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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL MARITAL INSTABILITY AND CONFLICT, ADULT ATTACHMENT STYLES, AND COLLEGE STUDENTS' INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

By

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL MARITAL INSTABILITY AND CONFLICT, ADULT ATTACHMENT STYLES, AND COLLEGE STUDENTS' INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

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This study examined the links among perception of interparental conflict, parental divorce, adult attachment traits, and college students' intimate relationships. Eighty-five dating couples were videotaped discussing a relationship problem, and each member of the dyad completed questionnaires regarding (1) demographic information, (2) memories of perceived interparental conflict via the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict scale, (3) attachment traits via the Adult Attachment Questionnaire, and (4) other personality traits via the NEO Five-Factor Inventory. In addition to completing the attachment traits and personality traits questionnaires with respect to themselves, each member of the dyad completed these questionnaires with respect to their partners.

Based on previous research, it was predicted that memories of perceived interparental conflict would be a more significant factor than parental divorce on young adults' romantic relationships. Perceived interparental conflict was predicted to relate to college students' attachment traits, which in turn would influence their behavior in intimate relationships. A significant association was found between memories of perceived interparental conflict and insecure adult attachment indices for college women but not for college men. The study also found that college men who were more

avoidantly attached were more likely to be stressed during the relationship discussion. Overall though, neither parental divorce nor perceived interparental conflict, via adult attachment index, were predictors of behavior in intimate relationships for either college men or college women. Limitations of methodology are discussed and directions for future research are suggested.

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INTRODUCTION

The present study examined the links among perceived memories of interparental conflict, parental divorce, adult attachment traits, and college students' intimate relationships assessed via questionnaire completion and observations of couple interaction.

Previous research has demonstrated a connection between perceived quality of parents' marriage and style of late adolescents' and young adults' attachment (Brennan and Shaver, 1993), but not between parental marital status and attachment style (Brennan and Shaver, 1993; Hazen and Shaver, 1987). This research assessed only one partner in the relationship using self-report measures. Thus, it is unclear whether perceived quality of parents' marriage and attachment styles impact interactions among romantic partners.

Another body of attachment research has ascertained that people with different attachment styles have different experiences in intimate relationships (Collins and Read, 1990; Feeney and Noller, 1990; Hazen and Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer and Nachson, 1991; Pistole, 1989; Simpson,1990; Simpson, Rholes, and Nelligan, 1992; Simpson, Rholes, and Phillips, 1996). However, the reports of research on the influence of attachment relationships that observed features of couple interaction (Simpson, Rholes, and Nelligan, 1992; Simpson, Rholes, and Phillips, 1996) did not include parental marital instability as

one of the independent variables. Again, it is not known whether parental marital instability (either divorce or perceived interparental conflict) and adult attachment style play a role in college students' intimate relationships. Because these adult children of divorce and interparental conflict are going to be among the next generation of mothers and fathers, it is important to explore how adult children of divorce and interparental conflict maintain and resolve conflicts in intimate relationships. This study hypothesizes that perceived interparental conflict affects college students' attachment styles, which in turn influences their behavior in intimate relationships, and therefore will be a new contribution to the literature.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Parental Marital Instability and Conflict: An Overview

In the 1970's one half of all marriages ended in divorce, and close to 60% of couples who obtained a divorce had children under 18 years of age (Glick, 1979). Approximately 1 million children each year since 1972 were involved in divorces (Norton and Moorman, 1987), with an estimated 30% of all children born in the early 1980's having experienced parental divorce before they reached age 18 (Glick, 1984).[1]

Approximately twenty years later, these children are now of marrying age. Survey data reveal that children from marriages that were disrupted during their childhood have a higher rate of divorce than children from intact marriages (Catton, 1988; Glenn and Kramer, 1987; Mueller and Pope, 1977). Pope and Mueller (1976) refer to this phenomenon as "the intergenerational transmission of marital instability."

According to Wallerstein and Kelly (1980, p.4), "Divorce is a process which *begins* (italics are mine) with the escalating distress of the marriage, and often peaks at the separation and legal filing." Therefore, this study viewed divorce not only as the event of a separation, but also as a process, and thus examined how young adults are affected by their direct or indirect involvement in their parent's conflict.

[1] For a literature review of the effects of divorce and interparental conflict on children see Appendix A.

Parental Marital Instability and Conflict and Young Adults' Intimate Relationships

Young adults from problematic and fragmented family backgrounds express more doubt and anxiety about their relationships than young adults from happy intact families (Lauer and Lauer, 1991). Robinson, Garthoeffner, and Henry (1995) theorized that experiencing doubt and anxiety about relationships is a potential maladaptive attitude that could negatively impact the quality of interpersonal relationship. To test their assumption, three hundred and six undergraduates between the ages of 18 and 24 completed self-report questionnaires assessing interpersonal relationship quality and anxiety about close relationships. The undergraduates were instructed to think about a current or past close personal relationship in responding to the questionnaires. The young adults with divorced parents who had high levels of relationship anxiety reported lower levels of interpersonal relationship quality than young adults from intact families. Unfortunately, due to the vagueness of the instructions the respondents could have been thinking about platonic and not romantic relationships in responding to the questionnaires.

Not trusting one's partner is another maladaptive attitude that might hamper the maintenance of intimate relationships. Johnston and Thomas (1996) posited that adult children of divorce expect relationship failure and therefore are less trusting of their partners and more hesitant to get emotionally involved. In their study, 60 undergraduates involved in exclusive heterosexual relationships for at least three months completed the Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere and Huston, 1980), the Risk in Intimacy Inventory (Pilkington and Richardson, 1988), and a demographic questionnaire. Correlation

analyses indicated that young adults from divorced homes perceived intimate relationships as risky and trusted their partners less than those from intact homes.

Sprague and Kinney (1997) also found that college students from divorced families reported feeling less trust in current relationships than students from intact families. However, the authors also noted that students from divorced families reported experiencing more conflict while growing up than students from intact families. They did not analyze felt level of trust with respect to interparental conflict. Thus, it is unclear whether marital conflict plays a role in the difference between trust levels of students from divorced families and those of intact families.

While it may be the case that adult children of divorce are less trusting of their partners, neither Sprague and Kinney (1997) nor Johnston and Thomas (1996) measured various qualities of the undergraduates' relationships (e.g., warmth or hostility between partners). Consequently, it is not known whether there is a relationship between adult children's lack of trust in their relationships and hampered maintenance of their romantic relationships. Furthermore, as Robinson, Garthoeffner, and Henry (1995) and Johnston and Thomas (1996) suggest, it may be that young adults from divorced homes feeling anxious about relationships and having less trust create negative experiences in relationships. However, it may also be the case that negative experiences in relationships, perhaps as a consequence of maladaptive styles of interaction, results in increased relationship anxiety and a decrease in trust.

Interparental conflict may have as strong or stronger an effect on young adults' intimate relationships as the separation itself (Gabardi and Rosen, 1992; Westervelt and Vandenberg, 1997). Gabardi and Rosen (1992) examined the effects of parental divorce

and marital conflict on college students' attitudes toward marriage. They administered the Attitudes Toward Marriage Scale (Gabardi and Rosen, 1991) and the Relationship Belief Inventory (Eidelson and Epstein, 1982) to 300 college students enrolled in an introductory psychology course. With regard to attitudes toward marriage, they found no significant differences between college students with divorced parents and those with intact parents. However, their results indicated that memories of greater interparental conflict for college students from both intact and divorced parents was related to greater attitudes of doubt and more negative attitudes toward marriage. Their study suggests that memories of interparental conflict may be more important than parent's marital status when considering influences on students' attitudes toward marriage.

Similarly, Westervelt and Vandenberg (1997) found that interparental conflict is a more significant factor than divorce on young adults' capacity for intimacy. Parental conflict was assessed using the Family Environment Scale (Moos and Moos, 1981) and level of intimacy in closest intimate relationship was assessed using the Psychological Intimacy Questionnaire (Tesch, 1985). Individuals who rated themselves as coming from families with high conflict reported lower ratings of current intimacy than individuals who rated themselves from families with low conflict. There was no significant relationship between parental marital status and level of intimacy.

While the literature reviewed suggests that both parental marital status and the quality of parents' marriage influence the nature of young adults' intimate relationships, the research lacks a theoretical underpinning by which to interpret the results. Part of the purpose of the current study is to test attachment theory as a theoretical framework for understanding the intergenerational transmission of marital instability.

Attachment Theory: A Brief History

Attachment theory is concerned with the processes by which infants become emotionally attached to their caregivers and emotionally distressed when separated from them (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980). Attachment theory draws on concepts and ideas from psychoanalytic object relations theory, ethology, and evolution theory. Bowlby argued that attachment behaviors (e.g., crying) evolved to ensure that infants, who at birth are absolutely dependent, are more likely to survive. There are three defining features of an attachment relationship. The first is *proximity maintenance* or staying near the caregiver or causing the caregiver to stay near. The second feature is using the *caregiver as a secure base*, meaning that the infant can feel comfortable enough to engage in other behaviors such as exploring the environment. The third feature is using the *caregiver as a safe haven*, meaning that the infant can rely on the caregiver for comfort, support, and reassurance. Bowlby proposed that early interactions with parents develop into internal working models of self and other. For example, if a caregiver is consistently emotionally available and responsive to a child's needs, the child develops an internal working model of caregiver as caring and responsive and an internal working model of self as worthy of care and attention. These models govern one's behavior in relationships, and are activated during periods of stress.

A methodology known as the Strange Situation was developed for observing attachment behavior (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall, 1978). The Strange Situation consists of episodes in which an infant, placed in a playroom with toys, is separated from his/her mother, exposed to a short period of being alone, exposed to an unfamiliar adult, and then reunited with the mother. Ainsworth et al. identified three patterns of

attachment; secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent. Infants who were securely attached approached their mothers at reunion, were able to get comfort, and then continued to explore the room. Infants who had avoidant relationships did not seek support from their mothers at reunion and displayed self-sufficient behavior. Mothers of avoidant infants tended to dislike close physical contact and were less affectionate with their babies. Infants who had anxious/ambivalent attachments made attempts for contact with mother at reunion, but were also angry. Their behavior reflects a model of caretaker as being inconsistently available and unreliable.

Continuity of Attachment Style

Bowlby (1979) maintained that "attachment behavior characterizes human beings from cradle to grave," (p.129).There is some empirical support for the continuity of attachment style across the life span. Researchers have found that an infant's attachment style remains relatively stable over the first six to ten years of life (Elicker, Englund, and Sroufe, 1992; Grossman and Grossman, 1991; Main and Cassidy, 1988). However, there is no longitudinal evidence to date on whether children's attachment styles remain relatively stable into adulthood.

Other work has used retrospective methods to demonstrate a link between early attachment experiences and current adult attachment styles. Main and her colleagues developed an interview that inquires about adults' early relationships with parents and categorized respondents into three adult attachment classifications: secure, preoccupied, and dismissing (Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy, 1985). These three classifications correspond to the infant attachment categories of secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant, respectively, as described by Ainsworth et al (1978). Various researchers have found that

secure individuals reported that their parents provided adequate care and encouraged personal autonomy, whereas adults with insecure attachment styles reported having less positive childhood relationships with their parents (Collins and Read, 1990; Feeney and Noller, 1990). Interparental conflict is associated with less warm, less empathic relationships between parents and children and more rejection of the child (Belsky, Youngblade, Rovine, and Volling, 1991; Caspi and Elder, 1988). Therefore, it is expected that individuals who perceived high levels of interparental conflict would have insecure adult attachment styles.

