioning, the expected relations tended to appear, although with some exceptions. When compared to other self-report scales, family cohesion most clearly showed a strong, linear, positive relation to healthy individual and dyadic functioning. The concurrent relations between self-report of family adaptability on FACES and other family or dyadic functioning was less clear. Multimethod investigations have not demonstrated adequate concurrent validity. Russell (1979) has found low

correspondence across self-report and behavioural methods of analyzing cohesion and adaptability (see Appendix A).

With regard to criterion validity, clinical and nonclinical families have been found to differ on FACES scores. As predicted, families requiring professional clinical assistance tended to report adaptability and cohesion scores in the extreme range (Olson et al., 1985). The relation between family therapy and change in family report of flexibility and cohesion requires further investigation.

For the purpose of the present research there would appear to be utility in defining adaptability and cohesion as measured by self-report on FACES III as family constructs that provide estimates of actual family characteristics. FACES III can then be categorized as a self-report device tapping family system constructs from the perspective of individual family members.

Given the large data base now existing for FACES, the present study attempted to replicate and extend this research into the area of stepfamily formation. For the goals at hand stepfamily placement on the circumplex grid (see Appendix A) was not assessed, the more recent linear view of FACES III was utilized in all analyses. Stepfamily self-report of family cohesion and adaptability was analyzed presently, given predictions that successful remarriage involves family bonding and role negotiation.

Family Coping Skills

Do members in a newly formed family have a sense of efficacy in the face of daily hassles or life crises? If the stepfamily members are found to report lower family cohesion and adaptability, does this have implications for their ability to cope? Again a distinction between individual coping (socialization outcome) and family coping (familization outcome) may be relevant. Individual sense of coherence has been proposed as a construct meant to depict a global orientation toward health, a feeling of confidence that the world one deals with is structured and predictable, that one has the resources necessary to meet the demands posed by the environment, and that meeting these demands is a worthwhile challenge (Antonovsky & Sourani, 1988). Antonovsky and Sourani propose that while this is theoretically a general view of the world, what matters is that the stimuli defined as important in one's life be coherent. A specific investigation of the family sense of coherence is warranted, as the family is considered to be an important sphere of life for everyone.

One measure that appears to bridge family and individual levels is the Family Sense of Coherence Scale (FSOC; Antonovsky & Sourani, 1988). The FSOC was chosen because it was developed from a very different literature than FACES. The FSOC is an extension of the concept of individual sense of coherence, developed from the stress and

coping health literature. It taps individual family member's perceptions of their family's ability to manage life change, to clarify problems and find meaning in the family unit. A strong sense of coherence indicates that "the motivational and cognitive bases exist for transforming one's potential resources, appropriate to a given stressor, into actuality, thereby promoting health" (Antonovsky & Sourani, 1988, p. 80).

There is a distinct literature outlining the association between stress and family coping. Variables of interest include the sources of stress - normative transitions versus crises, the appraisal of the stressful situation, the internal and external familial resources, and the outcome of the stress - e.g., family dysfunction or disruption (Lavee & Olson, 1991). This literature indicates that the level of stress within and outside the family must be incorporated into investigations of family functioning.

Would a lower self-report of family coping ability be expected among the members of a newly remarried family? Having lived together a short time, one would anticipate limitations in the ability to clarify and comprehend family issues. Will the newest member in the home experience the least sense of family coherence? It is proposed here that all members of newly forming stepfamilies would express a lower sense of family coherence. If this is found to be true, it would be of interest to further tease out the

relation between life hardship and family functioning. If
stepfamily members report a lower sense of family coherence,
will this be accounted for solely by the level of family
stress, or will membership in a new family, even a happy one
experiencing little stress, still be predictive of a lowered
sense of efficacy? Family sense of coherence provides an
important addition to the constructs of family cohesion and
adaptability in investigating first and remarriage family
differences.

Given this overview of the family constructs of
interest and their measurement, the next section reviews the
obstacles inherent to assessing a dynamic group entity.
These measurement considerations will eventually assist in
the interpretation and analysis of the data.

General Measurement Issues

The paradigm shift that takes place when one changes
from an individual perspective to a dynamic group
perspective has many implications. While this potential has
been exploited in many scholarly ways, it unfortunately has
failed to generate equally impressive gains in the field of
measurement until very recently. The principles of
measurement developed through years of work on assessment of
the individual have been drawn into this new field without
due consideration of their applicability. The field of
"family systems assessment" has failed to garner the

attention necessary for the systems orientation to advance
logically from an empirical perspective.

Levels of measurement.   Whatever the system variable
of interest to a particular investigator, great ingenuity is
required to obtain a snapshot of an interactive, dynamic
state among all family members.   Fisher (1982; Fisher,
Kokes, Ransom, Phillips, & Rudd, 1985) provides a framework
upon which to conceptualize family measurement. Most
commonly measurement occurs at the level of the individual.
These scores have much utility, but reflect only one
individual's behaviour, perspective, attitude, or belief
(Fisher et al., 1985). The individual may be asked to
report on family system matters, but these authors argue
this information should not be mistakenly referred to as
family data (see also Reiss, 1983). An alternative
consideration of this problem involves answering the
methodological question "who will aggregate the data ... the
respondent or the investigator" (Huston & Robins, 1982,
p.906).

Fisher et al. (1985) refer to the next level of data as
"relational": "In this case, individual-level data collected
from two or more family members are 'related' to each other
in some way by the investigator." (p. 214). Information
between two individuals may be related, or a method of
grouping the data from all family members may be used.
Fisher et al. review the major approaches to creating

relational data, and their advantages and disadvantages. Each type of score measures information that is distinct from the other in important ways. Measures of central tendency (e.g., mean) or variability (e.g., discrepancy score) can both be used to obtain a collective score. Scores across family members can also be summed or a weighted average obtained. More complex approaches include combined scaling, where both the individual magnitude of scores and their differences are combined into one multivariate equation, or placed in a contingency table that partitions families into "types" (e.g., circumplex type).

An example of a device using individual and relational data is FACES III (Olson et al., 1985). Let the distinction between self-report of personal traits and the report of family traits be clear; devices such as FACES III pertain to the family system level in that the questionnaire items target individual perceptions of system or relationship constructs (e.g., cohesion), they however exploit only one component of the system in doing so. Any individual's self-report can not be considered a family self-report. True family self-report would require a group measurement procedure. Following this reasoning, Olson et al. (1985) have provided formulae for calculating discrepancy scores between family members, as intermember contrast provides a measure of the relation between the self-reports of people within the system from different perspectives. In this

light, variability across family respondents is as essential to report as is the content of scores. Unfortunately the interpretation of discrepancy scores is complex; the clinician can report the variance across each dyad or across the whole family, but how does the scientist collapse these discrepancy scores in a meaningful way? For some measures a "family profile" or pattern of family member responses might be a useful indication of family functioning.

Fisher's final perspective of measurement, termed transactional data, involves "some product of the system or behavioral interchange among system members that indicates the transactional unification of the system's elements into a whole that is significantly different from the sum of its parts." (Fisher et al., 1985, p. 215). The observation of family interaction can meet this definition, with transactional categories such as information exchange and conflict coded in various interactive contexts. Observational data can theoretically fall into the individual, relational, or transactional category depending on the unit of study, coding categories, and form of data analysis (see Markman & Notarius, 1987 for a review). A paper-and-pencil measure could be used to assess transactional data. However, when asking a family to come to a consensus on their answers, some coding of their interactions (e.g., dominance, leadership, participation) is needed for the data to have a true systems flavour.

Otherwise one individual may answer all questions, and knowledge of this process (dominance) adds much to our understanding of the product of the system (e.g., see Cromwell and Peterson's (1983) discussion of the Kvebaek Family Sculpture Technique). The current investigation did not involve the collection of transactional data.

Clearly then, construct validation in the family research domain is hindered by the problem of unitization evident in family assessment. Christensen and Arrington (1987) have reviewed this problem, distinguishing confounds between the unit of study (usually the individual), the object of study (often a dyadic or family variable), the unit of observation (which data are gathered from the unit of study), the unit of measurement (method of data collection), and the unit of data analysis (e.g., a relational score may be composed). Investigators proposing a family construct must be aware of all of these factors in building their nomological net.

In the present investigation, standardized self-report was the method chosen, in order to focus on the view from within the family. FACES III, an individual and relational measure focusing on family cohesion and adaptability, served as our primary dependent measure. The self-report of family sense of coherence, parent-child relations, marital relations, individual personality data and accumulation of life events served as associated measures. The view of

family functioning from within ("the insider perspective" Olson et al., 1985), is not proposed to represent an objective reality. Some of the perils of the monomethod bias were softened by the use of separate self-report from different individuals within the family, namely mother, father, and adolescent. Multiple family members served as the units of study, and their views of real and ideal family, dyad and individual functioning served as the object of study. Individual and relational (intrafamilial consensus) data was analyzed. The experimental hypotheses involved various combinations of individual and relational scores compared across two family structures over time. An introduction to the constructs that are proposed to tie in with adaptability and cohesion follows below.

Bridging Individual, Dyadic, and Family Levels: The Study of Interpersonal Match

Interest in the relation between individual personality and small group behaviour has been prominent in the literature throughout this century (Haythorn, 1953; Mann, 1959). The empirical study of varying combinations of different individuals in ad hoc groups (Rosenberg, Erlick, & Berkowitz, 1955) has implications for family reconstitution. Specifically, Rosenberg et al. refer to the "assembly effect", which highlights the fact that an individual brings certain traits to the group, and he or she will

differentially exhibit these traits (and behave, think, and feel differently) depending on the other individuals with whom he or she is assembled.

This pursuit historically carried over into family study with the investigation of spousal personality attributes and marital satisfaction. In the past, the variance in dyadic satisfaction has been investigated from the perspective of the match of personality betw. en partners. With regard to parent and child, a temperament mismatch has also been hypothesized as one of the catalysts of poor parent-child interactions. Presently, stepfamily formation provides us with a window into the assembly effect for families, allowing an assessment of the relation between individual, interpersonal, and family system factors.

The individual traits that have been identified as important to dyadic and family functioning tend to be interpersonal in nature (Gottman, 1982; Meyer & Pepper, 1977). There is indeed a distinct literature on interpersonal traits, and this literature has been thoroughly reviewed from a clinical perspective by Wiggins (1982), and further integrated by Kiesler (1983). These reviews place interpersonal traits on two primary axes, control and affiliation. Surprisingly, the empirical association of the two heavily researched interpersonal traits of control and affiliation and the seemingly related family constructs of adaptability and cohesion is unknown.

There apparently has been little attempted integration between the family, interpersonal, and individual trait literatures. This author for example was unable to find Social Science Citation Index citations of Wiggin's (1979, 1982) excellent reviews of the taxonomy of interpersonal traits by authors publishing in family systems journals (such as Journal of Marriage and the Family, Family Process).

While developed from theoretically distinct backgrounds, there appears to be much conceptual overlap between the recent flurry of self-report family devices, and instruments aimed at tapping interpersonal traits. Both bodies of wc. . stem from the need to assess adjustment and dysfunction beyond the intrapsychic level. Etiological and treatment focus in psychopathology is now often viewed from an interpersonal and/or family systems perspective, while historically outcome measures have focused on individual symptomatology (Wiggins, 1982), hence the need for a valid yet easy to use assessment methodology geared toward holistic and interactional variables.

Recently, the bulk of integration in these literatures has occurred in the area of schizophrenia and depression, where the investigator focuses on familial interactions affecting relapse. There is a large body of research that pursues determinants of individual well-being and

psychopathology by examining family interactions (e.g., Hooley, 1985).

Investigations of the self-report of normative family functioning and normative individual functioning are less remarkable. This is somewhat surprising as the connection has been stated for a number of years. Handel (1965), in delineating the analysis of whole families as a field of psychological study, refers to Burgess's (1926) treatise "The family as a unity of interacting personalities", and proposes this question: "how do the several personalities in a family cohere in an ongoing structure that is both sustained and altered through interaction?" (Handel, 1965, p. 21).

The prediction of reported family cohesion or family adaptability or family coping should then incorporate some aspect of this assembly effect of individual traits. Hypotheses can be found in the dyadic relationship literature. Specifically Meyer and Pepper (1977) concluded that two (by now familiar) conceptual categories predicted marital satisfaction, "orientation toward direction from other people" (analogous to the adaptability axis) and "degree and quality of interpersonal orientation" (analogous to the cohesion axis).

The specific psychometric relation between individual level variables and family level variables was therefore examined presently. The original definition of family

cohesion was "the emotional bonding members have with one another and the degree of individual autonomy a person experiences in the family system" (Olson et al., 1979, p.5). When Beavers and Voeller (1983) noted the conceptual and measurement confusion created by confounding a theoretically curvilinear family trait and a linear individual developmental one such as autonomy, the reference to autonomy was dropped from the definition on a theoretical rather than empirical basis (Olson et al., 1983). Clearly it would be interesting to assess the relation between the "individual personality trait" of autonomy, and the "family trait" of cohesion. The Personality Research Form (PRF; Jackson, 1984), includes an Autonomy scale describing individuals who "enjoy being unattached, self-determined, not tied to people, self-reliant, [etc]". The PRF is a well constructed, psychometrically sound, global personality inventory that may be used to determine the self-report of individual personality traits. Spousal similarity and perceived similarity on the PRF scales of Autonomy, Nurturance, and Affiliation have been shown to relate to marital satisfaction (Meyer & Pepper, 1977). How this relates to family Cohesion scores is of interest. The relation between family adaptability or family sense of coherence and individual personality could also be explored through conceptually related PRF scales and the FACES Adaptability and FSOC scales.

Perceived and actual intermember discrepancy across
levels. Family characteristics depend in part upon the
unity or assembly of interacting personalities within
certain contexts. Methodologically, we are asking
individuals to describe themselves and to describe a group
of which they are a member. In the small group literature,
one study found self-ratings of self-concept to be similar
in profile to ratings of a small cohesive group in which the
subject was a member, with the self ratings generally
scoring more positively (Weinbaum & Gilead, 1984). This
finding was derived from the hypothesis that an individual
will tend to identify with his or her reference group, and
to assess the group through his or her own personal
percepts. The investigation by Weinbaum and Gilead
specifically manipulated the address-mode of item phrasing,
i.e., first-person singular ("I") versus first-person plural
("we"). This is important as family, dyadic, and individual
measures may differ with respect to item content (different
constructs) or they may merely differ with respect to the
focus or address-mode of the items (e.g., the Family
Assessment Measure, Skinner et al., 1984).

Weinbaum and Gilead (1984) suggest that individuals who
rate their group self-concept more positively than their own
self-concept may be in a problematic personality or
behaviour state. This notion of the comparative utility of
actual self-ratings and other ratings has taken many forms,

emphasizing discrepancy scores within and between individuals. Much of psychopathology theory focuses on distortions in the self, lack of an integrated self, inaccurate perceptions of feedback from others regarding the self, etc. The discrepancy between actual self and ideal self and actual self and ought self has been used to predict self-concept and emotional states , as in Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory.

In the present focus on stepfamily relevant constructs, several discrepancy scores would appear to be of interest: self-report across family members (family consensus or discrepancy), perceived consensus or discrepancy across family members, prediction of self-report by other family members (understanding), and ideal versus real levels of cohesion and adaptability (satisfaction). In the marital and family literature discrepancy scores regarding ratings of spouse have been used in several different ways, often as a covariate in family studies. For example a husband's rating of his wife versus his rating of the ideal wife denotes perceived role fit, or marital satisfaction (Meyer, 1975; Olson et al., 1985; Perkins & Kahan, 1979). The husband's rating of his own traits versus the wife's rating of the ideal husband's traits (actual role fit) is also related to marital adjustment (Meyer, 1975). We also have a tendency to report that we want someone similar to ourselves and our ideal selves; Meyer reported high correlations

between PRF self and ideal spouse ratings, and even higher
correlations between ideal self and ideal spouse ratings.
Self-reports by husband and wife consistently demonstrate a
low to moderate positive correlation on a variety of traits,
dispositions, behaviours, attitudes, emotions, and
descriptions of family life (Buss, 1984), with happier
couples generally demonstrating greater agreement than
unhappy couples (see Sullaway & Christensen, 1983, for a
review). Perkins and Kahan (1979) report on a relational
score which they hypothesize measures understanding, e.g., a
husband's self-report versus a wife's report of how she
believes (or predicts) her husband answered.

Each of these discrepancy or agreement scores allows
for an assessment of the match between various views of the
self, the other, and the group. High levels of intermember
agreement do not necessarily indicate that a general,
objective, cross-situational reality exists within a group
(Jessop, 1981), as indicated by the generally poor
convergence on insider versus objective outside rater
reports of family (Olson, 1985). However consensus on the
subjective reality and the subjective ideal would seem
important to accurate family communication and adjustment.
Consensual agreement (identified earlier as an important
part of familization) on both goals and present functioning
may be indicative of a "family schema", borrowing from the

individual cognitive psychology literature on self-schema (Markus, 1977).

Will stepfamilies in general hold different family schema? Will they have less consensus regarding family schema? Van der Veen and Novak (1974) quote Ackerman (1958) in describing the family concept: "each parent, each child has a picture of what the family stands for, its expectations, its standards, its strivings, and its value orientation...Family identity is an evolving thing...When a new family is born, each of the partners in marriage and parenthood carry with them their respective mental pictures of the families they came from." (p. 772). Intermember match and discrepancy on perceived and ideal family living in first and second marriages should advance our understanding of family functioning.

This discussion is intended to highlight the impact of intermember match on patterns of family functioning. Included in this consideration of the match/discrepancy between family members on individual and family characteristics, is the concordance among members regarding their perceptions of how a family should function. Consensus on family ideals may be predictive of family functioning. Meyer (1975) found more significant relations with marital adjustment in perceived need compatibility than in actual need compatibility; and perceived role fit had a stronger relation with marital satisfaction than did actual

role fit (p. 98). He reports that high and low adjustment couples have similar views of the ideal mate. Surprisingly however he found that even self-ideal spouse, ideal self-ideal spouse discrepancies related to self report of marital adjustment, indicating that perceptual distortion and response style may be accounting for some of the variance on self-report measures (Meyer, 1975).

Somewhat similarly, Perkins and Kahan (1979) found that while step-relations did have some similar views of the family, they underestimated this level of similarity when asked to predict the response of the other. Within-subject ideal-actual discrepancy and between-subject perceived discrepancy may then be more predictive of dyadic adjustment than actual high or low scale scores and their match of needs or roles. In other words, consistent distortions in perception or attitude or response style may differentially occur in functional versus dysfunctional relationships.

In contrast to the above, Antonovsky & Sourani (1988) found that FSOC scale content (Family Sense of Coherence) was more important than a relational measure of spousal consensus in predicting family satisfaction (although both were related and they utilized small sample sizes). The differential utility of discrepancy versus trait scores has yet to be established in the individual self-concept literature (see Higgins, 1987), and has received insufficient attention in the family functioning literature.

In the present investigation the differential utility of
perceived discrepancy scores and actual family member
discrepancy scores in predicting family self-report was
investigated.

The Process of Family Reconstitution

   Individual, dyadic, family system, and context effects.
This overview of family measurement and family constructs,
can now be brought to bear on the investigation of
stepfamily formation. As reviewed, to understand the study
of whole families, the family must be viewed as an entity
with externally and internally observable descriptive
properties. When individuals form a unit, certain
holistic/interactive properties must be accounted for in the
prediction of behaviour. Our ability to unearth these
properties, define them, and measure them is at the core of
all group systems research.

   Who forms the unit, and in what context, will logically
affect group traits. The developmental tasks of family
reconstitution that have received theoretical attention to
date (see Goetting, 1982; Hetherington & Camara, 1984;
Messinger, 1976; Roberts & Price, 1985; Walker & Messinger,
1979) provide hypothetical empirical predictors of the
successful/dysfunctional process or outcome of systemic
reorganization following remarriage. The present focus was
on predicting self-reported stepfamily functioning (as

opposed to objective rater or outsider aggregated variables).

In general, it was proposed that family functioning would be affected by extrafamilial and intrafamilial forces, dyadic relations among family members, individual personality factors, and intermember consensus regarding expectations for the family.

Extrafamilial factors include levels of environmental stress and support, and therefore socioeconomic/educational factors should be controlled or matched (Belsky, 1990). General intrafamilial family variables to be monitored include the report of within-family stress, the age and cognitive developmental level of the child(ren) and parents, and family size.

Relationships within the family, especially the new step-relations, would be expected to predict family process or outcome variables. Dyadic relations were assessed by parent-child report of communication, and adult report of marital relations. It was anticipated that these dyadic relations would correlate with each other and with self-report of family cohesion, family adaptability, and family sense of coherence (Olson et al., 1985). Marital adjustment was not expected to be reported as a concern in the newly remarried. The stepparent-stepchild relationship was expected to significantly differentiate intact and stepfamily functioning, given previous reports of

stepparent-stepchild difficulty (e.g., Amato & Keith, 1991b; Hetherington, 1989).

While extrafamilial and dyadic relationship factors have received considerable attention from family researchers, the examination of the interaction of individual member personality traits has been rejected by many in the family systems school, as this directly threatens the holistic model they propose. The interaction between family systems and individual constructs was also explored in this study.

Stepfamily versus Nuclear Family Self-report

Several studies have examined stepfamily members' self-reports of two of the family constructs of interest. For example, with regard to family cohesion, Ganong and Coleman (1987) summarized their assessment of adolescents in stepfamilies by noting that stepchildren perceived themselves to be only moderately close to their stepparents. Amato (1987), utilizing eight questions on family closeness from a child interview study, found that 54 stepchildren reported lower cohesion than 201 nuclear family children. Roberts and Price (1989) reported that increasing scores on family cohesion self-report were associated with increasing marital adjustment in remarried couples. During the course of the present investigation, Pill (1990) published results of stepfamily cohesion using FACES III with 29 families at

the adolescent stage of family life. As with previous
studies, stepfamily levels for cohesion were lower than
previously published nuclear family levels (Pill did not
have her own nuclear control group).

Pink & Wampler (1985) and Peek et al. (1988), utilizing
FACES II, found stepfamilies to differ from nuclear families
on self-report of family adaptability and cohesion, with
stepfamily scores falling between clinical and nonclinical
nuclear family norms. Peek et al. (1988) report
stepfamilies did not differ on reported family organization
and conflict, but did significantly differ on cohesion and
adaptability. Pink and Wampler (1985), controlling for
marital satisfaction, also found lower cohesion and
adaptability in stepfamilies, with lowered stepfather-
adolescent communication likely accounting for the altered
family system. Perkins and Kahan (1979) report lower
adjustment and satisfaction in stepfamilies, again with poor
understanding between the stepfather-adolescent indicated as
a contributing factor.

Across these studies, there was a tendency for mothers
to hold both a higher ideal view of family cohesion and a
higher actual view, with stepfathers next highest and
adolescents wanting and perceiving the least family
cohesion.

Hypothesis testing: the need to screen for family
dysfunction during sample selection. The independent
variable in these few investigations into stepfamily versus
nuclear family self-report was family structure.
Unfortunately the samples were not described in sufficient
detail to adequately assess the complexity of this quasi-
experimental manipulation. Most investigators made some
attempt to control for family variables such as length of
time remarried. Satisfaction with family functioning was
sometimes indicated. The authors surmise that differences
in family cohesion and adaptability were attributable to
divorce and remarriage, however it is proposed here that
stepfamily dysfunction was not sufficiently considered in
these previous investigations. While several of the
investigations utilized demographically similar intact-
family controls, they did not clearly rule out the potential
for differential sampling of clinical families in the
remarriage group.

Bray (1991) claims that stepfamilies are
disproportionately represented in U.S. surveys of the use of
mental health services. Only a few studies however have
explicitly examined functional and dysfunctional
stepfamilies (Bray, 1991). Bray has reported that his
clinical stepfamilies, when compared to nonclinical
stepfamilies, report less effective problem solving and more
negative interactions, and the children had more behaviour

problems. Anderson and White (1986) reported less involvement between stepfathers and stepchildren in both clinical and nonclinical groups, when compared with nuclear families. Functional stepfamily members reported less exclusion of the stepparent, and better marital adjustment than did nonfunctional stepfamily members. Brown, Green and Druckman (1990) found stepfamilies in therapy reporting less role satisfaction and more conflict.

