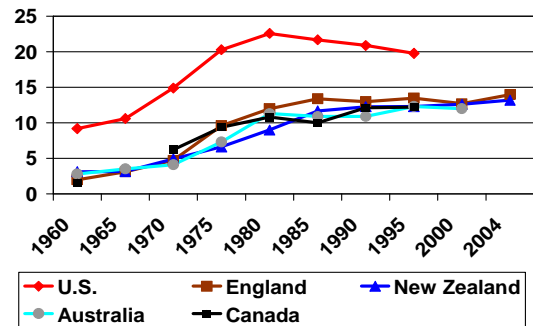


Children and Divorce: What We Know and What We Need to Know

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Refined Divorce Rates for Five Countries



Is Divorce Linked with Negative Outcomes among Children?

Yes

- externalizing problems
- internalizing problems
- academic failure
- problems with peer relations
- weaker bonds with parents (fathers)

Is Divorce Linked with Negative Outcomes among Adult Offspring?

Yes

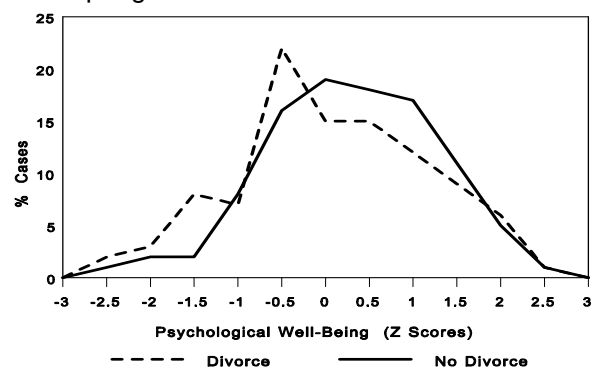
- less education
- lower income and job status
- increased risk of depression
- increased risk of divorce
- weak long-term bonds with parents

Are All Children Affected Similarly?

No

- Some children exhibit lifelong increases in serious problems
- Some children show only minor, short-term distress
- Some children are better off in the long-run following divorce, especially if their parents have overtly hostile relationships

Distributions of Psychological Well-Being for Offspring with Divorced and Married Parents



Do Gender Differences Exist in the Links Between Divorce and Child Well-Being?

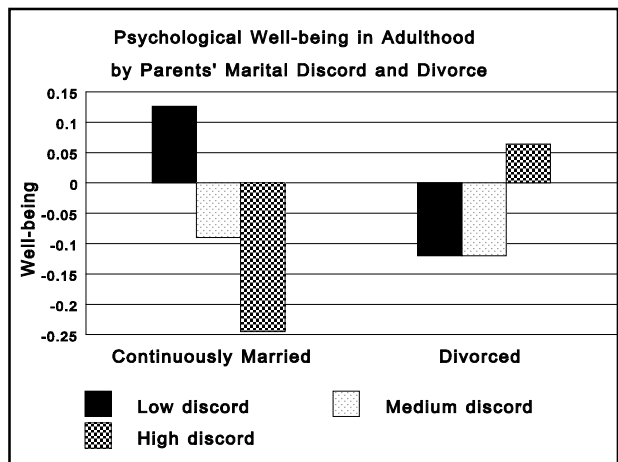
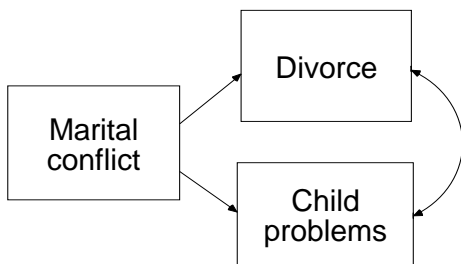
- Perhaps, but the pattern is not clear
- Among children, boys are at greater risk of problems with conduct and social relationships
- Among young adults, women experience greater educational disadvantage than men

Does Divorce Cause These Problems?