The idea that attachment styles are continuous from infancy into adulthood is controversial. Collins and Read (1994) believe the infant's working model of the nature of relationships is subject to revision from outside the family (e.g., peers), and it is unclear how much revision goes on between infancy and adulthood. Regardless of continuity or discontinuity, the patterns of attachment styles represent a useful way to conceptualize adult relationships (Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994; Hazen and Shaver, 1994a, b).

Adult Attachment Styles and Intimate Relationships

In a pioneering study, Hazen and Shaver (1987) proposed that adult's romantic relationships could be conceptualized as an attachment process. They adapted the three infant attachment styles into three paragraph descriptions appropriate to adult intimate relationships, and asked subjects (who responded to newspaper articles) to indicate which description best characterizes their feelings in romantic relationships. Hazen and Shaver found that adults with different attachment styles experience intimate relationships differently. Securely attached people (across the life span) characterized their romantic

relationships as happy, friendly, and trusting. Anxious/ambivalent people characterized their romantic relationships as involving obsession, desire for reciprocity and union, emotional highs and lows, and jealousy. Romantic relationships of avoidant people were characterized by fear of intimacy, emotional highs and lows, and jealousy.

Similarly, Simpson (1990) found that people (specifically college students) with a secure attachment style tend to be involved in relationships characterized by higher levels of interdependence, trust, commitment, and satisfaction. People with insecure styles (anxious/ambivalent and avoidant) tend to be involved in relationships characterized by the opposite set of features. Furthermore, people with secure attachment styles reported experiencing more positive emotions about their relationships, whereas people with insecure attachment styles reported experiencing more negative emotions about their relationships. These results have been replicated by other investigators (Collins and Read, 1990; Feeney and Noller, 1990).

Only a limited number of studies have explored how persons with different attachment styles maintain and resolve conflicts in intimate relationships (Mikulincer and Nachson, 1991; Pistole, 1989; Simpson, Rholes, and Phillips, 1996). Secure people are more open in discussing topics than insecure people (Mikulincer and Nachson, 1991). In attempting to resolve conflict, secure people are more likely than avoidant or anxious/ambivalent people to report using an integrating strategy ("I try to integrate my ideas with those of my partner to come up with a decision jointly"), and they are more likely than anxious/ambivalent people to report using a compromising strategy ("I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse") (Pistole, 1989). Lastly, in one of the rare studies to use an observational measure of couple interaction, Simpson, Rholes and

Phillips (1996) videotaped one hundred and twenty-three college dating couples trying to resolve a problem. Observer ratings revealed that in discussing a problem highly ambivalent people displayed greater stress and anxiety during their interactions, and avoidant men behaved in a less warm and supportive manner toward their partner.

In addition to finding differences in romantic experiences among adults with different attachment styles, Hazen and Shaver (1987) examined the proposition that adults' romantic relationships are affected by their attachment history. Attachment history with parents was assessed in part by asking respondents whether their parents ever separated or divorced. Interestingly, Hazen and Shaver (1987) found that adult attachment styles did not seem to be influenced by parental divorce. Brennan and Shaver (1993) pursued this line of inquiry further and assessed the influence of both parental divorce and quality of parents' marriage on attachment style. The investigators administered Hazan and Shaver's (1987) single-item adult attachment measure and a questionnaire regarding parents' marital status and whether parents were happily or unhappily married to 863 college students enrolled in introductory psychology courses. They also found that parental divorce was not related to their offspring's attachment style. However, Brennan and Shaver (1993) discovered that insecure attachment styles were overrepresented among young adults who reported their parents as being unhappily married.

Attachment Styles and Personality Traits

Attachment styles have been correlated with personality traits (Shaver and Brennan, 1992). It may be that measures of adult attachment style also measure personality, only less well. Thus, personality is an important potential confound. There

are several approaches to measuring personality: Block's (1961) Q-Sort method, Cattell's (1982) Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire, McCrae's (1985) Five-factor Model, and Eysenck and Eysenck's (1975) Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. For the purposes of this study, McCrae's five-factor model will be used in order to replicate Shaver and Brennan's (1992) results.

Many personality constructs have been shown to reduce to one or a combination of five factors, referred to as the "Big Five" personality traits (Digman, 1990; John, 1990; McCrae, 1989). Costa and McCrae (1985) named the five factors: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Neuroticism indicates the tendency to experience unpleasant and disturbing emotions. Extraversion concerns differences in the preferences for social interaction. Openness to Experience refers to receptiveness to new ideas, approaches, and experiences. Agreeableness refers to selfless concern for others and trusting, generous sentiments. Conscientiousness concerns individual differences in organization and achievement.

Intuitively, attachment styles appear to be related to the Big Five personality traits. For example, it would be expected that securely attached people would be less neurotic than insecurely attached people. Shaver and Brennan (1992) examined associations between the three adult attachment styles and the Big Five personality traits assessed by the NEO Personality Inventory (Costa and McCrae, 1985). As expected, they found that secure subjects were less neurotic and more extraverted than insecure subjects, and more agreeable than avoidant subjects. Shaver and Brennan (1992) also found that these personality traits were not as powerful as attachment styles in predicting romantic relationship outcomes. The authors theorize that the reason is probably because the

personality constructs are intentionally very general and the attachment style constructs are relationship specific.

HYPOTHESES

The present study intended to extend Brennan and Shaver's (1993) and Simpson, Rholes, and Phillips' (1996) results by examining how a college student's attachment history and style influences his/her behavior in discussing a problem in their relationship with a current dating partner. The literature on the effects of divorce suggests that both parental marital status and the quality of parents' marriage influence the nature of young adults' intimate relationships. However, Brennan and Shaver's (1993) results, in support of Gabardi and Rosen (1992) and Westervelt and Vanderberg (1997), indicate that the perceived quality of parents' marriage is the more important factor influencing college students' attachment styles and intimate relationships. Based on Brennan and Shaver's results, the causal process could be conceived as follows: perceived interparental conflict negatively affects the college student's attachment style, which in turn (based on Simpson, Rholes, and Phillips' results,) negatively influences the student's behavior discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner.

Specifically, the hypotheses for the present study were as follows:

(1). Parental marital status will not be found to be statistically significantly related to college students' scores on attachment indices.

(2). College students who have memories of high levels of interparental conflict are likely to have higher scores on indices of either ambivalence or avoidance.

(3). College students who have higher scores on an index of ambivalence will have a higher measure of stress and anxiety in discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner.

(4). College students who have higher scores on an index of avoidance will have lower scores of warmth and supportiveness toward their partners in discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner.

(5). College students who have memories of high levels of interparental conflict will have a higher measure of stress and anxiety in discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner.

(6). College students who have memories of high levels of interparental conflict will have lower scores in warmth and supportiveness toward their partners in discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner.

(7a). The relationship between memories of high levels of interparental conflict and the college student's higher measure of stress and anxiety in discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner will be mediated by higher scores on an index of ambivalence.

(7b). The relationship between memories of high levels of interparental conflict and the college student's lower scores in warmth and supportiveness in discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner will be mediated by higher scores on an index avoidance.

In addition, given the lack of existing research examining the connection between adult attachment styles and personality, the present study intends to further clarify the relative roles of attachment and personality with intimate relationship outcomes. It is hypothesized that:

(8). The college student's scores on attachment indices will explain more parsimoniously

the college student's behavior discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner than higher order personality traits (i.e., neuroticism, extraversion, and agreeableness) theoretically related to attachment.

METHOD

Subjects and Procedures

An analysis of power necessary for .80 power to detect a moderate effect size, r =.30, (the effect size previous studies have discovered)(Cohen, 1992), determined that 85 couples were needed as subjects, and recruitment continued until 85 couples participated. Subjects were recruited through Michigan State University Psychology Department's Subject Pool using the World-Wide Web. At least one member of each dyad participated to earn extra credit points toward their psychology class grade. To ensure that couples were involved in meaningful relationships, partners were required to have been dating the same person for at least 6 months to participate. The mean length of relationships was 21 months, ranging from 6 months to 80 months. The mean age of men and women was 20.2 and 19.5, respectively. Participants ranged in age from 16 to 27. Although three of the participants were under the age of majority, this was not known until after their participation was completed and parental consent was not received. Table 1 on page 22 presents the demographic characteristics of the subjects.

Each member of the dyad was asked to sign consent forms and complete questionnaires regarding (1) demographic information, (2) perceptions of interparental conflict, (3) attachment style, and (4) personality traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, and agreeableness. In addition to completing the attachment style and personality traits questionnaires with respect to themselves, each member of the dyad was asked to complete these questionnaires with respect to their partners.

In a procedure similar to Gottman's (1979) dyadic interaction paradigm, partners then jointly identified the most significant unresolved problem in their relationship. Once

both partners agreed on the problem, they were told to think about the last major argument or disagreement they had about this topic and then try to resolve it. The couple was told that although no one will watch their interaction while it takes place, their discussion will be videotaped and coded at a later time by trained raters. The couple was also informed that questionnaires and coding forms were identified by subject number to maintain confidentiality, and should one of the coders recognize a participant that coder will not rate the videotape. A copy of the Researcher Script can be found in Appendix B, and a copy of the Couples Discussion Task can be found in Appendix C.

Immediately following the interaction and before any discussion between the couple occurs, each member of the dyad rated both their own behavior and their partner's behavior in the interaction. The rating scales used by each member of the dyad were the same scale used by the trained raters. For a description of the rating scale see section "Coding of Dyadic Interactions" and Appendix H-2/3. The experimenter then spent 15-30 minutes (as needed) with the couple to process the relationship discussion to make sure the couple left with a sense that the issue raised during the protocol was worked through. The experimenter referred the couple to counseling agencies as needed.

Measures

Demographic Information

Subjects provided standard demographic information including age, sex, racial/ethnic background, and parents' marital status. Subjects also provided information regarding length of current romantic relationship and family characteristics (e.g., whether either of their parents are deceased, number of siblings, if applicable, age at time of divorce). This information was used for exploratory analyses not related specifically to

the study's hypotheses. A copy of the Demographic Information Questionnaire can be found in Appendix D.

Attachment Traits

Attachment traits were assessed by the Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ; Simpson, Rholes, and Phillips, 1996); see Appendix E for a copy of this questionnaire. Advantages of using the AAQ are that it is rooted in Hazen and Shaver's (1987) scale, it is a dimensional measure, and it permits easy comparison of results to Simpson et al.'s results. The AAQ breaks Hazen and Shaver's (1987) three attachment style paragraphs into 17 sentences, with each statement relating to some aspect of one of the attachment styles. Examples of these statements are: "I don't like people getting too close to me," "I usually want more closeness and intimacy than others do." Subjects were asked to rate each statement according to how they typically feel toward romantic partners in general. Each statement is rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

A factor analysis of the AAQ (Simpson et al., 1996) revealed two dimensions; avoidance and ambivalence. Avoidance reflects the degree to which people tend to avoid or withdraw from closeness and intimacy in relationships. Items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 loaded highly on avoidance. An example of an item on the avoidance index is: " I find it difficult to trust others completely." Scores on this index could range from 8-56 with higher scores indicating greater avoidance. Ambivalence reflects the degree to which people tend to have conflicted thoughts and feelings about whether others can be counted on. Items that loaded highly on ambivalence were 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17. An example of an item on the ambivalence index is: "I often want to merge completely

with others, and this desire sometimes scares them away." Scores on this index could range from 9-63 with higher scores indicating greater ambivalence. Low scores on both dimensions indicate secure attachment. Reliabilities for the indexes were: avoidant, alpha = .70 for men and .74 for women; and ambivalent, alpha = .72 for men and .76 for women.

