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Young Adult Children's Communicative Management of Emotions about Divorce and
Divorce Disclosures: Creating and Applying a New Measure

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of Social Science

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Jenna Rae Shimkowski

June 2015

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Title: Young Adult Children's Communicative Management of Emotions about Divorce and Divorce Disclosures: Creating and Applying a New Measure
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ABSTRACT

Although scholars have examined the impacts of divorce on children, there has been little research focused on how children communicatively manage and make sense of their emotions following the divorce. Theoretically, the communication field is lacking in the knowledge of ways in which children of divorce handle the emotions that can arise in their new family system. This dissertation consists of two studies. Study 1 included identifying the strategies that young adult children report using to manage their emotions regarding parents' divorce and creating a new measure based on children's reports of these management strategies. Young adults reported using verbal expression, nonverbal expression, and unresponsiveness as communicative strategies for managing their divorce-related emotions, providing three subscales for the new measure.

Study 2 involved applying the measure from the first phase in a study of divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being. This study examined the relationships between parents' divorce disclosures, young adults' emotion management strategies, and their mental well-being in terms of their perceived stress, self-esteem, and mental health symptoms. Results indicated that the more frequently parents disclose about their divorce, the more likely young adults use verbal expression to directly state their feelings and thoughts when managing their emotions. While divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being did not share a statistically significant relationship, all three

strategies were meaningfully related to mental well-being. Thus, young adults' mental well-being increases as they utilize verbal expression but decreases the more they use nonverbal expression (e.g., facial expressions and body language) and unresponsiveness (e.g., leaving the room or sitting silently). Finally, results indicated that emotion management strategies did not function as a moderator of the relationship between divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being. Potential reasons for this are explored in Study 2.

These studies contribute to family communication research surrounding divorce. Whereas previous work on emotions has centered predominantly on the internal emotion regulation of feelings, the current project accounts for communication during the management of emotions in an attempt to better understand some of the difficulties children endure in divorced families and how they deal with those challenges.

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Romans 12:12 – “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Young Adult Children's Communicative Management of Emotions about Divorce and Divorce Disclosures: Creating and Applying a New Measure

Communication scholars have long examined the effects of divorce on children (Afifi, McManus, et al., 2007; Buchanan, Maccoby, & Dornbusch, 1991; Schrodtt, Baxter, McBride, Braithwaite, & Fine, 2006). More specifically, researchers have delved into research focusing on the impact of divorce on children such as feeling caught between parents (Afifi, 2003; Afifi & Schrodtt, 2003; Schrodtt & Shimkowski, 2013), children's well-being (Amato & Afifi, 2006; Schrodtt & Ledbetter, 2007), and details of the parent-child relationship, such as parents' disclosures (Afifi & McManus, 2010; Afifi, Schrodtt, & McManus, 2009; Koerner, Wallace, Lehmann, & Raymond, 2002). Scholars have identified some of the emotions children feel in relation to the divorce (Metts et al., 2013) and that children's intense feelings such as guilt, anger, or fear can sometimes last for decades (Maldonado, 2009). Unfortunately, there has been little research focused on the ways in which these children communicatively manage and make sense of their emotions following the divorce.

As a result of this gap in the research, the present study focuses on children's communicative management of emotions following their parent's divorce. There are two reasons why this focus is important. First, theoretically, the communication field is lacking in the knowledge of ways in which children of divorce handle the emotions that

can arise in their new family system. Scholars previously have examined children's emotions and well-being regarding parental conflict for intact families (Afifi, Afifi, & Coho, 2009) as well as for stepfamilies (Metts et al., 2013), but the strategies that children of divorce in particular utilize in managing their emotions regarding the divorce necessitate an even closer look.

The second reason the communicative management of emotion following divorce necessitates more investigation is that a divorce represents a unique situation in which children, regardless of their age and place of residence, must manage competing emotional needs. At any age, the breaking apart of one's family undoubtedly brings about various types of emotional responses. For example, emotions these children might experience include anger, hostility, embarrassment (Metts et al., 2013), feeling caught (Afifi, 2003; Afifi & Schrodt, 2003), shame (Maldonado, 2009), or sometimes forgiveness (Metts et al., 2013). Children must identify ways in which they can successfully manage those emotions and communicate their feelings, especially as they grow older and the demands from divorced parents may increase. Scholars have consistently found that, when compared to their counterparts from intact family systems, older children from divorced families face a higher risk of emotional and behavioral adjustment problems (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Baxter, Weston, & Lixia, 2011). Developing ways to help alleviate some of the emotional difficulties these children endure when growing up rests upon understanding the ways that children currently cope with and manage their divorce-related emotions. However, research has yet to focus on how they do so.

Given these two reasons for a scholarly focus on children's communicative management of emotions related to their parent's divorce, there were two overarching purposes of the present dissertation that were addressed in two studies. The first purpose and study included creating a coding scheme that identified the strategies that young adult children use to manage their emotions regarding parents' divorce. Additionally, the coding scheme was used to create and validate a measure of young adults' communicative strategies for managing their divorce-related emotions in Study 2. Using the new measure, the second study sought to examine communication strategies as a moderator in the relationship between divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being.

Examining divorce-related emotions as well as disclosures about divorce go hand in hand. Divorce disclosures represent one of the most common events in which young adult children will grapple with their emotions revolving around family communication. Disclosures include such communication as revealing information about the other parent, the ex-spousal relationship, parenting behaviors, financial information, or parent-child relationships with the other parent (Afifi, Afifi, & Coho, 2009). Some parents use their children as confidants to disclose information about their relationship or the other parent. Once a parent begins disclosing inappropriate or sensitive information about the divorce to their child, the child must then decide how to handle that information as well as the acts of disclosing. Moreover, such disclosures can put children at risk psychologically and emotionally (Afifi, Schrodt, & McManus, 2009). The proposed studies focus on *young adult children*, because they may be especially prone to parents' divorce

disclosures (Koerner et al., 2002) and be placed at an even greater risk for emotional hardships than younger children.

Considering the potential challenges that young adult children face, it is important to investigate the emotion management strategies they use in divorce disclosure situations and how that impacts their mental well-being. Previous work on handling emotions, however, has centered predominantly on the internal emotion regulation of feelings (Bebko, Franconeri, Ochsner, & Chiao, 2011), but this does not account for any communication during the management of emotions. Perhaps an eye toward more external emotion management practices would provide a fuller picture of divorced children's experiences and a better understanding of their adjustment and well-being problems. Many behavioral issues that children face after a divorce are most likely a result of underlying emotional difficulties (Lee, 1997). While divorce disclosures from parents may represent a major mental strain on children recovering from or adapting to a divorce, researchers first need to identify the unique strategies that young adult children use in managing their emotions surrounding their parents' divorce in general.

In sum, the underlying need and purpose of the current study, then, was to gain a better understanding of the communicative strategies that young adult children use to manage their emotions following the divorce of their parents and then to examine how those emotional coping strategies function in relation to parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's mental well-being. The current study took an *exploratory sequential mixed method* approach. Such an approach includes qualitatively exploring then quantitatively assessing young adults' emotion communication. The rationale for this research design was to, in Study 1, qualitatively explore young adult children's

emotion management strategies about divorce and then, in Study 2, apply those strategies to the common post-divorce phenomenon of receiving parents' divorce disclosures. The first study included asking young adult children of divorce about their emotional experiences. From this first exploration, the qualitative results were employed to develop and validate an instrument that was administered to a larger sample of young adults in the second study. Also in Study 2, young adult children of divorce completed a questionnaire regarding mental well-being and their parents' divorce disclosures. The results of the proposed explorations have the potential to aid practitioners in prescribing help to children of divorce and their families, as well as aid in closing the gap between communication studies and emotion research.

CHAPTER TWO: STUDY 1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Study 1: Examining Young Adults' Strategies for the Communicative Management of Emotions

The initial study aimed to assess young adult children's strategies for communicatively managing their divorce-related emotions. First, the researcher detailed why it is necessary to examine young adults specifically. Then, the researcher elaborated on the two guiding theoretical frameworks for this study, Arnett's (2000) theory of emergent adulthood and Davies and Cummings' (1994) emotional security hypothesis. Next, the researcher reviewed the literature on divorce and children's emotions and proposed research questions to guide data collection and analyses for developing categories of strategies for communicatively managing divorce-related emotions. In Study 2, these categories were used to construct a new measure.

Need for a Measure

The field of Communication Studies does not yet possess an instrument for measuring the communicative management of divorce-related emotions. While scholars in others fields such as psychology examine the internal control of emotions through emotion regulation (e.g., Gross, 1998, 2001; Gross & John, 2003), there is little research on how individuals communicate those emotions to others and currently no research involving communication strategies in the specific context of emotions related to parents' divorce. Thus, creating and validating a new measure would fill this gap in

Communication Studies and potentially help bridge studies of divorce-related emotions and family communication. While the new measure will not be created until Study 2, the foundation for this measure is built in Study 1 through creating qualitative categories. Young adults represent an important population to study when creating this new measure, which is discussed next.

Need to Examine Young Adults

Following a divorce, young adulthood presents a unique time in children's lives when they are learning to navigate their parents' divorce and manage the accompanying emotions. As Amato and Afifi (2006) noted, many previous studies have focused on adolescents feeling caught between their parents, and these scholars suggested that children who are transitioning into adulthood and leaving home may still endure these feelings as young adult children. These scholars claimed that young adult children of divorce, for example, "may experience loyalty conflicts when they choose to spend weekends, holidays, or other special occasions with one parent rather than the other" (Amato & Afifi, 2006, p. 222-223). Because they are older, young adults have the ability to choose which parent to talk to and visit when they have the opportunity to do so. Buchanan et al. (1991) found that older adolescents tend to feel caught more often and that an older child's increased cognitive and social maturity may place him or her in more of a position to become caught in their families. Hence, it is important to investigate young adults' specifically.

Young adults, as opposed to young children, are more aware of divorce-related problems between their parents and in their family systems. Because children develop new relationships, school activities, and hobbies as they grow older, they may have

difficulty keeping a balanced relationship with both divorced parents (Cole & Cole, 1999). Finally, young adult children who are no longer living with their parents may be at an increased risk for parents' divorce disclosures because their parents now view them as adults in whom they can confide their opinions and feelings (Afifi & Schrodt, 2003; Afifi, Schrodt, & McManus, 2009). Young adult children belong to a distinctive subset of children who are not so far removed from residing with parents that the divorce does not affect them, yet they are beginning their lives on their own, gaining more independence, and exercising increased cognitive complexity. For these reasons, young adult children must be examined independently from other age groups of children. This need is further underscored by one of the two theoretical guides for this study, which is now discussed in detail.

Theoretical Frameworks

One theoretical approach that underscores this need to study the young adult population is the theory of emergent adulthood (Arnett, 2000). This theory lends credence for examining the young adult population in this study. The other guiding theoretical framework for this investigation is the emotional security hypothesis (Davies & Cummings, 1994). These two theoretical perspectives provide a clearer lens for understanding the needs of young adult children, as well as the way that they handle difficult family interactions such as conflict between parents. A comprehension of the way in which young adult children process their emotions based on their needs in the family is essential to gaining a better understanding of their communicative strategies for managing those emotions. Thus, the need to investigate young adults was highlighted in examining the notion of emergent adults.

Theory of Emergent Adulthood

Young adulthood sets the stage for a unique time in a child's life. As Konstam (2007) claimed, reaching one's 20s brings about uncertainty, unfamiliarity, unknowns, and is oftentimes overwhelming. Arnett's (2000) theory of emerging adulthood highlights this distinctive period in an individual's life and gives rise to the complications that can ensue once children hit this age. In this theory, Arnett (2000) proposed that individuals ranging from 18-25 years old are in a period of emergent adulthood, "having left the dependency of childhood and adolescence, and having not yet entered the enduring responsibilities that are normative in adulthood" (p. 469). He claimed that the qualities most important to this group of individuals are the ability to make their own decisions, accept responsibility for themselves, and to become independent financially.

Emergent adulthood spans the ages of 18-25 years. However, this range does not include the full spectrum of social development when considering individuals who are entering their adult years. Supporting this idea, Cote (2006) insisted that the age range should be extended from 25 to 30 to better depict the transition to young adulthood. Moreover, Konstam (2007) claimed that "recent literature suggests that many of the developmental markers identified by Arnett are inclusive of many individuals approaching 30" (p. 1). Cote (2006) noted that "Arnett does allow that the emerging adulthood period can constitute the entire 20s for some people" and that "the preceding results suggest that focusing on the early 20s may be too early for key features of identity formation to come to fruition" (p. 108). In the proposed study, then, the term *young adult*

will be used to refer to individuals ranging from 18-30, extending Arnett's (2000) traditional view in order to encompass a fuller span of the period of young adulthood.

Because they do not yet view themselves as fully having reached adulthood, young adults are still somewhat reliant on their parents. For instance, Arnett (2000) claimed that an individual's financial independence is critical to becoming self-sufficient and that young adults' conceptions of what is required to become an adult often relies on feeling self-sufficient. Thus, individuals in young adulthood are not yet self-sufficient and often still rely on their parents to meet their needs, such as financial needs or assistance in making decisions. For instance, many individuals in young adulthood still need a parent to co-sign a lease for them or may be getting a loan from parents to pay for college tuition. Arnett (2000) suggested that this period of life is often spent attempting to live independently while also relying on parents. When parents divorce, young adults may face a plethora of insecurity issues as they move toward adulthood. Perhaps their parents are unable to support them financially now that they are separated or maybe they are no longer able to seek as much guidance and direction from their parents as before now that they are in two different homes. Thus, children in this stage of life are still highly dependent on their parents and probably keeping in touch with them regularly, where divorce might cause an emotional strain on that fragile relationship.

Young adulthood may leave children feeling mentally or emotionally vulnerable, which may only increase when parents are divorced. A key component of young adulthood is the opportunity for them to explore their identities in terms of work, love, and worldviews (Arnett, 2000). Additionally, young adults have high levels of instability of residence, moving often as they transition out of the house, into dorms or apartments,

and out on their own (Arnett, 2000). While individuals in this area of life experiment and test the waters in their personal and professional lives, once again, they tend to have the ability to rely on the stability of their parents. When parents are divorced and there is no longer as stable of a home to return to or the emotional stability provided by two parents, young adult children may face unique emotional needs in comparison to their peers who belong to still married families. Thus, this period of life is somewhat fragile for children as they attempt to spread their wings, yet still rely on parents. Another area in which young adults rely heavily on parents is for their emotional security, leading to the other guiding theoretical foundation for this study.

Emotional Security Hypothesis

Another theoretical framework guiding the proposed research project is the emotional security hypothesis (Davies & Cummings, 1994). In this theoretical proposal, Davies and Cummings (1994) claimed that children's responses to their parents' marital conflict is more so a response to the implications of that conflict on their emotional security as opposed to direct emotional contagion. In other words, Davies and Cummings (1994) claimed that children react based on the meaning of the conflict and interpersonal implications that will follow instead of simply displaying or reflecting their parents' feelings. While these scholars refer specifically to marital conflict (e.g., conflict within the marital relationship in intact families) throughout their theorizing, the nature of this theoretical framework is highly relevant to divorced families as well, given that children of divorce have probably endured a great deal of interparental conflict before and maybe even following a divorce. Furthermore, these scholars claimed that children whose parents divorce have often experienced heightened levels of parents' marital conflict

prior to the divorce, and thus, the emotional security hypothesis should still hold true for children who have experienced a divorce. Davies and Cummings (1994) claimed that “family dissolution as an end result of destructive marital conflict drastically reduces the psychological availability of the non-custodial parent, also causing economic hardship and many difficult life changes” (p. 389). Thus, children from divorced families could potentially face even more chances for emotional insecurity and heightened trouble with emotion regulation. Family communication may play a large role in children’s emotional security.

Family conflict and child well-being. As children interpret parents’ conflict based on their needs within the family system, family communication has a direct effect on children’s emotions and well-being. Davies and Cummings (1994) proposed that children’s emotional well-being is often concerned with what parental discord means for family relationships. Thus, children may be worried about how their family members will get along with one another and what that means as far as future support they will receive. When children feel insecure emotionally, they are less likely to effectively cope and will face increased behavioral and emotional dysregulation when faced with daily challenges and stressors (Davies & Cummings, 1994). When children do not feel secure in their relationship with parents and with their family life, this takes an emotional toll on their personal life.

Feelings about their parents’ relationship necessarily impact children’s feelings of well-being. Children with more emotional security about their parents’ relationship feel more confident in the constancy of their parents’ marital interactions, in the continued availability of their parents both physically and psychologically, and confidence in the

idea that their parents' marital discord will eventually subside (Davies & Cummings, 1994). Thus, emotional security provides children with confidence in the present and in the future regarding their parents' assistance. When conflict is eventually resolved between parents, a child may feel that he or she does not need to get involved anymore, that the uncomfortable emotions have subsided, that there is a decreased risk of family violence, and that parents are now more available emotionally (Davies & Cummings, 1994). Some parents experiencing marital discord choose to divorce, possibly further decreasing children's emotional security depending on several factors.

Factors impacting emotional security. Divorce is a time when children experience a mix of emotions that they must navigate as their family structure changes. The emotional security hypothesis suggests that children are impacted by three covarying but distinct factors (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Harold, Shelton, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2004). The first factor includes how well children are able to regulate their emotions when feelings such as fear, sadness, or relief are activated. The second factor is comprised of children's cognitive representations or assessments of a problem's potential impact on the family and how an event will impact their family in the long term. The third factor includes behavioral regulation or children's reactions to the interparental conflict, such as intervening between parents or withdrawing from the conflict. Harold et al. (2004) suggested that children do not simply feel their emotional security is threatened because of interparental conflict, but instead claimed that the impact on emotional security is determined by children's underlying foundations of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional security when they experience that parental conflict. Thus, the ways in which

young adult children manage their emotions and emotional reactions in relation to family communication should be examined more closely.

Emotion management is directly tied to children's feelings of emotional security. Emotional security impacts children's own emotion regulation, motivates children to cope with family events by regulating their parents' conduct, and also impacts their appraisals and ideas about their family's relationships (Davies & Cummings, 1994). These researchers also hypothesized that children who are exposed to parents' destructive conflict face increased emotional dysregulation and arousal in addition to increased risk of adjustment problems. In other words, children who endure their parents' conflict may face difficulties managing their own emotions. The next sections, then, further review and explore how young adult children manage their emotions and communicate them with others following the divorce of their parents.

Divorce and Young Adults' Emotion Management

Divorce can be difficult for a child at any age. Grollman and Grollman (1977) claimed that when parents initially tell their children about the divorce, there is often a terrible lack of understanding on the children's part because of parents attempting to keep secrets. Moreover, these scholars suggested that children's fears are magnified when parents avoid talking about the divorce as children rely on psychological defenses and fantasy instead of reality (Grollman & Grollman, 1977). Parents' separation may be viewed as a step in relational breakdown and readjustment where child outcomes are associated with their experiences of the whole process (Baxter et al., 2011). Communication is a crucial factor in children dealing with the divorce. For instance, Grollman and Grollman (1977) posited that parents must allow their children the right to

feel, never turning away from children's opinions or thoughts, and allowing true feelings such as guilt and resentment to surface. They also advocated for parents to not lead their children to feel they should hide their true emotions out of fear of parent condemnation. Children, however, may not always feel comfortable expressing their emotions with others or may not have the capabilities to do so effectively following a divorce.

Divorce necessarily arouses deep emotions. Children of divorce are more likely to endure a range of behavioral and emotional problems adjusting than children in still married families (Baxter et al., 2011). Exploring children's emotional responses is vital in understanding their true experiences in separated, conflicted families from their perspective (Lee, 2001). Children may experience a plethora of emotions following parents divorcing and possibly face implications of that divorce for the rest of their lives. Even the very announcement of divorce, regardless of if the child was very young, could have made a radical impact on his or her life growing up. Great change often creates emotions of panic for children because they may fear losing once taken-for-granted family functioning such as losing a father's financial support when he no longer lives with them in the house or feeling the non-residential parent will no longer be their parent (Grollman & Grollman, 1977). Hence, young adults' feelings of emotional insecurity in the family may increase following a divorce, necessitating their emotion management to cope and proceed with family functioning.

Emotional security, then, may be damaged following a divorce. When children feel emotionally secure, they can effectively cope with problems, but when they feel insecure emotionally, there is a decreased chance for effective coping and increased chances for more behavioral and emotional dysregulation with daily stressors (Davies &

Cummings, 1994). In fact, Davies and Cummings (1994) claimed that “family dissolution as an end result of destructive marital conflict drastically reduces the psychological availability of the non-custodial parent, also causing economic hardship and many difficult life changes” (p. 389). Thus, children from divorced families could potentially face even more chances for emotional insecurity and heightened trouble with emotion management. Maldonado (2009) claimed that children from divorced families are more likely to handle anger in a destructive manner and that those children who are faced with interparental anger have even lower chances for coping healthily with anger. Hence, the next sections further elaborate on the ways in which divorce impacts young adult children specifically as well as how parents’ communication influences that process.

Impacts of Divorce on Young Adults

Emotion management may become vastly more important as children grow older and face new and challenging situations involving their parents’ divorce. Individuals whose parents have divorced in childhood have an increasing chance for psychological problems and decreased psychological well-being once they reach adulthood (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001). Oftentimes, divorce is only the first step in a series of family changes and transitions that children must adjust to (e.g., remarriage or stepsiblings), while their psychological well-being tends to decline with each family transition (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001). This requires maintaining strategies for managing their emotions. McRae et al. (2012) noted that reframing emotions is a skill that is used increasingly more as children develop and grow older. While younger children may be allowed to act out when experiencing negative emotions, adults must align themselves with social norms in which they need to alter their display of feelings in public or around others. It is

imperative to better understand how young adult children manage their emotions about the divorce with their parents and within their social groups. Lee (1997) suggested that many of children's behavioral issues following a divorce are probably a result of their underlying emotional difficulties. Understanding the ways in which young adult children manage their emotions after their parents' divorce and the factors that impact that management is essential in helping families recover after a divorce. One factor that may affect their emotion management is their parents' communication.

Parents' Communication Following Divorce

Young adults' emotion management abilities may be highly impacted by parents' communication styles. When parents who are divorced cannot parent together without conflict, there could be an increased risk of emotion management difficulties for children. Furthermore, Afifi and Schrodt (2003) posited the possibility of numerous implications arising from parents' interpersonal communication (or lack of these skills) on children's communication competency. It is possible that if children witness ineffective communication between their parents after a divorce, they may not have the communication competency to effectively share their feelings when attempting to manage their emotions. This could lead them to turn more to hiding their feelings instead of sharing them with their parents or peers in such situations. Maldonado (2009) suggested that children often sense parents' emotions and attempt to imitate their behavior. If parents do not know how to manage their own emotions with one another and communicate effectively after their divorce, there is a chance that they also did not teach their children to handle emotions in a way that enhances their well-being.

Additionally, the parent-child relationship may suffer and impact young adult children's well-being following a divorce.

The parent-child relationship also impacts how well children are able to handle a divorce. A good relationship between parent and child may help children adjust after a divorce while conflict between parents deteriorates the parent-child relationship (Lee, 1997). Thus, when parents divorce, children may only hear one side of their parents' conflict at a time through communicated revelations and disclosures. In this case, children may have to negotiate mixed signals if they feel they have a close relationship with one parent yet that parent is revealing hurtful information about the other parent or continuing to engage in conflict. Amato and Sobolewski (2001) found that adult children of divorce are still at a disadvantage compared to children from still married families and concluded that parents' marital discord weakens the emotional bonds shared with children in adulthood, placing these children at risk for unhappiness, lower self-esteem, and distress. These scholars continued in suggesting that having little parental support during the challenges of young adulthood could possibly magnify their distress. Thus, parents' communication with their young adult children about the divorce may impact the parent-child relationship as well as how their children process and manage competing emotions about the divorce of their parents.

Although it would make sense to assume that the majority of emotions surrounding parental divorce would be negative, there is the possibility that some children may feel positive emotions. For instance, Amato and Sobolewski (2001) noted that divorce sometimes benefits a child by removing him or her from a dysfunctional living situation. In such cases, children could feel a sense of relief or peace to not endure

their parents' discord in the same home anymore. Thus, scholars need to better understand the strategies that young adult children use to manage all of their divorce-related emotions. The next section, then, centers on the ways in which individuals work to navigate their emotions.

Managing and Communicating Emotions

In considering how family situations such as conflict and divorce impact children's emotional security and feelings of well-being, it is also important to understand how children of divorce communicate about their emotions. As young adults learn of their parents' divorce and navigate their new family setups, they must find ways to process their emotions internally as well as communicate them externally with others. Thus, this section reviews the roots of emotions, how emotions are connected to interpersonal relationships, coping processes individuals work through, and previous work on the regulation of emotions.

The basis of emotions. Emotions take root in some emotion-eliciting event and this event may be viewed as triggering positive or negative emotions. Individuals assess emotional cues and evaluate them, which then trigger a response involving physiological, behavioral, as well as experiential systems over time (Gross, 2001; Gross & John, 2003). Ochsner and Gross (2008) claimed that contemporary theorizing views emotions as products of brain systems that evaluate the importance of perceived stimuli in respect to an individual's needs and goals by tapping into one's working memory. After an emotion-eliciting event or encounter, individuals must decide how they will manage that emotion moving forward, and typically identify a way to communicate that emotion to the other individuals involved in the event. Emotions may be communicated directly and

truthfully, might be falsified by selecting to portray a different emotion, or emotions could even be communicated through silence.

Because individuals can choose to communicate their emotions honestly, partially, or not at all, it stands to reason that emotions point to the deepest thoughts and values within individuals. Lazarus (2006) suggested there are five features that point toward the importance of examining emotions. First, emotions show what is important to individuals and serve as a measurement of success in achieving goals, values, and beliefs. Second, emotions are a common feature of ongoing relationships with any other individuals. Third, emotions serve to help or hurt interpersonal relationships, especially considering closer relationships. Fourth, the deep internal source of an emotion cannot be directly seen or observed and interpreters must rely only on what is displayed. Fifth, emotions are often difficult to control. For all these reasons, emotions have a way of bringing together individuals' personal goals, close relationships, and their communication, creating a unique intersection with heightened importance. Close familial relationships, then, may be a hotbed for emotion-eliciting situations, especially when families endure a divorce. Thus, emotions must be examined in relation to close others.

Emotions and relational others. Emotions are intrinsically connected to relationships and interactions with others. Lazarus (2006) stated that, “an emotional encounter is not a single action or reaction, as in a still photo or a static stimulus-response unit, but a continuous flow of actions and reactions among the persons who participate in it” (p. 14). Individuals who experience an emotion may attempt to express that exact emotion or choose a different, less honest emotion to express during an interaction. In the

case of young adult children managing their emotions about their parents' divorce, they may wish to communicate those emotions to others in or outside of their family.

It is important to closely examine emotions when understanding how children process parents' divorce. Scholars have proposed examining emotion rather than stress, which is concerned mostly with negative relationships and environments, to instead focus on the larger umbrella category of emotion which also includes positive relationships and emotional responses (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Considering that children's emotions about their parents' divorce cannot be assumed to be solely negative for them, emotion is a much more encompassing focus point for stepping out to assess their feelings. In other words, some young adult children could be happy that their parents divorced and are no longer together and arguing. Because of such cases, it is important to begin from the ground up in examining how they manage their range of emotions. In other words, it is not safe to assume that all emotions associated with parents' divorce are negative, so the present dissertation used the first study to ask young adult children what emotions they are experiencing in relation to their parents' divorce and then inquired about their management strategies.

Young adults' communication of emotions is reliant on who they feel is close to them and how comfortable they feel sharing their feelings. Considering the importance of emotions in interpersonal relationships, feelings and emotions are an integral part of close relations such as the parent-child one or close friendships. The fact that another person cannot tell with certainty what emotion an individual is experiencing, but can only work off of what that individual says or shows, places the emphasis solely on communication. Those who express one emotion are also more likely to express others too, including both

positive and negative emotions (Gross & John, 1995). Communicating emotions, then, may serve as a management tool for individuals experiencing deep emotions. For example, they may choose to fully express an emotion to someone else or could attempt to hide that emotion out of saving their face, saving the other's face, or simply not wishing to communicate about their feelings at that time with that person. This consideration opens a myriad of options for young adult children managing their divorce-related emotions, but past research has not yet identified their strategies in this particular context.

In sum, emotions are inherently relational, and emotions surrounding a changing relationship (i.e., marriage to divorce) usually typify a situation with heightened emotions. Lazarus and Folkman (1987) claimed that “we need a language of relationships in which the two basic subsystems, person and environment, are conjoined and considered at a new level of analysis” (p. 142) and that this interaction of emotions and relationships are transactional rather than still and static. Therefore, it is important to study both situations (e.g., parents' divorce) and children's emotion management techniques in order to better understand the emotional and communicative differences that may be unique to divorced families. Emotion processes, regardless of the situation, typically begin with appraisal. Thus, the next section outlines the historical model of emotion appraisal.