It is proposed that the investigations which the present study builds upon did not sufficiently address the issue of clinical status during subject selection. Pill (1990) reports using nonclinical stepfamilies, but does not use a control sample and does not indicate how clinical status was screened. Roberts and Price (1989) describe adult report of family cohesion in remarriage, but do not indicate that any screening for clinical status was attempted. In the Ganong and Coleman (1987) American sample and Amato (1987) Australian sample, an attempt at larger scale random sampling of high school and university students was made, however no indication of clinical status is noted. Pink and Wampler (1985) and Perkins and Kahan (1979) recruited their sample volunteers in a manner similar to the present study (convenience sample), however they do not indicate that clinical involvement was screened. In the Peek et al. (1988) convenience sample, subjects were recruited in part from stepfamily support groups. Indeed

Waldren et al. (1990) have reanalyzed the Peek et al. sample and found that the stepfamilies were significantly more likely to have sought counselling. Unfortunately they do not indicate if this accounted for the lowered stepfamily FACES scores.

This lack of attention to sampling screening in a quasi-experimental design is disconcerting, as the reported stepfamily-intact family difference in family cohesion could be attributed to sampling issues. FACES scores have been demonstrated to distinguish clinical and nonclinical families, and clinical stepfamilies may be differentially represented in convenience samples. It is also a meaningful distinction in that Amato and Keith (1991a) pointed out that clinical, convenience, and random samples often had differing effect sizes in their meta-study of divorce outcome.

Hypotheses Stemming from the Empirical Family Measurement and Conceptual Stepfamily Literatures

The present research utilized the preceding review in choosing the theoretical foundation upon which to build. The goal was to find a family model that was well defined, had attempted to create a nomological net describing the relations between constructs, had at least one valid system of assessing the constructs of interest on at least one

level, and had theoretical importance to stepfamily
formation.

To summarize, there is a solid foundation for the
constructs of family cohesion and adaptability and their
measurement, and demonstrated relevance to family
functioning. These constructs are theoretically linked to
theories of stepfamily adjustment. Family sense of
coherence is proposed to be another construct useful to
understanding stepfamily adaptation, a hypothesis explored
for the first time in the present research. While
conclusions as to the cardinal status of these factors are
premature (Bloom, 1985), they do provide a sound framework
with testable hypotheses about adaptive family functioning
and family pathology from a developmental perspective.
These constructs hold theoretical promise for our
understanding of the process of family reconstitution, in
light of the factors identified by clinicians working with
stepfamilies (e.g., boundary definition and affiliation).
The three family variables of interest have demonstrated
some predictive, discriminant, and concurrent validity, with
clinical relevance. They have been theoretically and
empirically critiqued, contrasted, and integrated with other
models of family functioning. The Family Sense of Coherence
scale is a relatively new measure requiring further validity
work, and is used here on an exploratory basis. The complex
pattern of relations between various conceptualizations of

two of the most thoroughly researched family constructs (cohesion and adaptability) points to a weakness in our current level of sophistication. The dimensionality and linearity of self-report measures of cohesion and adaptability require further investigation. Investigations into the significance of different operationalizations of adaptability and cohesion indicate a consistent distinction between the insider and outsider perspectives. In general, family system constructs are not likely to demonstrate clear heteromethod convergence across behavioural observation and self-report questionnaire procedures.

The interest of the present study was in mapping the development of stepfamily adaptability, cohesion and sense of coherence as assessed by family members. Volunteer first marriage families with a child between the ages of 12 to 16, and volunteer stepfamilies with a same aged child who had lived together less than one year were studied. The selective use of adolescents controlled for family life stage, as family cohesion may differ across the family life span (Olson et al., 1985). Variability in sampling factors was carefully assessed. Three family members were asked to rate within-family functioning on two occasions, in order to avoid mono-rater and transient reporting biases.

The Present Study

First and remarriage families at the adolescent family life stage were compared on self-report measures on two

occasions. In order to control sampling heterogeneity and focus on the time of family formation, only those families remarried less than one year were included in the test group. Based on the preceding theoretical review, it was decided that clinical families would be eliminated from this investigation, in order to study functional volunteer families.

Hypothesis 1: Family cohesion. It was predicted that nonclinical volunteer stepfamilies would on average report lower levels of family cohesion on the FACES III measure early into remarriage (Pink & Wampler, 1985; Peek et al., 1988). All members (mother, father, child) of the demographically similar first marriage families were expected to report higher cohesion than the corresponding average score of the stepfamily members. The lowered stepfamily cohesion scores were not expected to be low enough to fall within the clinical range of family disengagement. The present analyses provided a more stringent test of the hypotheses regarding stepfamily self-report differences by reporting on a longitudinal follow-up across three family members. Previous investigations of self-reported stepfamily cohesion have utilized single snapshots, often of one family member. Although no previous follow-up studies exist, given that lowered stepfamily cohesion has been previously reported in families remarried for several years (e.g., Pink & Wampler, 1985), it was

hypothesized that these lowered cohesion scores would hold true at follow-up 8 months later.

Family cohesion scores were predicted to significantly correlate with marital and parent-adolescent adjustment (Pink & Wampler, 1985; Roberts & Price, 1989).

Hypothesis 2: Family adaptability. Stepfamily members were also expected on average to differ on their report of family adaptability from the report of intact family members. The altered perception of family management of roles and rules was hypothesized to hold true on average for all stepfamily subjects, and in planned comparisons between mothers, fathers, and adolescents from each family group. FACES III Adaptability scores had been hypothesized to be lower in stepfamilies (Pink & Wampler, 1985). However, during the course of the present investigation, Pill (1990) reported higher Adaptability FACES III scores in stepfamilies. Also of concern is a recent large scale study from Green, Harris, Forte, and Robinson (1991a, 1991b), indicating that adaptability as reported on FACES III may be psychometrically problematic. They found that FACES III Adaptability scores did not correlate as expected with other measures. These recent findings tempered the strength of second hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Family sense of coherence. If stepfamily members are not as cohesive, which is associated with less interaction and poorer communication, then they would not be

expected to have a high sense of family coherence. It was hypothesized that a lower sense of family coherence would be reported on average by stepfamily members on the Family Sense of Coherence Scale (FSOC). As previous stepfamily self-report on this measure is unknown, specific planned comparisons were made identical to those in Hypotheses 1 and 2 on the basis of the theoretical review. All intact family members were expected to hold a greater sense of family coherence due to the increased evidence of efficacy that they have experienced over the years of cohabitation.

Hypothesis 4: Family ideals. It was anticipated that stepfamilies would tend to hold nuclear family ideals, due to a lack of knowledge of normative stepfamily functioning. Consequently, ideal FACES Cohesion and Adaptability scores were not expected to differ across family type (Pink & Wampler, 1985). First marriage and remarriage families were therefore expected to differ on ideal-actual absolute family concept discrepancy scores.

Hypothesis 5: Marital relations. Stepfamilies were not expected to differ from intact families on marital functioning, as clinical families were not utilized in the present study. While adults in both groups should report Dyadic Adjustment Scores (DAS; Spanier, 1989) well within the normal range, the newly married were expected to report high marital adjustment (a 'honeymoon effect').

Hypothesis 6: Parent-adolescent relations. Less open
and more problematic stepparent-stepchild relations were
expected (Hetherington, 1989; Pink & Wampl , 1985). Both
parent and adolescent self-report were expected to support
this hypothesis. Self-report differences on the Parent-
Adolescent Communication Scale (PAC; Olson et al., 1982)
between biological parents in first and remarriage families
and their adolescents were not predicted. While in their
behavioural observations Vuchinich, Hetherington, Vuchinich,
& Clingempeel (1991) found biological parent-adolescent
relations early into remarriage to be more conflictual,
whether this would hold true for self-report early into a
remarriage was uncertain. Planned two-tail comparisons were
therefore utilized to examine natural parent-child relations
in the two groups.

The Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale scores were
expected to hold a positive significant correlation with
marital adjustment scores and FACES scores (Olson et al.,
1982).

Hypothesis 7: Intermember differences. Family members
were expected to differ in absolute terms in their mean
self-report of family and dyadic relations, but to hold
significant within-family correlations. Multiple family
members were assessed, as parents and adolescents
consistently demonstrate low to moderate positive
correlations in their view of individual and family traits

(Jessop, 1981), with disturbed adolescents generally reporting lower family satisfaction and disagreeing more with other family members in their family concept (van der Veen & Novak, 1974).

In the present investigation, within both intact families and stepfamilies, parents and adolescents were expected to differ in their mean self-report, with adolescents reporting the lowest level of cohesion and the lowest level of desired cohesion, and mothers both seeing and desiring the most family cohesion (Peek et al., 1988; Pink & Wampler, 1985). Parents in both family groups were expected to report better parent-child relations than adolescents on the PAC (Olson, 1986). These differences should result in a significant main effect for family member on global analyses of mean scores on family measures.

Little existing empirical literature was found to allow for a specific prediction of intrafamilial consensus in first and remarriage families. There is some evidence that intermember family consensus is likely to be higher on ratings of attitudes or beliefs or values that are generally accepted as true in the culture. Given that the normative values of the stepfamily are less well established, stepfamily consensus may also be lowered by the lack of a cultural consensus (Keshet, 1990), although if stepfamily members hold nuclear family norms this distinction may not hold true.

The robust finding of perceptual differences between parents and adolescents was expected to hold across the two groups. However, given that poorer stepparent-stepchild relations were expected, it was anticipated that stepchildren may differ even more from their parents in their perceptions of family variables than first marriage children would from their parents. Within-family correlations on the primary measures will be assessed in order to test the hypothesis that lower within-family concordance on family and dyadic self-report would occur in stepfamilies.

Regardless of the outcome of this test of discrepancy in self-report of actual family functioning early into remarriage, it was hypothesized that stepfamily members would perceive themselves to be more discrepant in their ideals. It was anticipated that the change in family membership would lead to perceived uncertainty in the family schema. This phenomenological viewpoint, emphasizing the importance of the relation between the perception of other and perception of a family system construct was analyzed. It was also hypothesized that in all families, perceived discrepancy would be more predictive of family cohesion than actual discrepancy between members. If stepfamily members do express dissatisfaction with their family functioning, their perceived role fit would be expected to differ more from first marriage families than their actual role fit.

It was also anticipated that having lived together a short time, stepfamily members would hold a poorer degree of intermember understanding. This involved a relational score assessing the accuracy of one family member's prediction of another member's self-report on FACES III ideal Cohesion.

Hypothesis 8: Individual and family constructs. Given the theoretical position that the developmental tasks of the newly formed family centre on family cohesion, personal need for autonomy was proposed to be predictive of reported stepfamily adjustment. For example stepparents high in autonomy would report lower ideal family cohesion. Beyond exploratory correlational analyses between self-report of individual personality variables and family constructs, some developmental predictions were made. It was expected that in all families high PRF Autonomy scores at Time 1 would be predictive of lower Cohesion (as reported by the adolescent) at Time 2. These hypotheses stem from the belief that an individual need for autonomy would affect the developmental tasks leading to bonding in the parent-adolescent. Specifically within stepfamilies, the stepfather's need for autonomy would be expected to affect the development of family cohesion. Using father Autonomy reports and adolescent family Cohesion reports provides a stringent test of the proposal, as it avoids mono-rater bias.

The relationship between the other family scales of interest (FACES III Adaptability and Family Sense of

Coherence) and individual personality traits will also be assessed through exploratory correlational analyses.

Hypothesis 9: Prediction of family cohesion. The ease of adjustment during transition to stepfamily life is theoretically a function of many associated factors - can this be teased out empirically? It is proposed here that successful fulfilment of the developmental tasks of family blending involves family cohesion and can be predicted from a knowledge of the accumulation of stressful life events, dyadic relations, existing individual and interpersonal characteristics, and intermember consensus. Correlational and multiple regression analyses were used to assist in an exploratory look at the relation between these variables.

Given the focus on child outcome in much of the family literature, and given the theoretical importance of family cohesion, prediction of the adolescent report of cohesion was attempted. The prediction of adolescent self-report of cohesion in all families was undertaken using standard regression models. The accumulation of life stress was entered in a block with other predictors in all regression equations, in order to control for common contextual factors. Family structure was expected to predict FACES Cohesion, however the quality of relationships within the family was expected to provide more predictive power. Good marital and parent-child relations were expected to predict high family cohesion. Adolescent report was used as an

independent variable with parent reports used as predictors,
in order tr provide a more stringent test of our hypotheses.
Personal Autonomy scores were also examined as predictors of
family cohesion. Finally discrepancy scores, examining
actual and perceived differences across family members, were
analyzed. It was hypothesized that knowledge of perceived
discrepancy between family members would be more predictive
of adolescent report of family cohesion than would actual
family discrepancy.

Unique to the present study was the use of multiple
individual self-report data over time. The Time 2 sample
therefore provided the opportunity to test the robustness of
the regression equations determined at Time 1.

METHOD

Subjects

Sixty three married or common-law families from several southern Ontario cities (Hamilton, Burlington, London, Guelph, Kitchener, Brantford) volunteered to complete in-home questionnaires on two occasions over several months. Families were recruited via advertisement, therefore this volunteer group does not constitute a truly random sample. Cable television classified ads, newspaper ads, bulletin announcements, and radio and newspaper stories on the research attracted subjects. Three families were recruited by word of mouth from other families. The ads specified remuneration and asked for intact two-parent families with a child 12 to 16 years of age. Alternating ads specifically asked for newly forming stepfamilies (in the first year of living together) with a child between 12 to 16 years of age. Families were paid between $30.00 or $50.00 for participating (remuneration was increased during a final advertising blitz).

Variability in family functioning was partially controlled by selecting families at the same developmental life stage. Certain parenting issues in early adolescence are distinct from those in raising younger children. It was also hypothesized that children under the age of 12 would have difficulty understanding some of the issues under study, while children older than 16 were not targeted due to

their increased focus on personal autonomy issues. Children's age and the amount of time living together as a stepfamily were screened when respondents phoned, otherwise all families were accepted and no a priori matching on demographic variables was involved.

Subjects primarily offered 4 reasons for participating: it sounded interesting, the adolescent saw the ad and expressed interest in the money, they have pride in their family and wanted to share this, family members thought it might facilitate parent-adolescent communication. Mothers primarily made the initial phone call.

Clinical status was screened during both home visits. Families that reported receiving any clinical professional assistance (e.g., marital therapy, children's aid), or reported seeking such, were not included in the present analyses. This eliminated "clinical" families from the current investigation, thus allowing for a comparison of families who felt they were functioning adequately.

Altogether 32 stepfamilies were visited initially. During the course of the Time 1 and Time 2 interview/questionnaire completion, it became clear that six of these families had had clinical involvement, with one couple separating prior to the follow-up. These families were dropped from the analyses.

The 25 nonclinical stepfamilies that were retained included seven families with a stepmother-stepchild

relationship as the target, the rest a stepfather-stepchild.

The 31 first marriage families that participated also included several families that were excluded due to reported clinical involvement, and one due to extreme outlier scores, leaving 26 for the present analyses.

At follow-up (mean time between visits = 8.5 months, sd = 2.5 months), 2 nuclear families did not participate and 5 stepfamilies did not participate. This attrition was due to the family moving without notice or expressing no interest in completing the follow-up questionnaires.

A demographic outline of the 51 families analyzed appears in Table 1. As can be seen the 26 first marriage families (Group 1) and 25 new stepfamilies (Group 2) were demographically similar on various socialization risk factors. First and remarriage families did not differ on group mean comparisons of family size, education, age, or income. Seventy three percent of the targeted children were first-born. In the study there were 18 sons and 8 daughters in first marriage families and 15 sons and 10 daughters in stepfamilies. The most common family type in Group 2 was therefore stepfather-stepson. Sons and daughters did not differ on mean age. The major difference between these groups was the history of divorce, remarriage, and time spent together as a family. The potentially stressful nature of divorce and remarriage was evident in that the stepfamilies had undergone more moves in residence.

Table 1

Mean Group Demographics

	Group 1 First marriage (n=26)		Group 2 Stepfamily (n=25)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Age of mother	38.65	4.32	37.32	5.09
Education level of mother	13.54	2.23	13.96	2.70
Age of father	42.50	4.96	39.12	7.24
Education level of father	13.31	2.46	13.68	2.70
Age of adolescent	14.15	1.51	14.44	1.28
Education level of adolescent	9.15	1.41	9.43	1.31
Family size	4.42	1.05	4.26	1.21
Family income	$56961	$19623	$68120	$31210
# of homes in past 5 years *	1.54	.64	2.93	1.21
Time living together *	17 years		7 months	

* $p < .0001$

Measures

Self-report measures focusing on family, dyadic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal variables were chosen. These measures were chosen due to their theoretical relationship to the tasks of family reconstitution. These measures can be found in Appendix B.

Family scales. FACES III (Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales 3rd revision; Olson et. al., 1985) is a 20 item, 5 point Likert scale assessing family adaptability and cohesion. It is a popular research and clinical measure with a normative sample of over 2,000 individuals. Olson et al. (1985) controlled for social desirability during item selection, a concern with self-report measures (Cohesion and Social Desirability r = .35; Adaptability and Social Desirability r = .35). The two subscales are orthogonal (r = .03) in Olson's sample. Published correlations between family members range from a low of .13 between mother and adolescent Adaptability ratings, and a high of .48 between husband and wife Cohesion ratings. The published reliability for each scale is acceptable, but is lower for the Adaptability scale (internal consistency r = .62 for Adaptability, r = .77 for Cohesion). Validity for this measure is good for research purposes, and it is the intent of this research to expand previous validations.

Family members were asked to complete four versions of FACES III: real, ideal, and prediction of the ideals of the other two members of the family, in that order. First they rated their actual level of family cohesion and adaptability ("describe your family now"). They then completed the FACES scale for the ideal or perfect family ("ideally, how would you like your family to be", see Appendix B). These ideal scores assessed the desired levels of family cohesion and adaptability. The absolute ideal minus real FACES difference is proposed to represent family satisfaction, and this relational score was analyzed for family group differences. FACES was then completed in the manner they felt the other family members would like the family to be, for example, "ideally, how would your stepchild like your family to be".

Three other relational scores were created using the these various FACES Cohesion and Adaptability subscale totals. Intermember family discrepancy was assessed by comparing real score differences within families. A measure of a single member's perceived discrepancy was calculated by determining the absolute difference between self-report of ideal Cohesion and the prediction of another family member's ideal Cohesion. Understanding was calculated by determining the absolute difference between prediction of another family member's ideal FACES Cohesion and that family member's ideal Cohesion score. Tentative hypotheses regarding group

differences on these three relational variables had also been made.

The FSOC (Family Sense of Coherence Scale; Antonovsky & Sourani, 1988), was used as an assessment of perceived family coping. The FSOC was chosen because it was developed from a very different literature than FACES. The FSOC is an extension of the concept of individual sense of coherence, developed from the health, stress and coping literature. The components of the FSOC are comprehensibility (an ordered view of the world), manageability (perceived efficacy), and meaningfulness (motivation), asked via 26 semantic differential items (7 point scale). The correlation between husband and wife on the FSOC was .77 on Antonovsky and Sourani's initial study of 60 couples, and internal reliability was .92. FSOC total scale scores were used presently. In examining the items, it was expected that this measure would relate to the FACES III measure. No previous studies relating these two measures were found.

Dyadic scales. The DAS (Dyadic Adjustment Scale; Spanier, 1976;1989) is a 32-item self-report inventory with a substantial research base (1000 studies), developed on the strengths of previous marital adjustment measures. Responses to the DAS have been found to distinguish intact and divorced dyads, and be sensitive to therapeutic intervention. Marriage versus cohabitation per se does not

appear to predict DAS scores (Spanier 1989). Previous DAS norms for stepfamilies were not found at the outset of this investigation. During the course of the investigation, Pill (1990) reported on a nonclinical sample of 29 stepfamilies. In her sample a mean of 111 was obtained for both the husbands and wives reporting on the DAS. Surprisingly, Pill (1990) did not find a significant relationship between DAS scores and FACES III Adaptability and Cohesion scores. A positive correlation was predicted between these measures in the present study.

Four theoretically significant subscales created through factor analytic techniques subdivide the DAS; dyadic consensus, dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, and affectional expression. Total DAS scores were used in the present study. The total DAS Cronbach alpha ranges from .84 to .96 in published reports (see Spanier 1989). Short term test-retest reliabilities are also reportedly high. In a long term follow-up, Belsky, Spanier, and Rovine (1983) reported stability during the first nine months of new parenthood to be .69 for husbands and .82 for wives on total DAS scores. Spanier (1989) reports one study examining husband-wife agreement, finding a cross-spouse correlation of .59. The overall mean scores for men and women are virtually identical according to Spanier.

The PAC (Parent-Adolescent Communication; Barnes & Olson, 1982) is a 20-item scale with parent and adolescent

forms. It is a brief inventory assessing positive and negative communications between parents and adolescents utilizing a 5-point response scale. Factor analysis by Barnes and Olson resulted in two subscales: open family communication and problems in family communication. PAC total scores by parent and child were used in the present analyses. The correlation between PAC scores and family Cohesion and Adaptability as assessed by FACES II has been reported as .50 and .48 respectively (Olson et al., 1983). Published internal consistency estimates for the two subscales are .87 and .78, as compared to .88 for the total scale (alpha).

Individual scales. The PRF-E (Personality Research Form; Jackson, 1967) is a 352-item individual personality questionnaire. It was developed through construct validation procedures with a large psychometric research base, and continues to serve as a model for test construction in psychology (Anastasi 1982). Scales include: Abasement, Achievement, Affiliation, Aggression, Autonomy, Change, Cognitive Structure, Defendence, Dominance, Endurance, Exhibition, Harmavoidance, Impulsivity, Nurturance, Order, Play, Sentience, Social Recognition, Succorance, Understanding, and two scales examining response bias - Infrequency, and Desirability. It includes several individual trait subscales theoretically related to the family traits of cohesion and adaptability. Correlations

between the PRF and family measures of interest were not found in the literature, and will be examined presently.

The FILE (Family Inventory of Life Events and Changes, parent and adolescent versions; McCubbin, Patterson, & Wilson, 1982) provided a quick checklist of the accumulation of potentially stressful life events over the months immediately preceding the first visit and during the course of the first and second visits. The two inventories differ in the emphasis of items, for example the teenage version includes questions about drugs and school, while the parent version includes questions about debt or job loss. The overall reported reliability (Cronbach's alpha) is .72, while total test-retest reliability over four to five weeks is .80.

Procedure

In order to ensure questionnaires were completed independently and in order to ask/answer questions, subjects were visited in their homes. The author made all visits. Mother, father, and adolescent were gathered in one room and given consent forms to read (see Appendix B). The confidentiality explained on the consent was reiterated verbally, notably the lack of names on questionnaires, and the fact that responses would not be disclosed to anyone (including other family members) without permission. Subjects were also told that the questionnaires were not like school tests, as there were no right or wrong answers.

Subjects were encouraged to ask questions of the examiner, and to write down any comments or clarifications on the questionnaires. If a participant had difficulty reading or understanding some aspect of a questionnaire, the investigator and other family members helped as necessary. If family members attempted to discuss the answers, or to share finished questionnaires, they were asked to wait until the end of the session, so as to generate independent opinions. Based on this monitoring of the completion of the vast majority of questionnaires administered for this study, it is proposed that independent ratings were obtained from family members.

Questionnaire completion during the first visit took approximately two hours. Questionnaire completion order was identical for all participants: FACES, FSOC, PAC, DAS, PRF, and a demographic interview. The majority of sessions ended after the family and dyadic instruments were completed. Families were then left with the PRF and another personality measure not analyzed in the present investigation. They were given a stamped envelope to return the PRF by mail within 3 weeks.

A few family members asked to finish the individual questionnaiʳer on their own time, but did not return these instruments by mail. This partially accounts for the small differences in sample sizes seen across measures. Other

differences in cell sizes stem from the difficulty in following up some families (attrition).

After 6 months to a year (mean 8.5 months) a second home visit occurred. The second visit took approximately one hour for questionnaire completion. Again questionnaire order was fixed: Family Life Events Checklist, FACES, FSOC, PAC and DAS. At Time 2, family members generally expressed great difficulty in recalling any specific information from the first visit. The second visit therefore served as a distinct second time sample of self-report.

Seven families did not participate at follow-up. This small attrition did not appear to bias the Time 2 data in a particular direction. The Time 1 scores of these 7 families ranged both sides of the median on the primary dependent and demographic measures; a significant skew or bias distinguishing these families from those completing follow-up was not noted. The small number however did not allow an adequate statistical analysis.

RESULTS

First Marriage and Remarriage Norms

Descriptive Statistics

An analysis of z-scores, stem-leaf and boxplot graphs,
and measures of dispersion and central tendency indicated
that assumptions of normality of sampling distributions were
met. The range of values and shape of the sampling
distributions indicated that the subject recruitment process
(including screening of families with clinical involvement)
had been effective in eliminating excessive skew and/or
heterogeneity from the sample. As recommended by Tabachnick
and Fidell (1989), a further search for extreme univariate
and multivariate statistical outliers was undertaken. Only
one family (a nuclear family), had scores on the family and
dyadic variables that fell beyond three standard deviations.
This family was therefore dropped from the analysis.

