THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEVEL OF
ANXIETY AND GENDER DURING POST-DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT

by

George M. Collenberg

A Master's Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

OTTAWA UNIVERSITY
JUNE 1996
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by

George M. Collenberg

has been approved

May 1996

APPROVED:

[Signature]

Donald G. From

ACCEPTED:

[Signature]

Sueann L. Snyder

Associate Dean for Graduate Studies
ABSTRACT

The relationship between anxiety levels and gender were studied to determine the differences between men and women during the post-divorce period. One hundred and fifteen (115) university students from 24 classes participated in the study by reporting their post-divorce feelings on an anonymous 47-item instrument. Differences in how anxiety is expressed by men and women were measured using a 5-point "Likert" scale. Individuals surveyed did not include those who are co-habitating or who were separated. Some differences between males and females were found in each of the four life category scales: Daily Living, Social Interaction, Health, and Emotional; however, these differences were not statistically significant. Greater differences were expected between the responses of males and females. However, as expected, most respondents indicated less intense anxiety feelings the longer the time period since their divorce.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this research study would not have been possible without continuing encouragement and assistance from a number of people, some of whom previously influenced my life in this direction. Four mentors in my past provided a influencing guidance to my life. My mother Eva Marie Collenberg, taught me how to be sensitive to other's thoughts and feelings. Mr. Walter Douglas, gave me the knowledge of confidence in what I set out to accomplish. Richard Willey Ph.D., encouraged me to continue developing insight into my skill of personnel management and Rev. Melvin Pritts; provided guidance when I needed it most. The staff and faculty of Ottawa University provided me opportunities for personal and professional growth that elsewhere would not have been possible. In particular I want to thank the following for their encouragement and assistance: Sherwin Synder Ph.D., Ronald Frost Ph.D., Roberta Richards Ph.D., Ann Wright-Edwards, Thomas Roche, Jane Zukowski, Pam Hanfelt, and Nikki DeLeon. And finally, to my friend William Binkert, who over the years has provided insight and reflection to my thoughts in our many conversations.
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Introduction

The ending of a marriage with subsequent divorce and one's reaction to this traumatic event, forever affects one's life; causing both Men and Women to face future unforeseen challenges and additional new demands added to an already complex daily life.

Divorce is a complex social phenomenon as well as a complex personal experience. Because most of us are ignorant of what it requires of us, divorce is likely to be traumatic: emotional stimulation is so great that accustomed ways of acting are inadequate . . . On a social level we do something analogous, not allowing ourselves to think fully about divorce as a social problem. Our personal distrust of the emotions that surround it leads us to consider it only with traditional cultural defenses. (Bohannan, 1971, p. 33)

After a divorce, men and women are faced with altered lifestyles--their accustomed daily activities have changed, effecting their traditional styles of living. Anxiety felt over the divorce can impede the ability to adjust to the post-divorce changes. "Recent clinical observations and research findings suggest that divorce may also be considered as a traumatic event which has severe impact on both adults and children" (Dreman, 1991, p. 115).
The term anxiety is most often used to describe an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, and worry, and by activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system. The term anxiety is also used to refer to relatively stable individual differences in anxiety proneness as a personality trait. Researchers regard anxiety as a complex emotional syndrome which consists of unpleasant cognitive and affective states and physiological arousal as basic components. In defining anxiety and differentiating it from other emotional syndromes, they suggest that particular attention be given to the developmental origins of an emotion, the pattern of response that characterizes the emotion, and the stimulus conditions which elicit it. (Spielberger, 1972, p. 482)

Different levels of anxiety are expected between men and women because of their different individual reactions to divorce itself. "Women face more stressors due to divorce than do men because of gender differences in income, social activity, and single parenthood" (Diedrick, 1991, p. 36).

**Development of the Problem**

Levels of anxiety in individuals vary depending on individual personality and reaction response. Divorce alters the relationship an individual had with their former spouse. Anxiety levels change and may even increase over time because of the losses and related life changes created by divorce. Dealing with anxiety is a significant challenge for people after their divorce. Divorced individuals are examining their environment, surroundings, and themselves within a new context. Personal anxiety increases as the divorced person struggles to make needed adjustments.
Being divorced is an example of a tenuous role, where the status is clearly defined, but the role behaviors are unclear. One has to reformulate new roles with little outside support and few normative guidelines from a society that is geared primarily to being married and part of a family. (Rice & Rice, 1986, p. 131)

Assessing expressed affective and cognitive reactions of divorced individuals can assist in the process of identifying changed levels of anxiety. "The way in which men and women define these new-found situations will impact their respective experiences. One's cognitive appraisal of the situation as a threat, challenge, or loss will significantly affect the person's coping response" (Pledge, 1992, p. 175).

Being able to focus on individual levels of anxiety experienced by post-divorce men and women provides a greater understanding of what the reactions are which are caused by the anxiety levels being changed by divorce. Becoming more aware of these changes in divorced individuals can provide family therapists and counselors with further knowledge to assist their clients to adjust during the post-divorce time. This is supported by Weller, cited in Gray (1978) whose

... observations led him to believe that the divorced person suffered excessively in making these adjustments and that the adjustment was often hampered by the intrusion of irrational behavior on the part of the divorced individual. He saw divorce as a crisis situation that called upon the individual to instigate drastic change in his way of relating in and to the world in order to survive. (p. 290)
Individual reaction to divorce and the subsequent anxiety expressed by the newly divorced man or woman is different. A higher level of anxiety is part of the post-divorce experience. Therapists and counselors often come into contact with those post-divorce individuals who have still unfinished business; usually left over from the divorce masked by a higher level of anxiety in their daily life.

These higher levels of anxiety are not seen as an everyday part of the post-divorce adjustment experience. The impact of divorce and the adjustment to the divorce, is a stressful event—shattering one's daily routine; the effect of this immediate loss can be devastating.

Having to quickly adjust to what has been lost creates much of the increased anxiousness from men and women after the event. Assisting clients in the post-divorce process requires an understanding of the differences between the anxiety reactions of men and women.