Appraising emotions. Before managing emotions, individuals first appraise the emotion-eliciting situation. Historically, scholars have suggested two forms of emotion appraisal. Lazarus (1991a) claimed that people only generate emotions when they realize that they have something to lose or gain by a situation's outcome. In Lazarus's (1968,

1991b) appraisal theory, Lazarus argued that primary appraisals include assessments of the situation's relevance to personal well-being while secondary appraisals center around ways of coping and evaluations of the resources available for dealing with the event. These appraisals together determine the intensity and the nature of one's emotional reaction (Parkinson, 1997). In other words, "primary and secondary appraisals converge to determine whether the person-environment transaction is regarded as significant for well-being, and if so, whether it is primarily threatening (containing the possibility of harm or loss), or challenging (holding the possibility of mastery)" (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986, p. 993). The appraisal process, then, serves to influence what individuals feel and the meaning or function of those feelings for them.

Appraisals lead to specific emotions that serve very specific functions. The blending of emotion may occur when an appraisal includes different emotions along different dimensions, such that when an individual appraises that someone else is responsible for an unpleasant situation and that situation is also unexpected, that individual might feel both angry and surprised (Ellsworth & Smith, 1988). For instance, some young adults could feel hurt by their parents but simultaneously surprised, angry, or fearful. According to Ellsworth and Smith (1988), emotions should serve different adaptive functions (e.g., sadness indicating that person needs support). In this vein, anger should motivate individuals to remove an obstacle that they have the potential to change, involving another person or target rather than oneself while fear is associated with obstacles threatening one's well-being and motivates individuals to flee from that danger (Ellsworth & Smith, 1988). Furthermore, Ellsworth and Smith (1988) urged future scholars to investigate appraisals and emotions in relation to the behaviors that they

produce and motivate, and to further delineate modes of coping with emotions. Once again, context is important to give ground to examining behaviors and motivations stemming from emotions. In relation to young adult children of divorce, it is necessary to examine the emotions they feel and assess how they are motivated to cope with and manage those emotions through communicative behaviors.

Assessment or appraisal of emotions necessarily precedes action to cope with or regulate those emotions. Once individuals experience an unwanted emotion, they may attempt to determine a way to communicatively deal with that emotion. Lazarus (2006) claimed that emotions are *relational* in that they are dependent on the interaction between people in an environment while emotions are also concerned with *coping*, or individuals' attempts to manage demands for adaptation and the generated emotions. As Lazarus (2006) highlighted in his theory of emotional appraisal, there is an emphasis on an action rather than a product during appraisal and labeled appraisal as "an evaluation of the personal significance of our relationships with others and the options for coping" (p. 11-12). Thus, emotions and coping or management of those emotions are inextricably intertwined when individuals encounter an emotion-eliciting event. It is important to understand how young adult children of divorce manage their range of emotions about divorce because they are in an interim stage of life, forging their own path while staying connected to their parents for resources and guidance. For these reasons, young adult children of divorce must identify ways to cope with their difficult emotions in the family.

Coping and emotions. Children develop management strategies for coping with the stress of their parents' divorce and the impacts of that divorce long after it is legally finalized. Stress is not the only factor when assessing one's well-being, but how well that

individual copes with the stress plays a large role (Lazarus, 2006). Furthermore, Lazarus (2006) claimed that stress may have destructive consequences for morale, health, and social functioning when coping is ineffective. Thus, understanding how young adult children of divorce manage their emotions surrounding the divorce may help them to maintain increased mental well-being and better social functioning in the future.

Young adults facing the divorce of their parents will most likely make an effort to manage and deal with their strong emotions. Gross, Richards, and John (2006) described emotion regulation as “attempts individuals make to influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how these emotions are experienced and expressed” (p. 14). Coping is an essential factor in managing emotions. Lazarus (2006) suggested that coping may be seen as a personality trait, a process subject to social and personal forces, or as a style. Gross (1998) distinguished between problem-focused coping (i.e., attempting to solve a problem) and emotion-focused coping (i.e., attempting to decrease negative emotions) and claimed that examining emotion regulation has the ability to make finer distinctions than could be accomplished by only studying stress. Gross (1998) also claimed that emotion regulation encompasses both positive and negative emotions as well as the expression of emotion. The regulation of emotion may be conscious or unconscious, controlled or automatic, and can impact the emotion generating process at one or multiple points (Gross, 1998). Emotion regulation, then, can be a complicated process to examine. Unfortunately, emotion regulation has predominantly been studied from an internal cognitive perspective instead of from an external communicative point of view. The present study, then, seeks to focus on the strategies that young adult children use to manage those emotions through communicating with others.

There are currently several approaches to examining how individuals cope with their emotions. Folkman et al. (1986) proposed several coping possibilities such as accepting the situation, altering it, or holding oneself back from acting on impulse or from acting in a manner that would be counterproductive. Lazarus (2006) suggested that there are three ways to identify coping styles and that styles are typically measured using a questionnaire. The first describes a stable view of coping and includes examining habitual patterns over situations and time within a group of individuals in an empirical approach. The second process includes first identifying stable coping traits then researching their stability through a deductive approach. The third way focuses on how the circumstances of one's environment impact the reaction and coping trait, with Lazarus (2006) stating that he thought this was the most worthwhile and sophisticated approach because the trait is only triggered in events that are applicable to that specific coping trait. This last approach would be best concerning this first study as the focus is on the circumstance of parents' divorce and how children negotiate the impact of their feelings concerning the divorce.

In the same vein, there are several ways to assess young adults' strategies for managing emotions. Gross (1998) noted several ways to conceptualize and assess emotion regulation processes including precisely defining what individuals do to regulate a specific emotion. Gross (1998) suggested that researchers can ask participants what they do to regulate certain emotions and record responses, categorizing regulation strategies based on what component is targeted (i.e., facial expression or experience), or by examining the process of regulation acts (e.g., generating emotion response tendencies then attempting to alter them). Instead of selecting between these options, it is perhaps

more valuable to ask young adult children of divorce what emotions they experience as a result of the divorce and how they attempt to communicatively manage those emotions. While some work has been done on regulating emotions, current research does not account for the communication of emotions in an effort to manage them. Thus, the researcher reviews what has been found regarding the regulation of emotions while highlighting the paucity of regulation strategies focused specifically on communication.

Emotion regulation strategies. Several general emotion management strategies have previously been noted in research. Gross (1998) distinguished between five emotion regulation strategies including situation selection (i.e., approaching or avoiding to choose between possible encounters), situation modification (i.e., attempting to alter the situation itself), attention, deployment (i.e., selecting a certain aspect of a situation to focus upon), cognitive change (i.e., selecting a meaning to attach to a situation), and response modulation (i.e., influencing experiential, physiological, or behavioral response tendencies). Finally, Gross (1998) claimed that emotion regulation goals usually include increasing positive emotions and decreasing negative emotions, while these goals may vary by context or by emotion. Better understanding what strategies children of divorce use could possibly lead researchers or therapists to help young adult children develop management techniques to make those strategies more effective.

Regulation strategies may begin at the start of an emotion-eliciting event or be engaged during the process. Scholars (Gross, 2001; Gross & John, 2003) have claimed there are two broad level emotion regulation strategies. Antecedent-focused strategies occur when individuals must do something before emotion response tendencies are finished activating while response-focused tendencies include things individuals must do

after an emotion has already begun. Antecedent-focused strategies are focused on modifying future emotional responses (Gross, Richards, & John, 2006). An example is that a person who hears an acquaintance make an obnoxious comment might reassess the comment, choose to view it as a sign of insecurity, and then feel pity for that acquaintance rather than feeling anger (Gross, Richards, & John, 2006). An example of a response-focused strategy would be hearing that same obnoxious comment from an acquaintance and attempting to look unfazed by the comment even if that person was actually feeling deep anger. Based on antecedent- and response-focused strategies, scholars have focused mainly on two strategies for regulating emotions.

Two of the predominant strategies for internally managing emotions that are currently studied include cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Cognitive reappraisal includes cognitively altering the interpretation of emotional events during appraisal in order to affect physiological, behavioral, and experiential reactions to the events (Bebko et al., 2011). In other words, when an individual knows that he or she is about to experience an unwanted emotion, he or she attempts to reframe the situation so as to bring about a different and more welcomed emotion. Expressive suppression is another common strategy for regulating emotions. This emotion regulation strategy is focused on altering behavior and involves inhibiting one's expression or outward display of emotion (Gross, 2001). Although these are the most common emotion regulation strategies being infused into research, they do not predict how individuals will communicate their regulated emotions to others. Additionally, it is possible that these are not the only emotion regulating tactics that children employ in managing difficult emotions. Furthermore, Gross and John (2003) posited that emotion regulation processes

may sometimes be conscious, but are mostly automatic with little conscious deliberation or awareness behind the strategies. Thus, young adult children may not even be consciously processing or considering the strategies they use to manage divorce-related emotions if those strategies are rather engrained and automatic.

Although regulation strategies may be more automatic, they consist of many inter-working parts. Gratz and Roemer (2004) recognized several facets of emotion regulation including accepting emotions, understanding and being aware of emotions, controlling one's impulsive tendencies and behaving in line with desired goals during negative emotional times, and using appropriate emotion regulation strategies flexibly when altering emotional responses to meet goals and demands. These researchers claimed that the absence of one or all of these regulation abilities would constitute emotion dysregulation or the presence of emotion regulation difficulties (Gratz & Roemer, 2004). In this vein, scholars have identified six dimensions on which individuals may have trouble regulating their emotions including lack of clarity of responses, lack of awareness of responses, difficulty controlling impulses to negative emotions, nonacceptance of responses, trouble enacting goal-directed behaviors with negative emotion, and limited access to strategies for regulating emotions effectively (Gratz & Roemer, 2004). Although emotion regulation may function as one aspect of managing emotions, it is only one part of the experience. Examining emotion management as opposed to regulation allows for a better look into the ways that young adult children of divorce communicate to manage their emotions rather than solely assessing how they internally regulate and think about their emotions. This leads to the limitations facing the current understanding of emotion regulation and coping processes.

Limitations in emotion regulation. In noting the limitations of current methods for studying coping styles, Lazarus (2006) postulated that some people may have consistent preferences for certain coping strategies, but that “the theoretical foundations of what is currently studied seem to me to be too limited and do not allow us to say much about the way these individuals actually cope” and “to examine these styles interactively with the situational context” (p. 27). Thus, it would seem that current theory and research is lacking in understanding how individuals select coping methods based on specific situational or environmental contexts, such as divorce. Because divorce provides an important context that comes with a mix of emotional reactions, it would be fruitful to theoretically supplement current coping literature with more information on the ways that children process their emotions related to the divorce, and attempt to identify themes of coping styles that they often use. Thus, it is necessary to review previous findings on the ways in which divorce impacts young adult children’s emotions prior to developing a generalizable instrument for their emotion management strategies.

Scholars have called for an increase in studies that examine how and when individuals regulate emotions in their daily lives (Gross, Richards, & John, 2006). There are both short- and long-term stresses following a divorce that increase a child’s risk for emotional and interpersonal problems while adjustment may happen quickly with fewer negative outcomes or more slowly with consequences that impact adulthood, depending on the moderating factors (Amato, 2000; Amato, 2010). Young adult children may have developed their own ways to manage and communicate their emotions following a divorce. Similarly Metts et al. (2013) looked at divorce and stepfamilies, but additional research is needed to extend their study to focus specifically on children of divorce, as all

of their participants were members of stepfamilies speaking retrospectively about their parents' divorce. Thus, the first research question offered in the present dissertation study is a partial replication of their study. Additionally, Lazarus (2006) claimed that current measurements of coping do not include relational meanings that individuals construct when in an emotional encounter, which he suggested is they key factor in coping and its outcomes of divorce. Hence, the research question guiding Study 1 was used to inquire about the communicative management of emotions in the specific context of parental divorce.

RQ1: What are the strategies young adult children of divorce use to communicatively manage their emotions about the divorce?

CHAPTER THREE: STUDY ONE METHOD

Current assessments for measuring emotion regulation skills provide insight into children's handling of emotion-eliciting events, but may not fully encapsulate their communicative approaches to doing so. Studies 1 and 2 in the present study took an exploratory sequential mixed methods approach to help increase understanding of children's management strategies. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), an exploratory sequential design utilizes qualitative data to build a quantitative study in order to generalize qualitative findings. As such, Study 1 used participants' qualitative reports to create categories that would lead to the creation of a new measure in Study 2 in order to better make sense of and generalize the first study's findings. Additionally, Creswell (2003) asserted that this particular mixed methods design is best for investigating a phenomenon (e.g., divorce or parent-child interactions), which in the present study involves the ways in which young adults communicatively manage their divorce-related emotions.

There are four steps in this design. These include 1) collecting and analyzing qualitative data (i.e., answers to the open-ended questions), 2) developing a measure, 3) collecting then analyzing quantitative data based on the original qualitative findings, and 4) identifying the ways that the findings can be generalized to a larger population (i.e., young adult children of divorce) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Thus, this project began with the collection and analysis of qualitative responses in Study 1, followed by

instrument development based on those responses in Study 2, the implementation of that instrument in the quantitative second study, and discussing the results in terms of generalizability and application. The initial step was completed in Study 1 and the remaining three steps were completed in Study 2 of the present project.

Participants

After receiving Institutional Review Board approval (see Appendix A for IRB materials for Study 1 including the research narrative, informed consent, and study announcements), young adult participants were recruited from undergraduate and graduate classes at the University of Denver and through snowball sampling via Facebook and email. The researcher asked participants to identify others who fit the study criteria and asked them to pass on the study announcement in order to increase sample size. Participants were recruited from the University of Denver as well as from the researcher's own social network in an effort to expand the range of experiences in the sample of young adults from divorced families.

Participants for this study included young adults ($N = 75$) ranging in age from 18 to 30 years old ($M = 24.32$, $SD = 3.47$). This included 17 males and 58 females. The majority of participants identified as Caucasian/Non-Hispanic ($n = 55$, 41%), while other ethnicities included Hispanic/Latino ($n = 10$, 7.5%), Asian/Asian-American ($n = 3$, 2.2%), Black/Non-Hispanic ($n = 2$, 1.5%), and "Other" ($n = 4$, 3%). Participants reported their parents being divorced for an average of 13.6 years ($SD = 8.04$) with the earliest divorce being less than a year and the longest divorce having occurred 27 years ago. Parents were married an average of 14.41 years ($SD = 7.51$) before divorcing and this time ranged from less than a year to 31 years. As is the norm in Western culture (Metts et

al., 2013), many participants reported continuing to reside with their biological or adoptive mother ($n = 29$, 21.6%) or their mother and stepfather ($n = 10$, 7.5%) after the divorce. The remainder of the participants split time evenly between parents' households ($n = 11$, 5.2%), lived with their biological or adoptive father ($n = 7$, 5.2%), or resided with their father and stepmother ($n = 2$, 1.5%). A handful of participants reported living away from their parents or with someone else after the divorce ($n = 16$, 11.9%).

Procedures

For this study, participants completed an online questionnaire using Qualtrics software. Before completing the survey, participants first read through the online informed consent page, which explained the purpose of the current study, that their participation was completely voluntary, and that their responses would remain confidential. They then indicated that they gave consent in order to complete the remainder of the survey. If they indicated that they did not agree with the consent, they were automatically closed out of the survey. The Study 1 questionnaire took approximately 15-30 minutes for them to complete (see Appendix C).

The questionnaire contained several prompts requiring open-ended responses. In Metts et al.'s (2013) study on emotions and stepfamilies, the researchers interviewed participants about different events in their stepfamily formation and probed for emotions as well as how those emotions were either concealed or revealed. Similarly, the research question guiding Study 1 sought to ask about emotions that young adult children face regarding their parents' divorce, but more specifically, aimed to understand how they communicatively manage those emotions with others. Scholars have previously asked participants to recall interactions between themselves and others and then elaborate on

those instances using open-ended responses (e.g., Leary, Springer, Negel, Ansell, & Evans, 1998; Vangelisti, Young, Carpenter-Theune, & Alexander, 2005). For this study, participants were asked to recall three interaction sequences that occurred between themselves and their mother, themselves and their father, and themselves and someone other than their mother or father (i.e., grandparent, friend, or roommate). Each sequence included three parts or segments.

First segment. The first part of the sequence involved the description of the episode. Specifically, participants were asked to recall and describe an interaction in which something about the divorce came up in conversation, including who was involved, where they were, what was said, and why. Participants were asked to explain in as much detail as possible what their mother/father/other said and/or did during the interaction. In order to prompt participants to think of a wide-range of possible interactions, examples were provided, including “post-divorce finances, parenting, communication between the ex-spouses, or emotions about the divorce itself.”

Second segment. The second part of the sequence included participants’ feelings about the interaction. Participants were asked to include a statement that best described how they were feeling and what emotions they were experiencing during that interaction. Although not the focus of the present study, knowing the emotions young adults are experiencing when examining their communicative management strategies shed light on whether their emotions were predominantly negative (e.g., anger or fear) or positive (e.g., relief or happiness). Knowing young adults’ emotions was useful in investigating their emotion management strategies and their emotional beginning points when engaging those strategies.

Third segment. In the third portion of the sequence, in order to gain insight into young adults' strategies for emotion management about their parents' divorce, participants were asked to describe how they communicated their emotions during the interaction. Specifically, the prompt read:

I am interested in the ways that you *communicated your emotions* during the interaction. By 'communicated your emotions' I am concerned with the ways in which you *expressed how you felt to the person with whom you were interacting*. There are different ways in which we find ourselves communicating our emotions. For example, if your father says something about his relationship with your mother that makes you feel really angry, you may choose to communicate verbally (e.g., telling your father you are angry or upset or instead telling him that you do not wish to talk about your mother anymore) nonverbally by expressing your feelings (e.g., frowning, crying, leaving the room), or choosing not to let him know what you are feeling at all (e.g., hiding your emotions by acting like everything is alright). These are just a few examples of ways in which someone might communicate their emotions.

Participants recalled the three separate interactions with their mother, father, and the individual other than their mother or father on three separate pages of the survey. In addition to providing instructions for the portions of the sequence on each of the three pages, the researcher provided an example of a three-part sequence. The example sequence for mothers included the following:

1. My mother and I were having a conversation over dinner at her house. She told me how my father never helped out with chores when they were married and how

she had to do everything herself. She had just finished vacuuming before we sat down to eat.

2. I felt frustrated that my mother would speak negatively about my father to me.

3. I nodded my head but did not tell my mother how I felt, hoping she would change the subject.

The participants finished the survey by completing demographic items, including questions about their age, ethnicity, and family information such as length of time since divorce and how often they talk to their parents each week. Participants were also asked to provide their email address so that the researcher could solicit their participation for Study 2, which included the newly developed measure based on Study 1.

Data Analysis

Qualitative coding. The basis for qualitative coding is described first followed by the application of that coding process to Study 1. Participant open-ended responses were analyzed by coding for themes using inductive analysis and a coding process developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), this coding process begins with *open coding* where the responses are examined line by line to pull out participants' actions, then *axial coding* wherein connections are drawn between newly created categories and subcategories, which are further defined during *selective coding*. In selective coding, the researcher chooses a core category which encompasses the open and axial coding but provides one overarching label for that category. For this study, open coding included reading the data and recording summaries of what emerged while also including participants' direct quotes. Axial coding involved locating and recording the relationships between those summaries. Selective coding then included

determining the one core label that defined that summary and relationship then coding the data using only those categories.

The coding is now explained in more detail. According to scholars Joffe and Yardley (2004), coding involves identifying patterns in data and separating that data to allow for more detail and clarity. Coding, then, is detailed and systematic as categories need to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Stemler (2001) claimed that

mutually exclusive categories exist when no unit falls between two data points, and each unit is represented by only one data point. The requirement of exhaustive categories is met when the data language represents all recording units without exception (p. 4).

Recording units, in this sense, refer to the big picture ideas that arise in qualitative responses (e.g., the communicative strategies in this case). The unit of analysis for coding was participants' coping strategies.

In order to combat unitization, or the difficulty facing multiple individuals subjectively coding texts (Krippendorff, 1995), the unitizing strategy for this study followed the style of Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, and Pedersen (2013) wherein coders focused on meaning units as opposed to a certain length or block of text. Coding, then, included highlighting any amount of text regardless of length that indicated a strategy for communicatively managing emotions. This could include a few words or a few sentences. Additionally, coding followed the pattern of Vangelisti et al. (2005) in searching for the predominant response when participants listed more than one. This was often the first response listed or the response in which the participant was most descriptive in explaining his or her communicative management of the emotion. These steps are now explained in more detail in specific relation to this study.

Qualitative coding for this study. In order to analyze the data that addressed RQ1, which sought to determine the relationship between parents' divorce disclosures and young adults' strategies for communicatively managing emotions about the divorce, the researcher investigated participants' qualitative reports of their communicative strategies in order to create categories for these strategies within the context of parents' divorce. The qualitative reports were copied onto a Microsoft Excel document with each participant report in a separate row and first assessed by reading through the responses several times in order to have a general understanding of the content. A graduate student from the University of Denver was enlisted to assist the researcher with coding. The research assistant had previous experience with coding qualitative data.

The researcher and assistant then separately read through the entire response set and individually came up with categories representing those responses using both deductive and inductive coding. The research assistant was not knowledgeable about emotion management strategies and inductively coded the responses. In other words, the assistant looked for new categories to arise from the data because this coding would not be based on previous findings regarding emotional reappraisal and suppression. The researcher coded the responses more deductively because of her knowledge of emotion regulation strategies in past research but still looked for newness in the data. If the researcher had found that the categories of reappraisal and suppression best fit the data, she would have used those categories as a guide. Thus, it was a combination of deductive and inductive coding depending on the fit.

Coding differences between the research assistant and researcher were addressed after the initial reading of the responses. While differences were minimal, they discussed

labeling differences and better specified subcategories through comparing notes on their independent coding efforts. This was achieved through investigator triangulation in which “the fact that any one team member is kept more or less ‘honest’ by other team members adds to the probability that findings will be found to be credible” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 307). Investigator triangulation included utilizing multiple coders to keep one another in check so that both members of the research team were working together in a way that would ensure credibility of their findings. Accordingly, the researcher and coding assistant made sure to check in with each other, confirming their coding schemes, and coming to agreement with one another throughout the process. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also recommended keeping an audit trail or “a residue of records stemming from the inquiry” (p. 319), so the researcher and assistant maintained detailed records of how they arrived at their decisions and labeling in case these notes needed to be referred to at a later point for clarification of the process.

After the researcher and assistant compared categories from the first reading of the whole response set, they resolved small differences in their labeling to create one list of management strategies using investigator triangulation. Thus, open codes included such phrases as “told the person he/she did not want to talk”, “not engaging but showing he/she is listening”, and “changed the subject.” Axial codes included “trying to avoid the conversation politely” and “directly attempting to end the conversation.” Next, they read through and coded the entire response set once again and compared categories once more to be sure no new categories emerged when using the same coding scheme, as recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1998). During this time, the researcher and assistant reassessed the open and axial coding. The final selective code for the example

used here was “avoidance.” The researcher and graduate assistant checked to be sure that all categories for the response set were mutually exclusive and that the categories were exhaustive. Lastly, the researcher established reliability of the coding by enlisting the help of two additional graduate student research assistants who had not had any experience with the data thus far. They read through all of the responses and assessed the reliability of their coding with the established codes using Cohen’s kappa. Stemler (2001) called this inter-coder reliability wherein the same coding scheme should arise when responses are coded by different people. Calculations of Cohen’s Kappa yielded reliability to be .72 ($\kappa = .72$) for mother, father, and other ratings, which represents a very substantial agreement (Viera & Garrett, 2003). In the last step, the researcher and original research assistant met to agree on the final selective codes and to be sure that each participant response received only one code since only the primary or dominant management strategy was being coded.

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY ONE RESULTS

The first research question asked what strategies young adult children of divorce use to communicatively manage their emotions about their parents' divorce. Through the coding process, five categories emerged including avoidance, other-centered communication, verbal expression, nonverbal expression, and no response during the interaction. *Avoidance* referred to communicating in order to withdraw from the conversation. This was accomplished through both direct (i.e., saying they did not wish to talk about something or changing the subject) and indirect means (i.e., minimally participating in the conversation in an effort to not take part in it). The literature on topic avoidance coincides with the category of *avoidance* regarding discussions about parents' divorce in this study. For example, Guerrero and Afifi (1995b) identified four reasons that topic avoidance arises in parent-child relationships including (1) self-protection to avoid vulnerability, criticism, judgment, or feeling embarrassed, (2) protection of the relationship to avoid relationship damage, conflict, or partner anger, (3) fear of unresponsiveness of partner for concern that the other person might not know how to handle the conversation, think the issue is not worth discussing, or will be unresponsive, and finally (4) social inappropriateness wherein the topic may not be acceptable for discussion.

Young adults may wish to avoid divorce-related conversations to protect themselves and the parent-child relationship or out of fear of the conversation itself.

Guerrero and Afifi (1995a) found that self-protection is the most common predictor of topic avoidance within a family. Hence, young adult children may divert focus away from sensitive conversations in order to shield themselves from possible repercussions with parents. Afifi and Afifi (2009) noted that adolescent children sometimes report feeling sensitive about their parents' relationship and that they may engage in high levels of passive avoidance of discussions involving their parents' relationship. Ultimately children show more avoidance of conversations about their parents' relationship when those parents are divorced (Afifi & Afifi, 2009). Hence, avoidance is a common strategy for managing emotions during discussions about parents' divorce.

Other-Centered Communication included communication that focused on the other person involved in the conversation rather than the young adult. This communication was aimed at increasing the mutual understanding between the young adult child and the other person involved in the conversation. This could include communicating reassurance or support to the other, giving advice, and asking questions or gathering information. Supportive communication entails both "verbal and nonverbal behavior produced with the intention of providing assistance to others perceived as needing that aid" (Burlison & MacGeorge, 2002, p. 374). During other-centered communication, then, young adults attempt to focus on and provide support to the parent or close other involved in the conversation when they perceive that the person is in need of aid. Messages that are more emotionally supportive include certain features such as acknowledging the perspectives or feelings of the recipient, being highly person-centered, and encouraging the recipient to further elaborate on feelings so as to make sense of them within that particular context (Burlison, 1994). This notion concurs with the subcategory

coding for this category because young adults attempted to focus on the other by asking questions, communicating reassurance, and providing advice in order to provide clarity and understanding.

Verbal Expression referred to the expression of emotions or thoughts through the use of words. This included directly expressing the emotion or thought verbally as well as through yelling, cursing, or using name-calling. The voice provides a number of means for expression as individuals can express their feelings based on changes in how fast they speak, how loudly they speak, how long they speak, and the tone they use (Planalp, 1999). Verbal expression takes advantage of a host of different vocal attributes in order to communicate feelings to another person. For example, Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, and O'Connor (1987) found that when individuals verbalize their feelings of fear or nervousness, their voices often tremble or shake and they yell or scream. When they feel anger, people often react verbally, employing a ferocious and loud voice or attacking the person who caused the anger (Shaver et al., 1987). Thus, verbal expression utilizes words and the delivery of those words as a means to express and manage emotions.

Nonverbal Expression included expressing the emotion through means other than words. This was accomplished for young adults via crying, facial expressions, body language, or movements. Nonverbal means of expressing emotions are more natural and primitive than verbal expression when communicating feelings (Stone, Markham, & Wilhelm, 2013). Rather than use words, many people communicate their emotions primarily through nonverbals. In fact, scholars have posited that individuals express feelings nonverbally because they often find it difficult to express emotions using words and also because words typically come secondary to nonverbal expressions (Stone et al.,

2013). Nonverbal expression of emotions can take many forms but are often easily interpreted by receivers. For example, individuals sometimes communicate feelings of anger nonverbally by slamming doors or walking away and communicate joy nonverbally by becoming bouncy, energetic, or active (Shaver et al., 1987). Thus, nonverbal expression is another means of communicatively managing emotions.

Finally, *No Response* referred to saying or doing nothing during the conversation. Participants who reported this as their predominant emotion management strategy often reported simply sitting and listening without communicating anything in return. Shaver et al. (1987) reported that people experiencing sadness, for instance, often become listless and inactive, withdrawing from social contact and talking very little. Moreover, a “negative outlook, and the conviction that the situation is hopeless, are reflected in the sad person’s tendency to give up – to withhold futile efforts to improve circumstances” (Shaver et al., 1987, p. 1077). Becoming unresponsive during conversations is a means of managing one’s difficult emotions. Corroborating this idea, therapists have found that disengagement from emotional occurrences during counseling makes emotional processing more difficult while inhibiting a patient’s emotional arousal (Stringer, Levitt, Berman, & Mathews, 2010). Thus, disengaging from the conversation through silence is an avenue that individuals may choose to manage their feelings internally on their own.

Table 1 presents the five categories and ten subcategories, along with exemplars and frequencies of the main categories of emotion management strategies.

Table 1

Qualitative Coding Scheme with Categories, Subcategories, Exemplars, and Frequencies

Category	Subcategory	Examples
1. Avoidance (n = 44, 20.2%)	1A- Acknowledged the conversation but without taking part in it (indirect avoidance)	“I just nodded my head and said ‘yeah’ hoping she wouldn't say anything else.” “I would just look at her and say ‘oh’, or something of the sort.”
	1B- Acknowledged the conversation but explicitly said they didn't want to talk about it or they changed the subject (direct avoidance)	“I told her I didn't want to discuss this in public and that it didn't matter anymore since the divorce was over.”
2. Other-Centered Communication (n = 47, 21.6%)	2A- Communicated reassurance or support to the other person	“I would tell my mom that I agreed with her and that I did not understand why dad acted the way he did. I always listened to her complaining and let her know that I understood.”
	2B- Gave advice to the other person	“I told my mom that she needed to tell my dad she was dating someone, because he would find out eventually and it would be better to hear it from her. I told her he was probably not going to be happy about the news, but that I felt it best to be honest and forthcoming if she wanted to have a neutral relationship.”
	2C- Asked questions or gathered information from the other person	“I don't think I said much regarding my emotions other than, wow really? why didn't you change the locks? how long did he do that?”