Reliability

Internal consistency. As indicated in the method
section, published Cronbach alpha values are acceptable for
all instruments utilized. The FSOC and PAC are relatively
new measures. For purposes of the present analyses only
overall scale totals were utilized; these measures were not
broken down into subscales. The PAC Cronbach alpha was .892
for the Time 1 sample (n=149), .902 for Time 2 (n=143).
Internal consistency for the FSOC was .920, n=151, at Time

70

1; .928, n=143, at Time 2. FACES III Cronbach alpha for the Cohesion scale (the 10 odd numbered items seen in Appendix B) was .844, n=152, at Time 1; .846, n=143, at Time 2. In contrast, the Cronbach alpha for the Adaptability scale (the 10 even numbered items seen in Appendix B) was .666, n=152, at time 1; .723, n=143, at Time 2.

As can be seen, the internal consistency for our primary measures was high (above .84), with the exception of the FACES III adaptability subscale. This corroborates previously published results. Further reservations regarding this latter subscale are detailed below.

Cronbach alpha, a measure of the mean inter-item correlation on an instrument, may be susceptible to covariance due to the group differences obtained in the present investigation. In order to ensure that internal consistency was not overestimated due to these group differences, a separate analysis of Cronbach alpha was carried out in both the stepfamily and first marriage family groups. This analysis confirmed that alpha values were not inflated by group differences. For example, the alpha at Time 1 for FACES Cohesion in intact families (Group 1) was .85 (n=78), in stepfamilies (Group 2) .82 (n=74). FACES Adaptability alpha in intact families was .74, in stepfamilies .55. Time 1 Cronbach alpha values on the FSOC were .92 (n=78) for Group 1 and .91 (n=73) for Group 2. On

the PAC, the Time 1 internal consistency value was .88 for both family types.

Test-retest reliability. On average, Time I and Time 2 questionnaires were completed 8.5 months apart in both groups (sd=2.5). Subject report at Time 2 indicated no recollection of Time 1 answers, indicating that the second visit represented a distinct follow-up sample, and should not be compared to the usual 4 week test-retest figures published for the current measures.

It can be seen in Table 2 that scores demonstrated considerable reliability (r's from .606 to .888) across the two data collection time samples. Time 1-Time 2 correlations can be found on the diagonal in Table 2.

Associations Between Measures

Table 2 provides an overview of first degree linear relations between the measures for all subjects at Time 1. These zero-order correlations between self-report scores on various family relationship instruments were expected to be significant, and clearly the primary dependent measures are moderately to highly (and significantly) intercorrelated. The exception to this rule is the FACES Adaptability scale, which has a notably smaller relation to the other family and dyadic measures used in this study.

Insert Table 2 about here

Family and dyadic scales.   The correlations found in
Table 2 support previous examinations of the convergent and
discriminant validity of the current measures of interest.
First, note that over an 8-month period, family member
ratings show significant consistency (Table 2 on the
diagonal).   The spousal, parent-child and family level self-
report variables were found to relate at a moderate to high
level, with the exception of the FACES Adaptability measure.
FACES Adaptability scale correlations with the other dyadic
and family measures at both Time 1 and Time 2 were all below
$r=.4$, while the mean intercorrelation between the other
measures across the two samples was $r=.58$.

With the construction of FACES III, Olson had hoped to
make the Cohesion and Adaptability subscales orthogonal.
Presently these two subscales were related significantly and
identically on both data sets ($r=.25$, $p<.002$).   However,
their relationship with each other was lower than the
relationship Cohesion held with other measures in the
present study.   The FACES and FSOC measures of family
functioning were expected to correlate, as both measures tap
related areas of family functioning from different
theoretical perspectives.   The Cohesion subscale of FACES
was strongly correlated with Family Sense of Coherence (Time
1 $r=.73$), while the Adaptability measure was not (Time 1
$r=.09$).

Table 2

Zero-order Correlations Between Measures -- Entire Sample

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1)FACES cohesion	.792 (129)	.250 (152)	.727 (151)	.659 (100)	.618 (98)	.534 (98)
2)FACES adaptability	.250 (130)	.606 (129)	.088 (151)	.214 (100)	.037 (98)	.369 (98)
3)Family Sense of Coherence (FSOC)	.660 (129)	.130 (129)	.816 (127)	.717 (99)	.718 (98)	.570 (97)
4)Parent-Adolescent Communication mother-child	.477 (87)	.231 (87)	.611 (87)	.800 (86)	.597 (49)	.553 (50)
5)Parent-Adolescent Communication father-child	.500 (85)	.178 (85)	.680 (84)	.682 (44)	.856 (83)	.337 (48)
6)DAS marital adjustment	.436 (85)	.208 (85)	.596 (85)	.463 (44)	.413 (41)	.868 (83)

Notes.
1. N's in brackets differ due to family vs dyad level and missing data.

2. Time 1 sample is above diagonal, Time 2 sample is below diagonal, Time 1 with Time 2 is in bold face on the diagonal.

3. All measures intercorrelated significantly at $p<.01$ except for FACES Adaptability.

Barnes and Olson (1988) reported the relationship between the PAC and FACES scales to be significant. In the present study FACES Cohesion was moderately and significantly correlated with Parent-Adolescent Communication scores from both the mother-child and father-child pairs at Time 1 and Time 2 (see Table 2).

As can be seen in Table 2, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale also tended to be moderately and significantly correlated with the other family and dyadic self-report measures. Generally, marital adjustment and parent-child relations were found to be related, as in previous published research.

Family and individual measures. A theoretical analysis of the scales used indicated that while the dyadic and family level measures had been developed independently of the personality measurement literature, there appeared to be overlap in the constructs being measured. Specific associations had therefore been proposed in Hypothesis 8. One association of interest was that of the FACES Cohesion scale and the theoretically correlated measure of Autonomy on the Personality Research Form. When the relationship between the content scales of the PRF and FACES Cohesion were examined, there was considerable evidence that family and individual measures overlap in the expected manner. There are 20 PRF personality subscales, consequently only correlations obtaining a significance level below .002 were examined (.05/20=.0025).

In the first study, as predicted, high PRF Autonomy scores were most strongly related to low family Cohesion scores in the sample as a whole, $r(123)= -.36$, $p < .001$. The remaining correlations with FACES Cohesion in rank order, all significant ($p < .002$), were PRF Need for Order (.33), PRF Nurturance (.31), PRF Aggression (-.28), and PRF Endurance (.27). When these PRF scores were correlated with ratings of family Cohesion several months later, the correlation matrix was remarkably similar ($n=108$): Nurturance (.36), Need for Order (.32), Affiliation (.32), Autonomy (-.31), and Aggression (-.30).

The correlation of the FACES Adaptability scale with the PRF subscales was also examined. As with the FACES Adaptability correlations seen in Table 2, Adaptability was not found to be highly related to the PRF scales. At both Time 1 and Time 2, only one subscale, Nurturance ($r=.3$, $p<.001$), was significantly related to family Adaptability.

Family Sense of Coherence, which was developed from the individual stress and coping, personal health literature, also contained significant correlations ($p<.002$) with some of the expected PRF subscales: Endurance (.37), Impulsivity (-.35), Achievement (.34), Need for Order (.29), Aggression (-.29), Nurturance (.29), and Cognitive Structure (.27). At follow-up FSOC scores significantly related to PRF Defendence (-.31), Impulsivity (-.30), and Cognitive Structure (.28) subscale scores.

Intermember Concordance

When more than one member of a family is asked to
report on familial or dyadic relations, comparing answers
across family members is useful in determining family member
concordance. Within-family correlations were relatively
high in the present investigation, somewhat higher than
expected from published intermember correlations of family
self-report (e.g., Olson et al., 1985). As seen in Table 3,
mothers' and fathers' responses on FACES Cohesion, DAS
marital adjustment, and Family Sense of Coherence were
significantly correlated in both groups. Likewise, within
parent-child dyads, perceptions of Parent-Adolescent
Communication, Cohesion, and Family Sense of Coherence
tended to covary significantly.

FACES Adaptability is not noted in Table 3 as
concordance between family members was poor. All FACES
Adaptability intermember correlations between spouses and
between parents and children in both family groups failed to
reach statistical significance ($p > .05$). This again raises
reliability of measurement concerns for this subscale.

As predicted in Hypothesis 7, and as shown in Table 3,
the stepfamily intermember concordance on our primary
measures of FACES Cohesion, FSOC, DAS, and PAC (mean
intercorrelation = .505), was not as striking as the
intermember covariation in the intact nuclear families (mean
intercorrelation = .828). This lowered stepfamily

intermember concordance was not found to be statistically significant, and indeed concordance in both family structures was as high as that reported in other research. Newly forming families, having lived together less than one year, had not been expected to covary as highly in their self-report.

Insert Table 3 about here

Group Mean Scores

Table 4 provides a listing of the family means and standard deviations on the primary measures used in this study. The results will at times be analyzed by family cells (26 nuclear and 25 stepfamilies), while at times data from various dyads (parent-child; marital) or all data from the 153 individual subjects (3 members of each family) will be utilized. Slight variations in cell sizes result from a small amount of missing data on some questionnaires. Note that these descriptive statistics indicate that the volunteer families in the present study responded similarly to published norms for volunteer nonclinical families.

Insert Table 4 about here

Table 3

Time 1 Significant Self-report Concordance Within Families

Group 1   Intact first marriage families

Measure*	Dyad	Pearson r	p	n
DAS	father-mother	.709	.001	25
FSOC	father-mother	.714	.001	26
FACES Cohesion	father-mother	.557	.002	26
PAC	teen-mother	.553	.002	25
PAC	teen-father	.567	.002	24
FSOC	teen-mother	.674	.001	26
FSOC	teen-father	.540	.002	26
FACES Cohesion	teen-mother	.607	.001	26
FACES Cohesion	teen-father	.726	.001	26

Group 2   Stepfamilies

DAS	father-mother	.429	.020	23
FSOC	father-mother	.589	.002	23
FACES Cohesion	father-mother	.609	.001	24
PAC	teen-mother	.378	.034	24
PAC	teen-father	.631	.001	23
FSOC	teen-mother	.500	.006	24
FSOC	teen-father	.459	.012	24
FACES Cohesion	teen-mother	.585	.001	25
FACES Cohesion	teen-father	.366	.039	24

* Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), Family Sense of Coherence Scale (FSOC),
Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES), and the
Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (PAC).

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Major Variables by Group and Time

	TIME 1 51 families 153 individuals				TIME 2 43 families 129 individuals			
Measure	Intact Family		Stepfamily		Intact Family		Stepfamily	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
FACES Cohesion	37.5	8.8 *	34.3	6.7	37.2	5.8	34.9	6.8
FACES Adaptability	27.4	6.2	27.1	4.8	25.9	6.1	26.1	4.8
Ideal Cohesion	42.3	5.0 *	40.2	5.3	41.9	5.2	39.4	6.0
Ideal Adaptability	32.9	5.4	32.9	5.1	31.6	4.8	32.5	4.7
Family Sense of Coherence	141.7	21.5 *	132.3	20.9	144.5	19.7 *	132.5	20.7
PAC mothers	83.1	10.2 *	73.9	12.2	81.3	11.6	74.8	15.2
PAC fathers	78.6	11.2 *	68.9	12.8	75.3	12.1	71.4	11.6
PAC teens re mother	72.8	12.5 *	66.0	11.2	75.0	10.6	70.0	13.8
PAC teens re father	69.9	15.3 *	59.7	13.8	72.6	13.1 *	63.1	16.5
DAS scores	113.8	14.6	119.2	12.6	112.9	18.9	116.9	13.2

Notes.
1. * indicates significant F for group mean differences p <.06.
2. Family member was a within subjects variable on all analyses (see Table 6).
3. Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES), Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (PAC), Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS).

First Marriage versus Remarriage Comparison

Much confusion exists in the literature on how best to analyze data collected from multiple family members. Several reviews of family studies methodology were found in the literature (Galligan, 1982; Huston & Robins, 1982; Miller, Rollins, & Thomas, 1982), including the specific challenges of researching the remarried (Esses & Campbell, 1984). All noted the problem of dependency or multicollinearity between family members. Some authors suggested that data should be collapsed across family members, but this belies the fact that family member scores are often found to differ in a distinct manner. None of these reviews adequately addressed the use of blocking or treating family member as a within-subjects variable during analysis of variance procedures. In analyzing mean differences across family structure and within families, the investigations that most closely parallel this study conflict in their choice of design. For example Peek et al. (1988) utilized a two-way between-groups analysis (family type by sex (mother or father)), while Pink and Wampler (1985) utilized a repeated measures approach, treating family member as a blocking factor. They argued that family members were expected to be more similar to each other than to others.

Blocking on family member may increase the strength of our hypothesis testing by reducing error variance but

presently it also greatly reduced degrees of freedom (e.g., 75 individuals versus 25 family blocks) and therefore statistical power. It was decided however that treating family members as a within-subjects factor better controlled for dependency between these scores. A visual depiction of the design of the study can be found in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

It should be noted that for all analyses, tests for homogeneity of variance and homogeneity of the variance-covariance matrices indicated that the assumptions necessary to proceed with a linear analysis of variance were not violated.

The specific hypotheses regarding family type and family member were analyzed separately for each measure. Initially Time 1 analyses were carried out. Attrition reduced the statistical power of the follow-up analyses, and therefore a power analysis will be presented below. Note that the direction of the mean scores at follow-up all supported the results of the Time 1 analyses (see Table 4). However, given their reduced statistical power the emphasis here will be on the Time 1 results. Time 2 and longitudinal data will be analyzed following the Time 1 data analysis.

Figure 3. Time 1 intermember mean Family
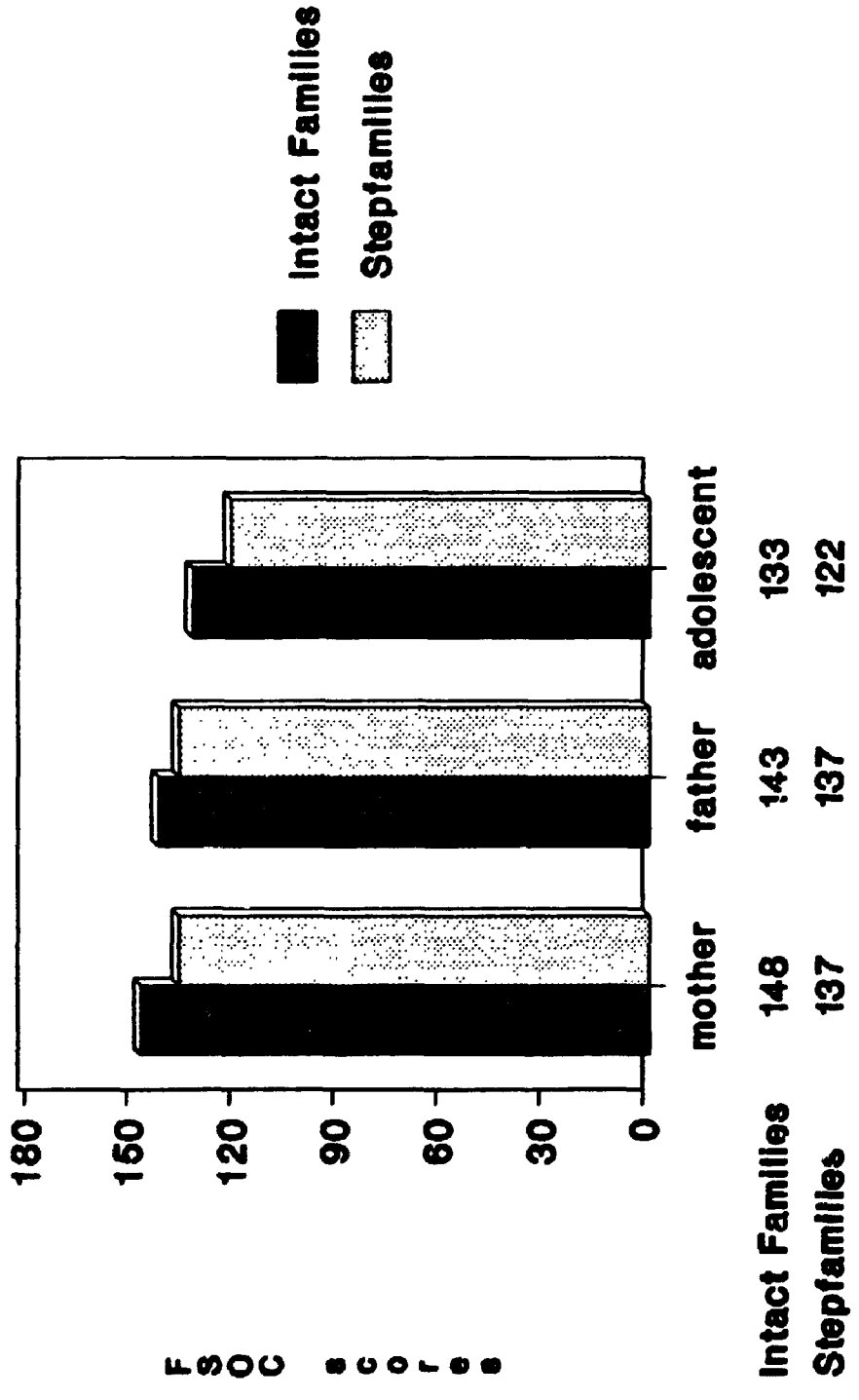
Sense of Coherence scores across groups*

	mother	father	adolescent
Intact Families	148	143	133
Stepfamilies	137	137	122

* means differ significantly between
family groups and between family members

■ Intact Families

☐ Stepfamilies

83

Figure 1

Research Design

Data collected at Time 1 and repeated again at Time 2:

A mixed between (2 groups) by within (3 family members) by within (2 time periods) model best describes the overall quasi-experimental design. Analyses of mean scores between the two family groups, within family members, and on repeated measures over time were undertaken. Time 1 analyses were undertaken first, with the reduced (due to attrition) follow-up sample analyzed subsequently.

Self-reported Family Relations Across Groups at Time 1

Using data from all family members, ANOVA analyses comparing intact family and stepfamily FACES scores and FSOC scores did not find significant family type by family member interactions. The lack of interaction indicates that while mother, father, and child scores differed significantly in value, their relationship across family structure was identical, with intact family member scores always ranking higher than the counterpart stepfamily member scores in the same manner. This relationship and the mean scores are depicted in Figures 2 and 3.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Insert Figure 3 about here

Hypothesis 1: FACES Cohesion. A mixed model univariate analysis of variance comparing family type (Group 1 intact first marriage versus Group 2 stepfamily) by family member (father, mother, adolescent) was carried out on family cohesion as reported on the first visit. On FACES real Cohesion, stepfamily members as a whole reported less family cohesion, Group 1 M = 37.5 sd = 6.6, Group 2 M = 34.3 sd = 6.7, F (1,47) = 4.11, p = .05, as predicted. As depicted in Figure 2, higher Cohesion scores were reported by all intact

Figure 2. Time 1 intermember mean FACES

Cohesion scores across family groups *

	mother	father	adolescent
Intact Families	38.69	37.23	36.58
Stepfamilies	35.96	34.96	32.04

■ Intact Families

□ Stepfamilies
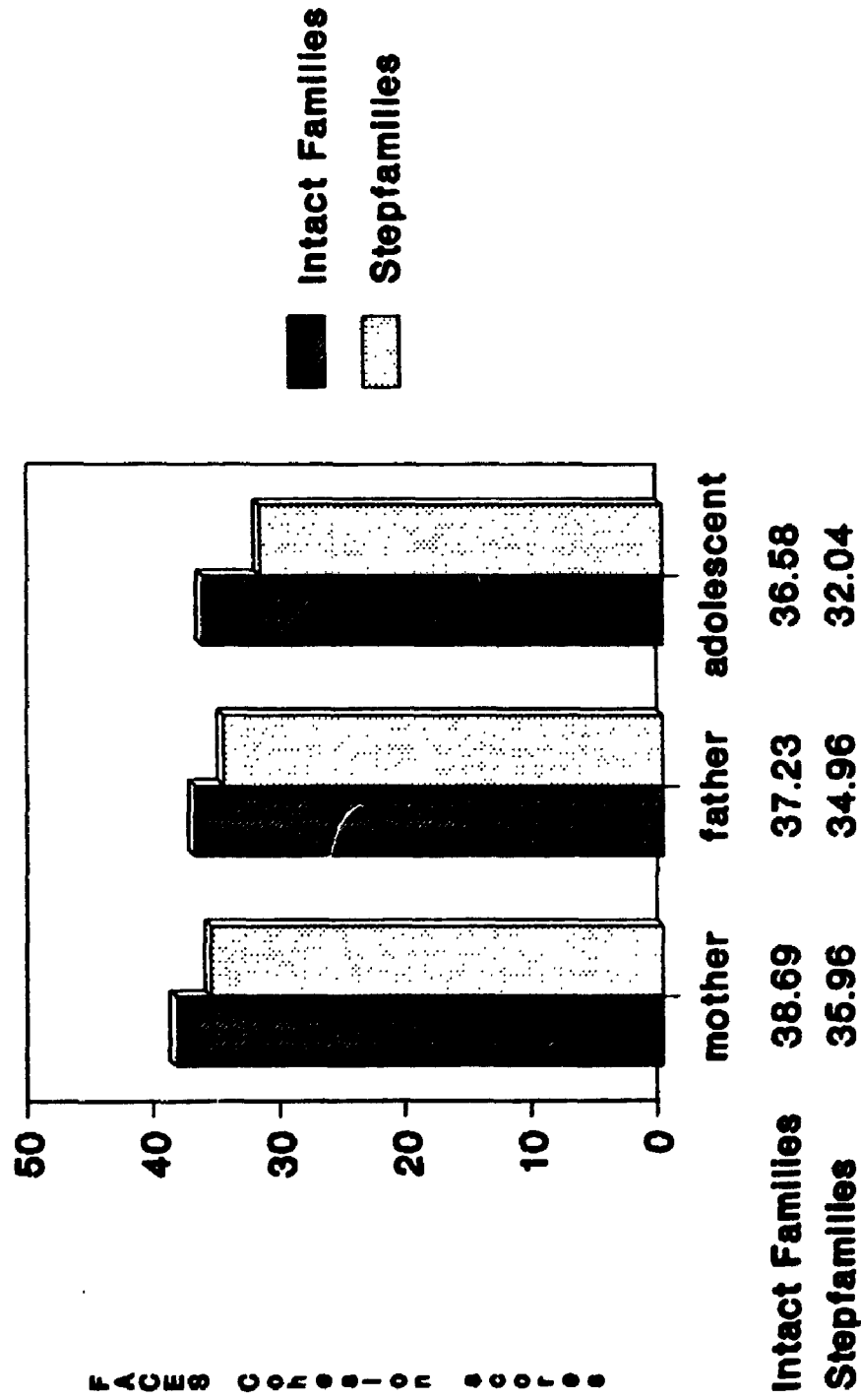
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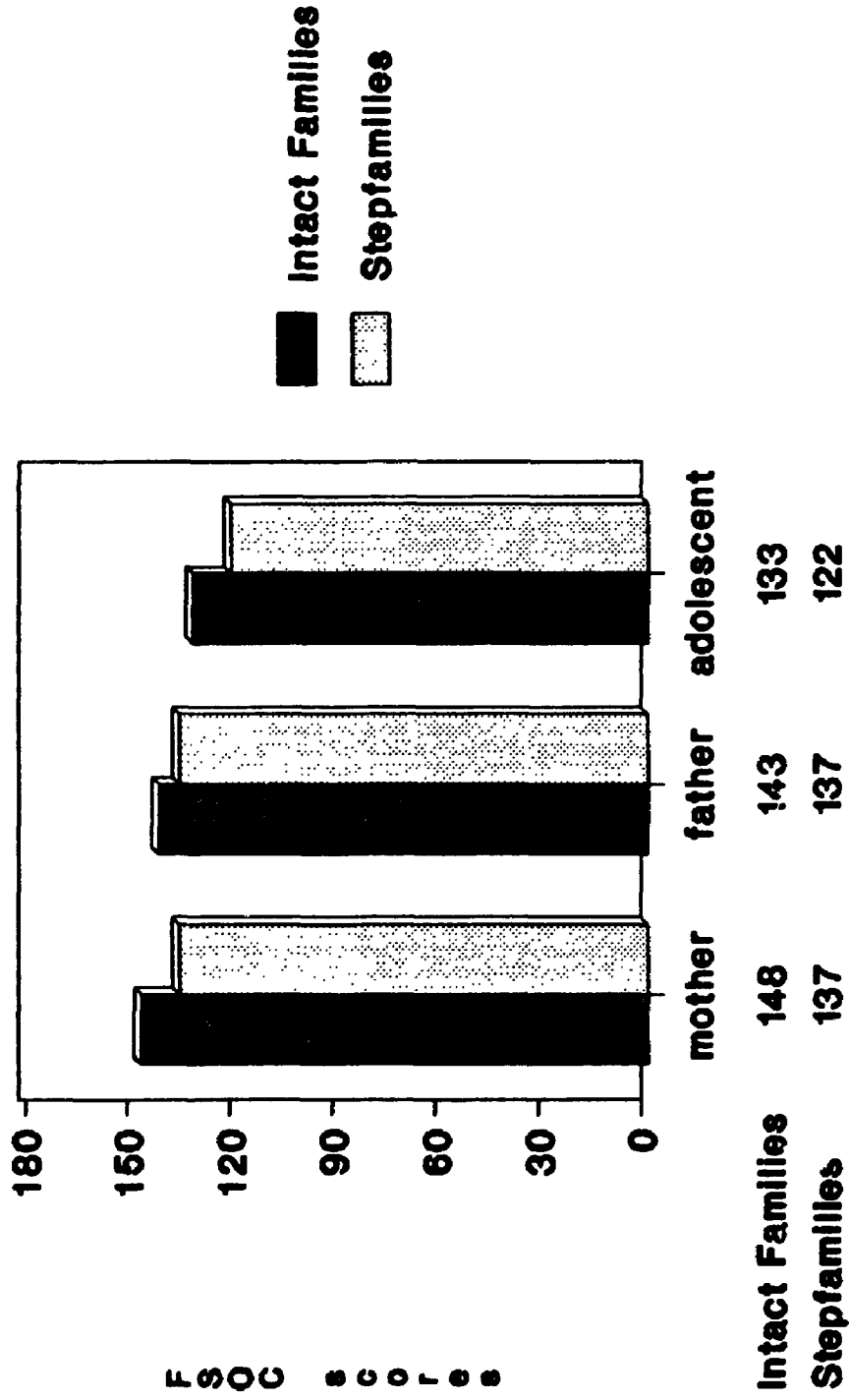
* means differ significantly between
family groups and between family members

family members. The significant family group differences on the ANOVA were further analyzed by individual planned one tailed t-tests comparing mothers, fathers, and teenagers from each family structure. When examined separately, the lower stepfamily scores were statistically significant for mothers: Group 1 M = 38.69 sd = 5.36, Group 2 M = 35.96 sd = 6.27, $t(49)$ = 1.68, $p=.05$, and teenagers: Group 1 M = 36.58 sd = 7.8, Group 2 M = 32.04 sd = 7.3 $t(49)$ = 2.14, $p=.02$, but not for fathers: Group 1 M = 37.23 sd = 6.41, Group 2 M = 34.96 sd = 6.22, $t(48)$ = 1.27, $p=.10$.