Need for the Study

An understanding of the anxiety process within divorced individuals can assist therapists to better understand their clients' individual reactions to the trauma of divorce. Little has been researched about the time period after marriage.
While there can be little doubt that the postdivorce period is a time of adjustment, there is a paucity of evidence with regard to what constitutes good or poor adjustment. However, if certain variables help or hinder this adjustment, than the identification of these variables could seemingly open to new avenues of exploration which might ultimately lead to programs of education for the adjustment of divorced persons. (Goode, cited in Heritage & Daniels, 1974, p. 44)

To be able to identify changes in the individual's personality and connecting this to a level of anxiety that the divorce process motivates, can promote a greater knowledge about the person's behavior that is expressed.

The knowledge of this effect during post-divorce enables therapists to continually assist clients while they are experiencing this adjustment. "Until 1973 only five major works dealing specifically with postseparation and postdivorce adjustment had been done, and only four had been published" (Raschke, 1977,p. 130). Differential anxiety levels between divorced men and women during post-divorce have not been researched in terms of the persisting and motivating effects that the anxiety creates.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to determine if men and women differ in the levels of anxiety experienced during the post-divorce adjustment process.
Research Question

What is the relationship between level of anxiety and gender during post-divorce adjustment?

Definition of Terms

Abandonment: To give up completely and/or to desert. (Guralnik, D. B., 1987, p. 1).

Adjustment Disorder: Occurs in response to a life stressor and ends after the stressor or its consequences end. (APA, 1994, p. 435, 623).

Anxiety: A worry or the uneasiness of about what may happen. (Guralnik, D. B., 1987, p. 27).

Cinderella Complex: Female fear of having to be independent, a deep wish to be taken care of by others. (Dowling, 1981, p. 32).

Gender Roles (Divorce Adjustment): Differences between Males and Females that reinforce gender differences during divorce. (Diedrick, P., 1991, p. 33).

Generalized Anxiety Disorder: An individual displaying unrealistic or excessive anxiety regarding a variety of circumstances in or around their daily life. (APA, 1994, p. 432).

Nonpathological Anxiety: Anxiety that can be controlled, and not as distressing, such as life circumstances and regular everyday worries. Does not cause significant impairment in social or occupational functioning. (APA, 1994, p. 435).

Separation Anxiety Disorder: Having concern about others or of being away from family or from home. (APA, 1994, p.435).
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of current literature concerning the experience of anxiety during the post-divorce period. Divorce itself as an event, creates an establishment for changes within that person's current life. Divorce promotes the effects of this change, creating an heightened sensitivity and awareness to events in that person's surrounding environment.

Being single again or becoming a single parent means a change in role status and the necessity of redefinition, which can lead to more autonomy or to anomie. Similarly, studies have shown that income and economic status may produce marked anxiety and pessimism as well as increased feelings of personal control and power over the external exigencies in one's life. (Rice & Rice, 1986, p. 20)

Literature about the effects of divorce on males and females concentrates mostly on the period just before the divorce actually occurs, in addition to mainly focusing on those issues that refer mostly to females: readjustment; effect on children; financial stability; identity; and role restructuring (Pledge, 1992). Currently, little research exists for the time period that directly follows divorce.
However, various models of the stages of divorce, have been published since the 1970s (Bohannan, 1971; Kaslow, 1984; Kaslow & Schwartz, 1987; Krantzler, 1981; Rice & Rice, 1986). But, little exists about the subject of the after-effects of divorce. The following review of current literature on these after-affects is arranged in the following order:

1) Anxiety

2) Adjustment Process after Divorce

3) Counseling Approaches to Post-Divorce Adjustment

Anxiety

Anxiety is a significant part of the divorce process. The level of anxiety experienced can profoundly affect the individual's reaction to and recovery from divorce. Anxiety is generally described as an increased feeling of uneasiness about one's self, family, or surroundings (Spielberger, 1972). "The apprehensive anticipation of future danger or misfortune accompanied by a feeling of dysphoria or somatic symptoms of tension. The focus of anticipated danger may be internal or external" (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 764).

Acute or chronic levels of anxiety are considered anxiety disorders according to the American Psychiatric Association (1994). Anxiety disorders that possibly evolve during post-divorce are briefly described below:
Panic disorder. Panic attacks; are often connected with intense fear and a desire to flee from wherever the panic attack is occurring. Panic attacks can occur in other anxiety disorders.

Phobias(specific/social). Characterized by significant anxiety provoked by exposure to a specific feared object or situation—or the exposure to certain types of social or performance situations. These phobias can produce avoidance behaviors.

Obsessive-Compulsive disorder. Characterized by obsessions(causing anxiety) and/or by compulsions (causes anxiety to stop).

Post-traumatic stress disorder. Characterized by a re-experiencing of an extremely traumatic event including symptoms of increased arousal and/or behaviors for avoidance.

Acute Stress disorder. Characterized by symptoms similar to post-traumatic stress disorder occurring immediately in the aftermath of an extremely traumatic event.

Generalized anxiety disorder. Characterized by at least six months of persistent and excessive anxiety and worry.

Separation anxiety disorder. Characterized by anxiety related to being away from parental figures. However, concerns about others and being away from family and/or away from home also creates separation anxiety.

These anxiety disorders describe those higher levels of anxiety that could be a part of the male or female response to the trauma of divorce.

The effects that divorce has on individual males and females differ. Women observe and express anxiety
differently than men because, men and women view their relationship from different perspectives. Women also experience the stress of anxiety differently (Pledge, 1992). "A significant number of young women are living with an intolerable level of anxiety about betrayal . . . Such anxieties occur and persist in many young women who are, by most standards, extremely successful" (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989, p. 62).

In discussing female expression of anxiety, DeRosis (1979) noted that, "Anxiety reactions come in all sizes, in all shapes, and in all disguises" (p. 262). Research by Stevens and Gardner (1994), indicated that men show similar symptoms of anxiousness.