Perception of Interparental Conflict

Perception of interparental conflict was assessed using the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict scale (CPIC; Grych, Seid, and Fincham, 1992). The CPIC consists of three factor analytically derived subscales: Conflict Properties, Threat, and Self-Blame. High scores on the Conflict Properties subscale reflects the perception that interparental conflict occurs often, involves high levels of hostility and aggression, and is poorly resolved. High scores on the Threat subscale indicate feeling threatened and unable to cope when parental conflict occurs. High scores on the Self-Blame subscale indicate that the interparental conflict is blamed on self. Correlations among the three scales range from .31 to .52. The alphas ands test-retest reliabilities for each scale are: Conflict Properties (alphas: .90; .89; test-retest = .70), Threat (alphas: .83; .83; test-retest = .68), and Self-Blame (alphas: .78; .84; test-retest = .76). Sample items are as follows: "When my parents have an argument they yell a lot," "When my parents argue I'm afraid that they will yell at me too," and "Even if they don't say it, I know I'm to blame when my parents argue." The participants were instructed that in every family there are times when parents do not get along. When parents argue or disagree, kids can feel a lot of ways. The participants were informed that the author of the study wanted to know what kinds of feelings they had when their parents had arguments or disagreements and were

asked to rate each item on the CPIC by circling either "True," "Sort of True," or "False."

Several studies have found that the Conflict Properties scale, but not the Threat and Self-Blame scales, were consistently related to adjustment indices (Cummings, Davies, and Simpson, 1994; Grych, Seid, and Fincham, 1992). Greater hostility and aggression and poorly resolved conflicts in particular are conflict properties associated with maladjustment (Cummings and Davies, 1994, Grych and Fincham, 1993). Further, the Conflict Properties subscale predicts child adjustment problems more consistently than the O'Leary-Porter Scale (Porter and O'Leary, 1980), and the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979)(Grych, Seid, and Fincham, 1992).

The CPIC was validated for use by college students (Bickham and Fiese, 1997), and the same factors were present in college students as with children. Of the three factors, the Conflict Properties subscale and the Threat subscale were negatively related to general indicators of adjustment. Coefficient alphas for the three subscales range from .85 to .95. Correlations among the three subscales range from .21 to .67. In the current study's sample correlations among the three subscales ranged from .12 to .62. A copy of the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale can be found in Appendix F.

Personality Traits

Personality traits was assessed using the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI ; Costa and McCrae, 1992). The NEO-FFI is a 60-item inventory and measures five dimensions of personality: Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A), and Conscientiousness (C). The NEO-FFI is a shortened version of the 181-item NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI). Twelve items having the highest positive or negative loadings from each of the five NEO-PI validimax factors were

selected to make up the inventory. The NEO-FFI scales, when correlated with the NEO-PI validimax factors, yielded correlations from .75 for Conscientiousness to .89 for Neuroticism. Coefficient alphas for the five scales were: Neuroticism = .86, Extraversion = .77, Openness = .73, Agreeableness = .68, and Conscientiousness = .81. Participants were asked to read each of the 60 statements carefully and for each statement rate the response that best represents their opinion about themselves. Statements are rated as either "SD = strongly disagree," "D = disagree," "N = neutral," "A = agree," or "SA =strongly disagree." A copy of the NEO Five-Factor Inventory can be found in Appendix G.

Coding of Dyadic Interactions

Trained raters (blind to experimental hypotheses and subjects' perceptions of interparental conflict and attachment styles) viewed videotapes of couples discussing a relationship problem and rated the behaviors of both dyad members. To maintain compatibility with Simpson et al.'s (1996) research on conflict in close relationships, the raters' ratings focused on two dimensions relevant to successful conflict resolution (Gottman, 1979): the extent to which each partner displayed high versus low levels of stress/anxiety and the extent of warmth/supportiveness during the interaction.

Following Simpson et al.'s (1996) protocol, levels of stress/anxiety were measured by ratings on five adjectives: stressed, anxious, upset, aroused, and hurt. Raters rated each adjective on a 9-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all to 9 = extremely). To minimize halo effects, there were four teams of two raters each. One team rated men on observed level of stress and anxiety. The second team rated men on observed level of warmth and supportiveness. The third team rated women on observed level of stress and

anxiety. The fourth team rated women on observed level of warmth and supportiveness. The adjectives were defined using a dictionary's definition of the adjectives. The raters trained on practice tapes created by the experimenter until an inter-rater reliability of at least .80 was achieved. See Appendix H-1 for a copy of the rating sheet. Inter-rater reliability for each adjective was good (the average inter-rater reliability was .80 for men and .83 for women across all adjectives). Thus, raters' ratings were aggregated on each adjective. Because the summed ratings of all five adjectives were internally consistent (alphas = .91 for men and .93 for women; the lowest level of internal consistency recommended for research use by Nunnally (1978) is .70), the five adjectives were aggregated to create a global observer-rated Stress/Anxiety index.

Similarly, the amount of warmth/supportiveness was assessed by nine adjectives: supportive, warm, hostile (reverse-keyed), sarcastic (reverse-keyed), arrogant (reverse-keyed), rejecting (reverse-keyed), understanding, emotionally detached (reverse-keyed), and cold (reverse-keyed). Raters rated each adjective on a 9-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all to 9 = extremely). Inter-rater reliability for each adjective was good (the average inter-rater reliability was .83 for men and .84 for women across all adjectives). Thus, raters' ratings were aggregated on each adjective. Because the summed ratings of all nine adjectives were internally consistent (alphas = .93 for men and .95 for women; the lowest level of internal consistency recommended for research use by Nunnally (1978) is .70), the nine adjectives were aggregated to create a global observer-rated Warmth/Supportiveness index.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=85 Couples)

	Males	Females
Mean Age	20.2	19.5
Range of ages	16 – 27	17 – 23
Mean length of relationship	21 months	21 months
Range of relationship length	6 – 80 months	6 – 80 months

	Total	% of Sample	Total	% of Sample
Ethnicity				
Caucasian	69	81.2	68	80.0
African American	10	11.8	7	8.2
Hispanic	1	1.2	4	4.7
Asian	2	2.4	3	3.5
Other	3	3.5	3	3.5
Family Income				
<$10,000	0	0.0	3	3.6
$10-30,000	6	7.1	4	4.8
$30-60,000	18	21.2	17	20.0
$60-100,000	38	44.6	37	43.6
>$100,000	23	27.1	22	25.9
Parent's Marital Status				
Married	54	63.5	59	69.4
Separated	3	3.5	3	3.5
Divorced	24	28.2	20	23.5
Father Deceased	3	3.5	1	1.2
Mother Deceased	1	1.2	2	2.4

RESULTS

Tests of Hypotheses

To protect against the possible confound that differences in the dependent measure (i.e., displayed behavior in discussing a relationship problem with a partner) may be due to the partner's behavior during the discussion, all analyses were conducted separately for men and women.

The first wave of analyses were conducted using the subjects' self-reports as a measure of attachment style and observer ratings as a measure of displayed behavior in discussing a relationship problem. The first hypothesis, based on previous literature (Brennan and Shaver, 1993; Gabardi and Rosen, 1992; and Westervelt and Vanderberg, 1997), was that parental marital status would not be statistically significantly related to college students' scores on attachment indices. Table 2 on page 27 presents the means relevant to this prediction. A Univariate Analysis of Variance was conducted to determine the effect of parents' marital status on avoidant and ambivalent attachment indices for males and females. Table 3 on page 28 contains a summary of the effects. The results revealed no statistically significant effects of parents' marital status on college students' attachment indices. Similarly, a Univariate Analysis of Variance revealed no statistically significant effects of parents' marital status on college students' observed behavior discussing a relationship problem. Table 4 on page 29 presents the means relevant to this analysis. Table 5 on page 30 contains a summary of the effects of the Univariate Analysis of Variance.

Table 6 on page 31 presents a summary of correlational analyses relevant to

Hypotheses (2) through (6). The second hypothesis was that college students who have memories of high levels of interparental conflict are likely to have higher scores on indices of either avoidance or ambivalence. There were no statistically significant correlations between perceived interparental conflict and either avoidant (r = .17, p=.12) or ambivalent (r = -.03, p=.79) attachment scores for college men. However, for college women there was a statistically significant correlation between perceived high interparental conflict and both high avoidant attachment scores (r = .23, p=.03) and high ambivalent attachment scores (r = .28, p=.01).

The third hypothesis was that college students who have higher scores on an index of ambivalence will have a higher measure of stress and anxiety in discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner. There was not a statistically significant correlation between ambivalent attachment scores and measured stress in the interaction for either men (r = .04, p=.73) or women (r = .10, p=.38). The fourth hypothesis was that college students who have higher scores on an index of avoidance will have lower scores of warmth and supportiveness toward their partners in discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner. Although the correlations between avoidant attachment scores and observed warmth in the dyadic interaction were in the predicted direction (r = -.08 for men; r = -.11 for women), they were not statistically significant (p=.44 for men; p=.32 for women). Surprisingly though, as it was not predicted based on previous research, avoidant men had a high measure of stress and anxiety in discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner (r = .33, p=.00).

The fifth hypothesis was that college students who have memories of high levels of interparental conflict will have a higher measure of stress and anxiety in discussing a

relationship problem with a current dating partner. There was not a statistically significant correlation between perceived interparental conflict and displayed stress and anxiety as rated by observers in the interaction for either men (r = .11, p=.31) or women (r = -.05, p=.63). Likewise, there was not a statistically significant correlation between perceived interparental conflict and displayed warmth and support as rated by observers in the interaction for either men (r = .10, p=.35) or women (r = 0.0, p=.99), the sixth hypothesis.

The main hypothesis of the study was that memories of interparental conflict would negatively affect the college student's behavior discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner and that the association is mediated by the student's attachment traits. However, as reported above, for men all of the associations among perceived interparental conflict, attachment scores, and observed behavior during a relationship discussion were not statistically significant. While for women there was a statistically significant association between memories of interparental conflict and attachment trait, there were no statistically significant associations between attachment scores and observed behavior or between perceived interparental conflict and observed behavior.