With family member treated as a blocking variable, significant differences in the report of mother, father, and adolescent were found (see "Hypothesis 7: Intermember Differences" section below).

Hypothesis 2: FACES Adaptability. As is evident from the group means in Table 4, FACES Adaptability scores did not differ across family structure. Given the concerns noted with the internal consistency, convergent validity, and intermember concordance of the FACES Adaptability subscale, and the univariate repeated measures differences found on the other two family scales, it is proposed that subsequent analyses can focus on group differences for Family Cohesion and Family Sense of Coherence, retaining a repeated measures approach for family member.

Hypothesis 3: Family Sense of Coherence. A between (family groups) by within (family members) ANOVA of Time 1

FSOC scores showed that intact families on average (M = 141.7; sd = 21.5) expressed a greater sense of family coherence than did stepfamilies (M = 132.3; sd = 21), as predicted, F (1,47) = 3.94, p = .05. Figure 3 indicates that the higher sense of coherence in first marriage family report held true across multiple family members. The planned one tailed individual analyses of the family member mean FSOC scores in Figure 3 indicated that the mothers in intact and stepfamilies differed most in their sense of coherence t(48) = 2.09, p=.02. Teenagers in intact families also tended to hold a greater sense of their family's ability to cope than did the comparison stepfamily adolescent t(49) = 1.67, p=.05, while the distinction between fathers in each family type was not statistically significant, t(48) = 1.08, p=.14.

Differences between family member self-report, to be discussed in detail below, consistently arose, corroborating other research. Correlations between family member self-report in this study were significant, yet family member differences in mean scores were predictable. Clearly family member report on within-family issues is not independent and blocking on family member would appear to safeguard this concern.

Hypothesis 4: Family ideals. A between (2 groups) by within (3 members) MANOVA on family ideals on the FACES-ideal Cohesion and Adaptability scales was undertaken. In

accord with previous research, which indicated no difference between ideals in stepfamilies and nuclear families, no difference according to Wilks' criterion was found on a MANOVA, $F(2,47) = 2.47$, $p > .1$. However in keeping with the logic that the Adaptability subscale is suspect, a univariate test indicated stepfamilies overall did report less ideal Cohesion, Group 1 $M = 42.28$ $sd = 5.0$, Group 2 $M = 40.19$ $sd = 5.26$, $F(1,48) = 4.68$, $p=.035$. The groups did not differ significantly on ideal Adaptability (Group 1 $M = 32.7$, Group 2 $M = 32.6$).

Family members from both groups did express the ideal of greater family cohesion and adaptability, with FACES ideal scores higher than real scores on average (see Table 4). This ideal-real distinction may depict family member's desire for greater closeness and the desire for more flexibility in rule setting.

Interestingly, the mean ideal-real Cohesion difference for all family members (the absolute value of FACES real minus FACES ideal scores), which is thought by Olson et al. (1982) to represent family satisfaction, was virtually identical for the two groups (see Table 4). In other words the lowered real Cohesion scores found in stepfamilies were matched by the lowered ideal scores found in stepfamilies. The relative value of desire for increase in cohesion was the same across the two family structures. In contrast, Pink and Wampler (1985) had found stepfamilies desired FACES

1I Cohesion scores at the nuclear family norm level, thus signifying a higher level of dissatisfaction.

Time 1 summary. As predicted, self-report of family cohesion and family sense of coherence was significantly different across newly remarried stepfamilies and long term intact families. Intact family means were higher in all family members, however the distinction between self-report from fathers in first and remarriage families was not statistically significant when analyzed separately. As in previous research the lower stepfamily Cohesion scores fell above the clinical range of family disengagement. Olson et al. (1985) classify self-report from families with adolescents scoring below a raw score of 31 on FACES III Cohesion as falling into the disengaged category. Presently the mean Cohesion scores in both groups fell above this c?? cut-off score.

All subjects tended on average to idealized greater family cohesion and adaptability. It was also found that the stepfamily Cohesion ideal was lower than the ideal Cohesion level of intact families, possibly indicating a realistic expectation of lowered cohesion early into family formation.

Family Follow-up (Time 2 data)

Six to 12 months after the initial data collection 44 of the families participated in a follow-up home visit, with 39 of these families containing no missing data at Time 1 or

Time 2. The above analyses were repeated, adding time as a within-subjects factor.

As can be seen in Table 4, mean scores changed very little at Time 2. Indeed when time was analyzed as a repeated measures factor no significant differences were found over time on any of the questionnaires. Again interaction effects were not significant, including the higher order interactions between time, member, and group.

Statistical power. The evaluation of the data from the perspective of a longitudinal design decreases the power of the analyses, as the extra dependent measures (repeated at Time 2) decrease the degrees of freedom. The statistical power of the follow-up was also reduced due to subject attrition. For example at Time 1 the effect size ($\underline{ES}$) of the group difference on family Cohesion was approximately $\underline{ES}$ = .5 (37.5 - 34.3 /6.65). This is considered a medium effect size (much higher than the average effect size analyzing individual mental health outcome in children of stepfamilies). With this effect size, approximately 33% of the area of the 2 distributions is not overlapped (Cohen, 1988). If this difference had been analyzed as a simple one-tailed $\underline{t}$-test over 25 families in each group, the power, or chance of rejecting the null hypothesis at the .05 level, would be 54%. Likewise on the FSOC at Time 1, a moderate $\underline{ES}$ = .44, has a power of approximately 47%. At Time 2, effect size values were again determined for Cohesion $\underline{ES}$ =

.38, anu Family Sense of Coherence $\underline{ES}$ = .59. Power at Time 2, when comparing the 24 nuclear families and 20 stepfamilies, reduced to 35% on rejecting the hypothesis that stepfamily-intact family reported Cohesion would not differ. This indicated that in the reduced follow-up sample, a weak test of the family group difference on FACES Cohesion was carried out. The power for the FSOC Time 2 analysis remained relatively strong at 61%.

The sample attrition and reduction in degrees of freedom over the longitudinal design tended to weaken the statistical power of the analysis. In other words, a larger effect size would be necessary to reject the null hypothesis at Time 2. Given these findings regarding the statistical power of our analyses, we would anticipate that the FSOC family difference would hold over time, while at Time 2 the significance of the FACES Cohesion group difference would be weakened.

Time 2 results. Time 1 and Time 2 scores did not differ significantly in the families that completed the follow-up, with stepfamilies continuing to score lower on self-report of FACES Cohesion and Family Sense of Coherence. Although scores did not differ significantly over time, between (family types) by within (family members) by within (times) ANOVA's were carried out to determine if the statistical significance of these group differences would hold in the reduced longitudinal sample.

Hypothesis 1, follow-up on FACES Cohesion. The overall
analysis of family cohesion on two occasions reported across
groups did not meet conservative control of type I error,
$F(1,39)=2.9$, $p=.09$. Blocking on family member remained
significant, Wilks' criterion $F(2,38)=7.68$, $p=.002$; and as
noted time was not a significant factor, $F(1,39)=.15$, $p>.6$.

Hypothesis 3, follow-up on Family Sense of Coherence.
The significance of the overall analysis of Family Sense of
Coherence reported across groups remained virtually the same
in the full 2x3x2 mixed design, $F(1,37)=3.87$, $p=.057$; again
with no significant time $F(1,37)=.21$, $p>.6$, or interaction
effects.

Hypothesis 4, follow-up on family ideals. Time 2 ideal
family Cohesion scores also did not differ significantly
from Time 1 scores $F(1,37)=.84$, $p>.4$. The overall 2x3x2
repeated measures analysis on the reduced sample of families
completing both Time 1 and Time 2 data, showed that over two
occasions stepfamilies tended to report lower ideal
cohesion, $F(1,37)=3.88$, $p=.056$. When only follow-up data
were analyzed, the stepfamily ideals remained lower but not
significantly different ($p=.1$) at a conservative type I
error rate. In a within-subjects analysis, family members
differed in their reported ideal cohesion at Time 2, Wilks'
$F(2,36)=4.57$, $p=.017$.

Family members' reported satisfaction with family cohesion (ideal minus real scores) did not differ between groups again at Time 2.

Time 2 summary. The major hypotheses that stepfamily members would report lowered levels of family cohesion and family sense of coherence were supported. No group difference on FACES Adaptability scores was found. Little change in scores was witnessed over the eight month follow-up, although the lowered stepfamily cohesion did not reach statistical significance at Time 2, due in part to a decrease in statistical power. Stepfamily members did report significantly lower FACES ideal-Cohesion scores. Stepfamily members and intact family members did not differ on family satisfaction, taken as the absolute difference between real and ideal evaluations of family cohesion.

Dyadic Relations

Hypothesis 5: Marital adjustment. The stepfamilies in the present investigation were within the first year living together, while the first marriage couples had been together on average 17 years. In comparing intact first marriage families with adolescents and newly forming stepfamilies with adolescents it was predicted that there would be no difference on marital satisfaction. Looking at Table 4 it is evident that the newly married couples did tend to report higher Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) scores. These group differences were not found to be statistically

significant at Time 1, $F(1,46)=2.68$, $p>.1$. Husbands and wives were treated as a within subjects or blocking effect, and their report did not differ significantly, husbands ($M = 115.85$, $sd = 14.53$), wives ($M = 116.94$, $sd = 13.30$).

Marital follow-up. At follow-up both time and sex were treated as within subject measures. Again the stepfamily marital adjustment scores were not found to be significantly higher, $F(1,38)=1.42$, $p>.2$. As at Time 1 alone, no significant differences were found for husband and wife $F(1,38)=.68$, $p>.4$. There was some tendency for marital adjustment scores to change over time $F(1,38)=2.84$, $p=.1$, which appeared to be accounted for by lower DAS scores after the remarried couple was several months into remarriage (the honeymoon was ending). Again no higher order interactions were significant. It should be noted that the DAS means of each group fell well within the nonclinical range (above 100).

Hypothesis 6: Parent-child communication. Planned repeated measures univariate F tests examining combined parent and child reports indicated that poorer Parent-Adolescent Communication (PAC) scores were reported in stepfamilies. The mean father-child relationship in stepfamilies ($M = 64.29$ $sd = 14$) was poorer than reported in nuclear families ($M = 73.24$ $sd = 13.7$), $F(1,45) = 6.12$, $p = .017$ at Time 1. The mean mother-child relationship PAC score in stepfamilies ($M = 70.02$ $sd = 12.27$) was also lower

by comparison to first marriage families (M = 78.10 sd = 12.38), $F(1,45)$ = 6.35, p = .015 at Time 1. This demonstrated significant effect of comparing intact versus stepfamily parent-child communication (Group 1 versus 2), was further analyzed in order to specify biological and step-relations. Group 2 was subdivided into stepfather and stepmother relations, then further subdivided into an analysis of sons and daughters. Specific findings with regard to PAC scores from each side of the parent-child dyad can be found in Table 5.

In Table 5 all a priori pairwise predictions utilized a one-tailed t test (i.e., that step-relations would report poorer communication with each other). Two-tailed tests were used regarding biological parent-child relations across the two groups. While the biological parent-child relationship has been reported to suffer after a divorce, and a lack of cohesion has been observed in natural parent-child relations in stepfamilies (Vuchinich et al., 1991), it was uncertain what the self-report of this relationship would be shortly after remarriage.

Insert Table 5 about here

As predicted, stepfather-stepchild relations were reported to be less open with more problems in communication. At Time 1, intact family biological fathers

reported a significantly better relationship with their teenager (in what appears as a palpable difference of 9 points on the PAC group mean scores). Referring to Table 5, this was true of the father's reported PAC $t(40)=2.57$, $p=.007$; and true of the teenager's report of the relationship, $t(40)=2.51$, $p=.008$. The attainment of conservative statistical significance is important (i.e., $p<.01$), given that multiple predicted comparisons were utilized after the ANOVA. Pink and Wampler (1985) reported fathers and stepfathers differed significantly on the PAC, while teens in the two families did not meet their conservative test of significance required for multiple comparisons, although the effect size of their group difference ($t(54) = 2.3$, $p <.03$) was remarkably similar to that found presently. When examined in this context, there would appear to be consistent evidence that both sides of the generational dyad report poorer step-relations.

As seen in Table 5 only seven stepmother families volunteered for this study. The biological fathers in these stepfamilies did not report different relations with their teenagers than biological fathers in intact families. The adolescents in stepmother families did tend to report more problematic communication with their biological fathers, but not significantly so given the small sample. Like the male stepparents, these seven stepmothers did express PAC scores 9 points lower on average than the biological intact family

Table 5

Time 1 Parent-Adolescent Communication Scores

(low score represents less open and more problematic communication)

Respondent	N	Group Mean	SD	t value (p)
Grp 1 fathers	25	76.60	11.20	
vs				2.57 (.007)
Grp 2 stepfathers	17	67.06	12.64	
Grp 2 biofathers	7	73.43	13.01	.64 (n.s.) ▪
Grp 1 mothers	26	83.15	10.16	
vs				1.77 (.043)
Grp 2 stepmothers	7	74.57	15.55	
Grp 2 biomothers	18	73.61	11.16	2.94 (.005) ▪
Grp 1 teens re dad	25	69.88	15.31	
vs				2.51 (.008) ᵇ
Grp 2 teens re stepdad	17	58.82	11.77	
Grp 2 teens re biodad	7	61.71	18.90	1.19 (n.s.) ▪
Grp 1 teens re mom	25	72.84	12.50	
vs				0.8 (n.s.)
Grp 2 teens re stepmom	7	68.71	10.68	
Grp 2 teens re biomom	17	64.88	11.54	2.09 (.043) ▪

▪ The biological parent-child relations in the two groups were analyzed using a planned two-tailed t-test (the step-relations comparison to intact relations is a planned one tailed t-test).

ᵇ The lowered teen report of communication with stepfather was the only comparison to retain similar conservative statistical significance during the follow-up investigation eight months later.

mothers ($t(31)=1.77$, $p=.043$). The small number of
stepmother families in the study however precluded a good
test of the representativeness and statistical significance
of this difference. The adolescents in these stepfamilies
reported their relationship with their stepmother to be 4
points lower on the PAC than first marriage mother-child
relations (not significant).

To summarize, early into remarriage, stepfamily versus
nuclear family parent-child communication differences were
reported on a communication scale by both parents and
teenagers. Is all of the between group variance in parent-
child communication accounted for by the poorer step-
relations? Not entirely. Clearly both father and
adolescent report of stepfather-stepchild relations
indicated less open and more problematic communication.
However in the present sample the biological mother-child
relationship in stepfather families was also reported to be
less open and more problematic than in intact families.
Reported natural parent-child relations in the two groups
did differ (again signifying the lack of an interaction
effect in the overall ANOVA analyses). First marriage
biological mothers reported higher (better communication)
PAC scores than did biological mothers from Group 2,
$t(42)=2.94$, $p=.005$, in a two-tailed test as no directional
hypothesis was made (see Table 5 preamble). In this
exploratory analysis, adolescents in stepfamilies also

tended to report poorer relations with their biological mother, but did not differ from the intact family teen report utilizing a conservative pairwise significance level, $t(40) = 2.09$, $p = .043$ (two-tailed t-test).

It should be noted that stepteens and first marriage teens did not appear to differ on any sampling factors that could account for this finding. The groups did not differ in mean child age (both groups at 14), nor was age even significantly related to adolescent-mother PAC scores. This effect on the biological parent-child relationship appears to be attributable to some aspect of the remarriage or divorce. Whether this effect has extended from the single parent-child relationship or has arisen due to the intrusion of the new adult partner in the home is unknown.

The sex of the adolescent is not indicated in Table 5 because it was not a significant factor in parent-child relations when adolescent sex differences among the target children were examined. Parent-adolescent communication was not reported to be significantly different across sons and daughters. It appeared that teenage daughters reported the poorest relationship with their mothers. Small cell sizes precluded a more fine grained analysis of any possible sex by group interaction. On the FSOC, boys and girls did differ in the study as a whole, with adolescent boys ($M = 132.9$, $sd = 22.4$) expressing a greater sense of family

coherence than girls (M = 119.1, sd = 23.3), F (1,49) = 4.33, p = .04. There were no adolescent sex effects on the FACES scales.

Parent-child follow-up. Mean differences in the parent-child relationship in stepfamilies versus intact families remained evident at follow-up, however were less striking. Time 2 PAC scores were not found to differ significantly from the Time 1 PAC scores on a mixed model analysis. While some changes in PAC scores can be seen in Time 1 versus Time 2 scores in Table 4, the father-child report of their relationship did not alter over time, $F(1,38)$ = 1.81, p >.18, nor did the mother and child report, $F(1,40)$ = 0.56, p >.45.

Statistical power. A power analysis (Cohen, 1988) of the stepfamily-intact family reporting differences on parent-adolescent communication, had indicated the following effect sizes (ES) and power values (with p<.05, n = 25) at Time 1: PAC mothers ES = .83 power = 90%, PAC fathers ES =.64 power = 72%, PAC teenagers regarding their mothers ES = .58 power = 65%, PAC teenagers regarding their fathers ES = .70 power = 79%. Clearly these analyses all provide a good test for rejecting the hypothesis that stepfamilies and intact families have identical parent-child communication. At Time 2 (p<.05, n = 22) the same analyses revealed: PAC mothers ES = .48 power = 47%, PAC fathers ES = .33 power = 30%, PAC teenagers regarding their mothers ES = .40 power =

37%, PAC teenagers regarding their fathers ES = .64 power = 68%. As can be seen in Table 4 and from the effect sizes, while family report was not found to alter over time in a statistically significant manner, small mean score changes over time were in the direction of reducing effect size (regression to the mean). At times this reduction in effect size was noteworthy (e.g., PAC fathers), and the chance that our follow-up results would replicate the statistical significance of the initial findings was lowered. When the reduced effect sizes are combined with a small reduction in sample size, the chance of rejecting the null hypothesis in some of the Time 2 analyses is poor (the exception is child report of father). The reduction in effect size appeared to be equally relevant to the power determination as the subject attrition.

Parent-child communication at Time 2. Overall a 2 (family group) x 2 (father-child) x 2 (time) analysis on the Parent-Adolescent Communication scale indicated that in the longitudinal sample, stepfamily fathers and adolescents reported poorer communication, $F(1,38)=5.34$, $p=.026$. In examining father and child report at Time 2 alone, the repeated measures univariate test found a weakened stepfamily versus first marriage family mean difference $F(1,40)=3.29$, $p=.077$. The overall 2x2x2 mother-child longitudinal analysis also found the significant difference across family types, $F(1,40)=6.19$, $p=.017$. Again at Time 2

alone the combined mother-child score difference in first
and remarriage families was weakened, $F(1,42)=3.01$, $p=.09$.
An analysis of the mean PAC scores at Time 2, indicate that
while Time 1 and 2 scores were not found to differ
significantly, there was a tendency at Time 2 for the group
differences to lessen (see Table 4). Improved mean
communication scores were reported in stepfamilies at
follow-up, however this change over time was not
significant. When this reduction in group differences was
combined with reduced sample size, Time 2 PAC scores did not
achieve conservative significance on their own. Intact
family scores appeared to show less movement toward the
grand mean, however this was not further analyzed because
the main effect for time was not significant.

In order to replicate the analyses of the Time 1
sample, the follow-up data were analyzed separately with
planned t-tests in order to tease out stepfather versus
stepmother effects. The statistical analysis of stepmother-
stepchild relations should be reviewed with extreme caution
due to the small sample size. With the sample attrition and
(nonsignificant) lessening of group differences seen at
follow-up, only the most powerful analysis held conservative
significance on the planned comparisons at follow-up.
Adolescents continued to report poorer relations with their
stepfathers ($M = 61.1$, $sd = 14.5$), than did intact family

adolescents (M = 72.6, sd = 13.1), $t(36)$=2.51, p=.008 at Time 2.

The poorer communication reported by biological mothers in stepfamilies at Time 1 did not hold true at Time 2, (Group 1 M = 81.3, sd=11.6; Group 2 M = 78.2 sd=10.8; $t(36)$ = .82, p >.4). While the nonsignificant Time effect precludes further analysis, this lack of a biological mother difference in groups at Time 2 did not appear to be solely due to reduction in sample size, the group difference (effect size) did lessen somewhat.

Controlling for Life Stress

This and previous investigations of stepfamily self-report have used demographically similar nuclear control groups to control for extrafamilial factors that might affect family functioning. Presently demographic factors did not differ statistically in the two groups, nor was a potential covariate such as income found to correlate significantly with our primary constructs of interest (e.g., income and family cohesion r = .16). Waldren et al. (1990) noted that families in the Peek et al. (1988) sample differed in life event changes experienced, with stepfamilies undergoing more potentially stressful circumstances. They did not however covary on life events in their ANOVA, although reported a significant relationship between life events and placement on the circumplex grid. Based on this literature, an re-analysis of the group mean

differences on family self-report was undertaken using life events as a covariate.

Presently, stepfamily life event changes scores did tend to be higher, but not at a statistically significant level. The family group mean difference on potentially stressful life events as measured by the Family Life Events Checklist (FILE) was not significant, $F(1,41)=1.82$, $p>.1$. Replicating Waldren et al. (1990) however, family life events and changes that took place over the previous one year were found to be negatively correlated with family cohesion and sense of coherence. For example for adolescents, FACES real Cohesion scores and the accumulation of family life events correlated, $r= -.31$, $p = .024$, while the correlation between the FSOC and the accumulation of family life events was $r= -.30$, $p = .026$. The checklist of potentially stressful life events experienced over the course of the study was therefore entered as a covariate in analyzing those families that successfully completed both Time 1 and Time 2 data collection. The mixed model analyses on family Cohesion, Family Sense of Coherence, and on Parent-Adolescent Communication were repeated with this covariate. The assumption of no covariate by group interaction was not violated. Given that the within-subjects factor of family member was significant on our major dependent family measures, each family member's own life events checklist served as his or her covariate.