Table 1 (Continued)

<p>3. Verbal Expression (<i>n</i> = 64, 29.4%)</p>	<p>3A- Directly expressed the emotion or thought verbally</p>	<p>“I ... ended up snapping at my mom a few hours later telling her the story bothered me. She apologized and said she didn't realize it would affect me.” “I told him I was happy that he and mom were still friends.”</p>	
	<p>3B- Yelled, cursed, or used name calling</p>	<p>“As I said previously, I would cry or yell, and if I cried it involved yelling as well. I am sure sometimes I said whatever my mom said back to her, but directed at her (Well, you aren't the best mom in the world or you're a son of a bitch etc.). Then I usually stormed off to a friends or to my room.”</p>	
<p>47</p>	<p>4. Nonverbal Expression (<i>n</i> = 37, 17%)</p>	<p>4A- Expressed the emotion nonverbally by crying</p>	<p>“I didn't yell at my father I just went into my room and cried with my little brother.”</p>
		<p>4B- Expressed the emotion nonverbally through facial expressions</p>	<p>“I was verbally quiet and I felt sad and made it known with my face expressions.”</p>
		<p>4C- Expressed the emotion nonverbally by body language/movement</p>	<p>“I ... burst into angry tears, and stormed away to my room.”</p>
	<p>5. No Response (<i>n</i> = 26, 11.9%)</p>		<p>“I did not say anything verbally. Nonverbally I felt anger and sadness.” “I never show emotions to my dad regarding anything.”</p>

CHAPTER FIVE: STUDY ONE DISCUSSION

Study 1 focused on identifying the communicative strategies that young adult children use when managing emotions related to conversations about their parents' divorce. Findings extend previous work on emotion regulation strategies by identifying the ways in which young adults communicatively manage their emotions in interactions specifically related to their parents' divorce. Andersen and Guerrero (1998) posited that the primary precursor to the majority of individuals' emotional experiences is interpersonal interaction. When considering interactions surrounding communication about parents' divorce, it stands to reason that young adult children might feel strong emotions and consequently, have to find ways to manage those emotions while in the midst of sharing a communicative interaction with a parent, family member, or friend. Hence, emotion management must be examined more closely.

While scholars have identified ways in which individuals internally work to manage difficult emotions, there is less research on how individuals actually communicate those processed emotions to others. Cognitive reappraisal (i.e., reframing an emotional situation) and expressive suppression (i.e., stifling emotional expression) are often cited as the most common forms of emotion regulation strategies, however, they do not account for specific contexts or for outward management of emotions. Corroborating the need to examine this further, Lazarus (2006) posited that current theoretical foundations are too limited in helping researchers understand how individuals

cope with their emotions and that emotion regulation must be examined within situational contexts. According to Planalp (1999), action tendencies during emotional experiences may be

manifested in communicative behaviors such as variations in eye gaze (toward or away), interpersonal distance (close or far), voice volume (loud or soft), amount of talk (loquacious or reticent), and any number of others. Such communicative behaviors are multifunctional” (p. 29).

In other words, individuals can communicate their emotions on a number of different levels and their communicative actions must be interpreted within that specific context. Hence, Study 1 extended emotion regulation research into communicative emotion management in the specific context of young adults’ divorce-related conversations.

Because young adult children are situated in a time in life wherein they are encountering new relationships, jobs, and living situations, they consistently face emotion-eliciting situations that must be managed. While they have begun independent lives away from their parents, many young adults still face the difficult challenge of navigating holidays, birthdays, weddings, and family events with divorced parents. Thus, while they may not be living under the same roof as their parents, the divorce can still impact them in numerous ways. This study sought to uncover the ways in which these young adults communicated in an effort to manage their divorce-related emotions. Five management categories emerged.

Results from the qualitative first study produced five categories of communicative responses including avoidance, other-centered communication, verbal expression, nonverbal expression, and no communicated response in the interaction. While Planalp

(1998) differentiated between face and body as well as voice and verbal cues, qualitative reports from this study were coded into either verbal or nonverbal expression for these categories instead of four categories of face, body, vocal, and verbal cues. In coding, the researcher and assistants considered the origin of the participants' expressions and determined if they were either verbal or nonverbal. For instance, while body and face cues may include different forms of expression, the root of both is nonverbal communication of one's emotions. Guerrero, Anderson, and Trost (1998) noted that the expression of emotions

encompasses actions that occur in private (e.g., grimacing and swearing when hitting your hand with a hammer), spontaneous emotional expressions (e.g., automatically smiling back at someone), and strategic communication (e.g., telling someone you love them before criticizing them) (p. 9).

Thus, there is a myriad of ways in which young adults can communicate, express, and manage their emotions. This study was particularly focused on the communicative management of emotions during discussions about parents' divorce.

Avoidance

Coding revealed that the category of *Avoidance* included both direct and indirect avoidance wherein the young adult communicates in order to withdraw from the conversation. Indirect avoidance referred to acknowledging the conversation about the parents' divorce taking place but without actively taking part in the interaction. For example, one participant responded that, "I usually just listen and tell her I am fine and not bothered so she will move on." In this case, the young adult inserted an ambiguous response in an effort to minimally contribute to the conversation without actually sharing

anything meaningful. Indirect avoidance entailed communicating that the young adult was listening and present without engaging in the conversation or expressing feelings. Direct avoidance included participants acknowledging the conversation at hand but saying that they did not want to talk about the divorce-related issue or attempting to change the subject. For instance, one response was “I told her I didn't want to discuss this in public” while another response included “I tried to diffuse the situation by saying he works hard and is busy, and then tried to change the subject.” This category involved a more explicit attempt to move past the conversation and included 20.2% of participant responses.

Individuals may avoid an emotional conversation regarding their parents’ divorce for numerous reasons. Adolescents from divorced families are more likely to avoid discussions about their parents’ relationship than their counterparts in still married families (Afifi & Afifi, 2009). This would make sense considering how disruptive a divorce can become to family members. As Davies and Cummings (1994) noted, divorce often limits the availability of one parent, leads to challenging life changes, and typically leads to economic adversities. If young adult children have already endured these difficult family changes, they may not wish to continue getting involved in conversations that bring up those memories or remind them of their family troubles. Moreover, children often blame themselves for problems in their parents’ marriage (Grych & Fincham, 1993). Some children may still be questioning their role in the divorce and not want to add anything to a discussion on it. Thus, children may be more likely to shy away from conversations about their parents’ relationship once they are divorced.

Protection could be one of the underlying motives behind avoidance. Adolescents avoid discussions about their parents' relationship for fear of harmful consequences to their family members, parent, their relationship with the parent, or for themselves (Afifi, Caughlin, & Afifi, 2007). Discussing the divorce could potentially fracture a parent-child relationship. If children's emotional security is diminished leading up to or following a divorce, their confidence that one or both parents will remain physically and psychologically available to them may fade (Davies & Cummings, 1994). Considering that children may already feel a threat to their relationship with their parents following a divorce, it stands to reason that they may think speaking their mind or talking about such a sensitive topic could potentially damage that relationship. Hence, young adults may turn to either direct or indirect forms of avoidance in order to avoid contributing to the discussion.

Contributing to the conversation may also lead a young adult child to feel he or she is taking sides in the divorce, supporting one parent over the other. Children are more likely to feel caught between parents when there is less cooperative communication and more hostility or discord between parents (Buchanan et al., 1991). Additionally, if children feel their opinion stands in contrast to a parent's view, they may decide to avoid the subject so as not to get in trouble with their parent or anger their parent through disagreeing. Indirect avoidance, then, would allow a child to be a part of the conversation without voicing any opinions or feelings while direct avoidance would function to remove them from the conversation entirely. As Davies and Cummings (1994, 1998) advanced in their emotional security hypothesis, the main goal motivating children's

reactions is attempting to preserve their own emotional security. Avoidance may be the safest option for some young adults who find themselves in unwanted divorce-related conversations. Another way in which young adults might manage their emotions is by focusing in on the other person involved in the discussion.

Other-Centered Communication

The second category *Other-Centered Communication* included young adults using communication that focused on the other person involved in the conversation rather than themselves. This could include attempting to reassure or support the other person in the conversation (e.g., “I reassured my Dad that he always made the right decision, and by putting us first he was the best father a kid could ask for”) or giving advice (e.g., “I tried to comfort my sister the most I could, advising her that she should talk to my dad about how she felt and that she should not just cut my dad out of the picture”). This category also included the young adult children asking questions or working to gather information from the other person involved. For example, one participant wrote about a conversation with the mother saying, “I asked a lot of questions that were never really answered. I wanted to know why he hadn't paid money and why we needed the money and why I was the one that had to talk to him.” Perhaps focusing on the other person provides a degree of self-soothing for a young adult. This category included 21.6% of participant responses.

Support can involve a great deal of effort from the sender. According to the dual-process theory of supportive communication, recipients must be able and motivated to receive and process supportive messages while these messages have the strongest effect when recipients analyze the content of the message (Bodie & Burleson, 2008). Thus,

young adult children may be highly focused on crafting and delivering a highly supportive message rather than expending that energy to discuss their own feelings. According to Burleson (2009), the outcomes of supportive messages can be measured by the recipient's degree of cognitive appraisals, emotions, coping or behavioral changes. Hence, the ultimate goal of social support is to alter the recipient's outlook, feelings, or course of action. Changes within a family often bring about the need for greater amounts of support between family members.

Support expectations may run high in families following the divorce of parents. Afifi, Schrodt, and McManus (2009) claimed that one reason parents disclose about their divorce to their children is for social support while McManus and Nussbaum (2011) found that parents expected significantly more social support from their children than from friends or other family members. Possibly because children are already privy to many of the divorce happenings within a family, they are often looked to in order to provide a listening ear and for support. McManus and Nussbaum (2011) posited that young adult children expected to exchange social support in the form of nurturant, informational, and tangible support with their parents regarding stress from the divorce. According to Trees (2000), nurturant support includes expressions of love or concern while informational support includes problem-solving, taking each other's perspectives, or advising. Tangible support includes offering assistance in completing daily tasks (Cutrona & Suhr, 1994). Thus, offering support and other-centered attention within a family may serve dual purposes: to fulfill familial expectations and needs as well as to navigate emotions through providing that support to another.

Focusing on another may be one form of communicatively managing emotions. Individuals utilize emotion regulation for themselves as well as for others by toning down or amplifying their feelings or by making the feelings more positive or negative as they process through them (Planalp, 1999). Thus, people are often aware of how others view their emotion expression processes. Some young adults may not want their parents or friends to see how they are feeling. For example, if the young adult felt relief while the other person felt distressed, he or she may not want to express those feelings of relief at that time. Or, the young adult may not wish to delve into his or her feelings of anxiety when the other person is clearly under stress already. Examples such as these may highlight one reason that children would redirect the conversation back on the other person rather than talk about their own emotions. Rather than stemming from a place of avoidance, such reactions instead are based in the idea of focusing more on the other person as opposed to not wanting to focus on the topic.

Some young adults may choose to view their feelings as a secondary concern in divorce-related conversations rather than the primary one. Planalp (1999) argued that when the topic of conversation is important, individuals often feel their emotions do not deserve attention or care until later. Participants who reported communicating a connection with the other person rather than expressing their emotions to that person may have felt their emotions could come second in that instance. They may have prioritized clarifying the situation and reassuring the other individual over their making their thoughts and feelings known. When individuals possess high concern for others and low self-concern, the obliging strategy is often used in conflict resolution wherein the

individual may sacrifice his or her own interests for the sake of satisfying the other (Rahim, 1983). While this was a common emotion management strategy that young adult participants in this study reported using, the cost to their mental or emotional well-being of focusing more on another is not yet known. Another reason that young adults may focus more on the other person in such discussions is because of the relationship they share with that person.

Focusing on the other person in a divorce-related conversation could be correlated with relational closeness in the relationship, especially in the parent-child relationship. Buchanan et al. (1991) noted that adolescent children who shared close relationships with their parents reported fewer feelings of being caught between parents, speculating that parents in these closer relationships might be more aware of communicating in ways that place their children in a position to feel caught and more aware of their children's feelings. Young adult children, then, may attempt to tighten the closeness between themselves and their parents during divorce-related discussions so that parents will work harder to understand their children and not place them in the middle. On the other hand, perhaps the young adults who reported more other-focused responses already shared a close relationship with their parent and therefore, felt it was a natural next step to comfort or console the parent because of their closeness. While some young adults are other-centered in their communication, other individuals focus on managing their own feelings by expressing emotions directly through verbal expression.

Verbal Expression

The third category identified was *Verbal Expression*. This included the expression of emotions or thoughts through the use of words. This included participants directly expressing their thoughts or feelings through words, yelling, cursing, or using name-calling. For instance, participants claimed, “I laughed in shock and was disgusted and told her so”, “we talked frequently about how we were frustrated”, and “mostly I would shout and yell at him.” This category encompassed participant responses that indicated a direct expression of their emotions with the other person in the conversation and constituted the largest number of responses (29.4% of responses).

Vocalizing emotions may serve as the most direct way to communicate one’s feelings. Kappas, Hess, and Sherer (1991) noted that while facial expressions have been studied extensively, vocal cues (e.g., yelling, screaming, or voice changes in tone or speed) have not been so easily understood, claiming that scholars should begin investigating how such cues are interpreted during communicative interactions. Once again, this points to the importance of studying emotion communication within specific contexts such as divorce-related talks. Young adults can communicate their feelings verbally in numerous ways. For instance, Planalp (1998) claimed

the possibilities are limitless. We can summarize a feeling in a word (love, jealousy, loneliness). We can blurt out exclamations or expletives, or we can analyze the emotion-provoking situations for hours (p. 35).

Words and language allow individuals to be direct and provide the ability to clarify and expound where other forms of emotional expression may be more limiting.

Young adults can vocalize their feelings in a number of ways during divorce-related conversations. Emotions may be communicated verbally through voice volume, length of talk, speed of talk, and pitch of voice (Planalp, 1999). Hence, even the manner in which they voice their feelings can further communicate their emotions beyond the words they use. For instance, some young adult participants in this study raised their voices and yelled at the other person involved in the conversation to further express their anger or frustration. Pittam and Scherer (1993) found that vocal cues such as speed, loudness, and pitch could be associated with the arousing emotions of joy, anger, or fear when these three cues were heightened (i.e., speech was faster, louder, and higher pitched) and with arousal-dampening feelings of sadness when those three cues were lower (i.e., slower, softer, and lower pitched). Vocal expressions may be a direct way of sharing one's feelings because individuals are able to couple their words with their vocal cues to enhance or magnify their expressions to another.

Some young adult children reported managing their emotions through yelling or name-calling in the discussions about their parents' divorce. Anger may be attributed to goal impediment, or the feelings individuals experience when something interrupts their plans, usually arising from someone else's behavior (Canary, Spitzberg, & Semic, 1998). In the case of divorce, discussing the divorce may seem an impediment to a young adult's desire for calmness as these discussions may bring up feelings of pain or uncertainty. This may lead to feelings of anger, disappointment, or confusion. Shaver et al. (1987) found that common verbal responses to anger included verbal attacks such as yelling, using a loud voice, cursing, screaming, or using obscenities. Some young adults may

manage these feelings by becoming irate or taking out their difficult emotions on the other person in the conversation. Canary et al. (1998), however, noted “that Shaver et al. (1987) were more interested in the basic content of emotion prototypes than they were in the communicative management of any single emotion” (p. 204). While not focusing on any one particular emotion, the current study indeed points toward yelling and name-calling as potential strategies for young adults communicatively managing their difficult emotions. It is plausible that these forms of communication help individuals feel they are more effectively expressing their emotions because they are able to do so with emphasis while directing their strong feelings at someone. Instead of using their words or voice, other individuals choose to communicatively manage their emotions nonverbally.

Nonverbal Expression

The fourth category was *Nonverbal Expression* and included expressing the emotion through means other than words. This category accounted for 17% of the responses and referred to participants expressing their emotions through crying, facial expressions, or through their body language or movement. For example, one participant noted, “I cried with him. I didn't know what to say back so I sat and cried in silence and played with his hair.” Other responses included “I just stayed quiet and showed disapproval on my face”, “I also aggressively moved my arms when I walked to show I was upset”, and “I stormed away [*sic*], slammed my door, and pouted.” Specifically, this category referred to young adults communicating their emotions through expressions not involving words.

Nonverbal expressions are a common factor in emotional interactions. Planalp (1998) questioned whether emotions are *expressed* or *communicated* through facial expressions, or whether expressions of the face and body movements are merely natural reactions to emotions. This begs the question of intentionality as emotional reactions can be different than the communication of emotions. However, Planalp (1998) claimed that while emotions may be expressed as a natural response, they are indeed *communicated* whether this is done intentionally or not due to cultural norms of responding in the presence of others. Hence, when participants reported giving an angry facial expression in their divorce-related conversations, this could have been partly out of experiencing anger but also out of a desire to express that anger to the other individual. Cultural rules would dictate that one should not always express feelings of anger depending on the situation, and this is why people often turn to expressive suppression to alter their display of feelings. This idea helps corroborate the notion that nonverbal expressions are indeed a form of communicating emotional responses because individuals who wished to hide their feelings of anger from someone could stifle their angry expressions and smile instead. Nonverbally expressing anger through a scowl, eyes squinted, or body movement, then, is a choice that people make in choosing to enact or display the felt emotion to another.

Facial expressions are one of the most common ways people nonverbally manage or express their emotions. According to Planalp (1999) there is more research on the relationship between facial cues and emotion than on any other emotion cue, while most research has focused on specific facial configurations correlated with discrete emotions

and has become so detailed that exact muscle changes can be identified when distinguishing between feelings based on facial expression. In other words, people can communicate a great deal through their facial cues. Individuals communicate feelings such as joy by turning up their mouth or sadness by turning it down, express surprise by widening their eyes, or disgust by wrinkling their nose (Planalp, 1999).

Planalp (1999) claimed that body movements and gestures such as pacing, clenching fists, fidgeting, jumping up, or walking heavily all communicate emotions that can be easily recognized by viewers, yet scholars have examined these far less than vocal and facial cues. Planalp (1999) grouped activities such as going for a run, hanging up the phone, throwing things, or slamming doors under the umbrella of action cues, because she claimed that these actions were purposeful and done by choice. As stated previously, other nonverbal cues such as facial expressions or crying may be just as intentional and goal-directed as clenching fists or walking away. For this study, the researcher and coders identified similar actions such as storming out of the room as body movements under the category of nonverbal expression. Any bodily actions or movement were viewed as nonverbal communication.

Many participants in this study reported crying during the divorce-related conversations. According to Santiago-Menendez and Campbell (2013), crying is poorly understood in research as it represents a range of emotions, but it is most often associated with feelings of sadness. It makes sense that many young adults would report crying during discussions with their parents, friends, or other family members if the conversation was centered on something upsetting to them about the divorce. Moreover,

Hendriks and Vingerhoets (2006) found that observers identified individuals who were crying as less emotionally stable as well as less aggressive, while also reporting that as the observer, they felt sadder in the presence of people who were crying. While crying may represent one form of communicating emotions of sadness, anger, or despair to others, young adult children may also use crying as a potential strategic move during an interaction. Individuals are more likely to approach and emotionally support someone who is crying (Hendriks & Vingerhoets, 2006). Hence, young adults may cry in an effort to gather support from the other person in the conversation or to garner empathy from them, using crying as a tool to help manage their emotions through the help of another. While participants reported managing their emotions through avoidance, other-centered communication, as well as verbal and nonverbal expressions, others reported not responding during the interaction.

No Response

The fifth and final category was *No Response* in the interaction. This category referred to saying or doing nothing during the conversation. This category entailed 11.9% of participant responses and referred to a lack of any verbal or nonverbal response during the communication. For example, one participant wrote that “I didn't say much and I didn't even cry. I just went to my room and finished my homework. The next morning I went to school and carried on a normal day” while another claimed “I never answered her or acknowledged that she said anything whenever she told us that.” Planalp (1999) claimed that people are rarely unresponsive to their social environments, whether their responses are manifested overtly through expression or not. Because Afifi and Afifi

(2009) claimed that the topic of the parental relationship is typically sensitive for adolescents, one may think that children involved in conversations about the interparental relationship would be especially reactive. Based on this response, however, participants may have been fully suppressing their emotions in an effort to not communicate any feeling verbally or nonverbally. Thus, individuals reporting a lack of response did not necessarily lack emotion related to the divorce communication. Instead, they may have chosen to manage their feelings by completely suppressing any display or acknowledgement of emotion.

This category differed from the category of *Avoidance* in that individuals who attempted to avoid the conversation still acknowledged the speaker through some form of communication. Silence may communicate something very different than avoidance. For instance, silence could be interpreted as anger or fear as well as disapproval or a lack of care because the other person in the interaction has little to go on when a young adult is silent. Young adults who communicate avoidance, however, either indirectly or directly express their desire to end the conversation. The other party may or may not cease engaging in the divorce-related conversation. However, young adults who do not respond might lead others to feel as though they should continue speaking or instead feel hesitant to keep sharing. There are many reasons why young adults may choose not to respond through communication.

Some young adults choose to restrain their display of emotions. According to Andersen and Guerrero (1998), children are socialized to express their emotions through communication, while this may mean learning to inhibit emotions in addition to

expressing them. Young adult children may be more prone to repressing their emotions or constraining the display of their feelings than young children. For instance, young adults may try to seem less distressed by reducing their involvement and displays of emotion, having developed emotion inhibition skills as they aged into adolescence and learned about impression management (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998). In an effort to seem unfazed, some young adults may wish to act as though everything is all right, even if that is not how they feel internally.

It is important to keep in mind that young adult children may refrain from communicating their emotions as a safety mechanism or out of hesitation. As Planalp (1999) noted, the lack of emotional expression does not signify a lack of feelings. Some individuals are unsure how to express their emotions or may feel frozen at that moment in time. Additionally, the lack of response can still communicate something to the other individuals involved in the conversation. Perhaps silence lets others know the person is unhappy, disinterested, or accepting. Wills (1990) noted that if a parent responds to an adolescent with blaming, denying the problem, criticizing, or lecturing, that the adolescent will most likely take his or her next issue to someone else. If a friend, family member, or parent has previously reacted to a young adult's emotional expressions or conversations in any of these ways, then divorce-related discussions may be met with silence out of self-protection and hesitancy to receive another similar reaction. Previous socialization with the other individual involved in the conversation, then, may reveal another reason for the lack of a communicated response.

Conclusion

Young adult children can communicatively manage their emotions regarding their parents' divorce in a number of ways. In this study, findings indicated that young adults managed emotions through conversation avoidance, other-centered communication, verbal and nonverbal expression, and choosing not to respond during the interaction. Several practical and theoretical implications are worth noting as well as limitations and directions for future research.

Practical implications

Some practical implications regarding emotion management in the family arose in this study. It is helpful to understand how young adult children manage their emotions about their parents' divorce with their parents and with others in order to better prepare parents and practitioners to advise children and families on best communication practices following a divorce. While individuals cognitively regulate emotions internally as feelings rise to the surface (Gross, 2001; Gross & John, 2003; Lazarus, 1968, 1991b), actually communicating those emotions is a crucial step in managing feelings with others. However, there has previously been a gap in research examining how young adult children communicate their emotions with others in discussions revolving around their parents' divorce.

Communicating emotions can involve strategic planning or sudden outbursts as individuals work through their feelings in the presence of others. During interpersonal emotion regulation, individuals attempt to control how a social audience will react to their emotional response as they use different display rules to express feelings that are

socially acceptable (Parke, McDowell, Cladis, & Leidy, 2006). Hence, in the communicative management of emotions, young adult children manage their feelings based on their own needs as well as the needs they sense in the social situation at hand, indicating that young adults' reasons for choosing between verbal and nonverbal expression, other-centered communication, avoidance, and not responding are diverse. Findings from this study show that one young adult may feel the need to directly state his feelings to others via verbal expression (i.e., explaining his thoughts or voicing his feelings) while another may instead feel she needs to avoid the conversation (i.e., acknowledge that a conversation is taking place but she attempts to stay out of it). Perhaps the first young adult sensed he needed to gain more control in the discussion or alter the direction of the conversation by stating his thoughts while the other young adult felt that if she spoke up about her emotions, the other person in the conversation would become more angry or upset so she instead tried to avoid adding fuel to the fire. In addition to practical implications, several theoretical implications also arose.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this study lends credence to both Arnett's (2000) theory of emergent adulthood as well as Davies and Cummings' (1994) emotional security hypothesis. Arnett (2000) proposed that young adults are entering a time of unfamiliarity and uncertainty that can become overwhelming as they begin to navigate their independence from parents. As results from this study signal, young adults are still tightly connected to their parents as displayed in their emotional responses. Many young adults reported screaming and cursing during conversations about their parents' divorce. If they

were not still intertwined to some degree with their parents, they would most likely not be upset to such a degree during conversations about them. Arnett (2000) also noted that young adults, while trying to strike out on their own, are often still quite reliant on the security and reliability of their parents. Once parents divorce, children may find it more challenging to assess the security parents will continue to provide, altering the ways in which they communicate their feelings such as fear, anger, or disappointment. Additionally, the theory of emergent adulthood fits nicely with the other guiding theoretical framework for this study regarding emotional security.

Davies and Cummings' (1994) emotional security hypothesis is also supported through this research. According to these scholars, children's reactions to parents' conflict are based on the impact of that conflict on their emotional security and the degree to which their parents will be psychologically available to them in the future (Davies & Cummings, 1994). Young adults' communicative management of their emotions may stem from how secure they feel about their relationship with their parents. For instance, many young adults in this study reported focusing more on the other person during divorce-related discussions or else directly sharing their feelings through verbal expression. Children who feel more emotionally secure in their relationship with a parent may feel more at ease disclosing difficult emotions because they feel that the closeness they share means that the parent can be trusted and will try to help them work through it.

Increased emotional security may encourage young adult children to focus more on their parent by attempting to comfort the parent or ask deeper questions to better understand the parent's point of view. Perhaps children who felt decreased emotional

security, possibly due to years of interparental conflict leading up to divorce, were the ones more likely to avoid communicating their emotions or to not respond at all. If they felt emotional insecurity with their parents, it would stand to reason that those children would not feel comfortable making themselves more emotionally vulnerable by disclosing feelings of sadness or fear. Thus, communicative strategies for managing emotions may depend heavily on the relationships shared between family members. This leads to the limitations and directions for future research resulting from these findings.

Limitations and Future Directions

Both the limitations of this project and future directions are now reviewed. First, the majority of young adult participants for this study reported that they are Caucasian. While great attempts were made to recruit a host of different participants via snowball sampling, the results are limited in terms of speaking to any ethnic or racial differences that could exist in the communicative management of emotions. Some children may have been raised to express their feelings more readily than other children and much of that could be dictated by cultural differences. Next, the sample consisted of more than three times as many females as males, perhaps providing greater generalizability of findings for young adult females than young adult males. Obtaining a larger male participant sample could have given better insight into sex differences in emotion management. Readers should keep these limitations in consideration when interpreting the results.

This study also brought to light future points of consideration for researchers. Nearly 12% of participants reported living away from their parents or with someone else following the divorce. Children who still resided with a parent may have had a different

experience with divorce-related conversations than children who lived alone or with a friend, significant other, or family member when their parents divorced. It would be worthwhile to delve deeper into investigating the emotion management differences between children who still lived at home, children who lived alone, and children who lived with someone else (e.g., a relative, significant other, or a friend) at the time of their parents' divorce. Regardless of where they lived, young adults' emotions following a divorce often depend on family communication.

Because divorce communication often involves other family members, it is important to investigate how families communicate with one another about the divorce and how young adult children are involved in such emotion-eliciting discussions. The degree of impact that the parental relationship has on young adults' emotional functioning might hinge on family communication. For instance, Buchanan et al. (1991) found that while parents may rate high on their degree of conflict, their children are less likely to feel caught between them if the parents do not ask them to be messengers or ask about the other parent's home. Parents may experience higher amounts of discord but not lead their children to feel caught between them until they begin placing the children in the middle. Hence, it is important to investigate how and what parents communicate to their young adult children following a divorce and how their children manage what is relayed when their mental well-being is impacted. Thus, Study 2 was created to address this direction for further research.

The categories for young adults' communicative strategies for managing their divorce-related emotions were identified and established in Study 1. Study 2 then

employed exploratory factor analysis to apply those categories to the creation and validation of a new measure, which was implemented in a quantitative investigation of parents' divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being. Specifically, Study 2 begins with an examination of divorce disclosures, emotions, and mental well-being, followed by a detailed description of the creation and validation processes used in making the new measure, and the results of applying that measure to assess the possibility of moderation.