The financial problems and feelings of loss suffered by divorcing women have long been obvious, and we women have therefore elicited sympathy and received welcome support from our sisters. But hardly anyone seemed to notice or care that divorcing men were exhibiting even worse distress. The men we were divorcing were frequently depressed, hostile, abusive, and unable to function competently, or suffering from various combinations of these . . . until recently, finding literature on male psychology in general and the vulnerabilities of males in particular was almost impossible. (p. ix)

Stevens and Gardner (1994), while investigating male separation anxiety and the dread of abandonment for gender differences noticed that men do indeed display trauma the nature and intensity of which varied according to their biology, maladaptive social expectations, and their success in dominating and intimidating women.
Divorce is a form of betrayal to both men and women. Both are devastated by the breaking of the marriage; feeling a lack of self-concept and self-identity after divorce. This lack of stability for both men and women represents a loss in life of predictability, completeness, balance, and comfort. In short, their lives have been permanently altered (Rice & Rice, 1986).

Men may feel a lack of structure in their lives, a lack of roots and even a lack of identity . . . Women suffer economic stress, often lack work-appropriate education and have problems trying single-handedly to manage households and careers at the same time. Moreover, because of societal values, women feel a greater loss of self-esteem as women, are under greater stress rearing children as a single parent, and are shunned socially by coupled friends as the wives of these couples come to perceive them as threats to their own marriages. (Tiemann, Danto, & Gullo, 1992, p. 103)

Different levels of anxiety between genders are defined by the culture and the environment. An awareness that both genders are affected differently by the trauma of divorce has only recently been acknowledged. Men feel the loss of structure and root in their lives. A male reaction to divorce includes social and dating activities in order to cope with the loss. Women will feel equal or greater loss because of societal values and the greater stress in rearing children as a single parent (Tiemann, Danto and Gullo, 1992).

For both male and female, levels of anxiety from the trauma of divorce are increased but, because of different
"sensing" between the sexes it's expressed through an appropriate cultural and societal norm. Both men and women have increased levels of anxiety after divorce but, with distinct differences. "The major differences were seen in the type of depressive symptoms, with men exhibiting an agitated or anxious depression, and women exhibiting distressed and somatic depressions" (Pledge, 1992, p. 157).

**Adjustment Process after Divorce**

Adjustment process after divorce is broadly defined as a period of time following marriage. "Many researchers agree that divorce is best conceptualized as a process rather than a discrete life event, and have identified stages within that process" (Pledge, 1992, p. 154).

The adjustment period after divorce is a time period where individuals must become more aware of their roles and interactions with others. Because of this adjustment being defined as a process, individual variations and reactions are numerous. Adjusting to divorce effects the role in work, home, and play. However, the process of adjustment itself is not clearly defined. "Adjustment is a concept that theorists of various bents have found difficult to define conceptually" (Raschke, 1977, p. 131). The lifestyle and behaviors the individual was comfortable with before will not work now, becoming unworkable because of changes no longer controllable, influenced by divorce
effects. In addition, it is not known exactly how this adjustment effects the individual right at the time of divorce.

Divorce adjustment has been measured primarily in terms of self-reported psychological, relational, and behavioral problems. Such measures emerge from the assumption that divorce leads to stressors which influence the individual in terms of psychological and behavioral changes. Measurement has, with few exceptions, been taken after actual separation or divorce, and thus conclusions concerning change because of divorce are difficult. (Diedrick, 1991, p. 35)

Gender reaction differences after divorce have been described and researched extensively. Divorce research articles that refer to gender continue to have more reference to females than to males during post-divorce. Colburn, Lin, and Moore (1992) perhaps explained the reasons for this difference since

According to research on gender difference in relation to the conceptualization and expression of feelings, males can be predicted to seek an external source for the validation of self necessitated by the marital breakup. Unlike women, men can afford to imagine the experience of love as involving the loss of control since their general control in Western patriarchal society is assured. (p. 101)

Male and female individual adjustment has also been examined in terms of defensively responding to the divorce as a major life stressor. Men and women vary in handling this post-divorce stress. One way to examine this gender adjustment difference is to examine the social participation after divorce. "There are different patterns, for the most part, for males and females, with females not
participating socially as much as males nor participating when it would do most for alleviating stress. Males participate more than females" (Raschke, 1977, p. 138).

It is known that increased social involvement of each of the sexes following divorce will further speed recovery and lower anxiety levels throughout the adjustment period. However, post-adjustment is still an individual process with each person adjusting differently to it, and at a different rate.

Counseling Approaches to Post-Divorce Adjustment

Counselors, and therapists each have taken different approaches examining the post-divorce period. Until the 1970s, little research existed on this part of the divorce process. As Raschke (1977) noted

Until the early 1970's there was very little empirical theoretical work done in the area of postseparation and postdivorce adjustment. In the 1950's Goode (1956) was aware of this neglect and attributed it to the emphasis on marital happiness, marital adjustment, and marital satisfaction by researchers in family sociology, which consequently caused a de-emphasis on what happens to the individual after separation and/or divorce. (p. 129)

Perhaps because of the greater individualization of men and women since the 1960s, and the greater emphasis placed on importance of individual rights, men and women reflect about themselves more today. A person's viewpoint is discussed freely more often now from the standpoint of individualization and with emotion of what they desire out
of life. This shift has occurred when importance of the individual's happiness becomes of greater importance. Understanding that individuals' happiness and sadness, and then being able to relate it to their individualization and growth is important. This aids understanding the effects divorce creates.

Being satisfied in marriage has also become more important to individuals but, the adjustment to the absence of marriage is relatively unknown and not recognized until the divorce is almost final. Role transition skills must be learned or re-learned after divorce. A realization that role transitioning occurs frequently during a lifetime may assist the counseling approach that is used to help with post-divorce recovery. Raschke (1977) also found that

The critical role transition from a married status to a divorced status can be somewhat equated to the critical role transition from middle age into old age . . . a partial explanation for differential postdivorce stress is that those who, for the most part, participate in new sociability roles outside the home are more likely to perceive themselves as experiencing less stress. These people are males in general (versus females) and older males (versus females) and males with few children. (p. 138)

What this means is that there is a link between activity and low stress levels as perceived by the divorced individual. When new roles and personal activities are engaged in by participation outside the home, new viewpoints and advantages to those recently divorced occurs. A greater sense of satisfaction with one's life is perceived. However,
activity in of itself after divorce, is viewed from a different perspective between men and women.

Males tend to work harder to find fulfilling activities outside the home after divorce because of the absence of activity in the home. Whereas, for females, social activity has been built by their activity in and out of the home during the marriage. Because of the social roles, women who have no children after divorce generally, already have a social activity "framework" in place outside of the home.