Controlling for reported family life events was found to affect the test of group mean differences. A direct comparison of the ANOVA and ANCOVA results indicates that when group means were statistically adjusted to be equivalent on a measure of intrafamilial and extrafamilial life events, the stepfamily versus intact family differences on self-report diminished. For example with FILE scores controlled for statistically, the overall 2x3x2 analysis of family Cohesion as reported by all family members on two occasions was found to be $E(1,38)= 1.23$, $p>.2$ (without covariate $E(1,39) = 2.9$, $p=.09$). The same held true when FILE scores were covaried out of the assessment of group differences on Family Sense of Coherence, $E(1,36)= 1.18$, $p>.2$ (without covariate $p=.05$).

The differences in parent-adolescent communication reported across family structure were also reanalyzed using Family Life Events scores as a covariate. Again covarying out life events appeared to have considerable effect. Father and child report of poorer communication in stepfamilies (without covariate $E(1,38)= 5.3$, $p=.026$), was partially accounted for by FILE scores as indicated by the adjusted mean difference ($E(1,36)= 3.1$, $p=.08$). Likewise mother and child group differences on PAC scores ($E(1,38)= 5.1$, $p=.03$), were affected by covarying on FILE ($E(1,36)= 2.7$, $p=.11$). Note that the use of a covariate does reduce power by lowering the degrees of freedom.

It is important to note that FILE scores account for both intrafamilial and extrafamilial stressors. As expected, reported accumulation of stressful life events is related to self-report of family functioning, and appears to account for some of the variability in self-report of family functioning seen across family structures.

Hypothesis 7: Intermember Differences

There was an overall within-subjects significant main effect for family member on the repeated measures multivariate analysis of FACES Cohesion, FACES Adaptability and FSOC, using Wilk's criterion $E(6,42)=6.88$, $p<.001$. Specific a priori predictions regarding member differences in self-report of family relations across all families had been made. Recall that there were no group by member interactions. The intrafamilial mean differences in reporting were the same in nuclear families and stepfamilies, so the intermember comparison examines all subjects (collapsed across groups).

It was predicted (Pink & Wampler, 1985) that mothers would tend to wish for more cohesion and see more cohesion, with adolescents wanting the least cohesion and seeing the least cohesion. This was supported (see Table 6). For family Adaptability and Family Sense of Coherence, significant univariate differences were also found among family members. Teenagers reported a notably lower sense of family coherence (see Table 6). On FACES Adaptability,

teenagers reported the most flexibility within the family and fathers the least (see Table 6). These intermember differences were quite striking, and indeed they held trᴜᴊ to pattern at follow-up.

Unlike in Pink and Wampler's (1985) study, ideal adaptability was also rated significantly differently by different family members, with adolescents expressing a strong desire for greater family flexibility around rules and regulations. Those items rated highly by teens included "the children would have a say in their discipline", "rules would change in our family".

As reported earlier, in the study as a whole, mothers and fathers did not significantly differ on their reported marital adjustment.

Unlike the family report measures, the PAC specifically focuses on the parent-child dyad. In their norming study using the PAC, Barnes and Olson (1985) found mothers reported better communication with adolescents than did fathers, while adolescents tended to express more difficulty communicating than did their parents. No sex differences were reported.

Insert Table 6 about here

Table 6

Family Member Mean Differences - Total Sample

Time 1				Time 2	

FACES Cohesion

	Mean	S D		Mean	S D
mother	37.35	5.92		37.95	5.43
father	36.14	6.36		36.12	6.25
teen	34.35	7.83		34.30	6.73

$F(2,96) = 5.33$, $p = .006$ $F(2,80) = 7.85$, $p = .001$

FACES Ideal Cohesion

	Mean	S D		Mean	S D
mother	42.49	4.31		42.56	5.28
father	41.44	4.41		40.74	4.85
teen	39.88	8.35		38.88	6.34

$F(2,96) = 3.41$, $p = .037$ $F(2,76) = 7.01$, $p = .002$

FACES Adaptability

	Mean	S D		Mean	S D
mother	27.75	5.41		26.25	5.08
father	25.50	5.15		25.12	4.74
teen	28.55	5.84		28.63	6.59

$F(2,96) = 4.71$, $p = .011$ $F(2,80) = .83$, $p = .4$

Table 6 cont'd

	Time 1			Time 2	

FACES Ideal Adaptability

	Mean	S D		Mean	S D
mother	32.04	4.56		31.00	4.01
father	30.50	4.55		30.49	4.71
teen	36.23	4.86		34.60	4.58

$F(2,96) = 19.61$, $p < .001$ $F(2,76) = 11.46$, $p < .001$

Family Sense Of Coherence

	Mean	S D		Mean	S D
mother	142.96	19.33		143.43	20.22
father	140.68	19.23		141.93	19.31
teen	128.02	23.48		131.67	21.77

$F(2,94) = 17.46$, $p < .001$ $F(2,78) = 8.38$, $p = .001$

In the present study as a whole the two sides of the parent-adolescent dyad perceived communication in a significantly different manner, with parents perceiving a better relationship than that reported by their teenagers (see Table 7). This finding was remarkably similar across the two family structures and the two time samples.

Insert Table 7 about here

Predicting Family Cohesion as Reported by Adolescents

Hypothesis 9. During adolescence the issue of closeness versus independence from the family receives considerable attention. Here adolescent report of family togetherness was recorded on two occasions. Separate standard regression analyses were utilized to predict the adolescents' report on FACES Cohesion from various theoretical perspectives. Only those families that completed the initial and follow-up visits were utilized in the regression analyses, in order to allow two tests of the prediction model.

One consideration was the control for general life hardship and extrafamilial factors. Income was not found to be associated with the major dependent variables. It was decided that the FILE checklist of family life events should

Table 7

Parent Adolescent Communication Scores from
Both Sides of the Dyad - Total Sample

Time 1 [a]			Time 2 [b] follow-up	
Father-adolescent				
	Mean	S D	Mean	S D
father	72.84	12.50	73.45	11.88
teen	64.88	15.35	68.27	15.36
Mother-adolescent				
mother	78.61	12.04	78.38	13.59
teen	69.50	12.24	72.73	12.26

[a] Multivariate test of mean member differences $F_{(2,44)} = 15.7$, $p < .001$

[b] Multivariate test of mean member differences $F_{(2,39)} = 4.45$, $p < .02$

be used to account for family stressors during all
regressions. The FILE checklist was negatively related to
the major dependent measures. Increases in the number of
life events experienced in the last year were associated
with lower family Cohesion scores, lower Family Sense of
Coherence, and poorer adjustment reported by dyads within
the family. It was anticipated that family cohesion would
be variously affected by familial stressors, so life events
were entered as a block with other theoretical predictors.

The group variable of family structure represents two
family types differing on length of time living together, on
history of family relations, and as seen above differing on
current family relations. The above tests of mean
differences between the groups was further explored through
the general linear model of regression analyses. Based on
the literature, it was predicted that entering reported
family dyadic relations would more strongly predict
adolescent FACES Cohesion scores than would family type
(i.e., perceived quality of family interactions rather than
family structure accounting for more variance). However,
the adolescent's self-report of parent-child communication
and self-report of family cohesion could be biased by a halo
effect, not allowing a true test of the constructs of
interest. In order to avoid this mono-reporter tautological
dilemma (of self-report predicting self-report), and in
order to control for response bias, self-report by other

family members was instead utilized in the prediction equation. This use of more than one observer within the family also will hopefully address some of the concerns of multicollinearity that were evident in the zero-order correlations. Separate equations were produced for the effect of reported marital relations, and the effect of mother and father reported parent-child relations on child report of cohesion.

Tables 8 through 14 display the zero-order correlations (r), multiple correlation (R), the squared multiple correlation (R^2), R^2 adjusted for the moderate sample size, the corresponding F test, the semipartial correlations (sr^2), and the standardized regression coefficients (Beta). Separate standard regressions entering the independent variables of interest simultaneously were used to explore the various theoretical predictors. The data were examined for any violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). An examination of scatterplots indicated that residuals were normally and evenly distributed about the predicted scores. No statistical outliers were discovered.

The sr^2 values, which represent mathematically the unique contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable of child's report of family cohesion, are presented to help the reader to examine which variables added significantly to the equation. Note however that the

theoretical interpretation of a variable that has had its relationship with other variables partialled out is not without controversy (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). Forced entry of blocks of variables were used in separate regression analyses in order to allow for an exploratory look at the relationships.

The second time sample provides a rudimentary check on the utility of the regression equation determined from the Time 1 sample. Family Cohesion as reported by these adolescents was stable over time (mean at both visits = 34) and correlated significantly over time, r (43) = .73, $p < .001$. These exploratory regression analyses attempt to predict FACES Cohesion as reported by adolescents in all families. The first exploratory regression analysis examines the effect of family structure on reported Cohesion (see Table 8), entering adolescent report of family life events (FILE) as a block with FACES Cohesion.

Insert Table 8 about here

Approximately 18% of the variance in adolescent report of family cohesion is accounted for by family type and life stress at Time 1, approximately 9% at Time 2 (see Table 8).

Table 8

Standard Multiple Regression on Adolescent Report
of Family Cohesion on Two Separate Occasions

Life events (FILE) and family structure (Group) on Time 1
adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R^2	AdjR^2	F	r	sr^2	Beta
Group					-.398	.112	-.344 *
FILE	.483	.214	.176	5.58 **	-.319	.055	-.241

Life events (FILE) and family structure (Group) on Time 2
adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R^2	AdjR^2	F	r	sr^2	Beta
Group					-.204	.016	-.132
FILE	.365	.133	.090	3.08	-.342	.092	-.312 *

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

The utility of family type or structure to the prediction of adolescent FACES Cohesion scores was less evident at Time 2. Analytically this is another way of conceptualizing the ANOVA follow-up results. Small but significant differences in adolescent reported family cohesion existed in first and remarriage families, with this distinction less evident over one year into remarriage.

Marital adjustment, like family structure, generated a prediction equation accounting for only modest amounts of variance in adolescent reports of family Cohesion (see Table 9).

Insert Table 9 about here

Insert Table 10 about here

Mother and father report of parent-child communication provided a much stronger prediction model. Forty nine percent of the variance was accounted for by life events and mother and father report of their relationship with their child at Time 1 (see Table 10). However when parent-child relations, as reported by parents, were used to predict

Table 9

<u>Standard Multiple Regression of Marital Adjustment on Adolescent FACES
Cohesion Time 1 and 2</u>

Life events (FILE), marital adjustment (DAS) on Time 1
adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R^2	AdjR^2	F	r	sr^2	Beta
father marital adjustment					.290	.007	-.115
FILE					-.276	.100	-.334 *
mother marital adjustment	.551	.303	.247	5.37 **	.451	.171	.543 **

Life events (FILE), marital adjustment (DAS) on Time 2
adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R^2	AdjR^2	F	r	sr^2	Beta
father marital adjustment					.251	.004	.107
FILE					-.321	.081	-.292
mother marital adjustment	.381	.145	.076	2.09	.218	.005	.112

* p<.05 ** p<.01

Table 10

<u>Standard Multiple Regression of Parent-Adolescent Communication on
Adolescent FACES Cohesion Time 1 and 2</u>

Life events (FILE) and parental report of Parent-Adolescent
Communication (PAC) on Time 1 adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R^2	AdjR^2	F	r	sr^2	Beta
mother's PAC					.721	.260	.667 **
FILE					-.289	.005	-.075
father's PAC	.727	.528	.491	14.20 **	.510	.001	.051

Life events (FILE) and parental report of Parent-Adolescent
Communication (PAC) on Time 2 adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R^2	AdjR^2	F	r	sr^2	Beta
mother's PAC					.350	.020	.179
FILE					-.332	.043	-.224
father's PAC	.433	.188	.124	2.93 *	.325	.016	.155

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

adolescent views of family cohesion 8 months later, a much poorer prediction equation was established, with only 12% of variance accounted (Table 10). This emphasizes that single sample regression can capitalize on aspects of the single sample correlation matrix.

Exploratory regression analyses. An exploratory area of interest was the effect of individual differences in personality on Cohesion. PRF Autonomy, as assessed on the PRF, was as predicted found to overlap with family Cohesion ratings. A regression entering personal Autonomy scores from each family member was used to assess the assembly effect (see Table 11). This allowed for an assessment of the overlap between these related individual and family constructs and for an assessment of the assembly effect of personalities. The significant amount of variance accounted for stemmed primarily from the adolescent self-report. This did not provide clear support for the assembly effect.

Insert Table 11 about here

The regression analyses assessed teenager report in all families. As can be seen (Table 11) parental Autonomy scores did not enter significantly into the regression equation on adolescent report of family cohesion. A specific hypothesis regarding the development of cohesion in

Table 11

Standard Multiple Regression of Adult Personal Autonomy on Adolescent
FACES Cohesion Time 1 and 2

Life events (FILE) and mother's and father's personal
Autonomy on Time 1 adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R²	AdjR²	F	r	sr²	Beta
mother's autonomy					-.148	.010	-.105
adolescent's autonomy					-.498	.233	-.491**
father's autonomy					-.207	.005	-.071
FILE	.597	.358	.270	4.15**	-.309	.090	-.282

Life events (FILE) and mother's and father's personal
Autonomy on Time 2 adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R²	AdjR²	F	r	sr²	Beta
mother's autonomy					-.033	.001	.032
adolescent's autonomy					-.382	.122	-.355 *
father's autonomy					-.236	.017	-.135
FILE	.501	.251	.151	2.52	-.301	.072	-.280

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

stepfamilies had also been made. It was predicted that high PRF personal Autonomy ratings in the stepfather at Time 1 would be predictive of lower Cohesion ratings by the stepchild at both Time 1 and Time 2. Unfortunately the small sample size precluded an adequate test of this hypothesis. Stepfather Autonomy scores were found to be moderately negatively related to stepchild ratings of family Cohesion at both Time 1 ($r(12) = -.48$, $p = .06$) and Time 2 ($r(10) = -.42$, n.s.). The small cell size did not allow for an adequate multiple regression analysis. The zero-order correlations do not rule out the hypothesis that the new adult family members' desire for autonomy may hinder family cohesion in the newly forming family.

A further area of interest involved determining the efficacy of discrepancy scores. Following the principle of parsimony, the creation of relational indices (difference scores between family members) must add incrementally to our knowledge of the family obtained from unitary measures, or their utility is in question. Actual absolute discrepancy scores were created by subtracting one family member's rating of ideal family cohesion from another. Perceived discrepancy scores were created by subtracting one family member's self-report from how they predicted another family member reported (a single subject distinction). A final discrepancy score measured knowledge or accuracy of prediction of fellow family members. For example how

accurately did children predict their father's answer to the questions about ideal cohesion levels.

As predicted on the basis of the perceptual bias hypothesis, the perceived discrepancy scores (see Table 13) appeared to contribute to a better predictor equation of reported cohesion (accounting for over 30% of the variance on both the Time 1 and Time 2 samples) than either actual discrepancy scores (see Table 12) or family understanding scores (see Table 14). In fact perceived discrepancy with other family members on family ideals appears to be as good or better a predictor of adolescent reported family cohesion as does adult report of the parent-adolescent relationship.

Insert Table 12 about here

Insert Table 13 about here

Insert Table 14 about here

Table 12

Standard Multiple Regression of Actual Parent-Adolescent Discrepancy Regarding Ideal Family Cohesion on Adolescent FACES Cohesion Time 1 and 2

Life events (FILE) and actual parent-adolescent discrepancy re: ideal family Cohesion on Time 1 adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R^2	AdjR^2	F	r	sr^2	Beta
child-mother					-.434	.114	-.379 *
FILE					-.298	.058	-.242
child-father	.498	.248	.191	4.30**	-.236	.002	-.049

Life events (FILE) and actual parent-adolescent discrepancy re: ideal family Cohesion on Time 2 adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Step	MultR	R^2	AdjR^2	F	r	sr^2	Beta
child-mom					-.516	.094	-.363 *
FILE					-.347	.070	-.269 *
child-dad	.622	.387	.336	7.58 **	-.465	.037	-.229

* p<.05   ** p<.01

Table 13

Standard Multiple Regression of Adolescent Perceived Discrepancy
Regarding Ideal Family Cohesion on Adolescent FACES Cohesion Time 1
and 2

Life events (FILE) and adolescent perceived discrepancy with
parents' ideals on Time 1 adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R^2	AdjR^2	F	r	sr^2	Beta
child-perception of father					-.559	.064	-.318*
FILE					-.319	.025	-.185
child-perception of mother	.644	.414	.370	9.43**	-.555	.071	-.332*

Life events (FILE) and adolescent perceived discrepancy with
parents' ideals on Time 2 adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R^2	AdjR^2	F	r	sr^2	Beta
child-perception of father					-.538	.086	-.363 *
FILE					-.341	.039	-.207
child-perception of mother	.598	.357	.306	7.03**	-.436	.030	-.208

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Table 14

Standard Multiple Regression of Adolescent Accuracy in Predicting Ideal Family Cohesion on Adolescent FACES Cohesion Time 1 and 2

Life events (FILE) and adolescent accuracy in predicting parent report on Time 1 adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R²	AdjR²	F	r	sr²	Beta
inaccuracy in predicting mother					-.470	.172	-.424 *
FILE					-.084	.004	-.060
inaccuracy in predicting father	.519	.270	.213	4.80**	- 298	.048	-.219

Life events (FILE) and adolescent accuracy in predicting parent report on Time 2 adolescent Cohesion scores

Predictor Variable	MultR	R²	AdjR²	F	r	sr²	Beta
inaccuracy in predicting mother					-.388	.095	-.319 *
FILE					-.347	.066	-.268
inaccuracy in predicting father	.521	.271	.210	4.46**	-.326	.024	-.166

* p<.05   ** p<.01

Perceived versus Actual Intermember Differences

While the various discrepancy scores had some utility in regression analyses of adolescent family cohesion report across time, they did not prove to be useful in distinguishing stepfamily versus first marriage families. An examination of the hypothesis of differential role fit versus perceived role fit across family types was not successful. The contention that intact family members would have more consensus and know each other better was not confirmed statistically. As seen in Table 3 there appeared to be a tendency for nuclear family members to be more similar in their self-report, however the intermember covariation was not significantly different in the two groups. Self-report concordance in newly formed stepfamilies was remarkably high. One theory of familization, predicting that consensual validation would be notably weaker in stepfamilies, was therefore not strongly supported by the present data.

The predictive accuracy was not impressive in either family type. Family member's prediction of FACES responses by other family members did not tend to covary significantly with the actual FACES responses. Family members were asked to predict the other family member's desired levels of family cohesion and family adaptability on FACES III. These scores were then correlated with ideal FACES scores of those other members. At Time 1 only nuclear parent prediction of

their children's ideals of family cohesion covaried significantly (mother's prediction of teen correlated with teen's response r (27) = .54, p = .002; father's prediction of teen r (27) = .49, p = .004). Finding merely two significant correlations across multiple intermember predictions could be attributed to chance.

When actual discrepancy scores were compared across groups, no significant differences existed. As noted earlier the pattern of differences between father, mother, and child report were identical in first and remarriage families (no interaction effect).

DISCUSSION

The present investigation focused on family member self-report on two occasions in two differing family structures at the adolescent life-stage. The major hypotheses regarding family member self-report differences and family type differences were supported, with some reservations regarding the power of the longitudinal analysis. Attempts to explain these differences will be integrated with previous findings.

The data can be theoretically examined from a normative stepfamily perspective. This focus on normative stepfamily functioning provides a useful heuristic with which to organize the results, however "normative" is used figuratively. This thesis does not represent survey population research. The size and demographic make-up of the present sample is fairly typical of previous standardized community stepfamily research, however statistically it represents a small, non-random, convenience sample. The inclusion of a demographically similar control group at the adolescent life stage, attention to sample homogeneity by screening for clinical involvement and examination of statistical outliers, careful selection criteria, plus follow-up data collection, and the use of reliable standardized responses from multiple family members all add to the depth and breadth of the discussion.

However, the difficulties inherent in generalizing these findings to other intact and remarriage families remain. These reservations will structure some of the connotations of the discussion to follow.

To review, two primary types of comparisons were made, those between individuals in differing family structures (a between-subjects factor), and those between different family members (a within-subjects factor). As proposed: stepfamily self-report of family functioning differed from first marriage self-report; while within families, mothers, fathers, and teenagers perceive the family and familial relations in related but predictably distinctive ways.

Stepfamily Distinctions: Lower Family Cohesion

Volunteer, nonclinical, first marriage and newly remarried families, similar in average demographic background, age, and family size, differed in their perceptions of some aspects of the family as a unit. The present nuclear family sample self-report norms were similar to the published norms. The stepfamily sample self-report scores, while significantly lower, also tended to fall within the normal range of scores.

Generally, stepfamily members within the first year of family formation consistently reported lower family cohesion. When individual family members were analyzed separately, the father's in intact families and

stepfamilies, while demonstrating the same trend, did not differ significantly on FACES Cohesion.

In a follow-up investigation several months later, the means did not change, however the statistical significance of the family group differences reduced for several reasons. Statistical power was reduced in this longitudinal design by sample attrition. The statistical power of group difference analyses were also tempered at both Time 1 and Time 2 when a blocking or repeated measures design was used to control for dependency among family member reports, thereby greatly reducing the degrees of freedom.

The report of lower stepfamily cohesion is of a substantial effect size, half a standard deviation below intact family report within the first year of remarriage, over one third of a standard deviation within the second year of remarriage. These lowered stepfamily FACES Cohesion scores are not at the level of clinical family disengagement reported in published clinical norms (Olson et al., 1985). The practical meaning of this difference therefore requires further exploration. This finding strengthens a small number of published reports highlighting normative self-report differences in stepfamily cohesion, by clarifying that the effect is not due to failure to monitor for families suffering from clinical levels of dysfunction and disengagement. These newly married well-functioning stepfamilies did not report any greater level of

dissatisfaction with their family togetherness than intact family controls. It appeared that they were realistic in distinguishing lowered levels of stepfamily cohesion as an attribute of their ideal family.

Eight months further into the remarriage, the small but significant group difference in family cohesion appeared relatively stable. Previous investigations have also found this family structure difference in reported family cohesion to be true in families remarried for several years. However, the alternate hypothesis that well-functioning stepfamilies would increase in cohesion over time can not be ruled out on the basis of the present small, single follow-up visit. Amato (1987) found that girls in some of his more established stepfamilies reported increasing family cohesiveness.

One previous study of FACES III stepfamily Cohesion norms was discovered in the literature, and that report parallels the present data in terms of mean scores. Pill (1990) states that she collected a nonclinical volunteer sample, however it is not clear how clinical status was screened. Pill's 29 stepfamilies with an adolescent differed from the present sample in that her families had been married on average 5 years. Her mean stepfamily FACES Cohesion scores ($\underline{M}$= 33.9) were remarkably similar to those found presently (Time 1 $\underline{M}$= 34.2, Time 2 $\underline{M}$= 34.9).

Family sense of coherence. The prediction of lowered
Family Sense of Coherence scores in stepfamilies was
supported. No previous investigations examining stepfamily
sense of coherence were found in the literature, however the
lowered sense of family coherence reported by the
stepfamilies is intuitively face valid and supports theories
of stepfamily formation. For example the Family Sense of
Coherence measure asks how the family as a whole copes with
stress, questions family efficacy, and inquires about the
clarity and importance of the family unit. The new
stepfamily could not yet be expected to have found as much
meaning in the family unit or to have clarified family
coping issues. The strained communication found to exist
between stepparents and stepchildren would not aid the
development of family cohesion nor family coherence. There
was some consensus among stepfamily members about this
lowered level of family coherence, it was not restricted to
the newest member of the home. As with the individual
family member analyses of self-report of cohesion, the
lowered stepfamily sense of coherence was statistically
significant for mother and adolescent, but not for fathers.

At follow-up, Family Sense of Coherence scores had not
increased in stepfamilies, remaining significantly lower
than FSOC scores reported by first marriage members.
Continuing to follow family sense of coherence further into
remarriage would prove interesting. Can stepfamilies be

assisted in strengthening the clarity of the new family unit? What predicts the development of the sense of efficacy a family holds in the face of daily hassles and major crises? It was demonstrated in this study that family sense of coherence was associated with a knowledge of individual characteristics of family members, reported family cohesion, marital happiness and parent-child communication, and negatively with the accumulation of life stress. Although developed from completely distinct literatures, Family Sense of Coherence and FACES Cohesion were highly related on two occasions in the present sample of families. Clearly, when looking at group coping, cohesiveness plays a key role. An oft-repeated refrain of clinicians working with stepfamilies is that bonding and boundary clarity takes time and depends on open communication. It appears that on average, less than two years into a healthy (nonclinical) remarriage involving adolescents, stepfamily members consistently report that first marriage norms regarding togetherness, communication, and sense of purpose and efficacy are not wholly applicable.