Lastly, it was hypothesized that the college student's attachment trait would explain more parsimoniously the college student's behavior discussing a relationship problem with a current dating partner than higher order personality traits (i.e., neuroticism, extraversion, and agreeableness) theoretically related to attachment. While no statistically significant correlations between predicted attachment scores and the college student's behavior discussing a relationship problem were found (as previously

reported), it was not known whether there was a connection between one or more higher order personality traits and behavior in discussing a relationship problem. It was found that there were no statistically significant correlations between higher order personality traits and the male college student's behavior discussing a relation problem. However, for female college students there was a statistically significant correlation between low agreeableness and observed high stress in discussing a relationship problem ($r = -.36$, $p=.00$). Intuitively, this result is a little puzzling. If there was to be an association between higher order personality traits and behavior in discussion a relationship problem one might intuitively expect an association between neuroticism and stress or between agreeableness and warmth. Nonetheless the results indicated that college women who see themselves as agreeable were less likely to display stress in discussing a relationship problem with a partner. Table 7 on page 32 presents a summary of correlational analyses among attachment indices, higher order personality traits, and observed behavior during a relationship discussion.

Table 2

Means (and Standard Deviations) of Scores on Self-Report Adult Attachment Indices

Avoidant Index		
	Parents' Marital Status	
	Married	Divorced or Separated
Males	24.7 (7.0)	25.8 (8.5)
Females	23.6 (7.8)	23.6 (8.5)

Ambivalent Index		
	Parents' Marital Status	
	Married	Divorced or Separated
Males	26.8 (7.7)	26.9 (7.5)
Females	29.3 (8.1)	26.9 (6.5)

Table 3

Univariate Analysis of Variance of Parents' Marital Status on Self-Report Attachment Indices for Males and Females

Avoidant Index			
	Degrees of freedom	F	Probability Level
Males	80	.37	.55
Females	81	.00	.96

Ambivalent Index			
	Degrees of freedom	F	Probability Level
Males	80	.00	.96
Females	81	1.72	.19

Table 4

Means (and Standard Deviations) of Scores on Observer Rated Behavior During a Relationship Discussion

Observed Stress		
	Parents' Marital Status	
	Married	Divorced or Separated
Males	9.0 (4.4)	8.5 (4.7)
Females	8.4 (3.9)	7.7 (2.3)

Observed Warmth		
	Parents' Marital Status	
	Married	Divorced or Separated
Males	61.1 (9.9)	61.7 (12.4)
Females	64.4 (8.0)	65.2 (7.8)

Table 5

Univariate Analysis of Variance of Parents' Marital Status on Observed Behavior During a Relationship Discussion for Males and Females

Observed Stress			
	Degrees of freedom	F	Probability Level
Males	80	.22	.64
Females	81	.58	.45

Observed Warmth			
	Degrees of freedom	F	Probability Level
Males	80	.07	.79
Females	81	.17	.69

Table 6

Correlations Among Perceived Level of Interparental Conflict, Attachment Index (based on self report), and Observed Behavior During a Relationship Discussion

Men

	Conflict	Avoidant	Ambivalent	Stressed	Warm
Conflict	---				
Avoidant	.17	---			
Ambivalent	-.03	.09	---		
Stressed	.11	.33**	.04	---	
Warm	.10	-.08	.03	-.20	---

Women

	Conflict	Avoidant	Ambivalent	Stressed	Warm
Conflict	---				
Avoidant	.23*	---			
Ambivalent	.28**	.31**	---		
Stressed	-.05	-.04	.10	---	
Warm	0.0	-.11	-.07	-.55**	---

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level; *Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Table 7

Correlations Among Attachment Index, Higher Order Personality Traits, and Observed Behavior During a Relationship Discussion.

Men							
	Avoid.	Ambiv.	Neur.	Extra.	Agree.	Stress	Warm
Avoidant	---						
Ambivalent	.09	---					
Neurotic	.04	.48**	---				
Extravert	-.43**	.00	-.20	---			
Agreeable	-.35**	-.02	-.09	.39**	---		
Stressed	.33**	.04	-.09	.13	-.06	---	
Warm	-.08	.03	.08	.10	.12	-.20	---

Women							
	Avoid.	Ambiv.	Neur.	Extra.	Agree.	Stress	Warm
Avoidant	---						
Ambivalent	.31**	---					
Neurotic	.30**	.54**	---				
Extravert	-.34**	-.17	-.37**	---			
Agreeable	-.40**	-.24*	-.27**	.34**	---		
Stressed	-.04	.10	.01	.02	-.36**	---	
Warm	-.11	.07	.05	-.15	.20	-.55**	---

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level; **Correlation is significant at the .01 level

Other analyses were then conducted using different methods of measurement to evaluate the data relevant to the hypotheses. The second wave of analyses were conducted using partners ratings of the partners' attachment trait and observer ratings of discussion behavior. The results revealed no statistically significant effects of parents' marital status on college students' attachment indices as reported by their partners. See Table 8 on page 35 for the means relevant to this analysis and Table 9 on page 36 for a summary of effects for a Univariate Analysis of Variance. There were also no statistically significant correlations among perceived level of interparental conflict, attachment index (based on partner's report), and observed behavior during a relationship discussion for either men or women. See Table 10 on page 37 for a summary of the effects of the correlational analyses.

Correlational analyses were then repeated using self-report of attachment trait and partners ratings' of the partners' discussion behavior. For men there were statistically significant correlations between scores on attachment index (based on self-report) and behavior during a relationship discussion as rated by their partners. College men who are more ambivalent tended to be perceived by their partners as more stressed (r = .26, p=.02) and less warm (r = -.24, p=.03). College men who were more avoidant also were perceived by their partners as more stressed (r = .22, p=.04) and less warm (r = -.31, p=.00). For college women the only statistically significant correlations continued to be those between perceived interparental conflict and attachment index as reported previously. See Table 11 on page 38 for a summary of the effects of the correlational analyses.

Lastly, the analyses were repeated using partners ratings' of the partners'

attachment trait and self-report of behavior during a relationship discussion. For men there were no statistically significant correlations among perceived level of interparental conflict, attachment index (based on partner's report), and behavior during a relationship discussion (based on self-report). For women the only statistically significant correlation was between scores on the ambivalent index based on partners report and behavior during a relationship discussion ($r = -.24$, $p=.03$). Women who were viewed as being more ambivalent by their partners tended to see themselves as less warm in the relationship discussion. See Table 12 on page 39 for a summary of the effects of the correlational analyses.

Table 8

Means (and Standard Deviations) of Scores on College Students' Attachment Indices as Rated by Their Partners

Avoidant Index		
	Parents' Marital Status	
	Married	Divorced or Separated
Males	25.8 (9.5)	29.1 (9.0)
Females	27.2 (7.8)	28.4 (8.2)

Ambivalent Index		
	Parents' Marital Status	
	Married	Divorced or Separated
Males	28.1 (7.3)	30.3 (5.6)
Females	32.4 (9.8)	33.4 (8.5)

Table 9

Univariate Analysis of Variance of Parents' Marital Status on Attachment Index Based on Partner's Report for Males and Females

Avoidant Index			
	Degrees of freedom	F	Probability Level
Males	80	2.25	.14
Females	81	.33	.57

Ambivalent Index			
	Degrees of freedom	F	Probability Level
Males	80	1.78	.18
Females	81	.15	.67

Table 10

Correlations Among Perceived Level of Interparental Conflict, Attachment Index (based on partner report), and Observed Behavior During a Relationship Discussion

Men

	Conflict	Avoidant	Ambivalent	Stressed	Warm
Conflict	---				
Avoidant	.13	---			
Ambivalent	.01	.18	---		
Stressed	.11	-.03	-.03	---	
Warm	.10	-.11	.05	-.20	---

Women

	Conflict	Avoidant	Ambivalent	Stressed	Warm
Conflict	---				
Avoidant	.15	---			
Ambivalent	.17	.12	---		
Stressed	-.05	.18	.18	---	
Warm	0.0	-.17	-.07	-.55**	---

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level; **Correlation is significant at the .01 level

Table 11

Correlations Among Perceived Level of Interparental Conflict, Attachment Index (based on self-report), and Behavior During a Relationship Discussion (rated by partner)

Men					
	Conflict	Avoidant	Ambivalent	Stressed	Warm
Conflict	---				
Avoidant	.17	---			
Ambivalent	-.03	.09	---		
Stressed	-.11	.22*	.26*	---	
Warm	-.03	-.31**	-.24*	-.51**	---

Women					
	Conflict	Avoidant	Ambivalent	Stressed	Warm
Conflict	---				
Avoidant	.23*	---			
Ambivalent	.28**	.31**	---		
Stressed	-.01	-.04	.15	---	
Warm	.02	-.07	-.12	-.68**	---

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level; *Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Table 12

Correlations Among Perceived Level of Interparental Conflict, Attachment Index (based on partner report), and Behavior During a Relationship Discussion (based on self-report)

Men					
	Conflict	Avoidant	Ambivalent	Stressed	Warm
Conflict	---				
Avoidant	.13	---			
Ambivalent	.01	.18	---		
Stressed	.09	-.12	.08	---	
Warm	-.10	-.13	-.09	-.56**	---

Women					
	Conflict	Avoidant	Ambivalent	Stressed	Warm
Conflict	---				
Avoidant	.15	---			
Ambivalent	.17	.12	---		
Stressed	.01	.19	.17	---	
Warm	-.08	-.20	-.24*	-.55**	---

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Post-Hoc Analyses

As previously reported, there was a relationship between perceived interparental conflict and self-reported attachment indices in college women (see Table 6). Although there were no predicted relationships between different types of perceived conflict (e.g., discussing things quietly versus yelling or pushing or shoving) and traits of adult attachment, it may be that particular types of perceived conflict are influential. Hence, correlational analyses were explored between individual items on the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict scale and scores on indices of adult attachment.

It was found that for college women the more they remembered their parents as being mean to each other the more likely they were to report avoidant ($r = .25$, $p=.02$) or ambivalent ($r = .22$, $p=.04$) attachment traits. It was also found that college women who remembered their parents as arguing more were more likely to report ambivalent traits ($r = .22$, $p=.04$). As there were no statistically significant correlations between the more global measure of perceived interparental conflict and attachment traits for men, it was not expected that there would be an association between specific items of perceived conflict and scores on attachment indices. Surprisingly it was found that the more college men remembered their parents as breaking or throwing things the were more likely they were to have avoidant traits ($r = .33$, $p=.00$). It was also found that the more likely the college men remembered their parents to have pushed or shoved each other the higher their report of an avoidant trait ($r = .24$, $p=.03$). See Table 13 on page 43 for a summary of correlations of five of the most salient individual items on the Conflict Properties scale and attachment index.

Given that there were statistically significant correlations among particular types

of perceived conflict and attachment indices, it was wondered whether there were also relationships among particular types of perceived interparental conflict and observed behavior discussing a relationship problem. For college women there were no statistically significant correlations among individual items on the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict scale and observed behavior during the relationship discussion. However, for college men it was found that the more they perceived their parents to have broken or thrown things the more likely they were to display stress during the relationship discussion (r = .23, p=.04). See Table 14 on page 44 for a summary of correlations of five of the most salient individual items on the Conflict Properties scale and observed behavior during a relationship discussion.