Females who have jobs for their principal source of income participate more than females who depend on alimony or child support. They naturally have more outside-the-home contacts, and they are probably less afraid to get involved in roles outside the home. Also, they probably have more financial resources for social participation. (Raschke, 1977, p. 136)

An approach of crisis intervention is common to help individuals through divorce adjustment. Because divorce therapy initially came from a marital and family therapy perspective, therapists often use the theory of crisis when working with the divorced. Divorce causes us to express intense emotion. However, during the process of role transitions, it also continually brings emotional change. Crisis therapy however, is directed at the individual, relating that personal responsibility must be taken for behavior.

Divorce itself however, is a emotional crisis that is providing opportunity for a positive outcome but, not
without pain and conflict involved. Individuals are not accustomed to relating opportunity to pain and conflict. But, post-divorce individual changes are ongoing and are experienced as crises in what was a predictable life before divorce. Therefore, crisis therapy is limited to dealing with divorce as a crisis but, is not usable for the on-going changes that are created by the divorce process.

Divorce is a form of emotional crisis that produces the opportunity for positive outcome and growth concomitant with pain and conflict. In this respect, it is no different from any other intense emotional stressor that brings people to therapy. The status quo by definition does not produce growth. Some anxiety and conflict generally are necessary to motivate change. In such a state one's usual equilibrium is grossly upset and preferred coping mechanisms often are far less effective . . . Crisis theory provides a conceptual definition for dealing with upset in an individual's usual steady state. (Rice & Rice, 1986, p. 55)

Crisis therapy benefits individuals at the point of divorce for immediate short term therapy, but for a longer period of time another approach usually is necessary.

Another model of counseling is the gender-oriented approach used to facilitate a greater understanding of an individual's place within the adjustment process. Men and women, but especially women, can benefit from using this communication style approach which also promotes better self-esteem and motivation. A communication approach will increase an individual's awareness of role adjustment, also developing necessary communication skill which divorced
individuals lack or are not aware of (Thiessen, Avery and Joanning, 1980).

As a counseling approach, increasing communication skills improves the likelihood of increased self-confidence and self-esteem while further reducing anxiety levels. With better self-esteem, communication skills improve adjustment to post-divorce (Thiessen, Avery and Joanning, 1980).

Increasing communication skills of both men and women has long been known to also increase the satisfaction of both genders in their relationship towards the other and also to bring satisfaction to themselves in their daily life. Improving communication skills, improves the individual's adjustment to post-divorce, because it improves the individual's ability to verbalize events leading to divorce and to become more aware of his or her ability to process post-divorce feelings.

A communication skills concept has been used by Thiessen, Avery, and Joanning (1980), observing that

... provides empirical evidence that a structured intervention program which attempts to train recently divorced women in specific communication skills may be an effective means of diminishing the difficulties that accompany postdivorce adjustment. This evidence corroborates ... that the trauma of postdivorce adjustment can be eased using a structured intervention approach. (p. 41)

Reflecting on different approaches available, it is important to know that little research exists for a specialized treatment of post-divorce. Various approaches
exist but, depending on the exact situation, dependent, angry, or depressed individuals will still be encountered. No one approach is better than another because post-divorce is a period of uncertainly with continual re-examination of roles and behaviors.

However, a conventional approach may be useful at first to begin to understand where the divorced individual is in their "process". In this way, a further understanding can then be gained by the therapist in order to know the best direction for a continuing therapy. Kaslow (1984) noted however,

There is no one right way during the aftermath. If the person remains extremely distraught, the therapist can mobilize their most rational faculties and help them to cognitively restructure their thoughts and attitudes. Conversely, if the individual is over-intellectualizing to combat allowing their feelings into consciousness, the therapist should slowly evoke the emotions buried within. Once some balance is achieved between their affective and cognitive capacities and moods, they can make wiser decisions about their preferred course of action. (p. 36)

When a high state of confusion exists during post-divorce, and using no model or with no prior knowledge, it's best to begin with an issues approach, increasing coping abilities and overall stability before beginning to understand where in the process the individual's located. How that individual is being effected is important when looking at post-divorce without having a framework to begin from. Before an individual is able to cope with the
uncertainly and trauma of the divorce, most energy can be expended just understanding where the individual is in the process. Knowing that individual's ability of reaction is gained first by an understanding how that divorced person responds to divorce itself. Clinical psychiatrist Charlton (1980) noted, "Most energy in working with clients going through a divorce is expended in and around three dynamic issues: failure, loss, and renewal" (p. 142).

The individual's coping ability will foster the counseling approach, by their awareness of processes occurring and knowing the time frame they view themselves within. The therapist's own awareness of this connection between coping ability and adjustment, will be an indicator of where in the adjustment process an individual is located, in addition, to indicating their speed and time frame perspective.

Understanding individual adjustment processes assists the therapist in becoming aware of the best approach to use. However, the client's coping ability must be taken into account. Dreman (1991) concludes that further

Research which reliably establishes the relationship between coping strategies and adjustment at different stages of the divorce process, as well as in other traumatic events, should have important clinical implications. Clinicians would be well advised to take such process considerations into account in their diagnostic and therapeutic efforts. Longitudinal research is necessary to establish reliably the relation between coping and adjustment in the postdivorce process. (p. 118-119)
Adjusting to the post-divorce period requires a firm understanding that stressful situations will continue to provoke further anxiety. The ability to cope with these stressful situations and the resulting anxiety seems to be affected by one's sex role orientation. However, Pledge (1992) did note that

Findings suggest that the less traditional one's attitude toward sex-role orientation, the better is one's adjustment, post-divorce . . . The literature suggests that traditional sex role orientation is significantly associated with poor adjustment to marital disruption in the case of women. No such differences were found for men. The differences in adjustment for men and women found in the literature could be a function of the level of independence (for men) or dependence (for women) adopted by each spouse with the marriage. For women, the dependency might be characterized by passivity, dependence, and difficulty in perceiving oneself as productive or useful outside of the marital role. (p. 159-160)

Finally, the counselors' awareness of the individual's role orientation, the individual's awareness of post-divorce as a process over time, and perception of self-esteem, provides a base in which to examine the individual's place in the adjustment from a multidimensional perspective. This provides greater insight into the process of post-divorce. An individualization of self-definition and finally an individual self-determination of what ultimately happens motivates both the approach used and the depth of post-divorce experience.