CHAPTER SIX: STUDY TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

Study 2: Examining Young Adults' Emotion Management Strategies as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Parents' Divorce Disclosures and Young Adult Children's Mental Well-Being: Creating and Applying a New Measure

Study 1 provided a better understanding of the ways in which young adult children communicatively manage their emotions about their parents' divorce by categorizing strategies into avoidance, other-centered communication, verbal expression, nonverbal expression, and no response in the interaction. Study 2 then applied those categories to create a new measure for assessing young adults' emotion management strategies that are specifically related to their parents' divorce. This measure was implemented in the context of discussions involving parents' divorce disclosures and ultimately assessed how those strategies might impact young adults' mental well-being following a divorce.

Parents' divorce disclosures are a common emotion-eliciting event for children of divorce. Young adults have developed more cognitive complexity than small children and parents may easily turn to them as confidants when needing to reveal feelings about their divorce (Koerner et al., 2002). Young adult children may seem like a safe and viable option when an upset parent needs to confide in someone about the divorce. Hence, disclosures about the divorce or about the ex-spouse are imperative to study in conjunction with young adult children from divorced families. Afifi, Schrodtt, and

McManus's (2009) divorce disclosure model provides an excellent framework for delving deeper into an investigation of parents' divorce disclosures as the model helps to define why parents disclose and to what ends in the family structure. Thus, Study 2 is built upon the divorce disclosure model and aims to extend this foundation to account for young adults' emotion management strategies.

It is necessary to investigate emotion management tactics because of the emotional upset that can occur during divorce disclosures. Accordingly, one way in which parents' divorce disclosures may impact children is by placing them at risk emotionally (Afifi, Schrod, & McManus, 2009). For instance, young adults may feel caught (i.e., feel the pressure of triangulation and the need to choose sides or loyalties) between their parents (Amato & Afifi, 2006). Young adult children must decide how best to navigate these emotions, yet this may prove challenging as they continue to receive disclosures from parents. Some children may be fearful of confronting their parents and seeming disloyal or possibly losing a parental relationship (Amato & Afifi, 2006). Amato and Afifi (2006) further argued that children's emotional adjustment may be compromised regardless of which strategy they choose when managing the difficult feelings of being caught between discordant parents. Hence, it is important to investigate the relationship between parents' disclosures about their divorce and children's strategies for managing those emotions through communication.

It is also crucial to understand how children manage their emotions because those emotion management strategies may impact their mental health. In other words, the emotional struggles of navigating parents' divorce disclosures might ultimately impact

young adults' mental well-being. As Koerner et al. (2004) noted, children typically cannot control a parent's decision to share unwanted disclosures with them. This leaves children in a rather subordinate and vulnerable position. As children continue to receive parents' divorce disclosures, they are consistently placed in a position to consider and ruminate on the problems their parents are facing, which can take a toll on their mental health. As parents' divorce disclosures have the potential to detract from young adult children's mental well-being, it is necessary to consider how the strength of the impact of disclosures on their well-being could be dependent on the ways in which children handle their divorce-related emotions. Communicating emotions allows individuals to better process a situation or relationship, while their expression of those emotions can be conveyed in a helpful or hurtful manner (Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001). The ability to communicate one's emotions is necessary for creating and maintaining healthy functioning relationships and setting the stage for increased mental well-being.

As young adults find themselves feeling caught between their parents and perhaps feeling the need to choose sides, they must find strategies to manage and communicate about their resulting emotions. It is important to consider how emotion management strategies influence the relationship between receiving parents' disclosures and young adults' mental health. Thus, the purpose of the second study is to employ the newly developed measure of young adult children's emotion management techniques from Study 1 as a moderator of the relationship between parents' divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being. As Study 2 is guided by the divorce disclosure model (Afifi, Schrod, & McManus, 2009), the study begins with an exploration of parents'

disclosures and the effects of those disclosures on the divorced family followed by a review of previous literature regarding emotions and mental health.

Divorce Disclosures

This section begins with a detailed description of the guiding theoretical framework for the second study. Following that is a review of additional research regarding divorce disclosures and the potential impact of disclosures on young adults in divorced families, leading to the research questions and hypotheses for the second study.

Divorce Disclosure Model

The study is guided by a theoretical model which outlines the disclosures that often follow a divorce. According to Afifi, Schrodt, and McManus (2009), parents who are divorcing typically admit that they need to discuss the divorce with their children, but trouble arises out of what, how much, and exactly how to communicate this information. These scholars proposed the divorce disclosure model (DDM) to help explain why parents disclose negative information to children, which factors influence such disclosures, and the impacts on adolescents' and parents' well-being. The following sections, then, highlight reasons for disclosures and how disclosures impact relationships in the family.

Reasons for divorce disclosures. Parents disclose to their young adult children for a variety of reasons. Afifi, Schrodt, and McManus's (2009) DDM includes four motivational influencers for parents' disclosures, comprised of extrarelational, relational, individual, as well as contextual factors. Extrarelational factors include negative feelings about one's former spouse or decreased social support from friends of other family

members. Relational factors revolve around the parent-child relationship and parents' efforts to enhance that relationship, seek social support from the child, provide their account of the divorce situation, or to guide, give information, or receive information from their child. When parents share disclosures about the divorce with their children, their relationship may grow closer but may also decrease the child's mental or physical health (Afifi, Schrod, & McManus, 2009). While these first two factors (i.e., extrarelational and relational factors) deal with relationships, the remaining two factors (i.e., individual and contextual factors) involve characteristics of the person as well as the details of the interaction.

Individual and contextual factors also influence why parents disclose to their children. Individual factors refer to a parent's personal characteristics such as their emotional intelligence, grief, or coping abilities. For instance, Afifi, Schrod, and McManus (2009) claimed that a parent who is emotionally intelligent should have the means to reveal "stressful information to the child in a manner that aids in resolving the stressor, demonstrates that she or he understands the emotions and its effects on the child, and do so in a way that regulates the emotion effectively" (p. 411). A parent who is not emotionally intelligent, on the other hand, might keep disclosing to a child when he or she cannot tell that the child is uncomfortable with the disclosed information. Finally, contextual/environmental factors include stressors such as finances, responsibilities in parenting, or changes in the home following the divorce. Afifi, Schrod, and McManus (2009) posited that the most significant predictor of negative disclosures is the

interparental relationship. Hence, relationships greatly impact disclosures in a family following a divorce.

Relationships and divorce disclosures. Divorce disclosures are relationally driven. The DDM focuses on two key aspects of the ex-spousal relationship including their renegotiated intimacy and boundaries (e.g., how much they are involved with their former partner and the amount of hostility involved) as well as coparenting. Afifi, Schrodt, and McManus (2009) stated that

When combined, both dimensions of the ex-spousal relationship are believed to (a) influence the factors that prompt the decision to disclose inappropriate information; (b) provide a relational context within which such disclosures are interpreted and processed; and (c) ultimately impact the psychological, physiological, and relational well-being of both parents and children in postdivorce families (p. 415-416).

Because of the relational nature of divorce disclosures, including the parents' relationship after the divorce as well as the parent-child relationship, children often find themselves caught in the middle of their parents' new relationship with each other.

Feeling caught, then, is a common result of receiving parents' divorce disclosures. According to the DDM, children's feelings of being caught between their parents may stem from negative parental disclosures, acting as a messenger between parents, interparental disputes, or one parent asking for information about the other parent (Afifi, Schrodt, & McManus, 2009). Feeling caught brings up feelings of stress and anxiety for children as a result. Afifi, Schrodt, and McManus (2009) posited that young adults may react to these feelings "with a 'flight' response by (1) avoiding the topic and/or a 'fight' response by (2) directly confronting their parent or (3) responding with aggression" (p.

407). These researchers suggested that some children do not know what to say and attempt to avoid parents' relationship discussions in an effort to shield themselves from the ensuing distress. Other children may request that their parents speak to one another or perhaps begin to imitate their parents own conflict styles themselves. Children, then, have a variety of options when deciding how to best manage their feelings resulting from parents' disclosures to them.

While the DDM is applied in this study as a useful guiding lens, it is still important to review additional research on divorce disclosures to paint the full picture of this family communication phenomenon before implementing the newly developed measure derived from Study 1. Hence, the next section builds off of the DDM by elaborating further and in more depth on the kinds of disclosures parents make to their children, why they disclose, and the effects of those disclosures.

Parents' Disclosures About Divorce

Communication surrounding a divorce can be sensitive in nature and calls for great care in deciding how much parents should share with children. As Afifi and McManus (2010) found, many parents are not sure of the amount of information that they should be sharing with their children surrounding the divorce. Afifi, McManus, et al. (2007) claimed that parents' disclosures about the divorce may become problematic to children when they perceive the shared information is not appropriate for them to be hearing. According to Koerner et al. (2002), a parent utilizes a child as a confidant when that parent chooses to regularly disclose concerns, worries, or complaints, while this type of close relationship is generally meant for closer adult relationships.

Types of divorce disclosures. There are a variety of disclosures that parents may make when discussing the divorce with their children. Scholars (Afifi, Afifi, & Coho, 2009) have previously identified several types of disclosures from parents including information about the relationship meant for the child to relay to the other parent, comments about the child's relationship with the other parent, living arrangements, finances, and comments about the other parent's behaviors, personality, or parenting practices. Stressors from a divorce may impact individuals long after the divorce takes place, as opposed to just for the few years following it (McManus & Nussbaum, 2011). These scholars identified common stressors such as former spouse, stepfamilies, and finances. The stressors might also determine how harmful the disclosures may be.

Some types of disclosures may be more negative and harmful than others. Afifi, Afifi, and Coho (2009) found that divorced parents' disclosures are more negatively valenced when discussing their relationship with their ex-spouse or the divorce relationship itself, and that the valence regarding the disclosure about the ex-spouse is a stronger predictor of adolescents' anxiety than the frequency of the disclosures. In other words, the degree of positivity or negativity surrounding a disclosure is immensely important. Afifi and McManus (2010) noted that parents' disclosures that would still be considered neutral or positively valenced may still be too sensitive for children processing that information, particularly if the parent goes into detail concerning the problem at hand, and suggested that adolescents' anxiety could possibly be predicted by a combination of disclosure topic, valence, as well as depth of discussion. Examining the

eventual effects of parents' divorce disclosures on their children is vital in helping children learn better ways to manage their resulting emotions.

Disclosing to children. Parents' may disclose to their children for a myriad of reasons, but Afifi, McManus, et al. (2007) suggested that the three most prominent factors are probably the extent or severity of the stressors from the divorce, a shortage of social support from others, and feelings of little control over the divorce stressors. For instance, Afifi, McManus, et al. (2007) noted that when a parent becomes overwhelmed by the intensity of a stressor, he or she might disclose to the children about it, which most likely serves as catharsis for the parent. Thus, if parents wait until they are no longer able to cope with the ensuing stress from a divorce and wait to share information with their children until that point, the information is most likely more inappropriate and emotionally laden at that time. Afifi and McManus (2010) found, however, that disclosures that were centered on catharsis did not impact adolescents' health. Hence, children may be able to differentiate their reactions based on knowing the true reasons behind their parents' disclosures. This has the potential to greatly impact the family.

Impact of divorce disclosures on the family. Divorce disclosures can have long-lasting effects on families. Scholars have found that some families may have stressors that will never be resolved fully and will stay with them even as they mature and change over time (McManus & Nussbaum 2011). For postdivorce families, parents' most common stressors include decision making or additional responsibilities, parenting, and finances while adolescents' most common stressors include the parent-child relationship, their parent's new relationship, and their living situation or visitation with parents (Afifi,

Hutchinson, & Krouse, 2006). McManus and Nussbaum (2011) also found that some stressors (e.g., communication or shared time) often change shape (e.g., legal custody not dictating the amount of time spent together) as time goes on and children grow into adults or parents marry again to create a stepfamily. Thus, divorce is an important time in a family wherein disclosures may become increasingly prevalent considering the amount of and nature of changes occurring. Afifi, McManus, et al. (2007) found that when divorced parents who felt less control concerning their divorce stressors also felt they had less stressful conflict with their ex-spouse, they reported more distress when disclosing to their children, whereas parents who felt they were in a more stressful relationship with their ex-partner did not feel the same distress about disclosing. The nature of the current ex-spousal relationship, then, impacts parents' divorce disclosures to their children as well as how children process the divorce.

Burden of disclosures. Parents' divorce disclosures may have a direct impact on children's abilities to emotionally process their parents' divorce. McManus and Nussbaum (2011) claimed that "although the ways stressors are experienced might change, the underlying nature of the stressor can remain the same" (p. 263). Some stressors, such as personal feelings about the ex-spouse, are more under a parents' control while other stressors, such as the way the ex-spouse behaves toward the other parent, are less out of a parent's control (Afifi, McManus, et al., 2007). Afifi, Afifi, and Coho (2009) suggested that while parents are working through their divorce and grieving their past relationship and family unit, they may not always keep in mind that their children are also grieving the same things. Hence, parents' divorce disclosures to young adult children

who are attempting to work through the divorce or their parents' new relationship themselves may simply be adding more of a burden for the young adult children to carry during an already difficult time. Furthermore, Afifi and Schrodt (2003) concluded that "parents' communication skills and the extent to which children feel as if they must ameliorate their parents' disputes may account for a more complete explanation of children's avoidance and dissatisfaction with their parents than the divorce itself" (p. 166). This would suggest that children may suffer more from triangulation between parents and ineffective parental communication than from the actual splitting up of their family. Thus, it is necessary to move an investigation past studying the effects of the actual divorce to also examining longer lasting familial changes such as disclosures following the divorce.

One reason to examine divorce disclosures more closely is that there may be malicious intents involved in disclosing to young adults. Afifi and McManus (2010) found that a residential parent's negative disclosures to an adolescent about the other parent increased the adolescent's reports of satisfaction and closeness with that residential parent. Thus, a parent could manipulatively utilize negative disclosures in order to have the child side with him or her. Ex-spouses may be less concerned with inappropriate disclosures if they have a stressful divorce relationship and consequently, are less worried about hurting their children's view of the ex-spouse (Afifi, McManus, et al., 2007). Feelings of ambivalence about the appropriateness of divorce disclosures may lead these parents to ultimately endanger the relationship shared by their child and their ex-spouse. Because parent-child relationships following a divorce may be more fragile, it

is important to examine the communication aspects that have the potential to damage these relationships.

Interpretation of disclosures. While divorce disclosures represent one form of communication impacting the parent-child relationship, sometimes there is ambiguity in interpreting disclosures. Children and parents might differ in the way they view the extent of parental disclosures about the other parent (Afifi & McManus, 2010). While parents could view a discussion as a friendly conversation to share information with their child, the young adult child may instead view the information as wildly inappropriate. Afifi, McManus, et al. (2007) found that adolescents' perceptions of parental disclosures were more negative and more predictive of their well-being than how their parents' perceived the disclosures. In other words, adolescent children rated parents' divorce disclosures more negatively than parents did. This finding points to the idea that children may have a more difficult time than parents processing divorce related information and that the perspective of children of divorce must be examined more when studying child outcomes. Thus, the effects of parents' disclosures must be examined and taken into consideration.

Effects of disclosures on children. The effects of divorce disclosures on young adult children can be both positive and negative. On one hand, Afifi and McManus (2010) claimed that some children may report more satisfaction and closeness to their parent who discloses while concurrently reporting higher levels of anxiety or depression. Additionally, these researchers posited that "children who become enmeshed in their parents' disputes might be more likely to align themselves with one parent over time to

release themselves of the pressure of having to demonstrate loyalty to two parents” (Afifi & McManus, 2010, p. 102). Closeness between parent and child may operate to foster even more disclosures, which, in a destructive cyclical pattern, may create an even closer bond through sharing this personal information while perhaps leading the child to worry unnecessarily about his or her parents (Afifi & McManus, 2010). While it could be helpful for children to be kept in the loop in regards to major family changes, negative disclosures regarding the divorce or the other parent may lead children to want to help carry the burden of divorce problems. Additionally, because the information is one-sided, biased opinions have the potential to cause unwarranted anxiety on a child’s part. On the other hand, Koerner, Wallace, Lehman, Lee, and Escalante (2004) found that although the majority of adolescent responses to maternal divorce disclosures were concern, distress, or frustration, some reported feeling neutral or fine about the disclosures. Hence, there are differences in the effects of disclosures on the family.

Divorced and non-divorced families. There are also differences in the effects of disclosures in divorced and non-divorced families. Afifi, Afifi, and Coho (2009) found that children from divorced homes report feeling caught more often and that divorced parents report becoming more physiologically aroused when disclosing to their children. However, parents from both divorced and nondivorced families in their study reported feeling anxious in talking about their relationship. Thus, parents may already be aware that the information they are about to disclose to their child is sensitive in nature and possibly inappropriate, yet many choose to go through with the disclosure anyway, placing their child at risk. Schrodts and Afifi (2007) found that young adult children report

less family satisfaction and closeness with their parents in addition to increased feelings of being caught and marital conflict when they are part of a divorced family. These researchers also found that negative disclosures about the (ex)spousal relationship increased young adults' feelings of being caught while disclosures about marital or personal problems increased their mental well-being and satisfaction. Schrodts and Afifi (2007) posited that these young adults may desire more certainty in knowing about their parents' problems as opposed to uncertainty. Thus, parents' attempts to reduce ambiguity for their children may warrant some disclosures about their divorce, but certain negative disclosures may serve to entangle the children in the ex-partners' relationship. This leads to the notion of family communication boundaries.

Boundaries and feeling caught. Crossing privacy boundaries in disclosures may place children at risk emotionally or in terms of their mental and emotional well-being. Afifi (2003) highlighted the importance of parents taking a role in creating appropriate rules about privacy by watching what and how much they disclose and conceal to children as many parents in her study were not even aware that their children felt caught. Amato and Afifi (2006) suggested that children may be fearful that choosing not to mediate their parents' conflicts and coming between their parents by speaking up may seem as though they are disloyal to their parents, thus many children feel caught between parents. Young adult children have several options when they feel caught between their parents and these include attempting to preserve positive relationships with both of their parents, siding with one parent over the other, or selecting to reject both parental relationships (Amato & Afifi, 2006). Each of these decisions comes at a cost to the child

be it harboring feelings of disloyalty, losing a familial relationship, or being caught between two parents. Young adulthood may prove to be an especially challenging time to accrue such costs.

Examining young adults specifically. Young adults pose an important subset of children to examine in relation to divorce disclosures. Afifi (2003) suggested that perhaps because children feel they are in the subordinate position with their parents, they feel pressured to continue in a mediating role between parents since the children in her study tended to utilize avoidance strategies in dealing with their parents sharing information. Dealing with divorce disclosures presents a sizable and emotional task for young adult children. Amato and Afifi (2006) claimed that any strategy a child chooses for dealing with feelings of being caught (i.e., maintaining both or neither parental relationships or siding with one parent over the other) will create stress for that child and could compromise his or her emotional adjustment. Afifi, Afifi, and Coho (2009) suggested that scholars should “assess how children learn to manage their anxiety and arousal over time when they are in an environment where their parents are unable to maintain a cordial relationship with one another” (p. 535). Thus, strategies were examined and identified in Study 1 to include avoidance, other-centered communication, verbal and nonverbal expression, and no response during the interaction.

It is important to consider how the specific tactics identified in the first study might impact family interactions, particularly where divorce disclosures from parents are concerned. For instance, there may be an inverse relationship between children’s choice to verbally express their feelings regarding the divorce and the frequency of parents’

divorce disclosures. In other words, it stands to reason that if children verbally express their emotions about their parents' divorce, parents may be less likely to add additional stress or worry by continuing to disclose to their children. Young adults' nonverbal expression of their emotions, such as crying or frowning, may indicate to a parent that they are upset and do not wish to receive further disclosures about the ex-spousal relationship. Another possibility includes a positive association between young adults' lack of emotional expression and the frequency with which parents disclose to them. In this case, children's unresponsiveness may lead their parents to believe they are fine receiving future divorce disclosures and parents then continue to disclose because their children do not communicate any feelings regarding the conversations. As children choose to express or conceal their emotions with their parents, it is important to investigate how parents' disclosures increase or decrease in relation to children's specific strategies. Hence, communicative management of emotions following divorce disclosures is a much-needed area to research further, leading to the first research question:

RQ1: What is the relationship between the frequency of parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's strategies for communicatively managing their emotions about the divorce?

Children receiving divorce disclosures from parents may be placed at risk for stress and health issues. According to Afifi and McManus (2010), while parents' disclosures may bring parent and child closer together, negative disclosures may also take a toll on adolescent children's mental and physical health, such as anxiety and depression. These scholars proposed that even general information concerning the

divorce, such as custody arrangements or finances, may impact adolescents' health and bring stress. For these reasons, young adult children's mental well-being needs to be examined in relation to divorce disclosures and their emotion management.

Divorce Disclosures and Young Adults' Mental Well-Being

Divorce often accompanies a host of possible negative outcomes for children involved. In their meta-analysis of divorced families, Amato and Keith (1991) found that parents' divorce has a wide range of negative consequences once children reach adulthood such as "psychological well-being (depression, low life satisfaction), family well-being (low marital quality, divorce), socioeconomic well-being (low educational attainment, income, and occupational prestige), and physical health" (p. 54) and that "the argument that parental divorce presents few problems for children's long-term development is simply inconsistent" (p. 54) with previous scholarly findings. Even if divorce occurs during childhood, the effects can be long-lasting. Oftentimes, parents' communication with the child and with one another plays a large role in future child adjustment.

Outcomes of the divorce may decrease a child's mental well-being while disclosures about the divorce intensify those tensions. Afifi, Afifi, and Coho (2009) postulated that adolescents are most aroused by negative disclosures about the other parent when they feel caught between their parents and when their parents are divorced. Unfortunately, children often do not receive reassurance about the parent-child relationship from their parents' actions or words following a divorce (Emery & Dillon, 1994). Sometimes parents become so caught up in dealing with their own emotions

regarding ex-spousal relations that they forget to reassure their children that they are still available and that the parent-child relationship is not changing. During this time, children must work on adjusting to spending less time with one parent (i.e., the nonresidential parent) (Emery & Dillon, 1994). Once parents separate and are no longer living together, parental availability decreases for children. An additional burden stemming from the separation of parents includes divorce disclosures.

Distress from Divorce Disclosures

Once children reach adulthood, parental disclosures about the divorce may only serve to weaken the children's well-being further as they are constantly reminded of the problems between their parents. Negative disclosures about the divorce may include revelations that are derogatory, emotionally charged, pessimistic, or demeaning and may revolve around the marriage or around the ex-spouse (Afifi, Afifi, & Coho, 2009). Revealing information about the divorce to relieve stress or rumination may increase parents' physical or psychological well-being (Afifi, McManus, et al., 2007). In disclosing to their children, parents then place children at risk.

There are numerous risks associated with receiving distressing disclosures from parents. Koerner, Jacobs, and Raymond (2000) found that psychological distress increased in relation to reports of their mothers disclosing negatively about their ex-husbands or about financial concerns, hypothesizing that such disclosures probably involve anger, worry, upset, and are negatively valenced. Furthermore, Koerner et al. (2000) suggested that these kinds of disclosures might undermine an adolescent's view of the family as a whole, the father (i.e., the ex-husband), or the future when considering

financial assistance. It is quite reasonable to believe that these distressing disclosures could wreak havoc on a child's emotions, as well as feelings of mental well-being and stability. In a later study, Koerner et al. (2004) found that adolescent daughters and sons receive divorce disclosures from their mothers at a similar frequency and with similar detail in the two years following the divorce, and that these disclosures are associated with adjustment trouble, most often through psychological distress. Parents' communication of disclosures as well as their family state impact children's reception of parental disclosures. For instance, Afifi, Afifi, and Coho (2009) noted that what was said about the other parent and how it was said affected adolescents' anxiety, with children from divorced homes reporting higher levels of anxiety. Anxiety often accompanies other indicators of decreased well-being such as emotional difficulties.

Emotional Difficulties

Decreased mental well-being following divorce disclosures may arise from a mix of emotional difficulties. For example, children may find themselves lacking control during divorce disclosures. Children cannot generally control a mother's decision to disclose nor can they control the underlying feelings or events that provoke such disclosures in the first place (Koerner et al., 2004). It is interesting to consider how the very cause of many parents' divorce disclosures comes in the form of lack of control (Afifi, McManus, et al., 2007) and that children's lack of control regarding disclosures pushes them into distress. Koerner et al. (2004) also found that adolescent children who received divorce disclosures reported a desire that their mothers would quit disclosing about sensitive topics, felt worried about finances, felt uncertain about or unable to assist

their mothers, or felt the need to defend their fathers regarding their mothers' criticisms about child support. It is possible that this lack of control or ability to help either parent may decrease a child's self-esteem and increase their feelings of being caught, even during adulthood. For young adult children who already feel caught between parents, divorce disclosures that lead to more frustration could serve to place undue stress upon them. In fact, many of the studies that examine well-being in relation to divorce disclosures examine children's feelings of being caught rather than the disclosures themselves (Afifi, Afifi, & Coho, 2009; Afifi, Schrodt, & McManus, 2009). Hence, it is valuable to examine the nature of the relationship between disclosures and child well-being.

It is necessary, then, to investigate the direct link between parental divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being such as their stress, self-esteem, and mental or physical health symptoms. Because negative disclosures about an ex-spouse share a positive relationship with adolescents' feelings of depressive symptoms and anxiety (Afifi & McManus, 2010) and because divorce disclosures have been found to increase adolescent children's psychological distress (Koerner et al., 2000, 2004), divorce disclosures should be examined in relation to young adult children's mental well-being. Corroborating this notion, Afifi, McManus, et al. (2007) found that it is more accurate to examine the child's perspective of parental disclosures than parental perceptions of disclosures when taking children's well-being into account. Thus, the second research question is proposed:

RQ2: What is the relationship between the frequency of parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's mental well-being?

Emotion Management and Mental Well-Being

In addition to divorce disclosures impacting young adults' mental well-being, the ways in which they handle the emotions that arise from those disclosures also have great potential to affect their well-being. Some of the emotion regulation strategies that are often studied include enhancing an emotional display of the true emotion, manipulating the felt emotion in an effort to naturally display that desired emotion, suppressing or subduing a true emotion, or simply faking the emotion one desires to display (Dieffendorff & Gosserand, 2003). In considering past research on emotion regulation strategies, the well-being outcomes for these strategies are quite varied for individuals. Garnefski and Kraaij (2006) found that cognitive emotion regulation strategies account for a considerable portion of variance when accounting for depressive symptoms. Similarly, Beeko et al. (2011) found that individuals who choose cognitive reappraisal are able to decrease their negative emotional experience more than individuals who select to expressively suppress their emotions.

Decreasing negative emotions, then, may also serve to increase mental well-being in terms of concepts such as stress, self-esteem, and mental health. Corroborating this argument, scholars have suggested that antecedent-focused emotion regulation shares a positive relationship with increased well-being in the form of positive mood, life satisfaction, and less negative mood (Schutte, Manes, & Malouff, 2009). Managing

emotions, therefore, may be key to young adults strategically handling their parents' divorce disclosures in order to increase their mental well-being.

Expression of Emotions

Being able to communicate and manage emotions is critical. Kennedy-Moore and Watson (2001) claimed that "emotions are a source of information about the relationship between the self and environment. Expression is a means of processing and communicating this information, but it can be done in adaptive or maladaptive ways" (p. 205). Thus, possessing the ability to communicate and express emotions is crucial for personal and interpersonal success. For example, lacking emotional clarity and the feeling of limited access to strategies for regulating emotions share an inverse relationship with subjective well-being and mental health (Saxena, Dubey, & Pandey, 2011). Gross and John (2003) found that cognitive reappraisal shared a positive association with sharing both positive and negative emotions with others and that part of the reason for reappraisers' success may be their ability to share negative emotions with another without directing that feeling toward the social partner. In other words, individuals who cognitively reappraise emotions are more likely comfortable communicatively sharing their emotions with others rather than bottling up those emotions inwardly.

Research regarding sharing emotions with others points toward the importance of communicatively managing tough emotions and highlights the relieving mental effects of sharing emotions with another. For example, expression of distress may help to alleviate worries about distress as well as enhance well-being (Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001).

Moreover, these scholars claimed that this expression may serve to increase one's self-understanding, self-acceptance, and improve social relations (Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001). Thus, expressing emotions should be a central factor in attempting to remove the stress and burden of parental disclosures.

Effects of Expressing Emotions

Benefits of expression. There are many benefits to properly expressing emotions. Gross and John (2003) found that individuals who reappraise show more self-esteem and satisfaction with life while reporting fewer symptoms of depression. It would seem, then, that those who reappraise may have a better chance at achieving increased mental and emotional well-being. However, if not communicated properly, expressing distress may lead to the impairment of social relations, feeling guilty or ashamed, or perhaps never resolving the problem but instead rehearsing over it (Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001). Therefore, it may be the proper expression or communication of emotions, not simply communication in any form, that aids individuals in increasing their mental health and well-being.

Drawbacks of expressive suppression. The effects of expressive suppression, or not communicating one's true feelings, are quite different than those of cognitive reappraisal. The strategy of expressive suppression "intervenes late in the emotion-generative process and can modify only what individuals express behaviorally, at considerable cost for the individual's functioning. Consistent with this view, we found suppressors experience themselves as inauthentic, misleading others about their true self" (Gross & John, 2003, p. 360). In an effort to conceal the behavioral expression of

emotions, suppression may lead individuals to feel as though they are not being truthful to themselves or those around them. This has the potential to lead to decreased well-being and fewer deep relationships. Thus, communicating emotions in an effort to manage them may play a large role in individuals' feelings of mental well-being. Scholars have also posited that suppressing feelings may limit others' ability to track and appropriately respond to one's needs if he or she is stifling emotions (Gross & Levenson, 1997). If this is the case, not only may suppression decrease the chance for adjustment (Gross & Levenson, 1997), but this regulation strategy may also make the situation worse when a parent or peer cannot respond as needed because the suppressor is not choosing to share true feelings, possibly exasperating the problem.