Although it was not predicted, the results indicated that for college men there are statistically significant associations among memories of parents having broken or thrown things during an argument, an adult avoidant trait, and displaying stress during a relationship discussion. Consistent with the study's predicted hypotheses, the relationship between memory of parents having broken or thrown things and displayed stress during a relationship discussion mediated by an avoidant attachment trait was examined. To test for mediation a regression analysis was conducted. See Table 15 on page 45 for a summary of the Beta weights. The first equation involved regressing observed stress during the discussion (the dependent variable) on scores of the avoidant attachment index (the mediator) (Beta =.33, p=.02). The second equation involved regressing observed stress during the discussion on memory of parents breaking or throwing things during an argument (the independent variable)(Beta = .23, p=.04). The third equation involved regressing observed stress during the discussion on both memory of parents breaking or

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throwing things during an argument and avoidant attachment index. The Beta weight of the independent variable (memory of parents breaking or throwing things) in the third equation was reduced and became not significant (Beta = .13, p=.27). Thus, a significant mediation effect was found. College men who remembered their parents to have broken or thrown things during an argument are likely to display more stress in discussing a relationship problem with a partner and that association is mediated by an avoidant attachment trait.

Table 13

Correlations Among Individual Items of Interparental Conflict and Attachment Index

	Men						
	Mean to each other	Argued	Yelled	Broken/Thrown things	Pushed/ shoved	Avoid.	Ambiv.
Mean	---						
Argued	.41**	---					
Yelled	.30**	.63**	---				
Broken	.31**	.22*	.30**	---			
Pushed	.33**	.23*	.27**	.64**	---		
Avoidant	.12	-.07	-.01	.33**	.24*	--	
Ambivalent	-.02	-.03	.04	-.04	-.01	.09	---
	Women						
	Mean to each other	Argued	Yelled	Broken/Thrown things	Pushed/ shoved	Avoid.	Ambiv.
Mean	---						
Argued	.75**	---					
Yelled	.63**	.54**	---				
Broken	.37**	.32**	.42**	---			
Pushed	.29**	.28**	.25*	.68**	---		
Avoidant	.25*	.17	.12	.18	.19	---	
Ambivalent	.22*	.22*	.19	.14	.01	.31**	---

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level; *Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Table 14

Correlations Among Individual Items of Interparental Conflict and Observed Behavior During a Relationship Discussion

Men							
	Mean to each other	Argued	Yelled	Broken/Thrown things	Pushed/ shoved	Stressed	Warm
Mean	---						
Argued	.41**	---					
Yelled	.30**	.63**	---				
Broken	.31**	.22*	.30**	---			
Pushed	.33**	.23*	.27**	.64**	---		
Stressed	.08	.07	.10	.23*	.03	---	
Warm	.11	.01	.06	.04	.09	-.20	---

Women							
	Mean to each other	Argued	Yelled	Broken/Thrown things	Pushed/ shoved	Stressed	Warm
Mean	---						
Argued	.75**	---					
Yelled	.63**	.54**	---				
Broken	.37**	.32**	.42**	---			
Pushed	.29**	.28**	.25*	.68**	---		
Stressed	.01	-.05	-.03	-.03	-.05	---	
Warm	-.07	.06	-.04	.07	-.07	-.55**	---

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level; *Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Table 15

Regression Analyses of Adult Avoidant Attachment Index and Perception of Parents Having Broken or Thrown Things During an Argument on Observed Stress for College Men

	Beta	Probability Level
First Equation		
Avoidant Attachment Index	.33	.02
Second Equation		
Perception of parents breaking or throwing things during an argument	.23	.04
Third Equation		
Avoidant Attachment Index	.28	.01
Perception of parents breaking or throwing things during an argument	.13	.27

DISCUSSION

This study sought to examine the links among perceived interparental conflict, parental divorce, adult attachment styles, and college students' intimate relationships. It was not known whether parental marital instability and adult attachment style play a role in college student's intimate relationships. The study's main hypothesis was that perceived interparental conflict affects college students' attachment styles, which in turn influences their behavior in intimate relationships.

It was found that for college men neither parental marital status nor perceived interparental conflict was related to adult attachment scores. In addition perceived interparental conflict was not associated with behavior during a relationship discussion. Further, scores on adult attachment indices were also not related to behavior during a relationship discussion in ways that were predicted. It was predicted that college men who were more avoidant would likely be less warm, and college men who were more ambivalent would likely be more stressed. It was found that college men who were more avoidant were more likely to be stressed during the relationship discussion. For college women parental marital status was not related to adult attachment scores. However, perceived interparental conflict was related to avoidant and ambivalent attachment traits. Neither perceived interparental conflict or adult attachment traits, though, were related to behavior during a relationship discussion.

For both men and women tests of the study's main hypothesis did not yield statistically significant findings. One possibility for the lack of evidence for the study's main hypothesis is that perhaps attachment history (i.e., parental marital instability such

as divorce or perceived interparental conflict) and attachment traits are not predictors of intergenerational difficulties in romantic relationships. The present study used multiple sources of data (e.g., self-report of attachment traits and own behavior during relationship discussion, partner's report of partner's attachment traits and partner's behavior during relationship discussion, and observer ratings of behavior during relationship discussion) and cross-source methodology whereas previous research relied solely on self-report measures. Thus, it may very well be the case that neither parental divorce nor perceived interparental conflict, via adult attachment index, are predictors of behavior in romantic relationships.

On the other hand, post-hoc analyses provided limited support for the idea that perceived interparental conflict negatively affects the college student's attachment traits, which in turn negatively influences the student's behavior discussing a relationship problem. It was found that college men who perceived their parents to have broken or thrown things during an argument are likely to display more stress in discussing a relationship problem with a partner and that association is mediated by an avoidant attachment trait. The support is limited because it was only found for men and there is limited reliability and validity for a one-item measure of perceived interparental conflict. Furthermore, a finding based on using an individual item taken from a larger scale is subject to Type I error. Nonetheless, it suggests that maybe it is the perception of the more overt physical expression of interparental conflict that has long-term impact. This has implications for the way parents manage conflict in front of their children. It may be that arguing in front of children that does not escalate into aggression is benign. Therefore, continuing to examine the impact of perceiving different types of expression

of interparental conflict on adult attachment and on intimate relationships may be useful. The limited support also suggests that another possibility for the study's main hypotheses not being supported is that perhaps a history of interparental conflict is a factor in intergenerational transmission of relationship difficulties, except the scale used to assess perception of interparental conflict was not sensitive enough for men.

Although the main hypothesis of the study was not supported, several of the secondary hypotheses were supported. The finding that parental marital status was not related to either college males' or college females' attachment styles replicates the results obtained by Hazen and Shaver (1987) and Brennan and Shaver (1993). The results also revealed that perceived interparental conflict was related to adult attachment styles for college women but not for college men. Although this gender difference was not predicted, a possible explanation may be due to women being more relationally oriented than men (Gilligan, 1982). Thus, the effect of perceived difficulty in parent's marriage is displayed in relational outcomes for women; whereas for men perceived difficulty in parent's marriage might be displayed in more behavioral terms. The finding that there is a gender difference in the relationship between perceived interparental conflict and adult attachment style warrants further study.

Lastly, it was found that personality accounted for some college women's behavior during a relationship discussion; college women who see themselves as agreeable are less likely to display stress as rated by observer in discussing a relationship problem with a partner. For college men attachment style accounted for behavior during a relationship discussion: avoidant men tended to display greater stress during a relationship discussion. At first blush this might also seem to be a gender difference.

However, when one takes into account that for both men and women there was a significant correlation between avoidant attachment and low agreeableness (men: $r = -.35$, $p=.00$, women $r = -.40$, $p=.00$), there may be less of a gender difference then at first observed. This finding is consistent with Shaver and Brennan (1992) who found that avoidant subjects were less agreeable than secure subjects. It may be that avoidant attachment and agreeableness are measuring similar constructs. While avoidant attachment is generally concerned with interpersonal closeness and agreeableness with a person's niceness, each to varying degrees refers to interpersonal trust. For example, the scale measuring avoidant attachment contains the following item: "I find it difficult to trust others completely." While the scale measuring agreeableness contains the following item: " I tend to be cynical and skeptical of others' intentions." People high on an avoidant index may be less trusting and people high on agreeableness may be more trusting. In either case the association between stress and agreeableness or stress and avoidance seems counter-intuitive. Both agreeableness and avoidance would seem to be intuitively related to warmth. This not only seems counter-intuitive, but the association between avoidant attachment and stress is also counter to the results found by Simpson, Rholes, and Phillips'(1996). It is helpful to keep in mind, though, that correlation does not imply causation. It could just as easily be the case that these are college men who feel stressed in interpersonal situations and have become avoidant as a way to deal with the stress, or college women who feel less stressed and as a result become more agreeable.

Methodological Limitations of the Study

As was previously mentioned, it was found that for college men a single item from the independent measure (i.e., perceiving parents to have thrown or broken things

during an argument) has predictive power. This suggests that perception of some overt expression of interparental conflict/violence has predictive value. It may be that having parents break or throw things during an argument has more of an impact on memory than just arguing. The Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict scale (CPIC) relies on memory. However, it may be that what is crucial to predicting college students' behavior in intimate relationships is the actual level of interparental conflict itself and not the perception of the conflict. In retrospect because the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict scale (CPIC) relies on memory it is thought that perhaps the CPIC does not sufficiently tap into the level of interparental conflict experienced. While correlations between the CPIC and parent rated measures of marital conflict (the O'Leary-Porter Scale; $\underline{r} = .30$) and interspousal aggression (the Conflict Tactics Scale; $\underline{r} = .39$) are moderate and suggest validity, perhaps a parent rated measure of marital conflict should be included as one of the independent variables.

Another limitation of the present study may have been in the selection criteria requiring partners to have been dating the same person for at least six months. This was chosen to ensure that couples were involved in meaningful relationships. While it may be that dating the same person for at least six months makes the relationship meaningful, there may not be a sufficient level of intensity in dating couples that would allow for an intense enough discussion of relationship difficulties. Perhaps information from distressed couples would clarify this. In addition, some of the participants were as young as sixteen years of age. It may also be that younger couples are not as invested in their relationships as older couples.

Further, the method used for coding stress and warmth may have been too global.

Ratings were assessed based on dictionary definitions of related adjectives. While inter-rater reliability was good, there may not have been enough specificity in the criteria to allow for enough variance in coding and thus for enough discrimination between subjects. The coding system could be improved by including ratings of how close the partners sit together, how often they look at each other, how often they touch each other, how often they interrupt each other, and the use of I versus we in the discussion.

Lastly, the use of perceived interparental conflict as the sole independent variable could be criticized as simplistic. It was thought that interparental conflict created an environment for children that contributed to the development of insecure attachment. However, an influential factor not taken into account by the present study in the development of attachment style is the intergenerational transmission of attachment style via the relationship between parent and child (Bretherton, 1990). Perhaps parents who are fighting with each other have insecure attachment styles themselves. Through interactions with the parent, the child develops an internal working model of relationships, which governs their behavior in future relationships. Future studies might be conducted which would assess the parents' attachment style and the relationship between parent and child in addition to assessing the offsprings' adult attachment style and relationship. Another factor not taken into consideration by the present study is the impact of other relationships (i.e., grandparent or peer relationships) on the development of an internal working model of relationships. It may be that a positive adult-child and/or peer relationship mitigates the effects of perceived interparental conflict. Future studies would inquire about the presence of other relationships and assess their nature as well.