The present study adds to the construct validity of this new family measure, the Family Sense of Coherence Scale. It developed out of the stress and coping literature, and hopes to tap into family resourcefulness (or the sense thereof). For example the FSOC contains items targeting the perceived efficacy within the family and with

regard to familial responses to the outside world. Not surprisingly the FSOC scores were found to hold a strong correlation with FACES Cohesion, Parent-Adolescent Communication, and Dyadic Adjustment Scale scores. Further validity work is established presently by the concomitant variation between the FSOC and theoretically related Personality Research Form scales. The individual psychological characteristics that were found to correlate with the FSOC could be described as indicative of good problem-solving traits. The Personality Research Form Endurance, Achievement, Order, and Cognitive Structure scales were all significantly and positively related to the Family Sense of Coherence, while Impulsivity and Aggression were negatively related.

During my own clinical training under the McMaster Model of Family Therapy, a common therapeutic goal was to understand the family's definition of an event. The Family Sense of Coherence measure, and the consensus among family members on this measure, provides one promising method of assessing this key therapeutic variable.

Family adaptability. In contrast to Pink and Wampler (1985), family adaptability was not found to differ among the two family groups in the current sample. The FACES III Adaptability measure demonstrated the same moderate internal consistency reported by Olson et al. (1985). Also, Adaptability held low overall correlations with other

measures in this study, and poor concordance between family members. This further corroborates research published during the course of data collection for the present study indicating that the Adaptability scale does not correlate with other family measures as expected (Green et al., 1991a, 1991b). Green has proposed that while family flexibility and family-level response to change continues to be a prime theoretical variable, the Adaptability scale of FACES III should not be used until further restructuring is done (i.e., the development of FACES IV).

The self-report of family adaptability holds theoretical promise in understanding stepfamily adjustment, but further empirical support is required. It is proposed therefore that the lack of group differences on FACES Adaptability did not provide an adequate test of the hypothesis that newly forming stepfamilies differ in their role relationships and rule setting behaviour.

Ideals of family functioning. Another method of attempting to understand the "normative" perspective in stepfamilies involves self-report of ideal family functioning. Comparing how first and remarriage families perceive the ideal family opens one window into family expectations, a target of family therapists working with stepfamilies (Visher & Visher, 1990). When compared to actual family ratings it also provides a difference measure of family contentment.

Pink and Wampler (1985) found that stepfamilies reported lower (but nonclinical) levels of family functioning, but expressed similar ideals of family functioning. Like the families participating in the Pink and Wampler study, members in intact families and stepfamilies in the present study both expressed higher family cohesion as ideal. However in the present study, the mean differences between real and ideal FACES Cohesion scores were almost identical in first and remarriage families. This ideal-real difference score is one measure of family satisfaction, and did not differ in the two groups, which appears to be in contrast to the Pink and Wampler sample.

It should be noted that the increased discrepancy between real-ideal scores in the Pink and Wampler (1985) stepfamily sample could be due to several methodological differences. Pink and Wampler utilized an earlier version of the FACES measure. They did not indicate screening for clinical involvement, and volunteer stepfamilies may be over-represented in terms of clinical concerns. Clinically dissatisfied stepfamilies may tend to over-idealize nuclear family norms (i.e., higher cohesion). Pink and Wampler did control for marital satisfaction, which somewhat lessens the risk of their study differentially sampling clinical stepfamilies. Their sample had been remarried for much longer on average. Assuming that the Pink and Wampler

stepfamilies were not expressing dissatisfaction due to family dysfunction, it is possible that stepfamilies that had been married several years began to idealize cohesion levels closer to the nuclear family, yet still failed to realize these high levels of cohesion.

The present stepfamilies, both early into the remarriage and many months into remarriage, were not expressing on paper significant dissatisfaction with family cohesion. They appeared to be realistic in their assessment of real versus ideal cohesion for a new family. They did not envision their perfect family as being as tightly enmeshed as that of the perfect intact first marriage family.

Further tests of the importance of ideal family expectations may prove fruitful in predicting family outcome. For example what are the expectations just prior to remarriage? Also, asking members of stepfamilies to rate the ideal cohesion levels of both first and remarriage families may bring to light any current biases held about family form. This would provide a more direct test of the "incomplete institution" hypothesis (Cherlin, 1981), which predicts that stepfamilies lack their own norms and therefore tend to idealize nuclear family norms. A final hypothesis regarding the satisfaction in levels of family cohesion among the stepfamily sample, is that of increasing "institutionalization" of stepfamilies. Families in the

1990's may be more realistic in their views of different
family forms, and less likely to view their family only
through the perceptual window of nuclear family norms.
Amato and Keith (1991a) indicated that this normalization of
divorce and remarriage, may partially account for the
decrease in effect size differences seen in recent years on
outcome measures comparing children in intact and non-intact
families.

Family Dyadic Relations

Marital relations.   Self-report of marital relations
in the two family structures did not differ statistically.
There was a nonsignificant tendency for the honeymooning
remarriage couple to express higher marital adjustment very
early into the remarriage, however this was less evident at
follow-up and both groups fell well within the normal
(nonclinical) range.   High marital adjustment scores were
correlated with increased family cohesion and family sense
of coherence and good parent-child relations.   This does not
simply represent a self-report halo effect as significant
correlations existed across the report of multiple family
members.

How the marital relationship affects perceptions of
family cohesion and family sense of coherence requires
further investigation.   In the present study the
adolescent's perspective of family cohesion was moderately

associated with parental report of marital adjustment. This significant predictive relation held true early into the remarriage but not at follow-up. Given that different family members reports on these two family characteristics appear to be related, it does seem that researchers interested in predicting the 'family level' variable of cohesion should consider that a portion of the variance will be accounted for by the dyadic relationship between the marital partners.

Parent-Adolescent communication. Much clinical attention appears to be placed on the stepparent-stepchild relationship. In support of this focus, presently both sides of the dyad in the stepfather-stepadolescent relationship reported less open and more problematic communication, when compared to a demographically similar first marriage father-adolescent sample. Hetherington (1989) proposes that children at the age of early adolescence (targeted here) are more resistant than younger or older children to the entry of a stepparent. Her description of stepfathers as "polite strangers" and young adolescents as resentful and withdrawing during the early stages of family formation may be an apt description of the formative stepparent-stepadolescent relationship.

Poor parent-adolescent communication was not restricted to the new adult member in the home. No interaction effects were found when examining parent-child relations across

groups, nor for relationship to parent. Early into a remarriage, adults and children, whether biologically related or not, tended to report less open and more problematic communication.

For example, early into the remarriage in stepfather families, the biological mothers reported significantly less open and more problematic communication with their teens than the first marriage mother-teen controls. The adolescent scores regarding biological mothers also tended to differ across groups in the same direction. Sampling factors did not appear to account for this difference. In the present sample biological mother-adolescent pairs who have been through divorce and recent remarriage report strained relations when compared to intact family controls.

Parents in stepfamilies often ask "are our problems normal to adolescent development or are they a function of divorce and remarriage". In the present study there appeared to be an extra strain on the biological mother-teen relationship during the early stages of family blending. Whether poor communication results from the new member in the household, or whether the relationship was equally strained before the remarriage or divorce is unknown from the present data. The mother may be placed in the potentially unhappy position of liaison between new spouse and child. Another hypothesis proposes that the turmoil of first marriage family breakup has already strained the

mother-child relationship. Previous work (e.g., Hetherington 1989) indicates that the strain on the relationship can be seen during single parenthood, especially for mothers and sons.

When stressful life events were entered into the present data as a covariate, the group differences in parent-adolescent communication were attenuated. Stress within and outside the family appears to affect the quality of parent-child communication.

One study has corroborated this self-report of strained communication from the objective/outsider perspective. Vuchinich et al. (1991) reported that early into a remarriage, custodial mothers and their biological children engaged in rates of behaviour similar to intact mother-child pairs, on several interaction variables (e.g., commands, questions). However, the mothers in the newly formed stepfather family were observed to be more likely to oppose their children, while the children were less responsive to their mothers. This behaviour pattern showed little change approximately 18 months further into remarriage (Vuchinich et al., 1991).

One to two years into remarriage in the present study, the significant communication difficulties experienced by adolescents with their stepfathers remained. There was some indication that the reported strain on the biological mother-child relationship in the stepfamilies had lessened

several months later into the remarriage. Further large
scale sampling would be necessary to map the development of
biological parent-adolescent communication over the course
of family breakup and family blending. There would appear
to be sufficient self-report and observational evidence to
warn families that beyond stepparent-stepchild concerns, the
biological parent-adolescent relationship is at risk for
less open and more problematic communication during the
early stages of bringing a new adult partner into the home.

In much stepfamily research, stepfathers are targeted
as subjects due to their prevalence. Indeed only seven
nonclinical stepmother families volunteered for the present
study. The findings appeared to be the same in these few
families where the father had retained physical custody of
the children, with the same lower stepfamily Parent-
Adolescent Communication scores indicated by both sides of
the dyad. The small number of stepmother family volunteers
precluded an adequate statistical analysis of the test of
stepparent sex differences. Further research into
stepmother families is required in order to adequately test
the generalizability of the present findings.

Intermember Differences

To summarize the within-family analyses, the predicted
(Barnes & Olson, 1985) intergenerational differences were
found. Overall, parents reported substantially better

relations with their teenagers than teenagers reported with their parents. Teenagers in all families reported poorer adult-child communication, poorer family cohesion, and a poorer sense of family coherence. These generational reporting differences between family members were similar in stepfamilies and intact families.

Within-family mean score differences were prevalent on self-report of dyad and family relations throughout the present study. This underscores the importance of including as many family members as possible in any self-report endeavours, be they clinical or empirical. Although small spousal differences existed, the intergenerational differences were the most striking presently.

In the group comparison statistics, multiple family member data were treated as dependent or repeated measures, because members of the same family were theoretically correlated on their reports on related events. In support of this approach, family members in both groups did correlate significantly in their standardized self-report of family and dyadic functioning. Nonetheless, note that when scoring questionnaires completed by adolescents, there is consistent evidence that children hold distinct and predictable absolute mean differences in their perceptions of family relations.

The similar patterning of these member report differences across family types may be the same due to the

hierarchical structure of families. In other words, fathers, mothers, and teenagers appear to differ similarly in family attitudes as do stepfathers, stepmothers and stepteenagers. In the present study for example, mothers and stepmothers both desired and perceived more family cohesion, while teenagers and stepteenagers held less positive views of the family and familial relations than their parents. It is also possible that response bias to questionnaires differs systematically between teens and their parents, and that various experimental effects (e.g., hypothesis guessing, reading comprehension level) hold differential power over different types of subjects.

While within families scores tended to covary significantly, it should be noted that in general in all families, predictive accuracy or knowledge of how another family member would respond was poor. Support for the hypothesis that intact family members would show less discrepancy in their report and know each other better was not strong in the present sample. Intact family member responses tended to covary to a higher degree, but not significantly so. The utility of intermember discrepancy scores in assessing stepfamily versus intact family differences was questionable. The first order constructs of family sense of coherence, family cohesion, and parent-adolescent communication were better predictors and provided a more parsimonious prediction of group effects. The

problem of group perception remains however an issue that
must systematically be considered in family research. Given
the utility of relational discrepancy measures in other
research (e.g., Meyer & Pepper, 1977), the present
investigation does not rule out their use, it merely implies
that they may not prove to have differential utility in
families of different structures.

Adolescent sex did not stand out significantly in
analyzing the intermember differences of this small sample.
Parent-adolescent communication was not reported to be
significantly different across sons and daughters (there was
a nonsignificant trend towards sons reporting better
relations with their fathers). Hetherington (1989) has
found in her investigations that stepdaughters appear to
have the most difficulty accepting a new father into the
single parent home. She hypothesizes that their
relationship with their mother is most threatened by the
remarriage.

No sex differences were evident on the Family
Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales, but in the
study as a whole (both groups), sons reported a greater
sense of family coherence than daughters. Beyond the
interesting male versus female mental health connotations of
this finding, it appeared in the present sample that sons
held greater hope that family problems could be identified
and solved. Antonovsky and Sourani (1988) do not report sex

differences between adults on Family Sense of Coherence, nor were they found presently, so this isolated finding regarding adolescents' sense of family cohesion requires replication.

Follow-up

The follow-up data collection represented a distinct sampling of family self-report; family members reported only general recall of the first visit, with no specific questionnaire items recalled. Anecdotally, the majority of family members reported that they felt their answers had changed little. Several stepfamily members indicated that they were more certain of their answers as they knew their new family member better by Time 2.

Sample attrition at follow-up hindered the power of some statistical analyses. Use of a repeated measures design reduced power due to the decrease in degrees of freedom. Effect sizes tended to be slightly smaller. Statistical power at Time 2 was generally reduced to moderate or low levels.

The prediction of responses 6 to 12 months after the first home visit was based on several theoretical tenets. First it was assumed that the measures used were reliable indicators of the constructs in question. It was also recognized that some of the variability in Time 1 versus Time 2 responding could be due to uncontrolled measurement factors, such as daily mood of the respondent, response

style variability, hypothesis testing on the part of the
subjects, etc.

Correlations between Time 1 and Time 2 scores were
remarkably high. The positive linear relation between
reported family cohesion, family sense of coherence, marital
adjustment, and parent-adolescent communication held at Time
2. The potential for multicollinearity between measures
that attest to measuring 'family level' cons.ructs versus
'dyadic properties' must therefore be considered robust.
This potential overlap between newly created measures in the
family area should continue to be examined carefully through
multitrait-multilevel analyses.

No significant change in self-report scores was
witnessed over the eight months, with no main effect for
Time found using a repeated measures analysis. Group means
at Time 1 and Time 2 were remarkably similar, with small
decreases in effect size for group comparisons. The
direction of group differences on the mean scores
consistently held true in all mean reports at follow-up. In
other words lower scores on FACES Cohesion, Family Sense of
Coherence, and Parent-Adolescent Communication were reported
by stepfamily members within the first year of remarriage
and at follow-up approximately eight months later. With the
decrease in statistical power the specific hypotheses were
not always supported statistically during the second self-
report. The reduced statistical power of the longitudinal

analysis found the group effect on family Cohesion was not significant statistic⁻⁺⁻y. Lower stepfamily sense of coherence remained significant across both time samples. At follow-up, the adolescent report of poor communication with stepfather remained statistically significant.

Family member differences were also the same at follow-up, with adolescents tending to report lower cohesion, lower sense of coherence and poorer parent-adolescent communication. This finding that adults and children perceive their family from different vantage points appears to be very robust. Intermember concordance was similar at follow-up, indicating that while the level of normative scores (e.g., mean) differed, within-family responses tended to covary significantly.

What Accounts for First Marriage/Remarriage Differences?

Adult and adolescent stepfamily members, early into remarriage, indicate a lower level of family closeness, even when demographic and sampling variance is controlled. This is not surprising when newcomers are asked to help form a household. How does this within-family distance manifest itself behaviourally? One observational study has reported family cohesiveness to prove salient to adolescent stepfamily functioning. Vuchinich et al. (1991) observed a small number of newly remarried stepfamilies and intact families during routine in-home communications. They

reported that stepfather-adolescent communication was marked by patterns of avoidance and to a lesser extent conflict. They fear that children, in particular stepdaughters, may respond to a stepfather early in the remarriage by engaging in resentful withdrawal. In comparison to intact families, the stepfather was generally positive but engaged in little communication or parenting early in the remarriage, while the biological mothers in stepfamilies were more likely to initiate conflicts with children.

Beyond the distancing in the stepparent-stepchild relationship and potential for conflict in the biological parent-child relationship, other factors may affect the development of stepfamily cohesion. Theories of stepfamily versus intact family differences variously focus on intrafamilial and extrafamilial factors. In their meta-analysis, Amato and Keith (1991a, 1991b), note several commonly hypothesized factors affecting individual well-being after divorce. Parental absence, socioeconomic stressors, stigma and family conflict have all been proposed to account for negative outcome post-divorce. The present family structures, as well as being equated demographically and with regard to clinical status, did not differ on marital adjustment. Therefore several factors likely to account for variability in stepfamily versus intact family functioning were controlled. Even with this refinement on previous research, stepfamily versus intact family self-

report differences tended to persist, especially early into the remarriage. The difference was not of the magnitude of clinical-nonclinical family self-report differences.

Some of these stepfamilies did report experiencing more life event changes (e.g., moving homes, changing schools or jobs), but a significant group mean difference was not found on a measure of life events, likely due to the screening process. These stressors were assessed prospectively, no assessment of historical pre-remarriage variables was attempted. The parent-child relationship that existed prior to remarriage is not known.

While report of recent stress within and outside the family did not clearly distinguish family groups, the accumulation of life stress did relate significantly and negatively to self-report of family functioning across all subjects. An attempt was made to statistically control for self-report of life events over the past year using the Family Inventory of Life Events and Changes (FILE). When entered as a covariate into the original ANOVA analyses of family self-report, the significant family group differences diminished.

Due to the nature of this quasi-experimental design, directional causal attributions regarding this family functioning-life stressors relationship is not possible. Do families become disengaged due to overwhelming life demands, or do family members get into more problems (e.g., get

suspended from school) due to a lack of within-family
support, or is there a bidirectional relation? While not
providing causal direction, the present investigation does
confirm the importance of measuring accumulation of life
events when assessing family functioning. The theoretical
impetus for using the FILE as a covariate was consideration
of increased extrafamilial and intrafamilial demands in
accounting for stepfamily-intact family differences. Models
of the effects of divorce and remarriage usually focus on
both family functioning factors and life stressors. The
present analysis confirms that these constructs are
significantly related.

Waldren, Bell, Peek, and Sorell (1990), have reanalyzed
the Peek et al. (1988) family data, incorporating a
canonical correlation analysis of FACES II, and stress
(FILE) and coping measures. They do not indicate if the
original nuclear family versus stepfamily group differences
were tempered by covarying out life events. They did
however report that the accumulation of potentially
stressful life events was linearly and negatively related to
family cohesion and adaptability, as was found presently.
They found this to be especially true in their stepfamilies,
and hypothesize that remarried family cohesion and
adaptability may be more vulnerable to life stress.

It is important to note that the FILE checklist used
presently and utilized by Waldren et al. (1990),

specifically incorporates intra-family strains such as parental time away from the family, and behaviour management. It includes normative developmental life change (e.g., "member started high school"), unanticipated stress (e.g.," family member was robbed"), and family conflict stress (e.g., "parent(s) and teenager(s) have increased arguments over ...hours to stay out"). It therefore does not provide a unidimensional assessment of familial stressors.

Lavee and Olson (1991) have just recently published a comparison of family type as assessed on the Olson circumplex grid, and family stress. They subdivided the FILE into items that represented stressful events, more normative transitions, and intrafamilial strains. They found that only the intrafamilial strains subscale was related to FACES III family Cohesion and Adaptability circumplex scores, an intriguing finding. Unfortunately they indicate Cronbach internal consistency scores for the majority of measures in their study, but not for the FILE subscales, indicating that they may have concerns about the psychometric strength of these distinctions between types of stressors.

Further refinement of the distinction between normative and nonnormative stress within and outside the family is warranted. The very definition of "normative" versus "nonnormative" life change is put into question by the

inclusion of the growing number of stepfamilies into the family life-stress literature. The arrival and departure of adult members within the home can no longer be considered a "nonnormative" event for many members of our society. Use of a demographically matched family comparison group likely acts as a control for both intrafamilial and extrafamilial strains, as socioeconomic ratings generally are found to relate to family functioning. In fact stress on the family from within and stress on the family from outside would be expected to be correlated.

A qualitative analysis of the FILE checklist indicates some theoretical item redundancy with the primary dependent measures used presently. For example items assessing time away from family (affecting cohesion), level of parent-child arguing (related to parent-adolescent communication), and amount of conflict (likely related to family sense of coherence), may indicate some overlap in these measures. Considering this potential overlap the significant covariate effect of FILE was not surprising. The fact that knowledge of the perceived accumulation of these familial stressors may help account for stepfamily versus first marriage family functioning differences is an important empirical validation. However to partial out life events specific to divorce and remarriage versus those that occur across all family types (e.g., economic hardship) would involve

covarying on experience with diverse extrafamilial and
intrafamilial stressors specifically.

Given the negative relation between the accumulation of
family life events and Family Sense of Coherence (created as
a health and coping index), a more fine grained analysis of
coping with normative developmental life changes that may be
increased in stepfamilies (e.g., school change), versus
coping with hazardous events not directly related to
stepfamily life (e.g., illness) would be useful. Lavee and
Olson (1991) have begun this process with an attempt to
determine the specific intrafamilial patterns of relating
(e.g., level of family cohesion) and extrafamilial
conditions (e.g., economic hardship) under which adaptation
or disruption occurs within the family.

The potential for adaptation within the stepfamily may
be best assessed by the Antonovsky and Sourani (1988)
measure of Family Sense of Coherence. Hetherington (1989)
has attempted to detail individual personality factors that
would serve as protective factors in post-divorce adjustment
and outcome. The family sense of coherence construct
advances her argument by providing a more conceptually
focused theoretical protective factor. The present data
indicates that this variable may provide a direct assessment
of the family's vulnerability to stress, or its inoculation
against the stress of family transitions. The FSOC focuses
on the family level perceived coping response, targeting the

family's ability to solve problems in response to life change and stress. It was found to correlate significantly with family relationship constructs such as cohesion and marital adjustment, and be negatively associated with the accumulation of stressful life events.

Antonovsky and Sourani (1988) specifically attempted to avoid questions about satisfaction with family life on the FSOC, in order to avoid tautology in their discriminant validity work. The moderate to high correlations witnessed among the various measures of family and dyadic functioning used presently does raise the concern that general satisfaction or dissatisfaction with family life accounts for some of the common variance. However, the fact that stepfamily members tended to report a lower sense of the family's ability to cope and less clarity in the family unit both early into the remarriage and several months later may prove more significant to family outcome than the lowered family cohesion levels.

Clearly, stressful events within and outside the family and poor dyadic relations or communication within the family appear to hinder the development of family cohesion and the sense of family coping ability. There is previous evidence that a majority of remarried adults interviewed in survey research recommend that open communication with a focus on clarifying expectations will assist in family blending (Hobart, 1990). Open communication with important figures

outside the home is also recommended (Wallerstein &
Blakeslee, 1989). The noncustodial relations (e.g., a
parent or sibling living in a different home) were not
assessed presently. They may also affect cohesiveness
within the new family, as ongoing conflict between ex-
spouses is known to be detrimental to the child's behaviour
(Sorensen & Goldman. 1990). While loyalty conflicts are
mentioned clinically, there is no clear evidence that
cohesiveness in stepfamilies, or affection between a
stepparent-stepchild, hinders the noncustodial parent-child
relationship (Ganong & Coleman, 1984).

Are Family Measures Necessary?

The addition of a well established individual
personality measure to the present investigative battery was
an attempt to assess the potential overlap with "family"
measures, an area not addressed adequately in the literature
to date. Measures purporting to assess relationship
constructs appear to have much in common with measures of
individual constructs. For example Olson et al. (1979)
dropped the mention of individual autonomy from the
definition of family cohesion in order to avoid confusion in
family level versus individual level thinking. However the
empirical relation between these constructs was never
assessed. Presently it was indeed found that high Autonomy

scores were moderately and significantly related to low Cohesion scores.

A moderate correlation establishes some convergent validity for the construct of family cohesion while strengthening the proposition that there may be incremental gain to be made by specifically focusing on questions of within-family autonomous behaviour ("fine-tuning" the domain of the construct). Knowledge of PRF Autonomy Scale scores also significantly predicted FACES Cohesion scores at Time 1 and 2, however this was primarily accounted for by the correlation between self-ratings on Autonomy and family Cohesion. Contrary to prediction, knowledge of Autonomy scores in other family members did not greatly aid in prediction of Cohesion. This analysis was a first order one, a family discrepancy score on individual Autonomy was not created.

Exploratory analyses of the relation between stepfather's personal autonomy and the adolescent's report of family cohesion indicate that this could bear further investigation. Knowledge of individual characteristics prior to remarriage may predict stepfamily adjustment. Currently the adolescent's report of family cohesion was negatively related to his or her stepfather's desire for autonomy, but the small sample size precluded an adequate statistical test of this correlation. Knowing that a man entering the home of a woman and her adolescent child

desires autonomy may predict lower cohesion in the new
family, which is related to poor parent-adolescent
communication.

Other investigators have expressed similar future
interest in comparing individual and family level
constructs. Antonovsky and Sourani (1988) proposed several
research avenues to investigate the incremental utility of
the use of family sense of coherence over their more global
measure of coherence. For example one can be asked about
the perceptions of the coherence of family life or about the
coherence of all of life, and this can be done individually
or across family members.