The negative effects of suppressing and not sharing emotions are far-reaching. In an emotion suppressing experiment, Gross and Levenson (1997) found that college-aged children showed increased physiological activation and suggested that this may be indicative of them preparing themselves in anticipation of suppressing their emotions. This could be a taxing activity when a young adult is already enduring negative feelings such as anger or guilt. Dieffendorff and Gosserand (2003) proposed that individuals who continually display emotions that do not match up to their personal goals will likely experience dissatisfaction and eventually burnout. Because young adults may have been altering their emotional displays regarding the divorce for years, there is the possibility that they could be experiencing that sense of burnout or exhaustion. Larsen et al. (2013) found that depressive symptoms in adolescents are linked with an increased use of the expressive suppression strategy for both males and females. Similarly, Gross and John

(2003) found that suppressors have more symptoms of depression, decreased self-esteem, less satisfaction with life, and score lowest regarding positive relationships. Schutte et al. (2009), however, proposed that even though an antecedent-focused strategy such as reappraisal is more effective, response modulation could potentially be beneficial depending on its form. For example, there are instances wherein individuals attempt to protect others by suppressing emotions that could potentially be hurtful. Therefore, it is important to examine not only how young adults attempt to manage their emotions, but to also explore if those strategies are increasing their well-being in the long run.

Communicating emotions. The successful communication of emotions is essential in maintaining healthy relationships and an increased chance for mental health. Individuals regulate emotions during emotionally charged occurrences out of a desire to keep good relationships with others and in order to reach their own goals (John & Gross, 2004). In an emotion-eliciting event, then, it is in one's best interest to be able to properly share feelings while simultaneously managing the relational aspect of the social interaction. John and Gross (2004) harkened that sharing emotions with another does not mean that one is directing emotions toward the other. It is here that communication of an emotion without necessarily directing and portraying that emotion is prized in social interactions. However, researchers have failed to examine this communication step in the process further, perhaps because other fields of research are not as concerned with the actual outward expression or communication of feelings as they are the internal management of feelings.

Based on the new measure that was created in Study 1, it is plausible that the more communicative strategies such as verbal or nonverbal expressions of children's negative feelings about disclosures might increase young adults' mental well-being. These children are able to release their feelings and make them known, regardless of whether the expression is calm or chaotic. However, it is also possible that continually expressing negative emotions could decrease their mental well-being if they continue to ruminate on those difficult feelings. Communicating their emotions may allow them to release feelings, label and elaborate on what they are thinking, and hopefully change the course of future divorce-related interactions with their parents.

Communication is an important, but understudied aspect of emotion management. Scholars have claimed that it is "an essential function of emotion expressive behavior, namely the communication of our emotional states to others, thereby influencing their behavior. Such nonverbal information flow is essential for successful interpersonal functioning" (Gottman & Levenson, 1997, p. 102). Expressing one's emotions via verbal or nonverbal strategies of communication might increase mental health. These individuals are able to engage in dialogue about their feelings or let their feelings be known by the other party, sharing the weight of carrying those emotions on their own. The mere release of those feelings, whether they are positively or negatively valenced, may increase their mental well-being by intensifying their feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem through sharing.

On the other hand, when individuals do not communicate that they are feeling hurt or upset by another person, the other individual is unlikely to cease hurting or

upsetting them because they may not be aware of the emotion-eliciting event that is being created. Thus, young adults who choose the strategy of not responding during an interaction might face decreased mental well-being as they bottle up their emotions rather than share them. It also possible, however, that young adults who choose not to express their emotions might experience increased mental well-being if they feel better not sharing negative emotions with someone who is already hurting. For instance, if a mother disclosed to her son about her divorce and the son felt upset, he might choose not to respond in the interaction out of a desire to protect his mother from further hurt. While he was not sharing his own emotions, the feelings of control and good will that he felt from not communicating more negative emotions might serve to increase his own mental well-being. Hence, the next research question is presented:

RQ3: What is the relationship between young adult children's use of communicative emotion management strategies and their mental well-being?

It stands to reason that the ways in which young adult children manage their emotions about the divorce could possibly impact the relationship between their parents' divorce disclosures and their mental well-being. Corroborating this notion, Gross, Richards, and John (2006) suggested that suppression may produce a discrepancy between a suppressor's inner emotional experiences and his or her outer expression of emotion, threatening emotionally close relationships from fully developing. In the case of divorced parents disclosing to their children, young adult children who feel they need to hide their true feelings from their parents may additionally hide their true emotions from those who could provide much needed social support during this time. For this reason, it

is important to investigate how young adults employ emotion management strategies through their communication with others.

Management strategies as a moderator. It is necessary to examine the specific ways in which young adult children of divorce communicatively manage their emotions regarding their parents' divorce. Those who suppress emotions tend to ruminate about the negative emotion-eliciting event (Gross & John, 2003). If the event that the young adult child is ruminating about is what is disclosed about the divorce, there is likely little that he or she could do to change the situation unless the decision is made to interfere in the relationship and risk further feelings of triangulation. Hankin, Stone, and Wright (2010) proposed a transactional cycle for some youth wherein they co-ruminate, or excessively discuss problems, so much that they create interpersonal stressors and endure increases in emotional distressors. When considering parents' divorce disclosures, it stands to reason that when a parent wants to continually discuss or co-ruminate with his or her young adult child about problems in the divorce, this may create interpersonal tension in the parent-child relationship and lead to increased feelings of emotional distress for the child. This situation, then, may require communicative action to cease the cycle.

It is important for children to communicate their feelings about parents' disclosures. Not communicating emotions may impact close relationships, while the lack of close relationships could potentially harm young adults' mental health. Metts et al. (2013) found that children experience a wide range of emotions, more negative than positive, when considering their parents' divorce and that divorce is often a time of hurt and disappointment for them. Gross and John (2003) suggested that habitual suppressors

tend to share fewer negative or positive emotions with others and report increased avoidance and discomfort with sharing in their closer relationships. In addition to not expressing their emotions, it would seem that suppressors are also more likely to steer away from close interpersonal relationships with others and have less social support. It is possible that young adults who consistently endure parents' divorce disclosures may eventually begin turning to suppressing their emotions if they become more anxious and depressed by the disclosures.

Scholars have hypothesized that adolescents may choose suppression as a means to temporarily decrease their feelings of sadness or as a result of adolescents attempting to avoid any more interpersonal consequences (Larsen et al., 2013). Considering that it is young adults' parents who are doing the disclosing, it is possible that young adult children do not wish to sever any interpersonal ties with their parent and thus decide to suppress their true emotions in order to maintain a strong interpersonal parent-child relationship. In other words, children could be concerned that expressing their feelings of disapproval or hurt could damage their relationship with the disclosing parent. In a similar vein, Metts et al. (2013) posited that children in stepfamilies may utilize emotional labor, or managing public display of emotions, and that this should be a concern to researchers in examining the cost of children's emotional labor (i.e., experiencing emotions but not expressing them). Although these scholars were examining stepfamilies specifically, children negotiating their new family system following a divorce may also operate under emotional labor if they choose the strategy of suppressing emotions and becoming unresponsive.

While some young adults may choose the strategy of suppression or not responding, others may decide to verbally or nonverbally communicate their emotions about the divorce. It is possible that communicating feelings through words or facial expressions, for example, might act as a buffer during divorce disclosure discussions. For example, when a young adult child receives a divorce disclosure then expresses feelings of anger, that expression could possibly mitigate the potential negative impact that the disclosure would have had on the child's mental well-being. Alternatively, communicative strategies for emotion management may do little to moderate the relationship between disclosures and mental well-being if young adults instead appreciate receiving parents' disclosures rather than unwillingly receiving them as reluctant confidants. For these reasons, it is important to examine young adults' emotion management strategies in relation to their parents' divorce disclosures and their mental well-being. Thus, the final research question is presented:

RQ4: How do young adult children's strategies for communicatively managing emotions about their parents' divorce moderate the relationship between the frequency of their parents' divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being?

CHAPTER SEVEN: STUDY TWO METHOD

In order to answer the research questions guiding Study 2, the researcher first needed to create and validate a measure of young adults' communicative strategies for managing emotions about their parents' divorce. Thus, from the identified qualitative categories in Study 1, the researcher transitioned to creating a new measure that was tested within Study 2. The next section, then, details assembling the instrument as well as assessing reliability and validity of the new measure.

Creating the Measure

Findings from Study 1 provided the foundation for the creation of a new measure generalizable for surveying young adult children from divorced families and their communicative emotion management strategies. Study 2, then, addressed how these management strategies act as a potential moderator in the relationship between parental divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being. This stage of the study consisted of two parts. This included assembling the new measure using the qualitative categories created in Study 1 and establishing validity of the new instrument, both of which are now described in detail.

Assembling the instrument. Researchers in the field of Communication Studies have previously used qualitative exploratory data to create a quantitative measure (Myers & Oetzel, 2003; Mazer, 2012; Vangelisti, Crumley, & Baker, 1999), providing a model for the present study. Items for the new measure were assembled and tested based on

participants' open-ended responses to the three-part sequence in Study 1. After coding and categorizing the open-ended response data, the researcher then created a pool of 50 items representing each of the five categories for emotion management strategies identified by her and the research assistants in Study 1. Using the categories and subcategories which had been classified, the researcher drafted items that reflected the strategies that young adults reported using. Similar to Mazer's (2012) repetition in phrasing, each of the items began with the same phrase "When I experience emotions while communicating with someone about my parents' divorce, I..." The items were measured using a Likert-type response ranging from 1 *Strongly Disagree* to 7 *Strongly Agree* in order to provide participants with sufficient variation in their degree of agreement. As DeVellis (2003) noted, Likert scales are often used to assess individuals' beliefs, opinions, or attitudes. Hence, this was the best format for measurement.

Each identified strategy category served as a subscale in the new measure containing 10 items per subscale or construct. For instance, one of the categories was called "Verbal Expression." Example items falling in that subscale included "I yell or raise my voice" and "I tell the other person how I am feeling." According to DeVellis (2003), when researchers are writing new items, they should attempt to exhaust their wording options for a construct in order to correctly articulate the essence of each concept. The measure was as concise as possible so as not to become overly redundant and in order to encapsulate the most salient strategies for young adults' emotion management strategies regarding parents' divorce. However, DeVellis (2003) posited that scale creators should be "attempting to capture the phenomenon of interest by developing

a set of items that reveals the phenomenon in different ways” (p. 65). Fifty items ensured better reliability after factor analysis was run in Study 2. Table 2 contains the new measure with the initial item pool of 50 items used in data collection as well as the corresponding category for each item.

Table 2

Measure of Young Adults' Communicative Strategies for Managing Divorce-Related Emotions

Consider the phrase "When I experience emotions while communicating with someone about my parents' divorce, I..."

	SD		N			SA	
1) ... change the subject. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2) ... communicate support or reassurance to the person with whom I am speaking. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3) ... leave or storm away from the person. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4) ... tell the other person how I am feeling. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5) ... say as little as possible in hopes that the conversation will soon end. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6) ... curse or call someone names. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7) ... begin crying. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8) ... do not express my emotions in any way. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9) ... ask questions or attempt to gather more information in the conversation. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10) ... yell or raise my voice. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11) ... use facial expressions to express how I feel. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12) ... say that I do not want to talk about it anymore. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13) ... say or do absolutely nothing. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14) ... focus on giving advice to the other person about the situation. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15) ... have no response in the interaction. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16) ... say what I am thinking. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17) ... simply say things like "ok" or "yeah" as I listen rather than engage in the conversation. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18) ... listen silently without any response. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	19) ... convey my feelings through my body language. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	20) ... ask the other person how he or she is feeling in that situation. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	21) ... openly express my feelings through my words. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	22) ... comfort the person with whom I am communicating. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	23) ... communicate my emotions through the way I look at the other person. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	24) ... say anything to not continue taking part in the conversation. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	25) ... do not react or respond at all. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	26) ... briefly mention my feelings in passing. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	27) ... try to change the topic of conversation. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	28) ... focus on the other person's emotions rather than my own. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
105	29) ... ask to not talk about it. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	30) ... work through my feelings out loud. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	31) ... cry during the conversation. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	32) ... engage in an open conversation about my feelings. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	33) ... sit there without saying anything. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	34) ...acknowledge the conversation but do not take part in it. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	35) ... communicate my feelings through faces I make. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	36) ... try to learn more about the situation during the conversation. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	37) ... share my feelings with the other person. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	38) ... express my emotions using my hands or hand gestures. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	39) ... listen without doing or saying anything. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	40) ... give my opinion on what the other person should do or think. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	41) ... acknowledge the discussion but try to end it. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	42) ... express my thoughts verbally. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Table 2 (Continued)

43) ... choose not to respond during the interaction. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44) ... use my body or body movements to express my feelings. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45) ... hone in on the other person's needs at the time. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46) ... do not take part in the conversation at all. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47) ... make short comments but do not really add to the conversation. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48) ... let my facial expressions do the talking. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49) ... try to focus more on the other person in the conversation than myself. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50) ... choose not to express my feelings at all. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

106 Categories:

- 1 = Avoidance
- 2 = Other-Centered Communication
- 3 = Verbal Expression
- 4 = Nonverbal Expression
- 5 = No response

Establishing validity. Validity of the new instrument was assessed in order to be sure it measured the constructs it was meant to measure. Face and content validity were assessed with the assistance of research assistants and scholars in the field.

First, face validity was established and assessed to determine that there was differentiation between the qualitative categories/quantitative subscales on the measure. Following Mazer's (2012) direction, the researcher gathered a fourth and fifth research assistant to help with scale development by assessing the measure for face validity. The researcher provided each of the assistants a list of scale items that had been ordered randomly along with a listing of the measure's categories/subscales created from the qualitative data. Similar to Mazer (2012), the researcher then asked the assistants to identify which category best matched each item and to then report the intensity with which each item represented the category in which they placed it by using a scale ranging from (1) *Very Weak* to (10) *Very Strong* (see Appendix D for the initial measure assessment sheet). This rating allowed the assistants to identify the strength to which the individual items reflected the particular subscales that would be used in the measure. For example, the assistants were asked to place the first scale item of "change the subject" into one of the five categories (i.e., avoidance, other-centered communication, verbal expression, nonverbal expression, and no response) and then rate the intensity of the fit on a scale of one to ten with ten being the strongest fit. The assistants' results were then inspected for face validity, making sure that they placed each item into the appropriate category for which it was intended to fit (i.e., the correct category from which the researcher initially derived that item) and that they indicated strong ratings of intensity

for each of the items. Mazer (2012) indicated that strong intensity ratings included scores between 7 and 10.

The measure was then examined further for validity. There are three standards that the researcher applied to the items on the questionnaire. Survey questions must meet three standards including standards of content, cognition, and usability (Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer, & Tourangeau, 2004). Groves et al. (2004) referred to *content standards* as being sure the questions are asking the correct things while *cognitive standards* include being sure participants consistently understand the questions being asked, have the knowledge to answer the questions, and possess the ability to create answers to those questions. Finally, *usability standards* include assurance that participants can complete the survey easily and as the survey creator intended. In order to evaluate the three standards just mentioned, Groves et al. (2004) recommended several possible methods including submitting the survey questions for expert review.

For this study, the researcher utilized expert reviews before employing the new measure. For expert reviews, DeVellis (2003) and Groves et al. (2004) recommended submitting a survey to individuals with expertise in that particular subject and asking them to determine if the content is the most suitable for the intention of measuring the concepts. Thus, the researcher submitted the measure to Communication Studies experts on family communication and emotion (i.e., Andrew Ledbetter, Paul Schrodt, and Tiffany Wang) for review and commentary. The researcher asked if items needed to be rephrased for clarity and if there needed to be any alterations on question format or instructions. Once the measure was refined based on their recommendations, the researcher applied

the measure in an empirical study (Study 2) in order to test and generalize the findings from Study 1, as is the purpose of a mixed methods exploratory sequential design.

Creating and validating a measure allows for increased studies examining children of divorce specifically, as opposed to stepchildren or children from intact families, to see how their emotion management strategies impact other aspects of their lives such as well-being. In this way, the pretested measure was applied to address the hypotheses and research questions in a study of divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being from Study 2. The participants, procedures, and measures for Study 2 are now detailed.

Participants

After receiving approval from IRB (see Appendix B for IRB materials including the research narrative, informed consent, and study announcements for Study 2), participants were recruited from undergraduate classes at the University of Denver as well as through Facebook and email. I also contacted participants who provided their email address from Study 1 and said they wished to participate in Study 2. I posted the study on Facebook and solicited other participants through email using snowball sampling. Based on previous validation techniques used by Schrodtt (2006), the researcher randomly emailed 15 of the respondents who were recruited through snowball sampling to confirm that their parents were divorced and that they indeed completed the survey themselves. This helps to confirm the validity of the participants completing the survey. All participants who were emailed verified their participation in this study.

The sample included 232 young adult children participants from divorced families. Young adult participants ranged in age from 18-30 years old ($M = 22.75$, $SD =$

3.62). This included 57 males and 173 females, with two participants not reporting their sex. The majority of participants identified as Caucasian/Non-Hispanic ($n = 174$, 75%), but other ethnicities included Hispanic/Latino ($n = 22$, 9.5%), Black/Non-Hispanic ($n = 15$, 6.5%), Asian/Asian America ($n = 11$, 4.7%), and “other” ($n = 8$, 3.4%). The majority of young adults reported residing primarily with their biological or adoptive mother ($n = 86$, 37.1%) or their mother and stepfather ($n = 33$, 14.2%) after the divorce while they were still living at home, as is the tradition for children of divorce in our Western culture (Metts et al., 2013). The other participants either split time evenly between parents’ households ($n = 59$, 25.4%), lived with a biological or adoptive father ($n = 23$, 9.9%), or lived with their father and stepmother ($n = 8$, 3.4%). A handful of participants reported living away from their parents or with another individual following the divorce ($n = 21$, 9.1%).

Participants reported that their parents had been divorced an average of 10.91 years ($SD = 7.24$) with the earliest divorce occurring less than a year ago and the latest divorce occurring 27 years ago. Parents were married an average of 14.82 years ($SD = 7.74$) before divorcing while this time ranged from less than a year to 36 years. Young adult participants reported speaking, on average, 5.91 hours per week with their mothers ($SD = 11.17$) and 3.54 hours per week with their fathers ($SD = 10.36$).

Procedures

After agreeing to the online informed consent, participants completed an online survey using Qualtrics software (see Appendix E for the complete survey). Participants first read through the online informed consent page, which explained the purpose of the

current study, that their participation was completely voluntary, and that their responses would remain confidential. They then had to indicate that they agreed in order to complete the remainder of the survey. If they selected the option reporting that they did not agree with the consent, they were automatically taken to the last page of the survey, which said that the questionnaire was now complete. The questionnaire took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Those providing their consent completed the measures detailed in the following section.

Measures

Parents' divorce disclosures. Young adults' perceptions of their parents' divorce disclosures were measured using a form of Schrodtt and Afifi's (2007) unpublished measure regarding residential parents' disclosures. The measure originally contained 22 items dealing only with residential parents' inappropriate disclosures, but the items were altered for this study to specifically concern disclosures about the divorce or ex-spouse from either the residential or non-residential parent rather than disclosures in general. Young adults were asked to consider how much their parents talk with them regarding their relational difficulties with the other parent as well as how much their parent talks poorly about the other parent to them since the divorce. Example items include "My parent talks openly to me about his/her troubles with the divorce" and "My parent refrains from talking badly about my other parent to me." Responses to the 22 items are indicated on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 *Never* to 4 *Often*. Once averaged, higher scores indicate increased negative divorce disclosures from parents. Alpha reliability for this measure was .95.

Young adults' mental well-being. Mental well-being was assessed using three different measures. The first measure was Rosenberg's (1965) self-esteem scale (SES). This measure contains 10 items that measure an individual's global self-worth. Participants used a 7-point Likert-type scale that ranges from 1 *Strongly Disagree* to 7 *Strongly Agree*. Example items include "I am able to do things as well as most other people" and "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself". The 10 items were averaged together with higher scores representing increased self-esteem levels. Scholars have previously noted the reliability of this measure ranging from .77 to .89 (Amato & Afifi, 2006; Schrodt & Ledbetter, 2007; Shimkowski & Schrodt, 2012). The reliability of this measure was .87 in the current study.

The next measure was Dornbusch, Mont-Reynaud, Ritter, Chen, and Steinburg's (1991) physical and mental health symptom instrument. This measure consists of nine items where participants utilized a four-point frequency scale that ranges from 0 *Never* to 3 *Three or More Times* to rate how often they have experienced specific symptoms. Sample items ask participants to indicate how often over the last two week period they have felt "depressed", "without appetite", "felt like running away from everything", or "nervous." In this measure, higher scores relate to increased mental health symptoms (i.e., decreased mental health). Scholars have previously found this measure to be reliable, with alphas ranging from .81 to .85 (Schrodt & Afifi, 2007; Schrodt & Braithwaite, 2011; Schrodt & Ledbetter, 2007; Shimkowski & Schrodt, 2012). Reliability for this measure was .84 in this study.

The third measure was Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein's (1983) Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). This measure uses 14 items to assess participants' stress levels over the previous month. Example items include "In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?" and "In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?" The measure uses a four-point frequency scale ranging from 0 *Never* to 4 *Very Often*. Scholars have previously demonstrated the reliability of the PSS with alphas ranging from .83 to .85 (Cohen et al., 1983; Schrodtt & Ledbetter, 2007; Shimkowski & Schrodtt, 2012). The measure produced an alpha reliability of .82 in this study.

Communicative emotion management strategies. This new measure was created and validated using results from the first study in this project. The process for assessing the newly applied measure is described below through initial item analysis as well as preliminary analysis.

Initial item analysis. The initial item pool consisted of 50 items created using the coding scheme found in Study 1. Each of the five subscales (i.e., Avoidance, Other-Centered Communication, Verbal Expression, Nonverbal Expression, and No Response) contained 10 items each. A large number of items was included initially to assure that all subscales would be assessed thoroughly, especially since there are currently no other similar scales. As DeVellis (2003) stated, a large pool of items can be seen as candidates for inclusion in the eventual final scale. Participants rated their communicative emotion management strategies using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 *Strongly Disagree* to 7 *Strongly Agree*.

Item quality for the new measure was first assessed for monotonic trace, which is an indication of the fit of an item to a particular subscale based on the linear plot of that item (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Item analysis is meant to identify the poorest items in scale development in terms of item fit to that subscale. Maintaining items that have positive monotonic relationships with the measured construct should help to create an overall subscale or scale that shares a linear relationship with the measured construct.

First, a total score was created for each of the five subscales by adding the items together. Then, the total scores were recoded into a set of 5 categories based on frequencies in order to plot the association between each item score and the subscale's total score. Following the direction of Schrodtt (2006) and Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), the researcher assessed monotonic trace by calculating scores for the five emotion management subscales using cutoff values to create five groups. The researcher obtained these cutoff values through descriptive statistics that automatically divided the sample into five equal parts using SPSS software (i.e., selecting the "cut points" function and indicating five equal groups). Each participant was then recoded and assigned to one of the five groups (e.g., rankings) for each subscale based on their total score for that particular dimension using the frequency analysis function.

Next, one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were run to plot the relationships for each subscale using the "means plot" direction. The item scores for each group were used as the criterion or dependent variables and each of the total grouping scores were used as predictor or factor variables to test for monotonic trace. Monotonic trace follows the assumption that higher scores on specific items should be related to higher scores on a

subscale (Shavelson, 1996). On the ANOVA plots, a positive relationship showed good monotonic trace, whereas no relationship or an inverse relationship showed poor monotonic trace, indicating that that particular item was not related well to the total score. Following this initial item analysis (see Appendix E for initial scale), three items (i.e., items 6, 10, and 26) from the Verbal Expression subscale were removed from the original item pool for failing to show sufficient monotonic trace. Factor analysis was run for the remaining 47 items.

Preliminary analyses. Factor analysis was used in investigating the remaining items in the scale after the initial item analysis. Factor analysis helps to uncover how many latent variables, or underlying constructs, exist in an item set by identifying the items that covary (DeVellis, 2003). Similar to a study conducted by Vangelisti et al. (2005), exploratory factor analysis was used instead of confirmatory factor analysis because previous research and findings have not delineated a certain number of factors associated with young adults' strategies for communicatively managing their emotions. According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), exploratory factor analysis examines factors for best fit (i.e., the most variance explained by the fewest number of factors) mathematically by condensing the factors then transforming them via rotation. While confirmatory factor analysis directly defines the number of factors based on previous theory, exploratory analysis instead defines the factors mathematically then allows for researcher interpretation (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Hence, exploratory factor analysis was best for this study.

A series of factor analyses were run for the entire scale as a whole. Gorsuch (1983) claimed that in order to analyze the entire scale with all of the items at once, factor analysis would necessitate having at least five participants per item. Since there were 50 initial items, obtaining 232 participants came very close and thus enabled this process. More importantly, collecting approximately 200 participants generally produces stable correlations and is the recommended number when attempting to produce findings that are generalizable (McCroskey & Young, 1979). DeVellis (2003) noted that even more modest sample sizes of 150 are often used in factor analysis during scale development projects. Thus, the scale was analyzed as a whole.

The scale was assessed using principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation (McCroskey & Young, 1979). According to DeVellis (2003), principal components analysis produces composite variables, or weighted sums of original scale items, which are grounded in the data and are linear transformations of the original variables. Varimax rotation was used during the principal components analysis.

Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) claimed that for rotation,

the most commonly used, is *varimax*. Varimax is a variance-maximizing procedure. The goal of varimax rotation is to maximize the variance of factor loadings by making high loadings higher and low ones lower for each factor (p. 625).

Varimax is a type of orthogonal rotation. Orthogonal rotation is used for factors that are uncorrelated or statistically independent of each other while oblique rotation assumes that the factors are correlated (DeVellis, 2003).

During the principal components factor analyses, a .60/.40 criterion was used. This method includes maintaining items whose primary loadings are at least .60 while those items can have no secondary loadings greater than .40 on any other factors. McCroskey and Young (1979) noted that this is a very conservative criterion for assessing item significance. Following Schrodts (2006) analysis, any items that showed either single factors or spurious factors were removed from that dimension in the analysis while the remaining items were then submitted iteratively to principal components factor analyses until the final set of items met the .60/.40 criterion. As recommended by Vangelisti et al. (2005), factors were dropped if the loadings were low or if they could load on more than one factor so that the results of this analysis' scree plot and eigenvalues identified the best factors or strategies describing the data from Study 1.

Eigenvalues and scree plots are now explained in more detail. Eigenvalues report how much information is captured by a factor based on the total amount of information in that set of items (DeVellis, 2003). The average item in a scale would contain 1 unit of information and would then have an eigenvalue of 1.0 or $1/k$ (k being the total number of items) based on the total variance in that set of items (DeVellis, 2003). Hence, principal components factor analysis is only selecting factors with eigenvalues of 1.0 or greater. According to Kaiser (1960), an eigenvalue of less than 1.0 should be removed because it does not contain sufficient information. Next, the scree test plots eigenvalues using successive factors where the amount of information in each factor is less than the previous factors (Cattell, 1966). According to Cattell (1966), the most valuable factors are located in the vertical part of the plot while the scree or less valuable factors are

located in the horizontal part of the plot, recommending that the scree be discarded where there is a sudden transition from vertical to horizontal on the chart.

Scale Development Results

The analysis originally produced an eight-factor solution. Factor analyses were run iteratively until obtaining the optimal number of items according to the data. In the first analysis, items 2, 3, 8, 14, 17, 24, 27, 36, 40, 41, and 47 were removed. In the second analysis, items 5, 9, 20, 22, 29, and 30 were removed, and in the third analysis, items 1, 12, and 45 were removed. In using the analysis output, eigenvalues, and scree plots to determine the optimal factor solution, 23 items were ultimately removed from analysis due to double or low loadings, suggesting that a 27-item solution was a good description of the data. Based on primary factor loadings, however, two factors (i.e., crying and other-centered communication) contained only two items each, which is not fruitful when trying to produce a reliable and generalizable scale. Thus, the two other-centered communication items (items 28 and 49) were removed as they did not conceptually fit into any of the remaining factor categories, thus producing a four-factor solution that still fit the .60/.40 criterion. In order to test the fit of the two items focused on crying, a scale score was created for the other nonverbal items as well as a scale score for the two crying items then a correlation was run. The correlation, while significant, was very weak ($r = .18$) so the two crying items (items 7 and 31) were also dropped, leaving a three-factor solution with 23 items that best fit the data.

The final three subscales included Verbal Expression, Nonverbal Expression, and Unresponsiveness. Table 2 contains the Cronbach's alpha reliability estimates, means,

standard deviations, and Pearson product-moment correlations for these three subscales. Tables 3-5 present the primary factor loadings for each subscale. The alpha reliability of this new measure is .78. Appendix F contains the final 23-item measure.