Both therapist and divorced individual roles interact during this process. However, the therapist must permit the
individual to continue to resolve conflict and evolve emotionally over the adjustment period with an individualization process of self-definition and self-determination. Milne (1986) noted

Therapeutic interventions with divorcing couples combine an insight approach with the action-oriented focus of the behaviorists. Divorcing spouses attempt to resolve relational conflicts to effect a satisfactory postdivorce adjustment. Out of this has come a body of emerging theory directed toward the emotional-psychological process of divorce. (p. 197-198)

It is with this greater understanding that post-divorce is multi-faceted and must be dealt with on a situation-by-situation basis. Understanding that different counseling approaches to post-divorce are beneficial only if the approach used directly takes into account differences of each individual's rate of progress and levels of intensity then, will the adjustment for that individual be comfortable and acceptable to them long after the divorce occurred.

Summary

Reviewing literature on post-divorce, individual anxiety has not generally been considered by researchers or therapists until some time after the divorce has occurred. Because of this, traditional models are being used during therapy.

Professionals however, do have some research to use as basis for post-divorce adjustment therapy. However, those models are based on crisis theory, gender roles, gender
identity, and women's issues. Those address only individual parts of a total post-divorce adjustment.

Post-divorce is a process that divorced individuals experience. Men and women display different anxiety levels in reaction to being divorced because of change and upheaval occurring. Those anxiety levels vary because of different individual reaction to the anxiety stressors.

The levels of anxiety that are experienced by males and females after divorce are not exactly known, only for sure that, post-divorce is a period of uncertainly. A deeper understanding of the relationship that level of anxiety has to gender during divorce adjustment can add to the therapist's deeper understanding of the behaviors that individuals display as they experience the after-effects of divorce.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine if Men and Women experience different levels of anxiety during post-divorce. It is important to examine the differences that gender can have on post-divorce experiences. "Yet it should be recognized that research on gender differences also suggests that males and females will differ in their ways of accounting for the adjustment to divorce" (Colburn, Lin & Moore, 1992, p. 101). This study will suggest relationships between anxiety and behavior, but not necessarily predict individual male/female behaviors after divorce.

Research Design

The descriptive research design approach was selected to measure anxiety levels of divorced men and women.

In descriptive research, the researcher does not manipulate variables or control the environment in which the study takes place. Its purpose is to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of a given phenomenon, population, or area of interest. Description may include (1) collection of facts that describe existing phenomena; (2) identification of
problems or justification of current conditions and practice; (3) project or product evaluation; or (4) comparison of experience between groups with similar problems to assist in future planning and decision making. (Merriam & Simpson, 1995, p. 61)

Descriptive research as applied to this study, was chosen because individuals' reactions and thoughts can be accessed. By assessing anxiety levels of divorced individuals, a relationship of perceptions and/or feelings can be compared to the anxiety they may have experienced during post-divorce.

Data to answer the research question was obtained by the use of a researcher-designed questionnaire which obtained demographic material and measures of post-divorce anxiety experienced in four categories: "Daily Living"; "Social Interaction"; "Health"; and, "Emotional".

The demographic information measured included Gender; Age; Length of time since the divorce; Length of former marriage; Number of times married; Marital status (now); and, Undergraduate/graduate status.

Pilot Study

The pre-pilot test items of the instrument were based on data collected from interviews the researcher conducted with 6 adults (4 females and 2 males), who shared experiences and feelings of their own post-divorce experiences.

A pilot study for the improvement of the questionnaire was then conducted with two classes of graduate students
(N=20). Their input was used to improve the focus and clarity of the instrument. The instrument was also assessed for face validity by graduate faculty at the university.

**Population and Sample**

The sample consisted of 115 adult men and women, who had been divorced and were currently students in psychology, education, and management classes at the university. A total of 24 classes were visited. To insure an adequate sample size, the sample was drawn from both undergraduate and graduate classes. Participants were identified only by gender, current marital status, current age, and by undergraduate/graduate status.

**Assumptions and Limitations**

It is assumed that participants were honest in reporting their personal experiences of post-divorce anxiety. It is also assumed that the respondents were free from any abnormal psychological condition.

A potential limitation to this study is related to participants whose divorce occurred many years ago. Having re-married, those respondents may have become less aware of anxiety experienced over time after experiencing a post-divorce adjustment period.

After moving from short-term to long-term adjustment, these re-married adults may have increased levels of
functioning. The effects of time or other disturbances may limit accurate responses (Kraus, 1979).

Because the sample was limited to adult students at Ottawa University Phoenix, Arizona, the results of this study may not necessarily be generalized to the larger population of divorced men and women.

Procedure

Research data came from an anonymous questionnaire designed to assess levels of anxiety as described and experienced by post-divorce adult men and women.

Data were collected by administering the inventory to university students during class meetings. Permission to seek volunteers from the classes was gained from the instructors prior to visiting the classes. After instructor permission was obtained; this researcher then visited each class to distribute the questionnaire and attached cover letter (Appendix). No identifying information (name, address, instructor, or class) appeared anywhere on the questionnaire or answer sheets.

The instrument and cover letter were handed out to every student to inform them of the purpose and nature of the study, in order so that they may voluntarily decide to participate.
Instrumentation

A researcher-designed 40-item anxiety questionnaire (Appendix B), was developed to measure anxiety levels using a "Likert" scale of 1 to 5 levels of intensity. In addition, to the 40 questions which ask about levels of anxiety experienced, 7 questions were included to obtain demographic information about the respondents including: length of time from divorce(months/years); gender; current marital status; age at divorce; education level; length of previous marriage and, number of times married.

This instrument directed the respondents to think back to that time period immediately following their divorce, and asked them to indicate how often they experienced anxiety related feelings and behaviors during that period in their lives. This intensity was expressed by the descriptors: Never; Sometimes; Often; Almost always; and, Always.