Prediction of Family Cohesion

The number of major life events experienced by family
members was related to reported levels of family functioning
in both first and remarriage families. By focusing on the
early adolescent stage of the family life cycle, all
participating families were undergoing life changes such as
starting high school, or increased strain on negotiating
rules regarding curfew. Also by definition, the newly
remarried families in this study were more likely
(historically) to have gone through familial changes such as
change in household membership, moving, and change in school
or employment. The total number of life event changes

within the past year however did not differ significantly across family type.

The checklist of life events was consistently entered as a predictor into all exploratory regression equations. In predicting the adolescents' report of family cohesion beyond these life stressors, within-family dyadic relations, personal desire for autonomy among all family members, discrepancy in family ideals, perceptions of discrepancy in family ideals, and understanding of other family members views were all considered and found to have some significant predictive power. It was predicted that these various individual and relational assessments of within-family functioning would better account for family cohesion level than would family structure. The follow-up sample provided a test of the regression equations formed from the first investigation. These exploratory regression analyses were carried out to aid future research hypothesis generation.

Life events and stepfamily versus intact family status accounted for approximately 18% of the adjusted variance[2] of adolescent report of family cohesion at Time 1, only 9% of the variance at Time 2. Family group was not a significant parameter in the Time 2 analysis. Recall that at follow-up there was a nonsignificant trend towards smaller group differences on family cohesion. Finding

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[2] All values describing the variance accounted for by the independent variables represent R^2 adjusted for the moderate sample size.

smaller mean group differences in longitudinal family structure investigations is not uncommon. If the follow-up sample was analyzed separately, one would conclude that nonclinical stepfamilies 10 to 20 months into remarriage report only slightly lower levels of family cohesion than do intact families, and knowledge of the divorce and remarriage status of the group accounts for little of the variance in family cohesion.

Marital relations. When the quality of the marital relationship is entered into predicting the adolescent report of family cohesion, approximately 25% of the variance was accounted for at Time 1, 8% of the variance at Time 2. While much other variance remains, the quality of the marital alliance is associated with the child's view of the instrumental and emotional closeness between all family members.

Green et al. (1991a, 1991b), in a large scale study, found that for both male and female adult respondents, the FACES Cohesion scale related in a linear fashion to measures of marital and personal happiness, while the FACES Adaptability scale did not correlate significantly with these other measures. Roberts and Price (1989), while not accounting for life stressors, found that self-reported marital communication accounted most significantly for the variance in adult self-reported family cohesion in 60 remarried couples. The present finding extends these two

reports by corroborating the connection between these variables beyond the self-report of the marital couple. The correlation between martial adjustment and family cohesion held across independent observers (i.e., another family member - the adolescent), thereby avoiding single subject self-report bias effects.

Some family clinicians theorize that a strong, unified adult marital dyad in remarriage will assist stepfamily blending (Visher & Visher, 1990). The present correlational intra-family results support this contention. For example marital adjustment and family sense of coherence were found to have a positive linear relation. This finding does not represent single subject self-reporting bias, for example adolescent report of family cohesion and parent-child communication was positively related to parent report of marital happiness. Visher and Visher, founders of the Stepfamily Association of America, argue that in order to have "a honeymoon in the midst of a crowd" (1980, p.8), adult time alone must be planned, and this will promote family cohesion over the long term (also Roberts & Price, 1989). Due to the fact that the parent-child bond precedes the new couple relationship, a stable marital bond will require open communication around this issue, helping the children benefit from the presence of two unified adults in the home. While divorce rates may be slightly higher in remarriage, investigators report that in remarriages that

last, marital adjustment scores are not lower than intact controls (Hobart, 1990).

Empirical support was provided here for the positive correlation between marital quality and the child's report of family cohesion. This supports the contention made by Roberts and Price (1989) that family cohesion depends on a satisfying communication pattern between family members. There was no evidence that strong dyadic relations harmed family unity, a hypotheses that appears in the literature periodically. High marital adjustment scores were related significantly to positive parent-child communication across both family groups. Poor or negative communication between any dyad within the family may lead to an avoidance of shared activities. No specific test of the stepparent's role in parenting the stepchild was made. The process of low cohesion and poor communication may be perpetuated by a failure to assign family roles, and a breakdown in managing the tasks of family adjustment and development. Unfortunately the measurement of self-report of flexibility in assigning family roles that was targeted for the present study (FACES Adaptability) was not found to be strongly related to other measures.

Parent-adolescent relations. Parent-Adolescent Communication scores, as reported by the parents across both groups, accounted for 49% of the variance in adolescent report of family cohesion at Time 1, only 12% at Time 2. It

appeared that in particular the mother's report of the parent-child relationship was strongly related to the child's view of family unity.

As with the prediction by marital adjustment scores, the lowered adjusted R^2 value in the second sample reminds us that single sample predictor equations can take advantage of possibly spurious relations.

Incremental utility of discrepancy scores. As considerable work is involved in relating family member scores to each other, the creation of intermember difference scores must add some theoretical utility to be of value. Presently that was assessed in two ways: did discrepancy scores assist in distinguishing first and remarriage families? Did discrepancy between family members aid in our prediction of family member self-report?

Relational discrepancy measures were not found to reliably distinguish family groups. Real discrepancy across family member ratings was almost identical in the two groups, as seen above by the significant effect on family member, with no member by group interaction. Surprisingly, perceived discrepancy scores were also not found to differ consistently across groups. In other words step-relations reported no greater feeling of discrepancy in family views than first marriage relations.

If intermember discrepancy scores did not greatly aid our differentiation of intact and remarriage families, did

they assist in predicting family self-report generally?
Given the consistency in within-family discrepancy scores in
the two family groups, further analyses of discrepancy
scores on the entire sample of families were undertaken. In
examining zero-order correlations, actual discrepancy scores
between husbands and wives did not tend to be useful in
predicting dyadic functioning levels. However perceived
discrepancy scores were correlated with dyad relations. It
had been proposed that perceived intermember discrepancy on
self-report would be more predictive of self-report of
family functioning than would actual intermember
discrepancy. Some support for this hypothesis was found.
For example a wife's perceived discrepancy with her husband
on desired family cohesion was strongly and negatively
correlated with her report of marital adjustment eight
months later.

The regression analyses of adolescent report of family
cohesion were supplemented by utilizing discrepancy scores
as predictors. The first model assessed actual discrepancy
between mother-child and father-child reports of desired
family cohesion. If family members disagree on their
desired levels of family interaction and closeness, actual
family cohesion may be hindered. The data supported the
hypothesis, highlighting the importance of family consensus
to family functioning in all families. Indeed 19% of the
variance in adolescent cohesion scores at Time 1 and almost

34% of the variance at follow-up was accounted for by discrepancy on desired cohesion. In particular it was noted that the adolescent reported lower cohesion when mother and adolescent differed in their ideals.

A assessment of perceived discrepancy was also under aken. It had been proposed that regardless of the actual level of agreement or disagreement between family members, if a family member thought that his or her views differed from other family members, this would affect family cohesion. The correlational findings support this contention, though do not indicate causal direction. When adolescent ideal Cohesion scores were subtracted from how they predicted their parents would want the family to be on the FACES Cohesion items, a significant correlation with adolescent report of real family Cohesion was found. The adolescent's perception of discrepancy with his or her parents was negatively and moderately correlated with his or her view of family cohesiveness. At Time 1, perceived discrepancy with mother and father, when entered with life events, accounted for 37% of the variance in adolescent reported cohesion, while at Time 2 30% of the variance was predicted.

The adolescent's ideal view of the family (FACES III) subtracted from his/her perception of father's ideal view of the family tended to be more predictive of his/her reported cohesion score than the actual discrepancy score between

child and father on the FACES III measure. This
phenomenological point of view has received considerable
attention in the human relationship literature. The
variance in perceived intermember discrepancy scores is
thought to be a function of interpersonal experience plus a
halo effect, and an egocentric bias or projection (e.g.,
Kammann & McQueen, 1984). This finding would indicate that
individual self-report of family cohesion, as
operationalized in terms of emotional bonding and boundaries
on the FACES measure, has some general nonspecific
evaluative component regarding family concept. Note that
utilizing same subject perceived discrepancy scores as
predictors does contain the risk of tautological reasoning
(self-report predicting self-report). Perceived discrepancy
may however provide another window into individual
satisfaction with family system functioning, given that an
unhappy family member will perceive their views as differing
from the views of others within the system. Dissatisfaction
with family closeness may then lead to distancing within the
family. This causal direction could be reversed, with low
family cohesion leading to dissatisfaction (given that
higher family cohesion was considered an ideal for
subjects). Even more likely, as in other theories of family
functioning, a bidirectional causal loop of perceived
discrepancy -- low conjoint family activities -- perceived

discrepancy, may best characterize the correlational findings.

Finally the understanding or accuracy of prediction of other family members was examined. Accuracy in knowing how another member feels was significantly related to ratings of family functioning. In particular higher family cohesion was reported by adolescents who were also more accurate in predicting their mothers (and to a lesser extent their fathers) views regarding family cohesion. These accuracy scores, when entered with life events, accounted for 21% of the variance of adolescent FACES Cohesion scores at both Time 1 and Time 2.

To summarize, there would appear to be utility in creating relational scores when assessing familial relations across all family types. Comparing actual discrepancy among family members, perceived intermember discrepancy, and accuracy in predicting the report of family members, assisted in accounting for variation in reported family functioning. Each of these relational scores has distinct theoretical interest, and the distinctions are important given the confusion that exists regarding the analysis of data from multiple family members (Christensen & Arrington, 1987).

Future tests of these prediction models will confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis that perceived family consensus is actually a more potent variable than real family consensus

during familization. Clearly, the perception that one's own ideals are not matched by other family members, is related to lower ratings of family closeness. The present results do however support the theory that at least some of the variance (here 20% to 30%) in adolescent FACES Cohesion scores is accounted for by real discrepancy in family member expectations or ideals of family functioning.

This confirms the importance of assessing multiple family members in research of this nature. It also highlights the importance of family communication. As proposed by family clinicians, the developmental and coping tasks of family life (including stepfamily adjustment) can be more readily mastered if family expectations are voiced, and perceptions confirmed or disconfirmed. In the present intact and remarriage families, increases in actual and perceived family discrepancy were related to lower reports of family cohesion. If family member's would voice their perceptions of family discrepancy, actual family discrepancy may be lessened.

Pill (1990) found that one third of her stepfamily sample reported no conscious preparation for, or discussion of, the shape their new family would take. She noted that three quarters of her sample expressed disappointment at the fact that they had not bonded like a nuclear family, with many questioning how they could have been so naive prior to the remarriage. Many noted the inordinate amount of time

and effort required to function in a stepfamily. Pill notes several factors identified as assisting in family formation, including family rituals and other means of establishing a new family identity.

Anecdotal reports from the present study indicated a similar process. For example one stepfather with a new stepdaughter indicated that they were "trying to shuffle three decks of cards together without bending any of the cards". Another pleased stepfather created a truly Canadian metaphor for what clinicians refer to as permeable boundaries between family members: "our family has changed from concrete walls to snow fences".

Implications

Several research and clinical implications arise from the present study. Normative scores on standardized questionnaires focusing on family relations should be used with discretion on non-intact families. Examine the sampling procedure of marital and family scales in order to determine their relevance to other family forms. New scales being developed should sample single parent and stepfamily members, in order to establish specific norms of non-nuclear family functioning. Differential norms of family member self-report should also be established, as mother, father, and adolescent reports may differ.

As members of a group who are asked to comment on the functioning of that group, data from each family member was not considered independent. The design was quasi-experimental (naturally occurring independent variables), and a blocked or repeated measures design was used within groups. From an experimental standpoint the blocking or matching on family members assisted in decreasing error variance but also reduced power by reducing degrees of freedom. The review of the family systems literature indicated that this block design on family members is not yet consistently used. Given the significant within-family correlations but mean intermember self-report differences, focusing on each family member separately may also have theoretical merit, regardless of the multivariate group finding. The other alternative would be to collapse the data across family members. While presently this would not have altered the flavour of the data as differences across groups were similar over all family members, this may not be true in the investigation of other constructs. Presently no interaction effects were found for family Cohesion, Family Sense of Coherence, or Parent-Adolescent Communication, however it is possible that without examining each family member separately variations in self-report will be missed.

The present investigation did not target individual mental health outcome, but rather focused on the relation between family level constructs and family structure. It is

notable that Amato and Keith (1991b) reported a higher mean effect size for parent-child relations (dyadic level relational variables), than for some of the other individual outcome assessments in their intact-nonintact family comparison data. The present effect size estimates are in line with other investigations contrasting the family level constructs of interest across family structure.

Recall the familization/socialization distinction proposed above. It is theoretically plausible that the effect of divorce and remarriage on family systems or relationship level constructs will be stronger than the effect on more general adaptive behaviour variables. Socialization outcome is mediated by a myriad of sociocultural factors beyond the family. Family cohesion, family sense of coherence, and family adaptability are more closely linked theoretically and temporally to family breakdown and restructuring. Self-reported communication between a parent and adolescent living together for less than one year would be expected to (and did) differ from intact parent-child relations by an effect size larger than .17 (the effect size on individual outcome reported by Amato and Keith). Here individual outcome or child well-being was not probed, rather family factors - relational variables expected to covary with family health and possibly individual outcome, were examined from within the family system.

The stepfamilies in the present study, contrary to previous research, did not express dissatisfaction with their family cohesion on a real-ideal discrepancy score. They appeared to hold realistic views of the expected level of closeness between family members. It is unknown whether a lower level of cohesion, if accepted by family members, has implications on individual well-being or future relationship outcome. When the present data are combined with earlier research, they provide sufficient empirical support to reinforce clinical theory stating that stepfamilies should expect that family togetherness will suffer. Clinicians warn that cohesion will take time, and the empirical evidence indicates that even in well-functioning stepfamilies, cohesion, communication, and problem-solving may differ from first marriage functioning many months after family formation. How this lowered cohesion or communication affects individual and relationship outcome over the long term is unknown.

Clinicians have proposed tasks that may assist family cohesion (e.g., Pill 1990). Knowledge of normative stepfamily functioning may be of assistance to individuals forming a new family. One can predict that dissatisfaction with a normative state (e.g., lower cohesion in stepfamilies) would place adverse strain on the process of family formation. Outside the clinical realm, educative programs in schools, or remarriage preparation courses in

the church or community should inform stepfamilies about these altered family norms. Alerting stepfamily members to the potential decrease in the sense of family coherence over at least the first 2 years may serve the purpose of primary prevention. Knowing that the clarity of the family unit, the sense of family efficacy, and the meaningfulness of the family unit are all lowered may allow for a dialogue to be opened regarding stepfamily coping issues. Likewise alerting stepfamily members to the potential strain on parent-adolescent communication may help prevent false expectations and ease adjustment. An empirical assessment of the effects of remarriage preparation on stepfamily outcome is warranted.

Waldren et al. (1990) propose that the literature is marked more by equivalence than distinctions in the patterning of family functioning across family types. Within-family member differences were identical across family types presently, and the actual stepfamily-intact family differences were small when compared to clinical-nonclinical family differences. During preparation for remarriage courses, these comparisons to nuclear family norms may assist in the assimilation of the information.

Limitations

The family system research literature is fraught with all of the threats to validity inherent to multivariate

quasi-experimental research. Assessing the variability in functioning between families differing in consistency of structure is at the heart of the present investigation. Clinicians and theoreticians propose that a difference exists between first and remarriage families at the family system level. These differences were examined here from the perspective of subjective impressions of relationship properties and interpersonal events (Huston & Robins, 1982). Whether the subjects' perceptions will help in the prediction of future interpersonal events and subjective conditions is a difficult empirical question. Several difficulties in attempting to examine this question were outlined in the introduction.

To briefly reiterate, the concept of system assessment, or transactional assessment, is new and frequently misunderstood. Presently it is recognized that only subjective individual and relational data were used to address individual, dyadic and system level constructs. Insider and outsider views of the family have tended to differ greatly, and no attempt at multimethod convergent validity was made here. Historically in family research, a large number of explanatory constructs, often multidimenʒional, intercorrelated and measured with varying degrees of error and unreliability, have been assessed variously as interpersonal traits, subjective conditions, or relationship properties. This has resulted in much

confusion in the analysis of raw data and in the compilation of data across investigations.

In the present study several attempts were made to attenuate these threats to the validity of the theoretical proposals. All of these attempts can be conceived of as struggling to control variance in an investigation of two naturally differing samples. Variability in self-report in first marriage and remarriage families was assessed. Variance not of primary interest ("error") was controlled by several means. Variability due to child age was restricted by subject selection. Potential variability due to income, education, and family size was assessed and deemed similar across groups. Variability due to sampling bias was hopefully random, however in a small volunteer convenience sample it is possible that the type of stepfamilies motivated to participate may have differed from the type of first marriage families motivated to participate. In order to restrict some of the anticipated differential heterogeneity on our measures of interest, families seeking clinical assistance and families falling in the extreme range of scores (severe statistical outliers from this sample) were removed from the present analysis, as by definition they fall into the extremes of functioning on the measures of interest. While this screening decreased sample size and therefore statistical power, it theoretically

increased the potency of our discussion by again partialling out unwanted variability.

Given the potential for correlational bias due to unequal cell sizes (i.e., greater clinical concentration in stepfamilies), screening for clinical status and an examination of scores for outliers is recommended in future investigations. If in fact stepfamilies do more frequently access clinical services (?), then partialling this out has artificially imposed a bias from the perspective of normative survey research. The goal however was to assess self-report in viable, adequately functioning family units differing in family history of membership continuity. Variability due to single subject reporting bias was assessed by utilizing reports from multiple family members. This complex research strategy appears to have merit. Whereas family member's self-reports consistently differed, their responses were correlated, and the patterning of family member responses was the same across the two family structures. Variability due to dynamic subjective measurement properties (the "statelike" component of variance in questionnaire scores) was assessed by sampling across two independent time periods using standardized measures with known psychometric properties. This allowed for an extension of the cross-sectional literature by indicating that nonclinical stepfamily versus first marriage family differences on cohesion and parent-child relations

show some stability over time, here specifically over the crucial first 20 months of remarriage. There was evidence that these differences may be attenuated over time, and by the inclusion of a covariate. When variability due to life event changes was accounted for, differences across family type were less remarkable.

With regard to generalization, normative conclusions are cautionary. While these results serve to strengthen earlier work comparing self-report in stepfamilies and intact families, it is still possible that families that do not volunteer to participate in such research differ from those that do. Very little is known about this bias. In one of the few empirical examinations of this issue, Krokoff (1990) found that husbands (generally more difficult to recruit for studies on family relationships) who agreed to participate in a study, were rated as more "emotionally involved" by their wives than those husbands who refused participation. Clearly a finding of this nature, if replicated, has implications for family systems research.

There is now sufficient evidence to conclude that stepfamilies, on average, consistently self-report lowered family cohesion. This was found to hold true for happily married stepfamily members functioning within the normative range on various standardized instruments. Compared to intact family controls, these stepfamily members did not express dissatisfaction with their lowered levels of family

bonding on a real-ideal discrepancy measure. This decreased
sharing or closeness within the family is associated with
decreased marital adjustment, lowered stepparent-
stepadolescent ccmmunication scores, decreased sense of
family coherence, between-member discrepancy on family
ideals, and perceived intrafamilial discrepancy. It is
proposed that nonclinical stepfamily self-report norms on
family variables consistently fall between first marriage
clinical and nonclinical norms. Some of this difference
appears to relate to differing levels of stressful life
events, and within-family communication problems, although
there is still variance to be determined. This difference
in reported stepfamily relations may lessen over time,
although the present investigation did not find strong
evidence of change over time.

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APPENDIX A

Development of the Circumplex Model and Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales

For the constructs of adaptability and cohesion to prove useful to families, clinicians, and researchers, the principles of construct validation should continue to be followed. For adaptability and cohesion to provide a useful structure upon which we can map family functioning, the theoretical model defining these variables must be explicit. Experimentation should simultaneously expand our knowledge of family functioning and build upon the construct validity of these variables. The validity of the circumplex model and the utility of the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES) in measuring adaptability and cohesion was reviewed from four perspectives: (a) the prediction of criterion groups, (b) response to experimental or clinical manipulation, (c) developmental implications, and (d) relation to other measures. Methodological variance concerns, and the importance of the face validity and clinical validity of these constructs should be noted, as their measurement properties, salience, and intuitiveness will help determine their utility to family members, clinicians, and theoreticians.

Olson's circumplex model (Olson et al., 1979) proposes that family adaptability and family cohesion are orthogonal descriptors of family functioning. Cohesion was initially viewed from a curvilinear perspective, with a moderate amount of family cohesiveness seen as optimal to family functioning and individual development. Extreme enmeshment and limited individual autonomy at one end, and extreme disengagement with limited attachment at the other were both viewed as maladaptive.

As with cohesion, Olson and his colleagues initially viewed balanced levels of adaptability as most conducive to family functioning and individual well-being. To remain together as a unit while adapting to individual maturation and changes in the family life cycle (e.g., adding or losing family members), Olson et al. (1979) proposed families worked toward a balance of morphogenesis (change) and morphostasis (stability). In their view (cf. Beavers & Voeller, 1983) rigid adherence to the family status quo would lead to a disordered family unable to cope with transition, while extreme morphogenesis (essentially constant change) would prevent the development of a foundation of common values and expectations needed for the family to communicate and establish reciprocal roles.

From a clinical perspective low to high cohesion has been divided into four family types: disengaged, separated, connected, and enmeshed; while the low to high adaptability groups are labelled: rigid, structured, flexible, and

191

chaotic. The model proposes the dimension of family
communication is the primary facilitator in determining
family type and movement on the two dimensions.

Criterion validity of FACES was initially established
by demonstrating in research at the University of Minnesota
that schizophrenic and neurotic families, alcoholic
families, and families of sexual offenders, were more likely
to obtain extreme scores (Olson et al., 1985). Rodick,
Henggeler, and Hanson (1986) found 93% of juvenile
delinquent families fell into the moderate or extreme
typologies, versus 31% of controls. Garbarino, Sebes, and
Schellenbach (1985) found families at risk for dysfunctional
parent-child relations primarily fell into the chaotically-
enmeshed typology, which contrasted with the balanced
(mainly flexibly-connected) scores of most families
considered to be at low risk. Smets and Hartup (1988)
reported a higher degree of extreme scores on FACES II in
their clinical sample, with "balanced" clinical families
reporting fewer total behaviour problems on the Achenbach
Child Behaviour Checklist.

The circumplex model further predicts that families
balanced on cohesion and adaptability will engage in more
positive communication patterns than extreme families (Olson
et al., 1983). Barnes and Olson (1985) found support for
this hypothesis using parental self-report from "nonproblem"
families, but failed to obtain support from adolescent self-
report. Rodick et al. (1985) did find that families
reporting balanced cohesion and adaptability were observed
to communicate positively. Balanced mothers in this study
demonstrated more positive affect, supportive communication,
and higher use of explicit information. Anderson (1986)
tested this same hypothesis using operationalizations for
adaptability and cohesion other than FACES. He generally
found support for the relationship between self-report of
marital and family cohesion and adaptability, and self-
report of perceived family communication expressiveness and
clarity.

The predictive validity of FACES could also be assessed
by examining family life stage, or developmental maturation.
What happens to family adaptability and cohesion over time?
During different life stages? Sociologists and family
clinicians have proposed various sequential life stages that
mark successful completion of hierarchical developmental
tasks (e.g., birth of a child). While these developmental
models may attempt to force continuous growth into labelled
stages, they allow for conceptualization of the evolution of
families (Steinglass, 1987). Further work on the circumplex
model and the FACES measure must examine families at
different life stages. Olson et al. (1983) have
hypothesized specific levels of adaptability and cohesion
for distressed and nondistressed families at selected points
in the family life cycle. For example the parent-adolescent

dyad, targeted in the present study, is typically expected
to be less cohesive than the relationship between a parent-
preadolescent. Olson et al. (1985) are reportedly
continuing their investigation of levels of family cohesion
and adaptability over the life cycle.

Validation according to the prediction of criterion
groups should logically be supplemented with an analysis of
the circumplex model's verification by independent
manipulation. Treatment outcome studies provide the most
obvious test of family adaptability and cohesion in response
to manipulation. No-therapy or alternate therapy matched
controls must be compared with treatment families on the
dimensions of interest.

The laboratory provides another environment that allows
careful manipulation of the many components of family
adaptability and cohesion. Are these family "traits"
manipulable in the lab? The small group behaviour
experimental literature can guide us in designing
experiments to answer this question. Early work on the
validation of the circumplex model out of Minnesota,
utilizing observed family interaction data to test the
hypotheses of the model, produced equivocal results
(Sprenkle and Olson, 1978).