The first factor called Unresponsiveness accounted for 40.55% of the variance and contains 10 items ($\alpha = .94$) that center on listening silently, acknowledging the conversation at hand without engaging in it, and having no reaction during the immediate conversation. Participants with higher scores on this subscale more often avoided getting involved in the divorce-related conversation, choosing not to respond at all in the interaction or discussion. The second factor labeled Nonverbal Expression includes 7 items ($\alpha = .90$) revolving around facial expressions, body language, and hand gestures. Higher scores on this subscale indicated a greater propensity to communicate emotions about parents' divorce nonverbally without words. The third factor labeled Verbal Expression includes 6 items ($\alpha = .90$) reflecting conversations, openly sharing feelings, and using words to describe thoughts and emotions. Participants with higher scores on this subscale more often verbally articulated their emotions about their parents' divorce or divorce-related issues.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix of Emotion Management Strategies Factors

Factors/Subscales	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	1	2	3
1. Verbal Expression	4.66	1.32	.90	-	-	-
2. Nonverbal Expression	4.21	1.27	.90	.44**	-	-
3. Unresponsiveness	2.64	1.28	.94	-.55**	-.13*	-

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Table 4
Factor Loadings for Unresponsiveness Subscale

Item	Loading
13) ... say or do absolutely nothing.	.75
15) ... have no response in the interaction.	.71
18) ... listen silently without any response.	.72
25) ... do not react or respond at all.	.83
33) ... sit there without saying anything.	.87
34)...acknowledge the conversation but do not take part in it.	.81
39) ... listen without doing or saying anything.	.79
43) ... choose not to respond during the interaction.	.83
46) ... do not take part in the conversation at all.	.82
50) ... choose not to express my feelings at all.	.80

$\lambda = 9.33$

Variance accounted for: 40.55%

Note. These are the primary factor loadings using principal components analysis with Varimax rotation.

Directions asked participants to read each statement that completed the phrase “When I experience emotions while communicating with someone about my parents’ divorce, I...” then indicate the degree to which they agreed with each statement.

Table 5
Factor Loadings for the Nonverbal Expression Subscale

Item	Loading
11) ... use facial expressions to express how I feel.	.78
19) ... convey my feelings through my body language.	.78
23) ... communicate my emotions through the way I look at the other person.	.75
35) ... communicate my feelings through faces I make.	.83
38) ... express my emotions using my hands or hand gestures.	.69
44) ... use my body or body movements to express my feelings.	.81
48) ... let my facial expressions do the talking.	.71
$\lambda = 4.42$	
Variance accounted for: 19.20%	

Note. These are the primary factor loadings using principal components analysis with Varimax rotation.

Directions asked participants to read each statement that completed the phrase “When I experience emotions while communicating with someone about my parents’ divorce, I...” then indicate the degree to which they agreed with each statement.

Table 6
Factor Loadings for the Verbal Expression Subscale

Item	Loading
4) ... tell the other person how I am feeling.	.66
16) ... say what I am thinking.	.76
21) ... openly express my feelings through my words.	.74
32) ... engage in an open conversation about my feelings.	.79
37) ... share my feelings with the other person.	.76
42) ... express my thoughts verbally.	.78
$\lambda = 1.68$	
Variance accounted for: 7.30%	

Note. These are the primary factor loadings using principal components analysis with Varimax rotation.

Directions asked participants to read each statement that completed the phrase “When I experience emotions while communicating with someone about my parents’ divorce, I...” then indicate the degree to which they agreed with each statement.

The three subscales of Verbal Expressiveness, Nonverbal Expressiveness, and Unresponsiveness collectively help to explain young adult children's predominant communicative means of managing emotions about their parents' divorce. Some young adults choose to utilize their words to express their thoughts or feelings while others use their nonverbal expressions or silence to navigate emotions when involved in a divorce-related conversation. In addition to creating and refining this new measurement, Study 2 also aimed to apply the measure in examining parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's mental well-being. The analyses and results of this investigation are now discussed.

CHAPTER EIGHT: STUDY TWO RESULTS

Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and Pearson product-moment correlations for the variables included in the study are reported in Table 7. The first research question sought to determine the relationship between the frequencies of parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's specific strategies for communicatively managing their emotions about the divorce. A linear regression was computed for each strategy (i.e., subscale) for communicatively managing emotions.

Table 7
Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for all Variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	(α)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Verbal Expression	4.66	1.32	.90	-						
2. Nonverbal Expression	4.28	1.28	.90	.44**	-					
3. Unresponsiveness	2.64	1.28	.94	-.55**	-.13*	-				
4. Divorce Disclosures	2.42	.73	.95	.22**	.10	-.02	-			
5. Self-Esteem	5.21	1.09	.87	.22**	-.02	-.23**	-.01	-		
6. Mental Health	2.79	.59	.84	.06	-.15*	-.20**	-.12	.45**	-	
7. Perceived Stress	3.08	.58	.82	.20**	-.04	-.18**	-.12	.61**	.61**	-

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

The first linear regression indicated a significant positive relationship between parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's use of verbal expression as a means of managing their divorce-related emotions, $R = .22$, $F(1, 225) = 11.10$, $p < .01$, $beta = .39$. The linear regression produced a non-significant relationship between divorce disclosures and young adults' nonverbal expression as an emotion management strategy, $R = .10$, $F(1, 226) = 2.12$, $p = .15$, $beta = .17$. Thus, while there is a small positive relationship, that relationship is not significant. The third linear regression produced a non-significant relationship between divorce disclosures and young adults' unresponsiveness during the interaction, $R = .02$, $F(1, 226) = 11.10$, $p = .79$, $beta = -.03$. Once again, while there is a small inverse relationship, that relationship is not statistically significant.

The second research question asked about the relationship between the frequency of parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's mental well-being. To analyze this research question, a linear regression was computed. This produced a small but non-significant inverse relationship, $R = .10$, $F(1, 225) = 2.35$, $p = .13$, $beta = -.35$. Thus, while mental well-being and parents' divorce disclosures are inversely related, that relationship is not statistically significant.

The third research question asked about the association between young adult children's use of certain communicative emotion management strategies and their mental well-being. This research question was analyzed using a multiple regression with mental well-being as the dependent variable, whereas the independent variables included each of the three emotion management strategies from the subscales for the new measure (i.e.,

verbal expression, nonverbal expression, and unresponsiveness). The linear combination of verbal and nonverbal expressiveness and unresponsiveness was significantly related to young adults' mental well-being, $F(3, 221) = 6.50, p < .001, R = .29$, indicating that approximately 8% of the variance in mental well-being can be accounted for by this linear combination. Verbal expression ($\beta = .17, t = 2.02, p < .05$), nonverbal expression ($\beta = -.17, t = -2.34, p < .05$), and unresponsiveness ($\beta = -.16, t = -2.05, p < .05$) all contributed significantly to this relationship.

The fourth research question asked how certain communicative strategies for managing emotions about divorce might moderate the relationship between the frequency of parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's mental well-being. This question was analyzed using a series of hierarchical regressions. The variables were centered (i.e., subtracting the arithmetic mean from all values for that variable, providing a mean of zero) prior to entering them into a regression equation. Following Aiken and West (1991), an interaction term was created for each of the emotion management strategies and frequency of parents' divorce disclosures. This is done by multiplying each subscale (i.e., verbal expression, nonverbal expression, and unresponsiveness) by the scale score for parents' divorce disclosures to create three new variables.

In total, nine hierarchical regressions were run to get a better look at the relationships between all of the variables. In all regressions, the terms were centered before entering them into the first step while the interaction term of those two terms was entered into the second step of the regression. Thus, the first step in the regression included disclosures and one of the emotion management strategies as the predictors

while the second predictor entered included the interaction term of those two variables.

The results are listed in Table 8.

Table 8
Hierarchical Regressions Testing Moderation

Moderating Variables	Self-Esteem			Mental Health			Perceived Stress		
	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>p</i>
1. Verbal Expression	3.74	.05	.90	1.90	.03	.51	5.38	.07	.75
2. Nonverbal Expression	.24	.00	.46	2.42	.03	.61	1.48	.02	.20
3. Un-responsiveness	4.12	.05	.47	4.63	.06	.27	4.19	.05	.13

Note: All regressions were run with parents' divorce disclosures as the independent variable.

None of the regressions were significant at the $p < .05$ level.

In total, nine hierarchical regressions were run to gain a better understanding of the relationships between divorce disclosures, emotion management strategies, and young adults' mental well-being. In the first regression, the emotion strategy of verbal expression was examined as a moderator of divorce disclosures and young adults' self-esteem. The results did not indicate a statistically significant moderation, $F(3, 223) = 3.74, p < .05, R^2 = .05, \Delta F = .02, p = .90, \Delta R^2 = .00$, interaction term: $\beta = .01, p = .90$. In the second regression, the emotion strategy of verbal expression was examined as a moderator of divorce disclosures and young adults' mental health symptoms. The results did not indicate a statistically significant moderation, $F(3, 223) = 1.90, p = .13, R^2 = .03, \Delta F = .44, p = .51, \Delta R^2 = .00$, interaction term: $\beta = .05, p = .51$. In the third regression, the

emotion strategy of verbal expression was examined as a moderator of divorce disclosures and young adults' perceived stress. The results did not indicate a statistically significant moderation, $F(3, 221) = 5.38, p < .01, R^2 = .07, \Delta F = .10, p = .75, \Delta R^2 = .00$, interaction term: $\beta = -.02, p = .75$.

In the fourth regression, the emotion strategy of nonverbal expression was examined as a moderator of divorce disclosures and young adults' self-esteem. The results did not indicate a statistically significant moderation, $F(3, 224) = .24, p = .87, R^2 = .00, \Delta F = .55, p = .46, \Delta R^2 = .00$, interaction term: $\beta = -.05, p = .46$. In the fifth regression, the emotion strategy of nonverbal expression was examined as a moderator of divorce disclosures and young adults' mental health symptoms. The results did not indicate a statistically significant moderation, $F(3, 224) = 2.42, p = .07, R^2 = .03, \Delta F = .26, p = .61, \Delta R^2 = .00$, interaction term: $\beta = -.03, p = .61$. In the sixth regression, the emotion strategy of nonverbal expression was examined as a moderator of divorce disclosures and young adults' perceived stress. The results did not indicate a statistically significant moderation, $F(3, 222) = 1.48, p = .22, R^2 = .02, \Delta F = 1.65, p = .20, \Delta R^2 = .01$, interaction term: $\beta = -.09, p = .20$.

In the seventh regression, the emotion strategy of unresponsiveness was examined as a moderator of divorce disclosures and young adults' self-esteem. The results did not indicate a statistically significant moderation, $F(3, 224) = 4.12, p < .01, R^2 = .05, \Delta F = .53, p = .47, \Delta R^2 = .00$, interaction term: $\beta = .05, p = .47$. In the eighth regression, the emotion strategy of unresponsiveness was examined as a moderator of divorce disclosures and young adults' mental health symptoms. The results did not indicate a

statistically significant moderation, $F(3, 224) = 4.63, p < .01, R^2 = .06, \Delta F = 1.24, p = .27, \Delta R^2 = .01$, interaction term: $\beta = .07, p = .27$. In the ninth regression, the emotion strategy of unresponsiveness was examined as a moderator of divorce disclosures and young adults' perceived stress. The results did not indicate a statistically significant moderation, $F(3, 222) = 4.19, p < .01, R^2 = .05, \Delta F = 2.31, p = .13, \Delta R^2 = .01$, interaction term: $\beta = .10, p = .13$.

None of the nine regressions produced significant results. Hence, young adults' strategies for communicatively managing their emotions about divorce (i.e., verbal expression, nonverbal expression, and unresponsiveness) did not serve as a moderator of parents' divorce disclosures and their mental well-being (i.e., self-esteem, mental health symptoms, and perceived stress). Implications of these results are now examined.

CHAPTER NINE: STUDY TWO DISCUSSION

The principal goal of this study was to develop and implement a new measure of young adults' communicative strategies for managing emotions about their parents' divorce. The secondary goal of this study was to assess the impact of parents' divorce disclosures on those strategies for managing their divorce-related emotions and to then examine those strategies as a potential moderator in the relationship between divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being. Because parents' divorce disclosures place children at risk emotionally and because the communication of emotions is essential to processing interpersonal interactions and relationships (Afifi, Schrodt, & McManus, 2009; Amato & Afifi, 2006; Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001), the creation and application of a new measure to assess these family communication occurrences was imperative. Study 2 produced several worthwhile implications for family communication about divorce and emotions. The discussion of these results highlights the theoretical and practical implications as well as provides suggestions for future use of the newly developed instrument and further research on this topic.

Instrument Development

One of the chief goals of Study 2 was to create, validate, and test a new measure of young adults' communicative strategies for managing emotions about their parents' divorce. Using qualitative data from Study 1, the researcher derived an initial item pool, applied the measure in an empirical study, then used exploratory factor analysis to reveal

three worthy subscales. These subscales included verbal expression, nonverbal expression, and unresponsiveness as communicative strategies that young adults use to manage emotions about their parents' divorce.

The primary reason for creating a new measure was that scholars currently lack a way to measure and assess young adults' strategies for communicating their emotions in the specific context of parents' divorce. While the field of psychology has focused on the internal management and regulation of emotions (Gross & John, 2003), emotion regulation theorizing is lacking for two reasons. First, it is not context specific. In order to better understand how young adult children process divorce-related communication specifically, it is important to focus in on that context. Second, emotion regulation does not account for the array of communicative options for managing emotions. The identified subscales of verbal and nonverbal expression as well as unresponsiveness represent specific ways in which young adult children might choose to manage their divorce-related emotions when interacting with others. The communicative management of emotions is critical to individual and social success and functioning.

The ability to measure how individuals communicate emotions (or lack thereof) is key to understanding how they process difficult emotion-eliciting situations. Scholars have noted that communicating and expressing one's emotions, however, serves to increase self-acceptance and understanding as well as relationships with others (Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001). When individuals instead suppress their emotions, they often view themselves as less authentic toward others (Gross & John, 2003). By creating a new measure, this study may help bridge the space between research on

divorce, family communication, and emotion regulation, and provide scholars working in these areas with a new tool for assessment. In addition to offering up a new instrument, this study delved into one common type of family communication following the separation of parents, divorce disclosures.

Divorce Disclosures and Mental Well-Being

The relationship between frequency of parents' divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being is rather ambiguous, even when examining previous research. Following a divorce, parents may struggle with how to talk with their children about the divorce and how much to reveal in those conversations (Afifi, Schrodt, & McManus, 2009). Divorce disclosures to children are certainly prevalent as parents seek out support following the divorce. Unfortunately, "the greatest danger in talking to intimates is the burden may be too great. Given how powerful the feelings surrounding divorce tend to be, it is tempting to fall back on the only remaining intimates in your life – your children" (Planalp, 1999, p. 122). The results of Study 2 indicated, however, that the mental outcomes for children receiving divorce disclosures are not always clear-cut. As parents decide to reveal more information regarding the divorce to their young adult children, results of Study 2 indicated that the impact of the frequency of those disclosures on children's mental well-being is not buffered by the ways in which children communicatively manage their emotions. Various facets of the relationships that were tested help to illuminate the role of divorce disclosures and emotion management strategies when examining young adults' mental well-being.

Impact of divorce disclosures. Divorce disclosures may impact child recipients positively or negatively. Afifi, Schrodts, and McManus (2009) noted that disclosures may lead to closer parent-child relationships or may become harmful to the children's mental health. Findings from this study corroborated this notion. One implication of this study is that the relationship between parents' divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being was not statistically significant at either the individual level (i.e., was not significantly correlated with either self-esteem, perceived stress, or mental health symptoms individually) or at the composite level (i.e., was not significantly related to mental well-being as a combination of self-esteem, perceived stress, and mental health symptoms). While the DDM supports the notion that unwanted disclosures can increase children's feelings of being caught between parents (Afifi, Schrodts, & McManus, 2009), young adults' stress, self-esteem, and mental health symptom levels were not significantly impacted by the frequency of their parents' divorce disclosures in this study. Several reasons exist for this finding, shedding more light on the nature of divorce disclosures within divorced families. These reasons span the timing of the divorce and the relationship between parent and child.

Disclosures and timing. One possibility for the lack of association is based on time. The average length of time that parents had been divorced in this study was almost 11 years. Perhaps by this time young adults are used to receiving their parents' disclosures and do not allow that type of communication to impact their stress, mental health, or self-esteem levels as much anymore. McManus and Nussbaum (2011) noted that individuals are still impacted by the stress of a divorce long after the divorce is made

official. It is possible that children were more deeply impacted by disclosures when the divorce was relatively new to them but have since become accustomed to listening without absorbing the potential negative impacts. In addition to timing, some young adults may feel better prepared to become disclosure recipients than others.

Nature of disclosures. Another potential reason for the lack of association between disclosures and mental well-being could be that some young adult children desire divorce disclosures while others would rather not become recipients. The distinct difference in these opposing reactions may have contributed to the finding that disclosures did not ultimately impact their mental well-being in this study. For instance, disclosures regarding the ex-spousal relationship are often considered to be more negative by children while they consider parents going into more depth on seemingly neutral topics to also be more negatively valenced (Afifi, Afifi, & Coho, 2009; Afifi & McManus, 2010). Thus, some of the disclosures discussed by young adults in this study may have been more negatively valenced than other types of disclosures, leading some children to experience decreased mental well-being while not affecting well-being at all for other children. Perhaps young adults' mental well-being is not impacted by divorce disclosures because some children value the disclosures and find more happiness than stress when receiving disclosures. Part of the value children may feel in becoming recipients could depend on the parent-child relationship.

Disclosures and parent-child relationships. The parent-child relationship may impact the eventual impact of disclosures quite a bit. The average age of young adult children in the present study was almost 23 years old. Just as parents might view their

older children as confidants (Koerner et al., 2002), young adult children in their mid-twenties may likewise view their parents more as friends. If so, receiving information about the divorce may feel less threatening to them and would then be less likely to impact their stress, self-esteem, or mental health symptoms. Afifi and McManus (2010) found that parents' negative disclosures regarding the other parent increased adolescents' feelings that they shared a closer relationship with that parent. Young adults may view parents' disclosures as opportunities to break down parent-child boundaries left from childhood while building more mutually beneficial new relationships with their parents. Additionally, as children grow older they may wish to know more about their parents' relationship as their own relationships commence, deteriorate, or lead into marriage.

Rather than viewing disclosures as harmful to themselves, perhaps young adults are better able to process the disclosures in a way that removes them from feeling implicated or impacted. Children typically become less dependent on their parents as they age, potentially detaching them more and more from feeling the divorce disclosures will necessarily entangle them or cause added pressure in their lives. This leads to the vast array of children's perceptions regarding divorce disclosures.

Children have vastly different perceptions of their parents' divorce disclosures. In Afifi and McManus's (2010) study on parents' divorce disclosures and children (ages 10-18), some adolescents felt the disclosures were unwanted but

seemed to bond through their disclosures. A few children also did not appear to be bothered, but grew closer through their catharsis and the adversity they faced and appreciated the parents' openness about the divorce (p. 97).

Hence, divorce disclosures can be both positive and negative for children (Afifi & McManus, 2010). Considering the functionally dark and bright side nature of post-divorce communication, Schrodt and Braithwaite (2011) noted that both divorce disclosures and inappropriate disclosures may lead to feelings of triangulation (i.e., the dark side of post-divorce communication) while also reducing uncertainty and fostering closeness (i.e., the bright side).

Some children may appreciate becoming the recipients of more information while others may feel stress over that role. Some children might feel that divorce disclosures bring them and the disclosing parent closer together while others may instead feel caught between their parents as if they are being forced to choose sides (Afifi & McManus, 2010; Afifi, Schrodt, & McManus, 2009). Moreover, Schrodt and Afifi (2007) posited that some children would rather reduce uncertainty through becoming disclosure recipients than to wonder about their parents' relationship. Thus, there is a great deal of difference in young adults' views on divorce disclosures in relation to their well-being in terms of mental health symptoms, feelings of stress, or impact on their self-esteem, providing one possible explanation for lack of moderation in this study. Another facet of family communication that did impact their mental well-being, however, included their strategies for managing divorce-related emotions.

Emotion Management Strategies and Mental Well-Being

The association between children's communicative strategies for managing emotions and their mental well-being was also examined more closely. One implication from this study is that young adults' strategies for managing their divorce-related

emotions significantly impact their mental well-being. In divorced families, about 8% of young adults' mental well-being can be accounted for by their use of verbal expression, nonverbal expression, and unresponsiveness as strategies for dealing with their emotions. In other words, young adults' feelings of stress, self-esteem, and mental health are impacted by the strategies that they choose when dealing with emotions related to their parents' divorce.

Verbal expression and mental well-being. Specifically, young adult children reported increased mental well-being when they utilized verbal expression as a means of managing their emotions related to their parents' divorce. Directly stating their feelings and expressing their thoughts using words via talking or yelling positively predicted increased self-esteem as well as decreased stress and mental health symptoms. Planalp (1999) noted that individuals may share their emotions with close others or intimates because they might be sharing in the same emotional experience and may be more accepting of each other's faults or weaknesses. Hence, young adult children may feel a sense of relief when verbally revealing their feelings.

Perhaps young adults feel an intimate such as a parent, sibling, or grandparent is the only person who will understand their reactions, hence, sharing those feelings could be cathartic. Additionally, young adult children may feel that the parent or close other to whom they verbally express feelings is accepting of them and will not judge them for their emotional reactions. Individuals often turn to those close to them when experiencing threatening or stressful situations in order to receive support, help, or comfort (Collins & Feeney, 2000). Sharing a close relationship with someone may foster a sense of being

able to convey one's true self without fear of reprisal because close relationships (e.g., family members, best friends, romantic partners) generally provide a safe haven for those invested in the relationship. Expressing pent-up feelings, then, may be a release when resting in the knowledge that the recipient has their best interest at heart.

Verbal expression may increase mental well-being through help from the recipient of their expressions or through the process of expression. Burleson and Goldsmith (1998) claimed that conversation acts as a channel through

which a distressed person can express, elaborate, and clarify relevant thoughts and feelings. As a result of concretizing and exploring thoughts and feelings, the distressed person may be led to modify goals, views of the situation, and/or coping efforts (p. 260).

The mere communication of one's feelings can help to attach words and labels to feelings and add clarity when in a time of confusion. Through stating their thoughts or emotions, young adult children may be better prepared to successfully cope with their feelings. Burleson and Goldsmith (1998) added that altering perceptions can help individuals reappraise a situation and possibly improve their affective state. Thus, describing one's feelings can help to refine goals and create a more positive and hopeful outlook.

Unresponsiveness and mental well-being. Unresponsiveness was also shown to impact young adults' mental well-being. Young adults who use unresponsiveness as an emotion management strategy report a slight increase in their stress and mental health symptoms and decrease in their self-esteem. Suppressing one's expression of emotions has previously been linked with increases in depression and decreases in self-esteem and overall life satisfaction (Gross & John, 2003; Larsen et al., 2013). According to the

DDM, some children try to avoid their parents' relational discussions because they are not sure what to say and want to shield themselves from the potential distress surrounding such talks (Afifi, Schrodt, & McManus, 2009). While not expressing one's feelings in any way during an emotional conversation may feel like an easy or comfortable option in the moment, it may leave young adult children feeling distraught in the long run.

Young adults may believe that unresponsiveness frees them from taking sides or contributing to an argument between their parents, but this comes at a cost to their mental health. Scholars have previously posited that expressing emotions that differ from one's true feelings can lead to burnout and feelings of inauthenticity (Dieffendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Gross & John, 2003). It stands to reason that feeling dissatisfied and inauthentic over the course of numerous divorce-related conversations wherein the child does not express his or her feelings would be associated with decreased mental well-being. Explicitly, self-esteem levels may decrease the longer young adult children remain unresponsive as they may not be experiencing the same feelings of empowerment that those who make their thoughts known experience. Stress and mental health symptoms also increase as they remain unresponsive, keeping their emotions to themselves during conversations related to their parents' divorce. Simply listening may help children to feel they are being part of the conversation, but not expressing their emotions ultimately detracts from their mental well-being.

Nonverbal expression and mental well-being. When young adults choose to utilize nonverbal expression of emotions such as facial expressions and body language when dealing with their parents' divorce, there is a small but meaningful inverse

relationship with their mental well-being. In the DDM, Afifi, Schrodt, and McManus (2009) noted that children may respond to parents' divorce disclosures using aggression. While nonverbal expression such as eye rolling or storming away may not preclude any kind of verbal or physical aggression, perhaps such tendencies are a form of passive aggressiveness. Canary et al. (1998) claimed that expressions of anger often include aggression and that anger prototypes often involve negative and aggressive responses. In creating a cluster analysis of prototypical anger accounts, Shaver et al. (1987) labeled one grouping "nonverbal disapproval" while this cluster included stomping, slamming doors, frowning, gritting teeth, and making unpleasant facial expressions. Communicating difficult emotions nonverbally may constitute an aggressive act in that relationship. For instance, Guerrero (1994) posited that passive-aggression involves actions that are both indirect and threatening such as giving a dirty look or leaving the place of interaction.

Passive aggression shares an inverse relationship with mental well-being.

Guerrero (1994) noted that passive aggression occurs when individuals have strong feelings but are not willing to or are not able to directly express those feelings to another, instead directing their energy into indirect forms of expression. Not fully expressing one's emotions can detract from individuals' mental health. For instance, strategies that are passive aggressive in nature can lead to breakdowns in communication and ultimately detract from relational satisfaction (Bach, 1971; Guerrero, 1994). Moreover, Guerrero (1994) posited that people who bottle up their anger may experience increased heart rate and blood pressure while leaving an anger-eliciting situation unresolved may further deteriorate their interpersonal relationship. Hence, young adults exercising this means of

nonverbal expression could feel more stress and mental health symptoms as well as decreased self-esteem as they drive a wedge deeper into a close relationship through their passive aggressive expressions. These young adult children might not feel they can fully express themselves but are attempting to show feelings at the price of their mental well-being and relational satisfaction. Although the association between young adults' emotion management strategies and their mental well-being is meaningful, inspecting the relationship between parents' divorce disclosures and these strategies may provide more insight as to why the strategies do not function as a buffer.

Divorce Disclosures and Emotion Management Strategies

The relationship between divorce disclosures and children's communicative strategies for managing emotions was also examined more closely. A chief implication in this study is that a significant positive relationship exists between the frequency of parents' divorce disclosures and young adults' use of verbal expression to manage their emotions, but not their use of nonverbal expression or unresponsiveness. In other words, young adult children are more likely to verbally express their feelings and thoughts the more their parents disclose to them about divorce-related topics.

Verbal expression following disclosures. Divorce disclosures spur increased verbal expression of young adults' emotions. Parents may disclose divorce-related information to their children such as information about finances, the coparenting relationship, or the ex-spouses' personality (Afifi, Afifi, & Coho, 2009). The more parents reveal this type of information to their young adult children, the more likely their children are to verbally express their emotions in an effort to manage their feelings. This

might include voicing their emotions directly to one of their parents or perhaps verbally expressing those feelings to a sibling, close friend, or family member. Based on the new measure developed in this research project, verbal expression can include engaging in open conversations about one's thoughts or feelings and openly expressing one's emotions through words. In the DDM, the theoretical model guiding this study, Afifi, Schrodt, and McManus (2009) claimed that young adults may respond to parents' divorce disclosures with "fight" or "flight" responses including avoidance, direct confrontation, or aggression. Only verbal expression, which would constitute their idea of confrontation, was significant in the present study.

Reasons for verbal expression. It is important to consider why young adult children are more likely to verbally express their emotions when their parents disclose information about the divorce to them. Young adults are less likely to utilize the other two strategies including nonverbal expression of emotion (e.g., facial expressions, body movements, or hand gestures) and unresponsiveness (e.g., not responding, keeping quiet, or having no reaction) when the frequency of their parents' divorce disclosures increases. Oftentimes, parents are unsure how much to share with their children about their divorce (Afifi & McManus, 2010). Verbally expressing their feelings or thoughts to their parents may provide young adults an opportunity for setting limits or boundaries for their parents on how much they are comfortable receiving. Moreover, disclosures can easily become problematic when they contain inappropriate information, worries, or complaints for children to receive (Afifi, McManus, et al., 2007; Koerner et al., 2002). Verbally expressing that the disclosures are unwanted or that being the recipient of the disclosures

is causing unwanted feelings such as sadness, anger, or pain may seem like the best option to young adult children wanting things to change. Perhaps they believe nonverbal responses or the lack of any response would not help to change the situation as these methods may leave room for ambiguity and uncertainty on the recipient's part. Furthermore, it is possible that young adults wish to be as clear as possible about their emotional reactions and feel that verbally doing so is the best available option.

Verbal expression surrounding divorce disclosures may provide the most direct path for tackling potentially emotionally threatening situations. Divorce disclosures can function as both an asset and a hindrance to the parent-child relationship. Some children feel more closeness to and satisfaction with a disclosing parent, however, they also report increased feelings of depression and anxiety (Afifi & McManus, 2010). It is possible that verbally expressing their emotions gives young adult children the chance to clearly express themselves in communicating where they feel those disclosures land on the spectrum of helpful to hurtful. Afifi and McManus (2010) claimed that until children confront their parents about disclosures, parents are often unaware of the impact of those disclosures. Considering that children often feel caught in divorced families as parents discuss more about the other parent or the ex-spousal relationship with them (Schrodt & Afifi, 2007), it stands to reason that the use of verbal expression as a means of managing emotions related to the divorce would be a helpful option to children encountering such triangulation. Verbally acknowledging feelings and thoughts may feel empowering and provide a potential way to free themselves from being caught between parents.