The data collected identified traits generally associated with anxiety: Emotional instability; Suspiciousness/apprehensiveness; Guilt-proneness; Low reality-integration; and, Tension. Some questions in each of the 4 life scales were designed to identify these anxiety traits. Emotional instability is identified by questions in the health and emotional scales; suspiciousness/apprehensiveness by questions in the social interaction and emotional scales; guilt-proneness by questions in the
emotional scale; and low reality-integration by those questions in the daily living and social interaction scales.

However, if a respondent's divorce has occurred one year ago or less, it is believed that the temporary condition of "State-Anxiety" will also be measured. Both "State" and "Trait", are evaluations of how respondents have felt at a particular time in the past. State anxiety describes feelings of anxiety experienced in the recent past, whereas Trait anxiety measures long-standing neurotic anxiety (Spielberger, 1972). One question about the perceived level of depression experienced during post-divorce was included on the instrument.

Method of Analysis

Data were initially sorted by the different categories of age; gender; length of time since divorce; length of most recent former marriage; number of times married; marital status; and degree program. Means and standard deviations were then computed for the 10 questions in each of the 4 life category scales: Daily living; Social interaction; Health; and Emotional. Mean scale scores for each of these categories and a total score for the instrument were also computed.

A T-test of means was then performed to determine if there was a significant difference between males and females on post-divorce levels of anxiety.
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The data presented in this chapter were gathered from a total of 24 undergraduate and graduate classes, and out of the 406 possible participants, 115 or 28.3\% of the students volunteered to complete this questionnaire. The data includes the following: demographics, marital patterns, life category scale responses, and individual item responses broken down by gender.

Demographic Data

Demographic data from respondents is presented in Table 1. Data collected for the demographics of the sample included: gender, age, current marital status, and undergraduate/graduate degree status.
TABLE 1
RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 50</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 60</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Married</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The demographics of the sample indicated that the majority (74.8%) of the respondents were females and that most (49.6%) of the respondents were in the 41-50 age range. In addition, most (66.1%) respondents were not currently married and were also enrolled in the undergraduate degree program (59.1%).

**Marital Patterns**

Table 2 presents data on the marital patterns of the respondents broken down by gender.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean (Yrs.)</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean (Yrs.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time since recent Divorce</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of former marriage</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Times Married</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Females reported a higher mean length of their former marriage (10.6 yrs) than did males (8.1 yrs). However, males had been married more times (n=2.0) than females (n=1.7). Females also reported a larger length of time since most recent divorce (9.6 yrs); then did males (9.1 yrs). The mean length of time since recent divorce for men and women combined is 9.5 years, with a range of 0.08 to 32 years. While the length of the former marriage ranged from .25 to 30.3 years, respondents reported having been married from 1 to 4 times.

**Life Category Scales**

The data in table 3 is grouped according to the mean total score for each Life Category scale: Daily Living; items #8-17, Social Interaction; items #18-27, Health; items #28-37, and Emotional; items #38-47. All of the questions were answered using a "Likert" type scale where the
respondents were asked to think back to that time period directly following their divorce, and to indicate how often they experienced anxiety related feelings and behaviors during that period as expressed by the following descriptors: Never = 1; Sometimes = 2; Often = 3; Almost always = 4; and, Always = 5. Each life category scale has a minimum score of 10.0 points to a maximum score of 50.0 points. A higher score represents higher levels of anxiety. Means and standard deviations are reported by gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Living</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Interaction</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>100.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Males reported a higher level of anxiety on the daily living scale while females reported higher levels of anxiety on the social interaction, health, and emotional scales.

However, the differences between men and women on the mean scores on each of the scales and the total score for the instrument was not statistically significant when tested
at the .05 level of significance.

Table 4 reports means and standard deviations from the Life Category scales and the Total score for the instrument for the sample as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Category</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily Living</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Interaction</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>100.2</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means for the life category scales and the total score for the entire sample are similar to the means broken down by gender.

**Individual Item Responses**

Means and standard deviations for each individual item on the instrument are presented in table 5. Men and women combined reported the highest levels of anxiety related to: "feeling betrayed" (item #40) and, "feeling angry" (item #44). Those means were 3.32 and 3.40 respectively. Table 6 on page 37 examines individual item responses by gender.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Overworked</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Couldn't concentrate</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Work less important</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Work faster</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I felt lonely</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Pressure at work</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Too many duties</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>At work later</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Couldn't keep schedule</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Work wasn't important</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Felt embarrassed</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Uncomfortable with others</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Emotionally dependent</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Stopped sharing feelings</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Couldn't talk to others</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Had lost friendships</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Self-conscious of others</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Lost personal identity</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Receiving attention</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Wanted to run away</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Concerned with appearance</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Changes body weight</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Tension changed health</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Others noticed health</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Heart pounding</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Appetite changed greatly</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Changes of alcohol/drugs</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>About to break down</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Needed more sleep</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Getting sick</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Felt guilty</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Feelings of panic</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Felt betrayed</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Irritable things go wrong</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Numb to everything</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Couldn't trust gender</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Felt angry</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Life became stressful</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Felt insecure</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I was depressed</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item #</td>
<td>Brief description</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Overworked</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Couldn't concentrate</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Work less important</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Work faster</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I felt lonely</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Pressure at work</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Too many duties</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>At work later</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Couldn't keep schedule</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Work wasn't important</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Felt embarrassed</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Uncomfortable with others</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>2.44</td>
</tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Emotionally dependent</td>
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<td>1.26</td>
<td>2.51</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Stopped sharing feelings</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Couldn't talk to others</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Had lost friendships</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Self-conscious of others</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Lost personal identity</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Receiving attention</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Wanted to run away</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Concerned with appearance</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Changes body weight</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Tension changed health</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Others noticed health</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Heart pounding</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Appetite changed greatly</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Changes of alcohol/drugs</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>About to break down</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Needed more sleep</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Getting sick</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Felt guilty</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Feelings of panic</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Felt betrayed</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Irritable things go wrong</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Numb to everything</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Couldn't trust gender</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Felt angry</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Life became stressful</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Felt insecure</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I was depressed</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While there were some differences between men and women on the mean responses for individual items, none of those differences were statistically significant when tested at a .05 level of significance.