Russell (1979) examined the heteromethod validity of
the circumplex model. She found low correspondence across
self-report and behavioural methods of analyzing cohesion
and adaptability. With regard to method variance, Russell
(1980) has attempted to compare four instruments
theoretically capable of assessing cohesion and adaptability
in a modified multitrait-multimethod analysis. Russell
assessed five traits (2 related to family cohesion and 3 to
family adaptability), each in at least two ways
(transactional and self-report). In her data analysis, The
Family Sculpture Test (Kvebaek, 1979) was validated against
three other techniques, the Simulated Family Activity
Measurement technique (SIMFAM game), an early version of the
Moos and Moos (1981) Family Environment Scale (FES), and an
adaptation of a scale assessing the influence and perceived
worth of familial values on the individual. She generally
reported poor convergent validity across similar
traits/different methods. Specifically the Moos cohesion
scale appeared to tap a theoretically different concept than
family cohesion (possibly support). Adaptability was
operationally defined by control - a successful attempt to
influence another family member's behaviour, and the results
suggest that the Family Sculpture Test may not yield a
reliable estimate of this dimension. Russell also suggested
that task effects (i.e., the differing setting commands and
situational constraints) play a strong role in the
determination of family leaders. The Family Sculpture Test
centres on a discussion of familial closeness, and here
mothers were most likely to lead, while the SIMFAM task

emphasizes instrumental problem-solving, and here fathers
were more likely to exercise control.

In another attempt at heteromethod analysis Green,
Kolevzon and Vosler (1985) initially found a surprising lack
of association between family competence as depicted by
Beavers, and balanced cohesion and adaptability as depicted
by Olson. Several factors may account for this discrepancy.
The Beavers' variables were assessed via objective codings
of videotaped family discussions, while the Olson variables
were assessed with the original FACES self-report measure.
When the method variance was reduced by creating a sound
self-report questionnaire, more consistent associations
arose, but still with less than adequate specificity. Both
FACES II and III did demonstrate high correlations with the
Self-Report Family Inventory (SFI), which is the
questionnaire for the Beavers Systems Model (Hampson,
Beavers, & Hulgus, 1988).

Concurrent validity within the self-report domain has
proven to be more promising than heteromethod comparisons.
Attempts to relate FACES scores to other family self-report
measures however have been hindered by statistical
confusion. Some authors have incorporated the curvilinear
nature of the circumplex model in their analyses, while
others have utilized a linear Pearson correlation between
cohesion, adaptability, and their own measure. In strict
linear correlation analyses, FACES II was not found to
correlate as expected with the Family Assessment Device
(FAD), which is an operationalization of the McMaster Model
of Family Functioning (Byles, Byrne, Boyle, & Offord, 1988).
FACES III was found to relate in a linear fashion to another
operationalization of the McMaster model, the Family
Assessment Measure (FAM III) (Fristad, 1989). Beavers &
Voeller (1983) have theoretically contrasted their Beavers
Systems Model with the circumplex model, and their
suppositions have in part been validated by the subsequent
large scale research by Green et al. (1991a).

The work in clarifying family models involves an
ongoing evaluation of the relations and distinctions between
the various family constructs that have been proposed.
Bloom (1985) has begun this process with an attempt to
develop a self-report measure based on the serial
correlational analysis of four well known measures: the FES,
the FAM (Skinner, Steinhauer, & Santa-Barbara, 1983), the
Family-Concept Q Sort (FCQS; van der Veen, 1965), and FACES.
Through a series of cluster and factor analyses, Bloom
created a 75 item, 15 dimension measure of family
functioning that incorporated items from all the above
scales. While more comprehensive than the FACES III measure
of cohesion and adaptability, Bloom noted that cohesiveness
was an integrating concept, correlating significantly with
many of his dimensions. Subsumed under adaptability were
Bloom's dimensions of expressiveness, and family style

(democratic, laissez-faire, authoritarian). In relating individual and family constructs, Bloom found locus of control to be associated with family functioning and leadership style. Bloom's work indicates commonalities in family dimensions across independently developed instruments, and represents a further step in determining concurrent validity for family measures.

More recent work using FACES III has questioned the use of a curvilinear statistical model, and the relation between cohesion, adaptability and family functioning. Based in part on empirical work by Green (Green, Kolevzon and Vosler, 1985) and Beavers (Beavers, Hampson and Hulgus, 1985; Beavers & Voeller, 1983), and theoretical critiques by Lee (1988), Olson (1991) has now recently revised his conceptualization of the Circumplex Model and his recommended scoring of FACES III. Lee (1988) outlined a sophisticated theoretical attempt at explaining the complex findings, targeting the adaptability dimension of the circumplex model specifically. After a detailed review of the validity of the circumplex model and an intuitive analysis of the items on FACES I, II, and III, Lee concluded that there exists conceptual ambiguity within the model. He proposes that adaptability, when viewed from within the family, is a first-order measure of change that is curvilinear. At any one stage of life too much change (chaos) or too little (rigidity) can be pathological. The ability to effect family change however is considered a linear second-order dimension of adaptability that more closely parallels Beaver's health/competence dimension. Indeed Lee refers to the ability of healthy families to successfully navigate extremes in adaptability and cohesion during family transitions.

Green, Harris, Forte, and Robinson (1991a, 1991b) have reviewed the discrepant findings across the many investigations utilizing FACES. They propose that sampling issues may have obscured some of the actual relations in the data. While they continue to support the circumplex model, and indeed are working with Olson on FACES IV, they argue that FACES III is not a curvilinear measure able to assess the circumplex model. Their own large scale study (n = 2440), published during the course of the present study, indicates that FACES III does not adequately assess the circumplex model. Rather they found that for both male and female adult respondents, the cohesion scale related in a linear fashion to measures of marital and personal happiness, while the adaptability scale did not correlate significantly with these other measures.

During the course of the present study this ongoing research into the operationalization of the circumplex model saw it evolve over time (Olson, 1991). Currently Olson views the circumplex within a three dimensional model reflecting the view that high self-report of cohesion and

adaptability reflect healthy family functioning. These family constructs are still proposed to be structured in a circumplex, but measurement of this circumplex has proven difficult. Olson's (1991) new circular three-dimensional model incorporates the distinction between first and second order change. He has also responded to this data by altering his view of FACES III, indicating that it indeed is a linear measure. He now suggests that high scores on FACES III represent balanced type families, and low scores represent extreme types. The utility of the circumplex labels is now in question with the indication that high self-report of cohesion and adaptability is not indicative of 'chaotic-enmeshment', clearly a pejorative term. He proposes that his Clinical Rating Scale (CRS), which allows professionals to rate family interaction, does adequately tap the curvilinear nature of the circumplex model. Control families rated on the CRS were more likely to be balanced, while clinical families were more likely to be extreme.

The unexplained convergence and divergence seen when correlating the FACES dimensions with conceptually overlapping family traits tapped by other self-report family instruments will no doubt be further analyzed psychometrically through factor analysis during the development of FACES IV. Clearly both cohesion and adaptability could be conceptualized from a multidimensional, rather than unidimensional perspective. Olson et al. (1983) defined cohesion and adaptability as traits incorporating several family functions, however they revised FACES III to contain only two unidimensional scales, thus resulting in a possible conflict between circumplex theory and its adequate operationalization (Bilbro & Dryer, 1981).

The somewhat equivocal nature of concurrent validity studies incorporating more than one measure indicates that family researchers must add to their concern for different operationalizations and method specific findings an understanding of the complexity of the constructs, the level of aggregation of the data and the level of the system under study as outlined by Christensen and Arrington (1987) and Fisher et al. (1985). Rather than merely reporting multitrait-multimethod-multilevel convergence and divergence, investigators in the family field must begin to hypothesize about the meaning of the complex patterns of 'theory-method-system level' relationships that are hindering integration of this literature.

APPENDIX B

Sample of Questionnaires Given to Family Members

The UNIVERSITY of WESTERN ONTARIO

Faculty of Social Science • Department of Psychology

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS
Consent Form

You are being asked to be part of a research study interested in your view of your family. Both first and second marriage family members are participating in the completion of questionnaires concerning themselves and their families. Questions will focus on individual traits and the marital and parent-adolescent relationship. It is hoped that this study will enhance our understanding of the association between individual characteristics, relationships between family members, family functioning, life stresses, and family formation.

We would like to gather this information by providing you with eight questionnaires that you can complete in your home. Mother, father, and adolescent will all complete these forms individually. This process will be repeated approximately 6 months later. The questionnaires require approximately $1^1/_2$ to $2^1/_2$ hours of your time. The questionnaires that the investigator will leave with you do not have to be completed in one sitting, however we ask that they be completed within 5 days of your receiving them. You will be provided with stamped, addressed envelopes in order to return the questionnaires. You may withdraw your participation and consent at any time, and your questionnaires will be destroyed.

The questionnaires will be assigned a number code, and your name will not appear anywhere on them. Only the principal investigators will keep a separate record of the participant's names and matching codes. Research assistants in this study will only have access to the anonymous questionnaire responses. No one else will be given access to the questionnaires. Your answers will not be disclosed to other family members. Our interest is in group results, not individual questionnaire results. If you are interested I will provide you with a summary of the results of the overall study.

Thank you for your assistance with The Family Relationships Study. Your family will be paid $30.00 for your time and effort. If you have any questions please feel free to ask, or call and leave a message for me in London at the University of Western Ontario 519-679-2111 (ext. 4715), or in Hamilton at 416-385-2651.

Sincerely,

Jeff St. Pierre, M.A., Doctoral Candidate
Psychology Dept., University of Western Ontario
Principal Investigator, Family Relationships Study

Consulting Supervisor: Dr. David Wolfe, Psychologist,
Associate Professor, University of Western Ontario

(FACES)

1	2	3	4	5
ALMOST NEVER	ONCE IN AWHILE	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

DESCRIBE YOUR FAMILY NOW:

____ 1. Family members ask each other for help.

____ 2. In solving problems, the children's suggestions are followed.

____ 3. We approve of each other's friends.

____ 4. The children have a say in their discipline.

____ 5. We like to do things with just our immediate family.

____ 6. Different persons act as leaders in our family.

____ 7. Family members feel closer to other family members than to people outside the family.

____ 8. Our family changes its way of handling tasks.

____ 9. Family members like to spend free time with each other.

____ 10. Parent(s) and children discuss punishment together.

____ 11. Family members feel very close to each other.

____ 12. The children make the decisions in our family.

____ 13. When our family gets together for activities, everybody is present.

____ 14. Rules change in our family.

____ 15. We can easily think of things to do together as a family.

____ 16. We shift household responsibilities from person to person.

____ 17. Family members consult other family members on their decisions.

____ 18. It is hard to identify the leader(s) in our family.

____ 19. Family togetherness is very important.

____ 20. It is hard to tell who does which household chores.

1	2	3	4	5
ALMOST NEVER	ONCE IN AWHILE	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

IDEALLY, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR FAMILY TO BE:

____ 1. Family members would ask each other for help.

____ 2. In solving problems, the children's suggestions would be followed.

____ 3. We would approve of each other's friends.

____ 4. The children would have a say in their discipline.

____ 5. We would like to do things with just our immediate family.

____ 6. Different persons would act as leaders in our family.

____ 7. Family members would feel closer to each other than to people outside the family.

____ 8. Our family would change its way of handling tasks.

____ 9. Family members would like to spend free time with each other.

____ 10. Parent(s) and children would discuss punishment together.

____ 11. Family members would feel very close to each other.

____ 12. The children would make the decisions in our family.

____ 13. When our family got together, everybody would be present.

____ 14. Rules would change in our family.

____ 15. We could easily think of things to do together as a family.

____ 16. We would shift household responsibilities from person to person.

____ 17 Family members would consult each other on their decisions.

____ 18. We would know who the leader(s) was in our family.

____ 19. Family togetherness would be very important.

____ 20. We could tell who does which household chores.

1	2	3	4	5
ALMOST NEVER	ONCE IN AWHILE	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

IDEALLY, HOW WOULD YOUR MOTHER LIKE YOUR FAMILY TO BE:

_____ 1. Family members would ask each other for help.

_____ 2. In solving problems, the children's suggestions would be followed.

_____ 3. We would approve of each other's friends.

_____ 4. The children would have a say in their disciplin.

_____ 5. We would like to do things with just our immediate family.

_____ 6. Different persons would act as leaders in our family.

_____ 7. Family members would feel closer to each other than to people outside the family.

_____ 8. Our family would change its way of handling tasks.

_____ 9. Family members would like to spend free time with each other.

_____ 10. Parent(s) and children would discuss punishment together.

_____ 11. Family members would feel very close to each other.

_____ 12. The children would make the decisions in our family.

_____ 13. When our family got together, everybody would be present.

_____ 14. Rules would change in our family.

_____ 15. We could easily think of things to do together as a family.

_____ 16. We would shift household responsibilities from person to person.

_____ 17. Family members would consult each other on their decisions.

_____ 18. We would know who the leader(s) was in our family.

_____ 19. Family togetherness would be very important.

_____ 20. We could tell who does which household chores.

1	2	3	4	5
ALMOST NEVER	ONCE IN AWHILE	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY	ALMOST ALWAYS

IDEALLY, HOW WOULD YOUR STEPFATHER LIKE YOUR FAMILY TO BE:

____ 1. Family members would ask each other for help.

____ 2. In solving problems, the children's suggestions would be followed.

____ 3. We would approve of each other's friends.

____ 4. The children would have a say in their discipline.

____ 5. We would like to do things with just our immediate family.

____ 6. Different persons would act as leaders in our family.

____ 7. Family members would feel closer to each other than to people outside the family.

____ 8. Our family would change its way of handling tasks.

____ 9. Family members would like to spend free time with each other.

____ 10. Parent(s) and children would discuss punishment together.

____ 11. Family members would feel very close to each other.

____ 12. The children would make the decisions in our family.

____ 13. When our family got together, everybody would be present.

____ 14. Rules would change in our family.

____ 15. We could easily think of things to do together as a family.

____ 16. We would shift household responsibilities from person to person.

____ 17. Family members would consult each other on their decisions.

____ 18. We would know who the leader(s) was in our family.

____ 19. Family togetherness would be very important.

____ 20. We could tell who does which household chores.

(FSOC)

This questionnaire contains questions about the way your family handles various daily problems. The questions relate to your immediate family. In answering, try to think of the behaviour of the entire family, and not only of specific individuals. Don't include little children to whom the questions don't apply. There are no right or wrong answers. Each family has its own way of behaving in different situations. Below each question is a scale, please circle the number that best describes your answer.

1. Is there a feeling in your family that everyone understands everyone else well?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There's full understanding among all family members						There's no understanding among family members

2. When you have to get things done which depend on cooperation among all members of the family, your feeling is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There's almost no chance that the things will get done						The things will always get done

3. Do you have the feeling that it's always possible, in your family, to get help one from another when a problem arises?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
You can always get help from all family members						You can't get help from family members

4. Let's assume that unexpected guests are about to arrive and the house isn't set up to receive them. Does it seem to you that:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The job will fall on one person						All the members of the family will pitch in to get the house ready

5. In case an important decision has to be taken which concerns the whole family, do you have the feeling that:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A decision will always be taken that's for the good of all family members						The decision that will be taken won't be for the good of all family members

6. Family life seems to you:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Full of interest						Totally routine

7. Does it happen that someone in the family feels as if it isn't clear to him/her what his/her jobs are in the house?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This feeling exists all the time						This feeling exists very rarely

8. When a problem comes up in the family (e.g., unusual behaviour of a family member, an unexpected overdraft in the bank account, being fired from work, unusual tension), do you think that you can together clarify how it happened?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very little chance						To a great extent

9. Many people, even those with a strong character, sometimes feel like sad sacks (losers). In the past, has there been a feeling like this in your family?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There's never been a feeling like this in the family						This feeling always exists

10. Think of a situation in which your family moved to a new house. Does it seem to you that:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
All family members would be able to adjust easily to the new situation						It would be very hard for family members to adjust to the new situation

11. Let's assume that your family has been annoyed by something in your neighbourhood. Does it seem to you that:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Nothing can be done to prevent the annoyance						It's possible to do a great deal to prevent the annoyance

12. Until now your family life has had:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No clear goals or purpose at all						Very clear goals and purpose

13. When you think about your family life, you very often:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feel how good it is to be alive						Ask yourself why the family exists

14. Let's say you're tired, disappointed, angry, or the like. Does it seem to you that all the members of the family will sense your feelings?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No one will sense my feelings						All the family members will sense my feelings

15. Do you sometimes feel that there's no clear and sure knowledge of what's going to happen in the family?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There's no such feeling at all						There's always a feeling like this

16. When the family faces a tough problem, the feeling is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There's no hope of overcoming the difficulties						We'll overcome it all

17. To succeed in things that are important to the family or to one of you:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Isn't important in the family						Is a very important thing for all family members

18. To what extent does it seem to you that family rules are clear?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The rules in the family are completely clear						The rules aren't clear at all

19. When something very difficult happened in your family (like a critical illness of a family member), the feeling was:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There's no point in going on living in the family						This is a challenge to go on living in the family despite everything

20. When you think of possible difficulties in important areas of family life, is the feeling:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There are many problems which have no solution						It's possible in every case to find a solution

21. Think of your feeling about the extent of planning money matters in your family.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There's full planning of money matters						There's no planning about matters at all in the family

22. When you're in the midst of a rough period, does the family:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Always feel cheered up by the thought about better things that happen						Feel disappointed and despairing about life

23. Does it happen that you feel that there's really not much meaning in maintaining the family framework?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
We always have this feeling						We've never had a feeling like this in our family

24. Think of your feeling about the extent of order in your home. Is it the case that:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The house is well-ordered						The house isn't at all ordered

25. Let's assume that your family is the target of criticism in the neighbourhood. Does it seem to you that your reactions will be:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The whole family will join together against the criticism						Family members will move apart from each other

26. To what extent do family members share sad experiences with each other?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There's complete sharing with all family members						We don't share our sad experiences with family members

PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION: Parent Form

Response Choices

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

1. _____ I can discuss my beliefs with my child without feeling restrained or embarrassed.

2. _____ Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my child tells me.

3. _____ My child is always a good listener.

4. _____ I am sometimes afraid to ask my child for what I want.

5. _____ My child has a tendency to say things to me which would be better left unsaid.

6. _____ My child can tell how I'm feeling without asking.

7. _____ I am very satisfied with how my child and I talk together.

8. _____ If I were in trouble, I could tell my child.

9. _____ I openly show affection to my child.

10. _____ When we are having a problem, I often give my child the silent treatment.

11. _____ I am careful about what I say to my child.

12. _____ When talking to my child, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid.

13. _____ When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my child.

14. _____ My child tries to understand my point of view.

15. _____ There are topics I avoid discussing with my child.

16. _____ I find it easy to discuss problems with my child.

17. _____ It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my child.

18. _____ My child nags/bothers me.

19. _____ My child insults me when she/he is angry with me.

20. _____ I don't think I can tell my child how I really feel about some things.

(DAS)

L 5 - 10

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate with a check the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occa-sionally Disagree	Fre-quently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
1. Handling family finances.						
2. Matters of recreation.						
3. Religious matters.						
4. Demonstrations of affection.						
5. Friends.						
6. Sex relations.						
7. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior).						
8. Philosophy of life.						
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws.						
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important.						
11. Amount of time spent together.						
12. Making major decisions.						
13. Household tasks.						
14. Leisure time interests and activities.						
15. Career decisions.						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occa-sionally	Rarely	Never
16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or termi-nating your relationship?						
17. How often do you or your partner leave the house after a fight?						
18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?						
19. Do you confide in your partner?						
20. Do you ever regret that you married or began living with your partner?						
21. How often do you and your partner quarrel?						
22. How often do you and your partner "get on each other's nerves?"						

Go to next page

UAS - Page 2

	Every Day	Almost Every Day	Occa-sionally	Rarely	Never
23. Do you kiss your partner?............					
24. Do you and your partner engage in out-side interests together?..........					

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your partner?

	Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas....						
26. Laugh together...........						
27. Calmly discuss something.........						
28. Work together on a project.........						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check yes or no)

	(1) Yes	(2) No
29. One of you being too tired for sex.		
30. One of you not showing love.		

31. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect
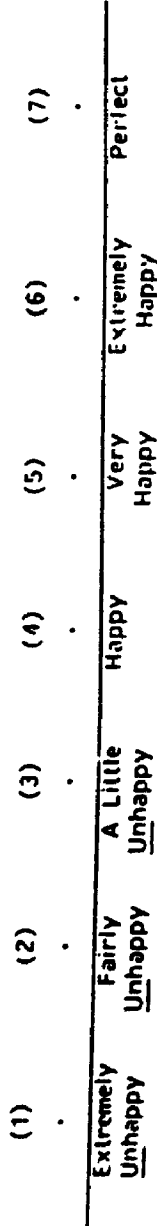
32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship?

FAMILY LIFE EVENTS CHECKLIST

Read each item and place a check beside those events that have taken place
over the past year.   If the event has occurred over the past six months,
please place a circle around the item number.

Intra-family member strains

1. Increase of husband/father's time away from family.
2. Increase of wife/mother's time away from family.
3. A member appears to have emotional problems.
4. A member appears to depend on alcohol or drugs.
5. Increase in conflict between husband and wife.
6. Increase in arguments between parent(s) and child(ren).
7. Increase in conflict among children in the family.
8. Increased difficulty in managing teenage child(ren).
9. Increased difficulty in managing school age child(ren) (6-12 yrs).
10. Increased difficulty in managing preschool child(ren) ($2\frac{1}{2}$-6 yrs).
11. Increased difficulty in managing toddler(s) (1-$2\frac{1}{2}$ yrs).
12. Increased difficulty in managing infant(s) (0-1 yrs).
13. Increase in the amount of "outside activities" which the child(ren) are
    involved in.
14. Increased disagreement about a member's friends or activities.
15. Increase in the number of problems or issues which don't get resolved.
16. Increase in the number of tasks or chores which don't get done.
17. Increased conflict with in-laws or relatives.

Marital status

18. Spouse/parent was separated or divorced.
19. Spouse/parent has an "affair".
20. Increased difficulty in resolving issues with a "former" or separated
    spouse.
21. Increased difficulty with sexual relationship between husband and wife.

Pregnancy and Childbearing Strains

22. Family member experiencing menopause.
23. Spouse had unwanted or difficult pregnancy.
24. An unmarried member became pregnant.
25. A member had an abortion.
26. A member gave birth to or adopted a child.

Finance and Business Strains

27. Took out a loan or refinanced a loan to cover increased expenses.
28. Went on welfare.
29. Change in conditions (economic, political, weather) which hurts family investments and/or income.
30. Change in Agriculture Market, Stock Market, or Land Values which hurts family investments and/or income.
31. A member started a new business.
32. Purchased or built a home.
33. A member purchased a car or other major item.
34. Increasing financial debts due to over-use of credit cards.
35. Increased strain on family "money" for medical/dental expenses.
36. Increased strain on family "money" for food, clothing, energy, home care.
37. Increased strain on family "money" for child(ren)'s education.
38. Delay in receiving child support or alimony payments.

Work-family transitions and strains

39. A member changed to a new job/career.
40. A member lost or quit a job.
41. A member retired from work.
42. A member started or returned to work.
43. A member stopped working for extended period (e.g., laid off, leave of absence, strike).
44. Decrease in satisfaction with job/career.
45. A member had increased difficulty with people at work.
46. A member was promoted at work or given more responsibilities.
47. Family moved to a new home/apartment.
48. A child/adolescent member changed to a new school.

Illness and family care strains

49. Parent/spouse became seriously ill or injured.
50. Child became seriously ill or injured.
51. Close relative or friend of the family became seriously ill.
52. A member became physically disabled or chronically ill.
53. Increased difficulty in managing a chronically ill or disabled member.
54. Member or close relative was committed to an institution or nursing home.
55. Increased responsibility to provide direct care or financial help to husband's and/or wife's parent(s).
56. Experienced difficulty in arranging for satisfactory child care.

Losses

57. A parent/spouse died.
58. A child member died.
59. Death of husband's or wife's parent or close relative.
60. Close friend of the family died.
61. Married son or daughter was separated or divorced.
62. A member "broke up" a relationship with a close friend.

Transitions in and out

63. A member was married.
64. Young adult member left home.
65. A young adult member began college (or post high school training).
66. A member moved back home or a new person moved into the household.
67. A parent/spouse started school (or training program) after being away from school for a long time.

Family legal violations

68. A member went to jail or juvenile detention.
69. A member was picked up by police or arrested.
70. Physical or sexual abuse or violence in the home.
71. A member ran away from home.
72. A member dropped out of school or was suspended from school.