Disclosures, Emotions, and Mental Well-Being

While verbal expression shares a meaningful association with the frequency of parents' divorce disclosures, neither verbal expression, nonverbal expression, nor unresponsiveness ultimately alters the relationship between disclosures and young adults' mental well-being. Hence, a closer look is now taken at these strategies individually.

Verbal expression strategy. First, the use of verbal expression did not moderate the relationship between divorce disclosures and young adults' self-esteem levels, mental health symptoms, or perceived stress in this study. While verbally expressing one's feelings about parents' divorce disclosures might alleviate some pressure or provide clarity for the child, the relationship between disclosures and their mental well-being does not depend on the use of this strategy. Although verbal expression was found to significantly predict young adults' increased mental well-being in this study, its impact is not strong enough to increase or decrease the effect of parents' divorce disclosures on their stress, self-esteem, or mental health symptoms. Planalp (1999) posited that sharing feelings with close others may reinforce unwanted emotions if others feed into them. Thus, verbally expressing emotions could be helpful in terms of a child framing his or her communication desires with the parent surrounding future divorce disclosures, but could also be harmful if the parent's response only serves to increase the feelings of distress, hurt, or anger that the child may have communicated. Even if young adults verbalize their feelings about the divorce or the divorce disclosures, the eventual impact of the divorce-related communication on their mental well-being does not change.

Although young adults are more likely to verbally express their feelings the more often their parent discloses, and even though verbal expression positively predicts their increased mental well-being, perhaps young adults differentiate between the emotional effects of verbalizing their feelings and the emotional effects stemming from disclosures. For instance, if a mother discloses to her young adult daughter about the ex-spousal relationship, the daughter may express her feelings of sadness upon hearing the disclosure and feel good (i.e., less stress, increased self-esteem, and fewer mental health symptoms) upon directly stating her feelings and being honest with her mother. However, the daughter may still feel disturbed by the divorce disclosure, regardless of the fact that she successfully communicated her emotions to the discloser in that instance. In other words, the possibility that young adult children may distinguish between the benefits of direct emotional expression and the feelings following a divorce disclosure may help to explain why no moderation occurred.

Nonverbal expression strategy. The use of nonverbal expression did not moderate the association between divorce disclosures and young adults' self-esteem levels, mental health symptoms, or perceived stress. In other words, young adults' facial expressions, body language, and physical movements such as leaving the room do not alter the association between divorce disclosures and their mental well-being. Findings from this study indicate that children are less likely to use forms of nonverbal expression as opposed to verbalization when their parents disclose to them. Cosnier, Dols, and Fernandez (1986) claimed that the emotions of joy and anger are feelings people typically talk through while people tend to keep silent about feelings of sadness and fear.

Considering that many young adults probably feel hurt and afraid following a divorce disclosure, it makes sense that they might be less likely to vocalize their thoughts and feelings.

As discussed previously, nonverbal expression shares a meaningful inverse relationship with mental well-being. Thus, when young adults communicate their feelings nonverbally, they are decreasing their chances for better mental well-being as passive aggressive strategies tend to encourage communication deterioration and fulfillment in relationships (Bach, 1971; Guerrero, 1994). Because nonverbal expression does not ultimately serve to increase young adults' mental well-being, it may simply be a form of immediate expression that young adults use in the spur of the moment and not as a tool that will mitigate any impact parents' disclosures have on their self-esteem, mental health, or stress levels. Therefore, nonverbal expression might function as a tool for self-expression, but one that does not bear much weight in altering any impact that children feel from becoming divorce disclosure recipients. It is possible that nonverbal expression operates as more of an unplanned reaction in the moment rather than young adults feeling any cognitive or emotional differences by responding nonverbally during a parent's divorce disclosure. Therefore, one might not expect for nonverbal expressions of emotion to alter the relationship between disclosures and young adults' mental well-being.

Unresponsiveness strategy. Finally, the use of unresponsiveness did not moderate the relationship between divorce disclosures and young adults' self-esteem levels, mental health symptoms, or perceived stress. This means that listening without saying something or having no response during an interaction does not alter the

relationship between disclosures and mental well-being. There are a host of reasons why young adults would choose unresponsiveness as a strategy for managing their divorce-related emotions. Some young adult children may not want to show they are weak by expressing disapproval or disagreement. Others may feel that speaking or displaying emotions would create more difficulty in the relationship or foretell increased distress for themselves. For example, communicating emotions with someone who is sharing that emotion may not lead to any fresh perspectives regarding the emotion-eliciting situation (Planalp, 1999). In other words, some young adult children may feel that revealing emotions about their parents' divorce disclosures will not help them in the long run to change the situation or receive any solace through sharing their feelings. If a parent cannot separate his or her experience from the child's experience, that parent may not be able to comfort the child or help the child process the information in a different way. If a young adult child has already realized this about the parent through years of experience and growing up in the household, he or she may not even attempt to communicate feelings.

Because unresponsiveness does little to get young adult children involved in a divorce-related discussion, it stands to reason that any impacts of divorce disclosures on their mental well-being would not be mitigated by using this strategy. While young adults are able to process their parents' divorce disclosures internally by not responding outwardly, findings from this study indicate that unresponsiveness decreases their mental well-being. Perhaps the lack of response does little to change how young adults process their parents' disclosures in light of their mental functioning. When children choose not

to respond or express their emotions, they still experience the full impact, be it positive or negative, of their parents' divorce disclosures on their mental health, stress, and feelings of self-esteem. Thus, unresponsiveness neither magnifies nor decreases the degree of impact that disclosures have on their mental well-being. Perhaps unresponsiveness does not act as a buffer because those who choose this strategy do not think they have an opportunity to impact the discussion anyway. It is possible that the young adults who choose to be unresponsive may already feel as though they are not capable of altering the effects of their parents' divorce disclosures, otherwise they might express themselves in some way. Unresponsiveness does little to alter this association and therefore, does not function as a moderator.

In addition to the creation of this new measure, findings from Study 2 also produced several theoretical and practical implications. It also highlighted several strengths, weaknesses, and directions for future research which are now explained.

Conclusion

Overall, these two studies contributed to the growing body of research on family communication surrounding divorce and shed light on the need to continue investigating the role of emotions in those interactions. Because many family systems end in divorce, it is important to consider the ways in which children in these families can endure these changes in a healthy way. As Andersen and Guerrero (1998) noted, the majority of emotional experiences are preceded by interpersonal interaction, be they real, anticipated, or imagined. Therefore, grounding studies of emotion communication in specific types of interactions, such as conversations surrounding divorce, is necessary in framing and

providing context for the types of communication that individuals use. This leads to the practical implications arising from this study.

Practical Implications

Divorce necessarily involves emotional conversations as parents and children discuss what has happened, what the future of their family will look like, and what changes will occur. The current research project is meaningful considering “that the origins, development, experience, and deployment of emotions are inherently communicative” (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998, p. 49). While much of the emotional experience may indeed be rooted in communication, little has been examined previously concerning the ways in which young adults communicate emotions about their parents’ divorce. Communication provides individuals with words to assign to their feelings as well as a means to express those feelings to others. The communication of emotions surrounding parents’ divorce is often sensitive in nature, bringing mixed feelings such as guilt, fear, relief, anger, disappointment, happiness, embarrassment, or sadness. As indicated in Study 1, young adult children subscribe to a number of different means of communicating such emotions with their parents and close others. Namely, they use verbal expression, nonverbal forms of expression, and unresponsiveness in communicating their feelings during interactions involving discussions about their parents’ divorce.

The use of the three types of emotion management strategies impact young adult children in diverse ways. In Study 2, results indicated that young adults are more likely to use verbal expressions to manage their emotions rather than nonverbal expressions or

unresponsiveness when their parents disclose to them about their divorce. Moreover, these results also showed that verbal expression increases their mental well-being while nonverbal expression and unresponsiveness decrease their mental well-being. Hence, it is not only the communication of feelings (through verbal, visual, or silent forms of communication) that is important regarding how well individuals can manage emotions. This study showed that specific types of emotion-related communication, such as expressing both positive and negative emotions using words, are ultimately more effective than other types of communication when attempting to increase one's overall mental health. Because expressing emotions can help people become more self-aware and build closer relationships with those around them (Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001), counselors should focus on teaching children to learn to recognize different feelings and to effectively voice their emotions with close others. Learning to effectively communicate emotions to others may help individuals as they encounter family changes and work through family transitions such as the divorce of parents. Divorce is the major structure underlying the theoretical grounding for the study.

Theoretical Implications

The DDM provided the guiding theoretical framework for this study. The DDM thoroughly elaborates on reasons for parents' divorce disclosures and the effects of those disclosures on parents and children (Afifi, Schrodt, & McManus, 2009). Even though the model dictates that disclosures have the potential to decrease children's mental well-being and increase feelings of triangulation or feeling caught, the model does not currently include the ways in which children manage their emotions about the

information disclosed to them. Hence, Study 2 provided a helpful addition to this robust theoretical framework by highlighting communicative emotion management strategies including verbal expression, nonverbal expression, and unresponsiveness that children may utilize. Because these strategies are specific to divorce-related communication, they help to extend the model by adding depth to children's reactions.

The identified strategies help to elucidate the DDM's analysis of children's responses to disclosures. The results from this study mirrored Afifi, Schrodt, and McManus's (2009) position in the DDM that young adults react to parents' divorce disclosures with a flight or fight response through confronting parents, becoming aggressive with parents, or by avoiding parents. Findings from this study help give substance to this claim based on the three emotion management strategies. Results indicated that children voice their thoughts and feelings to parents in a calm manner or can become aggressive through their choice of words and yelling. Children can also avoid the conversation by remaining unresponsive, thus using their silence to communicate their lack of desire to participate in the discussion out of feelings such as distress, fear, or anger. While this study helped to extend the DDM as a theoretical framework, there were also limitations that should be addressed as well as directions for future research on this topic.

Limitations and Future Directions

While there were numerous strengths and fruitful implications from this study, there were also a few limitations that led to suggestions for furthering this research in the future. The first limitation dealt with one of the measures of mental well-being in that the

assessment of mental health symptoms was based on participants indicating how they felt over the last two weeks. While this measure has been used numerous times in other studies of mental well-being in combination with measures of stress and self-esteem (e.g., Schrodt & Afifi, 2007; Shimkowski & Schrodt, 2012), it is always important to keep in consideration the possible implications for results. In this study, for instance, young adults may have had few symptoms of depression, nervousness, or little appetite within the last two weeks, but could have experienced a great deal more of these symptoms closer to the divorce or closer to stressful events involving parents such as birthdays or graduations. Because this study was based on self-reports, however, it was important to get the most accurate gauge of young adults' mental health assessments, which meant that they would be more accurate in assessing their current feelings and symptoms over the last couple weeks. Other participant restrictions existed as well.

Participant age also presented itself as a limitation. The average age of participants in this study was 22.75 years. When considering that young adulthood spans 18-30 years of age, the younger side of this demographic was much more heavily represented. Much of this limitation results from recruiting in undergraduate classrooms and having those students recruit friends or family members to participate. It is possible that young adults who are closer to 30 may have developed better mechanisms for communicatively managing their emotions about parents' divorce since they would have had longer to hone their skills and learn from their mistakes than younger adults. Or, it is possible that young adults who are older face more difficulties in managing their emotions if they never learned how to effectively navigate difficult emotional situations.

For example, Mill, Allik, Realo, and Valk (2009) found that adults begin to decline in their ability to recognize the vocal and facial expressions of anger and sadness around the age of 30. Thus, future research should aim to understand any differences that might arise because of age with young adult participants communicating about their parents' divorce.

Another limitation of this research was that females were represented much more than males. There were three times as many females who completed the survey than males. Sex differences in emotional expression may have looked different or been reported in different proportions had the sample of males and females been split more evenly. For instance, scholars have found that women are more emotionally expressive through facial expressions than men (Cherulnik, 1979). Thus, it is important to remember that males and females may communicate their emotions differently. Cherulnik (1979) also posited that differences in emotional expression of the face might simply be a result of differences in cultural upbringings wherein women are taught to use facial expressions to communicate more than men. Based on gender-role ideals in Western culture, this notion leads to some of the potential differences that culture creates in this research.

An additional point of limitation in this study included the cultural makeup of the participants. Three-fourths of the participants identified as Caucasian. Different ethnicities may process divorce and emotions differently than individuals reared in the American culture. Although forty to fifty percent of Americans will experience a divorce, the cultural norms of the United States may aid in higher divorce rates when compared with other countries (Afifi, Davis, Denes, & Merrill, 2013). For instance, cultural decisions to divorce could vary by power roles in the family based on gender, access to

resources, the closeness of a family's social network and family members, cultural laws, and religion (Afifi et al., 2013). Young adult children from other cultural backgrounds may process their parents' divorce quite differently than many American children would simply because divorce has become such a common theme in American culture. If a children's parents divorced in a culture where divorce was not as acceptable because of religious beliefs or because of the involvement of many close family members, for instance, that child may face a much more difficult time managing his or her emotions than a child who had already experienced the divorce of friends' parents growing up. Further investigations of cultural differences surrounding divorce and emotions could provide great insight into this research area.

Regardless of cultural differences, it is vital that children learn effective emotion management skills as they experience the difficulties of family communication and one day build their own families. Helping young adult children understand what strategies are most effective may be of great help as parents continue to discuss their divorce with young adult confidants. By producing a new scale for assessing young adults' use of certain emotion management strategies related to their parents' divorce, this project provides a springboard for future studies to investigate the ways in which young adult children function during divorce-related conversations, and provides evidence that communicative strategies impact children's mental well-being in different ways. Future endeavors should work to offer up more complete pictures of these emotion management strategies in action by interviewing participants or through observing actual divorce conversation interactions through experimental settings. Moreover, experimental designs

may help to better understand causal ordering involved in the relationships between divorce disclosures, mental well-being, and the employment of communicative strategies for managing emotions.

As young adult children continue to navigate life after their parents' divorce, understanding their communicative means of discussing their feelings is key. Comprehending the ways in which young adults manage their emotions may ultimately help families to better traverse their daunting communication interactions and help guide their young adult children into healthier communication practices.

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Appendix A

IRB Application Forms (Study 1)

Research Narrative

Project Title: Examining How Young Adult Children Communicatively Manage Their Emotions about Divorce: Creating and Testing a New Measure

Principal Investigator: Jenna Shimkowski

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Erin Willer

DU IRB Protocol #: 570508-1

Version Date:

I. Background:

There are two overarching purposes of the present project that will be addressed in two phases. The first purpose and phase includes identifying the strategies that young adult children use to manage their emotions regarding parents' divorce and creating a new measure based on children's reports of their management strategies. The second purpose and phase involves applying the measure from the first phase in a study of divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being. In the first phase, the research question asks what strategies young adult children of divorce use to communicatively manage their emotions about the divorce. For the second phase, the first research question seeks to determine the relationship between the frequency of parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's specific strategies for communicatively managing their emotions about the divorce. The second research question asks about the relationship between the frequency of parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's mental well-being while the third research question asks about the association between young adult children's use of certain communicative emotion management strategies and their mental well-being. The fourth and final research question asks how certain communicative strategies for managing emotions about divorce moderate the relationship between the frequency of parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's mental well-being.

Although scholars have examined the impacts of divorce on children, there has been little research focused on the ways in which these children communicatively manage and make sense of their emotions following the divorce. Theoretically, the communication field is lacking in the knowledge of ways in which children of divorce handle the emotions that can arise in their new family system. Scholars have consistently found that, when compared to their counterparts from intact family systems, older children from divorced families face a higher risk of emotional and

behavioral adjustment problems. Developing ways to help alleviate some of the emotional difficulties these children endure growing up rests upon understanding the ways that children currently cope with and manage their divorce-related emotions. However, research has yet to focus on how they do so.

The second phase is focused on divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being, identifying the ways in which the strategies identified in the first phase impact this relationship. Disclosures include such communication as revealing information about the other parent, the ex-spousal relationship, parenting behaviors, financial information, or parent-child relationships with the other parent. Once a parent begins disclosing inappropriate or sensitive information about the divorce to their child, the child must then decide how to handle that information as well as the acts of disclosing. Moreover, such disclosures can put children at risk psychologically and emotionally. It is important to investigate the emotion management strategies they use in divorce disclosure situations and how that impacts their mental well-being. Previous work on handling emotions, however, has centered predominantly on the internal emotion regulation of feelings, but this does not account for any communication during the management of emotions. Perhaps an eye toward more external emotion management practices, however, would provide a fuller picture of divorced children's experiences and a better understanding of their adjustment and well-being problems.

II. Design

a. Study Population:

For both phases, I am examining young adult children of divorce for this study. I estimate recruiting 200 participants for each phase. Thus, young adult participants will range in age from 18-30 years old and must have divorced parents. I will not include any potentially vulnerable populations in this study.

b. Recruitment and Consent:

For both studies, participants will be recruited from undergraduate classes at the University of Denver, through the researcher's own social network via email and Facebook, and through posts on several divorce discussion boards online (i.e., OJar.com, DailyStrength.com, SupportGroups.com, and DivorceDex.com). An announcement will be made in undergraduate classes for the study. The study announcement handout is attached. I will include a post and link to the online survey on Facebook and through email snowball sampling. Finally, I will post the announcement (the same one given out to the classes) on the online divorce discussion boards where parents will be asked to pass the study along to their children who fit the study criteria. In the first phase, participants will be asked to provide an email address so that they can be contacted for the second phase survey as well. Forms such as recruitment and consent forms for phase 2 will be

submitted as an amendment to IRB after phase 1 is complete and before beginning phase 2.

c. Procedures:

The procedure is the same for both studies in this project. After agreeing to the online informed consent, participants will complete an online survey using Qualtrics software. They will be informed that participation in the current study is voluntary. Participants will first read through the online informed consent page, which explains the purpose of the current study, that their participation is completely voluntary, that their responses will remain confidential, and that they can choose to skip any question or quit the survey without penalty. They must check that they agree in order to complete the remainder of the survey. If they check that they do not agree with the consent, they will automatically be closed out of the survey. The questionnaire should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. The first survey will only be comprised of open-ended questions while the second survey will include the newly developed measure as well as several additional measures.

b. Measures: (for the second phase) (This survey for phase 2 will be submitted as an amendment prior to proceeding with this phase of the study.)

Parents' divorce disclosures will be measured using Afifi and Schrod's unpublished measure regarding parents' disclosures.

Young adults' emotion management strategies will be measured using the newly created and validated measure from phase 1 in this project.

Young adults' mental well-being will be assessed using three different measures. The first measure is Rosenberg's (1965) self-esteem scale (SES). The next measure is Dornbusch, Mont-Reynaud, Ritter, Chen, and Steinburg's (1991) physical and mental health symptom instrument. The third measure is Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein's (1983) Perceived Stress Scale (PSS).

Young adults' emotion regulation strategies will be assessed using Gross and John's (2003) Emotion Regulation Questionnaire.

Young adults' feelings of being caught will be measured using Buchanan, Maccoby, and Dornbusch's (1991) measure of feeling caught.

III. Risks:

The researcher has taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, the participants may still experience some risks related to your participation, even when the researchers are careful to avoid them. There could possibly be minimal psychological

stress or emotional responses when responding to questions concerning emotions or family communication as you recall details about your parents' divorce. There could possibly be minimal psychological stress when responding to questions concerning emotions or family communication. Participants will be given the number to the University of Denver's Health and Counseling Center if they should encounter any psychological distress when completing the questionnaire. The number is 303-871-2205. Additionally, participants can contact the Metro Crisis Line at 888-885-1222. This hotline provides free and confidential support regarding emotional, mental, or family problems.

IV. Benefits to subject or future benefits:

This study is designed for the researcher to learn more about the ways in which young adult children communicatively manage their divorce-related emotions with others.

There will be no direct benefits to participants. However, information gathered in this study may provide insight into helping researchers better understand how young adults manage their feelings about their parents' divorce as they grow older.

V. Confidentiality:

I will be using online questionnaires (i.e., Qualtrics software) to collect responses. There will be an additional Qualtrics link for participants to provide their names if they are completing the questionnaire for class credit so that their names are in no way attached to their responses. They will also use this separate link if they wish to be entered into a drawing for an Amazon gift card. Participants will only be labeled with a letter and number combination through Qualtrics, a password protected online system. The data file and names will be stored separately. The researcher will retain the data until the project is complete and up to five years after.

The data will not be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study.

The results from the research may be shared at a meeting. The results from the research may be in published articles. Participants' individual identity will be kept private when information is presented or published.

VI. References:

- Buchanan, C. M., Maccoby, E. E., & Dornbusch, S. M. (1991). Caught between parents: Adolescents' experience in divorced homes. *Child Development, 62*, 1008-1029. doi:10.2307/1131149
- Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 24*, 385-396. doi: 10.2307/2136404
- Dornbusch, S. M., Mont-Reynaud, R., Ritter, P. L., Chen, Z., & Steinberg, L. (1991). Stressful events and their correlates among adolescents of diverse backgrounds. In M. E. Colten and S. Gore (Eds.), *Adolescent stress: Causes and consequences* (pp. 111-130). New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Gross, J. J., & John, O. P. (2003). Individual differences in two emotion regulation processes: Implications for affect, relationships, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 348-362. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.85.2.348
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Informed Consent

You are being asked to be in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part.

Invitation to participate in a research study

You are invited to participate in a research study to learn more about young adults' emotions and communication following parents' divorce. This study is funded by grants from the University of Denver's Liberal Arts Advantage as well as the University of Denver's Department of Communication Studies.

You are being asked to be in this research study in order to gather information on the ways in which young adult children communicate about their divorce-related emotions with their parents and others.

Description of subject involvement

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to respond to questions regarding past interactions with others (i.e., your mother, father, and another individual of your choice) involving conversations about your parents' divorce.

This will take about 20-30 minutes.

Possible risks and discomforts

The researcher has taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, you may still experience some risks related to your participation, even when the researcher is careful to avoid them. There could possibly be minimal psychological stress or emotional responses when responding to questions concerning emotions or family communication as you recall details about your parents' divorce. Participants will be given the number to the University of Denver's Health and Counseling Center if they should encounter any psychological distress when completing the questionnaire. The number is 303-871-2205. Additionally, participants can contact the Metro Crisis Line at 888-885-1222. This hotline provides free and confidential support regarding emotional, mental, or family problems.

Possible benefits of the study

This study is designed for the researcher to learn more about the ways in which young adult children communicatively manage their divorce-related emotions with others.

If you agree to take part in this study, there will be no direct benefit to you. However, information gathered in this study may provide insight into helping researchers better understand how young adults manage their feelings about their parents' divorce as they grow older.

Study compensation

Participants can enter their email address at the end of the survey by following a separate

link if they wish to be entered into a drawing for an Amazon gift card. Students may also be offered course or extra credit in their classes if their instructors so desire.

Study cost

You will not be expected to pay any costs related to the study.

Confidentiality, storage, and future use of data

I will be using online questionnaires (i.e., Qualtrics software) to collect responses. There will be an additional Qualtrics link for participants to provide their names if they are completing the questionnaire for class credit so that their names are in no way attached to their responses. Participants will only be labeled with a letter and number combination through the Qualtrics system. The data file and names will be stored separately. The researcher will retain the data for up to five years.

The data will not be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study.

The results from the research may be shared at a meeting. The results from the research may be in published articles. Your individual identity will be kept private when information is presented or published.

Who will see my research information?

Although we will do everything we can to keep your records a secret, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Both the records that identify you and the consent form signed by you may be looked at by others.

- Federal agencies that monitor human subject research
- Human Subject Research Committee

All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Also, if you tell us something that makes us believe that you or others have been or may be physically harmed, we may report that information to the appropriate agencies.

Some things we cannot keep private: If you tell us you are going to physically hurt yourself or someone else, we have to report that to the state police. Also, if we get a court order to turn over your study records, we will have to do that.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw early, the information or data you provided will be destroyed.

You may choose not to participate or to stop your participation in this research at any time. This will not affect your class standing or grades. The investigator may also end your participation in the research. If this happens, your class standing or grades will not be affected. You will not be offered or receive any special consideration if you participate in this research.

Contact Information

The researcher carrying out this study is Jenna Shimkowski. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may email Jenna Shimkowski at jenna.shimkowski@du.edu.

If the researchers cannot be reached, or if you would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) about: (1) questions, concerns or complaints regarding this study, (2) research participant rights, (3) research-related injuries, or (4) other human subjects issues, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or you may contact the Office for Research Compliance by emailing du-irb@du.edu, calling 303-871-4050 or in writing (University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121).

Agreement to be in this study

I have read this paper about the study or it was read to me. I understand the possible risks and benefits of this study. I know that being in this study is voluntary. I can skip any questions or choose not to complete the study without penalty. If I choose to be in this study, I can get a copy of this consent form by asking/emailing Jenna Shimkowski at jenna.shimkowski@du.edu.

Informed consent will be obtained by having participants read through the informed consent document that is the first page of the online survey. They will check that they have read the informed consent and agree to completing the survey or that they do not agree. If they check that they agree, they will be allowed to complete the survey. If they check that they do not agree, they will be automatically taken to the end of the survey.

_____ I agree and wish to continue with the survey.

_____ I do not agree and do not wish to continue with the survey.

Study Announcements

Study Announcement (for the University of Denver classes)

Hello, my name is Jenna Shimkowski and I am a graduate student in the Communication Studies department here at DU. I am conducting a study on young adults' communication of their divorce-related emotions. I would greatly appreciate your help in the data collection process. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years old to participate in the current study and no older than 30 years of age. Additionally, your parents must be divorced in order for you to complete the questionnaire. Participation is voluntary and will not affect your grade in the class in any way if you do not wish to complete the questionnaire. You may choose to not answer any question and can withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty. Your responses will remain secure and confidential. There will be a separate link for you to provide your name if you are completing the questionnaire for course credit so that your name will in no way be attached to your response. Your name will not be linked with any of the information on the questionnaire for the purposes of this study. The questionnaire will take about 20-30 minutes of your time. You must complete the questionnaire in one sitting, as the online software will not save your responses if you should exit the program. I will forward a link to the online questionnaire to your instructor who will then forward the link to your class. Additionally, the link is listed below.
Thank you.

Study Announcement (for Facebook)

I am conducting research to learn more about young adults' communication of their divorce-related emotions. I am in need of participants between the ages of 18 and 30 from divorced families to complete an online survey that takes about 20-30 minutes. You may choose to not answer any question and can withdraw from the study at any time. The questionnaire does not require you to provide your name or identifying information. Thanks for you help. The survey can be accessed at the following link:

Study Announcement (for email)

Hello _____,

I am conducting research to learn more about young adults' communication of their divorce-related emotions. I would appreciate your help in collecting participants. To be eligible for the study you must be 18-30 years and from a divorced family. The survey takes about 20-30 minutes. You may choose to not answer any question and can withdraw from the study at any time. The questionnaire does not require you to provide your name or identifying information. Thanks for you help. The survey can be accessed at the following link:

Appendix B

IRB Application Forms (Study 2)

Research Narrative

Project Title: Examining How Young Adult Children Communicatively Manage Their Emotions about Divorce: Creating and Testing a New Measure

Principal Investigator: Jenna Shimkowski

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Erin Willer

DU IRB Protocol #: 667319-1

Version Date:

VII. Background:

There are two overarching purposes of the present project that will be addressed in two phases. The first purpose and phase has already been completed and included identifying the strategies that young adult children use to manage their emotions regarding parents' divorce then creating a new measure based on children's reports of their management strategies. The second purpose and phase involves applying the measure from the first phase in a study of divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being. In the first phase, the research question asked what strategies young adult children of divorce use to communicatively manage their emotions about the divorce. For the second phase, the first research question seeks to determine the relationship between the frequency of parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's specific strategies for communicatively managing their emotions about the divorce. The second research question asks about the relationship between the frequency of parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's mental well-being while the third research question asks about the association between young adult children's use of certain communicative emotion management strategies and their mental well-being. The fourth and final research question asks how certain communicative strategies for managing emotions about divorce moderate the relationship between the frequency of parents' divorce disclosures and young adult children's mental well-being.

Although scholars have examined the impacts of divorce on children, there has been little research focused on the ways in which these children communicatively manage and make sense of their emotions following the divorce. Theoretically, the communication field is lacking in the knowledge of ways in which children of divorce handle the emotions that can arise in their new family system. Scholars have consistently found that, when compared to their counterparts from intact family systems, older children from divorced families face a higher risk of emotional and

behavioral adjustment problems. Developing ways to help alleviate some of the emotional difficulties these children endure growing up rests upon understanding the ways that children currently cope with and manage their divorce-related emotions. However, research has yet to focus on how they do so.

This second phase is focused on divorce disclosures and young adults' mental well-being, identifying the ways in which the strategies identified in the first phase impact this relationship. Disclosures include such communication as revealing information about the other parent, the ex-spousal relationship, parenting behaviors, financial information, or parent-child relationships with the other parent. Once a parent begins disclosing inappropriate or sensitive information about the divorce to their child, the child must then decide how to handle that information as well as the acts of disclosing. Moreover, such disclosures can put children at risk psychologically and emotionally. It is important to investigate the emotion management strategies they use in divorce disclosure situations and how that impacts their mental well-being. Previous work on handling emotions, however, has centered predominantly on the internal emotion regulation of feelings, but this does not account for any communication during the management of emotions. Perhaps an eye toward more external emotion management practices, however, would provide a fuller picture of divorced children's experiences and a better understanding of their adjustment and well-being problems.