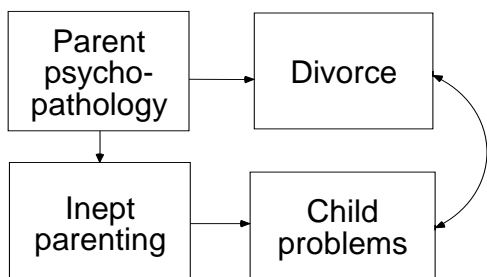
Yes, but selection processes also play a role

- Marital conflict
- Parent psychopathology
- Genetic effects

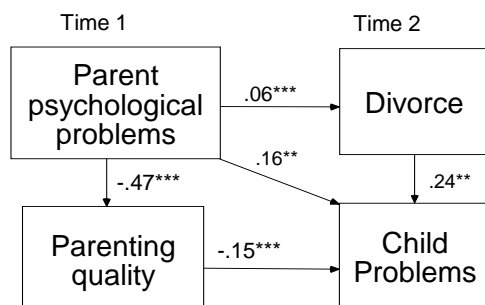
Marital Conflict Model



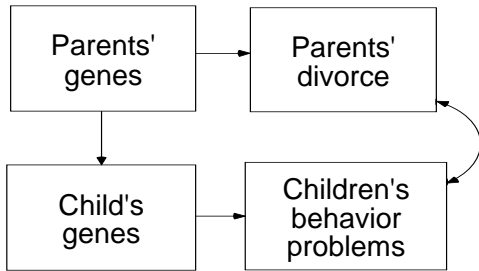
Parent Personality Model



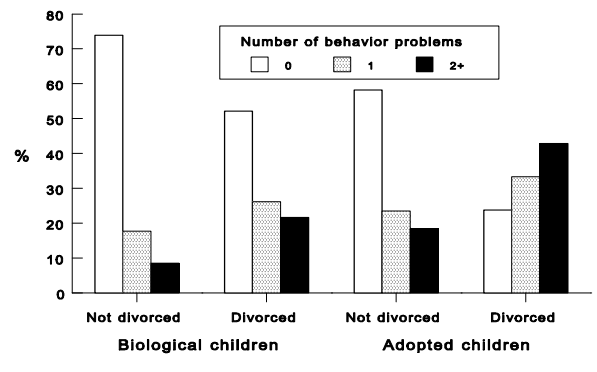
Parent psychological problems, divorce, and child problems (NSFH I & II, Unstandardized coefficients)



Passive Genetic Model



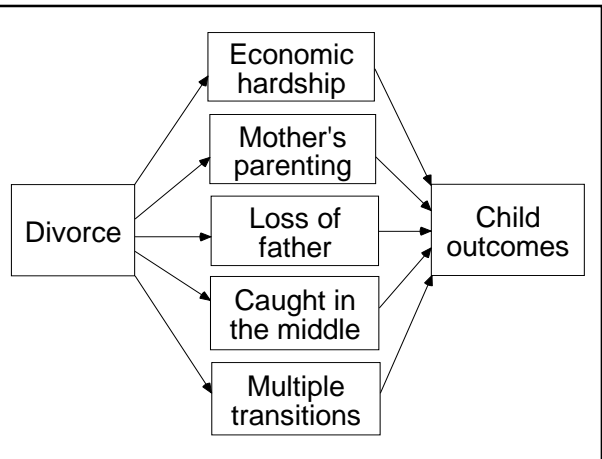
Percentage of Children Exhibiting Behavior Problems by Divorce and Adoption Status



Do We Know How Divorce Lowers Children's Well-Being?

Yes

- Economic hardship
- Mothers' parenting quality
- Loss of relationship with father
- Feeling caught in the middle
- Multiple transitions

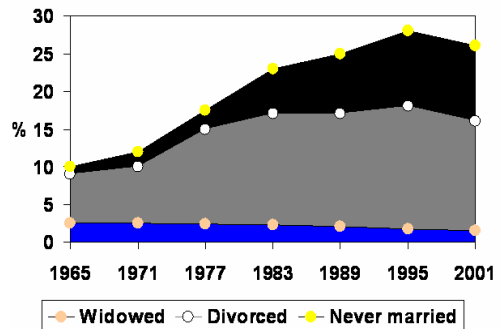


Do We Know What Helps?

Yes

- Economic security
- Competent (authoritative) parenting from both parents
- Cooperative co-parenting
- Stability

Children Living with One Parent by Marital Status (US)



Questions

- Do children with never married parents experience the same risks as do children with married parents who divorce?
- Are the mediating processes the same for these children?

More questions

- Few studies have focused on minority groups. In the U.S., are the estimated effects of divorce comparable for Whites, Blacks, Latinos, and Asians?
- Are there differences between countries? And if yes, what accounts for these differences? Culture? Social policies?

How Effective are Interventions?

- Court-based parenting education courses for divorcing parents are common in the U.S. Do they work?
- Would more joint physical custody benefit children?
- What can we do about high-conflict couples following divorce?

Programs to Promote Healthy Marriage

- How effective is marriage education at improving marital quality and lowering divorce?
- Is it useful to encourage unmarried parents to marry?
- Are community education programs useful?
- Do these programs benefit children?