However, when looking at selected questions from each of the 4 life categories, differences in responses by gender can be seen. Women reported higher mean levels of anxiety on 14 items (items #16, #24, #27, #28, #29, #30, #36, #37, #39, #41, #43, #44, #45, and #46). Men reported higher mean anxiety levels on 6 items (items #9, #19, #32, #34, #35, and #38). On one question (item #47), men and women reported equal mean anxiety levels.

Table 7 on page 39 examines the differences of male/female anxiety by the respondents' martial status at the time of this survey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
<th>Not married</th>
<th></th>
<th>Married</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Couldn't concentrate</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Couldn't keep schedule</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Uncomfortable with others</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Self-conscious of others</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Wanted to run away</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Concerned with appearance</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Changes body weight</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Tension changed health</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Heart pounding</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Changes of alcohol/drugs</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>About to break down</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Needed more sleep</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Getting sick</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Felt guilty</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Feelings of panic</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Irritable things go wrong</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Couldn't trust gender</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Felt angry</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Life became stressful</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Felt insecure</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I was depressed</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the 21 selected questions, unmarried respondents reported higher levels of anxiety on 18 items (items #16, #19, #24, #27, #28, #29, #30, #32, #35, #37, #38, #39, #41, #43, #44, #45, #46, and #47); while married respondents reported higher levels of anxiety on 3 items (items #9, #34, and #36). Married and unmarried respondents reported fairly
equal levels of anxiety on item #36.

**Correlation Analysis**

A correlation analysis was performed to see if there was a relationship between any of the demographic questions (#1 to #7), and the scores from the 4 Life Category scales: Daily Living(#8 to #17); Social Interaction(#18 to #27); Health(#28 to #37); and Emotional(#38 to #47). The results of this analysis indicated that there was a significant correlation\( r = -0.243, \ p = .014 \), between the score on the social interaction scale and the number of times married. In addition, there was a significant correlation \( r = -0.196, \ p = .049 \), between the score on the emotional scale and the number of times married.

However, these correlations don't necessarily indicate that there is a direct cause and effect relationship between these variables.

**Summary**

The original hypothesis of this study was that there would be a significant difference between men and women on the level of anxiety they experience during a post-divorce adjustment period.

The main findings indicate that the levels of anxiety reported by men and women were not significantly different. However, males reported higher levels of anxiety associated
with Daily Living category responses and females reported higher levels of anxiety associated with Emotional category responses.

On individual item responses, both genders scored highest on indicating "angry" emotions post-divorce. More than 50% indicated "Often" intensity; and 26.96% indicated the highest level of intensity—"Always". In addition, individuals who were not-married at the time of the survey reported even higher mean levels of anger (0.25% higher), over the respondents who indicated that they were married.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to determine if men and women differ in the levels of anxiety experienced during the post-divorce adjustment process. This research concentrated on anxiety reactions that divorced men and women experienced immediately after their divorce as reported on the following four scales: Daily Living; Social Interaction; Health; and Emotional.

The changes and new ways of living brought on by a divorce contribute to increased feelings of uncertainty and anxiety in men and women. Because very little research exists regarding the after-effects of divorce, and in particular on the time period immediately following divorce, there is a need to gain a greater understanding of the effect that divorce has on an individual.

Measuring anxiety levels after a divorce provides data on an individual's reaction to the stresses brought on by the divorce and the effect it has on self-identity. The purpose of this study was to determine if men and women
differed in levels of anxiety experienced during post-divorce adjustment.

The literature review in this study focused on anxiety and anxiety disorders; the adjustment process after divorce; and counseling approaches to post-divorce adjustment. Most of the available literature on divorce concentrates on the time period before the divorce and refers mostly to women. This researcher found little data on post-divorce other than the identification of various models that describe the stages of the divorce process. However, those models do not directly address the individual's experience of post-divorce nor do they investigate individual reactions to the trauma produced immediately after divorce. This study measured individual reaction to divorce as a traumatic event causing increased anxiety reactions in the immediate post-divorce time.

The methodology used in this study involved measuring the anxiety related feelings and behaviors among divorced individuals using a self-administered questionnaire to a population of university (undergraduate and graduate) students. This 40-item questionnaire was designed to measure the effects of post-divorce by having respondents indicate anxiety levels from four life categories: daily living; social interaction; health; and emotional. Seven additional questions were used to collect demographical information. Of
a possible sample of 406 University students, 115 participated for a 28.3% response rate.

The demographics of the survey indicated that 25.2% of the respondents were male; and 74.8% female. Most respondents (49.6%); were between 41-50 years old. The majority of the respondents reported that the length of time since their most-recent divorce was 10 years. The mean length of the respondents most-recent marriage was 10 years. Most respondents (47%); were married at least 2 times. Sixty-six percent were unmarried at the time of the survey and over 50% were undergraduates.

The findings indicated that divorced men and women report similar anxiety levels. In each of the 4 Life category scales, men's and women's mean scores were not significantly different. When examining individual questions, some responses did differ by gender and question category. Males indicated more anxiety behaviors and feelings associated with daily living; while females indicated more anxiety in the emotional category.

Conclusions

Men and women experience similar levels of anxiety after divorce. However, there is a distinct difference in how some of the questions were answered when viewed from a gender perspective. This research indicates that men and women in this sample responded to divorce in terms of
gender-referenced behaviors. Women had greater anxiety levels related to emotional issues and reported greater feelings of anger than did men.

Males indicated greater anxiety related to daily living tasks. Both men and women had a difficult adjustment to their divorce. This study suggests that both genders experience a similar amount of depression. In addition, there appears to be a relationship between the number of times married and anxiety related to social and emotional factors; as an individual's number of times married increases, anxiety related to social interaction and emotional factors will decrease.

Of the total sample, the majority (66.09%) did not re-marry after 2 previous marriages. With less anxiety reactions from having additional marriages, it may then be easier to divorce after having had the experience of a first marriage.

Of the 21 selected questions grouped by life areas and marital status (Table 7, page 39), those individuals who had not re-married reported higher anxiety levels than those who had re-married. In 18 out of the 21 selected questions, those who had re-married at the time of this questionnaire, reported lower anxiety levels after their most recent divorce. Perhaps, having re-married helped to lower anxiety levels, creating new stability in those respondents' lives.
Recommendations

The data which suggests that men and women display similar levels of anxiety during the period immediately following divorce, but that the nature of anxiety related behaviors and feelings varies by gender, may be important to those therapists and counselors who work with divorced individuals.