VIII. Design

a. Study Population:

For the second phase, I am examining young adult children of divorce. I estimate recruiting 200 participants for this phase. Thus, young adult participants will range in age from 18-30 years old and must have divorced parents. I will not include any potentially vulnerable populations in this study. I will decrease the chance for those outside of my parameters to participate by adding a forced question on the consent form that asks if the participant is between 18 and 30 years old. If they check "yes", they will be allowed to continue. If they check "no", they will automatically be closed out of the survey.

d. Recruitment and Consent:

For this study, participants will be recruited from undergraduate and graduate classes at the University of Denver and through the researcher's own social network via email and Facebook. Participants from Phase 1 who requested the link to the follow-up study will also be contacted. I will distribute the announcement to divorce support groups at local churches (e.g., Fellowship Denver, Mission Hills, Cherry Hills Church, Denver Community Church, Restoration Community Church). An announcement will be made in undergraduate and graduate classes for the study. The study announcement

handout is attached. I will include a post and link to the online survey on Facebook and through email snowball sampling. I will also include the post and link to the online survey for the divorce support groups.

e. Procedures:

The procedure is the same for both phases in this project. After agreeing to the online informed consent, participants will complete an online survey using Qualtrics software. They will be informed that participation in the current study is voluntary. Participants will first read through the online informed consent page, which explains the purpose of the current study, that their participation is completely voluntary, that their responses will remain confidential, and that they can choose to skip any question or quit the survey without penalty. They must check that they agree in order to complete the remainder of the survey. If they check that they do not agree with the consent, they will automatically be closed out of the survey. The questionnaire should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. The survey will include the newly developed measure as well as several additional measures.

f. Measures: (for this second phase)

Parents' divorce disclosures will be measured using Afifi and Schrodt's unpublished measure regarding parents' disclosures.

Young adults' emotion management strategies will be measured using the newly created and validated measure from phase 1 in this project.

Young adults' mental well-being will be assessed using three different measures. The first measure is Rosenberg's (1965) self-esteem scale (SES). The next measure is Dornbusch, Mont-Reynaud, Ritter, Chen, and Steinburg's (1991) physical and mental health symptom instrument. The third measure is Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein's (1983) Perceived Stress Scale (PSS).

Young adults' emotion regulation strategies will be assessed using Gross and John's (2003) Emotion Regulation Questionnaire.

Young adults' feelings of being caught will be measured using Buchanan, Maccoby, and Dornbusch's (1991) measure of feeling caught.

IX. Risks:

The researcher has taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, the participants may still experience some risks related to your participation, even when the researchers are careful to avoid them. There could possibly be minimal psychological stress or emotional responses when responding to questions concerning emotions or

family communication as you recall details about your parents' divorce. There could possibly be minimal psychological stress when responding to questions concerning emotions or family communication. Participants will be given the number to the University of Denver's Health and Counseling Center if they should encounter any psychological distress when completing the questionnaire. The number is 303-871-2205. Additionally, participants can contact the Metro Crisis Line at 888-885-1222. This hotline provides free and confidential support regarding emotional, mental, or family problems.

X. Benefits to subject or future benefits:

This study is designed for the researcher to learn more about the ways in which young adult children communicatively manage their divorce-related emotions with others.

There will be no direct benefits to participants. However, information gathered in this study may provide insight into helping researchers better understand how young adults manage their feelings about their parents' divorce as they grow older.

XI. Confidentiality:

I will be using online questionnaires (i.e., Qualtrics software) to collect responses. There will be an additional Qualtrics link for participants to provide their names if they are completing the questionnaire for class credit so that their names are in no way attached to their responses. They will also use this separate link if they wish to be entered into a drawing for an Amazon gift card. Participants will only be labeled with a letter and number combination through Qualtrics, a password protected online system. The data file and names will be stored separately. The researcher will retain the data until the project is complete and up to five years after.

The data will not be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study.

The results from the research may be shared at a meeting. The results from the research may be in published articles. Participants' individual identity will be kept private when information is presented or published.

XII. References:

- Buchanan, C. M., Maccoby, E. E., & Dornbusch, S. M. (1991). Caught between parents: Adolescents' experience in divorced homes. *Child Development, 62*, 1008-1029. doi:10.2307/1131149
- Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 24*, 385-396. doi: 10.2307/2136404
- Dornbusch, S. M., Mont-Reynaud, R., Ritter, P. L., Chen, Z., & Steinberg, L. (1991). Stressful events and their correlates among adolescents of diverse backgrounds. In M. E. Colten and S. Gore (Eds.), *Adolescent stress: Causes and consequences* (pp. 111-130). New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Gross, J. J., & John, O. P. (2003). Individual differences in two emotion regulation processes: Implications for affect, relationships, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 348-362. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.85.2.348
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Informed Consent

You are being asked to be in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part.

Invitation to participate in a research study

You are invited to participate in a research study to learn more about young adults' emotions and communication following parents' divorce. This study is funded by grants from the University of Denver's Liberal Arts Advantage as well as the University of Denver's Department of Communication Studies.

You are being asked to be in this research study in order to gather information on your parents' divorce communication, ways in which young adult children communicate about their divorce-related emotions with their parents and others, and how that communication impacts their mental well-being.

Description of subject involvement

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to respond to questions regarding how your parents discuss one another, your feelings, how you manage your emotions, and questions about your stress and mental well-being. This will take about 20-30 minutes.

Possible risks and discomforts

The researcher has taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, you may still experience some risks related to your participation, even when the researcher is careful to avoid them. There could possibly be minimal psychological stress or emotional responses when responding to questions concerning emotions or family communication as you recall details about your parents' divorce. Participants will be given the number to the University of Denver's Health and Counseling Center if they should encounter any psychological distress when completing the questionnaire. The number is 303-871-2205. Additionally, participants can contact the Metro Crisis Line at 888-885-1222. This hotline provides free and confidential support regarding emotional, mental, or family problems.

Possible benefits of the study

This study is designed for the researcher to learn more about the ways in which young adult children communicatively manage their divorce-related emotions with others and how that impacts their mental well-being.

If you agree to take part in this study, there will be no direct benefit to you. However, information gathered in this study may provide insight into helping researchers better understand how young adults manage their feelings about their parents' divorce as they grow older.

Study compensation

Participants can enter their email address at the end of the survey by following a separate link if they wish to be entered into a drawing for an Amazon gift card. Students may also be offered course or extra credit in their classes if their instructors so desire.

Study cost

You will not be expected to pay any costs related to the study.

Confidentiality, storage, and future use of data

I will be using online questionnaires (i.e., Qualtrics software) to collect responses. There will be an additional Qualtrics link for participants to provide their names if they are completing the questionnaire for class credit so that their names are in no way attached to their responses. Participants will only be labeled with a letter and number combination through the Qualtrics system. The data file and names will be stored separately. The researcher will retain the data for up to five years.

The data will not be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study.

The results from the research may be shared at a meeting. The results from the research may be in published articles. Your individual identity will be kept private when information is presented or published.

Who will see my research information?

Although we will do everything we can to keep your records a secret, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Both the records that identify you and the consent form signed by you may be looked at by others.

- Federal agencies that monitor human subject research
- Human Subject Research Committee

All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Also, if you tell us something that makes us believe that you or others have been or may be physically harmed, we may report that information to the appropriate agencies.

Some things we cannot keep private: If you tell us you are going to physically hurt yourself or someone else, we have to report that to the state police. Also, if we get a court order to turn over your study records, we will have to do that.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw early, the information or data you provided will be destroyed. You may choose to skip any question or quit the survey without penalty.

You may choose not to participate or to stop your participation in this research at any time. This will not affect your class standing or grades. The investigator may also end your participation in the research. If this happens, your class standing or grades will not be affected. You will not be offered or receive any special consideration if you participate in this research.

Contact Information

The researcher carrying out this study is Jenna Shimkowski. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may email Jenna Shimkowski at jenna.shimkowski@du.edu.

If the researchers cannot be reached, or if you would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) about; (1) questions, concerns or complaints regarding this study, (2) research participant rights, (3) research-related injuries, or (4) other human subjects issues, you may contact Chair of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4015 or by emailing IRBChair@du.edu, or you may contact the Office for Research Compliance by emailing IRBAdmin@du.edu, calling 303-871-4050 or in writing (University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121).

Agreement to be in this study

I have read this paper about the study or it was read to me. I understand the possible risks and benefits of this study. I know that being in this study is voluntary. I can skip any questions or choose not to complete the study without penalty. If I choose to be in this study, I can get a copy of this consent form by asking/emailing Jenna Shimkowski at jenna.shimkowski@du.edu.

Informed consent will be obtained by having participants read through the informed consent document that is the first page of the online survey. They will check that they have read the informed consent and agree to completing the survey or that they do not agree. If they check that they agree, they will be allowed to complete the survey. If they check that they do not agree, they will be automatically taken to the end of the survey.

_____ I am between 18 – 30 years old.

_____ I agree and wish to continue with the survey.

_____ I do not agree and do not wish to continue with the survey.

Study Announcements

Study Announcement (for the University of Denver classes)

Hello, my name is Jenna Shimkowski and I am a graduate student in the Communication Studies department here at DU. I am conducting a study on young adults' communication of their divorce-related emotions and their mental well-being. I would greatly appreciate your help in the data collection process. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years old to participate in the current study and no older than 30 years of age. Additionally, your parents must be divorced in order for you to complete the questionnaire. Participation is voluntary and will not affect your grade in the class in any way if you do not wish to complete the questionnaire. You may choose to not answer any question and can withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty. Your responses will remain secure and confidential. There will be a separate link for you to provide your name if you are completing the questionnaire for course credit so that your name will in no way be attached to your response. Your name will not be linked with any of the information on the questionnaire for the purposes of this study. The questionnaire will take about 20-30 minutes of your time. You must complete the questionnaire in one sitting, as the online software will not save your responses if you should exit the program. I will forward a link to the online questionnaire to your instructor who will then forward the link to your class. Additionally, the link is listed below. Thank you.

Study Announcement (for Facebook)

I am conducting research to learn more about young adults' communication of their divorce-related emotions and their mental well-being. I am in need of participants between the ages of 18 and 30 from divorced families to complete an online survey that takes about 20-30 minutes. You may choose to not answer any question and can withdraw from the study at any time. The questionnaire does not require you to provide your name or identifying information. Thanks for your help. The survey can be accessed at the following link:

Study Announcement (for email)

Hello _____,

I am conducting research to learn more about young adults' communication of their

divorce-related emotions and their mental well-being. I would appreciate your help in collecting participants. To be eligible for the study you must be 18-30 years and from a divorced family. The survey takes about 20-30 minutes. You may choose to not answer any question and can withdraw from the study at any time. The questionnaire does not require you to provide your name or identifying information. Thanks for you help. The survey can be accessed at the following link:

Study Announcement for Phase 1 Participants (for email)

Hello,

Thank you for your participation in the first phase of this study. I am still conducting research to learn more about young adults' communication of their divorce-related emotions and their mental well-being. I am in need of participants between the ages of 18 and 30 from divorced families to complete an online survey that takes about 20-30 minutes. You may choose to not answer any question and can withdraw from the study at any time. The questionnaire does not require you to provide your name or any identifying information. Thanks for you help. The survey can be accessed at the following link:

Appendix C

First Questionnaire

Directions: For this question, you will be asked to recall three interaction sequences that occurred between yourself and your mother, yourself and your father, and yourself and someone other than your mother or father (i.e., grandparent, friend, or roommate). Each sequence will include three parts.

The first part of the sequence involves the description of the episode. Specifically, you will be asked to recall and describe an interaction in which something about the divorce came up in conversation, including who was involved, where you were, what was said, and why. You will be asked to explain in as much detail as possible what your mother/father/other said and/or did. For example, maybe you were involved in a discussion about post-divorce finances, parenting, communication between the ex-spouses, or your parents' emotions about the divorce itself.

The second part of the sequence includes your feelings about the interaction. You will be asked to include a statement that best describes how you were feeling and what emotions you were experiencing during the interaction that you just described.

In the third portion of the sequence, I am interested in the ways that you *communicated your emotions* during the interaction. By “communicated your emotions” I am concerned with the ways in which you *expressed how you felt to the person with whom you were interacting*. There are different ways in which we find ourselves communicating our emotions. For example, if your father says something about his relationship with your mother that makes you feel really angry, you may choose to communicate verbally (e.g., telling your father you are angry or upset, telling him that you do not wish to talk about your mother anymore) nonverbally by expressing your feelings (e.g., frowning, crying, leaving the room), or choosing not to let him know what you are feeling at all (e.g., hiding your emotions by acting like everything is alright). These are just a few examples of ways in which someone might communicate their emotions.

An example sequence for mothers includes the following:

1. My mother and I were having a conversation over dinner at her house. She told me how my father never helped out with chores when they were married and how she had to do everything herself. She had just finished vacuuming before we sat down to eat.
2. I felt frustrated that my mother would speak negatively about my father to me.
3. I nodded my head but did not tell my mother how I felt, hoping she would change the subject.

Remember, you will be asked to repeat this process of answering the three questions twice more, once for your father and once again for anyone else who was not your parent (i.e., grandparent, friend, or roommate).

Below are the questions:

Mother

1. Describe the event/situation with your mother bringing up something about the divorce. Please elaborate on who was involved, what was said, where this occurred, and why.
2. Describe your emotion(s) during that interaction.
3. Describe your response both verbally and nonverbally (especially considering how you communicated your emotion from #2 above).

Father

1. Describe the event/situation with your father bringing up something about the divorce. Please elaborate on who was involved, what was said, where this occurred, and why.
2. Describe your emotion(s) during that interaction.
3. Describe your response both verbally and nonverbally (especially considering how you communicated your emotion from #2 above).

Other (please specify your relationship with this person):

1. Describe the event/situation with your mother bringing up something about the divorce. Please elaborate on who was involved, what was said, where this occurred, and why.
2. Describe your emotion(s) during that interaction.
3. Describe your response both verbally and nonverbally (especially considering how you communicated your emotion from #2 above).
4. Please provide an email address where you can be contacted for a follow-up survey:

DIRECTIONS: Please provide the most appropriate response to each question.

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your biological sex (please circle one)?
 - 1 Male
 - 2 Female
3. If you are a student, what is your current classification in school?
 - 1 First-year student
 - 2 Sophomore
 - 3 Junior
 - 4 Senior
 - 5 Graduate student
 - 6 Other (please specify): _____
4. What is your ethnicity or race?

1 Caucasian/White	4 Native American
2 Black	5 Asian or Pacific Islander
3 Hispanic	6 Other (please specify): _____
5. With whom do you currently live (Or when you lived at home, who were your primary caretakers)?
 - 1 Biological (or Adoptive) Mother
 - 2 Biological (or Adoptive) Father
 - 3 Both mother and father
 - 4 Mother and Stepfather
 - 5 Father and Stepmother
 - 6 Other (please specify): _____
6. Approximately how long has it been since your parents divorced? _____
7. Approximately how long were your parents together or married before they divorced?
8. On average, how often do you talk with your MOTHER during a typical week? _____
hours _____ minutes
9. On average, how often do you talk with your FATHER during a typical week? _____ hours
_____ minutes
10. How many siblings do you have? _____

Appendix D

Initial Measure Assessments

Directions: Please read the following statements that would complete the sentence “When I experience emotions while communicating with someone about my parents’ divorce, I...”

I would like for you to identify which category each item response would fit into (categories 1-5) as well as report the intensity with which each item represents the category in which you placed it using a scale ranging from (1) *Very Weak* to (10) *Very Strong*.

Categories:

1 = Avoidance, 2 = Other-Centered Communication, 3 = Verbal Expression, 4 = Nonverbal Expression, 5 = No response

Scale Items	Category it Fits Into (1-5)	Intensity of Fit into that category (1-10)
1) ... change the subject.		
2) ... communicate support or reassurance to the person with whom I am speaking.		
3) ... leave or storm away from the person.		
4) ... tell the other person how I am feeling.		
5) ... say as little as possible in hopes that the conversation will soon end.		
6) ... curse or call someone names.		
7) ... begin crying.		
8) ... do not express my emotions in any way.		
9) ... ask questions or attempt to gather more information in the conversation.		
10) ... yell or raise my voice.		
11) ... use facial expressions to express how I feel.		
12) ... say that I do not want to talk about it anymore.		
13) ... say or do absolutely nothing.		
14) ... focus on giving advice to the other person about the situation.		
15) ... have no response in the interaction.		
16) ... say what I am thinking.		
17) ... simply say things like “ok” or “yeah” as I listen rather than engage in the conversation.		
18) ... listen silently without any response.		
19) ... convey my feelings through my body language.		
20) ... ask the other person how he or she is feeling in that situation.		

21) ... openly express my feelings through my words.		
22) ... comfort the person with whom I am communicating.		
23) ... communicate my emotions through the way I look at the other person.		
24) ... say anything to not continue taking part in the conversation.		
25) ... do not react or respond at all.		
26) ... briefly mention my feelings in passing.		
27) ... try to change the topic of conversation.		
28) ... focus on the other person's emotions rather than my own.		
29) ... ask to not talk about it.		
30) ... work through my feelings out loud.		
31) ... cry during the conversation.		
32) ... engage in an open conversation about my feelings.		
33) ... sit there without saying anything.		
34) ... acknowledge the conversation but do not take part in it.		
35) ... communicate my feelings through faces I make.		
36) ... try to learn more about the situation during the conversation.		
37) ... share my feelings with the other person.		
38) ... express my emotions using my hands or hand gestures.		
39) ... listen without doing or saying anything.		
40) ... give my opinion on what the other person should do or think.		
41) ... acknowledge the discussion but try to end it.		
42) ... express my thoughts verbally.		
43) ... choose not to respond during the interaction.		
44) ... use my body or body movements to express my feelings.		
45) ... hone in on the other person's needs at the time.		
46) ... do not take part in the conversation at all.		
47) ... make short comments but do not really add to the conversation.		
48) ... let my facial expressions do the talking.		
49) ... try to focus more on the other person in the conversation than myself.		
50) ... choose not to express my feelings at all.		

Appendix E

Second Questionnaire

Instructions: This set of questions concerns what your parents talk to you about with regard to your relationship and the divorce. Please use the following scale when responding to each item:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
1. My parent talks openly to me about his/her troubles with the divorce.	1	2	3	4
2. My parent talks openly to me about his/her finances or money specifically in relation to the effects of the divorce or my other parent.	1	2	3	4
3. My parent talks openly to me about his/her relationship problems.	1	2	3	4
4. My parent refrains from talking badly about my other parent to me.	1	2	3	4
5. My parent talks about the frustrations of the divorce to me.	1	2	3	4
6. When my parent is lonely, he/she talks about his/her feelings concerning the divorce or my other parent.	1	2	3	4
7. When my parent is down or sad, he/she talks to me	1	2	3	4

about his/her feelings concerning the divorce or my other parent.				
8. My parent tells me about difficulties that he/she is having with my other parent.	1	2	3	4
9. My parent talks to me about money problems in relation to the divorce or my other parent.	1	2	3	4
10. My parent confides in me about my other parent.	1	2	3	4
11. My parent tells me negative things that my other parent has done.	1	2	3	4
12. My parent cries in front of me and tells me that he/she is sad about the divorce or his/her relationship with my other parent.	1	2	3	4
13. My parent talks to me about his/her feelings about divorce in general.	1	2	3	4
14. My parent talks to me about his/her feelings about marriage in general, but in a way that is impacted by the divorce.	1	2	3	4
15. My parent tells me about his/her feelings toward my	1	2	3	4

other parent in
general.

16. My parent tells me about ill feelings that he/she has toward my other parent. 1 2 3 4

17. My parent tells me about conflicts that he/she is having with my other parent. 1 2 3 4

18. My parent talks to me about his/her personal worries concerning the divorce or my other parent. 1 2 3 4

19. My parent lets negative things about my other parent slip to me. 1 2 3 4

20. My parent tells me about the behaviors of my other parent that bother him/her. 1 2 3 4

21. My parent tells me about things that my other parent does that irritate him/her. 1 2 3 4

22. My parent tells me about things that my other parent has done that make him/her angry. 1 2 3 4

Mental and physical health instrument

Directions: Now, I would like to assess your health. Please think about your state of mind over the past two weeks and identify how often you have felt the following ways on a scale from 1 (never) to 4 (three or more times the past two weeks).

In the past two weeks, how often have you:

	Never	Once	Twice	Three or more times
1. Felt over-tired.	1	2	3	4
2. Felt nervous or worried.	1	2	3	4
3. Felt “low” or depressed.	1	2	3	4
4. Felt tense or irritable.	1	2	3	4
5. Had trouble sleeping.	1	2	3	4
6. Lost your appetite.	1	2	3	4
7. Felt apart or alone.	1	2	3	4
8. Felt like running away from everything.	1	2	3	4
9. Felt as if you were eating too much	1	2	3	4
10. Had a headache.	1	2	3	4
11. Had a stomach ache.	1	2	3	4
12. Had a cold or other illness.	1	2	3	4
13. Had a physical injury.	1	2	3	4
14. Had skin problems.	1	2	3	4

Rosenberg’s self-esteem scale

Directions: For the next set of statements, please indicate how much you agree with each statement using the following scale:

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat Disagree 3	Neither Agree nor Disagree 4	Somewhat Agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7				
					SD	N	SA				
1. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I wish I could have more respect for myself.					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am able to do things as well as most other people.					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I certainly feel useless at times.					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. At times I think I am no good at all.					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.					1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Perceived stress scale

Directions: The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate *how often* you felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and you should treat each one as a separate question. The best approach is to answer each question fairly quickly. That is, don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way, but rather indicate the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate. For each question, choose from the following alternatives:

	Never 1	Almost never 2	Sometimes 3	Fairly often 4	Very often 5
				Never	Very Often
1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	1	2	3	4	5
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	1	2	3	4	5
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?	1	2	3	4	5
4. In the last month, how often have you dealt successfully with irritating life hassles?	1	2	3	4	5
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?	1	2	3	4	5
6. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	1	2	3	4	5
7. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	1	2	3	4	5
8. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	1	2	3	4	5
9. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	1	2	3	4	5
10. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?	1	2	3	4	5
11. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?	1	2	3	4	5
12. In the last month, how often have you found yourself thinking about things that you have to accomplish?	1	2	3	4	5
13. In the last month, how often have you been able to control the way you spend your time?	1	2	3	4	5
14. In the last month, how often you have felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	1	2	3	4	5

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire

Directions: We would like to ask you some questions about your emotional life, in particular, how you control (that is, regulate and manage) your emotions. The questions below involve two distinct aspects of your emotional life. One is your emotional experience, or what you feel like inside. The other is your emotional expression, or how you show your emotions in the way you talk, gesture, or behave. Although some of the following questions may seem similar to one another, they differ in important ways. For each item, please answer using the following scale:

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
1. When I want to feel more <i>positive</i> emotion (such as joy or amusement), I <i>change what I'm thinking about</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I keep my emotions to myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. When I want to feel less <i>negative</i> emotion (such as sadness or anger), I <i>change what I'm thinking about</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. When I am feeling <i>positive</i> emotions, I am careful not to express them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. When I'm faced with a stressful situation, I make myself <i>think about it</i> in a way that helps me stay calm.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I control my emotions by <i>not expressing them</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. When I want to feel more <i>positive</i> emotion, I <i>change the way I'm thinking about the situation</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I control my emotions by <i>changing the way I think about the situation I'm in</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. When I am feeling <i>negative</i> emotions, I make sure not to express them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. When I want to feel less <i>negative</i> emotion, I <i>change the way I'm thinking about the situation</i> .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Initial Measure

Communicative Strategies for Managing Divorce-Related Emotions

Directions: For this section, I am interested in how you manage your emotions related to discussing your parents' divorce. Sometimes we are involved in conversations in which something comes up about our parents' divorce. These conversations may take place with anyone (i.e., a parent, family member, friend, coworker, etc.). Please read each statement below that completes the following phrase then indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement using the scale below.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Consider the phrase “When I experience emotions while communicating with someone about my parents’ divorce, I...”

	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
1) ... change the subject. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
2) ... communicate support or reassurance to the person with whom I am speaking. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
3) ... leave or storm away from the person. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
4) ... tell the other person how I am feeling. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
5) ... say as little as possible in hopes that the conversation will soon end. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
6) ... curse or call someone names. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
7) ... begin crying. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
8) ... do not express my emotions in any way. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
9) ... ask questions or attempt to gather more information in the conversation. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
10) ... yell or raise my voice. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
11) ... use facial expressions to express how I feel. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
12) ... say that I do not want to talk about it anymore. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
13) ... say or do absolutely nothing. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
14) ... focus on giving advice to the other person about the situation. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
15) ... have no response in the interaction. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
16) ... say what I am thinking. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
17) ... simply say things like “ok” or “yeah” as I listen rather than engage in the conversation. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
18) ... listen silently without any response. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
19) ... convey my feelings through my body language. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
20) ... ask the other person how he or she is feeling in that situation. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
21) ... openly express my feelings through my words. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
22) ... comfort the person with whom I am communicating.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

(2)							
23) ... communicate my emotions through the way I look at the other person. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24) ... say anything to not continue taking part in the conversation. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25) ... do not react or respond at all. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26) ... briefly mention my feelings in passing. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27) ... try to change the topic of conversation. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28) ... focus on the other person's emotions rather than my own. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29) ... ask to not talk about it. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30) ... work through my feelings out loud. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31) ... cry during the conversation. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32) ... engage in an open conversation about my feelings. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33) ... sit there without saying anything. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34) ... acknowledge the conversation but do not take part in it. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35) ... communicate my feelings through faces I make. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36) ... try to learn more about the situation during the conversation. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37) ... share my feelings with the other person. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38) ... express my emotions using my hands or hand gestures. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39) ... listen without doing or saying anything. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40) ... give my opinion on what the other person should do or think. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41) ... acknowledge the discussion but try to end it. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42) ... express my thoughts verbally. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43) ... choose not to respond during the interaction. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44) ... use my body or body movements to express my feelings. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45) ... hone in on the other person's needs at the time. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46) ... do not take part in the conversation at all. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47) ... make short comments but do not really add to the conversation. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48) ... let my facial expressions do the talking. (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49) ... try to focus more on the other person in the conversation than myself. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50) ... choose not to express my feelings at all. (5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Categories:

1 = Avoidance

2 = Other-Centered Communication

3 = Verbal Expression

4 = Nonverbal Expression

5 = No response

DIRECTIONS: Please provide the most appropriate response to each question.

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your biological sex (please circle one)?
 - 1 Male
 - 2 Female
3. If you are a student, what is your current classification in school?
 - 1 First-year student
 - 2 Sophomore
 - 3 Junior
 - 4 Senior
 - 5 Graduate student
 - 6 Other (please specify): _____
4. What is your ethnicity or race?

1 Caucasian/White	4 Native American
2 Black	5 Asian or Pacific Islander
3 Hispanic	6 Other (please specify): _____
5. With whom do you currently live (Or when you lived at home, who were your primary caretakers)?
 - 1 Biological (or Adoptive) Mother
 - 2 Biological (or Adoptive) Father
 - 3 Both mother and father
 - 4 Mother and Stepfather
 - 5 Father and Stepmother
 - 6 Other (please specify): _____
6. Approximately how long has it been since your parents divorced? _____
7. Approximately how long were your parents together or married before they divorced?
8. On average, how often do you talk with your MOTHER during a typical week? _____
hours _____ minutes
9. On average, how often do you talk with your FATHER during a typical week? _____ hours
_____ minutes
10. How many siblings do you have? _____

Appendix F

Final Scale

Communicative Strategies for Managing Divorce-Related Emotions

Directions: For this section, I am interested in how you manage your emotions related to discussing your parents' divorce. Sometimes we are involved in conversations in which something comes up about our parents' divorce. These conversations may take place with anyone (i.e., a parent, family member, friend, coworker, etc.). Please read each statement below that completes the following phrase then indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement using the scale below.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Consider the phrase "When I experience emotions while communicating with someone about my parents' divorce, I..."

	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
1) ... tell the other person how I am feeling. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
2) ... use facial expressions to express how I feel. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
3) ... say or do absolutely nothing. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
4) ... have no response in the interaction. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
15) ... say what I am thinking. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
6) ... listen silently without any response. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
7) ... convey my feelings through my body language. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
8) ... openly express my feelings through my words. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
9) ... communicate my emotions through the way I look at the other person. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
10) ... do not react or respond at all. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
11) ... engage in an open conversation about my feelings. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
12) ... sit there without saying anything. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
13) ... acknowledge the conversation but do not take part in it. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
14) ... communicate my feelings through faces I make. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
15) ... share my feelings with the other person. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
16) ... express my emotions using my hands or hand gestures. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
17) ... listen without doing or saying anything. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
18) ... express my thoughts verbally. (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
19) ... choose not to respond during the interaction. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
20) ... use my body or body movements to express my feelings. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
21) ... do not take part in the conversation at all. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

22) ... let my facial expressions do the talking. (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23) ... choose not to express my feelings at all. (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Subscales:

1 = Verbal Expression

2 = Nonverbal Expression

3 = Unresponsiveness