Summary and Conclusion

Previous research provided evidence that perceived quality of their parents' marriage was related to adult attachment style (Brennan and Shaver, 1993). Previous research also provided evidence that adult attachment style was related to observed behavior discussing a problem (Simpson, Rholes, and Phillips, 1996). Thus, the study's main hypothesis was that perceived interparental conflict affects college students' attachment styles, which in turn influences their behavior in intimate relationships. The present study found that perceived interparental conflict seems to impact adult attachment style for women but not men. The study also found that adult attachment style seems to influence behavior in intimate relationships for men but not women. Perhaps there are gender differences. Nonetheless, it appears that parental marital instability such as divorce or perceived interparental conflict, via attachment, are not predictors of intergenerational difficulties in romantic relationships for either men or women. However, the finding that a specific perception of interparental conflict (i.e., seeing parents throw or break things during an argument), via avoidant attachment, is a predictor (albeit a limited one) of stress in discussing a relationship problem for college men suggests that continuing to examine the impact of parental marital instability on adult attachment and on intimate relationships may be useful.

Given the methodological limitations considered above, future studies would profit from including a parent rated measure of marital conflict as well as a measure of perceived interparental conflict that inquires about specific and different forms of the overt expression of interparental conflict. Further, future studies would gain from using a coding system of various verbal and nonverbal behavior that may be indication of

variations in intimacy. In addition, future studies would benefit from using distressed couples and divorced partners as subjects, and from using a design that examines the impact of childhood experience (parents' marital status, perception of interparental conflict) in a more complex manner than was possible in the current study by assessing the parents' attachment style and the relationship between parent and child in addition to assessing the offspring's' adult attachment style and relationship.

APPENDIX A

LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE AND INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT ON CHILDREN

A sizable amount of research has been conducted on the effects of divorce and marital conflict on children. Divorce and marital conflict have often been associated with adjustment problems in children (Camera and Resnick, 1985; Emery, 1988; Hetherington, Cox, and Cox, 1985; Kelly, 1993; Wallerstein, 1991; Wallerstein, 1987; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1976). Children of divorce in comparison to children in never-divorced families exhibit more aggressive, impulsive, and antisocial behaviors (Guidubaldi and Perry, 1985; Hetherington, Cox, and Cox, 1985; Peterson and Zill, 1986), have more difficulties in their peer relationships (Guidubaldi and Perry, 1985; Hetherington, Cox, and Cox, 1985), and are less compliant with authority figures (Kelly, 1993). Perception of marital discord in children has been significantly correlated to problematic attitudes and emotions (Kelly and Berg, 1978), low self-esteem (Berg and Kelly, 1979), and behavior problems (Emery and O'Leary, 1982; Porter and O'Leary, 1980).

The Effects of Divorce on Children

Age of the Child

Some of the effects of divorce mentioned above appear to be mediated by the child's age at the time of the divorce. Kelly and Wallerstein (1976) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) assessed the effects of divorce among several different age groups. Children

between 7- and 10-years old were clearly distinguishable from the 5- and 6-olds. The 7- to 10-year olds showed more anger than the 5- and 6-yearolds. Also, the 7- to 10-year olds divided into two groups: the early latency group (7-8 years old) and the latter latency group (9-10 years old). Most noticeable was the overwhelming sense of sadness of the early latency group. Based on clinical observation, the authors report that these children were aware of their feelings, but did not seem to have any defenses against their sadness. The 5- and 6-year olds used denial or fantasy to escape their suffering. Whereas the latter latency group used avoidance, bravado, and activity to cope with their feelings of loss and suffering.

In a 10-year follow up study, Wallerstein (1987) observed that the children from the early latency group continued to suffer more than the other groups. She noticed that ten years later these children were unhappy about their current relationships and worried about future ones.

However, Wallerstein's studies suffer from methodological problems. She did not use objective measures of outcome, and failed to include any kind of comparison group. Thus, it is unclear both whether the suffering of latency aged children suffer more than children from intact families. Palosaari and Aro (1994) addressed these concerns in their study on the significance of a child's age at the time of divorce on later well being. They compared the prevalence of depression in young adults from nondivorced and divorced families. Those who had experienced divorce were divided into three groups as to when divorce took place: preschool age, latency, and adolescence. The Beck Depression Inventory was used to assess depression. They found that depression was significantly more common in young adults from divorced families than from nondivorced families.

Furthermore, they found that for males depression was significantly more prevalent among those who had experienced divorce in latency as compared with those who had experienced it before school age or in adolescence. However, for girls depression was independent of the timing of parental divorce.

Sex Differences

In addition to Palosaari and Aro (1994) a number of researchers have found evidence indicating that parental divorce affects boys and girls differently. Wallerstein (1987) reported in a ten-year follow up study of latency aged children of divorce that the boys were less psychologically and socially well adjusted than the girls. Hetherington, Cox, and, Cox (1978) found that children of divorced parents exhibit more negative behavior than children of intact families, and that this behavior was more severe and prolonged for pre-adolescent boys than for pre-adolescent girls. Pre-adolescent children of divorce, particularly boys, in comparison to children in nondivorced families exhibit more aggressive, impulsive, and antisocial behaviors (Guidubaldi and Perry, 1985; Hetherington, Cox, and Cox, 1985; Peterson and Zill, 1986).

While divorce seems to have a greater effect on boys during pre-adolescence, divorce seems to have a greater effect on girls during adolescence. Using observational measures, Hetherington (1972) found that compared to 13-17 year-old girls from intact families and families in which the fathers were deceased, 13-17 year-old girls from divorced homes were more forward and attention seeking with males, had lower self-esteem, and reported more sexual activity. Kalter, Riemer, Brickman, and Chen (1985) observed that there is a "time bomb-like reaction" (p.538) in girls whose parents divorced in the girls' early childhood. They state that it would be unlikely to observe difficulties in

daughters of divorce in the latency years as mothers and daughters are expected to be close during this period. One would not anticipate problems until adolescence, which is a time of individuation and separation.

One should note that by the age of young adulthood, regardless of when parental divorce occurred, both males and females would have been affected by divorce. Therefore, the present study will not use age and gender as possible moderator variables.

Interparental Conflict

Interparental conflict may have as strong or stronger an effect on children as the separation itself (Emery, 1982; Kelly, 1993). Kelly and Berg (1978) constructed a projective test, The Family Story Test, to measure children's emotional and attitudinal reactions to divorce. In the process of evaluating the test, Kelly and Berg found that children who viewed their families as intact but high on conflict exhibited more problematic attitudes and emotions than children from divorced families.

Berg and Kelly (1979) then compared the self-esteem levels of children whose parents were divorced, children who viewed their families as intact and without marital difficulties, and children who viewed their families as intact but having interparental hostility. They reported that the measured self-esteem of children of divorce is not statistically different from children who viewed their families as intact and without marital difficulties. However, children who viewed their families as intact but having interparental hostility had significantly lower self-esteem levels than either of the other two groups. Berg and Kelly, however, did not include in their comparisons groups of children whose parents were divorced and either viewed their families as having high or low levels of conflict. Thus, it is unclear whether children whose parents were divorced

and who view their families as having high levels of conflict have more difficulties than either children whose parents were divorced with no conflict or children whose families were intact but high on conflict.

Porter and O'Leary (1980) were interested in assessing the relationship between marital hostility and child psychopathology. Marital hostility was measured by the mother's report on a scale developed for the study, the O'Leary-Porter Scale. Child psychopathology was measured by the mother's report on the Behavior Problem Checklist. Porter and O'Leary correlated these measures and found that marital hostility significantly correlated with behavior problems.

Emery and O'Leary (1982) were interested in assessing the relationship between children's behavior problems and how the children perceive their parents' marital discord. A scale developed for the study, The Children's Perception Questionnaire, measured children's perceptions of the parents' marital discord. The child's behavior was measured by the mother's report on the Behavior Problem Checklist. Emory and O'Leary correlated these measures and found that perception of parents' marital discord was significantly correlated with behavior problems.

It is thought that marital conflict affects children's adjustment because it negatively affects the parent-child relationship. High marital conflict is associated with less warm, less empathic relationships between parents and children and more rejection of the child leading to behavioral difficulties in the children (Belsky, Youngblade, Rovine, and Volling, 1991; Caspi and Elder, 1988).

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH SCRIPT

"Hi, my name is Jeffrey Zinbarg. I am a graduate student in psychology and I am working on my dissertation. I would really like to thank you for coming today.

This study is called the Dating Relationship Study. I am interested in understanding how dating couples resolve conflicts. Today's study will require each of you to complete a questionnaire packet which will take about 1 hour. Then, the two of you will jointly identify several unresolved issues in your relationship and try to resolve one of them. This discussion will take about 30 minutes, and although no one will watch your discussion while it takes place, it will be videotaped. The videotapes will be coded at a later time by trained raters. Your questionnaires and coding forms will be identified by subject number to maintain confidentiality, and I will make sure that should one of the coders recognize either of you that coder will not rate the videotape. At the end of the study I will give more explanation about the study and Participant Information Sheets for each of you to take home. I will stamp the psychology credit card(s), and one (or both) of you will receive five extra credit points toward your psychology class.

Okay, let's begin. First, please read the consent form. If you wish to participate in today's study sign, the consent form. After I collect the consent forms, I will administer the questionnaires. Are there any questions? Please remember to read the directions for each questionnaire before answering it and read each question carefully before responding."

After each member of the dyad has finished the questionnaires, they will each be given the Couples Discussion Task inventory to complete separately. When both partners have finished the inventory: "Now I'd like the two of you to talk together about your ratings and come up with a joint list of the three areas that you both think are the most important issues." I will let them do this without my help and leave the room.

The inventories will be collected from both people, and the issue they rated #1 will be selected for discussion (if "Sex" is rated #1, the issue they rated #2 will be selected). "I am interested in learning about how couples go about discussing these important issues. Please take the next 10 minutes to discuss the issue of ___(#1)_____. Identify what the issue means to each of you, then attempt to reach a mutually satisfying agreement about how to resolve the issue. I will leave the room and return when 10 minutes are up."

At the end of the discussion: Videotaping will stop. "We're finished with the task today; there will be no more recording. Before you go I'd like for each of you to rate your own behavior and your partner's behavior in the discussion."

When the rating forms have been completed the experimenter will process the discussion task with the couple. The approach will be to spend 15-30 minutes (as needed) to help process this experience. "I just want to talk a little with you now about what this experience has been like. How did it feel to do this? What was it like to talk about this issue in front of a video camera?" The idea is to allow the couple to leave with a sense that the issue raised during the protocol will have been worked through. The experimenter will refer the couple to counseling agencies as needed. The experimenter will then hand out the Participant Information Sheets, answer any questions, stamp the psychology credit card(s), and thank the couple again for participating.

APPENDIX C

Subject #_____

COUPLE DISCUSSION TASK

Instructions:

Below is a list of common issues that all couples face. At various times, these issues can become sources of disagreement or problems for couples. I would like to know how important each issue is in your relationship at present. In the first column following the issue please write in a number from 0-to-100 to indicate your opinion of how important the issue currently is in your relationship. In the second column, please write in a number from 0-to-100to indicate how you think your partner will respond to this issue. A zero indicates that the issue is not a source of disagreement or a problem, and a 100 indicates it is a very important source of disagreement or problem.