The ability to recognize the increased anxiety that the divorced individual displays while being aware of how anxiety can produce gender-referenced behavior may assist the counselor to understand how the process of adjusting to a divorce can increase anxiety levels beyond those normally experienced by the client. This study may assist counselors to separate valid divorce adjustment anxiety from everyday anxiety, thereby understanding how that individual reacts to their divorce in addition to the stresses of daily life.

The data from this study indicated that for females, social interaction, health, and emotional factors are part of their anxiety related post-divorce issues. Whereas, for males, daily living anxiety has a stronger input on their post-divorce adjustment. Therapists and counselors need to be aware of each separate life category that is important to men and women.

Further research would be worthwhile to identify how increased anxiety levels may affect an individual's
personality. An understanding of the connection between how changes affects the individuals personality after divorce and the individual's ability to successfully respond to and cope with divorce, could be a further outgrowth from this research study.

Further research would also be useful to investigate an individual's re-marriage "timeframe" after divorce. Gathering additional data from the post-divorce period to a re-marriage could identify a possible relationship between post-divorce anxiety and symptoms of trauma.

Additional study would be to investigate how much if any, the divorced individual's current anxiety is preventing or has prevented that individual from further establishing satisfactory relationships with others. A question to ask would be, "Is re-marriage a goal for everyone?" This study did not report why the majority did not choose to re-marry. However, those who haven't re-married indicated higher anxiety intensity over those who had re-married. Why is this so? A related question to this could be directed to those who marry quickly(1-year or less), after divorce. Do those individuals continue to display any anxiety from their (previous) post-divorce? And if so, what affect does it have in the new marriage?

Continuing study in the area of post-divorce adjustment would enable counselors to positively influence those
recently divorced in continuing to have strengthened functioning in their lives.
REFERENCE LIST


APPENDIX A

Anxiety Questionnaire Cover Letter
February 19, 1996

Dear Ottawa University Student,

Attached is an questionnaire I am using to gather data for my Master's Research Project. The purpose of the study is to examine anxiety responses among men and women during the post-divorce adjustment period.

If you have experienced a divorce sometime during your life please respond to the items on the questionnaire. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete in class. Your participation is voluntary and anonymous.

Unless you have been instructed to do otherwise, please leave the questionnaire with the instructor.

Thank you,

[Signature]
George Collenberg
Ottawa University Master's Student
APPENDIX B

Anxiety Questionnaire
PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS
DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS PAPER

WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED: PLEASE RETURN TO INSTRUCTOR
(unless directed otherwise)

Thank you for your cooperation

Unless otherwise indicated please mark
the following questions with an "X":

(1) Gender: Male____ Female____

(2) Age range: under 20____
21 - 30____
31 - 40____
41 - 50____
51 - 60____
60+____

NOTE:
If divorced more than once, please answer all questions
in terms of your most recent divorce.

(3) Length of time since most recent divorce: Years____ Months____

(4) Length of most recent former marriage: Years____ Months____

(5) Number of times married: ___
   (write in number)

(6) Marital status now: married / not married
   (circle one)

(7) Degree Program: undergraduate / graduate
   (circle one)
Please Note:
For the following questions—In the space provided after each item, place the number which corresponds to your response for each item using the scale below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>never / sometimes / often / almost always / always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1       2          3            4           5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now . . . Think back to the time period immediately following your divorce (1-year); and indicate how often you experienced the following during that time frame:

(Daily Living)
(8) I felt overworked____
(9) I couldn't concentrate on daily tasks____
(10) I felt work had become less important____
(11) I felt I had to "work faster" to get things done____
(12) While I was at work I felt lonely____
(13) I felt a lot of "pressure" at work____
(14) I had taken on too many additional duties____
(15) I stayed at work later each day____
(16) I felt that I couldn't keep to a schedule____
(17) I felt that work wasn't important____

(Social Interaction)
(18) I felt embarrassed____
(19) I felt uncomfortable when around other people____
(20) I felt I was more emotionally dependent on others____
(21) I stopped "sharing" my feelings with others____
(22) I felt I couldn't talk about the divorce to others____
(23) I felt that I had lost friendships____
(24) I felt self-conscious of what others were thinking
(25) I felt I had lost my personal identity
(26) I felt that I was receiving "special" attention
(27) I felt I wanted to run away

(Health)
(28) I felt concerned about my physical appearance
(29) I had significant changes in body weight
(30) Tension had significantly changed my health
(31) Others had noticed that my health had "changed"
(32) I felt my heart pounding
(33) I felt that my appetite had changed significantly
(34) I used or increased my use of alcohol/drugs
(35) I felt that I was about to "break down"
(36) I needed more sleep
(37) I felt that I was getting sick

(Emotional)
(38) I felt guilty
(39) I had feelings of panic
(40) I felt that I had been "betrayed"
(41) I felt irritable when little things would go wrong
(42) I felt that I was "numb" to everything
(43) I felt I couldn't trust someone of the opposite gender
(44) I felt "angry"
(45) I felt that my life had become stressful____
(46) I felt insecure____
(47) I was depressed____

Thank you -- for taking time
to complete this survey ...
George Milton Collenberg was born in Buffalo, New York, on September 29, 1953. He received his elementary education from the Public School System in Buffalo, and in Tucson, Arizona; where he accompanied his family in 1964. Having since maintained residence in Arizona, his secondary education was completed at Tucson High School in the Tucson Public School System. In 1972, he entered the University of Arizona. While at the University of Arizona, he taught Science to public school children (3rd to 12th grade), and conducted Astronomical research which, was later published. In 1981, he entered Pima Community College and was awarded an Associate of General Studies degree in 1984 and, an Associate of Applied Science degree in 1985. In April 1990, he entered Ottawa University, graduating in 1992 with a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Human Resources. While at Ottawa University, he conducted research on Human Development in the workplace, which was later privately published. In January of 1993, he entered the Graduate Program at Ottawa University. He has been recognized for a high standard of academic excellence, and community leadership by being placed on The National Dean's List for 1991-1992 and 1994-1995. He is a member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, the American Counseling Association and, the Arizona Counselors Association.