For example:

	Your response	How you think your partner will answer
Alcohol & drugs	90	80

Would indicate that you view the alcohol and drugs issue an important source of disagreement in your relationship and you think your partner also thinks it is important, but not quite as much as you.

Subject #_____

	Your Response	How you think your partner will answer
1. Money		
2. Communication		
3. Partner's Parents		
4. Sex		
5. Religion		
6. Recreation		
7. Friends		
8. Alcohol and drugs		
9. Demonstrations of affection		
10. Jealousy		

Please feel free to write down any other issue which you may feel is relevant to your relationship.

11._____

Ranks: 1._____
2._____
3._____

APPENDIX D

Subject #_____

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The following are items and questions concerning yourself and your family. For each item and question please circle the number or write in the answer that is most accurate regarding yourself and/or your family.

1. Your sex:
    1. Male
    2. Female

2. Your age at your last birthday:

3. Your racial/ethnic group:
    1. Caucasian/Non-Hispanic
    2. African American/Non-Hispanic
    3. Hispanic/Latino
    4. Asian American
    5. Other (please describe your racial/ethnic group)

4. Number of years at M.S.U.:
    1. This is my first year
    2. This is my second year
    3. This is my third year
    4. This is my fourth year
    5. I have been here for more than four years

5. Your current relationship status:
    1. Dating
    2. Engaged
    3. Married

6. Length of current romantic relationship:

7. The kind of community in which you lived for most of your life:
    1. Large city (over 250,000 persons)
    2. Medium size city (between 50,000-250,000 persons)
    3. Small city (between 25,000-50,000 persons)
    4. Suburban community (village or town of less than 25,000 persons) near a city
    5. rural

8. Annual family income:
    1. Less than $10,000
    2. $10,000-$30,000
    3. $30,000-$60,000
    4. $60,000-$100,000
    5. Above $100,000

9. Father's education:
    1. Some high school or less
    2. High school graduate
    3. Some college or technical school
    4. College or technical school graduate
    5. Professional/graduate degree

10. Mother's education:
    1. Some high school or less
    2. High school graduate
    3. Some college or technical school
    4. College or technical school graduate
    5. Professional/graduate degree

11. Number of older siblings (3 years or less) who are male

12. Number of older siblings (4 years or more) who are male

13. Number of older siblings (3 years or less) who are female

14. Number of older siblings (4 years or more) who are female

15. Number of younger siblings (3 years or less) who are male

16. Number of younger siblings (4 years or more) who are male

17. Number of younger siblings (3 years or less) who are female

18. Number of younger siblings (4 years or more) who are female

19. Are either of your biological parents deceased?
    1. Yes, my father is deceased (go to item 16)
    2. Yes, my mother is deceased (go to item 17)
    3. Yes, both of my parents are deceased (complete questions 16 and 17)
    4. No, neither of my parents are deceased – **GO TO QUESTION 18**

20. If your biological father is deceased, how old were you when he passed away?

21. If your biological mother is deceased, how old were you when she passed away?

22. If neither of your biological parents are deceased what is their current marital status?
    1. Married
    2. Separated
    3. Divorced

23. If your parents separated or divorced, how old were you when the divorce or separation occurred?

24. If your parents separated or divorced, with whom did you live or do you live (while at home?)
    1. Mother
    2. Father
    3. Both (I spent/spend about equal time with each of my divorced parents)
    4. Neither (I did not live with nor do I visit or live with either of my parents)

25. If you lived/live with only one parent, how would you describe contact with the other?
    1. Constant
    2. Frequent
    3. Intermittent
    4. Infrequent
    5. Never

APPENDIX E-1

Subject #_____

ADULT ATTACHMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please rate the following items according to how *you* typically feel toward romantic partners *in general*. You are asked to rate each statement on a scale of 1 (not all like me) to 7 (very much like me). Mark your answers by circling a number of the scale underneath each statement.

Not at all like me			Somewhat like me			Very much like me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1. I find it relatively easy to get close to others.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. I'm not very comfortable having to depend on other people.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. I'm comfortable having others depend on me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. I rarely worry about being abandoned by others.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. I don't like people getting too close to me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. I'm somewhat uncomfortable being too close to others.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. I find it difficult to trust others completely.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. I'm nervous whenever anyone gets too close to me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. Others often want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all like me			Somewhat like me			Very much like me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. Others often are reluctant to get as close as I would like.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. I often worry that my partner(s) don't really love me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. I rarely worry about my partner(s) leaving me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. I often want to merge completely with others, and this desire sometimes scares them away.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. I'm confident others would never hurt me by suddenly ending our relationship.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. I usually want more closeness and intimacy than others do.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. The thought of being left by others rarely enters my mind.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. I'm confident that my partner(s) love me just as much as I love them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

APPENDIX E-2

Subject #_____

ADULT ATTACHMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please rate the following items according to how you believe *your partner* typically feels toward romantic partners *in general*. You are asked to rate each statement on a scale of 1 (not all like him/her) to 7 (very much like him/her). Mark your answers by circling a number of the scale underneath each statement.

Not at all like him/her			Somewhat like him/her			Very much like him/her
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1. S/he finds it relatively easy to get close to others.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. S/he is not very comfortable having to depend on other people.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. S/he is comfortable having others depend on her or him.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. S/he rarely worries about being abandoned by others.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. S/he doesn't like people getting too close to her or him.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. S/he is somewhat uncomfortable being too close to others.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. S/he finds it difficult to trust others completely.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. S/he is nervous whenever anyone gets too close to her or him.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. Others often want her or him to be more intimate than s/he feels comfortable being.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all like him or her			Somewhat like him or her			Very much like him or her
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. Others often are reluctant to get as close as s/he would like.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. S/he often worries that her or his partner(s) don't really love him or her.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. S/he rarely worries about her or his partner(s) leaving her or him.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. S/he often wants to merge completely with others, and this desire sometimes scares them away.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. S/he is confident others would never hurt her or him by suddenly ending the relationship.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. S/he usually wants more closeness and intimacy than others do.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. The thought of being left by others rarely enters his/her mind.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. S/he is confident that her or his partner(s) love him/her just as much as S/he loves them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

APPENDIX F

FAMILY DISAGREEMENTS

Subject #_____

In every family there are times when the parents don't get along. When their parents argue or disagree, kids can feel a lot of different ways. I would like to know what kinds of feelings *you* had when *your* parents had arguments or disagreements. Please rate the following statements as either T =True, ST = Sort of True, or F = False.

_____1. I never saw my parents arguing or disagreeing

_____2.When my parents had an argument they usually worked it out

_____3. My parents often got into arguments about things I did at school

_____5. My parents got really mad when they argued

_____6. When my parents argued I could do something to make myself feel better

_____7. I got scared when my parents argued

_____8. I felt caught in the middle when my parents argued

_____9. I was not to blame when my parents had arguments

_____10. They might not think I knew it, but my parents argued or disagreed a lot

_____11. Even after my parents stopped arguing they stayed mad at each other

_____13. My parents had arguments because they were not happy together

_____14. When my parents had a disagreement they discussed it quietly

_____15. I didn't know what to do when my parents had arguments

_____16. My parents were often mean to each other even when I was around

_____17. When my parents argued I worried about what would happen to me

_____18. I didn't feel like I had to take sides when my parents had a disagreement

_____19. It was usually my fault when my parents argued

_____20. I often saw my parents arguing

_____21. When my parents disagreed about something, they usually came up with a solution

_____22. My parents arguments were usually about something I did

_____23. The reasons my parents argued never changed

_____24. When my parents had an argument they said mean things to each other

_____25. When my parents argued or disagreed I could usually help make things better

_____26. When my parents argued I was afraid that something bad would happen

_____27. My mom wanted me to be on her side when she and my dad argued

_____ 28. Even if they did not say it, I knew I was to blame when my parents argued

_____ 29. My parents hardly ever argued

_____30. When my parents argued they usually made up right away

_____31. My parents usually argued or disagreed because of things I did

_____32. My parents argued because they didn't really love each other

_____33. When my parents had an argument they yelled a lot

_____34. When my parents argued there was nothing I could do stop them

_____35. When my parents argued I worried that one of them would get hurt

_____36. I felt like I had to take sides when my parents had a disagreement

_____37. My parents often nagged and complained about each other around the house

_____38. My parents hardly ever yelled when they had a disagreement

_____39. My parents often got into arguments when I did something wrong

_____40. My parents have broken or thrown things during an argument

_____41. After my parents stopped arguing, they were friendly toward each other

_____42. When my parents argued I was afraid that they would yell at me too

_____43. My parents blamed me when they had arguments

_____44. My dad wanted me to be on his side when he and my mom argued

_____45. My parents have pushed or shoved each other during an argument

_____46. When my parents argued or disagreed there was nothing I could do to make myself feel better

_____47. When my parents argued I worried that they might get divorced

_____48. My parents still acted mean after they had an argument

_____49. My parents had argument because they did not know how to get along

_____50. Usually it was not my fault when my parents had arguments

_____51. When my parents argued they didn't listen to anything I said

APPENDIX G-1

NEO-FFI-S

Subject # _____

This questionnaire contains 60 statements. Read each statement carefully. For each statement rate the response that best represents your opinion about *yourself*. Please rate the following statements as either SD = *strongly disagree*, D = *disagree*, N = *neutral*, A= *agree*, SA= *strongly agree*.

Write in SD if you *strongly disagree* or the statement is definitely false.

Write in D if you *disagree* or the statement is mostly false.

Write in N if you are *neutral* on the statement, you cannot decide, or the statement is about equally true and false.

Write in A if you *agree* or the statement is mostly true.

Write in SA if you *strongly agree* or the statement is definitely true.

_____1. I am not a worrier.

_____2. I like to have a lot of people around me.

_____3. I don't like to waste my time daydreaming.

_____4. I try to be courteous to everyone I meet.

_____5. I keep my belongings clean and neat.

_____6. I often feel inferior to others.

_____7. I laugh easily.

_____8. Once I find the right way to do something, I stick to it.

_____9. I often get into arguments with my family and co-workers.

_____10. I'm pretty good about pacing myself so as to get things done on time.

Please rate the following statements as either SD = *strongly disagree*, D = *disagree*, N = *neutral*, A= *agree*, SA= *strongly agree*.

____11. When I'm under a great deal of stress, sometimes I feel like I'm going to pieces.

____12. I don't consider myself especially "light-hearted."

____13. I am intrigued by the patterns I find in art and nature.

____14. Some people think I'm selfish and egotistical.

____15. I am not a very methodical person.

____16. I rarely feel lonely or blue.

____17. I really enjoy talking to people.

____18. I believe letting students hear controversial speakers can only confuse and mislead them.

____19. I would rather cooperate with others than compete with them.

____20. I try to perform all the tasks assigned to me conscientiously.

____21. I often feel tense and jittery.

____22. I like to be where the action is.

____23. Poetry has little or no effect on me.

____24. I tend to be cynical and skeptical of others' intentions.

____25. I have a clear set of goals and work toward them in an orderly fashion.

____26. Sometimes I feel completely worthless.

____27. I usually prefer to do things alone.

____28. I often try new and foreign foods.

____29. I believe that most people will take advantage of you if you let them.

____30. I waste a lot of time before settling down to work.

Please rate the following statements as either SD = *strongly disagree*, D = *disagree*, N = *neutral*, A= *agree*, SA= *strongly agree*.

____31. I rarely feel fearful or anxious.

____32. I often feel as if I'm bursting with energy.

____33. I seldom notice the moods or feelings that different environments produce.

____34. Most people I know like me.

____35. I work hard to accomplish my goals.

____36. I often get angry at the way people treat me.

____37. I am a cheerful, high-spirited person.

____38. I believe we should look to our religious authorities for decisions on moral issues.

____39. Some people think of me as cold and calculating.

____40. When I make a commitment, I can always be counted on to follow through.

____41.Too often, when things go wrong, I get discouraged and feel like giving up.

____42. I am not a cheerful optimist.

____43. Sometimes when I am reading poetry or looking at a work or art, I feel a chill or wave of excitement.

____44. I'm hard-headed and tough-minded in my attitudes.

____45. Sometimes I'm not as dependable or reliable as I should be.

Please rate the following statements as either SD = *strongly disagree*, D = *disagree*, N = *neutral*, A= *agree*, SA= *strongly agree*.

____46. I am seldom sad or depressed.

____47. My life is fast-paced.

____48. I have little interest in speculating on the nature of the universe or the human condition.

____49. I generally try to be thoughtful and considerate

____50. I am a productive person who always gets the job done.

____51. I often feel helpless and want someone else to solve my problems.

____52. I am a very active person.

____53. I have a lot of intellectual curiosity.

____54. If I don't like people, I let them know it.

____55. I never seem to be able to get organized.

____56. At times I have been so ashamed I just wanted to hide.

____57. I would rather go my own way than be a leader of others.

____58. I often enjoy playing with theories or abstract ideas.

____59. If necessary, I am willing to manipulate people to get what I want.

____60. I strive for excellence in everything I do.

NEO-FFI-P

Subject # _____

This questionnaire contains 60 statements. Read each statement carefully. For each statement rate the response that best represents your opinion *your partner*. Please rate the following statements as either SD = *strongly disagree*, D = *disagree*, N = *neutral*, A= *agree*, SA= *strongly agree*.

Write in SD if you *strongly disagree* or the statement is definitely false.

Write in D if you *disagree* or the statement is mostly false.

Write in N if you are *neutral* on the statement, you cannot decide, or the statement is about equally true and false.

Write in A if you *agree* or the statement is mostly true.

Write in SA if you *strongly agree* or the statement is definitely true.

_____1. S/he is not a worrier.

_____2. S/he likes to have a lot of people around her or him.

_____3. S/he doesn't like to waste her or his time daydreaming.

_____4. S/he tries to be courteous to everyone s/he meets.

_____5. S/he keeps her or his belongings clean and neat.

_____6. S/he often feels inferior to others.

_____7. S/he laughs easily.

_____8. Once s/he finds the right way to do something, s/he sticks to it.

_____9. S/he often gets into arguments with her or his family and co-workers.

_____10. S/he is pretty good about pacing him or herself so as to get things done on time.

Please rate the following statements as either SD = *strongly disagree*, D = *disagree*, N = *neutral*, A= *agree*, SA= *strongly agree*.

____11. When s/he is under a great deal of stress, sometimes s/he feels like s/he is going to pieces.

____12. S/he don't consider him or herself especially "light-hearted."

____13. S/he is intrigued by the patterns s/he find in art and nature.

____14. Some people think s/he is selfish and egotistical.

____15. S/he is not a very methodical person.

____16. S/he rarely feels lonely or blue.

____17. S/he really enjoys talking to people.

____18. S/he believes letting students hear controversial speakers can only confuse and mislead them.

____19. She would rather cooperate with others than compete with them.

____20. S/he tries to perform all the tasks assigned to him or her conscientiously.

____21. S/he often feels tense and jittery.

____22. S/he likes to be where the action is.

____23. Poetry has little or no effect on him or her.

____24. S/he tends to be cynical and skeptical of others' intentions.

____25. S/he has a clear set of goals and work toward them in an orderly fashion.

____26. Sometimes s/he feels completely worthless.

____27. S/he usually prefers to do things alone.

____28. S/he often tries new and foreign foods.

____29. S/he believes that most people will take advantage of you if you let them.

____30. S/he wastes a lot of time before settling down to work.

Please rate the following statements as either SD = *strongly disagree*, D = *disagree*, N = *neutral*, A= *agree*, SA= *strongly agree*.

____31. S/he rarely feels fearful or anxious.

____32. S/he often feels as if s/he is bursting with energy.

____33. S/he seldom notices the moods or feelings that different environments produce.

____34. Most people s/he knows likes him or her.

____35. S/he works hard to accomplish his or her goals.

____36. S/he often gets angry at the way people treat him or her.

____37. S/he is a cheerful, high-spirited person.

____38. S/he believes we should look to our religious authorities for decisions on moral issues.

____39. Some people think of him or her as cold and calculating.

____40. When s/he makes a commitment, s/he can always be counted on to follow through.

____41.Too often, when things go wrong, s/he gets discouraged and feels like giving up.

____42. S/he is not a cheerful optimist.

____43. Sometimes when s/he is reading poetry or looking at a work or art, s/he feels a chill or wave of excitement.

____44. S/he is hard-headed and tough-minded in his or her attitudes.

____45. Sometimes s/he is not as dependable or reliable as s/he should be.

Please rate the following statements as either SD = *strongly disagree*, D = *disagree*, N = *neutral*, A= *agree*, SA= *strongly agree*.

____46. S/he is seldom sad or depressed.

____47. His or her life is fast-paced.

____48. S/he has little interest in speculating on the nature of the universe or the human condition.

____49. S/he generally tries to be thoughtful and considerate.

____50. S/he is a productive person who always gets the job done.

____51. S/he often feels helpless and wants someone else to solve his or her problems.

____52. S/he is a very active person.

____53. S/he has a lot of intellectual curiosity.

____54. If s/he doesn't like people, s/he lets them know it.

____55. S/he never seems to be able to get organized.

____56. At times s/he has been so ashamed s/he just wanted to hide.

____57. S/he would rather go his or her own way than be a leader of others.

____58. S/he often enjoys playing with theories or abstract ideas.

____59. If necessary, s/he is willing to manipulate people to get what s/he wants.

___60. S/he strives for excellence in everything s/he does.

APPENDIX H-1

Subject #_____

Rater: _____

COUPLE INTERACTION RATING SHEET

After viewing a couple discussing a relationship problem, rate *each* partner on the following adjectives. Rate each adjective on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 9 (extremely).

Not at all				Somewhat				Extremely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

STRESS/ANXIETY

Stressed _____

Anxious _____

Upset _____

Aroused _____

Hurt _____

WARMTH/SUPPORTIVENESS

Supportive _____

Warm _____

Hostile _____

Sarcastic _____

Arrogant _____

Rejecting _____

Understanding _____

Emotionally detached _____

Cold _____

APPENDIX H-2

Subject #_____

Rater: _____

COUPLE INTERACTION RATING SHEET

After discussing a relationship problem with your partner, rate *your own* behavior in the interaction on the following adjectives. Rate each adjective on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 9 (extremely).

Not at all				Somewhat				Extremely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

STRESS/ANXIETY

Stressed _____

Anxious _____

Upset _____

Aroused _____

Hurt _____

WARMTH/SUPPORTIVENESS

Supportive _____

Warm _____

Hostile _____

Sarcastic _____

Arrogant _____

Rejecting _____

Understanding _____

Emotionally detached _____

Cold _____

APPENDIX H-3

Subject #_____

Rater: _____

COUPLE INTERACTION RATING SHEET

After discussing a relationship problem with your partner, rate your ***partner's*** behavior in the interaction on the following adjectives. Rate each adjective on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 9 (extremely).

Not at all				Somewhat				Extremely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

STRESS/ANXIETY

Stressed _____

Anxious _____

Upset _____

Aroused _____

Hurt _____

WARMTH/SUPPORTIVENESS

Supportive _____

Warm _____

Hostile _____

Sarcastic _____

Arrogant _____

Rejecting _____

Understanding _____

Emotionally detached _____

Cold _____

APPENDIX I

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Psychology

Research Consent Form

1. I have freely consented to take part in a scientific study being conducted by Jeffrey R. Zinbarg, M.A. under the supervision of Dr. Gary Stollak, Ph.D.

2. The study has been explained to me and I understand that I am being requested to complete six questionnaires and discuss a relationship problem with my partner which will be videotaped. Participation in this study will take about 1 hour and 30 minutes.

3. I understand that I or my partner will receive 5 research credits for my participation.

4. I understand that I am free to discontinue my participation in the study at any time without penalty.

5. I understand that the results of the study will be treated in strict confidence and that I will remain anonymous.

6. I understand that my participation in the study does not guarantee any beneficial results to me.

7. I understand that at my request, I can receive additional explanation of the study after my participation is completed.

8. I understand that in the event that I will not be able to participate in this experiment to earn extra credit points, there are alternative ways for me to earn extra credit points for my psychology class which will vary according to the instructor that I have. I can receive information about these alternative ways from my psychology instructor.

Title of study: The Dating Relationship Study

Signed_____

Date:_____

Print Name here:_____

APPENDIX J

Participant Information Sheet

This study is an exploration of the relationships among parental divorce, perceived interparental conflict, and college students' romantic relationships. Previous research indicates that perceived interparental conflict is the more significant factor influencing young adults' romantic relationships. However, existing research focuses on only assessing one partner in the relationship. By observing features of couple interaction this study should further our knowledge of how adult children of interparental conflict maintain intimate relationships. In addition, prior literature lacks a theoretical underpinning by which to interpret results. Part of the purpose of the current study is test attachment theory as a theoretical framework for understanding the intergenerational transmission of relationship behavior. Attachment refers to affectional bonds that individuals display toward others. An individual develops an attachment style from their early relationship with their primary caregiver. There are three attachment styles; secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent. For more information regarding romantic relationships and attachment styles you may want to refer to the following source:

Hazen and Shaver (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52(3), 511-524.

Thank you very much for participating in the study. If you have any additional questions or concerns please feel free to contact Jeffrey Zinbarg at 355-9564 (phone) or zinbargj@pilot.msu.edu (e-mail).

APPENDIX K

Table 16

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for Adult Attachment Questionnaire, Conflict Properties Scale of the CPIC, and the NEO-FFI

	Males	Females
Avoidant Attachment		
Mean	25.1	23.6
SD	7.5	7.9
Range	13-54	9-49
Ambivalent Attachment		
Mean	26.9	28.7
SD	7.5	7.6
Range	12-51	11-49
Conflict Properties		
Mean	13.6	14.3
SD	9.9	10.0
Range	0-37	0-34
Neuroticism		
Mean	17.6	22.1
SD	6.9	7.4
Range	5-36	6-40
Extraversion		
Mean	30.7	33.5
SD	6.2	5.8
Range	16-46	16-44
Openness		
Mean	29.1	29.3
SD	6.9	6.5
Range	12-46	8-43
Agreeableness		
Mean	29.0	31.4
SD	6.3	5.6
Range	12-44	16-46
Conscientiousness		
Mean	30.0	32.6
SD	7.2	6.2
Range	11-46	18-47

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